



# CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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

Issue 86: May 2, 2013

## Headlines

- State media tripped up by tale of Xi Jinping cab ride
- Netizens, internet firms respond to Sichuan earthquake
- State seeks netizen tips on corruption, arrests anticorruption activists
- Apple removes app with banned books on Tibet and Xinjiang
- China-based hacking continues as U.S. weighs stronger response

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK: A DEMOCRATIC SPORT



Credit: [Youku](#)

## BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



### **Officials, state media aim to shape Sichuan quake narrative**

On April 20, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Lushan County in Ya'an City, Sichuan Province. Over the following days, state media reported a death toll of almost 200 and thousands of people injured. Though not nearly as severe as the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, also in Sichuan, the Ya'an disaster quickly drew comparisons (see CMB No. [22](#)). The government appeared intent on performing better than in 2008, in terms of both relief efforts and image management. At least 7,000 soldiers were dispatched to the area, armed with better technology than in 2008. Premier Li Keqiang flew to the region within 24 hours of the quake and reportedly slept in a tent. The authorities spared no effort in attempting to shape the coverage, as state media competed with independent reporting on social-media platforms, whose use was not widespread in 2008. On May 1, the *People's Daily* published a 6,000-word feature detailing how Li took command and personally participated in some rescue efforts. The article followed similarly laudatory coverage by Xinhua news agency and other official outlets. Analysts argued that the propaganda push reflected the new leaders' sensitivity to public opinion and improved public-relations savvy compared with their predecessors. The effort was buttressed by a series of media directives issued by the central and provincial authorities. *China Digital Times* reported an April 26 leaked directive from the Central Propaganda Department that forbade "all media, including web media," from carrying negative news and analysis about the disaster. Another set of allegedly leaked directives banned reporting on the quick promotion of Ya'an City officials following the disaster and ordered the removal of an article about thousands of people awaiting relief. In addition, a detailed directive stated that April 27—one week after the quake—had been designated a "province-wide day of mourning" and instructed local media to promote relevant slogans and carry the provincial government's proclamation on their front pages. It also ordered websites to post the message on their homepages and, in a sign of the growing importance of mobile web access, their mobile-version landing pages in order to achieve "universal knowledge of the activities." Many foreign journalists and photographers were allowed to enter the quake area, but some citizen journalists were obstructed. On April 21, Radio Free Asia reported that a group of activists had been intercepted by police and prevented from traveling to the region. Among them was Huang Qi, who had spent three years in prison on charges of "leaking state secrets" due to his independent and critical online reporting on the 2008 earthquake.

- *South China Morning Post* 5/2/2013: [Media reports of premier's visit of Sichuan quake zone show propaganda grip](#)
- *New Yorker* 4/21/2013: [The Sichuan earthquake test](#)
- *China Digital Times* 4/30/2013: [Ministry of Truth: 'Heartfelt sorrow,' mandated](#)
- *China Digital Times* 4/26/2013: [Ministry of Truth: No bad earthquake news allowed](#)
- Radio Free Asia 4/21/2013: [Activists, monks blocked from Sichuan quake-hit area](#)



## State media tripped up by tale of Xi Jinping cab ride

In what appeared to be a propaganda mishap, the official Xinhua news agency confirmed, and later denied, a report that Chinese president Xi Jinping had taken a cab ride in Beijing. The supposed incognito trip was first reported on April 18 by *Ta Kung Pao*, a pro-Beijing newspaper in Hong Kong, which produced interactive graphics to accompany the online version of the story. According to the paper, the cab ride took place on March 1, and Xi chatted with the driver about pollution and other daily concerns. The president was said to have left a note to the driver that read, “May you have favorable winds in your sails.” Other news sites quickly began commenting on the story, praising it as another example of Xi’s down-to-earth style (see CMB No. [83](#)). Xinhua confirmed the authenticity of the article on its Sina Weibo microblog account the same day, citing Beijing transportation authorities. With official approval, the story was posted on several state-run websites, including a news portal operated by the State Council Information Office. Within hours, however, Xinhua posted a brief retraction, calling the reported taxi trip “fake news” and failing to explain why it initially gave credence to the story. Meanwhile, *Ta Kung Pao* issued a statement that read, “Checking has established that this was a false report, and we feel deeply distressed and extremely regretful about this.” Many Chinese netizens expressed their frustration at the “scoop.” One user asked of Xinhua, “Are you the authority for publishing real news, or fake news?” The terse corrections stirred speculation on what had actually happened. Beijing-based media analyst Bill Bishop offered several theories. According to one, the cab ride was concocted as part of the common-touch propaganda campaign surrounding Xi, but he or other officials ordered it denied, “either because it went too far or as part of something bigger involving the propaganda system’s relationship with the new leadership.” Another of Bishop’s theories was that “someone is using *Ta Kung Pao* to embarrass the propaganda authorities and/or Xi Jinping.” In January, the paper had falsely reported that the trial of ousted Chongqing Communist Party boss Bo Xilai was scheduled to take place in Guiyang on January 28. Some 30 journalists, including reporters from Xinhua, duly appeared at the courthouse, only to be sent away by baffled court officials (see CMB No. [79](#)).

