

## China's Response to SARS

Joseph Fewsmith

A month after severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) moved from a medical crisis—albeit one unacknowledged as such by the Chinese authorities—to a political crisis, it has become apparent that the disease will have a significant impact on China's political system, though one that is likely to be long-term rather than immediate. Although some have argued that SARS will be “China's Chernobyl,” leading to far-reaching political change and perhaps democratization, others have maintained that the political system will simply absorb the impact and not change. Both judgments appear wide of the mark. Much more likely is that SARS will set off a variety of forces which the government will try to control, but which are going to be increasingly difficult to contain. It is still too early to draw strong conclusions about the impact of the SARS crisis, but some tentative conjectures about both elite politics and the longer-range implications can be hazarded.

In thinking about the political impact of SARS at the elite level, one has to start with the unsettled condition of the political transition that took place at the 16th Party Congress in November 2002 and at the National People's Congress in March 2003. Indeed, as many people have noted, China's failure to report SARS in a timely and accurate fashion was apparently due to the desire to maintain “stability” during a period of leadership transition as well as a deeply ingrained bureaucratic impulse to maintain secrecy (even within the political system). Just as important was the ambiguous nature of the transition. Hu Jintao was named general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Wen Jiabao was named premier, but Jiang Zemin held on to his positions as head of the party and state Central Military Commissions (CMC) and named several close cronies to the Politburo and its Standing Committee. Whether such an arrangement was intended to provide a slow transition from one leadership to another or simply reflected unresolved political conflict, it left the lines of authority unclear—and that, too, had an impact on the ability of the Chinese government to respond.

Indeed, it may have been the tenuousness of Hu Jintao's position that led him to make efforts—careful efforts at that—to strike themes in the weeks following the party congress that would create an image of an involved “man of the people.” Thus, Hu's emphasis on “rule by law,” his visit to the revolutionary capital of Xibaipo in December to stress the virtues of plain living, his visits with peasants in Inner Mongolia and the suburbs of Beijing around the time of the lunar new year, and the January conference on rural work all seemed to distinguish Hu as a leader from the more remote Jiang. This contrast should not be exaggerated. Leaders are expected to visit ordinary people around the lunar new year; Jiang had done the same thing earlier in his tenure as general secretary. Nevertheless, given the increasing gap between the coast and the hinterland, Hu's statements and activities appeared to set a different tone and create some political

space for the new leader. Premier Wen Jiabao's statements and activities have likewise suggested an effort to project a new image.

The question that was set up by the outcome of the 16th Party Congress concerned the relationship between Hu as general secretary and Jiang as head of the CMC. Hu has been very careful to pay respect to Jiang. When Hu went to Xibaipo, he carefully cited Jiang's words on plain living and hard struggle (as well as those of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping). All policy initiatives have been cast in terms of carrying out the spirit of the 16th Party Congress and realizing the "three represents." When on rare occasions Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin have appeared in public on the same day, *People's Daily* has run their pictures, exactly the same size, next to each other; they have thus appeared almost as coleaders.

## Responding to SARS

The delicate and unclear leadership situation appears to have had an impact on the way in which China's leaders responded to the SARS crisis. The first public indication of leadership concern over SARS came on April 2, 2003, when Premier Wen Jiabao presided over a State Council Executive Committee meeting that discussed the SARS issue. The Xinhua News Agency report on the meeting makes it apparent that the issue was already being taken very seriously at the highest level and suggests the source of frictions that led to the dramatic firing of Minister of Health Zhang Wenkang on April 20. At the State Council meeting, the Ministry of Health (no doubt Zhang) presented a briefing on the SARS situation. Based on this briefing, the meeting declared that SARS had "already been brought under effective control." It also appointed a leadership small group, headed by Zhang Wenkang, to lead preventative work, to report promptly to the World Health Organization (WHO), and to increase effective cooperation with the WHO.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, such arrangements were not effective. The following day, April 3, Zhang Wenkang told a news conference that Beijing had 12 cases of SARS and three deaths. On April 9, Vice Minister of Health Ma Xiaowei stated that there were 22 cases of SARS in the city and four deaths. "Today, the numbers I report are correct," said Ma. The same day, however, Jiang Yanyong, the retired head of China's premier military hospital, Number 301, publicly declared that he knew of at least 120 cases at Number 301 hospital and two other military hospitals.<sup>2</sup>

