

# SARS: UNMASKING CENSORSHIP IN CHINA

BY ERPING ZHANG

Effective civil society movements depend on the free flow of information. Erping Zhang describes how public participation in controlling the spread of the SARS epidemic was hampered by the Chinese government's policy of censorship and disinformation. The question now is, were any lessons learned?

## Introduction

Censorship in mainland China is such a long-standing issue that the international community has come to take it for granted. Many long-time China-watchers once hoped that China's present economic reform, sustained by foreign investment, might gradually bring transparency and democracy to China. But in reality censorship and deception continue unabated as the regime has engaged the new era of information technology by building the world's most sophisticated Internet firewall system and at the same time has further tightened its vice-like grip on traditional media outlets. The worldwide press freedom index published by the Paris-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders ranks China second from the last among 139 countries, trailed only by North Korea.<sup>2</sup>

While China's draconian efforts have proven successful throughout the Communist Party's 50-year rule, their implications to the rest of the world were brought home by the sudden and unforeseen advent of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). China's five-month cover-up of this deadly epidemic, immortalized in cover stories by prominent foreign publications such as *Time* and *The Economist*, sent shockwaves through the international financial world and caused panic in dozens of infected territories in Asia and North America.

A common point of conjecture has been whether the outside world would ever have learned about SARS if the virus had remained within China's borders rather than migrating to places such as Singapore and Canada. Indeed, would even the Chinese public have heard about it? It is quite possible that SARS would have remained the subject of rumor, or maybe of the odd article by a foreign correspon-

dent. Even those who contracted the illness might never have known that they had fallen victim to a raging epidemic.

Knowing what we now do of SARS, this seems impossible – until we consider China's handling of another major health crisis, AIDS. How many years was it before Beijing admitted to an AIDS problem, and how many mainlanders even now understand the real extent of the threat? Equally important in respect of disease prevention, how many villagers in central China have been given enough information about the risks of selling blood? Have adequate steps been taken to sterilize medical equipment to prevent future contamination? It was only last year, under pressure from the foreign press and the UN, that the leadership in Beijing raised its estimate of people infected with HIV from 30,000 cases to up to 1 million. Even at that, *Agence France-Presse* reported, "According to UN estimates, up to 1.5 million people in China had HIV by December 2001, and the number could reach 10 million by 2010."<sup>3</sup> Whether or not Beijing's revised estimate is accurate remains to be seen, just as we cannot know with any great certainty, even now, the actual extent of the SARS epidemic.

The Chinese regime's usual response to a health scare is to cover it up and hope it will go away by itself. The Chinese Communist Party's survival depends on regulating public sentiment and sustaining a good public image through an iron grip on information and a policy of effective censorship. There is little to suggest that SARS has brought about any change to this policy.

## The Story of SARS

On April 20, 2003, the Beijing authorities officially acknowledged that SARS existed as a serious problem within China, more than one month after the World Health Organization issued a global travel alert on this epidemic. *Time* reported that this virus was first uncovered on November 16, 2002, in Guangdong province, where by early February 2003 at least five persons had died and more than 300 had become infected.<sup>4</sup> With the government providing no information on the epidemic for months, the frightened people of Guangdong battled the "strange plague" on their own through traditional healing methods such as white vinegar, Banlangen (a herbal root), and cold tea.<sup>5</sup> The epidemic coincided with China's most important holiday, the Spring Festival, during which



**The cost of official secrecy: the funeral of 35-year-old Tse Yuen-man, a doctor killed while treating SARS patients in Hong Kong. Photo: Reuters.**

hundreds of thousands of migrant workers left industrialized Guangdong for family reunions throughout China, taking the disease with them. A 64-year-old doctor from Guangzhou, Liu Jianlun, managed to single-handedly contribute to the international dissemination of the disease after traveling to Hong Kong and infecting others, who in turn carried SARS throughout Hong Kong and to Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Canada and the U.S.

