

CHINA UPDATES: November 2010 **(There are 12 updates)**

Pressure mounts for China to modify one-child policy

November 28, 6:47 AM

Asia Headlines Examiner Glen Loveland

BEIJING, CHINA - The Chinese government has been urged to amend a decades-old family planning policy which has become the root of many social problems, state media reported Saturday.

Experts have intensified their call for adjustments in the Chinese family planning policy, which allows most couples to have only one child. Population problems now concern a worsening gender imbalance and an aging population, the China Daily newspaper said.

The call comes after recent data showed that 33.31 million more boys than girls were born in China between 1980 and 2000.

Technically, China doesn't prevent families from having more than one child. Instead, the government charges exorbitant fees for additional children to receive their identification card, or "hukou," which is necessary to attend school.

Additionally, non-Han Chinese citizens are not subject to this policy and can have more than one child without paying the additional charges.

According to Yuan Xin, a professor at the Tianjin-based Nankai University's Population and Development Institute, adjusting the family planning policy in the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15) will be beneficial to families as well as social development.

He said that China's male to female birth ratio has been changing, with more boys born since the 1980s. Worldwide, the average is 103 to 107 boys for every 100 girls. But last year, it reached 120.56 in China.

"The gender gap in China will continue to widen in the short term," the professor further explained.

The one-child family planning policy began in the 1970s after China encouraged couples to have only one child, and made it binding on all, except minority ethnic groups and rural residents, in 1982.

Many Chinese families are concerned that their only children are growing up spoiled. In fact, boys are often called "xiao huangdi" or "Little Emperor."

The Telegraph, UK

China admits it runs illegal black jails

A magazine run by the Chinese government has revealed the existence of a network of secret detention centres or "black jails" in Beijing where inmates are often beaten or tortured.

**By Malcolm Moore in Shanghai
Published: 5:21PM GMT 26 Nov 2009**

Until now, the Communist Party has strenuously denied running black jails, despite a growing number of testimonies and evidence from former inmates.

However, a report in Liaowang (Outlook), a magazine which is written for elite government officials and published by the official Xinhua news agency, laid the system bare.

The victims of the jails are usually ordinary Chinese who have travelled to Beijing to lodge a complaint, or petition, with the central government that their local officials have ignored.

Every day, hundreds of petitioners arrive in Beijing from across China, only to be hunted down by plain-clothes policemen or even private security firms sent by their home province to "retrieve" them.

Since local governments are judged on the number of grievances that arrive in Beijing, officials are often determined not to let the petitioners file their claims. The Liaowang report said that the number of people employed by local governments to abduct citizens "can reach over 10,000".

"In Beijing, a monstrous business network has emerged to feed, house, transport, man-hunt, detain and retrieve petitioners," said the magazine. It added that there are at least 73 black jails in the capital, often in unused homes or psychiatric wards. Private security firms demand fees of 100 yuan (Pounds9) to 200 yuan per person they abduct.

Liaowang said the system "seriously damaged the government's image".

Inside the black jails, all mobile phones and identification cards are confiscated, and many inmates are beaten, sexually-abused, intimidated and robbed, according to Human Rights Watch, which interviewed 38 former detainees for a report which it published just two weeks ago.

At the time, the Foreign ministry angrily rejected the accusations from the NGO. "There are no black jails in China," said Qin Gang, a spokesman.

In the report, one 46-year-old former detainee from Jiangsu province, who spent more than a month in a black jail, said: "They are inhuman...two people dragged me by the hair and put me into the car.

My two hands were tied up and I couldn't move. Then [after arriving back in Jiangsu] they put me inside a room where there were two women who stripped me of my clothes [and] beat my head [and] used their feet to stomp my body." At the beginning of November, a guard at a black jail pleaded guilty to raping a 20-year-old woman from Anhui province in front of a dozen witnesses. However, the court dismissed the charges against the "guesthouse" and two provincial liaison officials, according to the official China Daily newspaper.

For some activists, the state-sanctioned articles in Liaowang signalled a possible willingness by the Communist party to confront the problem.

"They have categorically denied there are even black jails. This is the first time an official, high-level magazine acknowledges that they exist. This is fairly significant," said Wang Songlian at Chinese Human Rights Defenders.

More English needed as China steps up peacekeeping

Thu Nov 19, 2009 2:36pm IST

By Lucy Hornby

HUAIROU, China (Reuters) - A lack of proficiency in English has been one of the main factors hindering Chinese peacekeeping forces in their missions overseas, officials said on Thursday at a new training centre outside Beijing.

U.N. peacekeeping missions have given China, which has not been in an overseas conflict for three decades, a channel for diplomatic outreach and military experience as the People's Liberation Army modernises.

