



# CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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

Issue 84: April 4, 2013

## Headlines

-  Editors sacked over North Korea, Taiwan articles
-  Apple apologizes to blunt a coordinated attack in state media
-  New surveillance 'grid' imposed on Tibet, activist released from prison
-  Hollywood alters zombie, superhero films for China release
-  Sale of Next Media's Taiwan outlets falls through

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK: MY 'CHINA DREAM'



Credit: [Tea Leaf Nation](#)

## BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



### State media promote Xi Jinping's 'China Dream' slogan

Since Xi Jinping assumed his position as Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary in November, he has promoted the “China Dream” as a new political slogan in his speeches, displacing his predecessor’s “harmonious society” catchphrase. According to analyst Bill Bishop, the term refers to “national rejuvenation, improvement of people’s livelihoods, prosperity, construction of a better society and military strengthening as the common dream of the Chinese people that can be best achieved under one party, Socialist rule.” State media have rolled out a steady stream of editorials, commentaries, and stories to amplify the message (see CMB No. [83](#)). The official news agency Xinhua reported that during an inspection tour of Shandong and Jiangsu Provinces from March 25 to 28, the head of the party’s propaganda department, Liu Qibao, called promotion of the Chinese Dream an important task. On March 27 and 28, the CCP mouthpiece *People’s Daily* published the seventh and eighth front-page editorials in its series on the theme, inadvertently highlighting some of the internal contradictions in the deliberately vague concept. The March 27 editorial asserted that the dream is that of every individual, while the March 28 piece reiterated the importance of the party’s leadership in achieving the dream, ignoring the possibility that individuals’ aspirations could conflict with the party’s ends or means. As the buzzword trickles down through every level of Chinese society, it is spurring expectations that may be difficult for the CCP to satisfy without unprecedented systemic reforms and a dilution of its monopoly on power. The *New Yorker’s* Evan Osnos quotes his elderly neighbor as saying, “What’s my China Dream? To live a few more years in my house” *Tea Leaf Nation* spotlighted a series of photographs posted on microblogs of Beijing petitioners holding up hand-made signs with their dreams, which included “At 70, I would not be sent to black prisons,” “Judicial fairness. Give back the life of my son,” and “My Chinese dream is that China would no longer conduct land grabs of people’s homes, and I can live in safety and enjoy my work.”

- *People’s Daily* 3/27/2013 (in Chinese): [After all, China dream is everyone’s dream](#)
- *People’s Daily* 3/28/2013 (in Chinese): [Generate strength to fulfill the dream under party leadership](#)
- Xinhua 3/29/2013: [Official stresses ‘Chinese dream’ promotion](#)
- *New York Times* 3/25/2013: [A highly public trip for China’s president, and its first lady](#)
- Bloomberg 4/1/2013: [China’s new leader follows Katy Perry’s tune](#)
- *New Yorker* 3/26/2013: [Can China deliver the China dream\(s\)?](#)
- *Tea Leaf Nation* 3/27/2013: [Chinese petitioners: Here’s my ‘Chinese dream’](#)



### Editors sacked over North Korea, Taiwan articles

Deng Yuwen, a deputy editor at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) newspaper *Study Times*, was indefinitely suspended from his position after he published an opinion article in the *Financial Times*

that called for China to abandon North Korea as an ally. In the February 27 commentary, Deng said North Korea's recent third nuclear test was an opportunity for Beijing to reevaluate its ties to Pyongyang. Citing an array of strategic arguments, Deng urged Chinese leaders to press for reunification of the Korean Peninsula rather than propping up the North. In an interview with South Korea's *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper, he said the Chinese foreign ministry was upset by his writing and called the CCP's Central Party School, with which *Study Times* is affiliated, to complain. In a separate incident, Japan's *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper reported on March 23 that the majority of the 20-member editorial team of *National History* magazine, owned by a state-run company based in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, were forced to resign for their selection of Taiwan's democracy as the topic for a special feature in the magazine's February issue (see CMB No. [79](#)). Publication was blocked in late January, and a new editorial team created a replacement feature entitled "Feminine power goes virile: 100 women who changed history." The dismissed staff were reportedly paid compensation only if they agreed not to reveal details of the incident.

