



## **China Newsletter**

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# **Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Liu Xiaoming at the Press Conference on China-UK Relationship**

Chinese Embassy in the UK, 30 July 2020

Good morning!

Welcome to today's press conference.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the China-UK "Golden Era". Since early this year, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Boris Johnson have had two telephone conversations, during which they reached important agreements on advancing China-UK relations and enhancing joint response to Covid-19. The departments of the two governments have been working hard to implement these agreements and carry out cooperation in various areas.

This was a positive momentum in China-UK relationship that should be cherished so that further progress could be achieved. To our regret however, this relationship has recently run into a series of difficulties and faced a grave situation.

People are asking: What is happening to China-UK relationship? The British media are also asking: What has caused the current difficulties in China-UK relationship? Has China changed or has the UK changed?

Today, I am going to give you my answer to these questions. My answer is loud and clear: China has not changed. It is the UK that has changed. The UK side should take full responsibility for the current difficulties in China-UK relationship.

**First, China's determination to follow the basic norms governing international relations has not changed.**

These basic norms include:

- mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity,
- non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
- equality,
- and mutual benefit.

These are the fundamental principles that are enshrined in the UN Charter. They are the basic norms of the international law and state-to-state relations. They are also the basic guidelines that have been written into the Joint Communiqué of China and the UK on exchange of ambassadors and hence form the bedrock for China-UK relationship.

China has never interfered in the internal affairs of other countries, including the UK, and we ask the same from other countries.

Recently, however, the above-mentioned important principles have been violated time and again.

On Hong Kong:

There has been blatant interference from the UK in Hong Kong affairs, which are internal affairs of China, including

- groundless accusations against the National Security Law for Hong Kong SAR,
- change to the policy involving BNO passport holders,
- and suspension of the extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

These moves have severely disrupted the stability and prosperity in Hong Kong.

On Xinjiang:

- The UK disregarded the facts,
- confused right and wrong,

- flung slanders recklessly at China's Xinjiang-related policies
- and interfered in China's internal affairs by raising the so-called "human rights issue" in Xinjiang, bilaterally and multilaterally.

These actions have seriously poisoned atmosphere of China-UK relationship.

### **Second, China's commitment to the path of peaceful development has not changed.**

Pursuing peaceful development is the unwavering strategic choice and solemn pledge of China. China has never invaded other countries or sought expansion. China has never and will not export its system or model. China seeks development because we want better life for our people. We do not want to threaten, challenge or replace anyone.

History has proved and will continue to prove that China is always a defender of world peace, a contributor to global development and an upholder of international order. A stronger China will make the world a more peaceful, stable and prosperous place.

However, some British politicians cling to the "Cold War" mentality and echo the remarks of anti-China forces in and outside the UK. They

- play up the so-called "China threat",
- see China as a "hostile state",
- threaten a "complete decoupling" from China,
- and even clamour for a "new Cold War" against China.

### **Third, China's resolve to fulfill its international obligations has not changed.**

This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. China was the first country to put its signature on the UN Charter. It is now a member of more than 100

inter-governmental international organisations and has signed over 500 multilateral treaties.

- It has faithfully fulfilled its international responsibilities and obligations.
- It has never withdrawn from international organisations or treaties.
- Nor does it believe in “us first” at the expense of others.

It is completely wrong to see the National Security Law for Hong Kong SAR as a violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration or a failure to honour international obligations.

The core content of the Joint Declaration is about China’s resumption of exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. The National Security Law for Hong Kong SAR fully embodies the comprehensive jurisdiction of the Central Government of China over Hong Kong.

The policies regarding Hong Kong laid out in the Joint Declaration were proposed by China on our own initiative. They are not China’s commitments to the UK or international obligations. The label of “failure to fulfill international obligations” should not be stuck on China.

It is the UK side that has failed to fulfill its international obligations and went against its own pledges by changing the policy on BNO passport holders and suspending the extradition treaty with Hong Kong to create public confusion in Hong Kong, disrupt the implementation of the National Security Law and interfere in China’s internal affairs.

**Fourth, China’s willingness to develop partnership with the UK has not changed.**

During President Xi Jinping’s state visit to the UK in 2015, China and the UK issued a joint declaration on building a global comprehensive strategic partnership for the 21st century.

