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RRM CANADA OPEN DATA ANALYSIS
August 18, 2022

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RRM Canada: PRC Carries Out Large-Scale Information Operation Targeting G7 Countries, Following Speaker Pelosi's Visit to Taiwan

Key Findings

- RRM Canada has detected a large-scale Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) information operation (InfoOp) directed at the G7, including Canada, following G7 criticism of PRC military exercises in the Taiwan Strait and Philippines Sea
- The InfoOp is part of a larger global campaign by the PRC to discredit U.S. House Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, and intimidate the people of Taiwan with images of China's military might
- The PRC has mobilized an unusually large number of state-controlled social media accounts to broadcast its position on Taiwan, and it has employed a range of tactics, including:
 - Directing the PRC's diplomatic core on Twitter to make bellicose threats to the G7
 - Micro-targeting its message to Canada's Chinese diaspora on WeChat
 - Using anglophone Canadian YouTube vloggers¹ to repeat PRC talking points
 - Marshalling over 30 multilingual state media staffers posing as "influencers" on Facebook to condemn Speaker Pelosi's visit in French, Arabic, Spanish, Russian, and Hindi
 - Producing fake books on Amazon.ca that claim Speaker Pelosi's visit inflames China's relationship with G7 countries
- RRM Canada notes that the operation received very high levels of engagement.² By directing all of its social media assets to post on the same issue, the PRC was able to "saturate" information spaces with its viewpoint on Speaker Pelosi's visit
- The unit assesses this is the largest PRC InfoOp of its kind in at least three years, following a similarly sized PRC campaign to discredit Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests in 2019
- If an actual invasion were to occur, RRM Canada expects the PRC would use a similar model of micro-targeting and saturation to persuade audiences its actions were justified

Purpose

The purpose of this Open Data Analysis³ is to analyze and assess the PRC's efforts to influence the online information environment in Canada and other G7 countries, related to the visit of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan. The analysis is part of Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) Canada's efforts to monitor the digital information environment for signs of foreign state sponsored information manipulation.

¹ A "vlogger" is a YouTube user who creates and maintains a blog of their experiences in video format.

² RRM Canada determines its "engagement" metric by adding the number of "likes", "shares", and "comments." While "high" and "low" engagement differs on each platform, the unit often describes 0 to 1K interactions as "low engagement" and 10K and above as "high engagement".

³ Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) Canada produces Open Data Analysis to chart trends, strategies, and tactics in foreign interference. This analysis supports the G7 RRM, an initiative agreed by the G7 in 2018, to strengthen coordination to identify and respond to diverse and evolving threats to G7 democracies, including through sharing information and analysis, and identifying opportunities for coordinated response.

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Methodology

RRM Canada leveraged a combination of media marketing websites, account trackers, and advanced search tools to examine publicly available data on social media platforms. RRM Canada analysed the content of PRC-linked social media accounts across Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and WeChat.

Over the past three years, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have rolled out “labelling policies” that notify users when they are viewing content from a PRC state-controlled media entity.⁴ RRM Canada tracks these labeled accounts as part of its monitoring of the information space for malign foreign activity. For this report, the unit tracked content published in English, French, simplified Chinese, and traditional Chinese. All RRM Canada reporting is subject to an ethical and methodological framework.⁵



Image 1: A snapshot of the social media accounts mobilized to discredit Speaker Pelosi's visit and reproach Canada for its statement condemning military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, including clockwise from top left: "Wolf Warriors" like former PRC Ambassador to Canada Lu Shaye, covert PRC state-controlled media on TikTok, multi-lingual state media "influencers" on Facebook, PRC state affiliated YouTube vloggers, and local WeChat news accounts targeting Canada's Chinese diaspora.

⁴ <https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/state-media-warning-labels-can-counteract-the-effects-of-foreign-misinformation/>

⁵ https://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/publications/rrm-mrr/ethical_framework-cadre_ethique.aspx

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Findings

Background

Shortly after a July 19 *Financial Times* report⁶ revealed U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi might visit Taiwan as part of a tour of U.S. allies in East Asia, PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Zhao Lijian responded in a press conference that the U.S. “must not arrange” for the Speaker to visit, and that the PRC “will take strong and resolute measures” if she insists on doing so.⁷ For the following four weeks, the PRC launched a large-scale information operation (InfoOp), mobilizing nearly all of its overt state-controlled social media accounts across all U.S. based platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, et al) and PRC based platforms (WeChat, Weibo, TikTok, et al) to amplify China’s position on the issue.

