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## **Chinese Anti-Western Nationalism, 2000–2010**

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### **Abstract**

Anti-Western sentiments among the Chinese in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not the first global surge in recent years, reached a high in 2008. One could ask how and why those sentiments developed when the Western states claimed to present no threat to China at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The subject of Chinese nationalism have aroused increasing academic interest, and many books and articles have been published, but Chinese anti-Western nationalism in the first years of the new century has not yet become the object of adequate scholarly scrutiny. This article will trace the source of Chinese nationalism and examine the formation of such anti-Western sentiments among the Chinese people from 2000 to 2010.

**Keywords:** Nationalism, Anti-West, China

### **Izveleček**

Protizahodni občutki med Kitajci v prvem desetletju 21. stoletja, ki ne predstavlja prvega globalnega vzpona v zadnjih letih, so dosegli vrh leta 2008. Lahko bi se vprašali, kako in zakaj so se tovrstni občutki razvili, ko zahodne države zatrjujejo, da ne predstavljajo nobene grožnje Kitajski na prelomu 21. stoletja. Tema kitajskega nacionalizma je vzbudila naraščajoče zanimanje med akademiki, številne knjige in članki so bili že objavljeni, vendar kitajski antizahodni nacionalizem na začetku 21. stoletja še vedno ni postal predmet ustrezne akademske raziskave. Pričujoči članek bo sledil izvoru kitajskega nacionalizma ter raziskoval formacijo tovrstnih antizahodnih občutkov med Kitajci od leta 2000 do 2010.

**Ključne besede:** nacionalizem, anti-zahodni, Kitajska

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## **1 Introduction**

The 2000s witness a surge of Chinese anti-West nationalism in the world. Many Chinese openly excoriated Western countries for considering China as competitor, constantly spying on China's territories, promoting prejudice against the Chinese, demonizing China, attempting to destabilize China's Olympic moment, promoting Tibetan independence, putting economic pressure on China, interfering with China's internal affairs in the name of human rights, and others. Anti-Western sentiments among the Chinese in the 2000s, not the first global surge in recent years, reached a high in 2008. Ahead of the Beijing Olympics, constant Western attacks against Beijing on such issues as the Darfur conflict, global warming, protests in Tibet, and human rights abuses increasingly enraged many Chinese. Inside China, large-scale anti-French demonstrations were seen in more than twenty cities after the disruption of the Olympic torch relay in Paris and French President Sarkozy's threat to shun the Olympic Games opening ceremony. Outside China, almost every pro-Tibetan protest was significantly overwhelmed by a greater pro-China protest all over the world. City streets and university campuses in many countries were filled with outraged Chinese demonstrators, waving red flags and chanting patriotic songs. One could ask how and why those sentiments develop when the Western states claim to present no threat to China at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The subject of Chinese nationalism have aroused increasing academic interest, and many books and articles have been published (Gries 2004; Guo 2004; Leibold 2007; Hughes 2006; Karl 2002; Wu 2007; Shen 2007; Wong 1989; Laitinen 1990; Friedman 1992; and Unger 1996), but Chinese anti-Western nationalism in the 2000s has not yet become the object of adequate scholarly scrutiny. This article will trace the source of Chinese nationalism and examine the formation of such anti-Western sentiments among the Chinese people from 2000 to 2010.

## **2 The Rise of New Anti-Western Nationalism**

Anti-Western sentiment in China was growing in the 1990s and reached a high point in May 1999 when thousands of demonstrators went to the streets in main cities to protest against NATO air force that had alleged to wrongly bomb China's embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia and took life three and wounded twenty Chinese. Demonstrators were in conflict with police at the American embassy in Beijing, destroying cars and windows. More than 170,000 people massed in front of the

U.S. consulate in Chengdu for several days following the bombing, and protesters set fire to the U.S. consul's residence in that city. Police in Guangzhou in South China warned Western residents to stay indoors. The U.S. and British governments issued travel advisories for their citizens in China, urging them to remain in their hotels or homes. Protests in front of the U.S. and British embassies were the biggest anti-West demonstrations in China since the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s (Xu 2001, 151–62).

A significant anti-Western backlash among the Chinese occurred in 2008 due to two major incidents. One is the alleged Western media bias, especially with regard to the March 2008 Tibet riots. The other is the 2008 demonstrations during the Olympic torch relay. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of many Chinese cities to denounce France and call for a boycott of French goods while hundreds of thousands of overseas Chinese throughout the world were protesting against the Western media bias.

The anti-Western sentiment increased in 2009 when a book, *Unhappy China—The Great Time, Grand Vision and Our Challenges*, was published in March 2009 (“Unhappy China” 2009). Written by Song Qiang and other four authors, *Unhappy China*, a collection of essays, argues that China has been too respectful to the Western world which is still hostile toward China. This book is a continuation to the popular anti-Western book, *China Can Say No*, written by the same author, Song Qiang, as well as three others and published in 1996 (“On Sino-U.S. Relationships” 2009). This new book encourages the Chinese government to become more aggressive rather than to be inactive in dealing with the West. This hot-selling book is stimulating debate among Chinese about nationalism and China's position in the world. The authors contend that China needs to use its growing power and economic resources to set up its own position of dominance, claiming that the Chinese are most qualified to take the lead in the world in perspective of the human history, while the Westerners should be the second. After being released on March 13, this book became the bestseller on the list in China. The publisher claimed that it initially printed 270,000 copies, but 100,000 copies were sold just in the month after its publication (Hille 2009).

