

PM20140120

Press Meeting January 20, 2014

Politics

1. China renews most western journalists' visas
 - a. After a long delay, new visas are finally arriving for many journalists at The New York Times, Bloomberg News and other organizations. But at least one New York Times reporter, Austin Ramzy, who worked for Time magazine, is still waiting and might be forced to leave China for the second year in a row when his temporary visa expires at the end of January.¹
 - b. Meanwhile, websites of Bloomberg and NY Times are still blocked in China, briefly joined by the Guardian three weeks ago.
 - c. The Washington Post's Simon Denyer surveys the mounting obstacles faced by the Chinese media.
 - i. "Some subjects, such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations or criticism of the president, are clearly off-limits, and there is no room for independent reporting on Tibet, the military or religious issues. But elsewhere, lines are more blurred."
 - ii. **"Reporting on a neighboring province tends to be easier than exposing corruption closer to home. Often reporters can break news — on a protest or scandal — before the censor swings into action."**
 - iii. "A financial journalist, who requested anonymity because she was not authorized to speak to foreign reporters, said **many of her stories ended up being deleted, especially negative ones about state-owned enterprises, or pieces on companies owned by high-ranking Communist Party families. Many powerful companies increasingly bribe local propaganda officials or use their political influence to shut down negative reporting,** journalists say."²
 - d. 王青雷 告别央视——留给这个时代的一些“真话”³ – The view from the inside of the propaganda machine
 - i. 事情的起因，是因为在今年的八月，公安部打击网络谣言期间我发布的微博。当时，各地公安机关在没有明确法律依据

¹ Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-renews-western-journalists-visas-after-months-long-standoff/2014/01/09/fde67b9c-792c-11e3-8963-b4b654bcc9b2_story.html

² Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/chinese-journalists-face-tighter-censorship-marxist-re-training/2014/01/10/6cd43f62-6893-11e3-8b5b-a77187b716a3_story.html

³ CDT, <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/chinese/2013/12/王青雷：告别央视-留给这个时代的一些真话/>

和司法解释的情况下，动用各种罪名（寻衅滋事罪、治安管理处罚条例、非法经营罪、诽谤罪等等）打击“大谣”。我当时对这种现象提出了质疑：打击网络谣言没错，但要依法执法、罪责法定，否则就变成了权力僭越法律。直到几周之后，最高法才被迫匆匆出台一个令人啼笑皆非的“五百条”，算是在法律上给了一种并不合理的界定。

- ii. 从做《24小时》的制片人到《面对面》的制片人，我们每天最大的工作就是竭尽脑汁地用各种办法和说辞，把媒体人应该做的选题想尽办法获得领导的批准，然后再竭尽全力地在走钢丝的同时不给领导找麻烦。表面上看起来，我们也曾经偶尔有所突破，但是这样的突破往往都是具有极强的偶然性，甚至在播出之后就会遭到可以预料的结果。即使一些新闻我们做出了报道，但是往往在回避问题的真正所在，只是在新闻的边缘寻找被允许表达的那部分，向外界显示我们关注了而已。在这样的过程中，很多人或许并没有意识到，我们距离新闻的本质、距离新闻的核心、距离新闻的理想已经越来越远，我们是温水里的那只青蛙，已经没有跳出来的勇气和信念。
- e. Qian Gang provides a detailed analysis of political discourse in the Chinese media in 2013⁴
 - i. “Deep red,” on the left end of the spectrum, denotes political terms from the Maoist era. At the opposite end, we have “dark blue” terms. These are words and phrases, many of them associated with sensitive concepts like separation of powers or privatisation of the military, that the Chinese Communist Party does not permit.
 - ii. “Light Blue” Terms Associated with Constitutionalism and Democracy Reach New Lows — some moving into the dark blue end of the spectrum.
 - iii. Light Red Party Discourse Runs Hot and Cold
 1. Hot: Chinese Dream (classic super-term), “trusting in the path” (道路自信)
 2. Cold: Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Three Represents, the Scientific View of Development, the Harmonious Society, the people as the base, political system reforms, political civilisation, democratic politics and intra-party democracy
 - iv. Qian focused on “intra-party democracy”
 1. “The focus during the Hu era where intra-party democracy was concerned was on what is called **“differential election,”** or cha’e xuanju (差额选举), whereby **multiple Party candidates stand for election by their Party peers for a number of positions** (a differential of 105 percent, for example, would mean 105 individuals filling 100 posts). Under Hu Jintao there was also limited experimentation in

⁴ China Media Project, <http://cmp.hku.hk/2014/01/06/34866/>

certain areas with direct election of Party officials. After he took office, Hu encouraged a number of places in China to organize experiments in the direct election of grassroots Party officials. One of these places was in Jiangsu province, where the provincial Party secretary, Li Yuanchao, first experimented with “ or **gongtui zhixuan** (公推直选), between 2002 and 2007.

