

**CHINA'S TELEVISION "GOING OUT" AND
THE DYNAMICS OF MEDIA COMPETITION
WITHIN CHINA**

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Executive Summary

1. The “going out” strategy of China’s media organizations is often linked to China’s attempts to extend its soft power. At the same time, however, these media organizations also have their bureaucratic interests to look after in addition to that of the Party/state.
2. More specifically, China’s media organizations are keen to ride on this Party-and-state endorsed strategy to extend their reach to a wider audience. It is very much about the intense competition among these media players to gain a bigger market share.
3. China’s Central Television (*CCTV*)’s position as the sole national-level television broadcaster was unquestioned for many years. However, this state of affairs was disrupted when *Xinhua News Agency*, a state news service, began its 24-hour television broadcasting in Chinese to parts of the world in January 2010.
4. Subsequently, *Xinhua* launched its 24-hour English television news broadcast worldwide in July 2010. Apparently, *Xinhua* managed to break into TV broadcasting by obtaining permission from the central leadership, overstepping the authority of the *State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT)* that oversees such matters.
5. To allay the concerns of *CCTV* and *SARFT*, *Xinhua* has asserted that its television broadcasting is directed at the competition outside China. Yet, *CCTV* appeared unconvinced. Taking the competition head-on, *CCTV* revamped *CCTV-9*, its international English television channel, in April 2010.
6. The *People’s Daily (PD)*, a publication under the Party, also seems keen to have a share of the lucrative TV broadcasting business. In May 2010, the *PD* announced the launch of its online TV known as *People’s Television*. While

this service is currently only available online, its name betrays the *PD*'s ambition to venture into TV broadcasting one day.

7. Competition remains key to pushing China's media organizations to constantly improve themselves. Consumers will also benefit from more service providers and innovative programs. *Xinhua*'s foray into television broadcasting should therefore be viewed positively.
8. There are, however, a number of hurdles to cross in this "going out" process. Internally, these media organizations will require a mindset change to embrace competition with an open mind. They also need to develop a keener appreciation of what appeals to a foreign audience apart from raising their technical standards.
9. Externally, China's media organizations need to build up their credibility. They can do so by enriching the perspectives on developments in China and around the world. The Chinese media authorities that oversee them would also need to allow them to carry more in-depth and balanced reports on China-related issues.
10. Finally, there should be equal emphasis on inviting more external media professionals and organizations to China to view China from inside out. By providing them with opportunities to be more responsible in reporting on China, they may become more effective "spokespersons" for China.