

# CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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

Issue No. 67: September 13, 2012  
Top Headlines

-  Media silence sparks rumors on Xi Jinping's absence
-  Regulator issues more rules on TV content
-  Opponents protest Hong Kong's pro-Beijing education plan
-  Canadian reporter claims Xinhua used him for spying
-  National Review' explores academic self-censorship on China

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK: FLAG OF INCONVENIENCE



Credit: [China Media Project](#)

## **BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS**



### **Media silence sparks rumors on Xi Jinping's absence**

State-controlled media have been largely silent on the recent absence from public view of Vice President Xi Jinping, who is expected to succeed President Hu Jintao in the coming months (see CMB No. [63](#)), fueling heated speculation online and overseas. For nearly two weeks, no public activities by Xi have been reported in state media, which are known for exhaustive coverage of senior leaders' official duties. Xi's absence was first widely noticed on September 5, when news surfaced that he had canceled meetings with visiting foreign dignitaries, including U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton and Singaporean prime minister Lee Hsien Loong. He also called off a meeting with Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Denmark's prime minister, on September 10. Possible explanations have ranged from unconfirmed reports that Xi is recovering from a back injury sustained while swimming, to rumors that he was injured in a car accident, or even a deliberate crash linked to party infighting ahead of the leadership change. Although state-run media are secretive regarding the health of top leaders, when inaccurate reports have surfaced in the past—such as claims that former president Jiang Zemin had died in July 2011 (see CMB No. [42](#))—the official media have been quick to refute the allegations by reporting on a public appearance and releasing related photos. Their continued silence about Xi has therefore encouraged more speculation and lent credence to reports of his physical incapacitation. In a possible move to dispel suggestions that Xi had somehow fallen out of favor, the Communist Party academy newspaper *Study Times* on September 9 published a transcript of a speech Xi gave at an event on September 1. Meanwhile, on the popular microblogging platform Sina Weibo, searches for Xi's full name and surname were blocked, and several postings containing his given name were reportedly removed. Some users avoided these restrictions by referring to him as “the crown prince.” Separately, a close ally of Hu's, Ling Jihua, was apparently demoted on September 1 amid reports that his son was involved in the fatal crash of a Ferrari in March, which had generated censorship and public speculation at the time (see CMB No. [51](#)).

- *Wall Street Journal* 9/11/2012: [Chinese mystery: Where is Xi Jinping?](#)
- CNN 9/11/2012: [Absence of Chinese vice president fuels intrigue before power transition](#)
- Associated Press 9/10/2012: [Where is China's next leader? Mystery absence of Xi sends rumor mill into frenzy](#)
- Reuters 9/11/2012: [China's Xi not seen in public because of ailment: sources](#)
- *New Yorker* 9/11/2012: [Paging Mr. Xi Jinping](#)
- *New York Times* 9/3/2012: [China faces new scandal over crash of a Ferrari](#)



### **Papers grope for censorship limits on Diaoyu Islands photo**

The conflicting territorial claims of China, Taiwan, and Japan over the Diaoyu Islands, also known as the Senkaku Islands, in the East China Sea, have recently received dense press coverage in China.

Among the reports was a photograph showing a group of Hong Kong activists who landed on the islands bearing the flags of both China and Taiwan, which is considered by Chinese authorities to be a renegade province. Despite its nationalistic reputation and a general taboo on showing the Taiwanese flag, the Chinese Communist Party–owned *Global Times* printed the unaltered image on the front page of its August 16 issue. A city newspaper in Shandong Province also ran the image in print, but the link to the front page on the paper’s website was disabled. Other Chinese newspapers placed a large headline over the image to obscure the Taiwanese flag, or cropped it so that only the Chinese flag was in the frame. The *Xiamen Commercial News* in Fuzhou Province went so far as to digitally convert the Taiwanese flag into a Chinese one. The doctored image was circulated on the popular Chinese microblogging platform Sina Weibo, but at least one post comparing the original and altered images was deleted by censors. As U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton arrived in Beijing on September 4, the *Global Times* alleged that many Chinese people disliked Clinton due to her “meddling” in China’s maritime territorial disputes with several countries in the region. However, on September 11, an opinion piece published by the same newspaper criticized Chinese media for stoking nationalism to win readers. The author, China Central Television (CCTV) anchorman Yang Rui, said the sensationalistic stories about Diaoyu Islands made it seem like China was going to war.