Following confirmation that Speaker Pelosi would land in Taiwan on August 2, the Chinese military – the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) – also confirmed through a bulletin in Xinhua that they will conduct “important military exercises” that include “live-fire drills” in six maritime areas surrounding Taiwan.⁸

RRM Canada assesses that the PLA military exercises were directly linked to the PRC InfoOp. The unit also assesses this is the largest PRC InfoOp of its kind in at least three years, following a similarly sized PRC campaign to discredit Hong Kong’s pro-democracy protests in 2019.

For a truncated timeline of PRC malign activity over the past four weeks, along with major events linked to Speaker Pelosi’s visit, please see [Annex A](#).

Overview of Tactics, Trends and Procedures

This InfoOp is notable for the PRC’s widespread use of micro-targeting specific demographics and saturating the information space with Beijing’s view on Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan.

PRC-linked accounts targeted their message to multiple groups, including anglophone and francophone audiences in Canada, the mainland Chinese diaspora in Canada, global audiences who consume content in their mother tongue (such as Spanish, Arabic, Hindi or Russian), general audiences in Taiwan, and general audiences in mainland China. To service these diverse demographics, the PRC maintains a virtual armada of social media accounts across both Western and PRC-based social media platforms.

Under normal circumstances, PRC state media does not direct all of these accounts to speak on the same issue, and it divides accounts into subsets to target specific audiences. However, RRM Canada observes that this is the first PRC InfoOp in almost three years where an overwhelming number of PRC-linked accounts are all laser focused on one issue – asserting China’s position on Taiwan. We judge that 75% of the 4,800 PRC-linked accounts that RRM Canada regularly monitors posted about Taiwan during the period of July 19 to today. Scholar Anne-Marie Brady calls this approach “saturation”, with PRC media entities using “every possible channel” to amplify its point of view. “If one channel doesn’t have an effect, another might,” notes Brady.⁹

In addition, following new rules by platforms that label PRC state media outlets and personalities with a “state-controlled media” disclaimer on their profiles, many of these entities have resorted to covert

⁶ <https://archive.ph/7lCHb>

⁷ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/202207/t20220719_10723456.html

⁸ <https://english.news.cn/20220802/7ff41ba20b064b9cae78ca0a4aaa339c/c.html>

⁹ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-china-watcher/2022/08/11/chinas-washington-diplos-outmuscle-taiwans-reps-with-media-blitz-00050960>

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means to broadcast the PRC's position on Taiwan, including renaming or establishing secondary accounts, or moving to platforms with less restrictive rules, such as TikTok. As a result of this technique, some audiences may not be aware of the provenance of a narrative pushed by PRC state media entities.

RRM Canada observed a spike in new content from PRC-linked social media accounts on August 1-3, followed by a steady stream of content over the course of PLA military exercises in the Taiwan Strait from August 4-7. PRC linked accounts continue to trickle out Taiwan-related content post August 8, but they receive less engagement from target audiences.

In this InfoOp, RRM Canada has observed the following techniques from PRC linked media entities. To jump to the related section of this report, click on the anchor link embedded in each subtitle:

- [“Wolf Warriors”](#): Leveraging PRC diplomats to tweet bellicose statements about Taiwan and the G7
- [“WarTok”](#): Creating awe-inducing TikTok-style videos of PLA military exercises
- [“Borrowed Mouths”](#): Amplifying anglophone YouTube vloggers to speak on Beijing's behalf
- [“Influencers”](#): Mobilizing the PRC's armada of multi-lingual state media workers
- [“Co-opt Diaspora Media”](#): Pumping out pro-PRC content through Canadian focused WeChat news accounts
- [“Fake books”](#): A new technique, which involves using an unknown entity to publish low-quality books on Amazon.ca in both digital and physical form that portray Speaker Pelosi in a negative light

Each of these techniques are used to amplify a select set of narratives and tropes that embody China's position on Taiwan. For a partial list of the narratives used, please see [Annex B](#).

