

Owning the Conversation: Assessing Responses to Russian and Chinese Information Operations Around COVID-19 | CEPA

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Introduction

The crisis around COVID-19 and the resulting “infodemic” has been exploited by authoritarian regimes to spread propaganda and disinformation among populations around the world. The Russian Federation and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have used the pandemic to engage in information warfare, spread divisive content, advance conspiracy theories, and promote public health propaganda that undermines US and European efforts to fight the pandemic.

In 2021, the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) published two reports, *Information Bedlam: Russian and Chinese Information Operations During COVID-19*¹ and *Jabbed in the Back: Mapping Russian and Chinese Information Operations During COVID-19*,² comparing how the Kremlin and CCP have deployed information operations around the COVID-19 pandemic, virus origins, and efficacy of the vaccines to influence targeted populations globally, using the infodemic as a diplomatic and geopolitical weapon. The CCP mainly spread COVID-19 narratives to shape perceptions about the origins of the coronavirus and often push narratives to shun responsibility. Meanwhile, the Kremlin recycled existing narratives, pushing and amplifying them via validators and unsuspecting people in order to sow internal divisions and further exploit polarized views in the West about the efficacy of vaccines, treatments, origins of new variants, and impact to the population. While the world has learned about new COVID-19 variants, such as Omicron, China and Russia have evolved their tactics to spread COVID-19 disinformation and propaganda and further sow doubt and confuse the population about the pandemic.

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Source: [Owning the Conversation: Assessing Responses to Russian and Chinese Information Operations Around COVID-19 | CEPA](#)