China has always seen the UK as a partner and it has been committed to developing a sound and stable relationship with the UK. As State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said two days ago in his telephone conversation with Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, **for the UK, China is an opportunity rather than a threat, a factor for growth rather than a cause for decline, a solution rather than a challenge or a risk.** However, there have been major changes and serious deviations in UK's perception and definition of China. This is particularly evidenced by the recent ban on Huawei.

The issue of Huawei is not about how the UK sees and deals with a Chinese company. It is about how the UK sees and deals with China. Does it see China as an opportunity and a partner, or a threat and a rival? Does it see China as a friendly country, or a "hostile" or "potentially hostile" state?

The UK leaders have said on many occasions that they want to build a balanced, positive and constructive China-UK relationship. We hope they will match their words with actions.

The world is undergoing increasingly profound changes unseen in a century. Covid-19 is still ravaging, dealing a heavy blow to economic globalization and resulting in a deep recession of the world economy. What kind of China-UK relationship do we need in face of such a situation?

China and the UK are both permanent members of the UN Security Council and important members of the G20 and other international organizations. Both are countries of global influence. Both shoulder the important mission of safeguarding world peace and promoting development.

A sound and stable China-UK relationship is not only in the fundamental interests of the peoples of the two countries but also conducive to world peace and prosperity. We have a

thousand reasons to make this relationship successful, and not one reason to let it fail.

How can we make it successful? I think it is critically important to follow three principles:

**First, respect each other.**

History tells us that when international law and the basic norms governing international relations are observed, China-UK relationship will move forward; otherwise, it will suffer setbacks or even retrogression.

China respects the UK's sovereignty and has never interfered in the UK's internal affairs. It is important that the UK do the same, namely, respect China's sovereignty and stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs, which are China's internal affairs, so as to avoid further harm to China-UK relationship.

**The second principle is: engage in mutually-beneficial cooperation.**

China and the UK have highly complementary economies and deeply integrated interests. The two sides have both benefited tremendously from cooperation. Such mutual benefit should not be gauged by an over-simplified comparison of who is more dependent on the other or who has been "taken advantage of".

It is our hope that the UK would resist the pressure and coercion of a certain country, and provide an open, fair and non-discriminatory environment for Chinese investment, so as to bring back the confidence of Chinese businesses in the UK.

China and the UK already share broad consensus on safeguarding multilateralism, promoting free trade and addressing global challenges such as climate change. When Brexit is completed and Covid-19 is over, there will be

unlimited prospects for China-UK cooperation in the areas of trade, financial services, science and technology, education and health care.

It is hard to imagine a “global Britain” that bypasses or excludes China. “Decoupling” from China means decoupling from opportunities, decoupling from growth, and decoupling from the future.

**The third principle is: seek common ground despite differences.**

China and the UK differ in history, culture, social system and development stage. It is natural that we do not always see eye to eye.

Seventy years ago, the UK was the first major Western country to recognize New China. For the past 70 years, China and the UK have found common ground despite differences and went beyond ideological differences to achieve continuous progress in their bilateral relationship.

Today, after 70 years, this relationship has been more substantial and profound. It is not a relationship between rivals, where one side’s gain is the other’s loss. Still less is it a relationship of “either-or” that exists between hostile states. China-UK relationship is one of partnership, which is defined by equal treatment and mutual benefit.

China and the UK should have enough wisdom and capability to manage and deal with differences, rather than allowing anti-China forces and “Cold-War” warriors to “kidnap” China-UK relationship.

I often say “Great Britain” cannot be “Great” without independent foreign policies. The UK has withstood the pressure from others and made the right strategic choices at many critical

historical junctures,

- from becoming the first major Western country to recognize the People's Republic of China in 1950, to establishing diplomatic relationship with China at the chargé d'affaires level in 1954;
- from taking part in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to building a global comprehensive strategic partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century with China.

Now, China-UK relationship is once again standing at a critical historical juncture. It is my hope that political leaders and visionary people from all sectors in the UK would keep in mind the big picture of the international trend, prevent various disruptions and make the strategic choice that serves the fundamental interests of the peoples of our two countries.

Thank you.

Now I would like to take your questions.

## **Ambassador Liu Xiaoming on issues relating to Xinjiang**

On issues relating to Xinjiang, there are so many fallacies and lies that permeate the Western media. They can well be called “the lies of a century”. Moreover, some Western countries have been using Xinjiang-related issues to discredit China and interfere in China’s internal affairs. Regrettably, the UK is one of them. I would like to take this opportunity to debunk the lies and let facts be known, so as to show you a real Xinjiang.

