

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Hearing on “Is America’s Overseas Broadcasting Undermining our National Interest and the Fight Against Tyrannical Regimes?”
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Television Broadcast to China: Challenges and Hope

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Chairman Rohrabacher, Ranking Member Carnahan, and members of this Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to join you this afternoon. First, I would like to speak about the general landscape of the Chinese-language media today, and the responsibility of free Chinese-language media.

Chinese-language Media Market and Responsibility of Free Media

Since the mid-1980s, when waves of immigrants came abroad from China, Beijing had been concerned about the communication between the overseas Chinese and those on the Mainland. Surveys have shown that Chinese living outside of China still rely heavily on Chinese-language media as their information sources. As a result people have seen over the past two decades the aggressive efforts made by the Chinese government to expand the global presence of its own media and control the existing overseas Chinese media.

For example, CCTV-4 is the overseas version of China’s state-run television CCTV. At present, just CCTV-4 alone is on 26 satellites around the world, 8 of them are over North America including the DirecTV and Dish Network satellites.

In the U.S., CCTV channels are carried by all major cable and direct-to-home satellite TV systems, in both Chinese and English languages. The Great Wall TV package consisting of more than 20 channels from China was directly approved by China’s State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, according to its website, and is on both Dish Network and KylinTV in the U.S.

About half a year ago, China’s state-run China Radio International began its first 24/7 mandarin broadcast in the U.S. by leasing KSFN AM-1510 in San Francisco through an indirect investment.

In the meantime, using a vigorous campaign over the past two decades to infiltrate and influence third-party Chinese media through commercial pressure and business lure, and at the same time suppress independent voices in the Chinese community, the Chinese communist government has by and large successfully controlled the overseas Chinese-language media market and manipulated the public opinion among the overseas Chinese population.

In the U.S., all major national and local Chinese-language newspapers, radios, and televisions except a few are either totally controlled or heavily influenced by the Chinese government.

But, Beijing's propaganda machine would rarely pass up a chance to rouse Chinese nationalism, sometimes mixed with anti-American sentiments. Just months ago, the Chinese media under Beijing's influence have successfully convinced many Chinese Americans that the ongoing inflation in China was caused by some plots of the U.S. government, including the QE2 (Federal Reserve's Quantitative Easing 2), to transfer the U.S. problems to China.

The Chinese-language media market has become very unique in the sense that one can hardly hear a different voice especially on those sensitive issues most challenging to the Chinese government. A free media in Chinese-language should take up the social responsibility to be an alternative voice for the Chinese audience.

However, sometimes when I read reports on those challenging issues by some U.S. government funded media, the reports repeated in great length the rhetoric of the Chinese government officials. I doubt people in China take great risks to break through the censorship to read or watch those reports just to find out what the Chinese government's position is. The damage this kind of reporting may cause to the Chinese audience could be much greater than that of the communist government's own media, since the Chinese audience had hope and trust in such supposedly alternative voice.

Challenges Facing Independent Chinese Media

Next I will use New Tang Dynasty (NTD) Television as an example to speak about the challenges facing independent Chinese-language media today.

NTD was established in 2001 after 9/11 by a group of Chinese American media professionals, Wall Street investors, and people in academia. At the time, they were disappointed at how Chinese-language media reported on the terrorists' attack and the anti-America sentiment in the Mainland Chinese community. They realized the importance of having an American media broadcasting in Chinese-language that reflects American values and journalistic standards, and hence NTD came into being.

Over the past nine years, with the grass-roots support from worldwide Chinese communities, NTD as a non-profit media has grown to become a global television network with reporters in over 50 cities around the world today, and broadcasts globally via satellite, cable, and the Internet. Just over the Internet alone, more than one million Mainlanders visit NTD website every month using Internet anti-censorship software such as FreeGate and UltraSurf.

However, NTD's development has necessarily become a threat to Beijing's heavy-handed grip on media. Thus, over the years, the Chinese communist government has

launched an aggressive and relentless campaign to silence NTD using political and business pressures.

