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### **Mediating a Polyarchal Public Sphere in China**

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#### **Abstract**

The 'promotion of democracy' is an integral part of most developed countries' foreign policies, and most foreign interventions are now carried out in the name of democracy. Yet despite the democratic rhetoric surrounding such policies the underlying motivations for so-called democratic interventions often remain ambiguous. Many authors have even suggested that instead of promoting substantial or participatory forms of democracy, such practices actually serve to promote low-intensity democracy. In this regard, one of the most powerful organisations is the US-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which tends to set the global agenda for these rather questionable 'democratic' interventions. The NED itself recognises that a vital part of its work entails the development of a suitably democratic public sphere in its target countries. Therefore, this study will provide the first critical analysis of the NED's role in promoting 'democratic' media developments within China. It will identify the groups that receive support from both the American and wider international 'democracy promoting' community and discuss the implications of their activities on the development of what might become the world's largest democratic public sphere.

The promotion of democracy is now a mainstay of US foreign policy, which is ironic given the US's historical (and ongoing) propensity for overthrowing democratic governments, and funding authoritarian regimes and terrorists to promote 'democracy' (Blum 2004; Ganser 2005). However, despite evident contradictions, democracy promoting bodies all over the world have long considered the cultivation of independent media outlets (abroad) to be a key component of their countries' foreign policies. Such attempts by US foreign policy elites to promote democratic public spheres are especially controversial given the present democratic deficit of their own domestic media systems (e.g. Klaehn 2005). This begs the question: what type of public sphere is actually being promoted overseas in the name of democracy? The answer to this question has been heavily influenced by the neoliberal onslaught forced on much of the world's citizenry over the last few decades (Beder 2006; Carey 1995), as the political, economic and cultural ascendancy of corporate-backed elites has severely limited discussions of what should constitute a democratic public sphere. Thus instead of promoting more participatory forms of democracy (e.g. Albert and Hahnel 1991), it appears that foreign policy elites have settled for promoting low-intensity democracy (Gills 1993), or what Dahl (1971) referred to as polyarchy – that is, a limited form of elite-driven democracy.

In the US, the formal institutionalisation of the 'promotion of democracy' into their foreign policy making apparatus was marked in 1984 by the formation of two 'non-governmental' bodies, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the US Institute for Peace (USIP). (At this point it is important to note that although this article focuses on the activities of the former of these two groups, the NED, it is important to point out that the USIP undertakes similar 'democratic' work but under the guise of peace not democracy (Diamond and Hatch 1990).) Building upon the pioneering work of liberal philanthropists (like the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations) who were successful in their attempts to deradicalize progressive movements for social change (Barker 2008a; Roelofs 2003), the NED was created to enable, as their first president duly noted, to overtly undertake the work that was previously carried out covertly by the CIA – that is, providing strategic funding to various foreign groups (Ignatius 1991). This 'democratic' idea gained special credence within US foreign policy elites, because public revelations of the covert and illegal actions of the CIA in both the US and abroad – as revealed by the Church Commission – led to increased pressure on the government to be more democratic. Thus the creation of the NED, which was blessed with bipartisan support and was as Blum (2000, 180) accurately observed a masterpiece '[o]f politics, of public relations and of cynicism.'

Robinson (1996) provided the first seminal critique of the NED's international 'democracy promoting' activities when he thoroughly documented their role in promoting polyarchy in Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. However, since his initial study many other authors have illustrated the crucial coordinating role the NED has played in promoting the 'democratic' interests of transnational capital (for recent examples see Barker 2006; Fenton 2006; Scipes 2006). Interestingly, researching the groups that receive funding from the NED is easy because the overt nature of their organisation means that they publish their grant details on their website.<sup>1</sup> To date though, despite increased media coverage of the NED's antidemocratic activities (in Venezuela particularly), few researchers have investigated how the media and publishing projects the NED has been involved with – notable exceptions being Barker (In Press a, 2008b) and Sussman (2006).

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<sup>1</sup> Only grants distributed by the NED after 1990 are listed on their website, see Democracy Projects Database. <http://www.ned.org/dbtw-wpd/textbase/projects-search.htm>. All further unattributed quotations used in this article referring to NED grants can be located on this database.

Taking note of this gap in both academic reports and the alternative media, this paper examines Chinese organisations that have received media-related grants from the NED since 1990 (the date from which the NED's grant making details are available online). Although for reasons of concision it is not possible to review all of the Chinese groups that have received NED support for their media work, I will provide a critical overview of some of the better known organisations to illustrate the numerous ways by which the NED attempts to promote a polyarchal public sphere in China. Support for Tibetan-related causes is also an integral part of the NED's work in China, however, this has been examined elsewhere (Barker 2007a). The structure of this article is as follows: initially, I examine one of the first media projects to receive NED aid in the 1980s. I follow this with an assessment of a number of America-based groups and their media projects. The paper will then investigate the media work of two of the largest human rights groups working on Chinese issues, and will conclude by examining the NED's support of the free-market in China.

