Public Intellectuals in China

Thursday, March 10, 2005 at 10:00 AM

Russell Senate Office Building, Room 385

Testimony

of

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What Does This New Crackdown Tell Us?

Since Hu Jintao took office, the plight of the intellectuals in public life in China has not been bettered; in fact, it has worsened. In reality, the lack of improvement in and of itself is tantamount to worsening, because the same oppression becomes more onerous as time goes on, and the consequences of that oppression more and more severe.

Not long ago, the Hu Jintao regime unleashed a new crackdown on intellectual circles. The authorities once more raised aloft the banner of "anti-liberalization", and stridently criticized "liberalized thought" and "public intellectuals." The Central Propaganda Department brought out a list of names and banned a number of liberal intellectuals who had a tiny foothold in the official media from making more statements. The Ministry also demanded that the media implement rigorous checks, as they "may not report on premeditated bombings, riots, demonstrations or strikes." A batch of books was banned, and a number of Web sites were closed down. At the same time, the authorities also utilized administrative means and autocratic methods to persecute some liberal intellectuals. Some were discharged from their jobs, some had their houses searched and notes confiscated, some received very stern warnings, and others were arrested and sentenced. When Zhao Ziyang died, it was as though the CCP authorities were on their guard for all possible danger. They took all sorts of measures to strengthen their control, and many dissidents were subjected to house arrest, with others taken into custody. Those inside the system received harsh warnings: they were not to participate in any memorial event on pain of losing their posts. Moreover, we must not forget the world-renowned Dr. Jiang Yanyong, who fought against SARS. For no greater reason than the fact that the letter he wrote to the National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference last Spring asking for a rectification of names for the June 4th event was published overseas, he was kidnapped and held in custody, and continues under house arrest today.

The facts demonstrate that Hu Jintao and his predecessor Jiang Zemin are cut from the same cloth. In 1991, Jiang Zemin quoted a literary reference from the "Commentary of Zuo", a famous Classical Chinese work, while speaking privately to a visitor from Taiwan. The passage basically holds that in politics it is better to be fierce than lenient. Fire is fierce, and everyone who sees it is frightened and hides away. As a result, very few people are burned to death. Water seems to be gentle and weak, so many people do not respect it. They fool around in the water, and even more people end up drowning. (Later on,

this exchange was published in the August, 1996 issue of "The 90s", a Hong Kong magazine.) The Chinese Communist leaders are deeply cognizant of the fact that their political power is entirely based on the fear of the masses. Consequently, if they are to preserve their own rule, they must keep the people in fear. That means they cannot seem warm or enlightened in front of the masses. If the people feel the authorities are kind or enlightened they will dare to speak out, saying things they would never have dared otherwise. The more they dare to speak out with demands they would not have dared offer otherwise, the greater the pressure and the challenges become facing the authorities. The authorities must invest a great deal of energy if they are to repress (if indeed they are able to do so). At the end, their image may be even more severely tarnished. Hu Jintao showed his true face of cruelty the moment major power was within his grasp. His primary goal was to maintain and consolidate the power of intimidation by force and the effect of fear that the autocratic Chinese government had enjoyed since “June 4.” By so doing, he would then nip any unrest in the bud. There was no need to use force or violate any taboos on killing. Everything Hu Jintao has done since taking office has been the cause of widespread disappointment in him on the part of the outside world. It has also given people the impression that he has not gone overboard in any way. However, in reality, that is precisely the effect he wished to achieve by implementing this sort of strategy.

