

Rural household registration reform and farmers' rights

1. State Council notice on February 24 (国务院办公厅发布关于积极稳妥推进户籍管理制度改革的通知) to change regulations on household registration, relaxing restrictions for migration to small- and medium-sized cities.¹
 - a. Beijing Times: notice was in fact dated February 26, 2011. "That it is showing its face to the public with one year's delay has caused widespread concern in the society".²
 - b. Global Times responding to criticism of China's hukou policy as denying rights to rural migrants: "The destiny of the hukou system in large cities is more than just a moral issue. Western approaches are not the ultimate solution, given the discrepancy in population."³
 - c. Zhang Yi, CASS: "Study on the rural migrant workers' willingness to have urban hukou and the choice of urbanization path of China in recent years" (China Economist, vol. 6, no. 6, 2011)
2. The notice also emphasizes the protection of land owned by rural households. Earlier in July 2011, the State Council released the "Regulations for Correct Conduct for Village Cadres (Testing)" (农村基层干部廉洁履行职责若干规定: 试行) to target widespread corruption in rural areas, forbidding rural cadres from illegal occupation of rural land, pocketing villagers' expropriation compensation fees, setting up "little coffers" (小金库), meddling in village elections, living an extravagant lifestyle (大吃大喝, 公款旅游, 大操大办婚丧喜庆事宜), etc.⁴
 - a. Xia Xueluan, sociology professor at Peking University: Forced land taking has been strongly opposed in some places and enlarged political risks. Social security rights of peasant workers are absent in the cities they are working and living in, so protecting land rights is the minimum measure the government should take. (Business China)⁵
 - b. 温三民主义 (HK Economic Journal)⁶
 - c. Three essays on Wukan in Trend:
 - i. 乌坎模式 as demonstrative case of village self-governance. Institutional change in China must begin at the most grassroot and the darkest level.

¹ China Daily, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqzx/2012-02/24/content_14681789_2.htm

² Beijing Times, <http://news.jinghua.cn/351/c/201202/24/n3642525.shtml>

³ Global Times, published on People's Daily <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7740263.html>

⁴ Full document available on Central People's Government website, http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2011-07/13/content_1905793.htm

⁵ Business China, <http://en.21cbh.com/HTML/2012-2-25/4NMjMyXzIxMTc4Nw.html>

⁶ Hong Kong Economic Journal,

http://www.hkej.com/template/dailynews/jsp/detail.jsp?dnews_id=3336&cat_id=3&title_id=495060

- ii. Wukan in historical context: 1978 Xiaogang (Anhui), 2007 Fujin (Heilongjiang), 2011 Wukan.⁷ Wukan as the “new land revolution” that the 18th National Congress cannot ignore.
 - d. Wukan election on March 3
3. China released draft of first grain law for public consultation. Critics comment that the law does nothing to encourage farming: farming costs have soared considerably, but every year the NDRC only raises minimum grain purchase prices by “several pitiful fen”. (SCMP)

Chongqing updates

1. Epoch Times: defeat of Bo Xilai’s Chongqing model and the changing tone of Wang Yang’s Guangdong model.⁸ Ming Pao: “Bo Xilai abandons redness”.⁹
 - a. Wang Lijun
 - b. Bo’s latest political declarations and support for Hu
 - c. Trend: Wang fully supported by Hu, Wukan may turn out to be good publicity for Wang
 - d. People’s Daily: 宁要微词，不要危机；改革有风险，但不改革党就会有危险¹⁰; Jia Qinglin’s speech on March 3
2. Defeat of Bo and Chongqing?
 - a. Learn from Lei Feng phenomenon
 - b. Wang Yang’s high-profile 打黑: instructed by Beijing to show that the strong-handed approach is not yet irrelevant (Epoch Times)¹¹
3. Other commentaries:
 - a. Ming Pao: If Bo is out Wang’s position also threatened since ideological balance is overthrown
 - b. 阳光时务: Both Chongqing and Guangdong models are mere variants of the same Deng Xiaoping model¹²