China has sent more than 14,000 peacekeepers, mostly military observers, engineers and medics, to U.N. peacekeeping operations in the last 20 years. About 2,000 Chinese are currently serving, Senior Colonel Kui Yanwei told reporters.

"The relatively low English standards of peacekeepers" ranks after general security issues and a lack of trained teachers with peacekeeping experience among the challenges they face, Kui said.

"We need English for better communications with the other U.N. personnel and teams," peacekeeping veteran Liu Zhao said, in fluent English, as he showed reporters around a compound modelled on the Chinese camp in Darfur.

As China's economic muscle has given it greater clout in the United Nations, it has experimented with peacekeeping activities.

"Beijing's policymakers see engagement in peacekeeping and conflict resolution as a way for China to project a more benign and harmonious image beyond its borders," Chin-hao Huang, who co-authored a report for the Stockholm

International Peace Research Institute, told reporters earlier this month.

China sees it as a way "to reassure neighbours near and far about its peaceful intentions, and in the long-term to gradually balance U.S. and other Western influence by gradually but more firmly establishing China's status as a great power", he said.

Western countries seeking to engage China have also broached the idea of military cooperation on humanitarian missions.

China sent naval ships to the Gulf of Aden last winter to protect commercial vessels against Somali pirates, and has now indicated it would further cooperate with NATO patrols there.

The United States has floated the idea of Chinese support in Afghanistan, but Kui said China can only participate in peacekeeping operations organised by the United Nations.

China's domestic media have paid most attention to its peacekeepers' work in Haiti, where it sent police units.

"Chinese peacekeepers involved on the ground adds a layer of legitimacy because China is a developing country," Huang said.

(Additional reporting by Ben Blanchard; Editing by Benjamin Kang Lim and Alex Richardson)

Los Angeles Times, latimes.com

In China, Obama's hosts show no signs of budging
President Obama is leaving China without any definable concessions
on things such as support for tougher sanctions on Iran or currency
exchange rates.

By Barbara Demick
November 18, 2009
Reporting from Beijing

When it came to China, President Obama's famous powers of persuasion failed to persuade.

He came bearing a long shopping list, including Chinese support for tougher sanctions on Iran and more flexibility by Beijing on currency exchange rates, but Obama was met with polite, yet stony, silences.

Only one more key meeting was scheduled for today before Obama's departure, a working lunch with Premier Wen Jiabao. Before flying to South Korea, the president will tour the Great Wall -- the famous symbol of Chinese tenacity and

an appropriate backdrop for a visit in which China again showed its resistance to U.S. entreaties.

Not only is the U.S. president coming away without any definable concessions, but the Chinese appeared to be digging in their heels.

On Tuesday, just hours after Obama stood with President Hu Jintao in the Great Hall of the People, praising China's commitment to "move toward a more market-oriented exchange rate over time," a senior Chinese official called a news conference across town to issue a rebuttal.

"We maintained a stable yuan during the financial crisis, which not only helped the global economy but also the stability of the world's financial markets," He Yafei, deputy foreign minister, said, adding that it was too soon since the worldwide financial crisis to talk about a change of strategy.

The Chinese official also slapped down Obama's call for more Internet freedom, saying that "we need to ensure that online communications do not affect our national security."

Perhaps most disappointing was China's failure to budge in its opposition to tougher sanctions on Iran. With their extensive oil interests influencing their policies toward Tehran, the Chinese are increasingly seen as an obstacle to reining in Iran's nuclear ambitions.

But Obama had hoped that China would at least fall into step with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who publicly criticized Iran's intransigence during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit over the weekend in Singapore.

"I would not say that we got an answer today from the Chinese, nor did we expect one," said Jeffrey Bader, director of Asian affairs at the National Security Council, briefing U.S. journalists after the meeting between the presidents. He acknowledged that the Chinese were less worried about Iran's nuclear program than about North Korea's.

During the news conference at the Great Hall of the People, where the presidents each read 15-minute statements outlining the highlights of the meetings as they perceived them, Hu conspicuously omitted mention of sanctions against Iran, saying only that there were differences on some issues.

After the ritual handshake and posing for photographs, the leaders left the podium -- refusing to answer questions from reporters, which is unusual for a news conference, even in China.

It was in keeping with the character of a presidential visit notable for its formality and lack of spontaneity. Every aspect of Obama's visit was carefully scripted, with the Chinese government taking pains to make sure nothing was left to chance. Obama did not meet with Chinese journalists, lawyers, human rights advocates, environmentalists or any ordinary Chinese, and an expected meeting with Hu Shuli, who recently resigned as editor of China's leading

business magazine, did not materialize.

