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A Marriott sign is seen in Shanghai. The city's market regulator has launched an investigation after the company's blunder in which Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet were categorized as 'countries.' Photo: Marriott

ASIA UNHEDGED // REAL-TIME INTEL ON WHAT MOVES MARKETS

Marriott China caught in nationalist groundswell

The hotel company has apologized repeatedly for calling Taiwan, Tibet and the SARs 'countries,' but a Twitter post has further complicated the case

By ASIA TIMES STAFF | JANUARY 11, 2018 8:18 PM (UTC+8)



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What does a customer loyalty program have to do with China's sovereignty and Beijing's adamant insistence that Taiwan is a breakaway province?

Very much if you, as the US hospitality company Marriott International has just confessed to doing, categorize Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and Tibet as "countries" along with China itself in a customer survey for Chinese members of its loyalty and rewards program.

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In a survey e-mailed to its members, Marriott categorized Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet as 'countries.' Photos: Handout

Marriott's blunder instantly ignited a huge commotion among Chinese customers and news media, after its attempt to "split China" was first exposed by patriotic netizens this week.

Market regulators in Shanghai soon stepped in, summoning top executives of Marriott International China to stern talks on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the city's Market Supervision Bureau has officially opened an investigation into any wrongdoings and illegalities, promising most severe sanction, according to a Xinhua report.

Meanwhile, Marriott China has issued three sincere apologies in a row in two days, promising a thorough review of all of its websites, social-media accounts and publications to weed out inappropriate and incorrect content, insisting that the company has the utmost respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Marriott, currently the world's largest hotel group, operates more than 100 hotels and resorts ranging from the top-of-the-line Ritz Carlton and St Regis to the mass-market brand Courtyard in mainland China's first-and second-tier cities.

Yet in an even more dramatic twist, Chinese netizens soon discovered that the US hotel group “liked” and shared on one of its Twitter

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A Bloomberg News story on January 10th claimed that unnamed Chinese officials want to buy fewer U.S.

branch rushed to do damage control in the wake of the earlier public relations disaster.

The Twitter post read “Friends of Tibet congratulate hotel chain Marriott International for listing Tibet as a country along with Hong Kong and Taiwan.”

Marriott Rewards liked



Friends of Tibet @friendsoftibet · Jan 10

Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain #Marriott International for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan.



Marriott Rewards, Marriott Hotels, Marriott Internat'l and 3 others

Now Marriott's Chinese patrons have been further irritated by the US brand, with many starting a boycott.

“Totally disgusting Marriott behavior in the whole process. Yesterday u apologized to Chinese people, today u liked Friends of Tibet which listed Tibet as a country. R u blind?” a disgruntled Chinese wrote in the comment section. However, it's unclear whether the Twitter user, Jim, used a virtual private network (VPN) to circumvent China's Internet blockade of Twitter to voice his discontent or if he actually lives overseas.

Marriott later said on Twitter that it did not support separatist groups that subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, and it sincerely apologized for “any actions that may have suggested otherwise.”

Marriott Rewards has removed the shared post from its account, but it still appears in the “like” list of the Friends of Tibet post.

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Marriott Rewards

@MarriottRewards

Marriott International respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We don't support separatist groups that subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We sincerely apologize for any actions that may have suggested otherwise.

11/1/2018, 14:44

21 Retweets 34 Likes

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Coca-Cola, Chanel, Prada, Burberry, Bulgari, Cartier, Apple and others have been accused in the past of "splitting China" by listing Hong Kong and Taiwan as "countries" on their websites or in brochures.

Hong Kong and Taiwan are still listed separately from China but those brands have been cautious after the outcry and renamed their country lists as "country and region lists."

But before long their clients in Hong Kong and Taiwan started protesting against the elimination of their own identities, taking potshots at these brands' kowtowing to Beijing.

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Shanghai closes Marriott's website and app in China

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The Shanghai Cyberspace Administration on Thursday closed down the official Chinese website and the smartphone app of Marriott International Inc. for a week, over the hotel chain's listing Chinese regions including Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Tibet as "countries" in a customer questionnaire.

The Shanghai authorities urged the group to "start a thorough self-inspection, remove the law-violating information and publish the investigation result and measures to the public" .

Shanghai's Huangpu District market supervision bureau has launched an investigation into Marriott for violating the country's cybersecurity law and advertisement law.



Screenshot of a statement issued by the National Tourism Administration. /CGTN Photo

In a recent customer questionnaire sent to its members through email, the world's biggest hotel chain listed Chinese regions Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Tibet as "countries", triggering widespread outrage among the Chinese netizens on Sina Weibo, China's answer to Twitter.

The National Tourism Administration of China issued an official statement Thursday, urging the Shanghai Tourism Bureau to conduct an investigation as soon as possible. It also asked all local tourism bureaus to check the hotels' online websites and applications, in order to prevent such incident from happening again.

The group issued an apology on its official @MarriottRewards Weibo account on Tuesday, saying that they had suspended all the questionnaires, and amended the options.



A Marriott hotel in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province. /VCG Photo

However, Marriott's members revealed that soon after it published the apologizing letter on the Weibo account, the hotel chain's Twitter account liked a tweet that supported "Tibet independence" .

The double-tongued behaviors of the group re-ignited Chinese social media and Chinese people took to social media, calling for a boycott against the hotel chain. Many of its members said they have already canceled their bookings with the hotel chain.



Screenshot of Marriott's apology on Twitter. /CGTN Photo

The Weibo account @MarriottRewards issued three other apologies between Wednesday morning and Thursday, emphasizing that “Marriott International respects Chinese sovereignty and its territorial integrity” , and that they “sincerely apologize for any actions that led to misunderstanding on the aforementioned stance” .

Its Twitter account issued the same apology in English, however, it remains unclear whether Marriott can win back the hearts of its Chinese customers.

In its official statement, the Shanghai Cyberspace Administration said its following decisions would be made in accordance to Marriott’ s responses.

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Regulator probes Marriott for violating China's cybersecurity law following Tibet incident

Source:Global Times Published: 2018/1/11 14:05:03

Chinese netizens called on Thursday for an investigation of global hotel chain Marriott International for allegedly listing China's Tibet Autonomous Region as a country in an email sent to members, after a Twitter account affiliated to Marriott "liked" a "pro-independence of Tibet" tweet.

Shanghai police said the company is suspected of violating China's laws on cyber security and advertisements

Marriot Reward "liked" the tweet of the "Friends of Tibet," a Twitter account claiming to support a "free and independent Tibet."

Marriot Reward is responsible for managing the membership of Marriott Inc. It has not said whether the move was made by an individual.

A netizen named "zhongjusaodi" said on Tuesday that Marriott International sent a questionnaire via email to its elite members for feedback on its service and asked them to choose their country. The list included the Chinese mainland, China's Tibet, Macao, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The government of Huangpu district in Shanghai released a notice on its Sina Weibo account on Wednesday, saying that "the regulator on cyberspace affairs and market supervision bureau in Huangpu have noticed the incident of Marriott International listing China's Tibet Autonomous Region as a country and had a meeting with its heads on Tuesday and Wednesday."

The regulators asked the company to withdraw the content in question, and conduct an overall check on information released online and on its app. It also asked the hotel chain to give a timely response to public concerns, make corrections on different channels and try its best to erase the bad influence.

"The Market Supervision Bureau in Huangpu has filed a case to investigate the incident, and the hotel chain is suspected of violating China's Cybersecurity Law and Advertisement Law," read the notice.

Marriott Reward released a statement on its Sina Weibo on Tuesday, saying, "We are deeply sorry for the questionnaires. We realize that this mistake would deeply disappoint our Chinese customers. For now, we have suspended the questionnaires and will fix the options at once. We apologize for the inconvenience caused by the incident."

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Corporate Statements

01/11/2018 – Bethesda, MD

Statement from Arne Sorenson, President and CEO, Marriott International, Inc.

Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite: First, by incorrectly labelling certain regions within China, including Tibet, as countries in a drop-down menu on a survey we sent out to our loyalty members; and second, in the careless “like” by an associate of a tweet that incorrectly suggested our support of this position. Nothing could be further from the truth: we don’t support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups. We recognize the severity of the situation and sincerely apologize.

In the aftermath of these two events, here’s what we have done. As soon as we became aware of the issue with the survey, we worked to take it down and make the necessary corrections. We also reviewed the other areas on our websites and apps where this type of functionality might exist to make sure the labeling is correct. In China, at the request of the Government, we have taken down our Chinese websites and apps to conduct a full review and audit. We

Upon completion of a full investigation into how both incidents happened, we will be taking the necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved, which could include termination, changing our approval and review procedures for online content, reviewing our customer feedback channels, and enhancing training to ensure these situations don't happen again. We are also working closely and co-operating with the relevant Government authorities in China.

As a company, we take very seriously the privilege and opportunity we have to serve guests in countries around the world – and particularly in China, a market we have been in for over 30 years. We also take responsibility when we make mistakes. We will learn from this experience, make changes to ensure errors like this don't happen again, and continue to focus on making sure our Chinese guests feel respected and have wonderful experiences as we have the privilege of serving them in our hotels in China and around the globe.

BUSINESS DAY

Marriott to China: We Do Not Support Separatists

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By SUI-LEE WEE JAN. 11, 2018

Marriott International, the hotel chain, wants to be clear on this point: It does not support separatist elements in China.

Marriott is best known for its hospitality, not fomenting rebellion in the countries where it does business. Nevertheless, it apologized to the Chinese government on Thursday for the way it worded a customer survey — wording that has spurred intense online criticism and a government investigation.

The problem: The survey listed Tibet, a region of China, and Taiwan, an island it claims as its own, as separate countries, according to Chinese media reports. It also listed Hong Kong and Macau — territories that are ruled by China — as separate, according to the reports.

The error is a common one, and easy to make, among companies that do business there. A simple website drop-down menu labeled “countries” can inadvertently bestow the nation label on places like Taiwan and Hong Kong.

But in China, where the government is often quick to claim that the feelings of nearly 1.4 billion Chinese people have been hurt, the repercussions can be

severe. The Shanghai Internet Information Office said it would shut down Marriott's Chinese website and its Chinese app for a week.

Marriott said on its official account on Weibo, the Chinese social media platform, that "we will absolutely not support any separatist organization that will undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The Huangpu district of Shanghai, where Marriott China is based, said on Wednesday that it had opened an investigation into the company for violating cybersecurity and advertising laws and questioned Marriott executives. Angry Chinese called for a boycott of the hotel chain.

"They are earning our people's money, and yet they are thinking of splitting our motherland," said a user on Weibo.

In a statement, the company said it was fully cooperating with the investigation and had updated its website and apps to "ensure the proper country/region classifications."

"We sincerely apologize and thank guests and netizens for their candid feedback," it said.

China is quick to lash out against any hint of support for an independent Tibet and for an independent Taiwan, a self-ruled democratic island that Beijing regards as a breakaway province and has vowed to take back by force if it declares independence. In recent years, many nationalistic Chinese have stoked a backlash against many foreign companies that are seen to be anti-China.

Last year, China forced the shutdown of more than 80 stores owned by the South Korean supermarket chain Lotte, which provided land for an American missile defense system intended to stop potential launches by North Korea.

In 2008, hundreds of protesters called for a boycott of the French retailer Carrefour after Tibetan activists disrupted the Olympic torch's journey through Paris. Irate Chinese internet users accused Carrefour of supporting pro-Tibetan independence groups.

In recent years, the government has condoned nationalist outbursts and then stamped them out after a short period.

In 2012, it allowed anti-Japanese demonstrations, which were fueled over islands that are claimed by both Japan and China. During those marches in Beijing, police officers stood by as eggs and plastic water bottles were thrown at the Japanese Embassy. Protesters took photos using Canon cameras and ate from lunchboxes from Yoshinoya, a Japanese fast food chain, during their breaks.

Zhang Tiantian contributed research.

A version of this article appears in print on January 12, 2018, on Page B5 of the New York edition with the headline: Marriott Facing Backlash As Survey Rankles China.

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Marriott's website shut over mistake

SHANGHAI—Authorities in China have shut down Marriott's local website for a week after the US hotel giant mistakenly listed Chinese-claimed regions as separate countries. **AFP** (<http://thestandard.com.ph/search?q=AFP>)
posted January 12, 2018 at 06:33 pm by

Shanghai's cyberspace authority late Thursday ordered Marriott to close its Chinese website and app for a week and completely clear out illegal content according to a government statement.

Marriott's Chinese website now shows a message with an apology.

"We never support any separatist organization that damages China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," it says.

"We apologize profoundly for any behavior that will cause misunderstanding about the above stance."

In a customer questionnaire in Mandarin, Marriott asked members of the chain's customer rewards program to list their country of residence, giving Macau, and Taiwan as possible options.

It triggered an uproar on Chinese social media as Tibet is an "autonomous region" firmly under Chinese control since the 1950s.

Hong Kong and Macau are former British and Portuguese colonies, respectively, that are now "special administrative regions" under China.

Taiwan has been self-ruled since splitting from the mainland after a 1949 civil war, but Beijing continues to claim sovereignty over the island.

Shanghai authorities are probing whether the gaffe in Marriott International's Mandarin-language questionnaire violated national cyber-security and

While Marriott apologized, public anger further escalated after the official Twitter account of Marriott Rewards liked a tweet from "Friends of Tibet", a group that supports Tibetan independence and congratulated the hotel chain for listing Tibet as a country.

Marriott president and chief executive Arne Sorenson soon issued a lengthy apology letter, which described the "like" as "careless".

"Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that we regret," Sorenson said.

"Upon completion of a full investigation into how both incidents happened, we will be taking the necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved, which could include termination."

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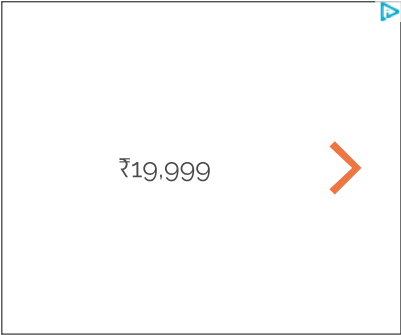
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China shuts Marriott's website over Tibet and Taiwan error

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China has shut down the Chinese websites of Marriott International for a week, after the firm listed Tibet and others as separate countries.

The hotel group has apologised for the error and said it did not support separatist movements in China.

Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau were listed as individual nations in an online survey sent to customers.

Beijing considers self-ruling Taiwan to be a breakaway province and Tibet is governed as an autonomous region.

Hong Kong and Macau are both special administrative regions of China.

Marriott was also chastised after one of the firm's social media accounts "liked" a post made by a group supporting a separatist Tibet.

Chinese media is reporting that some travellers are cancelling Marriott reservations in response.

'Respect Chinese sovereignty'

China is usually quick to respond to any actions or statements it deems supportive of separatist movements, especially related to Tibet and Taiwan.

While the hotel's international website is still available within China, the Shanghai Cyberspace Administration ordered it to close a Mandarin version.

Authorities also shut down Marriott's Chinese mobile phone app as part of its punishment for the Mandarin-language survey. But having being closed earlier, the app now appears to be functioning.



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On Thursday the hotel group's chief executive Arne Sorenson issued an apology, saying his firm "respects and supports Chinese sovereignty and its territorial integrity".

"We don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups," Mr Sorenson said.

"Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite."

The statement added that the company would take "necessary" disciplinary action against staff involved, which may include termination.

Mr Sorenson has previously described China as his firm's biggest market. While Marriott has over 100 hotels in the country under different brands, it is also keen to profit from the swelling number of Chinese people travelling internationally.

Last year it launched a joint travel venture with China's ecommerce giant Alibaba.

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Marriott China in crisis comms mode as website gets shutdown

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It all started last week when Marriott emailed a Chinese-language questionnaire to its customer rewards programme members, one of which asked members to list their country of residence, giving Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as possible options.

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Marrriott
INTERNATIONAL

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Listing the four Chinese-claimed regions as separate countries, it immediately triggered an online uproar that asked for a Marriott boycott, as well as an official investigation from Shanghai Authorities.

Despite issuing five public apologies since the initial outcry, with Arne Sorenson, president and chief executive officer of Marriott International specifying that he was “deeply sorry” and wished to “reiterate our usual stand in respecting China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity”, the company once again landed in hot water last Friday.

It occurred that the company's Twitter account for its loyalty programme had "liked" and shared a post by Friends of Tibet, which campaigns for independence for the region.

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Friends of Tibet @friendsoftibet · 1月9日

Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain #Marriott International for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan. pic.twitter.com/SXKWb20v3e



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The US-based hotel group now has its Chinese and traditional Chinese website and app shut down – as requested by authorities in Shanghai, according to the latest release (pictured below).

万豪国际集团总裁兼首席执行官苏安励(Arne Sorenson)先生的致歉信

万豪国际一贯尊重并支持中国的主权及领土完整。遗憾的是，本周内我们的工作出现了两次与此理念背道而驰的错误。首先，在会员调查问卷中，我们错误地将西藏等中国领土列为了国家选项。其次，由于个别员工的过失，我们的官方账号错误地点赞了支持西藏独立的推文，误导了公众。事实上，我们的立场坚定明确：我们绝不支持任何蓄意颠覆中国主权及领土完整的行为，我们也绝不会以任何形式鼓舞或煽动这类组织或个人。我们深刻意识到事态的严重性，并再次为伤害了中国人民的感情而诚恳致歉。

针对上述事件，我们将积极整改，目前已经采取了以下行动。问卷错误一经发现，我们立刻终止了该项目并做了相关修正。同时，我们已对万豪集团官方网站及App上的内容进行自检，以确保相关信息准确无误。在中国，与相关政府部门沟通后，我们积极配合工作，已将中文版网站和App关闭，以进行彻底的内部审查。此外，我们已及时撤销了对上述推文的错误点赞，并立即发布道歉声明。

在对上述事件全面调查结束并了解内部原因后，我们将全面整改，包括对涉事个人及第三方采取必要的措施、改善网络信息审批流程、重新审视客户反馈机制、加强中国法律法规的培训以杜绝类似事件的发生。万豪国际集团将继续积极配合政府的调查工作。在后续处理过程中，我们将做到公开透明，并保证及时向公众公开调查结果、解决方案以及90天行动小结。

在万豪国际，我们非常珍视服务全球客人的机会，感谢过去三十多年中国客户的信任和支持。对于工作错误，我们直面事实，承担责任。我们将以此为鉴，积极整改，杜绝此类事件发生。同时，我们将不断致力于在中国以及全球各地为中国顾客带来更好的服务和体验。



万豪国际集团总裁兼首席执行官

Sorenson added that the group will be “taking the necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved, which could include termination, changing our approval and review procedures for online content, reviewing our customer feedback channels, and enhancing training to ensure these situations don’t happen again.”

“We are also working closely and co-operating with the relevant Government authorities in China,” he said.

Marriott operates more than 30 chains and 124 hotels in China at the moment, according to its website.

However, public outcry spreading over the internet has been contagious, and other international brands joined the line to be accused of causing offence with its geographical inaccuracies over the weekend.

Fashion brand Zara and medical equipment maker Medtronic, for instances, were ordered by the internet regulator in Shanghai to update their websites after they were found to have listed Taiwan as a country. Both companies apologised on their website.

ZARA

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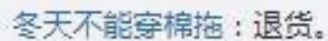
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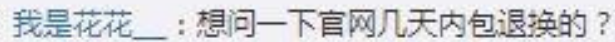
回复 | 245

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回复  3

共6条回复



1月11日 23:20

回复 | 141

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1月12日 11:45

回复  2

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1月12日 16:20

回复 |  155

ZARA V: 您好! 请您以私信的形式告知是通过ZARA网上商店 www.zara.cn /ZARA天猫官方

"Rejection," wrote netizens on ZARA's Weibo amid boycott campaign.

Delta Air Lines too was found to have listed Taiwan and Tibet as independent countries on its website.

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--	---

下一步

It was summoned by the Civil Aviation Administration of China, and issued a public apology on Friday, saying it had made a "grave mistake".

致歉信

By Staff Writer • posted Jan. 12, 2018 3:52 am



达美航空公司对于在官方网站的相关网页上将西藏、台湾列为“国家”这一严重错误，表示由衷的歉意！

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与此同时，我们也正在彻查内部流程，并将采取必要行动，以避免未来再出现错误。最后，恳请接受我们对此次严重错误的诚挚歉意！

达美航空公司

2018年1月12日

The administration said it had asked all foreign airlines to check their websites for similar indiscretions. As disgruntled consumers continue their search, it is possible that more foreign companies will be named if they underestimated the severity of the geopolitical issues in China.

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ASIA

China Shuts Down Marriott's Website For Listing Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet as 'Countries'

By [Carl Samson](#)

Posted on January 12, 2018



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China suspended the website and mobile app of hotel chain Marriott after it listed Chinese territories as separate “countries.”

The order, issued by the [Shanghai Cyberspace Administration](#), is effective for one week. It also launched an investigation to determine if the company violated advertising and cybersecurity laws.

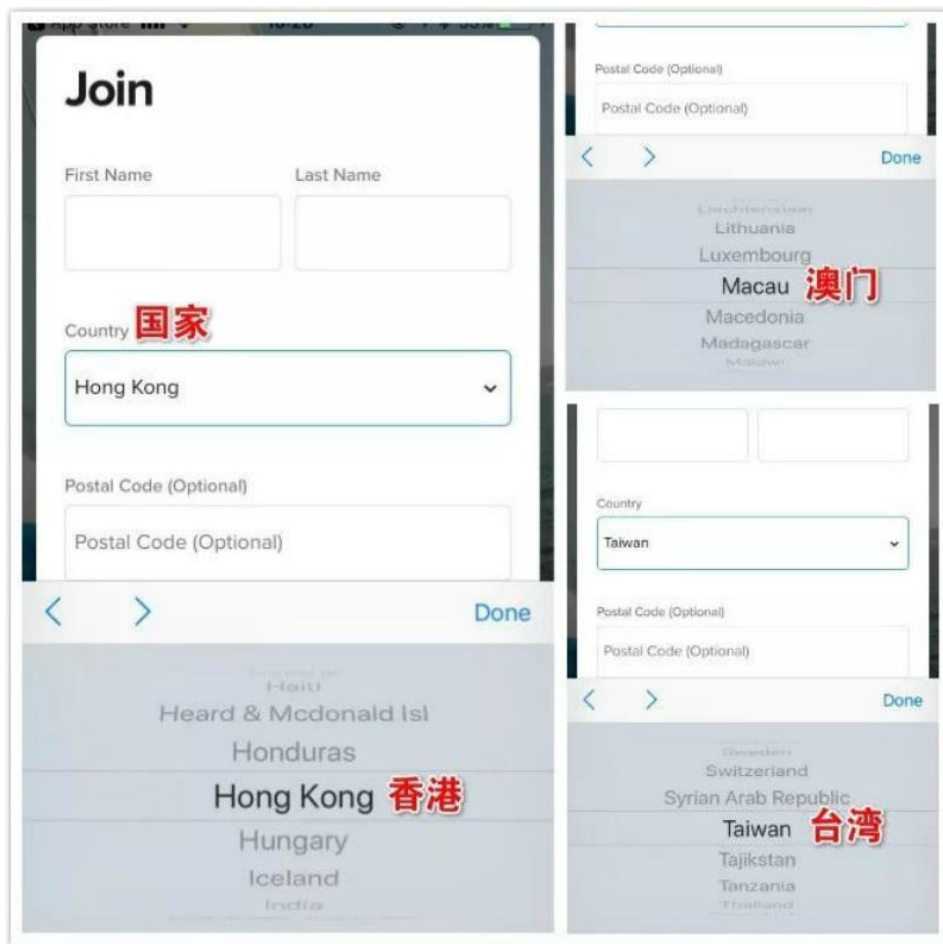
The problem sprung when Marriott released a survey earlier this week that aimed to reward club members. To the government's alarm, it listed Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Tibet as "countries."

For the record, **Hong Kong** and **Macau** are special administrative regions (SAR), while **Tibet** is an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China (PRC or mainland China).

Taiwan's political status **is more complicated**. The island, run by a government different from the mainland, is called the Republic of China (ROC).

The PRC and ROC do not recognize each other's sovereignty. Both believe that the government of the other is illegitimate, as there is only one China (mainland and Taiwan), with each of them representing the legitimate administration.

Today, the PRC considers Taiwan a province under its constitution. Mainland media usually refer to it as the Taiwan Area or Taiwan Region.



According to the Shanghai Cyberspace Administration, the Marriott incident “hurt the feelings of Chinese people.”

The hotel chain also received flak for “liking” a “pro-independence of Tibet” tweet that praised Marriott for listing Tibet as a “country.”

SCMP.COM

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Marriott in more trouble after 'liking' Twitter post by Tibetan independence group

PUBLISHED : Friday, 12 January, 2018, 5:30pm

UPDATED : Friday, 12 January, 2018, 5:27pm

News › China › Society

Zhuang Pinghui pinghui.zhuang@scmp.com

Boss of hotel group blames latest gaffe on 'individual' employee, as Chinese internet users call for boycott

US hotel giant Marriott has come under a new round of fire after one of its Twitter accounts was found to have "liked" and shared a post congratulating it over a gaffe in which it listed Chinese-claimed regions like Tibet and Hong Kong as independent countries.

Authorities in Shanghai shut down the company's Chinese website and launched an investigation after it emailed a Chinese-language questionnaire to its customers in which Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan were named as countries.

