

Russian Voice in the Chinese Information Space: The Case of Poland

PRC–Russian Federation Joint Efforts in Anti-Western Propaganda and Disinformation as Exemplified by Poland-related Narratives



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Russian Voice in the Chinese Information Space: The Case of Poland PRC–Russian Federation Joint Efforts in Anti-Western Propaganda and Disinformation as Exemplified by Poland-related Narratives

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to map, analyse and showcase the extent of the co-operation between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Russian Federation in the field of information exchange on the example of Poland-related narratives in the Chinese infosphere (often referred to, in a broader sense, as “the Sinosphere”). The emphasis was put on dissemination of content that can be categorised as propaganda and disinformation. This, in turn, will help answer the main question of this study: is there a “Russian Voice” in the Chinese information space, and if so, what is the purpose of such content being circulated in an infosphere tightly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) organs? To provide a comprehensive answer to the matter in question, an analysis on a substantial, ideological, and intentional level is order, and this will therefore dictate the structure of the research.

The introduction briefly outlines the concept of the *information war* as well as sets the basic framework for the political and ideological background of the PRC–Russia cooperation. It summarizes the current state of research on the subject and identifies the scope and goals of the following research in detail.

The second part consists of case studies of selected examples of Poland-related messaging in the Sinosphere, portraying the prevalence of Russian narratives in the PRC's information space. It aims not only to show the intent, but also to analyse the strategic meaning of intentional placement of the described content in the information space.

The third part focuses on the issue of *information laundering* and the threats associated with the presence of Chinese applications (TikTok) in the Polish and, by extension, European information space. It aims to put the results of the research in a broader context and connect it to further studies of the propaganda and disinformation in Sinosphere.

The summary includes the core findings, as well as recommendations for further research and advice for building increased resilience of information systems and audiences to disinformation and propaganda.

1. Research background

The fact that the PRC perfectly understands the potential and value of information and is able to use it to advance its interests domestically and globally is now common knowledge among all China observers and FIMI (*Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference*) experts. Nevertheless, for years, a certain naïvety in the subject of Chinese influence operations aimed at information space had prevailed in the Western world, which in itself demonstrates the incredible effectiveness of China's public image strategy. In the report "Chinese Influence Operations: A Machiavellian Moment," P. Charon accurately calls this approach "*a naive belief in the Chinese 'peaceful rise' theory and were overconfident about the superiority of the democratic model*" [1] and points out that over the last two decades the world, and Europe in particular, has been too preoccupied with the topic of Russia to be able to take the threat from China seriously.

Meanwhile, voices calling for greater caution in the face of China's growing potential in information warfare are nothing new: as far back as in 2001, T. Yoshihara wrote about the ever-growing interest of the PRC in the topic of psychological operations, mainly in the context of the rivalry with the United States. [2] The concept of *information warfare* is not a newly coined term, and in China itself it has been the subject of research and discussion since at least 1985. One of the "fathers" of the Chinese concept of information warfare, Wang Pufeng, wrote in 1995 about the *information domination*, or, in Chinese: *zhi xinxi quan* (制信息权), as the basis of victory, correctly predicting that the constantly accelerating development of technology would enable the pursuit of a *total* takeover of the information space by one state or entity. [3] The theoretical and practical work of Wang Pufeng and other experts associated with the People's Liberation Army led to the development of the concept of the *Three Warfare*s (*san zhan* 三战), which is believed to have been ideologically inspired by the Su Tzu's *The Art of War*. [4]

As early as 2003, a doctrine which focuses on three core elements – psychological warfare, public opinion warfare, and legal warfare was given definite shape. [1, p. 19] These concepts have been adopted, among others, for the People's Liberation Army, which places increasing emphasis on operations focused on psychological warfare and public opinion warfare. This demonstrates the PRC

government's deep understanding of the psychological aspects of influence operations. It allows the ruling Party not only to effectively manage public sentiment through domestic propaganda but also to continue its soft power strategy worldwide. This includes countries that may not be traditionally associated with PRC influence operations, such as Poland.

Using propaganda and disinformation as tools in influence operations is therefore not a newly employed tool, however recent years have brought significant developments in China's involvement in the field. Efforts to obtain a type of – quoting Wang Pufeng – *information dominance* have sped up after Xi Jinping came to power in 2012 and have since seen a steady intensification, inextricably linked to China's technological advances and a vivid change in the CCP's foreign policy, that has become increasingly assertive, or even hawkish.

Until the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the PRC influence operations were focused on two main *branches*: propaganda and information control activities aimed at the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Hong Kong, [5] and regulatory actions aimed at exerting influence globally by implementing a so-called soft power strategy. This, in turn, was primarily based on the concept of promoting China abroad, in the spirit of Xi Jinping's slogan "Tell China's Story Well" [6] coined in 2013, one of the pillars of which was the extended use of external propaganda or *waixuan* (外宣). Many observers in the Western world back then perceived these actions as a natural way for China to advance its own international reputation, without posing a direct threat to the information landscape. For many years the prevailing, yet probably too optimistic opinion in expert circles was that Chinese propaganda was unsophisticated and ineffective – in 2022 Haifeng Huang, associate professor of politics at the University of California called the Chinese propaganda and disinformation techniques *primitive*, especially as compared to Russian efforts in the field. [7] It seems though, that in just a few short years the CCP has "done its homework" – now, in 2025 Chinese propaganda can be called anything but. The speed of change could be called extraordinary, and it is fair to believe that Chinese have used every opportunity to learn from their Russian partners. In a study covering the Russia – China propaganda and disinformation narratives on the war in Ukraine, published in 2023 by Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), A. Legucka and J. Szczudlik clearly warned about the dangers of the PRC messaging: "*The European Union should pay more attention to Chinese disinformation, which can more effectively reach people and groups not susceptible to Russian narratives.*" [8] This indicates a complex evolution of the Chinese approach to disinformation, and shows a turn in the fields from optimistic naïvety towards a curious alertness.

