



CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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

Issue No. 68: September 20, 2012

Top Headlines

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK: BAIDU PLANTS ITS FLAG



Credit: [Wall Street Journal](#)

BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



State media toe the line on Wang Lijun trial coverage

In their coverage of former Chongqing police chief Wang Lijun's two-day trial, which took place in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on September 17–18, the Chinese media followed the model set by their reporting on the recent murder trial of Gu Kailai, the wife of purged Chongqing Communist Party secretary Bo Xilai (see CMB No. [67](#)). On September 19, state-run Xinhua news agency released the first official account of Wang's reasons for entering the U.S. consulate on February 6, an act that erupted into the Chinese Communist Party's most dramatic political scandal in decades, forcing Bo's ouster and disrupting the party's upcoming leadership transition. The lengthy Xinhua article's acknowledgment of a confrontation between Wang and Bo signaled for the first time that Bo could face criminal charges for covering up his wife's murder of British businessman Neil Heywood, though other abuses, such as his alleged wiretapping of top party officials, may be the true motivating factors if he is eventually prosecuted. The article said that on the morning of January 29, the police chief was "angrily rebuked and slapped in the face by the official"—clearly referring to Bo, though not name—after he told Bo that Gu was a suspect. The testimony did not lay out the details behind Wang's confrontation with Bo, but it indicated that their relations soon turned sour, as Wang immediately ordered subordinates to collect more evidence on Heywood's murder after the argument. Most mainland newspapers carried the Xinhua article in their inside pages. On September 20 the Communist Party–controlled *Global Times* published the first editorial on the trial, portraying the tightly controlled Wang and Gu cases as victories for transparency that proved “no one is above the law.” As in Gu's case, foreign journalists were barred from Wang's trial proceedings. Court officials said Wang, who was charged with abuse of power, taking bribes, and bending the law for personal gain, would receive a verdict at a later date.

- *New York Times* 9/19/2012: [Trial of ex-police chief in China scandal ends in a sign of leniency](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 9/19/2012: [China report suggests harsh Bo penalty](#)
- Xinhua 9/19/2012: [Details of the trials of Wang Lijun](#)
- BBC 9/20/2012: China morning round-up: [Wang Lijun's testimony](#)



More investigative journalists resign under pressure

Several reporters and editors at respected commercial news outlets in China have resigned in recent weeks, continuing a trend of official pressure on investigative journalism (see CMB No. [67](#)). Reporter Jian Guangzhou of the Shanghai newspaper *Oriental Daily*, who became widely known for his 2008 report on tainted milk powder produced by the Chinese dairy company Sanlu, announced on September 3 that he was ending his career because “the dream is dead.” On July 18, the same publication's president and vice editor were forced to quit for unspecified reasons. Two editors at Nanjing-based *Oriental Vanguard*, another of the more liberal papers in the country, were dismissed for an August 23 front-page report about star Chinese athlete Liu Xiang, who left the Olympic

Games in London due to a severe injury that Chinese officials allegedly knew about beforehand (see CMB No. [67](#)). The article suggested that state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) had prepared four scripted announcements before Liu's injury became apparent during a race. Investigative reporters are often viewed by Chinese authorities as threats that could undermine the legitimacy of Communist Party rule. In addition to official pressure and censorship, journalists also face overwork, low salaries, poor job security, and the daily risk of physical assaults in the course of their reporting. Some Chinese journalism schools reportedly include self-defense courses. According to *Tea Leaf Nation*, even as liberal newspapers face more intimidation and subject themselves to a higher degree of self-censorship, official state media have sought to displace them by addressing sensitive topics more often, though on their own terms. However, prominent Chinese reporter Liu Jianfeng, who resigned from the *Economic Observer* in July, made the case for a more optimistic view, arguing that Chinese journalists could find new ways of getting out their stories, including by publishing them independently online.

