

LEADING THE NEWS

NATO

Obama looks to future of Nato's Afghan mission

US president will try to persuade partners to help with the cost of supporting country after 2014

Bloomberg in Chicago

US President Barack Obama faces the task of persuading financially-pressed European governments and their war-weary citizens to back Afghanistan's security over the next decade. Obama is seeking to prevent a rush to the exits in Afghanistan by US allies ahead of 2014, when Afghan forces are to take over full security. Beyond that, the US wants allies, many enduring budget cuts, to help cover the US\$4.1 billion a year needed to finance Afghan security forces after 2014.

As the 28 Nato members and partner nations gather for their Chicago summit that ends today, the effort to reach a consensus on the way ahead

expected to agree on a "smart defence" initiative, which calls for sharing technologies and weapons systems. The goal is to pool resources to acquire capabilities that may be too costly for a single country.

Because of austerity-driven cuts in Europe and the US, Nato might be constrained in its ability to carry out some missions, said Stephen Larrabee of the Rand Corporation think tank. Such constraints "will intensify the debate" on what security Nato would provide beyond Europe, where most future threats would come from, Larrabee said.

Many alliance members "are not very comfortable" with operations such as Afghanistan "in which they do not see a strong national interest and which are expensive, and which involve, in many cases, casualties."

France's new president, Francois Hollande, said on Friday that he was sticking to his campaign pledge to pull French combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of this year.

He said a "few remaining troops" would work on training and equipping Afghan forces.

Hollande's position may frustrate US efforts to keep European combat forces in place through 2014, and to get Nato partners to help underwrite an estimated US\$4.1 billion a year in assistance to Afghan security forces over the following decade.

Financing the Afghan force has taken on greater urgency as Western allies start departing after more than a decade of warfare, the longest combat operation in Nato's history.

Afghan soldiers and police officers totalled 337,000 in mid-March and are set to reach 352,000 this year. The coalition has agreed with Afghan leaders to begin paring the force after 2014 to about 230,000.

Maintaining those numbers would cost about US\$4 billion, with the US seeking \$1.3 billion from allies and with Afghanistan contributing about US\$500 million annually, Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon said this month.

► GROUP OF EIGHT FAVOURS MIX A9

\$444b
What the US had spent on its operations in Afghanistan as of last year, according to the US Congressional Research Service

in Afghanistan will test Obama's diplomatic skills, and also the political cohesion and staying power of the 63-year-old group.

Obama is also scheduled to meet in Chicago Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who is sometimes harshly critical of his Nato allies.

The summit takes place as Europeans and the US cut defence spending and as Nato avoids being drawn into the crisis in Syria, which borders alliance member Turkey.

Last year's military actions in Libya exposed the Europeans' reliance on US military equipment like Tomahawk cruise missiles and airborne reconnaissance and refuelling.

The Nato leaders in Chicago are



A protester sits in front of police officers on State Street in downtown Chicago as part of a demonstration against the Nato bloc. Photo: AP

TAIWAN

Ma delivers no surprises with cross-strait policy

As he begins a second term, Taiwanese president indicates he will maintain his mainland approach

Lawrence Chung in Taipei
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Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou struck a cautious note yesterday in delivering his cross-strait policy that promises little change, as he began his second term amid protests across the island.

Analysts said the leader's cross-strait policy for the next four years, unveiled during his inaugural speech, was similar to that of his first term, indicating high-profile political dialogues, such as the signing of a peace pact, would be unlikely.

But Ma did respond, in a way, to mainland hopes that he would clearly spell out his recognition of the "one China" principle.

Such recognition was considered a type of political payback for a spate of economic sweeteners offered by Beijing over the past four years to help the Ma administration improve the island's lacklustre economy.

He pointed to the last amendment to the island's constitution, from two decades ago, that says: "The two sides of the Taiwan Strait have been defined as 'one Republic of China, two areas', which he said had remained unchanged since the administrations of his predecessors Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian. He also stressed that, "when we speak of

one China, naturally it is the Republic of China".

That reference differs somewhat from the concept of "one country, two areas" made by the honorary chairman of Taiwan's Kuomintang, Wu Poh-hsiung, during his meeting with President Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) in late March. In that meeting, Wu told Hu that both Taiwan and the mainland were two areas under one country. Beijing, which has been pushing for the "one China" principle since the end of the civil war in 1949, reportedly gave tacit approval of Wu's remarks. But the concept sparked angry protests from the island's pro-independence camp, which suspected that Ma was trying to hand over the island to the mainland.

"Although the pro-independence camp warned Ma against spelling out this concept in his inaugural speech, Ma, in a safe way, still brought this



Protesters throw eggs onto a portrait of Ma in Taipei. Photo: AP

HUMAN RIGHTS



Chen Guangcheng and his family are greeted by supporters on Saturday evening on arrival at a university housing complex in Manhattan. Photo: AFP

CHEN RELISHES 'FIRST REST IN SEVEN YEARS'

Blind activist arrives in New York and says he hopes to return to China after studying law and taking time to recover from year-long detention ordeal

Teddy Ng in New York
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Blind activist Chen Guangcheng (陳光誠) appeared happy and upbeat as he arrived in New York yesterday, bringing an end to a seven-year saga of confinement that culminated in tense diplomatic negotiations after he fled to the US embassy in Beijing a month ago.