After Hu Jintao took office, he reiterated time and time again his concern for disadvantaged groups. Many people mistakenly thought that Hu would permit events that would safeguard the rights of these groups, but that simply wasn't the case. For example, Li Boguang, a PhD in law from Beijing, has helped peasants to guard their rights, always within the dictates of current law. Not long ago, he was detained by the local government on suspicion of fraud (he recently made bail and is currently awaiting trial). This proves that while it's not necessarily true that Hu Jintao's regime was not thinking of shrinking the huge disparity between rich and poor to some extent, of putting the brakes on corruption to some degree, and of improving the lot of disadvantaged groups a bit, they absolutely do not permit the people to initiate any open group action or to stand up to defend their own rights. The authorities can partially satisfy the material needs of the people, but the thing they fear most is that the people might thus obtain the ability to engage in independent group activity. Additionally, the authorities also refuse to implement a true rule of law, in which everyone is equal before the law. This is because they know full well that the existing allocation of wealth is based on a huge injustice that is essentially illegitimate. The gap between rich and poor in China is unique in that it is not a product of history or of the market but is mainly due to power. In China, the poverty of the poor exists in large part because the products of their labor have been appropriated by those in power. The wealth of the rich is in large measure due to their use of power to steal the prosperity created by others. The moment that the people are able to argue strongly based on law and rationality, the moment they have the ability to band together to make a stand, they will absolutely no longer be satisfied with a tad more aid to the unemployed or a small additional subsidy for the poor. They will first demand that the group of people who used power to first become rich turn over the property they plundered, and there may very well be a day of reckoning for privileged rich privatization that will threaten the autocratic government itself. Naturally, this is not the wish of the Hu Jintao regime. As a result, the so-called "concern for the disadvantaged" touted by Hu Jintao's regime is in reality no more than a desire to employ "controlled oppression" and to maintain "continued squeezing".

Yes, on the surface it seems that the intelligentsia are very active in today's China. On the Internet, even in the official media, discussion certain public issues is quite open and even quite lively. Some dissidents

express themselves without fear, and nothing happens, they sit at home, quite well. But what I must bring to your attention is the principle being implemented by authorities in China today, that principle is "all people are not equal before the law." When the authorities handle issues related to expression and speech, there is no single standard measure used. The standards vary by person, by time, and by place. When the authorities oppress the intellectuals, they often consider a multitude of factors, such as; do you have any position within the establishment? Are you known internationally? What's your social network of "connections" like? And so on. We cannot draw the conclusion based solely from the situation of a few well-known dissidents that freedom of speech in China has expanded greatly. Again, we cannot forget that the means the Chinese Communists use to squash freedom of speech have taken on many forms over the years. For example, during the Anti-Rightist movement only a handful of the over 500,000 Rightists were actually imprisoned and sentenced, some Rightists were fired from their jobs and sent to the countryside to do manual labor. Some were demoted, had their salaries cut, or were forced to move to other posts. Some Rightists were permitted to show their faces in the official media to say a word or two. The situation today is the same.

At this point I should mention that when the outside world assesses the degree of freedom of speech in China, it quite often focuses on how many people have been arrested or imprisoned. Without a doubt, a shocking number of dissidents have been locked up in China, a number that puts China in first place in such matters. However, this is but one standard by which we assess the amount of freedom of expression and the plight of intellectuals in China. First I want to say that precisely because there is still no freedom of the press in China, the outside world does not have an accurate figure on the number of dissidents in prison there. The figures the world gets are usually greatly understated. Second, another point that must be made is that the number of dissidents in custody isn't really as important as it might seem at first blush. Nations that arrest smaller numbers of dissidents do not necessarily have a more serious lack of freedom of expression than nations that arrest many. At times, the situation may be quite the opposite. We all know that traditional autocratic governments use investigation and punishment after the act to control freedom of speech. When the media does not get government approval on articles or news it puts out, then the chances greatly increase that articles or news items not favored by the government will become known to the world. Moreover, it also greatly increases the difficulty the government faces in penalizing the articles or news items it does not like. This results in the government being unable to cover up its oppression and makes its evil deeds obvious. But Communist autocracy doesn't work this way. The Communist Party takes a preventative approach before anything even happens. The Communist Party government not only has its book and newspapers supervisory structures in place (such as propaganda offices at various levels), but also, quite simply, has a direct hold on all the media. Party faithful are sent out to lead the defense effort. This is tantamount to a double layer of insurance. Under these circumstances, opinions or news items that displease the Party have no chance of making it to the media. And there is no need to run out and lock up the occasional minnow that manages to elude the net. The only thing needed is to mobilize Party sanctions and administrative sanctions, which are generally enough to resolve the problem. Doubtless the advent of the Internet has made control more difficult, particularly when users can post articles on their own, and it's almost impossible to censor in advance. Accordingly, the Chinese government has established the largest network surveillance system in the world. On the one hand, screening programs search for "sensitive" words and phrases, while on the other hand the instant any writings with a "dangerous bent" are detected, they are immediately erased. If necessary, the poster of the content can be found and punished afterwards. As a result, in a country that undertakes this sort of

