



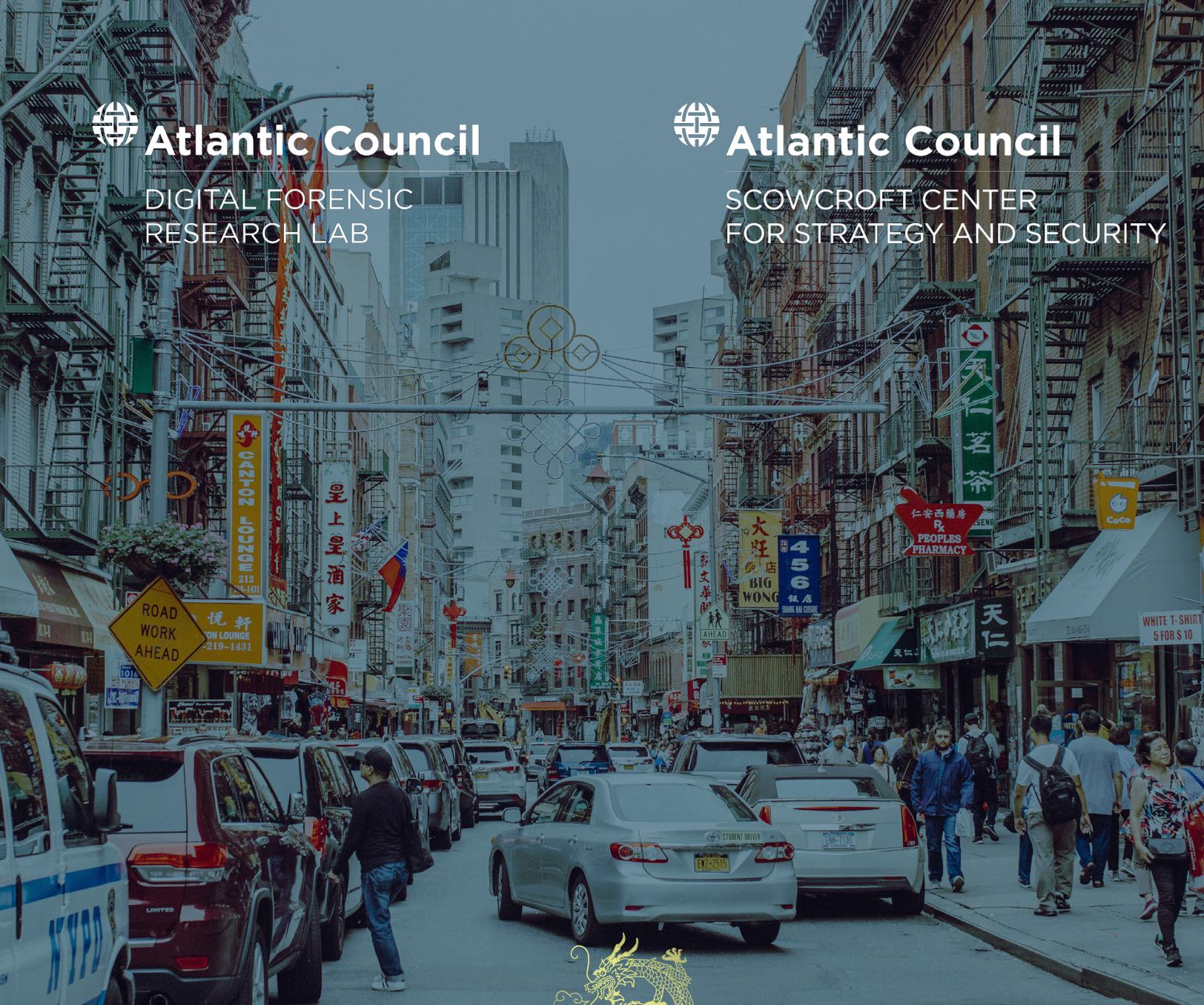
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DESCENDANTS OF THE DRAGON

China Targets Its Citizens and Descendants
Beyond the Mainland



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Introduction

As an element of discourse power, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) works to directly message and influence Chinese diaspora communities abroad with the strategic goal of retaining the Chinese national identity and building a positive amplification network. The strategy is not always successful, among other reasons, due to the drastically more open international information environment compared to the controlled information environment within China. This brief explores how CCP discourse power is directed at the Chinese diaspora community with recent examples.¹

As China has sought to increase its geopolitical power, it has also expanded its attempts at both overt and covert online influence. As a part of these efforts, China has focused its energy on telling the “China story” – a positive messaging campaign designed to boost a favorable perception of the party-state. When that fails, the CCP seeks to ignore, downplay, or disparage negative narratives, using other tools and tactics to attack those spreading “harmful” narratives or to portray other countries negatively as a means of boosting positive sentiment toward China by contrast. The DFRLab covered the philosophy of discourse power, and its realization in the “China story,” in its previous report, *Chinese Discourse Power*.

For these efforts to succeed, however, China needs to maintain the support from its own people. With its strict control over the internet and the mechanisms through which its populace access it domestically, it is easy for the CCP to maintain that support by amplifying favorable stories and limiting the reach – often completely – of those that are damaging. The Chinese diaspora – including Chinese citizens residing abroad, recent immigrants hailing from China, or citizens of other countries of Chinese descent – on the other hand has access to a broader array of information, including that which is critical of the CCP. Anti-CCP sentiment is common among some Chinese diaspora communities, including some in the United States under the influence of Falun Gong media, the most impactful of which is the *Epoch Times*, and outspoken Chinese businessman in exile Guo Wengui, who has close connections with Steve Bannon.² The diaspora is harder to reach than the domestic

population for CCP’s influence operations, though it remains an important focus of CCP’s discourse power efforts. Many in the diaspora use Chinese social media apps including WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin, to communicate with family and friends inside China, providing the CCP access to its target audience outside of China, and the lack of a language barrier for an already familiar narrative similarly helps attempts to embed the China story in the diaspora.

The diaspora living in more open societies, such as the United States, is of particular interest. The democratic values those countries transmit – if seen as preferable to party-state control by those in the diaspora less persuadable by or immune to CCP messaging – would undermine the CCP’s goals with the same community. To compensate, when it comes to the United States, narratives reflecting negatively on the country’s political leaders proliferate in the Chinese-language space. Many high-profile US politicians, over the course of multiple campaign cycles and while in office, have expressed heavy criticism of China or the CCP specifically, criticism that inevitably makes them a target for the CCP’s messaging efforts to the Chinese diaspora. Both US President Donald Trump and now President-elect Joe Biden, for example, spoke critically of the Chinese government during the 2020 presidential campaign, leading negative messaging toward both to persist in the Chinese information space.

China uses high-profile current events and international crises, in particular, as a means of asserting itself in the global competition for information and instilling the China story. The divergent responses of the CCP and the US government to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, served as a case study in how the CCP uses messaging as a means of instilling support for the Chinese party-state or diminishing support for democratic systems. In particular, CCP narratives portray China as a benevolent world power, providing resources for countries in need of assistance in the fight against the virus while denigrating the Trump Administration’s response.

Meanwhile, China sees broad opportunity in its diaspora, many of whom left China to seek an education and who

1 The bulk of the research for this report was performed ahead of November 3, the day of the 2020 US presidential election, and does not account for China’s activities – or, specifically, those that have come to light – since that time. Among such instances were Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian’s amplification of a doctored image that faked a scene of an Australian soldier holding a knife against an Afghan child and, separately, the Chinese Embassy to the US’s official Twitter account retweeting and then deleting a baseless claim by US President Donald Trump that the US elections were fraudulent. These two incidents, while not specifically targeting the Chinese diaspora communities, are representative of CCP officials injecting anti-Western narratives into the mainstream. Read more about the Australia image here: Kirsty Needham, “China’s WeChat blocks Australian PM in doctored image dispute,” December 1, 2020, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-china-tweet/chinas-wechat-blocks-australian-pm-in-doctored-image-dispute-idUSKBN28C01T>; for Chinese embassy retweet story, read more here: Vivian Wang, “Chinese Embassy retweets Trump’s false claims of election fraud, then backtracks,” *The New York Times*, December 9, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/12/10/us/joe-biden-trump#chinese-embassy-retweets-trumps-false-claims-of-election-fraud-then-backtracks>.

2 Amy Qin, Vivian Wang and Danny Hakim, “How Steve Bannon and a Chinese Billionaire Created a Right-Wing Coronavirus Media Sensation,” *New York Times*, November 20, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/20/business/media/steve-bannon-china.html>.

could potentially contribute to China's competitive growth. In telling the China story, China hopes to retain connection and support, as well as draw some back to the mainland to enrich its talent pool further. More broadly, the CCP relies heavily on cultural affinity as a hook to keep the diaspora engaged. By pulling on heartstrings, the CCP hopes that the diaspora will not just remain loyal to the party-state but also become vocal advocates on its behalf. Similarly, positive sentiment among a growing diaspora might encourage more China-friendly foreign policies as the diaspora communities gain both size and political strength locally. China also sees the diaspora as proof of concept that its model of governance and society can be successful abroad. among the diaspora. This often took the form of highlighting policy and political failures in the United States - including criticizing the Trump Administration's COVID-19 response - as a means of distracting attention away from China's own failures in the beginning of the outbreak and discrediting the political system of the United States, which it focuses on as the highest profile democracy to contrast with its authoritarian or centrally controlled system. Alternatively, China also undertook superficially obvious efforts to boost its own international reputation (e.g., its mask diplomacy campaign) around the pandemic. In the end, however, it is unknown precisely the impact these efforts have on the diaspora, including those in the United States.

Following an overview of the Chinese diaspora, China's general approach to the diaspora, and insight into the Chinese American diaspora community, this report will detail specific instances of Chinese-language content seemingly targeting the community of Chinese people and their descendants living outside the mainland. In particular, the report will detail content on Chinese social media platform WeChat before turning to Facebook, where the DFRLab found evidence of a Malaysia-based content farm as well as a coordinated network of pages that posted predominantly pro-China and anti-Trump content.

Background

The Chinese diaspora, as a population living outside of the strict, deliberate control of the party-state and notionally more exposed to less distorted information on the situation in mainland China, presents a complex challenge for the CCP, which seeks to cultivate the diaspora as not just adherents but promoters. Success, however, is predicated upon the diaspora being sympathetic, but many among the community are critical or even hostile toward the ancestral homeland they departed or those that lead it.

