

# **CHINA: Chinese Question Government's One-Child Policy**

**By Antoaneta Bezlova**

BEIJING, Jul 6 (IPS) - When China's population control was imposed in 1980, it was meant to be a temporary measure which the government promised to phase out in three decades. It was intended to halt the baby boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

But as China is preparing to mark the 30th anniversary of its "one-child" policy next year, indications are that the policy would remain in place despite mounting opposition from the general public and experts who question its success.

During the annual session of the National Parliament in March, a senior legislator tabled a proposal for further tightening of the family planning rules, arguing that many of China's current problems stemmed from lapses in implementing the policy.

The world's most populous country is plagued by the depletion of resources amid an oversupply of labour, all of which threaten a serious unemployment crisis, he alleged.

"Without solving China's population problem, we will never be able to measure our country power against that of European countries and the United States," Cheng Enfu, dean of the Marxist Studies Institute with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said during the plenary discussions of the parliament. "Our gross domestic product and our living standards will always lag behind those countries".

Cheng called for a halt to the relaxation of the "one child" policy, predicting that China will not be able to progress if it wavers on population control.

While experts and legislators have been debating the pros and cons of the policy in recent years, Cheng's analysis directly equated China's population control to the country's economic success.

Previous debates have tended to focus on the quality of the nation, highlighting the difficulties of feeding and educating China's 1.3 billion people.

"Less is better" has long been a widely used slogan by population control officials during their campaigns to raise awareness across the country.

Cheng's arguments touched a nerve with an increasingly assertive Chinese public because it suggested that Beijing was preparing to hold onto its policy even after its originally planned expiration date in 2010.

According to an internet poll conducted among 130,000 people, and published

by the Southern Weekend newspaper, 67.5 percent opposed further measures to tighten family planning laws.

"China is not the country with the most serious population problems in the world but its population control is the most draconian," said one commentator. "Even if we only consider Asia, there are at least three countries with bigger population density than China - Japan, South Korea and Israel. In Europe, one third of the countries are more densely populated than China. Are more strict measures really needed?"

In recent years, the success of China's family planning measures has become a matter of much debate. Government officials credit the "one-child" policy with preventing some 350 million births over 30 years and reducing the Chinese birthrate to 1.7 children per woman from more than six in the 1960s.

Defenders of the policy evoke images of the early 1970s when the economy was struggling to feed a rapidly expanding population.

Arguably, the "one-child" policy is the policy with the biggest public impact ever rolled out by the communist Chinese leaders. But when it was imposed in 1980 it was not even submitted for endorsement by the national parliament.

Instead, the decision for its launch was announced in a public letter issued by the Central Committee of the Communist party in September 1980, which clearly stated that the measures would be in place for 30 years, by which time it said "population pressure would have been alleviated".

From the moment of its inception, the policy has met with fierce and often violent opposition from peasants. In 1984, the rules were amended to permit two children if the first was a girl or handicapped. Ethnic minorities were also allowed two children. But in the big cities, families were restricted to just one child and subjected to fines if the rule was violated.

In the countryside, protests against forced abortions and excessively high fines routinely flared up. One of the biggest recent protests happened last year in Guangxi province where hundreds of farmers rioted, accusing officials of charging five times the officially mandated amount for breaching the policy.

Since China entered the new millennium, population experts have become bolder in questioning the wisdom of implementing stringent population controls. They point out an array of social problems that have accompanied its implementation.

China, which last year replaced Germany as the world's third largest economy, is aging so rapidly that by 2050, there could be two working people for every elderly, compared with 13 to one now. The problem of shrinking workforce is compounded by the lack of a full-fledged social safety net, which places the responsibility of the ageing population on a dwindling number of children.

Draconian restrictions on childbirth are being blamed also for a gender

imbalance that China might have to endure for decades. In Chinese society, where Confucian tradition places a strong emphasis on male heirs, there are now millions of more boys than girls.

In most countries, males slightly outnumber females - between 103 and 107 male births for every 100 female births. But in China there are now 120 male to 100 female births.

Population controls have also spurred a grim trade in stolen children, which the government is struggling to eliminate by carrying out periodic crackdowns.

