

Covid-19 disinformation made in China and Russia

20200425

Table of contents

1. The Guardian: Chinese interference in EU report about disinformation
2. The EU report
3. MSN: Europas Duckmäusertum gegenüber China ist beschämend
4. MSN: Desinformation in der Coronakrise: Chinas verdeckte Einflussnahme in Deutschland
5. Die Welt: China will deutsche Beamte zu Propagandisten machen

6. Die Welt: Bundesregierung bestätigt chinesische Einflussversuche auf Ministerialbeamte

7. How China is ruthlessly exploiting the coronavirus pandemic it helped cause

1. The guardian: [...] Reuters has reported that China sought to block a European Union report alleging Beijing was spreading disinformation about the coronavirus outbreak.

The report was eventually released, albeit just before the start of the weekend Europe time and with some criticism of the Chinese government rearranged or removed, a sign of the balancing act Brussels is trying to pull off as the coronavirus outbreak scrambles international relations.

Diplomatic sources told Reuters that the report had initially been slated for release on 21 April but was delayed after a senior Chinese official contacted European officials in Beijing the same

day to tell them that, “if the report is as described and it is released today it will be very bad for cooperation”. The correspondence quoted a senior Chinese foreign ministry official, Yang Xiaoguang, as saying that publishing the report would make Beijing “very angry” and accused European officials of trying to please “someone else” – which the EU diplomats understood as meaning Washington.

The four sources said the report had been delayed as a result, and a comparison of the internal version of the report obtained by Reuters and the final version published late Friday showed several differences. For example, on the first page of the internal report shared with EU governments on 20 April, the

EU's foreign policy arm said: "China has continued to run a global disinformation campaign to deflect blame for the outbreak of the pandemic and improve its international image. Both overt and covert tactics have been observed." The public summary posted on Friday to the EU's disinformation portal, euvvsdisinfo.eu, attributed the disinformation to "state-backed sources from various governments, including Russia and to a lesser extent China". The public summary did note "significant evidence of covert Chinese operations on social media" but the reference was left to the final six paragraphs of the document.

Source:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/25/coronavirus-nearly-60-new-cases-found-on-cruise-ship-in-japan>

2. The EEAS post mentioned in the Guardian article as euvsdisinfo.eu is given below. EEAS is the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force. It was established in 2015 to better forecast, address, and respond to the Russian Federation's ongoing disinformation campaigns affecting the European Union, its Member States, and countries in the shared neighbourhood.

The source is

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/eeas-special-report-update-2-22-april/?highlight=china>

EEAS SPECIAL REPORT UPDATE: Short Assessment of Narratives and Disinformation around the COVID-19/Coronavirus Pandemic

(Updated 2 – 22 April)

April 24, 2020



Preliminary Note: The objective of this report is to provide a snapshot overview of the current trends and insights into disinformation activities related to COVID-19/Coronavirus. It does not provide a comprehensive or complete overview and focusses primarily on the external dimension, in line with the European External Action Service (eeas) mandate. The report was authored by the EEAS Strategic Communications and Information Analysis Division, which contributes to the EU's efforts to counter disinformation, including through detection, analysis and exposure of disinformation campaigns. In

addressing disinformation and identifying and analysing disinformation surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak, the EEAS is working closely with the European Commission and EU Member States. The EEAS also cooperates on this issue with international partners (G7, NATO and non-state actors). The results are regularly published on EUvsDisinfo.eu and social media channels. Insights are shared with EU institutions and EU Member States in real time, including through the Rapid Alert System on Disinformation.

Summary

As outlined in the earlier reports, disinformation, myths and misinformation continue to proliferate around the world, with potentially harmful consequences for public security, health and effective crisis communications. In this context, it is important to distinguish the very different forms of mis- and disinformation, as well as other forms of information manipulation. Not all, but some of this activity is linked to intentional and coordinated activities, often carried out by state or state sponsored actors. For example, this includes:

- **Coordinated campaigns** have been running across EU Member States and neighbouring regions, promoting false health information and disinformation about the EU and its partners, including from foreign state-controlled media and social media channels.
- **Reports indicate** that there are continued efforts at deflecting blame for the outbreak of the pandemic, involving both overt and covert tactics.
- **Analysis** by EEAS Stratcom and external groups shows that highly harmful disinformation about COVID-19/Coronavirus is going

particularly viral in smaller media markets within and outside the EU, where tech companies face lower incentives to take adequate counter-measures.

In detail: COVID-19 related disinformation, propaganda and other activities

(April 2 – 22)

As in the previous reporting period, we saw a proliferation of different misinformation, disinformation incidents, and other forms of manipulation and distortions. **Despite their potentially grave impact on public health, official and state-**

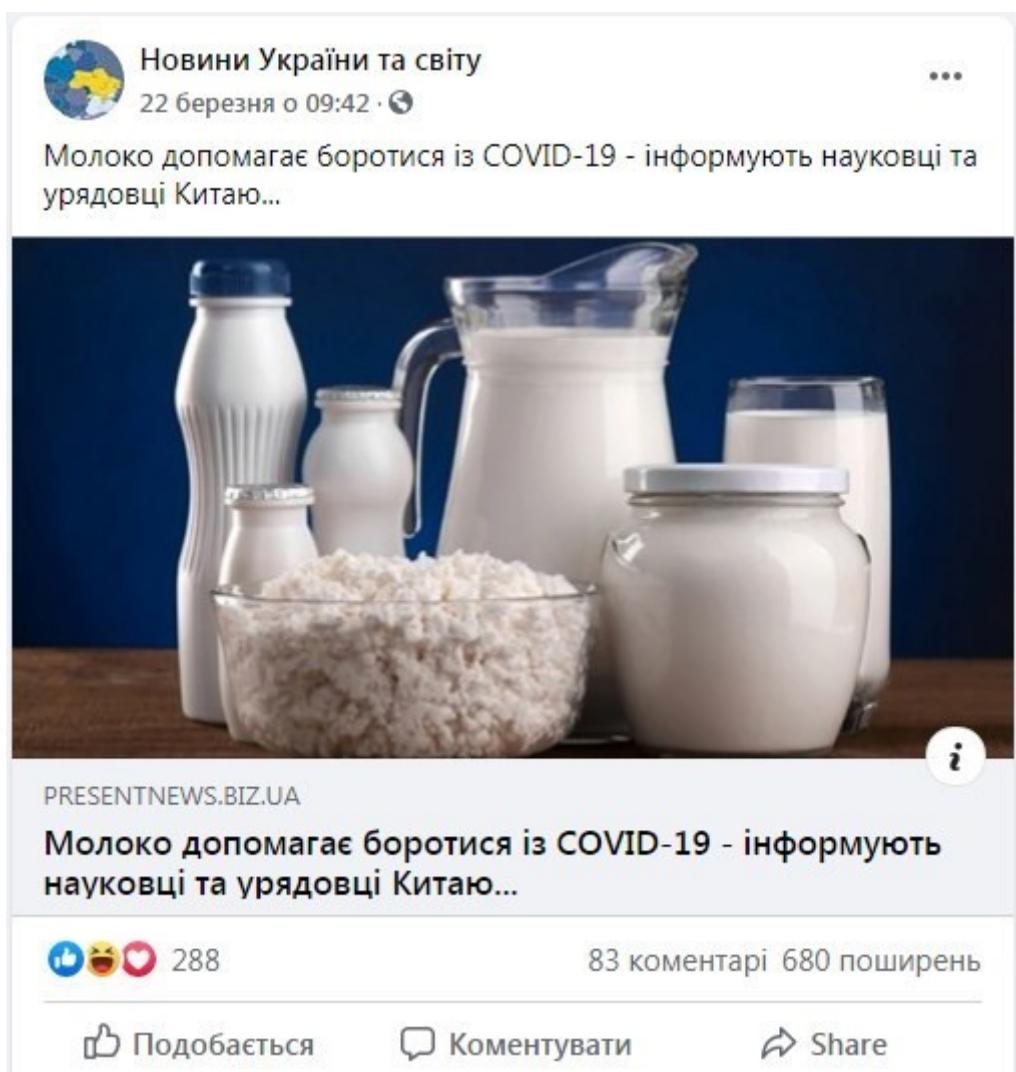
backed sources from various governments, including Russia and – to a lesser extent – China, have continued to widely target conspiracy narratives and disinformation both at public audiences in the EU and the wider neighbourhood. This update provides additional elements which are neither covering the entire information space nor are they exhaustive. They are mainly as illustration and examples of the different activities that can be observed.

