



# CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

*A weekly update of press freedom and censorship news  
related to the People's Republic of China*

Issue No. 65: July 19, 2012

## Headlines

-  State media reject or ignore Clinton's democracy remarks
-  Mystery surrounds newspapers' leadership, content changes
-  LinkedIn's SlideShare blocked in China
-  Communications cut on Dalai Lama's birthday, monk authors detained
-  China and North Korea release first film coproduction

## BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS

### State media reject or ignore Clinton's democracy remarks

A July 12 editorial in Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece the *People's Daily* criticized U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton over comments she made about democracy in Asia during a recent visit to Mongolia. During her speech, Clinton highlighted elections in countries like Mongolia and challenged claims that democracy was only for Western societies, noting that according to Freedom House data, Asia-Pacific has been the only world region to make steady democratic gains over the past five years. In an implicit rebuke of China's political system, she criticized "those governments that resist reforms" and "work around the clock to restrict people's access to ideas and information." The *People's Daily* accused Clinton of acting as an arrogant "preacher for human rights" and suggested that Washington's "aggressive" posture in the region stemmed from insecurity. The state-run Xinhua news agency's report on Clinton's speech omitted any mention of her comments on democracy, instead focusing on women's rights and stating that she "urged all governments to help women find their roles in their societies." Meanwhile, some efforts by netizens to circulate Clinton's comments were reportedly censored. One such post on the Sina Weibo

microblogging site, by a writer with 12,000 followers, was deleted on July 11, according to the Hong Kong-based China Media Project. More dramatically, a day after the *People's Daily* article was published, the Sina Weibo account of the U.S. consulate in Shanghai was suddenly shut down. It had 80,000 followers at the time and was known for its sometimes tongue-in-cheek comments about high-profile political and social incidents in China. The Sina Weibo accounts of other U.S. diplomatic outposts in China remained active.

- Reuters 7/11/2012: [Hillary Clinton diplomacy: Newspaper slams Secretary of State for comments on democracy, China](#)
- *People's Daily* 7/12/2012 (in Chinese): [Washington should control its urge to preach for human rights](#)
- Xinhua 7/9/2012: [U.S. investment helps boost Mongolia's development: president](#)
- China Media Project 7/11/2012: [Clinton remarks on democracy in Asia deleted from Weibo](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 7/12/2012: [No freeze for U.S. consulate as Weibo account axed](#)
- Associated Press 7/13/2012: [Shanghai US consulate's social media account, known for its irreverent remarks, disappears](#)



## Mystery surrounds newspapers' leadership, content changes

Notable personnel and content changes at two well-known commercial papers over the past week are thought to be connected to government efforts to avoid any political disruptions ahead of the 18th Communist Party Congress scheduled for the fall (see CMB No. [63](#)), but the specific reasons for the actions remain unclear. The arbitrary and opaque nature of China's censorship system often leads to sudden, unexplained reversals of fortune for individual journalists and entire outlets, a phenomenon one Hong Kong paper called "death by uncertain causes." In the first incident, Lu Fumin was removed as editor in chief of Guangzhou-based *New Express Daily* after his paper ran a full-page July 10 report on the Chinese Communist Party's incoming leadership. On July 16, Lu confirmed that he would be moving to a position at *New Express Daily's* parent paper. What struck observers as strange, however, was that the July 10 article was a rerun from the previous day's *Jinan Daily*, the official party newspaper of Jinan, Shandong Province, and remained available online after Lu's removal. The article explored the personal histories of key national-level party members, including Xi Jinping, expected to become China's next president, and Li Keqiang, who is poised to become prime minister. *New Express Daily* has since focused on entertainment and local rather than national or international news, and its editorial page has been cut. In the second incident, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* reported on July 18 that Lu Yan, publisher of the *Oriental Morning Post* in Shanghai, had been transferred to another division of the paper's parent company after a series of reports that angered the city's party secretary, including one on an economist who advocated liberal reforms. Here too, however, the article in question remained available online. Meanwhile, the same paper's deputy editor, Sun Jian, was reportedly suspended from his position for a microblog post in which he shared a cover image of *Conversations with Chen Xitong* (see CMB No. [60](#)). In the book, former Beijing mayor Chen Xitong admits that the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen Square crackdown was an unnecessary tragedy. The *Post* has long been known for its strong

journalism, including robust coverage of a fatal bullet-train crash in 2011, causing observers to suggest that the dismissals were in response to the paper's overall track record or a preemptive measure during a sensitive political period, rather than a punishment for a specific article.

