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Xi Jinping warns against "foreign infiltration" in religions

by John Ai

Speaking at high-level conference last week, China's top leader underscores the fact that religion remains a matter of "state security" and "national unity". Sinicisation and the party's religious policy remain the same.

Beijing (AsiaNews) – China held a high-level conference on religion last Friday and Saturday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed the seminar, stressing the need to be aware of foreign infiltration through religions. The matter, in his view, "is related to the state security and the country's unification", the *Xinhua* news agency reported.

Typically, the issues of security and national unity are cited in reference to Xinjiang Muslims and Tibetans, who are often accused of terrorism and secessionism.

Now, this kind of rhetoric is being applied to other religions even if their aspirations are non-violent or separatist.

For Xi, religious groups must "merge religious doctrines with Chinese culture, [as well as] abide by Chinese laws and regulations".

At the same time, they should "devote themselves to China's reform and opening-up drive and socialist modernisation to contribute to the realisation of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation," Xi was quoted as saying.

Yesterday, the *People's Daily* said in an editorial that party officials and members must support the **sinicisation of religion**, and improve the "legalisation" of religious affairs.

It also noted that Xi called on the party to adhere to and develop religious theories "with Chinese characters", by adhering to the independent principle and adapt religions to socialist society.

Xi stressed that the party must resist religious infiltration from abroad, be aware of extreme religion thoughts, pay attention to religious affairs on line, and propagate the party's religious theories and guidelines by "spreading positive voices".

Politburo member Yu Zhengsheng, who is in charge of Xinjiang and Tibet, was present at the conference. In his address,

he said the party should minimise the negative impact of religions.

From all this, it is clear that the Communist Party's religious policy remains unchanged.



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