

**“CREATING A FAVORABLE INTERNATIONAL
PUBLIC OPINION ENVIRONMENT:
EXTERNAL PROPAGANDA (DUIWAI XUANCHUAN)
AS A GLOBAL CONCEPT WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS”**

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Abstract

This thesis offers a political history of PRC propaganda targeted at foreigners in the 20th and 21st century. It seeks to give an answer to the seeming contradiction that particularly over the last decade, China has repeatedly pledged to invest more resources into improving its image and influencing international public opinion, yet at the same time, there continue to be blunders of the most basic type, particularly in areas where China wants to influence foreigners' opinions most. The thesis examines how and to what extent China has been able to adapt its external propaganda apparatus, initially set up on the basis of the Soviet propaganda model that depended on the ability of the Party to regulate the flow of information into and out of China, to the current global media environment marked by porous national borders and fast-paced flows of information across the globe. Drawing on internal publications, archival documents, openly available materials, and interviews, it combines a bird's-eye perspective on the development of external propaganda in China over the course of the 20th and 21st century with in-depth reading and analysis of key texts.

Two propositions are tested: First, that external factors, including foreign models that China learns from, have had significant impact on how Chinese external propaganda policy has developed and second, that previous choices the PRC has made for its external propaganda sector substantially restrict the options available to the CPC today. Arguing that external propaganda has been path dependent at various levels, this study explains the difficulties China's external propaganda apparatus continues to face as well as what strategies people pushing for reforms have used to overcome historical, ideological, and bureaucratic baggage.

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Note

This thesis employs the *pinyin* system for the transliteration of Chinese terms and names. An exception is made for proper names that are commonly transcribed in other systems, e.g. Li Teng-hui, Ma Ying-jeou, Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen, etc. All abbreviations used are explained in the Appendix.

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1 Introduction

In December 2003, propaganda targeting foreigners received a major upgrade in status: In a little-publicized speech, China's President Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 declared that "creating a favorable international public opinion environment" and "establishing a good image of China" abroad were "of importance for China's national security and social stability."¹ This, for the first time in the history of the People's Republic of China (PRC), turned propaganda targeting foreign publics formally into a matter of national security as well as internal stability. A few months later, in April 2004, China created the External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group in order to better coordinate policy making and implementation in this field.² Simultaneously, the CPC introduced a Three Step Plan (*san bu zou* 三步走) for the development of its external propaganda sector until 2020.³ Since then, officials have reiterated the need to give external propaganda (*duiwai xuanchuan* 对外宣传), the term China uses to refer to what would be called "public diplomacy" in most other countries, a stronger role in the realization of its long-term strategic objectives.⁴

Although neither Hu Jintao's speech nor the creation of the Leading Small Group were picked up by the Western press or in academic studies on the topic, the manifold consequences of linking propaganda targeted at foreigners to China's

¹ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi, 2006), 188.

² Cf. Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, *Fengyun jidang qishi nian* 风云激荡七十年 [Seven turbulent decades], vol. 2 (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2007), 248; Zhou Zongmin 周宗敏, "Yong 'shijie yuyan' tong haiwai shouzhong 'zhijie duihua' – yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan" 用'世界语言'同海外受众'直接对华'——与国内分社记者英文报道培训班学员座谈, *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 10 (2004): 10.

³ "Quansheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi tichu: jianli da wai xuan geju kaichuang wai xuan gongzuo xin jumian" 全省对外宣传工作会议提出:建立大外宣格局开创外宣工作新局面 [The province's foreign propaganda work meeting suggests: establish a big external propaganda pattern to create a new situation of external propaganda work], *Jinri Hainan* 今日海南 [Hainan today], no. 7 (2004): 7.

⁴ Cf. "Wang Chen: Kaichuang dang he guojia duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian" 王晨: 开创党和国家对外宣传工作新局面 [Wang Chen: Create a new situation for the Party's and China's external propaganda work], *Zhongzhi dangjian* 中直党建 [Party building (in institutions directly) under the Central Committee], no. 9, 2012, put online August 29, 2012, <http://www.zzdjw.com/n/2012/0829/c348481-18868083.html>, accessed November 14, 2012.

national security, domestic stability, and its long-term goals were soon noticed. Journalists as well as scholars have commented on the well-financed push of China's media for a global presence in the midst of a global recession and at a time when most Western media were experiencing crises,⁵ on the mushrooming of Confucius Institutes,⁶ and on the marked improvement in the way China's diplomats presented themselves abroad.⁷ China has made headlines for its orchestration of the 2008 Olympic opening ceremonies,⁸ for its campaign to improve the image of products "made in China,"⁹ for renting a huge billboard at the very heart of world news Times Square in New York City,¹⁰ and for the expansion of Chinese media into Africa,¹¹ to list just a few examples. These efforts are usually associated with the by now well-known concept of "soft power," introduced by Joseph Nye as a form of power that does not rely on military or economic might, but on attraction and thus "co-opts people rather than coerces them."¹² Particularly earlier articles and studies argued that although China had only recently discovered "soft power," it was good at what it was doing and was improving its image in leaps and bounds, quite possibly at the expense of the United States' (U.S.) international popularity.¹³

⁵ E.g. Nicholas Bequelin, "China's New Propaganda Machine: Going Global," website of the *Wall Street Journal*, January 30, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123326012456829891.html>, accessed September 14, 2012; Liang Fook Lye and Siew Keng Catherine Chong, *China's Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building*, EAI Background Brief no. 555 (2010), available online at <http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB555.pdf>, accessed September 15, 2012.

⁶ E.g. James Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power," *Asian Survey* 49, no. 4 (July/August 2009): 647-665.

⁷ E.g. Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Yale University Press, 2007).

⁸ E.g. Richard Williams, "Patriot Games: China Makes its Point with Greatest Show," website of the *Guardian*, August 9, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2008/aug/09/olympics2008.openingceremony>, accessed December 17, 2012; "Olympic Show Opens with a Bang," CNN website, August 8, 2008, <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/08/08/olympics.opening.us/index.html>, accessed December 17, 2012.

⁹ E.g. Calum MacLeod, "New Ad Campaign Touts 'Made in China,'" website of USA Today, August 1, 2010, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-01-07-made-in-china-products_N.htm, accessed August 30, 2012.

¹⁰ E.g. Stuart Elliott, "Sign of Arrival, for Xinhua, Is 60 Feet Tall," *New York Times Online*, July 25, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/26/business/media/xinhuas-giant-sign-to-blink-on-in-times-square.html?_r=0, accessed December 17, 2012.

¹¹ E.g. David McKenzie, "Chinese Media Make Inroads into Africa," CNN website, September 25, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/09/05/business/china-africa-cctv-media/index.html>, accessed December 17, 2012.

¹² Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Public Affairs, 2004), 5.

¹³ E.g. Joshua Kurlantzick, "China's Charm: Implications of Chinese Soft Power," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace *Policy Brief* 47 (June 2006), accessed through CIAO (Columbia International Affairs Online); Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*.

Even after several years of investments and hard work, however, the fact that Chinese media and politicians operate in an environment that they are not fully familiar and comfortable with becomes evident on a regular basis. One scholar has noted that “in many contentious areas, including Taiwan, Tibet, [...] the Falun Gong organization and so on, China’s performance has been dismal.”¹⁴ In fact, ironically, the fields in which China wants to influence foreigners’ perceptions most strongly are also the fields in which the country’s attempts to sway global public opinion seem most heavy-handed and clumsy. For instance, in 2010, after Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, China’s shrill reaction was met with a mixture of bewilderment and ridicule.¹⁵ In September 2012, some Western media complained about the refusal of Chinese spokespersons to comment on the reasons why Xi Jinping 习近平, who is slated for the highest office in the Party and government, had cancelled important meetings and was not seen for two weeks.¹⁶ This was perceived as a form of secrecy that was outdated and incompatible with how a major power should behave. Chinese journalists and academics that I spoke to were generally aware of similar problems and somewhat frustrated about their inability to effect permanent change in how Chinese authorities approach communicating with foreign publics.¹⁷

¹⁴ Paradise, “China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing’s Soft Power,” 664.

¹⁵ As Kalathil has pointed out, the “petulant and stilted language” of China’s official rebuttal to Liu Xiaobo’s Nobel Peace Prize “[made] China seem amateurish.” Shathi Kalathil, “China’s Soft Power in the Information Age: Think Again,” *ISD Working Papers in New Diplomacy*, 2011, 9. Available online at http://isd.georgetown.edu/files/Kalathil_Chinas_Soft_Power.pdf, accessed March 1, 2013.

¹⁶ E.g. Ian Johnson, “Communist Leader’s Absence Sets Off Rumor Mills in China,” *New York Times* Online, September 10, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/11/world/asia/xi-jinping-chinas-presumptive-new-leader-mysteriously-absent.html?pagewanted=all>, accessed September 13, 2012; Mark Jia, “Guest Post: The Many (Imagined) Lives of Xi Jinping,” *Foreign Policy* Online, http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/09/12/guest_post_the_many_imagined_lives_of_xi_jinping, accessed September 13, 2012; Steffen Richter, “Pekings Schweigen ist gestrig” [Beijing’s Silence is Outdated], Website of *Die Zeit*, September 11, 2012, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2012-09/xi-jinping-modernes-china>, accessed September 13, 2012. In December 2012, the disappearance of the new head of the Central Propaganda Department (CPD) was shrouded in similar silence. Cf. David Bandurski, “Where is Liu Qibao,” December 3, 2012, website of the China Media Project, <http://cmp.hku.hk/2012/12/03/29628/>, accessed December 9, 2012.

¹⁷ Interview with Communications Studies professor I, Beijing, April 2011; Interview with Communications Studies professor II, Beijing, April 2011; Interview with Journalist I, Beijing, April 2011.

In sum, on the one hand, China has linked a positive image abroad to the security and stability of the nation, and actual initiatives confirm that external propaganda ranks high on the list of priorities. The country has signaled its willingness to invest money and other resources into this endeavor, and there is visible apprehension in the United States and other countries about its possible impact. On the other hand, China's rapidly expanding external propaganda continues to face difficulties because of content and journalistic practices that contain blunders, often seem to disregard the foreign audiences and lead to low impact if not disbelief and ridicule. My thesis takes up these contradictions and asks under what institutional, ideological and historical constraints Chinese propaganda targeted at foreigners has been operating and what the Communist Party of China (CPC) does (or does not do) to solve these problems. In so doing, this thesis tackles an issue that is relevant for all fields of contemporary China studies because it analyses the policies behind media content and official government statements that scholars working on almost any aspect of contemporary China use as their sources.

While external propaganda as the effort of trying to establish a better image for oneself and gaining understanding for one's policies among foreign publics is ubiquitous among nation-states in modern times, China provides a particularly fascinating case study. First, the CPC tries to adapt to a globalizing world as a Party originally organized according to Leninist principles and with a propaganda apparatus that was constructed for a global environment vastly different from today's. Before the founding of the PRC and in the early 1950s, the PRC adopted a lot of its propaganda practices from the Soviet Union, whereas since the beginning of the post-Mao period, it has looked to the West as an important model how to make propaganda more effective.¹⁸ Thus, over the course of its history, the CPC has adapted ideas and propaganda practices both from the Soviet Union and from the West, particularly the Anglophone world, and is currently trying to consolidate the two.

Second, one major difference between Chinese external propaganda and external propaganda as organized by states with multi-party democracies is its dual function: to propagate both the CPC and the Chinese nation-state. When the

¹⁸ See Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham MD et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 72-73.

CPC propagates China to the world, it does not want to omit itself from the picture but wants to convince foreigners that China's development is the result of the Party's policies rather than having been achieved despite the Party's rule.¹⁹ Thus, a Communist party claiming Marxism as its guiding ideology and ruling the second largest economy in the world is trying to establish itself and its point of view in front of the international public. It needs to do so in the post-Cold War era in which few other Communist parties remain in power and in which much of the practices and rhetoric of the former Socialist bloc have been discredited.

While the CPC has arguably adapted its Leninist domestic propaganda apparatus with relative success to the changed political, economic and technical environment,²⁰ its redefined external propaganda faces additional problems: It has to operate in an environment that the CPC does not control, and worse, that is dominated by Western news agencies and media which are considered as relatively hostile to both the form and the content of China's attempts to influence foreign publics. This makes the development of an effective Chinese external propaganda strategy that at the same time does not conflict with Party-internal sensitivities all the more challenging. Thus, the PRC offers a uniquely interesting and timely case study on the perceived importance of an effective external propaganda strategy for a rising economic giant ruled by a Communist Party that is ideologically and structurally deeply anchored in propaganda practices of a world that largely collapsed with the end of the Cold War.

1.1 State of the Art and Remaining Questions

Chinese external propaganda is a highly contested and rapidly developing field. The increasing number of reports, studies, hearings and briefs demonstrate the attention China's efforts have received among media, scholars, and foreign governments. The U.S. Congress has held several sessions discussing Chinese "soft power"²¹ and has received multiple briefings on the topic.²² Over the last

¹⁹ For example, in 2011, an edited volume on the CPC was published in English as part of a government-funded publications plan: Xie Chuntao, ed., *Why and How the CPC Works in China: A Look at What's Behind the Achievements of the Communist Party of China* (Beijing: New World Press, 2011).

²⁰ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 201.

²¹ Most importantly "China's Propaganda and Influence Operations, its Intelligence Activities that Target the United States and its Resulting Impacts on US National Security," Hearing before

three years, both edited volumes and individual articles on various aspects of China's soft power project have surged in number. Despite this increase, there are four problems in existing secondary literature that I will use as a starting point to develop my own explorative approach for this thesis: first, the field of research is fragmented, second, the link between Chinese external propaganda and similar practices in other countries has been neglected, third, current initiatives are not connected with past practices, and fourth, there is a large amount of Chinese source material that has not been studied.

A Fragmented Field

Research on what broadly falls under the scope of “external propaganda” is scattered across different disciplines and theoretical frameworks, each of which approaches the subject matter from a different angle. Studies on or touching on Chinese external propaganda, past and present, come from a broad variety of disciplinary backgrounds, most importantly communication studies, international relations (IR), political science, and history. The manifold approaches to studying Chinese external propaganda defy easy classification; however, in order to present them more systematically, it makes sense to roughly divide them into two large categories. First, over the last decade, a debate on Chinese soft power has developed that tries to assess Chinese resources of soft power as well as the role soft power plays in China's rise from an IR perspective. Second, external propaganda has been examined from an institutional-historical perspective by historians, political scientists as well as by scholars in the field of journalism and communications studies. These studies examine the structural transformations of Chinese politics and society and, as such, can be considered part of a larger body of literature focused on the question of how the CPC has adapted to the current times and how it is trying to secure its ruling position in China.²³

the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, April 20, 2009, available online at http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/china/09_04_30_infl_ops.pdf, accessed March 1, 2013.

²² E.g. *Another U.S. Deficit - China and America - Public Diplomacy in the Age of the Internet: A Minority Staff Report Prepared for the Use of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, February 15, 2011* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011), available online at <http://lugar.senate.gov/issues/foreign/diplomacy/ChinaInternet.pdf>, accessed November 1, 2012.

²³ E.g. David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center and Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California

In the last decade, the number of studies examining Chinese external propaganda initiatives and potential resources of soft power in IR studies has grown. The first few studies largely consisted of outlines and assessments of Chinese soft power resources and public diplomacy tools and have thus provided useful overviews of simultaneous developments as much as attested to the fact that the CPC has taken a close interest in the soft side of power, drawing on resources such as culture, history, and its media.²⁴ Later, researchers increasingly also relied on individual case studies either to examine a specific field in its own right or in order to arrive at larger conclusions about Chinese soft power as a whole. Areas relatively well-covered include cultural diplomacy in general²⁵ and Confucius Institutes in particular,²⁶ the Olympics,²⁷ the discourse of China's

Press, 2008); Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley, "Reclaiming Legitimacy in China," *Politics and Policy* 38, no. 3 (2010): 395-422; Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*.

²⁴ E.g. Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, "Sources and Limits of China's Soft Power," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 48, no. 2 (2006): 17-36; Yanzhong Huang and Sheng Ding, "The Dragon's Underbelly: An Analysis of China's Soft Power," *EAST ASIA* 23, no. 4 (2006): 22-44; Young Nam Cho and Jong Ho Jeong, "China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects," *Asian Survey* 48, no. 3 (2008): 453-472; Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," *ANNALS, AAPSS*, no. 616 (2008): 257-273.

²⁵ E.g. Xiaogang Deng and Lening Zhang, "China's Cultural Exports and its Growing Cultural Power in the World," *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed., Mingjiang Li (Lanham, Md, et al.: Lexington Books, 2009), 143-162; Sheng Ding, "The Middle Kingdom's Cultural Attractiveness: China's Reliable Soft Power Resource," chapter 4 of *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power*, by Sheng Ding (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 59-74; Hongyi Lai, "China's Cultural Diplomacy: Going for Soft Power," in *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, eds. Hongyi Lai and Yiyi Lu (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 83-103; Sheng Ding and Robert A. Saunders, "Talking Up China: An Analysis of China's Rising Cultural Power and Global Promotion of the Chinese Language," *EAST ASIA* 23, no. 2 (2006): 3-33.

²⁶ The University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School has a research project with Jian Wang as principal investigator, titled "Reshaping Cultural Diplomacy in a New Era: Confucius Institutes and China's Soft-Power Strategy," that researches Confucius Institutes. Cf. the project's website at http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/research/project_detail/confucius_institutes/, accessed October 7, 2012. The project includes the Confucius Institutes Media Monitor (July 2009 to date) that keeps track of Confucius Institutes all over the world. Other studies include Paradise, "China and International Harmony"; Don Starr, "Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes," *European Journal of Education* 44, no. 1 (2009): 65-82; Hsi Chang Li, Sam Mirmirani, and Joseph A. Ilacqua, "Confucius Institutes: Distributed Leadership and Knowledge Sharing in a Worldwide Network," *The Learning Organization* 16, no. 6 (2009): 469-482.

²⁷ E.g. Kevin Latham, "Media, the Olympics and the Search for the 'Real China,'" *The China Quarterly* 197 (2009): 25-43; Hui Li, "Imagining China through the Olympics: Government Publicity and Journalism" (PhD dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, 2005); Nicholas Cull, "The Public Diplomacy of the Modern Olympic Games and China's Soft Power Strategy," in *Owning the Olympics: Narratives of the New China*, eds. Monroe E. Price and Daniel Dayan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 117-144; Jian Wang and Michael Hallquist, "The Comic Imagination of China: The Beijing Olympics in American TV Comedy and Implications for Public Diplomacy," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 7, no.

“peaceful rise,”²⁸ the transformation of China Central Television (CCTV),²⁹ and China’s “soft power” initiatives in the developing world.³⁰ China’s relatively new policy to create global media players has also attracted some attention.³¹ More recently, relatively broad overviews in the IR approach have been supplemented by a number of edited volumes, most importantly *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics* (2009),³² *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication* (2011),³³ which focuses on media-based initiatives, and *China’s Soft Power and International Relations* (2012).³⁴ While these have contributed to a more nuanced study of Chinese external propaganda by offering case studies from different perspectives, the framework holding them together is still largely missing.

In the IR field, scholarship produced out of analytical interest and studies written to give policy advice to governments cannot always be neatly separated. Aside from briefings directly produced for different governments, there are, for

4 (2011): 232-243; Kevin Caffrey, *The Beijing Olympics: Promoting China: Soft and Hard Power in Global Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

²⁸ E.g. Dominik Mierzejewski, “The Quandary of China’s Soft-Power Rhetoric: The ‘Peaceful-Rise’ Concept and Internal Debate,” in *China’s Soft Power and International Relations*, eds. Lai and Lu, 64-82. The theory of China’s “peaceful rise” was first presented by Chinese politicians in late 2003 in response to what China saw as widespread fear about its fast development and increasing power on the international stage.

²⁹ John Jirik, “Making News in the People’s Republic of China: The Case of CCTV-9” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2008); Xiaoling Zhang, “China as an Emerging Soft Power: Winning Hearts and Minds through Communication with Foreign Publics,” The University of Nottingham China Policy Institute, Discussion Paper 35, October 2008, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-35-china-emerging-soft-power.pdf>, accessed September 16, 2012; Xiaoling Zhang, “China’s International Broadcasting: A Case Study of CCTV International,” in *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 57-71; Amar C. Bakshi, “China’s Challenge to International Journalism,” *SAIS Review* 31, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2011): 147-151.

³⁰ Kurlantzik, *Charm Offensive*; Sheng Ding, “‘Old Bottles, New Wine’: Beijing’s Soft Power Campaigns in the Global South,” chapter 8 in id, *The Dragon’s Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 131-148; Merriden Varrall, “Debunking the Myth of China’s Soft Power: Changes in China’s Use of Foreign Assistance from 1949 to the Present,” in *China’s Soft Power and International Relations*, 38-169; Joshua Kurlantzik, “China’s Soft Power in Africa,” in *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li, 165-183; Ignatius Wibowo, “China’s Soft Power and Neoliberal Agenda in Southeast Asia,” in *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Relations*, 207-223.

³¹ Liang Fook Lye and S.K.C. Chong, “China’s Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building,” EAI Background Brief, no. 555. (2010): 4-7; Zhang Xiaoling, “Chinese State Media Going Global,” *East Asian Policy* 2, no. 1 (2009): 42-50.

³² Li, ed., *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*.

³³ Jian Wang, ed., *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

³⁴ Lai and Lu, eds., *China’s Soft Power and International Relations*.

instance, studies produced at various government-affiliated think tanks³⁵ or sponsored by government agencies.³⁶ This has led to government concerns dominating the focus and questions asked in this field. As others have pointed out before,³⁷ Chinese “soft power” is implicitly or explicitly largely analyzed from the perspective whether and to what extent it might challenge the position of the U.S. or the West in general, and to what extent it poses a threat to the national security of a particular country. Kurlantzik, whose most important work focuses on South East Asia, answers in the affirmative,³⁸ whereas Rawnsley,³⁹ Kalathil,⁴⁰ and Lye⁴¹ find that China still has a long way to go. Some authors invert the perspective, and instead of looking at Chinese external propaganda from a U.S. security angle ask how China can overcome foreigners’ suspicions and raise its soft power.⁴² Of course, most individual author’s arguments are more complex than a simply yes or no reply to the question whether Chinese soft power might pose a threat to the U.S. or any other country, and some of these arguments will be addressed again below in the individual chapters. However, overall, the national security perspective has framed –and limited– the IR analysis.

³⁵ E.g. Carola McGiffert, ed., *Chinese Soft Power and Its Implications for the United States: Competition and Cooperation in the Developing World. A Report of the CSIS Smart Power Initiative* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2009); Joshua Cooper Ramo, *Brand China* (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2007), available online at <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/827.pdf>, accessed August 23, 2012; Jaime Otero Roh, “China Discovers Public Diplomacy,” June 1, 2007, Real Instituto Elcano, http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/291/291_Otero_China_Public_Diplomacy.pdf, accessed August 23, 2012. Javier Noya, “New Propaganda: The Public Diplomacy of the Authoritarian Regimes in China and Venezuela,” January 15, 2008. Working paper 3/2008. Real Instituto Elcano. http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documentos/WP2008/WP3-2008_Noya_Public_Diplomacy_China_Venezuela.pdf, accessed August 23, 2012.

³⁶ E.g. Xiaolin Guo, “Repackaging Confucius: PRC Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Soft Power,” *Asia Paper*, January 2008, Institute for Security & Development Policy (Stockholm, Sweden), http://www.isdp.eu/images/stories/isdp-main-pdf/2008_guo_repackaging-confucius.pdf, accessed August 22, 2012. The paper was, among others, sponsored by the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

³⁷ Cf. Mingjiang Li, “Soft Power: Nurture not Nature,” in *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, 2; Kalathil, “China’s Soft Power in the Information Age: Think Again,” 3-4.

³⁸ Kurlantzik, *Charm Offensive*. He was criticized for his “alarmism” and took a more nuanced approach in later studies, e.g. Kurlantzik, “China’s Soft Power in Africa,” in *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Li, 177-179

³⁹ Gary D. Rawnsley, “China Talks Back: Public Diplomacy and Soft Power for the Chinese Century,” in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, edited by Nancy Snow and Philip Taylor (New York: Routledge, 2008), 282-291.

⁴⁰ Kalathil, “China’s Soft Power in the Information Age: Think Again.”

⁴¹ Liang Fook Lye, “China’s Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building,” *International Journal of China Studies* 1, no. 2 (2010): 545-568.

⁴² E.g. Cheng (Jason) Qian, “Challenges for China’s Harmonious Diplomacy,” in *China’s Soft Power and International Relations*, eds. Lai and Lu, 121-137.

The institutional-historical perspective can be subdivided into two approaches. First, there is the top-down perspective, which is an outgrowth of a debate on the role of propaganda in Chinese politics and governance, focusing on bureaucratic structures and official policy. It includes the works of Anne-Marie Brady, who has primarily focused on China's domestic propaganda and thought work but also devoted a chapter in *Marketing Dictatorship* (2008) to external propaganda work, in particular to the differences in external propaganda before and after the crackdown on Tiananmen in 1989.⁴³ David Shambaugh also comments on external propaganda in a 2007 article on China's overall propaganda system.⁴⁴ The top-down institutional-historical approach, which stays relatively close to Chinese terminology and categories of organization, provides a potentially interesting angle, but has thus far treated external propaganda as an aside rather than as a topic in its own right.

Second, the institutional-historical perspective also includes a few studies analyzing the role and agency of Chinese journalists. These are part of a larger field concerned with transformation and negotiation processes in the media sector from a bottom-up perspective. One study assesses the function of foreign language media in China's overall media landscape,⁴⁵ and, like other accounts,⁴⁶ concludes that foreign language media are more advanced and thus have a pioneering role vis-à-vis domestic media. In another case study on the transformation of CCTV-9, John Jirik demonstrates, among other things, the influence of CCTV's employees and existing structures and hierarchies on

⁴³ Anne-Marie Brady, "Combating Hostile Forces: China's Foreign Propaganda Work since 1989," chapter 7 in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 151-174. Additional information on the set-up of the external propaganda apparatus is available in chapter 2 of the same book, "Guiding Hand: The Role of the Propaganda System." Brady has also testified at a U.S. government hearing on April 30, 2009. See "Testimony of Associate-Professor Anne-Marie Brady," *China's Propaganda and Perception Management Efforts, Its Intelligence Activities that Target the United States, and the Resulting Impacts on U.S. National Security*, April 30, 2009, available http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/written_testimonies/09_04_30_wrts/09_04_30_brady_statement.pdf, accessed August 26, 2012.

⁴⁴ David Shambaugh, "China's Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy," *The China Journal*, no. 57 (2007): 25-58.

⁴⁵ Zhongshi Guo and Yu Huang, "Hybridized Discourse: Social Openness and Functions of English Media in Post-Mao China," *World Englishes* 21, no. 2 (2002): 217-230.

⁴⁶ Two accounts of the *China Daily* try to paint the paper as different from domestic media, more advanced, and less propagandistic. Cf. Won Ho Chang, "China Daily," in id., *Mass Media in China: The History and the Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), 112-126; Tan Hongkai, "China Daily," in *China Ink: The Changing Face of Chinese Journalism*, eds. Judy Polumbaum and Xiong Lei (Lanham et al., Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 55.

planned changes to the channel.⁴⁷ This approach from journalism and communication studies adds an important dimension to the study of Chinese external propaganda, namely how the agenda and agency of journalists and other people involved in the implementation of external propaganda policies may differ from the interests of the Party Center and affect the implementation of central policies on the ground. Like the top-down approach, however, the study of bottom-up transformations or resistance to reforms of the Chinese media is predominantly focused on the domestic.⁴⁸ Thus, while the bottom-up and top-down perspectives are both useful, the questions how external propaganda has been transformed to adapt to changing international circumstances and what difficulties are encountered in the process have only been treated marginally.

Methodological Nationalism

As implied above, China has selectively copied from other countries, most importantly the Soviet Union and the United States. Today, the CPC has an official policy of emulation, or rather, selective appropriation of foreign knowledge and expertise that has well-known predecessors going back to the 19th century when China was first confronted with the Western world order.⁴⁹

While few people would claim that attempts to influence foreign publics are an exclusively Chinese practice, it is often presented and examined as such. Aside from academic convention (“methodological nationalism”) this most likely also has to do with the fact that the study of other countries’ foreign propaganda apparatuses has grown out of and feeds back into intelligence work. Even

⁴⁷ Jirik, “Making News in the People’s Republic of China: The Case of CCTV-9,” 215-237.

⁴⁸ For recent works, see for example David Bandurski and Martin Hala, *Investigative Journalism: Eight Cases in Chinese Watchdog Journalism* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010); Susan Shirk, ed., *Changing Media, Changing China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Daniela Stockmann, *Media Commercialization and Authoritarian Rule in China* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁴⁹ The current emulation/appropriations policy has been covered, for example, by David Shambaugh in *The Chinese Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (University of California Press, 2008). For the official justification of the policy in 1979 by referencing the works of Lenin and Mao, see for example “Le yu xiqu waiguo de hao dongxi - jieshao zuijin chuci yicheng zhongwen de Lienin lunshu” 乐于吸取外国的好东西 ——介绍最近初次译成中文的列宁论述 [Happily absorb the good things from abroad – Introducing one of Lenin’s expositions recently translated into Chinese for the first time], *Cankao ziliao* 参考资料 [Reference Materials], no. 2, (1978): 22-26 and “Mao zhuxi guanyu xuexi waiguo xianjin jingyan he kexue jishu de bufen lunshu” 毛主席关于学习外国先进经验和科学技术的部分论述 [A part of Chairman Mao’s exposition on learning from foreigners advanced experience and science and technology], *Cankao ziliao*, no. 1 (1979): 2-6.

explicitly comparative studies are rare; comparison, if it does take place, is usually implicit and comes in the form of edited volumes with different authors covering separate areas.⁵⁰ A number of studies have mentioned that the Chinese development is part of a transnational trend.⁵¹ A recent dissertation on Chinese soft power, moreover, includes a chapter that introduces other countries' initiatives, although again the comparison takes place largely through juxtaposition, not analysis.⁵² Thus, what has been left out of the equation is the massive amount of flows regarding the concept of propaganda as well as specific institutions and practices.

“Soft Power” versus “External Propaganda”

Studies that analyze the reception of the concepts of soft power or public diplomacy in China usually do not take earlier concepts into account –concepts that actually remain dominant in official circles and attached to which is a package of discourses, institutions and practices that the current soft power and public diplomacy discourses draw on or at least have to interact with in some form. Because China's recent expansion of its external propaganda apparatus since 2004 has been so striking, the majority of studies on current developments implicitly or explicitly treat the country's interest in shaping international public opinion as a relatively new phenomenon.⁵³ A notable exception is Edney Kingsley's “Soft Power and the Chinese Propaganda System.”⁵⁴ A few other studies make a note that before China became interested in soft power or public diplomacy in the 21st century, it subsumed and practiced activities associated with these concepts under

⁵⁰ Such as Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009). Palgrave Macmillian has a book series on Global Public Diplomacy.

⁵¹ E.g. Jirik, “Making News in the People's Republic of China”; Jian Wang, “Introduction: China's Search of Soft Power,” in *Soft Power in China*, 1.

⁵² “Chapter Nine: Comparing Other Nations' Soft Power Wielding and Other Major External Communication Players in the World with China,” in “External Communication as a Vehicle for Disseminating Soft Power: A Study of China's Efforts to Strengthen its Cultural Soft Power in the Era of Globalization,” by Liu Youling (PhD diss. State University of New York at Buffalo, 2011).

⁵³ E.g. Lye and Chong, “China's Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building,” 3; Yong Nam Cho and Jong Ho Jeong, “China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects,” *Asian Survey* 48, no. 3 (2008): 457.

⁵⁴ Edney Kingsley, “Soft Power and the Chinese Propaganda System,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 21, no. 78 (November 2012): 899-914.

the term external propaganda.⁵⁵ Others give a cursory overview of past developments on a few pages.⁵⁶ Xiaoling Zhang and Rumi Aoyama have briefly addressed the differences between external propaganda before and after 1978. These two authors have proposed to use different terminology to address the rupture between the Mao and post-Mao periods: Zhang has proposed to read the transformation of propaganda in China today as a transformation from “propaganda to hegemony” in the domestic realm⁵⁷ and from “foreign propaganda to international communication” for messages targeting foreigners.⁵⁸ Aoyama speaks of a transformation from “propaganda to public diplomacy.”⁵⁹ What is missing, however, is a detailed analysis of both continuities and changes in China’s external propaganda between today and the founding of the PRC or even before. Thus, the questions how previous conventions affect current practice and how previous choices restrict current options remain largely unexplored.

Particularly in recent years, a number of studies on Chinese external propaganda both during the Republican period and during the Mao period have emerged. The emphasis in secondary literature has primarily been on concrete initiatives and content. Chinese wartime propaganda during the Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945 is fairly well researched compared to earlier initiatives.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ In one of her works on public diplomacy, Ingrid d’Hooghe briefly analyzes previous attempts in and notes at one point that Chinese advocates of targeting foreigners called public diplomacy propaganda. Cf. Hooghe, “Public Diplomacy in the People’s Republic of China,” in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 92. Zhang notes that there were activities akin to public diplomacy known as “foreign propaganda” before the term public diplomacy was adopted. Cf. Zhang, “China as an Emerging Soft Power.” Kalathil also makes a note of previous terminology. Cf. Kalathil, “China’s Soft Power in the Information Age: Think Again,” 6. However, except for very brief overviews, discussions examining Chinese soft power and public diplomacy usually do not connect current practice to earlier initiatives.

⁵⁶ E.g. Sheng Ding, *The Dragon’s Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 155-157; Xiaoling Zhang, “From ‘foreign propaganda’ to ‘international communication’: China’s Promotion of Soft Power in the Age of Information and Communication Technologies,” in *China’s Information and Communications Technology: Revolution, Social Changes and State Responses*, eds. Xiaoling Zhang and Yongnian Zheng (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 103-106.

⁵⁷ Xiaoling Zhang, *The Transformation of Political Communication in China: From Propaganda to Hegemony* (World Scientific, 2011). This work touches on China’s external propaganda, but is mainly concerned with the domestic media and propaganda sphere.

⁵⁸ Zhang, “From ‘foreign propaganda’ to ‘international communication,’” 103-119.

⁵⁹ Rumi Aoyama, “Chinese Diplomacy in the Multimedia Age: Public Diplomacy and Civil Diplomacy,” December 2004, 10, http://dspace.wul.waseda.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2065/800/1/20050307_aoyama_eng1.pdf, accessed August 14, 2012.

⁶⁰ E.g. Yong Z. Volz, “China’s Image Management Abroad, 1920s-1940s: Origin, Justification, and Institutionalization, in *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Wang, 157-179; Kuo-je Tsang, *China’s Propaganda in the United States during World War*

The most recent and comprehensive study is a dissertation on the development of Chinese propaganda targeted at foreigners between 1928 and 1941.⁶¹ For external propaganda in the Mao period, the most detailed studies are a dissertation from 2009, which argues that external propaganda during the Mao period was difficult and costly for the Chinese state⁶² and another study published in Chinese in 2010 that primarily seeks to show that many of the current innovations in external propaganda work already existed in some form before 1966.⁶³ In addition to these works, there are some studies in Chinese that cover the time frame from the late 19th century until today, though these are forced into a relatively strictly defined historical narrative informed by the CPC's teleological understanding of history that steadily progresses from lower to higher stages of development.⁶⁴ One of the most glaring gaps in the current literature is the development of external propaganda during the 1980s and 1990s, which could give valuable insight into the reasons for the problems China has encountered thus far. Brady, who gives the most detailed account of this period, differentiates between external propaganda before and after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, but does not make any other distinctions and still considers "talking up the economy, rather than improving China's political image"⁶⁵ as the main aim of China's external propaganda,⁶⁶ which is clearly no longer true. Thus, a large number of both small and large changes have been disregarded.

II (M.A. Thesis, North Texas State University, 1980); Tsuchida Akio, "China's 'Public Diplomacy' toward the United States before Pearl Harbor," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 17 (2010): 35-55.

⁶¹ Shuge Wei, "To Win the West: China's Propaganda in the English-Language Press, 1928-1941" (PhD diss. Australian National University, 2012).

⁶² Cagdas Ungor, "Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)" (PhD diss. Binghamton University, 2009).

⁶³ Xi Shaoying 习少颖, *1949-1966 nian Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi yanjiu* 1949-1966 年中国对外宣传史研究 [Research on China's external propaganda history from 1949 to 1966] (Wuhan: Huazhong keji daxue chubanshe, 2010).

⁶⁴ E.g. in Gan Xianfeng, 甘险峰, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国对外新闻传播史 [A history of Chinese journalism and communication targeted at foreigners] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004).

⁶⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 170.

⁶⁶ Rawnsley makes a similar argument, stating that China's "talking back" has thus far mainly focused on the economy and culture. Cf. Gary D. Rawnsley, "China Talks Back: Public Diplomacy and Soft Power for the Chinese Century," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, eds. Snow and Taylor, 283.

Chinese Sources

Existing studies on Chinese soft power initiatives or public diplomacy proceed from a number of different approaches. This includes case studies on concrete initiatives which analyze visible output or use interviews, participant observation, and theoretical assessment of potential soft power resources. Except in cases where authors have analyzed the emergence of a debate surrounding the new concept of soft power in China,⁶⁷ studies make relatively little use of Chinese source material. Works that fall into the historical-institutional approach, such as Brady, have widely consulted policy documents and speeches, but do not offer a detailed analysis of how the understanding and debate surrounding external propaganda has changed. Thus, there is a large amount of Chinese source material on external propaganda, including speeches, policy documents, handbooks, academic works, etc. that has thus far not been examined in an effort to understand both current and past changes in the sector.

In conclusion, the current literature on various aspects of Chinese external propaganda is spread out across several disciplines and theoretical frameworks, and while each makes important points, these are only rarely linked up. More importantly, a large number of works are driven by government concerns, whereas analyses of institutional changes have only addressed external propaganda as an aside. Second, Chinese external propaganda is examined in isolation from similar developments and phenomena in other countries, and while studies might acknowledge the existence of similar practices outside of the Chinese context, the impact of flows between different countries has been neglected. Third, most studies on Chinese external propaganda or public diplomacy focus on the last decade, and almost no attempts have been made to analyze how the external propaganda concept and associated practices have changed and how previous practices constitute constraints for current initiatives. Finally, a close examination

⁶⁷ Such as Mingjiang Li, "Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Li, 21-43; Hongying Wang and Yeh-Chung Lu, "The Conception of Soft Power and its Policy Implications: A Comparative Study of China and Taiwan," *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, no. 56 (2008), 425-447; Yongnian Zheng and Chi Zhang, "'Soft Power' and Chinese Soft Power," in *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, 21-38. There are fewer studies about the concept of "public diplomacy" in China published in English. One that does touch on the conceptual understanding of soft power is Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power."

of Chinese source material is missing. Thus, the Chinese perspective and the inner logic of the external propaganda apparatus and its expansion are actually not well understood.

Based on the gaps in existing studies, this thesis is primarily driven by two connected sets of research questions:

1. How have the CPC's concept and practice of external propaganda changed, and what domestic as well as international or "external" factors have played a role in this change?
2. How do past practices and institutions restrict China's current options as well as how and to what extent is the CPC or groups within the Party addressing these issues and trying to solve them in the ongoing reform of its external propaganda apparatus?

In answering these questions, this study tries to address each of the four issues in current studies on external propaganda explained above. First, by using and adapting methods as required by the material at hand rather than by the canon approved for a particular discipline, my dissertation serves as a first exploration on how to combine various methods in the study of a topic defined by subject matter rather than discipline, language, medium or country. It primarily seeks to make a contribution to the research on the transformation of the CPC and the PRC in order to adapt to the new international environment; however, while I do not assess or measure China's soft power, this thesis also provides a basis and background for future studies on Chinese soft power. Second, this dissertation includes a detailed analysis of the development of external propaganda in China, particularly since the beginning of the post-Mao period and examines how the past influences and restricts current choices. Third, it explicitly aims to analyze Chinese external propaganda not in isolation but as part of a global trend or phenomenon, beginning with the concept itself and extending to the appropriation of concrete arguments and practices. At the same time, it takes account of the fact that concepts, institutions, and practices adapted in China enter a new, though constantly changing structural context. My dissertation is thus located in a field of tension between a global, or near global, notion in the contemporary world, namely that a nation-state needs to advertize itself in order to be successful in

international politics, and a concrete Chinese realization of this idea, complete with a set of assumptions, practices, and institutions that is distinct from yet at the same time continues to interact with and feed off the implementation of the same notion in other countries. Finally, the analysis is predominantly based on Chinese sources, taking its point of departure from material that is openly available or at the lowest levels of China's internal classification system and employing various reading strategies outlined below to generate information about core directives and documents that are not necessarily publicly available.

Below, I will briefly introduce the two main approaches – the past as potential burden as well as external propaganda as a global concept – before explaining my working definition of propaganda as well as addressing sources, research strategies, and structure of the thesis.

1.2 Research Perspectives

Proceeding from the gaps in the current literature, I make two propositions to be tested: First, the development of the external propaganda concept and associated practices in China has been impacted significantly by the development of propaganda in other countries. Throughout the 20th century and until today, ideas about propaganda as much as actual institutions and practices have tended to spread fast from one country, ideological camp or interest group to another. In the “battle over the hearts and minds” of the people of the world, learning from one's enemy or competitor is considered legitimate.⁶⁸ China is no exception. Over the course of the 20th century and into the 21st century, it appropriated several different propaganda discourses as well as concepts of propaganda that are part of different ideologies or ways of ordering and explaining the world. The CPC has adjusted its external propaganda apparatus and practices to better adapt it to the changing international environment in a continuous interaction with other countries' propaganda concepts and strategies as well as a global media landscape with its own routines and values.

⁶⁸ See for instance Liu Yaming 刘雅鸣 and Li Pei 李珮, “Quanqiu chuanbo shidai woguo duiwai xuanchuan xin chulu (san) – Di yi shijian fachu shengyin waixuan bixu xian fa zhi ren” 全球传播时代我国对外宣传新出路（三）——第一次发出声音外宣必须先发制人 [A new way out for China's external propaganda in the era of global communication (three) – Starting with the first sound external propaganda needs to gain the upper hand by releasing news first], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2004): 19.

Second, previous choices and previous institutional arrangements have exerted an influence on what reforms can and cannot be achieved and can explain difficulties encountered. Although the CPC has proven extremely flexible and pragmatic in its overall propaganda reform efforts,⁶⁹ it appears to have difficulties improving some aspects of its external propaganda apparatus, despite substantial political will and financial commitment. In order to solve this puzzle, I propose to investigate the history of Chinese external propaganda from a perspective of path dependence, used loosely. Originally developed to explain inefficient yet persistent modes of operation or technology such as the survival of the QWERTY key board,⁷⁰ path dependence has been used extensively in economics and has also been adopted in other branches of the social sciences, including political science.⁷¹ The basic idea behind arguments of path dependence is that earlier choices tend to have immense consequences in the future because it is difficult to reverse them without paying a price. Margaret Levi has offered an apt metaphor:

“[...] once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high. There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice. Perhaps the better metaphor is a tree, rather than a path. From the same trunk, there are many different branches and smaller branches. Although it is possible to turn around or to clamber from one to the other - and essential if the chosen branch dies - the branch on which a climber begins is the one she tends to follow.”⁷²

Here, the appropriation of different propaganda concepts over the course of the history of the PRC becomes relevant again. What makes the Chinese case a particularly interesting object for the study how a previous path affects current options and how subsequent constraints can be overcome is the fact that China has adopted aspects from radically different models of organizing society in general

⁶⁹ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 65-87.

⁷⁰ The QWERTY key board was originally created for type writers. Letters were arranged to intentionally slow people typing down in order to prevent bars from jamming. The QWERTY key board is maintained in the English-speaking world despite the fact that computer keys cannot jam because people had become used to the order of the keys.

⁷¹ Cf. Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251-267.

⁷² Margaret Levi, “A Model, a Method, and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis,” In Mark I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28.

and the media and propaganda in particular, namely the Soviet model and the “Western” model. China has worked with and combined different concepts of propaganda stemming from what could be called different versions of modernity or ways of organizing modern society. Although one of them is considered a “failed modernity,”⁷³ vital aspects of the Soviet or Soviet-inspired way of organizing modern mass society survive in the CPC’s concept of propaganda and its vision of the role of the media until today.⁷⁴ How and to what extent has the CPC been able to reverse its course? Is it trying to climb up a dead branch; has it climbed back down; has it leapt to another branch; or is the Soviet-inspired branch perhaps not dead at all?

In the case of Chinese external propaganda, path dependence can potentially be applied to several different levels: As implied above, there is the question how the choice of copying the Soviet model in the 1950s has affected any later reforms. This includes the concept of propaganda in general and its place in the overall ideological universe as much as concrete institutions and practices. At the most basic level, it is costly to change certain external propaganda practices because personnel need to be retrained. At higher levels, this may entail clashes between new practices and old values. There is also the issue of bureaucratic resistance: It is difficult both to reorganize a sector and to change existing practices because different groups and people at higher and lower levels in the Chinese bureaucracy have a stake in the status quo. In this last area, a certain degree of path dependence in the external propaganda sector has been demonstrated in existing secondary literature. John Jirik’s study on the transformation of CCTV-International has shown that it is difficult to change both existing practices and existing hierarchies in the Chinese bureaucracy.⁷⁵ While the concrete information

⁷³ Stephen R. Graubard, “Preface,” in *Multiple Modernities*, ed. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000), ix. The article in the volume that Graubard sums up with this remark is Johann P. Arnason, “Communism and Modernity,” 61-90.

⁷⁴ Cf. Nicolai Volland, *The Control of the Media in the People’s Republic of China* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 2003).

⁷⁵ John Jirik has documented the failures of an attempt to turn CCTV into a 24 hour news channel in 2004 in his PhD dissertation. The first obstacles to reforming the channel as planned came from within the unit itself, as the production teams affected opposed the changes that the reform plan mandated. The producers of the feature programs began to negotiate their position and ultimately succeeded in framing their existing programs as necessary to CCTV’s continued function as a “window on China.” The second obstacle was the fact that CCTV-9 had just undergone a make-over shortly before, in 2003 and simply did not have the capacities to organize another revamp, particularly without sufficient staff. Third, the plan involved

Jirik could draw on as an advisor to CCTV is hard to come by for outsiders, path dependence, in the sense that initial choices tend to be difficult to reverse, still provides a promising approach to explain the development of Chinese external propaganda as well as the remaining problems in the sector.

1.3 Definition of Propaganda

As briefly indicated above, some authors have suggested to analyze the transformation of Chinese influence operations at home and abroad as a move away from propaganda and towards a different mode of communication, whereas Brady, for example, analyzes the changes as a way to adapt the Chinese understanding and practices of propaganda to the new environment. In this thesis, I adopt a broader definition of propaganda that subsumes both techniques and practices as practiced in relatively closed off totalitarian or authoritarian societies and those developed for democratic settings.

The term propaganda is a pejorative word in English today and has largely been turned into a political instrument to delegitimize the activities of opponents. Because of this, a number of alternative terms have been coined to describe activities related to propaganda: political communication, publicity, perception management, public relations, outreach, public diplomacy, etc. Initially, many of these were explicitly coined as euphemisms,⁷⁶ but since then, much energy has been spent to distinguish them from propaganda.⁷⁷ The Socialist camp on the other hand, retained the term propaganda in an act of defiance: As Marxists, they

cooperation between CCTV, Xinhua, and CRI as well as with Shanghai TV, none of which manifested despite calls from high ranking cadres to join forces. As these alternative sources of programs failed and CCTV was forced to produce almost all of the content on its own, the leadership began to fall back on the rhetoric originally developed by the Feature production team to defend their programs when revising the plans for reform. During the relaunch, the planned establishment of an assignment desk also failed because it did not align with existing authority structures in the news production process and thus evoked strong opposition from those defending the status quo. Cf. Jirik, "Making News in the People's Republic of China: The Case of CCTV-9," 215-237.

⁷⁶ For instance, Edward Guillon, who is credited with inventing the modern usage of the term public diplomacy, preferred propaganda, but felt the term could no longer be used because of its negative connotations and therefore used public diplomacy as an alternative. See Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase," in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, eds. Snow and Taylor, 19.

⁷⁷ Cf. Thymian Bussemer, *Propaganda: Konzepte und Theorien* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 382-385. See for example John Brown, "Public Diplomacy & Propaganda," *American Diplomacy*, September 2008. http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2008/0709/comm/brown_pudiplprop.html, accessed November 19, 2012.

argued, they were proud to spread the truth to gain the support of the people and thus propel history in the right direction. Unlike the bourgeoisie, which denied engaging in reactionary propaganda to slow down the progress of history and their own demise, Marxists were on the right side of history and could be honest and proud about their actions.⁷⁸

While using different terms, such as political communication or publicity, to refer to various activities carried out by different actors has some merit, the activities they refer to have a common purpose: They all constitute attempts to influence the perception of publics through selective presentation of information and argument, either in order to get others to act in a certain manner or to diminish objection to one's own actions. Thus, the use of different terms is veiling connections between related activities with common roots and further contributes to the fragmentation of the field of propaganda studies.

In setting a working definition of propaganda for this thesis, I return to the first theoretical explorations of the topic during the first half of the 20th century, when terms such as propaganda and publicity were still used interchangeably. In an article from 1927, Harold Lasswell defined propaganda as “the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols.”⁷⁹ The word “attitude” was used by Lasswell to refer to “a tendency to act according to certain patterns of valuation.”⁸⁰ This definition –one of the earliest– already contains most of the core ingredients: Propaganda consists of a range of techniques that are intended to manipulate symbols of communication, with the aim of shaping human perception and consequently influence both short-term and long-term behavior of the target group. Another core ingredient, which Lasswell's definition does not state explicitly but rather presumes is the notion of the public: The idea that the opinion of large sections of or of the entire population of a political unit matters because it can facilitate, restrict, or otherwise influence the exercise of power. This new concept of the “public” is what distinguishes propaganda as a broad cross-temporal practice from propaganda as a specific phenomenon that spread around the world in the 20th century and that I examine in this thesis.

⁷⁸ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda: Konzepte und Theorien*, 28.

⁷⁹ Harold Lasswell, “The Theory of Political Propaganda,” *The American Political Science Review* 21, no. 3 (1927): 627.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

This definition of propaganda as first laid down by Lasswell, however, is still very broad. For a narrower definition, there is an additional ingredient that was routinely used in the first half of the 20th century to distinguish between propaganda in the broad and in the narrow sense:⁸¹ An organizational structure to plan propaganda activities (usually with a budget to fund it). An institutional structure with a budget can refer to state or party institutions, but also the public relations (PR) departments of corporations, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other types of organizations. Propaganda thus is a particular mode of communication before the public that is organized and funded. Propaganda as a mode of communication goes beyond verbal communication through the mass media. It can include other symbolic acts, although doing so before the eyes of the public usually means transmission through the mass media.

Propaganda does not take place in a vacuum in which one group simply spreads its message. Either directly or indirectly it always replies to a particular countertext. Thus, propaganda is not only concerned with proactively getting a particular message out, but also with reactive measures to deal with propaganda spread by one's opponents, including direct replies, indirect replies, discrediting the source of a message, or censorship of the message. Usually, even the proactive propaganda agenda devised by governments reacts to outside concerns or propaganda spread by other groups. Although measures such as censorship and the blocking of information flows will play a role time and again in this thesis, they are more relevant for domestic propaganda, and even there, the CPC increasingly focuses on proactive measures. Thus, while this thesis will include more detailed analyses of direct and indirect replies to "attacks" from foreigners, it only addresses censorship where this is directly relevant to the mode in which propaganda targeted at foreigners can be conducted. By contrast, for each period, I will include domestic propaganda in order to examine how the concept and practice of domestic propaganda impacted on external propaganda work.

⁸¹ See for example Wu Yuzhen 吴榆珍, "Xuanchuan ji qi yingxiang yu Zhongguo shehui bianhua de taolun" 宣传及其影响于中国社会变化的讨论 [A discussion of propaganda and its impacts on the transformations in Chinese society], *Shehui xuejie* 社会学界 [World/Circles of sociology], no. 4 (1930):199. Although Lasswell does not include the existence of an organization in his definition, he also speaks about different types of organizations behind propaganda and thus implicitly assumes them as an important part of propaganda. Lasswell, "The Theory of Political Propaganda," 629.

1.4 Sources and Strategies

While I have also conducted a small number of interviews and analyzed some of the output of China's media targeted at foreigners, my main basis for this thesis are different sets of Chinese language source material. The sources available for each decade naturally differ both in type and in number for each period. During the Republican period, there was a very vivid and open debate on propaganda, which was initially stifled after the PRC was established. In the Mao period, the topic was rarely discussed in open or semi-open publications. Instead, more detailed discussions largely took place in administrative documents with a very limited circulation range. Those involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA, *Waijiaobu* 外交部) are available at the MFA's archive.⁸² In addition, internal journals primarily concerned with domestic propaganda work, such as *Propaganda Newsletter* (*Xuanchuan tongxun* 宣传通讯) and *Propaganda and Education Dynamics* (*Xuanjiao dongtai* 宣教动态), also occasionally carried articles on external propaganda. Over the course of the last 40 years, the external propaganda debate has again gradually moved into the public realm as a result of both intensified debates, more people interested in the topic, and a lifting of restrictions on discussing external propaganda openly: In the 1970s and 1980s, for which archival records have not yet been declassified, more widespread discussion in internal journals was added, and a number of policy documents have been made available in document collections. Starting in the mid-1990s, in the wake of the policy to involve more bureaucratic organizations within the Party-state, public journals began to carry articles on external propaganda. Then, in the 21st century, articles on the topic cropped up everywhere, resulting in an explosion of material available for analysis. Given this development as well as the difference in approaches, the main sources used for each chapter also differ, in some cases significantly. However, the most important material and approaches used for this thesis shall be introduced here briefly.

My first type of sources consists of relatively authoritative documents, including government circulars issued within the propaganda and the external

⁸² The MFA Archive was opened in 2004 and offers access to declassified diplomatic documents. The declassification process is ongoing; when I visited the archive, documents from up to the mid-1960s were available. For an introduction to the archive, see Amanda Shuman, "Foreign Ministry Archives of the PRC," *Dissertation Reviews*, February 14, 2012, <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/936>, accessed March 1, 2013.

propaganda sector. A number of these documents have been made available in the form of document collections.⁸³ Another important collection of authoritative sources has been handbooks, most importantly *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* (*Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作), first issued on a trial basis in 2001⁸⁴ and then republished in 2006 in a second revised version that included a section on external propaganda.⁸⁵ Articles on external propaganda work published in the *People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报), the mouthpiece of the CPC, also fall into the category of authoritative documents. Finally, I will use speeches of former leading cadres in the external propaganda sector, which have been preserved in a series of collections.⁸⁶

Second, I will draw on twenty-five years (1981 to 2005) of issues of the journal *External Propaganda Reference* (*Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考) edited by Xinhua News Agency. *External Propaganda Reference* was initially launched under the name *External Reporting* (*Duiwai baodao* 对外报道) in

⁸³ Most importantly Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting zhongyang dang'anguan bianyanbu 中共中央宣传部办公厅中央档案馆编研部 [Editorial and Research Department of the General Office of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC], ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian: 1915-1937* 中国共产党 宣传工 作文献 选编: 1915-1937 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China: 1915-1937] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1994); Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中共中央宣传部办公厅 [Office of the Central Propaganda Department], ed., *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenjian (1951-1992)* 党的宣传工作会议概 况和文献(1951-1992) [Overview and documents from the Party's propaganda work conferences (1951-1992)] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994); and, for the local level, Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People's Government of Shandong Province], eds., *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编 (1992-1998) [Document collection on Shandong Province's external propaganda work (1992-1998)] (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1999).

⁸⁴ Zhongxuanbu ganbuju 中宣部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2001).

⁸⁵ Zhongxuanbu ganbuju 中宣部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2006).

⁸⁶ For instance, for the first director, Zhu Muzhi, the most important collections are Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, *Zhu Muzhi lun duiwai xuanchuan* 朱穆之论对外宣传 [Zhu Muzhi speaks about external propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 1995) and Zhu Muzhi, *Fengyun jidang qishi nian* 风云激荡七十年 [70 turbulent years] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2007). For the second director, Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, the most important collection is Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan* 融冰,架桥,突围:曾建徽论对外宣传 [Melting the ice, building bridges, breaking through: Zeng Jianhui on external propaganda], 2 vols. (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006).

1973⁸⁷ and was intended for internal circulation within Xinhua News Agency only. In June 1981, it was renamed *External Reporting Reference* (*Duiwai baodao cankao* 对外报道参考) and began to be distributed more widely, i.e. also to recipients in the external propaganda system not working for Xinhua 新华.⁸⁸ In 1984, the journal was again renamed, this time *External Propaganda Reference*.⁸⁹ Since issue ten (October) 1989, the journal has been supervised by the highest external propaganda organization in the Party.⁹⁰ As the title already implies, it is only intended for “reference” purposes, meaning that the journal does not include direct orders to external propaganda workers and work units. The journal’s purpose is to provide reports of local and sectoral external propaganda to other units, to publish external propaganda policies and slogans devised by the Center, publish analyses of failed or successful external propaganda initiatives, both past and present, Chinese and foreign, and to brief readers on other countries and their take on China.⁹¹ Issues of the journal from 1981 to 2005 are available at the National Library (*Guojia tushuguan* 国家图书馆) in Beijing 北京. This already shows that although it used to be intended for “internal distribution” (*neibu faxing* 内部发行) only, *External Propaganda Reference* is not a strictly controlled

⁸⁷ “Zhongyao qishi” 重要启事 [Important announcement], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 9 (1989): 8. It should be pointed out that before *Duiwai baodao*, there were other journals published internally within Xinhua with the intent to circulate experience on reporting for external audiences, such as *Duiwai xinwen yewu jiaoliu* 对外新闻业务交流 ([Journal for the] Exchange [regarding work experience in the] external news business), which was first published in the early 1960s. Cf. Yang Jinzhou 杨金洲 and Yang Guoren 杨国仁, “Xingshi, renwu, tiaozhan, jiyu – xie zai xin shiji kaiyuan zhi ji” 形势·任务·挑战·机遇——写在新世纪开元之际 [The situation, responsibilities, challenges, opportunities – Written on the occasion of the new century], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 1 (2001): 3. Another source states that *Duiwai baodao* was launched in 1976, so the 1973 journal may have been published under yet another different name and renamed *Duiwai baodao* in 1976. Cf. “Zhi duzhe” 致读者 [To the readers], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1981): 2.

⁸⁸ Cf. “Zhi duzhe.”

⁸⁹ The reason provided by the journal’s editors was that the old name did not capture the full scope of what the journal covered. Cf. “*Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* (yuan ming *Duiwai baodao cankao*) zhengqiu 1984 nian xia ban nian dinghu” 《对外宣传参考》(原名《对外报道参考》) 征求 1984 年下半年订户 [*External propaganda reference* (formerly called *External reporting reference*) seeking subscribers for the second half of 1984], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (1984): n.p.

⁹⁰ Cf. “Zhongyao qishi,” 8. At the time, that was the Bureau of External Propaganda at the Central Propaganda Department; today, it is Office of External Propaganda, also known as the State Council Information Office. These organizations will be introduced below in chapters 5, 6, and 8.

⁹¹ Cf. “Huanying dingyue Xinhua tongxunshu 2005 niandu *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*” 欢迎订阅新华通讯社 2005 年度《对外宣传参考》 [Invitation to subscribe to Xinhua News Agency’s *External Propaganda Reference* for the year 2005], note at the back of issue 10 (2004): n.p.

journal.⁹² Over the course of its existence, the target audience was continuously broadened and requirements to subscribe lowered. Nonetheless, it contains material not published in openly available journals as well as vital clues as to what the CPC wants its external propaganda workers to know and take into consideration.

Third, the most important source to analyze the organizational and hierarchical set up of the CPC and Chinese government agencies is *Materials on the History of Organization of the Communist Party of China* (*Zhonggong zuzhishi ziliao* 中共组织史资料), which covers institutional changes up to the year 1997/1998.⁹³ For more up-to-date versions, I will use official Chinese government and party websites, which usually provide an overview of their internal structure (*jigou shezhi* 机构设置), as well as reports on institutional structures or activities in the media.

Fourth, I will draw on a number of fulltext databases. For the period before 1949, the most important databases were the Early Chinese Periodical Database Dacheng Data (*Dacheng laojiu kan quanwen shujuku* 大成老旧刊全文数据库),⁹⁴ and the Shanghai-based *National Index of Papers and Journals* (*Quanguo baokan suoyin* 全国报刊索引).⁹⁵ The most important resources that I used for the time after 1949 are *Duxiu* 读秀, the databases of the *China National Knowledge Infrastructure* (CNKI, *Guojia zhishi jichu sheshi* 国家知识基础设施), and the

⁹² It has no longer been marked “internal distribution” (*neibu faxing*) since the early 21st century, although it is presumably still restricted to Chinese readers in the mainland.

⁹³ *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui* 中国共产党组织史资料编审委员会 [Editorial committee for Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 [Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China]. Vol. 6, “*Wen hua da ge ming*” *shiqi, 1966.5-1976.10* [The period of the “cultural revolution”, 1966.5-1976.10]. Vol. 7: *Shehui zhuyi shiye fazhan xin shiqi, 1976.10-1997.9* 社会主义事业发展新时期: 1976.10-1997.9 [The new period of developing the socialist enterprise: 1976.10-1997.9]. Appended vol. 1 [vol. A1], *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhengquan zuzhi, 1949.10-1997.9* 中华人民共和国政权组织, 1949.10-1997.9 [The political organization of the People’s Republic of China, 1949.10-1997.9] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000).

⁹⁴ Dacheng Data contains about 7000 periodicals from the late Qing period until 1949. Cf. “Women you shenme” 我们有什么 [What do we have], website of the Early Chinese Periodical Database Dacheng Data <http://www.dachengdata.com/search/toRealIndex.action>, accessed March 1, 2013.

⁹⁵ Quanguo baokan suoyin contains journals published between 1833 and today. Cf. “Guanyu women” 关于我们 [About us], Website of the National Index to Chinese Newspapers and Periodicals, http://www.cnbkysy.cn/shlib_tsd/article/frontForm.do?articleId=38, accessed December 14, 2012.

database of the journal *Reference News* (*Cankao Xiaoxi* 参考消息). *Duxiu* is a massive database run by a Beijing-based company that allows for full-text search of a large number of monographs, journals, newspapers as well as other information resources mostly from the PRC but also including some earlier materials and material published outside of the mainland.⁹⁶ Through *Duxiu*, I have had full text access to several dozens of monographs on propaganda and external propaganda, including handbooks, translated works, and scholarly works produced in the PRC. CNKI, associated with Qinghua University, is a platform integrating several research resources from the PRC.⁹⁷ It offers access, among others, to China Academic Journals (CAJ), which contains several thousands of journals published in the PRC in fulltext, and a database of doctoral and M.A. theses from PRC universities.

The material at hand is marked by a contradiction that needs to be addressed in order to make the analysis feasible and generate meaningful findings. On the one hand, the volume of sources available is massive. On the other hand, as China's external propaganda work is among the policy fields in which much background information and documents about the decision making process are simply not available. Thus, the challenge is to extract as much information from the large quantity of Chinese language source material that *is* out in the open without getting lost. I will adopt a number of reading strategies both to navigate the large volume of texts and to generate information that remains classified. In each chapter, the strategies adopted differ slightly, but the most important can be summed up as follows:

First, I will use a combination of inductive and deductive reading of my source material. For each period in the post-Mao period, I will locate the most important policy document or speech which sets the agenda for that particular period as well as identify the most important decisions about external propaganda policy taken at the highest level. Major changes in focus in large numbers of texts at the lower level give clues as to the timing and content of a new policy

⁹⁶ A lot of the material indexed is available in full text or in excerpts. The publisher is Beijing Superstar Information Technology Co. Ltd.

⁹⁷ Cf. "Zhongguo zhishi jichu sheshi gongcheng" 中国知识基础设施工程 [China Knowledge Infrastructure], <http://cnki.net/gycnki/gycnki.htm>, accessed December 14, 2012.

document, speech, or decision, which then makes it possible to search for it in a more focused manner. While more recent policy documents are not available in full text, it is often possible to find excerpts in academic articles or to reconstruct them on the basis of particular wordings that appear verbatim in large numbers of articles. Once the existence and in many cases the content of a particular document is known, it then becomes possible to read the debate in academic and professional journals in a more structured manner.

Second, I will use examples of local external propaganda structures to better understand how external propaganda at the central level functions. Likewise, local external propaganda organizations often provide more concrete information about specific policies they pursue. Thus, reading local documents allows some (though limited) inferences about central policies.

Third, most formal writing, such as speeches, circulars, and scholarly works are written in the language of the Marxist-derived “theory system with Chinese characteristics.” While such statements are often dismissed, I argue that much can be gained by understanding what they actually mean. Knowledge of the ideological universe and the terminology in which it is presented makes it possible to pick up certain nuances and changes that are otherwise overlooked. I argue in this thesis that rhetorical upgrades matter, and that, in order to spot them, it is necessary to understand the language in which the conversation on external propaganda takes place. More importantly, in order to understand certain constraints on policy options in the external propaganda sector exist, it is important to understand how the CPC frames reality as much as to know the purpose of propaganda and external propaganda as they are seen within this ideological universe.

Fourth, a key feature of communication in China is the use of slogans (*tifa* 提法). Often, summaries of speeches by high-level leaders consist of little but lists of the most recent slogans. With regard to interpreting texts in general and slogans in particular, it is important to be aware that things that are said or written have a context-specific meaning. In reverse, this means that use of the same slogan, either in different fields or across time, should never be assumed to mean that the content behind the slogan is the same, although use of a slogan in other fields can sometimes provide important clues as to its meaning in external propaganda work.

Therefore, I have used a number of approaches how to understand slogans in their specific context that will be introduced in the main body of the dissertation.

1.5 Structure

I have chosen the form of a political history in order to be able to analyze how earlier choices limit later choices and how the path Chinese external propaganda currently finds itself on emerged and was consolidated through a series of events and decisions taken. The main body is divided into three parts that will proceed largely chronologically, with occasional in-depth excursions on specific topics as well as necessary background information.

Part I, consisting of chapters two and three, examines the development of Chinese external propaganda before the official beginning of economic reforms in 1978. This part's purpose is to demonstrate different ways of understanding propaganda in China's past and to understand the historical trajectory of external propaganda that influenced China's options later. It analyzes the legacy from the Republican period (1911-1949), in which different models and understandings of propaganda coexisted and what happened to them after the founding of the PRC, when the CPC systematically emulated the Soviet model. In order to understand the CPC's take on external propaganda as well as many of the current debates taking place, the second chapter illustratively dissects different understandings and genealogies of the concept of propaganda in China since the beginning of the 20th century and thus traces how key beliefs and ideas related to propaganda came about, changed, and continued to develop. I will show that propaganda came to China as part of different modernization packages via different groups of intermediaries and that rivaling concepts clashed, and merged within the Chinese context. With the founding of the PRC, the environment in which external propaganda was discussed and implemented changed entirely. The third chapter therefore analyzes the new institutional environment that China's external propaganda apparatus became a part of as well as the dispute between different factions over whether external propaganda should serve revolutionary goals or state-to-state diplomacy. Although the Communist Party of China (CPC, Gongchandang 共产党) had been exposed to very different ways of understanding propaganda, it chose a particular path after the founding of the People's Republic

of China (PRC), taking the first step towards the institutional dilemma it currently finds itself in now that other approaches the CPC rejected temporarily have regained in importance.

The choices of the Mao period did not irreversibly define the path China was bound to take. In the 1980s, there was a serious possibility that the overall domestic propaganda apparatus might be reformed before the CPC decided to fortify it after 1989. **Part II**, consisting of chapters four, five, and six, covering the period 1977 to 2002, tries to answer how the changes in the CPC's general line and in the importance attached to domestic propaganda work affected external propaganda. It examines how external propaganda cadres and other actors within the CPC repeatedly tried to change external propaganda policy and concrete conventions in order to make it serve the new Party line against the backdrop of institutional and ideological constraints and changes in the political climate. By looking at the many subtle and major changes Chinese external propaganda has undergone since the late 1970s, it is possible to better understand the problems China current faces and moreover to gain insight into the dynamics of policy processes in the PRC. Chapter four takes a systematic approach and provides the background on the institutional and ideological environment of the PRC in the post-Mao period that anyone joining the policy debate has to operate within. Chapter five examines the development of external propaganda in the 1980s as the CPC's overall propaganda and media policy came under attack. Chapter six analyzes how China's external propaganda changed against the backdrop of tense international relations as well as a reinforced domestic propaganda apparatus during the era of Jiang Zemin 江泽民.

Part III addresses the current round of external propaganda after the field was formally defined as a matter of national security and social stability by the CPC in 2003/2004. It asks why external propaganda was upgraded in importance at this particular point in time, how this upgrade has been translated into reforms and new initiatives, and how proponents of external propaganda have tried to overcome and circumvent institutional obstacles that cannot be removed completely. This part is not an assessment of China's soft power or its ability to communicate successfully with foreign publics, but rather asks to what extent the added urgency after 2003 has led to conceptual and institutional reforms. In

chapter seven, I will explain why external propaganda became so important to the CPC at this particular juncture in time and illustrate the changes that followed the upgrade. Chapter eight examines the bureaucratic structures behind China's external propaganda efforts, how they coordinate their work and what conflicts exist between different players within the bureaucracy. Chapter nine analyzes the problems faced in one of the key areas of external propaganda, namely China's media, as they try to establish a name and credibility for themselves in the international arena.

Finally, on the basis of the findings of the three parts, the conclusion will explain how and under the influence of which types of factors the Chinese understanding and practice of external propaganda has changed and to what extent path dependence has played a role in the development of Chinese external propaganda. While it is not the goal of this book to assess to what extent Chinese external propaganda has been “successful” in improving China's image and influencing international public opinion –an issue that hinges on a lot of factors, many of which are outside of the control of the CPC– I will point out basic problems standing in the way of realizing reforms, such as conflicts between different bureaucracies, conflicts between different policies that are supposed to be implemented simultaneously, as well as incentive structures that prevent the implementation of certain policies.

Part I

Choosing a Path for China?

Chinese External Propaganda between Different Social and
Political Imaginaries before 1976

2 Between the Western and the Soviet Model: Propaganda in China before 1949

“The initiative in introducing propaganda as a regular instrument of international relations must be credited to the Soviet Government. The causes of this were partly accidental. The Bolsheviks, when they seized power in Russia, found themselves desperately weak in the ordinary military and economic weapons of international conflict. The principal element of strength in their position was their influence over opinion in other countries; and it was therefore natural and necessary that they should exploit this weapon to the utmost.”¹

--- E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 1939

In the late 19th and early 20th century, in the midst of several crises after having been defeated first by the Western powers in the two opium wars and by Japan in 1895, China underwent a major reconfiguration of world order from an empire with China at the center of civilization to a nation-state based world order, in which all “civilized” nations interacted with one another on equal terms, but in which China painfully found itself at the bottom of the hierarchy, not recognized as an equal by the Western powers and forced to cede parts of its territory. In the conceptual and institutional rearrangements that China underwent in search for renewed strength to overcome this power asymmetry both before and after the fall of the Qing 清 dynasty, different foreign models played key roles at different though often overlapping times. One core idea that reached Chinese elites as early as in the 19th century was the need to manage public opinion through instruments such as the press.

In 1939, when Edward Carr published what is today considered one of the earliest works of International Relations (IR) theory, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, he included a distinction between military power, economic power, and “power over opinion.” Exercising “power over opinion,” according to Carr, was initially the weapon of choice of the militarily and economically weak Soviet Union and spread from there to become a regular instrument of diplomacy in times of peace in the inter-war years. China, however, saw itself not only in a weak position

¹ Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1954, second edition), 137.

militarily and economically, but also in terms of “power over opinion.” The crucial media links between China and the world and between different parts of the country were in the hands of foreigners with extraterritorial privileges located in foreign settlements. Thus, during the late Qing period, there was already a sentiment that the key media represented foreign interests, and in order to reassert itself, China needed to control press instruments of its own.² Later, as the distinction between military power, economic power, and power over public opinion, or “propaganda power,” began to establish itself in China as part of a massive appropriation of ideas from abroad, Chinese elites recognized this area as a chance for China to catch up more easily than in terms of military and economic power. As China’s conflict with Japan gradually escalated over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, propaganda began to be increasingly seen as a crucial instrument both to rally domestic resistance and to gain the support of foreign publics.³

Most Chinese authors tend to point out that there is a radical disconnect between the English word *propaganda* and the Chinese term *xuanchuan* 宣传.⁴ They are right, of course, that *propaganda* is largely derogative in the English language today, whereas *xuanchuan* is predominantly used either in a positive or in a neutral sense in mainland China. However, this was not always the case. The notion of “power over opinion,” and its weapon of choice, propaganda, can be considered key concepts that shaped how people analyzed and debated various aspects of politics and society in the 20th century. Propaganda was practiced by and in different countries, under different political systems, became part of different ideologies and social and political imaginaries⁵ and was known under many different names. It dominated theories of politics and government, the

² Cf. Natascha Vittinghoff, *Die Anfänge des Journalismus in China* [The origins of journalism in China] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002).

³ Cf. Shuge Wei, “To Win the West: China’s Propaganda in the English-Language Press, 1928-1941” (PhD diss. Australian National University, 2012).

⁴ E.g. Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celiue yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 2-3; Gan Xianfeng 甘险峰, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国对外新闻传播史 [A history of China’s external news communication] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004), 11.

⁵ The concept of the social imaginary was introduced by Cornelius Castoriadis to refer to the mental constructs underlying and thus also creating a particular social or political order. Cf. Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writing on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, translated by David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 84-85.

organization of mass and social movements, as much as practices and assumptions in the world of corporations and businesses. In the first half of the 20th century, as China looked for ways to strengthen itself, it simultaneously absorbed several of these propaganda discourses.

Although there is more than enough source material, no study to date has dealt with the colorful history of how and under what circumstances the concept of propaganda was appropriated in China through different routes and became accepted – though amidst some controversy – as a tool for realizing one’s policy objectives among different groups and factions. Today, full text databases have made it possible to search for different uses of the term *xuanchuan* across a broad range of sources and identify the most important issues in the debate while at the same time challenging the standard narrative of the history of propaganda in China, illustrating the breadth of what was discussed, the variety of propaganda concepts adapted, of how this happened, and of which common themes can be discerned across different interest groups as well as across time. Chinese domestic and international propaganda are not unexplored topics per se, but the focus of attention thus far has been external propaganda practice, not the underlying ideas about propaganda. More importantly, secondary literature addresses specific aspects and is thus spread out across different areas.⁶ As mentioned in the Introduction, there are some overviews of the history of propaganda and external propaganda published in China, but those tend to follow a very strict political

⁶ For example, a number of works on Chinese wartime international propaganda exist: The earliest work was published in 1938: Bruno Lasker and Agnes Roman, *Propaganda from China and Japan: A Case Study in Propaganda Analysis* (American Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1938). More recent studies include Yong Z. Volz, “China’s Image Management Abroad, 1920s-1940s: Origin, Justification, and Institutionalization, in *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 157-179; Tsuchida Akio, “China’s ‘Public Diplomacy’ toward the United States before Pearl Harbor,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 17 (2010): 35-55. For domestic propaganda, there are a number of works on Chinese efforts as part of the resistance against Japan, e.g. Chapter 9 in Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). GMD rituals in citizen-making, which could also be categorized as part of the overall propaganda enterprise, have been analyzed: Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Moreover, various works on the role of foreigners and foreign journalists in China also touch on the topic of propaganda: E.g. Stephen R. MacKinnon, *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Paul French, *Through the Looking Glass: China’s Foreign Journalists from Opium Wars to Mao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

narrative.⁷ In line with Chinese Marxist conventions of historiography, the history of Chinese external propaganda is divided into successive and overall progressing periods.⁸

The most basic aim of this chapter is to analyze how the term *xuanchuan* 宣传 was understood in China before 1949 in an environment that was marked by a sense of crisis as much as by a plurality of interest groups and lack of a single authority controlling the Chinese territory. Although the Communist Party of China (CPC, Gongchandang 共产党) had been exposed to very different ways of understanding propaganda, it chose a particular path after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), taking the first step towards the institutional dilemma it currently finds itself in now that other approaches the CPC rejected temporarily have regained in importance. To understand the complex history of how different propaganda concepts were translated into the Chinese context helps to understand the dilemmas PRC external propaganda has been facing since the early 1950s. It also forms the first step in elucidating the dilemma Chinese foreign language media have found themselves in since the 1990s, trying to switch from one propaganda model and set of practices to another.

Analytically, this chapter has three dimensions: First, it examines Chinese propaganda concepts and practices as part of larger global trends. Second, it traces the merging and clashing of different discourses, and third, it identifies themes and practices that persist until today or reappeared again at a later point in time.

In the analysis, I will use approaches that can broadly be associated with conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*).⁹ Conceptual history analyzes the

⁷ For propaganda and journalism in general, see for instance Fang Hanqi 方汉奇, *Zhongguo jindai baokan shi* 中国近代报刊史 [A history of the modern press in China] (Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1981). For external propaganda, see for example Gan Xianfeng 甘险峰, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国对外新闻传播史 [A history of China's external news communication] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004).

⁸ For instance, according to Gan Xianfeng, the first period, the “incubation period” or “preparation period” (*yunniang shiqi* 酝酿时期), took place between the late 19th century and 1937. The second period, the “initial period” (*qibuqi* 起步期), lasted from the beginning of the full-scale war of resistance against Japan in 1937 until the proclamation of the PRC on October 1, 1949. The third period, which began with the founding of the PRC and ended with the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution is called the “fully operating period” (*quanmian kaizhan qi* 全面开展期) by Gan Xianfeng. The fourth period, the “wavering period” (*paihuaiqi* 徘徊期) during which China's external propaganda suffered serious setbacks, encompasses the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. The fifth and final period, the “period of rapid development” (*xunsu fazhan qi* 迅速发展期), which Gan does not formally subdivide into stages, began in 1976 and continues until this day. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai chuanbo shi*, 12, 51, 136, 196, 208.

changing meanings of concepts, but because its main unit of analysis has been a lexeme in a single language and its changing underlying meanings, it has mainly been applied within artificial national contexts and disregarded the fact that major concepts and ideas cross borders through transnational networks, translations of texts, loan translations of individual terms, and continued conversations about the same idea that transcend national languages and national borders. I therefore seek to make a contribution to the sub-discipline of conceptual history by applying it to a transnational and translanguing context.

The analysis includes concepts of propaganda in the domestic and international realm that share some common roots, but developed in different directions before being appropriated in China. In the analysis, I will refer to different discourses on propaganda. Discourses can be compared to foreign languages that need to be learned and that can provide the speakers with a unique perspective on a particular topic.¹⁰ Discourses, understood as ways of framing and discussing a particular topic or phenomenon, provide a certain perspective; they come with a specific vocabulary, shared assumptions and usually a limited range of positions that can be articulated without being dismissed by the discourse community.¹¹ To help discern different intellectual and political trends and schools of thought with regard to the concept of propaganda I will use the concept of man (*Menschenbild*) and concept of world order underlying a particular propaganda discourse.¹² The concept of man and ideas about the relationship between masses and elites are important primarily for domestic propaganda, whereas the concept of the nation and ideas about how the world is structured influences external propaganda. While the overall focus of this dissertation is on propaganda targeted at foreigners, including propaganda discourses primarily

⁹ The most famous work of the approach of conceptual history is *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* [Basic concepts in history: A historical encyclopedia of political and social language in Germany], ed. Reinhardt Koselleck, published in eight volumes (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972-1997).

¹⁰ Cf. Frank Fischer, *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 42.

¹¹ For instance, two different ways of speaking about and conceptualizing external propaganda are the 'mutual understanding' discourse and the 'national interest' discourse. The first sees external propaganda as a way of furthering understanding between different peoples, whereas the second insists that external propaganda needs to serve the national interest.

¹² I take the approach to focus on the concept of man from Thymian Bussemer's *Propaganda. Konzepte und Theorien* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008). The focus on different ways of ordering the world was inspired by Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Century* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).

centered on the domestic realm is vital first, in order to illustrate the differences in development and origin between domestic and external propaganda in China and, second, in order to understand the origins of concepts of domestic propaganda in China, which have interfered with China's propaganda targeted at foreigners both in the past and today.

In order to make this chapter feasible in light of the massive amount of data, I have approached the source material from three different directions. First, I have taken the ideas behind the concept of propaganda in the narrow, modern sense as defined in the introduction and analyzed briefly how propaganda-related ideas were discussed in China before the term *xuanchuan* became commonplace in the 1920s on the basis of hints available in Chinese secondary literature, searching for key terms related to the press and public opinion. Second, I have taken the term *xuanchuan* as the unit of analysis in a corpus-based approach by analyzing monographs and a sample of journal articles, largely obtained through the Early Chinese Periodical Database Dacheng Data (Dacheng laojiu kan quanwen shujuku 大成老旧刊全文数据库), and the Shanghai-based National Index to Chinese Newspapers and Periodical (*Quanguo baokan suoyin* 全国报刊索引) introduced above. Third, I have paid attention to references to foreign key texts on propaganda, full or partial translations from other languages, as well as examples from foreign contexts.¹³

¹³ Translations can be divided into acknowledged and unacknowledged as well as full and partial. Acknowledged full translations published in book form are generally speaking the easiest to locate, but this was not how the bulk of material was published. Finding unacknowledged translations on the other hand, is largely a matter of luck or coincidence. Aside from full monographs, articles and book excerpts were often published in several parts of a series in Chinese journals. One example is the partial translation of Lasker and Roman, *Propaganda from China and Japan: A Case Study in Propaganda Analysis*: “Zhong Ri zai Mei zhi xuanchuanzhan” 中日在美之宣传战 [The propaganda war between China and Japan in the United States], *Gonglun congshu* 公论丛书 [Public opinion series], no. 6, 1939. It is possible that many expositions on propaganda that are not directly concerned with China but instead use other parts of the world were originally, at some point in time, translated from a foreign language and not attributed. These unacknowledged translations were then often supplemented with original writing. Two examples I came across where this strategy was obvious are Zhang Jiuru, *Qunzhong xinli* [Crowd psychology] (Zhongyang Junxiao, 1929), a *de facto* plagiarism of Le Bon's *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: Alcan, 1895), and Xuanchuanxi 宣传熹, “Jinhou de guoji xuanchuan luxian” 今后的国际宣传路线 [Direction for international propaganda in the future], *Duzhe* 读者 [Reader] 1, nos. 2-3 (1946): 18-19, which sometimes sums up and sometimes directly translates passages from the sub-chapter “Power over Opinion” in Edward Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 132-145. Although translations were often unattributed, Chinese authors usually did not attempt to hide the Western (or in some cases Soviet) origin of the concept and set of practices of propaganda. As was common with other concepts, practices, and institutions as well, a number of texts pointed to ancient Chinese propaganda practices as a

Below, I will first give an overview of the concept of propaganda as it developed outside of China, most importantly in the West and in the Soviet Union. In the second step, I will look at the wide and the narrow concept of propaganda in China before the term *xuanchuan* was used to denote political propaganda. Finally, I will analyze several propaganda discourses and institutions that developed after the 1920s, when the topic had become popular across different political factions and interest groups. This includes the Guomindang's (GMD, 国民党) and the CPC's understanding of propaganda and external propaganda in between the Soviet model and the Western model to lay the basis for subsequent development after the founding of the PRC. I will show that the idea of propaganda made its way to China through various different routes and channels and became part of several different transnational and translingual debates, which stayed in contact either implicitly or explicitly and thus shared some common ground but also developed distinctly with regard to other aspects.

2.1 Emergence and Development of Propaganda in the West and the Soviet Union

Propaganda in its broad definition is a ubiquitous phenomenon not bound to a particular moment in history. However, propaganda in the narrow sense as explained in the Introduction is closely tied to the notion that the opinion of broad sections of the population –whether they are referred to as *the masses*, as *the people* or as *the public*– matters. As such, the emergence of propaganda in this sense is linked to a number of ideas that first surfaced in the 19th century and were translated into the political process in the 20th century. Propaganda as a subject of interest, as a research object, and as a profession was intimately tied to the nascent concepts of *the masses*, *the public*, and *public opinion* in the 19th century accompanying a rise in literacy, media proliferation, and elections.

During the Enlightenment movement the idea of collective rationality, achieved through debate between rational individuals resulting in a consensus that embodied a higher level of rationality than that of the individual, became

means to legitimize the practice. See for example Wu Yuzhen 吴榆珍, “Xuanchuan ji qi yingxiang yu Zhongguo shehui bianhua de taolun” 宣传及其影响于中国社会变化的讨论 [A discussion of propaganda and its impacts on the transformations in Chinese society], *Shehui xuejie* 社会学界 [World/Circles of sociology], no. 4 (1930): 199.

dominant.¹⁴ It was against the backdrop of the growing Socialist movement in 19th century Europe and increasing fear of the masses that a strong polemic against this enlightenment ideal emerged, namely the idea that individuals lose their ability to think once they become part of a crowd, subsequently necessitating select elites to operate from behind the scenes to maintain order.

Fear of the mob was already prevalent as a theme in much of literature and art of the 19th century,¹⁵ but was first systematically spelled out during the last decades of the century in the guise of the study of “crowd psychology.” Crowd psychology is considered one of the most important intellectual preconditions for the development of professional propaganda in the 20th century.¹⁶ One of the intellectual predecessors of the concept of systematic propaganda was Gustave Le Bon’s (1841-1931) *La psychologie des foules*,¹⁷ translated into English as *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*,¹⁸ which presented itself as a practical guide to statesmen on how to manage crowds and minimize their inevitably increasing grip on power in the present “age of crowds” (*l’ère des foules*). The key to managing crowds, according to Le Bon, lay in understanding their character (*l’âme*) and knowing how to appeal to them. Though intellectually clearly inferior to the individual, the crowd’s actions were determined by the external stimuli it received; depending on the nature of those stimuli, the crowd could be better or worse than its constituent individuals.¹⁹

¹⁴ Cf. J.S. McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob: From Plato to Canetti* (London: Routledge, 2010), 108-113.

¹⁵ Cf. Jaap van Ginneken, “The Mob in Influential Novels,” in *Mass Movements in Darwinist, Freudian and Marxist Perspective: Trotter, Freud and Reich on War, Revolution and Reaction, 1900-1933*, by van Ginneken (Appeldoorn and Antwerpen: Het Spinhuis, 2007), 7-29.

¹⁶ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 56-57.

¹⁷ Gustave Le Bon, *La psychologie des foules* [The psychology of crowds] (Paris: Alcan, 1895).

¹⁸ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1896). Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) was one of the most influential scholars of his time and continued to be well-known until, at least, the end of the Second World War. He cannot be assigned to one particular academic discipline, especially as some subject matters that belonged to a certain discipline then would be categorized differently today or be considered pseudo-science. Originally trained as a physician, Le Bon soon turned towards a variety of different topics.

¹⁹ In a crowd, individual personalities disappear and, as in a chemical reaction, a collective mind (*âme collectif*) that is neither equal to the sum or mean of the individual minds is formed. Entering such a crowd makes an individual (temporarily) substitute any intelligence or reason he might have possessed for a “crowd psychology” driven by emotion, and throws him back on the ladder of evolution down to the level of “women, savages, and children.” Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2002), 10. Cf. Mareike Ohlberg “The Era of Crowds: Gustave Le Bon, Crowd Psychology, and Conceptualizations of Mass-Elite Relations in China.” Manuscript under review for Antje Flüchter and Jivanta Schoettli, eds., *The Flow of Concepts and Institutions*.

Le Bon's writings influenced people such as Walter Lippmann,²⁰ whose work *Public Opinion* (1922) introduced the concept of public opinion as a factor in the political process into political theory²¹ as well as Edward Bernays²² and Ivy Lee,²³ both famous for their pioneering role in public relations. Gustave Le Bon's work, likewise, influenced Lenin and the Bolsheviks in general.²⁴ The differentiation between propaganda (explaining a complex idea to an individual so that he can rationally grasp it) and agitation (getting the masses to act on a single issue through appealing to their emotions) in the Soviet Union is one indicator for such influence or at least a shared substratum of ideas between crowd psychologists and "elitists" within the Marxist and Socialist movement.²⁵ Thus, although propaganda developed differently in the Soviet Union and in Western countries later during the 20th century, the underlying assumptions about masses and elites were rather similar.

The term *propaganda* is derived from the *Sacra congregatio de propaganda fide* (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith),²⁶

²⁰ Walter Lippmann (1889-1974) was one of the most influential U.S. journalists of the 20th century. During the First World War, he worked for the Committee on Public Information (to be introduced below).

²¹ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 86.

²² Edward Bernays (1891-1995), a nephew of Sigmund Freud, has been dubbed the "father of public relations." He coined the word "public relations counsel," and introduced the principles of public relations work, largely on the basis of his own experience, in *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, first published in 1923.

²³ Ivy Lee (1877-1934) was arguably the earliest "public relations" expert. He was the first to publish his work principles on public relations in 1906 and could be credited with having invented crisis communication for companies. Cf. Burton St. John III, "The Case for Ethical Propaganda within a Democracy: Ivy Lee's 1913-1914 Successful Railroad Campaign," *Public Relations Review* 32 (2006): 221-224. Ivy Lee did not cite Le Bon, but was clearly influenced by his conception of the crowd. Cf. St. John, "The Case for Ethical Propaganda within a Democracy," 223.

²⁴ Cf. Alice Widener, *Gustave Le Bon, the Man and his Works* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1979), 13 and Richard Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 119.

²⁵ "Elitists," such as the Bolsheviks, believed in the necessity of a revolutionary vanguard to aid the "laboring masses" develop the correct consciousness and consequently be able to overthrow their oppressors. Without such an elite of "professional revolutionaries," no revolution could take place. However, there was no unified opinion with regard to the role of elites in the revolution. One famous opponent of the Bolshevik's "elitism," for instance, was Rosa Luxemburg. See for example A. James Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1979), 248.

²⁶ The name was changed to *Congregatio pro gentium Evangelizatione* in 1982 by Pope John Paul II because of the negative connotation of the word propaganda. Alan R. Freitag and Ashli Quesinberry Stokes, *Global Public Relations: Spanning Borders, Spanning Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 18.

founded in Rome in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV to counter the influences of the Reformation and help spread Catholicism.²⁷ Initial use of the term was in the form of a proper noun, “the Propaganda,” to refer to this particular Catholic institution. The often-told story that the term *propaganda* had a positive connotation until the word was tarnished by its association with the First World War is not entirely accurate. The idea that propaganda was practiced by a minority of “bad elites” in secrecy could already be found in the Enlightenment movement, which viewed propaganda as an activity steered by a secret society within the Catholic Church (i.e. “the Propaganda”) that intentionally tried to keep people uninformed.²⁸ Consequently, *propaganda* had a positive connotation in Catholic regions and a negative connotation in Protestant areas.²⁹ During the French Revolution, the verb *propager* was used by Jacobins to refer to their right to export the revolution to other countries.³⁰ The proper noun *la propagande* denoted a fictive Jacobin institution modeled on the Catholic *Sacra Congregatio*, but with the opposite goal, namely to destroy Christianity.³¹ Propaganda was also taken up by the 19th century Labor Movement as a means to mobilize workers, or “the laboring masses.”³²

The First World War was a key event for the theory and practice of propaganda. Before the outbreak of the war, propaganda-related activities included advertisement, press-agentry, and agitation as part of various social movements. Likewise, governments and other political actors increasingly utilized control over information to disseminate their point of view, particularly as the telegraph and, subsequently, news agencies became more widely spread.³³ With the beginning of the war, however, the activity of propaganda first became institutionalized through actual organizations at the governmental level both on the side of the Axis and the Allies. Great Britain established a War Propaganda Bureau as early as in October 1914, later renamed Department of Information in

²⁷ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 27.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 28.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*

³² Cf. *ibid.*

³³ See, for instance, the example of the first Austrian news agency run by Joseph Tuwara. Tuwara had advertised the agency as a “weapon as flexible and long-range [...] of inconceivable advantage to the government.” Cited in K.M. Shrivastava, *News Agencies from Pigeon to Internet* (Elgin: New Dawn Press Group, 2007), 2-3.

1917 and Ministry of Information in early 1918.³⁴ Although Germany later attributed the loss of the war to a “propaganda deficit,”³⁵ it also established governmental structures, such as the Center for Foreign Service (*Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*).³⁶ After the United States joined the war, Wilson established the Committee on Public Information (CPI), also named the Creel Committee after its chairman George Creel. Despite the dominant view in U.S. society at the time that rejected manipulation of the people by select elites, the CPI’s way of operating was very much based on the premises of mass theory.³⁷ The CPI initially focused on the American public, but later established branches abroad to promote U.S.-style democracy, including in China.³⁸ The CPI’s staff included people that were later to make important contributions to the conceptualization of propaganda and public opinion in the U.S., most importantly Walter Lippmann and Edward Bernays.

At the same time, the First World War also had an impact on the concept of propaganda itself, contributing to its politicization and militarization.³⁹ The “propaganda war” (alternatively called “psychological war” or “war over opinion”) became an established category alongside the “military war” and the “economic war.” Germany was particularly active in researching propaganda to professionalize it after the end of the war due to the perceived propaganda deficit: In the early 1920s, while the U.S. still predominantly discussed propaganda as a social pathology and abuse of government powers,⁴⁰ Germany established research institutes and German academics published extensively on propaganda.⁴¹ In the second half of the 1920s, Americans began to develop a more active interest in propaganda theory. One of the earliest works systematically analyzing the role of propaganda in English that drew on previous research done in Germany was

³⁴ Tomoko Akami, “The Emergence of International Public Opinion and Origins of Public Diplomacy in Japan in the Inter-War Period,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 3 (2008):106.

³⁵ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 102

³⁶ Cf. Ulrike Oppelt, *Film und Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg: Propaganda als Medienrealität im Aktualitäten- und Dokumentarfilm* [Film and propaganda during the First World War: Propaganda as media reality in newsreel films and documentaries] (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 107.

³⁷ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 74-77.

³⁸ Cf. Hans Schmidt, “Democracy for China: American Propaganda and the May Fourth Movement,” *Diplomatic History* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 1-28.

³⁹ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 29.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 102.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 105-108.

Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War*,⁴² which gave a systematic overview of different propaganda methods, techniques and target audiences and became a classic work of reference, including in China, where Lasswell taught at Yenching University (*Yanjing daxue* 燕京大学) in 1937.⁴³

In the 1930s, propaganda research continued to develop under different political systems, including democracies as much as the Bolshevik and the Fascist totalitarian states. Beliefs quickly spread across different countries and systems. Edward Carr, for instance, drew on German concepts of propaganda; citing Hitler, he explained that propaganda was the weapon of choice to deal with these masses that had become influential without being intellectually qualified to make any decisions. Propaganda, Carr continued, was important in democratic and totalitarian states alike.⁴⁴ The Soviet Union was quite active in international propaganda as well. According to Carr, the Comintern was the first “large-scale permanent international propaganda organization” established by a state, intricately tied to the new Soviet state and necessitated by the latter’s military and economic weakness.⁴⁵ Although the Bolsheviks certainly used international propaganda as a means to protect and further the interests of the Soviet Union within the state-based world order at a time when it had few alternatives, their definition of propaganda was similar to that of the Jacobins: They considered themselves to have both the right and the duty to export the revolution to other countries.⁴⁶

In the area of cultural relations, the Soviet Union was, indeed, a pioneer, not in terms of the idea itself (which had been practiced by France and Germany for several decades⁴⁷), but in terms of scope and organization. In 1925, it founded the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, also known

⁴² Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (London: K. Paul et al., 1927).

⁴³ Cf. Rodney Muth, Mary M. Finley and Marcia Muth, *Harold D. Lasswell: An Annotated Bibliography* (New Haven: New Haven Press, 1989), 13.

⁴⁴ Cf. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 133.

⁴⁵ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 138.

⁴⁶ There was also a strong link between a successful Soviet state and international propaganda, as the idea that the Soviet Union could succeed in building socialism on its own was considered impossible until after Lenin’s death.

⁴⁷ France founded the Alliance française for the promotion of the French language in 1883 and the Institut français for the promotion of French language and culture in 1907. Germany was also already involved in cultural propaganda before the beginning of the First World War.

under its Russian acronym VOKS (БОКС).⁴⁸ VOKS organized all kinds of cultural and scholarly exchanges, including sending art troupes abroad, organizing art exhibitions, organizing the visits of academics and professionals, etc.⁴⁹ In addition, the Soviet Union set up international organizations for leftist artists and intellectuals such as the International Union of Revolutionary Writers, the International Union of Revolutionary Theater, etc.⁵⁰ By the 1930s, cultural propaganda had become a more widely recognized important instrument of diplomacy, so that in 1934, both Britain and Japan set up organizations to coordinate cultural propaganda.⁵¹

In North America, the period between the mid-1920s and the 1940s was marked by a paradoxical, bifurcated attitude of society towards the concept and practice of propaganda: On the one hand, propaganda had been discovered as a new “secret weapon” and a large number of academic and professional treatises on the topic began to be published (though not all of them chose the word propaganda). On the other hand, contempt and wariness of propaganda and the “abuse of words” had already emerged as a result of the First World War on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵² An indirect exchange between John Dewey and Walter Lippmann, which later became known as the Dewey-Lippmann debate,⁵³ shows

⁴⁸ Cf. Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 38. VOKS stands for *Vsesoyuznoye obshchestvo kulturnoy svyazi s zagranitsey* Всесоюзное общество культурной связи с заграницей.

⁴⁹ Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 39.

⁵⁰ Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 38.

⁵¹ Britain set up the British Council, and Japan founded the Society for International Cultural Relations (Kokusai bunka shinkōkai 国際文化振興会). Akami, “The Emergence of International Public Opinion and the Origins of Public Diplomacy in Japan in the Inter-War Period,” 119-120.

⁵² There was an overall opposition to any practices associated with propaganda, regardless under which term, as an attempt to manipulate and corrupt public opinion, what Bussemer referred to as the humanist paradigm. This paradigm remained dominant in the U.S. during most of the 1920s. Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 81.

⁵³ Lippmann has been introduced above. John Dewey (1859-1952) was a philosopher and educator teaching at Columbia University, famous among other things for his democratic and practice-oriented teaching philosophy. For the Dewey-Lippmann debate, which only took place in the form of an indirect exchange through a number of successive publications, see for example Mark Whipple, “The Dewey-Lippmann Debate Today: Communication Distortions, Reflective Agency, and Participatory Democracy,” *Sociological Theory* 23, no. 2 (June 2005): 156-178. The idea of a “Dewey-Lippmann debate” was first introduced by James Carey, a teacher at the University of Illinois and at Columbia University, in the early 1980s. While it is agreed that Dewey was replying to Lippmann, Lippmann may not have been aware that a “debate” was ongoing.

the two main positions American elites took on the role of propaganda and public opinion in a democracy over the course of the 1920s.

Both Dewey and Lippmann agreed that the basis for public opinion and participation in politics had been broadened in the 20th century. Lippmann saw public opinion as irrational, unreliable, and easily manipulated. It was therefore up to a class of elite men with both expertise in a particular field and an understanding of how to steer public opinion to guide it in the correct direction. Dewey, on the other hand, while conceding that public opinion did not necessarily always make the wisest choices, maintained that it remained powerful moral force that exerted a positive influence on politics. The Dewey-Lippmann debate exemplifies two very different political imaginaries, namely the public holding politicians and other elites accountable versus the public having to be guided by elites. Both Dewey and Lippmann were very influential in China,⁵⁴ and both points of view also showed up in the Chinese propaganda debate, as will be shown below.

The attitude towards the notion of propaganda continues to a large extent to be determined by a society's or other group's concept of man, of collectives, and of the relationship between masses and "elites." The concept of man in a given society consists of several different aspects or subordinate 'building blocks' regarding specific traits of man, such as the popular question whether man is good or bad by nature.⁵⁵ In the interaction between man and society, this assessment has implications for the question whether contact with the collective corrupts or improves a person. In cases where man is considered inherently good, governmental or any other form of interference of society in the development of the individual is often considered undesirable and as detracting from man's "purity," "authenticity," "individuality," or "innocence." If one assumes that a person on his or her own is bad by nature or incapable of recognizing his or her own interests, on the other hand, society and/or the government are suddenly

⁵⁴ For Dewey, see Jessica Ching-sze Wang, *John Dewey in China: To Teach and to Learn* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). For Lippmann, see Hu Zhengqiang 胡正强, "Lun Lipuman xinwen sixiang zai Zhongguo de zaoqi chuanbo yu yingxiang" 论李普曼新闻思想在中国的早期传播与影响 [The early dissemination and influence of Lippmann's thought on the press], *Xinwenjie* 新闻界 [Press Circles], no. 4 (2009):102-103.

⁵⁵ In Chinese philosophy, one might refer to the difference between Mencius (man is good by nature) and the Legalists (man is bad by nature) as concrete examples of ideologies on opposing ends of the scale.

tasked with turning every individual into a morally upright human being. Of course, there can be other reasons for society or the government to have to interfere in the development of an individual.

In Marxism, man has no inherent nature that is shared by all of humanity. Just as society evolves, so does the consciousness and nature of the people inhabiting it, hence man's "class nature." However, in the Leninist version of Marxism that was adapted by the Chinese Communists, some people are ahead of others, forming a revolutionary vanguard, and it is their role to educate and enlighten the rest of society. The role of domestic propaganda in Lenin's view of how to engineer a revolution becomes apparent in his early writings on the press: Consciousness had to be brought to the laboring masses from without.⁵⁶ This task was the responsibility of the Communist Party, which had a higher level of consciousness than the rest of the population. This leads to another "building block" in the concept of man, the question whether a person can be changed or not, as well as when and how such change can be brought about. Whether or not a person or an unenlightened population or mass of people can be changed determines the responsibilities of the elites towards the rest of the population, for example whether they are to educate them, to guide them or to keep them in check and minimize their influence on political decisions.

The similarities between Lippmann's take on public opinion and that of the Bolsheviks⁵⁷ can be explained, at least in part, by a shared sub-stratum of ideas circulating widely at the time about the psychology of crowds and the differences between enlightened elites and the overwhelming mass of ordinary, unenlightened people.⁵⁸ However, whereas the Bolsheviks believed in the malleability of the masses and in the possibility of raising their consciousness, Lippmann did not. Likewise, while propaganda had begun to acquire a negative connotation in the English-speaking world starting in the First World War, Communists continued to use the term with pride. As Marxists and as an enlightened vanguard of the people, they argued, they needed to spread the truth in order to help propel history in the right direction. There was no shame in this kind of work, neither domestically nor

⁵⁶ Most importantly "What is to be done," 1903, *Iskra*. Cf. Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5-6.

⁵⁷ This similarity has also been noted by Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 68.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ohlberg, "The Era of Crowds."

internationally. In the Communist world, including in China after 1949, as the term propaganda had been appropriated by the Party-state and continued to describe the Party-state's rather than the "enemy's" activities, it was shielded from the bulk of the massively negative connotations that began to be attached to the word propaganda in Western languages after the First World War and that became dominant after the end of the Second World War.

While in the Soviet Union, just like in China during the 1950s, the focus was on trying to penetrate and thus reach all of society through establishing a propaganda network, propaganda research and practice in the West focused on techniques how to convince people psychologically. To a large degree, this was the result of working in a democratic setting in which many different interest groups operated and tried to gain the attention and the favor of the public for their purposes. Thus, the core challenges were to establish credibility in a setting with many different competing actors and to catch people's attention in an information-rich society.

Although censorship did exist,⁵⁹ it was relatively limited, and interest groups trained how to present themselves as better or more trustworthy than their opponents, whose voices could also be heard. This entailed conducting research to test the effectiveness of techniques. In the 1920s and 1930s, propaganda was professionalized in politics as much as in business. Large companies had already begun to employ press agents in the late 19th and early 20th century in order to combat the muckraking press and negative publicity in cases of major work accidents, labor protests, etc.⁶⁰ The two most famous figures in the emerging public relations industry were Ivy Lee and former CPI staffer Edward Bernays.

After the First World War, Bernays began to write down the experience he had accumulated earlier. Bernays had been strongly influenced by the theories of "crowd psychology," which to him justified the need for a few select elites to manipulate the rest of the population for its own good. Thus, although "crowd psychology" has long been rejected in the discipline of psychology, it retained

⁵⁹ For instance, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were restrictions on importing "Communist propaganda" in the U.S., such as magazines from the PRC (cf. chapter 3). By and large, however, Western political authorities were trained to discredit and marginalize rather than to proscribe other points of view.

⁶⁰ Cf. St. John, "The Case for Ethical Propaganda within a Democracy."

considerable influence on large parts of Western society well into the 1930s and 1940s.⁶¹ In *Crystallizing Public Opinion*,⁶² he introduced a range of new, proactive techniques that went beyond simply distributing positive news stories and managing bad press for a client. These new strategies included widely publicized charitable acts, commissioning scientific studies,⁶³ conducting public opinion polls in order to influence the public with the results,⁶⁴ or countering rumors through the release of only indirectly related news stories rather than issuing direct rebuttals.⁶⁵

By the early 1930s, commercial enterprises were searching for better ways to predict consumer behavior.⁶⁶ This was the beginning of quantitative marketing research as well as public opinion research. In 1935, George Gallup founded the American Institute of Public Opinion.⁶⁷ In 1937, the journal *Public Opinion Quarterly* was launched.⁶⁸ In the 1930s, empirical propaganda studies became a sub-branch of the emerging discipline of communications studies.⁶⁹ The two most important people in the field were Harold Lasswell and Paul Lazarsfeld.⁷⁰ Thus, the collecting of quantitative data on people's opinions and choices as a basis for decision making was introduced into the political process.⁷¹

While opposition to propaganda was weaker in the 1930s than it had been in the 1920s, it continued to exist. In 1937, largely in reaction to empirical propaganda studies, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) was founded, whose goal was to train citizens to recognize propaganda and thus make them immune to attempts to manipulate them that were by then lurking almost

⁶¹ Including, for example, on U.S. military thought and practice, and U.S. immigration restrictions. For an introduction into this still largely unexplored field, see Joseph W. Bendersky, "Panic": The Impact of Le Bon's Crowd Psychology on U.S. Military Thought," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 43, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 257-283. For immigration restrictions, see *ibid.*, 273.

⁶² Edward Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (New York: Liveright, 1961, originally published in 1923). Page numbers in this dissertation are to the 1961 edition.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-15. His list of examples in the book, most of which are from his personal experience, also include government campaigns, such as the campaign for recognition conducted by the Lithuanian government in the U.S. in 1919 (*ibid.*, 25-27). Bernays, just like public relations firms today, worked both for businesses and governments or other political bodies; he did not distinguish between these two types of clients.

⁶⁶ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 251.

⁶⁷ "Preface to New Edition," in Bernays *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, xlvi.

⁶⁸ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 257.

⁶⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 260.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁷¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 275.

everywhere.⁷² The IPA published a journal called *Propaganda Analysis*, in which it explained propaganda techniques and dissected concrete examples.⁷³ After facing increasing criticism,⁷⁴ the Institute, which had opposed American intervention in the Second World War, was closed in October 1941, shortly before the United States joined the war.⁷⁵

In 1942, the Office of War Information (OWI) was established, which ran the newly founded radio station Voice of America and worked together with Hollywood to organize both domestic and international propaganda campaigns.⁷⁶ Like the CPI earlier, the OWI's international arm, the U.S. Information Service (USIS) was quite active in China, having dispatched people who were later to become renowned China scholars, such as John Fairbank.⁷⁷ The Second World War provided an opportunity to test propaganda techniques that had been developed over the course of the 1930s.

However, it was also the last time that the U.S. government could openly organize propaganda targeted at domestic audiences. In Western countries, particularly the United States but also countries in Western Europe, since the end of the Second World War, there has been a strong –though recently challenged–⁷⁸ taboo against domestic propaganda and attempts to manipulate public opinion at home organized by the government⁷⁹ and a less pronounced aversion against propaganda targeting foreigners. As demonstrated above, its intellectual roots

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, 340.

⁷³ *Propaganda Analysis: A Monthly Letter to Help the Intelligent Citizen Detect and Analyze Propaganda.*

⁷⁴ The institute tried, on the one hand, to make theoretical contributions to propaganda studies, and, on the other hand, wanted to keep its language simple enough that it could be used to educate a broad target audience. This led to their contributions being rejected for being simplistic from very early on. Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 344.

⁷⁵ According to Bussemer, several people who had opposed propaganda earlier and had been affiliated with the Institute were less hostile to propaganda after Roosevelt began his campaign for joining the war (*Propaganda*, 346). The last issue of *Propaganda Analysis* stated that the journal was discontinued, among other things, because “the analyses could be misused for undesirable purposes by persons opposing the government’s efforts.” Cited in Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 347.

⁷⁶ Cf. Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, “What to Show the World: The Office of War Information and Hollywood, 1942-1945,” *The Journal of American History* 64, no. 1 (1977): 87-105.

⁷⁷ Matthias Messmer, *China: Schauplätze west-östlicher Begegnungen* (Böhlau Verlag Wien, 2007), 180-181.

⁷⁸ Cf. Michael Kelley, “The NDAA Legalizes the Use of Propaganda on the US Public,” May 21, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/ndaa-legalizes-propaganda-2012-5>, accessed February 7, 2013.

⁷⁹ Political parties, corporations, etc. were not affected by this taboo, although of course they did not label their activities “propaganda.”

preceded the Second World War, but the taboo only became properly institutionalized after end of the war, for example in the United States with the passing of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which barred content produced for external propaganda purposes to be made accessible to U.S. audiences.⁸⁰

By contrast, for propaganda targeted at foreigners was much more accepted. In 1953, the U.S. instituted a strong international propaganda agency, the United States Information Agency (USIA).⁸¹ There were two different discourses framing the need for propaganda targeted at foreigners, one “Realist” discourse that highlighted national interest and the role of propaganda to defeat the enemy and one “Idealist” discourse related to the humanist critique of propaganda⁸² as disinformation which stressed cultural exchange and the distribution of correct information as a channel to further mutual understanding. However, critiques of international propaganda to support national interests were focused on policy goals and means used rather than questioning the legitimacy of propaganda per se, as was the case in the domestic realm.⁸³

While in practice, various U.S. administrations made use of domestic propaganda campaigns,⁸⁴ the conceptual distinction between propaganda targeted at foreign publics serving the national interest and domestic propaganda, which was officially shunned, had important consequences for how the concept of propaganda developed in the West and how it developed in the Socialist bloc after

⁸⁰ Cf. Kelley, “The NDAA Legalizes the Use of Propaganda on the US Public.”

⁸¹ For a history of the USIA during the Cold War, see Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). The USIA was disbanded in 1999 after the end of the Cold War had diminished the perceived need for international propaganda.

⁸² Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 81.

⁸³ For instance, Senator Fulbright became an opponent of the U.S. propaganda apparatus, believing it was put to the wrong uses. Cf. A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond* (Washington D. C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 215-216.

⁸⁴ Cf. Shawn J. Parry-Giles, “‘Camouflaged’ Propaganda: The Truman and Eisenhower Administrations’ Covert Manipulation of News,” *Western Journal of Communication* 60, no. 2 (1996): 146-167; Robert Parry and Peter Kornbluh, “Iran-Contra’s Untold Story,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 72 (1988): 3-30; Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, “The Revival of the Propaganda State: US Propaganda at Home and Abroad Since 9/11,” *International Communication Gazette* 68, no. 5-6 (2006): 389-407. For primary sources on the domestic dimension of the Iran-Contra scandal, see the collection “Public Diplomacy and Covert Propaganda: The Declassified Record of Ambassador Otto Juan Reich,” in the National Security Archive of George Washington University, available online <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB40/>. For a detailed description of how domestic propaganda was organized, see in particular “Public Diplomacy Action Plan: Support for the White House Educational Campaign,” March 12, 1985, available online at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB40/00934.pdf>, accessed November 3, 2012.

the end of the Second World War. This difference in attitude towards domestic propaganda further reinforced two rather different sets of methods and mechanisms as well as underlying institutional structures through which governments in both blocs sought to manipulate the news at home, which then, in turn, also impacted how propaganda targeted at foreigners was conducted.

This, of course, did not mean that there were no flows between the two camps; on the contrary, the Soviet Union and the United States closely watched each others' propaganda activities as well as China's. Likewise, it does not mean that each side did not integrate aspects of the non-dominant imaginary. However, the difference in political system, overall institutional contexts and legitimacy of propaganda itself as much as different underlying conceptions of the public/the masses led to the development of rather different techniques and mechanisms of controlling information on the two sides of the Iron Curtain.

As (domestic) propaganda acquired a bad name in the West, the term became a politicized instrument used primarily to delegitimize opponents. Consequently, propaganda was replaced by a number of terms with less negative baggage attached to them: Publicity, public relations, persuasion, perception management, etc.⁸⁵ This already indicates that it would be wrong to assume that propaganda strategies did not continue to develop in the West after the end of the Second World War. On the contrary, the propaganda-aversion of the population of North America and Western Europe resulted in the continued perfection of strategies that were either less objectionable than the more crude techniques employed during the war or covert and thus deniable. The first category included practices such as press conferences and access journalism. Well-known covert or grey operations included media such as Radio Free Europe⁸⁶ or and various ways

⁸⁵ This was not a clear-cut process; during the 1920s and 1930s, several of the terms that are now considered less controversial, such as publicity and public relations, were often used interchangeably with propaganda. Cf. Philip M. Taylor, *The Projection of Britain: British Overseas Publicity and Propaganda, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 6. Likewise, some terms that do not have a strongly negative connotation comparable to that of propaganda today were considered derogatory in the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, Bernays notes that his term *public relations counsel* was seen as a euphemism for *press agent*. Cf. "Preface to New Edition," in Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, xxxv. Despite attempts to distinguish the activities subsumed under these new labels from propaganda, they also tended to acquire negative baggage quickly. See for example Robert L. Heath, *Handbook of Public Relations* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2001), 200.

⁸⁶ Cf. Nicholas J. Cull, "'The Man who Invented Truth': The Tenure of Edward R. Murrow as Director of the United States Information Agency During the Kennedy Years," in Patrick

of co-opting or planting journalists.⁸⁷ Governments could also draw on new methods and research produced in the marketing and public relations industries. All in all, while domestic propaganda remained important, the United States invested much more resources in its international propaganda war against the Soviet Union. In the Communist world, including in China after 1949, as the term propaganda had been appropriated by the Party-state and continued to describe the Party-state's rather than the enemy's activities, it was shielded from the bulk of the massively negative connotations that began to be attached to the word propaganda in Western languages after the First World War and that became dominant after the end of the Second World War.

In sum, propaganda became part of several movements, institutions, disciplines, and ways of organizing the world, all of which tried to come to terms with the question how to deal with a new influential force of the 20th century, namely the public or the "masses." The concept of propaganda as it developed in the West and the Soviet Union shared some common roots in its assumptions about the relationship between "the masses" or the overwhelming majority of society and elites, but later relied on rather different institutions and techniques. The international socialist movement which received much impetus from the Soviet Union through the Comintern focused on how to organize and mobilize the laboring masses. While the Bolsheviks were concerned with penetrating Soviet society and spreading the revolution to as many other countries as possible, researchers in the U.S. focused on the question how to predict or measure reactions of the public. In the interwar period in the U.S., propaganda was discussed as part of two different imaginaries of how politics and mass-elite relations should function, both of which survive not only in different models of democracy but also in media discourses in China today. In the first imaginary, it is the role of the public to hold politicians accountable. This imaginary established itself in most Western countries, which is why propaganda became an unusable term, research and debates were conducted around a large variety of old and new

Major and Rana Mitter, eds. *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (Frank Cass, 2004), 25 (23-48).

⁸⁷ See for example Carl Bernstein, "The CIA and the Media," originally published October 20, 1977 in *Rolling Stone*, available online at http://carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php, accessed November 19, 2012.

terms referring to different aspects and types of propaganda. In the other imaginary, the public is guided by politicians and other elites. This imaginary determined the actions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and, later, the CPC. As will be seen below, these various strains of propaganda debates were picked up in China at some point in time and reused for different purposes.

2.2 From Incorporating the World into China to Incorporating China into the World

One problem in tracing the history of the concept of propaganda in China (as with any concept anywhere) is distinguishing between terminological and conceptual history. While the term for propaganda, *xuanchuan*, in its current usage, entered the Chinese lexicon at a fairly late point in time (around 1920) related ideas circulated in China long before that and even had some pre-modern Chinese framings of mass-elite relations to draw on and engage with. These practices were not always referred to as propaganda at the time, but were definitely part of the genealogy of various propaganda packages in late 19th and 20th century Europe. I argue here that the earliest discussions in China that touched on issues that were related to political propaganda (including national image management in the eyes of foreigners, the spreading of revolutionary ideas, or the unifying of national public opinion for short term or long term purposes) were discussed largely (though certainly not exclusively) as part of the role of the new institution of the newspaper. These discourses preceding the term *xuanchuan* in its modern sense are addressed here primarily because they included key ideas that still inform the CPC's conception of the world and its understanding of domestic and external propaganda. While it makes little sense to want to answer essentialist questions such as "What is truly 'Chinese' about Chinese propaganda?", this section introduces ways of framing the world and mass-elite relations dominant in pre-modern Chinese politics (at least during the Qing dynasty) that recur in contemporary propaganda discourses.

As several studies point out, neither the idea of trying to influence behavior and thought of Chinese subjects (today called 'internal propaganda') nor the idea to project a particular image of China abroad (today called 'external propaganda') were entirely alien to imperial China. Tsang, in his dissertation from

1980 on Chinese propaganda in the U.S. during WWII, sums up an excerpt from Sunzi's *The Art of War* (*Sunzi bingfa* 孙子兵法) describing how propaganda leaflets were dropped over the enemy in battle, terming this the first use of war propaganda in world history.⁸⁸ Some texts on propaganda from the Republican period also linked the concept to Chinese classics.⁸⁹ Of course, linking propaganda to older Chinese texts or concepts the way that Tsang does here has mainly served and continues to serve as a tool to legitimize the appropriation of Western ideas. Nonetheless, ideas about the role and responsibility of elites towards the rest of the population, as well as parts of the pre-modern Chinese way of framing the world still underlie current conceptions of propaganda. Thus, it makes sense to consider pre-modern ideas that could be termed propaganda in the broader sense and analyze how they began to intermingle with news ways of ordering the world.

In the context of international propaganda, the concept of man is often secondary to how a particular group conducting propaganda understands and analyses the world order and the world's main units of interest. The three main ways of distinguishing different interest groups in the world that were common in China since the late 19th century were, first, dividing the world according to race, culture, or civilization, second, dividing the world according to nation-states, and third, dividing the world according to class. This is important because all three conceptualizations show up in the discourse surrounding propaganda targeting non-Chinese.

In the pre-modern Chinese political imaginary, China was the center of civilization in a system best imagined as “concentric squares” around a central source of civilization.⁹⁰ China's “foreign relations” or inter-state relations, if one can speak of such a thing, during the imperial period were considered an

⁸⁸ Kuo-jen Tsang, “China's Propaganda in the United States during World War II” (M.A. Thesis, North Texas State University, 1980), 1. Sheng Ding also cites Sunzi as one example of ancient Chinese conceptions of propaganda in times of war. Cf. Sheng Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with its Soft Power* (Lanham et al: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 24.

⁸⁹ E.g. Wang Yizhi 王一之, “Woguo guoji xuanchuan shang de yanjiu” 我国国际宣传上的研究 [Chinese research on international propaganda], *Xin zhengzhi* 新政治 [Reforming politics] 2, no 4 (1939): 66-76.

⁹⁰ Cf. Yaqing Qin, “Why is there no Chinese international relations theory,” in Amitav Acharya, *Non-Western International Relations Theories: Perspectives On and Beyond Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 37.

extension of this “domestic” system.⁹¹ The world as a whole was thus an extension of the Chinese empire itself, in the center of which sat the emperor,⁹² who bore the ultimate responsibility for emanating morality and civilization into the world uni-directionally. China’s role and position as center of civilization was communicated to other “countries” through rituals and other actions associated with the tributary system. In fact, the ancient Chinese model is contrasted with the current situation in the contemporary soft power debate.⁹³ Although the notion of soft power in its contemporary sense is a clear product of the 20th century, similar ideas structured China’s self-perception during the imperial period.⁹⁴

Voices that suggested propagating China to the world, of course without using the term *xuanchuan*, were first raised after China was confronted with and felt challenged by the West in the mid-19th century. The fact that China saw itself as the moral center of the world was also reflected in these writings of Chinese officials and reformers in the second half of the 19th who suggested “establishing newspapers in Western languages”⁹⁵ because China’s moral superiority was not only not recognized by the foreign powers, but China was also misrepresented in the Western press. These early texts advocating the establishment of foreign language media were located in between the traditional Chinese world order with China as the center of civilization, and the new nation-state based world order structured by racial hierarchies, leaning towards one or the other to different degrees.

In the late 19th century, China was gripped by a sense of crisis after having been defeated in the Opium Wars twice, having been subjected to a number of unequal treaties and facing additional domestic problems and instability. The

⁹¹ Modern categories, such as “foreign relations” and “domestic” are used in quotation marks to indicate that the concepts in question cannot be uncritically applied to the pre-modern context and used here only for lack of an alternative.

⁹² Cf. Qin, “Why is there no Chinese International Relations Theory,” 36.

⁹³ Wang Yiwei, associate professor at the Center of American Studies of Fudan University (cf. “Wang Yiwei,” <http://www.cas.fudan.edu.cn/viewprofile.en.php?id=60>, accessed December 9, 2012), argues that “[u]nder the ancient imperial tributary system emperors and their courts sought to maintain the prestige of the Chinese nation. Today, reputation is neglected.” Wang Yiwei, “Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power,” *ANNALS of the American Academy* 616 (March 2008): 261.

⁹⁴ Also see Ding, *The Dragon’s Hidden Wings*, 24-25.

⁹⁵ *She yangwen ribao* 设洋文日报 or, alternatively, *she Xiwen ribao* 设西文日报. Details will be explained below.

absorption of evolutionary theories, racial theories, and Social Darwinism⁹⁶ convinced many concerned intellectuals that the Chinese nation was facing extinction. This was not some abstract idea in the eyes of Chinese intellectuals, but a concrete danger that had already afflicted India and China's former tributary states in South East Asia. The only nation-state in Asia that had successfully managed to protect itself in the race war was Japan, which is why Japan, after having defeated the Qing Empire in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, advanced to the position of primary model for China in almost all aspects of governance, including how to present the country to the outside world.⁹⁷ There were quite a few similarities between what was suggested and what was done or at least financed by political actors during the late Qing period, suggesting that the debate did lead to actual initiatives in the late Qing period. While it is not possible to establish whether any of the authors briefly discussed below concretely stipulated the launching of external propaganda publications, the idea was clearly floating around right before actual initiatives were first put into practice in the early 20th century.

The first known suggestions for China to establish foreign language papers, which were still very much informed by the traditional Chinese conception of the world, are from 1874 and reacted to what was seen as unfair coverage of China in the foreign press whenever Chinese and foreign interests clashed. This was two years after Ernest Major founded the *Shenbao* (申報) in Shanghai 上海,⁹⁸ at a time when the idea and institution of the newspaper was beginning to take hold

⁹⁶ According to the ideas of social Darwinism, people, nations, or races compete against one another in a battle over survival. Social Darwinism combined the units of "race," culture, and territory within its discursive matrix, which were then recombined differently later (according to territorial units of different sizes).

⁹⁷ It is also noteworthy to point out that by drawing on the Japanese model, Chinese reformers were hoping for a quick fix for China's problems: By emulating the West, Japan had managed to modernize itself within a few decades, something which had taken the West itself several hundred years. Copying and condensing the Japanese experience, was presented by Chinese reformers as a way to, in turn, modernize China within only a few years. Cf. Wang Xiaoming, "From Petitions to Fiction: Visions of the Future Propagated in Early Modern China," translated by Eva Hung, in *Translation and Creation Readings of Western Literature in Early Modern China, 1840-1918*, edited by David Pollard (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1998), 46.

⁹⁸ For a study of the *Shenbao*, see Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872-1912* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

among Chinese elites in China's treaty ports.⁹⁹ "Unfair coverage" probably generally referred to articles on the quite frequent conflicts between Chinese and foreigners in the treaty ports. In 1874, there was a relatively big concrete event when Japan sent a "punitive expedition" to Taiwan in retaliation for the death of Okinawan fishermen, after the Qing authorities had first presented the conflict as an internal Chinese affair and later renounced judicial responsibility.¹⁰⁰ At the time, Japan was already actively involved in distributing its own version of events to the foreign press.¹⁰¹

Wang Tao 王韬 (1828-1897), a close associate of the *Shenbao*, argued that the papers established in China's coastal cities were all financed by foreign capital and that although the foreign editors had usually stayed in China for some time, they rarely knew anything about the China outside the coastal concessions. What these papers published was often distorted. The formulation Wang Tao used here, "confusing black and white and turning right and wrong upside down" (*hei bai hun xiao, shi fei dao zhi* 黑白混淆, 是非倒置), is still often used to describe Western media today.¹⁰² Westerners –who only spoke foreign languages and therefore had no chance to read Chinese opinions– would then readily believe these lies.¹⁰³ Thus, when any incident touching both on foreign and Chinese interests happened, foreigners would trust what they had read in their papers and would be hard to convince of anything else later (*xian ru zhi yan wei zhu* 先入之言为主).¹⁰⁴ In the current times, Wang argued, it was therefore more important for

⁹⁹ For some background information, see Vittinghoff, *Die Anfänge des Journalismus in China*.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's Encounter with European International Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 146-152; Alan Wachman, *Why Taiwan? Geostategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 63-64.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Akami, "The Emergence of International Public Opinion," 104.

¹⁰² Including in English translation. For instance, an article published in English after the unrests in Lhasa in 2008 asked "How come so many Western media openly call white black and distort plain facts?" Cf. Zhou Yan, "Commentary: Biased Media Reports Reveal Credibility Crisis," March 26, 2008, <http://english.cri.cn/2946/2008/03/26/1042@338172.htm>, accessed November 16, 2012.

¹⁰³ Cf. Xu Xinping, 徐新平, "Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang" 论晚清时期对外新闻传播思想 [Thoughts about external news communication in the late Qing period], *Xinwen yu chuanbo yanjiu* 新闻与传播研究 [Press and communication research], no. 6 (2009): 38. In fact, British authorities in Shanghai and beyond did translate and read the Chinese press. Cf. Vittinghoff, *Die Anfänge des Journalismus in China*, 215-216.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Xu Xinping, "Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang," 38-39. The formulation *xian ru wei zhu* 先入为主 is also still used today.

China to run papers in foreign languages than in Chinese; after all, the latter were only read and understood by Chinese people.¹⁰⁵

In the *General newspaper (Huibao 汇报)*, a paper launched in 1874 by local officials in Shanghai that soon engaged in polemics with the British press about Britain's role in China,¹⁰⁶ reformer Zheng Guanying 郑观应 (1842-1923)¹⁰⁷ announced his plans to establish a Western (presumably English) language paper to be called *Jiaoshebao 交涉报* ["Interaction (between different "countries"/peoples) paper"]. In the charter for the paper, Zheng explained that because Western papers' coverage of events was motivated by partisan interests (*si xin 私心*, as opposed to by concern for the public good, *gong 公*), the righteous people in each country did not know of all the injustices that China suffered.¹⁰⁸ This framing has, in fact, persisted throughout the propaganda discourse, both in the 20th century and today, because it fits in the master narratives of China as a victim and China as a country without adequate external propaganda capacities. The planned paper would report whenever anything happened that involved China and foreign countries. If there was any unfair coverage in foreign papers, the *Jiaoshebao* would do a special report with the original biased text attached, so that everyone realized both the true situation and the unfair coverage in the foreign paper.¹⁰⁹

The two underlying assumptions of voices calling for foreign language media run by Chinese were first, the problem China was faced with was not one of bias, but of availability of information. The Qing court's regulations, argued early proponents of Chinese-run papers, prevented Chinese people from speaking up for themselves. If this was changed and Westerners enabled to obtain correct information about China, it was argued, they would believe it. The reasons why misinformation about China was spread differed. Some of Wang Tao's comments imply that he assumed lack of knowledge as the reason. On the other hand, the fact that foreign papers did not have the greater good in mind (*gong*) was taken for

¹⁰⁵ For Wang Tao's comments on Chinese-run foreign language papers, also see Vittinghoff, *Die Anfänge des Journalismus in China*, 205-206.

¹⁰⁶ For more information about the *Huibao*, see *ibid.*, 213-215.

¹⁰⁷ Zheng Guanying was an important reformer arguing for change of China's political system and its education system. His most famous work is *Words of Warning in Prosperous Times (Shengshi weiyang 盛世危言)*.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Xu Xinping, "Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang," 39.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

granted, just like the fact that Chinese papers would automatically express the public interest. Second, what Westerners knew and thought about China was important. The reason was that the current hard power world order was opposite to what it should be if ethics were the decisive criterion; if Westerners realized China's moral and cultural superiority, they would adjust its place in their mental and consequently their physical universe. This theme is important because it continued to show up in China's external propaganda discourse long after Chinese elites had largely transitioned from 'all under heaven' (*tianxia* 天下) to the basic premises of a new world order based on nation-states competing against one another.

This already shows that there were larger concerns than balancing incorrect reporting at work, related to the changing world order: How should China conduct its 'foreign relations' in the new situation and thus assure the continued recognition of China as a great civilization by other countries. According to Zheng Guanying, the purpose behind setting up papers in Western languages was to "maintain [the stability of] the overall situation and stay true to relations with other 'states'" (*yi wei daju er du bangjiao* 以维大局而笃邦交).¹¹⁰ In "On the advantages of China setting up papers in Western languages itself," Wang Tao also argued that what defined success in relations between China and other countries had changed and that now, in order to maintain good relations (*xiuhao mulin zhi dao* 修睦邻之道¹¹¹), it was necessary to run a newspaper in a foreign language.¹¹²

The debate intensified towards the turn of the century. In 1894, Zheng Guanying again expressed his anger over China-related coverage in Western papers on Chinese soil and the lack of a platform for Chinese to contest foreign media's version of events and called on the Qing government to allow Chinese to run papers as well.¹¹³ In 1897, after China had been defeated in the Sino-Japanese war and Japan had become the most important model, poet Chen Yan 陈衍 (1856-

¹¹⁰ What Zheng meant was that in order for China to continue to engage with other "states" according to the ideals and ideology of imperial China, it had to change the way it conducted these relations and make use of the press (rather than the tributary system). Quote cited in Xu Xiping, Xiping, "Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang," 38.

¹¹¹ "On the advantages of China setting up papers in Western languages itself" (*Lun Zhongguo zhi she Xiwen ribao zhi li* 论中国自设西文日报之利). Cited in *ibid.*, 39.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Xu Xiping, "Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang," 39.

1937) advised the Chinese government to learn from Japan in this regard.¹¹⁴ The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been funding Chinese and Japanese language publications in China since the beginning of the short war in 1894.¹¹⁵ The purpose behind running a foreign language paper was to counter China's image as the "Sick man of Asia" and to demonstrate that the country was serious about its self-strengthening movement.¹¹⁶

The time after the defeat against Japan is considered the period when China began to internalize the concept of the nation-state,¹¹⁷ and the logic behind proposals to establish papers in foreign languages did reflect this shift. After 1901, China launched the "Renewing of Government" (*Xinzheng* 新政) reforms to modernize the government apparatus on the basis of the Japanese model.¹¹⁸ The idea to establish papers in foreign languages to *represent* China abroad in the system of nation-states came up again during this period. For example, in 1906, Xiong Xiling 熊希齡 (1870-1937), who was in Fengtian 奉天 (today's Liaoning 辽宁) to help implement the *Xinzheng* reforms in the three northern provinces, suggested to establish a global news agency (*huanqiu tongbaoshe* 环球通报社) in Shanghai and to publish monthly journals in the local languages in Japan, Britain, the US, Germany, France, Russia, Austria,¹¹⁹ and Italy. These should be distributed for free to foreign papers and officials. Thus, by the early 20th century, in the midst of the *Xinzheng* reforms and attempts to modernize the Chinese state to better fit the new nation-state based world order, more concrete strategies how to distribute China's point of view, such as liaising with foreign papers and foreign embassies in China, had emerged.

¹¹⁴ Chen Yan, "Lun Zhongguo yi she Yangwen baoguan" 论中国宜设洋文报馆 [Why China should establish a Western language newspaper], *Qiushibao*, November 25, 1897. Cited in Xu "Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang," 39. Also see Gan Xianfeng, 15.

¹¹⁵ Chen Yan mentions Japan's activities explicitly. Also see Akami, "The Emergence of International Public Opinion," 104.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 14-15. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, China was referred to as the "Sick Man of Asia" in the West, in analogy to the Ottoman Empire as the Sick Man of Europe. Cf. S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (New York et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18. Also see chapter 5.4.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Yūjirō Murata, "Dynasty, State, and Society: The Case of Modern China," in *Imagining the People: Chinese Intellectuals and the Concept of Citizenship, 1890-1920*, eds. Joshua Fogel and Peter Zarrow (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1997), 113.

¹¹⁸ For a thorough analysis of these reforms and Japan's role, see Douglas R. Reynolds, *China 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1993).

¹¹⁹ Probably Austria, but just abbreviated Ao, so could theoretically also be Australia.

Two Chinese authors note that these plans were not realized, explaining that the circumstances simply did not allow for that.¹²⁰ This is not entirely true. Through their foreign networks, individual politicians and cliques engaged both in foreign language publishing on Chinese soil and in other activities that can be classified as external propaganda for China and as attempts to improve their own image in the eyes of foreign publics. In the late Qing and early Republican period, these publications joined a multilingual vivid publishing industry consisting of periodicals representing different national interests run both by foreigners of various nationalities and by Chinese who successfully circumvented the ban on media ownership by presenting a foreigner as the public face of the periodical or registering abroad.¹²¹ At the same time, publishing was a popular means used by Chinese reformers and revolutionaries in exile used to gain support. This was a very “messy” media environment, in which the nationality of the owner was rarely indicative of the interests a particular publication represented, and alliances of a paper could change quickly.¹²² In order to stand out internationally, a new paper had to draw attention to itself in this fiercely competitive environment. Therefore, it is no surprise that papers directly presented themselves as the official mouthpiece of the Chinese court or high-ranking politicians.

In 1908, both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* reported that a national paper called *Chinese Public Opinion* had begun to be published thrice weekly in Beijing 北京 by general Yuan Shikai 袁世凯 (1859-1916).¹²³ According to the U.S. press, the *Chinese Public Opinion* was “part of a general movement to express in the press the feeling of China with regard to her international situation.”¹²⁴ At the time, there was, in fact, a paper called *Chinese Public Opinion* published in Beijing with the parallel Chinese title *Beijing ribao*

¹²⁰ Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 12 and Xu Xinping, “Lun Wanqing shiqi duiwai xinwen chuanbo sixiang,” 38, 43.

¹²¹ Cf. Rudolf G. Wagner, “Don’t Mind the Gap! The Foreign Language Press in Late Qing and Republican China,” *China Heritage Quarterly* nos. 30/31 (June/September 2012), available online at http://chinaheritageneewsletter.anu.edu.au/features.php?searchterm=030_wagner.inc&issue=030, accessed November 16, 2012.

¹²² Cf. Wagner, “Don’t Mind the Gap!”

¹²³ “National Paper for China,” *New York Times*, May 3, 1908, C3. The founding of the paper was also reported in the *Washington Post*. Cf. “China Adopts Publicity,” *The Washington Post*, May 3, 1908, 21.

¹²⁴ “National Paper for China.”

北京日报 [Beijing daily];¹²⁵ however, it is also possible that the U.S. press was referring to a different paper, the *National Review*, which had a parallel Chinese title that translated to *Chinese Public Opinion* (*Zhongguo gonglun xibao* 中国公论西报). In 1910, the *New York Times* unequivocally reported about the *National Review*, stating that it had been founded with the aim of “[giving] the English-speaking world a correct understanding of the Chinese opinion on international questions.”¹²⁶ According to the article, the paper received backing from the Qing court, which had it distributed to all Ministries, Consulates, and educational establishments in China. Furthermore, the State Department in Washington also received two copies.¹²⁷ The paper was first published in January 1907 and, according to Chinese sources, was “subsidized” (*jintie* 津贴) by Yuan Shikai.¹²⁸

During the Republican period, the journal was controlled by the Northern government and thus, just like in the late Qing period the journal supported Yuan Shikai. Yuan used the paper as a platform to shape his own image and manage image crises. For instance, when a scandal erupted in 1913 that relatives of Yuan’s were growing opium in Henan 河南, the *National Review* published a statement from a credible third party that Yuan Shikai had ordered an investigation of the issue. This statement was then reprinted in the *New York Times*.¹²⁹ The *National Review* translated articles from the Chinese press and often also reprinted articles published in other English language papers (such as the

¹²⁵ Cf. Wagner, “Don’t Mind the Gap!” See figure 13. According to Chinese sources, the paper edited by Zhu Qi 朱淇 was falsely registered as belonging to a German business. Cf. Wang Guiyun 王桂云, “Qingdao zui zao de minying baoren Zhu Qi” 青岛最早的民营报人朱淇 [The first person in Qingdao to run a private paper: Zhu Qi], December 5, 2011, <http://www.xhgmw.org/archive-57369-2.shtml>, accessed November 16, 2012.

¹²⁶ “China Looks to Us for Her Future. So Says Capt. Kirton, English Publisher of Shanghai, who brings a message to America,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1910, 4.

¹²⁷ “China Looks to Us for Her Future.”

¹²⁸ Cf. Ma Guangren 马光仁, *Shanghai xinwen shi* (1850-1949) 上海新闻史 (一八五〇—一九四九) [A history of the press in Shanghai (1850-1949)] (Fudan daxue, 1996), 351. During the initial phase (until at least 1910) British journalist Walter Kirton, who was also managing editor of the paper, and Y.C. Tong, a Columbia graduate, were co-proprietors of the paper. “China Looks to Us for Her Future. So Says Capt. Kirton, English Publisher of Shanghai, who brings a message to America,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 1910, 4. Kirton was later succeeded by W.S. Ridge. Cf. Ma Guangren, *Shanghai xinwen shi*, 369.

¹²⁹ Cf. “Yuan Stops Opium Growing: Relatives of the President of China had Plantations in Ho-Nan,” *New York Times*, July 6, 1913, C3.

Peking Gazette). In addition to introductions about the paper, U.S. media occasionally republished or summarized articles from the *National Review*.¹³⁰

In the American press, the *National Review* was presented as a sign that China was a progressive and reforming nation-state that fulfilled its duty to keep other nations informed of “Chinese public opinion.” The presentation of the paper to American audiences (it is unclear how much of a role Chinese players had in choosing this representation) was in line with the paradigm that saw public opinion as a force of reason and publicizing it as an obligation imposed on each nation in an internationalizing world. By publishing the paper, China was fulfilling part of its obligation necessary to be admitted as an equal into the family of nations. Whether or not and to what degree Yuan Shikai’s financing of the paper was officially backed by and done in the name of the Qing court is unclear. In the climate of the *Xinzheng* reforms, with an increasing number of official papers at national and provincial level,¹³¹ and with Japan as the primary model doing the same, an official mandate (rather than an individual decision by Yuan Shikai) is certainly within the realm of the plausible, despite the fact that Yuan primarily used the paper to promote himself and his own interests.

The *National Review* was not Yuan’s only initiative to publicize himself in the West. He was also honorary Vice-president of the China Society of America (*Zhong Mei xiejinhui* 中美协进会),¹³² an organization founded in winter 1911/1912, among others by V. K. Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun 顾维钧),¹³³ who was an exchange student studying in the United States (U.S.) at the time. The China Society’s headquarters were located in New York, and its self-declared purpose was to further cultural exchange between China and the U.S. and to “[educate] Americans to know China and things Chinese.”¹³⁴ Its scope of

¹³⁰ E.g. “Yuan Shikai appreciated by National Review,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 16, 1911, 14; “Yuan Stops Opium Growing”; “Foreigners in China: Their Disregard of Law and Regulations Causes Serious Trouble,” *Washington Post*, August 30, 1908, EE8; “Foreigners in China: Frequent Disregard of the Laws for Their Protection Is Shown by Travelers,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1908, I13.

¹³¹ Cf. Natascha Vittinghoff, “Unity vs. Uniformity: Liang Qichao and the Invention of a ‘New Journalism’ for China,” *Late Imperial China* 23, no. 1 (June 2002): 102.

¹³² “Plea to Taft for China,” *The Washington Post*, September 23, 1912, 4. Today the Chinese name *Zhong Mei xiejinhui* refers to a different body, namely the Chinese American Civic Council.

¹³³ Columbia-educated Wellington Koo (1887-1985) was a famous diplomat during the Republican period, first for the Northern government and later for the Guomindang.

¹³⁴ The China Society of America, *Annual Report of the China Society of America* (New York: China Society of America, January 1926), 16. The report is available online at

activities was very broad, ranging from publishing or recommending China-related publications, trying to influence parts of the U.S. school curriculum and lobbying the U.S. government in favor of affiliated interest groups in China to sponsoring various cultural events, providing a network for Chinese students in the U.S. and practicing film diplomacy.¹³⁵ There are some instances in which influential members of the China Society propagated Yuan Shikai's stance in the US media. For example, when Yuan declared himself emperor, citing "historical reasons and public opinion" as a justification for this move, he was defended by Andrew B. Humphrey, then president of the China Society of America, in an article in the *New York Times* as a democratic move because it had been decided by referendum.¹³⁶

One of Yuan's main adversaries, Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan 孙中山), is of course also well known for his connections both with fellow overseas Chinese and with white "mainstream" society in North America and Western Europe. Sun Yat-sen had several Western friends who advised him on how to propagate China and his own cause in the West and who also helped him with concrete texts in English.¹³⁷ In China, Sun financed *The China Press* (*Dalu bao* 大陆报), which operated in the International Settlement and was registered in Delaware to avoid being censored by the Qing Court.¹³⁸ In addition, Sun Yat-sen also subsidized *The Republican Advocate* (*Minguo Xibao* 民国西报), which was launched in Shanghai in April 1912. Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang 董显光), a Missouri-trained journalist who was later to play an important role in the GMD's international propaganda apparatus, acted as Beijing correspondent of the paper.¹³⁹

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/5324478> through the Harvard University Library Open Collections Program.

¹³⁵ The China Society, in addition, published the magazine *Asia* as well as the quarterly bulletin *China*. Cf. The China Society of America, *Annual Report of the China Society of America*, 6-7.

¹³⁶ Cf. Andrew B. Humphrey, "What China Must Decide for Herself," *New York Times*, November 23, 1915.

¹³⁷ Cf. Zhang Zhuhong 张注洪, "Meiguo guanyu Sun Zhongshan he Xinhai geming shi de yanjiu" 美国关于孙中山和辛亥革命史的研究 [U.S. research on Sun Yat-sen and the 1911 Revolution], http://agzy.youth.cn/xzzh/hwps/200912/t20091230_1124930.htm, accessed July 25, 2012.

¹³⁸ Cf. Stephen R. MacKinnon, *China Reporting: An oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 24.

¹³⁹ Sun Yat-sen used *The Republican Advocate*, among other things, as a platform to contest Yuan Shikai. Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 30.

These examples are only illustrative, but they do give some insight into the use of the subsidized English language press in China in the rivalry between different politicians and factions in China during the 1910s. This shows that rivaling factions were engaged in a propaganda war over international public opinion before the term *xuanchuan* was used to designate political propaganda and before fully and openly government-run papers (or other media) became a more acceptable transnational practice, but after the idea that the press was an ideal tool to consolidate one's power and to defend one's "national interest" had already gained currency. At least in the case of the *National Review*, attempts were made to present the periodical as the official voice of the Chinese people (through the government legitimately representing them) and to distribute it to embassies.

2.3 The Chinese Term for Propaganda: *Xuanchuan*

The First World War and the interest it triggered in the phenomenon of propaganda as part of the regular functions of government of any successful state contributed significantly to the introduction and subsequent wide use of the term *propaganda* in Japan and China. Propaganda had suddenly become the weapon of choice in the 20th century in various different domestic and international contexts. Propaganda-related notions and activities had been present in both countries before, just like the manipulation of news had already been part of the standard repertoire of international relations in Europe for decades, but after the war, discussions began to intensify in Europe and this resulted, among others, in a narrowing down on the term *senden/xuanchuan* in Japan and China.

The Japanese-Chinese word for propaganda consists of two characters, *xuan* 宣 and *chuan* 传. The word *xuan*, by itself or in various combinations, has a connotation of something rightful and honest being announced officially and solemnly. In ancient China it was also associated, during certain periods and among other meanings, with "making visible the 'mandate of heaven'" (*xianshi tianming* 显示天命).¹⁴⁰ It hence signified something righteous, i.e. the

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Shao Peiren 绍培仁, *20 shiji Zhongguo xinwenxue yu chuanboxue: xuanchuanxue yu yulunxue juan* 20 世纪中国新闻学与传播学: 宣传学和舆论学卷 [Journalism and communication studies in 20th century China: Volume on Propaganda Studies and Public Opinion Studies] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2002), 30.

proclamation of truth. Words containing *chuan* have historically been used in the sense of transmission in all sorts of fields, e.g. physics, mechanics, medicine, missionary work, heritage, lingual translation, and, finally, speech acts.¹⁴¹

Most people believe that the lexeme *xuanchuan* 宣传 in its modern sense was coined in Japan (宣伝, Japanese pronunciation: *senden*) and transmitted to China from there.¹⁴² In the earliest reference found in the Modern Chinese Scientific Terminologies database (MCST),¹⁴³ namely as an entry in the *Chinese English Dictionary (Hua Ying zidian jicheng* 华英字典集成), published in Hong Kong since 1868, the term *xuanchuan* is used in a Christian context: *xuanchuan fuyin* 宣传福音, which is translated as “to proclaim the gospel.”¹⁴⁴ This means that the lexeme may actually have functioned as a loan translation to render the new concept of *propaganda* in China earlier than in Japan, but for propaganda in a

¹⁴¹ Words containing *xuan* include 宣布 (declare, proclaim, announce), 宣称 (assert, declare, profess), 宣导 (try to persuade), 宣读 (read out in public), 宣告 (declare, proclaim), 宣讲 (preach; explain and publicize), 宣教 (propaganda and education), etc.. Other historical uses over the last 150 years are, for example, *xuan shi* 宣誓 (attest, give testimony), *xuan zhan* 宣战 (declare war, 1903), *xuanbu* 宣布 (declare), *xuanyan* 宣言 (manifest, manifesto), *xuangao* 宣告 (announcement), *xuanyang* 宣揚 (spread), *xuanjiao* 宣教 (preach), *xuanjiang* 宣讲 (delivery, 1882), *xuanchuan* 宣傳 (proclamation, 1884), *shenxuanshuo* 神宣说 (mysticism, 1913), *xuanshi* 宣誓 (oath, 1913), *xuanjiaoshi* 宣教师 (preacher, 1913; missionary, 1916), *xuanweishi* 宣慰使 (pacification, commissioner, 1913), and 宣夜 (astronomical instruments, 1912). Terms are taken from the Modern Chinese Scientific Terminologies (MCST) Database, set up by Michael Lackner, Iwo Amelung, and Joachim Kurtz. The database is the outcome of a research project launched in 1996 studying the formation of modern Chinese scientific terminology by coining calques for English and Japanese terms. It is available online at http://mcst.uni-hd.de/search/searchMCST_short.lasso.

¹⁴² Cf. Nicolai Volland, *Control of the Media in the People's Republic of China* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 2003), 31. Also see the entry for *xuanchuan* in Liu Zhengtan 刘正焱, Gao Mingkai 高名凯, Mai Yonggan 麦永乾, and Shiyouwei 史有为, eds., *Hanyu wailaici cidian* 汉语外来词词典 [Parallel English title: *A Dictionary of Loan Words and Hybrid Words in Chinese*] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1984), 376. The dictionary entry also says that the modern usage of the term *xuanchuan* entered China via Japan, but does not give a citation. The definition provided in the *Dictionary of Loan Words* is the same as in the *Dictionary of Modern Chinese (Xiandai Hanyu cidian, 1978 edition)*: “Explaining [things] to the masses so that they trust [the Party] and act [with the Party]” (对群众说明讲解, 使群众相信并跟着行动). Zhou Zuoren also writes in his essay “Propaganda” that the modern meaning of the term was likely imported through Japan. Cf. Zhou Zuoren, “Xuanchuan” 宣传 [Propaganda] in *Yaotang zawen* 药堂杂文 [Essays from the apothecary] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 92.

¹⁴³ Introduced in Footnote 141.

¹⁴⁴ Kwong, Ki-chiu 邝其照, *Hua Ying zidian jicheng* 华英字典集成 [Chinese English Dictionary] (Hong Kong, 1923, 7th edition; first edition published in 1882). Michael Lackner, Iwo Amelung, and Joachim Kurtz, *MCST Databases: An Electronic Repository of Chinese Scientific, Philosophical and Political Terms Coined in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*, retrieved February 20, 2013 from <http://mcst.uni-hd.de>.

religious context only. In 1914, the term was still used in official paper *Internal Affairs* (*Neiwu gongbao* 内务公报) to refer to the propagation of Christianity.¹⁴⁵

There is some evidence that, as in many other cases, *xuanchuan* is, in fact, a graphic loan from Japanese, where it had been appropriated from a different context (either a pre-modern Chinese text or a more recent Chinese text on religious propaganda) to translate the English term *propaganda*. Akami writes that the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs underwent a relatively sudden change in terminology in the period 1919 to 1920. Earlier, activities related to news propaganda had been termed *news manipulation*. Suddenly, the new terms of choice were “propaganda” (*senden* 宣传) and “enlightenment” (*keihatsu* 啓発).¹⁴⁶ In China, the first instances of use of the term *xuanchuan* are from 1918¹⁴⁷ and 1919.¹⁴⁸ After these first few mentions, the number of articles in the two main databases I searched then starts to increase significantly after 1920.¹⁴⁹

Different understandings of propaganda and the types of activities it encompassed reached China through different routes at the same time. Japan, which increasingly emerged as China’s main enemy, served as an important model. In addition, there were exchange students and networks of Chinese students in Europe. Although after the war, many Chinese were convinced that Europe was doomed and worse off than China,¹⁵⁰ this did not stop them from trying to extract from the European tradition anything they thought might be

¹⁴⁵“Pi Zheng Wenxin bing xuanchuan yejiao suo qingyou bu zixing gaisheng fagei shiyu zhichu ainanzhaozhun wen” 批郑维新禀宣传耶教所请由部咨行该省发给示谕之处碍难照准文,九月二十一日 [Official document rejecting Zheng Weixin’s request for a ministerial order to that province, for facilitating the propaganda of Christianity, September 21], *Neiwu gongbao* 内务公报 [Inner affairs gazette], no. 13 (1914): 49-50.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Akami, “The Emergence of International Public Opinion,” 111.

¹⁴⁷ The first use from 1918 is still in the sense of proclamation, but has points in common with the phenomenon of political propaganda popular at the time. “Geming jinian ri shilue ji xuanchuan yaodian” 革命纪念日史略及宣传要点 [Brief history and propaganda points for the commemoration day of the revolution], *Hebei jiaoyu gongbao* 河北教育公报 [Hebei education bulletin], nos. 35-36 (1918).

¹⁴⁸ The second article speaks about the propaganda of “Russian extremists.” “Eguo guojipai zhi xuanchuan yundong” 俄国过激派之宣传运动 [The propaganda campaigns of the Russian extremists], *Shishi xunkan* 时事旬刊 [Current events biweekly] 1, no. 9 (1919): 20-21.

¹⁴⁹ Particularly in the second half of the 1920s, the term *xuanchuan* became increasingly popular and widely used. There is a marked increase of articles with the term *xuanchuan* in the title in Dacheng data in the year 1925: There were 3 in 1924, and 14 in 1925. In Quanguo baokan suoyin, there is also an increase from 33 to 44. However, the number of articles is too small to make this a decisive indicator.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Robert A. Scalapino, “The Evolution of a Young Revolutionary – Mao Zedong in 1919-1920,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (November 1982): 35.

useful to save China. With the Boxer Indemnity Scholarships, an increasing number of Chinese were introduced to U.S. discourses. The first journalists in China were mostly U.S.-educated (at Columbia and Missouri) and maintained networks with their colleagues abroad. China also found the United States to be an ally in its struggle against British and Japanese colonialism, as the United States had an interest in an independent China free from the control of other nations.¹⁵¹ According to Manela, many Chinese perceived the U.S. as “the first nation to [have emerged] from a successful revolt against empire, and one that, although born of the West, represented a more benign version of Western modernity when compared with the habits of imperial aggression and exploitation associated with the European powers.”¹⁵² Finally, the Comintern directed the CPC as one its subordinate branches and also exerted a strong influence on the GMD until 1927. Thus, during the May Fourth Movement and in the 1920s, different ideas from a large variety of different movements, political interest groups, and movements were absorbed in China.

This resulted in the coexistence of several different propaganda discourses, most of which used the term *xuanchuan*, including propaganda in times of war, propaganda as a part of diplomacy, or propaganda for one’s national interest, propaganda as a means to create national unity, propaganda as education of the citizenry, propaganda in the international labor movement, propaganda as a way to spread the revolution, etc. The articles using *xuanchuan* that I have found suggest that the term was applied to domestic and international propaganda roughly around the same time in the late 1910s and early 1920s, although with international propaganda a bit earlier. This makes sense, as the initial discussions were derived from the European war experience, whereas domestic propaganda only became a major issue after the GMD turned towards the Soviet Union for help. First voices openly critical of the concept of propaganda or alluding to the fact that propaganda had a negative connotation among some people were present in China both in the 1920s and 1930s. However, the role the Soviet Union played in organizing both the GMD and the CPC and the Soviet concept of propaganda

¹⁵¹ Cf. Shuge Wei, *To Win the West: China’s Propaganda in the English-Language Press, 1928-1941* (PhD dissertation, Australian National University, 2012), 63-64.

¹⁵² Erez Manela, “Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1911,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1343.

as a legitimate activity contributed to the stability of the term *xuanchuan*, even as euphemisms for the term *propaganda* multiplied in the West.

Below, I will introduce these different discourses, beginning with the earliest discussions and practices of international propaganda, continuing with the introduction of the idea of domestic propaganda, and finishing with the concept of propaganda in times of war and crisis as discussed both by the GMD and the CPC.

2.4 Participating in the International Public: Chinese Public Opinion Matters

One common strategy in the overall repertoire of techniques to influence international public opinion used by China and others today is launching complaints about the representation of one's own country in the foreign media. This strategy was used as early as in the 1920s, primarily by people who had networks abroad and saw China as a junior member of the world community.

After the turn of the century, especially starting in the 1920s, despite the fact that the GMD had turned towards the Soviet Union, the United States became more influential in shaping China's reforms in a number of realms including education and journalism because of the Boxer Indemnity Scholarships, the first round of which was distributed in 1909.¹⁵³ In the 1920s, U.S.-educated Chinese journalists maintained ties to U.S. journalists and institutions.¹⁵⁴ As opposed to most European scholars, Americans at the time still viewed "public opinion" as a benign, positive force that had developed legitimately and that needed to be respected by governments that wanted to claim any form of legitimacy/representation.¹⁵⁵

As demonstrated above, early efforts on the part of Chinese political factions were presented in the United States as an attempt on China's part to publicize its stance and the opinion of the Chinese public because the world had

¹⁵³ There had been Chinese studying in the U.S. before, but the overwhelming majority of them came through ties to missionary schools and were not connected to the Chinese government. The Boxer Indemnity Scholarships were created responding to demands mostly by American missionaries to return the money that China had given freely to the U.S. in excess of American claims in the Boxer Protocol. Cf. Stacey Bieler, "*Patriots*" Or "*Traitors*"?: *A History of American Educated Chinese Students* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 99.

¹⁵⁴ The most important destination for Chinese journalists was the University of Missouri. For its influence on the formation of Chinese journalism, see Yong Z. Volz and Chin-Chuan Lee, "American Pragmatism and Chinese Modernization: Importing the Missouri Model of Journalism Education to Modern China," *Media Culture Society* 31, no. 5 (2009): 711-730.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 74.

an interest and a right to know about it. The idea of international public opinion as a moral force had been implied in Wilson's Fourteen Points, which were wildly popular in China at the time of the May Fourth Movement,¹⁵⁶ and was fully spelled out in Wilson's speech at the League of Nations in February 1919.¹⁵⁷ This was a time when the idea of "public diplomacy" became popular in China, not in the sense that the term is used today but as a synonym of "open diplomacy" and the opposite of examples such as the Versailles conference, which was seen by Chinese American-educated journalists as the classic example of "secret diplomacy," i.e. diplomacy behind closed doors, which led to unjust outcomes.¹⁵⁸ While in the early 20th century, journals such as the *National Review* were only presented in the terminology of the "rational public opinion" discourse in the U.S. press (but not necessarily in China), by the early 1920s, Chinese journalists, at least when speaking in English, had adapted the same vocabulary and line of argument in addition to new arguments about the need for open diplomacy and journalism standards that had become popular in the United States by that time.

One common strategy that Chinese organizations pursued during the early 1920s, not called *xuanchuan*, but taking place at a time when the term *xuanchuan* was already in use in China, was cautioning foreign governments and foreign organizations that their image in the eyes of the Chinese public deteriorated because of their negative portrayal of China and the Chinese people in the country's mass media. Thus, as early as in the 1920s, Chinese used appeals to shared values in order to try to change how China was portrayed in foreign media, including the press and film.

Such activities were not labelled *propaganda*. In fact, at the first Pan-Pacific journalism conference organized by the Press Congress of the World in

¹⁵⁶ For translations of Wilson's talks, see for example Jiang Menglin 蔣夢麟, "Meiguo zongtong Wei'ershun canzhan yanshuo" 美国总统威尔逊参战演说 [Parallel English title: *President Wilson's speeches on the World War*] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1918) and Ch'ien Chih-hsiu 钱智修, "Meiguo zongyong Wei'ershun heyi yanjiang" 美国总统威尔逊和议演说 [Parallel English title: *President Wilson's Speeches on Peace*] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1919). Also see Erez Manela, "Imagining Woodrow Wilson in Asia: Dreams of East-West Harmony and the Revolt against Empire in 1911," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1327-1351. Wilson obviously lost in popularity after the decision at Versailles to hand Shandong to Japan, and this was one factor that led Chinese to turn towards Bolshevism (cf. *ibid.*, 1349), but networks of U.S.-educated Chinese of course continued to exist.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Akami, "The Emergence of International Public Opinion," 108-109.

¹⁵⁸ In this case the fact that German colonies in China were handed to Japan rather than returned to China.

Hawaii in October 1921,¹⁵⁹ at which China was represented by four delegates,¹⁶⁰ one of the Chinese delegates, Xu Jianping 许建屏 (Jabin Hsu),¹⁶¹ called for a Western “press devoid of propaganda and colored news.”¹⁶² Propaganda in his eyes, as in the eyes of the other participants, was a bad word, the opposite of ‘white publicity,’¹⁶³ which was intended to counter the problem of secret diplomacy behind closed doors and create transparency for the public. The crucial function of the press was to hold politicians accountable to their promises of open diplomacy. The argument that ‘public diplomacy’ was needed in order to serve the public interest certainly appealed to Chinese journalists, particularly when made in connection with the Treaty of Versailles. It also resonated with the traditional Chinese distinction between private interest (*si*), as displayed by the Western press at the time, and public interest (*gong*), which could only be achieved through open diplomacy.

The press congress was used by Chinese delegates to criticize the Western press’s China coverage and to appeal to the (perceived) wish of the Western press to be well-respected in China. Delegate Xu Jianping emphasized that Chinese journalists had already lost their respect for the Western press, as they felt that news organs were controlled and steered by their national governments.¹⁶⁴ The speech Xu gave was very much in line with the rhetoric of the American members of the World Press Congress at the time, but also expressed the disappointment of

¹⁵⁹ Although the Congress had theoretically been in existence since 1915, the meeting in Honolulu was the first in the history of the institution. Program and proceedings of the conference are available at <http://archive.org/details/programproceedin00panp>, accessed July 29, 2012. See for instance “Greetings from China” (12), Hollington K. Tong, “Open Diplomacy, the Hope of the Pacific Press” (57-59). Tong referred to Americans as “leaders of public opinion” (58), Jabin Hsu, “A message from the Chinese Press” (65-66), K.P. Wang (Associate editor of the *Shenbao*), “Getting News In and Out of China” [88-93], Also see Walter Williams, *The Press Congress of the World in Hawaii* (Columbia, Missouri: Stephens Publishing, 1922). <http://ia600500.us.archive.org/9/items/presscongressofw00presrich/presscongressofw00presrich.pdf>, accessed July 29, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Bryna Goodman, “Semi-Colonialism, Transnational Networks and News Flows in Early Republican Shanghai,” *The China Review* 4, no. 1 (2004). Document retrieved through ProQuest on August 14, 2012. The President of the Press Congress was Walter Williams, who was also the president of the University of Missouri, where the majority of Chinese journalists were trained (and where Williams himself had founded the Journalism School).

¹⁶¹ Xu had graduated from the University of Michigan and worked for the *China Press* (*Dalu bao* 大陆报) at the time. Volz, “China’s Image Management Abroad,” 160.

¹⁶² Jabin Hsu, “A message from the Chinese Press” (65-66). “Program and Proceedings,” <http://ia600409.us.archive.org/1/items/programproceedin00panp/programproceedin00panp.pdf>, accessed July 29, 2012.

¹⁶³ Hsu, “A message from the Chinese Press,” 66.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Volz, “China’s Image Management Abroad,” 160.

the Chinese people in the American press which had been accepted as “big brothers” in teaching China the code of journalism and as a force “helping to guide the public opinion of China’s vast populace.”¹⁶⁵ The belief underpinning this line of argumentation was that public opinion was a moral force and that foreigners cared about how Chinese public opinion viewed them.

In addition, China also tried to engage in “film diplomacy,” which refers the efforts of a nation-state (both through popular and government initiatives) to exert influence on how one’s country is portrayed in film productions abroad. This was a very common practice for governments all over the world in the first part of the 20th century.¹⁶⁶ Films that portrayed China and the Chinese people negatively prompted both protest letters to influential people in the film industry and foreign governments, as well as caused heated discussions at home. In protesting movies to foreign governments, Chinese often appealed to the interests of the other parties to maintain their own image in China. Protesting the 1921 movie *Dinty*¹⁶⁷ to the U.S. Secretary of State, for instance, Chinese students implied that films portraying a negative view of the Chinese could hurt America’s image in China if the government allowed these movies to be distributed unchecked.¹⁶⁸

The central idea behind such appeals was, again, that China was an equal or a potential equal in the international system, once it had caught up with the Western countries by learning from them. Those who believed that China was already accepted as a junior member of the international community and would be increasingly integrated over the coming years as the country continued to modernize itself tried to engage and reason with their foreign peers by appealing to shared ideals.

This shows that the notion of the rationality and importance of public opinion was also used to try to improve China’s image abroad (by appealing to foreign journalists, film studios, etc). Such activities later became part of the

¹⁶⁵ Hsu, “A message from the Chinese Press,” 65-66.

¹⁶⁶ By the 1930s, Hollywood had begun paying attention to foreign markets by avoiding movies that could be censored in one country due to unfavorable portrayal of its citizens. The requests of third nations were also taken into consideration by national censorship regulations, either preemptively or upon request by a foreign government. Michael C. Walls, “Chinese Reactions to the Portrayal of China and Chinese in American Motion Pictures Prior to 1949” (PhD diss. Georgetown University, 2000) 139-141.

¹⁶⁷ *Dinty* is a film about a newsboy who runs into trouble with drug smugglers in Chinatown.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Walls, “Chinese Reactions,” 61.

overall package of activities subsumed under the term *xuanchuan*.¹⁶⁹ The discourse universe centred on the notion of imperialists who would never treat China as an equal was soon to emerge, among others, as a polemic against this ideal.

2.5 Establishing China in the Forest of Nations

International respect became one of many issues addressed during the May Fourth Movement. The fact that Japan had been given German rights in Shandong 山东, rather than fully returning the province to China was a painful reminder to May Fourth students and intellectuals that China was not seen as a full member of the international community *en par* with Europe, North America, and Japan, despite the promises made in Wilson's Fourteen Points.¹⁷⁰ Just like in the late 19th and at the turn of the 20th century, recognition of China by the international community, its "international status," was important in the early 1920s. The idea of international status and of being accepted as a great civilization that is at least on equal footing with the Western countries are central to understanding China's early conception of external propaganda that also persisted after the end of the First World War and subsequently became one of the many discussions surrounding the term *xuanchuan*.

An article from 1922 on the propagation of Chinese history written by Miao Fenglin 缪凤林 (1899-1959), who was later to become a renowned historian, posited that having a reputation as a great ancient civilization was a precondition for being respected today, at least for China, arguing that because there were no systematic introductions of Chinese history in Western textbooks on world history, it should not come as a surprise that the West did not respect China.¹⁷¹ It was not that there were no texts on China's history in the West at all, but the existing

¹⁶⁹ Particularly under the term "big external propaganda" (*da waixuan* 大外宣), a coinage from the 1990s, which sums up the PRC policy to include many different actors and activities in its external propaganda. Cf. chapter 8.

¹⁷⁰ Shandong was returned to China three years later in 1922 at the Washington Naval Conference on disarmament in East Asia. See "The Washington Naval Conference, 1921-1922," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/NavalConference>, accessed January 27, 2013.

¹⁷¹ Miao Fenglin 缪凤林, "Zhongguo shi zhi xuanchuan" 中国史之宣传 [The propagation of Chinese history], *Shidi xuebao* 史地学报 [The journal for history and geography]1, no. 2 (1922), 2 (1-7). The *Journal for History and Geography* was the organ of the Research Association for History and Geography of Nanjing Higher Normal School (南京高等师范学校史地研究会).

studies, first, did not grasp the true value of Chinese civilization (*wei neng mingliao wuguo wenming zhi zhenjia* 未能明了吾国文明之真价) and, second, they contained grave mistakes.¹⁷² This was particularly bitter for China because histories of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Babylon were, as Miao pointed out, much more detailed. While Westerners were interested in understanding Chinese history, their language abilities and other limitations prevented them from doing so properly.¹⁷³ Therefore, the Chinese people needed to speak up for themselves, propagate Chinese history and, in so doing, answer to the demands from other countries to learn about China and to prevent all sorts of misunderstandings.¹⁷⁴ This type of rhetoric places the appeal somewhat within the discourse centred on rational public opinion and interaction between China and foreigners on equal footing.

At the same time, the author highlighted the superiority of Chinese civilization compared to the West. For North Americans and Europeans, whose own countries were too young to even remotely compare to China, argued Miao, it was difficult to imagine the glories of a country that had thousands of years of civilization. Currently, they therefore viewed China as a semi-carved up, semi-opened up country.¹⁷⁵ Propagating the achievements of China's civilization, for instance its contributions to governance and law,¹⁷⁶ would help eliminate this lie and show people the contributions China had made as well as its potential for future contributions to world civilization.¹⁷⁷ Propagating China's history, Miao stated, was also important to let the world see the wrongs Europeans had committed on the Asian continent. All countries that the West has forced open and thus destroyed used to be part of the Chinese tributary system, with India as the only exception. They were part of Chinese history and hence it was China's responsibility to let the world know of their fate at the hands of Western countries.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷² Miao, "Zhongguo shi zhi xuanchuan," 2.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁷⁶ For instance, China had much more advanced discussions on law than Grotius' *On the Law of War and Peace* as early as during the Chunqiu period, said Miao. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

However, relatively abstract recognition of China's greatness as well as demonstrating the West's immoral behavior were not the only reason why China needed to propagate its history abroad; rather, history was also to serve present political needs: An incorrect understanding of Chinese history would cause other countries to take the wrong stance on current political issues. For instance, Westerners believed that Manchuria only became a part of China during the Qing Dynasty. If China let them know that it had been a part of China for thousands of years, they would not dare to openly support Japan's bids to control the land.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, China needed to eliminate the misperception that the North and South of the country had been ruled by different governments for significant parts of Chinese history. If Westerners understood that the North and the South had always been unified, that would influence them psychologically and make them support a unified China.¹⁸⁰

The article contained themes that had been present in earlier debates why it was necessary to establish media in foreign languages and that were to remain important in the coming decades. It is representative of later (to some extent including today's) discussions in its ambivalence towards the role of the Western countries, expressing disdain on the one hand and a desire of being recognized as a great civilization by the West on the other. Likewise, it shows that culture and history, which are considered important carriers for communicating China's message today, have had a place in the Chinese discussion on external propaganda since the earliest days. The theme of a rival faction doing its own international propaganda, by contrast, was only implicit in this early article. It was spelled out more explicitly later, after the conflict with Japan worsened over the course of the 1920s: Foreigners (or, alternatively, illegitimate Chinese governments) kept getting away with misrepresenting events because China did not have any international propaganda.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Wu Tianfang 吴天放, "Zhongguo dangqian zuiyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti" 中国当前最要的国际宣传问题 [The most pressing issue in China's current international propaganda], *Baoxue jikan* 报学季刊 [Journalism quarterly] 1, no.1 (1934): 3-9.

2.6 Domestic Propaganda: Making and Governing Citizens

Although the first longer discussions on *xuanchuan* in its modern meaning described the practice of international or transnational propaganda, the term was soon also used to refer to domestic propaganda. After Sun Yat-sen had propagated his agenda in the West,¹⁸² but had failed to gain recognition or support from Western governments for the GMD that had set up a separate government in the South, he turned towards the Soviet Union. As the GMD rebuilt itself as a Leninist party under Soviet tutelage, it established domestic propaganda structures. In 1922, two years prior to the official restructuring of the GMD along the lines of a Leninist party, but at a time when the term *xuanchuan* for the modern phenomenon of political propaganda was already well-established in China, Sun Yat-sen first instituted a Propaganda Bureau (*Xuanchuanju* 宣传局), thus establishing the first structure to manage propaganda in GMD history.¹⁸³ At this time, Sun was, of course, already working with the Comintern. In 1923, he established the GMD Central Propaganda Department (*Guomindang zhongyang xuanchuanbu* 国民党中央宣传部) in Shanghai.¹⁸⁴

The CPC had also established a Propaganda Department in the year of its foundation in 1921, as such a structure was a requirement for joining the Comintern.¹⁸⁵ Thus began the importation of domestic propaganda structures and techniques from the Soviet Union. Volland has argued that the current domestic propaganda concept of the CPC has its roots not only in practices absorbed from

¹⁸² In *The International Development of China*, published in 1922, Sun Yat-sen appealed to Western countries to invest in China as a way to make up for the war industries that no longer had a purpose in times of peace. Sun had developed the idea immediately after the First World War and tried to sell it to various Western governments as early as in 1919. The idea had already been fully devised by early 1919 and sent to U.S. government officials as well as possibly other governments. Cf. Michael R. Godley, "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: Sun Yatsen and the International Development of China," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* no. 18 (1979): 111-112.

¹⁸³ See for example Li Benyi 李本义, "Sun Zhongshan xuanchuan sixiang de xianming tese" 孙中山宣传思想的鲜明特色 [The distinct features of Sun Yat-sen's thought on propaganda], *Hubei minzu xueyuan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 湖北民族学院学报 (哲学社会科学版) [Journal of the Hubei Institute for Minorities (humanities and social sciences edition)] 29, no. 5 (2011): 10.

¹⁸⁴ Tang Xiaotong 唐晓童, "Sun Zhongshan chuanbo sixiang guankui" 孙中山传播思想管窥 [A glimpse at Sun Yat-sen's thought on communication], *Chengdu daxue xuebao (Shehui kexue ban)* 成都大学学报 (社会科学版) [Journal of Chengdu University (social science edition)], no. 3 (2005): 63.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Volland, *Control of the Media*, 36. According to Volland, "[t]he naming of a propaganda director was a demonstration of the CCP's willingness to coordinate the activities of the various leftist publications in China" (36).

the Soviet Union through the Comintern, but also in pre-modern ideas about the relations between the people (*min* 民) on the one hand and the emperor and his officials (*guan* 官) on the other.¹⁸⁶ The pre-modern Chinese concept of *min* had been marked by a distinct lack of trust in intellectual capacities and conscious agency of the people. In what would today be considered the domestic realm, namely the territory controlled by the court through the dispatching of officials (*guan*), the emperor as the Center of the world was responsible for the moral education of the population, which depended on him like children.¹⁸⁷ Likewise, there was a general idea that competing individuals or groups (“ringleaders”) could mislead and corrupt the people if they were not dealt with swiftly and harshly. The emperor mainly fulfilled his duty through living as a moral example. In addition, there were a number of practices and routines that ensured that the population did not miss the message, such as the regular reading of the Sacred Edict (*Shengyu* 圣谕) by officials to villagers all over the Chinese empire.¹⁸⁸

Reformers and revolutionaries at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries likewise assumed the population’s need for guidance in order to turn China’s useless masses into proper, awake patriotic citizens.¹⁸⁹ Chinese intellectuals’ conceptions about the population they had to deal with in order to build a strong nation that would be able to survive in the social Darwinist struggle were further fuelled by Western theories that reached China usually through the mediation of Japan. For example, in China, as in other parts of the world, ideas about “national psychology” and “crowd psychology,” one of the foundations for propaganda studies later, became very popular among intellectuals starting in the early 20th century.¹⁹⁰

Le Bon’s *Les lois psychologiques de l’évolution des peuples*, which intended to analyze the “psychology” and consequently the political behavior of different

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 140-146.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 148.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 147-148; Andrew J. Nathan, *Chinese Democracy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 134.

¹⁸⁹ See for example Joan Judge, “Publicists and Populists: Including the Common People in the Late Qing New Citizen Ideal,” in *Imagining the People*, eds. Fogel and Zarrow, 165-182. For the metaphor of China awake and asleep, see Rudolf Wagner, “China ‘Asleep’ and ‘Awakening.’ A Study in Conceptualizing Asymmetry and Coping with It,” *Transcultural Studies*, no. 1 (2011):4-139.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Sun Lung-kee [Sun Longji 孙隆基], *Lishi xuejia de jingxian* 历史学家的经线 [The historian’s warp] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007).