### **The First Chinese Reform Publication to Receive NED Support**

Between 1990 and 1994 China Perspective, Inc. received five NED grants to publish their Chinese-language quarterly, the *Chinese Intellectual* – which the NED described as a 'Chinese-language quarterly distributed inside the People's Republic of China which promotes the evolution of China toward an open and democratic society.' Crucially, McGehee (1999) notes that the *Chinese Intellectual* was launched in 1984 with NED support; the NED's website also adds that China Perspective, Inc. was 'the first of many Chinese reform publications to receive NED support.'<sup>2</sup>

The *Chinese Intellectual* is edited by Liang Heng, who is the co-author of *Son of the Revolution* (1984) – the other author of his book is his wife, Judith Shapiro, who in 1993 (at least) was the Asia program officer at the NED (McGehee 1999; Shapiro, 1993). McGehee (1999) notes that the *Chinese Intellectual's* editorial board is 'composed of distinguished American and Chinese writers — John K. Fairbanks and Andrew Nathan, Sidney Hook, and social scientists Irving Horowitz and Seymour Martin Lipset.' Three of these scholars are notable for their strong 'democratic' links, Andrew J. Nathan (who is a trustee of Freedom House, a director of the NED-funded Center for Modern China (see later), a member of the editorial board of the NED's *Journal Of Democracy*, the former Director of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute where he is presently a faculty member, and is a member of HRW's Asia Advisory Committee – where he was chair from 1995 to 2000);<sup>3</sup> Irving L. Horowitz (who is a member of Freedom House's American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus, has been a director of the conservative Alexis de Tocqueville Institution, and in 2003 was awarded the Gerhart Niemeyer Award by the infamous Intercollegiate Studies Institute – Messer-Davidow, 1993);<sup>4</sup> and the recently deceased Seymour Martin Lipset (who is a former director of the USIP, Albert Shanker Institute, and the Committee for the Free World).<sup>5</sup> Finally, according to

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<sup>2</sup> NED 20th Anniversary Timeline. <http://www.ned.org/about/nedTimeline.html>

<sup>3</sup> Board Of Trustees. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?boardmember=30&page=10>

<sup>4</sup> The American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus was formerly known as the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, see Right Web Profile. <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1429>

About ACPC. [http://www.peaceinthecaucasus.org/about\\_members.htm](http://www.peaceinthecaucasus.org/about_members.htm)

Fiscal 2002. <http://adti.net/form990/tax.menu.html>

Gerhart Niemeyer Award for Distinguished Contributions to Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.

[http://www.isi.org/spotlight/awards/awards\\_detail.aspx?id=7C2BCC8C-AC3D-4646-A0FA-D48161F61CE7](http://www.isi.org/spotlight/awards/awards_detail.aspx?id=7C2BCC8C-AC3D-4646-A0FA-D48161F61CE7)

<sup>5</sup> Right Web Profile: Committee for the Free World. <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/gw/1587>

'Welcome'. <http://www.kennedy-center.org/about/>

Media Transparency, between 1987 and 1993 China Perspective, Inc. received seven grants (worth a total of \$290,000) from the neoconservative Bradley Foundation.<sup>6</sup>

### **Chinese Media: Made in America**

Another group that benefited from the NED's largess is the Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars (IFCSS) was founded on August 1, 1989 in America, and aims to 'promote democracy in China and to protect the interests of the Chinese students and scholars studying in the United States, as a response to the June 4th event in 1989.'<sup>7</sup> In 1992, IFCSS received support from the NED to publish their newsletter which is 'distributed to a membership of 43,000 Chinese students with registered chapters on 166 campuses in the United States.' Their newsletter received continued NED support in 1994 and 1995 – by then it was being sent to '200 IFCSS campus chapters and other student associations.'

The founding president of IFCSS was Yongchuan Liu (also known as Alex Liu), who in 2001 also founded the Los Angeles-based RM Institute – where he currently directs their *Measuring Democracy* project.<sup>8</sup> The RM Institute's website notes that this project 'aim[s] to develop new measurement technologies with applications to measure quality of democracy and the opening of authoritarian regimes' with a special emphasis on using their 'frameworks and technologies to measure Chinese democracies.'<sup>9</sup> The RM Institute's website also adds that advisors on this project include Stanford professor Larry Diamond, who is a co-director of the NED's International Forum for Democratic Studies, a member of USAID's Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, coordinates the democracy program of the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law, and is a senior fellow at the right-wing Hoover Institution.<sup>10</sup> Liu's close affiliations to 'democratic' notables like Diamond are not so surprising considering that he came to Stanford University on a Fullbright Scholarship in 1986, and has also worked as a research fellow at the Hoover Institution between 1993 and 1995.<sup>11</sup> It is also interesting to note that Qiang Xiao, who served as the assistant to the first IFCSS president (Yongchuan), went on to work for Human Rights in China (see later); while Hongkuan Li who served as a IFCSS council member between 1997 and 1999, went on to become an editor of Chinese VIP Reference – an organisation that received a grant from the NED in 1998 to publish two Chinese-language electronic newsletters, the weekly *Dacankao* (*Big Reference News*), and the daily *Xiaocankao* (*Mini Reference News*).<sup>12</sup>

In 1994 and 1995 the NED supported the US publication *Tendency Quarterly* (*Qingxiang*), which the NED referred to as the 'most political of China's overseas literary quarterlies.'<sup>13</sup> *Tendency Quarterly* was founded in 1993 by Huang Beiling (Bei Ling), who is also the founder and former executive director of the Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC) – a group that was 'founded in 2001 by a group of Chinese writers in exile and in China, ICPC is primarily concerned with the rights of Chinese language writers throughout the world.'<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> China Perspective, Inc. <http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipientgrants.php?recipientID=607>

<sup>7</sup> About Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars (IFCSS). <http://www.ifcss.net/ifcss-intro.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Yongchuan Liu. <http://www.ifcss.net/yongchuan-liu.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Measuring Democracy. <http://www.researchmethods.org/demomeasure>

<sup>10</sup> Larry Diamond. <http://www.hoover.org/bios/diamond.html>

<sup>11</sup> Alex's Life Journey. <http://www.researchmethods.org/alex.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Huang Jinqu – Party Organizer and Writer Arrested. <http://www.freechina.net/2004/heroes/00046.htm>

<sup>13</sup> In 1995 'Approximately 2,000 copies per issue will be published, with at least 600 copies to be distributed in China. Each issue will also contain information about human rights violations against writers and artists in China, as well as proceedings of recent meetings of dissidents and writers.'