Despite issuing five public apologies since the initial outcry, a fresh controversy was sparked when Chinese internet users discovered that the company's Twitter account for its loyalty programme had "liked" and shared a post by Friends of Tibet, which campaigns for independence for the region, soon after the first apology was issued.

[Chinese probe into Marriott hotels over geography gaffe in customer survey](#) [1]

The post congratulated the hotel group for listing Tibet as a country, along with Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Internet users accused Marriott of insincerity.

"What exactly does the group want? Marriott has always been my top choice and I will let it pass if it corrects the slip of listing Tibet as a country. But liking the post of a separatist [group] shows Marriott supports separation," wrote an internet user with the name Uncle Renyi.

Other people called for a boycott of the hotel, while Chinese booking platforms, including Dianping and Meituan, withdrew Marriott properties from their systems.

The company's President and CEO Arne Sorenson described the Twitter gaffe as "misconduct by an individual member of staff".

[Beijing warns of pro-independence turmoil in ties with Taipei in 2018](#) [2]

In his latest apology, made on Thursday after the "like" had been removed from the Twitter account, Sorenson said: "Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite."

China's foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Friday that foreign companies in China should respect the nation's laws and sovereignty.

"I want to stress that Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Tibet are part of China. This is an objective fact that is recognised by the international community," he said.

"We welcome foreign companies to invest in China. At the same time, foreign companies operating in China should respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, obey China's law and respect the national sentiment of Chinese people. This is the basic of any companies that want to invest in a foreign country."

[Is China planning to take Taiwan by force in 2020?](#) [3]

The questionnaire that started the dispute was sent to members of the hotel's loyalty and rewards programme. The document was published in both English and Mandarin, but the geographical gaffe appeared only in the Chinese-language version. The questionnaire was later withdrawn.

The Shanghai Cyberspace Administration on Wednesday ordered the group to shut down its Chinese website and app for a week from Thursday evening to "thoroughly clear all erroneous information".

The Shanghai Tourism Administration also summoned the "person in charge" of the group's Shanghai branch and ordered the company to severely punish the employees responsible for the incident, news portal Thepaper.cn reported.

Topics: Luxury Hotels

More on this: [Chinese probe into Marriott hotels over geography gaffe in customer survey](#) [1]

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2127999/marriott-more-trouble-after-liking-twitter-post-tibetan>

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THE STRAITS TIMES



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China censures Marriott, Delta Air Lines for listing Taiwan, Tibet as countries



Chinese authorities have also shut down Marriott's local website for a week after the US hotel giant mistakenly listed Tibet and Hong Kong as separate countries. PHOTO: AFP

🕒 PUBLISHED 2 HOURS AGO | UPDATED 1 HOUR AGO

SHANGHAI (REUTERS, AFP) - China's aviation authority on Friday (Jan 12) said it had asked Delta Air Lines to investigate why Taiwan and Tibet were listed as countries on its website, and demanded an "immediate and public" apology.

Chinese authorities have also shut down Marriott's local website for a week after the US hotel giant mistakenly listed Tibet and Hong Kong as separate countries.

Civil Aviation Administration of China said on its website it would require all foreign airlines operating routes to China to conduct comprehensive investigation of their websites, apps and customer-related information and "strictly comply with China's laws and regulations to prevent a similar thing from happening".

Delta was not immediately able to comment outside US office hours.

Visitors to Delta's complaint and comment section on its Chinese website could select Tibet and Taiwan as countries which they were from, as of Friday morning in China. The Tibet option had been removed as of 4pm China time.

Meanwhile Shanghai's cyberspace authority late Thursday ordered Marriott to close its Chinese website and app for a week and completely clear out illegal and irregular information, according to a government statement.

Marriott's Chinese website now shows a message with an apology. "We never support any separatist organisation that damages China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," it says. "We apologise profoundly for any behaviour that will cause misunderstanding about the above stance."

In a customer questionnaire in Mandarin, Marriott asked members of the chain's customer rewards programme to list their country of residence, giving Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as possible options.

It triggered an uproar on Chinese social media as Tibet is an "autonomous region" firmly under Chinese control since the 1950s. Hong Kong and Macau are former British and Portuguese colonies, respectively, that are now "special administrative regions" under China.

Taiwan has been self-ruled since splitting from the mainland after a 1949 civil war, but Beijing continues to claim sovereignty over the island.

Shanghai authorities are probing whether the gaffe in Marriott International's Mandarin-language questionnaire violated national cyber-security and advertising laws.

"We welcome foreign companies to invest and operate in China, but in the meantime they should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, respect our laws and regulations, as well as the feelings of the Chinese people," foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a regular press briefing.

"I think this is the basic principle for foreign countries to conduct operations and investment in other countries," Lu said.

While Marriott apologised, public anger further escalated after the official Twitter account of Marriott Rewards liked a tweet from "Friends of Tibet", an India-based group that supports Tibetan independence and congratulated the hotel chain for listing Tibet as a country.

Marriott president and chief executive Arne Sorenson soon issued a lengthy apology letter, which described the "like" as "careless".

"Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite," said Sorenson.

"Upon completion of a full investigation into how both incidents happened, we will be taking the necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved, which could include termination."

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Marriott apologises to China over Tibet and Taiwan error

Hotel chain is ordered to shut down its website for week after customer survey lists regions including Hong Kong and Macau as separate countries

Benjamin Haas in Hong Kong

Fri 12 Jan 2018 10.10 GMT

The Marriott International hotel chain has apologised and condemned “separatists” in China after the Beijing government shut down its website over an online questionnaire that suggested some Chinese regions were separate countries.

China’s Cyberspace Administration, the internet watchdog, said the hotelier had “seriously violated national laws and hurt the feelings of the Chinese people” after a customer survey listed Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau as separate countries. The regulator ordered Marriott’s website and booking applications to close for a week.

The company, which operates more than 100 hotels in China, quickly responded with a profuse apology distancing itself from charges of supporting separatist movements.

“Marriott International respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We don’t support separatist groups that subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China,” the company said in a statement. “We sincerely apologise for any actions that may have suggested otherwise.”

The company's Chinese website was replaced with a similar statement, adding it was only taking reservations over the phone. Marriott has previously described China as its biggest market.

Chinese troops marched into Tibet in 1950 to bring the region under Beijing's control while Hong Kong and Macau were returned to China in the 1990s after colonial rule, although both are governed separately from the mainland.

While China claims Taiwan, the island has been governed separately since 1949 and maintains formal diplomatic relations with a handful of countries.

The Chinese government frequently erupts with outrage at any perceived contradiction to its territorial claims, claiming such statements upset all of China's 1.4 billion citizens. Even local activists who have called for greater autonomy for regions within China have faced harsh prison sentences.

Many on social media echoed that outrage. Some travellers were cancelling their reservations in response, according to Chinese media reports.

"Everyone should do the same as me and abandon [Marriott] in protest. Let's all switch to Hilton," one user wrote on social media.

Dozens of other comments had a simpler message: "Marriott, get out of China."

China's tourism regulator ordered other hotel operators to review their own websites to avoid similar mistakes.

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OPINION

Marriott CEO trashes Trump at Davos after bowing to communist China

by Philip Wegmann | Jan 25, 2018, 10:35 AM

International travel has dipped because of Trump, complains the chief executive officer of Marriott International. "Part of that," Arne Sorenson **explained** at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, "is I think the sense that the U.S. is less welcoming today."

But if the United States is a bit more unfriendly, China is absolutely a communist tyranny.

Not only did Sorenson demonstrate craven opportunism by bad-mouthing his country on the world stage, he simultaneously underscored the relative freedom and oppression of the two regimes.

Other than scoring a few points with global elite, there won't be any consequences to his criticism. The police won't storm Marriott corporate headquarters, regulators won't pull Marriott licenses, and technicians won't scrub the Marriott website. Worst case scenario, the company will find itself on the receiving end of a poorly worded and maybe misspelled tweet from the president.

What the international innkeeper didn't mention is that since Trump took the oath of office, hotel stock has traveled brilliantly upward. Because of the better business environment, Marriott shares have almost doubled in value, more than mitigating any lost revenue.

Of course, there isn't anything wrong with this criticism aside from the fact that it rings completely hollow. Marriott always makes sure to leave the light on for Chinese communists.

When Marriott referred to Tibet, Macao, Hong Kong, and Taiwan as independent countries in an emailed survey, China shut down the hotel's website. And when a Marriott Rewards employee liked a tweet from the group "Friends of Tibet" that praised the questionnaire, the government deleted the hotel's mobile app. Shortly after the blackout, the Washington Post **reports**, the authorities called Marriott officials in for questioning.

Two days later, Marriott issued a breathless nearly 400-word apology to the Chinese government, detailing each of their mistakes, describing their disciplinary action to be taken against its own employees, and begging for forgiveness. It was pathetic.

"We don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China," Marriott concluded in a **statement** posted on its website, "and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups. We recognize the severity of the situation and sincerely apologize."

Not mentioned was the serial Chinese abuse of human rights. Not cited was ongoing Chinese persecution of journalists. And not included was Chinese secret detention of dissidents. None of that is surprising: Marriott owns and operates more than 300 hotels in mainland China.

Offending the regime in any way, as the episode demonstrates, would hurt their bottom line. Trashing Trump, on the other hand, is hardly risky.

Marriott Pulls Banned 'Books' From China Hotel to Avert Backlash

Bloomberg News

January 16, 2018, 11:25 AM GMT+5:30

- Mock versions of Falun Gong book displayed in Chinese hotel
- Company earlier apologized over Tibet treatment on website



Supporters of Falun Gong during a demonstration in London. *Photographer: Richard Baker/Corbis News via Getty Images*

Marriott International Inc., which apologized to China last week over perceived political slights on its website, has removed from a local hotel decorative copies of a book <https://www.amazon.com/Bloody-Harvest-Organ-Harvesting-Practitioners/dp/> that alleges government abuse of the banned Falun Gong spiritual group.

As recently as Sunday, hollow, cardboard copies of “Bloody Harvest: the Killing of Falun Gong for Their Organs” appeared on bookshelves in the lounge of the Element by Westin hotel <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/element/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=4064> in Chongli, a ski area about three hours northwest of the Chinese capital that is being developed as an Olympics site. China branded the Falun Gong an “evil cult” in 1999 after about 10,000 followers surrounded the Communist Party headquarters in Beijing in a silent protest.

After being informed about the titles’ presence by Bloomberg News, the hotel pulled them down and alerted the local Public Security Bureau, Element Chongli said in an emailed statement Tuesday. “As we are assisting the PSB with their enquiries we will not be commenting further,” the hotel said via a Marriott representative.

Multiple copies of “Bloody Harvest” were stacked among other mock English-language tomes on the history of the stiletto and the Statue of Liberty. Hotels, restaurants and retailers can furnish their properties with such items ordered through suppliers and it was unclear how the faux book ended up on Element Chongli’s shelves. China’s National Tourism Administration didn’t immediately respond to a faxed request for comment.

Less Tolerance

The incident illustrates the challenge that multinationals face in trying to avoid political controversies in China. The global lodging company apologized last week for listing Tibet and Taiwan as “countries” on its Chinese-language website. China regards both as part of its sovereign territory.

Emboldened by its growing economic and geopolitical clout, China is stepping up scrutiny of foreign companies and showing less tolerance <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2018-01-12/china-steps-up-policing-of-multinationals-on-sovereignty-issues> for what it sees as violations of political red lines. The treatment of Tibet and Taiwan on Marriott’s website drew intense criticism online, leading the company to declare its respect for China’s sovereignty.

China has also asked Delta Air Lines Inc. and Inditex SA’s Zara clothing line to purge similar “illegal” content from their sites. Qantas Airways Ltd. said Monday that it was changing some web pages where some Chinese territories were “incorrectly listed as countries.”

Human Rights

The 164-room Chongli property is one of nine Element by Westin hotels in China, according to its website <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/element/directory/hotels/asia-pacific/cn/list.html>. The chain comes under Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide LLC, a company acquired by Marriott in 2016. The area of Hebei province is being developed as a ski destination for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, which is seen by the government as a chance to showcase China <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-11-06/china-s-great-ski-jump-forward> on the global stage.

Chinese guests would probably not find the actual book comfortable fireside reading. The 2009 book is based on a research report by former Canadian lawmaker David Kilgour and a human rights lawyer David Matas. It has been cited by the U.S. government as evidence of human rights abuses against the Falun Gong.

— With assistance by Emma O'Brien, Rachel Chang, Keith Zhai, and Peter Martin

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Marriott fires employee for "willfully liking" a tweet in support of Tibetan independence



Marriott has fired one of its social media managers because the employee "wrongfully liked" a tweet from Friends of Tibet, a group that supports Tibetan independence from China.

The sacking started when Marriott contracted with an outside company to perform a customer satisfaction survey, on which a multiple choice question about which countries guests had used the chain's hotels in listed "Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan" as separate countries. Describing these territories as independent countries is an offense under Chinese law.

Chinese patriotic trolls made a cause celebre out of the questionnaire, called for a boycott of Marriott Hotels, and went digging for dirt, discovering that the Twitter account associated with Marriott's loyalty program had liked the Friends of Tibet tweet during the controversy.

President and managing director of Asia-Pacific for Marriott International Craig Smith publicly announced that he had fired the employee responsible for "willfully liking" the tweet,

As for the Marriott employee who "liked" the Twitter post by Friends of Tibet, Smith said disciplinary proceedings had been started.

"Due to the mistake of an individual employee, our official [Twitter] account wrongly 'liked' the tweet supporting Tibet independence and misled the public. [We] have now suspended this employee and dismissal proceedings are under way," he was quoted as saying.

Marriott sacks employee who 'liked' Twitter post from Tibet independence group [Teddy Ng/South China Morning Post]

(via [Super Punch](#))

(Image: [Marriott](#); [Christopher Michel](#), CC-BY)

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AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein

by JOHN HAYWARD 18 Jan 2018

Marriott International was one of several companies caught up in China's crackdown on foreign corporations that allegedly insult its territorial integrity by treating controversial or semi-autonomous regions like Tibet, Hong Kong, Macao, and especially Taiwan as separate "countries" on their websites.

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Health



Days after the story broke, Marriott is still offering fulsome apologies and implementing a draconian “eight-point rectification plan” to get right with Beijing.

In fact, according to an article in the state-run *China Daily* on Thursday, Marriott froze all of its social media worldwide to placate the authoritarian communist nation. The article stated:

The company was discovered to have classified the four regions as countries in a mail survey to its Chinese members on Jan 9, and “liked” the post of a separatist group on Twitter, which “congratulated” the listing the following day.

The actions resulted in strong reactions from both the public and government of China. At a regular news briefing three days later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged overseas companies to show respect for China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

After identifying its errors, the company has taken the survey offline, “unliked” the post, shut down its six websites and apps in Chinese, and put a freeze on its social media across the world. The CEO has volunteered to issue an apology.

It has also terminated the contract with the third-party vendor that built the survey, a Canadian company that Marriott has been working with for a long time, and with the US-based employee who “liked” the tweet.

The tweet *China Daily* refers to was posted by [Friends of Tibet](#), which China considers a “separatist group” because it advocates independence for the Tibetan people. Media organizations appear strangely reluctant to actually quote the tweet that just got somebody in Marriott’s customer rewards department fired, but Friends of Tibet helpfully pinned it to the top of their Twitter page:





Friends of Tibet
@friendsoftibet



Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain #Marriott International for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan.

10:39 PM - Jan 9, 2018

 298  89  237

Twitter is one of several social media services banned in China, so Beijing was able to get a foreign (possibly American) employee fired for “liking” a post on an American social media platform that Chinese citizens cannot use.

As for that worldwide social media freeze, David Ramli of Bloomberg News sees evidence that *China Daily* was not exaggerating:



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David Ramli ✓
@Davidramli



Almost all of Marriott's many global accounts stopped tweeting on Jan 10, followed by a capitulating apology on Jan 11. Since then, its accounts have only sent replies. If it turns out this was ordered by Chinese authorities it greatly changes the calculus of doing business here. twitter.com/greatfirechina...

2:47 PM - Jan 18, 2018

24 387 337

"This is a huge mistake, probably one of the biggest in my career. To regain confidence and trust, the first thing is to admit the mistake, then fix it, and it would come back slowly as we prove we really mean what we say," Marriott's Asia-Pacific managing director Craig S. Smith told *China Daily* on Wednesday.

To that end, Marriott announced an "eight-point rectification plan" that will include "expanding employee education globally, creating straightforward complaint channels for Chinese customers, and more strictly supervising the work of third-party agents for projects largely targeting the China market."

China's frenzied crackdown on challenges to its territorial claims, deliberate or inadvertent, has not been limited to travel company websites. The *Taipei Times* [reported](#) on Tuesday that China has taken to destroying entire shipments of Taiwanese food products, if they are not clearly labeled as coming from the "Taiwan Area" or "Taiwan, China," at a cost of over a hundred thousand dollars U.S. for each lost shipment.

Canada's *National Post* [reported](#) Wednesday about a Peking University alumnus named Shawn Zang, who currently lives in Canada on a student visa, whose parents back in China were visited by the police within hours of Zhang reposting that Friends of Tibet tweet about Marriott.

"It's like they are holding my parents hostage there, so that I can't say things. It is not just Chinese, but many non-Chinese are under this censorship. People in Canada and the United States have to censor their own statements if they want to get business inside China, so they don't say anything. They surrender to censorship," Zhang keenly observed.

"In Canada, in general, most Chinese students are not willing to express any opinion about China, or to talk about China. Even my Taiwanese friends are worried about getting in trouble with the Chinese government – they have friends and family, and they don't want to express opinions. The situation is very disturbing," he said.

Incidentally, Zhang refused to take down his tweet, but evidently his parents reached an agreement with Chinese authorities to have him remove two posts they didn't like on Weibo, which is essentially China's version of Twitter. One of the posts in question was a very, very mild joke involving a popular nickname for Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Charles Sturt University professor of public ethics Clive Hamilton, one of Australia's most prominent academics, [told Business Insider](#) on Wednesday that China is "engaging in economic blackmail, imposing acceptance of its geopolitical ambitions on corporations that want to operate in the country."

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FROM THE HOMEPAGE

"The Marriott incident shows that, for foreign companies, the price of operating in China is succumbing to the Communist Party's thought control," Hamilton said.

Hamilton has written an entire book on the subject of China's dangerous political influence and economic blackmail, entitled *Silent Invasion: How China is Turning Australia into a Puppet State*. Unfortunately, you can't read it yet, because China intimidated Hamilton's publisher into delaying the release of the book by threatening defamation suits. Hamilton parted company with publisher Allen & Unwin in response.

"What we're seeing ... is the first instance where a major Western publisher has decided to censor material of the Chinese Communist Party in its home country," Hamilton [said in November](#), as he began searching for a new publisher. "We as Australians living in a free society should not allow ourselves to be bullied into silence by an autocratic foreign power."

It is all part of what the Chinese government sees as an opportunity to remake its image and control free speech around the world by leveraging its economic power. Western companies desiring access to Chinese markets are growing accustomed to compromising Western ideals of free speech and individual liberty. Western businessmen have proven almost universally willing to submit to China's demands. Few of them respond to Beijing's "sharp power" the way Clive Hamilton did, not when millions of product sales, plane tickets, or hotel reservations are on the line.

The Chinese Communist Party's *People's Daily* published a 5,500-word article this week, written as a semi-official declaration of Party thought, declaring that "the world has never focused on China so much and needed China so much as it does now," so this is the perfect moment to use Chinese economic leverage to reshape global order.

"The capitalism-led world political and economic system is full of drawbacks; the global governance system is undergoing profound changes; and a new international order is taking shape," the *People's Daily* judged, asserting that China is "more confident and capable than at any given period in history seize this opportunity."

"The amount of publicity the article has received from the propaganda machine also sets it apart. In addition to dominating headlines on party media outlets and online news portals, it was promoted on social media the night before it went to press—rare treatment for commentaries in the paper," the *South China Morning Post* [observed](#).

Clearly, Beijing means business and grows increasingly confident of its ability to force international companies to toe the Communist Party line. This is no longer just about blocking access to foreign material the Chinese government doesn't want its citizens to see. It's using sharp power to force groveling apologies from Western companies and censor material its citizens *cannot* see. Tibetan activists hopefully [view](#) Beijing's dramatic reaction to the Marriott "mistake" as a sign of weakness and insecurity, but the *People's Daily* portrays it as the roar of a newborn dragon, with more serious demands yet to come.

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'Economic Blackmail': Zara, Qantas, Marriott And Delta Air Lines Reverse Position On Taiwan For Fear Of Angering China

'Economic blackmail': Zara, Qantas, Marriott and Delta Air Lines reverse position on Taiwan for fear of angering China

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ALAIN JOCARD/AFP/Getty Images

- **Zara, Marriott, Qantas, and Delta Air Lines have all updated their websites in the last week after China slammed several companies for listing Hong Kong and Taiwan as countries.**
- **An ethics professor whose book on China's soft power was not published due to fear of Beijing's influence told Business Insider this amounts to "economic blackmail."**
- **Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China, but Taiwan's political situation is highly contested.**
- **Business Insider found numerous companies, including Uber, Amazon, Uniqlo, and H&M, listed these regions as countries.**

A number of international companies, including Zara, Marriott, Qantas, and Delta Air Lines, have apologized to China in the last week for listing Taiwan and Hong Kong as "countries" on their websites.

Zara, Marriott and Delta Air Lines all deleted references to these regions as countries and were publicly reprimanded by Chinese authorities, while Qantas discovered and fixed the same type of "error" during a routine review of its website.



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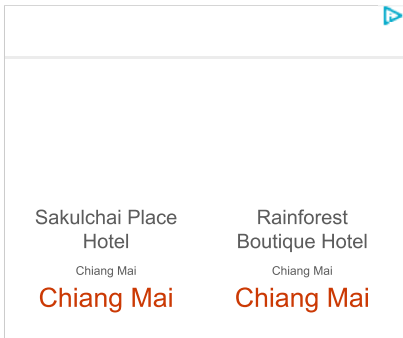
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Clive Hamilton, a public-ethics professor whose publisher scrapped his upcoming book about China's soft power out of concern about possible reprisals from Beijing, told Business Insider the situation these companies are facing amounts to "economic blackmail."



"The People's Republic of China is engaging in economic blackmail, imposing acceptance of its geopolitical ambitions on corporations that want to operate in the country," said Hamilton.

Hong Kong and Macau are technically Special Administrative Regions of China, while Taiwan's status is contested. Self-ruled Taiwan considers itself an independent island, while Beijing deems it a province of China.

Chinese authorities began reaching out to corporations last week regarding what it deemed as errors online.

The Shanghai arm of the Cyberspace Administration of China first contacted hotel chain Marriott regarding an email that listed Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as countries.

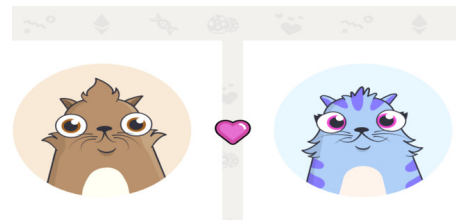
Authorities (http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/11/c_136888952.htm) from China's cyberspace administration and market supervision bureau interviewed Marriott managers in China about a potential breach of cybersecurity and advertising laws (<http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-marriott-apologies-after-listing-taiwan-tibet-as-countries-2018-1>). There were also reports (<http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-marriott-apologies-after-listing-taiwan-tibet-as-countries-2018-1>) these staff were interviewed by police. Marriott was then ordered to take down its website and app for a week while the errors were corrected.

Marriott's CEO, Arne Sorenson, later released a statement.



1 "Economic blackmail": Zara, Qantas, Marriott and Delta Air Lines reverse
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Part of this apology still sits on Marriott's temporarily removed website (<http://www.marriott.com.cn/default.mi>).



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"The Marriott incident shows that, for foreign companies, the price of operating in China is succumbing to the Communist Party's thought control," Hamilton said.

China, and its growing affluent population, is an important revenue-driver for international companies like Marriott. Currently, China's hotel market generates \$64.8 billion a year.

But the country's communist government retains tight control of its economy, and companies that operate within it. While some Chinese consumers have proposed a boycott (<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1084577.shtml>) of the hotel chain, the Cyberspace Administration retains the power to prevent websites and apps from operating in China - as it has done with Facebook, Twitter, Google, and Skype.

Other government departments can order businesses to close their physical premises. Last year, in retaliation for military decisions by South Korea, China closed 87 Lotte supermarkets, South Korea's fifth-largest conglomerate (<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-39335854>). Hit with alleged fire safety violations, the six-month closure led the company to lose \$470 million (http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2017/09/11/2017091101337.html).

Qantas and Delta Air Lines have reversed their positions



Cameron Spencer/Getty Images

Qantas confirmed to Business Insider that it mistakenly listed Hong Kong and Taiwan as countries on its website.



"Due [to] an oversight, some Chinese territories were incorrectly listed as 'countries' on parts of our website. We are correcting this error," a Qantas spokesperson told Business Insider.

Qantas, which does not fly into other contested territories, was not directly contacted by Chinese authorities but reportedly found the country listings during a regular review of the site. Most of the references on their site have now been updated.



