

China on Thursday passed a new law to counter foreign sanctions, as it looks to build its defences against rising US and EU pressure over trade and human rights.

Beijing has accused the United States of “suppressing” Chinese firms and issued veiled threats of retaliation after President Joe Biden last week expanded a blacklist of companies in which Americans are not allowed to invest.

Countermeasures in the Chinese law include “refusal to issue visas, denial of entry, deportation... and sealing, seizing, and freezing property of individuals or businesses that adhere to foreign sanctions against Chinese businesses or officials,” according to the text published by the standing committee of the National People’s Congress, China’s top legislature.

The restrictions can apply to family members of individuals who fall foul of Beijing.

The law also allows the country’s courts to punish companies that comply with foreign laws, and says that businesses or people in China do not need to comply with foreign restrictions.

“The law aims to firmly safeguard the sovereign dignity and core interests of the country and oppose Western hegemony and power politics,” foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbing told a briefing.

China has long complained about US sanctions and trade restrictions affecting Chinese companies, calling it an extraterritorial application of US law.

Biden has stepped up US criticism of Beijing in recent months over the theft of intellectual property, and alleged human rights abuses in Hong Kong and the restive Xinjiang region.

Last week, the White House expanded the blacklist of companies Americans are barred from investing in due to the firms’ links to Beijing’s military.



Image source: TRT World

The list of 59 Chinese firms that are off-limits to US investors from August 2 includes major telecoms such as China Mobile, video surveillance firm Hikvision, China Railway Construction Corp, and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC).

‘Powerful deterrent’

China’s anti-sanctions law comes as Biden is pushing for a common approach to restrain China with allies in the Group of Seven, which meets at the weekend in Britain.

Biden’s project to “push back against the Chinese government’s economic abuses and coercion” has had buy-in from Japan, South Korea and Australia, and the US president is now trying to get European leaders on board.

The new countermeasures against those slapping sanctions on China is a “precise response” against US attempts to forge a common front against Beijing, said an editorial in the state-run Global Times.

“It will act as a powerful deterrent against countries imposing sanctions,” it said.

“We will not hesitate to fight back against forces that arrogantly challenge us and will continue to enrich our legal toolbox.”

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