During Obama's "town hall" meeting in Shanghai on Monday, the 50 students selected to question him were mostly officers of the Communist Youth League. Wary that Obama might say something provocative, the Chinese government refused White House requests that the event be broadcast live on nationwide television. Instead, it was broadcast only on Shanghai television.

Coverage of Obama's visit was also subdued, with noticeably fewer stories in the Chinese newspapers and shorter television reports than during other presidential visits.

Obama's limited results in part reflect the profound shift in Sino-U.S. relations and global politics, with China's rapid rise and America's weakened position, especially in the wake of the financial crisis.

"It used to be the U.S. could go around and say 'Do this and do that' because they had so much leverage," said Dali Yang, director of the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago. "Today, the U.S. can't do that."

Ding Xinghao, president of the Shanghai Institute of American Studies, said Obama did not seem to connect with the Chinese as well as did former President Clinton. He recalled a 1998 nationally televised question-and-answer session with students at Peking University. "That was an amazing event. . . . Clinton looked the students in the eye and answered very hard questions," Ding said. "Obama's performance in Shanghai was significant, but for me it couldn't compare."

Then again, as Ding noted, the novelty of a U.S. presidential visit has long since worn off.

In fact, it was difficult to find anybody in Beijing who would express any real enthusiasm for Obama's visit. Even at a shop selling Obama souvenirs, the reaction was ho-hum.

"Obama coming here doesn't have anything to do with us. He's the president of the United States. We're Chinese," said Yang Xiuying, a clerk at a Beijing crafts store selling dolls of Obama dressed as Superman.

Kenneth Lieberthal, a former Clinton administration official on China, now with the Brookings Institution, said Obama hasn't really had a chance to connect with the Chinese because both sides are still being cautious.

"Not that there is Obamamania, but I think the Chinese have a relatively favorable impression of him," Lieberthal said. "But they are sitting back, like most Americans, waiting to see what he actually gets done."

For their part, White House officials were taking pains to deny that there had been any disappointments in the president's maiden visit to China.

"I did not expect . . . that the waters would part and everything would change in

the course of our almost 2 1/2 -day trip to China," White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs told a reporter who suggested Obama's reception was chilly.

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A different way to nurture U.S.-China relations

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by Xinhua writers Cheng Yunjie and Jin Jing

BEIJING, Nov. 18 (Xinhua) -- "Can I do it differently?" This is the question U.S. President Barack Obama encouraged young Chinese to ask constantly in their pursuit of individual success as he shared with college students his personal experiences in Shanghai early this week.

The same question may help China and the United States to open the door toward a healthier collective future.

For a long time, the real China has been misunderstood by westerners because of either ignorance or ideological stand or other reasons, and the word of China seemed to have often been connected with something evil or dangerous.

The West's perception of China has been changing gradually, and a positive turn has occurred as Obama has said more than once during his ongoing Asia tour that the United States would not seek to contain China's rise but welcome China as a strong and prosperous player in the community of nations.

Be it an expedience to solicit China's support in time of the worst recession in decades or a willing-hearted strategic decision, the remarks have forged a good starting point to further Chinese-U.S. ties as the Obama administration has made it clear that the two nations, sharing much in common while being different in certain ways, were not predestined to be adversaries.

Such mentality is just what ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius taught his students to pursue thousands of years ago: "Be harmonious yet different."

Probably just a minor event in the eyes of many Americans, the adoption of a resolution by the U.S. House of Representatives late last month to honor the 2,560th anniversary of the birth of Confucius did hearten many Chinese.

And Disney, a symbol of American pop culture and from which generations of American kids have drawn happiness, is expected to land in the Chinese mainland as a Shanghai project has been recently approved by the Chinese

government.

Such coincidence surely will help mend the cultural gap and to break down prejudices between peoples of the two countries.

Without an open mind and a pragmatic way of thinking to change for the good of the people, the Chinese people couldn't have gone such far in either poverty elimination or economic development. But along its way to retrieve its national pride, China faces a severe task of having itself better understood so as to defuse unnecessary disputes and practice what Confucius advocated "being harmonious yet different."

Many westerners do not realize China's gigantic internal gap in wealth, regional development and public utilities. Some take Shanghai and Beijing for what the whole China is like, others think the Chinese only refer to the Han nationality.

In this sense, China needs to think and act differently, by telling the world more of its less developed areas and thinking more of herself from the perspectives of others.

The United States, on the other hand, may also need to be introspective and take initiatives to figure out effective new ways to tackle its own chronic problems.

Given that the U.S. jobless rate hit a record high of 10.2 percent in October, a lot of internal pressure in the country might once again target China as a source of the problem.

