



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

- As media tout Xi's focus on ethics, leak shows hard line on regime security
- Journalists respond to false rumor of Bo Xilai trial
- Qihoo hit by competition warning, removal from iTunes store
- Netizens petition U.S. to bar entry for China firewall creators
- Hong Kong journalists organize to block corporate privacy bill

PHOTO OF THE WEEK: A MEDAL FOR METTLE



Credit: [Reuters](#)

BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



As media tout Xi's focus on ethics, leak shows hard line on regime security

State-run media are burnishing the corruption-fighting image of new Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Xi Jinping even as a leaked internal speech points to his deep hostility to political reform. The official Xinhua news agency reported on a January 22 address to the CCP's discipline body in which Xi vowed to crack down on graft by both “tigers” and “flies”—a reference to senior leaders and lowly bureaucrats. He said no exceptions would be made or leniency granted, stating that “power should be restricted by the cage of regulation.” However, observers noted that in practice, such anticorruption campaigns in China are often selective in their choice of targets, reflecting internal power struggles or calibrated responses to public attention. On January 29, state media quoted Xi as warning all officials to curb wasteful public spending and adhere to the ideal of “honor to frugality and shame to extravagance.” These attempts to promote humility and self-restraint in the CCP contrasted sharply with the imperious tone of the leaked December speech, which provides a troubling glimpse of how far Xi may be willing to go to protect the CCP's monopoly on power. On January 25, prominent Beijing-based writer Gao Yu published an account of the speech online, along with excerpts she claimed to have obtained from a well-placed source. According to Gao, Xi discussed the Soviet Union's collapse and the lessons that could be learned from it, stressing the need to maintain party control over the military. Gao focused on Xi's alleged assertion that the Soviet Communist Party had collapsed because the military remained neutral—and “nobody was man enough to stand up and resist”—when popular Russian leader Boris Yeltsin and crowds of protesters thwarted a coup attempt by Communist hard-liners in 1991. Gao concluded that Xi is determined to defend the CCP regime, but hopes to revamp its image and restore the popular legitimacy it held during its early years in power. The text of Xi's alleged comments has yet to be confirmed, but netizens responded with concern. One wrote, “He's hinting that he's the ‘man enough’ one,” while another reflected that “Xi is using his fight against corruption to win us over and pave the way for his authoritarian regime. If you're dreaming that he'll implement constitutional government, dream on.”

- Xinhua 1/22/2013: [Xi Jinping vows ‘power within cage of regulations’](#)
- *Guardian* 1/22/2013: [Xi Jinping vows to fight ‘tigers’ and ‘flies’ in anti-corruption drive](#)
- *China Daily* 1/30/2013: [Xi's appeal to curb waste gets warm response](#)
- Xinhua 1/29/2013 (in Chinese): [GS Xi Jinping call on frugality and anti-extravagance generates strong responses](#)
- *China Digital Times* 1/27/2013: [Leaked speech shows Xi Jinping's opposition to reform](#)
- *Seeing Red in China* 1/26/2013: [Beijing observation: Xi Jinping the man, by Gao Yu](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 1/28/2013: [Xi Jinping's opposition to political reforms laid out in leaked internal speech](#)
- Deutsche Welle 1/25/2013 (in Chinese): [Beijing observation: Xi Jinping the man](#)
- *China Digital Times* 1/28/2013: [Netizen voices: Xi Jinping's macho dream](#)



Journalists respond to false rumor of Bo Xilai trial

On January 28, about 30 journalists from foreign and domestic media, and even the state news agency Xinhua, appeared at a courthouse in the southwestern city of Guiyang in response to false rumors that the trial of former Chongqing party secretary and Politburo member Bo Xilai was about to open there. The Hong Kong newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*, often seen as a reliable source of inside information given its close ties to the Chinese Communist Party, had reported on Friday, January 25, that a “usually well-informed source” said the trial would begin on Monday in Guiyang. The mainland government’s silence, even as the report spread via the internet, fueled speculation that the report was accurate. A belated semiofficial response came from the party-owned *Global Times*, which reported on January 28 that Bo’s trial would not begin until March at the earliest and would last 10 days, compared with the one-day trial of Bo’s wife in August 2012, due to its “complexity.” Faced with the assembled reporters, court officials in Guiyang held an impromptu press conference, stating that they had “received no information whatsoever about the trial of Bo Xilai taking place” there. Legal expert Jerome Cohen said the incident reflected doubts among journalists—even those working for state-owned media—that in such a high-profile case the authorities would follow legal requirements to announce the trial date and location several days in advance. Other observers criticized the government’s lack of transparency surrounding the case and failure to immediately dispel the rumor, recalling a similarly stalled response to false reports of the death of former president Jiang Zemin in July 2011 (see CMB No. [28](#)). Separately, journalist Gao Yingpiao, who had been secretly sentenced to three years in prison in 2010 during Bo’s tenure as Chongqing party chief, was released early on January 20 (see CMB No. [53](#)). Gao was the third person since Bo’s early 2012 ouster to be freed after being jailed under Bo for expressing critical opinions online. Fang Hong, one of the other recently released detainees, told Radio Free Asia that 5,800 people from Chongqing had been sent to labor camps in 2011 for free expression offenses or involvement in organized crime; it remains unclear how many such detainees are still being held.

