

New anti-China theory a travesty of truth

Editor's note: Some Western media outlets have been hyping up the “Chinese tourists as weapons” theory to claim that China has used the increasing number of Chinese outbound tourists as an economic weapon to intimidate other countries to realize its diplomatic goals. What is the relationship between bilateral ties and tourism development? Has China influenced other countries with its newly attained economic power? Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily's Liu Jianna. Excerpts follow:

Western criticism reflects bias against China



Ma Xiaolin, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University

Thanks to a relatively resilient economy and a notable increase in Chinese households' disposable incomes, the number of Chinese outbound tourists has shown a remarkable increase over the past years. According to the UN World Tourism Organization, Chinese tourists accounted for almost one-fifth of the world's total tourist spending in 2017. A large tourist population such as China's, combined with their purchasing power, is certain to have a huge impact on a destination country's tourism economy.

While the development of a country's tourism economy is closely related to multiple factors, including international relations, geopolitical climate, citizens' security and corporate behavior, it is irresponsible to lay the blame on its government for a decline in certain countries' tourism growth.

The people of a country are bound to undergo a change of emotions, they can even oppose the states with which their country has a strained relationship — and a war of words between the media outlets of the countries at loggerheads will heighten people's aversion for the countries they oppose. Under such circumstance, people's choice of desti-

nation countries will obviously change.

To safeguard its people's safety and interests, which are part of national security, China is obliged to issue travel alerts for the countries with which it does not have good relations. As a matter of fact, the practice of issuing travel alerts originated in Europe and the United States, and China is simply following the international norm.

Moreover, the travel agencies will take into account the tourists' personal safety and security, and potential loss of property in the destination countries hostile to their home country, and thus choose to reduce or suspend travels to those countries. Which means, behind the tourists' decisions, basic economic principles are at play.

Politicizing the economic and commercial issues by ignoring the economic laws reflects the prejudice of the Western media against China and the double-standard they tend to use in issues concerning China.

The massive size of and sharp increase in Chinese tourists' outbound travels have turned out to be a huge boon to the destination countries' tourism economy, as they have boosted their employment and household income growth. This in turn has helped develop the global green economy and helped strengthen sustainable development. The fact that countries with highly developed tourism infrastructure and environment, including the ROK, Japan, Italy and the United Kingdom, yearn for the continuous flow of Chinese tourists and that many of them have

China should make clear its position and refute the baseless accusations with hard facts, but refrain from over-reacting to avoid creating the impression that it indeed is battling with such problem.

made it a priority to attract, retain and serve Chinese tourists speaks volumes about the increasing importance of Chinese consumers in the global tourism market.

In general, tourism markets in any two countries will maintain a sound momentum when bilateral ties are strong, and suffer losses if bilateral relations deteriorate. Therefore, the stable and healthy development of bilateral ties is an essential precondition for the prosperity of any country's tourism economy.

People-first policy in outbound tourism



Chen Fengying, a researcher at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations

Overall, the changes in relations between two countries will

have an impact on their tourism economies. Any country will discourage its people from traveling to those countries with which it has a strained relationship, as they can become victims of verbal or physical attacks. True, China has been playing a guiding role in its people's choice of destination countries, but it is doing so to ensure their safety and the country's national security.

Also, changes in bilateral ties will have a major impact on people's emotions and their choice of destination countries, as the people will naturally opt for the countries with which their home country has friendly relations. Since the growth of a country's tourism economy is subject to the sway of bilateral ties, it is important that countries maintain sound bilateral relations if they want to help their tourism economies grow.

That some Chinese outbound tourists are often derided for improper behavior by the people of some countries is not only a matter of personal likes and dislikes, but also shows their vastly different ways of thinking, different consumption patterns and economic conditions. Thanks to China's continued economic development and further integration with the international community, along with Chinese people's growing travel experience, Chinese tourists, in the near future, will more easily adjust to foreign laws and customs leaving little room for complaints.

As a matter of fact, there is already a notable improvement in Chinese tourists' manners compared with a couple of decades ago when China first opened outbound tourism for individuals.

China must strengthen its theoretical base

The “tourists as economic weapon” theory is a Western



Wang Xuebin, an associate professor at and the deputy director of the Researching Office of Chinese History, Party School of the CPC Central Committee

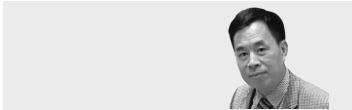
concoction, which does not conform to China's real conditions. It could turn out to be another theoretical trap set by some Western countries to suit their own needs and interests. China can fall victim to these countries' play if it rushes to explain its position without a systemic analysis of the situation and adequate preparations.

China should make clear its position and refute the baseless accusations with hard facts, but refrain from overreacting to avoid creating the impression that it indeed is battling with such a problem.