- *Chosun Ilbo* 4/1/2013: [Chinese editor fired over call to abandon N. Korea](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 4/2/2013: [Journalist suspended for an article asking China to abandon North Korea](#)
- *Financial Times* 2/27/2013: [China should abandon North Korea](#)
- China Media Project 4/3/2013: [Deng Yuwen case draws interest online   
http://cmp.hku.hk/2013/04/03/32342/](#)
- *Asahi Shimbun* 3/23/2013: [China magazine spikes Taiwan issue, fires staff](#)



## Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo's relative charged with fraud

In a further attempt to silence family members of jailed 2010 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo, Beijing police detained Liu Hui, Liu Xiaobo's brother-in-law, on fraud charges on January 31. According to his lawyer Mo Shaoping, who described the case to foreign media on March 28, Liu Hui and his business partner were accused of cheating an associate out of 3 million yuan (\$483,000) in a real-estate transaction. The defendants were scheduled to go on trial in May. The Chinese authorities frequently bring trumped-up charges to pressure dissidents and their families, and Liu's case was apparently a retaliation for several incidents in which prominent activists and foreign journalists made unexpected visits to him and his sister, Liu Xia, the wife of Liu Xiaobo. Liu Xia has been under strictly enforced extralegal house arrest since the 2010 Nobel announcement (see CMB No. [83](#)). To protest her brother's detention, she reportedly skipped her monthly visit to Liu Xiaobo in Jinzhou prison in February. The couple's relatives said they were warned not to accept media interviews, as they face close surveillance. Prominent human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang confirmed tighter restrictions on the family, saying, "We used to interact with both Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia's brothers and sisters, but now we have been completely cut off from them."

- Associated Press 3/29/2013: [China jails Nobel winner's relative](#)
- Radio Free Asia 3/29/2013: [Chinese laureate's relative held on 'fraud'](#)



## Censors target critical journalists, Warhol paintings

Radio Free Asia reported on April 2 that a recent microblog post quoting insider sources at the Chinese Communist Party's Central Propaganda Department had generated online discussion of a possible new censorship drive. The post said that the department had recently banned official newspapers from publishing any article that “goes against the interests of the Party and the people” or is “anti-Mao.” News outlets that violated the rule would have their licenses revoked. The microblog post claimed that the authorities would also be targeting journalists who fit a new “Three-Anti” category—anti-Party, anti-China, and anti-Han Chinese. Many Chinese netizens, reacting to the post, warned of a new political campaign against freedom of speech, and some deleted previous microblog entries to avoid future punishment. In a separate attempt to protect the party's image, the Chinese government has censored American artist Andy Warhol's colorful images of former leader Mao Zedong at a special exhibition. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, a traveling exhibition of hundreds of works organized by the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh is scheduled to go on display in China in April, but several well-known paintings of Mao will not appear. Meanwhile, recent media directives allegedly sent out by the central and provincial propaganda departments have banned or guided coverage of a wide array of topics, including a deadly landslide at a mining camp in Tibet, a charity embezzlement scandal in Jiangxi Province, a speech by National People's Congress chairman Zhang Dejiang, and the case of a missing woman in Changsha, Hunan Province.

- Radio Free Asia 4/2/2013: [Report sparks fears of China media witch-hunt](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 3/25/2013: [Warhol's Mao works censored in China](#)
- *China Digital Times* 4/1/2013: [Ministry of Truth: Scams, sewers, constitution](#)
- *China Digital Times* 3/30/2013: [Ministry of Truth: Tibet mine landslide](#)

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## NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



## Apple apologizes to blunt a coordinated attack in state media

Last week, Chinese state media continued a coordinated attack against Apple that began in mid-March (see CMB No. [83](#)). For several consecutive days, the evening news program of state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV), which is watched by tens of millions of viewers in China and must be aired during prime time on multiple channels, ran segments criticizing the U.S. technology giant. The reports were followed by related articles in other state-run media. The Communist Party print mouthpiece, the *People's Daily*, published multiple stories attacking Apple, including one accusing it of “incomparable arrogance.” The official Xinhua news agency noted that the State Administration for Industry and Commerce had demanded more stringent legal supervision of the company. In a March 29 commentary, the Communist Party–owned *Global Times* warned Apple not to “entangle itself into political debates” between China and the United States. At the center of the controversy were allegations that Apple's customer service conditions violate Chinese laws. Responding to the campaign on April 1, Apple chief executive Tim Cook apologized

