

Falun Dafa Minghui.org www.minghui.org PRINT

The Danger of One Voice from Mainstream Media

Dec. 20, 2020 | By Wen Sirui

(Minghui.org) Something is wrong in this society. When covering an event, the majority of the mainstream media in the U.S. would either praise or denounce the persons involved in the event instead of reporting on the various aspects of what is really going on. Almost all news media have the same concerted voice – very often without bothering to verify the primary source.

One example is the U.S. general election fraud. With hearings taking place in swing states and a large amount of solid evidence from sworn affidavits, there is virtually no mainstream media covering that.

Lie and Fact from the Same Video Footage

When news media and social media joined forces to

spread misleading information, finding facts can be difficult, although not impossible. To some degree, this has become a test of our honesty and caliber.

J. K. Rowling, author of the *Harry Potter* books, posted a tweet on in July 2017, accusing U.S. President Trump of ignoring Montgomery Veer, a three-year-old handicapped boy who reached out to the President for a hand shake. Given Rowling's fame, the post along with a short video went viral and many people joined her to condemn Trump.

The boy's mother, Marjorie Kelly Weer, wrote in a post on Facebook after reading Rowling's tweet. She explained that Rowling had misinterpreted the situation. "If someone can please get a message to JK Rowling: Trump didn't snub my son & Monty wasn't even trying to shake his hand," she wrote, adding that Monty didn't much like shaking hands.

"The raw video footage showed that Mr. Trump had crouched down to shake the boy's hand. He appeared to have gently touched the child's left elbow, as the boy lifted his clenched left hand," reported *New York Times* on August 1, 2017, in an article titled "J.K. Rowling Apologizes for Anti-Trump Tweets (but Not

to Trump).”

This tells us that although knowing information helps us learn facts, knowing partial information could strengthen our established bias. When media neglected its mission of providing factual information and instead started to manipulate public opinions with selective reporting, it could lead to dire consequences.

Above was one of the many false accusations against Trump in the past four years. The sheer number and methods employed in the defamation are beyond imagination. For example, after nearly two years, Russian investigation did not find Trump had wrongdoings.

Such a list continues. In June 2018, many news media claimed a crying little Honduran girl had been separated from her family, and used that to attack the Trump administration’s immigration law. The girl’s father later clarified it was untrue since the girl had never been separated.

Another example was the accusation that Trump’s administration had detained children in cages at the

border facilities. A Customs and Border Protection (CBP) deputy commissioner testified that the cages were built during the Obama era in 2014 for illegal immigrants.

Although these facts were later straightened out, the damage had already been done. As a result, misled by the news media, many people called Trump a dictator and racist. “A lie told often enough becomes the truth,” said Vladimir Lenin, founder of Soviet Union. How far are we from that?

In contrast, had something bad happened to a Democrat, a double standard would be applied. Although no evidence was found against Trump, news media continued to call the Russia accusation a Trump scandal. After *New York Post* reported Hunter Biden’s laptop with concrete facts and involvement from FBI, however, news media either ignored it or dismissed it.

It is important to reflect on this, understanding where we are and what it means. The truth is, when we fail to protect legitimate rights of others and continue to expand the net of lies and defamation, every one would become victims one day including ourselves.

Role of Fourth Estate

Because of its influence, news media is often referred to as the Fourth Estate. One example is the Watergate Scandal that occurred to U.S. President Richard Nixon from 1972 to 1974. Independent investigation by two journalists revealed what happened, forcing Nixon to resign. As a testimony for the press freedom and judicial independence, it set up a good example for modern society. But the situation changed drastically in the 1990s.

Despite the notorious human rights record of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), U.S. banks and businesses invested in China for profits. JP Morgan Chase, an “old friend” of the CCP, became the first American Bank acting as an agent of the Bank of China in the U.S. in 1973, six years before formal diplomatic relations were established between the two countries.

“The large Wall Street banks and other large American-in-name-only companies, were more interested in making as much money as they could by trading with a mortal enemy, then in abiding by

American laws and American standards and upholding American values,” explained Curtis Ellis, policy director from America First Policies, “I’m sure if you dug around and looked around, you’d find that JP Morgan wasn’t alone in that kind of practice.”