- **China Media Project 8/16/2012:** [The flag that launched 1,000 headaches](#)
- **China Media Project 8/17/2012:** [Post on media flag fakery removed from Weibo](#)
- **NBC News 9/4/2012:** [Chinese media: ‘Many Chinese people dislike Hillary’](#)
- **Global Times 9/4/2012 (in Chinese):** [Secretary Clinton: the person who deeply reinforces US-China mutual suspicion](#)
- **Global Times 9/11/2012:** [Media stokes nationalism over Diaoyu Islands for ratings](#)

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## Regulator issues more rules on TV content

A staffer at the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), China’s regulator for broadcast media, confirmed on August 4 that it had introduced new rules on the content for television series. It was unclear exactly how the restrictions were implemented or whether there would be legal consequences for broadcasters that failed to comply. According to the Communist Party newspaper *Beijing News*, television dramas adapted from foreign productions or online games are now banned. The new rules also called for limits on portrayals of family conflicts, and stated that shows on revolutionary themes should have a storyline that clearly distinguishes between villains and Communist heroes. Business-themed shows must emphasize “positive values,” while period dramas are to avoid fabricated storylines, though it was not immediately apparent whether SARFT meant to encourage screenwriters to produce work based on real events. The vague guidelines quickly drew criticism from Chinese netizens on the popular Sina Weibo microblogging site. One lamented that he might lose his job as a scriptwriter, while another complained, “This is why I don’t watch TV. SARFT are like aged parent; it likes to use its power but it harms human rights.” The regulator has imposed a series of new restrictions on entertainment programming since 2011 (see CMB No. [47](#)).

- **Global Times 8/6/2012:** [SARFT bans remakes of TV dramas adapted from online games](#)

- *Variety* 8/4/2012: [China issues new broadcast rules](#)
  - Ministry of Tofu 8/6/2012: [Six more diktats from Chinese TV censors panic netizens and screenwriters](#)
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## **Editor's suicide linked to censorship pressures, paper suspended for Beijing flood reporting**

Xu Huaqian, a senior editor at the Communist Party mouthpiece *People's Daily*, died on August 22 after jumping from a building, prompting discussion about the work environment for journalists in China. Xu was the editor of *Dadi*, a cultural supplement to the *People's Daily*. In an interview before his death, he expressed frustration with his own self-censorship and external constraints on his work, but said his family would suffer if he were to “leave the system.” The *People's Daily* and other sources said Xu had suffered from clinical depression, but many online commentators linked his mental state to the burden of official censorship and propaganda controls. “When you always have to speak falsehoods, the pressure is immense,” one netizen wrote. Prominent Beijing-based journalist Gao Yu said she had often written relatively bold articles, only to have them withheld by editors. “Of course it’s hugely depressing to be in that situation,” she said. Newspapers that push beyond the boundaries of permissible reporting can face serious repercussions. On August 6, the respected Shandong Province newspaper *Economic Observer*, which has offices and many readers in Beijing, was ordered to suspend its work in the city by the Beijing municipal government’s cultural bureau. According to Radio France Internationale, the authorities had confiscated copies of its August 4 issue from vendors, claiming that the newspaper was publishing illegally because it was not registered in the capital. The *Observer* was widely believed to have been punished for an article disclosing that the Beijing government had understated the death toll from destructive flooding in late July (see CMB No. [66](#)). In an example of the government’s sensitivity over coverage of the floods, the State Council Information Office reportedly issued a censorship directive calling on all websites to “boost their manpower” to “clean out harmful information” on the topic, including calls for official accountability.

