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Beijing's Efforts to Maintain Socio-political Stability and Crush a Potential Jasmine Revolution

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Summary: This article explores some of the Chinese regime's responses to the Middle East crisis as of early March 2011 in the following areas: misinformation and propaganda; the tightening grip of the military and the police; the exercise of social control; and Internet censorship and arrests. While the timing of Zhongnanhai's actions suggest they are a clear attempt to avoid a Middle East style crisis, these methods used are not new; they have long served the purpose of handling China's own social instability. The collected facts may offer interesting insights into the regime's maneuvers in its attempt to survive and continue its rule.

Beijing's Efforts to Maintain Socio-political Stability and Crush a Potential Jasmine Revolution

Starting in January 2011, popular protests erupted in some Middle East countries, leading, within weeks, to the removal of the authoritarian presidents of Tunisia and Egypt. The shock waves continue to spread across the region and reached Zhongnanhai in Beijing, where the Communist dictators are deeply apprehensive about their own future.

This article explores some of the Chinese regime's responses, as of early March 2011, in the following areas: misinformation and propaganda; the tightening grip of the military and the police; the exercise of social control; and Internet censorship and arrests. While the timing of Zhongnanhai's actions suggest they are a clear attempt to avoid a Middle East style crisis, these methods used are not new; they have long served the purpose of handling China's own social instability. The collected facts may offer interesting insights into the regime's maneuvers in its attempt to survive and continue its rule.

Misinformation and Propaganda

Beijing's attitude toward democracy movements has been consistently clear and strong. As Wu Bangguo, the Chair of the National People's Congress and a Politburo standing committee member, stated in his talk on January 24, 2011, "Based on China's national conditions, [we] solemnly declare that we will not engage in a multi-party political system or in diversity of the guiding ideology. We will not pursue the 'separation of powers' and the bicameral system, or engage in federalism or privatization of property." [1]

The government's response regarding the movements in the Middle East can be exemplified by the Foreign Ministry spokesperson's comments on the situation in Egypt, made on February 10, 2011, one day before Mubarak stepped down: "China understands and supports the Egyptian government's efforts to maintain social stability and restore order, and (China) believes that the Egyptian affair should be decided by the Egyptians instead of by external interference." [2]

The official media's coverage seems to achieve two purposes. It misinforms the Chinese people about the nature of the events, and it uses the events to support Communist Party propaganda.

The world's free media have characterized the developments in Tunisia and Egypt as pro-democracy protesters toppling the heads of repressive regimes; they portray Libya's Muammar Qaddafi as a tyrant killing protesters and defectors. China, however, avoids the above characterizations and instead focuses on three peripheral aspects.

A. The economic reason as the driving force

Legal Weekly, a magazine under *Legal Daily*, said that "the young jobless people who had a lot of resentment became the main force behind the turmoil. The unemployment rate in Tunisia has continued to rise. Some economists have said that the unemployment rate was above 20% and even over 60% in some areas." [3]

China Review News, a Hong Kong based news agency under Beijing's control, made this comment: "In the near 20-day protest in the square (in Egypt), most of the participants were young people who suffered from unemployment and low income. They were encouraged by the 'street miracle' in Tunisia. Their motivation was based less on America's hoped for Western style freedom, democracy, and human rights, but rather on their hatred of the polarization, corruption, unemployment, and low income resulting from Mubarak's long period of authoritarian rule." [4]

B. The consequences are chaos and social turmoil

The following exchange is from a *Xinhua* TV news broadcast:

"TV Anchor: Recently, when Egypt imposed a curfew, thievery and vandalism mushroomed. Many stores on downtown streets in Cairo were looted and suffered from huge losses.