Leaning on crutches and with a plaster cast to mend an injury suffered to his right foot during his dramatic escape, Chen smiled and waved to a cheering crowd of supporters before speaking to reporters outside a university housing complex in Manhattan's Greenwich Village.

"After such turbulence, I have finally come here from Dongshigu village in Shandong (山東)," said Chen, who has accepted a research fellowship at New York University's School of Law. "I am very glad that the Chinese government has remained restrained and calm when handling my case."

His flight landed on Saturday evening in Newark, New Jersey, after 13 hours. He was then taken to the university by US State Department officials and his law professor friend, Jerome Cohen. The university has admitted Chen as a special student.

"For the past seven years, I have never had a weekend that I could take rest," Chen said. "Now I am here, I can do a bit of recuperation for body and in spirit."

He took only one question from reporters, replying "yes" when asked if he would return to China. In prepared remarks he said: "Equality and justice have no boundaries."

The 40-year-old activist said the Chinese government had promised to protect his rights as a citizen while he was out of the country.

"I'm very grateful for the assistance of the American embassy and also [for] receiving a promise from the Chinese government for protection of my rights as a citizen over the long term. I believe that the promise

from the central government is sincere and they are not lying to me."

His wife Yuan Weijing (袁偉靜) was with him at the beginning of the press session before leaving to "take care of the two children".

Chen, who had been under house arrest since being released from a four-year prison term in 2010 for his opposition to forced sterilisations and abortions in his home province, repeatedly expressed his gratitude to people who supported him.

"The US embassy gave me a lot of assistance during critical moments,"

he said. "I hope to continue getting their assistance in the future."

Officials from Britain, Canada, France and Sweden also kept in contact with him, he said.

Crowds of onlookers and reporters gathered at Newark Airport and the university hours before Chen appeared. At the university, the crowd applauded Chen and chanted "human rights" before he spoke.

Former Tiananmen Square student leader Chai Ling, who was at the airport and the university, described Chen as a hero, but also said Chen would still have to be careful about saying or doing something in the US that could provoke authorities to crack down on his family at home.

Bidders run shy of hospital tender

► CONTINUED FROM A1

buildings in Happy Valley. Director of nursing services Manbo Man Bo-lin said its feasibility study had shown that medical equipment might not survive the shock and vibration from trains on the future MTR South Island line.

Dr Alan Lau Kwok-lam, chairman of the Private Hospitals Association, has expressed worries that investors could be scared off because the terms of the tender were so demanding they could make it difficult for the hospitals to be financially viable.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau declined to comment while tendering was in progress.

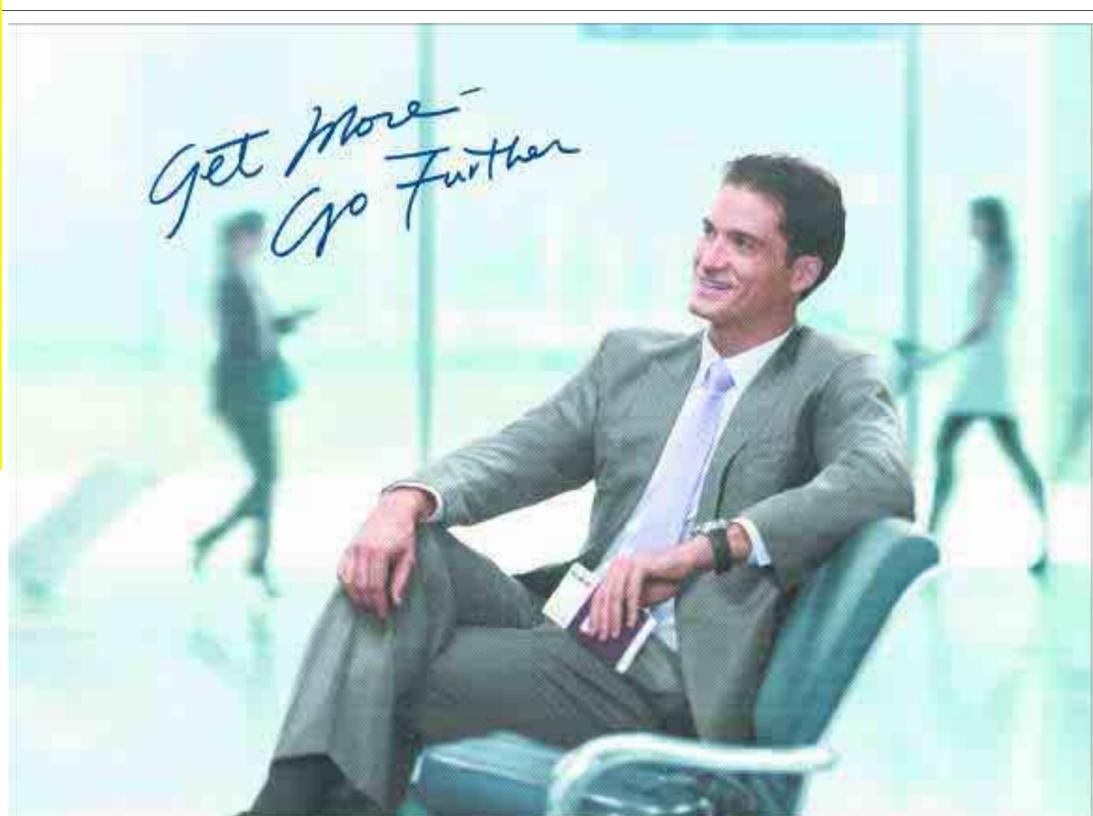
Union Hospital in Sha Tin, another known contender for the Wong Chuk Hang site, said yesterday

12
This many of Hong Kong's 56 hospitals are private

it would probably go ahead with its bid. "Most of the requirements seem OK to us, and we will go forward by engaging consultants and architects for the project," a spokeswoman said.

