

DOCUMENT NUMBER NINE

中文: 关于当前意识形态领域情况的通报

Pinyin: guānyú dāngqián yìshì xíngtài lǐngyù qíngkuàng de tōngbào

English: Briefing on the Current Situation in the Ideological Field

or Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere

Author: CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping

Estimated Range of Dating: July 2012

The Briefing on the Current Situation in the Ideological Field, also known as Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere, or Document Number Nine (or Document No. 9), is a confidential internal document widely circulated within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 2013 by the General Office of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party).

The document was first circulated in July 2012. The document warns of seven dangerous Western values, allegedly including media freedom and judicial independence. Teaching on any of the seven topics is forbidden. There is an emphasis on controlling and preventing communication using the internet of ideas subversive to one party rule. The document was issued in the context of planned economic reforms and increased calls for political reform. It has been described as a critique of the "liberal ways of thinking".

The document was not made available to public by the Communist Party or any branches of the Chinese government, but in July 2013 was allegedly leaked by Chinese dissident journalist Gao Yu, who was in turn sentenced to a seven-year imprisonment for "leaking state secrets".

It is thought that Document No. 9 was issued by the General Office of the Central Committee, and would have required the approval of CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping and other top leaders. This document is official Chinese policy and therefore most likely written by Xi Jinping himself.

Name

The document has been described as a communiqué or circular. The name of the document (*Document Number Nine*), as it came to be commonly referred in Western English-language press, comes from the fact that it was the ninth such document issued that year in China.

Contents

The document reveals the same attitude that we find in Dictator Putin and Aleksandr Dugin as well as in utterings of authorities of Islam. It is highly critical of what can be broadly described as "Western values" (the document itself uses terms such as "Western values", "Western principles", "Western standards", "Western ideas", and more precisely, "Western constitutional democracy" and "Western-style theories of governance", as well as making references to "Western anti-China forces"). The document is critical of "extremely malicious" ideals spreading in the Chinese society, such as ideas of (Western) constitutional democracy, civil society, universal values (freedom, democracy, and human rights), neo-liberalism, and freedom of the press (described as the "Western news values"). The document warns that such subjects undermine the CCP's control over Chinese society. The document also promotes ways of dealing with these problems, which include "Unwavering adherence to the principle of the Party's control of media."

Prelude

The prelude to this document references a previous article of 2012 and raises six challenges faced by China in asserting control over its ideology, while also identifying various routes by which Western hostile forces might subvert Chinese ideology.

DOCUMENT NUMBER NINE

1. The cultural penetration of Western hostile forces threatens the security of our ideology. There are three main ways of cultural penetration:
 - The first is direct cultural propaganda, that is, the use of modern media for long-term ideological penetration.
 - The second is to use cultural commodities as a carrier to infiltrate the various values of the West into the public. (*Cultural commodities refers to movies, novels, commercial goods, and other commodities which might be subverted by Western hostile forces.*)
 - The third is to infiltrate Western values into social elites such as high-level scholars and intellectuals under the cover of educational and academic exchanges.
2. Various social thoughts aim to hinder or subvert the authoritative identification of China's mainstream ideology.
3. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe have undermined belief in China's mainstream ideology.
4. The theme of development and the goal of modernization have played down the opposition between ideologies. (i.e. opposition between the Western system of liberal democracy and the Chinese system of "socialism with Chinese characteristics", which by implication are irrevocably opposed.)
5. Diverse value orientations have a negative impact on China's mainstream ideology.
6. Information networking poses a challenge to the control of our ideology.

