



China News Summary

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General Board of Global Ministries
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New US ambassador to China named. Republican governor of Utah, Jon Huntsman, Jr. has been named United States ambassador to the People's Republic of China, by President Barack Obama. Huntsman, 49, a Republican, served as a White House staff under Ronald Reagan, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce and ambassador to Singapore under President George H. W. Bush, before running for governor of Utah. Huntsman is considered a Republican moderate who is able to take a bipartisan approach with China. Underlying the importance of this ambassadorship President Obama said, "I can think of no more important assignment than creating the kinds of bridges between our two countries that will determine the well being of not just Americans and the Chinese, but also the future of the world," reported the *NYT*. If confirmed by the Senate, Huntsman will be key in Obama's efforts to keep China onboard in overcoming the global economic downturn (China currently holds \$767.9 billion in US Treasury securities), curb greenhouse gas emissions, and contain North Korea's nuclear programs said Bloomberg. Huntsman is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (Mormon) and served an LDS mission in Taiwan from 1987-1988 where he also studied mandarin Chinese. He has seven children, one of whom is adopted from China. Huntsman co-chaired John McCain's unsuccessful bid for the US presidency in 2008, and is the son of billionaire philanthropist John Huntsman, Sr. (*"Utah governor chosen as ambassador to China"*, *New York Times*, May 18, 2009; *"Utah's GPO governor chosen as China envoy"*, *Washington Post*, May 17, 2009; *"Obama names ambassador to China"*, *BBC*, May 16, 2009; *"Huntsman seen as effective as China relations evolves"*, *Bloomberg*, May 18, 2009)

June 4 anniversary passes without incident in Beijing. The 20th anniversary of the June 4, 1989 military crackdown on student and worker demonstrators in Beijing has passed without incident in Beijing. The only demonstrations allowed in China occurred in the Special Administrative Region of Hongkong where 150,000 gathered in Victoria Park for the annual candlelight vigil to commemorate the tragic event, said the BBC. They were addressed by Wang Dan and Xiong Yan, both were imprisoned for their organizational roles in the 1989 events. In the lead up to *liu si* (June 4), as it is called in China, Beijing blocked several websites, including the social networking site Twitter and the photo sharing site Flickr, said the BBC. The video sharing website Youtube had been blocked since March, said the Associated Press. On June 4 itself, there was heavy and visible police presence in Tiananmen Square and also reports of foreign journalists being prohibited from entering the square itself. For many younger Chinese, those born after 1989, *liu si* has diminished significance as it is not part of any student curriculum and the government has yet to provide an official inquiry into the event that led to the death of hundreds of civilians and military personnel. (*"Tiananmen killings: Was the media right?"*, *BBC*, June 2, 2009; *"Foreign reporters, blogs blocked from Tiananmen"*, *Associated Press*, June 3, 2009; *"Hongkong holds Tiananmen vigil"*, *BBC*, June 4, 2009; *"Police swarm Tiananmen to bar protests"*, *New York Times*, June 4, 2009)

Hongkong's Chief Executive angers legislators with June 4 remarks. Hongkong Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen's remarks that China's economic development over the last 20 years should be taken into account when assessing the events of June 4, 1989 caused outrage in the Legislative Council (Legco), the Hongkong Special Administrative Region's law making body. When Tsang remarked that this was the opinion of the Hongkong people the chamber erupted with protests from pro-democratic councilors, reported *Sing Tao News*. Legco was suspended for nearly 10 minutes as members from pan-democratic parties walked out and held a press conference accusing the Chief Executive of gross misrepresentation of the Hongkong people. Tsang apologized and acknowledged that this was his opinion and it was wrong to put that forward as that of the SAR's. It is widely thought that Tsang's remarks contributed to the increased numbers at the annual June 4 commemorative vigil in Hongkong's Victoria Park, who numbers routinely reach in the tens of thousands. (*"Uproar at Tsang June 4 view"*, *Sing Tao News Online*, June 2009; *"HK cardinal criticizes Beijing"*, June 1, 2009)

