

Press Highlights

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Mainland China

Politics

1. Death of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo

On 13 July 2017, Liu Xiaobo, a political dissident who was imprisoned for his involvement in drafting the “Charter 08” (full English translation [here](#) by Perry Link) calling for democracy in China, died of liver cancer after days of medication under “medical parole”, despite international calls for his release for medical treatment abroad with his wife and other relatives. The government soon organized his funeral with his body cremated and spread to the sea in lieu of a burial, which government officials claimed that they acted according to the will of Liu’s family. While Liu’s widow Liu Xia is out of contact with the outside world afterward, Liu’s elder brother Liu Xiaoguang is arranged to speak to the media and express thanks to the government and the Party. Media reports suggest that Liu’s wife was sent to Yunan Province while Liu’s relatives are forbidden to pay tribute to Liu openly. Liu Xiaobo’s death sparks a number of commemorations for his contribution to China’s democracy in [Hong Kong](#) and [beyond](#). Official censorship is apparent on the Chinese internet where the name “Liu Xiaobo” could not be searched for. Despite the censorship, some Chinese netizens used images with an empty chair (a symbol of absence as Liu in the Prize Presentation Ceremony for his Nobel Peace Prize in 2010) or “1955-2017” (the life time of Liu) to remember Liu’s death (for more details, see [here](#) by China Digital Times). In an article on China Change, Wu Qiang praised Liu

Xiaobo as a major contributor to the democracy movement in China, and detailed his significance since the 1989 Tiananmen Crackdown.

- //Liu, age 61, was detained in December 2008, after co-writing Charter 08, a pro-democracy manifesto which was initially signed by more than 2000 people, and eventually by more than 10,000. Charter 08 advocated reforms including an independent judiciary, protection of human rights, separation of powers, freedom of expression and religion, and rural-urban equality. [...] A year later, Liu was sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges of “inciting subversion of state power.” [...] While German Chancellor Angela Merkel and representatives of the Trump administration had called for more lenient treatment of Liu, human rights activists and others criticized foreign governments for not speaking up more forcefully in defense of Liu. // Source: [China Digital Times](#), 13 July 2017.
- //Liu Xiaobo’s older brother, Liu Xiaoguang, said at a news conference organised by the authorities that the government had followed the family’s wishes for the funeral. He also said Liu Xia was so heartbroken that she may need hospital treatment. But supporters said it was impossible to verify if the family had really wanted a sea burial and noted that the brothers were politically at odds. Amnesty International China researcher Patrick Poon said Liu Xia, 56, suffers from depression and heart disease. He said the loss of contact was “strange”.// Source: [HKFP](#), 15 July 2017.
- //Candle emoticons and the phrase “R.I.P.” were banned on Weibo, a popular Chinese microblogging site. On many sites, searches of Mr. Liu’s name turned up zero results. Still, Mr. Liu’s admirers found creative ways around the controls, using code words, videos and photographs to show solidarity and to criticize the government’s treatment of China’s only Nobel Peace laureate. [...] As censors sprung into action after Mr. Liu’s death, **internet users found creative means to convey their opinions. One popular motif was a picture of an empty chair, echoing the way the Nobel Prize committee honored Mr. Liu at the 2010 ceremony.** Another common image was a black backdrop accompanied only by the text “1955-2017,” the years of Mr. Liu’s life.// Source: [New York Times](#), 17 July 2017.
- //Even in the world of Chinese political activists, opinions on Liu Xiaobo are polarized, and this has to a large degree also impacted his exposure among the public. The most controversial item is no doubt the last sentence of Liu’s statement, delivered to the court on November 23, 2009 (and later adapted as his Nobel acceptance speech in absentia): “I Have No Enemies.” A significant number of committed democracy activists in China have for years strongly maintained that this pledge was no less than Liu’s capitulation. They facetiously call him “No Enemy Liu,” and dismiss his path of nonviolent resistance. **This, however, is precisely why the Norwegian Nobel Committee thought so highly of him, and it’s likely also the reason that so many Chinese activists are proud of him** and see him as China’s own Mandela,

Ghandi, Aung San Suu Kyi, or Xanana Gusmão. **Though it also led to another view, which was that the civil society in China has no need to call for Liu's amnesty, as this would simply be an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the sentence against him.** This has been a view propagated precisely by the activists who purportedly support Liu. [...] **It must be observed, of course, that this circumstance to some degree reflects the fragmented and chaotic state of opposition politics,** and the attenuation of civil society in post-2008 China, when Liu was detained and jailed. **For all these reasons, evaluating afresh Liu Xiaobo's remarkable contribution to Chinese opposition politics, including from the perspective of the Norwegian Nobel Committee when they gave him the prestigious award, will be a profitable exercise.**// Source: [China Change](#), 30 June 2017.

In a related incident, Xu Zhiyong (许志永), a rights lawyer who helped initiate the New Citizens' Movement back in 2012, was recently released from prison after his 4-year imprisonment for "disturbing social order". Observers worry that he may not be set totally free out of prison. Many also noted that the control is tightened under the Xi Administration, and the arrest of Xu was a start of what is later known as 709 Crackdown on various rights activists and lawyers. For details see the CEFC current affairs [article](#) by Samson Yuen). For a more detailed discussion on the New Citizens' Movement see [here](#) by Bloomberg.

- //Rights lawyer, civil society activist, and New Citizens' Movement founder Xu Zhiyong left prison on Saturday at the end of a four-year sentence for gathering crowds to create disturbance. But supporters fear that, like others including rights lawyer Xie Yang, he may simply have been shifted into what NYU law scholar Jerome Cohen has called a "non-release release", which usually means formal release from prison into another form of coercive confinement." [...] Xu worked on a wide range of causes including anti-corruption, petitioners' rights, and access to education for migrant workers' children. He was known as a moderate voice, and was sometimes "accused of bending over backwards to meet the other side" according to Human Rights Watch's Maya Wang. In a 2014 interview about Xu at China Change, which offers a thorough account of his career, his colleague Teng Biao said that Xu "hoped to be [a] mediator between the government and the people, to the greatest extent possible using peaceful and legal means to resolve conflict." [...] **More than three years on, the situation now appears bleaker to many. At China Change on Sunday, Yaxue Cao wrote that the crackdown on Xu and his fellow activists was the start of a path leading through the Black Friday or 709 crackdown on rights lawyers in 2015, and on to the death of Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo last week.**// Source: [China Digital Times](#), 18 July 2017.

2. New mechanism to assess party cadres

Since April, many cities and provinces such as Chongqing, Guangdong, Shaanxi and Anhui in China implement new guidelines to ensure party cadres to take more

seriously the work of “letters and visits”, a means for citizens to petition. Beijing joined the roll since early July. In detail, it will include the work of “letters and visits” as part of the cadre evaluation. Cadres will bear responsibility if they fail to reduce the number of letters and visits, violates the legal rights of petitioners, do not show ability to resolve the conflicts and allow it to grow bigger, etc. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party also experiments how to use big data to better evaluate cadres’ performance.

- //《北京市信访工作责任制实施细则》近日印发施行，其中提出“建立健全信访工作考核评价机制，各级组织人事部门在干部考察工作中，应当听取信访部门意见，了解掌握领导干部履行信访工作职责情况”。[...]各级信访工作的总责，落在党政机关领导班子主要负责人的肩上。依据《实施细则》，班子其他成员根据工作分工，对职权范围内的信访工作负主要领导责任。《实施细则》提出，各级党政机关应当将信访工作纳入督查范围，并建立健全信访工作考核评价机制，考核结果作为对领导班子和领导干部综合考评的重要参考。各级组织人事部门在干部考察工作中，应当听取信访部门意见，了解掌握领导干部履行信访工作职责情况。// Source: [The Beijing News](#), 06 July 2017.
- //Party cadres in southwestern China will soon be scored on their ideological correctness and job performance by a cloud-based artificial intelligence system that tracks everything from their attendance at Party events to comments they post on social media. The Party school of Sichuan province is collaborating with the platform, whose name translates to “Smart Red Cloud,” state newspaper Science and Technology Daily reported Friday. **The platform promises to make the selection, assessment, and education of Party cadres “smarter.”** The platform has been in development since 2012 by Yunshu Weilai, a tech startup under the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, located in the provincial capital of Chengdu. Liang Lihua, the company’s marketing head, said one “innovative” function, called “Portrait of Cadres,” uses the evaluation of cadres’ past performance to predict their ideas and behaviors in the future. **He said this feature will be a good supplement to the current personnel system.**// Source: [Sixth Tone](#), 03 July 2017.

