



CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

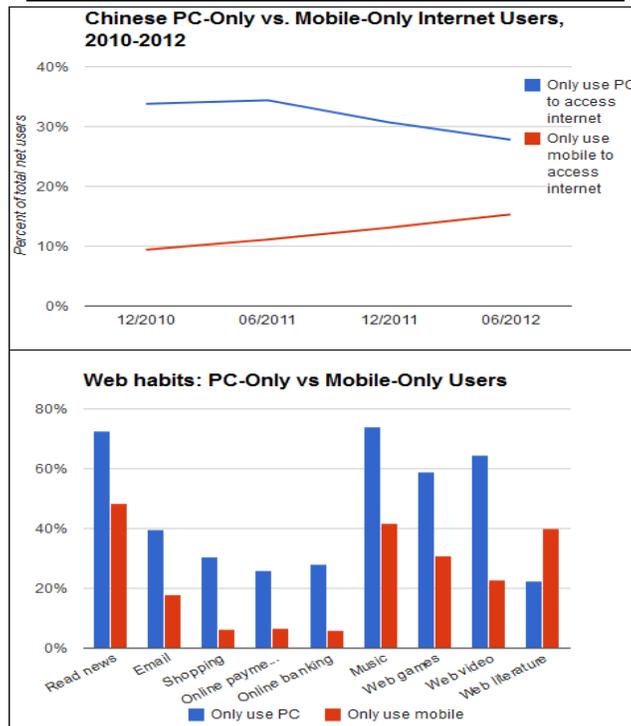
*A weekly update of press freedom and censorship news
related to the People's Republic of China*

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Headlines

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK: GOING MOBILE



Credit: [Tech in Asia](#)

BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



Print media reinforce party decision to expel Bo Xilai

Just days after the sentencing of his former police commander, Wang Lijun, the official Xinhua news agency reported on September 28 that the Politburo had decided to formally expel former Chongqing Communist Party chief Bo Xilai from the party, ending months of silence on Bo's fate (see CMB No. 69). The report stated that Bo would be stripped of all official positions and handed over for criminal prosecution, accusing him of involvement in the 2011 murder of British businessman Neil Heywood, extensive corruption, improper sexual relations with various women, and other violations of party discipline. It also announced that the 18th Party Congress would begin on November 8. The Xinhua piece and subsequent coverage in state media sought to portray the secretive, clearly politicized decision on Bo as a sign of the party's "resolve to police itself and its commitment to the rule of law." In reality, given the party's control over the judiciary, most observers agreed that a guilty verdict is a foregone conclusion and that Bo will almost certainly face jail time, with a sentence possible before the party congress. In a now-familiar propaganda pattern, a series of commentaries praised the Politburo decision and cited supposed public support. A Xinhua article from September 30, for example, was titled "Cadres and Citizens Uphold CPC's Bo Decision." Even some commercial papers, like the *Chongqing Daily*, praised the move as representing the "rule of law." In addition to reinforcing the party line on Bo's case, state media and party mouthpieces have gone to great lengths to present an image of party unity amid signs that infighting over Bo's situation has not completely ended. The *People's Daily* published a photograph of all nine members of the Politburo Standing Committee to mark the 63rd anniversary of the party's rise to power on October 1, and a *Global Times* editorial declared that the recent "decisions once again prove the certainty of Chinese politics." However, opposition to the announcement on Bo quickly emerged in discussions online, including from his neo-Maoist supporters; his U.S.-based son, Bo Guagua; and netizens who criticized what they saw as a farcical display of politicized justice (see below).