The Sichuan earthquake was a stark reminder of the price paid by parents who lose their only child. Thousands of children perished in the tremor, leaving behind grieving parents.

"Numbers are not really the biggest problem with the existing population control policy," Ji Baocheng, a population expert. "Family planning laws are supposed to be conducive to family harmony but if we continue doing things as we did in the 1980s, achieving harmony would be very difficult".

(END/2009)

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SUN WUKONG

The party's over

By Wu Zhong, China editor

HONG KONG - The Chinese Communist Party's 88th birthday and a row over web-filtering software are - strangely - connected issues.

On June 30, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) made a last-minute announcement to postpone the mandatory requirement that all personal computers sold in the country be pre-installed with the controversial web-filtering software, Green Dam-Youth Escort.

Earlier that month, MIIT had ordered that all computers produced or sold in China had to be pre-installed with Green Dam from July 1 (in Putonghua, the word "Green Dam" sounds similar to Filtering King).

The pre-installation had been postponed, MIIT said, because some computer producers needed additional time for such a massive installation. "The ministry will keep on soliciting opinions to perfect the pre-installation plan," a MIIT spokesman was quoted by the official Xinhua News Agency as saying. No indication was given of when compulsory installation would be enforced.

July 1 was also the Communist Party's 88th birthday. On the occasion, it announced that at the end of 2007 it had more than 74.15 million members, and that each year more than 10 million people applied for membership. This means, given the country's 1.3 billion people and if those under the age of 18 are excluded, about one in 10 of the population is a party member.

At a study session of the party's politburo on the eve of the anniversary, President Hu Jintao, who is also party general secretary, vowed to "pro-actively promote democracy within the party".

This provides a clue to the link between the party's anniversary and the backtracking on the MIIT's plan for web-filtering software.

While some overseas reports highlight the role played by pressure from foreign countries, particularly the United States, the government was concerned about growing public anger at home which could threaten social stability in the run-up to the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in October.

Further, of China's approximately 300 million Internet users, a fair proportion of them could be expected to be party members. While they might have slammed Green Dam anonymously, critical commentaries on official media such as the People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency and China Daily were an open challenge to government policy.

This would have been unimaginable in the times of Mao Zedong from the founding of the republic to his death in the mid-1970s as the party was known for its "iron-like" discipline. All party members had to support any decision made by the headquarters as well as all government policies. If a party member disagreed, he or she had to raise the matter through internal channels. To make public any differences with the party was regarded as "rebellious", "traitorous" or an "attempt to split the party". In Mao's theory, the party was the vanguard of the working class to lead the proletarian revolution. And as such, it had to have iron discipline.

To an extent, Deng Xiaoping inherited this idea, though his reforms and open-door policy marked a 180-degree departure from Mao's "class struggle" doctrine. In 1987, Deng demanded that dissenting party members be expelled and he personally ordered the expulsion of Fang Lizhi, Liu Bingyan and Wang Ruowang, who had openly called for democratization. After the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen crackdown, then-party chief Zhao Ziyang was accused of "attempting to split the party" because he opposed the use of armed forces to suppress the student-led pro-democracy demonstrations.

Still, Deng's economic reforms brought about fundamental changes in society and within the party itself. To reflect this change, then-party general secretary Jiang Zemin put forward his so-called "Three Represents" theory in 2002 at the party's 16th National Congress:

Reviewing the course of struggle and the basic experience over the past 80 years and looking ahead to the arduous tasks and bright future in the new century, our party should continue to stand in the forefront of the times and lead the people in marching toward victory. In a word, the party

must always represent the requirements of the development of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of the development of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China.

Simply put, this meant that the party was no longer revolutionary, rather, it represented the vast majority of Chinese people. Because of this, the party had to admit members from all sectors of society. In short, the party was no long "the vanguard of the proletariat" but an "all-people" party that could include new-born capitalists, the previous class enemy of the communists.

The "Three Represents" laid the foundation for Vice President Xi Jinping, tipped to succeed Hu in 2012, to formally declare in late 2008 that the party had transformed from a "revolutionary party" into the "ruling party" of the country. And its legitimacy to rule lay in that it represented the vast majority of Chinese people.