3. The downfall of party head of Chongqing Sun Zhengcai sparks speculations about intra-party struggle ahead of the 19th CCP Party Congress

The party head of Chongqing Sun Zhengcai (孙政才) was dismissed from the post and placed under investigation on 15 July 2017 as first reported by state-owned media. He is replaced by Chen Min’er (陈敏尔), a former party head of the southwestern province of Guizhou and a former associate of Xi Jinping. According to Bloomberg, it is the first probe into a sitting Politburo member since the fall of Bo Xilai in 2012. The concrete detail about why he has been dismissed is yet clear. Various scholars offered their views on the implications of Sun’s dismissal. Most of them argued it is a move by Xi Jinping to sideline its rivals ahead of the 19th CCP

Party Congress. Recently, Wang Qishan, the head of CCP's discipline department, published an article on the People's Daily (full text in Chinese [here](#)), which argued that the central inspection over the past years has been successful and has covered all relevant units. He also revealed the figures related to the inspection work, and mentioned the use of new methods to validate party members' credentials, for example, to check their files closely and pick up those who faked their backgrounds. He also wrote that the inspection work would continue and even expand after the 19th CCP Party Congress.

- **//Sun, 53, was the youngest member of the party's Politburo and was considered a rising star ahead of a key leadership reshuffle later this year. State media reported Saturday that he was replaced by a provincial party chief -- Chen Miner -- who is an associate of President Xi Jinping. [...] The officials said they were urged to eliminate the influence of Sun, including his policies and instructions. The Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday that Sun was being probed, without providing details. [...] It's the first probe of a sitting Politburo member, a key leadership body in the Communist Party, since the downfall in 2012 of another one-time Chongqing chief, Bo Xilai, later sentenced to life in prison for corruption and abuse of power.** // Source: [Bloomberg](#), 16 July 2017.
- **//Sources told the South China Morning Post over the weekend that Sun was being questioned by Communist Party investigators, but it is not clear if he has been formally detained for internal interrogation, or what exactly might have gotten him into hot water.** // Source: [SCMP](#), 18 July 2017.
- **//Sources with ties to the leadership and foreign diplomats say Sun has been out of favor after the party's anti-corruption watchdog in February criticized Chongqing authorities for not doing enough to root out Bo's influence.** Meeting city officials, Chen told them that they must "unify their thought" on the feedback the party graft-buster gave the last time it inspected the city, a reference to the February report. // Source: [Reuters](#), 18 July 2017.
- **//"The 18th Party Congress approved Sun Zhengcai and Hu Chunhua for the Politburo, and both were viewed as possible successors to Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang," said Joseph Fewsmith, a professor at Boston University who studies China's elite politics. "So now, part of the decision of the 18th Party Congress has been overturned. We'll see if the other part is," he said. The removal of Sun could open the way for Chen to take a seat on the 25-member Politburo. Chen was Xi's propaganda chief during his tenure in the southeastern Zhejiang province between 2002 and 2007. Chongqing's party chiefs have been represented on the Politburo since 2007. "Chen worked closely with Xi before and has shown unfaltering political loyalty -- the most important credential for promotion under Xi's leadership," said Zhao Suisheng, director of the Center for China-U.S. Cooperation at the University of Denver.** // Source: [Bloomberg](#), 17 July 2017.

- //“Unless he suddenly makes himself incredibly useful and helpful to Xi, Sun is politically a dead man walking,” said **Steve Tsang, director of the SOAS China Institute in London. His dismissal and investigation also send a powerful signal to other cadres, he said. “What is happening to Sun can happen to others who resist falling in line with Xi’s plan for the 19th party congress.”**// Source: [SCMP](#), 18 July 2017.
- //Su Wei, a professor at the Party School of the Chongqing Committee of the CPC, told the Global Times on Monday that a clear distinction between right and wrong is very important for Chongqing Party members to get prepared for the upcoming 19th CPC National Congress. "Actions in support of the implementation of the CPC Central Committee's spirit and the construction of Chongqing are crucial, while those which violate the Party's principles are destructive," Su said.// Source: [Global Times](#), 17 July 2017.
- //贯彻党的十八届三中、四中全会精神，党中央修订颁布《中国共产党巡视工作条例》。六中全会对全面从严治党再动员再部署，党中央又一次启动修改巡视工作条例，再次印证全面从严治党永远在路上，党的十九大后，巡视工作要继续发扬光大、更好发挥利剑作用。[...] 实现一届任期巡视全覆盖。三中全会提出，改进中央和省区市巡视制度，做到对地方、部门、企事业单位全覆盖。六中全会审议通过的党内监督条例进一步明确，党委要在一届任期内实现巡视全覆盖。这是党中央根据党风廉政建设和反腐败斗争形势依然严峻复杂的判断作出的重大部署，全覆盖本身就是有力震慑，只有全覆盖才能零容忍。[...] 创新组织制度和方式方法。利剑作用的发挥、全覆盖的实现、“回头看”成为常态，都离不开改革创新。// Source: [People’s Daily](#), 17 July 2017.

4. New establishment of “State Textbook Committee”

The State Council recently announced that it has established a brand new 49-person-strong “State Textbook Committee” (国家教材委员会), composed of 22 members from various ministries and 27 members from various professional backgrounds. The committee is responsible for 1) planning for curriculum building, 2) instructing and coordinating work of various local governments’ departments related to curriculum, 3) supervise national curriculum setting and curriculum standards, especially those curricula of strong ideological nature. The committee is headed by the vice premier Liu Yandong (刘延东) who just convened the first meeting on 05 July. A scholar on Global Times argued that the new committee could solve the problem about some books which include the excessive contents praising foreigners while downgrading the Chinese. On the Beijing Times, a scholar noted that the local government is responsible to prepare their own curriculum since 1999 to suit the various needs of local students with quality textbooks. In recent years, the central government has been revising its policies related to curriculum with the example of changing the period of anti-Japanese war from 8 to 14 years in 2017. A commentary on Xinhua later pointed out that there are some worries about undermining the autonomy of

local governments in setting their own curricula, but it argued that it is important to separate the supervision agency from the management agency to ensure curriculum standards and quality, and the autonomy of local governments is retained in the preparation of the materials for approval. For the full member list of the committee, please find it [here](#) (in Chinese).

- **//The [state textbook] committee will be responsible for discussing strategy and annual planning of textbook compilation and supervising curriculum standards, according to a circular released on the State Council's website on Thursday. Vice Premier Liu Yandong has been appointed head of the committee. "This committee can help solve existing problems in current texts, such as excessive praise of foreigners while belittling the Chinese people's image in some primary school textbooks," Zhuang Deshui, a professor at Peking University, told the Global Times. The issue of some primary schools' Chinese textbooks advocating Western culture while disgracing the Chinese people has triggered online controversy and accusations toward one book publisher since last year.// Source: [Global Times](#), 10 July 2017.**
- **//根据国办下发的通知，国家教材委员会负责指导和统筹全国教材工作，贯彻党和国家关于教材工作的重大方针政策。具体涉及多个方面，研究审议教材建设规划和年度工作计划，研究解决教材建设中的重大问题，指导、组织、协调各地区各部门有关教材工作，审查国家课程标准和课程标准制定，审查意识形态属性较强的国家规划教材。[...] 新成立的国家教材委员会主任由国务院副总理刘延东担任，副主任由教育部部长陈宝生、中央宣传部副部长黄坤明担任。教育部副部长朱之文任秘书长。除此之外，组成人员还有部门委员和专家委员两部分。部门委员包括外交部副部长、发改委副主任、科技部副部长等 22 位相关部门的领导。专业委员共有 27 名，包括高校、出版社、中科院、中央编译局等单位部门的专家教授。[...] 刘延东在会上强调，要落实党中央、国务院决策部署，坚持社会主义办学方向，推进大中小学教材建设，服务学生德智体美全面发展，为培养中国特色社会主义事业合格建设者和可靠接班人提供有力保障。刘延东强调，教材建设是事关未来的战略工程、基础工程，教材体现国家意志。要坚持党的教育方针，把握正确方向和价值导向，加强社会主义核心价值观和优秀传统文化、民族精神教育，帮助学生扣好人生第一粒扣子。// Source: [The Beijing News](#), 06 July 2017.**
- **//中国教育科学研究院研究员储朝晖介绍，1949 年以前，教材主要由个人或机构编写；1951 年后，教材开始实行统一编写，即统编、统购、统销的方式，由于不同地域文化等方面存在较大差异，使用过程中出现较多问题，之后开始由各省自行组织编写。1999 年我国实行课程改革之后，通过对教材编写进行系统调查分析和了解，政府提出了课程标准，放开由地方和相关出版机构来编写教材，由教育部门进行审核，这时出现了江苏版、北师大版、人教版等多种教材，整体效果较为理想，出现了很多优秀教材，满足了多样性学习需求，有利于教材专业水平的提高，**

