

# East Asia Office

## The Council on Middle East Relations

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Cardinal Pietro Parolin  
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Your Eminence ,

Should the Vatican renew its pact with the Chinese Communist Party, then in the words of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the Holy See will “ jeopardises the church’s moral authority. “

To the chagrin and embarrassment of Christians worldwide, the CCP-Vatican pact puts the church, especially Pope Francis, who is primarily responsible for it, on the wrong side of history. It reinforces the widespread perception that this first Jesuit pope is not only ignorantly arrogant, but is also spiritually bankrupt. His shameful refused to meet Hong Kong’s Cardinal Joseph Zen, who made the trip to External City to discuss renewal of the pact, speaks of a man who has little humility.

As you will be aware, one of Zen’s concerns is the appointment of a new bishop for Hong Kong to fill a vacant post. He fears the church in the former British colony, which recently lost its fight to preserve the freedoms it was guaranteed under the “one country, two systems” principle in the 1997 handover, is to be ruled by a bishop who has China’s support but not that of the local flock.

The CCP-Vatican deal has never been sighted. Transparency is not a strong point of either Beijing or under this Papacy. Yet it hands the Chinese state considerable power over bishops’ appointments.

Such power was not even part of the notorious Reichskonkordat of July 1933 between the Vatican and the newly formed Nazi government in Germany.

Until now, that shameful pact, signed by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII), Vatican secretary of state under Pope Pius XI, was the last time the church made such a blunder with a totalitarian regime.

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*The East Asia Office explores the multidimensional relations between the Middle East and East Asia through scholarly analysis of cross-regional economic, political, security, and social/cultural interactions and their implications. It seeks to foster collaborative research on these issues as well as forging institutional partnerships.*