<sup>14</sup> 'In August 2000, *Bei Ling* was arrested for 'illegally publishing' his journal in China. After a brief time in a Beijing jail, with the help of international society and the American State Department, he was released and

Perhaps not incidentally, the ICPC received NED funding in both 2004 and 2005, and two other ‘democratically’ linked members of ICPC are Chen Kuide (who has worked for both the NED-funded Princeton China Initiative, and the Center for Modern China – see later),<sup>15</sup> and Zheng Yi (who is a member of the Princeton China Initiative – see later).<sup>16</sup>

The Los Angeles-based Chinese-language bi-weekly newspaper, *Press Freedom Guardian*, was created just after the Tiananmen Square massacre, and it has received annual NED aid between 1993 and 2005 (but not in 2000).<sup>17</sup> According to their website, the current chair of the board of *Press Freedom Guardian* is Wang Juntao, who founded the US-based China Strategic Institute which received NED aid in 1996 and 1997 and ‘helps law firms in China to bring human-rights suits under Chinese law.’<sup>18</sup> Unusually for NED recipients, *Press Freedom Guardian* is open about their links to the NED, and they even mention this connection on their website on a page titled *Related Sites*.<sup>19</sup>

### ‘Human Rights’ in China

Between 1992 and 2005 the Washington-based Laogai Research Foundation, which was founded in 1992 by Harry Wu, received eleven grants from the NED to compile a database documenting information about China’s labor camp (*laogai*) system, and to publish a quarterly newsletter and annual report. According to their website the Foundation was ‘established to gather information and spread public awareness on the Chinese Laogai.’<sup>20</sup> The NED notes that the Foundation’s work ‘document[s] the truth about the *laogai* and... reveal[s] to the Chinese people and the world the inhumanity of the system, its arbitrary nature, and the way in which prisoners, including political detainees, are exploited for profit through the forced production of export goods in the *laogai*.’ In 1996, the Foundation also received a small grant to make a short documentary about public executions which was to ‘be used at upcoming intergovernmental meetings on human rights in China’ and was to ‘be made available to human rights activists and organisations worldwide.’

The Laogai Research Foundation’s founder, Harry Wu (also known as Wu Hongda), is currently their executive director, and in 2002 he founded the NED-funded China Information Center (see later).<sup>21</sup> In that same year (2002), Wu was also nominated for the Nobel Peace

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expelled from China.’ In addition, in 1995 and 2001, Bei Ling was awarded a Hellman/Hammett grant from Human Rights Watch. See, Bei Ling. <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/icwt/whoware/bling.html>  
History of P.E.N in Chinese Communities. <http://www.penchinese.net/en/history.htm>  
Independent Chinese PEN Center. <http://www.penchinese.net/en/enindex.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Sino-Tibetan Relations: Prospects for the Future. <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/area/tibet-potomac/cultural/chenkuid.html>

<sup>16</sup> More writers will be added as their works become available in English.

<http://www.penchinese.net/en/memberworks.htm>

<sup>17</sup> In 1995 ‘The news-oriented editorial philosophy, the lightweight (4-page) newspaper format, and the frequency of distribution (twice a month) make this newspaper unique among the Chinese pro-democracy publications. The total distribution will be 6,000 copies per issues, including 1,800 paid subscriptions. An average of at least 500 copies of each issue will enter China, where they are passed from hand to hand, each reaching an estimated dozen or more readers.’

<sup>18</sup> Introduction to Press Freedom Guardian. <http://www.pressfreedom.com/pfg/english/pfgintre.htm>

Yvonne Abraham, Cashing in on Tiananmen. March/April 1997.

[http://72.166.46.24/alt1/archive/news/97/03/27/CHINA\\_7.html](http://72.166.46.24/alt1/archive/news/97/03/27/CHINA_7.html)

<sup>19</sup> Related Sites. <http://www.pressfreedom.com/pfg/english/related.htm>

<sup>20</sup> About Laogai. <http://www.laogai.org/news/category.php?bigcategoryid=34>

<sup>21</sup> According to McGehee (1999) on June 19, 1995 Wu was arrested in China and was ‘charged with spying and found guilty and sentenced to 15 years in prison and expulsion’, however, just over two months later (on August 24) he was released from prison and left China for the US.

Prize by Mairead Corrigan Maguire.<sup>22</sup> Incidentally, Maguire is also a member of the international council of advisors for the NED-funded International Campaign for Tibet – an organisation at which Wu is a member of their advisory board. Finally, Wu is presently a member of the international council of the New York-based Human Rights Foundation, an organisation whose ‘democratic’ ties will now be briefly examined.