Chinese anti-Western nationalism in the 2000s was different from that in the 1990s. In the 1990s, anti-Western protests and complaints happened, by and large, mainly in mainland China. Most demonstrators and protestors did not use internet widely as a means for communication. In comparison to anti-Western nationalism

in China in the 1990s, Chinese anti-Western nationalism in the 2000s has two major characteristics.

First, the overseas Chinese played a more important role than the Chinese in mainland China. Prior to the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games, the international leg of the Olympic torch relay was subject to extensive protests mainly due to China's human rights record and Tibetan independence. Pro-Tibetan supporters aimed at the Olympic relay around the world. In London, for example, thirty-seven people were arrested when protestors clashed with police as the torch made its way through the city. In Paris, the relay was cut short and the torch was transported by bus after demonstrators interrupted the relay. Demonstrations also took place in Athens, Istanbul, Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Canberra, Nagano, and Seoul between March and April 2008 ("Clashes Along Olympic" and "Olympic Torch" 2008).

The Chinese were enraged. The Paris protest triggered special rage among the Chinese around the world when a Chinese female athlete in a wheelchair had to safeguard the flame from hecklers. Overseas Chinese lost no time in arranging "pro-China" counter-protests at the torch march. Protesters targeting the Olympics torch relay to oppose the Beijing government encountered counter-demonstrations by forceful and exciting Chinese living and studying overseas in defence of the Beijing Olympics. The Chinese were also protesting Western media coverage of the recent rioting in Tibet while protecting the Olympic torch relay from attackers. Counter-demonstrations against Tibetan separatism and Western media prejudice created headlines and editorials in major cities as the torch made its way throughout the world. Large-scale counter-protests of overseas Chinese and foreign-based Chinese nationals became the largest in the later parts of the relay. For the first time since 1989, overseas Chinese have become worldwide reports when they voiced disapproval in great numbers against the West and showed their support for the Chinese government (MacArtney 2008; Anast 2008; "Argentine Torch"; "Anti-China Protest"; "Bangkok Relay"; "Rival Demonstrators"; and "San Francisco").

Second, Chinese anti-Western nationalism in the 2000s is distinguished from that in the 1990s because the Internet played a more important part in inciting and expressing anti-Western sentiments. In the rise of new Chinese nationalism in the 2000s, the Chinese used websites and online chat rooms to express their anti-Western sentiments. Chinese anti-Western feelings on the Internet are more

pronounced than the broader feelings of the Chinese on the streets throughout the world (Ford 2008). In the 2000s, there has been an increase in chauvinistic, racist attacks in China's online chat rooms presented in extreme language and aimed at the West. For example, when U.S. State Secretary Condoleezza Rice was visiting Beijing in March 2005, many active Chinese participants in the online community of the Internet attacked her in China's online chat rooms (Liu 2005). An anti-French sentiment on Chinese web sites was rising in April 2008, including calls for economic embargo against all French manufactured products and goods immediately after President Nicolas Sarkozy openly claimed to boycott the Olympic Games ("Chinese Nationalism" 2008).

Some Chinese also launch cyber warfares against the Western media websites whenever they think there is a bias against the Chinese. Though CNN, the cable news network, is available only in diplomatic compounds, high-end condominiums, and major five-star hotels in China, Chinese are still able to read reports from CNN as well as the BBC and to watch videos on YouTube. During the 2008 Tibet demonstrations, although the Chinese government restricted foreign media coverage about the disturbances, many Chinese were able to watch Western media reporting, soon becoming very angry. The Chinese web users, instead of turning to civil turbulence, backed the Chinese government and condemned Western news coverage of Tibet, calling it incorrect and biased with anti-China attitude. Following CNN's allegedly biased reporting regarding the March 2008 unrest in Tibet, CNN became a particular target of anger. Its website was hacked and replaced with a page announcing that "Tibet was, is, and always will be a part of China." CNN workers were forced to leave their Beijing headquarters during that time and retreated to a neighbouring hotel after they were flooded by irritated calls, as well as some intimidating violence (Magnier 2008).

Some Chinese web users create websites to challenge Western media's reporting of China. Rao Jin, a 23-year old student, created an anti-CNN.com website, portraying Western media reporting as white superiority (Deng 2009; Mostous 2008). Considering that Western media news stories include falsifications, this website claimed that it was participating in "a struggle of resistance against Western hegemonic discourse". On the website, there is a slogan, "The World's Leader of Liars", and a photo that CNN ran on its website showing green security motor vehicle leaving behind an upturned car. On this photo, however, off to the right, the rock-throwing Tibetan protesters were cropped out. The website asks, "Your feeling about this manipulated photo?" The website also criticized several

other U.S., British, and German media for running shots of Nepalese police identified as Chinese battling rioters. The number of visitors to the anti-CNN.com website reached 100,000 only just one week after it was created on March 21 (Kwok 2008).

Chinese internet users, in China and overseas, claimed that some Western media sources had given dishonest reports about the Tibet riots in March 2008. They posted thousands of angry messages on websites and made strange crank calls to some Western media offices in Beijing. The Chinese internet users were more belligerent than those on the streets, as Tong Zeng, who facilitated the anti-Japanese demonstrations in 2005, says that resentment about Tibet on the Internet was more articulated than wide-ranging emotion on the streets (Yardley, 2008).