Wen Jiabao presided over a meeting of the various democratic parties on April 11 to listen to their views on the SARS issue, and then two days later spoke at a national meeting on preventing SARS. Wen conveyed a greater sense of urgency, saying that although the epidemic was "under effective control," the "situation remained extremely grave." Wen warned that the SARS crisis "directly affects the overall situation of reform, development, and stability," and hinted at frustration in controlling the epidemic. It was necessary to "increase cooperation," Wen told the meeting. "All areas and all departments," he said, "must unify their thinking with the arrangements the party center

and the State Council have made.”<sup>3</sup> The same day, Hu Jintao met with Tung Chee-hwa, chief executive of Hong Kong, in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and promised full support for Hong Kong’s efforts to control the epidemic.<sup>4</sup>

On April 17, Hu Jintao presided over a Politburo Standing Committee meeting, the very convening of which stood in contrast to the meeting’s declaration that the work of prevention and cure had attained “obvious results.” The report on the meeting concluded by warning officials to report periodically to the public, not to delay reports, and not to cover up the situation.<sup>5</sup> The following day, Xinhua News Agency reported that a new task force to oversee SARS work had been established. Liu Qi, Beijing party secretary and Politburo member, was named head; the deputies were Zhang Wenkang, minister of health; Meng Xuenong, Beijing mayor; and Wang Qian, deputy director of the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) General Logistics Department.<sup>6</sup>

This report suggests that despite the frequent leadership activities related to SARS and the increasing tone of urgency in official reports (notwithstanding claims of “effective control”), no decision had yet been made to remove Zhang and Meng from their positions; on the contrary, the report seemed to reflect an increase in their responsibilities. Indeed, foreign reporters were told on the morning of April 20 that Zhang and Meng would be at a press conference that day to report on the SARS situation. They never made it.

Thus, the startling decision to remove Zhang and Meng from their positions must have come at the last minute. The decision may have come late, but the frustration had apparently been mounting for some time. According to John Pomfret, as early as April 7—two days before Jiang Yanyong spoke publicly about the cover-up—when Wen Jiabao visited China’s Center for Disease Control, the premier talked about the failure of the military to report on the situation. City officials similarly covered up the situation. Zhang Wenkang apparently knew of the situation, but could not control it.<sup>7</sup>

There may also have been a lack of cooperation bordering on insubordination. Zhang Wenkang was a former military doctor and personal physician to Jiang Zemin, and that is apparently where his loyalties lay. Meng, a former Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL) official, was loyal to Hu Jintao, and his ability to gain cooperation from either the Ministry of Health or the Beijing municipal authorities was apparently limited.

The sacking of Zhang and Meng was shocking, but not unprecedented. Petroleum Minister Song Zhenming was fired following the collapse of the Bohai Number Two oil rig in 1980, but his dismissal (as well as the subsequent sacking of his boss, then-vice premier Kang Shi’en) was closely related to factional struggles then ongoing in elite circles. In 1988, amid a brief burst of attempts to enforce accountability, Ding Guan’gen was dismissed as minister of railways in the wake of a number of serious train accidents, and Hu Yizhou was dismissed as head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China in an assignation of responsibility for plane crashes. Although Hu’s career never recovered, Ding was a close bridge partner of Deng Xiaoping, so he went on to serve as head of the Propaganda Department—a critical position—for a decade.

The choice of replacements for Zhang and Meng, however, suggested that something different from factional politics was at play, though politics is clearly part of the calculation. Vice Premier Wu Yi was named to replace Zhang as minister of health, and Wang Qishan was named to replace Meng. Wu and Wang are both, in Washington parlance, “heavy hitters.” Wu is widely seen as an associate of former premier Zhu Rongji, but her experience and connections significantly predate her association with Zhu. Born in 1938, Wu graduated from Beijing Petroleum Academy and spent her career from 1962 to 1988 in the petroleum industry. For much of that time she was in Beijing, and she almost certainly became acquainted with Zeng Qinghong; Zeng was with the National Energy Commission from 1979 to 1982 and then with the Ministry of Petroleum from 1982 to 1984. From 1988 to 1991, Wu served as vice mayor of Beijing (when Chen Xitong was mayor). In 1991, Wu moved to the Ministry of Foreign Trade (later renamed the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation), serving as deputy party secretary and then party secretary. It was in this capacity that she worked closely with Zhu Rongji on details of China’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and became well known to the foreign community. Thus, she brings to her new job long bureaucratic experience (as part of the “new petroleum faction”), deep knowledge of Beijing municipality, and credibility with the foreign community.