The party-state crafted a diaspora policy as early as 1978, around the same time with the Chinese economic reform. The primary goal at the time was to better engage with overseas Chinese descendants as a means of opening up the economy and stimulating trade growth. Since President Xi Jinping took power, China's diaspora policy has become more politically focused, aligning with Xi's vision of an international order following the "China model." Hong Liu and Els van Dongen describe the nature of the latest Chinese diaspora policies to be one of "transnational governance," which is premised on China's dependence on a global order that facilitates further growth in its already significant geopolitical power.³ Indeed, the country sees Chinese diaspora communities, including Chinese expatriates and those who share cultural backgrounds with Chinese residents, as a way to project the country's soft power on a broader stage.⁴ In the Xi Jinping era, while the CCP envisions a world of increasing Chinese leadership, there is a growing emphasis on keeping policies around the Chinese diaspora in line with a desire to continue increasing China's discourse power.⁵ The end goal is to promote a positive image of China influence international values, attract overseas talent back to China to develop the country, and shape local policies to balance

with Chinese national interest via these communities.⁶

The CCP identified this need amid a growing Chinese diaspora around the globe, especially as more Chinese citizens or their descendants have increasing financial ability to invest and do business overseas. There is no definitive count of Chinese diaspora communities because definitions of who comprises the community differ between countries and organizations. Writing for the US Census Bureau in August 2019, Daniel Goodkind identified the United Nations' 2017 report that estimated the number of first-generation Chinese immigrants in foreign countries to be 10 million people.⁷ Goodkind contrasted this with a different number from the Overseas Community Affairs Council of Taiwan, which estimated that "the Chinese diaspora around the same time [as the UN report] numbered about 45 million people," a number that includes not only first-generation immigrants but also immigrants who are born in foreign countries but are of Chinese descent.⁸

The UN estimates further reveal that there is a sharp increase in the number of Chinese diaspora in the past few decades: the population has more than doubled from 1990 to 2017.⁹ In some of the areas, including the United States, the population has almost quadrupled.¹⁰ According to the 2018 US Census Bureau tabulations, there are approximately 4.2 million individuals who identify themselves as of Chinese origin, accounting for 1.3 percent of the entire estimated US population in 2018,¹¹ which is a sharp rise from the approximately 2.4 million people of Chinese descent who self-identified in 2000.¹²

Historically, neither Chinese Americans nor Asian Americans have been particularly politically active. According to Pew

3 Hong Liu & Els van Dongen, "China's Diaspora Policies as a New Mode of Transnational Governance," *Journal of Contemporary China* 25 (2016): 805-821, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10670564.2016.1184894>.

4 Sheng Ding, "Engaging Diaspora via Charm Offensive and Indigenised Communication: An Analysis of China's Diaspora Engagement Policies in the Xi Era," *Politics*, 35 (2015): 230-244, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9256.12087?journalCode=pola>

5 Ibid.

6 Wu Xiao An, "China's Evolving Policy towards the Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia (1949-2018)," *Trends in Southeast Asia* 14(2019), accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/2404>.

7 Daniel Goodkind, "The Chinese Diaspora: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Trends," U.S. Department of Commerce, August 2019, https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2019/demo/Chinese_Diaspora.pdf, p.14.

8 Ibid, p.14.

9 Ibid, p.4.

10 Ibid, p.4.

11 "2018: ACS 5-Year Estimate Data Profiles: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates," United States Census Bureau, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Data%20Profiles&tid=ACSDP5Y2018.DP05>; Carlos Echeverria-Estrada and Jeanne Batalova, "Chinese Immigrants in the United States," Migration Policy Institute, January 15, 2020, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states-2018#:~:text=The%20Chinese%20diaspora%20in%20the,to%202018%20Census%20Bureau%20tabulations>.

12 "2000 Census of Population and Housing: Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics," U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, and U.S. Census Bureau, May 2001, https://www2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/demographic_profile/0_National_Summary/2khus.pdf, p.1

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Research Center, in 2000, Asian Americans were the lowest in voter participation rate in presidential elections behind white, Black, and Hispanic voters.¹³ The participation rate, however, has been improving. In 2016, the voter participation rate among Asian Americans rose from 43 percent in 2000 to 49 percent, 1 percent higher than that of the Hispanic community.¹⁴ Among Asian Americans, however, Chinese Americans have the lowest registration and participation rates. According to an analysis of November 2016 US census data by AAPI Data, 48 percent of eligible Chinese Americans had registered to vote while 41 percent of that number actually voted.¹⁵ Among the Chinese diaspora in the United States, the political affiliation is a majority Democratic. Ahead of the US election, FiveThirtyEight published a poll by APIA Vote, AAPI Data, and Asian American Advancing Justice estimating that 56 percent would vote for Joe Biden versus 20 percent for Donald Trump.¹⁶

With a growing and increasingly politically active Chinese diaspora community in the United States, the Chinese government is more incentivized to attempt to strengthen the inherent cultural connections as a means of encouraging a more friendly policy environment in foreign countries, including the United States, though many in the diaspora may be critical of or fully inclined against the CCP and its efforts. One prominent example is Guo Wengui, who had 449,000 followers on Twitter before his account was suspended for spreading disinformation. Many of his Twitter followers were from Chinese diaspora communities around the globe.¹⁷ Given the mostly complete absence of Western social media platforms in mainland China, a consequence of the CCP's banning them, any Chinese language activity on those platforms should be understood as targeting the diaspora or those in China who have circumvented the "great firewall." In the both cases, positive Chinese-language "China story" messaging is meant to backstop any deviation of thought away from complete support for the actions of the CCP toward criticism that could result from the broader access to information.

Content and narratives throughout the 2020 US election cycle across the diaspora information environment provide notable examples.

13 Ruth Igielnik and Abby Budiman, "The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate," Pew Research Center, September 23, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/2020/09/23/the-changing-racial-and-ethnic-composition-of-the-u-s-electorate/>

14 Ruth Igielnik and Abby Budiman, "The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate."

15 Karthick Ramakrishnan, "The Asian American Vote in 2016: Record Gains, but Also Gaps," AAPI Data, May 19, 2017, aapidata.com/blog/voting-gains-gaps/

16 Dhruvil Mehta, "How Asian Americans Are Thinking About The 2020 Election," FiveThirtyEight, September 18, 2020, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-asian-americans-are-thinking-about-the-2020-election/>

17 Tom Phillips, "Guo Wengui, the maverick Chinese billionaire who threatens to crash Xi's party," the Guardian, October 15, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/16/guo-wengui-the-maverick-chinese-billionaire-who-threatens-to-crash-xis-party>.

WeChat: Anti-Biden Content on Domestic Chinese Platforms

According to App Annie, a data analytics company in China, by August 2020, there were over 3.3 million active WeChat users in the United States.¹⁸ The diaspora community in the United States use WeChat primarily to maintain relationships with families back in China, facilitated by the intimate community of family and friends created by WeChat Moments.¹⁹ WeChat facilitates a community that caters to Chinese family traditions and culture. Other instant messaging apps, including WhatsApp, Telegram, Line, and Signal, are not available for use in mainland China as Chinese phone numbers cannot be used for registration. Moreover, for first-generation immigrants who are used to WeChat pay in China, there are also vendors in the United States and other foreign countries accepting this method of payment. The number of active users in the United States includes not only the diaspora communities but also those who do business or collaborate with Chinese people.

WeChat has two primary functions: instant messaging and blogging. Still used primarily for its instant messaging capabilities, its use as a blogging platform has also been popular since its inception in 2012. All private messaging accounts on WeChat by policy are verified, given a phone number and other personal identifying information are necessary to register an account. In the platform's own terminology, an "official" account ("微信公众号") is a subscription channel that is publicly accessible to all users on the platform. These Official Accounts, including ones for state-controlled media outlets, function as the blogging channels that publish articles, videos, and pictures to its subscribers. Moreover, private accounts can share the content posted by these Official Accounts to "Moments" ("微信朋友圈"), which is similar to private Facebook feeds where accounts share thoughts, external links, and WeChat blogs. Although in the past few years, there has been decreased attention on the WeChat Official Accounts, the number of articles published each year and the times of reading still remain high.

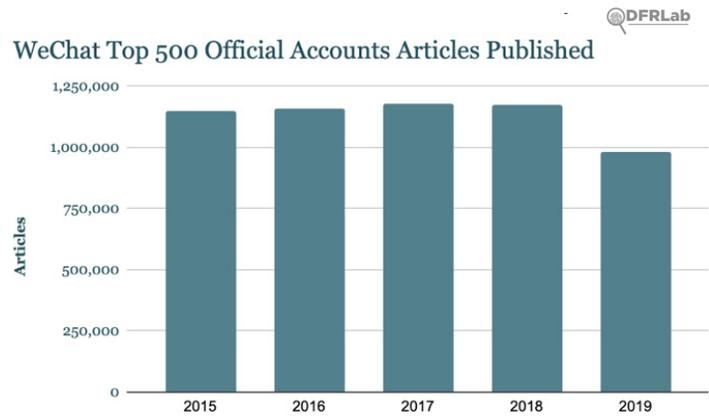


Chart showing the number of articles published by the Top 500 Official Accounts (subscription blogging channels) on WeChat. In the platform's own terminology, "Official Accounts" are those that are publicly visible to all users on the platform, so the articles accounted for here are those that are publicly visible to all users on the platform.²⁰

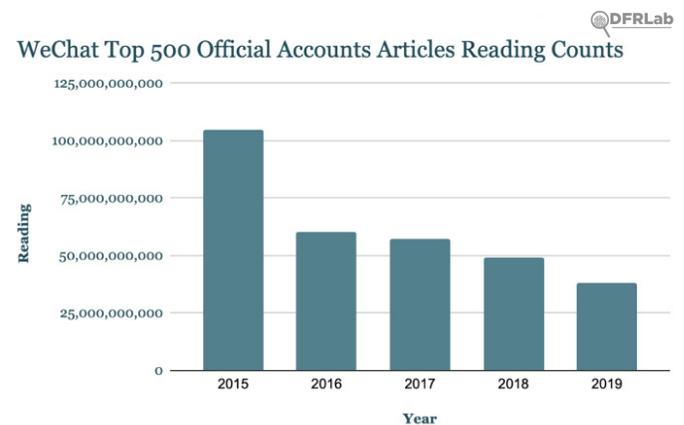


Chart showing the total readership of articles posted by the Top 500 Official Accounts – those that are publicly visible – on WeChat by year between 2015 and 2019.²¹

18 李思阳, "美媒: 美政府封杀WeChat 百万美国用户受影响" ("US Media: US government banned WeChat, Millions of US Users are Impacted"), Sina Finance, September 20, 2020, <https://finance.sina.com.cn/china/2020-09-20/doc-iivhvpwy7764934.shtml>

19 Ibid.

20 Stella, "2015年中国微信500强年报," (2015 WeChat Top 500 Official Accounts Annual Report), PR Newswire, January 18, 2016, <https://www.prnasia.com/blog/archives/18307>; "2016年中国微信500强年报" ("2016 WeChat Top 500 Official Account Annual Report"), Sohu News, January 26, 2017, https://www.sohu.com/a/125185153_483389; "2017年中国微信500强年报" ("2017 WeChat Top 500 Annual Report"), Tencent News, January 14, 2018, <https://xw.qq.com/cmsid/20180114B0MDUH/20180114B0MDUH00>; 新榜服务, "2018年中国微信500强年报", WeChat, January 7, 2020, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/yirfwwP8lkFPpgZiCMAYDQ>; "2019中国微信500强年报," ("2019 WeChat Top 500 Official Account Annual Report"), CnBeta, January 14, 2020, <https://www.cnbeta.com/articles/tech/932337.htm>.