### **3 The Sources of Anti-Western Nationalism**

The new type of anti-Western nationalism mainly comes from four sources: Chinese government's patriotism campaigns and anti-Western propaganda, the pride of Chinese people in their successful economic achievements, Western governments' policies toward Beijing, and Western media's bias against the Chinese.

#### **3.1 Official Propaganda Campaigns**

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Chinese government continues to preach patriotism—love of and loyalty to, or zealous support of, one's country. The Chinese leadership exploits patriotism for several reasons. First, as the orthodox ideology has waned drastically, if not completely, in Chinese political life, and many Chinese have lost their confidence in Communism and Marxism, the leadership finds that it has little alternative but to cultivate national pride and patriotism to hold the country together during its rapid, turbulent transformation. Patriotism may be both a great driving force to encourage the Chinese people to revitalize the nation and a banner under which to unify different ethnic groups. Second, Beijing's call for patriotism is designed to counteract regional decentralization, to divert attention from inequalities, such as the unequal distribution of wealth and the gap between the cities and countryside, to avoid civil unrest, and to shift public attention from domestic to international problems.

Before 2000, unfilled political slogans and boring teachings dominated traditional propaganda campaigns. Realizing that the traditional approach to propaganda has not attracted the public attention, particularly the youth, the Chinese leadership began to adopt new approaches to promote the patriotic education campaign (Wang 2008, 782–806). In October 2004, ten ministries of the central government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), such as Ministry of Education and the Propaganda Department, jointly issued a statement, “Suggestions to Reinforce and Advance the Patriotic Education.” This official paper encourages government offices and education units to use a variety of educational methods, especially entertainment, as a means to promote patriotic education campaigns. They persuaded the Chinese to watch 100 chosen red films, read 100 chosen red books, and sing 100 chosen red songs, all of which focus on Chinese national humiliation in modern China. One of the 100 red books, titled *Mo Wang Guo Chi* (*Never Forget State Humiliation*), is on the list (*Mo Wang Guochi* 2002).

The Chinese government also began to build many museums and public monuments to promote patriotic education. The central government established 100 national-level demonstration bases for ideological reeducation while local governments began to found provincial-level and county-level patriotic education bases. Thus, several provinces spent more than 10 million Chinese Yuan yearly creating patriotic bases (“Zhongxunbu fuze” 2001). By 2006, five provinces or centrally administered municipalities—Beijing, Hebei, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, and Anhui—have established more than 400 provincial-level bases and nearly 2,000 county-level patriotic education bases. More than 10,000 memory sites were created, and visiting these memory sites is becoming a normal part of all schools’ set of courses (Wang 2006).

To urge more people to visit those patriotic education bases, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council started a red tourism campaign, a program to sponsor people to visit the former revolutionary bases and landmarks. In 2004, over 20 million tourists visited more than 150 major red tourism sites in thirteen provinces and municipalities (“China Boosts” 2005). The National Bureau of Tourism of China named 2005 “Year of Red Tourism” and published a list of 100 red tourism points so as to promote a campaign of “Education with Tourism”. From 2004 to 2007, more than 400 million Chinese people participated in the red tourism program, visiting such popular destinations as Chairman Mao Zedong’s

birthplace in Hunan province and the CCP's sacred place—Yanan in Shaanxi Province—the CCP's revolutionary capital before 1949 (“Red Tourism” 2007).

The Chinese leaders also use national and traditional holidays to pursue a campaign of patriotic education, such as the New Year, Spring Festival, Women's Day, Labour Day, Youth day, Children's Day, the CCP's Birthday, Army Day, and National Day. The patriotic subjects are especially emphasized during the holiday celebrations. Besides, the Chinese government annually organizes a series of activities to celebrate several important anniversaries of historical events. In 2005, for example, the Beijing government initiated a grand campaign to memorialize the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anti-Japanese War all over China.

The Chinese leaders understand that to incite patriotism without any opponents is impossible, and that Chinese nationalism would not be sustained without an obvious rival. Beijing concentrates on China's humiliating past to stir up consciousness of suffering, underscoring the theme of disgrace on the Chinese brought by the West during the patriotic education campaigns. To heighten the traditional feeling of humiliation of a weak China, bullied by the West over the past 150 years, the Beijing government tries to convince the Chinese that China was a leading power in the world before 1839 and that the Chinese nation-state was declining and the Chinese were suffering significantly at the hands of Western powers from 1839 to 1949 because of Western powers' invasion, bringing humiliation upon the Chinese. For instance, in his speech at the 2001 Conference celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the CCP, the CCP leader Jiang Zemin, glorifying the chief achievements of the CCP, claimed that the modern Chinese history has shown that, without the CCP, New China would not have been born, and that it is the CCP which brings to an end the humiliation on the Chinese and secures China's national independence (“Jiang Zemin's Speech” 2001). Humiliation education campaign is to keep the nationalistic enthusiasm going in order to mobilize domestic support for the CCP.