Wang Qishan is similarly associated with Zhu Rongji, and no doubt Zhu supported Wang, but again Wang’s credentials go far beyond his relationship with Zhu. As the son-in-law of Yao Yilin, Wang is one of the premier *gaogan zidi* (princelings) in China today. Born in 1948, he graduated from Northwest University and then worked in the Institute of Modern History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences from 1979 to 1982. In 1982, he worked with Du Runsheng in the Rural Policy Research Office of the CCP Central Committee and in the State Council Rural Development Research Center. In this capacity, he was very much a part of the group of young reformers who helped bring about China’s agricultural reforms. Wang came to fame as early as 1980, when he and three other young intellectuals were dubbed the “four gentlemen” for an economic reform proposal they made which was praised by Chen Yun. In 1989, Wang became vice governor of the Construction Bank of China; in 1993, he became deputy head of the People’s Bank of China; and in 1994, he became head of the Construction Bank of China. In 1998, Wang became deputy governor of Guangdong, and then in 2000 he moved to the State Council’s Economic Reform Commission. Finally, in 2002 he was named party secretary of Hainan Province. Thus, Wang has long experience with reform issues, wide connections among the foreign community, and the connections and confidence of a *gaogan zidi* to get things done.

What Wu and Wang bring to their new positions is the bureaucratic and personal clout to get recalcitrant local bureaucracies to cooperate. Indeed, Wang’s mobilization efforts to build a SARS hospital (called Xiaotangshan) in northwest Beijing seemed designed in part to demonstrate his authority (though no doubt the extra beds were desperately needed). Three weeks after Wu’s and Wang’s appointment, new SARS cases in Beijing are reportedly going down, though neither the city nor the country is out of danger yet.

## Other Sackings and Accountability

The firings of Zhang Wenkang and Meng Xuenong proved to be just the first of many similar, but lower-profile, sackings around the country. On May 8, Xinhua reported that at least 120 officials had been fired for dereliction of duty.<sup>8</sup> Separate reports spoke of 63 officials being disciplined in Inner Mongolia, as well as 12 in Anhui, 11 in Shandong, seven in Changsha, etc.<sup>9</sup> Although this disciplinary action was widely touted as unprecedented, Xinhua pointed out that more than 60 cadres in Hunan had been disciplined during the flood of 1998.<sup>10</sup> Such actions are dramatic and no doubt catch the attention of local cadres (according to the philosophy of “killing the chicken to scare the monkeys”), but they should not be taken as indicative of any sort of political reform.

The “Emergency Regulations on Public Health Emergencies,” issued on May 12, are useful in codifying—at great length—responsibilities and procedures to be followed in crises such as the one China currently faces.<sup>11</sup> The 1989 Epidemic Control Law already made it illegal to conceal outbreaks of disease that would threaten public health—but that did not help in the current crisis. One provision of the new regulations, however, might prove to be of some help. Article 3 specifies that in an emergency, the State Council will establish an emergency response office that will be composed of people from the relevant State Council ministries and relevant departments of the military. The State Council would have responsibility for overseeing the office and responding to the emergency. If this plan were put into effect, it would curtail the independence of the military; indeed, since the regulation is effective from the day it was promulgated, presumably the military will be brought under the auspices of the State Council for purposes of fighting SARS. If that is the case, it constitutes a breakthrough.