For example, in April 2009, when cable carrier RCN launched NTD on its platform, the senior VP of RCN received an unexpected hour-long phone call from the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., demanding RCN to stop carrying NTD. Fortunately, RCN rejected the demand.

However, insiders have revealed that CCTV has made some major U.S. cable and satellite TV companies accept its lucrative business deals, in exchange with the condition that these companies need to get CCTV's approval to add any additional Chinese-language channel to their broadcast platforms. Its target is NTD. As a result NTD has suffered discrimination by and been excluded from many broadcast platforms.

CCTV also provides news and other programming content to all other U.S.-based local Chinese-language televisions for free, under the condition that they cannot broadcast the programming of NTD.

Commercial pressure and business lure have been among the most effective tools (if not the most effective tool) used by the Chinese communist government to influence, and in some cases control, the political and the business communities, including the Chinese-language media, around the world. But the U.S. government is proven to be the one who can dissolve such challenges.

In May 2004, in partnership with Eutelsat - a Paris-based satellite company – NTD launched the very first 24/7 uncensored Chinese-language satellite television broadcast into China, reaching millions of private satellite television dishes across the country.

Within a year, Eutelsat was under Beijing's business pressure and intended to drop NTD. Then BBG and the U.S. Congress supported Eutelsat to resist Beijing's pressure and brought VOA television service to the same satellite used by NTD – Eutelsat's W5, which comprised a protection umbrella for this open satellite window to China. So Eutelsat continued to carry NTD and some other NGO broadcasters for 3 more years. However, it was unfortunate that in 2008, for some reasons, BBG moved VOA from Eutelsat's W5 to a Chinese government controlled satellite AsiaSat-3S. Then Eutelsat shut down the open satellite window two months before the Beijing Olympics. We believe VOA's broadcast still plays a role and has its audience. But for people in China who are willing to take great risks, sometimes may even risk their lives, to install large dishes to watch censored satellite broadcast, what VOA has offered is far from enough.

Conclusion

In the 21st century today, the Internet and satellite TV have become the two most important high technologies to tear down the Censorship Wall of the closed societies like China. According to official surveys, there are hundreds of millions of Internet users, as well as satellite TV viewers, in China. The user bases of different technologies in China

seem vastly different. It would be important that we keep the door open for not only the Internet users, but also the satellite TV viewers in China to have free access to uncensored information. Nonetheless, in any case, the contents the U.S. government-funded media provide should serve the needs of Chinese audience for an alternative voice, not as an echo of the Chinese government.

The past experience has shown that, without the support of the U.S. government, no satellite companies in the world can resist the threat and lucrative business deals of China's communist government to allow an uncensored TV channel to broadcast to China on their satellites.

In 2005, it was of critical importance that BBG supported Eutelsat to resist Beijing's pressure so that it made history by saving the only open satellite window to China at the time. This proves that BBG's Chinese-language service would be able to play another critical role consistent with the U.S. national interests and commitment to freedom. It can create a protection umbrella on the satellites it uses for China so that it allows other US-based independent Chinese-language broadcasters to lease channels on the same satellite to broadcast to the same target audience. This by far appears to be the only hope to create a protected platform for all independent Chinese-language broadcasters to reach the vast satellite TV audience in China.

Thank you.

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee require the disclosure of the following information. A copy of this form should be attached to your written testimony and will be made publicly available in electronic format, per House Rules.

1. Name: Shiyu Zhou (English name: Samuel Zhou)	2. Organization or organizations you are representing: New Tang Dynasty Television
3. Date of Committee hearing: March 30, 2011	
4. Have <u>you</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	5. Have any of the <u>organizations you are representing</u> received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
6. If you answered yes to either item 4 or 5, please list the source and amount of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant was you or the organization(s) you are representing. You may list additional grants or contracts on additional sheets. 	
7. Signature: 	

Please attach a copy of this form to your written testimony.