**First, Xinjiang-related issues have nothing to do with human rights, ethnic groups or religions, but everything to do with fighting violent terrorism, separatism and extremism.**

Since 1990s, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, terrorist, separatist and religious extremist forces have launched thousands of violent attacks in Xinjiang, resulting in devastating casualties of innocent people and huge loss of property. During the riots on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, which shocked Xinjiang and the whole world, 197 lives were lost and more than 1,700 people injured.

In face of such grave situations, the Government of Xinjiang Autonomous Region has struck down upon violent terrorist activities in accordance with law and adopted de-radicalisation measures to address the root causes. These measures have been very effective: there has not been a single terrorist attack for more than three years in a row in Xinjiang, and the basic rights of all ethnic groups, especially the rights to life, health and development, are fully safeguarded. Therefore, these measures have won extensive and heartfelt support from people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

These measures have also been an important contribution to the global fight against terrorism, and thus won positive response from the international community. Since the end of 2018, more than 1,000 people in over 70 groups, including officials from the United Nations, members of foreign diplomatic corps in China, permanent representatives to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva, journalists and representatives of faith groups, have visited Xinjiang. They represent over 90 countries. They spoke highly of the counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation measures in Xinjiang, saying that these measures are in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations in striking down upon terrorism and safeguarding basic human rights, and should be fully recognized and shared with other countries.

In October 2019, representatives from more than 60 countries spoke at the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in recognition of the human rights progress in Xinjiang. In July this year, representatives from 46 countries made a joint statement at the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in support of China's position and the counter-terrorism measures in Xinjiang.

Now I would like to play a video to help you see the harm caused by terrorist, separatist and extremist attacks in Xinjiang, so that you will understand why the measures taken in Xinjiang against terrorism, separatism and extremism are necessary and important.

**Second, there are many rumours and lies about the vocational education and training centres in Xinjiang, calling them “concentration camps” or “re-education camps”. The truth is they are none of these. They are useful and positive explorations of preventative and de-radicalisation measures.**

The centres were established to address the root causes for

extremism and prevent further escalation of violent terrorist activities. They are in line with the principles and the spirit embodied in a number of international documents on counter-terrorism, such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In nature, they are no different from the Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) of the UK, the community corrections in the United States, or the de-radicalisation centres in France.

At the vocational education and training centres, those who have been led astray by extremist ideas or who have committed minor crimes could learn the common language, legal knowledge and vocational skills. Such education and training will strengthen their ability to break away and stay away from extremist ideas and master vocational skills, and help them to not only become law-abiding citizens but also find stable jobs, earn their own living and live a better life.

At the centres,

- The Constitutional and legal principles on respecting and safeguarding human rights are strictly followed, the dignity of the trainees is fully respected, and insults and abuse of all forms are strictly prohibited.
- The freedom of trainees is guaranteed. The centres are managed as boarding schools. Trainees can have home visits or ask for leave to attend to private affairs.
- Meanwhile, the right of the trainees to use languages of ethnic groups is also fully guaranteed. All rules and regulations, school timetables and menus are written in both the common language and languages of ethnic groups.
- The customs and habits of different ethnic groups are fully respected and protected. A variety of Halal food are provided for free.
- The freedom of religious belief is also fully respected and protected. Religious believers have the freedom to attend lawful religious activities while on home leave.

Now I would like to show you a video in which the trainees of the vocational education and training centres tell the stories of their life in the centres.

**Third, let me turn to four lies and slanders widely spread in Western media about Xinjiang. I think it is wrong to allow the lies and slanders to run amok, or to let arrogance and prejudice prevent people from seeing the facts and truth. So it is important to get the facts and truth out there, so that people could make up their own minds from an objective and reasonable perspective.**

**The first lie is that “nearly a million Uyghurs in Xinjiang are detained”.**

This is a lie cooked up by an anti-China organization and an anti-China individual.

The organization is the so-called “Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)” backed by the government of the United States. Armed with interviews with only eight people who are ethnic Uyghurs and based on an extremely rough estimation, CHRD reached an absurd conclusion that 10% of the more than 20 million people in Xinjiang are detained at so-called “re-education camps”.

The anti-China individual is called Adrian Zenz, a far-right fundamentalist funded by the government of the United States. He published an article on the journal *Central Asian Survey*, claiming that “Xinjiang’s total re-education internment figure may be estimated at just over one million.” According to *The Grayzone*, an independent news website, Zenz’s conclusion is based on a single report by Istiqlal TV. This so-called “Uyghur exile media organization” based in Turkey is far from being a media organization. Istiqlal TV is an organization that advocates separatism and extremism. And Zenz himself believes that he is

“led by God” on a “mission” against China.

