

UN Security Council imposes new sanctions on Iran

By CINDY DRUKIER
Epoch Times Staff

The United Nations Security Council approved on Wednesday a resolution imposing a new round of sanctions against Iran for continuing its nuclear program.

The fourth round of sanctions in as many years was endorsed by 12 countries in the 15-member council.

President Barack Obama said the American-sponsored resolution imposed “the toughest sanctions ever faced by the Iranian government and it sends an unmistakable message about the international community’s commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons.”

Brazil and Turkey, who have been trying to broker a diplomatic solution to avoid sanctions, voted against the resolution. Lebanon abstained.

Brazil and Turkey signed a deal last month with Tehran to allow Iran to ship low-enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for higher-grade enriched uranium that Iran says it will use in a medical research reactor.

Brazil’s U.N. Ambassador, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, reiterated her country’s view that the sanctions are punitive and not as constructive as a diplomatic solution.

“Sanctions will most probably lead to the suffering of the people of Iran and will play into the hands of those on all sides that do not want dialogue to prevail,” Viotti told the Security Council.

Susan E. Rice, U.S. permanent representative to the UN, says she expects the sanctions resolution will have a strong impact on Iran. “which is why Iran has worked so hard to try to prevent its adoption.”

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, however, had the opposite reaction.

“Sanctions are falling on us from the left and the right. For us they are the same as pesky flies,” Ahmadinejad said, according to Al Jazeera. “We have patience and we will endure throughout all of this.”

Iran has insisted that its uranium enrichment program is for peaceful purposes.

The resolution includes many binding measures such as arms restrictions on Iran, a ban on the launch of ballistic missiles that could carry nuclear weapons, and bans on Iranian investment in uranium related activities abroad.

It expands the arms embargo against Iran, and also includes travel restrictions for Iranians, as well as measures to restrict Iran’s financial sector.

“The financial measures are new and groundbreaking and extremely significant, as are the measures in the commercial sphere,” said Rice in a statement on Tuesday.

On Tuesday the five permanent members of the Security Council—United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China—met to discuss the resolution. This was followed by an open session including the 10 non-permanent members—Austria, Japan, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Uganda, Brazil, Mexico, Gabon, and Nigeria.

Beware the fox hunt

Another perspective on the Foxconn suicide scandal

By WU TSEN-HSI
Epoch Times Staff

News Analysis

The 13 suicide attempts this year by Chinese workers at Foxconn have attracted international attention and condemnation of the Taiwanese manufacturing giant for exploiting and mistreating workers.

While most reports focus on sweatshop accusations and the economic implications of the case, some China experts suspect that the widespread publicity is the result of political intervention in favour of Foxconn’s Chinese competitors.

“It’s an old trick for the Chinese communist regime to prey on Taiwanese businesses,” said Kao Weipang, head of Taiwan’s Victims of Investment in China Association (VICA). “When I saw the unanimous criticism on Chinese government-controlled media, I knew this is not just about suicides. They are trying to break Terry Gou.”

Gou, 60, is the founder and CEO of Taiwan-based Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. The Taiwanese tycoon opened his first Chinese factory in 1988 in Shenzhen, a special economic zone north of Hong Kong. Since then, Foxconn quickly evolved into the world’s largest manufacturer of electronics and computer components. It has stable contracts from Nokia, Sony, Apple, Dell, and many more, and 800,000 employees—300,000 of whom are in Shenzhen.

FOXCONN RUNS UP AGAINST BEIJING

Foxconn’s nightmare began in 2008 when Gou complained to Beijing authorities about its major local competitor, BYD. BYD is headed by Wang Chuanfu, a member of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress—the most powerful body of the Chinese Communist Party.

The tension between Foxconn and BYD started in 2003



CONTROVERSIAL CONDITIONS: Chinese workers assemble electronic components at Foxconn’s factory in Shenzhen, north of Hong Kong. Following a spate of suicides at its Chinese plants, Foxconn on June 2 confirmed the death of another employee but denied he died of exhaustion. (AFP/AFP/Getty Images)

when, according to Foxconn, BYD poached more than 400 key employees from Foxconn’s Nokia team. Along with them flowed internal company documents and information to BYD. Foxconn also accused BYD of copying its business model.

In 2006, Gou sued BYD for stealing trade secrets. BYD won the suit and counter-sued Foxconn for bribery and falsifying evidence, resulting in the arrest of some Foxconn employees.

During the same period, BYD captured a significant amount of business from Foxconn by undercutting their Taiwanese competitor. In 2008, BYD outperformed Foxconn in revenue and earnings per share. The following year, Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway bought 10 percent of BYD for US\$230 million (CA\$241 million).

Gou decided to seek help from the central government, which, according to a former high-level Foxconn manager, was Gou’s fatal mistake. “Since then,” the retired manager said, “Terry Gou has had a very hard time surviving there.”

VICA’s Kao said such communications with the central government often bring a host of new problems. “As far as I know, over the years no Taiwanese victim has ever got justice [from higher authorities],” he said.

SUSPICIOUS SUICIDES

Facts emerging about Foxconn and the suicides have raised questions about whether they were indeed suicides, or perhaps murders. For example, the ninth victim who allegedly jumped to his death was reported to have four knife wounds on his body.

Some of the victims, as well as other Foxconn workers, have been violently abused and harassed by Foxconn’s security staff. The Foxconn empire has a reputation for having strict, heavy-handed security.

Multiple bloggers identifying themselves as former Foxconn

employees have stated that company security personnel frequently detain and abuse employees, but are never held accountable.

