



CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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

Issue 91: August 9, 2013

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK: TOO MUCH EXCITEMENT!



Credit: [Reyoo](#)

BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



State media spin Bo Xilai indictment as part of anticorruption campaign

The Chinese authorities have taken heavy-handed measures to ensure a positive spin on news of the indictment of Bo Xilai, the former Chongqing Communist Party chief whose March 2012 ouster reportedly set off months of party infighting (see CMB No. [70](#)). On July 25, the official Xinhua news agency and state broadcaster China Central Television issued terse announcements that Bo had been formally charged with “bribery, embezzlement, and power abuse” in indictment papers delivered to the Jinan Municipal People’s Intermediate Court in Shandong Province. Within minutes, state-run media and internet censors went into overdrive to ensure the dominance of the party line on the story. The well-orchestrated coverage primarily sought to cast Bo’s prosecution as an example of the new Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership’s anticorruption campaign (see below). In a widely reprinted article, *People’s Daily* said the party “has kept a solemn promise in front of the 1.3 billion Chinese people to catch high-ranking ‘tigers’ as well as low-ranking ‘flies,’” using terms popularized by President Xi Jinping. The reports tried to deflect attention from Bo’s political challenge to the central leadership, allegations that he had spied on senior officials, and reports of an attempted power grab, which many analysts believe is the real reason for his ouster. It remained unclear whether the charge of “abuse of power” would be applied to his possible involvement in the murder of British businessman Neil Heywood. Bo’s wife was found guilty of the crime in August 2012 (see CMB No. [67](#)). Also absent from the coverage were references to allegations that Bo had overseen torture and abuse while governing Dalian and later Chongqing. On July 25, the Central Propaganda Department reportedly issued a directive ordering all media outlets to use Xinhua’s wire copy on the Bo case rather than conducting their own investigations. A review of the front pages of newspapers across the country by the *Danwei* blog confirmed the directive’s strict implementation, even by publications that are usually more daring. Papers in the cities of Chongqing and Dalian did not stray from the approved texts, adding no local details. Separately, Agence France-Presse reported that references to Bo were being systematically scrubbed from a local museum in Dalian whose opening he oversaw.

- Xinhua 7/25/2013: [Bo Xilai charged with bribery, embezzlement, power abuse](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 7/26/2013: [Media denounces Bo, urges party unity after charges filed](#)
- Danwei 7/26/2013: Bo Xilai indicted: [‘No-one is above the law’](#)
- *China Digital Times* 7/26/2013: [Ministry of Truth: The Bo Xilai trial](#)
- *China Digital Times* 7/26/2013: [Writing the official narrative on Bo Xilai](#)
- Agence France-Presse 8/5/2013: [China expunges Bo’s once-stellar reputation](#)



Regulator imposes new restrictions on TV singing contests

Despite their immense popularity among viewers, the State General Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SGAPPRFT) on July 24 ordered television broadcasters to

limit the quantity of singing contests. The new directives place limits on existing singing shows' access to primetime slots, postpone the premiere dates of programs currently in postproduction, and effectively bar the development of any new singing competitions. Stations were also instructed to refrain from airing "extravagance, luxury, sensationalism, and flashy programming, as well as formats that cause too much excitement." The SGAPPRFT explained that the regulations aimed to "avoid the monotony of television programs" and "provide more options for the audience." High-budget talent shows such as *The Voice of China*, which premiered in 2012, had been popular topics on China's leading social-media platform, Sina Weibo. The show broke viewership records and reportedly garnered over 2.6 billion online hits, prompting the emergence of copycat programs. Some Weibo users welcomed the SGAPPRFT's new regulations, saying they were annoyed by an oversaturation of internet posts related to singing shows. But many expressed frustration with the regulator's interference, and some pointed to the irony of its efforts to "avoid monotony" when all television stations are required to air the evening news program of state-run China Central Television (CCTV) at 7 p.m. For those working in the industry, the regulations were seen as a costly setback. "It really affects the competitiveness of my channel, since we took so much effort to create and prepare this show," said Liu Yuzhe, an employee at a satellite station in Jiangsu. The government has issued a series of rules in recent years that restrict entertainment programs and impose costly prohibitions on provincial satellite television stations that compete with CCTV (see, inter alia, CMB Nos. [19](#), [38](#), [41](#), [67](#), [76](#)).

