



May, 2009

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INTERNATIONAL & TAIWAN

The postponed **summit meeting between China and the EU** finally took place in Prague, after rows concerning the Dalai Lama and trade led the Chinese to cancel the previous meeting. China is still aggrieved that the EU's crowded agenda does not take China seriously while some EU officials have said China's actions last year amounted to 'diplomatic contempt'. Premier Wen Jiabao addressed the summit, emphasizing cooperation in order to overcome the global economic crisis. Trade dominated the talks. Exports from China to the EU amounted to \$337bn in 2008, representing China's most important export destination, while EU exports to China reached \$106.3bn. The European Council on Foreign Relations has warned that EU countries risk being outmaneuvered by China on key issues unless they act in a united manner at forums like the G20. The Council argues that China must now be seen more as a diplomatic competitor than a developing country. (See IPS, 22 May)

European pressure to encourage China to play a **'more responsible' role** in countries like Myanmar and Zimbabwe were brushed aside. The Chinese Ministry for Foreign Affairs has repeated that it hopes the 'relevant parties in Myanmar can realize reconciliation, stability and development through dialogue'. India is also said to be concerned about Chinese influence in Sri Lanka, where it is now one of the largest defence suppliers and recently made a deal for the use of the Indian Ocean port of Hambantota. (See Bloomberg, 20 May; Times of India, 20 May)

The Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi visited China at the invitation of her Chinese opposite number Wu Bangguo. She emphasized the common agenda of tackling climate change, which has become a major theme of President Obama's policy of engagement with China. (See AP, 22 May; SCMP, 25, 27 May)

The South African government has reversed its policy preventing the Dalai Lama from attending a peace conference linked to the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The conference had to be postponed after Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former President F.W. De Klerk pulled out in protest. The recently elected President, Jacob Zuma and his international relations minister have insisted that the Dalai is welcome to come to South Africa. (See BBC, 15 May)

The monopoly of Western media organizations on financial reporting has been criticized as a leading component of the financial crisis and economic recession. Vice-President of Xinhua, Mr. Lu Wei, said that the remedy was to build Shanghai into a world financial centre, and that the state-run media outlet would soon be launching its own international financial information platform – China Finance Corp. This is part of a push by the Chinese state media to extend their overseas profile, a campaign with a reported budget of \$45bn. (See WSJ, 18 May)

Four Chinese are listed in Time Magazine's '100 Most Influential People in the World' for 2009. They are Chinese vice-president Xi Jinping, Vice-Premier Wang Qishan, Alibaba.com founder Jack Ma, and the concert pianist Lang Lang. (See China Daily, 8 May)

Pro-Chinese supporters and human rights protestors have clashed in Bratislava during Hu Jintao's state visit, on 18-19 June. The two-day visit has economic cooperation at the top of its agenda. (See *The Slovak Spectator*, 19 June)

NATIONAL NEWS

Sichuan Earthquake Anniversary

President Hu Jintao led the **first anniversary commemorations of the Wenchuan earthquake** which devastated Western China on 12 May, 2008. The main ceremony was held at the earthquake's epicentre in Yingxiu, Sichuan province. President Hu said that the Chinese people had formed a 'fortress of unified resolve', and were determined to 'win an all-out victory in our post-earthquake construction events'. Vice-premier Li Keqiang was also at the event which was broadcast across China. Local media have also highlighted the 1000 mothers who have been given special fertility treatment and are now pregnant with a second child.

The official number of **school children killed during the earthquake** has finally been released as 5,335, out of a total figure of 87,449. The number of children killed remains hotly contested, particularly after a vice-governor of Sichuan, Wei Hong, told a press conference in November that 19,065 students were dead or still missing. An independent list compiled by the artist/designer Ai Weiwei, using self-reporting on the internet, estimates that around 6,000 children died. Despite an official investigation, a report has yet to be produced indicating why so many school buildings collapsed while other government buildings remained standing. Parents who have attempted to travel to Beijing to petition the government for a report have been detained and sent home.