21 Ibid.

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WeChat has undergone several rounds of reform to increase the readership of the blogs.²² In the “Top Stories” section of WeChat, there is a “Wow” subsection where a user can see articles (“wows”) liked by their friends and where they can react to their “wow” by adding another to the article. In the “Top” section, you can search related keywords and see the recommended stories, the first of which is always a piece of official government news from CCTV, a government-owned media outlet.

With public display of read counts and a larger user base than any other social media app in China, WeChat therefore demonstrates more clearly the reach of the narratives pushed by the state-controlled media. In general, state-controlled media have been relatively neutral in covering Biden while pushing more negative narratives around Trump. The predominant tone of state-controlled media, however, has been one of discrediting the US political system in general, for example, by portraying the election as chaotic. Moreover, the platform, under close scrutiny of the CCP, has not made adequate efforts to tackle rampant disinformation about both candidates, regardless of the source of the misleading information.

While state-controlled media has been generally neutral about Biden and his campaign prior to and after the election, there have been a few instances of negative content targeting him, though they received low engagement. For example, a search for “Biden” on the Official Account of *Global Times Net* (“环球网”) yielded 213 results as of December 2, 2020, ranging from two articles in 2014 to ninety-six articles in November 2020. The channel also posted 113 articles in the months leading up to the election in November. The articles vary greatly in read counts, with twenty-six of the articles having over 100,000 reads while 185 of the articles had under 10,000 reads.

Most of the articles in the search results were neutral toward then-presidential candidate Biden, although some did seem to amplify misleading or decontextualized information intentionally pulled from the US domestic information

environment, a trend that was especially apparent before the election. For example, an August 10 article, titled “拜登重提‘警察杀死黑人’旧案欲拉黑人选民选票，评论区直接‘翻车’” (“Biden brought up the case of ‘police killing a black man’ to win support from black voters; the comments are not what he expected”), featured a post from Biden’s official Twitter account on August 10, 2020, in which he commemorated the death of Michael Brown and condemned “systematic racism” in the country.²³ The article condemned Biden, saying he was disingenuously and dishonestly using racism as a political tool and in his support for Brown.²⁴ Moreover, some of the articles report on Biden making mistakes on the number of COVID 19 cases and deaths, utilizing emotive headlines that made fun of Biden despite a pretty neutral tone throughout the body of the article. Example headlines included “美国人更慌：拜登说美国估计已死2亿人” (“Americans are more panicked: Biden said that there are already about 200 million deaths in the US”) and “数百万人因疫情失去生命，拜登肯定又说错了!!!” (“‘Millions of people have died because of the pandemic,’ Biden said it wrong again!!!”).²⁵

On the other hand, state-controlled media have been more critical of Trump and have directed sarcastic posts at Trump, discrediting his competency. For example, as of December 2, 2020, sorting the search result for “Trump” by overall rank – the default sorting rule for WeChat – on the Official Account of Global Times Net, the top ten articles used emotive language to joke about Trump. Some of the titles of these articles included “特朗普这下‘亏’大了” (“What a big loss for Trump!”), which quoted four sarcastic and one supportive comments about his allegations of voter fraud in Wisconsin; “特朗普又尴尬...” (“Trump is embarrassed again...”), which discussed his mistaking a fake Twitter account for that of his sister, Betty; and “特朗普大骂” (“Trump ranted!”), a reference to his tweet criticizing “antifa” on November 15.²⁶ The cumulative viewership for these articles was more than 100,000 times and yet they only received a total of 1,623 engagements, signaling a potential lack of interest in the topic.

Conversely, the channel’s critical posts targeting the

22 微营销笔记, “微信公众号的“在看”功能, 出于怎样的需求?”, Zhihu, March 30, 2020, <https://zhuannan.zhihu.com/p/121137376>.

23 环球网, “拜登重提‘警察杀死黑人’旧案欲拉黑人选民选票, 评论区直接‘翻车’” (“Biden brought up the case of ‘police killing a black man’ to win support from black voters; the comments are not what he expected”), WeChat, August 10, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?src=11×tamp=1607363569&ver=2752&signature=IQXwc7jkNu4hzhbqnmHE1Qm8zBO5i8qrjiaqQc4S*M9TWIwhOMtZYbHD3I8JgvNI7K3ystuCT19UrJizO-NnM1OvySieeFVqFTRY*t6b9GU=&new=1. Please see the archived link here: https://web.archive.org/web/20201207175533/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?src=11×tamp=1607363569&ver=2752&signature=IQXwc7jkNu4hzhbqnmHE1Qm8zBO5i8qrjiaqQc4S%2AM9TWIwhOMtZYbHD3I8JgvNI7K3ystuCT19UrJizO-NnM1OvySieeFVqFTRY*t6b9GU%3D&new=1.

24 Ibid.

25 环球网, “美国人更慌:拜登说美国估计已死2亿人” (“The Americans are more concerned: Biden just said that there are 200 million people have died in the US”), WeChat, September 21, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?src=11×tamp=1607363863&ver=2752&signature=IQXwc7jkNu4hzhbqnmHE1Uwl8eoa4X4k-DYWRVv7MgUt8Tj4PrgYdFHTSWUk2PqICIBKqjMm8R5MERzX9W5q2wJha4qkycBHYyq6L2*KDbYLjHUC05sNdqQdJ*Q628o&new=1, for archived link, <https://web.archive.org/web/20201207175832/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?src=11×tamp=1607363863&ver=2752&signature=IQXwc7jkNu4hzhbqnmHE1Uwl8eoa4X4k-DYWRVv7MgUt8Tj4PrgYdFHTSWUk2PqICIBKqjMm8R5MERzX9W5q2wJha4qkycBHYyq6L2%2AKDbYLjHUC05sNdqQdJ%2AQ628o&new=1>; 环球网, “数百万人因疫情失去生命, 拜登肯定又说错了!!!” (“‘Millions of people have died because of the pandemic,’ Biden got it wrong again!!!”), WeChat, May 16, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?src=11×tamp=1607364006&ver=2752&signature=IQXwc7jkNu4hzhbqnmHE1Uwl8eoa4X4k-DYWRVv7MgXetTQMUA08K*zbJ4wUg9MR8Izd-L6l6c*8Y*WjTBoTxFrm0w1OQg5rBS4M6dQemwFxxQ-c7IyLe8h8va3LOih&new=1, for archived link, see <https://web.archive.org/web/20201207180226/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?src=11×tamp=1607364006&ver=2752&signature=IQXwc7jkNu4hzhbqnmHE1Uwl8eoa4X4k-DYWRVv7MgXetTQMUA08K%2AZbJ4wUg9MR8Izd-L6l6c%2A8Y%2AWjTBoTxFrm0w1OQg5rBS4M6dQemwFxxQ-c7IyLe8h8va3LOih&new=1>.

26 环球网, “What a big loss for Trump”, WeChat, November 29, 2020, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/am_v0KP8d2mwyfMWsQ4bGA, archived link can be found at https://web.archive.org/web/20201208145518/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/am_v0KP8d2mwyfMWsQ4bGA; 环球网, “Trump is embarrassed again...”, WeChat, November 21, 2020, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/jwyoPZxeun4HvziSSyZRew>, archived link can be found at <https://web.archive.org/web/20201208145256/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/jwyoPZxeun4HvziSSyZRew>; 环球网, “Trump ranted!”, WeChat, November 15, 2020, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/-59X3YY9YQ5TxRsV5g1hrQ>, archived link can be found at <https://web.archive.org/web/20201208145141/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/-59X3YY9YQ5TxRsV5g1hrQ>.

United States in general, growing out of the increasing friction between the two powers over the past few years, have yielded more viewers and engagement. One popular narrative accuses the United States of interfering with China’s technological development. Some of the articles that received more than 100,000 reads included “美国又来了” (“Here comes the US again!”) and “美国屡伸黑手, 这次盯上...” (“The US has again and again played out its conspiracy; this time they are onto...”). Another popular narrative is to focus the description on the internal chaos of the United States. The third most read article of the search result of “美国” (“the US”) in the channel is titled “美国人怒烧美国国旗” (“Americans burnt the national flag in a state of rage”), which was viewed over 100,000 times and received 3,398 “wows.” “”

Besides the narratives propagated by the state-controlled media, WeChat has also failed to actively manage disinformation or decontextualized information on US politics spread by bloggers beside the state-controlled media, which has the potential to mislead Chinese diaspora viewers. Misleading content targeting Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris, as well as toward Trump, is prevalent

on the platform. One popular disinformation narrative on WeChat in the post-election period regarded Harris’s relationship with Willie Brown, former speaker of the California Assembly and former mayor of San Francisco, insinuating that her success in politics were due to her having a relationship with Brown while he was technically married (though separated for over a decade), an insinuation designed to impugn her qualification to be vice president of the United States.²⁷



Screenshot showing results of a search for Kamala Harris’s Chinese name, “贺锦丽,” on WeChat on December 2, 2020, of which the top ten results contained three misleading and critical narratives regarding Harris’s relationship with Willie Brown, although all received relatively low engagement.²⁸

27 Bethania Palma, “Did Kamala Harris Have an Extramarital Affair with Willie Brown That Boosted Her Career?” Snopes, August 14, 2020, <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/kamala-harris-affair-willie-brown/>

28 Each of the view counts for these articles are below 20,000. 新西兰中文先驱, “起底贺锦丽: 出生美国奥克兰·因情妇身份从政! 女版奥巴马! 还有可能成为总统.....” (“Backstage story on Kamala Harris: Born in Oakland, California, she entered politics because of an identity of mistress! Female version of Obama! She will possibly become the president...”), WeChat, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/TMBPWfrycAoiZUAFsa5rUA>. 加拿大留学移民网, “地表最强小三贺锦丽: 比起拜登, 我们更应关注的是她” (“The most powerful mistress Kamala Harris: compared to Biden, we should focus more on her”), WeChat, November 26, 2020, WeChat, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/JcndNXYkNokZbkkP11epRA>; 老美那些事儿, “贺锦丽: 从情妇到女版奥巴马” (“Kamala Harris: from a mistress to Female version of Obama”), WeChat, November 11, 2020, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/lwkNtGEjoPqSzPmC-CekFw>.