- *Tea Leaf Nation* 4/18/2013: [As Chinese press rushes to withdraw botched story, media machinery peeks into view](#)
- *Ta Kung Pao* 4/18/2013 (in Chinese): [Apology to readers for April 18 report: ‘Beijing brother’s mysterious encounter: General Secretary Xi took my taxi’](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 4/19/2013: [Saga of President Xi Jinping’s Beijing taxi trip reaches a dead end](#)
- *New York Times* 4/19/2013: [President Xi takes a taxi? Yes, too good to be true](#)
- *Sinocism* 4/19/2013: [The Sinocism China newsletter for 04.19.13](#)



## Journalists and activists face detention, economic pressure

The following individual cases illustrate Chinese authorities’ continued efforts to isolate and punish those who attempt to document or speak out on “sensitive” issues.

- **Liu Xia ‘not free’:** On April 23, Liu Xia, the wife of jailed Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, appeared in public for the first time since she was put under house arrest in 2010. After being allowed to attend her brother’s trial on fraud charges, she reportedly shouted to diplomats and reporters from an open car window, saying, “I’m not free. When they tell you I’m free, tell them I’m not.” Liu Xia has been confined to her home, incommunicado, since her husband won the Nobel Peace Prize, and although she is permitted to visit her parents once a week and her husband once a month, those trips do not afford contact with reporters or activists. Her brother, Liu Hui, was arrested in January and faces a maximum of 14 years in prison for allegedly defrauding a contractor in a real estate deal (see CMB No. [84](#)). Both siblings have said the case was fabricated as a form of political pressure.
  - **Journalist held for filming protest:** Sun Lin, a reporter for the U.S.-based Chinese-language news site Boxun, was arrested in Hefei, Anhui Province, on April 16 for shooting video footage at a protest against the expulsion of veteran dissident Zhang Lin’s 10-year-old daughter, Anni, from a local school. Sun’s lawyer said he was beaten by police, who reportedly accused him of “creating a bad impression abroad.” Sun had been sentenced to four years in prison in 2008 after writing articles for Boxun on topics such as crime and police brutality, though his charges were nominally unrelated to his work.
  - **AIDS petitioners, filmmaker detained:** Five petitioners and a filmmaker shooting a documentary about people with HIV/AIDS were arrested in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, on April 22 during a protest by about 300 people affected by the disease. Tens of thousands of residents had contracted HIV through government blood-donation centers in the province in the 1990s, when current premier Li Keqiang was Henan’s governor. At the protest, the petitioners held a banner appealing to Li for help. One of those arrested was released after several hours, and the filmmaker was released on April 23, reportedly with visible bruises. The four other petitioners apparently remained in detention.
  - **Journalist Chang Ping leaves job:** Chinese journalist Chang Ping has announced on his Facebook account that he will no longer serve as chief editor of Hong Kong–based current affairs magazine *iSun Affairs*. Chang did not describe the reasons for or circumstances of his departure. He had been forced to quit a previous job at the liberally oriented Guangdong Province newspaper *Southern Metropolis Daily* in 2011, and later sought refuge abroad. He also encountered visa obstacles while trying to take up his position at *iSun Affairs* (see CMB No. [45](#)).
- Radio Free Asia 4/25/2013: [Chinese journalist held for filming school campaign](#)
  - Reporters Without Borders 4/29/2013: [Chinese journalist arrested for distributing video footage of a protest](#)
  - *South China Morning Post* 4/24/2013: [Aids activists call on Henan to release petitioners](#)
  - China Media Project 4/24/2013: [Chang Ping no longer to serve as chief editor of iSun Affairs](#)
  - *South China Morning Post* 4/24/2013: [Wife of jailed Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo shouts, ‘I’m not free’](#)