- *Ta Kung Pao* 1/25/2013 (in Chinese): [Sources say Bo Xilai to be tried in Guizhou on January 28](#)
- *Global Times* 1/28/2013: [Officials deny rumor of Bo Xilai’s imminent trial](#)
- *New York Times* 1/29/2013: [China’s ‘trial of the century’ is just a false alarm](#)
- Reuters 1/28/2013: [Dead end trail to Bo trial in China’s south](#)
- Agence France-Presse 1/28/2013: [Bo Xilai trial not until March, says Chinese state media](#)
- Radio Free Asia 1/25/2013: [Chongqing journalist freed early](#)



Censors block China magazine’s report on Taiwan democracy

Shanghai’s *Oriental Daily News* reported on January 29 that a monthly magazine in Sichuan Province had been forced to suspend its February issue “due to an inappropriate selection of topics.” According to the newspaper, *National History* magazine, owned by the state-run company Chengdu Xianfeng Culture Media, had planned to release a special edition about Taiwan’s democratization. Xianfeng deputy editor in chief Da Hai said the company would instead print a combined February-

March edition, which had been submitted in advance to media regulators to “serve as a record based on the relevant regulations.” *National History* executive editor Sun Zhan told *Oriental Daily News* that his team had spent six months working on the February special edition, which included articles written by 14 renowned Taiwanese writers about Taiwan’s political transformation over the past century. *National History*, founded in September 2007, describes itself as China’s first news journal about historical events and has a monthly circulation of more than 100,000 copies. The Chinese authorities consider Taiwan a renegade province, and any media content that touches on its sovereignty is regarded as highly sensitive. The government is also wary of any favorable coverage of Taiwan’s democracy or suggestions that it could be used as a blueprint for democratization in China (see CMB No. [44](#)).

- *Taipei Times* 1/30/2013: [Chinese magazine withdraws planned issue on Taiwan](#)
- *BBC Chinese* 1/29/2013 (in Chinese): [Chengdu ‘National History’ suspended due to inappropriate topic choice](#)
- *Apple Daily* 1/29/2013 (in Chinese): [Sichuan official magazine suspended for report on Taiwan democracy](#)

NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Sex video whistleblower questioned by police

Veteran Beijing journalist Zhu Ruifeng, whose November 2012 posting of a sex video online triggered a scandal that ensnared several Chongqing officials, said he was visited by police late on January 27, but refused to open the door to them, suspecting they had come from Chongqing (see CMB No. [75](#)). One Chongqing district party chief, Lei Zhengfu, had been fired shortly after the video emerged; another 10 officials were dismissed on January 25, and Zhu had vowed to continue his investigation, saying, “We have the internet as our weapon.” After consulting lawyers, Zhu reported to a Beijing police station on January 28 for seven hours of questioning by Chongqing officers, but he said he would not turn over his cache of sex videos, which he had obtained from a confidential source. The recordings were allegedly made by a construction company that sought to lure and then extort contracts from the targeted officials. Amid a broader anticorruption propaganda campaign by the new Communist Party leadership (see above), news outlets such as *Beijing News* and *Global Times* published editorials on January 29 that called on Chongqing authorities to provide information about their investigation and explain why they interrogated the whistleblower.