- **China Media Project 7/17/2012:** [Top editor reshuffled at Guangzhou paper](#)
  - **China Media Project 7/19/2012:** [China's media and 'death by uncertain causes'](#)
  - **Epoch Times 7/17/2012 (in Chinese):** ['New Express' harmonized, chief editor demoted to 'Yangcheng Evening News'](#)
  - **Want Daily 7/17/2012:** [Political pressure allegedly forces changes at Guangzhou paper](#)
  - **South China Morning Post 7/18/2012:** [Officials crack down on outspoken Shanghai daily](#)
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## **German art handler detained amid industry crackdown**

China's growing art scene has been shaken by a string of detentions. The *New York Times* reported on July 16 that German citizen Nils Jennrich, the general manager of Hong Kong art-handling company Integrated Fine Arts Solutions, was taken into custody during a raid of the firm's Beijing office on March 30. He was accused of underreporting the value of art items to evade 10 million yuan (\$1.5 million) in taxes. The company's operations manager, Lydia Chu, was also held for questioning, and a broader crackdown on the art industry has reportedly led to detentions of three other Chinese citizens. According to Shanghai's *Oriental Morning Post*, a shipping company in Beijing called Noah Fine Art Shipping Agency was recently forced to turn in an 800-name list of clients during a police investigation. Some have speculated that Integrated Fine Arts Solutions caught the government's attention for having handled the work of prominent Chinese artist and blogger Ai Weiwei, an outspoken critic of the ruling Chinese Communist Party. Separately, the lawyer for Beijing-based artist Hua Yong said on July 17 that Hua had been sentenced to a "reeducation through labor" camp. He and another artist, Guo Zhenming, had been detained on June 4 after they tried to set up an art installation in Tiananmen Square to commemorate the 1989 crackdown on prodemocracy protests there (see CMB No. [62](#)). Guo was released after 38 days in custody, with a year's probation.

- **New York Times 7/16/2012:** [Two arrests in China unnerve art world](#)
  - **Agence France-Presse 7/17/2012:** [German art smuggling suspect held in China](#)
  - **Oriental Morning Post 4/23/2012 (in Chinese):** [Customs investigation launched on imported artworks](#)
  - **Bloomberg 5/16/2012:** [German held on art smuggling in China as buyers dodge tax](#)
  - **Radio Free Asia 7/17/2012:** [Labor camp for Tiananmen artist](#)
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## Censors tear pages from ‘Economist,’ readers complain

The June 30 issue of the British weekly newsmagazine the *Economist* was recently censored by the Chinese authorities. On July 8, a Chinese netizen reported on the popular microblogging site Sina Weibo that all articles in the magazine’s China section had been torn out of the copy he bought at Shanghai’s Hongqiao International Airport. The retailer claimed that the stock had come in without the China section, which contained articles on China’s security state and democratic activism in Hong Kong. Many other netizens reported similar experiences. A subscriber to the U.S. magazine *Time* said that the publication’s articles on China were often torn out, and issues with covers about China were simply not distributed (see CMB No. [59](#)). “All words and phrases related to Tibet are blacked out with markers in the Merriam Webster dictionaries sold online,” another user added. With respect to television programming, a netizen located in Guangdong Province said news segments from Hong Kong were frequently subjected to blackouts. While most comments were critical of the censorship, one offered sarcastic advice: “These people still don’t do their jobs right. [You] should black out all the article titles from the table of contents, so the readers won’t even know what you had torn out.” Such incidents of heavy-handed, low-tech censorship are not a new phenomenon. In August 2011, censors tore pages out of copies of *Newsweek* magazine distributed in China because they contained an article authored by prominent Chinese artist Ai Weiwei in which he described Beijing as a “nightmare” (see CMB No. [32](#)).

- *Tea Leaf Nation* 7/9/2012: [How to censor the Economist in Shanghai? Just tear the pages out](#)

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## NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



## Microblog service hides ‘the truth’ and Politburo member’s name

In the latest example of unusual censorship on the popular Sina Weibo microblogging platform, internet users began reporting during the week of July 9 that searches for the Chinese characters for “the truth” (真相) produced Sina’s well-known response for censored results: “According to relevant laws, regulations, and policies, search results for ‘the truth’ cannot be displayed.” The discovery spurred a wide range of humorous remarks by netizens, who wondered when “the truth” would reveal itself again. A Sina spokeswoman claimed the problem was due to a “technical glitch.” Meanwhile, testing by *China Digital Times* found that as of July 17, posts involving former Beijing Communist Party secretary Liu Qi and a tourist spot in northeastern China were blocked. Two days earlier, spontaneous protests had broken out when tourists were forced to wait below the scenic Mount Baekdu as senior officials—including Liu, it was rumored—toured the area. It is not uncommon for individuals’ names to be designated as “sensitive” keywords on Weibo (see, inter alia, CMB No. [63](#)). Contrary to instances in which prominent activists’ names are censored, ostensibly to check their influence, the restrictions on search results involving Communist Party officials typically occur when there is a spike in negative public attitudes about them. Limiting netizens’ ability to

search for their names is apparently a more efficient way to curb the momentum of an embarrassing discussion than attempting to delete all of the negative posts.