Beichuan, one of the towns most seriously affected and where 8,600 people died, is being preserved in its ruined state as **a memorial to the dead**. Chinese Catholics have erected a 2m concrete cross near the town. (See *Times*, 4 May; *BBC*, *NYT*, 6 May; *SCMP*, 8 May; *BBC*, *UCAN*, *Times*, 12 May)

Tiananmen Square Anniversary

The 20th anniversary of the crackdown on the student-led protests of 4 June, 1989, led to widespread security measures throughout China. The only **official Chinese media response** to the anniversary appears to have been a pair of articles in the English-language edition of the *Global Times* which claimed that Chinese intellectuals had now realised that Western-style democracy is unsuitable for China. The articles entitled 'The Evolution of Mainland Intellectuals' and 'Prosperity Tangible along Chang'an Avenue', quoted several scholars, including Zhang Liping (CASS) who said that scholars had 'switched to silence' and that intellectuals had since become 'more moderate and more rational'. Another intellectual reflected that the protests arose out of 'uncertainty' concerning China's future, which was now much more secure. Overseas Chinese and foreign critics have suggested that the lack of debate permitted in the Chinese national press continues to indicate a lack of confidence on the part of the Chinese authorities. (See *SCMP*, 3 June; *NYT*, 5 June)

Several of the **former student leaders**, including Wang Dan and Wu'er Kaixi, were denied entry into Hong Kong and Macao in the days preceding the anniversary. Another, Zhou Younong, was arrested in September last year after secretly travelling back to China and has since been charged with financial fraud. Several student leaders have taken part in commemoration events overseas, including Cai Chongguo (in Paris), Han Dongfang and Xiong Yan (Hong Kong), and Wu'er Kaixi (Taiwan). In the United States several student leaders who became Christians in exile held a vigil at the National Presbyterian Church in Washington. Four other student protestors who remained in China signed a public letter calling on the government to make economic redress to those injured or imprisoned after 4 June. At least one of these, writer Wu Gaoxing, was subsequently arrested by police at his home in Zhejiang province. Several other prominent dissidents including Yu Jie (Beijing), Zhao Dagong (Shenzhen) and Chen Xi (Guizhou) were all placed under house arrest in the lead up to the anniversary. Between 60,000 and 150,000 people marched in Hong Kong, and joined in a candle-lit vigil in Victoria Park to commemorate the anniversary. The commemoration was organised by the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China.

Ding Zilin, a retired university professor and founder of the Tiananmen Mothers Association, was also prevented from leaving her house. Around 50 other bereaved parents were permitted to hold a small, private gathering on 17 May in a Beijing living room. They have met once every five years since the crackdown. (See *AsiaNews*, 13 May; *SCMP*, 19 May; *HRIC*, 1 June; *Reuters*, 3 June; *China Aid*, 4 June; *UCAN*, *SCMP*, 5 June; *AsiaNews*, 22 June)

The number of **protestors still imprisoned** after the crackdown of 4 June, 1989, has declined to about 30. According to the Dui Hua Foundation, several prisoners – mostly young workers who were responsible for industrial strikes, burning army trucks, attacking soldiers or stealing equipment – were released earlier this year. These workers, frequently charged with ‘hooliganism’, were often given much longer jail sentences than the students. (See AP, 18 May)

China **blocked leading internet sites** in China including hotmail, facebook and twitter, in the lead up to the anniversary. Twitter has been growing in popularity in China in the last few months, used by comedians, artists and protestors. (See Guardian, 2 June; SCMP, 3 June)

Hong Kong’s Legislative Council (Legco) narrowly failed to pass a resolution calling for an official apology from Beijing and a rehabilitation of the dead students. During the Legco debate, Donald Tsang, chief executive of Hong Kong, controversially claimed that the killings of June 1989 need to be seen in the perspective of 20 years of subsequent economic growth. He has since apologised. Activists from the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission held a commemorative 20 hour fast. (See ENI, 25 June; AsiaNews, 27 May; BBC, 31 May; BBC, SCMP, 1 June)