- *Wall Street Journal* 1/25/2013: [Chinese officials ousted over alleged sexual exploits](#)
- *Washington Post* 1/27/2013: [Police visit Chinese blogger who exposed sex scandal](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 1/28/2013: [Police visit home of Chongqing sex tape whistle-blower](#)
- *Associated Press* 1/28/2013: [Zhu Ruifeng, China whistleblower in sex tapes case, faces police pressure](#)
- *Beijing News* 1/29/2013 (in Chinese): [Chongqing sex tape whistleblower said ready to be detained after cross-provincial investigation](#)

- *Beijing News* 1/29/2013 (in Chinese): [How deep is the water of the vulgar video case?](#)
 - *Global Times* 1/29/2013 (in Chinese): [He Hui: Why not openly respond to Weibo anxiety, Chongqing police?](#)
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Qihoo hit by competition warning, removal from iTunes store

Shares of the Beijing-based internet company Qihoo 360 Technology dropped to a one-week low on the New York Stock Exchange on January 28 as investors reacted to news that the firm had received a warning from Chinese regulators for unfair competition and that its applications had been removed from Apple's online iTunes store. In a microblog post on January 24, the Beijing Industrial and Commercial Administration Bureau wrote that it had issued Qihoo an executive warning for combining its antivirus software with its web browser. The company had previously been accused of using this and other tactics to unfairly boost the market share of its browser and search programs (see CMB No. [73](#)). On January 28, Qihoo countered that the search engine giant Baidu, one of its competitors, was improperly discouraging use of Qihoo's browser by telling users it was incompatible with Baidu's system. Separately, Qihoo confirmed that its applications had been removed from iTunes on January 25 "without a clear reason." After a similar incident in early 2012, Qihoo had expressed suspicions that a rival firm had artificially generated negative user comments on the iTunes site, triggering an automatic removal.

- *Bloomberg* 1/28/2013: [Qihoo drops to 1-week low after saying Apple cut its apps](#)
 - *The Next Web* 1/29/2013: [Chinese regulator warns Qihoo 360 for unfair competition with browser and antivirus products](#)
 - *Tech Crunch* 1/28/2013: [Qihoo gets double dose of bad news as Apple cuts its iOS apps and it receives unfair competition warning](#)
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Netizens petition U.S. to bar entry for China firewall creators

On January 25, a Chinese netizen initiated a petition on the official website of the U.S. presidency, urging that "people who help internet censorship, builders of Great Firewall in China for example, should be denied entry to the U.S." The campaign was reportedly launched in reaction to a two-day blockage in China, beginning on January 21, of the internationally popular open source code repository GitHub. The site is often used by software developers to share knowledge with their peers in other countries. The White House petition was linked to a document uploaded to GitHub entitled "The Great Firewall Contributors List," identifying 180 individuals who allegedly contributed to the construction of China's online censorship system, the so-called Great Firewall (GFW). Among them were Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications professor Fang Binxing, who is widely known in China as the chief GFW architect, and Han Weili, a professor at Shanghai-based Fudan University. On January 26, access to GitHub was briefly disrupted by an apparent cyberattack. In a posting that day on his Sina Weibo microblogging account, Han denied that he had contributed to the GFW. He then claimed on January 27 that he had been summoned by

the authorities. In a January 28 interview with the Communist Party–owned newspaper *Global Times*, Fang said he was not aware of the petition and would not let it bother him, having already faced years of controversy over his creation. The petition, which needs to collect 100,000 signatures by February 24 to trigger an official response from the White House, was signed by over 10,000 netizens within a week of its launch. According to the *South China Morning Post*, many Weibo postings that included a link to the petition site have been deleted. The White House’s online petition system, established in late 2011, was designed as a way to facilitate the public’s communication with the executive branch, in keeping with the U.S. constitution’s guarantee of the right to “petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Nearly 100 petitions have won responses to date, ranging from serious policy suggestions to purely humorous inquiries.

- *South China Morning Post* 1/29/2013: [Netizens launch White House petition to ban architects of the Great Firewall from entering US](#)
- *Global Times* 1/28/2013: [White House petition asks to ban GFW developers](#)
- *The Next Web* 1/21/2013: [The Chinese government appears to be blocking GitHub via DNS \(Update: Investigation underway\)](#)
- *Greatfire.org* 1/30/2013: [China, GitHub and the man-in-the-middle](#)
- *White House* 1/25/2013: [People who help internet censorship, builders of Great Firewall in China for example, should be denied entry to the U.S.](#)