One of the reasons for the change in Beijing's action is this: in the second half of the 2010s, the CCP recognized that a one-track approach to influence

operations was simply insufficient. In the following years, the PRC continued its efforts to expand “soft power,” but also embraced a more assertive, even confrontational, course of action, dubbed “wolf warrior diplomacy”. [9] China began conducting a campaign in which it openly criticized and intimidated individuals, entities, and even countries whose positions were deemed to undermine Beijing’s interests. This approach yielded satisfactory results, as the gains greatly outweighed the potential losses, mainly in public image.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic can be considered another turning point, when the CCP’s activities aimed at spreading pro-Chinese propaganda and disinformation became particularly visible even to those who were not China watchers. At that time, predictions about the dangers of Chinese propaganda and disinformation emerged, which we can now consider fulfilled: we can now talk about a completely new diplomatic approach that combines the best parts of *soft power* and *wolf warrior* strategies into a more advanced and far more threatening action pattern. [10]

As an example, it would be wise to recall the statement by the then-Chinese Ambassador to France, Lu Shaye in 2023, who denied the Baltic states’ right to exist, [11] echoing Russian narratives regarding the former Soviet states. What he said, was clearly politically motivated as Lithuania has been in diplomatic conflict with China since 2021 and did not go unnoticed as it was put forward as a leading example of Beijing’s increasingly hawkish stance towards Europe.

In February 2025, Lu Shaye was appointed Special Representative for European Affairs, [12] a clear indication of Beijing’s shift in policy that is not accidental. At the same time, the CCP is officially pushing a narrative of hoping to achieve a *new opening* with the Baltic States. Such is the effective implementation of the carrot and stick approach, a mechanism continuously refined by its extended use in influence operations in the information space.

Wherever there are *conflict* and *contested* truth, there lies a brilliant opportunity for the PRC to exert its narrative-shaping power. It comes as no surprise then, that in a world torn by conflict, especially in Ukraine and the Middle East, interests of two large countries that have been characterized as *disruptive* [13] due to their behaviour – China and Russia – converge. Although Russia seems to be quite open about its destructive actions in Ukraine and the region framing them in a propaganda narrative of the *right thing to do*, China has been trying to adopt a strategy of trying to deny outright ties with Russia. Yet, the scale of the cooperation, including information exchange, could not be clearer, as shown in the next section.

1.1 Literature review and research focus

Cooperation between China and the Russian Federation, especially in the face of the war in Ukraine, is the subject to a rapidly increasing number of studies and discussions. In an ongoing series of reports published throughout the 2020s, the Mercator Institute for China Studies presented data on the scope of cooperation in the economic, security, political, and social spheres, clearly demonstrating the scale of the two countries' ties, which in this situation can be considered allied. The study paid less attention to cooperation based on information exchange, which has been ongoing since at least 2017, despite its extreme threat to security and democracy in the age of the information society. [14]

Over the past decade, the Russian news agency TASS and the Chinese agency Xinhua have actively deepened their cooperation, [15] although, historically speaking, May 2026 marked the 70th anniversary of the “strategic partnership” between these entities, which are closely linked to the governments in Moscow and Beijing. This cooperation has been officially renewed several times during meetings between Russian and Chinese representatives. In 2022, European Parliament published a short report on the “Confluence between Russian and Chinese information operations in European information space” which outlined joint malignant operation in the European infosphere, and – correctly – predicted that such cooperation shall continue in the foreseeable future. [16] On May 16–17, 2024, Vladimir Putin visited Xi Jinping in Beijing, and the statement issued after the meeting announced, among other things, continued cooperation in information exchange. Based on these arrangements, Russian media channels operate legally on Chinese social media, as do the accounts of some Russian politicians. On September 2, 2025, the heads of Xinhua and TASS signed a “Development and Cooperation Strategy for 2026–2030.” The document holds the status of an internal operational protocol and has never been made public. It most likely contains, among other things, instructions regarding cooperation on content censorship, the coordination of bot and troll farms, and principles for the mutual “smoothing” of messaging.

Channels of entities such as the *Sputnik News Agency*, *Russia Today*, and *Ruptly* operate openly in the Sinosphere, e.g., on the social platform Weibo. [17] They freely disseminate propaganda and disinformation content. The fact that the PRC allows this type of media to be published on their most popular social media platforms indicates that these narratives align with the CCP government's interests in the information sphere.

In June 2025, CEPA (Center for European Policy Analysis) published the report “Sino-Russian Convergence in Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference: A Global Threat to the US and Its Allies”. [18] It complements the previous

CEPA work on joint Sino-Russian activities during the COVID-19 pandemics, [19] and describes the joint activities of China and Russia in the area of FIMI and the resulting threats. It presents the main narratives and directions of joint influence operations, a key element of which is undermining the integrity and agency of institutions such as NATO and the EU. The report focuses on data demonstrating the scale of cooperation between key government entities and maps the main trends in the activities of the PRC and Russia. However, due to its format, it does not provide a more detailed analysis of the narratives or include case studies. Therefore, there is a need for a more thorough exploration of these topics in a regional context.