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“Wolf Warrior” Diplomats on Twitter

More than any other platform, the PRC’s diplomatic core has turned to Twitter to communicate China’s position on domestic and global affairs. RRM Canada monitors 147 Twitter accounts linked to PRC diplomats or missions. Many of these accounts tweeted about Speaker Pelosi’s visit, repeating MOFA Spokesperson Zhao Lijian’s statement that the PRC will take “firm and strong measures” if she lands in Taiwan.

Many of these tweets received high levels of engagement, between 10K and 20K engagements each. RRM Canada was not able to determine if these levels of engagement were inflated through artificial means or represent genuine interactions from users. Journalist Peter Martin describes MOFA’s recent turn to bombastic language as “Wolf Warrior” diplomacy and suggests this behaviour is “rewarded by the [CCP’s] party center. Those who indulge in this tactic, like Zhao, are promoted very rapidly.”¹⁰ The use of such rhetoric likely assists in boosting its appeal, with Twitter users more likely to tweet divisive content.¹¹

Many of the highest engaged tweets from PRC diplomats used bellicose language towards Speaker Pelosi, as well as G7 countries following their August 3 joint statement. MOFA Spokesperson Hua Chunying claimed the “US-led G7 personifies aggression and coercion.”¹² On August 4, Zhao Lijian claimed the G7 joint statement was “ugly” and “shameless.”¹³

Former PRC ambassador to Canada, Lu Shaye, also attracted attention with his belligerent statements on Twitter, claiming a successful PRC annexation of Taiwan would lead to “re-education” of the Taiwanese public “to eliminate separatist thought and secessionist theory.” The statement was later retweeted by multiple PRC diplomat accounts, including the PRC mission to the EU and Zhao Lijian.¹⁴



Lu Shaye à @Lci: Pourquoi je dis « rééduquer » ? Parce que les autorités de #Taiwan ont fait une éducation de « désinisation » sur sa population, qui est effectivement endoctrinée et intoxiquée. Il faut la rééduquer pour éliminer la pensée séparatiste et la théorie sécessionniste

Translate Tweet



12:01 PM · Aug 7, 2022 · Twitter for Android

40 Retweets 86 Quote Tweets 120 Likes

Image 2: Former PRC ambassador to Canada Lu Shaye calls for the re-education of the population of Taiwan.

¹⁰ <https://www.nbr.org/publication/understanding-chinese-wolf-warrior-diplomacy/>

¹¹ <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2024292118>

¹² <https://twitter.com/SpokespersonCHN/status/1555213305291370496>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/zlj517/status/1555215885404893184>

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/ChinaEUMission/status/1555262754621104130>

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PLA "WarTok" videos

In the early stages of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, media commentators noted the public's fascination with short clips of military hardware in action, dubbing the phenomenon "WarTok."¹⁵ PRC state media outlets appear to have adopted this approach, and are assiduously amplifying videos of PLA military exercises in the Taiwan Strait on Twitter, TikTok, and WeChat.

The majority of WarTok videos originate from a single account on WeChat, the PLA's Eastern Theatre Command news account. As the primary theatre command responsible for carrying out military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, the Eastern Theatre Command's WeChat feed has become a rare glimpse of the PLA's fearsome fighting capabilities.¹⁶ RRM Canada judges the PLA hopes to generate fear and anxiety in order to weaken the Taiwanese public's support for Speaker Pelosi's visit.

In some instances, PRC state media actively attempted to foment distress over potential PLA military activity, harkening to previous WarTok videos to bolster their claims:

- On July 20, former *Global Times* editor Hu Xijin suggested PLA fighter jets should "accompany Pelosi's plane" to Taiwan, "making a historic crossing of the island by military aircraft for the first time."¹⁷
- On Aug. 2, a state media account on Weibo claimed a PLA Air Force (PLAAF) Sukhoi Su-35 plane was "crossing over the Taiwan Strait" during Speaker Pelosi's visit.¹⁸ However, according to the Taiwan government, no such incident occurred.¹⁹
- On Aug. 5, state media accounts featured an image of a PLA Navy (PLAN) officer viewing the eastern coast of Taiwan through binoculars.²⁰ Fact-checkers in Taiwan later discovered the image was a doctored composite image.²¹



Image 3: A Taiwan-based fact-checking initiative discovered a frequent image used by PRC state media outlets to prove the PLA Navy sailed close to Taiwan's east coast was in fact a composite.