- **SARFT 7/24/2013:** [对歌唱类选拔节目实行调控 为观众提供丰富多彩电视节目 \[Control on singing contest shows provides more diverse content for audience\]](#)
- **People's Daily 7/25/2013:** [Singing competition shows to be limited in amount](#)
- **Atlantic 7/26/2013:** [Too popular for their own good: China restricts TV singing competitions](#)
- **Wall Street Journal 7/30/2013:** [China cracks down on televised singing competitions](#)



Party outlets reject constitutionalism ahead of summer conclave

A series of commentaries published and promoted by state-run media over the past week have vigorously defended China's one-party system while rejecting arguments by liberal intellectuals—and possibly some Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders—that reforms acknowledging the primacy of the constitution should be instituted. Citizen demands for the genuine enforcement of rights guaranteed in the Chinese constitution had spawned a similar series of editorials by CCP-affiliated outlets in May (see CMB No. [88](#)). The latest spate of articles began on August 1, when major news portals posted a commentary by the official Xinhua news agency with the provocative title "Upheaval Would Leave China Only More Tragic than the Soviet Union." The article, authored by Wang Xiaoshi, had originally been posted online in mid-July, to little fanfare. Then, high-level party conservatives apparently took note, reviving it and aggressively urging its promotion. A leaked directive from the State Council Information Office indicates that this was the catalyst for its posting on news portals, instructing that "for the next 48 hours, all media websites must prominently display the Xinhua editorial.... These are important instructions from a key comrade in central leadership. All websites must strictly comply." Wang's editorial offers a dire assessment of Russia's political and economic situation after the fall of the Soviet Union, arguing that political

change would leave China poor and miserable and citing a series of statistics to support this point. He criticizes “microbloggers and their mentors” for creating an “apocalyptic vision of China’s imminent collapse” for the purposes of promoting constitutionalism. Microbloggers quickly jumped on the article, questioning the statistics’ accuracy and claiming that Wang had misattributed quotations. On August 5, the CCP’s mouthpiece, the *People’s Daily*, published an editorial arguing that “constitutional-rule” ideas were part of a conspiracy by U.S. intelligence agencies and foundations they finance with the aim of overturning China’s “socialism.” And on August 6, the *People’s Daily* overseas edition’s front page featured a commentary specifically attacking the U.S. model of constitutional governance. By contrast, an August 5 editorial in the *Study Times*, published by the Central Party School, argued for political reforms to promote citizen participation. Some observers interpreted the different editorials as reflecting a rift within the leadership, though in practical terms the CCP appears united in its rejection of reforms that might challenge its overarching authority. The string of commentaries comes as senior party members prepare for an annual conclave at the resort town of Beidaihe to debate policy issues.

- *China Digital Times* 8/5/2013: [Ministry of Truth: Worse than the Soviet Union](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 8/2/2013: [China and the desperation of dire predictions](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 8/2/2013: [Nationwide commentary lashes out at party’s critics](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 8/6/2013: [Opposing editorials reflect ideological rift in Communist Party](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 8/7/2013: [People’s Daily continues attack on US constitution](#)



Journalist, activists detained as crackdown on antigraft movement widens

The Communist Party is continuing its crackdown on the New Citizens Movement, a grassroots campaign calling for the financial accountability of public officials, among other reforms. The movement has gained international attention since the criminal detention of its founder, prominent lawyer and blogger Xu Zhiyong, on July 16 (see CMB No. [90](#)). One of the latest targets of the crackdown was Xiao Shu, a former commentator at the Guangzhou-based newspaper *Southern Weekly*, which is known for its liberal reporting. On August 2, Xiao was abducted by security forces in Beijing and forcibly taken on a plane to Guangdong Province. He was held extralegally at a hotel in Guangzhou for 48 hours before being released. The journalist subsequently posted a statement online to thank “domestic and international friends” who put a spotlight on his case. He also called on the authorities to release all prisoners of conscience and end illegal abduction “so that all citizens can truly enjoy freedom from terror.” On July 25, Shenzhen police raided a birthday dinner for prominent activist Hu Jia that they suspected would serve as a rallying point for Xu’s supporters. Hu, human rights lawyer Teng Biao, and more than a dozen guests were held for questioning for several hours. Teng told Hong Kong’s *South China Morning Post* that the police did not produce a warrant or provide a reason for their detentions. U.S.-based activist Li Xiaorong noted in the *New York Review of Books* that “what all the detained activists seem to have in common is that they are accused of organizing actions that would take place not just in cyberspace but in the physical space of city streets.” On August 8, a video clip surfaced online in which Xu—handcuffed, dressed in a prison uniform, and apparently speaking from a detention center—defiantly urged Chinese people

to defend their rights. It remained unclear who filmed the footage, which was available briefly on the Chinese video-streaming site Youku and on overseas websites like YouTube.