提高学生的学习质量，质量不高的也会被淘汰。[...] 近年来，大中小学教材内容和相关规定也在发生变化，仅 2017 年有关大中小学教材方面的变化就有不少。年初，据媒体报道，2017 年春季教材将全面落实 14 年抗战概念。// Source: [The Beijing Times](#), 07 July 2017.

- //成立国家教材委员会，有人担心这是不是把编写教材的权力收到国家主管部门手里，由此影响地方和学校的自主性。但如果以教育管办评分离的思路来看待国家教材委员会，则可以消除这种担心：让教材委员会主要发挥审查国家课程设置、课程标准制定的作用，同时扩大地方和学校的自主权，开发编写有特色的地方课程、校本课程和教材。教育管办评分离改革，具体指政府部门要依法保障学校办学投入，同时监督学校依法自主办学，而学校如何办学，是学校的自主权，并对学校办学实行专业评价与社会评价。经审定出版的教材，再由地方教育部门和学校选择使用，地方教育部门和学校在教材方面的自主权，主要体现在编写、采用和使用上。此前，我国已经把教材编写核准的权力下放，也就是说，教师可自主编写教材，但是否能作为教材，要经过审定。建立国家教材委员会，其主要职责就在于明确课程建设、教材编写标准，这有利于提高课程设置、教材编写的质量。// Source: [Xinhua](#), 08 July 2017.

Diplomacy

5. G20 Summit and China

The G20 Summit was held in Hamburg during 07-08 July (For statistics about the profiles of G20, see [here](#) by Quartz). In addition to the US stance toward climate change different from the rest of G20 members (but some updated news suggest that Donald Trump has a second thought about leaving the Paris Agreement, see [here](#) by SCMP), some commentators argued that China successfully avoided controversial issues at G20 as spotlights were principally on the US and Russia. From a broader perspective, the G20 also raises the discussion about the possibility of Germany having closer relations with China to take up the world leadership role in the event of the US retreat.

- //The summit pledges to jointly step up cooperation based on the outcomes of the Hangzhou summit, advance trade and investment, give full play to the potential of digitalization, push forward sustainable development, and forge partnership with African countries, said the communique adopted at the conclusion of the two-day meeting.// Source: [Xinhua](#), 08 July 2017.
- //19 of the 20 leaders were able to agree on all points made in the joint declaration (known as the communique) with the exception of Donald Trump who could not agree on climate change. Breaking with tradition, a separate paragraph on the US's stance on the Paris climate agreement and fossil fuels was added.// Source: [The Guardian](#), 09 July 2017.

- //In the end it was U.S. President Donald Trump's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, amid accusations Russia interfered in the U.S. election, and Trump's refusal to return to the Paris climate agreement that dominated the limelight. **Xi, by contrast, avoided controversy in his bilateral meetings and reaffirmed China's commitment to the Paris deal and to an open global economy, in what the official China Daily called the "burnishing of (his) reputation".** "Nobody talked about the South China Sea. No one talked about trade. Everyone was happy with Xi. I think he played this well," said Ulrich Speck, senior fellow at the Elcano Royal Institute in Brussels. [...] **On India, where China has over the past few weeks accused New Delhi of provocation by sending troops across the border in a disputed region,** Xi avoided drama by not having a formal bilateral meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, though India's foreign ministry said they did speak. **Even on Liu Xiaobo, Xi avoided being put on the spot,** with China on Saturday allowing a U.S. and German doctor to meet him at his hospital in northeastern China.// Source: [Reuters](#), 10 July 2017.
- //For Merkel, the G20 host, Xi is an ally and Trump a troublesome rival on some of the most important issues on the agenda in Hamburg - from trade and climate change to economic development in Africa. [...] The visit [of Xi Jinping], a month after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang traveled to Berlin to meet Merkel, comes at an extremely sensitive time for big-power relations. Trump is ratcheting up pressure on Beijing to restrain North Korea, which on Tuesday announced that it had successfully test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile that showed it could strike anywhere in the world. His administration is threatening punitive trade measures against China on steel, a step that could also hit German exporters. Meanwhile a U.S. warship sailed near a disputed island in the South China Sea on Sunday, prompting Beijing to complain of a "serious political and military provocation". Against that backdrop, Xi needs allies, and Germany is top of the list. [...] **Eberhard Sandschneider, a China expert at Berlin's Free University, said Merkel's main goal was to gather as many allies as possible on climate, trade and Africa before the G20 summit,** describing the encounter as a pure "coordination meeting". [...] "Beijing views Europe as an Asian peninsula. We see it differently," she [Angela Merkel] said. **"Nevertheless, it is a fact that parts of German industry are dependent on China. So we need to deal with China's demands in a way that brings harmony and advantages for both sides."**// Source: [Reuters](#), 05 July 2017.
- //Recently, after Chinese President Xi Jinping described protectionism as akin to "locking oneself in a dark room," German Chancellor Angela Merkel praised his words as "very memorable." Now that Germany's G20 presidency is underway, German leaders have been exploring how their country might promote globalization in America's stead. But **Germany is simply too small to act as a hegemon, and its position within the eurozone is still being strained by the legacy of the 2008 financial crisis. China, too, would encounter obstacles in pursuit of global leadership. Its financial sector is still relatively**

underdeveloped and prone to crises. Its large infrastructure initiative, **One Belt, One Road**, will create new dependency problems and exacerbate existing rivalries in Asia. And, finally, the prospect of Chinese leadership will **raise fears about the fate of democracy.** At the heart of anti-globalization critiques in rich countries has been a call for more democracy, not less.// Source: [Project Syndicate](#), 04 July 2017.

6. China-India military standoff over territory near Bhutan

Since June, China and India were reported to have a military standoff over the Doklam Plateau which borders the two countries and Bhutan. The dispute is over China's road construction by the People's Liberation Army through Doklam and the construction work was stopped by the Indian troops. The Indian reaction to the road construction is said attributed to a concern about China's unilateral change of the security dynamics in the area. Scholars pointed out that the recent standoff is the longest as well as most open since their war in 1962, and argued that the military standoff is one of the incidents in the dwindling relations between the two a few years ago, but they generally believed that China and India are not going to have military conflicts and the standoff will be resolved through diplomacy. Ankit Panda, a senior editor at *the Diplomat*, had a different opinion and suggested that the potential for escalation remains high due to the difference between China and India in their respective perception of "status quo" in the area, and their broader aspirations for being the Asia's power.