- World Association of Newspapers 4/7/2008: [Boxun news contributor Sun Lin sentenced to four years in prison](#)
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## NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



### **Netizens, internet firms respond to Sichuan earthquake**

In contrast to the coverage of the 2008 Sichuan Province earthquake, which was dominated by state broadcaster China Central Television and predated the proliferation of social media in China, much of the reporting on the April 20 temblor in the province was driven by online sources (see above). News of the quake appeared on microblogs within minutes, and millions of posts about the disaster were quickly circulated. Many users turned their profile photos gray in a collective sign of mourning, while influential bloggers used their accounts to relay calls for relief and rescue. *Tea Leaf Nation* reported that Zuoyeben, a grassroots microblogger with over five million followers, even offered to give followers in need his account password so they could broadcast updates of their situation directly to a wide audience. On April 20, Google China created a person-finder landing page, an initiative that was quickly duplicated by Chinese search engines such as Baidu and Qihoo. In an unusual departure from their fierce competition, several rival internet companies consolidated their databases into one. Government rescue efforts largely met with netizen approval, though the same could not be said for some local officials and the Red Cross Society, a government-affiliated charity whose credibility has been damaged by reports of corruption and other scandals in recent years (see CMB No. [27](#)). Many people chose to give to a private charity started by film star Jet Li due to its reputation for greater transparency and accountability. Separately, Fan Yijie, an official from Ya'an City, near the epicenter, became the focus of online rebukes after sharp-eyed netizens noticed a tan line where his wristwatch should have been in a post-quake photo of him alongside Premier Li Keqiang. Users uncovered earlier photos of Fan wearing what appeared to be a Vacheron Constantin timepiece worth more than 210,000 yuan (\$34,000); similar evidence of corruption dredged up by internet users has brought down several officials over the past year (see below). The *South China Morning Post* reported on April 24 that searches for Fan's name had been blocked on popular microblogging platforms. Observers noted deletions of several microblog posts related to the quake, such as an April 24 photograph of victims holding signs that read, "We are cold and hungry." Other deleted posts raised questions about the effect that a nearby dam project may have had on the region's fault lines. Nevertheless, other posts on these topics and citizen-driven relief efforts circulated widely online.

- *Tea Leaf Nation* 4/22/2013: [Social media's role in earthquake aftermath is revealing](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 4/21/2013: [Live blog: Yaan earthquake](#)
- *Tech in Asia* 4/22/2013: [Google, Baidu and many web companies set up 'people finder' boards after Chinese quake](#)
- China Media Project 4/30/2013: [Is the China Red Cross still credible?](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 4/30/2013: [China's Red Cross tries to rebuild after self-inflicted disaster](#)

- *Caijing* 4/24/2013: [China's Red Cross announces new round of probe into Guo Meimei case](#)
  - *Wall Street Journal* 4/23/2013: [After Lushan quake, a debate over who's donating what](#)
  - *South China Morning Post* 4/24/2013: [Watch imprint on quake official's wrist goes viral on internet](#)
  - China Media Project 4/23/2013: [Weibo post on slow quake relief deleted](#)
  - Buzzfeed 4/25/2013: [The pictures and protests of the Sichuan earthquake the Chinese government doesn't want its people to see](#)
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### State seeks netizen tips on corruption, arrests anticorruption activists