- *Tea Leaf Nation* 9/14/2012: [Chinese journalist chatter: All hope is not yet lost](#)
- *Tea Leaf Nation* 9/14/2012: 'The dream is dead': [Why so many Chinese journalists are quitting](#)
- Ming Jing News 9/5/2012 (in Chinese): [Sanlu tainted milk reporter Jian Guangzhou to quit](#)

NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Netizens suspect official hand, oppose violence in anti-Japan protests

Various reports have suggested that a recent wave of anti-Japanese protests in China—centered on the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu Islands, known in Japan as the Senkaku Islands, in the East China Sea—were initially tolerated or encouraged by Chinese authorities, then curbed after they became more violent. According to Hong Kong–based blogger Oiwan Lam, Chinese netizens have noted that many demonstrations were organized via the popular web portal Tencent's QQ groups, with the initial senders of the protest calls identified as employees at government agencies, including a land revenue bureau and a military corporation. Postings containing keywords such as “anti-Japan protest” and “Protect Diaoyu” were searchable and uncensored on Tencent QQ. One netizen sarcastically asked, “What about the three layers of monitoring existing in QQ? Are all these functions suspended because of patriotism?” In another possible sign that the authorities were carefully guiding the phenomenon, newspapers in Liaoning Province refused to publish a citizen-produced advertisement calling for China to “protect” the disputed islands, with one paper explaining that it had to “thoroughly adhere to Xinhua news agency's manuscripts.” That drew bitter mockery from netizens, one of whom remarked, “The facts prove the Diaoyu Islands belong to Xinhua and to the Party.” After September 15, when the Japanese embassy in Beijing was besieged by protesters and reports surfaced that several Japanese citizens were attacked, state media began to change its rhetoric and denounce the violence. A September 17 editorial in the Communist Party–controlled *Global Times* declared, “Violence cannot be tolerated simply because the protests are aimed at Japan.” It noted that the same rule applied to antigovernment protests, and denied that the

government was “turning a blind eye” to the recent violence. Public opinion online generally opposed the violence as well. Popular blogger Han Han warned that the unrest could lead ordinary citizens to grow wary of protests in general and accept the Communist Party’s repressive policy of “stability maintenance.”

- *Washington Post* 9/17/2012: [Chinese government both encourages and reins in anti-Japan protests, analysts say](#)
 - Global Voices 9/16/2012: [China: Censor machine suspended for anti-Japan mobilization?](#)
 - *Atlantic* 9/17/2012: [China’s anti-Japan protests attract some Chinese criticism](#)
 - *China Digital Times* 9/18/2012: [Diaoyu Islands are Xinhua’s](#)
 - *Global Times* 9/17/2012: [Violence is never appropriate solution](#)
 - *China Digital Times* 9/17/2012: [Han Han denounces violent anti-Japanese protests](#)
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Baidu takes up Diaoyu Islands cause, escapes harsh copyright ruling

The Chinese search-engine giant Baidu has recently taken a series of steps to convey support for China’s territorial claims on the Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea, which are held by Japan and known there as the Senkaku Islands. On September 18, the 81st anniversary of the Mukden Incident, which touched off Japan’s lengthy invasion of China, Baidu modified the landing page of its search engine by adding a drawing of a Chinese flag planted on a small island. According to Baidu spokesperson Kaiser Kuo, the image was meant to encourage the rational, nonviolent expression of patriotism, as opposed to “throwing rocks or smashing cars.” The island dispute has fueled a series of protests and riots in China in the past week (see above). Baidu also created a special page that allows netizens to plant Chinese flags on a digital island group, and added a giant flag to Diaoyu on its mapping service, Baidu Maps. The features threatened to scupper Baidu’s expansion plans in Japan and in Southeast Asia, where many countries are engaged in their own territorial disputes with China. However, editors of the *China Media Bulletin* found that the “patriotic” additions were not visible to overseas users. Separately, Chinese state media reported that on September 17, a district court in Beijing ordered Baidu to compensate three Chinese writers in the amount of 145,000 yuan (\$22,900) for copyright infringement. The company had been sued in September 2011 by a group of writers, including popular blogger Han Han and author Murong Xuecun, who criticized its document-sharing platform, Baidu Wenku, for providing users with unauthorized access to their work (see CMB No. [37](#)). The ruling was expected to have little impact on the wide availability of pirated content on China’s internet. The payment was less than one-fifth of the amount requested by Han Han alone, and the plaintiffs’ other demands, such as the closure of Baidu Wenku, were rejected.