And with the next mid-term elections approaching in the United States, American trade partners, especially China, might have to face more finger-pointing and protectionism, which would be detrimental to bilateral relations and global economic recovery.

To avoid turning back to the same old page of history, it might be time for the United States to go back to the premier question and think what it could do differently.

Instead of blaming others for its unemployment, for example, the United States could create jobs by expanding export, such as boosting high-tech products to China.

To embark on an unbeaten path on developing bilateral relations, however, it needs not only political wisdom, but also trust, sufficient respect and a broad public understanding of the real China.

AsiaNews - www.asianews.it
11/17/2009 10:20
CHINA - USA

Obama and Hu Jintao, the "agreements" on economic protectionism and the growth of the yuan

by Wang Zhicheng

Vague consensus on economic problems, climate change, the North Korean nuclear problem and cooperation. The issue of human rights almost absent. Obama hopes for a resumption of talks with the Dalai Lama and says that "Tibet is an integral part of China." China "godfather" of U.S. debt.

Beijing (AsiaNews) - In a press conference this morning, presidents Obama and Hu Jintao expressed mutual acceptance. A joint statement lists a series of discrete agreements on climate, Iran on the nuclear problem of North Korea, etc. .. Beyond a general call for dialogue with the Dalai Lama - balanced by the recognition that Tibet is part of China - there was no word on human rights. Rather more widespread, however, was dialogue on the economy, where differences emerged, but were wrapped up in a generic sense of collaboration.

The welcoming ceremony took place inside the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square, perhaps to avoid the sight of protesters. Hu "warmly greeted" his counterpart on his first visit to China, recognizing his great commitment to improving Sino-American relations. Obama reaffirmed his willingness to cooperate with Beijing, which benefits not only the United States but "the rest of the world as well".

At a joint press conference, both expressed agreement on the problem of North Korea's nuclear ambitions and issues related to climate change. Obama has stated that China and the U.S. want the Copenhagen Conference to be a success and want to have measures in place "with immediate effect". The statement is the direct opposite to the outcome of last week's Asia-Pacific summit, where on account of China and the United States, the possibility was excluded that compulsory measures to save the climate will be put in place in Copenhagen.

Regarding the economy, apparently Beijing and Washington are "determined to work together to achieve a more balanced and sustainable global economic growth." But in practice, Hu said they want a world that "rejects protectionism" as a veiled indictment of recent U.S. measures against the taxes on tires and tubes from China. Obama, for his part, appreciated the willingness of China to want to set the Yuan to a more market-oriented monetary policy. A few days ago - after endless pressure to re-appreciate the Yuan - the Central Bank of China said it would consider a fluctuation of the Yuan against a selection of currencies. To date, the Yuan is pegged to the dollar and much underestimated as a value. This gives Chinese products a huge advantage in exports, as well as producing an imbalance in the huge U.S. balance of payments.

In recent weeks, many Chinese dissidents, activists, lawyers had asked Obama to

press China to respect human rights. The matter was addressed, but in a superficial manner. Obama mentioned respect for minorities and said that he hoped Beijing would resume talks with the Dalai Lama, but pointed out that the United States "recognizes that Tibet is an integral part of China". A month ago Obama, contrary to White House tradition, refused to meet with the Dalai Lama during a visit of the Tibetan leader to the U.S..

Yesterday in Shanghai, the U.S. president during a meeting with students, had declared that "freedom of expression and religion, access to information and political participation are universal rights. They should be enjoyed by all persons, including ethnic and religious minorities". But the national television and newspapers deleted this sentence, only allowing it in texts read on the Internet.

In the joint statement published at the end of the talks, collaboration in the scientific and military fields, for health issues, space security and in the area of climate change are emphasised. Obama has also invited Hu Jintao to visit the United States next year.

According to observers, "it is very difficult for Obama to play hard while on the other side of the table sits the head of the Chinese Communist Party, which holds the U.S. debt in its hands". In fact, China is the largest foreign holder of U.S. debt, for an amount of 797 trillion dollars.

The Wall Street Journal
16 November 2009

Obama Pushes for Internet Freedom in China

By JONATHAN WEISMAN and IAN JOHNSON

SHANGHAI -- President Barack Obama made a pitch for Internet freedom in China Monday, even as the audience for his comments was limited by China's government.

Speaking to a selected group of Chinese students at the beginning of his first visit to China, Mr. Obama said that the free flow of information makes societies stronger and holds political leaders accountable. People in positions of power may bristle at criticism, he said, but open criticism "makes our democracy stronger, and it makes me a better leader because it forces me to hear opinions that I don't want to hear."

