

外交部副部长谈“战狼外交”“四面树敌”“威权主义”

乐玉成

外交部副部长

Le Yucheng: China's vice foreign minister Le Yucheng on 'Wolf Warrior diplomacy', 'Making Enemies all over the world' and 'Authoritarianism'

Translated by Md Yasin*

ICS-HYI Fellow and Research Scholar, Centre for East Asian Studies,

Jawaharlal Nehru University

langman.mdynju@gmail.com

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Author: **Le Yucheng**, is China's Vice Foreign Minister

***Md Yasin is a doctoral candidate at the Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University and ICS-HYI Harvard Multi-year fellowship awardee 2018**

The ICS is an interdisciplinary research institution, which has a leadership role in the promotion of Chinese and East Asian Studies in India. ICS Translations aims to introduce views of the P R China scholars, analysts, and commentators coming from across disciplines.



According to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, vice foreign minister Le Yucheng on 5th December 2020 attended and delivered a keynote speech at the 3rd China Think Tank International Influence Forum and the 6th Symposium on Creating New Types of Think Tanks, hosted by Renmin University of China and organised by the Chongyang Institute of Finance, Renmin University of China and the National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said: “labelling China with ‘wolf warrior’ diplomacy is a gross misunderstanding of Chinese diplomacy. China has always been a nation of etiquettes valuing harmony; it has neither provoked others in the past nor has it ever gone to other people’s homes. Now they are coming to our doorstep, interfering in our internal affairs, relentlessly nagging at us, insulting and slandering us. We have no choice but to firmly stand up and defend our national interests and dignity. Obviously, the ‘wolf warrior’ diplomacy is actually another version of the ‘China threat theory,’ another ‘discourse trap’ that prevents us from fighting back and wants us to give up resistance. I suspect these people have not awakened from their dreams of 100 years ago.”

Le Yucheng emphasised that communications between people and countries are more important and prominent than ever in today’s increasingly globalised and well-informed world. And the prerequisite of communication is that you must be adept at expressing yourself so that others can understand you more and better. In modern history, others described us as the “yellow peril” and “the sick man of East Asia” only because we failed to express ourselves well. They are still taking advantage of the discourse power formed in history to defame and demonise China to this day. This shows that having made considerable strides in expressing ourselves it is still far from enough. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that backwardness would leave one vulnerable to attacks, poverty would lead to hunger, and losing discourse/aphasia would get one scolded. Now that we have solved the first two problems, we must be determined to resolve the issue of ‘being scolded’. Experts and academicians need to shoulder this responsibility. Everyone should go out of the study room more, go to the media and speak out about Chinese culture, Chinese stories, Chinese spirit and China’s contributions. Moreover, the land of China with a population of 1.4 billion is constantly changing. We are provided with immense materials by the success of the path of socialism with special Chinese characteristics to tell China story well.

The following is the full text of the speech:

‘Pandemic and major changes call for great unity and great deeds’ 3rd China Think Tank International Influence Forum and 6th Create New Type of Think Tank Symposium – Keynote address by vice foreign minister Le Yucheng

Dear guests and friends,

I am overwhelmed to attend today’s seminar. The year 2020 is coming to an end. Major media houses are passionately discussing the key phrases of this year, and the word “cloud” is very attention grabbing. Under this pandemic situation, everyone is looking at each other on the “cloud”. Many times our work life is inside the “cloud”. Cloud performances, cloud exhibitions, and cloud economy have turned into a major highlights and growth points. As a diplomat, I have not been to any country this year, but participated in numerous cloud consultations, cloud meetings and cloud talks. Cloud diplomacy has become the new normal in diplomatic domain. All these changes are due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19.

The unexpected encounter between once-in-a-century pandemic and the profound changes of a kind unseen in 100 years have superimposed resonance. It has profoundly changed the world and every aspect of human life. The epidemic has detached almost all countries and regions in the world from one another, affecting more than 7 billion people. It has claimed the lives of more than 1.5 million people, which has turned

it into the most serious pandemic since World War II.

