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**INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT
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**CANADIAN SECURITY
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
SERVICE CANADIEN DU
RENSEIGNEMENT DE SÉCURITÉ**

IM 30/202331 July 2023

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM



CHINA: Domination of Chinese-Language Media in Canada Poses National Security Threats

KEY JUDGEMENTS

- Communist Party of China (CPC)-friendly narratives inundate Chinese-language media in Canada. Censorship (including self-censorship) is pervasive and alternative media voices are few or marginalized in mainstream Chinese-language media. This includes traditional media such as newspapers, and in new media provided by online platforms and applications such as WeChat. (S)
- The CPC's strategy to shape the media landscape relies on two main areas of efforts: control over narratives and control over platforms. [redacted] overt and clandestine. (S)
- The CPC controls narratives by limiting opportunities for dissenting voices [redacted] by providing economic incentives [redacted] fostering self-censorship [redacted]
- [redacted]
- The popularity and extensive use of WeChat in Canada poses enduring challenges. [redacted]. Its platform design can also exacerbate the spread of disinformation and misinformation that serves CPC interests. (S)
- The CPC's ability to influence Chinese-language media, and therefore shape overseas public opinion, also plays a critical enabling role in its other activities, including transnational repression efforts and attempts to influence electoral outcomes. (S)

PRODUCT SCOPE

1. This joint assessment by PCO-IAS and CSIS, with input from GAC's intelligence bureau and CSE, supports the Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence Response's examination of the Communist Party of China influence in Canadian Chinese-language news media. This paper examines why and how the CPC influences Canadian Chinese-language media. It does not include a survey of the entire Canadian Chinese-language media landscape and the extent of CPC influence across it; [redacted]

such, this vector is primarily a means to shape public opinion overseas and to convince others of its approved narratives on major international issues so that the CPC can legitimize its authority and build support for its strategic objectives. [redacted]

[redacted] Two mutually reinforcing messages in its external propaganda are the undermining of "anti-CPC" forces abroad, while upholding China as a successful model for other nations, and thus demonstrating the CPC's competency. (S)

WHY DOES CHINA SEEK MEDIA INFLUENCE?

2. The CPC views influence over Chinese-language media abroad as an extension of domestic efforts to maintain political control, a part of which requires exerting control over information environments (and by extension, media, culture and narratives). As

WHY CANADA?

3. The CPC considers control over overseas Chinese diaspora communities integral to its domestic stability and legitimacy. As such, the CPC prioritizes countries with large Chinese diasporas; Canada's Chinese diaspora (estimated at over 1.7

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million in 2021), makes Canada both an important target and vector for CPC external propaganda. (C)

4. Media industry insiders observe a notable absence of independent Chinese-language media that offer narratives that contradict the CPC's,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

CPC CONTROL OVER NARRATIVES

8.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

PRIMARY PRC ACTORS INVOLVED

5. The People's Republic of China (PRC)

[Redacted]
[Redacted] are key actors in enhancing CPC reach into Chinese-language media abroad.
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

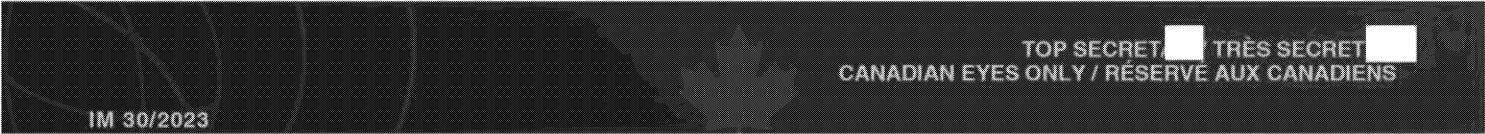
HOW DOES THE CPC EXERT MEDIA INFLUENCE?

6. The CPC's strategy rests on control over two components: the narratives disseminated and the platforms used to disseminate. (S)

7.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

CPC CONTROL OVER PLATFORMS

[Redacted] **exerts influence** [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] open source reporting indicates several instances of self-censorship in their publications over the years. (C)

11. [Redacted] **WeChat social media platform are the top online Chinese-language news providers in Canada.** [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Meanwhile, as news accounts on WeChat that service Canadians are registered to individuals or companies in China, content is censored by the CPC according to PRC domestic standards. (C)

12. The widespread use of WeChat presents two enduring challenges. Its status as a critical platform for reaching Chinese audiences places the CPC in a strong position to exert control over content and to leverage the platform for its own objectives. Open source estimates



suggest there are over one million WeChat users in Canada. Due to WeChat's all-encompassing multipurpose nature in China (as a social media platform, messaging application, and payment service, among others), members of Chinese diaspora communities [redacted] use the app [redacted] to maintain links to family and friends in the PRC. This facilitates CPC surveillance, repression, and influence over overseas Chinese as WeChat's operating environment is subject to domestic PRC laws and regulations. Violations of such rules can lead to account suspension, a threat that forces users to self-censor and obey CPC policies even when not in China. WeChat's platform design can also exacerbate the spread of

[redacted]

disinformation and misinformation that serves CPC interests. For instance, it impedes fact checking by preventing users from embedding hyperlinks in their articles. (S)

13. **Fairchild TV and OMNI are the top Chinese-language broadcasters in Canada.** OMNI is a multilingual specialty channel owned by Rogers Media with about 300,000 weekly viewers nationwide. Fairchild TV runs both local TV programs, as well as satellite news produced in Hong Kong. A Canadian business conglomerate owns Fairchild TV, with a pro-CPC Hong Kong broadcaster holding a 20 percent minority stake.

[redacted]

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

14. **Beyond shaping narratives among diaspora, the CPC's dominance of Chinese-language media in Canada advances other PRC strategic objectives.**

[redacted] transnational repression, [redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] the CPC [redacted] use Chinese-language media as an enabler for foreign interference, including during elections. [redacted]


[redacted]

[redacted] More recently, open source reporting notes a coordinated disinformation campaign on WeChat aimed at dissuading voters from supporting parliamentary candidates with anti-China views in 2021. [redacted]

[redacted]

Assessment Base
This assessment is based on open source reporting, CSIS reporting and analysis, [redacted] (C)
Consultations and Responsibilities
[redacted] and CSE provided input to this assessment. The judgements in this assessment are the responsibility of IAS and CSIS. (C)

This assessment has been approved by:


Martin Green
Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet
Intelligence Assessment
[redacted]

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