



## China Reform Monitor No. 1492

February 2, 2022 **Joshua Eisenman**

**Related Categories:** Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Public Diplomacy and Information Operations; China; Hong Kong; Taiwan

### **CHINA HIRES AMERICAN INFLUENCERS TO POLISH IMAGE DURING OLYMPICS**

Beijing has contracted an army of American social media influencers, each with hundreds of thousands of followers on TikTok and Instagram, to spread CPC propaganda during the upcoming Winter Olympics. China's New York consulate has inked a \$300,000 deal with Vipinder Jaswal, a former Fox News executive, to "strategize and execute" an influence campaign in the U.S. between November and March. According to the contract, which was registered with the Department of Justice, each influencer will produce 3-5 "deliverables" for their target audience. Jaswal promised Beijing that his team will bring about 3 million impressions on the social media platforms largely populated with younger users. The contract states that 70% of the content will be cultural, including history and modern life in China, 20% will highlight "cooperation and any good things in China-U.S. relations." (*The Guardian*, January 22, 2022)

### **JIA: BLINDLY PURSUING ABSOLUTE SECURITY WILL MAKE US LESS SECURE**

In a rare critique of China's security hawks, Jia Qingguo, the former dean of Peking University's school of international relations and a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, has warned against the blind pursuit of absolute security. "To ignore the comparative nature of security, and blindly pursue [it] absolutely, will result in making the country less secure, as it inflicts unbearable costs and fails," Jia argued. The unfettered pursuit of security "will see the costs go up drastically and the benefits go down, until the costs outweigh the benefits." Jia cited the USSR's massive defense spending before its collapse as a cautionary tale. "The result was the Soviet Union lagged behind in economic development and was not able to support its massive defense spending. People's lives did not improve for a long time and this caused loss of political support. This sacrifices long-term interests for short-term gains, and to a great extent sped up the [Soviet] collapse." (*South China Morning Post*, January 22, 2022)

### **PRC TARGETS TAIWAN WITH MASSIVE DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN**

Taiwan's Investigation Bureau, Information and Communication Security Division has created a task force to counter China's information warfare. China is infiltrating social media to subvert the public's trust in the government, destabilize society and meddle in elections, the bureau said. Since 2020, Taipei has been tracing 2773 fake accounts promulgating disinformation from China's content farms. "These accounts specialize in posting fake news and disinformation to undermine the COVID-19 measures implemented by Taiwan's health authorities, create confusion and circulate politically charged messages to generate disputes," said an unnamed Taiwanese official. China's accounts first altered posts on Taiwan's most popular online bulletin board system, then disseminated the disinformation via hundreds of fake Facebook and other social media accounts, all in order to lure actual Taiwanese into sharing the fake content with their friends and family. (*Taipei Times*, January 24 2022)

### **HK CHIEF EXEC. APPOINTS NATIONAL SECURITY JUDGES, ENDS TRIAL BY JURY**

Hong Kong's Chief Justice, Andrew Cheung, has defended holding national security trials in front of national security judges hand-picked by the chief executive rather than a jury. Cheung declined to disclose how many judges Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam has appointed to rule on national security cases. In one high profile case, she appointed a national security judge to preside in the trial of five speech therapists charged with "conspiracy to print, publish, distribute, display or reproduce seditious publications." The five speech therapists published three children's books portraying sheep defending their village against invading wolves – a plot that authorities said incited hatred of the authorities. The national security judge, Kwok Wai-kin, denied them bail, claiming the charges are a "national security" matter. The defendants are being held without bail until their trial in July 2022. To date, more than 160 people have been arrested under the national security law. (Agence France Presse, January 24, 2022)

## **CREDITS ON CHINESE TV WILL LABEL FOREIGN ACTORS**

According to a new rule by the China's National Radio and Television Administration, starting in April the credits of Chinese TV shows will show the nationalities of actors with foreign citizenship. The new requirement, which comes amid a culture clampdown intended to advance patriotism and party loyalty, is intended to discourage Chinese actors from obtaining foreign citizenship. Although China does not recognize dual nationality, some celebrities have obtained foreign citizenship. Beijing-born Jet Li, for instance, is a Singaporean citizen. Some Chinese celebrities have given up their foreign passports, such as Nicholas Tse, who renounced his Canadian citizenship. In 2020, regulators barred the use of "inappropriate" cast and crew from outside the PRC, which pushed producers to choose mainland Chinese actors to avoid risks. Last year's five-year industry plan specified "support for artists who are patriotic" and banned those who take incorrect political stances. (NikkeiAsia, January 25, 2022)