

# [***Meta Removes Over 7,500 Facebook Accounts Linked To Chinese Influence Campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692C-PT31-JBCM-F01G-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 677 words

**Byline:** Ty Roush, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** The campaign referred to as Spamouflage spread positive commentary about China s Xinjiang province and disinformation about the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Body**

**Topline**

Thousands of Facebook accounts and a number of Instagram accounts were removed by parent company Meta in an effort to disrupt a Chinese influence campaign, which generated a network to spread positive commentary about China s law enforcement and disinformation about the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a report Tuesday by Meta.

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The campaign referred to as Spamouflage spread positive commentary about China s Xinjiang province and disinformation about the Covid-19 pandemic.

Getty Images

</figcaption></figure>

**Key Facts**

Meta removed 7,704 Facebook accounts, 954 Facebook pages, 15 Facebook groups and 15 Instagram accounts linked to an influence campaign that targeted the U.S., Taiwan, the U.K. and other countries, MetareportedTuesday.

The network referred to by Meta as Spamouflage was first identified by Meta in 2019 and allegedly originated within Chinese law enforcement, though it expanded over the last four years as more accounts were identified by the company.

Hundreds of accounts across other platforms including TikTok, X, LiveJournal and Blogspot, among others also participated in the campaign, Meta said, which posted positive commentary about China s Xinjiang province where the Chinese governmentdetainedits Uyghur population and criticisms of the U.S., Western foreign policies and critics of the Chinese government, including journalists and researchers.

The network also attempted to spread false claims that the U.S. was where Covid-19 originated, and included a 66-page research paper that was remarkable for its errors, according to Meta.

The Facebook pages amassed an estimated 560,000 followers, though Meta indicated the accounts were likely spam accounts purchased from Vietnam, Bangladesh or Brazil.

Ben Nimmo, Meta s global threat intelligence lead, toldReutersthe campaign was large and noisy and it struggled to reach beyond its own fake echo chamber.

**Crucial Quote**

Nimmotoldthe**New York Times**: This is the biggest single takedown of a single network we have ever conducted. When you put it together with all the activity we took down across the internet, we concluded it is the largest covert campaign that we know of today.

**Key Background**

The Chinese influence campaign is the seventh that Meta has removed over the last six years, including four over the last year, according to the company. Meta said last year it haddiscovereda Chinese campaign to interfere in U.S. ***politics*** ahead of midterm elections, including posts from fake accounts posing as conservative Americans that promoted gun rights and opposition to abortion rights. Chinese influence campaigns typically rely on spam accounts, Meta noted, which tend to post the same comment over several accounts across multiple platforms. The Spamouflage network was first identified by Nimmo, other Meta employees and the social media research firm Graphika in 2019. Areportby Nimmo and Graphika indicated the network had used hijacked or fake accounts on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook to support the Chinese government and discredit its critics during ongoing protests in Hong Kong. Though the network was active and prolific, the report suggested it was ultimately low impact.

**Tangent**

Chinese officials were previously accused of leading disinformation campaigns across social media that targeted Canadian politicians. Global Affairs Canadareportedearlier this month that Michael Chong, a member of Canada s Conservative Party, was likely targeted by a coordinated network of WeChat news accounts, which shared and amplified a large volume of false or misleading narratives about Chong. The Canadian government noted that while it was highly probable that China was involved in the alleged campaign, unequivocal proof of China s involvement is not possible.

**Further Reading**

Meta s Biggest Single Takedown Removes Chinese Influence Campaign(**New York Times**)

Canadian Lawmaker Likely Targeted By Chinese Disinformation Campaign(**Forbes**)

Chinese Malware Could Cut Power To U.S. Military Bases, Businesses And Homes, Report Claims(**Forbes**)

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