- *Wall Street Journal* 9/18/2012: [Net neutrality? Baidu plants its flag on disputed islands](#)
 - *Tech in Asia* 9/17/2012: [Baidu’s digital patriotism looks like corporate suicide for overseas expansion plans](#)
 - *Global Times* 9/18/2012: [Han Han wins cash in Baidu copyright suit](#)
 - *Wall Street Journal* 9/18/2012: [Chinese writers ‘win’ in lawsuit against Baidu](#)
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Second netizen wins Chongqing labor camp case

The Chinese newspaper *Southern Metropolis Daily* reported on September 12 that the authorities had annulled the two-year labor camp sentence of a netizen based in Chongqing on September 7. The netizen, Peng Hong, was sent to a “reeducation through labor” camp in October 2009 for defamation, after he reposted a satirical cartoon about the city’s anticrime campaign on the popular Chinese web forum Tianya. The image hinted that police officials were protecting favored criminal gangs. Peng’s posting came at a sensitive time, with then Chongqing Communist Party secretary chief Bo Xilai at his peak of popularity and former police chief Wen Qiang facing corruption charges. Wen was eventually tried and executed for sheltering criminals. Bo was purged from the party earlier this year, and another netizen won a lawsuit in June over his own labor camp stint for mocking Bo online (see CMB No. [63](#)). In both cases, the rulings appeared to have been made possible by Bo’s fall from political grace, but they were presented as products of the rule of law. The sentences, and their reversals, highlight the arbitrary ways in which Chinese citizens can be deprived of their liberty based on the administrative fiat of local officials.

- **China Media Project 9/12/2012:** [Chongqing revokes labor sentence for web user](#)
- **China Daily 9/12/2012:** [Chongqing clears man after 2-year labor camp](#)
- **Telegraph 9/12/2012:** [Chinese man was unlawfully sent to 're-education through labour' camp](#)

HONG KONG



Journalists detained, beaten by mainland police

Two journalists with the Hong Kong newspaper *Ming Pao* were detained by police in Shaoyang, Hunan Province, on September 5, after they attempted to investigate labor rights activist Li Wangyang's suspicious death in June (see CMB No. [65](#)). Their mobile phones, computers, cameras, and audio recorders were seized, and the data recorded on the devices were erased. While being held in a hotel room under round-the-clock surveillance for 44 hours, the journalists were forced to surrender their e-mail passwords, and security officers checked their e-mail and telephone contact histories. According to *Ming Pao*, the authorities also forced the reporters to re-interview a number of individuals close to Li so as to undermine their original reporting, which had indicated that Li’s family and friends rejected the official finding of suicide. The coerced interview session was recorded by the local propaganda officers. Since that incident, a string of Hong Kong–based journalists have been assaulted by Chinese police in recent weeks while covering anti-Japanese protests on the mainland (see above). The Hong Kong Press Photographers’ Association and the Hong Kong Journalists’ Association (HKJA) issued a joint statement on September 17, demanding that Beijing abolish its accreditation system for Hong Kong journalists to ensure the safety of those who work without press permits. According to the statement, at least five journalists had been detained or attacked since September 14. A *South China Morning Post* photographer said he was beaten by security officers with batons during a September 16 demonstration in Shenzhen,

Guangdong Province, even after he repeatedly identified himself as a reporter. Some of the other abused journalists had initially withheld their identities due to fear of punishment.

- IFEX 9/13/2012: [Journalists held, interrogated for investigating death of Chinese activist](#)
 - *Ming Pao* 9/14/2012: [Editorial: Is there any rule of law in Hunan?](#)
 - *South China Morning Post* 9/16/2012: [SCMP editor in chief Wang Xiangwei issues statement on injured photographer at anti-Japan protest](#)
 - *South China Morning Post* 9/18/2012: [Police violence sparks call to reform mainland media system](#)
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TIBET



Monks held for spreading news of protests

According to a report by overseas Tibetan newspaper *Tibet Post International*, the Chinese authorities detained four monks at the Zilkar monastery in Yushu Prefecture, Qinghai Province, on September 1, after they were accused of circulating reports and photos of self-immolations by Tibetan protesters, and of possessing images of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader (see CMB No. [66](#)). A fifth monk who photographed the police during the raid was also taken. Two of the detained monks are reportedly physically disabled, and one suffers from a kidney ailment. At least 200 security officers participated in the raid on the monastery, where they searched the monks' rooms and seized computers, DVDs, documents, and photos. In an effort to suppress news of the incursion, the authorities cut off the monastery's power supply and telephone lines and increased the police presence in the area. Reporters Without Borders also reported on the case and called for the Chinese government to end its policy of imposing a news blackout on Tibet. Over 40 Tibetans have self-immolated over the past year to protest Chinese repression, and the resulting reports and images have renewed international attention to the plight of the Tibetan people.