- Xinhua 9/28/2012 (in Chinese): [Politburo decides to strip Bo of all official positions](#)
- Xinhua 9/28/2012: [Bo Xilai expelled from CPC, public office](#)
- *Global Times* 9/29/2012: [Political certainty in public's best interest](#)
- Xinhua 9/29/2012: [No compromise on Party discipline](#)
- Xinhua 9/30/2012: [China exclusive: Cadres, citizens uphold CPC's Bo decision](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 9/29/2012: [China's Communist Party continues to discredit Bo Xilai](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 10/1/2012: [Beijing in scramble to put Bo Xilai on trial ahead of leadership transition](#)
- *Chongqing Daily* 9/28/2012 (in Chinese): [Bo Xilai and Wang Lijun unpopular due to misdeeds](#)



Dissidents face clampdown ahead of party congress

Reflecting what has become common practice for the Chinese authorities ahead of high-profile events, reports of dissidents being subjected to extra monitoring have surfaced as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) prepares for its upcoming 18th Party Congress, set to begin on November 8. According to Britain's *Telegraph* newspaper, prominent AIDS and environmental activist Hu Jia has recently been put under house arrest without access to the internet and been beaten three times by the police. Hu has faced shifting restrictions on his movement and communications since his release from prison in June 2011 (see CMB No. [37](#)). Jiao Guobiao, a former journalism professor at Beijing University who was detained on September 12 for his scathing online writings about the CCP (see CMB No. [69](#)), was released on September 27 but has remained under tight surveillance. Amid the heightened security, a foreign-language bookstore in Beijing removed books about China from its shelves "because of the Party Congress," an employee told the *Telegraph*. Meanwhile, in an apparent effort to avoid popular resentment and media scrutiny, the CCP has reportedly limited the number of extremely wealthy delegates set to attend the party congress. At the National People's Congress in March, luxury brand items carried by delegates were the subject of much netizen attention, criticism, and mockery (see CMB No. [50](#)).

- *Telegraph* 9/28/2012: [China's Communist Party Congress: Beijing to lock down as China changes leaders](#)
- IFEX 10/1/2012: [Chinese writer released, remains under tight surveillance](#)
- *Businessweek* 10/2/2012: [China's wealthiest discreetly stay away at party congress](#)



Director reveals details of film censorship process

In an interview with the popular news portal Sina on September 26, prominent Chinese director Lou Ye described his experiences with the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), revealing the inner workings of the country's film censorship system. Lou was banned from making movies for five years in 2006, after he screened his film *Summer Palace* at the Cannes Film Festival without government approval. It was the first Chinese movie to contain scenes depicting the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Lou said his 2011 film *Mystery* had no political content, but he was ordered to cut several sexual and violent scenes before it was submitted to Cannes in 2012. He was then asked to do more editing just 41 days prior to the movie's domestic premiere, an expensive and artistically upsetting imposition. Over the course of September, Lou used his Sina Weibo microblog to describe his ongoing negotiations with regulators. Finally, frustrated by the onerous censorship process, he announced on September 25 that he would remove his name from the movie's credits in protest. While all films require SARFT's approval before they can be released in theaters, an independent film sector has developed, with screenings held in informal venues. However, the independent filmmakers are unable to reach wider audiences, and festival organizers have faced arbitrary interventions and harassment by the authorities, including travel restrictions and power cuts (see CMB No. [37](#)). The censorship system has also begun to hamper a recent boom in Chinese coproductions with Hollywood film studios, which had sought to circumvent annual quotas on releases of foreign films (see CMB No. [67](#)).

- *Tea Leaf Nation* 9/29/2012: [Director reveals mystery of China's film censorship system on Weibo](#)
 - Sina Entertainment 9/26/2012 (in Chinese): [Lou Ye: I accept changes, and I will remove my title off the list](#)
 - *China Digital Times* 9/26/2012: [Director reveals mystery of China's film censorship](#)
 - *Crikey* 9/6/2012: [Chinese filmmakers risk it all to defy government censorship](#)
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NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Online censors allow some criticism of Bo expulsion