China has many a time fallen into the thought-trap laid by some Western media outlets, scholars, even governments, which to a certain extent reflects its lack of say in the global public opinion field. So it is important that China builds a complete and scientific theoretical system and gains the initiative in the competition for global discourse.

Speaking of developing tourism, China indeed has a lot to learn from the countries that are highly developed in terms of tourism, as it has a problem with the unsustainable development of tourism. The rapid growth of outbound tourists should prompt domestic tourism agencies to catch up with the developed countries and provide premium travel products, services and experiences.

In other words, China should not only step out, but also appropriate the best global practices and expertise to develop domestic tourism.



Chen Weihua

The author is a columnist at China Daily. chenweihua@chinadailyusa.com

UN speech reveals US' perilous worldview

I wrote in my column two weeks ago that if US President Donald Trump were to choose to speak at the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, he would see many faces of resistance against his unilateral and protectionist policies. That proved true on Tuesday when he delivered his 35-minute speech at the UN General Assembly.

To the chagrin of the haughty US president, his excessive bragging of having “accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country” triggered laughter among the delegates from around the world. It is not known, though, whether he mistook the audience for his supporters attending his rallies, where he always speaks in a nationalistic tone and is so adept at spreading misinformation.

In a fact check after Trump's speech, The Washington Post pointed to 14 key claims made by Trump on the UN General Assembly podium. They are either exaggerated or false, including the claim that the US lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs and 60,000 factories after China joined the World Trade Organization.

While many in the United States tend to focus on Trump's embarrassing moment of being laughed at on a global stage, what is dangerous for the world are his disdain for the world order and attacks on global bodies such as the United Nations, the UN Human Rights Council and the WTO.

This should wake up even those who still hold any illusion about Trump or his policies, as the US president laid bare his disruptive “America First” worldview ...

Sun Jiashan

Why can't our TV series be popular abroad?

Two TV dramas, *Ruyi's Royal Love in the Palace* and the latest online series *Story of Yanxi Palace*, tell different stories about the court life of the same group of women. Ironically, however, the controversy the two dramas have created has led to their success. In particular, *Story of Yanxi Palace* indicates the progress of China's entertainment industry has made.

Using industrialization as a subdued theme to cater to the audience's taste, the drama is set during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). It has drawn praise both for its storyline and the tough personality of a protagonist, who is the best behaved woman in the palace but does not bat an eyelid before getting back at anyone who hurts her, and climbs up from the lowest-level maid to become a high-powered princess.

Targeted at young urban women with increasing consumption power, *Story of Yanxi Palace* has become a big hit with those female white-collar workers who face severe competition at the workplace.

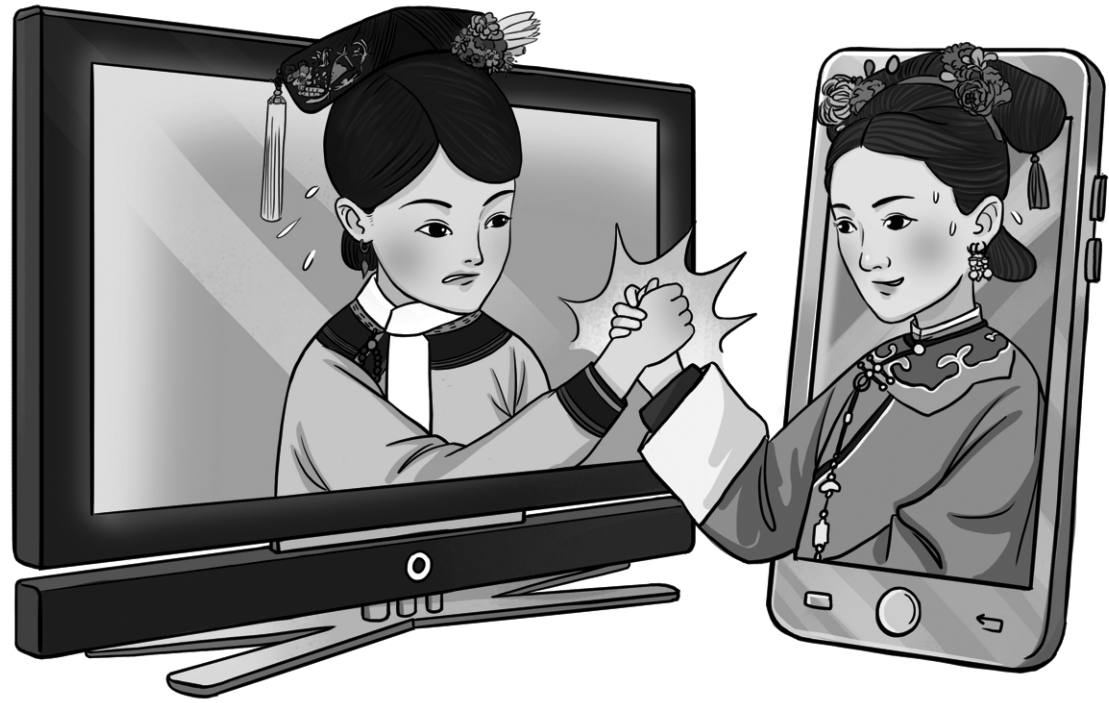
But unlike their Hollywood counterparts, why can't even hit Chinese films and TV dramas gain popularity overseas?