The **memoirs of the late Zhao Ziyang**, general secretary of the CCP in 1989, have been published in Hong Kong. The memoirs entitled *Prisoner of the State: the secret journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* are based on 30 hours of tapes recorded by Zhao, who was removed from office in 1989 after he sought reconciliation with the student protestors. He was kept under house arrest until his death in 2005. One of his former aides, Bao Tong, who himself spent seven years in jail and remains under house arrest, said that he planned the recordings, their smuggling out of China and subsequent publication. The memoirs claim that a harsh, denunciatory editorial in the *People’s Daily* on 26 April which hardened both sides against dialogue was written by then Premier Li Peng without the consent of Deng Xiaoping or the politburo. It also says that the decision to use violence to clear the square was made by a small group of conservatives who preyed on Deng Xiaoping’s great fear of instability. However, it was ultimately Deng who ordered the crackdown and emphasised the need for continued dictatorship by the Party elite. This is the first public memoir from a senior leader in the Chinese Communist Party. (See SCMP, BBC, Times 14 May; WSJ, 15 May)

Eighty Chinese church leaders from mainland China and around the world have signed a statement, calling on the government to repent for its crackdown on the 1989 protests. The statement also calls on Christians to repent of their silence, lies or acquiescence about the events. As such they asked the period from 12 May to 4 June to be a time of prayer and remembrance for China. They ask Christians to pray “for the salvation of lost souls in our home country, for social justice and for the future of our race.” (See UCAN, AsiaNews, 11 May; China Aid, 4 June)

Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, urged China to publish the names of all those who died during the crackdown on protests in Beijing and around China. She asked that China “examine openly the darker events of its past and provide a public accounting of those killed, detained or missing, both to learn and to heal”. A spokesman for the Chinese Ministry for Foreign Affairs condemned her remarks, saying they were a “gross interference in China’s internal affairs.” Australian Premier, Kevin Rudd, also appealed for China to improve its human rights record. (See Asia News, 4 June)

Chinese migrant workers will be given **access to free contraceptives** after a new regulation promulgated by the State Council. However fines for having an illegal second child will be levied according to the earnings standard of their city workplace, rather than their rural home towns. Since June last year, officials have had leeway to decide whether fines should be set at the rural rate or the local urban rate, but the stiffer regulations are intended to deter families from migrating away from their hometowns in order to have more than one child. 70 percent of China’s estimated 150m migrants are of child-bearing age. (See SCMP, 22 May)

In its annual human rights report, Amnesty International has reported that **7000 death sentences were handed down by Chinese courts** in 2008 and around 1,700 prisoners were executed. This is a significant increase on the previous year’s figures (1860 and 470 respectively) which were the lowest on record. The report also suggests that hundreds of Tibetans remain in detention after anti-Chinese protests, but authorities say that only a handful remain and over 1000 were released during the course of the year. (See SCMP, 29 May)

There are approximately **800,000 South Koreans living and working in China**, with 150,000 living in the city of Qingdao alone, and 54,000 are students. Despite the economic crisis, trade ties between the two countries continue to grow strongly. Nevertheless, there have been cases of rising resentment against the Korean population for not integrating more fully into the Chinese way of life. The Korean Community in China (KCC) has been formed to try and help build social and business ties between the two communities. (See The Korean Times, 3 May)

LOCAL NEWS

A prominent Beijing rights lawyer, Jiang Tianyong, together with around thirty others, has not had his annual license to practice law renewed. Mr Jiang was the first non-government appointed lawyer to handle the defence of a Tibetan accused of participating in last year's anti-Chinese protests when the case came to trial a few weeks ago. Jiang says that he will abide by the decision but is confident that more and more lawyers will take on more sensitive cases. (See The Times, 1 June)

In a raid in Jiesshou, Anhui province, 10 people were arrested, charged with **kidnapping people with mental handicaps** and forcing them to work in brick kilns. The kiln owner said that he had bought the people off a taxi driver in Shandong. Over 1000 'slaves' were found working in brick kilns in Shanxi and Henan provinces in 2007. The factory owners were said to prefer people with mental handicaps because they were more easily cowed and less likely to try to escape the dreadful work conditions. (See AsiaNews, 22 May)

