



January, 2010

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INTERNATIONAL & TAIWAN

A virtual and diplomatic storm grew quickly as **Google accused Chinese government-backed hackers of attempts to hack into email accounts belonging to Chinese dissidents**. Following an internal investigation into the attacks, Google is refusing to abide by an agreement signed with the Chinese government in 2006. The agreement allowed for censorship on Google's flagship search engine to prevent searches listing results connected with Tibet, Tiananmen and other issues deemed sensitive by the Chinese Communist Party. Google has said that it might pull out of China as a result of the dispute. US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, suggested that China was trying to build 'a new Berlin wall' using internet censorship. China's foreign ministry called her comments 'harmful' and has insisted that continuing censorship is essential to social harmony. Wang Chen, minister of the State Council Information Office, listed several concerns that the authorities have regarding the internet: hacker attacks, internet viruses, fraud and pornography. In addition, he said, the internet 'gives space for spreading rumours and issuing false information ... causing serious damage to society and public interests.' For the moment Google's Chinese site (google.cn) is showing uncensored links and images, but its shares dropped 1.4% after news of the accusations were made public. (See SCMP, 14, 15 January; Guardian, 21 January; AsiaNews, 23 January)

China's vice foreign minister with responsibility for African affairs, Zhai Jun, has **promised to use Chinese influence to enhance stability in the Great Lakes region** of Africa. He was speaking during his participation on the China-Rwanda bilateral meeting. Mr Zhai promised to use China's place at the UN security council and its partnership with other countries. (See the New Times, Rwanda, 26 January)

The Anglican Archbishop of Sudan, Daniel Deng, has **accused China of looking only for economic benefit** from its ties with the country. 'They are not interested as to whether Sudan goes to war or not ... that is not their problem.' Archbishop Deng said that it was in China's long-term interest to have a united, peaceful Sudan. He was speaking as Sudanese talks around the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement looked in danger of stalling. China imported \$6.3bn of crude oil from Sudan in 2008. (See Catholic Information Service for Asia, 12 January)

According to a new paper from Jackie Sheehan, **Chinese are the most trafficked ethnic group smuggled into the UK**, or 17% of the total. Of these, 70% are women and girls smuggled for sexual exploitation purposes. Others were forced into domestic servitude. Men and boys were being trafficked for forced labour. (See Nottingham University, China Policy Institute discussion papers; retrieved 28 January).

China has **protested the showing of a new documentary on the Dalai Lama** at the Palm Springs International Film Festival. Festival organizers refused to withdraw 'The Sun behind the Clouds: Tibet's

Struggle for Freedom' from the festival programme. As a result the Chinese authorities insisted that two Chinese films were withdrawn. (See Reuters, 24 January)

NATIONAL NEWS

Around 30,000 pro-democracy protestors, most of them young people, gathered outside Hong Kong's Beijing Liaison Office on 1 January. A prominent leader of the movement, Christina Chan, was subsequently arrested on the charge of assaulting a police officer, but quickly released. City authorities have warned demonstrators that they will not tolerate 'radical demonstrations'. The demonstrations came amid a **period of consultation surrounding a Hong Kong administration paper on constitutional change**. The Hong Kong Christian Council has called on the Territory's administration to set out a clear timetable toward universal suffrage. Revd Po Kam-cheong, who chairs the Council, said that the present government 'lacks vision on democratisation'. Calls to abolish 'functional constituencies', by which trade and civic bodies appoint Legco seats have been dismissed by Hong Kong's chief executive as being premature. In response, five Pan-Democratic legislators have resigned to trigger by-elections in a bid to hold a popular referendum on the issue. (See UCAN, 6 January; DPA, 9 January; AsiaNews, 11, 18 January; SCMP, 7, 21 January)

Protestors have gathered outside Hong Kong's Legislative Council to demonstrate against plans for a high-speed rail link with the mainland. The link will cost US\$8.6bn and will bring Hong Kong into China's new high-speed rail network. The protestors said the link would harm the local environment and was too expensive. The Hong Kong government said that the link would be used by 100,000 people daily. (See AsiaNews, 11 January; ENI, 15 January)

A study by academics from Wuhan University has shown that Chinese students pay more than \$100m last year for ghost-written papers, a figure that is increasing rapidly each year. These papers are used to inflate publication lists and thereby gain promotion or funding. Two lecturers were recently sacked for falsifying seventy papers in two years. (See BBC, 5 January)

China has suffered **large gas shortages since November** as domestic demand soared through the winter. China produces between 70-80bn tons of natural gas, insufficient to meet demand of between 100-120bn tons. Contracts with Gazprom, and new pipelines to central Asia have not yet met the shortfall, and PetroChina was forced to buy 65,000 tons at emergency prices in January. Given the fixed price for Chinese domestic consumers this meant an immediate loss to the company of RMB60m, (See Global Times, 6 January)