Human Rights Foundation (HRF) was incorporated in 2005 and opened its New York office in 2006; its website notes that it is ‘devoted to defending human rights in the American hemisphere.’<sup>23</sup> Thor Halvorssen is president and CEO of HRF, but prior to this (from 1999-2004) he was first executive director and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). Halvorssen’s link to FIRE is interesting, because this conservative group is a vocal proponent of *Intellectual Diversity*, and attacks the so-called ‘liberal’ bias in US academia. Thus it is not surprising that FIRE lists among their previous funders, favourite neoconservatives the Bradley Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, and the Coors-linked Castle Rock Foundation.<sup>24</sup> Particularly interesting directors at HRF include Tom G. Palmer (who is a senior fellow at the neoliberal Cato Institute, and has also worked with the neoliberal Atlas Economic Research Foundation), Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (who is the founder and president of the conservative Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, is a former member of the neoliberal Mont Pelerin Society, and is the co-founder and president of the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty – which is part of the Atlas Economic Research Foundation network).<sup>25</sup> Numerous other members of HRF’s international council and board of advisors are also linked to the following conservative groups, the Independent Institute, the Hoover Institute, the Hudson Institute, the Middle East Media Research Institute, Americares, and the American Enterprise Institute amongst others.<sup>26</sup>

As mentioned previously, Harry Wu, in 2002 founded the China Information Center (CIC), a group which describes itself as a nonprofit organisation that aims to ‘bring balanced and credible information about China, Tibet and the world to the Greater Chinese readership found within Mainland borders and beyond.’<sup>27</sup> This description suggests some form of nonpartisan activities, but like Harry Wu’s conservative Laogai Research Foundation, CIC proudly displays its neoconservative credentials on its homepage lists links to eight US think tanks which include the American Enterprise Institute, the Brookings Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institute, and the Jamestown Foundation.<sup>28</sup> Since CIC’s founding in 2002, it has received annual support from the NED to ‘establish and maintain a Chinese-language Web site that features independent news and analyses of world events and domestic Chinese developments mainland and overseas Chinese’ (which they do through the presence of ‘two Chinese-language websites and an e-mail list’). Critically, the CIC obtains unusually strong support from the NED, and although they have only received four NED grants they total just over \$1.7 million (which is abnormal as most NED grants are relatively small).

Another perhaps more prominent human rights organisation that has received ongoing support from the NED is Human Rights in China (HRIC). HRIC was founded in 1989, and according to their website they are an ‘international, Chinese, non-governmental organisation with a

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<sup>22</sup> Introduction to LRF founder Harry Wu. <http://www.laogai.org/news/newsdetail.php?id=1869>

<sup>23</sup> About Us. <http://www.humanrightsfoundation.org/aboutus.html>

<sup>24</sup> Grants to Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, Inc. <http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipientgrants.php?recipientID=1994>

<sup>25</sup> Board of Directors. <http://www.humanrightsfoundation.org/board.html>

<sup>26</sup> International Council. <http://www.humanrightsfoundation.org/internationalcouncil.html> Board of Advisors. <http://www.humanrightsfoundation.org/board.html>

<sup>27</sup> Welcome to the China Information Center (CIC). <http://www.cicus.org/aboutus.html>

<sup>28</sup> China Information Center. <http://www.cicus.org>

mission to promote universally recognised human rights and advance the institutional protection of these rights in the People's Republic of China (China).'<sup>29</sup> One of their reports (from 1997) also disingenuously notes that their work is 'independent of any political groups or governments.'<sup>30</sup>

HRIC received their first NED grant of the 1990s in 1995: with reference to this grant, the NED's project database notes that HRIC 'received continued NED support for its human rights advocacy program [which suggests that it had already obtained NED grants prior to 1995], which aims to facilitate and strengthen the activities of human rights advocates in China.'<sup>31</sup> This NED grant was used to allow HRIC to produce their twice-monthly radio program, and to help them engage 'with international NGOs, the media, governments and intergovernmental bodies to maintain pressure on the Chinese government to improve its human rights record.' HRIC also received continued NED support in 1996 to continue this work, and in 2001 they received a grant to allow them to 'publish a quarterly journal China Rights Forum and maintain a Web site ([www.hrichina.org](http://www.hrichina.org)).' Since 2000, HRIC has received a further four NED grants for non-media work which came to total of approximately \$1.3 million (again a large amount of money in NED terms). It is also interesting to note that in 1996, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (the British version of the NED, see Clarke, Forthcoming) also provided HRIC with a £13,000 grant to 'produce 500 copies of a human rights manual in Chinese to provide basic teaching material on human rights issues.'

HRIC's work appears to be closely related to that undertaken by its better known counterpart, Human Rights Watch. Robert L. Bernstein, the founder and former chair of Human Rights Watch, is currently the chair of HRIC's board of directors (and a member of the national council of Human Rights First), and they regularly work together to publish human rights reports.<sup>32</sup> According to the NED's senior program officer for Asia, Louisa Coan Greve, 'Human Rights in China is considered as reliable as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International as a source of accurate human rights information.'<sup>33</sup> The founder of HRIC, Fu Xinyuan, is Associate Professor of Pathology at Yale University School of Medicine, and also sits on the advisory board of the Israel Science Foundation (which is 'Israel's predominant source of competitive grants funding for basic research').<sup>34</sup> Their current executive director is Sharon Hom, who is a member of HRW's Asia Advisory Committee, and is professor of law at CUNY Law School.<sup>35</sup> However, prior to this HRIC's executive director from 1991 to 2002 was Qiang Xiao, who is now the is chief editor of the China Digital Times, the vice-chair of the steering committee of the NED initiated World Movement for Democracy, the Director of

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<sup>29</sup> Our Mission and Approach.

<http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/article?revision%5fid=30348&item%5fid=10298>

<sup>30</sup> China: Whose Security? 'State Security' in China's New Criminal Code, April 1997, Vol. 9 (4).

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/china5/>

<sup>31</sup> The NED database lists their grants under three names, 'Human Rights in China, Inc.', 'Human Rights in China, Inc. (HRIC)', and 'Human Rights in China'.

<sup>32</sup> Biography of Robert L. Bernstein. <http://www.law.yale.edu/intellecualife/bernsteinbio.htm>

HRIC Reports and Papers. <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/category?cid=1075>

<sup>33</sup> International Spotlight Lends Hope to Human Rights in China.

