

Western Media Continues to Flog a Dead Anti-China Horse

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When it comes to the ever ascending techno-economic colossus of China, it is year-round open season in the West for monopoly media and government officials to invoke whatever opprobrium, throw it against the wall and hope it sticks, if not repeat the defamation. Evidence does not matter. It can be cooked up. And the same story can be repeated ad nauseam because if someone hears it often enough, it must be true, ... right?

The Beijing-hosted Winter Olympics are happening, and this provided an opportunity for Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai to meet with gathered western media and clarify misconceptions or doubts about her narrative. But that is not [how western monopoly media operates](#). Still she met with two journalists, Sophie Dorgan and Marc Ventouillac, from the French sports newspaper *L’Equipe*.

The [Associated Press notes](#) of the interview that Peng was “prepped and ready to talk for the first time with western media about allegations she made of forced sex with a former top-ranked Communist Party official.” It comes across as saying she would produce canned responses. Given the hullabaloo that exploded after her Weibo social-media post, many people would want to forgo such an interview. But Peng had opened a can of worms with that post, a post she soon after deleted. It was incumbent that she clear the air much more than she had done hitherto. Going into such an interview cold turkey was not in the cards. Besides, it is [normal and recommended that athletes prepare for an interview](#).

AP writes of a “restrictive interview arranged with Chinese Olympic officials.” Isn’t every interview/interaction restricted in some sense? So what was the purpose of the adjective “restricted”? And since it is taking place at the Olympic venue, wouldn’t arrangements best be made by Olympic officials from China? But the AP framing is pointed: behind the scenes, Chinese officials were controlling the process. Does China not have a responsibility to look out for one of its citizens, whether Peng is at fault or not through her own (mis)handling of the situation? There is nothing sinister in this.

One of two *L’Equipe* journalists, Marc Ventouillac, told AP “he is still unsure if she is free to say and do what she wants.”

“It’s impossible to say,” he said in English. “This interview don’t give proof that there is no problem with Peng Shuai.”

In other words, Ventouillac doesn’t know. How could he know? There is nothing substantial for AP to seize on here.

So instead AP writes,

China’s intent, however, was clear to him [Ventouillac]: By granting the interview as Beijing is hosting the Winter Olympics, it appeared that Chinese officials hope to put the controversy to rest, so it doesn’t pollute the event.

Really? First, how was the Chinese intent clear? Second, when AP writes “it appeared that Chinese officials hope to put the controversy to rest,” the phrasing “it appeared” does not speak to clarity or certainty. It instead *appears* that the AP is backing down from its stance on Ventouillac’s clarity of Chinese intent. Third, where does the phrase “Chinese officials hope” come from? Did the journalists interview Chinese officials? This was not stated anywhere. If not having spoken to Chinese officials, then how would the French journalists know what Chinese officials were hoping for? This is pure conjecture without any substantiation. Is this journalism?

AP tries a different take:

“It’s a part of communication, propaganda, from the Chinese Olympic Committee,” Ventouillac told The Associated Press on Tuesday, the day after L’Equipe published its exclusive.

More questions are raised by this. What communication was that? Who communicated it? What exactly was stated in the communication? Why is this communication termed propaganda? Is there anything meaningful in this short quotation by AP? If not, then why was it not edited out of the article? It *appears* that the propaganda is coming from AP.

More supposition follows:

With “an interview to a big European newspaper, they [China] can show: ‘OK, there is no problem with Peng Shuai. See? Journalists (came), they can ask all the questions they wanted.’”

Why not? I don’t think China cares so much about the ruckus stemming from the Weibo post. It is small potatoes compared to allegations of US presidents, current and past, involvement in sexual scandals. But, understandably, Peng would like to clear the air, and China would like to help out an athlete who has been a good ambassador on the tennis court.

However, AP puts a different spin on this:

“It’s important, I think, for the Chinese Olympic committee, for the Communist Party and for many people in China to try to show: ‘No, there is no Peng Shuai affair,’” Ventouillac said.