The subject of cooperation between the People's Republic of China and Russia in information exchange is mostly absent in the Polish media space, and if it is, it usually refers to the war in Ukraine, [8] and does not focus on a broader European perspective. While there is an unwritten consensus that disseminating information from Russian sources is not only socially harmful but also detrimental to our country's national interest, media awareness of the People's Republic of China's information activities in our country is negligible. Part of the report "Echoes and Resistance: China's discourse power and public perceptions in Central Europe," published by the CEIAS institute [20] devoted to Poland hints on the topic of Chinese FIMI in the Polish information space, yet unfortunately, due to a limited research corpus,¹ does not examine the subject further and gives off the impression that Poland is not of particular interest to China, which, as separate research currently carried out by the NASK institute indicates, is not entirely true.

Given this situation, it is not surprising that there's little interest in what and how China says about Poland in its own information space. A more detailed analysis of Chinese sources is needed to illustrate how the scale of PRC–Russia cooperation influences narratives and messages of a propaganda and disinformation nature regarding Poland in the Chinese information space. The following study aims to demonstrate, using narratives related to Poland as an example, how the PRC and Russia collaborate to create a common information frontline, which is to be aligned with the previously described concept of striving for *information dominance*.

It is also important to clearly show the intent behind the cooperation. The fact that Russian propaganda and disinformation narratives are appearing in the Sinosphere indicates that these messages pursue goals that are overwhelmingly aligned with the CCP's agenda.

1 The study was based on the use of Gerulata Juno tool, which has proven to be of limited use in comprehensive monitoring of the Polish infosphere regarding Chinese FIMI.

Firstly, anti-Western, and especially anti-EU and anti-American, narratives serve to legitimize and consolidate the CCP's power in China. The tone and nuances of propaganda materials change depending on the international situation and the partners with which Beijing wishes to build alliances, but one thing remains constant: China is presented as the only bastion of peace and prosperity in a world engulfed in conflict and social divisions.

Secondly, as described in detail in [section 3](#) of this paper, placing Russian propaganda and disinformation narratives in the Sinosphere allows for the so-called "information laundering," thanks to which these messages, appropriately filtered through the mechanism of Chinese censorship, can reach Western recipients, e.g. Polish ones, as "reliable information" from China, and not from Russia, which is clearly perceived negatively in the region.

By understanding and analyzing the abovementioned mechanism, it is clear to see the correlation between content published in the Sinosphere about European countries (in this case: Poland) inspired by Russian propaganda, and messages that later appear in the regional infosphere, including through apps such as TikTok and RedNote. A better understanding of the PRC's mechanisms of disinformation and propaganda will, in turn, enable the development of more effective measures to defend the information environment in Poland and the region, and to increase the awareness and media resilience of content recipients. It may also contribute to broader research on the PRC's anticipated influence operations strategies against Poland, the EU, and Europe as a whole.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted as a part of work done within the Disinformation Analysis Centre at NASK (National Research Institute of Poland). It utilized quantitative and qualitative approach to provide an in-depth look at the problem of the PRC–Russia information exchange. Certain specialized internet and social media monitoring tools as well as manual methods were used to analyze messages (e.g., based on reactions, views, and reach) and identify traffic patterns related to specific narratives.

The work process consisted of daily monitoring of over 25 Chinese media channels (including the popular platforms: *Xinhua*, *CCTV*, *Baidu*, *Sina*, *Weibo*) for the period of 8 months (7 Jan 2025 – 31 Aug 2025). The research also includes data from limited-access platforms that have a portion of content only available to users registered using Chinese phone numbers (*Weixin*², *Bilibili*, *Xigua Shipin*, *Douyin*, *Haokan*). With limited use of specialized monitoring tools in the Sinosphere, the bulk of monitoring was conducted manually (semi-automatically, including with the support of available search engines) based on network analysis of sources identified in as being consistently involved in the creation and popularization of disinformation and propaganda content. As a result, the research material, comprising the corpus of analysis, consisted of media articles, TV broadcasts and publicly available posts from social media users related to the observed topic.

Due to the lack of transparency in the Chinese media system (and therefore lack of means to acquire fully reliable and relevant quantitative data on the number of views or range of posts), a research sample was purposefully prepared based on the study of patterns that followed events of a worldwide impact and particular adjustments in the PRC's international and domestic policy. Work was conducted under the assumption that there is no *accidental* information release in a tightly controlled information space such as the Sinosphere, at least not for long enough to be subject to long-term research. Therefore, whatever appears in the Sinosphere is the result of a deliberate informational strategy and whether

2 Its English version is known as WeChat.

it is addressed to the public, or to users participating in smaller information bubbles, it solely serves the purpose of promoting the dominant meta-narrative of the CCP.

Within this scope it is often difficult to draw a distinct line between separate narratives, as part of the PRC's information strategy is creating messaging "packages" that compliment and amplify one another. However, the research strived to classify the information into categories based on the topic to which the main narrative line pertained.

In the Jan 7 – Aug 31 2025 period, out of all qualitatively relevant (that is: impactful) Poland-related pieces of information that included elements of propaganda or disinformation in the Sinosphere, a total of 966 informational pieces (that includes articles, news, TV news and social media posts varying in length) have been identified as containing messaging identical or nearly identical to propaganda and disinformation materials published by Russia.³ Within this, the majority (523 pieces) were published on *Weibo* (微博), with another popular news platform *Sina* (新浪) coming in second place with 255 pieces. The remaining material was published on a variety of channels, which includes, but is not limited to: *Xinhua Press Agency* website, CCTV (on-air and on-line), *Baidu*, and *Douyin*. The total number excludes "duplicates" (same content being posted repeatedly, surpassingly for the purpose of reaching a wider audience) and informational pieces obtained from Chinese APP that were either removed later, or which could not be downloaded and registered due to app restrictions. Additionally, the data was chosen using manual and half-automated qualitative selection methods (range, "likes" or "shares," positioning by the algorithm, advanced search options) so the grand total number of information pieces disseminating Russian propaganda and disinformation in the Sinosphere could very possibly be much higher, and – considering the lack of transparency and limited access in the Chinese internet – close to impossible to fully assess.