¹⁵ <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/watching-the-worlds-first-tiktok-war>

¹⁶ https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/n_gtB_JR25sVOHQ8mWrOg

¹⁷ https://twitter.com/huxijin_gt/status/1549709745866838016

¹⁸ <https://m.weibo.cn/status/LFba2ro4g?jumpfrom=weibocom>

¹⁹ <https://nypost.com/2022/08/02/taiwan-denies-china-jets-crossed-strait-as-beijing-sets-up-military-operations/>

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/chinadaily/status/1556898102509912064>

²¹ <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/8006>

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YouTube Vloggers as “Borrowed Mouths”

PRC state media entities may have contracted anglophone YouTube vloggers to speak disparagingly about Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan or, in the parlance of PRC state media, “borrow a mouth to speak and use international friends to carry out foreign propaganda.”²²

According to two reports from the *New York Times*²³ and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)²⁴, PRC state media deployed a host of anglophone YouTube vloggers with high visibility (250K to 500K followers) to speak on behalf of the Chinese government for its treatment of Uyghur and Kazakh peoples in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Some of these vloggers confirmed they received payment from PRC state media to produce these videos.²⁵

RRM Canada observes that these same group of vloggers have produced videos favorable to the PRC’s position on Speaker Pelosi’s visit. These videos were then shared by PRC diplomats and Twitter accounts that exhibit bot-like behaviour.²⁶

In one video, a U.K. vlogger repeats a July 19 statement from MOFA spokesperson Zhao Lijian, that Speaker Pelosi was “crossing a red line, and that the U.S. will be playing with fire, and can expect to get burnt.”²⁷ In another video, an Italian vlogger claims Taiwan has seen “a lot of foreign meddling from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)” and that “Taiwan is not a true democracy” because of this meddling.²⁸

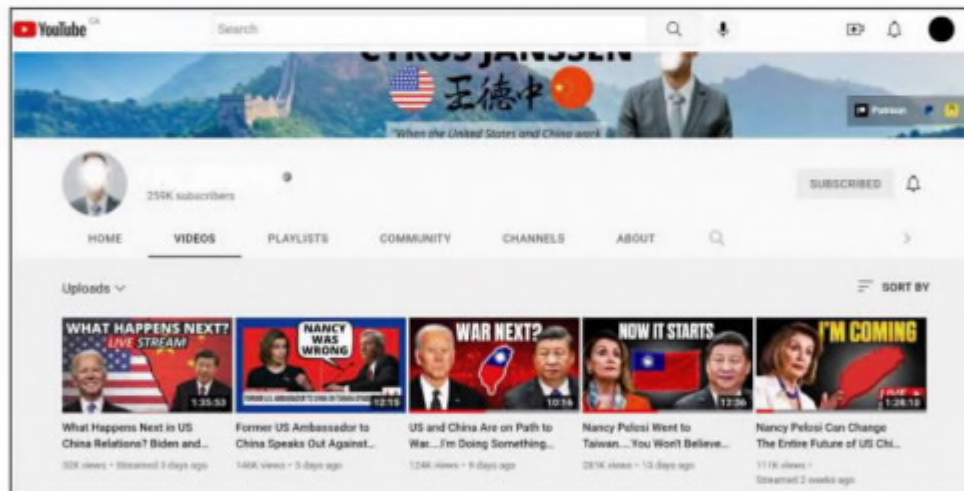


Image 4: A U.S.-based YouTuber provided extensive negative coverage of Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan. According to the *South China Morning Post*, this same YouTuber illicitly filmed inside a Vancouver court during the Meng Wanzhou extradition trial, and their videos were then widely shared by the PRC state-controlled *Global Times*.²⁹

²² http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2021-06/01/c_1127517461.htm

²³ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/13/technology/china-propaganda-youtube-influencers.html>

²⁴ <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/borrowing-mouths-speak-xinjiang>

²⁵ <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2021/12/the-ccps-willing-influencers-amplify-state-propaganda-online/>

²⁶ <https://twitter.com/NathanRichHGDW/status/1553371806655848449/retweets>

²⁷ <https://youtu.be/YblgXOc1CTY?t=159>

²⁸ <https://youtu.be/A-c0qd7g1c2?t=254>

²⁹ <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3107883/canada-court-investigates-pro-china-youtubers-video-about-meng>

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State Media Employees Posing as “Influencers”

RRM Canada observed a wide network of multilingual PRC state media personalities posting about Speaker Pelosi’s visit. Most of these personalities work for China Radio International (CRI), a PRC state-owned broadcaster managed by China Media Group (CMG) and under the control of the CCP’s Propaganda Department.³⁰ CRI publishes content in over 65 languages, with most of its staffers graduating from Beijing’s prestigious Foreign Studies University, which hosts the country’s best foreign language program.