"*Xinhua* Reporter Li Zhuting: I am in the commercial district of Egypt's capital city, Cairo. During the Egyptian turmoil, serious incidents of vandalism and arson have taken place. Now I am standing in front of a clothing store. We can see that the

windows have been broken. I also found sharp wooden wedges like this one on the ground. Let's go inside to see how the store has suffered.” [5]

Another *Xinhua* article portrayed the situation in the Middle East and North Africa as “in turmoil; local society and people’s livelihoods have been hit hard; the economic losses are huge. During the chaos in Tunisia, tourism, which is the nation’s pillar industry, was paralyzed. Direct economic losses to the whole country exceed US\$2 billion. The political disorder in Egypt brought about US\$17 billion in losses to this ancient Middle East civilization.” [6]

A commentary published in the Shanghai based *Oriental Morning Post* forecast a gloomy outlook for the developments in Egypt. “However, things are not that simple. ... On the same day, both Prime Minister Beji Caid el Sebsi and Speaker of Parliament Foued Mebazaa claimed the title of ‘Acting President.’ They were both politicians in the ‘existing system,’ ... so one can infer that although street demonstrations and the Internet movement spread, the final ‘solution to the problem’ was still the traditional approach of a coup in the Arab world. After the event, big countries like the U.S. and France congratulated the ‘Tunisian people for their victory.’ However, many observers pointed out that the violence and looting on the streets of Tunisia have intensified. Many neighborhoods have closed up in self-defense. If the looting spreads, the situation will become more complicated. Observers have also pointed out that Hezbollah, Hamas, and other fundamentalist Islamic groups have extended their congratulations (to the Tunisians). This has people worried. ... After all, in Algeria, an incident occurred in which an extremist organization almost won the election by securing enough votes. This led to unrelenting violence and unrest, which has continued to the present.” [7]

C. Western countries, especially the U.S., are the “black hands” behind the scenes.

On February 18, 2011, *Beijing Daily*’s “Who Messed up the Arab World” pointed the finger at the West. “One undeniable key factor in the recent turmoil in the Arab world is the adverse consequences of Western forces’ long term intervention. Under the cover of the Western ideology and value system, they (the protesters) have seized local oil resources and benefited from their geographic advantage. To a certain extent, the current chaos can be viewed as a sequel to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, post ‘9.11,’ and the malignant fermenting of the bankrupt U.S. military forces and moral value system. The U.S. put many governments in the Middle East and North Africa in power, but those they put in power couldn’t satisfy the U.S. Their long-term connivance with Western countries’ encroachment of their oil resources created strong anti-U.S.

sentiments; after the adoption of a democratic election, it will be easier for the anti-U.S. parties to win.” [8]

Another lengthy investigative *Xinhua* article called the U.S. the “strategic black hand” and led readers to believe that the U.S. encouraged a “regime change” in Egypt. “The entire U.S. foreign diplomatic establishment and the entire apparatus that implements foreign policy spread ‘U.S. Thinking’ and the idea of ‘being obedient to the U.S.’ The formula of ‘Democracy = We the U.S.’ tells the world that, without the U.S., without treating U.S. interests, goals, and demands as a top priority, this ‘lady in the U.S. uniform’ (meaning democracy) would not even exist.”

“Clearly, as long as it helps to solve the problems the U.S. faces, the State Department would like to see the people and their blood on other country’s squares. In a sense, a revolution subtly initiated ‘from within’ is, after all, an ideal tool. The U.K.’s *Daily Telegraph* claimed that the U.S. secretly supported the Egyptian dissidents, who, three years ago, promised Washington a ‘regime change’ movement in 2011.”

“On April 6, 2008, more than 100,000 Egyptian Internet users who logged onto the ‘Facebook’ social networking site decided to support the Mahalla workers strike. The movement later developed into a national strike. This was the initial driving force for the establishment of the April 6 Youth Movement. The *Daily Telegraph* confirmed that Washington had been paying attention to the April 6 Youth Movement. In early December 2008, some people in the movement were invited to New York to meet with youth leaders from around the world, and a group of senior experts were sent in to ‘seek the best means of using digital technology to promote freedom and fairness and reject violence, extremism, and oppression.’ The session proposed that 17 youth organizations from 15 countries ‘should set up a youth movement alliance.’”

“The *Daily Telegraph* reported that an alliance was established. ‘Facebook,’ Google, YouTube, MTV, and other U.S. companies, along with Columbia University’s Law School, which trains young successors for the U.S. government, got directly involved in the process.”