The problem is, with so many people from various social backgrounds flocking into the party, conflicts of interest invariably had to arise. As such, it is no longer possible for the party to maintain iron-like unity with iron-clad discipline.

On the contrary, it becomes natural for party members to hold and express different views; no policy or decision can please everyone and a "correct" and workable policy or decision can only be one that is supported by the majority based on some compromise. Thus, the principle of democracy that "the minority must be subordinate to the majority" must be upheld.

Likewise, as an "all-people" party, the Chinese Communist Party will have to choose its leaders through some form of democratic process. The strongman politics are gone with the passing of revolutionaries like Mao and Deng. Now, to rise in the party hierarchy, one must show talent and capability to win majority support among party members. In this way, the party leader will rule according to the will of the majority.

The Green Dam fiasco sounds the alarm that it is now difficult for the party and its government to implement policies that are unacceptable to the majority of party members, as well as to the general public. It is unwise for the government to forcefully impose policies, as this will only weaken its governance and in turn the party's legitimacy to rule. For its very survival and continued rule, the party must promote democracy within the party.

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Reporters Fight With Web Police for Xinjiang Incident Photos and Videos

By Helena Zhu  
Epoch Times Staff Jul 9, 2009

Amidst the violence in Urumqi, Xinjiang, Chinese bloggers penetrated the regime's Internet blockades and uploaded photos and videos to Web sites including Twitter and YouTube. They also sent text messages overseas, saying "Reveal truth to the world."

Many of the posts have already been deleted by China's Web police. In order to obtain original photos and information, reporters had to race with time against Chinese police.

According to Apple Daily, a publication based in Hong Kong, there were tens of thousands of messages and video clips sent to the Web, yet nearly all of them only survived for a few minutes before being deleted. Although Xinhua—the Chinese regime's mouthpiece media—published an article regarding incidents in Xinjiang on July 6, many journalists chose to seek original documents from online blogs and forums.

As pointed out by several Chinese bloggers, on the large search engines and forums, as long as sensitive words such as 'Urumqi' and 'unrest' were included, the Web page would be deleted.

The Internet in Urumqi was shut down starting midnight on July 6. As a result, the numbers of photos uploaded dramatically increased and only limited information was able to be passed out through other means.

As of the afternoon of July 7, the Chinese Internet users were still unable to access Twitter, YouTube, and Google. A blogger said, "This time the censorship is really, really severe."

Most of the Web sites that remained uncensored simply republished Xinhua's articles and did not allow comments below the articles.

Asgar Can, vice-chairman of the World Uyghur Congress told AFP on July 8 that between 600 and 800 people died according to eye witnesses as a result of the struggle between ethnic Han and Uyghurs, who were labeled as "terrorists" by the state government.

Since the riots on July 7, the locals of Urumqi—in fear of recurring incidents—began to purchasing stock food and drinks. As a result, food prices rose two to three times and stores gradually shut down as no more items were in stock.

According to Yang Jianli, president of Initiatives of China at Harvard University, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) claims to generate stability and harmony among the Chinese people. Yet such a goal is unachievable without recognizing and respecting the peaceful grievances of its citizens.

"The CCP's tradition of intimidating, demonizing, and incarcerating people whose opinions, beliefs, or lifestyles are different from the Han Chinese model is counterproductive and promotes the very instability it claims to prevent. As a minimal first step, the CCP must cease its divisive and troubling behavior of stereotyping the Uyghurs as 'terrorists.' The Falun Gong practitioners as 'subversive,' and the Tibetan people as 'ingrates,'" he said in a news release.

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Op-Ed Contributor

## Beijing Always Wins

By RUSSELL LEIGH MOSES - Beijing

THE riots in the Xinjiang region, the home of China's Muslim Uighur minority, will affirm to many analysts outside the country that social unrest is a direct threat to the continued rule of the Communist Party. If officials don't take a long, hard look at how to avoid such uprisings, this argument will run, the government could eventually fall.

If only Chinese officials saw things that way.

But even after at least 156 people have been reported dead in the city of Urumqi, many officials here see the recent violence – with Uighur rioters torching businesses owned by Han Chinese, China's ethnic majority – as simple ingratitude.