RRM Canada currently tracks over 80 CRI staffers posing as “influencers” on Facebook. Of note, CRI influencers that post in non-Western European languages, such as Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Pashto, Arabic, Burmese, Malay, Turkish, Hausa, Farsi and Russian, have attracted the largest followings, with some personalities attracting between 2 million to 3.9 million followers each. CRI staffers do not disclose their affiliation to PRC state media in their bios and are labeled as “state-controlled media” entities below their usernames. According to a report from cybersecurity research firm Miburo, CRI staffers appear to largely post “apolitical content” and “present themselves as everyday Chinese citizens” who are “providing their audiences with a more intimate look at their personal lives, travels and interests.”³¹

But beginning August 1, more than one third of these influencers shifted their focus to condemn Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan. French-speaking CRI staffer Chloe Zhou posted: “Si Pelosi rendait visite à Taïwan sans la permission de Beijing, elle serait considérée comme agresseur et devrait être battue.”³² Arabic-speaking CRI staffer Suad Ye wrote: “if Pelosi dares to visit Taiwan, let’s wait and see what measures China will take in response.”³³ Facebook posts from CRI staffers received some interaction from users, with each post about Speaker Pelosi receiving between 1K to 3K engagements each.

RRM Canada judges that CRI staffers act as important conduits for the PRC to deliver its narratives to countries in the Global South and conduct their work largely undetected by governments or publics in target countries.



Image 5: Miburo has identified these personalities as CRI staffers. Staffers circled in blue posted about Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan. The coloured inner circle represents the language spoken by CRI staffer. Red = Arabic, Dark Green = Hausa, Purple = Spanish, Yellow = Urdu, Orange = Hindi, Light Green = Sinhalese, Light Blue = Hebrew, Brown = German, White = Other languages, including Japanese and Farsi.

³⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/21/world/asia/china-communist-party-xi-jinping.html>

³¹ <https://miburo.substack.com/p/csm-influencer-ops-1>

³² <https://facebook.com/Chloezhoubeijing/posts/pfbid0NxxvphWz6HZPJaLyMY6SP5c5aegPL182MbmPHTwh5du7eNzpCWtfoQQ2m36EhF1r>

³³ <https://facebook.com/suadxinxin/posts/pfbid0Y5h9AyxfY41oBPMY3tiABrePhb4Z96ZXiCo5xKfzntAhW1MnYkbi1QaMKXEm743FI>

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Co-opt WeChat Accounts

PRC state media may have also leveraged Canada-focused WeChat news accounts to amplify negative stories about Speaker Pelosi's trip. On Aug. 1, Canada-focused WeChat news accounts began republishing editorials from PRC party state media outlets about Speaker Pelosi's visit, such as the *Global Times*, *CCTV News*, *Xinhua News*, and *China News Service*. The editorial headlines were nearly identical in nature – "Firestarter Pelosi, scurries like a rat to Taiwan!"³⁴ – and resembled similar headlines carried by PRC state media.³⁵

It is unusual that Canada-focused WeChat news accounts would post about Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Canada-focused news accounts rarely post about U.S.-China bilateral issues, and mostly publish on quality-of-life issues in Canada.

None of these Canada-focused WeChat accounts reported on Minister Joly's statement on preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, however, many of them enthusiastically reported PRC MOFA Minister Wang Yi refuting the statement.³⁶

Nearly all the over 200 Canada-focused WeChat accounts of which the unit is aware are registered to businesses or individuals in China. Many of the accounts involved in amplifying false or misleading stories about Speaker Pelosi are also members of a content sharing agreement with *China News Service*³⁷ – a news wire that is directly controlled by the United Front Work Department.³⁸

³⁴ https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/o4dyrX8M4Aupc8N24_c7pg

³⁵ <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Y19UUndCefbbVWl13mfOQ>

³⁶ <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/qWKfGYYUPp0QGRFpYTLzGQ>