One year after establishing diplomatic relations, the U.S. granted most favored nation (MFN) status to China. Renewed on a yearly basis, the MFN status was dependent on the human rights situation in China. This proved to be effective, as China would release some detained dissidents every year before the renewal. This connection between human rights and the economy also helped the U.S. to defend Western values from communism.

Nonetheless, the U.S. government in general had an appeasement policy towards the CCP, hoping a more developed China would lead to democracy. That is why the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, suppression in Tibet, and the persecution of Falun Gong since 1999 were largely ignored.

To divert Western society’s attention to human rights issues in China, former CCP leader Jiang Zemin planned to enter the WTO and improve China’s

relationship with the free world. Michael Pillsbury, director of the Center on Chinese Strategy at the Hudson Institute, described how the CCP influenced the American officials through a multi-thronged approach in his book *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*.

According to defector Ms. Lee (pseudo name), “China had made false claims from 1995 to 2000 to persuade Congress to grant China permanent normal trade relations and pave its way into the WTO. Ms. Lee revealed that China’s leaders’ strategy was to leave nothing to chance by aiding those who favored the vote, and suppressing information about their mercantilist economic strategy,” the book wrote, “They launched a program of propaganda and espionage that was more sophisticated than anyone in the U.S. intelligence community suspected.”

In the end, then president Bill Clinton killed a condition that Congress proposed for China to enter the WTO, that is, releasing 2,000 – 3,000 detained prisoners of conscience (most of the prisoners of conscience at the time were Falun Gong practitioners.) In the end, Clinton signed into law in

October 2000 to grant China permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status, allowing China to be admitted to the WTO in December 2001.

From Misconception to Misinformation

French prophecist Nostradamus in the 16th century had predicted that in July 1999, a great King of Terror would come and Mars (Marx) would rule the world claiming to give people a happy life. That year, the CCP began to suppress Falun Gong and the persecution has lasted since then, making it the biggest religious persecution in China.

Part of the issue was misjudgment of the CCP from the beginning. Speaking before an elite audience in Washington in March 2000, then U.S. President Bill Clinton expected increased freedom in China as “liberty will be spread by cell phone and cable modem.” “Now there’s no question China has been trying to crack down on the internet,” he declared, “Good luck! That’s sort of like trying to nail jello to the wall.” Within several years, however, the CCP’s Great Firewall became the world’s most sophisticated system for controlling and surveilling the web.

News media also played a critical role in this process. “Since the 1960s, U.S. policymakers have been led to believe that China is a backward nation, not militarily active, and certainly not focused on the United States as a military threat. This was the message that Beijing’s leaders conveyed to Westerners to great effect,” wrote Pillsbury in his book, “In 1999, Patrick Tyler, the Beijing bureau chief for the *New York Times*, reported the following: ‘Today the evidence suggests that while China is working to master state-of-the-art technologies in its laboratories, it has little expertise and few resources to build the industrial base necessary to become a modern military power.’”

Those narratives turned out to be pure propaganda after one book was published in the same year in China called “Unrestricted Warfare.” “Instead of direct military action, the authors proposed nonmilitary ways to defeat a stronger nation such as the United States through lawfare (that is, using international laws, bodies, and courts to restrict America’s freedom of movement and policy choices), economic warfare, biological and chemical warfare, cyberattacks, and even terrorism,” the book

continued, “The work raised eyebrows further because it was written by two colonels serving in the People’s Liberation Army—Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui... Once news of the study made its way to the West, Beijing quickly withdrew all copies from its bookstores.”

As communist China rose to the global power, its influence also began to dominate the news industry. Ian Johnson from the *Wall Street Journal* won the Pulitzer Prize in 2001 for his international reporting on the persecution of Falun Gong. “It was a tremendous example of courage and determination to get a story in the face of strong police pressures against the reporting, combined with very sensitive and powerful writing,” wrote Paul E. Steiger, managing editor of the Journal.

However, almost 20 years have passed and yet hardly any reports have appeared in mainstream news media since then due to influence by the CCP.