Beyond targeted and sometimes state-backed campaigns, conspiracy theories and false or misleading content about

COVID-19/Coronavirus continue to proliferate widely on social media platforms. In an analysis covering five European languages and Arabic, the NGO Avaaz found that “millions of Facebook users are still being put at risk of consuming harmful misinformation on coronavirus at a large scale”. Avaaz analysed sampled content, reportedly finding that it was shared over 1.7 million times on Facebook, and viewed an estimated 117 million times^[i].

EEAS Stratcom conducted an additional analysis in nine other EU and non-EU languages, including Czech, German, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian. In all languages, false or highly misleading

content continues to go viral, even when it has been flagged by local fact-checkers. While aggregate reach figures are impossible to calculate, it is safe to say that respective content is reaching millions of users across the analysed language areas.



Post on a public page in Ukrainian claiming milk helps to fight COVID-19.

There is also a growing body of evidence on the impact of COVID-19/Coronavirus-related disinformation and narratives on public health and official crisis communication:

- **One third of people** across 6 countries (Argentina, Germany, South Korea, Spain, the UK, and the US) say they have seen “a great deal” of false or misleading information about COVID-19 on social media and messaging applications in the last week (up to 15th of April)^[ii].
- **One third** of UK citizens believe that vodka can be used as hand sanitiser.
- **According to a BBC report**, in one Iranian province more people had

died from drinking industrial-strength alcohol than from COVID-19, based on a false claim that it could protect you from the virus^{[\[iii\]](#)}.

- **Conspiracy theories** about 5G telecommunication masts allegedly facilitating the spread of COVID-19 led to vandalism and abuse of telecommunications staff in several locations in the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK^{[\[iv\]](#)}.
- **Growing numbers** are regularly holding illegal rallies in Berlin to protest “vaccination terrorism” and claiming that COVID-19 is “nothing but a simple flu”^{[\[v\]](#)}.

- Italian polling firm SWG finds that the share of respondents saying they considered China as friendly to Italy went up to 52 percent in March from 10 percent in January, while the share of respondents indicating they have trust in EU institutions went down to 27 percent in March from 42 percent in September^[vi].

Narratives and activities targeting and related to the EU

In previous reports, we have listed a number of the most recurring narratives and activities. Many of these activities are continuing. For example, in the period covered by this report, it was

confirmed that pro-Kremlin sources and Russian state media continue running a coordinated campaign with the twofold aim of undermining the EU and its crisis response, and to sow confusion about the origins and health implications of COVID-19/Coronavirus.



Kremlin-funded YouTube channel in German suggesting “the pandemic never happened” (almost 900.000 views and 5000 comments)

Kremlin-backed disinformation on COVID-19/Coronavirus continues to proliferate widely on social media, even

if it contradicts official WHO guidance and the content policies of social media companies. There is also evidence of a coordinated push by official Chinese sources to deflect any blame for the outbreak of the pandemic[vii] and publicising announcements and deliveries of bilateral assistance, with polls in certain countries showing China being perceived as more helpful in fighting the pandemic than the EU[viii]. Additional information can be found on www.euvvsdisinfo.eu

International dimension

State-controlled sources targeting audiences in the EU, Eastern Partnership countries, the Western Balkans and the

MENA region continue to portray the EU and its partners as ineffective, divided and cynical in their response to the COVID-19. As such, the pandemic is repeatedly presented as a weakness of democratic systems to effectively deal with the crisis. A coordinated disinformation from Russia and the Syrian regime is conducted to discredit the latest OPCW report, while blaming the US for the lack of medical assistance to Syrian refugees in the camps of Al Rukban and Al Hol, claiming that the US are diverting the UN aid from Syrian refugees to terrorist groups.

At the same time, we see continued and coordinated push by some actors,

including Chinese sources, to deflect any blame for the outbreak of the pandemic and highlighting bilateral assistance. Many reports confirm a high level of coordination between different parts of the Chinese system in messaging and amplification of messages across different languages and communication channels, including the use of overt and covert tactics [ix].

Many actors, including pro-Kremlin disinformation outlets, continue to share misleading and deceptive health information around COVID-19/Coronavirus with international audiences. Much of this disinformation directly contradicts the

WHO's official guidance, as well as the content policies of online platforms.