Online censorship related to former Chongqing Communist Party secretary Bo Xilai appeared to loosen after state media announced on September 28 that he had been expelled from the party and would face prosecution on numerous charges (see above, CMB No. [62](#)). According to tests by *China Digital Times* and *China Media Bulletin* editors, a number of search terms related to Bo that had been blocked in recent months on the popular microblogging platform Sina Weibo were turning up results in the days after the announcement, though others remained blocked. The unblocked terms included Bo's name, nicknames like Captain Bo or "not thick," Wang Lijun, Chongqing, 18th Party Congress, and even "support Bo." For a brief period on October 4, the Bo story was ranked third among the top 10 topics on Sina Weibo's home page. The loosened censorship opened the door to more critical commentary than was available through traditional media. A common thread among netizens were questions about why, if Bo's alleged crimes stretched back to his time as mayor of Dalian, it took a decade and the flight of his police chief, Wang Lijun, to a U.S. consulate to uncover them. Lei Yi, a historian, wrote: "What we should be thinking about is how, at every step along the road, he was violating discipline. How did he climb so high? We should consider problems with the system." In other instances, neo-Maoist supporters of Bo posted comments on the Red China website (blocked but accessible with circumvention tools), questioning the legitimacy of the charges against him, given that, as blogger Mao Jianhui said, "many other senior officials have done much worse." Online discussions also stretched beyond China. Bo's U.S.-based son, Bo Guagua, issued a statement via the social-networking site Tumblr, questioning the charges against his father, and forwarded his remarks to Western media. Meanwhile, the official Xinhua news agency's assertion that Bo's misdeeds included sexual relations with various women has prompted female celebrities to distance themselves from any possible connection to him. Media reported on October 4 that actress Zhang Ziyi was pressing ahead with a defamation suit filed in Los Angeles against the U.S.-based online news outlet Boxun, which reported earlier this year that she had been paid millions of dollars to have sex with Chinese officials, including Bo (see CMB No. [59](#)).

- *South China Morning Post* 10/1/2012: [Bo Xilai's supporters take to blogs to show their support for former chief](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 9/28/2012: [Bo Xilai falls, China's microbloggers gloat](#)
- *China Digital Times* 9/29/2012: ['High voltage' discipline for cadres](#)
- *China Digital Times* 9/29/2012: [Sensitive words: The Bo Xilai expulsion](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 9/30/2012: [Bo Xilai's son defends father](#)

- *Straits Times* 10/4/2012: [Zhang Ziyi sues US website over Bo Xilai link claims](#)
 - *Epoch Times* 10/4/2012: [Chinese celebrities panic over mention of Bo's sexual escapades](#)
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Dissident artist Ai Weiwei's company license revoked

Beijing municipal authorities have informed dissident artist and blogger Ai Weiwei that they are revoking the business license of his art company, Fake Cultural Development. Ai posted the notice online on October 1, having received it on September 30, three days after he lost the final appeal in his lawsuit challenging a \$2.4 million tax bill that had been imposed on the company (see CMB No. 69). According to the notice, which was dated September 16, the company had failed to properly renew its license. Ai explained on his blog on October 1 that all relevant documents required for the procedure had been confiscated by the authorities as part of the tax case, and the company's account had been frozen by the tax bureau. "I wouldn't be surprised if the government insisted on making the wrong decision on the company just to maintain face," he said. Ai said his team had submitted an application for a public hearing on the license suspension. Regardless of the fate of the company, Ai has pledged not to pay the remainder of the tax bill; about half had already been surrendered to the authorities as a bond so that the unsuccessful legal challenge could be filed.

- *Wall Street Journal* 10/2/2012: [Ai Weiwei: Shutdown of wife's company is to 'maintain face'](#)
 - *BBC* 10/2/2012: [Chinese artist Ai Weiwei to lose design firm licence](#)
 - *South China Morning Post* 10/2/2012: [Licence of Chinese dissident Ai Weiwei's art firm to be revoked](#)
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Official report tracks growth and habits of mobile internet users

According to the latest statistical report from the official China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), released on September 21, a growing share of Chinese users are accessing the internet exclusively from mobile devices, while the percentage gaining access only through personal computers, including laptops, is declining. Among the 538 million internet users in China, mobile-only users had grown to 15.3 percent as of June, from 11.1 percent a year earlier. PC-only users fell from 34.4 percent to 27.8 percent over the same period. The data show that the majority of mobile-only users are adults with no secondary-level education degree, such as migrant workers and farmers, who are less likely to be able to afford computers. The report suggests that both types of internet users are highly engaged in reading news, downloading music, and playing web games, though PC-only users are more active in these areas than mobile-only ones. Mobile-only users are also much less likely to use online shopping or banking services. However, mobile-only users are more active than PC-only users in other categories of activity, including instant messaging (77 percent vs. 65 percent), reading online fiction (39 percent vs. 22 percent), and accessing social-networking sites (34 percent vs. 30 percent). On September 23, the UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development released its first global broadband report, which predicts that Chinese will overtake English as the dominant language used by internet users in 2015.