- China Media Project 8/27/2012: [Editor's suicide prompts reflection, reproach](#)
  - BBC 8/24/2012: [China editor's suicide sparks web debate](#)
  - Radio Free Asia 8/23/2012: [Editor suicide linked to pressure](#)
  - IFEX 8/9/2012: [Newspaper suspended in China in alleged retaliation for investigation of Beijing storm death toll](#)
  - *China Digital Times* 8/19/2012: [Beijing flood censorship directives](#)
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## **Foreign journalists denounce series of beatings in China**

In a rare move, the foreign correspondents’ clubs of Hong Kong, Shanghai and China issued a joint statement on August 20 after several of their members were attacked in the course of their work (see CMB No. [57](#)). Foreign journalists often encounter resistance by police and hired thugs, despite

official regulations allowing them to travel freely, but the recent assaults were unusually violent. On August 11, German broadcaster ARD's China correspondent, Christine Adelhardt, and her crew were beaten and held by security guards and workers at a chemical plant in Zhongzhan County, Henan Province, after they recorded material for a report on pollution. They were accused of being "foreign spies" and detained for nine hours until the police arrived. On August 10, a Hong Kong reporter was assaulted by plainclothes police outside the court in Hefei, Anhui Province, where ousted Chongqing party chief Bo Xilai's wife, Gu Kailai, had been tried for murder the day before. The Asia Television (ATV) reporter, Lei Zhaohe, said he was beaten as he tried to record the arrests of several protesters who called for reforms of China's court system. On July 28, reporter Atsushi Okudera of the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* was beaten at a mass protest against pollution in Qidong, Jiangsu Province. While he was photographing protesters being attacked by the police, he was shoved to the ground, kicked by over a dozen officers, and had his camera and press credentials confiscated. Hundreds of people had taken to the streets in Qidong to express concerns that a waste pipeline project would pollute the local waterways. The authorities eventually bowed to public pressure and scrapped the project hours after the protest. Media outlets were ordered to publish only reports by state-run Xinhua news agency on the subject. The Qidong incident was one of several recent protests that forced the cancellation of industrial projects due to pollution concerns (see CMB No. [64](#)).

- *Epoch Times* 8/14/2012: [Hong Kong reporter beaten after Gu Kailai's trial](#)
- IFEX 7/31/2012: [Foreign journalist savagely attacked by police](#)
- *Guardian* 8/17/2012: [German TV crew attacked while filming at Chinese factory](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 8/24/2012: [China's abuse of journalists](#)
- FCCC 8/20/2012: [Foreign correspondents' clubs in China jointly express extreme concern over abuse of journalists](#)



## **Gu Kailai trial prompts scripted media coverage, netizen criticism**

One day after the August 9 murder trial of Gu Kailai, the wife of purged Chongqing Communist Party secretary Bo Xilai, Chinese state media broke months of silence on her case (see CMB No. [62](#)). State-run Xinhua news agency published an exhaustive report that laid out the official version of events on August 10. It described how Gu had admitted to poisoning British businessman Neil Heywood in November 2011, saying he had threatened her son. She reportedly apologized in court for causing the "nightmare," and blamed her actions on a "mental breakdown." The report made no mention of Bo, in an apparent effort to distance him from the case; it remains unclear whether he will face punishment on other grounds. There was also no reference to assorted corruption and other criminal allegations against Bo and Gu that have been reported overseas and could taint the broader Communist Party leadership. Most party-controlled newspapers, including the *Global Times*, *People's Daily*, and *Beijing Morning Post*, published similar stories about the trial, but none appeared on the front page. Foreign journalists were barred from the trial proceedings. The court in Hefei Province issued its verdict on August 20, imposing a suspended death sentence, which could allow Gu to win medical parole after a few years in prison given the psychological ailments cited in the judgment. A family aide, Zhang Xiaojun, was sentenced to nine years in prison for acting as Gu's accomplice. International media noted a number of key flaws and inconsistencies in the one-day trial

and the official account of the crime, including the unconvincing motive. The suspended death sentence generated heated discussion on the microblogging platform Sina Weibo. Gu's name was blocked online, but netizens managed to dodge censors by referring to her as "G." Many said her lenient treatment was unfair, as most ordinary citizens convicted of murder would be quickly executed. Others mocked what they saw as an opportunistic claim of mental illness and a seemingly rehearsed trial. Speaking to the *New York Times*, prominent Chinese artist and blogger Ai Weiwei criticized the Chinese Communist Party for carrying out the trial "in such a way that made everyone laugh," adding, "It's obvious to everyone that they came up with the sentence before the facts were known."