We see similar exploitative efforts around the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis to push false messages about vaccines. **These often involve extreme conspiracy theories alleging that governments will impose forced mass vaccination and nano-chip implantation to establish social control, or that vaccines are either ineffective or outright harmful.** Bill Gates is a common target in these narratives. Here are some examples:

- COVID-19 can be cured with traditional medicine instead of

vaccines, but the corporate-controlled internet says otherwise (NewsFront)

- After the pandemic, a global vaccination program with toxins and DNA-altering proteins may be forced upon the surviving population (Journal of New Eastern Outlook)
- The coronavirus pandemic may be used to introduce absolute social control through a vaccine (Strategic Culture Foundation)
- Vaccines don't heal; their production is part of the agenda for a New World Order (South Front)
- COVID-19 will allow total control of the population through forced

vaccination and chips (NewsFront Spanish)

A particularly concerning and malicious category of disinformation pertains to claims about fake cures or treatments for COVID-19/Coronavirus. Examples:

- Frequent hand washing does not protect you from COVID-19 (Sputnik Germany, RT German)
- We have nothing to lose by using hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 without testing (RT English)
- Zinc could help to kill coronavirus (RT Arabic)
- Western media in cahoots with Big Pharma ignore successful treatment of

COVID-19 with vitamin C in China (South Front)

One category of health-related disinformation attempts to downplay the pandemic and suggest that it is a hoax, for example by saying that the mortality rate is exaggerated. These messages frequently focus on attempting to undermine trust in institutions and governments by alleging that they are using the pandemic as an excuse to exert undue power and control over their citizens. Examples:

- Coronavirus pandemic is exaggerated in order to turn countries into fascist hygiene dictatorships (Sputnik Germany)

- Governments are fiddling with the numbers to exaggerate the death toll of the coronavirus (One World)
- The COVID-19 crisis is manufactured by media (South Front)
- It is too early to tell whether any extra people will die because of COVID-19 (RT English)
- Coronavirus mortality figures are insignificant (Sputnik Czech)

-

Other selected activities that are reported

Chinese officials and state media try to curtail any mentions of Wuhan as the origin of COVID-19[x], with new domestic restrictions on publishing

COVID-19 related research in China[xi]. Some state-controlled social media channels continue to spread the theory of the outbreak in Wuhan being linked to US military representatives, indicating a continued intent to spread confusion about the origin of the virus[xii].

There is also significant evidence of **covert Chinese operations** on social media. ProPublica uncovered a network on Twitter involved in a coordinated influence campaign with ties to the Chinese government[xiii]. The Daily Telegraph found Chinese state media circumventing social media platforms' political ad rules and buying advertising

that praised China's handling of the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and attacked the US^[xiv]. According to the Daily Telegraph, “the ads are part of a worldwide propaganda campaign, coordinated across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and traditional media, attempting to depict China as a global leader in the fight against Covid-19 and drown out accusations that it made the crisis worse by trying to cover up its own outbreak.”

Formiche has found a coordinated operation of Twitter bots in Italy amplifying messages of the Chinese embassy and attacking the EU^[xv]. Thousands of tweets with pro-China

hashtags published in a two-week period in March came from bots.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) has found in their analysis of COVID-19 /Coronavirus

disinformation^[xvi] that “elements of China’s diplomatic and state media messaging continue to demonstrate disinformation tactics more familiar to coordinated and persistent Russian state-sponsored disinformation. Chinese state efforts to contest the information domain are supported by coordinated, although not necessarily inauthentic, pro-China patriotic trolling”.

In the Middle East region, the **Syrian regime** is using the

COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis to keep on advancing its disinformation narrative against the EU claiming that the EU is perpetuating an “economic war” against Syria and the Syrian people with the EU sanctions crippling the health sector.

False cures continue to be a fertile ground for disinformation with **Iranian authorities** publicising a new device able to detect COVID-19/Coronavirus, widely mocked as a rebirth of the ‘complete cure device’ narrative inspired from Egypt’s case in 2014.

Also, Journalists and activists have been arrested in some countries, while the access to some independent online

media has been blocked on the ground of ‘foreign funding’; in others, licences were revoked or journalists expelled.

[i] https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/facebook_coronavirus_misinformation/

[ii]

https://www.politico.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Navigating-the-Coronavirus-infodemic.pdf?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=66ec24c50f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_15_05_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-66ec24c50f-190134993

[iii]

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/world-51984399/page/3>

[iv]

<https://www.ft.com/content/1eeedb71-d9dc-4b13-9b45-fcb7898ae9e1?desktop=true&segmentId=7c8f09b9-9b61-4fbb-9430-9208a9e233c8#myft:notification:daily-email:content>

[v]

https://amp.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/kritik-an-corona-massnahmen-das-steckt-hinter-der-querfrontdemonstration-in-berlin/25752958.html?__twitter_impression=true

[vi] <https://formiche.net/2020/04/cina-usa-sondaggio-swg-casini-ventura/>

[vii]

<https://www.recordedfuture.com/covid-19-chinese-media-influence/>

[viii] <https://dennikn.sk/1830536/fakty-vs-dojmy-ako-slovensku-realne-pomahaju-rusko-cina-a-europska-unia/?ref=mpm>

[ix]

<https://freedomhouse.org/article/beijings-coronavirus-propaganda-has-both-foreign-and-domestic-targets>

[x] <https://twitter.com/globaltimesnews/status/1241559268190343168?lang=en;>

[xi] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/11/china-clamping-down-on-coronavirus-research-deleted-pages-suggest>;

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/12/asia/china-coronavirus-research-restrictions-intl-hnk/index.html>

[xii] [CGTN Arabic](#)

[xiii]

<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-china-built-a-twitter-propaganda-machine-then-let-it-loose-on-coronavirus>

[xiv]

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/>

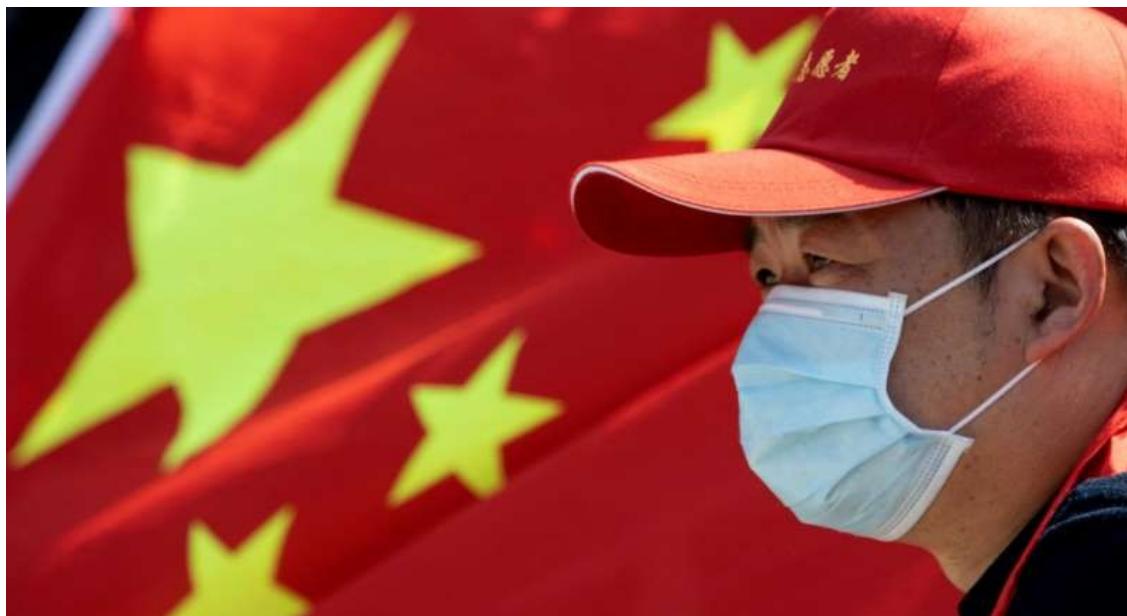
2020/04/05/china-floods-facebook-
instagram-undeclared-coronavirus-
propaganda/