3 The messages were cross-checked with a research corpus on Poland-related propaganda and disinformation present in the Russian infosphere that was acquired during the work at the Disinformation Analysis Centre at NASK.

3. Results: Examples of Russian narratives in the Sinosphere

The following section aims to show the prevalence of Russian propaganda and disinformation in the Sinosphere by presenting examples that showcase the dissemination of the selected narratives within material published on Chinese media channels.

In accordance with the methodology described in Section 2, four main narratives were identified for the purpose of this research, illustrating the most visible convergence points of the Chinese and Russian narrative:

1. "Poland adopts confrontational and aggressive foreign policy."
2. "NATO is to blame for the unrest in Eastern Europe and other conflicts."
3. "Poland is pursuing militarisation as the war threat looms over Europe."
4. "European Union is politically and socially unstable."

The narratives were analysed on the levels on *substance*, *ideology*, and *intention* in order to show, whether the similarities were simply accidental or whether they served a role in the Chinese propaganda and disinformation strategy.

3.1 "Poland adopts confrontational and aggressive foreign policy"

The dominant Poland-related narrative in the Sinosphere, which is fully consistent with Russian propaganda, is that of Poland's alleged confrontational and

aggressive foreign policy. It is often combined with an anti-NATO narrative and a narrative of alleged *russophobia* among Poles.

At the content level, the materials in which the narrative is disseminated refer to Poland's relations with its near and distant neighbors. The way the narrative is presented depends on the platform on which the materials are published.

In government media, the narrative is presented in a benign manner, though not without a propagandistic tone. Of all the events in Polish politics during the period under review, the *Xinhua News Agency* chose to extensively cover, among others, the diplomatic crisis between Poland and Russia (the closure of the consulate in Cracow) and the downgrading of diplomatic relations between Poland and Hungary. It is no coincidence that both countries maintain close relations with the People's Republic of China. Furthermore, the materials emphasize commentary from the Russian and Hungarian sides, which emphasize the desire to improve relations and alleged *helplessness* in the face of Poland's *unjustified* actions.



ILLUSTRATION 1: A NEWS PIECE FROM XINHUA INDIRECTLY SUGGESTING THAT POLAND IS TO BLAME FOR DETERIORATION OF POLAND – RUSSIA RELATIONS. ([HTTP://WWW.NEWS.CN/WORLD/20250712/4E216A308F034F7B884C31BAC79D-326D/C.HTML](http://www.news.cn/world/20250712/4E216A308F034F7B884C31BAC79D-326D/C.HTML))

In Chinese social media, the message is more consistent with the Russian narrative style. Propaganda and disinformation materials primarily emphasize Poland's aggressive stance toward neighboring countries and Russia – often with identical messages also directed at the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia). They are cited as *warmongers*, and in Poland's case, quasi-historical materials are also published to prove its aggressive stance toward neighboring countries.

A persistent narrative in the Sinosphere, among other things, portrays Poland as a *country that lost its independence three times*. The widespread use of such content directly points to a Russian source – Poland and its history are of little interest to most Chinese citizens. The materials emphasize Poland's tense

relations with its neighbors and repeat false information (also consistent with the Russian messaging) that Poland was responsible for events such as the Partitions (1772–1795) or even the outbreak of World War II.



ILLUSTRATION 2: A 20-MIN LONG VIDEO PUBLISHED ON DOUYIN REPEATING THE RUSSIAN NARRATIVE PORTRAYING POLAND AS A “REGIONAL BULLY” HATED BY ALL THE NEIGHBORING NATIONS. SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM DOUYIN CHANNEL 暗巷追光者 (ANXIANG ZHUIGUANGZHE): OVER 100,000 FOLLOWERS, ANTI-WESTERN AND PROPAGANDA MATERIALS. ([HTTPS://V.DOUYIN.COM/I573F7MR/](https://v.douyin.com/I573F7MR/), ACCESS: 20.02.2025)

On an ideological level, the Russian message fully aligns with its Chinese counterpart. Poland is portrayed as an *imperialist*, *hostile* country, which is – since 1989 – allied with the United States, a country that serves as both Russia’s and the PRC’s *nemesis*. Polish Russian relations have long been tense; in case of China, Poland is seen as an example of a country that has not only “broken away” from the Eastern sphere of influence but also achieved relative economic and social success, contradicting the thesis of the superiority of socialism over capitalism.

In the case of Russia, denigrating the image of Poland and Poles is politically justified, but in the case of China, there are seemingly no grounds for the Chinese Communist Party to endorse a message portraying Poland in a negative light. Meanwhile, portraying Poland as a confrontational and aggressive country is part of the ubiquitous anti-Western metanarrative in the Chinese information space: this action is aimed not so much at Poland itself, which maintains good relations with China, but at the entire Western world, with the United States at the forefront. As a US ally, Poland must be a country on the *wrong side of history*. In this context, the message about a confrontational Poland is extremely useful in reinforcing the propaganda narrative aligned with the Publicity (Propaganda) Department of the CCP’s line.