The Seven Noteworthy Problems

The document specifically addresses the following issues that were seen as problems. These are the terms used in the document itself:

1. Promoting Western Constitutional Democracy: An attempt to undermine the current leadership and the "socialism with Chinese characteristics" system of governance. (Including *the separation of powers, the multi-party system, general elections, and independent judiciaries.*)
2. Promoting "universal values" in an attempt to weaken the theoretical foundations of the Party's leadership. (That "*the West's values are the prevailing norm for all human civilization*", that "*only when China accepts Western values will it have a future*".)
3. Promoting civil society in an attempt to dismantle the ruling party's social foundation. (i.e. that *individual rights are paramount and ought to be immune to obstruction by the state.*)
4. Promoting Neoliberalism, attempting to change China's Basic Economic System. (i.e. *unrestrained economic liberalization, complete privatization, and total marketization.*)
5. Promoting the West's idea of journalism, challenging China's principle that the media and publishing system should be subject to Party discipline.
6. Promoting historical nihilism, trying to undermine the history of the CPC and of New China. (For example *to deny the scientific and guiding value of Mao Zedong thought.*)
7. Questioning Reform and Opening and the socialist nature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. (For example, saying "*We have deviated from our Socialist orientation.*")

Leak

The contents of the memo became known when accounts of presenting it to cadre in the Liaoyuan municipal government were published in the local paper. In May 2013 cadre at the Chongqing Party Committee for Urban and Rural Construction studied the material, as did

cadre in Anyang. However, there were no explicit mentions of the seven Western values above.

In April 2015, the *Wall Street Journal's* Josh Chin reported a 71-year-old Chinese journalist was convicted for releasing Document 9. Journalist Gao Yu was sentenced to seven years in prison by Beijing's Third Intermediate People's Court after being found guilty in a closed trial of leaking state secrets to foreign media. Ms Gao was accused by the court of leaking an internal Communist Party directive to an overseas Chinese news site in 2013, according to her lawyer, Mo Shaoping. Historically, it is rare for Chinese authorities to detain or jail elderly critics, who were traditionally given quiet warnings when they crossed political red lines. The article suggests that the charge is a pretext for aggressive action against political dissent and cites other examples of elderly publishers and journalists being prosecuted.

Analysis

According to news analysis by a reporter at *The New York Times*, the emphasis on political discipline is intended to forestall leftist, or Maoist, opposition to needed economic reforms avoiding the split which resulted in the Soviet Union during Gorbachev's reform efforts when media freedom resulted in publishing of a great deal of critical historical material and alienation of the mass of party workers.

Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere A Notice from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China's (CCP) General Office

Provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Party committee, Central ministries and state organs, Party ministries, People's Liberation Army headquarters, major Party committees, and Party leadership groups of civilian organizations: This notice "A Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere" has been approved by the central leadership, and is herewith distributed to you. Please thoroughly implement its suggestions.

April 22, 2013

(This document has been sent to local divisional levels)

CCP Introduction

Since the Party's Eighteenth National Congress, under General Secretary Xi Jinping's strong central leadership, the nation triumphantly convened the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the Party's and nation's various undertakings have made a good start, and the general mood of the Party and Government has been constantly improving. Cohesion among our nation's people has become stronger and our confidence in our path, our theory, and our system has become more resolute. Mainstream ideology is becoming healthier and more vigorous. The spirit of the Party's Eighteenth National Congress and General Secretary Xi Jinping's series of important speeches have unified the thought of the entire Party, the entire country, and the entire people enormously. The ideological foundation of our united struggle is unceasingly solidifying.

The new session of the central leadership group has: put forth a series of new principles for conduct in political administration, furnished an interpretation of the Chinese dream of the

great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, improved our work-style, maintained close ties with the masses, rigorously enforced diligence and thrift, opposed extravagance and waste, increased vigor in the fight against corruption, and won the widespread endorsement of cadres and the masses. We persist in upholding scientific development as the main theme, accelerating economic transformation as the main thread, and increasing the quality and efficiency of the economy as the core. The outlook for our nation's economic development continues to be favorable, and the people's faith in China's economic prospects has risen. In an effort to improve the people's livelihood, we are putting forth new measures to benefit the people so they may look forward to a better future: disseminating thought on the cultural front as the most important political task; studying, implementing, and advancing the spirit of the Eighteenth Party Congress; rapidly arousing mass fervor, proclaiming that socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Chinese dream are the main theme of our age; expanding and strengthening positive propaganda; strengthening guidance on deep-seated problems; strengthening the management of ideological fronts; promoting unification of thought; concentrating our strength and implementing the development of a positive atmosphere and providing spiritual strength to the party and nation.

