

When Covid Hit, China Was Ready to Tell Its Version of the Story | The New York Times

By Ben Smith

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In the fall of 2019, just before global borders closed, an international journalists' association decided to canvass its members about a subject that kept coming up in informal conversations: What is China doing?

What it found was astonishing in its scope. Journalists from countries as tiny as Guinea-Bissau had been invited to sign agreements with their Chinese counterparts. The Chinese government was distributing versions of its propaganda newspaper China Daily in English — and also Serbian. A Filipino journalist estimated that more than half of the stories on a Philippines newswire came from the Chinese state agency Xinhua. A Kenyan media group raised money from Chinese investors, then fired a columnist who wrote about China's suppression of its Uyghur minority. Journalists in Peru faced intense social media criticism from combative Chinese government officials.

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