Mr. Obama's words, however, likely reached few Chinese. In contrast to visits by his two predecessors, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, Mr. Obama's talk was not broadcast live on national television. A local network in Shanghai carried the "town hall" meeting on its television station and Web site, but a promised national "live broadcast" on the Web site of the state-run news agency, Xinhua, did not materialize. Instead, under the term "live broadcast," a transcript appeared. In addition, the meeting was broadcast on the White House Web site,

although it's unlikely that many Chinese would have been able to navigate what for them would be a foreign-language site.

The terms of the talk were the subject of last-minute negotiations between the U.S. administration, which was keen for Mr. Obama to be heard nationally, and the Chinese government, which sought to limit the scope of the talk. Mr. Clinton, in 1998, and Mr. Bush, in 2002, were able to have speeches followed by audience questions broadcast nationally during China visits.

National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer said after Monday's event, "We're satisfied that the Chinese people will know what the president said today." White House spokesman Nicholas Shapiro said the limited dissemination and lack of advanced promotion only underscored the importance of Mr. Obama's message.

Speaking at an hour-long town-hall style forum at this city's Museum of Science and Technology, the U.S. president fielded eight questions, some of them emailed to the U.S. embassy in Beijing from around the country.

Mr. Obama approached difficult issues in China but veered away from real controversy. His comments extolling freedom of expression and political criticism did not mention China or Chinese leadership.

One questioner suggested Americans and Chinese have different cultures and that the U.S. should not impose its views on China. Mr. Obama responded that the U.S. believes "there are certain fundamental principles that are common to all people regardless of culture."

But he did not mention hot-button human rights issues such as Tibet or the Muslim Uighurs. Instead, he said children should not be exploited or forced into labor, and women should be respected, educated and allowed to pursue careers.

His emphasis was on U.S.-Chinese cooperation and the improvement of political and economic relations going forward.

For the most part, questioners played it safe as well, with questions that would upset neither Mr. Obama nor Chinese leaders.

At one point, a young woman from Shanghai International Studies University, reading a question she said came from a Taiwanese businessman off the Internet, suggested Taiwanese oppose arms sales to their island.

"When I heard the news that some people in America would like to continue selling arms and weapons to Taiwan, I begin to get pretty worried," the Internet questioner was quoted as saying.

Mr. Obama responded by praising warming relations between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China and reaffirming the U.S. commitment to a one-China policy.

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Obama reaches out to China in first visit
President cites 'dramatic ties'
Government chose audience for town hall

By Anne E. Kornblut and Andrew Higgins
Washington Post Staff Writers
Monday, November 16, 2009

SHANGHAI -- President Obama met a carefully screened audience of Chinese students in a town hall-style meeting on Monday, telling them that relations between the United States and China have often faced "tumultuous winds," but that the two countries have developed "deep and even dramatic ties."

"Surely we have known setbacks and challenges over the last 30 years," Obama said during his first public appearance in China during his eight-day trip to Asia. But, he added, "the notion that we must be adversaries is not predestined."

The event was billed as an opportunity for Obama to reach beyond Chinese officialdom. But virtually every aspect of the meeting was scripted.

Obama's audience, selected and coached by Chinese officials, was bused to the venue from eight universities. Questioned briefly as they were hustled into the hall, the students said they were mostly members of the ruling Communist Party.

The meeting, attended by nearly 500 students, was held at the Shanghai Science and Technology Museum, a hyper-modern complex located in Pudong, a new development zone far from the city center. Police sealed off the museum and blocked off nearby streets. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush also met students during their own trips to China but did so on university campuses.

Obama, in opening remarks, described the United States as a nation that had endured painful chapters in its history because of its core ideals, including a belief that government should reflect the will of the people. He said the United States did not seek to impose "any system of government on any other nation," but said "America will always speak out for its core principles around the world."

"We made progress because of our belief in those core principles that have served as our compass in the darkest of storms," Obama said.

He did not begin taking questions before this edition went to press.

Before the meeting, Liu Yupang, a 21-year-old mechanical engineering student from Shanghai's Jiaotong University, said he and fellow students had been given

an afternoon of "training." He said they could ask Obama what they wanted but had been ordered to take a "friendly attitude." Liu is a party member.

Chinese officials held newspaper reporters traveling with the White House in a separate "viewing room" from which Obama and the students could barely be seen.

A sign outside the Museum informed visitors that the premises were closed from Nov. 14 to 16 for "maintenance needs." U.S. and Chinese officials haggled for weeks over the format of the Shanghai meeting, with the United States asking that the meeting be as freewheeling as possible, and the Chinese demanding the opposite.

Live video of the event was streamed on the official White House Web site to reach as many members of the Chinese public as possible by circumventing the Chinese government's strict control of information.