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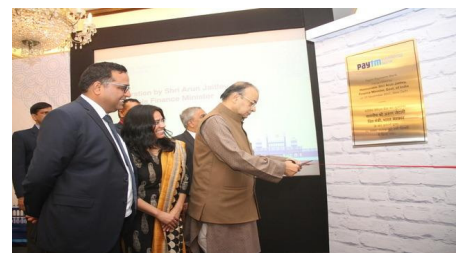
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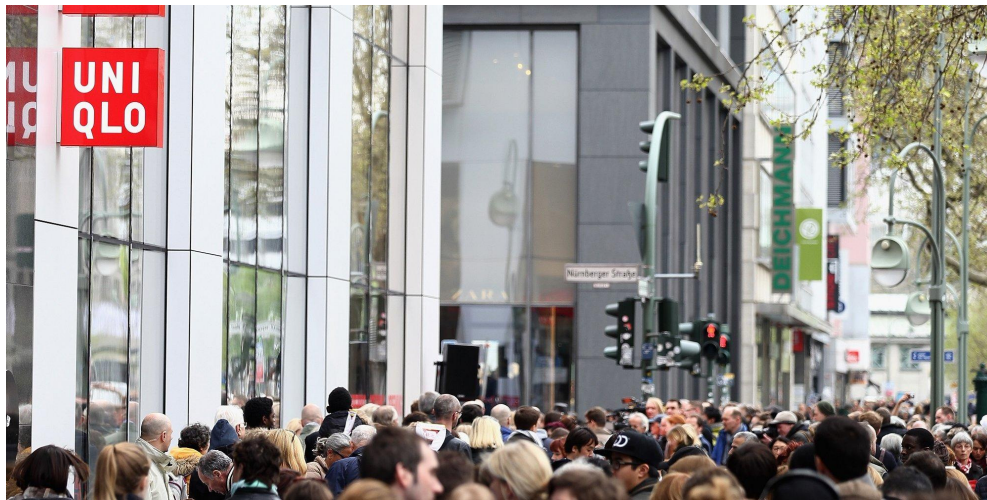
This follows a demand last Friday by the Civil Aviation Administration of China for Delta Air Lines to offer an "immediate and public" (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-delta/china-cracks-down-on-foreign-companies-calling-taiwan-other-regions-countries-idUSKBN1F1oRC?il=0>) apology for listing Taiwan and Tibet as countries on its website. The airline responded saying it had made a "grave mistake."

The aviation authority said all foreign airlines operating in China would be required to review all their materials to ensure they "strictly comply with China's laws and regulations to prevent a similar thing from happening," according to Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-delta/china-cracks-down-on-foreign-companies-calling-taiwan-other-regions-countries-idUSKBN1F1oRC?il=0>) .

Chinese news site thepaper.cn reported 24 airlines list Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as independent countries.

Flight booking sites also fall into difficult territory. When checked by Business Insider, Skyscanner listed Hong Kong as a city of China but Taiwan is listed as an independent country. Skyscanner did not respond to a request for comment.

Retail stores and Silicon Valley aren't immune, either



Andreas Rentz/Getty Images for Uniqlo

Global fast fashion retailer Zara was another company the Shanghai Cyberspace Administration publicly called out for showing Taiwan as a country in a list of nations on its website. The retailer was ordered (<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/YlnWev3ubw5GolltMF7LPw>) to publish an apology by 6 p.m. last Friday.

Zara, which operates 170 stores in China, was also ordered to carry out a "self-inspection" and turn in a rectification report. Further actions against the retailer are pending.



But, based on research by Business Insider, other companies also appear to have difficulty navigating the political boundaries in Asia.

Uniqlo (<http://www.uniqlo.com/au/shop/>) lists both Hong Kong and Taiwan as countries while H&M had both in a drop-down list (<https://www.hm.com/us/store-locator>) of countries on its site.

Uber (<https://www.uber.com/en-AU/country-list/>) , on the other hand, lists Taiwan with the suffix "(ROC)," to denote the Republic of China, but lists Hong Kong as a country. On two webpages (<https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201074230>) (<https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=200417280>) , Amazon lists both Hong Kong and Taiwan as countries.

The companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Some companies appear to be moving away from problematic lists. Prada (<http://www.prada.com/en/store-locator.html>) , Gucci (<https://www.gucci.com/int/en/>) , and Airbnb (<https://www.airbnb.com.au/about/about-us>) all use maps to indicate their operating locations which avoids the need to explicitly define countries.

Taiwan's political situation is highly contentious



Taipei, Taiwan. Billy H.C. Kwok/Getty Images

Taiwan's political situation is both complicated and contentious.

The US ended diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979 but continues to have a "robust unofficial relationship."

Then President-elect Donald Trump famously accepted a phone call from Taiwan's president (<http://www.businessinsider.com/china-lodges-diplomatic-protest-against-trump-taiwan-call-2016-12>) in 2016, resulting in China lodging a formal diplomatic complaint. In December, China complained the US was interfering in its internal affairs (<http://www.businessinsider.com/senior-chinese-diplomat-threatens-to-invade-taiwan-if-us-navy-visits-2017-12>) when Trump signed a law allowing US navy vessels to visit Taiwan.

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Yet Trump has previously acknowledged the need to respect China's position on Taiwan in exchange for political help.

Trump told reporters (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-interview-highlights/highlights-of-reuters-interview-with-trump-idUSKBN17UoD4>) last year he wouldn't speak with Taiwan's leader again unless he cleared it with Chinese President Xi Jinping, because he is helping the US with a "big situation." It was understood he meant the US needed China's help to exert influence over North Korea.

NOW WATCH: Here's how the map of the United States has changed in 200 years (<http://www.businessinsider.com/animated-map-of-200-years-us-border-territory-changes-2016-1>)



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Designers are renaming products after Meghan Markle. AP Photo/ Dominic Lipinski, Pool

- **Meghan Markle and Prince Harry are to be married in May, but Markle's icon status has already been cemented.**

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- **Markle is following in the footsteps of Kate Middleton, who drives \$1 billion to the UK fashion industry annually.**
- **The " Meghan Effect (<http://www.businessinsider.com/meghan-markle-kate-middleton-bring-millions-to-the-british-economy-2018-1>) " has already taken hold and Markle may be poised to overtake Middleton.**

Like Kate Middleton before her (<http://www.businessinsider.com/kate-middleton-best-style-moments-reveal-meghan-markle-fashion-future-2018-1>) , Meghan Markle became an instant fashion icon the moment she announced her royal engagement.

The 36-year-old American actress has become an object of fascination by royal fans in Britain and the US.

Everything Markle wears and does is idolized - and that's translating to hundreds of millions of dollars for the British economy.

According to an estimation by Brand Finance, reported by Forbes (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ceciliarodriguez/2018/01/08/meghan-markle-and-the-price-of-the-princess-lifestyle/#1168e5244011>) , Markle's entree into the royal family is expected to rake in about \$677 million (<http://www.businessinsider.com/meghan-markle-kate-middleton-bring-millions-to-the-british-economy-2018-1>) (£500 million) this year, but that's only the beginning. If Middleton and Prince William's 2011 nuptials are any indication, the public's obsession with Markle will only deepen over time. Especially when she starts having babies (<http://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/tradition/g12167293/kate-middleton-best-maternity-outfits/>) .

Markle is following in the footsteps of Middleton, whose fashion-icon status is worth about \$1 billion annually (<http://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/fashion-news/a13931622/markle-sunglasses-the-meghan-effect/>) to the British fashion industry.

But with fan bases in the US, Canada, and now the UK - and a decidedly trendier and less traditional (<http://www.businessinsider.com/kate-middleton-versus-meghan-markle-fashion-2017-11>) style than Middleton's - it's possible Markle's newly initiated "Meghan Effect" could swiftly dominate the "Kate Effect."

Keep reading to find out how Markle has gained a foothold among the royal family.

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Markle's entrée into the royal family as the wife-to-be of Prince Harry — long considered one of the world's most eligible bachelors — is expected to bring a \$677 million boost to the British economy this year, according to an estimation by Brand Finance.

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Sources: People, (<http://people.com/royals/prince-harry-named-most-eligible-bachelor-in-the-world/>) Forbes (<https://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/?toURL=https://www.forbes.com/sites/ceciliarodriguez/2018/01/08/meghan-markle-and-the-price-of-the-princess-lifestyle/&refURL=http://www.businessinsider.com/meghan-markle-kate-middleton-bring-millions-to-the-british-economy-2018-1&referrer=http://www.businessinsider.com/meghan-markle-kate-middleton-bring-millions-to-the-british-economy-2018-1#1168e5244011>)

Markle and Prince Harry's nuptials will drive up tourism and travel, bringing in profits from restaurants, hotels, parties and celebrations, and sales of T-shirts, hats, banners, and other commemorative merchandise related to the wedding.

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Around the time of the last royal wedding, the phenomenon was deemed the "Duchess Effect" or the "Kate Effect": Anything worn by Middleton, and now her children, flies off the shelves. Middleton effectively became a trendsetter overnight.

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Newsweek estimated in 2012 that the "Kate Effect" is worth more than \$1 billion annually to the UK fashion industry. But the "Meghan Effect" has staked its claim so quickly, there's speculation that Markle's influence may soon dominate her future sister-in-law's.



Source: Harper's Bazaar (<http://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/fashion-news/a13931622/markle-sunglasses-the-meghan-effect/>)

Markle wore a \$750 white wool coat from Canadian brand LINE during the couple's engagement photo call in late November. The coat sold out in seconds and is now renamed "The Meghan." According to the brand's president, John Muscat, "everyone is trying to get it," but the coat "has to stay exclusive."



Source: People (<http://people.com/royals/designers-cant-keep-up-with-the-meghan-markle-effect-we-have-3000-people-on-the-wait-list/>)

At Markle's first official royal outing with Prince Harry, she carried a burgundy purse made by Scottish brand Strathberry. The \$675 bag sold out in 11 seconds and Strathberry promptly renamed it the "Meghan Bag."



Source: People (<http://people.com/royals/designers-cant-keep-up-with-the-meghan-markle-effect-we-have-3000-people-on-the-wait-list/>), Strathberry (https://www.strathberry.com/collections/the-strathberry-midi-tote/products/the-strathberry-midi-tote-tri-colour-burgundy-navy-vanilla?utm_source=RakutenMarketing&utm_medium=Affiliate&utm_campaign=2116208:Skimlinks.com&utm_content=10&utm_term=UKNetuH.TqYoEuJzf3eLzypRnShw)

In fact, every piece of clothing item Markle has worn so far as Prince Harry's fiancée has sold out, except for a black turtleneck bodysuit from Austrian brand Wolford that retails for about \$250.



Source: People (<http://people.com/royals/meghan-markle-nottingham-outfit/>)

LINE president Muscat has worked with Markle and her personal stylist for several years, according to People. "I think there is an appetite for something new and she is a bit of surprise."



Source: People (<http://people.com/royals/designers-cant-keep-up-with-the-meghan-markle-effect-we-have-3000-people-on-the-wait-list/>)

For several years, Markle ran a fashion and lifestyle blog and often shared photos of her clothes and accessories with millions of Instagram followers. Her influence only swelled after announcing her engagement to Prince Harry. She was recently described as "a singular mover of product" by The New York Times.



Source: The New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/22/fashion/meghan-markle-engagement-portrait-dress.html>)

Markle's American citizenship, along with the few years she spent living in Canada while shooting television drama "Suits," expands her global fan base.



But as demonstrated by the "Kate Effect," reverberations continue far beyond the months surrounding the wedding. For Markle, an American actress and fixture on red carpets, the royal stage is simply a status upgrade.



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This artist imagined what it would look like if Google and Facebook died in a retail apocalypse

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Andrei Lacatusu

What if Facebook, Google, and other tech giants were going through the same collapse (<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-american-retail-apocalypse-in-photos-2017-3>) experienced in recent years by retailers such as Sears, Macy's, and Walgreen's?

That was graphic artist Andrei Lacatusu (<https://www.behance.net/andreilacatusu>)'s starting point for a new project. He imagined what it would be like if today's tech titans were actually subject to the same urban decay as defunct retailers with aging storefronts in abandoned towns. In Lacatusu's series "Social Decay," paint fades from the tech companies' signs, and letters fall off some buildings all together.

Lacatusu is based in Bucharest, Romania, where he works as a computer-generated imagery artist at Carioca Studio. He created the works in "Social Decay" using a mix of Adobe Photoshop and a pair of 3D rendering programs called Autodesk 3ds Max and V-Ray.

The tech companies' signs may be fabricated but they look all-too-real. As such, they offer a new perspective on companies such as Google and Facebook, which given their current dominance, seem immortal. But as Lacatusu's work suggests, as societies change, so do the companies with the most money and power.

Here's what Lacatusu sees when he imagines the end of the titans of tech:

Get the latest Google stock price here.
(<http://markets.businessinsider.com/stock/GOOG-Quote>)

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These 15 companies are defying the retail apocalypse and opening hundreds of new stores

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- **Discount stores are thriving while mall-based stores are closing a record number of stores.** (<http://www.businessinsider.com/store-closures-in-2018-will-eclipse-2017-2018-1>)
- **Discounters are collectively opening hundreds of new stores this year.**
- **Retailers planning to add new stores include Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, Aldi, Lidl, Five Below, and Hobby Lobby.**

US shoppers started gravitating toward discount stores during the recession, and most never returned to shopping full-price.

Discount stores are rapidly building new locations, with at least one - Dollar General - adding as many as 900 stores this year.

A large majority of the retailers that are opening new stores this year are discounters, including Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, Aldi, Lidl, Five Below, and Hobby Lobby.

Those retailers and others will collectively open more than 2,100 stores this year, according to a Business Insider analysis based on company data.

Here's a full list of companies opening hundreds of new stores:



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Dollar General — 900 stores



In addition to adding 900 new stores (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>), Dollar General plans to remodel 1,000 locations and relocate 100 stores.

Dollar Tree — 320 stores



Dollar Tree, which owns Family Dollar, expects to open "hundreds" of stores under each chain this year, a company spokesman told Business Insider (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>). The company declined to provide an exact number until its next earnings release date in March, but it referenced its fiscal 2017 store growth — totaling 620 stores — for guidance.

Family Dollar — 300 stores



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Family Dollar is also expected to open several hundred more stores in 2018.
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>) The company said it will reveal more information in March.

Aldi — 180 stores



The discount grocery chain Aldi, which operates 1,750 stores in 35 states, is planning to add another 180 stores (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>) this year as it works toward its goal of reaching 2,500 stores by 2022, the company said.

Five Below — 125 stores



Five Below currently has 600 stores and plans on adding 125 more locations in 2018.
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>)

Ulta — 100 stores



Ulta has opened hundreds of stores in the last few years and will continue to do so
(<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/analysts-think-future-ulta-beauty-214707712.html>) in
2018 with 100 new locations.

Hobby Lobby — 60 stores



Hobby Lobby opened 63 new stores in 2017 and is planning on continuing its growth this
year (<https://newsroom.hobbylobby.com/articles/continued-growth-anticipated-2018/>)
with 60 additional stores.

H&M — 60 stores



After a successful third quarter (<http://about.hm.com/en/media/news/financial-reports/2017/9/2669620.html>), H&M will continue to expand its presence across the United States with an additional 60 stores in 2018.

Lidl — 52 stores



Aldi's biggest global competitor, Lidl, launched its first US stores last year and now has 48 locations across the East Coast. The company plans to open another 52 stores (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>) by June of this year, a spokesman told Business Insider.

Target — 35 stores



Target launched a successful initiative to reimagine its stores (<http://www.businessinsider.com/target-beat-expectations-over-the-holidays-2018-1>) in 2017 with services like in-store pick-up. The company plans on continuing their efforts this year in addition to opening 35 new locations.

Walmart — 25 stores



Walmart plans to open up 25 new locations (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>) that will include a mix of Neighborhood Market stores and Supercenters.

Dick's Sporting Goods — 20 stores



Dick's Sporting Goods has turned a corner since it's CEO Edward Stack said the retail industry was in "panic mode." (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retail-panic-mode-says-dicks-ceo-2017-8>) The retailer now offers competitive price matching, it's own private line and is planning on opening 20 new stores this year. (<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>)

Nordstrom Rack — 14 stores



While Nordstrom's same-store sales have been steadily declining, sales at its discount sister store have been stronger than ever. (<http://www.businessinsider.com/nordstrom-rack-store-photos-2017-6>) The off-price Rack stores already outnumber Nordstrom's full-price locations and will continue to grow in 2018 with 14 new locations.

Costco — 3 stores








Costco will open at least three new stores in 2018.
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/retailers-opening-new-stores-this-year-2018-1>)

JCPenny — 1 store



JCPenny is set to open 1 new store in 2018, which is a vast improvement from 2017 when the chain was forced to close 138 locations because of slowing traffic and sales.
(<http://www.businessinsider.com/jcpenney-stores-closing-2017-3>)

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Ivanka Trump is taking a page out of Melania Trump's style handbook - and she needs it now more than ever

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AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

- **On Tuesday, Ivanka Trump spoke on a panel about the state of women in the US.**
- **The first daughter's outfit was a noteworthy departure, and it seemed to be a sign that Ivanka was taking a page out of her stepmother's style playbook.**
- **As Ivanka Trump faces scandals in the White House, first lady Melania Trump has only become more popular.**

Ivanka Trump is, once again, (<http://www.businessinsider.com/ivanka-trump-copies-melania-aspirational-fashion-2017-11>) taking a page out of First Lady Melania Trump's fashion handbook.

On Tuesday, as part of an event called "Conversations with the Women of America," President Trump's daughter and advisor spoke on a panel of women about the administration's efforts to advance women at home and work. Trump's outfit was a noteworthy departure from her typical appearance, as she swapped her typical trendy dresses for a sharp suit.

It seemed like an outfit that could have come straight out of the closet of her stepmother, Melania Trump.



AP Images

In fact, when Hope Hicks wore a similar suit, we saw it as a tip-off (<http://www.businessinsider.com/ivanka-trump-copies-melania-aspirational-fashion-2017-11>) that the communications director had changed her fashion icon



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from Ivanka to Melania.

Since Donald Trump began his presidential campaign, Ivanka has attempted to convince more progressive Americans that her father is a worthwhile politician. As a result, her fashion strategy has been to appear relatable.

Melania, on the other hand, strives to be aspirational in her fashion. Her outfits tend to be sleeker than Ivanka's, with sharper angles. A sharp suit - instead of a softer dress - reveals the fashion divide between first lady and first daughter.



Hope Hicks in more Ivanka-inspired attire (left), and her own Melania-esque suit. AP Images

Ivanka's new outfit could symbolize a new strategy for the first daughter. Republicans' perception of Ivanka Trump has dropped as the first daughter has been increasingly seen as a moderating force who makes an active effort to push forward certain policies.

With reports that her close friend Wendi Deng Murdoch could be a Chinese spy (<http://www.businessinsider.com/kushner-warned-that-his-friend-wendi-deng-murdoch-may-be-a-chinese-spy-2018-1>) and the continuing drama following the publication of Michael Wolff's bombshell book on the internal divisions in the White House (<http://www.businessinsider.com/fire-and-fury-trump-book-wildest-claims-2018-1>), Ivanka is in a position where she needs to change the narrative.

The first lady has managed to make fashion and a handful of apolitical causes her major talking points since the election - an achievement that former fashion entrepreneur and registered Independent (<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=oahUKEwj7pIvxu9sYAh1IQ7VMKHJd5Bd4QFgsMAA&urclosest-confidants-cant-vote-for-himbecause-theyre-still-democrats&usg=AOvVaw2A2g1cVW21D8p6J4DozFHX>) Ivanka may wish she could have managed.

Further, Melania Trump has only become more popular over the last year. In December, Gallup found (<http://news.gallup.com/poll/223853/majority-americans-view-melania-trump-favorably.aspx>) that 54% of Americans had a favorable opinion of Melania - exceeding her husband's approval rating.

Melania was, somewhat surprisingly, not in attendance at "Conversations with the Women of America." The first lady's office told CNN's Kate Bennett that (https://twitter.com/KateBennett_DC/status/953362845021982720) she "had a previous engagement and was not able to attend."

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Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders just inadvertently exposed a flaw in Amazon's Alexa voice-shopping platform

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"Alexa, we have a problem," Sarah Huckabee Sanders tweeted. AP/Alex Brandon

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- **Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders tweeted that her two-year-old ordered a Batman toy through Amazon** (<http://markets.businessinsider.com/stock/AMZN-Quote>) 's Alexa voice-shopping platform.
- **Sanders said her kid did it by "yelling 'Batman!' over and over again into the Echo."**
- **This anecdote shows that the ease of voice shopping cuts both ways for customers interested in convenience.**

Ordering items on Amazon from an Alexa-enabled device - so easy, a child could do it.

It turns out that ease of use might be a little bit of an issue. Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders tweeted on Sunday that her two-year old kid was able to order a toy from the device just by shouting "Batman!" at it.

" Alexa, we have a problem," she tweeted.

Amazon has attempted to lessen the friction for customers by making ordering super easy - maybe too easy. Though Alexa probably isn't going to accept a command as simple as "Batman!" it's easy to see a circumstance where the device gets confused in a loud room with a lot of people talking.

Taking Sanders' account as accurate, this is a concern for Amazon as it gets more of its Alexa-enabled devices in homes. If the voice-shopping features are just *too* easy to use - or too easily fooled - Echo owners might turn off the feature altogether and write it off as more trouble than it's worth.

Voice shopping is built for convenience, but an accidental order requires a whole lot more work, as customers will either have to ship the item back or reach out to the company to cancel it.

Amazon does have safeguards against this kind of thing. The app allows users to establish only certain voices as those that are enabled to purchase with their voice, or prompt select voices to give a specific four-digit code each time. This makes the whole process a bit less seamless, but it can cut out the hassle for certain households - especially ones with kids that love to ask Alexa to play the "Frozen" soundtrack.

As with any new platform, voice shopping has its kinks to work out.

Alexa, we have a problem if my 2 year old can order a Batman toy by yelling "Batman!" over and over again into the Echo [pic.twitter.com/7uF0d2fmD8](https://t.co/7uF0d2fmD8) (<https://t.co/7uF0d2fmD8>)

- Sarah Sanders (@PressSec) January 14, 2018
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30 of the best things you can buy at Target

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Women's private-label brand A New Day launched in the fall of 2017. Target

- Target (<http://markets.businessinsider.com/stock/TGT-Quote>) has a large portfolio of private-label brands.
- These brands have become key drivers of growth for the business.
- We put together a selection of the top products available, based on consumer reviews and best-selling lists.

Target is the king of private label.

In 2017, the store launched eight different private label-brands, including women's apparel line A New Day, menswear collection Goodfellow & Co., home goods brand Project 62, athleisure brand Joy Lab, and Hearth & Hand with Magnolia, a home goods collaboration with Chip and Joanna Gaines from "Fixer Upper." CEO Brian Cornell said the store will launch another four over the course of 2018, one of which - Universal Thread - launches next month.

Private labels are a way to differentiate Target and boost profit margins while still being able to offer customers affordable prices. Its strategy seems to be working - in just over a year, sales at Cat & Jack, its kids' apparel brand, surpassed \$2 billion (<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-11/the-retail-apocalypse-is-fueled-by-no-name-clothes>) .

We scoured best-selling lists, customer reviews, and consulted the duo behind "Target Does It Again (<https://www.instagram.com/targetdoesitagain/?hl=en>) ," a self-proclaimed "source for all things cool at Target," to put together a list of the best products you can buy exclusively at the chain.

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Kroger

Kroger is rolling out a new technology that will communicate with customers' smartphones and highlight products on their shopping lists.

- **Kroger (<http://markets.businessinsider.com/stock/KR-Quote>) is rolling out a new technology, called Kroger Edge, to nearly 200 stores by the end of 2018, the company told Business Insider.**
- **The technology digitally displays pricing and nutritional information, as well as video ads and coupons for various products.**
- **It will eventually communicate with customers' smartphones and highlight products on their shopping lists as they walk down store aisles - helping them to quickly select items in a sea of identical-looking items.**
- **It will also highlight items that match customers' dietary needs if they have allergies or other dietary restrictions.**

Kroger is rolling out a new technology to nearly 200 stores, and it could change grocery shopping as we know it.

The technology, called Kroger Edge, will be installed on store shelves where paper price tags currently hang. It digitally displays pricing and nutritional information, as well as video ads and coupons for various products.

The technology gives Kroger the ability to instantly change prices and activate promotions across its stores, enabling it to undercut sales at other chains and freeing up employees who would otherwise change prices by hand.

"It's an exciting platform for a lot of future innovation," Kroger Chief Information Officer Chris Hjelm told Business Insider in an interview.

In the future, the technology will communicate with customers' smartphones to help them complete their shopping lists.

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Kroger

"As you walk down the aisle, it will highlight the next item for you to pick on your shopping list," Hjelm said.

This means the shelf will light up underneath the product that shoppers are seeking.

Kroger employees recently tested out this function while picking items for customers' online orders.

"They loved it," Hjelm said, noting that it drastically cut down on the amount of time it took to pick and pack the orders.

Kroger expects Edge to be particularly helpful to customers trying to identify a specific brand among a sea of identical-looking items.

"If you are looking for a particular bottle of wine, Edge will show it to you by highlighting it on the shelf," Hjelm said.

The technology can even help customers select items based on their dietary restrictions.

"If you are standing in front of nutrition bars and you are gluten-free, we would highlight for you, in your color of choice, which of the gluten-free bars are good for you," Hjelm said.



Kroger

Kroger Edge is currently deployed in only a handful of stores. For now, customers must use one of Kroger's handheld devices to communicate with the system.

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The company is working on developing an app that will enable customers to take advantage of the system with their smartphones.

Kroger Edge will be available in 200 stores by the end of 2018, but mostly in stores' end caps - the industry's term for displays at the ends of store aisles.





