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US calls on India to reduce dependence on China

July 23, 2020 thejakartapost.com reported: "US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday called on India to tamp down its dependence on Chinese goods, amid growing tensions between Washington and Beijing.

In remarks to a US-India virtual business summit, Pompeo said New Delhi was a natural partner to Washington as "one of a few trusted, like-minded countries".

"India has a chance to attract global supply chains away from China and reduce its reliance on Chinese companies in areas like telecommunications, medical supplies, and others," he told the meeting organized by the US-India Business Council.

"India is in this position because it has earned the trust of many nations around the world, including the United States."

US-China relations -- already strained over the coronavirus pandemic, the situation in Hong Kong and trade -- took a turn for the worse Wednesday when Washington ordered that Beijing shut its consulate in Houston.

Nuclear-armed neighbors China and India, the world's two most populous nations, also have long had a prickly relationship. But ties deteriorated significantly following a border clash on June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead as well as an unknown number of Chinese casualties.

Pompeo said the clashes were "initiated by" China's armed forces and were another example of "unacceptable behavior" from China's ruling Communist Party." ..."

Tensions soar as US orders China consulate shut

July 23, 2020 spacewar.com reported: "US-Chinese relations, already tense over the coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's crackdown in Hong Kong, deteriorated once again Wednesday as Washington ordered the closure of the Chinese consulate in Houston within 72 hours.

China slammed the US move, which came one day after the unveiling of a US indictment targeting two Chinese nationals for allegedly hacking hundreds of companies worldwide and seeking to steal virus vaccine research.

President Donald Trump threatened more consulate closures, telling reporters 'it's always possible.'

'We're setting our clear expectations for how the Chinese Communist Party is going to behave,' US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said during a visit to Denmark.

'President Trump has said 'enough,' 'Pompeo added..."

Pompeo urges 'entire world' to stand up to China

July 22, 2020 spacewar.com reported: "US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged 'the entire world' Tuesday to stand up to China but denied forcing Britain's hand in its decision to ban the communist superpower's private telecoms giant Huawei.

Pompeo met Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the heat of an emerging crisis in relations between London and Beijing over everything from China's treatment of Hong Kong to its persecution of more than one million ethnic Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities.

The top US diplomat used a press conference with his UK opposite number Dominic Raab to air a host of grievances President Donald Trump's administration had built up against Beijing.

He accused China of engaging in 'a cover-up and co-opting' the World Health Organization by allegedly suppressing early details of the 'preventable' coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 610,000 people globally.

The Chinese Communist Party's 'exploitation of this disaster to further its own interest has been disgraceful', he said.

Pompeo also castigated China for claiming disputed areas of the South China Sea 'you have no lawful claim to' and trying to 'threaten and bully' its neighbours.

'We think that the entire world needs to work together to ensure that every country, including China, behaves in the international system in ways that are appropriate and consistent with the international order,' he said..."



US State Secretary
Mike Pompeo

US defense chief plans to visit China as tensions grow

July 22, 2020 spacewar.com reported: "US Defense Secretary Mark Esper plans to visit China for talks on how to improve two-way communications in a crisis as geopolitical tensions between the superpowers rise and concerns mount over a potential South China Sea flashpoint.

Esper said Tuesday that he hopes to make the trip before year-end to "establish the systems necessary for crisis communications and reinforce our intentions to openly compete in the international system in which we all belong."

Last week, the United States formally declared Beijing's pursuit of territory and resources in South China Sea as illegal, explicitly backing the territorial claims of Southeast Asian countries against China's. It has also downgraded relations with Hong Kong after China implemented a new security law in violation of its promises of autonomy for the territory.

"We are not in search of conflict," Esper said in an address to the International Institute of Strategic Studies. But China "has no right to turn international waters into a zone of exclusion for its own maritime empire," he said." ..."

Indian, US Warships Conduct Joint Drills in Indian Ocean

July 21, 2020 voanews.com reported: "Indian navy warships have held a joint exercise with the United States navy in the Indian Ocean, according to the two countries.

The maritime drill signals growing strategic cooperation between New Delhi and Washington at a time of heightened tensions with China.

The exercises were carried out Monday near India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are located away from the Indian mainland near one of the world's busiest shipping routes close to the Malacca Strait.

The Indian navy called the Monday drills with the aircraft carrier, the USS *Nimitz*, a 'passage exercise,' a reference to maneuvers held by two countries when a transiting warship joins other.

'The *Nimitz* Carrier Strike Group is transiting through IOR [Indian Ocean Region]. During the passage, Indian navy units undertook Passage Exercise (Passex) with US Navy,' the Indian navy spokesman said in a tweet..."



Nimitz Carrier Strike Group

Report: China Forcing Poor Citizens to Trade Faith for Welfare Checks

July 20, 2020 Breitbart.com reported: "The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is leveraging economic restraints caused by the coronavirus pandemic to coerce increasingly desperate, low-income Chinese Christians to renounce their faith or lose welfare benefits, human rights magazine *Bitter Winter* reported on Friday.

The economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic has hit China's low-income households hardest, many of which rely upon state-funded welfare benefits to survive. In recent months, the CCP has reportedly forced Christians across the country receiving state-funded welfare benefits to remove religious symbols from their households and replace them with images of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Mao Zedong; some are told to renounce their faith altogether. If Christians refuse, the state cancels their welfare payments, according to the magazine.

In April, the government of a town administered by Linfen, a city in northern Shanxi province, ordered officials from all local villages to 'remove crosses, religious symbols, and images from the homes of people of [Christian] faith who receive social welfare payments and replace them with portraits of Chairman Mao and President Xi Jinping. The officials were instructed [by the CCP] to annul the subsidies to those who protest the order,' *Bitter Winter* reported..."

Pentagon lays groundwork for future US experimental space station

July 17, 2020 spacewar.com reported: "The Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) was recently awarded a US Department of Defense contract to transform its own intended NASA transport vehicle into the core structure of the US military's future Unmanned Orbital Outpost.

A Tuesday news release published by SNC detailed that its Shooting Star transport vehicle's versatility will be useful as the global aerospace and national security leader begins repurposing the vehicle as the core of a future autonomous space station for logistics demonstrations and experiments.

'We're excited by the multi-mission nature of Shooting Star,' SNC CEO Fatih Ozmen expressed.

'It was originally developed for NASA resupply missions to the International Space Station, and since then we keep identifying new capabilities and solutions it offers to a wide variety of customers. The possible applications for Shooting Star are really endless.' ..."

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