³⁷ <https://www.gcmcu.com/web/LMCY/index.html>

³⁸ https://www.istor.org/stable/resrep25132.8#metadata_info_tab_contents

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"Fake Books" on Amazon.com/Amazon.ca

RRM Canada identified a potential new technique to denigrate the information space but does not have clear evidence that the PRC is responsible for employing it. On August 5th, a book publisher noted on Twitter that Amazon.com had seen "a torrent of new low quality 'books' about Taiwan."³⁹ The publisher noted that the content of these books appears to be plagiarized, and the names of the authors appear to be fake. "The language inside changes from perfect English to passages riddled with grammatical errors and back again," adds the publisher.⁴⁰

RRM Canada discovered 81 of these low-quality books on Amazon.com/Amazon.ca, with most books appearing on the website between Aug 2-4. However, new fake books continue to appear as of the writing of this report. The unit will continue to investigate and provide a "deep dive" on this new TTC.

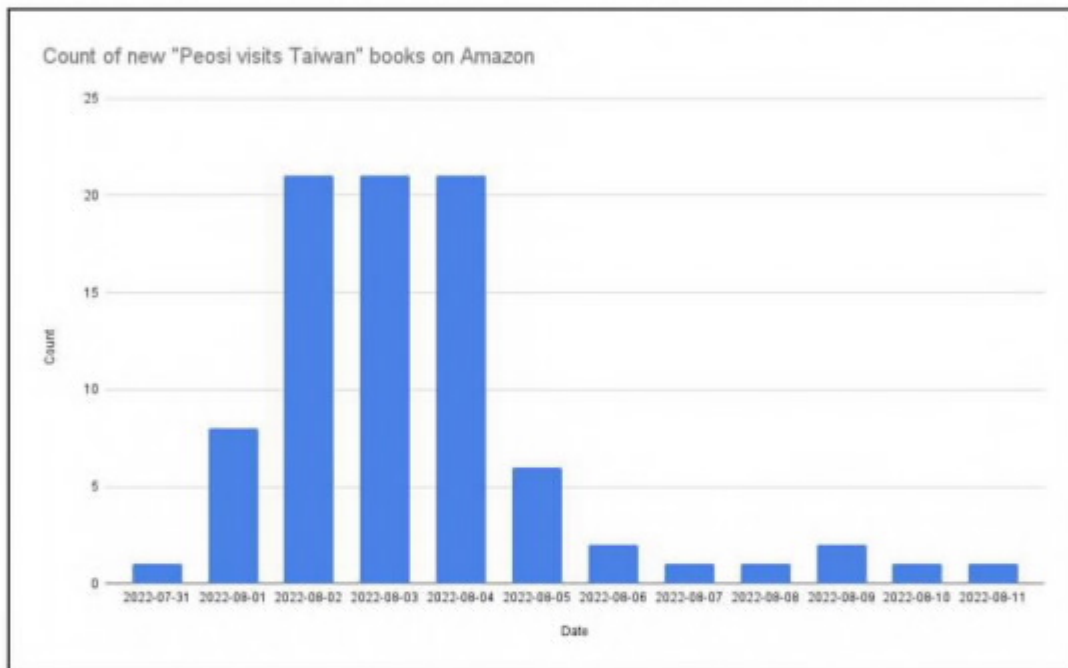


Image 7: This graph shows the number of "low-quality" books about Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan that appeared on Amazon.com/Amazon.ca between July 31st and Aug. 11.

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/formosaphile/status/1555685973610078208>

⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/formosaphile/status/1555685976126660613>

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Over the past ten years, the PRC has invested nearly 2.8 billion USD into its state media properties.⁴¹ Many of the techniques described in this report – such as CRI influencers and pro-PRC YouTube vloggers – did not appear until January 2020; RRM Canada believes much of this funding was used to bolster its presence on U.S. social media platforms.

The unit expects the PRC will use a similar model of micro-targeting and saturation in future instances where its sovereignty over Taiwanese territory is challenged. This signals the need for the G7 RRM community to prepare for unprecedented PRC information operations, in size and scale, with respect to Taiwan, particularly if the PRC decided to annex Taiwan.