The global economy since the 1930s is in its worst recession. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts global GDP contraction at 4.4% this year. The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated by the World Bank to push hundreds of millions people into extreme poverty. The economic globalisation has encountered a negative counter current. The pandemic outbreak has almost disrupted tourism, aviation, trade and people-to-people exchanges, and more than 40 airlines around the world have gone bankrupt. The industrial supply chain has been severely impacted, and the multilateral trading system is facing many challenges. Individual major powers have engaged in unilateral bullying and even provoked “new cold war”, with a marked increase in international contradictions and regional conflicts and unprecedented challenges to the global governance system and the international order.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that the COVID-19 global pandemic has accelerated the changes in the world, in the international economy, in science & technology; culture, security and politics are all undergoing profound adjustments and the world has entered a period of turbulent change. In the face of this catastrophe, great upheaval and great change, we are all pondering and

discussing the way forward, where the world is heading, and gradually forming more and more consensus.

The most urgent task is to do everything possible to contain the spread of the pandemic. No one can stand alone in the face of a crisis. We must establish the concept of people and life first, replace differences with unity, work together to internationally promote joint prevention and control of the pandemic, especially cooperation in vaccine research and development and distribution, and strive to make vaccines a public good that is accessible and affordable to all peoples.

Our central task is to promote the recovery of the world economy. Protectionism and “decoupling” will only make the world economy even worse. We should actively build an open world economy, promote connectivity among countries, ensure the safe and smooth flow of industrial and supply chains, vigorously develop the digital economy, launch innovative growth drivers, and achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

The urgent need is to build a more just and reasonable international governance system. Zero-sum game and unilateral bullying have no appliance. They can neither solve their own problems nor deal with the common challenges of mankind. We should carry out the basic principles of extensive consultation,

cooperation, joint contribution and mutual benefits. We need to constantly improve global governance; safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law.

The only solution lies in promoting the construction of a world community with a shared future for the humankind. Human beings are on the same planet with connected and united destiny. The pandemic outbreak underscores the necessity and urgency of building a community with a shared future for humankind, and also makes this concept more deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. The pandemic outbreak will not be the last crisis humanity is facing, and we must be prepared to work together to address more global challenges. The concept of big family and community is the only option for the future of humankind.

Since the beginning of this year, 1.4 billion Chinese people, with firm courage and perseverance, have made every effort to overcome the impact of the pandemic, speed up the restoration of production and living order, and achieve a steady economic progress. Not long ago, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China deliberated and adopted the proposal on formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 2035 Vision, which drew up a grand blueprint and made a strategic deployment for China to

embark on a new journey of comprehensively building a socialist modern country. We will scientifically grasp the new stage of development, firmly implement the new development concept, and actively build a new development pattern with the domestic circulation as main body and domestic and international double circulation mutually promoting each other. It should be pointed out that we build a new development pattern, which is by no means a closed domestic single cycle, but an open and mutually stimulating domestic and international double circulation. We will never go back in history, and China's open doors will not only remain unclogged, but will be further unlocked. An increasingly open and developing China will create broad development opportunities for all countries in the world and make greater contributions to the stability and prosperity of the “post-pandemic world”.

Guests and friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak is a special and unforgettable test for all. In this historic test, the diplomatic front under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee has accurately identified changes, made scientific responses and actively sought changes; has carried out an effective anti-pandemic diplomacy, demonstrating the definite principles and distinctive features of the major power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics

in the new era. As a witness who experienced personally, I have a few outstanding highlights to share with you.

First, we need to adhere to the people-centred approach. Chinese diplomacy is the people-to-people diplomacy. On one hand, our diplomatic task is linked to overseas students, expats, and on the other hand it is connected with thousands of households in China, and the interests and concerns of every Chinese are closely related. The diplomatic front always adheres to the people-oriented approach, practices diplomacy for the purpose of the people, and strives to engage in diplomacy that is satisfactory to the people. Since the pandemic outbreak, our embassies and consulates staff abroad have braved risks and difficulties and worked hard to pass on the concern of the Party and the state to every overseas citizen. We distributed anti-epidemic materials to more than 5 million overseas Chinese, delivered more than 1.2 million “health kits” to Chinese students in need, and arranged hundreds of temporary flights to pick up expatriates. The diplomatic “retrograde” in the pandemic has extended warmth, care and confidence to the vast number of overseas compatriots.