[xv] <https://formiche.net/2020/03/china-unleashed-twitter-bots-covid19-propaganda-italy/>

[xvi]

<https://www.aspi.org.au/report/covid-19-disinformation>

3. Europas Duckmäusertum gegenüber China ist beschämend



Die Bundesregierung bestätigt Einflussversuch aus China, offenbar um eigene Propaganda zum Ursprung der Corona-Pandemie zu verbreiten. Die chinesische Botschaft in Berlin bestreitet solche Kontaktaufnahmen. Quelle: WELT
© WELT Die Bundesregierung bestätigt Einflussversuch aus China, offenbar um eigene Propaganda zum Ursprung der Corona-Pandemie

Clemens Wergin 20200426

Kommentar

Wenn es mit rechten Dingen zuginge, müsste Chinas kommunistische Regierung im Boden versinken vor Scham. Das Coronavirus, das die ganze Welt in Quarantäne geschickt hat, hat seinen Ursprung in China, genauso wie einst das Sars-Virus.

Statt schnell Maßnahmen dagegen zu ergreifen, hat Peking die Sache zunächst vertuscht und damit dazu beigetragen, dass sich der Infektionsherd in Wuhan zu einer globalen Pandemie ausweiten konnte.

Und inzwischen verbreiten chinesische Funktionäre, von Peking gelenkte Medien und chinesische Bots in sozialen

Medien allerlei Verschwörungstheorien, um von der Schuld Chinas abzulenken, während Peking gleichzeitig an der Oberfläche versucht, mit Hilfslieferungen um Sympathien zu werben.

Peking führt zurzeit weltweit eine Propagandaschlacht der Lügen. Und mobbt etwa westliche Regierungen, damit die sich mit Kritik an Peking zurückhalten und es dem Regime so ermöglichen, das eigene Narrativ effektiver zu verbreiten.

So hat die Bundesregierung gerade einen Bericht der WELT AM SONNTAG von vor zwei Wochen bestätigt, die schrieb, dass chinesische

Offizielle versucht haben, in Bundesministerien eine chinafreundliche Lesart der Corona-Krise durchzudrücken.

Tatsächlich hält sich die Bundesregierung weiter merklich zurück mit Kritik an Peking. Chinesischen Funktionären ist es laut „New York Times“ auch gelungen, einen EU-Bericht, der chinesische Versäumnisse und Propagandabemühungen deutlich benannte, zu entschärfen.

Solches Duckmäusertum ist beschämend für den Westen. Es ist höchste Zeit, einzugestehen, dass China nicht zu jenem „guten Mitbürger“ der Weltgemeinschaft geworden ist, den wir

uns erhofft haben. Das Regime in Peking ist ein Feind von Demokratie und freien Gesellschaften. Und die jüngsten Mobbingversuche zeigen, dass Peking auch ein Gegner eines auf Wahrheit basierenden internationalen Diskurses ist und Methoden der Beeinflussung anwendet, die den russischen ähneln. Während unsere Forscher derzeit nach Antikörpern gegen das aus China stammende Coronavirus suchen, die uns helfen können, immun gegen das Virus zu werden, sollten wir nicht vergessen, dass unsere Gesellschaften auch wirksame Antikörper brauchen gegen

wirtschaftliche und politische
Einflussnahme von Diktaturen.

China versucht immer unverfrorener,
Dominanz in der Welt auszuüben.
Höfliches Wegducken wird uns da nicht
weiterhelfen.

Quelle:

[https://www.msn.com/de-de/nachrichten/
kommentare/europas-duckm%C3%A4usertum-gegen%c3%bcber-
china-ist-besch%C3%A4ftigt/ar-
BB13dWCc](https://www.msn.com/de-de/nachrichten/kommentare/europas-duckm%C3%A4usertum-gegen%c3%bcber-china-ist-besch%C3%A4ftigt/ar-BB13dWCc)

4. Desinformation in der Coronakrise: Chinas verdeckte Einflussnahme in Deutschland

Claudia von Salzen

20200426

*Chinesische Diplomaten
wollten deutsche Regierungs-
beamte zu positiven Äußerun-
gen über Chinas Umgang mit*

der Pandemie bewegen. Das bestätigt die Bundesregierung.



© Foto: Mike Wolff Die chinesische Botschaft in Berlin.

Für ausländische Diplomaten gehören Kontakte zu Regie-

rungsvertretern ihres Gastlandes zum Alltagsgeschäft.

Doch die Bemühungen Chinas in der Coronakrise gingen offenbar weit über die üblichen Gepflogenheiten hinaus: Die Vertreter der Volksrepublik versuchten, über Kontakte zu Beamten verschiedener Bundesministerien Einfluss auf die deutsche Bewertung

des chinesischen Umgangs mit der Pandemie zu nehmen.

Die Bundesregierung habe „Kenntnis von einzelnen Kontaktaufnahmen chinesischer Diplomaten mit dem Zweck, öffentliche positive Äußerungen über das Coronavirus-Management der Volksrepublik China zu bewirken“, heißt es in einer Antwort des Innenministeriums auf eine

parlamentarische Frage der
Grünen-Bundestagsabgeordneten
Margarete Bause.
Damit bestätigte die
Bundesregierung einen
Bericht der „Welt am
Sonntag“, die auch über die
Antwort zuerst berichtet hatte.
Demnach hatte das
Auswärtige Amt im März
andere Ministerien darüber
informiert, dass chinesische

Diplomaten Beamte und Mitarbeiter von Bundesministerien kontaktiert hätten, um die deutsche Position zu beeinflussen. Zugleich soll das Amt dringend davon abgeraten haben, auf diese Anfragen einzugehen. Die chinesische Botschaft dementierte den Bericht über die versuchte Einflussnahme.

In seiner Antwort auf die parlamentarische Frage betonte Günter Krings (CDU), parlamentarischer Staatssekretär im Bundesinnenministerium, die Erfolglosigkeit der chinesischen Versuche: „Diesen Aufforderungen ist die Bundesregierung nicht nachgekommen.“ Allerdings enthält die Regierungsantwort kein Wort

der Kritik an China – Krings hebt sogar die Leistungen der Volksrepublik im Kampf gegen das Coronavirus positiv hervor. Es gebe einen regelmäßigen Austausch mit chinesischen Diplomaten.

„Die Bundesregierung hat dabei – nicht auf Aufforderung – die Anstrengungen gewürdigt, die die chinesische Regierung insbesondere seit dem

23.Januar zur Eindämmung von Covid-19 unternommen hat.“ Transparenz spielle bei der erfolgreichen Bekämpfung der Pandemie eine zentrale Rolle, dies habe die Bundesregierung gegenüber der chinesischen Regierung deutlich gemacht.