The Beijing government also claims that today some Western powers that are hostile towards the Chinese are still posing a threat to China's integrity and independence. On March 2, 2009, for example, the Information Office of the State Council of China published a white paper entitled “Tibet's Democratic Reform in the Past Fifty Year”. The white paper asserts that “Western anti-China forces” in favour of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama are guilty of disregarding historical facts concerning Tibet, and that the so-called Tibet issue is absolutely not an ethnic, religious nor



human rights issue; more exactly, it is the Western anti-China forces' endeavour to contain, split, and demonize China" ("Fifty Years" 2009).

China's media censorship itself is a factor in fostering anti-Western sentiment among the Chinese. Media in China always gives a one-sided view of the West. In international reporting, by means of choosy inclusion and exclusion, the press in China is very aggressive in promoting the anti-Western theme, which increases the suspicious of the Chinese towards the West. Stanley Rosen writes that the media censorship has helped cultivate "increasing suspicion and distrust" of the Western countries, the United States in particular, and justify the motivation for the Beijing government's "self-serving" policy (Rosen 2003, 97–118).

To build a politically, economically, and culturally unified China without Western influences which are regarded as threatening to the foundation of the Chinese government, Beijing promotes official propaganda on Chinese national humiliation and Western hostility toward China so as to urge the Chinese to wipe clean national humiliation and to increase Chinese's suspicions of the West. Under such situation, an average Chinese believes that China, once the world's greatest civilization, has fallen from grace and has suffered from poverty, Western domination, and numerous civil wars after the British defeated the Chinese during the Opium War of 1839–41.

Beijing's campaigns to incite profound sense of humiliation among the Chinese help foster anti-Western sentiments. In 2007, the Committee of 100, with assistance of Zogby International and Horizon Research Consultancy Group, published a report. According to the public opinion polls in this report, many Chinese still suspect the West's motives towards China, resulting basically from historical experiences and specifically the century of humiliation. The polls report writes, "Nearly half of the Chinese feel that the U.S. is trying to prevent their country from becoming a great power." ("Hope and Fear" 2007) After studying the emergence of new Chinese nationalism, Peter Gries concludes that anti-Western sentiment, once created and encouraged by the Beijing government, has been taken up by the Chinese new youths, and the popular nationalism profoundly rooted in an account of past humiliations at the hands of the West will have an impact on the 21<sup>st</sup> century China and the world (Gries 2004, 58).

### 3.2 Chinese Pride

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many people believe that the 21<sup>st</sup> century belongs to China because China has an economic miracle in the world with an annual GDP rate of approximately 10% in the past three decades. The global financial crisis in the late 2000s, the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression of the 1930s, resulted in the collapse of the large financial institutions, the failure of major businesses, and extensive declines in stock markets all over the world (“Three Top” 2009).

In contrast to the West, China’s economy is making significant progress. By 2010, China has surpassed Germany to become the largest exporter and second largest importer of goods in the world, and China’s GDP became the world’s second largest economy after the United States, exceeding Japan’s. Today, China produces more cars, builds more miles of high-speed railroad, has more cell phone users, and constructs more wind power than any other countries in the world. In addition, China is moving from export dependency to development of a domestic market so as to reduce China’s economic reliance heavily on Western market. Many Chinese believe that China could become the world’s largest economy sometime as early as 2020. Economic success certainly resulted in rising of living standard. China’s economic miracle has enhanced Chinese people’s welfare. Chinese standard of living has increased drastically, especially from 2000 to 2010. Wages in many cities and towns have been rapidly rising, and thousands of hundreds of peasants moving from countryside to urban areas yearly make more money than they did ten years ago (Ren 2012).

More importantly, China’s economic wonder contributes to Chinese satisfaction and pride. China’s economic miracle encourages the Beijing government and Chinese scholars to make an effort to show the world, especially many Asian and Africa countries, that China’s political and economic system would be another pattern, instead of Western model (Western democracy and market economy), to achieve economic expansion. Today, many Chinese have a righteous pride in China’s progress, ridiculing the decline of the West, especially its financial and economic crisis. Many Chinese believe that the West needs China nowadays, especially its financial resources to solve the Western financial crisis. According to Xu, many Chinese assume that they are reclaiming their rightful place as an international powerhouse in the world, a position they have lost decades before and they have been denied for many years (Xu 2001, 151–62).

Some Chinese also suggest that China need to redefine the rule of the games in its own terms, and that China should be an alternative to the meddling power of the West. As a result, the Chinese people are becoming more nationalist at home and more vocal abroad, especially in dealing with the West. The Chinese nationalism built on self-confidence demands a change of the current international order at the turn of the twentieth-first century.

Economic nationalism is rising in the world, especially since the global financial crisis. China is developing large manufacturing industries and is the biggest exporter in the world, exporting an extensive range of commodities from clothing to electronics. In China, tens of millions of new job-seekers, including millions of peasants migrating from the country to cities, go into the market each year. Many Chinese think that, if the economy would not grow rapidly, the risk of social unrest would be huge, and that their country's survival would have to be based on an export-led and manufacturing-based economic strategy. Many Chinese hope to make money by exporting products to the world, developing overseas markets. The rise of China's economy increased the trade deficit of the West. For example, the U.S. trade deficit with China climbed to \$800 billion in 2010. China is the largest creditor nation in the world and owns approximately 20.8% of all foreign-owned U.S. Treasury securities (Wong 2010; Shamim 2010). The huge trade deficits cause Western countries to put increasing pressure on Beijing to open China's markets to Western goods and to stop governmental manipulation of its currency, since this makes China's exports to the West cheaper and the Western exports more expensive. The Western countries strongly criticize that Chinese manufacturing firms compete unfairly at the cost of Westerners' lost jobs due to the advantages of state support.

