

The Chinese Communist Party's role in the Ukraine information war.



THE CCP AND THE KREMLIN'S "PARTNERSHIP WITHOUT LIMITS"

- On February 4th, President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin released a joint statement outlining a partnership "without limits" - at its core were shared fears and hatreds.
- The CCP and the Kremlin are united in an anti-liberal democratic agenda - which they both crystallised around the US.
- Both regimes also exhibit an increasingly conspiratorial view, especially of democratic protests (which they falsely view as CIA-backed coups).
- Hybrid Warfare experts have commented that while both regimes share similar goals (regime survival, spheres of influence and undermining the current International System), they have different methods of achieving it - the Kremlin's is often very chaotic, leveraging disorder, whereas the CCP thus far has favoured a more methodical approach based on infiltration of institutions and building influence. But one tactic they share is the use of disinformation.
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine has catalysed a convergence in the Kremlin's and the CCP's messaging, which seeks to shift the blame for the conflict onto anyone but Russia.

FACT-CHECKING THE CCP'S NARRATIVES

- "The West, in particular the United States, are to blame for what has happened in Ukraine because the West has constantly ignored Russia's security concerns."
NATO members have historically discussed security issues with Russia through the NATO-Russia Council. Before the 24th Invasion, several NATO representatives attempted to open a dialogue with the Kremlin, but were rebuffed.
- "China, like Europe, wants the war in Ukraine to end as soon as possible, but the conflict drags on because of U.S. involvement, who traffic weapons to Ukraine for profit."



A typical cartoon from the Global Times: blaming the US for Russia's invasion.

Despite Russia's violation of international law and evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by its forces, the CCP has refused to censure Russia and plans to expand energy cooperation which will give the Kremlin increased funding for its war and, by extension, these crimes. It has also disseminated pro-Kremlin disinformation about Kyiv being a far-right extremist government.

- "China does not support unilateral Western sanctions against Russia because the United States uses these sanctions as a way to expand its influence and geoeconomic reach."
The sanctions are not unilateral; they have been decided upon by a collection of states in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. They are also having a negative effect on Western economies, rather than increasing their influence. By contrast, the CCP has a history of utilising its economic influence in states to coerce them to adopt pro-CCP policies, such as the isolation of Taiwan.

GAINING TRACTION

- While even cursory research exposes the CCP's narratives as disinformation, it is important to recognise they are not aimed at the West. The CCP has spent years cultivating information and media networks across the Global South (especially Africa) to dominate the information space in those regions and control the narrative surrounding its actions, those of its allies and its perceived enemies.
- Coupled with Russia's own influence efforts in the Global South, evidence suggests this is paying dividends. While African's have their own reasons for their choice of support in the conflict, many African Social Media accounts have parroted pro-Kremlin disinformation, while Xinhua news (the CCP's main foreign news outlet) continues to stress the impacts of the invasion without declaring it a war of aggression by Russia.
- This is of particular concern considering the growing food insecurity crisis that the Kremlin and the CCP are seeking to blame the West for; risking a permanent negative change in perceptions of the West in the Global South.