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More on Google + China

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Now that we've all had a few days to think deeply about the Google + China story, lots of commentaries and opinion pieces are coming across the wire. Here's a sampling of those that caught our attention over the weekend:

1. James Kynge at the *Financial Times*, "[China and the west: Full circle](#)":

Google's defiance of China's censorship regime is indicative of much more than a single company's decision to reassert its open-society principles over the pragmatism by which it originally entered the Chinese market, agreeing then to self-censor in return for business licences. Google's move may suggest that the accommodations made by western companies in China can extend only so far before contorted values snap back into place.

More broadly, though, Google's actions present at least a symbolic challenge to a broad swath of assumptions that has underpinned the west's engagement with China over the past 30 years. In particular, they raise the question as to whether missionary capitalism – the prevalent but fuzzy belief that the west's commercial engagement may somehow bring about a Chinese political liberalisation – has ever been more than a naive hope.

2. Rebecca MacKinnon at *RConversation*, "[Google, China, and the future of freedom on the global Internet](#)":

Google is betting its global business success on an open Internet. If you look at Google's latest China move through the lens of global Internet policy trends and not just through the lens of Chinese politics, or China's relationship with the West, it makes a lot more sense. It makes sense from a business standpoint for Google not only to oppose censorship but to work actively against it, and do everything in their power to influence global policies, laws, and community practices that favor openness. In the past year they've gotten increasingly vocal about censorship – and not just in authoritarian countries like China.

3. This "[Room for Debate](#)" conversation at *The New York Times* features eight short essays dealing with the question "Can Google beat China?"

4. Ian Johnson and Jason Dean at *The Wall Street Journal*, "[Google's China threat upends norms](#)":

While the U.S. Internet giant's move isn't likely to be emulated by other big foreign companies, its unexpected defiance is certain to fuel debate over business relations with China. For years, Western companies have accepted that business is done a certain way in China—agreeing to government interference that wouldn't be tolerated elsewhere, from stifling free speech to setting up Communist Party cells. And over the past generation, outside political leaders have drawn a similar conclusion, choosing to play down human rights in the hopes of effecting change.

This has been driven by China's rapidly increasing importance. Already the largest market for everything from cellphones to a range of commodities, China surpassed the U.S. last year as the biggest market for cars. It supplanted Germany as the world's top exporter, and is on pace to pass Japan this year as the second-biggest economy after the U.S.

But as Google's move shows, China's rise is being accompanied by growing tension with the outside world over policies and practices that defy international norms and that many in the West are finding more unpalatable.

5. [This video](#) from *PBS NewsHour* gives an overview of the Google + China story, followed by interviews with Xiao Qiang of *China Digital Times* and Andrew Lih, director of new media at USC's Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism.

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