“nations” or “races,” had been a popular book during the last years of the Qing dynasty, when intellectuals in exile in Japan argued over the ideal form of government for China. Liang Qichao 梁启超 used Le Bon’s *Psychology of Peoples* as early as 1904 to argue against the introduction of too much liberty into the Chinese political system. He commented on the chaos that he found in San Francisco’s Chinatown due to the lack of governmental power that usually kept the Chinese in check and suggested that Chinese were incapable of living under any other system than despotic rule.¹⁹¹

Certain notions, such as “crowd psychology” or, later, the need for a revolutionary vanguard leading the people, were thus well-received in China in the early 20th century because they were considered a modern scientific explanation for traditional paternalistic conceptions of the people from the imperial period. The belief in the lack of intellectual capacities and conscious agency of the people as well as the role of masses and elites vis-à-vis each other did not need to be significantly changed in order to accommodate new ideas imported from the West arguing for the need of an elite in guiding the rest of the population. Instead, an existing belief was bolstered with additional details and came to be “scientifically proven” by Western psychology or Bolshevik ideology.

However, Chinese intellectuals, with a few exceptions, largely believed in the malleability of crowds through education and advocated cultivating their good sides while eliminating their shortcomings.¹⁹² By creating a large number of good citizens, China would be able to strengthen itself and thus its overall position in the Social Darwinist struggle for national existence. Chinese elites distinguished between themselves and the overwhelming majority of the population, but as opposed to European crowd psychologists who were looking for ways to manipulate the masses to maintain order, Chinese elites saw it as their

¹⁹¹The Chinese people “can only live under despotic rule and are incapable of [responsibly] exercising liberty. [...] It is like what Le Bon called the national psychology; one can detect [the characteristics of the Chinese people] everywhere [i.e. wherever one can find Chinese]. If one has citizens [*guomin*] like these and wishes to implement a parliamentary system with them, is that [even] possible? 只能受专制不能享自由[...] 即李般所谓国民心理，无往而不发现也。夫以若此之国民，而欲与之行合议制度，能耶否耶。[...]以若此之国民，而欲与之行选举制度，能耶否耶。 From Liang Qichao, “Xin dalu youji (jielu)” 新大陆游记（节录） [Notes from the travel to the new continent], February 1904, in Liang Qichao Wenji 梁启超文集 [Collected works of Liang Qichao], 191-192. He considered the Chinese to be exactly like the French (as Le Bon and many of his contemporaries saw them) with regard to the chaos such a system would cause. Cf. Sun, *Lishi xuejia de jingxian*, 38.

¹⁹² Cf. *ibid.*, 61.

responsibility and genuinely wanted to change people in order to create a stronger China. Similar ideas can be found today for example when the CPC talks of the need to raise the “quality” (*suzhi* 素质) of the Chinese people, which will be addressed again below in chapter 8.4.

In the political imaginaries of both reformers and revolutionaries –reality was of course a different matter– the purpose of such “propaganda” was not to push through certain policies, but to change the population for the greater good. As opposed to previous conceptualizations centered on the emperor’s role in maintaining morality and order, the underlying rationale of intellectuals at the turn of the century was that China needed an enlightened, patriotic citizenry in order to strengthen itself and be able to survive in the competition between nations. This has been covered extensively in secondary literature¹⁹³ and will therefore only be revisited here to make brief points about the role of the press, conceptions of mass-elite relations, and the link to later ideas about propaganda.

Again, some of the earliest ideas of what was later to become one of the debates around the term *xuanchuan* were initially expressed in the form of discussing the role of the press, which was an adept instrument to turn useless Chinese peasants into proper citizens by reformers at the turn of the century. Sun Yat-sen, too, shared the belief in the press as a powerful force to unify national public opinion. In 1912, on several occasions, he stressed that one of the most important functions of the press during the revolutionary struggle had been to unify public opinion and guide it towards the one correct truth.¹⁹⁴ After the term *xuanchuan* became commonly used in China, statements such as these were considered part of the history of the idea of propaganda in China.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, the

¹⁹³ E.g. Fogel and Zarrow, eds., *Imagining the People*.

¹⁹⁴ Chinese quote: “其初虽有不正当之舆论……而报馆记者卒抱定真理，一往不渝，并牺牲一切精神、地位、财产、名誉，使吾所抱真理屹不为动，作中流之砥柱。久而久之，人人之心均倾向于此正确之真理，虽有其它言论，亦与之同化” “Zai Shanghai *Minlibao* zhi dayan” 在上海《民立报》之答言 [Answering questions at the Shanghai *People’s Paper* (literally: paper set up by the people)], April 17, 1912, in Sun Yixian 孙逸仙 [Sun Yat-sen], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* 孙中山全集 [Complete works of Sun Yat-sen] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), vol. 2, 337. For another speech, see for example “The Press Should Be United” (Speech given on April 27, 1912 to reporters of Canton newspapers). In Sun Yat-sen, *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-Sen* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1994), 73

¹⁹⁵ For instance, writing in 1928, one Chinese author opined that before the 1911/1912 revolution, the members of Sun’s Revolutionary League (Tongmenghui 同盟会) focused on propaganda, a focus that was unfortunately lost and replaced by an emphasis on military achievements after 1912. Long Sheng 龙生, “Guoji xuanchuan yu Shanghai guoji dianxunshu” 国际宣传与上海

belief in the press's ability to shape opinions and transform people is another important precursor of the concept of propaganda before the term *xuanchuan* was introduced into China and discussed on a large scale in the aftermath of the First World War. It was in the 1920s, mostly under the influence of the Comintern, that Sun Yat-sen began using the term *xuanchuan* to when speaking of the need to unify people and make them accept the GMD's correct ideas. In 1923, he proclaimed that for the revolution to succeed, the GMD needed to rely to 90 per cent on propaganda and only 10 per cent on military force because reforming people's thought could not be achieved through military might.¹⁹⁶

After the GMD had brought larger sections of Chinese territory under its control through the Northern Expedition of 1927-1928 and had established itself in Nanjing 南京, it had more capacities for large scale propaganda movements that were theoretically intended to target and shape all of the Chinese population within the GMD's reach. Starting in the second half of the 1920s and continuing throughout the 1930s, the GMD Central Propaganda Department as well as its provincial equivalents began to devise "propaganda programs" or outlines (*xuanchuan dagang* 宣传大纲) for a number of different occasions and campaigns,¹⁹⁷ a format that was later also used to list the points to highlight in international propaganda work.¹⁹⁸ In this context, any sinister context of the term *xuanchuan* was not even debatable. Importantly, like later CPC outlines, this included the proper slogans to write and shout.¹⁹⁹ Despite the break with the Comintern after 1927, the GMD had clearly internalized organizational principles and practices established under Soviet influence, such as the mass campaign

国际电讯社 [International propaganda and the Shanghai international news agency], *Guoji zhoubao* 国际周报 [International weekly] 1, no 2 (1928): 1.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Fu Qixue 傅启学, *Zhongshan sixiang tixi* 中山思想体系 [Sun Yat-sen thought system] (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1985), 109.

¹⁹⁷ E.g. "Zongli anzang xuanchuan dagang" 总理安葬宣传大纲 [Propaganda program for the burial of the President], *Guangdong dangwu* 广东党务 [Guangdong Party affairs], no. 5 (1929): 43-47; "Ji'nan can'an zhounian jinian xuanchuan dagang" 济南惨案周年纪念宣传大纲 [Propaganda program for remembering the anniversary of the Jinan massacre], *Guangdong dangwu* 广东党务 [Guangdong party affairs], no. 7 (1929): 37-40.

¹⁹⁸ E.g. "Zhanshi duiwai xuanchuan dagang" 战时对外宣传大纲 [Outline of external propaganda in times of war], in *Jimei zhouban* 集美周刊 [Jimei weekly], 22, no. 10 (1937): 28-30.

¹⁹⁹ E.g. "Zongli anzang xuanchuan dagang," 46-47, and "Ji'nan can'an zhounian jinian xuanchuan dagang," 40.

(*yundong* 运动), i.e. the mobilization of the population under the leadership of the Party in order to achieve a particular goal.²⁰⁰

Looking at the CPC's understanding of propaganda work, it becomes apparent that it was an outgrowth of or converged with earlier citizen-building campaigns that had been ongoing since the turn of the century, at least in part. The CPC considered domestic propaganda a necessary activity in order to raise the consciousness of the Chinese people and develop (*fayang* 发扬) their conscious agency (*zijue nengdongxing* 自觉能动性) to enable them to stand up to their domestic and international oppressors.²⁰¹ Like in the GMD, the CPC discussed propaganda as a necessary activity to “awaken” the Chinese people so that they could struggle against and liberate themselves from the enemy *du jour* – whether that was the “imperialists,” the Japanese or the capitalists. Former concrete values and their abstract categories that the “new Chinese” was to be inculcated with were simply replaced with new ones. However, the reach of the CPC was obviously limited, and initially, its propaganda activities were relatively uncoordinated and waxed and waned.²⁰² It was only in 1942 that the CPC established a strong domestic propaganda apparatus to inculcate Party members with “correct thought” and unify their thinking.²⁰³

Aside from use of the term *xuanchuan* in the GMD (and starting in the 1930s increasingly the CPC) bureaucracy to denote a certain type of activity that had already been accepted as a normal part of the political process in order to shape proper citizens and no longer needed any debate, there was a parallel movement among intellectuals to write at length about propaganda and

²⁰⁰ Between 1934 and 1937, the GMD organized the New Life Movement (*Xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活运动), a massive top-down mobilization in order to inculcate correct morality and correct public and private hygiene in all sections of Chinese society that the GMD could reach and thereby build a modern Chinese citizenry with a solid foundation of ‘traditional’ values selected from Confucianism. See for example Arif Dirlik, “The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1975): 945-980.

²⁰¹ Cf. Mao Zedong 毛泽东, “Yiqie fuheyu keguan shishi de sixiang shi zhengque de sixiang” 一切符合于客观事实的思想是正确的思想 [All thought that is in line with objective facts is correct thought], May 1938, in Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu 中共中央组织部 [Organization department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De lun dang de xuanchuan gongzuo* 毛泽东, 周恩来, 刘少奇, 朱德论党的宣传工作 [Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi and Zhu De on the Party's propaganda work] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1989), 62.

²⁰² Cf. Volland, *Control of the Media*, 35-40.

²⁰³ Cf. *ibid.*, 41-42.

propaganda strategies. While propaganda as a strategy of governance had been adopted from the Soviet Union, the actual propaganda debate at the time mostly drew on the North American and Western European discussions, which focused on qualitative strategy and research to buttress actual propaganda work. At the time, the GMD could also learn from Fascist countries in Europe that perfected propaganda techniques on their own populations and with which the GMD had good ties in the 1930s.²⁰⁴ As opposed to the early Republican period (until the early 1920s), when the focus was on *what* elites wanted China's population to become and to believe (modern citizens who had been ideologically freed of China's "feudal" legacy), the focus in the late 1920s and 1930s shifted to the question *how* elites could successfully mold, steer, and control the people.

An excerpt in a book on crowd psychology, whose tenets were also used in China to derive propaganda methods, stated: "Propaganda is the most important strategy to gain the trust of crowds. Without propaganda, even if you argue well, you cannot gain the trust of the majority."²⁰⁵ In other words, merely being right and being able to articulate one's beliefs in the form of cold, rational arguments did not suffice; one needed to employ a set of particular propaganda techniques to succeed.²⁰⁶ This reflects an idea that was becoming widespread at the time, namely that any political authority that wanted to prevail needed to be well-versed in the art of propaganda, which consisted both of certain verbal and rhetorical skills (qualitative aspect) and of the omnipresence and constant repetition of one's arguments (quantitative aspects).

While initially, propaganda strategies discussed were linked to crowd psychology and assumptions about the "crowd mind," they were later mixed with more up-to-date qualitative and quantitative research that emerged in the United States in the 1930s. *Applied Propaganda Studies* (*Shiyong xuanchuanxue* 实用宣传学), written by Missouri-trained journalist Liang Shichun 梁士纯 (1902-

²⁰⁴ Cf. William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 205-206; Anne-Marie Brady and Douglas Brown, "Introduction: Foreign Bodies," in *Foreigners and Foreign Institutions in China*, eds. Brady and Brown (New York: Routledge, 2013), 17.

²⁰⁵ Chen Dongyuan 陈东原, *Qunzhong xinli ABC* 群众心理 ABC [ABC of crowd psychology] (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1929), 68.

²⁰⁶ For instance, Chen explained once a term had acquired a pejorative connotation, it needed to be replaced by a word that evoked better images. Chen, *Qunzhong xinli ABC*, 66.

1984)²⁰⁷ and published in 1936, explored various different propaganda strategies that were first invented, or at least systematically spelled out, in U.S. research on public relations. These included how to grab the attention of the audience,²⁰⁸ how to maintain the target's interest,²⁰⁹ and how to elicit a particular reaction from the audience. Concrete examples included putting notices up in places where people are bored, such as on the train or in the waiting room at the doctor's office. The color red, wrote Liang, was best to grab people's attention,²¹⁰ but it was also important to combine colors that made for a good contrast.²¹¹ In talks and articles, it was always good to use concrete examples to illustrate a theoretical point.²¹² Changing strategies was, moreover, a good means to maintain interest.²¹³ Liang also explained what emotions or perceptions to evoke, from the perspective of psychology, to get a group of people to act. The section used both ideas still largely based on Le Bon's crowd psychology, such as that people (or, in Le Bon's work: crowds) were conservative and would cling to old ideas and newer findings from marketing research, such as that a product or idea one wanted to sell needed to be associated with positive sentiments.²¹⁴ Thus, while both the GMD and the CPC were influenced by the Soviet concept of propaganda, the results of U.S. (marketing) research conducted in the 1930s also made their way to China.

Despite the largely positive or neutral connotation that the term *xuanchuan* had, there were quite a few voices that presented propaganda as a social pathology and questioned its underlying notions of mass-elite relations. The relatively widespread negative connotation of propaganda in China does not only become

²⁰⁷ Liang Shichun's English name was Hubert Liang. Liang also helped Edgar Snow to visit the Communist base and became involved in China's international propaganda after the outbreak of the war in 1937, both by writing articles in English and by giving talks about China's plight in the U.S. Cf. Liang Shiwei 梁世伟, "Fuqin Liang Shichun na nan yi wangque de wangshi" 父亲梁士纯那难以忘却的往事 [Those events in the past of (my) father Liang Shichun that are hard to forget], originally published in *Nanjing yueyou* 南京约友 [Nanjing friend], no. 44 (September 2009), available online at http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_61b84b4b0100v3pt.html, accessed February 20, 2013.

²⁰⁸ Liang Shichun 梁士纯, *Shiyong xuanchuan xue* 实用宣传学 [Applied propaganda studies] (Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 11-13.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 16.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

visible in texts directly condemning or talking negatively about propaganda,²¹⁵ but also in texts supporting propaganda which explain that the term has a bad reputation.²¹⁶ As early as in 1930s, one article called “Discussion of propaganda and its influence on changes in Chinese society” explained that what people associated with the term *xuanchuan* differed vastly: Some people thought of secret societies, others equated propaganda with advertisement, and some went even so far as to believe that propaganda was deceptive in nature (*dai qipian xingzhi de 带欺骗性质的*).²¹⁷

Different assumptions about whether propaganda was good or bad, honest or dishonest could also be mixed. For example, a text otherwise very affirmative of international propaganda published in the journal *Sino-Soviet Culture* (*Zhong Su wenhua* 中苏文化), the mouthpiece of the GMD-affiliated Sino-Soviet Culture Association, which had many members from the CPC, who controlled the journal,²¹⁸ implicitly accepted the negative association. It argued that “exactly because we rely on iron-clad facts, one could even say that we are not engaging in propaganda, but are only stating what is true and righteous.”²¹⁹ Through such statements, propaganda was overall portrayed as legitimate, but the fact that some people saw it as dishonest was also acknowledged.

On the one hand, the negative connotation may have originally slipped into the Chinese debate through the unattributed translation of Western texts. On the other hand, the issue was genuinely taken up and discussed later in a larger debate over the difference between propaganda and education in which the different underlying concepts of men of different factions clashed. Several well-known texts stated that propaganda was the same as education. Liang Shichun explained

²¹⁵ E.g. Cha Liangzhao 查良钊, “Gonggong tushuguan yu chengjian de xuanchuan” 公共图书馆与成见的宣传 [Public libraries and propaganda of prejudices], *Chenbao fukan* 晨报副刊 [Supplement to the morning paper], May 31, 1925, 196.

²¹⁶ E.g. Wu Yuzhen, “Xuanchuan ji qi yingxiang yu Zhongguo shehui bianhua de taolun,” 199.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Cf. Danke Li, *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 148. The Sino-Soviet Culture Association (中苏文化协会), was founded in 1936 by Soviet-educated GMD member Zhang Ximan 张西曼 (1895-1949) and headed by Sun Yat-sen’s son Sun Fo. Cf. Li, *Echoes of Chongqing: Women in Wartime China*, 148.

²¹⁹ Chinese quote: “正因为靠了这铁一般的事实，甚至可以说我们不是在宣传，而是在申述真理和正义。” From Jian Baicun 简柏邨, “Kangzhanqi Zhongguo de guoji xuanchuan” 抗战期间的国际宣传 [China’s international propaganda while fighting Japan], *Zhong Su wenhua zazhi* 中苏文化杂志 1, no 1 (1937): 48.

that propaganda, “in other words, is educating the masses,”²²⁰ reflecting the standard definition of propaganda promoted through the practice of the GMD.

In the early 1940s, sociologist Pan Guangdan 潘光旦 (1899-1967), best known for his role in the Eugenicist movement in China, by contrast, made a strong polemic against statements like this that shows that relatively thorough criticism of propaganda as an activity per se from a humanist point of view were also transmitted to China.²²¹ Pan explained that propaganda first came to be viewed as a social pathology in Europe after the First World War, and that he based the details of his argument largely on the work of Western philosophers, educators, and psychologists.²²² According to Pan, the beliefs underlying propaganda and education respectively were diametrically opposed. Education proceeded from the assumption that man had some inner wisdom and that he would use it to solve problems in his environment. Therefore, education did not seek to solve problems but instead sought to enable individuals to use their knowledge to solve problems.²²³ At the same time, people were different, and no one-size-fits-all model applied. Education theory held that, therefore, the best form of education was to “enlighten” (*qifa* 启发), not to “pour” (*guanshu* 灌输).

Propaganda, on the other hand, made use of “pouring,” not of “enlightening.”²²⁴ Propaganda reduced the theories the propagandist deemed important to very simple dictums and hoped that the target audience would accept them as a whole and without any doubts.²²⁵ Propaganda only offered a one-size-fits-all explanation ill-suited to the actual differences that existed.²²⁶ The assumption behind propaganda was that only a small portion of humanity could

²²⁰ Chinese quote: “换言之，就是教育群众” Liang Shichun, “Xu” 序 [Preface] to *Shiyong xuanchuanxue*, 2.

²²¹ Pan’s pamphlet was supposedly reacting to a campaign organized by students to rectify the name of propaganda in which the students had put up banners stating that propaganda was a form of education (*xuanchuan ye shi yi zhong jiaoyu* 宣传也使一种教育). Cf. Pan Guangdan, *Xuanchuan bu shi jiaoyu* 宣传不是教育 [Propaganda is not education] (Shanghai: Shenghuo shudian, 1946), 1. The volume from 1946 contains both the initial text by Pan Guangdan, “*Xuanchuan bu shi jiaoyu*” 宣传不是教育, as well as his retort to a GMD article published in the Central Daily (*Zhongyang ribao* 中央日报) in response to his piece, “*Zailun xuanchuan bu shi jiaoyu*” 再论宣传不是教育 [Further discussing that propaganda is not education]. Both essays were initially composed in 1940.

²²² Cf. Pan, *Xuanchuan bu shi jiaoyu*, 4-5.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

attain wisdom, that only this small minority could develop a proper ideology and rescue society. All other people had to listen, accept, and follow orders.²²⁷ In the case of education, the receiver was the main beneficiary; in the case of propaganda, the sender benefited the most.²²⁸ Pan's text shows that the position that people like Dewey had taken in the U.S. in the 1920s showed up in China in the 1940s and that people not only attacked certain understandings of propaganda, but also addressed underlying concepts of man.

In conclusion, as the GMD and the CPC copied the Soviet domestic propaganda apparatus and the corresponding ideology, the new beliefs mixed well with earlier conceptualizations of mass-elite relations. Although the institutional set-up and practices such as mass campaigns were largely learned from the Soviet Union, the debate on domestic propaganda was also transfused with and further developed by drawing on the findings of new research from the U.S. Moreover, while the "mainstream" connotation of the term propaganda was positive owing to the perceived usefulness of propaganda in mobilizing the Chinese populace for various purposes, there were voices of opposition that drew their ammunition largely from the U.S. debate on the role of propaganda and education in a democracy. Therefore, it is incorrect to claim that *xuanchuan* has always had a positive connotation in China.²²⁹ However, the GMD contributed to the establishment of a Soviet-inspired model of propaganda which defined propaganda as a legitimate activity and focused on penetration of society. Later, after the CPC had founded the PRC in 1949, this understanding of propaganda dominated in China for several decades before being temporarily challenged during the 1980s.

2.7 International Propaganda and Socialist Internationalism

The earliest structures for international propaganda in China were most likely also set up under Soviet influence. While the GMD was still working closely with the Comintern, besides its domestic propaganda apparatus, it also

²²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²²⁸ Ibid., 5-6.

²²⁹ An argument that is commonly made. See for example Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celiè yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 2-3; Gan Xianfeng 甘险峰, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国对外新闻传播史 [A history of China's external news communication] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004), 11.

tried to institute separate structures for international propaganda work. In August/September 1924, the suggestion was made to establish a Committee on International Propaganda (*Guoji xuanchuan weiyuanhui* 国际宣传委员会) in the GMD headquarters that would serve as a liaising knot between China and the world to propagate the Three People's Principles²³⁰ abroad, to spread international ideas in China, and to handle any contact between the GMD and the Comintern in a systematic manner.²³¹ It appears this structure was not solely intended to import information, but also to export it. Nonetheless, this effort should be viewed somewhat separately from later initiatives, as it was clearly first and foremost part of trying to integrate China into the international network of Socialist movements rather than to appeal to foreigners for help in a specific conflict situation.

In the case of the CPC, the initial focus on internationalism and class solidarity was naturally even more pronounced. When the CPC was founded in Shanghai in 1921, the Bolsheviks and their international representative organ, the Comintern, were already quite conscious of the usefulness of propaganda both domestically and internationally. In order to facilitate communication with the Comintern and thus other socialist movements around the world, the China-Russia News Agency (*Zhong E tongxunshe* 中俄通讯社) was set up in Shanghai as early as July 1920, before the CPC had even been founded.²³² By September 1920, dispatched Comintern agent Voitinsky (Войтинский; 维经斯基) reported that the Secretary's Office of the Comintern in East Asia²³³ had opened publishing centers in Harbin, Beijing, and Shanghai which distributed works originally printed in Moscow in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.²³⁴ The Far Eastern Department of the

²³⁰ The Three People's Principles (Sanmin zhuyi 三民主义) was the GMD's main ideology roughly devised by Sun Yat-sen and then claimed and reinterpreted by Chiang Kai-shek. The three principles are *minzu zhuyi* 民族主义 ("nationalism," concerned with the need to unite the people), *minquan zhuyi* 民权主义 ("democracy," concerned with the "ideal" form of government), and *minsheng zhuyi* 民生主义 ("livelihood," referring to the need to take care of people's livelihood and ensure their economic well-being).

²³¹ Cf. Zeng Chenggui 曾成贵, "Zhongguo guomindang Hankou zhixingbu jiexi" 中国国民党汉口执行部解析 [Analysis of executive departments of the Guomindang in Hangkou], *Minguo dang'an* 民国档案 [Republican (period) archive], no. 4, 2009, available online at <http://blog.gmw.cn/u/4327/archives/2009/94696.html>, accessed December 10, 2012.

²³² Cf. Fang Hanqi 方汉奇, *Zhongguo xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国新闻传播史 [History of Chinese journalism and communication] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2002), 190.

²³³ *Gongchan Guoji Dongya Shujichu* 共产国际东亚书记处 or Восточноазиатский секретариат коминтерна.

²³⁴ Examples include the "Program of the Russian Communist Party" and the "Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic". Cf. Li Ying 李颖, "Gongchan guoji fuze

Comintern, established in December 1922, published the *Far Eastern Newsletter* (*Yuandong tongxun* 远东通讯) distributed to leaders of each of the member parties of the Comintern, and also established a Foreign Books Press, an editorial office, and a book room for Marxist works.²³⁵ In October 1923, the CPC established the Committee for Education and Propaganda (*Jiaoyu xuanchuan weiyuanhui* 教育宣传委员会) to fulfill Comintern requirements. The internal structure of the Committee shows that one important purpose of the committee was actually to transmit information about the Communist movement to China.²³⁶

Initially, the CPC was very weak. Founded by a dozen Communists at a time when the two most powerful factions were the GMD in the South and the Northern government in Beijing, the young CPC entered an alliance with the GMD in 1922 at the behest of the Comintern in what later became known as the First United Front.²³⁷ The alliance broke apart after Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi 蒋介石) cut ties with the Comintern and purged members of the Communist Party from his ranks in the midst of the Northern Expedition, so that the CPC had to go underground before establishing a permanent base, the “Chinese Soviet Republic” in Jiangxi in late 1931.

Propaganda targeted at foreigners was one task of nearly all of the CPC’s newly founded media in the 1930s, although these initiatives cannot be called very successful. Red China News Agency, the predecessor organization of Xinhua

Zhongguo wenti de zuzhi jigou de lishi yanbian (1920-1935)” 共产国际负责中国问题的组织机构的历史演变(1920-1935), [Historical evolution of the Comintern institution responsible for Chinese affairs (1920-1935)]. *People’s Daily* Online, June 3, 2011, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/218984/218998/14818684.html>, accessed November 27, 2012.

²³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

²³⁶ It consisted of an Editing Department (*bianjibu* 编辑部), a Correspondence Department (*hanshoubu* 函授部), the “Information Bureau” (*tongxunbu* 通讯部), a Printing Department (*yinxingbu* 印行部), and a Library (*tushuguan* 图书馆). The task of the Information Bureau was to compile and translate works related to the Communist movement into Chinese. It had eight separate divisions: the English Division, the Russian Division, the French Division, the German Division, the Japanese Division, the Periodical Division, the Newspaper Division, and the Research Division. Cf. “Jiaoyu xuanchuan weiyuanhui zuzhifa” 教育宣传委员会组织法 [Organization law for the Commission for Education and Propaganda], October 1923, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian: 1915-1937* 中国共产党宣传工作文献选编: 1915-1937 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China: 1915-1937], ed. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting zhongyang dang’anguan bianyanbu 中共中央宣传部办公厅中央档案馆编研部 [Editorial and Research Department of the General Office of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1994), 555-557.

²³⁷ Since 1922, the Comintern had pursued an overall United Front policy in which communist parties were to link up with all workers and to do so by working together with other parties and organizations. The directions given to the CPC were an extension of this overall policy.

established in 1931 directly after the Temporary Central Soviet Government in Ruijin was officially established, engaged in some –though extremely limited– external propaganda work. In spring 1931, the Chinese Workers and Peasant’s Correspondence (CWPC) was formed under head of the CPC’s Central Propaganda Department Zhang Wentian 张闻天 (1900-1976).²³⁸ CWPC released news once a week or about every ten days, each consisting of ca. 3000 to 4000 characters. News was released both in Chinese and in English. For Chinese news, seven or 8 copies were made by hand and distributed secretly to Party papers and other “progressive papers.” As for English language releases, usually around 80 copies were printed and distributed mainly abroad.²³⁹ With regard to content, these releases mainly covered CCP policies, activities and developments at the Communist basis, workers’ and students’ movements, anti-Japanese activities, and anti-GMD releases.²⁴⁰

As will be seen below, starting in the mid-1920s when the conflict with Japan continued to escalate, Chinese authors already wrote impassioned articles urging their fellow Chinese to pay more attention to international propaganda. The CPC, too, addressed the issue of international propaganda, but before allying with the GMD against the Japanese for a second time, it used the term in quite a different meaning: To refer to linking the Chinese Communist movement more closely to other Communist movements around the world.

An article published in the official paper of the CPC *Red Flag* (*Hongqi* 红旗)²⁴¹ in 1930 focused on transnational solidarity between the working class and the oppressed peoples of the world. The article explained that Communists were “internationalists,” not only in their beliefs, but also in their actions. The responsibilities of Communists in each country were not only determined by the circumstances in their country: Just like other countries’ struggles mattered for China, China’s struggle was watched by the masses in other countries. The only way that the CPC could be successful in China was to let the working masses

²³⁸ Zhang Wentian had been one of the 28 Bolsheviks, but allied with Mao Zedong in 1935 and subsequently became General Secretary of the CPC. He remained General Secretary until 1943, when the position was abolished.

²³⁹ Presumably more material was distributed in English than in Chinese because the CPC lacked Chinese printing facilities.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 41-42.

²⁴¹ Not to be confused with the CPC’s later theoretical journal *Hongqi* published between 1958 and 1988.

(*laoku qunzhong* 劳苦群众) know that they were part of the world revolution and connect them with the Chinese revolution. For this, the CPC had two important tasks that were equally important: First, it needed to conduct international education (*guoji jiaoyu* 国际教育), which meant bringing news about the world revolution to the Chinese masses and to politically educate them about the ideology of internationalism. Second, the Party needed to engage in international propaganda (*guoji xuanchuan* 国际宣传), which meant widely propagating (*guangda xuanchuan* 广大宣传) the current state of the Chinese revolution to the international proletariat and agitating them into helping the Chinese revolution.²⁴²

The article criticized the CPC's lack of attention to international propaganda and noted that this was the reason why China had received so little international support for its revolution thus far.²⁴³ Just like around the turn of the 19th and 20th century it had been presented as the duty of the Chinese state to inform the people of the world of "Chinese public opinion," it was the duty of the CPC to inform other communist parties of the development and progress of the movement on the Chinese front.

The article acknowledged the existing "Capitalist" world order, in which (working) people were divided and conquered by the erection of national borders held against it the ideal of solidarity determined by class, not by nation-state. "International propaganda" had to operate in an environment fractured by national borders, but was intended to produce and nurture feelings of solidarity between working people all over the globe by reporting on and thus linking the development of socialist movements in different countries. As will be seen below, while similar themes also showed up in later texts on international propaganda by authors doubting that appealing to imperialist Western countries could help China, this distinct discourse on class solidarity faded into the background after Japan was identified as the greatest threat to China.

²⁴² Wen You 问友, "Guoji xuanchuan yu guoji jiaoyu" 国际宣传与国际教育 [International propaganda and international education], *Hongqi* 红旗, no. 110, June 14, 1930, 1.

²⁴³ Wen You, "Guoji xuanchuan yu guoji jiaoyu," 1.

2.8 The Third Front: The War over Public Opinion, 1925-1931

As the tension between China and Japan rose over the course of the 1920s and 1930s and China looked for ways to gain the sympathy of the international community, international propaganda became increasingly important. The experiences of the First World War had led to a systematic study of the function of propaganda and an institutionalization of propaganda as part of international relations. As indicated above, China adapted the debate on propaganda almost from the very moment that propaganda became a subject of systematic study in Europe, and the term *xuanchuan* entered the Chinese vocabulary around the same time or soon after *senden* became a central concept in the Japanese government. The division into military wars, economic wars, and propaganda wars was quickly adapted in China²⁴⁴ and soon became a form of common knowledge among people writing on propaganda.

After the end of the First World War, a large body of literature on propaganda emerged in all major Western countries involved in the war. In Germany, it became commonplace, especially among military elites, to blame the loss of the war on a “propaganda deficit”²⁴⁵ both at the domestic and the international propaganda front.²⁴⁶ The role of propaganda in Germany’s loss of the war was also highlighted in China.²⁴⁷ One author noted that the First World War was not decided on the military front, but mainly on the economic front and the propaganda front.²⁴⁸ Prominent statements made by German military generals and in the German press in this context were often picked up to bolster the importance of propaganda well into the 1930s, although it is doubtful that they were taken directly from the German context and incorporated into Chinese articles on international propaganda. It is more likely that these quotations already circulated in English-language treatises on propaganda and found their way into

²⁴⁴ E.g. Wang Yizhi 王一之, “Ouzhan zhong zhi guoji xuanchuan zhan” 欧战中之国际宣传战 [The international propaganda war during the European war], *Xin zhengzhi* 3, no 1 (1939): 64-77. Wang speaks of “three fronts” (san ge zhenxian 三个阵线). Also see Wang Yizhi, “Woguo guoji xuanchuan shang de yanjiu” 我国国际宣传上的研究 [Chinese research on international propaganda]. *Xin zhengzhi* 2, no 4 (1939): 66-76.

²⁴⁵ The term *Propagandadefizit* had been coined by Martin Mohr, who later became head of the German Institute for Press Studies (Deutsches Institut für Zeitungskunde). Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 102.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Bussemer, *Propaganda*, 103-104.

²⁴⁷ Wang Yizhi, “Ouzhan zhong zhi guoji xuanchuan zhan,” 64.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

the Chinese debate from there.²⁴⁹ An article in the journal *Journalism Quarterly* (*Baoxue jikan* 报学季刊)²⁵⁰ from 1934 quoted Kaiser Wilhelm II and Hindenburg to emphasize the importance of propaganda.²⁵¹ Another article quoted a “German general” and a “German paper.”²⁵² As China got much of its literature on propaganda from the United States, however, Germany was not portrayed as entirely unskilled in the art of propaganda in every Chinese text on the topic. Instead, many texts introduced several different propaganda strategies used during the war and then explained which country had excelled at which strategy.²⁵³ For the balance in the propaganda war, Chinese authors not only wrote about propaganda skills, but also took hard aspects, such as control over means of communication into account. Thus, it was noted that Germany was in a weaker position in the propaganda war because Britain controlled the telegraph system and wireless telecommunication technology was not yet developed enough that it could be employed by Germany on a wide scale.²⁵⁴

In the 1930s, journals published overviews of international propaganda initiatives organized by different countries.²⁵⁵ The purpose was quite similar to later overviews: To try to stay up to date with developments in the field and at the same time to demonstrate the importance of propaganda by arguing that all countries in the world paid attention to it. Propaganda measures were regularly divided into “proactive” (*jiji* 积极) and “reactive” (*xiaoji* 消极).²⁵⁶ This could refer to the distinction between propaganda and censorship measures and other

²⁴⁹ Works written in European languages other than English were usually translated on the basis of an English or Japanese translation.

²⁵⁰ The journal was launched in Shanghai in October 1934 and connected to the manager of the *Shenbao*, Zhang Zhuping 张竹平. Cf. Duan Bo 段勃, “*Baoxue jikan*: Minguo shiqi yi fen zhongyao de xinwenxue xueshu kanwu” 《报学季刊》: 民国时期一份重要的新闻学学术刊物 [*Journalism quarterly*: An important academic publication on journalism from the Republican period], *Chuanmei guan cha* 传媒观察 [Media observation], no. 11 (2010).

²⁵¹ Wu Tianfang, “Zhongguo dangqian zuiyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti,” 4.

²⁵² Hao Gong 浩公, “Xuanchuan” 宣传 [Propaganda], *Shehuixue zazhi* 社会学杂志 [Journal of sociology] 4, no. 3-5 (1931): 199-120.

²⁵³ See for example Wang Yizhi, “Ouzhan zhong zhi guoji xuanchuan zhan,” 64-77.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁵⁵ E.g. “Shijie geguo boyin xuanchuan zhenxian zhi xianzhuang” 世界各国播音宣传阵线之现状 [The current situation on the broadcasting front in various countries of the world], *Guangbo zhoubao* 广播周报 [Broadcasting weekly] 104, no. 1 (1936): 58-60. The article included examples and illustrations from the U.S., Great Britain, Italy, and Germany, including images of King Edward VII, Hitler, and Mussolini while giving speeches or broadcasting to the public.

²⁵⁶ E.g. Liu Naifu 柳乃夫, “Xunsu kuoda guoji xuanchuan” 迅速扩大国际宣传 [Quickly expand international propaganda], *Zhanxian* 战线 [Front], no 1 (1937): 12.

restrictive means.²⁵⁷ However, reactive could also mean to be forced to have to react to accusations made by the enemy rather than being able to determine oneself what was discussed by the international community.²⁵⁸

The debate in Europe and the U.S. (and presumably Japan as well) had the outcome that propaganda came to be viewed as a form of “magical weapon” in China as well. International propaganda was described as “a powerful weapon” (*liqi* 利器)²⁵⁹ that helped the citizens of a country to prosper and progress and that thus constituted “the most indispensable instrument in the competition over national existence” (*minzu shengcun jingzheng zui bu ke qushao de gongju* 民族生存竞争最不可缺少的工具).²⁶⁰ One argument made frequently was that China, which had just awoken, was not yet ready to fight a military or an economic battle and therefore needed to try even harder to excel in the propaganda war.²⁶¹ This is reminiscent of the argument that Edward Carr made about the Soviet Union later and was also invoked by Chinese authors when speaking in more general terms of the “oppressed peoples” (*bei yapo minzu* 被压迫民族).²⁶² Another article argued that the 20th century was a “century of open public opinion” (*yulun gongkai zhi shiji* 舆论公开之世纪). All who could make their voice heard had an advantage, regardless of their military strength.²⁶³

One argument often used by students and intellectuals to stress the urgency of better international propaganda was the fact that even in this “soft” area, China was significantly behind Japan, with disastrous consequences. Thus, Japan served

²⁵⁷ E.g. in “Zhanshi duiwai xuanchuan dagang,” 28-30.

²⁵⁸ E.g. in Xiao Zisheng 萧子升, “Guanyu Hu’an jiying de liang dian: Duiwai xuanchuan, duinei xuanchuan” 关于沪案及应的两点: 对外宣传, 对内宣传 [Two points about the Shanghai Massacre: International propaganda, domestic propaganda], *Mengjin* 猛进 [Fierce advance], no. 15 (1925): 6.

²⁵⁹ Long Sheng, “Guoji xuanchuan yu Shanghai guoji dianxunshe,” 1.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶¹ E.g. Sun Yizhi 孙义植 and Zhong Xuanmin 钟选民, “Shijieyu zai guoji xuanchuan shang zhi xiaoli” 世界语在国际宣传上之效力 [The effectiveness of Esperanto in international propaganda], *Xuesheng zazhi* 学生杂志 [Literally: Student journal; parallel Esperanto title: *L’Esperanta Studento*] 15, no. 11 (1928): 127.

²⁶² Zhou Anguo 周安国, “Bei Yapo minzu yu xuanchuanzhan” 被压迫民族与宣传战 [The oppressed peoples and the propaganda war], *Huangpu yuekan* 黄埔月刊 [Hwang Poo monthly] (No year): 41. Dacheng data claims this article is from 1924; however, this year is evidently false as the article quotes Lasswell’s *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927). The article could be from *Minguo* 民国 24, i.e. 1935.

²⁶³ He Xie 何燮, “Xin Zhongguo yu guoji xuanchuan” 新中国与国际宣传 [New China and international propaganda], *Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志 [Eastern miscellany] 25, no. 24 (1928): 33.

both as primary competitor and as primary reference model. Starting in the mid-1920s, Japan's international propaganda was frequently portrayed as being ahead of China in all possible ways – their news releases were faster, their equipment was more modern, and their methods were more innovative.²⁶⁴ Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had established a Department of Information (Jōhōbu 情報部) by 1921 to adapt to the new post-war diplomatic environment in which propaganda would play a more and more important role.²⁶⁵ Its main responsibility was news-related propaganda, including supervising “independent” Japanese media and liaising with foreign media organizations.²⁶⁶ With the creation of the Department, Japanese news propaganda was expanded from countering anti-Japanese protests in the U.S. and China (reactive) to a more proactive program.²⁶⁷ In 1923, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs added the Department of Cultural Affairs for China.²⁶⁸ In 1924, Japan set up the supra-ministerial Research Committee for International Information Telecommunication, which was primarily created to research wireless news transmission.²⁶⁹

Calls for better international propaganda usually came in the wake of conflicts with foreign powers in China, although aside from these relatively immediate concerns, the idea of being perceived by foreigners as uncivilized also continued to be a motivation.²⁷⁰ In fact, as the section on the propagation of Chinese history has shown, lack of recognition as a worthy civilization and lack of political support were linked in the heads of some Chinese participants in the debate. The first widespread calls for better international propaganda driven by a sense of crisis came together with the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925. The event that led to the movement is known in China as the May Thirtieth Massacre

²⁶⁴ E.g. Long Sheng, “Guoji xuanchuan yu Shanghai guoji dianxunshu”; Xiao Gan 萧乾, ““Mo guai waiguo baozhi: Women tai zhuoyu guoji xuanchuan 莫怪外国报纸：我们太拙于国际宣传 [Don't blame foreign papers: We are too clumsy in international propaganda], *Nahan* 呐喊 [The cry], no 2 (1937):27-28; “Ri kuoda guoji xuanchuan” 日扩大国际宣传 [Japan expands international propaganda], *Guoji huikan* 国际汇刊 [International general publication] 2, no 10 (1936): 48.

²⁶⁵ Akami, “The Emergence of International Public Opinion,” 111-113.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ The Department was renamed Department of Cultural Affairs in 1927 after it was put in charge of cultural affairs in countries other than China as well. *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 115-116. This committee, according to Akami, was the first attempt to coordinate news propaganda, although it probably only survived until 1925.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 84.

(*Wu Sa Can'an* 五卅惨案). On May 30, 1925, Shanghai students had gathered to protest the shooting of a Chinese worker in a Japanese-owned cotton mill. In the course of the demonstration, British police opened fire on the protestors, killing thirteen students on Nanjing Road in the International Settlement.²⁷¹

The incident led both to a discussion of the usefulness of international propaganda²⁷² and to some short-lived non-governmental attempts at international propaganda, such as the Shanghai Student Union publishing nine issues of a journal named the *English Weekly* (*Yingwen zhoubao* 英文周报) in 1925.²⁷³ One paper called for people to mobilize their Chinese friends studying or working abroad and sending them copies of newspaper articles so that they had enough information to spread.²⁷⁴ According to their own account, members of China's Esperanto movement also sent letters to Esperanto societies around the globe that were then translated into local languages to publicize the events in China.²⁷⁵ Over the course of the next few years, the GMD added a number of foreign propaganda channels. The GMD launched its "Chinese News Service" that issued English language publications in Canton.²⁷⁶ The official party paper *Central Daily* (*Zhongyang ribao* 中央日报) published in Hankou 汉口 in 1927 also had an English language edition, which relied on translations from the Chinese version and was edited, among others, by Lin Yutang 林语堂.²⁷⁷

The next incident that spurred widespread calls for better international propaganda was the Jinan Incident, known as the May Third Massacre (*Wu San Can'an* 五三惨案) in Chinese, when GMD and Japanese troops clashed in 1927 in Shandong. Japanese troops ultimately purged GMD troops from the area, killing many of the soldiers. Although not all foreign papers took a decidedly anti-

²⁷¹ Cf. David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 182.

²⁷² E.g. Zhou Lunchao 周伦超, "Ruhe yong xuanchuan gongfu" 如何用宣传功夫 [How to use the art of propaganda], *Jingbao fukan* 京报副刊 [Peking press supplement], nos. 195-224 (1925): 91.

²⁷³ Cf. Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo xinwen chuanbo shi*, 208.

²⁷⁴ Sun Jingzhang 孙景章, "Yi ge yongli shao er shouxiao da de guowai xuanchuan fangfa" 一个用力少而收效大的国外宣传方法 [A rarely used but very effective method to do propaganda abroad], *Jingbao fukan* 京报副刊 [Peking press supplement], nos. 195-224 (1925): 14.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Sun Yizhi and Zhong Xuanmin, "Shijieyu zai guoji xuanchuan shang zhi xiaoli," 127.

²⁷⁶ The earliest publication I could find was from 1927. Chinese News Service, *Special Issue Regarding Hankow Incident* (Canton: Chinese News Service, 1927).

²⁷⁷ Cf. Ding Ganlin 丁淦林, *Zhongguo xinwen tushi* 中国新闻图史 [Illustrated history of the Chinese press] (Guangzhou: Nanfang ribao chubanshe, 2002), 104.

Chinese stance, the Jinan Incident was considered a clear propaganda defeat.²⁷⁸ The number of articles calling for international propaganda was larger than in 1925,²⁷⁹ and the topic was treated like a well-established problem.²⁸⁰ One author commented after the incident that China was already well aware of the need to conduct international propaganda, but had difficulties putting this realization into practice.²⁸¹

Another author suggested that the GMD should establish English language papers under direct control of the Central Propaganda Department. In addition, China should run papers and periodicals in the “world’s important capitals,” whose dual responsibility would be to “introduce Chinese culture and transmit Chinese news.”²⁸² The GMD should also establish a proper news agency that would release news in both English and Chinese and subsidize private initiatives in return for pro-GMD propaganda.²⁸³ China also needed a decent newspaper that employed well-educated journalists. In order to ensure that there was enough personnel, Chinese universities had to add journalism departments.²⁸⁴ While the author argued that Chinese officials and politicians needed to learn to respect journalists, he also encouraged censorship of any items that were untrue or smeared China. Foreign journalists who were ill-intentioned (*xin huai eyi* 心怀恶意) and permanently wrote against China should be deported.²⁸⁵ Individual journalists that were known to report favorably should be contacted. By

²⁷⁸ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 63-77.

²⁷⁹ E.g. Huang Yankai 黄延凯, “Jinhou bendang zhengfu dui guoji xuanchuan gai zenyang” 今后本党政府对国际宣传应该怎样 [What should this Party’s government do about international propaganda in the future], *Guanche* 贯彻 [Implementation], no. 7-8 (1928):18-22.

²⁸⁰ E.g. in Long Sheng, “Guoji xuanchuan yu Shanghai guoji dianxunshe,” 1.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² Huang Yankai, “Jinhou bendang zhengfu dui guoji xuanchuan gai zenyang,” 21.

²⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*, 21-22.

²⁸⁴ In fact, a number of Chinese universities had begun setting up journalism departments starting in the early 1920s. The first Chinese university to set up a news department was Shanghai’s St. John’s University, which created such a department in 1920 and hired American D.D. Patterson to serve as its head. In 1924, the American M.E. Votaw became head of the department. Overall, the department had about 40 to 50 students. Classes were conducted in English. In 1921, Xiamen University also established a News/Journalism Department. In the first year, there was only one student, with the number increasing to six in 1922. In 1923, Beijing Pingmin University also established a News/Journalism Department, headed by Xu Baohuang and with the head of the *Jiangbao* as one of the professors. The curriculum did not only include classes, but also an internship at a newspaper. Beijing Yanjing University (1924), Beijing Minguo University (1924), Beijing Guoji University (1924), Shanghai Southern University (1925),²⁸⁴ Shanghai Hujiang University (1926), Shanghai Guanghua University (1926), Shanghai Dasha University (1926), and Fudan University (1929),²⁸⁴ followed suit. Cf. Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo xinwen chuanbo shi*, 214-215.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Huang Yankai, “Jinhou bendang zhengfu dui guoji xuanchuan yinggai zenyang,” 21-22.

establishing contacts with well-established Western news agencies, China could ensure that pro-China messages were transmitted to Western papers in their home countries.²⁸⁶

In 1928, the GMD set up the Central Broadcast Station (*Zhongyang guangbo diantai* 中央广播电台), which broadcasted news provided by the Central News Agency, but did not have a very strong signal.²⁸⁷ In the same year, the GMD established an International Division (*Guojike* 国际科) within its Central Propaganda Department. This was both the result of the Jinan Incident and of the GMD's desire to strengthen its own position after having established itself in Nanjing.²⁸⁸ As the division lacked organization and its work was directed by the same people that were also in charge of domestic propaganda, however, it was not very successful. Many texts were translated directly from Chinese, focused on Party doctrines and praised the GMD. In sum, these propagandists paid no attention to the question how to appeal to foreign target audiences and how to reduce the "propaganda flavor" of their publications.²⁸⁹ Thus, the GMD faced a similar dilemma in the 1930s as the CPC would face later starting in the post-Mao period, namely trying to conduct propaganda targeted at Western audiences through structures set up with the help of the Soviet Union, based on the Soviet model and intended primarily for domestic propaganda.

Just like in 1925, the episode also triggered a number of popular initiatives. In July 1928, the Shanghai International News Agency (Shanghai guoji tongxunshe 上海国际通讯社) was founded.²⁹⁰ Also in reaction to China's treatment by Japan in 1928 and the international take on the events, returned overseas exchange students launched the *China Critic* (*Zhongguo pinglun zhoubao* 中国评论周报), dubbed "the only Chinese owned and edited English weekly," in Shanghai in May 1928.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 22.

²⁸⁷ Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 45.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 81, 85.

²⁸⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 85-88.

²⁹⁰ Long Sheng, "Guoji xuanchuan yu Shanghai guoji tongxunshe," 1.

²⁹¹ Cf. William Sima, "Re-introducing *The China Critic*" *ChinaHeritage Quarterly*, nos. 30-31 (September 2012), http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/features.php?searchterm=030_editorial2.inc&issue=030, accessed February 18, 2013. Lin Yutang had his own column called "The Little Critic," launched in 1930.



國際宣傳的比較！

III. 2.I: “A comparison of international propaganda.”²⁹²

A cartoon from 1931 after Japan had invaded Manchuria shows the imbalance between Japanese and Chinese international propaganda as it was seen in China at the time. On the left side of the stage, the cartoon shows a Japanese man with a sword hidden

behind his back, though the attempt to conceal it is not very pronounced. He holds a black megaphone to amplify his “black propaganda” message. The Japanese is small, has “traditional” Japanese hairstyle, a shirt resembling a kimono, no pants, and Japanese sandals. On the right side of the stage is a Chinese, who is notably taller than his Japanese counterpart and resembles Sun Yat-sen in terms of his hairstyle, moustache, and clothing and is clearly a “modern” man. He is holding his white megaphone in the wrong direction, so that the message is diminished rather than amplified. His other hand is clearly visible. Both the Japanese and the Chinese are performing in front of a Western audience (as shown by their clothes and especially their top-hats) of five people who are facing the Japanese propagandist and listening to him.

In 1931, with the occupation of Manchuria and the impending hearing before the League of Nations, concerns about international propaganda again surged. The League of Nations dispatched the Lytton Commission in spring 1932.²⁹³ Japan set up an informal coordination committee in May and an information committee at the Cabinet Office in September 1932 to present Japan’s position to the Commission and member countries of the League of Nations (including all countries the General Assembly).²⁹⁴ The GMD sent Columbia-

²⁹² “Guoji xuanchuan de bijiao” 国际宣传的比较 [A comparison of international propaganda], *Shishi yuebao* 实事月报 [Facts monthly] 5, no. 5 (1931): 1.

²⁹³ The Lytton Commission was sent to Manchuria by the League of Nations in order to investigate the Mukden Incident, a false flag operation by Japan to justify its take-over of Manchuria.

²⁹⁴ Akami, “The Emergence of International Public Opinion,” 118.

educated diplomat Wellington Koo to provide background material to the Commission and to accompany its members on their visit to Manchuria.²⁹⁵ Likewise, in 1932, the previously very weak Central Radio Station, which had broadcasted in Japanese since 1931, was replaced by a 75 Kilowatt station.²⁹⁶ The GMD also set up an English newspaper in Beiping 北平 shortly before the Commission arrived to write its report.²⁹⁷ In addition, the GMD attempted to set up a supra-ministerial board in charge of international propaganda, which, however, lacked mechanisms for coordination between different ministries and was therefore ineffective.²⁹⁸ The decision of the League of Nations has been described as a tremendous propaganda loss for Japan.²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the outcome was viewed as anything but victory on the Chinese side. The theme “We are right, but we are not heard because China does not conduct (enough) international propaganda” remained dominant.

In addition to GMD activities, non-governmental institutions continued to launch initiatives. In 1932, the Chinese Catholic Action (officially founded in Beijing in 1928) decided to establish an international propaganda organization (*guoji xuanchuan jiguan* 国际宣传机关) in order to target their fellow-Catholics abroad and counter Japanese propaganda.³⁰⁰ The distribution of material was to be funded by the headquarters of the Catholic Action. This again highlights the use of net-works that were not state-based, transnational rather than international. Esperanto also continued to be propagated as a good tool for international propaganda as late as in 1939.³⁰¹

Over the next few years, as the GMD began to pursue a policy of appeasement towards Japan and subsequently toned down its international propaganda,³⁰² calls for better external propaganda continued. An article from

²⁹⁵ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 170-171. Japanese attempts to prevent Koo from travelling with the group largely worked in China’s favor. Cf. *ibid.*, 171-172.

²⁹⁶ Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 46-47.

²⁹⁷ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 173.

²⁹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 172.

²⁹⁹ Akami, “The Emergence of International Public Opinion,” 118.

³⁰⁰ “Gongjiao jinxinghui zongbu zhuyi guoji xuanchuan” 公教进行会总部注意国际宣传 [The Headquarters of the Catholic Propaganda pays attention to international propaganda, *Jiaoyu yiwenu* 教育益闻录 [Analecta educationis] 4, no. 2 (1932): 125.

³⁰¹ Chen Yuan 陈原, “Zuowei guoji xuanchuan yong de shijieyu” 作为国际宣传用的世界语 [Esperanto as used for international propaganda], *Guomin gonglun (Hankou)* 国民公论 (汉口) [Nationals’ public opinion (Hankou)] 2, no. 1 (1939): 37.

³⁰² Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 174.

1934 insisted that “because we do not have international propaganda, foreigners do not understand that the three Northern provinces have [always] been a part of China.”³⁰³ Like others before, the author came up with an ambitious proposal that suggested running one English language paper in London and Washington DC each, running a French language paper in Paris, a German language paper in Berlin, an Italian language paper in Rome, and a Japanese language paper in Tokyo. In addition, China should establish a Bureau for International Propaganda or a similar institution in Shanghai in order to be able to liaise with foreign journalists.³⁰⁴

GMD initiatives could not live up to the suggestions made in Chinese journals, but a number of new institutions were set up. In 1934, the Central News Agency (*Zhongyang she* 中央社) established an English department, which provided papers all over the country with English language news releases.³⁰⁵ This meant that people did not need local staff with English language editing skills, but could rely on a central agency to provide them with the necessary material. Some of the domestic news consisted of translations from Chinese language news releases as well as selected articles from local Chinese language papers picked by local branches of the Central News Agency.³⁰⁶

The press environment in the 1930s in which multiple interest groups were active and in which Chinese could either employ a nominal foreign editor or register their papers abroad or in the international concessions allowed for a relatively vivid privately organized press to begin with. While the GMD did not have the reach to shut a paper down, it could extend its support to and subsidize papers that were partial to the Party’s cause. *T’ien Hsia Monthly*, which focused on literature and the arts, was launched in Shanghai in August 1935, funded by the Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education after the editors enlisted Sun Fo’s 孙科³⁰⁷ support.³⁰⁸ Altogether, more than fifty editions

³⁰³ Wu Tianfang, “Zhongguo dangqian zuiyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti,” 3.

³⁰⁴ Wu Tianfang, “Zhongguo dangqian zuiyao de guoji xuanchuan wenti,” 5. Wu noted that if China could not afford that much, it should first establish papers in London, Washington, and Tokyo. *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁰⁵ Xiao Xia 晓霞, “Zhongyangshe zai Dalu de rizi” 中央社在大陆的日子 [The Central News Agency’s days on the mainland], *Minguo dang’an* 民国档案 [Republican (period) archive], no. 2 (1995): 137.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ Sun Fo (孙科 Sun Ke) was Sun Yat-sen’s son, a member of the Executive Yuan and a long-term rival of Chiang Kai-shek.

were published. The majority of editors and contributors had studied abroad. Originally, *T'ien Hsia Monthly* was supposed to be a political journal, but ultimately its main aim was defined as introducing Chinese culture to the West.³⁰⁹ In 1935, American writer Emily Hahn (1905-1997) and Chinese poet Shao Xunmei 邵洵美 (1906-1968) also tried to launch the English language periodical *Vox*, which did not succeed in establishing itself.³¹⁰ Again, these examples are only illustrative; there were many private and semi-private initiatives, although not all of them were effective.

However, the use of international propaganda did not remain unchallenged in China in the 1930s. Two problems came together: First, the failure to get the international community to intervene militarily and the subsequent loss of Manchuria had created doubt whether propaganda was really as powerful a weapon as it had been made out to be. One article argued against this new mindset and criticized the Chinese people for going from one extreme (trust in the international community and propaganda) to the other (rejection of propaganda and loss of trust in the international community) and for expecting support simply for being right without even trying to be competitive in the international propaganda battle.³¹¹ Second, one of the dominant world views at the time, namely that China was not and would never be considered an equal by Western powers, got in the way. The argument was made that appealing to Western powers, the oppressors and imperialists, was both morally wrong *and* futile because the imperialists would never side with oppressed China. This, according to one author,

³⁰⁸ He Ansen 何安森 and Zhao Xiaoyan 赵潇雁, “*Tianxia fengyun*” 《天下》风云 [The situation of Tianxia Magazine], *Lifemagazine*, no. 50, 2010, available online at <http://www.chinalifemagazine.com/Web/ShowNews.asp?id=587>, accessed November 17, 2012. The journal was named after Sun Yat-sen’s “*tian xia wei gong*” 天下为公. It was advertised, for instance, in the weekly supplement to *The China Press* as “[p]ublished under the auspices of the Sun Yat-sen Institute for the Advancement of Culture and Education.” Cf. for example *The China Press Weekly* 1, no. 22 (January 5, 1936): 13.

³⁰⁹ For instance, the journal published Chinese writers Lu Xun 鲁迅, Shen Congwen 沈从文, Lao She 老舍 and others in translation. He Ansen and Zhao Xiaoyan, “*Tianxia fengyun*.”

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ Chen Daichu 陈岱础, “*Poqie de guoji xuanchuan wenti*” 迫切的国际宣传问题 [Urgent international propaganda issues], *Xin minzu* 新民族 [New nation] 1, no. 4 (1938): 11.

was confirmed by the 1935 decisions in the League of Nations on Abyssinia that failed to restrict Italian aggression.³¹²

Thus, on the one hand, Chinese authors writing from an anti-imperialist point of view had to condemn the international community for being unfair and led by imperialist governments. On the other hand, the purpose of international propaganda was for this unfairly organized international community to intervene on China's behalf. A theme that had dominated the anti-imperialist protests of the 1920s re-entered the debate on international propaganda, namely "The present world order is unfair and determined by particular interests (*si*) rather than the public interest (*gong*)." However, even those most vocally condemning the contemporary world order did not necessarily reject international propaganda entirely.

The solution, as would be the case later during parts of the Mao and post-Mao periods, was to distinguish between unethical political and military elites and the overwhelming majority of the people. For instance, as early as in 1928, one article addressing those opposing international propaganda argued that in the past, uncivilized behavior had always been the fault of individual politicians and warlords and "did not come from the public [= in the sense of 'in the public interest,' i.e. just or unselfish] will of the people" (*er fei you mingzhong zhi gongyi ye* 而非由民众之公意也).³¹³ Several articles stressed the need to address the Japanese people and ask them to oppose the policies of their government more vigorously.³¹⁴ Often, the crisis discourse of having to appeal to other nations for help and the discourse on class solidarity as exemplified in the *Red Flag* text from 1930 were blended within single articles. For instance, an article in the journal of the GMD's Whampoa Military Academy, *Hwang Poo Monthly* (*Huangpu yuekan* 黄埔月刊), entitled "The oppressed peoples and the propaganda war" first described the use of propaganda in the First World War and noted that each country had recognized the importance of propaganda in winning a fight. The article then explained that conducting propaganda was particularly important for

³¹² Lao Cao 劳艸, "Hai dankao 'kuoda guoji xuanchuan' ma?" 还单靠“扩大国际宣传”吗? [Shall we still only rely on 'expanding international propaganda?'], *Libailiu* 礼拜六 [Saturday] no. 619 (1935): 379.

³¹³ Long Sheng, "Guoji xuanchuan yu Shanghai guoji dianxunshe," 2.

³¹⁴ E.g. Liu Naifu, "Xunsi kuoda guoji xuanchuan," 12 and Jian Baicun, "Kangzhan Zhongguo de guoji xuanchuan," 49.

the oppressed peoples of the world who lacked the material resources of the imperialist countries.³¹⁵

Thus, a number of texts drew on two different ways of conceptualizing international propaganda, one drawing on the discourse of propaganda as a tool of diplomacy and the other based on a mixture of the discourse of class solidarity across national boundaries and a framing of the popular will as inherently good and just. Although the basic units of interest (dividing the world according to class, race, or nation-state) have changed a number of times since then, these two basic positions have persisted: One the hand, some people argue that external propaganda is pointless because the target audience is biased against China, on the other hand are those who maintain that this is only a small minority and that the overwhelming majority of foreigners are good and therefore must have good will towards China (which stands for righteousness and the public interest, *gong*).³¹⁶

2.9 1937: The Breakthrough?

In September 1937, with pressure added by the outbreak of the war against Japan in July, the GMD finally managed to solve some of its institutional problems regarding international propaganda.³¹⁷ The Office for International Propaganda was taken out of the Central Propaganda Department and transformed into the Fifth Board of the Military Affairs Commission, thus putting it under the direct control of Chiang Kai-shek. Hollington Tong was appointed head of the new office after being recommended by Chiang's wife, American-educated Song Meiling 宋美龄.³¹⁸ For Tong, a Missouri-trained journalist, the GMD's previous international propaganda work as well as its defensive counterpart, the Party's censorship policy, came as a shock.³¹⁹ Tong established a number of significant qualitative changes in the GMD's external propaganda apparatus. He requested anything that could make information from China look like propaganda in the

³¹⁵ Cf. Zhou Anguo, "Bei yapo minzu yu xuanchuanzhan," 41.

³¹⁶ E.g. in Fu Ying 傅莹, "Zhongshi gonggong waijiao" 重视公共外交 [Attach importance to public diplomacy], *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People's Daily], July 27, 2009, 14.

³¹⁷ The founding of a more effective external propaganda structure has been described in Hollington Tong's *Dateline: China*. Hollington Kong Tong, *Dateline: China. The beginning of China's Press Relations with the World* (New York: Rockport Press, 1950). It has also been dealt with in the secondary literature on the topic. Volz, "China's Image Management Abroad," 168-173; Wei, *To Win the West*, 248-257.

³¹⁸ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 250-251.

³¹⁹ Cf. Hollington Tong, *Dateline: China*.

eyes of Westerners be removed and suggested employing foreigners to conduct propaganda on China's behalf.³²⁰ Moreover, he succeeded in relaxing the censorship policy. Not everyone approved of the changes Tong implemented. In order to solve internal power struggles between Tong and his superior, Chiang abolished the Fifth Board and turned it into the International Department of the Central Propaganda Department. Importantly, however, the new department continued to be funded by the military and was thus directly under Chiang's control.³²¹

Aside from the main international propaganda organization under Tong, the GMD used a number of additional channels to spread its message. In 1938, the GMD established the Central Overseas Department (*Zhongyang Haiwaibu* 中央海外部), which was assessed as relatively successful before Japan occupied the South Pacific and cut off China's access to the rest of the world through occupation of China's harbors.³²² Appeals to overseas Chinese were very common, and the GMD, CPC, and the Wang Jingwei 汪精卫 regimes all had special government or party structures and journals to liaise with Chinese abroad.³²³ While initially, overseas Chinese had been primarily a propaganda *target*, they also came to be considered a propaganda *resource* in the conflict with Japan. Likewise, in the 1930s, as cultural activities came to be increasingly viewed as a channel for propaganda in Europe, Chinese also displayed interest in the topic. For instance, the World Exposition held in Paris in 1937 was used as an opportunity by Chinese overseas to discuss how China could improve its own cultural propaganda.³²⁴

³²⁰ Cf. Wei, *To Win the West*, 250.

³²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 256-257.

³²² Cf. Xie Chengyu 谢澄宇, "Haiwai dangwu de xuanchuan wenti" 海外党务的宣传问题 [Problems of propagating Party affairs overseas], *Huaqiao xianfeng* 华侨先锋 [Overseas Chinese vanguard] 7, nos. 2-3 (1945): 33.

³²³ For overseas Chinese affairs work of the Wang Jingwei regime, see for example Chen Zhongxing 陈中行, "Cong quan guo xuanchuan huiyi shuo dao huaqiao xuanchuan" 从全国宣传会议说到华侨宣传 [(A few word on) overseas Chinese propaganda (as inspired by) the nationwide propaganda meeting], *Qiaowu jikan* 侨务季刊 [Overseas Chinese affairs quarterly] 2, no. 1 (1941): 24-28.

³²⁴ E.g. Li Xubo 李虚伯, "Cong Bali Bolanhui tandao Zhongguo guoji xuanchuan" 从巴黎博览会谈到中国国际宣传 [Beginning with the Paris World Exhibition to talk of Chinese international propaganda], *Guomin gonglun* 国民公论 (巴黎) [National public opinion (Paris)], no. 2 (1937): 28-29.

Although Chinese propaganda arguably improved under Tong, Chinese authors continued to find problems. The sentiment that Japanese international propaganda was far ahead of China's continued after 1937.³²⁵ Naturally, China also kept a close eye on any developments in Japan's propaganda apparatus, and any changes in its international propaganda institutions and organizations were reported in China.³²⁶ China's own international propaganda institutions, by contrast, were seen as insufficient and riddled with problems. For instance, an article published in the *Shenbao* in April 1938 complained about the state of China's foreign propaganda initiatives as contrasted with Japan's: China was lacking an "organization directly engaged in foreign propaganda" (*zhijie duiwai xuanchuan de jiguan* 直接对外宣传的机关), such as a large international news agency. The Central News Agency did not match Japanese activities. Second, China's official news releases were always behind Japan's by one to two days, an advantage Japan uses to influence readers in its favor. Third, the most effective tools of propaganda were news, images, and movies. So far China had not only fallen short in the realm of daily news, but almost completely ignored images and movies, instead only publishing a few pamphlets. Finally, the country did not distinguish between different target audiences sufficiently.³²⁷ One author also complained about the habit to create posts for individuals (*yin ren she shi* 因人设事), who would then squander the money intended for international propaganda for their own pleasure.³²⁸ While this alarmism about China's "propaganda deficit" should be taken with a grain of salt, the article does illustrate a common problem, namely the fact that China, which was already struggling to catch up with Japan, had to constantly consider new developments in the fast developing field of international propaganda. Even if China did manage to surpass Japan at some

³²⁵ One article likened Japanese propaganda to water: "There is nowhere it cannot enter/reach." Gao Yuan 高原, "Nuli guoji xuanchuan zhan" 努力国际宣传战 [Make efforts (in the) international propaganda war], *Zhanshi jizhe* 战时记者 [Wartime journalist], no. 2 (1938): 3.

³²⁶ E.g. Liang Shichun 梁士纯, "Xinwen tongzhi yu guoji xuanchuan" 新闻统制与国际宣传 [Control of the press and international propaganda], *Baoxue jikan* 报学季刊 [Journalism quarterly] 1, no 4 (1935): 1-2 and "Ri kuoda guoji xuanchuan," 48.

³²⁷ "Guoji xuanchuan wenti" 国际宣传问题 [Problems with international propaganda], *Shenbao*, vol. 3, no. 47, April 16, 1938. Accessed through the *Shenbao* full text database at <http://shunpao.egreenapple.com/WEB/INDEX.html>, which did not provide a page number.

³²⁸ An Ping 安平, "Guanyu guoji xuanchuan" 关于国际宣传 [About international propaganda], *Xin Zhengzhi* 新政治 [Renewing politics] 3, no 1 (1939): 12.

point in time, that moment of triumph was unlikely to last for long. This was a problem that the CPC would also have to grapple with in the post-Mao period.

2.10 CPC International Propaganda after 1936

The CPC came into being and grew stronger during this time of crisis and of course did not exist in a completely parallel universe. In 1935, after the CPC had settled down in Yan'an 延安,³²⁹ the Seventh (and last) World Congress of the Comintern directed its branches to enter alliances with non-Communists again and thus form a United Front against Fascism. Chiang Kai-shek had no interest in allying with the CPC, but other members of his Party thought otherwise. In 1936, he was kidnapped and coerced into entering the Second United Front with the CPC, which formally lasted until 1946, although GMD and CPC already fought one another before the end of the Second World War.

In order to justify the alliance with the GMD, most likely in hindsight, Mao Zedong famously redefined what he termed the principal contradiction (*zhuyao maodun* 主要矛盾). Contradictions in Marxist ideology are different from contradictions in formal logic (*xingshi luoji* 形式逻辑) in that they do not refer to a relationship of mutual exclusion between two things or aspects, but to the “reciprocal struggle and reciprocal relation” between two aspects within a thing.³³⁰ Complex things, such as “human society” have many different contradictions between different pairs of aspects, and therefore, one of the main functions of Communist parties is to make sense of this complex mix and assess what is important at a particular point in time and what the Party has to do to make history progress. This episode of how Mao redefined the principal contradiction in line with the Comintern directive is well-known, but as it exemplifies some of the flexibility of the ideological system that will become relevant again below, this will be briefly explained in more detail.

³²⁹ After being pursued by the GMD, the CPC's Red Army was forced to flee Jiangxi in 1934, retreating some twelve thousand kilometers and losing more than 90 per cent of its soldiers in what became known as the Long March (*changzheng*) before establishing its next permanent base in Yan'an in 1935.

³³⁰ Entry “Bianzheng maodun” 辩证矛盾 [Dialectical contradiction] in *Xin zhishi cidian* 新知识词典 [Dictionary of new knowledge], eds. Che Jiyan 车济炎 and Lin Dehong 林德宏 (Nanjing: nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1987), 88.

Basic contradictions of a global scale had been declared by Lenin and Stalin in 1920 and 1925 respectively.³³¹ The Comintern's declaration that Fascism posed a more dangerous enemy than the capitalist class provided the framework within which the CPC had to justify its alliance with the GMD. Mao did this by famously inventing a second type of contradiction aside from the basic contradictions (*jiben maodun* 基本矛盾), namely the **principal contradiction** (*zhuyao maodun*). A thing can (and usually does) have several basic contradictions. They are present throughout the entire development process of the thing (*shiwu fazhan de guocheng* 事物发展的过程), and are the fundamental driving force (*genben dongli* 根本动力) of its development. Basic contradictions manifest themselves differently in different periods of history owing to the different characteristics (*tedian* 特点) of the international situation (*guoji jushi* 国际局势) and different factors influencing it at different times.³³² Once the basic contradictions have been resolved, the nature of the thing (*shiwu* 事物) changes and a new thing/ development process begins. The **principal contradiction**, according to Mao Zedong 毛泽东, on the other hand, usually does not run through an entire development process. To solve the principal contradiction of a certain period is the prerequisite to being able to advance to a higher stage of development. Hence, the identification of the principal contradiction of a certain

³³¹ Obviously, other individuals and groups promoted different contradictions, but Lenin's and Stalin's contradictions entered official party historiography. The five basic contradictions of human society at the international level as defined by Lenin were 1. The contradiction between socialism, which had just emerged, and capitalism, 2. The contradiction between oppressed nations and oppressing nations, 3. The contradictions of capitalism, 4. The contradictions between the imperialist countries (imperialism being the highest stage of capitalism), and 5. The contradictions within the workers movement. In December 1925, at the Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU, accommodating the changes after the First World War, Stalin redefined the five basic contradictions that determined the development of the international situation in his political report of the Central Committee: 1. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie within capitalist countries, 2. The contradiction between imperialist countries and their colonies and dependencies, 3. The contradiction between the imperialist countries that had won the war and those that had lost, 4. The contradictions among the victorious capitalist countries, and 5. The contradiction between socialist countries and capitalist countries. Compared to Lenin's judgment, Stalin focused a lot more on the aftermath of World War I. See entry "Shijie jiben maodun xueshu" 世界基本矛盾学说 [The theory of the basic world contradictions] in *Zhongguo Dabaikequanshu: zhengzhixue* 中国大百科全书: 政治学 [Great Chinese encyclopedia: Political science], eds. Zhongguo dabaike quanshu zong bianji weiyuanhui *Zhengzhixue* bianji weiyuanhui 中国大百科全书总编辑委员会《政治学》编辑委员会 [Political science editorial commission of the overall editorial commission of the Great Chinese Encyclopedia] (Beijing: Zhongguo da baike quanshu chubanshe, 1992), 330.

³³² Entry "Shijie jiben maodun xueshu."

period also defines the principal task (*zhuyao renwu* 主要任务) and the core work (*zhongxin gongzuo* 中心工作) of this period for the Party. While the basic contradictions as defined by Stalin remained valid, a new stage in the development of Chinese history had begun that. The new principal contradiction was now that between fascism and the forces against fascism. This principal contradiction dictated what China needed to do, and because the GMD was an ally in the fight against Japanese fascism, the CPC had to work with it instead of continuing to focus its energies on class struggle.³³³

The CPC's understanding of international propaganda was adapted to this new evaluation of reality. With the beginning of the Second United Front, the CPC naturally de-emphasized the class-based framework of international propaganda. There were obviously different stances on asking the "imperialist" countries for help both within the GMD and the CPC, but as the crisis that China experienced worsened and public opinion in Western countries was increasingly on China's side, this concern lost in importance. As the CPC readjusted its core responsibility, international propaganda naturally followed suit.

During the Second United Front, the CPC cooperated with the GMD on external propaganda matters. For most of this time, the CPC did not have the resources or the capacities to organize any media-based international propaganda comparable to the activities of the GMD, but it did have the advantage of being able to draw on the international network of the Comintern. Moreover, the CPC proved extremely adept at accommodating foreign journalists who then wrote favorably about the Party, most famously Missouri-educated journalist Edgar Snow, who had lived in China since 1928 and who recounted his experiences living with the Communist Party in the 1938 bestseller *Red Star Over China*.³³⁴ Although Snow maintained that the book was not political, he made a number of

³³³ Mao Zedong 毛泽东, "Maodun lun" 矛盾论 [On Contradiction] August 1937, available on Marxist.org. <http://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-193708.htm>, accessed March 2, 2013. There has been some debate as to whether Mao actually wrote *On Contradiction* in 1937 or whether the most important ideas of the text emerged in the 1950s and were predated. See, for instance, Sturt Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 66-67.

³³⁴ The book was translated back into Chinese in the same year and published in Shanghai. Cf. Huang Hua, "Behind the Red Star over China," *China Daily Online*, October 22, 2006, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-10/22/content_713979_3.htm, accessed December 10, 2012.

changes to the manuscript at the request of CPC leaders to reflect new policies of the Party after the forming of the Second United Front.³³⁵

In September 1938, the International News Agency (*Guoji xinwenshe* 国际新闻社) was established in Wuhan, following a directive by Zhou Enlai 周恩来, who was responsible for the Southern Office of the CPC, with the aim of better coordinating news work in the entire area.³³⁶ It was headed by publicist and activist Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之 (1896-1986) and journalist Fan Changjiang 范长江 (1909-1970). After obtaining permission from the International Department of the GMD Central Propaganda Department, the International News Agency starting November 1939 also began to release news to the outside world. In late 1939, due to the shifting war front, the International News Agency was first relocated to Changsha 长沙 and then to Guilin 桂林. In Guilin, the News Agency began issuing various print publications, one of them in English (the *Far Eastern Bulletin*, also called *Yuandong tongxun* 远东通讯 in Chinese). In May 1941, the offices in Guilin and Chongqing 重庆 were closed, and the main office moved to Hong Kong 香港, where it was, however, also closed down following the Japanese invasion in December 1941.³³⁷ Starting in March 1941, the CPC published ten issues of a print publication called *Zhongguo tongxun* in English, Russian, and French, edited by Zhang Wentian.³³⁸

In 1941, the CPC launched its first foreign language broadcasts in Japanese, but these were very weak and their significance was most likely exaggerated in the historiographies of the CPC's external propaganda activities.³³⁹ In 1944, Xinhua News Agency began sending irregular English language broadcasts.³⁴⁰ Transmitters only reached Beijing and Nanjing, and therefore, the

³³⁵ Snow was allegedly told that if he refused to make the changes, the CPC would denounce the book. Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 47.

³³⁶ Today, the International News Agency is considered the predecessor of the China News Agency (*Zhongguo Xinwen she* 中国新闻社) established in 1952. Wang Furu 王福如 and Wang Haibo 汪海波, eds., *Xuanchuan gongzuo zhishi quanshu* 宣传工作知识全书 [Knowledge on propaganda work] (Jingji guanli chubanshe, 1993), 773.

³³⁷ Cf. Liu Jianming 刘建明 et al., eds. *Xuanchuan yulunxue da cidian* 宣传舆论学大辞典 [Dictionary on the study of propaganda and public opinion] (Beijing: Jingji ribao chubanshe, 1992), 1110.

³³⁸ Wang Furu and Wang Haibo, eds., *Xuanchuan gongzuo zhishi quanshu*, 768.

³³⁹ Cf. Cagdas Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)* (PhD diss. Binghamton University, 2009), 42-43. Also see footnotes 115 and 117.

³⁴⁰ Cf. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 66-67.

CPC was dependent on reporters picking up stories and forwarding them. Through Morse code, however, China could both send and receive messages to and from all over the world.³⁴¹

After the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Civil War, CPC members and sympathizers launched a number of English language media largely based in Hong Kong to avoid being shut down by the GMD, for example the *China Digest*, edited by then-journalist Qiao Guanhua 乔冠华 (1913-1983)³⁴² and his wife Gong Peng 龚澎 (1914-1970),³⁴³ and an English newsletter published by journalist Jin Zhonghua 金仲华 (1907-1968) on behalf of Xinhua's Hong Kong branch.³⁴⁴ Jin was quite familiar with the reading habits of Westerners; he had previously worked for the USIS, first in Chongqing and later, after Japan had surrendered, in Shanghai. As the CPC continued to be on the move, its international propaganda activities largely lacked central coordination and instead relied on individual initiatives roughly coordinated with individual Party leaders such as Zhou Enlai. Thus, even after the CPC had consolidated its Party-internal propaganda apparatus in 1942, for its external propaganda it drew on a network of people who were acquainted with Western journalistic norms that were not subjected to very rigid control.

2.11 Conclusions

This chapter has analyzed how the concept of propaganda came to China via different routes and as part of different modernization packages as the country tried to adapt to the new world order in order to gain both strength and status. It has shown that in the first half of the 20th century, in a climate of near constant crisis, different groups within the country simultaneously appropriated ideas from different countries, including Japan, Western Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union, resulting in the co-existence of understandings of propaganda that differed in terms of the underlying concept of man, and the imaginary of the ideal political order both at the national and at the international level.

³⁴¹ Cf. Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade*, 49.

³⁴² Qiao Guanhua later became a high-ranking official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC and was foreign minister between 1974 and 1976.

³⁴³ Cf. Wang Furu and Wang Haibo, eds., *Xuanchuan gongzuo zhishi quanshu*, 768-769.

³⁴⁴ “Jin Zhonghua” 金仲华, website of the Political Consultative Conference of Hongkou District in Shanghai, <http://www.hkqzx.gov.cn/charadeat.asp?id=59>, accessed February 18, 2013.

The appropriation of different concepts of propaganda happened against the backdrop of several shifts in how China imagined world order and the “structural basis of world relations,”³⁴⁵ which also had an impact on how international propaganda was understood. Initially, under the influence of the traditional Chinese world order, Chinese journalists and academics looked for ways to get the West to acknowledge China’s cultural achievements and thus regain its status as a great civilization recognized by others. With the *Xinzheng* reforms after 1901 and the founding of the Republic in 1912, the nation-state emerged as the most important unit of interest which structured how different groups of people interacted with each other. The nation-state based world order came in both a benign and a hostile version. In the benign imagination, China’s goal became to be accepted among the “family of (civilized) nations.” The underlying assumption of this aim was that China would eventually be welcomed in this “family,” as, for instance, the rhetoric of Wilson’s Fourteen Points suggested. By contrast, the rhetoric of anti-imperialism that became increasingly popular in the 1920s and 1930s suggested that the industrialized countries would never accept China as an equal. This hostile imaginary of the nation-state based world order was mixed with the rhetoric of the class-based world order. Here, the category of the West began to merge with the category of the imperialist, and the exploiter. The category of China, on the other hand, was equated with the exploited, the colonized, and the “people.” These two images of the West –benign versus irredeemably imperialist– as well as the distinction between “the people,” who were basically good and on China’s side, and the “enemies of the people” that could not be won over would show up again as important themes in the debate on external propaganda in the decades to come.

Thus, for international propaganda, several different discourses can be identified. First, there was propaganda as a way to rectify China’s image and show foreigners the greatness of Chinese civilization, an idea that had circulated among Chinese reformers before the term *xuanchuan* became commonly used. This theme of making the international public realize the greatness of Chinese civilization was to be pushed into the background for several decades after the founding of the PRC owing to new way of ordering the world as well as to more

³⁴⁵ The term is from Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Century* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 43.

concrete external propaganda concerns, but it has become a relevant motivation again since the end of the 20th century.

Second, there was the humanist tradition focused on mutual understanding that viewed China as a junior member of international society and in which China had the responsibility to inform foreigners about developments in China. While the word propaganda had a negative connotation in this context, Chinese participation in international networks was used to improve foreigners' image of China and to eliminate biased or stereotypical portrayals of the Chinese people in foreign media.

Third, two additional ways of understanding international propaganda existed that were to clash in the Mao period. On the one hand, there was propaganda as a tool of diplomacy in times of peace accompanying concrete policy aims, a concept and practice that emerged in the inter-war years. This understanding of propaganda naturally focused on propaganda within the nation-state-based world order. On the other hand, there was propaganda as a means to spread the world revolution and trying to reinforce alternative units of interest outside of the nation-state system, namely class solidarity and linking up with the "oppressed people of the world."

Different ways of ordering the world led to different explanations why propaganda was unsuccessful. For propaganda in times of war and crisis, there were two basic ways of framing why foreigners did not help China, tied to the two different evaluations of the West as either benign or imperialist. The first was that China's international propaganda initiatives were insufficient; foreigners would help China if the country did a better job at letting others know of its problems. The second framing was that Westerners viewed Chinese people as inferior and had no interest in helping them. These two frames could be combined by arguing that arrogant Westerners with an imperialist mindset did not represent the majority of the population and that therefore, it made sense to appeal to "the people" (*min* 民, *minzhong* 民众, later: *renmin* 人民). The two different ways of making sense of China's failure to persuade Westerners were to resurface again in the post-Mao period.

Finally, there was propaganda as a weapon in times of war, which combined domestic and international propaganda. The constant crises that China

experienced during the 1920s and 1930s led intellectuals to push for better institutions to conduct international propaganda, including both proactive and reactive means. Although many of the plans suggested were overly ambitious, the GMD took massive steps to improve its propaganda work. Neither domestic nor international propaganda was entirely undisputed in China. As the conflict intensified, critical voices subsided, first, because the crisis helped in shape a consensus but also because more foreigners came to be sympathetic of China. After 1937, international propaganda as an instrument of war was rarely questioned.

Although domestic propaganda and propaganda targeted at foreign nationals were connected during the war, they had very different origins and routes of transmission to China. For international propaganda in the state-based world order, despite Carr's assessment that the Soviet Union must be understood as a pioneer, the West was the most important source of new ideas, practices, and institutions. The dominant institutions associated with domestic propaganda were largely based on the Soviet model, both for the GMD and for the CPC that mixed with existing ideas from earlier nation-building projects and was challenged occasionally from a humanist perspective.

There were three main ways of viewing domestic propaganda. First, there was propaganda as a means to strengthen and unify the nation, an idea that already existed at the turn of the century, that drew on pre-modern frames of mass-elite relations and that was reinforced after the GMD began building a domestic propaganda apparatus under Soviet tutelage. Second, there was propaganda as a way to propel history by elevating the consciousness of the masses and allowing them to liberate themselves from their oppressors. Interaction included both convergence and polemic. In both discourses, propaganda was equated with tutelage of the people by more enlightened elites for a noble purpose. Finally, the humanist discourse, which rejected domestic propaganda as illegitimate manipulation and as the opposite of education was also appropriated in China. Thus, although domestic propaganda had a predominantly positive connotation in Republican China, the clash between two different political imaginaries also manifested itself in the Chinese debate. Those who believed that elites needed to guide the masses clashed with others that maintained that such manipulation was harmful and misguided.

A first clash of concepts between domestic and international propaganda could be observed when the GMD first tried to organize external propaganda aimed primarily at Western countries through its domestic Propaganda Department based on the Soviet model. In a way, this anticipated the problems faced later by the CPC in the post-Mao period. Ultimately, Chiang Kai-shek succeeded by fiscally separating the GMD's external propaganda structure from the Central Propaganda Department and putting in charge U.S.-educated Hollington Tong, who was familiar with the likes and dislikes of China's most important target audience. This did not solve all problems, but allowed for propaganda that used the language of the Western target audience and catered to its concerns and interests.

During the Republican Period, activities, instruments, and channels for international propaganda considered and in many cases also realized were very broad, including both official and private initiatives. Although the GMD had adopted the Soviet domestic propaganda apparatus, it did not exist in an environment in which such a system could be enforced. In the realm of the media, all parties were faced with fierce competition from other groups. While censorship had been a popular means of establishing at least a little bit of control over foreign media, both the GMD and the CPC had also practiced "soft" means of co-opting rather than coercing actors outside the two parties. After the CPC gained control over most of China's territory and established the PRC, it took the Soviet Union as its main teacher during the first few years. The new environment marked by much tighter control as well as the erection of effective barriers blocking flows of information allowed for a very different mode of conducting propaganda than the more open environment of the first half of the 20th century. The focus of the next chapter will be the fate of external propaganda under these new circumstances.

3 External Propaganda during the Mao Period: For the State or for the Revolution?

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Communist Party of China (CPC) no longer propagated itself solely as a political party and as a faction in war, but as the legitimate government of China, both to those that recognized the PRC and to those that did not. Relatively little written evidence about the external propaganda concept during the Mao period is available, particularly if compared to the large amount of writing produced during the Republican period with its flourishing media landscape. However, the study of the few documents that are available combined with an analysis of activities does provide an insight into the different framings and purposes of propaganda during this time as well as its interaction and conflict with the domestic propaganda apparatus. Several indicators show that the question what external propaganda should be was one aspect of a larger power struggle between the “left” and the “moderates” pushing for economic reform and state-to-state diplomacy. Both the purpose and the methods of external propaganda became an issue of dispute.

Basically, after 1949, two different propaganda concepts clashed. On the one hand were people like former United States Information Service (USIS) employee Jin Zhonghua 金仲华, who were familiar with the Western understanding of and attitude towards propaganda and who, like Hollington Tong (Dong Xianguang 董显光), maintained that the best type of propaganda was that which was not recognized as such.¹ This point of view had its origin in the experience of international wartime propaganda, of studying at U.S. universities, and of being in contact with Western journalists and audiences. As will be seen below, many of these people joined the young PRC's external propaganda apparatus. At the other end of the spectrum was the notion that propaganda meant education of the backward masses organized by an enlightened elite and was an

¹ Jin Zhonghua is credited with stating that “the best propaganda is that which does not let people recognize it as propaganda; propaganda that can be recognized as such is the worst [kind of] propaganda” (最好的宣传, 是使人看不出是在宣传; 看得出的宣传, 是最不好的宣传). Cited in Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, “Waiguoren bu yuanyi jieshou bieren de ‘xuanchuan’ – Tan ‘nei wai you bie’” 外国人不愿意接受别人的“宣传”——谈“内外有别” [Foreigners are unwilling to accept someone's ‘propaganda’ – On the difference between internal and external (propaganda)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 10 (1998): 4.

activity that could and should be conducted openly. Affirmation of propaganda meant the proud affirmation of the idea that everybody was capable of understanding and eventually getting involved in politics so long as the Party fulfilled its duty of educating the masses. Similarly, the two different understandings of external propaganda in particular that existed within the CPC during the Republican era were also frequently blurred and became the object of factional struggles: On the one hand, China's external propaganda had a diplomatic mission; on the other hand, it had a revolutionary mission. This dilemma was similar to the quandaries of Soviet international propaganda during the 1920s, which was affected by the well-known conflict between Soviet diplomats interested in European diplomatic recognition and Comintern agents interested in spreading the revolution.²

China's initial external propaganda initiatives drew heavily on networks from the war against Japan and the Civil War. These people were very much aware that one of the functions of external propaganda was to support or at least not significantly interfere with China's diplomacy on the state-to-state level. In order to get out China's message without offending particular governments, China had to compromise. This was also necessary in order to be able to distribute the material abroad in the first place. Another discourse that grew stronger as leftist influences increased was that of class solidarity and of bringing the good news of China's revolutionary transformation to the laboring masses of other countries as well as to anybody else struggling against the oppression of their capitalist rulers.

In addition, there was a dispute over how much external propaganda was allowed to deviate from domestic content for strategic purposes. In the early 1950s, external propaganda media were allowed to implement the principle of "largely the same with small differences" (*datong xiaoyi* 大同小异) in order to adapt to different target audiences.³ During the Anti-Rightist Campaign in 1958 and over the course of the 1960s, as China redefined itself as the new center of the world revolution and became increasingly evangelical, those arguing in favor of more distinction lost ground. This was also a battle over who the target audience

² Cf. Alastair Kocho-Williams, "Engaging the World: Soviet Diplomacy and Foreign Propaganda in the 1920s," December 2007, available online at <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/hlss/history/sovietdiplomats1920s.pdf>, accessed December 11, 2012.

³ Cf. Cagdas Ugor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)* (PhD diss. Binghamton University, 2009), 110.

should be, which in certain respects resembled the debate of the 1920s and 1930s whether it made sense to appeal to “imperialist” countries or not. After 1970, on the other hand, the idea that external propaganda needed to serve China’s state-to-state diplomacy rather than further the world revolution regained ground, laying the basis for the policies that were to be established after 1978.

Although the CPC again used various different models for its external propaganda between 1949 and 1976, the founding of a domestic propaganda apparatus according to Soviet standards during the first few years had a lasting impact. The existence of a strong domestic propaganda apparatus in Communist countries has, time and again, been presented as an asset in the international propaganda war against the West.⁴ However, I argue that, in fact, the most disruptive factor for external propaganda work in the PRC was the integration into a relatively powerful domestic propaganda apparatus (established right after the CPC gained control of most of China’s territory), coupled with the ideological argument that adapting too much to target audiences in non-socialist countries equaled “catering to the capitalists.”⁵ More importantly, perhaps, with the existence of a strong domestic propaganda bureaucracy, China did not establish any powerful, independent external propaganda agency comparable to the United States Information Agency (USIA) founded in 1953 (cf. chapter 2.1).

After a brief introduction to the new domestic propaganda apparatus and the control of information in and out of the PRC that the CPC relied on, I will analyze the external propaganda organs set up in the PRC and discuss how external propaganda developed over the course of the Mao period under the

⁴ One former USIA official writes “Soviet leaders were very good at distorting reality, for every single day they needed to convince their own people that they lived in a land of freedom and plenty.” Alvin A. Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation: American Propaganda, Soviet Lies, and the Winning of the Cold War* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 96.

⁵ The first full policy document on external propaganda in the post-Mao period stated that trying to adapt to foreign target audiences had been condemned as “catering to the capitalists” under the “Gang of Four.” See “Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian” 对外宣传小组关于改进和加强对外宣传工作的意见 [The External Propaganda Small Group’s opinion on improving and strengthening external propaganda work], June 30, 1980, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian (1951-1992)* 党的宣传工作会议概况和文献(1951-1992) [Overview and documents from the Party’s propaganda work conferences], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 391. While post-Mao documents would naturally condemn the external propaganda practices of the Cultural Revolution, this was an actual problem.

influence of factional struggles, different political agendas, as well as domestic propaganda practices.

3.1 The Domestic Propaganda Apparatus

In the early 1950s, as the CPC sought to tighten its grip on Chinese society, it set up a nationwide “propaganda net” (*xuanchuanwang* 宣传网) that could penetrate all sectors and aspects of society. At the top of this “net” was the Central Propaganda Department, which was moved to Zhongnanhai in late 1949.⁶ The “net” itself was built by setting up propaganda departments within party committees (*dangwei* 党委) at all levels, including in factories and other production sites.⁷ It came together with a system of conducting “study sessions” on the basis of the journal *Study* (*Xuexi* 学习) edited by the Central Propaganda Department (CPD), launched in 1950.⁸ As part of this effort, the CPC published handbooks for cadres on how to set up this net and conduct propaganda work in the early 1950s.⁹ Some of these were directly translated from Russian,¹⁰ while others combined information from various sources or circulated the experience of Chinese propaganda cadres for reference purposes at other propaganda departments.¹¹

⁶ Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 36.

⁷ In 1951, it was decided that every party branch must have a full time propaganda cadre in charge of propaganda work and reporting back to CPD about local conditions. Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 37.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 37.

⁹ E.g. Renmin chubanshe bianjibu 人民出版社编辑部 [Editorial department of People’s Press], ed., *Zenyang jianli xuanchuanwang 怎样建立宣传网* [How to build a propaganda net] (Beijing: Gaishe, 1951); Xinhua shishi congkan she 新华时事丛刊社 [Xinhua current events series press], ed., *Zenyang gao hao qiye xuanchuan gudong gongzuo 怎样搞好企业宣传鼓励工作* [How to do propaganda and agitation work in companies well] (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1950).

¹⁰ E.g. M. Vodolagin М.Водолагин, author and Ze Xiang 泽湘, trans., *Sidalingele sheng xuanchuan yuan gongzuo de jingyan 斯大林格勒省宣传员工作的经验* [Experience of propaganda workers in Stalingrad province] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1954). Original: M. Vodolagin М.Водолагин, *Opyt raboty Stalingradskikh agitatorov Опыт работы Сталинградских агитаторов* [Work experience of agitators in Stalingrad] (Moscow: 1949). Note that agitators is translated as *xuanchuan yuan*.

¹¹ E.g. Fu Zhensheng 富振声, *Dongbeiqu jianli xuanchuanwang jingyan 东北区建立宣传网的经验* [Experiences from the Northeastern zone in establishing a propaganda net] (Shenyang: Dongbei renmin chubanshe, 1951); “Yi zhi” 一知, *Xuanchuanbu zenyang jinxing gongzuo 宣传部怎样进行工作* [How a propaganda department works] (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1955).

After the founding of the PRC, the main declared goals of propaganda work were, first, to explain core tasks to the masses so that they could be implemented properly,¹² i.e. a practical and often short term use, second, to increase the masses' trust,¹³ which could potentially have both short term and long term uses, and, third, to raise the political level (*zhengzhi shuiping* 政治水平) and political awareness (*zhengzhi juewu* 政治觉悟) of the masses,¹⁴ a long term task. Concretely, propaganda after 1949 had two main goals, both tied to the aim of eradicating the Capitalist class in China: explaining the CPC's policies and inculcating socialist ideology on the one hand, and eradicating the legacies of GMD propaganda on the other.

In many ways, the concept of propaganda during the Mao period must be seen as a polemic against the framing already present in pre-modern conceptions of mass-elite relations and given "scientific" backing by "crowd psychology" that considered the masses incapable of understanding higher truths and therefore to be kept out of politics. Chinese propaganda and thought work had no lesser goal than to involve the entire population in political matters and ensure correct thinking in every single member of Chinese society so as to make full use of every Chinese person's conscious agency in transforming China and propelling it towards a higher and more advanced stage of history.

The Soviet model of domestic propaganda that was appropriated in China relied on a relatively closed environment in which the party-state had an almost exclusive monopoly on information. First, as early as in January 1949, the CPC issued instructions that no foreign news agencies would be allowed to send news or use radio transmitters on Chinese soil. Foreign-owned papers and journals were initially allowed to continue their operations after registering with the authorities for a limited time after which all except a few select publications would be shut

¹² Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇, "Xuanchuan gongzuo buneng likai dangqian de zhongxin gongzuo" 宣传工作不能离开当前的中心工作 [Propaganda work cannot be removed from the current core work], in *Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De lun dang de xuanchuan gongzuo* 毛泽东、周恩来、刘少奇、朱德论党的宣传工作 [Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi and Zhu De on the Party's propaganda work], ed. Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu 中共中央组织部 [Organization department of the CPC Central Committee] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1989), 37.

¹³ Ibid., 39.

¹⁴ Ibid., 37.

down.¹⁵ After the founding of the General Press Administration, the Center set up a journalism school to retrain journalists according to the new standards as part of the overall re-education campaigns targeting Chinese intellectuals.¹⁶ By 1953, the CPC had either brought previously independent media under its control or had closed them down.¹⁷

While there are different means of creating monopolies on information and maintaining barriers between different populations, only entities that are backed up by a military, such as national governments, or groups that are able to keep populations in and out of a certain territory through other means (such as geographic barriers, control over food, etc.), can create these most radically sealed-off environments. During the Mao period, China had established this type of environment for large parts of its population through restrictions on movement, not only at the national level by restricting the travel abroad of Chinese people and closely coordinating the visits of foreigners, but also at the local level through the *hukou* 户口 system. Today, the most prominent and arguably the most effective of the few remaining examples of propaganda in totalitarian states is North Korea. This control over which information enters or leaves a certain territory makes some otherwise very costly or complicated propaganda maneuvers possible. However, it is difficult to maintain once borders are eroded and has a number of other drawbacks, such as lack of credibility in the international environment.

3.2 1949 to 1954: Setting up the PRC's External Propaganda Apparatus

While after the founding of the PRC the CPC instituted a strong domestic propaganda apparatus in order to be able to ideologically penetrate all of society it

¹⁵ Cf. Neil O'Brien, "John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review, An American Editor in Early Revolutionary China" (PhD diss, Washington State University, 2001), 204-205.

¹⁶ Ibid., 332-333. This re-education campaign also affected Liang Shichun (cf. chapter 2.6), who was teaching classes on international propaganda at Shanghai's St. John's University when the PRC was founded. Cf. Liang Shiwei 梁世伟, "Fuqin Liang Shichun na nan yi wangque de wangshi" 父亲梁士纯那难以忘却的往事 [Those events in the past of (my) father Liang Shichun that are hard to forget], originally published in *Nanjing yueyou* 南京约友 [Nanjing friend], no. 44 (September 2009), available online at http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_61b84b4b0100v3pt.html, accessed February 20, 2013.

¹⁷ The last foreign-owned journal, the *China Monthly Review*, was closed down in 1953 by the editor. O'Brien, "John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review," 448.

did not install a comparably unified and operational external propaganda bureaucracy. The Soviet Union (S.U.) did not have any such structure either.¹⁸ As was the case in China later, the responsibilities of the external propaganda sector in the S.U. were spread out across units that were supervised by two different super-ordinate bodies, neither of which had specialized personnel for external propaganda.¹⁹ China's external propaganda activities were organized through a complex network of institutions that both belonged to the propaganda sector and to the foreign affairs sector without an all-encompassing bureaucratic organization at the top. In the 1950s, the external propaganda apparatus was dominated by a network of people who had also helped propagate the CPC during the previous wars and were loosely affiliated in some way with Zhou Enlai 周恩来, including journalist and later diplomat Qiao Guanhua 乔冠华, publicist Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之, Sun Yat-sen's (Sun Zhongshan 孙中山) widow Song Qingling 宋庆龄, and three of her colleagues from the China Defense League: the Polish-born Jewish emigré Israel Epstein (1915-2005),²⁰ and Chinese journalists Jin Zhonghua and Liao Chengzhi 廖承志.²¹ The external propaganda sector employed a number of foreigners ("foreign friends," waiguo pengyou 外国朋友) since the earliest days, some of whom had worked with the CPC before the founding of the PRC while others came to China later on.²² One important mechanism to tie most of the institutions responsible for various aspects of external propaganda together in China was thus the existence of a network of people that had also worked in external propaganda during the previous years and with an ally at the very top, namely Zhou Enlai, who could provide some support. While his role is also a construct of post-Cultural Revolution historiography to a certain extent,²³ Zhou

¹⁸ Cf. Vladimir Pechatnov, "An Exercise in Frustration: Soviet Foreign Propaganda in the Early Cold War, 1945-47," *Cold War History* 1, no. 2 (2001): 7.

¹⁹ Cf. Pechatnov, "An Exercise in Frustration," 7.

²⁰ Israel Epstein had come to China at the age of two and was a member of the China Defense League during the war against Japan with Sun Yat-sen's widow Song Qingling. In the early 1950s, Song brought him back to China in order to work in China's external propaganda apparatus.

²¹ Liao was put in charge of overseas Chinese affairs after the founding of the PRC.

²² For the concept and system of political friendship and foreigners in China, see Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

²³ Which divided politicians and cadres into bad ones affiliated with the "Gang of Four" and good ones affiliated with Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping.

interfered quite a few times, defending those in the external propaganda sector in favor of more restrained language.²⁴

The lack of a powerful organization at the top did not mean that external propaganda was not a priority; in fact, in its earliest year, the PRC spent considerable resources on foreign language magazines, which is particularly noteworthy in light of the many pressing problems the country faced at the time,²⁵ including a complete reorganization of the Chinese population to bring it under CPC control. China had good reason to want to propagate itself. Before the founding of the PRC, the CPC had not ruled out trade relations with the United States (U.S.), and Stalin had signaled that the S.U. would permit China to maintain diplomatic and trade relations with capitalist countries.²⁶ After the outbreak of the Korean War, however, the U.S. imposed a total embargo on China. In May 1950, at the behest of the U.S., the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution to the same effect.²⁷ While China certainly did not expect countries such as the United States to drop the embargo as a result of its external propaganda, it hoped to increase opposition among the populations in other countries against harsh policy measures against China. In addition, China wanted to gain recognition among foreign populations for its achievements and thus propagate the superiority of the socialist system so that more countries saw the advantages of joining the Socialist camp.

China was itself the target of U.S. propaganda, although fewer resources were spent on it than on the S.U. and Europe²⁸ and the barriers to block the flow of information established by the CPC proved to be quite effective. The U.S. had

²⁴ For example, in 1958, Zhou Enlai wrote to the foreign ministry, pointing out that words like “imperialism,” “fascism,” etc. were not well received abroad, a fact that had even been pointed out by people friendly to China. Cf. Sun Xupei 孙旭培, “Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu” 谈对外报道的新观念和新艺术[On new ideas and new art (i.e. qualitative skills) of external reporting], *HuaiBei meitan shifanxueyuan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 淮北煤炭师范学院学报（哲学社会科学版）[Journal of HuaiBei Coal Industry Teacher’s College (Humanities and social sciences edition) 25, no. 3 (June 2004) : 33.

²⁵ Cf. Leonard Lazarick, “China’s Smiling Face to the World: Beijing’s English-Language Magazines in the First Decade of the People’s Republic” (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 2005), 1. This quite remarkable M.A. thesis is available online at <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/1903/3276/1/umi-umd-3104.pdf>, accessed October 25, 2012.

²⁶ O’Brien, “John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review,” 219-220.

²⁷ Hossein Askari, *Case Studies of US Economic Sanctions* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 15. Also see Shuguang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America’s Embargo Against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

²⁸ Department of State, “Memorandum for: Special Assistant to the President; Subject: International Radio Broadcasting by Radio Free Asia,” issued April 1, 1953, CK3100139128, accessed through Declassified Documents Reference System.

two radio stations, the official Voice of America and the “gray propaganda” initiative Radio Free Asia, which broadcasted into the PRC between 1951 and 1953.²⁹ However, broadcasts to the PRC were seen as inefficient because due to public loudspeakers and “group-listening centers” only very few private households had radios, and “clandestine listening” was difficult.³⁰

When the CPC established itself as the ruling party of China in 1949, the structures engaged in external propaganda and liaising with foreigners were not under centralized control and could still be broadly categorized into two types of different origin: first, there were media units which had been founded during the Second World War and which had nominally operated under the guidance of Zhou Enlai. Some of these units had been established with the help of Westerners and had focused on getting Western support throughout the Second World War as well as during the ensuing civil war with the GMD. Second, there were units that had been born out of an interaction with the Communist International and the S.U. These units were reorganized after the founding of the PRC, resulting, for instance, in the International Liaison Department (*Duiwai lianluo bu* 对外联络部), which was founded in 1951 and was given some responsibilities formally held by the United Front Department (*Tongzhan bu* 统战部), which only remained in charge of liaison work with Taiwan and ethnic Chinese.³¹

Between 1949 and 1953, under the supervision of Soviet advisors, China set up a number of state organs and transferred to them administrative powers previously held by party institutions. In the propaganda sector, this change was exemplified by the creation and brief existence of the General Press Administration (GPrA, *Xinwen zongshu* 新闻总署, 1949-1952), and the General

²⁹ For instance, after Stalin’s death, the U.S broadcasts focused on the theme that “Malenkov [had] succeeded to a position of influence over the Communist movement to which not he, but Mao alone [was] entitled” hoping for a possible defection of Mao to the U.S. In this regard, VOA was seen as a better channel for the message, “for if there is any hope for Mao's defection, it is more likely to come when VOA, expressing official U.S. policy, makes the reward seem great enough.” Radio Free Asia was also approached with a covert cooperation offer by the Taiwanese Radio Free China. A report commented that this “make possible the broadcasting of an imaginative dark gray or black type program into the Mainland which cannot be done under CFA or RFA attribution.” For example, “phrases such as ‘Down with Mao Tse-tung, Long live Zhou En-lai’ could be broadcast from Radio Free China on the same frequency as Radio Peiping during pauses by the Peiping commentator.” Department of State, “Memorandum: International Radio Broadcasting by Radio Free Asia,” 2-5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹ Cf. David Shambaugh, “China’s ‘Quiet Diplomacy’: The International Department of the Chinese Communist Party,” *China: An International Journal* 5, no. 1 (2007): 35. For the predecessor organizations of the ILD, see *ibid.*, 32-35.

Publication Administration (GPuA, *Chuban zongshu* 出版总署, 1949-1954) under the Central Government Administrative Council (*Zhengfu zhengwuyuan* 政府政务院), the predecessor of today's State Council. These were charged with some of the former responsibilities of the Central Propaganda Department.³²

During the first few years of the PRC, some of the propaganda-related bodies established a specific subordinate body responsible for “international propaganda.” The GPrA, headed by Hu Yuzhi,³³ subsumed the China Information Bureau (*Guoji xinwen ju* 国际新闻局, literally: International Press Bureau),³⁴ which is seen as the first predecessor of what is today the Foreign Languages Office.³⁵ During these initial years, propaganda targeted at foreigners was still referred to as international propaganda (*guoji xuanchuan* 国际宣传).³⁶ Soon after, external propaganda, *duiwai xuanchuan*, became the most established term to refer to propaganda aimed at foreign audiences.³⁷ After the GPrA was disbanded

³² Cf. Nicolai Volland, “The Control of the Media in the People’s Republic of China” (Doctoral diss. University of Heidelberg, 2003), 196-197.

³³ Cf. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui 中国共产党组织史资料编审委员会 [Editorial committee for Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 [Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], Appended vol. 1 [vol. A1], *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo zhengquan zuzhi, 1949.10-1997.9*. 中华人民共和国政权组织, 1949.10-1997.9 [The political organization of the People’s Republic of China, 1949.10-1997.9] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 52.

³⁴ Cf. Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and skills of external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 40. Also see Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, “Duiwai xuanchuan de lishi fazhan – duiwai xuanchuan baodao yewu tantao zhi wu” 对外宣传的历史发展——对外宣传报道业务探讨之五 [The historical development of external propaganda – Fifth exploration of professional (standards of) external reporting], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (1998): 5.

³⁵ “CIPG lishi yange” CIPG 历史沿革 [Historical evolution of the CIPG], website of the Foreign Languages Office, <http://www.cipg.org.cn/jjgl/lsyg/>, accessed October 22, 2012. Its responsibilities included the editing (in foreign languages) and distribution abroad of news and newsletters on current affairs, to publish the works of Mao Zedong and short leaflets on the Chinese revolution (using the nameplate “Foreign Languages Press”), publishing the English language journal *People’s China*, publishing the Esperanto journal *El Popola Ĉinio*, managing foreign journalists stationed in China, and producing a Chinese translation of the mouthpiece of the Cominform, *Za Próchnyy Mir, Za Narodnuyu Demokratiyu! Za Próchnyy Mir, Za Narodnuyu Demokratiyu!* [For a Lasting Peace, for a People’s Democracy]. Cf. Hou and Guo, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao*, 40.

³⁶ E.g. “关于国际宣传问题，如通过电影[...]等形式对外宣传新中国，[...]” in “Waijiaobu guanyu duiwai xuanchuan wenti de baogao” 外交部关于对外宣传问题的报告 [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ report on problems in external propaganda], March 23, 1950, MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Archive, no. 113-00055-03(1).

³⁷ During the early 1950s, however, *duiwai xuanchuan* still had alternative meanings. For instance, in one example from the time when a nationwide “propaganda net” (*xuanchuanwang* 宣传网) was in the process of being built, it was used to describe the dispatching of propaganda workers to a different unit to do propaganda work there on a temporary basis. Cf. “Guanyu

in 1952, the Bureau was turned into the Foreign Languages Press,³⁸ the Chinese equivalent of Moscow's Foreign Languages Publishing House in which all publications targeting foreigners were produced. This suggests that in this case, "international news" was used in its meaning from the Republican period: news aimed at foreigners. Similarly, in 1950, the Broadcasting Bureau (*Guangbo shiye ju* 广播事业局) established the Editorial Department for International Broadcasting (*Guoji guangbo bianjibu* 国际广播编辑部), responsible for editing and translating radio programs for foreigners.³⁹ Between 1951 and 1954, the CPD had an International Propaganda Division (*Guoji xuanchuan chu* 国际宣传处),⁴⁰ which was headed by Zhou Enlai's secretary Yang Gang 杨刚, who became deputy director of the *People's Daily* responsible for international propaganda in 1955 after the International Propaganda Division had been shut down.⁴¹ At least in the second case, at the *People's Daily*, the term "international propaganda" must have already been used in the new meaning established during the first few years of the PRC: propaganda *about* international affairs.⁴²

In addition, China founded "popular" (*minjian* 民间) organizations in charge of "people-to-people" diplomacy, such as the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (*Zhongguo renmin waijiao xuehui* 中国人民外交学会, official

laodongju duiwai xuanchuan yuan gongzuo zongjie" 关于劳动局对外宣传员工作总结 [Summary of the work of the Bureau of Labor's external propagandists] in *Ju dangzhibu guanyu yi jiu wu san xia ban nian zhibu gongzuo zongjie ji duiwai xuanchuan yuan gongzuo zongjie* 局党支部关于一九五三下半年支部工作总结及对外宣传员工作总结 [Summary of branch work and of work of external propaganda workers of the Bureau's Party branch in the second half of 1953], 1953, Beijing Municipal Archive, no. 110-001-00322, 9-13.

³⁸ "CIPG lishi yange." The Bureau's Liaison Department was placed under the MFA's Intelligence Division. Cf. "Guanyu yuan Guoji xinwen ju lianluochu gai shu Waijiaobu qingbaosi de tongzhi" 关于原国际新闻局联络处改属外交部情报司的通知 [Notice about placing the Liaison Office of the former China Information Bureau under the authority of the Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], February 27, 1952, MFA Archive, no. 116-00061-03.

³⁹ Zhai Shuyao, "Duiwai xuanchuan de lishi fazhan – duiwai xuanchuan baodao yewu tantao zhi wu," 5.

⁴⁰ Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 5, *Guodu shiqi he shehui zhuyi jianshe shiqi (1949.10-1966.5)* 过渡时期和社会主义建设时期 (1949.10-1966.5) [The period of transition and of building socialism (1949.10-1966.5)], 62-63.

⁴¹ Cf. "Yang Gang" 杨刚 [Yang Gang], <http://www.baike.com/wiki/%E6%9D%A8%E5%88%9A>, accessed February 10, 2013.

⁴² As early as in 1952, Xinhua already distinguished between external news (*duiwai xinwen* 对外新闻), meaning news targeted at foreigners and international news (*guoji xinwen* 国际新闻), meaning news about international affairs. Cf. He Guoping, 何国平, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu* 中国对外报道思想研究 [Research on China's thought on external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2009), 226.

English acronym: CPIFA), founded in December 1949,⁴³ and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (*Zhongguo renmin duiwai youhao xiehui* 中国人民对外友好协会), established in 1954 as the External Cultural Liaison Bureau (*Duiwai wenhua lianluo ju* 对外文化联络局).⁴⁴ In these popular networks, the PRC was integrated into and thus initially depended heavily on the structures created by the S.U. Likewise, many Soviet practices were adopted: The Chinese word *youhao* 友好 –political friendship– is a direct translation of the Russian word *druzhiba* Дружба,⁴⁵ and much of China's people-to-people diplomacy was Soviet-inspired. For instance, China also adopted the *delegatziya* Делегация system of organizing highly coordinated visits of foreign delegations to China.⁴⁶

“Popular” media and associations were useful wherever other countries were suspicious of activities organized by a Communist government. The notion that messages are more persuasive when they are stated by a neutral party has been part of the conceptualization of propaganda since people began to systematically write about the topic.⁴⁷ Similarly, creating new, seemingly independent media to broadcast messages that could not be broadcast for different reasons by the Voice of America (VOA) was one of the most important rearrangements of the U.S. external propaganda apparatus under the Eisenhower administration. “Popular” media, presented as independent though de facto part of the CPC's organizational network, served a similar function for China. Of course, the Party-state also controlled popular organizations. Control was further

⁴³ “Xuehui jieshao” 学会介绍 [Introduction to the society], website of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.cpifa.org/s/toCpifaSurveyIntroduction.do?channelId=2>, accessed March 30, 2012.

⁴⁴ “About us,” website of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, <http://en.cpaffc.org.cn/introduction/agrintr.html>, accessed October 17, 2012. In 1958, the Bureau was turned into the External Cultural Liaison Commission (*Duiwai wenhua lianluo weiyuanhui*) and put under the leadership of the newly founded Foreign Affairs Small Group and its office. Cf. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui*, *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, A1, 145. Friendship, *youhao*, in the sense of “political friendship” was a translation from the Russian word *druzhiba* Дружба. Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 7.

⁴⁵ Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 7.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 11-12.

⁴⁷ In 1927, Lasswell noted that “the neutral witness always speaks with some authority” in his seminal *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. Lasswell observed that “an excellent device which was used by the British to lend weight to their stories of German atrocities was to consult a commission of men with international reputations for truthfulness to collect evidence and deliver findings.” Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (London: K. Paul et al., 1927), 88.

consolidated in 1953, when the Central Committee established the Commission for the Coordination of International Activities (*Guoji huodong zhidao weiyuanhui* 国际活动指导委员会), which oversaw all popular (*minjian* 民间) international activities, including participation in non-governmental international organizations, conferences, and dispatching or receiving delegations.⁴⁸ Nonetheless “popular” media, for example, faced fewer restrictions abroad than official publications, which were officially banned from being imported into the U.S.⁴⁹

The main activities of the first few years consisted of setting up a number of print publications with the help of people who had organized the CPC’s propaganda directed at foreigners earlier. *People’s China* was the first English language publication of the newly established PRC, its first issue published in January 1950, only three months after the CPC had officially proclaimed the new republic. *China Pictorial* was added in July 1950, with *Chinese Literature* following in July 1951.⁵⁰ In 1950, Xinhua News Agency also established China Features (*Zhongguo tegao she* 中国特稿社), which acted as a “popular” (*minjian*) organization to the outside world and was not subjected to the same level of tight ideological control as other media.⁵¹ Moreover, it potentially enjoyed more credibility among those skeptical of China because it was not presented as a Party-affiliated medium. In 1952, two additional external propaganda media were launched. The first was the magazine *China Reconstructs*, which was modeled on the U.S. magazines *Life*, *Look*, and *Saturday Evening Post*⁵² and was nominally edited by Song Qingling and could therefore avoid censorship by being classified as a “popular” (*minjian*) journal.⁵³ The second was China News Service

⁴⁸ Cf. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 5, *Guodu shiqi he shehui zhuyi jianshe shiqi (1949.10-1966.5)*, 71-72. The office for its work was established within the ILD and the commission was also nominally headed by the director of ILD, Wang Jiaying 王稼祥. Ibid, 72.

⁴⁹ Cf. “Song Qingling yu ‘Jinri Zhongguo’” 宋庆龄与《今日中国》 [Song Qingling and *China Reconstructs*], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2002): 17.

⁵⁰ Lazarick, “China’s Smiling Face,” 2.

⁵¹ Cf. Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 23.

⁵² Lazarick, “China’s Smiling Face,” 36.

⁵³ This was a strategic consideration agreed on by Song Qingling and Zhou Enlai. Cf. “Song Qingling yu ‘Jinri Zhongguo,’” 17.

(*Zhongxinshe* 中新社), a new agency targeting overseas Chinese. Both were de facto headed by Jin Zhonghua.

These media units could draw on predecessors and networks from before 1949. According to Epstein, the two most important journals, *People's China* and *China Reconstructs* should be seen as continuations of two earlier journals edited in Hong Kong prior to the founding of the PRC.⁵⁴ *People's China* was basically a continuation of *China Digest*, relying on the same staff and using the same list of readers to distribute the journal. In essence, *China Digest* was relocated from Hong Kong to Beijing, and renamed *People's China*.⁵⁵ Likewise, *China Reconstructs* is considered a continuation of Song Qingling's *China Defence League Newsletter*,⁵⁶ though, as will be seen below, it was more likely a continuation of other foreign language media closed down in the early 1950s.

Foreign language media in the early PRC were not limited to periodicals. In May 1950, the CPD's International Propaganda Division began publishing the first CPC-run English language daily, *The Shanghai News*. It was headed by Jin Zhonghua and was meant for the foreign population in Shanghai, which mainly consisted of Soviets and Jewish refugees from the Second World War.⁵⁷ Shanghai was the ideal place for such an undertaking because the city still had a lot of equipment previously used by foreign language papers that had been closed down after the CPC's takeover and thus could be reused.⁵⁸ In 1952, however, *The Shanghai News* was closed down. While many of Shanghai's foreigners had already left the city by then, the main reason was that the Center wanted to expand its own external propaganda and needed both technical equipment and qualified staff. The entire printing equipment was moved to Beijing, and the personnel were

⁵⁴ Cf. Israel Epstein, "Zhou Enlai zongli he duiwai shukan chuban (shang)" 周恩来总理和对外书刊出版(上) [Premier Zhou Enlai and the publishing of books for foreigners (one)], *Duiwai da chuanbo* 对外大传播 [Big external communication], no. Z1 (1998): 14.

⁵⁵ Cf. Lazarick, "China's Smiling Face," 1, 13, Lazarick got this information through an interview with Zhang Yan, the *de facto* editor of *People's China*. Also see Epstein, "Zhou Enlai zongli he duiwai shukan chuban (shang)," 14.

⁵⁶ Cf. Epstein, "Zhou Enlai zongli he duiwai shukan chuban (shang)," 14.

⁵⁷ Cf. Shen Suru 沈苏儒, "Jianshu xin Zhongguo de yi zhang Yingwen ribao: *Shanghai xinwen*" 简述新中国第一张英文日报: 《上海新闻》 [Brief description of China's first English language daily: *The Shanghai News*], originally published in *Xinwen jizhe*, published online July 28, 2009, *People's Daily Online*, <http://media.people.com.cn/GB/22114/49489/163749/9736670.html>, accessed January 21, 2013.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

transferred to work for the new journal *China Reconstructs*, for the Foreign Languages Press, and for Xinhua 新华.⁵⁹

After the GPrA's China Information Bureau (*Guoji xinwen ju* 国际新闻局) was disbanded in February 1952 and was transformed into the Foreign Language Press (*Waiwen chubanshe* 外文出版社), its News Office (*Xinwenchu* 新闻处) became Xinhua's External News Editorial Department (*Duiwai xinwen bianjibu* 对外新闻编辑部).⁶⁰ With the rearrangement, Xinhua inherited the responsibility to distribute text and images both in China and abroad.⁶¹ Since the very beginning, this department was only responsible for reporting Chinese domestic news to foreigners; international news were handled by the International News Department (*Guoji xinwen bu* 国际新闻部),⁶² which was responsible for all international news whether targeting Chinese or foreigners, a division of responsibilities that still applies today.

In addition to China's foreign language media and Xinhua, there were two other media units that were considered external propaganda organs: Radio Peking and the *People's Daily*. Radio Peking was launched in 1950 on the basis of earlier foreign language broadcasts during the Civil War.⁶³ The *People's Daily*, primarily intended for domestic consumption, was also treated as an external propaganda organ, as foreigners read the publication to get a glimpse of China's political direction.⁶⁴

While print publications' layouts were fashioned after U.S. examples,⁶⁵ all media were brought under the control of the CPC's Soviet style propaganda apparatus, which stressed heavy control by the Party and the top leadership, who

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Cf. He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 226.

⁶¹ Gan Xianfeng 甘险峰, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国对外新闻传播史 [A history of China's external news communication] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004), 173.

⁶² Cf. He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 226.

⁶³ Cf. "History and Milestones: CRI English Service," website of China Radio International, <http://english.cri.cn/about/history.htm>, accessed February 19, 2013.

⁶⁴ Cf. Henansheng geming weiyuanhui banshizu 河南省革命委员会办事组 [Executive Group of the revolutionary committee of Henan province], *Mao Zedong guanyu duiwai xuanchuan de zhishi* 毛泽东关于对外宣传的指示 [Directives from Chairman Mao about external propaganda work]. Directive with Mao quotes marked top secret (*juemi* 绝密) at the time, published by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC on June 8, 1972 and transmitted by the Henan Provincial Revolutionary Committee's Executive Group on August 1, 1972.

⁶⁵ Cf. Lazarick, "Chinas Smiling Face," 36.

often read and approved important articles personally.⁶⁶ Between 1949 and 1960, before the Sino-Soviet conflict became official and all advisors were pulled out of China, the country relied on the help of approximately ten thousand Soviet advisors.⁶⁷ External propaganda units had Soviet advisors as well.⁶⁸ Shen Suru 沈苏儒 (1919-2009), who had transferred to the *The Shanghai News* after having worked for the USIS, later recounted the changes Chinese journalists had to accommodate under the influence of Soviet advisors:

“According to Western press theory, the most important content that will attract readers the most needs to be placed at the very top of the news report, so when the editors need to delete something, they delete the end of an article, not the beginning. However, the theory of Soviet experts was precisely the reverse; they believed that each article had to have a political conclusion and that this conclusion could only be placed at the very end [of the article]. So when editing, we often had to reprint even long articles in full without any changes.”⁶⁹

Although Shen does not spell this out directly, for those Chinese journalists who had worked with relative independence during the Second World War and during the Civil War, this complete turn-around and integration into a propaganda system that functioned by completely different rules, not only in terms of control exercised but also in terms of what was considered good journalism must have come as quite a shock. Soviet advisors were also stationed at other external propaganda units, and although their influence later diminished, by then the new style of writing and the mechanisms to ensure compliance had fully established itself in China.

⁶⁶ Cf. Cui Qi 崔奇, “Gao zhan yuan zhu wu wei bu zhi: huiyi Zhou zongli dui Renmin ribao guoji xuanchuan de guanhuai he zhidao” 高瞻远瞩 无微不至 回忆周总理对人民日报国际宣传的关怀和指导 [Showing great foresight and caring in every possible way: Remembering the care and guidance of Premier Zhou towards the international propaganda of the People’s Daily], in *Renmin ribao huiyilu: 1948-1988 人民日报回忆录* [Memoirs from the *People’s Daily*]: 1948-1988, ed. Renmin ribao shi bianji zuzhi 人民日报报史编辑组 (Beijing: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1988), 266-272.

⁶⁷ Cf. Thomas P. Bernstein, “Introduction: The Complexities of Learning from the Soviet Union,” in *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-Present*, eds. Bernstein and Hua-Yu Li (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 1.

⁶⁸ Cf. Shen Suru, “Jianshu xin Zhongguo de yi zhang Yingwen ribao: *Shanghai xinwen*.”

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Texts to be published in external propaganda media were generally prepared in Chinese and then translated into different languages.⁷⁰ One important phenomenon that needs to be noted is the CPC's obsession with correct terminology that also had a significant impact on external propaganda work and in many cases continues to show until today. Schoenhals has studied this phenomenon as "formalized language", which denotes a "restricted code"⁷¹ or linguistically reduced form of language, used, for example, in politics for the purpose of constituting one's power. In this "restricted code" only a selection of the vocabulary, syntax, and speech patterns of everyday language is available for use.⁷² Formalized language has played an extremely important part in Chinese politics, to a degree where policy making can almost be equated with policy formulation.⁷³ According to Schoenhals,

"policy implementation at all levels is affected by concerns with questions like How should this be put? What happens if we put it like that? Will putting it like that put people off? What do they mean by putting it differently? Can we really let them put it like that?"⁷⁴

Political correct-speak⁷⁵ is not limited to the Chinese context. However, in China it has taken on an importance and a dynamic of its own that might, in fact, be unparalleled anywhere else in the world.⁷⁶ A famous passage in the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 论语) argues that wrong terms will lead to political disarray, and that therefore the prime responsibility of government is the rectification of names (*zheng ming* 正名).⁷⁷ As Munro explains, this importance attached to the accuracy of words and the link between words and value judgments was present throughout pre-modern China: To call someone a king meant to morally approve of the way

⁷⁰ Cf. Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade*, 110.

⁷¹ Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992), 1.

⁷² Cf. *ibid.*

⁷³ Cf. *ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ For the term, see Rudolf Wagner, "Zhonggong 1950-1953 nian jianli zhengyu, zhengwen de zhengce dalü" 中共 1950-1953 年建立正语、正文的政策大略 [The CPC's policy of establishing correct-speak and correct-write in China, 1950-1953] in *Wenyi lilun yu tongsu wenhua* 文艺理论与通俗文化 [Literary theory and popular culture], ed. Peng Xiaoyan 彭小妍 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 1999).

⁷⁶ Cf. Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words*, 1-3.

⁷⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 2.

this person occupied the position.⁷⁸ Although to draw a direct connection may be a bit farfetched and insistence on one's own terminology to be used in international diplomacy is not limited to China, there is some continuity in the importance attached to words as carrying moral judgement. Munro continues that in Maoist ideology "[t]o use the language of the peasants is to take a step toward both describing and evaluating the world as they would."⁷⁹ This idea becomes somewhat problematic, ideologically, when having to adapt one's news reports language-wise to a Western target audience, some of whom are even considered hostile to China. Adopting their language is tantamount to agreeing with their point of view.

Several documents attest to how important correct translations and the unification of slogans (*tongyi xuanchuan koujing* 统一宣传口径) were in external propaganda work.⁸⁰ Aside from junior cadres, who were responsible for the translation and proofreading of texts, external propaganda units also employed senior cadres in charge of content and ideological correctness of the texts produced. The latter often did not speak any foreign languages.⁸¹ Each cadre in a unit had a "clearance level," which determined both his access to classified information and which types of texts produced in the external propaganda unit they were allowed to sign off on.⁸² Foreign proofreaders did complain about the language and requested changes, but these were usually rebuffed, as their words did not correctly reflect what China wanted to say in the eyes of the Propaganda Department.⁸³

Moreover, anything touching on international relations or China's foreign policy, particularly when published in the *People's Daily* (*Renminribao* 人民日报), which was read by foreigners in order to learn about official CPC and PRC policy, was treated as a diplomatic statement and controlled accordingly. It is

⁷⁸ Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 53-54.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 55

⁸⁰ E.g. "Zhu Minzhu Deguo shiguan guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de jiancha baogao" 驻民主德国使馆关于对外宣传工作的检查报告 [Report on the inspection of the external propaganda work of the Chinese embassy in the German Democratic Republic], June 22, 1959, MFA Archive, no. 109-01954-04(1), 2.

⁸¹ Cf. Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade*, 98-99. Ungor's information is based on an interview with Sidney Rittenberg.

⁸² Cf. *ibid.*, 99-100.

⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*, 126-127.

well-known that Zhou Enlai and other top leaders in the Party-state personally read, corrected and rewrote important pieces.⁸⁴

Speed, by contrast, was not considered as important. China had an almost complete monopoly on reporting China-related news. Although foreign media did pick up certain stories from Chinese domestic media before they could be reported in China's external propaganda journals or even by Radio Peking,⁸⁵ there was no competition over access to information from foreigners. Likewise, correct political commentary was more important than being the first to tell foreigners about a particular story. The importance attached to correct speech, which required several layers of control, combined with the lack of genuine competition meant that reporting on time was not an important priority.

Before 1953, there were some exceptions to the language policies. The CPC's instructions on how to handle the foreign press in China from January 1949 had included special provisions for selected foreign publications that the CPC would continue to allow to operate and even protect from Chinese takeover.⁸⁶ The *China Monthly Review*,⁸⁷ edited since 1946 by American journalist John W. Powell (1919-2008), was one of the few foreign-run periodicals allowed to continue publication after the founding of the PRC. Powell had initially come to China working for the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI).⁸⁸ Before the Communist take-over Powell had advocated against the U.S. policy in Asia to stop Communism by all means, although he had also been critical of the S.U. to some extent.⁸⁹ After the takeover, he was mindful of Chinese sensitivities and also lobbied the U.S. to recognize the PRC.⁹⁰ Powell's journal vocally supported the PRC and attacked the U.S. war in Korea. Despite the fact that it was allowed to comment on political issues, its articles – particularly Powell's editorials – were not subjected to the same language policies as other publications. Instead, articles included explicit disclaimers that the views

⁸⁴ See for example Cui Qi, "Gao zhan yuan zhu wu wei bu zhi: huiyi Zhou zongli dui Renmin ribao guoji xuanchuan de guanhuai he zhidao." The habit for high ranking leaders to personally read and correct important pieces of news was started in Yan'an 延安 and continued after the founding of the PRC.

⁸⁵ Cf. Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade*, 205-206.

⁸⁶ O'Brien, "John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review," 205.

⁸⁷ The journal had been founded in 1917 by Thomas F. Millard under the name *Millard's Review*. Its English name and editor changed multiple times over the next few decades.

⁸⁸ O'Brien, "John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review," 6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 187-192.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, chapters 6 and 7.

expressed were those of the editor and the respective journalists.⁹¹ In addition to original content, the journal also published policy documents and full texts of speeches made by Chinese politicians or attached them as supplements.⁹² The *China Monthly Review* was closed down in May 1953, officially for financial reasons and because it was no longer allowed to be distributed in the U.S. by American customs owing to its anti-American stance during the Korean War.⁹³

It is true that the journal had suffered financial difficulties for a long time, but if it had continued to exist, it would certainly have been tied into the overall propaganda apparatus more closely. The closing down of the journal came at a time when the CPC embarked on a new economic course, tightened Party control and wanted to expand its own external propaganda apparatus under stricter Party supervision. In 1953, all work was first divided into functionally related sectors called “gateways” (*kou* 口).⁹⁴ This initiated a policy of strengthening party control over government bodies that was to be reaffirmed five years later in 1958 with the creation of five different Small Groups (one for each of the five functional areas of government) reporting directly to the Politburo and the Party Secretariat.⁹⁵

With plans for faster economic development, reinforced Party control and an increasingly anti-Soviet agenda, China’s interest in propagating its stance abroad was to rise dramatically over the next few years.

⁹¹ E.g. “The People’s Unity,” *China Monthly Review* 119, no. 1, January 1951, 3.

⁹² E.g. “Full text of Wu Hsiu-Chuan’s Speech at the Security Council,” Supplement to *China Monthly Review* 119, no. 1, January 1951; “Resolution of Northeastern People’s Government on Higher Education,” *China Monthly Review* 119, no. 1, January 1951, 47-49. The first was most likely an official translation provided to the CMR; the latter carried a note that it had been translated by the CMR itself.

⁹³ The paper had carried an article in which Powell accused the U.S. and the Japanese government of biological warfare in China and Korea, an article for which Powell was tried in the U.S. in 1956, though he was acquitted in 1959. O’Brien, “John William Powell and the China Weekly/Monthly Review,” chapters 8, 9, and 10. The journal had suffered financial difficulties for several years. Cf. John W. Powell, “Dear Review Reader,” *China Monthly Review* 119, no. 1, January 1951, 2.

⁹⁴ Cf. Shiping Zheng, *Party vs. State in Post-1949 China: The Institutional Dilemma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 85-86.

⁹⁵ Cf. Shaw Chong-hai 邵宗海, “Zhonggong zhongyang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu zuzhi dingwei” 中共中央工作领导小组组织定位 [The organization and position of leading small groups of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China], website of National Chengchi University, www3.nccu.edu.tw/~chshaw/clg_staus.doc, accessed April 18, 2010, 6.

3.3 1955 to 1969: From Afro-Asian Solidarity to Spreading the Revolution

Starting in the mid-1950s, China began to be more involved in the activities of what was later to become the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). This was accompanied by attempts to crank up China's voice towards Asian and African countries. Concern with external propaganda clearly rose in 1958 and continued to grow throughout the 1960s. Reasons included the Sino-Soviet split following Khrushchev's Secret Speech in 1956,⁹⁶ which ended the period during which China saw itself mainly as a student of the S.U. rather than a teacher in its own right (although Chinese publications continued to stress that China should never force its own model on anybody else).⁹⁷ The conflict with the S.U. turned into a security issue that made it necessary for China to gain more allies on the international stage in order to avoid complete isolation within the international system in general and to balance against the S.U. in particular. Thus, spreading China's point of view and trying to turn others against the S.U. was not a mere struggle over the correct ideological line, but seen as a way to gain much-needed allies.

In 1955, Premier Zhou Enlai took part in the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung (Wanlong 万隆). This new focus on Asian and African countries was also reflected in further media expansions. In 1955, Mao Zedong 毛泽东 instructed Xinhua to "manage the globe" (*Xinhua yao ba diqiu guan qilai* 新华要把地球管起来), and to "let the whole world hear our voice" (*rang quan shijie dou neng tingdao women de shengyin* 让全世界都能听到我们的声音).⁹⁸ In 1956, in order to make itself more international, Xinhua added a number of new cadres in

⁹⁶ In 1956, Khrushchev delivered a speech at an unofficial Party session in which he denounced Stalin.

⁹⁷ This was based on Mao's instructions to not force anything on others (*bu yao qiangjiayu ren* 不要强加于人), which will be addressed again below.

⁹⁸ E.g. mentioned in Cheng Manli 程曼丽, "Congliang de jilei dao zhi de feiyue – Xinhuashe zou xiang shijixing tongxunshu de 80 nian licheng" 从量的积累到质的飞跃——新华社走向世界性通讯社的80年历程 [From an accumulation of quantity to a leap of quality – 80 years' history of the Xinhua news agency towards a global news agency], *Zhongguo jizhe* 中国记者 [China journalists], no. 11 (2011): 9. Also see "Xinhuashe juxing jinian Yingyu duiwai xinwen kaibo liushi zhounian zuotanhui" 新华社举行纪念英语对外新闻传播六十周年座谈会 [Xinhua news agency holds symposium to commemorate the 60th anniversary of external news dissemination], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (2004): 6.

1956 and also transferred people from domestic Xinhua branches (*guonei fenshe* 国内分社).⁹⁹

The idea to build a world news agency was also tied to activities at UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in the early 1950s. Although the MacBride Commission of the late 1970s and early 1980s is the most famous UNESCO initiative regarding the world's media and information order,¹⁰⁰ the UN and UNESCO were committed to the setting up of national news agencies as early as during the 1950s¹⁰¹ and compiled reference material as part of the process. In 1953, UNESCO published *News Agencies – Their Structure and Operation*,¹⁰² which listed five “world news agencies”: Agence France Presse (AFP), the Associated Press (AP), Reuters, the Telegraph Agency of the S.U. (TASS, *Telegrafnoye agentstvo Sovetskovo Soyuz* Телеграфное агентство Советского Союза), and United Press International (UPI). In late 1954, China sent a delegation to study TASS for two months and learn from its experience as a world news agency.¹⁰³ The UNESCO report was translated and published by Xinhua under the title “Introduction to various countries’ news agencies” in 1957,¹⁰⁴ after the decision to turn Xinhua into a “world news agency” had been announced. The 1957 version appears to have been published openly (*gongkai* 公开), and it is highly likely that there were earlier translations circulated internally. Thus, while the term *shijixing tongxunshe* (世界性通讯社) is generally considered a coinage of Liu Shaoqi’s 刘少奇 from the year 1956¹⁰⁵ when Liu repeated Mao’s call on Xinhua to become a

⁹⁹ Cheng Manli, “Congliang de jilei dao zhi de feiyue,” 9.

¹⁰⁰ In the 1970s and 1980s, a UNESCO commission headed by Seán MacBride was tasked with researching how to create a more “just” media order in which the developing countries were adequately represented. Also see chapter 5.3.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Oliver Boyd-Barret, “Constructing the Global, Constructing the Local” in *Global Dynamics of News*, eds. Abbas Malek and Anandam P. Kavoori (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000), 315.

¹⁰² Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1953.

¹⁰³ Xi Shaoying 习少颖, *1949-1966 nian Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi yanjiu* 1949-1966 年中国对外宣传史研究 [Research on China’s external propaganda history from 1949 to 1966] (Wuhan: Huazhong keji daxue chubanshe, 2010), 27.

¹⁰⁴ Xinhua tongxunshe 新华通讯社 [Xinhua news agency], *Ge guo tongxunshe jieshao* 各国通讯社介绍 [News agencies of various countries] (Beijing: Xinhua tongxunshe, 1957).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Li Yue 李越, “Xinhua she guoji xinwen baodao de lishi fazhan jiankuang” 新华社国际新闻报道的历史发展简况 [Historical development of Xinhua’s international new reporting], in *Guoji xinwen caixie: jingyan huicui* 国际新闻采写: 经验荟萃 [Collection of experience in

“world news agency” on two occasions in May and June 1956, it may actually have been introduced into the Chinese language through the translation of the UNESCO report.

There was, however, also an obvious link between the news agency project and the move away from the S.U. and towards African and Asian countries. On June 19, 1956, Liu Shaoqi told Xinhua employees that in the world, there was a large “neutral” camp (*zhongli diqu* 中立地区), which did not have its own international news agencies. Although they were not particularly fond of the way things were done, they were forced to rely on news releases either from British and American or Soviet news agencies. Thus, he explained, as long as China’s news were done well, there was a big market out there.¹⁰⁶ Following a directive from Zhou Enlai, Xinhua was to first focus on Asia and Africa before trying to enter the West (*xian Ya Fei, hou Ou Mei* 先亚非, 后欧美).¹⁰⁷ From the beginning, however, the goal was to enable Xinhua to compete with Western news agencies. A two-step plan with a timetable was released in 1956: During the first five to seven years, Xinhua should concentrate its forces to become the most authoritative news agency in the East (meaning Asia and Africa). Second, within ten to twelve years, Xinhua was to become a news agency able to compete with Western capitalist news agencies all over the world.¹⁰⁸

External propaganda was not the only reason for Xinhua’s planned overseas expansion. Better intelligence was at least as if not more important. At the same time that plans were made to strengthen China’s voice in the world, Xinhua’s internal reporting system was reformed. Xinhua’s main “semi-public” publication selectively translating news published by foreign media was re-launched under the name *Reference News* (*Cankao xiaoxi* 参考消息) in March 1957.¹⁰⁹ Thus, while China wanted to increase its voice, it also sought more information about the world.

writing international news], ed. Xinhuashe xinwen yanjiusuo 新华社新闻研究 [Research center of Xinhua news agency] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1991), 125.

¹⁰⁶ Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwaixinwen chuanbo*, 175.

¹⁰⁷ Xi Shaoying, *1949-1966 nian Zhongguo duiwai xuanchuan shi yanjiu*, 28.

¹⁰⁸ Lu Xiaohua 陆小华, *Xin meiti guan: Xinxihua shengcun shidai de siwei fangshi* 新媒体观: 信息化生存时代的思维方式 [Conceptualizing the new media: A mode of thinking for the survival in the information age] (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2008), 230.

¹⁰⁹ Following an order by Liu Shaoqi, who was responsible for propaganda work at Xinhua at that time. Although the accessibility of *Cankao xiaoxi* was restricted in 1957, the number of printed

In 1956, with the Hundred Flowers movement and the growing disenchantment with the S.U., a search for new models for China's news media began.¹¹⁰ A Xinhua report compiled during the Hundred Flowers Movement in 1957 pointed out that one-sided external propaganda left a bad impression of China abroad.¹¹¹ The idea of establishing more "liberal" media that were less strictly controlled by the Party was crushed with the Anti-Rightist Movement of 1957. The Western education of much of the staff of *People's China* caused some problems in the second half of 1957, just like the idea that external propaganda needed to be different from domestic content was condemned as unnecessary "exceptionalism."¹¹² According to recollections, entire editorial boards of media targeted at foreigners were affected by the Anti-Rightist campaign.¹¹³ The monthly journal was then turned into the weekly *Peking Review*, which placed a much larger emphasis on politics (see below). However, the renewed interest in propagating China's stance to the world remained and with the Sino-Soviet conflict intensifying, China's interest in publicizing its own stance and gaining allies increased. The year 1958 saw a major push in this direction.

China Reconstructs was less affected, possibly due to the interference of Zhou Enlai who openly opposed the idea of adding more political content to the magazine and generally argued in favor of toning down the rhetoric at the time owing to the negative feedback China received for its harsh attacks.¹¹⁴ One MFA document explained that turning *People's China* into the *Peking Review* was primarily done in order to avoid overlap with *China Reconstructs*, which was to be aimed at the broad readership generally interested in China, whereas the *Peking Review* was to specifically target those researching China.¹¹⁵ In 1958, the CPC also briefly tried to ease the fear of cadres afraid of "committing mistakes." However, this policy did not last long and the negative effects of too little control

copies was actually significantly increased. Cf. Fang Hanqi 方汉奇, *Zhongguo xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国新闻传播史 [History of Chinese journalism and communication] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2002), 375-377.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Li Yue, "Xinhuashe guoji xinwen baodao de lishi fazhan jiankuang," 129.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Cf. Zhai Shuyao, "Duiwai xuanchuan de lishi fazhan," 6.

¹¹³ See Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade*, 136-137.

¹¹⁴ Sun Xupei, "Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu," 33.

¹¹⁵ Cf. "Dui 'Beijing zhoubao' (Yingwen) de ji dian yijian" 对'北京周报'(英文版)的几点意见 [A few points on the *Peking Review* (English version)], November 1 to December 26, 1958, MFA Archive, no. 116-00233-02(1), 2.

were lamented in 1959 after the Campaign against Rightist Deviation had begun.¹¹⁶

China's new evangelism also translated into a major change in policy coordination as the responsibilities within the external propaganda sector were reshuffled after the introduction of (leading) small groups into the system. Small Groups were originally intended to strengthen Party control over government work, dividing the latter into five different functional areas, each with a Party group at the top. At the top of all foreign affairs work was the newly created Foreign Affairs Small Group (FASG). After the FASG was founded, responsibilities within the external propaganda sector were redistributed. The changes were claimed to be in response to an "Opinion" (*yijian* 意见) sent to the MFA and the FASG by Zhang Wentian, who was first vice foreign minister at the time.¹¹⁷ The Opinion mainly complained about the lack of a central structure to coordinate the reporting of Chinese affairs abroad, including at the local level when foreigners visited China.¹¹⁸ The direct counter-text for Zhang's request was widespread fear among cadres after the Anti-Rightist Campaign of making mistakes.¹¹⁹ Zhang's suggestion was to either create a group (*zu* 组) within the

¹¹⁶ For the attempts to alleviate fear, see "Zhang Wentian tongzhi guanyu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan de juti lingdao de yijian" 张闻天同志关于加强对外宣传的具体领导意见 [Comrade Zhang Wentian's Opinion about reinforcing the concrete leadership over external propaganda], April 9, 1958, MFA Archive, no. 102-00074-02(1). For backlash against these attempts, see "Zhu Minzhu Deguo shiguan guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de jiancha baogao" 驻民主德国使馆关于对外宣传工作的检查报告 [Report on the inspection of the external propaganda work of the Chinese embassy in the German Democratic Republic], June 22, 1959, MFA Archive, no. 109-01954-04(1).

¹¹⁷ "Zhonggong zhongyang pizhuan waishi xiaozu guanyu tiaozheng he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lingdao wenti de baogao" 中共中央批转外事小组关于调整和加强对外宣传工作报告问题的报告 [The CPC Central Committee approves and circulates the Foreign Affairs Small Group's report on the problem of how to reorganize and strengthen the leadership of external propaganda work], originally issued August 24, 1958, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1949-1966)* 党的宣传工作文件选编(1949-1966) [Selected documents on the Party's propaganda work (1949-1966)] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 371. The original memorandum is available at the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Zhang Wentian tongzhi guanyu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan de juti lingdao de yijian." For Zhang Wentian, also see footnote 238 in chapter 2. Shortly after writing the Opinion, in 1959 at the Lushan Plenum, Zhang was declared a member of the Peng Dehuai Anti-Party Clique after criticizing the Great Leap Forward and was removed from power.

¹¹⁸ "Zhang Wentian tongzhi guanyu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan de juti lingdao de yijian," 1-2.

¹¹⁹ Zhang highlighted that in the absence of concrete orders how to proceed, cadres were afraid of "committing mistakes" (*pa fan cuowu* 怕犯错误). "Zhang Wentian tongzhi guanyu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan de juti lingdao de yijian," 2. In 1959, the Chinese embassy in Eastern Germany had to write a report criticizing itself for having allowed Chinese exchange students

Foreign Affairs Office (the institution through which the FASG interacted with other departments) or to establish an Office within the Central Propaganda Department.¹²⁰

Before 1958, media-related external propaganda had been the responsibility of the International Liaison Department (ILD), while propagating China's foreign policies was the responsibility of the MFA.¹²¹ In 1958, the Center approved a report¹²² by the FASG that called for strengthened leadership over the foreign propaganda sector. In many respects, the concerns sound similar to more recent criticisms of the lack of a centralized body to coordinate foreign propaganda work. However, the FASG mostly wanted a clear division of labor (rather than one single powerful body overseeing all aspects of foreign propaganda work). Through its suggestions, the ILD handed most of its power over policy making to the FASG, while other bodies retained or gained influence in their areas of expertise. Most major responsibilities were handed over to the new Leading Small Group, including macro-level policy making, with an elaborate division of labour for specific tasks between a number of other units belonging to different functional bureaucracies (see Table 2).¹²³ Thus, on the one hand, leadership over the sector was strengthened; on the other hand, the fragmentation of the field was further institutionalized.

participate in external propaganda work without sufficient control. “Zhu Minzhu Deguo shiguan guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de jiancha baogao.”

¹²⁰ “Zhang Wentian tongzhi guanyu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan de juti lingdao de yijian.”

¹²¹ Cf. “Zhonggong zhongyang pizhuan waishi xiaozu guanyu tiaozheng he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lingdao wenti de baogao” 中共中央批转外事小组关于调整和加强对外宣传工作领导问题的报告 [The CPC Central Committee approves and circulates the Foreign Affairs Small Group's report on the problem of how to reorganize and strengthen the leadership of external propaganda work], originally issued August 24, 1958, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1949-1966)* 党的宣传工作文件选编(1949-1966) [Selected documents on the Party's propaganda work (1949-1966)], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 371.

¹²² “Zhonggong zhongyang pizhuan waishi xiaozu guanyu tiaozheng he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lingdao wenti de baogao,” 371-373.

¹²³ Ibid.

Unit	System (<i>Xitong</i> 系统) ¹²⁴	External Propaganda Responsibilities
Foreign Affairs Small Group	Foreign Affairs	Macro-level policy making
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Foreign Affairs	Propagating China's foreign policy
Commission for External Cultural Liaison Work ¹²⁵	Foreign Affairs	Propagating China's "basic conditions" through print publications and film
Xinhua News Agency	Propaganda and Education	Policy making for written and oral broadcasting
Local Propaganda Departments	Propaganda and Education	Helping with propaganda targeted at foreigners in China
Guangdong Province Party Committee	-	Propaganda activities in Hong Kong and Macao
Overseas Chinese Committee	Foreign Affairs	Propaganda aimed at ethnic Chinese in South East Asia
International Liaison Department	Foreign Affairs	Propagating the Chinese experience to other Socialist parties
Central Propaganda Department	Propaganda and Education	International news targeted at Chinese audiences

Table 3.I: Units Involved in External Propaganda after 1958¹²⁶

All of this happened at a time when China tried to expedite its own transformation into an industrial society and overtake the UK within fifteen years through the Great Leap Forward. The results of this experiment are well-known: An estimate of 20 to 30 million Chinese starved to death. Although at the time, there were only rumors abroad, the CPC felt it had to take countermeasures. In June 1960, Edgar Snow was allowed to return to China in the hopes that he would write a book to dispel rumors about famine in China after the failure of the Great

¹²⁴ A *xitong*, usually translated as "system," refers to a "grouping of functionally related bureaucracies." Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1995), 193.

¹²⁵ In 1958, the External Cultural Liaison Bureau (cf. chapter 3.2) was turned into a Commission under the direct leadership of the FASG and its permanent office. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. A1, 145.

¹²⁶ Based on "Zhonggong zhongyang pizhuan waishi xiaozu guanyu tiaozheng he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lingdao wenti de baogao," 371-373.

Leap. Although Snow did not feel welcome and was alienated by the strongly anti-American rhetoric at the time, his new book *The Other Side of the River: Red China Today* did not reflect this, and he did assure his readers that he had seen no signs of mass starvation during his trip.¹²⁷

In 1960 and 1961, as the conflict with the S.U. worsened, the CPC strengthened its international reporting structures. In mid-December 1960, following the Moscow conference from November 11 to 25 of the same year that had deepened the Sino-Soviet split, a propaganda meeting was convened at which the question how to report international issues was discussed.¹²⁸ In 1960, Xinhua began publishing a new classified journal dedicated to developments abroad.¹²⁹ The ILD received a temporary office specifically responsible for anti-Soviet propaganda and countering S.U. positions.¹³⁰ In 1963, Peking TV, the predecessor of today's China Central Television (CCTV), which had been founded in 1958, established a group in charge of producing short news programs in foreign languages to be sent abroad (*chuguopian zu* 出国片组).¹³¹

The obsession with correct terminology received new importance with the heightened conflict in order to prevent the S.U. (and all other “revisionist” countries) from exploiting such mistakes for their own counter-propaganda. A circular from early 1963 noted that the terminology used to translate important key terms and concepts was not unanimous and often diverged from the fourth volume of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, which was to serve as the standard in the future. In case someone disagreed with the translation in *Selected Works*, the Compilation and Translation bureau was to convene a meeting to discuss a

¹²⁷ Cf. Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 121-122.

¹²⁸ “Zhongyang guanyu zhaokai xuanchuan huiyi de tongzhi” 中央关于召开宣传会议的通知 [Notification from the Center on convening a propaganda conference], December 6, 1960, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian: 1957-1992* 中国共产党宣传工作文献选编: 1957-1992 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China: 1957-1992], eds. by Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中共中央宣传部办公厅 and Zhongyang dang'anguan bianyanbu 中央档案馆编研部 (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1996), 196.

¹²⁹ Cf. “Huanying dingue 2005 niandu Xinhuashe jimiji kanwu *Guoji neican*” 欢迎订阅 2005 年度新华通讯社机密级刊物《国际内参》 [Call to subscribe to the confidential Xinhua publication *International internal reference for 2005*], Xinhuanet. <http://www.jl.xinhuanet.com/shangye/neican/guojineican/guojineican.htm>, accessed December 30, 2012.

¹³⁰ Cf. Shambaugh, “China’s ‘Quiet Diplomacy,’” 35-36.

¹³¹ Li Yu 李宇, *Zhongguo dianshi guojihua yu duiwai chuanbo* 中国电视国际化与对外传播 [The internationalization of Chinese television and external communication] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2010), 6.

possible improvement of the translation.¹³² Consistency in translation was vital to avoid “misunderstandings” (*wujie* 误解) and “chaos” (*hunluan* 混乱).¹³³

Although generally the number of exceptions for external propaganda was reduced, some concern how to distinguish between domestic and external propaganda remained. A propaganda directive on how to cover the 40th anniversary of the founding of the CPC in 1961 limited the number of theoretical articles (*lilunxing wenzhang* 理论性文章) targeted at foreigners to two.¹³⁴ Another circular from 1965 stressed that the slogan “Oppose the invasion of Vietnam by American Imperialism,” one out of eight slogans shouted at a rally against the American occupation of Taiwan was reserved for internal use only and was not to be propagated abroad, although the circular does not state what precisely distinguished it from the other slogans.¹³⁵

In early 1961, the Center approved the creation of the International Propaganda Small Group (*Guoji xuanchuan lingdao xiaozu* 国际宣传领导小组), which handled both domestic propaganda and propaganda targeting foreigners concerning international issues.¹³⁶ It was comprised of the leaders of the External

¹³² “Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu zai guoji xuanchuan zhong ying zhuyi zhengque shiyong ciju de tongzhi” 中央宣传部关于在国际宣传中 应注意正确使用词句的通知 [Notification from the Central Propaganda Department that attention needs to be paid to using terms and phrases correctly in international propaganda], January 15, 1963, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian, 1957-1992* 中国共产党宣传工作文献选编, 1957-1992 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China, 1957-1992] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1996), 272.

¹³³ “Mao xuan Ying yi dinggao zu guanyu 12 yue 15 ri shelun he 31 ri gei Guba de ‘hedian’ Ying yi de yixie yijian” ‘毛选’英译定稿组关于 12 月 15 日社论和 31 日给古巴的‘贺电’英译的一些意见 [Opinion from the English translation finalization group of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* on the English translation of the editorial from December 15 and the ‘congratulatory message’ to Cuba from the 31st], January 4, 1963, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian, 1957-1992* 中国共产党宣传工作文献选编, 1957-1992 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China, 1957-1992] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1996), 274.

¹³⁴ “Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu dang de sishi zhounian jinian huodong de qingshi baogao” 中央宣传部关于党的四十周年 纪念活动的请示报告 [Report and request for instructions from the Central Propaganda Department about activities to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the CPC], May 5, 1961, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian, 1957-1992*, 201. The directive added that requests from foreign Socialist papers for articles written by senior leaders could be fulfilled *ad hoc*.

¹³⁵ “Zhongyang guanyu fandui Mei diguo zhuyi qinzhan wo guo lingtu Taiwan shiwu zhounian de xuanchuan yaodian he kouhao de tongzhi” 中央关于反对美帝国主义 侵占我国领土台湾十五周年的 宣传要点和口号的通知 [Notification from the Center on propaganda points and slogans to oppose the occupation of American imperialism of Chinese territory in Taiwan on its fifteenth anniversary], June 20, 1965, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian, 1957-1992*, 398-399.

¹³⁶ Cf. He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 226.

Affairs Office of the State Council,¹³⁷ the MFA, the ILD, CPD, the External Cultural Liaison Commission, *People's Daily*, Xinhua News Agency, and Radio Peking (*Guangbo diantai* 广播电台) and was headed by Wu Lengxi 吴冷西,¹³⁸ director of Xinhua news agency. Ungor, based on Gan Xianfeng, interprets the small group to have been in charge of external propaganda.¹³⁹ However, *duiwai* 对外 and *guoji* 国际 were clearly established as separate categories at the time, and international propaganda was usually understood as domestic and external propaganda *regarding* international events, developments, and ideological altercations. Thus the main purpose of this small group is not to be confused with that of the External propaganda small group created in 1980. Nevertheless, as China became increasingly evangelical regarding its stance and its opposition to Soviet policy on the international stage, international reporting had an important external propaganda dimension.

While the conflict between the S.U. and China grew stronger in the late 1950s and early 1960s, China did not immediately isolate itself completely from the Socialist bloc. China also continued to observe the external propaganda practices of other Socialist countries on which the MFA frequently produced reports.¹⁴⁰ In 1958, Chinese delegates attended an external propaganda conferences for Socialist countries convened in Prague. China only had observer status (*guanchayuan* 观察员). The conference was primarily about agreeing on the overall stance to present to non-socialist countries as well as about the question whether the socialist camp needed to maintain unity towards the outside world, not circulating and profiting from other countries' experiences. Nonetheless, this shows that in 1958, China still kept in touch with other Socialist countries regarding the overall external propaganda direction.¹⁴¹ Another report

¹³⁷ This was the office through which the FASG operated.

¹³⁸ Cf. He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 226.

¹³⁹ Cf. Ungor, *Reaching the Distant Comrade*, 84.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. "Aerbaniya 1958 nian duiwai wenhua jiaoliu he duiwai xuanchuan de qingkuang" 阿尔巴尼亚 1958 年对外文化交流和对外宣传的情况 [The situation of foreign cultural exchange and foreign propaganda of Albania in 1958], February 17, 1959, MFA Archive, no. 109-01321-04(1); "Chaoxian duiwai xuanchuan he huodong dongtai" 朝鲜对外宣传和活动动态 [North Korea's External propaganda and actions targeted at foreigners], March 21, 1961, MFA Archive, no. 106-00579-01. It is highly probable that China also kept a close eye on Western propaganda initiatives and that the cables in questions were simply not released.

¹⁴¹ Cf. "Guanyu pai Zhao Yimin, Wang Li he Yao Zhen canjia Bulage shehuizhuyi guojia duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo qingkuang jiaoliu huiyi ji you guan huiyi qingkuang de dianbao" 关于派赵毅敏、王力和姚溱参加布拉格社会主义国家对外宣传工作情况交流会议及有关会议情

produced for the MFA also shows that China and the S.U. made a largely successful deal to tone down each others' external propaganda in the run-up to the Sino-Soviet talks held in Moscow in July 1963.¹⁴² Thus, while the propaganda battle was fierce, it could still be reined in for important diplomatic events.

The 1960s cemented China's orientation towards the world's developing countries which it had started taking during the mid-1950. By the early 1960s, China hoped to be able to set up its own revolutionary network, and therefore, the focus on the developing world became increasingly strong. In September 1961, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was formally founded in Belgrade. Shortly before the first conference of the NAM, the ILD had established the Research Institute for Latin American Issues (*Lamei wenti yanjiusuo* 拉美问题研究所) and the Research Institute for Afro-Asian Issues (*Yafei wenti yanjiusuo* 亚非问题研究所), which produced backgrounders on the situation in various developing countries.¹⁴³ This followed the 1958 founding of the Afro-Asian Writers

况的电报 [On sending Zhao Yimin, Wang Li, and Yao Qin to participate in the Prague meeting of Socialist countries to exchange experience on external propaganda work, plus telegrams related to the meeting], March 8-29, 1959, MFA Archive, no. 109-01201-01. Also see "Guanyu wo guo pai guanchayuan chuxi Ouzhou shehui zhuyi guojia zai Jiekesiluofake zhaokai de duiwai xuanchuan huiyi de wendian" 关于我国派观察员出席欧洲社会主义国家在捷克斯洛伐克召开的对外宣传会议的文电 [Telegrams about China's sending observers to attend the external propaganda meeting of Europe's socialist countries in Czechoslovakia]. Exchange includes documents from March 7, 1958 to November 6, 1958. MFA Archive, no. 109-01837-01.

¹⁴² "Guanyu Zhong Su zai duiwai xuanchuan deng fangmian de qingkuang he wenti" 关于中苏在对外宣传等方面的情况和问题 [Situation and problems between China and the Soviet Union with regard to external propaganda and other aspects], December 24, 1963, MFA Archive, no. 109-02542-03. The report found that both sides had largely kept their word with their few exceptions (1). Problems on the Chinese side, according to the MFA, included rhetoric and false attributions in media from Hong Kong and Macao (1-3), rejections of Soviet journalists' requests for interviews in certain areas of China while allowing Western journalists like Edgar Snow and Felix Greene to visit these places (3), and Chinese exchange students distributing political pamphlets in the S.U. (4-5). Problems on the Soviet side included issues such as Soviet media treating Taiwan as an independent country (5-6), referring to the PRC as the Republic of China (7), accepting the McMahon line as the Sino-Indian border (7), and Soviet media misquoting Chinese writer Mao Dun 茅盾 (8-9).

¹⁴³ Cf. "Zhonglianbu fubuzhang Chen Fengxiang zai Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan Lading Meizhou yanjiusuo jiansuo 50 zhounian jinian dahui shang de jianghua" 中联部副部长陈凤翔在中国社会科学院拉丁美洲研究所建所 50 周年纪念大会上的讲话 [Speech by Chen Fengxiang, the deputy director of the International Department of the CPC on (the occasion of) the commemorative celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Institute of Latin American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences], Website of the Institute of Latin American Studies, July 12, 2011. <http://ilas.cass.cn/cn/50suoqing/content.asp?InfoID=17299>, accessed October 16, 2012. Also see David Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process," *The China Quarterly* 171 (September 2002): 577. Also see Daniel Large, "Beyond

Association, whose headquarters were first based in Colombo, Sri Lanka and then moved to Cairo, Egypt in the 1960s.¹⁴⁴ In 1963 and 1964, Zhou Enlai visited ten African countries with the hopes of setting the stage for a second Afro-Asian conference in which the S.U. would be excluded.¹⁴⁵ Between 1960 and 1965, China established formal diplomatic relations with 14 new African countries that had just gained independence.¹⁴⁶ In 1964, several university departments focusing on international relations and teaching foreign languages were set up at the behest of Zhou Enlai.¹⁴⁷ In 1965, the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations was founded under the leadership of the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG).¹⁴⁸ Chinese also intensified contacts with leftists and people sympathetic to China's cause in the West. In 1965, the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding was founded in England, headed by the renowned scientist Joseph Needham.¹⁴⁹

As opposed to what is claimed in the official historiography of external propaganda,¹⁵⁰ after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, external propaganda activities did not decrease but were expanded.¹⁵¹ For instance, by the end of 1966, Radio Peking was broadcasting in 33 different languages.¹⁵² Although during the initial years, the majority of Chinese cadres involved in foreign propaganda under Zhou Enlai (Jin Zhonghua, etc.) were purged, others,

'Dragon in the Bush': The Study of China-Africa Relations," *African Affairs* 107/426 (2008): 46.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. publications of the Bureau in Worldcat.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Ian Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* (Taylor & Francis, 2011), 11. For background information and overviews of ties between China and Africa as well as a good example of China's stance on the relations, see for example Li Anshan, "China and Africa: Policy and Challenges," *China Security* 3, no. 3 (Summer 2007), 69-93.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Ian Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8. Ghana and Mali in 1960, Congo-Kinshasa in 1961, Uganda in 1962, Kenya and Burundi in 1963, Tunisia, Congo-Brazzaville, Tanzania, Central African Republic, Zambia, and Benin in 1964, and Mauritania in 1965. Cf. table in Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*, 9.

¹⁴⁷ Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks," 577.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 582.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. "About the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding Forty Five Years of Fostering Understanding between the British and Chinese Peoples," website of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, <http://www.sacu.org/about.html>, accessed February 21, 2013.

¹⁵⁰ As reflected in any work on external propaganda history produced in the PRC, e.g. Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 196-207.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, "Red and Expert: China's Foreign Friends in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-1969," in *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counternarratives*, ed. Woei Lien Chong (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 103.

¹⁵² Fang Hanqi, *Zhongguo xinwen chuanbo shi*, 380.

including foreigners, rose in importance and continued to have an active role in China's external propaganda until early 1968. An extreme example is Sidney Rittenberg, who is alleged to have been in control of Radio Peking until he, too, came under attack in late 1967.¹⁵³

A circular issued for the Foreign Affairs Office in February 1967 explained that Maoism was the highest and most alive form of Marxism and that with the progression of the world revolution, people all over the world had a demand to read his thoughts.¹⁵⁴ This was strongly reflected in China's external propaganda publications. In many ways, the understanding of external propaganda of those in control at the time resembled that of the internationalism expressed in the *Red Flag* (*Hongqi* 红旗) article from 1930 introduced above, except that China now played a more dominant role than in the 1930s. The main topics in China's external propaganda during the high tide of the Cultural Revolution, as could be expected, were China's role in the world revolution and condemnations of the S.U., with many highly polemical articles translated directly from Chinese, such as "Hit Back Hard at the Violent Provocations of the Filthy Soviet Revisionist Swine."¹⁵⁵ The *Peking Review* and Xinhua's news dispatches frequently highlighted the impact of Mao's work on foreigners and the link between Maoism and the "revolutions" taking place all over the world,¹⁵⁶ including on the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, there were some restrictions. For instance, Mao noted in 1968 that China should not claim it was

¹⁵³ Cf. Brady, "Red and Expert," 121.

¹⁵⁴ "Wei guowuyuan waishi bangongshi 'Guanyu dui waiguoren zengsong Mao XX yulu de tongzhi'" 伪国务院外事办公室《关于对外国人赠送《毛 XX 语录》的通知》 [Notification from the Foreign Affairs Office of the illegitimate State Council on 'Giving *Quotations from XX Mao* to foreigners'], originally issued by the PRC State Council's Foreign Affairs Office on February 18, 1967, printed in *Zhonggong wenhua da geming zhongyao wenjian huibian* 中共文化大革命重要文件汇编 [Compilation of important documents from the CPC's Great Cultural Revolution], ed. "Zhonggong yanjiu" zazhi she bianjibu '中共研究'杂志社编辑部 [Editorial department of the journal Research on the CPC] (Taipei: Zhonggong yanjiu zazhishe, 1974), 6.

¹⁵⁵ *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 6, February 8, 1967, 13-15.

¹⁵⁶ E.g. "Light of 'Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung' Illumines World," *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 1, January 1, 1967, 11-19; "Revolutionary People of the World Hail Great Mao Tse-tung," *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 3, January 16, 1967, 3-5; "Let Mao Tse-tung's Thought Shine Over Whole World," *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 4, January 23, 1967, 18-21.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. "Mao Tse-tung's Thought Inspires Afro-American Struggle for Survival," *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 34, August 21, 1967, 19-20.

the Center of world revolution, but only quote foreigners to this effect,¹⁵⁸ a directive largely followed.¹⁵⁹

From a Chinese perspective, the idea that China was at the forefront of a global revolutionary struggle made sense. The 1960s had seen another wave of previously colonized countries gaining independence. In the U.S., the African-American Civil Rights Movement was gaining momentum, Japan and several Western European countries were gripped by student movements, and in 1968 the Prague Spring demonstrated opposition to Soviet policies within the socialist camp. In sum, China's opposition to the two "imperialist super powers" – a formulation first used in the re-evaluation of the world contradiction in 1969 to refer to the U.S. and the S.U.¹⁶⁰ – was shared or quickly picked up by many around the globe.¹⁶¹ By contrast, China was completely isolated in the state-based system. It could neither participate in the international organizations of the capitalist nor in those of the socialist camp.¹⁶²

With the focus on structures outside the nation-state based framework, the Cultural Revolution was one of the few periods in Chinese history in which relatively unrestrained people-to-people diplomacy was permitted (or at least could not be prevented due to lack of authority of those opposing it) for a short while before the Party-state reasserted its monopoly over external propaganda. This dampening of people-to-people diplomacy and a return to state-to-state diplomacy observed by Brady¹⁶³ started in 1968/1969 and was further consolidated with the resumption of diplomatic talks between China and the

¹⁵⁸ Henansheng geming weiyuanhui banshizu, *Mao Zedong guanyu duiwai xuanchuan de zhishi*.

¹⁵⁹ See for example "Mao Tse-tung's Thought Most Powerful Weapon for World Revolution, Say Foreign Friends at Site of Chinese Communist Party First Congress," *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 10, March 5, 1967, 19-20; "New China Led by Chairman Mao Becomes Centre of World Revolution, Says Singapore Paper," *Hsinhua Selected News Items*, no. 4, January 23, 1967, 27.

¹⁶⁰ China had denounced the S.U. as an imperialist country for a number of years. The official re-evaluation of the world contradiction came after the Soviet Union cracked down on the Prague Spring in 1968 and after Soviet and Chinese troops had clashed at their shared border. Cf. Donald Clark Hodges, *The Bureaucratization of Socialism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 158-160.

¹⁶¹ For Maoism in Germany, see for example Sebastian Gehrig, Barbara Mittler, and Felix Wemheuer, *Kulturrevolution als Vorbild? Maoismen im deutschsprachigen Raum* [The Cultural Revolution as a model? Maoisms in German speaking countries] (Frankfurt: Lang, 2008).

¹⁶² Cf. Samuel S. Kim, "China's International Organizational Behaviour," in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, eds. Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (Oxford University Press, 1996), 405-406.

¹⁶³ Brady, "Red and Expert," 130.

United States and the partial reassertion of control over external propaganda by the “moderates” after 1970.

3.4 1970 to 1976: Diplomacy or Revolution?

In 1969, amidst fears of a nuclear strike by the S.U. against China, the country revised its foreign policy of opposing both superpowers and made first steps towards rapprochement with the United States.¹⁶⁴ Among the many ways the willingness to work more closely with the U.S. was signalled was through the *People's Daily*, which, after all, had an external propaganda function: A large picture of Mao Zedong and Edgar Snow was printed on the front page, declaring “All peoples of the world, including the American people, are our friends” in the upper right hand corner, where Mao quotations were usually published.¹⁶⁵ With the fall of Lin Biao 林彪 in 1971, Zhou Enlai’s political influence was strengthened, and some of his allies were appointed to positions in the foreign affairs sector.¹⁶⁶ Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之 and Mu Qing 穆青, who were also to hold important positions in the external propaganda sector after 1978, became director and deputy director of Xinhua news agency.¹⁶⁷ By the early 1970s, as the “moderates” regained political strength, the enthusiastic proclamation of China as the center of the world revolution was also curbed, although rhetorical solidarity with the third world continued.¹⁶⁸

Practically, this was achieved by centrally distributing a document with Mao quotations. A circular classified top secret (*juemi* 绝密) with Mao’s directives (*pishi* 批示) on external propaganda work between 1967 and 1971 was

¹⁶⁴ For good summaries of the events see for example Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 177-186.

¹⁶⁵ The picture was published in October 1970. Cf. Li Zhi 李智, *Guoji zhengzhi chuanbo: Kongzhi yu xiaoguo* 国际政治传播：控制与效果 [Parallel English title: *International Political Communication: Control and Effects*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), 174. According to Brady, this message was not noticed in Washington. Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 177.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 180.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, A1, 557.

¹⁶⁸ Mao famously explained to Nixon in 1972 that the Chinese press would have to continue to criticize the United States for a while because the Chinese people were used to it. Cf. Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 181.

published by the CPC Secretariat in August 1972,¹⁶⁹ a few months after Nixon's visit in February. The main points highlighted were the need to adapt to foreign target audiences, to avoid "forcing things on others" (*qiangjia yu ren* 强加于人), and not to carry the veneration of Mao too much to the outside world.¹⁷⁰

Though the standard history of external propaganda, as one would expect, presents 1978 as the most important turning point for external propaganda that reversed ten years of catastrophic external propaganda during the Cultural Revolution, the basis for the changes that were to become instituted in the late 1970s was already laid during the informal rapprochement with the United States. A number of initiatives were launched to propagate China in a softer tone to the outside world. The change in China's foreign policy was accompanied by a massive expansion of Xinhua branches, both in developing countries and in the West.¹⁷¹ In 1971, more Westerners were allowed back into the country and taken on supervised tours around the country again.¹⁷² Zhou Enlai instructed the people accompanying foreigners to not only present successes to foreign visitors but talk about problems as well, not to exaggerate China's achievement and to correct any false or exaggerated information that local officials might tell foreigners taken on tours.¹⁷³ In 1972, Michelangelo Antonioni was invited to China by Zhou Enlai and received Chinese support to film his famous documentary *Chung-Kuo/Cina*. In 1973, China launched its first partner city arrangements, called "friendship cities" in Chinese.¹⁷⁴ The MFA's international relations think tank that had stopped functioning during the high tide of the Cultural Revolution officially resumed

¹⁶⁹ The document was then spread locally by provincial revolutionary committees. Henansheng geming weiyuanhui banshizu, *Mao Zedong guanyu duiwai xuanchuan de zhishi*.

¹⁷⁰ The document included Mao's comments on texts he had proofread as well as corrections he had made (usually consisting of cutting out references to himself and his own greatness and his importance to the world revolution).

¹⁷¹ Cf. Xinhuashe xinwen yanjiusuo 新华社新闻研究 [Research center of Xinhua news agency], ed., "Chuanmei fazhan fanglüe: 2001 nian Xinhua she xinwen xueshu nianhui lunwen xuan" 传媒发展方略: 2001年新华社新闻学术年会论文选 [Media development strategy: Selected papers of the Xinhua news agency's annual scientific conference 2001] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2002), 388.

¹⁷² Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 182.

¹⁷³ "Zhang Xiangshan tongzhi tan guanyu zuohao jiedai, lüyou gongzuo zhong de xuanchuan wenti" 张香山同志谈关于做好接待、旅游工作中的宣传问题 [Comrade Zhang Xiangshan talks about the issue of properly doing propaganda as part of hosting (foreigners) and tourism work], *Xuanchuan dongtai xuanbian, 1979* 宣传动态选编, 1979 [Selections from *Propaganda trends*, 1979] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981), 235-236.

¹⁷⁴ Cai Han 蔡涵, "Youhao chengshi: Minjian youhao hezuo de zhongyao qudao" 友好城市: 民间友好合作的重要渠道 [Friendship cities: An important channel for popular friendship and cooperation], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 14 (1985): 25.

business in 1973.¹⁷⁵ The early 1970s also saw the second major wave of establishing diplomatic relations with African countries.¹⁷⁶ However, owing to continued political struggle over the course of the 1970s, tone and content of external propaganda continued to shift. For instance, while Antonioni's documentary was initially well-received among Chinese diplomats, by 1974, when Zhou Enlai had come under attack during the "Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius" Campaign, the film was attacked in the *People's Daily*.¹⁷⁷

3.5 Conclusions

With the founding of the PRC, the CPC had the opportunity to set up a propaganda apparatus of a more pervasive kind with Soviet help. This propaganda apparatus was built so that it could reach the entire population reliably. While the CPC was also concerned with propaganda techniques, the effectiveness of the methods and techniques used was to a large extent contingent on the ability to prevent flows of information and block out alternative sources of information. China's external propaganda media were integrated into the overall system of media control that insisted on long, theoretical texts and on the use of "correct" formulations. The establishment of the domestic propaganda apparatus and the fact that external propaganda work became a field somewhere in between propaganda work and foreign affairs work set China on a path of a bureaucratically weak and dependent external propaganda sector. People who had been involved in external propaganda work before the founding of the PRC suddenly saw themselves confronted with completely different journalistic standards. Many external propaganda cadres were aware that they needed to change their methods of propaganda in order to make their message more acceptable to anyone other than those already sympathetic towards China. The conflict between those who believed that propaganda needed to be adapted to foreign target audiences and those who believed that to do so would mean

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks," 578. Shambaugh states that it did not become fully active again until 1978.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*, 9-10.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. "Pekings Zorn auf Antonionis China" [Beijing's wrath directed at Antonioni's China], originally published in *Der Spiegel*, no. 10, March 4, 1974, available online at <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41784228.html>, accessed January 27, 2013.

abandoning one's principles raged throughout most of the Mao period and, as will be seen below, continued into the post-Mao period.