Malaysia Based Facebook Content Farms Posting in Chinese

Unlike WeChat, a Chinese platform, Facebook is largely inaccessible to mainland Chinese residents, as the CCP has banned its use in the country. Despite this ban, Chinese-language content is prevalent on the Western platform, which could be understood – for the most part – as a reflection of diaspora communities and the global prevalence of the Chinese language beyond China. Topical content about the United States in Chinese, for example, is likely to be of most interest to the US-based diaspora and is intended – though often fails – to instill negative sentiment of US-style democratic systems as well as to portray the “China model” as a better alternative. Content farms produce this type of content at scale and cheaply while allowing the source relative anonymity.

The DFRLab identified two relatively small networks of assets (user accounts, pages, and groups) on Facebook engaged in inauthentic coordinated efforts promoting pro-China and anti-Trump videos, which they pull from two external content farm websites, 奇趣网/趣享网 (“Qiqu Web”) and 琪琪看新闻 (“Qiqi”). Content farms are operations – frequently in the form of independent websites – that create repetitious and often dubious content (“clickbait”) at volume to post as links on social media as a means of generating clickthrough revenue or, less frequently, driving political messaging. If a government or other entity seeks to undertake an information operation while avoiding attribution, offshoring the work to a content farm operator is an easy way to avoid it. In this case, there was no indication that the CCP had any role in the content being produced, though the content did align with the CCP’s pro-China and anti-Western democracy narratives.

In addition to the different Facebook assets promoting their content detailed below, the two content farms also often disguised themselves by using different – but similar – URLs when posting links to Facebook. For example, for Qiqu, while the primary address for the website is <https://www.qiqu.live/>, there were a series of other domain addresses the website, including <http://www.qiqu.pro/>, <http://www.qiqu.world/>, <http://www.nanyang.news/>, and <http://funnies.live/>.²⁹ When you click on the news entries on the main page of these websites, the link directly transfers you to a [qiqu.world](http://www.qiqu.world/) news page. Similarly, “琦琦看新闻”/“琪琪看新闻” (“Qiqi Read News”) also had multiple variations in domain

names, including twitter-qiqi.com, hotqiqi.com, xqiqis.com, facebook-qiqi.com, and newqiqi.com.

The first network included twenty-five Facebook pages masquerading as news agencies in Malaysia and amplified content from 奇趣网/趣享网 (“Qiqu Web”). The pages seem to intended mostly as a mechanism for propagating links to content on www.qiqu.pro. A Whois search for www.qiqu.pro revealed that the registrant had used an anonymization service (WhoisGuard, Inc.) to register the domain.

The Facebook pages consistently coordinated on the time of posting the same identical content from Qiqu Web. For example, on September 25, the twenty-five pages posted a link to the Qiqu Web article titled “Trump Refuses to Commit to Peaceful Transition of Power, Pelosi: Trump is like a dictator” with the posting time intervals ranging from one to four seconds. While the engagements with the posts were insignificant, with the highest engagements at eleven interactions, the pages themselves enjoy large numbers of followers, with a cumulative total of 1,573,538 followers, as of October 3, 2020. Similar anti-Trump posts from the same twenty-five pages also happened on September 30, a day after the first US presidential debate, around an article titled “Biden tells Trump to shut up immediately, US presidential debate is in chaos.” The text accompanying the link read “Not long after the first debate in the US presidential election began, President Trump and Democratic candidate Biden refused to give up to each other and started a confrontation. When Trump repeatedly spoke at Biden, he interrupted Biden, and Biden, who has always been gentle, could not help but scold Trump for being an out-and-out clown and liar!”

²⁹ 繁華中國，“關閉中國領事館第三天，特朗普罕見承認2個事實，後悔也為時已晚” (“Third day into closing the Chinese embassy, Trump admitted two facts. It’s too late to regret now!”), Facebook Post, July 27, 2020, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/Chinabustling/posts/747359706024270>.

Page Name	Translation	Likes at Posting	Created	Type	Engagement	Message	Link Text
四大名捕	Stealing 'Malaysian Jokes'	4505	2020-09-25 09:52:53 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷《大马笑话“无奇不有”》	Stealing 'Watermelon gang'	30006	2020-09-25 09:53:56 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷《吃瓜看天下》stealwatermelongang	Global Zhongzheng Express Us	1597	2020-09-25 09:52:57 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
Global忠政快讯Us	Global Zhongzheng Express Us	102221	2020-09-25 09:52:59 EDT	Link	3	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷《新闻爆料快讯》	Stealing 'News Hit Hit Hit Express'	1681	2020-09-25 09:53:00 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
《专偷1》大马最Hitz新闻	Stealing 'Malaysia Most Hitz News'	2821	2020-09-25 09:53:02 EDT	Link	3	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷《快捷新闻》	Stealing 'Express News'	2913	2020-09-25 09:53:09 EDT	Link	1	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
環球新聞博覽 Global News Explorer	Global News Explorer	11076	2020-09-25 09:53:10 EDT	Link	3	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
PenangKin 当今城城 PenangNow	Penang Now	32243	2020-09-25 09:53:11 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
大马时报 Malaysiatimes	Malaysia Times	20858	2020-09-25 09:53:12 EDT	Link	1	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
请用行动支持马籍 'Support DAP with Contributions	Support DAP with Contributions	140227	2020-09-25 09:53:13 EDT	Link	2	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
我们全力支持马行 We Fully Support DAP	We Fully Support DAP	469146	2020-09-25 09:53:14 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
Stealheroexpress	Malaysia Zhongzheng Express	1288	2020-09-25 09:53:17 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
大马忠政快讯	Malaysia Zhongzheng Express	20192	2020-09-25 09:53:18 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷行动新闻 Stealtvotmp88	Steal VOTMP 88	3342	2020-09-25 09:53:19 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
人民当家作主 People are the Masters	People are the Masters	6764	2020-09-25 09:53:20 EDT	Link	1	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
忠政快讯 2.0	Zhongzheng Express 2.0	4275	2020-09-25 09:53:21 EDT	Link	2	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
全球劲爆新闻网 WWMNN	World Hit News Website	77756	2020-09-25 09:53:25 EDT	Link	11	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷《新闻》	Stealing 'News'	913	2020-09-25 09:53:26 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
全球力症鸡场街	The World Supports Jonker Walk	2030	2020-09-25 09:53:28 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
我们全力支持希联 We Fully Support Pakatan Harapan	We Fully Support Pakatan Harapan\	391708	2020-09-25 09:53:29 EDT	Link	1	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
专偷《必理不可》StealBibaabooke	Steal Bibaabooke	1024	2020-09-25 09:53:30 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
我们全力支持马行 UBAH 周边产品	We Fully Support DAP UBAH and Associated Products	1920	2020-09-25 09:53:31 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
大马吹吹水	Malaysia Gossiping	3262	2020-09-25 09:53:32 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者
抵制myfm	Resisting MYFM	17330	2020-09-25 09:53:33 EDT	Link	0	美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。美国众议院议长佩洛西更直批，特朗普简直像是一名独裁者的行为，并提醒特朗普，美国是一个民主国家，希望他尊重美国宪法。	特朗普拒和平转移权力 佩洛西：特朗普如独裁者

Twenty-five pages posted the news link from qiqu.pro almost simultaneously, the title of which is “Trump Refuses to Commit to Peaceful Transition of Power, Pelosi: Trump is like a dictator.”³⁰



Four example screenshots of the coordinated posts reflected in the above table.³¹

30 DFRLab-generated list using social media monitoring tool CrowdTangle.

31 @WeFullySupportrdap, “美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。” (“The US presidential election has entered the countdown stage. Trump, who has always strongly questioned the legitimacy of mail-in voting, once again refused to promise a peaceful transfer of power, triggering public opinion and controversy in the United States.”), Facebook post, September 25, 2020, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/WeFullySupportrdap/posts/2075949675872730>, archived link is <https://archive.is/2QZ9D>; <https://archive.is/4kR2j>; @四大名捕, “美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。” (“The US presidential election has entered the countdown stage. Trump, who has always strongly questioned the legitimacy of mail-in voting, once again refused to promise a peaceful transfer of power, triggering public opinion and controversy in the United States.”), Facebook post, September 25, 2020, accessed on December 7, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2178310302314061&id=777674019044370, <https://archive.is/wvuN8>; @专偷《吃瓜看天下》stealwatermelongang, “美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。” (“The US presidential election has entered the countdown stage. Trump, who has always strongly questioned the legitimacy of mail-in voting, once again refused to promise a peaceful transfer of power, triggering public opinion and controversy in the United States.”), Facebook post, September 25, 2020, accessed on December 7, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3632065963511497&id=1385275681523881, <https://archive.is/2QZ9D>; @专偷《大马笑话“无奇不有”》, “美国总统大选进入倒数阶段。向来都强烈质疑邮寄投票合法性的特朗普，再次拒绝承诺和平转移权力，引发美国舆论与争议。” (“The US presidential election has entered the countdown stage. Trump, who has always strongly questioned the legitimacy of mail-in voting, once again refused to promise a peaceful transfer of power, triggering public opinion and controversy in the United States.”), Facebook post, September 25, 2020, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/zhuantoudamaxiaohuawuqibuyou/posts/2108245075985738>, <https://archive.is/4kR2j>

DESCENDANTS OF THE DRAGON

Page Name	Translation	Page Created At	Location
全球華人聯盟總主頁	Global Chinese Alliance General Page	December 30, 2014	Malaysia (6) China (1) Taiwan (1)
全球華人盟主專區	Chinese Chinese Leader Community	February 11, 2015	Malaysia (6)
全球華人寰宇聯盟	Global Chinese Universe Alliance	November 23, 2015	Malaysia (6) China (1) Taiwan (1)
全球華人盛世聯盟	Global Chinese Best World Alliance	December 2, 2015	Malaysia (6) Taiwan (1)
全球華人科技聯盟	Global Chinese Technology Alliance	December 2, 2015	Malaysia (6) China (2) Not available (1)
全球華人亞洲聯盟	Global Chinese Asia Alliance	March 8, 2016	Malaysia (6) China (1) Not available (1)
全球華人鐵血聯盟	Global Chinese Iron Blood Alliance	March 13, 2016	Malaysia (6)
兵部尚書	Military Leader	March 25, 2016	Malaysia (6)
全球華人風雲聯盟	Global Chinese Alliance	March 25, 2016	Malaysia (6)
天天頭條	Everyday Headline	May 12, 2016	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
全球華人鋼鐵聯盟	Global Chinese Iron Alliance	May 17, 2016	Malaysia (6)
繁華中國	Prosperous China	February 21, 2018	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
我有中國夢	I have a China Dream	February 21, 2018	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
康來康去	Look Around	March 1, 2018	N/A
全球華人盟主專頁	Chinese Chinese Leader Page	March 16, 2018	Malaysia (1)
世界日報	World Daily	April 9, 2018	China (2) Malaysia (1) Taiwan (1)
中國軍武	Chinese Military	April 5, 2019	Malaysia (1)
全球華人風雲聯盟Pro	Global Chinese Alliance Pro	September 23, 2020	N/A
全球華人軍事聯盟Pro	Global Chinese Military Affairs Alliance Pro	September 23, 2020	N/A



Twenty-five pages posted the news link from qiqu.pro almost simultaneously, the title of which is “Biden tells Trump to shut up immediately, U.S. presidential debate kicks off in chaos.”³²

Similar anti-Trump posts from the same twenty-five pages also happened on September 30, a day after the first US presidential debate, around an article titled “Biden tells Trump to shut up immediately, US presidential debate is in chaos.” The text accompanying the link read “Not long after the first debate in the US presidential election began, President Trump and Democratic candidate Biden refused to give up to each other and started a confrontation. When Trump repeatedly spoke at Biden, he interrupted Biden, and Biden, who has always been gentle, could not help but scold Trump for being an out-and-out clown and liar!”

