



## June, 2009

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### INTERNATIONAL & TAIWAN

Seventeen **Uighurs held at Guantanamo** after being captured by US forces in Afghanistan have been released after seven years in detention. Strong US Congressional opposition prevented the men being offered places in the USA, and fears were raised about their safety if they were returned to China. Instead, four of the men have been taken temporarily by Bermuda and the rest are due to go to Palau. In 2006, five other Uighurs were accepted by Albania. Ten members of the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) have been arrested in Pakistan and extradited to China. ETIM is a separatist movement which demands an independent Muslim state in what is now China's Uighur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang. Pakistan says the ten were captured after they attacked Pakistani security positions in its tribal areas. (See The News, 6 June; NYT 14 June; BBC, 10 June)

India has boosted its **military presence in the disputed Arunachal Pradesh region**, sending in two additional Army divisions (roughly 60,000 men), a squadron of fighter jets, and reconnaissance aircraft to monitor China's troop movements along the 3,500 km border. China has claimed the region ever since the 1962 Sino-Indian war. The new railway to Lhasa is just part of China's growing infrastructure development in Tibet, which has allowed it to move troops and military equipment to the region much more quickly than previously. India has now indicated that it will begin a two-year programme to match China's new capabilities. The new Indian Minister for State Defense has also said that India will seek to counter growing Chinese influence in Pakistan and Sri Lanka. China and India have also supported opposing sides in Nepal's civil war. (See The Statesman, 10 June; Zeenews, 1 June)

### NATIONAL NEWS

China's **petitioning system** is in line for major changes, according to plans laid out by the NPC's Legislative Affairs Commission. Currently, thousands of petitioners a year travel to Beijing to lodge complaints about local government officials and policies, particularly involving land requisition, house relocations and judicial injustices. Under the new system, branch offices of the State Bureau for Letters and Visits will be set up in various provinces and cities to hear petitions and work with local officials to resolve complaints. A website established set up to allow Chinese to inform on corrupt officials crashed immediately after opening. The site was created to handle up to 1,000 people making a complaint at the same time, but initial demand was much higher. The site ([www.12309.gov.cn](http://www.12309.gov.cn)) and telephone number is based on a system trialled in 2008 which highlighted 20,000 cases of official corruption. (See Da Gong Bao, 2 June; BBC 24 June)

The **Chinese Ministry for Environmental Protection has won a major victory** by forcing the suspension of work at two new hydroelectric dams on the Jinsha River. According the ministry's website it was discovered that two of China's biggest energy companies, Huadian and Huaneng, had begun construction on the two dams without permission, with plans to spend up to £20bn on the project. The Ministry has now said that it will refuse permission to any future project proposed by the two companies. A spokesman for the ministry said that the hydropower resources of the Jinsha were already

being overexploited, and that the construction of dams without proper designs and environmental protection would damage the ecology of the river and local communities. (See Telegraph, 12 June)

Zhejiang Province has begun construction on **six new nuclear reactors**, with the aim of adding 5,800 MW to its nuclear energy production by 2014. The province intends that nuclear power will increase from 6% to 12% of its installed capacity as a result of the new reactors. (See Interfax, 16 June)

A report from Greenpeace and Oxfam has highlighted the **disproportionate effects of climate change on mainland China's poorest communities**. Hu Anguang, a prominent Chinese economist, looked particularly at a community in Sichuan being affected by torrential rain fall, a Guangdong community hit by a cycle of flooding and drought, and an area of Gansu which has been hit by prolonged drought. (See SCMP, 18 June)

China has begun rolling out its two-year programme to (re)create a **universal health care system**. The budget of 850bn yuan (\$123bn) is chiefly aimed at creating a national system of community clinics and expanding medical insurance coverage. The number of clinics is to be expanded by 11,000 from its current number of 24,260, though many Chinese still prefer to go to a full hospital rather than use a local clinic. The Chinese medical insurance market has been growing by about 30% annually, and now features over 100 companies. It is regulated by China's Insurance Regulatory Commission, which may allow insurance companies to purchase stakes in hospitals. The Ministry of Health is also creating an essential drugs catalogue, which will allow patients to claim reimbursement under the new health care system. The catalogue is likely to list only generic drugs, and the government hopes that this will encourage multinationals to start joint-ventures in China to produce low-cost drugs. (See Interfax, 8,12, 15 June)

A proposed **Chinese Mental Health Law** is going through the consultative process prior to enactment. A mental health law has been on the agenda ever since 1985, but several drafts have never reached the NPC to be enacted into law. Surveys have estimated that 173m Chinese adults have mental health issues of which 158m have never sought professional help. There are remaining concerns that it will still only take one doctor's signature to admit a patient into a mental hospital, although the draft law does require a second opinion (though no signature). (See SCMP, 17 June; WSJ, 12 June)

