



**Statement of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown,  
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive  
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Roundtable on “China’s Treatment of  
Foreign Journalists”**

**December 11, 2013**

*As prepared for delivery.*

Today I am calling on China to immediately cease its policy of harassing foreign journalists, denying and delaying their visas, and blocking the websites of foreign media in China. If the situation does not improve, we must consider other steps that Congress may take to address the issue.

Our approach is critical. China is the world’s most populous country and our second-largest trading partner. It faces daunting challenges, from crippling pollution and widespread corruption, to suppression of the basic freedoms we take for granted. And as we have seen recently, China is increasing its military posture in the region.

What happens in China affects us all.

It is therefore imperative that we have a complete and accurate picture of what is going on there.

But we can’t do that without foreign journalists.

If foreign journalists cannot report the news in China, who will investigate the financial dealings of China’s top leaders and their families?

Who will report on Tibet and Xinjiang and the plight of human rights activists?

Who will investigate labor conditions at factories that make products sold in America?

It has to be the foreign press because China’s own journalists are hamstrung by severe censorship.

That's why China's recent actions to shut down foreign journalists are so troubling.

What's happening now has few precedents.

If 23 reporters don't get their visas by the end of the year, *The New York Times* and *Bloomberg* may not be able to cover China at all.

China has now made this a fair trade issue by blocking access to the web sites of *The New York Times*, *Bloomberg*, *Reuters*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

And in November, Chinese officials denied a visa to American journalist Paul Mooney after he had been reporting in China for the past 18 years.

For years foreign journalists in China have had to endure periodic beatings, interrogations, and harassment just to do their job.

But what is new is that China is now threatening to use its weapon of last resort—closing the country off to the rest of the world.

We must do all we can to prevent that from happening.

###