- **BBC 8/20/2012:** [Bo Xilai scandal: Netizens criticise Gu Kailai's sentence](#)
- **New York Times 8/20/2012:** [In China, Gu Kailai's reprieve reinforces cynicism](#)
- **France 24 8/22/2012:** [China: Web users react to Gu Kailai's sentence](#)
- **Daily Beast 8/11/2012:** [China: Gu Kailai blames murder plot on mental breakdown](#)
- **Wall Street Journal 8/12/2012:** [China gives account of Brit's murder](#)
- **CNN 8/10/2012:** [How China handles news of Gu Kailai's murder trial](#)

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## NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



### Online censorship update

The following are some of the more notable instances of online censorship that have come to light since early August.

- **Olympic propaganda:** The Chinese Communist Party's Propaganda Department issued two directives on August 6 and August 7 regarding star Chinese athlete Liu Xiang, who left the Olympic Games in London after he tore his Achilles' tendon on August 7. He had injured the same tendon at the 2008 Olympics, raising questions about his fitness for the London games. The media were ordered not to report negative news about him, and to focus instead on his "indomitable fighting spirit." Subsequently, a Chinese writer questioned on his microblogging account whether Liu's participation in the games, along with other recent headlines in China, were all set pieces or lies produced by "China's propaganda machine." The post was removed from the account, which has over 275,000 followers, on August 23.
- **No Xinhua news allowed:** Chinese netizens distributed a leaked September 2 directive from the Guangdong Province propaganda department regarding a Guangzhou official who had assaulted a flight attendant. In a curious departure from the common instruction to use only the version of events reported by the official Xinhua news agency, the Guangdong directive ordered local media outlets not to reprint Xinhua's story at all. The prohibition illustrated the fact that the censorship priorities of local authorities sometimes diverge from those of the central leadership.

- **Official caught visiting Japan:** Amid rising tension between China and Japan, on August 29, a microblog repost featuring series of photos of a tour bus, purportedly taken in Japan, was removed from the account of a Hainan Province official who has 162,000 followers. The bus in the photos bears a sign reading “Delegation of Henan Provincial Government’s Governor Zhang.” The original post was published by a netizen with only 169 followers. Part of the photo caption read, “Are you afraid people won’t know you’re a provincial governor from China? OK! I’ll help you do a bit of propaganda!”
- **Premier on a bike:** A photo of Chinese premier Wen Jiabao riding a bicycle, purportedly taken during his recent visit to Zhuhai in Guangdong Province, was removed from a Guangdong-based researcher’s microblogging account on August 27. Although the image seems innocuous, even flattering, censors may be wary of any unofficial or casual photos of top leaders.
- **Abolishing the Foreign Ministry:** A message that called for the dissolution of China’s Foreign Ministry, posted by popular blogger Feng Liu Yun Shi, who has about 108,000 followers, was removed from his microblog account on August 27. It criticized the ministry for making repetitive, ineffectual statements in response to current events, and urged other netizens who agreed that “there is no need for it to exist” to “pass this post along.”
- *China Digital Times* 8/8/2012: [Directives from the Ministry of Truth: Liu Xiang](#)
- China Media Project 8/23/2012: [The party who cried ‘wolf!’](#)
- *China Digital Times* 9/3/2012: [Ministry of Truth: In assault reports, No Xinhua allowed](#)
- China Media Project 9/3/2012: [Post on Henan ‘governor’ in Japan deleted from Weibo](#)
- China Media Project 8/27/2012: [Premier Wen bicycle photo deleted from Weibo](#)
- China Media Project 8/29/2012: [Post on dissolving Ministry of Foreign Affairs deleted from Weibo](#)



