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Media in Mainland China, Mouthpieces for the Chinese Communist Party

January 28, 2005

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(Abbreviations used in this report, CCP: Chinese Communist Party; CCCCPC: Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party)

Outline

Completely contrary to the popular belief regarding media in the West, the media controlled by the CCP are entirely propaganda tools and have never functioned as news reporting agencies.

The CCP directly rules China or indirectly through controlling administrative bodies. The first type is day-to-day functions, which are carried out by controlling administrative government agencies overseen by the corresponding units in the CCP, typically represented by the judicial system. The Chinese judicial system includes the police, the procuratorate and the court, headed by the Political and Judicial Committee from the CCP committee. The Political and Judicial Committee represents the single greatest barrier to judicial independence in China. The decisions to arrest, convict and sentence people, especially political dissidents, civil religious members and Falun Gong practitioners, are all made by the Political and Judicial Committee. (The "610 Office" is under the administration of the CCP Committee while most of its members are from the Political and Judicial Committee and in fact it is not run by the governmental organs). The police carry out the arrest and the court only reads the pre-determined verdict.

The second type of control is double-management (i.e., one work unit with two nameplates). This is for some very important work units. The CCP must clasp these agencies with hooks and claws, but it's also necessary for the CCP to use the name of an administrative institution to cover up the CCP's interference with government administration. There are at least five such agencies on the central government level. The Ministry of Supervision and the CCP Central Commission for Discipline Inspection are the same body and they work together. This organ is listed in the State Council sequence but its establishment is directly listed under the Central Committee of CCP (CCCCP); as are the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the CCCCPC, the Information Office of the State Council and the International Communication Office of CCCCPC, and the Office for Preventing and Solving Evil Cult Issues of the State Council and the Office of Leadership Team for Dealing With Falun Gong Issue (also called the "610 Office") of CCCCPC. Each pair of organs listed above is the same work unit but has two nameplates and is directly listed under the sequence of the CCCCPC.

The State Archives Bureau and the Archives Bureau of the CCCCPC are also the same body and they belong to a ministry/bureau directly under the CCCCPC. These organs are completely operated by the CCP and not the State Council, but the government on all levels must obey the CCP's leadership.

The third type consists of agencies that are of life-and-death importance to the CCP, the CCP must directly manage them, such as the Central Chinese Television (CCTV), and People's Daily.

I. The Organization and Hierarchy of the CCP Media

Central level public media (excluding CCP's internal publications) include Xinhua News Agency, China News Services, China Internet Information Center, CCTV, People's Daily, Guanming Daily, among others.

On July 24, 2000, at a CCTV regular meeting, Sun Yusheng, the deputy editor general of CCTV conveyed the essence from the Internet Work Task Conference. The conference announced the five big websites that are supported by the CCCCPC are:

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People's Daily Website (PEOPLE.COM.CN), China News Agency Website (Xinhuanet.com), China Daily Website (CHINADAILY.COM.CN), China Radio International Website (CRI.COM.CN), and China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC.NET.CN). The other five big websites that should be promoted are: Shanghai East Net, Qianlong net, Chinese Communist Youth League net, CCTV.COM, and Central People's Radio Station net. Other commercial websites should not be promoted.

People's Daily is the CCCCPC's Official Newspaper and is directly under the CCCCPC. [1]

CCTV, Central People's Radio Station, and China Radio International all belong to the China TV and Film Broadcasting Group. **The China TV and Film Broadcasting Group (CTFBG) is under the leadership of the CCP Propaganda Department** and the Party Committee of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television is the Substitute management for CTFBG. CTFBG is run by a Management Committee controlled by the CTFBG Party Committee. The Chinese government officially claims that Xinhua News Agency is the state news agency of People's Republic of China, it is **the eye, ear, mouthpiece of the CCP and the State**; the largest collection and distribution center of news information in China, and one of the four major news agencies in the world. [2]

Guangming Daily is "a comprehensive national CCP newspaper sponsored by the CCCCPC. It is based in the academic field and serves the public."