<http://www.ned.org/publications/articles/jun04Spotlight.html>

<sup>34</sup> The Israel Science Foundation has an annual budget of 'roughly \$60 million' and it funds around '1,300 grants a year, providing 2/3 of all such funds.' Ironically, in 2005, the Guardian reported that foreign grant reviewers were boycotting the Israel Science Foundation due to their government's human rights violations (Annon, 2005). China Whose Security? 'State Security' in China's New Criminal Code.

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1997/china5/>

Fu, Xin-Yuan. <http://www.talenting.com/talenting/event/mitspeaker.htm>

Israel Science Foundation. <http://www.isf.org.il/English/>

<sup>35</sup> Faculty and Staff. <http://www.law.cuny.edu/cli/facu.html>

the China Internet Project (at the University of California at Berkeley), and sits on the board of advisors for the International Campaign for Tibet (Goossen, 2006).<sup>36</sup>

The China Digital Times (formerly the China Digital News) at which Qiang Xiao is chief editor, is a ‘collaborative news website covering China’s social and political transition and its emerging role in the world.’<sup>37</sup> The project receives funding from the MacArthur Foundation amongst others, and their executive editor, Sophie Beach, was formerly a senior research associate for Asia at the ‘democratically’ linked Committee to Protect Journalists (Barker 2007b).<sup>38</sup> In addition, the chair of the China Digital Times advisory board is Orville Schell who is emeritus board member of HRW, vice chair of HRW’s Asia Advisory Committee, is a director of the National Committee on United States-China Relations, a member of the core founding group of the Dalai Lama Foundation, and has worked for the Ford Foundation in Indonesia.<sup>39</sup> Another member of their advisory board with strong ‘democratic’ ties is John Gage, who serves on the advisory board of the USIP, and is a director of Relief International (Barker 2007c).<sup>40</sup>

Returning to Human Rights in China, although their website provides no list of their staff or directors, a basic internet search has shown that the following people are directors of HRIC, Andrew J. Nathan, R. Scott Greathead (who is also a founder and director of Human Rights First – for details of their ‘democratic’ connections, see Barker 2007c),<sup>41</sup> Harold Hongju Koh Koh (who was the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor during the Clinton administration, and is a director of both the National Democratic Institute and Human Rights First),<sup>42</sup> Perry Link (who serves on the advisory board of the NED-funded Beijing Spring, is the former chair of the Princeton China Initiative, and is a member of HRW’s Asia Advisory Committee, see Link, 2005), Hu Ping (who is a former president of the NED-linked Chinese Alliance for Democracy, a ‘regular commentator for Radio Free Asia’, and has been chief editor of *Beijing Spring* since 1993),<sup>43</sup> and Nina Rosenwald (who is a trustee of Freedom House, serves on the advisory board of the American Center for Democracy, and is a director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee).<sup>44</sup> In addition, former HRIC director Fiona Druckenmiller is a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and is a former director of HRW.<sup>45</sup> Other people involved with HRIC with ‘democratic’ ties include the chair of their executive committee Liu Qing (who is on the advisory board of *Beijing Spring*, is a former editor of the *April Fifth Forum*, and is ‘a close ally of Wei Jingsheng’ – a Chinese activist who won the NED’s 1998 Democracy Award).<sup>46</sup> As a number of HRIC people are linked to Beijing Spring, the following section will introduce their ‘democratic’ work.

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<sup>36</sup> Qiang Xiao. [http://chinadigitaltimes.net/author/xiao\\_qiang/](http://chinadigitaltimes.net/author/xiao_qiang/)

<sup>37</sup> CDT Mission. <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/mission/>

<sup>38</sup> Sophie Beach. [http://chinadigitaltimes.net/author/sophie\\_beach](http://chinadigitaltimes.net/author/sophie_beach)

<sup>39</sup> Biography. <http://orvilleschell.com/biography.htm>

<sup>40</sup> Board Members. <http://www.icwfd.org/BoadMembers.html>

<sup>41</sup> R. Scott Greathead. <http://www.wiggin.com/attorneys/bio.asp?ID=G558376492>

<sup>42</sup> Harold Hongju Koh. <http://www.law.yale.edu/HKoh.htm>

NDI Board of Directors & Senior Advisory Committee. <http://www.ndi.org/about/bdadv/bdadv.asp>

<sup>43</sup> About Beijing Spring. <http://bjzc.org/bjs/aboutbjs.htm>

Public Intellectuals in China. <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/roundtables/031005/index.php>

<sup>44</sup> Board Of Trustees. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?boardmember=35&page=10>

About Us. <http://www.public-integrity.org/advisory-board.php>

<sup>45</sup> Fiona Druckenmiller. <http://www.carnegie.org/sub/about/f.druckenmiller.html>