Even as state-run websites encourage netizens to report official corruption to investigative agencies, the authorities have cracked down on grassroots efforts to follow up on Chinese president Xi Jinping's anticorruption pledges. Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) reported on April 19 that at least six individuals affiliated with the Beijing-based "New Citizens Movement" reform group had been seized by police since April 10. Among other activities, the group has promoted a petition calling on senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials to disclose their financial assets. Four other activists were charged with unlawful assembly on March 31 for holding banners in downtown Beijing that made a similar demand. In at least some of these cases, police raided the activists' homes and seized computers and other materials. On April 27, an activist couple based in Jiangxi Province were allegedly tortured by police for their involvement in asset-disclosure campaigns and calls for China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (see CMB No. [82](#)). Meanwhile, on April 19, the popular private web portals Sina, Sohu, and Netease, along with state- and party-run media outlets including Xinhua, *People's Daily*, and *Guangming Daily*, simultaneously unveiled special websites that would allow Chinese netizens to pass evidence of official corruption to top investigative agencies such as the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Supreme People's Court. The projects seem to represent an effort to divert the growing phenomenon of online corruption exposés into less public official channels, but netizens may continue to opt for the relative safety—and often, effectiveness—of mass online opprobrium (see CMB No. [80](#)). On April 22, Zhang Aihua, the CCP boss of an industrial zone in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province, was dismissed for violating regulations after a group of citizens, some of whom took photographs and recorded video, burst into a lavish banquet he was hosting at a local restaurant on April 19. Images of the scene, including Zhang's abject apology for his profligacy, were widely circulated on the microblogging platform Sina Weibo. *People's Daily* reported that Zhang personally paid a total of 5,430 yuan (\$880) for 20 people at two tables—an apparently expensive bill for a small city, though moderate by Shanghai or Beijing standards.

- CNN 4/22/2013: [China said to detain activists who sought to publicize top officials' assets](#)
- *New York Times* 4/22/2013: [China presses crackdown on campaign against graft](#)
- Chinese Human Rights Defenders 4/19/2013: [Chinese authorities must release activists, end escalating crackdown on free expression](#)

- Chinese Human Rights Defenders 5/2/2013: [Police torture activists involved in anti-corruption campaign](#)
- Xinhua 4/19/2013: [China opens online informant pages for corruption fight](#)
- *Financial Times* 4/23/2013: [China's austerity drive: official pays high price for lavish dinner party](#)
- *Guardian* 4/25/2013: [Chinese official sacked after 'citizen journalists' expose extravagant banquet](#)
- People's Daily Online 4/23/2013 (in Chinese): [Jiangsu Taizhou publishes investigations on lavish banquet, individual held responsible dismissed](#)



## Online humor and censorship

The following cases provide a sense of the breadth of internet censorship and the role of humor in netizens' attempts to subvert it.

- **Redefining the 'China Dream':** At a forum held in Beijing on April 16, the state-run All-China Journalists Association (ACJA) and 25 official media outlets, including Xinhua, *People's Daily*, and *People's Liberation Army Daily*, issued a formal pledge to promote Chinese president Xi Jinping's "China Dream" slogan (see CMB No. 84). Signatories to the pledge, entitled "Applying Positive Energy with a Fierce Sense of Social Responsibility to Realize the China Dream," vowed to sing the "main melody"—a reference to the official line of the Chinese Communist Party. However, according to David Bandurski of the University of Hong Kong's China Media Project, Chinese netizens have already begun to satirically equate the optimistic term with censorship, explaining the deletion of microblog posts by saying they had been "dreamed away." Internet users had similarly appropriated former president Hu Jintao's "harmonious society" slogan, joking that censored content had been "harmonized."
- **Obama's comedy plays in China:** A video of U.S. president Barack Obama speaking at the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner on April 27 was widely viewed on China's internet. One version with Chinese subtitles was uploaded to the video-sharing site Youku on April 28, and by May 2 it had generated 290,000 hits. Several users praised Obama's confident ability to poke fun at himself based on incidents reported by American news outlets, with commentator and real estate mogul Ren Zhiqiang attributing the president's ease to "the freedom of a free country." Some expressed wishes that their own leaders could muster a similar performance. However, one viewer cautioned, "We don't have the tradition or the environment for it," adding, "We'll have to wait many years."
- **News of village revolt suppressed:** According to *China Digital Times*, on April 25, the State Council Information Office sent out a directive ordering all microblogging platforms to ban searches for the term "Pantu," a village in Xiamen, Fujian Province. The villagers had reportedly maintained a sit-in protest since March 17 to object to land seizures by local officials, but violence erupted early on April 25, when police forcibly dispersed the encampment. The authorities dispatched reinforcements to the area after residents later reassembled to confront local leaders and apparently stripped a district Communist Party boss naked.