II. State Officials' Speech and CCP's Documents Demonstrate the Mouthpiece Nature of the CCP's Media

In August 2000, when interviewed by CBS 60minutes Mike Wallace, Jiang Zemin claimed that, "the press should be a mouthpiece of the Party." [3]

On December 5, 2003, Hu Jintao gave a speech at the National Working Conference on Propaganda and Ideology during which he emphasized, "The Party is in charge of propaganda, the Party is in charge of ideology; these are important principles and policies our Party have adopted through long-term practice. It is an important aspect of upholding the Party's rule, which [we] must firmly persist from the beginning to the end, and we cannot waver at any time." When talking about the important points of propaganda work in the present and the near future, Hu Jintao especially mentioned propaganda export, he said, "Continue to take the strengthening and improvement of propaganda export as a strategic mission in line with the battle of propaganda and ideology. [We must] diligently carry out the CCCCPC's foreign policies by closely following the overall situation of the work involving the Party and State? [4]

The Civilization Office directly under the CCCCPC said the following on Xinhua News Agency, "Xinhua News Agency is our national news agency and also an international agency. It is bestowed with the glorious mission of correctly guiding Chinese media and effectively influencing world media." [5]

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television is directly under the State Council and it is in charge of only one corporation, -- the China TV and Film Broadcasting Group (CTFBG). The administration and management of CCTV is the responsibility of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television. The official website of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television contains an introduction of the CTFBG [6], the opening sentence of which is, "the China TV and Film Broadcasting Group is an important mouthpiece for the CCCCPC, and it is also an important battleground of ideology and culture for the Party and the state."

"The main responsibility of the CTFBG is to thoroughly and accurately spread Party's basic doctrines, theories and guidelines; advocate various policies and decisions by the Party and State government; accomplish the propaganda task at home and abroad assigned by the CCCCPC, and persist the correct guidance of public opinion..."

"CTFBG is led by the Propaganda Department of CCCCPC and managed by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television Party Committee. CTFBG is operated by a Management Committee under the leadership of the CTFBG Party Committee. The CTFBG Party Committee is the core leadership of CTFBG; it is responsible for thoroughly guiding the work of CTFBG, strengthening the building of the Party within the corporation, studying and developing strategies for the development of the corporation; deciding on important propaganda work, appointment and dismissal of work positions, and capital management and operation. Under the Party Committee's guidance, the Management Committee plans, directs and organizes the execution of various work assignments as the work progresses."

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III. The Role of the CCP's Mouthpiece in the Persecution of Falun Gong

On July 23, 1999, the third day on the beginning of the persecution, the authority of the Chinese Propaganda Department published a speech on People's Daily. It read: "Our fight with the Falun Gong organization is a serious ideological and political battle. The ideological propaganda frontier should follow the central CCP's principle, take actual political responsibilities, and tightly guide the media on the right track." [7]

News Frontier in the People's Daily Group published a special editorial discussing "how to take the fight with Falun Gong as an important political task of the news propaganda." The article even mentioned specific methods in news reporting, such as "well utilizing happenings around people, letting the transformed former Falun Gong practitioners to testify, letting the Falun Gong victims and their family members to expose, criticize, and to accuse Falun Gong's crime. Try to avoid rigid propaganda. To work on the depth and pay attention to the effect of the propaganda." [8] The reporting on the staged Tiananmen Square self-immolation has no doubt been following this guiding principle.

In his article "Paying Attention to the Art of Propaganda and the Effect", Guo Jingzhe, the Editor in Chief of the China International Radio Station, described his experience on anti-Falun Gong propaganda following Jiang's theory. He said, "Comrade Jiang Zemin said 'actively fight and try to attack other people first? The propaganda to overseas is often like fighting. One needs to hold the shield on one hand to defend the enemy's attack and the spear on the other to actively attack.' ... When we initially reported to the overseas about how Falun Gong was being exposed and criticized, we just copied the propaganda used inside China. It was hard for the foreigners to accept some of the terms that we used. Later, we clearly indicated in our overseas' propaganda that Falun Gong is a cult and the foreigners immediately understood and accepted. What we did was beneficial to win the international media..." [9]

Anti-Falun Gong Propaganda Takes Place under the Direct Control of the Central CCP. China Broadcasting and TV Bureau published "Comments on enhancing atheism and scientific propaganda in the broadcasting and TV". It emphasized to follow the important commands from the CCP leader(s) and the arrangements of the CCP Propaganda Department and to well perform the propaganda task including "continuing the propaganda reporting on the exposure and criticism of Falun Gong." [10]

Since 2001, during the process of the broadcasting and TV business re-organizing at the central and the local level, four points have been repeatedly said not to be changed. They were: the nature that the broadcasting and TV is the mouthpiece of the Party and the people, the Party controls the media, the Party has to control its cadres, the right media guidance. The corporate broadcasting and TV groups are still under the leadership of the Party Committee. [11] Even advertisements are required to persist in "the nature of the broadcasting and TV as the mouthpiece." [12]