“It would have been a very interesting pursuit to identify the involvement of the April 6 Youth Movement in the Cairo riots that led to the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. Unfortunately, we no longer have the chance, but one can firmly believe that three years ago it was the leader of this movement in New York who promised the State Department that he would ‘overthrow the government’ before the 2011 election.” [9]

Although some of the descriptions of the situation in the Middle East may not be fabricated, such as the economic losses and disorder in some regions, between the lines, Beijing is sending a clear message to the Chinese people that the cause of the upheavals is not the authoritarian nature of the regime, but the economy; that the democracy movement is bad because it leads to chaos and economic disaster; and that U.S. exportation of its democratic value system is done only for its own interests. At the same time, the official media runs a propaganda campaign to convince people why a Middle East style revolution will not happen in China.

“In an interview with Hong Kong Cable Television, Hao Tiechuan, the propaganda chief of the Liaison Office of the Chinese government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, said, ‘A Middle East style Jasmine Revolution will not occur in China.’ He added that China’s economic achievements make the people proud and that public support for the government is strong. If someone wishes to foment turmoil, that person is irresponsible. The public will be hurt first.” [10]

“First, the ‘Jasmine Revolution’ in Tunisia and Egypt is also called the ‘Hunger Revolution,’ meaning those countries have a severe poverty problem. ... In terms of the benefit to the people, China is at its peak of prosperity for the first time in 170 years since the Opium War. How can Egypt and other Middle East countries that have weak economies, rampant poverty, high inflation, and unemployment compare (with China)!

“After 30 years of reform and opening-up, China has become the world’s second largest economy, the largest trading country, the largest foreign reserve holder, and the number one U.S. debt holder. China’s success is recognized by the entire world. Although China’s political system still has areas that are less than satisfactory, it suits China’s basic situation and its stage of development. It is improving steadily and suits an ever-opening domestic and overseas environment. China is capable of handling challenges from both inside and outside. It has fully demonstrated its huge advantages in development and competition, creating the ‘beautiful landscape’ of the ‘China Model.’” [11]

After the evacuation of Chinese citizens from Libya, a *Xinhua* article proclaimed that “The effort has proven to be a decisive success. It is China’s largest-scale overseas evacuation since the birth of the new China in 1949. The massive, orderly, and extraordinarily efficient evacuation is widely regarded as a vivid reflection of the Chinese government’s motto of ‘putting people first and running the government in the interests of the people.’” [12]

The Tightening Grip of the Military and the Police

Wenweipo, a Hong Kong newspaper controlled by Beijing, quoted a pro-Beijing businessman on how the Chinese Communist Party traditionally keeps a tight grip on the military. “Mubarak ruled Egypt for 30 years. On the surface it seems that the protesters drove him out, but actually the military’s ‘ultimatum’ forced him to leave. Looking at China, the Chinese Communist Party single-handedly created the People’s Army. The Party established the principle of ‘the Party commands the gun,’ so that the army is loyal to the people and loyal to the Party.” [13]

Since January 2011, the PLA has issued several directives to strengthen the Party’s control over the army:

On January 26, 2011, the General Political Department of the Central Military Commission (CMC) issued a “Notice to Organize the Study of *Chinese Communist Party History, Volume II*,” demanding that Party committees and political organs at all levels of the PLA “regard organizing Party members and cadres to study *Chinese Communist Party History, Volume II*, as an important political task, and combine it with other political studies, including equipping officers and soldiers with a theoretical understanding of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, fostering the core values of contemporary revolutionary soldiers, and strengthening the buildup of Party organizations.” [14]

On February 8, 2011, the CMC circulated a newly revised “Regulations for the Work of Party Committees,” which “fully reflects the Central Military Commission’s new provisions on strengthening the development of Party organizations, promoting the advanced nature of the Party, improving the quality of cadres, disciplining personal conduct, and combating corruption.” [15]

On February 11, 2011, the CMC’s General Political Department sent an instruction to “deepen the political work in military training.” The instruction emphasized a need to “solidly strengthen the Party committees’ leadership over military training; to give full play to the role of Party committees as a gatekeeper to ensure that military training is always on a healthy track in the right direction; to give full play to the role of Party committees as the coordinator, adhering to the principle of the division of

responsibilities among military chiefs under the unified collective leadership of the Party committee; and to strictly implement the training system of the Party committee.” [16]

As reported in early March 2011, the PLA will see its third pay raise in the past six years. The pay raises range from 5% to 40% and will be retroactive to the second half of 2010. Non-commissioned officers will receive a 40% raise, while the average raise for officers will be 1,000 yuan (US\$152). For example, a platoon lieutenant’s pay will increase from 3,500 to 4,500 yuan (US\$685) and a general’s pay will increase from 21,000 to 22,000 yuan (US\$3,348). [17] This is widely believed to be a payment for loyalty, especially after the Middle East incidents.