through a letter posted on the company's official Chinese-language website. Cook acknowledged the accusations made by CCTV, stating, "We are aware that a lack of communications ... led to the perception that Apple is arrogant and doesn't care or attach enough importance to consumer feedback." He vowed to improve the company's customer service policies. The clearly coordinated nature of the campaign, which appeared disproportionate to the alleged offenses, has triggered much speculation as to the true motive behind the vitriol. Suggested explanations include a shakedown by CCTV to encourage Apple to advertise on its channels, retaliation for U.S. government restrictions on Chinese firms like Huawei (see below), and an effort to weaken foreign firms in the mobile operating system market in favor of emerging domestic rivals. The third theory was strengthened by the March 28 launch of Smartisan, an operating system created by the Chinese company Hammer Technologies. At the launch event, the firm's chief executive said, "Our objective is to kill off Apple eventually." Last month, an official white paper warned of the market dominance enjoyed by another U.S.-made mobile system, Google Android (see CMB No. [82](#)). But as the *Economist* admitted after surveying potential explanations, "Truth be told, nobody outside the official inner circle has a clue what is really going on."

- *Financial Times* 4/1/2013: [Apple bows to Chinese pressure](#)
- [Apple Warranties](#) (in Chinese)
- *New York Times* 4/1/2013: [Apple of discord in China](#)
- *Global Times* 3/29/2013: [For Apple, business must stay business](#)
- *Christian Science Monitor* 3/28/2013: [China takes aim at Apple. Why?](#)
- *Tea Leaf Nation* 3/28/2013: [A new mobile operating system that hopes to 'kill Apple eventually'](#)
- *Economist* 4/1/2013: [Unparalleled arrogance, full apology](#)



## U.S. lawsuit over Baidu censorship faces dismissal

On March 26, the Chinese search-engine giant Baidu won the dismissal of a lawsuit filed in the United States by a group of New York-based Chinese dissident writers in May 2011. The plaintiffs accused the company and the Chinese government of violating U.S. law by filtering out their work in search results, even for users in the United States (see CMB No. [56](#)). The Manhattan federal court found that the defendants were not properly served with court papers, since China's Justice Ministry had refused to do so. The judge noted that China had invoked an international treaty allowing it to refuse service that would infringe its sovereignty or security. He said he had no jurisdiction to rule on that claim, but he suspended the dismissal for 30 days, giving the plaintiffs time to propose an alternative means of serving Baidu with the complaint and present arguments as to why the Chinese government should not be dismissed as a defendant.

- *Bloomberg* 3/26/2013: [Baidu wins dismissal of U.S. political censorship lawsuit](#)
- *Reuters* 3/25/2013: [Baidu, China win dismissal of U.S. censorship lawsuit](#)
- *Global Times* 3/26/2013: [US court dismisses Baidu lawsuit](#)

# TIBET & XINJIANG



## Tibetans in U.S. meet Beijing-backed photo show with rival display

Organizers of a University of Minnesota photography exhibition on Tibet sponsored by the Chinese consulate in Chicago reportedly canceled an opening ceremony and related activities on March 25, after local Tibetans mounted a parallel exhibit to counter what they described as a propaganda effort by Beijing. The official exhibit, “Tibet Today: Sights of Western China,” was organized by the university’s Chinese Students and Scholars Association. It displayed photographs of smiling Tibetans waving Chinese flags and of new infrastructure projects in the region. In contrast, the parallel exhibit organized by Tibetan rights groups, including Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), featured a wall of portraits of Tibetans who had self-immolated since 2009 to protest Chinese government repression, among other items. SFT-Midwest regional coordinator Tenzin Sonam said the second display would help audiences judge the truth, adding that the incident held a lesson for China: “If you want to improve your image abroad, do it by making genuine change on the ground inside Tibet, not by hosting a propaganda show to mislead the global public.”

- Phayul 3/27/2013: [Tibetans shut China’s ‘propaganda exhibit’](#)
- *Star Tribune* 3/26/2013: [Culture beat: U hosts dueling exhibits on Tibet](#)
- Students for a Free Tibet 3/26/2013: [China’s propaganda in US university](#)