IV. Chinese Communist Regime's Strategy to Enhance Its Propaganda Permeation Overseas

In the afternoon of September 18, 2001, in his closing speech at the closing ceremony of the First International Chinese Media Forum held in Nanjing, Liu Zepeng, Vice Director of the Oversea Chinese Affairs Office of State Council and Director of China News Agency, mentioned that "media industry has become one of the backbone industries of China." [13]

Xia Lin, the Deputy Editor in Chief of Xinhua News Agency proposed that the investment in propaganda campaign is considered "national defense investment," that "there are two battle fields in terms of ideological work: one is domestic propaganda field; the other is international arena of public opinions," and that "(we) should lose no time to implement Comrade Jiang's open policy of 'stepping out' so as to create an international atmosphere with public opinions advantageous and favorable for China." [14]

On January 9, 2003, the Chinese Communist authority held the national conference on "Propaganda Work Aimed At Overseas" in Beijing. At the conference, a number of resolutions were passed and decisions have been made to expand the overseas propaganda mission. Li Changchun, Member of Standing Committee of Political Bureau of the CCCCPCP advocated that "the function of the major overseas media of CCCCPCP should be fully exerted," and **"enhance its overseas influence; adopting the method that combines 'stepping out' and 'inviting outside (press) to inside China' to do well in our**

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work on influencing foreign media and foreign journalists, improving the quality of propaganda materials, expanding the channel to publish these materials overseas, exploring and establishing the publication and circulation mechanism of overseas propaganda material market, try all means to deliver our propaganda material aimed at overseas to the hands of foreigners."[\[15\]](#)

After the conference, in light of Li Changchun's speech which required "establishing a mechanism of holistic planning and collaboration," 25 departments inside the central government have established "CCCCP union conference for overseas propaganda" which takes charge of the overall planning and detailed implementation of policies of overseas propaganda. The Overseas Propaganda Office of CCCCPC took the leadership responsibility; the departments involved include Department of Propaganda of CCCCPC, Overseas Propaganda Office of CCCCPC, International Communication Department of CCCCPC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (of State Council), Taiwan Affairs Office of CCCCPC, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, State Administration of Religious Affairs, General Administration of Civil Aviation. [\[16\]](#)

Reference

[1] Departments and Institutions directly under the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party

[2] Xinhua News Agency is the state news agency of People's Republic of China, [it is] the eye, ear, throat and tongue of the Party and one of the four major news agencies in the world.

[3] Jiang Zemin Talks With Wallace. Jiang has always favored tough government controls of the press. "The press," he said, "should be a mouthpiece of the Party." "I think all countries and parties must have their own publications to publicize their ideas," Jiang told Wallace. "We do have freedom of the press, but such freedom should be subordinate to and serve the interests of the nation. How can you allow such freedom to damage the national interests?"

[4] Wired from Beijing on December 7, 2003, Xinhua News Agency. CCCCPC held national conference on "Propaganda Work Aimed At Overseas" in Beijing from December 5th to 7th. Secretary General of CCCCPC, Hu Jintao delivered an important speech at the conference.

[5] Report from The Civilization Office directly under the CCCCPC: "Xinhua News Agency made great effort to improve the civilization level of the agency with the emphasis on improvement of the morality required for media professions."

[6] The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television: Introduction to the China TV and Film Broadcasting Group.

[7] People's Daily reported on July 24, 1999: "Solidly carry out the political responsibility, play a correct guiding role in public opinion--- responsible person from Department of Propaganda of CCCCPC delivered a speech to journalists of People's Daily."

[8] News Frontier. The third Issue, 2001.

[9] The Editor in Chief of the China International Radio Station, Guo Jingzhe's speech : "Paying Attention to the Art of Propaganda and the Effect"

[10] China Broadcasting and TV Bureau's publication: "Comments on enhancing atheism and scientific propaganda in the broadcasting and TV"

[11] Southern Daily reported on January 19, 2004.

[12] Xinhua Net reported on September 26m 2003. The Responsible person from the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television Answered Questions from Journalists: Maintain a healthy development of Radio and TV advertisement

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[13] Liu Zepeng's closing speech at the closing ceremony of International Chinese Media Forum

[14] Vice Editor in Chief of Xinhua News Agency, Xia Lin.

[15] Wired from Beijing on January 10, 2003, Xinhua Net. Li Changchun's speech "Do Well in Overseas Propaganda Work, create an international atmosphere with public opinions advantageous and favorable for China."

[16] The Chinese VIP Reference, August 24, 2003.