Even after the World Health Organization (WHO) issued its global alert on March 12, 2003, it was only revelations to the foreign press on April 8 by Jiang Yanyong, a retired doctor at the People's Liberation Army Hospital No. 301, that eventually led the Chinese government to admit to the seriousness of the situation. By then police had begun arresting people using the Internet and mobile phone Short Messaging Services (SMS) to disseminate facts, rumors and even jokes that had filled the vacuum of accurate official information. One joke advised the U.S. government to halt its search for Iraq's infamously mendacious Information Minister, Saeed al-Sahaf, as he had been spotted hosting official SARS press conferences in Beijing.

On April 20, 2003, the same day that China's health minister and Beijing's mayor were sacked as scapegoats, the official number of infected people jumped tenfold from 37 to 339, and bustling Beijing suddenly became a ghost town as migrant workers and the affluent fled the city by any form of transport available. Soon afterwards, more than 20,000 people were quarantined in Beijing alone. All schools were shut down and university students were confined to their campuses, which were guarded by armed police.

While the government attempted to cope with this new epidemic through all available medical and political means, its cover-up and deception appear to have continued. *Time* reported that just before a WHO inspection team arrived at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in mid-April, "31 coughing, shivering staff members who had caught SARS from patients were hastily loaded into ambulances and driven around until the investigators left."<sup>6</sup> This same *Time* article further reported, "Dr. Zhang Hanwei, director of the Shanxi Provincial People's Hospital in Taiyuan, relayed what he called the 'three nos' disseminated by China's Ministry of Central Publicity: no talking to the media about SARS, no talking to the public about treating the disease and no talking to WHO if its experts come calling."<sup>7</sup> In mid-May an AP report quoted WHO's spokeswoman Mangai Balasegaram as complaining, "China's SARS data has serious flaws because the information does not show how half of the country's patients caught the highly contagious respiratory illness... Right now the situation is that we have a whole load of people, and we don't know where they got the disease... The problem with the data is that there are holes in it."<sup>8</sup>

The WHO's cumulative number of reported probable cases of SARS states that by July 10, 2003, 8,437 persons had been infected with the virus worldwide, while 812 persons were confirmed to have died. China, excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, has reported 5,327 cases and 348 cases of deaths thus far.<sup>9</sup>

The SARS crisis brought home to many Chinese people how thoroughly they had been betrayed by their leadership and the state-controlled media, a revelation that may have

never occurred without the disease's direct affect on the international community and subsequent international pressure that forced the Chinese government to move from complete denial to finally admitting to the presence of SARS within a period of a few months.

### **Manipulation of Information as a Source of Power**

Since its earliest days, the Chinese Communist Party has made use of the media's ability to alter public perceptions of reality. As far back as the 1920s, when the CCP was still in its infancy, it had already set up a Department of Propaganda modeled after Stalin's system. In 1957, the CCP began its first public purge of outspoken intellectuals in an effort to control what was being thought and discussed among the masses. Millions were labeled as "Rightists" and were sent to jail, so-called "re-education through labor" camps and mental institutions for expressing their opinions; thus began the CCP's successful attempts to muzzle the people. The Great Leap Forward in 1958 entailed the Party's most inflated propaganda campaign as the CCP promoted a mass steel production campaign and the setting up of people's communes nationwide. The propaganda inspired construction of backyard furnaces in a vain effort to boost China's steel production to surpass England's, while news media reproduced reports from communes exaggerating their production output to levels unattainable by even the most advanced technology.

The Cultural Revolution (1967-76) led by Mao Zedong perfected the art of using propaganda to mobilize the populace and eliminate political rivals such as Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao, while the Cultural Revolution attempted to wipe out China's 5,000-year civilization, culture and values to make room for the foreign transplant of Communist ideology.

Before the death of Mao in 1976, listening to foreign radio stations was considered a capital crime of treason. On the pretext that isolation and "self-reliance" were in the best interest of China and its people, Mao succeeded in fending off information and influence from overseas, particularly from the "revisionist Soviet Union" and the "imperialist United States."

In the early 1980's, Deng Xiaoping initiated economic reforms in a move to save the collapsing economy. But when Deng noticed a degree of freedom of expression accompanying the package, some dissidents were arrested and there was a clampdown on free speech. Nonetheless, as the economy started to grow free expression among the populace also continued to find informal outlets throughout the 1980s.