Speaking of small potatoes, how does a social media faux pas stack up against allegations, [patently false](#) though they are, [of genocide](#)? If there is nothing more to the issue than a

regrettable posting on her social media account that blew up into an international fiasco, then of course Peng would like to put the issue to rest.

The Women's Tennis Association is unconvinced, saying that the *L'Equipe* interview "does not alleviate any of our concerns" about the allegations she made in November. First, what concern? The AP piece makes it sound like a concern about the allegation and *not* about the well-being of the player. Second, what concern is an allegation of a crime committed outside the WTA's jurisdiction to the WTA? Is the WTA an international forensics and prosecutorial agency now? Third, is it any business of the WTA, especially since Peng has stated she wanted to be left in peace?

Simon has two demands: "As we would do with any of our players globally, we have called for a formal investigation into the allegations by the appropriate authorities and an opportunity for the WTA to meet with Peng — privately — to discuss her situation." We would like to meet *privately* with Peng. Privately, so she should appear before the WTA brass alone? The WTA is not alone; Simon stated "we." Why can Peng not bring anyone to accompany her? A lawyer would be a good start. And what if she doesn't want to meet?

Two other key words here are "would do." Has the WTA ever acted in such capacity before, beyond words?

When 19-year-old tennis star Jelena Dokic, a victim of parental abuse, asked the WTA to not issue credentials to her parents, the WTA keenly stressed that Dokic's personal arrangements were "[a private matter](#)."

Nonetheless, although Peng's matter is public now (and social media is not a medium if you want privacy), are the details of Peng's matter not private as far as the WTA is concerned?

What did the ATP, the men's equivalent of the WTA, do when one of its former star players, the phenotypically Black James Blake, was [assaulted by a white New York plains clothes officer James Frascatore](#)? I never heard the then ATP president, Chris Kermode, issue any statements of concern for Blake. I am unaware of any ATP calls for a formal investigation into alleged, and subsequently confirmed, police brutality.

Nowadays, German tennis star Alexander Zverev finds himself dogged by [allegations of domestic violence](#) made by a former girlfriend. All the ATP has done publicly in this matter is issue new domestic abuse guidelines. I have not heard of ATP concern for the player or the alleged victim.

The WTA has come up with its own framing of the incident. WTA chief executive Steve Simon stated, "Peng took a bold step in publicly coming forth with the accusation that she was sexually assaulted by a senior Chinese government leader."

That is Simon's framing. First, was the Weibo post a big step or big mistake by Peng? Second, when you put out a statement, then get it right. Simon's statement is factually inaccurate. The "senior Government leader" has been retired for a few years. It should have read a *former* senior vice premier of the State Council. Is Kamala Harris ever called a *leader* of the United States? Simon has willfully positioned Peng's paramour, Zhang Gaoli, in the leadership position in China. Had anyone outside of China ever heard of Zhang before Peng's Weibo post?

Conveniently appearing at the end of the AP piece are the following:

1. Ventouillac said Peng “seems to be healthy.”
2. Originally 30 minutes were allotted for the interview, but it lasted nearly an hour.
3. Ventouillac said the journalists had asked all the questions they wanted.
4. And, “There was no censorship in the questions.”

Telling is what was unmentioned in the AP article: *that Peng denies an assault as having happened.*

Is that clarity? I submit that there remains a question still answered: why did she write of being forced to have sex in the first place? She denies it having been the case, but she put it out there in social media. Hence, the once posted allegation is something that anti-China types can and will latch onto to besmirch the nation.

It is not up to the WTA, ATP, IOC, AP, US, EU, NATO, IMF or whichever entity to force Peng to do anything she is uncomfortable with. She is not a criminal. At worst, she was engaged in thoughtless mischief. If she says it never happened, everyone has to accept her at her word. Peng is the only one who knows with 100 percent certainty her truth. If need be, she knows that there are plenty of people out there who would listen to her story.

Meanwhile in Washington, there is a “leader,” a sitting president with an accusation of sexual assault against him. Tara Reade has never backed down from her allegation against Joe Biden, but the domestic US mass media has given him a pass, belying the two-faced nature of American media when it comes to the alleged malfeasance of American officials versus the allegations of wrongdoing against a officials in a state-designation enemy.

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