It could also start showing up soon in other retailers' stores. Kroger is marketing and selling the technology, which was developed with Microsoft Azure, Microsoft's cloud computing service, to other retailers globally.

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McDonald's is falling short on recycling in one massive way - here's how it's changing that fact

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Reuters

- **McDonald's (<http://markets.businessinsider.com/stock/MCD-Quote>) plans to add recycling to its more than 36,000 locations around the world by 2025.**
- **Currently, customers can only recycle at roughly 10% of locations.**
- **The fast-food chain is also switching to packaging made with renewable, recycled, or certified materials.**
- **"As the world's largest restaurant company, we have the opportunity - and frankly responsibility - to use our scale for good," McDonald's chief supply chain and sustainability officer told Business Insider.**

McDonald's just announced two major sustainability commitments.

On Tuesday, the fast-food chain announced that it will make recycling an option at all locations globally by 2025. Currently, roughly 10% of the more than 36,000 McDonald's locations allow people to recycle.

The chain is also pledging that by 2025, all packaging on customer products will come from "renewable or recycled sources," or sources certified by environmental organizations Forest Stewardship Council or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.

"As the world's largest restaurant company, we have the opportunity - and frankly responsibility - to use our scale for good," Francesca DeBiase, McDonald's chief supply chain and sustainability officer, told Business Insider.

According to DeBiase, the hardest part of the new sustainability pledges will be to add a recycling option at every location. Due to different local regulations - including some regions that lack the necessary infrastructure - DeBiase says that adding recycling globally is a multi-year effort.

"Working with different municipalities to put the infrastructure in place is going to be the most complex piece of work that we do," DeBiase said.

The new sustainability efforts follow McDonald's announcement (<http://www.businessinsider.com/mcdonalds-ditches-foam-cups-packaging-2018-1>) that it will ditch foam cold-beverage cups and trays. The company also recently announced plans to use 100% recycled fiber-based packaging globally by 2020.

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An unusual display at a Gristedes grocery store in New York city. Business Insider/Mary Hanbury

- **The US grocery sector is being disrupted as Lidl ramps up its store count in the US and Amazon**
(<http://markets.businessinsider.com/stock/AMZN-Quote>) takes market share with its acquisition of Whole Foods.
- **We compared two stores in London and New York City to see how the shopping experience differed.**
- **We found a big difference in price, quality, and variety.**

America's grocery scene is in the midst of a major shake-up.

Last year, German discount store Lidl announced plans (<http://www.businessinsider.com/lidl-store-tour-2017-6>) to expand in the US, and Amazon bought Whole Foods (<http://www.businessinsider.com/amazon-changes-whole-foods-2017-9>) - both of which threatened to upend the US grocery market and send established national chains into aggressive price wars.

The grocery scene in New York City isn't immune from these changes, not only because there are several Whole Foods stores in the city, but also because the absence of a major national chain like Walmart makes for a unique shopping experience.

We looked at how different it is to go grocery shopping in London versus New York. We disregarded Whole Foods, as it's known to be a more premium store, and instead looked at two stores where customers would typically do a shopping trip in their neighborhood.

In London, we chose Tesco, the largest supermarket chain in the UK, which occupies 27.8% of market share but is also considered to be a typical neighborhood store. It has five different store formats ranging from city convenience stores to large supermarkets in suburban areas. For this exercise, we visited one of its Express stores, which are under 3,000 square feet in size.

There's no direct equivalent to this in New York City, so we picked a smaller chain, Gristedes, (<http://www.gristedessupermarkets.com/>) which has 30 stores across the city.

Here's what we found out:

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We visited a Tesco Express in London's Fulham neighborhood on a cold January morning. On first impression, the store looks easy to navigate with clearly labeled sections.

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By the entrance, there's an attention-grabbing fresh produce area to lure customers in. "It's a way to immediately establish credibility and set a tone for the rest of the store," Mike Paglia, director of the retail insights firm Kantar Retail, told Business Insider. "You can pick up and feel an apple or smell an onion, but you can't do that with a pack of Cheerios, for example."



A similar tactic is used at the Gristedes store in Downtown Manhattan, though with a less nutritious approach. Fresh cakes and pies are displayed on a table near the entrance.



Then there's a strange twist — a rack of dated sunglasses is dropped right by the entrance. This is an unusual way to lure shoppers into the store in mid-January.



Instantly, there's less of a focus on healthy fresh food, as the near wall is covered with two-liter bottles of Coke.



In fact, there's a ton of soda and soft drinks.



**We find the fresh vegetable section tucked towards the back of the store.
Glowing green, these unpackaged products look very fresh.**



At Tesco, by contrast, the vegetables are covered in packaging. UK supermarkets have been criticized by customers for coating products in excessive amounts of plastic, leading to a request for "plastic-free aisles."

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UK consumers (<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/plastic-free-aisle-supermarkets-products-packages-survey-groceries-nine-ten-people-uk-a7859066.html>) have called for supermarkets to create plastic-free aisles because of pollution concerns. Tesco (<https://www.tescopl.com/news/blogs/topics/tesco-launch-new-packaging-to-reduce-food-waste-at-home/>) has launched initiatives to reduce plastic in its stores.

The fruit and vegetable section gives us our first glimpse into the mammoth price difference between the two stores.

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At Gristedes, you'll pay \$5.99 for a case of raspberries (and this doesn't include New York city tax).

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At Tesco, they're equivalent to \$2.70 with VAT included.



Even American brands are cheaper in the UK. This bag of Doritos cost a whopping \$4.29 at Gristedes and \$1.35 at Tesco.



New Yorkers reportedly spend double the amount of money on basic groceries as Londoners, according to a CNBC report. High real estate costs in the city play a big part here, but the absence of a national brand means there's no pricing pressure in the market. "When Walmart (the US' biggest grocery chain) enters a market it compels them to drive prices down; no Walmart, no pressure to do that," Paglia told Business Insider.



The lack of private-label goods in these US grocery stores is another reason for higher prices. UK stores carry more private-label products. In the company's earnings call in October, Tesco CEO Dave Lewis said that private labels now account for 50% of sales at the chain.



The cheapest cereal we could find at Gristedes was \$3.39. At Tesco, it's under \$1 for a private-label variety.

"Private label is a profit driver," Paglia told Business Insider. "There's still a lot of resistance towards it here in the US, and we lag behind the UK."

But pressure to drop grocery prices is mounting in the US as German chain Lidl heats up competition in the space.



In the US, retailers' private labels currently capture only a minority share of total grocery spending. Last year, these products accounted for 14.5% of all US spending on consumer packaged goods, according to a report done by Fung Global Retail Technology (<https://www.fungglobalretailtech.com/research/deep-dive-private-label-us-grocery-five-drivers-growth/>).

"The US grocery market is unusually fragmented, and fragmentation inhibits the development of sophisticated, tiered and innovative private-label ranges," according to Fung (<https://www.fungglobalretailtech.com/research/deep-dive-private-label-us-grocery-five-drivers-growth/>).

Fung predicts that total sales in the US generated by private-label discount stores such as Lidl could surge to \$37.7 billion in 2020 as they rapidly expand.

While there's no real difference in the quality of staple products in each store — cereal, snacks, etc. — when it comes to meat, you'll have to fork out a lot more for quality at Gristedes. 1.1 pounds of Tesco's Finest beef mince, from its premium brand, costs just under \$6.



At Gristedes, 1.32 pounds of a similar own-brand product costs double at \$12.



One of the best parts of Tesco is the smell of fresh bread wafting out of the door. In this location in London, there's a self-service coffee machine next to its bakery section for customers who are running in for a quick bite and a hot drink.

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The bread section in Gristedes is hidden at the back of the store by the chilled products, squashing any chance of a tempting smell as you come in.

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For both stores, convenience is key to cater to its urban customers. This Tesco "grab-and-go" section offers sandwiches, wraps, and salads for lunch.

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There are affordable "meals deals," which cost around \$4 for a drink, snack, and sandwich or salad.



There's a limited selection of prepared sandwiches at Gristedes. This depressing-looking "meal deal" including a sandwich, chips, and bottle of water costs \$6.99.



In Tesco, there's a ton of gourmet, ready-made microwavable meals for one person. You can buy two for \$5.40.



They look pretty tasty.



At Gristedes, there's far more frozen food to choose from — a whole aisle, in fact.



At both stores, we found an impressive selection of specialty foods for food allergies. There were also lots of different ingredients for other styles of cuisine.



In Tesco, there are even ready-made meals that cater to customers with allergies.



For two small stores, there's plenty of choice. At Gristedes, we found an entire aisle devoted to cleaning products and tissues ...



... which seems unnecessary for a store of this size.



It's especially apparent when you see how much space it devotes to other products.



In Tesco, the focus is on the necessities. Shopping habits have changed in the UK as customers shift from doing a weekly shopping trip to "shopping for tonight; little and often," Natalie Berg, retail insights director at Planet Retail RNG, told Business Insider.



A report done by UK chain Waitrose showed that two-thirds of UK shoppers (<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/nov/01/weekly-shop-daily-spending-waitrose-supermarket>) visit a supermarket more than once a day.

Then there's alcohol.



In Tesco, there's a wide selection of wine, beer, and spirits.



New York law prevents grocery stores from selling wine with alcohol content. There's often one brand available, Chateau Diana, which is produced exclusively for these stores because of its low alcohol content.








There's no shortage of beer; this is one of the store's best-stocked sections.




Overall, the shopping experience was definitely better in London based on price, quality, and ease of navigating the store. Supermarkets in the UK have already experienced the fierce competition of discount stores such as Lidl and Aldi, which has benefited customers as they are forced to reduce prices. The competition has also led to greater own-label innovation as it's a way for stores to boost profit margins and offer lower prices.

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"British shoppers have the best-in-class experience," Berg told Business Insider.

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China urges hotels to review websites as 'country' crackdown grows



In a Mandarin-language questionnaire sent out to customers, Marriott listed Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as separate countries. (Photo: AFP)

13 Jan 2018 05:35PM
(Updated: 13 Jan 2018 11:40PM)

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SHANGHAI: China's tourism authority has urged accommodation companies to review their websites and apps to fix what Beijing deems to be inaccurate labelling of Taiwan or other Chinese-claimed territories as countries.

The move expands the Chinese government's efforts of recent days to police how foreign businesses refer to parts of China, or territories claimed by Beijing, including Taiwan and Hong Kong - even if only in pull-down menus on websites.

On Thursday (Jan 11), the government suspended Marriott International Inc's Chinese website for a week to punish the world's biggest hotel chain for listing Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau as separate countries in a customer questionnaire.

No activities that challenge China's "legal red lines" would be permitted, the state news agency Xinhua quoted a China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) official as saying.

It said the administration had ordered immediate and thorough checks of websites and apps by accommodation companies to ensure they comply with the law.

The civil aviation authority on Friday demanded an apology from Delta Air Lines for listing Taiwan and Tibet as countries on its website, while another government agency took aim at Inditex-owned fashion brand Zara and medical device maker Medtronic Plc for similar issues.

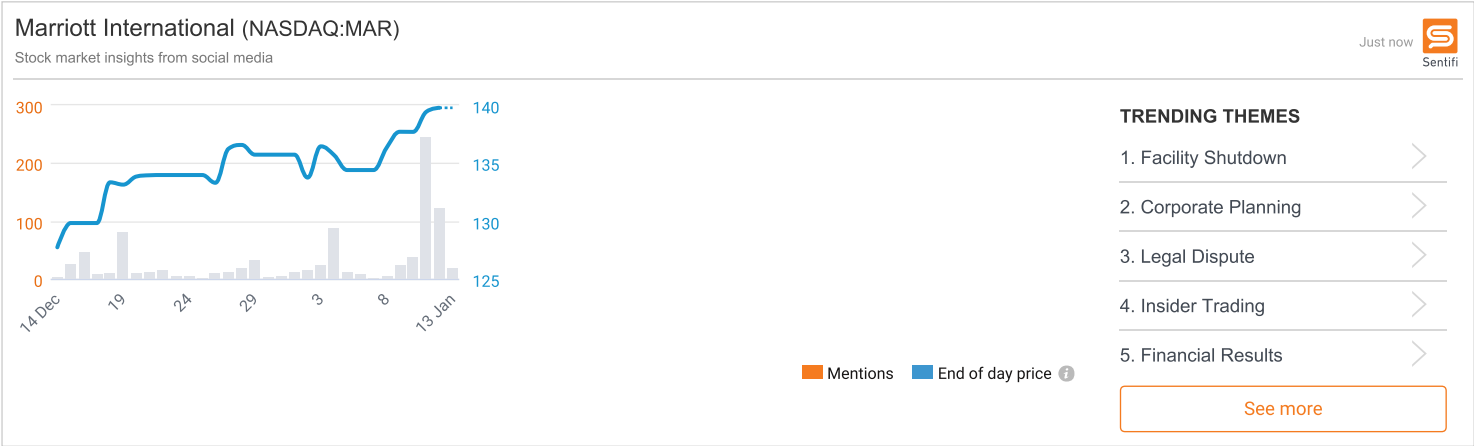
Marriott, Delta, Zara and Medtronic have all apologised.

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The Civil Aviation Authority of China (CAAC) ordered all foreign airlines operating routes to China on Friday to check their websites and apps.

The crackdown was accompanied by an outcry online in China over the perceived slights, and efforts to unearth other infractions.

On Saturday, the Shanghai-based newspaper The Paper reported that it had found 24 other foreign airlines with websites listing Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau as countries. Most were in pull-down menus in registration or comments sections, it said.



Marriott announces 'rectification plan' to regain trust

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Signage for the New York Marriott Marquis is seen in Manhattan, New York. [Photo/Agencies]

One week after Marriott International shut down its Chinese website and mobile apps for illegally listing Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao as countries, it announced an "eight-point rectification plan" on Wednesday in an attempt to prevent such mistakes from happening again.

"This is a huge mistake, probably one of the biggest in my career," said Craig S. Smith, president and managing director of Marriott's Asia-Pacific office, who has been working with the company for three decades.

"To regain confidence and trust, the first thing is to admit the mistake, then fix it, and it would come back slowly as we prove we really mean what we say," Smith told China Daily in Shanghai on Wednesday, one day before the company's digital platforms are scheduled to be back online.

The eight measures to be taken, especially in the next 90 days at an intensive pace, include expanding employee education globally, creating straightforward complaint channels for Chinese customers, and more strictly supervising the work of third-party agents for projects largely targeting the China market.

In a statement issued with the rectification plan, it noted that the company has made "two significant mistakes that appeared to undermine Marriott's long-held respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

The company was discovered to have classified the four regions as countries in a mail survey to its Chinese members on Jan 9, and "liked" the post of a separatist group on Twitter, which "congratulated" the listing the following day.

The actions resulted in strong reactions from both the public and government of China. At a regular news briefing three days later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged overseas companies to show respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

After identifying its errors, the company has taken the survey offline, "unliked" the post, shut down its six websites and apps in Chinese, and put a freeze on its social media across the world. The CEO has volunteered to issue an apology.

It has also terminated the contract with the third-party vendor that built the survey, a Canadian company that Marriott has been working with for a long time, and with the US-based employee who "liked" the tweet.

"It's a company we hired, but we are responsible. Our responsibility is to check it and we have failed to do so," said Smith.

He noted that the global employee education would include any one of the company's 500,000 staff that has contact with China.

He added that one of the biggest lessons learned, as well as advice for other foreign enterprises in China, is to localize in pace with expansion.

The company announced in 2016 that it would double its presence in China, where it now operates more than 300 properties and has another 340 in the pipeline.

"When our CEO took over, one of the first things he did is to decentralize the company, moving out the decision-making process into areas. I don't know if we have moved in China fast enough or complete enough in that case. No one will know China as well as a Chinese," he said.



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Foreign Firms Under Fire Over Taiwan, Tibet References

The past week has seen a series of moves by the [Cyberspace Administration of China](#) and other official bodies to [police sensitive political references on foreign companies' websites](#), in part based on national security provisions in the country's [new cybersecurity law](#). The same law was also behind the recent news that [Apple would hand over management of Chinese users' iCloud data to a Chinese firm](#). From Reuters' Brenda Goh and John Ruwitch:

China's aviation authority on Friday demanded an apology from Delta Air Lines (DAL.N) for listing Taiwan and [Tibet](#) as countries on its website, while another government agency took aim at Inditex-owned (ITX.MC) fashion brand Zara and medical device maker Medtronic Plc (MDT.N) for similar issues.

[...] The apparent intensification of efforts to police how foreign businesses refer to Chinese-claimed territories – even if only in pull-down menus – underscores just how sensitive the issue of [sovereignty](#) has become in a China that is increasingly emboldened on the international stage.

[...] The aviation authority also said it would require all foreign airlines operating routes to China to conduct comprehensive investigations of their websites, apps and customer-related information and "strictly comply with China's laws and regulations to prevent a similar thing from happening".

In a statement, Delta apologized for making "an inadvertent error with no business or political intention", saying it recognized the seriousness of the issue and had taken steps to resolve it. [\[Source\]](#)

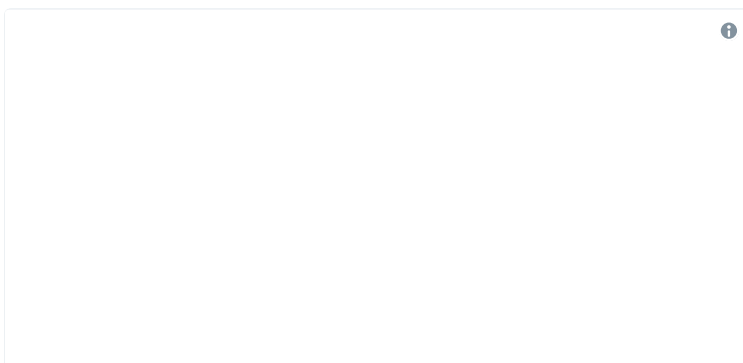
The [starting pistol in the current volley was aimed at the Marriott hotel group](#) after a Weibo user spotted a "[disgusting](#)" affront to Chinese sovereignty in an online survey. From Wayne Ma at The Wall Street Journal:

U.S. hotel giant Marriott International Inc. has been ordered by Chinese authorities to temporarily shut its website and mobile app to Chinese residents after circulating an online guest survey that listed Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and [Macau](#)—all claimed by China—as separate countries.

In a statement posted on its official social media account on Thursday evening, the Shanghai office of China's Cyberspace Administration said it demanded that Marriott suspend operation of its Chinese website and the Chinese version of its smartphone app for the next week.

[...] The Huangpu district of Shanghai—where Marriott's business is registered —said late Wednesday that Marriott violated cyber-security and advertising laws and that it had launched an investigation into the hotel group. [\[Source\]](#)

The CAC further accused Marriott of "[hurting the feelings of the Chinese people](#)." To make matters worse, one of Marriott's official Twitter accounts was [then seen to "Like" a Tibet independence group's post about the listing](#):



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Chinese netizens on Thursday urge investigation on Marriott after @MarriottRewards liked a “pro-independence of Tibet” tweet that congratulated Marriott listing #Tibet as a country on its app.

11:16 AM - Jan 11, 2018

6

8

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One Chinese Twitter user expressed his disillusionment with @MarriottRewards by giving Americans a taste of the same medicine:

Megha Rajagopalan

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12 Jan

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[twitter.com/MarriottReward...](#)

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A **Xinhua commentary** and **Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson** both rebuked **Marriott**:

Respecting China's core interests is the bottom line for companies to operate in the country.

As an international hotel chain with operations around the world, it is hard to understand why Marriott should have listed Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Tibet as separate countries in its recent questionnaire email to elite members.

Territorial integrity is China's core interests. Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Tibet are all indispensable parts of China. These facts are beyond doubt and challenge.

"We welcome foreign enterprises to do business in China. Meanwhile, they should respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, abide by Chinese law, and respect the Chinese peoples' feelings, which are the foundation for any corporation to do business in any country," said Lu Kang, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in answering a question on the Marriott incident at a news briefing held in Beijing Friday.

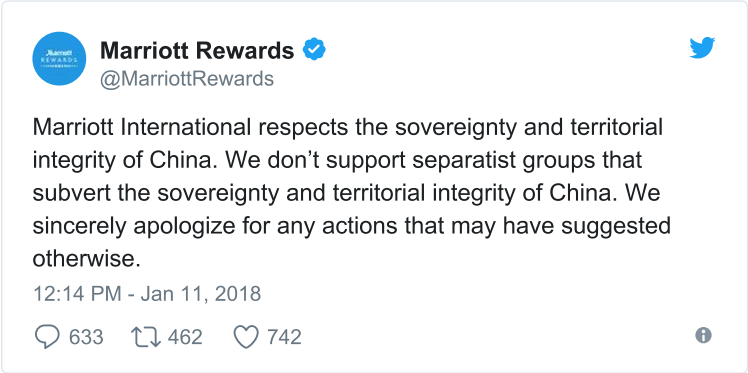
[...] To show its sincerity and corporate responsibility, Marriott should, at the very least, immediately look into the matter and deliver a clear and convincing answer to the public. [\[Source\]](#)


The company has rushed to do so, as Caixin's Teng Jing Xuan reports:

As of Thursday, the official Marriott Rewards Weibo page had made four separate posts apologizing for the survey, which the company said it had taken offline.

[...] Marriott made three posts on the matter Tuesday and Wednesday before making a more strongly worded one on Thursday. "Marriott International respects China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said. "We absolutely do not support any separatist organizations undermining China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We deeply apologize for any actions that may have caused misunderstandings about the above position." [\[Source\]](#)

It echoed these sentiments on Twitter:



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The firm's president and CEO [Arne Sorenson reiterated in a statement](#):

Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite[...]

[...] Upon completion of a full investigation into how both incidents happened, we will be taking the necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved, which could include termination, changing our approval and review procedures for online content, reviewing our customer feedback channels, and enhancing training to ensure these situations don't happen again. We are also working closely and co-operating with the relevant Government authorities in China.

As a company, we take very seriously the privilege and opportunity we have to serve guests in countries around the world – and particularly in China, a market we have been in for over 30 years. We also take responsibility when we make mistakes. We will learn from this experience, make changes to ensure errors like this don't happen again, and continue to focus on making sure our Chinese guests feel respected and have wonderful experiences as we have the privilege of serving them in our [hotels](#) in China and around the globe. [\[Source\]](#)

China Daily noted that "Marriott International is not the first international enterprise that has made such a mistake. In May, [Coca-Cola put the names of China and Taiwan on separate labels](#) on a drinks dispenser at an exhibition center in Atlanta in the United States, raising strong objections from Chinese netizens." Even Chinese companies have slipped up: last January, [Alibaba tweeted a map graphic that showed China without Taiwan or the South China Sea islands](#), and America without Alaska or Hawaii. The company offered "no excuse [and] our deepest apologies."

The sensitivity of Taiwan's *de facto* independence was illustrated in May last year after a ruling by its top court cleared the way for legalization of gay marriage. According to [a leaked propaganda directive published by CDT](#):

News regarding "Taiwan becoming a legal area for same-sex marriage," raises sensitive political and social issues. Do not hype this story. Regarding terms such as constitution, Judicial Yuan, Legislative Yuan, President, etc., take note to use quotation marks. Make sure not to present Taiwan as a different political entity than the Chinese mainland. [\[Source\]](#)

Earlier that month, [Xinhua had issued a set of guidelines covering similar territory](#). From ZiQing Low at The News Lens:

- Hong Kong and Macau are special administrative regions, and Taiwan is a province of China. These regions should not be referred to as "countries" in any text, maps or graphs, especially when many other countries and regions are also being mentioned.
- If the use of names referring to Taiwan's governmental system and other such institutions cannot be avoided, then quotation marks should be used, such as Taiwan's "Legislative Yuan," "Executive Yuan," "Control Yuan," "Central Election Commission," "Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan." The words "central," "national," "Chinese Taipei" should be avoided. If it the use of such words cannot be avoided then quotation marks should be used, such as Taiwan "Central Bank." Taiwan's "Premier," "Legislators," and other such terms should be put in quotation marks. Taiwan's "National Tsing Hua University," "Palace Museum," and other such names should be put in quotation marks. Under no condition should "President (or Vice-President) of the Republic of China" be used to refer to the leaders of Taiwan, even if it is put in quotation marks.
- The so-called "law" in Taiwan should be referred to as "relevant regulations of Taiwan." When referring to legal affairs in Taiwan, do not use international legal terms such as "document validation," "judicial assistance," or "extradition." [\[Source\]](#)

China has previously attempted to [police online references to Taiwan and Tibet through channels such as the United Nations' NGO accreditation process](#), as a Human Rights Watch report on [Chinese interference at the U.N.](#) described last year:

As noted above, China has been especially insistent in questioning NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, about their views on Tibet and Taiwan. Even NGOs whose work was not focused on China, Tibet, or Taiwan were subjected to such questions. The following examples are illustrative:

The representative of China said the website incorrectly identified Taiwan as a country and he hoped the group would clarify its position on Taiwan and correct that information according to United Nations rules.

–Engineers Without Borders, January 2016

The representative of China noted that ‘Taiwan’ was listed as a country on the organization’s website, and asked for correction.

–Child Soldiers International, January 2016

The representative of China noted that Tibet was listed as a country on its website, asking the organization to clarify its position on that issue.