The primary purpose of external propaganda was contested as well, but largely followed the dominant line of the CPC's foreign affairs work. In the first half of the 1950s, China wanted to propagate the superiority of the socialist system. By the mid-1950s, after the Bandung conference, alliance with the countries of the newly founded NAM at the state level gained in importance. After Khrushchev's Secret Speech in 1956, Sino-Soviet relations quickly deteriorated, and China's interest in touting its own anti-Revisionist line both in front of Socialist and non-Socialist countries increased. This led to an expansion of propaganda instruments. As China was increasingly isolated diplomatically, its external propaganda came to be used as an instrument of spreading the revolution rather than of aiding diplomacy, and China began to target "the people" in other countries directly. Contrary to the official narrative, external propaganda was not curtailed, but all of China's messages were political and delivered in a highly charged language. As China's foreign policy was adapted yet again in the late 1960s, external propaganda became softer and more restrained again, supporting China's diplomatic efforts and focusing on liaison work and exchange. In the 1970s, state-led external propaganda in support of improved state-to-state relations and possible economic reforms remained, by and large, dominant, but came under attack whenever the "moderates" were weakened.

A few observations about organizational principles and work practices during the Mao period are also in order. First, despite attempts to gain exceptions for external propaganda work, China's foreign language media were governed by the rules of the overall propaganda sector that insisted on correct formulations. The tone used in China's external propaganda media varied according to the overall political climate, according to the status of the medium, and according to the topic, but compared to the Republican period, journalists and foreigners were much more limited. Texts were written in Chinese and then translated on the basis of authorized dictionaries and texts that served as standards. Foreign polishers that tried to change these formulations failed. In addition, whenever China saw itself provoked, it issued a response in "tit-for-tat" (*zhen feng xiang dui* 针锋相对) style, harshly attacking the opponent. The fact that correct terminology and correct

content were such an important part of external propaganda work already shows that timely release of news, by contrast, was not much of an issue.

Second, according to the organizational logic of the Chinese bureaucracy as first instituted in 1953, which divides party and government work into functionally related sectors (“gateways,” *kou* 口), external propaganda was not considered a category in its own right, and units involved consequently belonged to different functional bureaucracies, most importantly propaganda work and foreign affairs work. Thus, there was no Chinese equivalent to the USIA, in the sense of a single independent and internally consolidated agency. Instead, one important organizational principle that emerged during the Mao period was a clear division of work with different departments responsible for different aspects of external propaganda. In the 1958 rearrangement, although the division of work regarding media and content was somewhat different from today’s, one can see the origins of a systematic and intentional division of work in the external propaganda sector that continues to exist today in a slightly different form and that involves many different units from different gateways with theoretically clearly defined fields of responsibility.

Third, the CPC insisted on total organizational control over all of its external propaganda activities. Except for brief periods during the earliest days of the PRC and again in 1967 and 1968, when the bureaucracy was in disarray, the Chinese Party-state tightly monopolized external propaganda activities during the Mao period. All “popular” initiatives were part of the Party’s organizational net. Even in times when China was relatively eager to spread its revolutionary message, it tried to keep semi-private initiatives, such as those organized by Chinese exchange students abroad, at bay.

Fourth, anything printed in the central Party-state media that were available outside of China was viewed as official policy statements, or at least could not contradict any principles and policies. The equation of news with policy partially explains the lines of division according to which news in the PRC were and until today continue to be sorted in order to ensure that the department or ministry that knows the policies in its own realm best gets to have the final say. The idea that statements made in official Party media are considered policy statements and therefore need to be controlled accordingly was not only shared

with other countries in the Socialist camp. One reason for the establishment of gray propaganda initiatives by the United States during the Cold War was that these “private” media could say things that official government media, such as the VOA could not say for a number of reasons. The difference was and continues to be that in the U.S., only a few media are directly under government control, whereas all media in the PRC are owned and controlled by the Party.

In conclusion, external propaganda was considered an important activity during the first few decades of the PRC, and the Mao period thus left a legacy of external propaganda institutions and practices, but not one that was firmly established in consolidated, independent leadership structures. As opposed to Western countries, which pursued propaganda targeted at foreigners but officially rejected domestic propaganda in times of peace and therefore did not institute strong domestic propaganda structures comparable to those of the S.U. and the PRC, China had to work with an external propaganda apparatus that was squeezed in between foreign affairs work and overall propaganda work. In the next part, I will analyze how China dealt with this legacy after it had decided to open up and reintegrate itself into a media environment that required very different skills from those the Chinese propaganda apparatus had focused on.

Part II

“Creating a Favorable International Environment” or “Winning the Struggle over International Public Opinion”?

Shifting Rationales and Foci of External Propaganda Work

1977 to 2002

4 The Chinese Party-State: Ideology and Organization

“In accordance with the spirit of the instructions [given to us by] the Center and in accordance with the actual situation of external propaganda work, we have proposed the following goals for external propaganda in the period to come: [We need to] strengthen macro coordination, fight a total war and build a big external propaganda pattern. [...] [We need to] make efforts to break the Western monopoly on international public opinion, so that by the 21st century, we can occupy a more favorable position in the international public opinion pattern and can gradually attain visible improvement of our international public opinion environment.”¹

This quote is an excerpt of a speech delivered by Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽 (1928 -), a former director of the Central Office of External Propaganda of the Communist Party of China (CPC), also known as the State Council Information Office (SCIO),² at the annual nation-wide conference on external propaganda work held in Beijing in January 1996. The 1996 conference marked the beginning of the Ninth five-year-plan (1996 to 2000). In the excerpt, Zeng Jianhui described China’s goals for the coming five years in a field that is arguably familiar to policy makers and politicians in almost any country in the world today: How can we improve our image, how can we sell our policies to foreign publics so as to get the most support from other countries? Yet he does so in a language that can only be partially understood by an outside listener and that clearly speaks differently about propaganda targeted at foreign publics than, say, a German or American politician would. Similarly, external propaganda policy making and implementation in China is influenced by junctures such as the beginning of a new five-year-plan and other rules according to which the bureaucracy functions that are particular to China.

¹ Chinese quote: “根据中央的指示精神和对外宣传的实际情况，我们提出了今后一个时期对外宣传工作的奋斗目标，这就是：加强宏观协调，打总体战，建立大外宣格局 [...] 努力打破西方对国际舆论的垄断，使我们在 21 世纪的世界舆论格局中占据较为有利的位置，使我们的国际舆论环境逐步得到明显改善。” Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan* 融冰架桥,突围:曾建徽论对外宣传 [Melting the ice, building bridges, breaking out of the encirclement: Zeng Jianhui on external propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006), 125.

² The Office of External Propaganda/State Council Information Office will be introduced in more detail in chapters 6.2 and 8.1.

As I will show in chapters 5 and 6, both in the 1980s and the 1990s, just like during earlier periods, China appropriated substantial amounts of knowledge about external propaganda from the West, which had become the most important role model again. The institutional environment into which “new knowledge” is absorbed, however, plays an important role in how external propaganda can be discussed and implemented: The last chapter has shown that in the Mao period, external propaganda was influenced by the ideological tenets of the Party, by the way the bureaucracy was organized as a whole and by more concrete values and work routines of the Party. Before analyzing the changes in how external propaganda was understood in the post-Mao period, I will therefore briefly introduce the institutional environment in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) that has shaped both external propaganda policies and the policy process, including organizational principles, regulations, modes of operation, ideology, informal conventions, etc. I will explain key characteristics of the Chinese Party-state in three fields:

1. The Basic Ideological Matrix. Contrary to the predictions of the 1980s and the 1990s, Chinese Marxism remains very influential, whether people believe in each of its individual tenets or not. As the last chapter has shown, external propaganda belongs into the realm of ideology and of “high politics”, in which people actually carrying out the work have relatively little to say and are often eclipsed by ideologues. Therefore, understanding the logic of Chinese Marxism is essential both in order to understand debates on external propaganda and to analyze how the factor of ideology constrains individuals and groups in the external propaganda policy process.

2. The Set-Up of the Party-State. The Chinese external propaganda bureaucracy is a part of the overall Chinese bureaucracy and thus subject to the same categories according to which the entire apparatus is structured. Therefore, in order to understand how the external propaganda apparatus is set up, the basic parameters of the overall bureaucracy need to be understood. This includes more general aspects such as the relationship between the Party and the government, as much as what types of bureaucratic organizations exist and how they interact with one another.

3. Rules and Routines of the Policy Process. External propaganda is affected by the rules and routines that play a role in various stages of the policy

process in China. This includes political cycles, how the Party Center communicates its intent to lower levels, how new policies are implemented, etc.

The chapter has a dual function. First, it seeks to understand the formal and informal institutions in the PRC policy process that form the basic institutional environment within which all people involved in the external propaganda bureaucracy have to operate, including the overall ideology, political values, the set-up of the bureaucracy and the rules governing it, particular modes of operation, etc. This is vital to understanding choices made and solutions chosen in the external propaganda sector in the chapters to come. Second, this chapter also has a functional aspect from the perspective of the overall dissertation project. Understanding the institutional environment makes it possible to develop strategies for how to interpret texts used in the remaining parts of the thesis. For instance, by understanding the role of slogans in Chinese politics or basic rhetorical conventions, it becomes easier to decipher speeches and policy documents.

4.1 The Ideological Framework

“People who know the Chinese language well,” wrote Schurmann in 1970 “are often misled into believing that they ‘understand’ what the Chinese Communists are saying.”³ This was so, he stated, because seemingly regular words assumed a particular meaning that could only be understood by someone familiar with the ideology.⁴ During the Cold War, trying to understand remarks written in the language of a particular country’s or movement’s Marxist “dialect,” like other more specific forms of esoteric communication, constituted a somewhat established if not overly common approach in Western academia, both when studying the PRC and when studying the Soviet Union (S.U.). The emphasis on decoding ideological texts and finding “hidden messages”⁵ was to a large degree necessitated by the fact that few other sources than public statements written in

³ Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 58.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Cf. Myron Rush, “Esoteric Communication in Soviet Politics,” *World Politics* 11, no. 4 (1959): 614-620. In Chinese studies, one of the last works specifically devoted to the politics of language, published briefly after the end of the Cold War, is Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies* (Center for Chinese Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992).

Chinese Marxist code were available. Since the 1980s, when more sources gradually became available and references to Marxism-Leninism increasingly came to be seen as mere lip service and empty rhetoric, much less attention has been paid to understanding the language and internal logic of Chinese Marxism. References to ideology are now often read as an anachronistic leftover from the past that is basically meaningless and consequently not worth understanding in detail.

Two different points of view on ideology are common: The first is that China's official ideology and its reality are simply not compatible; China is adhering to "Marxism"/"Communism" in theory but has moved towards capitalism in practice. This opinion sees a radical disconnect between what is said and what is done and views references to Marxism as mere lip-service. The second, slightly more accurate point of view is that in the post-Mao period, ideology is frequently twisted to provide after-the-fact justifications for existing policies.⁶ Both views proceed from the assumption that Chinese Marxism, just like Marxism elsewhere, is in crisis, a view which became widespread, was actively encouraged for political reasons.⁷

While there undoubtedly are differences between Chinese Marxism before and during the Mao period and in the post-Mao period, the dichotomy between a Marxism that was taken seriously in the Mao period and the post-Mao Marxism that primarily served a legitimizing role has been exaggerated. The relationship between the production of policies and the production of ideology has been complex throughout the 20th century, and providing after-the-fact legitimacy for a policy that prevailed has arguably always been part of the function of ideology,

⁶ For instance, Adrian Chan stresses that "while Marxism, Leninism and MZT [Mao Zedong Thought] have been repeatedly stated by the CCP as its guiding principles in the Reform period, I shall argue that although these principles have been regarded as important, their roles are different from those they had under Mao's leadership, before the reforms. In the Reform period, they have become the legitimizers rather than goals." Adrian Chan, *Chinese Marxism* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), 173. Shambaugh, likewise, argues that the role of ideology has been reversed: In the Mao period, policies were derived from ideological principles, whereas in the post-Mao period, it "became an inductive means for validating empirical realities." David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2008), 105. Also see C. Cindy Fan, "Uneven Development and beyond: Regional Development Theory in Post-Mao China," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 21, no. 4 (1997):622.

⁷ First the need to portray Communism as an ideology in decline in the 1980s and then, in the first half of the 1990s, as part of a wave of post-Cold War triumphalism, which considered the Chinese system an anachronism that would soon disappear, just like the Soviet Union had.

such as in the introduction of a “principal contradiction” by Mao to explain why the CPC needed to join forces with the GMD. In fact, as Zheng Yongnian has pointed out, for the new generations of leaders who have no revolutionary experience to bolster their authority, ideology has become even more important.⁸

Much of the Party’s rhetoric is, in fact, met with cynicism or made fun of. The question, however, is whether this actually makes the language used by the CPC and the ideology it is based on meaningless and insignificant. Since the 1990s, everybody has had to learn (Chinese) Marxist code and principles through “education in theory” (*lilun jiaoyu* 理论教育) in high school (*gao zhong* 高中) and take additional classes if continuing to university. Special targets for theory education campaigns are cadres with leadership positions, party members, and young people, primarily students.⁹ Especially since 2004, as the CPC began to address inequalities in development and to search for alternative sources of legitimacy aside from economic performance and nationalism under the fourth generation leadership, ideology has regained in importance.¹⁰

I argue that as long as the CPC manages to enforce the Chinese Marxist code as the only acceptable form in which certain statements can be made and as long as policy choices have to be justified ideologically, it is important to understand this language and the internal logic of the system, regardless of whether or not individual members of the political, and academic elite believe in the CPC’s rhetoric and the validity of Chinese Marxist patterns of assessing the domestic and global situation. Both the rules of dialectic logic and the currently valid assessment of objective reality are important factors influencing and restricting policy options.

⁸ Yongnian Zheng, *The Chinese Communist Party as Organizational Emperor: Culture, Reproduction and Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 83.

⁹ Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2006), 25.

¹⁰ Cf. Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley, “Reclaiming Legitimacy in China,” *Politics and Policy* 38, no. 3 (2010): 395-422. Simultaneously, cultural and ideological firmness and security, particularly its distinctly socialist identity, has been linked to China’s ability to develop its soft power (E.g. Ao Daiya 敖带芽, “Shehui zhuyi jiazhi guan shi woguo guojia ruanshili de hexin” 社会主义价值观是我国国家软实力的核心 [The socialist value system is the core of China’s soft power], *Neibu canyue* 内部参阅 [Internal reference readings], no. 30 (2006): 3-12. This issue will be addressed again in chapter 7.

This chapter understands Chinese Marxism as the CPC defines it: a highly complex and flexible “theory system” (*lilun tixi* 理论体系) or discourse system (*huayu tixi* 话语体系) that is based on dogmas clearly related to other ideologies in the Marxist families, but that has integrated and continues to integrate elements from various other ideologies.¹¹ Though Chinese Marxism as a theory system and a discourse system on the surface seems fairly isolated from other ideologies or discourse universes (owing to what could be termed “methodological Cold War-ism”¹²), it is as interrelated with, drawing on as well as inspiring debates in the rest of the world as Marx’ and Engels’ as well as Lenin’s writings themselves were. The Chinese ideological system has been relatively successful at appropriating and integrating new ideas—a conscious policy pursued by China with the intent of making Chinese ideology more relevant and applicable to the current times. The producers of theory keep track of developments in the international Marxist movement and in Western academia and selectively adapt ideas that then, once “translated” and integrated, become fully valid parts of the overall discourse universe. This was already true during the Mao period and has become more pronounced since the beginning of China’s reform and opening policies.

There are a number of important flows, almost all of which are understudied. Since the 1990s, many major American debates pertaining to the field of international relations have been translated into the Chinese context.¹³ While I will not be able to analyze this massive flow of concepts and entire debates within the framework of this chapter, all of these are important though neglected influences that are hard to overstate and that should be kept in mind. In

¹¹ See for example Du Feijin 杜飞进, “Jiji goujian Zhongguo tese huayu tixi” 积极构建中国特色话语体系 [Proactively build a discourse system with Chinese characteristics], originally published in the *Guangming ribao* 光明日报 [Guangming daily], republished on *People’s Daily Online*, October 30, 2012, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2012/1030/c40531-19430985.html>, accessed November 15, 2012.

¹² In analogy to the concept of “methodological nationalism,” “methodological Cold War-ism” refers to the tendency to study the two sides of the Iron Curtain in isolation from one another and therefore not to consider conceptual as much as institutional flows between the two camps. Although not terming the phenomenon “methodological Cold War-ism,” Jönsson pointed out this problem in his monograph *Superpower*, in which he constitutes a strong convergence between the United States and the Soviet Union. Cf. Christer Jönsson, *Superpower: Comparing American and Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984).

¹³ Cf. Yaqing Qin, “Why is there no Chinese international relations theory?” in *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia*, eds. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (London: Routledge, 2009), 29-30.

other words, for almost any new development, one of the first questions asked should be: which transnational trend(s) does this change respond or correspond to?

Although ideology is currently cautiously being reintroduced into Chinese studies as an area into which the CPC invests large amounts of money and energy and which it views as an important source of legitimacy,¹⁴ understanding the internal logic of Chinese Marxism and assessing its role in the policy process remains uncommon in studies on China produced in the West. Knowledge of the theoretical system of interrelated categories makes it possible to understand additional layers of a huge body of Chinese texts and to better pinpoint important policy changes. Thus, while understanding this system does not enable readers outside the Chinese bureaucracy to grasp all details in a speech or policy document, it adds vital clues and context to texts circulated publically that are deliberately written in abstract and obscure language without adding the explanations that people within the bureaucracy get through study sessions. Similarly, understanding the overall ideological framework is also vital to understanding the behavior of the CPC and the overall framework within which politicians today—none of whom have the authority of a Mao Zedong 毛泽东 or a Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 to single-handedly add or modify ideological tenets—have to operate within.

The Chinese Marxist discourse system has two main constituent parts that will be addressed separately: The first part, the overall framework, or “skeleton,” consists of a set of key concepts (in the form of pairs of opposites) and a set of key relationships. This component is context-independent and can, theoretically, be understood throughout all of China, and, if translated accurately, it could also be understood (except for a number of Chinese Marxist idiosyncrasies, such as additional differentiations that are made in China) by people fluent in another “dialect” from the “Marxist family.” Second, there is the content with which this frame is filled, judgments or evaluations (*panduan* 判断) of reality and, on the basis of these evaluations, principles and policies (*fangzhen zhengce* 方针政策) that are usually expressed in the form of slogans that assume different concrete

¹⁴ E.g. Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley, “Reclaiming Legitimacy in China,” Another short article on the development of ideology in current China is Ren Jiantao, “Ideology: Its Role in Reform and Opening,” in *China Today, China Tomorrow: Domestic Politics, Economy, and Society*, ed. Joseph Fewsmith (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 181-191.

meanings under different circumstances, a tool for policy making that will be explained in chapter 4.3.

Chinese Marxism in the Post-Mao Period

Marxism today is defined as “a scientific thought system continuously developing through practice.”¹⁵ This system consists of Marxist “basic principles” and new additions based on the Chinese “experience” as much as on outside imports. Thus, Marxism in China is officially defined both as a selective absorber of new ideas from outside and as continually developing. Currently, each new generation of leaders is expected to make a contribution to Chinese Marxist theory. A handbook for cadres from 2006 edited by the Central Propaganda Department’s (CPD) Cadre Bureau, *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period (Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo 新时期宣传思想工作)*, states that the most fundamental way to maintain the guiding position (*zhidao diwei 指导地位*) of Marxism in contemporary China is to study, propagate, and implement (*guanche 贯彻, luoshi 落实*) Deng Xiaoping Theory, the “Three Represents” (Jiang Zemin’s contribution to theory) and the scientific development outlook (the fourth generation’s contribution to theory).¹⁶ These three have been summed up under the name “theoretical system of building socialism with Chinese characteristics” since the 17th Party Congress.¹⁷ Aside from saving some space, this collective

¹⁵ Cf. “Makesi zhuyi shi zai shijian zhong buduan fazhan de kexue de sixiang tixi” 马克思主义是在实践中不断发展的科学的思想体系 [Marxism is a thought system continually developing through practice], in Dai Zhou 戴舟, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo 党的建设与宣传思想工作* [Party-building and propaganda and thought work] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1995), 63. Or a “complete theory system,” *wanzheng de lilun tixi 完整的理论体系*, consisting of three main parts: philosophy (dialectical materialism and historical materialism), political economy, and scientific socialism. Cf. Wu Yurong 吴玉荣, “Makesi zhuyi lilun chuangxin yu wangluo shidai” 马克思主义理论创新与网络时代 [The rejuvenation of Marxist ideology and the age of the Internet], *Neibu canyue* no. 8 (February 27, 2004), 6. Scientific socialism is “the application of the laws of historical materialism to that particular stage of social evolution in which capitalism takes shape, fulfills and exhausts its potential, and passes over to the higher formation of socialism.” (George Novack, “Sociology and Historical Materialism,” <http://www.marxists.org/archive/novack/works/history/ch10.htm>, accessed October 31, 2011.) Thus, whereas historical and dialectical materialism apply to all stages of the development of human society, scientific socialism only applies to the period of transition between capitalism and socialism.

¹⁶ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 129.

¹⁷ Cf. Ren Lixuan 任理轩, “Makesi zhuyi lichang guandian fangfa de xianming tixian – Lun Zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi lilun tixi de qunzhongguan renshiguan dongliguan shidaiguan” 马

name also has the advantage that future theoretical contributions by future generations of leaders can be easily integrated without having to adjust the shorthand. Hence, all instances where tribute is paid to Marxism do not refer to the works of Marx and Engels, but to the parts that are considered applicable to contemporary China according to several generations of post-Mao leaders. This turns references to Marxism from empty rhetoric and mere lip-service into programmatic statements of the Party's most basic policies, namely those subsumed under the name "theory system of building socialism with Chinese characteristics" today.

What does the Party mean by Deng Xiaoping *theory* or the "theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese characteristics?" *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* (2001 version) states that "Deng Xiaoping theory is the fairly structured preliminary answer to the pressing question of how to build socialism in an economically and culturally backwards country **like** China"¹⁸ (my emphasis). The word "like" indicates applicability beyond the Chinese context, though only under similar circumstances, namely economic and cultural backwardness. Coming up with valid theories is important for the Party's aspiration to make its own work more "scientific."¹⁹

The Objective World

In order to understand how the CPC adheres to the basic tenets of Marxism, yet has adapted them to fit its post-Mao agenda, I will briefly explain the philosophical basis of Chinese Marxism, dialectical materialism and historical materialism, and how it is interpreted today. Dialectic materialism was developed

克思主义立场观点方法的鲜明体现 ——论中国特色社会主义理论体系的群众观认识观动力观时代观 [A vivid embodiment of the Marxist stance, points of view and methods – The outlook on the masses, on cognition, on the driving force and on the times of the theory system of socialism with Chinese characteristics], *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People's Daily], December 24, 2009, 9.

¹⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2001), 27.

¹⁹ This applies to all areas of Party work. For instance, since ca. 1998, the Party has been actively pursuing the development of external propaganda theory (*duiwai xuanchuan lilun* 对外宣传理论). Conferences on *waixuan* theory started in 1998. Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei – Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan*, vol. 2, 54-60. Research institutes were inaugurated in 1999.

in the S.U. on the basis of Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*²⁰ and was subsequently adopted in China as well.

One of the basic premises of dialectical materialism is that it is possible to understand the world, and that statements and actions can be clearly divided into correct (*zhengque* 正确) and false (*cuowu* 错误). Thus, the CPC, as a Communist Party, considers itself both able and dutybound to assess all things in the world. The importance of scientifically correct assessments of reality as a basis for policy making has increased in the post-Mao period rather than decreased. Verdicts on what is correct and what is false are not only limited to factual verdicts, but include moral questions as well; in fact, the two are not clearly separated. When a decision or an act is considered "scientific" in the sense that it conforms to objective laws and consequently helps human society to progress, it is also the correct choice morally speaking.²¹

As in any Marxist and a fair share of other conceptions of the universe, the contemporary Chinese Marxist world consists of **things** (*shiwu* 事物), of which "the world" (*shijie* 世界) is the largest unit to be considered and all of which are in **motion** (*yundong* 运动), meaning that they are constantly developing and changing (*fazhan bianhua* 发展变化). Change, i.e. the development of things, usually follows objective laws (*keguan guilü* 客观规律). If something is determined by objective law, it is inevitable (*biran* 必然), whereas if it is not and the outcome could vary depending on various factors, it is accidental or not predictable (*ouran* 偶然). The reason for motion is the dialectical **contradictions** (*bianzheng maodun* 辩证矛盾) between different **aspects** (*fangmian* 方面) within the thing. **Aspects** are things within things, usually arranged in pairs which are in

²⁰ The dialectical materialism know today is first and foremost Plekhanov's reading of Engels. It was also Plekhanov who coined the term dialectical materialism. See Allen W. Wood, "Dialectical Materialism," in *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (London: Routledge, 2000), 208.

²¹ During the Mao period, throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, this emphasis on the one morally and scientifically correct line, path or verdict on a particular issue was frequently carried over into China's external propaganda publications as well. The emphasis on "correctness" was most pronounced in the *Beijing Review* during the high tide of the Cultural Revolution, but also before and after. See for example "The Communist Party of China Is a Great, Glorious and Correct Party," *Beijing Review* no. 6, February 7, 1969, 13-14; "Implementing Correct Cadre Policy," *Beijing Review*, no. 15, April 14, 1978, 17; Eugene V. Dennett, "Correct Appraisal of Mao Zedong's Role," no. 51, December 19, 1983, 2 (in column letters from the readers); "Reform Deviations Must Be Corrected," *Beijing Review*, no. 3, January 2, 1995, 23.

opposition to one another (*duili* 对立).²² The development of a thing from beginning to end is called **process** (*guocheng* 过程 or *shiwu fazhan guocheng* 事物发展过程). In the analysis of reality, which will be covered in more detail below, a thing such as, for example, “Socialism” can both be spoken of in its capacity as “thing” (describing its current state *zhuangtai* 状态) or in its capacity as “process” (describing its dynamics *dongtai* 动态, direction *fangxiang* 方向, trend *qushi* 趋势, etc.).

The CPC ascribes an important role to itself as an interpreter of complex reality for the Chinese people. Each thing has attributes that distinguish it from other things. *Tedian* 特点 (characteristic) and *tezheng* 特征 (the defining characteristic that distinguishes one thing from other similar things) are both externally visible. In addition, there are properties that cannot be grasped through sensory perception alone, and it is in this field that the CPC sees one justification why its own existence is for the greater good of the Chinese nation. For these “hidden” attributes, a difference is made between changing properties or properties that depend on context (called *xingzhi* 性质) and static properties (called *shuxing* 属性) that are inherent in the thing (*shiwu guyou de* 事物固有的²³) regardless of external conditions.²⁴ One of the functions of the CPC is determining these invisible properties and hence the thing’s essence.

In accordance with Hegel’s dialectics adopted in Marxism, each thing has an **appearance** (*xianxiang* 现象) and an **essence** (*Wesen und Erscheinung* in Hegel’s writing), a term that is rendered in Chinese interchangeably as *benzhi* 本质 (fundamental nature or fundamental property) or as *shizhi* 实质 (often translated into English as “true nature”). The essence is the internal connections

²² An aspect, of course, is always also a thing in its own right and only becomes an aspect in relation to another thing.

²³ When speaking of changing attributes, on the other hand, the formulation used is *shiwu juyou de* 事物具有的, i.e. attributes “that the thing has *concretely*”.

²⁴ Cf. entry “shuxing” 属性 [Static properties], in *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui* 《哲学大辞典·中国哲学史卷》编辑委员会编 [Editorial committee for the *Dictionary of philosophy, Volume on the history of Chinese philosophy*], ed., *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan* 哲学大辞典, 马克思主义哲学卷 [Dictionary of philosophy, volume on Marxist philosophy] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1990), 924.

(*neibu lianxi* 内部联系) of a thing,²⁵ and, in accordance with the maxim that internal contradictions are what make a thing move, the part of the two that truly matters. Appearance (*xianxiang*), on the other hand, is the external connections (*waibu lianxi* 外部联系) of a thing (those which do not determine the existence and development of a thing).²⁶ The two are related in that the appearance consists of the external manifestations of the essence in all its aspects (*zai ge ge fangmian* 在各个个方面).²⁷ The essence is relatively stable²⁸ in contrast with the appearance, i.e. the fickle and quickly changing external aspect.²⁹ To give a commonly cited example from the 1990s, the U.S. policy to contain China and the policy of engagement were considered two outward expressions of what is in essence the same underlying strategic aim, namely to “Westernize and split China.”³⁰ Moreover, while Chinese media according to official CPC ideology (going back to Lenin) are supposed to tell the truth, this always refers to the essence of things. Thus, whereas Western media focus on superficial appearances and details, all of which are “true,” Party media first determine the essence of something and then report accordingly.

This principle was explained by Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 in a speech on the nature of the press in China from February 1985, in which he addressed the problem of what the slogan “seek truth from facts”³¹ meant and what the ratio between positive and negative news should be – literally: 80 per cent positive, 20

²⁵ Liu Jianming 刘建明 et al., eds., *Xuanchuan yulunxue da cidian* 宣传舆论学大辞典 [Dictionary on the study of propaganda and public opinion] (Beijing: Jingji ribao chubanshe, 1992), 517.

²⁶ Ibid., 519-520.

²⁷ Ibid., 517.

²⁸ Stability is defined as the ability to systematically return to one’s initial state (*yuanlai zhuangtai* 原来状态) after interference from without or from within (*lai zi waibu huo neibu de ganrao* 来自外部或内部的干扰). Cf. entry “Wending yu bu wending” 稳定与不稳定 [Stability and instability], in *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, ed. *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui*, 976.

²⁹ Entry “Benzhi yu xianxiang” 本质与现象 [Essence and appearance], in *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, ed. *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui*, 190.

³⁰ Cf. Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (xia)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析 (下) [A critical analysis of Western media’s spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part three of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 6 (2001):8-9.

³¹ For the origin and uses of the slogan “seek truth from facts,” see Gucheng Li, *A Glossary of Political Terms of the People’s Republic of China* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), 412-413.

per cent negative, because the “main aspect of socialist society is brightness”³² This is precisely the line of argument that the Chinese Party-state adapted in the 21st century when attacking Western media’s China coverage, albeit worded differently: By focusing too much on the negative and neglecting its progress, Western media are distorting China’s image.

The internal relations of simple things and appearances are directly expressed (*biaoxian* 表现) in the form of a contradiction between two aspects. Complex things and appearances have complex internal relations, but officially, since Mao invented the category of the principal contradiction, one of these connections or contradictions is always the principal one.³³ Likewise, in the contradiction between two aspects, one is always the principal, dominating aspect (*zhuyao fangmian* 主要方面),³⁴ though the relationship between aspects can change over time. For instance, according to Mao, in the conflict between the capitalist class and the working class on a global scale, the capitalist class was still the principal aspect that dominated the working class, but the relationship was to be inverted, with the working class becoming the principal, dominating aspect as history progressed.³⁵ Hence, a contradiction between two aspects may continue while the balance of power between its two aspects changes, first quantitatively and later fundamentally. This is how the CPC continues to frame the struggle against its opponents today. In what it sees as the fight against those that want to destroy China, the CPC does not expect swift victory, but rather seeks to gradually shift the balance of power.

Because contemporary life is complex, and the (internal) properties of things do not reveal themselves automatically, a thing’s essence or fundamental nature needs to be determined by way of scientific analysis (*kexue fenxi* 科学分

³² “Guanyu dang de xinwen gongzuo” 关于党的新闻工作 [On the Party’s press work], February 8, 1985, *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian, 1957-1992* 中国共产党宣传工作文献选编, 1957-1992 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China, 1957-1992], eds. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中共中央宣传部办公厅 and Zhongyang dang’anguan bianyanbu 中央档案馆编研部 (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1996), 675-676.

³³ Entry “Neibu lianxi” 内部联系 [Internal connections], in *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, ed. *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui*, 112.

³⁴ Cf. Mao Zedong 毛泽东, “Maodun lun” 矛盾论 [On Contradiction], August 1937, available on Marxist.org, <http://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-193708.htm>, accessed March 2, 2013.

³⁵ Ibid.

析).³⁶ It is the responsibility of the Party to determine and explain the essence of potentially all things in the world to the people, who lack the necessary cognitive instruments to do so on their own. Importantly for political reality, the notion of the fundamental nature of things makes it possible to impose harsh sanctions or punishments in the case of (seemingly) innocuous offences, as the party can declare that while they may appear harmless, their essence is detrimental to the Party's and the people's interests. Thus, if the nature of a statement attacking the CPC is declared premeditated, political, or malicious, the reaction will be stronger and usually very polemical. This is one example where the ideological evaluation of events translates into real-life consequences.

As opposed to dialectical materialism, which is intended to look at and explain everything, the object of study of historical materialism is human society (*renlei shehui* 人类社会). The process of the development of the thing that is human society functions just like any other process. Due to the unilinear historical model, development usually also means progress (*jinbu* 进步), in the form of a spiral spiraling up or ahead. In China, the master narrative of historical materialism has arguably been reinterpreted considerably, making each historical period significantly longer since the beginning of the post-Mao period by reference to “reality” and “actual experience” in China. What remains is the base-superstructure relationship and the categories and rules according to which periodization of history occurs. The smaller, subordinate temporal unit of a process that falls into the sphere of historical materialism is called stage (*jieduan* 阶段), which, of course, also means that stage as a category is always relative to a process, and each stage of a larger process always constitutes a process in its own right. A historical stage in the development of human society is called an era (*shidai* 时代).³⁷ Thus, the process of human society is subdivided into eras such as feudalism, capitalism, and socialism, which can, again, be broken down into smaller units. In dialectic materialism, each thing is subdivided into different

³⁶ Cf. Liu Jianming 刘建明, *Deng Xiaoping xuanchuan sixiang yanjiu* 邓小平宣传思想研究 [Research on the propaganda thought of Deng Xiaoping] (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe), 44.

³⁷ See entry “Shidai” 时代 [Era], in *Xinhua cidian* 新华词典 [New China dictionary], ed. Shangwu yinshuguan cishu yanjiu zhongxin 商务印书馆辞书研究中心 [Research center for dictionaries of the Commercial Press] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2001), 892.

levels (*cengci* 层次), and during the process of development, the thing progresses from a lower to a higher, from a simpler to a more complex or from a relatively shallow to a deeper level. In historical materialism, or if the thing is analyzed in its capacity as a process, one speaks of stages (*jieduan*) rather than levels. However, the development process of every thing (*shiwu*) can potentially be declared to have several stages. Socialism as a process, for instance, is again subdivided into stages.³⁸

During the post-Mao period, the concept of qualitative change pertaining to a stage or a level of a thing (*jieduanxing zhibian* 阶段性质变, *cengcixing zhibian* 层次性质变), has increased in importance in order to justify China's reforms (*gaige* 改革) and explain why a reform is also a form of revolution (*geming* 革命). A reform that changes the fundamental nature of a thing, i.e. one that constitutes a qualitative change, is a revolution with regard to that particular thing; hence replacing an old system with a new system makes reform a revolution of this system. By this logic, reforms are legitimate as an alternative to social revolutions because a completed reform of a particular sector or level of society (such as the economic system) constitutes a qualitative change and hence a revolution of this particular level in its own right.³⁹ Thus, the CPC has been justifying its own gradual reform agenda in ideological terms.

Although the international environment is becoming increasingly important for China, the CPC's primary concerns are still at home. The primacy of domestic factors over international factors in impacting China's development has also been explained in ideological terms. The internal contradictions of a thing constitute the fundamental reason for the direction (*fangxiang* 方向) in which it develops. External factors, called circumstances (*tiaojian* 条件) when they restrict or influence the existence and development of a thing, on the other hand, can speed up or slow down the development process, but they are always secondary to

³⁸ See for example Dai Zhou, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 54

³⁹ A "qualitative change of a stage" (*jieduanxing zhibian* 阶段性质变) or a "qualitative change of a level" (*cengcixing zhibian* 层次性质变) refers to a qualitative change of a parameter (*canshu* 参数) of a thing, while the essence of the thing remains the same. This change is, consequently, only a quantitative change with regard to the thing itself, but still elevates the thing to a new level and makes the process of its development enter a new stage. Cf. Dai Zhou, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 77.

internal factors and must act through internal factors in order to influence the thing (*waiyin tongguo neiyin qi zuoyong* 外因通过内因起作用).⁴⁰

The Objective and the Subjective World

One decisive theoretical question that decides whether or not propaganda is of value and has a place in society is the relation between the objective and subjective world and how much influence each aspect has over the other, i.e. whether reality determines consciousness or whether consciousness determines reality. The perhaps best-known pair of dialectic opposites is the division into economic base and superstructure, where, officially, the economic base determines the superstructure and the superstructure reflects the base.⁴¹ This pair pertains only to human society and hence falls into the sphere of the study of history or historical materialism in particular.⁴² More generally speaking, i.e. in the study of all things, not just history, the world is subdivided into two basic categories: objective reality (*keguan xianshi* 客观现实), or the objective world (*keguan shijie* 客观世界) and subjective reality (*zhuguan xianshi* 主观现实), or the subjective world (*zhuguan shijie* 主观世界). Anything that exists independently of human consciousness counts as objective reality. This encompasses the material world, but also objective laws. Subjective reality, on the other hand, is the world of ideas, consciousness; the things in peoples' heads.

According to the basic laws of materialism, subjective reality reflects (*fanying* 反映) and is derived from (*you... paisheng de* 由...派生的) the objective world; reversely, objective reality determines subjective reality. On the other hand, and this has been stressed more strongly again since the 1990s, the subjective world not only reflects but also creates the world. This pairing of opposites and

⁴⁰ Entry "Neiyin yu waiyin" 内因与外因 [Internal factors and external factors], in *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, ed. *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui*, 113.

⁴¹ For base and superstructure, see for example *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, ed., *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui*, 43. Other pairs of opposites describing different aspects of subjective and objective reality that should be mentioned here are consciousness and matter (*yishi yu wuzhi* 意识与物质), also known as spirit and matter (*jingshen yu wuzhi* 精神与物质), social consciousness and social existence (*shehui yishi yu shehui cunzai* 社会意识与社会存在), understanding and practice (*renshi yu shijian* 认识与实践), thought and action (*sixiang yu xingdong* 思想与行动), theory and practice (*lilun yu shijian* 理论与实践), etc.

⁴² Cf. *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui*, ed., *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, . 43.

their relation with one another famously runs throughout the entire theoretical system. All of these pairs are in the same relationship: the objective part determines (*jueding* 决定) the subjective part, and the subjective part reflects the objective, but, importantly, can also direct (*zhipei* 支配) it.⁴³

Consciousness (*yishi* 意识) is defined as a philosophical category and the subjective world's counterpart to matter (*wuzhi* 物质).⁴⁴ Social consciousness is determined by and reflects social existence and changes when social existence changes. However, as indicated above the relationship is not entirely one way. Progressive social consciousness (i.e. consciousness that correctly reflects objective things) drives the development of social existence forward; backward social consciousness impedes it. This means that it is important to have correct consciousness in order to make full use of man's subjective agency (*zhuguan nengdongxing* 主观能动性 or *zijue nengdongxing* 自觉能动性), i.e. their ability to change the world by seeing beyond the external surface of things and grasping their fundamental nature and laws.⁴⁵

The Marxist conception of understanding and knowledge is basically a consolidation of empiricism and rationalism: Understanding is “the active (*nengdong* 能动) reflection [happening] on the basis of practice⁴⁶ in the human brain of external reality; it consists of sensory understanding (*ganxing renshi* 感性认识) and theoretical understanding (*lixing renshi* 理性认识).”⁴⁷ The whole algorithm of understanding includes two “leaps” (*feiyue* 飞跃) between the two: The first leap is to turn sensory understanding (*ganxing renshi*), i.e. that which can be grasped through sensory perception, into theoretical understanding (*lixing renshi*).⁴⁸ Particularly the essence of things, unlike the appearance, cannot be directly known through sensory perception.⁴⁹ Therefore, knowledge gained

⁴³ See entry “Zhipei” 支配 [Direct], in *Xinhua cidian*, ed. Shangwu yinshuguan cishu yanjiu zhongxin, 1259.

⁴⁴ See entry “Yishi” 意识 [Consciousness] in *Cihai* 辞海 [Cihai], ed. Cihai bianji weiyuanhui 辞海编辑委员会 [Cihai editing committee] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1999), 5769.

⁴⁵ See entry “Zhuguan nengdongxing” 主观能动性 [subjective agency], *Xinhua cidian*, ed. Shangwu yinshuguan cishu yanjiu zhongxin, 1295; *Xuanchuan xulunxue da cidian*, 522.

⁴⁶ Practice as the basis of cognition goes back to Marx's polemic against academics' and philosophers' lack of interest in changing the world

⁴⁷ Entry “Renshi” 认识 [Understanding] in *Cihai*, 1094.

⁴⁸ Cf. entry “Siwei” 思维 [Thought], *Cihai*, 4763.

⁴⁹ Entry “Benzhi” 本质 [Essence], *Zhexue da cidian*, *Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan*, 187.

through practice must then be subjected to scientific thinking by the Party. The second leap is to reapply theoretical understanding to practice and let it guide practice. Thus, one can see whether theoretical knowledge passes the test of practice and can correct and perfect it. The correct formation of understanding needs both leaps, and the process will then be repeated over and over. Aside from, again, justifying the existence of a Communist Party as a purveyor of correct understanding, this definition has also been used to explain the need for experiments in Chinese politics, which will be addressed below in section 4.3.

Understanding is a process that never stops,⁵⁰ not only because there are always higher levels of understanding, but also because reality changes. This is so because of the development of objective reality itself, but is exacerbated through the agency of understanding. From the perspective of the material world, the development of objective reality itself, following objective laws, constantly already produces new things and new problems for the CPC. However, continuously updating understanding is also necessary because of the reciprocal relationship between objective reality and understanding of objective reality: Knowledge is derived from practice and is in turn used to improve practice, which will then require a new process of cognition. Thus, the CPC not only has the right but also the *duty* to keep Marxist ideology up to date.

To get things right is extremely important: Correct understanding guides practice and promotes the development of practice; incorrect understanding impedes the development of practice. Hence, through correct understanding, the CPC can try to positively influence things over whose existence and development it finds itself able to exercise some control. Since the 1990s, the stress on the agency of understanding and the consequent need for the production and broad distribution among the people of correct understanding has gained, again, in importance and shows itself in the renewed emphasis on propaganda and thought work. The idea is that first, through having a correct understanding of reality and

⁵⁰ Cf. Mao Zedong 毛泽东, “Jianchi changqi zuo diaocha gongzuo, cai neng buduan renshi xin shiwu huode xin zhishi” 坚持长期做调查工作, 才能不断认识新事物获得新知识 [Only by keeping up investigation work for a long time can we continuously understand new things and gain new knowledge], September 13, 1941, in *Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De lun dang de xuanchuan gongzuo* 毛泽东, 周恩来, 刘少奇, 朱德论党的宣传工作 [Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi and Zhu De on the Party’s propaganda work], ed. Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu 中共中央组织部 [Organization department of the CPC Central Committee] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1989), 72.

using correct theory, the CPC can influence China's development for the better from the top by making correct decisions. Moreover, by imbuing the Chinese people with correct thought, the Party can galvanize forces for China's development, which will again speed up and improve the process.

The Party's Assessment of Reality as a Basis for Policy

The fact that cognition is supposed to guide practice means that the understanding of objective reality serves as a scientific basis (*kexue yiju* 科学依据) for the line (*luxian* 路线), principles (*fangzhen* 方针), and policies (*zhengce* 政策) for the CPC.⁵¹ Line refers to the very abstract formulation of how to realize the Party's overall goals in a specific period; those goals being what it needs to fulfill in order to be able to end a historical process and progress to a higher stage of development and of history.⁵² Principle refers to an overall principle with which the Party approaches one particular aspect (*fangmian* 方面) of its work, usually expressed in abstract terms, which guides the formulation of more concrete policies.⁵³ A prominent example is the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries. Policy refers to concrete policies (which are usually also formulated in the form of an abstract slogan) that apply to different aspects of party work and need to be adapted and interpreted according to local and other specific needs.⁵⁴ The difference between principles and policies is that concrete policies may change over time and according to circumstances, whereas the underlying principles informing policies remain the same.⁵⁵ In other words,

⁵¹ Texts frequently point out that the official definition of objective reality has ramifications for CPC policy. One example is this excerpt from *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*: "According to Comrade Jiang Zemin during his speech at the 49th anniversary of the PRC, the overall pattern and the general trend of the international situation have not changed. Peace and development are still the two main themes of the contemporary world. Therefore, China's basic foreign policy and the basic principles of external propaganda have not changed." "Wang Wei guanyu dangqian duiwai xuanchuan sikao" 王微 关于当前对外宣传思考 [Wang Wei's ideas about current external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (1990): 7.

⁵² *New China Dictionary (Xinhua cidian 新华词典)* defines the line as "the fundamental standard which aspects such as thought and politics have to abide by." (思想、政治等方面多遵循的根本准则). Entry "Luxian" 路线 [Line], second meaning, in *Xinhua cidian*, 641.

⁵³ *Xinhua cidian* still defines it as "the direction and goals advancing the progress of a cause." 引事业前进的方向和目标 (Entry "Fangzhen" 方针 [Principle], *Xinhua cidian*, 261).

⁵⁴ *Xinhua cidian* defines policy as "a concrete action standard determined, in accordance with the line, by the state or the party in order to realize a specific task." 国家或政党为实现一定任务、根据路线制定的具体的行动准则 (Entry "Zhengce" 政策 [Policy], *Xinhua cidian*, 1258).

⁵⁵ Cf. Li Anshan, "China and Africa: Policy and Challenges," *China Security* 3, no. 3 (2007): 74.

changing policies are outward expressions of what in essence (in the Marxist or Hegelian sense) remains the same principle.

Whether or not the assessment of objective reality is correct determines whether the line, principles, and policies are correct; if it is not they “will be removed from reality and will violate objective laws of development,”⁵⁶ as happened last during the Cultural Revolution. The CPC therefore needs to have an official version of reality that is declared and officially informs the formulation of the Party’s “line, principles, and policies.” The egg-chicken relation of whether ideology really informs policy or is made up as an after-the-fact justification is irrelevant; what is important is that this link is strongly and repeatedly stressed in contemporary China and that the Party needs to maintain unity between its guiding ideology and the policies it pursues.

With regard to the actual practice, the assessment of objective reality for national and international level affairs is naturally a normative enterprise that cannot be undertaken by anyone. It used to be the prerogative of the pre-eminent leader and has now, since the death of Deng Xiaoping, who can be considered the last leader to have had the authority to single-handedly re-define objective reality (although without using the standard terminology of the Chinese Marxist discourse universe), become the responsibility of the collective leadership of the Party in general and of research centers for Marxism-Leninism, the Party School, and the CPD (especially the Theory Bureau) in particular. Particularly for the leadership generations since Deng Xiaoping, the assessment of reality cannot simply be redefined over night, but needs to be renegotiated over time and thus serves as a guiding compass constricting the options of even the highest leaders of the CPC. Characteristically, redefinitions of reality since the post-Mao period and increasingly so since the 1990s, have taken place implicitly in the form of a shift in emphasis rather than a complete and explicit turnaround.

According to the normative definition of objective reality, China is currently, and will remain for a long time, in the primary stage of Socialism (*shehui zhuyi de chuji jieduan* 社会主义的初级阶段). In this stage, the principal contradiction in Chinese society is “between the growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backwardness of social production.” This, in turn,

⁵⁶ Dai Zhou, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 197.

determines the core work (*hexin gongzuo* 核心工作) that the Party needs to focus on in order solve the contradiction and move to a higher level: Since the social production falls short of people's needs, the fundamental responsibility is to develop the productive forces.⁵⁷ This principal contradiction was originally defined in 1956 and revived in a slightly different wording in the 1981 *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China* (henceforth: 1981 Resolution).

Between 1949 and 1956, the principal contradiction within Chinese society was the “contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie and between the socialist road and the capitalist road,” as defined in the General Line for the Transition Period proposed by Mao Zedong in 1952 and affirmed as correct in the 1981 Resolution for the period 1949 to 1956. The logic was that because the CPC first had to change production relations and eradicate the bourgeoisie before it could formally enter the period of Socialism. In September 1956, the Eighth National Congress of the CPC declared the end of the period of transition (*guodu shiqi* 过渡时期) with the basic establishment of the socialist system in China and redefined the principal contradiction as lying “between the demand of the people for rapid economic and cultural development and the existing state of our economy and culture [falling] short of the needs of the people.”⁵⁸ After 1962, according to current Party historiography, Mao incorrectly asserted that since the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, the principal contradiction in China had, again, consisted of that between the working class and the bourgeoisie.⁵⁹ Consequently, because of the faulty evaluation, the CPC was acting against objective laws between 1957 and the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Communist Party of China Central Committee (CPCCC), when the mistake was finally corrected.

The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in December 1978 turned time back to 1956, when things had started to go wrong. In 1981, five years after Mao's death, the principal contradiction in Chinese society

⁵⁷ Ibid., 387.

⁵⁸ “Guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti jueyi” 关于建国以来党的若干历史问题的决议 [Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China], passed June 27, 1981, available on *People's Daily Online*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/71380/71387/71588/4854598.html>, accessed March 1, 2013.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

was officially re-evaluated and the 1956 understanding of objective reality was famously declared the last correct assessment before things got out of hand due to “leftist” influences.⁶⁰ According to the 1981 Resolution and any major normative party documents today, class struggle had ceased to be the principal contradiction in Chinese society with the extinction of the exploiting class in 1956, although it would continue to be relevant “for a long time to come” “owing to certain domestic factors and influences from abroad.”

The notion of the “primary stage of socialism”, which was to last for at least one hundred years, was first formally introduced by Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳 at the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1987⁶¹ although the term itself had been used and discussed by academics as early as 1979.⁶² The core work (zhongxin gongzuo 中心工作) of the Party for as long as China was in the primary stage of socialism would be economic construction. By repeatedly emphasizing that the stage would last for at least one hundred years, the CPC has sought to provide reassurance to investors and private entrepreneurs that its policy of reform and opening is not a whim, but a long term commitment. After Zhao was ousted from power in 1989, the term “primary stage of socialism” was not mentioned in the report at the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992. However, during his Southern tour, Deng Xiaoping did emphasize that the policy of reform and opening would continue for at least another hundred years.⁶³ At the Fifteenth Party Congress in 1997, Jiang Zemin 江泽民 again emphasized that China would be in the primary stage of socialism “for a long time to come,” and that the principal contradiction “between

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Alan R. Kluver, *Legitimizing the Chinese Economic Reforms: A Rhetoric of Myth and Orthodoxy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 72.

⁶² The origin of the concept, according to Cindy Fan, was in a 1979 paper by Su Shaozhi 苏绍智 and Feng Lanrui 冯兰瑞: “They argued that China was a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country when it adapted socialism; and because it has not yet reached the socialist stage as defined by Marx and Lenin, the transition to socialism would entail a very long process.” According to Fan, the theory only became popular in the late 1980s, when party leaders needed justification for economic policies, and hence this “is one of the many examples where ‘theories’ became an after-the-fact justification for policies that have already been implemented for pragmatic, political or other reasons.” C. Cindy Fan, “Uneven Development and beyond: Regional Development Theory in Post-Mao China,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 21, no. 4 (1997): 622.

⁶³ Cf. Zhang Weiwei 张维为, “Deng Xiaoping Nanxun qijian de naxie shi” 邓小平南巡期间的那些事 [Those things during Deng Xiaoping’s Southern Tour], Website of the Journal *Dangjian* 党建 [Party building] of the Central Propaganda Department, February 28, 2012, http://www.dangjian.cn/ddls/lstda/201202/t20120228_525985.shtml, accessed February 18, 2013.

the growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backwardness of social production” would accompany China for the entire period of the primary stage of socialism, something which had been challenged and therefore needed reconfirmation in 1997 after Deng Xiaoping’s death in February.⁶⁴ Unless there was a major hostile invasion of Chinese territory, economic construction would remain the core work of the Party.⁶⁵

Another important concept reintroduced into post-Mao China is “national circumstances” or the “Chinese situation”, probably better known under its Chinese name, *guoqing* 国情. The compound *guoqing* first appeared in the *Strategems of the Warring States* (*Zhanguo ce* 战国策). Since the 20th century, it has been employed in various different circumstances to refute Western ideas, including Communism in the 1930s. Mao used the term in his 1939 “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party.”⁶⁶ *Guoqing* in its present use is a re-invention of the Reform and Opening Period.⁶⁷ After 1980, the term then came to be frequently used in the sense that anything done in China would have to be compatible with the Chinese circumstances. While it was rarely invoked between 1988 and the mid-1990s in official speeches, it was revived in 1997 in Jiang’s report, which stated that the primary stage of socialism was a “basic national condition” (*jiben guoqing* 最基本的国情).⁶⁸

One important development of the 1980s that justified the focus on economic development rather than preparedness for war was Deng Xiaoping’s

⁶⁴ Cf. Zheng Yongnian and Zou Ziyang, “Power to Set Own Agenda: Jiang Zemin’s New Political Initiatives at China’s Fifteenth Party Congress,” in *China after the Fifteenth Party Congress: New Initiatives*, ed. the National Congress of the CPC and National University of Singapore, East Asian Institute (River Edge: World Scientific and Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1997), 31.

⁶⁵ Cf. Jiang Zemin 江泽民, “Guanyu jiang zhengzhi” 关于讲政治 [On stressing politics], in *Neibu tongxin jingxuan huibian* 内部通信精选汇编 [Collection of selected (articles) from *Internal Communications*], ed. Zhongxuanbu xinwenju 中宣部新闻局 [Press/News Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhongxuanbu xinwenju, 1998), 9.

⁶⁶ Geremie Barmé, *In the Red: On Contemporary Chinese Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 446, footnote 15.

⁶⁷ The first time that *guoqing* was used in the *People’s Daily* in the sense of China’s national circumstances was in 1979. Ye Linsheng 叶林生 and Wang Zhizhong 王致中, “‘Guoqing’ lun xiaokao” “国情”论小考 [A brief study of the theory of ‘national situation’], *Renmin ribao*, August 10, 1979, 3.

⁶⁸ “Jiang Zemin zai Zhongguo gongchandang di shiwu ci quanguo daibiao dahui shang de baogao (2)” 江泽民在中国共产党第十五次全国代表大会上的报告 (2) [Jiang Zemin’s report at the Fifteenth National Congress of the CPC (2)], September 12, 1997, available on *People’s Daily Online*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64568/65445/4526287.html>, accessed March 2, 2013.

unofficial redefinition of the principal contradiction in the world and of the “characteristics of the times.” During the Mao period, the characteristics of the times were officially defined as “war and revolution,”⁶⁹ so the need for readiness for war was stressed.⁷⁰ The general idea of “war and revolution” as the characteristics of the times was that as long as imperialism existed, war was inevitable.⁷¹ Over the course of the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping began to push for a new assessment of objective realities regarding the international level. The immediate countertext for the redefinition of the characteristics of the era was the question of China’s military budget vis-à-vis other priorities.⁷²

In September 1985, Deng Xiaoping identified the world’s “two biggest problems” (*liang da wenti* 两大问题), namely peace and development, rather than a single principal contradiction. Peace was a problem between East and West, and development a problem between North and South. Of these two, development was the “core problem” (*hexin wenti* 核心问题). In other words, Deng Xiaoping did his job as informal preeminent leader in identifying the principal contradiction in the world without claiming the status of preeminent leader or risking confrontation by labeling it thus.⁷³ Deng Xiaoping’s introduction of the “two biggest problems”, due to the different vocabulary used, did not officially annul the principal contradiction as it was defined in the late Mao period, namely the contradiction between the two superpowers competing over global hegemony and

⁶⁹ The notion of the era of “war and revolution” is generally traced back to Stalin’s *The Basics of Leninism* (1924).

⁷⁰ Including in external propaganda publications, such as the *Peking Review*, such as in this excerpt from the journal from 1976: “One should have a clear understanding of the aggressive nature of the superpowers, discard illusions about peace, expose the source and danger of war, fully mobilize the people to get prepared mentally and materially for resistance against a war of aggression. Only then can one cope with all eventualities, stand on firm ground and seize the first opportunity to lead the struggle to final victory.” Jen Ku-ping, “Factors for both revolution and war are increasing”, *Peking Review* no. 1 (1976): 28.

⁷¹ Colonel Hong Baoxiu, “Deng Xiaoping’s Theory of War and Peace,” in *Chinese Views of Future Warfare*, ed. Michael Pillsbury (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1997), 21. The book is a compilation of articles translated from Chinese. Hong Baoxiu’s article was published in the Spring 1994 issue of *China Military Science*.

⁷² Deng had demanded to reorganize military construction from having to be prepared for imminent war at all times to “peacetime construction” in June 1985. Cf. Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, *China’s Security: The New Roles of the Military* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 62-63.

⁷³ In his position as pre-eminent leader without filling the post as CPC General Secretary, he was known for his casual remarks outside correct-speak but with immense policy consequences. Cf. David Shambaugh and Richard H. Yang, *China’s Military in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 16. With this style, it was up to others to either put his propositions in line with the contributions of previous preeminent leaders or, as happened in a few cases, to establish the terms used by Deng as new key terms in the discourse universe.

the third world opposing hegemony. Neither did it annul “war and revolution” as the “characteristics of the era.” However, obviously it implicitly challenged both by defining the North-South problem –i.e. the problem of development– to be the core problem while also stressing that the international situation was currently undergoing a thaw.

One important aspect to back up the claim that war was no longer imminent was, initially, the weakening of the rivalry of the two superpowers. According to Deng, science and technology replaced arms as the new primary “focal point” of global competition.⁷⁴ As such, Deng Xiaoping’s re-evaluation was linked to a larger global trend that started in the late 1970s, namely the emphasis on interdependence between countries and, consequently the reduced risk of war, as expressed in new theories of international relations that were translated into Chinese in the 1980s.⁷⁵

The events of the early 1990s forced China to officially re-evaluate the international situation. After 1989, and more so after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the debate over the principal contradiction in the world came to the forefront again, as the global situation had obviously changed significantly, and the old principal contradiction from the second half of the Mao period needed to be officially reassessed now that one of the two poles –the two superpowers striving for hegemony– no longer existed. After a vigorous debate in the early 1990s,⁷⁶ the CPC dropped the issue, though the semi-official position is that the world is too complex to have a principal contradiction.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Colonel Hong Baoxiu, “Deng Xiaoping’s Theory of War and Peace,” 21-22.

⁷⁵ One of the first and the most influential work in this tradition was Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977). This work was one of the first of many works on IR theory to be translated into Chinese. Cf. Sheng Ding, “Soft Power and the Rise of China: An Assessment of China’s Soft Power in Its Modernization Process” (PhD Dissertation, State University of New Jersey, 2006), 88-89.

⁷⁶ See for example Zhang Guocheng 张国成 and Liao Xianwang 廖先旺, “Geju, maodun, zhanlue – Zhongguo guoji wenti yanjiu zhongxin tanlunhui ceji” 格局·矛盾·战略——中国国际问题研究中心讨论会侧记 [Pattern, contradiction, strategy: Sidelights from the seminar of the China Research Center for International Studies], *Renmin ribao*, December 13, 1991, 7.

⁷⁷ At a debate on the topic of the principal world contradiction attended by academic heavy-weights such as Pan Wei 潘维, most participants argued that the world was too complex. Notably, however, all contributions were in rather colloquial Chinese, largely avoiding the key terms of the Chinese Marxist discourse universe. For a summary of the positions at the debate, see “‘Wenming de chongtu’ daolai le ma? Guanyu shijie zhuyao maodun de zhenglun” “文明的冲突”到来了吗——关于世界主要矛盾的争论 [Has the ‘clash of cultures’ arrived? A debate on the world’s principal contradiction], *Shijie zhishi* 世界知识 [World knowledge] no. 3 (2002): 33-37.

Similarly, there was a debate about the “world pattern” (*shijie geju* 世界格局), an alternative term for “world order.” The world pattern changes fundamentally when there is a fundamental change (i.e. qualitative change) in the global power balance, as happened at the end of World War II or in the early 1990s.⁷⁸ After the end of the bi-polar world order, China debated what world order would come next. By 1993, a new consensus that is by and large maintained until today (though preserved in a different formulation) had emerged: “The old pattern is in the process of change, [...] but the new pattern has not yet formed.”⁷⁹ Under the current world pattern (or non-pattern), often referred to as “one superpower and several strong countries” (“*yi chao duo qiang*” *geju* “一超多强”格局),⁸⁰ the goal of the United States (U.S.) was to strengthen its position as the only super power and to push the world pattern into the direction of a unipolar world as much as possible and by all means that do not hurt its own interests. China’s goal, on the other hand, was to strengthen the trend of multi-polarity.

In conclusion, the basic principles of Marxism continue to serve an important function in the PRC’s political process. Adapting or reinterpreting Marxist principles is considered a legitimate exercise, justified by the link between practice and theory. Ideology can thus of course be used to provide after-the-matter justifications for policies. At the same time, the existing ideological framework at any moment defines the room for maneuver for CPC leaders. Likewise, when new leaders want to make contributions to the “theory system of Socialism with Chinese characteristics,” they need to align their contributions

⁷⁸ For example, the 20th century saw three (or perhaps only two and a half) different world patterns: first, the Versailles-Washington System (Fan Hua tixi 凡华体系), second, the Yalta System (Ya’erta tixi 雅尔塔体系), usually referred to as the bipolar world pattern (*liang ji shijie geju* 两极世界格局), and, finally, since the early 1990s, the “trend of multipolarization” (*duojihua qushi* 多极化趋势). The term trend (*qushi*) needs to be used as a clearly multi-polar pattern itself has not yet formed.

⁷⁹ Huang Zecun 黄泽存, “Xuexi Jiang Zemin de waixuan sixiang he waixuan shijian (shang)” 学习江泽民的外宣思想和外宣实践 (上) [Study Jiang Zemin’s external propaganda thought and practice (one)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2002): 31. Also see the formulation “新旧格局交替时期” in Li Zhaoxing 李肇星, “Xin shiqi waijiao gongzuo de baogui jingshen caifu – Xuexi Jiang Zemin tongzhi waijiao sixiang de tihui” 新时期外交工作的宝贵精神财富——学习江泽民同志外交思想的体会 [A valuable spiritual asset for diplomatic work in the new period: Studying Jiang Zemin’s thought on diplomacy], *Renmin ribao*, September 30, 2006, 2.

⁸⁰ “Geju, maodun, zhanlüe – Zhongguo guoji wenti yanjiu zhongxin taolunhui ceji.”

with the existing ideological framework. Thus, the existing framework and the rules by which it functions are a “guide to action” for the CPC. China’s evaluation of the world, which officially informs all policy, continues to serve as a battlefield in the struggle over China’s overall direction as much as concrete policies.

4.2 The CPC and the Chinese Party-State in the Post-Mao Period

One significant difference between the study of the Chinese and most other countries’ political systems is the relationship between the Party and the state, which officially form two separate vertical hierarchies.⁸¹ The first sector that external propaganda belongs to (namely propaganda and thought work) is clearly considered Party territory, although for representative purposes, bureaucracies are often paraded as state organs in public. Foreign affairs work, on the other hand, is primarily government work, although, as will be seen below, the Party also gets involved. While in the propaganda sector, it makes sense to speak of a Party-state (with the Party in command and the State in an administrative role), it should be remembered that two distinct bureaucracies that are administered through different channels and are governed by two separate sets of regulations are involved.

The Party and the State have separate leadership structures. The CPC’s Central Committee (CC) is appointed every five years at the National Congress, usually in fall. It consists of circa 350 full and alternate members. The CC officially “elects” a number of leaders forming the Politburo, which has about 20 to 25 members. Real leadership is exercised by the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC). The number of members has varied; the PBSC of the 14th and 15th CC (1992-2002) consisted of seven members, the PBSC of the 16th and 17th CC (2002-2012) consisted of nine members, whereas for the 18th CC (2012-2017), the number was again reduced to seven. The highest ranking leader is the General Secretary of the CPC who also serves as President of the PRC, a position currently held by Xi Jinping 习近平. However, as opposed to parts of the Mao

⁸¹ The military forms a third vertical system. Cf. Lu Ning, “The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies, State Council Ministries, and Party Departments,” in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Reform Era*, ed. David Lampton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 39.

period, leadership of the CPC is no longer concentrated in a single individual today, but is collective.⁸²

The Chinese equivalent of a government Cabinet is called the State Council and combines the premier, vice premiers, state councillors, and the ministers and directors of other high ranking organs within the state hierarchy. Government dignitaries usually also concurrently occupy high ranking positions within the Party. The official legislative of the PRC is the National People's Congress (NPC), which consists of circa 5000 members chosen by the CC and which meets once per year, usually in March.

The relationship between the Party and the State has varied over the course of PRC history. In the Mao period, after it first looked as if China would separate the Party and the state relatively strictly, first in 1953 with the creation of “gateways” (*kou □*) and then with the formation of small groups in 1958, the authority of the Party over the government was strengthened. In the post-Mao period, after initiatives in the 1980s that sought to separate the two more clearly, the pre-eminence of the Party was reasserted in the early 1990s.⁸³ Since then, the leadership of the party has become a premise that no one is allowed to challenge in public. At the same time, in the 1990s, the Party worked on an official re-conceptualization of its own leadership function that was different from what was known as “centralized leadership of the Party” (*dang de yi yuan hua lingdao* 党的

⁸² Cf. Zheng, *The Chinese Communist Party as Organizational Emperor*, 76-83.

⁸³ Between the promulgation of the new Party Statute in 1982 until the 13th Party Congress, the Party Group (*dangzu* 党组) was the leading institution within each ministry. Starting in the mid-1980s, the reform-minded members of the Central Leadership supported by Deng Xiaoping began to push for a clearer separation of Party and State. Zhao Ziyang launched a reform that sought to abolish party groups and give ultimate power within the ministry to the minister. In November 1987, the Party Statute was amended, stating that party groups *could* be formed (*keyi chengli dangzu* 可以成立党组), implying that this was not obligatory. Further steps to disband party groups were taken in the summer of 1988. After Zhao Ziyang's downfall, the reform was never properly implemented, and after the post-1989 power consolidation within the party, in October 1992, the passage in the Party Statute was changed back to its 1982 wording. What has happened at the central level since then, however, is that the minister usually concurrently heads (*jian ren* 兼任) the party group of his ministry. This still makes him the most powerful person within the ministry, without, however, separating party and state. Cf. Lu Ning, “The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies,” 55-56; Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui 中国共产党组织史资料编审委员会, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 [Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China, *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*], vol. 7: *Shehui zhuyi shiye fazhan xin shiqi, 1976.10-1997.9* 社会主义事业发展新时期: 1976.10-1997.9 [The new period of developing the socialist enterprise: 1976.10-1997.9] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 272-273.

一元化领导) during the Mao period – meaning that the Party was responsible for all aspects of government⁸⁴ – without endangering the supreme role of the CPC in Chinese politics. The result, explained in any major work on China’s political system published during or after the second half of the 1990s,⁸⁵ was an arrangement under which the CPC officially exercised leadership in three areas: politics, organization,⁸⁶ and ideology. Its supremacy in these three sectors – not its all-pervasiveness – is what constitutes its ruling position (*chizheng diwei* 持政地位).⁸⁷ Likewise, party members and party organizations at all levels have to preserve unity (*baochi yizhi* 保持一致) with the center on issues pertaining to politics, organization, and ideology.⁸⁸ Of course, this is not always the case in practice, but formally, departments and locales are required to put their own interests aside.

A look at the subordinate bureaucracies below the State Council and the Central Committee reconfirms that the State Council commands the technocratic bureaucracies (finance, development, etc.) while the Central Committee remains in charge of ideological and sensitive issues, including both propaganda and foreign affairs. External propaganda, which falls into the realm of politics and ideology, is clearly an area that needs to be controlled by the Party. The State Council bureaucracies that *are* concerned with matters of ideology and politics fall into two categories: First, there are institutions under the State Council existing only in name, mostly for representative purposes, with the real body under the authority of the CC (an arrangement known as “one organization with two nameplates,” *yi ge jigou liang kuai paizi* 一个机构两块牌子). The most important example for this thesis is the Office of External Propaganda, which

⁸⁴ Yu Keping 俞可平, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi – Zhongguo* 当代各国政治体制—中国 [Current political systems of various countries: China] (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 1998), 4.

⁸⁵ E.g. Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*,; Xie Qingkui 谢庆奎, *Dangdai Zhongguo zhengfu yu zhengzhi* 当代中国政府与政治 [Contemporary Chinese government and politics] (Beijing Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003).

⁸⁶ Known as “the Party manages [i.e. appoints or fires] cadres” *dang guan ganbu* 党管干部 The primacy of the party over the state in terms of personnel management is clearly demonstrated by the fact that that Minister of Personnel is also deputy director of the Central Committee’s Organization Department, an arrangement which shows a leading-led relationship between the two.

⁸⁷ Cf. Xie Qingkui, *Dangdai Zhongguo zhengfu yu zhengzhi*, 72; Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 4.

⁸⁸ Cf. Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 17.

presents itself under the name State Council Information Office. Second, there are institutions that largely fulfill the function of carrying out administrative duties (the General Administration of Press and Publication, GAPP,⁸⁹ the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, SARFT,⁹⁰ etc.), with policies devised in different bodies under the Central Committee.

Besides this division of work, the party committee (*dangwei* 党委) at any level is always above the government at the same level.⁹¹ Again, at the national and provincial level, this arrangement is often, but not always, in practice managed through concurrent posts. In the case where the party secretary and the government head are not the same person, the government head is still a member or deputy secretary of the party committee. This ensures that government heads can deliberate with other members of the party committee first, and then implement the policies they decided on through the government structures.⁹²

In conclusion, the Party has reformed itself and redefined its own role, but continues to occupy a pre-eminent position in China. While the section above was dedicated to the most distinctive particularity of the Chinese bureaucracy at the macro level, namely the relationship between the Party and the State, the next section will give an introduction to the characteristics and structural arrangements defining the Chinese bureaucratic system at the micro level: the basic vocabulary needed to understand authority structures and relationships between different units in the system.

⁸⁹ GAPP is a ministerial level organization that monitors and regulates press and publication activities in China. It is under the joint leadership of both the CPD and the State Council, with the CPD being responsible for ideological and the State Council for administrative matters. Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in the People's Republic of China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 17. GAPP's tasks are to formulate regulations and development plans for the news and publishing industry, to monitor all publishing activities, and investigate as well as prosecute illegal publishing activities. Most importantly, it is charged with granting and revoking licenses to all work units involved in publishing activities, which gives it significant leverage to enforce regulations and guidelines. Cf. Yongnian Zheng and Lye Liang Fook, "Re-making the Party's Image: Challenges for the Propaganda Department," in *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*, eds. John Wong and Hongyi Lai (Singapore: World Scientific, 2006), 123, 125.

⁹⁰ SARFT is a ministerial level body in charge of administering the broadcasting industry. Like GAPP, it is under the joint leadership of the CPD and the State Council. Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 17.

⁹¹ This system is known as "administrative chief executive responsibility under the leadership of the Party Committee" (*dangwei lingdao xia de xingzheng shouzhang fuzezhi* 党委领导下的行政首长负责制). Cf. Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 17.

⁹² Cf. Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 18. Also see Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, second edition), 17.

Fragmented Authority

The most important framework used to analyze contemporary Chinese politics and policy making in the post-Mao Chinese bureaucracy, “fragmented authoritarianism” (*fenge de quanwei zhuyi* 分割的威权主义) model was developed by Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1990).⁹³ As the name suggests, it argues that authority in the Chinese bureaucracy is not centralized but segmented, resulting in different bureaucratic players of equal rank engaging in “bureaucratic bargaining” and making compromises to realize their own interests. The “fragmented authoritarianism” model was originally developed on the basis of material from the energy policy sector and therefore cannot be easily applied to external propaganda studies. The authority structure in the Party-dominated propaganda sector as well as in the foreign affairs bureaucracy, which touches on issues of national security, is much more centralized. Nonetheless, the propaganda sector forces a number of bureaucracies, largely of equal rank (with a few exceptions), to devise and implement policies together, and individual bureaucracies have the possibility to work against certain reforms that are against their interests.

Leading Small Groups

At the top of each important field or policy sector at the central level is a Leading Small Group (LSG) that analyses the situation in the sector and acts as the *de facto* decision maker for the PBSC.⁹⁴ LSG are usually comprised of leading

⁹³ Kenneth Lieberthal and Michel Oksenberg, *Policy Making in China: Leaders, Structures, and Processes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

⁹⁴ Small groups were initially intended to strengthen party control over government work, countering the initial policy of the early 1950s to separate party and state. In June 1958, government work was divided into five areas (finance and economy, politics and law, foreign affairs, science, and culture and education). Small groups that reported directly to the Politburo and the Party Secretariat were created for each of these sectors. The origin of small groups through the division of government work into “gateways” (*kou*) is traced back as early as 1953. Through the establishment of small groups, Mao could weaken the power of the prime minister (Shaw Chong-hai 邵宗海, “Zhonggong zhongyang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu zuzhi dingwei” 中共中央工作领导小组组织定位 [The organization and position of leading small groups of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China], website of National Chengchi University, www3.nccu.edu.tw/~chshaw/clg_staus.doc, accessed April 18, 2010, 6). On August 18, 1980, Deng Xiaoping addressed the problem of separating party and government again more clearly at the extended meeting of the Politburo (*ibid.*, 7). In 1986, Deng again stressed the need for political reform in the form of strict separation of party and state. This, however, was never intended to weaken the power of the party (*ibid.*, 8). According to some scholars, it was during the 1980s that the LSG were transformed from coordinating bodies supervising the state bureaucracy and subordinate to the CPC Secretariat to decision

cadres from both pertinent Party and state bureaucracies. The establishment and abolition of LSG is fairly flexible and according to (perceived) needs. Hence, some LSG have existed for a long time while others had only a short life span. LSG at any level are not automatically of equal standing and importance; their weight depends on the ranks of their constituent members.⁹⁵ Party Committees at all levels can create LSG,⁹⁶ although sub-central committees often do so following a directive from their central level equivalent.⁹⁷ The party committees of media units also create LSG for specific tasks. For instance, in 1998, Xinhua 新华 established the Leading Small Group for Responding to Sudden Events (*Tufa shijian yingji zhihui lingdao xiaozu* 突发事件应急指挥领导小组).⁹⁸

Policies deliberated in central LSG in regular mode and ratified by the central leadership usually indicate the general policy direction only and are open for interpretation and translation into actual policies by standing bodies, such as the various ministries and departments.⁹⁹ Perhaps even more importantly, during times of crisis, LSG frequently convene to make *ad hoc* decisions.¹⁰⁰

Several sources state that Leading Small Groups are advisory bodies and officially do not have any decision making powers, but their suggestions are usually adopted by the central leadership.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, the term *leading* actually suggests that they have the authority to make and enforce policies with relative autonomy. Although information about LSG is very sketchy and contradictory, the most important difference between Small Groups and Leading Small Groups appears to be that the latter have direct access to the Politburo because they are headed by one of its members.¹⁰² A similar distinction is made

making bodies directly under the PBSC and equal in rank with the Secretariat. Hence, their status was actually elevated under the policy of separating party and state. Cf. *ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁵ Cf. Lu Ning, "The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies," 47.

⁹⁶ Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 21.

⁹⁷ This was largely the case with external propaganda, for example, as will be seen below.

⁹⁸ Yan Wenbin 严文斌, "Shijixing tongxunshu yu tufa shijian duiwai baodao" 世界性通讯社与突发事件对外报道 [A world news agency and reporting sudden events abroad], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1998): 12.

⁹⁹ Cf. Lu Ning, "The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies," 50.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Thomas Bondiguel and Thierry Kellner, "The Impact of China's Foreign Policy Think Tanks," *BICCS Asia Paper* (2010): 18.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Shaw, "Zhonggong zhongyang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu zuzhi dingwei." Alice Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 26 (2008):1, available online at <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM26AM.pdf>, accessed August 12, 2012.

¹⁰² This was tentatively suggested to me in an interview with a communication studies professor (I). Interview, Beijing, April 2011. None of the Central LSG for which information is available

between leading departments (*lingdao bumen* 领导部门), which are headed by a member of the Politburo and regular departments of ministerial level under the Central Committee.¹⁰³

Chains of Command: Vertical and Horizontal Divisions

The entire Chinese bureaucracy is ordered according to two grids: *tiao* 条, referring to the vertical chain of command according to sector, i.e. one central organization and its sub-branches all over the country, and *kuai* 块, the horizontal bureaucracy, i.e. all organizations within one administrative unit, such as a department or a locale.¹⁰⁴ A strict *kuai* hierarchy structure would mean that the party committee or government at a particular level had sole authority over a unit within its jurisdiction; no other unit would be authorized to give it binding orders. A strict *tiao* hierarchy would mean that a local propaganda department would only take orders from the propaganda department at the superordinate level and would not have to take orders from the party committee at the same level. Most often, a combination of the two is used. Such an integration of vertical and horizontal chains of command is called “integration of vertical and horizontal bureaucracies” (*tiao kuai jiehe* 条块结合), and usually needs to specify which arrangement takes precedence in case of a conflict.¹⁰⁵ In the post-Mao period, as part of the movement towards decentralization, there was a trend towards rearrangement from favoring vertical towards favoring horizontal authority structures, that is, local party committees and local governments gained in power over their subordinate units at the same administrative level.

contradict this; all are headed by a member of the Politburo or, the more powerful ones, by a PBSC member. For the members of different LSG, see Miller, “The CCP Central Committee’s Leading Small Groups.”

¹⁰³ The distinction is, for example, mentioned in Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 45.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution through Reform* (London: W.W. Norton, 1995), 169-170.

¹⁰⁵ “Integration of vertical and horizontal bureaucracies with precedence given to the horizontal bureaucracy” (*tiao kuai jiehe, yi kuai wei zhu* 条块结合, 以块为主) means that a unit is led both by the party committee or government at its own administrative level and by its own equivalent or superior unit at its superordinate level, but that if in doubt, the local party committee or government’s decision is more important. “Giving precedence to the vertical bureaucracy” (*yi tiao wei zhu* 以条为主) conversely means that the orders given by a subordinate unit at a higher level (usually a specialized department) outweigh those given by the local party committee or government. See Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 169-170, who also introduces these principles, albeit without explaining most of the Chinese vocabulary.

Administrative Ranks

In the Chinese bureaucracy, each institution has a rank that determines its powers vis-à-vis other institutions as well as its access to information within the system. In the vertical (*tiao*) grid, ranks below the central (*zhongyang* 中央) or national (*guojia* 国家) level¹⁰⁶ are – in descending order – the department/ministry¹⁰⁷ (*bu* 部), the bureau (*ju* 局, or *ting* 厅), the office (*chu* 处), and the division (*ke* 科). Their hierarchical equivalents in the *kuai* grid are the province (*sheng* 省), the prefecture (*di* 地), the county (*xian* 县), and the township (*xiang* 乡). Each of these levels is further subdivided into full (*zheng* 正) and deputy (*fu* 副) status, so that a unit of vice-ministerial rank (*fu bu* 副部长) is below the ministries and provinces, but above the bureaus and prefectures in the power hierarchy. Previously, each unit, including state-owned enterprises and service units, automatically had a fixed rank in the hierarchy, although in recent years, attempts have been made to abolish the ranking system for certain sectors, such as for universities, for better and more economical management of personnel.¹⁰⁸ For ministries and departments, however, the ranking naturally still applies. The Office of External Propaganda, for example, has the rank of a ministry (*zhengbuji* 正部级).¹⁰⁹ In the past, there was a clear division between bodies called *bu* 部, which had ministerial level, and those called commission (*weiyuanhui* 委员会), which usually ranked higher at full or deputy national level (as they usually supervised several ministries). Today, some bodies that are headed by Politburo

¹⁰⁶ Usually, the prefix central is used for Party institutions, while national is used for state institutions.

¹⁰⁷ Party organs are called “department” whereas state organs are translated as “ministries” into English, but the Chinese term is *bu* in both cases.

¹⁰⁸ See “Zhongguo jiang quxiao gaoxiao deng shiye danwei xingzheng jibie” 中国将取消高校等事业单位行政级别 [China will eliminate administrative levels for service units such as universities], *People’s Daily* Online, June 7, 2010, <http://finance.people.com.cn/GB/11800797.html>, accessed October 25, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu huifu zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu de tongzhi” 中共中央关于恢复中央对外宣传小组的通知 [Notification from the CPC Central Committee on the resurrection of the Central External Propaganda Small Group], *Zhongwei* [1990] no. 48, March 19, 1990, reprinted in Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongshi, ed., *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)* [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1988-1992)] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 1904.

members, such as the Central Propaganda Department, also have a higher rank than others, but the name (*bu* 部 or *wei* 委) is no longer a criterion to tell.

The Nomenklatura System

One important mechanism through which control over lower levels can be maintained is the Chinese equivalent of the Soviet *nomenklatura* Номенклатура, called *zhiwu mingcheng biao* 职务名称表 in Chinese, i.e. the list of leadership positions of subordinate organs to be appointed by an upper rank party committee. Positions on each *nomenklatura* list are listed in hierarchical order, indicating the importance of each post and its associated unit. For instance, since 1992, the head of CPD has been listed above the head of the Central Organization Department in the central *nomenklatura*.¹¹⁰ Each party committee Organization Department manages (*guanli* 管理)¹¹¹ the cadres below. In the past, the reach would go down two levels. For instance, the Organization Department of the Central Committee would be responsible for leading cadres (head and vice heads in both the party and the state) at ministerial and provincial as well as at bureau and prefectural level. In recent years, control has been relaxed. While appointments at the bureau and prefectural level still need to be reported to the Centre,¹¹² only ministerial and provincial level leading positions (both full, *zheng* 正, and deputy, *fu* 副) are actually appointed by the Center.¹¹³ This means that for a ministerial level body, such as the Office of External Propaganda, the director and deputy directors are appointed by the Center, whereas other positions are recruited through exams or other recruitment processes, with bureau-level heads also reported to the Center. The *nomenklatura* should not be confused with the *bianzhi* 编制, which fixes the number of posts within one unit.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 23.

¹¹¹ “Management” encompasses inspecting (*kaocha* 考察), providing further training (*peiyang* 培养), choosing (*xuanbo* 选拔), recommending (*tuijian* 推荐) [i.e. recommending to the state bureaucracy], supervising (*jiandu* 监督), and dismissing (*renmian* 任免) cadres. Cf. Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 20.

¹¹² Cf. Hon S. Chan, “Cadre Personnel Management in China: The Nomenklatura System, 1990–1998,” *The China Quarterly* 179 (September 2004): 705.

¹¹³ Cf. Yu Keping, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 19. These positions are listed on the *Zhonggong Zhongyang guanli ganbu mingchengbiao* 中共中央管理干部名称表. Cf. Chan, “Cadre Personnel Management in China,” 705.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard, “Institutional Reform and the *Bianzhi* System in China,” *The China Quarterly* 170 (June 2002):363; Chan “Cadre Personnel Management in China.”

Although most positions on the Central Committee's *nomenklatura* as well as at lower levels are still appointed by the Central Organization Department and its lower local counterparts, other departments (propaganda, united front, etc.) also have responsibilities to varying degrees of managing cadres at their level. For instance, the propaganda department at any certain level will (often in conjunction with the organization department) manage cadres of the same level and one level below belonging to departments related to culture, art, education, broadcasting, television, research, etc.¹¹⁵

Types of Units and Types of Relationships

With increasing institutionalization and codification of the functioning of the Chinese bureaucracy under the policy of “governing the country by law” (*yi fa zhi guo* 依法治国) that gained traction in the 1990s,¹¹⁶ a large number of different types of units have been defined either through laws or other official documents. First, with regard to types of units, a differentiation needs to be made between standing bodies (*changshe jigou* 常设机构) and non-standing bodies (*fei changshe jigou* 非常设机构). The two are often referred to as “real agencies” (*shiti jigou* 实体机构) and “nominal agencies” (*xushe jigou* 虚设机构), respectively.¹¹⁷ A standing body has a fixed office address, a fixed number of staff (i.e. a fixed *bianzhi* 编制), and exists for a relatively long time.¹¹⁸ Conversely, a non-standing body does not have an office or permanent staff and is usually composed of leading cadres from various party and state bureaucracies that hold membership in the body *ex officio*. An important example of non-standing bodies is LSG, whose function will be explained below.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Yu Keping *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 20. Also see Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 14, 16.

¹¹⁶ The “rule by law” (*fazhi*) was first introduced into the Party agenda as part of the project to ‘build a Socialist spiritual civilization’ in 1995. In 1999, the principle to “rule the country in accordance with the law” (*yi fa zhi guo*) was included in the Chinese Constitution. Zhu Weijiu, “Towards Governance by Rule of Law,” in *China’s Journey Toward the Rule of Law: Legal Reform, 1978-2008*, eds. Dingjian Cai and Chenguang Wang (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 103-104.

¹¹⁷ Cf. “Ge lei jigou jianjie” 各类机构简介 [Introduction of various (types of) structures], website of the government of Emin county in Xinjiang, <http://www.xjem.gov.cn/bw/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=10967>. Aug 18, 2010.

¹¹⁸ Cf. “Ge lei jigou jianjie.” Also see Yu Keping *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi*, 92.

In late 1987 a new system was introduced under which all institutions under the Central Committee had to be assigned one of three categories: **decision-making advisory organs** (*juece zixun jigou* 决策咨询机构), **executive organs** (*banshi jigou* 办事机构) or **work departments** (*gongzuo bumen* 工作部门), and **service organs** (*shiye jigou* 事业机构).¹¹⁹ Decision-making advisory bodies are commissions/committees or LSG responsible for assisting the Central Leadership in macro policy making. They are usually non-standing bodies. Executive organs or work departments are the standing bodies of LSG or other non-standing bodies. For instance, in 1988, the CPD was defined as a general work department (*zonghexing gongzuo bumen* 综合性工作部门) under the dual leadership of the CC and the Propaganda and Thought Work LSG.¹²⁰ They have a permanent office and permanent staff that do administrative work on behalf of their LSG. All party departments, including the Central Propaganda Department, are executive organs or work departments with administrative powers. Service organs, on the other hand, are organs which carry out procedures or tasks on behalf of and provide services for other units. Examples are media units (most importantly the *People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报)), and educational institutions (most importantly the Central Party School).

There is one more important distinction between different types of departments at the highest level, namely between **leading departments** (*lingdao bumen* 领导部门) and **institutions directly under the central committee** (*zhongyang zhishu jigou* 中央直属机构). One major difference, as the name already suggests, is that leading departments can circulate documents with new policies or policy directions on their own, whereas institutions directly under the central committee usually write documents that first need to be approved by and then distributed through the Center.¹²¹ This is an important difference between the Central Propaganda Department and the Office of External Propaganda. The CPD is a leading department which circulates orders directly (called *zhong xuan fa* 中宣发). The Office of External Propaganda (*Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai*

¹¹⁹ Cf. Lu Ning, "The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies," 46.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui*, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 231.

¹²¹ CPD had to do the same during the Mao period. Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 36.

xuanchuan bangongshi 中共对外宣传办公室, OEP), on the other hand, is a unit directly under the Center, so it produces Opinions and sends them to the Center for approval. In addition, there are structures which are not directly under the authority of the central committee and therefore cannot communicate with the Center directly but have to go through the unit leading them.

The relationship between two units defines what rights and duties they have towards each other. One relationship is the **leading-led relation** (*lingdao yu bei lingdao guanxi* 领导与被领导关系). In this case, the leading unit is fully in charge of the led unit and can issue legally binding orders that have to be carried out.¹²² The second is the **guiding-guided relation** (*zhidao yu bei zhidao guanxi* 指导与被指导关系). Here, one unit provides “guidance” to another in its area of expertise, but its legal repertoire of punishments if the guided unit does not follow the suggestions is limited. In addition, the activities of a unit led or guided by another unit can be subdivided into **administrative work** (*xingzheng* 行政) and **professional work** (*yewu* 业务).

For professional work both leadership (*yewu lingdao* 业务领导) and guidance (*yewu zhidao* 业务指导) are possible.¹²³ In this area, it is again possible to establish a key difference between the propaganda and thought work sector and the external propaganda sector with regard to their relationship with their lower level equivalents. The central propaganda department leads propaganda departments at departmental/provincial level and below.¹²⁴ In the external propaganda sector, however, the Central Office of External Propaganda only has a guiding relationship over its lower level equivalents (*zai yewu shang zhidao* 在业务上指导).¹²⁵

¹²² Such a relationship can only exist if the leading unit has a higher administrative rank than the unit led, although the reverse is not true: higher rank does not automatically mean being allowed to issue binding orders.

¹²³ Lieberthal still presents all professional relationships (*yewu guanxi* 业务关系) as non-binding (*Governing China*, 170). However, this is clearly not the case.

¹²⁴ Yongnian Zheng and Liang Fook Lye, “Re-making the Party’s Image: Challenges for the Propaganda Department,” in *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*, eds. John Wong and Hongyi Lai (Singapore: World Scientific, 2006), 128.

¹²⁵ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan*, vol. 2, 45.

Management According to Sectoral Division (guikou guanli 归口管理)

One particularity of the Chinese bureaucracy that dates back to the Mao period is an arrangement called **management according to sectoral/functional division** (*guikou guanli* 归口管理). This expression traces back to the time when state work was still clearly grouped into “gateways” (*kou*), each under the supervision of a party small group. It basically refers to a vertical (*tiao*) authority structure, i.e. a unit that is actually formally established under a different geographical or sectoral unit, but is – either professionally or completely – led by its functional equivalent higher up in the bureaucracy. The subordinate units in a *guikou guanli* relation are usually referred to as **vertical structures** (*chui zhi ji gou* 垂直机构).¹²⁶

In external propaganda, just like during the Mao period, this results in an elaborate division of work between different departments, in which each department is responsible for those aspects of external propaganda that touch on its area of expertise, either in terms of content, or in terms of target audience. For instance, the OEP is responsible for reporting “general” (*zonghexing* 综合性) domestic news to foreigners, excluding news specifically aimed at ethnic Chinese, which is the responsibility of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for reporting international news, while military news always need to be handled through the military propaganda system.¹²⁷ News related to culture, trade, or tourism are most likely the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Commerce, and the National Tourism Administration respectively.¹²⁸ The advantage of the *guikou guanli* system is that

¹²⁶ “Management” primarily refers to the management of cadres, the principal avenue for exerting control. However, the term is also used in relation to the division of work along sectoral lines in a particular field. See for example Huang Zecun 黄泽存, *Xin shiqi duiwai xuanchuan lungao* 新时期对外宣传论稿 [Preliminary discussions of external propaganda in the new period] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2002), 264.

¹²⁷ The Liberation Army Daily (*Jiefangjun ribao* 解放军日报) is directly under the command of the Propaganda Department of the General Political Office of the People’s Liberation Army. Cf. David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China’s Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 135. The assumption that the PLA GPD is probably the only organ authorized to release military news is also confirmed by the observation that it was only through a co-operation with the *PLA Daily* that English translations of military news could be made available on the *China Daily* website. Cf. Peng Lan 彭兰, *Zhongguo wangluo meiti de di yi ge shi nian* 中国网络媒体的第一个十年 [The first ten years of China’s Internet media] (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2005), 32.

¹²⁸ This is inferred from “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo shixing guikou guanli, fengong fuze zhidu de yijian” 关于对外宣工作实行归口管理、分工负责制度的意见 [Opinion on

for each news category, the highest organization in charge is also the one that understands the sector best and can therefore make sure that news do not contradict policy, but in real life, this arrangement requires a lot of coordination and cooperation between different departments, a process that is both time-consuming and a potential source of conflict.

4.3 Other Factors Influencing the Policy Process

This last section introduces a number of institutions and mechanisms that impact policy making and implementation in China at various levels. This includes things such as political cycles, established modes of policy-making (such as experimentation), conventions of macro policy-making (slogans), and channels of communication, to list a few.

Political Cycles

Just like electoral cycles impact policy debates and the range of choices available to a particular political actor in democracies, certain events and cycles exert influence on how policy making takes place in China. First, China took over the habit of making five-year-plans (as well as fifteen-year-plans or “long term goals,” *yuanjing mubiao* 远景目标¹²⁹) from the Soviet Union. These five-year-plans basically cover all policy fields, including propaganda and thought work and

implementing the system of management according to gateway and division of labor in external propaganda work], *Tingzi* 厅字 [1993] 22 hao 号 [Note from the General Office of the Shandong Provincial party Committee [1993] no. 22], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian 1992-1998* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编 (1992-1998) [Document collection on Shandong Province’s external propaganda work (1992-1998)], eds. Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People’s Government of Shandong Province] (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1999), vol. 1, 6. The result of this arrangement at the level of individual media units is that different editorial departments are led or guided by different departments or ministries. For instance, Xinhua’s International News Department would have to coordinate with the MFA, whereas Xinhua’s External News Department works together with the OEP. If a sudden event occurs in any of these fields, media need to check not only with CPD, but also with the relevant ministry or department before releasing news. Cf. *ibid.* Also see “Youguan jiqing de baodao yao yange baguan” 有关疫情的报道要严格把关 [Reports on epidemics need to be checked strictly], *Neibu tongxin* 内部通信 [Internal communications], no. 21 (2001): 8.

¹²⁹ For an external propaganda five-year-plan at the provincial level, see for example “1996 nian – 2000 nian Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan shiye fazhan guihua” 1996 年—2000 年对外宣传事业发展规划 [Development plan for Shandong’s external propaganda work between 1996 and 2000], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol. 1, 27.

external propaganda work. While an overall plan exists, each sector also produces its own five and fifteen-year-plans. As opposed to the earlier days of the Mao period, five-year-plan cycles have been very regular since 1966. Thus, at any point in time, China is at a certain (and relatively predictable) stage in the planning, drafting, implementation, and evaluation of a particular five-year-plan.

Another benchmark in the policy process is the National Congress of the CPC, which takes place every five years, and, less importantly, its government equivalent, the National People's Congress (NPC), which takes place once a year, usually in March, and is also newly reconstituted every five years. Both events mark, first, a power transitions (nearly complete replacing every ten years, partial power transition at the congress in between) and, second, the opportunity to formalize the policy focus on the party for the coming five years. Due to the fact that most cadres occupy a position both in the Party and in the state bureaucracy, they first take over the party position at the party congress, usually held in fall, and then formally get power in the state bureaucracy at the annual NPC held in spring of the following year. For institutions like OEP/State Council Information Office (*Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi* 国务院新闻办公室, SCIO) that are part of the party bureaucracy but presented as part of the state, it must be assumed that the actual power hand-over takes place in fall, but cannot be publically announced until the next spring. In addition, the occurrence of a National Party Congress also greatly impacts the media environment. Media regulations as well as enforcement are tightened significantly in the year that a Party Congress takes place, and many positions that can otherwise be expressed become taboo.¹³⁰

In a one-party-state in which the ruling party has relatively tight control over the media, different modes of controlled debates are possible than in a country whose political debates are influenced or shaped by multi-party elections. This set-up makes it possible to raise and drop certain slogans and debates fairly easily. Of course, this does not mean that there is no competition whatsoever over who gets to dominate the discourse, but disagreements (whether real or contrived) are usually not fought out in public. Thus, the parts of the debate which are available in public or in the semi-public are influenced by and adapted to political cycles.

¹³⁰ Cf. "Reminwang jiaqiang 'Qiangguo luntan' guanli" 人民网加强'强国论坛'管理 [People's Daily Online reinforces control of 'Strong Nation Forum'], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 19, 2002, 13-15.

The Role of Experiments

In its reform and opening project, the CPC has chosen gradual or incremental reforms. This is usually contrasted with the approach later taken in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which went for more sweeping reforms.¹³¹ Incrementalism is not only limited to the economic sector, but has been applied to all other arenas as well. One of the most important features of incremental reforms that constitutes a particularity of the Chinese policy process is the use of experiments.

Studies on the policy process usually break down the policy cycle into different stages. This division is artificial in terms of time, as usually all stages overlap to a higher or lower degree, but is useful to isolate and examine different steps in the process. The first stage is **agenda setting**. Analyses of agenda setting deal with the question how a certain issue comes to the attention of a government or other political authority. In the second stage, **policy formulation**, different options to solve the (perceived) problem are presented to policy makers by different stakeholders. Studies of the third stage, **decision-making**, assess why a specific policy option is chosen over another. The fourth stage is **policy implementation**. Here, the object of enquiry is how the policy is implemented and what unintended outcomes it might produce. The fifth and final stage is **policy evaluation**.¹³²

While the stages of policy processes that have been identified in academic literature are always artificial to a certain degree and blur in reality, the Chinese case is special in that China has not been restricted by the need to legislate new policies before implementing them.¹³³ Instead, it has been possible for China to

¹³¹ Cf. Jeffrey Sachs and Wing Thye Woo, "Structural Factors in the Economic Reforms of China, Eastern Europe, and the Former Soviet Union," *Economic Policy* 9, no. 18 (April 1994): 101. As the title already indicates, this article rejects the "gradual versus sweeping reform" thesis, arguing that structural factors accounted for the differences in how reforms played out.

¹³² There are various different categorizations of stages in the policy process. I am using this division into five stages as introduced in Michael Howett and M. Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13.

¹³³ Sebastian Heilmann, "Experimentation under Hierarchy: Policy Experiments in the Reorganization of China's State Sector, 1978-2008," CID Working Paper no. 172 (June 2008), http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezp_site/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/centers-programs/centers/cid/publications/faculty/wp/172.pdf, accessed August 11, 2012, 3.

“cross the river by feeling the stones,” (*mozhe shitou guo he* 摸着石头过河)¹³⁴ or to “feel its way” (*mosuo* 摸索). The approach of experiments has been justified by the Chinese definition of “understanding” (*renshi* 认识), whereby one always needs to gain experience through practice first and then re-apply one’s preliminary understanding to practice to refine it (cf. chapter 4.1).

The study of experiments as a part of the PRC political process first concentrated on the economic sector in the post-Mao period, where consequently the practice is very well documented.¹³⁵ The origins of the policy can be traced back to the earliest days of the CPC. Even before the founding of the PRC, experimentation was affirmed as legitimate practice during the Rectification Movement in Yan’an 延安.¹³⁶ During the early Mao period, the Center frequently used “experimental points” (*shidian* 试点) to try a policy first before implementing it on a larger scale.¹³⁷ The approach was weakened in the ideologically charged climate marked by attempts at rapid modernization as well as Mao’s attempts to reassert his authority after 1957.¹³⁸ In the post-Mao period, the policy regained in importance and was applied to economic reforms in a modified form.¹³⁹ For proponents of reform, it served as a vital strategy to overcome domestic opposition to the reform and opening policies in a situation in which opponents wielded strong ideological arguments.¹⁴⁰ Today, the policy usually comes in three stages: “From point, to line, to surface” (*cong dian dao xian dao mian* 从点到线到面): A policy is first tried - with approval from the Center - in one place or very few places. If it is evaluated as successful, a larger number of locales or sectors implement the policy in a second test stage before it is adopted on a national level.

¹³⁴ Although the slogan is attributed to Deng Xiaoping, it was actually coined by Chen Yun and only later applied to characterize China’s overall economic reform approach. Sebastian Heilmann, “From Local Experiments to National Policy: The Origins of China’s Distinctive Policy Process,” *The China Journal*, no. 59 (2008): 26.

¹³⁵ E.g. Heilmann, “Experimentation under Hierarchy.”

¹³⁶ Cf. Heilmann, “From Local Experiments to National Policy,” 4-8.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-16.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 25-27.

¹⁴⁰ Heilmann, “Experimentation under Hierarchy,” 1.

Channels of Appropriation in the Chinese Party-State

The current policy to absorb advanced technology and other experience from abroad was formally (re-)established in 1978 and 1979 as part of the reform and opening package. Pragmatically, the policy has been justified by arguing that through drawing on foreign expertise and experience, China can develop faster;¹⁴¹ ideologically, the CPC can argue that the Law of the Negation of the Negation mandates this policy.¹⁴² The practices of learning from capitalist countries and of accepting foreign investment were legitimized in one go in late 1978 and early 1979.¹⁴³ Notably, especially since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, “using the foreign to serve China” has also referred to negative models.¹⁴⁴ For external propaganda work, authors frequently suggest to appropriate other countries’ practices and techniques. For instance, Egypt has been held up as a model for China for how to successfully portray oneself as an ancient civilization and promote oneself as a tourist destination.¹⁴⁵ In the early 21st century, when

¹⁴¹ Speeding China’s development up by various means is referred to as “winning time” (*zhengqu shijian* 争取时间).

¹⁴² The law of the negation of the negation (Gesetz von der Negation der Negation), attributed to Engels, means that as a stage or level of a thing is negated (i.e. when the thing moves on to a higher stage or level), the good things from the lower stage or level are kept.

¹⁴³ Its initial difficult standing becomes apparent when looking at the texts that were adduced to justify the policy, namely writings by Lenin, Stalin, and Mao on the usefulness of absorbing foreign knowledge. Cf. “Le yu xiqu waiguo de ao dongxi - jieshao zuijin chuci yicheng zhongwen de Lienin lunshu” 乐于吸取外国的好东西 ——介绍最近初次译成中文的列宁论述 [Happily absorb the good things from abroad – Introducing one of Lenin’s expositions recently translated into Chinese for the first time], *Cankao ziliao* 参考资料 [Reference Materials], no. 2, (1978): 22-26. Issue 1, 1979 of *Cankao ziliao* first offered a compilation of Mao’s writings on learning from progressive foreign experience (“Mao zhuxi guanyu xuexi waiguo xianjin jingyan he kexue jishu de bufen lunshu” 毛主席关于学习外国先进经验和科学技术的部分论述 [A part of Chairman Mao’s exposition on learning from foreigners advanced experience and science and technology], *Cankao ziliao*, no. 1 (1979): 2-6) and then added remarks by Hua Guofeng, Ye Jianying, Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiannian, and Fang Yi on the need to absorb foreign technology and other advanced knowledge or experience (“Zhongyang lingdao tongzhi guanyu xuexi waiguo xianjin jingyan he yinjin waizi, jishu zhuangbei de zhishi” 中央领导同志关于学习外国先进经验和引进外资、技术装备的指示 [Instructions from central leading comrades on learning from foreign advanced experience and introducing foreign investment, technology, and equipment], *Cankao ziliao*, no. 1 (1979): 17-25).

¹⁴⁴ Both Brady’s *Marketing Dictatorship* and Shambaugh’s *China’s Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* already mention that the Soviet Union serves as a powerful counter-model. Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 175-176; David Shambaugh, *China’s Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 126.

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Li Xin 黎信, “‘Mingxing’ shi zenyang shengqi de – Aiji lüyou xuanchuan jieshao” ‘明星’是怎样升起的——埃及旅游宣传介绍 [How did the ‘star’ rise – An introduction to Egyptian tourism propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (1990): 5-7.

China tried to expand its cultural propaganda, one author stressed that China needed to learn from countries such as the U.S. and Japan.¹⁴⁶

I will distinguish here between four different routes in which foreign experiences and debates held in or across other countries reach China, all of which are also established in various different forms and to various degrees in other countries.¹⁴⁷ The first is extended intelligence work, including the systematic and organized translation of news clippings from the foreign press as much as the monitoring of academic and other trends abroad, including the translation and introduction of key works to China. Through this route, countries pick up large amounts of information about new developments and discussions abroad. The second route is exchange and cooperation with individual foreigners as well as with foreign organizations and is usually geared towards rather specific knowledge and concrete skills. The third is transnational networks. The fourth is systematic studies of different approaches to a similar problem across different countries. These four will be introduced in more detail below.

Like most other countries, China monitors media and academic trends abroad. This was already the case during the Mao period. For instance, Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*¹⁴⁸ was translated and published internally in 1962.¹⁴⁹ The number of units involved in the translation of material that is publically available abroad is huge. For news media, Xinhua carries the heaviest responsibility and has an elaborate system for internal reporting (both for original reports and for relaying translations from foreign media to various groups of people with different levels of "clearance"). While some point out Xinhua's mandate to collect intelligence as a particularity of China,

¹⁴⁶ Xu Ge 许革, "Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan yu shi jujin de ji dian sikao" 关于对外宣传与时俱进的几点思考 [A few thoughts on external propaganda going with the times], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2003): 7.

¹⁴⁷ Needless to say, these do not exhaustively describe all channels through which China appropriates knowledge and experience from abroad.

¹⁴⁸ Walt Whitman Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1960).

¹⁴⁹ Luosituo 罗斯托 [Walt Whitman Rostow], *Jingji chengzhang de jieduan: fei gongchandang xuanyan* 经济成长的阶段——非共产党宣言 [Translation of *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*], trans. Guoji guanxi yanjiusuo bianyishi 国际关系研究所编译室 [Translation and compilation office of the research center for international relations] (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1962. Published internally). The book was officially introduced as "negative teaching material" (*fanmian jiaocai* 反面教材) so as to enable Chinese to understand and criticize Rostow's "reactionary theory." Li Zongzheng 李宗正, "Jianping Luosituo de *Jingji chengzhang de jieduan*" 简评罗斯托的《经济成长的阶段》 [Short criticism of Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth*], in Luosituo, *Jingji chengzhang de jieduan*, 7.

the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) International Service has been gathering information on developments around the world since the 1930s, and the Voice of America network has, similarly, been used to gather intelligence.

The most widely read publication is *Reference News* (*Cankao xiaoxi* 参考消息), edited by Xinhua's Reference Department (*cankao bianji bu* 参考编辑部), which has been openly available (*gongkai* 公开) since the 1980s.¹⁵⁰ *Reference News* itself does not have the mission to provide the Center with intelligence, but has a propaganda mandate and is used as a channel to provide ordinary Chinese citizens with carefully selected news from foreign media. However, it is at the lowest level of a system that is set up in order to feed information to China's leaders: *Reference News* also has a *qingyang* 清样 edition with a much more limited distribution that contains very sensitive news (Chinese arms sales, espionage allegations against China, etc.). While openly available or lower-level internal (*neibu* 内部) media serve no intelligence purpose and cannot predict what is contained in higher level publications, they demonstrate the breadth of what is translated into Chinese on a daily basis.

In addition, Xinhua carries a large number of other internal publications with foreign press clippings or reports on foreign affairs classified as top-secret (*juemi* 绝密), confidential (*jimi* 机密) or as secret (*mimi* 秘密).¹⁵¹ One example is *Internal Reference Materials [about] International [Affairs]* (*Guoji neican* 国际内参), which is classified as "confidential."¹⁵² Lower classifications include the note "internal material" (*neibu cailiao* 内部材料 or *neibu ziliao* 内部资料) or

¹⁵⁰ *Cankao xiaoxi* has been available to all Chinese since the 1980s. *Cankao xiaoxi* also has a *qingyang* 清样 edition with a much more limited distribution (usually classified as *juemi* 绝密) that contains very sensitive news (Chinese arms sales, espionage allegations against China, etc.). Cf. Lu Ning, "The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies," 53.

¹⁵¹ Cf. "Bude gongkai yinyong fabiao Xinhuashe neican de shemi cailiao" 不得公开引用发表新华社内参的涉密材料 [Do not quote or publish classified material from Xinhua News Agency's internal publications], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 17 (2002): 13. The classification is according to Article nine of the Law on Protecting State Secrets (保守国家秘密法 *Baoshou guojia mimi fa*). Cf. *Zhongguo zhengfu ruhe kongzhi meiti* 中国政府如何控制媒体 [Parallel English title: Media control in China], report by Human Rights in China (HRIC), 2004, 43. The report is available online at http://ir2008.org/PDF/initiatives/Internet/Media-Control_Chinese.pdf, accessed December 17, 2012.

¹⁵² See "Huanying dingue 2005niandu Xinhushe jimiji kanwu *Guoji neican*" 欢迎订阅 2005 年度新华通讯社机密级刊物《国际内参》 [Call to subscribe to the confidential Xinhua publication *International internal reference* for 2005], *Xinhuanet*, <http://www.jl.xinhuanet.com/shangye/neican/guojineican/guojineican.htm>, accessed December 30, 2012.

“only for distribution within China” (*xian guonei faxing* 限国内发行). Many of these publications also feature translations of texts originally published abroad. Xinhua’s many internal publications, however, are only the tip of the iceberg at the central-national and general or “non-subject-specific” (*zonghe* 综合) level. Party committees at lower levels usually also have institutional structures to provide them with press clippings from the foreign press on more or less particular topics.¹⁵³

For academic trends in the humanities and social sciences, the most important responsibilities at the central level lie with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS),¹⁵⁴ the Central Party School,¹⁵⁵ and various different centers of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau.¹⁵⁶ Again, most major units and governments tend to have their own institutions for keeping track of general or specific international trends.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ For example, one article on Guangzhou’s external propaganda structures explains that one responsibility of the External Propaganda Division of the Guangzhou Municipal Propaganda Department (广州市委宣传部外宣处) is to edit the journal *Selections from the Overseas Press* (*Haiwai baokan xuanji* 海外报刊选辑), consisting of selected press clippings from the foreign press for the municipal party committee and government. “Guangzhou waixuanchu ‘liu si’ yilai shi ruhe kaizhan gongzuo de” 广州外宣处“六四”以来是如何开展工作的 [How Guangzhou’s External Propaganda Division has worked since “June Fourth”], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 7 (1990): 11.

¹⁵⁴ CASS is a service unit officially under the direct authority of the State Council. CASS was formed in May 1977 by transforming the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the CAS into a separate academy. Cf. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* vol. A 1, 950-951.

¹⁵⁵ The Central Party School of the Communist Party of China (*Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao* 中共中央党校) is a service unit under the direct authority of the Central Committee. It is nominally headed by the deputy party secretary, meaning it is among the units under direct control of the PBSC.

¹⁵⁶ Established in 1953, the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (CCTB, *Zhongyang bianyi ju* 中央编译局) has been under the direct authority of the Central Committee since 1988. Despite its name (bureau, *ju* 局), it actually has vice-ministerial rank (*fu bu ji* 副部级). CCTB’s main responsibility is to compile and translate as well as research classical works of Marxism, to translate important Party-State documents and works by Chinese leaders, to research and develop basic Marxist theory and their applicability to Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, to research the history and current state as well as theory and practice of the global Socialist movement, and to collect and collate literature, information, and data from the field of study of Marxism and Socialism. Attached to the CCTB are a number of subordinate research centers (*zhishu jigou* 直属机构), such as the Research Center for Contemporary Marxism (*Dangdai makesi zhuyi yanjiusuo* 当代马克思主义研究所), which actively seeks international cooperation and researches such questions as good governance (cf. “Zhongyang bianyiju jianjie” 中央编译局简介 [Brief introduction to the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau], Website of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, <http://www.cctb.net/introduce/>, accessed August 13, 2012).

¹⁵⁷ For instance, The Central International Liaison Department, which manages party-to-party relations of the CPC, has an “Information Center” (*Xinxi bianyan shi* 信息编研室), which gathers information on international affairs and political parties in other countries and

The second route, exchange and cooperation also happens through a large number of different channels, including taking advice from “friends of China” as well as “foreign experts,” sending official delegations to “study” foreign news organizations, sending personnel for internships at foreign news organizations, setting up co-operations with foreign news organizations, usually by allowing foreign media companies certain access to the Chinese market in return for technology transfer or for helping Chinese products get a footing abroad, and inviting foreign guest professors or trainers. Many of these activities are today, at least in theory, coordinated through the State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs (*Guojia waiguo zhuanjia ju* 国家外国专家局, SAFEA) and its local and sectoral equivalents at lower levels in the bureaucracy. Strategies are officially divided into “inviting in” (*qing jinlai* 请进来), i.e. inviting foreigners to come to China and contribute with their expertise, and “going out” (*zou chuqu* 走出去), i.e. sending Chinese abroad to do training.¹⁵⁸ SAFEA is also responsible for devising policies and plans how to “import foreign knowledge” (*yinjin guowai zhili* 引进国外智力) into China.¹⁵⁹ In addition, central level units often have a department for cooperation with foreign organizations. For instance, the *People’s Daily* has a Department for Foreign Exchange and Cooperation (*Duiwai jiaoliu hezuo bu* 对外交流合作部, a *neishe jigou*), and the Foreign Language Press has a Department for International Cooperation (*Guoji hezuo bu* 国际合作部). In the external propaganda sector, much like in any other sector, Chinese units invite foreign experts or advisors or send foreign delegations abroad to study.¹⁶⁰ “Development

maintains a database on the latter. Cf. “Guanyu Zhonglianbu – Jigou shezhi” 关于中联部 —— 机构设置 [About the International Department of the CPC – Institutional set-up], Website of the International Department of the CPC, <http://www.idcpc.org.cn/about/jgsz.htm>, accessed November 7, 2012.

¹⁵⁸ The slogan is used differently in other contexts. On the adaptation of slogans to different sectors, see below in 4.3, “Communicating the Spirit of the Center.”

¹⁵⁹ For its responsibilities, see “Jigou zhineng” 机构职能 [Responsibilities of the institution], <http://www.safea.gov.cn/intro/jgsz.php>, accessed August 11, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ For instance, Chinese journalists also participated in the classes of the European exchange initiative ‘Journalists in Europe/ Journalistes en Europe,’ a program which still exists today (that is, in 2002-2003) and in which Chinese journalists continue to participate. Cf. Zhao Jian 赵坚, “Jizhe zai Ouzhou’ peixunban xiaoji” ‘记者在欧洲’培训班小记 [Brief notes on the training program ‘Journalists in Europe’], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (1985): 25. Some more information on the program can be found here: Sources.com: Resources for Journalists, Reporters, Writers, Freelancers, Editors, and Researchers, <http://www.sources.com/SSR/Docs/SSR12-02-JournalistesEnEurope.htm>, accessed April 25, 2012. Originally published in *Sources*, Winter 1983-1984.

aid” can be sent to China from foreign media, as was, for example, the case when the *China Daily* was set up in 1981.¹⁶¹ Hiring foreign trainers and advisors is another popular route to bring foreign expertise to China.

Participation in international organization and transnational networks obviously also serves as a link between policies in China and similar policies in other countries. Such initiatives can be official and organized at the state or Party level, unofficial, or semi-official, for instance in the form of academic exchanges. In the early years of the CPC, the Party’s most important formal network was the Comintern (1919-1943). In the 1950s, China maintained strong ties to other countries in the Socialist bloc, including through the Cominform (1947-1956). After nearly two decades of isolation in international governmental organizations following the Sino-Soviet split, China became more active again in the international system. Between 1977 and 1989, following the entry to the United Nations (U.N.) in 1971, China’s membership in intergovernmental organization increased from 21 to 37.¹⁶² Much more significantly, its membership in international nongovernmental organizations rose from a mere 71 in 1977 to a striking 677 in 1989.¹⁶³

Another vital platform for networking is the International Department of the CPC (IDCPC, Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai lianluo bu 中共中央对外联络部), before 1995 known as the International Liaison Department (ILD) in English.¹⁶⁴ Established in 1951, the IDCPC is a ministerial level department of the CPC under direct authority of the Central Committee. Primarily only intended for contacts with Socialist parties, its functions were gradually expanded in the 1980s¹⁶⁵ and 1990s to include relations with all parties that were willing to

¹⁶¹ Cf. John Lawrence, “*China Daily News*,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 8 (July 1982): 147-151.

¹⁶² Prior to its entry into the UN in 1971, China had only been represented in one intergovernmental organization, owing to the fact that China opposed both the U.S. and the S.U. See Samuel S. Kim, “China’s International Organizational Behaviour,” in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, eds. Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh (Oxford University Press, 1996), 405-406. Also see Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

¹⁶³ Samuel S. Kim, “China’s International Organizational Behaviour,” 406.

¹⁶⁴ The official English name was changed from International Liaison Department to International Department in 1995. David Shambaugh, “China’s ‘Quiet Diplomacy’: The International Department of the Chinese Communist Party,” *China: An International Journal* 5, no. 1 (2007): 29.

¹⁶⁵ In 1986, the ILD began to establish relations with European Socialist Democratic parties. Cf. Shaumbaugh, “China’s ‘Quiet Diplomacy,’” 39.

establish contacts with the IDCPC. Its party-to-party diplomacy is very useful for China's diplomacy, as it allows it to establish extensive contacts with the political opposition¹⁶⁶ and is often used as an intermediary in sensitive issues or when official diplomatic ties are strained.¹⁶⁷ The IDCPC has a research department, which researches developments abroad and is also in charge of academic exchange.¹⁶⁸

In addition to those more formal platforms, there are also initiatives organized below the state level, such as partnerships between cities, academic exchanges or connections to transnational epistemic communities. Through all these channels, China can keep up to date with developments in other countries. In the last few years, China has become much more proactive in initiating international conferences itself. In October 2009, the first (and, as of February 2013, the only) World Media Summit (*Shijie meiti fenghui* 世界媒体峰会) took place in Beijing under the motto "Cooperation, Action, Win-Win & Development" (*hezuo, yingdui, gongying, fazhan* 合作、应对、共赢、发展), organized and largely funded by Xinhua News Agency.¹⁶⁹ While China's more proactive role in this area serves multiple purposes, including improving foreign journalists' perception of Chinese journalism and increasing acceptance for its idiosyncrasies, such conferences and seminars are also part of the attempt to build networks.

Finally, whenever the CPC plans important reforms of a particular policy sector, it conducts relatively systematic studies of different policy options from other countries. Studies that are released in public, particularly those looking at the U.S. external propaganda apparatus, also have to be seen as a tool to demonstrate that China's opponents not only engage in propaganda but also outspend and outwit China, thus showing the urgency for China to catch up. Nonetheless, the external propaganda institutions and practices of foreign

¹⁶⁶ And consequently does not need to build a new network of contacts when a different party comes to power.

¹⁶⁷ Shambaugh, "China's 'Quiet Diplomacy,'" 30-32.

¹⁶⁸ "Guanyu Zhonglianbu, Jigou shezhi."

¹⁶⁹ Participants had to pay for their travel to Beijing, but accommodation, food, and transport costs were covered by Xinhua. Cf. "World Media Summit Beijing, Letter of Invitation," website of the World Media Summit, http://www.worldmediasummit.org/english/2009-03/20/content_16010173.htm, accessed October 13, 2012. According to Lye and Chong, the idea was conceived of during talks between Xinhua and the heads of various Western news organizations (including Rupert Murdoch) during the time of the Olympic Games. Cf. Lye, Liang Fook and S.K.C. Chong. *China's Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building*. EAI Background Brief, no. 555 (2010): 4.

countries are primarily studied with the goal of finding areas that China can emulate.

Integrating Expert Opinions

In the post-Mao period, China has worked on ways to integrate expert opinions into its decision-making process. This shows both in the increasing number of think tanks, often affiliated with a particular ministry or department,¹⁷⁰ and in the integration of outside expertise at high level meetings. Both LSG and other decision-making bodies invite external experts (such as scholars, businesspeople, etc.) to part of their sessions to get some input. For instance, Wang Yiwei was invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to speak as part of a lecture series on “public diplomacy” in 2003, one year before the MFA added a Division for Public Diplomacy.¹⁷¹ Since at least the 1990s, Chinese bureaucratic organizations have also relied on permanent advisors from the academic field. For instance, Li Xiguang 李希光, professor at Qinghua University and author of, among others, the 1996 bestseller *Demonizing China (Yaomohua Zhongguo 妖魔化中国)*, has been heavily involved in creating China’s external propaganda policy since the late 1990s and continues to be involved.¹⁷²

High Politics and Low Politics: The Core Category of the Political

The distinction between what is called “high politics” (i.e. issues that matter to the security of a state) and “low politics” in Political Science is important at all stages of the Chinese policy process. Issues and events are categorized into political and non-political, which in turn triggers different types of responses and of dealing with things or making decisions. A problem is considered political in China if it touches on national security, regime security, or “core interests” of China. This naturally includes all sensitive topics, such as

¹⁷⁰ Cf. David Shambaugh, “China’s International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process,” *The China Quarterly* 171 (2002): 579-580.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Yiwei Wang, “Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power,” *ANNALS of the American Academy* 616 (March 2008), 260.

¹⁷² Cf. “Zhao Qizheng: ‘Zhongguo xingxiang dashi’ jiu jue xin chang” 赵启正: “中国形象大师” 旧角新唱 [Zhao Qizheng: The ‘master of China’s image’ sings an old role in a new tune], originally published in *Zhongguo jingmao jujiao* 中国经贸聚焦 [China business focus], no. 4, 2009, available online at <http://www.xzbu.com/2/view-454291.htm>, accessed December 15, 2012.

Taiwan, Tibet, Tiananmen, Falungong, etc. A similar division exists for policy arenas, which can be divided into technical areas (“low politics”) and ideological areas (“high politics”).¹⁷³ For decision-making, too, there is a “regular mode” (*Normalmodus*), characterized by prolonged bureaucratic bargaining and willingness to compromise and a “crisis mode” (*Krisenmodus*), characterized by a high degree of centralization, personal decisions, and ideology as the most important criterion for decisions.¹⁷⁴

This distinction between high and low politics is carried into all areas of Chinese public life. “Mistakes” committed by Chinese media, for instance, can either be political or not political.¹⁷⁵ In the first case, the response is much more serious. Moreover, reforms that have possible effects on political issues are much more difficult to defend. In the post-Mao period, there has been a policy to strictly distinguish between political issues (*zhengzhi wenti* 政治问题) and academic issues (*xueshu wenti* 学术问题). In the latter case, the new “hundred flowers, hundred schools” (*shuang bai* 双百) policy applies, and people are free to voice their own opinions and deviate from the position of the Party however much they like without having to fear repercussions.¹⁷⁶ Once an issue is categorized as political, however, anything that is published in writing or otherwise transmitted through the media is expected to maintain unity with the position of the Center.

This is relevant for external propaganda because it explains two different modes in which China communicates with the outside world. For apolitical issues,

¹⁷³ Suisheng Zhao, “The Structure of Authority and Decision-Making: A Theoretical Framework,” in *Decision-Making in Deng's China: Perspectives from Insiders*, eds. Carol Lee Hamrin and Suisheng Zhao (M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 239.

¹⁷⁴ Sebastian Heilmann, *Das politische System der VR China* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004), 32-32, 42-43 Zhao, “The Structure of Authority and Decision-Making: A Theoretical Framework,” 239-240.

¹⁷⁵ For a “political mistake,” see “Jiefang ribao she dui ‘Xinwen chenbao’ zhongda zhengzhi cuowu zuochu chuli” 解放日报社对《新闻晨报》重大政治错误作出处理 [The Liberation Daily agency deals with the major political mistake of the *Morning News*], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 19 (2000): 10. In this case, the *Xinwen chenbao*, a subsidiary of the Liberation Daily (*Jiefang ribao*), referred to Taiwan as the “country which exports the most electronic products in the world” (全球最大电子产品出口国) on page 21 of the paper. For a simple “mistake,” see “Zhengzhou wenyi guangbo diantai rexian dianhua jiemu chuxian yanzhong cuowu shou jinggao” 郑州文艺广播电台热线电话节目出现严重错误受警告 [Zhengzhou literature and arts radio’s hotline program receives a warning for a serious mistake], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 3 (2001): 15. In this case, Zhengzhou radio station received a warning because it broadcast a ten second excerpt of a listener call, in which the caller disparaged a national leader (*guojia lingdao*).

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2001, 18.

external propaganda workers are asked to explain China's stance in a kind and patient manner. For political issues, however, they need to "take a clear stance," which usually results in attacks on opponents as well as rhetorical overdrive. These ideologically charged texts are referred to in Chinese as "having a high tune" (*diaozi gao* 调子高) or "singing a high tune" (*chang gao diao* 唱高调).¹⁷⁷

As mentioned above, the essence, which only the CPC can correctly determine, is decisive for whether an issue is political or not. Therefore, statements or actions are not judged by what is said or done, but by what the CPC thinks the underlying purpose is.

Communicating the Spirit of the Center: Speeches, Policy Documents, and the Role of Slogans

In analyzing the external propaganda debate (and debates in other policy sectors as well), certain regularities can be observed. For each given period, there is one particular text, usually a speech by a high-ranking leader, which serves as the "master text." This text constitutes a point of reference and is often listed by name by an author writing on external propaganda. Additionally, circulars from the center are also frequently invoked as master texts; the period during which they are invoked may overlap with the period during which a certain speech serves as master text. Generally speaking, a speech remains quotable for longer periods of time than a circular. During the time that a master text is valid, new ideas are gradually introduced through a number of different channels, some of which are included in the next master text, while others are not. Moreover, there are instructions by high level leaders which might only apply to a particular aspect of external propaganda.

Documents in the Chinese bureaucracy can be divided into different types according to two criteria: First, documents are classified according to content. Documents from subordinate units to their superior units include reports (*baogao*

¹⁷⁷ To adjust the tone depending on diplomatic aims and agreements was not uncommon during the Mao period and remains important today as well. For instance, a document from the MFA on problems with external propaganda in China and the Soviet Union at a time when the two countries had agreed to keep attacks to a minimum includes a reference to a piece of news sent by Zhongxinshe whose tone was too high and therefore should not have been released. Cf. "Guanyu Zhong Su zai duiwai xuanchuan deng fangmian de qingkuang he wenti" 关于中苏在对外宣传等方面的情况和问题 [Situation and problems between China and the Soviet Union with regard to external propaganda and other aspects], December 24, 1963. MFA Archive, no. 109-02542-03.

报告, *huibao* 汇报), requests for instruction (*qingshi* 请示), and opinions (*yijian* 意见). Circulars sent from the top include decisions (*jueding* 决定, *jueyi* 决议), orders (*ling* 令), and notifications (*tongzhi* 通知), among others. Replies to requests for instructions from subordinate units are called *pifu* 批复. Instructions left on other types of documents, usually directly written on the paper and often from top leaders, are called *pishi* 批示. Often, binding circulars only approve a certain document; in that case, the approved document (a report, an opinion, etc.) is attached (*fu* 附).

Second, binding circulars carry different abbreviations depending on which organization issued (*xiafa* 下发) them. Circulars issued by the Party Center are called “Central [Committee] Circular” (*Zhongfa* 中发). The government equivalent issued by the State Council is abbreviated *Guofa* 国发 (State Council Circular). In addition, central leading departments (*zhongyang lingdao bumen* 中央领导部门) may also issue binding documents without having to go through the CPC Central Committee. Circulars sent by the CPD (which has been authorized to directly issue binding documents since the post-Mao period) are called CPD Circular (*Zhongxuanfawen* 中宣发文 or *Zhongxuanfa* 中宣发).¹⁷⁸ Circulars are referred to by their number, with counting starting over each year. The year of issuance is usually indicated before the number in square brackets (e.g. *Zhongfa* [1990] no. 21).

In addition to official policy documents, there are “important speeches” (*zhongyao jianghua* 重要讲话) from leading cadres that provide the basic direction of work. People in all sectors are asked to study them and “interpret their spirit” to apply it to their own work sector. Below, I will explain what “interpreting the spirit” means, using one type of rhetorical form in Chinese politics that makes up a part of both policy documents and “important speeches”: Slogans.

Above, the Chinese Marxist discourse system has been divided into two basic components: An ontology that provides the overall framework and concrete principles and policies, usually expressed in the form of slogans. Slogans are a

¹⁷⁸ Brady notes that during the Mao period, “[m]any recommendations by the Central Propaganda Department had to be backed up by a CCP Central Committee commentary (*piyu*) in order to encourage local bodies to take action.” Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 36.

component of the discourse system in the Chinese bureaucracy and Chinese politics of nearly inflationary use. Slogans, particularly their frequency and any change made to them have been watched in the past to get a sense of China's policy direction, both overall and in specific fields. Qian Gang, former editor at *Nanfang zhoumo* and now the director of the China Media Project at Hong Kong University, has recently argued in favor of both continuing to watch the frequency of slogans and understanding what they mean in order to gain an insight into elite politics.¹⁷⁹ This is definitely true, but what has been neglected thus far is the role that slogans play in policy making in the Chinese bureaucracy.

Compared to understanding the basic principles of the Chinese Marxist ideology or determining the position and function of external propaganda in the overall universe of the CPC and its plans for China's future, interpreting and translating slogans is a more difficult task for several reasons: First, slogans are ubiquitous in Chinese politics, and their potential number has no limits. Second, slogans are usually not explained in documents publically available; their meaning needs to be reconstructed on the basis of additional speeches or context. Third, slogans are coined with a particular central policy in mind, but then assume different meanings in different policy sectors and across time. Additionally, one slogan can be used with different meanings in the same policy sector at the same time.¹⁸⁰ Basically, the party centre (usually through the Central Propaganda Department) invents a new or reuses¹⁸¹ an old slogan and defines its particular

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Qian Gang, "Watchwords: The Life of the Party," website of the China Media Project at the University of Hong Kong, <http://cmp.hku.hk/2012/09/10/26667/>, accessed November 22, 2012.

¹⁸⁰ If this is the case, the definition that applies will usually be clarified when used in internally circulated documents (particularly if it is not the most common usage). One author explains that while usually, *neiwai youbie* refers to distinguishing between Chinese and foreigners, he uses the term to refer to the difference between media units sending internal reports to inform their mother unit about a certain situation on the one hand and preparing news to be released for the public on the other. See *Neibu tongxin*, no. 7 (1999): 10. Likewise, the slogan can be used to highlight the difference between "public" (*gongkai* 公开) and "internal" (*neibu* 内部) in any field. For instance, some slogans may only be use internally (*neibu tifa* 内部提法) and referring to them in publically available documents is also considered a violation of the *nei wai you bie* principle. Cf. "Shewai baodao you yao zhuyi nei wai you bie" 涉外报道又要内外有别 [Reports on external (affairs) need to differentiate between internal and external], *Xuanchuan daobao* 宣传导报 [Propaganda herald], no. 8 (1986): 12.

¹⁸¹ This is the case, for example, with the "Double Hundred" (*shuangbai* 双百) policy. The *shuangbai* slogan has been reused starting in the 1990s to express the center's policy to strictly distinguish between political and academic issues, meaning that substantial academic freedom is tolerated as long as academics do not encroach on important issues of principle for the CPC. Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbujū, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2001, 18.

meaning with regard to the overall or entire situation (*quanju* 全局¹⁸²). Leaders in central departments and below the central level are then tasked with interpreting the slogan to fit the particular needs of their professional work sector or geographic jurisdiction. Afterwards, the concrete meaning of the slogan in a particular field is usually communicated to a limited number of people through study sessions and internal publications. Slogans devised at the central level for the overall situation provide the basic framework for policy making at the lower levels. Departments and locales are relatively free in interpreting slogans to match what they perceive as the most pressing problems, but policy making cannot be done completely independently. This does not only apply to the ministerial and provincial level, but to all levels below, which take the interpretation of their immediate superiors as the point of departure for their own policy interpretation of the slogan.

Thus, in each context at a particular point in time, slogans assume different and usually very concrete meanings. Sometimes it is possible to get enough information to reconstruct the exact meaning of a slogan in a particular area at a particular point in time, but even where that is not possible, there are a number of strategies to get a better understanding of what a slogan is referring to in a particular situation. In order to further illustrate the use of slogans, selected slogans with multiple meanings in external propaganda work will be dissected below. This is important both to grasp one of the most important tools with which the Chinese bureaucracy works and in order to be able to properly interpret texts on external propaganda. As will be seen throughout the following chapters, the translation of slogans provided as broad guidelines by the CPC into concrete policies significantly shapes the external propaganda debate. Principles and policies originally devised for other policy sectors, most importantly propaganda and thought work and foreign affairs work, are also frequently re-interpreted and adapted to the external propaganda sector.

There are various ways to gain more information about a slogan. First, articles and speeches targeted at cadres within a particular sector often explain

¹⁸² *Quanju* is the opposite of *jubu* 局部 [part] and refers to the thing (in this case the PRC) as a whole (*shiwu de zhengti* 事物的整体) when it is spoken of in its capacity as a thing or to its entire development process (*quan fazhan guocheng* 全发展过程) when it is spoken of as a process. Cf. entry “*Quanju*” 全局 [Overall situation], in *Xinhua cidian*, 810.

slogans or give vital clues in documents that are openly available. Second, it often helps to get an idea of the meaning of the slogan in other contexts around the same time, such as in another sector or in a higher or lower administrative level. Third, when little additional information is provided, the context in which the slogan is used becomes crucial. Moreover, it can be helpful to look at the precise meanings of components of slogans. Often, two slogans are listed together. When this is the case, there is no universal formula for determining the relationship between the two, but three options are most common: In the first case, the two form one single slogan, and the first part indicates what needs to be done in order to achieve the desired result, which is spelled out in the second part.¹⁸³ In the second case, the two parts are two separate principles (*fangzhen*) that constitute dialectic opposites and need to be balanced against each other.¹⁸⁴ When no dialectic opposite is provided, it makes sense to try to figure out its implied opposite. In the third scenario, two related slogans are simply listed together.¹⁸⁵

To give an example, according to a handbook from 2006, external propaganda work needs to “continue to rely mainly on positive propaganda, rely on ourselves, and speak through facts” (*jianchi yi zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu, yi wo wei zhu, yong shishi shuohua* 坚持以正面宣传为主，以我为主，用事实说话).¹⁸⁶ These are actually three different slogans as well as underlying policies, and each of them needs an implied opposite in order to gain meaning.

The first, “relying mainly on positive propaganda” (*yi zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu* 以正面宣传为主) is a principle that was devised specifically for propaganda and thought work and therefore does not have a “general” meaning applicable to all policy sectors. The slogan, first introduced in a speech

¹⁸³ An example is “continue to take the initiative in order to gain the upper hand” (*jianchi dahao zhudongzhang, zhangwo zhudongquan* 坚持打好主动仗，掌握主动权), a slogan usually used in the media sector to highlight the need for China to become more proactive instead of being forced into a reactive position by Western media.

¹⁸⁴ One example is the combination of “focusing on ourselves” (*yi wo wei zhu* 以我为主) and “aiming for the objective” *you di fang shi* 有的放矢. When used together, these two slogans usually refer to the need to strike the balance between what China wants to say and how it wants to say it on the one hand, and what foreigners want to hear and the style they are used to on the other. See for example Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 139.

¹⁸⁵ Such as in the case of “distinguishing between internal and external” (*nei wai you bie* 内外有别) and “distinguishing between external and external” (*wai wai you bie* 外外有别).

¹⁸⁶ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 190.

by Li Ruihuan at a conference for domestic propaganda and thought work on November 28, 1989,¹⁸⁷ is often interpreted to comment on the balance between positive news and more critical or negative reports.¹⁸⁸ However, this is only one usage of the slogan. Its more common implied or explicit opposite in domestic propaganda work is “supervision and control” (*jiandu kongzhi* 监督控制). Thus, “rely mainly on positive propaganda” asks propaganda workers to flood the news market with positive stories rather than relying excessively on censorship.

In external propaganda, *zhengmian xuanchuan* has two main meanings. Which one of the two meanings applies can only be reconstructed by looking at the context and searching for the implied opposite. In summaries of speeches in the *People's Daily*, such context is not necessarily provided, but full texts of speeches usually provide a frame of reference. First, it can be used to make statements about the ratio of positive versus negative news. To “rely mainly on positive propaganda” does not mean that problems should not be addressed at all, but rather that China needs to focus on the essence of Chinese society, namely “bright aspects” and progress. When covering problems, reports should simultaneously address how China intends to solve them. However, the slogan has had another main implied opposite since the 1990s, namely “engaging in the struggle over international public opinion” (*kaizhan guoji yulun douzheng* 开展国际舆论斗争). In that case, “rely mainly on positive propaganda” means that China should primarily introduce itself abroad and help improve its image by means of non-polemical news stories. Refuting “lies” by hostile forces and publishing stories on sensitive issues, something which is usually done in the much harsher “crisis mode” of reporting, should be reduced. While such refutations are necessary where China’s national interests are at stake, excessive struggle would put China into a passive and reactive position, something which is to be avoided.

“Speaking through facts” usually means providing selective factual information to get people to arrive at a certain conclusion, instead of telling people directly what their opinion on a certain issue should be, as used to be

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 46-47.

¹⁸⁸ E.g. Wu Zheng 吴征, *Zhongguo daguo diwei yu guoji chuanbo zhanlue* 中国的大国地位与国际传播战略 [China’s great power status and (its) international communication strategy] (Changzheng chubanshe, 2001).

common in the state-owned media across the Socialist bloc. This principle was introduced to Chinese external propaganda workers as an important strategy of Western propaganda media vis-à-vis the S.U. in the early 1970s.¹⁸⁹ This slogan has been used relatively consistently throughout the post-Mao period. Its opposite is a practice that used to dominate Chinese journalism and that external propaganda experts have been trying to combat since the 1980s, namely to tell the target audience what its point of view on a particular issue should be in direct terms.¹⁹⁰

“Relying mainly on ourselves” (*yi wo wei zhu* 以我为主) can again be used in different contexts and with different dialectic opposites at the time. For instance, it can refer to the notion that China cannot parrot what others say (for instance with the goal of raising the credibility of Chinese media in the eyes of foreigners), but needs to strictly uphold its stance (*lichang* 立场, *guandian* 观点, or *zhuzhang* 主张) on particular questions of importance. Producing “news with Chinese characteristics” rather than parroting what the West says was also promoted as a means to become more competitive and attractive to the rest of the world.¹⁹¹ In this case, its dialectic opposite is *you di fang shi* 有的放矢, i.e. tailoring content and form of one’s message in order to make it more effective.¹⁹²

“Relying mainly on ourselves” can also refer to external propaganda channels. In this case, the implied opposite of *yi wo wei zhu* is “using foreign forces to propagate China” (*yong waili xuanchuan Zhongguo* 用外力宣传中国), for example by cooperating with foreign media or trying to win over foreign journalists. This option was considered in the 1990s because Chinese media enjoyed low credibility. In the end, it was rejected as a main strategy because China’s efforts to “convert” journalists and foreign media and try to get them to report more favorably on China were evaluated as not successful enough. Of course, China continues to work with foreign media, but *yi wo wei zhu* means that its main strategy is to invest in its own forces and infrastructure.

¹⁸⁹ Cui Yongchang 崔永昌, “Xuanchuan ‘xinlizhan’ mantan” 宣传‘心理战’漫谈 [Discussion of the “psychological war” through propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (1988): 30.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 100-101.

¹⁹² For an explanation of the dialectic pair in this meaning, see for example Yi Xianfei 易先飞, “Tigao waixuan xiaoguo bixu jiaqiang zhenduixing” 提高外宣效果必须加强针对性 [In order to raise the effectiveness of external propaganda, we need to strengthen its accordance with the target audience’s tastes and needs], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 5 (2001): 36-37.

As these examples have shown, it is not only worthwhile to watch the use and frequency of slogans at the general central level, but also makes sense to decode the meaning of a slogan in a particular context. Applying the “general” meaning of the slogan can help to get an idea, but at the same time, awareness that many different concrete meanings of the same slogan exist is important in order to understand any text rich in slogans.

From a perspective of policy making, slogans are umbrella terms that can be translated into a broad range of specific actions. As such they are a very effective way of giving both consistence at a given moment to different actions, and allow for specific application to the context in which they are used. As a form of political guidance they are a rather effective instrument that provides both a structure for lower level players but also gives them sufficient agency to deal with the problems they identify.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an introduction into the post-Mao institutional environment and thus given both background knowledge and tools for the analysis in the following chapters. From a functional perspective, this chapter has explained the basic terminology needed in order to understand anything written in the language of Chinese Marxism and texts about the set-up of the external propaganda bureaucracy and its interaction with other units. It has also explained strategies how to understand slogans in a particular context. From a substantial perspective, it has demonstrated the change and development of the organizational and ideological order since the beginning of the post-Mao period and has highlighted the most important trends. Throughout the rest of the dissertation, I will come back to the ideological and organizational principles outlined here.

The most important particularity of the Chinese case is, obviously, the fact that China is ruled by a Communist Party. The CPC has understood itself as the vanguard (*xianfengdui* 先锋队) of the Chinese people, and, its many transformations notwithstanding, that is the role it continues to see itself in until today. This role is well-institutionalized: Party structures continue to be above government institutions, and while the CPC has delegated administrative work to the state, it maintains tight control over political, ideological, and organizational

matters. The CPC has reorganized and reinvented itself multiple times over the course of its history. Nonetheless, it retains guiding ideology and distinct organizational features that are no longer shared by many other parties today and that make it stand out. Ideology remains an important factor in Chinese policy-making that both shapes and is shaped by the CPC's agenda at a particular point in time. The overall ideological universe is a restricting factor on individual actors, but it is not a completely inflexible construct that inevitably ties China down.

This chapter has introduced some of the basic mechanisms of policy making: First, important principles and policies devised for the “overall situation” (*quanju*) are meant to be adapted to each policy sector and each locale. Under the cover of shared terminology, locales and departments interpret policies and adapt them to their own needs. Second, experiments have played an important role in the post-Mao period, both as a regular mode of policy making and as a means to push policies that face ideological objections from other leaders. Third, using foreign models is a legitimate way of trying to speed up China's development process, although since the 1990s, the CPC has highlighted selective appropriation and the need to adapt any idea of practice that is imported to the Chinese circumstances.

The difference between high politics and low politics pervades all aspects of Chinese politics and communication. If something is low politics, it means decisions are made regular mode, China tries to compromise and accommodate everyone's needs. In altercations, potential opponents are generally portrayed as reasonable. If something is high politics, the crisis mode of policy making and communication kicks in, marked by a high tone and readiness for struggle against the perceived enemy. As the next chapters will show, this division into two modes of operating and communication has played an important role both in external propaganda policy making and in actual external propaganda output based on policies built around this distinction.

Finally, the chapter has touched both on restrictions placed on individuals or groups as much as on possible avenues to overcome these restrictions. First, there is the issue of consensus politics. The absence of a “supreme leader” who can take decisions single-handedly means that at the highest levels, the Politburo and the PBSC, structure gains in relative importance vis-à-vis agency. By and large, individual leaders do not have the necessary political clout to simply

implement reforms or changes in contested or political arenas; they are constrained by organization, institutional and ideological conventions. Policy documents do not necessarily provide certainty to have eclipsed one's opponent, as different positions are usually included and different aspects of a policy document can be highlighted at a later point in time when the political climate changes. This does not mean that individual leaders are helpless in the face of the institutions they have to work with, but their room for maneuver is limited. At the same time, the Chinese bureaucracy has some inbuilt mechanisms that make it potentially very flexible, such as the tradition of experiments before full implementation of a policy and the general willingness to appropriate new ideas from abroad.

5 **The Long 1980s: The (Relative) Rise and Fall of External Propaganda**

In the late 1970s and 1980s, with the overall reform project that China embarked on, external propaganda received a new and important role: To serve economic development by diminishing foreigners' doubts about China's reform course and by attracting foreign investment.¹ Thus, China not only had reason to propagate itself abroad, but also to do it in a way that would be accepted by the most important target audience, which were no longer leftist revolutionaries, but overseas Chinese and Westerners. External propaganda reforms could be couched in the language of the opening up policies, presenting them as part of China's historical shift towards the world. The new importance resulted in a number of organizational changes, including the setting up of a small group at the top of the sector –the first such group for external propaganda in the People's Republic of China's (PRC) history– and the launching of various new media and exchange initiatives. The reforms were so substantial that I propose to read the developments of the 1980s in the sector as part of the attempt to change the Chinese media system and make external propaganda at least as, if not more, important than domestic propaganda work –a project that enjoyed Hu Yaobang's 胡耀邦 support and that ultimately failed after his ouster and left an external propaganda apparatus that was structurally dependent on domestic propaganda institutions.

As I will show, external propaganda became a part not only of the change in economic policy, but also of a larger struggle over China's political direction. The 1980s were a time in which the political orientation of China and the way it would turn was relatively open again. Rejection of the Cultural Revolution and condemnation of the "Gang of Four" had opened a window in which it became possible to attack the ways China had been run during the Mao period, including the Chinese understanding of journalism and media control. Like the 1920s, the decade was a time in which China tried to reform itself and "catch up" with the rest of the world by systematically –and, compared to the 1990s, relatively

¹ Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 151.

uncritically— importing “Western knowledge.”² Hu Yaobang was generally supportive of political reforms, including in the realm of propaganda and media control. Between 1978 and 1987, China gradually moved in the direction of weakening the domestic propaganda apparatus, and strengthening its external propaganda apparatus instead. This was a non-linear, complex project, neither supported by all members of the CPC nor given cohesion by a single understanding of external propaganda shared by all involved in the debate. While there was no strong opposition towards strengthening external propaganda per se, the issue became a part of the larger struggle over the direction that China was to take.

Against this larger backdrop, I will first introduce the overall domestic and international context of the late 1970s and 1980s affecting the development of the external propaganda sector. I will then analyze the different phases in the upgrade (and, after 1987, in the relative downgrade) of external propaganda. A detailed analysis helps to understand both what drove the changes and how supporters of external propaganda went about instituting them.

5.1 External Propaganda between the Domestic and the International

In 1978, China officially launched its policies of reform and opening that would help develop and modernize China while at the same time ensuring that foreigners literally had an investment in an internally stable and prosperous China. External propaganda was declared an important part of this new plan. By and large, new initiatives in external propaganda followed expansions of reform and opening. Although initial economic reforms had already been launched under the supervision of Zhou Enlai 周恩来 and Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 between 1971 and early 1976, when Deng was purged for a second time,³ formally, the Reform and Opening (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放) policies began with the famous Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, held December 18-22, 1978, when Deng Xiaoping consolidated his power and became the unofficial pre-eminent leader of the Central Party Committee and China.

² Cf. *ibid.*, 67.

³ For a brief account, see, for example, Raphael Shen, *China's Economic Reform: An Experiment in Pragmatic Socialism* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 27-28.

In 1979, Deng Xiaoping first came up with the notion of the “moderately well-off society” (*xiaokang shehui* 小康社会) as a goal for China to achieve by the end of the 20th century. Deng named a per capita Gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1,000 as a reference value for what the target meant in terms of GDP. The Twelfth Party Congress 1982 then officially declared the moderately well-off society as China’s strategic goal (*zhanlüe mubiao* 战略目标) for the end of the 20th century.⁴ The new policies also allowed for foreign investments, and in 1980, the first batch of special economic zones was created. A second batch was opened after the reforms shifted their focus from rural to urban areas in 1984 at the Third Plenary Session of the Twelfth Central Committee.⁵ As will be seen below, the launching of both stages of reform was accompanied by increased attention to external propaganda.

With the beginning of reform and opening, China found itself operating in a new environment. Domestically, the PRC relaxed controls on foreign broadcasting signals within its territory. For instance, in October 1978, the Voice of America (VOA) was unblocked. The Central Propaganda Department (CPD) issued a circular which stated that while Chinese citizens would not be encouraged to listen to VOA, they were allowed to listen to broadcasts teaching English.⁶ External propaganda, too, lost much of its monopoly on PRC-related news and information abroad. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, people involved in external propaganda were reminded not to exaggerate achievements so as to avoid disappointment once foreigners actually visited a place.⁷ Aside from trying

⁴Cf. “Deng Xiaoping tichu de ‘xiaokang shehui’ shi shenme hanyi?” 邓小平提出的“小康社会”是什么含义？ [What does Deng Xiaoping’s ‘moderately well-off society’ encompass?], <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64156/64157/4418455.html>, accessed September 8, 2011.

⁵ Cf. Shanquan Gao, Yu-Ling Wang, and Youling Wang, *Two Decades of Reform in China* (Singapore: World Scientific, 1999), 19-20.

⁶ “Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu shouting ‘Meiguo zhi yin’ Huayu guangbo zhong Yingyu jiaoxue jiemu ji shifou keyi xiang ‘Meiguo zhi yin’ zhu Xianggang banshi jigou hansuo Yingyu jiaocai deng wenti” 中央宣传部关于收听“美国之音”华语广播中英语教学节目及是否可以向“美国之音”驻香港办事机构函索英语教材等问题的通知 [The Central Propaganda Department on the issues whether it is allowed to receive the English teaching programs of the Voice of America and whether it is allowed to enquire at the Hong Kong office of the Voice of America for material to learn English], *Zhongxuan fawen* [1979], 1 hao 中宣发文 [1979], 1 号 [Circular from the CPD (1979), no. 1], January 5, 1979, *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian* (1976-1982) 党的宣传工作文件选编 (1976-1982) [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1976-1982)], 667.

⁷ E.g. “Zhang Xiangshan tongzhi tan guanyu zuohao jiedai, luyou gongzuo zhong de xuanchuan wenti” 张香山同志谈关于做好接待、旅游工作中的宣传问题 [Comrade Zhang Xiangshan talks about the issue of properly doing propaganda as part of hosting (foreigners) and tourism

to get away from a particular model of journalism that played up China's successes, these reminders also showed that opening up confronted China with a new situation it had to adapt to. Following the adoption of the policies of reform and opening up, China's external propaganda apparatus had to adapt to working in an environment in which foreign media correspondents began to be gradually allowed into the country.⁸ Initially, foreign journalists' access to most parts of the country and news sources was extremely limited. Nevertheless, allowing journalists to be stationed in Beijing and incrementally increasing their access weakened the monopoly CPC media had previously held on China-related news. On the one hand, this took away some of Chinese media's freedoms to report as they pleased while foreign media did not have access to the country and thus could not challenge their version of events except by means of wholesale dismissal of anything coming out of "Red China." On the other hand, it potentially increased the credibility of news emerging from the country and opened up new possibilities for using foreign journalists and media organizations to propagate China abroad.

In the 1980s, external propaganda reforms also overlapped with the larger project of challenging domestic propaganda. As is well-known, the concept of propaganda became contested, and the question what constitutes proper journalistic practices and ethics were debated vigorously in China⁹ as new journalism departments were added to universities and disciplines that had been established in the West for decades, such as communication studies, were for the

work], published in *Xuanchuan dongtai xuanbian*, 1979 宣传动态选编, 1979 [Selections from *Propaganda trends*, 1979] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981), 236. Zhang's statement was actually from the early 1970s but circulated again in 1979. Also see remarks by Turkish foreign expert: "Guangbo shiyeyu waiguo zhuanjia tan tical, xiezuo he shixiao" 广播事业局外国专家谈题材写作和时效 [Foreign experts from the Broadcasting Bureau speak about (choice of) topics, writing, and timeliness], *Duiwai baodao cankao* 对外报道参考 [External reporting reference], no. 2 (1981): 13.

⁸ This monopoly had never been absolute: During the Mao period, news were often picked up by foreign media organization through Chinese domestic media before China's *waixuan* media could report. Cf. Cagdas Ungor, "Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)" (PhD diss. Binghamton University, 2009), 205-206. However, by and large, China had had more control over what was reported than after the changes initiated in 1978.

⁹ E.g. Junhao Hong and Marlene Cuthbert, "Media Reform in China since 1978: Background Factors, Problems, and Future Trends," *Gazette* 47, no. 3 (1991); Chin-chuan Lee, ed., *Voices of China: The Interplay of Politics and Journalism* (New York and London: Guilford Press, 1990).

first time introduced systematically in China.¹⁰ Challenging the propaganda concept of the Mao period was possible, first, because the effort could be framed as part of the fight against the remnants of the “Gang of Four” in China and, second, because the idea enjoyed some support within the highest ranks of the Party. Especially with the introduction of communication studies, more concrete means to improve the “art of propaganda” (*xuanchuan yishu* 宣传艺术) were systematically explained. However, ultimately, issues went well beyond the merely technical level of how to be able to better persuade readers. There was, for example, a debate about why China had never produced anyone comparable to Walter Lippmann, who was seen in China as the prototype of a journalist with influence on (U.S.) policy.¹¹ The message was clear: Instead of being influenced by politics, journalists should influence policy, and to be able to do so, the Chinese system had to change. People from the external propaganda sector did not challenge the CPC’s concept of propaganda directly.¹² Nonetheless, in a way, external propaganda served as a precursor and an apt vehicle to push for changes in the conceptualization of propaganda. Many of the suggested changes in external propaganda followed the overall debate on proper journalistic practice,

¹⁰ For instance, in May 1982, Wilbur Schramm (transliterated as Xuan Weibo 宣伟伯 in *Duiwai baodao cankao*) gave a series of lectures in Beijing which had been organized with the help of his student, Yu Yelu (余也鲁), who was head of the Journalism Department of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Zhang Liang 张梁, “Meiguo chuanboxue bizu -- Xuan Weibo boshi” 美国传播学鼻祖——宣伟伯博士 [The father of American communication studies -- Dr. Wilbur Schramm], *Duiwai baodao cankao* no. 12, (1982): 12-13. Schramm’s tour lasted six days, and he spoke, among others, at the *People’s Daily* and at People’s University (*Renmin daxue* 人民大学), which had first translated and published *Four Theories of the Press* in 1980 (Wilbur Schramm et al., *Baokan de si zhong lilun* [Four theories of the press], transl. “The Press Department of People’s University”, 1980). His talks were highly influential, as works for translation were chosen on the basis of his recommendations. Cf. Zhang Yonghua 张咏华, *Dazhong chuanbo shehuixue* 大众传播社会学 [Sociology of mass communication] (Shanghai: Shanghai waiyu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998), 37. In 1982, the first national conference on communications studies (*chuanboxue* 传播学) was held in Beijing. Cf. Zhang Yonghua, *Dazhong chuanbo shehuixue*, 39

¹¹ For a publically available article calling for reform of the Chinese press system to make possible the emergence of a Chinese Lippmann, see for example Siren 斯人, “Zhongguo hui you Lipuman ma?” 中国会有李普曼吗? [Can China have a Lippmann?], *Xinwen jizhe* 新闻记者 [News reporter], no. 6 (1989): 47. Lippmann was well-known in China as both *Cankao Xiaoxi* and the *Renmin ribao* frequently carried translations of or summaries of his articles, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s.

¹² Though some such as Shen Suru argued that external propaganda needed to be exempt from some of the Party’s assumptions of propaganda work, such as the relationship between sender and receiver. Whereas for domestic propaganda work, there was a teacher-student relationship between the Party and the masses, for external propaganda, the relationship between external propaganda workers and foreign readers should be one of equal status. See for example Shen Suru 沈苏儒, *Duiwai baodao yewu jichu* 对外报道业务基础 [Professional basics for external reporting] (Beijing: Jinri Zhongguo chubanshe, 1989), 31-32.

but at the same time, the need to be understood and accepted by foreign audiences served as one powerful (and relatively apolitical) argument in favor of changing existing journalistic practices and conventions.

China's external propaganda reforms had a lot of material from abroad to draw on, and analyses of other countries external propaganda activities or reforms frequently showed up in open and internal publications.¹³ In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were multiple changes to the most important U.S. external propaganda organization during the Cold War, the United States Information Agency (USIA, called *Meiguo xinwenshu* 美国新闻署 in Chinese) that were reported in the U.S. media and consequently selectively translated and published in China internally in *Reference Materials* (*Cankao ziliao* 参考资料), *Reference News* (*Cankao xiaoxi* 参考消息) and in other specialized (*zhuanxing* 专业性) journals.¹⁴ First, Jimmy Carter reorganized the USIA and renamed it International Communication Agency (ICA, Chinese translation: *Guoji jiaoliushu* 国际交流署¹⁵) on April 1, 1978. He also gave a number of talks outlining the responsibilities of the restructured agency that were translated into Chinese and analyzed.¹⁶ Ohmstedt has argued that Carter's changes were not only cosmetic, but also tried to re-conceptualize the agency's purpose from one focused primarily on protecting U.S. national interests to one genuinely promoting international

¹³ E.g. "Ribei kaishi zhongshi duiwai xuanchuan" 日本开始重视对外宣传 [Japan has started to pay attention to external propaganda], *Bianyi cankao* 编译参考 [Compilation and translation reference], no. 2 (1982):84-87; "Meiguo ying ruhe jinxing duiwai xuanchuan" 美国应如何进行对外宣传 [How should America conduct external propaganda], *Bianyi cankao*, no. 10 (1983):78-84. Like many *Reference* (*Cankao*) publications, these two articles consisted of translated articles from the U.S. and Japanese press.

¹⁴ Such as *Journalism Abroad* (*Waiguo xinwen shiye ziliao* 外国新闻事业资料), an internal journal launched in the late 1970s.

¹⁵ In the 1980s, Communication Studies was translated, like today, as *chuanboxue*, but could also be translated as *jiaoliuxue* (See for example Kuang Hua 匡华, "Guangyi qingbaoxue – Jiaoliuxue" 广义情报学——交流学 [Information studies in the broad sense: Communication studies], in *Qingbao kexue* 情报科学 [Information studies] 5, no. 4 (1984): 20.

¹⁶ An article on ICA mentions that the functions of ICA as outlined in the article were reconstructed on the basis of various talks Carter gave. Shu Zongqiao 舒宗侨, "Meiguo de duiwai xuanchuan he wenhua jiaoliu – Guoji jiaoliushu de qingkuang he gongzuo" 美国的对外宣传和文化交流——国际交流署的情况和工作 [America's external propaganda and cultural exchange – Overall circumstances and work of the International Communication Agency], *Waiguo xinwen shiye ziliao* 外国新闻事业资料) [(Material on) *Journalism Abroad*], no. 4 (1979): 5-6.

understanding,¹⁷ thus re-introducing elements from the humanist discourse into U.S. international propaganda work again.

Under Reagan, the reinforced propaganda war against the Soviet Union (S.U.) led to a reversal of Carter's changes and a major boost of U.S. external propaganda organs. Between 1981 and 1986, the USIA's budget increased by 93 per cent.¹⁸ Many of the changes were due to Reagan's personal contacts into the Hollywood PR scene, where Charles Wick, newly appointed head of ICA, named back to USIA in 1982,¹⁹ had worked previously. In the same year, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was founded, based largely on the model of German political foundations.²⁰ In early 1983, Reagan's National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) Number 77 (an executive order), "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security," announced the establishment of a Special Planning Group (SPG) under the National Security Council with five subordinate committees in charge of all public diplomacy activities.²¹ From the document itself it becomes clear that the SPG would be responsible both for domestic propaganda (called "public affairs" and handled by the Public Affairs Committee) and external propaganda (handled by the International Information Committee, the International Political Committee, and the International Broadcasting Committee).²² In late 1983, Wick launched "Worldnet," the first worldwide television network consisting of five satellite networks. Regular operation of the channel began in April 1985,²³ and although the effort ultimately failed, the new developments in using satellite technology for

¹⁷ Cf. Holger Ohmstedt, *Von der Propaganda zur Public Diplomacy: Die Selbstdarstellung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika im Ausland vom Ersten Weltkrieg bis zum Ende des Kalten Krieges* (Doctoral dissertation, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 1993), 143-145.

¹⁸ Cf. Robert S. Fortner, *Public Diplomacy and International Politics* (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 6-7.

¹⁹ Cf. Ohmstedt, *Von der Propaganda zur Public Diplomacy*, 158.

²⁰ Cf. Rainer Thiel, *Nested Games of External Democracy Promotion: The United States and the Polish Liberalization, 1980-1989* (Springer, 2010), 223. For some more details, see footnote 216 on the same page.

²¹ The document is available in full on the website of the Federation of American Scientists and on of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. Ronald Reagan, "Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security," NSDD-77, January 14, 1984, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/23-1966t.gif>, accessed December 15, 2012, 1; <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/Scanned%20NSDDS/NSDD77.pdf>, accessed December 12, 2012.

²² Cf. *ibid.*, 2-3.

²³ Cf. Ohmstedt, *Von der Propaganda zur Public Diplomacy*, 164-165.

news transmission across the globe was taken very seriously by China and other countries at the time.²⁴

The developments at the USIA showed up in Chinese public and semi-internal media (*People's Daily*, *Reference News*). For example, on January 23, 1983, following Reagan's signing of the NSDD 77 on January 14, the *People's Daily* reported on the establishment of "two special small groups" (*liang ge zhuanmen xiaozu* 两个专门小组).²⁵ While articles in the *People's Daily* were obviously primarily meant to "expose" U.S. activities, they also confirm that developments abroad were watched rather closely by China and that, despite the fact that NSDD 77 remained classified until 1996, whatever had leaked to the Western press was reported in China as well. It can safely be assumed that a large number of additional reports and assessments exist on the Chinese side that were classified at different levels.

The Soviet Union also served as a model in this regard, but there are a number of indications that it was outranked by the U.S. For instance, a book by *China Reconstructs* journalist Li Chaochen from 1989 noted that the S.U.'s external propaganda forces and budget (at more than \$ 3 billion) were larger than the United States', but Li still devoted less space to its resources and actions compared to the longer and more detailed explanation of the external propaganda apparatus of the U.S.²⁶ Nonetheless, points newly introduced to Chinese external

²⁴ As the U.S. improved its capacities to transmit news via satellite and planned worldnet, Chinese officials also began to stress the need for China to improve satellite technology for the transmission of news. Cf. Mu Qing 穆青, "You mianxiang guonei zhuanxiang mianxiang shijie" 由面向国内转向面向世界 [From facing China to facing the world], *Mu Qing lun xinwen* 穆青论新闻 [Mu Qing on news] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2003), 271-272. Compared to the Soviet Union (see Alvin Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation* [New York: Arcade, 1995], 23) China was obviously not as worried about the prospect of having to deal with U.S. propaganda in their territory.

²⁵ "Mei chengli liang ge zhuanmen xiaozu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan, yi ge duifu Su heping gongshi, yi ge zhengqu Xi'ou zhichi Mei bushu daodan" 美成立两个专门小组加强对外宣传 一个对付苏和平攻势 一个争取西欧支持美部署导弹 [The United States sets up two special small groups, one to deal with the Soviet Union's peace offensive and one to win Western European support for the deployment of U.S. missiles], *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People's Daily], January 23, 1983, 6.

²⁶ Cf. Li Chaochen 李超尘, *Mantan dui wai dui Tai xuanchuan* 漫谈对外对台宣传 [Thoughts on external propaganda and propaganda targeted at Taiwan] (Beijing: Zhongguo jianshe chubanshe, 1989), 4-5. Li refers to a report from a U.S. journal to note that the number of S.U. external propaganda broadcast workers was seven times that of the U.S. It appears that figures about Soviet external propaganda, at least those that were publically or semi-publically presented, were largely derived from Western sources, not independent Chinese intelligence work. Since China's relations with the S.U. were not good and Soviet media did not report on the details of the Soviet external propaganda apparatus, Western media are likely to have been

propaganda workers were often backed up by references both from Western and from Soviet research to demonstrate a broad international consensus.²⁷ External propaganda initiatives of other countries such as Japan were also reported in Chinese journals.²⁸

At the same time, the drive to improve external propaganda was inspired by and rhetorically linked to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) debate over establishing a new media world order that prompted the U.S. to withdraw from UNESCO in 1984 and that has recently (2011) been picked up in China again.²⁹ Beginning during the early 1970s, the NAM had begun to raise issues concerning “cultural imperialism” and misrepresentation of third world countries supported by the media world order at the time.³⁰ These were taken up at UNESCO in the second half of the 1970s in the debate over what was called the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) or New World Information Order (NWIO), translated into Chinese as *Guoji xinwen xin zhixu* 国际新闻新秩序. The debate culminated in the MacBride Commission report, *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New, More Just, and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*, published in 1980.³¹ China did not have a representative in the MacBride Commission, but followed the UNESCO developments closely. *Many Voices, One World* was translated and published in Chinese in 1981.³² The issue was also taken up at the Organization of Asia-Pacific

an important source of information on Soviet propaganda or intelligence operations. The figures quoted in the U.S. were usually based on CIA estimates. For a table of these estimates, see for example Starr, Richard Felix, “Soviet Foreign Propaganda,” in *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1991), 76.

²⁷ E.g. Li, *Mantan dui wai dui Tai xuanchuan*, 4-5.

²⁸ E.g. “Ribei kaishi zhongshi duiwai xuanchuan,” 84-87.

²⁹ For instance, an article by Xinhua’s president Li Congjun published on the website of the Wall Street Journal referred to the initiative. Cf. Li Congjun, “Toward a New World Media Order,” website of the *Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704816604576335563624853594.html>, accessed December 15, 2012.

³⁰ A UNESCO report called *World Communications: A 200-Country Survey of Press, Radio, Television, and Film* was published in 1975. The report was mentioned, for example, in Zhang Longdong 张隆栋, “Shijie xinwen shiye gaikuang (yi)” 世界新闻事业概况(一) [The state of the world press (part 1)], *Guoji xinwenjie* 国际新闻界 [International press circles], no. 1, 1979.

³¹ MacBride Commission: *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New, More Just, and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order* (Paris: Unesco, 1980).

³² Lianheguo jiaokewen zuzhi 联合国教科文组织 [UNESCO], *Yi ge shijie duo zhong shengyin* 一个世界多种声音 [Translation of *Many voices, one world*, literally: One world, many voices] (Beijing: Duiwai fanyi chubansongsi, 1981).

News Agencies,³³ of which Xinhua 新华 was a member.³⁴ Although China initially lost some of its interest in the Third World with improving relations with the United States, the country was bent on declaring its continued solidarity with the developing world. All in all, the Chinese rhetoric during the 1980s –and the external propaganda discourse was no exception– was still frequently linked to the rest of the socialist movement (internationalist theme) and of the NAM (solidarity against imperialism).

In sum, a number of domestic and international factors came together in the 1980s that had an impact on how external propaganda was discussed: External propaganda was, most importantly, seen as necessary to support China’s new reform agenda. Reforms in the field of external propaganda were impacted by and in turn impacted the overall debate over proper journalistic norms and control of the media. Finally, new ideas were constantly generated both as the U.S. and the S.U. fought a propaganda war against one another and as UNESCO discussed a new media world order.

5.2 1977 to 1981: Institutionalizing the New Consensus

“Each author, translator, or editor engaged in external propaganda should put a sign on his or her desk that reads ‘foreigners are not Chinese.’”³⁵

--- Felix Greene, speech at Xinhua News Agency, 1977

The first reform of external propaganda in 1977-1981 was part of the overall movement to “cleanse” China of the remnants of the Cultural Revolution and reorganize Chinese society around the new political goals. This process entailed, among many things, the rehabilitation of individuals that had been purged during the Cultural Revolution, the reintegration into urban society of

³³ The Organization itself had been stipulated by UNESCO in the early 1960s.

³⁴ Cf. Teng Wenqi 滕文启, “Yatai tongxunshu zuzhi he Yatai xinwen jiaohuanwang” 亚太通讯社组织和亚太新闻交换网 [The Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies and the news exchange net in the Asia Pacific], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1982): 21-22.

³⁵ Chinese quote “从事对外宣传的每一个作者、翻译和编辑，都应该在他的写字台上放一个标语牌，上面写着：外国人不是中国人。” Quoted in Yi Xianfei 易先飞, “Tigao waixuan xiaoguo bixu jiaqiang zhenduixing” 提高外宣效果必须加强针对性 [In order to raise the effectiveness of external propaganda, we need to strengthen its accordance with the target audience’s tastes and needs], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 5 (2001): 36.

youths and others who had been sent to the countryside, reforming the organizational structure of the political apparatus, and inculcating Party members with the content of the new general line and new “core values” of the new leadership as encapsulated in the slogans “liberate thought” (*jiefang sixiang* 解放思想), and “seek truth from facts” (*shishi qiushi* 实事求是). With regard to concrete external propaganda practices, the focus was on re-establishing the principle of “distinguishing between domestic and external (propaganda)” (*nei wai you bie* 内外有别), on de-ideologizing the language used in propaganda targeted at foreigners, and on getting away from the “positive news only” model of reporting China. During these early years, the notion of media competition between China and either of the two superpowers was conspicuously absent from the debate. China’s foreign relations were relatively smooth at the time and China’s main concerns were domestic, so problems identified in external propaganda work had to do with the remnants of the Cultural Revolution, not with any external factors.

The intention to change external propaganda practice was largely formalized in 1977, more than a year before the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, with first institutional changes following suit in early 1978. The way the changes were introduced is representative of the role foreigners played in the institutionalization of new practices. Their main role was not to stipulate change (although they were frequently asked for advice and listened to) but to legitimize changes and to make suggestions that external propaganda cadres in favor could not make as easily. Felix Greene (1909-1985), a British journalist who had first come to China in 1957 with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Vice President of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (cf. chapter 3.3) at the time, gave a talk in front of Xinhua’s external department on April 6, 1977 in which he criticized the habit of Chinese media to directly translate texts from Chinese into foreign languages without any changes in style.³⁶ Greene was clearly considered a “friend of China” (cf. chapter 3.2). He had been friends with Zhou Enlai and was well-known internationally for his positive accounts on a number of socialist countries written

³⁶ Cf. Gan Xianfeng 甘险峰, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi* 中国对外新闻传播史 [A history of China’s external news communication] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2004), 210.

over the course of the 1960s and 1970s.³⁷ Deng Xiaoping officially approved the points Greene had made in August 1977 and had them circulated to units involved in external propaganda.³⁸ Until 1979, when Hu Yaobang delivered a speech on external propaganda work, Deng Xiaoping's short instructions (*pishi* 批示) regarding Greene's words were the official master text on China's external propaganda policy. Although Greene later met with the Dalai Lama and was, according to the latter's account of the meeting, ultimately convinced that the situation in Tibet was not as rosy as he had portrayed it in one of his documentaries, he remained a revered person in China whose advice on external propaganda work continues to be invoked until today.³⁹

Half a year later, the first changes were implemented. In January 1978, briefly after its re-establishment in late 1977 and almost a year before the 3rd Plenum of the 11th Central Committee, the CPD added a Bureau for External Propaganda (*Duiwai xuanchuan ju* 对外宣传局).⁴⁰ Xiao Ximing 肖希明, who

³⁷ Cf. "Felix Greene, Reporter, Dies; Visited North Vietnam in 60's," AP, published June 27, 1985, available on the website of the *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/06/27/world/felix-greene-reporter-dies-visited-north-vietnam-in-60-s.html>, accessed December 17, 2011. His books include *Vietnam! Vietnam!* (1966), *The Wall has Two Sides: A Portrait of China Today* (1964), *Awakened China: The Country Americans Don't Know* (1961), *The Enemy* (1970), and *A Curtain of Ignorance* (1965). His films include *China* (1965), *Freedom Railway* (1974), *One Man's China* (1972), and *Tibet!* (1976). Felix Greene also did the "first personal interview" with Hua Guofeng in 1979, available at China Digital Times ("Hua Guofeng Interview with Felix Greene." <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2007/06/hua-guofeng-interview-with-felix-greene/>, accessed December 17, 2011).

³⁸ Gan Xianfeng, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 210. Also see "Zhang Xiangshan tongzhi tan guanyu zuohao jiedai, luyou gongzuo zhong de xuanchuan wenti" 张香山同志谈关于做好接待、旅游工作中的宣传问题 [Comrade Zhang Xiangshan talks about the issue of properly doing propaganda as part of hosting (foreigners) and tourism work], in *Xuanchuan dongtai xuanbian, 1979* 宣传动态选编, 1979 [Selections from *Propaganda trends*, 1979] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981), 236. Deng Xiaoping's evaluating comment (*pishi*) on the talk was "I believe that Greene's opinion is very important for propaganda, writing style and other aspects; in each case, it deserves our attention. I suggest to transmit [his opinion] to comrades working in propaganda and external affairs work so they can take a look at it." (我认为, 格林的意见很重要, 无论宣传和文风等方面, 都值得注意。建议印发给作宣传、外事工作的同志看看。) Cited in Gan, *Zhongguo duiwai xinwen chuanbo shi*, 210.

³⁹ This is probably so because Deng Xiaoping did not make any other comments on external propaganda work, so his approval of Greene's opinion is the only clear directive Deng ever gave on the issue. One relatively recent text invoking Greene is Yi Xianfei, "Tigao waixuan xiaoguo bixu jiaqiang zhenduixing," 36.

⁴⁰ Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui 中国共产党组织史资料编审委员会 [Editorial committee for Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 [Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], vol. 7: *Shehui zhuyi shiye fazhan xin shiqi, 1976.10-1997.9* 社会主义事业发展新时期: 1976.10-1997.9 [The new period of

had worked at Xinhua for the previous 32 years, including as head of the External Department (*Duiwaibu* 对外部), became the first director of the Bureau.⁴¹ At the first Xinhua conference on external propaganda since the end of the Cultural Revolution in November and December 1978, the Xinhua party group (*dangzu* 党组)⁴² first stipulated to turn Xinhua into a “large proletarian world news agency” (*wuchanjiuji de shijiexing de da tongxunshe* 无产阶级的世界性的大通讯社),⁴³ a plan that was to be pursued further after 1982. On March 21, 1979, Hu Yaobang gave a speech on external propaganda at the “Briefing for press, broadcasting and print publication propaganda (and) reporting work targeted at abroad” convened by the CPD, at which he offered a thorough criticism of existing external propaganda practice. This was briefly after having ascended to the Politburo in December 1978 and at a time when he was still head of the CPD. The speech was circulated widely through internal channels, among others in the journal *Propaganda Dynamics* (*Xuanchuan dongtai* 宣传动态).⁴⁴

The speech introduced the concerns and main points on the agenda in the immediate period after the “official” end of the Cultural Revolution. The main problems identified by Hu were that of “Ultra-Leftism” –a standard attack on the politics of the Cultural Revolution– and that of subjectivism (*zhuguan zhuyi* 主观

developing the socialist enterprise: 1976.10-1997.9] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 230.

⁴¹ Yang Jianye 杨建业 and Yang Guoren 杨国仁, “Gengyun waixuan fengxian rensheng (xia) – Zoujin Zhongxuanbu yuan duiwai xuanchuan ju juzhang Xiao Ximing” 耕耘外宣 奉献人生 (下) ——走近中宣部原对外宣传局局长肖希明 [A life dedicated to the cultivation of external propaganda (part 2): Getting to know the former director of the Bureau for External Propaganda of the Central Propaganda Department, Xiao Ximing], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 8 (2004): 1.

⁴² Government institutions in China all have a Party group that makes major decisions. The Party group should not be confused with the Party Committee (*jiguan dangwei* 机关党委), which manages everyday work and whose institutional structure roughly replicates the Central Committee. Cf. Yu Keping 俞可平, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi – Zhongguo* 当代各国政治体制—中国 [Current political systems of various countries: China] (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 1998), 23-24.

⁴³ The participants of the conference agreed on two standards as to what defined a world news agency: first, being able to report on time on all big events in China and the world, and, second, that Xinhua’s news releases would be used by big media outlets in various countries (*ge guo* 各国). Cf. Xinhuashe xinwen yanjiusuo 新华社新闻研究所, *Chuanmei fazhan fanglue: 2001 nian Xinhuashe xinwen xueshu nianhui lunwenxuan* 传媒发展方略：2001年新华社新闻学术年会论文选 [Parallel English title: *Strategy of Media Development*] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2002), 389.