rigorous before-the-fact preventive actions, the government has no need to lock up too many dissidents. In reality, of the dissidents the Chinese government has in prison at present, quite a few were brought in for issuing articles or placing news items either on the Internet or in the foreign media. This is a benefit accrued from today's high technology and from being opened up to the outside world. If it were not so, these people would not even have the opportunity to "commit a crime", and the government would very likely catch fewer of them. If we liken the traditional model of autocracy and its treatment of free expression to killing people or butchering children, then the Communist autocracy's methods are not limited to killing people and slaughtering babies but also include abortion and contraception. The effects of this oppression are not only more severe and far-reaching; they are also more insidious and more apt to fool people.

On the surface, the yardstick used as a measure for the control of free speech by the authorities is broader than before, with the standards not only looser than those of the Mao era but also as loose as or even looser than those of the 1980s. But this doesn't mean enlightenment on the part of the authorities. It should be said that it is a number of other factors that are creating this situation. First and foremost is the impact of the 1989 democracy movement. During that movement, tens of thousands of people took to the streets shouting "We want democracy, we want freedom!" The butchery of the June 4 incident caused the common people to be even more incensed. Throughout China, people of both high and low status began to curse the Communist Party in untold numbers. No matter what means the authorities adopt, they are unable to completely return the hearts of the people to their former cramped and limited space. As a result, the government was forced to turn a blind eye to many expressions of opinion that are outside the "norms". Second we have the breakdown of the international Communist fraternity and the bankruptcy of Communist ideology. This includes the economic reforms promoted by the authorities themselves, in which, theoretically, they overturned the golden rules of theory that they themselves had enshrined. This provided the opportunity for all sorts of other ideologies to have their moment in the sun. At the present stage, the Chinese Communist authorities are still working hard to put together a new ideology, doing their utmost to find a theme and striving in vain to once more unify thought. However, their efforts are falling short and they have been forced to turn to largely defensive principles. This means that in the current phase, when the Chinese Communist authorities are controlling speech, they are largely looking not at whether something that is said is in line with the official ideology, but rather thinking about whether it poses a direct challenge to the current regime. This provides relatively more space for other thought and speech. Also, with the June 4th massacre as their landmark, the Chinese Communist government has lost the traditional support of belief. It has been transformed into a rule of naked violence. Violent rule means negative indifference toward government by the people; it means widespread cynicism; and in today's China, the power of thought and speech to appeal lags far behind the force these carried in the 1980s. This has increased a certain type of immunity on the part of the authorities to resist criticism. Violence does not care much for people's criticism. That is because violence is forced upon people without the need for the consent of a third party. You yell about what you want, and I'll comply about what I like. What can you do to me? Simply put, the authorities have become even more shameless ("I'm a rogue, who should I fear?") so the "degree of tolerance" for dissidents has, on the contrary, increased. However, at the same time, the authorities have adopted a more straightforward means of implementing oppression than they previously had regarding speech they simply cannot tolerate. In the past, officials who toed the Party ideological line were all recognized by the entire Party as having theoretical authority (in more cases, the tone was personally set by the "Great Leader"). It was said that

only they could accurately discern what conforming speech was and what was not. At that time, if the authorities wanted to crack down on some type of opinion, they would always take care to cobble up some sort of reason, to show that they had a basis for their actions. Quite often the offending speech was trotted out and shown to everyone so that the masses could judge it and criticize it jointly. But now, today's guardians of ideology don't need to trouble themselves overly much. If they say ban, it's banned; if they say wipe it out, it's wiped out; and if they say "arrest him", he's under arrest. They don't need to give any reason. Sometimes they don't even need to issue formal paperwork. It can all be done with a single phone call, avoiding all the other formalities. Today, the Chinese Communist authorities control over speech is in no way truly looser than it was in the past.