- //The row began on June 16, when Indian border troops approached a People's Liberation Army road construction group to stop building a road in an area claimed by both Bhutan and China. **India said it was asked to intervene by Bhutan and that the construction had implications on its own security. China, which said Indian troops had stopped the construction, accused India of intruding into its territory.** [...] The media in both countries has reflected the growing tensions, with the more nationalistic newspapers talking about the possibility of a war. China's nationalist newspaper Global Times warned in an editorial on July 4 that India should be "taught a bitter lesson" and would suffer "greater losses" in a war. A headline of an opinion piece on Monday in Firstpost, an Indian online news portal, noted: "Another war with India will be an economic blunder for China." [...] **Experts said the current row is one of the longest stand-offs between the two sides since the war in 1962. "Ties are under stress... the bonhomie that was there two to three years ago (between the leaders) has started to dwindle," said Professor Alka Acharya, a former director of the New Delhi-based Institute of Chinese Studies.** [...] The growing proximity between India and the United States is also a cause of worry for China, experts said. On Monday, India, Japan and the US kick-started the annual Malabar exercises, which China believes are part of a bid to contain its influence. [...] **The row comes amid India's boycott of China's Belt and Road Initiative on the grounds that it passes through disputed territory in Pakistan.** This was preceded by the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, visiting the state of Arunachal

Pradesh, which China claims as its own. China has also blocked India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, comprising nuclear supplier countries seeking to prevent nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials.// Source: [The Strait Times](#), 11 July 2017.

- **//“The construction of the road clearly changes the security dynamics to our detriment significantly,” says Ashok Kantha, former envoy to China and director of the Institute of Chinese Studies in Delhi. “They are changing the status quo in a very major way and it has serious security implications for us. The Chinese are changing the trijunction unilaterally, and this affects us as the Chinese military presence here will be widened and deepened.” The current dispute has echoes of a similar standoff more than 50 years ago in the same area, when the Indira Gandhi government took a strong stand against Chinese intrusions, with Beijing then dispatching herdsmen onto Doklam to stake its claims. Then, as now, China's ire was aimed not at Bhutan but at India's 'interference'. This is possibly the first time Beijing has reacted so publicly over a boundary dispute with India since the normalisation of relations in 1988.**// Source: [India Today](#), 06 July 2017.
- **//While tensions remain high, regional experts said it was unlikely fighting would break out on the border. [...] Wang Dehua, director of the Institute for Southern and Central Asian Studies at the Shanghai -Municipal Centre for International Studies, said there would not be any immediate end to the stand-off. “This situation is deadlocked ... the ball is definitely in India’s court,” Wang said. “But it’s not so bad ... both sides need time to cool their heads.” Alka Acharya, a professor of Chinese studies at the Centre for East Asian Studies in New Delhi, said a military conflict, which would bring “catastrophic losses for both”, was the last thing Beijing or New Delhi wanted. “This is a war that neither side can, or will, win,” Acharya said, adding that both sides wanted to resolve the situation through diplomacy.**// Source: [SCMP](#), 08 July 2017.
- **//Notably, while Delhi has sought to frame its decision to intervene in terms of its obligations to Bhutan, Thimphu did not mention India once in its sole public statement on the Doklam standoff. For China, this subtle gap between the Indian and Bhutanese positions — at least publicly — is enough to sustain its ultimatum while gradually signaling that escalation may be possible. For Beijing, the “win” state now is less about having a road that terminates at Jampheri ridge and more about seeing the Indians blink first. This brings me to the conclusion of this second installment in this series on the ongoing standoff at Doklam and sets up the final discussion. As I noted last week, if a solution will be found, it will not be borne of reinterpreting old maps or semantic gamesmanship over what the correct “status quo” in the Doklam triboundary area should be. For India and China, this standoff has released long pent-up frustrations that highlight their divergent paths and aspirations in Asia and the world. For China, the standoff serves as an opportunity to put an increasingly assertive and confident India back in its**

place as Asia's permanent second-class great power. For India, despite some de-escalatory messaging, memories of defeat at the hands of the PLA in 1962 continue to sting and so showing resolve at all costs remains the **overriding task**. For now, India has no plans of complying with China's ultimatum and pulling its troops past the international boundary.//Source: [The Diplomat](#), 18 July 2017.

7. The call for greater regulation of popular mobile game "Honour of Kings" in China

The Chinese government has long scolded mobile games for addicting the young in China. In recent days, the state-owned media People's Daily and Xinhua have started a new round of criticisms by publishing a number of articles labelling a popular online game "Honour of Kings" as "poisoning" the kids who are addicted to the game and having negative impacts on their understanding of Chinese history. The first article on the same theme could date back to late March this year, and the criticisms intensified in early July. In brief, these articles urged for stronger regulation of cultural products to ensure they make positive impacts on the society. For example, Chinese history should not be distorted or misrepresented for entertainment, the government should take steps to avoid kids' addiction to the game, etc. A report on SCMP noted that the game is popular because it connects players' friends whom they have not seen for a long time. Some experts argued that kids are obsessed with the game because they can have a sense of achievement, and the game is not solely blamed for kids' addiction, as it is also the parents' responsibility not to let kids as they are.

- **//Chinese communist party mouthpiece People's Daily stepped up its criticism of a mobile game developed by Tencent Holdings, a day after the country's top gaming and social media firm said it is limiting play time for users of the "Honour of Kings" game.** Shares of Tencent, one of Asia's most valuable firms with a market value of HK\$2.6 trillion (\$333 billion), ended 4.1 percent down on Tuesday, its biggest one-day fall in 17 months, after it announced restrictions for some users of the world's top-grossing mobile game, responding to complaints that children were getting addicted.// Source: [Reuters](#), 04 July 2017.
- **//[所]有人物按游戏的角色设定只是取了一个名字而已，与历史背景和人物经历并无关系，内容和精神被架空，有名无实。[...]** 建议相关部门或行业协会除了对游戏进行事前审核外，还要加强事中监管，跟踪究竟是什么人群在玩，尤其要评估对青少年的影响。[...]**近年来中央十分强调文化产业的社会效益，提出坚决反对唯票房、唯收视率、唯发行量、唯点击率，文化企业不仅要看经济指标，更要看怎样用精品去丰富居民精神文化生活，为社会贡献了怎样的正能量。** // Source: [Sohu](#), 29 March 2017.
- **//立足平台，要市场更要责任。**智能手机普及，手游市场火爆，但手机不能沦为“黑网吧”甚至“手雷”。游戏研发者不能只重刺激性而忽视潜在危害，不能只重体验而不计后果。[...]**立足政府，要创新更要监管。**游戏毕竟是市场行为，其研发与营销也代表了一定的创新与活力。政府要鼓励企业创新，支持企业开拓，但是监管是永远不能松的那根弦。**即便几年前就发布了《关于保护未成年人身心健康实施网络游戏防沉迷系统**

的通知》，但监管的滞后性仍旧明显。// Source: [People's Daily](#), 03 July 2017.

- //如果政府部门只在一些节点上把一把、管一管，对游戏全流程置之不理、对社会效应视而不见、对新动向缺乏敏锐，纵使出台了一些政策文件，也不过是形式大于效力。[...] 由此，不管是游戏制作方、政府部门、家庭、学校等，都不能只顾眼前的输赢，只有站在同一战队，才能打赢这场“社交游戏”的监管战。// Source: [People's Daily](#), 04 July 2017.
- //历史文化可以阐释，人物形象可以演绎，但前提是尊重和维护优秀传统文化。手游也是文化作品，需要寓教于乐，如果创作者缺乏起码的文化自尊与自爱，又何谈对传统文化的继承和弘扬？像《王者荣耀》一样，一边消费历史文化，一边歪曲历史人物，只能形成文化误读和价值错乱。特别是，《王者荣耀》已涉足海外市场，更不应以编造中国历史人物来“坑”那些不了解中国历史的海外玩家，让他们在刚刚接触中华文化符号时就被误导。// Source: [Xinhua](#), 10 July 2017.
- //It's a kind of group communication and that's quite absent in the kids' life nowadays," Wu said. A fantasy role-playing game based on Chinese historical characters and developed by gaming and social media giant Tencent, Honour of Kings has become the most popular mobile game in the world. It has more than 200 million registered players – about one for every seven people in China and about 80 million daily active users, equivalent to the population of Germany. [...] An expert in game addiction said that it was easy for primary and middle school pupils to become obsessed with games because of their young age, and the problem was compounded by busy parents who did not have enough time to talk to their children and teach them correct values. "Schools and parents values students' academic scores," said Wan Lizhu, chief psychologist at the Shanghai Ruiling Psychology Consulting Centre, which treats young game addicts. "When students perform badly in their studies, they will feel they are not recognised at home and at school," said Wan. "But when playing the game, they will have a sense of achievement."// Source: [SCMP](#), 10 July 2017.