⁴⁴ “Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan ruhe ba duiwai xuanchuan gao de geng hao yixie 胡耀邦同志谈如何把对外宣传搞得更好一些” [Comrade Hu Yaobang talks about how to do external propaganda even better], *Xuanchuan dongtai xuanbian*, 1979, 38-46.

主义), meaning behavior that was grounded in theory and removed from reality, as defined in 1942 by Mao Zedong 毛泽东 in Yan'an 延安.⁴⁵ In addressing the problem that external propaganda did not distinguish enough between domestic and foreign audiences (*bu kan duixiang* 不看对象) Hu linked his concerns to the Yan'an rectification campaign and thus used the common strategy of invoking Mao's authority. In those early years, there were few discussions on external propaganda per se, which only followed in the second half of the 1980s. While adapting the content, form, and style of media messages to the target audience in order to increase acceptance seems like a reasonable thing to do and was in line with the basic tenets of communications studies that were being introduced in China at the time,⁴⁶ it must be assumed that, as during the Cultural Revolution, doing so was not at all undisputed, and that people advocating for it continued to run the risk of being accused by political opponents of selling out on principles and abandoning the traditional Chinese-Leninist concept of the press and the role of propaganda.

The main reason why existing problems were difficult to eradicate, according to Hu, was fear of making mistakes, a point also highlighted in 1958 after the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Hu Yaobang picked the issue of "fear" up more than once in his speech⁴⁷ and later also reiterated it in private conversations with leading external propaganda cadres.⁴⁸ A policy document issued a year later likewise noted that most departments and cadres were still "afraid of doing external propaganda work, afraid of approaching foreigners, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of taking responsibility."⁴⁹ The prevailing attitude, stated the

⁴⁵ Attributed to Mao and generally associated with the Yan'an Rectification Campaign of 1942, Mao criticized subjectivism in his speech "Rectify the Party's style of work" from early 1942. See Mao Zedong 毛泽东, "Zhengdun dang de zuofeng" 整顿党的作风 [Rectify the Party's style of work], February 1, 1942, available online at Marxist.org, <http://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19420201.htm>, accessed March 2, 2013.

⁴⁶ E.g. Shen Suru 沈苏儒, *Duiwai baodao jiaocheng* 对外报道教程 [Parallel English title: *Reporting China for Abroad*] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2004), 13. This 2004 edition was based on an earlier work of Shen's from 1989.

⁴⁷ Cf. "Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan ruhe ba duiwai xuanchuan gao de geng hao yixie," 39.

⁴⁸ Cf. Yang Jianye and Yang Guoren, "Gengyun waixuan fengxian rensheng (xia) – Zoujin Zhongxuanbu yuan duiwai xuanchuan ju juzhang Xiao Ximing," 1.

⁴⁹ "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian" 对外宣传小组关于改进和加强对外宣传工作的意见 [The External Propaganda Small Group's opinion on improving and strengthening external propaganda work], June 30, 1980, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian, 1951-1992* 党的宣传工作会议概况和文献,

document, was that it was “better to do one too few than one too many” (*duo yi shi bu ru shao yi shi* 多一事不如少一事).⁵⁰ External propaganda did have to adhere to principles, but it also had to remain flexible (*jidong linghuo* 机动灵活) at the same time; it needed both central guidance and for individual workers to take the initiative (*zhudongxing* 主动性).⁵¹

Hu Yaobang also updated participants of the conference on the new goals and target audience. To “further the world revolution” could no longer be the aim of external propaganda.⁵² Instead, Hu “suggested” that the primary goal should be to increase foreigners’ “understanding of and friendly feelings towards China.” With regard to the target audience, Hu stressed that all foreigners were a potential target, explicitly correcting the notion that only the political middle (*zhongjian fenzi* 中间分子) was the target of external propaganda, a “misunderstanding” which had arisen while combating the policy of targeting mainly the international left. While it was true that the majority of foreigners belonged to the political middle and therefore it was important “not to sing too high a tune” (*bu yao chang gao diao* 不要唱高调), any foreigner, regardless of political leanings, should be a potential target.⁵³

The conventions of Party journalism at the time also came under attack in the speech. Hu introduced four standards against which external propaganda should be measured: First, there was truthfulness (*zhenshixing* 真实性), which attacked the habit not only to report success stories, but to exaggerate them to boot. External propaganda workers were allowed to report some “shortcomings” (*quedian* 缺点), though “there [were] some ugly things which [did] not need to be told” (*you xie chou shi bu bi jiang* 有些丑事不必讲).⁵⁴ Second and third were variety (*fengfu duocai* 丰富多彩),⁵⁵ and liveliness (*shengdong huopo* 生动活

1951-1992 [Overview and documents from the Party’s propaganda work conferences, 1951-1992] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 390.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 390-391.

⁵¹ Ibid., 391.

⁵² Cf. “Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan ruhe ba duiwai xuanchuan gao de geng hao yixie,” 40.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁵ Referring to news from different areas (economy, politics, culture, science, etc.) and both from the center and locales.

泼),⁵⁶ which opposed the bias towards political topics and the tendency towards long theoretical explications. Number four, speed or timeliness was deliberately de-prioritized: While it was important to release news on time, haste was also the cause of many mistakes. Thus, according to Hu's speech, thoroughness came first and speed only came second.⁵⁷ A few years later, by 1982, this was to change as well.

At the time, foreign models were also used to argue for reforms indirectly. There were some conspicuous similarities between the points advocated by Hu and a description of the U.S. International Communication Agency (ICA, the name of the USIA between 1978 and 1982) published in an internal journal around the same time.⁵⁸ The piece on ICA, for instance, highlighted the fact that employees of the VOA and other broadcasting institutions had relatively high editorial independence as long as they stayed within the overall focus prescribed by ICA.⁵⁹ Hu Yaobang, correspondingly, stressed the need for external propaganda workers to make certain decisions on their own. Hu also encouraged people to let the CPD know if its orders were confusing (*xia zhihui* 瞎指挥).⁶⁰ While ICA employees did, in fact, have considerably more editorial freedom than China's external propaganda workers, the most likely scenario is that this aspect about ICA was stressed in Chinese texts so as to argue indirectly for relaxed control in China.

During this early period, China again selectively allowed foreigners into the country to film. Some outcomes of this policy were Murray Lerner's documentary, *From Mao to Mozart* (1980), portraying Isaac Stern's visit to China

⁵⁶ Hu did not explain this point any further, but it probably mainly meant that news should be written in an interesting way that would attract readers. "Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan ruhe ba duiwai xuanchuan gao de geng hao yixie," 40.

⁵⁷ "Ibid., 41.

⁵⁸ Shu Zongqiao, "Meiguo de duiwai xuanchuan he wenhua jiaoliu – Guoji jiaoliushu de qingkuang he gongzuo," 5-16.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 11-12. In addition, the four work principles attributed to ICA are also reminiscent of the four standards that Hu prescribed for China's external propaganda work, although Hu de-prioritized speed. ICA's supposed four work principles were 1. Speed (*xinwen liqiu kuaisu jishi* 新闻力求快速及时). 2. truthfulness, 3. Clear and succinct coverage, saying the important things in only a few sentences, with simple background info. 4. Variety of material (*ticai de duoyangxing* 题材的多样性). Cf. Shu Zongqiao, "Meiguo de duiwai xuanchuan he wenhua jiaoliu – Guoji jiaoliushu de qingkuang he gongzuo," 12. Hu's four standards were truthfulness (*zhenshixing* 真实性), variety (*fengfu duocai* 丰富多彩), and liveliness (*shengdong huopo* 生动活泼), and speed.

⁶⁰ "Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan ruhe ba duiwai xuanchuan gao de geng hao yixie," 45.

and cooperation with the China Central Symphony Society and an interview with Hua Guofeng 华国锋 made by Felix Greene.⁶¹ Nonetheless foreign television channels were treated with caution in the early 1980s. For example, while newspaper correspondents were already allowed into the country, TV stations did not get permissions at first. Jim Laurie, who opened the first TV bureau in Beijing for the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in 1981, recounts that officials told him not to use the word “television” on his visiting card and instead stick to a strict translation of broadcasting as *guangbo* 广播, which only refers to *radio* broadcasts in Chinese.⁶² This seems to suggest that there was some disagreement whether to allow foreign television into China, and the solution was to first grant permission to TV stations whose name sounded like a radio station in Chinese.

In April 1980, the External Propaganda Small Group (*Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu* 对外宣传小组, henceforth EPSG) was founded in addition to the CPD’s External Propaganda Bureau and charged with supervising all external propaganda work,⁶³ following a directive from Hu Yaobang.⁶⁴ The EPSG was not a *leading* small group, i.e. not headed by a Politburo member, but it served a similar function by combining cadres from various units involved in external propaganda as well as in foreign affairs work. It was nominally headed by Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之 (the *de facto* director of the Central Propaganda Department), and its *de facto* director was Xiao Ximing. CPD’s Bureau for External Propaganda

⁶¹ Cf. “Hua Guofeng Interview with Felix Greene,” China Digital Times, posted June 16, 2007, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2007/06/hua-guofeng-interview-with-felix-greene/>, accessed August 29, 2012.

⁶² Interview with Jim Laurie, Hong Kong, January 14, 2011. An official later told Laurie that the reason why some people in the Chinese government did not want to allow foreign TV stations into the country was the famous documentary *Chung Kuo - Cina* (1972) made by Michelangelo Antonioni during the Cultural Revolution, which authorities thoroughly disliked as they felt it portrayed China as backward.

⁶³ The notice announcing its creation to Party Committees at the ministerial/provincial level was dated September 16, 1980. Cf. “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jianli duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi” 中共中央关于建立对外宣传小组加强对外宣传工作的通知, [Notification from the CPC Central Committee on establishing the Central External Propaganda Small Group and strengthening external propaganda work], in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian (1951-1992)* 党的宣传工作会议概况和文献(1951-1992), ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 386-387.

⁶⁴ Huang, Zecun 黄泽存, *Xin shiqi duiwai xuanchuan lungao* 新时期对外宣传论稿 [Preliminary discussions of external propaganda in the new period] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2002), 178; also see Yang Jianye and Yang Guoren, “Gengyun waixuan fengxian rensheng (xia) – Zoujin Zhongxuanbu yuan duiwai xuanchuan ju juzhang Xiao Ximing,” 1.

continued to exist and served as the EPSG's "executive body,"⁶⁵ meaning that it was a non-standing organization without an independent permanent office. The EPSG was comprised of cadres from fourteen different units that mainly combined bureaucratic organizations from the propaganda system, the foreign affairs system, as well as the bureaucracies in charge of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, and overseas Chinese affairs work.⁶⁶ It had six main responsibilities:

1. Researching public opinion abroad, especially on China-related topics, thus providing "intelligence" what kind of "misunderstandings" or problems China needed to react to,
2. Devising external propaganda policies,
3. Overseeing the implementation of particularly important tasks,
4. Coordinating the work of different units,
5. Researching external propaganda work and
6. Making development plans both for China's external propaganda work and for the training of cadres.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jianli duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi," 386-387. "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu chengyuan mingdan" 对外宣传小组成员名单 [List of members of the External Propaganda Small Group], in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian: 1951-1992*, ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting, 388.

⁶⁶ "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jianli duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi," 386; "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu chengyuan mingdan," 388.

⁶⁷ "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jianli duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi," 386-387. Concretely: 1. Understand (*liaojie* 了解) and grasp (*zhangwo* 掌握) public opinion trends (*yulun dongxiang* 舆论动向) as well as political and thought dynamics (*zhengzhi, sixiang dongtai* 政治、思想动态) abroad, especially international political, thought-related and public opinion circumstances that concern China (*tebie shi yu woguo you zhongyao guanxi de guoji zhengzhi, sixiang, yulun qingkuang* 特别是与我国有重要关系的国际政治、思想、舆论情况), and reflect these to the centre on time (*jishi xiang zhongyang fanying* 及时向中央反映). 2. Coming up with external propaganda principles, policies, and propaganda slogans regarding important problems on time and in accordance with the development of the situation in China and abroad as well as with new trends in politics, thought and public opinion outside of China. 3. Organizing, inspecting and supervising the completion of especially important external propaganda responsibilities. 4. Coordinating the external propaganda work of all respective work units as well as summing up and circulating (*zongjie jiaoliu* 总结交流) experience. 5. Regularly familiarizing (*jingchang liaojie* 经常了解) itself with the circumstances and problems (*qingkuang he wenti* 情况和问题) in external propaganda work; researching and formulating, improving and developing important measures for external propaganda work. 6. Researching and outlining (*yanjiu he niding* 研究和拟定) development plans (*fazhan guihua* 发展规划) for the enterprise (*shiyeh* 事业) of external propaganda and proposals for the training and improvement of external propaganda cadre personnel.

Aside from arrangements at the Central level, provinces were also asked to participate. External propaganda had not been an issue for the provinces during the Mao period, as aside from Guangdong 广东, which had a clear mandate for propaganda aimed at Hong Kong and Macao,⁶⁸ no other provinces were regularly engaged in external propaganda work except during highly scripted visits from foreigners that were organized by the Center.⁶⁹ As early as in October 1979, the CPD had published “Notification on strengthening local external propaganda work,”⁷⁰ one of the first steps towards involving locales more actively. Following the establishment of the EPSG at the central level, a number of provincial equivalents were founded.⁷¹ For instance, Shandong 山东 established an external propaganda small group as early as in October 1980,⁷² and Hunan 湖南 created an External Propaganda Division (*duiwai xuanchuan chu* 对外宣传处) within its provincial propaganda department in 1985.⁷³ Some provinces also established external propaganda small groups or offices at sub-provincial level,⁷⁴ especially in locales officially opened up to foreigners. By the early 1980s, much of the

⁶⁸ Cf. “Zhonggong zhongyang pizhuan waishi xiaozu guanyu tiaozheng he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzu lingdao wenti de baogao” 中共中央批转外事小组关于调整和加强对外宣传工作领导问题的报告 [The CPC Central Committee approves and circulates the Foreign Affairs Small Group’s report on the problem of how to reorganize and strengthen the leadership of external propaganda work], originally issued August 24, 1958, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1949-1966)* 党的宣传工作文件选编(1949-1966) [Selected documents on the Party’s propaganda work (1949-1966)] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 371-373.

⁶⁹ A practice adapted by China on the basis of the Soviet *delegatziya* system. Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People’s Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 11.

⁷⁰ “Guanyu jiaqiang difang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi” (关于加强地方对外宣传工作的通知). See He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 227.

⁷¹ The 1980 “Opinion” had stipulated the creation of external propaganda structures (such as small groups or offices) at each central unit frequently in contact with foreigners, at each provincial party committee and government, as well as in all important cities opened up to foreign investment. “Opinion,” 395.

⁷² “Dong Fengji tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu huiyi shang de jiang hua” 董凤基同志在省委对外宣传小组会议上的讲话 [Comrade Dong Fengji’s speech at the meeting of the External Propaganda Small Group of Shandong Provincial Party Committee], May 18, 1992, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, eds. Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People’s Government of Shandong Province] (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1999), vol. 1, 124.

⁷³ Cf. Hunan sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 湖南省地方志编纂委员会编 [Local chronicle compilation committee of Hunan province], ed., *Hunan Sheng Zhi: Minsu zhi* 湖南省志: 民俗志 [Hunan provincial chronicles: Folk customs] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2005), 307.

⁷⁴ E.g. Hunan in 1986, cf. *ibid.*

responsibility to advertise themselves in order to gain foreign direct investment was handed directly to the coastal provinces. The first external propaganda conference in 1984 accordingly took place in Guangdong, not Beijing.⁷⁵

In June 1980, the Center approved and circulated a document from the newly founded small group called “The EPSG’s Opinion on Improving and Strengthening External Propaganda Work” (*Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian* 对外宣传小组关于改进和加强对外宣传工作的意见). The document took up most points in Hu Yaobang’s speech, presenting them in a more systematic way adding concrete policy suggestions. It thus constituted the first official “agenda” (*gangling* 纲领) for external propaganda work in the post-Mao period. The “Opinion” defined the “fundamental responsibility” of external propaganda as “serving the general line and the external line of the party” (*wei dang de zong luxian fuwu, wei dang de duiwai luxian fuwu* 为党的总路线服务，为党的对外路线服务)⁷⁶ and tied external propaganda to the successful completion of China’s strategic goals, which were later, at the 12th Party Congress in 1982, termed the “three grand tasks of the 1980s:” first, opposing hegemonism and protecting world peace, second, returning Taiwan and realizing unification of the motherland, and third, intensifying the Four Modernizations.⁷⁷ This meant affirming that external propaganda was “related to” (*sheji dao* 涉及到) China’s “big policies” (*dazheng fangzhen* 大政方针), as well as China’s overall tasks and goals (*zong renwu, zong mubiao* 总任务，总目标).⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Cf. Tan Zhen 谭震 and Lei Xiangqing 雷向晴, “Quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu -- 2005 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi da yinxiang” 全方位、多层次、宽领域——2005年全国外宣工作会议大印象 [All-dimensional, multitiered and wide-ranging – Impressions from the nation work meeting for external propaganda], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 8 (2005), no page number provided in the digital version from China Academic Journals.

⁷⁶ Cf. “Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian,” 390.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁷⁸ Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, “Duiwai xuanchuan shi duiwai kaifang de zucheng bufen” 对外宣传是对外开放的组成部分 [External propaganda is a part of opening up], speech given at the Conference for Coordinating External Propaganda Work of China’s Northern provinces (华北地区) on June 22, 1986, available online on the website of the China Society for Human Rights Studies http://www.humanrights.cn/cn/zt/tbbd/fyjd70n/03/t20070110_198144.htm, accessed October 20, 2012. Definition of *zhanlue*: 战略是长远的全局的纲领和目标，以及为实现战略目标的保证 Cf. Zeng Jianhui, Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan* 融冰架桥, 突围: 曾建徽论对外宣传 [Melting the ice, building

Crucially, the 1980 “Opinion” constituted the first step towards making external propaganda as important as domestic propaganda. It identified the current institutional structure as a problem, with external propaganda structures isolated and departments doing both domestic and external propaganda work focusing mainly on domestic issues, either neglecting external propaganda or even believing that it was optional (*ke you ke wu* 可有可无). Thus, in all areas (news, broadcasting, books, films, TV, art, pictures, exhibitions, etc.), institutions really suiting the needs of external propaganda were rare. The “Opinion” announced that especially in departments responsible for both domestic and external propaganda, external propaganda would be strongly reinforced.⁷⁹ Importantly, as opposed to many later documents, the 1980 “Opinion” was not a typical “compromise” document in which different political positions were included. The problem of insufficient external propaganda was identified, reasons given, and solutions as well as an agenda for development offered.

External propaganda priorities laid out in the “Opinion” were first, external propaganda through broadcasts, films, television, news agencies, newspapers, and journals, second, external propaganda books (notably listed separately from all other media⁸⁰), third, sending artist troupes abroad (focusing on many small rather than a few big events), fourth, targeting foreigners living in or visiting China, fifth, providing material to newspapers run by overseas Chinese, sixth, opening up propaganda centers abroad,⁸¹ seventh, using the culture departments of Chinese embassies as well as Xinhua and China News Agency (*Zhongxinshe* 中新社) branches abroad for external propaganda purposes, and eighth, cooperating with journalists stationed in China as well as with news and cultural personnel at foreign embassies and with “foreign experts” (*waiguo zhuanjia* 外国专家).⁸²

bridges, breaking out of the encirclement: Zeng Jianhui on external propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006), vol. 2, 58.

⁷⁹ “Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian,” 392.

⁸⁰ It should be noted that in the introduction of ICA, books were also treated separately from other media. Cf. Shu Zongqiao, “Meiguo de duiwai xuanchuan he wenhua jiaoliu – Guoji jiaoliushu de qingkuang he gongzuo,” 7-8.

⁸¹ This, according to the “Opinion,” was a complex issue and therefore China should first consider establishing centers on a trial basis in New York, Paris, and Tokyo, and later expand the policy to cover more places. Cf. “Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian,” 393.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The “Opinion” noted that letting foreigners speak on China’s behalf would be much more effective than China speaking for itself.⁸³ Means to improve work with foreign journalists included interacting with them through press conferences or meetings, systematically introducing them to certain topics and providing them with material to use in their news reports. Moreover, China would have to allow journalists to venture out of Beijing for interviews or sightseeing. Journalists, academics, and tourists who came to China for only a short time would also have to be won over.⁸⁴ While most external propaganda units did not generate income, incentives should be given to do so by allowing each unit to keep any surplus income and reinvest it in their enterprise,⁸⁵ a plan imitating contemporary Chinese agricultural policy and thus a typical example of translating the “spirit” of the Center into concrete policies in each sector.

By 1981, the first projects were under way. On July 1, 1981, after a very short trial period, the first official issue of the newly founded *China Daily* was published. The paper was not only available on the mainland, but also in Hong Kong, where it was printed and distributed through the CPC-controlled *Wen Wei Po* (*Wenhuibao* 文汇报).⁸⁶ According to one source, the idea to launch an English language paper was first proposed by the first wave of foreign tourists let back into the country, some of whom had suggested that China present its development and other news through an English language paper.⁸⁷ While such proposals probably did exist in some form, this represents a very typical way of justifying new initiatives on the part of Chinese proponents of external propaganda work, namely “We are only responding to foreigners’ needs.” This pattern also showed up in other places: Interviews with foreigners were frequently cited in order to justify particular policies. Seeking out the opinions of foreigners was a common tactic to bolster and legitimize one’s own plans.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 395.

⁸⁶ Cf. Won Ho Chang, “China Daily,” in *Mass Media in China: The History and the Future* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), 114.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁸⁸ See for example “Guangbo shiyuju waiguo zhuanjia tan tical, xiezuo he shixiao,” 13; “Guangbo shiyuju Xide zhuanjia Nuote tan duiwai xuanchuan” 广播事业局西德专家诺特谈对外宣传 [West German expert ‘Nuote’ from the Broadcasting Bureau speaks about external propaganda], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1981): 15.

The first English language daily since the founding of the PRC was set up by the *People's Daily* (*Renminribao*, 人民日报) with significant help from Australian partners, most importantly the publishers of *The Age* (David Syme and Co., Ltd.) and the Australia-China Council.⁸⁹ Compared to most of China's domestic media, the *China Daily* was very modern in terms of layout and content.⁹⁰ Moreover, one aspect that was entirely new about the *China Daily* among China's foreign language publications was that articles were actually originally written in English rather than first written in Chinese and then translated.⁹¹ While this sounds like a natural thing to do, this must be considered a major innovation that gave editors significant leeway to report more freely and with less interference from censors, whose English language skills were not good enough to pick up certain nuances. This is not to say that there was no control over content in the *China Daily* at all, but composing pieces in English rather than translating them represented an important move away from the absolute control over terminology that had played such a central role during the Mao period and made a completely different writing style possible again.

In addition, in the early 1980s, overseas Chinese became an important target of nearly all external propaganda units. There are at least two reasons for this development: First, China was seeking foreign investments, and overseas Chinese had cultural and familial ties to China and thus were most likely to invest. They were also the easiest to reach, as reporters and journalists could write news dispatches in their mother tongue. While there were still language issues, they were presumably easier to improve than articles and releases written in foreign languages – and at a lower cost. Second, one of the “three grand tasks” of the 1980s was reunification with Taiwan. Thus, more than before, China saw itself in a competition with Taiwan over public opinion on the issue among ethnic Chinese.

Previously, work aimed at overseas Chinese had been done mainly through China News Agency (*Zhongxinshe*). Xinhua's external department established an editorial department for Chinese language news releases as early as in 1980, supposedly in response to requests from Hong Kong papers for better Chinese

⁸⁹ For details on the early *China Daily*, see John Lawrence, “*China Daily News*,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 8 (July 1982): 147-151. John Lawrence was one of the foreign experts sent to China by David Syme and Co. in order to launch the paper.

⁹⁰ Won Ho Chang, “*China Daily*,” 112-126.

⁹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 115.

language news releases. Before 1980, Xinhua had sent two types of releases to Chinese language papers in Hong Kong: English dispatches sent by the External Editorial Department (*Duiwaibu* 对外部), which needed to be translated into Chinese first before they could be used, and Chinese language dispatches sent by the Domestic Editorial Department (*Guoneibu* 国内部).⁹² In August 1980, Xinhua leaders established the Chinese Editorial Group (*Zhongwen bianjizu* 中文编辑组) within the External Department. Releases produced by this group were first sent to Chinese papers in New York City and later, starting in early 1981, also to Hong Kong papers.⁹³ Additionally, Xinhua staffers were sent to the *Dagongbao* 大公报 and the *Wenhuibao* 文汇报 in Hong Kong for internships to improve the quality of Xinhua's Chinese language news work.⁹⁴ In the same year, *China Reconstructs* published its first Chinese edition.⁹⁵

Taiwan also became a key target of PRC propaganda, although the question how to call propaganda work targeted at Taiwanese was somewhat sensitive. While people from Hong Kong, Macao, as well as Overseas Chinese, were explicitly included in the target audience of external propaganda, "Taiwan compatriots" needed a special justification: "Because they have been separated from the mainland for a long time, our external propaganda is also used on them."⁹⁶ However, in addition, to *dui wai xuanchuan* 对外宣传, the separate category of *dui Tai xuanchuan* 对台宣传 has existed since at least the 1980s. Thus, while Taiwanese are considered targets of external propaganda in general, it is also possible to speak of propaganda targeted at Taiwanese in particular.⁹⁷

⁹² Cf. "Shijie ge di huawen baozhi huanying Zhongguo dalu xinwen" 世界各地华文报纸欢迎中国大陆新闻 [Chinese language papers all over the world welcome news from the Chinese mainland], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 15 (1982): 24.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Li Chaochen 李超尘, *Mantan dui wai dui Tai xuanchuan* 漫谈对外对台宣传 [Thoughts on external propaganda and propaganda targeted at Taiwan] (Beijing: Zhongguo jianshe chubanshe, 1989), 30.

⁹⁶ Chinese quote: "台湾同胞由于与大陆长期隔绝,我们的对外宣传也用于他们。" "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian," 390.

⁹⁷ As in the title of Li Chaochen 李超尘, *Mantan dui wai dui Tai xuanchuan* 漫谈对外对台宣传 [Thoughts on external propaganda and propaganda targeted at Taiwan] (Beijing: Zhongguo jianshe chubanshe, 1989).

During those early years, China's external propaganda organs still planned to use strategies that had been common during the Mao period. China's officials were also quite aware of the fact that foreigners read the Chinese press and particularly articles on literature and the arts to decipher any possible signal or clue that they could get about the internal workings and direction of the CPC. This knowledge was used strategically in order to dissipate foreigners' worries. For example, after the poet Bai Hua 白桦 had been criticized, Xinhua deputy director Li Pu 李普 insisted it had been vital to publicize the fact that Bai Hua had also recently received a poetry award, otherwise, foreigners would have speculated that the Party Center was internally unstable and beset with factional struggles.⁹⁸ Li Pu further explained that while Western journalists' stance was very different from China's, they quickly caught on to subtle changes in the news and had interpreted the article on Bai Hua quite closely to the message Xinhua had wanted to send.⁹⁹

In 1981, Xinhua therefore planned to establish two "authoritative commentators" akin to famous commentators at the Soviet news agency TASS (Telegrafnoye agentstvo Sovetskovo Soyuza Телеграфное агентство Советского Союза) and to China's own collective pseudonyms during the Mao period.¹⁰⁰ This was to be achieved by establishing two collective pen names to publish articles of a good quality on a regular basis, one on politics, culture and education (called Zhao Ping 赵平) and the other on the economy.¹⁰¹ The pseudonym Zhao Ping had been used in the past, but it appears the plans for a regular political commentator were not realized,¹⁰² most likely because shortly after the announcement, Xinhua was busy with much bigger plans. In addition, a year later, China began to move towards a system of announcing the Chinese government's position more openly through the establishment of a spokesperson system (see below in chapter 5.3).

⁹⁸ The Xinhua news release Li Pu referred to is "Criticism, but No Big Stick – Senior editor Zhao Ping," Xinhua General News Service, May 27, 1981, accessed through Lexis Nexis.

⁹⁹ "Li Pu 李普, "Jiaqiang zhenduixing, kaituo xin jumian" 加强针对性开拓新局面 [Strengthen targetedness to pioneer a new situation], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 4 (1981): 10.

¹⁰⁰ In the past, the people behind the pseudonym Yu Zhaoli were Qiao Guanhua, Yao Qin and Wang Li. Li Pu explained that foreigners had been quite aware that Yu Zhaoli was an authoritative person or an authoritative person's pen name. Cf. *ibid.*, 9-10.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

¹⁰² The database Lexis Nexis does not return any results for Xinhua releases by "Zhao Ping" after the second half of 1981.

With regard to style, as Hu Yaobang had already indicated in his speech, China's external propaganda workers were expected to fundamentally change the standards of what was considered good journalism again, reverting the changes of the 1950s. In June 1981, in order to provide more people with access to information about external propaganda and re-train them according to the new journalistic values, the internal Xinhua journal *External Reporting (Duiwai baodao 对外报道)* was renamed *External Reporting Reference (Duiwai baodao cankao 对外报道参考)* and began to be circulated outside of Xinhua.¹⁰³ Over the next few years, large sections of the journal were dedicated to systematically teaching journalists how to adapt to the reading habits of foreigners.¹⁰⁴ This included publishing translations of foreign (usually U.S.) works.¹⁰⁵ One article noted that since the term "propaganda" (*xuanchuan*) already had a connotation of being dishonest, Chinese propaganda would totally fail if China did not pay attention to the art of propaganda and instead propped its articles with political jargon and lofty adjectives. The most important propaganda art was to use facts to draw readers towards a particular conclusion.¹⁰⁶ In a speech to foreign affairs cadres, Zhu Muzhi also explained that the best way to do propaganda was not to tell, but to show, and how to show best was a matter of skills that could be learned.¹⁰⁷

Content provided to foreigners was primarily to be chosen on the basis whether it replied to their concerns, which could be largely determined by following reports on China in the foreign media. While some external propaganda workers likely also had access to other publications on foreign media trends, such

¹⁰³ Cf. "Zhi duzhe" 致读者 [To the readers], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1981): 2.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Hu Genkang 胡根康, "Daoyu shi li" 导语十例 [Ten examples of introductions], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 12 (1981): 18-19; Wu Xinwen 武新文, "Shitan duiwai baodao zhong de beijing jieshi" 试谈对外报道中的背景解释 [Discussion of (the role of) background explanations in external reporting], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 12 (1981): 21-24; Yin Zhonghui 尹忠惠, "Duiwai tiyu baodao qianyi" 对外体育报道浅议 [Brief discussion of reporting sports for foreigners], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 10 (1981): 20-22.

¹⁰⁵ For example, one model text was Ken Metzler's *New Gathering*, excerpts of which were translated and published in a series in *Duiwai baodao cankao* in 1981. "Texie" 特写 [Excerpt translated from Ken Metzler's *News Gathering*], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 11 (1981): 18-22.

¹⁰⁶ Wang Renlin 汪仁霖, "Duiwai xuanchuan de yishu" 对外宣传的艺术 [The art of external propaganda], *Duiwai baodao cankao* no. 9 (1982): 9. Also see "Zai quanguo waishi gongzuo huiyi shang Zhu Muzhi tongzhi de fayan" 在全国外事工作会议上朱穆之同志的发言 [Comrade Zhu Muzhi's speech at the nationwide work meeting for external affairs], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 11 (1981): 6-7.

¹⁰⁷ "Zai quanguo waishi gongzuo huiyi shang Zhu Muzhi tongzhi de fayan", 6-7.

as *Reference News*, *External Reporting Reference* frequently provided selected excerpts from foreign media. With regard to quantitative surveys on foreigners' attitudes towards the country, China was forced to rely on data generated in Western surveys. External propaganda workers were kept up to date on such developments through the selective translation and analysis of U.S. polls.¹⁰⁸ According to a speech delivered by Li Pu in front of Chinese journalists stationed in China but writing for foreign target audiences, foreigners had eight main questions about China that they wanted answered in the early 1980s:¹⁰⁹

1. Is China's political situation stable or are there factions fighting each other?
2. Is China's economy collapsing? (Question arose because of economic adjustment)
3. Is China "De-Mao-ifying"? (Question arose when the "two whatevers" were opposed)
4. Is China no longer socialist, but actually capitalist? (This question came about when China introduced economic reforms)
5. When China is speaking about democratization, is it serious or not? (This question arose when China began stressing the Four Basic Principles)
6. What is China's path for the future really (*daodi* 到底)?
7. Can business be made with China or not (*daodi*)?
8. Has China made new rich friends and forgotten its old poor friends? (Question arose when diplomatic relations with the United States improved)¹¹⁰

The attention paid by foreigners to China, which was presented as both an opportunity and a challenge that needed to be met, became one of the standard arguments for why external propaganda was necessary. As was and remains common, Li Pu framed foreigners asking these questions in terms of the common ideas about "the people" (*renmin* 人民): Some individuals asking these questions did have ill intentions, and this simply reflected international class struggle.

¹⁰⁸ Such as the Gallup poll on American attitudes towards Asia conducted with financial assistance from the Henry Luce Foundation in 1980. See Wu Yuehui 吴月辉, "Meiguoren zenyang kan Zhongguo: Yi ci minyi ceyan ji qita" 美国人怎样看中国: 一次民意测验及其他 [How Americans view China: A public opinion poll and other (points)], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 9 (1981): 17-19.

¹⁰⁹ Li Pu, "Jiaqiang zhenduixing, kaituo xin jumian," 2-22.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

However, these people were outnumbered by those genuinely concerned.¹¹¹ This was an extension of the previous classification between contradictions among the people and contradictions between the people and the enemies of the people,¹¹² which, in turn, can be traced back to earlier framings of the people (*min* 民) in China (cf. chapter 2). Li Pu dedicated large parts of his speech to creating understanding among Chinese news workers that foreigners' doubts were normal and the natural outcome of the vast changes taking place in China.¹¹³ Explaining these changes to foreigners was the "sacred duty" that "history [had] conferred upon" foreign propaganda workers.¹¹⁴

Importantly, there was also an attempt to get away from the Chinese concept of propaganda in people's heads in order to change journalistic practices. Chinese journalists were used to lecturing and thinking on behalf of their audiences by providing the correct conclusions to be drawn from an article. As is quite common in China, trying to change this was done by introducing a terminological change. Although *duiwai xuanchuan* continued to be the most common term used in official documents and was also in the name of the External Propaganda Small Group that was established in 1980, in sub-sectors of external propaganda work, use of the word *xuanchuan* was challenged. In a letter to CPD from August 1979, Hu Qiaomu 胡乔木 (1912-1992)¹¹⁵ gave instructions to refer to Xinhua's work as "external reporting" (*duiwai baodao* 对外报道), not "external propaganda" (*duiwai xuanchuan*).¹¹⁶ For the radio sector, "external broadcasting" (*duiwai guangbo* 对外广播) became common.¹¹⁷ Challenging the CPC's traditional understanding of the media as a propaganda tool was not uncontested, but through the use of different terminology in different sectors

¹¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹¹² Basically, the same evaluation of the global (including Western) population as Mao, who argued that 90-95 percent of mankind did not have anti-Chinese sentiments. Cf Samuel Kim, *China, the U.N. and World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 84.

¹¹³ Li Pu, "Jiaqiang zhenduixing, kaituo xin jumian," 5 and 7.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁵ Hu Qiaomu is considered one of Hu Yaobang's adversaries during the 1980s. He was president of the newly founded Chinese Academy of Social Sciences at the time.

¹¹⁶ Yang Jianye and Yang Guoren, "Gengyun waixuan fengxian rensheng (xia) – Zoujin Zhongxuanbu yuan duiwai xuanchuan ju juzhang Xiao Ximing," 3.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai 中国国际广播电台 [China Radio International], ed., *1982 nian duiwai guangbo gaoxuan* 1982 年对外广播稿选 [Selected manuscripts from external broadcasting in 1982] (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai, 1983).

while maintaining “external propaganda” as an umbrella term seemed to work as a compromise.

5.3 1982-1984: Conflict and Competition

Over the next few years, China embarked on the first series of structural reforms taking a first step towards making external propaganda at least as important as domestic propaganda and reorganizing China’s media to be ready to “face the world” (*zhuanxiang shijie* 转向世界). Although China’s relations with the U.S. had cooled by the time, this did not discourage reforms. Instead, the CPC began to frame the reinforcement of its external propaganda apparatus as a matter of solidarity with the Third World and of propagating “the superiority of the Socialist system”, arguing that it was important for China to be able to compete against Western news agencies.

This renewed focus on Socialism reflected China’s foreign relations. According to official Chinese evaluations, whereas between 1978 and 1982, China had clung to the “one line” strategy, i.e. trying to isolate the Soviet Union by allying with the United States, after 1982, it changed its diplomatic policy towards one of “independence and non-alignment.”¹¹⁸ In 1982, Sino-U.S. relations worsened over arms sales to Taiwan. As the relationship cooled, China was confronted with an increasingly negative portrayal in U.S. media. The two trends were not linked with one another officially in external propaganda speeches and documents at the time, but presumably, they contributed to the sentiment that the West was a competitor at least as much as a target and towards wanting to re-focus on third world countries, as they were potentially more sympathetic to China.

¹¹⁸ See “Guanyu yinfa ‘Chen Guanglin tongzhi zai gaige kaifang ershi zhounian duiwai xuanchuan yantaohui shang de jianghua’ de tongzhi” 关于印发《陈光林同志在改革开放二十周年对外宣传研讨会上的讲话》的通知 [Notification on issuing ‘Comrade Chen Guanglin’s speech at the external propaganda symposium on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of reform and opening], *Lu waixuan fa* [1998] 8 hao 鲁外宣发 [Circular from Shandong’s Office of External Propaganda [1998] no. 8], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian 1992-1998* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编 (1992-1998) [Document collection on Shandong Province’s external propaganda work (1992-1998)], eds. Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People’s Government of Shandong Province] (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1999), vol. 1, 466.

The work that was seen as the most representative of China's bad image in the United States at the time was Fox Butterfield's *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea*,¹¹⁹ a bestseller in the United States in 1982-1983.¹²⁰ Butterfield had been stationed in Beijing as a correspondent for the *New York Times*. When the *Beijing Review* published an article criticizing the U.S. press three years later in the midst of a campaign for the Party Principle (dangxing yuanze 党性原则), *Alive in the Bitter Sea* was the primary work criticized by name.¹²¹ Butterfield's work was probably singled out because it was a bestseller in both 1982 and 1983, and because it had been described as one of the best books on China since Edgar Snow.¹²²

As opposed to today's historiographies of Chinese external propaganda, external propaganda experts in the 1980s did point out the seeming contradiction that during the Cultural Revolution, China's image had been much better than in the 1980s. One explanation given for this phenomenon was that, first, when foreigners came to China in the 1970s, they still had the "old" China in mind; they imagined women to have bound feet and men to be addicted to opium. Of course they were impressed by the new China, despite all the destruction the Cultural Revolution had wrecked.¹²³ Second, during the Cultural Revolution, China had only presented the best side of the country to foreigners, and this false and overly positive representation had led foreigners to believe that everything was perfect. The result of China's actions was that foreigners obtained a fake image (*jiaxiang* 假象) of the country.¹²⁴ By contrast, when foreigners came to China in the early

¹¹⁹ E.g. Li Yuanjiang 黎元江, *Duiwai xuanchuan jichu* 对外宣传基础 [The basis of external propaganda] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1987), 158; Duan Liancheng 段连城, *Duiwai chuanboxue chutan (zengdingban)* 对外传播学初探 (增订版) [Preliminary exploration of external communication studies (Updated edition)] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2004), 39-41; Tan Huoyang 覃火杨, *Haiwai renshi tan Zhongguo shehui zhuyi* 海外人士谈中国社会主义 [People overseas on Chinese socialism] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1990), 39; Shen Suru, *Duiwai chuanbo lilun yu shijian*, 2004.

¹²⁰ Review of the book published in the NYT on May 30, 1982: <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/05/30/books/a-report-from-pekings.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹²¹ Cf. Peng Di, "Image of US Media – A Chinese View," *Beijing Review*, no. 27, 1985, 22-23. Agnes Smedley, Anna-Louise Strong, and Edgar Snow were, predictably, listed as positive examples (23).

¹²² Cf. Duan Liancheng 段连城, "Shuli wo guo lianghao xingxiang" 树立我国良好形象 [Establishing favorable image of China], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 17 (1986): 7. Duan also stated that by 1986, foreigners coming to China still considered the book an important reference work.

¹²³ Li Yuanjiang, *Duiwai xuanchuan jichu*, 158.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

1980s, they read all those reports exposing what had gone wrong during the Cultural Revolution. Thus, there was a phase of “exposing China” in the Western media.¹²⁵ The negative experiences with journalists stationed in China and the impact their writings had on China’s image were likely a reason why Chinese external propaganda soon stressed the need to work better with foreign journalists and others visiting China.¹²⁶

In addition, the Party used the need to limit foreigners’ access to information that could be used against China to caution media not to report too freely on China’s problems in the open domestic press. A circular from April 1983 distributed by the CPD addressed the repercussions of too open reports in the domestic sphere for China’s international image.¹²⁷ The example it cited was that of frequent reports on the mistreatment of women and female infanticide in the countryside by various Chinese papers and radio stations, which were then picked up by the foreign press and supposedly used to attack “the Chinese policy” as a whole. The “Chinese policy”, of course, in this case referred to the newly introduced one-child-policy. Such news pieces, especially if they cited details and statistics, should be reserved for internal reports only. The circular cautioned media that they ought not only to consider domestic repercussions, but also the damage to China’s image abroad before releasing such stories. Instead, the press should “positively” (*zhengmian* 正面) propagate the new policy and, if anything, convey the intention of the government to eradicate resulting abuses rather than describe concrete cases of malpractices or mistreatment in detail.¹²⁸

The notion that one of the functions of external propaganda was to project a certain “image” of China was a new idea that was only integrated into the Chinese debate on external propaganda in 1982 and 1983. Central circular [1983] no. 15, another “Opinion” (*yijian* 意见) on external propaganda work, spoke of “clearly establishing an image of socialist new China” on the international

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ See, for instance, Duan Liancheng, “Shuli wo guo lianghao, zhenshi de guoji xingxiang,” 8. Duan emphasized that foreigners visiting China acted took the role of “opinion leaders” (*yulun lingxiu* 舆论领袖), influencing foreigners’ attitude towards China.

¹²⁷ “Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu xinwen xuanchuan yao kaolü nei wai yingxiang; zhuyi shehui xiaoguo de tongzhi” 中央宣传部关于 新闻宣传要考虑内外影响; 注意社会效果的通知 [Central Propaganda Department’s Notification that news-based propaganda needs to consider the impact in China and abroad and pay attention to effects on society], April 26, 1983, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian: 1983-1987*, 1170-1172.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

stage.¹²⁹ The term “national image” or “image of the state” (*guojia xingxiang* 国家形象) had only entered the open media relatively briefly before that; it was first used in the *People's Daily* in 1982.¹³⁰ In Hu Yaobang's speech from 1979 and the 1980 “Opinion”, the idea that China had an image to protect or improve had still been completely absent. The most important reason for “image” entering the discourse probably was the concern with “image” of Ronald Reagan. Attempts by the Reagan administration to create a favorable image of the president as well as of the United States as a whole were frequently analyzed in *External Propaganda Reference*, though China of course insisted that its own image projection campaigns were fundamentally different from America's.

Despite the failure to improve China's image right away, external propaganda continued to be strengthened. A text from 1987 explains that after 1983, China's official aim was to turn its news industry into one that “focused mainly on the outside” (*duiwai wei zhu* 对外为主).¹³¹ A speech by Xinhua's president Mu Qing 穆青¹³² from 1985 in which he addressed the issue confirms that this was definitely a concern for domestic propaganda units.¹³³ According to Mu Qing, domestic and external were equally important, and in some aspects, external reporting was more important (*guo nei wai bing zhong, zai mou xie*

¹²⁹ “在国际上鲜明地树立起社会主义新中国的形象” The document is Zhongfa 中发 no. 15 [1983], “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de qingkuang he jinhou gongzuo de yijian” 关于对外宣传工作的情况和今后工作的意见 [Opinion on the current state of external propaganda and on the work to be done in the future]. Cited in He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 228.

¹³⁰ “Ying cong Yingjian bei jichen zhong xiqu shenme jiaoxun” 应从英舰被击沉中吸取什么教训 [What lessons should be drawn from the sinking of the British ship], *Renmin ribao*, June 1, 1982, 6. The article printed selected reactions in the Western press to the sinking of the British ship HMS Sheffield in the Falkland War after being hit by Argentinian missiles.

¹³¹ Pang Bing'an 庞炳庵, “Guoji xinwen baodao wu nian lai de tansuo” 国际新闻报道五年来的探索 [Exploration of international news reports in the last five years], in *Guoji xinwen caixiejingyan huicui* 国际新闻采写经验荟萃 [Collection of experience in writing international news], ed. Xinhua xinwen yanjiusuo 新华新闻研究所 [Xinhua news research office] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1991), 50.

¹³² Mu Qing (1921-2003) had been a journalist for the CPC since 1938 and had worked for Xinhua since 1949. During the Cultural Revolution, he was purged twice: first in August 1966 and, after he was reinstated as a deputy director of Xinhua in 1972 (with Zhu Muzhi as director), again in April 1976. He became president of Xinhua in 1982.

¹³³ Cf. Mu Qing 穆青, “Rang shijie tingdao Zhongguo de shengyin” 让世界听到中国的声音 [Let the world hear China's voice], *Mu Qing lun xinwen* 穆青论新闻 [Mu Qing on the press/news] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2003), 295.

fangmian yi duiwai wei zhu 国内外并重，在某些方面以对外为主).¹³⁴ While this structural realignment of the Chinese media towards the outside world came to a sudden halt in 1987 with the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization and the reorganization of the domestic propaganda sector, various reforms were implemented before that.

In August 1982, the link between external propaganda work and the “three grand tasks of the 1980s” was confirmed explicitly, and external propaganda was for the first time declared to be “a task of important strategic significance.”¹³⁵ Due to the increasing number of negative reports on China, the Chinese debate turned towards how to allow China to become more pro-active rather than constantly having to react to foreign accusations. Consequently, in 1982 and 1983, plans for three important institutional changes emerged, two of which were directly meant to raise the importance of external propaganda vis-à-vis domestic propaganda or at least put it on equal footing: First, Xinhua News Agency was to be turned into an “international news agency” (*guojixing tongxunshe* 国际性通讯社) or a “world news agency” (*shijiexing tongxunshe* 世界性通讯社), primarily targeting the Third World. Second, domestic propaganda and external propaganda were to be put on equal footing in potentially all units, locales, and departments, and third, China began to set up a spokesperson system in order to improve its relationship with foreign journalists.

Turning Xinhua into a World News Agency

First plans for an international news agency had been presented in 1979. The drive to assign more international responsibilities to Xinhua took up speed after April 1982, when Mu Qing became president of Xinhua. It was under the new head that the plans to turn Xinhua into a world news agency materialized. In early 1983, Xinhua wrote a report to the CPC Center, in which it asked for permission to turn Xinhua into a “world news agency with Chinese and socialist

¹³⁴ Ibid., 296.

¹³⁵ Cf. Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang” 建立系统的对外宣传工作，介绍中国良好形象 [Establishing systematic external propaganda work; introducing China's good image], speech given on November 26, 1986 at the first nationwide external propaganda conference in Beijing. Website of the China Society for Human Rights Studie,s http://www.humanrights.cn/cn/zt/tbbd/fyjd70n/03/t20070110_198142.htm, accessed October 27, 2012.

characteristics.”¹³⁶ The goal was to catch up to the level the most advanced Western news agencies had in the late 1970s and early 1980s by the year 1990.¹³⁷ The report was quickly approved by the Center and circulated in February 1983.¹³⁸ This was the formal beginning of the 1980s initiative to expand Xinhua’s international role.

In early 1984, Xinhua presented a concrete seven year plan for the development of the news agency between 1984 and 1990, in which the plan to turn Xinhua into a world news agency was presented as the overall goal (*zong mubiao* 总目标).¹³⁹ The plan also presented a two-step timetable to follow, according to which the first three years, from 1984 to 1986, were intended as a planning period before full-scale implementation of the policies was to be undertaken between 1987 and 1990.¹⁴⁰

The plans for Xinhua’s expansion were couched in the same language as UNESCO’s NWICO project: The goal of creating a “world news agency with Chinese characteristics” was to break through the monopolization of the international news market exercised by the four big Western news agencies;¹⁴¹ to “break the old international news order and establish a new international news order.”¹⁴² On February 6, 1985, Mu Qing delivered a speech at the conference for

¹³⁶ Cf. Zheng Dejin 郑德金, “Mu Qing yu jianshe shijiexing tongxunshu” 穆青与建设世界性通讯社 [Mu Qing and the construction of a world news agency], in *Chuanmei yunxing moshi biange: 2003 nian Xinhuashe xinwen xueshu nianhui lunwenxuan* 传媒运行模式变革 2003 年新华社新闻学术年会论文选 [Transformation of the media’s mode of operation: Selected papers from Xinhua’s annual academic conference 2003] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2004), 45, 48.

¹³⁷ Mu Qing 穆青, “Zhenfen jingshen, jianchi gaige, jin yi bu tuijin jianshe shijiexing tongxunshu de shiye” 振奋精神, 坚持改革, 进一步推进建设世界性通讯社的事业 [Further promote the cause of building a world news agency by uplifting the spirit and persisting in reform], speech given on March 4, 1986, republished in *Guoji xinwen caixie jingyan huicui*, ed. Xinhuashe xinwen yanjiusuo, 1. Also see Zheng Dejin, “Mu Qing yu jianshe shijiexing tongxunshu,” 49.

¹³⁸ *Chuanmei fazhan zhanlue: 2001 nian Xinhuashe xinwen xueshu nianhui lunwenxuan* 媒发展方略: 2001 年新华社新闻学术年会论文选 [Media development strategy: Selected papers of the Xinhua news agency’s annual academic conference 2001] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2002), 390.

¹³⁹ Cf. Zheng Dejin, “Mu Qing yu jianshe shijiexing tongxunshu,” 50.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 52.

¹⁴¹ Mu Qing, “Jianshe juyou Zhongguo tese de shijiexing tongxunshu” 建设具有中国特色的世界性通讯社 [Constructing a world news agency with Chinese characteristics], *Xinwen yewu* 新闻业务 [The news profession], no. 3 (1983): 6. The four big news agencies are not listed by name, but can be assumed to be the same ones identified in *Many Voices, One World*, i.e. AP, UPI, Reuters, and AFP.

¹⁴² Mu Qing, “You mianxiang guonei zhuanxiang mianxiang shijie,” 270.

Xinhua's work abroad (*Xinhua guowai gongzuo huiyi* 新华国外工作会议)¹⁴³ in which he gave two reasons why the Third World should be the primary target: First, there was a political need (as the population of third world countries made up 75 percent and was the most important force for peace and against hegemonism) and second, because conditions were most favorable for a Chinese expansion, as third world countries were generally interested in cooperating with Xinhua.¹⁴⁴ The strategic goal behind the whole plan, according to Mu Qing, was to strengthen the voice of all people supporting the just cause and of expanding the voice of Third World countries.¹⁴⁵ A focus on the Third World also meant fighting with Western news agencies over the news market in the developing world.¹⁴⁶ Thus, by 1982-1983, when Sino-U.S. relations were less rosy than in the late 1970s, the argument of having to compete against the West had been introduced into and figured prominently in the Chinese discourse.

Internal and External are Equally Important; Hold up Both Internal and External!

Second, under the slogans “hold up both internal and external” (*nei wai bing ju* 内外并举) and “internal and external are equally important” (*nei wai bing zhong* 内外并重), external propaganda as a whole was to be strengthened and upgraded to be as important as domestic propaganda. This referred both to the overall institutional infrastructure (i.e. domestic propaganda departments) that was to be reformed and to the volume of news releases.

In the second half of 1982, plans to further train external propaganda cadres with dual competences in ideological matters and in professional journalism were announced. It would be the responsibility of each propaganda department to provide training to its cadres. These plans would have to be fulfilled over the course of the next three years, starting in the second half of 1982 and running until 1985.¹⁴⁷ In May 1983, *Central Circular* [1983] no. 15 asked all

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 276-277.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 270.

¹⁴⁶ See Dong Guang'an 董广安, ed., *Mu Qing xinwen sixiang yu xinwen shijian* 穆青新闻思想与新闻实践 [Mu Qing's thought on and practice regarding the press] (Zhengzhou: Zhengzhou daxue chubanshe, 2008), 30.

¹⁴⁷ “Zhongyang lingdao tongzhi tan duiwai xuanchuan” 中央领导同志谈对外宣传 [Central leading comrades on external propaganda], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 16 (1982): 3.

central departments engaged in external propaganda work and all provincial level propaganda departments to come up with a plan how to strengthen external propaganda work for their department or province and report this plan to the EPSG and the CPD before the end of July 1983.¹⁴⁸ The goal was to make external propaganda work a part of the daily work of departments and locales. The document stressed that external propaganda was “a work of important strategic significance to internationally win the hearts of the people and speed up the realization of the Four Modernizations” by attracting foreign capital, experience and technology without which China’s modernization would take much longer.¹⁴⁹

In 1983, at the National Conference for External Television Propaganda, China Central Television (CCTV) and local TV stations¹⁵⁰ were also asked to implement the *nei wai bing ju* principle, to establish a professional external propaganda structure within their unit, educate cadres, solve the problem of TV broadcast equipment, and make a plan how to strengthen external TV propaganda. The goal was “to change the current backward and passive situation in external TV propaganda within three to five years.”¹⁵¹

The Spokesperson System

Third, in early 1982, the EPSG stipulated the creation of a spokesperson system for all units which had contact with foreigners in order to make use of foreign journalists stationed in China and increase the CPC’s agenda setting capabilities over how China was reported.¹⁵² China had begun convening press

¹⁴⁸ Li Zhijing 李志经, *Dangwei (zhibu) shuji shiyong zhishi shouce* 党委(支部)书记实用知识手册 [Manual of practical knowledge for Party secretaries of Party committees (branches)] (Beijing: Xuefan chubanshe, 1990), 333.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ The number of local television stations surged in the 1980s. See for example Junhao Hong, *The Internationalization of Television in China* (Westport: Praeger, 1998), 90-93.

¹⁵¹ “争取在三、五年内可改变目前电视对外宣传落后、被动的局面” in “Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu zhuanfa *Quanguo dianshi duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi jiyao de tongzhi*” 中央宣传部关于转发《全国电视对外宣传工作会议纪要》的通知 [The Central Propaganda Department’s notification on forwarding the *Minutes of the nationwide meeting for TV external propaganda work*], August 29, 1983, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1983-1987)* 党的宣传工作文件选编 (1983-1987) [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1983-1987)], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 1173-1178.

¹⁵² Cf. Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun” 新闻发布会有利于影响和引导国际舆论 [Press conference help to influence and guide international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2005): 4.

conferences at very irregular intervals as early as during the 1950s and 1960s, but a more systematic approach was only initiated in 1982.¹⁵³ The EPSG's request for such a system was approved in early 1983, requiring the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and all other departments of the State Council which often came in contact with foreigners to establish a spokesperson system and give press conferences regularly.¹⁵⁴ Thus, although China wanted to compete with Western media and had realized that many of the Western journalists stationed in China did not report favorably, it tried to improve its relation with foreign journalists by offering them information on a regular basis in a format that they were used to.

Aside from these larger structural reforms, smaller, concrete projects continued to emerge. In the post-Mao period, as Chinese citizens slowly began to interact with foreigners in a less strictly controlled environment both abroad and at home,¹⁵⁵ people involved in external propaganda naturally considered how they could make use of “unofficial spokespeople.” One article from 1982 explored various different avenues for organizing social forces to propagate China on the CPC's behalf. For instance, Chinese exchange students could and should be used for external propaganda abroad. To do this, exchange students should be familiarized with “foreigners' psychology” and the basic content to be propagated before leaving China. Exchange students could potentially be more useful than official spokespeople, as Westerners did not trust government spokespeople, particularly those from socialist countries. Two things were important to note: First, Westerners were more likely to trust Chinese students who were self-financed, whereas those on a government stipend were seen as suspicious. Second, students should be instructed to give their opinions “according to the spirit of” what was written in the papers, as any verbatim rephrasing of official papers' contents would make foreigners suspicious.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ It should be noted, however, that restrictions remained in the post-Mao period and were only gradually eased. In the early 1980s, contact between Chinese and foreigners was still strictly regulated.

¹⁵⁶ “Xide zhuanjia tanqin guilai tan guangan” 西德专家探亲归来谈观感 [West German expert talks about impressions after returning from a visit to relatives], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 13 (1982): 12.

In June 1983, the *China Daily* launched a North American edition.¹⁵⁷ At the time, print publications still clearly constituted an important part of China's external propaganda efforts. However, in the same year, China succeeded in broadcasting CCTV in Xinjiang 新疆 via satellite television for the first time,¹⁵⁸ laying the basis for TV-based *waixuan*, in which Chinese cadres ostensibly became more interested at a time when provincial TV stations proliferated, and after the USIA had launched Worldnet.

The heightened importance was also signaled by the number of general and more specific conferences. In June 1982, the EPSG held its first documented conference, focused on local foreign propaganda targeted at Taiwan (*Quanguo difang dui Tai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi* 全国地方对外对台宣传工作会议). Although it was aimed at local cadres, central cadres participated, and Hu Yaobang even delivered a speech,¹⁵⁹ a sign of his continued concern for external propaganda after he had become General Secretary. In August 1983, the Ministry of Radio and Television¹⁶⁰ convened a conference on television-based foreign propaganda in Beijing.¹⁶¹ The first formal conference on external propaganda work in general was convened in Guangdong 广东 in 1984.¹⁶² The choice of the location in Guangdong is representative of the focus of external propaganda before 1985-1986, when the Center and the coastal provinces were most involved in external propaganda work.

The choice of topic of this latter conference was representative of the overall trend in this period: To propagate the superiority of the Socialist system.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Won Ho Chang, "China Daily," 114.

¹⁵⁸ Wu Zheng 吴征, *Zhongguo de daguo diwei yu guoji chuanbo zhanlue* 中国的大国地位与国际传播战略 [China's great power status and (its) international communication strategy] (Beijing: Changzheng chubanshe, 2001), 116.

¹⁵⁹ Shen Honglei 申宏磊, Yu Miao 于淼, Cui Binzhen 崔斌箴, and Shen Xiaolei 沈晓雷, "Duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo ying gaige kaifang er sheng" 对外宣传工作应改革开放而生 [External propaganda work arose in response to reform and opening], <http://qkzz.net/article/55887f70-4b38-4496-8cd3-f4e9d5d5ecb1.htm>, accessed April 25, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ The predecessor of what is today the State Administration for Radio, Film, and Television introduced in chapter 3, footnote 90.

¹⁶¹ Zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu zhuanfa *Quanguo dianshi duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi jiyao de tongzhi*, 1174. The conference had 98 participants, 82 from CCTV and provincial-level television stations, and 16 from the State Development Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the MoC, the MFA, and "other relevant central departments." In addition, leading cadres from CPD, FPSG, and MFA delivered speeches (*ibid.*).

¹⁶² Cf. Tan Zhen and Lei Xiangqing, "Quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu – 2005 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi da yinxiang."

¹⁶³ Cf. *ibid.*

For instance, one article in *External Reporting Reference (Duiwai baodao cankao 对外报道参考)* explained that during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, some people had seen the disadvantages of the Chinese system and therefore now they thought – incorrectly – that there was no superiority of the socialist system that could be propagated.¹⁶⁴ However, upon proper investigation of the problems in capitalist countries, one would find a lot that was superior about socialism and that was worth propagating.¹⁶⁵ *External Reporting Reference* also carried a large number of articles on the problems in capitalist societies so that external propaganda workers had enough reference material to fall back on.¹⁶⁶

Zhang Xiaoling has argued that the topic of the 1984 conference in Guangdong was chosen because too many Chinese people had left the PRC for Hong Kong.¹⁶⁷ However, I would argue that there were several larger issues at work. First, the cooled relations with the United States had led to a renewed focus on China's socialist identity and its role as a leader of the Third World. Second, it also constituted a move against framing external propaganda in terms of humanist ideals of mutual understanding and of uncritically wanting to join China with the rest of the world. The choice of the topic was thus also a reminder that external propaganda was first and foremost to serve the interests and goals of the Party.

China was presumably also implicitly replying to the VOA whose charter defined one of the goals of the radio station as demonstrating the superiority of the American system in contrast to Communism.¹⁶⁸ This focus on the superiority of the socialist system waxed and waned over the course of the 1980s, changing with the overall political climate as well as following struggles over the role of propaganda and journalism in general. First and foremost, it shows that during the 1980s, there were different visions for the role external propaganda was to play,

¹⁶⁴ Wang Renlin, “Duiwai xuanchuan de zhenduixing” 对外宣传的针对性 [The targetedness of external propaganda], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 6 (1982): 12.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. “Yingguo de ‘shiyezhe zhongxin’” 英国的‘失业者中心’ [Britain’s ‘unemployment centers’], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 3 (1982): 31-32, “Xifang jingji xingshi ji qi qianjing” 西方经济形势及其前景 [Situation of the Western economy and its prospects], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1982): 6-9.

¹⁶⁷ Xiaoling Zhang, “China as an Emerging Soft Power: Winning Hearts and Minds through Communication with Foreign Publics,” University of Nottingham China Policy Institute Discussion Paper no. 35, October 2008, available online at <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-35-china-emerging-soft-power.pdf>, 4.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1986): 5.

just like there were different visions for the path that China should take economically and politically.

5.4 1985-1986: “Let the World Understand China; Let China Understand the World”

In 1985 and 1986, external propaganda received its second major upgrade from the Party Center, introducing a range of new projects as well as expanding its role to include “letting the Chinese people understand the world.” While different ways of conceptualizing external propaganda continued to compete, the discourse on fostering mutual understanding had regained in strength compared to the earlier years.

The upgrade was due to several interrelated developments in China’s reform course and its foreign relations. Most importantly, in 1985, China entered the second stage of its opening and reform policies, and the number of foreigners coming to China increased by more than 80 per cent compared to the previous year.¹⁶⁹ Both the closer interaction and the need for even more foreign investment provided strong arguments for external propaganda, which was confirmed as an important means to ensure (*baozheng* 保证) the successful implementation of the opening up principle.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, in 1984 and 1985, China’s image in the West improved significantly,¹⁷¹ mainly due to improved relations between the U.S. and the PRC, symbolized by Reagan’s visit to China in April 1984.¹⁷² All of this created a climate in which the theme of struggle and ideological conflict could be de-emphasized, and China’s “reformers” were in a relatively strong position. China’s further reintegration into the world was buttressed ideologically by Deng Xiaoping’s informal move away from the idea that war was inevitable for as long as imperialism existed by defining the two main problems and themes of the world as peace and development (cf. chapter 4.1).

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Zhu Muzhi, “Duiwai xuanchuan shi duiwai kaifang de zucheng bufen.”

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Li Yuanjiang, *Duiwai xuanchuan jichu*, 158.

¹⁷² Cf. “US President Ronald Reagan Visits China,” http://www.china.org.cn/world/china_us_facts_2011/2011-07/12/content_22971872.htm, accessed November 25, 2012. In early 1986, towards the end of this temporary ‘honeymoon’ period in Sino-U.S. relations, Deng Xiaoping even became Time Magazine’s person of the year. Cf. “Deng Xiaoping, Man of the Year,” *Time Magazine*, January 6, 1986. An image of the cover is available online at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19860106,00.html>, accessed November 25, 2012.

The upgrade was arguably started by a call from Hu Yaobang in an unlikely place, namely in a speech reaffirming the Party Principle (*dangxing yuanze* 党性原则) of the Chinese press. A year after the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution in late 1983, opposition to China's concept of domestic propaganda had begun to form again. Following relatively successful calls for more freedom of expression in literature and the arts, journalists tried to extend the same principles to the press. In February 1985, Hu Yaobang gave a speech on the nature of the Chinese press,¹⁷³ which has been primarily interpreted as a defense against attacks from elderly party members.¹⁷⁴ In the speech, Hu stressed the “party nature” of the press, thus expressly distinguishing press work from the field of literature and art. However, he also used the speech to further argue that Chinese media needed to “go towards the world” (*zou xiang shijie* 走向世界). The parts of Hu's speech that were concerned with the international expansion of Chinese media were republished in *External Propaganda Reference*.¹⁷⁵

While the speech itself is well-known, the external propaganda perspective has not been analyzed. In the speech, Hu Yaobang noted China was still unable to fully meet foreigners' demands to learn more about China and emphasized the need for the country to work on satellite transmission of news.¹⁷⁶ He criticized the continued lack of adapting to the needs and tastes of the foreign target audience¹⁷⁷ and defined the responsibility (*renwu* 任务) of the press as “to let the people know China and improve China, [and to let them] know the world and improve the world.”¹⁷⁸ While the latter point obviously referred primarily to the Chinese public, the climate of Internationalism gave external propaganda a purpose. Thus, external propaganda at the time was presented as both in the national interest in

¹⁷³ “Guanyu dang de xinwen gongzuo” 关于党的新闻工作 [On the Party's press work], February 8, 1985, in *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian, 1957-1992* 中国共产党宣传工作文献选编, 1957-1992 [Selected documents from propaganda work of the Communist Party of China, 1957-1992] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1996), 665-676.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. for example Susan Shirk, *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 87; Merle Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 151-152.

¹⁷⁵ “Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan xinwen gongzuo zouxiang shijie” 胡耀邦同志谈新闻工作走向世界 [Comrade Hu Yaobang speaks about news work going towards the world], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1985): 1.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ “Guanyu dang de xinwen gongzuo,” 673.

the positive sense –by helping to build China– and as means to genuinely connect China to the rest of the world in the humanist tradition.

In the first half of 1986, the Center heard a report (*huibao* 汇报) from the EPSG, after which it criticized that external propaganda's did not sufficiently take the initiative and was not vivid enough.¹⁷⁹ The need to improve China's external propaganda was justified by referring to the “China craze” abroad, which was predicted to last for a long time.¹⁸⁰ In June of 1986, the CPC released *Central Circular* [1986] no. 17, called “Notification on the Center approving the EPSG's ‘Opinion on how to strengthen and improve external propaganda work.’”¹⁸¹ The document referred to external propaganda as an important work mattering to “establishing an image of socialist China in the international arena” (*Shuli shehui zhuyi Zhongguo zai guoji shang de xingxiang* 树立社会主义中国在国际上的形象), “winning the hearts of the people of the world” (*zhengqu shijie renxin* 争取世界人心) and “ensuring smooth implementation of the opening policy” (*baozheng duiwai kaifang zhengce shunli shishi de zhongyao renwu* 保证对外开放政策顺利实施的重要工作).¹⁸² Various different ways of framing external propaganda were included in the document: It had an “important strategic significance” for propagating the superiority of the socialist system, expanding China's international influence, winning the empathy and support of the people of the world, strengthening friendly and cooperative relations with other countries, and creating favorable international conditions for the realization of the Four Modernizations.¹⁸³

While the entire document is not publically available, the main points dominant in 1985 and 1986 were explained at what is officially considered the first national external propaganda conference in November and December of that year. Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, and Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳 all met with conference participants, which signaled the PBSC's commitment towards external propaganda. The conference took place shortly before Hu Yaobang's fall, after

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Zhu Muzhi, “Duiwai xuanchuan shi duiwai kaifang de zucheng bufen.”

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸¹ 《中共中央批转中央对外宣传小组〈关于加强和改进对外宣传工作的意见〉的通知》。
Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸² Cf. Zhu Muzhi, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang – zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua.”

¹⁸³ Cf. *ibid.*

which it became clear that the 1986 “Opinion” was another “compromise document” that included the positions of various factions. For instance, it also portrayed external propaganda as an important tool in the fight against the capitalist class trying to infiltrate China, an aspect that was emphasized in 1987.¹⁸⁴ In late 1986, however, the conversation was still largely held in a non-confrontational mode. It introduced or buttressed a number of important points that will be explained below in some detail in order to capture the status quo before external propaganda reforms were thrown off course in 1987.

First, the dual function of external propaganda – “letting the world understand China and letting China understand the world” – was highlighted at the conference. Zhu Muzhi stated that thus far the second function of informing China about the rest of the world (indicating both education of the masses and providing intelligence to leaders) had been neglected. This argument is somewhat reminiscent of Carter’s transformation of the USIA into ICA and drew on the same discourse of “mutual understanding” (*huxiang liaojie* 互相了解). From a practical perspective, the external propaganda structures of various countries had been transmitting information two ways, serving both as propaganda structures of and as gatherers of intelligence for their national government. However, the notion that *guoji xuanchuan* 国际宣传, i.e. the education of the Chinese people about international matters, should be the responsibility of the external propaganda apparatus also expanded the latter’s responsibilities –quite possibly at the expense of the domestic propaganda apparatus.

External propaganda departments at the provincial level were to improve and strengthen training. Units concerned with both domestic and external propaganda were to come up with further concrete measures to realize the “hold up both internal and external” (*nei wai bing ju*) policy and thus strengthen external propaganda. Each department, enterprise or organization that had to do with

¹⁸⁴ Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, “Duiwai xuanchuan yu fandui zichan jieji ziyouhua – Zai Hebeisheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua zhaiyao 对外宣传与反对资产阶级自由化 ——在河北省对外宣传工作会议上的讲话摘要 [External propaganda and opposing bourgeois lebralization – Summary of a speech delivered at the conference for external propaganda work in Hebei], speech delivered on March 23, 1987, originally published in *Fengyun dongdang qishi nian* 风云激荡七十年 [Seven turbulent decades], available online at http://www.humanrights.cn/cn/zt/tbbd/fyjd70n/03/t20070110_198139.htm, accessed April 26, 2012.

foreigners (*she wai* 涉外) was to establish an external propaganda structure and train the personnel needed for the task. The exact structure and number of people employed (*bianzhi* 编制) could be decided freely by the locale's or department's party group as appropriate. A part of the training and further education of external propaganda cadres was to be organized by the center, another part by the locales or departments. A concrete plan for this was still to be worked out. In order to familiarize themselves with things foreign, external propaganda workers should be given the opportunity to participate in events or visits involving foreign countries (*duiwai huodong he chufang* 对外活动和出访). Outstanding external propaganda workers should get material rewards,¹⁸⁵ i.e. a higher salary and better amenities within their work unit (*danwei* 单位) to ensure a higher living standard.

Second, at the conference, China's "image" featured prominently. To create a "correct and fresh" image of China should be the principal responsibility (*zhuyao renwu* 主要任务) of external propaganda.¹⁸⁶ Zhu Muzhi first summed up the official historiography of China's international image at the time. Much like in the late 1970s, the fault was seen as lying with China itself; China had ruined its image through historical one-sidedness (*pianjian* 偏见) and the suppression of news flows to the outside world:¹⁸⁷ Through the founding of the People's Republic, the CPC made a significant contribution to eliminating the image of China as the "Sick Man of Asia,"¹⁸⁸ but the Cultural Revolution had damaged China's image and reversed previous progress severely. This setback had been partially overcome during the 1980s, but needed further effort to improve mutual understanding.

Zhu Muzhi explained to participants that whether a country's image was good or bad affected whether world public opinion supported or opposed it and affected the country's international position. Therefore, each country in the world paid attention to its international image. For example, the U.S. used the restoration

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Zhu Muzhi, "Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang."

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ As can be imagined, this framing of who is to blame for China's bad image has completely shifted since then.

¹⁸⁸ At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, China was referred to as the "Sick Man of Asia" in the West, in analogy to the Ottoman Empire as the Sick Man of Europe. Cf. S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (New York et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18. Also see chapter 2.2, footnote 116.

of the Statue of Liberty as an occasion to hold a large-scale celebration and propaganda event.¹⁸⁹ The fact that by 1986, “public relations” as a discipline (*gonggong guanxi xue* 公共关系学) was beginning to become popular in China¹⁹⁰ also showed in the speech. Zhu Muzhi explained at the conference that American businesses spent up to one third of their capital on propaganda, and that each dollar spent returned ten dollars. In China, by contrast, people did not make similar long term considerations.¹⁹¹

Third, to improve its image, China should make use of new measures that it could learn from other countries. One new point raised by Zhu Muzhi was pushing Chinese as a foreign language. The head of the EPSG presented this as being inspired by his visit to France, where he learned that one third of French external affairs expenditures were spent on exchanges with other countries and external propaganda, most importantly on pushing the study of the French language. Developing Chinese language studies included compiling text books and accompanying audio material. Teaching materials to be provided to Chinese schools abroad for overseas Chinese were to be homogenized over the next two or three years (*Gong huaren zidi xuexiao xuexi de jiaokeshu, yao zai liang san nian nei chuqi* 供华人子弟学校学习的教科书，要在两三年内出齐). Particularly in countries with a lot of overseas Chinese, embassies should support teaching Chinese.¹⁹² As a consequence of the decision to push Chinese as a foreign language, the organization that is today known as *Hanban* 汉办 and that is also in charge of Confucius Institutes was founded under the name of National Leading Small Group for Teaching Chinese Abroad (*Guojia duiwai Hanyu jiaoxue lingdao xiaozu* 国家对外汉语教学领导小组) under the leadership of the Ministry of Education.

Fourth, the conference also marked another important juncture in the move towards focusing on audio-visual media. In improving the quantity and the quality of external propaganda materials (*xuanchuan cailiao* 宣传材料, *xuanchuanpin* 宣传品), the key task for the Center was to prepare films and TV programs

¹⁸⁹ Zhu Muzhi, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang.”

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Chen Ni, “Public Relations in China: The Introduction and Development of an Occupational Field” (PhD diss., Ohio University, 1992).

¹⁹¹ Zhu Muzhi, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang.”

¹⁹² Ibid.

reflecting China's reforms, everyday life and spirit of the people and improve subtitling. Locales and departments were also asked to produce films.¹⁹³ Thus, by 1986, China clearly wanted to use audiovisual rather than only print media. The interest in television-based *waixuan* began to manifest itself in the form of concrete initiatives. On October 1, 1986, Shanghai launched its first English news TV channel, long before CCTV established a regular English channel in 2000 (though CCTV did begin broadcasting English language news on January 1, 1987).¹⁹⁴

Fifth, external news reporting was to focus on how to enter the international news market. For radio broadcasts, China should reach agreements with foreign countries to re-broadcast Chinese radio programs. With regard to books, China should stop relying on sympathetic leftists abroad (“left agents” *zuopai dailishang* 左派代理商), who could only reach a small readership, and instead try to get books into big bookstores to ensure wide distribution. China should also distribute books for free to influential libraries and cultural centers abroad, but it should only do so in a manner that was well-planned and focused, indicating that too much money was wasted on books at the time without ensuring that they reached and were well-received by their intended targets.¹⁹⁵

Likewise, China needed to become better at tapping into foreign resources. This included dealing with foreign journalists stationed in China and “helping them to correctly understand and report China's situation” (*bangzhu tamen bijiao zhengque de liaojie he baodao woguo de qingkuang* 帮助他们比较正确地了解和报道我国的情况). The primary avenue for this was press conferences, over which central departments and committees were to strengthen their control and support more. The Journalists' Association was to arrange meetings between various “personalities” (*renshi* 人士) and foreign journalists.

In sum, everything seemed to be on its way for further reforming external propaganda. Departments were asked to start preparing for propagating the 13th Party Congress in 1987 as well as the 40th anniversary of the founding of the PRC

¹⁹³ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Guo Ke 郭可, *Dangdai duiwai chuanbo* 当代对外传播 [Contemporary external communication] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2003), 49.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Zhu Muzhi, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang.”

in 1989.¹⁹⁶ Unlike the backlashes between 1982 and 1984, which led to a stressing of Socialism and Third World solidarity but did not weaken external propaganda, the next two ideological backlashes in 1987 and 1989 destroyed any plans to gradually increase the importance of external propaganda compared to domestic propaganda and possibly even eventually have the first replace the latter.

5.5 1987-1989: The Re-emergence of Domestic Propaganda and Thought Work

Briefly after the conference, in December 1986, after a series of student demonstrations, protests escalated and led to Hu Yaobang's removal from power and the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization. While China's image remained an issue after and even during the crackdown, institutional rearrangements following the campaign marked the beginning of the relative decline in importance of external propaganda.

To be sure, the debates surrounding the question how to deal with student demonstrations in December 1986 showed a clear concern for China's image in international public opinion. Instead of arguing that world public opinion was secondary, for example, Deng Xiaoping invoked Wei Jingsheng's 魏京生 arrest, which had prompted few repercussions for China, to argue that China's image would not be affected by dealing harshly with dissidents.¹⁹⁷ While Deng obviously underestimated the reactions that were to follow the crackdown on the Chinese democracy movement in 1989, China's image was not disregarded in the decision, but figured into the debate. During the campaign in early 1987, the *China Daily* and *Beijing Review* published a number of articles playing down the student protests¹⁹⁸ and pointing towards the role the VOA supposedly played in instigating the students.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Goldman, *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China*, 206.

¹⁹⁸ E.g. "Students Name Demo Instigator," *China Daily*, January 8, 1987; C.L. Wong, "Letters to the Editor: Implications of Student Unrest," *China Daily*, January 8, 1987. *China Daily* Commentator, "Confidence in Reform," *China Daily*, January 12, 1987, 4. *China Daily* articles from 1987 were accessed through a special CUHK Service Center collection, which unfortunately did not provide any page numbers for most articles. "Demonstrations Good Intentioned, But..." *Beijing Review*, December 28, 1986, 7.

¹⁹⁹ "Demo in Tiananmen Passes Peacefully," *China Daily*, January 3, 1987.

So what changed for the external propaganda sector? First, Hu Qili 胡启立 replaced Hu Yaobang as the cadre in charge of propaganda and thought work in January 1987. Although Hu Qili was an ally of Hu Yaobang's who had worked with him in the Communist Youth League and definitely did not count among the "hardliners," the external propaganda sector still lost its most powerful ally. At the same time, Zhu Houze 朱厚泽, who was also considered too liberal, was replaced by "hardliner" Wang Renzhi 王忍之 as head of the CPD.²⁰⁰

Aside from the leadership changes, the campaign changed how external propaganda was framed and brought the theme of struggle against hostile forces to the forefront. Similarly to what happened later in 1989, China accused Western media of peddling the protests.²⁰¹ Zhu Muzhi, who remained in his position, gave a speech on March 23, in which he declared his alliance to the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization and explained the important function external propaganda had in the international ideological struggle. In the speech, *Central Circular* [1986] no. 17 remained the point of reference, but other aspects that had previously been disregarded were stressed now. Zhu Muzhi quoted the document:

"External propaganda is an important part of the international struggle in the ideological realm. The capitalist class abroad is also directing its propaganda at us and is infiltrating us ideologically. In this field, the struggle is very fierce. Comrades at external propaganda departments need to understand this, keep a clear head at all times, and must not be steered by foreign capitalist propaganda."²⁰²

This turn-around in focus is a good example of the way in which central documents were –and continue to be– composed. Ideological ammunition for all factions is usually included in a written document, and whoever has the upper hand gets to decide which aspect is stressed. Many of the points emphasized by Zhu Muzhi in 1987 were re-used verbatim after 1989. Thus, the conference from 1986 provided many of the non-crisis mode points on the external propaganda agenda during the 1990s, whereas the 1987 speech foreshadowed the crisis mode

²⁰⁰ See Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 41.

²⁰¹ See for example Jin Hui 金晖, "Cong Ligen gei Meiguo zhi yin de heci tanqi" 从里根给美国之音的贺词谈起 [Discussion (inspired by) Reagan's congratulatory note to the Voice of America], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 8 (1988): 9-11.

²⁰² Zhu Muzhi, "Duiwai xuanchuan yu fandui zichan jieji ziyouhua."

points used during the 1990s. The post-Tiananmen master text on external propaganda thus also had predecessors to rely on.

The campaign was not the immediate end of external propaganda reforms. Later that year, CPD and the EPSG circulated a document which asked media to report faster, to stop refuting Western media directly, to include more critical news in order to raise the credibility of Chinese media, and, in some cases, to report news abroad first rather than focusing on reporting them at home to make sure they were still “news” when they reached foreign countries.²⁰³

The most important long-term consequence of the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization was a readjustment of the relationship between domestic and international propaganda that resulted in an institutional reinforcement of domestic propaganda work, which clearly weakened external propaganda in relative if not in absolute terms. In late 1987, the Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group (PTWLSG) was formed. While this was not the first small group to be concerned with propaganda work,²⁰⁴ the formation of the new group clearly raised the importance of the field. The responsibilities of the PTWLSG were quite similar to those of the EPSG, only focused on domestic propaganda work. They consisted of regularly analyzing the trends in the field of ideology, researching the principles and policies of propaganda work as well as other problems that concern the overall situation, coordinating the ideological work of departments in the field of propaganda, culture, news and publishing, and making suggestions and proposals for the building of a strong team of cadres engaged in propaganda and theory work.²⁰⁵ The term **propaganda and thought work**

²⁰³ Cf. Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 24-25.

²⁰⁴ The predecessor of the group was founded in 1967, and it was formerly known as the Propaganda and Education Leading Small Group (Xuan-jiao lingdao xiaozu 宣教领导小组). Cf. David Shambaugh, “China’s Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes and Efficacy,” *The China Journal* 57 (2007): 31.

²⁰⁵ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu zhongyang xuanchuan, sixiang gongzuo gongzuo lingdao xiaozu de renyuan zucheng ji gongzuo renwu de tongzhi” 中共中央关于中央宣传、思想工作领导小组的人员组成及工作任务的通知 [Notification on the members of the Central Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group and its responsibilities], *Zhongwei* 中委 [Central Committee (circular)] [1988], no. 11, January 10, 1988, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)* 党的宣传工作文件选编 (1988-1992) [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1988-1992)], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 1703.

(*xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 宣传思想工作) itself –at least in this particular combination– appears to be a neologism created in the aftermath of the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization.²⁰⁶ Hence, institutionally and conceptually, 1987 marked the most important turning point in the reaffirmation of domestic propaganda. Although without the events of 1989 and the restructuring of the world order in the early 1990s, it is questionable whether these changes would have been able to establish themselves permanently in the political landscape, the Campaign against Spiritual Pollution marked the first step on the path towards enshrining domestic propaganda in the post-Mao period as a pillar for regime security.

In 1988, the EPSG was disbanded as part of the central streamlining that year.²⁰⁷ The dissolving of the small group was announced on February 15, approximately a month after the PTWLSG was officially launched. This did not mean the end of all external propaganda work. The document disbanding the EPSG explicitly stated that local party committees did not have to follow the center, but could maintain their small groups.²⁰⁸ The responsibilities of the EPSG were divided up between several institutions. The day-to-day responsibilities of the EPSG were officially handed back to the CPD Bureau for External Propaganda, but the director and most of the personnel remained the same.²⁰⁹ Zhu

²⁰⁶ The term *xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* was first mentioned in the People's Daily in an article on a nationwide conference of heads of propaganda departments in January 1988. "Hu Qili zai quanguo xuanchuan buzhang huiyi shang shuo jin yi bu jiefang sixiang zhudong kaituo gongzuo ba shisan da baogao de xuexi yinxiang shenru" 胡启立在全国宣传部长会议上说 进一步解放思想主动开拓工作 把十三大报告的学习引向深入 [Hu Qili states at the nationwide meeting for propaganda department heads that (everbody needs to) further liberate thinking, proactively pioneer work and deepen the study of the report of the Thirteenth Party Congress], *Renmin ribao*, January 26, 1988, 1. Starting in July 1988, the first conference on propaganda and thought work was reported on, and probably, this was also the first conference that bore this title. Wu Shishen 吴士深 and Zhang Guorong 张国荣, "Hu Qili zai xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo zuotanhui shang qiangdiao zhengque yindao yulun zhenfen minzu jingshen tuanjie quanguo renmin gongchuang gaige nanguan" 胡启立在宣传思想工作座谈会上强调 正确引导舆论振奋民族精神 团结全国人民共闯改革难关 [Hu Qili stresses at the conference for propaganda and thought work: Correctly guide public opinion, uplift the national spirit, and unite the people of the entire nation to take on the difficulties of reform together], *Renmin ribao*, July 10, 1988, 1.

²⁰⁷ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 156. For the original document, see "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu chexiao Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu de tongzhi" 中共中央关于撤销中央对外宣传小组的通知 [Notification from the CPC Central Committee on the disbanding of the Central External Propaganda Small Group], *Zhongwei* [1988] no. 55, February 15, 1988, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)*, 1704.

²⁰⁸ Cf. "Zeng Jianhui de jiang hua" 曾建徽的讲话 [Zeng Jianhui's speech], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (1988): 4.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 44.

Muzhi stayed in charge of foreign propaganda by virtue of his seat on the Propaganda and Thought Work LSG and due to CPD's decision that the entire *waixuan* sector would continue to report directly to Zhu Muzhi.²¹⁰

In terms of decision-making at the highest level, two different Leading Small Groups were put in charge of external propaganda: The new PTWLSG was made responsible for overall direction and policy-making, whereas the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) received the responsibility for external propaganda concerning larger issues in the international situation and China's diplomacy. Concrete enforcement of policies was made the responsibility of CPD, while administrative matters and allocating the budget was to be handled by the State Council Foreign Affairs Office,²¹¹ which had an External Propaganda Group (*Duiwai xuanchuan zu* 对外宣传组) until 1991, when its responsibilities were transferred to the newly established EPSG.²¹²

Although the disbanding of the EPSG was downplayed by external propaganda leaders at the time who reassured everyone that "external propaganda could only become more important, not less important" in the future, there was obvious concern about the downgrade.²¹³ However, this unequivocally reversed the trend of the past decade of focusing on external propaganda work while neither directly attacking nor strengthening domestic propaganda work.

In retrospective, the Central EPSG of the 1980s was evaluated as ineffective. While this must also be seen as part of a master narrative after the establishment of new structures organized differently in the 1990s, it is highly likely that the EPSG did, in fact, encounter significant problems during its eight years of existence. Because the External Propaganda Small Group was not a proper executive organ but only a group of leaders whose office was part of and dependent on the CPD, it already had problems with giving orders within the horizontal (*kuai* 块) track, i.e. to units at the central level such as Xinhua, the *People's Daily* Overseas Edition, CRI, and CCTV. In the vertical (*tiao* 条) bureaucracy it had even more difficulties as its uncertain position in the power

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu chexiao Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu de tongzhi," 1704.

²¹² Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, A1, 894.

²¹³ "Zeng Jianhui de jiang hua," 3-4.

hierarchy made it difficult to issue orders to external propaganda small groups and news organs at the provincial level.²¹⁴ Its only executive power was derived from having a bureau within CPD, which made it dependent on the domestic propaganda apparatus.

Without Hu Yaobang's support, external propaganda was transformed from a matter of strategic interest that played a key role in China's historic reversal from isolation towards facing the world into a "professional" and "academic" topic. The way external propaganda was spoken about reflected the fact that much of the urgency attached to external propaganda reforms during the previous years had dissipated. For example, one article published in *External Propaganda Reference* in 1988 explained that: "We are a poor country; we cannot invest enormous amounts of money into our external broadcasting industry like the developed countries do. But we are a big country, so our voice also cannot be missing from the world."²¹⁵ Such a framing obviously attached little strategic importance to the sector. Reasserting control over the external propaganda sector was considered more of a priority than innovation. For instance, an article in *External Propaganda Reference* introduced the mechanisms how different countries prevented the leaking of secrets in their external propaganda work.²¹⁶

Nonetheless, the knowledge that had been accumulated over the course of the 1980s how to write for foreigners was put on record through a series of publications on external propaganda that show that external propaganda workers were already quite familiar with many of the issues discussed again in the 21st century. The late 1980s were marked by attempts to turn every possible field into an independent "discipline" (*yi men kexue* 一门科学). In the second half of the 1980s, as part of the effort to be more "scientific" but also to establish "disciplines with Chinese characteristics" that would counter the phenomenon of "blindly copying from the West," China began to work on Chinese theories of journalism,

²¹⁴ Cf. He Guoping, *Zhongguo duiwai baodao sixiang yanjiu*, 229.

²¹⁵ Chinese quote: "我们是个穷国，不能像发达国家那样不惜巨资发展对外广播事业。但是我们是个大国，世界上不能没有我们的声音。" Zhou Huifen 周惠芬, "Zhongguo guoji guangbo gaige tantao" 中国国际广播改革探讨 [Discussion of the reform of Chinese international broadcasting], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (1988): 8.

²¹⁶ "Guowai dui xuanchuan baodao de kongzhi he guanli" 国外对宣传报道的控制和管理 [Control and management of external reporting abroad], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 8 (1988): 27-28.

Chinese theories of propaganda, etc. After the call to establish “propaganda studies” (*xuanchuanxue* 宣传学) as an independent discipline or area of inquiry, calls to establish “external propaganda studies” (*duiwai xuanchuan xue* 对外宣传学) soon followed suit.²¹⁷ Foreigners arguing that external propaganda was an independent discipline were cited to buttress the enterprise.²¹⁸ External propaganda veterans quoted studies from the U.S. and the S.U. that found that if a piece was too far from the fixed ideas (*guyou guannian* 固有观念) a target held about the world, it would be rejected and have no influence whatsoever on the target audience.²¹⁹ This shows another rationale for pushing “external propaganda studies”: The move accompanied another attempt to reform China’s external propaganda practices, including conducting systematic research on the target audience,²²⁰ better tailoring messages to foreigners,²²¹ reporting faster,²²² and reporting on issues that were considered sensitive.²²³

Between 1987 and 1990, the first wave of monographs systematically introducing external propaganda (or its subfields, such as “external reporting” or “external broadcasting”) was published.²²⁴ These monographs were by and large

²¹⁷ E.g. Zhai Yongchang 翟永昌, “Jianli women de duiwai xuanchuan xue” 建立我们的对外宣传学 [Establishing Chinese external propaganda studies], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 1 (1988): 18-19; Lai Fa 莱法, “Ye tan jianli duiwai xuanchuan xue” 也谈建立对外宣传学 [Another discussion on establishing external propaganda studies], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 5 (1988): 26-27.

²¹⁸ An article in *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* cited a book by Spartak Beglov on external propaganda that had been translated into Chinese in which the author explained that external propaganda was a science and had its own theories and laws. The book in question is Spartak Beglov, *Vneshnepoliticheskaiâ propaganda: ocherk teorii i praktiki* (Moscow: Vysshaiâ shkola, 1984). Zhai Yongchang, “Jianli women de duiwai xuanchuan xue,” 18.

²¹⁹ Cf. Shen Suru 沈苏儒, *Duiwai baodao jiaocheng* 对外报道教程 [Parallel English title: *Reporting China for Abroad*] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2004), 13. The book published in 2004 included parts published before.

²²⁰ E.g. Zhai Yongchang 翟永昌, “Diaocha yanjiu shi guanjian” 调查研究是关键 [Investigation and research is the key], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 8 (1988): 23-24.

²²¹ E.g. Yu Jiafu 虞家复, “Duiwai kuaixun de caixie” 对外快讯的采写 [Reporting breaking news for foreigners], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (1988): 24-25.

²²² E.g. Hu Genkang 胡根康, “Jiaqiang zhenduixing - Gaige duiwai baodao de linghun” 加强针对性—改革对外报道的灵魂 [Increasing targetedness – Reforming the soul of external reporting], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 9 (1988): 12-13.

²²³ E.g. Lin Wusun 林戊荪, “Ying zai min’gan wenti baodao shang zhan youshi” 应在敏感问题报道上占优势 [We need to dominate the reporting of sensitive news], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 9 (1988): 14-15.

²²⁴ E.g. Li Yuanjiang, ed., *Duiwai xuanchuan jichu*; Duan Liancheng 段连城, *Duiwai chuanboxue chutan* 对外传播学初探 [parallel title: *How to Help Foreigners Know China*] (Beijing: Zhongguo jianshe chubanshe, 1988). Li Chaochen, *Mantan dui wai dui Tai xuanchuan* 漫谈对外对台宣传 [Casual discussion of propaganda aimed at foreigners and at Taiwanese] (Beijing:

supportive of the need to adapt to foreign target audiences. The accumulation of publications in 1989 and 1990 after the Tiananmen crackdown has to be seen as the outcome of the previous four years' work rather than as an immediate reaction to the perceived failure of Chinese external propaganda in June of 1989. All of the books had clearly been prepared earlier, and the master text regarding what had happened in 1989 was only added hastily in some prefaces.²²⁵

While the reinforcement of domestic propaganda remained contested after 1987, the events of 1989 cemented the change. During the 1989 Student Movement, the external propaganda media (except Xinhua) behaved similarly to the *People's Daily* (whose role and behavior during the protests has been studied relatively well²²⁶), that is, after printing or reporting on the April 26 editorial denouncing the students,²²⁷ they began to support the protests carefully but increasingly strongly,²²⁸ even printing the students' demands²²⁹ and carrying headlines such as "A Million March in Support of Students."²³⁰ It should be noted

Zhongguo jianshe chubanshe, 1989). Shen Suru 沈苏儒, *Duiwai baodao yewu jichu* 对外报道业务基础 [Professional basics for external reporting] (Beijing: Jinri Zhongguo chubanshe, 1989).

²²⁵ However, calls for the establishment of "external propaganda studies" and thus to find some universal rules that China should stick to continued in the early 1990s. E.g. Huang Zecun 黄泽存, "Jianshe duiwai xuanchuan kexue" 建设对外宣传科学 [Establishing the discipline of external propaganda studies], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (1990): 8-10.

²²⁶ E.g. Frank Tan, "The People's Daily: Politics and Popular Will - Journalistic Defiance in China during the Spring of 1989," *Pacific Affairs* 63, no. 2 (1990): 151-169.

²²⁷ "Party Organ Calls for Firm Stand against Disorder," *China Daily*, April 26, 1989.

²²⁸ This statement is based on coverage in the *Beijing Review* and *China Daily*. Issue 22 (May 29 – June 4) of the *Beijing Review* contained the most extensive reports on the movement, including four pages of images chronicling the events. In addition, the issue carried an article on the unpopularity of martial law with the residents of Beijing ("Martial Law: Declared But Not Enforced," 5-7), a summary of the events and key demands of the protestors ("Strikes Spark Political Crisis," 7-9), a summary of Li Peng's demands to curtail the protests, which tellingly put the word "turmoil" in inverted commas ("Strong Measures Declared to Curb 'Turmoil,'" 15-16), a polished script of the talks between the students and Li Peng on May 18 ("Li Peng Meets with Student Leaders", 16-21), and a melodramatic appeal by students who had been hospitalized ("We're Not Wrong Mum! A Report from the Hospital," 20-21). Two letters from readers were also published. The first, purportedly from a U.S. reader, complained about the bias in the *Beijing Review's* portrayal of the movement in favor of the government. The second, from Hong Kong, voiced concern for the health of the students on hunger strike. The most important function, above all, of publishing letters from the readers (whether they actually originated with a reader or were drafted by the editorial board) is to bolster and defend the current editorial policy. In this case, the letters served to justify the increased coverage of the movement, as well as the *sympathetic* coverage. Other than that, the main message in both letters, and hence the main point the board of editors wanted to make, was the call to rebrand the students as patriotic and pressure the government into reversing their verdict on the movement.

²²⁹ "Student Petition Sets 12 Demands," *China Daily*, May 5, 1989.

²³⁰ Staff Reporter, "A Million March in Support of Students," *China Daily*, May 18, 1989.

that during the protests, *China Daily* reports were almost exclusively written by staff reporters,²³¹ with only a few Xinhua releases.²³² Compared to reports by *China Daily* staff, Xinhua releases were relatively pro-CPC, often speaking on behalf of the government and Li Peng 李鹏, but there were also some exceptions.²³³



III. 5.1. *China Daily*, May 5, 1989

The problems with “propaganda discipline” of the Party media were blamed, in hindsight, on remarks made by Zhao Ziyang regarding how the protests should be covered.²³⁴ As the PBSC members in charge of propaganda (Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili) were generally speaking supportive of the movement,²³⁵ Premier Li Peng established an “Emergency Period Propaganda Working Group,” which was under his direct leadership, in late May as part of the imposition of martial law.²³⁶ Articles in the *China Daily* and *Beijing Review* also

²³¹ E.g. Guo Zhongshi, “State Rejects Students’ List of Demands,” *China Daily*, May 4, 1989; “Strikers to Resume Class after Mass Rally,” *China Daily*, May 5, 1989; Chen Hong, “Many Still Absent at Beijing U.,” *China Daily*, May 9, 1989; “Fasters Making History,” *China Daily*, May 18, 1989; “Fast in 6th Day; 2000 Taken Away,” *China Daily*, May 19, 1989.

²³² E.g. “Li Declares Tough Action to Quell ‘Turmoil’ with Backing of the Army,” *China Daily*, May 20, 1989; Source: Xinhua; “Martial Law for Part of Beijing,” *China Daily*, May 22, 1989, Source: Xinhua.

²³³ E.g. “Nation-wide Support to Beijing Students on Hunger Strike,” Xinhua General News Service, May 17, 1989, accessed through Lexis Nexis; “Beijing Student Strike Gains Momentum,” Xinhua General News Service, May 17, 1989, accessed through Lexis Nexis; “The Soul of the City has been Awakened,” *China Daily*, May 24, 1989, Source: Xinhua.

²³⁴ Huang Zecun, ed., *Duiwai xuanchuan de lilun yu shijian* 对外宣传的理论与实践 [External propaganda thought and practice] (Jinan: Shandong youyi shushe, 1992), 478.

²³⁵ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 42-43.

²³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 42.

indicate a “takeover,” though not a very forceful one, shortly before June Fourth.²³⁷

China accused the United States of plotting to stage a “peaceful evolution” (*heping yanbian* 和平演变) in China, and aside from harsh crackdowns on “ringleaders” of the movement, strengthening domestic propaganda work was considered one of the most important and urgent steps. The crisis meant a complete reshuffle of cadres in charge of propaganda work after the crackdown. Hu Qili was replaced by Li Ruihuan 李瑞环 as PBSC member in charge of propaganda and thought work. Zhu Muzhi again survived the crisis, making him one of only two members of the PTWLSG that did not lose their position.²³⁸ Directly after the movement in July 1989, the CPD convened several crisis meetings and issued new directives to reorganize propaganda work.²³⁹ Just as for domestic propaganda, the reaction in external propaganda was fairly immediate. First, external propaganda was also represented at these crisis sessions for overall propaganda work.²⁴⁰ Second, the heads of the central external propaganda units convened on June 17 and July 5,²⁴¹ one before and one after the Fourth Plenary

²³⁷ Towards late May and early June, a number of articles written by *China Daily* staffers or unsigned appeared that urged students to abandon the strike or that published complaints about the protests. E.g. “Square Statue ‘Insult to Site’,” *China Daily*, May 31, 1989; “Students Urged to End Boycott,” *China Daily*, June 2, 1989; “Give Priority to Nation’s Interests,” *China Daily*, June 2, 1989; Issue 23 of the *Beijing Review*, which was published on June 5, indicates that an interference took place a few days before June 4, but that the editorial team was not replaced immediately and not forced to issue harsh rebuttals (which had not been formulated at this point in time). Most articles that had been written on the movement, primarily centering on solidarity between students, soldiers, and residents of Beijing, were allowed to be published, with only a few changes. In addition, a few pro Li Peng pieces were added, presumably last minute. Issues 24 and 25 are not available in the *Beijing Review* database, which means that either, they were never published or they were excluded from the database. A full-fledged denunciation of the movement was only published in issue 26, after the power consolidation and reorganization at the *Beijing Review* had been completed.

²³⁸ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu tiaozheng zhongyang xuanchuan, sixiang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu zucheng renyuan de tongzhi” 中共中央关于调整中央宣传、思想工作领导小组组成人员的通知 [Notification from the CPC Central Committee on adjusting the members of the Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group], *Zhongwei* [1989], no. 110, July 28, 1989, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)*, 1824.

²³⁹ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 45.

²⁴⁰ Cf. “Dali jiaqiang waixuan gongzuo jiji kaizhan guoji yulun douzheng – Zhongxuanbu fubuzhang Zeng Jianhui zai quanguo xuanchuan buzhang huiyi shang de jianghua (jiexuan)” 大力加强外宣工作积极开展国际舆论斗争——中宣部副部长曾建徽在全国宣传部长会议上的讲话 [Vigorously strengthen external propaganda work to engage in the struggle over international public opinion proactively – Speech by Zeng Jianhui, deputy head of the Central Propaganda Department at the nationwide conference for propaganda department heads], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no 10 (1989): 2-5.

²⁴¹ “Dangqian ying dali jiaqiang guoji yulun douzheng – Ji pingbao hou Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan danwei de liang ci zuotanhui” 当前应大力加强国际舆论斗争——记平暴后中央

Session of the Thirteenth Central Committee on June 22 and 23, in which Jiang Zemin 江泽民 became General Secretary of the CPC.

Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, who was deputy director of the CPD and was soon to take up a leading position in the reorganized external propaganda bureaucracy, explained that while China had won the overall battle, it had clearly lost the propaganda war,²⁴² particularly on the international front. During the events, China's external propaganda machinery had not been able to refute the VOA and other Western media. Thus for the first time in the history of the PRC, hostile forces had completely dominated international opinion.²⁴³ Even now, after the events, China was still under attack: In the immediate aftermath of the crackdown, the VOA had added four additional hours per day to its China program, increasing the number of hours per day to twelve.²⁴⁴ Although China had had some very moderate successes in countering this point of view after the crisis was over, hostile forces had long managed to establish their point of view by reporting first (*xian ru wei zhu* 先入为主).²⁴⁵ To resolve this "misunderstanding" and re-establish a favorable image of China would take long years of hard external propaganda work.²⁴⁶ The most important step was to organize an external propaganda apparatus that was organized and strong enough to counter China's enemies. Thus, external propaganda regained in importance at the end of the decade, albeit this time clearly subordinated to domestic propaganda.

Likewise, the immediate reaction in external propaganda after 1989 was to stress China's socialist identity. Directly after the Tiananmen crackdown, "socialist China" was presented as the dialectic opposite of "ancient Chinese civilization." On September 6, 1989, Zhu Muzhi gave a talk to the heads of various TV stations and the directors of their external departments. In this speech, he noted that in the past, external propaganda workers had primarily focused on

对外宣传单位的两次座谈会 [Currently the struggle over international public opinion needs to be vigorously reinforced – Notes from the two central conferences on external propaganda after having quelled the riots], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (1989): 4.

²⁴² Cf. "Zeng Jianhui tongzhi tan waixuan gongzuo de ji ge wenti" 曾建徽同志谈外宣工作的几个问题 [Comrade Zeng Jianhui talks about a number of problems in external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 7 (1990): 2.

²⁴³ "Dali jiaqiang waixuan gongzuo jiji kaizhan guoji yulun douzheng," 2-3.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

how to establish an image for *ancient* China. The most important task now was to establish a correct image for *socialist* China.²⁴⁷

5.6 Conclusions

The late 1970s and 1980s provided a constellation in which external propaganda was continually strengthened for a decade (1977-1986), both in absolute terms and in relative terms vis-à-vis domestic propaganda. First, external propaganda was vital for China's economic reforms, whereas first the concrete practices and later even the entire concept of domestic propaganda gradually came under attack by an increasing number of people. Some of those critical of domestic propaganda practices almost certainly saw external propaganda as a welcome opportunity to give a new function to China's overall propaganda apparatus –a function that was more in line with China's new role as a country facing the world. While it would be overly dramatic to say that China was at a crossroads, there was a serious possibility during parts of the 1980s that China could have abandoned or substantially changed its approach to domestic propaganda work. However, first in 1987, at the institutional and conceptual level, and then more forcefully in 1989, this trend was stopped and reversed. External propaganda did not completely lose its importance, but it was weakened and eclipsed by domestic propaganda work again.

There are two additional points about the development of external propaganda during the 1980s:

First, it is reasonable to argue that the “hold up both internal and external” and the “internal and external are equally important” policies, which attempted to make domestic propaganda institutions pay more attention and shift resources to external propaganda, were the origin of institutional problems identified later during the 1990s, as they tied the two sectors very closely together. At the time, those supporting external propaganda and pushing the “equal importance” policy may have hoped that domestic propaganda would continue to lose significance and that external propaganda would eventually be able to take over and make use

²⁴⁷ “Zhu Muzhi tongzhi huijian ge dianshitai taizhang he duiwaibu fuzeren shi de jianghua” 朱穆之同志会见各电视台台长和对外部负责人时的讲话[Comrade Zhu Muzhi's speech while meeting with various TV station's directors and the heads of their external departments], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (1989): 2.

of the existing domestic propaganda infrastructure. This expectation was certainly not unjustified judging by the overall climate in the 1980s, but it lost much of its plausibility with Hu Yaobang's downfall in 1987 and had to be buried in 1989. Thus, by ensuring that each propaganda unit also established external propaganda structures, assigned personnel, and made sure that the head of the unit was responsible both for internal and external propaganda work, an institutional structure had been established that made external propaganda highly dependent on domestic propaganda units, including financially.

Second, in the struggle over which direction China was to take, neither faction opposed external propaganda. Instead, depending on the political climate, external propaganda was simply framed in very different ways: There was the humanist discourse, focusing on mutual understanding and the need to reintegrate China into global society, an internationalist discourse, focusing on third world solidarity against imperialist oppressors monopolizing the media sector, a "bloc solidarity" discourse, focusing on the need to demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system, a "struggle" discourse, focusing on the need to struggle against hostile forces, and the "functionalist" discourse, highlighting that external propaganda needed to serve China's goals. While all have shown up occasionally since then, and particularly the theme of "mutual understanding" has been stressed when speaking to foreigners, only the last two genuinely survived the crackdown in 1989 and were carried into the next decade: Propaganda needed to serve the national interest as defined by the CPC, both as it pursued its overall development goals and as it tried to fight off "hostile forces."

6 External Propaganda in the Jiang Era: “Struggle” versus Reform

Paradoxically, in the 1990s, Chinese external propaganda both received a major boost and was stunted at the same time. On the one hand, it continued to grow in importance. The external propaganda sector seized the opportunity to re-establish itself and demonstrate its own importance in the aftermath of the Tiananmen crackdown. Most of the external propaganda organizations and mechanisms as we know them today were first established in the 1990s. Facing widespread international isolation, China discovered external propaganda as vital for its diplomacy and as a tool to mitigate the adverse effects of the world’s reaction to the crackdown. On the other hand, external propaganda was much more politicized than in the 1980s, making it more difficult to realize important qualitative reforms.

There were various institutional rearrangements, including the resurrection of the External Propaganda Small Group (EPSG) as well as the founding of new external propaganda institutions, but both in the immediate aftermath of Tiananmen and throughout the 1990s, domestic propaganda was considered a higher priority than external propaganda. Just like during the Mao period, this strongly affected the latter: At the very top, the external propaganda sector was led by the Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group (PTWLSG).¹ After external propaganda work was expanded, cadres were often transferred from the domestic propaganda sector or even worked for both at the same time.² In units that did both domestic and external propaganda, the latter continued to be de-prioritized.

¹ Cf. “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu hui fu zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu de tongzhi” 中共中央关于恢复中央对外宣传小组的通知 [Notification from the CPC Central Committee on the resurrection of the Central External Propaganda Small Group], *Zhongwei* [1990] 48 hao 中委 [1990] 48 号 [Central Committee (circular) [1990] no. 48], March 19, 1990, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)* 党的宣传工作文件选编 (1988-1992) [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1988-1992)], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongshi 中央宣传部办公室 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 1904.

² Cf. Wang Wurong 王武荣, “Shuli xin guannian kaizhan quan fangwei duiwai xuanchuan” 树立新观念 开展全方位对外宣传 [Establish a new concept and engage in all-dimensional external propaganda], *Duiwai da chuanbo* 对外大传播 [Big external communication], no. 3 (1996): 38.

China continued to learn from Western models, but as Brady has pointed out, whereas in the 1980s, Western models were used to *criticize* the Chinese propaganda model, in the 1990s and beyond, approaches from Western PR and mass communications studies were consulted in order to modernize and thus *strengthen* Chinese propaganda.³ Despite this pragmatism, the issue of adapting language and journalistic habits to foreigners' tastes was further complicated by the debate over a "Chinese concept of journalism" that was different from "Western journalism" because of China's "national circumstances."⁴ This discourse, again, put those arguing for more flexibility in the external propaganda sector in a very vulnerable position. While external propaganda veterans were quite aware that China needed to adapt content and rhetoric to foreigners' tastes, once China encountered a crisis, this knowledge was often cast aside.

China's international relations and major powers' China policies had been relevant factors influencing China's external propaganda debate and policy since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but in the 1990s, the tone as well as concrete policies adopted were determined by developments in the international arena, by the relations between China and the United States (U.S.), and by the U.S. China debate and policy to an exceptionally high degree. This is true for immediate reactions to sudden events, which often determined the climate of the annual external propaganda conference, but also for the entire external propaganda policy and content to focus on. One reason for this was that after 1989, China had become an important topic in U.S. politics that became an issue of contention between Congress and the Executive and featured prominently in every election debate. Much of what has been termed the "China collapse theory" and the "China threat theory" was born out of electoral debates in the United States, with candidates attacking one another for their China or Taiwan policy. More informed Chinese texts show awareness of this fact, but rightly point out that

³ For instituting and improving patriotic education (*aiguo jiaoyu* 爱国教育), China studied examples from the U.S., Germany, France, Japan, and Singapore. Britain, particularly the Labor government under Tony Blair served as a model for spin doctoring and how to "repackage" a political party. Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in the People's Republic of China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 67, 86, 181.

⁴ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2001), 88.

intent and context do not matter, as China's image among the United States public and third countries is damaged regardless of the context, and the fact that anti-China rhetoric has such a large market in the U.S. is disconcerting in any case.⁵ Thus, for most of the 1990s, the discourse that external propaganda was an important part of China's struggle against hostile forces was very strong, and the "high politics" mode of conversation, in turn, influenced both external propaganda policy and behavior.

This chapter will show that although the tone of the debate was, by and large, much more martial in the 1990s than in the 1980s, it varied. Aside from the ups and downs in Sino-U.S. relations, the most important international events and developments influencing the Chinese external propaganda debate were China's application for entering the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/World Trade Organization (WTO) launched in 1994 and intensified in 1998,⁶ the triangular conflict between China, the U.S., and Taiwan, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 and 1998, and the handovers of Hong Kong and Macao in 1997 and 1999 respectively.

After the immediate crises of the early 1990s had been weathered, the CPC had the capacities to rethink its overall strategy. In the second half of the 1990s, the idea that China was or ought to be a great power and therefore should behave accordingly became dominant. This idea did not, in fact, emerge in a vacuum in China, but was linked to various international debates on China's future that began to predict a "Chinese century" and discussed the implications of China's rise.⁷ At the same time, several successes, such as the handover of Hong Kong and

⁵ For instance, one article from early 2000 points out that George W. Bush's statement that the U.S. and China are not "strategic partners" but "strategic competitors" is probably only a strategy to gain votes in the presidential election, but the fact that candidates feel this is the way to gain votes shows that there is a lot of fear about China in the U.S. Li Xin 黎信, "Weiyu choumou – Guanyu 'ru shi' yu duiwai xuanchuan de ruogan sikao" 未雨绸缪——关于《入世》与对外宣传的若干思考 [Taking precautions before it starts to rain – A number of thoughts on entering the WTO and external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 1 (2000): 5. Another article points out that the worst part of fear mongering about China in the West is its impact on other countries. Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, "Dui Xifang meiti sanbu 'Zhongguo weixielun' de pingxi (shang)" 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析（上） [A critical analysis of Western media's spreading of the 'China threat theory' (part one of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2001): 5.

⁶ Jiang Fei and Huang Kuo, "Transnational Media Corporations and National Culture as a Security Concern in China," in *Security and Everyday Life*, ed. Vida Bajc (New York: Routledge, 2009), 225.

⁷ Cf. Michael D. Swaine, *The Role of the Chinese Military in National Security Policymaking* (Washington: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 1998), 1.

China's successful strategy of not devaluing the Renminbi 人民币 (RMB) during the Asian financial crisis, gave the country more confidence. As China planned its next steps that included taking on a larger global role, the question of China's image and the role of external propaganda in China's overall foreign policy were upgraded in importance. While during the first half of the 1990s, external propaganda had been considered an instrument to aid China's concrete diplomacy and overcome its isolation, in the second half of the 1990s, external propaganda gradually began to be reframed as an important part of China's long term ascendancy.

Below, I will analyze the different shifts in external propaganda's role over the course of the Jiang era. Before that, however, I will first give a brief introduction to what has arguably been the most disruptive factor preventing external propaganda from implementing some of the most basic points already suggested by external propaganda cadres in the 1980s: Domestic propaganda and its new role in maintaining regime security as envisioned in the language and logic of Chinese Marxism.

6.1 Domestic Propaganda in the New Period

The importance of domestic propaganda in the post-1989 era is well-established. Brady explained that the Communist Party of China (CPC) believed that if it "lets go of controls over the propaganda sphere, then chaos would ensue."⁸ After the "lessons" of the 1980s, the CPC introduced the slogan "seize with both hands, both hands have to be strong" (*liang shou zhua, liang shou dou yao ying* 两手抓，两手都要硬). In its overall (*quanju* 全局) interpretation, this slogan meant that China could not only focus on the economy, but also had to pay attention to politics and ideology.⁹ In fact, the Party spent quite a bit of energy on redefining the role of propaganda in the new period in its overall ideological universe. While of course it makes sense to read the embedding of propaganda in the overall ideology as a mere justification for a step to bolster regime security, anchoring it in the ideological universe was an important part in giving it permanence and making it an untouchable consensus.

⁸ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 51.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 44-45.

The official turning point for propaganda work in terms of consolidation and introduction of a new policy that is still largely valid today was the Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992.¹⁰ In late 1992, Jiang Zemin 江泽民 ordered the powers of the Central Propaganda Department (CPD) to be expanded¹¹ while the CPC simultaneously pushed for media commercialization in order to combat the legitimacy crisis of China's media.¹² In January 1994, the new direction in propaganda and thought work was cemented with Jiang Zemin's "important speech" (*zhongyao jianghua* 重要讲话) at a work conference.¹³ The timing was no coincidence: 1992 was also when Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 embarked on his Southern Tour and when the Party subsequently enshrined the reform and opening policies at the Fourteenth Party Congress, which required additional ideological protection in the official political imaginary of the CPC. The reasons for why China needed domestic propaganda consisted of three separate points:

First, there was a positive rationale for propaganda and thought work: to motivate the Chinese population to partake in the reform project and to fully develop their "subjective agency." Correct understanding and correct consciousness –both of members of the Party and of the people– have consequences for the success of the core work as well as other work areas of the party. Correct thought allows people to use their subjective agency to the fullest extent and for the right purposes. There are two ways to acquire (and constantly improve) it: through practice, and through instruction carried out by a vanguard with a firm grasp on correct thinking.¹⁴ With practice moving in the wrong direction according to Marxist standards (i.e. towards marketization), proper instruction was even more important.

This already implies that in addition to this positive function, there were two problems that propaganda and thought work was meant to deal with: the

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 48-49.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 49.

¹² Cf. Chin-chuan Lee, Zhou He, and Yu Huang, "'Chinese Party Publicity Inc.' Conglomerated: The Case of the Shenzhen Press Group," *Media, Culture & Society* 28, no. 4 (2006): 584; Chengju Huang, "Trace the Stones in Crossing the River: Media Structural Changes in Post-WTO China," *The International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 5 (2007): 419.

¹³ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 50. For the new policy line decided on in 1994, see Jiang Zemin 江泽民, *Zai quanguo xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo huiyi shang de jiang hua* 在全国宣传工作会议上的讲话 [Talk at the nationwide conference for propaganda and thought work] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1994).

¹⁴ Cf. Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 38-39.

temporary move back towards a market economy, which constitutes an unprecedented¹⁵ reverse transition from the perspective of “orthodox” Marxist ideology by gradually turning China’s planned economy into a “socialist market economy,” and the fact that China was confronted with constant attempts of hostile forces to ideologically infiltrate Chinese society. While the latter was stressed in the popular discourse on propaganda, it had a less prominent position in the more formal theoretical debate on propaganda and thought work, which held that the primary problems China’s ideological environment faced stemmed from economic reform, and that ideological infiltration by the West was only added on top of that.¹⁶

In official texts, the most dangerous problem is Chinese society and the transformations it is currently undergoing. The reverse transition means that instead of increasingly converging interests among the “people” (*renmin qunzhong* 人民群众) as reform progresses towards the ideal Communist society, the Party needs to deal with a populace whose interests are becoming more divergent by the day. The Fourteenth Party Congress in 1992 spelled out that the goal of China’s economic reforms was to establish a socialist market economy. Realizing the transformation (*zhuanbian* 转变) from a planned economy to a socialist market economy touches many fields (*lingyu* 领域) both in the economic base and in the superstructure.¹⁷ It must (*biran* 必然, i.e. according to objective laws of development) have a broad and profound impact on people’s interests (*renmen de liyi guanxi* 人们的利益关系), social relations, ideas (*sixiang guannian* 思想观念), mode of thinking (*siwei fangshi* 思维方式), and lifestyle (*shenghuo fangshi* 生活方式).¹⁸ As reforms progress, differences between various social strata will increase. Big differences lead to contradiction and conflict (*maodun chongtu* 矛盾冲突).¹⁹ The Party recognizes that as economic reform

¹⁵ See Lei Jia 雷珈, “Wei quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui yingzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing” 为全面建设小康社会营造良好的国际舆论环境 [Create a favorable international public opinion environment for building a moderately well-off society], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2003): 4. This adds to the problem because China has no models to consult.

¹⁶ Chinese quote: “随着经济成分和经济利益的多样化[...] 人们的思想观念也必然多样化, 加上国际敌对势力‘西化’、‘分化’的图谋, 一是那台领域的斗争将更加复杂” Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbujue, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2001, 28.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

progresses, there will be an increasing number of clashes of interest, and hence, sources of conflict. This is the ideological background of statements that as reform of the socialist market economy progresses, propaganda and thought work will be become ever more important.²⁰

When comparing texts on propaganda from the Mao period and from the post-Mao period, particularly from after the year 1992, one key difference stands out: The belief in the short-term malleability of man and short-term solutions to reforming people's thought has been de-emphasized. The point of departure for all propaganda and thought work need to be the realities of the primary stage of socialism.²¹ Cadres need to become more understanding of the people's ideological shortcomings and must avoid moving too far away from the realities of the primary stage of socialism. Propaganda workers should not commit the mistake of being too impatient, but rather be mentally prepared to do long-term difficult work.²² Patience (*naixin* 耐心) is a quality that propaganda workers not only have to display towards foreigners, but also towards the Chinese people.²³ This call for patience on the part of the Party elite with the ordinary masses (and, for external propaganda, with foreigners) has become a vital part of the propaganda discourse in China.

The second –external– problem the CPC has identified for the current period is ideological infiltration, largely because of the U.S. Cold War policy of “peaceful evolution” (*heping yanbian* 和平演变) that it supposedly integrated into its China policy in the 1990s. *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* notes that “when hostile forces want to bring disarray to a society and overthrow a political regime, they always start by opening a hole to creep through in the ideological field and by confusing people's thought.”²⁴ The idea of peaceful evolution is generally attributed in China, as elsewhere, to John Foster Dulles

²⁰ See for example *ibid.*, 4: 越是改革开放，越要重视宣传思想工作，宣传思想工作在新形势下只能加强，不能削弱。

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 17.

²² “应当有做长期、艰巨工作的思想准备” *ibid.*, 18.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “敌对势力要搞乱一个社会，颠覆一个政权，往往总是先从意识形态领域打开突破口，先从搞乱人们的思想下手。” *Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbujū* 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2006), 2.

“peaceful evolution” policy of the early 1950s, which sought to undermine Socialist societies without having to engage in military warfare.²⁵ “Traditional” strategies of “peaceful evolution” include trade, and economic aid provided with the goal of planting Western values in these societies as an outcome of the interaction.²⁶ When the notion experienced a major revival in China after Tiananmen, one of the most important tools of peaceful evolution in the eyes of the CPC was the international media. This ideological “war,” driven by capitalist countries’ desire to eradicate socialism is considered to be a long-term battle.²⁷

According to an evaluation published in 1990 (but still valid today), the thaw in East-West relations has not caused Western countries to cease their activities undermining socialist countries. Under the new historical circumstances, this subverting has only changed its form (*xingshi* 形式); it now has more of a propaganda nature (*xuanchuan xingzhi* 宣传性质) and economic nature (*jingji xingzhi* 经济性质).²⁸ A large part of the master text on peaceful evolution was most likely picked up from the U.S. debate. After the end of the Cold War, the future of U.S. external propaganda programs was uncertain. The way the U.S. media, particularly the Voice of America (VOA), presented their own role in China’s democracy movement²⁹ probably contributed significantly to China’s framing of the events as much as to China’s increased attention to external propaganda. In addition, while Francis Fukuyama declared the “end of history,”³⁰ Samuel Huntington famously predicted that the next conflict would be a cultural

²⁵ Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan* 融冰架桥, 突围:曾建徽论对外宣传 [Melting the ice, building bridges, breaking out of the encirclement: Zeng Jianhui on external propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006), vol. 1, 3.

²⁶ Cf. Russel Ong, *China’s Security Interests* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 22-23.

²⁷ Chen Minyi 陈敏毅, ed., *Dangdai guoji chuanbo yanjiu* 当代国际传播研究 [Contemporary international communications research] (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guanbo chubanshe, 2006), 10.

²⁸ Cf. Liu Jianming 刘建明, *Deng Xiaoping xuanchuan sixiang yanjiu* 邓小平宣传思想研究 [Research on the propaganda thought of Deng Xiaoping] (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1990), 161.

²⁹ Cf. Zhou He and Jianhua Zhu, *The ‘Voice of America’ and China: Zeroing in on Tiananmen Square* (Columbia: Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1994); “The Role of the United States Embassy and the Voice of America in the recent China Uprising”, Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Operations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred First Congress, First Session, June 15, 1989.

³⁰ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

one between the West and the Islamic world or Confucian Asia.³¹ The emergence of a number of works and arguments associated with what China has termed the “China threat theory” provided ammunition to those in China arguing that China had been chosen as the new enemy to succeed the Soviet Union (S.U.), or at least as a target for cultural infiltration.³²

Even books that did not paint China as a potential threat were used as proof of the war of ideas waged by the West against China. Parts of Joseph Nye’s *Bound to Lead* were almost immediately³³ translated into Chinese and published by the Military Affairs Translations Press in January 1992 under the title “Is it certain that America can lead the world?” (*Meiguo dingneng lingdao shijie ma?* 美国定能领导世界吗?). The introduction pointed out that one important thought put forth in the book was the concept of soft power, translated as *ruan lilian* 软力量 at the time, and “how to turn it into a means for American hegemony of the world” (*shi qi zuowei Meiguo duba shijie de yi ge zhongyao shouduan* 使其作为美国独霸世界的一个重要手段).³⁴ As is common for books reflecting ideologies considered dangerous or at least disadvantageous to China, the Chinese publishers justified the translation in the preface by explaining the book’s “reference value” (*cankao jiazhi* 参考价值): First, it reflected the extreme feelings of chauvinism that had emerged in the U.S. after the end of the Cold War.³⁵ Second, it showed America’s ambition to “establish complete world hegemony.”³⁶ Third, the book offered a concrete policy for America’s plans to further peaceful evolution in the socialist world and the Third World. Nye, the publishers stated, was proposing to intensify cultural and ideological in-flows into China, the S.U., and the Third World in order to make these countries accept the American value system. From

³¹ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

³² See for example Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (zhong)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析 (中) [A critical analysis of Western media’s spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part two of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 5 (2001): 8.

³³ The editors pointed out that the book was a preliminary translation. In order to expose American plans and caution Chinese to be watchful against peaceful evolution, they stated, “we have specially invited a part of the professional translators located in the capital to translate this book within a very short time and have omitted some chapters.” *Meiguo dingneng lingdao shijie ma?* 美国定能领导世界吗? [Is it certain that America can lead the world], trans. He Xiaodong 何小东 and Gao Yuyun 盖玉云 (Beijing: Junshi yiwen chubanshe, 1992), 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

this it could be inferred that America was not only planning to dominate the world politically, but also culturally and ideologically. Therefore, China needed to clearly realize that the importance of the struggle against peaceful evolution would be long-term, complex, and intense.³⁷

According to the CPD, the West's cultural infiltration (*wenhua shentou* 文化渗透) has two levels (*cengci* 层次): The first layer is using international broadcasting (*guoji guangbo* 国际传播) to distribute hostile political views and to spread degenerate capitalist lifestyle through the distribution of pornographic films and books. This level of infiltration can be fairly easily discovered and destroyed by using press and propaganda measures (*xinwen xuanchuan shouduan* 新闻宣传手段) and “operations to eliminate pornography” (*sao huang xingdong* 扫黄行动) to prevent and refute it,³⁸ although it should be mentioned that today, the CPC has concluded that because of the Internet, controlling this type of infiltration is no longer that simple (cf. chapter 7). For the second level, namely high-level (*gao cengci* 高层次) ideological and academic infiltration (*sixiang xueshu shentou* 思想学术渗透), “hostile forces” use modern social science theory and values to win over intellectuals whose academic base (*xueshu gendi* 学术根底) is not deep and whose Marxist world outlook is not strong in order to distribute seemingly correct Western cultural research results in China.³⁹ Those results (that spread to China because of being embraced by Chinese intellectual and academics) usually contain new discoveries that have some worth for the development of science, but also anti-Marxist theoretical points of view.⁴⁰

The influence of the latter type of cultural infiltration cannot be countered on the propaganda and thought front through simple replies and criticism. Instead, the CPD needs to use the basic theories (*jiben lilun* 基本理论) of Marxism, analyze the development of new historical circumstances and of ideological trends in contemporary society, guide the people so that they grasp the objective world outlook and methodology, and continuously increase the Marxist theoretical level (*shuiping* 水平) of the entire party and the entire society. Only thus can this type

³⁷ Ibid., 2-3.

³⁸ Cf. Liu Jianming, *Deng Xiaoping xuanchuan sixiang yanjiu*, 164.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

of high-level ideological and cultural infiltration be successfully vanquished.⁴¹ Consequently, in order to win the fight against “peaceful evolution,” China depends on Marxist theorists and social scientists to let the people deeply understand (*shenke de renshi* 深刻的认识) the true reactionary nature (*fandong shizhi* 反动实质) of Western propaganda.⁴² A danger also lurks for Chinese who go abroad, so it is important that everyone who gets in contact with things foreign be armed with Marxist theory in order to be keenly aware of Western attempts to split and Westernize China.⁴³ This argument lays the basis for what later became a debate about China’s “ideological security,” “value security,” and a “discourse system with Chinese characteristics.”

Although propaganda was weakened in the U.S. after the end of the Cold War, reforms of the U.S. propaganda apparatus provided plenty of material for China to analyze. Over the course of the 1990s, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was restructured multiple times. In 1990, the USIA established the Bureau of Broadcasting in order to enable closer cooperation between its radio and television services, most importantly the VOA and Worldnet. In 1991, the Office of Affiliate Relations was established within the Bureau in order to liaise with foreign radio and TV stations rebroadcasting the USIA’s products. In 1994, Clinton signed the International Broadcasting Act that created the International Broadcasting Bureau within the USIA, as well as the Broadcasting Board of Governors located within the USIA to oversee non-military broadcasting, which further strengthened the consolidation of radio and TV broadcasting. In 1997, the Clinton administration first proposed to merge the USIA into the Department of State, a move which was generally supported by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy at the time.⁴⁴ According to the “Reorganization Plan and Report” from December 1998, the consolidation was to enable the State

⁴¹ Ibid., 164-165.

⁴² Ibid., 165.

⁴³ Cf. “Han Xikai tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di si ci huiyi shang de jianghua” 韩喜凯同志在省委对外宣传联席会第四次会上的讲话 [Comrade Han Xikai’s speech at the fourth meeting of the Joint Council for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], March 12, 1997, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol. 1, 96-97.

⁴⁴ United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *Consolidation of USIA into the State Department: An Assessment after one Year*. October 2000, available online at <http://www.state.gov/www/policy/pdadcom/acpdreport.pdf>, accessed March 1, 2013.

Department to make more persuasive and flexible foreign policy.⁴⁵ The reorganization has also been interpreted as a move to bolster short term propaganda campaigns accompanying specific policies (such as, for example, influencing news coverage during the war in Kosovo in 1999) in favor of long term projects of mutual understanding.⁴⁶ The consolidation was finalized on October 1, 1999. With the changes of the late 1990s, funding also decreased significantly; after all, saving money had been one of the main goals of the streamlining.⁴⁷ The consolidation of the USIA into the Department of State was evaluated largely negatively by the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy in 2000, especially with regard to its effect on former USIA personnel.⁴⁸

What was seen as a major cutting of funds in the U.S. following the end of the Cold War was largely presented as an expansion in China.⁴⁹ From a Chinese perspective, U.S. external propaganda initiatives actually did intensify. Although in general U.S. external propaganda institutions were weakened over the course of the 1990s (which is also acknowledged in Chinese publications⁵⁰), culminating in the dissolution of the USIA in 1999, there were, in fact, a number of new initiatives targeted at Asia and China in particular, most importantly the launching of Radio Free Asia in 1995.

Thus, both the potential for conflict in China because of economic reform and the constant threat of ideological infiltration have ensured that the need for domestic propaganda can never be questioned again in a similar way that it was questioned in the 1980s.

6.2 1990-1994: Entering the Smokeless Battle

Although domestic propaganda was considered more important in the early 1990s, external propaganda cadres also successfully portrayed external propaganda as China's "weak link" (*boruo huanjie* 薄弱环节) in the early

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁶ Cf. Kennon H. Nakamura and Matthew C. Weed, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and Current Issues*, available online on the website of the Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40989.pdf>, accessed March 3, 2012, 16.

⁴⁷ Cf. Susan B. Epstein, "U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and the 9/11 Commission Recommendations" <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl32607.pdf>, accessed March 2, 2013, CRS-1, CSR-4.

⁴⁸ United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, *Consolidation of USIA into the State Department: An Assessment after one Year*.

⁴⁹ E.g. Chapter 1 in Chen Minyied., *Dangdai guoji chuanbo yanjiu*, 3-11.

⁵⁰ E.g. *ibid.*, 14.

1990s.⁵¹ The framing was quite similar to how international propaganda was discussed in the 1930s: Although China was right and told the truth about the movement, it was not heard, and its image was wrecked –with drastic consequences for its diplomacy and economic development. This was because of a combination of China’s own weakness in the field and of being confronted with a formidable enemy bent on destroying China’s image in order to bring about its demise as a socialist country.⁵² While many of the initial reactions were focused on restricting the activities of foreign media in China, the country also realized that it could not improve its image through censorship and control alone.

In order to be able to compete in what was seen as a propaganda war against “hostile forces”⁵³ after the CPC had crushed the Chinese democracy movement on June 4, 1989, a new EPSG was established in March 1990 under the leadership of Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, this time as a “real entity” (*shiti* 实体), meaning that it had a fixed rank and staff.⁵⁴ The resurrected EPSG was led by the PTWLSG and had the rank equivalent to that of a ministry or a province (*zheng bu ji* 正部级).⁵⁵ The initial staff of the EPSG’s office was fixed at 60 people. 33 of them came from the CPD’s Bureau of External Propaganda; the others were to be picked by the EPSG from “relevant departments.”⁵⁶ Propaganda pertaining to

⁵¹ See “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi” 中共中央关于加强和改进对外宣传工作的通知 [Notification of the CPC Central Committee on strengthening and improving external propaganda work], *Zhongfa* [1990] 21 hao 中发 [1990] 21 号 [Central circular [1990] no. 21] from December 29, 1990, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian* 党的宣传工作文件选编 (1988-1992) [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1988-1992)], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 1920.

⁵² Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 11-14.

⁵³ These hostile forces changed their name over the course of the 1990s as the Socialist bloc had crumbled. Initially, China spoke of the “reactionary forces,” i.e. the forces against socialist progress. Later, the main enemy came to be term “anti-China forces.” See Table 1 in chapter 6.4.

⁵⁴ Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 3. For the notice on the establishment of the office, see “Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting guanyu zujian Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu banshi jigou de tongzhi,” 中共中央办公厅关于组建中央对外宣传小组办事机构的通知 [Notification from the General Office of the CPC Central Committee on establishing an executive office for the central external propaganda small group], *Tingzi* 厅字 [1990] 9 hao 号. [Note from the General Office of the CPC Central Committee [1990] no. 9], March 23, 1990, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian* (1988-1992), 1936.

⁵⁵ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu huifu zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu de tongzhi,” 1904.

⁵⁶ Cf. “Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting guanyu zujian Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu banshi jigou de tongzhi,” 1936.

the overall international situation and China's foreign policy remained in the hands of the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG).⁵⁷

The EPSG had 11 members in late 1990: Zhu Muzhi (the group's director and a member of the PTWLSG), Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽 (vice-head of CPD and "second in command" after Zhu Muzhi), Zhou Jue 周觉 (former ambassador to France and vice-head of the permanent office of the EPSG), Tian Cengpei 田曾佩 (vice-minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA), Li Shuzheng 李淑铮 (vice-head of the International Liaison Department, ILD), Liu Deyou 刘德有 (translator and journalist with experience in external propaganda, and Vice-Minister of Culture), Yu Fang 余放 (a high-ranking cadre from the security apparatus), Ma Qingxiong 马庆雄 (vice-head of what is today State Administration for Radio Film and Television, SARFT), Zhang Yunsheng 张云声 (deputy editor-in-chief of the *People's Daily*), Lin Shuilong 林水龙 (head of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office), and Wang Mengkui 王梦奎 (vice-head of the Research Office of the State Council *Guowuyuan yanjiushi* 国务院研究室 and professor at Beijing University after 1991).⁵⁸ This indicates that during the initial years, the small group still functioned like a non-standing advisory body, with relatively high-ranking representatives of different units coming together to deliberate and coordinate policies. However, as opposed to the 1980s, its executive office (*banshi jigou* 办事机构) was no longer a structure within the CPD, but had a degree of independence because it had a rank, and a seal of its own. Despite the creation of a permanent office in charge of external propaganda, the sector was still part of two different systems with responsibilities split between different Leading Small Groups (LSG), with the PTWLSG in charge of the majority of affairs.

After the EPSG was resurrected, not only locales but also central departments began to establish corresponding external propaganda structures. Directly after the 1990 conference on foreign propaganda work, for example, the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MFT) established an external propaganda small group

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Cf. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu zucheng renyuan renzhi de tongzhi" 中共中央关于中央对外宣传小组组成人员任职的通知 [Notification on the composition of people serving in the Central External Propaganda Small Group], in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian* (1988-1992), 1919.

under the leadership of the Ministry's Party group, which was headed by one of the vice-ministers. Each division and bureau (*ge si ju* 各司局) of the Ministry assigned one cadre specifically responsible for external propaganda work.⁵⁹

The post-1989 changes in external propaganda policy were formalized in late 1990. In November 1990, the second national level external propaganda conference with participation from China's top leaders (Jiang Zemin, Li Peng 李鹏, Li Ruihuan 李瑞环, etc.) was held in Beijing. In late December 1990, the consensus formally agreed on at the conference was published in *Central Circular* (*Zhongfa* 中发) [1990] no. 21. The circular summarized the most important post-1989 changes in the conceptualization of external propaganda and in concrete policies:

First, in addition to "strategic significance" external propaganda was now also declared to be of "practical significance" (*xianshi yiyi* 现实意义).⁶⁰ In the immediate aftermath of Tiananmen 1989 and 1990, China faced both economic sanctions and diplomatic difficulties. While official diplomacy was halted on the surface (although it continuing in secret),⁶¹ partner city agreements proved useful as they were, by and large, detached from state-to-state diplomacy.⁶² These remained relevant not only in the immediate aftermath of the Tiananmen crackdown but also after China had normalized most of its foreign relations again.⁶³ It was during this time that the concept of "comprehensive diplomacy" (*zongti waijiao* 总体外交) drawing on a wide variety of channels was introduced, and external propaganda was declared a part of said "comprehensive diplomacy."

⁵⁹ "Jingmaobu fubuzhang Shen Jueren jiang hua zhaiyao" 经贸部副部长沈觉人讲话摘要 [Summary of the speech by Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Chen Jueren], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 12 (1990): 5.

⁶⁰ Cf. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi," 1990.

⁶¹ Cf. David Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 22, 25-26.

⁶² Cf. Jia Guilin 贾桂林, "Shilun liyong you cheng qudao kaizhan duiwai xuanchuan" 试论利用有成渠道开展对外宣传 [On using successful channels to conduct external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (1998): 14-15.

⁶³ Cf. "Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong shengwei guanyu jin yi bu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian" 中共中央山东省委关于进一步加强和改进对外宣传工作的意见 [Opinion of Shandong Provincial Party Committee of the CPC on further strengthening and improving external propaganda work], Lu fa [1998] 5 hao 鲁发 [1998] 5 号 [Shandong circular (1998) no. 5], May 9, 1998, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian* (1992-1998), vol. 1, 49.

Its purpose was to “create a favorable international environment.” Although the link was not made explicit in the document, this is likely what “practical significance” referred to: External propaganda was recognized as a powerful supplement for China’s diplomatic work.⁶⁴

Second, *Central Circular* [1990] no. 21 affirmed the need for external propaganda to “establish the image of socialist China in the world” (*zai shijie shang shuli shehuizhuyi Zhongguo de xingxiang* 在世界上树立社会主义中国的形象).⁶⁵ The concrete points in the circular about the image to be propagated placed “socialist China” first (before “reforming China,” “open China,” “ancient China,” and “peaceful China”): The first thing that foreigners needed to understand about China was that it was a socialist country in which the entire population worked under the leadership of the CPC to build socialism with Chinese characteristics. It can be assumed that there was awareness among external propaganda cadres that stressing China’s socialist nature could be counterproductive in trying to improve its image. Some people probably raised the problems caused by the lack of credibility that state media enjoyed, especially the state media of socialist countries. However, the early 1990s were not the time when such an argument could be made in public or in a prominent place. It was only in the late 1990s and early 2000s that both the focus on socialist China and the predominance of the state and the Party began to be challenged.⁶⁶

Third, the document introduced two different types of external propaganda, which were later juxtaposed directly. On the one hand, there was “positively propagating China” and on the other hand, there was “refuting lies spread by hostile forces.” The latter type constituted a major battle in the eyes of the CPC and was later during the 1990s referred to as the “international public opinion struggle” (*guoji yulun douzheng* 国际舆论斗争). As has been indicated above, both aspects were already present in the *Central Circular* [1986] no. 17, with the first highlighted *before* and the second emphasized *after* the Campaign against

⁶⁴ Cf. Liu Jianming 刘建明 et al., eds., *Xuanchuan yulunxue da cidian* 宣传舆论学大辞典 [Dictionary of propaganda and public opinion studies] (Beijing: Jingji ribao chubanshe, 1992), 54.

⁶⁵ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi,” 1921.

⁶⁶ E.g. Wu Zheng 吴征, *Zhongguo de daguo diwei yu guoji chuanbo zhanlue* 中国的大国地位与国际传播战略 [China’s great power status and (its) international communication strategy] (Beijing: Changzheng chubanshe, 2001). Cf. chapter 6.4 and 6.6.

Bourgeois Liberalization. Notably, however, the document emphasized that refuting lies should be very selective and only be a last resort when China's national interests were threatened, because retorting meant giving "hostile forces" a platform and drawing attention to them.⁶⁷ Instead, China should "rely mainly on positive propaganda" (*zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu* 正面宣传为主) and focus on propagating China's real image rather than getting bogged down in a passive and reactive position by constantly issuing refutations. It is interesting to note that this was already explicitly laid down in the circular from 1990, as this dilemma continues to be a problem until this day.

Fourth, in 1990, the economic West, first and foremost the U.S., formally became the primary target of external propaganda. The rationale behind this was that the portrayal of China in Western media influenced third parties. Of course, China also had the most severe diplomatic issues with the West that needed to be resolved for China to be able to conduct business as usual again. The developing world still placed second, before the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. China's neighboring countries, which became more important a few years later starting with the disintegration of the S.U., were listed last and without further specification of what needed to be done concretely. The main group of people to target was the "political middle" (*zhongjian qunzhong* 中间群众), as the left was already fairly sympathetic to China, and "hostile forces" on the other end of the spectrum had ill intentions and could not be convinced.⁶⁸

Fifth, *Central Circular* [1990] no. 21 included another important policy point, namely to "distinguish between internal and external, and to be strict internally and lax externally" (*nei wai you bie, nei jin wai song* 内外有别、内紧外松).⁶⁹ This is mentioned here because the fact that in 1990, leading propaganda cadres still thought that reporting certain events abroad but not in China was viable is in stark contrast to the position it took only a few years later.

⁶⁷ Cf. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi," 1922.

⁶⁸ For the latter point, see "Zeng Jianhui tongzhi tan waixuan gongzuo de ji ge wenti" 曾建徽同志谈外宣工作的几个问题 [Comrade Zeng Jianhui talks about a number of problems in external propaganda work], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 7 (1990): 3. "当然，对于国外的敌对势力，不管你怎么讲，他总是要歪曲你、攻击你的。" [Of course, hostile foreign powers will always attempt to misrepresent and attack you, no matter what you say.]

⁶⁹ "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de tongzhi," 1923.

Sixth, while television and film were described as the “weakest link” in external propaganda work, radio and news releases were listed as the first priority. The focus on the radio was likely due to the important role that the VOA had played during the Tiananmen protests. In order to replace backward technology, the Center pledged to grant external propaganda a place in the national budgeting plan, although, of course, the precise budget was not specified in the document.⁷⁰

Between late 1990 and early 1994, no further nationwide external propaganda conferences took place (although a number of specific conferences were organized⁷¹), and no “agenda” documents (*ganglingxing wenjian* 纲领性文件) updating *Central Circular* [1990] no. 21 were released by the Center. Instead, following the 1990 conference, a number of organizational changes in the foreign propaganda sector were implemented and adjusted over the next few years. In January 1991, the EPSG got a second nameplate under the arrangement known as “one organization with two nameplates” (*yi ge jigou liang kuai paizi* 一个机构两块牌子): State Council Information Office (*Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi* 国务院新闻办公室, SCIO).⁷² As explained above (cf. chapter 4.2), the “two nameplates” solution can describe different concrete arrangements that are unique to China and are first and foremost a product of the lack of separation of Party and state. In the case of external propaganda, the highest organization has two names, one for internal communication within the regular Party structures and one for representative purposes and for communication with government departments. There is no ambiguity about its place in the party-state: It is an organization directly under the Central Committee (*Zhonggong Zhongyang zhishu jigou* 中共

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1929.

⁷¹ Such as an external propaganda conference for opened coastal areas (*Yanhai kaifang diqu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo zuotanhui* 沿海开放地区对外宣传工作座谈会) convened in August 1991, and an external propaganda conference for areas bordering the Yangtse (*Yan Changjiang diqu de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo zuotanhui* 沿长江地区的对外宣传工作座谈会) held in the second half of 1993. Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 77. Moreover, in 1991, China organized a conference to discuss propaganda targeted at the different countries of what used to be the Soviet Union and in 1992 held a similar conference but with a focus on South East Asian countries. Cf. *ibid.*, 79.

⁷² *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui* 中国共产党组织史资料编审委员会 [Editorial committee for Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 [Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000.), vol. A1, 896-897

中央直属机构), not under the State Council, and thus clearly part of the Party bureaucracy.⁷³

Here, the CPC has found an acceptable solution for a conflict between an internationally established practice (that governments should have a press or information office) and the rules according to which the Chinese bureaucracy functions, namely that media-related work must remain within the hands of the Party. In accordance with international conventions, the Chinese government needed a press office to speak on its behalf, but the CPC was reluctant to actually vest a government bureaucracy with that power. Therefore, the EPSG/SCIO was put under the direct authority of the Party Center, but acted to the outside world as if it were a government agency.

With Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour in 1992 that affirmed the policy of Reform and Opening and closed the debates over whether or not China should continue to interact more closely with the rest of the world, external propaganda fully regained its purpose as a precursor of reform and opening. If China had headed in the opposite direction and decided to seal itself off once again or significantly slow down its opening process, external propaganda's function would have had to be redefined once more to adjust it to the general line. However, once it was clear that economic reforms would accelerate, external propaganda's position and function, too, was affirmed.

After the 14th Party Congress, another reshuffle in the entire propaganda sector took place. Ding Guan'gen 丁关根⁷⁴ became head of CPD, while former director Wang Renzhi 王忍之 (who had opposed economic reform) was re-assigned to the position of deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Simultaneously, Ding replaced Li Ruihuan as the leading cadre in charge of propaganda work and head of the Propaganda and Thought Work

⁷³ Ibid. Circular no. 11 from 2008 issued by the State Council, which classifies the institutions under the State Council into different types of work units, reconfirms that OEP/SCIO is "one organization with two nameplates [that] belongs to [the institutions] under direct authority of the Central Committee" (一个机构两块牌子, 列入中共中央直属机构序列). Cf. "Guofa [2008] 11 hao: 'Guowuyuan guanyu jigou shezhi de tongzhi'" 国发 [2008]11 号: 《国务院关于机构设置的通知》 [National circular (2008) no. 11: Notice from the State Council on the institutional set-up], website of the Propaganda Department of Qinghai Province, April 25, 2008, <http://www.qhnews.com/index/system/2008/04/25/002492334.shtml>, accessed August 12, 2012.

⁷⁴ Ding Guan'gen had been alternate member of the Politburo since 1987 and was elevated to full membership at the 14th Party Congress.

LSG.⁷⁵ In the external propaganda sector, former vice head of EPSG/SCIO, Zeng Jianhui, replaced Zhu Muzhi (who was 76 years old at the time and thus due to retire).

In July 1993, the EPSG was “adjusted” to become the Office of External Propaganda (*Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi* 中共对外宣传办公室, OEP).⁷⁶ As explained above, when the EPSG was re-established in 1990, it still took the form of an advisory committee in which leaders of different units came together, but at the same time, it had, attached to it, a relatively independent executive office that represented it when interacting with other units and a clearly defined rank in the system. Likely, what happened in 1993 was that the advisory committee and the standing body were fully separated in name. The OEP got full-time leaders, whose main task was external propaganda. In the background, there probably continued to be an advisory body comprised of relatively senior cadres, and the new name of the executive office, “Office of External Propaganda,” was short for “Office of the External Propaganda Small Group” (*Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu bangongshi* 对外宣传小组办公室), although the continued existence of a small group was not acknowledged in public.

There are two main arguments for this: First, in early 1994, Shandong Province made a similar rearrangement in line with “the spirit of the center” by renaming its external propaganda small group and establishing a non-standing committee consisting of cadres from all departments somehow involved in external propaganda to macro-manage the sector, called Joint Committee on External Propaganda.⁷⁷ Beijing also has an External Propaganda LSG, whose executive office (*banshi jigou* 办事机构) was the city’s OEP.⁷⁸ While local arrangements do not necessarily have to mirror the center, they are often similar. Second, in 2004, around the same time that external propaganda had been

⁷⁵ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 49.

⁷⁶ Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 243.

⁷⁷ Cf. “Guanyu queding shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui canjia renyuan de tongzhi” 关于确定省委对外宣传联席会参加人员的通知 [Notification appointing the members of the Joint Committee for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol.1, 53.

⁷⁸ Cf. “Zhonggong Beijing shiwei fushuji Long Xinmin tan Beijing duiwai xuanchuan” 中共北京市委副书记龙新民谈北京外宣工作 [Long Ximin, deputy secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee speaks about Beijing’s external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2001): 2.

elevated to the level of regime security, former head of OEP/SCIO Zhu Muzhi remarked that the EPSG had recently been upgraded to the status of *Leading Small Group*,⁷⁹ which indicates that there had been a small group before 2004, whose status in the overall system was upgraded. The fact that the continued existence of the small group was not publicized is unsurprising, given that none of the small groups and leading small groups at the central level are officially acknowledged in documents that are fully public (*gongkai* 公开).⁸⁰ However, as opposed to other, more important small groups, no unofficial information on its full composition is available.⁸¹

The most important new practices introduced during the period 1990 to 1994 were institutionalized press conferences for China-related news and the release of white books at OEP/SCIO. In November 1991, China published its first white book, which was on China's human rights situation, with large parts written in the very polemical "struggle" rhetoric of the CPC reserved for the condemnation of China's enemies, the defense of core interests as well as crisis situations in post-Mao China.⁸² Before the end of 1994, five more had been released.⁸³ The idea to publish white books had supposedly been stipulated at a session of central leaders in early 1991,⁸⁴ shortly after the release of *Central Circular* [1990] no. 21. White books have been issued by states and international organizations since the 20th century to announce and justify policies, test the ground for a particular policy or invite. Thus, starting in 1991, China joined in the practice fairly late. The primary purpose of Chinese white books, however, is not

⁷⁹ Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, *Fengyun jidang qishi nian* 风云激荡七十年 [Seven turbulent decades] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2007), vol. 2, 248.

⁸⁰ Cf. Alice Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 26, 2008, 1-21. Available online at <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM26AM.pdf>, accessed August 12, 2012, 1.

⁸¹ The composition of the External Propaganda Work LSG, as the body was called after 2004, will be discussed below in chapter 8.3.

⁸² Particularly the recounting of China's history in Sections I. ("The Right to Subsistence -- the Foremost Human Right the Chinese People Long Fight for") and II ("The Chinese People Have Gained Extensive Political Rights"). See *Human Rights in China*, available online at <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/7/index.htm>, accessed February 9, 2013.

⁸³ Two in 1992: "Criminal Reform in China," and "Tibet -- Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation," one in 1993: "The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China," and another two in 1994: "The Situation Of Chinese Women," and "Intellectual Property Protection in China." See "White Papers," http://english.gov.cn/official/2005-08/17/content_24165.htm#1991, accessed January 31, 2013.

⁸⁴ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 47.

to invite domestic debate, but to present Chinese principles, policies, and developments in a particular sector to foreigners. As such, most of them have replied directly or implicitly to accusations leveled against China. White books can be in reply to long-term or short-term attacks. For instance, two months before Jiang Zemin visited the U.S. in 1997, U.S. media began attacking China for its suppression of religion, especially repressions against Christians.⁸⁵ Zeng Jianhui explains that OEP/SCIO produced a white book on religion in China (as well as a film on Protestant Christians in China) particularly to counter that attack.⁸⁶ As such, white books' role in China's external propaganda is both proactive and reactive: Their mission is to refute certain accusations, but they usually do so without naming them directly.

The role of the OEP was further strengthened in 1993, when Premier Li Peng decided that it should be responsible for all of the State Council's press release work.⁸⁷ Before that, the director of the Policy Research Office of the State Council had acted as the State Council's official spokesperson. OEP used its mandate to set up a spokesperson system that involved cadres from each ministry and commission and in which it primarily functioned as coordinator.⁸⁸ Previous lines of division within the bureaucratic system continued to apply; however: OEP/SCIO was only allowed to cover domestic issues; anything considered "international" was and continues to be handled by the MFA.⁸⁹ As part of this new responsibility, the Office also met with foreign correspondents stationed in China to get their opinions, facilitate their access to Chinese high level politicians and organize trips for them to different parts of the country to do interviews or investigate (*caifang* 采访).⁹⁰

In addition, a number of smaller changes occurred between 1990 and 1994. In 1989/1990, *China Reconstructs* received a makeover and got the more

⁸⁵ Ibid., 48. The debate in the U.S. around the time of Jiang's visit is also addressed, for example, in Todd Crowell, "China's Crusade Against Christians: No Change," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 1997, 6; accessed through Lexis Nexis.

⁸⁶ Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 48.

⁸⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 45.

⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Cf. Du Shengcong 杜圣聪, *Liang'an zhenxiang mima: Zhonggong dui Tai xuanchuan de zhengce, zuowei yu tujing* 两岸真相密码: 中共对台宣传的政策, 作为与途径 [Password to the truth between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait: Policies, practices and approaches of CPC propaganda targeted at Taiwan] (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji gufen youxian gongsi, 2008), 105.

⁹⁰ Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 80.

“fashionable” name *China Today*.⁹¹ In 1991, the Foreign Languages Office (FLO), which published all journals and books targeted at foreigners and had been part of the Ministry of Culture since 1982, was put under the leadership of OEP/SCIO.⁹² In 1994, the FLO began publishing a new journal called *Big External Communication* (*Duiwai da chuanbo* 对外大传播).⁹³ In 1993 and 1994, China founded two publishing houses: the Jiuzhou Press (Jiuzhou chubanshe 九州出版社) under the leadership of the Taiwan Affairs Office and the China Intercontinental Press (*Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe* 五洲传播出版社) under OEP/SCIO, which prepared publications primarily targeted at Taiwanese and foreigners respectively but which also published research on external propaganda.⁹⁴ In May 1990, China Radio International (CRI) began to issue an English newsletter called *The Messenger*, distributed to listeners abroad as well as to foreigners in China. According to CRI’s website, the newsletter was to inform listeners about developments at the radio station, but today, it also does background pieces on various aspects of Chinese society as well as on current political events.⁹⁵ Since 1993, CRI has been broadcasting content in the U.S. by buying air time at local stations.⁹⁶ Chinese ambassadors in certain key countries gave talks on China in the countries they were stationed in.⁹⁷

In 1992, OEP/SCIO issued a circular on how to strengthen and improve the production and distribution of local external propaganda materials. The circular required each locale and each unit opened to foreigners to produce a set of materials introducing itself: a picture brochure, an investment guide, a tourism brochure, a map, an introduction booklet, and one television feature program.⁹⁸

⁹¹Cf. “China Today Marks Future with Anniversary,” *China Daily USA*, February 14, 2012, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/life/2012-02/14/content_14605899.htm, accessed February 12, 2013.

⁹² Cf. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, *Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. A1, 747 and 868.

⁹³ Yang Zhengquan 杨正泉, “Fakanci” 发刊词 [Note on the first issue of the publication], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 1 (1994): 1.

⁹⁴ The first was founded in December 1993, the second in April 1994.

⁹⁵ See self-introduction on the website of the newsletter. The website also provides editions of the Newsletter since 2002. <http://english.cri.cn/messenger/>, accessed October 5, 2012.

⁹⁶ Liang Fook Lye, “China’s Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building,” *International Journal of China Studies* 1, no. 2 (2010): 555.

⁹⁷ Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 81.

⁹⁸ See Hunan sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 湖南省地方志编纂委员会编 [Local chronicle compilation committee of Hunan province], ed., *Hunan Sheng Zhi: Minsu zhi* 湖南省志: 民俗

In 1993, China established the Research Council for Human Rights (*Renquan yanjiuhui* 人权研究会), whose first director was Zhu Muzhi and which does both research and engages directly in the “struggle over public opinion.”⁹⁹ A few years later, the Council also began to conduct human rights dialogues with other countries.¹⁰⁰ The founding of a research institution shows that early on, China tried to counter attacks by working on an alternative human rights concept “with Chinese characteristics,” stressing the right of a people for sovereignty and the right to develop.

Between 1990 and 1994, external propaganda consisted of two main types of content. The first, commensurate with the policy of “relying mainly on positive propaganda,” there was introducing China with a strong focus on the economy.¹⁰¹ The fundamental responsibility of external propaganda was to “let the world understand China,” and to do this, the most important issue was to propagate China’s economy.¹⁰² Zeng Jianhui explained at the 1994 conference for external propaganda that the rationale for this was the new important position the economy now took in international relations and each country’s (*ge guo* 各国) foreign policy. According to Zeng Jianhui, because after the end of the Cold War the economy had become the most important factor (*zhuyao yinsu* 主要因素) in international relations, not only China but every country had made developing the economy its strategic focus and principal responsibility (*zhanlie zhongdian he shouyao renwu* 战略重点和首要任务).¹⁰³ Propagating a healthy economy could prompt other countries to reconsider their China policy. Second, in line with the dialectic opposite of “positive propaganda,” the policy to “engage in the international public opinion struggle,” EPSG/SCIO focused on those issues which China was under attack for, namely human rights, Tibet, and Taiwan.¹⁰⁴ A few years after Tiananmen, “lies” were still to be refuted, but this was to be done mainly in a “proactive” way by not directly issuing refutations (although that also had to be done in extreme cases), but by providing systematic information about

志 [Hunan provincial chronicles: Folk customs] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2005), 313.

⁹⁹ Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 48.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 87.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 105.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

China's human rights, Tibet and other areas of interest.¹⁰⁵ The two foci –economy and sensitive issues– were also the main topics that determined the debate on China in the U.S. in the early 1990s. In the 1992 presidential election, Clinton accused Bush of being “soft on China.” In 1993 and 1994, the Clinton administration had tied most favoured nation (MFN) status to China's human rights record. Thus, EPSG/SCIO's priorities were primarily replying to the U.S. debate over an appropriate China policy that became particularly fierce around the time of presidential elections, but also dominated congressional elections and rarely subsided entirely even when there was no election.

As official statements from the government, white books were written in Chinese and then translated into English, resulting in the type of language that had characterized external propaganda work during most of the Mao period that Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 had identified as a problem as early as in 1979. Xinhua 新华, too, often made use of this “official” or “traditional” CPC rhetoric, explaining, for example, that the “Tibetan people have launched epic struggles against imperialist invasions and have thwarted the schemes of imperialist and pro-imperialist separatist forces” which “have never ceased their anti-government and anti-people activities.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, as could be expected, despite the quantitative expansion of external propaganda, the “targetedness” (*zhenduixing* 针对性) of works produced declined.

The *China Daily* had been allowed to write its news releases directly in English, which gave it quite a bit of leeway to choose a style of reporting that would be accepted more easily by foreigners, or at least one that was different from typical CPC “correct-speak.” In the early 1990s, however, after the “lapse in judgement” of the paper in 1989, the autonomy of *China Daily*'s staff reporters was significantly curtailed. For the first few years after the crackdown, the *China Daily* was forced to rely on Xinhua releases when reporting on political matters, either those originally composed by the news agency (which were often formal, contained some awkward language, and focused on leaders' activities and

¹⁰⁵ Most importantly in the form of white papers mentioned above.

¹⁰⁶ This example is from a Xinhua release summarizing an article by Hu Jintao (who was Party Secretary of Tibet at the time) published in the theory journal *Qiushi*. “Tibetan Officials pledge to maintain unification of motherland and unity of nationalities,” Xinhua General News Service, May 22, 1991, accessed via Lexis Nexis.

speeches) or news from foreign news agencies, usually about international events, whose style was much more adapted to the reading habits of foreigners, but which were also handpicked by Xinhua.¹⁰⁷ Reports by *China Daily* staffers were limited to success reports or policy announcements on local and sectoral matters rephrasing government officials¹⁰⁸ and to the culture section of the paper.¹⁰⁹

Some strategic changes intended to improve the credibility of reports coming from China were made in the early 1990s. For instance, an article from 1990 in *External Propaganda Reference* pointed out Israel as a potential model for China, particularly for its ability to incorporate scholars and experts in its external propaganda enterprise.¹¹⁰ Xinhua News Agency, for example, made use of this strategy much more frequently over the coming years than in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹¹ “Expert opinions” were particularly used for sensitive topics or when

¹⁰⁷ For instance, the front page of the January 2, 1993 issue contained eight articles. Five of them were Xinhua releases: “Leaders Celebrate Success Story at New Year’s Party,” “Premier Li Urges Students to Return,” “Economic Boost for Minorities,” “Yang Wishes happiness to People All Over World,” and “China Suffering Acute Water Shortage.” The three others were from foreign news agencies, but selected and forwarded to the *China Daily* by Xinhua: “Railroading Passengers to Buy a Ticket” (New Delhi), “Epoch-Making Nuclear Pact” (Moscow), and “Blazing Way to Trade-Free Europe” (Brussels). *China Daily*, January 2, 1993, 1.

¹⁰⁸ For instance, on the front page of the issue from January 2, 1990 one out of seven articles was written by a staff reporter that relayed a statement made by the State Bureau of Foreign Experts (the predecessor of the State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs, SAFEA) announcing that China would invite more foreigners to come to work for the country. See Li Hong, “Development Means More Foreigners,” *China Daily*, January 2, 1990, 1. Similarly, the issue from January 2, 1991 also carried one article by a *China Daily* staffer on the front page, again as opposed to six written or forwarded by Xinhua. The article was basically a reiteration of a statement made by a government spokesperson. See Liang Chao, “Priority Given Water Conservation,” *China Daily*, January 2, 1991, 1.

¹⁰⁹ For instance, in the issue from January 2, 1993, signed articles and articles written by staff reporters were Chang Weimin, “CMC Wins Deal in Bangladesh” (2), “New Tourist Centre for Haikou City” (2), Wang Rong, “Grain Aid Scheme in Tibet is Successful” (3), Lin Shiwei, “Circus Thrills: Leaping Lions to Agile Acrobats” (5), Tian Lijun, “Drama Heats up with ‘Sun’ Play” (5).

¹¹⁰ “Yisielie duiwai xuanchuan” 以色列对外宣传 [Israel’s external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (1990): 19.

¹¹¹ For instance, a search for the phrases “expert says” and “experts say” in Xinhua’s General News Service releases on Lexis Nexis returns only 371 results for the period 1977 to June 3, 1989, but 984 results for the shorter period from June 4, 1989 to 1994.

refuting accusations,¹¹² but also when reporting positively about China's economy.¹¹³

By the time of the next nationwide external propaganda conference in January 1994, a lot of the points outlined in Central Circular [1990], no. 21 remained valid, but some had shifted their focus. For instance, by early 1994, TV had officially joined radio as the main priority for China's external propaganda work.¹¹⁴ While radio was still linked to the role of VOA in the region, the interest in television had, among others, been renewed by the powerful role TV, especially CNN (Cable News Network), had played during the first Gulf War.¹¹⁵ While other countries paid attention to these important channels of external propaganda, in China, they were still the "weakest link."¹¹⁶ In 1991, China Central Television (CCTV) established an External TV Center (*duiwai dianshi zhongxin* 对外电视中心).¹¹⁷ In 1992, CCTV-4, a Chinese-language TV channel targeted mainly at Overseas Chinese, was set up. CCTV-9, broadcasting in English, followed suit in 2000.¹¹⁸

Second, China's most important four external propaganda media (the CCTV Overseas Center, CRI, the *China Daily*, and *Beijing Review*) were supposed to enter the foreign news market, particularly Western mainstream

¹¹² E.g. "Jurists, Tibetologists Discuss Tibet," Xinhua General News Service, February 20, 1992; "Relations Between Ancient Tibet And Central Government Is Political Subordination – Tibetologist," Xinhua General News Service, February 23, 1992; "'Trial' Of Three Gorges Project Groundless, Expert Says," Xinhua General News Service, May 5, 1992. All items accessed through Lexis Nexis.

¹¹³ E.g. "Experts on China's Economy," Xinhua General News Service, December 18, 1991, and "Experts Predict Steady Economic Growth in China," Xinhua General News Service, December 18, 1991; both accessed through Lexis Nexis.

¹¹⁴ Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 87.

¹¹⁵ For example, one article explained that it was the Gulf War which first demonstrated the uses and usefulness of international television broadcasts. Cf. Cai Guofen 蔡帼芬, Xu Qinyuan 徐琴媛, and Zhao Xuebo 赵雪波, eds., *Guoji chuanbo yu duiwai xuanchuan* 国际传播与对外宣传 [International broadcasting and external propaganda] (Beijing: Beijing guangbo xueyuan chubanshe, 2000), 16.

¹¹⁶ Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 101.

¹¹⁷ In Zhang Changming 张长明, ed., *Rang shijie liaojie Zhongguo – Dianshi duiwai baodao 40 nian* 让世界了解中国——电视对外报道 40 年 [Let the world understand China – 40 years of TV reporting for foreigners] (Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe, 1999), 5.

¹¹⁸ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 167. Initially, CCTV's plans had been more ambitious: Its president announced in 1995 that CCTV should strive to establish a channel in English within the next one or two years. Cf. Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 57.

society.¹¹⁹ This was the first time that this goal was spelled out rather than only implied in the hierarchy of target audiences, as it had been in *Central Circular* [1990] no. 21. The main focus on a few influential countries was justified by referring to their leading role in shaping international public opinion and other countries' behaviour towards China. For instance, after the U.S. detached human rights from the Most Favored Nation (MFN) question and German chancellor Kohl had visited China in 1994 other countries began to adjust their China policy as well. If "Western mainstream public opinion" regarding China could be shifted that would have a tremendous impact on other countries.¹²⁰ Likewise, China should foster good relations with foreign journalists stationed in China and foreign media organizations because their reports on China were the main channel through which people abroad learned about China.¹²¹

Third, aside from focusing on the U.S. and Western Europe, China was also to strengthen its propaganda targeted at neighboring countries.¹²² In the 1990s, China largely adhered to the policy of keeping a low profile in international politics (*taoguang yanghui* 韬光养晦), instead focusing on its domestic priorities, a principle defined by Deng Xiaoping.¹²³ This did not mean, however, that China did not try to improve its diplomatic relations to aid its domestic development. In times of limited capacities, the immediate environment was the most pressing security concern that China's foreign policy had to take into consideration. The country settled several territorial disputes on its Northern border and in South East Asia in a very cooperative fashion in order to improve its foreign relations.¹²⁴ Particularly in and after 1994, China became more active in regional multilateral agreements, which it had opposed earlier.¹²⁵ In line with this shift, China began to organize conferences that discussed propaganda specifically targeted at its neighboring countries.¹²⁶ Much of the responsibility for researching public

¹¹⁹ Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 91.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 93.

¹²³ The principle China followed in the first half of the 1990s was "Observe dispassionately, react calmly, keep a low profile and make a difference" 冷静观察、沉着应付、韬光养晦、有所作为。 Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 79.

¹²⁴ Cf. M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 137-148.

¹²⁵ Cf. Yanzhong Huang and Sheng Ding, "Dragon's Underbelly: An Analysis of China's Soft Power," *EAST ASIA* 23, no. 4 (2006): 30.

¹²⁶ Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 79.

opinion in neighboring countries and organizing external propaganda was delegated to the provinces directly bordering these countries,¹²⁷ which were asked to produce television programs and print publications in the local languages of their neighboring countries.¹²⁸

In sum, after four years of institutional restructuring and setting up the basic infrastructure for governmental external propaganda, such as press conferences and white books, China was ready to draw the conclusions from its previous work, adapt its strategy, and make plans for the future of external propaganda work. This was to happen in the period 1994 to 1996, in an overall climate of triumph on the one hand, and strained triangular relations between China, the U.S. and Taiwan on the other.

6.3 1994-1996: Triumph, Crises, and New Plans

By and large, the period 1994 to 1996 was marked by a sense of victory as Western countries began to deal with China on a more regular basis again in order to profit from China's economic rise. The attempt of the Clinton Administration to tie China's MFN status to certain human rights standards in 1993 and 1994 failed and was abandoned.¹²⁹ Instead, the U.S. began to accommodate the idea that China would not collapse any time soon and therefore, in order to integrate the country into the current world order, the proper strategy was to engage it.¹³⁰ This shift obviously did not go unnoticed in China and was used as an opportunity to declare victory for China's post-1992 strategy. Zeng Jianhui proclaimed in September 1995 that the international environment had changed in China's favor.¹³¹ Asian economies flourished, while the West's did not do very well. Among the Asian economies, China's was developing the fastest. While previously the West had hoped that China would disintegrate, explained Zeng, since 1995, it had been re-evaluating its stance; there were even signs of a "China

¹²⁷ Ibid., 101.

¹²⁸ Cf. Ibid., 79.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 105.

¹³⁰ See Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, "Dui Xifang meiti sanbu 'Zhongguo weixielun' de pingxi (zhong)" 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析（中） [A critical analysis of Western media's spreading of the "China threat theory" (part two of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 5 (2001): 9.

¹³¹ Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol.1, 104.

craze” (*Zhongguo re* 中国热).¹³² By April 1996, the Clinton Administration conceded that trying to constrain China only hurt U.S. businesses, and engaging it was the best way to change China from within.¹³³

In the same period, China began to take note of what it has called the “China threat theory,” seen as an instrument used by “Western hostile forces” to impede China’s development and to protect the unipolar world order.¹³⁴ According to an article on the topic by Sha Qiguang 沙奇光 (the head of the Theory Bureau of the Office of External Propaganda), between 1989 and 1992, the mainstream Western media had focused their energy and attention on the “China collapse theory.” Western countries were convinced that China would undergo political change and disintegrate like the S.U.¹³⁵ The “China threat theory,” according to Chinese evaluations, emerged in 1992 and was linked to the reassessment of the Chinese economy in the West.¹³⁶ The birth of the “China threat theory” is considered to be a book by Richard Nixon, in which he “imagined a new world with new enemies, the most prominent of which would be China.”¹³⁷ Two other works published the same year also played a role, according to Sha Qiguang, “Awakening Dragon: The Real Danger in Asia is from China,” by Ross. H. Munro, published in September 1992 in *Policy Review*, and Huntington’s first article on the “Clash of Civilizations.” In late 1995, in order to “protect China’s image” (and to act against the policy option of containing China that had emerged in the media),¹³⁸ Chinese media, including some academic

¹³² Ibid., 105-106.

¹³³ Cf. *ibid.*, 160.

¹³⁴ Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (xia)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析 (下) [A critical analysis of Western media’s spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part three of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (2001): 7.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³⁶ Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (shang)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析 (上) [A critical analysis of Western media’s spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part one of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2001): 6.

¹³⁷ The book Sha Qiguang is referring to is not named, but should be *Seize the Moment: America’s Challenge in a One-Superpower World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992). Sha, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (shang),” 6.

¹³⁸ One piece referenced by Sha Qiguang is Charles Krauthammer, “Why we must contain China,” *Time Magazine*, July 31, 1995, accessible online at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,983245,00.html>. Cf. Sha, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (shang),” 5-6.

journals, began publishing a number of articles to refute the “China threat theory.”¹³⁹

The period 1994 to 1996 was also marked by tension in the triangular relations between China, the U.S., and Taiwan, which influenced both the rhetoric and concrete developments in the external propaganda sector and most likely contributed to the leadership’s full-scale affirmation of the importance of the sector in early 1996. In 1993-1994, Lee Teng-hui 李登輝 had made efforts to gain United Nations (UN) membership for Taiwan. In 1994, China announced its intent to isolate Taiwan through economic and diplomatic means,¹⁴⁰ which it subsequently did. This followed a period in which several countries in Africa had changed recognition from the PRC to the Republic of China (ROC) after having received financial incentives.¹⁴¹ In fall of 1994, partially in response to an incident in which Lee Teng-hui had been refused a visa into the U.S. during a stopover in Honolulu, the U.S. reviewed its Taiwan policy to strengthen “unofficial” economic and political ties.¹⁴² In January 1995, Jiang Zemin reacted with a relatively conciliatory gesture by presenting his Eight Point Proposal to Taiwan in which he stated, among other things, that the PRC sought more economic and political exchange across the Taiwan Strait and did not oppose Taiwan’s attempts to build “nongovernmental economic and cultural ties” with other countries as long as it stopped pushing towards independence.¹⁴³ However, after Lee Teng-hui gave a speech at his alma mater Cornell University in June, the PRC considered this softer approach a failure. A month after the speech, China conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait. In response, the U.S. sent vessels to the Strait in

¹³⁹ Ibid. Xinhua also began addressing the “China threat theory” on a more regular basis starting in the second half of 1996. E.g. “Who Is Threatening World Peace? Asks Liberation Army Daily,” Xinhua General News Service, July 4, 1996; “China Threat Theory Destabilizes Asia: ROK’s Ex-Foreign Minister,” Xinhua General News Service, September 6, 1996.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Joshua Kurlantzik, *Charm Offensive How China’s Soft Power is Transforming the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 42.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Ian Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9-10, which features a list of countries with which the PRC has (had) relations. Countries which established relations with the ROC were the Central African Republic (1991-1998), Senegal (1996-2005), Chad (1997-2006), Burkina Faso (since 1994), Guinea-Bissau (1990-1998), Niger (1992-1996), Gambia (since 1995), São Tomé und Príncipe (since 1997), Liberia (1989-1993 and 1997-2003), and Lesotho (1990-1994). Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁴² See for instance “Taiwan Policy Review,” statement by Winston Lord, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, September 27, 1994, <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/19940927-taiwan-policy-review-by-winston-lord.html>, accessed November 27, 2012.

¹⁴³ English fulltext: “Jiang Zemin’s Eight-Point Proposal,” CRI English, put online January 11, 2007, <http://english.cri.cn/4426/2007/01/11/167@184028.htm>, accessed November 27, 2012.

December,¹⁴⁴ but China was convinced that the Clinton administration was primarily preoccupied with the domestic economy and would not risk a war that could put Americans at risk and leave Clinton vulnerable to criticism. Thus, the vessels were not seen as a threat, but as a bluff, and in March of 1996, before Taiwan's presidential elections, China conducted more missile tests near Taiwan.¹⁴⁵

Despite the fierce conflicts in triangular relations, by the mid-1990s, the focus on hostile forces trying to bring about China's demise had abated in China's media messages to foreigners (cf. Graph 6.I in chapter 6.4). Instead, China's external propaganda media tried to support China's diplomacy through more restrained and more specific attacks. The *China Daily*, whose staff writers were allowed to write pieces on political matters again, including international politics, frequently wrote "Opinion" pieces on the damages to Sino-U.S. relations in the period.¹⁴⁶

Making Long Term Plans

Between 1994 and early 1996, China's plans for external propaganda during the Ninth five-year-period (1996-2000) and beyond were devised and presented. In early 1994, external propaganda cadres began to push for making strategic mid- and long term plans covering spans of five, ten, and even fifty years.¹⁴⁷ This was after the plans for domestic propaganda work had been consolidated over the course of 1993 and summed up in a speech by Jiang Zemin in early 1994.¹⁴⁸ During the second half of September 1995, OEP/SCIO convened a symposium in Wuhan for the heads of external propaganda offices in selected provinces in order to come up with plans for the development of the external

¹⁴⁴ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams*, 52.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ E.g. Sun Shangwu, "US Urged to Refuse Lee Entry," *China Daily*, May 26, 1995, 1; Ma Chenguang, "US Asked Again to Help Relations by Barring Lee," *China Daily*, June 2, 1995, 1; Xu Yang, "China Planning Response if Lee Makes US Trip," *China Daily*, June 7, 1995, 1; Xu Yang, "Lee's US Trip Harms Countries' Relations," *China Daily*, June 9, 1995, 1; Xu Yang, "Meddling Criticized at Meeting," *China Daily*, June 23, 1995, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Li Haibo 黎海波, "Shilun 'Sunzi bingfa' yu duiwai chuanbo (yi)" 试论《孙子兵法》与对外传播(一) [Discussion on Sunzi's *The Art of War* and external communication (one)], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 1 (1994): 24. Li Haibo was the head of the news center (*xinwen zhongxin* 新闻中心) of the *Beijing Review*.