To many Chinese, the Western countries are trying to impose their goods on China and threaten China's new prosperity with harsh protectionism. The Chinese nationalism with the anti-Western sentiment is based on the Chinese frustration over China's inability to overcome the economic barriers set up by the Western countries. They are equally determined to guard their own national interests. Anti-Westernism is growing because of Western pressure on China's economy. The anti-Western sentiment is an expression of new self-confidence and nationalism, which is commensurate with China's growing economic power, in addition to its history, culture, and others. Dr. Robert Kuhn, an international investment banker and corporate strategist, is an adviser to the Beijing government for many years. Dr. Kuhn stated, "The pride of the Chinese people—pride in their country,

heritage, history; pride in their economic power, personal freedoms, and international importance. [...] pride is the primary guiding principle that energizes a great deal of what is happening in China today” (Kuhn 2010).

### 3.3 The Western Governments’ China Policies

The Chinese masses’ anti-Western feelings resulted from policy disagreements between the Beijing government and the Western governments. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the West is still regarding China as a competitor instead of a partner and taking tough policies toward China on such issues as freedom of South China Sea, Tibet, China’s human rights, and others. The U.S. government’s approach to the U.S. spy-plane collision is an example. In April 2001, a U.S. EP-3 surveillance plane collided with a Chinese F-8 jet fighter. The Chinese plane split in half and crashed. The pilot parachuted out but was never seen again. The U.S. plane nearly crashed but was able to make an emergency landing on Hainan Island in Chinese territory. Chinese authorities took the crew of the U.S. spy plane into custody. At the beginning of this incident, Beijing took the assertive stance. It claimed that China’s sovereign airspace extends for 200 miles offshore and U.S. spy plane was in violation of its airspace, although most international agreements recognize only twelve miles. Tensions escalated, and each side blamed the other for the calamity. Beijing refused to release the crew until Washington issued a formal apology. The crew, however, was eventually released after American expressions of remorse over the loss of the pilot and aircraft (Kagan 2001).<sup>1</sup>

While lodging a protest against Washington, Beijing presented its report to the Chinese. Thus, anti-U.S. nationalism was rising in China. Many Chinese did not regard this clash as an isolated incident—simple violation of Chinese sovereignty, but as the latest in a long series of Western aggressions against the Chinese since the Opium War of 1839–41. Chinese public anger over the spy-plane collision raged, but there were no fierce anti-U.S. demonstrations on the streets in the Chinese cities, unlike the incident in May 1999 when violent attacks against U.S. diplomatic facilities in China. This time Beijing did not condone any violence, censoring condemnations from discussions on the Internet and prevented the government-owned media from talking about this event. The Chinese were outraged, but their fury over this event faded eventually a year later when official

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<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of the politics of apology in this context, see Gries 2002, 173–8.

press reported the mourners at the fallen pilot's funeral place in the city of Hangzhou (Pomfret 2001).

China's opposition to surveillance operations by an unarmed U.S. Navy surveillance vessel in waters off China is another case. In March 2009, an unarmed U.S. surveillance ship was hunting for Chinese submarines off China's Hainan Island, the site of a major Chinese navy base. The U.S. ship was in international waters but in China's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea. The ship was swarmed by Chinese vessels that tried to block it and destroy its sonar system. At one point a Chinese ship approached within eight meters of the American spy ship and littered wreckage in its path so as to damage American ship's equipments. The U.S. Navy ship took action by turning its fire hoses on one of the Chinese ships. The incident was the most vulnerable military confrontation between China and the United States since the spy plane incident in 2001. It occurred just after both countries announced that they were considering a naval pact to avoid accidental confrontations at sea. Washington urged Beijing to observe international maritime rules while Beijing claimed that the United States had violated both the international and Chinese laws ("US Says China Harassed Naval Ship" 2009).

The March 8<sup>th</sup> confrontation reconfirms many Chinese's notion of foreign states bent on encroaching upon China. Many Chinese believe that it is a deliberate and provocative act, and that no people would be contented to see foreigners arrogantly carrying out spy actions directly in front of their country. Some Chinese claim that the U.S. government understood quite well that this would irritate China, but it just only did not mind. Wang Xiaodong, a nationalist scholar who contributed several chapters to the anti-Western book, *Unhappy China*, states that "If Obama wants to talk about world peace, not sending troops abroad, and so on, then what is the U.S. Navy doing in the South China Sea?" (Ramzy 2009)

Western governments' criticism on Beijing's Tibet policy causes much antagonism among the Chinese. The Western governments have long been a critic of China's Tibet policy and in favour of Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader. In October 2007, President Bush and the leaders of U.S. Congress bestowed the Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian honour, upon the Dalai Lama, calling the exiled Tibetan religious leader a "warrior for peace" ("Dalai Lama's" 2007).