An envoy from the Dalai Lama has said that **the Tibetan side is ready to resume dialogue with the Chinese**. Seven months after negotiations stalled, Kelsang Gyaltzen told reporters that Tibetans continue to seek autonomy, not separation, from China. A detailed roadmap leading to self-government proposed by the Tibetan side had been rejected by the Chinese, despite its conforming to the principles of autonomy written into the Chinese constitution, he said. The Dalai Lama has indicated that his next reincarnation will be found in the 'free world' rather than within the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China (See AFP, 11 May; VOA, 20 May)

CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS NEWS

Cardinal Zen, the former Catholic archbishop of Hong Kong, has said that although China has held off from ordaining bishops without the Vatican's approval, **the appointment of bishops remains a major obstacle to diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Beijing**. He said that Pope Benedict viewed the recent 50th anniversary celebrations of 'patriotic ordinations' as a provocation. He also suggested that Chinese bishops were being offered up to 700,000 yuan (£62,000) to attend ordinations of bishops not approved by Rome. (See AP, 1 June; UCAN 2 June)

A **compendium to Pope Benedict XVI's pastoral letter of 2007** has been placed on the Vatican's website on 24 May (www.vatican.va), two years after the letter was first issued. The Compendium consists of a list of 23 questions and answers and aims to 'offer some guidelines concerning the life of the Church and the task of evangelisation in China'. It reiterates and clarifies some of the ground covered by the pastoral letter, thereby hoping to clarify some of the remaining ambiguities. The significance of suffering for the faith is emphasised, but the compendium is not widely seen as a concession to the 'underground' church. The answer to question nine emphasises that 'spiritual reconciliation' must precede 'structural merger' between the open and underground communities. According to the compendium, 'the maturation and conscience of individual Catholics must always be respected'. (See VIS, AsiaNews 23 May; UCAN, 27 May; EDA 29 June)

The **Day of Prayer for the Church in China**, held on 24 May, was marked by continued restrictions in China. Police again enforced strict traffic restrictions around the Marian shrine at Sheshan for the entire month of May, and the local diocese of Shanghai moved its main pilgrimage to 23 May so as to allow priests to return to their parishes for Sunday. Only about 2000 pilgrims could attend the celebration mass presided over by bishop Jin Luxian. Other dioceses organised pilgrimages to local sanctuaries instead, with bishop Fang Xingyao leading 30,000 faithful on a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine at Wangzhuang, Shandong province. In Hebei it was reported that underground communities could not even celebrate Mass on 24 May because at least 10 underground priests had been recently

arrested. In Italy, the day was marked by a bilingual ceremony held at Naples Cathedral and presided over by Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe. About 400 Chinese from all over Italy attended. (See UCAN, 6 May; AsiaNews, 25 May; AF 22 May)

A commemorative mass was held on the third anniversary of Catholic bishop Anthony Li Du'an's death. The mass on 19 May was presided over by his successor as bishop of Xi'an, Anthony Dang Mingyan, who said that bishop Li was a model of faith and a milestone of the times. The mass drew four more bishops from surrounding dioceses and 4000 faithful. (See UCAN, 22 May)

A Sichuan Catholic Churches Reconstruction Fund has been set up by Hong Kong Catholics, and boosted by a donation of HK\$190,000 from the Paris Foreign Missions (MEP). In Chengdu diocese alone, 25 churches collapsed and 22 were seriously damaged as a result of the earthquake in May 2008. Only three, newer churches were completely unaffected. Jinde Charities reported that Pope Benedict has made personal donations totalling nearly 1m RMB, Caritas groups from around the world had sent 7,550 quality tents, while Catholic communities across China had sent priests, religious and laity to offer material and spiritual support. Three makeshift churches have been set up and scholarships provided for 56 middle school and 3 university students to enable them to complete their exams. Altogether Jinde had spent 23.3m RMB (\$3.4m) or 93.5% of the donations it had received from Chinese and foreign donors. The Catholic Diocese of Chengdu also reported it has received large donations from Chinese and worldwide Catholics totalling 2.5m RMB.