All of that was to come to an abrupt end on June 4, 1989, when soldiers were ordered to fire on demonstrators at Beijing's Tiananmen Square. It is a testament to the power of China's propaganda machine that despite the bloodshed people throughout the world witnessed on television, to this very day many Chinese people continue to believe that no students were killed, and that soldiers were the only victims of this so-called "counter-revolutionary rebellion."

The SARS cover-up provided a classic illustration of how China's Propaganda Ministry serves as both the CCP's news

watchdog, blocking information through censorship, and its news generator, responsible for dissemination of misinformation. Every province in China, every city and every workplace has a propaganda division to ensure that the press and other information outlets remain consistent with the message or policy dictated by Beijing. Foreign investors in China are also instructed to allow the government to set up CCP branch committees in their joint venture corporations so that Chinese employees will not be contaminated by foreign "unhealthy elements."

The media itself has even become an effective weapon for repression in China, in line with Mao's contention that periodic "class struggles" were needed to keep society disciplined and united around the Party dictatorship. A prime example is the media campaign against the traditional meditation practice of Falungong. The Chinese government had



**Hogging the truth: animals seem to be the source of SARS, but disinformation helped it spread. Photo: Reuters.**

endorsed Falungong's health benefits both at home and abroad from May 13, 1992 to July 20, 1999, and this writer personally attend two large Falungong experience-sharing seminars sponsored by the Chinese Consulate General in New York City during that time. But when the size of the Falungong's following (estimated at 70-100 million people) became intimidating, Jiang ordered his propaganda machine to launch a smear campaign against both the founder and the practice of Falungong.

For the past four years, the Chinese people have seen and read negative propaganda such as suicides and murders blamed on the Falungong, while the incarceration of more than 100,000 Falungong practitioners in jails, labor camps and mental institutions remains an unknown story.

And Falungong is hardly the only victim. More recently, China's Civil Affairs Ministry launched a crackdown against

63 organizations in an effort to curb freedom of association, conscience, and expression. Many of those registered groups were formed for recreational hobbies, cultural studies and the arts, such as the China Fisherman's Association, the Dancing Hall Music Association and the Shakespeare Association.

### Cyber Censorship

The latest battleground for information control is the Internet. Guo Liang of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing told the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in 2001, "Mao Zedong said that to have power you need two things: the gun and the pen ... The Communist Party has the gun, but the Internet is now the pen. If they lose control of it, something will happen to challenge their authority."<sup>10</sup> The Chinese Communist Party's subsequent efforts to control this pen led the CPJ to list Jiang Zemin among the top ten enemies of the world press as thousands of Internet cafes in Beijing and all over China were shut down for "security reasons." All of China's Internet services are required to install filtering software to block prohibited sites and monitor some 60 million Chinese Internet users.

Potential cyber dissent is controlled through "Golden Shield," a secret program proposed by the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Information Industry and allotted sizeable financial and human resources. According to Reporters Without Borders, Golden Shield employs a cyber police force of some 30,000 persons to spot, identify and arrest dissident Internet users. The government has also issued more than 60 laws and sets of regulations relating to the Internet. Reporters Without Borders estimates that more people are in prison in China for expressing their views on the Internet than in any other country in the world.

Among the victims of the government's war on the Internet is Liu Di, a 22-year-old student who was arrested on the eve of the opening of the Communist Party's 16th Congress in November on accusations of "endangering state security" through messages she had posted in an Internet chat-room under the pseudonym "Stainless Steel Mouse."<sup>11</sup> On May 29, 2003, four more young Internet dissidents, Yang Zili, Xu Wei, Jin Haike and Zhang Honghai, were sentenced to prison terms of up to 10 years for discussing the growing social problems and for posting reform-minded essays on the Internet.<sup>12</sup>

Even before then, the Chinese government's war against the Internet had come to international attention following a decree from Beijing in early September 2002 that banned the Internet search engines Google.com and AltaVista.com. One week after the initial ban, Google was back in China, but only partially. The U.K.-based *Guardian* noted: "... when the magic name of Chinese president Jiang Zemin was entered, Google consistently replied that the information 'is currently unavailable' ... A click on 'BBC News' produces a blank and even the weather in England and Scotland is banned."<sup>13</sup>