#### LOCAL NEWS

Over **1000 Beijing lawyers have had their licenses to practice law suspended**. Last year the Beijing Administration of Judicial Lawyers abolished the system of annual registration, replacing it instead with an annual exam. However there are fears that the examination system has not been run fairly, as many of the lawyers who 'failed' have been involved in defending recent human rights cases or have called for the direct election of members to the Beijing Bar Association. 90 law firms have also been closed as a result of the new examinations. (See New Tang Dynasty Television, 28 June)

Christian human-rights lawyer Zhang Enchong has again been interrogated and tortured by PSB officers in Shanghai. On 17 June he was detained, stripped, repeatedly punched and lighted cigarettes pressed against his eyelids and lips. In 2003, Zhang launched a lawsuit against local officials, alleging that they conspired with Zhou Zhengyi to illegally confiscate homes and slate them for redevelopment. Since then he has been summoned by police more than 20 times, has had his house searched twice, and has been beaten four times, such that he now has difficulty walking. (See China Aid, 23 June)

Internet access was cut off for much of Southern China for four hours on 25 June. China Telecom said an investigation into the cause was inconclusive. The disruption came soon after the Chinese language version of Google ([www.google.cn](http://www.google.cn)) was particularly singled out in a campaign against vulgar and pornographic content. Several Google services were blocked for many hours and Google China has now withdrawn its 'suggest' function. It is possible that the Chinese government is trying to ensure that Chinese users prefer the use of Chinese search engines like Baidu – at the moment Google.cn is the 21<sup>st</sup> most-used site in China, while Baidu is routinely in the top 10. (See Reuters, 18 June; SCMP, 26, 29 June)

From 1 July, **all computers sold in China were to have been supplied with Green Dam software** that filters images and written content on the web. According to the Ministry for Industry and Information Technology which directed the move back in May, the software would help protect young people from harmful material – principally pornography. However there has been a widespread backlash against the plans. The prominent artist Ai Weiwei called for all Chinese ‘netizens’ to stay offline on 1 July in protest at the added control. Chinese media have also voiced concerns that the software might conflict with operating systems and that there was insufficient testing or lead-in time. A group of international manufacturers wrote a letter of protest to the Ministry. The OpenNet Initiative has said that the software is ‘substandard’ and will increase government control of Chinese cyberspace. On 1 July, the official news agency Xinhua announced that the requirement for Green Dam would be delayed. The statement did not say for how long. (See WSJ, 8 June; Reuters, 22 June; Bloomberg 17 June; NYT, 11 June; Guardian 1 July)

**Liu Xiaobo has been formally arrested** and charged with inciting subversion of the government and the overthrow of the socialist system. Liu was detained on 8 December, 2008, having helped to draft the declaration for political and legal reforms, Charter 08. His whereabouts have been unknown since his detention, and he was only formally charged on 23 June. A date for his trial has yet to be set, and the police have said that the state will not accept the lawyers chosen by Liu’s wife to defend him – Mo Shaoping and Shang Bojun. Mo is also one of the signatories to Charter 08. It has emerged that several senior Hong Kong legislators have also put their signatures to Charter 08, including the chairman of the Democratic Party, Albert Ho Chun-yan. Figures around the world, including the Catholic archbishop of Hong Kong, have called for Liu’s release. (See ENI, 26 June; SCMP, 25 June; AsiaNews, 24 June; AP, 7 June)

#### CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS NEWS

The **Year of Priestly Vocations** has been inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI to run from 19 June, 2009 until 19 June, 2010. Various Chinese dioceses have already been involved in preparing for the year, most significantly by highlighting the special vocation of priesthood, and promoting the ongoing formation of priests. Special masses, prayers and ordinations were held, features have been written for websites on the Pope’s teaching and the example of St Jean Marie Vianney. In Beijing a four-day retreat was held for forty priests from the archdiocese, urging the priests to leave their lives completely in the Lord’s hands, dedicated to prayer, to be faithful in celebrating the eucharist, and to maintain a personal relationship with the Lord. The retreat was led by Archbishop Joseph Li Shan and Fr Frances de Ridder (CICM). (See HKSE, 28 June; AF 6,19, 22, 24 June; UCAN, 19 June)

Three Christian leaders from Taochuan Village Christian Church in Shaanxi province were released after several days’ detention. Local authorities are trying to close the church and confiscate the church building, and arrested the three leaders on 14 June for ‘engaging in illegal religious activities.’ Their arrests were publicised on local television. The two women and a man have now lodged an appeal for illegal detention. (See China Aid, 27 June)

The Autumn Rain Church in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, faces further threat, this time from the Civil Affairs Bureau (CAB). Previous attempts to close the church by the PSB and RAB have failed. Officials from the CAB disrupted services on the afternoon of 21 June, on the basis that Autumn Rain Church was not registered under the Management Measures in the Regulation of Social Organizations, and ordered the church to cease meeting. The congregation of 100-120 was meeting at conference facilities of a hotel, and plans to persist in holding gatherings while it appeals against the decision for closure. The church is led by Wang Yi, a prominent professor of law, who met with George Bush in 2006. (See China Aid, 26 June)