- *Telegraph* 7/12/2012: [The 'truth' deleted from internet in China](#)
- *China Digital Times* 7/18/2012: [Sensitive words: Mount Baekdu fury and more](#)



## **Suicide finding in activist's death fails to stanch doubts online**

After Hunan Province police announced on July 12 that the disputed death of labor rights activist Li Wangyang was indeed a suicide, Chinese bloggers expressed anger and disbelief. Li was blind, deaf, and severely physically disabled as a result of spending 21 years behind bars, raising questions about his ability to kill himself in a hospital room on June 6 (see CMB No. [61](#)). According to the police statement, released on the website of Beijing-backed Hong Kong China News Agency, Li died by hanging himself with his bedsheet. The article included an image of a handwritten letter reportedly signed by Li's sister and her husband on June 9. "We don't want to accept any interviews.... We just want to deal with our grief and live a normal and peaceful life," the letter reads. However, because the couple remained incommunicado with their mobile telephones switched off, several activists asked whether they had written the letter under coercion, a common police tactic in cases of suspicious deaths in custody. According to Radio Free Asia, thousands of netizens have signed a petition calling for an investigation into the case. On the overseas Chinese news site Aboluowang, one wrote, "The administration should stop blaming people for spreading rumors. The government is the top-notch rumor-generator." In response to repeated calls from reporters, Yi Jun, a local police chief in Shaoyang, the Hunan Province county where Li was found dead, told the *Wall Street Journal* that the official investigation had been thorough and scientific, but that "no matter what we do, you media never believe us!"

- *Radio Free Asia* 7/17/2012: [Activists held over suicide doubts](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 7/13/2012: [Disbelief as investigation rules dissident's death a suicide](#)
- *New York Times* 7/13/2012: [China concludes that dissident committed suicide](#)
- *Agence France-Presse* 7/13/2012: [Hong Kong activists reject Li Wangyang suicide verdict](#)
- *Aboluowang* 7/16/2012 (in Chinese): [Overseas netizens criticize Chinese Communist Party's verdict of Li Wangyang death](#)



## **LinkedIn's SlideShare blocked in China**

SlideShare, an online document-sharing service owned by popular U.S. social-networking website LinkedIn, was reportedly rendered inaccessible to users in China on July 11. Those who attempted to reach it received a page error similar to those for blocked U.S.-based social media websites like

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. LinkedIn, which acquired SlideShare in May for \$119 million, focuses on networking among professionals and is not routinely blocked in China. However, it was disabled for two days in February last year, after one of its users posted calls for democracy and freedom in China (see CMB No. [12](#)). The proliferation of online social media and smartphone applications that enable the sharing of potentially sensitive information presents a complex challenge to censors, as well as the companies and users affected by their frequently unannounced and unexplained decisions (see, inter alia, CMB Nos. [42](#), [53](#), [57](#)). On July 10, the U.S. technology giant Apple informed New Tang Dynasty Television (NTDTV)—a New York-based station established by Falun Gong practitioners that offers uncensored, Chinese-language news programming—that its applications had been removed from Apple’s online App Store in China, though they would remain available in other countries. The notice simply stated that the NTDTV apps contained content that is “illegal in China” (see CMB No. [61](#)), an assertion the station disputed given the lack of a specific legal citation and the nominal protections for free speech in the Chinese constitution.

- *TheNextWeb* 7/12/2012: [LinkedIn-owned SlideShare is the latest Western service to get blocked in China](#)
- *Tech in Asia* 7/12/2012: [China blocks Slideshare](#)
- *PCWorld* 7/13/2012: [LinkedIn's SlideShare site blocked in China](#)
- NTDTV 7/12/2012: [Apple rejects NTD's iPad app, for China app store](#)