Beijing typically denied all knowledge of this ban, with an official from China's Ministry of Information Industry quoted as saying, "The Ministry has received no information

about Google being blocked, and we have received no information about a block being lifted."<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile more than 500,000 foreign Web sites remain blocked on the grounds of protecting Chinese people from exposure to pornography and other "unhealthy elements" from abroad – including news sites such as *The Washington Post* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

### Overseas Reach

Efforts by foreign governments to bring alternative sources of information to the Chinese public are consistently blocked. Although listening to a short-wave radio is no longer a treasonous offense, the Chinese authorities jam the frequencies of foreign media sources such as Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and the BBC. America's Cable News Network and other overseas satellite channels are routinely restricted to hotels, residences and offices for foreigners, and even at that topics sensitive to the government are often interrupted with no explanation.<sup>15</sup>

An American citizen, Dr. Charles Li, is currently serving a three-year sentence in China on charges of allegedly "preparing" to break through a television signal to broadcast outside information on the persecution of Falungong to the people of China. He has been held in a Chinese prison for more than six months and, according to Shanghai-based U.S. consular sources, has gone on a hunger strike. Furthermore, Dr. Li has reportedly been beaten, force fed and given "brain-washing" classes.

As for the private sector, rather than bringing greater freedom to China, in their scramble for profits some Western companies seem more inclined to import Chinese-style censorship to the West. In October 2001 a major U.S. media company, AOL Time Warner, signed an agreement to carry content from China's state-run television system, Chinese Central Television (CCTV), on cable in the United States in return for being allowed to present cartoons and other entertainment programming to certain media outlets in southern China. AOL Time Warner promised not to broadcast news or other programming inside China that might be considered "sensitive," while China's CCTV had uncensored access to its American audience.

This agreement is of particular importance to Chinese Americans in light of the fact that a large share of North America's Chinese language newspapers, radio stations and TV stations are financed by the Chinese Communist Party and propagate the Communist Party line on SARS and other issues such as the U.S. war against Iraq. For example, a Chinese TV network in New York recently repeated Beijing's SARS death toll, which remains suspiciously low compared with the numbers released by the World Health Organization. This kind of programming, an important source of information for many Chinese-speaking Americans, subliminally exports a whole culture of fear and repression. Many overseas Chinese do not dare speak to reporters or say what they think about the Chinese government for fear that agents from the Chinese Embassy and consulates might be watching or tapping their phones.

Other elements in the foreign private sector also seem more inclined to bow to censorship than to advocate free speech in China. *The Los Angeles Times* reported last year that some 300 Western businesses and other organizations had signed what was described as a “Public Pledge on Self-Discipline for China’s Internet Industry,” otherwise known as a self-censorship agreement.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, it is no secret now that China’s sophisticated Internet firewall is built with the assistance and know-how of foreign corporations. Some companies, however, such as Dynamic Internet Technology, Inc. and Ultrareach Internet Corporation, are employing cutting-edge technology to break through China’s firewall and deliver e-mail and Web content to users inside Mainland China. It appears that this new technology has contributed to an upsurge in the number of Chinese Web surfers who have managed to access overseas Web sites over the past few months for news on SARS and other critical matters.

### **China’s Media & SARS**

In the run-up to the critical 16th Party Congress last November, China’s Propaganda Department was working overtime, sending out a hefty memo informing editors of which topics were considered off-limits — basically anything and everything that could possibly reflect poorly on the Party’s job performance, including industrial accidents and food poisoning.<sup>17</sup> With the Propaganda Department threatening closure to miscreants, no reporter dared truthfully address the topic of SARS, which began to make its presence known soon after the Party Congress.

It is interesting to note that Health Minister Zhang Wenkang and the mayor of Beijing, Meng Xuenong, were both dismissed from their positions for what state media called their inadequate response to the outbreak, allowing the leadership to claim that it had come clean with WHO. Neither official, however, was ever accused by the top leadership of involvement in the cover-up or in the deception of the Chinese people and the world.

On the other hand, on June 2 *AP* reported that a top Chinese health official, Gao Qiang, was still denying claims that Beijing tried to hide the seriousness of the SARS virus. Gao claimed that the government warned about SARS as early as February and that early efforts to contain its spread were slowed by poor information.