Boiling Frog in Warm Water

“To target U.S., the most powerful country in the

world, the CCP had a clear goal of infiltration,” said Lin Yunfei, editor of New Citizens Movement, “The investment is huge in terms of both funding and personnel, and it has been continuing for many years.”

In particular, the CCP has a massive United Front network. For major media such as Voice of America, *New York Times*, or BBC, it has employed infiltration instead of purchasing these firms. “It is difficult to evaluate how deep and intense such infiltration is. Very often it happened in a subtle way like the warm water frog,” he explained, “Because of this, it is hard for mainstream society to realize it.”

Gong Xiaoxia, former director of Voice of America's Chinese Division, said in an interview that the CCP had spent lots of money controlling news media in the international community.

Wagreich Samuel from Harvard Law School published a report in 2013 titled “Lobbying by Proxy: A Study of China’s Lobbying Practices in the United States 1979-2010 and the Implications for FARA.” The CCP usually used large companies’ financial interests as leverage to lobby U.S. officials

and shape their policy in favor of China. The Department of Justice, primary auditor of the process, often failed to fulfill its role. Very often the Chinese embassy and consulates played a leading role in such lobbying activities.

“There is a quid pro quo; the Chinese are implying to corporations within their bounds that, ‘if you’re going to be successful in our market, you’re going to be playing a part in U.S.-China relations,’” said one interviewee cited in the report. “The pressure is implicit, but companies get the joke—the Chinese keep score. And in the future, if you want them to do something for you, they’re going to look back and see what you’ve done for them,” another one added.

Since there are many interactions between CCP officials and U.S. companies, it has become an unspoken rule that U.S. multinational corporations would lobby on China’s behalf without direct communication or order from China.

“In China, there is a lot of governmental regulation; they control factory approval, purchasing approval, investment approval—city-by-city—so corporations have an interest in showing that they’re allied of the

Government. On commercial issues like PNTR, CEOs were making it very known that they were being active on the Hill,” one interviewee testified, “And the Embassy was keeping track of who was testifying before Congress, who was making trips to the Capital Building, who was signing the letters. That’s just the way it is for companies that invest in China—their CEOs are constantly engaging with the Embassy.”

Over the years, investment banks have played a critical role providing financial support for Chinese firms. This includes functions as lead underwriters, sponsors, and financial advisors to boost economy for the CCP.

Similar situations occurred with news media. Funded by private capital, they easily became captives of such influences. The CCP has a large budget to conduct many secret PR activities, which are often neglected by American mainstream society.

Trump and News Media

The story of Trump started 20 years ago. Back in

January 2000, Trump published a book with a title of *The America We Deserve* which listed a set of policy proposals should he ever run for president. In the book, he already considered communist China the biggest, long-term challenge for the U.S.

Pillsbury said that what Trump is doing now as a president is correcting mistakes that the U.S. administration had made in the past 20-plus years of conniving with the CCP. Even in the 2000 book, Trump wrote, “We don't have our dream handed to us. We build it. We have our vision, then we go out and make it real.”

For a long time, politicians and Wall Street investors talked about “containing China” on the surface while secretly trading with the communist regime under the table. But now Trump, a businessman, messed up all this. He put every question or request that the CCP raised on the table, essentially cutting off the secret communication passageway that politicians and Wall Street investors had with the CCP in the past.

Trump vowed to “drain the swamp” in 2016 during his campaign and again after he became president in 2017. Since then, a intense battle had started with

news media as one of the major players.

Bari Weiss, writer and opinion editor, resigned from *New York Times* in July. In her resignation letter, she described how the newspaper had suppressed alternative opinions to please the progressive readers. “I was always taught that journalists were charged with writing the first rough draft of history. Now, history itself is one more ephemeral thing molded to fit the needs of a predetermined narrative,” she wrote, “Op-eds that would have easily been published just two years ago would now get an editor or a writer in serious trouble, if not fired.”

“Because of traditional values, she became “the subject of constant bullying by colleagues who disagree with my views. They have called me a Nazi and a racist... Several colleagues perceived to be friendly with me were badgered by coworkers,” she continued, “And I certainly can’t square how you and other Times leaders have stood by while simultaneously praising me in private for my courage. Showing up for work as a centrist at an American newspaper should not require bravery.”