–Action Against Hunger, May 2016

[...] An NGO representative who observed these proceedings noted that the extent to which China pursued this line of questioning was sometimes so extreme that even small NGOs whose work has little relationship to China could face these kinds of questions. She stated: “There was a Coptic solidarity organization under review [at the NGO Committee meeting in January 2017], and China asked them a question about their position on Taiwan and Tibet.... This Coptic solidarity organization is very unlikely to have anything to do with China.” [\[Source\]](#)

Meanwhile, in another example of corporate deference, American conglomerate [Honeywell has eagerly adopted the spirit of the CCP’s 19th Party Congress](#), according to Global Times:

Senior executives of US-based Honeywell International Inc found ample business opportunities in the report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in October 2017.

"The more I studied the report, the more excited I am," said William Yu, vice president and general manager at Honeywell Performance Materials and Technologies (PMT) Asia Pacific. PMT is one of the four strategic business groups of Honeywell.

[...] Yu told the Global Times that after the report was delivered at the Party congress, Honeywell sent copies of the report – both in English and Chinese – to the company’s management staff and invited them to study the report thoroughly.

"A couple of weeks ago, we also organized group discussions of the report," Yu said, adding that he plans to invite another expert to explain contents in the report to Honeywell employees this month.

[...] He also stressed that unlike some companies that just studied the report as a matter of routine, Honeywell studied the report for the company’s development.

[...] Lydia Lu, vice president of communications, Honeywell Asia High Growth Regions, said that the company has always had the tradition of studying important government documents in China, including the 13th Five-Year Plan(2016-20). [\[Source\]](#)

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January 12, 2018 11:11 PM

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Marriott hotels remove 'banned' book to avoid China backlash, as Beijing enforces crackdown on companies

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- Lodging giant, Marriott hotel group, has to remove books related to Falun Gong
- Marriott group was blamed for being disrespectful to China's territorial integrity
- A survey in Chinese had listed Hong Kong, Tibet, Macau and Taiwan as countries
- Delta, Zara and Medtronics were also called out for having the same mistakes

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The Marriott International group has pulled down decorative copies of a book that is related to the banned Falun Gong spiritual group over after the recent political scandal on territorial integrity.

The book, titled 'Bloody Harvest: the Killing of Falun Gong for Their Organs', appeared on the shelf in the lounges of Element Chongli, a hotel under the Marriott group, in northwest [China](#), according to [Bloomberg News](#).

Hotel representatives refused to give out any comment and said the matters are being look after by the Public Security Bureau.

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The Marriott saga has sparked series of criticisms for firms with geographical inaccuracies



Marriott hotel group is said to have taken down banned books related to Falun Gong

With over 5,800 properties across the globe, Marriott International Inc. crowned as the world's largest hotel group since they bought Starwood group in 2016.

But a recent Mandarin-language customer survey in its rewards programme had sparked mass outcry in China as it listed Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and Tibet as

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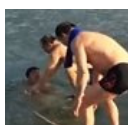
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China National Tourism Administration believed the survey had caused offence with its geographical inaccuracies.

The Chinese government demanded the hotel group to shut down their Chinese website for a week and ordered immediate and thorough checks of websites and apps to ensure they comply with the law.

Foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang, said: 'We welcome foreign enterprises to do business in China,

'Meanwhile, they should respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, abide by Chinese law, and respect the Chinese peoples' feelings, which are the foundation for any corporation to do business in any country.'

The gaffe deteriorated as one of their employees had liked a tweet published by Friends of Tibet on January 9.

The post was to congratulate the hotel group for listing Tibet as a country along with Taiwan and Hong Kong, stated **South China Morning Post**.



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It's said the banned book is put up on Element Chongli hotel's bookshelves in the lounge area



Friends of Tibet @friendsoftibet · Jan 9
Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain #Marriott International for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan. pic.twitter.com/SXKWb20v3e



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Marriott Reward gives a 'like' over Friends of Tibet's twitter post of listing Tibet as a country

Arne Sorenson, chief executive of the hotel group, issued an [apology letter](#) on January 11, stressing that the company 'respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite'.

The incident has drawn intense criticism online and web users 'volunteered' to look on other foreign companies.

[Delta Air Lines](#), Spanish clothing giant [Zara](#) and medical device company [Medtronic](#) were also called out for listing Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong as separate countries.

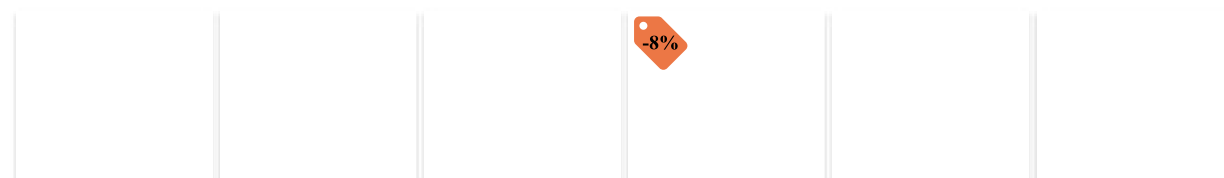
The firms were urged to "immediately alter their illegal content and publish apologies".

They have since apologised and changed their websites.

The Chinese government stated Tibet is an "autonomous region" firmly under Chinese control since the 1950s.

Hong Kong and Macau are former British and Portuguese colonies, respectively, that are now "special administrative regions" of China.

Taiwan has been self-ruled since splitting from the mainland after a 1949 civil war, but Beijing continues to claim sovereignty over the island.



Read more:

[Marriott Pulls Banned 'Books' From China Hotel to Avert Backlash - Bloomberg](#)

[www.medtronic.co...](#)

[Marriott in more trouble after 'liking' Twitter post by Tibetan independence group | South China Morning Post](#)

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o regain trust



A Marriott hotel. (Photo/CGTN)

One week after Marriott International shut down its Chinese website and mobile apps for illegally listing Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao as countries, it announced an "eight-point rectification plan" on Wednesday in an attempt to prevent such mistakes from happening again.

"This is a huge mistake, probably one of the biggest in my career," said Craig S. Smith, president and managing director of Marriott's Asia-Pacific office, who has been working with the company for three decades.

"To regain confidence and trust, the first thing is to admit the mistake, then fix it, and it would come back slowly as we prove we really mean what we say," Smith told China Daily in Shanghai on Wednesday, one day before the company's digital platforms are scheduled to be back online.

The eight measures to be taken, especially in the next 90 days at an intensive pace, include expanding employee education globally, creating straightforward complaint channels for Chinese customers, and more strictly supervising the work of third-party agents for projects largely targeting the China market.

In a statement issued with the rectification plan, it noted that the company has made "two significant mistakes that appeared to undermine Marriott's long-held respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

The company was discovered to have classified the four regions as countries in a mail survey to its Chinese members on Jan 9, and "liked" the post of a separatist group on Twitter, which "congratulated" the listing the following day.

The actions resulted in strong reactions from both the public and government of China. At a regular news briefing three days later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged overseas companies to show respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

After identifying its errors, the company has taken the survey offline, "unliked" the post, shut down its six websites and apps in Chinese, and put a freeze on its social media across the world. The CEO has volunteered to issue an apology.

It has also terminated the contract with the third-party vendor that built the survey, a Canadian company that Marriott has been working with for a long time, and with the US-based employee who "liked" the tweet.

"It's a company we hired, but we are responsible. Our responsibility is to check it and we have failed to do so," said Smith.

He noted that the global employee education would include any one of the company's 500,000 staff that has contact with China.

He added that one of the biggest lessons learned, as well as advice for other foreign enterprises in China, is to localize in pace with expansion.

The company announced in 2016 that it would double its presence in China, where it now operates more than 300 properties and has another 340 in the pipeline.

"When our CEO took over, one of the first things he did is to decentralize the company, moving out the decision-making process into areas. I don't know if we have moved in China fast enough or complete enough in that case. No one will know China as well as a Chinese," he said.

Hotelier Marriott unveils 'eight-point rectification plan' after Tibet and Hong Kong geography 'gaffe'

FP www.hongkongfp.com/2018/01/19/hotelier-marriott-unveils-eight-point-rectification-plan-tibet-hong-kong-geography-gaffe/
Kris Cheng

January 19, 2018

Hotel giant Marriott has announced an “eight-point rectification plan” after it triggered an online uproar with a customer questionnaire that listed Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet and Taiwan as separate countries.

Marriott shut down its Chinese website for a week following investigation by Shanghai authorities, before it was relaunched again on Wednesday. However, a Chinese statement detailing its rectification plan had disappeared from its website as of Friday.

Craig S. Smith, president and managing director of Marriott's Asia-Pacific office, apologised in an interview with state media outlet China Daily. “This is a huge mistake, probably one of the biggest in my career,” Smith said.



Craig S. Smith. Photo: Twitter/Wikicommons.

“To regain confidence and trust, the first thing is to admit the mistake, then fix it, and it would come back slowly as we prove we really mean what we say.”

The rectification plan – to be conducted within 90 days from Wednesday – includes expanding employee education globally, improving mechanisms to approve content, creating a more convenient complaints channel for Chinese customers, studying Chinese regulations better, and more strictly supervising the work of third-party contractors.

“Marriott International will strengthen communication mechanism with Chinese government departments to actively seek advice and direction from government departments, strengthen understanding of relevant regulations, and understand the spirit of policies,” the statement read.



The statement said Marriott International respects and is determined to defend China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity: “Last week, we made two serious mistakes that contradicted this stance.”

The group has terminated its contract with the third-party vendor which built the survey. It was a Canadian company that Marriott said it had been working with for a long time.

“It’s a company we hired, but we are responsible. Our responsibility is to check it and we have failed to do so,” Smith told China Daily.

Marriott International respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We don’t support separatist groups that subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We sincerely apologize for any actions that may have suggested otherwise.

— Marriott Rewards (@MarriottRewards) January 11, 2018

The hotel brand previously apologised for a staff member “carelessly” liking a tweet by a pro-Tibetan independence group that congratulated Marriott “for listing Tibet as a country along with Hong Kong and Taiwan.”

It said it has since fired the US-based employee.

Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain #Marriott International for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan. pic.twitter.com/SXKWb20v3e

— Friends of Tibet (@friendsoftibet) January 9, 2018

Australia's Qantas airline, Spanish clothing giant Zara, Delta Air Lines and Medtronic — a medical device company — were also called out for listing Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong as separate countries.

They have all either released apologies or issued “corrections.”



Marriott Hotels's statement on Tibet raises serious concerns for endorsing Chinese government's propaganda

International Campaign for Tibet <press@savetibet.org>

Thu, Jan 18, 2018 at 8:18 PM

Reply-To: International Campaign for Tibet <press@savetibet.org>

To: tenzinfot@friendsoftibet.org



Marriott Hotels's statement on Tibet raises serious concerns for endorsing Chinese government's propaganda

ICT report, January 17, 2018

[View report online »](#)

Following the Chinese government's objection to its labelling of Tibet (amongst others) on a survey drop-down menu under "countries", the President of Marriott Arne Sorenson, [issued a statement](#) on January 11, 2018 in which it said, "... we don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China."

The International Campaign for Tibet is seriously concerned and feels it's inappropriate for a multinational corporation to have a political position on the future of a people.

The right of people to self-determination is a cardinal principle that is enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We have therefore written to Mr. Sorenson expressing our concern and saying that since he has opined on the political future of the Tibetan people, he should also state his position on the universally acknowledged human rights violations suffered by the Tibetan people under the rule of the Chinese government. Failing to do so would mean endorsing the Chinese government political propaganda on Tibet.

Following is the full text of the letter.

Mr. Arne Sorenson
President and CEO
Marriott International, Inc.
[10400 Fernwood Road](#)
Bethesda, MD 20817

Dear Mr. Sorenson,

We write to you today with deep concern regarding the statement you issued on January 11, 2018, following an incident with China that included a reference to Tibet.

The International Campaign for Tibet is a membership-based organization, with offices in the United States and Europe, which works to promote human rights and democratic freedom for the Tibetan people.

Our concern is that your statement did not take into consideration the universally acknowledged fundamental rights of individuals and communities to decide their own destiny. In drafting your statement, you did not follow Marriott's own business philosophy, which states that, "...how we do business is as important as the business we do," and that your company upholds "a commitment to responsible business, human rights and uncompromising ethical and legal standards in all aspects of our business."

Although we can appreciate how your business interests may lead you to agree to the Chinese government's demand, your statement could have said that Marriott does not take any position on how communities should or should not

decide their future, but that your removal of Tibet from the survey is a reflection of the de facto situation. There was no need for Marriott to say, "...we don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups." You may be aware that the Chinese government also slanders His Holiness the Dalai Lama with these claims. Surely Marriott doesn't oppose this Nobel Laureate, a man who has been pursuing a nonviolent solution to the Tibet issue for decades!

Notwithstanding Marriott's position on the historical status of Tibet, you cannot deny observations made by many, including the United States government and the relevant United Nations organs, about the dire lack of human rights in Tibet. China has been continually attempting to silence international public debates on the issue of Tibet, and your statement unfortunately furthers their efforts. As it is, the Chinese propaganda machine is using your statement to undermine the legitimate rights of the Tibetan people, who have spent decades peacefully advocating for an end to Chinese human rights abuses.

It is universal knowledge that multinational corporations have helped to empower communities, specifically in South Africa during the apartheid period, by challenging the positions of governments who fall short on human rights and democratic freedom.

We would therefore like to seek a clarification from Marriott. Please tell us where you stand on the issue of human rights in Tibet, since you have publicly outlined your political position on Tibet in your statement.

I look forward to hearing from you at the earliest possible opportunity.

Matteo Mecacci
President
International Campaign for Tibet

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President, International Campaign for Tibet
Email: matteo.mecacci@savetibet.org
Tel: +1 (202) 580-6773

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ALL GENRES

China rebukes 3 companies for referring to Taiwan as 'country'

8:35 pm, January 13, 2018

The Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese regulators rebuked fashion brand Zara, Delta Air Lines and medical device maker Medtronic on Friday for calling Taiwan a country on their websites in a fresh show of Beijing's acute sensitivity about the self-ruled island.

Zara, Delta and Medtronic were ordered to remove the "illegal content" and make public apologies, airline and internet regulators said. Other airlines were ordered to check their own websites.

Taiwan and the mainland split in 1949 after a civil war but the Communist Beijing government claims the island as its territory. It regularly lashes out at publishers of books, maps or other materials that call the island a country.

"We apologize for hurting the feelings of the Chinese people!" Delta said on its website. The airline said it took "urgent steps to correct errors" on its website and was "thoroughly examining internal processes."

In a statement on its microblog 10 minutes ahead of a 6 p.m. deadline set by the internet regulator, Medtronic said it understood the Chinese authorities' position but was only trying to help users quickly find the appropriate location.

Zara added a three-sentence statement to its website expressing "sincere apologies" and said it would conduct a "self-examination."

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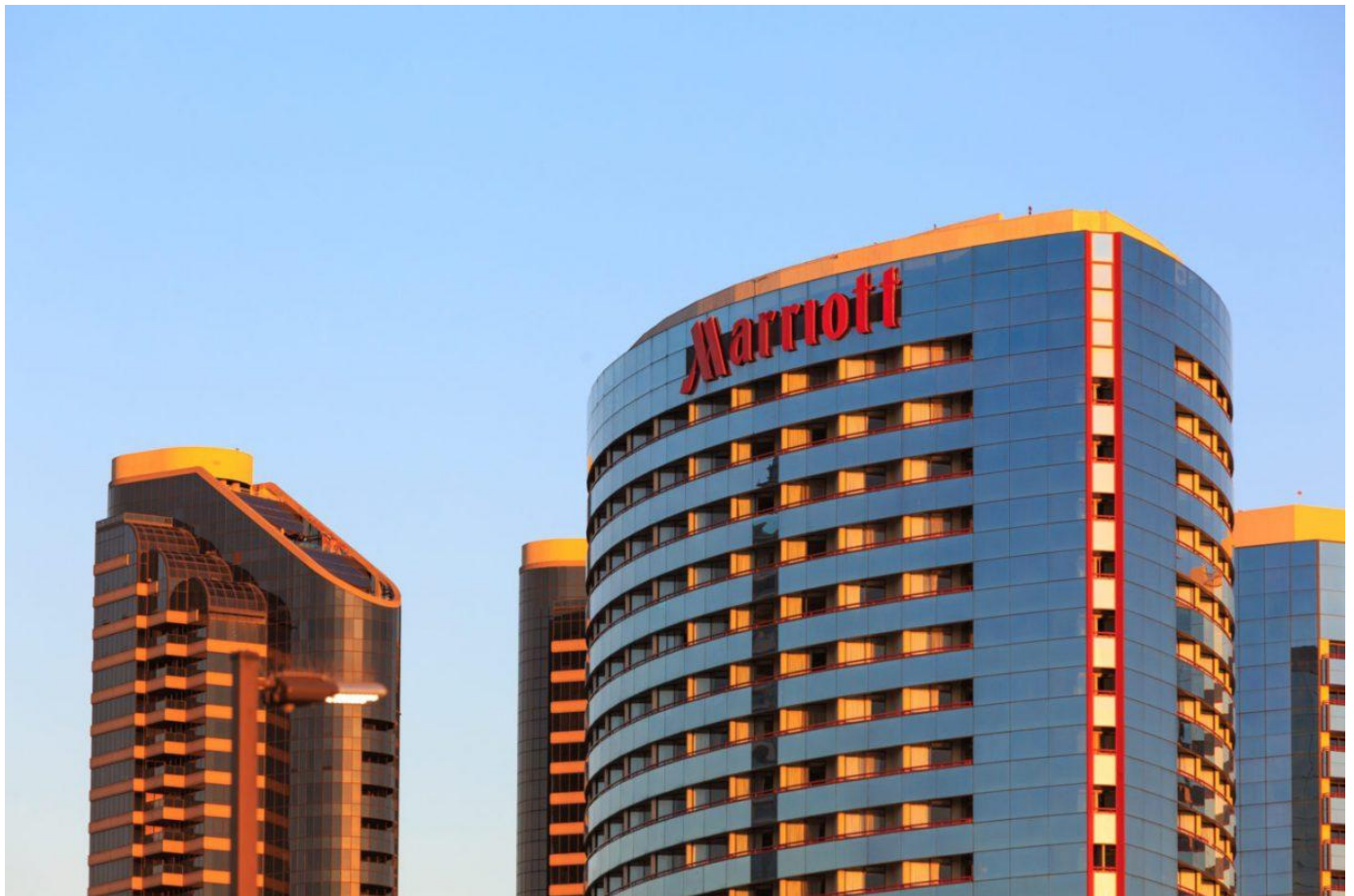
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RETAIL

Marriott's Blunder a Warning in Dealing With Beijing's Understanding of History

Mason Hinsdale / January 13, 2018



Marriott's troubles should also drive home for foreign businesses operating in China or hoping to cater to Chinese tourists that understanding how Beijing understands history is key to not running afoul of the Chinese government. Photo courtesy: Shutterstock

Marriott International has run afoul of the Chinese government and its website has been shut down in China for a week. On an online drop down list, Marriott listed Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as “countries.” The first three locations are regions controlled by the People’s Republic of China, Tibet being one of China’s autonomous regions and Hong Kong and Macau being special administrative regions. Beijing considers Taiwan to be controlled by an illegitimate, competing Chinese government, the Republic of China. Taiwan is often labeled as a “breakaway province.”

Chinese citizens cannot freely come and go from Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan and must apply for visas and permits. Moreover, residents of these three places also have their own passports and maintain separate visa and travel agreements with countries.

RECOMMENDED READING

Why Brands Shouldn't Treat the Hong Kong and Mainland Markets the Same

By Ruonan Zheng



Marriott has even been criticized in some state media because one of its Twitter accounts was “liked” by the account of Tibetan independence group. Of course, Twitter is blocked in China. Marriott Rewards posted an apology on Twitter.

This understandable and relatively minor mistake has led to a harsh penalty for Marriott, blocking it out of its online sales and booking in China for a week. According to the BBC, Marriott's international site is still available in China, but its Chinese language version is blocked.

There are some key takeaway lessons from Marriott's recent blunder, and they revolve around how the Chinese government sees itself in relation to private businesses and Beijing's understanding of history and its place in it.

The latter half of the 19th century and first half 20th century is often labeled as the “Century of Humiliation” (百年国耻 *bainian guochi*) in China, a time when imperialist powers like Britain, France, Russia, and Japan dominated the declining Qing Empire of China militarily and economically. The ruling communist party in China sees itself as the agent for righting these historical wrongs and transforming China from a victim into a global, assertive power.

This includes the restoration of China's historical control of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, which were all wrested from Chinese control by foreign, imperial powers.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), along with other Chinese political factions that developed in the early 20th century like the Kuomintang, saw industrialization and economic modernization as the main path for China to recover its prestige. Modern firms and industrial projects were and are expressions of state power for the CCP. While during the Maoist period this revolved primarily around the development of heavy industry, like steel production, today this understanding of a company's purpose in China extends to all sectors, including IT, heavy industry, agriculture, mining, light industry, and of course tourism.

Chinese firms and foreign firms entering China are in the eyes of the Chinese government, stakeholders in this historical narrative and the Chinese national project itself. Promoting

that firms make when they enter China: that they will support China's goal of asserting itself and righting historical wrongs.

This includes behavior both in and outside of China. While Marriott's Twitter account isn't accessible in China, its perceived support from Tibetan separatists was enough to deserve criticism.

Marriott's troubles should also drive home for foreign businesses operating in China or hoping to cater to Chinese tourists that understanding how Beijing understands history is key to not running afoul of the Chinese government. Even perceived implicit support of separatist movements or Taiwan could land a company or an individual in hot water.

RECOMMENDED READING

How Marriott's Doing Things Differently and Digitally in China

By Deanna Ting



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Western Companies Bow to Chinese Bullying, Censor Mentions of Taiwan, Tibet on Websites

January 20, 2018 Staff Writer

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Marriott International was one of several companies up in China's crackdown on foreign corporations that allegedly insult its territorial integrity by treating controversial or semi-autonomous regions like Tibet, Hong Kong, Macao, and especially Taiwan as separate "countries" on their websites.

Days after the story broke, Marriott is still offering fulsome apologies and implementing a draconian "eight-point rectification plan" to get right with Beijing.

In fact, according to an article in the state-run China Daily on Thursday, Marriott all of its social media worldwide to placate the authoritarian communist nation. The article stated:

The company was discovered to have classified the four regions as countries in a mail survey to its Chinese members on Jan 9, and "liked" the post of a separatist group on Twitter, which "congratulated" the listing the following day.

The actions resulted in strong reactions from both the public and government of China. At a regular news briefing three days later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged overseas companies to show respect for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

After identifying its errors, the company has taken the survey offline, "unliked" the post, shut down its six websites and apps in Chinese, and put a freeze on its social media across the world. The CEO has volunteered to issue an apology.

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It has also terminated the contract with the third-party vendor that built the survey, a Canadian company that Marriott has been working with for a long time, and with the US-based employee who "liked" the tweet.

The tweet China Daily refers to was posted by , which China considers a "separatist group" because it advocates independence for the Tibetan people. Media organizations appear strangely reluctant to actually quote the tweet that just got somebody in Marriott's customer rewards department fired, but Friends of Tibet helpfully it to the top of their Twitter page:

Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain International for listing as a country along with and .
— Friends of Tibet ()

Twitter is one of several social media services in China, so Beijing was able to get a foreign (possibly American) employee fired for "liking" a post on an American social media platform that Chinese citizens cannot use.

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As for that worldwide social media freeze, David Ramli of Bloomberg News sees evidence that China Daily was not exaggerating:

Almost all of Marriott's many global accounts stopped tweeting on Jan 10, followed by a capitulating apology on Jan 11. Since then, its accounts have only sent replies. If it turns out this was ordered by Chinese authorities it greatly changes the calculus of doing business here.

— David Ramli ()

"This is a huge mistake, probably one of the biggest in my career. To regain confidence and trust, the first thing is to admit the mistake, then fix it, and it would come back slowly as we prove we really mean what we say," Marriott's Asia-Pacific managing director Craig S. Smith told China Daily on Wednesday.

To that end, Marriott announced an "eight-point rectification plan" that will include "expanding employee education globally, creating straightforward complaint channels for Chinese customers, and more strictly supervising the work of third-party agents for projects largely targeting the China market."

China's frenzied crackdown on challenges to its territorial claims, deliberate or inadvertent, has not been limited to travel company websites. The Taipei Times on Tuesday that China has taken to destroying entire shipments of Taiwanese food products, if they are not clearly labeled as coming from the "Taiwan Area" or "Taiwan, China," at a cost of over a hundred thousand dollars U.S. for each lost shipment.

Canada's National Post Wednesday about a Peking University alumnus named Shawn Zang, who currently lives in Canada on a student visa, whose parents back in China were visited by the police within hours of Zhang reposting that Friends of Tibet tweet about Marriott.

"It's like they are holding my parents hostage there, so that I can't say things. It is not just Chinese, but many non-Chinese are under this censorship. People in Canada and the United States have to censor their own statements if they want to get business inside China, so they don't say anything. They surrender to censorship," Zhang keenly observed.

"In Canada, in general, most Chinese students are not willing to express any opinion about China, or to talk about China. Even my Taiwanese friends are worried about getting in trouble with the Chinese government – they have friends and family, and they don't want to express opinions. The situation is very disturbing," he said.

Incidentally, Zhang refused to take down his tweet, but evidently his parents reached an agreement with Chinese authorities to have him remove two posts they didn't like on Weibo, which is essentially China's version of Twitter. One of the posts in question was a very, very mild joke involving a popular nickname for Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Charles Sturt University professor of public ethics Clive Hamilton, one of Australia's most prominent academics, Business Insider on Wednesday that China is "engaging in economic blackmail, imposing acceptance of its geopolitical ambitions on corporations that want to operate in the country."