## New surveillance ‘grid’ imposed on Tibet, activist released from prison

According to New York–based Human Rights Watch, the Chinese authorities are expanding a new security “grid” (*wangge*) system in Tibet to step up surveillance on the population, with a special focus on groups like former prisoners and Tibetans who have returned from abroad. The plan was first announced in the annual Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) work report released on February 7. The official document reportedly described the system—which already included 676 police posts with high-tech monitoring equipment set up in 2012 alone, and local civilian security squads known as “Red Armband Patrols”—as an effort to improve public access to basic services through a network of offices at the sub-neighborhood level. However, Chinese Communist Party Politburo Standing Committee member Yu Zhengsheng said in a February 17 statement that its aim was to construct “nets in the sky and traps on the ground,” highlighting surveillance and control as the primary functions of the system. The Red Armband Patrols have reportedly raided homes of Tibetans and detained those found to be in “illegal” possession of photographs of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, or other media issued by exile groups. Separately, Jigme Gyatso, a Tibetan monk who was jailed in 1996 for “inciting splittism” and leading a “counterrevolutionary organization,” was released on April 1 after 17 years in prison. His specific offenses had included distributing proindependence leaflets and displaying a Tibetan flag at a monastery near Lhasa. Initially sentenced to 15 years, he repeatedly protested in prison, and his term was extended in 2004 after he shouted for the long life of Dalai Lama with other inmates. Despite his return to his hometown in Gansu Province, the *International Business Times* reported that the monk, who suffers

from a variety of health problems after years of harsh treatment and poor medical care in prison, remained under surveillance by the Chinese authorities.

- Radio Free Asia 3/21/2013: [‘Nets in the sky, traps on the ground’](#)
  - Human Rights Watch 3/20/2013: [China: Alarming new surveillance, security in Tibet](#)
  - Associated Press 4/2/2013: [China releases Tibetan political prisoner Jigme Gyatso after 17 years in prison](#)
  - *International Business Times* 4/3/2013: [Freed Tibetan monk Jigme Gyatso ‘still under Chinese surveillance’](#)
  - *New York Times* 4/2/2013: [China frees frail Tibetan in prison for activism](#)
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## Uighurs sentenced for ‘terrorist’ communications

On March 26, a total of 20 Uighurs were sentenced to prison at two local courts in Kashgar and Bayingolin Prefectures for “inciting splittism.” The news was first reported by the state-run Xinjiang web portal Tianshan Net on the same day. According to the article, four men were given life sentences, and the other 16 received jail terms ranging from five to 15 years. They had allegedly used the internet, mobile telephones, and data storage devices to “organize, lead, and participate in terrorist organizations.” However, a spokesman for World Uyghur Congress, an exile group, claimed that the defendants only listened to overseas radio broadcasts, viewed videos on YouTube, and discussed topics related to religious and cultural freedom on the internet. According to the Washington-based Uyghur American Association, Uighurs in China have been detained in the past for listening to broadcasts by the U.S.-sponsored Radio Free Asia.

- Uyghur American Association 3/27/2013: [Uyghur American Association condemns sentences handed down to 20 Uyghurs](#)
  - Tianshan Net 3/26/2013 (in Chinese): [20 Uyghurs sentenced in 5 criminal cases with use of internet, cell phones and electronic data](#)
  - Chinese Human Rights Defenders 3/27/2013: [Uyghurs harshly punished on political charges](#)
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## BEYOND CHINA



## U.S. Congress prepares bill to combat cyberespionage

In the context of a recent spike in cyberespionage allegedly originating in China, the *Financial Times* reported on March 28 that the U.S. House Intelligence Committee was preparing a bill aimed at punishing foreign companies found to have used trade secrets stolen by hackers (CMB No. [83](#)).

Committee chairman Mike Rogers, a Republican from Michigan, said the bill would be introduced in April, with penalties including visa bans for implicated individuals. U.S. companies' concerns about cyberespionage were highlighted in a survey released on March 29 by the American Chamber of Commerce in China. According to the poll, conducted in November and December 2012, about 26 percent of the 325 U.S. business respondents reported having data or trade secrets stolen from their China operations. In addition to government and business entities, journalists and activists focused on China-related issues have faced a pattern of hacking. A March 28 *Washington Post* article indicated that American documentary filmmakers working on a Tibet-themed project recently had their computers infiltrated. Experts have traced many sophisticated cyberattacks to the Chinese military's Unit 61398, and Reuters reported on March 24 that it had found evidence of close collaboration between the unit and academic researchers at the elite Shanghai Jiaotong University (see CMB No. [81](#)). Meanwhile, U.S. officials have expressed security concerns about Chinese firms' potential involvement in American telecommunications infrastructure. In an attempt to address such worries, U.S. telecommunications provider Sprint and its prospective Japanese buyer, SoftBank, have offered assurances in a series of meetings and regulatory filings over the past two months that their merged company would not integrate equipment made by Huawei, China's leading telecommunications firm, into their systems in the United States (see CMB No. [77](#)). They also agreed that the network would be open for security inspections.

