



# CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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

**Issue No. 71: October 11, 2012**

## Headlines

-  State-friendly novelist wins Nobel, peace laureate remains in prison
-  Chinese users critique, praise U.S. presidential debate
-  'World of Warcraft' fans bemoan censorship, state TV's addiction tale
-  Blogger self-immolates, Australian TV crew reaches restricted Tibetan areas
-  U.S. House panel says Huawei and ZTE pose security threat

## **PHOTO OF THE WEEK: A SHOE FOR FREE SPEECH**



Credit: [\*Wall Street Journal\*](#)

## **BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS**



### **State-friendly novelist wins Nobel, peace laureate remains in prison**

On October 11, the Swedish Academy announced that it had selected Chinese novelist Mo Yan as the winner of the 2012 Nobel Prize for literature, citing his development of a writing style that “merges folk tales, history, and the contemporary.” China’s state media cheered the news, as it marked the first time that a Nobel award was given to a Chinese national who is friendly with the authoritarian government. China’s last winner, 2010 Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, remains in prison for his advocacy of democracy. Previous Chinese-born Nobel recipients had won their awards after emigrating. According to prominent human rights lawyer Teng Biao, at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2009, Mo had refused to sit in a seminar with dissident Chinese writers Dai Qing and Bei Ling. When asked in the past about Liu’s 11-year prison sentence, Mo had claimed he did not know much about it and had nothing to say. At a news conference early on October 12, Mo said of Liu, “I now hope that he can regain his freedom very soon,” though he continued to plead ignorance about the jailed dissident’s political activities. In a recent interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a source close to the Liu family said that the Chinese government was trying to pressure him to go into exile by treating his wife, Liu Xia, harshly. However, Liu Xiaobo reportedly insisted on remaining in the country, though this would mean serving out his prison term, which ends in 2020. According to the BBC’s source, Liu Xia had been “suffering mentally” from being placed under illegal house arrest with round-the-clock surveillance—two policewomen were reportedly stationed inside her apartment. Liu Xiaobo, who is being held in Jinzhou prison in Liaoning Province, was said to have a worsening stomach ailment. The couple’s families have been warned by the authorities not to speak to the media or provide any information about their situation.

- *Offbeat China* 10/7/2012: [Will Chinese writer Mo Yan get this year’s Nobel Prize for literature? Chinese netizens vote no](#)
- Associated Press 10/11/2012: [Chinese writer Mo Yan wins Nobel literature prize](#)
- Associated Press 10/12/2012: [Nobel winner Mo urges China dissident’s freedom](#)
- BBC 10/8/2012: [China ‘steals wife’s freedom’ to pressure Liu Xiaobo](#)



### **Hotels told to report any foreign journalists, Wen plays hoops**

Chinese authorities have reportedly ordered hotels to keep watch for foreign journalists ahead of the upcoming 18th Communist Party Congress, scheduled to begin on November 8 in Beijing (see CMB No. [70](#)). According to a post by a Nanjing-based blogger on September 28, the Nanjing Public Security Bureau’s exit-entry administration sent an “emergency notice” on August 17, urging all government-owned municipal hotels to report on any guests who check in with foreign journalist visas and journalist residence permits. It added that any delay or failure in reporting would result in government investigations. It is not uncommon for hotels to receive such instructions at sensitive times. One notice from Beijing’s Haidian district, calling on hotels to report Uighur and Tibetan

guests, was circulated online in 2008, around the time of the Beijing Olympics. Separately, as he prepared to retire from his Politburo position after the congress, Premier Wen Jiabao was featured on the October 8 front page of state-run *China Sports Daily*. He was shown dressed in a basketball uniform, with one photo catching him in mid-air as he went for a basket during an October 3 match with several former national athletes. The images were considered unusually casual for a senior leader. An unofficial photo of Wen riding a bicycle had been deleted from a netizen's microblog account in August (see CMB No. [67](#)).

- *China Digital Times* 10/5/2012: [Emergency notice to hotels](#)
- *China Digital Times* 10/20/2008: [Haidian district's 'ethnic problem'](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 10/9/2012: [Counting down to his retirement, Wen seeks to defend his legacy](#)
- Sina 10/8/2012: [Premier Wen joins basketball match to encourage public sports](#)



