

The Chinese regime has significantly expanded its presence on global social media platforms and now reaches hundreds of millions worldwide. However, there is substantial disagreement over what to make of these efforts. This disagreement stems from conceptual and empirical gaps in our understanding of outward-oriented state-controlled media. In this paper, we provide a framework for conceptualizing such media efforts. We also analyze tweets produced by China's premier, outward-facing, state-controlled media outlet, CGTN, and compare these tweets to those made by international media outlets. We argue that government media messaging often generates deception through omission, distortion, and misdirection. We find that over half of CGTN tweets cover breaking news events completely unrelated to China. Of the remaining China-related tweets, the vast majority emphasizes four positive narratives of China, at the exclusion of negative portrayals, in an attempt to re-frame global perceptions of the country. The amount of CGTN content containing these re-framing narratives vastly outstrips reporting on China produced by any single international media outlet, but online engagement with re-framing content is lower than with international media coverage of China