The Chinese Communist Party has not only exercised iron control over the People’s Liberation Army, but also its police force, especially the People’s Armed Police (PAP), an army half the size of the PLA, which was created not simply for national defense but to crack down on the Chinese people.

On January 5, 2006, the PAP’s commander, Wu Shuangzhan, and Political Commissar Sui Mingtai published an article in *Qinshi Journal*, “Only by building the armed police into a politically reliable and mighty force and by training the officers and soldiers to be loyal guards of the Party and the people can we truly, calmly deal with troubles regardless of where the hostile forces create disturbances; only then can we deliver effective blows no matter how the hostile forces change their means of destruction.” The article explicitly lists “Taiwan Independence,” “Tibetan Independence,” “East Turkestan,” “the Democracy Movement,” and “Falun Gong” as hostile forces to “calmly deal with” and target for “effective blows.” [18] The chief of the Party committee of the PAP is Zhou Yongkang, a Politburo standing committee member and chief of the Ministry of Public Security from 2002 to 2007; he is often considered the Party’s security czar.

In recent years, the PAP, instead of the PLA, has been on the front line in repressing the Chinese people. The Chinese Communist Party is too afraid of strong resistance inside and outside of China should it deploy the PLA for domestic suppression, especially after the killing of students on Tiananmen Square in 1989. Using the PAP is

more justifiable and makes it easier to escape attention from the world's media. On the other hand, the entire size of the Chinese police force, including the PAP, is nearly 2 million, according to a Ministry of Public Security (MPS) report, [19] which is close to the PLA's size of 2.3 million.

On February 10, 2011, the MPS promoted 14 senior police officers to the rank of major general. [20] On February 17, the MPS promulgated the "Norms of Ideological and Political Work for Grassroots Public Security Organs," which includes contents on "how to use the new media to open up new frontlines in ideological and political work and how to do a good ideological and political job during war time." [21]

The Exercise of Social Control

On January 19, 2010, a week after Hosni Mubarak stepped down as President of Egypt, Hu Jintao gave a speech at an opening ceremony of a Central Party School's training session of provincial communist cadres, stressing the topic of social management. In a rare occurrence, the entire Politburo, including the nine standing committee members, plus all the top leaders of the country's provincial-level governments, central government and military organs, as well as the heads of major state-owned enterprises, financial institutions and institutions of higher learning under the administration of the central government, were in attendance.

Hu said that China faces a number of "prominent problems that cause unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable development." He vowed to "strengthen and innovate social management and maximize factors conducive to harmony while minimizing those detrimental to it, so as to solve prominent problems which might harm society's harmony and stability." Hu stressed that the CCP committee and the government develop a structure for social management, in which the public can participate.

Hu proposed eight tasks as the focus of the current work: 1) enhance the CCP's leading role and the government's social management functions; 2) strengthen and improve a mechanism, led by the CCP and the government, for safeguarding the rights and interests of the people; 3) boost and improve management and services for

the migrant population and other special groups by building a national database including basic information on the country's population, and by establishing an improved system that can dynamically track the population; 4) improve the capacity for social services at the grassroots level; 5) strengthen the public security mechanism to ensure food and drug safety, work-related safety, social order, and emergency response capabilities; 6) enhance and improve the management of private economic and private social organizations; 7) increase information network management, work to improve management of the virtual society and provide better guidance for public opinion on the Internet; 8) improve the ideological education on core socialist values. [22]

The second day, Zhou Yongkang, China's top policeman, addressed the same group of officials, further expanding on Hu's speech.

He explained, "It is necessary to 'detect conflicts and problems in time' and 'take forward-looking, active, and effective measures to improve social management.'"

