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Reuters exposes Washington's global disinformation campaign: The rest of the story

written by Brian Berletic
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In a recent article, Reuters confirms what many knew for years, that the United States government and its various departments and agencies have been conducting global disinformation campaigns targeting nations it seeks to undermine, and whose governments it seeks to overthrow.

Washington was Deliberately Harming American “Allies”

The [article](#) titled, “Pentagon ran secret anti-vax campaign to undermine China during pandemic,” admits:

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. military launched a secret campaign to counter what it perceived as China’s growing influence in the Philippines, a nation hit especially hard by the deadly virus.

The clandestine operation has not been previously reported. It aimed to sow doubt about the safety and efficacy of vaccines and other life-saving aid that was being supplied by China, a Reuters investigation found. Through phony internet accounts meant to impersonate Filipinos, the military’s propaganda efforts morphed into an anti-vax campaign. Social media posts decried the quality of face masks, test kits and the first vaccine that would become available in the Philippines – China’s Sinovac inoculation.

The article reveals that the campaign was not conducted only in the Philippines, but across the rest of Southeast Asia and far beyond.

The U.S. government campaign, carried out by the U.S. military, was not conducted because it was actually believed that China’s Sinovac vaccine or any of the protective equipment it manufactured was faulty, but purely to undermine China.

Reuters would cite a senior military officer involved in the disinformation campaign who claimed, “*we weren’t looking at this from a public health perspective. We were*

looking at how we could drag China through the mud.”

Reuters also interviewed doctors who admitted, *“it put civilians in jeopardy for potential geopolitical gain.”*

The U.S. Military Wasn’t the Only Culprit

As revealing and disturbing as Reuters’ article is, it falls far short of fleshing out the full extent of U.S. disinformation, manipulation, and coercion regarding Chinese vaccines and medical equipment.

In addition to a large-scale campaign across social media conducted by the U.S. military, the U.S. State Department through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED, is banned in Russia) called on various opposition groups and political parties the U.S. government had built up over the course of years in targeted countries, including in Southeast Asia, to amplify these same narratives both across the media, and even into the streets.

In Thailand, the U.S.-backed “Future Forward Party” headed by billionaire-turned-politician Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit and his [NED-funded opposition](#) movement helped spread the Pentagon’s admitted lies and disinformation through a series of protests demanding the Thai government end cooperation with China and instead procure vaccines from the United States, and more specifically, U.S. pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and Moderna.

The South China Morning Post in a 2021 [article](#) titled, “How China’s Sinovac vaccine got caught in the crossfire of Thailand’s anti-government protests,” would report:

Thailand’s anti-government movement has gone beyond calls for reforming politics and the monarchy and is zooming in on Prayuth’s handling of the pandemic and his reliance on the Sinovac vaccine amid a Delta-fuelled third wave.

The article would avoid mentioning who the opposition was specifically, and what potentially compromising connections they may have had motivating them to “coincidentally” take the Pentagon’s narrative into the streets of Bangkok.

It was clearly no coincidence that a U.S.-back opposition was conducting such protests, especially now that Reuters has revealed the Pentagon as the source of the anti-China claims the U.S.-backed Thai opposition were repeating.

The U.S. used all of its assets, far beyond media operations conducted by its military, but also opposition groups and political parties it had built up and is funding around the globe, to likewise participate in Washington’s global disinformation campaign against China.

Far from a single example, the U.S.-backed opposition in Thailand (and elsewhere) has sided with Washington against China on all conceivable issues, including issues that have nothing to do with Thailand directly, including the South China Sea, of which Thailand is not a claimant.

This Wasn’t the First, Nor the Last U.S. Disinformation Campaign

While Reuters focuses primarily on this one single aspect of a single disinformation campaign now admittedly and deliberately conducted by the United States knowingly causing harm to allies and enemies alike, the report alludes to the existence of many more campaigns like it.