The second is to firmly defend the national interest. Since the beginning of this year, the external anti-China hostile forces have launched a massive attack on China, vigorously

blamed China for “throwing the pot/passing the buck”, grossly meddled in China's internal affairs, launched a major attack on innocent Chinese enterprises, deliberately attacked the Communist Party of China and China's political system, and coerced other countries to “encircle/contain” and “confront” China. Such anti-China actions have crossed all limits and are resorting to every conceivable means. General Secretary Xi Jinping said, Chinese people don't provoke trouble, but they do not fear provocations; their legs will not tremble and they will not bow in the face of difficulties and risks. When it comes to safeguarding national interests and dignity, China's diplomacy is always charming without any attempt to yield or to please.

The third is to demonstrate the responsibility of a great power. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the big one must look big. The major powers need to shoulder special responsibilities in safeguarding world peace and development not only by emphasising their own priorities and not harming self-interest, but also by playing an exemplary role in providing international public goods and taking the lead in spreading positive energy for global governance.

Since the outbreak, we have implemented the largest global emergency humanitarian operations in the history of New China, sent 36 medical expert teams to 34 countries, provided

anti-pandemic assistance to 150 countries and nine international organizations, and joined the COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Program (COVAX), with the pledge to make vaccine a global public product. With an eye to promote the resumption of work and production, we along with the concerned countries have creatively set up “fast-track-channel” for personnel exchanges, “green channel” for cargo transportation and “life channel” for food transportation, respectively. We are also actively involved in the international community's debt relief initiatives for developing countries in order to help them overcome difficulties. In the reform of the global governance system, we firmly support the improvement of the representation and voice of developing countries; we advocate that the international community work together to formulate rules against unilateralism and power politics. We are earnestly implementing the “United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030” and the “Paris Agreement” on Climate Change; we actively propose the “Global Data Security Initiative” to strengthen global digital governance, and contribute Chinese strength and wisdom to the perfection of the global governance system.

Fourth, look at opportunities and challenges dialectically. The great changes in the world have accelerated and are profoundly evolving. China's external environment is complex as well as severe, and various sources of

unrest/turbulence and risk points are constantly increasing. We will face more and greater risks in the future. In this regard, we must strengthen risk awareness and bottom-line thinking, and strive to prevent and resolve various crisis challenges. At the same time, we must see that the crises coexist, find opportunities in the crises and turn the crises into opportunities. Once the difficulties and challenges are well addressed new opportunities may surface. The challenges are unprecedented; once they are dealt well, the opportunities would also be unprecedented.

This year we have experienced a typical example of “plot reversal”, turning crises into opportunities. In the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19, China was the first country to bear the brunt and the dark cloud quelled the city; the situation was desperately critical. At that time, many countries evacuated their citizens, withdrew businesses, suspended flights to China and wanted to even “isolate” China. In the face of this unprecedented pandemic disaster, we, under the personal command of General Secretary Xi Jinping, were united and worked hard to achieve significant strategic results in a very short period of time. The outbreak has become a “shining moment” of the socialist system with special Chinese characteristics, instead of becoming China’s “Chernobyl moment”.

For some time now, there has been a barrage of criticism of Chinese diplomacy and other countries have labelled us on multiple occasions. I would like to take this opportunity to share my personal views and discuss with you.

First of all, there are many discussions on the “wolf warrior” diplomacy. To put the “wolf warrior” label on us is, to say the least, a misunderstanding of Chinese diplomacy. It needs to be understood that labelling China with “wolf warrior” diplomacy is at least a misunderstanding of Chinese diplomacy. China has always been a country of etiquettes with utmost value for harmony; it has neither provoked others in the past nor has it ever gone to other people’s homes. Now they are coming to our doorstep, interfering in our family affairs, constantly nagging at us, insulting and slandering us. We have no choice but to firmly stand up and defend our national interests and dignity. Obviously, the Wolf Warrior diplomacy is actually another version of the “China Threat” theory, yet another “discourse trap”, aimed at preventing us from fighting back and wanting us to give up resistance. I suspect these foreign forces have not awakened from their dreams of 100 years ago.”