Next Steps

- RRM Canada will share its findings with relevant units at Global Affairs Canada and the GoC, as well as the wider G7 RRM community
- RRM Canada will conduct a “deep dive” investigation on a potential new TTC – the Amazon “fake book” technique
- RRM Canada will explore establishing a PRC open-source technical working group among G7 member countries to share best practices and new TTPs used by the PRC

Approved by: Gallit Dobner

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Disclaimer: Rapid Response Mechanism Canada monitors and shares information consistent with Canada’s privacy laws and the [Ministerial Direction for Avoiding Complicity in Mistreatment by Foreign Entities](#). The information sharing practices of Global Affairs Canada are subject to review by the Privacy Commissioner, the Information Commissioner of Canada, the Office of the Auditor General and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, among others. Nothing in the present document shall be construed as adding any obligation or normative commitment under international or national law for any G7 member.

⁴¹ <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/how-china-uses-news-media-weapon-its-propaganda-war-against-west>

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Annex A: Timeline

Below is a brief timeline of the PRC's information operation in relation to Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan and Canada and the G7's collective statement calling on the PRC to cease military exercises in the Taiwan Strait.

- July 19: FT reports Speaker Pelosi will "take a delegation to Taiwan in August"
 - The PRC mobilizes top-tier state media outlet the People's Daily and the PRC's diplomatic core⁴² on Twitter to "warn the US" there will be "strong and resolute countermeasures"⁴³
- July 20: U.S. President Joe Biden says U.S. military officials advised him that Speaker Pelosi's visit was "not a good idea"
 - Influential PRC reporter Hu Xijin tweets that PLA jets "will accompany Pelosi's plane" to Taiwan, "making a historic crossing of the island by military aircraft."⁴⁴
 - PRC state media outlets publish a wave of editorials suggesting the Speaker "listen to the Pentagon"⁴⁵ and that she is "playing with fire"⁴⁶
- July 26: The PRC's Ministry of Defense claims the PLA will take "strong actions to thwart any independence separatist scheme" if Speaker Pelosi visits Taiwan⁴⁷
- July 30: The PLA holds live-fire military drills on PRC-held Pingtan, located kilometres away from the Taiwan-held Matsu Islands
 - Twitter users circulate a video claiming to capture the PLA exercises at Pingtan; however, a Taiwan based fact-checking initiative determined the video dated back to 2020 and featured Taiwanese military exercises⁴⁸
- Aug. 1: Speaker Pelosi begins her tour of Asia-Pacific nations, starting in Singapore; U.S. and Taiwan officials tell CNN that Speaker Pelosi is "expected to visit Taiwan"⁴⁹
 - "Wolf Warrior" diplomats begin to tweet about Speaker Pelosi's visit en masse
 - "WarTok" videos of PLA military exercises appear on U.S. and PRC based social media
 - Canada-focussed WeChat accounts repeat verbatim PRC state media framing of the U.S. Speaker's visit, claiming "Pelosi is playing with fire"
- Aug. 2: Speaker Pelosi lands in Taiwan at 2130 (GMT+8); the PLA announces military exercises in six maritime areas around Taiwan
 - Videos and images of the PLA's armed forces deploying to Xiamen, a coastal city in China's Fujian province that is 5km away from Taiwanese-held Kinmen Island, appear on U.S. and PRC social media platforms; however, Taiwan based fact-checking initiative determined the photos dated from 2017⁵⁰
 - A Twitter account impersonating Yahoo! Japan claims that the PLA Air Force has shot down Speaker Pelosi's plane en route to Taiwan⁵¹

⁴² <https://twitter.com/CGMeifangZhang/status/1549351966282846208>

⁴³ <https://twitter.com/PeoplesDailyapp/status/1549316816195190784>

⁴⁴ https://twitter.com/HuXijin_GT/status/1549709745866838016

⁴⁵ https://twitter.com/thouse_opinions/status/1550016504229691392

⁴⁶ https://twitter.com/China_Focus/status/1549765068694335490

⁴⁷ <http://en.people.cn/n3/2022/0727/c90000-10127730.html>

⁴⁸ <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/7958>

⁴⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/01/politics/nancy-pelosi-taiwan-visit/index.html>