Noteworthy Problems Related to the Current State of the Ideological Sphere

While fully approving of the ideological mainstream, we must also clearly see the ideological situation as a complicated, intense struggle. Currently, the following false ideological trends, positions, and activities all deserve note:

1. Promoting Western Constitutional Democracy: An attempt to undermine the current leadership and the socialism with Chinese characteristics system of governance.

Western Constitutional Democracy has distinct political properties and aims. Among these are the separation of powers, the multi-party system, general elections, independent judiciaries, nationalized armies, and other characteristics. These are the capitalist class' concepts of a nation, political model, and system design. The concept of constitutional democracy originated a long time ago, and recently the idea has been hyped ever more frequently.

This is mainly expressed the following ways: In commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the enactment of the [Chinese] Constitution, [some people] hold up the banners of "defending the constitution" and "rule of law." They attack the Party's leaders for placing themselves above the constitution, saying China "has a constitution but no constitutional government." Some people still use the phrase "constitutional dream" to distort the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, saying things like "constitutional democracy is the only way out" and "China should catch up with the rest of the world's trend toward constitutional governance." The point of publicly proclaiming Western constitutional democracy's key points is to oppose the party's leadership and implementation of its constitution and laws. Their goal is to use Western constitutional democracy to undermine the Party's leadership, abolish the People's Democracy, negate our country's constitution as well as our established system and principles, and bring about a change of allegiance by bringing Western political systems to China.

2. Promoting "universal values" in an attempt to weaken the theoretical foundations of the Party's leadership.

The goal of espousing "universal values" is to claim that the West's value system defies time and space, transcends nation and class, and applies to all humanity.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways: [The people who espouse universal values] believe Western freedom, democracy, and human rights are universal and eternal. This is

evident in their distortion of the Party's own promotion of democracy, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, and other such values; their claim that the CCP's acceptance of universal values is a victory for universal values," that "the West's values are the prevailing norm for all human civilization," that "only when China accepts Western values will it have a future," and that "Reform and Opening is just a process of gradually accepting universal rights."

Given Western nations' long-term dominance in the realms of economics, military affairs, science, and technology, these arguments can be confusing and deceptive. The goal [of such slogans] is to obscure the essential differences between the West's value system and the value system we advocate, ultimately using the West's value systems to supplant the core values of Socialism.

3. Promoting civil society in an attempt to dismantle the ruling party's social foundation.

Civil society is a socio-political theory that originated in the West. It holds that in the social sphere, individual rights are paramount and ought to be immune to obstruction by the state. For the past few years, the idea of civil society has been adopted by Western anti-China forces and used as a political tool. Additionally, some people with ulterior motives within China have begun to promote these ideas.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Promoting civil society and Western-style theories of governance, they claim that building a civil society in China is a precondition for the protection of individual rights and forms the basis for the realization of constitutional democracy. Viewing civil society as a magic bullet for advancing social management at the local level, they have launched all kinds of so-called citizen's movements.

Advocates of civil society want to squeeze the Party out of leadership of the masses at the local level, even setting the Party against the masses, to the point that their advocacy is becoming a serious form of political opposition.

4. Promoting Neoliberalism, attempting to change China's Basic Economic System.

Neoliberalism advocates unrestrained economic liberalization, complete privatization, and total marketization and it opposes any kind of interference or regulation by the state. Western countries, led by the United States, carry out their Neoliberal agendas under the guise of "globalization," visiting catastrophic consequences upon Latin America, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe, and have also dragged themselves into the international financial crisis from they have yet to recover.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

[Neoliberalism's advocates] actively promote the "market omnipotence theory." They claim our country's macroeconomic control is strangling the market's efficiency and vitality and they oppose public ownership, arguing that China's state-owned enterprises are "national monopolies," inefficient, and disruptive of the market economy, and should undergo "comprehensive privatization." These arguments aim to change our country's basic economic infrastructure and weaken the government's control of the national economy.

