



WESTERN MASS MEDIA DISCRIMINATES AGAINST CHINA

By Lim Teck Ghee

It is a fact of life for the Chinese government and Chinese public that they will have to live with a hostile, ideologically and racially discriminatory western mass media in the immediate and foreseeable future. Undoubtedly one of the most important players in fanning fear of the rise of China and anti-Chinese sentiment is the Western English language media.

Using its decades old dominance of global news outlets, mainstream Western media has monopolised the agenda and news coverage for audiences, not only in their own countries but also around the world, especially where English is the lingua franca. The Western media's role in protecting the political and economic interests of the United States, Britain, Australia and its other allies is of course nothing new.

It is a long established fact, especially visible in the Cold War period. At that time, there was demonisation of the Soviet Union and other communist countries, conducted on a daily basis in the print media and over radio, film and television. There were three dimensions of this media manipulation.

The first was to smear the enemy and create mass fear and paranoia. The second was to push back and put down any domestic or international sympathy or goodwill

towards the targeted enemy. The third was to propagate the image of virtuous western democratic systems fighting to preserve values of freedom and human rights against authoritarian and oppressive regimes.

Today, the same cultural imperialism of the West through its mass media is directed at China. Though somewhat more sophisticated in bashing China in today's news coverage compared with during the Cold War era, the latest bout of slanted news and analysis, in addition to its pro-West political stance, comes with a strong racist agenda.

Playing up to sentiments aimed at polarising and reinforcing cultural and racial differences and animosity against a non-white threat to US national security concerns was one of the most outstanding characteristics of Trump's regime. This approach, now embraced by much of the mainstream American, British and other Anglo-Saxon-owned media, has contributed to the current wave of anti-Chinese and anti-Asian sentiment and random violence in the west.

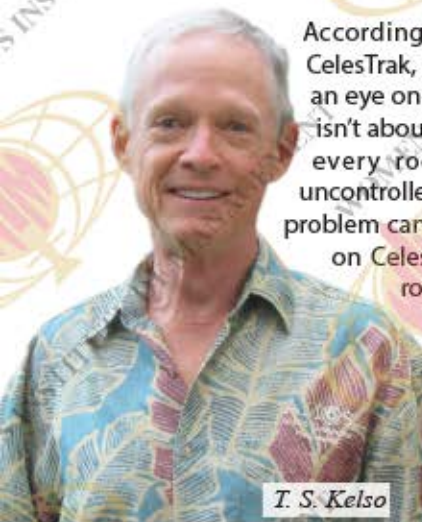
Two recent examples of news reporting serve to remind us of the real political and socio-economic intentions of the western media in their China coverage.

Coverage of Long March B5 fallout

The first is the way in which coverage of the debris associated with China's Long March B5

rocket was sensationalised to alarm the world as an example of China's irresponsibility and "failure" to adhere to international standards. Nasa administrator Senator Bill Nelson released the following statement regarding debris from the Chinese Long March 5B rocket:

"Spacefaring nations must minimise the risks to people and property on Earth of re-entries of space objects, and maximise transparency regarding those operations. It is clear that China is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris." Nelson and his own organisation and others in the US need a reminder to look into the mirror before accusing other nations of failure to adhere to "responsible standards" – whether this is in firing rockets or waging wars.



T. S. Kelso

According to T. S. Kelso, member of CelesTrak, an analytical group that keeps an eye on Earth-orbiting objects: "It really isn't about this one rocket body...because every rocket body in Earth orbit is uncontrolled." The true magnitude of the problem can be identified by a quick check on CelesTrak. "It shows there are 2,033 rocket bodies in Earth orbit...at least those that we have orbital data for, as there may be more classified ones. Of course, every one of them is uncontrolled. Of the 2,033, 546 belong to the US and only 169 belong to China."

Western non-coverage and "scientific racism"

Minimising or completely ignoring news stories that may lead to more favourable public opinion of China is another common strategy employed by western media editors. Perhaps the most striking recent example is the coverage of China's covid-19 vaccines. Right from the beginning, we have seen the western media cast doubt on the efficacy of the China-developed vaccines.

At the same time, positive responses from the leaders of developing countries provided with the Chinese vaccines or unable to access western developed vaccines have either been blanked out or presented with analysis aimed at undermining public opinion of the efficacy of the Chinese vaccines. A similar ideologically-biased position has also been taken with respect to Russia's Sputnik vaccine, but the main focus of negative reporting is against China.

Instead of objectively reporting on the importance of assisting poorer countries through affordable vaccines to

fight the pandemic, the main thrust of western media coverage has been to offer jingoistic rhetoric and to get their readers to view every action of China and Chinese companies through the lens of suspicion. Unsurprisingly, the most recent World Health Organization (WHO) decision to give emergency use approval to one of the China-made Sinopharm's Covid-19 vaccines has been largely consigned to the back pages of western newspapers.

This decision, which sees the Chinese vaccine being included in the Covax programme for the developing world, will potentially benefit millions of people worldwide. It is a potential game changer especially for low-income countries that cannot afford the investment in the highly expensive refrigerated infrastructure required by western vaccines. Western media's crude double standards on vaccines has led one international expert to comment in support of the Chinese vaccines.

In a little publicised news report on whether Australia will accept Australians to return when they have received the Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines, Prof. McLaws from the University of New South Wales noted that much of the scepticism, which stems from a lack of peer reviewed data, was without basis and even amounted, in her words, to "scientific racism". McLaws, it must be emphasised, is not the usual ideologically-biased "expert" commonly reported by the western media.

She is an acknowledged world leading epidemiologist, whose Covid-19-related activities include membership of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme Experts Advisory Panel for Infection Prevention and Control Preparedness, Readiness and Response to Covid-19. She is also the focal point of WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network and plays a prominent role in some of Australia's public health organisations.

Whilst some fair-minded and non-politically partisan scientists and journalists with integrity in the west may attempt to provide more balanced assessments and analysis of the many developments related to China, it is a fact of life for the Chinese government and Chinese public that they will have to live with a hostile, ideologically and racially discriminatory Western mass media in the immediate and foreseeable future. ■

Lim Teck Ghee writes a regular column, "Another Take" in The Sun. In this article, he is taking aim at challenging social orthodoxy.

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