

Five rings and one onion

As the emperor in his new clothes paraded through the town, lining up on the street were three types of folks. First, the ignorant, refusing to see what was right in front of their eyes, they'd rather believe what they were told. Then there were the arrogant, who despite knowing the truth themselves, but believing others were ignorant of it, were busy flattering the emperor to gain his favour. Both the ignorant and the arrogant were hypocrites. Lastly, the honest child.

As the empire of our time crumbles and goes deeper into moral deficit, it stubbornly doubles down on parading its "democratic values" and "international rules-based order", stepping up its attack on the so-called threat. The empire is trying to justify its supremacy and hegemony, just like the emperor tried to prove his competence and intelligence. The ignorant and the arrogant are out again, being hypocrites.

Hypocrisies are everywhere, far and wide. As two recent events show, the empire seems desperate to defend all aspects of its supremacy which it hopes would maintain the façade of its hegemony.

Before the 2024 Summer Olympics, the USA was already accusing World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) of covering up cases of Chinese swimmers testing positive before the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. To which a WADA spokesperson said the allegations "lacked any evidence from the beginning" and "only a few individuals, with their own agenda, continue to cling to those defamatory claims".

Expectedly, when the Chinese swimmer Pan Zhanle won the Olympics 100m freestyle with a time of 46.40 seconds, breaking his own previous world record of 46.80 seconds, the ignorant came out swinging. Pan's margin of victory, 1.08 seconds, quickly drew attack from an Australian swim coach, Brett Hawke. "Not humanly possible", inferring that Pan was not clean.

This attack did not go unanswered. Some pointed out that not only China had one of the lowest doping violation rates in the world, but their athletes had also been subjected to three times more tests compared to the USA while American athletes' violation rate was six times higher. Maybe Brett Hawke was ignorant of this fact. Or was it a case of hypocrisy laid bare. Other people doubted if he would say the same words if the race was won by a non-Chinese or non-Asian athlete.

Some people also noticed that only the American swimmers all seemed to have a purple face after their race, suspecting foul play. "Team Purple Yam" and "Team Thanos", referring to the purple-colored supervillain in Marvel's movies, began to make rounds on social media. Greg Doucette, a coach and athlete in bodybuilding and powerlifting, even went as far as claiming in a YouTube video that the purple face was consistent with the use of a substance called ITPP.

Pan's coach, Denis Cotterell (also an Australian), told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the Chinese swimmers were disappointed and "they wonder whether people are against them". After all, Denis knows the extraordinary lengths the Chinese training centers go through to make sure their athletes are clean. He believed that "Australians wouldn't tolerate ... what they (Chinese athletes) have been subjected to" to minimise the odds of accidentally consuming anything that could be contaminated. His advice to Hawke, "biochemists, real researchers, will analyze Pan, like they do every Olympic champion, because they want to see what the best are doing. And they will see that he is doing something different. It is unique to him. It is idiosyncratic. But Brett (Hawke) can't see it."

It's quite a shame. Pan's gold medal could have been celebrated as a brilliant example of Australian and Chinese people working together to

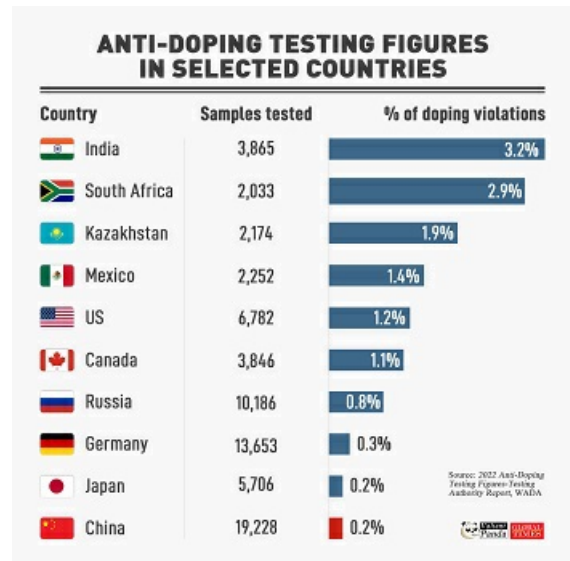


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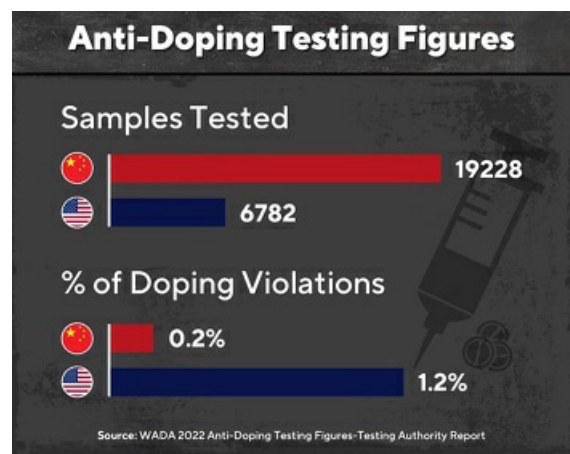


Photo: Screenshot

achieve the “humanly impossible”. But the remarks by one Australian ruined the mood. Perhaps the geopolitical tension between the countries made Hawke comfortable in using those words. The fact that Australia’s politicians and media have been at China for years certainly has the effect of emboldening a few individuals to deploy their ignorance and hypocrisy given the opportunity.