¹⁴⁸ For the full speech, see Jiang Zemin, *Zai quanguo xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua*.

propaganda sector.¹⁴⁹ The most important change came in early 1996, when OEP/SCIO delivered a report to the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) on January 18, after which the PBSC formally affirmed the importance of external propaganda and strengthened the sector's position. By the time, OEP/SCIO had developed a full macro policy program (referred to as *silu* 思路) that was presented to and approved by the PBSC¹⁵⁰ and later further handed down and adapted to the requirements of provincial external propaganda.¹⁵¹ The article on the 1996 conference published in the *People's Daily* announced that the Center had recognized and openly affirmed the importance of external propaganda and, as opposed to a year earlier, had already made a decision on the major policies.¹⁵²

The fundamental responsibility (*genben renwu* 根本任务) of external propaganda was defined as “creating a favorable international public opinion environment” (*chuangzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing* 创造良好的国际舆论环境).¹⁵³ First and foremost, this reflected a shift from the approach of the first half of the 1990s, in which external propaganda had accompanied concrete diplomatic tasks, towards long-term, strategic aims. The idea of a public opinion environment or public opinion front (*yulun zhanxian* 舆论战线) roughly derives from the division into different types of “wars” or areas of competition between different states, as first conceptualized in the inter-war years (cf. chapter 2). The “public opinion environment” can thus be listed alongside the “military environment,” the “economic environment,” etc.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ “Guanyu qicao ‘1996-2000 nian Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan shiye fazhan guihua’ qingbao de huibao” 关于起草《1996-2000年山东省对外宣传事业发展规划》情报的汇报 [Report on drafting the ‘Development plan for Shandong’s external propaganda work between 1996 and 2000’], October 11, 1995, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol. 1, 90. Individual provinces that participated then adapted their plans for the development of provincial waixuan “in the spirit” of the results of this symposium.

¹⁵⁰ Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 120.

¹⁵¹ For example, it showed up in a modified form in Shandong by early 1998: “Zhonggong zhongyang Shandong shengwei guanyu jin yi bu jiaqiang he gaijin duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian,” 42-52.

¹⁵² “Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi tichu wie xiandaihua jianshe chuangzao lianghao guoji yulun huanjing” 全国对外宣传工作会议提出为现代化建设创造良好国际舆论环境 [The nationwide conference for external propaganda work proposes to create a favorable international public opinion environment for (China’s) modernization], *Renmin ribao*, February 3, 1996, 2.

¹⁵³ Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 124.

¹⁵⁴ “Zhao Qizheng zhuren shuo, waixuan gongzuo de zhongdian shi zai guoji yulun zhong biaoda Zhongguo de shengyin” 赵启正主任说，外宣工作的重点是在国际舆论中表达中国的声音 [Director Zhao says, the focus of propaganda work is to express the voice of China in the international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 9 (2002): 1.

The definition of the fundamental responsibility was an extension of a slogan used in domestic propaganda work (cf. chapter 4.3 for the flexible use of slogans). In 1994, Jiang Zemin had defined the guidance of public opinion as one of the four core responsibilities of propaganda and thought work.¹⁵⁵ By 1996, the notion of the “public opinion environment” had been further conceptualized for the domestic arena and recast as a matter of both national and regime security. The idea was formally established a few months later, in September 1996, when Jiang Zemin, while inspecting the *People’s Daily*, introduced the notion that the fate of the Party and the Chinese people hinged on the correct direction of public opinion.¹⁵⁶ In October 1996, the Party published a Fifteen-Year-Plan on the building of “spiritual civilization,” which specified the media’s role in guiding public opinion (*yulun yindao* 舆论引导).¹⁵⁷ This was the last step that finalized the inclusion of the “public opinion environment” in the CPC’s conceptualization of the press, and the idea had obviously already circulated during the previous years and been transferred to external propaganda slogans and policies.

The policy program is not available in full, but was introduced and explained by Zeng Jianhui at a conference, providing more details. The goal behind creating a favorable environment was to speed up China’s development and economic construction, so that the country could gain a favorable position (*youli diwei* 有利地位) with regard to the ever increasing economic competition and with regard to its comprehensive powers.¹⁵⁸ According to the evaluation of the international situation (*guoji xingshi* 国际形势), each country at the time sought to get the best possible position in the post-bipolar world order that had not yet been again locked down in a particular power constellation (cf. chapter 4.1).¹⁵⁹

Zeng Jianhui explained that the current international public opinion environment continued to be very unfavorable towards China because the West

¹⁵⁵ Jiang Zemin, *Zai quanguo xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo huiyi shang de jianghua*.

¹⁵⁶ The ideas he presented are known in Chinese as the *fuhuolun* 福祸论 (“A correct direction of public opinion means blessings for the Party and the people, an incorrect direction of public opinion means disaster for the Party and the people” 舆论导向正确，是党和人民之福；舆论导向错误，是党和人民之祸).

¹⁵⁷ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 51-52. The plan itself is not publically available, but there are ample references to another related document, *The Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on a number of important issues to strengthen the construction of socialist spiritual civilization* (《中共中央关于加强社会主义精神文明建设若干重要问题的决议》), passed on the same occasion.

¹⁵⁸ Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 124.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 122.

controlled the most powerful public opinion tools (*yulun gongju* 舆论工具), which enabled it to monopolize international public opinion, suppress (*fengsuo* 封锁) the truth about China and spread lies.¹⁶⁰ This could only be changed through long term efforts. Therefore, creating a favorable international public opinion environment would not only be the fundamental responsibility for China's current external propaganda work, but would require long-term commitment.¹⁶¹ The argument of monopolization of the international media by the West was reminiscent of the UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's) New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debate of the 1980s, but now, the focus was entirely on the effects this had on China, temporarily omitting the rhetoric of solidarity with other developing countries.¹⁶²

The overall goal for external propaganda work in the ninth five-year-plan reflected the new trend towards long-term, "proactive" solutions to China's problems. By joining its different waixuan units and fighting a "comprehensive battle" (*zongtizhan* 总体战), China would strive to have its voice "be heard in the main regions of the world by the end of the century [... and] break the Western public opinion monopoly, so that we will occupy a relatively favorable position in the world public opinion pattern of the 21st century and will gradually see a marked improvement in our international public opinion environment."¹⁶³

The policy program (*silu* 思路) also defined principles for external propaganda. The first and most important principle was to "take China's fundamental interest as the highest standard" (*yi guojia de genben liyi wei zui gao zhunze* 以国家的根本利益为最高准则):¹⁶⁴ The national interest should inform all choices in external propaganda work. In the 1980s, there had been several different ways of framing external propaganda work, with humanist discourses on

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 124.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² As I will show in Part 3, in the 21st century, China refocused on finding allies amongst other developing countries against Western media.

¹⁶³ Chinese quote: "加强宏观协调, 打总体战, 建立大外宣格局, 改进和充实对外宣传手段, 加强海外宣传事业的建设, 争取到本世纪末使中国的声音能够达到世界上主要的地区, 努力打破西方对国际舆论的垄断, 使我们在 21 世纪的世界舆论格局中占据较为有利的位置, 使我们的国际舆论环境逐步得到明显改善。" Zeng, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 125.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 127.

mutual understanding and internationalism coexisting alongside discourses on external propaganda in the service of helping China develop in order to serve the national interest or to show the superiority of socialism. Thus, in the mid-1990s the CPC still felt the need to clarify that the national interest, not internationalist ideals, should guide and direct all external propaganda work.

Chinese external propaganda needed to use a “combination of principle and flexibility” (*yuanzhexing yu linghuoxing xiang jiehe* 原则性与灵活性相结合).¹⁶⁵ Principle and flexibility are a clear case of dialectic opposites. Principle refers to the need to defend China’s key interests, even if that means having to engage in tit-for-tat struggle. While the CPC realizes that issuing polemical retorts to provocative statements made by “hostile forces” might draw attention to them and do China more harm than good, being principled (*jiang yuanze* 讲原则) is code for doing so anyway because the need to be consistent and not be perceived as giving in to “hostile forces” outweighs potential harm. Thus, anything that falls into the category of “high politics,” i.e. anything touching on policy principles (*zhengce yuanze* 政策原则), important issues (*zhongda wenti* 重大问题), and sensitive issues (*min’gan wenti* 敏感问题), needs to be dealt with in a “principled” manner so as to prevent any harm to the national interest.¹⁶⁶ Flexibility, on the other hand, means that whenever China’s key interests are not at stake, external propaganda should get as much leeway as is possible within the overall Chinese propaganda apparatus in order to experiment with new strategies that might increase foreigners’ acceptance of Chinese media (such as adapting the language to suit foreigners’ tastes, including more negative news, etc.). The idea behind this dialectic pair is that external propaganda work needs to “be controlled without being killed off and vivid without being chaotic” (*guan er bu si, huo er buluan* 管而不死，活而不乱).¹⁶⁷

The new program asked external propaganda workers to differentiate between Chinese and foreigners as well as between foreigners from different countries. Moreover, China would have to “fight a proactive battle” and try to break stories as quickly as possible, ideally before Western news agencies did, so

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 128.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

that hostile forces could no longer use sudden events to “smear China’s image.”¹⁶⁸ China should also make use of foreign resources (like foreign journalists, foreign media, etc.) wherever possible (*jieryong waili* 借用外力).¹⁶⁹

In terms of target audiences, China should mainly focus on targeting and winning over the political middle, i.e. neither waste resources on people who were already sympathetic towards China nor on people who were hostile towards China and therefore could not be convinced. The framing of propaganda as both necessary and useful at the time was very similar to previous framing patterns. Zeng Jianhui explained that after meeting with ordinary Americans, external propaganda cadres usually had the impression that “they had goodwill towards China, but had many misconceptions”¹⁷⁰ about the country. These misconceptions could usually be resolved once they learned more about China, and in fact, said Zeng, foreigners often asked why China did not introduce and explain itself more.¹⁷¹ In this common depiction of foreigners, as already explained by Li Pu 李普 in the early 1980s and valid until today, there are a few bad Westerners who really want to harm China, and a large majority that is only deceived by biased Western media.¹⁷² Emphatic statements like Zeng Jianhui’s and Li Pu’s indicate the continued opposition against the belief that Westerners can be influenced in China’s favor from people who believe that there is a plot against China supported by more than just “a few people” or who think that Western “stereotypes” cannot be changed through propaganda.

Finally, China needed to “build a combined force” (*xingcheng heli* 形成合力),¹⁷³ that is, coordinate different departments and organizations in the external propaganda sector so that they could bring their work into agreement instead of being rivals or wasting resources due to overlapping responsibilities. In domestic propaganda work, too, this slogan had been used earlier to explain to media that

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 112-113.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 107.

¹⁷¹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷² E.g. Sun Xupei, “Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu” 谈对外报道的新观念和新技术 [On new ideas and new art (i.e. qualitative skills) of external reporting], *Huaibei meitan shifanxueyuan xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 淮北煤炭师范学院学报 (哲学社会科学版) [Journal of Huaibei Coal Industry Teacher’s College (Humanities and social sciences edition) 25, no. 3 (2004): 35.

¹⁷³ Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tuwei*, 127-128.

while competition was encouraged in order to raise the quality of the Chinese mass media as a whole, they should not forget that they had a common goal (to spread the Party's message) and therefore had to cooperate as well.¹⁷⁴ The ability to “concentrate forces” (*jizhong lilian* 集中力量) was presented as an inherent advantage of Socialism that China needed to make use of.¹⁷⁵ However, particularly in the external propaganda sector, the call to “join forces” addressed a problem that an increasing number of external propaganda workers pointed out at the time and that was the legacy of the decision to split external propaganda work up between different bureaucracies: There were too many units involved that did not coordinate their work properly, resulting in conflict and inefficiency.¹⁷⁶

6.4 1997-1998: “Breakthrough” and Additional Reform

While the overall tenor of the period 1994 to 1996 had been upbeat, and 1997 and 1998 saw another overall climate of triumph, early 1997 witnessed an ideological “backlash” around the time of Deng Xiaoping's death,¹⁷⁷ reflected in the reporting on the external propaganda conference in the *People's Daily*, which published a speech given by China's outgoing premier Li Peng in which he openly addressed the challenges posed to China by the ideological opposition in the West. Foreign propaganda had to engage in a long-term struggle over global public opinion (*guoji yulun douzheng* 国际舆论斗争) in order to stop those who wished to “Westernize” and “split up” China.¹⁷⁸ The harsh tone and the focus on ideological struggle were the outcome of the Taiwan crisis, new developments in

¹⁷⁴ See for example “Yi zhengque de yulun yindao ren shi xinwen gongzuo de genben renwu” 以正确的舆论引导人是新闻工作的根本任务 [Guiding people with correct opinion is the fundamental responsibility of press work], *Neibu tongxin* 内部通信 [Internal communications], no. 11 (1994): 3.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷⁶ See for example Wang Jianjin 王健全, “Jianli da waixuan geju” 建立大外宣格局 [Establishing a big external propaganda pattern], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 5 (1999): 23; Xia Zhifang 夏志方, “Guangbo dianshi waixuan ziyuan de peizhi yu sikao” 广播电视外宣资源的配制与思考 [System of distribution and thinking regarding resources in radio and television external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2000): 22-24.

¹⁷⁷ The annual conference on external propaganda took place at the same time that Deng Xiaoping died.

¹⁷⁸ “Weirao jingji jianshe he jinnian liang jian da shi jiaqiang waixuan gongzuo – Quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi zai Jing juxing” 围绕经济建设和今年两件大事加强外宣工作-全国外宣工作会议在京举行 [Focus on economic construction and this year's two big events to strengthen external propaganda: Nationwide conference for external propaganda work held in Beijing], *Renmin ribao*, February 22, 1997, 4.

domestic propaganda work, a renewed focus on Marxism,¹⁷⁹ and political struggles at the time accompanying the death of Deng Xiaoping. Li Peng, who was scheduled to leave the PBSC later that year, may have used the brief power vacuum after Deng Xiaoping's death to push the overall debate in this direction. Having been the strongest supporter of the crackdown on Tiananmen, it was clearly in his interest for China to keep up the post-1989 master narrative of having to combat hostile forces.

Nonetheless, the report on the conferences in 1997 first used the formulation “establishing a favorable image of China” (rather than “of socialist China”), repeated again in 1998, indicating a move away from stressing ideological content and China's socialist identity.¹⁸⁰ After debates regarding China and the rest of the world had often been led in crisis-mode, which restricted many policy options, parts of 1997 and most of 1998 constituted the first test case at the national level of de-emphasizing ideology while at the same time highlighting China's successes in actively creating a more “favorable public opinion environment” both in China and internationally.

All of this took place amidst a partial leadership transition. At the Fifteenth Party Congress in September 1997, Zhu Rongji 朱镕基, who led China's intensified World Trade Organization (WTO) bid, ascended to the PBSC, and in March 1998, he replaced Li Peng as premier. Ding Guan'gen took over all leading positions within the propaganda sector. Zeng Jianhui was replaced by Zhao Qizheng 赵启正 (1940 -),¹⁸¹ former deputy mayor of Shanghai and one of the many people that Jiang Zemin gradually brought to Beijing to bolster his own power base. Zhao Qizheng had made his career in the organization sector of the Party and had had little previous contact with external propaganda work (as

¹⁷⁹ As an article from Shandong province suggests, the focus on ensuring a proper ideological stance was in part in reaction to the increased popularity of Confucianism amongst cadres. The renewed focus on Marxism and battling hostile forces at the Center was also transferred to the debate at the provincial level. “Han Xikai tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di si ci huiyi shang de jianghua” 韩喜凯同志在省委对外宣传联席会第四次会上的讲话 [Comrade Han Xikai's speech at the fourth meeting of the Joint Council for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], March 12, 1997, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol. 1, 96-97.

¹⁸⁰ While this should not be over-interpreted and more detailed internal reports still used the full formula, changes in the wording used in the *People's Daily* are rarely arbitrary and are supposed to set the mode of the overall debate.

¹⁸¹ Zeng Jianhui became head of the Foreign Affairs Commission (Waishi weiyuanhui 外事委员会). Cf. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui*, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. A1, 727.

opposed to Zeng Jianhui, who had risen within the external propaganda bureaucracy). He did, however, have a lot of experience in dealing with foreigners from frequently receiving foreign delegations as the former Party Secretary of the Special Economic Zone Pudong 浦东 between late 1992 and 1998.

By 1997/1998, OEP/SCIO had a fixed staff of 110 working at its Beijing office¹⁸² and nine main responsibilities: **First** it was tasked with researching and drafting plans on China's external propaganda strategy as well as its principles and policies. These drafts were then approved by the Center.¹⁸³ **Second**, it also researched and drafted plans for future development of the external propaganda sector, subject to the same procedure of approval by the Center. **Third**, it had to research trends in international public opinion as well as come up with strategies how to present issues that other countries paid attention to as well as how to report sudden events. The word used to describe OEP/SCIO's responsibility was devising "countermeasures" or "counterstrategies" (*duice* 对策), implying that attacks from foreign media or politicians were already expected in these areas.¹⁸⁴ **Fourth**, OEP/SCIO guided and coordinated the external propaganda work of other central departments, locales, and embassies. The term "guide" is essential here, as it implies that OEP/SCIO had no authority to give binding orders to any of these players. **Fifth**, the Office was to research public opinion in Hong Kong and Macao and come up with "countermeasures," again implying that discontent with China was expected. **Sixth**, OEP/SCIO served as press office of the State Council and coordinated press releases from the other ministries and commissions. **Seventh**, OEP/SCIO was in charge of organizing and coordinating the "struggle" against Western attacks on China's human rights record. **Eighth**, OEP/SCIO managed special funds (*zhuanxiang jingfei* 专项经费) for external propaganda work. **Ninth**, it managed the cadres of its affiliated (*guakao* 挂靠) units and was to devise plans for training external propaganda cadres. **Tenth**, it had to complete

¹⁸² In addition, it had 15 people stationed outside of China, 40 people working at affiliated units, as well as 20 people working for the China Society for Human Rights Studies, which was affiliated with OEP/SCIO, but whose employees were listed separately. Cf. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 243.

¹⁸³ Cf. Zhang Xiaoling, "Chinese State Media Going Global," *East Asian Policy* 2, no. 1 (2009), 49, available online at http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/Vol2No1_ZhangXiaoling.pdf, accessed October 20, 2012.

¹⁸⁴ Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 243.

any other tasks handed to it by the PTWLSG,¹⁸⁵ which clearly maintained a leading relationship over the OEP in the 1990s. Under Zhao, OEP/SCIO received a new important task: It was put in charge of overseeing *all* internet news content, not just news targeted at foreigners, but news primarily intended for domestic consumption as well.¹⁸⁶

The year 1997 was an eventful year and has been widely portrayed as the “breakthrough year” (*tuwei nian* 突围年) for China’s external propaganda.¹⁸⁷ Particularly, the reporting of the Hong Kong handover was presented as a success. OEP/SCIO had been entrusted by the PBSC in 1995 with organizing all coverage related to the handover in and had planned accordingly.¹⁸⁸ Other events external propaganda workers claimed to have reported successfully included Deng Xiaoping’s passing away, the completion of the Three Gorges Dam, the official meeting between the Chinese and the U.S. president, and the 15th Party Congress.¹⁸⁹ Again, the “breakthrough” in external propaganda was mostly a spin-off discourse of China’s “breakthrough” in foreign affairs that was propagated at the same time. The period 1997 to 1998 saw relatively good Sino-U.S. relations. Jiang Zemin visited the U.S. in 1997, which was presented as a symbol of China’s return to the center stage of world politics,¹⁹⁰ and Clinton visited China in June 1998.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 92.

¹⁸⁷ E.g. He Guoping 何国平 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, “Cong ‘rang shijie liaojie Zhongguo’ dao ‘xiang shijie shuoming Zhongguo’ - Gaige kaifang 30 nian lai Zhongguo waixuan sixiang de yanjin” 从“让世界了解中国”到“向世界说明中国”——改革开放 30 年来中国外宣思想的演进 [From ‘letting the world understand China’ to ‘explaining China to the world’ - The evolution of external propaganda thought over 30 years of Reform and Opening], January 7, 2009, http://theory.southcn.com/llzhuanti/2008xsnh/chuanmei/content/2009-01/07/content_4823763_3.htm, accessed April 9, 2012; Li Xiguang 李希光 and Yu Jiadi 于家娣, “‘Jie yaomohua, hou Tiananmen xin Zhongguo’ - Meiguo meiti Kelindun fang Hua baodao toushi (yi)” “解妖魔化·后天安门·新中国”——美国媒体克林顿访华报道透视（一） [‘A new de-demonized China beyond Tiananmen – Perspectives of reporting Clinton’s visit to China in the U.S. media], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (1998): 10-14.

¹⁸⁸ He Guoping and Guo Guanghua, “Cong ‘rang shijie liaojie Zhongguo’ dao ‘xiang shijie shuoming Zhongguo’ - Gaige kaifang 30 nian lai Zhongguo waixuan sixiang de yanjin.”

¹⁸⁹ See *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ E.g. in Zheng Peimin 郑培民, “Nuli yingzao da waixuan geju” 努力营造大外宣格局 [Make efforts to create a big external propaganda pattern], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 7 (1998). Zhao Qizheng recounted in 2005 how he saw a photo of the the leaders of the UN security council with Jiang Zemin in the middle while visiting New York in 2000. This photo, he explained, was of historical significance because it symbolized China’s return to the center stage of world politics. Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun” 新闻

While Li Peng's speech at the external propaganda conference in early 1997 had still been very martial, by 1998, the overall rhetoric about the international situation in China was restrained. The "struggle over international public opinion" was de-emphasized, and commentators noted that the prevalence of the "China threat theory" in the United States had waned. Even Li Xiguang 李希光, author of the 1996 bestseller *Demonizing China* (*Yaomohua Zhongguo* 妖魔化中国) and an advisor to OEP/SCIO under Zhao Qizheng,¹⁹¹ joined in the chorus of people claiming that China had overcome its post-Tiananmen image crisis. For instance, during Clinton's visit to China, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger stated in Xi'an 西安: "I think China's human rights record is terrible. I think China is an authoritarian nation."¹⁹² Instead of focusing on the criticism regarding China's human rights, which would have happened under different circumstances, Li Xiguang instead reported that the U.S. had reclassified China from being a "totalitarian" to being an "authoritarian" state.¹⁹³ An article in *External Propaganda Reference* by one of Xinhua's deputy editors-in-chief noted that China needed to "seize the opportunities" (*zhuazhu jiyu* 抓住机遇) that presented themselves while the whole world was watching the country's rise.¹⁹⁴ As Graph I (see below) indicates, there was not only a toning down of internal rhetoric in most of 1998, but also fewer references to "anti-China forces" and "hostile forces" in Xinhua releases than in 1997 and in 1999, albeit more than in 1994, 1995, and 1996, when China was still focusing on concrete diplomatic struggles and had only just decided that it wanted to crank up its voice.

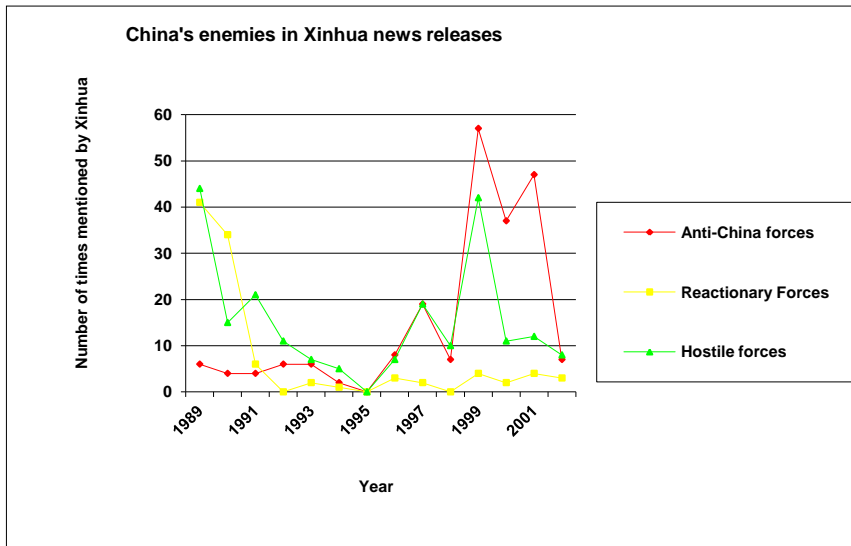
发布有利于影响和引导国际舆论 [Press conference help to influence and guide international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2005): 4.

¹⁹¹ For instance, in 1999, he coined the slogan for the final bid for the 2008 Olympics: "New Beijing, Great Olympics," although the slogan was later replaced by "One World, One Dream." Cf. "Li Xiguang," July 17, 2008, <http://english.cri.cn/4406/2008/07/17/1901s382246.htm>, accessed February 7, 2013.

¹⁹² See "Press Briefing by Mike Mccurry and National Security Advisor Sandy Berger," June 26, 1998, available on the website of the Federation of American Scientists, <http://www.fas.org/news/china/1998/980626-wh.htm>, accessed March 3, 2013.

¹⁹³ E.g. Li Xiguang and Yu Jiadi, "Jie yaomohua, hou Tiananmen xin Zhongguo - Meiguo meiti Kelindun fang Hua baodao toushi (yi)," 12.

¹⁹⁴ Xu Xuejiang 徐学江, "Zhuazhu youli shiji, yingzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing" 抓住有利时, 营造良好的国际舆论环境 [Seize the favorable time to create a favorable international public opinion environment], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1997): 3.



Graph 6.I: China's enemies between 1989 and 2002¹⁹⁵

The graph shows two things: first, the morphing of the main enemy from the reactionary forces into the anti-China forces (also see below in chapter 7.3), which is indicative of the transformation from a socialist to a nationalist identity in official rhetoric. Second, it shows the changes in how much Xinhua highlighted or de-emphasized China's enemies in a particular year.

At the 1998 annual conference, the tone of debate was completely different from 1997 and much more conciliatory. The new Politburo cadre put in charge of all propaganda and thought work, Ding Guan'gen, gave a speech¹⁹⁶ in which he stressed globalization as a factor outside of the control of the CPC that constituted a major rationale for foreign propaganda: While the world was growing closer by the day (*riyi jinmi* 日益紧密), the need for mutual understanding, promoting friendship, and broadening the consensus was also increasing. Interaction with the world was no longer defined as a strategic choice of the leadership (however necessary), but as inevitable. Such arguments were of course part of a larger polemic directed against those that did not want the country to become more closely integrated into the global economy and that therefore opposed China's bid

¹⁹⁵ Based on key word search in Lexis Nexis. Of the references to reactionary forces after 1991, quite a few were not referring to China's enemies during the 1990s, but were either quoting statements from other countries or referred to China's past. What needs to be taken into consideration, however, is the fact that the overall number of news releases significantly increased in 1998.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. "Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di wu ci huiyi jiyao" 省委对外宣传联席会第五次会议纪要 [Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Joint Committee for External Propaganda of the Provincial Party Committee], February 27, 1998, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol. 1, 118-122.

for WTO accession. Nonetheless, the bid provided a good opportunity for external propaganda cadres to argue for the importance of their work and to use the overall toning down of ideological polemics to push for more reforms.

Their efforts were successful. The Chinese government's "Work Agenda" (*gongzuo yaodian* 工作要点) for 1998 specifically mentioned external propaganda work as a pressing issue to be tackled that year: "We have to strengthen external propaganda work in order to establish and protect a good international image of China even further."¹⁹⁷ This inclusion again marked an upgrade of external propaganda work, or at least an important confirmation of the 1996 upgrade. An article in *External Propaganda Reference* applied the "grasp with both hands" (*liang shou zhua* 两手抓) slogan to domestic propaganda and external propaganda, indicating that external propaganda had been neglected for too long.¹⁹⁸ The largest part of 1998 was devoid of crisis mode events (not least due to the CPC's lack of interest in creating any that could spoil the "public opinion environment" needed for the WTO bid). However, the fact that 1998 was only a year of Congressional elections in the U.S. that had a shorter run up than presidential elections probably also helped.¹⁹⁹

As China's leaders were both bent on toning down aggressive rhetoric and on making China's message more acceptable to foreigners, external propaganda workers were asked to "distinguish between domestic and external propaganda" (*neiwai youbie* 内外有别). Articles in *External Propaganda Reference* again focused primarily on the basic issues to make China's external propaganda media look more professional and less ideologically motivated in the eyes of Westerners. Aside from the overall political climate, the fact that OEP/SCIO had a new leader who had not had much contact with domestic propaganda work probably also

¹⁹⁷ "加强对外宣传工作, 进一步树立和维护我国良好的国际形象." Zheng Peimin, "Nuli yingzao da waixuan geju," 7.

¹⁹⁸ Wen Xuande 文选德, "Neixuan, waixuan yao 'liang shou zhua, liang shou dou yao ying'" 内宣、外宣要"两手抓, 两手都要硬 [Internal propaganda and external propaganda need to be 'grasped with both hands, and both hands have to be firm'], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1998): 2.

¹⁹⁹ Although Clinton insisted that his visit to China could not be too close to the elections, which is why he visited in June. He was still attacked by domestic opponents, but nonetheless, in a presidential race, which is by and large considered more important and for which the selection process and campaigning starts more than a year in advance, going to China in June (or even hosting Jiang Zemin in late 1997) would probably not have been feasible for Clinton. This factor was presumably also considered by China and may be part of what is meant with statements such as "currently, the circumstances are particularly favorable towards us."

helped. In 1998, the external propaganda sector conducted a campaign to “grasp the style of work and change the style of writing” (*zhua zuofeng, gai wenfeng* 抓作风, 改文风). *External Propaganda Reference* published a series of articles on how to adapt articles to the foreign target audience.²⁰⁰ One article argued that the new slogan for all external propaganda work should be “reinforce awareness of external propaganda [and] scale down the tone of external propaganda [in order to] increase the effectiveness of external propaganda.”²⁰¹

These articles addressed the problems external propaganda had suffered during the previous year. For the first time since 1989, authors began to directly articulate the idea that ideological content needed to be de-emphasized in order to make external propaganda more effective. Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, a high-ranking journalist at Xinhua and professor at Xiamen University,²⁰² recalled that during the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979 ideological content in China’s external propaganda, such as statements that Vietnam did not care about internationalism, made Western audiences think that this was simply a conflict between two socialist countries that was none of their concern. Later, when China changed strategies and reported on the suffering of ethnic Chinese at the hands of Vietnamese, it got empathy and support from the international community.²⁰³ Whether or not an article used the word socialism, he argued, said nothing about whether the article would have the intended effect or even about whether the stance it portrayed was correct. Instead, the crucial criterion should be whether the *essence* (*shizhi* 实质) of its content and its spirit were beneficial to projecting a correct image of China or creating a favorable international public opinion

²⁰⁰ For instance, Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, “Waiguoren bu yuanyi jieshou bieren de ‘xuanchuan’ - Tan ‘nei wai you bie’” 外国人不愿意接受别人的“宣传”——一谈“内外有别” [Foreigners don’t like to listen to someone’s ‘propaganda’ – On the difference between internal and external (propaganda)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (1998): 3-5; Zhai Shuyao, “Duiwai xuanchuan de lishi fazhan – duiwai xuanchuan baodao yewu tantao zhi wu” 对外宣传的历史发展——对外宣传报道业务探讨之五 [The historical development of external propaganda – Fifth exploration of professional (standards of) external reporting], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (1998): 4-7.

²⁰¹ “我们的口号应该是：强化对外宣传意识，淡化对外宣传色彩，提高对外宣传实效。” Zhai Shuyao, “Waiguoren bu yuanyi jieshou bieren de ‘xuanchuan’ - Tan ‘nei wai you bie,’” 4.

²⁰² Cf. “Duiwai xuanchuan baodao yu Yingyu xiezuo” 对外宣传报道与英语写作 [External propaganda reporting and composing articles in English], Xiamen daxue wenku, http://210.34.4.13:8080/wenku/Detail.asp?w_id=4601, accessed February 18, 2013.

²⁰³ Zhai Shuyao, “Waiguoren bu yuanyi jieshou bieren de ‘xuanchuan’ - Tan ‘nei wai you bie,’” 5.

environment.²⁰⁴ In this particular case, the distinction between appearance and essence in the CPC's ideology provided a useful basis to argue for moving away from the focus on the appearance, namely individual words and formulations prescribed by the CPD, and moving towards articles which chose a different style and terminology, but supported China's and the CPC's stance in essence. Of course, this was very similar to what external propaganda veterans had already argued during the 1980s, but after the ideological backlash of 1989, it took nine years before a thaw in the overall political climate permitted such arguments again.

In line with the policy to adapt better to foreigners and get rid of any "propaganda flavor," in 1998, the CPD changed its English name to Central Publicity Department²⁰⁵ and mandated that *xuanchuan* no longer be translated as "propaganda" but as "publicity" when publishing or broadcasting in English. This was accompanied by a number of articles explaining the difference between *propaganda* and *xuanchuan*.²⁰⁶ The underlying idea was not new. An article in *External Reporting Reference* from issue 18, 1982 had explained the negative connotations of the term propaganda,²⁰⁷ but it had taken another fifteen years to translate this knowledge into an actual policy. External propaganda veteran Shen Suru 沈苏儒 (cf. chapter 3.2), who had supported using other terms than propaganda much earlier,²⁰⁸ explained that "there is no equivalent word in English for how we currently understand and use *xuanchuan*."²⁰⁹

The policy to translate propaganda as publicity is not enforced strictly. In some cases, *xuanchuan* (the activity) is still translated as propaganda, even when the CPD is referred to as the Publicity Department.²¹⁰ Likewise, there are instances in which the term propaganda, probably accidentally, is applied to

²⁰⁴ –Ibid.

²⁰⁵ See Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 73.

²⁰⁶ See for example Zhang Hao 张浩, "Zhongguo xu zhuyi suzao hao ziji de haiwai xingxiang" 中国需注意塑造好自己的海外形象 [China needs to pay attention to shaping its image abroad], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (1998): 47.

²⁰⁷ Wu Yuehui, "Cong 'xuanchuan' yi ci tan qi", *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 18 (1982): 11-13.

²⁰⁸ In his writings, he favored "external reporting" (*duiwai baodao*), e.g. Shen Suru *Duiwai baodao yewu jichu* 对外报道业务基础 [Professional basics for external reporting] (Beijing: Jinri Zhongguo chubanshe, 1989).

²⁰⁹ Shen Suru 沈苏儒, "Guanyu 'xuanchuan' de Yingyu ci" 关于宣传的英语词 [On the English term for *xuanchuan*], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 4 (1998): 15.

²¹⁰ "CPC Publicity Chief Calls for Promotion of Party Line," People's Daily Online. October 25, 2000, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/english/200010/25/eng20001025_53531.html, accessed February 17, 2010. While *Zhongxuanbu* is rendered as "Publicity Department" in this early article, *xuanchuan sixiang zhanxian* is still translated as "propaganda and ideological fronts."

“public education campaigns”; for example, one article in the *China Daily* from 2009 speaks of “traffic safety propaganda.”²¹¹ Some uses of “propaganda” instead of “publicity” are probably intended (for instance when speaking about the Cultural Revolution), whereas others seem accidental (“traffic safety propaganda” or referring to *xuanchuanbu* below the provincial level as “propaganda departments”), and first and foremost show the difficulties with implementing even the most straightforward directives.

At the same time, there was another initiative to grasp the “laws” according to which external propaganda functioned²¹² and to build external propaganda theory. In March 1998, OEP/SCIO organized a Symposium on External Propaganda Theory (*Duiwai xuanchuan lilun yantaohui* 对外宣传理论研讨会).²¹³ A year later, China began to set up numerous research centers devoted to external propaganda work and international communication, such as the International Communication Center (*Duiwai chuanbo zhongxin* 对外传播中心) at Qinghua University and the School for International Communication at Beijing Broadcasting Institute (*Beijing guangbo xueyuan Guoji chuanbo xueyuan* 北京广播学院国际传播学院).²¹⁴ Coming up with a distinct theory of external propaganda was most likely seen as a way to justify and institutionalize the deviance of external propaganda work from domestic propaganda work. The year 1998 provided a climate in which it was possible to argue for many reforms that had been taboo earlier, but being able to point to scientific laws would help enshrine the changes even after the next ideological backlash.

In 1998, the slogan of “holding up both internal and external [propaganda]” was revived again.²¹⁵ Plans approved by the PBSC in early 1995²¹⁶ of turning

²¹¹ *China Daily*, October 27, 2009, 14.

²¹² E.g. Zhai Shuyao, “Tansuo duiwai xuanchuan de guilixing zhishi – Duiwai baodao yewu tantao zhi yi” 探索对外宣传的规律性知识——对外报道业务探讨之一 [Exploring knowledge of the regularities of external propaganda – First exploration of professional (aspects) of external reporting], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (1998): 18-19.

²¹³ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 54-60.

²¹⁴ Cf. Cai Guofen, Xu Qinyuan, and Zhao Xuebo, eds., *Guoji chuanbo yu duiwai xuanchuan*, 1.

²¹⁵ See for example Wen Xuande, “Neixuan, waixuan yao ‘liang shou zhua, liang shou dou yao ying,’” 2.

²¹⁶ Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, “Lun guojia tongxunshu zai woguo duiwai xuanchuan zhong de gongneng – duiwai xuanchuan baodao yewu tantao zhi liu” 论国家通讯社在我国对外宣传中的功能——对外宣传报道业务探讨之六 [On the uses of the national news agency in China’s external propaganda – Sixth exploration of professional (aspects) of external reporting], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (1998): 10.

Xinhua into a news agency whose position was commensurate with China's international standing and that would be able to influence world public opinion were picked up again.²¹⁷

In this period, China also began to seriously address the problem of slow reporting in case of sudden events that had been pointed out as an area for improvement in 1996 to prevent Western media from exploiting any incidents.²¹⁸ In early 1998, Xinhua established a LSG for Guiding the Reporting of Sudden Events (*Xinhuashe tufa shijian zhihui lingdao xiaozu* 新华社突发事件指挥领导小组).²¹⁹ An article in *External Propaganda Reference* declared proudly that Xinhua's releases on a number of sudden events in 1998 had made their way into Western mainstream media either directly or indirectly and had destroyed Western media's bias that "Chinese officials and media always maintain silence in case of sudden events."²²⁰ An article in *External Propaganda Reference* cited the positive reactions Xinhua got from foreign media after reporting sudden events.²²¹ However, Xinhua distinguished strictly between natural disasters, which were now allowed to be covered directly and "political" (*zhengzhixing* 政治性) events which needed to be controlled strictly (*congyan* 从严).²²²

The most important development that influenced how the debate on external propaganda was to continue over the following years was the issue of China's ascendancy to a power of global importance. Better external propaganda was needed as all eyes were on China.²²³ The timing was informed by a number of factors. First, there was an overall climate of triumph in China after the handover of Hong Kong and the relatively successful weathering of the Asian financial crisis in 1998. Another important factor was the U.S.' planning its grand strategy

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ As briefly indicated above, this argument had been made by Zeng Jianhui in 1996 (Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1 113) and was repeated in articles written in 1998. Cf. Li Beilin 李杯林, "Tufaxing shijian baodao qianyi" 突发性事件报道浅议 [Brief discussion of reporting sudden events], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (1998): 6-8.

²¹⁹ Yan Wenbin 严文斌, "Shijiexing tongxunshe yu tufa shijian duiwai baodao" 世界性通讯社与突发事件对外报道 [A world news agency and reporting sudden events abroad], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1998):12.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid., 13.

²²³ E.g. Xu Xuejiang 徐学江, "Zhuazhu youli shiji, yingzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing" 抓住有利时, 营造良好的国际舆论环境 [Seize the favorable time to create a favorable international public opinion environment], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1997): 3-6.

for the 21st century in the last few years of the Clinton Administration. As will be seen below, the plans China devised were as much based on as they were a reply to the United States' strategic plans for the new century. The beginning of a new century was also linked to the much anticipated rise of China. By the mid-1990s, China had been gripped by the first waves of nationalism, clearly supported by the CPC, but also beginning to take on a dynamic of its own. An article in *External Propaganda Reference* from 1997 noted that "this 'turn of the century' is generally considered to be a new important starting point in the history of human development."²²⁴ Historically, it stated, new superpowers had always entered the world stage at the turn of a century.²²⁵ According to the same article, China was "generally expected" (*bei pubian renwei* 被普遍认为) to become not only a strong country in the Asia-Pacific region (*Yatai diqu qiangguo* 亚太地区强国), but also a globally strong country (*shijie qiangguo* 世界强国) within the first twenty to thirty years of the new century.²²⁶ In 1997, a front page article in the *People's Daily* for the first time used the phrase "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people" in the title as a new goal that the CPC would continue to struggle for.²²⁷ Thus, by 1997, the CPC had officially announced its historic mission to lead the Chinese people to renewed greatness. Over the next few years and into the new century, the question of external propaganda was to be increasingly tied to China's rise and its new status as a strong country that needed a sufficiently strong voice in the international arena.

6.5 1999: Preparing for the New Century

In the last few months of 1998, tensions between China and the United States rose again and led to a powerful backlash against the upbeat rhetoric of the years 1997 and 1998 that had been based on the notion that the world welcomed China's return. The new round of conflict had a number of reasons, including

²²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²²⁵ Such as England at the turn of the 19th century, and the U.S., Germany, and Japan at the turn of the 20th century. Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Liu Zhenying 刘振英, Chen Yan 陈雁, and Wu Hengquan 吴恒权, "Jiang Zemin zai Zhonggong zhongyang zhaokai de dangwai renshi zuotanhui shang zuo zhongyao jianghua [...]" 江泽民在中共中央召开的党外人士座谈会上作重要讲话 [...] [Jiang Zemin delivers important speech at the Central Committee's conference for non-Party members (...)], *Renmin ribao*, December 24, 1997, 1.

Congressional elections in the U.S. and accusations against China of having committed nuclear espionage.²²⁸ In this atmosphere of conflict and confrontation, the focus why China needed external propaganda work was shifted again, but the sector's position was strengthened rather than weakened as Chinese officials warned of a new Cold War—a war of ideas—between China and the United States.

1999 was an important year for both domestic and international propaganda work because of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the PRC and the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown. On February 26, 1999, Jiang Zemin delivered an “important speech” at the (by then) annual conference on external propaganda work, published as a front-page “important news” (*yaowen* 要闻) article in the *People's Daily* that summed up and confirmed the master text on external propaganda that had emerged over the course of the 1990s and set the policy line for the future.²²⁹ Many of the points were taken from the 1996 agenda and will therefore not be revisited here. The speech mostly cemented the changes in how foreign propaganda was portrayed that had emerged one by one between 1994 and 1999, introduced a few new points, and signalled that foreign propaganda work had become part of China's long term economic and diplomatic strategy. Thus, Jiang Zemin's speech was another upgrade in the importance of external propaganda work. At the time, China also made preparations for the Tenth five-year-plan (2001-2005), and Jiang's speech should also be interpreted as guidance and support for the plans ahead.

Both the proactive and the reactive rationale for external propaganda were highlighted: Given the recent deterioration in Sino-U.S. relations, the rhetoric was, again, much harsher than it had been for most of 1997 and 1998. Jiang reiterated that “the policy nature and political nature of external propaganda are strong, and when national sovereignty, national interests, or national dignity are involved, [China has] to adhere to principles.”²³⁰ At the same time, external propaganda was

²²⁸ A scandal erupted in the U.S. after the release of a report on Chinese intelligence operations in the U.S. since the 1980s suggested China had obtained nuclear secrets. The issue dominated the U.S. press for several weeks and caused China to issue several rebuttals. For the report, see Chris Cox and Kenneth Graffenreid, *The Cox Report: U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China* (1999). Zhao Qizheng later painted a press conference China held in relation to this case as a relative success. Cf. Zhao Qizheng, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun,” 5.

²²⁹ Liu Zhenying, Chen Yan, and Wu Hengqua, “Jiang Zemin zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan huiyi shang qiangdiao zhan zai geng gao qidian shang ba waixuan gongzuo zuo de geng hao.”

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

confirmed as a work of great strategic importance, as China needed a good international environment in order to realize its grand cross-century goals.

The summary line of the *People's Daily* article on Jiang's speech asked propaganda cadres "to form a powerful propaganda and public opinion force commensurate with China's status and prestige on the global stage in order to better serve the country's reforms and opening policies as well as its modernization."²³¹ This was not the first time that the element of prestige was mentioned in the foreign propaganda discourse, but the first time that successful foreign propaganda as a marker of great power status was presented in a front-page *People's Daily* article.²³²

In addition to summing up both points in "crisis mode" and in "regular mode" that had emerged over the course of the 1990s, the speech incorporated two new aspects for the first time that were to gain in importance in the next few years: First, using the Internet as a medium for external propaganda and second, the issue of "cultural security."

The Internet

The speech was the first on external propaganda publicized in the *People's Daily* to address the emergence of new media, most importantly the Internet. At this point in time, China had been using the Internet for its external propaganda for a number of years. In 1995, the *China Daily* had been one of the first Chinese media, and the first national-level medium, to create an online presence. Within a short period of time, several other media targeting foreigners went online before

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² This reference to status can be considered a transitory step from the pragmatic use of diplomatic foreign propaganda to gain support largely with regard to *specific* core interests (early to mid-1990s) to the concern with strengthening China's "comprehensive powers" (*zonghe guoli* 综合国力), into which "propaganda power" was soon to be integrated in the rhetoric of the CPC (cf. chapter 7). Comprehensive power refers to various forms of power including military power, but also including economic factors, scientific and technological innovation and, increasingly, normative power or soft power. The focus on comprehensive power intensified over the next few years. For instance, since 2000, the CASS has published an annual *yellow book* on the international situation, which keeps track of how China compares to other nation-states with regard to each power (economic, political, military, etc.) and with its national comprehensive powers as a whole. *Guoji xingshi huangpishu* 国际形势黄皮书 [Yellow book on the international situation], also known as *Quanqiu zhengzhi yu anquan bagao* 全球政治与安全报告. Cf. Wang Jun 王军 and Dan Xingwu 但兴悟, *Zhongguo guoji guanxi yanjiu sishi nian* 中国国际关系研究四十年 [Forty years of research on China's international relations] (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2008), 113.

the Internet was even opened to the Chinese public.²³³ China was first formally connected to the Internet in the first half of 1994. In 1996, it officially became open to the general public.²³⁴

The Internet is considered one of China's most important external propaganda channels. One Chinese author even argues that the development of the Internet in China was to a large extent driven by China's need to establish new foreign propaganda media.²³⁵ While the government recognized the inherent dangers to regime stability, it was convinced that it could manage the Internet and use it for its own purpose.²³⁶ Considering that the *China Daily* was the first Chinese newspaper to launch an online edition in 1995 before the Internet was even opened to the general public, and considering the speed with which subsequent English versions of other websites were set up, external propaganda may actually have been a very important factor. This view is also supported by the fact that OFP/SCIO (not CDP) has the overall coordinating and policy making responsibility for web-based news media.²³⁷ In May 1997, OEP/SCIO released a circular on the use of the Internet for external news propaganda.²³⁸ An article in *External Propaganda Reference* from early 1998 also called the Internet the "fourth front to enter Western mainstream society" (*jinru Xifang zhuliu shehui de*

²³³ CIPG went online in September 1995 and the *Shanghai Star* was online by 1996. At the time these publications were put online for the group of people that was using the Internet most. These were important people from the field of politics, economics, and from academics, who were also the ideal target audience due to their role as opinion shapers. Cf. Wang Baotai 汪宝泰, "Zhongguo chubanshe zhi chuang jinru guoji hulian wangluo 《中国出版物之窗》进入国际互联网 [Window on China's publications enters the Internet], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 6 (1996): 54.

²³⁴ Yongming Zhou, *Historicizing Online Politics: Telegraphy, the Internet and Political Participation in China*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 136.

²³⁵ Peng Lan, *Zhongguo wangluo meiti de di yi ge shi nian* 中国网络媒体的第一个十年 [The first ten years of China's Internet media] (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2005), 44-45.

²³⁶ Zhou, *Historicizing Online Politics*, 138.

²³⁷ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 129.

²³⁸ "Liyong guoji hulian wangluo kaizhan duiwai xinwen xuanchuan de zhuyi shixiang" 利用国际互联网开展对外新闻宣传的注意事项 [List of things to note when using the international Internet to conduct external news propaganda], *Guoxinban fawen* [1997] yi hao 国新办发文字 [1997] 1 号 [Circular from SCIO (1997) no. 1]. Cf. "Zhao Qizheng: 'Zhongguo xingxiang dashi' jiu jue xin chang" 赵启正: "中国形象大师"旧角新唱 [Zhao Qizheng: The 'master of China's image' sings an old role in a new tune], originally published in *Zhongguo jingmao jujiao* 中国经贸聚焦 [China business focus], no. 4, 2009, available online at <http://www.xzbu.com/2/view-454291.htm>, accessed December 15, 2012. Also see "Guanyu liyong guoji hulian wangluo kaizhan duiwai xinwen xuanchuan de buchong guiding" 关于利用国际互联网开展对外新闻宣传的补充规定 [Supplementary regulations for using the Internet to conduct external news propaganda], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 19 (1998): 9.

di si tiao zhanxian 进入西方主流社会的第四条战线).²³⁹ Initially, all news had to be posted online through a “central external propaganda platform.” A year later, this proved inefficient, and units with permission to go online were allowed to apply for their own domain name.²⁴⁰

What is noteworthy, especially if contrasted with today’s speeches that always speak of both challenges and opportunities, is the stress on the positive aspects and the need to actively use the new technology to innovate the means of external propaganda. Initially, because with regard to new technology, Chinese media did not lag behind as much, the Internet and other new technologies and channels were viewed as a chance to crank up China’s voice that needed to be fully exploited. Moreover, the Internet allowed China to reduce costly print publications²⁴¹ at a time when the country still sought to cut costs, despite the rhetorical commitment to external propaganda. For instance, by 2001, the Japanese, French, German, and Spanish editions of the *Beijing Review* all discontinued their print versions and moved online so that only the English version remained in print.²⁴²

One article argued that the Internet brought new opportunities for China to improve its image in the world and counter the bad influence of traditional Western media, which were monopolizing the media market: First, the Internet had the characteristic of equality (*pingdengxing* 平等性): In principle, each computer could establish a connection with other computers and exchange information. Second, it had the characteristic of interactiveness (*jiaohuxing* 交互性). In traditional media, the flow was unidirectional from the sender to the receiver. On the Internet, the information flow went both ways. Internet users could distribute content as well and could choose what type of content they liked. This change in communications relations (*chuanbo guanxi de bianhua* 传播关系

²³⁹ Zhao Ming 赵鸣, “Kaipi jinru Xifang zhuliu shehui de di si tiao zhanxian – Xinxi gaosu gonglu” 开辟进入西方主流社会的第四条战线——信息高速公路 [Opening up a fourth front into Western mainstream society – The information expressway], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (1998): 23-25.

²⁴⁰ These had to be approved by and registered at OEP/SCIO. “Guanyu liyong guoji hulian wanglu kaizhan duiwai xinwen xuanchuan de buchong guiding,” 8.

²⁴¹ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 156. Also cf. Peng Lan, *Zhongguo wanglu meiti de di yi ge shi nian*, 44-45.

²⁴² Cf. Guo Ke 郭可, *Dangdai duiwai chuanbo* 当代对外传播 [Contemporary external communication] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2003), 41.

的变化) provided China with an opportunity to improve its image. Third, the Internet had the characteristic of being direct (*zhijiexing* 直接性). Traditional media and traditional professional media personnel no longer served as a “gatekeeper” on the Internet; content could directly reach the target audience.²⁴³ Fourth, internet news could be large in volume and were convenient (*wangluo chuanbo xinxi rongliang da qie fangbian kuaijie* 网络传播信息容量大且方便快捷).²⁴⁴ There was unlimited space in a way that was completely incomparable to traditional media. Fifth, the Internet had the characteristic of being global (*quanqiuixing* 全球性), providing China with a direct connection to foreigners.²⁴⁵ Thus, the arguments offered by the author why the Internet was good for China’s image were not unlike those made by those who predicted the Internet would cause the CPC to fall.

In the year 2000, the Party Center designated the first five “central key news websites” (*zhongyang zhongdian xinwen wangzhan* 中央重点新闻网站): China.org.cn (*Zhongguowang* 中国网), *People’s Daily Online* (*Renminwang* 人民网), Xinhuanet (*Xinhuawang* 新华网), CRI Online (*Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai wang* 中国国际广播电台网), and *China Daily Online* (*Zhongguo ribao wang* 中国日报网).²⁴⁶ The fact that three of these were almost exclusively meant for external propaganda and the other two were linked to the most important media of the Party-state and also had some external propaganda responsibilities shows that at this point in time the Internet was still largely seen in connection with external propaganda. Later, CCTV.com, *China Youth Online* (*Zhongguo qingnian bao* 中国青年报), China Economic Net, and China Taiwan Net were added. Each administrative jurisdiction below the central level also has one or more key news websites,²⁴⁷ most of which were established between 2001 and 2002.²⁴⁸

²⁴³ Ma Hongwei 马宏伟, “Wangshang suzao Zhongguo guoji xingxiang” 网上塑造中国国际形象 [Shaping China’s international image online], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2001): 24.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Zhao Zhenyu 赵振宇, “Difang xinwen wangzhan ruhe zuo qiang waixuan” 地方新闻网站如何做强外宣 [How can local news websites do stronger external propaganda], *Qingnian jizhe* 青年记者 [Youth journalist], no. 14 (2009): 69.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Peng, *Zhongguo wangluo meiti de di yi ge shi nian*, 110.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

Finally, after an initial period of enthusiasm, external propaganda cadres began to highlight that the U.S. hoped to use the Internet as a fourth channel to “infiltrate” China.²⁴⁹ Thus, the guiding slogan for how to deal with the Internet became “grasp development with one hand and control with the other” (*yi shou zhua fazhan, yi shou zhua guanli* 一手抓发展, 一手抓管理).²⁵⁰

Cultural Security

The transcript of Jiang Zemin’s speech was also the first time that the term “cultural security” was mentioned in the *People’s Daily*.²⁵¹ Around this time, Chinese analysts began to lament that China lagged behind in the cultural arena and was therefore swamped by cultural products that were dumped on the country by Western powers taking advantage of being more developed than China.²⁵² This concern was related to the overall nervousness about conditions China might be forced to fulfill to join the WTO. The emerging cultural security debate at the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s was still closely tied to the post-1989 discourse of cultural infiltration, but also linked up with discourses on cultural hegemony or imperialism debated in other countries at the time.

Part of the reason for the upgrade in importance of culture, according to Chinese observers, was that over the course of the 1990s, other countries had adapted their cultural propaganda policy and paid more attention to cultural activities.²⁵³ This referred to a wave of “cultural protectionism” starting in 1993, when France succeeded in integrating its policy of “cultural exception” (*exception*

²⁴⁹ Yang Zhengquan 杨正泉, “Qixin xieli gaohao waixuan -- Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi fuzhuren” 齐心协力 搞好外宣——国务院新闻办公室副主任 [Together we should improve external propaganda, said the deputy chief of the State Council Information Office], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 3 (1999): 3.

²⁵⁰ Benkan jizhe 本刊记者 [Reporter from this journal], “Wo guo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo qude xin jinzhan” 全国对外宣传工作会议在京举行 [Nationwide conference on external propaganda takes place in Beijing], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 3 (2000): 4.

²⁵¹ Liu Zhenying, Chen Yan, and Wu Hengquan, “Jiang Zemin zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan huiyi shang qiangdiao zhan zai geng gao qidian shang ba waixuan gongzuo zuo de geng hao.”

²⁵² See for instance Ge Changwei 葛长伟, “Duiwai xuanchuan yao nuli shijian daibiao xianjin wenhua de sixiang” 对外宣传要努力实践代表先进文化的思想 [External propaganda must make efforts to realize the thought of representing advanced culture], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2001): 20. The thought of representing advanced culture is of course one of Jiang Zemin’s Three Represents.

²⁵³ Noted for example in Cai Guofen, Xu Qinyuan, and Zhao Xuebo, eds., *Guoji chuanbo yu duiwai xuanchuan*, 20.

culturelle) into the GATT.²⁵⁴ In the second half of the 1990s, Canada revised its foreign policy and gave culture a prominent role.²⁵⁵ Moreover, according to one Chinese author, around 1999, a number of non-Western countries (such as Singapore, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, India) began to propagate their own culture through radio broadcasts in order to counter Western distortions of their culture.²⁵⁶ An article in *External Propaganda Reference* also mentioned that the British Council (*Yingguo wenhua weiyuanhui* 英国文化委员会) had adapted its cultural propaganda strategy in late 1998 and included China as one of the eight countries it wanted to target most intensely.²⁵⁷

The cultural security project also had a domestic dimension aimed at buttressing the Party at home: At the time, China had launched what it called “reform of the cultural system” (*wenhua tizhi gaige* 文化体制改革), in analogy to the “reform of the economic system” (*jingji tizhi gaige* 经济体制改革).²⁵⁸ The idea behind the reform package was similar to and in a sense a continuation of the media reforms started in 1992: It was supposed to turn cultural units such as theatres and art troupes into enterprises that would generate revenue for local governments. This was intended as a means to reassert Party-control over the cultural sector by combating private cultural enterprises (operating in a legal gray zone) that had sprung up and were much more competitive than Party-owned cultural units.²⁵⁹ Thus, at the end of the 20th century, China had begun to make its own cultural sector more competitive, both to re-assert control and pre-empt unwanted influences at home and to have a basis to spread Chinese culture abroad.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Jiang Fei and Huang Kuo, “Transnational Media Corporations and National Culture as a Security Concern in China,” in *Security and Everyday Life*, ed. Vida Bajc (New York: Routledge, 2009), 215-216.

²⁵⁵ For the Canadian debate see Louis Bélanger, “Redefining Cultural Diplomacy: Cultural Security and Foreign Policy in Canada,” *Political Psychology*, vol. 20, no. 4 (December 1999), 677-699.

²⁵⁶ Wen Biao 温飏, “Guoji guanxi xin geju xia de guoji guangbo” 国际关系新格局下的国际广播 [International broadcasting under the new pattern of international relations], in *Dangdai guoji chuanbo yanjiu* 当代国际传播研究, ed. Chen Minyi 陈敏毅 (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guangbo chubanshe, 2006), 50.

²⁵⁷ Cf. Yi Xianfei 易先飞, “Tigao waixuan xiaoguo bixu jiaqiang zhenduixing” 提高外宣效果必须加强针对性 [In order to raise the effectiveness of external propaganda, we need to strengthen its accordance with the target audience’s tastes and needs], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 5 (2001): 36. According to the article, Germany, France, and Japan were also adjusting their cultural propaganda strategies.

²⁵⁸ For the cultural reform project, see Nicolai Volland, “From Control to Management: The CCP’s ‘Reforms of the Cultural Structure,’” in *China’s Thought Management*, ed. Anne-Marie Brady (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 107-121.

²⁵⁹ Volland, “From Control to Management,” 109.

China could link its cultural security project to similar initiatives ongoing in francophone countries, but for its overall external propaganda concept, pointing to other countries as a justification was not as easy. Despite creating new propaganda channels targeting China and other countries in Asia, the U.S. had significantly reduced its propaganda budget after the end of the Cold War. In late 1998, the Clinton Administration embarked on a more drastic reform course by submitting a roadmap for dissolving the USIA and merging most staff into newly created structures within the Department of State, a plan that was completed by October 1999. Although Chinese politicians had no interest in highlighting the reduction of America's propaganda budget, quite a few people in China were aware of the cuts and the restructuring. For instance, shortly after Jiang Zemin's speech, Yang Zhengquan 杨正泉, a vice head of OEP/SCIO, wrote an article in which he criticized the belief of "some people" (*youren renwei* 有人认为) that because external propaganda was a product of the Cold War, it would gradually disappear now that this confrontation was over.²⁶⁰ First, external propaganda, which, as Yang explained, was called "external communication" in the West, was a normal and widespread activity that became increasingly important for states. Second, although the Cold War was over, the "Cold War mentality" remained,²⁶¹ and therefore, China had to continue to fight a "propaganda war" against hostile forces.²⁶² After the U.S. had accused China of nuclear espionage, the argument that the U.S. was looking for a new enemy to replace the S.U. and had chosen China became relatively popular among Chinese officials and academics and could thus easily be used to justify the continued need for external propaganda. According to one former OEP/SCIO official, two new "Cold Wars" had been started in the 1990s: one targeting the global south and the Third World and

²⁶⁰ Yang Zhengquan 杨正泉, "Qixin xieli gaohao waixuan -- Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi fuzhuren" 齐心协力 搞好外宣——国务院新闻办公室副主任 [Work together to do external propaganda properly – Deputy director of the State Council Information Office], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (1999): 2.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3. Also see Sha Qiguang, "Dui Xifang meiti sanbu 'Zhongguo weixielun' de pingxi (xia)," 6.

²⁶² Yang Zhengquan, "Qixin xieli gaohao waixuan -- Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi fuzhuren," 3.

another targeting Socialism.²⁶³ In fact, he argued, the West was even fighting a “smokeless third world war” (my emphasis) against China.²⁶⁴

Despite the fact that the dissolution of the USIA was a reduction in propaganda capacities, the restructuring resulted in a number of reports in Western media that China could point to in order to argue that the U.S. was, in fact, expanding its external propaganda capacities. In March 1999, the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) launched its offensive in the Kosovo conflict. Subsequently, on April 30, 1999, Clinton signed the Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 68 that ordered the establishment of an “International Public Information (IPI) Core Group”²⁶⁵ for propaganda targeted at foreign publics, primarily meant to accompany the war in Kosovo at the time but probably also as a permanent institution. The Directive supposedly replaced Reagan’s National Security Decision Directive from 1983 and remains classified and thus inaccessible.²⁶⁶ However, China was aware of and reported on the IPI Core Group (*Guoji gonggong xinxi xiaozu* 国际公共信息小组).²⁶⁷

As is well known, the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia was bombed by NATO during the conflict in what the Chinese government claimed was an intentional attack.²⁶⁸ Thus, while China had opposed the war before, after the bombing its coverage in the Western media became a focal point in the Chinese

²⁶³ Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui shiji chu guoji yulun xingshi ji yingdui cuoshi de ji dian sikao” 对世纪初国际舆论形式及应对措施的几点思考 [Reflections on form of international public opinion and response measures in the beginning of the century], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2000): 9.

²⁶⁴ “西方国家正在打一场没有硝烟的第三次世界大战” Sha Qiguang, “Dui shiji chu guoji yulun xingshi ji yingdui cuoshi de ji dian sikao,” 9.

²⁶⁵ The IPI core group was chaired by the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and included officials from the Departments of Defense, State, Justice, Commerce and Treasury as well as from the CIA and the FBI. Cf. “International Public Information (IPI) Presidential Decision Directive PDD 68, 30 April 1999,” <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-68.htm>, accessed November 28, 2012.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁶⁷ E.g. Yi Xianfei 易先飞, “Tigao waixuan xiaoguo bixu jiaqiang zhenduixing” 提高外宣效果必须加强针对性, *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 5 (2001): 36. According to this article, the core group was formally constituted on October 1, 1999.

²⁶⁸ Jessica Chen Weiss, based on an interview with a scholar from an influential research institution in Shanghai, explained that China provided aid to Serbia through its embassy, a fact which China of course could not highlight in its public denunciations, but which provided a motive for an intentional bombing in the eyes of Chinese observers. Jessica Chen Weiss, “Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China,” *International Organization* 67, no. 1 (2013):19.

debate to illustrate how biased Western media were,²⁶⁹ but also (and often simultaneously) to analyze how a successful international propaganda campaign could be organized. *External Propaganda Reference* reported on the “smokeless war” waged by CNN and the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) during the war in Kosovo.²⁷⁰ Like the Gulf War in the early 1990s, Chinese observers noted, actual violence in the war in Kosovo was preceded by a media attack.²⁷¹ Thus, the end of the 20th century brought with it another crisis that illustrated, in China’s eyes, the importance of a good external propaganda machinery in order to be perceived as legitimate in the international community and be able to act in one’s interest.

6.6 2000 to 2002

Particularly in the years 1999 and 2000, from the Chinese perspective, at least in official rhetoric, the West was caught in its Cold War mentality and needed an external enemy for domestic and international political gain.²⁷² Chinese fears of “Westernization” were fuelled by discussions revolving around the notion of a “democratic peace,” which were relatively widespread around the turn of the century. The idea that a democratic China which could become part of a “a U.S.-led international order of democratic states” would be in America’s strategic interest was frequently expressed in the writings produced in U.S. think tanks at the turn of the century²⁷³ and continues to be expressed until today.²⁷⁴ Particularly

²⁶⁹ For example, after the Chinese embassy was bombed by NATO, the People’s Daily seized this opportunity not only to publically condemn the incident, but also to use it as “study material” to educate personnel inside the *RMRB* about American “freedom of the press” (10). Discussions, exhibitions, report sessions, and sessions for watching footage were all used to familiarize personnel, especially editors, with the Chinese position. Cf. “Renmin ribao kaizhan neibu jiaoyu, jielu Meiguo ‘xinwen ziyou’ de xuweixing” 人民日报开展内部教育, 揭露美国‘新闻自由’的虚伪性 [The People’s Daily conducts internal education to expose the falseness of American “press freedom”], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 12 (1999): 9-10.

²⁷⁰ Zeng Huan 曾璜, “Meiyu xiaoyan de zhanzheng – Cong CNN he BBC dui Kesuowo weiji de baodao kan guoji yulun shichang de juezhu” 没有硝烟的战争——从 CNN 和 BBC 对科索沃危机的报道看国际舆论市场的角逐 [The smokeless war – Looking at the competition on the international market of public opinion through CNN’s and BBC’s coverage of the Kosovo crisis], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (1999): 28-32.

²⁷¹ E.g. Li Huan 李环, “Qiantan Meiguo guojia ruanlilang” 浅析美国国家软力量 [On U.S. national soft power], *Guoji guanxi xueyuan xuebao* 国际关系学院学报 [Journal of the Institute of International Relations], no. 1, 2002, 26.

²⁷² E.g. Sha Qiguang, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (xia),” 6-7.

²⁷³ For instance, *China’s Grand Strategy*, a report prepared by the RAND Corporation for the U.S. Airforce, states that the United States’ engagement, with the aim of promoting a more cooperative China that will not challenge the U.S. would “be facilitated if China [became] a

around the turn of the century, when external propaganda cadres wanted to paint a gloomy picture of a new Cold War targeting China, the theory of the democratic peace served as proof.²⁷⁵

After a series of low points in 1999 and 2000, Sino-U.S. relations changed for the better in 2001. With the beginning of the War on Terror, China no longer perceived itself as the main (potential) enemy of the U.S., which Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations* had predicted to either emerge from the Arab world or from Confucian China. Some trade sanctions on China were lifted in early 2001, before China formally joined the WTO in November. Overall, during the Bush presidency, Sino-US relations improved considerably from a Chinese perspective, as the U.S. needed to rely on China for issues such as the Six Party Talks. At the same time, China continued to prepare for its WTO entry. In 2000, the country launched its “going out project” (*zou chuqu gongcheng* 走出去工程) and set in place a large number of new regulations guiding and monitoring outward Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).²⁷⁶ China has also provided financial benefits and incentives to companies “going out.”²⁷⁷ Chinese investments abroad were strengthened through an increasing number of free trade agreements. Nevertheless, both sudden events and long-term developments in Sino-U.S. relations continued to impact at least the external propaganda rhetoric, as they influence the overall political climate and what is permissible to say publically.

democratic state [...]” and that “if the advocates of the democratic peace are correct, a U.S.-led international order of democratic states of which China is a part might even be able to avoid the worst ravages of security competition.” Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *China’s Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Washington: RAND, 2000), xiv.

²⁷⁴ A recent article commenting on the leadership transition in China noted that “[j]ust as Washington does not worry about nuclear missiles in the hands of Britain, France and India today, so it would have less to fear from the military power of a consolidated Chinese democracy.” Daniel Twining, “Democracy Can Make China a Great Power,” October 28, 2012, website of the *Financial Times*, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b9b742d4-1f60-11e2-b273-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2DekSCCvp>, accessed November 30, 2012.

²⁷⁵ E.g. Sha Qiguang, “Dui shiji chu guoji yulun xingshi ji yingdui cuoshi de ji dian sikao,” 10; Yang Jinzhou 杨金洲 and Yang Guoren 杨国仁. “Xingshi, renwu, tiaozhan, jiyu – xie zai xin shiji kaiyuan zhi ji” 形势·任务·挑战·机遇——写在新世纪开元之际 [The situation, responsibilities, challenges, opportunities – Written on the occasion of the new century]. *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2001): 5.

²⁷⁶ See for example Yadong Luo, Qiuzhi Xue and Binjie Han, “How Emerging Market Governments Promote Outward FDI: Experience from China,” *Journal of World Business*, no. 45 (2010): 75. Also mentioned in Theresa Loo and Gary Davies, “Branding China: The Ultimate Challenge in Reputation Management?” *Corporate Reputation Review* 9, no. 3 (2006): 199.

²⁷⁷ Cf. Luo, Xue and Han, “How Emerging Market Governments Promote Outward FDI,” 75-76.

At the beginning of each year, cadres met in Beijing for the annual external propaganda conference. The conference for the year 2000 took place January 24 to 25.²⁷⁸ It highlighted the need to implement the “spirit” of Jiang Zemin’s speech from 1999.²⁷⁹ Thus, the basic framework remained largely the same and OEP/SCIO continued to ask cadres to adapt the principles and policies prescribed by the Center to local conditions. Foci were international news reporting and further development of the Internet as a channel for external propaganda.²⁸⁰ Locales were also asked to finally institute proper external propaganda structures and invest in this important work.²⁸¹ The year 2001 marked the beginning of the 10th five-year-plan. Among others, OEP/SCIO issued a five-year-plan for the training of external propaganda cadres between 2001 and 2005.²⁸² The 2002 conference was dominated by the successful bid for the 2008 Olympics, which served as a further impetus to improve foreign propaganda work.²⁸³ However, between Jiang Zemin’s speech in 1999 and 2002, there were no major changes in the propaganda concept or overall policy that were presented publically. Instead, a large number of concrete policies were devised and implemented after external propaganda had received a booster in 1999. More importantly, after issues of content and style had been addressed in 1998, by 2000, people involved in external propaganda work began to suggest more substantial changes that would not only allow external propaganda to deviate from domestic propaganda practice, but to actually become more independent from the domestic propaganda apparatus or even from the CPC as a whole.

The “struggle over international public opinion” (*guoji yulun douzheng* 国际舆论斗争) against hostile forces remained at the forefront. 2000 was a tense year in terms of Cross-Strait relations. In March 2000, Chen Shui-bian 陈水扁

²⁷⁸ Benkan jizhe 本刊记者 [Reporter from this journal], “Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zai Jing juxing” 全国对外宣传工作会议在京举行 [Nationwide conference on external propaganda takes place in Beijing], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (2000): 30.

²⁷⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 31.

²⁸² Cf. Benkan jizhe 本刊记者 [Reporter from this journal], “Wo guo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo qude xin jinzhan,” 我国对外宣传取得新进展 [China’s external propaganda makes new progress], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2002): 9.

²⁸³ Cf. Huang Yan 黄燕 and Sun Liji 孙立极, “Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan yhuanti gongzuo huiyi bimu” 全国对外宣传专题工作会议闭幕 [Closing of the special conference on nationwide external propaganda], *Remmin ribao*, January 31, 2002, 2.

was elected in Taiwan, despite attempts from the Chinese side to intimidate Taiwanese voters. In May 2001, OEP/SCIO and the Taiwan Affairs Council (*Zhongtaiban* 中台办) jointly convened a conference on propaganda work aimed at Taiwan²⁸⁴ and established a joint system (*lianxi huiyi zhidu* 联席会议制度) to coordinate online propaganda on Taiwan-related issues.²⁸⁵ In 2000, China also began publishing an annual report on the U.S. human rights record, as a “counterattack against America’s attack on China’s human rights situation.”²⁸⁶ The homogenization of the tone in U.S. media in the aftermath of 9/11 was used by China again to demonstrate both the hypocrisy of Western press freedom and to study how the U.S. government exerted control over the media.²⁸⁷ While this was mainly meant as a justification of media control in China, as an attack on the U.S. and as a demonstration that there was no such thing as “absolute press freedom,” there is a chance that studies of U.S. media were also used by some to point towards an alternative model to the Party press, a topic which was pushed in the external propaganda sector at the time, as will be seen below.

The “going out” slogan was also extended to a number of external propaganda projects, including large-scale translations of Chinese books to promote them abroad. The “project to support the export of Chinese books” (*Zhongguo tushu zouchuqu gongcheng* 中国图书走出去工程) was launched in 2002²⁸⁸ as part of the “going out” policies announced in 2000 after a debate on the asymmetry between cultural imports and cultural exports in and out of China largely stipulated by the WTO accession protocol. The “going out” slogan could

²⁸⁴ Cf. “Wo guo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo qude xin jinzhan,” 3.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Cf. “Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuangxin jingshen kaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian” 王晨：以改革创新精神开创党的对外宣传工作新局面 [Wang Chen: Create a new situation for the Party’s external propaganda work through the spirit of reform and innovation], Website of OEP/SCIO, July 5, 2011. http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/wangchen/jh/201107/t949561_2.htm, accessed June 29, 2012.

²⁸⁷ Liang Lihua 梁立华, “Cong ‘9/11’ kan Meiguo meiti” 从“9·11”看美国媒体 [Understanding U.S. media through ‘9/11’], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2002): 56.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Zhang He 张贺, “Rang shijie yuedu Zhongguo -- Zhanwang Zhongguo tushu zou chuqu” 让世界阅读中国——展望中国图书“走出去” [Let the world read China – prospects for China’s books “going out”], *Renmin ribao*, May 20, 2006, 5.

also refer to the policy of requiring OEP/SCIO and its local equivalents to be trained to go abroad and conduct cultural exchange activities.²⁸⁹

Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents" was, of course, also applied to the external propaganda sector. The request to "implement the important thought of the 'Three Represents'" in external propaganda work could mean a number of things, but one important interpretation was that the external propaganda sector needed to develop a business mentality, do better research on which products were well-received abroad and to avoid wasting money on material that missed its target audience.²⁹⁰ The report on the 2002 conference in the *People's Daily* added a remark that Chinese foreign propaganda needed to strengthen its "service mentality" (*fuwu yishi* 服务意识), one of the many ideas that was slipped into the external propaganda discourse when the "Three Represents" were discussed. Another outgrowth of both the "Three Represents" slogan and the preparation for the Olympics was the "[let it be] bright under the lamp" (*deng xia liang* 灯下亮) project to ensure that foreigners visiting China were exposed to external propaganda material.²⁹¹ The project was in the period of research and preparation in 2002, set to be implemented on a larger scale in 2003. The background behind the project was that many places produced brochures and other products and sent them abroad, but found that they did not reach their target audience, namely mainstream society. External propaganda was supposed to be made more efficient and less wasteful by focusing on the foreigners most easily reachable, those currently located in China. Zhao Qizheng noted that at airports and hotels, etc.

²⁸⁹ Sheng Zuren 盛祖仁, "Chuangxin huifeng, chuangxin jumian: Quanguo waixuan zhuanti gongzuo huiyi zai Jing zhaokai" 创新会风, 创新局面: 全国外宣专题工作会议在京召开 [Innovate the conference style, innovate the overall situation: Nationwide external propaganda conference focused on special topics held in Beijing], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (2002): 2.

²⁹⁰ See Yang Guoren 杨国仁 and Ding Wenkui 丁文奎, "Fuwu da waixuan - 2005 nian yuandan xianci" 服务大外宣—2005年元旦献辞 [Serving big external propaganda - 2005 new year's message], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2005): 2. Also see "Guowuyuan xinwenban Zhao Qizheng zhuren shuo, yong 'san ge daibiao' zhongyao sixiang tongling waixuan gongzuo" 国务院新闻办赵启正主任说, 用“三个代表”重要思想统领外宣工作 [The director of SCIO Zhao Qizheng says: Let the Important Thought of the "Three Represents" direct external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2004): 1.

²⁹¹ "Chuangxin huifeng, chuangxin jumian: Quanguo waixuan zhuanti gongzuo huiyi yai Jing zhaokai," 2.

there was very little material. He also pointed out that many famous large hotels in Beijing did not have CCTV-4 and CCTV-9 in their program.²⁹²

Finally, some external propaganda workers and experts tried to give the sector more independence. Under the arrangement of the 1990s, China's external propaganda forces were scattered, which subordinated them to the domestic propaganda bureaucracy and ultimately weakened them.²⁹³ Many external propaganda media units received their funding through super-ordinate media units whose main responsibility was to organize content aimed at Chinese audiences. This made external propaganda media overly dependent on domestic media and was pointed out as a severe systemic flaw by cadres engaged in external propaganda on multiple occasions.²⁹⁴

In September 2000, CCTV's English language broadcasts got their own channel in the form of CCTV-9.²⁹⁵ In the run-up to this change, an article published in *External Propaganda Reference* in early 2000 criticized the separation of television and radio external propaganda.²⁹⁶ By spreading the forces out over two different units, namely CRI and CCTV's Overseas Center (*Haiwai zhongxin* 海外中心), external propaganda was weakened. The problems the author identified can be divided into three types: first, the problems caused by the Overseas Center's dependence on CCTV, second, the problems caused by handling radio and television external propaganda separately, and third, problems caused by keeping both units dependent on state funding. With regard to the first, placing the Overseas Center within CCTV and thus subjecting it to the overall planning of CCTV rather than giving it more independence meant that its interests were constantly outweighed by the interests of domestic propaganda. One consequence of this was that the slogans and methods of domestic propaganda were applied to external propaganda.²⁹⁷ Because the Overseas Center depended on allocated funds taken out of the domestic propaganda budget, its independence

²⁹² “Zhao Qizheng zhuren shuo duiwai xuanchuan shi yi men gaochao de yishu” 赵启正主任说对外宣传是一门高超的艺术 [Director Zhao Qizheng says external propaganda is a high art], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2002): 2.

²⁹³ Xia Zhifang, “Guangbo dianshi waixuan ziyuan de peizhi yu sikao,” 22.

²⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁹⁵ “CCTV News, Your Link to Asia,” website of CCTV (“CNTV”), <http://english.cntv.cn/20100426/104481.shtml>, accessed February 1, 2013.

²⁹⁶ Xia, “Guangbo dianshi waixuan,” 22.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

was compromised and occasionally, it suffered budget cuts. Moreover, because external propaganda was under a domestic propaganda unit, it did not occupy an influential position within the Chinese bureaucracy, and thus, talented people on a career track were more likely to want to work in domestic propaganda.²⁹⁸

Second, by keeping radio and television external propaganda separate, cooperation between the two became more difficult. Because the Overseas Center had the ambition to become a real external propaganda unit, it had become like a “small TV station within a station” (*tainei de xiaotai* 台内的小台) and ate up huge sums of money. However, the cap on the number of people to be employed regularly (*bianzhi* 编制) led to a vicious circle. As the number of people was limited, jobs needed to be outsourced to temporary personnel paid out of production budgets. Obviously, temporary personnel were not as qualified; because of inefficiency, more people needed to be hired. As more people were employed, each salary became lower; with lower salaries, it became even more difficult to hire qualified people. Thus, the downward spiral had begun and, in addition, all money was pumped into staff and little was left for actual production. This problem could be somewhat remedied by joining radio and television targeted at foreigners because CRI had accumulated rich experience over the years, had built a qualified staff over the course of several decades, and also had a lot of staff stationed overseas. In many ways, there were similarities between the production of TV and radio external propaganda. Thus, by combining the two, television would be enabled to tap into CRI’s resources and use their personnel rather than having to hire unqualified temporary workers.²⁹⁹ At the same time, TV programs could be reused on the radio, saving further radio production costs.³⁰⁰

Again, foreign experience was cited to back up the demand: Studies of the development of radio and television propaganda abroad, argued the author of the article, had proven that in order to achieve a take-off, radio and television needed to be combined.³⁰¹ Here, the most important model was most likely the U.S. In 1990, the Bureau of Broadcasting had been established within the USIA to

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 22-23.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 24.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 23-24.

consolidate its radio and TV broadcasting, most importantly bringing together Worldnet TV and VOA.

Third, with regard to state funding, there was the problem that allocated money was not spent responsibly or reasonably, as the channel would not receive fewer funds if it mismanaged its finances, and thus, money ended up being wasted. This, according to the author, was a problem that could not be addressed fundamentally through “education” or better management.³⁰² More importantly, however, there was the issue of credibility with state-funded media abroad. As long as a station was government-funded, it came across as a propaganda tool to foreign audiences.³⁰³ The overall goal thus had to be for external propaganda to be able to sustain itself rather than depend on increasing handouts from the domestic propaganda sector.

The link between credibility and Party ownership of the media was also taken up by several others in the early 21st century. The timing was no coincidence: The “Three Represents” had allowed entrepreneurs to join the Party and had given private business more legitimacy. In addition, China was looking to restructure its media sector in anticipation of the WTO entry. In 2001, Wu Zheng 吴征 (Bruno Wu), founder of the Sun Media Group, Ltd. (*Yangguang meiti jituan* 阳光媒体集团)³⁰⁴ called for the capitalization (*chanyehua* 产业化) of Chinese media. His goal was to weaken the monopoly of state media and their power to suppress private or semi-private media. While he admitted that China would have to continue to rely on state media for its international communication, it should also rely on conglomerates, like a Chinese BBC or CNN.³⁰⁵ The government needed to create a number of big media conglomerates and then encourage them to “go out.”³⁰⁶ In the same book, Wu argued that China should primarily focus on its image as a “developing country making constant progress” and de-emphasize “socialist China.”³⁰⁷ This, according to Wu, was necessary for two reasons: First, because China should focus on one strong message (developing China) rather than

³⁰² Ibid., 23.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ See “Yangguang meiti jituan jianjie” 阳光媒体集团简介 [Brief introduction to China Sun Media Group], http://www.chinasunmedia.com/html/2013/summarize_0125/6.html, accessed February 7, 2013. The media group has no relation to the British tabloid *The Sun*.

³⁰⁵ Wu Zheng, *Zhongguo de daguo diwei yu guoji chuanbo zhanlüe*, 113.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 140-141.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 73-74.

equally stressing different aspects of China's image, and, second, because too much ideological content, which inevitably came with the focus on socialism, caused foreigners to reject Chinese external propaganda.

As will become clear in the next part, by the early 21st century, the tone of the debate on external propaganda had taken yet another turn, and different kinds of strategic adaptations in order to raise the credibility of China's media were again on the table.

6.7 Conclusions

At the beginning of the 1990s, a number of new targets and means of external propaganda were defined, some of which remained valid for the rest of the Jiang era whereas others changed or were supplemented as China began to make long-term plans again. During the 1990s, Chinese media were expected to "enter mainstream Western society" and to create a favorable public opinion environment for China's continued economic reforms. The most important changes during the period 1990 to 1994 were institutionalizing press conferences and the release of white books at OEP/SCIO. At the time, the newly founded institution did not do much else and largely dealt with imminent problems. The overall change from reactive to proactive policy in the field of propaganda was reflected in external propaganda work. After 1994, the CPC began to think about what it wanted and could achieve through external propaganda in the long run. Towards the end of the century, external propaganda, moreover, came to be thought of as an important instrument in what was presented as a long-term new "Cold War" against China.

In the time after 1989 external propaganda work was both strengthened and weakened: On the one hand, the sector had clearly regained in importance. A new small group was formed in order to deal with the negative fallout of the Tiananmen crackdown and facilitate China's diplomatic reintegration into the world, and various new initiatives were launched. On the other hand, however, domestic propaganda was unequivocally redefined as vital for the survival of the CPC, thus cementing and expanding domestic propaganda's institutional upgrade of 1987. External propaganda would not become an independent field, but a subfield of domestic propaganda. The fact that domestic propaganda set the

agenda showed in various ways. From the point of view of periodization, if for domestic propaganda the key years were 1992 and 1994, for external propaganda they were 1994 (key conference) and 1996 (cementing the new macro plans with internal PBSC approval). From the point of view of the CPC, domestic propaganda was clearly a more imminent security concern, and the fact that external propaganda often adapted the overall direction and policy slogans from the domestic propaganda sector meant that the latter determined the debate. Of course, domestic propaganda units were also incentivized to make their reporting more palatable, but domestically, different media with different functions were involved, many with their own motivations to become more appealing to readers. For external propaganda, the main groups were concentrated at the Center, close to the Party, most obliged to present the point of view of the CPC and least incentivized to go against the rules.

Moreover, the events of 1989 clearly brought back polemical tit-for-tat struggle against hostile forces. Policy documents show that the CPC was aware that its overreactions often had unintended consequences by drawing attention to “hostile forces.” Quite a few people in the external propaganda sector were also aware that such responses, far from elevating China’s standing in the eyes of foreigners, actually diminished it, but in crisis mode, the value that China needed to be principled (*jiang yuanze* 讲原则) trumped other considerations. The overall political climate thus often dictated a martial tone in China’s external propaganda. The affirmation of external propaganda as an important task in early 1996 did not lead to an overall toning down of “crisis mode” rhetoric. On the contrary; Xinhua releases instead indicate that as China became more confident it had weathered the worst crises, the CPC’s rhetoric towards the outside world became more martial again.

Throughout all of the 1990s, except for a brief period in parts of 1997 and 1998, the discourse centered on ideological struggle dominated or at least influenced all topics that could be discussed. Particularly the year 1998 showed that with enough political will, the aggressive tone adopted in “high politics” mode could be limited to a minimum. As Zhao Qizheng took over and the Party Center as a whole had a strong interest in holding its conversations in an “apolitical” manner, there was room for pushing a number of changes that went

against established domestic propaganda principles, practices, and norms. Nonetheless, in many ways, the optimism of this time came back with a vengeance in 1999, when the theme to remain vigilant in the face of hostile forces' continued ambitions to weaken or even destroy China returned. Although this theme has since been stressed to different degrees at different points in time and in different contexts, it has not been challenged. For all intents and purposes, the CPC still sees itself in the same situation as in 1989, with the only difference that the power balance between the two dialectic poles (China versus hostile forces) has shifted significantly in China's favor. Whether or not individual members of the CPC believe that the West wages a new Cold War against China is irrelevant.

In 1999, external propaganda was publicly affirmed by Jiang, ending the 1990s with a strong endorsement of external propaganda work from the highest levels that translated into a number of new policies in the first few years of the millennium. At the same time, with the beginning debate on China's rise, the focus of the external propaganda debate shifted again. In the 21st century, the search of the CPC for legitimacy and international standing became one of the most important domestic factors impacting policy making in a number of arenas. Especially after 2002, regaining great power status became an increasingly important topic. Although there were no public redefinitions of external propaganda between 1999 and 2002, and Jiang Zemin's speech remained the main point of reference for all authors discussing external propaganda work, internally, external propaganda began to be linked to China's rise both in a negative and in a positive sense. As will be seen below, many of the slogans used in the 1990s as well as their underlying policies were recycled in the 21st century. By then, the CPC had reframed external propaganda as a security issue and thus theoretically had the political will to back significant external propaganda reforms. These changes will be the topic of the final part of this dissertation.

Part III

“Coordinating the Domestic and the International” on the Road to Great Power Status

The Dilemmas of External Propaganda in the 21st Century

7 External Propaganda as a Security Issue: Reasons and Consequences

“If [Western hostile forces’] scheme to destroy China’s image succeeds, this will turn China into an international pariah whose cause is perceived as unjust. If, furthermore, they even succeed in ‘containing China’s development’ and cause China to have no power, the Chinese people will not be able to take their destiny into their own hands and will inevitably be bound to repeat the history of national humiliation.”¹

In 2001, Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, the former head of the Research Bureau of the Central Office of External Propaganda, published a series of articles in *External Propaganda Reference* in which he explained the “China threat theory” to the journal’s readers, i.e. what China considers to be the intentional spreading of fear about China by Western hostile forces in order to disrupt China’s ascent. Sha finished his series on a dramatic note with the quote above: Unless China succeeded in protecting its image against the attacks of Western enemies, it was doomed to repeat its history of humiliation. The term Sha used to describe the likelihood of adverse consequences –*biran* 必然– added to the urgency: Failure to improve external propaganda and stop hostile forces’ smears would inevitably, according to the objective laws of the universe, lead to more humiliation of the Chinese people.

After the importance of external propaganda had been affirmed several times over the course of the 1990s, Sha’s comments show that at the beginning of the 21st century, the conversation on external propaganda had been taken to a new level. A former external propaganda official, Sha clearly had an interest in exaggerating rather than understating the importance of protecting China’s image. By late 2003, however, Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 also declared external propaganda to be

¹ Chinese quote: “如果它们破坏中国国际形象地图谋得逞，便会使中国在世人心目中变成一个“无理无义”的国家，在世界上“失道寡助”；如果再能“遏制中国的发展”，使它没有实力，中国人民就会难以掌握自己的命运，必然要重蹈民族遭受耻辱的历史。” Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (xia)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析（下） [A critical analysis of Western media's spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part three of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 6 (2001): 9.

a matter of China's national security and domestic stability,² confirming that external propaganda had, in fact, taken on an unprecedented role in China's plans for the 21st century and had been linked to the fate of the nation and the Party.

The last part of the dissertation will analyze why and how external propaganda has come to play such an important role in the realization of China's strategic goals, how the upgrade has been reflected in actual initiatives, and will explain both successes and limitations in adapting China's external propaganda apparatus. This first chapter of the last part will begin by providing the necessary background on China's goals for the 21st century and the Communist Party of China's (CPC) official evaluation of the international environment in which it has to operate. It will then explain the official role external propaganda occupies in this grand scheme of things as well as how the upgrade in importance came about and was presented publically in 2003 and 2004. Finally, I will give an overview of subsequent developments, which should be seen as the outcome of the theoretical and rhetorical elevation of external propaganda. In sum, this chapter seeks to answer two questions: Why was external propaganda defined as a matter of national security and social stability, and what consequences did this have? The chapter will show that external propaganda work has a number of interrelated functions in the CPC's plan for China's future, but that perhaps the most important, ultimately justifying the upgrade, was the project to preemptively shift the power balance in what China calls the "international public opinion environment." Thus, external propaganda, among other things, can be interpreted as the most proactive step of the CPC in securing its power base in China, both against potential foreign and domestic challenges.

7.1 The International Situation

In order to understand China's take on external propaganda and why it is important, it is crucial to know its official stance on the international environment in which it has to work. This provides the basics for its external propaganda strategy: It defines who is friend and who is foe, what the most pressing challenges to China's development are, and how China can go about solving them.

² Yang Guoren 杨国仁 and Ding Wenkui 丁文奎, "Fuwu da waixuan - 2005 nian yuandan xianci" 服务大外宣—2005年元旦献辞 [Serving big external propaganda - 2005 new year's message], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2005): 1-5.

As explained above, these kinds of evaluations are based on an ideological matrix that weaves together older principles of Marxism-Leninism, their Chinese adaptations, and a large number of bits and pieces discussed by scholars and policy-makers abroad.

Although the international situation can, under normal circumstances (*pubian* 普遍), only play a secondary role in Chinese affairs and, as an external factor, can influence and restrict, but not determine the existence and development of China and Chinese society,³ it is the largest unit of analysis in the universe of dialectic materialism and historical materialism and thus the ultimate “overall unit” (*zhengti* 整体) whose correct understanding is the key to understanding everything else in the world. More importantly, with the integration of the idea of globalization into the CPC’s official ideology, the CPC has formally acknowledged that China and the world have become more intertwined, increasing the number of instances where “external” factors can influence domestic affairs. Consequently, correctly understanding the world is a high priority in the CPC’s ideological universe. This analysis is based on the assumption that the CPC as a Communist Party has an authoritative evaluation of reality, which formally serves as the basis for policy making.

With the principal contradiction no longer declared and basic world contradictions de-emphasized, the most general unit in objective reality that needs to be evaluated is called *xingshi* 形势, which can be forcibly translated as “situation,” or “circumstances” when such a translation is mandated, but which is actually difficult to render in a single term. *Xingshi* is defined as “the ‘current state’ (*zhuangkuang* 状况) and ‘trend’ (*qushi* 趋势) of the development and change of a thing.”⁴ In other words, an evaluation of the *xingshi* is supposed to provide both an abstract snapshot of the current situation the world finds itself in

³ Based on the premise (expressed by Mao) that external factors can only exert influence by going through internal factors. Cf. entry “Neiyin yu waiyin” 内因与外因 [Internal factors and external factors] in *Zhexue da cidian, Zhongguo zhexue shi juan bianji weiyuanhui* 《哲学大辞典·中国哲学史卷》编辑委员会编 [Editorial committee for the *Dictionary of philosophy, Volume on the history of Chinese philosophy*], ed., *Zhexue da cidian, Makesi zhuyi zhexue juan* 哲学大辞典, 马克思主义哲学卷 [Dictionary of philosophy, volume on Marxist philosophy] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1990), 113.

⁴ Entry “Xingshi” 形势 [Situation] in *Xinhua cidian* 新华词典 [New China dictionary], ed. Shangwu yinshuguan cishu yanjiu zhongxin 商务印书馆辞书研究中心 [Research center for dictionaries of the Commercial Press] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2001), 1100.

and, as things constantly change, assess the direction in which it is moving.⁵ The normative statements (master text building blocks) made about the *xingshi* in official texts are often very general, which makes some decoding of what is actually meant and against what background a statement was formed helpful.

According to the official evaluation, there were three major changes in the overall world situation since the beginning of the post-Mao period. The first, and most important, was the breaking apart of the bipolar world order and the beginning of a transition (or trend, *qushi*) towards a multi-polar world order, which is still continuing today. The second, less dramatic but still important, was the post-9/11 readjustment undertaken by the United States (U.S.) of its national interests and global presence (seen as an attempt by the U.S. to push the world further in the direction of unipolarity), which became visible around 2002.⁶ The third major change was the reshuffling of the global economic order following the 2008 financial crisis, which sped up the trend of multi-polarization, as it weakened the U.S. economy and consequently made the U.S. push for a uni-polar world more difficult while at the same time strengthening China in relative terms.⁷

⁵ According to a more concrete explanation for propaganda workers by Ding Guan'gen, the Politburo member heading the Propaganda and Thought Work LSG between 1992 and 2002, the *xingshi* basically subsume everything: "geographic situation, military situation, power balance, achievements, problems, internal factors, the development of things." The term *xingshi* can be divided into its two constituent characters, *xing* and *shi*. *Xing* refers to *xingxiang* 形象, or *xingtǐ* 形体, that which is real, which can be seen and can be touched, i.e. things that can be experienced through sensory perception. *Shi* 势, on the other hand, designates that which has not yet materialized, but which can already be felt or, rather, estimated. Through properly seeing the *xing*, it becomes possible to correctly estimate (*guji* 估计) the *shi*. In this division, *shi* are consequently associated with theoretical understanding (*lixing renshi* 理性认识), of which only the CPC is capable. Once *xing* and *shi* are clear, the direction of work (*gongzuo fangxiang* 工作方向), responsibilities (*renwu* 任务), and policy measures (*duice* 对策 and *cuoshi* 措施) can, in theory, be easily defined. Cf. Dai Zhou 戴舟, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 党的建设与宣传思想工作 [Party-building and propaganda and thought work] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1995), 298.

⁶ According to one assessment, namely Sa Benwang 萨本望, "Dui 2002 nian guoji xingshi de ji dian qianjian" 对 2002 年国际形势的几点浅见 [Some humble opinions on the international situation in 2002], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2003): 44. An assessment from 2003 stated that, unlike the changes in early 1990s, the U.S.'s post-9/11 readjustment of its global strategy did not cause any major changes in the "world situation" (Cf. "Hunan shengwei fushuji Wen Xuande tan kaichuang waixuan xin geju" 湖南省委副书记文选德谈开创外宣新格局 [Deputy party secretary of Hunan province Wen Xuande speaks about how to create a new external propaganda pattern], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2003): 1).

⁷ For instance, one article remarks that European countries continue to ask China for help even three years after the crisis, thus contributing to continued multipolarization. Pei Guangjiang 裴广江 et al., "Women, chumo shijie" 我们, 触摸世界 [Us, touching the world], *Renmin ribao*, December 29, 2011, 23. Also see Ye Zicheng, "Further Thoughts on the Life Expectancy of

In the following, I will briefly distinguish between different segments of the master text on the international situation currently forming the official basis for Party policy and articulated in speeches and other official texts on a regular basis. In addition, I will explain the implications each theme has for Chinese policy. The master text on the world situation is flexible to a degree, depending on which target audience is addressed and which policy is to be defended, but this is done primarily by emphasizing or de-emphasizing particular building blocks. It is thus also a typical “consensus text” that accommodates different positions within the Party and material that can be used in the two basic modes of conversation, i.e. that focused on harmony cooperation and that focused on struggle and confrontation.

Theme I: The International Situation is complicated and volatile

The current overall assessment consists of two parts, most likely intended, among other things, as a justification for why certain core categories important during the Mao period and the 1980s are no longer officially defined by the CPC, namely, first, the principal world contradiction, and, second, the world pattern: First, “the international situation is complex” (*guoji xingshi cuozong fuza* 国际形势错综复杂)⁸ and, second, “the current world is undergoing broad and profound changes” (*dangjin shijie zhengzai fasheng guangfan er shenke de bianhua* 当今世界正在发生广泛而深刻的变化).⁹ The precise formulation is not as important in this case as in many others. While the outcome of the change is clearly defined in official discourse (the world is constantly developing towards multipolarity),¹⁰ the

U.S. Hegemony,” in *Inside China’s Grand Strategy: The Perspective from the People’s Republic* (University Press of Kentucky, 2010), xi-xii.

⁸ 42 hits between 1991 and 2011 in the *People’s Daily* database (plus 3 from before 1991). E.g. Benkan pinglunyan 本报评论员 [Commentator from this paper], “Shenru xuexi Hu Jintao zongshuji zai Zhongyang dangxia zhongyao jiang hua zhi qi” 深入学习胡锦涛总书记在中央党校重要讲话之七 [Seventh instalment of in-depth study of General Secretary Hu Jintao’s important speech at the Central Party School], *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报 [People’s Daily], August 13, 2007, 1.

⁹ 59 hits between 2000 and 2011 in the *People’s Daily* database. E.g. Dai Bingguo 戴秉国, “Jianchi heping fazhan daolu” 坚持和平发展道路 [Adhere to the road of peaceful development], *Renmin ribao*, December 13, 2010, 6.; Zheng Jian 郑剑, “Chuangzao huihuang yongbao mengxiang” 创造辉煌 拥抱梦想 [Create brilliance; embrace the dream], *Renmin ribao*, January 2, 2008, 7.

¹⁰ See for example Benkan pinglunyan, “Shenru xuexi Hu Jintao zongshuji zai Zhongyang dangxia zhongyao jiang hua zhi qi.”

time frame is not, and neither is the length and gravity of temporary setbacks. The main implication of this statement for China is that the country needs to be flexible and “go with the times” (*yu shi jujin* 与时俱进)¹¹ so that it can quickly adapt to new situations and seize every opportunity to strengthen itself.

Theme II: There is a trend toward multi-polarization and economic globalization

Owing to the consensus that in the current world there is no stable world pattern comparable to the bipolar Yalta System, general trends are important. Trends designate the overall direction into which the development of a thing is moving in the long run, usually amongst setbacks. In the current situation, there are two general trends, both of which are officially defined as inevitable, one that sums up the development of the political world order, namely multipolarization (*shijie duojihua* 世界多极化), and one that refers to the development of the economic world order, namely economic globalization (*jingji quanqiu hua* 经济全球化).

As explained above (chapter 4.1), in the CPC’s official evaluation of international politics, the U.S. tries to push the world towards unipolarity, whereas China works towards multipolarization, the “correct” direction of historical development.¹² The statement that there is a trend towards multipolarization does two things: First, it affirms that the world continues to move in a direction that is favorable towards China and, second, it affirms that the CPC continues to be on the right side of history and –as opposed to the United States– pursues a path that takes human history to a new level. This does not mean, however, that China can

¹¹ The slogan “go with the times” was introduced by Jiang Zemin in 2000 and 2001, among others to justify his “three represents.” The slogan is considered Jiang Zemin’s contribution to Party theory alongside Mao’s “liberate the mind” (*jiefang sixiang* 解放思想) and Deng’s “seek truth from facts” (*shi shi qiu shi* 实事求是). Cf. “Jiang Zemin tongzhi shouxian tichu yu shi jujin, ta yu jiefang sixiang, shishi qiushi shi tongyi xulie de kexue gainian” 江泽民同志首先提出与时俱进, 它与解放思想、实事求是是同一序列的科学概念 [Jiang Zemin first raises going with the times; this is a scientific concept of the same order of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts], *People’s Daily Online*, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2012/1022/c350532-19344793.html>, accessed February 21, 2013.

¹² For instance, voices from the American media pushing the “China threat theory” are called “voices going against the historical tide” (*ni lishi chaoliu de zaoyin* 逆历史潮流的噪音). Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (shang)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析 (上) [A critical analysis of Western media’s spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part one of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2001): 5.

simply sit back and watch history take the right turn, as the actions the country and its people take can speed up or slow down the trend. The most important implication for China is that precisely because there is no absolutely stable world order, all countries are trying to advance as much as possible to maximize their interests and get as big as possible of a share of the future power pie.

Economic globalization is considered a new stage in the internationalization of economic relations. Although it is an objective trend, it is happening while the old international economic order has not yet fundamentally changed; the biggest profiteers of economic globalization are therefore the developed countries. For this reason, economic globalization is a double-edged sword. Since globalization is an inevitable trend, however, China must be a part and cannot simply shut itself off from the rest of the world. Thus, China's participation in the world economy can no longer be questioned; all that is up for debate is the *degree* of participation. A third trend, which is not officially called a trend but is always mentioned directly after multipolarization and globalization, is the “scientific and technological revolution.”¹³ This means that China is under enormous pressure to keep up or even place itself ahead of the rest of the world. Finally, one vital implication of the changes in the fields of the economy as well as science and technology for China is increased interdependence. Each country is engaged in cooperation and competition for its own interests, but while doing so, countries have to take into account the fact that simply weakening another power by all means possible will not necessarily and directly increase one's own power and strength. Despite taking interdependence into account, China continues to see itself in a situation of fierce international competition. In the mid-1990s, China had declared that the main focus of this competition was the economy. By the 21st century, the economy was still considered important, but now the CPC also focuses on competition in other aspects of each country's “comprehensive powers” (*zonghe guoli* 综合国力).

¹³ E.g. “Hu Jintao: Zhuazhu xin yi lun shijie keji geming zhanlue jiyu cong gongye daguo xiang gongye qianguo zhuanbian” 胡锦涛：抓住新一轮世界科技革命战略机遇 从工业大国向工业强国转变 [Seize the new round of strategic opportunities in the world revolution of science and technology; turn (China) from a major industrial country into an industrial power], *Dongfang zaobao* 东方早报 [Oriental Morning Post], May 30, 2012, available online at http://epaper.dfdaily.com/dfzb/html/2012-05/30/content_628167.htm, accessed March 2, 2013.

Theme III: Peace and Development Remain the Themes and the Trend of the Times

When Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 spoke of peace and development in 1985, he actually referred to two different though related things.¹⁴ First, he defined peace and development as the two main **problems** humanity was faced with that needed to be solved and that therefore China, too, should focus on. At the same time, however, Deng Xiaoping wanted to reduce the military budget and had to offer an ideological justification why it was safe for China to do so against the backdrop of an established ideological consensus that for as long as imperialism existed, war was inevitable. Therefore, he also re-evaluated objective reality and argued that peace and developments were the **trends** of the time, i.e. a direction into which the world was moving. So, on the one hand, peace and development are issues that need to be tackled, which is why they are problems (or the themes of the times); on the other hand, the overall climate today, as opposed to during the Cold War is more favorable towards peace and development, which constitute the direction into which the world will inevitably keep moving, thus making them the main trend. These two sides of the coin have survived in the present master text in the form of two dictums:

1. Peace and development are still the **main themes** (*zhuti* 主题) of the present era, i.e. the two remain the most important problems in the world.¹⁵ The

¹⁴ A number of articles indicate that “peace and development” as themes, trends, and characteristics are frequently confused. See for example Chen Yue 陈岳, “Ruhe renshi shidai tezheng he shijie zhuti” 如何认识时代特征和世界主题 [How to understand the characteristics of the times and world themes], *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi* 世界经济与政治 [Economy and politics of the world], no. 2 (2002), <http://www.irchina.org/xueren/china/view.asp?id=329>, accessed July 30, 2011.

¹⁵ 和平与发展是当代世界的主题 was first mentioned in the *People's Daily* in Zhao Ziyang's report to the 1987 Party Congress. In the immediate aftermath of 1989, the slogan was initially used to explain why China had let its guard down towards “peaceful evolution” after having lived in peace for a while. Cf. Jie Xi 解犀 and Shi Lu 施路, “Pingbao ‘beiwanglu’ – Jian da ‘jieyan budui bu rushing shiufou hui fasheng fan geming baoluan’ deng yiwen” 平暴“备忘录”——兼答“戒严部队不入城是否会发生反革命暴乱”等疑问 [“Memorandum” of quelling the riots – Plus answers to questions such as “If the martial law troops had not entered the city, could anti-revolutionary riots have happened?”], *Renmin ribao*, July 26, 1989, 1. Less than a month later, however, it was again used in the regular manner, asserting that the international situation had not undergone any major changes. See Li Peng's analysis of *guoji xingshi* as cited in Chen Yun 陈芸 and Yang Guojun 杨国钧, “Li Peng zongli zai guowuyuan quanti huiyi shang shuo nian nei jingji gongzuo zhongdian reng shi san jian shi jixu wending wujia, zhengqu nongye hao shoucheng, huanjie zong gonggei zong xuqiu maodun Guowuyuan jue ding zuzhi qicao san nian Zhili zhengdun jihua mingque san nian hou mubiao” 李鹏总理在国务院全体会议上说 年内经济工作重点仍是三件事 继续稳定物价, 争取农业好收成,

current themes (i.e. problems) of the times, peace and development, are complementary. Peace is a prerequisite (*qianti tiaojian* 前提条件) for development, and developing the economy is an important basis for maintaining world peace. The main obstacles in the way of realizing peace and development are “hegemonism and power politics,” though “unstable and unpredictable factors” can also be listed as the main threat whenever China wants to de-emphasize the theme of confrontation with the U.S. The implication for China is that it has to officially work towards making a contribution to peace and development of the world through both its domestic and foreign policy by developing China and by fighting against hegemonism, which is officially seen as the source of most conflicts. Thus, striving for peace not only implies that China has to avoid conflict, but also that it has to counter hegemonism and power politics, which at times can mean becoming more assertive or even getting into confrontations. This, however, excludes military confrontations, which are to be avoided at –almost– all costs.¹⁶

2. Peace and development are the **characteristics** (*tezheng* 特征) and **trends** (*qushi*) of the era. This formulation refers not to subjective goals, but to objective reality: In comparison to earlier times, the world is much more focused on working towards peace and development; there is no imminent threat of a war. This theme is today often expressed in the formulation “peace, development, and cooperation are **irresistible trends** of the times.”¹⁷ The addition of cooperation to

缓解总供给总需求矛盾 国务院决定组织起草三年治理整顿计划明确三年后目标 [Premier Li Peng said in the plenary meeting of the State Council that the economic priorities for the year are still three things: to continue to stabilize prices, to strive for a good harvest in agriculture, and to ease the contradiction between aggregate supply and aggregate demand; the State Council decided to organize the drafting of a three-year rectification plan and to define the goals for after three years], *Renmin ribao*, August 16, 1989, 1. In the early 1990s Chinese officials also used it to stress that the end of the Cold War had not resolved the problems of peace and development. Cf. Dai Zhou, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 100. The normative statement “peace and development are the main themes of the times” began to appear in the RMRB in the mid- to late 1990s in the formulation “peace and development are **still** the main themes of the times”. This statement was made by Jiang Zemin at the 49th anniversary of the founding of the PRC (cf. Benkan jizhe 本刊记者 [Reporter from this journal], “Wang Wei guanyu dangqian duiwai xuanchuan sikao” 王微关于当前对外宣传思考 [Wang Wei’s thoughts on current external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (1990): 7. Also see the full text “China’s Peaceful Development (Road)” from 2005 and 2011.

¹⁶ The exception is, of course, a declaration of Taiwanese independence.

¹⁷ “和平、发展、合作是不可阻挡的世界潮流” E.g. in Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi 国务院新闻办公室 [State Council Information Office], “Zhongguo de heping fazhan” 中国的和平发展 [China’s peaceful development], Website of the Chinese government, September 6, 2011, available online at http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2011-09/06/content_1941204.htm, accessed February 12, 2013.

the master text was not yet there in Jiang Zemin's 江泽民 report at the 16th Party Congress, but was highlighted by Hu Jintao in his report at the 17th Party Congress in 2007. It is part of a new master text on China's "peaceful development" that will be addressed again below. The affirmation of peace, development and cooperation as the trends or characteristics of the present era is primarily meant to confirm China's current line of peaceful development as correct and to emphasize that China needs to continue on this path.

Theme IVa: Hegemonism and Power Politics Continue to Exist (Competition and confrontation)

Hegemonism (*baquan zhuyi* 霸权主义) and power politics (*qiangquan zhengzhi* 强权政治) are most often defined as the two main threats to international security and to world peace and the two greatest obstacles to solving the problems standing in the way of peace and development. They are usually juxtaposed to peace and development through the term *tongshi* 同时 (while, meanwhile).¹⁸ This theme is basically a watered-down version of the previously dominant evaluation that for as long as imperialism exists, war is inevitable: Hegemonism has replaced imperialism; it no longer makes peace impossible, but it does threaten the peaceful coexistence of nations in the world. The complaint about hegemonism mainly refers to the United States' ambitions for global hegemony. This evaluation of the world is reflected in China's principle (*fangzhen* 方针) to oppose hegemonism and power politics and to work towards strengthening the trend of multi-polarization. The theme of hegemonism and power politics, which should be considered the more dominant evaluation of the main threats, thus highlights China's competition with the U.S. By contrast, the second threat to peace and development, which is less orthodox and established but cited increasingly often, highlights China's need and willingness to work with the U.S. and other countries to combat common threats:

¹⁸ E.g. Guo Jiping 国纪平, "Gongtong wei hu shijie heping wending" 共同维护世界和平稳定 [Jointly safeguard world peace and stability], *Renmin Ribao*, December 6, 2007, 3; Dai Zhou, *Dang de jianshe yu xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 100; Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, "Dui shiji chu guoji yulun xingshi ji yingdui cuoshi de ji dian sikao" 对世纪初国际舆论形式及应对措施的一点思考 [Reflections on form of international public opinion and response measures in the beginning of the century], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2000): 9.

Theme IVb: Unstable and Unpredictable Factors are on the Rise (Cooperation)

The stress on “unstable and unpredictable factors” and non-traditional security problems in the international environment affecting international security is the second opposite to the trend of peace and development that is linked with a while/meanwhile (*tongshi*) alternatively to “hegemonism and power politics.” Between the two options, this one is clearly less confrontational towards the U.S. and is used most often on occasions in which China is cooperating with the U.S. (at least formally) against a third party.¹⁹ This theme is also generally more likely to be stressed in texts aimed at the international community or specific regions whenever the main theme is cooperation.²⁰ The main characteristic of non-traditional security problems (terrorism, but also others, such as cybercrime, environmental degradation, refugees, etc.) is that they are transnational problems and require cooperation.²¹

In sum, China finds itself in a world that is complicated and has no clearly identifiable power pattern. With the political world order moving towards multipolarity, competition is fierce as all countries try to grab as big a chunk of the power pie as possible. While doing so, however, they are constrained by interdependence, the fact that their interests have become entangled with other countries’ interests. The position that the overall evaluation of the current world is supposed to buttress is that China is facing a “window of opportunity” to develop itself and, in fact, has to do so if it wants to survive politically, but that this cannot be a smooth enterprise all the way. China needs to be prepared to deal both with long-term problems and with difficulties that might arise unexpectedly.

¹⁹ Such as the Six Party Talks or other Non-Proliferation Issues. E.g. “Statement by Head of the Chinese Delegation Mr. Zhang Yan in the General Debate at the 2005 NPT Review Conference” New York, May 3, 2005, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/disarmament_armscontrol/npt/t194106.htm, accessed October 11, 2011.

²⁰ E.g. “Guanyu jiaqiang fei chuantong anquan lingyu hezuo de Zhongfang lichang” 关于加强非传统安全领域合作的中方立场文件 [About documents on strengthening China’s position on cooperation in the field of non-traditional security], Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa_chn/ziliao_611306/tytj_611312/zcwj_611316/t4547.shtml, accessed February 14, 2013; Hu Jintao 胡锦涛, “Tuidong gongtong fazhan, gongjian hexie yazhou – zai Bo’ao yazhou luntan 2011 nian nianhui kaibushi shang de yanjiang” 推动共同发展 共建和谐亚洲——在博鳌亚洲论坛二〇一一年年会开幕式上的演讲 [Promoting common development and building a harmonious Asia - Speech at the opening ceremony of the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia 2011], *Renmin ribao*, April 16, 2011, 1.

²¹ See for example Gu Ping 古平, “Lun guoji jushi de ji ge tedian” 论国际局势的几个特点 [On a few characteristics of the international situation], *Renmin ribao*, April 3, 2002, 3.

7.2 The CPC's Goals in the 21st Century

According to its own *official* definition, the CPC does not have any interests of its own other than to serve the people and the greater public good (*gong* 公).²² However, in order to be able to do so, it needs to stay in power. In 2004, the CPC for the first time admitted that its own status as Party in power was not secure and embarked on a major project exploring how it could strengthen its own power base (*zhizheng jichu* 执政基础). The Party issued a document in which it admitted publically that, although its rule was a “historical choice and the choice of the people”²³ its ruling position was neither inherent nor guaranteed.²⁴

China as a nation, in turn, officially pursues three main, interlinked goals that derive from the “three grand tasks of the 1980s”: development, unification, and protecting world peace. All three “grand tasks” are mutually connected, and are linked to the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese people” (*Zhonghua minzu weida fuxing* 中华民族伟大复兴): In order to achieve rejuvenation, China needs to be strengthened as a country (*qiang guo* 强国) and the Chinese people need to become rich (*fu min* 富民). The first is achieved through reunification and increasing China's international influence, the second is primarily realized through development.

The first is economic development, the “core responsibility” (*zhongxin renwu* 中心任务) derived from the principal contradiction in Chinese society (cf. chapter 4.1) and reaffirmed as the “top priority” (*di yi yaowu* 第一要务) of the Party at the 16th Party Congress in 2002.²⁵ For obvious reasons, detailed plans

²² The slogan summing this up is 立党为公、执政为民. See for example Qiu Zhaomin 邱兆敏, “Dui woguo zhengfu xinwen fabu gongzuo de sikao” 对我国政府新闻发布工作的思考 [Thoughts on the news release work of the Chinese government], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2004): 21.

²³ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe de jue ding (quanwen)” 中共中央关于加强党的执政能力建设的决定（全文） [Decision of the CPC Central Committee on strengthening the building of the Party's ability to rule (full text)], passed September 19, 2004 at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee, <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/2004/Sep/668376.htm>, accessed November 19, 2012.

²⁴ Cf. Heike Holbig and Bruce Gilley. “Reclaiming Legitimacy in China,” *Politics and Policy* 38, no. 3 (2010): 397.

²⁵ See Qin Xuan 秦宣, “Fazhan shi zhizheng xingguo de di yi yaowu (zhuti yuedu)” 发展是执政兴国的第一要务（主题阅读） [Development is the top priority in governing and rejuvenating (reading of the main topics [of the Party Congress])], originally published in *Renmin wenzhai*

regarding China's future development strategy and concrete goals are guarded, even for domestic development. Nonetheless, it is possible to gather some information on China's ambitions and plans for the future. The current goal for 2020 is to build a "moderately prosperous society of a higher level" (*geng gao shuiping de xiaokang shehui* 更高水平的小康社会). Deng Xiaoping had first articulated a three-step-plan (*san bu zou* 三步走) for China's development in 1987.²⁶ In 1991, a research team comprising cadres from 12 different central units was tasked with determining measurable targets or basic standards (*jiben biao zhun* 基本标准) to be fulfilled in order to be able to speak of a "moderately prosperous society" (*xiaokang shehui* 小康社会). At the 15th Party Congress in 1997, Jiang Zemin defined a new three-step-plan for the 21st century: The first step would be to double the Gross National Product (GNP) between 2001 and 2010. The second and the third step are not defined in precise terms (at least not in openly available sources), but take the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC (2021) and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (2049) as benchmarks.²⁷

Under the Hu-Wen leadership, the concrete goals were adapted and corrected a number of times. At the 2004 Bo'ao Forum (*Bo'ao luntan* 博鳌论坛), an economic forum launched by China as an alternative to Davos in 2001,²⁸ Hu

人民文摘 [People's digest], no. 11, 2002, available on *People's Daily* Online, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper2086/7638/730508.html>, accessed February 12, 2013.

²⁶ In 1980, China's annual per capita income had been at \$250. The first step was to double it over the course of the 1980s to \$500. The second step would be to double it again and reach \$1000 by the end of the 20th century (which would mean entry into a moderately well-off society for China). The third step was to double the per capita income twice to \$4000 until 2030 or 2050. Cf. "San bu zou de fazhan zhanlüe mubiao" 三步走的发展战略目标 [The strategic development goals of going in three steps], in *Deng Xiaoping lilun xiao cidian* 邓小平理论小辞典 [Dictionary of Deng Xiaoping theory], Xinhuanet, August 20, 2004. http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2004-10/28/content_2148526_11.htm, accessed June 12, 2012.

²⁷ See Wu Guoyou 武国友, "Jiang Zemin 'xiao san bu zou' zhanlüe sixiang guanyu fazhan de silu ji qi lilun jiazhi" 江泽民'小三步走'战略也思想关于发展的思路及其理论价值 [Jiang Zemin's 'little three step plan' on the thinking on development and its theoretical value], *Beijing jiaotong daxue xuebao* 北京交通大学学报 (社会科学版) [Journal of Beijing Jiaotong University (Social Sciences Edition)] 10, no. 3 (2011).

²⁸ Cf. Yanzhong Huang and Sheng Ding, "Dragon's Underbelly: An Analysis of China's Soft Power," *EAST ASIA* 23, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 31. In the *China Daily*, the Bo'ao Forum for Asia is described as a "non-government and non-profit international organization" whose aim is to bring about economic exchange and cooperation between Asian countries, and between Asia and the world. It organizes annual conferences that take place in Bo'ao, Hainan. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-04/11/content_433151.htm, accessed 24.08.2007.

Jintao announced that China would achieve a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$3,000 by 2020. This goal was referred to as “building a well-off society in an all-round way” (*quanmian jianshe xiaokang shehui* 全面建设小康社会)²⁹ at the 16th Party Congress in 2002. At the 30th anniversary of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Party Committee on December 28, 2008, after China had reached this goal twelve years ahead of schedule, Hu Jintao announced China’s new development goals for both centenaries:³⁰ by 2021 (2020), China was to have achieved a moderately prosperous society of a higher level (*geng gao shuiping de xiaokang shehui* 更高水平的小康社会), and by 2049 (2050), China should have basically realized modernization (*jiben shang shixian xiandaihua* 基本上实现现代化).³¹ Wen Jiabao 温家宝 explained at a press conference in 2010 that this only referred to a “developed country of medium level” (*zhongdeng fada de guojia* 中等发达的国家). Because of unequal development, it would take at least another one hundred years for China to have “truly achieved modernization.”³²

The second goal is national unification, with the main focus, of course, on Taiwan, but also including Hong Kong and Macao and potential hot spots such as Tibet and Xinjiang, where national unity needs to be maintained.

Unification, seen as another vital step in turning China into a “strong country,” similarly lacks a clearly defined timetable, despite the fact that officially, China still seeks a “final solution” (*zuizhong jieju* 最终解决) to the Taiwan problem.³³ While the PRC under Jiang Zemin still considered –though ultimately

²⁹ “China’s per capita GDP to hit US\$3,000 in 2020,” Website of *China Daily*, April 24, 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-04/24/content_326000.htm, accessed September 8, 2011.

³⁰ I.e. the Hundredth anniversary of the founding of the CPC in 2021 and of the founding of the PRC in 2049.

³¹ “Hu Jintao zhichu jian dang bai nian he chengli bai nian Zhongguo fazhan mubiao” 胡锦涛指出建党百年和成立百年中国发展目标 [Hu Jintao indicates targets for China’s development by the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Party and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the PRC], December 28, 2008, <http://news.sohu.com/20081218/n261288431.shtml>, accessed October 10, 2011.

³² Cf. “Wen Jiabao: Zhongguo zhenzheng shixian xiandaihua hai yao shangbai nian shenzhi geng chang” 温家宝:中国真正实现现代化还要上百年甚至更长 [Wen Jiabao: It will take at least another hundred years or even longer until China has truly realized modernization], website of *China Daily*, March 14, 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/2010qglianghui/2010-03/14/content_9587744.htm, accessed December 11, 2012.

³³ Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan*

rejected— a timetable for unification with Taiwan, the Hu-Wen leadership has moved away from the idea and instead focused on deterrence combined with strengthening cross-strait ties.³⁴

The first “grand task” of the 1980s, which is now usually listed last, namely “opposing hegemony and protecting world peace,” also still features prominently in contemporary Chinese visions of the world. The link between China’s rise or rejuvenation and world peace is frequently confirmed in the rhetoric of Chinese politicians. For instance, the White Paper on China’s Peaceful Development Road from 2005 states: “China has promoted world peace with its own development and made contributions to the progress of mankind.”³⁵ The logic behind this statement, a form of antithesis to the “democratic peace” under U.S. hegemony, is usually excluded from texts primarily targeting foreigners: When one country or a few countries rule the world, there can be no peaceful environment. Multipolarization, by contrast, limits hegemonism and power politics and thus contributes to peace.³⁶ Therefore, today, protecting world peace is largely fulfilled by developing China, thus making it grow stronger and allowing it to become a counterweight against U.S. attempts to strengthen unipolarity, but also by China taking on a more active role in the world, with the same underlying goal of countering hegemonism. This task is most directly concerned with China’s role in the world, its legitimacy and standing on the international stage, and its “normative” power as a voice that others listen to and that has the ability to shape international norms. Becoming a “strong country,” i.e. one that can stand up internationally, is clearly a key ingredient in the “great rejuvenation,” but one that is difficult to define because it is difficult to develop

sixiang gongzuo 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2006), 197.

³⁴ During Chen Shui-bian’s presidency only with the opposition and businesspeople; since Ma Ying-jeou came to power also more directly with the Taiwanese government itself.

³⁵ State Council Information Office, “China’s Peaceful Development Road,” (以自身的发展促进世界的和平与发展), Zheng Bijian speech on China’s peaceful rise from November 3, 2003: 争取和平的国际环境来发展自己, 又以自身的发展来维护世界和平; Wen Jiabao press conference March 2004, one of five key points: 第一, 中国的崛起就是要充分利用世界和平的大好时机, 努力发展和壮大自己。同时又以自己的发展, 维护世界和平。

³⁶ Cf. Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan* 融冰架桥, 突围: 曾建徽论对外宣传 [Melting the ice, building bridges, breaking out of the encirclement: Zeng Jianhui on external propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006), vol.1, 104.

indicators to measure international influence,³⁷ as a country's international standing and influence are to a large extent subjective.

The CPC's goals with regard to China's international status and influence (what is formally referred to as "opposing hegemony and protecting world peace") have, understandably, not been authoritatively defined in public, other than the ritualistic affirmation that China "does not seek hegemony." As indicated above, China's return to what is seen as its rightful place in the current world order has been a hot topic in semi-official circles. The early 21st century witnessed a vigorous debate on the correct relationship between "keeping a low profile" (*taoguang yanghui* 韬光养晦) in international relations and becoming more assertive or "making a contribution" (*yousuo zuowei* 有所作为).³⁸ It is beyond doubt that China plans to take up a more assertive role in international relations than it has done in the past, but the details and timetable are unclear and subject to discussion. In this field, first, there are presumably different opinion within the Party itself, and second, the CPC has to tread carefully, as it wants to convince foreigners on the one hand that its main priority is domestic and that therefore China does not pose a threat to the current world order while on the other hand catering to nationalists at home who want to see a more assertive China.³⁹

To sum up, the CPC's goals during the Hu-Wen era can be divided into four main quests: first, buttressing its own power base (*zhizheng jichu* 执政基础) in the country, second, finding the right balance for domestic development, third,

³⁷ In 2007, a member of the National Development and Reform Commission declared that in 2005, China had already fulfilled 46% of the responsibilities is needed to fulfill to realize the "great rejuvenation." By 2010, it had fulfilled 62%. Cf. "Zhonghua minzu fuxing zhishu' yanjiuzhe: mei hua guojia yi fen qian" "中华民族复兴指数"研究者: 没花国家一分钱 [Researcher of the "Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation Index": It did not cost the country a penny], *Nanfang Daily* Online, August 16, 2012, http://opinion.nfdaily.cn/content/2012-08/06/content_52298179.htm, accessed January 11, 2013. These numbers were naturally criticized as arbitrary by others. Cf. "Zhonghua minzu fuxing zhi shi yige yonglai guwu minzhong the zhengzhi kouhao" 中华民族复兴只是一个用来鼓舞民众的政治口号 [The Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation is only a political slogan for inspiring the people], *Nanfang Daily* Online, August 6, 2012, originally published on *Guangmingwang*, http://opinion.nfdaily.cn/content/2012-08/06/content_52302083.htm, accessed January 11, 2013.

³⁸ For more information, see for example Suisheng Zhao, "China's Foreign Policy as a Rising Power in the Early Twenty-First Century: The Struggle between *Taoguangyanhui* and Assertiveness" in *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, eds. Hongyi Lai and Yiyi Lu (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 191-211.

³⁹ For several of the dilemmas that the CPC faces in navigating domestic and foreign concerns (and that are usually also the subject of internal dispute), see Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

detering Taiwan independence, and fourth, securing a higher international status and more international influence for China. These four fields are linked to each other and, taken together, can be summed up as creating a powerful and internationally respected China under well-established CPC leadership.

7.3 The Need for Domestic Propaganda in the 21st Century

Propaganda and thought work, according to a handbook from 2006, has “a particularly important position and function” (*teshu zhongyao de diwei he zuoyong* 特殊重要的地位和作用) for the work of the Party.⁴⁰ In the current time, the influence of propaganda and public opinion (*xuanchuan yulun* 宣传舆论) is continuously growing, and thus, whether or not the Party can get this work right matters to whether China's modernization enterprise can succeed (*guanxi shiye xing shuai* 关系事业兴衰) as much as to whether the Party can maintain its ruling position (*guanxi dang de zhizheng diwei* 关系党的执政地位).⁴¹ This is not mere lipservice but is deeply ingrained in the thinking of the CPC and reflected in corresponding social and political institutions, which have been further reinforced in the Hu-Wen era. Rather than declining, propaganda and thought work has become even more important than in the 1990s. China's “risky” and unprecedented development goals have provided an important ideological justification for the existence of propaganda and thought work since the 1990s, both to prevent or mitigate social conflicts and to mobilize the population to take part in the endeavor. In the beginning of the 21st century, the rhetoric on both risk and opportunity of the new period of development and the consequent need to correctly guide and control the population became even louder.

According to the report of the 16th Party Congress in 2002, the first 20 years of the 21st century are a “period of important strategic opportunities” (*zhongyao zhanlüe jiyu qi* 重要战略机遇期)⁴² for China to get closer towards its goals and become more competitive. Importantly, the period of important strategic

⁴⁰ Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 1.

⁴¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴² “Jiang Zemin zai dang de shiliu da shang suo zuo de baogao” 江泽民在党的十六大上所作的报告 [Jiang Zemin's report at the 16th Party Congress], *Xinhuanet*, November 17, 2002, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2002-11/17/content_632260.htm, accessed February 16, 2013.

opportunities requires a lot of agency from all people involved in China's development as the period between 2000 and 2020 is defined as a time in which China will regress if it does not progress (*bu jin er tui* 不进而退). This dictum threatens relative, not absolute regress; China would still advance, but if it advances less than other countries, relatively speaking it would fall behind.⁴³ Thus, the Chinese population needs to be motivated through propaganda and thought work more urgently than ever.

From the perspective of modernization theory, which Chinese cadres have studied diligently, a more serious problem awaited China in the 21st century, namely the ugly counter-part of the period of important strategic opportunities, the "period in which social contradictions are particularly pronounced" (*shehui maodun tuxianqi* 社会矛盾凸显期).⁴⁴ Chinese texts often stress that the country finds itself in a "period of (social) transition"⁴⁵ (*shehui zhuanxingqi* 社会转型期). This idea was integrated into the official discourse universe under the influence of Western modernization theory, which China had kept an eye on during the Mao period,⁴⁶ but which became really influential only in the 1980s.⁴⁷ The period of

⁴³ Wang Qingdong 王庆东, "Zhongguo heping jueqi mianlin de tiaozhan" 中国和平崛起面临的挑战 [The challenges China's peaceful rise faces], *Neibu canyue* 内部参阅 [Internal reference readings], no. 20 (2004): 22-26. Also Cf. Jiang Zemin's report at the 16th Party Congress: "Competition in overall national strength is becoming increasingly fierce. Given this pressing situation, we must move forward, or we will fall behind."

⁴⁴ See for example "1000 Meiyuan yihou: Zengzhang haishi shuaitui" 1000 美元之后: 增长还是衰退 [After 1000 Dollars: Growth or recession], originally published in *Zhongguo jingji zhouban* 中国经济周刊 [China Economic Weekly], no. 13, 2004, available on People's Daily Online, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper1631/11856/1068626.html>, accessed February 14, 2013.

⁴⁵ The current period is a period of social transition (*shehui zhuanxingqi* 社会转型期). Transition refers to 1. the transition from planned economy to market economy, 2. The transition from a rural society to an urban society, 3. The transition from an industrial society to an information society, and 4. The transition from a poor to a rich society.

⁴⁶ China was familiar with the most important works of modernization theory during the Mao period. For example, Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1960) was translated by the Research Center for International Relations (*Guoji guanxi yanjiusuo* 国际关系研究所) and published internally in 1962. Luosituo 罗斯托 (*Guoji guanxi yanjiusuo bianyishi* 国际关系研究所编译室, transl.), *Jingji chengzhang de jieduan: fei gongchandang xuanyan, Neibu duwu* 经济成长的阶段: 非共产党宣言, 内部读物 [Stages of economic growth: A non-communist manifesto. Internal Readings], (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1962). In a "brief critique" (*jianping* 简评), Rostow is introduced as an economist attached to the contemporary American ruling clique and one of the most important advisors to the Kennedy administration. This critique, among other points, accused Rostow of "taking a few random, external phenomena" (*yixie ouran de, biaomian de xianxiang* 一些偶然的, 表面的现象) to explain the process of development of society. Li Zongzheng 李宗正, "Jianping Luosituo 'Jingji chengzhang de jieduan'" 简评罗斯托'经济成长的阶段'[Comment on Rostow's "Stages of economic growth"] in Luosituo, *Jingji chengzhang de jieduan*, 1-7. The

transition is a problem for the CPC because, as an article in *Internal Reference Readings* (*Neibu canyue* 内部参阅)⁴⁸ explains, “countries in social transition are always faced with a weakening of the power base.”⁴⁹ This can in some cases even lead to a collapse of political power (as happened to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War); in other cases, problems can be averted through reform and adaptation.⁵⁰

The article identifies four main factors through which the power base is weakened in countries in transition: 1. New aspirations of the population for freedom, democracy, justice, etc.; 2. the regime cannot deliver the economic growth expected by the population based on the fast growth in the initial period; 3. the emergence of conflicts of interests and disadvantages sections of the population; and 4. the fact that the old political, economic and value system has already been weakened while the new has not yet been fully consolidated.⁵¹ The formulation “countries in social transition” is usually reserved to refer to “developing countries on their way to modernity.”⁵² The 2006 edition of *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* defines under which conditions problems are most likely to occur:

“The development process of many countries shows that the period while per capita GDP is between \$1000 and \$3000 is both a period of opportunities for development and a period in which contradictions are particularly distinct.”⁵³

book is published in Chinese as “negative teaching material” (*fanmian jiaocai* 反面教材) so as to enable Chinese to understand and criticize Rostow’s reactionary theory. Li Zongzheng, “Jianping Luosituo,” in Luosituo, *Jingji chengzhang de jieduan*, 7.

⁴⁷ Cf. Gao Like, “China’s Social Transformation and Two Types of Modernity,” in *Culture and Social Transformations in Reform Era China*, ed. Tian Yu Cao, Xueping Zhong, and Kebin Liao (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 378-379.

⁴⁸ Internal Reference Readings is an internal journal edited by the People’s Daily Agency. It is classified as secret (*mimi* 秘密). It can be read by leading cadres at “deputy office” level (*fu chu ji* 副处级) or above.

⁴⁹ Chinese quote: “社会转型中的国家往往出现执政基础削弱得问题。” Xiao Chunbai 肖纯柏., “Gonggu Zhongguo gongchandang de zhizheng jichu” 巩固中国共产党的执政基础 [Consolidating the basis of the CPC’s rule], *Neibu canyue*, no. 25 (2007): 3. The author has also written another article on a similar topic: “Guowai butong zhengdang zhizheng linian zhi bijiao” 国外不同政党执政理念之比较 [Comparison of the ruling philosophy of different parties abroad], *Neibu canyue*, no. 11 (2007): 10-20.

⁵⁰ Xiao Chunbai, “Gugong Zhongguo gongchandang de zhizheng jichu,” 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 129. Xiao Chunbai (“Gonggu Zhongguo gongchandang de zhizheng jichu,”) also cites example

The idea of a transition zone between \$1000 and \$3000 is taken from Samuel Huntington's 1991 work *The Third Wave*,⁵⁴ which was published openly in Chinese translation in 1998.⁵⁵ Since then more recent scholarship on the same topic has been discussed in China.⁵⁶ Here, it becomes apparent that the Central Propaganda Department (CPD) has adopted at least part of modernization theory, presenting the \$1000-\$3000 rule if not as an objective law then at least as empirical knowledge. Given that even the CPD (which is usually fairly conservative in adopting new concepts before they have been properly translated into Marxist code) used these numbers, it is reasonable to assume that the existence of a \$1000-\$3000 risk zone was widely accepted at the time and a source of genuine concern within the CPC.

In 2003, China announced that its per capita GDP was higher than \$1,000 for the first time in China's history,⁵⁷ three years behind the schedule initially envisioned by Deng Xiaoping in 1987. The idea that China was now at risk of social chaos more than ever triggered a number of policy adaptations that became

of Latin American countries that encountered political unrest when they were between a per capita GDP of \$1000 and \$3000 -political unrest that finally toppled the rulers.

⁵⁴ Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 63. Huntington's point was that with a per capita GDP of between \$1000 and \$3000, the people of a country were most likely to kick out their dictators and adopt democracy if other conditions were favorable. If they were not, the result might simply be social upheaval and violence.

⁵⁵ Samuel Huntington, *Di san bo: 20 shiji houqi minzhuhua de langchao* 第三波：20世纪后期民主化浪潮 [Chinese translation of *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*], transl. Li Junning 刘军宁 (Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian shudian, 1998).

⁵⁶ For instance Adam Przeworski's analysis of the relationship between political regimes and economic development. Cf. Adam Przeworski, "Democracy and Economic Development." Przeworski's name is transliterated into Chinese as Yadang Zhuowoersiji 亚当·卓沃尔斯基. His work is extremely popular at Chinese party schools. Rudolf Wagner, personal communication.

⁵⁷ See for instance the debate about what to do after China had entered the "sensitive development period" (*fazhan de min'gan qi* 发展的敏感期) in 2003. "1000 Meiyuan yihou: Zengzhang haishi shuai tui." Also see Li Xiaojia 李小佳, "Jiefang ribao: Kuayue renjun GDP 1000-3000 Meiyuan zhi kan – Hu Shoujun jiaoshou tan ruhe tuijin jingji shehui de xietiao fazhan" 解放日报：跨越人均 GDP1000-3000 美元之坎 ——胡守钧教授谈如何推进经济社会的协调发展 [Liberation Daily: Overpassing the mark of the GDP per capita of 1000-3000 U.S. Dollars – Professor Hu Shoujun on how to promote the coordinated development of economy and society], *People's Daily Online*, December 27, 2004, <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/40551/3081605.html>, accessed February 14, 2013. Later, it was declared that China had actually reached \$3000 before 2003. Cf. "Wu nian zhang liang bei: Zhongguo renjun GDP po 3000 Meiyuan" 五年涨两倍 中国人均 GDP 破 3000 美元 [China's per capita GDP doubled in five years, breaking 3,000 U.S. Dollars], *Huanqiu shibao* 环球时报 [Global times], website of the *Global Times*, March 9, 2009, <http://finance.huanqiu.com/roll/2009-03/397089.html>, accessed February 14, 2013.

the hallmark of the Fourth Generation leadership. At the Third Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee in 2003, the idea of the “five co-ordinates” (*wu ge tongchou* 五个统筹) was added to the agenda of “building a well-off society in an all-round way.”⁵⁸ Likewise, the timing of the introduction of one of the key slogans of the Hu-Wen era, the “harmonious society” in 2004⁵⁹ as well as increased concern about Party legitimacy in the same year are no coincidence, but accompanied the entry into the “high risk” period in 2003.

As mentioned above, China first reached a per capita GDP of \$3,000 in 2008,⁶⁰ leveraging itself out of Huntington’s risk zone twelve years ahead of schedule. However, with China’s GDP growing faster than officially estimated, the \$1000-\$3000 zone was further reassessed (if it was ever taken at absolute face value in the first place), and Hu Jintao soon declared that China continued to find itself in the “period of important strategic opportunities” as much as in the “period in which social contradictions are particularly pronounced” (*Zhongguo jixu chuzai zhongyao zhanlüe jiyu qi he shehui maodun tuxian qi* 中国继续处在重要战略机遇期和社会矛盾凸显期).⁶¹ Currently, according to the official analysis, not GDP but uneven development is the greatest problem, as it is the main cause of conflicts of interest. In addition to reform measures introduced by the Fourth Generation leadership that are aimed at reducing the various divides in Chinese society, propaganda and thought work, through a number of different techniques, are also meant to mitigate the negative side effects of the current transition and the social and economic inequality it produces.

While the main obstacles to realizing China’s goals are at home, the country is faced with external enemies that are very good at infiltrating China and disrupting the country from within as much as at isolating China internationally. Both in the overall battle of unipolarity versus multipolarity and specifically on the “public opinion front,” China is faced with the “international anti-China forces”

⁵⁸ The five coordinates refer to the coordination (i.e. balancing development) between urban and rural areas, between different regions of the country, between the economy and society, between man and nature, and between domestic reform and opening up to the outside world.

⁵⁹ For the policy of establishing a harmonious society, see Sujian Guo and Baogang Guo, *China in Search of a Harmonious Society* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008).

⁶⁰ Cf. “Wu nian zhang liang bei: Zhongguo renjun GDP po 3000 Meiyuan.”

⁶¹ Hu Jintao 胡锦涛, “Zhongguo jixu chuzai zhanlüe jiyu qi he maodun tuxian qi” 中国继续处在战略机遇期和矛盾凸显期 [China continues to be in a period of strategic opportunities and prominent contradictions], January 1, 2010, *China News Online*, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/news/2010/01-01/2050420.shtml>, accessed February 14, 2013.

(*guoji fan Hua shili* 国际反华势力), a usually unspecified enemy that has replaced the former “international reactionary forces” (*guoji fandong shili* 国际反动势力) in official rhetoric (cf. Graph 6.I in chapter 6.4) and whose goal is to prevent China from growing stronger. Here, the official evaluation of the international situation is important: China finds itself in a world that is increasingly globalizing economically, thus producing more interdependencies, and that is, politically, i.e. in terms of the global power balance, continuously (though amongst setbacks) moving towards multipolarity. Since economic globalization is an inevitable trend, China has to participate and deal with the adverse consequences that opening the country brings along.

One big challenge of opening the country and making China dependent on the outside world is the fact that the “international public opinion environment” (*guoji yulun huanjing* 国际舆论环境) is turned against China. Integrating China more closely with the rest of the world gives “hostile forces” power as it becomes easier for them to infiltrate Chinese society and because the country depends on other countries, which hostile forces can try to turn against China, thus disrupting its development and its security. At home, China can counter hostile propaganda both through its own propaganda, through censorship, and by erecting borders to prevent certain information flows. Internationally, China can try to counter the hostile forces through external propaganda. In the 21st century, however, as censorship has become more difficult and interdependency has increased, China felt it had to become more proactive in changing the power balance in the public opinion environment.

In sum, domestic propaganda continues to be justified by internal changes and by external threats. As China finds itself in a key period of development as much as in a risk zone for social chaos, domestic propaganda has gained even further in importance. The notion of the “international public opinion environment” combined with the overall principle of becoming more proactive already provides a clue as to why external propaganda, too, was upgraded in the 21st century. However, the package of reasons for why China and the CPC need external propaganda is complex, and the different reasons will be analyzed in the next two sections.

7.4 Factors Leading to the Upgrade in the 21st Century

External propaganda had been on the CPC's agenda for several decades, so why did the redefinition and upgrade of the sector happen during the first few years of the 21st century? As with most other changes in the field of external propaganda, a number of domestic and international developments coincided. These can be sorted into four categories: First, there was China's debate about its return to great power status and the possible impediments that might thwart this plan. Second, there was the renewed importance attached to propaganda targeted at foreigners in the U.S. after 9/11. Third, there was the issue of increased interdependency as an inevitable trend which the CPC could not counteract through blockades and other forms of restrictions forever and therefore needed to face more proactively. Finally, there was the issue of securing the CPC's ruling position.

China's Rise

The first factor preceded the 21st century: In the second half of the 1990s, China had begun to debate its "rise" in public, both in order to nurture nationalism and because the West, too, anticipated and talked about China's rise. At the beginning of the 21st century, especially after 2002, regaining great power status became both a very real possibility and a necessity if the CPC wanted to remain in power, forcing the Party to contemplate possible impediments in rather concrete terms and plan ahead accordingly. The rise and fall of other countries served as both positive and negative examples. As early as in the year 2000, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) had established a special research group studying the topic "The rise and fall of the CPSu and the rise and fall of the S.U."⁶² The CPC's active interest in the ascendancy and fall of countries on the international stage was also demonstrated, for instance, on November 24, 2003, when the Politburo studied the rise of the great powers since the 15th century at a collective study session.⁶³ The most important problems standing in the way of

⁶² Li Shenming 李慎明 et al, "Sugong wangdang lishi jingyan jiaoxun" 苏共亡党历史经验教训 [Lessons learned from the history of the fall of the Soviet Communist Party], <http://www.wyzxsx.com/Article/Class14/200804/36170.html>, accessed June 3, 2011.

⁶³ "Zhongguo 'heping jueqi' zhong zai lishixing chuangxin" 中国 "和平崛起" 重在历史性创新 [The importance of China's 'peaceful rise' lies in historical innovation], originally published in *Guoji Xianqu Daobao* [Parallel English title: *International Herald Leader*], available online at

China's rise were, officially, its development issues at home. However, a peaceful international environment –both in China's immediate neighborhood and on a global scale– was identified as a precondition for continued development.

Both in the region and on a larger global scale, China has feared being isolated. These fears were exacerbated between 2000 and 2003 in the period immediately preceding the upgrade in importance of external propaganda. In the early 21st century, the debate on China's rise coincided with new concrete concerns about China's regional security. As is well-known, China has long been worried about the U.S. military presence in Japan. With Chen Shui-bian's 陈水扁 election, the PRC felt it was taken away further from both reunification and a secure regional environment in which it had a sufficient number of allies in the region. After 9/11, the U.S. expanded its military cooperation with the Philippines.⁶⁴ Afghanistan also shares a small border with China, and the Chinese government was not happy with the U.S. fighting a war in country bordering China.⁶⁵ In addition, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan allowed the U.S. to station troops on their soil, creating more U.S. bases in China's immediate vicinity.⁶⁶ Theories such as the China threat theory, it was feared, would additionally lead neighboring countries to balance against China or at least welcome a greater U.S. presence in Asia.⁶⁷ Thus, the changes in America's Asian presence at the time and the fear of being encircled contributed to the urgency of the debate on China's regional security environment in the years 2000 to 2004.

In terms of global concerns, China also found reason to worry. In 2002 and 2003, it began to observe renewed “anti-China sentiments” in the U.S. press and therefore felt that it needed to become more proactive in order not to fall victim to the battle over international public opinion that was conducted against it. The economic recession of 2002 had again led to an intensified debate in the West

<http://www.jkpx.net/sina/show.asp?url=NewsNews/c/2004-01-05/11352550115.shtml>, accessed March 1, 2013.

⁶⁴ Cf. Robert S. Ross, *Chinese Security Policy: Structure, Power and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 75.

⁶⁵ Cf. Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns,” in *Afghanistan Revisited*, ed. Cary Gladstone (New York: Nova Publishers, 2001), 16.

⁶⁶ Suisheng Zhao, *China's “Peaceful Rise” in the 21st Century: Domestic And International Conditions* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 240.

⁶⁷ Cf. Zhang Yunling and Tang Shiping, “China's Regional Strategy,” in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics*, ed. David Shambaugh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 50-51.

about the threat China posed to the economy.⁶⁸ The spreading of the China threat theory both in the West and in developing countries could cause other governments to take up measures to contain China or have other adverse effects on China's economic development. Likewise, the series of "Color Revolutions" during the first half of the 2000s kept alive the theme of the West trying to "split and Westernize" all non-Western states that were not democracies.⁶⁹

The U.S. Debate

These heightened concerns and the belief in a new Cold War against China that had already formed at the turn of the century met the U.S. debate on public diplomacy and soft power after 9/11. The upgrade in importance of U.S. propaganda (both image and perception management) towards foreign target audiences impacted China in two ways: First, there were the academic debates over public diplomacy and soft power, and second there were institutional rearrangements reported in the U.S. media and subsequently also translated into Chinese. The Chinese debate on soft power has been relatively well covered in secondary literature.⁷⁰ Here, I will only briefly explain how the U.S. debate contributed to the inclusion of propaganda power in China's comprehensive powers.

First, the idea that soft power was a part of a nation's comprehensive powers was largely derived from U.S. discussions in the early 21st century. Whereas "public diplomacy" had been weakened in the United States over the

⁶⁸ For instance, Stephen Roach of Morgan Stanley stated in October 2002 that China's export-based economy made global deflation (*quanqiu tongshuo* 全球通缩) worse. Although Roach later elaborated on this statement in an article and stated that China was a scapegoat, this set off another wave of bashing China for its export-driven economy in the Western media, according to an article in *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*. Cf. Zhou Zongmin 周宗敏 and Xu Xingtang 徐兴堂, "Yong shishi shuo hua, chuangzao youli de guoji yulun huanjing – Zhendui 'Zhongguo jingji weixielun' tan jinqi duiwai jingji baodao" 用事实说话, 创造有利的国际舆论环境 — 针对'中国经济威胁论'谈近期对外经济报道 [Speaking through facts to create a favorable international public opinion environment – speaking about current external reporting on the economy to counter the 'China economy threat theory'], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no 2 (2003): 6-7.

⁶⁹ Cf. David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2008), 87-92.

⁷⁰ Most importantly Mingjiang Li, "Soft Power in Chinese Discourse: Popularity and Prospect," in id., ed., *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* (Lanham et. al.: Lexington Books, 2009), 21-43.

course of the 1990s despite the “Eastward expansion” of U.S. propaganda that was highlighted in China, after 9/11, it became an important concern again. This manifested itself both in a renewed debate on America’s public diplomacy as well as its “soft power” and in new institutions and initiatives. Thus, after almost a decade in which the CPC had maintained that the West plotted to use propaganda to defeat the rest of the world but had very few hard figures to back this up, the new development provided it with massive direct proof that the West paid attention to propaganda.

As is well-known, the term “soft power” was coined by Joseph Nye in his 1990 *Bound to Lead* as one explanation why the United States would not decline as other superpowers had previously done. When the concept was revived in the early 2000s, Nye proceeded from a sense of crisis, not triumph. Both *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone* (2002) and *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004) bemoaned what he perceived as the lack of attention paid to soft power in U.S. politics.

Unsurprisingly, the Chinese reflection of the debates in the 1990s and 21st century were also quite different. Soft power had already been briefly discussed in China in the 1990s, mainly as a U.S. ploy to ideologically infiltrate China. There are three different terms to translate soft power: *ruan lilian* 软力量 (the term used in the Chinese translation of *Bound to Lead*), *ruan quanli* 软权力 (the term first used in the *People’s Daily*), and the term most commonly used today both in official speeches and the academic discourse, *ruan shili*. The first uses of one of the three translations, in the *People’s Daily*, can be traced back to 1993, when it was mentioned as a new concept introduced at a research retreat on international problems.⁷¹ Other than that, most of the times that any the translations of “soft power” were mentioned in the *People’s Daily* before the 21st century was to describe the new national strategy of the U.S. or other Western countries to ideologically infiltrate weaker countries. The second mention of “soft power,” for instance, was in a review and critical evaluation of Huntington’s *Clash of*

⁷¹ Xu Wen 许文, “Jianli Woguo de guoji guanxi lilun” 建立我国的国际关系理论 [Establishment of China's international relations theory], *Renmin ribao*, August 19, 1993, 7. The term also first appeared in the academic debate in 1993. Cf. Mingjiang Li, *ibid.*

Civilizations published in 1994,⁷² and this was the most important context for “soft power” in the *People’s Daily* during the next few years.⁷³ By 2004, on the other hand, the *People’s Daily* frequently discussed the concept as a new security concept, both in the U.S. context and in more general terms.⁷⁴ In the current competition over each nation’s place in the new and currently still forming world order, each major power also took soft power into account to strengthen its own position.⁷⁵ Chinese authors also point out that since 9/11, countries around the world have put improving their international image on the government agenda.⁷⁶

Second, new institutions and practices in the U.S., likewise, significantly influenced the direction that the Chinese external propaganda debate took. The changes to U.S. public diplomacy structures were reported in Western media and thus naturally made their way to China through the steady flow of translations from the Western press into Chinese. After 9/11, the United States’ external propaganda bureaucracy underwent several institutional changes. Immediately after 9/11, the United States tasked the Rendon Group, a public relations firm that had been contracted to improve the U.S. image abroad earlier, with launching a press initiative to manage the news.⁷⁷ In late October 2001, the Office of Strategic Influence was founded.⁷⁸ In July 2002, the White House Office of Global

⁷² “亨廷顿的观点，已构成一些西方大国新的国家战略中“软实力”政策的理论基础” Li Xiaobing 李小兵, “Lengzhan hou de wenming zhanlue: Hengtingdun de ‘wenming chongtu lun’ pingjie” 冷战之后的文明战略——亨廷顿的“文明冲突论”评介[A cultural strategy for after the Cold War: A review-cum-evaluation of Huntington’s ‘theory of the clash of cultures’], *Renmin ribao*, June 29, 1994, 5.

⁷³ See for instance Yuan Zhibing 袁智兵, “Xin ganshe zhuyi ‘xin’ zai nali” 新干涉主义“新”在哪里 [What is ‘new’ about new interventionism], *Renmin ribao*, July 29, 1999, 6; Qi Zhi 岂之, “Jingji quanqiu hua yu Zhongguo wenhua” 经济全球化与中国文化 [Economic globalization and Chinese culture], *Renmin ribao*, November 30, 2000, 11.

⁷⁴ Ruan Zongze 阮宗泽, “Ruanshili yu yingshili” 软实力与硬实力 [Soft power and hard power], *Renmin ribao*, February 13, 2004, 13.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ “Xuyan” 序言 [Preface] in Li Zhi 李智, *Guoji zhengzhi chuanbo: Kongzhi yu xiaoguo* 国际政治传播：控制与效果 [Parallel English title: International Political Communication: Control and Effects] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007): 1.

⁷⁷ Cf. LtC Susan L. Gough, *The Evolution of Strategic Influence* (Carlisle barracks, Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College), 29, available online at www.fas.org/irp/eprint/gough.pdf, accessed November 11, 2012.

⁷⁸ It was officially closed in February 2002 shortly after its existence and its plans to engage in black propaganda were reported in the media, although Donald Rumsfeld claimed that its activities were continued. Cf. “Secretary Rumsfeld Media Availability En Route to Chile,” November 18, 2002, U.S. Department of Defense Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Transcript, <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3296>, accessed November 11, 2012.

Communications (OGC) was founded to improve the United States' image by "countering propaganda and disinformation" and by "[helping] our government inform audiences about positive news stories,"⁷⁹ i.e. by propaganda and counter-propaganda, or what would be referred to as "positive propaganda" and as "struggle over global public opinion" in China. It was equipped with a \$200 million budget to coordinate U.S. external propaganda and officially started operating in January 2003,⁸⁰ shortly before the beginning of the Iraq War. The new institutional structure was reported on in the journal *External Propaganda Reference* in May 2003⁸¹ as well as in other publications around the same time.⁸² It is quite possible that the experimentation with various cross-departmental bodies and the creation of the White House OGC additionally impressed the need to improve its own external propaganda structures on the CPC and the Chinese government.

Interdependence and the WTO Accession

Worries about changes in China's own media environment were also a strong factor in pushing China towards more proactive measures. First, after initial enthusiasm about the uses the Internet could be put to for spreading China's external propaganda, by the turn of the century, the attitude of the CPC towards the new medium had become more mixed. The Internet was deemed to have made China clearly more vulnerable towards attacks by hostile countries.⁸³ Both in the run up to and in the immediate aftermath of the World Trade Organization (WTO) accession in November 2001, China debated ways to protect itself against global media encroaching on China and "cultural imperialism." While the WTO was

⁷⁹ "White House Office of Global Communications," The White House Archive, President George W. Bush, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/ogc/aboutogc.html>, accessed June 22, 2012.

⁸⁰ Jiang Fei and Huang Kuo, "Transnational Media Corporations and National Culture as a Security Concern in China," in Vida Bajc, ed., *Security and Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 216.

⁸¹ Wu Yan, "Jinjin zhuazhu zhongyao zhanlue jiyuqi – Fang dang de shiliu da daibiao, Zhenjiang shiwei shuji Zhang Weiguo," 3.

⁸² E.g. Guo Ke 郭可, *Xinwen chuanboxue yanjiusheng hexin kecheng xilie jiaocai: Chuanboxue daolun* 新闻传播学研究生核心课程系列教材·国际传播学导论 [Core curriculum textbook series for Journalism and Communication graduate students: Introduction to International Communication] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2004), 7. Also see Liao Hongbin 廖宏斌, "Xingxiang bu hao guai baozhuang" 形象不好怪包装 [If the image is bad, the packaging is to blame], *Renmin ribao*, November 1, 2004, 3.

⁸³ For arguments at the turn of the century, see for example *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2001): 4.

seen as another “front” (*zhendi* 阵地) for China’s external propaganda work,⁸⁴ the conditions tied to the accession were seen as an opportunity for the West to use its soft power to impact China.⁸⁵

While the accession protocol limited the potential impact of both cultural products and media through protective measures –the number of movies allowed to be imported per year was initially only increased from ten to twenty⁸⁶– the sense of crisis about such a stark asymmetry in cultural and media power between China and the West in an increasingly globalizing and technologically advancing world continued. Protective measures were a useful instrument during the period of transition, but ultimately would not shield China forever. More proactive steps were deemed necessary, both domestically and internationally.

Regime Stability and the Shift towards Qualitative Targets

From a domestic perspective, the upgrade of external propaganda also came at a time when the CPC had formally acknowledged the problem of maintaining its own legitimacy in the country. In official rhetoric, continued Party rule is a precondition for China’s domestic and international success. Unofficially, by contrast, the CPC is well aware that failure to deliver on domestic development or raising China’s status might sooner or later endanger its ruling position. From the perspective of regime security, the three official goals have, in turn, been linked to legitimacy at home and are thus considered a “guarantee” (*baozheng* 保证) for continued CPC rule. The debate how to secure the CPC’s power basis shifted China’s focus from numerical hard targets towards soft, qualitative targets. Notably, the changes accompany demands for a more assertive China from parts of the domestic public as well as the (temporary) Chinese Diaspora, i.e. Chinese

⁸⁴ “我们可以利用世贸组织这个全球性讲坛，宣传中国的改革开放政策，世贸组织将成为中国又一个外宣阵地。” Li Xin 黎信, “Weiyu choumou – Guanyu ‘ru shi’ yu duiwai xuanchuan de ruogan sikao” 未雨绸缪——关于《入世》与对外宣传的若干思考 [Taking precautions before it starts to rain – A number of thoughts on entering the WTO and external propaganda], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2000): 6.

⁸⁵ E.g. Li Xin, “Weiyu choumou – Guanyu ‘ru shi’ yu duiwai xuanchuan de ruogan sikao”, 5; Ma Hong 马宏, “Zhongguo ‘ru shi’ hou mianlin de ruanliliang tiaozhan” 中国‘入世’后面临的软力量挑战 [China facing soft power challenges after entering the WTO], *Zhibu jianshe* 支部建设 [Branch construction], no. 3 (2002): 38-41.

⁸⁶ See for example Shujen Wang, *Framing Piracy: Globalization and Film Distribution in Greater China* (Lanham et al.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 63-65. This applies to revenue-sharing films, i.e. films in which part of the revenue goes to the distributor, according to a pre-agreed contract. Ibid.

exchange students in Western countries. Previous studies have examined to what extent Chinese nationalism has influenced China's international behavior, largely focusing on short-term outbursts.⁸⁷ With the new focus on regime stability, long-term concerns about improving China's standing so as to fulfill Chinese expectations have become more important.

7.5 The Functions of External Propaganda in the Early 21st Century

By the early 21st century, an impressive number of reasons for why China needed external propaganda had accumulated as a result of the experiences of the past decades. Some of these reasons had existed for quite some time, while others were relatively new or given new meaning and significance. In order to understand why the CPC began to consider external propaganda as part of its overall long term strategy, this sub-chapter examines what the functions of external propaganda are in the official universe of the CPC. Like for domestic propaganda, the roles and functions of external propaganda can be divided into "positive" or proactive and "negative" or reactive. The first refers to times when China simply sends its message and what it wants to talk about to pursue its goals. The second signifies instances in which China is forced to react to outside "attacks" of various sorts.

In the 21st century, previous rationales for external propaganda remained relevant. To briefly revise the basics, helping China realize its strategic goals is the most general "positive" role of external propaganda that is achieved through both proactive and reactive measure. In 1980, the External Propaganda Small Group's (EPSG) first Opinion defined the "fundamental responsibility" of external propaganda as "to serve the general line and the external line of the party."⁸⁸ The general line refers to the basic principles and policies from which the concrete agenda of the Party derives; thus, serving the general line means

⁸⁷ Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Nationalism and Pragmatic Foreign Policy Behavior," in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior*, ed. Suisheng Zhao (London and Armong: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 66-90. Shirk has also discussed the implications of nationalism for regime security. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, particularly chapter 7: Taiwan: "A Question of Regime Survival," 181-211.

⁸⁸ Cf. "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian" 对外宣传小组关于改进和加强对外宣传工作的意见 [The External Propaganda Small Group's opinion on improving and strengthening external propaganda work], June 30, 1980, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian* 党的宣传工作会议概况和文献 (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 390.

helping the Party propel the course of history in the right direction. Currently, the goals the CPC needs to pursue to achieve this are the three large aims outlined above. Thus, the most important function of external propaganda has been to help the Party realize its official strategic goals, namely development, unification (or deterring independence of Taiwan), and “protecting world peace,” i.e. supporting China’s rise or rejuvenation.

First and most pragmatically, external propaganda has functioned as the vanguard (*xiandao* 先导) of opening up by attracting both foreign investment and foreign expertise to speed up China’s (economic) development.⁸⁹ This was considered the most important function of external propaganda during most of the 1980s. External propaganda was not only useful for short-term campaigns but also for creating the right climate for China’s development in the long run, as China needs not only a favorable domestic public opinion environment, but also a favorable international public opinion environment.⁹⁰ For instance, Zhao Qizheng 赵启正 argued in 2004 that the trust the international committee had in a country determined the conditions for entry into the WTO, making it easier for some countries than for others to join.⁹¹

Second, external propaganda’s function has been to “oppose ‘Taiwan independence’ and promote unification”⁹² by countering hostile forces and sending reassuring messages. Although the basic outset was completely different, proponents of external propaganda argued that because external propaganda had played such an important role in the return of Hong Kong and Macao, it would also play a vital part in finally bringing Taiwan home.⁹³ Both functions (aiding development and aiding reunification) can be employed in short term initiatives, e.g. in order to attract particular foreign expertise for a particular project, or to reply to a specific attack on China. The long-term purpose of external propaganda

⁸⁹ E.g. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol.1, 109.

⁹⁰ Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, “Nuli jianshe youliyu woguo de guoji yulun huanjing” 努力建设有利于我国的国际舆论环境 [Make efforts to build a favorable international public opinion environment], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (2004): 2.

⁹¹ Zhao Qizheng, “Nuli jianshe youliyu woguo de guoji yulun huanjing”, 1.

⁹² Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbujū, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 189.

⁹³ See for example Yang Jinzhou 杨金洲 and Yang Guoren 杨国仁, “Xingshi, renwu, tiaozhan, jiyu – xie zai xin shiji kaiyuan zhi ji” 形势·任务·挑战·机遇——写在新世纪开元之际 [The situation, responsibilities, challenges, opportunities – Written on the occasion of the new century], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 1 (2001): 5. The link in the article is only indirect.

in these two regards is to “create a favorable international public opinion environment for fully building a moderately well-off society and for realizing national unification.”⁹⁴

The third main strategic goal of the PRC, “protecting world peace and promoting common development,”⁹⁵ is the highest goal that would result from China’s succeeding in all other areas. It needs to be remembered that China’s main contribution to a more peaceful world with less hegemonism is the strengthening of its own comprehensive powers which enables it to provide a counter balance to the U.S. ambitions for unipolarity and its tendency to engage in “power politics.” While some texts are explicit about the fact that the first consideration in all external propaganda work always needs to be the national interest, statements such as that external propaganda “protects world peace”⁹⁶ are not just empty rhetoric. Propaganda protects world peace by strengthening China, thus contributing to a multipolar world order, which, according to Chinese analysts, is conducive to peace.

Since 2004, these basic positive goals have been expressed in the formula “three serves” (*san ge fuwu* 三个服务): External propaganda needs to serve reform and opening as well as modernization, it needs to serve national unification, and it needs to serve “China’s overall strategic objectives in its foreign policy as well as safeguarding world peace and promoting common development.”⁹⁷ The grouping of different goals in the last of the “three serves” again confirms the assumed link between world peace and a successful Chinese foreign policy that makes China more assertive and influential. From the perspective of the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese people”, a louder voice and a better image are both a means to help China develop and an end in itself because it means China already has more international influence.

⁹⁴ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 191.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 189.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ “Quanguo waixuanban zhuren yantaohui zai Lan kaimu, Zhao Qizheng chuxi” 全国外宣办主任研讨会在兰开幕 赵启正出席 [Opening of the national seminar for external propaganda directors in Lanzhou, Zhao Qizheng attends], August 18, 2004, originally published in the *Gansu ribao* 甘肃日报 [Gansu daily], available online at <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-08-18/13374066374.shtml>, accessed January 7, 2013.

In the 21st century, three important official additions to these “traditional” functions of external propaganda were made, one tied to a positive, proactive goal and two to China’s ability to protect itself against attempts from hostile forces to “infiltrate” it and encircle it in Asia as well as isolate it more widely on the international stage. Particularly the two “reactive” functions are concerned with immediate security concerns. First, external propaganda was linked to China’s national security, second, it was tied to domestic social stability, and third, the country’s “propaganda capacities” (*xuanchuan shili* 宣传实力) and its “soft power” (*ruanshili* 软实力) was declared a part of China’s comprehensive powers without which China would not be able to rise and remain competitive in the forest of nations. These three motivations have been alluded to in Mingjiang Li’s discussion of the concept of soft power in China, based on the explications of Chinese academics.⁹⁸ The way external propaganda is talked about in official speeches and handbooks confirms that these three reasons are not confined to the academic debate on soft power, but have also been formally embraced by the Party leadership for reframing its external propaganda policy.⁹⁹ In addition to these three, external propaganda was also indirectly tied to the Party’s legitimacy and its survival in China, although this link remains much sketchier than is the case for domestic propaganda. Each of these four points is worth explaining in more detail in order to understand why external propaganda was upgraded in importance in the early 21st century.

The link between external propaganda and both national security and social stability largely grew out of the debate around the turn of the century that hostile forces wanted to “Westernize” (*Xihua* 西化) and “split” (*fenhua* 分化) China. The ultimate goal behind preventing China from rising is to push the world away from multipolarity and closer towards a unipolar moment with the U.S. as the only hegemonic superpower, i.e. said “U.S.-led international order of democratic states”¹⁰⁰ advocated by proponents of the democratic peace. In this

⁹⁸ Mingjiang Li, “Soft Power in China Discourse: Popularity and Prospect,” in *Soft Power: China’s Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, 30-33.

⁹⁹ Statements from high level politicians confirming this will be introduced below in chapter 7.6. All three points are also included in the official introduction to external propaganda policy in the handbook *Propaganda and thought work in the new period*. Cf. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbujū, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 187-188.

¹⁰⁰ Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *China’s Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Washington: RAND, 2000), xiv.

context, the ancient Chinese conception of the world in terms of concentric circles has been used to explain the goal of the U.S.: It wants to create a world with itself as the only superpower in the center, with Western Europe and Japan in the middle, and with the rest of the world in the periphery.¹⁰¹ This is not spelled out in official government texts, but is indirectly present in the theme “Hegemonism and power politics continue to exist.”

On the public opinion front (*yulun zhanxian* 舆论战线), the situation is particularly dire, much more so than on the economic front, because the West continues to monopolize the overwhelming majority of “public opinion tools” (*yulun gongju* 舆论工具) and has them at its disposal to, first, smother China’s voice, and, second, to spread lies about China to stir up trouble in the short run and to tarnish its image in the long run.¹⁰² To resist these specific attempts and fight back became the most important meaning attached to the phrase “engaging in the struggle over international public opinion.” Since the 1990s, there have been ritualistic affirmations that in the current times, the “struggle over international public opinion” is not abating but becoming fiercer by the day.¹⁰³ Initially intended as a rebuke against those arguing that with the end of the Cold War the age of propaganda had also come to an end, the line continues to be used until today, often when there is renewed conflict after a brief thaw and therefore the need to counter more optimistic voices.

Tying external propaganda to national security appears to be primarily due to concrete geostrategic concerns about China’s neighborhood in Asia, i.e. its immediate security environment, although other security concerns also play a role. Throughout the 1990s and continuing into the 21st century, China has worried about U.S. attempts to isolate and encircle it in Asia. After settling its border conflicts in the 1990s, China continued to show its cooperative side as much as possible, became more actively involved in multilateral pacts and even began to

¹⁰¹ E.g. “Ruhe suzao 21 shiji Zhongguo de guoji xingxiang (shang) - Liu Kang yu Li Xiguang de duitan” 如何塑造 21 世纪中国的国际形象（上）——刘康与李希光的对话 [How to create China’s image in the 21st century (part one) – A dialogue between Liu Kang and Li Xiguang], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (2000): 14. The distinction between center and periphery is, of course, also used in empire studies.

¹⁰² At the turn of the century, Chinese analysts still spoke of an almost complete monopoly. Yang Jinzhou and Yang Guoren, “Xingshi, renwu, tiaozhan, jiyu - xie zai xin shiji kaiyuan zhi ji,” 5.

¹⁰³ E.g. *ibid.*, 4.

exhibit more regional leadership.¹⁰⁴ In its larger concerns about (regional) security, China also began to take the “international public opinion environment” into consideration.¹⁰⁵

This opinion environment is characterized by China with the phrase “Xi qiang wo ruo” 西强我弱 – the West is strong; China is weak. The main problem is that under these circumstances, Western media get to create China’s image.¹⁰⁶ A country’s image has been described as a precious resource and as an “exceptionally important intangible capital” (*ji qi zhongyao de wuxing zichan* 极其重要的无形资产)¹⁰⁷ that has tremendous consequences for how China can conduct its international relations. If other countries do not trust China, this has adverse affects on its possibilities for international cooperation and could make others want to balance against China. In 2001, Sha Qiguang explained that the greatest danger of the China threat theory was that it was used to “poison” China’s neighborhood in Asia by vilifying the country (*chouhua Zhongguo de xingxiang, jieci “duhua” Zhongguo de zhoubian huanjing* 丑化中国的形象，借此“毒化”中国的周边环境).¹⁰⁸ Thus, hostile forces have been trying to turn China’s neighboring countries against China, in some cases quite successfully.¹⁰⁹ Here, the continuation of more traditional framings of the relationship between “the people” and scheming elites (“the enemies of the people”) surfaces again. Neighboring

¹⁰⁴ In 2000, China proposed the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA), and in 2001, it launched the Bo’ao Forum, intended as an alternative to Davos. In the same year, the “Shanghai Five” welcomed Uzbekistan as a new member and formally gave itself the name Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO, *Shanghai Hezuo Zuzhi* 上海合作组织). Cf. Hanns Günter Hilpert, Kay Möller, Gudrun Wacker, and Gerhard Will, “China 2020: Perspektiven für das international Auftreten der Volksrepublik,” SWP-Studie [Study of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs], available on the website of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2005_S32_05_wkr_hlp_mll_wll_ks.pdf, accessed March 1, 2013, 26, 33-34.

¹⁰⁵ “以前，我们强调一国的安全，比如政治环境或者外交环境，而现在多了个舆论环境。” Zhao Qizheng, “Nuli jianshe youliyu woguo de guoji yulun huanjing.” 1.

¹⁰⁶ 西方传统媒体主导着国际上我国国家形象的塑造. Ma Hongwei 马宏伟, “Wangshang suzao Zhongguo guoji xingxiang” 网上塑造中国国际形象 [Shaping China’s international image online], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2001): 24.

¹⁰⁷ Wu Youfu 吴友富, “Difang zhengfu waiwen wangzhan jianshe yu guojia xingxiang suyao he chuanbo” 地方政府外文网站建设与国家形象塑造和传播 [Building of foreign language websites of the local governments and shaping and communication of the national image], *Shanghai xinxi hua* 上海信息化 [Shanghai informatization], no. 1 (2012).

¹⁰⁸ Sha Qiguang, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (xia),” 7.

¹⁰⁹ For instance, South East Asian countries have their doubts about China’s direction after it has grown powerful. So when the U.S. uses Asian issues that also concern China to impede China’s development, South East Asian countries sometimes help America inadvertently. *Ibid.*

countries as well as other developing countries lack the West's ill will, but also have no agency; they simply become pawns in the West's schemes, much like the people in China can be manipulated by hostile forces.¹¹⁰ Of course, use of the media to slander China is not the only channel through which hostile forces attack China, but it has been evaluated as an extremely important one in which China is much weaker than on most other fronts. Chinese politicians have been maintaining that China needs a favorable international public opinion environment to realize its strategic goals since the 1990s, but the concern about China's neighborhood turned what was previously a debate about "favorable conditions" into a much more immediate security concern. Thus, it is imperative to regain control over China's international image so that the country's security environment can be improved. This includes both short term initiatives, in which China reacts to specific attacks, and a long time project of improving China's image and shifting the balance of power in the "international public opinion environment." While China obviously will not rely on propaganda alone to make its neighborhood safe, external propaganda has been reframed as a matter of national security because of these considerations.

The reason why external propaganda was linked to social stability is, likewise, related to the struggle against hostile forces, this time at a front where the CPC is even more vulnerable: at home. The fact that "the West is strong and China is weak" in the "international public opinion environment" is becoming extremely problematic for China, as Hu Jintao explained in a speech in 2008 while inspecting the *People's Daily*, because in the current period "exchange of, integration of, and confrontation between ideologies and cultures are becoming more frequent."¹¹¹ While the CPC can work against hostile forces' attempts to infiltrate China through censorship regimes and other restrictions to a certain degree, it seems to admit that it is fighting a losing battle against what the Party itself sees as an "inevitable trend", namely that of the world growing ever closer together, inevitably leading to more flows of information between different countries that will be impossible to block completely. Thus, after turning domestic

¹¹⁰ E.g. Sha Qiguang, "Dui Xifang meiti sanbu 'Zhongguo weixielun' de pingxi (shang)," 9.

¹¹¹ "Hu Jintao zai Renmin ribao she kaocha gongzuo de jiang hua (quanwen)" 胡锦涛在人民日报社考察工作时的讲话(全文) [Hu Jintao's speech while inspecting the work at the People's Daily Agency], Xinhuanet, June 26, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2008-06/26/content_8442547.htm, accessed October 12, 2011.

propaganda into a matter of life and death for the Party in the aftermath of 1989, increasing China's influence on the "international public opinion front" is seen as a more proactive step to pre-empt unwanted information from having an impact in China.

This is confirmed by the fact that external propaganda has been described as "being at the forefront of the [struggle] against 'peaceful evolution,'" ¹¹² indicating a domestic dimension to China's external propaganda project by discrediting the message of hostile forces before they even reach China. If "hostile forces" have the upper hand in the media environment more "hostile" messages will get into the country, just like as long as they control the main share of the international public opinion environment, they will potentially enjoy a larger degree of credibility in China. This is true despite the fact that Chinese authorities have succeeded in mobilizing relatively large numbers of people against Western media whenever nationalist questions are at stake.

The CPC realizes that it will not be able to replace Western media conglomerates with its own media overnight. Nonetheless, it hopes to be able to mitigate the constant and intensifying threat of information flows into China while being both isolated and weak on the "public opinion front" through a long term shift of "propaganda forces" (*xuanchuan lilian* 宣传力量) in the international media environment. Until then, short term initiatives, such as selectively rebuking Western media or attacks by "hostile forces" through other channels are presumably also meant to protect social stability.

Finally, external propaganda was also declared to be part of China's comprehensive powers. ¹¹³ Cai Mingzhao 蔡名照, one of the deputy directors of Office of External Propaganda (*Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi* 中共对外宣传办公室, OEP)/ State Council Information Office (*Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi* 国务院新闻办公室, SCIO) from 2001 to 2009, explained that a country that had weak external propaganda capacities could not

¹¹² Wu Nong 吴农, "Lun duiwai xuanchuan yu jiaqiang dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe" 论对外宣传与加强党的执政能力建设 [On external propaganda and building the ability of the Party to rule], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2005): 17.