- **Film director's speech on censorship is censored:** On April 12, as prominent film director Feng Xiaogang gave a speech to accept the “director of the year” award from the China Film Directors Guild, he broke taboos by openly discussing the difficulty of working with government censors. Introducing the topic, he said, “In the past 20 years, every China director faced a great torment ... and that torment is censorship.” However, in the video of the speech, which was widely circulated online, the word “censorship” was itself censored.
  - **China Media Project 4/24/2013:** [Will we all be “dreamed away”?](#)
  - **All-China Journalists Association 4/17/2013 (in Chinese):** [‘Applying positive energy with a fierce sense of social responsibility to realize the China Dream’ pledge](#)
  - **Wall Street Journal 4/30/2013:** [Obama’s comedy is anything but routine for Chinese audience](#)
  - **China Digital Times 4/30/2013:** [Ministry of Truth: Xiamen riot, Chongqing bird flu](#)
  - **China Digital Times 4/26/2013:** [River Crab Archive: Month-long Xiamen sit-in ended](#)
  - **Tea Leaf Nation 4/17/2013:** [China’s Spielberg calls out censors during awards ceremony](#)
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## ICANN to allow top-level internet domains in Chinese

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on April 10, Fady Chehadé, president of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the private organization that oversees the basic design of the internet, said the entity would introduce top-level domains that include Chinese-language characters in the second half of 2013. (A top-level domain is the part of a web address that appears after the dot, such as .com, .net, and .edu.) The plan, part of ICANN’s broader push to move beyond its U.S. roots, would also add characters from other languages, including Arabic, Korean, Russian, and Japanese. Leading Chinese internet companies Tencent and Sina have requested the extension “.weibo” (microblog) in both Latin and Chinese characters for their competing microblogging services, with a standard application fee of \$185,000. On April 8, ICANN announced that it would establish its first overseas engagement center in Beijing to work with the Chinese government on internet development. The organization has resisted efforts by China, Russia, and other authoritarian countries to exert more state control over internet governance (see CMB No. [77](#)).

- **Wall Street Journal 4/10/2013:** [Coming Soon: A truly Chinese internet](#)
  - **Tech Crunch 4/10/2013:** [ICANN says it will allow Chinese top-level domain names this year, followed by other languages](#)
  - **ZDNet 4/8/2013:** [ICANN picks Beijing to open first engagement center](#)
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## TIBET & XINJIANG



### Urumqi journalist killed at construction site

Two female interns for the *Urumqi Evening Post* were struck by a construction vehicle on April 18 while reporting at the worksite of a major infrastructure project in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang autonomous region. One of the women was killed, and the other was seriously injured. While the incident appears to have been an accident, local media and authorities were accused of altering coverage to avoid responsibility and deflect negative attention. According to the China Media Project, managers of the road project in question had faced intense pressure from the Communist Party leaders in Xinjiang to complete it as quickly as possible, leading to alleged violations of normal construction procedures. Adding to the sensitivity of the case, the slain journalist was reportedly a member of the Hui ethnic minority, and a number of residents across the country have been killed by construction equipment while resisting forced demolitions in recent years. The *Urumqi Evening Post* initially reported the accident on its official microblog, mentioning the name of the Tianzi Road Project and the term “tractor shovel.” That post was quickly replaced with a version in which both terms were omitted. The paper’s April 19 edition carried a story on the intern’s death that also seemed to disassociate it from the worksite.

- **China Media Project 4/20/2013: [Questions surround Urumqi reporter’s death](#)**



### Apple removes app with banned books on Tibet and Xinjiang

The U.S.-based technology giant Apple has removed an application from its online App Store in China, apparently because it provides access to several banned books, including three titles by Wang Lixiong, a political writer who has been a prominent critic of government policy in Tibet and is married to well-known Tibetan blogger Woesser. On April 4, a letter from Apple informed Hao Peiqiang, who developed the “Jingdian Shucheng” bookstore app, that it would be removed from the online store because it “includes content that is illegal in China.” The app had been operating normally for two months prior to the notice and has not been removed from App Stores outside of China. It offers only 10 book titles, including the three by Wang about Tibet and Xinjiang. The removal of the app came three days after Apple issued an apology to its Chinese customers following intense pressure from state media (see CMB No. [84](#)). Both steps were seen as part of a strategic move by Apple to appease the government, adopt Chinese business practices, and thereby improve its growth in China. However, Jingdian Shucheng is not the first Apple offering to have been removed in response to pressure from Beijing. In July 2012, the company withdrew applications for New Tang Dynasty Television (NTDTV)—a New York-based station established by Falun Gong practitioners that offers uncensored Chinese-language news programming—from the China App Store because it contained content also said to be “illegal in China” (see CMB No. [65](#)). The station disputed that assertion given the lack of a specific legal citation and the nominal protections for free speech in the Chinese constitution.