Reuters would note:

Clandestine psychological operations are among the government’s most highly sensitive programs. Knowledge of their existence is limited to a small group of people within U.S. intelligence and military agencies. Such programs are treated with special caution because their exposure could damage foreign alliances or escalate conflict with rivals.

While Reuters omits any mention of specific campaigns, it admits that the U.S. government has conducted similar disinformation campaigns aimed at undermining public opinion of China.

Reuters admits:

In 2019, Trump authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to launch a clandestine campaign on Chinese social media aimed at turning public opinion in China against its government, Reuters reported in March. As part of that effort, a small group of operatives used bogus online identities to spread disparaging narratives about Xi Jinping's government.

These campaigns continue today, calling into question the quality and safety of other Chinese products and projects, ranging from telecommunication equipment manufactured by Huawei, to major infrastructure projects, all with the aim of not supplying or selling the developing world with American alternatives, but to simply deny the developing world the opportunity to develop altogether.

Just as was the case with Chinese vaccines and protective medical equipment, the U.S.-back Thai opposition has played a direct role in amplifying these other media campaigns.

For example, Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit was cited by Bloomberg, denouncing the Thai government's plan to jointly build a high-speed rail line connecting Thailand to China via Laos who already has a functioning Chinese-built high-speed rail line.

The U.S. State Department regularly decries China's Belt and Road Initiative, condemning it as a means of "entrapping" nations in debt and reliance on China.

The 2018 [article](#) titled, "Thailand Needs Hyperloop, Not China-Built High-Speed Rail, Junta Critic Says," would report:

A tycoon turned politician who opposes Thailand's military government has criticized its \$5.6 billion high-speed rail project with China because hyperloop technology offers a more modern alternative.

Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit would organize a press event in which he promoted the non-existent “hyperloop” as an alternative to the Chinese-Thai high-speed railway. During this event, he would reveal the true purpose of opposing Chinese-built infrastructure:

I think over the past five years we have been giving too much importance to China. We want to reduce that and rebalance our relationship with Europe, with Japan, [and] with the U.S. more.



In reality, Thailand places importance on China because of its geographic proximity, common cultural and historical ties, and more pragmatically, the fact that China is Thailand's largest trade partner, investors, source of tourism, infrastructure partner, and even increasingly a partner in the realm of defense.

Reducing a successful and growing relationship to pivot toward the U.S. and its European and Japanese proxies, all of whom are unable to offer alternatives to opportunities provided by China, is an irrational policy. It is only “rational” if those proposing such a policy serve U.S. interests rather than Thailand's.

Considering the close relationship Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit himself has with Washington, and the fact that his opposition movement is funded by Washington, his proposal of policies that serve U.S. interests at Thailand's expense comes as no surprise.

This is just a small illustration of just how much larger the scale is of U.S. manipulation and coercion around the globe, far exceeding dishonest and abusive

activities across social media platforms, but going as far as building up opposition movements and political parties to not only express opposition to China, but to forcibly pivot nations away from working with China by politically capturing their governments, installing client regimes into power, and having policy irrationally tilted in favor of serving U.S. interests as the expense of the targeted nation, in this case, Thailand.

This is done not only through the U.S. military, but also the U.S. State Department and a vast global network of organizations and political parties built up, funded, and directed by Washington.

For nations around the world, it is important to understand the abuse exercised by the U.S. within their own respective information spaces, and the necessity to protect their public against such abuse by controlling the social media networks serving as a vector for this abuse.

By forcing foreign social media companies to open offices in targeted countries and holding them accountable for violating local laws prohibiting abusive disinformation campaigns conducted by foreign entities like Washington, and by developing local alternatives to U.S.-based social media platforms, targeted nations can decide for themselves who can use their information space and for what purpose – and whether or not to tolerate the sort of manipulation and coercion exercised by Washington as exposed by Reuters in their recent report.

For China and Russia, who have already gone far in securing their own respective information spaces, they could perhaps add the means of defending information space to the portfolio of defense articles both nations already export around the globe.

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