"The Marriott incident shows that, for foreign companies, the price of operating in China is succumbing to the Communist Party's thought control," Hamilton said.

Hamilton has written an entire book on the subject of China's dangerous political influence and economic blackmail, entitled *Silent Invasion: How China is Turning Australia into a Puppet State*. Unfortunately, you can't read it yet, because China intimidated Hamilton's publisher into delaying the release of the book by threatening defamation suits. Hamilton parted company with publisher Allen & Unwin in response.

"What we're seeing ... is the first instance where a major Western publisher has decided to censor material of the Chinese Communist Party in its home country," Hamilton, as he began searching for a new publisher. "We as Australians living in a free society should not allow ourselves to be bullied into silence by an autocratic foreign power."

It is all part of what the Chinese government sees as an opportunity to remake its image and control free speech around the world by leveraging its economic power. Western companies desiring access to Chinese markets are growing accustomed to compromising Western ideals of free speech and individual liberty. Western businessmen have proven almost universally willing to submit to China's demands. Few of them respond to Beijing's "" the way Clive Hamilton did, not when millions of product sales, plane tickets, or hotel reservations are on the line.

The Chinese Communist Party's People's Daily published a 5,500-word article this week, written as a semi-official declaration of Party thought, declaring that "the world has never focused on China so much and needed China so much as it does now," so this is the perfect moment to use Chinese economic leverage to reshape global order.

"The capitalism-led world political and economic system is full of drawbacks; the global governance system is undergoing profound changes; and a new international order is taking shape," the People's Daily judged, asserting that China is "more confident and capable than at any given period in history seize this opportunity."

"The amount of publicity the article has received from the propaganda machine also sets it apart. In addition to dominating headlines on party media outlets and online news portals, it was promoted on social media the night before it went to press—rare treatment for commentaries in the paper," the South China Morning Post .

Clearly, Beijing means business and grows increasingly confident of its ability to force international companies to toe the Communist Party line. This is no longer just about blocking access to foreign material the Chinese government doesn't want its citizens to see. It's using sharp power to force groveling apologies from Western companies and censor material its citizens

cannot see. Tibetan activists hopefully Beijing's dramatic reaction to the Marriott "mistake" as a sign of weakness and insecurity, but the People's Daily portrays it as the roar of a newborn dragon, with more serious demands yet to come.

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MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, INC. OUR COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

As a world leader in hospitality, Marriott International supports and respects the protection of human rights within the company's sphere of influence and conduct our business in a manner consistent with the principles contained within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These efforts include a focus on standing against such tragedies as human trafficking and the exploitation of children.

Each year, more than 1.2 million children are trafficked worldwide exposing them to violence and sexual exploitation.¹ This is a growing global concern, particularly in communities facing extreme poverty and high unemployment levels.

Marriott has a long history of supporting programs and partnerships that help vulnerable young people and their families prepare for and find meaningful employment. As governments, law enforcement agencies and nongovernmental organizations address human rights issues, we are aligned with the growing number of corporations that provide their commitment and support to these efforts.

To more fully encompass and embrace the issue of helping children at risk, the company's Human Rights Policy, reflected in our [Human Rights Policy Statement](#), was amended by Marriott's Board of Directors in 2006 and is reviewed annually.

The following provides an overview of the many ways we actively express our commitment to human rights around the world.

Internal Training and Awareness: Ethics and Human Rights

Marriott's commitment to human rights is communicated to all employees and reinforced through a variety of channels and methods.

- Beginning in 2012, we integrated our human rights and the protection of children training into our onboarding process for all new employees. The training is mandatory for all Marriott managed properties covering more than 200,000 employees. We also make this training available to all Marriott franchise properties worldwide.

We also deliver human rights and the protection of children training developed specifically for our Loss Prevention Directors and Officers at all managed properties worldwide. The training is part of the required security officer certification program.

¹ UNICEF, Factsheet, Trafficking, <http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Trafficking.pdf>

- In 2007, the company amended its annual Legal and Ethical Conduct Survey, required of all officers and key senior managers, to specifically inquire as to whether the respondent is aware of any instance of indecent or exploitative treatment of minors. This survey is part of a complete program designed to maintain a global culture of corporate legal and ethical compliance.
- The Marriott Business Council Guidebook, which is designed for use by our more than 80 Marriott Business Councils, includes information about awareness and response to this important issue. The guide is accessible via our company intranet. Marriott Business Councils make up a network of Marriott hotel executives who, on behalf of all our hotels in major markets, collaborate to drive our renowned culture, community support, and government advocacy.
- Marriott actively cooperates with requests from national, state and local law enforcement agencies around the world to help deter and prevent crimes of sexual exploitation. Marriott Global Safety & Security also partners with law enforcement agencies to report and investigate alleged incidents of sexual exploitation of children at Marriott properties.
- Marriott's commitment to human rights and the protection of children is included in our business ethics training program, "How We Do Business Is As Important As the Business We Do," required for use in all new employee orientation training. This training is available to our property-level employees in 23 languages and published on our intranet in English and Spanish.
- Marriott business leaders have been informed of measures they can take, such as collaborating and supporting government and law enforcement efforts, providing resources to organizations focused on protecting children, supporting organizations committed to helping at-risk youth and their families, and sharing information concerning best practices with respect to such initiatives.

Community Outreach and Partnerships

We continue to support programs that address the root cause of exploitation. We also help vulnerable young people prepare for and find meaningful employment through programs including the Youth Career Initiative (YCI), SOS Children's Villages and The Ritz-Carlton's "Succeed Through Service."

Operation Underground Railroad

- In late 2014 Marriott initiated a partnership and rallied our industry to support [Operation Underground Railroad](#), a human rights organization working to address and rescue children and young adults from trafficking.

Youth Career Initiative

- For more than 15 years Marriott has offered the Youth Career Initiative (YCI), a six month education and life enhancing program for young people at risk, at our hotels in nine countries within Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. To date, thousands of students have graduated from YCI programs around the world and have gone on to pursue careers in hospitality, banking and health care, or have continued with further education. More than 750 of those graduates were trained at Marriott hotels, and to date seven survivors of human trafficking have been hired to work at our hotels.

- Marriott helped YCI secure a five-year grant worth \$550,000 from the U.S. State Department Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons. This funding has enabled YCI to integrate rehabilitated trafficking survivors into the program as well as provide awareness training to hotel staff. Nearly 30 trafficking survivors have completed YCI with 75 percent securing employment upon completion of the program.
- In 2007, a \$250,000 grant from The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, a private foundation, was made to YCI with a matching grant of an additional \$250,000 based on YCI's ability to bring in equivalent funding from new sources. Marriott invited other global hotel leaders to participate in the matching grant program, and YCI received commitments which resulted in total funding of \$750,000. In 2012, The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation awarded YCI an additional \$500,000 over three years.

“Succeed through Service”

- To support critical efforts addressing the school drop-out and delinquency crisis in the United States and many parts of the world, in 2009 The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company partnered with [America's Promise Alliance](#) to create “Succeed through Service.” As a component of [Community Footprints](#), The Ritz-Carlton's long-standing social responsibility program, [Succeed Through Service](#), is designed to engage and inspire at-risk young students through career exploration, life skills training and community service learning projects.
- The Ritz-Carlton properties across the United States and around the world partner with schools that serve disadvantaged communities to deliver “Succeed through Service” modules in the classroom and on field trips to the hotels and resorts. Taught by Ritz-Carlton employees, the lesson plans instill basic life skills and provide young students with a vision of potential careers they can pursue if they remain in school to graduate.

SOS Children's Villages

- In 2011, Marriott hotels in Europe implemented “World of Opportunity,” a charitable giving program helping young people from disadvantaged background reach their full potential by providing life and vocational skills. In Continental Europe, funds raised benefited the SOS Children's Villages Youth Program. To date more than \$160,000 was raised for the program which focuses on; education, employment, housing, social skills, life skills and emotional stability.
- Marriott hotels in Asia and the Middle East also work with SOS Children's Villages who are committed to meeting the needs and protecting the interests and rights of children. SOS Children's Villages has developed an approach based on building a community for children who have no one to turn to by focusing on four areas: promoting children's rights, operating children's villages, strengthening families, and providing education and employment opportunities.

Human Rights Commitment: Building Issue Awareness

- Marriott's commitment to human rights was recently featured in [Collaborate](#) magazine, a leading resource for meeting planners. "The guiding principle is 'see something, say something,'" said Mari Snyder, Marriott's VP of Social Responsibility.
- Marriott, together with Sabre Holdings, were the industry's first companies to join the United Nations' ["Your Actions Count—Be a Responsible Traveller"](#) campaign launched at ITB Berlin in March 2013. The campaign includes a focus on human trafficking, wildlife and fauna, cultural artifacts, illicit drugs and counterfeit goods. Marriott delivered these important campaign messages through our communications channels, including communications to our nearly 50 million Marriott Rewards® members and to our global workforce.
- Marriott participated in the International Tourism Partnership's Human Trafficking Working Group and was instrumental in the creation of an [Industry Position Statement on Human Trafficking](#) that includes a commitment to corporate policies, awareness training, and sharing best practices.
- In an effort to advance our industry's impact on protecting children from exploitation, we shared "Marriott's Human Rights and the Protection of Children" training programs with the American Hotel & Lodging Association, the International Tourism Partnership membership, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Marriott participated in two United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) events and shared our approach in addressing human trafficking within the context of our business. In April 2012 in Vienna, Austria, we participated in the panel "Building a Better Response: Human Trafficking in the Context of Tourism," which included the heads of the UNWTO and the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime. In September 2012, we participated in the panel, "An Ethical Framework for Responsible Tourism," which included the Chairman of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, as part of the International Congress held in Quito, Ecuador.
- Marriott's [Human Rights Principles](#), which are part of Marriott's [Principles of Responsible Business](#), as well as Marriott's [Human Rights Policy Statement](#) and are posted on the company's website under [Responsible Business](#).
- Since 2006, *The Responsible Tourist and Traveller*, a brochure developed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, has been included in more than 70 million reservation emails sent to Marriott guests annually.
- In October 2007, Marriott received the *Condé Nast Traveler* World Savers Award for environmental stewardship and social responsibility, based primarily on our involvement with the Youth Career Initiative (YCI), which provides training and employment opportunities for youth at risk worldwide. Marriott issued a press release; and, in his acceptance speech and blog, Chairman Bill Marriott commented on the value of programs like YCI in protecting the rights and welfare of vulnerable children.

- Marriott achieved a perfect score of 100% on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's [Corporate Equality Index](#) in 2014. Ratings were based on factors such as non-discrimination policies, diversity training, and benefits for domestic partners.
- Marriott's [2014 Sustainability Report](#) features a section devoted to [Business Ethics and Human Rights](#).

Our Ongoing Commitment

Marriott endeavors to hold its suppliers and contractors around the world to the same ethical business standards and human rights compliance it supports. Global contracts currently executed by Marriott require contractors to embrace the commitments upheld by Marriott in its [Human Rights Policy Statement](#).

Marriott's policies and practices on human rights, ethical business conduct, human resources, suppliers and the environment are embedded in our [Principles of Responsible Business](#) and our belief that how one does business is as important as the business one does.

Terry Glavin: As China pushes censorship on B.C. students, democracy falls back

A Peking University alumnus studying law in Canada posted an image of the Tibetan flag on Twitter. Then Chinese police phoned his parents



Shawn Zhang, a Peking University alumnus who came to Canada on a student visa two years ago to study law at UBC. *John Lehmann for Postmedia News*



TERRY GLAVIN

It's a story about the way the Beijing regime bullies people far beyond its borders, with a few amusing twists and several disgusting instances of corporate cowardice, but it begins

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Shawn Zhang, a Peking University alumnus who came to Canada on a student visa two years ago to study law, posted an image of the Tibetan flag below a tongue-in-cheek announcement on the Twitter account of Friends of Tibet, a solidarity group based in India that keeps an eye on China's brutal occupation of the exiled Dalai Lama's Himalayan homeland.

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纵容“藏独”，这支德国足球队还惦记与中国球队比赛赚补贴

章闻韶real

2017-12-22 11:04 来自 iPhone

买哪一盒包子呢？



1.3万 推广 10 27



Shawn Zhang 章闻韶

@shawnwzhang

6 hours after I posted a Tibet flag under friends of tibet's tweet (twitter.com/friendsoftibet...), government officers in my hometown found my family and urged me to delete it. 2 days later, we reached an agreement to delete my two weibo posts instead.

3:20 PM - Jan 15, 2018

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125

In one particularly bizarre turn of events, a panic erupted over a handful of hollow decorative boxes made to look like copies of the banned book “Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for 10 Organs,” by Canadian human rights campaigners David Mata and David Kilgour. The fake books were found in a hotel lobby in Chongli, a ski resort northwest of Beijing.

...were putting the heat on Zhang's schoolteacher parents back home in Wuyi, in the coastal province of Zhejiang, just south of Shanghai. The cops wanted Zhang's parents to tell their son to shut the hell up.

"It's like they are holding my parents hostage there, so that I cannot say things," Zhang told me. "It is not just Chinese, but many non-Chinese are under this censorship. People in Canada and the United States have to censor their own statements if they want to get business inside China, so they don't say anything. They surrender to censorship."

It is like they are holding my parents
hostage there, so that I cannot say
things

Shawn Zhang



The Friends of Tibet Twitter post that Zhang decorated with a image of the Tibetan flag was a satirical congratulations to the Marriott International hotel chain "for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan." The post was referring to the uproar set off by a rewards program customer survey the Marriott chain had circulated that referred to Tibet, Hong Kong and Taiwan as countries. Marriott complied with an order to shut down its website for a week as penance, and further agreed to kowtow with a grovelling apology, disavowing any sympathy for "separatist groups that subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China."

A Marriott employee was then found to have "wrongly liked" the sarcastic Friends of Tibet congratulations, thereby "misleading the public," which prompted Marriott to apologize again, vowing to fire the worker involved. Then those fake, cardboard versions of Matas and Kilgour's Bloody Harvest — true copies of which document the Beijing regime's organ-pillaging of Falun Gong

property in Chengdu, setting the local Public Security Bureau on high alert and causing Marriott bosses to be embarrassed again. Beijing considers the mildly religious Falun Gong movement to be a dangerously wicked cult.



The Marriott International hotel chain shut down its website for a week as an apology to the Chinese government for listing Tibet as a country in a customer survey. *AFP/Getty Images*

While all this was going on, it came to the attention of the authorities that several other foreign companies working in China were also referring to Taiwan and Tibet as countries. Taiwan is a thriving liberal democracy, an island republic that Beijing considers a renegade, breakaway province. Tibet is an ancient monastic redoubt of an esoteric form of Buddhism that was overrun by Mao Zedong's communists in 1950. These are not "countries," Beijing insists, so over the past few days, several companies have been obliged to follow Marriott's low example and they have apologized for using the word "countries." Qantas Airlines grovelled. Delta Airlines grovelled. The Galician fashion retailer Zara grovelled.

Zhang refused to take down his tweet, and he does not expect it will result in any serious repercussions, for four reasons. The first is that he expects he will never be able to return to China, and he hopes to obtain permanent resident status here in Canada after

China, and the censors have little choice to not about a threat Chinese people can't see. The third reason involves a concession of sorts that appears to have placated the police in Wuyi, arranged through an intermediary in the local propaganda bureau.

The propaganda official told Zhang's parents that everything would likely blow over if Zhang agreed to remove two posts he had put up on Weibo, the popular Chinese social-media platform. One mentions a rumpus at a soccer match in Germany last November where the Chinese Under-20 team suspended its tour because of the feelings-hurting presence of protesters waving Tibetan flags from the stands. The other is a photograph of a man in a grocery store holding up an English-language copy of Communist Party strongman Xi Jinping's *The Governance of China* in one hand and a package of steamed pork buns in the other. Xi's nickname is Xi Baozi. Steamed Bun Xi.



Practitioners of Falun Gong stage a protest in front of the city hall in Belleville, Ont., on July 29, 2016. *Tim Miller/Bellefonte Intelligencer/Postmedia News*

Zhang's online impudence came to the attention of Wuyi's public security police thanks to an editor at Global Times, a Communist Party disinformation and propaganda organ that launched its English-language editions eight years ago with a \$6.6-billion budget. An editor with the Chinese-language editions noticed

posed a series of questions about Zhang. Is he really Chinese? What will his parents think? Maybe his whole family has emigrated?

“In Canada, in general, most Chinese students are not willing to express any opinion about China, or to talk about China. Even Taiwanese friends are worried about getting in trouble with the Chinese government — they have friends and family, and they don’t want to express opinions. The situation is very disturbing,” Zhang told me.

In Canada, in general, most Chinese
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On Monday, Freedom House issued its annual report on the state of freedom in the world, and it makes for terribly grim reading. “Democracy faced its most serious crisis in decades in 2017 as its basic tenets — including guarantees of free and fair elections, rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law — came under attack around the world.” Last year marked the 11th straight year of declines in global freedom. Declines in political rights and civil liberties were noted in 73 countries. Only 35 countries registered gains. It was only a quarter of a century ago that the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended. Police states were on the way out. Now they are resurgent. “Today, it is democracy that finds itself battered and weakened.”

The United States has been withdrawing from the world for a decade. Vladimir Putin’s Russia is on the rise. Steamed Bun China is on the rise. Liberal democracies are rudderless, leaderless and weak.

The situation is, as Zhang put it, very disturbing.



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COMMENT

Colby Cosh weighs in on the private men's club debate.
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WHY ONLINE COOKING CLASSES ARE A SCAM.

McNeilly, *Page B1*



TAKE THE COGNITIVE TEST ADMINISTERED TO TRUMP. *Page A2*

TEST

VOL. 20 NO. 70 THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2018

'It's like they are holding my parents HOSTAGE, so I can't say these things'



JOHN LEHMANN FOR POSTMEDIA NEWS

Shawn Zhang, who came to Canada on a student visa two years ago, posted an image of the Tibetan flag on Twitter. Zhang says Chinese security officials pressured his parents living south of Shanghai to ask him to remove it.

AS CHINA PUSHES CENSORSHIP ON B.C. STUDENTS, DEMOCRACY FALLS

TERRY GLAVIN
Comment

It's a story about the way the Beijing regime bullies people far beyond its borders, with a few amusing twists and several disgusting instances of corporate cowardice, but it begins innocently enough, with a 28-year-old student at the University of British Columbia and a post he put up on Twitter last Wednesday.

Shawn Zhang, a Peking University alumnus who came to Canada on a student visa two years ago to study law, posted an image of the Tibetan flag below a tongue-in-cheek announcement on the Twitter account of Friends of Tibet, a solidarity group based in India that keeps an eye on China's brutal occupation of the exiled Dalai Lama's Himalayan homeland.

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performed by several corporations in order to expunge descriptions of Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan that had hurt the ruling Communist Party's delicate feelings.

In one particularly bizarre turn of events, a panic erupted over a handful of hollow decorative boxes made to look like copies of the banned book *Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for Their Organs*, by Canadian human rights campaigners David Matas and David Kilgour. The fake books were found in a hotel lobby in Chongli, a ski resort northwest of Beijing.

But back to Zhang's Twitter post — the Tibetan flag, with the words "Free Tibet" above it. Within hours, public security police were putting the heat on Zhang's schoolteacher parents back home in Wuyi, in the coastal province of Zhejiang, just south of Shanghai. The cops wanted Zhang's parents to tell their son to shut the hell up.

See GLAVIN on Page A11

LIBERALS' TRADE PLAN FACING REVISIONS

'PROGRESSIVE' ISSUES

'A bit of hard swallowing required'

MARIE-DANIELLE SMITH

OTTAWA • With Canada's "progressive trade agenda" meeting more apparent resistance from prospective trade partners than Prime Minister Justin Trudeau intended, officials are now discussing how the strategy might be reworked, according to sources in the Canadian foreign affairs community.

"It boils down to our political masters to have a serious reflection on all of this," said Guy Saint-Jacques, a former ambassador to China who confirmed to the National Post he is being consulted on the strategy and that a reckoning seems to be underway within the government. "There's a need for an internal debate and maybe (to) make some revisions to the strategy. I think this is taking place now, so hopefully there will be progress in the next few weeks. There's a bit of hard swallowing that is required."

An insistence on prioritizing provisions related to gender, Indigenous issues, labour and the environment appears to have created hurdles in Canada's three priority free trade negotiations: the launch of bilateral talks with China, the signing of a Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (renamed at Canada's behest) and a renegotiation of the 16-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement.

In a statement Tuesday, the Chinese embassy's spokesman, Xiaozhong Zhu, put it bluntly: While China values Canada as an important trade partner and "stands ready to negotiate and sign a free-trade agreement with the Canadian side at an early date," it considers some issues to be off the table.

See STRATEGY on Page A8

Canadians kidnapped in Nigeria ambush

Road notorious for abductions

DOUGLAS QUAN

The federal government said Wednesday it was looking into reports that two Canadians and two Americans had been kidnapped by gunmen in Nigeria along a highway that is notorious for abductions.

During the ambush, two security personnel who were travelling with the group were shot and killed by the as-

Freedom in retreat

2017 WITNESSED GLOBAL DEMOCRACY'S 'MOST SERIOUS CRISIS IN DECADES'



GLAVIN

Continued from A1

"It's like they are holding my parents hostage there, so that I can't say things," Zhang told me. "It is not just Chinese, but many non-Chinese are under this censorship. People in Canada and the United States have to censor their own statements if they want to get business inside China, so they don't say anything. They surrender to censorship."

The Friends of Tibet Twitter post that Zhang decorated with an image of the Tibetan flag was a satirical congratulations to the Marriott International hotel chain "for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan." The post was referring to an uproar set off by a rewards program customer survey the Marriott chain had circulated that referred to Tibet, Hong Kong and Taiwan as countries. Marriott complied with an order to shut down its website for a week as penance, and further agreed to kowtow with a grovelling apology, disavowing any sympathy for "separatist groups that subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China."

A Marriott employee was then found to have "wrongly liked" the sarcastic Friends of Tibet congratulations, thereby "misleading the public," which prompted Marriott to apologize again, vowing to fire the worker involved. Then those fake, cardboard versions of Matas



DAVE ABEL / POSTMEDIA NEWS

A student in Canada who posted a picture of the Tibetan flag on Twitter found himself subject to the unwelcome attention of the Chinese government shortly afterward.

and Kilgour's Bloody Harvest — true copies of which document the Beijing regime's organ-pillaging of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience — turned up in the lobby of a Marriott property in Chongli, setting the local Public Security Bureau on high alert and causing Marriott bosses to be embarrassed again. Beijing considers the mildly religious Falun Gong movement to be a dangerously wicked cult.

While all this was going on, it came to the attention of the authorities that several other foreign companies working in China were also referring to Taiwan and Tibet as countries. Taiwan is a thriving liberal democracy, an island republic that Beijing considers a renegade,

breakaway province. Tibet is an ancient monastic redoubt of an esoteric form of Buddhism that was overrun by Mao Zedong's communists in 1950. These are not "countries," Beijing insists, so over the past few days, several companies have been obliged to follow Marriott's low example and they have apologized for using the word "countries." Qantas Airlines grovelled. Delta Air Lines grovelled. The Galician fashion retailer Zara grovelled.

Zhang refused to take down his tweet, and he does not expect this will result in any serious repercussions, for four reasons. The first is that he expects he will never be able to return to China, and hopes to obtain perma-

nent resident status here in Canada after he graduates from UBC. The second reason: Twitter is banned in China, and the censors have little cause to fret about a tweet that Chinese people can't see. The third reason involves a concession of sorts that appears to have placated the police in Wuyi, arranged through an intermediary in the local propaganda bureau.

The propaganda official told Zhang's parents that everything would likely blow over if Zhang agreed to remove two posts he'd put up on Weibo, the popular Chinese social-media platform. One mentions a rumpus at a soccer match in Germany last November, where the Chinese Under-20

team suspended its tour because of the feelings-hurting presence of protesters waving Tibetan flags in the stands. The other is a photograph of a man in a grocery store holding up an English-language copy of Communist Party strongman Xi Jinping's The Governance of China in one hand, and a package of steamed pork buns in the other. Xi's nickname is Xi Baozi. Steamed Bun Xi.

Zhang's online impudence came to the attention of Wuyi's public security police thanks to an editor at Global Times, a Communist Party disinformation and propaganda organ that launched its English-language editions eight years ago with a \$6.6-billion

budget. An editor with the Chinese-language editions noticed the Tibetan flag Zhang posted and dashed off a snitch on Weibo that posed a series of questions about Zhang. Is he really Chinese? What will his parents think? Maybe his whole family has emigrated?

"In Canada, in general, most Chinese students are not willing to express any opinion about China, or to talk about China. Even my Taiwanese friends are worried about getting in trouble with the Chinese government — they have friends and family, and they don't want to express opinions. The situation is very disturbing," Zhang told me.

On Monday, Freedom House issued its annual report on the state of freedom in the world, and it makes for terribly grim reading. "Democracy faced its most serious crisis in decades in 2017 as its basic tenets — including guarantees of free and fair elections, the rights of minorities, freedom of the press, and the rule of law — came under attack around the world." Last year marked the 12th straight year of declines in global freedom. Declines in political rights and civil liberties were noted in 73 countries. Only 35 countries registered gains. It was only a quarter of a century ago that the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended. Police states were on the way out. Now they are resurgent. "Today, it is democracy that finds itself battered and weakened."