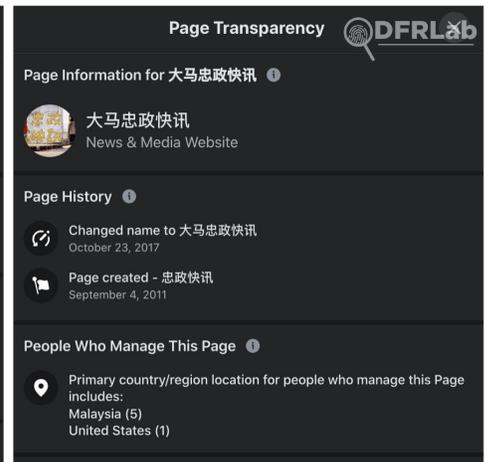
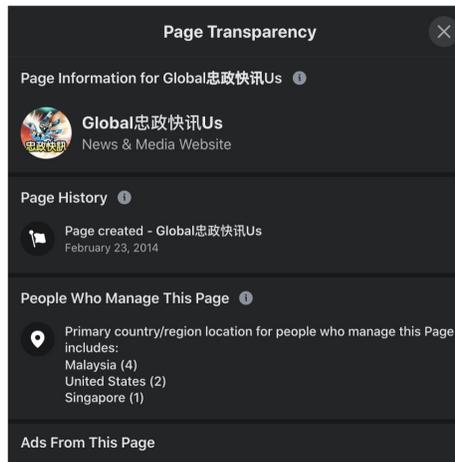
Nine of these pages were created in 2016, six in 2014, and the remaining ten in the intervening years between 2010 and 2018. Thirteen of the pages had administrators based in Malaysia, while two of these thirteen, “Global忠政快讯Us” (“Global Zhongzheng Express Us”) and “大马忠政快讯” (“Malaysia Zhongzheng Express”) also had two admins and one admin in the United States, respectively.

Nine of these pages were created in 2016, six in 2014, and the remaining ten in the intervening years between 2010 and 2018. Thirteen of the pages had administrators based in Malaysia, while two of these thirteen, “Global忠政快讯Us” (“Global Zhongzheng Express Us”) and “大马忠政快讯” (“Malaysia Zhongzheng Express”) also had two admins and one admin in the United States, respectively.

The page names are closely associated with Malaysia, and many of the posts on the pages discuss Malaysian politics. The posts use both simplified and traditional Chinese characters, so they would not be a part of search results for people searching in English. However, despite a predominant focus on Malaysia, there is also extensive content that communicates pro-China messaging, anti-US sentiment, and anti-Trump mockery, in accordance with the general tenor of the content from Qiqu Web. Moreover, many of the names of these pages are modeled as “Stealing” (“偷”) plus a preexisting page name. For example, the page “专偷《吃

瓜看天下》Steal From watermelongang” is modeled as “专偷” (“Steal From”) plus “吃瓜看天下.” While these pages target Malaysia, it does not preclude the possibility that their content might reach the broader global diaspora of Chinese Mandarin speakers, including in the United States where the content might have more resonance, especially ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

A second network identified by the DFRLab contained nineteen Facebook pages and also engaged in similar



Page Transparency sections for two Facebook pages, Global忠政快讯Us and 大马忠政快讯, had similar locations for admins. The former had four admins in Malaysia, two in the United States, and one in Singapore, while the latter had five admins in Malaysia and one in the United States.³³

32 DFRLab-generated list using social media monitoring tool CrowdTangle.

33 @Myzzkuaixun, Facebook page, accessed on October 13, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/myzzkuaixun/>, archived link is <https://archive.is/8YQ0p>; @GlobalZZKXUs, Facebook page, accessed on December 7, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalZZKXUs/>, archived link is <https://archive.is/U8F0x>.

34 The page name “吃瓜看天下” literally means “Eat a Melon and Take a Look at the World;” “Eat a Melon” means to gossip in Chinese internet slang. The Water Melon Gang is a part of a network identified later in this report as pushing predominantly pro-China and anti-Trump sentiment to Chinese diaspora communities.

promotion of news articles linked to Qiqu Web. These pages had 343,084 followers in total, and the administrators of these pages were spread across Malaysia, China, and Taiwan, with some of the pages having the exact same number of admins in the same locations. The content was predominantly in Mandarin Chinese, although it sometimes switched between traditional Chinese and simplified Chinese. The association with admins operating from China and the link to two pro-China and anti-US content farms indicated that this network of Facebook pages likely originated in China. Meanwhile, twelve of these pages were named in a similar fashion, with each including the words “全球華人” (“Chinese diaspora around the world”). Another three of the pages included “中國” (“China”) in their name and seemed intent in provoking a sense of fidelity to the homeland by alluding to the strong power of China. The names of these pages were intended to be highly appealing to Chinese diaspora groups around the globe, and the pages spread anti-Trump sentiment through the use of emotive content that would find salience within the Chinese diaspora communities within the United States.

On Facebook, however, the outbound links appeared to use a different domain address, Nanyang.News, that automatically redirected to “qiqu.world,” another domain belonging to the Qiqu content farm.



Screenshot of a coordinated post linking to Nanyang.news, which, when clicked, automatically redirected to an article on Qiqu.world. The headline and text mocked President Trump for his response to the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁶

Page Name	Translation	Page Created At	Location
全球華人聯盟總主頁	Global Chinese Alliance General Page	December 30, 2014	Malaysia (6) China (1) Taiwan (1)
全球華人盟主專區	Chinese Chinese Leader Community	February 11, 2015	Malaysia (6)
全球華人寰宇聯盟	Global Chinese Universe Alliance	November 23, 2015	Malaysia (6) China (1) Taiwan (1)
全球華人盛世聯盟	Global Chinese Best World Alliance	December 2, 2015	Malaysia (6) Taiwan (1)
全球華人科技聯盟	Global Chinese Technology Alliance	December 2, 2015	Malaysia (6) China (2) Not available (1)
全球華人亞洲聯盟	Global Chinese Asia Alliance	March 8, 2016	Malaysia (6) China (1) Not available (1)
全球華人鐵血聯盟	Global Chinese Iron Blood Alliance	March 13, 2016	Malaysia (6)
兵部尚書	Military Leader	March 25, 2016	Malaysia (6)
全球華人風雲聯盟	Global Chinese Alliance	March 25, 2016	Malaysia (6)
天天頭條	Everyday Headline	May 12, 2016	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
全球華人鋼鐵聯盟	Global Chinese Iron Alliance	May 17, 2016	Malaysia (6)
繁華中國	Prosperous China	February 21, 2018	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
我有中國夢	I have a China Dream	February 21, 2018	China (1) Malaysia (1) Not available (2)
康來康去	Look Around	March 1, 2018	N/A
全球華人盟主專頁	Chinese Chinese Leader Page	March 16, 2018	Malaysia (1)
世界日報	World Daily	April 9, 2018	China (2) Malaysia (1) Taiwan (1)
中國軍武	Chinese Military	April 5, 2019	Malaysia (1)
全球華人風雲聯盟Pro	Global Chinese Alliance Pro	September 23, 2020	N/A
全球華人軍事聯盟Pro	Global Chinese Military Affairs Alliance Pro	September 23, 2020	N/A

DFRLab

A chart showing the nineteen pages, their number of followers, the page creation dates, and the locations of the page admins. The different colored cells in the Location column indicate identical administrator locations. ed cells in the Location column indicate identical administrator locations.³⁵

35 DFRLab-generated list using social media monitoring tool CrowdTangle.

36 全球華人風雲聯盟Pro, “2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？” (“2:169, how dare Trump brag about his ‘leadership in the fight against the pandemic?’”), Facebook post, September 29, 2020, accessed on October 3, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=108004357733850&id=102456754955277, archived link is <https://archive.is/f0Zpp>.

DESCENDANTS OF THE DRAGON

Seventeen pages within the network frequently reposted the same posts from the final two pages in the network, 全球華人風雲聯盟Pro (“Global Chinese Alliance Pro”) or 全球華人軍事聯盟Pro (“Global Chinese Military Affairs Alliance Pro”). These latter two pages also shared Qiqu “news articles” within a short period of time on multiple occasions, with the shortest time interval being seven seconds and the longest around fifteen minutes. The Global Chinese Alliance Pro and Global Chinese Military Affairs Alliance Pro Facebook pages were both established on September 23, 2020, and each page had an administrator located in Malaysia. The Qiqu Web website sources its videos from a variety of outside organizations, including the Chinese state-controlled media outlet Global Observation, one of Global Times

video channels; multiple channels on 西瓜视频 (“iXigua”), a video platform, and Today’s Headline (“今日头条”), a news platform, both of which are owned by China’s ByteDance; and YouTube channels that celebrate the soft and hard power of China. For example, in the aforementioned post that mocked President Trump’s response to the pandemic, the video originated from Marx Matrix, a channel on iXigua, Today’s Headline, and an eponymous YouTube channel. The second video, “US hegemony arouses public outrage, foreign media: once Trump is reelected, he will harm the world,” in the network coordination table above was similarly taken from an outside source, in this case the video channel “第1军事” (“No. 1 Military Affairs”) on iXigua.