Internet

8. Leaked document suggests state-owned enterprises not to provide VPN service since February next year

Recently, Beijing ordered state-owned enterprises in the telecommunication sector not to provide VPN service by 01 February 2018, in some private government directives leaked out to the press. The VPN service was said widely used by individuals and companies in China to access Internet content banned in the country. For the time being, the foreign VPN service providers do not seem to be affected. Analysts suggest that it is a new step of Beijing's "Internet clean-up" campaign.

Charlie Smith from GreatFire analyzed that it shows the authority is more serious about Internet censorship now. Lotus Ruan from Citizen Lab of the University of Toronto said that Chinese people could still set up their own VPN with foreign service providers or access blocked content through “information brokers” who translate overseas content for Chinese audience. On 12 July, The Chinese media The Paper noted that the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the relevant regulatory body, dismissed the report as inaccurate, and stressed that legitimate use of VPN service will not be disturbed.

- **//China’s government has told telecommunications carriers to block individuals’ access to virtual private networks by Feb. 1, people familiar with the matter said, thereby shutting a major window to the global internet. Beijing has ordered state-run telecommunications firms, which include China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom, to bar people from using VPNs, services that skirt censorship restrictions by routing web traffic abroad, the people said, asking not to be identified talking about private government directives. [...] While VPNs are widely used by businesses and individuals to view banned websites, the technology operates in a legal gray area. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology pledged in January to step up enforcement against unauthorized VPNs, and warned corporations to confine such services to internal use.// Source: [Bloomberg](#), 11 July 2017.**
- **//[s]ome foreign VPN service providers said their business was thriving after mainland rivals were shut down, and that they were confident they could work around new technical barriers. [...] Providers of VPN services have long faced difficulties on the mainland, and recent moves had targeted China-based providers, Sunday Yokubaitis, president of internet company Golden Frog, said. Those located outside China, such as Yokubaitis’ Switzerland-based VyprVPN, have seen more sign-ups in recent weeks. When popular mainland firm GreenVPN shut down on July 1, citing a “notice from regulatory departments” – the latest in a string of mainland closures – New York-based KeepSolid VPN saw its downloads from China double. [...] Analysts said the move was unsurprising given Beijing’s internet “clean-up” campaign. But it made it harder for the average person to access VPNs and had a “chilling effect” on those considering using them, the co-founder of online censorship monitor GreatFire, who uses the pseudonym Charlie Smith, said. “The authorities are serious about cracking down on free access to information,” he said. “These measures are being rolled out non-stop now.” [...] But the government would find it hard to control or censor everything on the internet, and VPNs were vital tools for many businesses and researchers, Lotus Ruan, a researcher at the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab, said. People could also get around the system by setting up their own VPNs with overseas servers, or using “information brokers” – people based overseas who translate news and information for Chinese audiences, she said.// Source: [SCMP](#), 12 July 2017.**

- //Last week at [The Diplomat](#), Freedom House's Sarah Cook included this year's intensifying crackdown on circumvention tools in a list of "new censorship methods" being used by the CCP as they continue to reinforce their control over information and limit dissent. **Cook concluded her post warning that the increasingly invasive methods could serve to exacerbate the opposition authorities are seeking to eradicate**// Source: [China Digital Times](#), 10 July 2017.
- //工信部在给澎湃新闻的回应中提到，今年 1 月下发的《通知》中关于跨境开展经营活动的相关规定，不会对国内外企业和广大用户正常跨境访问互联网、合法依规开展各类经营活动造成影响。《通知》规范的对象主要是未经电信主管部门批准、无国际电信业务经营资质的企业和个人，租用国际专线或 VPN 违规开展跨境的电信业务经营活动。“外贸企业、跨国企业因办公自用等原因，需要通过专线等方式跨境联网时，可以向依法设置国际通信出入口局的电信业务经营者租用，《通知》的相关规定不会对其正常运转造成影响。”工信部在给澎湃新闻的回应中写到。
// Source: [The Paper](#), 12 July 2017.

Hong Kong

Politics

1. Xi Jinping's tour in Hong Kong and its messages

During his visit to Hong Kong, Xi Jinping made a speech on 1 July related to the implementation of One Country Two Systems (OCTS). On the political front, Xi reiterated that the central government would not tolerate Hong Kong independence, and urged the Hong Kong government to put greater emphasis on national interests such as national sovereignty, security and development interests. Xi also set out to mend relations with the pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong by proposing to talk to them, on a condition that they respect OCTS. On the economic and social fronts, Xi asked the Hong Kong government to focus on economic development and foster harmonious social environment. Observers pointed out that Xi Jinping's speech contrasted with previous China's leaders who spoke the same content as a matter of formality on the same occasion. Lau Siu-kai, vice-chairman of Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies, argued that Carrie Lam was now entrusted with two missions, 1) enactment of the local national security law, and 2) the launch of national education in school curriculum.

- **//The president's detailed speech contrasted with that of his predecessors, who focused on formalities such as reiterating the "one country, two systems" principle and Beijing's support for their work.** Xi was speaking shortly after swearing in the new administration led by Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, who vowed to take firm action against any move to undermine the country's security and sovereignty. [...] To achieve that, Xi laid down three principles for them. **Firstly, they should consider national interest: "Whether you are the person in charge of the executive branch, legislature or the judiciary, you must ... conscientiously protect national sovereignty, security and development interests."** [...] Secondly, they must stand firm in the face of pressure. "It is not a relaxing or comfortable task," he said, smiling. [...] Thirdly, they should maintain unity: "The governing team is a whole. One's glory is everyone's glory, and one's loss is everyone's loss."// Source: [SCMP](#), 02 July 2017.
- **//In rare criticism amid compliments about the city's success, Xi explicitly spelled out his unhappiness with the city's role in providing support for national security.** "Hong Kong needs to improve its systems to uphold national sovereignty, security and -development interests," Xi said. Later in the speech, **he added that any attempt to endanger national sovereignty and security and challenge the power of the central government "is an act that crosses the red line, and is absolutely impermissible"**.// Source: [SCMP](#), 01 July 2017.
- **//Professor Lau Siu-kai, vice-chairman of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies, a semi-official think tank, said Xi delivered a tougher message than in speeches by former presidents Hu Jintao and Jiang**

Zemin. [...] He believed the new chief executive, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, was now entrusted with two missions – enactment of Article 23 of Hong Kong’s Basic Law – which requires the city to enact its own national security law to ban treason, secession, sedition or subversion – and the launch of national education in the school curriculum. [...] In the latter part of his speech, Xi adopted a softer stance by calling on the public to solve problems through sensible communication instead of political confrontation. “On the part of the central government, we are ready to talk to anyone who loves the country, loves Hong Kong and genuinely supports the principle of ‘one country, two systems’ and the Basic Law of the HKSAR, no matter what political views or position he or she may hold,” he said. While Lau emphasised such talks were based on the precondition of respecting national sovereignty, **Civic Party leader Alvin Yeung Ngok-kiu said he would not readily take Xi’s remarks as an olive branch.** “Such a message coming from Xi of course has its significance and weight, but actions speak for everything,” Yeung said. “I do not think we should entertain too many unnecessary fantasies right now.”// Source: [SCMP](#), 02 July 2017.

Before Xi’s visit, protestors occupied the Golden Bauhinia Stature in protest against Xi’s arrival but were soon removed (details [here](#)). After Xi’s departure on 01 July, civil human rights front, the organizer of the democracy march on 01 July every year, finished the march with a drop in participant number compared to last year. Protests expressed dissatisfaction over the Chinese rule before Xi’s visit to Hong Kong. Local pro-independence group was banned by the police from having a gathering on 01 July, citing potential violation of the Basic Law as the reason. Several clashes between the pro-democracy protestors and the police were reported [here](#) and [here](#) (in Chinese). In a seminar, observers argued that the police have adopted an increasingly tough line against protestors.