Beijing Film Academy Professor Hao Jian once gave this explanation. He said, "We definitely know when we can strike the table in anger and speak with the force of justice behind us. We also know when we have to stay quiet about things we are perfectly clear on and keep our lips sealed. We do something else that's even scarier, we go for the underbelly, picking the softest, easiest targets and making a great deal of noise for justice and truth, but in fact it is all a sham. We also know when to say what so that we can get right to the top for a nod of approval and what will enrage everyone. For myself, I've perfected this sort of calculation to a fine art. And it's already become a part of my subconscious." This statement can help us understand the extent to which pretense flourishes among the intellectuals of today's China.

Long-term oppression produces very negative results. Up until the 1990s, there were still quite a number of dissidents in China who dared to speak out that held high posts within the system. For example, some held posts in Party media organizations, higher research institutes or in famous universities. Some were even in leadership positions. They had more chances to speak out and faced less risk. As the years went on, there were constant purges, and fewer and fewer of this kind of person remained. What's more, the party authorities stepped up their control of the media, and liberal intellectuals all over felt their situation worsen. In these circumstances, dissenter activities still hold on tenaciously among the people, but it's very difficult for them to develop any further.

In direct opposition to the early hopes of many Chinese and Westerners, the economic reforms and economic development in China have not put China on a pathway to freedom and democracy. On the contrary, reform and development have become the main reason the authorities use to cling to one-party rule and deny freedom and democracy. From Li Peng and Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, leaders have taken China's successful economic development as their basis to justify the crackdown on June 4th as necessary and right. They use it to show that a one party autocracy is necessary and right. In reality, China's privatization reforms not only were not aimed at setting down a foundation for democratization; they were actually aimed at throwing up more obstacles to democracy. The privatization and reform in China, if the truth be told, was nothing more than officials using their power to misappropriate resources that originally belonged to all the people. This sort of privatization reduces the "transaction cost" to a minimum, making it far quicker and more effective than privatization accomplished with democratic participation. However, such reforms are necessarily of the type that can never be approved by the people. The great blocs who profit immediately from all this are those who are most in fear of democracy and most stoutly oppose it. That is because these officials know very well that if they open the door to free democracy, they will not only lose their monopoly on political power but also, very possibly, will be called out by the people on charges of economic corruption.

In today's China, the Mao era is water under the bridge, and there is no going back. Even the ruling blocs themselves are not willing to go back to the days of Mao. China today must concern herself with something that seems even more old-fashioned, but which could be an even more persistent type of oppression: that of rule by people who believe in no "ism" but wield enormous power, and are determined to use every means at their disposal to preserve it.

新一轮整肃说明了什么？

胡平

胡锦涛上台以来，中国的公共知识分子的处境并未得到改善，甚至还有所恶化。其实，没有改善本身就意味着在恶化，因为同样一种压迫，持续的时间越长就越恶劣，其后果也就越严重。

不久前，胡锦涛政权发起对知识界新一轮整肃。当局再度祭出“反自由化”大旗，对“自由化思想”和“公共知识分子”严词批判；中宣部开出名单，禁止一些先前在官方媒体还有一席之地的自由知识分子在媒体露面；并要求媒体严格把关，“不得擅自报道有关蓄意爆炸、暴动、示威及罢工事件”；一批书被查禁，一些互联网站被封闭。与此同时，当局还采用行政手段和专政手段对一些自由派知识分子进行迫害，有的被解职，有的被查抄传讯，有的受到严厉警告，有的被逮捕判刑。赵紫阳先生去世，中共当局如临大敌，采用各种手段加强控制，许多异议人士被软禁，还有人被拘禁，体制内的人士则受到严厉警告：不准参加悼念活动，否则将被开除公职。此外，我们还不要忘记举世闻名的抗萨英雄蒋彦永医生，仅仅是因为去年春天，他写给全国人大和政协的一封要求为“六四”正名的信在海外发表，就遭到绑架和拘禁，至今仍被软禁。