3.2 “NATO is to blame for the unrest in Eastern Europe and other conflicts”

The narrative of Poland’s alleged confrontational and aggressive foreign policy is closely linked to a broader anti-NATO messaging. The starting point for this narrative is the factually incorrect assumption, intensively promoted by Russia and China, that NATO, under the leadership of the United States, is responsible for the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

Undermining the position and capabilities of the Transatlantic Alliance is one of the Kremlin’s overarching propaganda narratives, which also has a strong presence in the Sinosphere. China actively seeks to create a new world order based on organizations subordinate to itself, as evidenced by initiatives such as BRICS, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This is directly related to competition with the United States in the technological and military arenas.

On the substantive level, the message being intensively promoted is that NATO’s attempts at eastward expansion have forced Russia to respond militarily, presented as *self-defense*. Furthermore, NATO is expected to continue its provocative actions on its eastern flank, which includes the aggressive and allegedly *russoophobic* stance of countries such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. This narrative is combined with the message of the increasing *militarization* of Poland and the Baltic states, which are to be exploited by Western European countries and the United States to inflame the conflict with Russia. It is emphasized that if a full-scale conflict between NATO and Russia breaks out (which, according to propaganda materials, is expected to happen soon), Poland and the Baltic states will be the front line and will suffer the *greatest sacrifice*.

In materials currently circulating in the Sinosphere, NATO is portrayed as an organization completely dependent on the United States and unable to meet the challenges of the current geopolitical situation, including the war in Ukraine, which has been ongoing since 2022. China is exploiting the conflict for its own purposes, on the one hand positioning itself as a keeper of peace and negotiator, and on the other actively working to disseminate pro-Russian messages.

A good example of this narrative is the material relating to the destruction of the Polish Embassy in Kyiv during a Russian airstrike. In the Sinosphere, the event was presented as evidence of NATO’s weakness, as it was unable or unwilling to defend the interests of member states under Article 5 of the Treaty on Mutual Assistance. At the same time, references to Polish history and suggestions that it was being “sold” by the US resurfaced.



ILLUSTRATION 3: A PROPAGANDA VIDEO USING DEEPPFAKE TECHNOLOGY TO IMPERSONATE GEN. LIU ZHEN QI, WHO WARNS THAT “POLAND HAD IT COMING” SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM SINA.COM.CN ARTICLE BY 半格知新小札 (BANGE ZHIXIN XIAOZHA) ([HTTPS://K.SINA.COM.CN/ARTICLE_7295052910_M1B2D1AC6E02001ZD40.HTML](https://k.sina.com.cn/article_7295052910_M1B2D1AC6E02001ZD40.html), ACCESS: 09.09.2025)

This narrative stems from the strong ideological convergence between Russia and China regarding NATO. Both countries view it as a competitive and hostile bloc, and both, led by China, are increasingly striving to create an alliance that can compete with NATO's military dominance.

In recent years, China has been intensively promoting the BRICS bloc, established in 2001. Although it consists of countries with diametrically opposed goals and values, it provides an effective platform for expanding Beijing's influence, including in Africa, through initiatives such as the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative). BRICS is also an important element in the process of building the image of Beijing's "success," which culminated in the events of late August and early September of this year – the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit with the participation of India and Russia, and later the military parade on September 3rd of this year commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Asia (Victory over Japan Day).

It is for these reasons exactly that the PRC has adopted Russian anti-NATO narrative as an inherent part of its anti-Western metanarrative. The goal of the Chinese Communist Party is simple: to continually reinforce the message of China's technological, military, economic, cultural, and moral superiority over the West. The North Atlantic Alliance is a symbol of the US's strength and global leadership and portraying it as outdated and inadequate to the challenges of

today's world aligns with the vision of a *new world order* under China's aegis and Xi Jinping's leadership.

An additional benefit of disseminating narratives aligned with Russian propaganda and disinformation is the opportunity for "information laundering"—that is, using another medium or channel (typically one that does not carry negative connotations) to plant, for instance, a disinformation narrative or propaganda. In this context, we can speak of "information laundering" via Chinese apps such as TikTok and RedNote, as well as Western apps like X, Instagram, and Facebook – all of which are actively utilized by Chinese propaganda. This can be seen in the content also appearing in the Polish infosphere: channels advocating for a "reset" of relations with Russia and Belarus and repeating propaganda and disinformation content often replicate anti-NATO messages while promoting organizations such as BRICS and SCO, while presenting China as a potential ally of Poland.

3.3 "Poland is pursuing militarisation as the war threat looms over Europe"

The narrative of the imminent threat of a full-scale war in Europe is persistent in the Chinese information space. It aligns with Russian propaganda, which aims to incite fear of conflict – intended to radicalize anti-war, anti-Ukrainian, and anti-American sentiments, and is visible, among others, in some far-right circles, which advocate for improved relations with Russia. Part of this narrative is the message of Poland's *accelerating* and *irrational* militarization. The Polish government's plans to increase defense spending to 5% of GDP are portrayed as a push for confrontation and a *path to war from which there is no return*.

Chinese media meticulously report on European countries' efforts to improve the continent's defense capabilities, portraying them as excessive "militarization." Most of the materials point to Poland, which in this narrative is supposed to prioritize the well-being of its citizens and common sense over the desire for military domination in the region. Materials concerning the alleged "militarization" also contain "warnings" typical of Russian and Chinese propaganda (such as *he who lives by the sword dies by the sword*) and accuse Poland of deliberately disturbing the *balance of power in the region*. This narrative is often combined with anti-NATO and anti-American messages, and some content suggests that Poland is merely being exploited by the US.

The term *zuosi* (作死) which translates as "seek death," frequently appears in the materials or comment sections. Poles, as in the materials mentioned in

section 3.1, are described as brave but lacking common sense and blinded by hatred of Russians (the theme of “Russophobia,” or 反俄 resurfaces). This message is reinforced by the opinions of Chinese experts and commentators who, when discussing the Polish Russian conflict, tend to emphasize Poles’ sense of injustice and alleged hatred of Russians.