Some say China is “breaking international rules” and “challenging the existing international order”. The international community needs to have a clear view on who

is withdrawing from the international organisations and scraping agreements and who is engaged in unilateralism and hegemony? China did not obstruct the WTO's operations by violating multilateral trade rules and brandishing tariff stick; it was not China that undermined international cooperation on COVID-19, and withdrew and cut off the funding to the WHO. It was not China that threatened to "turn the tables/topple the card table" by ceasing its participation in the "Paris Agreement" on climate change. As a responsible great power, China has always been a defender of the international order, a contributor to global governance and a provider of international public goods.

Some people say China has made enemies all over the world. This is not true. We have always made friends and forged good relationships. It is the certain big powers who, in order to suppress and contain China, have coerced other countries to take sides and thus creating a "chilling effect" of either a friend or an enemy. But even under these circumstances, China's "friend circle" is getting bigger, not smaller. Many developing countries and friendly people have resisted pressure on them to not cooperate with China and have spoken out in support of China on international occasions. Nearly 170 countries and international organisations have so far participated in the China-proposed "Belt and Road Initiative". The number of member

countries of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that is also initiated by China has increased to 103. At this year's Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, more than 70 countries supported China either individually or in joint statements, effectively thwarting the attempts of some individual countries to take anti-China actions on issues related to Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Chinese candidates were elected as judges of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea respectively by large votes. The China-backed UN resolution on dealing with COVID-19 was adopted by a vote of 169 to 2. These facts and figures clearly show that China stands on the right side of history, meets the people's will, goes with the tide and has friends all over the world.

Some people vilify China as an "authoritarian" country, and use this label to smear China's anti-pandemic measures such as city lockdown, quarantining people and tracking down their contacts as "autocratic," "restricting personal freedom" and even wearing masks is described to be "violating human rights". First of all, in the face of the COVID-19 attack, a responsible government must adhere to the concept of life first and respect science, and take whatever measures it requires; these actions have nothing to do with democracy and freedom. Under the prevailing pandemic situation, a freedom that respects science is the real

freedom, and rights to health and life are the most basic human rights. China's successful anti-epidemic practices are the best proof of this. We resumed our existing freedoms and human rights within a short period of lockdown, Chinese people are now free to visit relatives and friends, go to school and travel wherever they want. To describe this freedom in China as “authoritarianism” is precisely the biggest mockery by those countries that advocate the so-called democracy and freedom.

Guests and friends,

Communications between people and countries are more important and prominent than ever in today's increasingly globalised and well-informed world. And the premise of communication is that you must be adept at expressing yourself in order for others to understand you more and better. “They can't express themselves, they have to be expressed by others”, Marx said of French farmers who could not defend their interests during the Great Revolution. In modern history, others described us as the “yellow peril” and “the sick man of East Asia” only because we could not express ourselves well. They (other countries) are still taking advantage of the discourse power formed in the past to defame and demonise China to this day. This shows that having made considerable strides in expressing ourselves, it is still far from enough. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that

backwardness would leave one vulnerable to attacks, poverty would lead to hunger, and losing voice would get one scolded. Now that we have solved the first two problems, we must be determined to resolve the issue of ‘being scolded’. Experts and scholars need to shoulder this responsibility.

Experts and scholars need not only engage in academic research, but also speak up in the media. This is the requirement of the current era and of China today. The two are mutually complimentary; research is the basis and premise of the weight of one's voice; it is a kind of application and amplification of our intensively carried out researches, and through mutual communication and inspiration, these researches must be better promoted. Therefore, everyone should go out of the study room more and go to the media to speak out about China's culture, China's stories, China's spirit and China's contributions. Furthermore, the landscape of China with a population of 1.4 billion is constantly changing. We are provided with rich materials by the success of the path of socialism with the Chinese characteristics to tell China story well. Here are three suggestions:

First, we need to increase political sensitivity. The current international struggle is very complex, and the ideological factors in international relations are becoming more and more prominent. Some people advocate the

revival of “McCarthyism”. And in line with this so-called value, there is an attempt to list China as “undesirable”. Others engaged in relentless “criticism” as matter of principle; we cannot be too naïve in our foreign exchanges. We must always keep a clear political mind and enhance our sensitivity and discernment. The fundamental starting point, regardless of the time, is to safeguard our national interests and the interests of our people.