## Bringing the Military Back In

The military was a major factor in covering up the SARS situation; if John Pomfret’s information is correct, China’s leadership was aware by early April that the military was withholding information. It appears that it was only with the sacking of Zhang and Meng and the concurrent reappraisal of the number of SARS cases (from 37 to 339) on April 20 that the military began to divulge information—and even then it may have held back for a while. In contrast with *People’s Daily*, which ran numerous commentator articles on the SARS crisis, *Liberation Army Daily* carried only one commentator article in the same period. It was not until Jiang Zemin signed an order on the evening of April 25 dispatching 1,200 army medical personnel to Beijing to join the fight against SARS (all were apparently assigned to the new Xiaotangshan Hospital) that the PLA appeared engaged in the fight. Even then, top military leaders such as Cao Gangchuan did not make comments on the crisis.

## Jiang Zemin

Although the poor record of the PLA in revealing information to civilian authorities in the early days of the crisis can reasonably be attributed to the sense of independence and secrecy that have long characterized the PLA, the slow response of Jiang Zemin is harder to understand. Jiang did not make a public comment from the onset of the crisis in mid-April until he met with Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes in Shanghai on April 26. Jiang told Fernandes: “After arduous efforts, we have achieved obvious results in controlling SARS.”<sup>12</sup> It was an odd statement to make, coming only six days after the sacking of two leading officials and as the number of SARS cases in Beijing and around the country continued to climb. Indeed, as some in chat rooms noted, it was as if Jiang were repeating the old mantra, the one that had existed before Hu and Wen insisted on openness. Some observers went further, reading into Jiang’s comments criticism of Hu Jintao for becoming too excited over the SARS threat.

As if on cue, other voices that had remained silent on the SARS issue began to speak up. On April 26, Xinhua reported that Zeng Qinghong, whose silence on the SARS issue had also become conspicuous, had gone to the Central Party School on April 24—the very day schools across Beijing were ordered shut—to deliver the opposite message. It is “extremely important,” Zeng said, that the party school “maintain normal teaching and studying order and work order.”<sup>13</sup>

Curiously, following Jiang’s reappearance on the scene, the Politburo met on April 28 to discuss Jiang’s ideological theme, the three represents (that the CCP represents the fundamental interests of the vast majority of the people, that it represents the advanced productive forces, and that it represents advanced culture). This Politburo meeting certainly put Jiang’s thinking front and center again, reminding people that Jiang was still central to the political system, but its relevance to the fight against SARS was not immediately evident. Strangely, *People’s Daily* ran no editorial or commentator article to expand on the three represents; normally the party organ expounds on whatever theme the Politburo or its Standing Committee has met to discuss. On May 15, however, *People’s Daily* ran an article by Ren Zhongping, a pseudonym meaning “People’s Daily Important Commentary.” Such commentaries are less authoritative than editorials or commentator articles, but no less important; frequently they express the views of the top leadership directly, without the compromises necessary in more authoritative statements of Politburo views. Although this article paid homage to the three represents, the centerpiece was clearly Hu Jintao’s 24-character phrase meaning: “The masses are of one heart; the masses’ wills are forged into a fortress, unified and mutually helping, harmonious and sharing together, advancing in the face of difficulties, and daring to achieve victory.”<sup>14</sup>

The Politburo meeting did, however, strike one theme that would become increasingly evident in the ensuing days, namely the need for “one hand to grasp the important issue of SARS, and the other hand to grasp the central task of economic

construction without wavering.”<sup>15</sup> Clearly, if Hu failed either to control the SARS epidemic or to maintain economic growth, his position would be weakened.

## Media Campaign

In the days following the leadership’s decision to reverse course and report the SARS crisis honestly, the media showed Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao in a constant blur of activity—convening meetings, visiting hospitals, meeting health workers—but no theme dominated coverage. Following Jiang Zemin’s reappearance, however, media coverage converged around a theme of patriotism. The new approach seemed to satisfy the needs of both those who wanted fuller disclosure of SARS information and those who were concerned about the impact such disclosures might have on social stability. This approach emerged from an April 25 meeting of the Propaganda Department, presided over by Li Changchun, the Politburo member in charge of propaganda. Drawing on a line used by Hu Jintao, Li emphasized that the “strongest motif of our times” was “uniting the will of the masses into a fortress, dedicating ourselves in unity, seeking truth in a scientific way, overcoming difficulties, and winning victory.” He went on to say that SARS had “put our country at the mercy of a sudden, major disaster,” and thus it was “more necessary for us than ever before to enhance our great national spirit.”<sup>16</sup>

