

E-ALERT | Anti-Corruption

December 2012

CASS PUBLISHES SECOND ANTI-CORRUPTION BLUE BOOK

In December 2012, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (“CASS”), China’s top think tank for philosophy and the social sciences, published the *Anti-Corruption Blue Book Second Report on Combating Corruption and Upholding Integrity in China* (the “Blue Book,” see related Xinhua news report [here](#)), which examines from an academic perspective recent efforts by the Chinese government to combat corruption and promote integrity by government officials. The Blue Book analyzes China’s anti-corruption campaigns, discusses recent achievements, highlights key corruption concerns as reflected in a public survey, and points out that the core issue remains how to effectively regulate and restrict power.

Overall, the Blue Book categorizes China’s anti-corruption campaign as featuring “one strong and three highs” (一强三高, *yiqiang sangao*), which represent the “strong” intensity of anti-corruption regulation by ministries and localities, the “high” concern among the public over corruption, the “high” participation rate of anti-corruption campaigns within society, and the “high” expectations of the people that the government will effectively combat corruption.

ANTI-CORRUPTION ACHIEVEMENTS

The Blue Book discusses recent anti-corruption achievements relating to official vehicle use, the healthcare industry, and the people’s court system, as well as achievements in various regions. Based on an extensive investigation and sampling survey of leading cadres and the general public across the country carried out by CASS last year, the Blue Book reports that in 2011, disciplinary inspection commissions (a branch of the Communist Party) across the country accepted a total of 1,345,814 whistleblower reports and investigated 137,859 corruption-related cases. As a result, 142,893 individuals were sanctioned, among which 4,843 county-level cadres or above received disciplinary punishments, 777 individuals’ cases were transferred for judicial review, and a total of RMB 8.44 billion in economic losses was recovered. In the healthcare industry in particular, one of the most corrupt areas, 169 commercial bribery cases involving a total of RMB 42,317,600 were investigated, 289 individuals were sanctioned by the Party, and 75 people were criminally charged.

In 2012, the Chinese government has continued to strengthen the anti-corruption campaign, including through the investigation of several significant corruption scandals of top leaders, such as former Railway Minister Liu Zhijun and former Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai. According to the Blue Book, this shows the Chinese Communist Party’s clear-cut attitude toward and firm determination to fight against corruption.

PUBLIC OPINION ON ANTI-CORRUPTION AND OVERSIGHT OF “BOSSSES”

The Blue Book reports that respondents to the CASS’ survey mentioned above expressed feelings toward corruption ranging from indifference to hatred. Nearly 60% of the Chinese urban and rural residents surveyed expressed confidence that China can achieve clear progress on anti-corruption work in the next five to 10 years. This is a slight increase from 2011.

Ineffective oversight of “bosses” (一把手 *yibashou*, which typically refers to the top leader of an administrative body, Party branch, or state-owned enterprise) and the transfer of huge benefits between leading cadres and business are the main concerns among those surveyed. The Blue Book explains that in China, too much power is vested in bosses, who are given wide discretion without sufficient restrictions on their authority. This allows many bosses to sit above the law and manipulate the rules, thus facilitating frequent corruption scandals among many bosses. In particular, acceptance of huge bribes from business by these bosses and other leading cadres and their collaboration in helping businesses make illegal deals has aroused widespread concern and anger among the public.

BLUE BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMBATING CORRUPTION

The Blue Book outlines five theoretical recommendations for combating corruption, including the need to regulate the power of bosses; to provide more institutional support for anti-corruption efforts; to use “strict” mechanisms taking into account provision of services to the public when promoting leading cadres and in other circumstances; to institute anti-waste mechanisms for public expenses; and to fight corruption in “social areas” (such as education, healthcare, food and drug production, and land use). However, the Blue Book concludes that the key area of focus for combating corruption should be establishment of a mechanism to restrict and balance power, with the power of leading cadres needing effective regulation as soon as possible by institutional mechanisms.

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