- **China Media Project 8/4/2013:** [Xiao Shu freed, releases statement](#)
- **Committee to Protect Journalists 8/2/2013:** [Veteran journalist detained, websites shut down in China](#)
- **HRIC 7/25/2013:** In custody and released: [Lawyer Teng Biao, rights activist Hu Jia](#)
- **South China Morning Post 7/27/2013:** [Activists 'detained while celebrating Hu Jia's birthday'](#)
- **New York Review of Books 7/29/2013:** [What's behind the new Chinese crackdown?](#)
- **New York Times 8/8/2013:** [Imprisoned Chinese rights advocate urges defiance in video](#)



State media mistake satirical 'Washington Post' sale for fact

In the latest example of Chinese state media apparently being duped by foreign satire, on August 7 the official news agency Xinhua published a story reporting that Amazon founder Jeff Bezos had accidentally purchased the *Washington Post* while shopping online. The article was based on a piece by comedian Andy Borowitz first published on the *New Yorker's* website and titled “Amazon Founder Says He Clicked on *Washington Post* by Mistake.” It included a series of humorous references about the experience of shopping online and attempting to return an unintended purchase—in this case, a \$250 million one. The *Post* had announced its sale to Bezos on August 5, though it clearly referred to a negotiated deal with the paper's parent company, not an online error. Xinhua translated the article, which was then reposted by other state media outlets like the *People's Daily*. As of August 8, the erroneous article remained on Xinhua's website, despite the embarrassing revelation of its mishap. This is not the first time Chinese state media have taken overseas satire as factual reporting. In November 2012, for instance, the People's Daily Online picked up an article published in the U.S.-based satirical newspaper the *Onion* that claimed North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un had been named “the sexiest man alive” (see CMB No. [75](#)).

- **Washington Post 8/8/2013:** [Chinese state media fooled by satirical story on Washington Post sale](#)
- **New Yorker 8/6/2013:** [Amazon founder says he clicked on Washington Post by mistake](#)
- **People's Daily Online 8/7/2013:** [亚马逊创始人称收购《华盛顿邮报》非本意 系点错鼠标 \[Amazon founder says he purchased Washington Post by mistake through wrong mouse click\]](#)

NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Online comment and deletion campaigns follow Bo Xilai indictment news

Following the July 25 announcement of purged Chongqing Communist Party chief Bo Xilai's indictment (see above), online censors appear to have carried out mass deletions of postings that expressed sympathy for Bo or questioned state media's claims that the handling of the case had adhered to the "rule of law." A leaked propaganda directive ordering the deletion of posts related to Bo was dated June 23, apparently issued in advance of the indictment announcement. Meanwhile, in a sign of state-organized efforts to artificially guide online discussion, many web portals and social-media sites were flooded by comments that unanimously praised the charges against him, with many featuring verbatim repetition of certain phrases like "determination to fight corruption." Such concerted campaigns contrasted sharply with the freewheeling conversations and sharing of information that surrounded the early stages of Bo's downfall in 2012. Observers have attributed the change to greater party unity on how to handle the situation as well as strengthened internet controls. In a related incident, Song Yangbiao, a Beijing-based *Time Weekly* journalist known for his ardent support of Bo, was detained on August 5. He was being held for "picking quarrels and provoking troubles" after he went online to urge the masses to storm the trial and take Bo out of prison.

- *Tea Leaf Nation* 7/6/2013: [China announces trial of purged princeling Bo Xilai, authorities coordinate positive social media](#)
- *Wall Street Journal* 7/25/2013: [China carefully curates online reaction to Bo Xilai indictment](#)
- *China Digital Times* 7/23/2013: [Ministry of Truth: Xi Says 'Hello, Gorgeous!'](#)
- *Financial Times* 8/6/2013: [Bo Xilai supporter arrested for urging masses to gatecrash trial](#)



