

## Keeping Score

June 12, 2020

Retired Chinese soccer superstar Hao Haidong “stunned his country,” *The Washington Post* reported last week, “after he called for the downfall of the ruling Communist Party and the formation of a new government.”

Certainly, Hao — “the Chinese national team’s all-time top goal scorer and an idol in the 1990s and early 2000s” — startled the country’s rulers, not to mention their multitudes of censors. Hard to say, however, how much information reached the average citizen before silence was enforced.

“The Communist Party’s totalitarian rule in China has caused horrific atrocities against humanity,” the expatriate declared in a YouTube video released on the 31st anniversary of China’s brutal Tiananmen Square massacre.

The Butchers of Beijing are a tad sensitive about that.

Working with “fugitive billionaire Guo Wengui, one of the Chinese government’s most reviled opponents,”\* Hao and his wife, Ye Zhaoying, once an Olympic medalist and badminton champion, offered that their dangerous stand against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was “the biggest and most correct decision in our lives.”

“It is extremely rare, if not unprecedented,” noted CNN, “for a successful Chinese sports star to unleash such a blistering



should be “kicked out of humanity” was spreading on Chinese social media. Hao’s account has since been deleted.

“Hao Haidong has made a speech that subverts the government and harms national sovereignty and uses the coronavirus epidemic to smear the Chinese government and spread falsehoods about Hong Kong,” said a statement by a popular sports website. “We strongly condemn this behavior.”

Soon, the statement replaced Hao’s name with only the Roman letter “H.” Hours later, the entire statement and all mention of the incident had been erased. Poof!

“Within 24 hours,” *The Post* disclosed, “Hao’s name had become the most heavily censored term on Weibo.”

It didn’t stop there. “Following his father Hao Haidong’s public criticism of the Chinese Communist Party,” informed *Taiwan News*, “Chinese soccer player Hao Runze has reportedly been released by his Serbian team due to heavy pressure from Beijing.”

The firing came “after an impressive debut performance,” in which the young Hao scored a goal. So “all Chinese news agencies have now removed any mention of the young rookie.”

This is the dystopian world with which 1.4 billion Chinese are stuck.

For now.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

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\* Billionaire Guo Wengui has hired former Trump advisor Steve Bannon to assist in the effort.

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public denunciation of the Communist Party and openly call for its downfall.” Adding, of course, that, “Dissidents who publicly criticize the party or demand democratic reforms often face lengthy prison sentences.”

Though China blocks YouTube, news of Hao saying the CCP