

“Inside the Great Firewall”

Red Lantern Analytica’s fortnightly China Digest: June 1st to 15th 2025

1. June 1 – Foreign Ministry Weaponizes South-South Rhetoric Against U.S.

China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a strongly worded joint declaration with African states denouncing “unilateralism and protectionism”—thinly veiled criticism of the United States. These carefully choreographed diplomatic documents double as domestic political messaging, portraying China as a besieged but righteous power in a hostile world order.

2. June 5 – Ministry of Public Security Expands Surveillance Model for Urban Control

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) released internal evaluations of China’s “grid-based” urban management system—an AI-assisted micro-surveillance tool already active in major cities. The timing reflects mounting paranoia about unrest over joblessness, evictions, or flash protests this summer.

3. June 9 – Hunan Party Chief Forced into Public Apology Tour Over Trash Scandal

Shen Xiaoming, Communist Party Secretary of Hunan province, visited the infamous Zhangjiajie karst cave to oversee cleanup after a viral video showed it was filled with a decade’s worth of garbage. His very public appearance—unusual for a senior cadre—underscores how local disasters in China must be politically contained, not institutionally prevented.

4. June 10 – Market Regulator Targets Local Governments’ Subsidy Games

The State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) launched a probe into local subsidy competitions among provinces in China’s electric vehicle sector. This sudden intervention exposes the chaos of uncoordinated local spending—and Beijing’s fear that internal competition is destabilizing national industrial goals.

5. June 10 – Xi Jinping Approves Tactical Rare Earth Concession

President Xi Jinping personally approved a six-month resumption of rare-earth exports to civilian U.S. companies, following backchannel negotiations. The move shows how China weaponizes its dominance in critical materials as geopolitical leverage, while pretending to act in “mutual interest.”

6. June 11 – National Development and Reform Commission Manipulates Retail for Political Ends

China’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) informally backed the extension of midyear e-commerce sales to artificially inflate consumer sentiment. This

manipulation of private commerce to serve political image-making reflects how deeply the Chinese state now intervenes in market optics without solving structural consumption problems.

7. June 11 – Environmental Ministry Launches National Crackdown in Political Damage Control

After a local environmental scandal in Hunan province made headlines, China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) announced a "special campaign" against illegal solid waste dumping. Rather than systemic reform, this response reflects the regime's standard playbook: highly publicized crackdowns that mask chronic regulatory failure.

8. June 12 – China's Industry Ministry Publicly Rebukes Automakers

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) ordered 17 car manufacturers to pay suppliers within 60 days, criticizing their "harmful practices." This rare public censure from a typically protective ministry reveals deep state anxiety about liquidity in China's flagship electric vehicle sector—while conveniently ignoring the state's own role in fostering risky overcapacity.

9. June 12 – Xi Jinping's Inner Circle Uses China-Africa Expo for Anti-West Campaigning

Han Wenxiu, a key economic adviser to President Xi Jinping and deputy director of the Central Financial and Economic Affairs Commission, used the China-Africa Economic and Trade Expo to denounce "economic bullying" by the West. Such politicization of trade forums shows how China's foreign policy is now guided more by ideological posturing than pragmatic economic engagement.

10. June 13 – Industry Minister Personally Intervenes in Auto Market Crisis

MIIT Minister Jin Zhuanglong convened emergency meetings with top Chinese carmakers to demand payment discipline and discourage price wars. That a minister must now micromanage pricing behavior reveals the fragility of China's much-hyped EV sector—and the regime's loss of confidence in its own industrial planning.

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