

Headlines:

- **Afghan Government Officials Helped Smugglers Sneak almost \$1 billion in Cash and Gold out of Afghanistan**
- **US Announces Record \$200m for Promoting Gender Equality in Pakistan**
- **Chinese Semiconductor IPOs Surge as Chip Arms Race Heats Up**

Details:

Afghan Government Officials Helped Smugglers Sneak almost \$1 billion in Cash and Gold out of Afghanistan

During the final months of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, as the Taliban advanced on the capital, the elected government struggled to reassure its US patrons that it could maintain control. Yet at the same time, smugglers were illegally carrying hundreds of millions of dollars in cash and gold out of the country with the assistance of officials from within the Afghan government, according to internal government documents and former Afghan officials. The office of Ashraf Ghani, the US-backed Afghan president, had been informed about the problem, insiders say. But it did nothing to stop it. Documents assembled by Afghanistan's now-defunct government and obtained by Insider show that \$59.7 million in cash and gold went from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan through the port of Hairatan during the first three months of 2021, as the US contemplated withdrawing its forces and the Taliban geared up for the spring offensive that eventually toppled Kabul. During a 13-month period running from May 2019 through May 2020, the total was a staggering \$824 million. Though the couriers failed to declare the money to Afghan officials as it left the country, Uzbek customs agents on the other side of the border did record the cash and gold on handwritten customs forms. Those records were obtained by Afghan anti-corruption officials as part of an investigation into money smuggling, and they form the basis of a scathing report documenting a river of cash flowing out of the impoverished nation. Much of the money, the Uzbek customs forms show, was bound for the United Arab Emirates, where top Afghan officials would flee when their government collapsed later that year. [Source: Business Insider]

The US helped Ashraf Ghani flee Kabul with the loot and then imposed severe restrictions on Taliban to change policy. Ever since, the US has been in the region both Afghanistan and Pakistan face turmoil and chaos. The only way out of this mess, is for Muslims of both countries to re-establish the Caliphate, which will end Western domination for good.

US Announces Record \$200m for Promoting Gender Equality in Pakistan

The Democratic-controlled US House of Representatives on Friday passed a \$1.66 trillion government funding bill that provides record \$200 million for gender equality in Pakistan.

The funding set aside for Pakistan for fiscal 2023 is 20 times higher than the provided in 2020 when the US congress announced \$10m for gender equality and \$15m for strengthening democracy in the South Asian country. Pakistan ranked 145 out of 146 on

the gender equality index released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in its Global Gender Gap Report 2022. The Bill boosts US defence-related spending by 10 per cent to a total of \$858bn while \$772.5bn has been set aside for non-defence domestic programmes.

The spending bill for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30 was approved on a largely party-line vote of 225-201, following Senate passage the previous day. President Joe Biden said he would sign the hard-fought legislation, which also includes more aid for students with disabilities, additional funding to protect workers' rights and more job-training resources, as well as more affordable housing for families, veterans and those fleeing domestic violence. The bill also provides record military funding and sends emergency aid to Ukraine. The war-hit country would get \$44.9 billion in new emergency US aid. [Source: Dunya News].

Not satisfied by promoting LGBTQ plus and gender fluidity at home, the US now wants to promote these filthy 'values' in Pakistan. To make matters worse, both the military and civilian leadership have hitherto failed to oppose the promotion of such values domestically, and in return for US money they will look the other way.

Chinese Semiconductor IPOs Surge as Chip Arms Race Heats Up

Chinese semiconductor companies are in the middle of a boom in IPO volumes, as a government push to develop the country's chip industry draws large sums of capital. Companies that produce chips or chip-making equipment raised the equivalent of \$12 billion from domestic initial public offerings in the year through Dec. 15, nearly three times what they raised in 2021. They have filed for another \$17 billion worth of IPOs in mainland China. The need for Chinese chip businesses to build bigger financial war chests has increased as the U.S. has mounted challenges to China's role in the global technology supply chain. The U.S. government-imposed export restrictions on advanced chips and chip-making equipment to China in October and made it harder for Chinese companies in the sector to hire Americans. The restrictions were a step-up from previous rules, which covered a narrower list of technologies and only targeted exports to specific Chinese companies like Huawei Technologies Co. and Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. The beefing up of American chip-sector curbs signals that China is increasingly on its own in its efforts to catch up with the U.S. in advanced technology, analysts said. That has added fuel to a Chinese government push to develop the country's chip industry. In 2021, the semiconductor sector was the most popular destination for venture-capital money as investors said they were happy to piggyback on the Chinese government's priorities. The rise in chip listings means overall IPO volumes have grown slightly in China—a stark contrast with the drop elsewhere. [Source: The Wall Street Journal]

The efforts by China to catch-up the US in the chip race, underscores how unprepared China is to challenge America's primacy in the region. Unless Beijing develops its own technology stack combined with a strong political will, it will not be able to challenge the US for the foreseeable future.