Viewing cable 08BEIJING1771, MAY 8 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: BURMA, ZIMBABWE, HU JAPAN VISIT,

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SUBJECT: MAY 8 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: BURMA, ZIMBABWE, HU JAPAN VISIT, DALAI TALKS, CHINESE IN KOREA, VATICAN, GRAIN PRICES

¶1. Key points at the May 8 MFA press briefing were:

-- China urged the Burmese Government to cooperate and consult with the international community on disaster aid.

-- Contrary to media reports, the Chinese arms shipment did not reach Zimbabwe.

-- President Hu Jintao reached an important consensus in Japan regarding regular high-level meetings.

-- China hopes "the Dalai side" will "take concrete actions to truly stop separatist activities, plotting and provoking violent actions and disrupting the Beijing Olympics."

-- Conflicts between protesters and Chinese students in Seoul and a recent DUI arrest of a Chinese diplomat in Korea are separate incidents.

-- China is "willing to improve relations and conduct further dialogue and make progress on the normalization of relations" with the Vatican.

-- China has pledged an additional 2 million USD to the World Food Program.

Burma Must Cooperate and Consult with International Community on Aid
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¶2. At the May 8, 2008 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesman Qin Gang urged the Burmese Government to "cooperate" and "consult" with the international community on disaster relief efforts. International assistance should "follow the principle of equality and mutual respect" and should "respect Burma's sovereignty." Qin also urged patience and communication when dealing with Burma. China is prepared to send rescue and medical teams provided the Burmese Government agrees.

¶3. Qin listed the financial support which has been given to the Burmese Government by various Chinese organizations. He announced that the Chinese Government would give 30 million RMB (approximately USD 4.2 million) in aid in addition to the USD 1 million which was already pledged. Qin said the first aid shipment from China included tents, food and medication, though he did not know if grain was included.

Arms Not Delivered to Zimbabwe

¶4. Qin called reports that the Chinese ship the "An Yue Jiang" delivered arms to Zimbabwe a "fabrication." Qin said the ship unloaded some non-military goods but "Zimbabwe failed to receive" the military goods.

Hu Reached Important Consensus with Japan

¶5. Qin said President Hu Jintao reached an important consensus with the Japanese Government regarding regular high-level exchanges. Qin encouraged reporters to focus on Hu's upcoming "important address" at a Japanese university. There is no specific date yet set for the first summit between Japanese and Chinese leaders, said Qin.

¶6. Asked about protests in Japan during Hu's visit, Qin said that "some forces and individuals conducted some activities within Japanese law." However, "the majority of Japanese support China-Japanese friendship." Qin said a "small handful of voices" will not stop the development of China-Japan relations. The "Japanese Government and people support the Chinese Government's efforts to ensure China's territorial integrity."

China's Negotiations with the Dalai Lama

¶7. Qin said China's attitude toward negotiations with the Dalai Lama is "serious, honest and sincere." China hopes "the Dalai side" will also be "sincere" and "take concrete actions to truly stop separatist activities, plotting and provoking violent actions and disrupting the Beijing Olympics." Qin said no matter how loud the voices of protesters, the progress in Tibet will "not be blocked."

Chinese Students in Korea and Chinese Diplomat DUI

¶8. Responding to a question about unruly Chinese students during torch relay protests in Korea and the arrest of a Chinese diplomat for driving under the influence, Qin said the reporter was

inappropriately linking the two issues. Regarding the students, Qin said some Chinese students had been "emotional and radical" because

"some forces wanted to disrupt the torch." These students were acting out of love for the Olympics. The conflict had a reason and should be responded to calmly and objectively, said Qin. Qin also expressed China's sympathy for the Koreans who were injured. He pointed out that there are large numbers of Chinese living in Korea and most of them are law abiding. China encourages all of its citizens overseas to follow the laws, regulations and customs of their host country.

¶9. Qin said a DUI incident involving a Chinese diplomat in Korea is under investigation. China requests its diplomats to follow the laws and regulations of the host country. Qin encouraged the ROK to "remain calm and objective."

China-Vatican Relations

¶10. Qin said he had taken note of the Pope's remarks following a Chinese concert at the Vatican. The concert was a "successful non-governmental exchange" which China believes will strengthen understanding and friendship. China is "willing to improve relations and conduct further dialogue and make progress on the normalization of relations."

China Concerned about Grain Prices

¶11. Qin announced that China was "ready to provide help to the best of its ability" for the World Food Program (WFP). In addition to the USD 2.5 million China had already pledged, Qin announced another USD 2 million to the WFP. The Chinese Government is concerned about rising grain prices and their effect on developing countries, he stated.

Visits

¶10. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will visit China at the invitation of Premier Wen Jiabao May 23-24. The schedule for his visit is under consultation but he will meet with various Chinese leaders, including President Hu Jintao. Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej will visit China May 15-17. Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo will visit May 14-18. From May 14-16, FM Yang Jiechi will attend a meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Russia and India in Russia and attend a meeting of the BRIC countries. Yang will host bilateral meetings with his counterparts while in Russia.

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