## Top investigative journalists chafe under tighter censorship

In an October 7 interview with U.S.-based McClatchy Newspapers, prominent investigative journalist Wang Keqin said that the year 2012 has been “probably the worst” in the past decade for investigative journalists in China. He said the government’s harsh controls on the media had intensified beginning in 2010, as the authorities focused on “maintaining stability” in the face of “white hot” social unrest, including protests and riots. Wang, whose enterprising investigative team at the *China Economic Times* was disbanded in 2010, has since moved to the *Economic Observer* (see CMB No. [30](#)). However, on October 9 he turned to his account on the popular microblogging platform Sina Weibo, where he has more than 350,000 followers, to break a story on the censorship of an article about a Fujian provincial official’s unexplained possession of luxury items, including a 50,000 yuan (\$7,950) watch and a 15,000 yuan (\$2,385) belt. (A similar case in September had drawn considerable public attention; see CMB No. [69](#).) The newspaper article had already been printed in the October 9 issue of the *City Times* in Kunming, but hundreds of thousands of copies were seized and destroyed, and the online version of the article was removed. Referring to the event on his own microblog account, *City Times* publisher and chief editor Zhou Zhichen wrote, “I abhor and despise that evil hand which reaches thousands of kilometers.” Journalists across the country then spread word of the event on Sina Weibo, prompting some coverage by national state-run papers like the *Global Times*. Another reporter interviewed for the McClatchy article was Jian Guangzhou, who became known in China for his 2008 report on tainted milk powder. He said he had resigned from the Shanghai newspaper *Oriental Daily* in September after a 10-year stint because his supervisors had grown “concerned” by his increasing use of Sina Weibo to address topics that were turned down by the newspaper (see CMB No. [68](#)). Jian also said “I definitely couldn’t do it” today, referring to the tainted milk exposé, given the tightened censorship environment. More broadly, he reflected that that under Communist Party rule, the media would always remain attached to the state apparatus, meaning any limited freedom they enjoyed would amount to “dancing with shackles.”

- McClatchy Newspapers 10/7/2012: [China moves to silence journalists who offered rare taste of transparency](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 10/10/2012: [A newspaper editor laments censorship](#)

- Sina Hong Kong 10/9/2012 (in Chinese): [Web rumor says article on provincial 'watch uncle' removed from Yunnan newspaper](#)
  - *Global Times* 10/10/2012: [Attempt to bully media backfires again](#)
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## NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



### **Student's shoe-throwing protest stirs netizen discussion**

A video in which a student threw a shoe at outspoken neo-Maoist commentator Sima Nan during a lecture has been widely circulated among Chinese netizens. During the question-and-answer session following Sima's address at Hainan University on October 7, a student called his views a threat to freedom, adding that "even if your talk is not good, you can go back to your hotel. If I argue against it, certainly I will be locked up in a tiny dark room." When Sima interrupted to ask whether there was a question in the student's remarks, he said, "My question is, can I throw my shoe?" The student then lobbed his sneaker onto the stage near the podium, earning applause from other students in the hall. Many netizens also praised the act, including prominent writer Murong Xuecun. He said that "throwing a shoe at him is like a reward," because Sima often called himself an intellectual, and many intellectuals were tortured or killed during the Mao era. State media said the incident highlighted increased left-right tension in the country. On October 4, an editorial in Communist Party mouthpiece *People's Daily* called for the arrest of prominent radical leftist professor Han Deqiang, who assaulted an 80-year-old man after he criticized Mao Zedong during an anti-Japanese protest in Beijing on September 18. Han has defended himself by denouncing the elderly man as a "race traitor," a term neo-Maoists have applied to various public figures and news media, including state and Communist Party outlets like the *People's Daily* and China Central Television (CCTV). Both Sima and Han are contributing editors for the Maoist discussion forum Utopia, which was partly shut down following the spring 2012 ouster of former Chongqing Communist Party chief Bo Xilai, a leading proponent of neo-Maoist sentiment. Bo was formally expelled from the party and handed over for criminal prosecution in late September (see CMB No. [70](#)).

- Global Voices 10/8/2012: [China: Student throws shoe to defend free speech](#)
  - *Wall Street Journal* 10/8/2012: [Student gives prominent neo-Maoist the shoe treatment](#)
  - *Global Times* 10/9/2012: [Shoe-tossing highlights vitriolic left-right divide](#)
  - *South China Morning Post* 10/4/2012: [People's Daily calls for the arrest of radical leftist 'traitor beater'](#)
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### **Chinese users critique, praise U.S. presidential debate**

The televised October 3 debate between U.S. president Barack Obama and his Republican Party challenger, Mitt Romney, triggered heated discussions among Chinese netizens, as had a Taiwanese

presidential debate last December (see CMB No. [42](#)). The U.S. event was streamed live on a number of popular Chinese web portals, including the microblogging platform Sina Weibo, on which the term “debate” was mentioned in some nine million postings that day. Obama made no reference to China in his remarks, but the country was brought up three times by Romney, who said the United States should cut government spending to avoid borrowing from China. (China is the largest single foreign holder of U.S. public debt.) “No more borrowing? So what? You guys never planned to pay us back anyway,” one user commented. While others similarly responded with criticism or sarcasm to any perceived “China bashing,” many devoted their comments to praise or curiosity regarding the democratic spectacle of the debate. One called the U.S. system a “blessing and luxury,” noting that unlike Chinese leaders, the U.S. candidates “do not have to worry that anything said will erupt into social instability. They can get down to business and talk about taxes, deficit, health care and education.”