A popular example on Chinese social media in May of this year is a statement by Professor Wu Dahui from the Institute of Russian Studies at Tsinghua University for the Chinese channel *Phoenix TV*: he recounted an anecdote from a visit to Poland, during which a fellow scientist jokingly asked China to *conquer Poland three times* because this would involve *having to cross [their] Russian soil six times*. Wu Dahui understood this to demonstrate the level of hatred among Poles, who are willing to joke about their own painful history (three times losing independence) just to take revenge on Russia. On the Douyin platform alone, a fragment of Wu Dahui’s statement has been liked 400,000 times.

At the same time, similarly to the Russian infosphere, a contradictory message is being disseminated, intended to portray Poles and Poland as terrified by the prospect of war. This is often combined with an anti-Ukrainian narrativ – also identical to the Russian message – that includes the Kyiv government’s attempts to drag Poland into a war with Russia. It is also emphasized, particularly in connection with President Trump’s plans to relocate US troops in Europe, that Poland’s existence is entirely dependent on the presence or absence of US troops in the country. The interchangeable use of contradictory messages to achieve the same goal, such as denigrating the image of Poland or NATO, is characteristic of Russian propaganda, which is readily replicated in the Chinese information space.



ILLUSTRATION 4: ON THE LEFT: AN ARTICLE ON A SOCIAL PLATFORM TOUTIAO ACCUSING POLAND OF BEING “SCARED OF RUSSIA” AND DIRECTLY CITING RUSSIAN MEDIA AS A SOURCE. SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM TOUTIAO, ARTICLE BY 乐观看世 (LEGUANKANSHI) ([HTTPS://WWW.TOUTIAO.COM/ARTICLE/7522386368208437786/?CHANNEL=8&SOURCE=SEARCH_TAB](https://www.toutiao.com/article/7522386368208437786/?CHANNEL=8&SOURCE=SEARCH_TAB), ACCESS: 09.09.2025); ON THE RIGHT: A POST BY A PRO-RUSSIAN CHINESE COMMENTATOR ON WEIBO 蜗牛柯基 (WONIU KEJI), QUOTING A RUSSIAN TELEGRAM CHANNEL КИРИЛЛ ФЁДОРОВ / ВОЙНА ИСТОРИЯ ОРУЖИЕ

(KIRILL FEDOROV / WAR HISTORY WEAPONS), ACCUSING POLAND OF NUCLEAR AMBITIONS. ([HTTPS://WEIBO.COM/1015206261/PNYZODOLR?REFER_FLAG=1001030103](https://weibo.com/1015206261/PNYZODOLR?REFER_FLAG=1001030103), ACCESS: 09.09.2025), SHOWCASING THE NARRATIVE “DOUBLESPEAK.”

The ideological basis for such narrative is rather clear in case of Russia, which aims to picture Poland as an enemy and a threat. It is highly probable that in China's case, the message is driven not so much by ideology as by geopolitical calculation. Meanwhile, the CCP government is closely monitoring the geopolitical situation in Eastern and Central Europe. This is related not only to the war in Ukraine, which is crucial and beneficial from the perspective of China's interests – one of the “bones of contention” in EU-China relations is Beijing's tacit but strong support for Russia's war efforts. A significant element is China's actions within EU member states aimed at increasing its own economic and political influence, which are based on careful observation of conditions prevailing in those countries. Understanding the mood and mindset of a given country is crucial for carrying out successful public opinion-shaping activities, as was the case with the gesture made by the Chinese Ambassador to Poland, Lu Shan, on September 30 this year, who instrumentalized the sensitive topic of the Warsaw Uprising to frame it within China's propaganda narrative of *anti-fascism war*. [21]

The Russian Federation is spreading the narrative of Poland's “militarization” to fuel anti-Polish sentiment, and adding the message of an impending war threat is intended to heighten anxiety and cast doubt on Poland's actions as a state and a NATO member. It is also significant that this narrative is being transmitted to the Polish information sphere, where it also plays a propaganda and disinformation role.

The PRC, however, which finds the narrative useful, allows its presence in the information sphere and repurposes it for its own uses. The main goal of China's actions in this case is to reinforce the narrative of dangerous life abroad, crucial to domestic propaganda. China is presented as a bastion of peace and security, while the news media constantly reminds us of acts of violence, accidents, diseases, and other negative phenomena occurring abroad, particularly in Europe and the United States. The flaunting of the “militarization” of Europe and the threat of devastating war is intended to instill in the Chinese a sense of gratitude towards a regime that is unique in the world in ensuring peace and prosperity for its citizens.

3.4 “European Union is politically and socially unstable”

Another narrative in which the Chinese message fully aligns with Russian propaganda is that of Europe’s political, economic, social, and *cultural collapse*. Its core revolves around anti-EU messages, which in most cases are identical to Russian propaganda and disinformation content that penetrates the European information sphere through radical, far-right channels, those sympathizing with conspiracy theories, or those identifying as anti-establishment.

On the substantial level the European Union in such narrative is portrayed as a politically divided entity that is failing to fulfill its primary function of ensuring stability and security in its member states. Countries that adopt an Eurosceptic stance, including Hungary and Slovakia, are openly praised in the Sinosphere. It is significant that the governments of both countries are also considered friendly to Vladimir Putin’s Russia. On the contrary, countries such as Poland and Lithuania are cited as enemies of China and *pawns* of the United States. As with other anti-Western narratives, channels in the Chinese infosphere eagerly reproduce information relating to alleged problems in Europe, which are supposed to prove the subordinate position of the Old Continent in relation to China.