One example is the Honduran girl mentioned above

who was stopped with her mother as they attempted to enter the U.S. illegally in 2018. News media falsified the story claiming the girl was crying because she was forcibly separated from her mother. *Time* magazine even had a composite picture of Trump and the girl as cover with a sarcastic phrase of “Welcome to America.” Media across the world including those in China immediately carried the story claiming Trump was a Nazi and racist.

Although both the girl’s father and a border control officer later clarified the girl was never separated from her mother, the damage and the defamation was difficult to remedy.

Sharyl Attkisson, journalist and TV program host, published a book in November 2020 titled *Slanted: How the News Media Taught Us to Love Censorship and Hate Journalism*. She described how journalists had deviated ethics and instead kept producing biased information.

“When it comes to news reporting, the center has been dragged so far left that a neutral posture is now viewed as right wing. Liberal or anti-Trump views—those are considered good, truth-telling journalism,”

she wrote, “At least that’s what the afflicted seem to believe. But raise questions about fairness or consider alternate viewpoints—that simply proves you’re the one who’s biased.”

In the book, Attkisson listed about 100 worst attacks against Trump. “Too often, reporters are no longer trying to get at the truth; they are trying to advance a particular narrative or ‘take’ on a story. This means they serve as willing vessels for propaganda and talking points,” she said in an interview.

Having worked in CBS, CNN, and PBS, she said few reporters would look for evidence or investigative reporting these days. “Through his unconventional ways that defied predictions and operated outside the controlling narratives, Trump exposed bias, flaws, and weaknesses in the news media, causing its members to lose their collective mind and shed all pretense of objectivity. The media at large became committed to a political agenda to undermine and ultimately remove Trump from office. Which only served to prove his point about their bias,” she wrote in the book.

Attkisson also talked about the fraud during the U.S.

general election. She said in the beginning that news media said there was no fraud. As evidence emerged, the media said there was no widespread fraud. As more evidence surfaced and a large number of sworn affidavits testified, they said this would not make a difference and would not change anything.

A Wake up Call

In one chapter titled “The Verbiage of the Narrative: Lies, Evidence, and Bombshells,” Attkisson explained journalism “standards exist in the first place—not just to afford fair treatment to people we like. They are also supposed to ensure fairness and accuracy when we cover those whom we don’t like, don’t agree with, or even believe are liars. In fact, that is when our standards matter most.”

“Trump tested our ability to prove how committed we are to staying true to our mission of journalists. And we failed,” she continued, “Across the nation, news-reporting positions today are filled by supposedly talented journalists assigned the singular task of serving up the narrative of Trump-as-a-liar over and over again, rather than reporting news

stories.”

It is as if that reporters’ questions for Biden versus President Trump were like day and night. While the reporters and hosts are respectful to people against Trump, their attitudes are drastically different to Trump or his supporters.

A perfect example is Trump's interview with Leslie Stahl from CBS on “60 Minutes.” Trump: “We created the greatest economy in the history of our country, and the other side was coming in.” Stahl cut him off, stating, “You know that’s not true.” The President shot back, “It is totally true.” Stahl said, “no,” before pressing Trump on the question again. Had it been for Biden or his supporters, the situation would be completely different.

Cong Riyun, a professor in political theory from China University of Polisci and Law, said such behaviors of American media had negatively influenced international media in general, making them refer to Trump as a racist or a Nazi.

This is different from the real Trump. Had it not been for Trump’s tireless efforts in the past few years,

America and the world would have drifted from traditional values much further. In fact, it is rare to find someone like Trump to act with a clear mind, a strong determination, and commitment to his words.

Do we really want this kind of “diversity” that progressives advocate? Asked Cong. Do you feel comfortable for your kids to go to a transgender restroom? Do you really think legalization of marijuana would benefit our children?

In a world like what we are in today, finding truth requires courage. But that tells what we stands for and who we are. After all, as mankind, we are defined by our conscience and dignity. “God hath given you one face, and you make yourself another,” warned Shakespeare.

The U.S. general election is a test of good and evil for everyone. The role that we play decides where we belong.

CATEGORY: Perspective