Page Name	Created	Type	Engagements	Message	Link Text	Description
全球華人風雲聯盟Pro	2020-09-29 08:34 EDT	Link	18		2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？	
全球華人盟主專頁	2020-09-29 08:36 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人盟主專區	2020-09-29 08:37 EDT	Link	7		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人聯盟總主頁	2020-09-29 08:38 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人盛世聯盟	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	5		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人鐵血聯盟	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	3		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人鋼鐵聯盟	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	3		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
兵部尚書	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	6		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人寰宇聯盟	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	4		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人亞洲聯盟	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
中國軍武	2020-09-29 08:55 EDT	Link	5		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
天天頭條	2020-09-29 08:56 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
繁華中國	2020-09-29 08:56 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
康來康去	2020-09-29 08:56 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
我有中國夢	2020-09-29 08:56 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人科技聯盟	2020-09-29 08:56 EDT	Link	7		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
世界日報	2020-09-29 08:56 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？
全球華人軍事聯盟Pro	2020-09-30 07:16 EDT	Link	20		美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界	
全球華人盟主專頁	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人盟主專區	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	7		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人聯盟總主頁	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人盛世聯盟	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人鐵血聯盟	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人鋼鐵聯盟	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
兵部尚書	2020-09-30 07:24 EDT	Link	3		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
世界日報	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	4		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
中國軍武	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	1		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人寰宇聯盟	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	27		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人亞洲聯盟	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	8		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
天天頭條	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
繁華中國	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
康來康去	2020-09-30 07:25 EDT	Link	0		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
我有中國夢	2020-09-30 07:26 EDT	Link	4		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界
全球華人科技聯盟	2020-09-30 07:26 EDT	Link	2		This is a re-share of a post	美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將損害全世界



Table showing the coordinated behaviors of nineteen pages in sharing the same link to Qiqu Web “news videos.” The first video, shared by seventeen pages in the light yellow posts (top half of list), was titled “Two to 169, why is Trump still bragging about leading the world against the pandemic?” and was first shared on the page Global Chinese Alliance Pro. The second video, shared by seventeen pages in the dark yellow posts (bottom half of list), was titled “US hegemony arouses public outrage, foreign media: once Trump is reelected, he will harm the world” and was first shared by the Global Chinese Military Affairs Alliance Pro page.³⁷



Screenshot of the ultimate destination of the earlier Nanyang News screenshot. The video, as shown by the stylized logo 火星方阵 (“Marx Matrix”) in the middle, belonged to a video channel on 西瓜视频 (“Xigua”).³⁸



A video titled “US hegemony arouses public outrage, foreign media: once Trump is reelected, he will harm the world” posted by Qiqu was originally from the video channel “第1军事” (“No. 1 Military Affairs”).³⁹

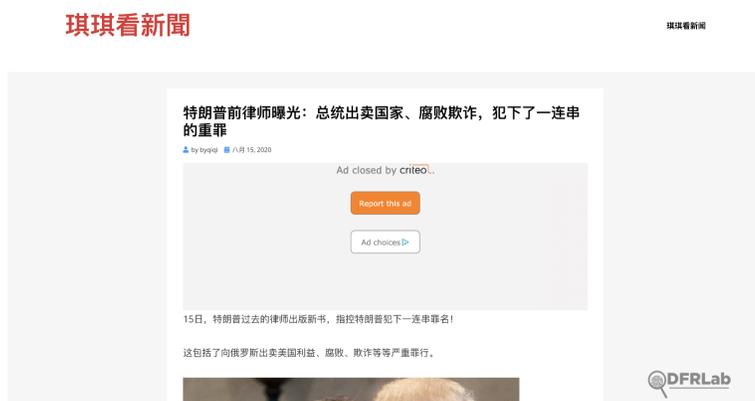
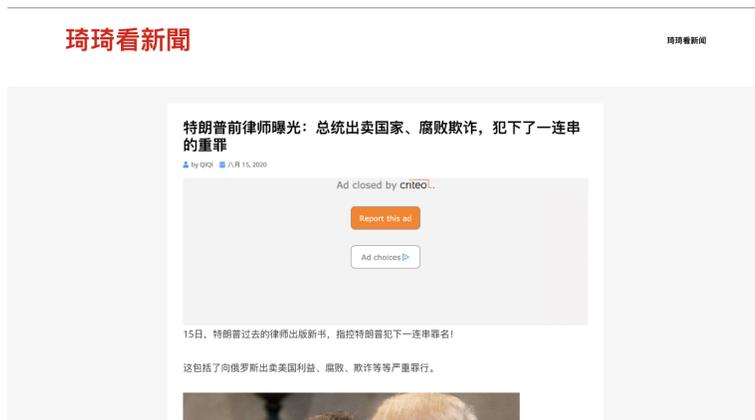
Page Name	Created	Type	Engagements	Link Text	Description
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-18 20:35 EDT	Link	12	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	19日，特朗普过去的律师出版新书，指控特朗普犯下一连串重罪！这包括了向俄罗斯出售美国利益、腐败、欺诈等等严重...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-18 20:35 EDT	Link	31	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	19日，特朗普过去的律师出版新书，指控特朗普犯下一连串重罪！这包括了向俄罗斯出售美国利益、腐败、欺诈等等严重...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-18 21:00 EDT	Link	40	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	19日，特朗普过去的律师出版新书，指控特朗普犯下一连串重罪！这包括了向俄罗斯出售美国利益、腐败、欺诈等等严重...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-18 21:00 EDT	Link	9	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	19日，特朗普过去的律师出版新书，指控特朗普犯下一连串重罪！这包括了向俄罗斯出售美国利益、腐败、欺诈等等严重...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-18 21:00 EDT	Link	9	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	19日，特朗普过去的律师出版新书，指控特朗普犯下一连串重罪！这包括了向俄罗斯出售美国利益、腐败、欺诈等等严重...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-19 07:29 EDT	Link	36	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	特朗普前律师曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪。据了解，这已经是...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-19 07:29 EDT	Link	46	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	特朗普前律师曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪。据了解，这已经是...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-19 07:29 EDT	Link	28	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	特朗普前律师曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪。据了解，这已经是...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-08-19 07:30 EDT	Link	92	特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪	特朗普前律师曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪。据了解，这已经是...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-10-05 20:26 EDT	Link	6	消息人士：特朗普现在非常疲倦，呼吸有些困难	【环球网快讯】美国《三报》刚刚消息称，一位不愿透露姓名的特朗普竞选团队成员向美国有线电视新闻网（CNN）确认称...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-10-05 20:26 EDT	Link	6	消息人士：特朗普现在非常疲倦，呼吸有些困难	【环球网快讯】美国《三报》刚刚消息称，一位不愿透露姓名的特朗普竞选团队成员向美国有线电视新闻网（CNN）确认称...
全球華人風雲聯盟	2020-10-05 20:26 EDT	Link	2	消息人士：特朗普现在非常疲倦，呼吸有些困难	【环球网快讯】美国《三报》刚刚消息称，一位不愿透露姓名的特朗普竞选团队成员向美国有线电视新闻网（CNN）确认称...
兵燹尚書	2020-10-05 20:26 EDT	Link	1	消息人士：特朗普现在非常疲倦，呼吸有些困难	【环球网快讯】美国《三报》刚刚消息称，一位不愿透露姓名的特朗普竞选团队成员向美国有线电视新闻网（CNN）确认称...

Some of the nineteen Facebook pages have consistently promoted content from Qiqu News, the second external content farm. The headlines, from top to bottom, read “特朗普前律師曝光：总统出卖国家，腐败欺诈，犯下了一连串的重罪” (“Trump’s former lawyer exposed: the president betrayed the country, committed corruption and fraud, and committed a series of felony crimes”), “特朗普前律師曝光：出卖国家、腐败欺诈！前律师出版新书指控美国总统” (“Trump crimes exposed: betrayal of the country, corruption and fraud! Former lawyer publishes new book accusing US president”), and “消息人士：特朗普现在非常疲倦，呼吸有些困难” (“Source: Trump is very tired now and has difficulty breathing”).⁴⁰

38 全球華人風雲聯盟Pro, “2:169, how dare Trump brag about his ‘leadership in the fight against the pandemic?’”; “2比169，特朗普還好意思吹噓自己「領導世界抗疫」？” (“2:169, how dare Trump brag about his ‘leadership in the fight against the pandemic?’”), 趣享網 Qiqu Web, accessed on October 30, 2020, http://www.qiqu.world/watch/332790?fbclid=IwAR3Cat9BSCSLZ-NNnLeR-Qvnb97i2l9XVSBESRXks_Q_Ctr2B6boyG6lTwc#2091, archived link is <https://archive.is/nNT4t>.

39 “美國霸權引發眾怒，外媒：特朗普一旦連任，將禍害全世界,” (“U.S. hegemony arouses public outrage, foreign media: once Trump is re-elected, he will harm the world”), 趣享網 Qiqu Web, accessed on October 30, 2020, www.qiqu.world/watch/332994, archived link is <https://archive.is/DH5Kq>.

40 DFRLab-generated list using social media monitoring tool CrowdTangle.



Example posts showing that “琪琪看新聞” (xqiqis.com) and “琦琦看新聞” (twitter-qiqi.com) displayed the same headline (“Trump’s former lawyer exposed: the president betrayed the country, committed corruption and fraud, and committed a series of felony crimes”) and a similar outlook of the webpage, indicating that they are likely connected to each other. ⁴¹

Moreover, some but not all of these pages also coordinated on sharing links to another content farm, “琪琪看新聞” or “琦琦看新聞” (“Qiqi News”), which – according to a report from Hong Kong news outlet *Apple Daily* – the National Security Bureau of Taiwan monitors because of the website’s history of spreading pro-China propaganda and disinformation that might affect Taiwan’s democratic development.⁴² Some examples of the anti-Trump content being amplified through this network range from personal attacks on the US president, including “特朗普前律師曝光：總統出賣國家，腐敗欺詐，犯下了一連串的重罪” (“Trump’s former lawyer exposed: the president betrayed the country, committed corruption and fraud, and committed a series of felony crimes”), to highlighting the comparative disadvantage of the United States resulting from Trump’s policies, “中國疫苗再獲世衛肯定，特朗普心急如焚出損招，不料美民眾不買賬” (“China’s vaccine has been affirmed by the WHO again, Trump is anxious and comes up with a bad solution, but Americans will not buy it”).

Again, if this content were to encourage any behavior or perception change among its recipients in the United States or elsewhere, it would be limited to the Chinese diaspora, as the posts were all in Mandarin Chinese and not English.

The impact of these Facebook networks was insignificant, but the method and content was notable. Despite the large number of followers, the posts rarely received more than 1,000 engagements. A potential reason can be observed from the conversations happening on the Facebook public groups made by the Malaysia-based pages. The posts to the groups concerned mainly personal, business, or entertainment matters, demonstrating that the user accounts active on these pages and related groups probably treated the group more as an apolitical association than a political one. Given this discrepancy between engagement around political and apolitical topics, the reach of the political propaganda on these networks is more limited than the number of followers has implied.