She said Union Hospital, which has operated since 1994, had long experience providing medical services in Hong Kong. Chan's abrupt U-turn triggered speculation he might be appointed to the Executive Council again by the incoming administration.

He is widely regarded as a supporter of chief executive-elect Leung Chun-ying and said earlier that the bidding might offer excuses for critics to stir up a controversy over a potential conflict of interest involving himself or Leung.



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► WHO'S NEXT FOR KMT? A6

BRIEFS

Navy receives anti-piracy training for Somalia

China's navy is stepping up training for anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia in a sign of its growing long-term commitment to overseas missions. The first two-week course for 84 leading officers began this week at the Naval Command College in Nanjing (南京), the armed forces newspaper *PLA Daily* said yesterday. The first anti-piracy patrols were launched in December 2008, joining an international flotilla aiming to protect shipping in the Gulf of Aden. More than a dozen separate missions followed, each consisting of two of the navy's most sophisticated missile frigates. AP

Foreign journalists attacked in village unrest

Two foreign journalists have been attacked and dozens of villagers detained in protests in Zhejiang (浙江) province against land grabs that have drawn comparisons with last year's rebellion in Wukan, Guangdong. Panhe residents held several protests this month over government land seizures. On Friday, state media said dozens of people had been detained in the village, as French and Dutch journalists said they had been set upon by unidentified men. Villagers said by phone the issue had been resolved. AFP

Emergency relief plan for drought-stricken Yunnan

The central government initiated an emergency response plan on Friday to battle a severe drought in Yunnan (雲南). The National Commission for Disaster Reduction and the Ministry of Civil Affairs sent teams to help with relief work. Provincial civil affairs officials said the drought had affected 6.3 million people in 91 counties, and left livestock and more than 2.4 million people short of drinking water. Xinhua

Myanmar nationals arrested in drug hauls

Police made two major drug hauls in Yunnan and arrested 12 suspects, including two Myanmar nationals, officials said yesterday. Six suspects were caught a week ago with 27kg of methamphetamine in Fengqing county, police said. A pistol and seven rounds of ammunition were also seized. In another case, six suspects were arrested with 20kg of heroin. Five of them were detained in Dali (大理) city and another in Lanzhou (蘭州), capital of Gansu (甘肅) province, police said. Xinhua

Hu appoints new ambassadors

President Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) has appointed six new ambassadors, including Wu Hailong (吳海龍) as head of China's mission to the European Union, replacing Song Zhe, said a statement from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Liu Zhenmin was named ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva, replacing He Yafei. Xinhua

ONLINE

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ETHNIC UNREST

Tibetans held after return from trip to see Dalai Lama

Rights group says hundreds sent to re-education after coming home from government-approved India trip

Reuters in Beijing

The government has detained several hundred Tibetans who returned from India after attending teaching sessions overseen by the Dalai Lama, and is forcing them to undergo political re-education, a human rights group has said. New York-based Human Rights Watch said it believed it was the first time since the late 1970s that authorities had detained Tibetan laypeople in such large numbers, and came as Beijing frets about unrest in Tibetan parts of the country. The central government allowed 7,000 Tibetans to attend the sessions with exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in Bihar in India from December 31 to January 10, in what the rights group said seemed to be a sign of a relaxation of policy towards Tibetans. "However, that changed against a backdrop of unrest in the eastern Tibetan areas and apparent fears it

CHINA

Even old ladies were carrying large boxes of firecrackers from their houses and setting them off at night

A WANGGANG VILLAGER, ON NEWS OF UNPOPULAR PARTY OFFICIALS BEING SUSPENDED > CHINA A8

DIPLOMACY

XI GETS HANDS DIRTY ON IOWA FARM



Vice-President Xi Jinping getting into the cab of tractor on Rick Kimberly's farm in Maxwell, part of a tour wrapping up his visit to Iowa. Photo: EPA

China and US seal five-year agreement on the safety and agricultural sustainability of products, as vice-president ends visit of US state with farm tour

Teddy Ng in Des Moines, Iowa teddy.ng@scmp.com

China and the United States have signed a five-year deal to guide discussions on the security and safety of food, and sustainable agriculture at a symposium in Iowa, as Vice-President Xi Jinping (習近平) wrapped up his visit to the US state.

Xi spent an hour visiting a farm owned by Rick Kimberley in Maxwell, north of the state capital Des Moines, after delivering an opening address at the symposium on Thursday.

His interest in farming was still alive, which he had shown 27 years ago when he visited Iowa on an agriculture mission as a Hebei (河北) provincial official.

Xi even joined Kimberley, 61, in the cab of a John Deere tractor on the 1,600-hectare farm.

Kimberley, a fifth-generation farmer, said Xi asked detailed questions about the farming techniques he used.

"We discussed many things like the use of GPS navigators on the farm that help me to spray seeds precisely and measure the use of fertiliser to avoid wastage," he said.