- *New York Times* 3/29/2013: [Sprint nears a U.S. deal to restrict China gear](#)
- *Financial Times* 3/28/2013: [US seeks cyber espionage crackdown](#)
- Reuters 3/24/2013: [Top China college in focus with ties to army's cyber-spying unit](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 3/29/2013: [Many U.S. businesses in China cite data theft](#)
- *Washington Post* 3/28/2013: [Tibet taboo leads to cyberattacks on film crew](#)



## Hollywood alters zombie, superhero films for China release

Hollywood studios are increasingly altering films to avoid Chinese censorship or creating special versions for release in China, which surpassed Japan in 2012 to become the world's second-largest film market, generating some \$2.7 billion in revenue that year (see CMB No. [78](#)). Even before it was sent to China's state regulator for review, the producers of forthcoming zombie film *World War Z* were reportedly advised by Paramount Pictures to change the script and remove a reference to China as a possible source of the zombie pandemic. University of Southern California (USC) East Asian Studies Center director Stanley Rosen called the change a "wise" move given the sensitivity of public health issues in China, but he questioned whether *World War Z* would ever win distribution there, as the country has strict bans on films related to horror, magic, and superstition. Another U.S. film producer, Disney's Marvel Studios unit, announced on March 29 that it would release a unique Chinese version of the superhero-themed action film *Iron Man 3*. Among other differences, the special cut would feature an appearance by popular Chinese actress Fan Bingbing. The movie had dropped its coproduction plans with Beijing-based Dynamic Marketing Group (see CMB No. [54](#)), but it still included significant Chinese elements that are essential for Chinese collaboration. In a surprising move, Chinese authorities recently agreed to domestic distribution of the violent American thriller *Django Unchained*, which is set to debut there on April 11. According to Quartz, the

film likely passed Chinese censorship because its storyline focuses on slavery in 19th-century America, which Beijing commonly highlights to deflect criticism of its own human rights record.

- *Los Angeles Times* 3/29/2013: [China will get its own 'Iron Man 3'](#)
  - Quartz 3/14/2013: [Why China is letting 'Django Unchained' slip through its censorship regime](#)
  - TheWrap 4/1/2013: [Zombie film 'World War Z' changes scene after fearing Chinese censors](#)
  - CNN 4/1/2013: [Iron Man 3 tweaked for Chinese audiences](#)
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## Sale of Next Media's Taiwan outlets falls through

Taiwan's Fair Trade Commission said on April 2 that the proposed purchase of the Taiwan assets of Next Media Group had collapsed after the consortium of buyers, most of them with significant business interests in China, submitted a notice that they were withdrawing from the deal. According to local media reports, Tsai Eng-meng, a pro-Beijing tycoon whose son was among the buyers, was concerned with potential antitrust scrutiny, as the family already owns several newspapers, television stations, and a broadband system in Taiwan (see CMB No. 77). Regulators in February had rejected Tsai's bid to acquire China Network Systems (CNS), Taiwan's second-largest cable provider, citing concerns over editorial independence at a television news channel (see CMB No. 81). While the Next Media assets would continue to operate under original owner Jimmy Lai of Hong Kong, a vocal critic of the Chinese authorities, they reportedly remained up for sale. Next Media's popular print outlets, including *Apple Daily* and *Next Magazine*, are known for their sensational but nonpartisan coverage of Taiwanese politics and critical reporting on the Chinese Communist Party. The proposed buyout had triggered a nationwide movement against concentration of media ownership after it was first reported in November 2012. In an interview with the *New York Times* on March 27, Next Media spokesman Mark Simon suggested that "mainland China sent a message out that this is not a necessary fight to have."

- *United Daily News* 4/3/2013 (in Chinese): [Next Media deal: Jimmy Lai: Glad to see deal for print assets fell through](#)
  - *New York Times* 3/27/2013: [As media deal in Taiwan collapses, political fallout lingers](#)
  - Central News Agency 4/1/2013: [Consortium withdraws application to buy Next Media print assets](#)
  - *Vancouver Sun* 3/31/2013: [Manthorpe: Fear of Beijing influence scuttles newspaper deal](#)
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## NOTABLE ANALYSIS



### Media freedom watchdog launches interactive map of violations

On March 26, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) launched an interactive online map feature that tracks press freedom violations in China. The map highlights incidents such as attacks against journalists, dismissals, and censorship directives dating back to 2008, and includes the date, the location, and a short description for each event. According to IFJ, the website will be regularly updated as reports of new violations emerge.

- **International Federation of Journalists 3/26/2013: [IFJ launches an interactive website on press freedom violations in China](#)**

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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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