

I recently made Twitter history, and I'm wearing it like a badge of honor

I recently made Twitter history: I'm the first and only foreigner to be labeled "China state-affiliated media" by the social media giant. And I'm wearing it like a badge of honor.

There's no other option, really, since such a brandishing is decided by the powers that be and is not optional — it's either like it or lump it.

For those who disagree with me — including a bunch of US and Australian journalists and the minions at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute who reported me en masse, demanding Twitter add the label to my account — such a tag is a negative. They see it as a chance to silence my point of view, a point of view that they find increasingly inconvenient.

They probably collectively giggled with glee when it happened. They shouldn't have.

For me, and many around the world, it's wholly positive. A unique and highly coveted confirmation that I stand firmly against the Western mainstream media machine.

Broadcaster and former British politician George Galloway recently called it "the ultimate accolade," adding: "Wear it like a badge of honor, Andy!"

My follower count shot up by thousands on the day of my knighthood, and I received hundreds of messages of support. Even I was surprised by how many people around the world are turned off by Western media's skewed and unfair reports aimed at maintaining the current US-led hegemony, a status quo that places the West and their allies at the top of the pecking order.

Joe Biden mentioned recently that we are heading toward a new world order, and he is desperate to remain in first place. But that's looking

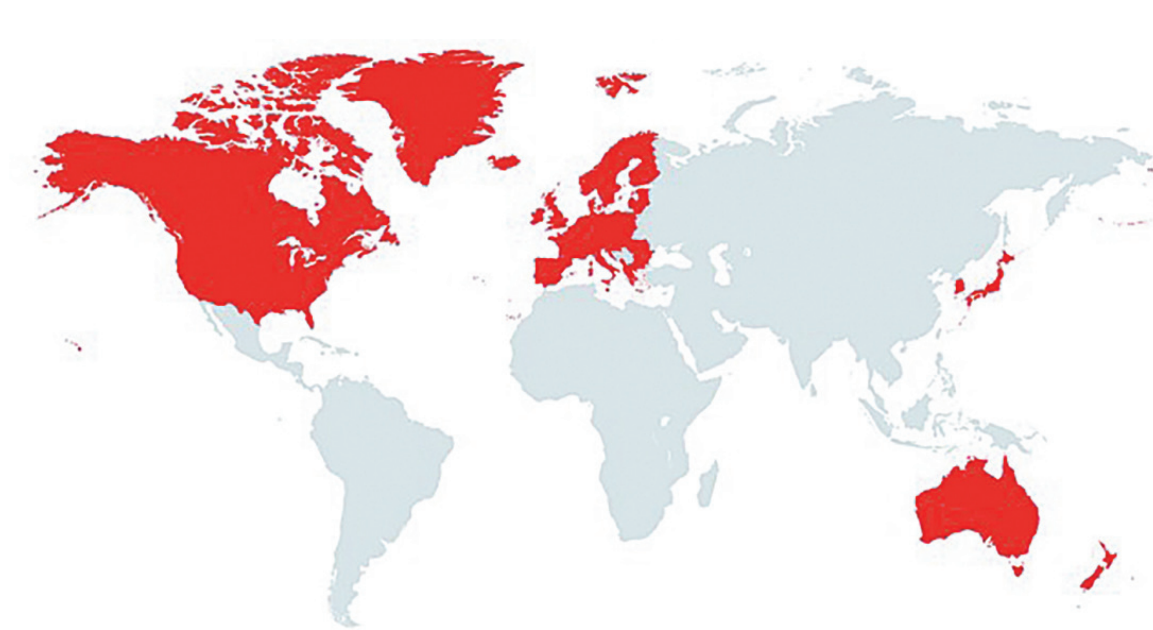
more and more unlikely as countries outside of what the United States calls "the international community" — which is, in fact, just the West and a small bunch of their allies — continue to decouple from the current order and forge their own alliances based on fairness, mutual benefit and respect.

The US president knows his country faces its biggest challenge in decades, and so does the Western media who have gone into overdrive over the past few years producing increasingly desperate reports aimed purely at portraying China and other "threats" as barbaric, backward and evil.

The US and the West in general have this fundamental belief that everything they stand for, every part of their way of life, is intrinsically virtuous and moral and right. They find it increasingly difficult to comprehend why others would dare hold different points of view, organize society in different ways, or — Bob forbid — refuse "help" from the West.

China, and any other country forging their own way into a global future using their own morals, beliefs, cultural contexts and set of conditions, are evil by default. Why? Because the West, unfortunately, translates the vast complexities of this world into a binary. Everything is black or white. Good or bad.

If a country doesn't embrace a "one person one vote" electoral system, it is automatically evil. If a country doesn't allow positive COVID-19 cases to walk free in the community, it is automatically evil. If a country decides to trade with someone other countries don't like, it is automatically evil. If a country doesn't allow its billionaires to



"The International Community," according to Western mainstream media.

influence politics and society, it is automatically evil.

I hope that, as a New Zealander who has lived in and strived to understand this country for nearly a decade, I can use my voice to educate people around the world — and especially in the West — about the fact that the world isn't black or white. It is complicated and varied and diverse.

As someone who works for "China state-affiliated media," I feel like I'm in a unique position to do so. That's despite having my Twitter account now severely limited in its reach — many don't realize that those stamped with "state-affiliated media" tags are non-searchable, can't take part in wider discussions, and are otherwise stymied. So much for freedom of speech, eh?

Contrary to the binary and stereotypical views many in the West hold around China and its media, I have never,

ever been told what to say, and only ever profess views and opinions that are my own. A decade in China and a master's degree in Chinese language and culture is nowhere near enough to understand this massive country and its long history, but it's a start.

Many "haters" online love to tell me that I'm "on the wrong side of history," a charge I can only laugh at.

It takes but a quick glance at history to see that China and the Chinese people are peaceful and peace-loving. It takes an even quicker glance at the past four decades to see that China's re-emergence — which has seen hundreds of millions lifted from poverty and a rise to the second-largest economy on the planet — has been achieved without bloodshed, without violence, and without a single bullet fired.

Can you say the same thing about the West?



ANDY BOREHAM

Editor's note:

Andy Boreham comes from New Zealand's capital city, Wellington, and has lived in China for nearly a decade. He has a master's degree in Chinese culture and language from Fudan University and is interested in all things related to contemporary Chinese society. E-mail him at andy.boreham@shanghaidaily.com and follow him on Twitter: @AndyBxxx.