



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 20, 2021

Amazon Kowtows to Chinese Communists: Report

In its efforts to capture market share in China, Amazon is partnering with the communist government to sell propaganda books in America and to suppress content that Beijing doesn't like, according to a [Reuters special report](#).

Based on interviews with people familiar with Amazon's China operations and a 2018 briefing document for Jay Carney, the former Obama-Biden administration mouthpiece who now serves as Amazon's senior vice president of global corporate affairs, Reuters reports that Amazon has "survived and thrived in China by helping to further the ruling Communist Party's global economic and political agenda, while at times pushing back on some government demands."



AP Images

One of the difficulties Amazon faces in China is that "ideological control and propaganda is [sic] the core of the toolkit for the communist party to achieve and maintain its success," reads the briefing document. "We are not making judgment on whether it is right or wrong." (Heaven forbid that Amazon pass judgment on a left-wing, totalitarian regime, but let Parler be used as a conduit for a perceived right-wing "insurrection" in Washington, and Amazon will [shut down its server](#) forthwith.)

Although Amazon has been operating in China since 2004, it struggled to obtain Beijing's approval to sell electronic books and Kindle devices there. To do so, the company chose to cooperate with China's censorship agency, the National Press and Publication Administration (NPPA). A former Amazon executive told Reuters that "the company secured some, but not all, of the government approvals it needed to sell Kindle devices and e-books," which "gave the government leverage over the retailer."

Amazon finally satisfied the NPPA by creating its China Books project, which, through a partnership with a state-run bookseller, markets various Chinese books to U.S. customers. Those items range from the innocuous, such as cookbooks, to the blatantly pro-Beijing, such as books "extol[ing] life in Xinjiang, where United Nations experts have said China interned one million ethnic Uyghurs in a network of camps" and "portraying China's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic ... in heroic terms," writes Reuters.

Asked about this questionable partnership, Amazon said it "complies with all applicable laws and regulations, wherever we operate." Furthermore, it added, "as a bookseller, we believe that providing access to the written word and diverse perspectives is important. That includes books that some may find objectionable."

Such a commitment to free speech does not, apparently, extend to books that challenge pro-transgender propaganda. Earlier this year, Amazon [stopped selling](#) Ryan Anderson's 2018 book *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*, later [telling](#) Republican senators who



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inquired into the matter that the company would not “sell books that frame LGBTQ+ identity as a mental illness.”

Amazon’s commitment to “diverse perspectives” on its Chinese website is also rather dubious. In one instance, the company, at Beijing’s behest, removed all customer ratings and reviews for a book of President Xi Jinping’s speeches and writings after the book received a negative review. “I think the issue was anything under five stars,” a person familiar with the incident told Reuters. After the Chinese government asked Amazon to remove from IMDb, a movie-review site it owns, a “link to China’s new blockbuster film *Amazing China* because of especially harsh user reviews,” Reuters says, “some negative reviews disappeared, archived screenshots of IMDb.com on archive.org show.” Amazon denied ever having received any requests to delete content, let alone actually doing so except for reviews that “violated our user review content guidelines.” And when Beijing asked Amazon Web Services (AWS) “to take an action that exposed [a Chinese] dissident’s Internet Protocol, or IP address,” AWS complied.

Clearly, Amazon has profited from these arrangements, having “grown into a powerful economic force in China in recent years,” notes Reuters. In fact, it’s doing so well in that country that it can afford to keep its unprofitable China Books project going.

Yet, observes Reuters, “the company’s compromises with Beijing contrast with its efforts to get around regulators in the world’s two largest democracies,” India and the United States. What is it about Red China that makes Amazon so willing to bend its supposed principles? Is it simply a matter of ideological affinity? Or does the almighty yuan trump everything, even — or especially — for leftists?



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