(See AsiaNews, UCAN, 11 May; AF, 12 May; <http://sccrf.catholic.org.hk/index-en.htm>; UCAN, 20 May;)

A mainland theological delegation was sent by the China Christian Council to take part in the **Cross-Straits Forum for the Development of Theological Education** held on 27-28 April at the Baptist Seminary in Taiwan. The delegation of seven was headed up by pastor Xu Xiaohong, secretary-general of the TSPM's standing committee, and representatives from six mainland seminaries. The topics of discussion included a review of past joint ventures, suggestions for future cooperation. The delegation then went on a tour of several Taiwanese seminaries and churches. (See CCC, 5 May)

In order to strengthen grass-roots training in China's mid-west, the CCC/TSPM organised a conference on 25-31 May for over a hundred ministers from the region. The meeting, held in Shanghai, was addressed by the chair of the TSPM, Elder Fu Xianwei, and the general secretary of the CCC, Kan Baoping. The ministers attended talks on basic Chinese religious law and standards for religious work, the progress of theological reconstruction, and the challenges facing the Chinese church. Elder Fu suggested that the training and cultivation of pastors depended on three key areas: a concentration of energy with industrious study; the real integration of learning and praxis, and observing church discipline. (See CCC, 25 May)

Architectural plans for Suzhou's new Dushu Lake Church have won a prestigious gold medal for interior design at the recent ninth international Interior Design Festival in Beijing. The proposed church will hold 2100 people, includes accommodation for pastors and a bell tower. (See CCC, 4 June)

A church in Wuxi welcomed **Pastor Jan Paulsen, president of the Adventist World Church**, on his first official visit to China. About 10 percent of the Protestant Church in Wuxi belong to 35 Seventh Day Adventist congregations which continue to worship on Sabbaths (Saturdays). The Dongting congregation in Wuxi has just completed building its own, 1200-seat church, but most others share buildings with other Protestant congregations. Altogether there are approximately 400,000 Adventists in China. Paulsen also had visits with CCC president Gao Feng, the Shanghai Christian Council, SARA, Northeast and Yanjing Seminaries and several other Adventist congregations. (See Adventist News Network, 14 May; CCC)

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The Religious Affairs Bureau in Tianjin has **banned and closed Immanuel Church**, a house church formed and run by pastor Han Changxu, an ethnic Korean. Pastor Han, originally from Heilongjiang Province, was placed under surveillance during the Olympics last year, after he was discovered to have contacts with South Korean missionaries. Since then a South Korean who visited the church has been detained and expelled. The church was formally closed on 16 May, and pastor Han was ordered to return to his home province. (See AsiaNews, 29 May)

Members of a Henanese house church have stationed a **24-hour watch over their building** for fear that it will be demolished to make way for a new highway. The congregation in Dong village, Sanggu town, Xiayi county, have been asked by the Village Party Committee to exchange the church's land with a smaller plot in a new location, but the congregation are want to exchange for a site located near the present church and of the same size. The congregation is worried that local officials will bulldoze the church rather than continue negotiations. 16 Christians from the China Gospel Fellowship Church in Xinye, Henan, were released despite not serving their 10-14 days sentences or paying the 1000 RMB fine in a climbdown by local authorities. (See ChinaAid, 8 June, 24 May)

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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.chinesechristianchurch.org.cn
CCP	Chinese Communist Party	
(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.cwnnews.com
	Chinaview	www.chinaview.cn
	China News [Zhongguo Xinwen She]	www.chinanews.com.cn
	China.org.cn	www.China.org.cn
DPA	Deutsche Presse-Agentur	www.dpa.com
EDA	Églises D'Asie	http://eglasiemepasie.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
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	
WP	Washington Post	www.washingtonpost.com
	Xinhua	http://www.xinhua.org/

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