

[HOME](#) > [NEWS](#) >

# China Information Operations Newsletter 11 May 2021

11 May 2021



The China Information Operations Newsletter is edited by Hannah Bailey and Hannah Kirk, researchers at the [Programme on Democracy and Technology](#) (DemTech) at Oxford University. Today's newsletter is a **three minute read**.

## New Research

### China's Global Public Diplomacy Operations

Our [new report](#) examines how China has significantly expanded its public diplomacy efforts on Facebook and Twitter, using accounts from diplomats, state-controlled media, and additional coordinated networks of inauthentic accounts. As reported by [The Associated Press](#), we find that

Chinese diplomat accounts are rarely labelled correctly by social media firms, that engagement with PRC diplomats is generated by super-spreader accounts, and that many coordinated networks on Twitter remain active for months at a time.

## China's Information Operations in the UK

In a [dedicated study](#) of the PRC's information operations in the UK, we find a large, coordinated network of inauthentic accounts amplifying China's diplomats. As reported by [The Associated Press](#), we find four forms of coordinated behaviour: account usage; account creation; account interaction; and repetition of key phrases.

## New Book on China's Public Diplomacy

Peter Martin's book "[China's Civilian Army: The Making of Wolf Warrior Diplomacy](#)" draws on the memoirs of over one hundred retired Chinese diplomats. This book offers lessons on the future of China as a superpower. From these diplomats, Martin captures China's internal battle between insecurity and self-confidence.

## Information Control Damages Civic Trust in China

An unintended consequence of the Chinese Communist Party's authoritarian control over information may be declining trust and credibility among citizens. A [recent study](#) published in the journal Political Communication uses the 2014 Kunming railway station attack as a case study, finding that citizens second-guess the intent of official government communications and distrust the provided information even if it is accurate.

## In The News

### China Winning the Narrative War on Sinovac

A [new report](#) by Politico describes how China's vaccine program faces controversy among international and domestic audiences. Doubts among the scientific community have failed to halt China's efforts to use its domestic vaccines, Sinovac and Sinopharm, as a tool to shape international narratives.

### Insecure Surveillance Systems

The [Economist](#) [highlights](#) the incompatibility of CCP surveillance efforts to protect against enemies within and outside its borders. Weak security, unencrypted social media communications and back-door access may help the government's domestic surveillance efforts but hinders protection against foreign surveillance.

### The Emergence of Chinese Crypto

Both the [Wall Street Journal](#) and the [Washington Post](#) recently reported on the launch of the digital yuan, more than a millennia after paper money was first developed in China's Tang dynasty. This new entrant to the cryptocurrency market will likely not resemble its incumbents—the Central Bank reserves the right to control its value and domestic or foreign users have no guarantee of anonymity. It remains to be seen how China's cryptocurrency could be integrated into existing surveillance infrastructure, but it is something worth watching carefully.

Sign up for the DemTech Newsletters on COVID-19 Misinformation and China Information Operations