5. Promoting the West's idea of journalism, challenging China's principle that the media and publishing system should be subject to Party discipline.

Some people, under the pretext of espousing "freedom of the press," promote the West's idea of journalism and undermine our country's principle that the media should be infused with the spirit of the Party.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Defining the media as "society's public instrument" and as the "Fourth Estate;" attacking the Marxist view of news and promote the "free flow of information on the Internet;" slandering

our country's efforts to improve Internet management by calling them a crackdown on the Internet; claiming that the media is not governed by the rule of law but by the arbitrary will of the leadership; and calling for China to promulgate a Media Law based on Western principles. [Some people] also claim that China restricts freedom of the press and bang on about abolishing propaganda departments. The ultimate goal of advocating the West's view of the media is to hawk the principle of abstract and absolute freedom of press, oppose the Party's leadership in the media, and gouge an opening through which to infiltrate our ideology.

6. Promoting historical nihilism, trying to undermine the history of the CCP and of New China.

The goal of historical nihilism, in the guise of "reassessing history," is to distort Party history and the history of New China.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Rejecting the revolution; claiming that the revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party resulted only in destruction; denying the historical inevitability in China's choice of the Socialist road, calling it the wrong path, and the Party's and new China's history a "continuous series of mistakes"; rejecting the accepted conclusions on historical events and figures, disparaging our Revolutionary precursors, and vilifying the Party's leaders. Recently, some people took advantage of Comrade Mao Zedong's 120th birthday in order to deny the scientific and guiding value of Mao Zedong thought. Some people try to cleave apart the period that preceded Reform and Opening from the period that followed, or even to set these two periods in opposition to one another. By rejecting CCP history and the history of New China, historical nihilism seeks to fundamentally undermine the CCP's historical purpose, which is tantamount to denying the legitimacy of the CCP's long-term political dominance.

7. Questioning Reform and Opening and the socialist nature of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

For the past several years, the discussion of reform has been unceasing, with all kinds of voices joining one after another. Some views clearly deviate from socialism with Chinese characteristics.

This is mainly expressed in the following ways:

Some blame the contradictions and problems of development on Reform and Opening. They say "Reform and opening up has gone too far" and that "we have deviated from our Socialist orientation." They question whether or not what China is doing now still truly is Socialism, or they just call it "Capitalist Socialism," "State Capitalism," or "New Bureaucratic Capitalism." Others say "reform is still distant and hasn't be realized" or that "reform of the political system lags behind and obstructs reform of the economy." They bang on about how we should use Western standards to achieve so-called "thorough reform." Essentially, they oppose the general and specific policies emanating from the road taken at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Congress and they oppose socialism with Chinese characteristics.

These mistaken views and ideas exist in great numbers in overseas media and reactionary publications. They penetrate China through the Internet and underground channels and they are disseminated on domestic Internet forums, blogs, and microblogs. They also appear in public lectures, seminars, university classrooms, class discussion forums, civilian study groups, and individual publications. If we allow any of these ideas to spread, they will disturb people's existing consensus on important issues like which flag to raise, which road to take, which goals to pursue, etc., and this will disrupt our nation's stable progress on reform and development.

