



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 02, 2004

### China Roiled by Muslim Unrest

by Michael in New York on 11/02/2004 07:27:00 PM

First, it's been VERY hard to post because of the massive traffic to our blog. Thanks for checking in and sorry there haven't been more updates. Your comments on the I Voted and Election Day story threads have been great.

But the rest of the world keeps on turning. In China, "ethnic" clashes erupted in a province, leading to at least 148 deaths (per the police) and much more according to others. Notable for two reasons. First, the "ethnic" clashes -- as described by the New York Times -- are really more evidence of Muslim unrest around the world. Second, the central government in China is admitting to the unrest, when normally news about massive strikes and unrest that regularly (yes, regularly) occur throughout that massive nation leaks out over weeks and is downplayed or suppressed by the government. More signs that the new head of China wants new openness as in their approach to the problems with SARS?

"The incident is the latest challenge for the authorities in a society that has become markedly prone to social unrest. A growing wealth gap and persistent corruption and backwardness in rural areas have fueled riots in the countryside and in secondary cities. Large-scale demonstrations, some violent, are no longer rare.

"Ethnic violence is less common. Hui Muslims, one of the country's 56 official ethnic groups, trace their origins to Central Asia. But they resemble Han Chinese, who make up about 90 percent of the population, and are considered well integrated into Chinese society.

"The details of the Henan incident remain sketchy and the number of casualties is in dispute. But it appears to have been one of the largest and most sustained ethnic clashes in many years."



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