事实证明，胡锦涛和他的前任江泽民没有两样。1991 年，江泽民在和一位台湾客人的内部讲话中引用了《左传》上的一个典故。大意是：为政宁猛勿宽。火猛，人人见了都害怕都躲避，所以很少有人被火烧死；水看来柔弱，许多人不在乎，“狎而玩之”，让水淹死的人反而更多（后来这段讲话发表在 1996 年 8 月号香港杂志《九十年代》上）。中共领导人深知，他们的统治完全是建立在民众的恐惧之上，因此，要维持自己的统治就必须维持民众的恐惧，这就不能在民众面前作出温和开明的样子。民众越是以为当局温和开明，他们就是敢于说出自己原先不敢说出的话，越是敢于提出原先不敢提出的要求，其结果就是对当局形成更大的压力和挑战，当局要压制就必须花更大的气力（如果能压得下去的话），到头来其形象反而会受到更大损害。胡锦涛一朝大权在手就露出凶相，其目的主要是维持和巩固自“六四”以来中共专制政权的威慑力和恐惧效应，从而将“动乱”扼杀在萌芽状态，这反而用不着大动干戈，大开杀戒了。胡锦涛上台以来的所作所为，一方面使得外界对他普遍失望，另一方面又让人觉得他做得好像也不太过分。其实那正是他实行这种策略所意欲达成的效果。

胡锦涛上台后，一再表示要关心弱势群体。很多人以为，胡锦涛就该容许弱势群体的维权活动；但事实并非如此。例如北京的法学博士李柏光，长期以来依据现行法律帮助农民维权活动，不久前却被地方政府以涉嫌欺诈罪名拘押（最近被取保候审）。这表明，胡锦涛政权虽然也未必不想对贫富悬殊略加缓和，对贪污腐败略加约束，使弱势群体的境遇稍有改善，但是他们决不容许民众采取公开的集体行动，自己起来维护自己的权益；当局可以部分地满足民众的物质要求，但是他们最惧怕的是民众由此而获得独立的集体行动的能力。此外，当局也拒绝实行真正的法治，让法律面前人人平等；因为当局深知，现存的财产分配格局是建立在极大的不公正之上，是根本不具合法性的。中国的贫富悬殊问题与众不同，它既不是历史造成的，也不是市场造成的，而主要是权力造成的。在中国，穷人之穷，在很大程度上是因为他们的财产被权势者所强占；富人之富，在很大程度上是因为他们利用权力抢走了别人创造的财富。一旦民众可以根据法律据理力争，一旦民众有了集体抗争的能力，他们绝不会仅仅满足于多得一点失业救济或多得一点贫困补助，他们首先会要求利用权力而先富起来的那批人交出他们掠夺的财产，他们很可能会对权贵私有化进行正当的清算，这也就势必威胁到专制政权本身。这当然不是胡锦涛政权所愿意见到的。因此，胡锦涛政权的所谓关心弱势群体，充其量不过是想用“有节制的压迫”，以维持“可持续的榨取”而已。

不错，从表面上看，在今日中国，知识分子还是很活跃。在互联网上，甚至在官方媒体上，对若干公共问题的讨论也很开放，以至很热烈。某些异议人士放言无忌，却安然无事，还好好地待在家里。不过我要提醒的是，如今当局实行的原则是“法律面前人人不平等”。当局在处置言论问题时，并没有一把固定的尺子，而是因人而异，因时而异，因地而异。当局在压迫知识分子时，往往要考虑到多种因素，例如你在体制内有无地位，在国际上有无名气，你有什么样的社会关系网，等等。我们不能单凭某些著名的异议人士的处境就得出结论，以为中国的言论空间已经比较宽松。再有，我们也不可忘记，中共压制言论的手段从来就是多种多样的。譬如当年反右运动，在五十几万右派中，正式逮捕判刑的是少数，有的右派是被开除公职，下放劳动；有的右派是降职降薪，强行调动工作；有的右派还被允许在官方媒体上露一露面，发表一点东西。现在的情况也是如此。

