

Newsletter

August 2009

Australia-China Friendship Society Victorian Branch

Ross House - 4th Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

Tel/Fax: 61-3-9654 8099

National Website: www.acfs.com.au

Email: acfsvic@vicnet.net.au

VIC. Website: www.acfsvic.org

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Over the past 6 weeks or so we have seen an unprecedented and vitriolic campaign in the mass media against China. Members will be familiar with the wide spread criticism of China over the Stern Hu/ Rio Tinto affair and also the anti-China publicity emanating from the self-styled leader of the Uyghur national minority group, Rebiya Kadeer.

Our position in relation to these matters is twofold. Firstly, we appose any attempt to fragment or dismantle the P.R.C. Secondly, we oppose any external interference in the internal affairs of China.

To present some balance in relation to the Uyghur issue, the ACFS (Vic) is presenting a talk by eminent academic and expert on China's national minority groups, Professor Eremitus Colin Mackerras on Friday 28th August 2009 at 6:30 p.m. Further details in relation to this important address are set out in this newsletter. I urge as many members and supporters as possible to come and hear the facts concerning this issue.

I also have pleasure in announcing our Society's, annual fund raising banquet, which will be held on the 18th September 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Dragon Boat Palace, 149 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. I am delighted to announce that the special guest speaker at the banquet will be the Honourable Martin Ferguson, Federal Minister for Resources and Energy, Minister for Tourism. This is an important opportunity for members and supporters to learn more about Australia's trade and tourist relationship with China. In addition this will be our most significant fund raising event for the year. I urge all members to book early. Full details of this event are set out in this newsletter.



MAKE A DATE:



6.30pm Friday August 28th in the Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room at the AsiaLink Centre **The 5 July Riot in Xinjiang: Background, Causes and Implications** talk by Professor Emeritus Colin Mackerras AO



6.30pm Friday 18th September at Dragon Boat Palace restaurant **ACFS Victorian Branch Annual Fund Rising Dinner** guest speaker Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP, Minister for Resources and Energy, Minister for Tourism



6.30pm Thursday 8 October in the Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room at the AsiaLink Centre **'Does China's Military Modernisation Pose a Threat?'** talk by Dr Dennis Woodward a Senior Lecturer in Politics in the School of Political & Social Inquiry at Monash University

Lastly, we have also arranged for noted academic, Dr. Denis Woodward to present a talk on so-called Chinese militarisation, to be held on the 8th October 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at the Asialink Centre, Melbourne university corner Monash Road and Swanston Street, Parkville.

I look forward to seeing as many members and supporters as possible at these three events.

Ms. Louise Clayton
(President)

The Ürümqi Riots of July 2009: Causes and Implications

Colin Mackerras

It was remarkable how quickly China got blamed for the disturbances in the Xinjiang capital Ürümqi. Almost immediately one got the image of a hate-filled country that treats its minorities cruelly, with no regards to human rights. What actually happened, and why?

What happened?

What occurred was ethnic rioting, mainly on 5 July 2009, but with some aftershocks, especially on 7 July 2009. Initially it appears to have been mainly instigated by Uygurs, a Turkic and Muslim minority in China's northwest, but later there were Han attacks against Uygurs as well. According to official figures, the death toll was 184, of whom 137 were Han, 46 Uygurs and 1 Hui, but later figures have said 197 people died. Twelve died through police gunfire, the remainder apparently through mob violence. In terms of scale and casualties, this was the worst ethnic rioting in China for many decades, and possibly in the whole history of the People's Republic.

I believe ethnic rioting is horrible, whenever and wherever it occurs. Police should intervene to stop it. What I find striking about the Ürümqi riots is not how brutal the police were but how slowly and ineffectively they intervened.

Background

There have been tensions in Xinjiang for some time. In 1990 a minor uprising in southwest Xinjiang

sparked by an Islamist holy war ideology led on to disturbances throughout the 1990s that did much to poison ethnic relations there. Meanwhile, radical Islam was on the rise in Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan. The Chinese, Russian and several Central Asian governments did what they could to counter this threat. After the September 11 incidents of 2001, Xinjiang became involved in the war against terrorism.