- *Tibet Post International* 9/4/2012: [Five monks detained in crackdowns at Zilkar monastery of Tibet](#)
 - Reporters Without Borders 9/7/2012: [Chinese security forces arrest five Tibetan monks in raid on monastery](#)
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BEYOND CHINA



Security researchers trace sophisticated cyberattacks to China

The California-based web security company AlienVault made rare revelations on September 13, linking a malicious program known as "PlugX RAT Trojan" to a programmer at a company based in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. PlugX RAT Trojan had previously been used in cyberattacks against

overseas Tibetan groups. According to AlienVault, a number of similarities between the malware and a software product distributed by the Chengdu company suggested that they were likely created by the same developer, whom AlienVault identified as a “virus expert” called “WHG.” At least once source alleged that the company was sponsored by the People’s Liberation Army, and references online linked WHG to a series of previous hacker attacks. Separately, a report released by another web security firm, Symantec, on September 7 indicated that foreign defense, industrial, and technology companies—as well as overseas human rights groups, including pro-Tibet campaigners—have been targeted by the same China-based hacker group that infiltrated U.S. technology giant Google two years ago. The researchers found that the hackers frequently applied “phishing” techniques (sending malware as an attachment or link in an e-mail message) as well as the “watering hole” method (laying a trap within a website that targeted victims are likely to visit) to breach computers and steal information. Separately, on September 6, Munich-based World Uyghur Congress (WUC) president Dolkun Isa said more than 10 overseas Uyghur groups had suffered cyberattacks that he believed originated in China. The organization was scheduled to hold an executive committee meeting on September 21, and Isa said many activists had received e-mail messages with infected attachments, purportedly inviting them to the event.

- **Phayul 9/16/2012: [Hacker connected to the Chinese government likely behind Tibet attacks](#)**
- **TechWorld 9/14/2012: [Tibet Trojan attacks connected to Chinese programmer](#)**
- **Wired 9/7/2012: [Sleuths trace new zero-day attacks to hackers who hit Google](#)**
- **Symantec 9/7/2012: [The Elderwood Project](#)**
- **Radio Free Asia 9/6/2012: [China: Hackers target Uyghur groups](#)**



Huawei and ZTE fail to assuage U.S. espionage concerns

At a public hearing before the U.S. House Intelligence Committee on September 13, China’s leading telecommunications firms, Huawei and ZTE, denied claims that they have ties with the Chinese government and could allow Beijing to use their equipment for cyberespionage. Chinese official media criticized the allegations as the product of an “outdated Cold-War mentality.” Huawei corporate senior vice president Charles Ding said the Chinese government and military had no ownership or influence at his company. Zhu Jinyun, a ZTE senior vice president, said that Beijing had never asked to use the firm’s networks for a cyberattack. Both executives claimed that they were unfamiliar with a Chinese state security law that allows the authorities to inspect the communications equipment of any company. Lawmakers responded to their denials with incredulity, saying they had hoped for more transparency and directness, and that the firms had provided “little actual evidence” to allay the committee’s concerns. Committee chairman Mike Rogers, a Michigan Republican, noted that both companies had also refused to present certain internal documents on the grounds that doing so would violate China’s state-secrets laws. He said the fact that documents of purportedly private companies would be considered state secrets in itself “gives us reason to question their independence.” Huawei and ZTE have been hampered by security and human rights concerns in their efforts to expand overseas (see CMB No. [61](#)). Some sources have pointed to deliberate non-cooperation with U.S. investigations. In July, the website Smoking Gun reported that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had opened a probe into ZTE regarding the possible

cover-up of its sale of surveillance equipment to Iran and obstruction of a related Department of Commerce investigation. At a separate hearing held before an Australian parliamentary intelligence committee on September 14, panelists pointed out that under Chinese laws, companies with more than 50 employees are required to hire Chinese Communist Party representatives to monitor their operations. Nevertheless, Huawei urged committee members not to “discriminate” against companies from a particular country when drafting laws on communications security, adding that it was independent of the government and “100 percent owned by staff.”