- *Atlantic* 10/4/2012: [What the U.S. presidential debate looked like from China](#)
- Ministry of Tofu 10/4/2012: [Mitt Romney’s mention of China during US presidential debate highlighted in the country](#)
- *Want Daily* 10/6/2012: [US presidential debate goes viral on China's internet](#)



## **‘World of Warcraft’ fans bemoan censorship, state TV’s addiction tale**

A recent program aired by state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) on the dangers of video-game addiction has drawn sharp criticism from netizens in the country. The episode of *Story and Law* used a dramatic reenactment to convey the experiences of a man who supposedly declared bankruptcy after becoming addicted to the online role-playing game *World of Warcraft* (WoW) and quitting his job. Several gamers said on the microblogging platform Sina Weibo that the depictions of the game were sensationalized and factually inaccurate. “This time CCTV’s lies are just too unprofessional,” one netizen wrote. Observers noted that Chinese players must also contend with censorship on their games. Words such as “freedom,” “sexy,” and “passion” were reportedly banned from the mainland edition of the WoW series released in 2010, and players whose accounts included those characters were forced to change their names. In addition, Chinese gamers have complained of prejudice by counterparts from other countries, some of whom assume that they are all “gold farmers” who perform repetitive tasks to collect online assets for real-life sale to other players (see CMB No. [23](#)).

- MyDrivers 9/27/2012 (in Chinese): [CCTV targets World of Warcraft again with unintelligent insults](#)
- Kotaku 10/4/2012: [Chinese WoW players are sick of lies](#)
- China Geeks 9/1/2010: [Beheading freedom](#)



## **Patriotic holiday brings online propaganda, photos of tourist glut**

In honor of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, the Communist Party mouthpiece *People's Daily* posted a list of the commemorative October 1 editorials it had published from 1949 to 2012 on its microblogging account. The posting on Sina Weibo insisted that the editorials' triumphant titles revealed the "forward march of the times." However, some readers reacted with dismay, sarcasm, or criticism. One commented, "I don't trust a single thing printed in your esteemed newspaper except the punctuation marks!" Another Weibo user remarked that the 1954 title, "Five Years of Striving for Peace, Democracy and Socialism," contained a "sensitive word." As October 1, National Day, marks the first day of China's seven-day Golden Week holiday, many netizens warned one another on Weibo to avoid crowded transportation routes and tourist sites. Several local newspapers published front-page stories about gridlocked traffic, record numbers of travelers, and the mountains of trash they left behind. Images of tourist spots being flooded with a shocking number of visitors, including one that appeared on the cover of *Henan Business Daily* on October 8 entitled "Great Wall of Flesh and Blood," were circulated widely online.

- **Danwei 10/8/2012:** [This year's Golden Week was not relaxed](#)
- **China Digital Times 10/3/2012:** [Netizens unmoved by 'National Day editorial'](#)
- **Tea Leaf Nation 10/4/2012:** [Amazing images: Chinese tourist season rapidly becoming an overcrowded disaster](#)



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## **Report finds rise in social, political, commercial, and cultural use of new media**

On October 4, state-run Xinhua news agency reported that a study recently published by the official China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) indicated several major effects of new media in Chinese society. According to the report, Development of *China's New Media No. 3*, there are over 415 million instant-messaging users in the country, a 17.7 percent increase since 2010. The even more rapid growth of microbloggers from 63 million in December 2010 to 274 million in June 2012 had helped channel public opinion and increase political participation (online), the study found. Meanwhile, a sharp rise in use of online business services, such as banking and shopping, suggested that new media were becoming increasingly popular for commercial purposes. The report also noted China's cultural development on the internet, as new media have become an entertainment platform with a flourishing number of videos, music services, and gaming websites.