Last January, a Reuters reporter who was taking pictures of the factory complex from the main road was manhandled by security guards. The reporter called local police who intervened, but the security guards were not questioned or detained.

The police gave the reporter the option of filing a complaint but said, according to Reuters, “You’re free to do what you want ... but this is Foxconn and they have a special status here. Please understand.”

Taiwanese attorney Winifred Tung described in a recent interview with Radio Taiwan International how many Taiwanese businesses have been plundered by spies sent by Chinese authorities to acquire core technologies. Security

personnel often play a role in this industrial espionage.

Tung said it is hard to know who security guards really work for. “When they come in to apply for the job, you don’t know who else is also paying them,” he said.

Another suspicious aspect of the suicides was the amount of coverage they received in Chinese state-run media in April and May. The criticism from the Party’s mouthpiece, Xinhua, was particularly harsh.

Tung says this sends a strong and clear message. “Chinese media do report negative news from time to time. But such sharp criticism usually appears in the media in regions outside of where the incident in question occurred. But this time, the coverage is nationwide.”

News reports mostly focused on the social issues surrounding the suicide cases, such as low pay, high suicide rates, the household registration system, and the suppression of workers’ unions. The same topics have dominated discussions in international media as well.

Then suddenly, reports and discussions about Foxconn were banned from Chinese media and major websites. This happened as commentators started looking beyond Foxconn management problems toward underlying issues with the nation’s political, administrative, and legal systems.

For Terry Gou himself, the attack may have been unexpected given Foxconn’s huge contributions to China’s GDP. But for the regime, the Taiwanese company may have outlived its usefulness, and may be seen as nothing more than a barrier to its government-backed competitor.

As the Chinese saying goes, “When the rabbit is caught, the dog can be cooked for dinner.”

Democracy’s next stand in Hong Kong

Electoral reform package allows Beijing to keep its grip on HK

By SONYA BRYSKINE
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Clashes have erupted in Hong Kong over proposed electoral reforms, which democracy groups, known as pan-democrats, say are nothing more than a rehashing of reforms that brought hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong citizens to the streets in protest in 2005.

Under the 1997 handover agreement, Hong Kong should be able to directly elect its leader by 2017 and its legislature by 2020. The latest reform deal omits both of these elements, which democracy groups say are crucial in the transition to full democratic rule.

“We feel that it is very difficult to support this 2012 political reform package. This is the only opinion we can provide to the democratic camp,” said Albert Ho, chairman of Hong Kong Democratic Party, reported NTDTV.

The former British colony was promised it could keep its Western-style democracy when it was handed back to China in 1997. Since 2003, Hong Kong’s pan-democratic camp has pushed for universal suffrage—allowing people to directly elect their leader and legislature.

On Monday, hundreds of pro-democracy protesters gathered to oppose what they considered a publicity stunt by Chief Executive Donald Tsang, namely his rallying pro-Beijing supporters to back his reform package.

As Tsang struggled to spread his “Act Now” message—the official slogan employed for the reform campaign—protesters drowned his speech with an “All Wrong” chant.

Opposition groups say the reform package is merely an overhaul of the undemocratic proposals put forward in 2005.

In December 2005, more than 250,000 Hong Kong residents took to the streets in a massive protest march against the reforms. The package was ultimately defeated in the legislature, blocked by pan-democrats who control over one-third of the seats, 23 of 60.

The latest proposals preserve the elite committee that selects the chief executive, equivalent to prime minister, under Hong Kong’s system. The committee, largely made up of powerful business tycoons and pro-Beijing groups, will be increased from 800 to 1,200.

The Legislative Council (Legco)—Hong Kong’s equivalent to a parliament—remains a largely toothless body, with half its seats still chosen from elitist functional constituencies comprised of bankers, property tycoons, and other trade-based groups.

The government wants to add 10 seats, enlarging the Legco from 60 to 70 lawmakers, but preserving the 50/50 balance. This means that only half the seats would be elected through a system of universal adult suffrage.

Group opposes Monsanto aid in Haiti

HAITI CONTINUED FROM P1

“The aim of Monsanto is to have complete control of the market. The intention is to open markets all around the world for their plants,” said Brenda Biddle, resource faculty for Evergreen State College.

The MPP is the largest grassroots organization of Haitians in Port-au-Prince, which helps aid organizations bring food, shelter, and resources to locals.

“The Haitian government is using the earthquake to sell the country to the multinationals,” Jean-Baptiste said, according to the AFP.

Monsanto states that there are no business ties with this gift, and the crops grown can bring in a profit for the farmers. Then the money can be used to buy the next batch of seeds, and so create a market.

Some of the seeds shipped to Haiti were treated with pesticides. Karl Tupper, a staff scientist at Pesticide Action Network of North America, explained that once the pesticide-treated crops enter local markets it will be very hard to go back and this crop will harm the soil.

Monsanto wants to drop off the rest of the 475-ton donation over the next 12 months.

“Big companies try to get farmers to grow the crops but it has devastating effects on the local economies,” said Tupper, adding that companies might be donating seeds that are not the best of quality or are banned in the country where they are produced.

Monsanto is also known for its aggressive litigation against farmers who save their seeds, and has even sued a Canadian farmer who said his fields became contaminated with Monsanto seeds that blew in from other fields. Monsanto alleges the farmer stole the seeds.

However, there is a possibility of a light at the end of the tunnel for Haitian agriculture. “They can rebuild their agricultural market,” said Biddle.

According to Biddle, Haiti will need help organizing an autonomous farming system that will be able to feed the families first, then the produce can be put on the local market and support whole communities.

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