Kimberley took Xi and about 70 other guests on a stroll around his farm's barren fields, with some ice and frost visible, after a casual chat at his home.

He showed Xi some large pieces of equipment and explained their use.

During their chat, Xi asked Kimberley whether he would like his family to continue farming.

"Yes, we're very interested in Grant [his son] continuing to farm," Kimberley replied, adding that perhaps the seventh generation would end up working on the family farm too.

Grant Kimberley, who farms with

his father, has visited China four times.

Xi then asked Kimberly how he kept up with market developments; Kimberly replied that marketing the crops was the toughest part of his job.

"We are someone you can rely on. We can produce good products, and a safe product," he said.

Kimberley gave Xi a baseball cap, a John Deere tractor toy model and a T-shirt bearing his farm's name during the visit.

"We are so glad to see such a harmonious family," Xi said. "I hope that everything you plant this spring will have a good outcome at harvest time."

The co-operation agreement, signed by US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and his Chinese counterpart Han Changfu (韓長賦), outlines mutual goals and responsibilities, as well as how China and America will address the issues of food safety, security and sustainability.

"We have the responsibility and opportunity to work together to address the causes of global hunger that affect more than 925 million people," Vilsack said.

"Current population trends mean that we must increase agricultural production by 70 per cent by the year 2050 to feed nearly 9 billion people."

At the agriculture symposium, Xi recalled that he had spent seven years working on farms in a western province, which led him to develop a "special feeling" for agriculture and farmers in rural areas.

He said agricultural trade formed an important element of Sino-US ties, and that bilateral co-operation should be strengthened to ensure stable food supply.

A day before the symposium, China and Iowa signed an agreement for China to buy about US\$4 billion worth of soya beans this year.

State governor bolsters ties with leader-in-waiting

Vice-President Xi Jinping's (習近平) trip to Iowa saw him put aside thorny issues in the Sino-US relationship to mingle with old friends.

It also resulted in a request from Iowa Governor Terry Branstad that could bolster ties with the man expected to become China's next leader.

Branstad, who invited the vice-president to visit Iowa, suggested to Xi that he be the first US state governor to visit Beijing when China's new president is installed next year – an idea which Xi appeared to welcome.

"I would like to be the first American governor to come and see him in Beijing after he becomes the leader. I mentioned it to him at a dinner," Branstad said.

"And then he said he wanted my wife to come with me as well, and also

when we were in Muscatine, he wanted to invite the old friends to come. We want to go and, obviously, we hope that he will come back to Iowa."

Branstad said Xi was careful not to touch on anything to do with the leadership transition in Beijing.

"He is careful about not assuming anything," Branstad said. "He is very careful to respect the fact that he is not the president and I think he is very politically astute."

Xi's visit has boosted the international standing of Iowa, which rarely sees such important international guests.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev visited the midwestern state in 1959, followed two decades later by Pope John Paul II.

Branstad said it was significant



China," he said. Xi spent less than 24 hours in the state and did not touch on sore points in the Sino-US relationship such as human rights and the value of the yuan. But the brief stay did allow him to show his outgoing, and personable side as well as boosting agricultural trade between the two countries.

"It puts a human side on a Chinese leader," Branstad said, adding he believed Xi was capable of settling long-standing sources of friction between the two countries.

"When you see someone like Xi Jinping, who is very honest and sincere, and has long-time friends in Iowa, I think it is going to help reassure people that we can trust and work with him to try to work out something," Teddy Ng

that Xi chose to visit Iowa as well as Washington.

"We really want to make it a wonderful and enjoyable experience for him. We also want to lay the groundwork for additional trade and exchanges between Iowa and



Mission control will be abuzz this summer when the Shenzhou IX, carrying three astronauts, launches.

SPACE

Summer launch for next mission

Shenzhou IX will carry three astronauts to space lab, but officials won't reveal their identities or operation

Stephen Chen binglin.chen@scmp.com

Three Chinese astronauts will blast off on a Long March rocket and board the Tiangong (Heavenly Palace) space laboratory, orbiting above the earth, between June and August, mainland authorities said yesterday.

The *taikonauts*, whose identities remain secret, would break many records in China's brief but ambitious history of human space flight, some space experts said.

"They will be the first to use a real

lavatory and sleep in a bed, to say the least," Professor Jiao Weixin (焦維新), of Peking University's school of earth and space sciences, said yesterday.

Their spaceship, Shenzhou IX, will rendezvous and dock with the Tiangong laboratory under manual control, a spokesman for China's manned space programme said. Colonel Yang Liwei (楊利偉) was the first Chinese astronaut nine years ago.

The ship's predecessor, Shenzhou VIII, performed the manoeuvre under computer control, without any human interference, last year. That success gave the latest mission clear-

ance and confidence, the programme said. The spokesman did not reveal what the astronauts would do at the laboratory, how long they would stay or whether any would be female.

Jiao said a summer launch was a bit unusual as most Chinese manned space flights took off in autumn, near the National Day holiday.

But he said the mainland's space projects had developed so rapidly that officials had been left with less room to schedule space flights for the celebration of political events. "More than 20 satellites and spaceships have lined up for take-off this year," Jiao said. "Their economic and defence value goes far beyond political fireworks."