⁵⁰ <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/7976>

⁵¹ <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/7968>

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- Anglophone YouTubers begin to post videos discrediting Speaker Pelosi's visit en masse
- "Influencers" employed by state-controlled China Media Group produce over 50 Facebook and YouTube posts claiming the goal of the Speaker's visit is to "escalate tensions across the Taiwan Strait" and to "help the Democrat's chances"
- Aug. 3: Speaker Pelosi concludes her visit to Taiwan; Canada and G7 partners publish a statement calling on the PRC to "preserve peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait"
 - Low quality books about Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan appear for a 2nd consecutive day
- Aug. 4: The PLA begins its largest ever military exercise at air and sea in the Taiwan Strait and the Philippine Sea, claiming the exercises will take place from Aug. 4-7
 - A series of viral Facebook posts appear claiming all commercial flights to Taiwan have been cancelled due to the PLA military exercises; however, flight tracker data at this time shows all international flights departed or arrived without disruption⁵²
- Aug. 5: Day 2 of military exercises
 - Xinhua News Agency and other PRC state media outlets release a photo of a PLA Navy soldier observing Taiwan's east coast through binoculars on the deck of a ship; the image is circulated widely on social media platforms, and Xinhua News later supplied the photo to the Associated Press, where it was then featured in U.S. media outlets like the Washington Post; However, a Taiwan based fact-checking initiative discovered the photo was doctored, and then notified the AP⁵³
- Aug. 6: Day 3 of military exercises
 - A Weibo video claims to show a rocket being fired over a northern coastal city in Taiwan; however, a Taiwan based fact-checking initiative determined the video was not filmed in Taiwan⁵⁴
- Aug. 7: Day 4 of military exercises
- Aug. 8: The PLA's Eastern Theatre Command announces military exercises will continue⁵⁵

⁵² <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/7986>

⁵³ <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/8006>

⁵⁴ <https://tfc-taiwan.org.tw/articles/8000>

⁵⁵ http://english.scio.gov.cn/pressroom/2022-08/08/content_78361666.htm

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RRM CANADA OPEN DATA ANALYSIS
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Annex B: Narratives

Below is a brief list of narratives that PRC-linked entities used over the course of this InfoOp. At this juncture, RRM Canada was only able to gather preliminary data on this operation and is not able to determine which of these narratives proved most impactful among users.

China Opposes the G7 Statement

- “The G7’s statement is ugly and shameless” [\[source\]](#)
- “The G7 statement is just a piece of wasted paper” [\[source\]](#)
- “The G7 is a puppet of the U.S.” [\[source\]](#)
- “The G7 turned blind eyes to Speaker Pelosi’s visit before it happened but now accuse China of taking actions of justice” [\[source\]](#)
- “The G7 colludes, they do evil, and call white, black” [\[source\]](#)
- “[The G7] clearly believes that they still live in the days of the Eight-Power Allied Forces over 120 years ago.” [\[source\]](#)

Claims that the “One China Principle” is a universal consensus

- “There is no room for any country to compromise on issues of right and wrong involving sovereignty and territorial integrity” [\[source\]](#)
- “181 countries have established diplomatic relations with China on the basis of the One China Principle” [\[source\]](#)
- “The One China principle is an irrefutable basic norm inscribed in UN legal documents” [\[source\]](#)
- “Speaker Pelosi’s visit violates the One China principle” [\[source\]](#)

Taiwan is “China’s red line”

- Taiwan is “the core of China’s key interests, and a red line, and a bottom line that cannot be crossed” [\[source\]](#)
- “If the US challenges China’s red line, it will be met with resolute countermeasures” [\[source\]](#)

Disparaging remarks directed at Speaker Pelosi

- People’s Daily: “Pelosi’s visit is a deliberate move to create tensions across the Taiwan Strait with extremely sinister intentions” [\[source\]](#)
- People’s Daily: “Pelosi’s visit is another dangerous move by the U.S. to distort and hollow out the One China principle” [\[source\]](#)
- “Pelosi’s visit is just a political showboat” [\[source\]](#)
- “Pelosi’s visit is a troublesome act by a troublemaker to create trouble” [\[source\]](#)
- “We don’t need some American politician in our territory” [\[source\]](#)

Military exercises are a warning to U.S. and Taiwan

- “This action is a solemn deterrent against major escalation by the U.S. on the Taiwan issue, and a serious warning to Taiwan independence supporters” [\[source\]](#)
- “The PLA Eastern Theatre Command has full confidence in its ability to counter all provocations” [\[source\]](#)
- “China resolutely defends its sovereignty and territorial integrity” [\[source\]](#)

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