

# Pence speech was wolf crying wolf

Anti-China policy outlined by US vice-president aims to retain Washington's hegemony, making it the real aggressor

By JIA WENSHAN

On Oct 4, at the headquarters of the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC, Vice-President of the United States Mike Pence delivered a speech on the current US administration's policy toward China.

Presented in a very condescending way in the tone of a typical Christian missionary, his speech was full of fake and grapevine information about China's actions and second-guessing of its intentions in its engagement with the world, such as its Belt and Road Initiative, international media, Chinese students studying in the US, and so on.

Such suppositions were wrongfully deemed as "intelligence", on the basis of which a new and more confrontational China policy has been adopted by the US. The reason for this is that such information is likely to have been gathered from or provided by a few so-called "China hands", such as Michael Pillsbury and Peter Navarro, whose knowledge of China is not only outdated and skewed but also esoteric and unsystematic.

Moreover, their knowledge about China is not based on rigorous theoretical and methodological studying of contemporary studies, regional studies, and international/global studies. Most unacceptably, such thinking about China is characterized by both a deeply racial

bias against China and an ideological agenda against China.

The China policy Pence advocated in his speech was aggressively anti-China in nature. It not only runs the risk of escalating the US-China trade conflict into an all-out collision, but also risks bringing the entire world to the brink of disaster.

Pence first tirelessly attempted to paint China as "an aggressor", "a predator" and "a meddler" in both the domestic affairs of the US and global affairs. For the first time in the entire history of the US, except the American Revolution, the US administration is playing the victim and prey in the name of the American people in front of a world audience.

By doing so, the vice-president proposed the isolation of China or decoupling, far beyond a trade war between the US and China, and put forward the Indo-Pacific Strategy of the US, which is likely to be more military than economic in nature, as an alternative to China's Belt and Road.

The aim of the anti-China policy outlined by Pence is clearly to tame and shape China within the US' preferred trajectory and retain the US hegemony — making it the real aggressor.

It is common knowledge that the US has on average started almost one war per year during its entire history of 242 years. Acting in the name of being the world's police,

**"As the November midterm elections inch closer, the current US administration is playing the China card in a bid to win votes."**

and with close to 200 military bases still in operation on all corners of the globe, it has exerted its aggression against peoples and launched invasions of countries on all continents.

It has also been a master meddler in the elections of many countries around the world, with a record of 81 cases of such meddling from 1946 to 2000, as documented by Dov H. Levin, a Carnegie Mellon scholar. With this in mind, one can easily see that Pence's speech was merely the wolf crying wolf.

Upon further analysis, the rhetorical structure of Pence's speech belies the narrative structure of a typical Hollywood blockbuster movie: A villain emerges and his vices are all exposed; a savior, a hero, or a superhero emerges to

fight against and defeat the villain.

In this case, Pence paints China as the "villain" while styling the US as the "superhero". Such a "good versus evil" narrative is symptomatic of the simplistic Western dualistic thinking that dominates the administration.

However, most Americans are more independent thinkers than the typical fans of President Donald Trump's *The Apprentice* TV shows or the congregation that is willing to lend an ear to Pence's sermons.

What is the goal of his remarks then? His comments are intended to arouse and raise the level of the alertness of the American public toward China, so they consider it to be a threat that needs to be constrained and contained on all fronts. He tried to portray a situation that legitimized his call for a tougher approach toward China.

If Washington is in a state of anxiety about the future of the US and its future role in world affairs, the White House and its advisers on China are obsessed with China as the biggest threat toward the "America First" policy.

As the November midterm elections inch closer, the current US administration is playing the China card harder and harder in a bid to win votes. But as Ryan Hass from the Brookings Institution wrote, even though a small Trump base supports a tougher approach toward China, the American public

is less enthusiastic of a tougher approach over a long period of time, and many disapprove of the administration's launching of a trade war with China.

The 21st century must be steered into one of multilateralism and collaboration, a century of progress characterized by the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. This is what China has been doing and fighting for over decades with the increasing support of many countries around the world, both the developed and developing ones.

What should China do in response to the Trump administration's antagonism? In a conflict, when one party is in a frenzy, it is crucial that the other party remain cool-headed, so it would be inadvisable to meet aggression with aggression.

It is China's policy to create a peaceful future whose benefits are shared by the US and China, and all other countries. By rescinding its attacks on China and reversing its anti-China policy, the US can join China in realizing this shared future.

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## SOEs no threat to global rivals

It remains a fallacy that State-owned enterprises enjoy unfair advantage versus market rivals

At the closing day of the Business 20 (B20) Summit on Oct 5, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the organization submitted a document on its conclusions and recommendations for the G20 countries ahead of its summit next month. B20 is the voice of the private sector in the G20 community.

The document was criticized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and the B20 China Business Council for ignoring Chinese concerns and proposals and for its assertion that China's State-owned enterprises (SOEs) create an uneven playing field for market competition.

Two experts shared their views with *China Daily's* Yao Yuxin. Excerpts follow:

### Impact of State firms overstated



**Liu Yingqiu**, director of the Center for Private Economic Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Both the State Council, China's Cabinet, and the People's Bank of China have recently introduced some new policies to ensure fair competition and equal access to financing in the market.

After 40 years of reform and opening-up, China highly values the development of the private sector, and protection of property rights has already been written into its Constitution and laws. However,

implementation of the policy to support the private economy is done by various departments and local authorities.

But not all SOEs enjoy preferential treatment in China. Instead, as most countries do, protections are usually given to certain areas, for example, to ensure national security. In addition, it is Chinese private firms, not SOEs, that play the major role in international trade and investment. Therefore, it does not make sense to accuse SOEs of distorting the global market competition.

And it should be pointed out that many developed countries already have advanced productivity and technology, and the international competition that they deem fair is actually unfair to developing coun-

tries such as China in some fields and puts them at a disadvantage.

However, with China's economy facing downward pressure, reflection is needed on how to optimize the distribution of resources and ensure fair competition in the market, or the country's innovation and economic vitality may be discouraged. The Chinese government should take note of the concerns expressed by the global community about the country's SOEs. But the role of China's SOEs in the international economic landscape should not be overstated.

### West rewrites trade rules

Different countries have different economies. It is quite unpractical for global organizations to monitor a state's microeconomic activities.



**Mei Xinyu**, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Some international economic organizations are now falling into a trap over making trade rules based on the demands of the developed countries. Such a practice seeks to incorporate more and more businesses, so it will take a long time and finally lead nowhere. We do not need to repeatedly explain ourselves or satisfy the desire of the United States and other Western countries to rewrite the trade rules to suit themselves. Time will tell the worth of the SOEs, and the country itself will make adjustments accordingly.