Prominent blogger lists deleted posts, news on high officials curbed

On January 30, former Google China chief executive Kai-fu Lee, who was recently named by the popular microblogging service Sina Weibo as one of the “100 Most Influential Weibo Celebrities,” posted screenshots of entries that had been deleted from his microblog over the last six months. Lee asked his more than 27 million followers, “What do you all think: did these 78 posts really deserve to die?” The entry quickly generated more than 3,500 comments and was reposted over 5,000 times. One of the deleted items referred to a March 2012 research report from Carnegie Mellon University that estimated Weibo’s deletion rate to be 16 percent (see CMB No. [50](#)). Another showed the October 27 cover of the *Economist*, featuring a photo of new Communist Party leader Xi Jinping under the headline “The man who must change China.” On January 29, *China Digital Times* released a list of keywords for which searches were allegedly blocked on Sina Weibo. In addition to the name of Zhu Ruifeng, a blogger who had touched off a sex scandal involving Chongqing officials (see above), the blocked terms included puns and homonyms used by netizens to discuss Communist leaders including Wen Jiabao and Xi Jinping. The Central Propaganda Department on the same day reportedly issued a ban on coverage of a recently translated biography on former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. Separately, amid confusion over the trial date for ousted Chongqing party chief Bo Xilai (see above), the authorities allegedly ordered media outlets to carry only articles by state-run Xinhua news agency for news related to Bo.

- *China Digital Times* 1/30/2013: [Kai-fu Lee: 78 innocent Weibos hounded to death](#)
- *China Digital Times* 1/29/2013: [Sensitive words: Warm, sly, fake](#)
- *China Digital Times* 1/29/2013: [Ministry of truth: House sisters and more](#)

INNER MONGOLIA



Detained Mongolian activist's health reportedly worsens

The New York–based organization Human Rights in China (HRIC) reported on January 29 that detained ethnic Mongolian journalist and activist Hada is suffering from psychological problems and deteriorating health without access to medical treatment. Hada has been held in extralegal detention since December 2010, when he completed a 15-year prison sentence for “separatism” and “espionage.” He had founded the pro-Mongol newspaper *Voice of Southern Mongolia* prior to his imprisonment and is currently being held at the Jinye Ecological Park in Inner Mongolia’s capital, Hohhot. According to HRIC, Hada’s wife, Xinna, who was allowed a rare visit with her husband in early January, said in a letter that Hada was restricted from reading and given little opportunity for exercise. He had also been supplied with liquor, which made him lethargic. In a January 25 statement released by HRIC, the couple’s son, Uiles, said the Chinese authorities had cut off his family’s communications, restricted their source of livelihood, and banned them from speaking to foreign journalists and overseas human rights organizations. Despite the ban, Xinna’s mother spoke with the New York–based Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC) on January 22, claiming that her son had recently been summoned by authorities for revealing information about Hada. According to Radio Free Asia, Hada’s ailments include a stomach ulcer, coronary heart disease, and rheumatoid arthritis.

- **Human Rights in China 1/29/2013: [Lawyer asks for immediate release of Mongolian dissident Hada; family provides further details on Hada conditions](#)**
- **Human Rights in China 1/25/2013: [Mongolian dissident Hada in illegal detention is mentally ill; son details abuses by authorities](#)**
- **Radio Free Asia 1/28/2013: [Hada’s mental health slipping](#)**
- **Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center 1/23/2013: [Phone interview with Ms. Hanshuulan, Hada’s mother-in-law \(2013-01-22\)](#)**

HONG KONG



Journalists organize to block corporate privacy bill

A petition signed by nearly 1,800 Hong Kong reporters, journalism professors, and students against a government proposal to restrict access to corporate information was published in five local newspapers on January 28. The full-page advertisement, headlined “Secrecy Breeds Corruption,” called on Hong Kong chief executive Leung Chun-ying to withdraw the bill, under which company officials could ask the government to block their personal information, including addresses and identification numbers, from public view. Hong Kong Journalists Association chairwoman Mak Yin-ting said on January 26 that the proposal would suffocate the free flow of information and jeopardize Hong Kong’s status as a regional information hub as well as a financial center.

Bloomberg News and the *New York Times* had used public business records available in Hong Kong for their 2012 exposés on the family wealth of Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping and Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, respectively. Chinese authorities reacted angrily to the stories and blocked both news outlets' websites; on January 30 the *Times* reported that China-linked hackers had infiltrated its computer systems in the period surrounding publication of its Wen article (see CMB No. [73](#)). The *South China Morning Post* reported the same day that the Hong Kong government had offered to provide “media companies” with an account and password to access the information that would be restricted under the draft ordinance. However, critics of that alternative said it seemed to exclude new media platforms and could allow authorities to track journalists' searches. Mak rejected the offer, explaining that her organization was interested in defending freedom of information for all citizens, not just professional journalists. She said, “There are many social groups who investigate dirty deals through company searches and they release the findings to the public. The new law would make them unable to do so.”