Peking University professor faces dismissal over online political comments

In an interview with Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* published on July 8, economics professor Xia Yeliang of the prestigious Peking University confirmed web rumors that his online remarks on political topics had jeopardized his tenure. Among other liberal writings, Xia had recently posted multiple comments on the popular microblogging platform Sina Weibo that were critical of the Communist Party. In one of them, he wrote that the "China Dream," a nationalist slogan introduced by the new leadership under President Xi Jinping earlier in 2013, was "going against constitutionalism and humanity" (see above, CMB No. [90](#)). He received a warning from the university about his potential dismissal, which would be decided by a faculty vote in September. According to Xia, the administration said his online activism was having negative consequences and that he should express his opinion through "regular channels." Xia's Weibo account reportedly remained active, though his accounts had been deleted by Sina on at least seven previous occasions, and his comments about the government were removed. He said that the state of academic freedom

in China had worsened, and that the decision to vote on his expulsion was a result of direct pressure from the central authorities. The professor also noted that his fellow scholars could face repercussions if they voted to support him. Xia is currently a visiting scholar at California's Stanford University, but said he planned to return to China by the end of August. He was among the first signatories of Charter 08, a prodemocracy manifesto drafted by jailed Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo. Peking University, a frequent partner to respected foreign schools such as Yale University, was ranked 46 out of 400 top universities around the world by the UK-based Times Higher Education index in 2012.

- **DW News 7/7/2013:** [北大教授夏业良嘲讽中国梦被威胁除名 \[Peking University professor Xia Yeliang threatened with dismissal after making fun of the China dream slogan\]](#)
- **Kyodo News 7/31/2013:** [Pro-democracy Peking University professor faces sacking in Sept.](#)
- **South China Morning Post 7/8/2013:** [Liberal Peking University professor threatened with expulsion](#)
- **Times Higher Education 2012–2013:** [Peking University](#)



Popular Chinese web portals join government to launch antirumor platform

On August 1, six popular Chinese web portals—Baidu, Sina, Sugou, Sohu, Netease, and Qianlong—unveiled the “Beijing Regional Antirumor Online Platform,” which will operate under the guidance of the Beijing Internet Information Office (BIIO) and the Beijing Internet Association. The new website featured 100,000 sample postings collected from microblogs and news portals that were deemed to contain false information. According to Bloomberg, entries ranged from a woman reporting that she had received a kangaroo in the mail when ordering powdered milk from Australia to allegations of official misconduct. A BIIO official told *Shanghai Daily* that in its second phase, the site will introduce more interactive programs to encourage internet users to report cases. The definition of “rumors” remains ambiguous in China, as the authorities frequently apply the label to accurate information that they wish to conceal, such as news surrounding disease outbreaks, air pollution, or political intrigue within the Communist Party. The Beijing Regional Antirumor Online Platform is the latest official effort to control online opinion, though individual companies such as Sina have already implemented their own antirumor mechanisms under government pressure (see CMB No. [90](#)). Wen Yunchao, a prominent blogger and visiting scholar at Columbia University, questioned the effectiveness of such initiatives “if people don’t believe in the government in the first place.”

- **Shanghai Daily 8/2/2013:** [Web giants join up to battle rumors](#)
- **China Digital Times 8/4/2013:** [Websites unite with party to squash rumors](#)
- **Bloomberg 8/2/2013:** [China starts website to refute rumors as scrutiny grows](#)
- [北京地区网站联合辟谣平台 \[Beijing Regional Anti-Rumor Online Platform\]](#)



Party officials mine online chatter as WeChat challenges Weibo dominance

The growing use of social media has prompted changes in the way the Communist Party monitors public opinion and grassroots developments. Traditionally, journalists from state media outlets like Xinhua News Agency have sent classified reports on local events up the chain of command to the party leadership (see CMB No. [67](#)). Now, the *People's Daily* has established an Online Public Opinion Monitoring Center to perform this function on a nationwide scale. According to the *Washington Post*, the center uses algorithms to mine and interpret online chatter, as staff summarize dominant views on hot topics, allowing almost-real-time monitoring of hundreds of millions of internet and social-media users. Based on their findings, analysts provide advice to party and government leaders on how to deal with emerging crises, in some cases urging more transparency and straight talk rather than the usual stilted official statements. The authorities also draw on information gathered by university research centers and private polling firms, a change from just a decade ago. Despite the massive operation, some observers note that its reach is incomplete, particularly when focusing on Sina's Weibo microblogging site, which is more popular among urban than rural users. In addition, according to Bill Bishop, who publishes the daily *Sinocism* newsletter, one article by two staffers at the *People's Daily* center pointed out the “importance of government departments learning to use Weixin, not just Weibo.” Weixin (WeChat in English) is a service offered by tech giant Tencent that combines text, voicemail, and image sharing (see CMB Nos. [78](#), [85](#)). Unlike Weibo, it is organized around closed communities, enabling users to keep in touch with friends and family, though a public account service allows the broadcasting of information to larger audiences. Launched at the end of 2011, Weixin reportedly has 300 million users (to Sina's reported 500 million, though not all are active). Also unlike Sina, Weixin has actively targeted foreign markets. Some 70 million of its 300 million users are non-Chinese, earning it slot number 5 in a recent ranking of the most-used smartphone applications globally. As usage of Weibo has dropped since mid-2012, some analysts worry that a shift to Weixin may damage the important social role that Weibo has played—despite active censorship—in disseminating viral news developments and enabling public debate on a nationwide scale.