Grünen-Politikerin wirft der Bundesregierung „Leiseterei gegenüber China“ vor

Die Grünen-Abgeordnete
Bause nannte die Antwort des
Innenministeriums
„enttäuschend“ und warf der
Bundesregierung
„Leisetreterei gegenüber
China“ vor. „Es wäre
angemessen, den chinesischen
Botschafter einzubestellen,
sich gegen die versuchte
Einflussnahme zu verwahren
und auf die sofortige

Beendigung dieser Vorgehensweise zu bestehen“, sagte die Menschenrechtspolitische Sprecherin der Grünen dem Tagesspiegel.

Der Botschafter wurde allerdings nicht ins Auswärtige Amt einbestellt. Nach Tagesspiegel-Informationen ist dies auch nicht geplant.

Auf die Frage, was die Regierung unternehme, um der chinesischen Propagandapolitik entgegenzuwirken, antwortete Staatssekretär Krings lediglich: „Zur Stärkung von Resilienzen gegenüber Einflussaktivitäten jeglicher Art wird seitens der Bundesregierung u.a. der Ansatz verfolgt, ein größeres

Bewusstsein für das Thema Einflussnahme zu schaffen.“ Auch an dieser Stelle fiel kein kritisches Wort über das chinesische Vorgehen.

Nach Einschätzung des Auswärtigen Dienstes der EU setzt China in der Coronakrise auf Desinformation. In einem am Freitag veröffentlichten Bericht heißt es, verschiedene Regierungen, „einschließlich

Russland und – in geringerem Ausmaß – China“, zielten weiterhin mit Verschwörungstheorien und Desinformationen auf die Öffentlichkeit in der EU.“ Es gibt auch Beweise für einen koordinierten Vorstoß offizieller chinesischer Quellen, von jeglicher Schuld am Ausbruch der Pandemie abzulenken.“ Teil dieser Kampagne sei auch die

Veröffentlichung von Berichten über Hilfslieferungen.

Ursprünglich hatten Europas Diplomaten noch klarere Worte für das Vorgehen der Volksrepublik gefunden. In einem Entwurf des Berichts hieß es: „China hat die globale Desinformationskampagne fortgesetzt, um von der

Schuld am Ausbruch der Pandemie abzulenken und sein internationales Image zu verbessern.“ Dabei würden sowohl offene als auch verdeckte Taktiken eingesetzt.

Diese Passage fehlt jedoch in dem nun veröffentlichten Bericht. China habe Druck ausgeübt, und daraufhin hätten Vertreter der EU den Text abgeschwächt, berichtete

die „New York Times“ am Freitag. Der Sprecher des Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienstes (EAD), Peter Stano, wies dies als „unrichtig“ zurück. Wer den Bericht des EAD mit offenen Augen lese, werde sehen: „Wir beugen uns keinerlei ausländischem Druck und machen unseren Job, Desinformation und deren Akteure aufzudecken.“

Unstrittig ist allerdings offenbar, dass China Druck machte, um auf den Bericht der europäischen Diplomaten Einfluss zu nehmen und den Text in der ursprünglichen Fassung zu verhindern.

Quelle: <https://www.msn.com/de-de/nachrichten/politik/desinformation-in-der-coronakrise-chinas-verdeckte-einflussnahme-in-deutschland/ar-BB13e5pR?>

5. China will deutsche Beamte zu Propagandisten machen

**Annelie Naumann,
Christian Schweppe**

20200412

直播

CCTV 13

新闻



湖北武汉

8日零时起武汉解除离汉离鄂通道管控

零点到来 离汉通道准时打开



00:12
4月7日 23:59

02:13

CCTV 新闻 由于新冠肺炎疫情在日本蔓延，日本首相安倍晋三4月7日下午发布紧急事态宣言

Elf Wochen war die chinesische Stadt Wuhan, in der die Corona-Krise ausgebrochen war, abgeriegelt. Nun wurde die Isolationszeit beendet - und Tausende Bewohner nutzten die Aufhebung des Ausreiseverbot. Quelle: WELT/Jana Wochnik-Sachtleben

China will seine Corona-Geschichte umschreiben – auch in Deutschland: Der Verfassungsschutz registriert eine „intensivierte Propagandapolitik“ Pekings. Auch das Auswärtige Amt

warnt Regierungsmitarbeiter vor den Anfragen chinesischer Vertreter.

Peking setzt Diplomaten auf deutsche Regierungsmitarbeiter mit einer speziellen Mission an. Wie nun bekannt wird, haben Vertreter der Volksrepublik Beamte und Mitarbeiter deutscher Bundesministerien kontaktiert, damit sich diese positiv über das Coronavirus-Management der Volksrepublik äußern.

Nach Informationen von WELT AM SONNTAG hat das Auswärtige Amt im März in einem Schreiben andere Ministerien darüber informiert, dass es zu entsprechenden Anfragen von chinesischer Seite gekommen sei. Das deutsche Außenministerium gab eine

eindeutige Handlungsempfehlung: Jenen Anfragen soll nicht entsprochen werden.

Das Auswärtige Amt wollte auch nach mehrmaliger Nachfrage den Sachverhalt weder kommentieren noch dementieren.

„Chinesische Offizielle betreiben im Hinblick auf Corona eine intensivierte Informations- und Propagandapolitik“, teilte indes das Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz auf Nachfrage mit.

Peking versuche, die Rolle Chinas als Ursprungsland des Virus in Zweifel zu ziehen und seinen Einsatz als Hilfeleistender für westliche Länder hervorzuheben, „um die Volksrepublik als verlässlichen Partner und

besonnenen Krisenbewältiger darzustellen“. China hatte zum Beispiel Frankreich, Italien und Deutschland mit Schutzausrüstung im Kampf gegen die Ausbreitung des Virus unterstützt.

Über LinkedIn deutsche Abgeordnete kontaktiert

Es ist nicht das erste Mal, dass chinesische Vertreter auf deutschem Boden Beeinflussungsversuche starten. Der Verfassungsschutz in Nordrhein-Westfalen hatte 2018 von „zahlreichen Kontaktversuchen“ zu Mitarbeitern aus Ministerien und Behörden berichtet. Bekannt ist mittlerweile auch, dass chinesische Dienste 2017 über das

Karrierenetzwerk LinkedIn deutsche Abgeordnete, Diplomaten und Mitarbeiter von Behörden angesprochen haben.

Über die erhöhte Propagandatätigkeit hinaus seien die Aktivitäten chinesischer Nachrichtendienste in Deutschland „unverändert und unabhängig von der aktuellen Corona-Krise auf einem hohen Niveau“, heißt es aus dem Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz.