2. Gongtui zhixuan is one method of **reforming the mechanisms by which leaders are chosen for official posts, a limited decentralization (or letting go) of the Party’s power to exercise control over its own cadres.** The word gongtui, which means roughly “mutual nomination,” refers to the method by which candidates emerge. Formerly (and of course this is mostly still the case), candidates were simply appointed by their Party superiors. Now, in addition to candidates recommended by superiors, **Party members can jointly or individually recommend candidates, and city residents or villagers can send representatives to take part in the nomination process.** Zhixuan, which means “**direct selection,**” refers to a process by which **a general meeting of Party members or a congress of Party delegates directly elects a candidate for a post from among the nominees.**
3. But Qian finds that use of the term “intra-party democracy”, “Open nomination and direct election” and “differential election” all fell in People’s Daily and the WiseNews database, although another term, “**deliberative democracy**” (协商民主), reached a five-year high 2013. Qian explains that “in the CCP dictionary, “elective democracy” and “deliberative democracy” are opposites. In the past, Party media have asserted that a combination of elective and deliberative democracy is what makes for Chinese-style democracy. Deliberative democracy is also a term much loved by those of the China Model camp, who assert that China has developed its own unique set of values (distinct from those of the West) enshrined in its own unique and highly successful system.”
4. In the Third Plenum Resolution, Xi Jinping said: “The [Party] Congress has taken the widespread and multi-level systematisation and development of deliberative democracy as the chief content of political system reform, emphasizing, under the leadership of the Party, the carrying out of an expansive process of deliberation throughout society on major issues of economic and social development and real issues dealing with the immediate interests of the masses, carrying deliberation

through from the policy-making phase to the policy implementation phase.”

5. Qian argues that this “suggest that we can only expect the scope of political reform [pursued by the Party] to narrow in the future. We can expect substantive moves on political reform, those touching on the thornier issue of Party power — **such as an organisational system in the Party based principally on elective procedures, or separating the powers of decision-making, implementation and supervision** — will be very slow indeed. The focus in promoting democratic politics under this formulation lies outside the Party, with **“consultation” taking precedence over election**. If this is indeed the case, I’m afraid what we have is the **shelving of Deng Xiaoping’s idea that the core of political reform must be addressing the problem of “over-concentration of power.”** As we see the rapid cooling off of the term “intra-party democracy” this can only anticipate **further concentration of power**.”

v. Terms to watch in 2014

1. Deep Red: public opinion struggle (輿論鬥爭), “raising high the banner of Mao Zedong’s Thought” (高举毛泽东思想旗帜) or “Mao Zedong Thought”
2. Light blue and dark blue: universal values, constitutionalism, “civil society” and “civil rights”
3. Light Red: Xi Jinping’s banner term, but most likely not “Chinese Dream”

2. Major policy shift in Xinjiang

- a. Recently, unrest has been growing in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, with the SUV crash in Tiananmen Square and the attack on a Xinjiang police station in recent memory. In response, in a high level meeting chaired by Xi Jinping last December, Xi reoriented the region’s policy from **one focused primarily on economic development to one that also emphasizes social stability**. (but there has been no reports that indicate Liu Yunshan, the PSC member responsible for propaganda, will lead stability work in Xinjiang.)
- b. Global Times reports:
 - i. “The Xinjiang Daily quoted Zhang [Zhang Chunxian] as saying that the focus of work should be **maintaining social stability and an enduring peace**, which is the “prime task” in the region. An editorial of the paper also said the central authority has clarified that development should be promoted surrounding the task of sustaining an enduring peace in Xinjiang.”
 - ii. **“The tone is different** from that set at the central government’s Xinjiang work conference in May 2010 [when Zhang just replaced former hardliner chief Wang Lequan].