The tension between Beijing and the Western governments over this issue increased in March 2008. On March 14, rioters in Tibet set hundreds of fires and assaulted ethnic Han Chinese as well as Chinese Muslims. As the crackdown in Tibet began to unfold, the Dalai Lama expressed fears that “a lot of casualties may happen” as a result of the protests and appealed to the international community for help. Just one day after his appeal, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi met the Dalai Lama in India on March 21, the first high-profile Western official to meet the Dalai Lama since protests in Tibet turned violent. At the meeting Pelosi called for an international investigation into the situation in Tibet and criticized China’s handling of the unrest in Tibet (“U.S. House Speaker” 2008). While addressing a crowd of thousands of Tibetans in Dharamsala, India, Pelosi called the crisis “a challenge to the conscience of the world” and called on “freedom-loving people” to denounce China (“Top US Politician” 2008). French President Nicolas Sarkozy suggested he could boycott the opening ceremony of Olympic Games in August 2008 when he arrived in the United Kingdom for a two-day state visit, who urged British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to do the same. Sarkozy told reporters in southwest France “Our Chinese friends must understand the worldwide concern that there is about the question of Tibet, and I will adapt my response to the evolutions in the situation that will come” (“China Lashes Out” 2008) On April 8, as the arrival of the Olympic torch was met by Tibetans and Tibet activists in San Francisco, the U.S. House of Representatives was debating House Resolution 1077, introduced by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and nine members who made up a delegation that met with Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. This Resolution, criticizing China over “repression” in Tibet, called on China to end its crackdown in Tibet and for the Beijing government to enter into a results-based dialogue with the Dalai Lama. The next day, H.R. 1077 passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 413 to 1 (Tenzin 2008).

The Western government’s stands on the Tibet riots infuriate the Chinese. In Bajoria’s article, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, professor at the University of Michigan, says that the Chinese see these anti-Olympic protests as an indication that regardless of how much China strives to become a constructive player in the world, and that “many in the West will never accept that, [and] will seek to humiliate them.” (Bajoria, 2008) As a result, West-bashing was widespread among the Chinese throughout the world.

In major cities in China, angry protesters organized demonstrators in front of Carrefour shopping centers to encourage people to impose an embargo on French

products after protests in Paris. They used internet and mobile phones to condemn Carrefour Company of support Dalai Lama, but Carrefour CEO Jose-Luis Duran rejected such rumor. (“Anti-Carrefour Protests Spread” 2008; “Carrefour Faces China Boycott Bid”, 2008; and “Carrefour CEO Denies Backing Dalai Lama” 2008). “If Bush meets the Dalai Lama right now, or if the Congress does anything, the Chinese people might do something,” said Tong Zeng. Mr. Tong also spoke that Internet was fulfilled with enraged remarks about the latest conference between Nancy Pelosi and the Dalai Lama (“Chinese Nationalism Fuels Tibet Crackdown” 2008).

Zhang Quanyi, associate professor at the Zhejiang Wanli University in Ningbo, China, commented, “Western leaders have been aggressive in adding oil to the fire. French President Nikolas Sarkozy warned he might boycott the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel also said she would not attend. The U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi even said the International Olympic Committee had made a mistake in awarding the 2008 Summer Olympics to China. China expressed strong indignation over this, saying it would encourage pro-independence forces” (Zhang 2008). Song Qiang, who contributed to both anti-Western books, *China Can Say No* and *Unhappy China*, wrote in the latest work that China should reduce the importance of Sino-French relations because of French President Sarkozy’s meeting with the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader who Beijing claimed, was sponsoring independence in the restless Tibet area (Ramzy 2009).

Minxin Pei, a senior associate in the China program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, also stated that “Chinese nationalism was actually partly a creation of Western imperialism” and that the Chinese feel very strongly about issues such as sovereignty and integrity of their territory because “they still have the historical memory of Western imperialism,” according to Bajoria’s article (Bajoria, 2008). Dr. Wenran Jiang, professor of political science at the University of Alberta in Canada, stated that overseas Chinese might appear to be rallying behind Beijing in response to the Olympic torch relay protests and the unrest in Tibet, and that “They see the Tibetan issue as there’s a perceived danger of separating Tibet out of China and this becomes not a issue with the Chinese government anymore, it’s just about sovereignty, about historical ties. I think that’s why, this time, emotion is very high.” (Kuhn, 2008)

Western politicians claim that their fire is directed at the Beijing government, but they do not understand the minds of the Chinese. Some Chinese believe that China needs changes and reforms, but they also accept as true that China cannot change overnight. Xiao Gongqin, history professor at Shanghai Normal University, said, “Outsiders should avoid pressuring China too much or it will return to radicalism [...] China will improve and enjoy more democratic rights, but it needs time.” (Magnier 2008) Although the Beijing government is not popular with all Chinese and many Chinese are opposed to its corruption and incompetence, they do not have any alternative. They still have only one government—Beijing represents their interests. Indeed, today the Chinese public has been overwhelmingly content with the direction in which their country is headed. In a spring 2010 survey by the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project, 87% of Chinese say they are satisfied with the way things are going in their country, and 91% of Chinese characterize their country’s economic situation as good. (Bell 2011) To many Chinese, the West’s unfriendly attitude and policies toward Beijing are directed toward the Chinese people. The Western pressure on Beijing backfires by offending Chinese patriotic sensibilities.