Zhou urged the government to "include all sorts of social organizations in the management system that the CCP and the government lead; conduct risk assessment of social stability prevent and reduce social conflicts at their source; construct a 'great mediation system' to resolve social conflicts; establish an emergency response and administration system to enhance the capability of crisis management; consolidate grassroots resources; and improve information technology for social management." [23]

Zhou also stressed improving the residential identification system and a national population database. "On overseas nongovernmental organizations' activities in China, (we) should set up a joint management mechanism to protect 'proper' exchanges and cooperation and strengthen regulation by law. On Internet management, (we) should form a comprehensive management structure featuring Party committees' leadership, government's strict management, enterprises' lawful operation, the Internet industry's self-regulation and joint supervision by the public, so as to boost the healthy development of the Internet. On resolving social conflicts, (we) should improve the

mechanism, led by the Party and government, to safeguard people's rights and interests, and efforts to nip conflicts in the bud.”

Days later, on February 25, 2011, at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee for Comprehensive Management of Public Security, Zhou again called for measures to sustain public order and stability by enhancing social management and “firmly” preventing accidents and incidents that might harm the normal social order. [24]

Over the past decade, Beijing has faced serious challenges of social unrest, which even official publications have disclosed in their statistics. The 2005 China's Social Blue Book published by the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) revealed that the number of incidents of large scale social unrest between 1993 and 2003 grew from 10,000 to 60,000 a year; the population involved grew from 730,000 to 3.07 million. Starting in 2006, the Social Blue Book stopped publishing statistics on social unrest. An official media quoted an estimate given by a Chinese Academy of Science researcher, who said that the 2007 figure was high as 80,000 a year, almost one large scale incident of social unrest every 6 minutes. [25] Another source, as revealed by a Chinese Academy of Governance (国家行政学院) scholar, told *Oriental Outlook Weekly*, a *Xinhua* publication, that the number of incidents of social unrest doubled from 2006 to 2010. Shanghai Jiao Tong University recently released its annual report on social unrest in China. The report, titled “Annual Report on China's Crisis Management,” stated that there were 72 major incidents of social unrest in 2010 that had a widespread and long lasting effect, that is, one such occurrence every five days. [26]

“From last year's data, from January to November of 2010, the national public security organs, in total, filed 5.34 million criminal cases, a 7.5% increase over the previous year; prosecutory organs filed 32,039 malfeasance cases for investigation, a 3.1% increase over the previous year; the courts accepted 9.75 million cases of all types, and social unrest is still running high,” said Chen Jiping, Deputy Director of the Central Committee for Comprehensive Management of Public Security, Deputy Secretary-General of the Committee of Political and Legislative Affairs under the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, and Director of the Central Office of Comprehensive Management of Public Security, in a special interview with

the *Outlook Weekly*. He concluded, “Therefore, advancing the three key tasks (resolving social conflicts, innovating social management, and fair and honest law enforcement), punishing crimes, and safeguarding public order and social stability are not only the focus of comprehensive management this year, but are also a very arduous task during the period of ‘the Twelfth Five-Year Period.’” [27] [28]

On February 15, the Supreme Court held a news conference to announce “A Number of Opinions on Further Strengthening the Grassroots Infrastructure of the People’s Court under the New Situation,” calling for expansion of supervision and guidance on the work at the grassroots level, improving the mechanism for discovering, reporting, analyzing, and solving a problem, and establishing a mechanism for the risk assessment of major sensitive cases. One of the justices on the Supreme Court told reporters that major sensitive cases include those closely related to social stability. [29]

Almost at the same time, authorities at provincial and lower levels started to implement practices to improve “social management and services.” The following are examples given by a *Xinhua* article on February 18, 2011, “Usage of grid management across the country to improve social management and services.” [30]

“There will be one informant in every residential building, 10,000 special security and stability agents, and 300,000 Party members and civil servants participating in community service management. ... Beijing’s Dongcheng District established a three-tier platform, integrating comprehensively the social services management command center, the neighborhood social services management command sub-center, and the community social services management integrated workstation. Grid management helps immediate discovery of key positions and public demand so as to resolve conflicts within the grid.”

“Chuxiong City in Yunnan Province is strengthening the development of Party organizations and neighborhood service management institutions through the implementation of grid management. It has set up a Party branch in the neighborhoods management services and every residential building has a ‘person-in-charge,’ so there is always someone able to take control.”