<sup>46</sup> Advisory Board. <http://www.bjzc.org/en/#Perry>

The Democracy Award. <http://www.ned.org/events/democracyaward.html>

*Beijing Spring* is a monthly Chinese-language magazine (sold in and outside of China) that was founded during the Democracy Wall Movement by Wang Dan (who in 1998 received the NED's 1998 Democracy Award, and since 2002 has been the president of *Beijing Spring*), Zhou Weimin and Chen Ziming (who founded the Beijing Social and Economic Sciences Research Institute in 1986, and in 1991 won the Committee to Protect Journalists' International Press Freedom Award along with his colleague Wang Juntao)<sup>47</sup> (Fei, 2005). According to the NED, the magazine 'carries analysis and commentary by authors inside and outside China regarding political developments, social issues, and the prospects for democratization in China', and since 2001, *Beijing Spring* has received annual NED aid.<sup>48</sup> *Beijing Spring's* editorial board is home to the following 'democratically' linked individuals Kuide Chen, Yu Dahai (see later), Wang Dan, Hu Ping, Zheng Yi, and *Beijing Spring* manager Xue Wei (who between 1982 and 1993 worked for the Chinese Alliance for Democracy).<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the members of Beijing Spring's advisory board exhibit many 'democratic' ties and include Perry Link, Andrew J. Nathan, Liu Qing, Fang Lizhi (who in 1995 (at least) was a board member of Human Rights in China, in 2000 (at least) was a member of HRW's Academic Freedom Committee, and is a member of the international council of advisors for the International Campaign for Tibet, see Annon, 1995), Su Shaozhi (who is the former chair of the Princeton China Initiative), and Yu Ying-shi (who helped set up the Princeton China Initiative). As a number of people affiliated with *Beijing Spring* have also been linked to the Princeton China Initiative, this organisation will now be briefly examined.

The Princeton China Initiative was founded in 1989 and closed operations in 2004,<sup>50</sup> and between 1992 and 2005 they received seven grants from the NED to allow exiled Chinese dissidents to publish two monthly newsletters, *China Focus* (English-language), and *The Road* (Chinese-language).<sup>51</sup> In 1989 Liu Binyan (deceased 5 December 2006) a key person at the Initiative was 'China's most prominent journalist' and a Neiman fellow at Harvard University, but when he was banned from returning to China that year he helped found and head the Princeton China Initiative.<sup>52</sup> One important 'democratically' linked person who was involved with the Princeton China Initiative during its early years was their managing director Lorraine Spiess. Prior to joining the Initiative, Spiess had been the executive director of the Canada China Business Council, and had 'worked on Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) programs to support China's ongoing economic reforms.' Spiess 'democratic' links were strengthened when she left the Initiative, as from 1993 to 1995 she

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<sup>47</sup> On February 12, 1991, Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming were imprisoned in China: in 1994, both were then released from prison on medical parole, and while Wang moved to America, Chen was rearrested in the following year and only released from house arrest in 2002. See, Chen Ziming completes 13-year prison sentence. <http://www.cpj.org/news/2002/China17oct02na.html>

International Press Freedom Award Winners 1991-1997. <http://www.cpj.org/awards97/awardschart.html>

<sup>48</sup> In 2004, their NED grant was used to allow Beijing Spring to 'engage in a new initiative to work together with Uyghur democracy activists to increase awareness among Chinese communities, in China and abroad, of the dire restrictions on freedoms in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China.'

<sup>49</sup> About Beijing Spring. <http://bjzc.org/bjs/aboutbjs.htm>

<sup>50</sup> Princeton Public Library: Community Resource File. <http://www.princetonlibrary.org/crf/sube7.htm>

<sup>51</sup> In 1996, the NED noted: the Princeton China Initiative's 'English-language monthly, 'China Focus,' with an international circulation of 1,500, provides in-depth analysis and insight into underlying trends often not reported in conventional media. It has drawn praise from professional China-watchers for consistently providing essential information about the current, on-the-ground situation within China. The Chinese-language monthly, 'The Road,' with a circulation of 3,000, allows readers inside China access to ideas and information otherwise blocked by state censorship.'

<sup>52</sup> Liu Binyan, Journalist. <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/china-99/liubinyan.htm>

Liu Binyan. <http://www.nybooks.com/authors/453>

Refining Definitions of Human Rights.

[http://www.cceia.org/resources/publications/dialogue/1\\_01/articles/504.html](http://www.cceia.org/resources/publications/dialogue/1_01/articles/504.html)



related to China's transition to a market economy.' The Unirule Institute was founded in 1993 and describes itself as a 'private non-profit research institution established for economic research and policy consultation'.<sup>58</sup> Disingenuously, despite receiving funds from the NED, the Unirule Institute still maintains that: 'Unirule has never obtained financial assistance from any government.' Other well-known 'democratic' funders listed on their website include the major liberal philanthropist the Ford Foundation (Roelofs, 2003), the Institute for International Economics (whose most 'democratic' directors are David Rockefeller and George Soros), 'many foreign embassies in Beijing', and 'international public institutions, such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank and African Development Bank'.<sup>59</sup>

The current president and co-founder of the Unirule Institute is Yushi Mao, who while based at the Unirule Institute between 1996 and 1997 was also an executive officer for CES.<sup>60</sup> ('In November 2004, Mao was elected by the International Business Review as one of the ten most influential economists in China.')

<sup>61</sup> It is also interesting to note that one of Unirule's directors, Wang Dingding, is a member of the faculty of the China Center for Economic Research (CCER) – a free market think tank (founded in 1994) at Peking University which 'aims to institutionalize a new teaching and research model which will attract domestic and international resources and bring together a group of Chinese economists who received rigorous academic training in abroad.'<sup>62</sup> The founder and executive director of CCER, Justin Yifu Lin, is a member of the council of fellows of CES, and has much experience of working with 'democracy promoters' like the Rockefeller Foundation, as he obtained their 1986-87 postdoctoral fellowship, and then had his research funded by the Rockefeller Foundation between 1988 and 1994.<sup>63</sup> Ties between CCER and the Rockefeller Foundation also come through Peter F. Geithner, who is a director of the former organisation, and a consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation. Geithner has also previously worked for the Ford Foundation for 28 years serving as their first representative in Beijing (in the late 1980s), has worked for USAID in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Washington, D.C., and is a director of the National Committee on United States-China Relations.<sup>64</sup>

