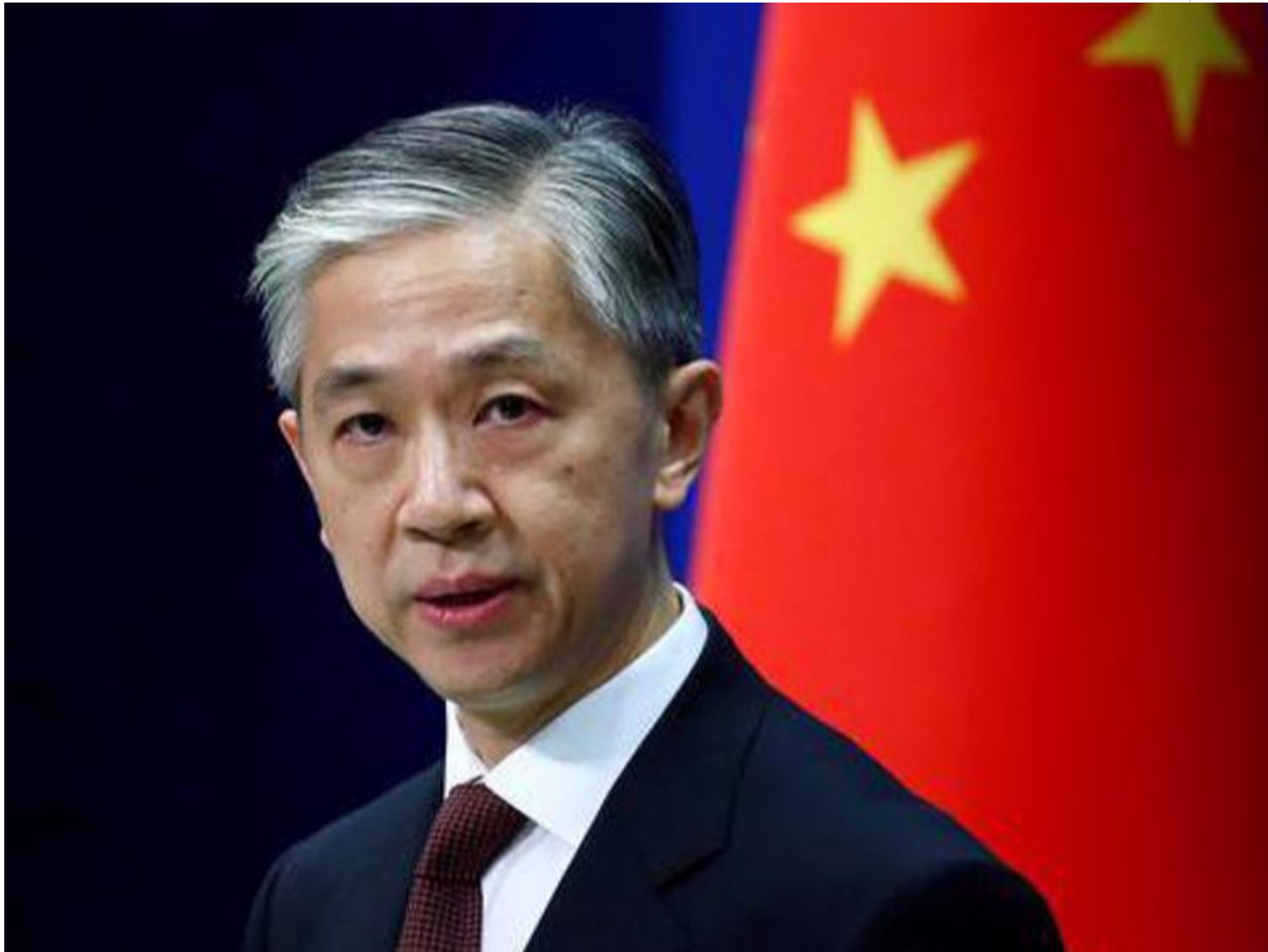


China urges U.S. to stop oppression of foreign companies



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin. (Photo: Reuters)

Beijing, December 19 (RHC)-- China has urged the United States to stop its “unjustified” crackdown on Chinese companies, following reports that Washington plans to add dozens of Chinese companies to a trade blacklist.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a daily press briefing in the capital, Beijing, on Friday that the blacklisting would be evidence of Washington's oppression of Chinese companies, adding that Beijing would continue to take the necessary measures to ensure its companies' legitimate rights and interests. "We urge the U.S. to cease its mistaken behavior of unwarranted oppression of foreign companies," Wang said.

The comments came after the United States confirmed earlier in the day that it would add dozens of Chinese companies, including the country's main chip maker, the SMIC, to a trade blacklist. The U.S. has decided to add 33 Chinese firms and institutions to an economic blacklist over alleged human rights violations or having ties with China's military.

The move by the President Donald Trump administration comes just weeks before Democratic President-elect Joe Biden is set to take office, on January 20th. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross said in a statement that Washington would deny licenses to the SMIC to access technology to produce semiconductors at advanced technology levels.

The companies previously added to the U.S. trade blacklist include Chinese telecoms giant Huawei Technologies and 150 affiliates, telecom equipment maker ZTE Corps, and video surveillance company Hikvision. The SMIC, which relies heavily on equipment from American suppliers, was already in the US's crosshairs.

In September, the U.S. Commerce Department notified some companies that they needed to receive a license before they can supply goods and services to the SMIC after claiming there had been an "unacceptable risk" that the equipment provided to the Chinese company could be employed for military purposes.

In early December, the US Department of Defense added the SMIC and the national offshore oil and gas producer CNOOC to a blacklist of alleged Chinese military companies.

The Trump administration on Thursday added China's top chipmaker SMIC and oil giant CNOOC to a blacklist of alleged Chinese military companies. The SMIC has said previously that its products and services are solely for civilian and commercial use.

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