Beijing will resume talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama according to the Tibetan lama's aids. The talks have been suspended for 15 months following riots in Lhasa in March 2008, but a leadership reshuffle in Tibet and reports of a high-level Tibet Work Symposium meeting on the issue have led new impetus to talks. The Dalai Lama's envoys were due to arrive in Beijing on 26 January for ten days of talks. This is the ninth round of talks since 2002. (See SCMP, 26 January)

LOCAL NEWS

Four senior retired Communist Party officials, all known for their liberal views, have signed a public letter **calling for a reconsideration of the verdict given against dissident Liu Xiaobo** for inciting state subversion. The letter was signed by Hu Jiwei, a former chief of the People's Daily, Li Pu, former deputy chief at Xinhua and Dai Huang, a former senior reporter at the same news agency. The authors of the letter said that Liu's calls for a federal republic were in line with early Communist Party discussions in the 1950s. The sentencing of Mr Liu has also drawn criticism from Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Vaclav Havel, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama. (See AP, 24 January)

Authorities in the Tibetan Autonomous Region have said that they will **complete the registration of all 'religious places, living Buddhas, monks and nuns'** by the end of 2010. Qiangba Puncog, chair of the 9th Regional People's Congress, said that the TAR government would continue to implement State Council policies on religion in the region, including increasing the level of legislative and political education in the monasteries. (See Chinaview, 12 January)

Four more Uighurs have been executed after being convicted of participating in last summer's violence. It is thought that 25 death sentences have been handed down since the violence, and that nine people have been executed so far. (See BBC, 26 January)

A former student leader during the 1989 protests has been sentenced to nine years in prison on charges of attempted fraud. Zhou Yongjun was also fined \$80,000. Mr Zhou was arrested while trying to enter Hong Kong on a forged visa in August 2008, apparently to visit his elderly parents. (See AP, 20 January)

CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS NEWS

Beijing's **annual meeting on religious work was held on 12 January** under vice-premier Hui Liangyu. A correct understanding and proper handling of religious matters was stressed as being important to social harmony. Hui instructed various departments to strengthen the use of law to resolve religious difficulties. Contemporary policies were in accordance with China's current situation and must be adhered to unswervingly, he added. (See Chinaview, 12 January)

Thousands of Catholics gathered in freezing conditions to pay their last respects to **'underground' bishop Leo Yao Liang who died on 30 December**. The officially unrecognised bishop of Xiwanzi, Hebei Province, had been sentenced to life imprisonment in 1958 and was released in 1984. He was clandestinely ordained bishop in 2002, and was detained for thirty months until early 2009. During the memorial mass he was referred to as 'shepherd', as the CPA recognise him only as a priest. (See AsiaNews, 4 January; UCAN, 6 January; EDA, 6 January)

This year is the **sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Three Self Movement**, and senior figures in the CCC/TSPM are visiting Guangdong and Fujian provinces to hold informal discussions with elders in the movement. Dan Weixiang, editor in chief of the *Tianfeng* magazine is leading the discussions. The four-man group also held discussions with young Christian representatives from Wenzhou, Suzhou, Ningbo and Hangzhou to determine what the Three Self principles meant to them. (See CCC, 12 January)

Various churches across China have **participated in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. Chinese Catholic church websites have carried the prayers for the week, and introduced its history. Ecumenical prayer services were held in Hong Kong on 25 January, focussing on the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake. (See AF, 20 January)

The Guangzhou municipal government is using the opportunity of the 16th Asian Games to renovate a number of religious structures, as well as building a specific International Religious Centre for the Games. 26 temples and churches will be open for participants at the Games. The Temple of the Great Buddha (Dafo si) and the City God Temple (Chenghuang guan) will both be significantly restored. The latter dates from the Ming Dynasty and was once the biggest temple in southern China. (See Sports Features Communications, 19 January)

Chinese Catholics have been organising for prayer and **collecting funds to support Haitians after January's earthquake**. Caritas Taiwan has donated \$10,000 and is soliciting for further funds, while Jinde Charities' new president, Bishop Lian Li Liangui has called on supporters to 'activate all channels of solidarity'. Taiwan, which maintains diplomatic relations with Haiti, has sent an aid donation of \$5m, while Beijing is sending aid worth \$4.4m. (See AF, 14, 16 January)

Chinese Catholics from Bameng Diocese have given aid in the form of coats, blankets and food to farming communities in Guizhou Province. The farmers have been particularly affected by heavy snows. In the diocese of Taiyuan, Fr Ning Mengyou led the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Anointing the Sick for 197 families. (See AF, 28 January)

According to statistics collated by the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies, there were 80 Chinese Catholic nuns working in government institutions caring for people with Hansen's Disease (leprosy). January 31 has been devoted to leprosy patients and dioceses across the nation are raising the social and practical implications of the disease. (See AF, 20 January)