- **ZDNet 9/14/2012: [Huawei, ZTE deny U.S. charges; House lawmakers unconvinced](#)**
- **Xinhua 9/14/2012: [Behind US unsubstantiated security claims](#)**
- **PC World 9/14/2012: [China’s Huawei and ZTE grilled by U.S. committee over spying concerns](#)**
- **Reuters 9/15/2012: [China’s Huawei urges Australia not to discriminate on telco security](#)**
- **Australian 9/18/2012: [Huawei responds to claims of security risk for the NBN](#)**
- **Smoking Gun 7/12/2012: [FBI targets Chinese firm over Iran deal](#)**



Chinese envoys press for removal of Oregon mural

In a letter dated August 8, the Chinese consulate in San Francisco urged the mayor of Corvallis, an Oregon college town, to pressure a property owner to remove a mural that advocated Taiwanese and Tibetan independence. The artwork includes depictions of police beating Tibetan protesters, Buddhist monks setting themselves on fire, and lanterns labeled “independence” floating above the skyline of Taipei, the Taiwanese capital. According to the consulate’s letter, the images had caused “strong resentment from the local Chinese community,” and could jeopardize economic and cultural relations between Oregon and China. After Corvallis mayor Julie Manning rejected the request, citing freedom of artistic expression under the U.S. constitution, two Chinese diplomats flew to Oregon on September 4 to make their case in person. City officials agreed to convey the message to David Lin, a Taiwanese American businessman who owns the building, but they made it clear that they would not order him to take the mural down. Lin responded that he had no plans to do so. He told the Associated Press that he had commissioned it after growing concerned about conditions in Tibet in recent years, saying, “The suffering in Tibet is unbelievable. I have to do something.” Chinese diplomats have repeatedly sought to curb artistic expression at foreign film festivals, book fairs, and other such high-profile events (see, inter alia, CMB No. [54](#), [62](#)). Cases like Lin’s are less widely reported, but Chinese representatives have been known to contact local officials or event venues in small towns or universities around the world, pressing them to cancel Tibetan or Falun Gong–related art exhibits, theatrical performances, and city council resolutions condemning oppression in China.

- **Corvallis Gazette-Times 9/8/2012: [Mural draws fire from China](#)**
- **Associated Press 9/11/2012: [Corvallis mayor pressured by China to remove Tibet-Taiwan mural](#)**

- *Indian Express* 9/16/2012: [Free Tibet: Chinese diplomats trying to limit free speech in US](#)
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Indonesia radio station wins frequency case despite Chinese pressure

At a press conference held on September 9, Indonesian broadcaster Radio Era Baru's president, Lei Meng, announced that the country's Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the station, reversing a regulator's decision to assign its frequency to another station. Era Baru was still awaiting rulings from the court on its request to overturn a suspended six-month jail sentence imposed on then manager Gatot Machali in September 2011, and on its lawsuit against the Indonesian Ministry of Telecommunications and Information related to the withdrawal of its broadcast permit. Radio Era Baru is an affiliate of Sound of Hope, a radio network run by Falun Gong adherents that offers uncensored news, including coverage of Beijing's human rights abuses. It was closed by the Indonesian authorities in 2011 under sustained pressure from the Chinese authorities (see CMB No. [32](#)). In a letter submitted to the Indonesian government in 2007, the Chinese embassy in Jakarta urged the authorities to restrict the station's activities, warning that bilateral relations might otherwise be damaged. Indonesia is rated Partly Free in Freedom House's 2012 *Freedom of the Press* index and Free in the 2012 *Freedom in the World* survey.

- *Tempo Interactive* 9/6/2012: [Era Baru Radio wins frequency dispute](#)
 - *Epoch Times* 9/11/2012: [Outspoken Indonesian radio regains frequency despite Chinese regime pressure](#)
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For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see:

[*Freedom of the Press 2012*](#)
[*Freedom of the World 2012*](#)
[*Freedom on the Net 2011*](#)

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