Second, we must tell the China story well. The Chinese story is richly colourful with plenty of ingredients. We have an anti-pandemic story of “life first”; we have a story of “two no worries and three guarantees”¹ of poverty alleviation, and the story of environmental protection as “green mountains and clear water are equal to mountains of gold and silver”², and the anti-corruption story of “beating tigers and flies

¹ “Two no worries” means do not worry about food and clothes while “three guarantees” refers to compulsory education, basic medical care, and housing safety. Hu Jintao in November 2011 held a Central Poverty Alleviation and Development Work Conference in Beijing and clearly pointed out that by 2020, the poverty alleviation targets that Chinese people will not worry about food and clothes. To ensure their compulsory education, basic medical care, and housing are the goals set by the central government. In December of the same year, the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council issued the “Central Rural Poverty Alleviation and Development Program Outline (2011-20)”.

² Xi Jinping, then Party secretary of Zhejiang province, first put forward the scientific assertion during his visit to Anji, Huzhou, Zhejiang province. Following the 2012 ascension of Xi as the General Secretary of the CPC, the slogan has been invoked in various contexts domestically and internationally by Chinese officials, complementing existing emphasis on the achievement of ecological civilisation.

together”³ and so on. I hope, with these inexhaustible story materials, you will be able to present a real vivid, multi-dimensional China to the outside world. At the same time, experts and scholars in order to defend the Party and our country should also be brave enough to debunk the criticisms of some foreign anti-China forces that carry out political slander and malicious attacks on the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government. Facts should speak louder than eloquence/rhetoric. But, if they (facts) are distorted, eloquence is needed.

Third, we need to positively contribute to wisdom. Human society is faced with a series of today’s questions, which require experts and scholars to strengthen research and contribute to Chinese wisdom. We need to extract and display the essence of the excellent Chinese traditional culture with contemporary value and world significance. For example, China since ancient times has advocated, “live in harmony” and “getting along with others despite disagreements”, and “the strong should not oppress the weak and the rich should not bully the poor”, “though a country is now strong, bellicosity will lead to its ruin” and so on. These ideas are elements that we can fully learn from and carry forward in promoting the

³ While the literal translation can be “beating tigers and flies together”, tigers in Chinese culture mean corrupt people with high rank and serious corruption cases they commit. Flies refer to corrupt people, but their ranks are relatively lower. This slogan was to crack down on both powerful leaders (tigers) and lowly bureaucrats (flies) who have benefited from graft.

theoretical innovation of international relations. We also need to draw sustenance from the great practice of building socialism with special Chinese characteristics in the new era. We need to thoroughly study China's experience in governance in the fields of development, stability, poverty alleviation, anti-corruption and environmental protection. We should also transform the concept of China's modernization drive into the concept of global governance so as to provide useful inspiration and reference for the development of all countries.

In short, the pandemic has catalysed major changes; and major changes call for great actions. I am sure that experts and scholars, through their insights, will be able to make a

unique contribution to peace and development in the post-epidemic era and to China's diplomacy in the new era. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to uphold the concept of “open door diplomacy”, listen carefully to the views and suggestions of all, and create more convenient conditions for the think tanks' foreign exchanges and cooperation.

Thank you all!

Series Editor: Hemant Adlakha

The views expressed here are those of the original author and not necessarily of the translator or of the Institute of Chinese Studies

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INSTITUTE OF CHINESE STUDIES

8/17, Sri Ram Road, Civil Lines,
Delhi 110054, INDIA
T: +91 (0) 11 2393 8202
F: +91 (0) 11 2383 0728

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