- [Washington Post 8/5/2013: Is China's vast Web monitoring actually helping to grow democracy?](#)
- [Washington Post 8/2/2013: In China, Communist Party takes unprecedented step: It is listening](#)
- [People's Daily Online 8/2/2013: 政务微信撬动社会舆论新格局 \[Government micro-channel leveraging new pattern of public opinion\]](#)
- [Think Digit 7/8/2013: Google Maps beats Facebook: Gains top spot in most used smartphone apps list](#)
- [Xinhua 8/6/2013: China Focus: Specialized newsrooms abuzz on WeChat](#)
- [Atlantic 7/30/2013: WeChat—not Weibo—is the Chinese social network to watch](#)
- [Global Voices 7/12/2013: Is WeChat the next Sina Weibo in China?](#)
- [Tech in Asia 2/25/2013: Why the WeChat vs. Weibo war will be the year's biggest story, and why Weibo needs to win](#)

TIBET



Authorities tighten restrictions on Dalai Lama photos, leaflets

According to state-run media, the authorities in Tibet have increased their crackdown on “illegal” and “promotional” products—a reference to publications that support Tibetan identity and the Dalai Lama. The official Xinhua news agency reported on July 17 that more than 1.32 million publications had been confiscated in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) since 2011. On the same day, People’s Daily Online reported that local officials at a July 12 Lhasa conference held by the State Antipornography and Anti-Illegal Publications Office were urged to share information with other provincial governments as they monitored and interdicted websites, text messages, books, and pamphlets, and carried out inspections at local printers to curb circulation of illegal content. Despite such efforts, leaflets calling for Tibetan independence and the longevity of the Dalai Lama were reportedly found on July 20, scattered at the Latsekha pass near Kardze (Ganzi), a Tibetan area of Sichuan Province. The discovery prompted police searches of homes and vehicles in the surrounding area. The authorities had reportedly lifted the ban on photographs of the Dalai Lama for a month in Qinghai Province beginning in June, but the restrictions were apparently restored in July as police resumed searching vehicles for such images. A number of travelers entering Tibet from India and Nepal have been detained and deported in recent months for possessing banned media materials. In an interview with Radio Free Asia, a Tibetan resident of India said he had been detained and interrogated for 10 days in late June by the authorities in the TAR after police found photos and a book by the Dalai Lama in his luggage. When he cited the reported relaxation of the rules, he was told that only photos taken of the Dalai Lama prior to the 1959 Tibetan uprising were permitted.

- Radio Free Asia 7/25/2013: [Security tightened in Tibetan area following leaflet campaign](#)
- *Tibet Post* 7/18/2013: [China to crackdown on publications in Tibet under ‘illegal’ lists](#)
- Radio Free Asia 7/30/2013: [Tibetan traveler sent back to India over Dalai Lama photos](#)
- People’s Daily Online 7/17/2013: [2013 年全国“扫黄打非·珠峰工程”座谈会在拉萨召开 \[Nationwide 2013 antipornography and anti-illegal publication campaign forum held in Lhasa\]](#)

HONG KONG



Journalists attacked while covering protest

The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) issued a statement on August 5 that criticized the police for failing to protect local journalists at a heated protest. On August 4, while covering a

confrontation between rival groups of protesters, a *Next Magazine* photographer was shoved and beaten by some of the demonstrators, and another photographer from *Ming Pao* newspaper who attempted to record the incident was himself assaulted. According to HKJA, police on the scene were slow to step in. The protest consisted of supporters and detractors of a local teacher who had stirred controversy by publicly berating the police for their handling of an earlier standoff between pro- and anti-Falun Gong groups. A man arrested for the August 4 assaults was reportedly a retired officer. Although violence against journalists was once rare in Hong Kong, it has increased significantly in recent years, and the HKJA said most cases remained unsolved (see CMB No. [90](#)).