Secret memoirs of Zhao Ziyang, published. The secret memoirs of the former chair of China's Communist Party who was removed from office during the June 4, 1989 military crackdown on student and worker demonstrators, has been published in both Chinese and English. *Prisoner of State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (Simon and Schuster, 2009) is hailed as a rare insight into the workings of both the Party and government during a time of national unrest, said *New York Times*. Zhao, a reformer, pressed for strategic dialogue with students and workers in 1989 who were advocating in part for an end to government corruption and greater freedoms of speech and press. Zhao was removed from office and spent the rest of his life under house arrest until his death in 2005. For several of those years Zhao recorded his memoirs over cassette tapes of children's songs and Beijing opera which were available in his apartment. He smuggled them out of China through trusted friends. It has taken several years for all the tapes to be brought together, transcribed, translated and edited. The tapes revealed that Zhao felt most of the demonstrators "were only asking us to correct our flaws, not attempting to overthrow our political system." Zhao felt the demonstrations were already dying down after about a week from their start when the then premier Li Peng led the government's hardline approach which branded the demonstrators as anti-Party and anti-socialist. That move caused moderates to join and rejuvenate the demonstrations which then spread throughout the country as far as the outreaches of the Gobi desert. The memoirs are perhaps most revealing for the light they shed on the early days of China's economic reforms. The details of economic reform were developed by Zhao himself, he said, and not necessarily by the late Deng Xiaoping who is widely credited with ushering them in, reported the *NYT*. Zhao acknowledged that none of the reforms could have been carried out without Deng's approval, but Zhao maintains Deng's strengths were more conceptual rather than those of a hands-on architect. The memoirs were so secret that even his daughter did not even know about them, said the BBC. ("Secret memoir reveals dissent from Chinese leader", *Washington Post*, May 14, 2009; "Secret memoir offers look inside China's politics", *New York Times*, May 14, 2009; "Secret Tiananmen memoirs revealed", May 14, 2009; "James Miles: The lost voice of Tiananmen", *BBC*, May 2009)

A year after the earthquake. A year after the May 12 earthquake that devastated parts of Sichuan and surrounding provinces, the Chinese government released new casualty and reconstruction figures, reported Xinhua, China's state news agency. The death toll now stands at 68,712 with another 17,921 missing and of those statistics 5,335 students were confirmed dead, and another 546 sustained permanent disabilities. It is the first time the Chinese government released statistics regarding children, said the BBC. The government also reported that nearly 70 percent of school students have moved into rebuilt or repaired schools. Approximately 21,000 post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction projects were started and the total spending is expected to be about 1 trillion *yuan* (\$146.5 billion). The central government has pledged to strictly enforce national building codes and technical standards and the degree to which this has been taken seriously has been independently confirmed, reported the BBC. There have been calls for more victim compensation both within China and from foreign human rights organizations. ("Reconstruction after the earthquake", *Xinhua*, May 7, 2009; "Chinese reveal child quake toll", May 7, 2009; "Rebuilding China's quake-hit zone", May 5, 2009)

In for the long haul: Amity continues post-earthquake reconstruction. One year ago, on May 12, 2008, just hours after a massive earthquake registered 8.0 on the Richter scale devastated Sichuan province, the Amity Foundation, a Global Ministries partner, was among the first non-governmental organisations to arrive in Chengdu to begin assessing damage in some of the worst affected counties. At first, Amity focused on relief efforts through the distribution of tarpaulins for make-shift housing, clean drinking water, mosquito nets, and quilts. Within a month, Amity quickly moved to from relief work to integrated reconstruction. Amity projects included community grain storage facilities, the construction of clean water and sanitation facilities, trauma counselling for victims, materials for the construction of homes, technical skills training for residents to assist in re-building homes, and rebuilt classrooms and new school equipment. The Amity Foundation has also helped to re-build a temporary church at Mianzhu where attendance is from 180 to over 1,000 each Sunday. ("Rebuilding Lives, Restoring Hope," http://gbqgm-umc.org/global_news/full_article.cfm?articleid=5407; *The Amity Newsletter* 2008)