Internet and digital governance

1. Occupy Obama movement: attempt to break the Great Fire Wall; “performance art” (Ming Pao)
2. Relaxation of internet censorship prior the 18th National Congress? Users: not a sign that the regime is lifting the taboo on keywords such as Zhao Ziyang and June Fourth, but indicates high-level power struggle within the CCP (New Tang Dynasty TV)¹³

⁷ One useful account of Xiaogang and Fujin, see <http://boxun.com/news/gb/pubvp/2007/12/200712120820.shtml>

⁸ Epoch Times,

<http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/12/2/29/n3526353.htm%E7%8E%8B%E8%96%84%E5%86%85%E8%AE%A7-%E9%87%8D%E5%BA%86%E6%A8%A1%E5%BC%8F%E6%83%A8%E8%B4%A5-%E5%B9%BF%E4%B8%9C%E6%A8%A1%E5%BC%8F%E6%82%84%E5%8F%98%E8%B0%83?p=all>

⁹ Ming Pao, published on sina,

<http://dailynews.sina.com/gb/chn/chnoverseamedia/mingpao/20120226/12413179956.html>

¹⁰ People’s Daily, on boxun, <http://boxun.com/news/gb/china/2012/02/201202230927.shtml>

¹¹ Same as footnote 8.

¹² Yangguang, <http://www.isunaffairs.com/?p=3622>

¹³ Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-z9aHbqdEE>

3. Half-year-long internet campaign to crack down on pornographic and vulgar information to be carried out by nine government agencies (China Daily)¹⁴
4. Creative resistance online: 军大衣 phenomenon (Trend)

On human rights activists:

- Ching Cheong's new book reveals inhumane condition to which he was submitted when a forceful confession was extracted from him (Ming Pao)¹⁵
- Yu Jie's declaration on his escape to America (Open)

Urban public services and financing

1. Lack of funding for public medical services
 - a. China Newsweek: 以药养医 (paying hospital bills with medicine) phenomenon¹⁶
 - b. SCMP: Plan to scrap drug surcharges in county-level public hospitals
 - c. China Daily: Gradual opening up of China's private medical sector for foreign investment
2. Nation-wide delay in railway construction due to lack of funds (中华读书报)¹⁷
3. Huge budget deficits in "airport building fever" (Oriental Outlook)¹⁸
4. Foshan's 112.2 billion investment in city building despite 30 billion yuan debt (Southern Metropolis Daily; Yangcheng Evening News)¹⁹
5. Large-scale protests on local governments' illegal raising of funds in Henan, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Shandong provinces (Trend)

Chinese economy

1. World Bank report China 2030
 - a. IHT: "An economy sheltered by politics": "The politics of China's need for a smooth leadership succession this year provide the best protection against a hard economic landing."
 - b. Intense internet debate on one-man protest by independent Chinese scholar Du Jiangguo (Huanqiu; Minsheng)²⁰
2. Beijing presses for new regulations on the Big Four global audit firms as joint venture arrangements (signed 20 years ago) expires (IHT)
3. Global hedge funds allowed to raise capital on the mainland (SCMP)

¹⁴ China Daily, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/28/content_14706100.htm

¹⁵ Sound of Hope, <http://soundofhope.org/programs/162/211540-1.asp>

¹⁶ China Newsweek, <http://newsweek.inewsweek.cn/magazine.php?id=4758>

¹⁷ On People's Daily, <http://finance.people.com.cn/BIG5/17155667.html>

¹⁸ Oriental Outlook, <http://www.lwdf.cn/wwwroot/dfzk/bwdfzk/201043/bmbd/254470.shtml>

¹⁹ Southern Metropolis Daily, on Xinhua, http://news.xinhuanet.com/city/2012-02/15/c_122703764.htm;

Yangcheng Evening News, <http://gd.people.com.cn/n/2012/0214/c123932-16748087.html>

