

Why China's attempts to stifle foreign media criticism are likely to fail | The Conversation

By Tony Walker

April 13, 2021

When China's ambassador to Australia, Cheng Jingye, summoned journalists to the Chinese embassy last week, this was not an occasion for polite exchanges on a troubled relationship between Beijing and Canberra.

Cheng was intent on communicating a forceful message to Australian reporters that China was intent on fighting back against what it regards as a great wall of unfavourable publicity about its treatment of its Uyghur minority.

In some media reporting of the press conference, the exercise was referred to as a "charm offensive". However, a more accurate characterisation would be to describe it as an attempt by China to draw a line under increasingly negative foreign reporting of its activities.

This reporting is having real world consequences for China's image abroad. It is inviting pushback from an international community that is mobilising against Chinese overreach. Beijing will not be insensitive to the risks of brand damage to China's reputation, or risks of sanctions.

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