- //About 60,000 people joined the annual pro-democracy march on July 1, about half of the crowd seen last year, making it the second lowest turnout on record and only exceeding the one in 2005, when there were less than 30,000 protesters, the Hong Kong Economic Journal reports. Police estimated the crowd at 14,500 at the peak, the lowest turnout in 15 years, while the University of Hong Kong’s Public Opinion Program said it was between 27,000 and 35,000. [...] The theme for this year’s march was **“Reclaim Hong Kong with democracy and autonomy 20 years after implementing One Country, Two Systems”**.// Source: [Economic Journal Insight](#), 03 July 2017.
- //The Hong Kong National Party (HKNP) plans to hold an event at the Clock Tower tourist site to mourn the 20th anniversary of the “fall” of Hong Kong. But the police issued a formal prohibition notice last Friday, citing both public order regulations and possible violations of the Basic Law – the city’s mini-constitution.// Source: [HKFP](#), 30 June 2017.
- //Brian Fong Chi-hang, associate director of the Academy of Hong Kong Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong, agreed that the

government had clearly decided to take a tougher line. “The rise in the number of arrests and prosecutions – seemingly using more serious charges against protesters – definitely reflects the government’s tough attitude against social movements,” he told HKFP.// Source: [HKFP](#), 01 July 2017.

During his trip, Xi also witnessed the signing of an agreement by Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangdong Province to implement the “Bay Area” project. Involved parties agreed to set up regular communication mechanism to implement the project and to confirm Hong Kong’s role in the project as the region’s hub of finance, shipping, trade, and innovation and technology.

- //Innovation and technological developments in Hong Kong will be boosted under an agreement on the Greater Bay Area project signed by local and mainland officials on Saturday and witnessed by Chinese President Xi Jinping. The city will also continue to **strengthen its role as the region’s financial and shipping hub, according to the framework agreement. It also provided clarity and assurance to counter uncertainties in recent months** on what role Hong Kong will play under the plan and how it will be executed. [...] According to a statement released by the Hong Kong government, the agreement stipulated that the goals of cooperation would include “consolidating and enhancing” Hong Kong’s status as a global financial, shipping and trade centre, as well as promoting Hong Kong’s innovation and technology industries. [...] **Local and mainland officials also agreed to cooperate on a series of goals, such as promoting infrastructure connectivity, enhancing the level of market integration and building a global technology and innovation hub.**// Source: [SCMP](#), 01 July 2017.
- //“**This is a unique development model unseen anywhere around the world, as the region involves [the] one country, two systems [principle], three different currencies, three independent members of the World Trade Organisation in different customs territories,**” Zhang [Zhang Guangnan from Sun Yat-sen University] said. Tian Feilong, an associate law professor at Beihang University in Beijing, called on Hong Kong to develop a sense of crisis because “national development strategies will pace ahead with or without Hong Kong’s participation”. [...] **Chen Guanghan, director of Sun Yat-sen University’s Centre for Studies of Hong Kong, Macau and the Pearl River Delta, said the mainland had yet to open up in many areas such as the financial market or free flow of information.** “It is still hard to foresee barrier-free access to Facebook in the Greater Bay Area region,” Chen said. “When something is threatening national security, it can never go ahead.”// Source: [SCMP](#), 09 June 2017.

2. Debates on the validity of the Sino-British Joint Declaration

In parallel to Xi Jinping’s visit to Hong Kong, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke at a press conference that China considered the Sino-British Joint Declaration as no longer having “practical significance”, in response to the statements concerning the

protection of human rights and freedoms after 20 years of the Handover by the US and the UK. It stirs up a debate about the validity of the bilateral treaty signed in 1984 which serves to guarantee the One Country Two Systems for Hong Kong after 1997. Some argued that the controversy lies in the mistaken translation of MFA statement (see the discussion [here](#) by China Digital Times). In a broader context, an article Quartz questioned China's commitment to international treaties given its ambivalent stance towards the Joint Declaration, especially in areas where China has recent conflicts with its neighboring countries such as India. On 11 July, MFA re-affirmed China's commitment to the Joint Declaration, but stressed not to allow interference into China's domestic affairs by foreign countries.

- //据外媒报道，英国外交大臣约翰逊 29 日称，法治、独立司法体系和自由媒体是香港取得成功的关键，香港未来的成功无疑将取决于《中英联合声明》赋予香港的权利和自由。与此同时，美国国务院发言人也表示，对任何侵犯香港公民自由和新闻自由的行为表示关切，美方支持香港民主体制继续向前发展。对此，中国外交部发言人陆慷 30 日在回应《环球时报》记者相关问询时表示，《中英联合声明》作为一个历史文件，不再具有任何现实意义。希望上述人士认清现实。// Source: [Huanqiu](#), 30 June 2017.
- //China said on Friday the joint declaration with Britain over Hong Kong, which laid the blueprint over how the city would be ruled after its return to China in 1997, was a historical document that no longer had any practical significance. [...] **It was not immediately clear if Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang was attacking just the idea of continued British involvement in Hong Kong, which marks the 20th anniversary of Chinese rule on Saturday, or the principles in the document.**// Source: [Reuters](#), 30 June 2017.
- //A brief Foreign Office statement emailed to journalists said the FCO minister Mark Field had told China's ambassador to London, Liu Xiaoming, that Britain **"did not accept the Chinese government's position that this was purely an historical document"**. The statement said that during a meeting on 5 July **"the minister made clear the UK government's commitment to the joint declaration on Hong Kong, which is a formal treaty between China and the UK. This declaration, registered with the UN, remains in force until July 2047."** [...] **Hong Kong's last governor, Lord Patten, has accused the British government of not being vocal enough in its criticism of Beijing's "outrageous" breaches of the joint declaration.** [...] **"I don't think that the only way you can have a good and constructive relationship with China is by behaving in that sort of craven way."**// Source: [The Guardian](#), 08 July 2017.
- //In the war of words over who's right, both India and China have cited past agreements—in some cases quite old ones. China said last week its rights over the area in question are clearly established by an 1890 agreement, the Convention of Calcutta. [...] **One tiny thing: that treaty was signed between parties who are obsolete today.** Britain had sway at the time over Sikkim thanks to the 1817 Treaty of Titalia between the British East India Company

and the area's ruler, reinstated by British forces. But Sikkim is no longer "of the Great Britain"; it became a part of India in 1975. On the Chinese side, the treaty was negotiated by the Qing dynasty, whose rule ended in the early 20th century. [...] **In a case of unfortunate timing, China's invocations of the 19th-century agreement came just as China outright dismissed (paywall) a far more recent agreement with Britain, the Sino-British Joint Declaration** [...] Perhaps that's one thing that can unite India and China, and bring them back from the brink: Blame Britain. Many of the border tussles that the two countries face today date to the days of the Raj and the Great Game, and a slew of treaties negotiated by Britain. **Bitterness over some of these agreements is still strong in China, where they are dubbed the "unequal treaties." For obvious reasons, the Calcutta Convention of 1890 doesn't appear to be in that category for the moment.**// Source: [Quartz](#), 06 July 2017.

- //A Ministry of Foreign Affairs official has clarified a remark made at a press conference on June 30th by spokesperson Lu Kang regarding China's stance on the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the handover of Hong Kong. [...] **China has now reiterated its commitment to the "two systems" formula and confirmed that the Sino-British treaty remained in force and is binding, but stressed that it will not allow the United Kingdom to interfere in the city's internal affairs.**// Source: [China Digital Times](#), 11 July 2017.

3. Self-censorship in Hong Kong's NGO and Legislature

Asia Society Hong Kong, a NGO headquartered in New York and with close relationship with local tycoons and top-level officials in Hong Kong, faces criticisms when it barred Joshua Wong, a pro-democracy activist, from speaking at a book launch event held in its venue. In a related incident, the Chairman of the legislature in Hong Kong refused the demands from pro-democracy lawmakers, and argued against the urgency of the matter to be discussed. One pro-establishment lawmaker argued that it is not appropriate to discuss matters in Mainland China, echoing what the new Chief Executive Carrie Lam said previously.