„Lobbyisten für chinesische Interessen“

Hierzu zählten auch Bemühungen, „Entscheidungsträger aus dem politischen Umfeld als ‚Lobbyisten‘ für

chinesische Interessen einzuspannen und über diese in Deutschland Einfluss im Sinne der politischen Agenda der Kommunistischen Partei“ auszuüben. Mitte Januar dieses Jahres war etwa bekannt geworden, dass die Bundesanwaltschaft gegen einen ehemaligen deutschen Diplomaten und EU-Kommissionsbeamten wegen des Verdachts der Spionage für die autoritär geführte Volksrepublik ermittelt.

Die chinesische Botschaft in Berlin kommentierte entsprechende Presseanfragen nicht, allerdings beantwortet sie kritische Nachfragen so gut wie nie. Erst kürzlich wies Peking

mehrere US-Journalisten führender amerikanischer Zeitungen aus. Kritische chinesische Reporter verschwinden immer wieder, werden von ihren Angehörigen als vermisst gemeldet. Im Ranking der Nichtregierungsorganisation „Reporter ohne Grenzen“ rangiert China auf Platz 177 von 180.

Nicht nur in Europa inszeniert sich Peking in der Corona-Krise. Der taiwanesische Geheimdienst berichtete am Freitag von chinesischen Internet-Trollen, die sich als Taiwanesen ausgegeben und den Chef der Weltgesundheitsorganisation rassistisch angegriffen hätten.

„Wir schreiben gemeinsam ein Märchen“

Um Pekings Sicht der Dinge zu verbreiten, scheint ausgerechnet Twitter bei chinesischen Diplomaten immer beliebter zu werden – ein soziales Netzwerk, das im eigenen Land gesperrt ist. Allein im vergangenen Jahr haben mehr als 30 chinesische Diplomaten, Botschaften und Konsulate Twitter-Kanäle eröffnet, unter ihnen auch die chinesische Botschaft in Berlin.

Am Donnerstag twitterte die Botschaft Chinas in Berlin: „Wir schreiben gemeinsam ein Märchen über Zusammenhalt in schwierigen Zeiten:

20.000 Atemschutzmasken, die von der chinesischen Partnerstadt Taizhou zur Unterstützung geschickt worden waren, werden am 6. April ans Klinikum Hanau ausgeliefert.“

Wenige Tage zuvor, am 1. April, veröffentlichte die diplomatische Vertretung allerdings eine Karikatur, die nahelegt, dass westliche Medien – wohl absichtlich – ein falsches China-Bild vermitteln würden. Chinas Botschafter in Berlin, Wu Ken, war es übrigens, der der deutschen Regierung im vergangenen Jahr mit Konsequenzen gedroht hatte, sollte der chinesische Technologiekonzern Huawei beim 5G-

Aufbau in Deutschland ausgeschlossen werden.

Quelle:

<https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article207210613/Corona-China-versucht-deutsche-Beamte-zu-Lob-zu-draengen.html>

6. Bundesregierung bestätigt chinesische Einflussversuche auf Ministerialbeamte

**Christian Schweppe, Annelie
Naumann 20200426**

Das Bundesinnenministerium
hat auf eine Anfrage aus dem
Bundestag hin erklärt,
Kenntnis von
Kontaktaufnahmen

chinesischer Diplomaten zu deutschen Beamten zu haben. Damit bestätigt die Regierung einen Bericht der WELT AM SONNTAG, nach dem sich China an die Beamten gewandt hatte, um mit deren Hilfe offenbar eigene Propaganda zum Ursprung der Corona-Pandemie zu verbreiten.

Die chinesische Botschaft in Berlin hatte den Bericht

öffentlich abgestritten und von „unwahren“, gar „verantwortungslosen“ Unterstellungen gesprochen. In ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage der Bundestagsabgeordneten Margarete Bause (Die Grünen) widerspricht die Bundesregierung diesen chinesischen Behauptungen nun deutlich.

Die Kontaktversuche aus China erfolgten demnach „mit dem Zweck, öffentliche positive Äußerungen über das Coronavirus-Management der Volksrepublik China zu bewirken“. Hierfür wurden unter anderem Beamte und Mitarbeiter in Bundesministerien kontaktiert, was das Auswärtige Amt auf den Plan rief.



China riegelte die besonders vom Coronavirus betroffene Provinz Hubei zeitweise komplett ab. Quelle: REUTERS

Die Bundesregierung erklärt, Aufforderungen zu einer betont positiven Sichtweise auf die Rolle Chinas nicht nachgekommen zu sein. „Aus Sicht der Bundesregierung

spielt Transparenz eine zentrale Rolle bei der erfolgreichen Bekämpfung der Pandemie“, hieß es, dies habe man gegenüber der Volksrepublik „deutlich gemacht“.

Verzicht auf grundsätzliche Kritik – Grüne verärgert
Auf Grundsatzkritik an der Volksrepublik allerdings verzichtete die

Bundesregierung vorerst und würdigte Anstrengungen, die China zur Eindämmung des Virus unternommen habe.

Man stehe „im Rahmen der umfassenden strategischen Partnerschaft zwischen Deutschland und der Volksrepublik China zu zahlreichen Themen in engem Kontakt“ mit Peking. Dazu zähle der regelmäßige

Austausch mit chinesischen Diplomaten.

Im Bundestag sorgt diese Haltung für Unmut, im Ausschuss für humanitäre Hilfe sind die chinesischen Einflussversuche bereits Thema gewesen.

Die Sprecherin für Menschenrechte der Grünen-

Fraktion, Margarete Bause,
sagte WELT AM SONNTAG:
„Die Antwort des
Innenministeriums zeigt
einmal mehr die Leisetreterei
der Bundesregierung
gegenüber China. Der
Europäische Auswärtige
Dienst zählt China explizit zu
den Ländern, die in Sachen
Corona für Desinformations-
kampagnen und Verschwör-
ungstheorien stehen.“ Die

Bundesregierung sei nicht einmal bereit, sich deutlich gegen Beeinflussungsversuche aus Peking zu verwahren.

Die Grünen fordern die Einsetzung einer unabhängigen internationalen Kommission, um die Entstehung des Virus und Vertuschungsmaßnahmen Chinas zu untersuchen. Das Auswärtige Amt gab auf

Nachfrage lediglich an, „in engem Austausch auf allen Ebenen“ mit China zu stehen, auch zur Lungenkrankheit Covid-19.

Der chinesische Botschafter in Deutschland ist nach Informationen der WELT AM SONNTAG bisher nicht wegen der Propagandaversuche einbestellt worden.

„Chinesische Offizielle betreiben im Hinblick auf Corona eine intensivierte Informations- und Propagandapolitik“, hatte indes zuletzt das Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz auf Nachfrage mitgeteilt.

Quelle:

<https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article207501567/Coronavirus-Bundesregierung->

bestaetigt-chinesische- Einflussversuche.html

7. How China is ruthlessly exploiting the coronavirus pandemic it helped cause

“Everything they’re doing is a full-court press,” one expert told Vox.