²⁰ Huanqiu blog, <http://bbs.huanqiu.com/thread-1164772-1-1.html>; Utopia

<http://www.wyzxsx.com/ShowCopyFrom.asp?ChannelID=1&SourceName=%E4%B9%8C%E6%9C%89%E4%B9%8B%E4%B9%A1>

4. US to set up Interagency Trade Enforcement Unit, to “bring the full resources of the federal government to bear to investigate and counter unfair trade practices around the world, including by countries like China” (Reuters)²¹
 - a. Wen Hui opinion

Foreign relations

1. China’s UN veto on Syria issue
 - a. Beijing blasting Clinton’s criticism of Chinese veto as “despicable”. Called US “patronizing and egotistical super-arrogance and self-confidence”.
 - b. Wen Hui: new Crusade launched by a hypocritical West; Christian violence cloaked in democracy, freedom and human rights. Ultimate goal not to bring down Syria or Iran but to divide and conquer, to demolish Islamic civilization.
 - c. People’s Daily: “relevant countries” making use of the UN platform to pave the way for military intervention in Syria “in the name of protecting human rights”.²²
 - d. SCMP Focus: Revived cold war geopolitics. China’s veto suggests new “step-in diplomacy”, assertive of its interest in the Middle East and determined to protect it.
 - e. SCMP Opinion: China is approaching the matter from a broader perspective. It is “rooted in something other than narrow national interest”.
2. Mayor of Nagoya denies Nanjing massacre
 - a. People’s Daily²³
 - b. Huanqiu²⁴
 - c. Analysis by Chen Yan: from perspective of Japanese politics²⁵
3. Offensive remarks by Chinese student in Singapore

Hong Kong-mainland tension

1. Investigative piece of Kong Qingdong’s background: backed by No. 1 TV Channel, opened in 2005 in concerted attempt to boost China’s soft power (Open)
2. Three articles ran by China Newsweek (issue no. 551) on Hong Kong-mainland tension²⁶
3. Other developments:
 - a. Creative smuggling (Ming Pao)
 - b. Retirees buying property across the border (SCMP)
 - c. New policies by National Tourism Administration to boost travel (Wen Hui)

²¹ Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/28/obama-trade-enforcement-idUSL2E8DS6GS20120228>

²² People’s Daily, <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2012/02/28/YO1202280007.htm>

²³ People’s Daily, on Xinhua, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2012-02/23/c_111556865.htm

²⁴ Huanqiu opinion, <http://opinion.huanqiu.com/roll/2012-02/2462368.html>

²⁵ Huanqiu, <http://world.huanqiu.com/roll/2012-02/2477329.html>

²⁶ China Newsweek, http://newsweek.inewsweek.cn/magazine_list.php?id=312

Hong Kong election updates

1. Ming Pao reveals aerial photos of Henry Tang's York Road residence
2. Tsang's corruption case:
 - a. Ming Pao: Strongly harmed the upright, non-corrupt image of the civil servants.
 - b. Opinion piece by Lee: provided the excellent opportunity for Tang to regain his reputation. The Tang camp has skillfully blamed the mud throwing on the Leung camp. If both are bad apples, Beijing would go for the one with more connections.
 - c. Inquiry into Leung also reveals tug of war between the Tang camp and the government
3. On the chances of unsuccessful election (流选):
 - a. Ming Pao opinion: unlikely, will adversely affect political position of Xi Jinping.
 - b. Wen Hui: blame rumors on the "opposition camp"
4. Wen Hui called upon Albert Ho to explain the large amount of political donation received from Lai Chi Ying.

Miscellaneous

Chinese architect Wang Shu awarded Pritzker Price: two opinion pieces on Wen Hui criticizing dominance of foreign architects in the Chinese building scene; extravagance; image construction. Commentaries on Wang Shu and Jeremy Lin phenomenon and the alternative construction of Chinese identity.

To watch out for: 18th NPC