- // **Pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong says that Asia Society Hong Kong needs to give a "reasonable explanation" for reportedly disallowing him from speaking at a book launch originally scheduled to take place at its Admiralty venue last Wednesday evening.** [...] Headquartered in New York, Asia Society's stated aim is to promote collaboration between Asia and the United States. **Its Hong Kong board of trustees includes Ronnie Chan – a real estate mogul and key supporter of former chief executive Leung Chun-ying – and young pro-Beijing property tycoon Lau Ming-wai.** "Despite earnest efforts to collaborate on a programme design, we were unable to come up with one that would be mutually compelling to our respective target audiences," the NGO told the South China Morning Post in relation to its abandoned discussions with PEN Hong Kong to launch the book at its venue. Last November, **Asia Society Hong Kong also cancelled a scheduled**

screening of Raise The Umbrellas, a documentary on the 2014 Occupy protests. PEN Hong Kong President Jason Y. Ng told HKFP: “The mission of PEN Hong Kong is to promote literature and defend the freedom of expression. To bar one of the contributors to our anthology, whether it is Joshua Wong or somebody else, from speaking at our launch event would undermine and in fact contravene that mission.”// Source: [Hong Kong Free Press](#), 06 July 2017.

- //Twenty-four pan-democratic lawmakers presented a petition in the Legislative Council yesterday urging Beijing to allow critically ill dissident Liu Xiaobo to receive treatment overseas. [...] On Tuesday, **Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor said it was not her role to exert pressure on the central government over the matter.** She said she was confident that Beijing would handle it “in a legal and compassionate way”.// Source: [SCMP](#), 13 July 2017.
- //24 名民主派議員昨在立法會會議上提交呈請書，要求中央政府讓諾貝爾和平獎得主劉曉波出國就醫，民主派亦先後 7 次提出休會待續，以辯論劉曉波事件，但均被立法會主席梁君彥以沒有迫切重要性或措辭不中性為由拒絕。[...] 經民聯林健鋒批評，民主派不斷提出休會待續是濫用程序，指立法會主要是討論香港事務，不宜討論其他地方個別人士的事情，而在一國兩制下，內地和香港事務已有清晰分界。// Source: [Mingpao](#), 13 July 2017.

4. Four localist lawmakers disqualified over their oath

On 14 July, four localist lawmakers were disqualified over the words of their oaths they spoke on 22 October 2016, by the Hong Kong court which bases the ruling partly on the controversial interpretation of the Basic Law by the NPCSC in November 2016 (for the specific wordings that disqualify each of them see [here](#) by SCMP). In a recent development, the four disqualified lawmakers planned not to make a legal appeal, citing the high fee as the reason, but may focus on by-election. The Chief Executive Carrie Lam indicated she has no plan to initiate additional lawsuit against lawmakers. Meanwhile, pro-Beijing lawmakers welcome the ruling, one of them urged that the legislature’s internal rule should be amended to stop filibustering, a strategy the pro-democracy lawmakers have used more frequently in the past few years to delay bills to be passed.

- //“Long Hair” Leung Kwok-hung, Nathan Law Kwun-chung, Lau Siu-lai and Edward Yiu Chung-yim were disqualified by the Court of First Instance while in the middle of a Legislative Council meeting which was postponed for a day as they refused to leave the chamber immediately. **The court, ruling on legal action initiated by former chief executive Leung Chun-ying, was unambiguous in clarifying that oath-taking must be done strictly by the book with no additions or deviations** – before, during or after an oath – no matter how well intended. Mr Justice Thomas Au Hing-cheung **based his ruling on both common law principles and a controversial interpretation of**

the city's mini-constitution by China's top legislature that earlier saw two newly elected pro-independence lawmakers kicked out of Legco for insulting the nation during their swearing-in. [...] **The ruling has effectively curtailed the bargaining power of the pro-democracy bloc.** With Leung, Law and Lau – all directly elected lawmakers – out of the picture, the pan-democrats, already a minority in the legislature, have **lost their limited veto power to block motions and amendments to bills tabled by their pro-establishment rivals.** They will also be unable to stop Beijing loyalists and government allies from changing Legco rules to prevent the pan-democrats from filibustering contentious bills. [...] **The disqualification is retroactive to October 12, 2016 – the date the four were sworn in, raising the prospect of further clashes with the government over the salaries and allowances they will be asked to return.**// Source: [SCMP](#), 14 July 2017.

- //Speaking to reporters on Saturday, [Carrie] Lam [HK's Chief Executive] said that Friday's disqualifications of Leung, Law, Lau and Yiu were conducted in accordance with the law. **"Currently, we have no plans to file further judicial reviews," she added.** [...] At a rally supporting their four newly-disqualified colleagues on Friday evening, some pro-democracy lawmakers including Fernando Cheung said they could not pretend that the legislature was in a business-as-usual condition and conduct their work as normal. [...] **Although Lam has not yet filed any further judicial reviews, Chu and fellow opposition lawmaker Cheng Chung-tai are facing an ongoing legal challenge filed by a member of the public to oust them from their seats.**// Source: [HKFP](#), 17 July 2017.

Taiwan

Politics

1. Taiwan rejects One Country Two Systems

In light of the Hong Kong's Handover, the Taiwanese government issued a response to One Country Two Systems, arguing Republic of China is a sovereign state and the arrangement of "One Country Two Systems" no longer fits the political reality of Taiwan. A survey on the reception of OCTS by the Taiwanese revealed that over 50% of the respondents view OCTS in Hong Kong as failure, in contrast to about 20% of them saw it as a success. Over 70% of them rejected implementation of OCTS in Taiwan, while 18.5% accepted it.

- //大陸國家主席習近平昨天暢談「一國兩制」在香港成功實踐。陸委會回應指出，中共當局片面提出的政治前提，均為地方化、矮化台灣的企圖，大陸迄今漠視兩岸現實，早與台灣民意嚴重脫節。陸委會表示，中華民國是主權國家，與香港情況完全不同，政府堅持台灣前途與未來發展是由二千三百萬人共同決定，這是台灣最大共識。// Source: [United Daily News](#), 02 July 2017.
- //台灣智庫 30 日民調指出，52.5%台灣民眾認為中國在香港實施的「一國兩制」是「失敗」的，僅有 22.2%民眾認為「成功」。針對兩岸政策，有 39.7%民眾認為「走台灣自己的路」，33.4%民眾認為要「維持現狀」，但也有 18.2%民眾認為應「向中國讓步」；至於是否接受「與中國統一，實行一國兩制」，有 73.2%民眾不接受，但也有 18.5%民眾接受。// Source: [NewTalk](#), 30 June 2017.

2. Release of draft guidelines for high-school national education curriculum for public consultation

In 2015, the former KMT-led government announced minor revisions to the high-school national education curriculum. It soon faced opposition by the DPP as well as the young, which later triggered the anti-curriculum movement (see [here](#) for details by HKFP). The Tsai Administration later suspended the former revisions, and lately released a draft guideline as a new round of revisions. One of the issues with the new revisions is related to the positioning of Chinese history and its volume. It is now proposed to put Chinese history in a broader context of East Asian history, and the volume related to Chinese history will also be reduced. Scholars have mixed reception of the revisions. Some argued that it is a new round of de-sinification, while some other contended that it helps Taiwanese to understand better Taiwan and its root. A former participant in the anti-curriculum movement in 2015 contended that the new guideline bears special meaning as the direction is more Taiwan-centric, promotes critical thinking, and put greater emphasis on social issues in Taiwan (see [here](#) for the article on Storm Media). It is expected that the Ministry of Education will review the proposal early next year.