*Asia Times* reported on June 3 that there appeared to have been an outbreak of SARS at a residential complex called Beiyuan Gardens. With more than 10,000 residents living in close proximity to each other, the outbreak threatened to replicate the case of Amoy Garden — the Hong Kong housing complex where more than 300 people contracted SARS and 35 died. *Asia Times* reported, “Beijing media have yet to report on the situation at Beiyuan Gardens. Some residents have tried to bring attention to their situation via public Web sites, but, for example, their information was deleted within less than a minute after posting it on the popular Internet portal Sina.com. Even their telephones are now unable to send out text messages — Beiyuan Gardens residents

have become overnight outcasts. Having fallen into despair, some residents of Beiyuan Gardens sent a letter to Wang Qishan, Beijing’s new mayor... Complex residents are still waiting for Mayor Wang’s response.”<sup>18</sup>

Does this sound like the reaction of a government and a media committed to the new “openness” promised by Gao Qiang, the Vice Health Minister, in battling against SARS? In Hong Kong, residents of the Amoy Gardens were quickly evacuated, quarantined and given food, shelter and medical care. In contrast, it appears the residents of Beijing’s Beiyuan Gardens were shut out by the security apparatus and left to contract SARS and infect others.

China’s *Caijing* economic journal was recently ordered to cease publication because its June 20 issue disclosed information on the SARS outbreak as well as a high-profile Shanghai real estate scandal. Ironically, this occurred during the same week that WHO lifted the travel alert against visiting Beijing.

The above examples cast serious doubt on the veracity of China’s SARS statistics even now. Who is holding China and its government accountable?

The latest target of censorship by China’s media outlets is the burst of mass protests in Hong Kong. When Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Hong Kong on July 1 for the sixth anniversary celebrations of Hong Kong’s reversion to Chinese rule, the occasion became a forum for a display of public outrage against a proposed security bill commonly referred to as Article 23, which many Hong Kong people regard as an attempt to curb freedoms and control dissent. *AFP* reported that in China’s state-run press “there was no mention of the controversial Article 23 legislation nor the 500,000 people opposed to it who took to the streets in the territory’s biggest protest since more than one million people rallied after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing.”<sup>19</sup> *AP* reported, “CNN’s broadcast into China was cut Monday night during an interview with a critic of a planned Hong Kong anti-subversion law that opponents say could stifle the media.”<sup>20</sup>

### **The Impact of SARS**

An assessment of the long-term impact the SARS crisis will have on transparency and media control in China is still difficult to make at this time. While the epidemic itself seems under control at present, its long-term effects remain uncertain, as does the future behavior of the various government factions. Given the Chinese Communist Party’s track record and its apparent willingness to resort to all and any means in pursuit of self-preservation, the task of converting China into a more transparent and open entity is comparable to asking a tiger to turn vegetarian. A totalitarian regime without media control would not be an effective dictatorship at all.

There is, however, one thing that the SARS epidemic has accomplished, and that is to focus more international attention on the issue of transparency in China. The way the Chinese regime attempted to cover up the situation and to disseminate falsehoods both domestically and internationally has seriously damaged its credibility, and that is a lesson that China sorely needed to learn. SARS has also served as a

wake-up call for foreign governments, a reminder that this is still a repressive regime that has been compulsively deceitful for more than 50 years. Perhaps SARS will even remove the rose-colored glasses worn by so many analysts in the U.S. private sector when assessing China's unfailingly optimistic economic statistics every year.

As one Hong Kong-based reporter wrote in late April this year, "In contemporary international relations, soft power matters. Reputation, transparency and accountability are all important measures to reflect one's standing in the global hierarchy. In its mishandling of SARS, China has squandered precious political capital that it has built up over the past five years. It will be a long time before China can restore its internal and international position."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, while the SARS crisis may or may not make China change its long-term habits, it may have at least provided the international community with the important lesson that external pressure works. Ultimately, better behavior and a little humility on China's part could have far-reaching implications for the creation of a more open society that is better equipped to participate in the international community.