## **Baidu workers accused of deleting content for bribes**

In a statement on August 7, Chinese technology giant Baidu said four of its employees had recently been fired for allegedly taking bribes to delete user comments on its popular online forum, Baidu Tieba. While it remained unclear which posts were targeted, the company confirmed that three of the four staffers were arrested, and claimed that they had received tens of thousands of yuan (thousands of dollars) in payments for the deletions. According to Chinese Communist Party newspaper *People’s Daily*, there is an increasing number of “public relations” companies that provide clients, mostly enterprises, with post-deletion services on popular websites in the country (see CMB No. [61](#)). The prices reportedly vary from 600 yuan to 5,000 yuan, with deletions on major web portals such as Sina, Netease, and Ifeng costing the most. Baidu stressed that it did not receive any payment when handling complaints about online comments, and had always punished and reported illegal behavior by its employees. However, web companies in China are required by law to follow

official propaganda directives and remove content that is deemed sensitive or subversive by the authorities, and Baidu is known for its strict compliance with such orders (see CMB No. [29](#)).

- **BBC 8/6/2012: [Baidu workers arrested for ‘deleting posts for money’](#)**
- **IDG 8/7/2012: [Baidu employees fired and arrested for taking bribes to delete content](#)**
- **People’s Daily Online 8/12/2012: [Inside story of post deletion’s industrial chain](#)**



## **Online criticism of labor camp system yields petitioner’s release**

The Chinese authorities released a woman from a labor camp on August 10 after her 18-month sentence, issued on August 2, stirred fury on the internet. Tang Hui, a mother in Yongzhou, Hunan Province, was sent to the camp for persistently pressing the authorities to impose the death penalty on all seven men convicted of the 2006 kidnapping, rape, and prostitution of her 11-year-old daughter. The immediate outcry among Chinese netizens appeared to have prompted the government to free Tang, who was accused of “disturbing the social order and exerting a negative impact on society.” While state-run Xinhua news agency focused on Tang’s gratitude for the public support following her release, an editorial in the Communist Party–owned newspaper *Global Times* expressed sympathy, saying that her petitioning did not “severely harm the public’s interests.” However, much of the online discussion surrounding the case focused on the injustice of the “reeducation through labor” system itself, a network of hundreds of camps to which individuals can be sentenced by police without a trial. According to studies by human rights groups, a substantial proportion of detainees are petitioners, Falun Gong adherents, Christians, or other prisoners of conscience. Prominent Chinese writer Murong Xuecun wrote on his Sina Weibo microblogging account that the Tang case illustrated the “darkness and cruelty” of the system, adding, “A person can be thrown into prison for offending a local official, without trial or evidence.” In an online poll of some 11,600 that was eventually removed by Sina Weibo, about 97 percent of the respondents called for abolition of the labor camp system.

- ***China Digital Times* 8/7/2012: [Netizen voices: Abolish labor re-education](#)**
- ***Global Times* 8/7/2012: [Officials, you are not above the people](#)**
- ***Global Times* 8/9/2012: [Probe launched after petitioning mother is sent to labor camp in China](#)**
- ***Daily Beast* 8/9/2012: [Woman sent to labor camp in China’s latest abuse outrage](#)**
- **China Radio International 8/12/2012: [Mother of young rape victim heads home](#)**
- **Amnesty International 8/16/2012: [Lawyers’ call for ‘adjustments’ to RTL covered in official media](#)**

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## **HONG KONG**



## **Opponents protest pro-Beijing education plan**

After protests and a related hunger strike against a Beijing-backed moral and national education

curriculum, Hong Kong's new chief executive, Leung Chun-ying, announced on September 8 that the government would revoke a 2015 deadline for public elementary schools to carry out the program. Leung said each school would be able to decide on its own whether to use the curriculum. The teaching materials have been criticized as an attempt to brainwash schoolchildren with Chinese Communist Party propaganda. Despite Leung's concession, tens of thousands of students, parents, and teachers continued to protest outside the government headquarters building. Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai, a vocal critic of the Chinese government, was among the crowd. In an effort to prevent the event from encouraging antigovernment activities in mainland China, online discussion of the protests was censored on the popular Chinese microblogging platform Sina Weibo. A Hong Kong professor's post of an essay he said was written by a mainland university student, in which the author reflects on the corrosive effects of "patriotic education" in China, was deleted on September 5, though the essay continued to circulate on Chinese social media. Prominent Hong Kong media commentator Qian Gang's post about *The China Model*, a pro-Communist booklet produced by a Hong Kong government-subsidized group and distributed to schools in recent months (see CMB No. 65), was deleted on September 9 after generating 4,000 reposts and 1,140 comments. An editorial published by the Communist Party-controlled newspaper *Global Times* criticized the opponents of the education plan, expressing surprise at the "strong emotions and lack of rationality in Hong Kong society." In a potentially counterproductive reference, the editorial continued, "On this issue, Hong Kong appears to be like Cairo one year ago, rather than a developed democratic society."