- //國家教育研究院昨公布十二年國教社會領域課綱草案，其中受矚目的高中歷史課綱有重大變革，必修八學分減為六學分，中國史由一點五冊的內容減為一冊，且由朝代編年史，改放在東亞史的脈絡、以主題方式呈現；課綱用字力求中性，甚至用問號不給答案，避免政治爭議。教育部次長林騰蛟昨晚說，社會課綱草案昨起到十一月十日舉行網路論壇聽取各方意見；九月三日起在各縣市辦公聽會，國教院課程審議委員會（課發會）修訂草案後，預計最快明年初交教育部課程審議會（課審會）審議，預定一〇八學年上路。// Source: [United Daily News](#), 04 July 2017.
- //According to Monday's edition of the pro-Taiwan independence Liberty Times, **the new curriculum guidelines will significantly change the way history is taught in senior high school**, focusing more on the history of Taiwan over the past 500 years. **While the history of China will be discussed as part of East Asian history, world history will also give more attention to Taiwan's interaction with the rest of the world**, the daily said. **Up to now, history of China has been taught independent of that of the rest of the world.**// Source: [Focus Taiwan](#), 19 June 2017.
- //據《三立新聞網》報導，對於未來歷史課綱的改定，學界正反態度並存，如文化大學史學系教授王仲孚相當擔憂，認為這樣的課綱看不到完整的中國歷史架構，如「辛亥革命」、「八年抗戰」均消失，認為是「去中國化的政治思想改造運動」。而中研院近史所研究員林滿紅認為，若是新課綱的台灣史能進一步教現代國家的形塑、台灣國際地位等，可以讓學生清楚自己的「根源」，更能讓現代年輕人對台灣有信心、真正的去愛台灣。// Source: [Liberty Times](#), 04 July 2017.

Society

3. Controversy over Greenpeace's inclusion of Taiwan in a China's map

In a report on the coal plants in China, Greenpeace published a map which includes Taiwan as part of China. Realized by Taiwanese netizens, it stirred up an unexpected controversy over the map. Some members of local environmental/human rights groups in Taiwan criticized Greenpeace for taking Taiwanese money while belittling the people. Their criticisms were supported by many Taiwanese. According to the Initiative's report, mainstream media covered the incident from a similar angle. The article continued to analyze how the deteriorating cross-strait relation impairs the work of cross-border environmental NGO, and raised awareness about the difficulties faced by foreign NGOs in China and that their survival becomes even harder after the implementation of new Foreign NGO Law.

- //Greenpeace Beijing on Wednesday published research on China's consumption of coal and water resources, but its maps showed Taiwan as part of China. Taiwan Association for Human Rights former director Chiu Yu-bin (邱毓斌) on Friday said on Facebook that Taiwanese donate more

than NT\$100 million (US\$3.27 million) to Greenpeace International each year, and yet it went so far as to include Taiwan in China. Greenpeace International has only a few employees in Taiwan and the group rarely makes contributions to Taiwanese issues, Chiu said, calling on people to donate to local environmental groups instead. Greenpeace East Asia later in the day issued an apology, saying the map was a “mistake.” Greenpeace East Asia vice director Cristina San Vicente said in the statement that the report cited data from the Global Coal Plant Tracker database, but Taiwan was not part of its research plan and should not have been included in the report. [...] **Organizations should be careful with their publications, rather than making apologies afterward, Citizen of the Earth, Taiwan consultant Tsai Chung-yueh (蔡中岳) said yesterday.** As more international organizations have established branch offices in Taiwan, they should understand the nation’s “status quo,” he said.// Source: [Taipei Times](#), 09 July 2017.

- // [主]流媒體亦以類似視角跟進報導此則新聞，自由時報甚至將它作為 7 月 9 日的頭版頭條，下標「將台灣中國化 民嗆退捐款 綠色和平道歉」，一場風暴由線上延燒線下，再燒回綠色和平的臉書專頁。[...] 一位綠色和平前員工也在臉書為綠色和平打抱不平。表示她任職於綠色和平期間，「類似的地圖也看過很多遍，但是只能不斷的跟其他國家同事溝通，讓他們理解台灣與中國的不同。」許多工作者都不約而同指出，在中國從事環境倡議運動，由於言論與政治空間有限，有時候甚至會有人身安全的風險，用「誤植」來解釋此次的地圖事件，恐怕是為了兼顧北京辦公室的運作，而取得的最大妥協。[...] 如果將焦距拉得更遠來看，在《測繪法》之外，2016 年 4 月通過、2017 年 1 月正式實施的《境外非政府組織（NGO）境內活動管理法》，對 NGO 來說也是巨大枷鎖。該法案中，規定境外 NGO 不得在中國當地募款。這條規定，幾乎等同於砍掉了境外 NGO 的手腳，從事倡議與行動的能力大幅縮減。該法條又規定，如果要把資金從境外送入中國境內，亦是限制重重。在新法的限制之下，如果要維持綠色和平北京辦公室的運作，必定要從其他國家的捐款來支應。中國政府藉由《境外非政府組織（NGO）境內活動管理法》，表面上看起來正式將境外 NGO 納入監管制度，實則是希望削弱境外 NGO 的影響力。這恐怕是多數要求綠色和平「去中國募款」的台灣網友沒有意識到的。[...] 或許，應該從境外 NGO 在中國的處境，來理解地圖爭議真正的起因。對於留在中國從事倡議行動的境外 NGO 來說，如何面對每天都會遇到的法律管制與政治問題，可能才是最大的難題。但這一次，在各種艱困中迂迴前進的境外 NGO，卻與台灣的「國家感情」直接對撞，幾乎沒有任何一張地圖，可以同時讓北京政府與台灣民心同時滿意。// Source: [The Initium](#), 11 July 2017.

Diplomacy

4. Taiwan secured arm sales from the US

The US has announced a new round of arms sales worth 1 billion USD to Taiwan while affirming China its commitment to "One China" Policy. Analysts suggested that the US arms sales, which China has tried to stop, signifies the hardening of US stance toward China after China failed to pressure North Korea in line with the US expectation. Michal Tim, a Taiwan analyst at the Association for International Affairs (Czech Republic), concurred on the SCMP that North Korea is a factor which facilitates the deal at this moment, and he pointed out the role of the US Congress which keeps paying attention to Taiwan after Republic of China and the US ceased their diplomatic relations 40 years ago.

- **//The State Department approved on Thursday selling more than \$1 billion in arms to Taiwan in yet another sign that the Trump administration is embracing a far more confrontational approach with China. Heather Nauert, a State Department spokeswoman, underscored that the military sales have no effect on the United States' "One China" policy, which President Trump suggested in December may be under review. Mr. Trump later affirmed to Chinese President Xi Jinping that he would honor the decades-old policy, under which the United States recognized a single Chinese government in Beijing and severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The arms sale is the most tangible sign yet that Mr. Trump's honeymoon with Mr. Xi is over. The American president had set aside tough moves on trade and regional issues in an informal quid pro quo for Mr. Xi's commitment to further pressure North Korea. But Mr. Trump acknowledged last week that China had fallen short in its measures toward North Korea, and officials have said he would be less constrained in other parts of the relationship, including Taiwan.**// Source: [New York Times](#), 29 June 2017.
- **//In a strong sign of congressional support, the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee welcomed what he called the "long-overdue" arms sale. "Sales of defensive weapons, based on Taiwan's needs, are a key provision of our commitments as laid out by the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances," said Rep. Ed Royce, referring to legislation and informal guidelines that steer U.S. relations with Taiwan.**// Source: [Time](#), 30 June 2017.
- **//The reaction from China was one of predictable indignation. Every arms sale is bad news for China, not only because of improvements to Taiwan's capability to fend off any military action from Beijing, but also because there is hardly a more effective statement of continued adherence to a framework defined by the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 and US president Ronald Reagan's Six Assurances of 1982. One of the defining features of this framework is that weapons sales will continue as long as there is a threat of use of force by Beijing. The deal comes at a time when the US is pushing**

Beijing towards a harder stance on North Korea. Thus, many commentators concluded that the sale is not so much about assisting Taiwan's defence as about using the sale as leverage against China. It is indeed possible that it was an important part of the overall consideration. [...] The peculiarity of US-Taiwan relations is they are not the sole prerogative of the executive branch. Relations are alive and well in large part thanks to the somewhat under-appreciated role of the US Congress. [t]he US Congress continues to guarantee that the executive branch pays due attention to Taiwan's needs.// Source: [SCMP](#), 06 July 2017.