顺便一提，外界在评估中国言论自由状态时，往往注重于有多少人被抓被关。毫无疑问，中国的异议人士被抓被关的数量是惊人的，在全世界都是名列前茅的。但这只是我们衡量中国言论自由状态和知识分子处境的一个指标。首先我要指出，正因为中国还没有新闻自由，外界不可能掌握到被拘禁的异议人士的完整数目，外界所能掌握到的数目多半是大大缩小的。其次，还需指出的是，被拘禁的异议人士的数目并不像乍一看去的那么重要。那些抓异议人士抓得少的国家不一定比那些抓得多的国家更缺少言论自由，有时倒恰恰相反。我们知道，传统的专制政权是采用事后追惩的办法压制言论自由，媒体在发表文章或消息前不交政府检查，这就大大增加了那些不为政府喜欢的文章或新闻得以公诸于世的机会，另外，也大大增加了政府对那些它不喜欢的文章和新闻实行惩罚的难度，同时更使得政府的压制无从掩盖而劣迹昭著。共产专制则不然。共产党采取事前预防的办法。共产党政府不但设有它的书报检查机构（如各级宣传部），而且它乾脆把一切媒体都直接抓在自己手里，派出党放心的人去领导去把关。这等于加了双保险。在这种情况下，那些让党不高兴的言论新闻压根就没有上媒体的机会，偶有漏网之鱼也不必都去抓起来关起来，只消动用党纪制裁和行政制裁差不多就足以解决问题了。互联网的发明无疑增加了管制的困难，特别是网友自己上帖，事前检查几乎不可能。为此，中国政府建立了世界上最庞大的网路监管系统，一方面，通过设置网路筛检程式对许多所谓“敏感”辞汇进行过滤；另一方面，只要发现了有“危险倾向”的文字便立即删除，必要时还可对上帖的网友事后追惩。所以，在这样一种实行严格事前预防的国家里，政府不需要关押太多的异议人士。事实上，目前中国政府监禁的异议人士，有不少是在互联网上或者在境外媒体上发布文章或消息而被监禁的，这还是托现代高科技之福，托对外开放之福，否则，他们连这点“犯罪”的机会都没有，那政府要抓的人很可能也就更少了。如果我们把传统型专制对言论的事后追惩比作杀人，比作屠婴；那么，共产专制的做法则是在杀人和屠婴之外，再加上堕胎和避孕。其压制效果不但更严厉，更彻底，而且更不显眼，更有欺骗性。

从表面上看，当局控制言论的尺度确实比以前宽多了，不要说比毛时代宽，就是和八十年代比也不遑多让，甚至还有过之。但是这并不表明当局的开明。应该说，造成这种状况的是其他一些原因。首先一条是八九民运的冲击。在八九民运中，数以千万计的民众走上街头，高呼“要民主要自由”；“六四”屠杀更是激起普遍民愤，全国上下，不知有多少人破口大骂共产党。无论当局使出何种手段，它也不可能把人心整个地重新装进原来的瓶子里，因此，它不得不对许多“出格”的言论采取睁一只眼闭一只眼的态度。其次是国际共产阵营的解体，共产党意识形态的破产。包括当局自己推行的经济改革，从理论上自己颠覆了自己原先奉为金科玉律的理论，这就为形形色色的其他思想提供了登台亮相的机会。现阶段的中共当局，固然也在努力编制新的意识形态，竭力鼓吹所谓主旋律，妄图重新统一思想，但毕竟力不从心，不得不转到以防守为主的原则。这就是说，现阶段的中共当局在控制言论时，主要不是看一种言论是否符合官方的意识形态，而是看它对现政权是否构成直接挑战。这就给其他思想和言论留下了较大的空间。再有，以“六四”屠杀为标志，中共政权失去了传统信仰的支援，转变为赤裸裸的暴力统治。暴力统治意味著民众在政治上的消