He said the Shenzhou IX mission was even more likely to succeed than the previous Shenzhou VIII as the automatic docking system had proved reliable. Failure would not occur unless computers and humans all made some terrible mistakes.

Tiangong is a dwarf compared with the gigantic International Space Station – about 10 metres long and three metres in diameter – but astronauts will have room to do scientific experiments and bioengineering tests, such as playing games and exercising, that were not previously possible, Jiao said. "A small step into the space lab is a big stride for the Chinese space programme," he said. But China's capabilities still trail those of the US by about 50 years, he said.

New system for accurate economic indicators

Reuters in Beijing

The nation's statistics agency will launch a new system today to collect data directly from businesses, the latest bid to improve the accuracy of key indicators in the world's second-largest economy.

Under preparation since 2009, it will allow 700,000 factories, property developers and department stores to report their business numbers on a monthly basis, the National Bureau of Statistics said.

The businesses account for more than 90 per cent of national industrial output and sales.

The latest steps to improve the accuracy of economic data comes as the fast-growing economy gains more global influence. Beijing in the past had to rely on local statistics cadres – who often manipulated numbers for career promotions – to compile key indicators such as industrial output and retail sales.

The new system would cut short the long process of data collection, which went from businesses to municipal and provincial statistics agencies and then finally to the national agency, said bureau chief Ma Jiantang (馬建堂).

It would ensure that the bureau got original data from firms and close the loopholes for local officials to alter numbers.

"Now enterprises can just press the 'submit' button, and their numbers will be in our database," Ma said. Ma and his agency had often come under fire from the public for producing questionable numbers.

For example, when the bureau announced that housing prices in 70 main cities had grown a mere 1.5 per cent in 2009, mainland media, analysts and even government officials said the number was untrustworthy.

"In the past, we sometimes sensed that there might be cooked numbers in some areas, but we couldn't pin down where as we couldn't see the first-hand data from companies. What we saw were numbers reported by local statistics organs," Ma said.

Now the bureau will be able to spot and record any change in input numbers.



Shanghai split

A man tries to insert his fingers into a long crack in a street between the Shanghai World Financial Centre and Shanghai Tower yesterday. The Shanghai Tower is under construction and expected to be the tallest building in China, with a height of 632 metres on completion in 2014. Experts said subsidence was under control. Such cracks were normal and presented no danger to the buildings. Photo: ImagineChina

FOCUS



Bob Fu (right) holds a phone as activist Chen Guangcheng speaks to a US Congress hearing convened by Congressman Christopher Smith (left). Photos: AFP

Man on a mission

Pastor Bob Fu fled China 16 years ago with his wife under threat of persecution and is now a central player in helping mainland dissidents make the journey out

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When Bob Fu set up his ChinaAid Association in 2002, his main mission was to advance religious freedom on the mainland. Instead, it's his constant involvement in the rescue of Chinese dissidents that has put him in the international spotlight.

The 44-year-old Fu, a pastor who fled China for the United States via Hong Kong in 1996 to escape persecution, has using his connections in the US and the international community to help dozens of dissidents and other Chinese citizens subjected to official threats and harassment to leave the mainland.

His involvement in the rescue of Shandong (山東) blind activist Chen Guangcheng (陳光誠) has showcased how he has become a key contact for some US officials, in a controversy that has put Sino-US ties to the test.

In two US congressional hearings on Chen, convened by Congressman Christopher Smith to put pressure on the Obama administration, Fu phoned the blind activist in his Beijing hospital room, allowing Chen to testify directly about concerns about himself and his family.

"When Chen escaped from house arrest in Shandong, we immediately set up a round-the-clock mechanism for giving him international backup. I dispatched information on Chen to government officials, especially US officials, telling them how he escaped and what should be done," Fu said, adding that US officials he had spoken to included Michael Posner, the US Assistant Secretary of State for human rights.

"This is a big mission that people both inside and outside of China need to put enormous efforts [into] to make it successful."

Fu declined to give details of the operation, saying only that more than a dozen people in China were involved and that the international campaign to save Chen intensified in November, when there were rumours that Chen might be dead.

"I set up an international coalition around that time, lobbying the support of politicians in the US and other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands," he said. "I gave them a profile of Chen, and told them what they could do."

"If the US refused to take Chen, some other countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, said they were willing to do so."

But even with the international support, Fu said, getting Chen out of his house in Linyi (臨沂) was extremely difficult because of the tight surveillance.

He said, generally speaking, it took only a few weeks to get a dissident out of China if they agreed to leave and there was another country willing to take him. Chen's case was delicate, however.

"He was kept incommunicado for a long time and security for him was basically round-the-clock. Even people who wanted to visit him were attacked by thugs, and people were deployed outside his bedroom to watch him closely," he said.

"A Taiwan couple briefly met Chen's wife, but they were detained by thugs afterwards and had their belongings snatched. Even briefly meeting his wife caused trouble."

One of the notable dissidents Fu has helped is doctor Gao Yaojie (高耀潔), who feared that her life was at risk after uncovering the spread of the Aids virus through illegal blood sales, in Henan (河南) province.

Fu had not met Gao before she went to the US in 2009, but said he decided to help her because he was touched by an e-mail Gao sent to a group of activists, describing how she was under threat for offending the authorities.

He said he liaised with US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to arrange a US visa for Gao, and asked his aide in Guangzhou to help get her out of China. Security around Gao was not tight, Fu said, but his assistant still "got into trouble" with the authorities.