- **China Scope 10/8/2012:** [Blue Book suggests the new media are the new driving force in China's social development](#)
- **Xinhua 10/2/2012 (in Chinese):** [Blue Book: New media are new driving force for development in Chinese society](#)
- **Blue Book on New Media 7/1/2012 (in Chinese):** [Development of China's New Media No. 3 \(2012\)](#)

# TIBET



## **Blogger self-immolates, Australian TV reaches restricted Tibetan areas**

According to Voice of America, a Tibetan poet and blogger named Gudrup died on October 4 after setting himself on fire to protest the Chinese authorities' repressive policies in Tibet. The self-immolation took place in Dzeru in central Tibet, where local officials reportedly refused to release Gudrup's body to his family. He had published several online articles urging Tibetans to resist oppression through nonviolent means, including self-immolations. In a March 14 posting, he noted that Tibetans who refuse to denounce Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, or accept Chinese rule are secretly killed or made to disappear. At least 53 Tibetans have self-immolated since February 2009. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Stephen McDonnell presented an impressive report on the issue on October 9 after making a rare, secretive foray into the restive Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province, where foreign journalists are typically banned. The crew recorded images of a heavy military police presence and barricades, particularly in Ngaba Prefecture, where over 20 self-immolations have occurred. A Tibetan woman living in the area told McDonnell that local residents could be arrested and beaten to death if they spoke the truth about the current situation. Nevertheless, she called on all countries of the world to "pray for the downfall of the Communist Party." The journalists subsequently decided to blur her face to protect her identity. The news crew was frequently followed and harassed by the authorities, and was eventually escorted out of town by local officials, who explained that journalists were not allowed in Tibetan areas.

- **Voice of America 10/4/2012:** [Tibetan blogger self-immolates, leaves posts behind](#)
- **Phayul 10/9/2012:** [If we speak the truth, they will beat us to death](#)
- **Australian Broadcasting Corporation 10/9/2012:** [Rare footage shows extreme measures of Tibetan protestors](#)

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# HONG KONG



## **Beijing-backed education plan shelved, but not scrapped**

In an effort to end repeated protests, Hong Kong's chief executive Leung Chun-ying announced on October 8 that the government was setting aside a controversial Beijing-backed moral and national education curriculum. However, Leung stopped short of conclusively withdrawing or scrapping the guidelines, and said schools were still permitted to implement them if they chose. The government's September announcement that the curriculum would not be mandatory had failed to halt demonstrations by opponents, who said the plan was designed to inculcate loyalty to the Communist Party (see CMB No. [67](#)). On October 1, a holiday marking the founding of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong residents had staged a protest in front of the China Liaison Office, which represents the central government's interests in the territory. Some carried banners with slogans such as "End one-party dictatorship" and "Power to the people." Others waved old Hong Kong flags that were used during British rule, which ended in 1997.

- *Los Angeles Times* 10/8/2012: [Hong Kong leaders try again to put divisive curriculum plan to rest](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 10/9/2012: [Controversial guidelines on national education shelved](#)
- *Washington Post* 10/6/2012: [Hong Kong and China: Former British colony clings to its separate identity](#)

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## BEYOND CHINA



### **U.S. House panel says Huawei and ZTE pose security threat**

In a report released on October 8, the U.S. House Intelligence Committee concluded that Huawei and ZTE, China's leading telecommunications firms, are a threat to U.S. national security (see CMB No. [68](#)). The committee said that the two companies could assist the Chinese government in extracting sensitive information from American businesses and government agencies. Both Huawei and ZTE denied claims that they collude with Beijing or the Chinese military, but the report indicated that Huawei in particular had worked with an elite cyberwarfare unit in the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The panel recommended that the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment block any business mergers or acquisitions involving Huawei and ZTE, and said it was handing over evidence of possible criminal violations to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Huawei spokesman William Plummer said the outcome of the probe was "predetermined" as part of an anti-China "political agenda." Also on October 8, Reuters reported that California-based information technology company Cisco had formally ended its seven-year sales partnership with ZTE following allegations that the Chinese company had acted as a middleman to sell Cisco equipment to Iran, which is barred by U.S. sanctions from importing American-made technology products (see CMB No. [52](#)). The FBI is investigating claims that ZTE attempted to cover up such sales after Reuters first reported on them in March.

- U.S. House Intelligence Committee 10/8/2012: [Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Ruppberger warn American companies doing business with Huawei and ZTE to 'use another vendor'](#); for the full report, click [here](#)
- *Washington Post* 10/7/2012: [House panel wants U.S-China telecom mergers blocked](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 10/8/2012: [Huawei fires back at the U.S.](#)
- *Financial Times* 10/8/2012: [US brands Chinese groups security threat](#)
- *New York Times* 10/9/2012: [U.S. panel cites risks in Chinese equipment](#)
- Reuters 10/8/2012: [Exclusive: Cisco cuts ties to China's ZTE after Iran probe](#)

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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