



The Wire *China*

What We're Reading *With Andrew Peple*

June 6th, 2024

Good Thursday afternoon, *The Wire* Subscribers.

It's been a week of big anniversaries. Here in the UK there has been a lot of coverage of events to mark eighty years since the D-Day landings. More pertinently for China watchers, it is 35 years since the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989: Our sister publication, *China Books Review*, has this [interesting podcast episode](#) on that ultimately tragic event.

I've picked out some other stories that caught my eye below, including a more upbeat one about a major trans-Pacific scientific breakthrough.

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Andrew Peple
News Editor

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The One to Read

China's economy is performing pretty badly, so why doesn't Xi Jinping just fix it? That's the nub of [this piece](#) by CSIS's Scott Kennedy for *Foreign Policy*, based on his recent conversations on a trip to Beijing. In answer, he refers — China politics-style — to “Four Nos” that could explain the government's failure to do enough to dig the country out of its current malaise.

Number One: perhaps Xi doesn't know how worrying things are, with the people around him failing to keep him informed of bad news. Or maybe the leader doesn't know what to do, as it's so tricky to come up with the range of problems the Chinese economy faces. Option three is that Xi “doesn't care”, as

long as he pursues nationalistic policies that tighten the CCP's and his grip on power.

The final option — which the plurality of Kennedy's interlocutors suggested — is that Xi simply doesn't agree with criticisms of the current policy direction.

The view “may be that given the loss of reliable access to Western technology, markets, and finance, China has no choice but to prioritize developing domestic technologies and gaining as much leverage over global supply chains as possible.” Moreover, China's dominance in areas like electric vehicles may have led the leadership to think that its policies are basically working.

The range of options over what's going on each demand different remedies. Kennedy sums up, though, by saying his informal survey “suggests hardening divisions between parts of Chinese society and its leaders as well as between Beijing and other capitals” — which in turn means more tension and conflict are likely at home and abroad.

Photo: Tingshu Wang/AFP/Getty Images via Foreign Policy



Also Noteworthy

I'm a sucker for good news stories about kids — who isn't? — and it's also nice to see positive outcomes from U.S.-China collaboration are still possible every now and then. So this [tale](#) from *The Guardian* about a successful gene therapy trial helping to restore hearing to five children who were born deaf was particularly heart-warming — the result of research from a Sino-American team of scientists. Let's hope for more of this sort of thing.

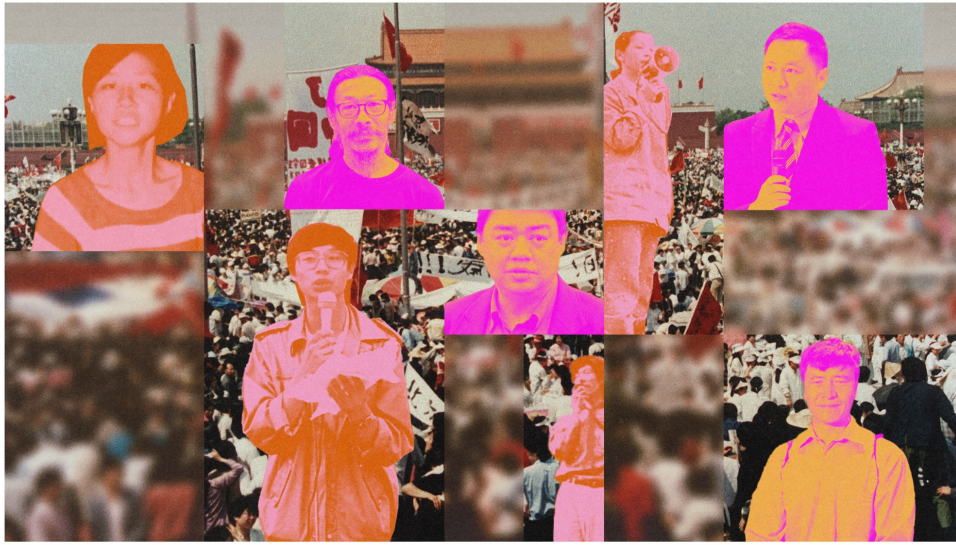
Photo: Mikeuk/Getty Images via The Guardian



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CHINA *Books Review*



RICARDO SANTOS

This week's release from [China Books Review](#) is a rundown where of the [Tiananmen protest leaders](#) are today, by Scott Savitt.

35 years after Tiananmen, the most-wanted student and worker demonstrators now live in America, Hong Kong and Taiwan. A journalist who covered the protests caught up with six of them, to see what perspectives fresh terrain has brought.

Also be sure to check out Scott Savitt's [Q&A with Teng Biao](#) on why resistance in China these days is increasingly impossible, in *The Wire China* archives.



Q & A

Teng Biao on Fascism with CCP Characteristics

BY SCOTT SAVITT

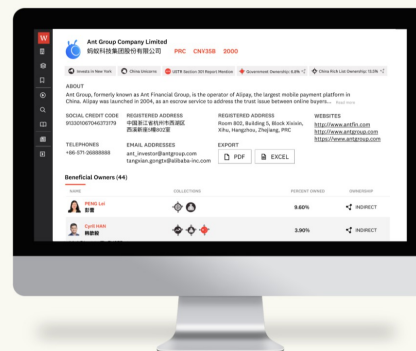
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