41 “特朗普前律師曝光：總統出賣國家、腐敗欺詐，犯下了一連串的重罪，” (“Trump’s former lawyer exposed: the president betrayed the country, committed corruption and fraud, and committed a series of felony crimes”), 琦琦看新聞 Qiqi News, August 15, 2020, [https://xqiqis.com/archives/80453?fbclid=IwAROUJC3rhAUHm6l-OZqLRAX-45uFTwWcqsKqRvF_Mo9mGZln60Xtj4QvLc](https://xqiqis.com/archives/80453?fbclid=IwAROUJC3rhAUHm6l-OZqLRAX45uFTwWcqsKqRvF_Mo9mGZln60Xtj4QvLc), archived on October 31, 2020 at <https://archive.is/fLPif>; “特朗普前律師曝光：總統出賣國家、腐敗欺詐，犯下了一連串的重罪，” (“Trump’s former lawyer exposed: the president betrayed the country, committed corruption and fraud, and committed a series of felony crimes”), 琪琪看新聞 Qiqi News, August 15, 2020, https://xqiqis.com/archives/80453?fbclid=IwAROUJC3rhAUHm6l-OZqLRAX-45uFTwWcqsKqRvF_Mo9mGZln60Xtj4QvLc, archived on October 31, 2020 at <https://archive.is/8as82>.

42 《蘋果》獨家 國安局監控11造謠網媒 防假消息擾大選 列管名單曝光” (“‘Apple’ exclusive National Security Bureau monitors 11 rumored Internet media to prevent fake news from disturbing the general election; the list is exposed”), *Apple News*, May 16, 2015, <https://tw.appledaily.com/headline/20190516/lz-VGSUMY7U5ZOKNHRLS3LFHDF4/>

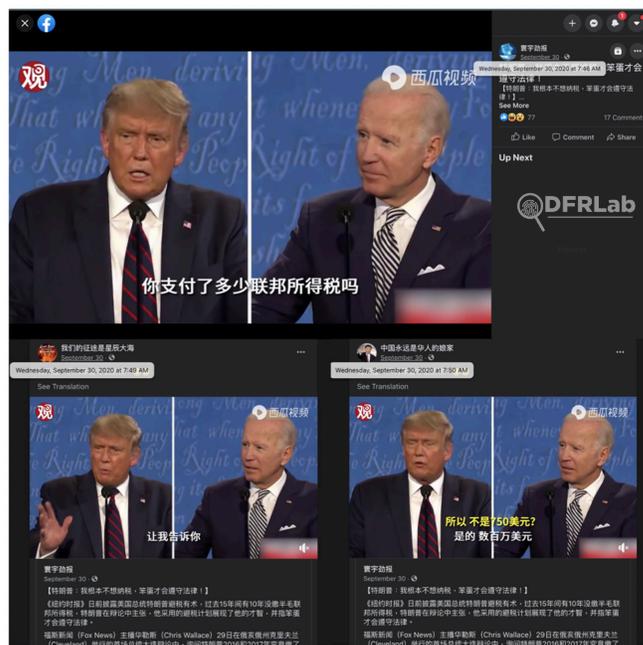
Coordinated Pro-China Pages Sharing Anti-Trump Videos on Facebook

Separate from the content farm above, the DFRLab also identified a network of nine Facebook pages and four associated Facebook groups that posted frequently in Chinese on US politics. Again, as Facebook is blocked for mainland Chinese internet users that are not circumnavigating the “Great Firewall” (a vast majority of Chinese internet users), the most likely audience for the content on these pages was the global Chinese diaspora.

The assets in the network coordinated at times to post videos directly on Facebook from official Chinese state-controlled media including CCTV, People’s Daily, and local official media including Shanghai Media Group (SMG). A CrowdTangle query showed eight pages republished a post from the ninth page, “寰宇劲报” (“Global Power News”), within a few minutes of the latter’s original post, indicating coordinated behavior.

The posts were often accompanied by identical text, as indicated in the “Description” column of the table above. The identical caption is “特朗普：我根本不想纳税，笨蛋才会遵守法律！” (“Trump: I don’t want to pay taxes; only fools will abide by the law!”), using emotive language to mock at Trump’s tax record.

The posts were often accompanied by identical text, as indicated in the “Description” column of the table above. The identical caption is “特朗普：我根本不想纳税，笨蛋才会遵守法律！” (“Trump: I don’t want to pay taxes; only fools will abide by the law!”), using emotive language to mock at Trump’s tax record.



Three examples extracted from the table above demonstrated these pages were engaged in promoting anti-Trump content in a coordinated fashion, including by accompanying the post with identical text.⁴⁴

Page Name	Translation	Page Creation Time or Last Updated	Page Location
民联专页大联盟	Pakatan Rakyat Page Alliance	February 24, 2014	Malaysia(13)
百万人民支持安华 Millions of people support ANWAR	Millions of people support ANWAR	March 7, 2014	Malaysia (17) Taiwan (5) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)
以民为主 For The People	For the People	October 17, 2015	Malaysia (26) Taiwan (6) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)
寰宇劲报	Global Power News	January 5, 2016	Malaysia (35) Taiwan (7) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)
中国永远是华人的娘家	China is always the home for diaspora	January 17, 2016	Malaysia (27) Taiwan (6) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)
我为人人 人人为我 One For All, All For One	One for All, All for One	March 30, 2016	Malaysia (7)
吃瓜看天下 Watermelon Gang	Watermelon Gang	October 4, 2016	Malaysia (27) Taiwan (5) Indonesia (1) Thailand (1) Not available (1)
我们的征途是星辰大海	Our journey extends to the sea and to the galaxy	January 1, 2017	Malaysia (19) Taiwan (6) Indonesia (1)
中华民族 伟大复兴	The Chinese Ethnicity: The Great Rejuvenation	January 1, 2017	Malaysia (14) Taiwan (3) Bangladesh (1)

The pages consistently posted, among other things, anti-Trump videos almost simultaneously, demonstrating a degree of coordinated behavior behind these pages.⁴³

43 DFRLab used social media analytics tool CrowdTangle.

44 @GlobalPowerMedia, “特朗普：我根本不想纳税，笨蛋才会遵守法律！” (“Trump: I don’t want to pay taxes; only fools will abide by the law!”), Facebook post, September 30, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1128787904183402>, archived on December 7, 2020 at <https://archive.is/Apz2r;@traveltoSkyandSea>, “特朗普：只有笨蛋才会纳税 😄😄！” (“Trump: only fools will pay taxes.”), Facebook post, September 30, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/210193176107572/posts/1025214951272053>, archived on September 30, 2020 at <https://archive.is/6Redz>中国永远是华人的娘家, “特朗普：只有笨蛋才会纳税！ 😄😄” (“Trump: only fools will pay taxes.”), Facebook post, September 30, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/ChinaMotherland/posts/2527484027542047>, archived on December 7, 2020 at <https://archive.is/scLKw>.

DESCENDANTS OF THE DRAGON

Page Name	Translation	Page Creation Time or Last Updated	Page Location	DFRLab
民联专页大联盟	Pakatan Rakyat Page Alliance	February 24, 2014	Malaysia(13)	
百万人民支持安华 Millions of people support ANWAR	Millions of people support ANWAR	March 7, 2014	Malaysia (17) Taiwan (5) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)	
以民为主 For The People	For the People	October 17, 2015	Malaysia (26) Taiwan (6) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)	
寰宇劲报	Global Power News	January 5, 2016	Malaysia (35) Taiwan (7) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)	
中国永远是华人的娘家	China is always the home for diaspora	January 17, 2016	Malaysia (27) Taiwan (6) Indonesia (1) Not available (1)	
我为人人 人人为我 One For All All For One	One for All; All for One	March 30, 2016	Malaysia (7)	
吃瓜看天下 Watermelon Gang	Watermelon Gang	October 4, 2016	Malaysia (27) Taiwan (5) Indonesia (1) Thailand (1) Not available (1)	
我们的征途是星辰大海	Our journey extends to the sea and to the galaxy	January 1, 2017	Malaysia (19) Taiwan (6) Indonesia (1)	
中华民族 伟大复兴	The Chinese Ethnicity; The Great Rejuvenation	January 1, 2017	Malaysia (14) Taiwan (3) Bangladesh (1)	

The pages were created between 2014 and 2017. The page admins were located predominantly in Malaysia but were also spread across Taiwan, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Indonesia.⁴⁵

It seems that two of the pages in this set, “民联主页大联盟” (“Pakatan Rakyat General Alliance”) and “百万华人支持安华Millions of people support ANWAR,” were created with a façade appearing to focus on Malaysian politics but the content of the pages was predominantly about China. These two pages frequently repost videos from Chinese media owned by central and local governments, including “华府观察” (“D.C. Observations”) owned by SMG and “胡侃” (“Discussion by Hu”), which is anchored by Xijin Hu, the chief editor of Global Times. The narratives of these pages align with China’s discourse power projection and unlike the pages mentioned in the first network, rarely, if ever, touched on Malaysian politics.

Similar to the second (Qiqi) network above, all of these pages’ content is predominantly simplified Mandarin Chinese, both traditional and simplified. This network also had page and group names suggesting that they too targeted Chinese diaspora (“华人”) communities, with names like “中国永远是华人的娘家,” (“China will always be the family of the Chinese”), “中华民族 伟大复兴” (“The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”), and “中国一点都不能少” (“China cannot lose any territory”). More subtle examples included “我们的征途是星辰大海,” which literally translates as “Our journey extends to the sea and to the galaxy.” Chinese media has used this phrase to describe the country’s ambition to explore the world via the power of technology. The group names within the network were the same as the page names, including the three mentioned above and “以民为主 For The People”

While the network did not specifically target the US election, it sought to amplify anti-Trump messages and rarely portrayed Biden in a negative light, which could have had an indirect impact on the Chinese diaspora community by instilling negative sentiment toward Trump.

45 DFRLab-generated list using social media monitoring tool CrowdTangle.

DouYin and Kuaishou Videos on Facebook

Similar to the previous network, the DFRLab also uncovered a number of Facebook pages disseminating anti-US propaganda by reposting videos extracted from 抖音 DouYin, the precursor to TikTok exclusively accessible to the Chinese market.⁴⁶ Just as TikTok is popular among non-Chinese speakers, DouYin is especially popular among Chinese-speaking populations. As these Facebook assets take content that would only normally be accessed mostly by people in mainland China and make it available on a platform only available to people outside of the mainland (or those who are circumventing the “Great Firewall”), the most likely audience would again be the global diaspora.

The content of these Facebook pages covered a wide spectrum of CCP messaging in line with discourse power projection, including accentuating China’s military power; pushing an image of a “benign and responsible” international power; and encouraging negative sentiment toward Western powers, including the United States and Australia, and pro-independence and pro-democracy activists in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Despite these goals, however, these pages generally garnered an insignificant volume of engagement, with the exception of one page, “婷婷看世界” (“Ting Ting Look at the World”).