The Shanghai event was seen by aides as one way for Obama to try to push China toward greater openness. But the Chinese government appeared to exert intense pressure on the town hall organizers, denying access to some potential guests and forcing others to go through pre-event training. A Beijing blogger, Rao Jin, said that "the Chinese government refused the U.S. Embassy's request" to allow him to attend.

Xu Lyiang, a student at Tongji University, said he had wanted to go but had been told that the quota of students had been fulfilled. But he heard from a teacher who was helping select attendees that they were required to attend a "lecture and a meeting" ahead of time.

Also Friday, Beijing police arrested Zhao Lianhai, an activist who had become a spokesman for parents protesting over contaminated baby formula, his wife said. It was an example of the sort of human rights restrictions that advocates say occur all too often.

Zhao's wife, Li Xuemei, said police from Beijing's public security bureau arrived at the house about 11 p.m. Friday and arrested her husband, also confiscating two computers, a digital camera, T-shirts and some fliers. She said she was later told that he had been "officially detained." Bloggers and Internet "netizens" began petitioning online for Zhao's release.

Zhao's 3-year-old son was one of tens of thousands of infants who developed kidney stones last year as a result of drinking formula contaminated with melamine, in one of a series of food safety scandals in China. As many as 300,000 children were infected by the formula. Officially, at least half a dozen infants died, but activists say they think there were possibly more.

Beijing has always been wary of American presidents' desire to reach out beyond the standard rituals of government-to-government meetings. The Chinese government has been particularly reluctant to give them unfiltered access to television since 1998, when, during a joint news conference that was broadcast

live, Clinton sharply criticized the bloody 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square. White House officials said they were not certain how much, if any, of Obama's appearance would be broadcast on television, and had State Department aides monitoring to find out.

Obama, traveling through China for the first time, finds himself under the microscope on whether he intends to take up the issue of human rights with Beijing more directly than he has so far.

Human rights activists have been alarmed by his delicate approach to date. Last month, he became the first president in nearly two decades not to meet with the Dalai Lama during a visit to Washington by the exiled Tibetan leader. Eight months earlier, Hillary Rodham Clinton soft-pedaled on human rights during her first trip to Beijing as secretary of state, saying that the issue could not be allowed to "interfere" with cooperation on the economy and climate change -- a dramatic shift from her landmark speech there in 1995, as first lady, in which she declared that "women's rights are human rights."

When Obama meets with Chinese President and Communist Party boss Hu Jintao in Beijing on Monday night and Tuesday morning, he will address "issues of freedom of expression, access to information, freedom of religion, rule of law and certainly Tibet," said Jeffrey Bader, Obama's National Security Council director for East Asian affairs.

But he was relatively mute on those subjects ahead of the visit. In Japan on Saturday, in the most significant address of his Asia trip, Obama did not mention Tibet or Xinjiang, two minority regions of China that have been racked by particularly serious protests and severe crackdowns over the past two years.

Still, Obama did call for the release of Burmese dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent most of the past 20 years in jail or under house arrest. He repeated the demand Sunday in front of the Burmese prime minister at an economic summit in Singapore. He made the appeal just hours before leaving Singapore for China, which has long had close diplomatic, business and military ties with the Burmese junta.

Obama has said he will meet with the Dalai Lama after his trip to China. He had hoped that delaying the meeting would generate goodwill, allow the two countries to focus on economic issues and perhaps encourage Beijing to move ahead with its long-stalled negotiations with the exiled spiritual leader's representatives.

That approach, however, appears to have emboldened China, encouraging it to ask other countries to refuse to meet the Tibetan leader, said Michael Green, a Bush administration Asia adviser who is at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

* Correspondent Keith B. Richburg and researchers Zhang Jie and Wang Juan in Beijing contributed to this report.

People's Daily Online

Chinese premier encourages Chinese companies to contribute to Africa's development

10:06, November 07, 2009

Visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao is more than delighted when he talks with African trainees face-to-face and via a video system at the Middle East and North Africa training center of Huawei, a leading Chinese company in communication technology,

"My Chinese name is Hua Mulan," a woman at Huawei's Nigerian training center introduced herself to Premier Wen through the video system.

"I have remembered your name, because it is the name of a famous ancient Chinese heroine," said Wen.

"She is Mulan No. 1, and I'm Mulan No. 2," the woman said. Her witty words triggered fits of laughter.

"Mulan No. 2" said more than 5,000 people have been trained in the center over the past several years. She has visited Huawei's headquarters in south China's booming Shenzhen city, and hopes she can teach Africans the skills she has learned from China.

Wen said "This reflects an important shift for China-Africa cooperation that we are giving priority to personnel training. The African people are brave and intelligent. I believe you can master the modern technologies, and push forward the development of Africa."