The United States has been withdrawing from the world for a decade. Vladimir Putin's Russia is on the rise. Steamed Bun Xi's China is on the rise. Liberal democracies are rudderless, leaderless and weak.

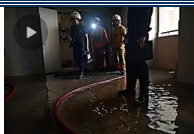
The situation is, as Zhang put it, very disturbing.

National Post

THE STRAITS TIMES



1st female Syariah Court registrar steps down



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China's Youngest Female Billionaire Selling Sydney Mansion Global

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China raps foreign firms over 'country' listings

🕒 PUBLISHED JAN 13, 2018, 5:00 AM SGT

The businesses had referred to Taiwan, Tibet and Hong Kong as countries

SHANGHAI • The Chinese authorities have rapped Western businesses ranging from the world's biggest hotel chain Marriott to Spanish fashion label Zara for listing Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong as countries, in a fresh show of Beijing's acute sensitivity about the autonomous regions.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China said yesterday that it had asked Delta Air Lines to investigate why Taiwan and Tibet were listed as countries on its website, and demanded an "immediate and public" apology.

The authority also said that it would require all foreign airlines operating routes to China to conduct comprehensive investigations of their websites, apps and customer-related information and "strictly comply with China's laws and regulations".

Meanwhile the Shanghai branch of the state cyberspace administration has shut down Marriott's local website for a week after the United States hotel giant mistakenly listed Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau as separate countries in a customer questionnaire.

Marriott's Twitter account for its loyalty programme was also found to have "liked" and shared a post by Friends of Tibet, which campaigns for independence for the region, soon after the hotel giant apologised for the first gaffe.

The same regulator accused Zara of placing Taiwan in a pull-down list of countries on its Chinese website. Medtronic had also put "Republic of China (Taiwan)" on one of its websites, the office said in a WeChat post, giving both companies until 6pm local time to apologise.

Medtronic issued an apology via social media, saying it had updated the website. An executive who answered the phone at Zara's Shanghai office was not able to immediately comment.

The apparent intensification of efforts to police how foreign businesses refer to Chinese-claimed territories - even if only in pull-down menus - underscores just how sensitive the issue of sovereignty has become in a China that is increasingly emboldened on the world stage.

The involvement of more than one Chinese authority in rebuking businesses across different industries suggested possible coordination at a high level of government.

"It's hard not to see it as part of the wider trend where nationalist issues are being emphasised very deliberately as part of the new era," said a China-based Western businessman who declined to be identified. "It's hard not to think this is the shape of things to come for foreign companies, having to be even more careful about these sensitivities."

Hong Kong and Macau are former European colonies that are now part of China but run largely autonomously. China annexed Tibet in 1950, although Beijing has long claimed the Himalayan region has been an indivisible part of China throughout history.

Taiwan is China's most sensitive territorial issue. The Communist Party considers the self-ruled, democratic island a province and refuses to renounce the threat of force to bring it into the fold.

"The companies that come to China should respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, abide by China's laws, and respect the feelings of the Chinese people," Foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular briefing yesterday. "This is the minimum requirement of any company going to another country to carry out business and investment."

In a statement, Delta apologised for making "an inadvertent error with no business or political intention", saying it recognised the seriousness of the issue and had taken steps to resolve it.

Last year, German carmaker Audi AG apologised for using a map that excluded Taiwan and parts of Tibet and the western Xinjiang region after it was heavily criticised on Chinese social media.

REUTERS

SCMP.COM

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Marriott sacks employee who 'liked' Twitter post from Tibet independence group

PUBLISHED : Saturday, 13 January, 2018, 8:01pm

UPDATED : Saturday, 13 January, 2018, 8:01pm

News › China › Society

Teddy Ng teddy.kyng@scmp.com

Row over mislabelling of Chinese territories rumbles on as news reports accuse 24 airlines of making similar mistakes

US hotel giant Marriott said it is in the process of sacking an employee for “wrongfully liking” a Twitter post by a group that supports independence for Tibet in its latest effort to calm a storm of criticism sparked by a company survey that referred to the Chinese region, and self-ruled Taiwan, as countries, Chinese state media reported.

Craig Smith, president and managing director of Asia-Pacific for Marriott International, made the announcement at a meeting with the China National Tourism Administration on Friday, Xinhua reported.

Wang Xiaofeng, deputy director of the administration, said listing Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as countries was an infringement of China’s territorial integrity and hurt the feelings of the Chinese people.

[Delta Air Lines, Zara join Marriott in China’s bad books over Tibet, Taiwan gaffes](#) [1]

He said the hotel group should learn from the experience and do all it can to minimise any negative impact.

Smith explained that the email questionnaire that triggered the controversy had been produced by an outsourcing company, but apologised for Marriott’s failure to notice the error. He added that the hotel group had suspended its dealings with the company.



As for the Marriott employee who “liked” the Twitter post by Friends of Tibet, Smith said disciplinary proceedings had been started.

“Due to the mistake of an individual employee, our official [Twitter] account wrongly ‘liked’ the tweet supporting Tibet independence and misled the public. [We] have now suspended this employee and dismissal proceedings are under way,” he was quoted as saying.

Calls and emails asking Marriott for comment went unanswered on Saturday.

[Marriott in more trouble after 'liking' Twitter post by Tibetan independence group](#) [2]

The row with the hotel chain started on Tuesday when a Chinese-language questionnaire it emailed to its customers referred to Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as independent countries. News of the error travelled rapidly online and triggered a backlash from Chinese internet users, who called for a boycott of the company.

Marriott’s troubles deepened after social media users spotted that the Twitter account for its loyalty programme had “liked” and shared the Friends of Tibet post after the company had apologised for its initial gaffe.

The hotel chain was not the only company to be accused of disrespecting China’s sovereignty, however. Shanghai-based news portal Thepaper.cn reported on Saturday that on the websites of 24 airlines, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan were all listed as countries.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China on Saturday demanded that all foreign airlines with routes to China check the accuracy of their websites and apps, and rectify any errors.

[Chinese probe into Marriott hotels over geography gaffe in customer survey](#) [3]

On Friday, the administration summoned executives from Delta Air Lines after it was found to have listed Taiwan and Tibet as countries. The airline issued an apology, saying it had made a “grave mistake”.

Similarly, international fashion brand Zara and medical equipment maker Medtronic were ordered by Shanghai's internet regulator to update their websites after they too were found to have to referred to Taiwan as a country.

The two companies complied with the request and issued public apologies on their Chinese websites.

Topics: Luxury Hotels

Source URL: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2128124/marriott-sacks-employee-who-liked-twitter-post-tibet-independence>

Links

[1] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2128046/delta-air-lines-zara-join-marriott-chinas-bad-books-over-tibet>

[2] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2127999/marriott-more-trouble-after-liking-twitter-post-tibetan>

[3] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2127800/chinese-probe-marriott-hotels-over-geography-gaffe>

SCMP.COM

South China Morning Post 南華早報

Marriott fiasco shows there's no room for disrespect when it comes to China's sovereignty

PUBLISHED : Sunday, 14 January, 2018, 5:09pm

UPDATED : Sunday, 14 January, 2018, 5:09pm

Comment › Insight & Opinion

Tammy Tam tammy.tam@scmp.com

Growing scrutiny from Chinese citizens reflects a simple, if hard, truth: prevailing practices that were not taken too seriously in the past are now becoming unacceptable, writes Tammy Tam

It started with a public outcry spreading over the internet, followed by stern official rebukes, after mainland Chinese netizens noticed the Marriott International hotel chain listing Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet as independent countries in a questionnaire it sent to customers.

That [turned out to be only the beginning](#) [1] of a rule-setting campaign to ensure respect for China's sovereignty.

In another development in Hong Kong, former lawmaker [Cheng Chung-tai](#) [2] was sacked by Polytechnic University for desecrating the national and Hong Kong flags during a Legislative Council meeting last year.



They were separate cases but the message was the same: from now there will be a price to pay for showing disrespect for China's territorial integrity.

This is not just the official line, but a sentiment shared by many ordinary Chinese people. So is it patriotism or populism?

Marriott sacks employee who 'liked' Twitter post from Tibet independence group [3]

There has long been a perception among certain political pundits at home and abroad that Beijing usually tries to whip up public sentiment to advance government agenda, but that line of thinking can be quite mistaken these days.

The Marriott controversy is a good example and a timely reminder to both foreign investors and political figures, including Hong Kong's opposition pan-democrats.



Over the weekend, the Chinese Foreign Ministry weighed in to warn all foreign enterprises to “respect China’s sovereignty ... and the Chinese people’s feelings”.

Beijing took it a step further with China National Tourism Administration deputy director Wang Xiaofeng meeting Craig Smith, president and managing director of Asia Pacific for Marriott, demanding the group conduct a thorough investigation into the matter. The hotel group was also asked to [deal with a member of staff who gave a “like”](#) [4] to a pro-Tibet independence Twitter message and later shared it with others.

Beijing warns of pro-independence turmoil in ties with Taipei in 2018 [5]

The official *People’s Daily* on Saturday ran a strongly worded commentary stressing that no one should be allowed to cross this “red line”. It also pointed out that the Marriott case was just the tip of the iceberg, as media reports soon dragged others into the spotlight for offending Chinese sentiment.

Is Beijing overreacting by rebuking the offending parties and ordering a nationwide check on all foreign companies’ use of such terminology? Are these companies really intent on “splitting” China or just being politically ignorant?

The answers may vary depending on who is talking, but one thing for sure is, it’s not only the government taking offence at such slights, careless or intentional – many ordinary Chinese people

feel just as strongly about it, and it's not because they are merely following the official line.

[What the pictures in Xi Jinping's office reveal about his feelings towards Hong Kong \[6\]](#)

That explains why mainland netizens hailed Polytechnic University's decision not to renew Cheng's contract as the right call, regardless of his "political prosecution" claims.

The concept of a red line when it comes to sovereignty is familiar enough for Hongkongers. President [Xi Jinping](#) [7] made it loud and clear, [in his July 1 speech last year to mark the 20th anniversary of the city's return to the motherland](#) [8], that nothing can compromise sovereignty – a stern warning to those advocating the idea of independence for Hong Kong.

Like it or not, growing scrutiny from Chinese citizens across the border reflects a simple, if hard, truth: prevailing practices that were not taken too seriously in the past are now becoming unacceptable.

[Xi's speech shows Beijing's resolve to confront any threat to national unity, academics say \[9\]](#)

This refers to even seemingly harmless things, such as Hongkongers referring to the mainland as "the Chinese side", or talking about "Hong Kong-China relations" instead of the more politically correct "Hong Kong-mainland relations". Even if it's something that Hongkongers are used to and not in any way suggesting the city is separate from the rest of China.

The writing is on the wall, it seems, and it says, "Enough is enough."

Topics: City Beat

Hong Kong localism and independence

Source URL: [http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2128191/marriott-fiasco-shows-theres-no-room-disrespect-when-it?](http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2128191/marriott-fiasco-shows-theres-no-room-disrespect-when-it?emarsys=1&sc_src=email_2126698&sc_lid=3366&sc_uid=148412318&sc_uid=RtUGiACS4I)

[emarsys=1&sc_src=email_2126698&sc_lid=3366&sc_uid=148412318&sc_uid=RtUGiACS4I](http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2128191/marriott-fiasco-shows-theres-no-room-disrespect-when-it?emarsys=1&sc_src=email_2126698&sc_lid=3366&sc_uid=148412318&sc_uid=RtUGiACS4I)

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[1] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2128046/delta-air-lines-zara-join-marriott-chinas-bad-books-over-tibet>

[2] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2128047/hong-kong-lecturer-decries-political-persecution-after>

[3] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2128124/marriott-sacks-employee-who-liked-twitter-post-tibet-independence>

[4] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2127999/marriott-more-trouble-after-liking-twitter-post-tibetan>

[5] <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2126377/china-taiwan-relations-grave-state-2018-says-beijing>

[6] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/2127179/how-does-xi-jinping-feel-about-hong-kong-look-pictures-his-office>

[7] <http://www.scmp.com/topics/xi-jinping>

[8] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2100895/president-xi-jinping-marks-red-line-warning-hong-kong>

[9] <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2115963/xis-speech-shows-beijings-resolve-confront-any-threat>



Top Global Tweets



Shawn Zhang 章闻韶
@shawnwzhang

Activity | Map | Analyse | Visualise | Alert

6 hours after I posted a Tibet flag under friends of tibet's tweet (https://t.co/hzpW17IXjD), government officers in my hometown found my family and urged me to delete it. 2 days later, we reached an agreement to delete my two weibo posts instead.



Friends of Tibet
@friendsoftibet


Activity | Map | Analyse | Visualise | Alert



Friends of Tibet congratulate global hotel chain #Marriott International for listing #Tibet as a country along with #HongKong and #Taiwan.



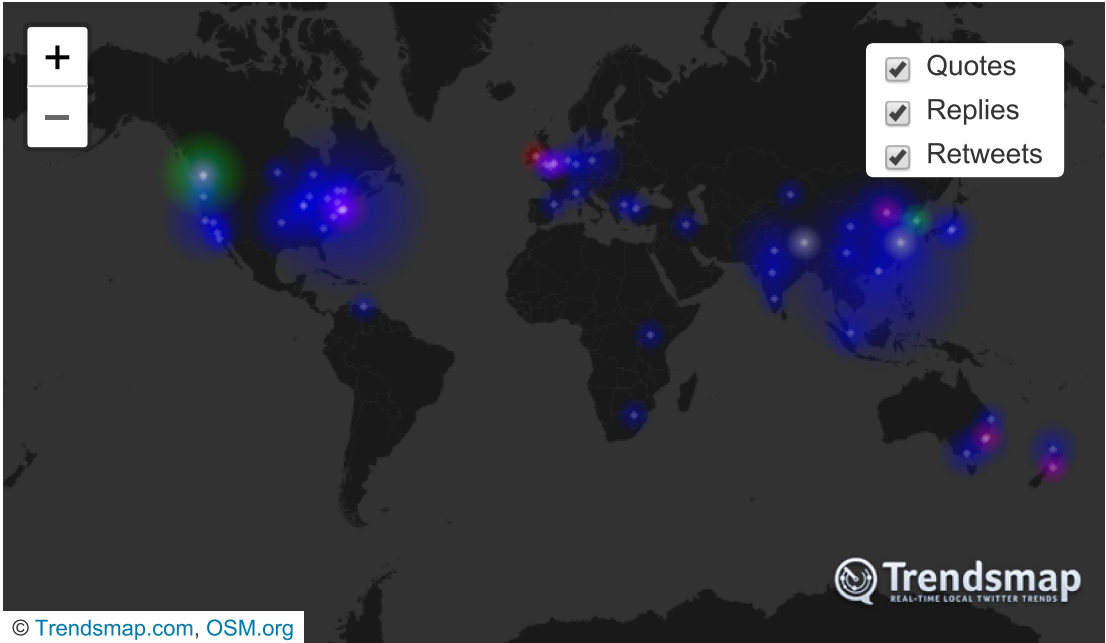
7 days ago · Twitter Web Client · en

 83  220 

 about 21 hours ago · Twitter Web Client · en


 121  72

Tweet Engagements



Total of 10 ↩ replies and 14 🗨 quotes found

⏴ All | ⏴ Replies | ⏴ Quotes | ⏴ Retweeters



Kenneth Roth 
@KenRoth

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

🗨 Another example of China extending the tentacles of its censorship overseas (this time, to Canada).



Shawn Zhang 章闻韶
@shawnwzhang

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

↩ Seems like they only care about Weibo because Weibo influences their political performance assessment, but twitter not.

[Twitter](#) about 21 hours ago · *Twitter for iPhone* · en

↻ 10 ❤ 23

[Detail](#)



Shawn Zhang 章闻韶
@shawnwzhang

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

↩ Another interesting thing I learned is that China's censorship still heavily depend's on ordinary people' reporting. Government is not so good at discovering "illegal" content themselves, they need help.

[Twitter](#) about 13 hours ago · *Twitter for iPhone* · en

↻ 8 ❤ 17

[Detail](#)



Friends of Tibet
@friendsoftibet

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

↩ @shawnwzhang Friends of Tibet sincerely thank you for all your genuine efforts for the #Tibet cause. We are confident that our humble efforts would bring in greater results in the long run. Thank you once again! @cruelsakura @BlackSapote @joshrogin @IBMCCaslin

[Twitter](#) about 21 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en

↻ 3 ❤ 13

[Detail](#)



Shawn Zhang 章闻韶
@shawnwzhang

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

↩ Another guess is that if they succeeded in persuading me to delete my Weibo, they can take more credit in "successfully maintaining stability". But if they ask superior department to delete it, it's not their credit.

[Twitter](#) about 14 hours ago · *Twitter for iPhone* · en

↻ 2 ❤ 9

[Detail](#)



Shawn Zhang 章闻韶
@shawnwzhang

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

↩ And they really don't care about you if you write in English.

[Twitter](#) about 13 hours ago · *Twitter for iPhone* · en



陈闯创
@1957spirit

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

“” 在加拿大的推友发个有图伯特旗帜的推文，然后他在中国的家人就被伪政府盯就上要求删帖，拉锯两天的结果竟然是他删除在自己微博上的两个帖子了事。

[Twitter](#) about 14 hours ago · *Twitter for Android* · zh

[Retweet](#) 4 [Like](#) 5

[Detail](#)



Aia
@_achaeon

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

“” The Chinese citizens are subjected to CCP's dictatorial censorship even when they are abroad and their families are harassed by the chinese authorities. [The families of Tibetan dissidents abroad, are often threatened].

#Tibet @KarmaGunz @Tibet_4_Tibetan

[Twitter](#) about 19 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en

[Retweet](#) 4 [Like](#) 4

[Detail](#)



Bernard Hickey
@bernardchickey

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

“” What happened to a law student in Canada who had parents in China.

[Twitter](#) about 8 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en

[Retweet](#) 1 [Like](#) 3

[Detail](#)



Friends of Tibet
@friendsoftibet

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

“” ↩ <https://t.co/eqcqJxUqIP>
@shawnwzhang Friends of Tibet sincerely thank you for all your genuine efforts for the #Tibet cause. We are confident that our humble efforts would bring in greater results in the long run. Thank you once again!

[Twitter](#) about 21 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en

[Retweet](#) 0 [Like](#) 4

[Detail](#)



Adam_Wu
@Adam_WuTong

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

“” Thread

[Twitter](#) about 2 hours ago · *TweetDeck* · en

[Retweet](#) 1 [Like](#) 2

[Detail](#)

[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

Thread

[Twitter](#) about 9 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en[Retweet](#) 1 [Like](#) 1[Detail](#)**Al Tran**
[@BlackSapote](#)[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)[Reply](#) @shawnwzhang Hey - are your family okay???[Twitter](#) about 21 hours ago · *Twitter for iPhone* · en[Retweet](#) 0 [Like](#) 2[Detail](#)**Wai Sing-Rin**
[@waisingrin](#)[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)[Reply](#) @shawnwzhang Short term, Shawn, you need to get your parents out of China. OTW, anything you say can pose a threat to them. Your family are CCP's hostages.[Twitter](#) about 9 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en[Retweet](#) 0 [Like](#) 2[Detail](#)**Iain Martin** [Verified](#)
[@_IainMartin](#)[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

Interesting thread

[Twitter](#) about 2 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en[Retweet](#) 1 [Like](#) 0[Detail](#)**Chris Jones**
[@hinderfella](#)[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)

China Communist Party will exert pressure on weakest link to achieve its aims.

[Twitter](#) about 10 hours ago · *Twitter Web Client* · en[Retweet](#) 1 [Like](#) 0[Detail](#)**gart hsah** [Verified](#)
[@portKKK](#)[Activity](#) | [Map](#) | [Analyse](#) | [Visualise](#) | [Alert](#)[Reply](#) @shawnwzhang fu*k CCP[Twitter](#) about 21 hours ago · *Twitter for iPhone* · en



Robin Brant 白洛宾 
@robindbrant

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

“” Fascinating thread #Tibet #China #censorship #dontcareaboutenglish

 about 2 hours ago · Twitter for iPhone · zh

 0  1

Detail 



aCuppa O'POOKABEAR
@WarshipQ

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

“” Huh? Crazy. I would have just had them kill me. Screw that

 about 7 hours ago · Twitter for Android · en

 0  0

Detail 



Abhishek Pratap
@Abhi5hekk

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

“” This is what the Indian government wants to achieve by pushing aadhar through our throats. @bainjal @ShashiTharoor

 about 12 hours ago · Twitter for iPad · en

 0  0

Detail 



Gao Feng
@igaoger

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

 @shawnwzhang @jgarnaut hhh should be in jail

 about 10 hours ago · Twitter for Android · en

 0  0

Detail 



Victorian Soldier
@shinafukyouwaon

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

“” A live example Chinese Government is censoring and persecuting Oversea Chinese for their free speech. @wenyunchao @CBCPolitics @csiscanada

 about 12 hours ago · Twitter for iPhone · en

 0  0

Detail 



Digby Howis
@DigbyHowis

 Activity |  Map |  Analyse |  Visualise |  Alert

@graham_guan

about an hour ago · Tweetbot for iOS · en

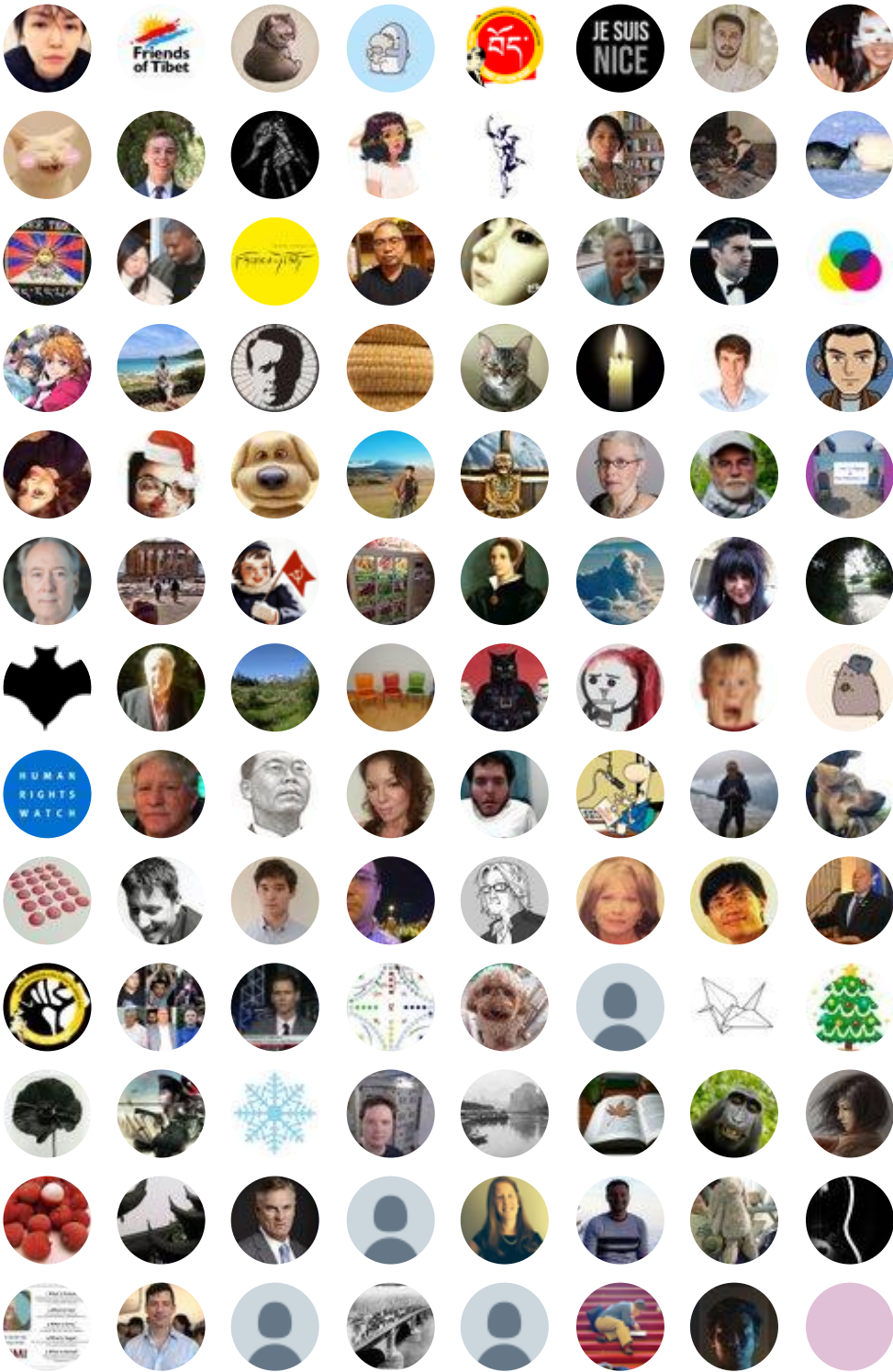
0 0

Detail

Over 1 replies and quotes not shown

Top

Retweeters





1 retweeters not shown

 Top

Contact
Blog

Pricing
Help



Marriott fires employee and contractor following territorial error

Hu Min
(/humin/)

🕒 10:57 UTC+8, 2018-01-13

Marriott International has suspended an employee and terminated the contract with a contractor who mistakenly listed Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau as separate countries in a customer questionnaire, the Asia Pacific head of the world's largest hotel chain said on Friday.