The China Aid Association has quoted a Chinese policeman as saying that the **Christian human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng has 'gone missing'**. Mr Gao was detained by security forces in February 2009. The policeman said that the lawyer subsequently 'went missing while out on a walk'. Rumours have spread since December that Mr Gao died after being beaten in custody, but this is the first time that a Chinese official has been quoted as saying they no longer know his whereabouts. (See BosNewsLife, 16 January; BBC, 29 January)

The **canonisation process for Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci has been renewed**. A historical commission has been tasked with collecting all his writings, while a diocesan tribunal has been established under Bishop Claudio Giuliodori of Macerata, where Ricci was born in 1552. The case for Ricci's beatification was first opened in 1984. (See AF, 22 January; UCAN, 25 January)

The 700th anniversary of the ordination of the Franciscan John of Montecorvino as Bishop of Beijing and Patriarch of the East was commemorated by a study day at the Pontifical University Antonianum on 15 January. By 1948 there were 706 friars in China (150 of whom were Chinese). They had 26 convents. According to the study day, a total of 1,162 friars lived in China between 1200 and 1977. (See AF, 19 January)

A Catholic priest in Ximen St Joseph's Church, Fuzhou diocese, has set up a recording studio at the church. Fr Luke Li Lujia hopes that the centre will attract musicians to the church, which is already noted for its Taizé-style services. (See UCAN, 21 January)

Meanwhile the Youth Fellowship of St Paul in Wuhan have created a nativity dance using traditional Chinese dance motifs. The performers were from the Catholic seminary in the city, and the artistic creator, Fr Luke Li Luanru, hopes that the dance-drama 'can help non-Catholics understand the true meaning of Christmas.' (See UCAN, 29 December)

A Buddhist monk from Donglin Temple, Lushan, has become increasingly famous for his Buddhist songs and website. Daoxin was first recognised in 2008 through his uncanny physical similarity with Hong Kong superstar Nicholas Tse. Since then he has released one album and a number of songs, the majority of which are updated versions of Buddhist chants and meditations, but he is also experimenting with pop lyrics. He is planning a lecture tour and a biography of the reforming monk Hongyi (1880-1942). His approach has drawn some criticism from more conventional Buddhist monks and bloggers criticising the high fees he charges at his concerts. (See CD, 8 January).

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SOURCES

AF	Agenzia Fides	www.fides.org
AFP	Agence France Presse	www.afp.com
AFPC	American Foreign Policy Centre	www.afpc.org
AP	Associated Press	www.ap.org
ATO	Asia Times Online	www.atimes.com
BBC	British Broadcasting Association	www.bbc.co.uk
CAA	China Aid Association	www.chinaaid.org
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	
CBNN	Christian Broadcast Network News	www.cbn.com/CBN/news
CCC	China Christian Council [Protestant]	www.ccctspm.org
CCP	Chinese Communist Party	
CNS	Catholic News Service	
(C)CPA (Chinese)	Catholic Patriotic Association	
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress	
CD	China Daily	www.chinadaily.net/news/
CHCA	Chinese House Church Association [Protestant]	
CRI	China Radio International	www.cri.com.cn
CWN	Catholic World News	www.cwnews.com
	Chinaview	www.chinaview.cn
	China News [Zhongguo Xinwen She]	www.chinanews.com.cn
	China.org.cn	www.China.org.cn
	Da Gong Bao (Ta Kung Pao)	www.takungpao.com
DPA	Deutsche Presse-Agentur	www.dpa.com
EDA	Églises D'Asie	http://eglisie.mepasie.org
FT	Financial Times	www.ft.com
	Guardian	www.guardian.co.uk
HK	Hong Kong	
HRIC	Human Rights in China	http://gb.hrichina.org
	Independent	www.independent.co.uk
IHT	International Herald Tribune	www.iht.com
IPS	Inter Press Service	www.ipsnews.net
NPS	National People's Congress	
PBS	Public Broadcast Radio	www.pbs.org
RAB	Religious Affairs Bureau	
	Religious Intelligence	www.religiousintelligence.co.uk
	Reuters	www.reuters.co.uk
	Sky News	http://news.sky.com/skynews
SARA	State Administration for Religious Affairs	
SCMP	South China Morning Post	www.scmp.com
SOE	State Owned Enterprise	
	The Daily Telegraph	www.telegraph.co.uk
	The Times	www.timesonline.co.uk/
TSPM	Three-Self Patriotic Movement	
UCAN	Union of Catholic Asia News	www.ucanews.com
UFWD	United Front Work Department	
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization	
VIS	Vatican Information Service	
WP	Washington Post	www.washingtonpost.com
	Xinhua	http://www.xinhua.org