On the whole African continent, Huawei, which set up branches in almost every African country, has six training centers, where more than 12,000 people from different African countries have received training on communication technology.

Established in October in Smart village, Cairo, the new Huawei Middle East and North Africa training center has more capacity and more functional training facilities than the old one. The old center, which was established in 2005, has trained about 5,000 people in the past five years.

Wen, who arrived here Friday afternoon for an official visit and the opening ceremony of the fourth ministerial meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, visited the training center upon his arrival.

Hend Kiwan, a 33-year-old Egyptian woman, said she gained skills and technical know-how at the training center. She also went on a tour of Huawei's headquarters in Shenzhen before the training started. She is now a human resources manager.

Wen told Kiwan he believes the quality of an enterprise depends on the quality of its employees, therefore an enterprise should attach great importance to training.

Moussa Bousso, a trainee from Senegal told the premier that the teachers at the center are excellent, and the Chinese telecom products, with their low price and fine quality, are very popular among Africans and Chinese enterprises have gained wide acclaim in Africa.

In reply, Wen said he hoped the Chinese enterprises will "teach the trainees the latest and most advanced technology."

Bousso invited Wen to visit Senegal, and Wen thanked his warmhearted invitation.

Ahmed, an Iraqi man who speaks fluent Chinese, expressed his hope that more Chinese enterprises will go to Iraq for businesses after his country restores peace and stability, and he would also have more chance to go to China for training.

"Just like you, I cherish the same hope that Iraq will regain peace as soon as possible," Wen said, adding training has no borders and he believed Ahmed's wish will surely come true.

Via the video system, head of the Huawei South Africa training center who introduced himself as Charles, greeted Wen in Chinese and briefed him on the center.

Wen said he was satisfied that China-Africa ties have gone beyond personnel exchanges and expanded o substantial technological cooperation.

While touring the training center's exhibition hall, Wen saw photos of African farmers making calls with new telephones and Huawei employees making donations for the local people, Wen praised them for doing such good deeds. "You and Africa are growing together," he said.

He encouraged Huawei's managers to tackle training from the broader perspective of China-Africa cooperation, rather than merely the development of their enterprise, and help promote the friendship between Chinese and Africans.

The premier said he expected the new technology, including communication technology, will develop rapidly in Africa and brings a new look to the natural resources-rich continent.

"I will be more than happy that Chinese companies can do their share for the development of Africa," Wen said.

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CHINA – LATIN AMERICA

Chinese goods conquer Latin America

Trade between China and the continent soars from US\$ 10 billion in 2001 to 140 now. In Latin America, Beijing is seeking raw materials, new markets and ways to diplomatically isolated Taiwan.

Rome (AsiaNews) – After 30 years as the favoured car of the Cuban nomenclatura, the Russian-built Lada is getting some competition from cars made in China. Ministers, communist officials and police are giving up their Ladas for the Geely CK, symbol of the new alliance between the Castroite regime and Beijing.

China is now Cuba's second-largest trading partner behind Venezuela, and second after the United States in Latin America.

All but invisible in Latin America a decade ago, China now is building cars in Uruguay, donating a soccer stadium to Costa Rica, and lending US\$10 billion to Brazil's biggest oil company. In fact, this year, China has replaced the United States as main trading partner of the continent's major economy, Brazil.

Silently but aggressively, Beijing has been filling the vacuum left by the United States, as Washington focused on wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the global economic crisis sapped its economy. Beijing is beefing up its embassies throughout Latin America, opening Confucian centres to expand Chinese culture, and sending high-level trade delegations throughout the region.

Quest for raw materials

Cooperation between China and Latin America is based on trade. One side, Latin America, ships raw materials, essential for the mainland's continued economic growth, and provides new markets for Chinese manufactured products.

Between 2000 and 2008, trade between Latin America and China soared from US\$ 10 billion to US\$ 140 billion. This year, the figure is expected to top 150 billion despite the worldwide economic and financial crisis.

China is buying zinc from Peru, copper from Chile, and iron ore from Brazil. It has signed deals with large mining companies and is pouring huge amounts of dollars into the region, especially in Chavez's Venezuela and Lula's Brazil.

A deal worth US\$ 4 billion was signed with Venezuela's national oil company, PDVSA, to supply China with 500,000 barrels a day this year, and triple that number by 2012.

Brazil's oil shipments to China are smaller, about 50,000 barrels a day to the China National Petroleum Corporation and another 60-120,000 to Sinopec, China's main oil company.

To develop Brazil's newly discovered offshore reserves vast investments are need. China and Brazil's Petrobras signed a deal worth US\$ 10 billion for such purpose.