“Ting Ting Look at the World” was created on January 29, 2016, and managed by an account based in China. The page portrayed itself as being a professional page for a photographer but in actuality posted predominantly political content. The page had 192,242 followers as of December 3, 2020. The followers on this page included not only Chinese citizens who would have to access the platform via virtual private networks (VPNs), as the Great Firewall obstructs the access of Chinese citizens to Western social media platforms, but also Chinese diaspora communities around the world.⁴⁸

“Ting Ting Looked at the World” regularly reposted videos from the DouYin accounts of Chinese state-controlled media, including CCTV and China Daily. Besides pro-China content that encouraged a positive perception of China’s military, technology, and diplomatic power, the page also posted videos discrediting the United States in general and attacking the Trump Administration by mocking its responses to the California wildfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, while criticizing its hostility toward China.

For example, the video “Hilarious replies again! During a California Wildfire briefing, officials alert the adverse effects of warming, while Trump replies: It’s going to get cooler, wait and see!” (translated from Chinese), received comments from user accounts based in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan, the United States, and China.⁴⁹ And out of the 744 reactions of the post, a majority (463) of the reactions were in line with the mocking tone of the post. The original video was pulled from the official DouYin account of People’s Daily, which itself originally garnered more than 1,300,000 likes, 256 comments, and 23,800 shares on DouYin.



Page Name	Translation	Followers (as of December 3, 2020)	Location	Created At
亮劍+中國夢/China Dream	Drawing Sword/China Dream	55,028	Hong Kong (2)	December 10, 2013
婷婷看世界	Ting Ting Look at the World	192,242	China (1) Not available (1)	January 29, 2016
永恒的一个中国	Forever One China	21,622	Hong Kong (5)	November 18, 2016
龍行天下	Dragon in the World	19,479	Taiwan (2) Not available (1)	July 5, 2019
我爱你中国 我愛你中國	I love you China	91,445	South Korea (3) China (1) Taiwan (1) Not available (2)	September 28, 2019
2044年中国世界强国	2044 China World Strong Power	25,690	Malaysia (2)	January 21, 2020
婷婷看世界	Ting Ting Look at the World	175	N/A	June 30, 2020
爱我中华	Love My China	1,087	Bangladesh (1) Hong Kong (1)	August 13, 2020
燕燕看新闻	Yan Yan Look at the News	9,279	Hong Kong (1) Not available (2)	December 23, 2019 (Changed name to 燕燕看新闻 August 27, 2020)

A list of Facebook pages that propagated videos from DouYin and Kuaishou, the short-form videos platforms originated from China. These pages covered a wide spectrum of Chinese discourse power subject materials.⁴⁷

46 Beyond a knowledge of the Chinese language, DouYin’s isolation to just the Chinese market is a result of a highly protective registration process that includes, for example, inputting a Chinese bank account. Many in the diaspora prefer DouYin to its progeny platform, TikTok, which is widely available to Western users.

47 DFRLab used social media analytics tool CrowdTangle.

48 Josh Summers, “Why You Need A VPN In China In 2020,” China Expat Society, October 1, 2020, <https://www.chinaexpatsociety.com/technology/why-you-need-a-vpn-in-china>.

49 @ttksj01, “又有神回复!加州山火简报会,官员提醒气候变暖带来的不利影响,特朗普:会变凉快的,你等着瞧吧!” (“Hilarious replies again! During a California Wildfire briefing, officials alert the adverse effects of warming, while Trump replies: It’s going to get cooler, wait and see!”), Facebook post, September 15, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=361003911943363>, archived on December 3, 2020 at <https://archive.vn/nNf3B>.



Post on the Facebook page “Ting Ting Look at the World” with a caption that translates as “Hilarious replies again! During a California Wildfire briefing, officials alert the adverse effects of warming, while Trump replies: It’s going to get cooler, wait and see!” The post features a video from the People’s Daily DouYin account.⁵⁰

Although the Facebook page seemed to be managed by a real person – her user account featured two photos of a girl geolocated back to Guangzhou, China – there was evidence belying the page’s organized and inauthentic behavior beyond its pushing anti-US messaging and pro-China propaganda. The page frequently reposted content from several Facebook pages that have a lot fewer followers and posted in several different languages. One example of such a lower profile page was “愛我中華” (“Love My China”), which included a profile picture closely resembling the buildings of the Chinese government and the symbols of the CCP. “Love My China” was established on August 13, 2020, and posted in several different languages, including simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, and English.

On the day “Love My China” was created, “Ting Ting Look at the World” reposted its first post in seven minutes. The title of the post was “想捏软柿子？吃我硬拳头！Take Me as a push-over Try My Tough fist!” in which the narrator issued a strong rebuke of the United States after the Trump Administration forced the closure of China’s consulate

in Houston, which the narrator says led to China’s tough response of closing the US consulate in Chengdu in August 2020.⁵¹ The content of this particular video was in English with bilingual subtitles in both Chinese and English, though others on the page featured spoken Chinese. According to Facebook, the administrator of “Love My China” was based in Bangladesh. With a relatively low 1,141 followers, it has only posted twenty-four times as of December 3, 2020, pushing pro-China narratives around the Hong Kong protests, encouraging positive sentiment toward China, and mocking Trump. It did, however, tailor its content to specific audiences with different language preferences: it posted in Cantonese Chinese when covering Hong Kong while using English in the caption for posts about the United States, though the accompanying videos included subtitles in simplified Chinese.

Another example page displaying a similar propaganda agenda with DouYin and Kuaishou short-form videos was “我爱你中国 我愛你中國” (“I love you China”). The page frequently posted videos from the Kuaishou account of Chinese state-controlled media. Kuaishou is a short-form video platform similar to DouYin, but they differ slightly in user base: while DouYin’s user base is more urban-focused, Kuaishou’s user base is more rural. The page was created on September 28, 2019, and has three administrator accounts in South Korea, two in China, and one in Taiwan. The page has mentioned Biden thirteen times and Trump 172 times. The overall sentiment of the US-related content on the page is predominantly critical of Trump, in particular targeting his competency as president

50 @rmbxmt, “又有神回复！加州山火简报会，官员提醒气候变暖带来的不利影响，特朗普：会变凉快的，你等着瞧吧！” (“Hilarious replies again! During a California Wildfire briefing, officials alert the adverse effects of warming, while Trump replies: It’s going to get cooler, wait and see!”), DouYin video, September 14, 2020, https://www.iesdouyin.com/share/video/6872547292990180622/?region=US&mid=6872547583544494861&u_code=0&titleType=title×tamp=1600715163&app=aweme&utm_campaign=client_share&utm_medium=ios&tt_from=copy&utm_source=copy, archived on December 7, 2020 at <https://archive.vn/IPJNY>.

51 愛我中華, “想捏软柿子？吃我硬拳头！” (“Take Me as a push-over Try My Tough fist!”), Facebook post, August 13, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=300585654540805>, archived on December 5, 2020 at <https://archive.is/y73nB>.

Conclusion

China's digital influence campaigns have served as a new front of its diaspora policy. Unlike Russia, which mostly focuses on disrupting and destabilizing society within its target country, China also dedicates significant resources toward convincing its diaspora of the country's soft power, in line with the discourse power principle of the party-state. Although it is often hard to attribute these information operations directly back to the Chinese government, the narratives generally align with CCP messaging by cheerleading China's military, technology, and diplomatic power while discrediting the political system of western and hostile powers in comparison to its own "China Model."

As the United States and other countries evaluate their policies to safeguard the elections and confront Chinese influence activities, three conclusions can be drawn about the DFRLab's research into China's propaganda apparatus as it targets the diaspora community.

First, the examples provided throughout this brief were limited in impact but exemplary of the information environment of the Chinese diaspora. While there was no evident link between the coordinated operations identified by the DFRLab and the Chinese government, the supply and prevalence pro-CCP content seemed to outweigh the demand measured in engagement. Investigators at the DFRLab were only able to conclude that, by coordinating the promotion of Chinese-language news articles from Malaysian-based content farms and state-controlled media outlets, the Facebook pages found during the course of this research aligned with the goals of China's preferred goals. When it comes to US-focused content, the broader aim appeared to be discrediting the US political system as a whole and to encourage the diaspora community toward a better "Chinese system," as a means of possibly convincing them either to return to China to contribute to the country's development or to attempt to influence the political system of their adopted country to be more favorable to Chinese national interests.

Second, the DFRLab observed more antagonistic messaging directed at the US political system in general, as opposed to a sustained focus on specific leaders, especially through inauthentic coordinated networks of accounts, pages, and groups on western social media platforms. Posts on Facebook, both from the content farms and from Chinese state-controlled media, often displayed a mocking and negative tone toward the President Trump. Certainly, his position as President of the United States

during a period of a deteriorating Sino-US relationship was likely the leading factor for the tone, as Trump has developed more hostile relationship with the party-state, but China also likely sees a benefit in a more stable United States, so diminishing his stature – as an internationally destabilizing force – would work toward this end. Aiming to undermine perceptions of democracy overall and to promote the benefits of an alternative "China Model," however, the party-state has additional incentives to attack the incumbent US president as the primary avatar for democratic systems. Within these networks, there was little anti-Biden content, though it is likely that, with his election to the presidency, the number of critical posts will accelerate.

Third, despite the large number of followers of the Facebook pages and groups uncovered during the course of this research, the actual influence these information operations had on their followers, namely, the Chinese diaspora communities, might have been relatively insignificant. The low engagement with the posts can serve as a proxy for level of influence, as the low volume projects a lack of interest in political affairs. Moreover, the communities following the pages were more active when discussing apolitical matters such as business, personal lives, and entertainment, perhaps due in part to a relatively apolitical tradition in diaspora communities.

Ultimately, under the Xi administration, a prominent application of the "discourse power" principle has been China's attempts to influence diaspora communities outside of mainland China, convincing them to align with, retain, or advocate for "Chinese values." The state-controlled media's "Official Accounts" (i.e., blogging) on WeChat Official Account, which is accessible to both mainland populations and diaspora communities, and overt coordination on Western social media platforms, which are mostly accessible only to the diaspora communities, mix narratives of China's power and ascendancy with negative sentiment toward foreign hostile powers and high-profile politicians in target countries.

China aims to cultivate a broader "Chinese" identity around the globe, regardless of national borders, seeking to implant an international system with "Chinese values" operating under a "China Model." The low engagement with many of the assets and the narratives uncovered as a part of this research, however, indicated that the party-state has had incomplete success in its efforts.

Contributors

Iain Robertson served as lead editor and contributing writer. DFRLab staff conducted principal research and writing. Romain Warnault created the cover, and Eric Baker designed the layout. Alicia Fawcett contributed additional research.



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