



British Embassy
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China Politics Update – May 2014

High-ranking People's Liberation Army (PLA) officers voiced support for President Xi Jinping's plans to reform the military. The PLA newspaper published a series of speeches by seventeen generals from seven Military Regions pledging allegiance to the Commander-in-Chief. Analysts see the campaign as an indication that Xi wishes to cement support for difficult structural reform and to mitigate concerns within the military about the current anti-corruption campaign.

Three people were killed and seventy-nine injured in a bombing at the Urumqi (capital of Xijiang Province) South station as President Xi wrapped up a four-day visit to the region focused on targeting extremism. The government labelled the incident as a terrorist attack and state media quoted police saying the suspects have "long been involved in religious extremism." This attack follows the Kunming attack in March. Both have been attributed to Uyghur separatists.

Premier Li Keqiang delivered a keynote speech at the annual Bo'ao Forum in Hainan. Addressing an audience of over ten heads of states and senior representatives from international organisations, Li stressed China's role in the Asia-Pacific economy, and urged closer regional economic integration. At the same time, he suggested Asian countries "build a community of shared interests, common destiny and shared responsibilities," and actively explore the establishment of a regional security cooperation framework in Asia.

Premier Li became the first member from the Standing Committee of Political Bureau to visit Chongqing since the 18th Party Congress in November 2012. Li showed his concern for working people when praised a local Bang Bang man (farmer-turned porters) as a symbol of hard-working Chinese people. Many netizens praised Li as a down to earth man.

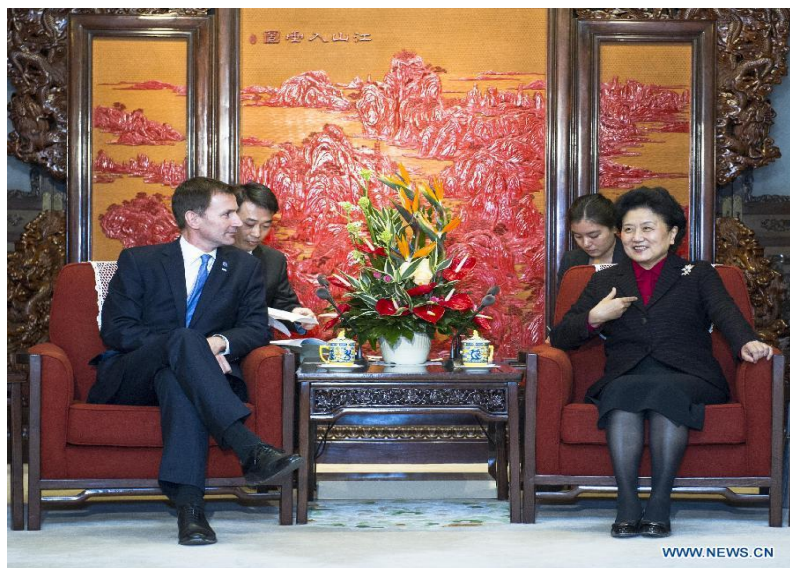


April also marked the traditional tomb sweeping festival, an occasion that people pay respect to those who have passed away.

Former President Hu Jintao visited the ancestral home of former General Secretary Hu Yaobang on the 25th anniversary of his death. In previous years media coverage of Hu Yaobang has been considered sensitive since his death provoked mass demonstrations which culminated in the violent events of 4 June 1989. However, series of online news portals praised Hu Yaobang for ‘contributing his whole life to the party and the people.’ These articles also stated Xi Zhongxun, father of President Xi as a close ally of Hu. Some commentators see this as a sign of the new leadership’s more confident attitude towards recent history, and President Xi’s wish to ally himself with reformists in the Party.

China has finally dropped the hammer on popular crypto-currency, Bitcoin, after Bank of China, China Construction Bank and top online payments company Tenpay banned the withdrawal, sale or purchase of the Bitcoin in their statements. According to one estimate, China accounted for more than half of the world’s trade in Bitcoin last year. Near the end of 2013, when its price was above US\$1,000, more than 100,000 coins were being traded daily on BTC China, a local exchange.

Finally, the UK and China held the second high-level People to People Dialogue on 23rd April, hosted in Beijing by Vice Premier Liu Yandong. The UK delegation, led by Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt, also met Premier Li Keqiang. The dialogue covers media, health, science, education, culture and youth. A full list of agreements can be found [here](#).



Enquiries and feedback are welcome. Please contact:

- **Giles Montagnon** | Political Section | giles.montagnon@fco.gov.uk | +86(0)10 5192 4232 or
- **Stephanie Shi** | Political Section | shi.zhenyi@fco.gov.uk | +86(0)10 5192 4492