Internet memes about US swimmers getting purple faces after competing.

Hypocrisy never left the Olympics because of geopolitics. Apart from the fact that Russia wasn’t allowed to participate while Israel was, it was particularly ugly this time. Anti-doping was weaponised by the empire. To the point that WADA released a statement on 30 July 2024 saying, “the politicisation of anti-doping continues ... by the media in the United States to imply wrongdoing on the part of WADA and the broader anti-doping community. As we have seen over recent months, WADA has been unfairly caught in the middle of geopolitical tensions between superpowers”.

The next Olympics will probably be even uglier, given the host nation is America. Concerned for its athletes going to the Los Angeles 2028 and 2034 Winter Games in Salt Lake City, China has urged the USA to treat all athletes fairly and cease “long-arm jurisdiction”. “Long-arm jurisdiction” refers to the *Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act*, a US Act that allows its law enforcement to detain or sue athletes from all over the world if they are suspected of doping during any major international sporting competition that involve American athletes or have financial connections to the USA.

At least the Olympians can be spared for four years, while we continue to be bombarded with hypocrisy day in day out.

The politicians in Canberra love to scream about “foreign interference” from China. Yet soon after two senators returned from a trip to Taiwan recently, the Senate passed a motion stating, “that United Nations Resolution 2758 of 25 October 1971 does not establish the People’s Republic of China’s sovereignty over Taiwan and does not determine the future status of Taiwan in the United Nations, nor Taiwanese participation in UN agencies or international organisations”. This trip was funded by Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Australian Citizens Party called out the absurd hypocrisies contained within that one-sentence motion.

In passing that motion, the Senate was arrogant and hypocritical. They could afford to be so arrogant because they knew the ignorant wouldn’t know this motion contradicts the Australian government position on this matter, the United Nation’s affirmation of the one-China principle, as well as 183 countries whose bilateral relationship with China is based on recognising this fundamental principle.

If only the United Nations were to vote on a similar resolution again, the way Australia votes would probably be a solid slap in the face of those senators. Or in the extremely unlikely scenario where Australia voted against it, we as a country would be standing on the opposite side of the majority of the world. Not to mention that Australia, one of a handful of countries that earn a trade surplus from China, would lose net income overnight.

Fortunately, China will reserve such a significant move for a far more serious situation, sparing us the embarrassment and economic devastation for now. But if Australia continues to play the pesky little “strategic ambiguity” game, we will eventually have to sign something much firmer than the 1972 Joint Communiqué. Anything short of unequivocal support of the one-China policy just wouldn’t cut it anymore.

However, the hypocrites in our Senate were either ignorant of that or too arrogant to admit it.

Truth is, both our previous and current governments have been hypocrites on a daily basis. From supporting the PRISM program to banning Huawei for security reasons; from advocating for integrity and transparency to jailing whistleblowers; from demanding Solomon Islands release details of its police cooperation pact with China to keeping the AUKUS agreement under tight wraps even from its own citizens; from condemning Russia’s war on Ukraine to supporting Israel’s “right to self-defence”; from fearmongering about “Chinese invasion” to building military bases on our soil for American troops.

Hypocrisy, far and wide, indeed.

Trying to understand Australian foreign policy is like the monkey peeling an onion. Analysing one case after another, as it gets more unpleasant, a consistent core set of principles is still to be found.

On the other hand, some countries who are cheering on the empire and participating in the geopolitical to-and-fro do have core reasons.

For Japan, it's about the skeletons in the closet. It's about being able to keep its glorification of its invasion of East Asian countries as if the Imperial Japanese Army was liberating them from western colonisation. It's about keeping those 1,066 convicted war criminals (12 of whom are Class A war criminals) enshrined as deities in Yasukuni Shrine. It's about defending the hegemony so Japan can remain a useful tool to the US dominance in the world.

South Korea has its hands tied by a legacy issue from the Korean War. As things currently stand, the USA still can take over the control of South Korea's military in wartime. Imagine the humiliation when the one who has the ultimate control of their military was no longer the top dog.

So what's Australia's reason for being a hypocrite on the global stage? If you keep on peeling this onion called Australian foreign policy, at its centre you will find there are no Australian interests. Only stars and stripes. And tears in our eyes.

By Dio Wang, Australian Alert Service, 18 September 2024

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