### Conclusion

The story of SARS is merely one example that serves to remind us of the chilling reality of censorship under the Communist tyranny, as well as of the importance of freedom of information in fostering transparency, the rule of law, human rights and civil society in China. It also brings out the importance of the international community's continued efforts to open up China, not only driven by economic interests, but more importantly for the sake of positive social change benefiting China's 1.3 billion citizens.

SARS was a natural calamity that came close to becoming a man-made disaster. More lives could have been saved had Beijing chosen not to cover up the issue up for more than five months, and many more would certainly have died had the deception continued. Had this epidemic not plagued foreign countries and led to an international outrage, the Communist regime in Beijing would almost certainly have treated the epidemic with the same secrecy and indifference with which it has addressed the AIDS epidemic. The tragedy of SARS lies not merely in the simple negligence or irresponsibility of certain individual officials of the regime, but in the operating logic of the authoritarian Communist system, under which government officials allow political considerations to dominate their approach to any issue. Hu Ping, a well-known intellectual in exile, recently observed that to the unelected bureaucrats of China, human life is little more than a statistic, and as long as the number of casualties remains within a permissible scope, they are an inevitable trade-off for maintaining social stability.<sup>22</sup>

The real lesson of SARS was the reminder for those who live in the free world that transparency and freedom of information must be treasured as a fundamental right, and is perhaps the most important factor in sustaining an open civil society.

1. This paper is based on my presentation at a hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on June 5, 2003 on the subject of "SARS in China: Implications for Media Control and the Economy," with additional research and analysis for a thesis presented to the faculty of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in partial fulfillment of the requirement for Degree of Master of Arts, July 9, 2003.
2. Reporters Without Borders, *First Worldwide Press Freedom Index*, available from [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=4116](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=4116).
3. AFP, *Hundreds of Police Storm 'AIDS Village' in China, Arrested 13 Farmers* (July 3, 2003), available from <http://www.aegis.com/news/afp/2003/AF030705.html>.
4. *Tale of Two Countries*, *Time* 54 (May 5, 2003).
5. "Guangzhou's 'Strange Disease' Plague" [Guangzhou di "guaibing" wenyi] *Radio Free Asia*, February 12, 2003; available from <http://origin.sarsinfo.cn/article.html?cid=98794>.
6. *Hiding the Patients*, *Time* 23 (April 28, 2003).
7. *Time*, *ibid*.
8. Christopher Bodeen, *WHO: Beijing's SARS Data Seriously Flawed*, AP (May 10, 2003), available from [http://www.ptd.net/webnews/wed/bb/Asars-china.Rod4\\_DyA.html](http://www.ptd.net/webnews/wed/bb/Asars-china.Rod4_DyA.html).
9. World Health Organization, *Cumulative Number of Reported Probable Cases of SARS* (July 10, 2003); available from [http://www.who.int/csr/sars/country/2003\\_07\\_10/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/sars/country/2003_07_10/en/).
10. A. Lin Neumann, *The Great Firewall*, briefing by Committee to Protect Journalists (January 2001).
11. Reporters Without Borders, *Young Internet user Liu Di secretly detained for four months*, (March 7, 2003), available from [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=5093](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=5093).
12. Joshua Eisenman, *Suppression goes online*, *The Baltimore Sun* (June 26, 2003).
13. John Gittings, *Google is back in China but don't try asking any difficult questions*, *The Guardian* (September 14, 2002).
14. AFP, *Google mystery deepens*, (September 13, 2002).
15. AP, *CNN China broadcast censored*, (June 30, 2003).
16. Xiao Qiang & Sophie Beach, *The Great Firewall of China*, *The Los Angeles Times* (September 11, 2002).
17. BBC, *China food poisoning kills 40*, (September 14, 2002), available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2258389.stm>.
18. *Asia Times*, *New SARS disaster looms in Beijing* (June 3, 2003).
19. AFP, "Chinese newspapers fail to report mass protests in Hong Kong," (July 2, 2003).
20. AP, *CNN China broadcast censored*, (July 1, 2003), available from <http://209.157.64.200/focus/f-news/938435/posts>
21. *Asia Times*, *SARS could doom China's leadership* (April 26, 2003), available from <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/ED26Ad02.html>.
22. Hu Ping, *SARS: the Real Story*, Beijing Spring (June 2003).