The 1990 uprising led on to a round of separatist feeling in some parts of Xinjiang, especially the south. Government authorities have linked radical Islam, terrorism and separatism as "the three evils". Some Muslim leaders have used this to fan hostility both to the Han and to the government. Although the government was able to prevent the frequent, though minor, disturbances of the 1990s from recurring in the first years of the twenty-first century, there were several incidents just before and at the beginning of the Beijing Olympics of August 2008 that were almost certainly aimed deliberately at causing trouble for China during that great event.

A few of the causes

The immediate trigger for the riots of July 2009 was protest and anger by some young Uygur men over rumours that the Chinese government had failed to punish those responsible for a major disturbance in Shaoguan, Guangdong Province, in which two Uygurs had been killed. There are, however, deeper and more important causes. These are both external and internal.

Let's begin with the external

In the West the Uygurs don't have anything like the support the Tibetans enjoy. There is nobody even remotely similar to the Dalai Lama as a figure promoting sympathy either for independence or quasi-independence.

However, since the end of the twentieth century, Uygur diaspora groups have been organizing themselves in imitation of the extraordinary impact the Dalai Lama and his followers have been able to exert. What they have come up with is a female businesswoman called Rebiya Kadeer, once the richest person in Xinjiang who was imprisoned in

1997 for revealing state secrets. After release she went to the United States and is now based in Washington, where she heads the World Uyghur Congress, a body that organizes activities designed to embarrass China and its policies in Xinjiang. The World Uyghur Congress was actually founded in Germany, and still has quite a few followers there.

The Chinese media put the blame on Rebiya Kadeer and the World Uyghur Congress for the riots. Personally, I am not concerned whether it is she and the body she leads that is mainly responsible. I do know, however, that the Uyghur diaspora has been getting more and more active and better organized over recent years, especially those hostile to China and those wanting to promote separatism. Though the sums up to now have not been large, the National Endowment for Democracy, a U.S. government agency, makes no secret of the fact that it has given funding to these people. I think it probable that there has been involvement in Xinjiang affairs from outside the country that is hostile to China and would like to see instability there and would like to stir up separatism.

There are also important internal factors that make for discontent among the Uyghurs. One of the main ones is the widening of economic disparities that have come as the economy has expanded and living standards have risen. Inequalities are of long standing, despite the "favourable policies" (youhu zhengce) that give advantages to the ethnic minorities all over China. With the Western Development Strategy that began in 2000 these disparities have got worse, with Han getting better jobs, especially at the professional level, and Chinese culture becoming more dominant as a result of investments from the east. Personally, I have seen no sign at all in Xinjiang of any policy of discrimination against Uyghurs, quite the contrary in fact. However, there are certainly perceptions among the Uyghurs that they have not benefitted nearly as much from economic growth as Han immigrants.

Figures from the five national censuses (1953, 1964, 1982, 1990 and 2000) and the 2005 sample census show that the Han proportion of the Xinjiang population grew greatly until 1982 but has since tended to level out. However, the perception of the Uyghurs is that the Han proportion is continuing to grow. I think that the real difference between the

years before the 1980s and the period since then is that the Han who went earlier were better motivated. Too many of the later ones are out for a quick buck and have no sensitivity towards Uyghur culture. Many workers come from the east to work on the cotton plantations that have become very important in the Xinjiang economy and then go back. Since the early 1990s, both Uyghurs and Han take less and less trouble to get on with each other. At one time Uyghurs would invite Han to their homes and ceremonies, and Han tried to make friends with Uyghurs. The recent trend, however, is for Uyghurs to shun Han as immigrants who are taking over their territory and for Han to fear that any friendly initiative they take will be misunderstood and met with coldness and hostility.

The future

The Chinese government faces a very difficult situation in Xinjiang. I doubt the problems are soluble and I am not very optimistic about the short-term future of Han-Uyghur relations there. But there may be things the authorities can do to ameliorate the tensions. Here are a few possibilities.