¹¹³ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 188.

prevail in the international competition, could not become a rich and strong country, and could not establish itself in the world's "forest of nations" (*shijie minzu zhi lin* 世界民族之林).¹¹⁴ The relationship between soft power or propaganda power and comprehensive power was not entirely uncontested. Quite a few voices argued that economic strength remained the determining factor: As China became more economically influential its voice would naturally become stronger.¹¹⁵ Thus, on the one hand, some believed that China's voice depended on its economic strength. On the other hand, the imbalance between China's economic power and both its voice and image was noted.¹¹⁶ In the end, the position that China needed to become more proactive in raising its own voice won. After all, China's economic strength was often used to slander the country, and this was a serious impediment to China's ability to continue to strengthen itself.

By the time the handbook *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* was published in 2006, the issue had been settled: The text states that "external propaganda powers/capabilities are an important component of China's comprehensive powers."¹¹⁷ In order to assert itself in the global competition between nation-states, China did not only need economic strength as a basis (*zuo jichu* 作基础), but also "public opinion forces" (*yulun lilian* 舆论力量) as a "guarantee" (*zuo baozheng* 作保证). Thus, by raising the international influence of China's external propaganda, China's competitiveness is strengthened.¹¹⁸ This means that while of course, economic development continues to be the most important factor in determining China's overall national strength, without the

¹¹⁴ "从某种意义上说, 一个外宣能力很弱的国家, 不可能在国际竞争中取胜, 不可能建设成为繁荣富强的国家, 不可能自立于世界民族之林" Zhou Zongmin 周宗敏, "Bu fu zhong tuo, bu ru shiming, nuli yingzao lianghao guoji yulun huanjing" 不负重托, 不辱使命, 努力营造良好国际舆论环境 [Accept the great responsibilities, fulfill the mission, work hard to create a international public opinion environment beneficial to China], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2004): 11.

¹¹⁵ For instance, one article argued that the reason why Chinese external propaganda in Africa had turned from largely unsuccessful to largely successful was simply the fact that China's economic and comprehensive powers had increased. Li Xin, "Weiyu choumou – Guanyu 'ru shi' yu duiwai xuanchuan de ruogan sikao," 6.

¹¹⁶ See for example Duanmu Laidi 端木来娣, "Xinhuashe duiwai baodao renwu jianju zeren zhongda" 新华社对外报道任务艰巨责任重大 [Xinhua's external reporting mission is formidable and its responsibility is heavy], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 9 (2001): 9.

¹¹⁷ "对外宣传实力是我国综合实力的重要组成部分" Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 188.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

“guarantee” of a sufficiently strong voice that matches China’s economic strength, the country was very vulnerable.

The inclusion of propaganda power into China’s comprehensive powers is, of course, also linked to the question of national security and social stability. Being able to counter such attacks made China more likely to survive and more competitive as well. However, by including external propaganda forces in China’s comprehensive forces, it was also tied to China’s aspirations to rise and become a strong country (*qiang guo* 强国) again. The ability to establish one’s point of view on the international stage became an indicator –albeit a fuzzy one– to measure the country’s international clout and its international standing. After China had successfully established itself as an economic giant, it now needed to develop a voice and an image that could both match its status and help further elevate it. In sum, “a rising world power requires a correspondingly strong propaganda and public opinion force.”¹¹⁹ This theme had already been implied in Jiang Zemin’s speech from 1999 and became continually stronger over the next few years.

Thus, external propaganda was not only tied to national security and social stability (i.e. a negative goal: preventing foreigners from splitting and Westernizing China by causing domestic problems), but also turned into a vital ingredient to realize China’s ambitions to become a power to be reckoned with on the global stage (i.e. a positive goal). The latter, in turn, had two dimensions: First, the idea that external propaganda is, in fact, vital for China to survive the competition against other countries, and, second, the notion of prestige or of working towards the goal of creating a “strong country” that the CPC had promised the Chinese people. In sum, external propaganda power was seen as an actual power without which China could not realize its rise, but also as a marker of status, which became increasingly important for CPC legitimacy.

This leads to the last issue, namely the manifold ways in which external propaganda can help ensure regime security in the eyes of the CPC. The first way in which external propaganda is useful in the eyes of the CPC is direct promotion of the Party to foreign audiences. Why propagating the Party is vital becomes clear when looking at U.S. strategic interests with regard to China, or at least what China believes those to be. With the opening of its economy to foreign businesses,

¹¹⁹ 正在金崛起的世界强国要求有与之相称的强大宣传舆论力量。Yang Jinzhou and Yang Guoren, “Xingshi, renwu, tiaozhan, jiyu - xie zai xin shiji kaiyuan zhi ji,” 4.

China has created powerful stakeholders abroad in the continued stability and economic growth of the country, and the CPC is quite aware of that. It knows that countries such as the U.S. do not have an actual interest in seriously disrupting economic growth in China, from which the West profits too much to want to seriously sabotage it. At the same time, a relatively strong faction in the U.S. believes that a stable *and* democratic China would be even more desirable, as it could prevent security competition. Thus, one of the goals of Chinese external propaganda, much like in the domestic realm, is to establish an image of a stable China *because* of the CPC. One author argued that whether or not external propaganda succeeded “directly influenced the image of the Party’s rule abroad” (*zhijie yingxiang dang de duiwai de zhizheng xingxiang* 直接影响党的对外的执政形象).¹²⁰ Promoting the CPC to foreigners is a hard sell, and in the 21st century, the Party went back and forth on how much to stress the role of the CPC and socialist ideology in texts targeting foreigners, as I will explain below in chapter 7.7.

Second, if the aspirations of the Chinese people for “national rejuvenation” and a powerful country were not fulfilled on all fronts, this would impact the CPC’s standing in China. A louder voice and a better image in the international sphere are both a means to an end – helping China’s economy to grow and promoting reunification – and an end in itself: Creating an internationally influential strong country. From the perspective of the CPC, both are means to the same end, namely showing the Chinese people that the CPC can deliver what it has promised and lead the Chinese people to renewed greatness and high international regard.

Importantly, however, unlike domestic propaganda and thought work, external propaganda has not (yet) openly been directly linked to regime security by tying it to the “ruling position” (*zhizheng diwei* 执政地位) of the Party, and rhetoric as much as actual institutions make it abundantly clear that external propaganda continues to be considered less important than domestic propaganda.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Wu Nong, “Lun duiwai xuanchuan yu jiaqiang dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe,” 16.

¹²¹ *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* only links propaganda and thought work in general to the ability of the Party to maintain its ruling position. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 2.

In sum, the role of external propaganda as defined in the early 21st century can be expressed at different levels. At the most abstract level, its role is to support the general line of the CPC and China's strategic goals by creating a 'favorable international public opinion environment.' This is done by creating a favorable image of China and the CPC in the eyes of foreigners and by gradually shifting the balance of power in the field of international propaganda and public opinion. Here, China's propaganda forces (*xuanchuan liliang* 宣传力量) are considered part of China's comprehensive powers. This implies that having a sufficient voice on the international stage is no longer seen as means to be able to pursue specific policies. Shifting the power balance in the field of "public opinion" is a way to make China more competitive in the long run. Moreover, although this is not spelled out, as the Chinese people increasingly care about China's image abroad and its ability to set international agendas, having normative power has also become a means to ensure continued legitimacy at home.

As in the 1990s, external propaganda has two dimensions: "Positive propaganda," i.e. spreading China's message, and the "international public opinion struggle," i.e. countering information spread by the "anti-China forces." Countering these hostile forces is vital because they are able to disrupt China's relations with other countries, particularly in Asia, preventing both business opportunities and support for China's policies in international organizations or other platforms in which China depends on the support of other countries.¹²² This is the national security dimension of external propaganda. Finally, it appears that raising China's voice on the international stage and making it more competitive vis-à-vis hostile forces is ultimately also intended as a means to prevent the latter from spreading its message inside China, first by discrediting their message, thus stopping it from being spread, and, in the long run, by replacing Western media as the most dominant and most credible source of information in the international media environment. This is why external propaganda matters to social stability.

¹²² Cf. Ma Hongwei, "Wang shang suzao Zhongguo guoji xingxiang," 24; Sha Qiguang, "Dui Xifang meiti sanbu 'Zhongguo weixielun' de pingxi (shang)," 5.

7.6 The Key Period 2003-2004

Three nationwide external propaganda conferences took place in 2003 and 2004 over a period of 16 months: one in January 2003, one in December 2003, and one in April 2004. At the first conference, external propaganda cadres presented a reformed external propaganda package of activities and impressed the need to better adapt to the foreign target audiences. At the second conference in December, Hu Jintao gave a speech in which he upgraded the importance of external propaganda, explaining that it was relevant for national security and social stability. The third conference a few months later was used to present a new central circular on external propaganda work and to introduce the agenda and goals for external propaganda work until 2020.

The national external propaganda work conference for the year 2003, which happened in Beijing over three days from January 9 to 11,¹²³ presented all the new measures that had been developed and refined over the past four years (1999-2002), both before and after public diplomacy had re-gained in importance in the U.S. The conference was presided over by Zhao Qizheng and attended by Liu Yunshan 刘云山 and Li Changchun 李长春, who each delivered an “important speech.”¹²⁴ The report on the 2003 conference on external propaganda as published in the *People's Daily* paraded the largest number of new ideas thus far and made the scope of what is defined as *duiwai xuanchuan* considerably more congruent with what is widely discussed in the U.S. under the term “public diplomacy.” The main topic of discussion at the conference was “analyze the international public opinion situation, and research countermeasures and initiatives to respond to new situations, new problems, and new challenges.”¹²⁵ The necessary adaptations China needed to make to its overall strategy had been discussed in *External Propaganda Reference* quite frequently over the course of 2002,¹²⁶ and by 2003, China was ready to discuss how to adapt to the changed

¹²³ Benkan teyue jizhe 本刊特约记者 [Specially appointed reporter from this journal], “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuangzaoxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi” 体现时代性 把握规律性 富于创造性——记 2003 年全国外宣工作会议 [Embody the characteristics of the times, grasp the rules, be rich in innovation – Notes from the nationwide work meeting for external propaganda in 2003], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2003): 1.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ “分析国际舆论形势，研究应对新形势、新问题、新挑战的对策和举措。” Ibid.

¹²⁶ E.g. Sa Benwang, “Dui 2002 nian guoji xingshi de ji dian qianjian,” 44-46.

global situation and power balance after 9/11 at the official external propaganda conference. However while a large number of changes were presented, higher level cadres were also still collecting material and information to be included in the new policy document that was to be released a year later.

In his speech, Li Changchun, the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) member in charge of Propaganda and Thought Work during the Hu-Wen era, presented the overall goal for the coming period, namely to be able to significantly strengthen China's "external propaganda powers" (*duiwai xuanchuan shili* 对外宣传实力) within a relatively short amount of time, increase China's influence in mainstream Western society, achieve a relatively large improvement of China's position in the international public opinion struggle, and thus taking the first step in building an "external propaganda pattern" (*duiwai xuanchuan geju* 对外宣传格局) that was commensurate with China's international standing.

There are several points to note. First, the speech marked the inclusion of "propaganda power" into China's comprehensive powers. Prior to the reignited debate about public diplomacy and soft power in the U.S., China had not directly conceived of successful propaganda or cultural appeal as part of a nation's comprehensive powers. Second, like in the 1990s, entering mainstream Western society was still the most important goal. Being successful in other regions was important as well, but the standard by which success or failure was to be decided was China's position in the West, *excluding* sections of society that were already sympathetic (and were not considered mainstream). In a sense, "hostile forces" were to be confronted on their own "home fronts." Third, this was to be achieved within a relatively short period of time, a pronouncement stressing both the urgency of the problem China faced and the resolve to take up the measures needed.

This was to be done by broadening the means and channels for external propaganda work and by "vigorously promoting the reform of the external propaganda system and the innovation of approaches."¹²⁷ While this was again a

¹²⁷加强外宣手段建设, 拓宽外宣工作的领域和渠道, 大力推进外宣体制改革和方法创新, 力争在较短的时期内使对外宣传实力有所增强, 对外宣传中国有新的进展, 我国在西方主流社会的影响有明显扩大, 在国际舆论斗争中的形势有较大的改善, 初步形成与我国国际地位相适应的对外宣传格局。Ibid.

spin-off of “system reforms” (*tizhi gaige* 体制改革) in other areas, the next few years showed that China was serious about instituting larger changes both to the methods with which external propaganda was conducted and to the way in which the work as a whole was organized and coordinated. Both points were addressed at the conference:

First, the message that Li Changchun sent was for propaganda cadres to think outside the box and use any channels possible to propagate China. China should strengthen its cultural exchanges and, more importantly, link the fields of external propaganda and cultural exchange. Likewise, China must draw both on the “going out” (*zou chuqu* 走出去) and the “inviting in” (*qing jinlai* 请进来, or *yin jinlai* 引进来) strategies to deal with foreign media and foreign journalists. While both slogans, as briefly indicated above (cf. chapter 6.6), have many different meanings within the external propaganda sector, here it refers to China sending journalists abroad and seeking cooperation with foreign media abroad while at the same time trying to accommodate and provide services to foreign media and journalists as much as possible in China in order to gain their favor in return.

Second, China must reform its external propaganda system, a point that later became the first of three goals until 2020 and that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. For sub-central external propaganda, Li Changchun had three demands: to establish a mechanism to coordinate work between different units (*tongchou xietiao jizhi* 统筹协调机制), second to establish and improve the press release mechanism (*xinwen fabu jizhi* 新闻发布机制), and third, to establish a mechanism to better coordinate work in case of sudden events that would enable China to react faster (*yingdui tufa shijian gaoxiao de xinwen xuanchuan xietiao jizhi* 应对突发事件高效的新闻宣传协调机制) so that China would no longer be in a defensive and reactive position.¹²⁸

This implies an additional problem the Center was faced with in its external propaganda reform at this particular juncture. The CPC had realized –at least in theory– that it needed to react quickly to sudden events in order to make Chinese media competitive. Most natural disasters had been allowed to be reported since 1998. But in order to do this, China depended on local branches of

¹²⁸ Ibid., 2.

its central media as well as on local governments and their external propaganda structures. Particularly the latter did not have an interest in reporting sudden events that would make it look bad in the eyes of the central government. Since the beginning of the post-Mao period, the Center had launched several campaigns to teach local governments to stop “reporting only the good things and not the bad” (*bao xi bu bao you* 报喜不报忧) in internal reports.¹²⁹ The SARS debacle that followed later that year proved that failure to report did not only harm the image of Chinese *media*, but the image of the Chinese government and the CPC as a whole.

Overcoming ideological inhibitions in order to be able to make strategic adaptations to China’s external propaganda were again high on the agenda, both at the macro level determining how the sector should be organized and at the micro level with regard to work style (*zuofeng* 作风) and writing style (*wenfeng* 文风). Li Changchun emphasized the need to innovate on the basis of existing experience and to let China’s external propaganda “emancipate the mind, seek truth from facts, and go with the times” (*jiefang sixiang, shishi qiu shi, yu shi ju jin* 解放思想、实事求是、与时俱进).¹³⁰ For external propaganda work, to “go with the times” described practices that conflicted with the “traditional” understanding of propaganda in the CPC, but that would significantly increase the acceptance of Chinese media coverage in the eyes of foreigners. For instance, one point raised in an article discussing the slogan “going with the times” as it applied to external

¹²⁹ E.g. Xie Lihong 谢立宏, “Duanzheng dangfeng de yi xiang zhongyao renwu: tan jiuzheng ‘bao xi bu bao you’ de huai zuofeng” 端正党风的一项重要任务——谈纠正“报喜不报忧”的坏作风 [An important task of rectifying the party style: On correcting the bad style of “reporting only the good things and not the bad”], *Sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo yanjiu* 思想政治工作研究 [Research on thought and political work], no. 12 (1985).

¹³⁰ Benkan teyue jizhe, “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuangzaoxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi,” 1. These three slogans are traced back to remarks made by Jiang Zemin at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Fifteenth Central Committee made in response to attacks on the three represents’ redefinition of the party. They are supposed to embody the theoretical contributions of three leadership generations. *Shishi qiushi* was developed by Mao and picked up by Deng, who added *jiefang sixiang*. Jiang Zemin in turn picked up this legacy and added *yu shi ju jin* 与时俱进.

propaganda was “to dare to report negative issues in order to raise the image and credibility of China’s public opinion.”¹³¹

The range of issues subsumed under this slogan at the time became clear in a speech by Li Bing 李冰, who was a vice head of OEP/SCIO between 1994 and late 2008. Li addressed six relationships between two dialectical opposites respectively that China needed to get right. All of the six tackled issues that external propaganda experts had pointed out since the 1980s, that had become taboo in public after 1989 and that now needed to be addressed if China wanted to succeed in increasing its influence in Western mainstream society:

First, China needed to get the relationship between Chinese ideology and Western ideology right. While external propaganda work needed to pay attention to ideology, it could not afford to be bogged down by it, for instance by choosing cooperation partners on the basis of ideological criteria.¹³² Moreover, Chinese external propaganda cadres were quite aware of the negative connotations that Communism evoked in the West, which meant that not only hostile forces but also ordinary people were difficult to win over.¹³³

Second, while China needed to hold on to its own understanding of the press, it also could not entirely disregard the Western understanding of the press. It was necessary to understand what the West was interested in, to learn how to “package” China’s message so that it would be accepted, and to look for common ground with regard to the senders’ and the receivers’ values.¹³⁴

Third, China needed to get right the relationship between saying what China wanted to say (*yi wo wei zhu* 以我为主) and “respecting the audience” (*zunzhong shouzhong* 尊重受众, also referred to as *you di fang shi* 有地放矢 elsewhere). This meant that China should send its message, but should make sure it was sent in a way that the target audience would accept. This required

¹³¹ Xu Ge 许革, “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan yu shi jujin de ji dian sikao” 关于对外宣传与时俱进的几点思考 [A few thoughts on external propaganda going with the times], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2003): 6.

¹³² “外宣既要讲意识形态, 但又不能被意识形态所限制, 不能以意识形态划线” Benkan teyue jizhe, “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuanguangxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi,” 3.

¹³³ Cf. “Zhao Qizheng zhuren shuo duiwai xuanchuan shi yi men gaochao de yishu” 赵启正主任说对外宣传是一门高超的艺术 [Director Zhao Qizheng says external propaganda is a high art], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2002): 2.

¹³⁴ Benkan teyue jizhe: “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuanguangxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi,” 3.

knowledge about the “cultural background” (*wenhua beijing* 文化背景) and the “psychological characteristics” (*xinli tedian* 心理特点) of the audience; in short, China needed to pay attention to the “art of propaganda” (*xuanchuan yishu* 宣传艺术).¹³⁵ Taken together, points one, two, and three also advocated getting rid of the overly strong focus on ideological matters that had dominated the external propaganda conception during the 1990s. While external propaganda should not entirely abandon socialism, it was not supposed to directly propagate it, either.

Fourth, China needed to find the right balance between reporting China’s successes and reporting China’s problems. Here, Li argued against the idea that “relying mainly on positive propaganda” meant to avoid reporting problems. Facing problems, he argued, would not inevitably lead to negative consequences, but showed that China had confidence.¹³⁶

Fifth, China needed to balance official voices and popular (*minjian* 民间) voices. By this, he mainly meant that China needed to become better at integrating the voices of “experts” and “scholars” into its overall external propaganda effort. If those experts expressed the position of the government in their own words, they would be much more effective than a press release from the government. In short, official voices and popular voices could mutually supplement one another and thus increase the effectiveness of the message.¹³⁷ However, such statements also fit into the overall call for privatizing the media. External propaganda had served as an argument for further privatization of the media before, and in early 2004, Li Xiguang, who was by then director of the Center for International Communication at Qinghua University (*Qinghua daxue guoji chuanbo yanjiu zhongxin* 清华大学国际传播研究中心), argued that if China wanted to compete with Western (particularly U.S. media), it would need its own unofficial, diverse (*duoyuan* 多元) media with transnational capital.¹³⁸ With this new media system, China could also push new content, new styles, and new forms of language.¹³⁹ Li Xiguang 李希光,

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Li Pei 李珮 and Liu Yaming 刘雅鸣, “Quanzhou chuanbo shidai woguo duiwai xuanchuan xin chulu (si)- Guanyu zhenghe waixuan ziyuan de jianyi” 全球传播时代我国对外宣传新出路 (四) [A new way out for China’s external propaganda in the era of global communication (four)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2004): 22.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

as briefly indicated above, is not only an academic, but also a close advisor of OEP/SCIO, who studied in China's earliest journalism programs in the 1980s, together with people such as Wang Chen 王晨, who became head of OEP/SCIO in 2008.¹⁴⁰

Sixths, China needed to get the relationship between social benefits and economic benefits right.¹⁴¹ This, first, meant that the sector needed to use money more effectively and be gradually led into the mechanisms of the market, presumably with the goal that external propaganda might eventually become financially independent, an idea that had been advocated by since the early 21st century (cf. chapter 6.6). Second, it also meant that China's media and other organizations involved in external propaganda should avoid presenting themselves as government organs when dealing with foreigners and rather appear with their "business face" (*yi shangye mianmao chuxian* 以商业面貌出现), particularly when cooperating with foreigners.¹⁴²

In sum, Li Bing presented six ways to improve the effectiveness of external propaganda that had been largely neglected during the 1990s, or rather been eclipsed in importance by the need to be principled, but that now needed to be addressed to allow Chinese external propaganda work to actually have some effect. In each case, he addressed the merit of the "principled" position that had dominated in the 1990s while at the same time arguing that adopting the new methods did not mean giving up principles but only meant being strategic while maintaining the essence of China's message and purpose. An important external propaganda principle that sums up this approach is called "round outside, square within" (*wai yuan nei fang* 外圆内方),¹⁴³ which can be interpreted, at the most basic level, to mean "appear relaxed to the outside world, but follow strict rules internally" Thus, by following this principle, external propaganda workers could

¹⁴⁰ See Sunny Lee, "China grooms new breed of journalists," website of the *Asia Times*, September 4, 2009, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/KI04Ad01.html>, accessed February 14, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Benkan teyue jizhe, "Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuanguangxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi," 3.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ E.g. Zhou Zongmin 周宗敏, "Yong 'shijie yuyan' tong haiwai shouzhong 'zhijie duihua' – yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan" 用'世界语言'同海外受众'直接对话'——与国内分社记者英文报道培训班学员座谈 [Using the 'world language' for 'direct dialogue' with overseas audiences - seminar with the participants of the english reporting training of the reporters of domestic branches], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (2004): 16; Benkan teyue jizhe, "Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuanguangxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi," 3.

make strategic adaptations on the outside, while observing a strict protocol on the inside.

Over the course of 2003, several events confirmed the urgency of the need to improve external propaganda in the eyes of decision-makers. First, China studied the use of the mass media before and during the Iraq War and determined that Saddam Hussein's regime had not only suffered a military loss, but also a devastating defeat in the war over international public opinion (presumably referring to the ability of the U.S. government to convince the Western public of the existence of weapons of mass destruction).¹⁴⁴ Although China's situation was not comparable to that of Iraq and the need to counter the "China threat theory" had been discussed earlier, the fact that China felt it had just witnessed the fall of the Iraqi regime among other things due to international public opinion increased the pressure and served as another powerful argument for proponents of a stronger external propaganda force.

Second, after the SARS outbreak, by April and May 2003, the Chinese government was heavily criticized for concealing information. Western media also began to frame the episode as a severe legitimacy crisis for China's political system.¹⁴⁵ The CPC evidently took these interpretations seriously. The legitimacy crisis, which had a strong domestic and less pronounced but still important international dimension, set in motion both debates and reforms.¹⁴⁶ Most importantly, from an external propaganda perspective, was the reinforced perceived need to be able to "guide international public opinion" (*yindao guoji yulun* 引导国际舆论) and the subsequent resolve to establish a proper press release and spokesperson system (*xinwen fabu zhidu* 新闻发布制度).¹⁴⁷ The

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, "Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun" 新闻发布有利于影响和引导国际舆论 [Press conferences help to influence and guide international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2005): 5.

¹⁴⁵ See for example Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, "Sars Threat to Communist Party," website of the BBC, May 8, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3011739.stm>, accessed January 7, 2013.

¹⁴⁶ For the breadth of discussions and initiatives set in motion, see John Wong and Zheng Yongnian, eds., *The Sars Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2004). The volume is based on a workshop held in November 2003 at the East Asian Institute of the National University of Singapore.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Wang Hongjiang 王宏江 and Guo Qing 郭晴, "Zhongda guoji saishi zhengfu yulun yindao moshi chuanguan yanjiu – Yi Beijing Aoyunhui wei li" 重大国际赛事政府舆论引导模式创新研究——以北京奥运会为例 [Research on innovation of the mode of the government guiding

Party-state's transparency efforts were not only geared towards international observers but were also intended to raise the legitimacy of the CPC and the national government at home.¹⁴⁸ The main professed purpose of the press conference system is to show the government and Party as open and transparent, both in China and abroad.¹⁴⁹ Thus, as usual, the rationale for the measure had both to do with domestic and with international problems.

Later in 2003, the way external propaganda was talked about clearly showed that it had been upgraded in importance. At the propaganda and thought work conference in late 2003,¹⁵⁰ Hu Jintao gave a speech, stressing that not only was external propaganda important for creating a favorable public opinion environment and establishing a good image for China, it also mattered to national security and stability (*guojia anquan he wending* 国家安全和稳定). The details of what Hu said on external propaganda were not reported publically.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, this signified, for the first time, the reframing of foreign propaganda from being simply of "strategic importance" (however interpreted) to being of imminent significance for regime security and continued CPC rule in official discourse for the reasons explained above.

The following months were a time of experimentation and contestations over the road that China was to take in terms of its self-presentation. Around the same time that the upgrade of external propaganda was formalized, the Fourth Generation Leadership tested another slogan and theory: "China's peaceful rise."

public opinion on major international (sports) competitions - the Beijing Olympic Games as an example], *Chengdu tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 成都体育学院学报 [Journal of Chengdu Institute of Physical Education] 35, no. 12 (2009): 4.

¹⁴⁸ The government began to speak of the 'right to know' (*zhiqingquan* 知情权) and establishing a system to provide the citizenry with information on time so as to prevent rumors from destabilizing society. Cf. Qiu Zhaomin, "Dui woguo zhengfu xinwen fabu gongzuo de sikao," 20-23.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. "Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuangxin jingshen kaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian" 王晨: 以改革创新精神开创党的对外宣传工作新局面 [Wang Chen: Create a new situation for the Party's external propaganda work through the spirit of reform and innovation], Website of OEP/SCIO, July 5, 2011. http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/wangchen/jh/201107/t949561_2.htm, accessed June 29, 2012.

¹⁵⁰ An external propaganda conference was convened simultaneously in Beijing, but not publically reported. Cf. Yang Guoren and Ding Wenkui, "Fuwu da waixuan - 2005 nian yuandan xianci," 1.

¹⁵¹ Yang Guoren and Ding Wenkui, "Fuwu da waixuan - 2005 nian yuandan xianci," 1

The term “peaceful rise” was first introduced by Zheng Bijian 郑必坚 at a session of the Bo’ao Forum for Asia on November 3, 2003.

Although Zheng has been presented as an advisor to the Chinese government or as a “leading intellectual,”¹⁵² he had been active as a leading cadre in the propaganda and thought work sector during the Jiang Zemin era as *de-facto* head of the Central Propaganda Department between 1992 and 1997 and later as vice president of the Central Party School between 1997 and 2002. By 2003, when he presented the peaceful rise theory, he had retired from his official Party functions, become a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and served as chairman of the China Reform Forum.¹⁵³ According to an article in the *Journal of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC*, Zheng developed the theory after a memo from Hu Jintao in January 2003, requesting that “research on the question of China’s peaceful rise be launched.”¹⁵⁴ In December 2003, the concept was officially taken up by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao.¹⁵⁵ By spring 2004, “peaceful rise” seemed to be on its way to becoming a key concept of the Fourth Generation Leadership. The decisive change came about on April 24, when Hu Jintao ignored the term *heping jueqi* 和平崛起 completely during a much awaited keynote address delivered at the Bo’ao

¹⁵² E.g. John L Thornton, “Foreword,” *China’s Peaceful Rise: Speeches of Zheng Bijian 1997-2004* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2006), v, website of the Brookings Institute, <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/events/20050616bijianlunch.pdf>, accessed February 18, 2013.

¹⁵³ The China Reform Forum was established in 1994. Its self-declared aim is to “devote itself to research on and analysis of national policies [...] and to submit advisory reports to the respective departments of the government.” The basis for this are the “close observation of development trends in international politics and economics and the organization of renowned scholars from all over the world to conduct multidisciplinary research on central issues and problems that appear in the course of China’s Reform and Opening up policies.” Luntan Jianjie 论坛简介 [Introduction to the (China Reform) Forum], website of the China Reform Forum, <http://www.crf.org.cn/about/home.htm>, accessed August 25, 2007.

¹⁵⁴ Kang Shaobang 康绍邦, “Zhongguo de heping fazhan daolu yu guoji zhanlüe” 中国的和平发展道路与国际战略 [China’s road of peaceful development and its international strategy], *Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao xuebao* 中共中央党校学报 [Journal of the Central Party School] 10, no. 4. (2006): 104.

¹⁵⁵ Wen Jiabao first used the formulation “peaceful rise” during a speech he delivered at Harvard University on December 10, presenting it to an international audience (“Remarks of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao: ‘Turning Your Eyes to China,’” website of Harvard University, December 10, 2003, <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2003/12.11/10-wenspeech.html>, accessed February 18, 2013). Hu Jintao used the term at a speech at the 110th anniversary of Mao Zedong’s birth on December 26 in front of a domestic audience which included his Politburo colleagues (“Hu Jintao zai jinian Mao Zedong danchen 110 zhou nian zuotanhui shang de jianghua” 胡锦涛在纪念毛泽东诞辰 110 周年座谈会的讲话 [Hu Jintao’s speech at the commemoration of the 110 anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong], *People’s Daily Online*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/69112/70190/70193/14286125.html>, accessed February 18, 2013).

Forum for Asia, instead reviving the considerably older expressions “peaceful development” (*heping fazhan* 和平发展) and “peace and development” (*heping yu fazhan* 和平与发展). The basic themes constituting China’s “peaceful development” largely remained the same.¹⁵⁶

Thus, the idea of China’s peaceful rise was devised on the basis of existing discussions over the course of 2003, between the introduction of new ideas and the rhetorical upgrade of external propaganda. It was then tested for several months and ultimately rejected around the time that China formalized its new external propaganda policy and its plans until 2020.

It should not go unmentioned that there were externally visible signs at the time that the CPD had come under attack internally. The department is anecdotally known to be unpopular with other departments for its neglect to coordinate with them before releasing certain statements that are then mistaken for the official government position.¹⁵⁷ In April 2004 the essay “Crusade against the CPD” (*Taofa Zhongxuanbu* 讨伐中宣部) written by Jiao Guobiao 焦国标, then assistant professor of Journalism at Peking University, was published on the Internet and caused a stir in China. Among other things, the essay criticized the CPD for ruining the image of the Party and the country.¹⁵⁸ According to Jiao, he had written the article between late 2003 and spring 2004 for internal circulation only, but someone had put it online after he had sent it to friends for feedback. Jiao was never criticized directly, but harassed through constant calls on his cell phone. He was eventually fired indirectly in spring 2005.¹⁵⁹ At the time, there were speculations that someone more powerful was behind the article. Although

¹⁵⁶ Both the rhetoric and substance of China’s peaceful rise/development have been covered in secondary literature, e.g. Robert L. Suettinger, “The rise and descent of ‘peaceful rise,’” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 12, 2004, <http://www.chinaleadershipmonitor.org/20044/rs.pdf>, accessed March 1, 2013.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, 95. The CPD is expected to coordinate with relevant departments before authorizing news commenting on political issues in a particular sector.

¹⁵⁸ For instance, the essay argues that “When the Chinese government states that [China’s] image in the international community is not ideal, it should first identify the Central Propaganda Department’s responsibilities [i.e. it should first and foremost blame the CPD]” (中国政府如果说在国际社会上形象不理想, 应该首追中宣部的责任). Jiao Guobiao 焦国标, “Taofa Zhongxuanbu” 讨伐中宣部 [Crusade against the CPD], available online at http://msittig.freeshell.org/docs/jian_guobiao_essay_utf8.html, accessed February 15, 2013.

¹⁵⁹ The university wanted to reassign him to the research center on ancient texts. At the time, he had already accepted an invitation from an American university. His family was subsequently informed that he had quit his job voluntarily. Interview with Jiao Guobiao, Heidelberg, June 29, 2007.

Jiao has always maintained that he wrote the article himself, it is testimony to a larger debate behind the scenes, in which at least one of his colleagues wanted to test the reaction to the article in public.

The second external propaganda conference within a few months was held in Beijing from April 20 to 21, briefly before the Bo'ao Forum. This time, the *People's Daily* publically reported Li Changchun's statement that external propaganda should "focus on safeguarding state security and stability" (*zhuoyan yu weihu guojia anquan he wending* 着眼于维护国家安全和稳定) as one of three foci of external propaganda work.¹⁶⁰ At the conference, *Central Circular* [2004] no. 10, called the *Center's Opinion on how to Strengthen and Improve External Propaganda Work under the New Situation* (*Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu jiaqiang he gaijin xin xingshi xia duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian* 中共中央关于加强和改进新形势下对外宣传工作的意见) was discussed and circulated among participants.¹⁶¹ This "Opinion" was presented as a "milestone" (*lichengpai* 里程碑) in the development of Chinese external propaganda.¹⁶² The full text is not publically available. As has been common in the past, it probably contains different building blocks that can support both the agendas of those that want to reform the external propaganda apparatus further along the lines of Western models and those that argue the CPC needs to refrain from certain steps to remain true to itself. Excerpts from the circular available in public stress the urgency of the reform agenda and the need to adopt a format of external propaganda that foreigners are familiar with and can accept.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰The other two are familiar from previous conceptualizations of external propaganda: "focus on creating an international public opinion environment favorable to China" and "focus on establishing a good image of China in the international community." "Li Changchun zai zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang qiangdiao yong 'san ge daibiao' zhongyao sixiang tongling duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo jin yi bu kaichuang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian" 李长春在中央对外宣传工作会议上强调用"三个代表"重要思想统领对外宣传工作 进一步开创对外宣传工作新局面 [Li Changchun stresses at the central external propaganda work conference that external propaganda needs to be directed by the important thought of the 'three represents' in order to continue to create a new situation in external propaganda work], *Renmin ribao*, April 22, 2004, 1.

¹⁶¹ Wu Nong, "Lun duiwai xuanchuan yu jiaqiang dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe," 16.

¹⁶² Ibid. Also see Zhou Zongmin, "Yong 'shijie yuyan' tong haiwai shouzhong 'zhijie duihua' – yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan," 10.

¹⁶³ Eleven articles in China Academic Journals reference the 2004 Opinion and/or cite very short passages. Moreover, *External Propaganda Reference* also contains a few passages.

The Opinion explained that strengthening and improving external propaganda work constituted an important step for China to be able to “become more proactive in the complex and fierce international struggle” (*shi woguo zai fuza jilie de guoji douzheng zhong yingde zhudong de xuyao* 是我国在复杂激烈的国际斗争中赢得主动的需要) and to protect national security (*shi weihu guojia anquan de xuyao* 是维护国家安全的需要).¹⁶⁴ One structural measure prescribed by the document and aimed at making China more proactive after the lessons of the SARS episode was the establishment of a three-tiered news release system that involved OEP/SCIO, all ministerial bodies of the State Council and all provincial-level governments.¹⁶⁵ Attempts to create such a system had been launched first in 1983 following the initiative of the first EPSG and again in 1993 under OEP/SCIO, but neither had succeeded in establishing a regular system respected abroad. The attempt in 2004 was geared toward providing better training to spokespeople, and making the system more authoritative, regularized and institutionalized.¹⁶⁶ Unlike previous attempts, it was strongly aimed at getting the provinces involved. The idea to include lower levels of government in organized news presentation to the outside world had already been raised in 2003, but the SARS crisis had made the establishment of a spokesperson system more urgent.¹⁶⁷

At the micro level or in terms of qualitative work, the document highlighted the principle of “distinguishing between internal and external” in order to increase the effectiveness of Chinese external propaganda.¹⁶⁸ In public

¹⁶⁴ Wu Nong, “Lun duiwai xuanchuan yu jiaqi dang de zhizheng nengli jianshe,” 16.

¹⁶⁵ Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠, “Zhengfu xinwen fabu xiaoguo pinggu yaosu chutan” 政府新闻发布效果评估要素初探 [Preliminary assessment of the factors of the effect of government press releases], *Xinwen yu chuanbo yanjiu* 新闻与传播研究 [Press and communication research], no. 4 (2010): 98.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Bai Li 白丽, “Xinwen cehua de jiben yuanze ji qi xianshi yiyi” 新闻策划的基本原则及其现实意义 [Basic principles of news planning and their practical significance], *Jiyuan zhiye jishu xueyuan xuebao* 济源职业技术学院学报 [Journal of Jiyuan Vocational and Technical College] 7, no. 2 (2008): 76.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Ni Chen, “The Evolving Chinese Government Spokeperson System,” in *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy Through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 77-80.

¹⁶⁸ “对外宣传要‘内外有别，注重实效’” Cf. Xiong Ying 熊英, “Woguo waixuan fanyi cunzai de buzu ji qi chengguo fenxi” 我国外宣翻译存在的不足及其成因分析 [On the existing shortcomings of Chinese external propaganda translation and an analysis of its causes], *Hunan keji daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 湖南科技大学学报(社会科学版) [Journal of Hunan University of Science and Technology (humanities and social sciences edition)], 15 no. 2 (2012): 143.

texts, this requirement is usually presented as a part of the “three closenesses” of external propaganda” (*waixuan san ge tiejin* 外宣三个贴近): External propaganda should be close to the reality of China’s development, close to the demands what foreign audiences would like to know, and close to the (ideological) thinking habits of foreigners,¹⁶⁹ a twist on the “three closenesses” in the overall (*quanju*) domestic context, introduced as a hallmark of the new fourth generation leadership in 2002 to diminish the distance between the Party and the masses.¹⁷⁰

Participants of the conference were also briefed on and discussed mid-range plans and goals for China’s external propaganda, i.e. the plans for the next fifteen years.¹⁷¹ These plans, just like China’s overall development plans, were presented in the form of a “three step” timetable (*san bu zou* 三步走).¹⁷² The first step, which was to be completed within about two years, consists of building an “all-dimensional, multitiered and wide-ranging big external propaganda pattern” (*quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu de “da waixuan” geju* 全方位, 多层次, 宽领域的“大外宣”格局),¹⁷³ which involves more departments as well as larger sections of the population in the external propaganda effort while ensuring efficiency through proper coordination mechanisms.¹⁷⁴ The second step, which

¹⁶⁹ “贴近中国发展的实际, 贴近国外受众对中国信息的需求, 贴近国外受众的思维习惯”。

¹⁷⁰ The original three closenesses from the domestic context are “close to reality, close to life, close to the masses.”

¹⁷¹ “2004年4月, 中央对外宣传工作会议在京举行, 明确了新世纪新阶段外宣工作的指导思想、方针原则和发展目标, 制定了外宣工作长远发展规划” Wei Wu 魏武, “Bieyou xian hua man ting xiang - Shiliu da yilai woguo duiwai xuanchuan he duiwai wenhua jiaoliu gongzuo zongshu” 别有鲜花满庭香——十六大以来我国对外宣传和对外文化交流工作综述 [Another fresh flower scenting in the yard - a summary of China’s foreign propaganda and foreign cultural exchange work since the 16th national congress], *Renmin ribao*. January 22, 2008, 1. The content of the plans is outlined in Zhou Zongmin, “Yong ‘shijie yuyan’ tong haiwai shouzhong ‘zhijie duihua’ - yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan,” 10 and “Quansheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi tichu: jianli da waixuan geju kaichuang waixuan gongzuo xin jumian” 全省对外宣传工作会议提出: 建立大外宣格局开创外宣工作新局面 [The province’s foreign propaganda work meeting suggests: establish a big external propaganda pattern to create a new situation of external propaganda work], *Jinri Hainan* 今日海南 [Hainan today], no. 7 (2004): 7.

¹⁷² As explained above, the formulation *san bu zou* was originally raised by Deng Xiaoping in 1987 to describe China’s overall development strategy towards a higher per capita income in three big steps.

¹⁷³ The text provides more details what this means: 第一步, 从现在起, 用两年左右时间, 理顺关系, 健全机构, 拓展外宣渠道, 强化手段建设, 建立起中央统一领导, 外宣办协调指导, 各地方、各部门以及驻外使领馆和对外新闻单位相互配合, 建立运行有序的体制和机制, 形成全方位、多层次、宽领域的“大外宣”格局. Cf. “Quansheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi tichu: jianli da waixuan geju kaichuang waixuan gongzuo xin jumian,” 7.

¹⁷⁴ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 199-200.

was to take about five years, consists of turning Xinhua 新华, China Central Television (CCTV), China Radio International (CRI), the *China Daily*, the *People's Daily Overseas Edition* (*Renmin ribao haiwai ban* 人民日报海外版) as well as the key websites into internationally competitive and influential media groups so that the position of China's media in international communication would be elevated and China's influence on international public opinion would be increased.¹⁷⁵ The third step, which will take about another ten years is to have achieved an international public opinion patterned that is relatively favorable to China and to have an external propaganda force commensurate with China's status.¹⁷⁶

This is, of course, not very concrete, but it means that China's efforts are expected to pay off by the year 2020. Thus, the setting up of the "big external propaganda pattern" was supposed to be completed by circa 2006; China was to set up globally operating media between 2006 and 2010, and by 2020, tangible results of the efforts should have manifested. This timetable is supported by a report on the 2007 external propaganda conference, which states that since the beginning of 2006, local and other sub-central units have begun implementing the center's directives.¹⁷⁷ Implementing the plan locally usually means coming up

¹⁷⁵第二步,从现在起,用五年左右时间,以一社(新华社)、二台(中央电视台、中国国际广播电台)、两报(中国日报、人民日报海外版)和重点网站为主体,形成具有国际竞争力和影响力的媒体集团,使我国媒体在国际传媒界的地位有所提高,在国际舆论中的影响力有所提高。
"Quansheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi tichu: jianli da waixuan geju kaichuang waixuan gongzuo xin jumian," 7.

¹⁷⁶第三步,再用十年左右时间,使我国对外宣传实力进一步增强,使我国在国际舆论格局中占据较为有利的位置,形成同我国国际地位相适应的较强的对外宣传力量。
"Quansheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi tichu: jianli da waixuan geju kaichuang waixuan gongzuo xin jumian," 7. The three step plan is also mentioned in John Jirik's dissertation on news making at CCTV-9, although Jirik links it to the "going out" strategy of 2001 rather than presenting it as a development plan for the entire external propaganda sector. Jirik's source is "Zhang, Changming. (2004). Speech to the jury of the 2003 Rainbow Awards. Weihai, Shandong Province." Cf. John Jirik, "Making News in the People's Republic of China: The Case of CCTV-9" (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2008), 28 and 659.

¹⁷⁷"去年以来,在以胡锦涛同志为总书记的党中央领导下,各地各有关部门认真贯彻中央部署" "Liu Yunshan zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang qiangdiao jinjin zhuazhu youli qiji jiji kaizhan duiwai xuanchuan chongfen zhanshi wo guo wenming gongzheng minzhu jinbu xingxiang" 刘云山在全国对外宣传工作会议上强调 紧紧抓住有利契机 积极开展对外宣传充分展示我国文明公正民主进步形象 [Liu Yunshan emphasizes at the nationwide conference for external propaganda work: Firmly grasp the favorable moment to proactively engage in external propaganda work and fully project the image of a China that is civilized, just, democratic, and progressive], *Renmin ribao*, January 22, 2007, 2.

with concrete local targets for each policy/slogan, which also appears to have happened in this case.¹⁷⁸

A lot of the ideas in the plan, such as the big external propaganda pattern, had already been included in the previous long-term plan from early 1996. Likewise, many of the debates on how to improve external propaganda work following the upgrade in 2004 were reminiscent of earlier discussions. However, owing to the new urgency attached to external propaganda because of its newly declared link to national security and social stability, this time, massive reforms followed.

Around the time of the conference, the Center created the External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group (EPWLSG, *Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lingdao xiaozu* 中央对外宣传工作领导小组), led by then CPD director and Politburo member Liu Yunshan, with Zhao Qizheng as vice director.¹⁷⁹ This placed the group directly under the Politburo. However, the creation of the EPWLSG also unequivocally placed the external propaganda sector under the authority of the CPD.

The arrangement was replicated at some lower levels; for instance, Xinhua created an External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group (*Waixuan gongzuo lingdao xiaozu* 外宣工作领导小组), headed by Xinhua's *de facto* editor-in-chief

¹⁷⁸ In Yunnan's external propaganda work, the *san bu zou* strategy is a three step plan towards establishing a "big external propaganda pattern" (*da waixuan geju* 大外宣格局). "Yunnan tichu 'san bu zou' jianli da waixuan geju" 云南提出"三步走"建立大外宣格局 [Yunnan comes up with three-step-plan to build a big external propaganda pattern], January 11, 2006. Originally published in Chuncheng evening news. <http://www.woxie.com/article/list.asp?id=2554>, accessed June 11, 2012 via Google cache. In Fujian, establishing a *quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu de da waixuan geju* is only the first of three steps intended to take about two years. "福建省确定新阶段外宣工作三步走目标, 将用两年时间形成全方位、多层次、宽领域的大外宣格局, 用 5 年时间打造在全国外宣工作中具有重要作用的媒体, 用 10 年时间形成在海外有较大影响力的外宣力量。" Cf. "Fujian sheng waixuan gongzuo queding san bu zou mubiao" 福建省外宣工作确定三步走目标 [External propaganda work of Fujian province lays down goals for three-step-plan], http://www.dss.gov.cn/Article_Print.asp?ArticleID=167130, accessed June 11, 2012. No date of publication is provided.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Zhou Zongmin, "Yong 'shijie yuyan' tong haiwai shouzhong 'zhijie duihua' – yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan," 10. Also see "Xinhuashe juxing jinian Yingyu duiwai xinwen kaibo liushi zhounian zuotanhui" 新华社举行纪念英语对外新闻开播六十周年座谈会 [Xinhua news agency holds symposium to commemorate the 60th anniversary of external news dissemination], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (2004): 1 and 6.

so that the status of external propaganda work within the agency would be strengthened.¹⁸⁰

Thus, to sum up the decisive period between 2003 and 2004, the latest developments in the external propaganda sector were first presented at the 2003 external propaganda conference. Later that year, external propaganda was formally upgraded through Hu Jintao's remark. The full external propaganda program until the year 2020¹⁸¹ was then presented to conference participants at the external propaganda conference in April 2004.

7.7 Since 2004: External Propaganda Takes Off?

After the upgrade, there were a large number of concrete developments, some of which had been planned for longer periods of time. For instance, China founded its first Confucius Institutes. In late 2004, Fudan University in Shanghai launched a new program to train international public relations professionals that could work at governments.¹⁸² Also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) established a Division for public diplomacy.¹⁸³ Over the next few years, China embarked on three major projects: First, raising China's soft power, second, improving the spokesperson system, and third, creating strong global media controlled by China.

¹⁸⁰ Zhou Zongmin, "Yong 'shijie yuyan' tong haiwai shouzhong 'zhijie duihua' – yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan," 10.

¹⁸¹ This macro mid-range program was not the same as the *concrete* external propaganda plans for the five year period 2006 to 2010, which were presented and discussed separately at the external propaganda conference for the year 2006 in December 2005.

¹⁸² "Zhengfu guoji gongguan de duice" 政府国际公关的对策 [Countermeasures in the international public relations of governments]. April 17, 2010, website of the Public Relations department of Shanghai International Studies University, <http://pr.shisu.edu.cn/s/19/t/38/0b/18/info2840.htm>, accessed February 3, 2013.

¹⁸³ Cf. Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," *ANNALS of the American Academy*, no. 616 (2008):260.

Raising China's Cultural Soft Power

The external propaganda conference in July 2005 was dedicated to the various cultural propaganda activities that China was experimenting with.¹⁸⁴ At this conference, Zhao Qizheng announced that he would soon take up another position at the CPPCC, where his work would also be connected to external propaganda.¹⁸⁵ In August 2005, at age 65, the official age limit for leading cadres at ministerial level, he was replaced by Cai Wu, who had served as deputy director of the International Department at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) since 1997. His replacement was part of a miniature rearrangement of leadership positions before the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th CC in October 2005 and had been planned for quite a while.¹⁸⁶ Under Cai Wu 蔡武, who later became Minister of Culture in 2008, a large number of new concrete developments had to do with the goal of raising China's cultural influence. However, this was most likely not the result of the change in personnel, but planned in advance: Zhao Qizheng, who was by then on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the CPPCC, also played a key role in pushing cultural soft power. In March 2006, he raised the issue of “cultural soft power” and “cultural external communication” at the annual CPPCC session. Culture was an important component of the comprehensive power of a nation and was thus tied to the future and fate of the country and the Chinese people.¹⁸⁷ He summarized:

¹⁸⁴ Cf. “Liu Yunshan zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang qiangdiao, jiashen liaojie, kuoda jiaoliu, tuidong hezuo, nuli yingzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing” “Liu Yunshan zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang qiangdiao jiashen liaojie kuoda jiaoliu tuidong hezuo nuli yingzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing” 刘云山在全国对外宣传工作会议上强调 加深了解 扩大交流 推动合作 努力营造良好的国际舆论环境 [Liu Yunshan emphasizes at the nationwide conference for external propaganda work: Deepen our understanding, expand exchange, promote cooperation and make efforts to create a favorable international public opinion environment], *Renmin ribao*, July 21, 2005, 4.

¹⁸⁵ Tan Zhen 谭震 and Lei Xiangqing 雷向晴, “Quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu -- 2005 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi da yinxiang” 全方位、多层次、宽领域——2005年全国外宣工作会议大印象 [All-dimensional, multitiered and wide-ranging – Impressions from the nation work meeting for external propaganda], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 8 (2005):n.p.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. “Wu sheng liu bu wei renshi tiaozheng Zhao Qizheng xieren Cai Wu jiebang guoxinban” 五省六部委人事调整 赵启正卸任蔡武接棒国新办 [Personnel changes in five provinces and six departments and commissions; Zhao Qizheng retires; Cai Wu succeeds him in the State Council Information Office], September 8, 2005. <http://news.163.com/05/0908/11/1T4GSK480001124T.html>, accessed February 3, 2013.

¹⁸⁷ 我们要充分认识到文化对一个民族和一个国家未来命运的基础、支柱和关键作用 Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, “Jiayan xiance gongshang guoshi – Quanguo zhengxie shi jie si ci huiyi dahui fayan zhaibian (er) Zhongguo yao dui shijie wenhua zuochu jiaoda gongxian” 建言献策共商国是——全国政协十届四次会议大会发言摘编 (二) 中国要对世界文化做出较大

“If China wants to become a strong Socialist country, it needs to reinforce its politics, its economy, and its culture at the same time. [...] Only when we have cultural security can we speak about value security and ideological security. The rejuvenation and export of culture need to be integrated into the national development strategies.”¹⁸⁸

Shortly after, the number of conferences on China’s soft power increased markedly. In August 2006, the Foreign Languages Publication and Distribution Office’s (*Zhongguo waiwen chuban faxing shiye ju* 中国外文出版发行事业局, short, *Waiwenju* 外文局, FLO) Center for International Communication Studies organized a forum on “Cross-cultural communication and building soft power.”¹⁸⁹ In July 2007, the CPPCC convened a conference on “Building Chinese Soft Power.”¹⁹⁰ This already indicates that despite the talk of “cultural security,” China’s cultural strategy was no longer seen as purely defensive and designed to pre-empt cultural infiltration of China by the West. Groups within the CPC genuinely believes that American pop culture poses a threat to China’s national security through subtle infusion of U.S. values into Chinese society and therefore feel that because the Party cannot stop the world from growing closer together, it has to counter it in a more proactive way than simply by erecting barriers blocking trade and flow of information. Instead, similar to its plans to weaken hostile forces’ ability to give China any troubles by shifting the power balance in the field of public opinion, China wanted to bring its culture more proactively to the world.

After cultural security became a renewed focus of attention in 2005 and 2006, the drive to export Chinese culture gained traction. In January 2006, the Office of External Propaganda (*Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan*

贡献 [Offering advice and suggestions; discussing the affairs of the state together – Excerpts from speeches at the Fourth Session of the tenth National Committee of the CPPCC (two): China needs to make a greater contribution to world culture], *Renmin ribao*, March 10, 2006, 7.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ “Yantaohui” 研讨会 [Forum], http://www.soic.china.cn/2009-06/30/content_2992540.htm, accessed January 18, 2013.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Pan Yue 潘跃, “Weirao ‘Yi wenhua jianshe wei zhuyao neirong de guojia ruan shili jianshe’ wenti jianyan xiance - quanguo Zhengxie zhaokai zhuanqi xieshang hui - Jia Qinglin chuxi bing jianghua - Liu Yunshan Chen Zhili daohui tingqu yijian bing jianghua” 围绕“以文化建设为主要内容的国家软实力建设”问题建言献策 全国政协召开专题协商会 贾庆林出席并讲话 刘云山陈至立到会听取意见并讲话 [Suggestions and ideas around the question of “cultural construction as the main content of the national construction of soft power” - National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference holds a thematic consultation - Jia Qinglin attended and gave a speech- Liu Yunshan and Chen Zhili listened to opinions and gave speeches], *Renmin ribao*, July 25, 2007, 1.

bangongshi 中共对外宣传办公室, OEP) and the General Administration of Press and Publication (*Xinwen chubanzongshu* 新闻出版总署, GAPP) established a small group for the plan. The group was responsible for policy deliberation as much as policy implementation and has its office in the China National Publications Import and Export Corporation. Initially, the small group combined cadres from 20 different units, later expanded to 33.¹⁹¹ By early 2007, China announced its “Greater China Library” project in which it would translate and publish books written throughout China’s “5000 years of history.”¹⁹²

The cultural soft power debate also included how to “brand” China as a nation. In 2006, vice president of the Shanghai Public Relations Association Wu Youfu 吴友富 suggested to replace the dragon as China’s national symbol with the panda.¹⁹³ Around the same time, as an alternative option, Chinese scholars vividly debated the option of changing the official translation of the Chinese term *long* 龙 into English by using transliteration (the most popular option being *loong*) rather than *dragon*, an approximate translation with very different connotations tarnishing China’s image.¹⁹⁴

At the 17th Party Congress in fall 2007, Hu Jintao called for China to “raise its cultural soft power” (*tisheng guojia wenhua ruanshili* 提升国家文化软实力)

¹⁹¹ Cf. “Zhongguo tushu duiwai tuiguang jihua” 中国图书对外推广计划 [Plan to promote Chinese books abroad], Baidu Encyclopedia, <http://baike.baidu.com/view/1257512.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012. Also Cf. “Zhongguo wenhua zhuzuo fanyi chubanzongshu kaishi quanmian shishi” 中国文化著作翻译出版工程开始全面实施 [The work to translate and publish works of Chinese culture has begun to be fully implemented], originally published in the People’s Daily, ShowChina.org, March 30, 2009, <http://www.showchina.org/zixun/200903/t288270.htm>, accessed March 1, 2013.

¹⁹² Cf. Xiaoling Zhang, “From ‘foreign propaganda’ to ‘international communication’: China’s Promotion of Soft Power in the Age of Information and Communication Technologies,” in Xiaoling Zhang and Yongnian Zheng, eds., *China’s Information and Communications Technology: Revolution, Social Changes and State Responses* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 105.

¹⁹³ Wang, “Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power,” 258.

¹⁹⁴ See for example “Miandui shijie - Zhongguo long danfu bu qi guojia xingxiang?” 面对世界 中国龙担负不起国家形象? [Facing the world - Can the Chinese dragon not afford to be the national image?], December 5, 2006, Xinhuanet, originally from *Zhongguo Qingnianbao* 中国青年报 [China youth journal], http://news3.xinhuanet.com/edu/2006-12/05/content_5435164.htm, accessed October 14, 2012; “Xuezhe huxu long ying yi ming fangqi Dragon gaiyong Loong” 学者呼吁龙英译名放弃 Dragon 改用 Loong [Scholars call for a change of the English translation of ‘long’ to ‘Loong’ instead of ‘Dragon’], December 8, 2006, Xinhuanet, http://news3.xinhuanet.com/edu/2006-12/08/content_5453441.htm, accessed October 14, 2012.

in his work report.¹⁹⁵ Use of the term “soft power” in such a prominent place signaled that the CPC had fully embraced the concept and made it part of its overall plans. “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” Hu’s report declared, “will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture.”¹⁹⁶ The notion of cultural soft power as explained by Hu was not entirely new, but rather the outcome of a longer debate on cultural security that had been reaffirmed and propelled by the wave of popularity of the concept of soft power in the U.S.

Propagating China’s culture is both a means and an end. It is a means because it is a particularly apt vehicle (*zaiti* 载体) to gain goodwill and improve China’s image. There are several advantages to cultural diplomacy from the Chinese perspective. Most importantly, Chinese culture and the Chinese language are seen as a rare opportunity for effective external propaganda: It is a field that China wants to talk about and that foreigners are interested in.¹⁹⁷ While cultural propaganda is often politically motivated, its political purpose is not usually immediately apparent. In this field, it is easier for China to make compromises and present information in a way that foreigners can easily accept and digest. Culture can be used to include (*rongna* 容纳) messages about Chinese politics, the economy or society¹⁹⁸ without “forcing them on people” (*qiangjia yu ren* 强加于人). In addition to this functional aspect, there is also a more intrinsic motivation behind “projecting the profound charm of Chinese culture and promoting the outstanding culture of the Chinese people.”¹⁹⁹ Part of the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese people” is international recognition by other countries of China’s civilizational achievements, a motive that already drove some of the earliest external propaganda in the 1920s (cf. Chapter 2). Again, from the perspective of the CPC, this is not merely an issue of prestige and gaining

¹⁹⁵ “Hu Jintao zai Dang de shiqi das hang de baogao, Qi: Tuidong shehui zhuyi wenhua da fazhan fanrong” 胡锦涛在党的十七大上的报告，七、推动社会主义文化大发展大繁荣 [Hu Jintao’s report on the congress of the party, seven: promoting the development and prosperity of socialist culture], Xinhuanet, October 24, 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-10/24/content_6938568_6.htm, accessed January 14, 2013.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Thus combining “what China wants the world to know” (*yi wo wei zhu* 以我为主) with both content that foreigners are interested in and a format that is more easily accepted than most political issues (*you di fang shi* 有的放矢).

¹⁹⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 188.

¹⁹⁹ “展示中华文化博大精深魅力，弘扬中华民族优秀传统文化”，ibid.

international standing, but also one of regime stability by delivering on the promise to bring the Chinese people to renewed greatness.

However, Hu Jintao's call for soft power was also a call to refocus on socialist ideology. His following explanations in the work report showed that cultural soft power encompassed more than the establishment of Confucius Institutes, organizing cultural years or exporting more Chinese books in translation. A rejuvenation of *socialist* culture was included in the project. The first issue Hu addressed was the need to “build a system of socialist core values and raise the attractiveness and cohesiveness of socialist ideology.”²⁰⁰

An earlier article in *Internal Reference Readings* (*Neibu canyue* 内部参阅) had explained that China's Socialist core values should be the most important source of the country's soft power.²⁰¹ This was one of the first signs that Socialism and other ideological issues had made their way back into external propaganda. It must be assumed that Chinese cadres in the external propaganda sector are aware of the drawbacks of leaving the zone of what is acceptable to foreign target audiences. Nonetheless, different target groups have different ranges of what can be accepted and is perceived as congruent with one's own point of view; therefore, with the Internet, this poses a problem in any case. Under these circumstances, an ideological and rhetorical compass ensured a degree of consistency.

In June 2007, the Center for International Communication Studies²⁰² convened a forum called “Values, Communication, National Image” (*jiazhi guan – chuanbo – guojia xingxiang* 价值观·传播·国家形象), which addressed the relationship between a country's core values and its national image and discussed how to realize the Center's recent request to “explain China's socialist core values to foreigners in a way that would be well-received” (*You zhenduixing de duiwai*

²⁰⁰ 建设社会主义核心价值体系，增强社会主义意识形态的吸引力和凝聚力 “Hu Jintao zai Dang de shiqi das hang de baogao, Qi: Tuidong shehui zhuyi wenhua da fazhan fanrong.”

²⁰¹ Ao Daiya 敖带芽. “Shehui zhuyi jiazhi guan shi woguo guojia ruanshili de hexin” 社会主义价值观是我国国家软实力的核心 [The socialist value system is the core of China's soft power], *Neibu canyue*, no. 30 (2006): 3-12. Things the author of the article considers part of a country's soft power include: “社会制度的科学性、核心价值观的吸引力、发展模式的可持续性、基本路线和发展战略的执行性、国民的凝聚力、民族的创造力、文化的感召力、危难时期的动员力及在国际事务当中的影响力。”

²⁰² The Center belongs to the Foreign Languages Office, which is, in turn, led by OEP/SCIO (cf. chapter 8.1).

shuoming wo shehuizhuyi hexin jiazhi tixi 有针对性地对外说明我社会主义核心价值体系).²⁰³

In 2008, as China celebrated the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the Opening and Reform policies, external propaganda was asked to propagate both China's concrete achievements as well as the "Chinese model of development" (*Zhongguo shi fazhan* 中国式发展).²⁰⁴ This marked the beginning of the effort to push Chinese values more to the forefront of external propaganda that has been continued since.²⁰⁵ "Big events" (重大事件 *zhongda shijian*) have been seen as a particularly apt vehicle for such campaigns since the coverage of the Hong Kong handover was evaluated as very successful and a "breakthrough point" in 1997. More importantly, the financial crisis had raised significant doubts about the way the U.S. and world economy functioned among large sections of the American and broader international public. This was perceived by China as an opportunity to present its own experience as a more solid model. The aftermath of the financial crisis also created new social forces, such as the Occupy Movement, which attacked the capitalist system as it currently exists in the U.S. and were thus potential allies for China.

Thus, one important part of the renewed focus on ideology is propagating the "China model." China's development model, termed the "Beijing Consensus" by Joshua Cooper Ramo,²⁰⁶ has potential appeal among developing countries with authoritarian regimes for its ability to produce economic growth without changing the political system.²⁰⁷ While the Beijing consensus is discussed in academic circles and publications such as the *People's Daily*, the Chinese government has been careful not to embrace the term officially.²⁰⁸ Although the CPC has officially

²⁰³ "Yantaohui."

²⁰⁴ Wei Wu, "Bieyou xian hua man ting xiang - Shiliu da yilai woguo duiwai xuanchuan he duiwai wenhua jiaoliu gongzuo zongshu," 1.

²⁰⁵ In 2009, external propaganda workers were, likewise, asked to propagate China's economic and social achievements, as well as the measures China was taking to combat the financial crisis. "Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zhaokai, bushu jinnian waixuan gongzuo" 全国对外宣传工作会议召开 部署今年外宣工作 [Nationwide conference for external propaganda work held; gives orders for this year's external propaganda work], *Renmin ribao*, January 7, 2009, 4.

²⁰⁶ Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Beijing Consensus* (London: Foreign Policy Center, 2004).

²⁰⁷ Cf. Young Nam Cho and Jong Ho Jeong, "China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects," *Asian Survey* 48, no. 3 (2008): 466.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Yong Nam Cho and Jong Ho Jeong, "China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects," *Asian Survey* 48, no. 3 (2008).

stated that its model cannot simply be transferred to other countries –a statement that is in line with its own principle of selective appropriation– it is of course interested in convincing others of the legitimacy of its approach. Articles on external propaganda work have “suggested” emphasizing aspects of the superiority of the Chinese system, such as the ability to centralize forces and react quickly, to China’s neighboring countries.²⁰⁹

There are conferences, and roundtables which China organizes. While the spotlight is usually on large-scale international events, like the 2008 Beijing Olympics or the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, for which China applied almost a decade earlier to international committees, the country has also become more proactive in organizing and hosting smaller international conferences of various kinds in recent years. Recently, the Confucius Institute announced plans to give out scholarships to China scholars in order to nurture a “new generation of sinologists.”²¹⁰

The Spokesperson System

One important means to improve interaction with foreign media has been the widespread institution of the spokesperson and press release system. As indicated above, this effort had been launched by the EPSG in 1983, but never implemented on a large scale. In 2006, the State Council circulated Document no. 19 on the improving and strengthening of the government spokesperson system, which was supplemented by concrete plans outlined in opinions and work plans from OEP/SCIO.²¹¹

The current spokesperson system has three layers (*cengci* 层次): OEP/SCIO, the central departments and national ministries, and administrative units of provincial level (i.e. provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities

²⁰⁹ Zhou Yongsheng 周永生, “Zhongguo zhoubian anquan huanjing yu duiwai chuanbo” 中国周边安全环境与对外传播 [China’s peripheral security environment and external communication], *Duiwai chuanbo* 对外传播 [External communication], no. 8 (2011): 20-21.

²¹⁰ Cf. Mark Siemons, “Zeit zum Teemachen ist für China sinnlos” [Tea time is pointless for China], website of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 5, 2012, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/pekinger-kulturpolitik-zeit-zum-teemachen-ist-fuer-china-sinnlos-11981839.html>, accessed December 9, 2012.

²¹¹ Wei Wu, “Bieyou xian hua man ting xiang - Shiliu da yilai woguo duiwai xuanchuan he duiwai wenhua jiaoliu gongzuo zongshu,” 1. Document 19 [2006] is not mentioned in Ni Chen’s chapter on the spokesperson system. Ni Chen, “The Evolving Chinese Government Spokesperson System,” in *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

under direct control of the Center).²¹² While the focus was first on the state ministries, the Party's departments were included later after the need to improve the image of the CPC and the need to present it as transparent had come to the forefront.²¹³ In a surprising move, even the CPD implemented the spokesperson system in early 2010;²¹⁴ however, it has not been used much, and the CPD still does not have its own online presence. In addition to functioning as the central node, OEP/SCIO began organizing classes to train spokespeople. Locales were encouraged to send delegations abroad to understand how the spokesperson system was organized and implemented in other countries.²¹⁵

In preparation for the Olympics, China announced in 2008 that it would ease restrictions on foreign journalists in China. The Lhasa incident again showed the necessity of properly providing journalists access to material and firsthand experience in order to have a chance to influence coverage. The spokesperson system was discussed at the 2009 external propaganda conference.²¹⁶ In 2010, OEP/SCIO, moreover, got a new bureau in charge of handling foreign journalists stationed in China.²¹⁷

From the external propaganda perspective, the reform is clearly intended to teach the Party-state “international norms” how to deal with foreign media. An article by Zhao Qizheng explained that press conferences were quite common (*tongxing* 通行) in other countries, particularly in the developed world.²¹⁸ The need for more and better press conferences was also again justified by pointing to

²¹² “中央外宣办、国务院新闻办，中央和国家有关部门，各省(区、市)三个层次的政府新闻发布制度已经建立并不断完善。” Cf. “Yi gengjia kaifang zitai xiang shijie chuanbo Zhongguo shengyin” 以更加开放姿态向世界传播中国声音 [Transmitting China's voice to the world with a more open attitude], Website of OEP/SCIO, September 6, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201209/t1213794.htm>, accessed September 19, 2012.

²¹³ Cf. Wang Mei 王眉, “Shijie xin geju xia de Zhongguo guoji chuanbo” 世界新格局下的中国国际传播——全国第二届对外传播理论研讨会综述 [China's international communication under new patterns of the world - summary of the Second National Symposium on external communication], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 12, 2011, 28.

²¹⁴ Cf. “Zhongxuanbu she xinwen fayanren shouci baoguang jujiao Zhongyang bumen fayanren” 中宣部设新闻发言人首次曝光 聚焦中央部门发言人 [The spokesperson of the Central Propaganda Department appears in the media for the first time; Spokespersons of other departments of the Central Government also receive attention], *People's Daily Online*, February 26, 2006, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/11032568.html>, accessed June 11, 2012.

²¹⁵ Qiu Zhaomin, “Dui woguo zhengfu xinwen fabu gongzuo de sikao,” 23.

²¹⁶ “Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zhaokai, bushu jinnian waixuan gongzuo,” *ibid.*, 4.

²¹⁷ The Eighth Bureau, cf. chapter 8.1.

²¹⁸ Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun” 新闻发布有利于影响和引导国际舆论 [Press conferences help to influence and guide international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2005): 4.

the world's interest in China.²¹⁹ Zhao explained that “no country that wants to create a favorable international public opinion environment can only rely on its own media.”²²⁰ The U.S. Office of Global Communications (*Meiguo quanqiu chuanbo bangongshi* 美国全球传播办公室), stated Zhao, openly admitted that it tried to influence foreign media and journalists so that they would report favorably to America.²²¹ Moreover, Zhao learned in Japan that foreign journalists rarely used reports from Japanese journalists, which was why press conferences were important.²²² As the goal was to enter Western mainstream society and China's media were currently not yet able to do so, the spokesperson system was a good alternative.

One main problem with the news release system was that spokespeople were not sure how to treat foreign journalists. Zhao Qizheng explained that it was important to treat them neither as students nor as subordinates and to know that they were neither friend nor enemy. Instead, they are “challengers” (*tiaozhanzhe* 挑战者), hoping for spokespeople to slip up and provide information not authorized for release.²²³ This required a professional and calm response. Zhao encouraged spokespeople to admit when they did not know an answer or were not authorized to disclose it, as lying or providing confusing answers would only hurt the authoritativeness of China's spokesperson system.²²⁴ Likewise, Zhao advised to keep answers as brief as possible, as those provided the least room for challenges in follow-up questions. According to Chinese studies, White House spokespeople spent an average of 40 seconds to answer each questions.²²⁵

News releases, he summarizes, can take various forms: interviews with single journalists, interviews with several journalists at the same time, providing answers over the phone or convening a briefing (*chui Fenghui* 吹风会):

“Briefings provide reporters with background information on a certain issue for reference purposes. Generally, reporters may not name the speaker. If someone

²¹⁹ Zhao Qizheng, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun,” 5.

²²⁰ “任何一个国家营造一个有利于自己的国际舆论环境都不能只依靠本国媒体。” Zhao Qizheng, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun,” 5.

²²¹ Zhao Qizheng, “Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun,” 5.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Cf. *ibid.*, 7.

²²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

²²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

violates the agreement, he will not be invited to come next time, and that will be a great loss for him.”²²⁶

This demonstrates Zhao Qizheng’s familiarity with certain forms of access journalism and anonymous statements to the press, an important strategy of various players in the U.S. and other Western governments of dealing with the media. Thus, another important system to establish aside from the press release system was a system to liaise with foreign journalists stationed in Beijing (*yu zhu Jing wai jizhe lianyi zhidu* 与驻京外记者联谊制度).²²⁷ Both press conferences and leaks to selected journalists are seen as soft ways of managing the press by setting the media agenda on the one hand and by giving special access to those favorable to one’s own point of view and thus implicitly suppressing other voices on the other.²²⁸

It is difficult to say with certainty who supports which position within the Party-state, but it is reasonable to assume that quite a few people within the external propaganda system would ultimately want for China to switch to a similar system of managing the media. However, with an established system of control of the media with the domestic propaganda apparatus at the top that wields both tremendous power and has a stake in defending it as well as with politicians that still have to be familiarized with this way of managing the media, China is very far away from relying primarily on these soft channels of managing the media by means of granting priority access to favorable voices. Currently, what China attempts is to set some of the media agenda through press conferences on the one hand while maintaining strong mechanisms of control and censorship on the other. As for granting priority access, the CPC and Chinese government appear to have focused on individual authors thus far rather than on journalists and media.

²²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 6.

²²⁷ “Zhonggong Beijing shiwei fushuji Long Xinmin tan Beijing waixuan gongzuo” 中共北京市委副书记龙新民谈北京外宣工作 [Long Ximin, deputy secretary of the Beijing municipal party committee speaks about Beijing’s external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2001): 1.

²²⁸ See for example Meng Jian 孟建 and Lin Xisheng 林溪声, “Xifang zhuyao zhengdang xinwen fabu huodong gaishu” 西方主要政党新闻发布活动概述 [Summary of press release activities of the major Western political parties], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 11 (2011): 59.

Raising China's Voice

First steps to strengthen China's media were taken almost immediately after announcing the three-step-plan: CCTV-9 received its first major makeover and rebranding as an international news channel in 2004. In order to reflect the change, the channel changed its slogan from "CCTV International, your window on China" to "CCTV International, your window on China and the world."²²⁹ In the same year, CCTV hired Edwin Maher as its first Caucasian news anchor.²³⁰ The channel was equipped with a new studio and underwent a number of changes in terms of personnel and programs.²³¹ While the English language program is supposed to function as the "trailblazer" (literally "dragon head," *longtou* 龙头), CCTV also launched new channels in other languages. Briefly after the first announcement that China planned to create global media players, CCTV established a Spanish and French channel in October 2004. In October 2007, CCTV turned its French and Spanish channel into two separate 24 hour channels, CCTV-Français and CCTV-Español. Despite some progress, some of the reforms were partially cosmetic rather than substantial. For instance, CCTV's shift in 2004 from an overall channel featuring cultural programs to a news channel was largely rhetorical and most of the feature programs remained.²³² Thus, implementation of the high goals set in 2004 faced quite a few difficulties. The project to create more influential media was given a new impetus in 2008.

At the Third Plenary Session of the Seventeenth Party Congress in late 2008, the CPC declared its intent to further increase its 'international communication capabilities' (*guoji chuanbo nengli* 国际传播能力).²³³ The idea was linked to the 2004 decision to create a set of "world class media" (*guoji yi liu*

²²⁹ Xiaoling Zhang, "China as an Emerging Soft Power: Winning Hearts and Minds through Communication with Foreign Publics," The University of Nottingham China Policy Institute, Discussion Paper 35. October 2008, website of the University of Nottingham, <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-35-china-emerging-soft-power.pdf>, accessed September 16, 2012. P. 8.

²³⁰ Cf. "Face of Change," June 10, 2008, Website of Liaoning Provincial Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, http://liaoning.caiep.org/events_en/content.php?id=37985, accessed October 7, 2012.

²³¹ Cf., Jirik, "Making News in the People's Republic of China," 198-199.

²³² Cf. *ibid.*, 199.

²³³ Wang Guoqing 王国庆, "Jianchi 'ruan', 'ying' liang shou qi shua, nuli tigao woguo meiti guoji chuanbo nengli" 坚持"软"、"硬"两手齐抓 努力提高我国媒体国际传播能力 [Adhere to grasp with 'soft' and 'hard' hands together, to make an effort to improve China's media international dissemination capabilities], *Zhongguo guangbo dianshi xuekan* 中国广播电视学刊 [Academic journal on China's radio and television], no. 10 (2010): 1.

meiti 国际一流媒体), the second step on China's overall "three-point-plan" for the external propaganda sector at the Central level that is supposed to be completed by 2020. While the term "international communication capabilities" was new, the justification was the same as for external propaganda's macro development plan: China needed these media in order to match its economic and social development and its international status.²³⁴

However, this announcement also came after a series of crises over the course of 2008 had demonstrated the urgency of creating Chinese media players and had led to an intensification of the debate how to crank up China's voice, contributed to the decision to go ahead with the plan to create recognizable powerful Chinese media players operating on a global scale and defending China's image and interest worldwide. Thus, the events of 2008 added much needed resolve and resulted in faster and more effective changes than any of the previous reforms had. The developments of 2008 can be divided into two different categories: sudden events and disappointment about the lack of the Olympics to improve China's image, which proved the urgency of creating strong Chinese media players in the eyes of policy makers and the financial crisis in fall, which presented itself as a rare opportunity in the eyes of the Party.

First, the year 2008 had a number of large-scale events whose presentation to the outside world China had planned for a long time. The most important event, which has also been covered extensively from a propaganda perspective, was the Beijing Olympics.²³⁵ This was seen by China as an opportunity to present itself to the world and also, in a sense, be rehabilitated in international society. However, the Olympics did not have the image-boosting effects that China may have hoped for. Early on, during the Darfur crisis, human rights groups had called for a boycott of the Olympics. As the Olympics drew closer, more protests followed, including the disruption of the Olympic torch relay and an alternative torch relay organized by Tibet support groups. In September 2008, less than two weeks after

²³⁴ Wang Guoqing, "Jianchi 'ruan', 'ying' liang shou qi shua, nuli tigao woguo meiti guoji chuanbo nengli," 1.

²³⁵ See Nicholas Cull, "The Public Diplomacy of the Modern Olympic Games and China's Soft Power Strategy," in *Owning the Olympics: Narratives of the New China*, eds. Monroe E. Price and Daniel Dayan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 117-144.; Jian Wang and Michael Hallquist, "The Comic Imagination of China: The Beijing Olympics in American TV Comedy and Implications for Public Diplomacy," *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 7, no. 4 (2011): 232-243; Kevin Caffrey, *The Beijing Olympics: Promoting China: Soft and Hard Power in Global Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

the Beijing Olympics had ended, the Center for International Communication Studies held a conference on external communication in the “Post-Olympic Age,” discussing the long term effects of the Olympics on China’s image and external propaganda as well as on the challenges that lay ahead.²³⁶

2008 is also known among Chinese analysts as a year with an extraordinary number of sudden events that China had to react to. Most importantly, protests erupted in Lhasa in March. In response, Chinese authorities cut Internet and mobile network connections in the area and expelled foreign journalists. The failure to spin international media during the crisis in Lhasa caused debate and provided an opportunity for those who argued in favor of radically changing how China dealt with these events. The Lhasa coverage and the failure to spin international public opinion served as yet another wakeup call that China needed to change its approach. An article on the website of OEP/SCIO (not attributed to any author in particular) published a year after the incident and by the time China had already decided to expand its global media, summed up the lessons and made suggestions what China needed to change, including relaxing strict control over coverage and allowing ordinary Chinese to participate more.²³⁷

In March 2008, after less than three years in office, Cai Wu was formerly replaced by Wang Chen as new director of OEP/SCIO, while Cai Wu became China’s minister of culture during the annual session of the National People’s Congress (NPC). This came in the wake of the crisis of the Lhasa riots, but it was part of an overall adjustment of leadership positions at the NPC²³⁸ and so close to the events that it should be assumed that the failure to properly “guide international public opinion” did not have anything to do with it.²³⁹ Wang Chen had briefly acted as deputy director of CPD in 2000 and 2001, and acted first as

²³⁶ “Yantaohui.”

²³⁷ “Jingwai meiti she Hua jiemu hulianwang chuanbo de duice yu sikao” 境外媒体涉华节目互联网传播的对策与思考 [Countermeasures for and reflections on the spread of China-related programs of foreign media on the internet], website of OEP/SCIO, March 13, 2009, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/wlcb/llyj/200905/t307427.htm>, accessed January 16, 2013.

²³⁸ Cf. “Guowuyuan ren ming Wang Chen wei Guowuyuan xinwenban zhuren, Cai Wu xieren” 国务院任命王晨为国务院新闻办主任 蔡武卸任 [State Council appoints Wang Chen as head of the State Council Information Office; Cai Wu steps down], Website of China Radio International, April 10, 2008, <http://gb.cri.cn/18824/2008/04/10/2685@2014927.htm>, accessed February 3, 2013.

²³⁹ In fact, this may only have been the public presentation of a move already decided and possibly implemented after the Party Congress in fall 2007, as OEP/SCIO is part of the Party hierarchy, and therefore leadership changes presumably come into effect after Party congresses.

editor-in-chief (2001-2002) and later as president (2002-2008) of the *People's Daily*.²⁴⁰ Since he took up his post at OEP/SCIO, he has also concurrently acted as a deputy director of CPD again.

Two months after protests broke out in Lhasa, Sichuan was hit by the second most deadly earthquake in PRC history with almost 70,000 estimated dead. The handling of the response was portrayed as a propaganda success, both domestically and internationally.²⁴¹ Shortly before the Olympics, infants began to fall sick and die from tainted milk powder produced by the dairy giant Sanlu 三鹿, but the scandal was suppressed until after the Olympics to avoid any negative coverage.²⁴² This demonstrated, yet again, that the suppression of news could seriously harm China's image. Thus, the triumph of the relatively effective coverage in a type of event that had long been on the list of sudden events to cover swiftly was overshadowed by the failure to report in a more sensitive man-made scandal.

Aside from both sudden and big events, there was another important factor that contributed to the timing of the massive media revamp starting in 2009. The Financial Crisis of 2008 and 2009 made China more confident about its rightful role as a big power in international politics.²⁴³ There is little doubt that China interpreted this crisis that also affected media as a "rare window of opportunity." The financial crisis was seen as a perfect time for Chinese media to catch up.²⁴⁴ Although the expansion of China's media had been planned in advance, the rapid moves following in early 2009 should also be interpreted as a policy

²⁴⁰ "Wang Chen tongzhi jianli" 王晨同志简历 [Vita of comrade Wang Chen], *People's Daily Online*, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/9667/9670/6580948.html>, accessed February 4, 2013.

²⁴¹ Cf. Ying Chan, "The Journalism Tradition," preface to *Investigative Journalism: Eight Cases in Chinese Watchdog Journalism*, by David Bandurski and Martin Hala (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 1.

²⁴² See David Bandurski, "Press Controls Feed China's Food Problems," originally published in *Wall Street Journal Asia*, October 7, 2008 available online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122332462058208791.html>, accessed February 13, 2013.

²⁴³ Cf. Suisheng Zhao, "China's Foreign Policy as a Rising Power in the Early Twenty-First Century: The Struggle between *taoguangyanghui* and assertiveness," in *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, eds. Hongyi Lai and Yiyi Lu (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 195.

²⁴⁴ This was also expressed openly in non-official circles. E.g. "Jinrong weiji shi Xifang meiti wu xia zi gu" 金融危机使西方媒体无暇自顾 [The financial crisis has made Western media incapable of taking care of themselves], Bulletin Board of CCTV. <http://bbs.cctv.com/redirect.php?fid=20492&tid=13839079&goto=nextnewset>, accessed April 24, 2010. Link no longer valid; page is on file with author.

accompanying this strengthened self-confidence and as “seizing the opportunity” (*zhuazhu jiyu* 抓住机遇).

All of this added to the resolve to take more drastic steps. After the announcement at the Third Plenary Session, China proceeded very quickly and earmarked at least 45 billion Yuan for the expansion of its global media leaked to the South China Morning Post (SCMP). These subsidies allowed Chinese media to grow in the midst of a global recession. Concretely, according to a Taiwanese intelligence report, the investment initially reported in the SCMP was intended for

1. Establishing CCTV in Arabic and Russian,
2. Increasing the number of Xinhua branches abroad from 102 to 180,
3. Establishing a 24 hour news channel (a task that was delegated to Xinhua, not CCTV),²⁴⁵ and
4. Expanding Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), an alternative that CCTV had been actively pursuing since 2006.²⁴⁶

Since many more changes have been implemented since 2009 that most likely cost much more than 45 billion Yuan, it should be assumed that the amount leaked to the SCMP was only a part of the money that has actually been invested since early 2009.

The need to build up China’s media dominated external propaganda work during the next few years. At the external propaganda conference in early 2009, building influential media players naturally featured prominently. Wang Chen, the new head of OEP/SCIO since April 2008, ordered participants to focus on “building first class international media in many languages, with a broad audience, large content volume and strong influence, covering the entire globe” and “establishing a modern communication system with wide reach and advanced technology” in order to become a communication power worthy of China’s

²⁴⁵ With regard to how broadcasting time could be ensured, two basic options are possible and should be equally drawn on whenever there is an opportunity: cooperating with foreign media or buying the controlling share of foreign media suffering difficulties after the financial crisis. The model the latter approach is mainly based on was CNN. Cf. Qi Huachu 企划处, “Zhonggong jinqi kuada guoji xuanchuan celue jianxi” 中共近期扩大国际宣传策略简析 [Brief analysis of the CPC’s recent strategy to expand its international propaganda], from *Dalu yu liang an qingshijianbao* 大陆与两岸情势简报 [Briefing on the mainland and the cross-strait situation], March 12, 2009, www.mac.gov.tw/public/Attachment/962315311446.pdf, accessed April 21, 2010, 4.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Qi Huachu, “Zhonggong jinqi kuada guoji xuanchuan celue jianxi,” 4-5.

international status and the level of its economic and social development.²⁴⁷ In 2010, the focus continued to be on increasing China's international voice. At the 2010 external propaganda conference, the two linked slogans "grasping the right to speak" (*zhangwo huayuquan* 掌握话语权) and "gaining the right to direct" (*yingde zhudaoquan* 赢得主导权), which had been discussed in policy circles and academia since 2007, were added.²⁴⁸ The two are both part of the goal to increase China's voice in shaping global public opinion. "Grasping the right to speak" means being able to set the media agenda, both through quantitative measures such as controlling more news resources and qualitative means, such as raising one's credibility with the audience. "Gaining the right to direct" refers to the goal of escaping the role of passive responder to Western accusations, being forced to refute rather than being able to set the media agenda. Chinese media need to be the first to report an incident due to the belief that the first to report gets to determine the overall framework through which audiences will interpret any follow-up reports.²⁴⁹ In 2011, when Wang Chen outlined the tasks China's external propaganda work needed to fulfill in the future, he stressed the need to be fully informed about international public opinion regarding China, continuously increase the effectiveness and influence of external propaganda in order to "grasp the right to speak and gain the right to direct." This means being keenly aware of the international opinion and communications situation, analyzing the characteristics and regularities of high points and low points in international public opinion regarding China, and dealing with them properly and calmly.

The "Project to increase China's international communication capacities" (*Zhongguo zengqiang guoji chuanbo nengli jianshe gongcheng* 中国增强国际传播能力建设工程), as it is referred to internally,²⁵⁰ is not just limited to

²⁴⁷ "Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zhaokai bushu jinnian waixuan gongzuo," 4.

²⁴⁸ "Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi bushu jinnian waixuan gongzuo gengjia jishi youli xiang shijie chuanbo Zhongguo shengyin" 全国对外宣传工作会议部署今年外宣工作 更加及时有力向世界传播中国声音 [The nationwide conference for external propaganda work gives orders for this year's external propaganda work: Transmit China's voice to the world in a more timely and forceful way], *Renmin ribao*, January 6, 2010, 1.

²⁴⁹ This line of argumentation, which also frequently refers to "the images in people's mind" probably first entered China through Lippmann's work, although the latter's basic argument (of pre-existing stereotypes that shape how any new information is interpreted) has been altered since then in China.

²⁵⁰ Interview with Chinese communication studies expert (II), Beijing, April 2011.

investments into the media directly. In 2003, OEP/SCIO found that China had far too few people qualified to do external propaganda.²⁵¹ By 2009, the CPD and the Ministry of Education devised and established a new master's degree in order to educate a new generation of "talent" (*rencai* 人才) with good command of a foreign language (most importantly English, but also other European languages) and familiar with the rules of international communication.²⁵²

New programs were set up at five universities: Qinghua University (*Qinghua daxue* 清华大学), People's University (*Renmin daxue* 人民大学), Fudan University (*Fudan daxue* 复旦大学), Communication University of China (*Zhongguo chuanmei daxue* 中国传媒大学), and at Beijing Foreign Studies University (*Beijing waiguoyu daxue* 北京外国语大学, BFSU).²⁵³ In addition to language and communication skills, the new master's program also includes classes on politics (*zhengzhi jiaoyu* 政治教育) and on China's "national circumstances" (*guoqing* 国情). For the latter, students had the opportunity to attend lectures by high officials, such as vice ministers or vice department heads from CPD, OEP/SCIO and various other ministries.²⁵⁴ Students in these programs have the opportunity to do internships at Chinese media targeted at foreigners, paid for by the CPD, as well as very well-paid field trips.²⁵⁵

In 2010 and 2011, some doubts appeared. After two years, CPD and the Ministry of Education re-evaluated their program and concluded that they were currently training more people than they would need. In response, the programs at Fudan University and BFSU stopped accepting new students in 2011, although authorities left open the possibility of reopening the programs at a later point in time. However, by the end of the year, at the Sixth Plenary Session of the

²⁵¹ "Xinhuashe juxing jinian Yingyu duiwai xinwen kaibo liushi zhounian zuotanhui" 新华社举行纪念英语对外新闻开播六十周年座谈会 [Xinhua News Agency holds seminar to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the beginning of the broadcasting of English foreign news], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (2004): 8.

²⁵² Interview with Chinese communication studies expert (II), Beijing, April 2011.

²⁵³ Ibid. Although the details are slightly different, this seems to be the same program referenced in Sunny Lee, "China grooms new breed of journalists," *Asia Times*, September 4, 2009, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/KI04Ad01.html>, accessed February 14, 2013.

²⁵⁴ Interview with Chinese communication studies expert (II), Beijing, April 2011. Initially, these lectures took place twice or thrice per year at each university. After the number of universities involved was reduced in 2011, the format of lectures by high officials in Beijing was changed to joint lectures at Communication University of China. While working at the National Library in Beijing, a student in one of these programs also told me about an upcoming lecture at the Communication University.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Chinese communication studies expert, Beijing, April 2011.

Seventeenth Central Committee in late 2011, the Party passed a resolution in which pledged to speed up its plans to create globally influential media,²⁵⁶ thus strongly reaffirming the project.

There is a faction of people in the Chinese external propaganda debate that maintains that the problem Chinese media face is first and foremost a hardware issue. Western news agencies and media conglomerates control the lion share of global information flows, and if China were to control a larger portion, its influence over global public opinion would rise automatically.²⁵⁷ Thus, the solution to China's lack of mass media related soft power is simply to give media more money so that they can expand.

The quantitative expansion, including some structural changes, soon became highly visible. In July and September 2009, CCTV launched its international Arabic and Russian channels respectively.²⁵⁸ In April 2010, CCTV-9 (a.k.a. CCTV International) was renamed CCTV News and now broadcasts 24 hours per day.²⁵⁹ In November 2010, CCTV announced that it was recruiting foreign anchors for a new phase of the re-launch of CCTV News.²⁶⁰ It appears that this time, CCTV primarily aims to cover developments in China and Asia in order to “establish itself as the best English news channel in Asia.”²⁶¹ During this shift, CCTV again employed foreign advisors, among others veteran journalist Jim

²⁵⁶ See “Weishenme yao jiakuai goujian xiandai chuanbo tixi?” 为什么要加快构建现代传播体系? [Why should the construction of a modern communication system be accelerated?], Xinhuanet, December 16, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2011-12/16/c_111249092.htm, accessed January 13, 2013.

²⁵⁷ E.g. Ma Hongwei, “Wang shang suzao Zhongguo guoji xingxiang,” 24.

²⁵⁸ Cf. “Zhongyang dianshitai Alaboyu guoji pindao 7 yue 25 ri kaibo” 中央电视台阿拉伯语国际频道 7 月 25 日开播 [CCTV's international Arabic channel begins broadcasting on July 25], Website of CCTV, July 24, 2009, <http://news.cctv.com/china/20090724/103396.shtml>, accessed October 6, 2012, and “Zhongyang dianshitai Eyu guoji pindao jianjie” 中央电视台俄语国际频道简介 [Brief introduction to CCTV's international Russian channel], Website of CCTV, September 9, 2009, <http://russian.cctv.com/20090909/107305.shtml>, accessed October 6, 2012.

²⁵⁹ Cf. “CCTV News, Your Link to Asia,” website of CCTV (“CNTV”), April 26, 2010, <http://english.cntv.cn/20100426/104481.shtml>, accessed October 5, 2012. CCTV-9, in turn, was refashioned as two documentary channels, one broadcasting in Chinese and the other in English. The two channels are known as CCTV-Jilu CCTV 纪录 and CCTV-Jilu (Yingyu) CCTV 纪录 (英语). Cf. “CCTV 9 Documentary,” website of CCTV (“CNTV”), <http://cctv.cntv.cn/documentary/>, accessed November 10, 2012.

²⁶⁰ Cf. “CCTV News begins recruiting new anchors,” website of CCTV (“CNTV”), November 11, 2010, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20101111/105851.shtml>, accessed November 10, 2012.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

Laurie, who had opened the first news bureau for American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in China.

China has also opted for more media “localization” (*meiti bentuhua* 媒体本土化). While it once denounced the strategy of “localization” pursued by foreign media organizations in China,²⁶² it now seeks to implement the *bentuhua* strategy itself.²⁶³ For this, media have been encouraged to produce more regional editions and open additional branches abroad directly producing the content. In January 2012, CCTV opened its first overseas news production center, CCTV Africa (非洲分台), in Nairobi, Kenya,²⁶⁴ where CRI had also opened its first FM radio station in 2006.²⁶⁵ In February, CCTV America (*Meiguo fenshe* 美洲分台), based in Washington, followed suit.²⁶⁶ The production center has reporting teams for the U.S. and for South America.²⁶⁷ The *China Daily*, too, has created new regional editorial branches (*fenshe* 分社) abroad producing and distributing their own regional editions of the paper. As of date (early 2013), the *China Daily* has a U.S. edition (re-launched in 2009), a weekly European edition (since early 2011), a China edition, a weekly Asia-Pacific edition, which supplements the Hong Kong edition of the paper launched in 1997, and a weekly Africa edition (since December 2012).²⁶⁸ In addition to the editorial departments, it has also registered companies abroad that are responsible for commercial aspects and marketing of the papers as well as for conducting audience surveys to get more systematic

²⁶² “Zhao Qizheng zhuren shuo, waixuan gongzuo de zhongdian shi zai guoji yulun zhong biaoda Zhongguo de shengyin,” 3. Speech by Zhao Qizheng, delivered while inspecting Guangdong’s external propaganda work.

²⁶³ Cf. Zhuo Peirong 卓培荣, *Chuanmei fazhan yu weilai guihua: 2005nian Xinhuashe xinwen xueshu nianhui lunwenxuan* 传媒发展与未来规划: 2005年新华社新闻学术年会论文选 [Development of the media and plans for the future: papers from Xinhua News Agency’s annual academic conference on press (work)] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2007), 18.

²⁶⁴ The article describes this as an important step in the creation of first rate international media (*guoji yiliu meiti* 国际一流媒体). Cf. “Zhongyang dianshitai shou ge haiwai fentai zai Feizhou Keniya kaibo” 中央电视台首个海外分台在非洲肯尼亚开播 [CCTV’s first overseas production center begins broadcasting in Kenya, Africa], January 12, 2012, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2012-01-12/080623787759.shtml>, accessed October 6, 2012.

²⁶⁵ Cf. “Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai” 中国国际广播电台 [(China Radio International), Website of China Radio International, <http://gb.cri.cn/cri/gk.htm>, accessed October 7, 2012.

²⁶⁶ Cf. “About CCTV America,” Website of CCTV (“CNTV”), <http://cctv.cntv.cn/lm/cctvamerica/01/index.shtml>, accessed October 6, 2012.

²⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Cf. Harry Verhoeven and Iginio Gagliardone, “Opinion: China’s Positive Spin on Africa,” website of CNN, December 19, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/12/18/opinion/china-media-africa-verhoeven-gagliardone/index.html>, accessed December 29, 2012.

feedback.²⁶⁹ As China's national news agency, Xinhua has, of course, long had branches and headquarters in other countries, but it has further increased its visibility: In 2011, Xinhua opened a newsroom in New York City²⁷⁰ and placed an ad with the Xinhua logo amongst the billboards of Times Square.²⁷¹ Even the journals of China's FLO have established overseas branches: The *Beijing Review* now has a branch in the U.S., *China Pictorial* has a branch in Moscow, and *China Today* has a Middle East branch in Cairo and a South American branch in Mexico City.²⁷²

There has also been a trend towards having more than one of each types of media. In April 2009, the *Huanqiu shibao* 环球时报 (*Global Times*), which is part of the *People's Daily* group and has been published in Chinese since 1993,²⁷³ got an English version, the *Global Times*, thus creating a second national level English language newspaper alongside the *China Daily*.²⁷⁴ In 2010, Xinhua launched its own television channel, CNC World (2010).²⁷⁵

In addition to the expansion of traditional media, China has also made more use of the Internet. In late December 2009, China Network Television (CNTV), a “national web-based TV broadcaster,” was launched.²⁷⁶ In January 2011, CRI established the China International Broadcasting Network (CIBN, 中国国际广播电视网络台), which, aside from strengthening CRI's online presence is also a part of the effort to turn CRI from a traditional medium relying on radio

²⁶⁹ Cf. Huang Jingwei 黄静玮 Xu Xiaodan 徐小丹, “Chuangxin duiwai chuanbo fangshi fangfa” 创新对外传播方式方法 [Innovative ways and means of external communication], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 1 (2012): 14.

²⁷⁰ “Xinhua opens new office in NYC's Times Square,” Xinhuanet, May 20, 2011. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/business/2011-05/20/c_13884252.htm, accessed June 27, 2012.

²⁷¹ Cf. “Xinhua Takes on Times Square,” website (blog section) of the *Wall Street Journal*, August 2, 2011. <http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2011/08/02/xinhua-takes-on-times-square/>, accessed June 27, 2012.

²⁷² Cf. “Zhongguo waiwen chuban faxing shiyeju zuzhi jiegou” 中国外文出版发行事业局组织结构 [Organizational structure of China foreign languages publishing and distribution administration], website of the FLO (“CIPG”), <http://www.cipg.org.cn/jjgl/zzjg/>, accessed January 18, 2013.

²⁷³ Originally under the name *Huanqiu wencui* 环球文萃

²⁷⁴ Its establishment was financed through the large subsidy first reported in the *South China Morning Post* in January 2009.

²⁷⁵ “Xinhua launches CNC World English channel,” Xinhuanet, July 1, 2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-07/01/c_13378575.htm, accessed June 27, 2012.

²⁷⁶ Cf. “CNTV Profile.” Website of CNTV (CCTV's IPTV service), June 9, 2010, <http://english.cntv.cn/20100609/102812.shtml>, accessed October 5, 2012.

broadcasts towards a player offering multimedia content (*Tuijin Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai jiakuai shixian you chuantong danyi meiti xiang guangbo dianshi zonghe meiti zhuanxing* 推进中国国际广播电台加快实现由传统单一媒体向广播电视综合媒体转型).²⁷⁷

Although China's use of social media has been more cautious, there has been some development in this area as well. In 2010, the CPC launched an initiative that required local governments to use social media, most importantly the micro-blogging service Weibo 微博, China's equivalent of Twitter.²⁷⁸ The project was implemented nationwide in 2011. This was partially in reaction to foreign governments' external propaganda initiatives in China. Around 2010, the country noticed an increase in accounts from foreign embassies on Chinese microblogs so as to be able to directly communicate with and influence Chinese publics²⁷⁹ and subsequently declared that China needed to "proactively 'occupy' micro-blogs."²⁸⁰

Aside from "defending" itself against foreign encroachment into its own territory, the PRC has also begun to use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube more proactively. The China Daily has two different accounts on Twitter, one for its U.S.²⁸¹ and one for its European edition.²⁸² CCTV only has an account for CCTV Africa.²⁸³ *Jinmin chugoku*, the Japanese version of People's China that continued after the English version was closed down, also has a Twitter

²⁷⁷ "Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai (China Radio International)."

²⁷⁸ Weibo is a service offered by the online media company Sina (*Xinlang* 新浪). Translated directly, Weibo simply means 'micro-blog.'

²⁷⁹ Deng Jianguo 邓建国, "Guankui waiguo zai Hua zhengwu weibo" 管窥外国在华政务微博 [Glimpse of a foreign government microblogging in China], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 5 (2012): 54-55; Xiang Debao 相德宝 and Zhang Lu 张璐, "Minjian zi meiti de duiwai chuanbo celue" 民间子媒体的对外传播策略 [The foreign communication strategy of social media], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 3, (2012): 22.

²⁸⁰ "积极'占领'微博阵地: 王晨还特别提到, 党的宣传部门应该担负起宣传党的方针政策、澄清谣言的任务, 基层宣传部门要积极用好微博这个平台和窗口, 积极'占领'微博阵地, 发展健康向上的网络文化。" "Wang Chen tan wenhua quanguo jianshe zhichu zhengfu guanyuan yao zhongshi weibo zuoyong" 王晨谈文化强国建设 指出政府官员要重视微博作用 [Wang Chen talks about building a cultural power, pointing out that government officials need to pay attention to the use of microblogs], *People's Daily* Online. November 2, 2011, <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/49157/49165/16106610.html>, accessed September 21, 2012.

²⁸¹ <https://twitter.com/ChinaDailyUSA>, accessed March 1, 2013.

²⁸² <https://twitter.com/ChinaDailyEU>, accessed March 1, 2013.

²⁸³ <https://twitter.com/cctvnewsafrika>, accessed March 1, 2013. Another account that uses the CCTV logo and that was very active until April 2010, CCTV Breaking News, appears to be no longer active.

account.²⁸⁴ On Facebook, China Daily maintains two active pages: China Daily USA²⁸⁵ and China Daily Asia Pacific.²⁸⁶ CNTV, the online TV service of CCTV has a Youtube account for its Chinese programs.²⁸⁷ CCTV-9 has two channels on Youtube: the Documentary Channel (since August 2011)²⁸⁸ and the Travelogue Channel (since February 2009).²⁸⁹ In addition, it should also be noted that the PRC monitors activity on social media websites that are blocked, certainly in exceptional circumstances during or after “high politics” events and possibly even on a more regular basis.²⁹⁰ One article has also argued that China needs to establish a first class English-language social media platform (*Guoji yiliu zi meiti* 国际一流子媒体).²⁹¹

Such plans appear very ambitious, particularly in light of the fact that the presence of Chinese media on Western social media is still very timid. Neither the State Council Information Office nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two main press release outlets, have accounts on Twitter. By contrast, most U.S. and British government departments and individual spokespeople have separate Twitter accounts,²⁹² and countries such as India and South Korea have also

²⁸⁴ Renmin Zhongguo zazhi she 人民中国杂志社 @PeopleChina, <https://twitter.com/PeopleChina>, accessed January 21, 2013.

²⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/ChinaDailyUSA?ref=ts>, accessed January 21, 2013.

²⁸⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/ChinaDailyAPAC?ref=ts>, accessed March 1, 2013. This page replaced the page of the China Daily Hong Kong Edition in late 2011 (see <https://www.facebook.com/chinadailyhkedition>).

²⁸⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/user/CNTV?feature=chclk>, accessed March 1, 2013.

²⁸⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/user/cctv9documentary>, accessed March 1, 2013.

²⁸⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/user/cctv9travelogue>, accessed March 1, 2013.

²⁹⁰ During the “Jasmine Protests” in February 2011, I posted a very short video on Youtube that I had taken on Wangfujing. Within five days, the video had accumulated 251 views from China, the largest number of views from any country other than the United States (where 520 views had originated from). While 251 views are not spectacular at all, it needs to be taken into account that Youtube is blocked in China and that regular users accessing the video platform by using a proxy to circumvent the “Great Firewall” will not be registered as Chinese IP addresses. Hence, these 251 views all came from Chinese IP addresses that had clearance to access sites otherwise blocked in China. *China Digital Times* compiled a list of tweets from new Twitter accounts opposing the “Jasmine Revolution.” This is a rare occurrence, however, as usually the Chinese-language Twitter-scape is clearly dominated by “dissidents” and human rights lawyers or activists. See “Remarkable Quotes from the Fifty Cent Party: Anti-Jasmine Revolution Tweets,” *China Digital Times*, February 28 2011, chinadigitaltimes.net/2011/02/fifty-cent-tweets-a-collection-of-anti-jasmine-revolution-messages/, accessed November 11, 2012.

²⁹¹ Xiang Debao and Zhang Lu, “Minjian zi meiti de duiwai chuanbo celüe.”

²⁹² E.g. the U.S. State Department (<https://twitter.com/StateDept>), the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (<https://twitter.com/foreignoffice>), the FBI Press Office (<https://twitter.com/FBIPressOffice>).

followed suit.²⁹³ Given that the plans to boost China's social media presence are very recent (2011), it is likely that Chinese government organs and media will at least try to use social media more aggressively soon. However, in this area, China is weighed down by the fact that major social media like Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter are categorically blocked in China. If the Chinese Party-state were to make them a cornerstone of its external propaganda, it would likely draw attention to this double-standard. Creating China's own English language social media platform would avoid such problems, but it is unlikely that outside of China, where the Party-state can protect its own players from foreign competition such a project would become serious competition to any of the established players.

In sum, overall, all Chinese media designated for global expansion have attempted to reform themselves in several regards: First, they have strengthened their English versions, as these are intended to lead the way (known as *Yingyu wei longtou* 英语为龙头). Second, they have launched editions and programs in new languages, although the number of languages covered by each media unit varies greatly. Third, as part of the "localization policy," media have established regional headquarters and branches which directly produce and distribute content abroad. Fourth, there is a change from reliance on *one* traditional channel (such as radio, television, *or* print material) towards each media unit offering multimedia content. The trend towards multimedia content has the side-effect –presumably intended– of creating several players in each field. This creates both actual competition and an impression of plurality. Fifth, each media unit has tried to find new channels for distributing its content through technological innovation and use of various online platforms.

With the renewed focus on legitimacy and ideological security, the CPC is currently working on further enshrining the ideas and principles behind Chinese Marxist theory in a way that is comprehensible both to ordinary Chinese people and to foreigners. In 2011 and 2012, the CPC started a public debate about the need to create a "discourse system with Chinese characteristics" (*Zhongguo tese*

²⁹³ E.g. the Public Diplomacy Division of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (<https://twitter.com/IndianDiplomacy>), the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (https://twitter.com/MOFATkr_eng).

huayu tixi 中国特色话语体系)²⁹⁴ that would allow the country to accurately articulate the Chinese experience, China's development plans, and its contribution to the world rather than constantly being forced into the "Western discourse system" and being evaluated by the latter's standards. The idea is familiar from China's attempt to create a Chinese understanding of human rights, but is more encompassing. The core of this system would be Marxist principles and the Chinese contribution to theory based on Chinese experience, but it would be continuously updated and supplemented with elements from abroad and new findings made in China.²⁹⁵ This discourse system needed to fulfill two requirements: It needed to be unique to China, yet enable the country to communicate with the rest of the world.

While China's interaction with the world is considered an important reason for the need to develop a unique Chinese discourse system, the project has various domestic dimensions, such as getting rid of antiquated concepts, slogans, and formulations in the Chinese Marxist discourse universe that no longer have any connection with reality and therefore diminish the legitimacy of the Party.²⁹⁶ Nonetheless, building this discourse system is one of the goals for China's external propaganda work over the next five to ten years. According to an article by Wang Chen, composed for the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the CPC, "building a discourse system that enables international dialogue yet is unique to China should be the focus and a [potential] breakthrough for external propaganda work under the new circumstances."²⁹⁷ The functions (*gongneng* 功能) of the

²⁹⁴ "Discourse systems are the external forms of expression of ideological-theoretical systems and knowledge system," one article explains, or, in other words, they are terms that need to correctly reflect the ideology underneath. Yao Huan 姚桓, "Goujian zhizhengdang lilun xin de huayu tixi" 构建执政党理论新的话语体系 [Constructing a discourse system with new theory for the ruling party], *People's Daily Online*, September 28, 2012, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2012/0928/c49150-19143965.html>, accessed November 15, 2012.

²⁹⁵ Cf. Du Feijin 杜飞进, "Jiji goujian Zhongguo tese huayu tixi" 积极构建中国特色话语体系 [Proactively build a discourse system with Chinese characteristics], originally published in the *Guangming ribao* 光明日报 [Guangming daily], republished on *People's Daily Online*, October 30, 2012, <http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2012/1030/c40531-19430985.html>, accessed November 15, 2012.

²⁹⁶ One author notes that particularly the language of the far "left" is no longer applicable to Chinese realities (特别是极"左"的语言不适用). Cf. Yao Huan, "Goujian zhizhengdang lilun xin de huayu tixi."

²⁹⁷ "Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuanguangxin jingshen kaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian" 王晨：以改革创新精神开创党的对外宣传工作新局面 [Wang Chen: Create a new situation for the Party's external propaganda work through the spirit of reform and innovation], Website of OEP/SCIO, originally published in *Qiushi* 求实 [Seeking truth], republished online

discourse system are to “accurately, in-depth, and vividly reflect the Chinese practice and the Chinese way, to answer China’s problems based on Chinese practice, to establish a favorable image of China, to enhance China’s soft power, and to contribute new ideas and new wisdom to the world.”²⁹⁸ Thus, it is both intended to help China solve its own problems more effectively by staying close to Chinese realities *and* to increase China’s image and soft power by allowing China to present its theoretical innovations to the rest of the world.

One article explains that China’s international voice (*huayuquan* 话语权), which forms an important part of China’s soft power, on the one hand depends on China’s comprehensive power (meaning the more power it amasses, the more likely other countries will be to listen to China), but, on the other hand, also on the appeal and influence of its discourse system to the outside world.²⁹⁹ Thus, making sure that Party ideology is up-to-date and that it can be properly explained through a coherent “discourse system” is seen as important not only for domestic but also for international legitimacy and success of the Party.

In September 2012, the CPD and the OEP held an opening ceremony for a major research project commissioned by the National Social Science Foundation (*Guojia sheke jijin zhongda weituo xiangmu* 国家社科基金重大委托项目) on the values and ideals of China’s path of development and how to propagate them internationally.³⁰⁰ One of the topics for the annual session of the Seminar on International Communication, to be held in August 2013, is “Political

July 5, 2011, <http://shanghai.xinmin.cn/xmsz/2011/07/05/11307805.html>, accessed November 15, 2012.

²⁹⁸ “三是准确、深入、生动地反映中国实践、中国道路，立足中国实践、解答中国问题，树立良好国家形象，增强国家软实力，向世界贡献新理念新智慧，是中国特色话语体系的功能定位” Du Feijin, “Jiji goujian Zhongguo tese huayu tixi.”

²⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ “Zhongguo fazhan daolu zhong de jiazhi linian ji guoji chuanbo yanjiu” 《中国发展道路中的价值理念及国际传播研究》. According to the report on the website of Shanghai Jiaotong University, this project received the highest funds handed out by the National Social Science Foundation to date. Cf. “Hu Wei danren Guojia sheke jijin zhongda keti shouxi zhuanjia” 胡伟担任国家社科基金重大委托课题首席专家 [Hu Wei serves as principal expert of the commissioned subject of the National Social Science Foundation], Website of Shanghai Jiaotong University, November 16, 2012, <http://news.sjtu.edu.cn/info/1002/130738.htm>, accessed November 28, 2012.

Communication and Discourse Systems” (*zhengzhi chuanbo yu huayu tixi* 政治传播与话语体系).³⁰¹

The idea behind promoting Chinese core values and a Chinese discourse system is not as antiquated as it sounds and has been linked to genuine external propaganda concerns by researchers. Qinghua professor Shi Anbin 史安斌 explains that because external propaganda has primarily supported China’s domestic and foreign policies for a long time, this has created the impression that China has no values to export and that the external propaganda enterprise’s only mission is to serve its Realist policy. The U.S. by contrast, stresses Realism in its diplomacy, but still uses its external propaganda apparatus to sell its core values, such as democracy and human rights. China lacked this type “ideational diplomacy” (*guannian waijiao* 观念外交). The slogans China has promoted thus far, such as the “harmonious world” and the “scientific development outlook” have either been misunderstood or unpopular abroad. In the future, China’s external propaganda apparatus needed to be permitted to gain some independence from China’s policies and be permitted to propagate China’s values.³⁰²

The CPC has, in fact, tried to occupy a more prominent spot in the overall image the world has of China. In July 2011, for the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CPC, the New World Press published *Why and How the CPC Works in China – A Look at What’s Behind the Achievements of the Communist Party of China*, sponsored by the National Publication Foundation.³⁰³ In thirteen chapters, the book provides the CPC’s official answer to large and small questions ranging from “How did the CPC remain in power when the Eastern Bloc Communist Parties fell?” (Chapter 4) to “How could the CPC conduct the earthquake relief work effectively and host the Beijing Olympic Games successfully?” (Chapter 12). Although this did not always succeed,³⁰⁴ the authors

³⁰¹ See “Di san jie quanguo duiwai chuanbo lilun yantaohui zhengwen tongzhi” 第三届全国对外传播理论研讨会征文通知 [Call for papers for the third National External Communications Theory Seminar], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 12, 2012, n.p.

³⁰² Shi Anbin 史安斌, “Weilai 5-10 nian woguo duiwai chuanbo mianlin de tiaozhan yu chuangxin celüe” 未来 5-10 年我国对外传播面临的挑战与创新策略 [Challenges faced by our external communication and innovation strategy for the next 5 to 10 years], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 9 (2012): 36.

³⁰³ Xie Chuntao, ed., *Why and How the CPC Works in China – A Look at What’s Behind the Achievements of the Communist Party of China* (Beijing: New World Press, 2011).

³⁰⁴ There are a few sentences such as “The aim of the CPC is to serve the people wholeheartedly” and “By employing Eastern wisdom, respecting reality and forging ahead with bold reforms,

of the texts clearly tried to adopt an easily understandable, semi-colloquial writing style suited to the tastes of English native speakers.³⁰⁵ In 2007, the CPC had first sent “Friendship Delegations” (*Zhonggong youhao daibiaotuan* 中共友好代表团) to socialist countries to explain the “spirit” of the 17th Party Congress. In 2012, for the 18th Party Congress, by contrast, delegations organized by the IDCPC were also sent to non-socialist countries.³⁰⁶ Six different teams were dispatched, the first covering Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australia, the second covering the European mainland, the third South Asia, the fourth to the United States, the fifth Africa, and the sixth Central and Eastern Europe.³⁰⁷

Becoming Competitive in the War over Opinion?

As China’s perceived influence in international affairs is increasing, the country is progressively portrayed in the U.S. as a rising superpower and the United States’ strongest competitor for global power. At the same time, China is also beginning to be held up as a potential reference model for the United States in a number of areas touching control over information flows, with varying success. In 2010, when U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman referred to China to defend his “Protecting Cyberspace as a National Asset Act” (better known as the “Kill Switch Bill” in popular discourse) on CNN, he was met with ridicule and scorn for what was perceived as a very unfortunate choice of reference model.³⁰⁸ However, particularly in the realm of external propaganda and the management of information flows in other areas, increasingly common attempts to paint China as

China expands the role of the market without ignoring the determining values of planning” (101),

³⁰⁵ The book was proofread by Paul White, a British national who has been working in China as an English polisher since 1984 and received a friendship award from the Chinese government. See Long Weiwei, “Chapter 13: Living by the Pen for 24 Years,” Yang Yaohua, transl., in *Dreaming Big in China*, eds. Lu Yang et al., transl. Yang Yaohua (Beijing: New World Press, 2009), available online at <http://www.nwp.cn/book/567.shtml>, accessed January 15, 2013.

³⁰⁶ See “Zhonggong pai duo pi ‘shiba da jingshen jiedu tuan’ fu Fei shehui zhuyi guojia” 中共派多批“十八大精神解读团”赴非社会主义国家 [CPC sends out several “Groups for the interpretation of the spirit of the 18th Party Congress” to African socialist countries], originally published in *Nanfang dushi bao* 南方都市报 [Southern metropolis daily], December 31, 2012, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2012-12-31/043925931032.shtml>, accessed January 15, 2013.

³⁰⁷ See “Zhonggong pai duo pi ‘shiba da jingshen jiedu tuan’ fu Fei shehui zhuyi guojia.”

³⁰⁸ Lieberman’s words were “Right now, China, the government, can disconnect parts of its Internet in a case of war. We need to have that here, too.” For the video and some reactions, see for example “Lieberman Says U.S. Needs Chinese Style Internet Kill Switch” June 21, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c74G9jhWOqk>, accessed September 12, 2012.

a potential model in the media and when arguing against cuts in the U.S. budget for public diplomacy have been met with much less resistance.

In 2009, in an article discussing the expansion of China's foreign language media, Gordon Chang, a veteran critic of the PRC, casually asked: "Shouldn't we be blocking Chinese state media in the U.S.?"³⁰⁹ Given that China jammed U.S. state media, such as the VOA or Radio Free Asia (RFA) and restricted private media companies such as CNN, the United States should retaliate in kind or demand reciprocity.³¹⁰ China, Chang argued, "does not have a First Amendment right to disseminate propaganda in the United States."³¹¹ While the article was neither widely distributed nor caused a large stir,³¹² since then, three U.S. Republican Congressmen have introduced the "Chinese Media Reciprocity Act of 2011," which demands parity in visas issued to journalists of state media.³¹³ If enacted, China would have 30 days to pull out all but two of its approximately 650 media staff currently in the U.S. on journalist visas.³¹⁴ While it seems highly unlikely that the Act would pass, the fact that such media restrictions seek to replicate the Chinese model, which is otherwise decried as highly oppressive, demonstrates the country's new status as primary competitor and therefore potential model in the eyes of many U.S. politicians.

The U.S. has even responded to China's Confucius Institutes by providing funding for the Creation of "American Cultural Centers" in a form of cooperation between U.S. colleges and Chinese universities. The first pilot project was started in 2010 and additional universities received start-up funds of \$100,000 each in 2011 and 2012.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ Gordon C. Chang, "Beijing's Propaganda Goes Global," May 6, 2009, <http://www.forbes.com/2009/05/05/global-times-beijing-cctv-peoples-daily-opinions-columnists-xinhua.html>, accessed November 1, 2012.

³¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² There were only 14 comments on the article, some of which were responses to readers by the author himself. Cf. Chang, "Beijing's Propaganda Goes Global."

³¹³ The bill in question is H.R. 2899. Cf. "Rep. Rohrabacher Introduces Bill to Counter Communist Chinese State Media Advantage in the U.S.," September 13, 2011, <http://rohrabacher.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=259836>, accessed November 1, 2012. The bill is also mentioned in Elizabeth Dwoskin, "China's Latest Export: Journalists," October 4, 2012, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-10-04/chinas-latest-export-journalists>, accessed October 7, 2012.

³¹⁴ Cf. "Rep. Rohrabacher Introduces Bill to Counter Communist Chinese State Media Advantage in the U.S."

³¹⁵ See Elizabeth Redden, "U.S. Answer to Confucius Institutes," November 2, 2012, <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/11/02/colleges-open-state-department-funded-american-cultural-centers-china>, accessed February 7, 2013.

Unsurprisingly, the U.S. Department of State has highlighted Chinese competition to the U.S. in the field of influence over global public opinion, sometimes during times when budget negotiations all but mandated the need to paint the image of a looming threat but also on a more regular basis. A report prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings commented on Chinese measures to spread its own message as much as on its attempts to block America's voice in China.³¹⁶ In 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton then declared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States currently found itself "in an information war" and was "losing that war" against Aljazeera, Russia Today, CCTV and other foreign or alternative media sources.³¹⁷ Clinton's testimony was accompanied by statements in the media from the Director of the Center of Public Diplomacy at USC, Philip Seib, that "[u]nlike the United States, China takes these matters seriously and has designed an approach to public diplomacy that is well-funded, imaginative, and fully integrated within its overall foreign policy."³¹⁸ Seib warned that,

"Congress should heed Secretary Clinton's warning and not relegate U.S. public diplomacy to a nickel-and-dime sideshow. In budgeters' worldview, public diplomacy might not be as sexy as weapons systems, but it is absolutely essential if the information war and the larger battle for influence are to be won."³¹⁹

Concern about Chinese attempts to influence U.S. opinion is not entirely limited to times of budget negotiations, however. During a talk at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Tara Sonenshine, the current Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, also highlighted the competition against China, particularly stressing the paid supplements to the *Washington Post* and *New York*

³¹⁶ Cf. "Executive Summary," in *Another U.S. Deficit – China and America – Public Diplomacy in the Age of the Internet* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2011), 4-6. Available online at <http://lugar.senate.gov/issues/foreign/diplomacy/ChinaInternet.pdf>, accessed November 1, 2012.

³¹⁷ Cf. Joby Warrick, "Clinton: U.S. losing global public-relations battle - to 'Baywatch' and wrestling," website of the *Washington Post*, March 3, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/02/AR2011030206898.html>, accessed February 18, 2013.

³¹⁸ Philip Seib, "Secretary Clinton and the Information War," March 6, 2011, *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/philip-seib/secretary-clinton-and-the_b_832008.html, accessed November 1, 2012.

³¹⁹ Seib, "Secretary Clinton and the Information War."

Times, the Confucius Institutes, and CCTV's new Washington studio.³²⁰ Exacerbating the concern is the fact that China's external propaganda expansion comes at a time when the West perceives itself to be in crisis and most media organizations are still struggling to adapt to the challenges posed by the Internet. The 2008 financial crisis worsened both the actual problems and the sentiment of decline.

In this atmosphere, concern over China's "soft power" has grown further, although the first wave of alarmist studies is being countered by studies putting China's soft power successes into perspective and arguing that the country is far from being able to "charm the world into submission." One author has argued that the U.S. discourse on China's soft power is much more about American soft power than it is about China's.³²¹ Joseph Nye who has weighed in on Chinese soft power on multiple occasions, changed his stance a number of times: In 2004, he paid hardly any attention to China, whereas a year later, by 2005, he sounded almost alarmist.³²² When he commented on Chinese soft power between 2010 and 2012, however, he was doubtful that China could develop proper soft power resources under its current political and media system.³²³

The evaluation in China itself is by and large more critical, even in official speeches. Despite all the current successes, the official evaluation of the international public opinion environment is that the situation that the West is

³²⁰ Adam Clayton Powell III, "PD Under Secretary-Designate's Advice: Watch China," March 27, 2012, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/newswire/cpdblog_detail/pd_under_secretary-designates_advice_watch_china/, accessed October 7, 2012.

³²¹ Cf. Yongjin Zhang, "The Discourse of China's Soft Power and Its Discontents," in *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics*, ed. Mingjiang Li (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 57.

³²² Cf. Joseph Nye, "The Rise of China's Soft Power," Op-ed Wall Street Journal Asia, December 25, 2005, reprinted on http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/publication/1499/rise_of_chinas_soft_power.html, accessed November 9, 2012.

³²³ See Joseph Nye, "American and Chinese Power after the Financial Crisis," *The Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2010): 143-153, available online at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, <http://csis.org/files/publication/twq10octobernye.pdf>, accessed November 9, 2012. Also see Ariel Tung, "Joseph Nye: Don't Magnify China's Soft Power," *China Daily Online*, March 31, 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2011-03/31/content_12252669.htm, accessed November 9, 2012; Joseph Nye, "Why China is Weak on Soft Power," *New York Times* online edition, January 17, 2012, published in the *International Herald Tribune*, January 18, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/opinion/why-china-is-weak-on-soft-power.html>, accessed November 9, 2012.

strong and China is weak has “not yet fundamentally changed.”³²⁴ Academics continue to point out problems, from the technical, such as translation errors, to the more fundamental, such as that Westerners will not accept Chinese state media or that the CPC needs to include more private groups. In 2009, the Center for International Communication Studies convened a conference on “Building a system to assess the effects of external communication” (*Duiwai chuanbo xiaoguo pinggu tixi jianshe* 对外传播效果评估体系建设).³²⁵ Since then, researchers have tried to develop standards how to measure the effectiveness of *waixuan*.³²⁶ The results of such analyses thus far have made many Chinese observers pessimistic about the prospects of being able to enter Western mainstream society and have led to calls to change the overall strategy and goal,³²⁷ but also to further calls to change the Chinese media system and journalistic practices. Some observers even question the usefulness of the external propaganda enterprise per se, arguing that China would do better to concentrate fully on its interests and simply disregard international public opinion.³²⁸ Thus, while the CPC continues to embrace external propaganda work, many are skeptical.

7.8 Conclusions

In the early 21st century, simultaneous developments in different areas coincided and resulted in the increased importance of external propaganda in the eyes of the CPC. The overall climate at the turn of the century in which China made long term plans and prepared for its rise set the stage. With the WTO ascension, a final affirmation that China could not shut itself off from the rest of the world, the CPC was compelled to think about how to deal with the

³²⁴ “但国际舆论传播格局“西强我弱”的态势没有根本改变，由于意识形态和价值理念的差异、冷战思维作祟，国际舆论中对中国的偏见、误解和疑虑依然存在” “Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuangxin jingshenkaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian.”

³²⁵ “Yantaohui.”

³²⁶ E.g. Tang Runhua 唐润滑 and Liu Ying 刘滢, “Meiti guoji chuanbo nengli pinggu tixi de hexin zhibiao” 媒体国际传播能力评估体系的核心指标 [Core indicators of the assessment system of the international communication capacity of the media], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 11 (2011): 6-9.

³²⁷ E.g. Shi Anbin 史安斌, “Weilai 5-10 nian woguo duiwai chuanbo mianlin de tiaozhan yu chuangxin celue” 未来 5-10 年我国对外传播面临的挑战与创新策略 [Challenges for China’s external communication in the coming five to ten years and strategies for innovation], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 9 (2012): 37.

³²⁸ An international communications professor I interviewed expressed this opinion. Thus, there are even skeptics among those who would profit from further expansion of external propaganda work. Interview with international communications professor (“Communications studies professor II”), Beijing, April 2011.

consequences of continued globalization. The U.S. debate after 9/11 provided rhetorical material for expanding the notion of power and framing external propaganda work both as a part of China's comprehensive power and as a matter of national security. These points were added to and strengthened previous arguments about a new Cold War against China. With regard to the latter, external propaganda came to be seen as a proactive strategy in the "struggle over global opinion" that could shift the balance in the international public opinion environment in China's favor and thus help contribute to China's social stability. All of these considerations resulted in an upgrade of external propaganda work, which in turn set in motion a large number of new activities and reforms that have attracted widespread attention and led to China being portrayed as a formidable competitor in the field of external propaganda. The fact that the massive number of new initiatives was preceded by a rhetorical upgrade confirms that rhetorical changes can predict actual changes in policy and that therefore, it makes sense to analyze how a particular work sector is framed in the speeches of top politicians.

With the upgrade, by demonstrating the political will to back external propaganda and explicitly addressing a number of long-standing problems at the same time, China potentially took an important step towards solving long-standing problems of the external propaganda sector. The results of the upgrade were clearly visible and caught widespread attention, but opinions whether or not the new measures are effective are highly divided. If there were a clear division between U.S. voices, presenting China's external propaganda as a powerful new menace, and Chinese voices, continuing to point out inadequacies, the disagreement might be dismissed as the outcome of different national agendas and alarmism on both sides. However, the picture is much more nuanced. In addition, despite the upgrade, the conflict between domestic and external propaganda has not been solved; on the contrary: Domestic propaganda was also elevated again amidst concerns over regime security in the "period of transition" and not only eclipsed external propaganda in importance, but was actually put in charge of the new EPWLSG. Thus, the question how and to what extent China has been able to deal with institutional problems remains as relevant as ever.

The last two chapters of this dissertation are intended to provide some preliminary answers to this question and are broadly informed by the first two steps of the three step plan introduced in 2004. Chapter 8 will explain the

institutional set up of the external propaganda sector (step one: creating a big external propaganda pattern), and Chapter 9 will analyze the dilemma Chinese media face as they try to make a name for themselves abroad while at the same time continuing to function according to the rules of the Chinese media sector (step 2: creating first rate global media). While obviously I will be unable to provide a definite answer to the question whether China will have improved its external propaganda capacities significantly by 2020 (step 3), I will look at the institutional structures and practices within initiatives that the CPC has launched in order to cope with a situation in which it is constrained both internally by the rules of its own bureaucracy and externally by a high degree of suspicion and scrutiny from foreign governments.

8 “Big External Propaganda”: Scope and Coordination

In December 2005, the Office of External Propaganda (OEP) convened a nationwide conference in which it discussed the first step of the three step plan from 2004: the creation of a “big external propaganda pattern” involving the entire country and providing coordination mechanisms to minimize conflicts and overlap. A common theme stressed in debates on the “superiority of the socialist system” in China is that socialist regimes have the ability to bundle different resources and coordinate the work of different bureaucracies and groups.¹ However, precisely this ability seems to have been missing in the external propaganda sector. At least one existing study suggests that the current set-up of the external propaganda apparatus is problematic, both for “forming a joint force” (*xingcheng heli* 形成合力) and for reforming individual units’ structure and work practices.² The coordination between different bureaucratic organizations has likewise been an issue of discontent among Chinese commentators, who speak of “departmentalism” (*benwei zhuyi* 本位主义) within the overall bureaucracy.³ Before the establishment of the External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group (EPWLSG), lack of leadership and coordination was highlighted as a major flaw of Chinese external propaganda, particularly if compared to the supposedly much more centralized external propaganda structures of other countries such as the United States (U.S.).⁴

As China has tried to further expand its external propaganda apparatus since 2004, who is involved and how the sector is organized to coordinate the increasing number of departments and local governments is an important question that has only been addressed superficially in existing literature on Chinese external propaganda. Some information is available in the secondary literature on the present institutional set-up of the external propaganda bureaucracy, especially

¹ See for example “Yi zhengque de yulun yindao ren shi xinwen gongzuo de genben renwu” 以正确的舆论引导人是新闻工作的根本任务 [Guiding people with correct opinion is the fundamental responsibility of press work], *Neibu tongxin* 内部通信 [Internal communication], no. 11, 1994, 4.

² John Charles Jirik, “Making News in the People’s Republic of China: The Case of CCTV-9,” (PhD diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2008).

³ E.g. Wang Jianquan 王健全, “Jianli da waixuan geju” 建立大外宣格局 [Establishing a big external propaganda structure], *Duiwai da chuanbo* 对外大传播 [Big external communication], no. 5 (1999): 23.

⁴ E.g. Wang Jianjin, “Jianli da waixuan geju,” 23.

on the ministerial level body in charge of coordinating the work: the OEP, also known as the State Council Information Office (SCIO).⁵ However, the picture that emerges when piecing together information on the external propaganda bureaucracy from various accounts in existing secondary literature is contradictory.⁶ These contradictions are largely due to the fact that Chinese sources provide conflicting or incomplete information, owing to the secrecy of some of the bodies involved as well as the fact that a number of organizations can act under different names. While not all questions about the external propaganda sector can be settled, it is possible to paint a relatively clear picture of the current organizational structure as well as organizations and people involved.

As early as during the 1980s, external propaganda leaders stressed that their work “had to rely on the entire Party,”⁷ although at the time, China clearly did not have suitable mechanisms to put this ideal into practice. The slogan “big

⁵ E.g. Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). Hooghe gives a brief overview of other actors. Ingrid d’ Hooghe, “The Expansion of China’s Public Diplomacy System,” in *Soft Power in China*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 21-24.

⁶ For instance, Hooghe writes on the Office of External Propaganda and the State Council Information Office that “[the] exact division of work and mandates between the two offices is not known but one can safely assume that the CCP Office sets the rules of the game and that it also has the final say in major decisions.” Hooghe, Ingrid d’, *The Rise of China’s Public Diplomacy*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael, Clingendael Diplomacy Papers no. 12, July 2007, http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2007/20070700_cdsp_paper_hooghe.pdf, accessed August 22, 2012, 21. Shambaugh and Brady, on the other hand, both assume the existence of an External Propaganda (Leading Small) Group or Committee established in 1980 sitting on top of the Office of External Propaganda (cf. “Testimony of Associate-Professor Anne-Marie Brady,” April 30, 2009, Website of U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, http://www.uscc.gov/hearings/2009hearings/written_testimonies/09_04_30_wrts/09_04_30_brady_statement.pdf, accessed December 29, 2012, 2; David Shambaugh, “China’s Propaganda System: Institutions, Processes, and Efficacy,” *China Journal*, no. 57, (January 2007), 47) despite the fact that both *Materials on the Organizational History of the CPC* claims that the Small Group was “restructured” and turned into the Office of External Propaganda in 1993. Cf. Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui 中国共产党组织史资料编审委员会 [Editorial committee for Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], ed. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao* 中国共产党组织史资料 [Materials on the history of organization of the Communist Party of China], Vol. 7: *Shehui zhuyi shiye fazhan xin shiqi, 1976.10-1997.9* 社会主义事业发展新时期: 1976.10-1997.9 [The new period of developing the socialist enterprise: 1976.10-1997.9] (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2000), 243.

⁷ Full Chinese quote: “对外宣传是全党的工作，必须调动国内外一切可以利用的力量，形成千军万马，上下左右一起来办。” Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang” 建立系统的对外宣传工作，介绍中国良好形象 [Establishing systematic external propaganda work; introducing China’s good image], Speech given on November 26, 1986 at the first nationwide external propaganda conference in Beijing, Website of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, http://www.humanrights.cn/cn/zt/tbbd/fyjd70n/03/t20070110_198142.htm, accessed October 27, 2012.

external propaganda” was first proposed as a solution to this problem during the 1990s. It surfaced as early as in 1992 in internal documents,⁸ and by 1996, “building a big external propaganda pattern” and “joining up forces” were already listed as two of external propaganda’s goals for the next five-year-period and discussed in public.⁹ The basic idea behind it at the time was how to harness different forces in society, most importantly the provinces, in order to integrate them into the larger project of improving China’s image, coordinated by the Center.¹⁰ After the EPWLSG came into existence in 2004, the “big external propaganda structure” made a comeback as the first goal that was to be realized within two to three years.

The full slogan used since 2004 to refer to the ideal that China’s external propaganda sector should aim for is “all-dimensional, multi-tiered and wide-ranging big external propaganda pattern” (*quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu da waixuan geju* 全方位、多层次、宽领域大外宣格局). The slogan derives from “all-dimensional, multi-tiered and wide-ranging opening pattern” (*quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu de duiwai kaifang geju* 全方位、多层次、宽领域的对外开放格局).¹¹ Again, the meaning of the slogan is flexible and set by different departments and locales according to their needs and policy aims. In the

⁸ “Gao Changli tongzhi zai shengwei waixuan xiaozu huiyi shang de jianghua” 高昌礼同志在省委外宣小组会议上的讲话 [Comrade Gao Changli’s speech at the meeting of the Provincial Party Committee’s External Propaganda Small Group], November 24, 1992, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编, eds. Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People’s Government of Shandong Province] (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1999), vol. 1, 154-155.

⁹ Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei: Zeng Jianhui lun duiwai xuanchuan* 融冰架桥, 突围:曾建徽论对外宣传 [Melting the ice, building bridges, breaking out of the encirclement: Zeng Jianhui on external propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2006), vol. 1, 125.

¹⁰ During the second half of the 1990s, a number of articles addressed primarily what it meant at the local level. One article from 1999 indicates that during the 1990s, the slogan could also be interpreted to refer to a well-coordinated effort to involve the entire population in external propaganda work. Since the West was stronger than China (*Xi qiang wo ruo* 西强我弱) and it was impossible for China to outspend it on the propaganda front, the author argued at the time, it had to take advantage of its large population, and mobilize a “people’s war,” just like the CPC had done, according to Party historiography, before the founding of the PRC. Wang Jianquan, “Jianli da waixuan geju,” 23.

¹¹ After the 15th Party Congress in 1997, Chinese analysts began discussing in public how to perfect (*wanshan* 完善) China’s “all-dimensional, multi-tiered and wide-ranging opening pattern.”

“big **opening** pattern,” all-dimensional (*quan fangwei* 全方位) can refer to the fact that China is open to different types of countries, not only to developed countries (although these are the primary focus given their advanced technology, rich experience, capital, and people), but also to developing countries, and the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.¹² Multi-tiered (*duo cengci* 多层次) refers, among other things, to different degrees of openness in different parts of the country,¹³ while wide-ranging (*kuan lingyu* 宽领域) refers to the openness to several different markets and the number of different strategies used.¹⁴ Transferred to external propaganda, all-dimensional, among others, refers to the fact that China targets different countries and key regions.¹⁵ Likewise, it can mean that different units are involved, that different areas (politics, economy, culture, etc.) are covered,¹⁶ and that both official and different popular voices should participate. Multi-tiered in its general meaning most likely refers to the fact that media offered in different languages can be at different stages of development (with English usually as the most advanced), and that while everyone needs to be involved, different departments and locales will naturally be at different stages. Wide-ranging refers to using all kinds of different channels and means to reach the target audience and get China’s message across.¹⁷

The “big external propaganda pattern” encompasses various measures that the Center has tried to implement for some time. Building a big external propaganda pattern (occasionally referred to as “building the big new external

¹² Cf. Ren Zhiyong 任志勇, “Quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu de duiwai kaifang geju” 全方位、多层次、宽领域的对外开放格局 [All-dimensional, multi-tiered, wide-ranging big external propaganda pattern], December 9, 2005, Changchun Radio & TV University/Changchun guangbo dianshi daxue, http://open.ccrvtu.com/file_post/display/read.php?FileID=12317, accessed June 12, 2012.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Cf. Tan Zhen 谭震 and Lei Xiangqing 雷向晴, “Quan fangwei, duo cengci, kuan lingyu -- 2005 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi da yinxiang” 全方位、多层次、宽领域——位、多层次全国外宣工作会议大印象 [All-dimensional, multitiered and wide-ranging provincial party committee propaganda department. Internal propaganda], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 8 (2005) [no page numbers].

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷ Cf. “Liu Yunshan zai quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang qiangdiao jiashen liaojie kuoda jiaoliu tuidong hezuo nuli yingzao lianghao de guoji yulun huanjing” 刘云山在全国对外宣传工作会议上强调 加深了解 扩大交流 推动合作 努力营造良好的国际舆论环境 [Liu Yunshan emphasizes at the nationwide conference for external propaganda work: Deepen our understanding, expand exchange, promote cooperation and make efforts to create a favorable international public opinion environment], *Renmin ribao*, July 21, 2005, 4.

propaganda pattern”) is primarily about getting more players involved while at the same time establishing mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between units, and consequently less competition. Big external propaganda pattern means three main things:

First, provinces need to be tied into the system and are then, in turn, responsible for establishing proper institutional structures and coordinating external propaganda work at lower levels. The main responsibility of locales is to serve reform and opening by promoting themselves abroad and attracting investment and opportunities for cooperation and exchange. In addition, in the case of a sudden event, the Center needs to be able to rely on them in the struggle against hostile forces’ attempts to smear China.¹⁸

Second, central departments and ministries need to develop an “external propaganda consciousness” (*waixuan yishi* 外宣意识), i.e. they need to realize that they represent China to the outside world and that their behavior can affect China’s standing. Each of them will have its unique responsibility and, through close cooperation, all departments will “form a joint force.”¹⁹ Overseas embassies are particularly important in this scheme because they are familiar with the circumstances in the countries that they are in and have access to the local population and the media.

Third, the population has to be trained to develop an “external propaganda consciousness.” The Chinese people need to be trained to protect China’s image through their behavior.²⁰ This was to be achieved through education campaigns teaching civilized behavior and through more patriotic education. The main target was to be young people so that from a young age, they had a strong national consciousness and would naturally try to protect China’s image.²¹ In addition to education campaigns creating “civilized” and “patriotic” Chinese, China had also begun to think about how to integrate more organized “popular” activities into its overall external propaganda program.

¹⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2006), 200.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Establishing a “big external propaganda pattern” is also meant to allow China to organize multi-tiered external propaganda campaigns similar to how it sees the United States’ propaganda targeted at China. Chinese observers have long been in awe of what they consider the U.S. aptness to let “multiple players sing the same tune.”²² By this they mean that different players take on different roles, criticizing China with different degrees of intensity while pursuing the same goal of weakening the country: When attacking China, one author explained, the U.S. president criticized least, congressmen’s voices were a little louder, the press criticized even louder, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) criticized most fiercely.²³ This creates an impression of plurality where there actually is none. More importantly, perhaps, it allows the executive to appear restrained and to claim helplessness in the face of opposition from the public and from Congress. As early as in 1979, when the U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act briefly after the executive had established official relations with the PRC, China complained about what it saw as a duplicitous tactic. In the 1990s and in the 21st century, while the Communist Party of China (CPC) recognized the existence of different interests within U.S. society, similar arguments were made:

“The U.S. Congress and the media always act in harmony, considering themselves to represent the will of the people and public opinion. They play the bad cop, threatening China with a big stick, thus allowing Clinton to play the good cop [seemingly] dedicated to engagement.”²⁴

By the early 21st century, China decided it needed a similar arrangement if it wanted to succeed in the battle over international public opinion. According to an experienced (*lao yi bei* 老一辈) external propaganda worker, China should

²² Liu Yaming 刘雅鸣 and Li Pei 李珮, “Quanqiu chuanbo shidai wo guo duiwai xuanchuan xin chulu (er) – Di yi shijian fachu shengyin waixuan bixu xian fa zhi ren” 全球传播时代我国对外宣传新出路（二）——第一次发出声音外宣必须先发制人 [A new way out for China’s external propaganda in the era of global communication– Starting with the first sound external propaganda needs to gain the upper hand by releasing news first], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 12 (2003): 18.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ “Ruhe suzao 21 shiji Zhongguo de guoji xingxiang (shang) - Liu Kang yu Li Xiguang de duitan” 如何塑造 21 世纪中国的国际形象（上）——刘康与李希光的对话 [How to create China’s image in the 21st century (part one) – A dialogue between Liu Kang and Li Xiguang]. *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (2000): 14. Chinese quote: “美国的国会和媒体一向配合默契，均以民意和社会舆论代表自居，所以扮演对中国挥舞大棒的黑脸角色，让克林顿去唱昌接触的白脸。”

establish a multi-dimensional external propaganda structure (*waixuan de liti jiegou* 外宣的立体结构) like the United States. China's external propaganda should be like a fleet in a battle, with a common strategy and a flagship, but with each battleship having its own tasks.²⁵ Thus, the goal of the "big external propaganda" policy is also to be able to assign different roles to different players in concrete conflicts.

This chapter introduces which organizations and groups are involved in China's extended or "big" external propaganda work, how they coordinate their work, and to what extent popular initiatives have been integrated into the overall strategy and scope of measures. I will begin by introducing the tasks of the most important bureaucratic structure in the system: the OEP/SCIO and then proceed according to the three main measures encompassed in the big external propaganda pattern, first discussing the role and integration of the provinces, second, analyzing the horizontal coordination of external propaganda work among central departments and units, and finally examining the inclusion of different groups outside of the Party-state before summing up the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangement in the conclusion.

8.1 The External Propaganda Office/State Council Information Office

The most important bureaucratic organization in the external propaganda sector is the OEP introduced above in chapter 6, a Party organization disguised as a government agency. The OEP continues to have ministerial rank. The director and the four deputy directors of OEP/SCIO are appointed through the central *nomenklatura* (cf. chapter 4.2). Bureau heads are not officially appointed by the Center, but need to be reported. At lower ranks, employees are recruited through competitive exams.²⁶ In addition to regular employees, OEP/SCIO has also

²⁵ Liu Yaming and Li Pei, "Quanzhou chuanbo shidai woguo duiwai xuanchuan xin chulu (er)," 18.

²⁶ Cf. "2012 nian guojia gongwuyuan zhaokao Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi zhiwei liebiao" 2012 年国家公务员招考中央对外宣传办公室职位列表 [Listing of positions in the state civil service to be recruited for the Central Office of External Propaganda], <http://v.htexam.com/htzwlib/a/36.html>, accessed September 19, 2012.

formally had Advisory Groups of Experts (*zixun zhuanjia zu* 咨询专家组) since at least 2001.²⁷

Aside from Leading Small Groups (LSG) and the Central Propaganda Department (CPD), whose relationships with OEP/SCIO will be addressed below, the only other institution above the OEP is the Central Committee and its leading board, the Politburo.²⁸ Not much is known about the interaction between OEP and the Party Center. Since 1990, the OEP has been an institution directly subordinate to the Central Committee. That means it can communicate directly with the Central Committee and send documents to its General Office (*Zhonggong zhongyang bangongting* 中共中央办公厅) for approval. Once approved, the OEP's "Opinions" will be "passed on" (*zhuanfa* 转发) by the General Office. The Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) also hears reports (*tingqu huibao* 听取汇报) from OEP's leadership and gives broad "instructions" (*pishi* 批示) on how external propaganda work should be done, leaving the OEP leadership to come up with concrete measures to translate the PBSC's suggestions into practice.²⁹ Like other organizations, OEP/SCIO produces annual work reports. Again, top cadres will leave written instructions (*pishi*) on such reports that indicate the overall direction.³⁰

OEP has a website under its nameplate State Council Information Office with the address www.scio.gov.cn, where it provides information about its institutional set up, its main activities, as well as resources, such as full texts of the government white papers that it has published. Notably, however, the web site is only available in Chinese and does not function as a propaganda platform, but as a place to publicize its own activities and provide resources for those interested in external propaganda work.

²⁷ Cf. "Li Xiguang Biography," <https://apps.cndls.georgetown.edu/projects/uschina/items/show/512>, accessed February 7, 2013.

²⁸ The State Council presumably has no direct authority over OEP/SCIO, as it is administratively clearly a part of the Party bureaucracy, not the State.

²⁹ Cf. Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 120.

³⁰ The *pishi* left on the 2005 work report was "围绕大局和重要题材, 准确发布信息, 正面引导舆论; 树立良好形象, 积极扩大影响。" Cited in Wang Hongjiang 王宏江 and Guo Qing 郭晴, "Zhongda guoji saishi zhengfu yulun yindao moshi chuangxin yanjiu - Yi Beijing Aoyunhui wei li" 重大国际赛事政府舆论引导模式创新研究——以北京奥运会为例 [Research on innovation of the mode of the government guiding public opinion on major international (sports) competitions - the Beijing Olympic Games as an example], *Chengdu tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 成都体育学院学报 [Journal of Chengdu Institute of Physical Education] 35, no. 12 (2009): 4.

Besides a secretariat in charge of coordinating policy between the central and local levels, as well as a personnel department that manages and organizes training for cadres at OEP as well as for outsiders, the OEP had seven bureaus (*ju* 局) for several years, expanded to nine in 2010. Each bureau is, in turn, subdivided into different departments (*chu* 处),³¹ which are, however, not listed on the SCIO website and are only occasionally mentioned in news reports.³² An outline of the bureaus and what they do already covers a large part of the OEP's current responsibilities:

The **First Bureau** could be called the (domestic) news bureau. It is in charge of press conferences regarding domestic news, regulates how important domestic events are reported abroad, writes White Papers and further develops and promotes Chinese media outlets' reporting targeted at foreigners.³³ The First Bureau also organizes briefings for Chinese media, often in cooperation with other departments, to direct their coverage of specific topics.³⁴ News reports further show that it has also helped to organize conferences for state-owned enterprises (SOE) intending to expand abroad (*zou chuqu* 走出去).³⁵

³¹ Such as propaganda departments *xuanchuan*, press departments *xinwen*, etc.

³² Therefore, the exact number of departments at each bureau is unclear.

³³ “Jigou shezhi” 机构设置 [Institutional set-up], Website of OEP/SCIO, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/>, accessed September 7, 2012. For restriction to domestic news, also see Du Shengcong 杜圣聪, *Liang an zhenxiang mima: Zhonggong dui Tai xuanchuan de zhengce, zuowei yu tujing* 两岸真相密码: 中共对台宣传的政策, 作为与途径 作为与途径 [Password to the truth between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait: Policies, practices and approaches of CPC propaganda targeted at Taiwan] (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji gufen youxian gongsi, 2008), 105.

³⁴ E.g. “2012 nian Zhongguo Tu'erqi yisilan wenhua zhan yan' huodong meiti chuifenghui zai Jing zhaokai” 2012 中国·土耳其伊斯兰文化展演”活动媒体吹风会在京召开 [“2012 China-Turkey Islamic Cultural Expo and Performances” media briefing held in Beijing], August 22, 2012, <http://www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/zjyy/yjdt/wenhuaajiaoliu/2012zhongguo-tuerqiyisilanwenhuazhanyan/201208/30-2965.html>, accessed September 7, 2012.

³⁵ Cf. “Zou chuqu' guoyou qiye waixuan gongzuo zuotanhui zai Zhongguo Youse Kuangye Jituan juxing” “走出去”国有企业外宣工作座谈会在中国有色矿业集团举行 [External propaganda work conference for state-owned enterprises ‘going out’ held at China Nonferrous Metal Mining Group], May 5, 2010, <http://www.metalchina.com/members/news.php?id=431255>, accessed August 23, 2010. For a different event also see “Zhongyang waixuanban yi ju he Guoziwei xuanchuanju lianhe juban qiye pinpai yu weiji chuanbo gaoji yantaoban” 中央外宣办一局和国资委宣传局联合举办企业品牌与危机传播高级研讨班 [First Bureau of OEP and the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission jointly organize the advanced seminar on corporate brands and crisis communication], website of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, September 22, 2009. <http://www.sasac.gov.cn/n1180/n1566/n259730/n264168/6654480.html>, accessed August 23, 2010.

The **Second Bureau** is in charge of OEP/SCIO's "international public relations" (*guoji gonggong guanxi* 国际公共关系), which mainly means that it is responsible for exchange and cooperation with foreign media and other institutions. It organizes conferences centred on the topic of media co-operation (for instance with Latin American or African countries) and also meets with foreign media CEO, though OEP's head, Wang Chen 王晨, will usually also be present personally when meeting important "press dignitaries."³⁶ It organizes media forums, such as the Sino-French Media Forum,³⁷ the China-Arab States Press Cooperation Forum,³⁸ the Sino-Korean Media Dialogue,³⁹ etc. The Second Bureau is also involved in seminars for foreign government officials, journalists and other media personnel that China has been offering and that will be addressed again in more detail in Chapter 9.4.⁴⁰

³⁶ Jiang Weiqiang 江伟强, head of the Office, was also present when Wang Chen met with Rupert Murdoch Cf. "Wang Chen huijian Meiguo xinwen jituan zongcai Moduoke" 王晨会见美国新闻集团总裁默多克 [Wang Chen meets with Murdoch, president of a U.S. news conglomerate], *People's Daily Online*, October 11, 2009, <http://politics.people.com.cn/GB/1026/10173125.html>, accessed August 23, 2010. More recently, Wang Chen and the director and deputy director of the second bureau met with a representative of Thompson-Reuter ("Wang Chen zhuren huijian Tangsen Lutou jituan Zhongguo quzhuxi Shijinde xiansheng yi xing" 王晨主任会见汤森路透集团中国区主席史进德先生一行 [Wang Chen meets the chairman of the China section of Thomson-Reuters Group, David Schlesinger], website of OEP/SCIO, May 4, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/wangchen/hd/201205/t1153723.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012) and Time-Warner. (Cf. "Wang Chen huijian Shidai Huana gongsi quanqiu gonggong zhengce zhixing fuzongcai Meikerui" 王晨会见时代华纳公司全球公共政策执行副总裁梅可睿 [Wang Chen meets with executive vice president of Time Warner, Carol Melton], website of OEP/SCIO, September 19, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/wangchen/hd/201209/t1220683.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012).

³⁷ "Guoxinban erju juzhang Jiang Weiqiang zhuchi luntan kaimushi" 国新办二局局长江伟强主持论坛开幕式 [Head of the Second Bureau of the State Council Information Office presides over the opening ceremony of the forum], Website of OEP/SCIO, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/dtzt/70/8/201202/t1100799.htm>, accessed September 7, 2012.

³⁸ See for example "Guoxinban juxing di san jie Zhong A xinwen hezuo luntan huanying zhaodaihui" 国新办举行第三届中阿新闻合作论坛欢迎招待会 [State Council Information Office holds reception for the third forum for press cooperation between China and the Arab countries], Website of OEP/SCIO, April 24, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/dtzt/73/5/201204/t1148837.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012.

³⁹ The website for the Dialogue is <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zt2009/zhl/index.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012.

⁴⁰ Cf. "Di jiu qi Feizhou guojia xinwen guanyuan he jizhe yanxiuban zai Jing kaiban" 第九期非洲国家新闻官员和记者研修班在京开班 第九期非洲国家新闻官员和记者研修班在京开班 [Ninth African countries press officials and reporters seminar starts in Beijing], July 18, 2012, Website of OEP/SCIO, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/dtzt/82/4/201207/t1190188.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012. Seminars for foreigners to learn from China are of course not limited to the media.

The **Third Bureau** is responsible for *waixuan* 外宣 books, films, TV programs, and comprehensive exchange activities.⁴¹ It is thus in charge of initiatives that need to be prepared ahead of time instead of those where OEP/SCIO has to react swiftly. It is the main organizer of exchange activities such as “Experience China” (*Ganzhi Zhongguo* 感知中国)⁴² and various China-themed “cultural years”⁴³ and “cultural weeks”⁴⁴ in different countries. Moreover, it is actively involved in the “Going Out Project” of the Chinese book industry (*Zhongguo tushu zou chuqu gongcheng* 中国图书走出去工程) launched in 2002.⁴⁵ In early 2006, OEP and the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) formed a Small Group for the “Plan to Promote Chinese Books Abroad,” which includes cadres from the Third Bureau.⁴⁶ Presumably, the Third Bureau also cooperates with or drafts instructions for the Foreign Language Office (FLO), which publishes magazines such as the *Beijing Review* and *China Today* and is led by OEP/SCIO.

The **Fourth Bureau** functions as OEP/SCIO’s “research bureau.” It does the research underlying policies, plans, and concrete means how to introduce China abroad and also analyzes global public opinion. As it mainly works in the second row, it has a very low visibility on the Internet compared to most of the

⁴¹ *Zonghe* 综合, i.e. overall or comprehensive, is an established category in the Chinese bureaucracy and is the opposite of specialized (*zhuanye* 专业). Media are also categorized according to this criterion. In this context, it means that the activities are not limited to a specific field or are clearly the responsibility of a specialized department, such as the Ministry of Commerce or the Ministry of Culture.

⁴² E.g. in Mexico in July and August 2007, in Israel in September and October 2009, and in Japan in June and July 2012, etc.

⁴³ Such as the Cultural Year of China in Italy that started October 2010. 2006 was the Cultural Year of Italy in China. “Yidali Zhongguo wenhuanian kaimu, liang guo wenhua jialiu xie xin pian zhang” 意大利中国文化年开幕 两国文化交流谱写新篇章 [Year of China in Italy opens, writes a new chapter in the two countries’ cultural exchanges], Website of OEP/SCIO, October 21, 2010, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/wh/13/4/201010/t786470.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012.

⁴⁴ Such as the week of Tibetan Culture (which actually lasted ten days) in Madrid 2010, organized jointly with the government of Tibet Autonomous Region and the Chinese embassy to Spain. Cf. “2010 Zhongguo Xizang wenhuazhou” 2010·中国西藏文化周 [Cultural week of China’s Tibet], Website of OEP/SCIO November 14, 2010, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/wh/14/6/201011/t803908.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012.

⁴⁵ Cf. Zhang He 张贺, “Rang shijie yuedu Zhongguo - zhanwang Zhongguo tushu ‘zou chuqu’” 让世界阅读中国——展望中国图书“走出去” [Let the world read China – prospects for China’s books “going out”], *Renmin ribao*, May 20, 2006, 5.

⁴⁶ Cf. “Guoxinban sanju fujuzhang Wu Wei zuo 2009 niandu gongzuo baodao” 国新办三局副局长吴伟做 2009 年度工作报告 [The deputy head of the third bureau of the State Council Information Office delivers work report for 2009], Website of OEP/SCIO, March 25, 2010, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/dtzt/22/6/201003/t585724.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012.

other offices, but its task to understand foreign public opinion about China has continually grown in importance in recent years.

The **Fifth Bureau** makes plans for Internet development, and pushes forward the development of news websites, including but not limited to those originally set up to target foreigners. It also organizes training classes for Chinese Internet administrators,⁴⁷ and its Cadres participate in Internet-related international seminars or roundtables, such as the training classes for African government spokespeople and journalists or the Internet Roundtable for Developing Countries (*Xinxing guojia hulianwang yuanzhuo huiyi* 新兴国家互联网圆桌会议) in 2012.⁴⁸ Despite the fact that it is located within OEP/SCIO, the Fifth Bureau's primary concern is domestic.

The **Sixth Bureau** guides the work of local Information Offices⁴⁹ and is responsible for providing services to reporters from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao visiting the mainland. It also meets with media representatives from the regions⁵⁰ and gets involved when Chinese media cooperate with media from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Macao.⁵¹

⁴⁷ E.g. “Wuju zhidao de wangluo bianji peixunban zai Renda Xinwen xueyuan kaiban” 五局指导的网络编辑培训班在人大新闻学院开班 [Training class for internet editors guided by the Fifth Bureau takes place at the Journalism School of People's University], Website of OEP/SCIO, August 24, 2006, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/gzdt/ldhd/gnhd/200608/t99687.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012.

⁴⁸ “Wang Chen huijian canjia Xinxing guojia hulianwang yuanzhuo huiyi” 王晨会见参加新兴国家互联网圆桌会议的各代表团长 [Wang Chen meets participants of roundtable on the internet in emerging countries], Website of OEP/SCIO, September 18, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201209/t1219483.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012.

⁴⁹ However, representatives from other offices also participate in conferences or other events at the local level.

⁵⁰ E.g. “Wang Zhongwei fuzhuren huijian *Jingbao* zhixing shezhang Yu Xinying” 王仲伟副主任会见《镜报》执行社长徐新英 [Deputy director Wang Zhongwei meets executive president of the *Jingbao* Xu Xinying], Website of OEP/SCIO, July 27, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201207/t1195063.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012. Depending on the importance, either on their own or accompanying the director or one of the deputy directors of OEP/SCIO.

⁵¹ See for example “‘Wuzhou’ yu Xianggang TVB hezuo 7nian 10 shenshi jiemu shixian duoguo luodi” ‘五洲’与香港 TVB 合作 7 年 10 省市节目实现多国落地 [Wuzhou and Hong Kong TVB have cooperated for seven years; programs from ten provinces and municipalities have ‘landed’ in multiple countries], Website of OEP/SCIO, September 18, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zhzc/3/2/201209/t1219429.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012. Previously, representatives of the Sixth Office have at times also been present when the director met with Japanese media people. However, this looks like a temporary phenomenon under Cai Wu. (E.g. “Guowuyuan xinwenban zhuren Cai Wu zai Beijing huijian Riben JC keren” 国务院新闻办主任蔡武在北京会见日本 JC 客人 [Cai Wu, director of the SCIO, met with guests from Japan JC guests in Beijing], website of OEP/SCIO, July 26, 2007, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/nd/2007/200905/t309804.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012.)

The **Seventh Bureau** is dedicated to researching and promoting China's human rights activities, and has more recently also been entrusted with managing and regulating the presentation of Tibet to foreigners.⁵² Through the Seventh Bureau, OEP/SCIO is also involved in human rights dialogues with foreign countries.⁵³ The volume *Organizational History of the CPC* indicates, however, that the Seventh Office exists mainly to give a platform to the Research Council for Human Rights (cf. chapter 6.2) as well as to the Foundation for Developing Human Rights.⁵⁴ It is probably correct to assume that there is a significant degree of overlap between these organizations and the Seventh Bureau and that therefore, if not the same, they are at least very closely linked. The most likely scenario is that various organizations related to human rights issues and Tibet affairs have an office stationed within the Seventh Bureau. With the emphasis on ideological security, developing and defending a Chinese concept of human rights has gained further importance and thus, external propaganda work focused on human rights and Tibet has also experienced an upgrade. For instance, in early 2012, the former head of the Tibet Party Committee's Propaganda Department became one of the deputy heads of OEP/SCIO.⁵⁵

A reform, probably from late 2009,⁵⁶ created two additional bureaus: the **Eighth Bureau**, responsible for managing and approving the work of foreign

⁵² "Jigou shezhi." The exact time when this change took place is unclear, but it must have been some time between the early and mid-2000s.

⁵³ See for instance this report about a human rights dialogue with the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Chengde: "Cui Yuying fuzhuren chuxi di shi jie Zhong De renquan yantaohui bing zhi ci" 崔玉英副主任出席第十届中德人权研讨会并致辞 [Deputy director Cui Yuying attends the Tenth Sino-German Symposium on Human Rights and delivers speech], Website of OEP/SCIO, September 19, 2012. <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201209/t1219741.htm>, accessed September 19, 2012.

⁵⁴ Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 243. *Zuzhishi ziliao* explicitly excludes the Seventh Office when listing OEP's fixed number of employees (*bianzhi* 编制).

⁵⁵ Cf. "Cui Yuying" 崔玉英 [Cui Yuying], website of OEP/SCIO, January 4, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/cyy/jl/201201/t1076179.htm>, accessed October 20, 2012.

⁵⁶ The news of the restructuring of OEP/SCIO was released on April 20, 2010 through Taiwanese and Hong Kong media. Of the two new offices, the 9th Office is clearly more explosive and controversial, both in China and abroad, and has attracted at least a moderate amount of attention on Chinese language online media of various origins, including, of course, U.S. external propaganda initiatives targeted at China (For instance, Radio Free Asia reported about it on its Chinese language website (Cf. "Guoxinban chengli jiu ju" 国新办成立九局 [The State Council Information Office establishes a Ninth Bureau], Website of Radio Free Asia, April 19, 2012, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/Xinwen/3-04192010121035.html>, accessed September 3, 2010).

media stationed in China,⁵⁷ and the **Ninth Bureau**, specifically created for managing social online networks (*shejiaoxing wangzhan* 社交性网站) and Web 2.0 applications, i.e. websites with large amounts of user-generated content, such as micro-blogs, blogs, BBS, social networks, etc. Thus oversight of the Internet was divided between the 5th Office, which continues to be in charge of managing news websites, and the newly created 9th Office.

In 2011, media reported that management of the Internet (i.e. the tasks of the Fifth and the Ninth Bureau) had been taken out of OEP/SCIO and made the responsibility of the newly created State Internet Information Office (SIIO).⁵⁸ The rearrangements did bring some changes in personnel, but the self-introduction of the office published on the SCIO website confirms that the State Internet Information Office is simply another nameplate for OEP/SCIO for when it acts in its capacity to regulate the Internet.⁵⁹ Through its nameplate SIIO, OEP/SCIO is now responsible for the legal framework for the Internet, for guiding and coordinating other departments' management of Internet content, for day-to-day administration of the online news sector, for guiding the work of other departments in regulating anything pertaining to and expanding the cultural industry on the Internet, for the construction of key news websites, for organizing and coordinating online propaganda work, for dealing with illegal websites in accordance with the law, for guiding the registration of websites and distribution of IP addresses, and for guiding the work of local Internet-related departments within its areas of responsibility.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Most likely the outcome of the new arrangements tested in the run-up to the Olympics.

⁵⁸ Cf. Michael Wines, "China creates new agency for patrolling the internet," *New York Times* online. May 4, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/05/world/asia/05china.html?_r=1, accessed May 7, 2011.

⁵⁹ Cf. "Ben ban jiben qingkuang" 本办基本情况 [Basic information about this Office], Website of OEP/SCIO, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/xwbjs/200905/t306817.htm>, accessed September 20, 2012. The nameplate arrangement was also already stressed when the establishment of the office was first reported on the SCIO website. Cf. "2011年5月4日国家互联网信息办公室挂牌成立, 我国互联网信息服务和管理工作进入了一个新的阶段。" "Wang Chen: jiji zhudong xiang shijie shuoming Zhongguo" 王晨: 积极主动向世界说明中国 [Wang Chen: Positively and proactively explain China to the world], Website of OEP/SCIO, January 18, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/wangchen/jh/201201/t1085178.htm>, accessed September 7, 2012. The Office is headed by Wang Chen, with Qian Xiaoqian acting as deputy director. "China sets up State Internet Information Office," Website of *China Daily*, May 4, 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2011-05/04/content_12440782.htm, accessed August 9, 2012.

⁶⁰ "Ben ban jiben qingkuang."

In addition, OEP/SCIO has a number of adjunct units that are not listed in the official institutional structure on its website, but whose affiliation with OEP is not denied. For instance, one affiliated unit of OEP is the “Cadre Training Center of the Information Office of the State Council” (*Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi ganbu peixun zhongxin* 国务院新闻办公室干部培训中心), which organizes training classes in China and abroad for external propaganda cadres,⁶¹ and is also actively involved in offering seminars to journalists and politicians in non-Western countries.⁶²

The most important unit under the leadership of OEP/SCIO is the Foreign Languages Publication and Distribution Office (*Zhongguo waiwen chuban faxing shiye ju* 中国外文出版发行事业局, short, *Waiwenju* 外文局 FLO), a unit with vice-ministerial rank also known as the China International Publishing Group (中国国际出版集团, CIPG), its “commercial face.”⁶³ FLO/CIPG has a Department

⁶¹ See for example a report on the first delegation sent abroad organized by OEP/SCIO in 2003. They were sent to England to see how the government controls the news. Cf. Miao Jianping 缪建萍, “Dui Yingguo xinwen guanli he meiti xinwen jiazhi guan de sikao – Canjia fu Yingguo xinwen ji meiti yewu peixun yougan” 对英国新闻管理和媒体新闻价值观的思考——参加赴英国新闻及媒体业务培训有感 [Reflection of British news management and media news values - impressions about participating in the British press and media business training], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2004): 42.

⁶² See for example “Lamei guojia xinwen guanyuan he jizhe yanxiuban zai Jing kaiban” 拉美国家新闻官员和记者研修班在京开班 [Seminar for government officials and journalists from Latin American countries takes place in Beijing], Website of OEP/SCIO May 15, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201205/t1157554.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012.

⁶³ The eventful history of the FLPO is well-documented. The first predecessor organization of the FLPO is considered to be the International News Bureau of the General Press Administration (GPrA) established in October 1949. In July 1952, the International News Bureau was officially turned into the Foreign Language Press (FLP) under the General Publication Administration (GPuA), and, in December 1954, when the GPuA was incorporated into the Ministry of Culture (MoC), the FLP was put under the authority of the MoC Publication Administration. In May 1963, it was re-established as a unit directly under the State Council (*zhishu danwei*) and named *Waiwen chuban shiye faxing guanli ju* 外文出版事业发行管理局 (in official documents usually abbreviated as *Waiwenju*) [*Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui*, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, A1, 161]. In August 1967, the “Foreign Language Office External Propaganda Newspaper Pool” (*Waiwenju duiwai xuanchuan zhizhang zongku* 外文局对外宣传纸张总库) was founded as a subordinate branch of the FLPO (*ibid*, A1, 558). In June 1968, the Foreign Language Office was put under military control (*junshi guanzhi* 军事管制). Between April 1970 and January 1972, when it was transferred to the International Liaison Department, FLPO was hosted (*dai guan* 代管) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*ibid*, A1, 558). According to an internal report, this reduced its effectiveness. In 1974, the ILD improved some of its difficulties, for instance by making sure that the FLO could hold regular briefing sessions with cadres from Xinhua. In 1979, the FLPO fought again for its status as an organ directly under the State Council (so it could receive a broader range of internal documents) and for being recognized as a news propaganda unit (*xinwen xuanchuan danwei* 新闻宣传单位) as this would facilitate its cooperation with many other units. In February 1982, as part of the administrative restructuring, the FLPO was merged

for International Cooperation (*Guoji hezuo bu* 国际合作部) and an extremely large number of subordinate units (*jushu danwei* 局属单位), including the three main foreign language journals *Beijing Review*, *China Today*, and *Peoples China*, these journals' regional branches, and the Foreign Language Press. Moreover, the FLO also manages the Translators Association,⁶⁴ which publishes lists of suitable translations for specific expressions on a regular basis.⁶⁵ Finally, in 2004, the FLO's Center for International Communication Studies (*Duiwai chuanbo yanjiu zhongxin* 对外传播研究中心) was founded, which publishes several journals and book series, analyzes public opinion about China abroad, conducts audience surveys to assess the effectiveness of external propaganda, and organizes annual conferences on topics related to external propaganda. It also subsumes the operational structure of the Translators Association of China.⁶⁶ Since 2010, it has convened the National Seminar on the Theories of International Communication (*Quanguo duiwai chuanbo lilun yantaohui* 全国对外传播理论研讨会),⁶⁷ which takes place every other year and invites cadres from the central departments and ministries, selected provincial external propaganda offices, and researchers from universities and think tanks, including academics from abroad.⁶⁸

with several other organs into the new Ministry of Culture and became a unit led by MoC. In June 1982, the Translators Association was formed, hosted (*daiwei guanli* 代位管理) by FLPO. In December 1991, FLPO was taken out of the MoC and became an independent institution under the State Council managed (*guikou guanli* 归口管理) by the EPSG (ibid, A1, 558).

⁶⁴ “Zhongguo fanyi xiehui jianjie” 中国翻译协会简介 [Brief introduction to the Translators Association of China], Website of the Translators Association of China, http://www.tac-online.org.cn/ch/tran/2009-09/27/content_3160548.htm, accessed August 22, 2012.

⁶⁵ One of the Translators Association's branches (*fenzhi jigou* 分支机构) is the Committee on Translation in International Communication (*Duiwai chuanbo fanyi weiyuanhui* 对外传播翻译委员会), founded in 1991, with a secretary's office as its permanent working body. Its members are comprised of people from the MFA, MoC, MOFCOM, IDCPC, the State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Xinhua, the Foreign Languages Office, the Translation and Compilation Bureau, the China Daily, CRI, and other “important experts from foreign affairs and foreign propaganda units.” “Fenzhi jigou jianjie” 分支机构简介 [Introduction to the branch offices], Translators Association of China, http://www.tac-online.org.cn/ch/tran/2009-09/27/content_3160397.htm, accessed October 26, 2012. Below the Committee are two small groups: one for Chinese-English and one for Chinese-French translations.

⁶⁶ “Zhongguo waiwenju duiwai chuanbo yanjiu zhongxin jianjie” 中国外文局对外传播研究中心简介 [Brief Introduction to FLPO's Center for International Communication Studies], http://www.soic.china.cn/2009-06/29/content_2989629.htm, accessed January 18, 2013.

⁶⁷ See the seminars's website: “Quanguo duiwai chuanbo lilun yanjiu yantaohui” 全国对外传播理论研讨会 [National Seminar on the theories of international communication], <http://www.soic.china.cn/index.htm>, accessed January 18, 2013.

⁶⁸ Wang Mei 王眉, “Shijie xin geju xia de Zhongguo guoji chuanbo” 世界新格局下的中国国际传播——全国第二届对外传播理论研讨会综述 [China's international communication under new patterns of the world - summary of the Second National Symposium on external

In sum, OEP/SCIO and its subordinate units are responsible for much of the media-based external propaganda, for helping the government and the Party interact with the outside world, and have also been put in charge to coordinate a great deal of the cultural exchange activities.

8.2 Vertical Coordination: OEP/SCIO and the Provinces

When the External Propaganda Small Group (EPSG) was resurrected in 1990, one idea behind it was that China needed an organization that could function as a link between the Center and the many organizations involved in external propaganda (*cheng shang qi xia de jigou* 承上启下的机构).⁶⁹ The interaction between OEP/SCIO and the Center has been briefly addressed above. This section will look at the involvement of provinces in China's overall external propaganda project as well as at channels and mechanism of communication between OEP/SCIO and its local equivalents.

Before the beginning of the reform and opening policies, locales rarely came in contact with foreigners, and when they did, they strictly followed instructions from the Center.⁷⁰ When external propaganda structures began to be established at the provincial level in the early 1980s, this happened at a time when China was in the midst of reorganizing its bureaucratic structure from vertical command chains (*yi tiao wei zhu* 以条为主) towards horizontal command chains (*yi kuai wei zhu* 以块为主). During the 1980s, the EPSG had virtually no control over provincial external propaganda small groups or bureaus because of its uncertain status among the central departments. In the 1990s, this problem was remedied by giving the central external propaganda structure an office and a rank in the bureaucracy. However, it is important to point out that OEP/SCIO was not authorized to *lead* local or departmental external propaganda small groups or

communication], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 12 (2011): 26. For instance, in 2011, Zheng Yongnian, director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore participated and gave a speech on China's lack of ideational power. Cf. *ibid*, 27.

⁶⁹ E.g. "Wang Wei zai Fujian tan pingbaohou de duiwai xuanchuan" 王微在福建谈平暴后的对外宣传 [In Fujian, Wang Wei speaks about external propaganda after having quelled the riots], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (1990): 7.

⁷⁰ Cf. "Zhang Wentian tongzhi guanyu jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan de juti lingdao de yijian" 张闻天同志关于加强对外宣传的具体领导意见 [Comrade Zhang Wentian's Opinion about reinforcing the concrete leadership over external propaganda], April 9, 1958, MFA Archive, no. 102-00074-02(1).

offices. In 1997, Zeng Jianhui 曾建徽 explicitly pointed out that OEP/SCIO did not have a direct leading relationship (*chuishhi lingdao guanxi* 垂直领导关系) with local external propaganda structures. These were led by party committees at the respective levels, and OEP/SCIO only professionally guided them (*yewu zhidao* 业务指导).⁷¹ Use of the word *zhidao* 指导 –to guide– on the current SCIO website when describing the relationship between the Central OEP and its local counterparts indicates that this is still the case.⁷² Thus, until today, it only professionally guides its local equivalents at the provincial level, which are instead led by the provincial party committees that they belong to.

Giving a relatively high degree of independence to local external propaganda structures makes sense because conditions on the ground vary greatly, and locales know best what they need and want to propagate abroad in order to attract tourists or investment. Locales are also more familiar with existing connections with foreigners or particular resources they could put to use or seek to reinforce to attract tourism or foreign investment. The obvious downside is that this makes it more difficult for the Center to enforce policies against the will of locales.

That said, policies can be enforced by going through the Central Committee, particularly if the Center itself attaches importance to an issue: After the elevation of external propaganda to the level of national security and social stability, the Center finally succeeded in establishing relatively reliable external propaganda structures in all provinces and below by defining external propaganda as one of the “core works” (*zhongxin gongzuo* 中心工作) of governments at all levels.⁷³ Pressure from the Party Center, which has probably tied the fulfillment of external propaganda tasks to promotion and demotion of provincial leaders in some way, now ensures a relatively high degree of compliance with regard to basic structures. Thus, even if a particular province feels that external propaganda

⁷¹ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 45.

⁷² The handbook *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period*, published in 2006, also explains that OEP only “guides and coordinates” (*zhidao xietiao* 指导协调) the external propaganda work of the central departments and the locales. Cf. Zhongxuanbu ganbujue, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 198.

⁷³ Cf. Shi Anbin 史安斌, “Weilai 5-10 nian woguo duiwai chuanbo mianlin de tiaozhan yu chuangxin celue” 未来 5-10 年我国对外传播面临的挑战与创新策略 [Challenges faced by our external communication and innovation strategy for the next 5 to 10 years], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 9 (2012): 36.

is a waste of its money, it is highly unlikely that it will be able to opt out of the most basic policies.