The customer questionnaire was compiled and distributed by a third-party company hired by Marriott International. However, the staff of the hotel did not review the drop-down menu, said Craig S. Smith, president and managing director of Asia Pacific at Marriott International, which has sparked an outcry among Chinese.

Smith said Marriott has ended cooperation with the unidentified third-party company. An employee has been suspended and will be fired for "liking" a tweet that "congratulates Marriott International for listing Tibet as a country" by a separatist group.

The mistake of the employee has misled the public, said Smith.

Smith made the response when meeting with Wang Xiaofeng, deputy director of the China National Tourism Administration.

He apologized during the meeting and said training on China's laws and regulations will be enhanced to avoid any "serious mistake."

Wang ordered Marriott to draw a lesson from the incident and thoroughly scrutinize content on its website and app.

Meanwhile, Chinese online travel agency ly.com and lifestyle website meituan.com have removed hotels under the Marriott International group from their websites.

Source: SHINE Editor: Wang Qingchu



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China's Reaction to Marriott's Tibet Gaffe Show Signs of Insecurity

 tibet.net/2018/01/chinas-reaction-to-marriotts-tibet-gaffe-show-signs-of-insecurity/



featured image: José Carlos Cortizo Pérez

With the 'New Era' proclaimed by President Xi Jinping, China has declared itself as one of the superpowers of the world. Superpowers, by nature, purport to portray an air of confidence and security, and China is no exception.

With a newfound confidence, Chinese government and its leaders have been singing – ad nauseam – a song of a new world order led by China and its economic prowess. So much so that they are often caught sanctimoniously lecturing other governments of the world.

The outward appearance of confidence and security however seem to conceal a deep sense of insecurity: a fear of its own people and nervousness about its territorial integrity. This insecurity was exposed once again in the recent case of Marriot Hotel's questionnaire gaffe.

The US-based hotel chain has sent out a questionnaire recently asking members of its customer rewards programme to list their country of residence. The options included Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The listing of these places – considered sensitive to China's national interest and territorial integrity – as countries, has sparked fury among Chinese netizens.

Chinese netizens, many of them part of 'Fifty cent army'- China's vast army of paid Internet commentators, reportedly called for a boycott of all Marriott hotels in China on Sina Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter.

Marriot, to limit the fallout from this political gaffe, frantically came up with a series of apologies and withdrew the survey, and offered a clarification, explaining that the group doesn't support separatism.

Nevertheless, China shut down Marriott's local website and mobile phone app for a week as punishment for apparently disrespecting China's sovereignty.

Chinese authorities also launched an investigation into Marriot for possibly violating China's Orwellian cyber security laws after the hotel chain's Twitter account seem to have liked a tweet by Friends of Tibet, a Tibet advocacy group based in India.

The Marriot gaffe is not the first incident to invite the anger of China's paid nationalist netizens. Like Marriot, US based Delta Airlines, European fashion line Zara and medical device maker Medtronic have also attracted the ire of China over similar gaffes recently. These companies were also forced to offer apologies and take immediate measures to amend their 'vices.'

However, these recent incidents represent just the tip of the iceberg in the corporate world's Faustian relationship with China. Multinational corporations have repeatedly sacrificed their moral stand to secure the prospect of a vast market in China. Even industry leaders like Apple has been known to kowtow to China and turn a blind eye to China's blatant violation of human rights, transgression of international rules and fair trade practices to gain access to its huge market.

China's economic intimidation and coercive tactics have become a routine affair of late and it has induced self-censorship and nervous adjustments from companies, universities and governments over the past few years. These incidents have signified mounting control and domination of these foreign corporations by China and the growing dependence and erosion of independence of the other.

While these instances may depict confidence and strength of China, it also underlies an insecurity complex. This insecurity emerges from the fact that the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation or Xi Jinping's China Dream rests on a fragile foundation of national integration.

Driven by a false notion of irredentism, China has occupied its smaller neighbors such as Tibet and Inner Mongolia et al in a quest to reclaim what they call 'lost lands' and attain past greatness. However, these regions still remain restive and haven't completely accepted Chinese rule. And the reality is not lost on China's leadership.

As a result, China's leaders harbor a deep fear and nervousness that these regions could one day rise up. Already, popular sentiments against Chinese rule in places like Hong Kong are gaining ground. In Tibet, sentiments are currently bottled up under strict surveillance and draconian rules. However, despite China's fear of its own people, the solution to these issues is not inconceivable. The Tibetans led by the Central Tibetan Administration have renounced separatism and have called for genuine autonomy of the Tibetan people based on the Buddhist notion of the Middle Way Approach conceived by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

President Dr Lobsang Sangay of the Central Tibetan Administration, the political leader of the Tibet, has called on China to address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people. At least 151 Tibetans have set themselves on fire and many more languish in Chinese prisons for peaceful expressions of dissent against China's unjust policies. If China reforms

its policies and resolve the Tibet issue based on the Middle Way Approach, at least the territorial integrity of the Chinese nation will be safeguarded. That would be one monkey off China's back, to say the least.

But the Chinese leadership is known to be paranoid. Instead of redressing the Tibetan issue and reforming their failed policies, they have resorted to imposing harsher measures, which generate even more resentment and the possibility of unrest.

The underlying question is how long can China maintain stability by relying on repression borne out of paranoia?

Andy Gove of Intel has said that 'only the paranoid survive'. But the paranoia that afflicts China is borne out of its own misdemeanors and historical fallacies. In fact, this misplaced paranoia could lead to disintegration and destruction, with no clear beneficiaries. Its time the Chinese leadership see sense and wisdom in the Tibetan approach to resolving the issue of Tibet and thereby harness the potential of Middle Way Approach.

China warns foreign companies that qualify Taiwan or Tibet as countries

Marriott, Delta Airlines or Zara have been some of the companies in the sights, they have updated their websites

16 January 2018 Tuesday 11:30 - 5 reads.



China has embarked on a particular offensive against those foreign companies that question, albeit in a tiny way, its sovereignty and territorial claims. Several multinational companies operating in Asian giant have been in sights of regulators and social networks for having included Tibet, Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan in a list of independent countries, when managing reservations, consult establishments or product orders. Among those affected are Marriott hotel chain, airline Delta Airlines or Zara, which have changed content of its web pages and issued a public apology.

The storm began with a questionnaire sent last week to members of Marriott points program in China. In drop-down menu to select country of origin, there were options — in addition to China — from Hong Kong, Macao, Tibet and Taiwan. The allegations of several Internet users unleashed a wave of criticism to point that administration of cyberspace of China has closed website of hotel chain for a week for offense. Once apologies were asked, and perhaps aware of imperative of being politically correct with Beijing's side if one wants to do business in China, US group said that it "do not support separatist groups that subvert sovereignty and territorial integrity of China."

Marriott International respects sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We don't support separatist groups that subvert sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. We sincerely apologize for any actions that may have suggested otherwise.

— January 2018 Marriott Rewards (@MarriottRewards) 11

Hong Kong and Macao were English and Portuguese colonies, respectively, who returned under Chinese sovereignty at end of last century, maintaining ample competence. Both are now considered as special administrative regions. Tibet is a Chinese autonomous region since it was invaded by Mao Zedong in 1951, although Beijing maintains that area of feudal servitude was liberated. Taiwan, an island self-governed and with a democratic system, is considered by Peking an integral part of its territory and even contemplates use of force if Taipei formally declared secession.

The Marriott case led Internet users to scrutinize contents of websites, applications and social networks of several foreign companies in search of similar examples. The airline Delta Airlines sinned with Taiwan and Tibet, and Zara also included island in its list of countries when making reservations. The authorities asked both for a rectification that came quickly. "It was a mistake without commercial or political intent and we apologize deeply. As one of our most important markets, we are fully committed to China and our customers in this country," airline's communiqué prayed.

Zara has replaced initial "Taiwan" with a "Taiwan China region", committing to undertake comprehensive review on all its platforms to detect "illegal" content. China has territorial disputes with several of its neighbouring countries, although case of Taiwan is particularly thorny: Beijing does not engage in diplomatic relations with anyone who believes that island is an independent state.

The anger unleashed on country's social networks by these indiscretions, with even calls for boycott, shows how sensitive is question of sovereignty claims not only for authorities, but for consumers with ever more capacity to influence accounts of results and decision making of large multinationals.

"We welcome foreign companies who want to do business in China, but they must respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, abide by laws, and respect sentiments of Chinese people. This is foundation for any company to do business in any country," said spokesman of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lu Kang. As a result of these cases, competent authorities in aviation sector have ordered all companies to revise their forms "to ensure that they conform to law", without discarding fines from defaulters.

From the Washington Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2018/01/11/whats-an-easy-way-to-miff-china-ask-marriott.html>

What's an easy way to miff China? Ask Marriott.

Jan 11, 2018, 2:13pm EST Updated: Jan 11, 2018, 5:44pm EST

The Chinese government is furious with Marriott International Inc. for listing Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao as separate countries on an email sent to rewards members, bringing a swift and strong apology from the Bethesda hospitality giant.

The wording of the email survey, as well as the “like” of a pro-separatist post on Chinese social media by a Marriott-associated account, has caused Chinese officials to investigate the hotel company and brought a swell of support for a Marriott boycott among Chinese.

The issue is a relatively simple one: Tibet is a region of China, while China claims Taiwan as its own. Taiwan, however, is self-governing — though recognizing its government is considered a slap in the face of the “One-China Policy” (it’s something that can be tricky for some national leaders to navigate). Additionally, Hong Kong and Macao are Chinese territories. Listing these places as separate countries is considered a shot at China’s supremacy.

“Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite,” Marriott said in a statement attributed to CEO Arne Sorenson, himself, offering apologies and adding “we don’t support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups.”

Marriott (NASDAQ: MAR) said it has taken down the survey to make corrections and is reviewing its websites. The company has also, at the request of Chinese government officials, taken down its websites in that country for a full review. That social media post has also been “unliked.”

Marriott says it will take “necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved, which could include termination.”

The situation doesn’t appear to be impacting Marriott on Wall Street, as its share price was up slightly at \$138.58 in early Thursday afternoon trading.

China represented 8 percent of Marriott’s worldwide rooms and 17 percent of its worldwide rooms pipeline, Sorenson said on an earnings call last year. The hotelier has done business in the Asian nation for more than 30 years.

In early 2016, Marriott outdueled Chinese colossus Anbang Insurance Group Co. — a company with close ties to the Chinese government — in a bidding war for its blockbuster acquisition of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, creating the world's largest hotel company.

Drew Hansen
Digital Editor



RICKY WONG

Marriott International, which has large holdings in China — including the Marriott Beijing West Hotel — apologized to the Chinese government on Thursday for listing Tibet, Taiwan and two Chinese territories as countries on an email survey to rewards members.

Washington Business Journal



PH

Business

China demanded Marriott change its website. The company complied.

By **Abha Bhattarai** January 18 at 7:24 AM

Marriott International is apologizing to the Chinese government — and changing its practices — after coming under fire for listing Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and Macau as stand-alone countries on an email questionnaire it sent to members of its rewards program.

The apology comes after the Chinese government, which maintains that those locations are part of China, shut down Marriott's Chinese website and app as punishment.

Marriott, the world's largest hotelier which has been aggressively expanding in China in recent years, says it took down the survey "immediately" and is doing a review of all of its materials, including its websites, according to a company spokeswoman. The Bethesda-based company is also taking disciplinary action against an employee who used a corporate Twitter account to "like" a post supporting Tibetan independence from China.

"Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China," chief executive Arne Sorenson wrote [in a statement](#) on the company's website.

"We don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups," he added. "We recognize the severity of the situation and sincerely apologize."

Marriott is among a growing number of companies that has been publicly targeted by the Chinese government for listing Taiwan and Hong Kong as separate countries. Delta Air Lines and Zara in recent weeks have also amended their websites — and issued public apologies — under pressure from China.

"It was an inadvertent error with no business or political intention, and we apologize for the mistake," a spokeswoman for Delta said in an email. "As one of our most important markets, we are fully committed to China and our Chinese customers."

A number of major companies, including Apple and Audi, have acquiesced to China's censorship laws and other demands in recent years, experts said. Apple last year removed messaging and VPN apps, which would allow users to bypass government-imposed firewalls, from its Chinese app store. Audi, meanwhile, apologized for using in a presentation a map of China that did not include Taiwan and parts of Tibet.

Hong Kong and Macau are officially part of China, although they have their own governments and political systems. (Traveling between Hong Kong, Macau and China requires a passport.) Tibet is ruled by China, although some Tibetans argue that it is an independent country that is illegally occupied.

Taiwan, meanwhile, also has its own democracy and maintains that it is an independent nation. China, however, claims it as a province.

“This kind of policing has been going on for a long time, but it used to be handled much more discretely,” said Sean Miner, a fellow at the Atlantic Council who specializes in China. “Now, though, China is overtly using its economic leverage to publicly shame companies that it believes are crossing the line.”

Marriott’s [Chinese website](#) has a notice saying it will be back online this week.

The Chinese market is an increasingly important one for Marriott, which is working hard to woo the country’s growing middle class. It has opened more than 240 hotels — many of them high-end resorts — in China over the past five years, as it looks to familiarize a growing population of jet-setters with the 91-year-old brand.

The company currently has more than 300 hotels in China, about five times what it did in 2012. And those properties are increasingly lucrative: During the first nine months of 2017, Marriott said revenue per available room, a key industry metric, rose 8.4 percent in Greater China, compared to 1.5 percent in North America and 2.6 percent worldwide.

“China is the biggest single market for us outside the U.S.,” Sorenson said at an industry conference in June. “We’re opening in excess of one [hotel] a week in China.”

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 **0 Comments**

Abha Bhattarai is a business reporter for The Washington Post. She has previously written for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Reuters and the St. Petersburg Times.  Follow @abhabhattarai

Business

Marriott and other firms bow to China to protect business interests

By **Abha Bhattacharai** and **Steven Mufson** January 19 at 12:40 PM

For Marriott, it was the wording of a survey emailed to members of its rewards club. At fashion brand Zara, it was a drop-down menu on its web site. And for Audi, it was a presentation at the German carmaker's annual meeting that showed a map of China that excluded Taiwan and parts of Tibet.

All three drew a backlash from the Chinese government in the past week, as did more than two dozen other international corporations — including Delta Air Lines, Qantas and Medtronic — for listing Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet and Macau as separate countries.

The Chinese government, further extending its political reach on the web and through social media, has demanded public apologies from the companies. In Marriott's case, the Chinese government also forced the company to shut down all six of its Chinese web sites and apps for one week after a U.S.-based employee "liked" a tweet favoring Tibetan independence.

All of the companies have moved to mollify Beijing — and their Chinese customers. "It was an inadvertent error with no business or political intention, and we apologize for the mistake," a spokeswoman for Delta said in an email. "As one of our most important markets, we are fully committed to China and our Chinese customers."

"This is a huge mistake, probably one of the biggest in my career," Craig S. Smith, president and managing director of Marriott's Asia-Pacific office, was quoted as saying in the state-owned China Daily.

The efforts by Beijing to curtail free speech at companies doing business with China fits into a larger narrative about the nature of China relations abroad. In recent months, China has also sought to support pro-Beijing campus groups and has warned Chinese students abroad against involvement in groups critical of China.

Once American scholars spoke of the virtue of U.S. cultural and economic "soft power" that sought to build support of American ideals around the world. A December report by the National Endowment for Democracy suggested another term for China and Russia, which it said were projecting "sharp power" that relies on coercion without any effort to "win hearts and minds."

"As China's power and influence grows, corporations will have to ask themselves the same question governments have had to: To what degree do the economic benefits of working with China run counter to the values and principles these companies

uphold?” said Ely Ratner, a senior fellow for China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. “The question becomes whether or not these companies want to be complicit in Chinese authoritarianism.”

‘Red lines’

Failure to follow the official line has consequences. The [Chinese newspaper Global Times](#) said that a “netizen” had discovered Marriott’s survey and was calling for a boycott of the company. A China National Tourism Administration official was quoted by Xinhua, the state news agency, as saying no activities that challenge China’s “legal red lines” would be permitted.

“We welcome foreign corporations’ investment and operation in China,” Lu Kang, a spokesperson for the ministry of foreign affairs, said at a press briefing last week, according to the Financial Times. “Meanwhile, they should abide by China’s laws and respect Chinese people’s national feelings.”

Marriott, which has been aggressively expanding in China in recent years, says it is implementing an “eight-point rectification plan” to prevent future mishaps. The word rectification carries extra significance in China because Mao Zedong used rectification campaigns to consolidate his hold on the Chinese Communist Party and indoctrinate its members.

The company also took down the survey “immediately,” terminated the contract with the Canadian firm that wrote the survey and initiated a review of all of its materials, including its web sites, according to a company spokeswoman. The Bethesda-based hotelier is also taking disciplinary action against the U.S.-based employee who used a corporate Twitter account to “like” a post supporting Tibetan independence from China.

“To regain confidence and trust, the first thing is to admit the mistake, then fix it, and it would come back slowly as we prove we really mean what we say,” Smith, who’s worked for Marriott for 30 years, was quoted as saying in the state-owned China Daily.

A number of major companies, including Apple and Audi, have acquiesced to China’s censorship laws and other demands in recent years, experts said. Apple last year removed [more than 670 apps](#), including messaging apps like Skype and virtual private networks, which would allow users to bypass government-imposed firewalls, from its Chinese app store.

Apple’s chief executive Tim Cook has talked about the importance of China’s market to Apple’s business strategy and its determination to stay there. “We believe in engaging with governments even when we disagree,” he said in August.

He traveled to China in December, and appeared at China’s World Internet Conference. “The theme of this conference — developing a digital economy for openness and shared benefits — is a vision we at Apple share,” Cook said there. “We are proud to have worked alongside many of our partners in China to help build a community that will join a common future in cyberspace.”

As for other tech giants, Google’s search engine and Facebook’s social-media platform have been cordoned off from Chinese customers. (Although Google has three offices in the country.)

“This kind of policing has been going on for a long time, but it used to be handled much more discretely,” said Sean Miner, a fellow at the Atlantic Council who specializes in China. “Now, though, China is overtly using its economic leverage to

publicly shame companies that it believes are crossing the line.”

Sensitivity about sovereignty

While China has sought to shape debates across digital borders, it remains sensitive about what is said about its physical borders. Hong Kong and Macau are officially part of China, although they have their own political systems. (Traveling between Hong Kong, Macau and China requires a passport.) Tibet is ruled by China, although some Tibetans argue that it is an independent country and that the Dalai Lama is its leader. Self-governing Taiwan, meanwhile, has its own robust democracy and military. China, however, claims it as a province.

“What if a Chinese enterprise listed Alaska or Hawaii as an independent country rather than a state of the United States?” [an editorial in the China Daily](#) said. “It would definitely be considered as having infringed on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United States.”

“Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China,” chief executive Arne Sorenson wrote in a statement on the company’s website.

“We don’t support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups,” he added. “We recognize the severity of the situation and sincerely apologize.”

Some China watchers said that Marriott failed to do what the U.S. government learned to do in the 1970s when it was normalizing relations with China: That an element of constructive ambiguity can be used to sidestep the question of Taiwan’s relationship with Beijing. The United States recognized one China, but maintained downgraded relations with Taiwan.

“People say that Marriott kowtowed,” said Scott Kennedy, deputy director of China studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Kowtow derives from a Chinese phrase for “knocking one’s head” on the floor, as people did when bowing to the emperor.

“Having to use a crisis management approach and respond publicly gives it that flavor,” Kennedy added. “Yet the place they end up is not really any different from where any government with diplomatic relations ends up: recognize the one China policy and tiptoe around the sovereignty issue and engage in enough ambiguity to have unofficial relations with Taiwan.”

From time to time, companies have learned this the hard way. More than 20 years ago, for example, the mobile phone company Nokia said its products were available in the following countries and listed Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Unlike then, the government today can use social media to stir up nationalist sentiment among customers of companies that misstep.

More sophisticated companies sidestep the sensitive issue of Tibet and Taiwan by referring to them as markets or regions. That, said Kennedy, “probably would have created enough ambiguity.”

Opinions

How China forces American companies to do its political bidding



By **Josh Rogin** Global Opinions January 21 at 7:27 PM

As China's economic might grows, Beijing is leveraging that power to coerce foreign companies to advance its political narrative and punish them when they step out of line. The Chinese Communist Party's treatment this month of hotel giant Marriott after a minor website error takes the effort to a new and dangerous level.

In Washington, the Chinese government's overreaction to Marriott listing Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong and Macau as "countries" on [an emailed questionnaire](#) has sparked alarm. Trump administration officials, lawmakers and experts said the Communist Party is escalating how far it is willing to go in enforcing strict adherence to its political positions among foreign actors.

After a Marriott Rewards employee "liked" a Jan. 9 [tweet](#) by the "Friends of Tibet" group praising the questionnaire, Chinese authorities called in Marriott officials for questioning, shut down their Chinese website and mobile apps, and demanded an apology. The [Jan. 11 apology](#) from Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson parroted the language the Communist Party uses to describe groups that stand opposed to Chinese repression or advocate for Tibetan autonomy.

"We don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups," Sorenson wrote.

Marriott has [more than 300 hotels](#) in China, its second-largest single market, after the United States. While it began disciplinary proceedings against the employee who "liked" the offending tweet, Chinese netizens [scoured the Internet](#) and found dozens more foreign corporations that had listed as countries territories that are claimed by China. Chinese [Internet bots](#) fueled the purportedly popular outrage.

Corporations including Delta Air Lines and Zara [rushed out apologies](#) of their own. But the Chinese government didn't stop there. Dozens of companies were told to scrub their websites for any related content or face severe consequences. The state-run media organ China Daily piled on [with an op-ed](#) headlined "No flouting of China's core interests will be tolerated." Chinese government officials even threatened the family of a [Chinese student in Canada](#) who responded favorably to the Friends of Tibet tweet.

By combining government power, manufactured public outrage and negative state-sponsored media coverage, the Chinese government can place massive pressure on American companies to tow the party's political line. That aggressiveness is now becoming an issue in the U.S.-China relationship.

“Everyone should be deeply concerned by the PRC's growing comprehensive campaign to exploit trade and commerce to advance its global Communist agenda,” Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) told me. “For decades the Communist Party has limited speech within China on topics and opinions that threaten their one-party rule, and we are now seeing this form of information warfare influence the way American companies conduct business.”

For example, by parroting the Communist Party line on Tibet, Marriott helps the Chinese government whitewash its systematic and brutal repression of Tibetans. As the International Campaign for Tibet [wrote in a letter](#) to Sorenson, Marriott could have changed the emailed questionnaire without endorsing China's political position on Tibet.

“China has been continually attempting to silence international public debates on the issue of Tibet, and your statement unfortunately furthers their efforts,” the group wrote, pointing out that the Chinese propaganda machine can use Marriott's statement to further undermine Tibetan human rights.

The question for Washington policymakers is: Where does this end? What if a Tibetan group wanted to hold a conference at a Marriott hotel in Washington? Would Marriott be within its rights to prevent that? Does official Washington have a role to play?

Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) told me that as China becomes more brazen in its efforts to coerce or control American businesses, the United States must devise a comprehensive public-private effort to push back.

“This is only the latest in a long pattern of the Chinese government leveraging access to its marketplace to extract painful concessions from foreign businesses,” he said. “Our actions, or lack thereof, can influence their behavior. To this end, we need to stand firm in defense of American interests, both security and economic.”

For now, Marriott seems more concerned with how it is viewed in Beijing than in Washington. A Marriott spokeswoman said the company had no response to the concerns of lawmakers or human rights groups about its behavior.

Marriott International Asia Pacific President Craig Smith turned down an interview request from me but [gave an interview](#) to China Daily, in which he called the incident probably one of the biggest mistakes of his career. In fact, the biggest mistake that American corporations can make is allowing themselves to be used as tools by the Chinese Communist Party to advance illiberal norms.

Washington is awake to the threat of Chinese economic coercion of American companies for political objectives. Now policymakers must persuade corporations to ask themselves if there is a larger interest at stake than their bottom line.

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Marriott apologizes for labeling China's territories as independent countries



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Photo taken on Jan. 11, 2018 shows the headquarters of Marriott International in Bethesda, Maryland, the [United States](#). (Xinhua/Yin Bogu)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11 (Xinhua) -- U.S. hotel chain Marriott's chief executive officer (CEO) apologized Thursday for listing Tibet, among other parts of China, as an independent country in a mail questionnaire, and promised to take measures to prevent such incidents.

"Marriott International respects and supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Unfortunately, twice this week, we had incidents that suggested the opposite," the company's President and CEO Arne Sorenson said in the statement.

"We don't support anyone who subverts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and we do not intend in any way to encourage or incite any such people or groups. We recognize the severity of the situation and sincerely apologize," the message said, in a more solemn tone than previous ones offered on Chinese media that were slammed as insincere.

The statement said the company has corrected the improper actions and checked its websites and mobile apps for other possible errors and will fully cooperate with investigations launched by the Chinese authorities.

"Upon completion of a full investigation into how both incidents happened, we will be taking the necessary disciplinary action with respect to the individuals involved," the statement said.

During a recent promotion program, Marriott listed Chinese territories, including Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as "countries" in a drop-down menu, and one of its Twitter accounts was found to have "liked" a Tibetan separatist group, drawing fire from Chinese netizens and prompting a probe from China's Internet and market supervisors to determine whether Marriott's actions violated Chinese laws.

According to market observers, Marriott is operating 270 hotels with nearly 100,000 rooms in China.



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