

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

China accuses Western media of 'terrorism' against Asia

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By By Hamid Mir

BEIJING: China has launched an aggressive campaign against the alleged bias of the Western media as a top Chinese government representative blasted major Western TV channels and newspapers of conducting 'media terrorism' against the Asian countries.

At the 4th Asia-Europe journalists roundtable conference which ended on Thursday, CNN, the BBC, the New York Times, the Washington Post, The Times London, The Economist, French paper Le Monde and German magazine Der Spiegel were blamed by name for distorting facts and were accused of blatant bias and prejudice.

Just one day before the 7th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) here in Beijing, a comprehensive charge-sheet was presented against the Western media by Professor Li Xiguang, Executive Dean School of Journalism and Tsinghua University, Beijing, in a media conference attended by selected journalists from Asia and Europe.

Professor Li has been leading a national program for training government spokesmen and heads of the government press office since 2001. He is also the head of Pakistan Study Centre in Beijing.

He came out with documentary evidence against the Western media in the journalists' roundtable conference. Majority of the invitees in the roundtable came from Europe and Professor Li embarrassed all of them by showing evidence of blunders committed by the top Western media outlets.

He said the Western media was very sensitive about US casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan but always showed insensitivity towards the civilian casualties. He gave reference of a story released by a Western news agency and said: "American soldiers killed yesterday in Afghanistan were worthy victims for the Western media but 10 Afghan civilians killed were unworthy victims, they were not given importance and this dichotomy is creating misunderstandings between the people of two continents."

He said the Western media and NGOs always try to set the agenda of their own liking for Asian countries. They want to control Asia and if any Asian country tries to get out of their control, it becomes an immediate target of media terrorism.

Professor Li accepted that Asian countries did not have the power to advance their own agendas because the international media was controlled by the Western companies. He said: "Western spin doctors have buried the truth; today the common man in the West is not aware who is a terrorist and who is a victim because CNN and the BBC project victims as terrorists."

Professor Li taunted that "Osama bin Laden was a freedom fighter for the Western media in 1980 but is now a terrorist." He said the Western media was using the name of democracy to promote undemocratic culture in Asia. He said the 'tabloid media' of the West was promoting tabloid democracy in Asia.

He showed some fake pictures published by the New York Times and the Washington Post with a caption "Chinese police beating protesters in Tibet". He proved that those pictures were not taken in Tibet but taken in Nepal. The Western media actually used the word "Chinese police" for Nepali police and spread anti-China propaganda all over the world.

No Western journalist present in the conference questioned the allegations made by Professor Li. One French journalist from Le Monde asked Professor Li "why don't you allow Western media to visit Tibet for reporting facts". Professor Li just ignored her question. A German journalist Mercedes Bunz partly agreed with the Chinese professor but said all the Western journalists were not the same.

The roundtable ended on Thursday evening after recommending to ASEM that the media should bridge the gap between different civilisations instead of widening gaps through "disinformation".

The journalist conference was organised by Asia-Europe Foundation and the All-China Journalists Association. The conference discussed affects of globalisation on the media and especially the need for integrating the print and electronic media to face new challenges. It has been learnt that the Chinese government has started encouraging young information technology experts to form special blogs against the CNN, the BBC and other Western media organisations to counter the anti-China propaganda.