In 1999, the NED provided a single grant (channelled via CIPE) to the Beijing-based National Economic Reform Institute (NERI) of the China Reform Foundation to allow them to 'conduct the first systematic study of economic freedom within China'. Fan Gang is the

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<sup>58</sup> Overview. <http://www.unirule.org.cn/English/AboutUnirule/About%20Unirule.html>

Board of Directors. <http://www.iese.com/institute/board.cfm>

<sup>59</sup> Overview. <http://www.unirule.org.cn/English/AboutUnirule/About%20Unirule.html>

Board of Directors. <http://www.iese.com/institute/board.cfm>

<sup>60</sup> CES EX-Officers. [http://www.china-ces.org/CES\\_About/EXofficer.asp](http://www.china-ces.org/CES_About/EXofficer.asp)

<sup>61</sup> China Security Authors. <http://www.wsichina.org/authen.html>

<sup>62</sup> China Center for Economic Research. <http://old.ccer.edu.cn/en/introduction/introduction.html>

<sup>63</sup> Justin Yifu Lin, Ph.D. <http://old.ccer.edu.cn/en/faculty/ejylin.htm>

China Center for Economic Research faculty member, Zhong Zhao, was also a 2004-05 director of the Chinese Economists Society. More interestingly another CCER faculty member, Zhou Qiren, is a director of the Unirule Institute, and was a 2003 fellow at Yale Law School's China Law Center – a center that that established in 1999 to 'advance the rule of law in China.' Also of interest, Jonathan Hecht, a senior research scholar at the China Law Center, helped founded the Center after working for four years as a program officer in the Beijing office of the Ford Foundation (Hecht, 2002), and he is also a member of Human Rights Watch's Asia Advisory Committee. Finally, the deputy director of the China Law Center, Jamie P. Horsley, is a director of the National Committee on United States-China Relations.

CES EX-Officers. [http://www.china-ces.org/CES\\_About/EXofficer.asp](http://www.china-ces.org/CES_About/EXofficer.asp)

Former Visiting Scholars. <http://www.law.yale.edu/intellecualife/clcformervisitingsscholars.htm>

The China Law Center. <http://www.law.yale.edu/intellecualife/ChinaLawCenter.htm>

About HRW. <http://www.hrw.org/about/info/board.html>

<sup>64</sup> Peter F. Geithner. <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/china/PeterG.html>

current Director of NERI (and he is also a director of the Unirule Institute), and in 2003 he was a speaker at the neoliberal Atlas Economic Research Foundation's 3rd Annual Liberty Forum (Burton, 2004).<sup>65</sup> The former president of NERI was Chen Yizi (Shi, 2004) who escaped from China in 1989 to live in exile in the US, where the following year he founded and became president of the Center for Modern China (based in Princeton, New Jersey).

The Center for Modern China was set up '[w]ith the goal of promoting a market economy and political democracy in China', and it has received NED aid every year between 1992 and 2005 (except for 2000).<sup>66</sup> This NED funding allows them to publish their *Modern China Studies* (a quarterly academic journal), *Papers of the Center for Modern China* ('a monthly series of academic papers for distribution within China'), the *Journal of Contemporary China*, and a number of related books on democratisation in China.<sup>67</sup> On October 5, 1992 – with the aid of the Tibet Forum – the Center organised the *Potomac Conference on Sino-Tibetan Relations: Prospects for the Future* (in Arlington, Virginia) at the facilities of the Freedom Forum with part-funding provided by the NED.<sup>68</sup> The two keynote speakers at the conference were Ambassador Winston Lord (who was the U.S. Ambassador to China from 1985 to 1989, and is married to Bette Bao Lord – who is a director of both Freedom Forum and the International Campaign for Tibet, and is also chairman emeritus of Freedom House)<sup>69</sup> and Ambassador John McDonald (who is chairman and CEO of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy).<sup>70</sup> In addition, the president of the NED, Carl Gershman, also gave a talk at the conference.

In 2004, the NED provided CIPE with a grant to promote the 'development of a transparent and law-based free-market system in China' by supporting a 'series of policy discussion forums and an online policy journal, in cooperation with the Center for Private Economic Studies.'<sup>71</sup> The Center for Private Economic Studies was 'founded in 1994, is a non-profit research organization under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences', and their Director, Liu

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<sup>65</sup> Unirule Introduction. [http://220.194.54.157/E\\_introduction/e\\_intro.html](http://220.194.54.157/E_introduction/e_intro.html)

Atlas Economic Research Foundation: 3rd Annual Liberty Forum.

[http://www.atlasusa.org/V2/main/page.php?page\\_id=289](http://www.atlasusa.org/V2/main/page.php?page_id=289)

<sup>66</sup> Foreword. <http://www.ciaonet.org/book/nathan02/foreword.html>

<sup>67</sup> In 1996, referring to *Modern China Studies*, the NED noted that '[o]f a total circulation of 2,000 copies per issue, half will be distributed to research and policy agencies and social science academies in all 30 provinces and 200 university libraries. The remaining copies will be distributed to Chinese scholars and democratic activists around the world' (in 1997, the circulation of the journal had increased to 3000 issues).

'*Journal of Contemporary China* is the only English language journal edited in North America that provides exclusive information about contemporary Chinese affairs for scholars, businessmen and government policy-makers.' See, *Journal of Contemporary China*. <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10670564.asp>

<sup>68</sup> The conference organizers also extended a special thanks to the aid provided by The Institute for Asian Democracy, and they 'acknowledge[d] Conference organizers Chen Yizi, Huan Guocang, Jigme Ngapo, Tseten Wangchuk Sharlho, and Yin Lu-jun.' 'We are grateful to the following for their extraordinary generosity of spirit: John S. Major, Kathleen W. Peterson, Franc de la Vega, Elsie M. Walker, and Kelsang Gyaltzen.' It looks like organizers were Jeanne Marie Gilbert and James D. Seymour.