Subsequently, the region had held onto the notion that “development is the key to all the problems in Xinjiang.”⁵

- c. Meanwhile, Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur economics professor at the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing, who has a history of speaking out about anti-Uyghur discrimination in Xinjiang, was taken from their home in Beijing and detained by authorities. Tohti helped create uighurbiz.net, a website that reports on Xinjiang news especially regarding human rights abuse and hosted overseas. But the website has since become inaccessible, apparently because of a cyberattack.⁶

3. Apologizing for the Cultural Revolution

- a. A group of around 20 *laosan jie* (老三届), students in the elite Beijing Normal University Girls High School at the time of the Cultural Revolution, met with around 30 teachers and their family members and apologized for their wrongdoings during the early years of the Cultural Revolution.
- b. Among them, Song Binbin, a daughter of a veteran revolutionary, Song Renqiong, apologized for her part in one of the most notorious killings of the Cultural Revolution. Bian Zhongyun, a deputy principal of the Beijing high school, where Song was a student, was beaten, kicked, tormented and left to die.
- c. Song became a notorious symbol of violence during the Cultural Revolution. She was famous for putting a Red Guard badge on Mao's arm on Tiananmen, after which Mao gave her the name of “yaowu” (要武). Later, however, she suffered as her father fell out of favor with the chairman. At that time, Mao Zedong urged students to turn against the school and party authorities he accused of stymieing his vision of a revolutionary society cleansed of ideological laxity.
- d. 在见面会上，宋彬彬也数度落泪。她做了约1500字、题为《我的道歉和感谢》的发言。宋彬彬首先向当年在校的所有老师同学道歉。她称卡校长被“暴力致死”前，自己和刘进曾两次阻止，看到同学散了，以为不会有事了，就走了。“我对卡校长的不幸遇难是有责任的……担心别人指责自己‘反对斗黑帮’，没有也不可能强势去阻止对卡校长和校领导们的武装。”宋彬彬还表示：“请允许我表达对卡校长的永久悼念和歉意，没有保护好校领导，是终生的伤痛和懊悔。”⁷
- e. Chris Buckley, New York Times:
“Ms. Song's apology immediately **prompted rival views on the Internet in China**. Some welcomed her words, others called them belated and inadequate. Some said the Communist Party itself should apologize.

⁵ Global Times, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/836495.shtml#.Us7r9qWTPFJ>

⁶ Guardian, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/16/chinese-police-uyghur-academic-ilham-tohti>

⁷ Beijing News, http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2014-01/13/content_489922.htm?div=-1

- i. Yin Hongbiao, a scholar at Peking University who studies the Cultural Revolution, said in a telephone interview that **Ms. Song had taken a valuable step in confronting her past and that rumors had overstated her role in Ms. Bian's death.**
- ii. But Cui Weiping, a retired professor of literature in Beijing who has written about China's struggle to recall – or forget – its traumatic past, **said Ms. Song lacked candor.** Ms. Cui said: Given who she was, this wasn't enough. She was an important figure among the Red Guards, and so the demands should be higher than for ordinary people. **It's meaningless to say you witnessed a murder and then say you don't know who the killers were.**
- iii. Ms. Song's declaration of remorse also appeared unlikely to satisfy Ms. Bian's widower, Wang Jingyao, who for years has accused Ms. Song and others of disguising their part in the death of Ms. Bian on Aug. 5, 1966.⁸
- f. Last August, Chen Xiaolu, son of PLA leader Marshal Chen Yi, has apologized, both through an article and a reunion, for torture of teachers at his alma mater, Beijing Number Eight Middle School, an elite institution for children of senior leaders. His apology has sparked controversy among the "second red generation".⁹
 - i. 去年8月，陳小魯公開發表文章，向“文革”中曾被其批鬥過的北京八中學校領導道歉；10月，陳組織了一場小型聚會，再次向在“文革”中受衝擊的八中老師表示歉意。事件引海內外輿論廣泛關注，並在“紅二代”中引起爭議。
- g. According to the CDT, the State Council Information Office issued a censorship instruction: Because online public sentiment is complicated, all websites must cool down the story "Song Renqiong's Daughter Song Binbin Apologizes." First, remove the article from homepages. Interactive platforms must not promote related topics.¹⁰

4. Wukan Loses Faith in Democracy Experiment

- a. SCMP's Echo Hui reports that the limited democracy in the Guangdong village of Wukan continues to fray, as local disillusionment grows and the political climate chills under the new provincial Party secretary, Hu Chunhua.¹¹
- b. The report writes about the quitting of Zhuang Liehong, who emerged as a leader of grass-roots protests over stolen land in Wukan in Guangdong in 2011 and was elected to its village committee in a historic democratic election the following year, from politics, because

⁸ New York Times, http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/13/bowed-and-remorseful-former-red-guard-recalls-teachers-death/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=1

⁹ SCMP, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1332588/chen-xiaolu-apologises-torture-teachers-beijing-alma-mater>

¹⁰ CDT, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2014/01/red-guard-apologizes-role-teachers-death/>

¹¹ SCMP, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1406766/grass-roots-leader-withdraws-politics-wukan-loses-faith-democracy>

he “has lost faith in democracy – at least the local version – amid a clash of competing interests and claims of a lack in transparency in the committee’s proceedings”.