- *South China Morning Post* 1/30/2013: [Press firm on gaining full access to data](#)
- *Hong Kong Business Magazine* 1/29/2013: [Petition declaring ‘secrecy breeds corruption’ unveiled in newspapers](#)
- *Bloomberg Businessweek* 1/27/2013: [Hong Kong journalists plan petition against privacy law proposal](#)
- *Financial Times* 1/23/2013: [HK hit over plan to protect corporate data](#)
- Hong Kong Journalists Association 1/27/2013: [Record number of journalists call on government to keep company directors’ personal information in public](#)
- *New York Times* 1/30/2013: [Hackers in China attacked The Times for last 4 months](#)

BEYOND CHINA



Open letter urges Microsoft transparency on Skype security

Several dozen free expression groups, scholars, and information-technology activists published an open letter to U.S. technology giant Microsoft on January 24, urging the company to address security concerns about Skype, a popular online chat service that Microsoft acquired in October 2011. Among the signatories were Reporters Without Borders, the Tibet Action Institute, and the *Great Fire* blog, which tracks blocked websites and keywords in China. The letter called on Skype to regularly release a transparency report that provides details on its compliance with requests for user information by governments. The letter specifically asked the company to provide documentation on its operational relationship with TOM, Skype’s government-approved partner in China, to which Chinese users are automatically redirected when trying to download Skype. The signatories called on the firm to explain what “surveillance and censorship capabilities users may be subject to” when using the TOM version. In October 2008, a report released by the Toronto-based research group Information Warfare Monitor found that TOM-Skype implemented extensive surveillance of its users in China, including scans of conversations for sensitive keywords and uploads of such communications to servers based in China. Skype’s international version is not available on the China-based branches of the online application stores Apple iTunes and Google Play.

- *Tech in Asia* 1/25/2013: [Microsoft under fire for Skype China business and alleged chat intercepts](#)
 - *Epoch Times* 1/26/2013: [Activists raise concerns about Skype privacy](#)
 - [Open Letter to Skype](#) 1/24/2013
 - *Information Warfare Monitor* 10/2008: [Breaching trust: An analysis of surveillance and security practices on China's TOM-Skype platform](#)
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In U.S. award speech, Chen Guangcheng urges media spotlight on abuses

Speaking at a January 29 award ceremony in Washington, DC, blind, self-taught activist lawyer Chen Guangcheng urged people in China to end the country's "leadership of thieves" and said the U.S. government, in its relations with Beijing, must not "give in an inch" on principles of democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech. Chen, who escaped from illegal house arrest in 2012 and now studies law at New York University, emphasized the importance of media attention on human rights issues, saying it had the dual effects of tempering official behavior and raising Chinese people's awareness of their legal rights. He identified several detained Chinese activists in his speech to draw international attention to their plights. Among them were prominent human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng and Liu Xia, the wife of jailed Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, who has been under illegal house arrest for more than two years. Chen also said that his relatives in Shandong Province, particularly his jailed nephew, Chen Kegui, were paying the price for his escape to the United States (see CMB No. [76](#)). Chen's speech was repeated in English by American film star and Tibetan rights activist Richard Gere, who presented him with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Prize, named for the late U.S. congressman. In an interview with the Associated Press on January 28, Chen said that China's authoritarian regime was doomed, as its people were increasingly challenging their Communist Party rulers. "It's an inevitability of history, whether the party likes it or not," he said, predicting that "when the time comes and I go back, China will be changing."

- *Agence France-Presse* 1/30/2013: [Blind activist urges no compromise on changing China](#)
 - *Reuters* 1/30/2013: [Blind dissident Chen Guangcheng urges global pressure on China over human rights](#)
 - *Associated Press* 1/30/2013: [Dissident: End of 'leadership of thieves' in China](#)
 - *Lantos Foundation* 1/29/2013: [Chinese activist Cheng Guangcheng receives Tom Lantos Human Rights Prize at U.S. Capitol ceremony \(full speech in English\)](#)
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For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see:
[Freedom in the World 2013](#)
[Freedom on the Net 2012](#)
[Freedom of the Press 2012](#)

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