

China Bashing in High Gear. Sustained by Western Media

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Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

Since the outbreak of COVID 19 criticism of China, by both Western political elites in the U.S. and U.K., has seen an upsurge. This intensification of rhetoric is reflected in the simplistic cold war hyperbole spun in the right-wing Western media. Here a simple dualistic script is presented where the forces of good do battle against evil.

This penmanship fails to comprehend that China has its own interests and fears. In a West where bashing China accumulates political virtue points, voices who do not follow this line are castigated as either nefarious or indoctrinated. In contrast, the Western audience is portrayed as an enlightened individual whose perspective on the world is untainted by mediated interests. As such, what is good for Western elites becomes transposed as a moral good for the rest of the world too.

The denial that China has a legitimate voice, with its own sense of justice vis-à-vis the Western 'enlightened-mind' lays the foundation for a rise in tensions and righteous indignation. As the moral basis is set hostility can be justified and supported by Western audiences. This Western civilization 'jihad' is nothing new. The 'white man's burden' and the spreading of Christianity justified the horrors of colonialism while the doctrine of liberal human rights was used as a cloak for the looting of Iraq.

In the context of the current wave of anti-Chinese sentiment foreign contributors to CGTN (China Global Television Network) have, come under attack. I was recently mentioned in an article in the Daily Express that was following up on allegations by the British communications regulator Ofcom and questions raised by British MPs that CGTN was using 'fake experts' and propagandists to attack critics of the Chinese government.

Having first gone to China in 2004 I quickly became aware of a disconnect between China as it is versus its Western portrayal. For example, in the summer of 2007 before the Olympic games, I wondered a hutong in the center of Beijing. I saw with my own eyes 'squalid ramshackle huts and barefoot muddy faced children bereft of clean clothes. These areas were regenerated and this poverty has vanished from Chinese cities. Nevertheless, the response from the Western press was one of blanket condemnation that emphasized cultural destruction.

Likewise, the unprecedented speed and efficiency of the lockdown achieved in China was also gnarled into a tale of repression and incompetence. Yet, my participation of lockdown, in China, was one characterized by unity, compassion, and, as demonstrated by the waves of COVID 19 memes, humor in the face of adversity. Of course, these characteristics are also present in the West now. However, the difference is that the united front and banter of Westerners is not being branded as a consequence of propaganda as it was in China.

China is evidently not a paradise it has much to improve on. However, there is no lack of reporting on China's negative side in the 'Anglosphere' press. What is missing is China's point of view and how it justifies its actions from its own historical and civilizational vista. Addressing, these issues require brave introspection into our own civilizational contradictions which opens up painful cognitive dissonance on our part.

From the Chinese perspective the cry for human rights and democracy are disingenuous. They see a manifold of discrepancies where democracy works at the expense of national interests and where the levers of power are all too easily captured by U.S. and transnational capital. Dov Levin Assistant Professor of International Relations at the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Hong Kong has identified 62 American interventions in foreign elections between 1946 and 1989. Overall America's favored candidates were simply those friendlier to U.S. interests. Bill Clinton's funneling of money in support of Yeltsin and the chaos that saw living standards and life expectancy plummet is a poignant lesson to Chinese citizens.

When socialist governments have been elected CIA coups such as those which brought Chile's Pinochet to power in 1973 have been employed. Worse is the use of war justified through spreading democracy and human rights. The contradiction of the Western 'force of the willing' illegally invading Iraq from autocratic Saudi Arabia is obvious. As conspicuous as it was our electorates proved impotent in preventing one of the worst human rights disasters of this century. These historical geopolitical facts are also glaringly unmistakable to Chinese citizens who in light of this reality combined with the tremendous progress made in development, largely accept their political-economic system.

One could argue that the closed nature of the Chinese media precludes Chinese citizens from understanding the full picture. However, to assume that the West knows more about China than the Chinese people themselves is not only belittling, it's factually wrong too. Strikingly, the Chinese understand vastly more about the occident than the Westerner knows about the orient. In China, lessons in English and Western culture are compulsory even at universities; Western media is avidly consumed and international Chinese tourists are now ubiquitous.

We in the West must be humble enough to question the limits of our world-view that is mediated largely through a mass media predominantly in the hands of a small business oligarchy.

I have had articles published by both the Western and Chinese media but only contributions to Chinese media have ever produced claims of 'fake expert' and 'propagandist'. While I'm a keen Sinologist the vastness of the subject leads me to reject the label expert. Nevertheless, I humbly offer my writing with sincerity from a position forged from direct experience combined with academic study. Therefore, I oppose the crude propagandist label which conjures up outdated images of McCarthyism.

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