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Washington Post and New York Times incite racist campaign against Chinese-Americans

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The *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, the newspapers most closely associated with the Democratic Party and the US intelligence agencies, are attempting to incite racially-motivated suspicions of Americans of Chinese ancestry.

Since the 2016 election, the Democrats have waged a hysterical campaign around unsubstantiated allegations of “foreign meddling,” initially focusing on supposed Russian efforts to intervene in American politics. But over the past year a similar sinister campaign has been mounted against China.

As part of this campaign, elements of the racist thinking that prevails in Trump’s White House are making their way into the Democratic Party and its de facto news outlets.

In May, Kiron Skinner, Trump’s head of policy planning at the Department of State, said the US conflict with China is “the first time that we will have a great power competitor that is not Caucasian.”

The *Diplomat* noted: “For the top strategic official in the US Department of State to make race a unit of analysis was shocking.” It commented that the statement prompted an outpouring of “criticism from scholars and analysts.”

In *Foreign Policy* magazine, Paul Musgrave condemned the “racist, and dangerous, lens of the new US statecraft.”

The *South China Morning Post* cited Cato Institute fellow Emma Ashford, who commented that “these ideas have been floated around in the Trump administration from day one.”

The newspaper paraphrased Ashford as observing that “Trump and senior officials in his administration had repeatedly made comments along thinly veiled racial and civilizational lines about Mexicans, Muslims and immigration.”

Last year, the *Financial Times* reported that “Stephen Miller, a White House aide who has been pivotal in developing the administration’s hardline immigration policies, pushed the president and other officials to make it impossible for Chinese citizens to study in the US.”

Miller’s proposal was, at the time, rejected as too radical. The White House adopted a more gradual approach of curtailing the duration of student visas from five years to one year, accompanied with denunciations of Chinese students and academics as potential spies.

But these racist arguments have been taken up with renewed vigor by the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, as the Democrats increasingly adopt large elements of Trump’s anti-China policy.

In a November 2 editorial, the *Washington Post* declared: “Nowhere is [Chinese President] Xi Jinping’s interest in worming his regime’s way around the world clearer than in the case of Chinese students at US universities; they reside in our physical space but in China’s cyberspace.”

In September, the *Post* published an editorial that endorsed a report by the Hoover Institution, a right-wing think tank, which argued that “it should no longer be acceptable that scholars, journalists, diplomats, and public officials from the People’s Republic of China be afforded unfettered access to American society.”

The Hoover Institution report declared that the Chinese government saw “the whole worldwide Chinese diaspora” as “overseas compatriots,” owing a measure of loyalty to “the Chinese Motherland,” as “sons and daughters of the Yellow Emperor.” It alleged that the Chinese government engaged in “racial targeting.”

The Hoover report demanded that “all American institutions—governmental and nongovernmental—that deal with Chinese actors should review their oversight and governance practices and codify and exemplify best standards of practice and due diligence.”

The *Post* editorial embraced the Hoover Institution demand, asserting that “the US State Department should respond in kind by restricting visas and access for Chinese journalists in the United States.”

This incitement has led to what can only be described as an xenophobic witchhunt at American universities and research institutions.

On Monday, the *New York Times* published a front-page lead under the inflammatory headline “Scientists With Links to China May Be Stealing Biomedical Research, US Says.” Without explanation, the headline was changed to “Vast Dagnet Targets Theft of Biomedical Secrets for China.”

The article reported that “The NIH and the FBI have begun a vast effort to root out scientists who they say are stealing biomedical research for other countries from institutions across the United States.” The targets of the investigation were “scientists of Chinese descent, including naturalized American citizens.”

The *Times* wrote: “The scale of the dragnet has sent a tremor through the ranks of biomedical researchers... some of whom say ethnic Chinese scientists are being unfairly targeted for scrutiny as Washington’s geopolitical competition with Beijing intensifies.”

Frank Wu, a law professor at the University of California Hastings School of the Law, told the *Times*: “People are living in fear... I am getting calls and emails constantly now from ethnic Chinese—even those who are US citizens—who feel threatened.”

Even as the *New York Times* report takes an ambiguously uneasy attitude to this dragnet, the newspaper has repeatedly and explicitly sought to whip up anti-Chinese hysteria, echoing the themes of the “yellow peril” myth used to justify imperialist domination of Asia in the 19th century. Last month, the *Times* warned of a “dangerous and growing threat” to American liberties by the “aggressive... Communist state.”

In an interview with the *Financial Times*, Steve Bannon, the former CEO of Trump's 2016 election campaign, declared that his efforts at "maintaining a hardline China policy" were succeeding, despite the ferocious struggle over foreign policy in Washington.

"We're winning!" declared the far-right ideologue with ties to white supremacist organizations. The *Financial Times* commented: "As evidence, he [Bannon] noted that Elizabeth Warren and other leading Democrats were moving to the right even of Mr. Trump on trade policy."

"In a country that's so divided," Bannon gloated, "the thing that pulls it together is China." In stating this, he echoed the talking points of Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, who said earlier this year that "the new China challenge provides us with an opportunity to come together across the political divide."

"At least half the battle is at home," Buttigieg added.

As hinted at by the statements of Bannon and Buttigieg, an escalation of the US-China conflict, combined with the racist incitement by all factions of the American foreign policy establishment, from the White House to the *New York Times*, will ultimately lead to domestic repression.

One final point must be made. For years, the *New York Times* has promoted and legitimized racist modes of thinking, primarily within the framework of promoting identity politics.

In 2016, the *Times* published an op-ed entitled "Behind 2016's Turmoil, a Crisis of White Identity," which argued that "experts see a crisis of white identity underlying much of the West's current turmoil."

"For decades, the language of white identity has only existed in the context of white supremacy," the *Times* asserted. "When that became taboo, it left white identity politics without a vocabulary." In an implicit effort to break that "taboo," the *Times* declared: "Western whites have a place within their nations' new, broader national identities."

It is not a far leap from accepting the neo-Nazi myth of "white identity" to endorsing the Trump administration's implicit statement that the United States is a "Caucasian" civilization and the Hoover Institution's racist classification of all ethnic Chinese as "sons and daughters of the Yellow Emperor."

The racist and xenophobic ideology that accompanied the imperialist carve-up of the world during the 19th century, and which culminated in the horrific, racially-motivated crimes of the Nazi regime, is once again re-emerging amid US imperialism's turn to "great-power conflict" against China and the threat of war it entails.

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