Issues of migration and civil liberties are an integral part of anti-EU narrative. As in the Russian media environment, the Sinosphere spreads a message that migrants are responsible for Europe’s social and economic problems. This narrative is strongly linked to the promotion of xenophobic and racist messages, as well as those targeting LGBTQ+ issues, which both Russian and Chinese propaganda present as one of the reasons for the alleged *fall of Europe*. Interestingly, the channels that spread the Russian messaging in the Sinosphere often use Poland as a “positive” example of a country that has not yet succumbed to the *immoral* and *irrational* European policy: in order to prove the point they often cherry-pick on events from Poland that include members of far-right and nationalistic groups opposing migrants or other groups that are deemed “dangerous” to what is shown as “Polish traditional morality,” it seems likely, based on striking similarities in messaging and sources cited, that for many such channels, especially on platforms like Weibo and Sina the direct source is either Russian media outlets or Telegram channels, rather than Polish media outlets.



ILLUSTRATION 5: A POST FROM SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM WEIBO SHOWING ALLEGED MEMBERS OF THE FAR-RIGHT ANTI-MIGRANT GROUP (VIDEO PROBABLY MADE WITH AI) ON THE POLISH-GERMAN BORDER. THE ACCOUNT IS WELL-KNOWN FOR SPREADING PRO-RUSSIAN NARRATIVES. SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM WEIBO, ARTICLE BY 军武大狼 (JUNWU DALANG) ([HTTPS://WEIBO.COM/3951218339/PA99M73BW?REFER_FLAG=1001030103_](https://weibo.com/3951218339/PA99M73BW?REFER_FLAG=1001030103_))

The Chinese information space is characterized by a lack of in-depth discussion of political pluralism, typical of authoritarian countries. Democratic processes such as presidential or parliamentary elections are generally discussed in a rather circumspect manner, and official announcements generally present only an ideological outline of the main parties or candidates. Social media is increasingly featuring materials related to this topic, but they also tend to focus on presenting the possibility of “choice” as synonymous with chaos and instability. This does not mean, however, that China doesn’t attempt to exploit the image of specific parties or politicians to bolster its own propaganda narrative. Here, too, there is a clear overlap in content with the Russian message.

One example is Grzegorz Braun, an ultraconservative politician and monarchist, a member of the European Parliament and a candidate in the 2025 presidential election. Russian propaganda has repeatedly exploited the politician’s pro-Russian, anti-EU, and anti-establishment statements to reinforce its own anti-Western message. Similarly, Grzegorz Braun has been widely reported on Chinese social media, focusing on his anti-Semitic and homophobic actions, which he portrayed as the *last voice of reason* in Europe. Channels known for disseminating pro-Russian messages have emphasized the politician’s anti-European and anti-Ukrainian stance, presenting him as a somewhat “non-mainstream voice.” The politician’s relatively high result in the 2025 presidential election has also been commented on.

From an ideological perspective, China, unlike Russia, views Europe, and the European Union in particular, not as an enemy but as an obstacle to its own plans for expanding global influence. EU–China trade negotiations in June of this year ended in failure, and relations between the two entities are currently far from ideal. Another important element is the fact that Europe and the EU symbolize democracy, which, in Chinese political terms, is a flawed system. With the growing intensification of nationalist sentiment in China and Xi Jinping’s clear plans for creating a new world order that challenges the supposed “Western hegemony,” the ideological base for anti-European narratives is gradually growing.

For the PRC, propaganda and disinformation materials originating from Russian sources are therefore extremely useful. They serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, they perpetuate propaganda intended for the domestic market about the weakness of democracy and the West in its broadest sense, fueling a nationalist narrative of China’s superiority over the rest of the world in every field, including cultural ones. On the other, they allow for a kind of “export” of ideologically beneficial propaganda messages to the information sphere of other countries, including Europe and Poland. In this sense, they constitute an important element of Chinese influence operations, an integral part of which is so-called “information laundering,” described in the next section.



ILLUSTRATION 6: A POST FROM A VIDEO CIRCULATING ON WEIBO, SINA AND DOUYIN SHOWING G. BRAUN DESECRATING AND BURNING THE UE FLAG. SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM SINA ARTICLE BY 自动售货机C3格 (ZIDONG SHOUHUOJI C3 GE), A CHANNEL CIRCULATING RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA MATERIALS. ([HTTPS://K.SINA.COM.CN/ARTICLE_7879996875_M1D5AF35CB03301A9HA.HTML](https://k.sina.com.cn/article_7879996875_M1D5AF35CB03301A9HA.html))

4. “Information laundering” – how Russian narratives reach the West via Chinese channels

A common and potentially dangerous misconception is that anything created and published in Chinese media serves only the CCP’s internal interests and poses no informational risk to other regions of the world. Meanwhile, it is important to remember that Chinese government-controlled media are active in almost every region of the world, including European countries. They have editions in various languages, aiming to reach the widest possible audience. In Poland, China Media Group’s media channels, CGTN, and Chinese Radio International (CRI), are active and publish in Polish, employing both Polish-speaking Chinese and Poles. The graph below aims to illustrate the general information flow in the process of information flow.