- *Tech in Asia* 9/26/2012: [How China's Internet is going mobile, and why that could be a problem](#)
 - CNNIC 9/24/2012 (in Chinese): [The other side of mobile internet: Expansion of mobile-only internet users](#)
 - *Telegraph* 9/26/2012: [Chinese internet users to overtake English language users by 2015](#)
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Disputed survey shows rise in Chinese Twitter, Facebook users

According to a report released by the London-based research group GlobalWebIndex on September 27, the number of Chinese users on the U.S.-based social-media sites Facebook and Twitter, which are both blocked by China's Great Firewall, has increased significantly over the past three years. The findings indicate that there are 35.5 million active Twitter users in China, up from 11.8 million in 2009. Active Facebook users in China reportedly increased almost eightfold to 63.5 million over the same period, while there were also an estimated 106 million Google+ users. However, those totals represented just 8 percent, 15 percent, and 25 percent, respectively, of Chinese internet users. By contrast, the popular domestic microblog service Sina Weibo continues to dominate, with 61 percent reporting having used the service. GlobalWebIndex concluded that the Great Firewall was "not as solid as many people think," as more netizens use circumvention tools to bypass government blocking. However, news blog *The Next Web*, prominent Chinese blogger Michael Anti, and other experts raised doubts about the figures. *Next Web* noted that the figures contradict Facebook's own data (which reports 600,000 Chinese users) and the estimates of other research organizations, and drew on a small survey sample of some 8,000 respondents. It warned that in light of the government's censorship policies and the various techniques used to get around them, information about Facebook and Twitter are especially "open to sizeable degrees of error and interpretation." Other experts expressed concern that the GlobalWebIndex data could create the false impression that a large portion of China's population has easy access to uncensored information.

- *Businessweek* 9/27/2012: [Facebook, Twitter Growth in China has lots of caveats](#)
 - CNET 9/27/2012: [Millions of Chinese pour onto Facebook, Twitter, report claims](#)
 - *The Next Web* 9/28/2012: [No, Facebook does not have 63.5 million active users in China](#)
 - GlobalWebIndex 9/27/2012: [China: The Home to Facebook and Twitter?](#)
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BEYOND CHINA



Media mogul sells Taiwan TV unit, citing political, business obstacles

Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai, a vocal critic of the Chinese government, announced on October 1 that his Taiwan-based television business Next TV would be sold to ERA

Communications, a Taiwanese cable and satellite company. Next TV was known for its signature “animation news,” which offered narrated, cartoonish summaries of both sensational news items and serious subjects like the biography of jailed Chinese democracy advocate and 2010 Nobel Peace laureate Liu Xiaobo (see CMB No. [4](#)). Next TV had lost over \$340 million since it was founded in 2009. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Lai had complained for years that the station’s hostility to the Chinese Communist Party had led to bureaucratic obstacles in Taiwan, such as the media regulator’s lengthy review of the license application for its news channel (see CMB No. [30](#)). Next TV also said existing Taiwanese media companies had resisted exposing their networks to new competition, limiting its access to viewers. In an internal memorandum dated October 1, Lai apologized to his employees for having “wasted three years of your precious time” at his company. “The TV operation has failed. I don’t have any complaints or regrets, but I deeply apologize to all the colleagues who have fought the battle despite being in such a dismal situation,” he wrote.