- *Telegraph* 4/4/2013: [Apple censors Tibet book app in latest concession to Chinese government](#)
  - Students for a Free Tibet 4/30/2013: [Woesser's statement on Apple's censorship of Tibet](#)
  - *Financial Times* 4/4/2013: [Apple bars China app for 'illegal' content](#)
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## HONG KONG



### **Man arrested for graffiti insults to Xi Jinping**

A Hong Kong resident surnamed Lin was arrested on April 18 after he wrote graffiti cursing Chinese president Xi Jinping in the stairwell of a residential building where he lives. According to the local newspaper *Apple Daily*, the 46-year-old man, who was later released on bail, wrote “Go to Hell, Xi Jinping” with markers and ball-point pens three times in the building in Ma On Shan district—an estate visited by Xi’s predecessor Hu Jintao five years ago. Hong Kong netizens expressed outrage that the police service’s regional crime unit, which is usually responsible for more serious criminal cases, was handling the case and called it a form a political prosecution. Users on the popular Hong Kong–based online discussion forum HKGolden mocked and criticized the selective nature of police action, at times challenging police to arrest them. One user nicknamed Macau Over said, “A few words that no one would have noticed are now spread everywhere across Hong Kong. Or perhaps that’s the very intention of Hong Kong government—to create a big case out of a minor incident so as to spread the message of ‘Go to Hell, Xi Jinping.’” Hong Kong residents were detained for writing politically tinged graffiti on at least one recent occasion. In May 2011, two members of the territory’s League of Social Democrats (LSD), a prodemocracy party, were taken into police custody over street art calling for the release of Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, who at the time had been detained incommunicado by Chinese authorities for over a month. The two had spray-painted Ai’s face, along with slogans like “Who’s Afraid of Ai Weiwei,” at a rally (see CMB No. [22](#)).

- *Global Voices* 4/22/2013: [Hong Kong man arrested for cursing China's president with graffiti](#)
  - *Apple Daily* 4/18/2013 (in Chinese): [HK local arrested for graffiti offending Xi Jinping](#)
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## BEYOND CHINA



### **China-based hacking continues as U.S. weighs stronger response**

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* published on April 24, an official at the computer-security firm Mandiant reported that Chinese hacking and cyberespionage attacks on U.S. companies were

continuing apace despite increased public attention and U.S. government attempts to openly confront the Chinese government about the problem in recent months (see CMB Nos. [83](#), [84](#)). In February, Mandiant released a 60-page report detailing extensive evidence of Chinese military links to large-scale hacking of American government and corporate computer systems (see CMB No. [81](#)). In the *Journal* interview, the company's security chief, Richard Bejtlich, alleged that the roughly two dozen hacker groups the firm tracks—some with ties to Chinese state entities—had since been “very busy.” The only change he noted was a drop in attacks emanating from the Chinese military's Unit 61398, which had been specifically named in the February report and attracted international media attention. Separately, on April 23, the U.S. telecommunications giant Verizon released a cybersecurity report, assisted by 19 other organizations, that analyzed 621 data breaches in 2012. The report found that “state-affiliated” actors in China accounted for 19 percent of the breaches, and 96 percent originated in China. The Chinese government continues to deny that any officially backed units are behind the attacks, despite growing classified and unclassified evidence to the contrary. As part of its escalating pressure on the Chinese government to curb the attacks and punish those responsible, the Obama administration is reportedly considering legal action and economic sanctions in addition to more vocal diplomacy. Current and former U.S. officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that possible future actions included prosecutions in the United States against individual state-sponsored Chinese hackers. The Department of Justice declined to confirm the assertion that such cases were being prepared. Though it is unlikely that China would extradite Chinese citizens to face prosecution in the United States, initiating such cases would serve as a deterrent for individuals, restricting their ability to travel internationally lest they risk arrest. It could also give U.S. diplomats leverage in their negotiations on the issue. Other actions under consideration include trade sanctions on Chinese firms that engage in cyberespionage and visa bans on individual researchers or hackers.