Fu also had a hand in the case of Geng He (耿和), the wife of jailed human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng (高智晟), who fled to the US in 2009 by getting refugee status in Thailand.

In some cases, leaving China does not mean dissidents will find sanctuary. In February 2009, Zhang Qing (張青), the wife of lawyer Guo Feixiong (郭飛雄) who supported Gao Zhisheng and was sentenced to five years' jail in November 2007 for engaging in illegal publishing, fled to Thailand with her two children to apply for refugee status with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations' refugee agency.

But the agency rejected the appli-

cation. Fu then addressed the family's request to the Obama administration, but the US government did not allow the family to be extradited without UN approval. Desperate, Fu arranged for the family to use other people's US passports, including his son's, to leave Thailand for the US, where they were later granted political asylum.

"I could have been put into a US jail for that," Fu said. "I didn't know what to do at that time, and I just kept praying until the matter was resolved and I was not sent to jail."

Fu said he knew the risks of a rescue operation because he went through a similar experience 16 years ago. Fu was forced to attend special political study sessions and constantly write self-criticism after leading a group of students from Liaocheng University in Shandong province, where he studied English literature, to join the Tiananmen protests in 1989 in Beijing.

During that time, he read a book given to him by an American Christian teacher about a Chinese intellectual who was addicted to opium in the early 1990s and changed his life after embracing Christianity.

Fu and his wife, Heidi Cai, then began attending an underground church, even while he was teaching English at the Communist Party's central school. In 1995, the two were arrested and taken into custody for two months.

Soon after their release, Fu was told that they would be jailed again and feared that his pregnant wife would be forced to have an abortion because she did not have a permit to have a child. The couple then decided to leave China, staying in Hong Kong for about eight months and leaving for the US a few days before the handover.

Unlike most other dissidents whose influence diminishes after



Ex-US president George W. Bush (centre) next to Bob Fu (right).

If the US refused to take Chen, some other countries ... said they were willing to

PASTOR BOB FU

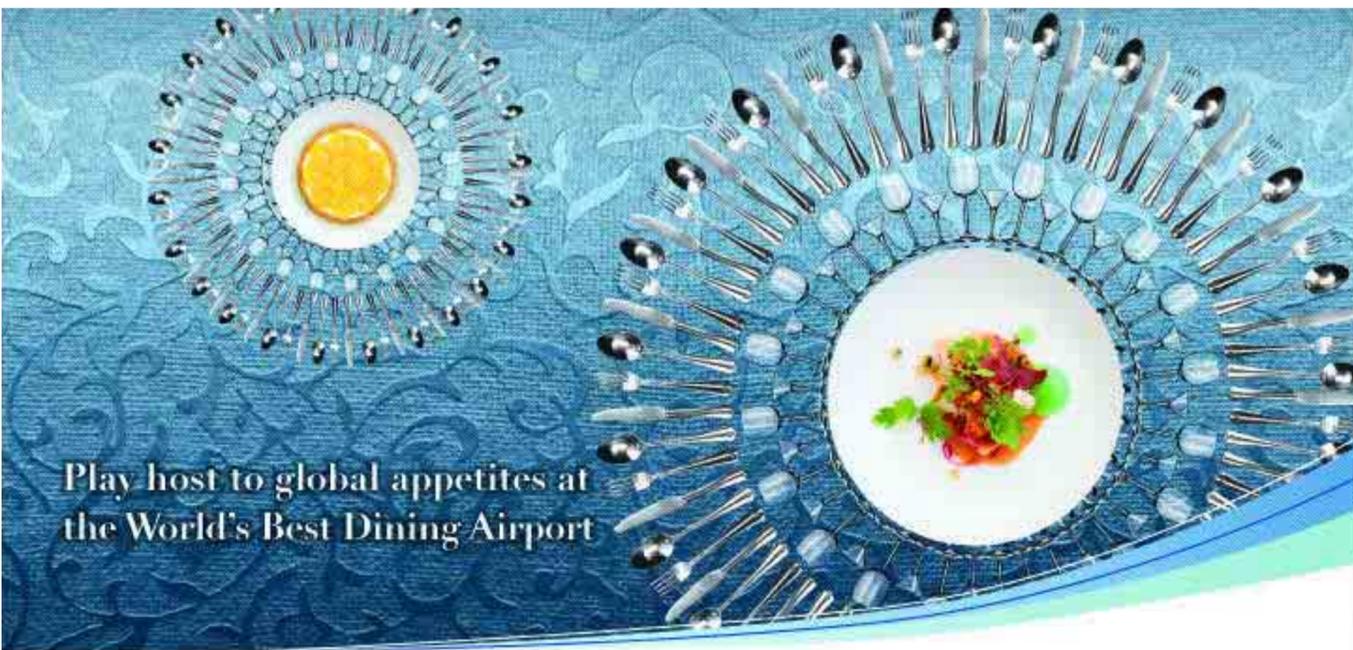
leaving China, Fu has stayed relevant to China with ChinaAid, which he founded after an official crackdown against an underground church in Hubei (湖北) province led to five Christians being sentenced to death.

ChinaAid has offices in the Texan city of Midland, Washington, and Los Angeles, and an annual budget of US\$1.5 million. Last month, Fu raised nearly double his original target of US\$200,000 at the association's annual gala. Most of the funds will be used for legal training and sponsoring underground churches on the mainland, he says.