A front-page editorial in the state-run People's Daily described the protests as criminal actions by rioters, not as the manifestation of complaints of citizens angered by discriminatory policies. That view is already popular here in the capital. Few are surprised by the violence meted out by the state, and more than a few applaud it. A merchant in east Beijing expressed allegiance with his fellow Han entrepreneurs and, referring to the large outlays of aid to Xinjiang, asked of the Uighurs, "Where is their thanks for all the money we provide them?"

Both nationalistic fervor and the fear that instability might reverse the hard-won individual gains of economic reform combine to create more support for the government's hard-line approach. Less discussed are the Uighurs' real grievances: Beijing's tight control over the practice of Islam; Han Chinese who migrate to Xinjiang and take the better jobs there; and the fact that ethnic minorities lack regular access to the government bureaucracy, where business in China is largely done.

Religious practice, local customs and educational choices in Xinjiang are controlled by the state to a draconian degree. Mosques are being repaired and modernized, but children have not been allowed to attend services. The follow-up demonstrations in Urumqi the day after the riots erupted took place outside mosques, testifying to the rallying cry of religion for a growing number of Chinese Muslims. These protests, too, were quickly broken up by local security forces.

Success breeds repetition, and the state always seems to win every contest with protesters – by cracking down, by persuading people to return to their homes, by imprisoning suspected ringleaders. Last month in Shishou, in Hubei Province, rumors surrounding a young man's mysterious death drew thousands into the streets, but a display of force cowed demonstrators, who ultimately retreated. Two recent incidents of unrest in Guiyang, in southwestern China – over a land dispute and employment – were quickly brought to a halt when officials, accompanied by police and security forces, dispersed the crowds. Little indicates that dialogue is preferred to repression. Indeed, some reports from Urumqi indicate that the

demonstrations began peacefully, and much of the marauding occurred only after security troops appeared in large numbers.

Party cadres know that Beijing's leadership is largely composed of officials who have not been shy about using force when protests emerged. For example, the crushing of dissent that took place in Beijing and Tibet in 1989 is seen by Chinese decision-makers and the cadres they sponsor as creating the conditions for economic reform. Party members seem to be keenly aware that those who supported the crackdowns were quickly helicoptered into high-level positions.

Many Chinese officials are quite sophisticated in their responses to threats to their governance, and they are not tone-deaf to technology. Cellphone service and Internet access were both blocked within a few hours of the first demonstrations in Xinjiang. When word of the unrest cascaded out, much of the news was artfully managed by officials. Friends of mine in Beijing received unsolicited messages on their cellphones that provided the government version of the unrest. Government representatives handed out discs with pictures taken by state news organizations.

The state news media talked up the looting and burning of Han businesses but said nothing about attacks on Uighur establishments, and repeated mantras about stability and order. Rumors ran rampant in the run-up to these riots, but at the end of the day, bullets flew faster and struck harder than netizens' bulletins.

The state apparatus has become dizzy with success in dealing with unrest. This gives little hope that further mass outbreaks will not be violently crushed. It also demonstrates that social upheaval will not pave the way to democracy. The party is too strong and confident to allow change from below.

\* Russell Leigh Moses is writing a book on the changing nature of power in China.

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In Latest Upheaval, China Applies New Strategies to Control Flow of Information

By MICHAEL WINES

BEIJING — In the wake of Sunday's deadly riots in its western region of Xinjiang, China's central government took all the usual steps to enshrine its version of events as received wisdom: it crippled Internet service, blocked Twitter's micro-blogs, purged search engines of unapproved references to the violence, saturated the Chinese media with the state-sanctioned story.

It also took one most unusual step: Hours after troops quelled the protests, in which 156 people were reported killed, the state invited foreign

journalists on an official trip to Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital and the site of the unrest, "to know better about the riots." Indeed, it set up a media center at a downtown hotel – with a hefty discount on rooms – to keep arriving reporters abreast of events.

It is a far cry from Beijing's reaction 11 years ago to ethnic violence elsewhere in Xinjiang, when officials sealed off an entire city and refused to say what happened or how many people had died. And it reflects lessons learned from the military crackdown in Tibet 17 months ago. Foreign reporters were banned from Tibet, then and now. Chinese authorities rallied domestic support by blaming outside agitators but were widely condemned overseas.

