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# **Trump's media attacks play into China's hands, says Beijing press**

**President calls media ‘the enemy of the American people’, as Global Times says Trump denying himself an ally on ‘ideological’ issues**

Donald Trump’s war on the media means he will struggle to challenge [China](https://www.theguardian.com/world/china) over “ideological” questions such as human rights, a Communist party-controlled newspaper claimed, as the US president intensified his offensive against the press, labelling journalists “the enemy of the American people”.

In [an editorial published on Saturday morning](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1033597.shtml), China’s state-run Global Times newspaper celebrated how Trump’s early moves in office suggested he would be “less concerned about issues like human rights” – long a bone of contention between western governments and Beijing’s authoritarian rulers.

“His war with mainstream media makes it difficult for Trump to ally with the media on [the] ideological front against China,” the state-run tabloid said, adding: “Many have predicted that Trump’s presidency would exacerbate the recession of liberalism.”

Carl Bernstein was among those appalled by Trump’s latest attempt to undermine the media.

“Oh boy,” he told the New York Times. “Donald Trump is demonstrating an authoritarian attitude and inclination that shows no understanding of the role of the free press.”

Bill Bishop, said Trump’s bid to cow the media into becoming an “obedient, unquestioning” force came straight out of the Communist party playbook. “It feels like China … It’s deeply depressing and deeply disturbing and yet every day it gets worse.”

As part of a sweeping crackdown designed to tighten the Communist party’s grip on power, China’s authoritarian leader, Xi Jinping, last year demanded “absolute loyalty” from the press, telling Chinese news outlets their “surname should be party”.

“Trump’s vision would be, ‘the media’s surname is Trump’,” said Bishop. “I’m surprised he hasn’t started referring to journalists as ‘news workers’ like the Communist party does. It could be next: ‘fake news workers’”.

Trump’s shock election and his repeated vows to take a hard line with Beijing over issues such as trade, Taiwan and the South China Sea had fuelled fears that a dramatic deterioration in relations between the world’s top two economies was on the cards.

However, those concerns have receded in the wake of what the White House called an “extremely cordial” telephone call between Trump and Xi on Thursday last week in which the US president appeared to back away from threats to challenge Beijing over Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory.

Bishop said he believed the domestic turmoil Trump was now facing would distract him from making Beijing a particular target. “There is so much chaos around Trump that China is unlikely to be any kind of real focus in the near term. China benefited after 9/11, China benefited from the Iraq debacle and China looks to be benefiting from the Trump disaster.”

As Beijing basked in an unexpected strategic opportunity to boost its global standing, Bishop said the US was lumbered with “a stark raving mad president holding Monty Pythonesque press conferences”.