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## HONG KONG



### **‘China Model’ textbook draws criticism**

*The China Model*, a 34-page booklet produced by the government-funded Hong Kong National Education Services Centre, has been criticized for “brainwashing” local schoolchildren, reviving a long-standing debate about Hong Kong government curriculum projects that seem to promote loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party (see CMB No. [31](#)). According to the booklet, the Chinese government is led by a “progressive, selfless, and united ruling group.” It also says that multiparty systems set up a “malignant party struggle” in countries like the United States. Several Hong Kong lawmakers said the approach resembled the propaganda practices used during China’s Cultural Revolution period. On July 12, education services center director Wong Chi-ming said at a press conference that the booklet was merely a reference for teachers, who could use their own judgment in employing it. He also reportedly scolded journalists, urging them to be more positive. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, about 30,000 copies of the material have been distributed to public schools in the past two months. In addition to praising China’s political system, it features positive images of Chinese leader Hu Jintao visiting farmers and military officers handing out medicine in Africa. There are some references to sensitive topics, including China’s internet censorship and food-safety issues. The center received about HK\$8 million (US\$1 million) from the Hong Kong government from 2008 to 2011 for production of educational materials.

- *Wall Street Journal* 7/16/2012: [‘China Model’ teaching booklet riles Hong Kong](#)

- *Standard* 7/12/2012: [National education material producer defends content](#)
  - *Scotsman* 7/12/2012: [Textbook prompts controversy in Hong Kong](#)
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## TIBET



### **Human Rights Watch reports information clampdown**

According to a report released on July 13 by New York–based Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Chinese authorities have stepped up controls on news, media, and communications in Tibet ahead of the 18th Communist Party Congress scheduled for the fall. Citing the need to combat “separatism,” the government has increased restrictions on the internet, text messages, telephones, music publishing, and photocopying, while also intensifying the use of political “education” sessions and progovernment television programming, films, and books (see below, CMB No. [61](#)). According to the HRW report, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) party secretary Chen Quanguo said in June that officials in Tibet must “make sure the Central Party’s voices and images can be heard across 120 thousand square kilometers,” and that the voices and images of “enemy forces” and the “Dalai clique” are suppressed. Beijing often accuses Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, of stirring up unrest in the region. HRW China director Sophie Richardson warned that “trying to seal the region off will only lead to further frustration and greater international concern.”

- *Phayul* 7/16/2012: [China tightens restrictions on media and travel in Tibet: Report](#)
  - *Human Rights Watch* 7/13/2012: [China: Attempts to seal off Tibet from outside information](#)
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### **Communications cut on Dalai Lama’s birthday, monk authors detained**

According to Radio Free Asia, two Tibetan writers, both monks, were detained in Ganzi County, Sichuan Province, on July 14, after they published books that were critical of China’s policies in Tibet. The two men, Tashi Dondrub and Kelsang Gyatso, were the president and a prominent member, respectively, of a Tibetan literary group called the State of Our Snow Mountains. Their families and students expressed deep concern about the detentions, as Tibetans arrested in Ganzi frequently face torture by police. Separately, the London-based media freedom group Index on Censorship reported on July 10 that the authorities had disabled text messaging and internet access in Ganzi for two days beginning on July 7, the birthday of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. The unexplained outage was confirmed by prominent Beijing-based Tibetan writer and blogger Woenser, who said she resorted to expensive telephone calls to reach her friends in Tibet.

- *Radio Free Asia* 7/16/2012: [Tibetan writers detained](#)
  - *IFEX* 7/10/2012: [China celebrates Dalai Lama's birthday by cutting communications in Tibetan region](#)
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## BEYOND CHINA



### China and North Korea release first film coproduction

*Meet in Pyongyang*, China's first film coproduced with North Korea, will be screened in Beijing on August 3, having already premiered in North Korea on June 27. According to China's official Xinhua news agency, the movie was North Korea's first cinematic collaboration with a foreign country since its founding in 1948. While Chinese state-run companies have been criticized for imposing censorship rules in their proliferating partnerships with Hollywood studios (see CMB No. [61](#)), *Meet in Pyongyang* provides viewers with a rare if somewhat rose-colored glimpse of a country where censorship is far more onerous than in China. The movie features Chinese and Korean codirectors and costars. According to *Hollywood Reporter*, the story centers on the friendship between two young dancers, Chinese and Korean, and makes a number of references to Chinese-Korean ties, including the countries' past wartime cooperation. The film notably avoids any indication of North Korea's crushing poverty or human rights abuses. North Korea has consistently been ranked as the most repressive media environment in the world in Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press* report.

- Xinhua 7/16/2012: [First China-DPRK film to screen in China](#)
- *Hollywood Reporter* 6/20/2012: [Meet in Pyongyang: Shanghai Review](#)

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For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see:

[\*Freedom in the World 2012\*](#)

[\*Freedom on the Net 2011\*](#)

[\*Freedom of the Press 2011\*](#)

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