A few days ago when I gave an interview on BBC’s Andrew Marr Show, Mr. Marr showed me a footage which he said has “been authenticated by Western intelligence agencies and by Australian experts” to prove that a large number of Uygurs are detained. Now let’s see what is really happening.

The video shows transfer of a group of prisoners by the Kashgar Detention House. It has nothing to do with the so-called “detainment of a large number of Uygurs”. China’s criminal law does not target specific ethnic group or religion. Everyone is equal before the law. The transfer of prisoners by judicial authorities is a normal judicial practice and brooks no distortion or defamation.

**The second lie is that “Xinjiang has demolished a large number of mosques”.**

The fact is, there are 24,400 mosques in Xinjiang, which means there is on average one mosque for every 530 Muslims. This ratio is higher than that in some Muslim countries and also higher than the number of churches per Christian in England.

The Jiami Mosque of Yecheng County and the Id Kah Mosque in Hotan prefecture, which were claimed to have been “dismantled”, were in fact renovated and put to use again. Those who cooked up the lies used the photo of the old, dilapidated mosques to support their lies. But I will refute their lies with photos of the new, renovated mosques.

**The third lie is that “forced sterilization is carried out in Xinjiang”.**

The fact is, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is one of the five ethnic autonomous regions in China. It is home to many ethnic groups, including 13 ethnic groups who have been living

there for generations. It is a place where 25 million people of all ethnic groups call home and live together in harmony.

The Chinese Government protects the lawful rights and interests of people of all ethnic groups, big or small in population. Over the years, the Uygur people and other ethnic minorities have enjoyed a preferential population policy. Between 1978 and 2018, the Uygur population in Xinjiang doubled, from 5.55 million to 11.68 million.

The true identities or stories of the so-called “victims” in the on-line videos about Uygurs being “prosecuted” are not what they claim. These self-claimed “victims” are either the so-called “East Turkistan” elements engaged in anti-China and separatist activities, or “actors” trained by anti-China forces in the US and other Western countries to spread rumours about China. Their claims have no factual ground. The relatives and friends of some of these people in Xinjiang have stood up to refute these rumours and lies.

At the Andrew Marr Show I mentioned earlier, Mr. Marr showed me another video of a so-called “victim”. This woman in the video, whose name is Zumrat Dawut, claimed that she went through “forced sterilization”. But her sister and brother publicly refuted her lies last November. It turns out that she has never been to any vocational education and training centre, she had an operation because she was diagnosed with myoma of uterus when she had her third child, and she has never been “forced to get sterilized”.

**The fourth lie is that “mass forced labour is taking place in Xinjiang”.**

In fact, this is yet another story fabricated by a hidden hand. This hidden hand is called the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), which is funded by the US government and arms dealers. This institute made up the so-called “Uyghurs for

sale” report last March, which is a distorted description of people from the southern Xinjiang seeking job opportunities in central and eastern China and trying to make a living and get rid of poverty. The report refers to stories of these people as “forced labour”.

After that, this absurd report was used as “evidence” by the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China to make up the so-called “Global Supply Chains, Forced Labor, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” report to fling slanders at China.

Now I would like to show you another video to lay bare their lies.

The Chinese people often say, “One does not know how vast and beautiful China is until one visits Xinjiang.” This vast and beautiful region is now witnessing sustained economic growth, social harmony and stability, improved wellbeing, and unprecedented cultural prosperity. People of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang are leading a secure life, getting along with each other in harmony, and enjoying full rights to life and development. Their freedom of religious belief and normal religious activities are protected by law. Now is the best time in history for Xinjiang to achieve development.

Rumours will not write off China’s progress in safeguarding human rights in Xinjiang. Attempts to disrupt Xinjiang’s development and prosperity will never succeed. It is my hope that you will not believe the rumours or the deceptive words of anti-China elements and politicians.

We urge the UK Government to view the progress and achievements in Xinjiang from a comprehensive and objective perspective, stop making irresponsible remarks on Xinjiang, and stop using Xinjiang to interfere in China’s internal affairs. We also hope that British media will discard their arrogance and

prejudice, and report and cover Xinjiang in an objective and fair manner so as to help the British public see the real Xinjiang.

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