By Alex Ward 20200428

The coronavirus pandemic that rages across the globe is a fire China helped light. And now, while Beijing grasps a fire hose with two hands, it’s also planting a boot on the world’s neck.



Serbian Minister of Mining and Energy Aleksandar Antić and Chinese Ambassador to Serbia Chen Bo pose for a photo in front of an airplane carrying equipment for new Serbian Covid-19 labs in Belgrade, Serbia, on April 15, 2020. Nemanja Cabric/Xinhua via Getty Images

The Chinese government spent weeks denying and downplaying the severity of its growing coronavirus outbreak that eventually spread to the rest of the world. That obfuscation cost nations

crucial time in preparing for and potentially curbing the damage of Covid-19. Some experts Vox spoke with believe President Xi Jinping's regime should be held accountable for the more than 3 million infections and 200,000 deaths that have taken place worldwide.

But China isn't letting the crisis go to waste. Instead of looking to make amends, Beijing is taking advantage of the chaos to pursue its long-term foreign policy goals more aggressively.

“When it sees opportunities, China moves to exploit them,” said Bonnie Glaser, director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in

Washington, DC. “And we are in a moment where the Chinese definitely see opportunities.”

China has capitalized on the world’s distraction to claim sovereignty over disputed islands in the South China Sea, intimidate Taiwan, and assert more authority over Hong Kong in an attempt to quash the pro-democracy movement there.

It’s taken advantage of vulnerable countries in Africa that are struggling to cope with the coronavirus and its economic impact by offering much-needed debt relief — but only if those countries provide lucrative national assets as collateral.

And after the US suspended funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) for allegedly being too cozy with Beijing, the Chinese government pledged millions of dollars in additional support for the organization, giving China even more influence in the global health agency and allowing the country to portray itself as the new champion of multilateralism.

Amid all this, China has launched a global disinformation campaign to deflect blame for the virus onto other countries — for instance, alleging the virus really originated in the US, or maybe in Italy. It also sent needed medical equipment and doctors to

heavily impacted countries where it seeks to expand its influence, allowing Beijing to play the hero of the pandemic instead of the villain.



Police stand off with protesters at the International Finance Center shopping mall on April 28, 2020, in Hong Kong.
Anthony Kwan/Getty Images

“Everything they’re doing is a full-court press,” said Michael Sobolik, an expert on China at the American Foreign

Policy Council. “Across the board, China is pushing hard.”

Experts say this is all part of Xi’s broader strategy to dislodge America as the world’s sole superpower and expand China’s reach around the world. In other words, he’s merely exploiting the coronavirus crisis to achieve his aims even faster.

Make China Great Again, but faster

Andrew Erickson, an expert on China at the US Naval War College, has no doubts about what Xi and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) want.

“To the extent that any nation has a grand strategy, China surely does. The

vision is no secret: Xi Jinping vows to make China great again,” Erickson wrote for [War on the Rocks](#) in October 2019. “Xi’s strategy for a modern China of unprecedented power and influence requires recapturing lost glories at home and abroad.”

Xi himself has said as much. During a [major speech in October 2017](#), he named specific timelines for his grandiose goals: China would have a “moderately prosperous society in all respects” by 2021; it would be a world leader in technology and military modernization by 2035; and by 2049, Beijing’s decades-long dispute with Taiwan would be resolved.

Those are big promises made on tight deadlines. It's no surprise, then, that Xi wouldn't waste a chance to make progress on those plans. "If you have the opportunity to step on the gas, you seize it," said Aaron Friedberg, a China expert at Princeton University.

And seize it China has.

On April 14, President Donald Trump announced the US would temporarily halt funding to the WHO, arguing that the global health body is too "China centric" and was too lenient on Beijing in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

And just two weeks later, China publicly pledged an additional \$30 million in funding to the WHO.



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a speech during a banquet marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on September 30, 2019, in Beijing. Naohiko Hatta-Pool/Getty Images

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said Beijing donated the money because it was “defending the

ideals and principle of multilateralism and upholding the status and authority of the United Nations.”

Few believe it was an altruistic move. Rather, most say it was opportunistic: The US left a leadership void, and China quickly stepped in to fill it. With just a (relatively) small donation, Beijing gets to look like a staunch advocate of global cooperation and a responsible partner in the public health response to the coronavirus, in contrast to the US.

“Thirty million is drop in the bucket,” Sobolik said. “If they wanted to contribute more, they absolutely could contribute more. But it’s really a signal

to the White House and the world that the US may not have as much clout as it thinks.”

America’s pause on WHO funding, then, played right into China’s hands. “It’s a gift from the Trump administration,” Glaser told me.

Xi has also used the distraction of the coronavirus pandemic to exert more authority in Hong Kong and crack down on the pro-democracy movement there.

On April 18, more than a dozen pro-democracy activists and lawmakers were arrested in Hong Kong, marking the largest single-day roundup in years. One of those detained was Martin Lee,

the 81-year-old founder of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, who has since blasted Beijing for trying to impose complete authority over the city.

“Hong Kong people now face two plagues from China: the coronavirus and attacks on our most basic human rights,” he wrote in the Washington Post three days after his arrest. “We can all hope a vaccine is soon developed for the coronavirus. But once Hong Kong’s human rights and rule of law are rolled back, the fatal virus of authoritarian rule will be here to stay.”

Beijing has also started to publicly weigh in on domestic Hong Kong politics in a new way. For instance, in

mid-April, the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, the Chinese state agency that closely oversees Hong Kong, criticized some of the city's lawmakers for filibustering debates, which it said has led to a backlog of legislation.

Taken together, experts say Beijing is using the coronavirus as a cover to cement its authoritarian rule over Hong Kong and stamp out the pro-democracy movement once and for all.

China is also trying to spread that rule elsewhere.

Beijing has long laid claim to disputed islands in the South China Sea. To stake its claim, Chinese naval vessels have pushed other claimants, like the

Philippines and Vietnam, out of the area so it can have full control of the islands and the oil and natural gas resources around them.



Chinese fishing vessels in the South China Sea on November 18, 2019. Artyom Ivanov/TASS via Getty Images

That practice hasn't stopped during the pandemic. Earlier this month, for example, a Chinese ship sank a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South

China Sea and claimed other regional islands for itself.

“China may be hoping to both send a message to other countries involved in the South China Sea that China will not back down under any circumstances, and send a message to a domestic population about the strong leadership of the party,” Kelsey Broderick, a China analyst at the Eurasia Group consulting firm, told [CNBC](#) on April 13.

China’s military, meanwhile, continues to place pressure on Taiwan, including by regularly flying [fighter jets near Taiwanese airspace and sending flotillas close to the island](#). This is relatively normal behavior — Beijing puts on this

kind of show of force all the time — but the US clearly sees an extra layer of threat in these times. [US warships](#), which usually sail by Taiwan about once a month, have been in the area at least twice in April.