As the Internet and other media raise new challenges to China's version of the truth, China is finding new ways not just to suppress bad news at the source, but also to spin whatever unflattering tidbits escape its control.

"They're getting more sophisticated. They learn from past mistakes," said Xiao Qiang, an adjunct professor at the University of California, Berkeley, who closely follows the Chinese government's efforts to manage the flow of information.

Chinese experts clearly have studied the so-called color revolutions – in Georgia and Ukraine, and last month's protests in Iran – for the ways that the Internet and mobile communication devices helped protesters organize and reach the outside world, and for ways that governments sought to counter them.

In Tibet, Chinese rallied behind the government's assertion that violence there was an effort by the exiled Dalai Lama to break the nation apart. But China's global image took a drubbing after Tibetan dissidents beamed images of violence to the outside world from cellphone cameras, and officials barred virtually all foreigners from entering the supposedly peaceful region.

Cellphone videos posted during the Tibet unrest led the government to block YouTube then, a tactic repeated in advance of the Tiananmen Square anniversary last month. YouTube remained blocked this week. Officials are systematically tearing down satellite dishes across the region, eliminating uncensored foreign television and radio broadcasts.

In Urumqi this week, the official response to one of the most violent riots in decades has taken two divergent paths. Internally, censors tightly controlled media coverage of the unrest and sought to disable the social networks that opponents might use to organize more demonstrations. Cellphone calls to Urumqi and nearby areas have largely been blocked. Twitter was shut down nationwide at midday Monday; a Chinese equivalent, Fanfou, was running, but Urumqi-related searches were blocked.

Chinese search engines no longer give replies for searches related to the violence. Results of a Google search on Monday for "Xinjiang rioting" turned up many links that had already been deleted on such well-trafficked Chinese Internet forums as Mop and Tianya.

State television has focused primarily, though not totally, on scenes of violence directed against China's ethnic Han majority. Chinese news Web sites carry official accounts of the unrest, but readers are generally blocked from posting comments.

As in Tibet, blame for the violence has been aimed at outside agitators bent on splitting China – in this case, the World Uighur Congress, an exile group whose president, Rebiya Kadeer, is a Uighur businesswoman now living in Washington.

State news agency reports assert that Chinese authorities have intercepted telephone conversations linking Ms. Kadeer to the protests. The exile group has condemned the violence and denies any role in fomenting it.

On the surface, at least, the government's approach to the outside world has been markedly different. By Monday morning, the State Council Information Office, the top-level government public-relations agency, had invited foreign journalists to Urumqi to report firsthand on the riots.

Scores of arriving journalists were escorted by bus to a downtown hotel, where they were offered a two-page summary that blamed Uighur separatists led by Ms. Kadeer for starting the riots. Officials gave photographers compact discs filled with bloody images, videos and television "screen grabs" from the riot.

The government-prepared package recalled a similar set of images, distributed widely during the 2008 disturbances in Tibet, that stoked widespread anger among ordinary Chinese against the Tibetan protesters.

Journalists were invited Tuesday morning on a government-escorted tour of one of the Uighur neighborhoods hit hardest by the violence. But they were explicitly barred from conducting any interviews without government minders present, and television journalists who sought to wander on their own were reported to have been stopped by police or paramilitary officers who demanded that they turn over their film.

Western governments and major organizations regularly woo the press with similar setups – although without the tight restrictions – and the Urumqi junket clearly lifted a page from the news management strategies of a variety of experts, including the White House and the National Rifle Association.

On Tuesday, the Chinese got an unpleasant taste of the strategy's limits, when Uighur protesters invaded a press tour of one burned-out neighborhood to demand the release of friends and family members seized by police.

Even so, Mr. Xiao of Berkeley said, the Chinese appear to have decided that it is better to give the world a supervised peek at the nation's problems – Uighur gate-crashing included – than to remain silent and let Beijing's critics set the news agenda.

The government "has revealed what they learned from handling the Tibet

situation," he said. "For Twitter or the Internet, when they see too many factors they cannot completely control, they shut down and block. But for foreign journalists, they feel that as long as they can keep those people under control, it may serve better the government's purpose."

\* Edward Wong contributed from Urumqi, China, and Jonathan Ansfield from Beijing

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