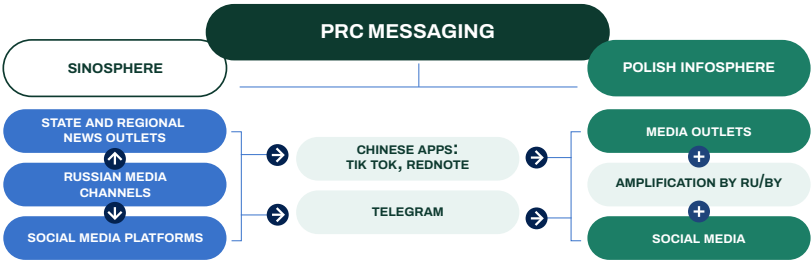


ILLUSTRATION 7: A GRAPHIC IMAGINING OF THE “INFORMATION LAUNDERING” PROCESS BY THE PRC AND RUSSIAN FEDERATION

In an interview with Radio France24 on Russian and Chinese influence operations, Paul Charon (IRSEM) noted that the Chinese side appears to be adopting Russian models: one element of this strategy is intensified efforts to shape the information environment not only in their own country but also globally. It appears

that China now possesses the appropriate tools for this, including the globally popular TikTok app. [22]

The activities of the TikTok application have aroused controversy and concerns almost from the very beginning of its existence, especially due to its non-transparent algorithm. [23] Although TikTok consistently denies any ties to the Chinese government, the fact that its parent company (ByteDance) is a Chinese legal entity means it is obligated to comply with PRC law, which grants the CCP full control over information. Furthermore, content from the Chinese version of the app (Douyin) also finds its way onto its international version, often deliberately.

There is therefore a significant risk of content consistent with Russian propaganda messages seeping back into the European news sphere. The materials are then labeled as “news from China” rather than from Russia, which would be difficult for audiences to accept. However, they may contain the exact same propaganda messages as mainstream Russian media outlets linked to the Kremlin. There is a risk that such content could be used by groups associated with “fringe media,” radical movements, or conspiracy theories, effectively implementing the objectives of the Russian Federation’s informational influence operations.

Moreover, the lack of media awareness regarding the scope of cooperation between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation in the field of information exchange leads to Russian and Chinese propaganda materials being published in Polish media and presented as “reliable sources.” This applies not only to references to the South China Morning Post, a medium owned by Alibaba Group, but also to the replication of information from Chinese social media on public and private news channels.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the research corpus allows for a clear answer to the question regarding the advisability of Sino-Russian cooperation in the field of information exchange. It shows the scale of cooperation between both countries in disseminating propaganda and disinformation aimed not only at harming the interests of Western countries but also at undermining democratic mechanisms in the global context. The study therefore leads to a conclusion that can be summarized in three distinctive points:

1. Propaganda and disinformation materials originating in Russia fit well into the Chinese information environment: although some of them are direct reprints (translations) of Russian content, they are understandable and attractive (many of them achieve significant reach) for Chinese readers. Information from Russian media channels operating in the Sinosphere (*RT*, *Sputnik*, *Ruptly*) is eagerly shared and commented on. They constitute an important source of information for Chinese internet users, shaping their perceptions of the world and their views on issues such as Europe, the United States, and the global geopolitical situation. They reinforce the prevailing propaganda message emanating from Chinese state media, but they also play on emotions and the sense of “breaking news factor,” thus attracting larger audiences.
2. Although Russia and China have different political and economic goals and attempt to pursue them in different ways, the ideological bond that allows Russian narratives to play a significant role in China’s propaganda mechanism is the anti-Western message, a key element of which is antidemocratic. China strives to create its own concept of the world based on its own system of “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” which contradicts the ideals of democracy and individual freedom. In truth, it represents a difficult-to-define combination of single-party authoritarianism, regulatory and protectionist policies, and a significant influence of nationalist ideology.
3. The People’s Republic of China not only consciously allows Russian disinformation and propaganda materials to circulate within its own information space, but also actively exploits them for its own purposes. The core of the CCP’s propaganda strategy is reinforcing the anti-Western meta-narrative, which is

consistent with the PRC's gradual shift from a "soft power" strategy through "wolf warrior diplomacy" to a new, syncretic information strategy that assumes comprehensive – one might even say global – actions. China seeks to shape information discourse not only within the domestic information sphere but also wherever it can expand its sphere of interests. It should be assumed that this type of proactive information strategy will continue in the coming years, most likely with increased intensity.

It should be emphasized that the study is based solely on materials concerning Poland and serves only as a starting point for a broader analysis of Sino-Russian ties, not only in terms of information but also methods of conducting influence operations and hybrid actions. Expanding the research to a regional, or in the future, European, scale would not only place the problem in a broader context but also allow for comparative studies based on the examples of individual member states.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance to underline the following: the research clearly demonstrates that China's technological capabilities for conducting advanced influence operations through propaganda and disinformation are constantly growing. Entities affiliated with the CCP government are also recruiting foreigners (including citizens of the United States [24], the Czech Republic [25], and even Taiwan [26]), who can play a significant role in propaganda activities on platforms like YouTube and TikTok.

The lack of awareness among both audiences and content creators (journalists and bloggers) about the scale of this phenomenon leads to a situation where there are no effective mechanisms to counteract harmful activities in the information sphere. Another problem is the complete lack of, or limited, accountability of social media owners for the content they publish, even if it openly promotes content that opposes freedom and democracy.

At a time of major geopolitical changes worldwide and the need to redefine alliances, there is a greater need than ever before to develop common, European and global mechanisms to counter propaganda and disinformation.

One of the pillars of such efforts must be not only fact-checking and debunking but also a proactive approach combining media education with raising awareness of threats emanating from countries like China, whose activities in the information sphere can be considered "disruptive" [13] Stronger cooperation between FIMI research organizations and experts in various fields, from security to social psychology, is also needed to not only analyze the current threat landscape but also create predictions regarding, among other things, the use of modern technologies in disinformation activities.

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