极冷漠，意味著普遍的犬儒主义，在今日中国，思想、言论的号召力远远比不上八十年代，这就增强了当局抵御批评的某种免疫力。暴力不那么在乎别人的批评，因为它本来就是强加于人而不需要别人的认同。你骂你的，我干我的，你能奈我何？简单地说，当局的脸皮更厚了（“我是流氓我怕谁？”），所以它对异议的“容忍度”反而更大了。但与此同时，当局对它不能容忍的言论采取了比以前更直截了当的压制措施。过去，主管意识形态的官员都是全党公认的理论权威（在更多的时候则是由“伟大领袖”亲自定调），因为据说只有他们才能正确地鉴别什么言论符合主义，什么言论不符合主义。在那时，当局要取缔一种言论，总还要装模作样地讲出一番理由，为了表明自己的取缔是有道理的，常常还要把被取缔的言论拿出来公诸于世，让群众鉴别，共同批判。现在好了，现在的意识形态主管只需要丁关根（盯关跟）的水平，说取缔就取缔，说封杀就封杀，说抓人就抓人，不需要再说明理由，甚至于不需要正式下达文件，打个电话就算完，其他各种手续统统免了。如此说来，今日中共当局对言论的控制，和以前相比并没有任何真正的松动。

北京电影学院教授郝建有过这样一段表白，他说：“我们绝对知道在什么时候可以拍案而起作出义正词严状，也绝对知道什么时候必须对自己清楚万分的问题保持沉默、三缄其口。我们还有一个更可怕的表现。这就是柿子专拣软的捏：即在一个最安全的方向上作出好似怒不可遏、仗义执言实际精打细算、八面玲珑的完美演出。我们也知道什么时候说什么话可以上达天庭得到首肯，什么话会触犯众怒。就我自己而言，这种算计已经高度技巧、出神入化；这种掌握已经进入潜意识层面。”这段话很能帮助我们理解今日中国知识界的虚假繁荣。

长期持续的压制造成很多消极后果。直到九十年代，在勇敢发出异议的人之中，还有不少在体制内处于较高的地位，例如在党的新闻部门和高等研究机构以及名牌大学任职，甚至担任领导职务，他们享有较多的发言机会和较小的风险。随着岁月的流逝和不断的清洗，这种人越来越少。再加上当局强化对媒体的控制，自由派知识分子普遍感到他们的处境比先前更艰难。在这样的形势下，民间的异议活动空间可以顽强地存在，但很难进一步发展壮大。

和许多中国人和西方人早先的期待相反，经济改革和经济发展并没有将中国引向自由民主之路，相反，它们倒成了当局坚持一党专制拒绝自由民主的最大理由。从李鹏、江泽民，到胡锦涛、温家宝，他们都是把中国经济发展的成功作为根据，用来证明当年“六四”镇压是必要的和正确的，用来证明一党专制是必要的和正确的。事实上，中国的私有化改革非但不是为民主化奠立基础，而是为民主化增加障碍。中国的私有化改革，说到底，就是官员利用权力把原本属于全体人民的财产据为己有。这样的私有化确实把“交易成本”降到最低，要远比那些在民主参与下的私有化来得更快捷更有效率。但是，这样的改革必定是最不能为人民认可的。由此而形成的庞大的既得利益集团必定是最害怕民主最反对民主的。因为这些官员深知，如果开放自由民主，他们不仅会失去对政治权力的垄断，而且很可能还会被人民以经济腐败的罪名送上审判台。

今日中国，毛时代已然一去不返，就连统治集团自己也不愿意再回到毛时代。今日中国最应当担心的是一种看上去更老式的，但也许是更持久的压迫形式：那就是由一些什么“主义”都不信，但掌握了巨大权力，并决心用一切手段维护其权力的人所施行的统治。