- *Wall Street Journal* 4/24/2013: [Mandiant: No drop in Chinese hacking despite talk](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 4/22/2013: [U.S. eyes pushback on China hacking](#)
- *Forbes* 4/23/2013: [New Verizon security report finds a growing number of attacks by China's hacker army](#)



## **Australian university retracts, restores invitation to Dalai Lama**

Less than a week after the University of Sydney announced that it was canceling a talk by the Dalai Lama, the university reversed its decision on April 24, allowing the exiled Tibetan religious figure to deliver a lecture on campus. The University of Sydney, ranked among the world's top academic institutions, had initially scheduled the visit by the Dalai Lama to coincide with his trip to the country in mid-June, but the administration began imposing conditions to distance itself from the event, insisting that the university logo not be displayed, that there be no press coverage, and that attendance by campaigners for a free Tibet be barred. Finally the university withdrew all support for the visit, and it was moved off campus. But under intense pressure from human rights groups such as Students for a Free Tibet, the university changed course again, announcing that its Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR) would host the Dalai Lama for an on-campus lecture to students in mid-June. It is unclear whether Chinese officials directly asked university leaders to disinvite the Dalai Lama or the administration took preemptive action, but critics accused the university of seeking to protect its relationship with China, including funding for its Confucius Institute, which provides Chinese-language and cultural instruction. A Freedom House blog post on

April 26 characterized the University of Sydney incident as an example of Beijing's global campaign to buy influence and burnish its image by restricting access to alternative viewpoints.

- *Guardian* 4/18/2013: [Sydney University criticised for blocking Dalai Lama visit](#)
  - *Radio Free Asia* 4/24/2013: [Dalai Lama will speak after all, Australian university says](#)
  - *Freedom at Issue* 4/26/2013: [The long arm of China's transnational censorship](#)
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## Taiwan insists on reciprocity before allowing China TV broadcasts

In a legislative hearing on April 29, Taiwan culture minister Lung Ying-tai offered assurances that the government would only consider allowing China's state-run television stations to broadcast in Taiwan if Beijing offered Taiwanese media similar access to Chinese viewers. Her comments came a day after Chiang Pin-kung, a former chairman of the Taiwan-based Strait Exchange Foundation, suggested that Taipei should offer local viewers "more choice" by permitting the distribution of international news programs produced by Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV and China's state broadcaster, China Central Television (CCTV). His statement drew an immediate backlash, with critics pointing out the contrasts between the Chinese Communist Party propaganda found in CCTV programming and the relatively diverse content offered by Taiwan's privately owned television stations. Taiwan was rated Free in Freedom House's 2013 *Freedom of the Press* survey, whereas Hong Kong was designated Partly Free and China Not Free.

- *South China Morning Post* 4/30/2013: [CCTV can only air in Taiwan on reciprocal basis, says culture minister](#)
  - *Central News Agency* 4/30/2013: [Reciprocity key to Chinese satellite TV: minister](#)
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## Using uncensored U.S. sources, China 'reveals' U.S. rights abuses

On April 21, two days after the U.S. Department of State released its annual human rights reports on countries around the world, the Chinese government issued its annual response, entitled "Human Rights Record of the United States in 2012" (see CMB No. [59](#)). As in previous years, China's report accused the United States of turning "a blind eye" to its own "woeful human rights situation" and promised to "reveal" the truth to the world, though it typically used information published by American media and U.S. government agencies. This year, citing statistics provided by the U.S.-based Cable News Network (CNN), Beijing focused on the U.S. government's handling of gun-crime issues. It also criticized privacy violations, arrests of protesters, and the 57.5 percent turnout rate for the 2012 presidential election, among other problems. Many Chinese netizens responded with sarcasm, especially over Beijing's criticism of elections in the United States, which a user nicknamed Zhaini Ruocao called "Chinese-style humor." Another user asked, "I wonder what is the voter participation in this honorable country?"

- Xinhua 4/21/2013: [Commentary: Biased human rights report detrimental to trust-building between China, U.S.](#)
  - *New York Times* 4/23/2013: [China's criticism of U.S. on Human Rights draws support \(and mockery\)](#)
  - U.S Department of State: [Human Rights Report: China](#)
  - Xinhua 4/21/2013: [Full text of 'Human Rights Record of the United States in 2012'](#)
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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 2013\*](#)

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<http://www.freedomhouse.org/cmb>