### **3.4 Western Media’s Prejudice and Bias**

Western mainstream media helps contribute to anti-Western sentiments among the Chinese. Many Chinese people claim that Western media has showed not only anti-Beijing tendency but also a bias and prejudice against the Chinese people, which has spread wider since 2000. Many Chinese hold that Western media coverage of China is built on the Cold War theory, Western ideology, and national interest, and even white chauvinism, and that such biased information has segregated the Western public from the reality of China. Many Chinese consider that the West has become even more hostile toward China, and that the most evident example of this hostility is the way the Western media covers China. For example, Dr. Chen Yongsheng complains that Western media reports of China have displayed ignorance and prejudice, and that the reporting of China more generally is only stories about censorship, spoiled food products, human rights issues, dangerous toys, poisonous milk, and others. Dr. Chen claims that such bias reports only put fuel on the Chinese’s rejection to the West while stirring up their patriotic passion (Interview with Professor Chen Yongsheng, 2009).



Western media's attitude toward the 2008 Olympic is one case in point. Sports become a national passion. When China won the right to hold 2008 Olympics, the Chinese throughout the world exploded in delight, believing that this is the first time China holds the Games, and that China has finally been recognized as a rising state after a century of isolation and humiliation. Many Chinese hoped to use 2008 Olympic moment to demonstrate how China had become a modern and peaceful world power at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many Chinese also thought that pride in Chinese athletes would unify the Chinese all over the world. Prior to the Beijing Olympic, however, some Western newspapers compared China's hosting of the Olympics to that of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime. Ex-British Cabinet Minister Michael Portillo, who was Britain's defense secretary from 1995–97, likened the 2008 Beijing Olympics to the 1936 Berlin Games. In an editorial titled "Tibet: the West Can Use the Olympics as a Weapon against Beijing", published in the *Sunday Times* on March 22, 2008, Portillo cites the use of the Berlin Olympics as a "showcase for Nazism" to rebuke world leaders for disregarding China's poor human rights record. Portillo states, "The leadership must by now be wondering whether staging the Games in Beijing will bring the regime more accolades than brickbats". ("China Lashes Out At British Press")

CNN's anti-Chinese comments are another case. On the April 9, 2008, the CNN *Situation Room* asked for remarks on the U.S. China relationship, Jack Cafferty answered, "I think they're basically the same bunch of goons and thugs they've been for the last 50 years." ("The Situation Room" April 9, 2008) Angered by such a statement, the Legal Immigrant Association started an online petition calling for a formal apology because Cafferty's anti-Chinese comments had aggravated destructive attitudes held by some Americans toward the Chinese and Chinese Americans. On the April 14 broadcast of CNN's *Situation Room*, Cafferty defended his observation: "Last week, during a discussion of the controversy surrounding China's hosting of the Olympic Games, I said that the Chinese are basically the same bunch of goons and thugs they have been for the last 50 years. I was referring to the Chinese government, and not to Chinese people or to Chinese Americans." ("The Situation Room" April 14, 2008) CNN issued a controversial apology on the same day, to "anyone who has interpreted the comments to be causing offense", but many overseas Chinese, not satisfied with CNN's response, launched protests against CNN. On April 26, in front of CNN headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, several thousand Chinese American demonstrators picketed CNN's office. Demonstrators also protested in front of a CNN office in San

Francisco and its Hollywood office (Mostrous 2008), demanding that CNN fire Cafferty from the network (“Protesters Gather” 2008).

Western coverage of the March 2008 riots in Tibet is controversial. Some Chinese claimed that several Western media sources misreported and distorted the incident to tarnish China’s image. When running a cropped photo online, CNN removed a group of Tibetan protesters stoning a military vehicle. When many Chinese accused CNN of disseminating Western media bias, CNN insisted in a statement that its coverage was accurate but admitted to the cropping due to an editorial choice. (Kwok 2008) Several Western news organizations also mislabeled photographs of police officers beating pro-Tibet protesters in Nepal as being from China in their reports of the riots.

Western reports of the July 2009 riots in northwest China is also contentious. The July 2009 Ürümqi riots were a series of violent riots over several days that broke out on July 5, 2009 in Ürümqi, the capital city of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in north-western China. On the first day’s rioting, about 1,000 Uyghurs began as a protest but escalated into violent assaults mainly on the Han Chinese people. People’s Armed Police were deployed to put down the riots. From the start, the *Financial Times* of London reported, “China’s bloodiest crackdown on protesters for 20 years reveals a government that is still more comfortable suppressing the symptoms of the country’s ethnic tensions than finding policies to solve the problems they cause.” (Editorial 2006) Many early reports of the riots incorrectly used a photo of a large number of People’s Armed Police squares to indicate the riots. Indeed, this picture was taken during the June 2009 Shishou riot in Hubei Province of China and was initially issued on June 26 by *Southern Metropolis Weekly*, a local government newspaper in Guangzhou. The image was also put on the website of *The Daily Telegraph*, a daily morning broadsheet newspaper circulated throughout the United Kingdom and internationally, but was eradicated the next day (“Posted Photos” 2009).