Like OEP/SCIO, local external propaganda offices also present themselves under the name “Information Office” to the rest of the world,⁷⁴ although in reports in Chinese on external propaganda at or below the provincial level, the “internal” name *waixuanban* 外宣办 is used much more often than at the central level.⁷⁵ The internal set-up of provincial external propaganda offices does not precisely mirror the center.⁷⁶ By and large, provincial external propaganda institutions have considerable overlaps, but exact local arrangements may differ, either because of different needs of the respective provincial party committee or because of the historical evolution of a particular local bureaucracy. The functions that all of them cover are introducing the locale outside its jurisdiction, press releases, and being able to host journalists from outside their jurisdiction.

In 2004, Zhao Qizheng 赵启正 stressed that there was no single standard with which to assess each province’s external propaganda work because some had been engaged in external propaganda longer than others and each had its own

⁷⁴ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 45.

⁷⁵ Presumably because foreigners pay less attention to local structures and language policies are less rigorously enforced.

⁷⁶ For instance, according to its website, Shanghai’s external propaganda office has a Secretariat (*Mishu chu* 秘书处), an External Propaganda Department, which also acts as Liaison Department for Journalists (*Duiwai xuanchuan chu* 对外宣传处 [*Jizhe lianluo chu* 记者联络处]), a Press Department (*Xinwen fabu chu* 新闻发布处), a Department for Developing the Sector (*Shiye fazhan chu* 事业发展处), a Research Office (*Yanjiushi* 研究室), and a Department for Online News Management (*Wangluo xinwen guanli chu* 网络新闻管理处). See “Neishe jigou he fuzeren” 内设机构及负责人 [Internal set-up and people in charge], <http://www.shio.gov.cn/shxwb/bbjs/nsjg/index.html>, accessed September 21, 2012. Heilongjiang has already divided the Departments according to News Office (*Xinwenban*) and Internet Office (*Wangluoban*). The first has a Secretariat, an External News Department (*Duiwai xinwen chu* 对外新闻处), a Press Department, and an External Liaison Department (*Duiwai lianluo chu* 对外联络处). The latter has a Department for Managing the Internet (*Wanguan chu* 网管处), a Comments Department (*Pinglun chu* 评论处), and a Public Opinion Department (*Yuqing chu* 舆情处). Cf. “Sheng zhengfu xinwenban neishe jigou” 省政府新闻办内设机构 [Internal institutions of the information office of the provincial government], <http://www.hljio.gov.cn/web/zyzz.shtml>, accessed September 21, 2012. Jilin’s External Propaganda Office has four Departments: The Comprehensive Propaganda Department (*Zonghe xuanchuan chu* 综合宣传处), the Department for Developing the Sector, the External Liaison Department, and the Press Department. Cf. “Neishe jigou” 内设机构 [Internal set-up], <http://www.jlio.gov.cn/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=lists&catid=57>, accessed September 21, 2012.

resources and strengths.⁷⁷ Provinces tend to be grouped into “coastal and developed” (*yanhai jingji jiao fazhan sheng* 沿海经济较发展省), “border regions” (*bianjiang sheng* 边疆省) and “inland provinces” (*neilu sheng* 内陆省).⁷⁸ Different things are expected of them, first because their location and development level affects what role they can play in the overall scheme and second, because some provinces have had much more experience with external propaganda than others. This is one of the many meanings of the formulation “multi-leveled” (*duo cengci* 多层次): Different provinces will be at different stages of development of their external propaganda apparatus. As long as the basic requirements are fulfilled and provinces continue to improve their work, that is completely acceptable. It would be unfair to expect the same level of professionalism of Hebei 河北 as of provinces like Guangdong 广东 or Shandong 山东, which have been engaged in external propaganda work at a relatively high level for several decades (cf. chapters 3 and 5).

Many provincial and municipal governments have put up websites in English. As briefly mentioned above, the term *xuanchuan* is still often translated as *propaganda* on sub-central government websites (cf. chapter 6.4).⁷⁹ This means that with the inclusion of locales, the Center potentially faces problems how to control the quality of material produced.

Some of the more advanced provinces have their own media targeting overseas Chinese and foreigners. China’s border provinces have been in charge of organizing material for neighboring countries since the 1990s, when the country sought to improve its regional security through mending relations (cf. chapter 6). Shanghai is clearly the most advanced in term of media catering to international

⁷⁷ Cf. “Guowuyuan xinwenban zhuren Zhao Qizheng tan difang waixuan gongzuo” 国务院新闻办主任赵启正谈地方外宣工作 [SCIO Director Zhao talks about local external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (2004): 1.

⁷⁸ Zhou Zongmin, 周宗敏, “Bufu zhongtuo, buru shiming, nuli yingzao lianghao guoji yulun huanjing - Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zai Jing zhaokai” 不负重托, 不辱使命, 努力营造良好国际舆论环境——全国对外宣传工作会议在京召开 [Accept the great responsibilities, fulfill the mission, work hard to create a favorable international public opinion environment], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 1 (2004): 10-11.

⁷⁹ See for example, “Emphasis on scientific outlook on development and advanced cultural industry,” Website of the People’s Government of Shaanxi Province, November 13, 2008, http://english.shaanxi.gov.cn/articleAboutgov/chinadoc/chinathree/governmentthree/200811/1986_1.html, accessed February 1, 2013; “Qingdao propaganda department calls for the publicity of the spirit of 18th CPC National Congress,” website of the government of the city of Qingdao, November 21, 2012, <http://english.qingdao.gov.cn/n2043295/n2048687/275206.html>, accessed February 1, 2013.

audiences. It had English language content before CCTV started incorporating programs in English.⁸⁰ In 2008, the Shanghai Media Group launched its International Channel Shanghai (ICS) with programs in English and Japanese.⁸¹ Since 2011, Guangdong has had its own international channel, GDTV World, which “aims to become a world-class media with authority, public credibility and influence.”⁸² The channel offers programs and news in both English and Chinese.⁸³ Yunnan 云南 received permission to launch an international channel in December 2011 and plans to broadcast both in Chinese and English.⁸⁴ However, until now, only a small minority of provinces have entered the field of providing media content in foreign languages.

The number of provinces offering Chinese content targeted at overseas Chinese is larger, with coastal provinces again ahead of most others. Jiangsu’s 江苏 international channel was launched in October 2004,⁸⁵ and Fujian’s 福建 international channel Strait Satellite TV (*Haixia weishi* 海峡卫视) was started in January 2005.⁸⁶ Shandong 山东 has also had an international channel broadcasting in Chinese called Taishan TV (*Taishan dianshitai* 泰山电视台) since August 2005. Sichuan’s 四川 international channel started broadcasting in

⁸⁰ Cf. Guo Ke 郭可, *Dangdai duiwai chuanbo* 当代对外传播 [Contemporary external communication] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2003), 49.

⁸¹ “About us,” <http://www.icshanghai.com/en/ad/ics/2012-04-01/92.html>, accessed January 16, 2013.

⁸² “Guangdong TV America,” http://www.wcetvdigital.com/Ch31_4/Intro_1e.asp, accessed January 16, 2013.

⁸³ The article reporting on the launching of the channel states that English programs make up the majority and Chinese programs only supplement them (*Yingyu wei zhu, Hanyu wei fu* 英语为主, 汉语为辅). “Guangdong dianshitai guoji pindao kaibo” 广东电视台国际频道开播 [Launching of Guangdong Television International channel], May 16, 2011, <http://nc.gdtv.cn/2011/0516/7484.shtml>, accessed January 16, 2013. However, while the channel clearly has English programs, such as English news and a program called Facetime interviewing foreigners living in China, Chinese programs appear to make up the majority. Cf. Michael Michelini, “Trip to Guangzhou, TV Interview on GDTV Facetime,” March 16, 2012, <http://blog.michaelmichelini.com/2012/03/guangzhou-facetime-interview.html>, accessed January 16, 2013; “Consul General Guangzhou Interview by Face Time, GDTV World Channel,” May 8, 2012, <http://guangzhou.nlconsulate.org/news/2012/05/consul-general-guangzhou-interview-by-face-time-gdtv-world-channel.html>, accessed January 16, 2013.

⁸⁴ “Guangdian zongju pifu tongyi Yunnan guangbo dianshitai kaiban guoji pindao” 广电总局批复同意云南广播电视台开办国际频道 [SARFT approves the launching of an international channel by Yunnan Radio and Television station], <http://www.ynbtv.gov.cn/%E7%BB%BC%E5%90%88%E4%BF%A1%E6%81%AF/readinfo.aspx?B1=5365>, accessed January 17, 2013.

⁸⁵ “Pindao jieshao” 频道介绍 [Introduction of the channel], <http://www.jstv.com/n/gj/aboutus/>, accessed January 17, 2013.

⁸⁶ “Haixia weishi” 海峡卫视 [Strait Satellite TV], <http://baike.baidu.com/view/853626.htm>, accessed January 17, 2013.

February 2010.⁸⁷ All of these provincial channels first need to be approved by the State Administration for Radio Film and Television (SARFT)⁸⁸ and are usually under the leadership of the respective provincial propaganda department and the respective provincial Administration for Radio, Film and Television, but are part of and operated by larger media conglomerates.⁸⁹

In the mid-1990s, local external propaganda documents still explained that “central external propaganda has the responsibility to engage in the struggle over public opinion in line with China’s overall diplomacy, whereas local external propaganda mainly brings into play any advantages (*youshi* 优势) the locale might have in external propaganda in order to create a favorable external environment for local economic construction and societal development.”⁹⁰ Since then, locales have been increasingly asked to develop an “awareness of the overall situation” (*daju yishi* 大局意识) and to try to create a good name for China as a country rather than only trying to increase their own Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).⁹¹ This is so, first, because the Center wants to create a more diverse picture of China abroad, and in order to do that, it needs to rely on the provinces to contribute their share. Second, as explained above, provinces and locales at lower levels have become more important because of the renewed importance of sudden

⁸⁷“Sichuan guangbo dianshitai guoji pindao zhengshi kaibo” 四川广播电视台国际频道正式开播 [Official launch of the Sichuan TV and radio station international channel]. March 1, 2010, http://www.wccdaily.com.cn/epaper/hxdsb/html/2010-03/01/content_158330.htm, accessed January 17, 2013.

⁸⁸ The SARFT is a ministerial level body under dual leadership of the State Council and the Central Propaganda Department and is in charge of administering and regulating the entire country’s broadcasting industry. Cf. Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in the People’s Republic of China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 17.

⁸⁹ E.g. “Shandong dianshitai guoji pindao (Taishan dianshitai) jianjie” 山东电视台国际频道（泰山电视台）简介 [Brief introduction of the international channel of the Shandong TV station (Taishan TV)], <http://www.iqilu.com/html/haiwai/news/2012/0418/1194863.shtml>, accessed January 16, 2013.

⁹⁰ “Dong Fengji tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di si ci huiyi shang de jiang hua” 董凤基同志在省委对外宣传联席会第四次会议上讲话 [Comrade Dong Fengji’s speech at the fourth meeting of the Joint Council for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], March 12, 1997, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编, vol. 1, 108.

⁹¹ E.g. “Rang shijie liaojie Zhongguo rang Zhongguo liaojie shijie, quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zai Jing juxing” 让世界了解中国 让中国了解世界 全国对外宣传工作会议在京举行 李鹏致信会议 丁关根同与会者座谈 [Let the world understand China; let China understand the world. Nationwide conference for external propaganda work takes place in Beijing; Li Peng sends a letter and Ding Guan’gen holds discussions with participants], *Renmin ribao*, February 21, 1998, 2.

events reporting and the Center itself is relatively helpless in this regard without the support of locales.

Local and sectoral external propaganda offices need to fulfill two requirements, which potentially can cause conflict: First, they need to be in line with and support central policies (or other policies designed at a higher level in the case of sub-provincial *waixuan*), and second, they have to conduct activities in accordance with and serving local/sectoral needs⁹² and are obviously more likely to be guided by their own interest when deciding how to implement policies prescribed by the Center. The latter appears to be quite aware of the principal-agent conflict it faces in the realm of external propaganda. In the past, it frequently urged locales to increase their external propaganda budgets, but also knew that locales felt reluctant to invest in their own publicity, as there was no immediate financial reward for them.⁹³ Articles and documents on external propaganda therefore often stress that the results of external propaganda are long term and not immediately visible, in the hope that this will persuade locales not to give up if they cannot see immediate results.⁹⁴ However, it seems unlikely that in the absence of changes in the actual incentive structure, these appeals will have much effect.

An additional problem, particularly before the Center made external propaganda a high priority, was the fact that external propaganda expenses are paid out of local coffers. External propaganda expenses need to be included in the budget at the same administrative level at which it is organized.⁹⁵ This makes

⁹² Spelled out explicitly for instance in Tuo Jun 虞军 and Ma Qing 马清, “Dui gouzhu difang da waixuan xin geju de ji dian sikao” 对构筑地方打外宣新格局的基点思考 [A few thoughts on establishing a new big external propaganda pattern at the local level], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 9 (2003): 25.

⁹³ See for example Wang Wurong 王武荣, “Shuli xin guannian kaizhan quan fangwei duiwai xuanchuan” 树立新观念 开展全方位对外宣传 [Establish a new concept and engage in all-dimensional external propaganda], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 3 (1996): 38.

⁹⁴ For instance, Huang Zecun writes: “在国外，西方大国大都以很大的投入，加大自己在海外的音量，进而控制世界的舆论。这种投入的回报周期是渐进的，长期的，不可能立竿见影，这是受新闻舆论规律决定的。” Huang Zecun 黄泽存, *Xin shiqi duiwai xuanchuan lungao* 新时期对外宣传论稿 [Preliminary discussions of external propaganda in the new period] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2002), 265.

⁹⁵ “要继续增加对外宣传事业的投入。各地应将外宣事业经费和基础建设投资列入地方财政预算和基建投资计划，并随着经济的发展，使外宣事业经费逐年有所增加，以保证外宣工作正常开展。” and “继续加大对外宣传事业发展的财力支持。市地、县（市、区）外宣事业经费要列入同级财政预算，并根据形势发展的需要逐步有所递增。” Taken from “Shengwei bangongting, Shengzhengfu bangongting zhuanfa shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi, shengzhengfu xinwen bangongshi ‘Guanyu jin yi bu jiaqiang xin xingshi xia

sense: If the local party committees and governments are the only ones that can issue binding orders to local external propaganda structures, it is unlikely that these activities would be funded by the Center.

One example from Shandong shows that locales did plan how to make external propaganda pay for itself and thus make the sector less dependent on local budgets that were usually already strained to begin with. For instance, Shandong considered (and presumably implemented) hard numeric requirements which materials people sent abroad on an official function (*gongpai chuguo* 公派出国) were required to buy and distribute abroad. Likewise, hotels housing foreigners were asked to increase the cost of their rooms so that they could put aside extra funds for external propaganda material.⁹⁶

The problem with external propaganda is how to measure “success” or simply fulfillment of requirements. The existing infrastructure of domestic propaganda work, on the one hand, makes it possible to set up structures quickly and, on the other hand, very difficult to ensure that these are not just superficial measures involved in ineffective activities that borrow too much from the domestic propaganda apparatus's way of operating. The Center has the possibility to request certain measures to be adopted, but it has few options to measure success qualitatively. Instead, it receives success reports from lower levels that measures have been successfully implemented. There has been a clear quantitative bias in the overall Chinese bureaucracy because numerical targets and quotas can be measured and are therefore used excessively to evaluate cadres' success or failure and consequently decide on promotion or demotion.⁹⁷ Obviously, sheer numbers of publications or activities, although used by locales in their reports to the center, are not a reliable indicator for successful external propaganda. They do

duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian' de tongzhi,” *Lubanfa* 鲁办发 [1994] no. 7, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编 (1992-1998) [Document collection on Shandong Province's external propaganda work (1992-1998)], eds. Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People's Government of Shandong Province], 17.

⁹⁶ “Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di san ci huiyi jiyao” 省委对外宣传联席会第三次会议纪要, October 11, 1995, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)*, vol. 1, 87.

⁹⁷ Cf. Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, “Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China,” *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 2 (January 1999): 172-173.

not say anything about the quality or about how foreigners received particular products. Thus, as in all other sectors, locales are incentivized to stress quantity over quality in external propaganda work even when quality is clearly more important. The problem of how to reliably measure the success of propaganda does not only affect China and is vividly debated in the literature on the popular concept of “soft power.”⁹⁸ For a country such as China, whose bias towards numeric targets is particularly strong and which only started very recently to combat this problem, this is a particularly tough challenge.

Channels for Coordination

Despite the fact that it cannot issue binding orders, OEP/SCIO works closely with its provincial and (less importantly) its departmental equivalents. Liaison work with external propaganda bureaus of lower ranks both within central departments and within provincial party committees is done by OEP’s Secretariat (*Mishuju* 秘书局).⁹⁹ In addition, there are a number of other channels that are used:

First, there are print publications to exchange experience and keep locales and individual departments up to date on the latest long-term developments and possible ways how to go about implementing policy. The most important is *External Propaganda Newsletter* (*Duiwai xuanchuan tongxun* 对外宣传通讯), the organ or mouthpiece (*jiguan kanwu* 机关刊物) of the Central Office of External Propaganda.¹⁰⁰ OEP/SCIO also publishes the internal journal *Cases of External Propaganda Work* (*Waixuan gongzuo anli* 外宣工作案例), whose purpose is to circulate the work experience of individual units, locales or

⁹⁸ Although many people believe it is ultimately impossible to measure how propaganda initiatives translate into real “soft power.”

⁹⁹ “Jigou shezhi.”

¹⁰⁰ The journal is mentioned in Han Licheng 韩立成, “Shenru xuexi shiwu da jingshen buduan tigao waixuan gongzuo shuiping” 深入学习十五大精神 不断提高外宣工作水平 [Study the spirit of the 15th Party Congress in-depth in order to continuously raise the level of external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 12 (1997): 3. Notes put online by sub-central party committees show that the journal continues to be published. E.g. <http://www.hfweb.cn/Search.asp?Field=Keywords&Keyword=%BB%A5%C1%AA%CD%F8> (accessed December 17, 2011) mentions an article placed in issue 4, 2011 of *Duiwai xuanchuan tongxun*. Often, locales release lists of articles they managed to place in central (or, in case of sub-provincial committees, provincial) level journals.

particular projects nationwide.¹⁰¹ Since the 1980s, provinces have also published their own journals on external propaganda in which directives or slogans from the Center are reprinted.¹⁰²

Second, there are regular meetings to “exchange experience” (*jiaoliu jingyan* 交流经验), discuss work and give the provinces direction and guidance for the focus of the work to be done in the next year.¹⁰³ While before 1994, external propaganda conferences at the national level only occurred at irregular intervals, they have since become an established practice with one conference taking place usually at the beginning of each year.¹⁰⁴ These are attended by cadres from external propaganda offices at the ministerial and provincial level who then, in turn, brief their own subordinates through conferences at the provincial level.¹⁰⁵ For the conference, OEP/SCIO usually prepares an “Opinion” outlining the tasks for the coming year that is then “discussed.”¹⁰⁶ The sessions are also used to study important policy documents and speeches and deliver reports on local and sectoral work.¹⁰⁷ In addition to the annual nationwide conference, OEP/SCIO organizes a number of conferences or seminars for external propaganda cadres (*waixuan*

¹⁰¹ Cf. “Shanghai ribao wangzhan zou xiang shijie de shijian yu qishi” 上海日报网站走向世界的实践与启示 [Practice and implications of the website of the Shanghai Daily going towards the world], Website of the Shanghai Newspapers Association. September 28, 2009, <http://www.shsby.com/shbyxh/node7/userobject1ai222.html>, accessed January 31, 2013.

¹⁰² For instance, in 1986, Hunan province launched its own *External Propaganda Newsletter* (*Duiwai xuanchuan tongxun* 对外宣传通讯), later renamed *Hunan External Propaganda* (*Hunan waixuan* 湖南外宣). See Hunansheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 湖南省地方志编纂委员会编 [Local chronicle compilation committee of Hunan province], ed., *Hunan Sheng Zhi: Minsu zhi* 湖南省志: 民俗志 [Hunan provincial chronicles: Folk customs] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2005), 309.

¹⁰³ Whenever a new five-year-plan (now called guideline) starts, these conferences usually give an outlook on the plans for this longer period.

¹⁰⁴ There have been some exceptions to this rule. For instance, in 2005, the first conference took place in July, with a second conference planning the work for 2006 in December.

¹⁰⁵ See Shandong shengwei duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi 山东省委对外宣传办公室 [Office of External Propaganda of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee] and Shandongsheng renmin zhengfu xinwen bangongshi 山东人民政府新闻办公室 [Information Office of the People’s Government of Shandong Province], eds., *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian (1992-1998)* 山东省人民政府新闻办公室, eds. 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编 (1992-1998) [Document collection on Shandong Province’s external propaganda work (1992-1998)] 2 vols. (Jinan: Shandong youyi chubanshe, 1999).

¹⁰⁶ See for example Benkan jizhe 本刊记者, “Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zai Jing juxing” 全国对外宣传工作会议在京举行 [Nationwide conference on external propaganda takes place in Beijing], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 3 (2000): 30-31.

¹⁰⁷ For instance, in 2000, cadres from the MFA and the TAO did special reports, and Xinhua, the *Guangming ribao*, the *China Daily*, CRI, the offices of external propaganda from Beijing, Shanghai, Shandong and Yunnan as well as China’s embassy in France introduced some of their external propaganda work. Cf. Benkan jizhe, “Quanguo duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi zai Jing juxing,” 30-31.

ganbu huiyi 外宣干部会议).¹⁰⁸ Moreover, it holds more specific conferences, such as the National Conference on the Coordination of External Propaganda Work of Municipalities (*Quanguo chengshi waixuan gongzuo xiezuohuiyi* 全国城市外宣工作协作会议),¹⁰⁹ regional conferences,¹¹⁰ conferences on external propaganda theory, etc. These conferences do not necessarily have to take place on Chinese soil; for example in 1995, OEP/SCIO convened a conference in New York City to discuss its external propaganda plans for North America.¹¹¹ Finally, just like the PBSC or the Politburo does for OEP/SCIO, cadres from OEP/SCIO also take work reports from (*tingqu huibao* 听取汇报) and inspect (*kaocha* 考察)¹¹² individual provincial external propaganda offices. In these cases, they will usually give some instructions, guidance, or assurances.

Because of the relationship between different units that usually does not allow for direct orders, departments and units make contracts and agreements for cooperation with one another. This is often done by the Central external propaganda media or units directly, both for concrete projects and for overall cooperation frameworks (*kuangjia* 框架).¹¹³ The idea itself is not new: In the 1990s, China Radio International (CRI) had a Chinese-language program called “Window on China” (*Zhongguo zhi chuang* 中国之窗), to which the radio

¹⁰⁸ Cf. “Guowuyuan xinwenban zhuren Zhao Qizheng tan difang waixuan gongzuo,” 1.

¹⁰⁹ “Quanguo chengshi waixuan hui re yi Jinzhou shiboyuan” 全国城市外宣会热议锦州世博园 [Nationwide external propaganda conference for municipalities heatedly debates Jinzhou’s World Expo Garden], September 5, 2012, http://www.ln.gov.cn/zfxx/qsgd/yks_1/zh/201209/t20120905_942341.html, accessed September 7, 2012.

¹¹⁰ Such as external propaganda conferences for all provinces of the Northeast, etc.

¹¹¹ Cf. Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 107.

¹¹² See for example “Wang Chen kaocha Chongqing waixuan gongzuo” 王晨考察重庆外宣工作 [Wang Chen inspects Chongqing’s external propaganda work], Website of *Chongqing morning news*, December 7, 2011, <http://www.cqcb.com/cbnews/cqnews/2011-12-07/483472.html>, accessed February 28, 2013; “Zhongyang waixuanban zhuren Wang Chen diaoyan Xizang waixuan gongzuo” 中央外宣办主任王晨调研西藏外宣工作 [Director of OEP Wang Chen inspects Tibet’s external propaganda work], Website of OEP/SCIO, July 27, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/tt/tp/201207/t1195095.htm>, accessed March 1, 2013.

¹¹³ “Zhongguo ribao she yu Zhonggong Hainan shengwei xuanchuanbu qianshu guoji chuanbo zhanlue hezuo kuangjia xieyi” 中国日报社与中共海南省委宣传部签署国际传播战略合作框架协议 [China Daily signs strategic cooperation framework agreement on international communication with CPC Hainan Provincial Committee Propaganda Department], *China Daily Online*, October 25, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/2012-10/25/content_15847279.htm, accessed January 12, 2013.

stations of different provinces contributed content.¹¹⁴ While such agreements have been ongoing since the 1990s, they have been accelerated since 2008 and 2009, when the Party Center pledged its resolve to increase China's "international communication abilities" (*guoji chuanbo nengli* 国际传播能力), which will be discussed in Chapter 9. The *China Daily* recently signed multiple cooperation agreements with provincial propaganda departments or external propaganda offices.¹¹⁵ The Foreign Languages Office¹¹⁶ and *Zhongxinshe* 中新社¹¹⁷ have also signed cooperation agreements with locales. Contracts and partnership agreements also play a role in horizontal coordination between units and departments of lower rank at the central level. In October 2012, the FLO signed a strategic partnership and framework agreement with Qinghua University for research on external communication.¹¹⁸

This section has analyzed the channels of command and communication between OEP/SCIO and the Central Committee of the CPC as well as its local equivalents. While the Central Committee can obviously exercise relatively tight control over OEP/SCIO, the same cannot be said for OEP/SCIO's relationship with external propaganda offices at the provincial level, as OEP/SCIO cannot issue binding orders to them. There are a number of mechanisms to coordinate

¹¹⁴ Cf. Hu Jiangyin 胡江银, "Yanshen xiezuo wangluo banhao waixuan zhuan" 延伸协作网络办好外宣专题 [Extend the network for cooperation to successfully do external propaganda on specific topics], *Shengbing shijie* 声屏世界 [Parallel English title: Voice and Screen World] no. 5, 1999, 10. Jiangxi contributed programs since the very beginning in May 1995 (ibid). The program was launched in 1995 (Cf. "Zhongguo zhi chuang jushou Lanzhou gongmou waixuan pinpai fazhan (shipin)" 《中国之窗》聚首兰州 共谋外宣品牌发展(视频) [Window on China meets in Lanzhou to make plans for creating an external propaganda brand (video)], August 28, 2012, <http://gb.cri.cn/27824/2012/08/28/5951s3827413.htm>, accessed October 7, 2012).

¹¹⁵ See for example "Zhongguo ribao she yu Zhonggong Hainan shengwei xuanchuanbu qianshu guoji chuanbo zhanlue hezuo kuangjia xieyi." This particular agreement included plans for a monthly Hainan edition of *China Daily* (《中国日报·海南月刊》).

¹¹⁶ E.g. "Wo ju yu Zhongguo zuojia chuban jituan dashu zhanlue hezuo xieyi" 我局与中国作家出版集团签署战略合作协议 [Our department signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the China Writers Publishing Group], May 22, 2012, http://www.cipg.org.cn/ywdt/gzxw/tpxw/201205/t20120522_42952.html, accessed January 12, 2013.

¹¹⁷ See "Yunnan shengwei waixuanban yu Zhongguo xinwenshe dashu zhanlue hezuo xieyi" 云南省委外宣办与中国新闻社签署战略合作协议 [Yunnan Provincial Party propaganda office signs a strategic cooperation agreement with the China News Agency], *China Daily Online*, November 27, 2012, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/dfpd/yn/bwzg/2012-11/27/content_15963762.htm, accessed January 12, 2013.

¹¹⁸ Tan Zhen 谭震, "Zhongguo waiwenju yu Qinghua daxue jiecheng 'Duiwai chuanbo yanjiu zhanlue hezuo huoban' guanxi" 中国外文局与清华大学结成“对外传播研究战略合作伙伴关系” [FLPO forms "external communication research strategic partner relationship" with Qinghua University], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 11 (2012): 34.

work between the Center and locales as well as departments, but also some financial conflicts of interest which are difficult for OEP/SCIO to resolve on its own. Thus, the external propaganda sector is prone to be affected by the principal-agent conflict. The problem of units of equal rank having to cooperate with one another across different vertical and horizontal lines of division is now solved through the signing of contracts and framework agreements.¹¹⁹

8.3 Horizontal Coordination: The EPWLSG and Division of Work

From the Mao period, and in some cases dating back even further, China's external propaganda apparatus has inherited a field of work that is located in between propaganda work and foreign affairs work and in which a large number of different departments are responsible for different areas of work: There are distinctions between news targeted at ethnic Chinese and news aimed at other foreigners, between international and domestic news, and between anything considered press and print work as opposed to radio and television, to list only a few examples. Thus, because of what is known in China as "management by gateway and division of work according to specialized sector" (*guikou guanli, fengong fuze* 归口管理, 分工负责), even at the same administrative level, there is a large number of other units that external propaganda offices at all levels need to cooperate with on equal terms.

While the idea that different departments are responsible for different aspects of external propaganda work is in line with the "big external propaganda pattern," there are problems that the current reform wave is supposed to address: First, these units need to coordinate their work, second, they need to be able to resolve conflicts of interest, and third, units whose primary concern is not external propaganda need to ensure they pay enough attention to external propaganda work. Since 2004, China has been handling this problem of cooperation between different units of largely equal rank the way it usually does: through a (leading) small group. Below, I will briefly illustrate the problems of the sector that needed to be solved and in many cases still continue to exist.

¹¹⁹ As the overwhelming number of agreements has only been made recently, whether or not this is an effective way to coordinate work remains to be seen.

Division of Work

First, the division of work is relatively complex and, like during the Mao period, involves a very large number of units. One example from Shandong during the 1990s illustrates how work is, ideally, divided in their province: The provincial **External Propaganda Office/Information Office** is responsible for “comprehensive” (*zonghexing fangmian* 综合性方面)¹²⁰ external propaganda and anything related to news work (*xinwen fangmian* 新闻方面).¹²¹ This includes the organization of news conferences, except the ones regarding diplomacy and international events, which are organized by the provincial Foreign Affairs Office (FAO). The **FAO** is in charge of any external propaganda regarding foreign affairs, including anything about foreign affairs and propaganda targeted at foreign experts and exchange students based in Shandong. Developing, building and propagating the most important tourist destinations/scenic spots (*canguandian* 参观点) is also up to the FAO in cooperation with other relevant units.¹²² Any external propaganda related to the economy and trade is the responsibility of the provincial **Economic and Trade Commission** (*Jingmaowei* 经贸委). This includes propaganda targeted at businesses and the most important clients stationed in Shandong and organizing propaganda to be carried out by Shandong businesses and businesspeople overseas.¹²³ All external propaganda work related

¹²⁰ Comprehensive work includes implementing work and development guidelines and plans, researching and identifying issues concerning the entire province, important activities involving the outside world and opinions as well as statement for external propaganda in case of sudden events, all in coordination with the provincial FAO and other departments getting in contact with the outside world. It also includes the organization and production of important external propaganda materials, organizing and overseeing the production and distribution of *waixuan* products, and concretely organizing, promoting and coordinating the external propaganda work of provincial news and cultural departments and departments whose work involves the outside world. Cf. ““Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo shixing guikou guanli, fengong fuze zhidu de yijian” 关于对外宣工作实行归口管理、分工负责制度的意见 [Opinion on implementing the system of management according to gateway and division of labor in external propaganda work], Tingzi 厅字 [1993] 22 hao 号 [Note from the General Office of the Shandong Provincial party Committee [1993] no. 22], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 5.

¹²¹ With regard to news work, it is in charge of coordinating and hosting foreign journalists stationed in Beijing, foreign experts, foreign TV hosts, and journalists coming to Shandong to do interviews. It also manages news and propaganda when Shandong has any major economic activity and organizes any major articles published outside the mainland (*jingwai* 境外) by Shandong. When big events (*jiqing huodong* 节庆活动) occur in Shandong, it comes up with slogans and organizes journalists. “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo shixing guikou guanli, fengong fuze zhidu de yijian,” 5.

¹²² “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo shixing guikou guanli, fengong fuze zhidu de yijian,” 5.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

to overseas Chinese is done by the provincial **Overseas Chinese Affairs Office**, tourism related waixuan is the responsibility of the provincial **Tourism Bureau**, and anything related to culture is handled by the provincial **Department of Culture** (*Wenhuating* 文化厅). Audio or audio-visual external propaganda products, joint film productions with foreigners, and the exchange of radio and TV programs are the responsibility of the provincial Department of Radio and Television. Matters related to education and science and technology are the responsibility of the two respective **commissions for education and science and technology**.¹²⁴ Advertizing targeting foreigners is handled jointly by the External Propaganda Office, the provincial Council for Trade Promotion, and the Shandong International Trade Exhibition Company. Propaganda targeted at Taiwanese is handled by the provincial Taiwan Affairs Office.¹²⁵

Despite the careful outlining of different responsibilities under the *guikou guanli* system, there is naturally some overlap, which means redundancy and wasted resources. More critically, the work of different units might be in contradiction as different departments and units have different primary interests to pursue. This leads to the second problem.

External Propaganda between Two Established Sectors of Work

The involvement of so many different sectors means that a number of different bureaucracies that have traditionally been handled separately need to work together. Although departments from all kinds of fields are involved under the system of “sectoral management,” the two most important systems that external propaganda is a part of are Propaganda and Thought Work and Foreign Affairs Work, each of which is headed by a LSG at the very top. The programmatic statement that external propaganda forms an important part of both propaganda work *and* foreign affairs work continues to be stressed in speeches by China’s leaders until today. Before the creation of the EPWLSG, this meant that macro policy making was spread out primarily across two different systems (*xitong* 系统) formally handled separately in the policy process despite some

¹²⁴ “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo shixing guikou guanli, fengong fuze zhidu de yijian,” 6.

¹²⁵ The text adds, as usual, that strictly speaking, targeting Taiwanese is not external propaganda, but the two fields are closely linked “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo shixing guikou guanli, fengong fuze zhidu de yijian,” 7.

overlap in departments and individuals involved at the very top: the foreign affairs system and the propaganda system.

At the top of the foreign affairs bureaucracy is the PBSC member in charge of foreign affairs, who heads the Foreign Affairs LSG. Since 1998, this position has been held, *ex officio*, by the chairman of the CPC.¹²⁶ The predecessor of the LSG on Foreign Affairs was one of the five initial small groups first officially established in 1958 as part of the aim to strengthen party supervision over the state. Disbanded during most of the Cultural Revolution, the LSG was re-established in spring 1981.¹²⁷ Under Jiang Zemin 江泽民 in 2000 it was decided that it would be merged with the newly created LSG on State Security in a “one organization with two nameplates” arrangement (*yi ge jigou liang kuai paizi* 一个机构两块牌子).¹²⁸ Units represented in the LSG are the Ministry of Defense, the Central Military Commission, the Ministry of Public Security, the Central Foreign Affairs Office, the International Liaison Department, OEP/SCIO, the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of Commerce, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).¹²⁹ The Executive Office of the LSG is the Central Foreign Affairs Office created in 1998.

At the top of the propaganda *xitong* 系统¹³⁰ is a member of the PBSC responsible for overseeing all propaganda and thought work.¹³¹ This person is currently Liu Yunshan 刘云山,¹³² who heads the Central LSG for Propaganda and Thought Work, the highest organization in the propaganda system, (re-) established as part of the bureaucratic streamlining of 1988.¹³³ Unlike his

¹²⁶ At the time of its re-establishment, it was led by Vice-President Li Xiannian 李先念. In March 1988, the position was handed over to Premier Li Peng 李鹏. According to Miller, Jiang Zemin already headed the LSG in 1993 (Cf. Alice Miller, “The CCP Central Committee’s Leading Small Groups.” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 26, 2008, 1-21. Available online at <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/CLM26AM.pdf>, accessed August 12, 2012, 9.

¹²⁷ Cf. Miller, “The CCP Central Committee’s Leading Small Groups,” 9.

¹²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 10. Miller’s info is based on Junzheng shequ, the military BBS mentioned above.

¹²⁹ Cf. “Zhongyang lingdao xiaozu” 中央领导小组 [Central leading small groups], December 15, 2011, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4ac8a6ac0102dwkx.html, accessed October 22, 2012.

¹³⁰ A *xitong*, usually translated as “system,” refers to a “grouping of functionally related bureaucracies.” Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1995), 193.

¹³¹ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 9.

¹³² Liu Yunshan is ranked fifth in the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), which since the leadership transition in fall 2012 has had only seven members (instead of previously nine).

¹³³ Cf. *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 230.

predecessor, Li Changchun 李长春, who had no previous experience in propaganda work, Liu Yunshan headed the CPD before ascending to the PBSC. The task of the LSG for Propaganda and Thought Work is to devise the general direction of propaganda work and act as a coordinating body at the top level.¹³⁴ The LSG's operating agency (*banshi jigou* 办事机构¹³⁵) is its office (*bangongshi* 办公室), which is stationed within the CPD.¹³⁶

The fact that external propaganda is stretched out between two well-defined sectors entails two main problems: First, the interests of these two sectors may be in conflict. Second, external propaganda is not the main priority in either sector. This leads to the third problem: External propaganda continues to be subordinated to domestic propaganda work.

¹³⁴ Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 10. The official task of LSG is to propose certain courses of action in their specific field to the PBSC, which has final decision making power, although recommendations are rarely refused (cf. Shaw Chong-hai 邵宗海, "Zhonggong zhongyang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu zuzhi dingwei" 中共中央工作领导小组组织定位 [The organization and position of leading small groups of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China], website of National Chengchi University, www3.nccu.edu.tw/~chshaw/clg_staus.doc, accessed April 18, 2010, 4). Due to their sensitive nature, very little information is openly available about the work of Leading Small Groups. Much about what Shaw knows about the role of LSG, he found out through personal interviews with higher rank cadres. However, the people he interviewed did not give him a unanimous precise definition of what LSG do. Also see Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups."

¹³⁵ In late 1987, organs of the Central Committee were reorganized into three different categories: decision-making consulting bodies (*juece zixun jigou* 决策咨询机构), executive bodies (*banshi jigou* 办事机构), and service institutions (*shiye jigou* 事业机构). Lu Ning, "The Central Leadership, Supraministry Coordinating Bodies, State Council Ministries, and Party Departments," in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Reform Era*, ed. David Lampton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 46.

¹³⁶ "Zhongyang xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu (bangongshi) jigou shezhi" 中央宣传思想工作领导小组（办公室）机构设置 [Institutional set-up of the (Office of the) Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group], January 20, 2010. <http://hi.baidu.com/xztlsty/blog/item/c1afdd00a0aaa21a728b65ed.html>, accessed March 13, 2010. Link no longer valid; page on file with author. Also see "Zhongyang xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu" 中央宣传思想工作领导小组 [The Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group], http://www.ourzg.com/bbs/htm_data/49/0804/18759.html, accessed July 25, 2010. Link no longer valid; page on file with author. Junzheng zaixian (<http://www.ourzg.com>) is a website based in Jiangsu that is specifically dedicated to analyzing military structures. The website does not give any information on its affiliation with any government or military unit, but the structure of the website and the sites it links to indicate a close co-operation. It has a bulletin board, in which users collect and discuss information (history, leadership, internal structure, etc.) on Party, State, and Military bodies. Although the reliability of the information cannot be guaranteed, where comparison with official sources is possible, these BBS entries usually display a surprising degree of accuracy. In this case, while the information cannot be corroborated independently, other (leading) small groups also have executive offices stationed in ministries and departments.

The Relationship between OEP and CPD

The administrative body of the Central Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group (PTWLSG) and the most important organization in the propaganda system is the CPD, which has been headed by Politburo member and former Party secretary of Sichuan, Liu Qibao 刘奇葆, since the 18th Party Congress in fall 2012.¹³⁷ Liu Qibao presumably also replaced Liu Yunshan as head of the EPWLSG. The central propaganda department is a leading department (*lingdao bumen*), meaning, among other things, that it can directly circulate documents (called *Zhongxuanfa* 中宣发) without having to go through the Central Committee. Much of its history has been covered in chapter three of Brady's *Marketing Dictatorship*. What is important to note here is that its powers have been significantly upgraded since the post-Mao period and especially since 1992, when for the first time the head of CPD was listed before the head of the Organization Department on the Central *nomenklatura*.¹³⁸ The Propaganda Department is replicated at all levels, both within the horizontal (*kuai* 块) and the vertical (*tiao* 条) grid, as all party committees have their own propaganda departments, which are led professionally by CPD (*zai yewu shang gui kou guanli* 在业务上归口管理).¹³⁹

The exact relation between the CPD and the OEP is not publically available, although the special status of CPD compared to “lesser” departments such as OEP is confirmed in various places.¹⁴⁰ A graphic in Brady's *Marketing Dictatorship* implies that the two are in a guiding-guided relationship (rather than one of actual leadership).¹⁴¹ However, while links might have varied over the course of the history of OEP/SCIO, it is most likely *led* by CPD today. A good indicator for the relationship is, first, the official CPC position on how much to

¹³⁷“Liu Qibao tongzhi jianli” 刘奇葆同志简历 [Vita of comrade Liu Qibao], *People's Daily Online*, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64242/6835171.html>, accessed February 10, 2013.

¹³⁸ Cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 23.

¹³⁹ Yongnian Zheng and Liang Fook Lye, “Re-making the Party's Image: Challenges for the Propaganda Department,” in *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*, eds. John Wong and Hongyi Lai (Singapore: World Scientific, 2006), 128.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. in Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华. *Duiwai baodao celiue yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and skills of external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 45

¹⁴¹ See Figure 2.1 China's Domestic Propaganda System in Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 11.

distinguish between propaganda targeting Chinese and propaganda targeting foreigners and, second, the director of OEP/SCIO and his connections to CPD.

The slogan that has been used to describe the Chinese policy of distinguishing between Chinese and foreign target audiences is *nei wai you bie* 内外有别 – literally “differentiate between inside and outside.” While this continues to apply to the micro-level (specific formulations, angle of reporting, etc.), it no longer applies at the macro-level, that is, China cannot tell different target audiences different facts or try to keep reports that are generally publically available away from one particular target audience.

The idea that in the current media environment, Chinese and foreign target audiences could no longer be clearly distinguished established itself in two steps, ironically beginning at the same time that the slogan *nei wai you bie* was first included in the official external propaganda policy in the mid-1990s.¹⁴² The first step was that people working for local media primarily intended for domestic consumption were asked to develop a “consciousness” or “awareness” for external propaganda (*waixuan yishi* 外宣意识) and the fact that their work could also be read by foreigners.¹⁴³ The immediate background was the increased number of foreigners in China and the decreasing capacity to restrict their movement and their purchases. In 1995, for example, Zeng Jianhui, then director of the OEP, emphasized that domestic propaganda also had an impact abroad under the opening policies as journalists stationed in China could read them, and many publications were also distributed abroad.¹⁴⁴ As the number of Chinese

¹⁴² It was first listed as one of the ten principles of external propaganda work in a report delivered by external propaganda leaders to the Politburo Standing Committee

¹⁴³ E.g. Xi Jinghua 席静华, “Duinei baodao ye ying qianghua waixuan yishi” 对内报道也应强化外宣意识 [Domestic reporting also needs to strengthen its external propaganda consciousness], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 8 (2002): 15-16.

¹⁴⁴ Zeng, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 1, 111. The change also showed up at the provincial level. At the meeting of the Shandong Joint Committee for External Propaganda in February 1995, shortly after the national conference, the head of the Shandong OEP first raised the notion (presumably picked up in Beijing in January) that with the continuous progress of means of communication, domestic propaganda and external propaganda could not be clearly separated any longer. By contrast, a meeting in March 1994 had still stressed the need to distinguish between Chinese and foreigners when reporting, and especially the need to keep certain details from foreigners or at least not to hype them. “Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di er ci huiyi jiyao” 省委对外宣传联席会第二次会议纪要 [Minutes of the second meeting of the Joint Committee for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], February 13, 1995, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 84. “Han Xikai tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di yi ci huiyishang de jianghua” 韩喜凯同志在省委对外宣传联席会第一次会议上的讲话 [Comrade Han Xikai’s speech at the first

newspapers and journals with online presences increased, so did the necessity to remind media that they also had a foreign audience. The campaign to remind local media that foreigners read Chinese media grew stronger in the early 21st century, as more and more local media went online.¹⁴⁵

The second step, which was never explained in as much detail in openly available material or material at a low classification range was the awareness that things published in media primarily targeting foreigners could have an impact among the Chinese public. The clear verdict in favor of closer coordination is relatively recent. At the 17th Party Congress in October 2007, Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 stressed the need to “coordinate the domestic and the international situation” (*tongchou guonei guoji liang ge daju* 统筹国内国际两个大局).¹⁴⁶ In 2008 and 2009, a few local Party committees highlighted the need for external propaganda to have “domestic propaganda awareness” (*neixuan yishi* 内宣意识).¹⁴⁷ The wording in both articles of this particular point is identical whereas the rest of the articles differ, indicating that the formulation is from an internal central document

meeting of the Joint Council for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], March 24, 1994, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 67.

¹⁴⁵ For instance, one article identified four areas in domestic reporting –usually in local media– that had negative repercussions for China’s image abroad. First, maps or formulations were in conflict with core Chinese policies. For instance, some maps used in local media did not include the Diaoyutai or even Taiwan, or members of the WTO were referred to as “member countries” (inacceptable because Taiwan is a member). Second, media reported sensitive stories that were not suitable for public reporting even within China and that could be used against China by the international anti-China forces now that most material published in China could also be accessed abroad. The example given to illustrate this point was the report in the online edition of a local paper on the execution of a 19-year-old female drug dealer, including the detail that someone wanted to buy her organs after the execution. Third, local media should not report anything that could hurt China’s relations with other countries. For instance, one paper had carried a photo of a soccer game between Iraq and Iran with the caption “Iran-Iraq War” (*liang Yi zhanzheng* 两伊战争). This was insensitive and could potentially hurt China’s relations with the two countries. Fourth, there were cultural differences between East and West that needed to be taken into account. For instance, Chinese media should avoid the topic of eating dogs. The article also lists the example of a report on a teacher who, in order to be able to work undisturbed, locked her 5-year-old daughter in at home, where the girl had to starve. While in China this kind of dedication to one’s work moved people, in the West the mother would have been arrested for child neglect, the article stated. Cf. Xi Jinghua, “Duinei baodao ye ying qianghua waixuan yishi,” 15-16.

¹⁴⁶ See “Tongchou guonei guoji liang ge daju” 统筹国内国际两个大局 [Coordinate the overall situation in China and abroad], *People’s Daily Online*, November 14, 2007, <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/49150/49152/6528753.html>, accessed March 3, 2013.

¹⁴⁷ “Guanyu Jinkouhe qu waixuan gongzuo de chubu sikao” 关于金口河区外宣工作的初步思考 [Preliminary thoughts on the external propaganda work of Jinkouhe District], June 18, 2008, <http://jkh.leshan.cn/djzc/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=602>, accessed February 10, 2013; “Guanyu Kaiping waixuan gongzuo de sikao” 关于开平外宣工作的思考 [Thoughts on the external propaganda work of Kaiping], July 13, 2009, <http://xuanchuan.kaiping.gov.cn/readme.asp?id=1500>, accessed February 10, 2013.

or speech communicated to lower levels.¹⁴⁸ At the 2009 external propaganda conference, Wang Chen also for the first time added the new slogan to “coordinate the domestic and the international situation.” In July 2011, on the occasion of the 90th birthday of the CPC, he published an article on the Party’s external propaganda work in which he explained the new principle more directly: “When we report domestically, we need to fully consider external public opinion effects, and when we do external reporting, we need to fully consider its influence on domestic social stability.”¹⁴⁹ The need to further improve this coordination was also highlighted as one of external propaganda’s main goals for the twelfth five year period (2011-2015).¹⁵⁰

A look at the leadership situation suggests a period of relative independence of OEP/SCIO between 1998 and 2004 and confirms the recent change towards closer coordination with and dependence on CPD. Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, the first director of the EPSG, worked at CPD and was a member of the PTWLSG (one of the few people who survived the almost complete replacement of personnel in the propaganda system of 1989). When the EPSG was resurrected in 1990, it was explicitly put under the leadership of the PTWLSG.¹⁵¹ Zeng Jianhui, who headed OEP/SCIO between 1992 and 1998, had been engaged in foreign propaganda activities since the early Mao period, when he worked for the International Department of the General Press Administration, the English Department of Beijing Xinhua Radio, and Xinhua’s External Department. Having been deployed primarily in media units, he automatically had a very strong tie to the CPD, whose deputy director he became in 1988. Zhao Qizheng was the first director of OEP/SCIO without any relation to the CPD at all.

¹⁴⁸ The exact wording is 内宣要有外宣意识，搞外宣也要有内宣意识。内宣外宣的宣传内容和形式都是一致的，区别主要体现在宣传对象、侧重点不同上，都应该围绕中心、服务大局。

¹⁴⁹ “Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuangxin jingshen kaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian.”

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu huifu zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu de tongzhi” 中共中央关于恢复中央对外宣传小组的通知 [Notification from the CPC Central Committee on the resurrection of the Central External Propaganda Small Group]. Zhongwei [1990] no. 48, March 19, 1990, reprinted in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)* 党的宣传工作文件选编 (1988-1992) [Selected documents from the Party’s propaganda work (1988-1992)], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 1904.

The trend of independence was clearly reversed in 2004, when CPD director Liu Yunshan became head of the newly created EPWLSG. While this upgraded external propaganda by putting a politburo member in charge, it also tied the sector's work more closely to the CPD. Cai Wu 蔡武, who headed OEP/SCIO between 2005 and March 2008, had made his career in and been deputy director of the International Liaison Department before, but, like Zhao Qizheng, did not have any previous connection to CPD. It was perhaps for this reason that he was transferred to the Ministry of Culture after only a short time in office and replaced by former head of the *People's Daily*, Wang Chen, who was made a deputy director of CPD in the same move. Such an arrangement of concurrent posts usually indicates a leading-led relationship. Thus, whatever the situation may have been in the past, by 2004, OEP entered an arrangement of both supervision of and closer co-operation with CPD. By 2008, under the new policy line to "coordinate the domestic and the international," OEP had been placed under CPD leadership.

The problem of a conceptual or institutional barrier between domestic and international public spheres in the absence of real barriers preventing the flow of information between the two has not only been a concern for China. In the 21st century, the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which bars domestic media from using any content produced for propaganda purposes targeting foreign publics, has become an object of contention in the U.S.¹⁵² In 2011, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and the Broadcasting Board of Governors identified the Act as an obstacle to U.S. public diplomacy. Recently, two U.S. Members of Congress have pushed legislation that would weaken the Smith-Mundt ban on domestic propaganda.¹⁵³ Thus, modernizing the national propaganda apparatus to better suit the needs of the present media and communication environment is not solely a Chinese concern. The difference is

¹⁵² See for example Allen W. Palmer and Edward L. Carter, "The Smith-Mundt Act's Ban on Domestic Propaganda: An Analysis of the Cold War Statute Limiting Access to Public Diplomacy," *Communication Law and Policy* 11, no. 1 (2006): 1-34.

¹⁵³ The bill in question is "The Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012" (H.R. 5736). Cf. "Thornberry and Smith Introduce bill to help counter threats in information age Bill updates Cold-War Era law that hampers diplomatic, military efforts," U.S. Congressman Mac Thornberry, Press Release, Washington, May 15, 2012, <http://thornberry.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=296108>, accessed July 11, 2012. The bill was passed in the House of Representatives. See Michael Kelley, "The NDAA Legalizes the Use of Propaganda on the US Public," May 21, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/nda-legalizes-propaganda-2012-5>, accessed February 7, 2013.

that in China, the strong and well-established domestic propaganda apparatus has historically influenced propaganda targeted at foreigners in ways that have decreased the effectiveness of external propaganda. With the suspension of the principle of “distinguishing between internal and external,” the central domestic propaganda apparatus regains in influence over external propaganda.

The External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group

Before 2004, there was no leadership structure involving all departments in the field and trying to bridge the gap between the PTWLSG and the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG). As pointed out above, in 1993, when the EPSG was transformed into the OEP, it is not unlikely that a small group for policy deliberation remained in the background; however, this was definitely not a *leading* small group and it therefore had limited power. After 2004, this was changed: The external propaganda sector now has its own LSG headed by a member of the Politburo (cf. chapter 7.6).

Virtually nothing is known about how the EPWLSG works and who is represented in it. It is reasonable to assume that it fulfills the same function as other LSG in the system: It is supposed to prevent conflict between different units through coordination at the highest level and acts as *de facto* decision-maker for the PBSC. In terms of concrete routines, it makes sense to look at the work of provincial coordinating bodies in the external propaganda sector. For instance, the external propaganda small group of Shandong used its meetings to hear work reports from units responsible for external propaganda (*waixuan zhuguan bumen* 外宣主管部门), to coordinate work, and to make decisions on important issues that exceeded the authority of the provincial OEP.¹⁵⁴

As opposed to other, more established LSG, for which more or less confirmed lists of members circulate,¹⁵⁵ very little information is available on the EPWLSG. However, there are three points of reference that make it possible to reconstruct the approximate composition of the group: The composition of the two Central EPSGs in 1980 and 1990 respectively, detailed information about the composition of Shandong's equivalent of the Central EPSG, and a few references to the Central EPWLSG after 2004 in high-ranking cadres' biographies.

¹⁵⁴ Huang Zecun, *Xin shiqi duiwai xuanchuan lungao*, 265.

¹⁵⁵ E.g. in Miller, “The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups.”

When the EPSG was first founded in 1980, it consisted of representatives from the CPD, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the International Liaison Department, the Central Investigation Department (a predecessor of the Ministry of State Security), the Taiwan Affairs Leading Small Group, the Ministry of Culture, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, the Hong Kong and Macao Office, Xinhua News Agency, the *People's Daily*, the Broadcasting Bureau,¹⁵⁶ the Foreign Languages Bureau, and the PLA General Political Office's Propaganda Department.¹⁵⁷ The resurrected EPSG in 1990 included cadres from the PTWLSG, the CPD, the EPSG's Executive Office, the MFA, the Ministry of Radio and Television, the *People's Daily*, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, and the Research Office of the State Council.¹⁵⁸ Given that in the meantime, the Propaganda and Thought Work LSG had been founded, it makes sense that the new EPSG had fewer members. The composition of both groups mainly combined institutions from the propaganda bureaucracy and from the extended foreign affairs bureaucracy, including Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese affairs.

However, while these are probably still the core members, it is quite likely that in order to accommodate more units touching on external propaganda under the *guikou guanli* system, the membership in the current LSG is broader. The cadre handbook *Propaganda and Thought Work in the New Period* lists the departments and work fields aside from propaganda and thought work related to external propaganda: Foreign Affairs, Trade, Science and Technology, Education, Culture, Press and Publication, Radio and Television, Tourism, Sports, Overseas Chinese Affairs, etc.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ The Broadcasting Bureau can be seen as the predecessor organization of today's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television covered in detail below. Two years after the founding of the FPSG, the Broadcasting Bureau was merged with the Ministry of Culture.

¹⁵⁷ "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu chengyuan mingdan" 对外宣传小组成员名单 [List of members of the external propaganda small group], in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian: 1951-1992 党的宣传工作会议概况和文献: 1951-1992* [Overview and documents from the Party's propaganda work conferences: 1951-1992], ed. Zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting 中央宣传部办公厅 [General Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 388.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu zhongyan duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu zucheng ren yuan renzhi de tongzhi" 中共中央关于中央对外宣传小组组成人员任职的通知 [Notification on the composition of people serving in the Central External Propaganda Small Group], in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian xuanbian (1988-1992)*, 1919.

¹⁵⁹ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 199.

A similar picture emerges when looking at Shandong's external propaganda arrangement at the highest level. Huang Zecun 黄泽存, deputy director Shandong Province's Propaganda Department and director of Shandong's Office of External Propaganda, states that provincial external propaganda small groups were usually made up of the cadre in the party committee responsible for (*fenguan* 分管) ideology, by the cadre in the government responsible for (*zhuguan* 主管) foreign work (*shewai gongzuo* 涉外工作), and by the leaders of departments that came into contact with foreigners (*shewai bumen* 涉外部门).¹⁶⁰ To provide a better picture of a possible set-up of the *waixuan* small group in the 1990s, I will briefly explain the arrangement implemented in Shandong in 1994. While this information from Shandong is most likely outdated, it comes from a reliable source and gives an approximate idea of an arrangement that is in accordance with the principle of "centralized management and division of work" that has been highlighted as an organizational principle for external propaganda work since the 1990s.

Shandong had an external propaganda small group since 1980 and kept it even when its central equivalent was dissolved in 1988.¹⁶¹ In 1992, in response to Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour, it reshuffled the members of the small group so that afterwards, it consisted of 27 cadres from departments having contact with the outside world (*shewai bumen*), departments from the news and cultural sector (*xinwen wenhua bumen* 新闻文化部门) and departments related to the economy and trade (*jingmao bumen* 经贸部门). Moreover, the small group got its own office, which turned it from a non-standing into a standing body, much like the resurrected EPSG at the central level.¹⁶² In March 1994, "in the spirit of" the national external propaganda conference earlier that year, Shandong furthermore established a Joint Committee for External Propaganda (*Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui* 省委对外宣传联席会), a non-standing body, like a leading small group, led by one of the deputy secretaries of the Shandong provincial committee (Han Xikai 韩喜凯) and created with the intention to improve macro

¹⁶⁰ Huang Zecun, *Xin shiqi duiwai xuanchuan lungao*, 265.

¹⁶¹ Cf. "Dong Fengji tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu huiyi shang de jiang hua," 124-125.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

management, macro decision-making and macro guidance of the sector.¹⁶³ Cadres came from Shandong's Provincial Propaganda Department, the *Dazhong ribao* 大众日报,¹⁶⁴ the province's Office for Radio and TV, its General Administration for Publishing, its Office for Culture, its Foreign Affairs Office, its Commission for Commerce and Trade, its Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, its Taiwan Affairs Office, its Bureau for Tourism, its Commission for Education, its Commission for Science and Technology, its Department of Finance, and Shandong's Office of External Propaganda. Each of these units was asked to name a cadre who would be in charge of external propaganda work and represent the unit in the advisory body.¹⁶⁵ The group met at irregular intervals to hear reports (*tingqu huibao* 听取汇报), do research, update one another on the current state of affairs in each unit, and to make decisions.¹⁶⁶ These meetings also served as a way to brief cadres about the "spirit" of the national-level external propaganda conference and make plans how to translate it into policies in Shandong.¹⁶⁷

Thus, in Shandong, the advisory body on external propaganda (called Joint Committee instead of Small Group) largely also consisted of cadres from the propaganda and foreign affairs bureaucracy, but also organizations from the finance and trade sector and from research and education.

At the time, in the 1990s, the Center was mainly concerned with improving China's image and countering any bad press that China got from foreign media or governments. Thus, using external propaganda to attract foreign investment was mainly done by locales. However, in 2001 China launched the

¹⁶³ "Guanyu yinfa 'Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di yi ci huiyi jiyao' de tongzhi" 关于印发《省委对外宣传联席会第一次会议纪要》的通知 [Notification on issuing the Minutes of the first meeting of the Joint Committee for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 55.

¹⁶⁴ The *Dazhong ribao* 大众日报 is the mouthpiece (*jiguanbao* 机关报) of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee, like the *Renmin ribao* is for the Central Committee.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. "Guanyu queding shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui canjia renyuan de tongzhi" 关于确定省委对外宣传联席会参加人员的通知 [Notification appointing the members of the Joint Committee for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 53.

¹⁶⁶ "Guanyu yinfa 'Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di yi ci huiyi jiyao' de tongzhi," vol. 1, 56.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. "Shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di er ci huiyi jiyao" 省委对外宣传联席会第二次会议纪要 [Minutes of the second meeting of the Joint Committee for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian*, vol. 1, 81.

“Going out” project and has since tried to create recognizable Chinese brands.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, it is quite likely that the Ministry of Commerce is also included in the Central EPWLSG. The same could be said for research and education at the central level, which has grown in importance in China’s presentation of itself abroad through the inclusion of Confucius Institutes in the extended external propaganda package. Nonetheless, the majority of units still come from the propaganda sector and the foreign affairs sector.

In addition, since external propaganda has been declared a matter of national security and social stability, it is very likely that the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of State Security are also represented in the EPWLSG. The bibliographic entry on Yang Huanning 杨焕宁 on Hudong 互动, one of the Chinese equivalents of Wikipedia, states that Yang, who was a vice minister in the Ministry of Public Security at the time and is considered an anti-terrorism expert, became a member of the Central External Propaganda LSG in May 2004.¹⁶⁹ While this information cannot be corroborated through more official sources,¹⁷⁰ Yang is also known for managing security at the Beijing Olympics 2008.

Finally, more recently, the international image of China’s military has also become an issue. For instance, the image of the PLA was discussed at the 2011 Seminar on International Communication organized by the FLO.¹⁷¹ In 2009, a volume published by the PLA Press on how to build a stronger army suggested that the military set up a structure to lead all external propaganda work to provide unified leadership for all the activities that were handled by different

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Theresa Loo and Gary Davies. “Branding China: The Ultimate Challenge in Reputation Management?” *Corporate Reputation review* 9, no. 3 (2006): 199.

¹⁶⁹ “Yang Huanning” 杨焕宁 [Yang Huanning] http://www.hudong.com/wiki/%E6%9D%A8%E7%84%95%E5%AE%81?prd=so_1_doc, accessed September 21, 2012. Simultaneously, he was also a member of Central Xinjiang Work Coordination Small Group and the Central Tibet Work Coordination Small Group. Cf. “Beida xiaoyou Yang Huanning ren gong’anbu changwu fu buzhang, zhuguan aoyun anbao gongzuo” 北大校友杨焕宁任公安部常务副部长, 主管奥运安保工作 [Beida Alumnus Yang Huanning serves as Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Public Security and is in charge of Olympic security work], June 12, 2008, Archive of the Bulletin Board of Peking University. <http://www.gotopku.cn/forum/archiver/?tid-64890.html>, accessed September 21, 2012. Also see “Wo guo fankong zhuanjia Yang Huanning zai ci churen Gong’anbu fubuzhang” 我国反恐专家杨焕宁再次出任公安部副部长 [Chinese anti-terrorism expert Yang Huanning again serves as vice minister of the Ministry of Public Security], *Legal Daily Online*, June 16, 2008, http://www.legaldaily.com.cn/fjdt/content/2008-06/16/content_880180.htm?node=7057, accessed September 21, 2012.

¹⁷⁰ The most official is his vita on *Legal Daily Online*, which is likely based on the Hudong entry. Cf. “Wo guo fankong zhuanjia Yang Huanning zai ci churen Gong’anbu fubuzhang.”

¹⁷¹ Wang Mei, “Shijie xin geju xia de Zhongguo guoji chuanbo,” 26.

organizations within the military at the time. In addition, the PLA should also nominate a leading cadre to join the EPWLSG.¹⁷² Given the recent surge in attention paid to PLA external propaganda work, it is quite likely that this suggestion was actually realized.

Below, I have listed the potential members of the LSG and have indicated their rank and their specific responsibilities.

Organization	Rank	Main Involvement in External Propaganda
CPD	Central Deputy level (2nd highest rank, equivalent to that of a Politburo member)	Overall leadership over the propaganda sector, including external propaganda
OEP/SCIO	Ministerial (<i>zhengbuji</i> 正部级)	See 8.1
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministerial	State-to-state diplomacy; external propaganda and liaison activities through embassies, press release system for all news touching on China's foreign relations and international affairs, control of all international news.
International Liaison Department	Ministerial	Party-to-Party diplomacy
Xinhua	Ministerial	Official state news agency; domestic news releases targeted at foreigners, managed by

¹⁷² Shi Lei 施雷 and Qiang jun zhi lu bianweihui 《强军之路》编委会, eds., *Qiang jun zhi lu: Qinli Zhongguo jundui zhongda gaige yu fazhan* 强军之路: 亲历中国军队重大改革与发展 [The road towards a strong army: A personal experience of major reforms and development of the Chinese army] (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2009), 59.

		its External Department (<i>Duiwaibu</i> 对外部), news releases on international affairs, managed by its International Department (<i>Guojibu</i> 国际部)
<i>People's Daily</i>	Ministerial	Represents the official position of the CPC and the Chinese government
SARFT	Ministerial	Leadership over CCTV and China Radio International
GAPP	Ministerial	Going out project for Chinese books
CCTV	Vice-ministerial (<i>fubuji</i> 副部级)	Has various channels targeting foreigners, managed by the Overseas Center (<i>Haiwai zhongxin</i> 海外中心)
CRI	Vice-ministerial	Foreign language broadcasts
China Daily	Vice-ministerial	English language daily
Ministry of Commerce	Ministerial	“Going out” project for Chinese companies
Central Taiwan Affairs Office ¹⁷³	Ministerial	News and Press Conferences targeted at Taiwan
Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office	Ministerial	Propaganda targeted at Hong Kong and Macao, management of journalists and media from Hong Kong and Macao stationed in China
Overseas Chinese Affairs Office	Ministerial	Propaganda targeted at overseas Chinese, leadership of <i>Zhongxinshe</i> 中新社, liaison work with overseas Chinese news organizations and journalists
Ministry of Culture	Ministerial	The Ministry's External Cultural Liaison Bureau ¹⁷⁴ “guides and manages” foreign

¹⁷³ The Central Taiwan Affairs Office presents itself to the outside world as a government organization (State Council Taiwan Affairs Office), but like OEP/SCIO, it belongs to the Party bureaucracy, not the state.

¹⁷⁴ The successor of the External Cultural Liaison Bureau founded in 1958 and turned into a Commission in 1958 (cf. chapter 3). It was merged into the Ministry of Culture in 1982. See *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui*, ed., *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, A1, 74.

		exchange activities as well as cultural foreign propaganda
Ministry of Education	Ministerial	Confucius Institutes; cooperation and exchange with foreign universities
Ministry of State Security	Ministerial	Participation in strategic plans for how to ensure a favorable international public opinion environment to enhance China's security
Ministry of Public Security	Ministerial	Presumably: Disarming hostile messages that could cause social instability and ensuring that external propaganda messages do not counteract domestic stability
Propaganda Department of the PLA General Political Office	Ministerial	Reporting of military news to foreigners

Table 8.I: Potential Members of the External Propaganda LSG

Despite the creation of the LSG, it is more than likely that not all problems have been solved. While no information about such high level conflicts is publicized, they certainly exist. First, there are numerous conflicts of interest in between these units. The LSG provides a platform to reach a consensus at the policy-making level, but it must be assumed that this is a cumbersome process and cannot eliminate all conflicts, even at the highest level. As policies are implemented at lower levels, problems are exacerbated. Second, while the existence of a leading small group since 2004 has likely strengthened the sector, the External Propaganda LSG is outranked by the PTWLSG and the FALSG, both of which are headed by PBSC members, the latter even by the Party Secretary himself.¹⁷⁵ External propaganda itself is in all likelihood under the leadership of the CPD. Likewise, the examples of members outlined above suggest that cadres representing the interests of the domestic propaganda, foreign affairs and other

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," 9.

sectors may constitute a significant portion, possibly the majority, of members of the External Propaganda LSG. This problem at the highest level also manifests itself at lower levels with the units actually carrying out external propaganda work. This is a particular problem for external propaganda media units, as they receive their funding through super-ordinate media units whose main responsibility is to organize content aimed at Chinese audiences (cf. Chapter 6.6).

To a large degree, the external propaganda sector simply faces the same problems as all other sectors within the Chinese bureaucracy. However, the fact that from the outset it is located between different sectors instead of being one of the more established bureaucracies appears to exacerbate the problems.

8.4 “Multiple Players Singing the Same Tune”

The limits that the issue of stake puts on the credibility of governments, parties, and interest group means that they are in constant need of more credible entities and individuals to speak on their behalf and fulfill certain functions that are difficult for governments to fulfill themselves. There has been a consensus that certain tasks in the propaganda spectrum can be much better achieved by non-government actors. The CPC, too, has been quite aware of the possibilities of using popular voices, and scholarly articles continue to argue for the inclusion of more social forces.¹⁷⁶ During the Mao period, however, the CPC exercised absolute organizational control over “popular” (*minjian* 民间) initiatives and social organizations (*shetuan* 社团). The question this opens up is therefore to what extent the Party has begun to genuinely include non-governmental entities in its overall external propaganda strategy. This does not necessarily refer to completely independent social organizations. For instance, NGOs still have to be sponsored by a government department. Nonetheless, there is a difference between departments and units that are directly under the Central Committee or at levels of the Party-state and organizations that are registered with the government and under a certain degree of government control, but not directly a part of the government itself and given some freedom to make independent decisions.

¹⁷⁶ For instance, in March 2012, the journal *External Communication* focused on popular initiatives and on ways the government could incorporate and direct various social forces and companies. Wang Lili 王莉丽, “Goujian ‘duo zhongxin’ ‘quan fangwei’ guoji chuanbo tixi” 构建“多中心”, “全方位” 国际传播体系 [Building a “multi-centered,” “all-dimensional” international communication system], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 3 (2012): 11-12.

The inclusion of people's voices today refers to several different strategies, some inspired by past practice and others adopted and modified from abroad: including "popular" organizations, "civilizing" citizens, outsourcing to corporations, increasing "external propaganda awareness" in ordinary Chinese, etc. Below, I will explain the different ways in which the Party-state has tried to integrate more non-official voices into its external propaganda project: Although foreigners are generally not included in explanations what the "big external propaganda" pattern encompasses, they also have a role in it as yet another voice that is potentially even more credible than Chinese popular organizations or corporations. They will therefore be included in this overview as well. I will show that while the CPC continues to be involved in nearly all "popular" initiatives, in many cases it has become better at macro-managing popular initiatives, encouraging different social forces without suffocating them through too much interference.

A Parallel Institutional Structure for Public Diplomacy

In the academic debate in China, public diplomacy (*gonggong waijiao* 公共外交) is often used as a synonym or euphemism for external propaganda. In the Chinese bureaucracy, however, public diplomacy structures are separated from external propaganda structures and form a separate system. Public diplomacy is organized not by the OEP, but by the MFA and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), an advisory body consisting of representatives of all political parties in China.

The MFA was the first department displaying an interest in the concept of public diplomacy since around 2004. One Chinese scholar reports that he was invited to give the first lecture in a series of talks on public diplomacy organized by the Department of Policy Planning and the Propaganda Department of the MFA.¹⁷⁷ That year, the Press Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a Public Diplomacy Branch (*Gonggong waijiao chu* 公共外交处). This, according to one article, marked the beginning of the inclusion of non-governmental forces into China's overall external propaganda project.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Yiwei Wang, "Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power," ANNALS, 260.

¹⁷⁸ Wang Lili, "Goujian 'duo zhongxin' 'quan fangwei' guoji chuanbo tixi," 12.

At the 2009 CPPCC annual session, one of the delegates, director of the China People's Friendship Association, Chen Haosu 陈昊苏, reportedly recommended that China establish an institutional structure to coordinate public diplomacy (*jianli tongyi de gonggong waijiao lingdao jigou* 建立统一的公共外交领导机构).¹⁷⁹ In July 2009, at the Eleventh Diplomatic Envoys Meeting (*Zhu wai shijie huiyi* 驻外使节会议), Hu Jintao stressed the importance of public diplomacy for China's image and as an objective requirement to perfect China's diplomacy under the new situation.¹⁸⁰

In 2011, Shanghai (February)¹⁸¹ and Guangdong (December)¹⁸² were the first two cities to establish "Public Diplomacy Associations" (*Gonggong waijiao xiehui* 公共外交协会) run not by the provincial party committees, but by the respective political consultative conferences.¹⁸³ The first Public Diplomacy Association at municipal level was established in Wenzhou in May 2012.¹⁸⁴ After these test cases were implemented at provincial and at municipal level and apparently evaluated as successful, the national-level China Public Diplomacy Association (*Zhongguo gonggong waijiao xiehui* 中国公共外交协会) was established in late December 2012.¹⁸⁵ It is headed by former foreign minister Li

¹⁷⁹ "Chen Haosu weiyuan: dali jiaqiang gonggong waijiao" 陈昊苏委员——大力加强公共外交 [Committee member Chen Haosu - vigorously strengthen public diplomacy], *Renmin ribao*, March 12, 2009, 9. Chen Haosu was a deputy director of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) between 1987 and 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, he served as deputy director of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (*Zhongguo renmin duiwai youhao xiehui* 中国人民对外友好协会). Since 2000, he has been director of the Friendship Association.

¹⁸⁰ "开展好公共外交直接关乎我国国际形象, 是新形势下完善我国外交布局的客观要求, 也是我国外交工作的重要开拓方向。" Cited in Chen Haigang 陈海刚, "Shanghai gonggong waijiao xiehui choubei gongzuo baogao" 上海公共外交协会筹备工作报告 [Report on the preparatory work for the Shanghai Public Diplomacy Council], speech delivered on February 25, 2011 at the opening ceremonies of SPDA, put online November 10, 2011, http://www.spda.org.cn/content/2011-11/10/content_4944853.htm, accessed August 12, 2012.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Cf. "Guangdong gonggong waijiao xiehui jintian xiawu chengli" 广东公共外交协会今天下午成立 [Guangdong Association of Public Diplomacy established this afternoon], December 26, 2011, *Nanfangwang*, http://gd.nfdaily.cn/bl/content/2011-12/26/content_35586091.htm, accessed August 12, 2012.

¹⁸³ The website of the Shanghai Public Diplomacy Association is <http://www.spda.org.cn>.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. "Quanguo shou ge dishiji gonggong waijiao xiehui zai Wenzhou chengli" 全国首个地市级公共外交协会在温州成立 [China's first municipal public diplomacy association was established in Wenzhou], *People's Daily Online*, May 18, 2012, <http://wz.people.com.cn/n/2012/0518/c139013-17051616.html>, accessed August 12, 2012.

¹⁸⁵ "Yang Jiechi buzhang zai Zhongguo gonggong waijiao xiehui chengli dahui shang de jianghua" 杨洁篪部长在中国公共外交协会成立大会上的讲话 [Minister Yang Jiechi's speech at the inaugural meeting of the China Public Diplomacy Association], website of the MFA,

Zhaoxing 李肇星. Li was educated at Beijing Foreign Studies University (*Beijing waiguoyu daxue* 北京外国语大学, BFSU) and served as one of the earliest spokespeople of the MFA when the spokesperson system was first implemented. At the national level, public diplomacy is not handled by the CPPCC, but is affiliated with the MFA. At this point in time, it is unclear whether this was planned from the beginning or whether initially the CPPCC was to be responsible but was cut off.

Both public diplomacy structures and other “popular” initiatives rely a lot on retired senior officials. Zhu Muzhi became head of the Association for External Cultural Exchange (*Duiwai wenhua jiaoliu xiehui* 对外文化交流协会). Zeng Jianhui headed the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress after retiring from OEP/SCIO. More recently China has tried to establish an alternative *waixuan* structure affiliated with the CPPCC. It is therefore no coincidence that several high ranking cadres previously dedicated to external propaganda work, such as Zhao Qizheng and Zheng Bijian 郑必坚, took on important positions in the CPPCC after retiring from their official Party posts.

Integrating Universities: The Case of Confucius Institutes

One initiative linked to the debates on China’s cultural soft power is the well-known and by now relatively well-studied establishment of Confucius Institutes worldwide.¹⁸⁶ The headquarters of China’s Confucius Institutes is at the Hanban 汉办, the executive office (*banshi jigou* 办事机构), founded in 2002, of the LSG for the International Promotion of the Chinese Language (*Zhongguo guojia Hanyu guoji tuiguang lingdao xiaozu* 中国国家汉语国际推广领导小组),¹⁸⁷ founded as the Leading Small Group for Teaching Chinese Abroad (*Guojia duiwai Hanyu jiaoxue lingdao xiaozu* 国家对外汉语教学领导小组) under the leadership of the Ministry of Education in 1987, when China first contemplated integrating Chinese language teaching into its overall external propaganda strategy (cf. chapter 5.4). Two years after the Hanban was created in 2002, in

December 31, 2012, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cedk/chn/gnss/t1002005.htm>, accessed January 15, 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Such as James F. Paradise, “China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius Institutes in Bolstering Beijing’s Soft Power,” *Asian Survey* 49, no. 4 (2009): 647-669.

¹⁸⁷ The official English translation of the name of the LSG is Chinese Language Council International.

2004, the first Confucius Institute was established in Seoul. In 2006, China announced it planned to have established 100 Confucius Institutes by the end of the year and 1000 by the benchmark year 2020.¹⁸⁸ By 2010, 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms had been established in 96 different countries.¹⁸⁹

Confucius Institutes are established as joint-ventures between a Chinese and a foreign institution, with start-up capital for the first three years provided by the Hanban. It should be mentioned that Confucius Institutes have come under attack as a waste of money in China itself.¹⁹⁰ Thus, relaxation of control over external propaganda measures has also been associated with loss of control over the agenda.

Integrating Non-Governmental Organizations

There have been a number of test cases with non-governmental initiatives. One example is the Confucius Peace Prize, established in 2010 as a Chinese alternative to the Nobel Peace Prize in order to counter the award of the Nobel award given to Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波. The idea allegedly came from a comment published by the *Global Times* and was then realized by the Chinese Local Art Association, a “popular” organization (*shetuan* 社团) registered at the national level and supervised (*zhuguan* 主管) by the Ministry of Culture (MoC).¹⁹¹

The first award was given to Lien Chan 连战, leader of the Taiwanese opposition under Chen Shui-bian 陈水扁, for his contribution to closer ties

¹⁸⁸ “Confucius Institutes: Promoting Language, Culture and Friendliness,” Xinhuanet, October 2, 2006, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-10/02/content_5521722.htm, accessed October 12, 2012.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. “Kongzi xueyuan/ketang: Guanyu Kongzi xueyuan/ketang” 孔子学院/课堂: 关于孔子学院 / 课堂 [Confucius Institutes/Classrooms: About Confucius Institutes/Classrooms], http://www.hanban.edu.cn/confuciousinstitutes/node_10961.htm, accessed October 30, 2012.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Mark Siemons, “Zeit zum Teemachen ist für China sinnlos,” December 5, 2012, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/pekinger-kulturpolitik-zeit-zum-teemachen-ist-fuer-china-sinnlos-11981839.html>, accessed December 9, 2012.

¹⁹¹ 中国乡土艺术协会为国家一级协会法人社团, 经文化部批准、在民政部于 1994 年登记注册成立 (社证字第 4265 号), 业务主管单位为文化部。Cf. “Wenhuabu jiaoting ‘di er jie Kongzi hepingjiang’ shanzi juban yishi” 文化部叫停“第二届孔子和平奖”二擅自举办仪式 [Ministry of Culture halts unauthorized ceremony for the ‘Second Confucius Peace Prize’], September 29, 2011, original source: Dongfang zaobao, <http://cul.sohu.com/20110929/n320902406.shtml>, accessed November 11, 2012. Also cf. Edward Wong, “China’s Answer to Nobel Mystifies its Winner,” website of the *New York Times*, December 8, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/09/world/asia/09china.html?_r=0, accessed November 11, 2012.

between Taiwan and the mainland.¹⁹² Lien Chan himself claimed he had never heard of the prize and did not come to Beijing to receive the award money.¹⁹³ Before the award of the second prize, the MoC disassociated itself from the first prize in 2010 and announced its intention to prevent the handing out of the second prize by the Chinese Local Art Association in an official decision (*jueding* 决定).¹⁹⁴ Instead, however, the China International Peace Research Center was founded in Hong Kong and a new committee was set up which handed the prize to Vladimir Putin and openly praised him, among other things, for his crackdown in Chechnya,¹⁹⁵ in an awkward attempt to establish alternative “Chinese” ideas of how to maintain unity and therefore peace. For obvious reasons, the choice and its justification were again met with ridicule.¹⁹⁶ In 2012, the China International Peace Research Center announced its intention to award another Confucius Peace Prize. The decision was publicized through an article by a journalist from the *Global Times* published on the online presence of the *People’s Daily* (*Renminwang* 人民网), which clearly noted that the MoC had nothing to do with the prize.¹⁹⁷

What appears to have happened in the case of the Confucius Peace Prize is that this was one of the many test cases of the policy of relinquishing control in which the Chinese Party-state tries to include non-governmental organizations in its overall public diplomacy scheme, and that it did not go as planned. This is so because unlike the Confucius Institutes, which ostensibly focus on apolitical cultural issues and teaching the Chinese language, the Confucius Peace Prize entered a highly charged arena of contentious political issues, a field in which the Party-state still tries to maintain tight control, particularly when it cannot fully disassociate itself from the popular organization in charge, as was clearly the case with the Chinese Local Art Association. An article in the *Global Times* notes that the prize was ridiculed, that the selection process was not transparent enough and commented that “if the organizers of the Confucius Peace Prize really want to

¹⁹² He had come to China in 2005 in a highly televised visit that marked the first official contact between high-ranking leaders of the GMD and the CPC since 1949.

¹⁹³ Cf. Wong, “China’s Answer to Nobel Mystifies its Winner,” accessed November 11, 2012.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. “Wenhuabu jiaoting ‘di er jie Kongzi hepingjiang’ shanzi juban yishi.”

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Wong, “For Putin, a Peace Prize for a Decision to Go to War.”

¹⁹⁶ E.g. *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Ling Yuhuan, “Confucius Peace Prize Announces List of Nominees,” *People’s Daily Online*, September 12, 2012, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90782/7946018.html>, accessed November 11, 2012.

make it a time-honored and influential prize, they need to first work hard to avoid it being seen purely as a politicized move.”¹⁹⁸

At the same time, the Prize is allowed to continue –there is no doubt that the Chinese government would be able to shut it down if it were determined to do so and had a clear consensus on the issue– so long as it is clear that this is not an official government initiative and not conducted through an organization registered in China, which always need government sponsorship to be legally registered. In fact, while there are most likely different opinions on the award within the Chinese government, it provides an opportunity to present a plurality of opinions and strategic criticism (*xiao ma da bangmang* 小骂大帮忙) from China on the topic itself through comments in media such as the *Global Times* while at the same time demonstrating several things: first, China tolerates different voices within the population, second, China’s official opposition to the Nobel Peace Prize handed to Liu Xiaobo is accompanied by outrage in the Chinese population, and third, compared to these nationalist groups, the Chinese government itself is very moderate and restrained.

Integrating State-Owned and Private Companies

There are several ways that companies have been integrated into China’s external propaganda strategy: First, they have acted as “commercial faces” of government projects, and second, some tasks have actually been outsourced. Finally, by improving the image of Chinese products, China also hopes to be able to improve its overall image.¹⁹⁹

First, the Party-state has interacted with foreign partners through companies, for instance in the cultural sector. In 2004, the “reform of the cultural system” first launched in the late 1990s, was implemented on a wider scale. The Central Propaganda Department established the Cultural Reform Office (*Wenhua tizhi gaige bangongshi* 文化体制改革办公室) as a new internal structure.²⁰⁰ This

¹⁹⁸ Xue Lei, “Confucius Peace Prize Fails to Gain Traction,” website of the Global Times, September 23, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/734806.shtml>, accessed November 11, 2012.

¹⁹⁹ For the link between products and the national brand, see Theresa Loo and Gary Davies, “Branding China: The Ultimate Reputation Management?” *Corporate Reputation Review* 9, no. 3 (2006): 198-210.

²⁰⁰ Nicolai Volland, “The Control of the Media in the People’s Republic of China,” (Doctoral diss. University of Heidelberg, 2003), 109.

was the beginning of the commercialization of central level cultural units in order to make them more competitive and thus reassert Party control over the cultural sector.²⁰¹ Although the move was driven largely by domestic needs, improving China's image abroad was certainly also a factor. In April 2004, the Beijing New Impression Culture Development Co., Ltd. (*Beijing Xin yingxiang wenhua fazhan youxian gongsi* 北京新影响文化发展有限公司) was founded in order to present China to the outside world both on behalf of the Central government, provincial governments, and "social organizations" (*shehui tuanti* 社会团体).²⁰² For example, the company is in charge of the concrete organization of the project "Experience China" (*Ganzhi Zhongguo* 感知中国), a series of short-term cultural activities, usually lasting one or two weeks, organized abroad by OEP/SCIO since 1999 in different countries.²⁰³ Thus, the reform of the cultural system also helps China to "show the commercial face" rather than the government face to the outside world.

Second, "in line with international standards," as one article explains,²⁰⁴ Chinese external propaganda departments increasingly rely on PR firms and advertizing companies. In 2011, OEP/SCIO tasked an advertizing company with creating a 30 second ad promoting China that was played on Times Square. The Party-state had only subsidized the production; the rest was done by the private company.²⁰⁵ Cities such as Shanghai and Chengdu 成都 have also used the service of PR firms to improve their image.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ Cf. Volland, "From Control to Management," 111-112.

²⁰² Cf. "Gongsi jianjie" 简介 [Introduction], <http://www.sinotransmit.com/show.aspx?id=379&cid=483>, accessed October 31, 2012 and "Wenhua jiaoliu" 文化交流 [Cultural exchange], <http://www.sinotransmit.com/list.aspx?cid=484>, accessed October 31, 2012.

²⁰³ Cf. "Huodong jieshao" 活动介绍 [Introduction of activities], <http://www.sinotransmit.com/list.aspx?cid=9>, accessed October 31, 2012. Countries in which activities have been held include for example France, the U.S., Germany, Russia, Brazil, Argentina, Israel, Switzerland, South Korea, South Africa, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland. Cf. *ibid.*

²⁰⁴ "符合国际惯例" Ji Meng 季萌, "Chunfeng huayu dishui shichuan – Dui minjian waixuan sikao" 春风化雨 滴水石穿——对民间外宣的思考 [Life-giving spring breeze and rain, constant dropping wears the stone - thoughts on popular external propaganda], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 3 (2012): 5.

²⁰⁵ Ji Meng, "Chunfeng huayu dishui shichuan – Dui minjian waixuan sikao," 5. The cooperation with the advertizing company also resulted in longer films that were then shown at Chinese embassies. Cf. Michael Barr, "Nation Branding as Nation Building: China's Image Campaign," *East Asia*, no. 29 (2012): 86-87.

²⁰⁶ Ji Meng, "Chunfeng huayu dishui shichuan – Dui minjian waixuan sikao," 5.

Finally, because of the overall bad image of Chinese products (“cheap,” “low quality,” or even harmful to people’s health) China has also launched various initiatives to create a more positive “made in China” brand. In 2009, after a series of product scandals,²⁰⁷ the Ministry of Commerce tasked a Chinese-foreign joint venture advertising company with producing a 30 second ad with the theme “Made in China, Made with the World,” and paid to have it shown, among others, on CNN.²⁰⁸

Thus, the Party-state is increasingly relying on both state-owned and private companies to get its own message out while at the same time trying to improve the image of Chinese companies and Chinese products to help improve the country’s overall image.

“Civilizing” the Chinese People

In 2011, a seminar discussed not only raising the quality of Chinese products, but also raising the quality of Chinese people in order to improve the image of both.²⁰⁹ The obsession with the “quality” (*suzhi* 素质) of the Chinese people is a left-over from some of the earliest nation-building campaigns in the early 20th century (cf. Chapter 2). The CPC has the ambitious –though still relatively abstract– plans to include every single Chinese citizen in its external propaganda project. Most importantly, the CPC wants to harness social forces because many messages are much more effective when stated by non-governmental actors. Long Xinmin 龙新民, former deputy secretary of Beijing remarked that if every person could become an “external propagandist” (*duiwai xuanchuan yuan* 对外宣传员) and would take the initiative (*zhudong* 主动) to engage in *waixuan*, this could achieve things that official propaganda could never achieve. Therefore, it was important to raise the awareness in Chinese people that “in front of foreigners, they represent China.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Including toys tainted with lead, the Sanlu Melamine scandal, etc.

²⁰⁸ See “Shangwubu quanqiu toufang guanggao tisheng Zhongguo zhizao xingxiang” 商务部全球投放广告提升中国制造形象 [Ministry of Commerce launched global advertisement to improve the image of Made in China], Sina, November 30, 2009, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2009-11-30/083519155485.shtml>, accessed February 15, 2013. Also see Michael Barr, “Nation Branding as Nation Building: China’s Image Campaign,” 86.

²⁰⁹ Wang Mei, “Shijie xin geju xia de Zhongguo guoji chuanbo,” 27.

²¹⁰ 这是构成国际化大都市的重要工程，全市人民要树立“在外国人面前我代表中国”的意识。“Zhonggong Beijing shiwei fushuji Long Xinmin tan Beijing waixuan gongzuo” 中共北京市

Much of this work is done in a format familiar from the Mao period: campaigns teaching “civilized behavior.” The most well-known “civilizing” campaign in the last few years was preparing the residents of Beijing for the 2008 Olympics, which included encouraging people to learn English and teaching them to queue at the bus stop.²¹¹

While this approach seems like an odd relic from China’s Maoist past, the project has some prominent supporters. For instance, Wang Jisi 王缉思, dean of the School of International Studies at Peking University and a well-known commentator on Sino-U.S. relations both in China and in the U.S., suggested that rather than trying to crank up its voice, China should concentrate on raising the “quality” (*suzhi*) of the Chinese people so that circumstances in China would be improved and leave a good impression on foreigners. He had recently been to Japan, and the orderliness and safe environment had impressed him. If China could progress to this level, its image would automatically be improved.²¹²

Mobilizing Public Opinion

In 2008, when pro-Tibetan independence groups organized events to disrupt the Olympic torch relay, Chinese exchange students and other Chinese living abroad organized pro-China rallies. The question whether or not these protests were facilitated by the Chinese government has been an issue of contention. Whereas Western media reports at the time often insinuated that Chinese embassies were behind the protests, Sautman and Li argue, based on interviews with organizers, that the protests constituted a genuine initiative from below without any help from the Chinese government.²¹³ I would like to suggest

委副书记龙新民谈北京外宣工作 [Long Ximin, deputy secretary of the Beijing municipal party committee speaks about Beijing’s external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2001): 1.

²¹¹ Also see Jeroen de Kloet, “National Image Management Begins at Home: Imagining the New Olympic Citizen,” *Soft Power in China: Public Diplomacy through Communication*, ed. Jian Wang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 117-133.

²¹² “Xingsu Zhongguo: Duiwai xuanchuan shi ciyao de - Zhuanfang Beijing daxue guoji guanxi xueyuan yuanchang Wang Jisi” 形塑中国：对外宣传是次要的——专访北京大学国际关系学院院长王缉思 [Shaping China: External propaganda is secondary - Interviewing the dean of the School of International relations of Peking University, Wang Jisi], website of *Nanfang chuang* magazine, July 9, 2009, <http://www.nfcmag.com/article/1555.html>, accessed February 3, 2013.

²¹³ Barry Sautman and Li Ying, *Public Diplomacy from Below: The 2008 ‘Pro-China’ Demonstrations in Europe and North America, CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy, Paper 11, 2011* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2011), 6-7 and 9-10. The study is available online at

that both views are correct. China has used the management of nationalist protests at home as a bargaining technique in international relations and a form of alternative to “voter pressure,” which governments of democratic countries can use to explain why they need to take a tough stance on a particular issue.²¹⁴ In the case of the Olympics, protests did not take place in China, but abroad, and there was no immediate diplomatic issue at stake. Instead, popular protests served as a way of buttressing the stance of the Chinese government on issues of principle in general. In the run-up to the Olympics, they became one of several voices “singing the same tune.” This does not mean that Chinese students participating in the events were not convinced of the cause. Rather, it means that the Party-state tapped into existing sentiments that buttressed its own cause.

In the previous years, Chinese scholars have devoted much energy to researching the role of “opinion leaders” in society.²¹⁵ There are several reasons why the Party-state has an interest in understanding the role of opinion leaders, including how to suppress protests when necessary, but such knowledge can also be used to fan nationalist protests. In addition, Chinese embassies stay connected with Chinese students studying abroad. Through employing opinion leaders and providing some infrastructure, it is certainly possible to create or encourage popular movements in which the overwhelming majority of participants are “unsuspecting” members of the public that simply agree with the cause that is being promoted. As is the case with many popular movements, different degrees of involvement of parties with special interests makes the distinction between “genuine” and “orchestrated” grassroots movements moot. When it comes to attacking Western bias against China, the organizers of such movements have a large base of young people and Chinese exchange students abroad that are willing to join in or might even take the initiative themselves. Thus, few of the participants in a rally will have been invited to join by a government contact directly.

http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/publications/perspectives/CPD_Perspectives_Paper_11_2011.pdf, accessed February 15, 2013.

²¹⁴ Jessica Chen Weiss, “Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China,” *International Organization* 67, no. 1 (January 2013): 1-35.

²¹⁵ The number of articles in the databases of China National Knowledge Infrastructure (for the CNKI see Introduction) shows a sharp increase after 2008. Cf. <http://trend.cnki.net/TrendSearch/trendshow.htm?searchword=%u8206%u8BBA%u9886%u8896>. Search for “yulun lingxiu” 舆论领袖 [opinion leader] on March 4, 2013.

Foreign Experts and Old Friends

Foreigners enjoy more credibility on certain issues, particularly when “national interests” or sensitivities are involved. Foreigners have served important roles since the earliest days of the CPC as advisors to the Party, as channels to spread China’s message abroad, and as a symbol of Chinese internationalism.²¹⁶ Both foreign experts and “friends of China” continue to have a function in external propaganda work. All foreigners legally working in Chinese units or state-owned companies are formally understood as “foreign experts” (*wai guo zhuanjia* 外国专家) that have come to China to help the country develop. Foreign experts are handled through State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) and its local equivalents and work in all kinds of positions (cf. chapter 4.3).

The idea to give foreigners more independence in China’s external propaganda project has been circulating in external propaganda circles since at least the 1990s. For instance, an article in the journal *Big External Communication* (*Duiwai da chuanbo* 对外大传播) from 1994 addresses the question whether foreigners should really only be limited to proof-reading or whether it might be more useful to involve them in editing choices as well. As the world grew closer together, Chinese media would ultimately have to adapt to international standards, and in this regard, foreign experts could be of great help.²¹⁷ Such suggestions, however, were only realized more than a decade later. Until recently, foreigners at the *China Daily* were only employed as polishers and, with a few exceptions, got work contracts for a very limited period of time.²¹⁸

With the plans to expand China’s global media, foreign advisors were hired. The tasks done by these advisors can vary, including training of Chinese personnel, giving strategic advice, and liaising with foreigners. Foreign experts

²¹⁶ Cf. Anne-Marie, Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People’s Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

²¹⁷ Li Haibo 黎海波, “Shilun ‘Sunzi bingfa’ yu duiwai chuanbo (yi)” 试论《孙子兵法》与对外传播(一) [Discussion on Sunzi’s The Art of War and external communication (one)], *Duiwai da chuanbo*, no. 1 (1994) : 24.

²¹⁸ Interview, Alfred Roman, Hong Kong, November 2010. Also see articles on some of the blogs of foreigners working for the *China Daily*, e.g. “So you want to work for *China Daily*?” Personal blog of a former ‘foreign expert’ working at the *China Daily*. October 4, 2005, <http://leakingstatesecrets.blogspot.de/2005/10/so-you-want-to-work-for-china-daily.html>, accessed November 10, 2012.

are also consulted for which story or which angle would be interesting for Westerners. While they are usually familiar with the boundaries of reporting, some of them like to push boundaries and therefore suggest ideas that are not approved by the leadership.²¹⁹ China Central Television (CCTV) has employed several advisors at different stages of its expansion, including John Jirik, who wrote his PhD dissertation on the reform attempt, and Jim Laurie, who opened the first foreign television bureau in Beijing in 1981.²²⁰ Before launching an English version, the *Global Times* hired Richard Burger, author of the famous blog *Peking Duck*.²²¹ Burger reported in an interview with *Danwei.org* that he spent most of his time copy-editing, but also wrote some columns himself. In addition, he was responsible for finding foreigners willing to write occasional columns for the *Global Times*.²²² The *China Daily*, too, now employs a number of foreign editors, and the *China Daily* online edition regularly features comments and editorials from foreign staff and guest writers. China has also increasingly hired foreign anchors. In 2004, CCTV-9 hired Edwin Maher, who previously worked at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

China has faced two main problems with hiring foreigners. First, until recently, because Chinese media lacked competitive salaries, they could not attract actual journalists and often employed foreigners studying temporarily in China. Experience as a journalist was not needed.²²³ Second, after China invested more money to be able to pay competitive salaries to actual journalists, it faced new problems as Western journalists working for Chinese media run the risk of being maligned as government spokespeople and of selling out on their journalistic ethos. Thus, while they bolster the credibility of Chinese media, their own credibility is diminished. An article on Edwin Maher addressed the issue: “Critics say Maher isn’t a reporter at all, but a shameless government yes-man who gives all Western journalists a bad name. Maher answers bluntly: He says he

²¹⁹ Interview, Beijing, April 2011. Also cf. “Richard Burger on Being a Foreign Editor at the *Global Times*,” *Danwei.org*, May 8, 2009. http://www.danwei.org/newspapers/richard_burger_on_being_an_eng.php, accessed November 11, 2012.

²²⁰ Interview with Jim Laurie, Hong Kong, January 2011.

²²¹ The Peking Duck, <http://www.pekingduck.org/>, accessed January 17, 2013.

²²² Cf. “Richard Burger on Being a Foreign Editor at the *Global Times*.”

²²³ Interview, Alfred Roman, Hong Kong, November 2010.

simply doesn't care."²²⁴ Maher also got a platform on Chinese media to address the criticism, arguing that while CCTV contained elements of propaganda, propaganda was really only a form of PR.²²⁵ Although accusations will likely diminish the more Western journalists start to work for Chinese media, this poses an initial hurdle, as people do not only have to be qualified, but also willing to face additional scrutiny.

In addition to employing large numbers of foreign experts, China also continues to rely on a selected number of "old friends." The "foreign friend" ranks higher than the "foreign expert." Friendship, as Brady explains, does not denote a close relationship, but is political and strategic in nature.²²⁶ Using foreign friends to present and promote China abroad was one of the first external propaganda tactics adopted by the CPC aside from drawing on larger networks and was evaluated as a very successful strategy in the post-Mao period that China must seek to replicate.²²⁷

There are two types of people that have been labeled friends of China in the past: influential foreigners who are seen as helping China realize its interests such as George Bush Sr. and Richard Nixon and foreigners working for the Party or the government such as Anna Louise Strong, Edgar Snow, or Felix Greene.²²⁸ For the latter category, China created the friendship awards (*youyijiang* 友谊奖) in 1991, the "highest national level award given by the Chinese government to foreign experts that have come to China to work."²²⁹ Each year, about 50 foreigners receive the award.²³⁰ Given the sheer number, it goes without saying that very few of them have standing or influence comparable to that of Edgar

²²⁴ Cf. John M. Glionna, "China's Man at the Anchor Desk," website of the *LA Times*, December 4, 2007, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-anchor4dec04,1,7057575,full.story>, accessed October 7, 2012.

²²⁵ "Edwin Maher on 'Propaganda'," China.org.cn, January 14, 2008, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/LivinginChina/239340.htm>, accessed January 17, 2013.

²²⁶ Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 7.

²²⁷ "Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu guanyu gaijin he jiaqiang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo de yijian" 对外宣传小组关于改进和加强对外宣传工作的意见 [The External Propaganda Small Group's opinion on improving and strengthening external propaganda work], June 30, 1980, in *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang he wenxian, 1951-1992* 党的宣传工作会议概况和文献, 1951-1992 [Overview and documents from the Party's propaganda work conferences, 1951-1992] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994), 393.

²²⁸ Anne-Marie Brady, *Making the Foreign Serve China*, 7-8.

²²⁹ "Guanyu youyijiang" 关于友谊奖 [On the Friendship award], http://www.safea.gov.cn/friendship/friendship_about/, accessed January 15, 2013.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Snow. Nevertheless, there are some of comparable status in terms of their access to leaders and either symbolic or actual political importance, usually referred to as “old friends.”

Currently, perhaps the most important old friend of China with an active role in external propaganda is Robert Lawrence Kuhn (*Luobote Laolunsi Ku'en* 罗伯特·劳伦斯·库恩). An investment banker and a relatively respected intellectual in the West who funds and hosts his own TV show on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS),²³¹ Kuhn exemplifies the type of foreign friend China wants and needs in these new times. He first came to China as an advisor to the government in early 1989 and has had access to China’s leaders that is very unusual for foreigners.

Kuhn has been likened to Edgar Snow in the Chinese media and as a “good friend that China’s leaders can rely on,”²³² and this is most likely how the top leadership views him as well: He has written several books about China and its leaders. In 2004, he published a hagiography of Jiang Zemin, *The Man Who Changed China: The Life and Legacy of Jiang Zemin*.²³³ In 2010, he published *How China's Leaders Think: The Inside Story of China's Reforms and What This Means for the Future*,²³⁴ for which he received “advice and counsel” from, among others, Liu Yunshan, Wang Chen, Cai Wu, and Zhao Qizheng.²³⁵ Kuhn sees being called an old friend of China as a compliment and wants to help the country by “[telling] the true story of China to the world.”²³⁶ His goal in writing the book, as he explained himself, was to “make China's leaders more transparent” and “their

²³¹ Called “Closer to Truth: Science, Meaning and the Future,” See the Website of Public Broadcasting Service, <http://www.pbs.org/kcet/closetotruth/about/index.html>, accessed January 17, 2013.

²³² E.g. Chen Xiaoping 陈晓萍, “Meiguoren Luobote-Kuen: Xiang shijie jieshao Zhongguo he ta de lingdaoren” 美国人罗伯特-库恩:向世界介绍中国和她的领导人 [American Robert Kuhn: introducing China and her leaders to the world], January 19, 2009, originally published in *Zhongguo xinwen zhoukan* 中国新闻周刊 [China news weekly], http://civ.ce.cn/main/gd/200901/19/t20090119_17999112.shtml, accessed January 17, 2013.

²³³ Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *The Man Who Changed China: The Life and Legacy of Jiang Zemin* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004).

²³⁴ Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *How China's Leaders Think: The Inside Story of China's Reforms and What This Means for the Future* (Singapore and Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).

²³⁵ “Acknowledgements,” ix. Kuhn stresses that while the Chinese edition of his book, published two years for the 30th anniversary of reform and opening, was censored, nobody tried to interfere with the English edition, except for interviewees asking to edit their own quotes. Kuhn, *How China's Leaders Think*, xxi-xxii.

²³⁶ “Acknowledgements” in Kuhn, *How China's Leaders Think*, ix-x.

ideas and attitudes more accessible.”²³⁷ He also funds and chairs the Kuhn Foundation, which is dedicated to “facilitating communications between China and the world”²³⁸ and to “[promoting] good relations between America and China.”²³⁹

Kuhn is quite aware of the fact that he can be accused of being a propagandist for the CPC and tries to pre-empt such accusations by addressing them, mostly explicitly, occasionally implicitly. The year that he first came to China, 1989, is associated first and foremost with Tiananmen and thus has the potential to diminish his credibility. Since most accounts of his career in China only list the year, not the month of his first encounter with China, he clarified that he visited the country in *early* 1989 and at first decided not to return after the Tiananmen crackdown, but was convinced to come back in 1990 in order to “support those, particularly in the science communities, who sought reform and opening-up.”²⁴⁰ A Xinhua article reported that when asked whether he tried to be balanced about China, he replied ““No. I do not try to be balanced about China. I try to tell the truth about China.””²⁴¹ This upfront reply characterizes how he has dealt with much of both actual and hypothetical criticism. In his books, he repeatedly stressed that he was not censored in English and that while he opposed the censorship the Chinese versions of his books were subjected to, he insisted that his words not be rephrased and thus felt that his book still provided Chinese readers with an alternative to the “Party line.”²⁴² This idea of accepting limitations for the greater good of bringing openness to Chinese society in the long run is relatively widely accepted, and Kuhn replies to his implied skeptics in a way that is very open and is likely to convince quite a few people who are not very opinionated about China.

Kuhn has advised Chinese leaders on the country’s media and international communications policy and has also tried to present China’s media reforms as

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, xix.

²³⁸ “About the Author,” no page number, in Kuhn, *How China's Leaders Think*.

²³⁹ See “Robert Lawrence Kuhn,” website of Closer to Truth, Kuhn’s TV show, <http://www.closetotruth.com/robert-lawrence-kuhn>, accessed March 4, 2013.

²⁴⁰ “About the Author,” endnote 1, no page number, in Kuhn, *How China's Leaders Think*.

²⁴¹ ““I try to tell the truth about China’: Robert Lawrence Kuhn,” China.org.cn, November 8, 2010, http://www.china.org.cn/travel/expo2010shanghai/2010-11/08/content_21298808.htm, accessed January 17, 2013.

²⁴² “Overview,” Kuhn, *How China's Leaders Think*, xxii. Such an assessment is a blatant underestimate of the Chinese media landscape, in which views that deviate from that of the Party’s but without challenging the core

progressive. In his profile of Liu Yunshan, after the former head of the CPD ascended to the PBSC, he explained that while China continued to regulate the media, Liu had “effected modernization and popularization of media communications” and had “enabled increased openness in China’s international communications.”²⁴³ In the last few years, he has written repeatedly for Chinese media and spoken about China’s leaders in venues such as the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations.²⁴⁴ In 2012, Kuhn acted as a commentator on the leadership transition and was featured both in China’s external propaganda media and the “Western mainstream press.”²⁴⁵

In sum, aside from official departments within the Party and the State, China increasingly draws on popular or semi-official voices, including Chinese companies, educational institutions, NGOs, Chinese youth, and foreign experts and friends.

8.5 Conclusions

The analysis above has shown that after several decades of intense and continued reform, the CPC still struggles to find an ideal coordinating mechanism for external propaganda work that is efficient without jeopardizing or counteracting the work of other sectors that are still considered strategically more important. The current institutional structure, most of which can be traced back to the initial institutional set-up of the Mao period, poses a number of problems:

²⁴³ Robert Lawrence Kuhn, “The Seven Who Will Run China,” originally published in the *China Daily* print edition, November 23, 2012, 8, available online at http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2012-11/23/content_15952462.htm, accessed January 17, 2013.

²⁴⁴ “How China’s Leaders Think: Discussion with Robert Lawrence Kuhn”, Jones Day China Lecture Series, January 12, 2010, <http://www.ncuscr.org/?q=programs/how-chinas-leaders-think-discussion-robert-lawrence-kuhn>, accessed January 17, 2013.

²⁴⁵ For instance, he gave a brief interview for Businessweek in which he explained that as opposed to the U.S., where the president can hire and fire members of his Cabinet, in China, each individual on the PBSC has power and that therefore it is important to understand each of them (“Kuhn: Xi Jinping Knows China has to Reform,” November 15, 2012, <http://www.businessweek.com/videos/2012-11-14/kuhn-xi-jinping-knows-china-has-to-reform>, accessed January 17, 2013). He himself subsequently introduced the seven members of the new PBSC in the *China Daily* (Robert Lawrence Kuhn, “The Seven Who Will Run China,” 8). He has also written for the *China Daily* as an Op-Ed contributor on other occasions (e.g. Robert Lawrence Kuhn, “The ‘Big Four’ Concerns of Chinese,” originally published in the *China Daily* print edition, September 25, 2012, available online at http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2012-09/25/content_15779729_2.htm, accessed January 17, 2013).

First, external propaganda involves a large number of units of equal rank that need to coordinate their work. There is a fairly elaborate division of work that dates back to the earliest days of the PRC, as different organs are responsible for foreign propaganda according to region of the audience and according to topic. The division of work (which in practice is probably not quite as clear as it appears on paper) has the advantage that it theoretically saves some resources by not having several units work on the same tasks and the disadvantage that it requires a high degree of coordination between units belonging to different systems. In practice, as complaints from scholars and cadres show, the division of work has historically resulted in wasted resources and lack of communication. The CPC has tried to remedy the problem of coordination, first, by creating the LSG, and second, by encouraging different units and departments to sign contracts and framework agreements. The LSG provides a platform to solve these issues and find a consensus at the highest level, whereas contracts facilitate interaction at lower levels. However, the actual effectiveness of both at reducing conflicts and improving cooperation is unclear.

Second, external propaganda is located between two distinct sectors which both consider external propaganda when deliberating policies, but definitely not as their highest priority. This problem is replicated at lower levels, for instance in media units that produce both content for domestic and for foreign target audiences.

Third, one major organizational difficulty is again the existence of the domestic propaganda apparatus, at the national level as much as at the provincial level and below. The creation of a leading small group for external propaganda work had strengthened the sector, but the upgrade came at time when external propaganda was simultaneously tied more closely to overall propaganda work, both conceptually and institutionally. The existing infrastructure of domestic propaganda work on the one hand makes it possible to set up structures quickly and on the other hand very difficult to ensure that these are not just superficial measures involved in ineffective activities that borrow too much from the domestic propaganda apparatus's way of operating. The Center has the possibility to request certain measures to be adopted, but it has few options to measure success qualitatively. Thus, as more and more locales get involved, it becomes

increasingly difficult for the Center to ensure that the content produced by provinces and municipalities meets certain qualitative standards.

Fourth, in terms of integrating players outside of the government, the Party-state is interested in outsourcing certain tasks and assigning different roles to different players, but continues to be reluctant to relinquish control. Not *looking* well-organized has the advantage of raising China's credibility. However, in a situation where different bureaucracies and individuals pursue different goals, lack of coordination results in conflicting messages that are not necessarily intended by the Center. China has many conflicting identities: It appears as a developing country, as a socialist country, as a rising power, as an already established power, etc. It wants foreigners to believe that China is peaceful, yet at the same time needs to maintain a credible threat of force towards Taiwan. Here, the principle of "round outside, square within" (cf. chapter 7.6) comes to mind again: While the CPC wants to let different actors to sing the same tune and look uncoordinated, it also wants to stay in charge and be able to control the message that is sent. Given the CPC's historical insistence on organizational monopoly, the experiments it has conducted should be noted. As I will demonstrate below, such experiments even exist in the sensitive area of media ownership, but as of now, they remain very cautious and an exception rather than the rule.

9 Raising China's International Communication Capabilities

In January 2009, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported that China planned to invest 45 billion Yuan into the expansion of its global media in an effort to create a “Chinese CNN.”¹ As demonstrated in chapter 7.7, the financial commitment resulted in a massive expansion of Chinese media, the creation of new regional editions of the *China Daily*, of television channels in Russian and Arabic, of a second English language TV network under Xinhua 新华, etc. However, China does not only want a global media presence, but actual international influence. Even with large-scale investments, Chinese media will not be able to establish anything even closely resembling hegemony in the media market, if such a thing exists. For the next few decades, China is well aware that it will remain one of many voices and therefore needs to be competitive not only in quantitative, but also in qualitative terms. One key problem, if not the most important problem, China's external propaganda apparatus – especially its mass media targeting foreigners – face today is the issue of credibility. The argument has been made that, today, the credibility of a medium may be the most important factor determining whether or not persuasion of the audience succeeds.² The importance attached to credibility means that media as well as political entities are constantly in the process of building and protecting this valued asset in different contexts and with their different target audiences. Media credibility is a complex topic in which a range of largely subjective factors come together, including the image of a medium, the image of parties associated with or funding the medium, the medium's past and present behavior, but also what is considered proper journalistic behavior in a certain society at a certain time.

As Shanthi Kalathil has aptly pointed out, “the information rich environment” of the current times “has the potential to greatly amplify discrete

¹ Vivian Wu and Adam Chen, “Beijing in 45b Yuan Global Media Drive” [sic!], website of the *South China Morning Post*, January 13, 2013, <http://www.scmp.com/article/666847/beijing-45b-yuan-global-media-drive>, accessed March 1, 2013.

² See for example R.S. Zaharna, “Mapping out a Spectrum of Public Diplomacy Initiatives: Information and Relational Communication Frameworks,” *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, eds. Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 89. Li Xiguang and Zhou Qing'an even explain that information sources trusted by the public are the best resource a country can have. Li Xiguang 李希光 and Zhou Qing'an 周庆安, *Ruan lilian yu quanqiu chuanbo* 软力量与全球传播 [Soft power and global communication] (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2005), 21.

soft power effort,”³ but at the same time also subjects any actor trying to influence the public to a greater degree of scrutiny, something with which China, as opposed to many democracies, has comparatively little experience.⁴ China’s media face substantial problems: First, there is the issue of stake in general, in particular the credibility of governments, political parties or other stakeholders. Pointing out affiliation with a government, a party, or any form of interest group is one popular means to undermine the credibility of a particular argument or of a medium as a whole.⁵ Second, there is the problem of the connotation of communism and socialism left over from the Cold War in Western mainstream society. This means that what has been presented as the most important asset of the Chinese media in the *official* domestic discourse for most of the 1990s – the principle of its party nature, *dangxing yuanze* 党性原则 – is one of its greatest liabilities abroad.⁶ The fact that Chinese media are party-state media shows up in most non-Chinese discussions of China’s current global media expansion.⁷ Third, there is the issue of actual media practice that influences how a particular medium is perceived in the eyes of the public and that can also provide ammunition to opponents who wish to call the medium on the issue of stake or otherwise smear its reputation. Fourth, China is a large and rising country in the international spotlight. Its media are more likely to be subjected to scrutiny than the state-media of smaller countries.

³ Shanthi Kalathil, “China’s Soft Power in the Information Age: Think Again,” *ISD Working Papers in New Diplomacy*, May 2011, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

⁵ For this phenomenon in general, see for example Jonathan Potter, *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1996), 110. Liang Fook Lye has pointed out that the “strong state role behind the overseas expansion plans of China’s state media organizations” is a double-edged sword, providing strong financial backing to Chinese media on the one hand, yet diminishing their credibility on the other. Liang Fook Lye, “China’s Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building,” *International Journal of China Studies* 1, no. 2 (October 2010): 561.

⁶ Of course, this has also been a liability domestically to varying degrees, but arguably, the problem is larger abroad, where Chinese media have much more competition.

⁷ Terms such as “state-media,” “state-owned media,” “state television” are used in almost every report on Chinese global media in the Western media. E.g. Tania Branigan, “Chinese state TV unveils global expansion plan,” website of the *Guardian*, December 8, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/08/china-state-television-global-expansion>, accessed July 9, 2012; “Chinese media’s US expansion,” website of the BBC, June 18, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18500702>, accessed July 9, 2012; “China’s state TV planning a huge global expansion,” website of the Taipei Times, February 1, 2012, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2012/02/01/2003524409>, accessed July 9, 2012. When Western media use press releases from Xinhua, they will also usually mention that Xinhua is state-owned.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) is quite aware of the problems it faces. In the 21st century, for example, Xinhua still used its China Features (cf. chapter 3.2) service to release certain in-depth reports because those will be accepted more easily by foreign media.⁸ The ongoing media expansion that followed the announcement has been focused on both hard aspects and on soft aspects or, as one of the four deputy directors of the Office of External Propaganda (OEP)/State Council Information Office (SCIO), Wang Guoqing 王国庆, remarked in a twist on the common “grasp with two hands” slogan (cf. chapter 6.1): China needed to grasp hardware (*yingjian* 硬件) and software (*ruanjian* 软件) with both hands in order to be able to succeed.⁹ This means that the CPC has realized that while expanding the infrastructure and reach of its media is important, in order to become truly influential, media need to improve the quality of their content and boost their credibility.

This chapter will analyze institutional problems China’s new global media face within the overall Chinese bureaucracy as well as measures attempting to overcome those. Aside from the attempts to establish strong Chinese media players, I will also look at the strategies China has employed to deal with its main competitor: “Western mainstream media.” Thus, I will explain why, on the one hand, particularly quantitatively, China has been quite successful in its external propaganda media reform and why, on the other hand, serious obstacles remain that will be difficult to solve in the future, absent any more drastic institutional reforms, such as a weakening of the Central Propaganda Department’s (CPD) powers and a more substantial retreat of the Party-state from the media sector.

In this field, Party-owned media that work according to very different organizational and journalistic principles face significant problems. Concern about credibility and effectiveness manifests itself in the heightened attention paid to the

⁸ Cf. Hou Yingzhong 侯迎忠 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008), 23.

⁹ Wang Guoqing 王国庆, “Jianchi ‘ruan,’ ‘ying’ liang shou qi shua, nuli tigao woguo meiti guoji chuanbo nengli” 坚持“软”、“硬”两手齐抓 努力提高我国媒体国际传播能力 努力提高我国媒体国际传播能力 [Adhere to grasp with ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ both hands together, to make an effort to improve China’s media international dissemination capabilities], *Zhongguo guangbo dianshi xuekan* 中国广播电视学刊 [Academic journal on China’s radio and television], no. 10 (2010): 1.

question how to assess the effectiveness of China's mass media based external propaganda. To understand why this is and what the main issues are, I will first give a brief introduction to the media landscape in China at the Central level and thus provide an understanding of the system that China's global media players are a part of. In a second step, I will then introduce the most important *waixuan* media as well as their institutional affiliation within the system and analyze how the media are presented or branded to the outside world. In order to understand the concrete problems faced by *waixuan* media, I will analyze daily mechanisms of enforcing control. Finally, I will present and assess conflicting media values and examine how these play out in three areas that Chinese media have traditionally had difficulties with: Sudden events reporting, criticism of the Party and the government, and the language used, particularly in crisis situations.

9.1 The Media's Place in the Chinese Bureaucracy

Three structural transformations of the Chinese media sector are important to understand how media are organized and run today: commercialization, conglomerization and capitalization.¹⁰ These transformations are relatively well-studied with regard to their influence on the domestic media landscape.¹¹ Although the main impetus for these transformations was maintaining control over the domestic media, and external propaganda media and media groups at the central level by and large still depend on government subsidies, they have been affected by these trends to varying degrees.

¹⁰ For the three processes, see Xiaoling Zhang, "The Chinese Media in Historical Context," chapter two in *The Transformation of Political Communication in China: From Propaganda to Hegemony* (2011), 31-55. Also see Yuezhi Zhao, "Securing the Commanding Heights: Class, Power and the Transformation of the Party-State's Media and Culture Sector," chapter 2 in *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power and Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

¹¹ E.g. Yuezhi Zhao, *Media Market and Democracy: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Roya Akhavan-Majid, "Mass Media Reform in China: Toward a New Analytical Framework," *Gazette: The International Journal for Communications Studies* 66, no. 6 (2004): 553-565; Doris Fischer, "Censorship and Marketization: Institutional Change within China's Media," *Regime Legitimacy in Contemporary China: Institutional Change and Stability*, ed. Thomas Heberer and Gunter Schubert (London: Routledge, 2008), 175-196; Zhengrong Hu, "The Post-WTO Restructuring of the Chinese Media Industries and the Consequences of Capitalization," *The Public* 10, no. 4 (2003): 19-36; Chengju Huang, "Trace the Stones in Crossing the River: Media Structural Changes in Post-WTO China," *The International Communication Gazette* 69, no. 5 (2007): 413-430.

Commercialization (Meiti qiyehua 媒体企业化)

During the first half of the 1980s, the establishment of local media outlets was actively encouraged by the top leadership. After 1983, media outlets were placed under the supervision of governments at the central, provincial, municipal/regional, and county levels and delegated ownership and management rights to the local state. The large number of media outlets and subsequent competition led to an increase in investigative journalism as papers vied for readers' attention.¹² Following the crackdown at Tiananmen, the Chinese government searched for ways to reassert control over the media in the early 1990s. Initially, the government responded with a reinforcement of the licensing system¹³ and with large-scale closures of media outlets.¹⁴ In 1992, after Deng Xiaoping's 邓小平 Southern Tour, the State Press and Publication (SPPA), the predecessor of the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), issued a document that required all major newspapers, except central Party publications, to become financially self-supporting by 1994, beginning the process of marketization of the media.¹⁵ Around the same time, media were furthermore tied into the bureaucratic system through their formal affiliation with two units ("supervising unit" and "sponsoring unit") above them in the vertical hierarchy,¹⁶ meant to prevent the establishment of general interest papers (*zonghexing baozhi* 综合性报纸) that could rival Party papers.¹⁷

¹² Ashley Esarey, "Cornering the Market: State Strategies for Controlling China's Commercial Media," in *Discontented Miracle: Growth, Conflict, and Institutional Adaptations in China*, ed. Dali L. Yang (World Scientific Publishing Company, 2007), 3-6.

¹³ Cf. Yuezhi Zhao, "From Commercialization to Conglomeration: The Transformation of the Chinese Press within the Orbit of the Party State," *Journal of Communication* 50, no. 2 (June 2000): 6.

¹⁴ Cf. Esarey, "Cornering the Market: State Strategies for Controlling China's Commercial Media," 14.

¹⁵ Cf. Zhao, "From Commercialization to Conglomeration," 6.

¹⁶ In 1993, the State Press and Publication (SPPA), the direct predecessor of today's General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) promulgated the "Interim Provisions on the Responsibilities of Sponsoring Units and Supervising Units of Publishing Units" specifying the responsibilities and the relation between a publishing unit (*chuban danwei* 出版单位) and its supervising unit (*zhuguan danwei* 主管单位) as well as its sponsoring unit (*zhuban danwei* 主办单位). A publishing unit in China is defined as any unit publishing newspapers, magazines, books, or audiovisual material that is properly registered with GAPP in accordance with the relevant provisions, both of which need to be able to give binding orders to the publishing unit. The supervising unit and sponsoring unit are responsible to guarantee proper editing, publication, printing and distribution of the publication. The sponsoring unit and publishing unit should be located in the same city (or the same administrative region). If a publishing unit has more than one sponsoring unit, it needs to be specified which of the sponsoring units is ultimately responsible. The head of the publishing unit needs to be employed (*zai zhi ren yuan*

Media remained fully owned by the government, but began to be managed like commercial enterprises (*shiyew danwei qiye guanli* 事业单位企业管理).¹⁸ Aside from the fact that this fit into the overall alignment towards a more market-driven economy, it was also considered necessary because subsidised Party media often damaged the Party's reputation by selling low-quality news and propaganda through forced subscriptions.¹⁹ The commercialization of media, however, only created new problems for the Party. Though theoretically the state retained control over media activities through the licensing system, illegal private ownership of media emerged through secret business cooperation and the contracting out of licenses.²⁰ In addition, media managed like enterprises decreased advertising revenues for important Party media.²¹

Conglomerization (Meiti jitihua 媒体集体化)

The solution adopted by the Party-state to reassert control on the one hand and cut costs on the other was concentration of media ownership, which Herman and Chomsky define as a key feature of the current propaganda model of the Western media: conglomerization.²² Brady has argued that besides serving as a criticism of Western "press freedom," Chomsky and Herman's analysis of the propaganda model has also served as a blueprint for the reform of the Chinese

在职人员) at the sponsoring unit. The Supervising unit (*zhuguan danwei*) is the unit that made the application on behalf of the publishing unit at the time it was founded. It needs to be the supervising department (*shangji zhuguan bumen*) of the sponsoring unit. For publishing units at the central level, the supervising unit should have vice-ministerial rank or higher. The responsibilities of the supervising unit include: double-checking that the sponsoring unit does its work properly, and approving important (*zhongda* 重大) plans and publications. Sponsoring and supervising unit can be the same institutions; in this case the given unit fulfills both the sponsoring and the supervising unit's responsibilities. See "Guanyu chuban danwei de zhuban danwei he zhuguan danwei zhize de zanxing guiding" 关于出版单位的主办单位和主管单位职责的暂行规定 [Interim Provisions about the Responsibilities of Sponsoring Units and Supervising Units of Publishing Units], promulgated on June 29, 1993 by SPPA, available on *People's Daily* Online, <http://www.people.com.cn/electric/flfg/d2/930629.html>, accessed January 16, 2010.

¹⁷ Yuezhi Zhao, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 127.

¹⁸ See Xiaoling Zhang, *The Transformation of Political Communication in China: From Propaganda to Hegemony* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2011), 42.

¹⁹ Cf. Chengju Huang, "Trace the Stones in Crossing the River: Media Structural Changes in Post-WTO China," *The International Communication Gazette*, vol. 69, no. 5 (2007): 419.

²⁰ Cf. Zhao, "From Commercialization to Conglomeration," 6-7; Huang, "Trace the Stones in Crossing the River: Media Structural Changes in Post-WTO China," 419.

²¹ Zhang, *The Transformation of Political Communication in China*, 43-44.

²² Brady, Anne-Marie, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in the People's Republic of China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 114.

media and propaganda apparatus in the 1990s,²³ that is, for how to cut costs through concentration of media in a few conglomerates without having to relinquish control. In 1996, the Guangzhou Daily Group (*Guangzhou ribao baoye jituan* 广州日报报业集团) was approved as China's first press group and served as a pilot project that was carefully studied by top politicians before the decision was made to create further conglomerates.²⁴ Lee notes that this was a "peculiar reversal of policy" as the Communist Party had previously denounced press conglomerization in the West as a means for the capitalist class to control public opinion.²⁵ In fact, this reversal from initial denunciation to embracing a measure is a typical pattern in Chinese media reform that can also be observed in other areas, such as media localization (*bentuhua* 本土化).²⁶

Shortly after conglomerization was officially launched on a trial basis, it was boosted through a number of focusing events. First, after the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, the overall growth of advertising revenue had dropped below 20%, and CCTV's advertising revenue decreased for the first time since 1990.²⁷ These statistics served as an indicator to policy makers that the media industry had reached a bottleneck and that restructuring was necessary to solve the problem.²⁸ Furthermore, as indicated above, with the impending World Trade Organization (WTO) accession, the government feared that China's domestic media would be

²³ Ibid., 69.

²⁴ Yuezhi Zhao, "The State, the Market, and Media Control in China," in *Who Owns the Media? Global Trends and Local Resistances*, eds. Pradip Thomas, Zahorom Nain, and Peter Golding (London: Zed Books, 2004), 193.

²⁵ Chin-chuan Lee, "Chinese Communication: Prisms, Trajectories, and Modes of Understanding," in *Power, Money, and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, ed. Lee (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 12.

²⁶ Today, as will be seen below, this strategy is pursued by most Chinese external propaganda media, whereas in 2002, China's main concern was still with preventing foreign media from pursuing "localization" in China, for instance by hiring Chinese anchors. "Zhao Qizheng zhuren shuo, waixuan gongzuo de zhongdian shi zai guoji yulun zhong biaoda Zhongguo de shengyin" 赵启正主任说，外宣工作的重点是在国际舆论中表达中国的声音 [Director Zhao says, the focus of propaganda work is to express the voice of China in the international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考 [External propaganda reference], no. 9 (2002): 3.

²⁷ Cf. Ruoyun Bai, "Media Commercialization, Entertainment, and the Party State: The Political Economy of Contemporary Chinese Television Entertainment Culture," *Global Media Journal*, vol. 4, no. 6 (Spring 2005), available online at <http://lass.purduecal.edu/cca/gmj/sp05/graduatesp05/gmj-sp05gradinv-bai.htm>, accessed February 5, 2013.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

placed at the mercy of powerful global media conglomerates.²⁹ The formation of conglomerates further opened the possibility for profitable papers to cross-subsidize unprofitable but important party papers,³⁰ an arrangement that is, for instance, used by the *People's Daily* Group that runs more than twenty papers and periodicals.³¹

External propaganda media are not excluded from the trend towards conglomerization: The *China Daily* is part of the China Daily Group (*Zhongguo ribao baoye jituan* 中国日报报业集团, also known as the *Zhongguo ribao she* 中国日报社),³² the *People's Daily Overseas edition* and the *Global Times* are part of the People's Daily Group (*Renmin ribao baoye jituan* 人民日报报业集团, the external "commercial face", more commonly known as the *Renmin ribao she* 人民日报社),³³ and CCTV and CRI are part of the China Radio, Film and Television Group (*Zhongguo guangbo dianying dianshi jituan* 中国广播电影电视集团, the commercial face of the State Administration for Radio Film and Television, SARFT) established in 2001.³⁴

In the reform process, China systematically studied media conglomerates in other parts of the world. For instance, one article stated that there are three types of entities, government-owned, public, and commercial. Of the three, the latter two are clearly strongest and the most influential with regard to controlling public opinion (*kongzhi yulun daoxiang* 控制舆论导向), market penetration (*shichang zhanyouliu* 市场占有率), and operating funds (*zijin yunying* 资金运营).

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.* Also see Li Xingwen 黎兴文, "'Ru shi' jiang gei waixuan gongzuo dailai de jiyu he tiaozhan" "入世"将给外宣工作带来的机遇与挑战 [Chances and challenges brought to external propaganda work by entering the WTO], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2001): 32.

³⁰ Cf. Bai, "Media Commercialization, Entertainment, and the Party State."

³¹ Cf. "Baoshe jianjie" 报社简介 [Brief introduction of the paper] <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/50142/104580/index.html>, accessed February 12, 2013. These papers do not make the People's Daily profitable or even self-sufficient, but they help alleviate some of the financial burden of the People's Daily itself.

³² See "About China Daily," <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cd/introduction.html>, accessed February 12, 2013.

³³ "Baoshe jianjie."

³⁴ Cf. "State Radio, Film and Television Conglomerate Established" December 7, 2001. http://english.people.com.cn/200112/06/eng20011206_86070.shtml, accessed June 30, 2012. Also see Jiang Fei and Huang Kuo, "Transnational Media Corporations and National Culture as a Security Concern in China," in *Security and Everyday Life*, ed. Vida Bajc (New York: Routledge, 2009), 225.

They were, therefore, the “mainstream” (*zhuliu* 主流) of world media groups.³⁵ However, despite such observations, conglomerization did not equal privatization of the media. According to a policy document from 2002, all media conglomerates belong to the Propaganda Departments at the respective levels in the bureaucracy and are therefore Party owned.³⁶

Media also continue to be governed by the rules of the Chinese bureaucratic system. Each medium has its own administrative rank that determines its position vis-à-vis other units. In addition, their access to information, the strictness with which they are controlled, and the scope of its distribution are determined by the administrative level of the Party Committee they belong to, i.e. national, provincial, prefectural, etc.³⁷ For instance, the People’s Daily Group and Xinhua have ministerial rank, while CCTV, and the China Daily Group have vice-ministerial rank; however, all of them are national media, i.e. media owned by the Central Committee and financed through the central budget. Allocations of budgets are usually done through the propaganda departments (which simultaneously have a leading relationship over the media unit) of the party committee at the respective level.³⁸

³⁵ “Guowai meiti jituan fazhan de zhuyao tedian he qushi (yi)” 国外媒体集团发展的主要特点和趋势 (一) [The main characteristics and trends of the development of media conglomerates abroad], *Neibu tongxin* 内部通信 [Internal communication], no. 9 (2001): 16.

³⁶ Zhao, “The State, the Market, and Media Control in China,” 196. I have not been able to get a hold of this internal document (which should be abbreviated as 中央发 [2002] 17 号文件 in Chinese) and am therefore not sure what the exact formulation is. However, the idea that CPD should have the final say over media groups seems in line with China’s overall media policy and is confirmed through studies based on interviews, such as Lee, Chin-chuan, Zhou He, and Yu Huang, “‘Chinese Party Publicity Inc.’ Conglomerated: The Case of the Shenzhen Press Group,” *Media, Culture & Society* 28, no. 4 (2006): 581-602.

³⁷ Cf. Zhongguo renquan yanjiu zhongxin 中国人权研究中心 [Human rights in China], *Zhongguo zhengfu ruhe kongzhi meiti* 中国政府如何控制媒体 [Parallel English title: Media control in China] (2004) http://ir2008.org/PDF/initiatives/Internet/Media-Control_Chinese.pdf, accessed December 17, 2012, 30-33. Also see Zhongdang Pan, “Improvising Reform Activities: The Changing Reality of Journalistic Practice in China,” in *Power, Money, and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, ed. Chin-chuan Lee (Evanston: North Western University Press, 2000), 77 for the importance attached to the administrative level of a media unit.

³⁸ Cf. Lee, He, and Huang, “Chinese Party Publicity Inc.” In other words, media are part of the Party bureaucracy, not the State bureaucracy. This is also corroborated by the fact that heads of media units mentioned that before conglomerization, they dealt directly with their respective propaganda departments, while after conglomerization, they have to go through their mother unit (Lee, He and Huang, “Chinese Party Publicity Inc”). This again reconfirms that media units answer to propaganda departments, both in terms of professional matters as well as in terms of budgets.

Capitalization (Meiti chanyehua 媒体产业化)

As demonstrated above (Chapter 6.6), the credibility problem of Chinese media abroad has been used by policy entrepreneurs to push for increased capitalization and even privatization of the media. While commercialization and conglomerization were adopted, the CPC has so far largely resisted pressure for privatization of the media. Instead, it began a process of strictly controlled capitalization.

In 2002, the Central Government laid the groundwork for subsequent regulations that officially allowed non-public investment in the media sector by separating editorial departments (*caibian zhineng bumen* 采编职能部门) and operating departments (*guanli zhineng bumen* 管理职能部门).³⁹ Editorial work units were to remain completely Party-controlled, while operational units could be transformed into commercial enterprises. They were first opened to non-media State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) capital and two years later, in 2004, to direct domestic and indirect foreign non-public investment⁴⁰ through the formation of joint ventures in which foreign capital could not exceed 49% of the shares.⁴¹

External propaganda media have clearly begun separating editorial departments from market operations, allowing the latter to operate as companies, including abroad, that can cooperate with foreign media more easily.⁴² More recently, there have also been first experiments with listing some of these companies on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKSE).⁴³ But this does not affect editorial departments at all. Thus, although non-public capital was allowed in the 21st century, including in limited experiments with media primarily targeting foreigners, the Party continues to own the controlling share of each medium. The idea that the Party must own the media has been one of the core tenets of the CPC. In addition, the experience of the Soviet Union (S.U.) has long served as a

³⁹ Chengju Huang, "Trace the Stones in Crossing the River," 423.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 424. Before August 2005, a number of informal arrangements allowed on an ad hoc basis existed, but after the release of a "clarifying" document, the rules have been more strictly enforced.

⁴² Cf. Huang Jingwei 黄静玮 Xu Xiaodan 徐小丹, "Chuangxin duiwai chuanbo fangshi fangfa" 创新对外传播方式方法 [Innovative ways and means of external communication], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 1 (2012): 14. Also see Hou Yingzhong and Guo Guanghua, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao*, 63.

⁴³ The operating company behind Xinhua's new TV network, CNC World, was listed in February 2012. Cf. "Xinhua affiliate begins trading in Hong Kong," website of the BBC, February 8, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-16939808>, accessed January 18, 2013.

powerful veto argument against any attempts to genuinely privatize the media. Between 2006 and 2010, a number of articles were published reaffirming the need to remain careful not to relinquish too much control and make the same mistakes as the S.U.⁴⁴ More recently (2011-2013), this orthodoxy has come under attack on unofficial platforms, such as blogs,⁴⁵ but also by media scholars.⁴⁶

Towards Privatization (Meiti siyouthua 媒体私有化)?

There is a concrete reason for the renewed debate over whether or not media privatization directly contributed to the S.U.'s demise: In October 2007, Liu Binjie 柳斌杰, the director of GAPP at the time, announced that he supported “comprehensive media listing” (*meiti zhengti shangshi* 媒体整体上市), i.e. no longer separating editorial and operating departments, instead allowing private capital in both. The first test cases followed suit soon after.⁴⁷ The CPC has long shown an interest in how others like the United States (U.S.) government exert

⁴⁴ Articles publically available include Tang Xiude 唐修哲, “Yulun shikong – Sulian jieti de cuihuaaji” 舆论失控——苏联解体的催化剂 [Loss of control over public opinion – A catalyst for the disintegration of the Soviet Union], *Xiandai chuanbo* 现代传播 [Modern communication], no. 1 (2006): 107-109; Wang Zhenyi 王贞一, “Lun xinwen de ‘gongkaxing’ – Sulian jieti de yulun fubi” 论新闻的“公开性”——苏联解体的舆论伏笔 [On the ‘openness’ of the press – Public opinion paved the way for the disintegration of the Soviet Union], *Xinwen tiandi (lunwenban)* 新闻天地(论文版) [News universe (thesis edition)], no. 5 (2008): 69-70; Zhao Qiang 赵强, “Yulun shikong: Sulian jieti de cuihuaaji” 舆论失控: 苏联解体的催化剂 [Loss of control over public opinion: A catalyst for the disintegration of the Soviet Union], *Qiushi* online, November 1, 2010, originally published in *Qiushi*, no. 21, 2010, http://www.qstheory.cn/zxdk/2010/201021/201010/t20101030_54269.htm, accessed February 5, 2013. Also see Li Shenming 李慎明 et al, “Sugong wangdang lishi jingyan jiaoxun” 苏共亡党历史经验教训 [Lessons learned from the history of the fall of the Soviet Communist Party], <http://www.wyzxsx.com/Article/Class14/200804/36170.html>, accessed June 3, 2011.

⁴⁵ “Long de chuanren” 龙的传人 [Descendants of the dragon], “Sulian zhi suo yi bengkui, he kaifang yulun meiyou zhijie de guanxi” 苏联之所以崩溃, 和放开舆论没有直接的关系 [There is no direct relation between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the liberalization of public opinion], blog entry. January 1, 2013, <http://blog.udn.com/tigerdemi/7189544>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁴⁶ Pan Xianghui 潘祥辉, “Lun Sulian jieti zhong de chuanbo shiling yinsu - Jian bo Sulian jieti de yulun shikong shuo” 论苏联解体中的传播失灵因素——兼驳苏联解体的“舆论失控说” [On the factor of failure of communication in the disintegration of the Soviet Union - With a simultaneous refutation of the theory that the Soviet Union collapsed because of loss of control over public opinion], *Ai sixiang*, <http://www.aisixiang.com/data/56699.html>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁴⁷ Cf. “Comprehensive Media Listing” 媒体整体上市 [Meiti zhengti shangshi] in *China Media Project Media Dictionary*, <http://cmp.hku.hk/2007/12/13/793/>, accessed December 29, 2012.

control over the media without directly owning them,⁴⁸ and the interest in at least experimenting with privatization seems genuine. However, the policy is still in the test phase. In 2011, after news leaked that 13 more media conglomerates were preparing to be listed comprehensively, an article in the media theory section of *People's Daily Online* cautioned against proceeding too fast while the policy and possible adverse effects were not yet clear. Since then, it looks as if the policy is indeed moving towards the next stage, that of the line (*xian* 线). In February 2012, GAPP issued an “Opinion” on speeding up the transformation of publishing media groups, encouraging comprehensive listing for publishing groups.⁴⁹ Needless to say, however, the expansion of the policy is limited to the publishing sector and does not include news media groups.⁵⁰

Thus, commercialization and conglomerization have not changed Party control and Party ownership of the media, and comprehensive listing is still in a test phase. More importantly, even if reforms progressed faster, the ownership of central level core Party news media would be least likely to be affected.⁵¹

⁴⁸ E.g. Li Zhi 李智, *Guoji zhengzhi chuanbo: Kongzhi yu xiaoguo* 国际政治传播: 控制与效果 [Parallel English title: International Political Communication: Control and Effects] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), 63-109.

⁴⁹ 《关于加快出版传媒集团改革发展的指导意见》 Cf. Cao Hong 曹虹, “Xinwen chuban zongshu: zhichi chuban chuanmei jituan zhengti shangshi” 新闻出版总署: 支持出版传媒集团整体上市 [GAPP: Supporting the comprehensive listing of publishing groups], *Dongfang zaobao*, <http://finance.ifeng.com/ipo/xgyw/20120227/5665811.shtml>, accessed January 18, 2013. These groups are called *Chuban chuanmei jituan* 出版传媒集团, but they are not involved in news operations, only publishing.

⁵⁰ Even for publishing work, this can still be considered a significant step. Publishing work is seen as an “important social and cultural activity” that is vital for the Party’s ability to correctly guide public opinion, for the moral and scientific education of the population and to strengthen the unity of the Chinese people. Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju 中共中央宣传部干部局 [Cadre Bureau of the Central Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee], ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo* 新时期宣传思想工作 [Propaganda and thought work in the new period] (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2006), 69. Historically, control over printing and publishing facilities proved a very effective means to control the content that could reach people. Much of the policy to strictly control all publishing activities was probably already transmitted to China on the basis of the experience of the CPSU in its first months in power in 1917 when printing facilities were scarce and control over them was a vital means to get support. Cf. Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 41-42.

⁵¹ An article on the topic from 2010 explained that a prerequisite before comprehensive listing was to check the “nature” (*xingzhi* 性质) of the medium; for Party papers and Party journals, there was currently no need for public listing. Zeng Fanbin 曾凡斌 and Zhang Rong 张荣, “Meiti de zhengti shangshi – Yi chuban chuanmei wei li” 媒体的整体上市探析——以出版传媒为例 [Comprehensive media listing - publishing media as an example], *Bianji zhi you* 编辑之友 [Parallel English title: *Editorial Friend*], no. 7(2010): 36.

Although external propaganda media are often presented as particularly open or as precursors for other media in China,⁵² they are controlled more strictly. First, they have traditionally been more “political” than most (though not all) domestic media. As a leading cadre from Shandong said in 1994, “the policy nature [*zhengcexing* 政策性] of external propaganda is stronger [than for domestic propaganda]; all external propaganda needs to be subordinate to and serve China’s overall foreign policy.”⁵³ Second, although China clearly plans to increase the number, currently, there are only very few media primarily targeting foreigners, and they are concentrated at the Center. This makes them generally easier to control and to keep in check. Thus, while the needs of external propaganda may convince the CPC to implement certain reforms, external propaganda media are unlikely to implement drastic reforms for which they have no backing from the Party Center.

China’s Foreign Language Media: Reality versus Self-Presentation

As explained above, at the 2003 external propaganda conference, Li Bing 李冰 told participants that especially when Chinese news organizations cooperated with foreign news organizations they should “appear with their commercial face” (*tebie shi yu waiguo hezuo yi shangye mianmao chuxian* 特别是与外国合作以商业面貌出现).⁵⁴ In order to analyze what strategies China is actually pursuing in order to brand its media and possibly reduce the stigma attached to its Party-owned media, I will introduce the main *waixuan* media and contrast their place within the bureaucracy with their changing self-representation.

⁵² E.g. Zhongshi Guo and Yu Huang, “Hybridized Discourse: Social Openness and Functions of English Media in Post-Mao China,” *World Englishes* 21, no. 2 (July 2002): 217-230; Tan Hongkai, “China Daily,” in *China Ink: The Changing Face of Chinese Journalism*, eds. Judy Polunbaum and Xiong Lei (Lanham et al., Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 55.

⁵³ “Dong Fengji tongzhi zai shengwei duiwai xuanchuan lianxihui di yi ci huiyi shang de jiang hua” 董凤基同志在省委对外宣传联系会第一次会议上的讲话 [Comrade Dong Fengji’s speech at the first meeting of the Joint Council for external propaganda of the provincial party committee], March 24, 1994, in *Shandongsheng duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo wenjian ziliao huibian* 山东省对外宣传工作文件资料汇编, vol. 1, 77.

⁵⁴ Benkan teyue jizhe 本刊特约记者, “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuanguangxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi.” 体现时代性 把握规律性 富于创造性——记 2003 年全国外宣工作会议 [Embody the characteristics of the times, grasp the rules, be rich in innovation – Notes from the nationwide work meeting for external propaganda in 2003], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2003): 3.

China Central Television (CCTV), China's national television station, which has several channels involved in external propaganda, is a vice-ministerial unit under direct control of the SARFT. To the outside world, it is often presented as part of the China Media Group (*Zhongguo guangbo dianying dianshi jituan* 中国广播电影电视集团), which functions as the “commercial face” of SARFT.⁵⁵ CCTV, in turn, fully owns China International Television Corporation (*Zhongguo guoji dianshi zong gongsi* 中国国际电视总公司), founded in 1984 and reorganized in 1997, a SOE which controls imports and exports of TV programs and is the only company licensed to sell the rights to CCTV's productions abroad.⁵⁶ Its most important foreign language channel is CCTV-News, formerly CCTV-International or CCTV-9. In 2004, CCTV as a whole was presented as “the national television station of the People's Republic of China.”⁵⁷ Currently, CCTV-News is presented online as “the English language news channel of China Central Television (CCTV), the nation's largest national broadcasting network.”⁵⁸ Thus, the self-presentation over the last few years has been somewhat ambiguous, neither acknowledging the fact that CCTV is owned by the Party-state, nor trying very hard to conceal the fact that it has government ties.

China Radio International (CRI), which broadcasts in 61 different languages, is a unit of vice-ministerial rank also under direct control of the SARFT. In 2003, its website introduced the radio service as aimed at “promoting understanding and friendship between the people of China and people throughout

⁵⁵ In a typical arrangement of “one organization with two nameplates” (*yi ge jigou, liang kuai paizi* 一个机构，两块牌子) or “one set of people, two nameplates” (*yi tao banzi, liang kuai paizi* 一套班子，两块牌子), an arrangement that is also replicated at lower levels. Cf. Zhang Jianhua 章剑华, “Qiangzhan xianji bawo zhudong – Jiangsu guangdian shishi jituanhua gaige de chubu shijian” 抢占先机 把握主动 ——江苏广电实施集团化改革的初步实践 [Seize the opportunity, grasp the initiative – First practical (experience) of Jiangsu Radio and Television implementing conglomerization], *Xinwen zhanxian* 新闻战线 [News front], no. 7 (2002), available on *People's Daily Online*, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper79/6821/664705.html>, accessed March 3, 2013.

⁵⁶ Cf. “Gongsi jieshao” 公司介绍 [Introduction to the company], Website of the China International Television Corporation, <http://www.citvc.com/04/03/index.shtml>, accessed August 13, 2012.

⁵⁷ “About Us, CCTV (China Central Television),” May 8, 2003, archived version from February 2, 2013, <http://web.archive.org/web/20031204051409/http://www.cctv.com/english/20030805/101215.shtml>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁵⁸ “CCTV News, Your Link to Asia,” April 26, 2010, <http://english.cntv.cn/20100426/104481.shtml>, accessed February 5, 2013.

the world”⁵⁹ and as “one of the most influential international broadcasting stations in the world,”⁶⁰ without mentioning any affiliation to the Party-state. By 2009, the self-introduction had added a note that CRI was “owned and operated by the state.”⁶¹ Today, it continues to be introduced as “a state-run radio station broadcasting to a global audience.”⁶²

Xinhua News Agency, the national news agency, has ministerial rank and is officially under the State Council, although it has a Party Group that controls it. In 2010, Xinhua launched its own television channel, China Xinhua News Network Corporation (CNC) World.⁶³ Xinhua’s website, Xinhuanet, shows the most important changes in self-representation. Before 2003, the only link to the government was the remark that Xinhua was the “state news agency” of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).⁶⁴ In 2003, in a counter-intuitive move, the “About us” section was changed as part of a major makeover to include a section called “Concept” that remained on the website between 2003 and June 2006. Aside from being written in awkward English that sticks closely to the original Chinese text, the “Concept” section also linked Xinhua to the CPC and acknowledged the existence of a leading party group within the news agency.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ “CRI Online,” archived version from February 5, 2013, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030201133514/http://www.cri.com.cn/>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁶⁰ “Who Are We? The English Service of China Radio International,” archived version from February 1, 2003, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030210093719/http://crioracle.cri.com.cn/english/aboutus/index.htm>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁶¹ “Who We Are?,” archived version from March 4, 2009, http://web.archive.org/web/20090222161111/http://english.cri.cn/about_us/who-we-are.htm, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁶² “About China Radio International,” September 20, 2012, <http://english.cri.cn/11114/2012/09/20/1261s723239.htm>, accessed February 5, 2013. The same applies for the self-introduction in German. “Radio China International,” <http://german.cri.cn/info/cri.htm>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁶³ “Xinhua launches CNC World English channel,” Xinhuanet, July 1, 2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-07/01/c_13378575.htm, accessed June 27, 2012.

⁶⁴ “Brief Introduction to Xinhua News Agency,” archived version from May 10, 2000, <http://web.archive.org/web/20000511224506/www.xinhua.org/english/index.htm>.

⁶⁵ “Xinhuanet.com [sic!] consistent principle is to persist in giving top priority to national interests, unwaveringly uphold correct guidance to public opinion and safeguard the authenticity, authoritativeness and objectivity of news reporting. ‘Making Xinhuanet.com more influential and bigger as soon as possible’ is the ardent expectation of the Party Central Committee on Xinhuanet.com. Never resting on success and keeping growing are the requirements posed by Leading Party Group of the Xinhua News Agency. Keeping pace with the times and seeking the outstanding are the consensus of all Xinhuanet.com employees. [...] Xinhuanet.com will continue to develop vigorously, boldly make innovations and make steady progress. It will bear in mind its duties and tasks, and make every possible effort to fulfill the historical mission of

After June 2006, the self-introduction was changed into a simpler format that focused only on the website, introducing *Xinhuanet*'s achievements. This self-introduction is still online and updated periodically. Xinhua News Agency itself, in stark contrast to the Chinese version of *Xinhuanet*,⁶⁶ is not introduced at all. Today, the status of Xinhua as the state news agency is not denied for obvious reasons; however, attempts are made to show Xinhua's official website from its "commercial face" by explaining that since 2010, *Xinhuanet* has been transforming itself into a corporation.⁶⁷ **CNC World**'s self-presentation online is ambiguous: On the one hand, it even introduces the institutional arrangement of "one organization with two nameplates" (*yi ge jigou liang kuai paizi* 一个机构两块牌子): "The CNC is based in Xinhua headquarters in Beijing. CNC and Xinhua's TV Department are the same institution under different names."⁶⁸ On the other hand, Xinhua News Agency itself is not introduced on the TV channel's website.

China News Service (CNS), unlike Xinhua, is not under the direct authority of the State Council. No information about its place within the bureaucracy seems to be available from official sources, but a number of unofficial websites state that it is under the authority of the State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (OCAO).⁶⁹ China News Service now also has an English language website that introduces the news agency as "a state-level news agency sponsored and established by Chinese journalists and renowned overseas Chinese experts on October 1, 1952."⁷⁰ The English version does not replicate the

'publicizing China and reporting the world' and scale new heights in the network field." ("Concept," *Xinhuanet*, archived version from May 26, 2006, http://web.archive.org/web/20060430021318/www.xinhuanet.com/english/aboutus_e4.htm).

⁶⁶ See "Guanyu Xinhuashe" 关于新华社 [About Xinhua News Agency], <http://203.192.6.89/xhs/>, accessed March 3, 2013.

⁶⁷ "Starting from 2010, Xinhuanet began transforming itself from a governmental cultural institution to an enterprise, operating in the entity of the Xinhua Network Corporation Limited. In May 2011, the Xinhuanet Corporation LTD was officially established." ("Brief Introduction to Xinhuanet," http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/special/2011-11/28/c_131274495.htm, accessed June 28, 2012).

⁶⁸ "An Introduction to CNC: CNC's Corporate Governance," <http://www.cncworld.tv/about/>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁶⁹ Cf. "Zhongxinshe zhuguan bumen shi shenme danwei" 中新社 主管部门是什么单位?, <http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/150709461.html?fr=qrl&cid=84&index=1>, accessed March 3, 2013. "Guanyu Zhongxinshe you ge wenti qingjiao dajia" 关于中新社有个问题请教大家", <http://home.donews.com/donews/forum/7/2003-08/12/374953.html>, accessed March 3, 2013.

⁷⁰ "About us," <http://www.ecns.cn/aboutus.shtml>, accessed January 13, 2013.

Chinese version, as the self-introduction highlights, but provides “firsthand data and insight into life in China.”⁷¹

China Daily Agency is a service unit of vice-ministerial rank (equivalent in rank to the *Guangming Daily*). In English, it is now officially known as the China Daily Media Group. It owns twelve different English language print publications plus one national level key news website (*guojia zhongdian xinwen wangzhan* 国家重点新闻网站, namely the *China Daily Online*).⁷² There are some uncertainties which unit the *China Daily* currently belongs to, and naturally, no such information has been published by official sources in recent years. In its initial stages, the *China Daily* belonged to the *People’s Daily* Agency. Between 1988 and February 1994, it was “hosted”⁷³ by the CPD.⁷⁴ As the *China Daily* is a media group, and Document 17 states that all media groups belong to the respective propaganda departments at their administrative level,⁷⁵ the China Daily Group should theoretically be fully owned by the CPD. However, two (admittedly unreliable) sources state that the *China Daily* is under the authority of OEP/SCIO. The first writes that the China Daily Group is directly under the authority of SCIO (*zhishu guowuyuan waixuanban* 直属国务院外宣办)⁷⁶ and the second that the *China Daily* is supervised (*zhuban* 主办) by the China Daily Group and that

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² According to Brady, the China Daily Agency is largely able to finance itself through one of its subsidiaries, *21st Century*, which is aimed at Chinese learners of English. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 168.

⁷³ *Daiwei guanli* 代为管理 (often shortened to *daiguan* 代管 in official documents), refers to a highly restricted form of leadership of one unit over another. A unit managed thus is called affiliated institution (*guakao jigou* 挂靠机构). Affiliated units are located on the premises of the unit managing them (which might also be responsible for some of its administrative work) but have their own seal and a fairly large amount of freedom regarding personnel, administration, and finances. As opposed to directly subordinate units (*zhishu jigou* 直属机构), they may also directly send documents and receive documents from the State Council or the Central Committee, without having to go through the unit that manages them. Cf. Yu Keping 俞可平, *Dangdai geguo zhengzhi tizhi – Zhongguo* 当代各国政治体制—中国 [Current political systems of various countries: China] (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 1998), 93. The arrangement of *daiwei guanli* is mostly used for smaller units in order to save office space and other resources (Cf. “Ge lei jigou jianjie” 各类机构简介 [Introduction of various (types of) structures], <http://www.xjem.gov.cn/bw/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=10967>, accessed Aug 18, 2010).

⁷⁴ *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 231.

⁷⁵ Cf. Ruoyun Bai, “Media Commercialization, Entertainment, and the Party State.”

⁷⁶ Which in itself is not quite correct, it is either called *Guowuyuan xinwenban* 国务院新闻办 or *Zhongyang waixuanban* 中央外宣办. <http://wenwen.soso.com/z/q188994546.htm>.

OEP/SCIO is its sponsoring unit (*zhuguan danwei* 主管单位).⁷⁷ Since the *China Daily* is a foreign propaganda media, it is not completely unlikely that OEP/SCIO is actually ultimately responsible for it.

Online, the paper is introduced as “China’s national English-language newspaper.”⁷⁸ The first “About us” section from May 2000 indirectly linked the web platform of the paper, *China Daily Online*, to the government by stating that the site was “designated by the Chinese government as one of the country’s five key media websites.”⁷⁹ By 2012, the connection to party or state had been entirely eliminated. The website of the *China Daily* introduces the China Daily Group with 12 different print media in its “About us” section.⁸⁰ The *China Daily* is introduced as the “leading English-language news organization in China.” Party or state ownership is not mentioned.

The People’s Daily Agency, presented as the People’s Daily Group, is a service unit of ministerial rank directly under the authority of the Central Committee. One of its publications is the *People’s Daily Overseas Edition*, which has vice-ministerial rank.⁸¹ On its online platform, *Renminwang*, the *People’s Daily* is tied to the party (as well as to the state).⁸² Previous introductions presented the *People’s Daily* itself as “a newspaper leading the others in China” that “reflects the views of the Chinese people, expounds on justice and lambasts various forms of malpractice.”⁸³ Currently, the *People’s Daily* is, in the first place introduced as “one of the world’s top ten newspapers,” but praise by Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 of the *People’s Daily Online* as “advocating the Party’s belief, guiding public opinion and warmly serving netizens in the years since inception”⁸⁴ is added in the same paragraph. The People’s Daily and the online platform of the

⁷⁷ <http://www.bjlccm.com/photonei.asp?id=280>.

⁷⁸ “About us,” http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/2011-04/13/content_12319449.htm, accessed February 6, 2013.

⁷⁹ [Chinadaily.com.cn](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn). Archived version from January 24, 2002. <http://web.archive.org/web/20011217180245/www1.chinadaily.com.cn/static/function/aboutus.html>

⁸⁰ “About China Daily,” <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cd/introduction.html>, accessed May 20, 2012.

⁸¹ *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao bianshen weiyuanhui, Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhishi ziliao*, vol. 7, 255.

⁸² “About us,” <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102840/7560415.html>, accessed May 20, 2012.

⁸³ “People’s Daily Online,” archived version from October 18, 2000, <http://web.archive.org/web/20001018093921/http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/about/aboutus.html>, accessed February 5, 2013.

⁸⁴ “Introduction to People’s Daily Online,” website of People’s Daily Online, <http://english.people.com.cn/102840/7560415.html>, accessed March 3, 2013.

People's Daily Group are therefore mainly presented as "authoritative" *because* of their party/state ties. Despite the conglomerization and presentation of the People's Daily Agency as the People's Daily Group, the fame of the paper as the mouthpiece of the CPC would prevent any other strategy. The need to appeal to foreign audiences is offset by the need to pledge loyalty to the Party.

This does not, however, apply to one of the subsidiaries of the *People's Daily*, the ***Global Times***. Published since 2009, it is the English edition of the *Huanqiu shibao* 环球时报, a unit directly under the People's Daily Agency. The English and Chinese editions are very different; however: Compared to the highly nationalist Chinese paper, the English version sounds very restrained, although by and large, it is still more nationalistic than the *China Daily*. The *Global Times* English online edition was launched in April 2009, providing fewer different self-introductions to compare. Nonetheless, the self-presentation has changed drastically. In 2009 and 2010, it was presented as a "new reliable channel for Chinese people and the rest of the world to understand one another, [...] expressing Chinese people's real feelings, sharing their opinions and standpoints on significant international issues and promoting their understanding of the global views on China."⁸⁵ While the paper was marketed as "the people's voice" from the very beginning, today, the *Global Times* has a much more "trendy," buzzword rich introduction which stresses the following themes:

1. GT is a key to understanding China, which "changes every day."
2. GT is read by the Chinese and international elite and future elite.
3. GT is different from traditional Chinese media. This is not explicitly spelled out, but hinted at by stating that GT provides "in-depth coverage of controversial stories, from child AIDS victims to urban renewal, forced demolition and the fight against corruption."
4. GT is "essential reading for every China-watcher."
5. Foreign media consider the GT a "trustworthy source."

It is needless to say that no connection to the party-state is mentioned in the self-introduction, although the link is has been mentioned in official Xinhua news

⁸⁵ "About us," archived version from January 13, 2010, http://web.archive.org/web/20100330040302/http://www.globaltimes.cn/www/english/about_us/index.html, accessed February 6, 2013.

releases.⁸⁶ The introduction also fails to mention that *Global Times* is part of the People's Daily Group, as association with the official party mouthpiece would have a similar effect as linking it to the party-state.⁸⁷

The weekly *Beijing Review* and monthly *China Today* are both subordinate units (*jushu danwei* 局属单位) of the Foreign Language Office (FLO)/China International Publishing Group (CIPG), which is, in turn, under direct leadership of OEP/SCIO. Thus, while *Beijing Review* and *China Today* used to be presented very differently to the outside world (one as an official and the other as a “popular” magazine), they are under the same leadership. The difference is no longer stressed as much today; the *Beijing Review* is dubbed “the only national newsmagazine in English.” Both are presented as subsidiaries of the CIPG, which appears with its “commercial face.”

In August 2008, the first issue of the new English edition of the Chinese journal *China Newsweek* (*Zhongguo xinwen zhoukan* 中国新闻周刊), called *NewsChina Magazine*, was published. Like the *Global Times*, *NewsChina Magazine* is presented as a fashionable modern journal explaining a vibrant country on the move to foreigners.⁸⁸ The self-introduction explains “This brand-new magazine will show you a China in transformation. We are not used to lecturing or moralizing. We like to present news in an honest and open way, crafted as if we were telling a story.”⁸⁹ This is, of course, nothing but a relatively good “translation” of the instructions that have been given regularly to external propaganda working workers since the 1980s. Nonetheless, like the *Global Times*, *NewsChina* is also branded as entirely independent and a journal presenting a rising and vibrant country without shirking controversial issues.

With regard to their presentation and their closeness to the CPC and the Chinese government, different media have pursued different strategies, or rather, taken on different roles. The results of the analysis show a trend to distinguish between two clear and two ambiguous branding strategies: First, a number of media are branded as authoritative, credible and reliable because, not in spite of,

⁸⁶ E.g. “Bo’s downfall result of inflated sense of influence: Global Times,” Xinhua General News Service, April 20, 2012, accessed via Lexis Nexis.

⁸⁷ “About the Global Times,” <http://www.globaltimes.cn/AboutUs.aspx>, accessed May 20, 2012.

⁸⁸ Cf. “About us,” <http://www.newschinamag.com/about-us>, accessed December 20, 2012.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

their connection to the party-state. Examples include Xinhua, the *People's Daily*, CNS, and CRI. In these cases, the fact that China has state media is presented as a normal practice that is done by many other countries. Second, another batch of media is branded as commercial, independent, modern, and audacious. Examples are the *Global Times* and *China Newsweek*. In these cases, the Party-state connection is de-emphasized or veiled without having to lie. When media, such as the China Daily Group, appear with their “commercial face,” this is no outright lie, either. The China Daily Group exists legally; it simply has no say over editorial choices, but is only in charge of commercial aspects of operations. Third, there are media which are currently still affiliated with their sponsoring unit, but which are not branded as authoritative and might be disassociated in the future. These are CNTV, Xinhua's TV channel CNC World, and the *China Today*. Fourth, there are media that are presented as “national”: “China's national English language newspaper” (the *China Daily*), the “largest national broadcasting network” (CCTV), and “the only national newsmagazine in English” (the *Beijing Review*). The word “national” implies an official nature, yet at the same time, all of them are presented as part of commercial media groups to the outside world. Media in this category, too, might either be disassociated later or branded as authoritative because of their state connections.

Summing up, not all media are presented with their “commercial face” or branded as entirely independent. Instead, the CPC seems to encourage different media that will be able to take on different roles and present different points of view, thus creating an impression of plurality. In this division, newly launched media are branded as independent and controversial. This is possible because they started afresh and thus do not have a history of sticking closely to the Party line. The world does not know them yet, which makes it possible to assign them any role. More established media, on the other hand, have less leeway in branding themselves, as they have acted as Party or state media for decades. In some cases, the Party-state ties are emphasized to present the medium as authoritative; in other cases, different branding options are open, as media are neither strongly associated with nor disassociated from the Party and the Chinese government.

9.2 Daily practices

Below, the most basic means to maintain control over media will be introduced, divided into those before, during, and after news production. Importantly, I am highlighting the mechanism through which the Party-state tries to control media, not the entire news production process. People (both foreigners and Chinese) that I interviewed stressed that most of the news production process is very similar to that in media anywhere in the world, except perhaps until recently a little less stressful.⁹⁰ In addition, agency within the given framework is encouraged in the overall Chinese bureaucracy, in which lower units usually have a significant degree of leeway in interpreting “the spirit” (*jingshen* 精神) of instructions from a higher level and tailoring relatively vague policy directions usually summed up in a slogan to local or sectoral needs.

However, I argue that in external propaganda, journalistic agency is limited to non-sensitive stories in non-crisis situations, when such agency is encouraged, as well as to trying to lobby the Center to change its rules. As opposed to some commercial media, which rely on sensational stories for financial gain or provincial media, which may enjoy a certain degree of protection through provincial governments, external propaganda have little incentive to circumvent the CPD’s orders. The close proximity of external propaganda media to the Center combined with financial subsidies means that there is very little reason to push the boundaries, except in cases where such experiments have been approved by or at least not explicitly prohibited by the Center.

Before Production

The news production process in China is both carefully planned and tightly controlled.

First, there is licensing, which theoretically affects all but the most high ranking media, the *People’s Daily* and Xinhua, which have the same administrative rank as the licensing organization.⁹¹ Aside from needing to obtain a

⁹⁰ Jim Laurie, interview, Hong Kong, January 14, 2011, Alfred Roman, interview, Hong Kong, November 2010, Chinese journalist, interview, Beijing, April 2011.

⁹¹ Licensing is handled by the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP). GAPP was established as an institution of vice-ministerial rank under the name of State Press and Publication Administration (SPPA) *Guojia xinwen chuban shu* 新闻出版署 in January 1987 on the basis of and drawing on the experience on a number of historical predecessors. For the

license to run a medium in the first place, there are also different types of media that are handled differently from the outset. One of the most basic distinctions in Chinese media is between political content and apolitical content, such as cultural or economic issues. Some media are not even authorized to begin with to produce content that falls into the category “politics.” One example is the magazine *China Today* for most of its history.⁹²

Second, coverage of large-scale, important events is usually planned and prepared several years in advance, with action plans what should be done at what point in time. For example, one major topic at the nationwide external propaganda conference in late 1986 was preparing the coverage of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the PRC in October 1949⁹³ –coverage that was ultimately overshadowed by the image crisis following the crackdown on Tiananmen Square. Likewise, OEP/SCIO began organizing its coverage of the Hong Kong handover in 1995.⁹⁴ In addition, propaganda and external propaganda departments make annual plans what to focus on at particular points in time of the year.⁹⁵

vice-ministerial SPPA, a larger number of print media were outside of its control, including the *Guangming Daily* and the *China Daily* (cf. Zhao Yuezhi, *Media, Market and Democracy*, 23). In 2001, the organization was upgraded to ministerial level, which was reflected in its new name: **General Administration of Press and Publication** (新闻出版总署). Yongnian Zheng and Lye Liang Fook. “Re-making the Party’s Image: Challenges for the Propaganda Department,” in *China into the Hu-Wen Era: Policy Initiatives and Challenges*, eds. John Wong and Hongyi Lai (Singapore: World Scientific, 2006), 123, 125.

⁹² *China Today* is focused on culture and society. Although today the boundaries are less clearly defined, it used to be forbidden to report anything classified as “news” or as “political.” For instance, after the crackdown on Tiananmen, *China Today* did not carry the official refutation of the Chinese government. Instead, a few months later, it only briefly alluded to the events by running a photo series of foreigners visiting Tiananmen again for the first time since the incident.

⁹³ Zhu Muzhi 朱穆之, “Jianli xitong de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo, jieshao Zhongguo lianghao xingxiang” 建立系统的对外宣传工作, 介绍中国良好形象 [Establishing systematic external propaganda work; introducing China’s good image], speech given on November 26, 1986 at the first nationwide external propaganda conference in Beijing, website of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, http://www.humanrights.cn/cn/zt/tbbd/fyjd70n/03/t20070110_198142.htm, accessed October 27, 2012.

⁹⁴ He Guoping 何国平 and Guo Guanghua 郭光华, “Cong ‘rang shijie liaojie Zhongguo’ dao ‘xiang shijie shuoming Zhongguo’ - Gaige kaifang 30 nian lai Zhongguo waixuan sixiang de yanjin” 从“让世界了解中国”到“向世界说明中国”——改革开放 30 年来中国外宣思想的演进” [From ‘letting the world understand China’ to ‘explaining China to the world’ - The evolution of external propaganda thought over 30 years of Reform and Opening], January 7, 2009, *Nanfangwang*, http://theory.southcn.com/llzhuanti/2008xsnh/chuanmei/content/2009-01/07/content_4823763_3.htm, accessed April 9, 2012.

⁹⁵ “Zhonggong Beijing shiwei fushuji Long Xinmin tan Beijing waixuan gongzuo” 中共北京市委副书记龙新民谈北京外宣工作 [Long Ximin, deputy secretary of the Beijing municipal party committee speaks about Beijing’s external propaganda work], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 7 (2001): 2.

Finally, there are very detailed instructions as to what media can and cannot report. Today, some of this is governed by official regulations. However, as is well-known, these are only the tip of the iceberg of what media need to pay attention to. In addition to openly available regulations, there are additional internal regulations handed down through the Party bureaucracy, as well as concrete written and oral instructions. For daily news production, propaganda departments at all levels produce briefings on which topics and terminology to avoid and to highlight. The principle of “relying mainly on positive propaganda” (*yi zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu* 以正面宣传为主) already suggests that circulars do not only include topics to be avoided, but also give orders on which topics to report and to focus on. One Chinese author lists the different ways of giving instructions to the media through non-public channels: Internal regulations from CPD and other departments, written notifications, notifications and oral instructions by phone (*dianhua tongzhi, koutou “da zhaohu”* 电话通知, 口头“打招呼”) and through briefings (*kai “tongqi” hui* 开“通气”会 or *chui Fenghui* 吹风会).⁹⁶ Obviously, propaganda departments do not speak with each journalist individually, but have contacts in each unit whom they give instructions and who then hand them down further within the media unit. Thus, most individual journalists are aware of the basic framework, but do not get in contact with the system directly. Instruction can include all possible aspects imaginable, though not necessarily at the same time: what to pay attention to, whether to report more or less on a certain topic, whether to report the positive or negative side of a story or both, when to make sure to strictly adhere to certain slogans, which articles to consult for reference, and which departments to consult before reporting on a particular topic.⁹⁷ In addition, the CPD addresses long term trends and widespread

⁹⁶Xiong Yanwu 熊燕舞, “Shilu xinwen yueping de biao zhun yu lizheng” 试论新闻阅评的标准与例证 [Discussion of standards and examples of news reading], *Jin chuanmei* 今传媒 [Media today], no. 8 (2007): 35 . Also cf. Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 19. The excerpt by Xiong is surprisingly frank for an article published openly: 尽管国家有关部门颁布了大量公开的法律法规, 但是这并不是管控政策的全部, 抛开很难综合辨别的法律法规的禁载规定外, 还有大量党规党纪、宣传纪律和宣传口径, 相关的通知、决定、规定和有关指示、要求, 这些纪律在新闻事业管理中发挥着重要作用。[...]中共中央办公厅、国务院办公厅、中宣部等部门的有关决定、通知、电话通知、口头“打招呼”、开“通气”会的方式以及业务管理部门制定的有关指示、办法和实际通行的惯例, 依靠着传统惯性, 随时对新闻出版机构下达指示, 规定刊载或禁载的内容。如中共中央《关于当前报刊新闻广播宣传方针的决定》, 中共中央宣传部《关于新闻报道工作的几点规定》等。

⁹⁷ Based on leaked directives on file with author.

problems in its journal *Internal Communications* (*Neibu tongxin* 内部通信), published since 1991.⁹⁸

During Production

In case of uncertainties, cadres are supposed to ask for directions (*qingshi* 请示) from the relevant units. In the past, important and sensitive issues did not only need approval from CPD, but also from relevant departments whose policy sector was reported on.⁹⁹ In the case of sudden events, this has become increasingly impractical, so new institutions have been put into place to allow Chinese media to report faster. China has been forced to react to sudden events because other news outlets will report, and the likelihood that China can hide anything even within its own territory has been constantly decreasing. The general rule since 1998 has been to allow reports unless explicitly proscribed, report as neutrally as possible and add opinion and direction (*quxiang* 趋向) only after the relevant departments have given instructions and guidance.¹⁰⁰

To make sure nothing undesired gets published or released, since the 1990s, media – including *waixuan* media – have employed “reading groups” (*yi du xiaozu* 一读小组) as part of the editorial process that are present in shifts day and night.¹⁰¹ These reading groups consist of cadres, who are usually older (as older people have a better feeling for sensitive and potentially sensitive language and content), who check news on behalf of the CPD (or lower level propaganda departments in the case of local media). A similar “censor” system exists for CCTV and presumably for radio and local television channels as well.¹⁰² As Jim

⁹⁸ “Chuban shuoming” 出版说明 [Publication notice], *Neibu tongxin jingxuan huibian* 内部通信精选汇编 [Collection of selected (articles) from Internal Communications], ed. Zhongxuanbu xinwenju [Press/News Office of the Central Propaganda Department] (Beijing: Zhongxuanbu xinwenju, 1998), n.p.

⁹⁹ Cf. “Renzhen zuohao yingjie dang de shiliu da de xuanchuan baodao,” 8: 涉及重要、敏感问题的稿件要送有关部门审定。

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Yan Wenbin 严文斌. “Shijiexing tongxunshu yu tufa shijian duiwai baodao” 世界性通讯社与突发事件对外报道 [A world news agency and reporting sudden events abroad], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1998): 13.

¹⁰¹ In the case of the People’s Daily, the reading group reads everything in detail, except for the international news age, which has had a separate inspection team. Here, the general reading group only skims headlines and selectively reads articles on China’s leaders or important events. “Renmin ribao she chengli yi du xiaozu” 人民日报社成立一读小组 [People’s Daily establishes reading group], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 9 (1999): 7-8.

¹⁰² Interview with Jim Laurie, Hong Kong, January 14, 2011

Laurie, advisor to the new English language channel CCTV-News, put it: “It is very similar to the final editing process in other countries, only that they look for different things.”¹⁰³ Although the official position of these “political editors” within the system is not clear, they are directly integrated in the overall editorial department,¹⁰⁴ and their decisions *de facto* overrule those of the editors.¹⁰⁵

After Production

The process of checking news does not stop with publication or release. Instead, since the 1990s, China has made use of the “news reading” (*xinwen yueping* 新闻阅评) system, which is considered an important mechanism (*jizhi* 机制) for macro-managing (*hongguan guanli* 宏观管理) the media.¹⁰⁶ The news reading system was instituted at the central level in 1994 when the CPD established its own News Reading Small Group (*Xinwen yueping xiaozu* 新闻阅评小组),¹⁰⁷ following earlier experiments at lower levels. Bandurski and Lin as well as Brady have given some accounts of the institutional arrangement of news reading work.¹⁰⁸ The existence of these groups is also confirmed through notices that media often publish online when they receive praise through the news reading system.¹⁰⁹ The institutional arrangement might be different in each propaganda department; nonetheless, it is instructive to look at some case studies on which detailed information is available. An article in *Internal Communications* (*Neibu*

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. “Renmin ribao she chengli yi du xiaozu,” 7.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. John Charles Jirik, “Making News in the People’s Republic of China: The Case of CCTV-9” (PhD diss. University of Texas at Austin, 2008), 261.

¹⁰⁶ Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu ganbuju, ed., *Xin shiqi xuanchuan sixiang gongzuo*, 2006, 50-51.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Su Jinyue 苏进跃, “Xinwen yueping dingyi, guilü, yuanze chutan” 新闻阅评定义、规律、原则初探 [First exploration of definition, laws and principles of news reading], *Hunan shehui kexue* 湖南社会科学 [Hunan social science], no. 6 (2005): 187.

¹⁰⁸ David Bandurski and Lin Hui, “China’s Shadow Censor Commissars,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 2006, 28-30; Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, 22. According to Brady, the CPD already established the system in 1993.