- CBS News 9/7/2012: [Hong Kong's "brainwashing" classes protested](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 9/8/2012: [Black day for national education as Tamar site is swamped](#)
- *New York Times* 9/8/2012: [Hong Kong retreats on 'national education' plan](#)
- China Media Project 9/6/2012: [Why is 'national education' scary?](#)
- China Media Project 9/10/2012: [Post on 'China Model' text by CMP director deleted from Weibo](#)
- *Global Times* 9/10/2012: [Mainland has no desire to change HK](#)

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## **BEYOND CHINA**



### **Canadian reporter claims Xinhua used him for spying**

In an interview with the Canadian newspaper *National Post* released on August 22, Ottawa-based freelance journalist Mark Bourrie alleged that China's official Xinhua news agency had used him to gather intelligence for the central government in Beijing. Bourrie said he ended his two-year relationship with Xinhua in April 2012, following a suspicious request by the news agency's Ottawa bureau chief, Zhang Dacheng. Specifically, Zhang asked Bourrie to cover a news conference after a meeting between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Dalai Lama, and to press for information on what happened during the meeting, even though, as the bureau chief admitted, the reporting would not result in a published story. Zhang denied the reporter's account, dismissing the notion that Xinhua had an intelligence-gathering role as "Cold War" ideology. Bourrie said most of his

assignments from Xinhua were “normal,” but there had been several “odd” requests. The first came in June 2010, when Chinese president Hu Jintao visited Toronto for a Group of 20 summit. Bourrie said he turned down an assignment to identify people who protested against Hu, and determine where they were staying. In another incident, he said he was asked to write about the Canadian government’s policies toward the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which is persecuted in China. Bourrie later noticed that his stories on Falun Gong were never published by Xinhua. Security consultant and former Canadian diplomat Charles Burton told the *National Post* that Bourrie’s description was consistent with other evidence that “the function of the Xinhua news agency is to gather information for the regime.” Such assertions add a new dimension to existing concerns about China’s overseas media expansion, which have generally focused on press freedom and propaganda issues (see, inter alia, CMB No. [64](#)).

- *National Post* 8/22/2012: [China’s state-run news agency being used to monitor critics in Canada: reporter](#)
- *Vancouver Observer* 8/28/2012: [Spying and journalism: the trouble with Mark Bourrie and Xinhua](#)
- *Canadian Press* 8/23/2012: [China journalist denies spying claim by Canadian freelancer who quit Xinhua](#)
- *Daily Beast* 8/24/2012: [Journalist, or spy? Xinhua doesn’t distinguish](#)



## China releases Yahoo dissident and Taiwanese national

**Yahoo user:** Wang Xiaoning, an engineer from Liaoning Province who had been imprisoned after distributing prodemocracy writings on U.S.-based web portal Yahoo and through his Yahoo e-mail accounts, was released in Beijing on August 31 after serving a 10-year sentence for “incitement to subvert state power.” Following his detention in 2002, Yahoo was criticized for providing Chinese authorities with information on Wang and other users (see CMB No. [35](#)). It explained that it had to comply with the laws of countries in which it operates. Information handed over by Yahoo also contributed to the 2005 conviction of Chinese journalist Shi Tao, who is still serving his 10-year prison term.