Since 2011, several Chinese TV dramas have been telecast overseas. That Chinese films and TV dramas are being screened outside China and accepted by some foreign audiences is in itself a big success. But the “export” of Chinese pop culture still has a long way to go.

As a matter of fact, manufacturers usually have to invest more than 200 million yuan (\$29.08 million) for a single movie or TV drama to survive in the market. However, many quality-oriented producers, even the mainstream ones cannot survive the competition.

Besides, domestic viewers have a common complaint — the poor quality of a majority of domestic movies and TV series. Given this fact, how can they become popular overseas?

Last year, Chinese films overseas accounted for just 1 percent of the global box office returns,



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

according to the Beijing Normal University's annual report on the international influence of Chinese movies.

For instance, *Legend of Zhen Huan*, one of the most popular Chinese TV dramas at home in 2011, received high ratings in many Asian countries which have cultures similar to that of China. But it failed to draw Western audiences' attention.

As China's economic rise continues, some Chinese film producers who intend to develop the overseas market are seeking to co-produce movies with major studios overseas. However, their poor box office returns and international influence suggest investment is not the main constraint to the globalization of the Chinese entertainment industry.

An accurate analysis of the target audience and the use of standardized production techniques will make the Chinese entertainment industry more competitive in the international market.

Take *The Great Wall*, a film co-produced by China and US producers, for example. Such commercial Chinese movies, despite adopting Hollywood production techniques, still invite a lot of criticism at home. So, despite using Hollywood-style storytelling and advanced techniques, Chinese film producers cannot gain universal appeal by sacrificing their culture.

An accurate analysis of the target audience and the use of standardized production techniques will make the Chinese entertainment industry more competitive in the international market.

Similarly, based on a survey on local cultures and people's interests of the countries along the Belt and Road, Chinese filmmak-

ers could crack the code of creating stories that can work both in China and foreign countries.

In addition, besides romance, Chinese film and TV drama producers should also make efforts to diversify the storylines of their films and TV series — such as the anti-corruption series — to meet the different needs and tastes of the people overseas. Perhaps that's why Netflix has shown great interest in *Day and Night*, a detective series, and made its first purchase of a Chinese online drama.

Sun Jiashan is the director of Contemporary Art & Literature Criticism Center at the National Academy of Arts. The article is an excerpt from his interview with China Daily's Yao Yuxin.

Unlike his predecessors, who often liked to claim the moral high ground in their speeches, Trump is clearly not afraid of “going low” in front of the international community.

He even unabashedly touted his decisions to withdraw the US from the Paris climate accord and the Iran nuclear deal, and to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, decisions that are widely regarded as disastrous for global peace and prosperity and have been condemned by the vast majority of UN member countries.

Trump didn't shy away from threatening and coercing even poor countries, as he said the US is “only going to give foreign aid to those who respect us and, frankly, (are) our friends”. He also reiterated his pledge to cut funding for UN peacekeeping forces.

To Trump, the US, the world's superpower, has been long victimized by every country in the world. “The United States will not be taken advantage of any longer,” he claimed on Tuesday.

This should wake up even those who still hold any illusion about Trump or his policies, as the US president laid bare his disruptive “America First” worldview on Tuesday.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who took the podium shortly after Trump's speech, expressed the feeling of many countries when he passionately advocated multilateralism and denounced protectionism, claiming that “in the 21st century, we will only triumph through bolstered multilateralism”. In his 44-minute speech, the 39-year-old French leader even urged countries to stop signing trade agreements with those countries that don't comply with the Paris climate agreement, a direct challenge to Trump.

On Monday, France joined Germany, Britain, China, Russia and Iran in recommitting to the Iran nuclear deal. And the European Union is working on a special payment system for trade with Iran to counter the Trump administration's threat of imposing sanctions on economies that do business with Iran.

Trump may be hugely proud of his speech. But it's really a confession about how during his less than two years of US presidency, he has been breaking global rules and norms faster than any of his predecessors. And that includes his trade conflicts with several economies which threaten to disrupt global supply chains and dismantle the global trading system.

If Trump's speech at the UN General Assembly achieved anything, it is this: It helped rally the world against Trump's unilateralism and protectionism.