Cardinal Zen has called for the Vatican to press ahead toward direct relations with Beijing, but only on the condition of complete religious freedom for China’s Catholics. He has warned that should the proposed Congress of Chinese Catholics take place ‘it would mean the complete waste of all the efforts made in the previous years and it would be an insult to the Holy Father’. He also noted that many of the problems faced by the Chinese Catholic Church are at a diocesan level. Another veteran of Sino-Vatican relations, Ren Yanli (former head of the Christian Studies Section of the World Religions Institute at

CASS) said that there had been a number of low-level diplomatic and cultural contacts over the past two years. Both sides have now adopted a wait-and-see approach, waiting for the other side to make the next move. (See UCAN, 16 June; AsiaNews, 16 June)

A court in Beijing has found Shi Weihai, a house-church leader and Christian book-store owner, guilty of illegal business operations. Shi was found guilty of printing Bibles and distributing them for free. He was fined 150,000 yuan (\$22,000) and sentenced to three years in prison. Six others, who were shareholders in the printing press involved, were also given lesser criminal sentences. Shi was rearrested in March, 2008, after an initial charge against him was dropped. Due to the time spent in jail, he is expected to be released in November, but is also launching an appeal against the ruling. (See China Aid, BosNewsLife, 11 June)

22 Chinese Buddhist monks have attended the first eight-month English language training course hosted by the Shanghai International Studies University. The course includes formal language training and also lessons in Buddhist terminology and history in English, taught by lecturers from the Buddhism Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong. The monks were also involved in translating at the second World Buddhist Forum which was held in March and April, in Jiangsu Province and Taiwan. (See People's Daily, 28 June)

**The Dalai Lama has called for a separation of powers** in the leadership of the exiled Tibetan community, saying that his role is too much for one man. In a video address during his latest European visit, shown to hundreds of monks, nuns and lay people in Dharamsala, the Dalai suggested that the exile Tibetan community choose its next political leader through a democratic vote. The next election for the government-in-exile is due for 2011. "It is appropriate that a democratically elected leader lead a people's movement," the Dalai said. "In reality, a change is happening in the responsibility of the Dalai Lama as the temporal and spiritual leader. This, I think, is very good. A religious leader having to assume political leadership, that period is over." There have been increasing concerns regarding the health of the Dalai Lama, 73, and worries over the choice of a successor. (See The Independent, 22 June)

Police disrupted a meeting of thirty Protestant house-church leaders in Langzhong City, Sichuan Province. The leaders were gathered at the house of Pastor Li Ming on 9 June, when several dozen officials surrounded the house and arrested all the Christians. 13 leaders were given 15 days administrative detention. Five leaders were given criminal detention sentences, but were subsequently released on 23 June. (See China Aid, 17, 29 June)

From 26-28 June, at the invitation of the CCC, the chair of trustees of the CWM/Nethersole Fund, Tam Sheung Wai, led a ten-person delegation to visit Jiangsu Bible School, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, Jiangsu churches and the Amity Foundation. The Nethersole Fund already contributes substantially to building projects in the province, for example the Yan city Christian Training Centre and the building of churches in Funing and Lianshui. (See CCC, 1 July)

The commencement day for Shaanxi Bible School celebrating the graduation of the 19<sup>th</sup> class of pastors and church volunteers was held in the province of Shaanxi on 26 June. It was addressed by President of the TSPM, Elder Fu Xianwei and head of the provincial CC, Rev Wang Jun. The class of 49 were also congratulated by the school principal, Rev Wang Huairan. (See CCC, 26 June)

A meeting of Chinese Christian publishers and distributors was held at Nanchang, Jiangxi Province. It was addressed by deputy secretary general of the CCC, Rev Dan Weihai. The conference showcased new books and audio-visual resources, as well as introduced a new online Christian bookstore. The conference focussed on ways of disseminating Biblical resources, under the slogan 'A good book in 10,000 homes, a blessing to all the world.' (See CCC, 1 July)

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A registered CCC/TSPM church in Tinghu district, Yancheng municipality, Jiangsu Province, continues to struggle with local officials determined to close its church building and redevelop the site as commercial housing units. In December, 2008 the church's training centre, office and cafeteria were demolished. In May, congregation members' bicycles were stolen from outside the church during a Sunday service. The church was forbidden from building a wall around its property, and groups of disruptive youths have been sent to Sunday services to encourage the congregation to move. (See China Aid, 15 June)

Church members of Changchunli TSPM church in Ji'nan, Shandong, have accused local CCC/TSPM officials of colluding with municipal authorities to close and demolish the church. On 8 June there was a confrontation between members of the Ji'nan CC/TSPM and members of the congregation who refused to let the church be sold to developers. After the congregation refused to back down, the local PSB sent round officials on 9 June to close the church by force. (See ChinaAid, 15 June)

*The China Desk Bulletin is a digest of published news sources. The China Desk is not responsible for the content of these items nor does it necessarily endorse all the views expressed. Please follow the links identified below to read the full report of each story. The monthly update is also available on the China Desk website [www.chinaonlinecentre.org](http://www.chinaonlinecentre.org)*

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SOURCES

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

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