Part of Fu's success in the US has been his fluency in English, which enabled him to integrate with Americans. That is in contrast with some exiled dissidents who, once in the US, refuse to interact with mainstream society and often become involved in infighting within the Chinese community. "Some [exiles] go only to Chinese places and take part in Chinese activities, because of the language barriers. They do not learn English even after staying here for a long time," he said.

Fu spent his first seven years in the US in Philadelphia, and moved to Midland in 2004. Midland has only a small Chinese community, but the oil town is also the childhood home of former US president George W. Bush and his wife, Laura. The Midlanders are also known for their association with Bush in raising concerns about difficulties faced by Christians around the world.

"I know my mission is to advance religious freedom in China. I don't want to get into the infighting among Chinese dissidents and I am not only working with Chinese here," he said.



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- Continuous stream of affluent customers who demand choice and quality. Over 80 dining outlets provide an array of the world's finest cuisines from scintillating sides to Michelin-star creations.
- 51% of departing passengers and 31% of well-wishers and meeters & greeters dine within the airport.⁴

Delight the palates of diners from far and wide

- Departing visitors with strong purchasing power come from Mainland China (21%); Taiwan (16%); S. & S.E. Asia (16%); Europe, Africa and Middle East (12%).⁴
- Airport users dwell in HKIA for around 4 hours on average.⁴
- Airport users include passengers, meeters & greeters, over 65,000 airport staff, exhibitors & visitors and local residents.

Seize this opportunity now for your catering business to flourish at HKIA!

Tender Closing Date:

6 July 2012, 11:00 a.m. (Hong Kong Time)

Tender Details:

Licences	Outlet Location in Terminal 1	Category	Area (sq. ft.)
A	Arrivals Greeting Hall (non-restricted area)	Coffee / Light Refreshment	63
B	Arrivals Greeting Hall (non-restricted area)	Coffee / Light Refreshment	63
C	Departures Check-in Hall (non-restricted area)	Light Refreshment / Ice Cream / Fruits / Yogurt / Juice / Salad / Tea/Cafe	19
D	Departures Central Concourse (restricted area)	Coffee	88
E	Departures North Concourse (restricted area)	Coffee / Light Refreshment	25
F	Arrivals Greeting Hall (non-restricted area)	Western Fast Food	312
G	Departures Check-in Hall (non-restricted area)	Fast Food / Vegetarian Restaurant / South East Asian Cuisine / Gorgee / Noodles	464
H	Departures Northwest Concourse (restricted area)	Asian Cuisine	231
		Western Cafe / Interbar / Sports Bar / Wine Bar	230

To request a set of tender documents:

Please send a cashier's order of HK\$500 (non-refundable) made payable to "Airport Authority" with a written request on a company letterhead specifying the Tender Number (12-0001), company name, contact details, catering category and trade name to:

Ms. Porlia Ho
Group Manager, Retail
Airport Authority Hong Kong
5/F, HKIA Tower, 1 Sky Plaza Road
Hong Kong International Airport, Lantau, Hong Kong

Tender documents (including information of all tendered outlets) will be delivered by courier.

Enquiries: Ms. Tong (852) 2183 3266 /
Mr. Cheung (852) 2183 3208 /
Ms. Ho (852) 2183 3087

Email: cateringtender@hkaairport.com
Fax: (852) 2182 3266

Website: www.hongkongairport.com (Tenders & Notices section)

Sources:

- 1 The 2012 Skytrax surveys collected feedback from 12 million passengers in over 100 countries / regions, covering more than 388 airports worldwide
- 2 HKIA Best Airport Dining "HODSIRK" Campaign in 2010
- 3 Airport Authority Hong Kong
- 4 HKIA Retail Tracking Survey November 2011 by Cimigo Ltd

FOCUS

Growing influence



The arrival of China on the international scene, economically and militarily, has brought much tension as the world works out how to accommodate this new superpower

Teddy Ng in Beijing
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When President Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) and Premier Wen Jiabao (温家宝) took power 10 years ago, China was still new to the world stage, trying to re-establish itself after a decade-long diplomatic stalemate.

China had just been accepted into the World Trade Organisation, an achievement which helped to show that the country was willing to play by international rules and could overcome the setbacks it suffered after Beijing's crackdown in 1989 on the student-led democracy movement brought sanctions from many countries.

Now, as Hu and Wen prepare to hand over the reins after a remarkable run that has turned China into the world's second-largest economy, the country is fast becoming a major presence in global events and learning to wield new influence overseas.

Officially, Beijing still sticks to the foreign policy directives laid out by previous leaders, including Deng Xiaoping (邓小平) and Jiang Zemin (江泽民), seeking to keep a "low profile" in international affairs. It denies any interest in China becoming a hegemonic power like the United States, and expresses a commitment to the country's peaceful rise, a phrase adopted by party leaders early in Hu's tenure.

But many analysts contend that, in practice, the overseas economic interests of China and Chinese companies, many state-owned, are increasingly influencing the affairs of other countries.

That growth is challenging the other major global powers, especially the United States, and leading to more calls for China to take action internationally, and more international anxiety over its rise.

"The policy mottoes still have not been changed," said Jin Canrong (金灿荣), an international affairs professor at the Renmin University. "But the constant change of development inside China and in the international community have triggered a change in how China's foreign affairs are perceived."