*Sino-Tibetan Relations: Prospects for the Future*. <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/area/tibet-potomac/editintr.html>

<sup>69</sup> Bette Bao Lord. <http://www.aifl.org/notable/baolord.html>

Freedom Forum Board of Trustees. <http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=18012>

Board of Trustees. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?boardmember=26&page=10>

<sup>70</sup> The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy is was formed in 1992 and has two particularly 'democratic' directors Thomas R. Donahue (who is the Vice-Chair of the NED, was Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO from 1979 to 1995, and is a director of the Albert Shanker Institute), and William L. Nash (who was the Director of Civil-Military Programs of the National Democratic Institute).

Key Personnel. <http://www.imtd.org/content/view/72/71/>

<sup>71</sup> 2005 Asia Program Descriptions. <http://www.ned.org/grants/05programs/grants-asia05.html>

Yingqiu, is the executive vice president of the Graduate Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.<sup>72</sup> The year before this (in 2003), the NED provided a grant to CIPE to help ‘enable entrepreneurs, economists, and corporate actors to play an enhanced transparent and democratic role in public policy development’, and to publish the Center for Private Economic Studies’s new Chinese-language online periodical, the *Journal of Private Enterprise*.

Finally, in 2005, a think tank called the China Review Information and Technology Company received a NED grant via CIPE to allow them to ‘continue its series of biweekly symposia stimulating debate on issues of economic and system reform.’<sup>73</sup> On 21 January 2006, China Review cohosted a symposium in Beijing with the Unirule Institute, at which Unirule’s Director, Professor Zhang Shuguang, discussed ‘China’s Macroeconomy.’<sup>74</sup>

As this section has illustrated, in China the NED has channelled a lot of funding via CIPE, however, the NED’s three other core grantees are the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center. In China’s case it appears that CIPE has received the lion’s share of the NED’s media related grants, and in contrast the NDI and IRI obtained no money for media projects from the NED, and the AFL-CIO’s Solidarity Center has only received two grants for such work since 1990. The first NED grant distributed to the Solidarity Center was passed on to the Asian-American Free Labor Institute in 1990 to produce 12 issues of the newsletter, *China Labor Notes*, and the second NED grant (2005) stayed with the Solidarity Center to ‘support a Chinese-language online worker-rights information center’ and allow the distribution of ‘an email newsletter containing information about developments related to labor issues.’<sup>75</sup>

## Conclusions

Regardless of the sincerity of the work carried out by the organisations funded by the NED, their acceptance of funding from ‘democracy promoters’ is certainly undermining attempts by other more progressive organisations (most of which remain unknown and underfunded) to promote a high rather than low-intensity democratic public sphere in China. Some groups who have received NED support may of course have only found out about the NED’s antidemocratic funding activities after receipt of their aid, but even if this was the case, it would seem appropriate that they should warn others about their mistake to prevent it happening again – a commendable step that none of the aforementioned groups appears to have yet taken. However, as this article has demonstrated the close ‘democratic’ links between many of the groups suggests that many see no problem in taking money from antidemocratic funders like the NED. Clearly, this is a serious problem, but unfortunately it is not one that is limited to people and groups whose politics are already aligned with the NED’s. In fact, the issue of developing sustainable funding (in ways compatible with participatory principles) for progressive social change has not even been seriously addressed by many progressive activists either – a recent exception being INCITE!’s (2007) *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* (South End Press). Unfortunately, this oversight on the part of

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<sup>72</sup> Center for Private Economic Studies (CPES).

<http://www.cipe.org/programs/global/partners/disPartner.php?id=196>

<sup>73</sup> 2005 Asia Program Descriptions. <http://www.ned.org/grants/05programs/grants-asia05.html>

<sup>74</sup> CIPE: Update on Key Activities January 2006. <http://www.cipe.org/publications/monthly/2006/January.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> Considering all NED grants, Hale (2003: 182) noted that throughout the 1990s, the ‘NED awarded \$4,128,444 to support labor activities in China’, over 60 percent of which was distributed to the Asian-American Free Labor Institute. For more details on the Solidarity Center’s work in China see Hin (2005).

progressive activists appears to have left many organisations open to the insidious cooptive assaults waged by funders intent on promoting a polyarchal public sphere – through a process that might be considered to be a new form of cultural imperialism (Barker, In Press a).

In conclusion, this paper has highlighted the serious threat that ‘democracy promoting’ organisations like the NED pose to the creation of a progressive and democratic public sphere in China. More importantly though, to change this situation, first and foremost progressive activists will have to educate themselves about the work of the ‘democracy promoters,’ a process which has been made easier by the launch last year of two groups which have made it their duty to expose the antidemocratic mechanisations of the NED and its numerous cohorts. These groups are the International Endowment for Democracy (<http://www.iefd.org>) and In the Name of Democracy (<http://inthenameofdemocracy.org/>). However, although it is certainly important to develop a comprehensive understanding of the role of the ‘democracy promoting’ community in circumscribing progressive social change, people can begin to rectify the democratic dilemma posed by the NED and its supporters by publicly denouncing their activities, and by refusing to work with them in the future. It seems that only then can civil society groups and media organisations begin considering adopting more participatory funding arrangements that will help to allow them to promote a genuinely democratic public sphere not a polyarchal one (for further details on alternatives see Barker 2008c).

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