Amity on Youtube and Twitter. The Amity Foundation is reaching out to a netizen culture by creating its own Youtube channel and Twitter-ings. You can visit some of the events of the Amity on its Youtube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/amityhk>. If you're a Twitter fan you can find Amity on Twitter at: http://twitter.com/ai_de_amity. Amity's official name in Chinese is *ai de jjinhui*, (*ai* means love, and *de* means virtue). (www.amityfoundation.org; *United Methodist China Program*)

Annual religious freedom report flags up China. The 2009 *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* published in May named China as one of 13 nations which it called 'countries of particular concern' or CPCs. The report accused the Chinese government of "systematic violations of the freedom of religion or belief" while at the same time acknowledged that the freedom to participate in religious activities has increased in many areas of the country. The report was particularly critical of how the law that governs religion in China, the National Regulations on Religious Affairs (NRRA) which was promulgated into law in 2005 and updated in 2007, has placed additional restrictions on what constitutes peaceful religious gatherings for Tibetan Buddhists and ethnic minority Muslims like the Uighurs. It was also critical of the closure of several well-known but unregistered Protestant communities prior to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing. A foreign ministry spokesperson for the Chinese government, Ma Zhaoxu, said China rejected the allegations within the report and that China "protects its citizens' freedom of religious belief according to law" and that "every ethnic group in any part of China enjoys full religious freedom." His statement is found on the Embassy of the PRC in the United States. The full report can be found on: <http://www.uscifr.gov/images/AR2009/final%20ar2009%20with%20cover.pdf> ("China rejects latest US report on religious freedom," *Associated Press*, May 5, 2009; Embassy of the PRC in the USA)

China's fight against child-abductions. China's Ministry of Public Security has set up a national DNA database, connecting 236 DNA centers, to help track children abducted by human traffickers, said the BBC and Xinhua. The idea of a database came from Zhang Baoyan who heads up a website, baobeihujia.com, whose focus is the return of abducted children. The Chinese government investigates 3,000 missing children cases a year, although the actual figure may be as high as 20,000 children abducted annual, said Xinhua quoting a US Department of State statistic. Many children are sold within China as extra labor, household servants, workers in mines and brick kilns, or into illegal prostitution rings. Baobeihujia.com has registered about 10,000 persons who have put information about missing children online. It has successfully returned 36 children to their parents since it began in 2007. *Baobeihujia* means 'baby back home'. ("China public fight against child-abductions", *Xinhua*, May 31, 2009; "China database to track children", *BBC*, May 1, 2009; www.baobeihujia.com)

Beijing drops objection to Taipei's involvement at WHO meeting. Taiwan's president, Ma Ying-jeou, marked his first year in office by stressing Taiwan's improved relationships with the China mainland, reported the BBC. Ma called the last year 'fruitful' and said the strait between the mainland and Taiwan was no longer a 'dangerous flashpoint' but had been turned into a 'conduit of peace and prosperity'. Beijing and Taipei have signed nine separate agreements on economic co-operation. In April Taiwan was accepted into the World Health Organization's annual assembly as an observer when Beijing dropped its objections to the island's participation, said the BBC. Beijing is insistent that Taiwan is a province of the People's Republic which will be reunified with China through negotiation and possible force, if necessary. The World Health Organization is a key body of the United Nations. Ma's presidency has been challenged through public demonstrations by those feeling he is kowtowing to Beijing and fostering economic subservience. ("Taiwan accepted into WHO meeting", *BBC*, April 29, 2009; "Taiwan hails stronger China ties", *BBC*, May 20, 2009)

North Korea's nuclear tests angers Beijing. In response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) underground nuclear testing, the force of which was equivalent to the bomb that the United States dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, China's Foreign Ministry swiftly said that the Chinese government was firmly opposed to the act. In a statement released by the Foreign Ministry it continued, "To bring about denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, oppose nuclear proliferation and safeguard peace and stability in Northeast Asia is the firm and consistent stand of the Chinese government. China strongly urges the DPRK to honor its commitment to denuclearization, stop relevant moves that may further worsen the situation and return to the Six-Party Talks." The six parties are China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia and the United States. Some of the member states feel the time has come for stricter sanctions against Pyongyang. China provides up to 90 percent of the DPRK's energy and 40 percent of its food, said the *Guardian*. But the Chinese government fears that sanctions will drive North Korea further away and create a new flood of refugees from North Korea into China, reports Reuters. There are already 50,000 illegal North Korean refugees along the Sino-DPRK border. Said Zhang Liangui, a Korea expert at Beijing's Central Party School who was interviewed in the *Guardian*, "This time North Korea has gone too far" and it has "hurt its relationship with Beijing." The 'hurt' is that Pyongyang has