- c. Hu Chunhua, who took over Wang Yang as Guangdong party chief, **“implied last November that Wukan's next village head should be a party member - prompting villagers' fears of a return to the days when the committee was dominated by cadres.”** Currently, “except for new village chief Lin Zuluan, a retired cadre and an instigator of the village uprising, most of the current village committee members are not party members.” The report quotes Xiong Wei, a PKU legal scholar, saying that **“it was “very likely” the coming election would fail to meet the minimum 50 per cent voter turnout. Villagers - who claim their elected officials have not delivered on promises to return their land - see few reasons to participate. If this happens, the village party secretary will take over the committee.”**
- d. According to Xu Zhiyuan, Wukan was a miracle. “It happened while China was in the throes of power struggles. But now the power of the central government has stabilised.”
- e. Village chief Lin Zhulian has “faced repeated calls to step down by villagers who say he has kept them in the dark while negotiations proceeded with higher-up officials”. **But he blames on the split between villagers, saying that villagers fell broadly into four groups, depending on their views:** some understood and appreciated the hard work of the new village committee; some had benefitted from the illegal land grab and so supported the old village committee. Others who supported Wukan's democracy had lost faith, while a final group wanted it to fail for personal reasons. Lin said this left the village divided with little chance of reaching a compromise.
- f. A China Media Project report earlier last year found that the “Wukan model” was left with “frustration, disappointment and exhaustion”.¹²
 - i. Olivia Rosenman: “I’m not ready to say that democracy has failed in Wukan. There is positive progress, albeit small, towards a more open, transparent style of government. Locals told me they were happy they could now approach their local leaders, that they could voice their concerns and be taken seriously.”
 - ii. “Behind the scenes, though, Wukan’s fragile experiment is exhausted. Yang Semao, the village committee member listed on the poster as being responsible for the renovation project, told me he is taking leave from the committee to deal with his failing health. The responsibilities and frustrations of the past year have left him physically and emotionally drained. He described himself as “near collapse.”

5. Beijing and Guangdong’s Deepening Reform Plan

¹² CMP, <http://cmp.hku.hk/2013/03/13/31750/>

- a. Beijing issued 《中共北京市委关于认真学习贯彻党的十八届三中全会精神全面深化改革的决定》.¹³ Main points include the following:
 - i. Solve “urban sickness” through 深化研究人口调控机制 (Population Control Mechanism), 科学制定人口总量中长期调控目标; 健全大气污染防治机制 (Mechanism to ensure Clean Air); 完善交通治堵机制 (Ease traffic jam); 健全城市精细化管理体制机制
 - ii. Shifting cadre evaluation from focusing on GDP 建立区县差异化考核评价指标体系, 不以GDP增长率评定政绩, 引导区县把注意力更多地集中到落实区县功能定位和转方式、调结构、增效益上来
 - iii. Accounting for natural assets 要落实对领导干部实行自然资源离任审计, 建立健全生态环境损害责任终身追究制¹⁴
- b. Guangdong, Zhejiang and Tianjin have also **formed their own leading small groups** on comprehensively deepening reform.¹⁵

6. Annual CNY migration

- a. China is about to enter the 40 day period of heavy travel as migrants start to scramble home to welcome the lunar new year with family. Known as the “world’s largest annual human migration”, this year is expected to be record-breaking. **Authorities expect Chinese to make 3.6 billion trips** during the 40-day Chinese New Year travel period that starts last Thursday, 200 million more trips than in 2013.
- b. A sizable portion of them will be traveling on China’s railway network, now under newly reorganized management following a massive corruption scandal in the Ministry of Railways, which has been reorganized into to a state-owned corporation in March 2013.