¹⁰⁹ See for example “Zhongxuanbu Xinwen yueping chengzan wo tai xilie baodao you kantou cheng qi sheng pishi guli” 中宣部《新闻阅评》称赞我台系列报道有看头 成其圣批示鼓励 [The Central Propaganda Department’s News Reading praises a series of reports from our station as worth watching; Cheng Qisheng writes encouraging comments], Website of Tianjin TV. August 15, 2012, <http://tjtv.enorth.com.cn/system/2012/08/15/009829691.shtml>, accessed February 7, 2013; “Xinwen yueping kending Xinjingbao ‘jizhe huan xiang’ tebie baodao” 《新闻阅评》肯定新京报“记者还乡”特别报道 [News reading affirms Beijing news’ special report ‘reporters return home’], February 23, 2011. *Guangmingwang*, http://www.gmw.cn/content/2011-02/23/content_1643881.htm, accessed February 7, 2013.

tongxin 内部通信) describes the “news reading group” arrangement at the Propaganda Department of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee and gives some insight into how the system functions in concrete terms:

News reading work was started in Beijing as early as in August 1991,¹¹⁰ when the Municipal Party Committee’s Propaganda Department organized a group of 12 senior cadres with experience in news work to become part of a “News Reading Assessment/Consultation Group” (*Xinwen yueping yi zu* 新闻阅评议组).¹¹¹ The Propaganda Department’s News Office (*xinwen chu* 新闻处) would then, at irregular intervals publish a briefing (*jianbao* 简报) called *Xinwen yueping qingbao* 新闻阅评情报 on the basis of suggestions made by the twelve senior cadres.¹¹²

In 1996, the operating structure and regulations of news reading work were adjusted, and the News Reading Work Leading Small Group was formed. It was put under the leadership of the director of the News Office, who also became the LSG’s head (*you... fenguan* 由...分管).¹¹³ The distribution range of the briefing compiled on the basis of news reading cadres was enlarged. Initially, it had only been distributed to “important leaders” of the municipality and within the Beijing propaganda department. After the change, it included the people responsible for the main media units affiliated with Beijing municipality. In addition, it was determined that all major media units belonging to Beijing Municipality would fall under the scope of news reading, including newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Each news reading cadre was assigned to a whole medium (all pages of a newspaper, including advertising, all programs from beginning to end, around the clock).¹¹⁴ Responsibilities, organizational arrangements, expenditures (*jingfei* 经费), and more were laid down as formal rules.¹¹⁵ Beijing’s news reading system works according to the principle of “carefully pick out problems, precisely point out successes, and kindly make suggestions, with a focus on ‘picking out

¹¹⁰ “Xinwen yulun hongguan guanli de canmou he zhushou - Beijingshi kaizhan xinwen yueping shi nian zongshu” 新闻舆论宏观管理的参谋和助手——北京市开展新闻阅评十年综述 [Constants and assistants for the macro-management of the press and public opinion – A summary of ten years of news review in Beijing], *Neibu tongxin* 内部通信, no. 5, 2002, 10.

¹¹¹ “Xinwen yulun hongguan guanli de canmou he zhushou,” 10.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 10-11.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

problems”” (*xi tiao maobing, jing shuo chengji, shan ti jianyi, yi ‘tiao maobing’ wei zhu* 细挑毛病、精说成绩、善提建议”, 以“挑毛病”为主). This has meant that between 1991 and 2001, when the article was written, more than 70 percent of “Opinions” (*yijian*) issued within the system were about flaws.¹¹⁶

Reports from locales testify to the fact that the news reading system is also used in external propaganda work, even below the provincial level.¹¹⁷ For locales, the target publications are usually in Chinese. For foreign language media at the central or provincial level, there is the additional difficulty of finding senior cadres who are familiar with the correct ideological line, knowledge of the language, and a sense for what adaptations are permissible in order to accommodate foreigners’ reading habits. Nonetheless, media such as the *China Daily* are definitely included in the overall system. For instance, the *China Daily* was praised for its Xinjiang and Tibet related coverage in the CPD’s journal *News Reading* (*Xinwen yueping* 新闻阅评).¹¹⁸

Depending on the mistake that senior readers find, media units might either only get a warning or be subjected to a number of penalties. Under the trend to “rule the country by law” (*yi fa zhi guo* 依法治国) the basic regulations about media infractions and penalties are available openly in written form. These regulations are relatively abstract and still contain a large number of catch-all definitions to retain flexibility, accommodate both “lax” and “tight” times as well as to be open to all kinds of changes in the political line and to local interpretation. Thus, without concrete written and oral instructions from propaganda departments, they say very little about what media can and cannot report at a particular point in time. Nonetheless, a look at the official regulations is instructional to get a first idea of the official framework before looking at how these rules are implemented in practice. There are seven different categories of mistakes that a medium can commit.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Putian shi waixuan xinwen yueping hui zai Xianyou shunli juxing” 莆田市外宣新闻阅评会在仙游顺利举行 [Conference for external propaganda news reading of Putian municipality smoothly held in Xianyou], July 26, 2008, <http://www.hxyjw.com/putian/news/2008-7/20087269578.shtml>, accessed February 4, 2013.

¹¹⁸ “Sun Shangwu” 孙尚武 [Sun Shangwu], Xinhuanet, June 21, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/zg/jx/2012-06/21/c_131668181_3.htm, accessed February 4, 2013.

¹¹⁹ Cf. 《关于建立违纪违规报刊警告制度的意见》 Mentioned in “Tianjin qingnianbao weiji baodao shou jinggao tongbao” 天津青年报违纪报道受警告通报 [Notification that the Tianjin

1. Negating the guiding position of Marxism, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory and in so doing causing bad effects on society (否定马列主义、毛泽东思想、邓小平理论的指导地位, 造成恶劣的社会影响).
2. Contradicting the party's line, principles, or policies and thus making a grave political mistake (违背党的路线、方针、政策, 出现严重的政治错误).
3. Divulging state secrets and thus endangering national security or harming national interests (泄露国家秘密, 危害国家安全, 损害国家利益).
4. Going against policies on ethnic minorities and religion and thus endangering ethnic unity and impacting social stability (违反民族、宗教政策, 危害民族团结, 影响社会稳定).
5. Preaching murder and violence, disseminating pornography, superstition and pseudo-science and thus committing a mistake in ideological direction (宣扬凶杀、暴力、色情、迷信和伪科学, 思想导向错误).
6. Spreading rumors, creating false news and thus disturbing the overall work (*gongzuo daju*) (传播谣言, 编发假新闻, 干扰工作大局).
7. Any other grave mistake as defined by the relevant propaganda departments and press and publication administrative departments (党委宣传部门和新闻出版行政管理部门认定的其他严重错误).¹²⁰

According to the document, when a warning is issued, the supervising unit (*zhuguan danwei* 主管单位) and the sponsoring unit (*zhuban danwei* 主办单位) need to conduct an investigation into the issue (documented in writing) and discipline the people responsible. Warnings will also be made available to other units through CPD's journal *News Reading* or, for cases that are both severe and instructional, in *Internal Communications*. If a medium receives three warnings within a year, it will be suspended, and the editor-in-chief or director of the medium needs to be fired. If a medium that has been suspended before commits another mistake, GAPP will take away its serial number (*kanhao* 刊号).¹²¹

Examples from *Internal Communications* illustrate how easily one can commit a mistake, and what the costs to those involved are. For instance, on August 3, 2000, the *Chengdu Evening News* (*Chengdu wanbao* 成都晚报)

Youth Daily receives a warning for a report violating regulations], *Neibu Tongxin*, no. 23 (2001): 18. The mistake mentioned here falls into category no. 7 (党委宣传部门和新闻出版行政管理部门认定的其他严重错误). The document is *Xinchulian* [2000] no. 19. The full text is available at http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2001/content_61303.htm, accessed August 10, 2012.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

published an article called “Qi Qi and Hu Bing ‘pick the best for themselves.’”¹²² The article included a photo of the two models living in Hong Kong. Qi Qi wore a T-shirt which said, in English: “It still hurts after 1989.” According to the report conducted by the propaganda department of Sichuan Provincial Party Committee, the photographer did not check the photos before uploading them onto the paper’s computer. Neither the editor in charge, nor the Publications Department, nor the Editorial Board’s night shift noticed the problem, so the photo was published on page eight of the paper the next day. The mistake was then noticed through the news reading system and categorized as a “grave political error” (*yanzhong zhengzhi cuowu* 严重政治错误) by *Internal Communications*,¹²³ the most serious category of mistakes. Subsequently, the *Chengdu Evening News* received one warning and all those involved had to write self-criticisms. More importantly, however, the person in charge of the editorial board also received a serious warning (*yanzhong jinggao chufen* 严重警告处分) and had to pay a fine of 1000 RMB. The heads of the photography department and publishing department both received a warning (*jinggao chufen* 警告处分) and each had to pay a fine of 600 RMB. In addition, all people who were considered directly responsible, such as the photographer, also received a serious warning and had to pay a fine of 800 RMB each. Finally, the photographer and the editor responsible for page eight were both “reassigned a new job” (*lingxing anpai gongzuo* 另行安排工作).¹²⁴

In another example, the *Morning News* (*Xinwen chenbao* 新闻晨报), a subsidiary of the *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang ribao* 解放日报), committed a “serious political mistake” (*zhongda zhengzhi cuowu* 重大政治错误) by referring to Taiwan as the “country which exports the most electronic products in the world” (*quanqiu zui da dianzi chanpin chukou guo* 全球最大电子产品出口国) on page

¹²² “Qi Qi Hu Bing ‘tiao fei jian shou’” 琦琦胡兵 “挑肥拣瘦.” Cf. “Chengdu wanbao yin kandeng you yanzhong zhengzhi cuowo de zhaopian shoudao weigui weiji jinggao” 《成都晚报》因刊登有严重政治错误的照片受到违规违纪警告 [“Chengdu Evening Times” receives a warning of violation of regulations and discipline because of publishing a photo containing a serious political mistake], *Neibu tongxin* no. 7 (2000): 12. QiQi (Sophia Kao) and Hu Bing are models living in Hong Kong.

¹²³ Cf. “Chengdu wanbao yin kandeng you yanzhong zhengzhi cuowo de zhaopian shoudao weigui weiji jinggao,” 13.

¹²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

21 of the paper.¹²⁵ According to the investigation that followed suit conducted by the *Liberation Daily*, the subsidiary had copied the news from a third party and did not notice the “incorrect” formulation. The person in charge of editing page 21 “lacked a sense of responsibility” (*quefa gongzuo zerenxin* 缺乏工作责任心) and did not inspect the page diligently. Likewise, the responsible person at the editorial department did not exert strict control (*baguan bu yan* 把关不严). The *Liberation Daily* concluded that the political consciousness and the sense of responsibility at the paper were simply not very strong. All that were considered responsible for this serious political mistake would receive an individual criticism, be transferred, receive a warning, and would not receive their monthly bonus/salary (*koufa dangyue jiangjin* 扣发当月奖金).¹²⁶ A foreign expert I interviewed indicated that Chinese editors’ and journalists’ primary concern is to make it through the day without making a mistake that could cost them a significant portion of their salary or even their job.¹²⁷

Importantly, although people like Li Xiguang 李希光 have argued that China needs to change its ways of handling the media and become more flexible,¹²⁸ China’s external propaganda media are part of this system and work largely by the same rules when it comes to sensitive issues and mistakes. The fact that the boundaries between external and domestic propaganda are no longer considered very pronounced reinforces the need to apply all rules to China’s foreign language media as well. Having to pay close attention to possible mistakes both costs a lot of manpower and energy and also provides a strong counter-incentive towards experimenting or testing the borders in instances that are not explicitly approved.

In interviews, it is common to encounter complaints that the penalty system is detrimental to creativity and innovation in China’s English language media, as editors’ primary goal is to avoid political mistakes and avoid being penalized. A “foreign expert” working for the *China Daily* in 2005 indicated that this was also true for China’s most important English language daily during the

¹²⁵ Cf. “Jiefang ribao she dui ‘Xinwen chenbao’ zhongda zhengzhi cuowu zuochu chuli” 解放日报社对《新闻晨报》重大政治错误作出处理 [The Liberation Daily agency deals with the major political mistake of the Morning News], *Neibu tongxin* no. 19 (2000): 10.

¹²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Interviews, November 2010 (China Daily), January 2011 (CCTV), April 2011.

¹²⁸ Li and Zhou, *Ruan lilian yu quanqiu chuanbo*, 31.

time that he stayed there.¹²⁹ In a work environment dominated by fear of making mistakes, there is little room for the innovation and creativity that is regularly demanded of *waixuan* workers.

In 2010, when the *China Daily* accidentally quoted a Tiananmen activist (not one of the most famous and most easily recognizable) in one of its articles, the paper's editor-in-chief, Zhu Ling 朱灵, was called into the CPD, and funds intended for the creation of a *China Daily* office in London were frozen temporarily,¹³⁰ presumably in addition to other fines levied on individuals. Of course, the expansion into Europe was not blocked permanently, but nonetheless, the system of warnings as well as fines which both units as a whole and individuals may be subjected to cannot but have a chilling effect.

As the speed with which news need to be delivered in order to be competitive has increased, this pressure has grown, too, as mistakes need to be detected and decisions made within much less time. This is one instance in which the system external propaganda media are a part of is in direct contradiction to the calls made in public. This does not mean that the calls for more innovation and creativity in expanding China's foreign language media are not serious, but this example clearly shows prioritization. The fact that mistakes are penalized, but there is no clear system to measure and reward means that innovation is slowed down because new ideas can only be tested in close coordination with the authorities.

A number of people have argued for treating external propaganda media according to different rules and by default allowing them more leeway in their reporting, language, and choice of topics. These proposals will be addressed again below. By and large, however, external propaganda continues to function by much of the same rules as media intended for domestic consumption.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Interview with Alfred Roman (former "foreign expert" at *China Daily*), Hong Kong, November 2010.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Interview with Alfred Roman (Hong Kong, November 2010), interview with Jim Laurie (Hong Kong, January 14, 2011).

9.3 Media Values and Their Applicability to External Propaganda Work

I suggest that the new term used by the CPC in 2009, “international communication capabilities,” was no coincidence, but reflected the efforts that people familiar with the Western understanding of the media and journalism had started in the 1980s and resumed in the 21st century to get the Party to change its understanding of what external propaganda was and what reforms it required in order to be successful. The link between “correct terminology” and “correct understanding” is still very pronounced in the CPC,¹³² and academics and external propaganda experts had long justified their choice of terminology by arguing that using a specific term was important in order to change (or retain) specific practices.¹³³ The debate over correct terminology ongoing since the 1980s reached new heights in the 21st century. To many, a change in terminology is needed to reflect an actual change in practice or to help cadres to correctly understand the work that they have to do. In both cases, the focus is on getting cadres and journalists to pay more attention to professional journalistic standards.

Generally, continued use of the term *xuanchuan* has been justified by saying that it reminds cadres and journalists of their responsibilities to defend the interests of the Party and of the state and to let them know that they are not simply doing reporting, but using reporting to serve a mission, namely to improve China’s image and guide international public opinion. For instance, one author argued in 2005 that only using the word “communication” (*chuanbo* 传播) “easily weakens media’s social responsibility and their national mission and almost makes it appear that communicating towards the target countries can transcend the state’s and the nation’s interests and even reaches the realm of global unity (*quanqiu datong* 全球大同).”¹³⁴ Instead, the author argues to use *chuanbo* and

¹³² See for instance Lu Di 陆地, “Ruhe cong duiwai xuanchuan zouxian guoji chuanbo” 如何从对外宣传走向国际传播 [How to go from external propaganda to international communication], *Hangzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao* 杭州师范学院学报 [Journal of Hangzhou Teachers College], no. 2 (2005).

¹³³ See for instance Lu Di, “Ruhe cong duiwai xuanchuan zouxian guoji chuanbo.”

¹³⁴ “容易冲淡媒体承担的社会责任和国家使命感，似乎面向目标国家的传播可以超越国家、民族的利益，而达到全球大同的境界。” Zhang Kun 张昆. “Zhongshi guojia xingxiang de duiwai xuanchuan yu chuanbo” 重视国家形象的对外宣传与传播 [External propaganda and external communication that pays attention to the national image], *Jin Chuanmei*, no. 9 (2005): 8.

xuanchuan together, so as to highlight both the need to adhere to certain professional ethics and the need to defend China's interests. Despite the new terminology introduced in late 2008, the routines and values of the propaganda and thought work sector pose a greater problem for the external propaganda sector. Chinese observers, especially those who have significant experience in external propaganda work, are often keenly aware of these issues. One professor I spoke to expressed his frustration that the authorities simply did not understand "international communication" and that in order to be effective, Chinese media needed more independence and less interference from the government.¹³⁵

In this section, I will introduce the values stressed in Chinese journalism before discussing the changes with regard to several issues that have been a problem for Chinese media for a long time: negative news, harsh language, and ideological content. Some of these values, such as the Party principle and the principle of truthfulness, go back to before the PRC was founded. Others, such as trying to adapt to foreigners (*zhenduixing* 针对性) were subject to debate during the Mao period. Timeliness (*shixiaoxing* 时效性), by contrast, only became relevant in the post-Mao period. The values according to which Chinese media function are well-known and will only be briefly summed up here as an introduction to the basic dilemmas media continue to face.

The Party Principle (dangxing yuanze 党性原则)

The most important and oldest principle highlighted in any speech or text on the Chinese media is the "Party Principle" (*dangxing yuanze* 党性原则). The Party Principle, in its contemporary interpretation, officially encompasses three different but related points: First, media have to embrace the Party's ideology, second, media have to propagate the Party's line, principles, and policies, and, third, media have to accept the Party's leadership.¹³⁶ Throughout most of the 1980s and 1990s, the "party nature" of Chinese media was formally presented as an asset, even in external propaganda work.¹³⁷ Neither in the 1980s nor in the

¹³⁵ Interview, "communication studies professor II", Beijing, April 2011.

¹³⁶ The party principle has been explained quite often. See Zhao Yuezhi, *Media, Market and Democracy*, 19.

¹³⁷ For instance, at a conference in March of 1986, Mu Qing stated that Xinhua's greatest specialty and greatest advantage (*youdian* 优点) was that it had a proletarian and Marxist-Leninist stance. Cf. Mu Qing 穆青, "Zhenfen jingshen jianchi gaige jin yi bu tuijin jianshe shijiexing

1990s this necessarily represented the views of all, or even the majority, of news workers – particularly of those people engaged in external propaganda, who knew which problems the “party nature” caused. However, the principle could not be attacked openly or directly.¹³⁸

Although external propaganda is not necessarily supposed to directly propagate the Party, but to communicate more subtly, the “Party Principle” continues to apply to all external propaganda media.¹³⁹ This means that in crisis or “high politics” mode external propaganda media continue to be forced to present positions and use language that most external propaganda cadres know will alienate foreigners. Moreover, since 1989, strengthening party leadership over external propaganda work has always been presented as the most important task for any external propaganda reform and cannot be disputed in public discourse.¹⁴⁰ Thus, while Chinese academics argue for the inclusion of private initiatives and the Party itself realizes that the affiliation of Chinese media with the Party-state diminishes their legitimacy, formally independent initiatives are slow to emerge, and truly independent media are out of the question.

Truthfulness (zhenshixing 真实性)

From Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 to Hu Jintao, party secretaries have argued that the party principle and the truth criterion are two sides of the same coin. The “truth” criterion is extremely flexible and can be turned against those arguing for

tongxunshe de shiye” 振奋精神 坚持改革 进一步推进建设世界性通讯社的事业 [Uplift the spirit, adhere to the reforms, further promote the cause of building a global news agency], speech given March 4, 1986, in *Guoji xinwen caixie jingyan huicui* 国际新闻采写经验荟萃 [Collection of experience in writing international news], ed. Xinhuashe xinwen yanjiusuo 新华社新闻研究 [Research center of Xinhua News Agency] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1991), 6.

¹³⁸ Instead, external propaganda veterans, such as Shen Suru, chose to ignore it, which was possible by emphasizing that one’s work was concerned with the “professional” (*yewu* 业务) aspects of external propaganda only, not with the political dimension.

¹³⁹ See for example *Duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lunwenji* 对外宣传工作论文集 [Collected studies on external propaganda work], ed. Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi yanjiushi 中央对外宣传办公室研究室 [Research Office of the Central Office of External Propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 1998), 208.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. Huang Zecun 黄泽存, *Xin shiqi duiwai xuanchuan lungao* 新时期对外宣传论稿 [Preliminary discussions of external propaganda in the new period] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 2002), 263: “首先，必须加强党对外宣传的领导。外宣工作是一项利用各种传播手段直接作用于外国受众的思想和政治工作，其直接任务是树立中国在国际上的良好形象，争取世界人心和国际社会的支持，保证改革开放的顺利实施，推动我国现代化建设事业的发展。这些任务的艰巨性要求从一开始就应加强党的领导，在党制定的方针、原则下开展对外宣传工作。”

only or overwhelmingly good news as much as against those arguing for the inclusion of more or certain types of negative news. Ultimately, the “truth” principle leads back to the need for guidance by the party. This is so because before reporting, the essence of an event needs to be determined, something which, officially, only the CPC is capable of (cf. chapter 4.1). Once that has been done, the CPC can determine whether reporting the event will reflect the essence or will create a false impression.¹⁴¹ Thus, the interpretation of the principle of truthfulness is entirely dependent on the political climate at a particular point in time.

Timeliness (shixiaoxing 时效性)

The idea that those who report first are able to determine how an event will be covered everywhere else has today been accepted as one of the “objective laws” (*guilü 规律*) of how media function. The Party-state fully recognizes that Chinese media are too slow and has worked hard to enable them to break news faster. Despite some celebrated successes¹⁴² and a massive overall improvement, Chinese media often continue to lag behind their Western counterparts.

Conformity to audiences’ tastes (zhenduixing 针对性)

The language that had been traditionally used in China’s foreign language media for much of the Mao period, as well as its rhetorical style, conflicted with the conception of the press and good reporting as taught in Western journalism classes, which were introduced in China on a massive scale in the 1980s. This mismatch between media content and readers’ expectations was especially stark when texts were directly translated from Chinese originals with minimal adaptations, a common strategy that continued into the 1990s. Issues of language and style impact the image and credibility of Chinese media in several direct and indirect ways: first, unfamiliar language and style makes Chinese media stand out

¹⁴¹ Cf. Gu Mingsheng 贾明生, “Lun shishi qiu shi de yuanze” 论实事求是的原则 [On the principle of seeking truth from facts], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 9, (1990):12.

¹⁴² Cf. Kang Xingping 康兴平, “Yilake zhanzheng baodao dui Xinhuashe jianshe shijiexing tongxunshu de qishi” 伊拉克战争报道对新华社建设世界性通讯社的启示 [Implications of reporting of the Iraq War for Xinhua building (i.e. becoming) a world news agency], in *Chuanmei yunxing moshi biange - 2003 nian Xinhuashe xinwen xueshu nianlunhui lunwen xuan* 传媒运行模式变革 2003 年新华社新闻学术年会论文选 (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe 2004), 60-62.

from other news sources in a negative sense in the eyes of most foreigners, second, direct translations from Chinese make foreign language texts resemble texts from the former Soviet bloc, whose media have been largely discredited in the eyes of the Western public, and, third, “crisis mode” retorts written in foreign languages often appear ridiculous to the foreign target audience. Today, avoiding such problems is high on the agenda, but in cases of conflict, particularly when an issue is considered “political,” the Party principle trumps every other principle.

Problems with conflicting values are acknowledged and have been recognized for a long time. Thus, the issue is not that the Party does not understand the legitimacy issues its media values cause. There are two layers of problems, however. First, owing to the need to find consensus solutions and the dialectical thinking of the CPC, the Party usually tries to balance two conflicting values and weigh them against one another. The current overall approach, as I will demonstrate, is to give external propaganda media as much leeway as possible to enable them to raise their own credibility, and to include some strategic well-orchestrated initiatives but to remain vigilant in the background and step in whenever the principles of the Party or the national interest are challenged meaningfully. Second, the principle of “round outside, square within” encourages reforms to be superficial and makes substantial structural reforms very difficult. In order to probe to what extent the need to create globally competitive media players has enabled Chinese media to reform their practices substantially and where the limits are, I will examine four case studies below, each of which addresses an area in which Chinese media have faced difficulties in the past: the reporting of sudden events, criticism of the Party and the central government, awkward or harsh language, and the question to what extent China should stress its socialist identity.

Negative News I: Sudden events

One major issue that Chinese media have been increasingly confronted with in the post-Mao period is sudden events reporting. Here, China faces two main problems: First, events may be categorized as sensitive and not be reported at all, and second, China’s media do not report fast enough for a number of reasons such as problems in coordination. While the latter is a problem of

professionalism (*yewu* 业务) and can be solved by investing money and retraining journalists, the first is a political issue (*zhengzhi wenti* 政治问题) and thus much more delicate.

To briefly resume, for sudden events, the types of news allowed to be covered have largely been expanding over the last decades. Towards the late 1990s and into the 21st century, reporting sudden events was increasingly portrayed as an issue of confidence and as an important means to stop hostile forces from attacking China and spreading rumors, 1998 being the first year of reforms. The most important explanation for why China needed to increase and speed up its reporting of sudden events that was already formulated five years prior to the SARS debacle was that “hostile forces” used them to smear China’s image (cf. chapter 6.3). By not reporting sudden events, Chinese media allowed hostile forces to dominate the presentation of events instead of “proactively guiding international public opinion” (*jiji zhudong de yindao guoji yulun* 积极主动地引导国际舆论). Hence, the issue was primarily framed as being part of the fight against hostile forces and the new agenda to positively guide public opinion at home and abroad. To be able to report on time, an article in *Internal Communications* (*Neibu tongxin* 内部通信) explained in 2000, it was necessary to break with the regular customs of reporting news (*dapo changgui* 打破常规) and to deal with sudden events in a special way (*tebie chuli* 特别处理).¹⁴³

Articles on the topic in *External Propaganda Reference* (*Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* 对外宣传参考) give a good insight into the categorization of news and how they were to be handled in the late 1990s. Xinhua was to draw a strict line between natural disasters, such as earthquakes, landslides, floods, and droughts, which should be handled freely or liberally (*congkuan* 从宽) and politically sensitive events, which needed to be handled strictly (*congyan* 从严).¹⁴⁴ As, theoretically, any issue could (and still can) be redefined as political in retrospective, this division still favors those who err on the safe side whenever

¹⁴³“Guanyu zhongda shijian tufa shijian xuanchuan baodao de ruogan jingyan” 关于重大事件突发事件宣传报道的若干经验 [A Number of experience about media coverage of major events and sudden events], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 6 (2000): 10-12.

¹⁴⁴Yan Wenbin 严文斌. “Shijiexing tongxunshu yu tufa shijian duiwai baodao” 世界性通讯社与突发事件对外报道 [A world news agency and reporting sudden events abroad], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1998): 13.

possible. A year before the SARS crisis, this policy was still basically affirmed: For most natural disasters and minor incidents, media should decide on their own whether and how to report. For major events either in China or abroad involving China that fell into the category of political, “careful research” (*shenzhong yanjiu* 慎重研究) had to be conducted before making a decision, although everybody was urged to try to speed up the clearance process even in the case of sensitive events.¹⁴⁵

For faster reporting in the case of predictable events, there have been some experiments with new structures. In early 2003, Xinhua leaders raised the point that Xinhua needed to dare to engage in a “news war” (*xinwenzhan* 新闻战) with big Western media during the Iraq War and to compete with them over English news from the frontline of the war.¹⁴⁶ Before the war broke out, Xinhua’s International Department (*Guojibu* 国际部) created the Iraq War Reporting Emergency Response Small Group (*Yilake zhanzheng baodao yingji xiaozu* 伊拉克战争报道应急小组), made arrangements to allow some journalists to dispatch news directly in English and laid down principles that had to be followed in the case of news that needed to be sent out quickly.¹⁴⁷ The reporting of the first shot in the Iraq War in 2003, in which Xinhua beat even CNN by 10 seconds, was celebrated as a great success at Xinhua and as evidence that in the case of “foreseeable sudden events” and with the right preparations it was possible for Xinhua to beat Western news agencies in terms of timeliness.¹⁴⁸

The year 2003 is also seen as a watershed changing the policy of reporting in the case of “unpredictable” and sensitive sudden events¹⁴⁹ because of the

¹⁴⁵ 对于突发事件可以区别对待，一般来说，对于天灾人祸，应由各媒体根据一贯做法和经验自行决定是否报道和如何报道，加强自检自律，由公众进行监督。对国内和国际涉我重大政治性突发事件，由于它的政策性和敏感性，需要慎重研究决定，但应尽量减少决策的中间环节，缩短时间，避免贻误时机，造成被动。对突发事件的报道分秒必争，限制了我们自己的报道，等于把舆论引导的主动权让给了他人。Yang Zhengquan 杨正泉，“Jiji caiqu cuoshi baodao hao tufa shijian” 积极采取措施报道好突发事件 [Taking measures actively to report well about sudden events], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 5 (2002): 5.

¹⁴⁶ Kang Xingping, “Yilake zhanzheng,” 61. The success is even listed on Xinhua’s English online introduction (Cf. “Brief Introduction to Xinhuanet,” http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/special/2011-11/28/c_131274495.htm, accessed October 23, 2012). However, this was a “predictable sudden event,” and Xinhua had prepared for it for several months (Kang, “Yilake zhanzheng,” 61).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

¹⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, 60-62.

¹⁴⁹ See for example an article by Zhao Qizheng, which mentions that Hu Jintao stressed the need to report news on time so as to be able to guide public opinion during a conference on how to

severe criticism China had received for having suppressed news about the SARS outbreak in late 2002. After the SARS debacle, China had to reconsider the types of news to be tightly controlled. An article from 2005 explained that Xinhua had changed its policy. All other countries' media had their eyes on important sudden events owing to their news value, and due to China's different political and ideological system, the country was under even more intense scrutiny. Therefore, Xinhua had introduced a new slogan summing up its new policy for reporting (potentially all) sudden events: "Swaying people by reporting first, focusing on what we want to say, guiding public opinion and thus decreasing any negative impact" (*xian sheng duo ren, yi wo wei zhu, yindao yulun, jianshao fumian yingxiang* 先声夺人，以我为主，引导舆论，减少负面影响).¹⁵⁰ Thus, by reporting first, China would ideally be able to set the agenda for follow-up reporting done by other media. The failure to spin coverage of the Lhasa unrest in 2008 served as another argument in favor of faster and more open coverage even for political and sensitive sudden events instead of trying to suppress or censor news. Although quite different, the Wenchuan 汶川 earthquake of May 2008 has been celebrated as a success in implementing the lessons learned from the SARS and Tibet incidents.¹⁵¹

Generally speaking, media are encouraged to "try to report" (*zhengqu baodao* 争取报道) and to report on time. Initially, Xinhua was also encouraged to report more openly towards foreigners: "Domestically, we must control strictly according to the requirements; externally, we should be basically open and strive

prevent SARS. Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, "Xinwen fabu you liyu yingxiang he yindao guoji yulun" 新闻发布有利于影响和引导国际舆论 [Press conference help to influence and guide international public opinion], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2005): 5.

¹⁵⁰ 突发事件，由于有较高的新闻价值共同取向，一向是各国媒体和世人关注的热点。又由于政治制度、意识形态等的差别，各国媒体对在中国发生的突发事件更加关注，且态度复杂。因此，“先声夺人，以我为主，引导舆论，减少负面影响”成为新华社报道突发事件的重要策略。Li Jianmin 李建民, "Xiansheng duoren, yi wo wei zhu - cong tufa shijian baodao kan guonei fenshe jizhe de 'shijiexing tongxunshe' yishi" 先声夺人 以我为主——从突发事件报道看国内分社记者的“世界性通讯社”意识 [Swaying people by reporting first, focusing on what we want to say - looking at the "global news agency"-consciousness of domestic branch reporters from the (angle of) reporting of sudden events], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (2005): 12.

¹⁵¹ E.g. Huang Hai 黄海, "'Huai xiaoxi' yu 'hao xingxiang'" "坏消息"与"好形象" [(The link between) "bad news" and a "good image"], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 8 (2011): 31-32; Hou Yingzhong and Guo Guanghua, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao* 对外报道策略与技巧 [Strategies and techniques for external reporting] (Beijing: Zhongguo chuanmei daxue chubanshe, 2008).

to release more [news]” (*duinei baodao yange an yaoqiu kongzhi, duiwai jiben fangkai, zhengqu duofa* 对内报道严格按照要求控制，对外基本放开，争取多发).¹⁵² However, by 2007, while the idea that as much as possible should be reported remained, external propaganda work was asked to take domestic repercussions into consideration. While the need to report fast potentially applies to all events, until today, if domestic repercussions are feared, an incident will not be reported, regardless of whether this hurts the credibility of Chinese media in the eyes of foreigners. Thus, there are a number of incidents that are still not reported or reported very late. This is particularly the case when there are “mass incidents” (*quntixing shijian* 群体性事件), i.e. popular protest, and the CPC fears that reporting the event will help spread the protests to other regions. In these cases, reports continue to be limited to very few official Xinhua releases, and even Xinhua takes several days or even weeks until it reacts.

When the U.S.-based website *Boxun* 博讯 called for a “Jasmine Revolution” in China in early 2011, Chinese media of course largely remained silent. There were only two Xinhua releases indirectly addressing the issue: One statement from Zhao Qizheng 赵启正 (released on February 26, 2011) that there would be no “Jasmine Revolution” in China¹⁵³ and a report that delegates from the ongoing Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) had asked foreign media to stop focusing on news not reflecting “the general trend of China's development,”¹⁵⁴ released on March 5, 2011.

Similarly, when Chen Guangcheng 陈光诚 escaped to the U.S. embassy in April 2012, Xinhua did not report on the issue until May 2, when it issued a 79 word statement that the Chinese government “[urged the] US to stop misleading the public” about the case.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Zhou Zongmin 周宗敏, “Yong ‘shijie yuyan’ tong haiwai shouzhong ‘zhijie duihua’ – yu guonei fenshe jizhe Yingwen baodao peixunban xueyuan zuotan” 用‘世界语言’同海外受众‘直接对华’——与国内分社记者英文报道培训班学员座谈 [Using the ‘world language’ for ‘direct dialogue’ with overseas audiences - seminar with the participants of the english reporting training of the reporters of domestic branches], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (2004): 18.

¹⁵³ “Senior political advisor: idea of possible ‘Jasmine Revolution’ in China unrealistic,” Xinhua General News Service, February 24, 2011, accessed via Lexis Nexis.

¹⁵⁴ “Foreign Media to Report China Objectively,” Xinhua General News Service, March 5, 2011, accessed via Lexis Nexis.

¹⁵⁵ “China urges US to stop misleading the public after harboring Chen Guangcheng,” Xinhua General News Service, May 2, 2012, accessed through Lexis Nexis.

There is an absolute taboo in the Chinese media to report on leadership politics, such as different factions.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the coverage on Wang Lijun's 王立军 defection to the U.S. consulate and Bo Xilai's 薄熙来 fall in China's foreign language media was initially limited to a small number of short official Xinhua statements and statements from spokespeople.¹⁵⁷ After the initial silence, commentaries painting the case as a good example that no-one is above the law in China¹⁵⁸ and criticizing foreign media for spreading rumors about political struggles did appear,¹⁵⁹ but these came very late and not before the CPC had made a decision on Bo.

In conclusion, because of a combination of adverse affects and an overall trend and willingness to report, China's external propaganda media have adapted significantly to the new media environment, in which it is often impossible to keep sudden events, including protests, from being discovered. China is aware that if its media remain silent on major sudden events, they will face difficulties gaining credibility and a loyal target audience. Nonetheless, whenever the Party considers domestic stability at stake or when news touch on other areas considered taboo (such as the top leadership), no reports are issued.

Negative News II: Strategic Criticism versus a "Chinese Model of Journalism"

Another key area in which the CPC's traditional conception of the media clashes with the ideals (though not necessarily the practice) of Western journalism is the question whether media should support those in power or challenge them. More broadly speaking, it is also a question whether media should focus on the positive or on the negative. The issue of finding the right balance between the "positive" and the "negative" as well as between "criticism" and "praise" in

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Susan Shirk, "Changing Media, Changing China," in *Changing Media, Changing China*, ed. Susan Shirk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 30.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. "Authorities investigating Chongqing vice mayor's entering into U.S. consulate," Xinhua General News Service, February 9, 2012, accessed through Lexis Nexis; "Wang Lijun under investigation: CPPCC spokesman," Xinhua General News Service, March 2, 2012, accessed through Lexis Nexis; "CPC Central Committee to investigate into Bo Xilai's serious violations," Xinhuanet, April 10, 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-04/10/c_131518307.htm, accessed February 13, 2013.

¹⁵⁸ E.g. Shan Renping, "Bo's downfall result of inflated sense of influence," Global Times Online, April 19, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/705623/Bos-downfall-result-of-inflated-sense-of-influence.aspx>, accessed February 14, 2013.

¹⁵⁹ "Commentary: Rumors, fabrications end up as laughingstocks," Xinhua General News Service, May 1, 2012, accessed via Lexis Nexis; "China Voice: Why do rumors repeatedly arise in Bo Xilai incident?" Xinhua General News Service, April 29, 2012, accessed via Lexis Nexis.

Chinese media coverage has been hotly debated throughout the entire post-Mao period. China is caught between two options: Either it can adapt to the expectations of its foreign target audience and include more negative news to raise its own credibility or it can try to defend a “Chinese model of journalism” that focuses on the positive. So how has China dealt with this question in the past and what options does it currently pursue?

Starting in the post-Mao period, the need to include more negative news, either to substantially improve Chinese journalism or to improve its image for strategic reasons has been discussed under a large variety of slogans. The first and most influential was that external propaganda needed to “seek truth from facts” (*shishi qiushi* 实事求是), which could be used both to argue for more positive and for more negative news.¹⁶⁰ In addition to the flexible “seek truth from facts” discourse, lack of negative news was also discussed under the slogan “reporting only happy and no bad news” (*bao xi bu bao you* 报喜不报忧).¹⁶¹ Another slogan that implies including negative news simply for strategic purposes is “a little bit of (strategic) criticism can go a long way” (*xiao ma da bangmang* 小骂大帮忙), which refers to the practice of criticizing one’s own government (or any other interest group behind a certain medium) in order to create the impression of being an “independent medium”¹⁶² and is considered a common strategy of the Western (previously: the capitalist) mainstream press. The purely strategic inclusion of

¹⁶⁰This was already mentioned in the early 1970s: Zhang Xiangshan tongzhi tan guanyu zuohao jiedai, luyou gongzuo zhong de xuanchuan wenti” 张香山同志谈关于做好 接待、旅游工作中的宣传问题 [Comrade Zhang Xiangshan talks about the issue of properly doing propaganda as part of hosting (foreigners) and tourism work], in *Xuanchuan dongtai xuanbian*, 1979 宣传动态选编, 1979 [Selections from Propaganda trends, 1979] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981), 235-236.

¹⁶¹In the 1980s, *bao xi bu bao you* 报喜不报忧 was used in two important contexts: First, to describe the problem of *internal* underreporting of problems at the local level to superiors and, second, to criticize the inclination of *public* Chinese media to focus on the positive.

¹⁶²Cf. Sun Xupei 孙旭培, “Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu” 谈对外报道的新观念和新艺术 [On new ideas and new art (i.e. qualitative skills) of external reporting], *Huaibei meitan shifanxueyuan xuebao* (*zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 淮北煤炭师范学院学报 (哲学社会科学版) [Journal of Huaibei Coal Industry Teacher’s College (Humanities and social sciences edition) 25, no. 3 (2004): 35. The formulation was first used by CPC members to describe the *Dagongbao* 大公报 in the 1930s and continues to be strongly associated with the paper. E.g. Liu Jianming 刘建明 et al., eds., *Xuanchuan yulunxue da cidian* 宣传舆论学大辞典 [Dictionary on the study of propaganda and public opinion] (Beijing: Jingji ribao chubanshe, 1992), 114.

negative news is also presented under the term “objectivity” (*keguanxing* 客观性) or “balance” (*pingheng* 平衡, both today usually in quotation marks).¹⁶³

While during large parts of the 1980s, objective and balanced news were discussed as an actual ideal to strive for, since 1987/1989, “objectivity” and “balance” have been presented almost exclusively as farces upheld by Western media: In order to gain the trust of the target audience and be able to exert influence subtly, they will include different points of view and not directly tell the reader or listener what the correct stance on a certain issue is. As early as 1981, an article in *External Reporting Reference* suggested that Chinese external propaganda organs learn from Western media in this regard and “include negative opinions that do not conflict with the basic interests of the ruling group.”¹⁶⁴

First in 1987 and then after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, with the change from “regular mode” to “crisis mode” in virtually all debates, those advocating for the inclusion of more negative news, both in domestic and in external propaganda media, suffered a setback. They were accused of wanting to introduce a 50/50 quota between positive and negative news in order to achieve true “balance” and to be even more critical of China than foreigners were.¹⁶⁵ Since at least 1990, external propaganda leaders have been pointing out explicitly that “relying mainly on positive propaganda” (*zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu* 正面宣传为主)¹⁶⁶ did not equal “reporting only happy and no bad news”.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless,

¹⁶³ See for example Hu Yajuan 胡雅娟, “Xifang jizhe wudao guoji shouzhong xiezuo shouduan qianxi” 西方记者误导国际受众写作手法浅析 [Analysis of writing techniques used by Western reporters to mislead the international audience], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 6 (2012): 34.

¹⁶⁴ “Guangbo shiyeju Xide zhuanjia Nuote tan duiwai xuanchuan” 广播事业局西德专家诺特谈对外宣传 [West German expert ‘Nuote’ from the Broadcasting Bureau speaks about external propaganda], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1981): 15.

¹⁶⁵ “*Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* huiyi shang Zeng Jianhui tongzhi de jiang hua” 《对外宣传参考》会议上曾建徽同志的讲话 [Zeng Jianhui’s speech at the meeting of External Propaganda Reference], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 9 (1990): 6. Zeng Jianhui: “平暴以前, 有相当一个时期, 有的同志认为, 所谓宣传要全面, 人家才相信, 好坏各打 50 板, 把问题的一面讲得很严重, 比如腐败问题, 有的将得比外国人讲的还厉害。”

¹⁶⁶ In the 1990s, while the slogan “relying mainly on positive propaganda” (*zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu* 正面宣传为主) was primarily used as the opposite of refuting hostile forces’ lies when applied to external propaganda work, it could also refer to the balance between reports promoting China’s achievements and those presenting more negative news. (E.g. “*Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* huiyi shang Zeng Jianhui tongzhi de jiang hua,” 6.) Nonetheless, the two uses of *zhengmian xuanchuan wei zhu* (the first in opposition to negative news and the second in opposition to refuting hostile forces) in external propaganda continue to be mixed up.

¹⁶⁷ Speech by Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jia qiao, tu wei*, vol. 127.

this was not an invitation for substantial criticism or even large numbers of critical news for strategic purposes.

At the 2003 external propaganda conference, Li Bing stressed again that talking about problems in the media first and foremost meant that China had confidence.¹⁶⁸ While China needed to adhere to its own outlook on the press (*xinwenguan* 新闻观), it could not entirely neglect the Western conception of the press.¹⁶⁹ Since 2003, the strategy to “rely mainly on the positive” has been openly attacked by authors writing on external propaganda, linking the issue directly to the credibility and consequently the influence of Chinese media among foreigners and arguing for the inclusion of a larger ratio of negative news in order to increase the credibility of Chinese media.¹⁷⁰ Sun Xupei 孙旭培, like Hu Yaobang in 1985, even spelled out a ratio: News targeted at foreigners should be 20-30% negative.¹⁷¹ The careful wording of early criticism¹⁷² showed that attacking “positive propaganda” or “positive reporting” ran the risk of being portrayed as an attack on the socialist conception of the press as first systematically spelled out in the late 1980s and the 1990s.

Today, arguments against “positive guidance” are less careful. One author explained that while positive reports could be justified in China, they were unsuitable for external reporting and one of the reasons why China had still not

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Benkan teyue jizhe, “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilüxing, fuyu chuanguangxing,” 3.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ E.g. Guo Ke 郭可, “Shilun woguo duiwai chuanbo zhong guoji shouzhong xinli yanjiu” 试论我国对外传播中国际受众心理研究 [Discussing research of the psychology of the audience in China’s external communication], July 3, 2003, <http://tech.sina.com.cn/other/2003-10-13/1647243344.shtml>, accessed July 9, 2012 Also see Tang Jiamei 唐佳梅, “Cong ‘duiwai xuanchuan’ dao ‘gongong waijiao’” 从‘对外宣传’到‘公共外交’ [From ‘external propaganda’ to ‘public diplomacy’], *Guangdong waiyu waimao daxue xuebao* 广东外语外贸大学学报 [Journal of Guangdong University of Foreign languages and foreign commerce] 19, no. 6 (2008): 31; Li Xia 李霞, “Duo jiaodu he xijie – duiwai baodao de kexindu” 多角度和细节——对外报道的可信度 [Multiple angles and details – the credibility of external reporting], *Zhongguo jizhe* 中国记者 [China journalist], no. 1 (2008); Zhu Jianting 朱建婷, “Duiwai xuanchuan: tigao guojia wenhua ruanshili de zhongyao lujing xuanze” 对外宣传: 提高国家文化软实力的重要路径选择 [External propaganda: Choosing an important path to raise the country’s cultural soft power], *Jiangxi Xingzheng xueyuan xuebao* 江西行政学院学报 [Journal of Jiangxi Administrative College] 10, no. 2 (2008): 29; Xu Ge 许革, “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan yu shi jujin de ji dian sikao” 关于对外宣传与时俱进的几点思考 [A few thoughts on external propaganda going with the times], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 4 (2003): 6.

¹⁷¹ Sun Xupei, “Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu,” 35.

¹⁷² E.g. “这不是说在对外传播中我们不能坚持以正面报道为主的方针, 但这必须以我们对外传播是否有效果为前提, 要看我们对国际受众心理状态的了解和把握程度。” Guo Ke, *Dangdai duiwai chuanbo*.

succeeded in entering Western mainstream society.¹⁷³ For external communication, the policy slogan of “positive propaganda” should be replaced with the slogan “striving for a positive effect of propaganda” (*zhengqu zhengmian xuanchuan xiaoguo* 争取正面宣传效果).¹⁷⁴

There are, again, different types of criticism that can be included in the news. First, there are social problems in Chinese society. Since the beginning of the 21st century, these types of report have been welcome. With the “China threat theory” and later as part of the response to it –the “peaceful development” discourse– Chinese external propaganda workers were discouraged from exaggerating China’s achievements¹⁷⁵ and encouraged to report more on its social and economic –though not its political– problems. The consensus was that the West exaggerated China’s actual economic power on purpose so as to be able to paint China as a much larger threat than the former S.U.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, reporting some of China’s economic problems was also encouraged to bolster the country’s status as a developing country surrounding the WTO accession.¹⁷⁷ One author wrote in 2001 that reporting only the positive and not the negative (*bao xi bu bao*

¹⁷³ Liu Shinan 刘式南, “Wenhua tizhi gaige de zhongyao neirong – shixian Zhonghua wenhua youxiao chuanbo” 文化体制改革的重要内容——实现中华文化的有效传播 [Important content of the reform of the cultural system - realizing effective communication of Chinese culture], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 5 (2012): 7-8.

¹⁷⁴ Huang Hai, “‘Huai xiaoxi’ yu ‘hao xingxiang,’” 31. For a discussion of how to understand positive propaganda when targeting foreigners also see Hou and Guo, *Duiwai baodao celüe yu jiqiao*, 131-138.

¹⁷⁵ This referred to economic and military achievements. While the principle of “relying mainly on the positive” still applied, one should be careful about not scaring other countries with too many success stories and fuelling the “China Threat Theory”. Zhang Zhenhua 张振华, “Guanyu duiwai xuanchuan ruogan wenti de sikao” 关于对外宣传若干问题的思考 [Thoughts on a number of problems in external propaganda], in *Duiwai xuanchuan lunwenji* 对外宣传论文集 [Collected studies on external propaganda], ed. Zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi yanjiushi 中央对外宣传办公室研究室 [Research Office of the Central Office of External Propaganda] (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 1998), 96f-97). Also see Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, “Duiwai xuanchuan yao jianchi ‘tao guang yang hui’, ‘you suo zuowei’” 对外宣传要坚持“韬光养晦, 有所作为” [External propaganda should ‘keep a low profile’ and ‘make contributions’], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (2005): 19.

¹⁷⁶ Sha Qiguang 沙奇光, “Dui Xifang meiti sanbu ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ de pingxi (xia)” 对西方媒体散布“中国威胁论”的评析(下) [A critical analysis of Western media’s spreading of the ‘China threat theory’ (part three of three)], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (2001): 8.

¹⁷⁷ Yu Jincui, “Chengguan not best choice to enforce civilized behavior,” *Global Times Online*, August 17, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/727453/Chengguan-not-best-choice-to-enforce-civilized-behavior.aspx>, accessed August 17, 2012.

you) was counter-productive to branding China as a developing country.¹⁷⁸ One article highlighted the need for Chinese journalists not to boast about China's powers (*shili* 实力), neither in China's own media nor through foreigners stationed in China. China had to be particularly careful with regard to military affairs and defense construction.¹⁷⁹ If external propaganda was not done well in this field, it could lead to Western countries taking up measures to curtail China and could cause other developing countries which are at about the same development level as China to worry about its increasing competitiveness.¹⁸⁰

Thus, obviously, including negative news in support of the peaceful rise narrative is not a *carte blanche* to criticize at will, but has to support goal of shaping China's image and creating an environment that is favorable to the realization of China's strategic aims. Therefore, critical reports have to support the Center's master narrative or at least not contradict it. Today, the problems that are generally safe to report on or that can be supported through reports are very well defined and have been incorporated into the "peaceful development" narrative: China is still a developing country, China has a large population, which makes development and growth more difficult, and China is unevenly developed.¹⁸¹ This excludes certain types of reports that might otherwise be included more regularly for strategic purposes.

With regard to criticism of the Party and the government, several authors have suggested to criticize the authorities on secondary issues to gain the readers' or viewers' trust and goodwill, but to affirm the Center's position on anything that mattered (*xiao ma da bangmang*).¹⁸² However, since 1953, media have been prohibited from criticizing party committees at the same level, meaning the

¹⁷⁸ Wu Zheng 吴征, *Zhongguo de daguo diwei yu guoji chuanbo zhanlue* 中国的大国地位与国际传播战略 [China's great power status and (its) international communication strategy] (Beijing: Changzheng chubanshe, 2001), 74-75.

¹⁷⁹ Zhai Shuyao, "Duiwai xuanchuan yao jianchi 'tao guang yang hui', 'you suo zuowei'," 19.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ E.g. Zheng Bijian: "Zhongguo heping jueqi xin daolu he Yazhou de weilai" 中国和平崛起新道路和亚洲的未来 [A New Path for China's Peaceful Rise and the Future of Asia], November 3, 2003, in *China's Peaceful Rise. Speeches of Zheng Bijian 1997-2005* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 14-15.

¹⁸² E.g. Wu Zheng 吴征, *Zhongguo de daguo diwei yu guoji chuanbo zhanlue* 中国的大国地位与国际传播战略 [China's great power status and (its) international communication strategy] (Beijing: Changzheng chubanshe, 2001), 101-102; Sun Xupei, "Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu," 35.

jurisdiction within which they operate, a rule that is enforced until today.¹⁸³ Thus, central level media are authorized to criticize provincial party committees and governments, but not the Party Center or the national government. This means, of course, that the center officially cannot be subjected to criticism by any open Chinese mass medium. When the entity being protested is local or private and the Center approves of the protest, by contrast, reporting it is encouraged and has become relatively common.¹⁸⁴ Particularly since the affirmation of the decision to create global media players in late 2008, there have been a number of articles on more delicate topics that appear to be part of the implementation of strategic criticism. One article on China.org.cn, entitled “Shanghai hukou reform just for show,”¹⁸⁵ points out the inadequacies in the 2009 Shanghai *hukou* 户口 reform.¹⁸⁶

More recent articles touch on even more sensitive topics. For instance, *Metro Beijing* and *Global Times Online* published an article on the discrimination against a Uyghur woman by Beijing authorities in an unresolved case of a denied passport. The article also explained that the woman had been harassed by authorities in the past over posts made on *Renren*, China’s equivalent of Facebook.¹⁸⁷ The *Global Times* also reported on the phenomenon of paid online commentators, better known as the “Fifty Cent Party.”¹⁸⁸

Generally speaking, media that are not directly linked to the Party-state in their presentation to the outside world are more daring and outspoken. While the *Global Times* carries harsh attacks on foreign governments and China’s critics, it

¹⁸³ See Zhao Yuezhi, *Media, Market, and Democracy in China*, 20. Also see Lang Jingsong 朗劲松, *Zhongguo xinwen zhengce tixi yanjiu* 中国新闻政策体系研究 [Research on China’s news policy system] (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2003), 63-64. The fact that today propaganda departments of party committees own media within the same administrative jurisdiction makes enforcing this rule easier. Consequently, local media only report on scandals outside of their province, despite the fact that the Center has tried to ban cross-regional reporting. Cf. Susan Shirk, *Changing Media, Changing China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 21-22.

¹⁸⁴ E.g. Wang Zhenhua, “Refusal of water sparks outrage,” China Daily Online, US edition, July 9, 2012, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/09/content_15559576.htm, accessed July 9, 2012.

¹⁸⁵ Fan Junmei, “Shanghai hukou reform just for show,” March 19, 2009. China.org.cn http://www.china.org.cn/china/features/content_17468979.htm, accessed July 9, 2012.

¹⁸⁶ The Shanghai municipal government announced in February 2009 that it would allow migrants to obtain a local *hukou* 户口 under a number of conditions, including having had a Residence Permit for at least seven years. “Shanghai hukou reform just for show.” A *hukou* is a local registration that is supposed to prevent the fluctuation of the population.

¹⁸⁷ Xie Wenting, “Double Standards,” website of the *Global Times*, December 24, 2012, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/752002.shtml>, accessed January 15, 2013.

¹⁸⁸ Zhang Lei, “Invisible Footprints of Online Commentators,” website of the *Global Times*, February 5, 2010, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/special/2010-02/503820.html>, accessed January 15, 2013.

has also served as a platform to test new policies and break taboos. For instance, in 2009, its first year, the *Global Times* openly referred to the “June 4 Tiananmen Incident” on the twentieth anniversary of the crackdown, even addressing the taboo around the event in Chinese society and describing the reserved reactions the *Global Times* received when asking officials and scholars to comment.¹⁸⁹ While such references are common in internal (*neibu* 内部) pieces, even at the lowest levels and public material without wide circulation,¹⁹⁰ they would not usually appear in public mass media such as newspapers. According to one report in the *Christian Science Monitor*, the article was approved by the authorities at the last minute.¹⁹¹

In addition to allowing more criticism or breaking taboos for strategic purpose, China has also become more assertive in presenting its own style of journalism as an alternative to Western media, particularly when covering the developing world. China is again arguing that its positive approach to news provides a remedy to Western misrepresentations of these regions. This line of argumentation is familiar from the UNESCO debate on the New World Media Order held in the 1970s and -80s. When the *China Daily* launched its Africa edition in December 2012, it emphasized its plans to focus on the positive in a region which it considered misrepresented by Western media.¹⁹² To what extent this approach resonates with audiences in the developing world is for future research to explore.

Articles in the *China Daily* critical of local party committees or governments are, time and again, seen as signs that China’s media are becoming

¹⁸⁹ Jiang Xueqing, “Prosperity Tangible Along Chang’an Avenue,” website of the *Global Times*, June 4, 2009, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/special/2009-06/434373.html>, accessed February 14, 2013.

¹⁹⁰ See for example Zhao Qizheng 赵启正, “Nuli jianshe youliyu woguo de guoji yulun huanjing” 努力建设有利于我国的国际舆论环境 [Make efforts to build a favorable international public opinion environment], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 6 (2004): 2; “Guangzhou waixuanchu ‘liu si’ yilai shi ruhe kaizhan gongzuo de” 广州外宣处“六四”以来是如何开展工作的 [How Guangzhou’s External Propaganda Division has worked since “June Fourth”], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao* no. 7 (1990): 11.

¹⁹¹ Peter Ford, “Chinese first: Tiananmen Square mentioned in official newspaper,” *Christian Science Monitor* Online, June 4, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2009/0604/p06s08-woap.html>, accessed January 14, 2013.

¹⁹² See for example “China-Africa media cooperation -- a joint force for truth,” Xinhuanet, April 22, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-04/22/c_13841508.htm, accessed February 18, 2013.

more open or that civil society is becoming stronger.¹⁹³ The discussions on including more negative or critical news for strategic purposes instead strongly suggest that the inclusion of such articles is a strategic change to raise the credibility of China's foreign language media more than anything else. However, two points should be made. First, journalists and officials engaged in external propaganda have argued for these changes for several decades, yet, such reports have only been included since circa 2008 or 2009 after external propaganda gained new urgency. Second, these changes in China's foreign language media might have a spill-over effect into domestic media under the policy to "coordinate the domestic and the international."

To conclude: Reports on certain social and economic problems are welcome not only to change the image of Chinese media as reporting only good news, but also in order to support China's peaceful rise narrative. More importantly, Chinese media increasingly integrate strategic criticism of local authorities in order to gain some credibility. Criticism of the Central Party Committee, the central government, and the political system per se remains largely taboo. Thus, the calls for including more negative or critical news in order to raise the credibility of China's media and be able to influence foreigners better has been realized in several different ways, with some more daring and potentially consequential than others. However, the question remains whether this is enough. David Bandurski sums up the main problem in a comment on the Tiananmen reference in the *Global Times*: "They are only breaking taboos in terms of the repressive media policies in China [...] If you look at their coverage in the context of global coverage, which is the whole point of projecting soft power, it is irrelevant."¹⁹⁴

Reducing Awkward and Polemical Language

One long term criticism of China's media targeted at foreigners –since the founding of the PRC or even before– has been that their language and style are not

¹⁹³ E.g. David Cohen, "The Curious Case of Zhan Haite," *The Diplomat* online, December 19, 2012, <http://thediplomat.com/china-power/the-curious-case-of-zhan-haite/>, accessed December 22, 2012.

¹⁹⁴ Peter Ford, "Chinese First: Tiananmen Square Mentioned in Official Newspaper."

well-suited to the “reading habits” of foreigners. Much has been done in this field. Particularly after the upgrade in 2004 and the decision to raise China's “international communication capabilities” in late 2008, there were very visible changes. At the same time, Chinese media continue to face criticism for awkward language in general as well as, more specifically, what I call “rhetorical overdrive”: The use of very harsh language whenever refuting what is perceived as an attack on China's core interests. In this chapter, I will explain how the idea that China needs to work harder to adapt to foreigners became increasingly important in the post-Mao period and what obstacles remain.

In the 1980s, journalists were systematically taught how to write articles for Western audiences, including the pyramid scheme, “speaking through facts” (*yong shishi shuohua* 用事实说话) and illustrating larger truths through reports on a specific topic (“making the large visible through the small,” *yi xiao jian da* 以小见大), to give a few examples. Despite the re-orientation towards a “Chinese style of journalism” in the 1990s, these basic principles of journalism and of trying to adapt to foreigners' reading habits remained valid. Both in the 1980s and 1990s, the main problems were not lack of awareness, but lack of qualified personnel and lack of political will to fundamentally change existing journalistic practices.

In 2003, Li Bing addressed the need to adapt to foreigners' reading habits and their conception of the role of the press to a certain degree, a point repeated by Li Changchun 李长春 in 2004 in a statement published in the *People's Daily*.¹⁹⁵ The fact that in 2003 and 2004 such a basic position –which was considered common knowledge among external propaganda workers in the 1980s, though not always realized in practice– still had to be justified carefully in the 21st

¹⁹⁵ For Li Bing, see Benkan teyue jizhe 本刊特约记者 [Specially appointed reporter from this journal], “Tixian shidaixing, bawo guilixing, fuyu chuangzaoxing: Ji 2003 nian quanguo waixuan gongzuo huiyi” 体现时代性 把握规律性 富于创造性——记 2003 年全国外宣工作会议 [Embody the characteristics of the times, grasp the rules, be rich in innovation – Notes from the nationwide work meeting for external propaganda in 2003], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 2 (2003): 2-3. For the *People's Daily* article, see “Li Changchun zai zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi shang qiangdiao yong ‘san ge daibiao’ zhongyao sixiang tongling duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo jin yi bu kaichuang duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian” 李长春在中央对外宣传工作会议上强调 用“三个代表”重要思想统领对外宣传工作 进一步开创对外宣传工作新局面 [Li Changchun stresses at the central external propaganda work conference that external propaganda needs to be directed by the important thought of the ‘three represents’ in order to continue to create a new situation in external propaganda work], *Renmin ribao*, April 22, 2004, 1.

century illustrates the problems external propaganda has faced in trying to institute changes to journalistic practices. The points Li Bing made were not new, but the fact that he stated them in a speech available to the public marked an important turn that accompanied the strategic upgrade of external propaganda in 2004. Until today, speeches and articles from high-ranking cadres continue to highlight that China needs to adhere to the “three closenesses,” find common ground between what China wants to say and what foreigners need to know and increase targetedness, effectiveness, affinity, and persuasiveness (*zhenduixing, shixiaoxing he qinheli, shuofuli* 针对性、实效性和亲和力、说服力) of external propaganda.¹⁹⁶

Nonetheless, China’s English language media continue to produce occasional articles that are seen as awkward or absurd. Often these are translations from local media or from ordinary citizens not actually employed as journalists.¹⁹⁷ For the 90th anniversary of the CPC, the *China Daily* online version published an article which sought to explain why the CPC had been so successful in China and had been embraced by the Chinese population:

“Why is CPC so special? How can CPC win the support of the people? There are many reasons, since it is relying on the basic theories of Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong thought, Deng Xiaoping theories, Three represents and scientific development concept, which are the summaries of experiences and wisdom of the CPC and the whole Chinese people.”¹⁹⁸

Aside from grammatical issues and awkward wordings, the article simply lists slogans one after the other without making any effort to explain what they mean. Obviously, the author does not try to speak through facts, either. In sum,

¹⁹⁶ “Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuangxin jingshen kaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian” 王晨：以改革创新精神开创党的对外宣传工作新局面 [Wang Chen: Create a new situation for the Party’s external propaganda work through the spirit of reform and innovation], Website of OEP/SCIO, July 5, 2011, http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwbjs/zygy/wangchen/jh/201107/t949561_2.htm, accessed June 29, 2012

¹⁹⁷ One example is “A Happy Ending to Farmers’ Anus Woes,” February 27, 2011, Global Times online, <http://life.globaltimes.cn/2011-02/628018.html>, accessed March 1, 2011. The article, which was translated from *Wuhan Morning News* and suitably filed under the category “Odd enough,” is no longer available online.

¹⁹⁸ Chen Xuefei, “CPC’s 90th Birthday Celebration and Reflection,” website of the China Daily, June 30, 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-06/30/content_12808678.htm, accessed December 21, 2012.

the article does everything that Chinese journalists have been taught to avoid for decades. The main reason for this is most likely that Chinese media are under pressure to produce a lot of content and needs to broaden its base of contributors. Thus, as long as people write as individual Chinese citizens and the medium can disassociate itself from the content –which the *China Daily Online* does explicitly in this case¹⁹⁹ - such articles are considered acceptable. Nonetheless, as the number of people involved in external propaganda or “international communication” increases through the involvement of ordinary people and through the creation of foreign language media at the provincial level, quality control becomes a serious issue again.

There is another issue, namely the need to propagate China’s socialist identity and the “superiority of the socialist system” that potentially lends itself to vocabulary that seems out of place in the 21st century. In July 2011, Wang Chen 王晨 mentioned that one of the successes in handling sudden events and reporting “hot topics” over the last few years had been demonstrating (*zhanxian* 展现) the superiority of the socialist system to the world.²⁰⁰ However, use of the word “demonstrate” seems to indicate that the strategy to directly spell out the superiority of the socialist system has been replaced by a softer “speaking through facts” approach in foreign languages. In 2011, a small number of articles published by Chinese media in English both before and after Wang’s comment did, in fact, directly stress the “superiority of the socialist system.” One article, called “Miraculous earthquake recovery proves superiority of socialist system,” reported on reconstruction in Sichuan after the Wenquan earthquake.²⁰¹ The socialist system, the article argued, was superior because it could “help a country concentrate efforts and resources on major tasks” and “innovation-based self-improvement in the process of addressing tough issues” that the CPC credits itself with. The rhetoric of the title and much of the content is reminiscent of articles published in the *Peking Review* in the Mao period and seems out of place in the 21st century. The relatively small number suggests that this was a test case rather

¹⁹⁹ “The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the China Daily website.” Chen Xuefei, “CPC’s 90th Birthday Celebration and Reflection.”

²⁰⁰ “Wang Chen: Yi gaige chuangxin jingshen kaichuang dang de duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo xin jumian.”

²⁰¹ “Miraculous earthquake recovery proves superiority of socialist system,” People’s Daily Online, May 13, 2011. <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90780/91342/7379684.html>, accessed October 31, 2011.

than an established new policy.²⁰² No similar articles were published in 2012, though a Xinhua release from 2012 cited a Brazilian senator pointing out that China's successes demonstrated the superiority of the Socialist system.²⁰³

Especially with regard to high politics or crisis mode condemnations and refutations, there has been another obstacle standing in the way of more moderate language, namely the need to “adhere to principles” (*jiang yuanze* 讲原则). According to *Central Circular* [1990] no. 21, retorts should be issued sparingly in order to avoid giving China's enemies a platform and achieving the opposite of one's intention (cf. chapter 6.2). However, as soon as China's core interests were touched, any issue was automatically upgraded to “political”, and Chinese external propaganda then needed to “adhere to principle” and issue a response. The identification of high politics issues is clearly not limited to China, but the “high tune” (*diaozi gao* 调子高) style of the responses triggered is quite distinct and is an obstacle to being taken seriously. Like during the Republican period, there remains an assumption that China is right, and thus spreading correct information should ideally suffice to convince foreigners.

The obvious problem, as already indicated above, is that Chinese media are least likely to produce content that foreigners will be convinced by in those areas that China cares about most. While arguing against such “high tone” condemnations is a sensitive issue to address and most Chinese analysts prefer not to criticize “the need to adhere to principles” when writing articles in public, media are aware of this and arguments have been made to reduce this type of

²⁰² See for instance “Miraculous earthquake recovery proves superiority of socialist system.” “‘Pairing-up’ support program for Tibet reflects superiority of socialist system: Vice President,” Xinhuanet, July 20, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-07/20/c_13998175.htm, accessed October 31, 2011. Liu Qibao, “A Great Miracle in Disaster Relief Created by the Socialist System,” *Qiushi* vol. 3, no. 3, July 1, 2011, website of Qiushi, http://english.qstheory.cn/politics/201109/t20110924_112591.htm, accessed October 31, 2011. For another likely test case, see Li Congjun's Op-ed in the Wall Street Journal. Li Congjun, “Toward a New Media World Order,” June 1, 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704816604576335563624853594.html>, accessed March 28, 2012. The reactions to the article, which were, without doubt, monitored, were overwhelmingly negative and no attempts were made by the Chinese side to add positive comments.

²⁰³ “Interview: China's communist party shows great leadership: Brazilian senator,” Xinhua General News Service, October 22, 2012, accessed through Lexis Nexis.

“overreaction.” Here, both Western media and China’s “enemies” have served as reference models.

For example, in April 2001, Xinhua General Editors’ Office held a “report coordinating session” (*baodao xietiao hui* 报道协调会) to give orders (*jinxing bushu* 进行部署) how to cover the 50th anniversary of the “peaceful liberation of Tibet.” The session studied the Dalai Lama’s and the Western point of view meticulously, browsed the Tibetan Government in Exile’s website, *TibetNet*,²⁰⁴ read “representative works” (*jingdian zhushu* 经典著述) from foreign scholars on Tibet, and read reports from foreign media on Tibet. In addition, Xinhua heard suggestions from (Chinese) Tibet scholars. One Tibet expert criticized the initial rough draft of various articles, stating that the criticisms of the Dalai Lama in some of the topics sounded just like wild cursing (*manma* 谩骂), whereas it would be much more effective to use facts.²⁰⁵

Another article published in *External Propaganda Reference* in early 2004 explained that the Voice of America (VOA) was a good example to teach Chinese cadres how to conduct external propaganda. For instance, normally, VOA used objective reporting to gain the trust of listeners and viewers, but in key times, they were directed by ideology.²⁰⁶ However, this argument was not used to justify rhetorical overdrive in cases where China’s core interests were touched. Instead, the article suggested China should learn from the Dalai Lama. As opposed to China, which often launched grand attacks (*xiang da pipan wenzhang* 像大批判文章), the Dalai Lama succeeded in making his political talks look apolitical by

²⁰⁴ <http://tibet.net>. A snapshot of the website from 2001 can be found here: <http://web.archive.org/web/20010221230948/http://www.tibet.net/index2.html>, archived version from February 20, 2001, accessed February 7, 2013. At the time, the website was available in English, Chinese, Tibetan, and Hindi.

²⁰⁵ Duoqiong 多穷, Qiu Lihua 裘立华, and Han Song 韩松, “Xin shiji yu Dalai de shouci da guimo yulun jiaofeng - Xizang heping jiefang wushi zhounian duiwai baodao sui’ji” 新世纪与达赖的首次大规模舆论交锋——西藏和平解放五十周年对外报道随记 [First large-scale public opinion clash of the new century with the Dalai - Random notes on external reports of the fiftieth anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 8 (2001): 16.

²⁰⁶ Liu Yaming 刘雅鸣 and Li Pei 李珮, “Quanqiu chuanbo shidai woguo duiwai xuanchuan xin chulu (er) - Di yi shijian fachu shengyin waixuan bixu xian fa zhi ren” 全球传播时代我国对外宣传新出路 (二) ——第一次发出声音外宣必须先发制人 [A new way out for China’s external propaganda in the era of global communication (two) - Starting with the first sound external propaganda needs to gain the upper hand by releasing news first], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 12 (2003): 19.

nurturing his image as a man of peace and avoiding certain terminology.²⁰⁷ The article acknowledged that while Western media's distorted reports on China accounted for part of the country's failure to sway public opinion on questions such as Tibet and Taiwan, the strategies and techniques China chose to get its point across also contributed to the problem.²⁰⁸ The year 2004 also saw another wave of teaching journalists to "speak through facts."²⁰⁹

An article from 2004 explains to journalists working for domestic Xinhua branches how to properly react to attacks against China (tit for tat, *zhen feng xiang dui* 针锋相对). One is to plan a series of objective reports. Another possibility is to reply to foreigners' concerns or hostile forces' attacks in a positive manner by providing information. Indirect answers can also work under certain circumstances. In some cases, it makes sense to preemptively deal with a potential attack, but it is important to avoid drawing attention to the issue. Finally, not reacting at all can also be a proactive way of dealing with an attack.²¹⁰

However, restraint in China's media coverage continues to be a matter of political climate and importance of the topic to China. For instance, the report on the external propaganda conference in 2010 again stressed the need to engage in the struggle over international public opinion again, something which had not been mentioned in a *People's Daily* report on external propaganda conferences since 2003. The topic most likely featured prominently because of the difficulties Chinese media had faced in spinning sensitive events in China's favor in both 2008 and 2009, which also increased the number of times "anti-China forces" (2008) and "hostile forces" (2009) mentioned in Xinhua news releases (see chart 9.1). Today, despite the fact that external propaganda cadres have been aware of the issue, rhetorical overdrive when covering *sensitive* stories²¹¹ continues to be a

²⁰⁷ Liu and Li, "Quanju chuanbo shidai woguo duiwai xuanchuan duiwai xuanchuan xin chulu (san)," 19.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ E.g. Zhai Shuyao 翟树耀, "Duiwai xinwen xiezuoyao yong shishi shuohua" 对外新闻写作要用事实说话 [Foreign news writing should speak through facts], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 10 (2004): 28.

²¹⁰ Zhou Zongmin, "Yong 'shijie yuyan' tong haiwai shouzhong 'zhijie duihua,'" 16.

²¹¹ Tibet, Taiwan, Xinjiang, human rights, and anything else touching China's "core interests" that requires external propaganda to "adhere to principle."

problem for China’s foreign language media. Xinhua news releases still speak of “overseas splittists,”²¹² “anti-China forces,”²¹³ “wolf in monk’s robes,”²¹⁴ etc.



Graph 9.I: China’s Crisis Communication

The first peak in red is from the year 2008; the second, yellow peak is from 2009.²¹⁵

The failure to influence international public opinion in 2008 prompted more outspoken criticism. An article on OEP/SCIO’s website argued for a relaxation of control over content and form. Previously, China had paid too much attention to enforcing unity of formulations in cases of reports whose political nature was particularly strong (*zhengzhixing teqiang de gaojian* 政治性特强的稿件). This could be easily achieved because all media simply had to follow Xinhua’s reports. In addition, the relevant departments and ministries had also determined the timing, order, page number, etc. of these articles in various media. The article did not attack the need to unify slogans, but argued that aside from that

²¹² “China Voice: Dalai Lama’s Way out Requires Compassion By Xinhua writer Cheng Yunjie,” Xinhua General News Service, July 18, 2012, accessed through Lexis Nexis.

²¹³ E.g. “Beijing Christians Urged to Abide by Law,” Xinhua General News Service, April 11, 2011.

²¹⁴ “Tibet’s Party chief reiterates Dalai Lama is ‘wolf in monk’s robes,’” Xinhua General News Service, March 7, 2011.

²¹⁵ Chart based on key word search of Xinhua news releases in full text database of Lexis Nexis.

—presumably meaning aside from a number of formal refutations released by Xinhua and possibly reprinted by other media, which were sacrosanct and thus could not be attacked at the time— China should relax all other controls.²¹⁶ Here, the article instead endorsed a statement made by Chen Lidan 陈力丹, a renowned journalism professor at the CASS and at China People’s University on his blog, reacting (supportively) to Hu Jintao’s speech at the People’s Daily in June 2008: The propaganda organs of the CPC and “some leaders” (*mouxie lingdaoren* 某些领导人) did not want to accept that one could also propagate the stance of the Party through other, more popular means than “a series of fixed-expression editorials” (*taohua lianpian de shelun* 套话连篇的社论). In this area, Chen argued, Party leaders’ and propaganda departments’ understanding of the functions of the media would have to adapt to the changed social environment.²¹⁷

The article on the OEP/SCIO website argued that for a specific type of political events (*teding de zhengzhi shijian* 特定的政治事件), particularly sudden events, the authorities needed to relax control over form and content of the message and allow the media to be creative. In addition, the number of articles and programs that had to be reprinted and rebroadcast should be gradually reduced and replaced by a policy of allowing the media to come up with their own content. “Specific type of political events” implied that not all political events needed to be handled like this. Rather, the article suggested a test case for events which involved nationalist sentiments and therefore guaranteed the loyalty of media and Chinese citizens. Here, the article implicitly used the CPC’s official evaluation of Western media as an argument for fewer controls. After all, “no matter how harsh ‘independent’ or ‘oppositional’ voices in one countries’ media sounded, they would never oppose their own country or their own people.”²¹⁸ It

²¹⁶ “Jingwai meiti she Hua jiemu hulianwang chuanbo de duice yu sikao” 境外媒体涉华节目互联网传播的对策与思考 [Countermeasures for and reflections on the spread of China-related programs of foreign media on the internet], Website of OEP/SCIO, March 13, 2009, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/wlcb/llyj/200905/t307427.htm>, accessed January 16, 2013.

²¹⁷ “主要是各级党的领导人，以及相应的党的宣传部门对传媒职能的认识，要适应社会环境的变化而有所改变” Quote from Chen Lidan 陈力丹, “Lun Hu Jintao chuanmei gongzuo de xin siwei” 论胡锦涛传媒工作的新思维 [On Hu Jintao’s new thinking on media work], October 3, 2008, Chen Lidan’s blog, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4a5940370100az3v.html, accessed January 16, 2013.

²¹⁸ “Jingwai meiti she Hua jiemu hulianwang chuanbo de duice yu sikao.”

worked abroad, and the recent events had demonstrated that it would also work in China.

In fact, it appears that the Chinese Party-state has tried to replace official Xinhua statements on sensitive areas as much as possible with astro-turfing and unofficial statements by “experts” or “ordinary Chinese.” “Speaking through experts” is a well-recognized propaganda tactic.²¹⁹ In domestic propaganda work, “relying on social forces” (*yikao shehui lilian* 依靠社会力量) by asking famous people or experts to give their opinion on a particular topic had been explicitly encouraged since at least 1994.²²⁰ These articles are characterized by the separation of news and opinion. First there are “neutral” reports in China’s official media summing up articles written by “experts,” which only paraphrase what the “experts” said without taking a stance. Likewise, the official media will report on “open letters” from Chinese citizens. Second, there are editorials. As a general rule, articles become more radical the less an author can be associated with a Party medium or the Party-state itself. The *Global Times*, which, after all, presents itself as independent, usually carries the most radical editorials of all official *waixuan* media, although the *China Daily* has also begun publishing more provocative editorials. The important point, however, is that these are editorials, not news articles, and that they are unequivocally presented as the opinion of a particular individual. There continue to be exceptions to this separation of news and opinion, for example in the form of Xinhua releases written like an opinion piece, but left unsigned,²²¹ but these types of articles have decreased.

The problem of language continues to be openly addressed. For instance, in late 2011, a very short article on how China should improve its media coverage in crisis situations highlighted:

“At the current stage, China’s news communication workers do not pay nearly enough attention to language. This is an area where we urgently have to learn from

²¹⁹ See for example Jonathan Potter, *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction* (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), 114.

²²⁰ E.g. “Yi zhengque de yulun yindao ren shi xinwen gongzuo de genben renwu” 以正确的舆论引导人是新闻工作的根本任务 [Guiding people with correct opinion is the fundamental responsibility of press work], *Neibu tongxin*, no. 11 (1994): 4.

²²¹ E.g. “Dalai Lama apathetic toward loss of life,” website of the European edition of *China Daily*, May 16, 2012, http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-05/16/content_15313703.htm, accessed November 12, 2012.

Western media: We need to replace forcible preaching with persuasive and suggestive language.”²²²

Of course, such commentaries are not new, but since Chinese media have instituted more systematic systems for reader feedback, the position to avoid lecturing and express China’s position more subtly has likely gained in support.

Having better feedback systems also allows Chinese media to experiment with different strategies and abandoning those that prove to be counterproductive. Using public opinion or the “will of the people” (*minyi* 民意) was experimentally used as a way to buttress the governments’ position. There are some indications that Taiwan served as a model in this regard. China was very annoyed by Chen Shui-bian’s 陈水扁 tactic to use public opinion polls to argue for Taiwan independence. Consequently, one article in *Internal Reference Readings* (*Neibu canyue* 内部参阅) suggested that the PRC should do the same (*dalü fangmian ye yinggai dachu “minyi pai”* 大陆方面也应该打出“民意牌”).²²³ This was seen as a good way to oppose Taiwan independence without risking the ire of the international community. The opinion of 1.3 billion Mainland Chinese should outweigh that of 23 million Taiwanese. This could be done in stages, first by publicizing the results of opinion polls on Taiwan in general and, if the “splittists” did not stop, the PRC could also publish polls on how many Chinese supported military action (according to online polls, the author stated, about 60% of the people did at the time).²²⁴

Poll results have, in fact, been used to support the position of the government and exert pressure on its opponents. The *Global Times* specifically has a polling center to generate results that can be used. For instance, in a confrontation between the Chinese government and Facebook in the aftermath of riots in Xinjiang over Facebook groups supporting Xinjiang independence, an

²²² “现阶段我国新闻新闻传播工作者对语言层面的关注还远远不够，这正是一个我们迫切需
要向西方媒体学习的地方——用说服性、暗示性的语言取代强行的说教。” Zhu Guannan
朱冠楠, “Weiji yingdui shiqi huayu chuanbo tixi de shengcheng” 危机应对时期话语传播体
系的生成 [The generation of discourse communication system in periods of crisis response],
Duiwai chuanbo, no. 11 (2011): 24.

²²³ Jiang Yuncang 姜运仓, “Zhongguo dalü ye yinggai dachu ‘minyi pai’” 中国大陆也应该打出
“民意牌” [Mainland china also should play the “will of the people” card], *Neibu canyue* 内部
参阅 [Internal reference readings], no. 49 (2003): 16-19.

²²⁴ Jiang Yuncang, “Zhongguo dalü ye yinggai dachu ‘minyi pai,’” 16-19

article on *People's Daily Online* declared that: “81.7 percent of netizens voted to support punishing facebook for conniving ‘Xinjiang independence’ forces”²²⁵ based on a poll conducted by the *Global Times*. According to the same article, 90 percent of netizens thought that Facebook should immediately ban the group.²²⁶ Another article, also on the Xinjiang protests, declared that “90 percent of netizens support anti-riot law.”²²⁷ An article in the English web-edition of the *Global Times* announced that 87.63 percent of respondents had declared they would “never go to Starbucks even if it [were] free” after Starbucks stopped listing Taiwan as a province of China in June 2009.²²⁸ All these and most other examples²²⁹ were from the year 2009, indicating a type of test run for this policy in the year that China also invested massively into the expansion of its media. In 2010, another article published on *China Daily Online* stated that 60 percent of netizens supported China’s *White Paper on Internet Policy*.²³⁰ While polls on other issues continue to be frequently cited in English language articles until today, including on problems in Chinese society,²³¹ they are no longer used to buttress the PRC’s policy on sensitive issues, indicating that the test run was not evaluated as successful and the idea was abandoned, at least in the crude form the test cases had taken.

In conclusion, until today, a basic distinction needs to be drawn between “regular mode” coverage and “crisis mode” coverage. In the case of the latter,

²²⁵ “80 pct of netizens agree China should punish Facebook,” *People’s Daily Online*, July 10, 2009, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6697993.html>, accessed September 30, 2009.

²²⁶ “80 pct of netizens agree China should punish Facebook.”

²²⁷ “90 percent of netizens support anti-riot law,” July 17, 2009, *People’s Daily Online*, <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90882/6703679.html>, accessed January 15, 2013.

²²⁸ “Starbucks Sparks Furor on Chinese Mainland over Taiwan Issue,” June 8, 2009, *Global Times Online*, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/business/top-photo/2011-04/435340.html>, accessed January 15, 2013.

²²⁹ Another article stated that 97 percent of netizens responding to a poll on *huanqiu.com* supported the execution of British citizen Akmal Shaikh, convicted of drug trafficking. Sun Wei, “China-UK Ties Marred by Execution,” *Global Times Online*, December 31, 2009, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/china/diplomacy/2009-12/495554.html>, accessed January 13, 2013.

²³⁰ “A sample survey found that over 60 percent of netizens had a positive opinion of the fact that the government gives wide scope to the Internet’s role in supervision, and considered it a manifestation of China’s socialist democracy and progress [...]”. “China Issues White Paper on Internet Policy,” website of the *China Daily*, June 8, 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-06/08/content_9948496.htm, accessed January 15, 2010.

²³¹ E.g. He Dan, “Survey Shows Charities Need More Transparency,” June 8, 2011, *China Daily Online*, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2011-06/08/content_12657630.htm, accessed January 15, 2013.

despite some resistance against this practice, the Party media are often obliged to adhere to very specific terminology prescribed by Xinhua and the *People's Daily*. In the first case, regular coverage, change has been sweeping. Nevertheless, more recently, as media try to involve larger sections of society so as to “speak through the voices of the people” and produce larger volumes of material, a number of articles are again published without being proof-read by native speakers. Thus, whereas in crisis mode, the problems are political in nature, issues that occur in regular mode coverage are problems of “professional” principles of journalism as well as language skills authors. Finally, whereas de-emphasizing China’s socialist character was contemplated as a strategy and temporarily even openly advocated in more or less direct terms, currently, attempts are made to reinsert the socialist dimension back into China’s image abroad as well as into its external propaganda messages amidst debates on ideological security, building socialist culture and establishing a “discourse system with Chinese characteristics.”

9.4 Dealing with Western Mainstream Media

In building up China’s “international communication capabilities,” Western mainstream media are both competition and a resource to draw on, or, as one Chinese author remarked in 2004: “Western media are our opponents, but at the same time, they can also become our partners.”²³² There are four different strategies: First, China tries to improve its handling of foreign journalists and foreign media in order to improve their China coverage. Second, China buys advertizing space or even full media. Third, China has tried to form alliances with others against “Western mainstream media.” Fourth, the country has tried to paint a credibility crisis of Western media and allowed first (possibly) privately owned media that are supposed to enjoy more credibility and can work outside of the restrictions of the overall Chinese media system.

Dealing with Foreign Media and Journalists

The CPC has complained to foreign media about their coverage since the 1990s. Zhao Qizheng recounted a conversation with CNN founder Ted Turner, whom he met several times, in which he told him he did not like CNN because it

²³² Sun Xupei, “Tan duiwai baodao de xin guannian he xin yishu,” 35.

still included the Tiananmen tank scene in the opening credits of the hourly news. Afterwards, the tank scene was cut out from the opening credits, and Zhao found out that Turner had reprimanded the head of CNN International and told him that if he wanted to do business in China, he would have to pay attention to such details.²³³ Mike Chinoy, the CNN Beijing Bureau chief between 1987 and 1995, recalled that Chinese did complain about the use of the shot to Ted Turner as well as to a number of other people, including himself.²³⁴ Complaints were made in private, never in public and were usually directly to the point though without making any overt threats.²³⁵ However, Ted Turner did not order the shot to be removed, and its use was gradually reduced rather than stopped over night. This happened around 1993 or 1994, partially in response to Chinese complaints, but also because Chinoy felt it no longer reflected realities in China. Thus, after a certain point in time, CNN continued to use the shot when a program was about the crackdown but no longer in general promotional videos.²³⁶

Since the 1990s, China has become more assertive in the case of serious political infractions it dislikes. The “Jasmine Revolution” in 2011 –a series of protests supposed to be modeled on the ongoing Arab revolutions– led to conflict between Chinese authorities and foreign journalists. On one day that authorities expected protests, the main high-end shopping street Wangfujing was sealed off for “cleaning.” A number of journalists (who had gathered to see if anything would happen) reported being attacked or treated roughly.²³⁷ On February 21, 2011, the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of China made an announcement on its website that in order “to ensure continued operation” of the Club, it was “currently not posting incident reports or statements on our website,” although it would continue to collect information (on the Jasmine protests) that would be

²³³ Zhao Qizheng, “Nuli jianshe youliyu woguo de guoji yulun huanjing,” 2.

²³⁴ According to Chinoy, it was not used in the opening credits of the news, but in promotional clips during commercial breaks. Email from Mike Chinoy, January 7, 2013.

²³⁵ Email from Mike Chinoy, January 8, 2013.

²³⁶ Email from Mike Chinoy, January 7, 2013.

²³⁷ Cf. Tania Branigan, “China’s Jasmine Revolution: Police but no Protesters Line Streets of Beijing,” website of the Guardian, February 27, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/feb/27/china-jasmine-revolution-beijing-police>, accessed March 4, 2013.

available to members upon inquiry.²³⁸ Thus, the Club had clearly been warned by the authorities and had decided to take the threats seriously.

The most effective tool to control foreign journalists individually and foreign media collectively is the issuing of visas. In May 2012, China expelled Al-Jazeera correspondent Melissa Chan, which resulted in the network's closing of its China bureau after applications for a new correspondent were also rejected.²³⁹ In late December 2012, Chris Buckley of the *New York Times* followed suit after the NYT had run an investigative piece on the fortune of the family of Premier Wen.²⁴⁰ A spokesperson later denied that Buckley had been expelled, claiming that his visa application had simply been filed incorrectly.²⁴¹ Compared to the relatively timid reactions to the Tiananmen video on CNN, this is clearly an escalation. However, in this area, the threat is more useful than actually realizing it: If everyone were expelled, China would obviously harm itself and its image.

Threatening journalists with revoking their visas or credentials is a potentially very effective means of control, but also a risky one that can backfire easily. Both Western governments and the Chinese Party-state use this method and both of them need to carefully weigh costs against benefits before making threats that are not subtle enough to maintain deniability. For Western governments being caught trying to muzzle the press can result in a scandal, first and foremost because such attempts conflict with their professed stance on the role of the media. In the case of China, there is no such great discrepancy between what is said and what is done (the Chinese government does not make public statements on media freedom), and the Chinese government is arguably held to a much lower standard. Nonetheless, the scrutiny China finds itself under

²³⁸ Foreign Correspondents' Club of China, "Important Announcement," February 21, 2011, <http://www.fccchina.org/2011/02/21/important-announcement/>, accessed March 1, 2011.

²³⁹ Cf. Evan Osnos, "China Expels a Correspondent," *The New Yorker* Online, May 8, 2012, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/evanosnos/2012/05/china-expels-melissa-chan.html>, accessed November 12, 2012.

²⁴⁰ John Garnaut, "China Expels Journalist after Wen Revelations," *Sydney Morning Herald* Online, January 1, 2013, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/china-expels-journalist-after-wen-revelations-20121231-2c2rl.html#ixzz2GdqVX2RK>, accessed January 9, 2013. The article on Wen Jiabao's family fortune is David Barboza, "Billions in Hidden Riches for Family of Chinese Leader," *New York Times* Online, October 25, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/26/business/global/family-of-wen-jiabao-holds-a-hidden-fortune-in-china.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, accessed January 9, 2013.

²⁴¹ "Reporter Forced to Leave China Had Problem with Visa, Officials Say," *New York Times* Online, January 4, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/05/world/asia/china-says-reporter-chris-buckley-was-not-expelled.html?_r=0, accessed January 17, 2013.

combined with the lack of control over the most important TMC (transnational media corporations) that have the power to amplify such scandals still have a potentially devastating effect on any progress China makes in other areas.

Gaining Allies: Shaping Journalistic Norms through Cooperation?

In his tasks for external communication in the coming five to ten years, Qinghua professor Shi Anbin argued that China's focus on elites and opinion leaders in North America and Western Europe during the previous years was misguided. Because of the difference in values and ideology, the results had not turned out as China had hoped: Not only had China's message not reached the ordinary people in the West, but the country had also alienated old friends in the developing world. Shi's solution was to reconsider the legacy of China's external propaganda apparatus in the Mao period, and to shift the focus of external communication to developing and undeveloped countries as well as to grassroots movements in the West, global social movements, and non-governmental organizations.²⁴² What Shi suggests is not so much an entirely new strategy, but a reassessment of priorities. Over the past few years, China has tried to gain allies in the developing world through a number of initiatives:

First, it cooperates with media and provides or sells mass communication-related equipment and services.²⁴³ China has established partnerships with Kenyan media (where China itself maintains a strong media presence with its local branches of CCTV and CRI). In 2006, the two countries signed an agreement on closer cooperation between SARFT and Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communications.²⁴⁴ In February 2006, CRI opened its first overseas FM radio

²⁴² Shi Anbin 史安斌, "Weilai 5-10 nian woguo duiwai chuanbo mianlin de tiaozhan yu chuangxin celue" 未来 5-10 年我国对外传播面临的挑战与创新策略 [Challenges faced by our external communication and innovation strategy for the next 5 to 10 years], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 9 (2012): 37.

²⁴³ The case of sub-Saharan Africa is relatively well-studied in this regard. See for example Teke Ngomba, "Differing Paradigms of Media Systems Development in Contemporary Africa: Does the 'Chinese Model' Have a Place?" *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 47, no. 1 (2011): 52-67; Iginio Gagliardone, Maria Repnikova, and Nicole Stremlau, *China in Africa: A New Approach to Media Development?* (Oxford: Center for Socio-Legal Studies, 2010), available online at http://www.chinamediaobs.org/pag/china_in_africa_report_2010_final.pdf, accessed November 1, 2012.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Joseph Onjala, *A Scoping Study on China-Africa Economic Relations: The Case of Kenya*, report submitted to the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Nairobi, May 5, 2008, 8, available online at

station in Nairobi, Kenya. In November of the same year, the second FM radio station followed suit in Vientiane, Laos.²⁴⁵ China has supported state media in Kenya and Zambia, provided Zimbabwe with jamming devices, and has won bids for or has provided money for the transformation of the telecommunications sector in several countries.²⁴⁶ A small body of literature on this Sino-African media cooperation has emerged over the last few years, largely centered on the question whether this might lead to the transplantation of the Chinese media model into different African contexts.²⁴⁷ Most authors conclude that there is no evidence thus far that this is happening. However, China's primary goal at this point in time does not appear to be to transplant its model of the media, but rather, to gain allies for its cause and platforms for distributing its own message.

Second, China has provided scholarships primarily for students from developing countries. In his speech on the role of the press in 1985, Hu Yaobang stressed the need to train people from the Third World. China could do so by letting them study in China, but also by letting them work in Chinese news units and thus learn through practice.²⁴⁸

Third, it offers training seminars for government officials and professionals from Africa, and South America. These seminars are intended to transfer expertise, as both journalists and government officials receive training in China on media-related matters. The first Seminar for Government Officials from Africa about News (*Di yi qi Feizhou guojia zhengfu guanyuan yanxiu ban* 第一期非洲国家政府官员研修班) organized by OEP/SCIO took place in Beijing in August 2004.²⁴⁹ This was the first time that China cooperated with African

http://www.aercafrica.org/documents/china_africa_relations/Kenya.pdf, accessed November 3, 2012. Hu Jintao visited Kenya in April 2006 (ibid, 5).

²⁴⁵ “Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai” 中国国际广播电台 [China Radio International], Website of China Radio International, <http://gb.cri.cn/cr/gk.htm>, October 7, 2012.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Ngomba, “Differing Paradigms of Media Systems Development in Contemporary Africa,” 57.

²⁴⁷ E.g. Suzanne Franks and Kate Ribet, “China-Africa Media Relations,” *Global Media and Communication* 5, no. 1 (2009): 129-136. Franks and Ribet primarily summarize the outcome of a conference on the role of the media in Sino-African relations held at the University of Westminster in 2008.

²⁴⁸ “Hu Yaobang tongzhi tan xinwen gongzuo zouxiang shijie” 胡耀邦同志谈新闻工作走向世界 [Comrade Hu Yaobang speaks about news work going towards the world], *Duiwai xuanchuan cankao*, no. 11 (1985): 1.

²⁴⁹ “Zhongguo juban di yi ci Feizhou guojia zhengfu xinwen guanyuan yanxiuban” 中国举办第一期非洲国家政府新闻官员研修班 [China holds first seminar for government press officials from African countries], Website of OEP/SCIO, August 15, 2004, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/ztk/dtzt/02/08/1/200907/t362661.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012.

governments to organize a seminar. The purpose behind the seminar, according to OEP/SCIO, was to foster exchange with China's news circles, to showcase China's achievements of the Reform and Opening period, and to "increase understanding and promote friendship and cooperation between China and Africa."²⁵⁰ Since then, China has offered one per year. In 2012, it offered several different seminars: one for English-speaking and one for French-speaking African countries and another seminar for Latin American countries.²⁵¹

Buying Media; Buying Media Space

Particularly while Chinese media still face severe credibility issues, using foreign media as vehicles to distribute China's point of view is important. The strategy of buying up foreign media is mentioned in several articles, although generally speaking, information is sparse due to the sensitive nature of the issue. In an article in *External Communication (Duiwai chuanbo 对外传播)*, author Wu Zuolai 吴祚来 cautions against rash actions and lists the buying of foreign media (*shougou haiwai meiti 收购海外媒体*) as one action among others that might backfire and damage China's reputation more than improve it.²⁵² He argues for more strategic thought to be put into the subject matter before randomly increasing budgets and expanding external propaganda quantitatively. Wu notes that the American government, for instance, did not buy up foreign media to increase U.S. influence worldwide, but rather exported its cultural products ranging from Coca Cola and Kentucky Fried Chicken to Hollywood and Michael Jackson, even if sometimes forcefully by declaring war on another country. This is not so much important for the point Wu makes here,²⁵³ but for the casual mentioning of the strategy which attests that buying up foreign media is part of

²⁵⁰“Zhongguo juban di yi ci Feizhou guojia zhengfu xinwen guanyuan yanxiuban.”

²⁵¹ For the Latin American seminar, see “Lamei guojia xinwen guanyuan he jizhe yanxiuban zai Jing kaiban” 拉美国家新闻官员和记者研修班在京开班 [Seminar for government officials and journalists from Latin American countries takes place in Beijing], Website of OEP/SCIO, May 15, 2012, <http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/wz/201205/t1157554.htm>, accessed September 21, 2012.

²⁵² Wu Zuolai 吴祚来, “Duiwai chuanbo yu wenhua jiaolü” 对外传播与文化焦虑 [External communication and cultural anxiety], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 9 (2009): 14-15.

²⁵³ Although his critique of the quantitative approach (“一些部门现在将文化对外传播看成一种烧钱行为, 似乎投资越大, 对外传播力度越强, 就会造成大的宣传效果, 自然就会达到传播的效果”) is certainly valid.

the standard repertoire considered to increase China's "soft power" in many circles, especially those favoring a quantitative approach to influence expansion.

Information on private Chinese citizens or companies buying up foreign media is more widely available on the Internet. Examples include Ye Maoxi 叶茂西, a businessman from Wenzhou 温州 and owner of the Xijing Group (*Xijing jituan* 西京集团),²⁵⁴ who bought up a British satellite TV station called Propeller in July 2009²⁵⁵ after it went bankrupt in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Ye Maoxi heard about the financial trouble of Propeller while on a diplomatic trip to England together with Premier Wen Jiabao 温家宝.²⁵⁶ A report on China.org on the acquisition used the opportunity to praise China's new "going out" policy: While it was common for business people to visit other countries together with important politicians, in the past only heads of SOEs had the opportunity in China. Now, with the new priorities, private entrepreneurs could also accompany Chinese politicians on state visits.²⁵⁷ The process of acquisition took about half a year until completed. This TV station, formerly subsidized by the British government, is now a "platform to broadcast Chinese culture."²⁵⁸ Ye Maoxi declared the aim of buying up the station to be "promoting Wenzhou, promoting Chinese culture, and creating opportunities for the Chinese to expand overseas markets."

Propeller TV has websites in English and Chinese (simplified and traditional), which, as of date (January 2013) are still very incomplete. According to the online schedule, the station broadcasts daily from 9 a.m. to 1 a.m., with a slightly different program on the weekends than during the week. The channel is broadcast on Sky and includes programs on Chinese culture ("A Shining

²⁵⁴ The original company, Xijing Advertising, Ltd., which has now expanded into the Xijing Group, was founded in 1994, six years after Ye Maoxi first came to Beijing from Wenzhou.

²⁵⁵ The TV station in question is called "Propeller" (Cf. "Wenzhou shangren Ye Maoxi shougou Yingguo yi jia weixing dianshitai" 温州商人叶茂西收购英国一家卫星电视台 [Ye Maoxi, a businessman from Wenzhou buys a British satellite TV station] http://ent.nfdaily.cn/content/2009-07/14/content_5366571.htm, accessed April 20, 2010.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Li Dabai 李大白, "Wenzhou shangren Ye Maoxi maixia Yingguo dianshitai sui Wen Jiabao fang Ying faxian jihui" 温州商人叶茂西买下英国电视台 随温家宝访英发现机会 [Wenzhou businessman buys British TV station; he discovered the opportunity while visiting Britain with Wen Jiabao,] <http://biz.icxo.com/htmlnews/2009/07/13/1395281.htm>, accessed March 3, 2013.

²⁵⁷ "Chinese Businessman Buys European TV Stations," China.org.cn, July 13, 2009, http://www.china.org.cn/china/news/2009-07/13/content_18127972.htm, accessed January 16, 2013.

²⁵⁸ Cf. "Wenzhou shangren Ye Maoxi shougou Yingguo yi jia weixing dianshitai" 温州商人叶茂西收购英国一卫星电视台 [Ye Maoxi, a businessman from Wenzhou buys a British satellite TV station], <http://www.jfdaily.com/a/152128.htm>, accessed April 20, 2010.

Civilization,” “The Living Customs in China,” “Kung Fu Tutorial”) and language lessons (“Communicate in Chinese”).²⁵⁹ Propeller has also signed a contract with Guangdong’s new international channel GDTV World.²⁶⁰

For now, however, a much more common strategy is advertising in established mainstream media, either by buying advertising space or through regular supplements. Buying up space intended for advertisement in Western media and using it for political messages was first introduced as an illegitimate practice conducted by Taiwan. An article published in *External Reporting Reference* (*Duiwai baodao cankao* 对外报道参考) in January 1982 reported on how the Guomindang (国民党, GMD) had bought the second page of Spanish paper *ABC* (which, according to the article, was usually reserved for ads) and used it to print an article in commemoration of the 1911 revolution, with a photo of Chiang Ching-kuo (蒋经国) in the centre of the page. The article was published on October 8, 1981, in preparation for the 80th anniversary of the revolution. The article noted that it was common practice for states to distribute propaganda material about its country, but that the GMD had bought advertisement space for its own articles only showed the world how desperate its diplomatic situation was.²⁶¹

Since then, the PRC has changed its opinion on buying up ad space for political messages. One phenomenon that emerged after the 2008 financial crisis was paid supplements to well-established newspapers. Since 2010, the *Washington Post* and the *International Herald Tribune* have included a paid supplement produced by the *China Daily*, called *ChinaWatch*.²⁶² The supplement is eight pages long and usually has one or two themes per issue, such as investment and economic development,²⁶³ healthcare,²⁶⁴ minorities,²⁶⁵ sports,²⁶⁶ or

²⁵⁹ Cf. “Schedule,” http://www.propellertv.tv/chinese_sim/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=110&Itemid=92&lang=en, accessed January 16, 2013.

²⁶⁰ “Guangdong dianshitai guoji pindao kaibo” 广东电视台国际频道开播 [Launching of Guangdong Television International channel], May 16, 2011, <http://nc.gdtv.cn/2011/0516/7484.shtml>, accessed January 16, 2013.

²⁶¹ Ji Yuqing 季裕庆, “Cong guomindang mai baozhi banmian shuoqi” 从国民党买报纸版面说起 [Discussion (of a number of related topics) beginning with the Guomindang’s having bought a page in a newspaper], *Duiwai baodao cankao*, no. 1 (1982): 22.

²⁶² Chinawatch is also available online at <http://chinawatch.washingtonpost.com/>, accessed October 5, 2012. China Watch predecessor in the Washington Post: Reports from China.

²⁶³ Edition from January 26, 2012.

²⁶⁴ Edition from September 18, 2012.

culture and heritage tourism.²⁶⁷ The supplement largely avoids direct political commentary and focuses on topics that are not considered political. Articles include numerous references to China's problems, but also some direct (and clearly strategic) criticism. For instance, one article cites a cadre from the State Information Center, a government think tank, questioning the sustainability of large-scale investments: "If the new leaders continue to make investments on a large scale, we'll see the country get into the trouble that European countries are in today."²⁶⁸

The edition from June 30, 2011, published a day before the 90th anniversary of the CPC provided an exception to the rule and focused entirely on the Party. However, this was done very subtly and in accordance with the advice given in one article cautioning external propaganda media to avoid theoretical articles and instead "tell stories" (*jiang gushi* 讲故事), focus on aspects that foreigners were interested in, and to use the words of foreigners rather than assessing or praising the achievements of the Party directly.²⁶⁹ First, the issue did not mention the fact that the Party had a birthday to celebrate anywhere on the front page. The fact only came up on page 3 in an interview with CPC advisor Robert Kuhn (cf. chapter 8.4) on the CPC's accomplishments.²⁷⁰ Second, it tried to adhere as much as possible to the principles of "showing the big through the small" (*yi xiao jian da* 以小见大) and "speaking through facts" (*yong shishi shuo hua* 用事实说话).²⁷¹ The front-page article, for instance, focused on the Central Party School. While not the most exciting topic, it provided an opportunity to give a basic introduction to China's current and previous policy and to make larger political points about freedom of speech in China in a relatively unobtrusive

²⁶⁵ Edition from December 27, 2012.

²⁶⁶ Edition from July 26, 2012, in anticipation of the 2012 London Olympics.

²⁶⁷ Edition from February 23, 2012.

²⁶⁸ Chen Jia and Wei Tian, "Will Fresh Stimulus Cash Spur Growth?" *ChinaWatch*, January 26, 2012, C1.

²⁶⁹ Zhang Xuan 张璇, "Jiandang 90 zhounian de duiwai baodao xuyao 'jiang gushi'" 建党 90 周年的对外报道需要"讲故事" [Foreign coverage of the 90th anniversary of CPC needs to "tell stories"], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 7 (2011): 30-31.

²⁷⁰ "CPC Helps Build Confident Nation: Greater Freedoms in People's Personal and Social Lives are the Most Important Accomplishment of the Communist Party of China," *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C3.

²⁷¹ "Telling stories" and "showing the big through the small" was explicitly recommended in an article published in External Communication in July 2011. Zhang Xuan, "Jiandang 90 zhounian de duiwai baodao xuyao 'jiang gushi,'" 30.

manner and by speaking through the people interviewed for the article.²⁷² Third, the issue provided a large number of different angles on the topic. Two articles addressed the popularity of the Party among Chinese people: one on university students²⁷³ and the other on Party Committees in joint venture firms.²⁷⁴ There were articles on Long March tourism,²⁷⁵ a reality TV show reliving the Long March,²⁷⁶ a heritage tourism site,²⁷⁷ on a sculptor making wax figures of famous historical CPC personalities,²⁷⁸ on the life and works of anthropologist and foreign friend Isabel Crook,²⁷⁹ and on a talent show featuring foreigners singing “red songs,” i.e. revolutionary songs praising the Party from the 1940s and the Mao period.²⁸⁰

Thus, particularly since 2009, China has paid for supplements in “mainstream” media, and Chinese businesspeople cooperating with the central or provincial government have even bought full media. The purpose behind all of these initiatives is to bring China’s message to “Western mainstream society” while China’s own media do not have enough credibility to significantly influence public opinion in the West themselves.

From Tit-for-Tat to Experimenting with Popular Media

Although China’s main strategy for increasing its international voice is building its own “first-rate international media” by expanding them and trying to raise the quality of journalism, it has also begun to use opportunities to counter and discredit Western media. The country has long complained about Western media’s bias. Depending on whether statements are made in “crisis mode” (with a high tone, *gao diaozi* 高调子) or in “regular mode,” different arguments are used.

²⁷² Li Jing and Peng Yining, “Shaping Lives: The Training Ground for Future Leaders of the Communist Party is like no Other University or College in the Country,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C1.

²⁷³ Lin Qi and Guo Shuhan, “Student Life’s a Party,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C4.

²⁷⁴ Yang Ning, “Party in Foreign Firms Can be One Big Family,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C4.

²⁷⁵ Mu Qian, “In the Footsteps of Giants,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C6.

²⁷⁶ Zhang Zixuan, “Unique Experiences Enliven Long March of Reality TV,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C6.

²⁷⁷ Xibaipo 西柏坡, where the CPC stayed for about a year from May 1948 to March 1949. Cheng Anqi, “Village at the Heart of New China,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C7.

²⁷⁸ Xu Junqian, “Sculpting Time,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C8.

²⁷⁹ Tan Zongyang, “Witness to the Revolution Still Keen to Record the Changes,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C5.

²⁸⁰ Sun Li, “‘Red Songs’ Appeal to New Voices,” *ChinaWatch*, June 30, 2011, C5. Also see David Bandurski, “A Brief History of the ‘Red Song,’” China Media Project, June 10, 2011, <http://cmp.hku.hk/2011/06/10/13105/>, accessed February 18, 2013.

Those in regular mode are based on the premise that foreigners and foreign media basically have no ill will, whereas those in crisis mode are usually centered on the idea that a significant number of Westerners and Western media want to harm China. Since the 1989 crackdown, the CPC has insisted that Western media hide behind the cloak of “objectivity” while secretly trying to Westernize and split China.²⁸¹ Exposing these plots became an important policy,²⁸² and ill motives were frequently highlighted in retorts countering attacks on China’s human rights situation or any other form of criticism touching on China’s core interests over the 1990s.

Since the 21st century, China has changed its strategy, primarily focusing on lack of accuracy and only later bringing the Western intentions vis-à-vis China in as a motive for the distortions. Chinese commentators as well as China’s foreign language media have tried to turn mistakes in reporting the protests in Tibet into a “credibility crisis.” For instance, one Xinhua commentator cautioned Western media to “watch out for your credibility crisis.”²⁸³ Likewise, when Xinhua criticized Western media for its coverage on Bo Xilai, it highlighted that they had obtained information from Falungong’s 法轮功 *Epoch Times* website: “In fact, those reports made by some foreign media have been circulated long ago on some websites sponsored by the evil cult that the people despise. Isn’t it a startling anecdote in international press history that rumors from cult-run websites appear in traditional media?”²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ The merit of this claim has been addressed above. As has been explained above, there is plenty of material to prove that the option of strategically weakening China is discussed. Likewise, when the VOA fought for its budget, it used exactly the same pattern of argument that the CPC accuses “the West” of employing. Cf. Birte C. Herrmann, “Der Diskurs über ausländische Einflüsse auf China’s ‘Demokratie-Bewegung’ von 1989: Soziale Bewegungen als Projektionsfläche politischer Ideologie” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 2012), 92-94. Therefore, it is possible that much of the Chinese master text on Western strategies of ideological infiltration are based on translations from US media, as well as academic articles and books. In many texts the impression arises that China assumes that Western governments control their media in the same way that the CPC does. The fact that China is beginning to implement strategies such as “access journalism” and selective leaks suggests, however, that the CPC has a more accurate grasp of various strategies Western governments and other interest groups actually use to attempt to spin media coverage in a direction of their liking than the CPC’s high heat condemnations reveal.

²⁸² Zeng Jianhui, *Rong bing, jiao qiao, tu wei*, vol. 2, 7.

²⁸³ Zhou Yan, “Commentary: Biased Media Reports Reveal Credibility Crisis,” Xinhuanet, March 26, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-03/26/content_7863400.htm, accessed November 12, 2012. The article was also republished on CRI English, and China.org.cn.

²⁸⁴ “China Voice: Why do rumors repeatedly arise in Bo Xilai incident?” Xinhua General News Service, April 29, 2012, accessed via Lexis Nexis.

Similar to what was already done in the 1920s and 1930s, China's media argue that biased or incorrect reporting and depiction of China in Western media first, harms mutual understanding, and second, hurts the image of Western media in China. In a rebuttal aimed against a *Washington Post* editorial on the Xinjiang Conflict in July 2009, the *Global Times* wrote:

“An editorial represents a paper's point of view. If an editorial of a newspaper is biased and questionable, it will do no good for the full understanding between people in China and the United States. As well, it will do no good to boost the newspaper's good image among Chinese people.”²⁸⁵

An Op-ed published by the president of Xinhua News Agency, Li Congjun 李从军, on the website of the Wall Street Journal, proposed to establish “a mechanism to coordinate the global communications industry, something like a ‘media UN,’”²⁸⁶ alluding to the UNESCO initiative of the 1970s and 1980s. The reactions to the article, which were, without doubt, monitored by the Chinese side to test the waters, were overwhelmingly negative. In this case, clearly, the CPC itself had very little credibility in the eyes of Western readers. However, in attacking Western media, the Party-state has also relied heavily (and arguably more successfully) on “popular voices” (*minjian shengyin* 民间声音) by mobilizing young Chinese, particularly those studying abroad, a strategy first employed in 2008, the year of the Olympics.

One outcome of the 2008 crisis is April Media (*Siyue meiti* 四月媒体), presented as a private media initiative and operating in Chinese, English, Russian, and Korean. In external propaganda, April Media, called “The 4th Media” in English, is a test case for the new policies to “let different actors with different roles sing the same tune” and to allow patriotic media to operate relatively independently. It uses a number of strategies that have been used for over half a century (though not all of them in China), including delegating “radical” positions that might have negative repercussions if voiced in party-owned media to “private” and “independent” media, and letting foreigners speak on behalf of China in order

²⁸⁵ “Washington Post editorial disappoints,” *Global Times Online*, July 17, 2009, <http://opinion.globaltimes.cn/editorial/2011-04/447849.html>, accessed September 17, 2011.

²⁸⁶ Li Congjun, “Toward a New Media World Order.”

to raise the credibility of the position argued, inspired by the strategy to assign different roles to official government media and “independent” (but government subsidized) media.

The founder and CEO of April Media was Rao Jin 饶谨 (1984 -), a Qinghua graduate who set up the well-known website anti-cnn.com, the predecessor of April Media, which went online on March 20, 2008 in the direct aftermath of the Lhasa incident less than a week earlier. The Anti-CNN forum was launched eight days later on March 28. It did not take long for official Chinese media to declare their support for the website.²⁸⁷ “April Youth Club” was launched one day before the Olympics Opening Ceremony, on August 7, 2008, combining various features of the Web 2.0 such as the option to befriend other users. April Youth Club was mainly an extension of the Anti-CNN forum in order to make it more interesting and attract more users. The name April Media is based on the month, April 2008, in which the movement to “expose” Western media’s lies gained traction.²⁸⁸

The official status of April Media is unclear. Founder Rao Jin has presented it as a popular or people-owned medium independent of the Party-state.²⁸⁹ There are, in fact, experiments with media that are fully privately owned, but the policy is in a very early testing stage and is strictly limited to publishing, thus far excluding news production (cf. chapter 9.2). At the same time, articles in 2008 and 2009 did argue in favor of relaxing controls in cases of events that would evoke nationalism. On the one hand, April Media claims to be people-run and independent, and the English-language website certainly does deviate from the standards that are applied to regular Party-state media. On the other hand, Chinese law does not allow independent media.

On its English language website, April Media introduces itself as “The 4th Media,” with the tagline “Just Another Voice” added in a smaller font, which, as the self-introduction reveals, stands for “just another voice in the progressive

²⁸⁷ E.g. “FM spokesman: ‘Anti-CNN’ website reflects Chinese people’s condemnation,” Website of CCTV, March 28, 2008, <http://www.cctv.com/english/20080328/100782.shtml>, accessed March 3, 2013.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Tang Jie 唐杰, “‘Si yue qingnian’ yu jingshen Zhongguo” ‘四月青年’与精神中国 [‘April youth’ and the spirit of China], *Tianwa* 天涯, no. 5 (2009): 14.

²⁸⁹ Rao Jin 饶谨 and Pei Pei 裴培, “Minjian meiti zai duiwai chuanbo zhong de jiyu he tiaozhan” 民间媒体在对外传播中的机遇和挑战 [Chances and challenges of popular media in external communication], *Duiwai chuanbo*, no. 3 (2012): 19-20.

global media landscape.”²⁹⁰ The self-introduction presents April Media, “the mother of the 4th Media,”²⁹¹ as “an independent media organization based in Beijing, China.”²⁹² Until recently (July 2012), the introduction included one sentence most likely directly translated from Chinese that is intended to express that April Media is aware of its “social responsibility” towards the Chinese state, but that remains cryptic in its English translation: “By thinking about national tradition, security, and demonstrating anxiety to occurrences within and outside our national boundaries, April Media strikingly demonstrates its responsibility and consciousness.” This sentence, which had been eliminated by November 2012,²⁹³ indicates that April Media has reason to want to declare its loyalty.

In March 2012, the founder of April Media, Rao Jin, published an article in *External Communication* that further explained April Media’s “responsibility.” He stressed that “popular media” such as the Fourth Media could only exist as long as the people running them had a thorough understanding of China’s national circumstances (*guoqing* 国情) and put the national interest above everything else.²⁹⁴ Thus, people that were sufficiently nationalist like the founders of anti-CNN may, indeed, have gotten permission to run their own media as long as they stuck to defending the national interest. Because they are not directly linked with the Party-state, they can support positions that China’s official media could not support for diplomatic or other reasons.

April Media might indeed be a test case for a “patriotic popular medium” operating in a legal gray zone under the close supervision of people OEP/SCIO trusts: The editors of the English version are linked to Qinghua University and to the head of the Research Center for International Communication and OEP/SCIO advisor Li Xiguang, who has been an outspoken supporter of April Media. According to Li, “A few youths had completely annihilated CNN’s credibility of

²⁹⁰ “About us: About The 4th Media,” <http://www.4thmedia.org/aboutus/>, accessed November 4, 2012.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Earlier version: “About us: About The 4th Media,” <http://www.4thmedia.org/aboutus/>, accessed April, 29, 2011, on file with author.

²⁹⁴ Rao Jin and Pei Pei, “Minjian meiti zai duiwai chuanbo zhong de jiyu he tiaozhan,” 20.

thirty years over night by setting up a single website.”²⁹⁵ Not CNN but Anti-CNN represented the media of the future.²⁹⁶

The editor-in-chief of the Fourth Media’s English-language website is Kiyul Chung 郑己烈, a Korean-American visiting professor at Qinghua University with a PhD in political science from Philadelphia University. Japanese-American Yoichi Shimatzu 岛津洋一, a former editor of the *Japan Times Weekly* and now based in Hong Kong as a freelance journalist, is listed as editor-at-large. In 2003, after being invited by Li Xiguang²⁹⁷ he also stayed as a researcher at Qinghua’s Research Center for International Communication and gave classes at Qinghua University on how to do reporting in English.²⁹⁸

There are two main differences between China’s official English-language Party-state media and the Fourth Media: First, Fourth Media is not constrained by CPD language policies and second, it the website carries much harsher attacks on the U.S. than any official media would ever be allowed to do, including the *Global Times*, which is branded as independent. In the earliest days of the PRC, the CPC granted some media branded as “popular” more leeway and subjected them to less strict control. However, for the largest part, not being subjected to certain controls of the system came at the cost of not being able to comment on current political matters directly.²⁹⁹ The Fourth Media, by contrast, is not restrained at all in its attacks.

The focus of the main English-language website is clearly on attacking the U.S. government and, to a lesser degree (in terms of quantity of articles), the Israeli government. It is largely sympathetic to social movements such as Occupy

²⁹⁵ Huang Qianni 黄倩妮, “Qiantan minjian wangluo meiti de yingxiangli -- anti-cnn wangzhan anli fenxi” 浅谈民间网络媒体的影响力——anti-cnn 网站案例分析 [On the influence of social network media - anti-cnn Website as a case study], *Xinwen shijie*, no. 5 (2009): 123. Huang Qianni also used the anti-cnn episode to argue for less strict control of the media and for giving popular initiatives a freer hand.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁹⁷ “Daojin Yangyi yu Afuhan” 岛津洋一与阿富汗 [Shimatsu Yôichi and Afghanistan], *People’s Daily Online*, March 14, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/14677/22114/25998/26383/1748306.html>, accessed February 7, 2013.

²⁹⁸ Cf. “Daojin Yangyi: dangqiang Zhongguo meiti yinggai zuoxie shenme?” 岛津洋一：当前中国媒体应该做些什么？ [Shimatsu Yôichi: What should the current Chinese media do?], *Xinhuanet*, January 29, 2003, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newsmedia/2003-01/29/content_711463.htm, accessed February 9, 2013.

²⁹⁹ *China Reconstructs* did not comment on political issues directly, except for brief periods during the Cultural Revolution.

Wall Street, as well as to politicians outside of the Democratic and Republican parties. In terms of editorial focus, it is thus similar to both Al-Jazeera and, more so, Russia Today. As opposed to regular Chinese media, the Fourth Media mainly carries editorials and investigative pieces from other news sources, including Russia Today, Al-Jazeera, and the Occupy Movement. In addition, it reprints articles from renowned individuals such as Noam Chomsky without naming the source where these articles were first published, creating the impression they were written specifically for the Fourth Media (which is usually not the case). Thus, the Fourth Media English-language website can best be understood as an aggregator of and platform for voices attacking U.S. policies which produces some original articles but primarily collects content from a broad variety of “alternative” media sources to reproduce them on the site. However, it also pays attention to issues the Chinese Party-state cares about at a particular point in time, for instance, in April 2011, the website ran a series of articles attacking and discrediting Ai Weiwei 艾未未 (in a rude way that would be impossible even for China’s official media).³⁰⁰

Thus, it seems that the Fourth Media could well be a test case of a medium not directly owned by the CPC. However, if so, it is clearly an exception that is unlikely to have broader implications. The “patriotic surge” of 2008 helped to justify the existence of April Media, but at best, this means that the CPC now allows private media run by individuals with personal connections to OEP/SCIO. Organization outside of the party-state continues to be a very sensitive topic. In the media sector, the official evaluation of what went wrong in the Soviet Union has been a very powerful obstacle standing in the way of granting social forces a larger degree of autonomy in China’s public diplomacy.

³⁰⁰ See for example the following excerpt: “Now, as the hidden associations with Shanghai’s boss, who abused political power to evict thousands of residents from their homes, come out, the truth is blowing apart Ai Weiwei’s phony ‘anti-corruption’ crusade. No wonder he keeps his fat mouth shut about the sordid details.” Yoichi Shimatsu, “Detained: Ai Weiwei, Con Artist,” Fourth Media, April 11, 2011, <http://www.4thmedia.org/2011/04/11/detained-ai-weiwei-con-artist/>, accessed February 9, 2013. In another article, Shimatsu wrote: “The obese and physically large Ai ‘Fei-Fei’ is at heart one of those little men that enjoyed vandalizing the objects of great ancient cultures in order to come to terms with their own insignificance.” Yoichi Shimatsu, “Ai Weiwei’s Smashing Success at the Art Market,” Fourth Media, April 15, 2011, <http://www.4thmedia.org/2011/04/15/ai-weiweis-smashing-success-at-the-art-market/>, accessed February 7, 2013.

9.5 Conclusions

Measures to create globally competitive and influential media have been implemented and become visible in the expansion of China's designated key media. Although the media expansion has been stunning (cf. chapter 7.7), China's global media continue to be burdened by certain restrictions that come along with being part of the Chinese media system. There have been several layers of problems in reforming news coverage. First, at the most basic level, there is the issue of old habits and of having to train and retrain staff so that they have sufficient journalistic as well as language skills. This is also a matter of investing money both into the education of new journalists and into attracting qualified personnel to work for Chinese media. In this area, the PRC has had problems for a long time. Currently, since 2009, it has done reasonably well in this area compared to earlier periods, although money invested is not always used efficiently and the authorities' support for media expansions and educational projects has not been absolutely consistent. Nonetheless, there has been substantial progress in areas which previously severely damaged the credibility and reputation of China's media. Second, media values pushed by the Party contradict each other. People involved in external propaganda or international communication have succeeded in including values such as timeliness or adapting content and style to the target audience in the overall package of things considered important, but in crisis situations when "high politics" issues are at stake, the "Party principle" trumps all other values. Third, arguments for certain reforms, such as the inclusion of more negative news, can be countered by demands for a "Chinese" style of journalism that focuses on the positive rather than the negative.

The continued emphasis on a correct ideological stance, combined with continued Party-ownership is one of the most important problems of the entire sector: A lot of the money invested is wasted on inefficient programs and on media that cannot become sufficiently influential because the Party suffocates the media. Proponents of external propaganda have pursued two strategies: First, they push for allowing more categories of news to be covered or to be controlled less strictly. Second, a number of people have argued for privatization of the media and delegating large parts of China's external propaganda or international communication to media groups not owned by the Party. Given the current

emphasis on feedback mechanisms and the quite established argument that some things will be more effective when expressed in the “spirit” of the Center rather than word by word, the trend of reducing the number of instances where concrete formulations are controlled strictly is likely to continue. Privatization of the media, on the other hand, while controlled experiments will likely continue, is unlikely to have a significant effect on external propaganda work in the near future.

While some inroads have been made in order to enable more people to participate in China’s external propaganda, the CPC is more interested in the impression of plurality and the impression of being supported by the people and has adopted various measures to create this impression: It let its media play different roles, allowing some to be more open and break more taboos in order to brand themselves as more open and independent. In these cases, the more deniability the Party has and the more it can distance itself from a particular position, the harsher the criticism. Although the inclusion of some investigative reporting or other forms of critical news is primarily strategic, it does have the effect of slowly shifting what is permissible in Chinese journalism. However, this also means that any measure to be newly introduced needs to be checked for its potential effect on the domestic media sphere. Under the principle of coordinating the internal and the external, the possibility of keeping certain changes limited to China’s foreign language media is limited.

10 Conclusion

This research has been driven by two sets of questions: First, how has Chinese external propaganda changed and what factors have played a role, and second, to what extent are current options limited by previous choices. In response, I have provided a political history of external propaganda in China and analyzed its development in order to explain the difficulties China's external propaganda apparatus continues to face as well as what strategies people pushing for reforms have used to overcome historical, ideological, and bureaucratic baggage. As such, it has probed how and to what extent China has been able to adapt its external propaganda apparatus, initially set up on the basis of the Soviet propaganda model that depended on the ability of the Party to regulate the flow of information into and out of China, to the current global media environment marked by porous national borders and fast-paced flows of information across the globe.

In order to tie together the findings of the previous chapters and systematically answer the questions raised in the introduction, I will briefly summarize the development of external propaganda over the last century before dissecting the different factors that have influenced how and to what extent external propaganda has changed. I will then address the different levels of path dependence of Chinese external propaganda, first by discussing in what ways and to what extent previous choices have limited and influenced the range of options available to China at a later point in time and, second, by explaining how external propaganda reformers have tried and in many cases succeeded to overcome institutional hurdles of various kinds.

10.1 Chinese External Propaganda: Reform and Inertia

Chinese external propaganda has been part of a larger set of beliefs, institutions, and practices that are spread across national, ideological, and other borders. The idea that a country or a party needs to promote itself and its goals before the international public was translated into different institutions and policies in China under varying circumstances and continued to develop under the influence of a large number of domestic and international factors. The concept of propaganda was first systematically introduced in China in the early 20th century

as part of the overall reorganization of world order. At the time, propaganda had become part of several movements, institutions, disciplines, and ways of organizing the world, all of which tried to come to terms with the question how to deal with a new influential force of the 20th century, namely the public or the “masses.” While ideas about the press that resembled later conceptualizations of propaganda already circulated earlier, the widespread discussion of propaganda began after the end of the First World War, when China translated massive amounts of texts from Western languages as part of the May Fourth Movement in an effort to extract from the European tradition anything that might save the Chinese nation. During this time, both the GMD and the CPC absorbed ideas about propaganda from the S.U. and from the West. Thus, several different concepts of domestic and international propaganda were appropriated around the same time and interacted with one another.

The concept of propaganda as it developed in the West and the S.U. shared some common roots in its assumptions about the relationship between “the masses” or the overwhelming majority of society and elites, but later relied on rather different institutions and techniques. Particularly the difference in attitude towards domestic propaganda in the two blocs resulted in two different sets of methods how to control and/or manipulate the media. More importantly, the underlying organizational structures to manage the media at home developed differently. The Soviet system of media management adopted in China relied on a powerful propaganda department at the top, whereas Western governments and other interest groups developed mechanisms such as press conferences, creating media events, access journalism or working with individual journalists to plant certain messages.

The GMD, which had also adopted the Soviet domestic propaganda apparatus, faced similar problems as the CPC did later when it first tried to organize propaganda targeted at foreigners through its domestic propaganda structures. The environment the GMD worked in was vastly different from that the CPC managed to establish after the founding of the PRC. Large parts of China were not under its control, and it had no influence on the content of the majority of media at the editorial level. Thus, the GMD had to work in an environment that was full of competitors and in which it was nearly impossible to shut individual papers down. While it tried to exert control through censorship of messages sent

out of China and through restricting journalists, which often backfired, the GMD also made use of “positive” or “proactive” measures, such as cooperating with and subsidizing private initiatives. The problems with the GMD’s own international propaganda apparatus were partially resolved in 1937 by putting a Missouri-trained journalist in charge and shielding him from interference by separating international propaganda from the domestic propaganda apparatus.

The CPC came of age in this media environment and was familiar with soft incentives. Many individual CPC members and people that continued to work in external propaganda after the founding of the PRC were familiar with the Western model of journalism. However, after the CPC had established control, it no longer had to deal with many of the problems the GMD had faced earlier. The CPC did not have to cope with foreigners that were not sympathetic to its cause, as those were simply not allowed into the country or expelled. Censorship regimes such as the GMD’s preventing individual messages from leaving the country were soon no longer necessary; restrictions both on foreigners and on the media in general took effect at a much higher level.

The media landscape in China changed completely after the founding of the PRC. Some foreign-owned papers were closed down immediately, whereas others were shut down by their foreign editors later. Controlling most of China’s territory, the CPC had the opportunity to set up a propaganda apparatus of a much more pervasive kind with Soviet help than anything the GMD could have hoped to accomplish before 1949. This propaganda apparatus was built so that it could reach the entire population, and the effectiveness of the methods and techniques used was to a large extent contingent on the ability to prevent flows of information and block out alternative sources of information.

The new propaganda and media system required widespread re-education of journalists, which also affected China’s external propaganda media. External propaganda in China before 1949 had been more closely connected with Anglo-American rather than with Soviet concepts and practices, but after the founding of the PRC, this legacy was absorbed into the Party-state bureaucracy with its Soviet-inspired set-up and was institutionalized within the domestic propaganda apparatus. People who had been engaged in external propaganda work before 1949 had to completely change the way they approached their work and became part of a system in which not only was there (in theory) only one correct way of

interpreting everything in the world, but also only one correct way of expressing reality.

None of the choices in the media environment were made primarily for external propaganda. Instead, in 1949, a full development package was chosen, and external propaganda, whose routines and values acquired during the wars did not fit this package very well, had to be adapted accordingly, though not entirely without resistance. The question what external propaganda should be was one aspect of a larger power struggle between the “Left,” pushing for revolution and transnational ties outside the state-based framework and the “moderates” pushing for economic reform and state-to-state diplomacy. The clash happened at two different levels. First, there was the question what goals external propaganda should serve. On the one hand, it had a diplomatic mission operating in a world ordered according to nation-states; on the other hand, it had a revolutionary mission in a class-based world order. As such, the struggle over external propaganda was a manifestation of the struggle over the general line of the Party. Second, how external propaganda was supposed to be organized and conducted was also disputed. To what extent was it legitimate to distinguish between foreign and Chinese audiences without negating the Marxist understanding of propaganda as an activity to be proud of? Thus, particularly this second conflict can also be understood as a continued clash between different understandings of propaganda technique and of what constitutes good and persuasive journalism.

In addition, in its earliest days, the PRC set up organizations for cultural exchange and CPC-controlled “people-to-people” diplomacy. In these structures, however, China depended on the network of the Socialist bloc, which was lost after the Sino-Soviet split, forcing China to rebuild its own networks. The country enjoyed quite a bit of success in building networks outside of the state-based framework, and as opposed to PRC historiography, the high tide of the Cultural Revolution was a time when China was not only highly engaged in external propaganda work, but also enjoyed a great deal of popularity among leftists, Maoist groups, and protest movements around the world. The problem, however, was that after China refocused on improving its relations with the U.S. to balance against the S.U. and embarked on the project of reform and opening, these people were no longer the contacts that China was interested in.

The relatively closed off environment of the Mao period meant that when the CPC decided to open itself up more, it had absolutely no experience at managing foreign media and journalists through softer approaches outside of a tightly controlled environment. Although controls on foreigners in China were not loosened over night, starting in the 1970s, the CPC, nonetheless, found itself in a catch-up game of learning the rules of the new media environment. At the time, a new form of journalism not only for external propaganda but for all of China's media apparatus was a welcome change in the eyes of many. External propaganda continued to develop despite varying political climates. The 1980s were a time when choices for China were relatively open again. Hu Yaobang pushed for political reforms, including in the media sector. Between 1978 and 1987, China gradually moved in the direction of weakening the domestic propaganda apparatus and strengthening its external propaganda instead. Though the official standard function in the eyes of the CPC was to support the realization of China's three grand tasks, from the humanist perspective, external propaganda was presented as a bridge to connect China to the world.

The trend of boosting external propaganda rather than focusing on domestic propaganda was stopped and reversed in two steps: First, the Campaign against Bourgeois Liberalization resulted in the strengthening of domestic propaganda work, particularly at the institutional level through the creation of a new LSG, and second, the Tiananmen crackdown enshrined the need for domestic propaganda as a matter of regime security. The fact that external propaganda structures were established on the basis of and thus within domestic propaganda structures made the sector highly dependent on the domestic propaganda apparatus. Without the key events in 1987 and 1989 which elevated domestic propaganda, both Chinese politics as a whole and its propaganda apparatus in particular could have taken a very different path.

The time after 1989 was dominated by a contradiction: On the one hand, external propaganda had clearly regained in importance. A new small group was formed in order to deal with the negative fallout of the Tiananmen crackdown and facilitate China's diplomatic reintegration into the world. Most of the institutions that are still involved in external propaganda today were set up in their most basic form in the 1990s. On the other hand, however, there were two problems. First, with the events of 1989, domestic propaganda was redefined as vital for the

survival of the CPC, thus cementing and expanding domestic propaganda's institutional upgrade of 1987. After its role had been called into question by some during the 1980s, domestic propaganda regained a firm and fortified place in the overall ideological universe, occupying a role both in the CPC's regime security considerations and in China's development plans. Propaganda targeted at foreigners was not nearly as important as domestic propaganda at the time. External propaganda, as it quickly transpired, would not become an independent field, but remained a subfield of domestic propaganda. Second, the events of 1989 set a precedent for tit-for-tat struggle against hostile forces in matters of principle. While the CPC was well aware that its hysterical reactions often drew attention to "hostile forces" and quite a few people in the external propaganda sector also knew that such responses, far from elevating China's standing in the eyes of foreigners, actually diminished it, the value that China needed to be principled (*jiang yuanze* 讲原则) often trumped other considerations.

Many of the established propaganda practices were not suitable for targeting foreigners. External propaganda cadres and journalists pushing for reform did not necessarily oppose China's need to defend its interests, but many knew that the form and the rhetoric of rebuttals was anything but helpful. Likewise, in the 1990s, the need to report certain events that Chinese media had previously ignored or reported very late was mainly fuelled by concerns over China's image abroad. This posed another challenge to China's media system that had emphasized tightly controlled use of correct terminology and politically correct content over timely release of news. In cases where the reasons for slow releases were technical or bureaucratic in nature, China had a chance to catch up. However, when the reasons were political, the problems were more difficult to solve.

In the late 1990s, as China began to plan its rise and return to great power status more concretely, external propaganda increased in importance and was given a place in China's long-standing dream of great power status again. This coincided with the United States' renewed debate on "public diplomacy" and "soft power" after 9/11, which further fuelled the discussions in China and provided Chinese analysts with new arguments why external propaganda mattered not only to China's development and diplomacy, but was essentially a matter of national

security. In 2003, external propaganda was upgraded in importance by linking it to the country's security and stability and by making China's external propaganda capacities part of its "comprehensive powers." The inclusion of propaganda powers in China's comprehensive powers and China's ability to defend itself was not mere rhetoric, but was tied to the CPC's evaluation of the international situation. As the world grew ever closer together, reactive and defensive measures such as censorship and the blocking of media flows would become increasingly useless. Instead, the CPC decided to embark on the ambitious plan to shift the international power balance in the field of "power over opinion."

It would be wrong to say that only the upgrade of 2003/2004 had significant consequences. Many of the current policies are variations of earlier reform attempts that failed or were too feeble due to lack of political commitment or unexpected turns of events. Each major call for strengthening and improving external propaganda work, usually accompanied by the release of a new policy document, brought with it tremendous changes. In 1979/1980, Hu Yaobang's speech and the first "Opinion" written by the newly created EPSG resulted in new structures to reinforce external propaganda as well as a complete retraining of journalists how to write for foreign audiences. The 1986 "Opinion" sought to incorporate all provinces and institute a variety of new measures centered on cultural exchange and pushing Chinese as a foreign language, though the reforms were disrupted by the events of 1987 and 1989. The "comeback" of external propaganda after the events of Tiananmen resulted primarily in new institutions for the Chinese government to propagate its stance that were more compatible with Western norms of how governments should interact with the media and the public, namely the (nominal) creation of an "Information Office," a spokesperson system for ministries other than the MFA, the release of white books, etc. After the new macro policy program (*silu* 思路) was introduced in 1996, China began to tackle sudden events reporting. The upgrade of 2003/2004 resulted in the inclusion of many new actors into China's "big external propaganda" project and an impressive expansion of China's media and cultural activities that have been noted worldwide, although new developments such as the crises of 2008 were arguably needed as additional incentives for the CPC to decide to invest even larger sums of money into the global expansion of its media.

However, instead of losing in importance, domestic propaganda and thought work actually came to be seen as even more significant under the Hu-Wen leadership. The position of domestic propaganda in the overall ideological universe was further cemented by weaving older Chinese Marxist tenets and findings of modernization theory predicting potential crises during the stage of development China was about to enter. A PBSC member, rather than, previously, a Politburo member, was put in charge of propaganda and thought work. The upgraded external propaganda sector was not given any independence, but was unequivocally placed under the leadership of domestic propaganda and thought work, thus reversing any possible trends towards more independence that may have been on the horizon during the previous years under Zhao Qizheng's directorship of OEP/SCIO. This step was further enshrined with the principle of "coordinating the domestic and the international" in order to deal with the increasingly globalizing world. Thus, despite what have arguably been tremendous developments in the field of external propaganda, Chinese observers are not satisfied with the results.

Basically, China currently attempts to take advantage of two basic models of media control at the same time. On the one hand, it tries to establish the Western model of media management by strengthening the spokesperson system, providing amenities and services to journalists and making first attempts at access journalism that go beyond merely threatening journalists with revoking their visas. On the other hand, it maintains the S.U. inspired model of media control through Party ownership of the media and a powerful propaganda apparatus pre- and proscribing what should and what should not be covered. The approach to mix elements of the Soviet-derived system of media control with Western techniques of spin might work for the domestic media to a certain extent, but it does not work for China's foreign language media. Neither does it work for large media conglomerates that are supposed to operate both within China and internationally. When there is a conflict between the two approaches to handling the media, the traditional model of control wins, and it is needless to say that this often destroys much of the goodwill that may have been built previously.

Nevertheless, after the upgrade in importance of external propaganda, a number of former taboos have been broken. China has clearly reduced the number

of scenarios that need to be “handled strictly” (*congyan* 从严) and in which it needs to “adhere to principle” (*jiang yuanze*), thereby reducing sources of conflict. Although the role of foreigners continues to be restricted at China’s main media, they were allowed to do more than language polishing. Media have instituted mechanisms to be able to deal with sensitive sudden events better without completely relinquishing control. The CPC has even begun to experiment with patriotic private or popular media, delegating some control to social forces outside of the Party-state, something which it has been very reluctant to do. Although the exact status of media such as anti-CNN is unclear, these “officially unofficial” media can carry harsher attacks, as the Party-state can distance itself from these media. The arrangement is similar in many ways to U.S. media such as Radio Free Europe (RFE), which could carry much harsher and provocative broadcasts because the U.S. government could credibly distance itself from RFE. A similar, though less extreme tactic is pursued for media such as the *Global Times* that are marketed as cutting-edge and provocative and that try to obscure their link to the Party-state as much as possible without having to lie.

Several Chinese observers have pointed out that if China wants to create credible media players, these will have to be privately owned, both because foreigners do not trust state or Party owned media and because such private initiatives would be more free from certain constraints within the Chinese media system. Until now, however, the strategy has been to let the established players “appear with the commercial face” rather than actually creating private media. The CPC is clearly willing to outsource, but it is unwilling to relinquish control. While small possibly private or semi-private media initiatives have been launched, China is currently planning to rely primarily on its established external propaganda media and use them as the basis for media groups with a global reach.

Since the CPC pledged to bring about the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” and placed a renewed emphasis on culture in the 1990s and the 21st century, the idea that the world needs to develop an appreciation for the greatness of the Chinese civilization, one of the earliest justifications for propaganda targeted at foreigners, has re-emerged. In the cultural realm, China’s external propaganda faces fewer restrictions. While culture also falls into the sphere of propaganda and thought work, there is no system of control for China’s

current cultural activities abroad comparable to that for the media. While culture and history both have highly political dimensions, cultural activities do not face the same dilemmas as the media, in that they do not have to respond quickly to sudden events or make sure to cover a certain event. Thus, in this area, China has relegated a relatively large degree of control. In the case of Confucius Institutes, China's policy has been to form joint ventures with foreign education institutions, giving the foreign partner quite a bit of control. Moreover, although the Confucius Institutes' headquarter is a central level unit, in concrete initiatives, the Chinese partner in these joint ventures is usually a Chinese university. While assessing the success of Confucius Institutes and similar cooperative enterprises goes beyond the scope of this thesis, in the largely "low politics" arena of culture, the CPC has been willing to relinquish control. However, relaxation of control in this area is unlikely to spread to sectors such as the media anytime soon.

10.2 Domestic and International Factors in China's External Propaganda Policy

The most recent as well as each previous change in China's external propaganda policy was driven by a complex set of domestic and external factors that were context-specific and therefore do not lend themselves easily to generalization. However, a few important factors should nonetheless be explained, divided into external and domestic.

First, the CPC's general line, officially based on its evaluation of the biggest problems the Party needs to tackle at home and abroad, has unsurprisingly influenced the aims of external propaganda as well as the most important target audiences. When line and goals change, so will external propaganda's purpose and the way in which it is conducted. After the CPC identified Japan as its main enemy in 1936, the focus of international propaganda shifted from linking the Chinese revolution to the world revolution towards getting the West's help in the fight against Japan. Conversely, when the direction or a particular policy is disputed, this is likely to show in China's external propaganda policy and output. During the Mao period, the goal, target audience, content and tone of external propaganda kept changing following political struggles within the Center over the course China should take. Since the beginning of the reform and opening period,

the main function of external propaganda has been to serve the realization of the three main tasks of the CPC, economic development, reunification, and world peace (i.e. China's rise). With regard to the latter two, divisions within the Center translate into difficulties to decide which of China's many roles to stress: is China a developing country or a major power; a peaceful and cooperative giant in the existing international system or a or a serious counterbalance against the U.S.? In addition, the CPC's external line and China's foreign policy have influenced the target audience. For example, as China began to attach importance to improving diplomatic relations in its immediate vicinity, external propaganda targeted at neighboring countries was reinforced.

Second, principles and policies devised for the overall situation (*quanju* 全局) and meant to be adapted to each policy sector and each locale significantly shape the external propaganda debate. For instance, when Jiang Zemin introduced the "Three Represents," the external propaganda sector came up with ideas how the new principle could be translated into concrete policies. Principles and policies originally devised for other policy sectors, most importantly propaganda and thought work and foreign affairs work, are also frequently re-interpreted and adapted to the external propaganda sector. Thus, the overall agenda of the CPC at a particular point in time provides the basic framework within which external propaganda can develop.

Third, in almost each new development, foreign models and the transnational development of what the concept of propaganda targeting foreign publics meant and what scope of activities it should encompass had an impact on the Chinese debate. These are developments that take place outside of the PRC and in which neither the CPC nor the Chinese government are directly involved, although some changes might be reacting to developments within the PRC. Such developments enter the Chinese discourse and pool of policy options through the channels of absorbing foreign knowledge outline in Chapter 4. The in-flow of ideas from abroad is partially acknowledged and marked as such (e.g. in the case of the concept of soft power) and partially unacknowledged.

Many different countries have served as models for specific aspects, for example Japan (culture), Israel (handling journalists, integrating academics), Egypt (image of ancient civilization), France (cultural diplomacy), etc. China has

also learned from its opponents such as the Dalai Lama. Intergovernmental initiatives and cooperation projects have likewise impacted Chinese external propaganda debates and practices. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the UNESCO debates about a “new world information and communication order” provided arguments why Xinhua would have to be turned into a world news agency.

The most important country that China has watched and studied since the post-Mao period, however, is clearly the United States, first, because since the 1990s China has seen itself as a major target of U.S. propaganda and wants to stay informed of what it has to expect and second, because the U.S. as the only superpower is an important model for China. In the 1980s, when an image-conscious Ronald Reagan was in the White House, China first began to speak about its own international image. Likewise, as Charles Wick prepared to launch Worldnet, China, too, began to focus on how it could use television to spread its message. In the 1990s, China kept an eye on the changes in the USIA. The “shift East” of U.S. propaganda was used as a general argument why China needed to reinforce its external propaganda, but concrete transformations, such as the consolidation of radio and television, were also picked up and used as suggestions for China’s reforms. In the 21st century, the renewed emphasis on soft power and public diplomacy in the U.S. introduced a range of new arguments about the relationship between external propaganda and national security into the Chinese debate that contributed to the upgrade of the external propaganda sector.

Debates abroad thus function as a constant supplier of new ideas. Through the established practices of intelligence work at all levels, ideas voiced or implemented in one national context quickly spread to other countries. The same is true for academic debates. The steady inflow of all kinds of new ideas and practices and the fact that in many areas China still tries to catch up means that Chinese discussions often become a form of “echo chamber” for larger global debates. For each development in China, it therefore makes sense to first look which global debate or development it responds or corresponds to. However, the examples throughout the dissertation have shown that the Chinese debate did not merely react passively to the influx of new ideas from abroad, but that the latter were mostly used quite consciously to push for changes within the Chinese system. The appropriation of different concepts and practices from abroad is often driven by specific Chinese needs, and when ideas and practices are transplanted, they can

assume very different meanings and purposes. As such, foreign models first and foremost constitute resources that can be used by different actors in the policy process to argue for (or against) certain reforms.

Despite the use of different models, the constant inflow of new ideas as well as changes in the structural base of world relations, some institutions have been very persistent. These are patterns of action or valuation that often precede the founding of the PRC or go back even further. The most important cultural or historical legacy going back to 19th century is the understanding of China as a victim of bullying by imperialist powers that is now finally able to resume its rightful place in the world. This master narrative has survived various changes in how the world is structured, with the bullies appearing in the form of the racist imperialists, the capitalist imperialists, the cultural imperialists, and the national hegemonists. In the debate whether external propaganda is the solution to many of China's problems or whether it is completely useless, the key is how the West is framed: Can it be convinced or is it irredeemably imperialist/reactionary/hostile? If it is the first, China needs to be patient with foreigners, who simply lack knowledge. If ill-will on the part of foreigners must be assumed, on the other hand, propaganda is useless. Here, the argument that the majority of the people are good has helped those in favor of more external propaganda throughout the 20th century as much as today.

In sum, while foreign models have played an important role, many twists in the debate can only be understood if analyzed as part of a larger Chinese domestic campaigns, which were, of course, often the result of interaction with an outside world. In addition, historical patterns of framing the world and discussing propaganda targeted at foreigners continue to be relevant in current debates.

10.3 Historical and Structural Constraints

Alarmism about the deficits of one country's propaganda is part and parcel of any attempt to get more money from the central government, both in China and elsewhere. However, it is still reasonable to argue that Chinese external propaganda is, in fact, lagging behind in many areas. Various constraints have prevented China from taking certain paths or have pushed it towards one option and away from another. Most issues can be traced back in some way to having

adopted the S.U. model of propaganda that works in a relatively closed environment, but does poorly in an environment in which borders are eroded. Problems China has to deal with in trying to reform the system can be identified at three different levels. First, at the most basic level, there is the issue of introducing new practices and having to re-train external propaganda workers. Second, there is the problem of bureaucratic resistance when trying to implement reforms. Finally, there is the organizational structure and place of external propaganda in the overall bureaucracy. Existing constraints can additionally be divided into two basic types: Those cases where the CPC fully supports a reform and that can - theoretically- be resolved through retraining personnel and institutional restructuring and those cases in which different policies and values are in conflict. While solving the first type requires commitment (both the political will and ability to invest money and energy) and thus should not be underestimated, the latter category has been more problematic in China and will likely remain difficult to solve in the future as well.

The first legacy of the institutional set-up of the Mao period is that external propaganda is not a powerful sector in its own right. Instead of setting up a relatively independent, strong external propaganda agency comparable to the USIA, China opted for a complex division of work between different departments largely from the propaganda sector and the foreign affairs sector according to their areas of expertise. Although the distribution of responsibilities has changed, the fragmentation of the sector has persisted until today.

Second, China now has a domestic propaganda apparatus that has a vital role in maintaining CPC control, but does not mix well with the practices required in the global media environment. Although the establishment of the domestic propaganda apparatus set China off on a path that was difficult to reverse, the fate of China's external propaganda as dependent on and thus constrained by domestic propaganda was neither sealed when the CPC consolidated its propaganda apparatus in 1942 nor when it invited Soviet advisors after the founding of the PRC to establish a pervasive nationwide propaganda apparatus. Rather, these were the first steps of a multi-stage process that could have turned out differently at several junctures, such as in the 1980s, when domestic propaganda came under attack. The current situation China finds itself in is the result of a series of reactions to different events that strengthened the domestic propaganda apparatus

and gave propaganda work a firm place in the overall ideological universe of the CPC.

After a decade of relative weakening of the domestic propaganda system and the relative strengthening of the external propaganda apparatus, domestic propaganda returned with full force. Owing to the institutional reforms of the 1980s, which had used existing domestic propaganda structures to strengthen China's external propaganda work, the overwhelming majority of new external propaganda structures depended on and had to take orders from domestic propaganda departments and units, at the central level as much as within most individual media units. Despite a possible trend towards more independence in the late 1990s and early 21st century, with the creation of the External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group in 2004 and the explicit order in 2007 to "coordinate the domestic and the international," external propaganda is now almost irreversibly a part of the overall propaganda system. The CPC's belief in the inevitable trend of globalization contributed significantly to the upgrade of external propaganda, but it also blocks the possibility of delinking the external propaganda apparatus from its more powerful domestic counterpart. While external propaganda media are encouraged to adapt their style and content at the micro-level to the tastes of foreign audiences, any substantial exceptions from the existing media rules for external propaganda media are ruled out. Thus, any reforms will have to apply to the domestic propaganda apparatus as well. That means in the eyes of the CPC the benefits of any proposed reform have to outweigh the costs not only for China's international communication, but also from a domestic perspective.

Many of the shortcomings of "external propaganda" that Chinese analysts frequently complain about, such as a reporting style that is not suited to foreign tastes or late reports especially in crisis situations, are arguably a direct result of the institutional arrangement at the decision and policy-making level, where the interests of external propaganda institutions are secondary to domestic concerns. Media are not like cultural projects, which can either focus on "low politics" or approach "high politics" issues indirectly. Instead, they are frequently required to directly engage in the global conversation on topics considered "high politics" by the CPC. In the dialectic contradiction between "focusing on ourselves" (*yi wo*

wei zhu 以我为主) and “being on target” (*you di fang shi* 有的放矢), the latter by and large takes precedence in regular mode, whereas the first prevails once a crisis is declared or China’s core interests are touched.

One main problem, which explains why some points on the agenda kept showing up for several decades without being solved, has been the fact that there have been few incentives for taking risks or implementing certain changes, but a lot to lose instead. In an environment in which the political climate keeps shifting and in which orders given are ambiguous –demands for creativity and innovation on the one hand, and for “propaganda discipline” (*xuanchuan jili* 宣传纪律) on the other– people are likely to err on the safe side. As opposed to domestic media, which need to make money, China’s big media targeting foreigners are not expected to pay for themselves. Thus, the potential for independent innovation is very low, and even in Party-sanctioned reforms, people are careful.

Two layers about the Chinese media system need to be distinguished that could, to a degree, be maintained or abandoned independently from one another, Party-ownership of the media and extra-legal control over media content and concrete formulations using day-to-day instructions through various well-established channels. In both areas, since the late 1980s, when the Party principle was strongly reaffirmed, there have been reforms: With regard to Party-ownership, some operating departments have been listed, even at the highest level. Regarding extra-legal controls, external propaganda media are supposed to get as much leeway as possible. Except for the careful testing of selected private media, however, there have been no substantial or qualitative changes that would off-set even small parts of the Party principle. So what stands in the way of substantial reforms, both regarding Party-ownership of the media, and concrete practices of control?

First, and most importantly, domestic propaganda work has a very firm place in the political imaginary of the CPC. It is no coincidence that the CPD’s powers were upgraded at the same moment that China embarked on further economic reforms in 1992. Instead, the two were tied together: For as long as China pursued the policies of reform and opening, it would have to continue strengthening its propaganda apparatus in order to mitigate any negative consequences of increasingly divergent interests within society and to counteract

any hostile ideology that could sneak in through the open door. The CPC's belief that chaos would ensue if it failed to correctly guide public opinion was further enforced by the absorption of modernization theory. Thus, in the new century, with the entry into the WTO and a very "risky" period of development ahead, domestic propaganda, again, became more, not less important.

Second, existing bureaucracies as well as groups and individuals within these bureaucracies are likely to resist change, both because they do not want to cede power and because changes in existing routines are costly. In the case of external propaganda, at the highest level, there is the fact that the CPD as a bureaucracy will resist any weakening of its power. Although less consequential, the same is true for units at lower levels.

Third, while the current system of media control with the CPD at the top, despite its many adaptations, is a huge burden for Chinese media going global, in the domestic realm it arguably works well enough that there is not enough of an incentive for the CPC to fundamentally change it. Instead the Party continues to try to optimize it. Since external propaganda has been tied to domestic propaganda, and domestic propaganda continues to be seen as more important, swift and substantial reforms in the near future for China's most important media are unlikely.

From a more practical perspective, there is the difficulty and cost associated with having to retrain people. Both after the founding of the PRC and again beginning in the 1980s, the CPC tried to retrain its external propaganda workers. While in the first case, some continued to argue for distinguishing material targeted at foreigners from domestic propaganda, the level of skill required to produce correct translations according to a single correct standard is relatively low. Through a system of additional checks, adherence to the new standards could be ensured relatively easily. Teaching journalists to write more vividly and independently in a foreign language, by contrast, has been a much more difficult enterprise. Throughout the post-Mao period, more rhetorical commitment usually led to more external propaganda initiatives, but not necessarily or immediately to qualitative improvement of media output, in the sense of moving away, for example, from the extreme attention paid to correct formulations and correct ideological stance, regardless of how such texts would be received by foreigners. On the contrary, the expansion of the apparatus and inclusion of more people and

organizations as well as the desire to crank up China's voice sometimes even led to temporary set-backs because new organizations became involved that had little experience with external propaganda work and not necessarily enough qualified personnel. A recent example is the trend among provinces and municipalities, presumably following orders from the Center, to set up websites in English which often contain basic "mistakes" such as translating *xuanchuanbu* 宣传部 as propaganda department not publicity department.

One of the most important problems is the fact that China has opted for a "quick fix." For the nation-wide establishment of external propaganda structures at the provincial level and below, existing domestic propaganda departments have arguably been of help to achieve swift results that could be pointed out in the typical "success reports" delivered by locales to their superiors. It is far easier to add a bureau to an existing department and transfer a number of people than to establish a new department from scratch. However, the problems with this approach are evident: The simple existence of an external propaganda department and personnel does not mean that cadres have the necessary qualifications. More importantly, retraining is difficult because cadres already have an established way of doing things. Finally, external propaganda bureaus, departments, and small groups are established under the authority of domestic propaganda structures, replicating the problems China also faces at the highest level. Thus, during the 1980s as much as today, domestic propaganda structures have offered a treacherous illusion of being able to set up external propaganda at lower levels fast without offering any actual way of quality control. Particularly in a sector such as external propaganda in which quality matters at least as much as quantity, if not more, the problems this causes are evident. While cities such as Shanghai have the expertise, experience and likely even the motivation to create media that are well-received by foreigners, possibly better than the Center itself, the same cannot be said of provinces such as Shanxi or Gansu.

A related problem has presented itself with the creation of global media players, which have been seen as key to China's overall external propaganda project. The reforms and expansions largely take place on the basis of existing media units, many of which have historically focused on domestic audiences. In the past, such existing infrastructures have proven difficult to work with in several

instances. Media newly created at an opportune moment, by contrast, had a much better chance to establish different work and reporting styles, despite being less powerful. The *China Daily*, founded in 1981 as a paper with unprecedented independence in the PRC, had been writing pieces quite removed from the Chinese journalistic style of the Mao period and produced English language articles of a much higher quality than Xinhua's External Department, which was tied down both by its previous experience and by its place in the overall news agency. Likewise, trying to establish a 24 hour news channel on the basis of existing structures at CCTV (including existing routines, existing hierarchies, etc.) has been problematic.

Of course, not all problems in China's external propaganda are caused or exacerbated exclusively by the domestic propaganda apparatus. The two different modes of communication in crisis mode and in regular mode are also upheld in texts clearly not scripted (though most likely often approved) by the CPD. In fact, long term advisors of OEP/SCIO such as Li Xiguang are outspoken proponents of lambasting anyone challenging any of China's core interests; they might be opposed to the awkward language used in some rebuttals, but they are not opposed to rebuttals per se, even very harsh ones. This is not an issue primarily caused by the CPD, but a part of Chinese political communication that, just like the distinction between malicious ringleaders and unwitting followers, is anchored more deeply in the CPC's way of thinking and acting and even has some pre-modern roots.

Moreover, with regard to harsh critiques in cases where China's interests are touched, there are different opinions tied to the larger debate about how assertive China should be in front of the international public. It is mainly an outcome of the various different roles that China tries to play simultaneously: China the developing country versus China the big power and peaceful China versus a China that needs to show the world it can and will defend its interests. However, the act of balance is arguably also further complicated by the two different modes of communication, a relatively restrained style stressing harmony versus the highly polemical often martial style that is used once issues are considered political.

Despite disagreements within the external propaganda sector, over the last few decades several individuals and groups of people have tried to change existing practices and arrangements. A number of different groups have an interest in changing the way external propaganda is run for different reasons: External propaganda departments and units have an interest in raising their own standing within the overall system by increasing the importance of external propaganda. Though most journalists do not get into contact with the CPD directly, many presumably have an interest in being disturbed by existing regulations as little as possible and not having to fear negative consequences for minute slips and mistakes. People who want to improve China's image and increase its influence over international public opinion who also have an understanding of how international journalism should operate in order to be effective have ideational motives. These people come from all walks of life. They might be cadres in higher or lower leadership positions, media scholars, journalists, or Chinese exchange students studying abroad. Businesspeople in the media industry generally have an interest in continued commercialization and privatization of the media. They point out the problems China's Party-owned media face internationally in order to further their own agenda.

External propaganda cadres' pushing for incremental reforms should not be confused with what is understood in studies of the Chinese media as "pushing the boundaries." In China's domestic media environment, journalists at the majority of media, which are no longer subsidized and thus need to be self-sufficient, have incentives to try to report as much as possible and test the waters in order to attract more readers and thus make more profits. China's external propaganda media –at least at the central level– are in a completely different situation. They receive large subsidies, and although several people have argued that eventually they will have to be self-sufficient in order to be competitive on the global media market thus far none of them have to worry about the bottom line. What they do have, particularly at the lower levels, is first-hand knowledge that China's domestic media model and Chinese journalistic norms and conventions of style do not work at the international level. At higher levels, aside from this knowledge, cadres are also motivated by making their own department more relevant to the CPC's interests and thus potentially more powerful.

Under the existing constraints, proponents of external propaganda reforms away from the strict constraints imposed by the CPC's elaborate system of media control have made use of a number of strategies, most of which are also known to be used in other sectors of the Chinese bureaucracy.

The first, successfully used in the early 21st century, was linking external propaganda to national security and regime security. Once this interpretation had gained the acceptance of the Party Center and external propaganda had been officially reframed as a security issue, much more drastic and sweeping reforms became possible.

The second strategy has been to ask for incremental reforms rather than sweeping changes. Thus, people keep lobbying for more reforms and for gradually shifting the balance between two dialectic policies. This chipping away at orthodoxies is a common strategy in Chinese politics and arguably more likely to succeed than asking for massive changes challenging the ideological foundations of propaganda work as a whole. However, whatever is gained can be quickly lost during the next conservative backlash.

Third, reformers couch the changes they advocate in the language of the Center. Departments and locales generally have a degree of leeway for making policies as long as they stay in the overall framework of the Center, usually provided in the form of speeches and new slogans. The results are usually very concrete policies that can be very removed from the original context provided by the Center. Within the confines of a slogan and the precedent what the slogan means at a higher level external propaganda policy makers do have some degree of freedom of interpreting the slogan and room for setting their own agenda (as long as this agenda can be connected to the slogan). The resulting policies are not usually seen as a problem by the Center; the flexibility is intentional. It does not mean that departments have endless possibilities, but in non-sensitive areas, they are relatively free to associate the problems they see as most pressing with the slogans devised at the Center, and even in sensitive areas, a new slogan can provide an opportunity to push in a particular direction.

Fourth, people pushing for a particular reform may also state that a particular measure is an "objective law" (*keguan guilü* 客观规律) that needs to be observed in order to succeed. Here, proponents of reform may point to studies of

various foreign models that have identified certain regularities. One author stated that external propaganda could only succeed if radio and television units joined forces. Likewise, several qualitative changes in writing style have been justified by pointing to the “objective laws of journalism.” Thus, building “external propaganda theory” is also a potential strategy to push for certain measures that might otherwise be rejected for ideological reasons. The building of mechanisms to harvest and evaluate feedback from readers also plays to the advantage of those arguing for more sweeping changes. Under the overall value of the “scientific development outlook” (*kexue fazhan guan* 科学发展观) combined with the overall urgency attached to extending China’s influence over global public opinion, being able to “prove scientifically” that a certain strategy is counterproductive is of immense value.

Fifth, successful events and experiments can be used to argue for the expansion of a particular policy or strategy. Events whose coverage or presentation to the world is evaluated as successful, such as the Hong Kong handover or the Wenchuan earthquake, often continue to be used as illustration that success is possible for years. This has to be understood as an argument against the common complaint that external propaganda is pointless because the West distorts China on purpose. More importantly, the (external) propaganda conducts controlled experiments. If an experiment goes well, supporters can point to the positive results to argue for a policy change. Anti-CNN very much seems like such a controlled experiment. The group was touted on Chinese mainstream media, and after the fact, it was used to argue that Chinese netizens were patriotic enough that they could be trusted, at least on questions involving nationalist issues.

10.4 Summary

To conclude, the shift from selective appropriations from the S.U. to selective appropriations from Western countries has proven difficult for China and continues to cause problems. The most disruptive factor for China’s external propaganda, an issue that most countries China currently selectively borrows from do not have to deal with, is the existence of a more powerful domestic propaganda apparatus, which was accorded an even more important and powerful position in the early 1990s than during earlier decades. Through the use of different strategies,

tremendous changes in China's external propaganda have been effectuated. Even in "high politics" areas, despite significant institutional and ideological obstacles, China has been able to adapt its external propaganda apparatus relatively well to an environment tilted largely to its disadvantage, but the process has been slow, and has been partially counteracted by new policies introduced in the 21st century that react to the difficulties in containing information and that mandate domestic and external propaganda coordinate its activities more closely. The Party's concept of propaganda and the media continues to put a cap on what can be done, and this is unlikely to change. This means that while reforms might be remarkable within the Chinese context they are not strong enough to have an effect internationally. Thus, in the absence of any drastic changes, Chinese external propaganda is heading towards a dead end. Whether or not this matters for China depends on whether or not there is any truth to the belief in propaganda as a magical weapon.

11 List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Name	Chinese/Russian (transcription)	Chinese/ Russian
ABC	American Broadcasting Company	<i>[Meiguo guangbo gongsi]</i>	[美国广播公司]
AFP	Agence France- Presse	<i>[Faguo xinwenshe (Fa xinshe)]</i>	[法国新闻社 (法新 社)]
AP	Associated Press	<i>[Meiguo lianhe tongxunshe (Mei lianshe)]</i>	[美国联合通讯社 (美联社)]
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	<i>[Yingguo guangbo gongsi]</i>	[英国广播公司]
BFSU	Beijing Foreign Studies University	<i>Beijing waiguoyu daxue</i>	北京外国语大学
CAJ	China Academic Journals	<i>Zhongguo xueshu qikan</i>	中国学术期刊
CASS	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	<i>Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan</i>	中国社会科学院
CC	Central Committee	<i>Zhongyang weiyuanhui</i>	中央委员会
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference	<i>Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi</i>	中国人民政治协商 会议
CCTV	China Central Television	<i>Zhongyang dianshitai</i>	中央电视台
CFA	Committee for Free Asia	<i>[Ziyou yazhou weiyuanhui]</i>	[自由亚洲委员会]
CIPG	China International Publishing Group	<i>Zhongguo guoji chuban jituan</i>	中国国际出版集团

CNC	China Xinhua News Network Corporation	<i>Zhongguo Xinhua xinwen dianshi wang</i>	中国新华新闻电视网
CNKI	China National Knowledge Infrastructure	<i>Guojia zhishi jichu sheshi</i>	国家知识基础设施
CNN	Cable News Network	<i>[Youxian dianshi xinwenwang]</i>	[有线电视新闻网]
CPC	Communist Party of China	<i>Zhongguo gongchandang</i>	中国共产党
CPD	Central Propaganda Department	<i>Zhongxuanbu</i>	中宣部
CPI	Committee on Public Information	<i>[Gonggong xinxi weiyuanhui]</i>	[公共信息委员会]
CPIFA	Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs	<i>Zhongguo renmin waijiao xuehui</i>	中国人民外交学会
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union	<i>Kommunisticheskaya partiya Sovetskogo Soyuz</i> <i>[Sulian gongchandang]</i>	Коммунистическая партия Советского Союза [苏联共产党]
CRI	China Radio International	<i>Zhongguo guoji guangbo diantai</i>	中国国际广播电台
CWPC	Chinese Workers and Peasant's Correspondence	<i>Zhongguo gongnong tongxunshe</i>	中国工农通讯社
EPSG	External Propaganda Small Group	<i>Duiwai xuanchuan xiaozu</i>	对外宣传小组
EPWLSG	External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group	<i>Duiwai xuanchuan gongzuo lingdao xiaozu</i>	对外宣传工作领导小组
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group	<i>Waishi lingdao xiaozu</i>	外事领导小组

FAO	Foreign Affairs Office	<i>Waishi bangongshi</i>	外事办公室
FASG	Foreign Affairs Small Group	<i>Waishi lingdao xiaozu</i>	外事领导小组
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	<i>[Waiguo zhijie touzi]</i>	[外国直接投资]
FLO	Foreign Languages Office	<i>Waiwenju (Zhongguo waiwen chuban faxing shiye ju)</i>	中国外文局 (中国外文出版发行事业局)
FLP	Foreign Language Press	<i>Waiwen chubanshe</i>	外文出版社
GAPP	General Administration of Press and Publication	<i>Xinwen chuban zongshu</i>	新闻出版总署
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade	<i>[Guanmao zong xieding]</i>	[关贸总协定]
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	<i>[Guonei shengchan zongzhi]</i>	[国内生产总值]
GDTV World	Guangdong Television World	<i>Guangdong dianshitai guoji pindao</i>	广东电视台国际频道
GMD	Kuomintang/ Chinese Nationalist Party	<i>Guomindang</i>	国民党
GNP	Gross National Product	<i>[Guomin shengchan zongzhi]</i>	[国民生产总值]
GPrA	General Press Administration	<i>Zhongguo xinwen zongshu</i>	中国新闻总署
GPuA	General Publication Administration	<i>Zhongguo chuban zongshu</i>	中国出版总署
HKSE	Hong Kong Stock Exchange	<i>[Xianggang jiaoyisuo]</i>	[香港交易所]
ICA	International Communication	<i>[Guoji jiaoliushu]</i>	[国际交流署]

	Agency		
ICS	International Channel Shanghai	<i>Shanghai waiyu pindao</i>	上海外语频道
IDCPC	International Department of Central Committee of CPC	<i>Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai lianluo bu</i>	中共中央对外联络部
ILD	International Liaison Department	<i>Duiwai lianluo bu</i>	对外联络部
IPA	Institute for Propaganda Analysis	<i>[Xuanchuan fenxi xuehui]</i>	[宣传分析学会]
IPI Core Group	International Public Information Core Group	<i>[Guoji gonggong xinxi xiaozu]</i>	[国际公共信息小组]
IPTV	Internet Protocol Television	<i>[Wangluo xieding dianshi]</i>	[网络协定电视]
IR	International Relations	<i>[Guoji guanxi]</i>	[国际关系]
LSG	Leading Small Group	<i>lingdao xiaozu</i>	领导小组
MCST	Modern Chinese Scientific Terminologies	<i>[Jin xiandai Hanyu xueshu yongyu yanjiu]</i>	[近现代汉语学术用语研究]
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<i>Waijiaobu</i>	外交部
MFN	Most Favoured Nation	<i>[Zui hui guo daiyu]</i>	[最惠国待遇]
MFT	Ministry of Foreign Trade	<i>Duiwai jingji maoyi bu</i>	对外经济贸易部
MoC	Ministry of Culture	<i>Wenhuabu</i>	文化部
MOFCOM	Ministry of Commerce	<i>Shangwubu</i>	商务部
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement	<i>[Bu jiemeng yundong]</i>	[不结盟运动]

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	<i>[Bei Daxiyang gongyue zuzhi]</i>	[北大西洋公约组织]
NED	National Endowment for Democracy	<i>[Meiguo guojia minzhu jijinhui]</i>	[美国国家民主基金会]
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	<i>[Fei zhengfu zuzhi]</i>	[非政府组织]
NPC	National People's Congress	<i>Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui (Renda)</i>	全国人民代表大会 (人大)
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive	<i>[Guojia anquan juece zhiling]</i>	[国家安全决策指令]
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order	<i>[Guoji xinwen chuanbo xin zhixu]</i>	[国际新闻传播新秩序]
NWIO	New World Information Order	<i>[Guoji xinwen xin zhixu]</i>	[国际新闻新秩序]
OCAO	(State Council) Overseas Chinese Affairs Office	<i>(Guowuyuan) Qiaowu bangongshi</i>	(国务院)侨务办公室
OEP	Office of External Propaganda	<i>Zhonggong zhongyang duiwai xuanchuan bangongshi</i>	中共对外宣传办公室
OGC	Office of Global Communications	<i>[Quanqiu jiaoliu bangongshi]</i>	[全球交流办公室]
OWI	Office of War Information	<i>[Zhanshi xinwen bangongshi]</i>	[战时新闻办公室]
PBSC	Politburo Standing Committee	<i>Zhonggong zhongyang zhengzhi ju changweihui</i>	中共中央政治局常委会
PDD	Presidential Decision Directive	<i>[Zongtong jueding zhiling]</i>	[总统决定指令]
PLA	People's Liberation Army	<i>Renmin jiefangjun</i>	人民解放军

PR	Public Relations	<i>[Gonggong guanxi]</i>	[公共关系]
PRC	People's Republic of China	<i>Zhonghua renmin gongheguo</i>	中华人民共和国
PTWLSG	Propaganda and Thought Work Leading Small Group	<i>Xuanchuan, sixiang gongzuo lingdao xiaozu</i>	宣传、思想工作 领导小组
RFA	Radio Free Asia	<i>Ziyou Yazhou diantai</i>	自由亚洲电台
RFE	Radio Free Europe	<i>Ziyou Ouzhou diantai</i>	自由欧洲电台
ROC	Republic of China	<i>Zhonghua minguo</i>	中华民国
S.U.	Soviet Union	<i>Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik</i> <i>[Sulian]</i>	Союз Советских Социалистических Республик (СССР) [苏联]
SAFEA	State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs	<i>Guojia waiguo zhuanjia ju</i>	国家外国专家局
SARFT	State Administration for Radio, Film, and Television	<i>Guojia guangbo dianying dianshi zongju</i>	国家广播电影电视 总局
SCIO	State Council Information Office	<i>Guowuyuan xinwen bangongshi</i>	国务院新闻办公室
SCMP	South China Morning Post	<i>[Nanhua zaobao]</i>	[南华早报]
SIIO	State Internet Information Office	<i>Guojia hulianwang xinxi bangongshi</i>	国家互联网信息办 公室
SOE	State-Owned Enterprises	<i>Guoyou qiye</i>	国有企业
SPG	Special Planning Group	<i>[Tebie jihua xiaozu]</i>	[特别计划小组]
SPPA	State Press and Publication	<i>Guojia xinwen chubanshu</i>	国家新闻出版署
TASS	Telegraph Agency of	<i>Telegrafnoye</i>	Телеграфное

	the S.U.	<i>agentstvo Sovetskovo Soyuz</i>	агентство Советского Союза (ТАСС)
		<i>[Tasi she]</i>	[塔斯社]
TMC	Transnational Media Corporations	<i>[Kuaguo chuanmei gongsi]</i>	[跨国传媒公司]
U.S.	United States	<i>[Meilijian hezhongguo (Meiguo)]</i>	[美利坚合众国 (美国)]
UN	United Nations	<i>[Lianheguo]</i>	[联合国]
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	<i>[Lianheguo jiaoyu, kexue yu wenhua zuzhi]</i>	[联合国教育、科学与文化组织]
UPI	United Press International	<i>[Hezhong guoji she]</i>	[合众国际社]
USIA	United States Information Agency	<i>[Meiguo xinwen shu]</i>	[美国新闻署]
USIS	United States Information Service	<i>[Meiguo xinwen chu]</i>	[美国新闻处]
VOA	Voice of America	<i>[Meiguo zhi sheng]</i>	[美国之声]
VOKS	All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries	<i>Vsesoyuznoye obshchestvo kul'turnoy svyazi s zagranitsey</i>	Всесоюзное общество культурной связи с границей (ВОКС)
		<i>[Sulian duiwai wenhua guanxi xiehui]</i>	[苏联对外文化关系协会]
WTO	World Trade Organization	<i>[Shijie maoyi zuzhi (Shimao)]</i>	[世界贸易组织(世贸)]

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12.1.1.6 Journal Articles

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12.1.1.7 Newspaper Articles

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- “Chen Haosu weiyuan: dali jiaqiang gonggong waijiao” 陈昊苏委员——大力加强公共外交 [Committee member Chen Haosu - vigorously strengthen public diplomacy]. *Remin ribao*, March 12, 2009, 9.
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标 [Premier Li Peng said in the plenary meeting of the State Council that the economic priorities for the year are still three things: to continue to stabilize prices, to strive for a good harvest in agriculture, and to ease the contradiction between aggregate supply and aggregate demand; the State Council decided to organize the drafting of a three-year rectification plan and to define the goals for after three years]. *Renmin ribao*, August 16, 1989, 1.

Dai Bingguo 戴秉国. “Jianchi heping fazhan daolu” 坚持和平发展道路 [Adhere to the road of peaceful development]. *Renmin ribao*, December 13, 2010, 6.

“Dui Xinhua she guanyu Yindu qingkuang de zhenshi baodao shen wei buman; Yindu zhengfu poshi Xinhuashe jizhe liyin; wo dashiguan zhaohui zhichu zhe zhong wuli zuofa you sun Zhong Yin youyi; Nihelu dui Xinhuashe de baodao zuo wu genju de gongji” 对新华社关于印度情况的真实报道深为不满 印度政府迫使新华社记者离印 我大使馆照会指出这种无理作法有损中印友谊 尼赫鲁对新华社的报道作无根据的攻击 [Deeply dissatisfied with Xinhua’s true reports about the situation in India, the Indian government forced Xinhua’s journalists to leave the country. The Chinese embassy pointed out in a verbal note that this unreasonable action harms Sino-Indian friendship. Nehru’s attack on Xinhua’s reports has no basis]. *Renmin ribao*, August 3, 1960, 3.

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