ignored China and through aggression is seeking to engage with the United States' new administration directly. Its actions reflect a "distrust and dislike of its protector," said the *Guardian*. Said Professor Shi Yinong of Renmin University to the *Guardian*, "If [the DPRK] launch even a limited conflict with South Korea, China will face immediate strategic and diplomatic problems," (*PRC Foreign Ministry* www.mfa.org.cn ; "North Korea's nuclear test puts China in a tight spot", *Guardian*, May 29, 2009; "China says opposed North Korea nuclear test", *Reuters*, May 25, 2009; "Chinese gov't 'resolutely opposed' DPRK's nuclear test", *Xinhua*, May 25, 2009)

Graduates look to civil service for jobs. Only twenty percent of university graduates landed jobs in the first quarter of 2009, down from a historical average of 70 percent in previous years, reported Bloomberg. The government, concerned about what student unemployment may mean in terms of potential social unrest, has made graduates' employment a priority, said the BBC. As a December 2008 conference Premier Wen Jiabao remarked, "Students, please rest at ease, we are putting the problem of graduates' employment on the top of our agenda." Early this year the Beijing city government announced a program to employ 1,600 graduates on three-year contracts as assistants to officials in villages around the city, said the BBC. The hope is it will ease unemployment and help villages in development efforts. The salary for those civil service jobs is moderate, approximately 2,000 *yuan* per month (US \$293), when compared to the salaries that some would draw if employed by private international companies. To entice applicants, the Beijing government announced that it would give a Beijing municipality residency permit to those completing their three years. The residency permit (*hukou*) is vital if continued employment in Beijing is desired, said the BBC. Latest figures showed that there were 56 applicants for every central government job, a jump of about 20 percent from the previous year, reported Bloomberg. ("China jobs slump makes graduates swap dreams for civil service", *Bloomberg*, May 14, 2009; "Graduates struggle as China slows", *BBC*, June 1, 2009)

China changes visa rules for US citizens. Same day, expedited visas can no longer be obtain from Chinese consulates or the embassy in Washington DC, a move designed to keep A/H1N1 virus, commonly called swine flu, contained. The United States has reported the second highest number of cases in the world. Tourist, business and student visas will now take six business days to process. The Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Ma Zhouxu was quick to say that the rules were "non-discriminatory and is not targeted at any country. The adjustment of the visa policy will not affect the normal entry of foreigners and exchanges of people." Chinese citizens returning from countries which had high numbers of reported cases have been strictly checked and in some cases quarantined. As of June 7, there were 73 reported cases of A/H1N1 on China's mainland, said *Xinhua*. ("China changes visa rules for US citizens", *The Washington Post*, May 5, 2009; "China reports fifth A/H1N1 case of local transmission", *Xinhua*, June 7, 2009)

Links and frequent sources

[Agence France-Presse](http://www.afp.com)

[Amnesty International](http://www.amnesty.org)

[Amity Foundation](http://www.amityfoundation.org)

[Associated Press](http://www.ap.org)

[British Broadcasting Corporation \(BBC\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

[Bloomberg](http://www.Bloomberg.com)

[Beijing Review](http://www.bjreview.com.cn)

[China Christian Council](http://www.ccctspm.org)

[China Daily](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn)

[China Development Brief](http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com)

[China Dialogue](http://www.chinadialogue.net/)

[China Institute](http://www.chinainstitute.org)

[China.org.cn](http://www.china.org.cn)

[Christian Science Monitor](http://www.csmonitor.com)

[CNN](http://www.cnn.com)

[Committee of 100](http://www.committee100.org)

[Deutsche Presse-Agentur](http://www.dpa.de/en/unternehmenswelt/index.html)

[Economist](http://www.economist.com)

[Ecumenical News Service](http://www.eni.ch/)

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