**Taiwanese national:** Chung Ting-pang, a Taiwanese Falun Gong practitioner who was detained on June 18 in Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province, was released on August 10 and returned to Taiwan the next day (see CMB No. [63](#)). His release followed an intense campaign on his behalf by his family, human rights groups, and lawmakers. He had been held at a guesthouse under police guard for 54 days. Chung was detained for his alleged attempts to disrupt television signals, presumably to broadcast uncensored information into China. The authorities did not press charges, but before his release he was made to sign a statement of his regret at having posed a threat to China’s national security. According to Amnesty International, Chung later said he was not physically abused, but signed the statement under psychological pressure and threats from his interrogators. He acknowledged that he had long sought to distribute materials about Falun Gong and the persecution it faces in China, but denied posing a threat to China’s national security.

- *PC World* 9/3/2012: [Chinese dissident Yahoo helped identify is released after ten years](#)
  - Amnesty International 8/21/2012: [Document - China: Further information: Taiwanese Falun gong practitioner released: Chung Ting-pang](#)
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## Chinese regulators grow wary of film coproductions

State-run newspaper *China Daily* reported on August 25 that the country's media regulator, the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), planned to tighten enforcement of regulations for film coproductions between Chinese and foreign studios (see CMB No. [65](#)). SARFT deputy chief Zhang Pimin told the newspaper that some American films had exploited existing coproduction rules by using minimal Chinese story elements and actors to exempt themselves from the foreign film quota, under which only 34 foreign titles can be shown in China per year. Zhang said the trend threatened to swamp the local film industry with what were effectively foreign movies. To qualify as a foreign-Chinese coproduction, at least one-third of a film's budget and main cast must come from China, and part of the picture has to be shot in China, among other requirements. At a seminar on August 23, Zhang admitted that the government had purposely delayed the release of several Hollywood blockbusters in July and August to "save some space for Chinese films." However, an executive at a Hong Kong-based film distribution company told *China Daily* that barring American movies would not guarantee revenue for local films. "Ultimately we need higher quality work, which requires a rating system and looser censorship," he said.

- *Wall Street Journal* 8/27/2012: [Warning from China film watchdog: Not enough 'co' in co-productions](#)
  - *China Daily* 8/25/2012: [Time for 'Action!' on co-produced films](#)
  - *Variety* 8/28/2012: [China regulators touchy on co-productions](#)
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## NOTABLE ANALYSIS



## 'National Review' explores academic self-censorship on China

In an in-depth August 27 article entitled "Scholars with Spine: Notes from the field of China studies," *National Review* senior editor Jay Nordlinger explores the multiple facets of and motivations for self-censorship among Western scholars studying China. Citing a series of interviews with academics and other experts, he points out that very few scholars have expressed support for Chinese dissidents. Many avoid research or public comment on sensitive topics such as Tibet or Falun Gong so they will not be put on Beijing's blacklist or endanger access to senior party members and archives. The Chinese government's arbitrary banning of entry to scholars who have written on subjects like the Tiananmen Square massacre or ethnic tensions in Xinjiang has had a particularly chilling effect. Some observers also lament the lack of support at American universities for those

who encounter trouble with the Chinese authorities, or for Chinese dissident intellectuals studying on their campuses. Nordlinger urges China experts to provide the world with complete and accurate information about China in light of its growing importance, and suggests that the Chinese authorities themselves have the greatest respect for scholars who challenge them.

- *National Review* 8/27/2012: [Scholars with Spine: Notes from the field of China studies](#)



## Chinese study tracks microblogs' growing role in breaking news

The state-owned Chinese Social Sciences Academic Press and the Shanghai Jiaotong University Center for Public Opinion Research on August 18 published a report on the role of new media in determining news trends in China. According to the blue-book study, *Chinese Public Opinion and Crisis Management (2012)*, digital and online media accounted for nearly 65 percent of breaking news reports in 2011, while traditional media only accounted for 30.8 percent. Among the various types of digital and online media, microblogs were the first to publish about 20 percent of the news, compared with 9.3 percent in 2010. Among traditional media, the authors claim that newspapers still have the upper hand in delivering breaking news because of their infrastructure and professional news staff.

- *China Scope* 8/18/2012: [Public Opinion Blue Book: News events published on microblogs increased significantly](#)

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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