- *Standard* 8/5/2013: [Reporters not protected, journalists' association says](#)
- HKJA 8/5/2013: [記協強烈譴責推撞記者阻撓採訪的暴行 要求警方嚴正執法 \[HKJA strongly condemns assault on reporters\]](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 8/5/2013: [Video reporters attacked during protests in Mongkok](#)
- *South China Morning Post* 8/6/2013: [Teacher says sorry again for Mong Kok row—but not to police](#)

BEYOND CHINA



China withholds payments to Hollywood studios in tax row

On July 29, the *Hollywood Reporter* revealed that the state-run China Film Group has been withholding all box-office revenue, amounting to tens of millions of dollars, from Hollywood studios since late 2012. The halt in payments stemmed from the Chinese entity's attempts to impose a new 2 percent value-added tax on the studios, which argue that their designated 25 percent share of Chinese box-office receipts is exempt from such taxes under a bilateral trade agreement reached in February 2012 (see CMB No. [48](#)). U.S. studios have continued to release films in China despite the standoff, apparently reluctant to withdraw from the enormous Chinese market. Hollywood regularly endures arbitrary and opaque decisions by Chinese censors and regulators, with each new film generating speculation on the reasons for its approval or rejection (see CMB No. [87](#)). The *Los Angeles Times* reported on July 23 that the animated blockbuster *Despicable Me 2* had been denied permission for a release in Chinese theaters, leading some observers to claim that censors had detected a resemblance between the film's diminutive, bespectacled "Minion" characters and former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. Sources at the main Chinese film regulator later denied that the movie had been rejected, telling reporters that it had never been submitted for approval. A Chinese distributor, Edko Films, had apparently decided not to apply for one of the coveted slots in China's annual quota of 34 foreign films because it did not expect the sequel to be a commercial success. The original *Despicable Me* film had not been screened in China in 2010.

- *Los Angeles Times* 7/23/2013: [Universal Pictures 'Despicable Me 2' denied release in China](#)

- *Guardian* 7/24/2013: [Despicable Me 2 blocked by Chinese censor, but Smurfs sequel approved](#)
 - *Hollywood Reporter* 7/29/2013: [Hollywood studios haven't been paid by China in months \(Exclusive\)](#)
 - *Hollywood Reporter* 8/5/2013: [China denies 'Despicable Me 2' ban](#)
 - *Guardian* 8/6/2013: [China denies Despicable Me 2 ban](#)
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Huawei's telecom management in Africa spurs surveillance fears

On July 25, China's leading telecommunications firm, Huawei, signed a \$700 million contract with Ethiopia's state-run Ethio Telecom to expand mobile-phone infrastructure in the country. According to executives at Ethio Telecom, the agreement would help double network subscribers to 56 million. The deal is the latest in a series Huawei has secured in recent years in countries such as Nigeria, Zambia, and Angola, as it has become involved in large-scale infrastructure projects across Africa. According to a recent feature in *Foreign Policy*, "Huawei isn't just providing cell phones, towers and fiber-optic cable and then turning them over to local businesses. The telecom giant ... is often running these networks for the local communications providers and the government." Such management of the telecom backbone infrastructure places Huawei in a particularly powerful position, says Chris Demchak, codirector of the Center for Cyber Conflict Studies at the U.S. Naval War College. According to Mai Truong, an Africa analyst at Freedom House, African governments are increasingly seeking Chinese assistance in monitoring their country's digital communications networks (see CMB No. [82](#)). This has sparked fears that Huawei could facilitate such surveillance by African governments, while some critics argue that it is in a position to spy for the Chinese authorities as well. Ethiopia is rated Not Free and Nigeria Partly Free in Freedom House's 2012 *Freedom on the Net* index.

- *Reuters* 7/26/2013: [Ethiopia signs \\$700 million mobile network deal with China's Huawei](#)
 - *Foreign Policy* 7/30/2013: [Africa's big brother lives in Beijing](#)
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For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see:

[Freedom in the World 2013](#)
[Freedom of the Press 2013](#)
[Freedom on the Net 2013](#)

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