- **Associated Press 10/2/2012: [Hong Kong mogul sells loss-making Taiwan TV arm](#)**
- **Wall Street Journal 10/2/2012: [Sorry, Lai says, after Taiwan TV sale](#)**
- **China Post 10/2/2012: [Next Media to sell off TV arm, lay off hundreds of employees](#)**



Cyberattack on White House confirmed, China link reported

The online newspaper *Washington Free Beacon* reported on September 30 that hackers linked to the Chinese government had breached a military computer network at the White House earlier that month. The attack, which was believed to have involved phishing (sending malicious software as an attachment or link in an e-mail message), was reportedly launched from computer servers in China. It allegedly penetrated an unclassified network used by the White House Military Office (WHMO), which is responsible for handling sensitive presidential communications, including nuclear commands. Without specifying whether the attack originated in China, a White House official confirmed to the media that the system was hit, but emphasized that it did not contain any classified information and that such attacks “are not infrequent.” Security experts have repeatedly traced cyberattacks on foreign militaries, companies, and rights groups to China, and in many cases to the Chinese government (see, inter alia, CMB Nos. [57](#), [63](#), [68](#)).

- **Washington Free Beacon 9/30/2012: [White house hack attack](#)**
- **BBC 10/1/2012: [White House confirms cyber-attack on ‘unclassified’ system](#)**
- **Huffington Post 10/1/2012: [White House hacked in cyber attack that used spear-phishing to crack unclassified network](#)**



‘China Daily’ runs Diaoyu ads in U.S. papers

The Chinese government has extended the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu Islands, known in Japan as the Senkaku Islands (see CMB No. [69](#)), well beyond its borders by publishing advertisements in prominent newspapers in the United States on September 28, as world leaders gathered in New York for the annual United Nations General Assembly. The costly full-page color spreads, sponsored by the state-run *China Daily* newspaper, bore a “headline” declaring “Diaoyu

Islands Belong to China.” The accompanying text said the islands “have been an inherent territory of China since ancient times, and China has indisputable sovereignty” over them. The ads ran in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Japanese ambassador to the United States Ichiro Fujisaki criticized the U.S. newspapers for publishing the material, asserting that “it is inappropriate to print arguments of just one side that are not in line with the facts.” In recent years, the *China Daily* has increasingly bought space or placed paid supplements in American dailies (see CMB No. 49). However, the material typically mimics news content and features positive economic and investment-related articles. A strident declaration of territorial claims would seem to clash with that pattern, potentially driving away the target audience of business elites.

- **Agence France Presse 9/30/2012:** [China Daily takes out ads in US newspapers to highlight Diaoyu claims](#)
- **Irish Times 10/1/2012:** [China takes out ads to back claim to islands](#)
- **Reuters 9/29/2012:** [China takes islands dispute with Japan to pages of U.S. newspapers](#)
- **Asahi Shimbun 9/29/2012:** [China runs ads in top U.S. newspapers asserting sovereignty over islands](#)

NOTABLE ANALYSIS



Freedom House blog urges U.S. candidates to weigh risk of China crisis

In an October 1 post on Freedom House’s *Freedom at Issue* blog, staff editor Tyler Roylance asks whether the U.S. presidential candidates, incumbent Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney, are ready for a possible Chinese economic and political collapse (see CMB No. 58). He notes that the campaign discussion of China has focused on the effects of its growing economy on unemployment in the United States, with little mention of the current Chinese slowdown or the risk that it could cause social or political unrest in the country. In the absence of electoral legitimacy or the rule of law, the Chinese Communist Party has had to rely largely on its consistent delivery of economic growth to maintain popular support in recent decades. But as the economy slows and opaque political wrangling holds up reforms, a confrontation between party and people seems more likely. Moreover, the party has been leaning more on its self-declared role as China’s defender against “foreign bullying,” creating friction with neighboring states like Japan. The blog post urges Obama and Romney to think beyond their campaign rhetoric, consider the current situation in China, and make plans to protect the interests of the United States and the international community as a whole should a crisis emerge.

- **Freedom at Issue 10/1/2012:** [Are Romney and Obama ready for a Chinese collapse?](#)

For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see:
[Freedom in the World 2012](#)
[Freedom on the Net 2012](#)
[Freedom of the Press 2011](#)

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