Hong Kong

1. The 2014 Policy Address

- a. Chief Executive CY Leung gave his second policy address last week.¹⁶ Key highlights:
 - i. Economy:
 1. Develop Lantau: study setting up more hotels and leisure facilities on Lantau, and set up a Lantau development advisory committee to “capitalise on the benefits brought by major infrastructure projects in the area, and the synergy between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta”; explore ways to further develop the

¹³ Caijing, <http://economy.caijing.com.cn/2014-01-14/113811804.html>

¹⁴ Caijing, <http://politics.caijing.com.cn/2014-01-14/113811980.html>

¹⁵ SCMP Chinese, <http://www.nanzao.com/tc/china/19582/guang-dong-she-di-fang-gai-ge-ling-dao-xiao-zu-ding-nian-nei-13xiang-ren-wu>

¹⁶ SCMP, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1406023/live-cy-leung-gives-his-second-annual-policy-address>

eastern waters off Lantau and neighbouring areas, forming what he called an eastern Lantau metropolis to accommodate a new population.

ii. Poverty

1. Proposed a HK\$3 billion scheme - the Low-income Working Family Allowance, will offer basic allowance to households in working poor, tied to employment and working hours. "More allowance will be granted to those who work more. Families with eligible children and young members will receive additional allowance." Leung expects the scheme to benefit more than more than 200,000 low-income families (lower than half of the median income – under the poverty line¹⁷) with 710,000 members, including 180,000 eligible children and young people. Families who wish to receive the monthly allowance have to pass through an income and asset test "with a lower threshold"

iii. Welfare

1. The disabled: provide 6,200 additional places for rehabilitation services; enhance regular assistance to disabled people through the Community Care Fund;
2. The elderly
 - a. Commission a study on a retirement scheme, and to consider expanding the Old Age Living Allowance scheme to Hongkongers living in Guangdong
 - b. Increase the supply of subsidised home-care places for the elderly through a multipronged approach that includes a special scheme on privately owned sites for welfare uses
 - c. Buy residential-care places from a home for the aged run by a Hong Kong NGO in Shenzhen to provide an option for elderly people on the central waiting list for subsidised residential-care places
 - d. Double the annual elderly healthcare voucher amount to HK\$2,000 per person within this year
 - e. Extend the concessionary fare of HK\$2 in phases to include green minibuses
3. Education for ethnic minority groups: ethnic minority pupils can have a Chinese-as-second-language learning framework at Hong Kong's primary and secondary schools, starting this September

¹⁷ one-person household —HK\$3600; two—HK\$7700; three—HK\$11500
four—HK\$14300; five—HK\$14800; six or above—HK\$15800; BBC,
http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/trad/china/2013/09/130928_hongkong_poverty.shtml
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4. Youth: expand Youth Hostel Scheme, adding Mong Kok and Jordan to the existing projects in Sheung Wan and Taipo, which in total will provide 1000 places
- iv. Education:
 1. Increase the voucher value of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme by \$2,500 per year for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 school years
 2. Provide an additional 2 120 subsidised places to local students to pursue degree education in and outside Hong Kong. Students who choose to further their studies in the Mainland will also receive financial assistance.
- v. Land:
 1. Provide a total of 470 000 units in the coming ten years, with public housing accounting for 60%
 2. The area close to Wah Fu Estate will be used for public housing development and the future redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, providing about 11 900 additional public rental housing and Home Ownership Scheme units
- b. Government highlights¹⁸
- c. Confusion lingered over whether the increase on allowances and welfare funding would cost an extra HK\$10 billion or HK\$20 billion a year. The HK\$20 billion figure was quoted on Wednesday by Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and Financial Secretary John Tsang Chun-wah. But Chief Secretary Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor said the estimate should be slashed in half. Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury Professor Chan Ka-keung rejected neither version, saying it depended on how the calculation was made. A person familiar with the address document later told the South China Morning Post that the HK\$20 billion included HK\$8.3 billion to fund the Old Age Living Allowance, carried forward from last year's policy address, and the effect of inflation.¹⁹
- d. HKU finds that the rate of satisfaction for the 2014 policy address is lower than that for the 2013 one. 港大民研昨日公布《2014年施政報告》即時評分調查，市民對施政報告滿意淨值為5，較去年特首梁振英首份施政報告的11明顯下跌，而整體評分則跌至54.1分。多名自稱中產市民致電電台直接批評梁振英，指他漠視中產困境，有家庭月入3萬元市民更自嘲是「中下產」，「你這樣派錢給低下階層，但我們這班人完全受惠不到！」梁振英稱，會透過發展經濟為中產提供穩定環境，並要防止中產生活質素向下流動。²⁰ But the support rating for CY Leung has improved after the policy address.

¹⁸ HK government, <http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2014/eng/highlights.html>

¹⁹ SCMP, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1408078/hk10-billion-discrepancy-over-welfare-bill-after-policy-address>

²⁰ Mingpao, <http://news.sina.com.hk/news/20140117/-3-3167778/1.html>