



Source : <https://www.sortirdunucleaire.org/The-curious-case-of-China-s-former>

Réseau Sortir du nucléaire > Archives > Revue de presse > **The curious case of China's former nuclear power chief's life sentence news**

20 novembre 2010

The curious case of China's former nuclear power chief's life sentence news

The former chief of China's civilian and military nuclear programmes and the prime facilitator of Pakistan's Chashma Nuclear Power Project, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Chinese court yesterday for accepting bribes.

The official Xinhua News Agency yesterday reported, citing a statement from Beijing's First Intermediary Court, that Kang Rixin, the former head of China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), was convicted for taking 6.6 million yuan (\$994,000) in kickbacks between 2004 and 2009.

Interestingly, when Kang was fired from his job last year, the Chinese government had accused him of taking bribes totalling 1.8 billion yuan, the equivalent of \$260 million.

During the course of the investigation, the Chinese government seized his personal assets in December 2009 and stripped him of his political rights for life.

According to the court, 57 year-old Kang had taken bribes and abused his position to enrich others, but was given a lighter sentence because he cooperated with the authorities and returned the money he had taken.

Kang is reported to have taken bribes between 2004 and 2009 in exchange for granting contracts to companies from France and Southeast Asia and also for allegedly trading on the stock market for his own gain with large amounts of public funds that were earmarked for the construction of three nuclear power plants.

It is likely that his embezzlement was discovered when the stock market crashed in late 2007.

But now being convicted by the court for taking merely \$1 million in bribes after being earlier accused in 2009 of taking \$260 million in kickbacks raises the possibility of the Chinese government protecting him just as the Pakistan government is protecting its rogue nuclear salesman A Q Khan.

Although the Chinese government has never disclosed which companies had bribed him, nor has the court named any foreign nuclear firms, Kang is reported to have taken kickbacks from French nuclear

power giant Areva for a contract in China's southern Guangdong province.

In November 2007, Areva bagged an order worth €8 billion (\$11.9 billion) to supply two of the third-generation EPR nuclear reactors to be built in Taishan in Guangdong province. It seems utterly implausible that Areva would offer a bribe of a measly \$994,000 for an \$11.9-billion order.

Under Chinese laws, accepting bribes invites the death penalty and the Chinese government has, of late, been strictly enforcing the death penalty for bribery.

In 2007, former drug regulator, Zheng Xiaoyu was executed after he was convicted of taking bribes to approve medicines, and Li Peiying, former head of the state firm that owns Beijing airport, was executed last year after he was found guilty of taking \$16 million in bribes.

Li Haitao, the head of the cultural relics at an imperial garden villa in Chengde city in the northern province of Hebei, was convicted of stealing cultural relics and selling around 152 of these for more than \$550,000. He was executed yesterday.

Analysts feel that the quantum of the bribe money in Kang's case was deliberately reduced to less than a million so as to save him from the gallows.

Born in 1953 in Datong in the northern province of Shanxi, Kang joined the Communist Party in 1982. He was a member of the Communist Party's elite and powerful 204-member 17th Communist Party Central Committee and held a rank equivalent to that of a cabinet minister since 2007.

He was also a member of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission that was to later investigate him.

He was made secretary of China Atomic Energy Scientific Research Institute CPC, Party Branch, in 1978 and also a deputy institute director in the same year.

As the head of the CNNC, he was instrumental in expanding China's nuclear industry, including nuclear weapons. He was also the prime facilitator of supplying nuclear plants to Pakistan including the Chashma Nuclear Power Project (Chasnupp) Phase I and II.

Chasnupp 1 was the first Chinese-built nuclear generating unit on foreign soil. China has also sold Algeria a heavy water reactor for research.

CNNC is the successor to the ministry of nuclear industry, which built China's first atom bomb, hydrogen bomb and nuclear submarine. It functioned as a government bureau for the national nuclear industry and reported directly to the Chinese State Council.

It oversaw China's nuclear-related corporations, manufacturers, institutions, research institutes, and plants, including those related to nuclear weapons. It was responsible for the design and operation of nuclear power plants ; nuclear fuel production and supply, including the processing of natural uranium, uranium conversion and enrichment, fuel assembly fabrication, spent fuel reprocessing, and nuclear waste disposal.

CNNC, which is an industrial conglomerate, comprising over 200 enterprises and institutions with advanced technology and equipment and a total of 280 000 employees, is also responsible for mining of uranium into nuclear fuel, nuclear manufacturing for both military and civilian use, nuclear waste treatment and storage, and nuclear safety.

It also exports nuclear power plants and heavy water to countries like Pakistan and Algeria. Its effort to build reactors in Pakistan and the Middle East, have raised concerns in the West about nuclear proliferation.