A Propaganda Department notice the following day emphasized the importance of the three represents, and demanded that propaganda units emphasize the unfolding of the “great national spirit” in the struggle against and victory over SARS.<sup>17</sup> An example of the new emphasis on ordinary people sacrificing for the national struggle against SARS appeared the same day (April 26) in a *People’s Daily* commentator article about Deng Lianxian, a senior doctor in a hospital in Guangzhou who died of SARS while treating other SARS sufferers. Hu Jintao was quoted as expressing condolences to the family and heralding the “struggles and contributions” of medical workers throughout the country.<sup>18</sup>

Since then, there have been numerous commentator articles on strengthening the national spirit, building up to Hu Jintao’s call on May 1 to launch a “people’s war” against SARS.<sup>19</sup> This new propaganda package has several advantages. First, it links the themes evoked by Hu Jintao since the previous fall—the emphasis on the common person, the emphasis on the mass line, and the Maoist rhetoric Hu used in his trip to Xibaipo—to his current, populist approach to fighting SARS. Second, it allows him to be forthright about reporting information about SARS. Third, it builds a sense of national crisis and solidarity that calms the fears of those concerned that speaking frankly about SARS will disrupt social stability. Finally, it provides a framework for controlling the media, in that it implicitly (but firmly) indicates that media outlets that do not adhere to the line are unpatriotic. It is an approach that allows for greater honesty but does not admit glasnost.

## Potential for Political Change

Because China's political system responded so poorly to the challenge presented by SARS, the crisis has provoked much speculation about whether substantial political change might result. Some have argued that this crisis is "China's Chernobyl" and will inevitably lead to large-scale change, perhaps even to the unraveling of the system. Others have argued that the system will absorb the impact of this crisis and eventually move on as if nothing had happened.<sup>20</sup> When looking at the short-term response to the crisis, it is hard to be optimistic that it will trigger any large-scale political change in the near term; after all, the propaganda apparatus appears to have rebounded very quickly following the sudden change in policy. If one dates the change from the April 17 Politburo Standing Committee meeting (or the April 20 dismissal of Zhang and Meng), it only took a few days (until April 25) for the party apparatus to formulate a new approach to propaganda. Whatever conflict there may be between Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin has not provided an opening for media to send mixed signals or for adventurous media to contest state control (though there have been a few interesting instances). Even the Internet, which has at times been boldly critical of the political authorities, has picked up the theme of nationalism. Yet if one looks at the medium- and long-term pictures, there are several reasons to be cautiously optimistic.

First, the transformation of technology, the growth of a contingent of dedicated Chinese journalists, the influence of reformers within the party, the presence of foreign reporters, and the impact of international pressures are all making it increasingly difficult to control information. Certainly many stories never make the headlines, and government operations remain frustratingly opaque. But, a lot of stories, especially those concerning major crises, do get out. A watershed in this regard was the case of schoolchildren making fireworks in a Jiangxi school in March 2001. The fireworks exploded, killing at least 42 people, including 38 children. Local reporters were the first to break the story, but it soon hit the international media. At first, Chinese authorities denied the story, but finally Premier Zhu Rongji apologized.<sup>21</sup>

Second, under Hu Jintao there had already been an effort under way since the beginning of the year to make the media more effective and, to a certain extent, more open. In January, Li Changchun called on the media not only to report on the government, "but also to monitor some problems and issues in society,"<sup>22</sup> and Liu Yunshan, the head of the Propaganda Department, similarly called for "push[ing] forward propaganda and ideological work in the spirit of reform."<sup>23</sup> These were by no means calls for fundamental change in the propaganda sector; nevertheless, there were some changes in media coverage. On May 1, China Central Television (CCTV) started an around-the-clock news service apparently modeled after CNN. This launch was expected to bring in a lot of revenue from advertising, but it also should increase the quality of news coverage. It certainly reflects growing competition in the media market. Moreover, during the war in Iraq, CCTV for the first time carried feeds from foreign broadcasters and live coverage of the war.<sup>24</sup>

Third, some media are demonstrating that they have "learned" the lesson of the SARS crisis. A case in point is that of the poisoning of some 3,000 schoolchildren (two of whom died) in the city of Haicheng in Liaoning Province. At first, the story was

suppressed, but it finally burst into the national media as reporters decried efforts that damaged the public health. An article in *Zhongguo qingnian bao* cited restrictions on the medical treatment the students received and demanded, “Is this not a naked violation of citizens’ right to health?” Another article, this one in *Nanfang luntan*, declared that a “modern government under law and order” should stop concealing facts. “The victims, the families, and even the public have the right to know the inside story and the right to get relief,” it said.