Western anti-China forces and internal “dissidents” are still actively trying to infiltrate China’s ideological sphere and challenge our mainstream ideology. Some of their latest major efforts include: Some people have disseminated open letters and declarations and have organized petition-signings to vocalize requests for political reforms, improvement of human rights, release of “political prisoners,” “reversing the verdict on ‘6/4’[the Tiananmen Massacre],” and other such political demands; they have made a fuss over asset disclosure by officials, fighting corruption with the Internet, media supervision of government, and other sensitive hot-button issues, all of which stoke dissatisfaction with the Party and government. Western embassies, consulates, media operations, and NGOs operating inside China under various covers are spreading Western ideas and values and are cultivating so-called “anti-government forces.” Cooking up anti-government publications overseas. Within China’s borders, some private organizations are creating reactionary underground publications, and still others are filming documentaries on sensitive subject matter, disseminating political rumors, and defaming the party and the national leadership. Those manipulating and hyping the Tibetan self-immolations, manufacturing the violent terrorist attacks in Xinjiang, and using the ethnic and religious issues to divide and break up [the nation]. Accelerating infiltration of the Internet and illegal gatherings within our borders. “Dissidents” and people identified with “rights protection” are active. Some of them are working together with Western anti-China forces, echoing each other and relying on each other’s support. This clearly indicates that the contest between infiltration and anti-infiltration efforts in the ideological sphere is as severe as ever, and so long as we persist in CCP leadership and socialism with Chinese characteristics, the position of Western anti-China forces to pressure for urgent reform won’t change, and they’ll continue to point the spearhead of Westernizing, splitting, and “Color Revolutions” at China. In the face of these threats, we must not let down our guard or decrease our vigilance.

Pay Close Attention to Work in the Ideological Sphere.

Historical experience has proven that failures in the economic sphere can result in major disorder, and failure in the ideological sphere can result in major disorders as well. Confronting the very real threat of Western anti-China forces and their attempt at carrying out Westernization, splitting, and “Color Revolutions,” and facing the severe challenge of today’s ideological sphere, all levels of Party and Government, especially key leaders, must pay close attention to their work in the ideological sphere and firmly seize their leadership authority and dominance.

1. Strengthen leadership in the ideological sphere.

Party members and governments of all levels must become fully aware that struggles in the ideological sphere are perpetual, complex, and excruciating; you must strengthen awareness of the current political situation, big picture, responsibility, and risks. Leaders at all levels of government, you must strengthen your sense of responsibility—make work in the ideological sphere a high priority in your daily agenda, routinely analyze and study new developments in the ideological sphere, react swiftly and effectively, and preemptively resolve all problems in the ideological sphere.

2. Guide our party member and leaders to distinguish between true and false theories.

Forcefully resist influential and harmful false tides of thoughts, help people distinguish between truth and falsehood, and solidify their understanding. Party members, especially high-level leaders, must become adept at tackling problems from political, big-picture, strategic, and theoretical perspective. They must clearly recognize the essence of false ideas and viewpoints, both their theoretical falsehood and the practical political harm they can

cause. We must have a firm approach and clear-cut stance toward major political principles, issues of right and wrong, what to support and what to oppose. We must uphold strict and clear discipline, maintaining a high-level unity with the Party Central Committee under the leadership of General Secretary Xi Jinping in thought, political stance, and action. We must not permit the dissemination of opinions that oppose the Party's theory or political line, the publication of views contrary to decisions that represent the central leadership's views, or the spread of political rumors that defame the image of the Party or the nation.

3. Unwavering adherence to the principle of the Party's control of media.

The [principle of the Party's control of media] stems from our political system and the nature of our media. We must maintain the correct political direction. We must firmly hold fast to the principle of the media's Party spirit and social responsibility, and that in political matters it must be of one heart and mind with the Party. We must persist in correct guidance of public opinion, insisting that the correct political orientation suffuse every domain and process in political engagement, form, substance, and technology. We must give high priority to building both the leadership and rank and file in the sphere of media work. We need to strengthen education on the Marxist perspective of media to ensure that the media leadership is always firmly controlled by someone who maintains an identical ideology with the Party's Central Committee, under General Secretary Xi Jinping's leadership.

4. Conscientiously strengthen management of the ideological battlefield.

When facing sensitive events and complex puzzles in the ideological sphere, we should implement the principle that the people in charge assume responsibility and use territorial management.

We must reinforce our management of all types and levels of propaganda on the cultural front, perfect and carry out related administrative systems, and allow absolutely no opportunity or outlets for incorrect thinking or viewpoints to spread. Conscientiously implement the "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Strengthening Information Protection on Networks," strengthen guidance of public opinion on the Internet, purify the environment of public opinion on the Internet. Improve and innovate our management strategies and methods to achieve our goals in a legal, scientific, and effective way.