

Public Abstract

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Title:GOVERNMENT CONTROLS OF AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS IN CHINA

China is currently experiencing an unprecedented transition. Its economy is growing, its interaction with the world is increasing and many believe it will soon challenge the U.S. for superpower status.

The foreign media play an important role in communicating China to the rest of the world - a role that grows more crucial along with China's status. However, China continues to be ruled by a totalitarian communist party that often seeks to squelch challenges - real or perceived - to its power. Controls that the Chinese government places on foreign reporters not only reveal the Communist Party's attempts to influence what the world knows about China, but also may have some influence on the news.

However, there have been no sufficient explorations of the controls the Chinese government uses today.

This study sought to examine the controls in an effort to help show the current working environment and press freedom status for American reporters in China. Several American reporters in China were interviewed in-depth to gain a picture of their experiences and the challenges they face in relation to government controls.

The study found that while in many ways freedoms for foreign correspondents have recently increased in China, the government also continues to use many controls that complicate the work of journalists and may have a negative impact on news. These controls also reveal a desire by the government to shape its image around the world, but also show that the Chinese authorities may be partly shifting toward more subtle control methods.

The study finds that the current press freedom status in China is mixed and that the signs of positive reform may present an opportunity for further expansion of freedom.