They could strengthen affirmative action policies in order to try and less economic disparities. They could strengthen education of both Han and Uyghurs to be sensitive to one another and to try and appreciate each other's culture. They should give stronger encouragement to Uyghurs to join the Chinese Communist Party and perhaps even appoint Uyghurs to the top positions in the CCP in Xinjiang so that they enjoy more political power and gain more from the Chinese system of government. While the government should not allow separatism or terrorism in any form, it could do more to lessen Uyghur perceptions that being anti-terrorism and anti-separatism is the same as being anti-Muslim. The great majority of Uyghurs are Muslims, but hardly any are terrorists and very few are active separatists.

Conclusion

I disagree strongly with a trend I perceive to heap all the blame for the riots in Ürümqi on the Han immigrants and the Chinese government. I find the reactions of many foreign governments quite shameful. Some Western governments have tended to assume that the Chinese are guilty of human rights abuses without looking at the complexities of

the situation. The Turkish prime minister likened the riots to genocide. A report in the Straits Times of Singapore on 13 July 2009 claimed that “Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan is well-known for speaking first and thinking only later”, but his reaction was certainly both irresponsible and ignorant.

The whole series of July’s events in Xinjiang has been tragic. They have benefitted nobody, least of all the Uyghurs, except for a few irresponsible people with investment in instability. What needs to happen now is for all those involved to put their minds to healing wounds and increasing ethnic trust.

Australia China Friendship Society (Vic)

Presents

‘Does China’s military modernisation pose a threat?’

A presentation by Dr Dennis Woodward

6.30pm Thursday 8 October 2009

The Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room, AsiaLink Centre

– Cnr Monash Road and Swanston Street, Parkville - opposite the Swanston St ‘University’ Tram Super Stop

The presentation:

China has been modernising its military since the 1980s although this process made little headway until the 1990s. Since then, military expenditures have grown significantly alongside the rapid growth of China’s economy. As China seeks to modernise all aspects of its military, projections of China’s future economic power have been linked to projections of its future military power — giving rise in some quarters to alarmist predictions of a ‘China threat’ and a coming ‘war with China’.

This talk seeks to place China’s military modernisation in context; to examine what is currently taking place; to speculate on future transformations; and to assess whether (and to whom) China’s military modernisation poses a threat.

Dr Woodward:

Dr Dennis Woodward is currently a Senior Lecturer in Politics in the School of Political & Social Inquiry at Monash University. He completed both his undergraduate and post-graduate studies at Flinders University in South Australia, with a PhD in Chinese politics.

He spent three years as a Research Fellow at the Contemporary China Centre at the Australian National University before moving to Melbourne in 1983.

He has maintained an interest in China’s People’s Liberation Army for over thirty years.

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Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People

Editorial

As the saying goes, "people regard food as their prime want." The people cannot survive without food. As part of a national culture, Chinese cuisine has become more important in world culture as a whole.

A new addition to the Newsletters this year is some Chinese Everyday Dish recipes. Any of our members or friends who are interested in Chinese cuisine, can try this at home. May be soon you will become a skilful Chinese cuisine chef. The recipes are originally from Chinese cooking books altered by Tower Liu to suit Australian food conditions.

If you have any tasty, easy to cook recipes that you would like to share with members through this newsletter, please send or email them to the ACFS office.

We are always looking for interesting stories and articles to share with our members. Any members who have great stories to tell please contact ACFS office or e-mail to acfsvic@vicnet.net.au

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not always reflect those of the ACFS and its policies. Reliance upon information in this Newsletter requires independent verification of its accuracy or completeness

FRIED PORK FILLET

Ingredients:

Pork fillet 200gms
Cooking oil

Part A:

1 large onion sliced
1 tablespoon Soy Sauce
1 teaspoon cooking wine
½ teaspoon sugar
1 garlic clove
1-teaspoon cornstarch

Part B:

2 tablespoons tomato sauce
½ Soy sauce
½ teaspoon sugar
1-teaspoon rice vinegar
1-tablespoon sesame seeds
30 ml water

Methods:

1. Cut pork into slice pieces. Mix with Part A and marinate for 30 mins or over.
2. Fry the pork in oil (3 tablespoons) till both side in golden and remove.
3. Cut onions into strips, stir-fried in oil (2 tablespoons) add Part B and pork, stir well in high heat until almost dry.
4. Put onion underneath the pork, sprinkle white sesame seeds on top ready to serve.



THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

To seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

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