Many Chinese accused Western media of intentionally tarnishing China’s image by publishing false reports about the events in Tibet and Ürümqi, including mistakenly identifying scenes of police battling with protesters in Nepal as if it is taking place in Lhasa, and regarding People’s Armed Police square in Shishou as those in Ürümqi. The Chinese from around the world were infuriated by Western media’s prejudice and bias, and the wave of demonstrations as protests gained its strength in 2008. On March 29, in protest against German media’s biased and

distorted reports on the Tibet riots, about 120 Chinese people working and studying in Munich held a peaceful demonstration with placards bearing such slogans as “Listen to Different Voices” and “Freedom of the Press (Not Equal To) Incitement” in German and English. “The main purpose of these protests”, an organizer wrote, was “to urge the German media to stop their biased reports and also to attract the German public to our website to gain different perspectives and start the dialogue.” (“Protest in Silence”) On April 19, 1,300 people assembled outside BBC buildings in Manchester and London, protesting against what they described as Western media bias (“Anti-French” 2008). At the same time numerous Chinese Australians organized a large demonstration in Sydney, pronouncing support for Beijing and opposing what they saw as Western media bias. The demonstrators were carrying signs which read “Shame on Some Western Media”, “BBC CNN Lies too” and “Stop Media Distortion!”. During an interview, a demonstrator told the reporter of BBC, “I saw some news from CNN, from the BBC, some media (inaudible), and they are just lying.” (“Pro-China” 2008) Wang Xiaoping, a Chinese doctor in the city of Guangzhou in southern China complained in 2009, “The Western media’s coverage of China has always been prejudiced against the Chinese, seeing China through tainted glasses. The Western media’s arrogance toward China has blinded their vision, and the Western media is losing its credibility.” (Interview with Wang Xiaoping 2009) In 2008, a report was prepared by the Committee of 100 with the assistance of Zogby International and the Horizon Research Consultancy Group. Entitled “Hope and Fear”, the report outlined the results of opinion polls regarding Chinese and American attitudes towards each other. The report found that a significant proportion of the Chinese general public believe that the Western media portrays China inaccurately (“Hope and Fear” 2007).

Western media complain the less freedom of the press and media and internet censorship in China, which prevents them from securing first-hand information on Tibet. Some Chinese people may know little about Tibet’s different interpretation of its history, partly because China’s propaganda may reflect only the official version of events, castigating the Dalai Lama as a terrorist “jackal” and calling for a “people’s war” to fight separatism in Tibet. For many Chinese, Tibetans have been granted special subsidies and benefits from the Beijing government in the past fifty years because of their ethnic status, and the protests occurred as ingratitude after Beijing spending a lot of money building roads, a high-altitude railroad and other infrastructure for the Tibet people.

While Western media support Tibetans so as to help them win their freedom out of the control of the Chinese government, many Chinese people regard Tibet protesters as terrorists attacking the Han Chinese. Dr Seema Anand, a reader of international relations at Westminster University in London, said that many Chinese regarded the Tibetan protests “as an attack on their core identity”, and that “it’s not only an attack on the state, but an attack on what it means to be Chinese.” (“Chinese Nationalism” 2008) Many Chinese not only support the Beijing government but also encourage the Chinese leaders to take strong, quick actions to suppress the rioters in Tibet. Meng Huizhong, an office worker, expressed anger at what she saw as a tolerant government response to Tibet turbulence. Like many Chinese, Meng was horrified firstly by the violent Tibetan protests in Lhasa and then was appalled that the government had failed to initially extinguish the brutality. She said that “We couldn’t believe our government was being so weak and cowardly. [...] The Dalai Lama is trying to separate China, and it is not acceptable at all. We must crack down on the rioters.” (“Chinese Nationalism” 2008) Ms. Emily Parker, an assistant editorial features editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, commented on the Tibet riots in 2008, “In some cases, nationalists have accused Beijing of not defending Chinese interests strongly enough.” (Parker 2008)

It is obvious that the Chinese anti-Western sentiments not only result from official propaganda but also from the Chinese reactions provoked by the West. Da Wei, associate research professor of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, was a visiting associate at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in 2008. Wei points out, “This situation (Anti-Western nationalism) has greater implications than previous waves of nationalism. [...]. Rather, it is about the pride of China and the prejudice of the West.” (Da 2008) Ms. Emily Parker also writes, “Chinese nationalism is not just coming from the top down. [...] These nationalist outbursts may have been influenced by years of propaganda, but they are not always dictated from the top.” (Parker 2008)

#### **4 Conclusion**

There is a deep suspicion between the Chinese and Westerners. Chinese anti-Westernism expressing a strong resentment of Western political and economic dominance is nurtured by past humiliation and new self-confidence which is

matching with China's rapid economic power. As a rising state, the Chinese want to be treated equally and fairly by the Western countries and to have more voice in the international affairs while the West still sees China as the same "Communist China" as they did during the Cold War period and attempts not to recognize its recent successful accomplishments.

Chinese anti-Western sentiments are perhaps unavoidable because both China and the West have different ideologies, cultures, political and economic systems, and levels of development, as well as diverging interests. The West, worrying about the rising China that may not play by international rules, encourages Beijing to carry out political and social reforms. The Chinese leaders, having no intention to do along the Western lines, have responded with nationalistic grievance. The combination of Western countries' pressure on China and China's antagonism toward the West will continue to lead to Chinese anti-Western nationalism for a long time. However, the desire for Sino-Western cooperation still exists because both have common interest. If the West understands China's culture and history better and has the courage to shun its hegemonic imperatives, and if China reduces its anti-Western propaganda, Chinese anti-Western nationalism may gradually decrease.

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