“Yichang City in Hubei Province divides the downtown area into 1,290 grids. By integrating grassroots management forces, it set up a corps of “grid administrators” to perform six basic tasks including information collection, comprehensive management, labor and social security, civil service, birth control, and urban management.”

“The Hongmenjie neighborhood in the Wuhou District of Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, divides the streets and 4,000 plus houses into eight management grids, sending community agents to do comprehensive management in each grid. The agent is responsible for contacting guards in each neighborhood compound, the residential building ‘person-in-charge,’ and the resident volunteers who are collecting information, mediating conflicts, and offering comprehensive services.”

“The Xihu neighborhood in the Qilihe District of Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, has a ‘people’s defense network’ composed of 208 community agents to do comprehensive management, 18 mobile population management coordinators, 20 bicycle patrols, and a corps of 1,678 ‘troops,’ from residential property security guards and policemen. After putting ‘two policemen in one neighborhood and two management agents for each policeman in place, the government also formed a volunteer security force of 1,530 citizens from Party and Chinese Youth League members, youth volunteers, and retired officials.”

Internet Censorship and Arrests

On February 19, 2011, an anonymous message about a “Jasmine Revolution” appeared on the U.S. based Chinese language website Boxun.com, calling for people in China to gather in 13 cities on February 20, 2011, at 2 pm. The call came on the same day that President Hu Jintao gave a speech to top Party officials, asking them to “solve prominent problems which might harm the harmony and stability of society.” Hu told the Party officials to improve management of information on the Internet in order “to guide public opinion.”

The authorities moved to stamp out the spread of the message by cutting off Internet connections, key word filtering, and closing down instant message services. Dozens of

rights activists were rounded up and either taken for a “tour” or a “chat over tea.” No proper police documents were ever presented.

A. The Internet

In the afternoon on February 21, 2011, a large number of Internet connections experienced downtime in Shanghai, Beijing, Chongqing, and in the provinces of Henan, Hunan, Shanxi, and Zhejiang, possibly due to DNS server irregularity. Although some have since been restored, a number of broadband users in Shanghai have been without an Internet connection since the morning of February 22. Analysts suggested this may have been a result of the authorities conducting another round of Internet blockades. It led to massive paralysis of Internet connections. [31]

On the Internet, searches for “China’s Jasmine revolution” (中国茉莉花革命) on Baidu, China’s largest search engine, were met with an error message saying, “Search results may not comply with the law and regulations, and thus are not shown.” [32]

Filtering also applied to the names of the locations where the gatherings were to take place, such as McDonalds (麦当劳), Wangfujing (王府井, a department store in Beijing), People’s Square (人民广场, a public square in Shanghai) and Chinese Jasmine (中国茉莉花). The popular Chinese social networking site Renren.com restricted the use of “today” and “tomorrow,” to which netizens commented that China is a country that has no today or tomorrow, only yesterday. [33] Sina.com has filtered the Chinese name of U.S. Ambassador to Beijing Jon Huntsman (洪博培) because he was sighted at the gathering in front of the McDonalds in downtown Beijing on February 20, 2011. [34]

Apparently different controls apply, depending on the sensitivity of the words. Some words simply cannot be sent out. Other words can be sent out, but nobody except the sender can see the message. In other instances, the subscribers or members can see the message, but an online search is met with an error message, i.e. the public is blocked. [35]

Online chat rooms QQ have not been spared either. [Tencent QQ, generally referred to as QQ, is the most popular free instant messaging computer program in Mainland China] In addition to auto key word filtering, state agents join chat rooms and monitor the chat. As a result, between February 19 and 22, a number of QQ chat rooms were shut down because the discussions were considered anti-government. Some have been re-opened since February 22 but remain susceptible to shutdown at any moment. The number of participants in these QQ chat rooms ranged from 100 to 500. [36]

Besides Tencent QQ, the gateways of portals, forums, and communities that carried the word “Jasmine” and related content were invariably shutdown. China Mobile and China Unicom blocked the word in SMS on cell phones. [37]

B. Arrests

Before and after February 20, the authorities launched a massive campaign to round up those it viewed as a threat to its power.