New markets

Unlike Africa, Latin America represents an important market for Chinese goods. The mainland ships electronic equipment to Brazil, buses to Cuba, clothes to Mexico and cars to Peru.

Whilst Latin American nations have increased their exports towards China, China has begun flooding their markets with its own manufactured goods, displacing local production.

This has led to protest in Mexico and Argentina over the past year. Local manufacturers have been hard hit by low-cost Chinese imports. In Brazil, the garment industry is up in arms against Chinese companies for taking their place as the biggest exporter of clothing and textiles to Argentina.

Chinese direct investments in the region have also come under criticism because Chinese companies tend to bring Chinese labour, creating very few jobs for local.

Containing Taiwan

In Latin America, China's objectives are not only economic but also strategic, namely isolating Taiwan.

Out of 23 nations with diplomatic ties with Taipei, 12 are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Taiwan's foreign policy has focused on providing material incentives, financial aid and economic assistance, to these countries in exchange of official recognition.

Beijing's expansionist approach to the region is instead designed to provide an alternative to its long-standing rival. (MarAI)

South China Morning Post

Beijing brains wrestle with a grey matter

Cary Huang in Beijing

Oct 26, 2009

With one of the fastest-greying populations in the world, the central government has begun to research ways of identifying and coping with the needs of the aged.

In a meeting to launch the programme on the eve of the Chong Yang Festival - a day when people pay their respects to the elderly - Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu called for close attention to the ageing issue, saying it concerned people's livelihoods, long-term economic development and the country's lasting social peace and stability.

The festival, known in English as the Double Ninth Festival - the ninth day of the ninth month in the lunar calendar - falls today. "Nine" in Chinese means both "luck" and "longevity", and the day has gradually turned into a celebration of the elderly.

Three decades ago, the government was worried it had too many children to support, leading it to introduce the single-child policy. Today, the country's leaders are grappling with the consequences of this policy: a rapidly greying population that is giving rise to its own worrying demographic challenges.

According to the UN, a society is officially ageing when one-tenth of its population is 60 or older, and 7 per cent is 65 or older. The mainland passed those markers with the 2000 census, which put the former at 10.5 per cent of the population and the latter above 7.1 per cent. By the end of 2007, these numbers had increased to 13.59 per cent and 9.29 per cent, respectively, according to The China 2008 Statistical Yearbook, compiled by the National Bureau of Statistics.

In Hong Kong, too, the rapid growth of the greying population has prompted debate on the need for a comprehensive review of population policy, including the retirement age, pension arrangements and immigration guidelines. The 1.2 million Hongkongers over 60 comprise 17.14 per cent of the city's population, and could grow to 2.7 million by 2036, according to a recent projection by the Census and Statistics Department.

While the percentage of the mainland population aged 60 or over is half that of the average in Western industrialised nations, mainland per capita income - more than US\$3,000 a year - is only one-fifth that of those countries.

By 2030, the number of mainlanders in the 65-plus age group will have more than doubled, from about 100 million now to more than 235 million. In the cities, by 2025 one in five urban Chinese will be over 65, a rate of ageing found only in Japan and Italy.

Economists say the mainland's demographic trends show several adverse implications for its social and economic development.

"With a rapidly ageing population and a shrinking workforce, tax revenue will contract, while expenditure on pensions and health care will expand, undermining the fiscal position," Zhuang Jian, senior economist with the Asian

Development Bank's China Resident Mission, said.

Zhuang said the mainland's leadership, society as a whole and the business community were ill-prepared to cope with the challenges ahead. "The ageing society is coming much earlier and much faster than expected," he said.

Taiwan president calls for lasting peace with China

Posted : Sun, 25 Oct 2009 10:16:54 GMT

By : dpa

Taipei - Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou declared Sunday that Taiwan would "use the biggest sincerity" to seek lasting peace with China. Ma spoke at a ceremony on Kinmen (Quemoy) Island marking the 60th anniversary of an historic battle in which the Chinese Nationalist forces crushed Chinese Communist troops' advances toward Taiwan.

Kinmen is an islet in the Taiwan Strait, a few kilometres off China's south-east coast.

Ma said the Battle of Kinmen, which left about 5,000 dead, re-wrote China's history and changed the fate of Taiwan and mainland China.

He thanked the martyrs for defending Kinmen, and renewed his 2008 pledge to turn the battlefield into the peace square. "Our resolve to build up our army against war and defend Taiwan remains unchanged."

"Faced with the dawn of cross-strait reconciliation, we will use the biggest sincerity to dissolve hatred and confrontation, make killing a thing of the past, and achieve lasting peace," he said.

Taiwan and China have been split since 1949, when the Chinese Nationalist Government lost the Chinese Civil War and fled to Taiwan to set up its government-in-exile.