And China is also flexing its muscles on other continents, especially in [Africa](#). Many African governments struggling to respond to the coronavirus are asking for debt relief so they can invest more in health care, sanitation, food, and social programs to keep millions of people safe during the pandemic.

China, one of the continent's largest creditors, is balking at the idea of large-scale debt relief out of fear it might set a

bad precedent of debt forgiveness. And according to [the Wall Street Journal](#), Chinese leaders have asked officials from at least one country, Zambia, to provide collateral — in this case, Zambian copper-mining assets — in exchange for economic help.

Experts Vox spoke with aren't surprised by this, as they say China has a very transactional view of foreign policy: If Beijing gives something, it gets something. [Giving African countries billions of dollars](#) in economic loans only to never see a return on that investment would be anathema to how Chinese officials view the purpose of loans.

But acting this way in the time of Africa's need may sour once-budding Sino-African relations. It doesn't help that racism against Africans in China has increased during the coronavirus crisis, leading many to be barred from hotels, restaurants, shops, and more.

Frank Nnabugwu, a Nigerian businessman who lives in the city of Guangzhou, said authorities wouldn't let him return to his rented home. “The security guards said to us: ‘No foreigners are allowed,’” Nnabugwu told the Guardian on Monday. “I was upset, very upset. I slept on the street.”

Put together, it's clear China hasn't reevaluated its foreign policy during a

dangerous period for which it shares blame. It's instead redoubled efforts to see it come true. That, in effect, is China on the offensive.

But Beijing is also using other measures — mainly a large-scale disinformation campaign — to play defense.

China is using Russia's disinformation playbook to deflect blame. It's not working.

As calls for China to take responsibility for the pandemic grow, Beijing has chosen to push back in a major way. And to do that, it's taken a page out of Russia's playbook, said Jessica Brandt,

an expert on Chinese disinformation at the German Marshall Fund.

First, China is peddling conspiracy theories about the virus's beginnings. It's well established that the coronavirus originated in Wuhan, China, before it spread to the rest of the world. Yet Chinese officials, including Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian, have falsely suggested the coronavirus first sprang up in the United States. The same goes for Italy, as Chinese propaganda has also pointed to the European country as a potential starting point for the disease.

*2/2 CDC was caught on the spot.
When did patient zero begin in*

US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!

pic.twitter.com/vYNZRFPWo3

— Lijian Zhao 赵立坚 (@zlj517)
March 12, 2020

This is a classic Russian disinformation technique, Brandt said. Instead of coming up with a new theory based on facts, the regime repeats a false claim until it makes enough people doubt the truth.

“For China to be using official channels to promote conspiracy theories is new,” Brandt told me.

Brandt also noted that there’s been a 300 percent increase in the number of Chinese officials on Twitter over the past year, starting around the time the Hong Kong protests began in spring 2019. That’s likely part of the country’s effort to better spread disinformation far and wide.

Chinese officials are also sending medical equipment and physicians to countries in Europe that are struggling to deal with coronavirus outbreaks. The regime made a big deal about offering support to Italy in March, when it had

one of the world's worst outbreaks. It has also sent supplies and resources to [Serbia, the Netherlands, and Spain.](#) Beijing's reason for doing all of this isn't pure altruism or even a recognition of its own responsibility in helping create the crisis in the first place. Rather, experts say China is trying to counter negative press about its early mishandling of the virus outbreak. Instead of being the irresponsible government whose failures unleashed a deadly pandemic on the world, China is trying to look like the world's savior, graciously providing critical supplies to countries in need.

But the countries it has chosen to help aren't just the ones who need it the most. They're also countries that Beijing has been working to build close ties with for the past several years — both to expand its economic reach in Europe and to weaken US alliances in the region.

Italy, for example, was the first major European country to sign on to China's Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing's trillion-dollar plan to build infrastructure and economic ties across three continents in order to dominate global trade.

By providing Italy and other key European nations with critical aid during

the pandemic, China further cements its ties to those countries and chips away at their relationships with the US.

“China and Europe will inevitably get closer,” the Chinese Ministry of National Defense’s Zhou Bo wrote for the [South China Morning Post](#) last week. “A divided Europe, further dismayed by the worsening transatlantic relationship, will naturally look east.” All in all, China is doing only things that help China — nothing more.

“Communist Party leaders are working overtime to polish China’s image as a global leader in the response to the Covid-19 crisis,” Jennifer Staats, an

expert on the country at the US Institute of Peace, told me.

The problem for China, though, is that the plan has started to backfire.

China’s methods make cooperation, including with the US, nearly impossible

China’s global PR campaign has yielded some fruit.

“We should thank them with all our hearts, they have proven to be great friends of Serbia and Serbs,” Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on March 21, after China delivered medical equipment to the country. “I am waiting

for Xi to visit Serbia and hundreds of thousands of people will welcome him.”



Guido Bilancini, consul general of Italy in Chongqing, poses with Zhang Yongwu, director general of the Foreign Affairs Office in Chongqing, in front of boxes of donated masks on March 19, 2020, in China. Zhou Yi/China News Service via Getty Images

Other European officials, including Italy's foreign minister, have also helped praise on Beijing. But some countries

are starting to get fed up with Beijing’s pressure tactics and posturing.

Take Australia. When the Australian government launched a global effort to open an inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus outbreak, Chinese officials threatened economic retaliation.

“Maybe the ordinary people will say, ‘Why should we drink Australian wine? Eat Australian beef?’” Cheng Jingye, China’s ambassador to Australia, said in a recent interview with the Australian Financial Review. “The parents of the students would also think ... whether this is the best place to send their kids.”

But instead of caving to Beijing’s demands, Australian Foreign Minister

Marise Payne spoke out. “We reject any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment, when what we need is global cooperation,” she said in a statement Monday.

Countries have also been complaining about the low quality of China-provided supplies. For instance, some of the tests Beijing gave to European nations don’t work. Spanish scientists have found that testing devices from the Chinese firm Shenzhen Bioeasy Biotechnology correctly identify a positive case around 30 percent of the time.

That hasn’t grown China’s prestige on the continent. “You can’t chest-beat and

deliver substandard quality,” Brandt said.

In total, experts say that China’s aggressive attempts to exploit the pandemic for its own benefit have made it harder for governments — especially the United States — to trust and work with the country. “I think at this point it’s going to be hard to cooperate, even though it would be in the interest of” every country, including the US, said Princeton’s Friedberg.

That could have deadly results. If China doesn’t work in concert with other countries, experts say, the disease could continue to spread. After all, it’s a rich, powerful country that can help find a

vaccine, fund further pandemic research, and help safeguard borders.

China's actions, then, not only make the world less safe but also don't help it attain the global prestige the regime seeks. "Across the board, I don't think that they're winning on this," Friedberg added.

Source:

<https://www.vox.com/2020/4/28/21234598/coronavirus-china-xi-jinping-foreign-policy>

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