Similarly, when the handling of the SARS case finally became public, *Zhongguo qingnian bao* compared keeping the lid on such stories to engaging a societal pressure cooker: “The final result,” it said, “would either be the lid bursting open, harming countless people; or the lid staying on, with countless victims under the lid and everywhere as peaceful as before.”<sup>25</sup>

Fourth, when the Chinese media disclosed on May 2 that 70 sailors had died in an accident on the Number 361 submarine, it was the first time military analysts could recall such a disaster being openly reported (though many key details, including the date the disaster occurred, remained hidden). Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao were both reported consoling relatives of the victims and even pictured on China Central Television (CCTV) visiting the sub. Was the decision to report the accident an instance of the new openness brought about by the SARS crisis? Apparently this is the case. But it may also have reflected a simple belief that in the current age of the Internet and cell phones, such a big story could not have been covered up. However, if that is the case, it raises questions about China’s ability to manage the news even as Li Changchun and the Propaganda Department express a determination to do so.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 2, 2003,

<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/9543/9546/20030402/961472.html>.

<sup>2</sup> John Pomfret, “Doctor Says Health Ministry Lied about Disease,” *Washington Post*, April 9, 2003, sec. A, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 13, 2003,

<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/9543/9546/20030413/970788.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 13, 2003,

<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shehui/212/10548/10604/20030413/97019.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 17, 2003,

<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/2152/2900/20030417/974570.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 18, 2003, FBIS CPP-2003-0418-000178.

<sup>7</sup> John Pomfret, “China’s Crisis Has a Political Edge,” *Washington Post*, April 27, 2003, sec. A, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Xinhua News Agency, May 8, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/20030508/987236.html>.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.unn.com.cn/GB/channel2200/200305/09/258590.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Xinhua News Agency, May 8, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guandian/26/20030508/987520.html>.

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/GB/shizheng/19/20030512/990224.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 26, 2003,

<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030426/980253.html>.

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- <sup>13</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 26, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030427/980379.html>.
- <sup>14</sup> Ren Zhongping, “Guqi women xin de changcheng—lun kangji feidian de weida jingshen” (Building our new great wall—On the great spirit of resisting and attacking SARS), *People’s Daily*, May 15, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guandian/183/2142/2852/20030515/992531.html>.
- <sup>15</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 28, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030428/981508.html>.
- <sup>16</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 25, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030426/980046.html>.
- <sup>17</sup> Xinhua News Agency, April 26, 2003, <http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/GB/shizheng/252/17/1844/20030427/980374.html>.
- <sup>18</sup> “Zhongzhi chengcheng, zhansheng yibing” (Uniting wills into a fortress, triumphing over the epidemic), *People’s Daily* (commentator article), April 26, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/guandian/183/2142/2853/20030426/980049.html>.
- <sup>19</sup> Xinhua News Agency, May 1, 2003, <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/16/20030501/983384.html>.
- <sup>20</sup> Joan Kaufman, “Can China Cure Its Severe Acute Reluctance to Speak?” *Washington Post*, April 27, 2003, sec. B, p. 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Craig S. Smith, “China Backs Away from Initial Denial in School Explosion,” *New York Times*, March 16, 2001, sec. A, p. 1.
- <sup>22</sup> Xinhua News Agency, January 8, 2003.
- <sup>23</sup> Xinhua News Agency, January 9, 2003.
- <sup>24</sup> Sun Zifa, “Yu Guoming: Reporting of Iraq War Brings About Fifth Symbolizing Transformation of Chinese Media,” *Zhongguo xinwen she*, March 27, 2003, and Yao Shuo, “War Coverage Is In-Depth and Open,” *Ta kung pao*, March 25, 2003.
- <sup>25</sup> “Chinese Press Lifts Lid on SARS,” BBC News, April 25, 2003, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/2>.