China's changing status in the world has been obvious since the autumn of 2008, when, just after Beijing hosted the country's first Olympic Games, global business and political leaders looked to Chinese economic power to help soften the recession then taking hold in the West.

The country contributed 14.5 per cent of global economic growth in 2009, up from 4.6 per cent in 2003, according to the World Bank.

China's complex new role was further illustrated last year at the G-20 summit in France, as European leaders courted Beijing for financial support to fight the continent's sovereign debt crisis, si-



President Hu Jintao plants a tree in Nairobi, with the help of the head of the UN Habitat Programme, Anna Tibaijuka. Hu was on a two-day state visit to Kenya at the time, in April 2006. Photo: AFP

multaneously stoking concerns about the West's growing dependence on the communist state.

Such developments make the diplomatic environment facing Hu, Wen and their successors more sensitive. Even as the country expands its footprint overseas in pursuit of energy, resources and business opportunities, its leaders have sought to contain perceptions of China as a threat. China rejected a proposal advanced by some in the US to create a "G-2", which would place China and the US alone at the head of world affairs. Beijing said it wanted increased co-operation with the US, but favoured a more multilateral approach to problem-solving.

To that end, China has sought an overhaul of the International

Monetary Fund, seeking reforms that would give developing countries more representation, a move which would diminish the dominance of the West.

Professor Jia Qingguo (贾庆国), who teaches international relations at Peking University, said: "The status of China is enhanced, while for the US it is lowered. China is exploring how to deal with its increased influence in the world."

In an attempt to cast China as a positive force for global development, Beijing has offered loans to countries across Africa, Asia, eastern Europe, Latin America and the South Pacific. In July, Hu pledged another US\$20 billion (HK\$155 billion) in loans to African states over the next three years.

To allay fears about China's

rising military strength, it leaders have begun committing troops to peacekeeping missions, with more than 2,000 peacekeepers serving in United Nations operations worldwide. It has also sent a naval squadron to join anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

Chinese leaders say they want a more "harmonious global order", an extension of Hu's domestic vision for a "harmonious society", and stress that countries should seek common prosperity and eschew unilateral action.

"We should use peaceful means and negotiations to settle international conflicts," Hu said at the UN's 60th anniversary in 2005, not long after the US-led invasion of Iraq. "We should oppose violation of other countries' sovereignty, interfering in the domestic affairs of one nation, and the use of violence as a threat."

But not everyone sees China as a force for harmony. Some accuse it of "colonising" Africa through the purchase by state-owned enterprises of farmland and tracts rich in minerals.

The People's Liberation Army's growing capabilities, including the launch last year of the navy's first aircraft carrier, have also fuelled concerns among China's neighbours that the country may one day resort to force to assert territorial claims in the South China and East China Seas.

"China is puzzled that increased concern from the outside world has led not to more recognition, but more suspicion," Jin said.

Faced with such fears, party leaders pledged their commit-

ment to China's "peaceful rise" after Zheng Bijian, then the vice-principal of the Central Party School, coined the term in 2003. Eventually, even that term was deemed too threatening and scrapped in favour of "peaceful development".

But the policy has failed to convince many, especially with the recent flare-up in territorial disputes between China and Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Kerry Brown, a specialist in Chinese politics at the University of Sydney, said: "Peaceful rise" is largely viewed as meaningless rhetoric. There is still deep suspicion of China's true intentions, and events over the last two years in the South China Sea only underline how disruptive China rising can be."

Nations that feel threatened by China are inclined to move closer to the US, a trend which stands to only increase tension and distrust between the two.

Even though Hu and the US president, Barack Obama, have met 11 times in the past four years, Sino-US ties remain delicate, with Beijing complaining about a "trust deficit" and American politicians accusing China of unfair trade policies and human rights abuses.

"To the US, the 'China threat' theory is becoming more obvious after 2008," Jia said. "Some US politicians believe that any concessions made to Beijing will be interpreted as a sign of the US declining, thus prompting them to be tougher against Beijing."

China has sought to establish its own international alliances,

China is exploring how to deal with its increased influence in the world



Jia Qingguo

such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and the BRICS group of developing economies, which takes in itself, Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa.

Jonathan Holslag, head of research at the Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies, said: "A lot of small countries are much more comfortable negotiating with Beijing on all sorts of issues if you give them the impression that they are in the game together."

"In that sense, China is really the master of the game of multilateralism and has made a lot of progress at the expense of Western countries, like the US."

Despite party leaders' commitment to a peaceful rise, they are facing mounting pressure at home to be more assertive, with some members of the military top brass urging a hard line in territorial disputes.

"China still thinks it is being bullied and that its territorial integrity is trampled on and thus it needs to take strong actions, which is a kind of 'weak nation' mindset," Jia said. "From a long-term perspective, China should focus more on navigation rights and how resources in the disputed waters can be utilised, than on territorial rights."

Analysts believe China's diplomatic approach will remain largely unchanged after Hu and Wen give way to their expected successors, Xi Jinping (习近平) and Li Keqiang (李克强). Nonetheless, maintaining an "introspective" position will eventually become untenable as China's booming resource needs drive it further abroad.



Deng Xiaoping, seen with US President Gerald Ford in 1975, advocated a "low profile". Photo: Reuters