

Viewing cable 08BEIJING1731, MAY 6 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: IRAN, TIBET, VISAS, BURMA,

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SUBJECT: MAY 6 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: IRAN, TIBET, VISAS, BURMA,
XINJIANG, HU VISIT TO JAPAN, CHINESE SUBMARINE BASE, MORE

11. Key points at the May 6 MFA press briefing were:

-- Iran enjoys the right to peaceful nuclear energy use, but also should show a sense of "responsibility."

-- Central Government policy toward the Dalai Lama is "consistent and clear-cut" and the "door for contact is always open."

-- China has "made some arrangements according to usual international practice," making the visa approval procedure "more strict and more serious."

-- China has decided to send a "first batch" of USD 1 million in aid, including "cash and aterials" to help Burma with post-cyclone recnstruction efforts.

-- The Olympic torch relay is the aspiration of the Xinjiang people and will display Xinjiang's ethnic solidarity, economic development and social progress.

-- President Hu began a "very significant" state visit to Japan today, and the two sides are "working toward the goal" of a new joint statement.

Iran Can Use Nuclear Energy, But Must Be Responsible

22. At the May 6, 2008 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesman Qin

Gang stated that a May 2 six nations foreign minister-level meeting on the Iran nuclear issue, which AFM He Yafei attended on behalf of FM Yang, "reiterated the six nations' willingness" to solve the issue through a "diplomatic approach." China supports the international nonproliferation mechanism and believes that solving the problem through diplomatic negotiation so as to safeguard the peace and stability of the Middle East is in the interest of all parties. Qin held that Iran enjoys the right to peaceful nuclear energy use, but also should show a sense of "responsibility." All sides should step up diplomatic efforts to achieve a long-term proper solution, Qin said.

Tibet Meetings: "Door Always Open for Contact"

13. Central Government policy toward the Dalai Lama is "consistent and clear-cut" and the "door for contact is always open," stated the spokesman. China hopes the Dalai Lama will "mean what he says," stop carrying out separatist activities, stop plotting and provoking violent activities and stop disrupting the Olympic Games so as to create conditions for further contact. During May 4 talks with Dalai Lama representatives in Shenzhen, Central Government officials "clearly and comprehensively" expounded upon the Central Government position, patiently answered questions from the Dalai Lama representatives and "exchanged views on contact." This contact is "only a beginning" and will continue if the Dalai Lama shows sincerity, especially in his actions, Qin said. He told reporters they should focus "more on contact, rather than format," when asked about a Xinhua News Agency report stating that the talks only addressed the March 14 incident, not actual policy.

Visas: Some "Arrangements" Made for a "Period of Time"

14. China has "made some arrangements according to usual international practice," making the visa approval procedure "stricter and more serious," stated Qin. He said the purpose is to "ensure a safe environment," "safeguard national security" and ensure the safety of foreigners in China. The Chinese Government and people will continued to adhere to the policy of opening and reform, to be open to the world and to welcome foreigners to China for work, study or travel. The principle behind China's visa policy is one of sovereignty, and compared to "some countries" that ask for fingerprints or eye examinations, China's procedure is "more convenient." Asked if the arrangements were temporary, Qin responded that they will be maintained for a "period of time."

China Offers USD 1 Million in Aid to Burma

15. To assist in Burma's reconstruction efforts in the wake of a disastrous cyclone, China has decided to send a "first batch" of USD 1 million in aid, including "cash and materials," said the spokesman in a prepared announcement. The Chinese Government is in close contact with the Chinese Embassy in Burma and is very concerned about Chinese people working and studying in Burma. President Hu, PM Wen and FM Yang have all sent messages to Burma expressing condolences to the victims of the cyclone.

¶6. The Olympic torch relay is the aspiration of the Xinjiang people and will display Xinjiang's ethnic solidarity, economic development and social progress, said the spokesman in response to a question on reports of increased repression in Xinjiang before the Olympic torch relay arrives there. "Separatists" fear the presentation of the Xinjiang people's "new image," said Qin.

Hu in Japan, New Joint Statement is "the Goal"

¶7. President Hu began a "very significant" state visit to Japan today, with the purpose of building trust, strengthening cooperation, deepening friendship and developing a strategic relationship of mutual benefit, said Qin. The two sides are "working toward the goal" of a new joint statement, which would "materialize" the "new development" in the bilateral relationship and expand cooperation into a wider field.

¶8. Responding to reporters' questions, Qin said "fully responsible" investigations into the poisoned dumplings issue are still underway and until a conclusion is reached China cannot rule out any possibility. Anti-China demonstrators in Japan do not represent the Japanese people, stated Qin on the topic of Tibet- and Olympics-related protests in Japan. Qin had nothing to add on prospects for the two sides solving the East China Sea dispute.

China the "Backbone" of World Peace and Stability

¶9. Asked about reports that China is building a secret submarine base on the southern tip of Hainan, the spokesman replied that China is following the path of peaceful development, China's national defense policy is defensive in nature and China's military build-up will pose no threat to any country. He added that China will "always be the backbone of world peace, security and stability." China's military has the "sacred duty" of safeguarding security on the seas, the sovereignty of its maritime territory and its maritime rights and interests.

Bus Fire, Disease Outbreak, Taiwan, Nepal

¶10. An investigation into a May 5 bus fire in Shanghai is still underway, said Qin. China takes a reported outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease in southern China very seriously and will take necessary measures. Asked about Taiwan President-elect Ma Ying-jeou's call for an end to checkbook diplomacy, Qin stated that China firmly opposes efforts to create "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" and will discuss the question of Taiwan's international actions after the "resumption of normal talks." China believes Nepal will protect Chinese diplomatic facilities and personnel in accordance with international conventions.

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