Four people have been charged with “inciting subversion of State power” or “subversion of State power” for using the Internet to express their views: Chen Wei (陈卫) and Ran Yunfei (冉云飞) in Sichuan Province, Hua Chunhui (华春辉) in Jiangsu Province, and Liang Haiyi (梁海怡) in Hailongjiang Province. According to Article 105 of the Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China, if convicted, the guilty party may be sentenced to life imprisonment. Under Article 106, “whoever commits a crime as prescribed in Article 103, 104, or 105 of this Chapter in collusion with any organ, organization, or individual outside the territory of China shall be given a heavier punishment according to the provisions stipulated in these Articles respectively.” [38]

According to the Hong Kong-based group Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, more than 100 activists in cities across China were taken away by the police, confined to their homes, or were “disappeared.” Families and friends reported the detention or harassment of several dissidents, and some activists said they were warned not to participate on February 20, 2011.

In some instances, police took the activists on an “excursion.” In others, state agents “invited” them to “have tea with friends.” For activities like this, police are apparently not required to produce authorization documents. Families were not notified even after 24 hours had passed.

On February 16, 2011, in Beijing, rights attorney Tang Jitian (唐吉田) was arrested at home. On February 19, attorney Jiang Tianyong (江天勇) was beaten and later arrested, and attorney Teng Bao (滕彪) was arrested at home. [39]

In Guangzhou, at noon on February 20, 2011, attorney Liu Shihui (刘士辉) was beaten so severely that his legs were broken; he was disappeared on February 24. Police took attorney Tang Jiling (唐荆陵) and freelance writer Ye Do (野渡) from their homes on February 22 for an “excursion.” On February 25, police brought in another attorney, Wu Zhengqi (吴镇琦), for interrogation. State agents took rights activist Chen Qitang (陈启棠), who was released on February 5, after serving two and half years in prison, into custody. [40]

Footnotes:

[1] *People's Daily*, “People’s Daily Commentator: A Legal Foundation that Keeps the Natural Color,” February 21, 2011.

<http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/13963415.html>.

See also: <http://chinascope.org/main/content/view/3343/81/>

[2] *China News Service*, “Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Understand and Support the Egyptian Government’s Efforts on Maintaining Social Stability,” February 20, 2011.

<http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2011/02-10/2834006.shtml>.

[3] *Legal Weekly*, “Boiling Popular Grievances Swept the Autocratic President and the Corrupt Families,” January 18, 2011.

<http://www.legalweekly.cn/content.jsp?id=165612&lm=%E5%9B%BD%E9%99%85%E8%A7%86%E9%87%8E>. (*Legal Weekly* is a weekly newspaper under *Legal Daily*, the mouthpiece of the CCP’s Committee of Political and Legislative Affairs)

[4] *China Review News*, “Commentary: Why Is the U.S. Troubled When Facing the Egypt Storm,” February 12, 2011.

<http://gb.chinareviewnews.com/doc/1015/9/4/6/101594652.html?coluid=9&kindid=6870&docid=101594652&mdate=0212154905>.

[5] *Xinhua* TV, "News on the Hour (Evening Edition) on January 31, 2011," January 31, 2011.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/video/2011-01/31/c_121045700.htm.

[6] *Xinhua*, "Looking around the World: Seeking Peace and Stability," February 27, 2011.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2011-02/27/c_121127221.htm.

[7] *Oriental Morning Post*, "How Long Can Tunisia's 'Jasmine Flower' Remain Fragrant," January 17, 2011.

<http://www.dfdaily.com/html/63/2011/1/17/559768.shtml>. (Oriental Morning Post is a Shanghai based newspaper)

[8] *Beijing Daily*, "Who Messed up the Arab World," February 18, 2011.

http://www.bjd.com.cn/10qrt/201102/t20110218_661744.html.

See also: <http://chinascope.org/main/content/view/3345/81/>

[9] *Xinhua*, "Middle East Chaos with the Looming U.S. Strategic 'Black Hand,'" February 23, 2011.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/2011-02/23/c_121115542.htm.

[10] *BBC Chinese*, "Analysis: China's 'Jasmine Revolution' and 'Time Bomb,'" February 21, 2011.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/zhongwen/simp/indepth/2011/02/110221_comment_china_jasmine.shtml.

[11] *Wenweipo*, "Commentary: 'Middle East Wave' Is Impossible to Replay in China," February 21, 2011.

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