

CHINESE WAR CORRESPONDENTS

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Executive Summary

1. The role of Chinese war correspondents has changed from obtaining second- or third-hand information to first-hand information, and from relying on ‘biased’ and ‘untrue’ reports by the western media to producing their own ‘credible’ reports from Chinese perspectives.
2. Both the market-oriented media and official media in China are becoming active in overseas wars and conflicts, breaking the monopoly of central media outlets—*Xinhua News Agency* (Xinhua), China Central Television Station (CCTV) and *People’s Daily*.
3. This is part of China’s outward strategy to boost its media representation globally and to strengthen its impact on global public opinion with an investment of US\$6 billion in the state media.
4. In September 2010, two correspondents from *Global Times*, an influential, profitable and elite newspaper affiliated with *People’s Daily*, were embedded with the 101st Airborne Division of the American military in Kandahar, Afghanistan for a couple of weeks.
5. They witnessed missions of the American military rooting out Taliban militants, a first in the history of Chinese journalism.
6. Chinese war correspondents perceive their complex mix of roles as objective reporter, interpreter, propagandist and diplomat. They downplay the critical and participatory roles due to their lack of comprehensive knowledge of the complex situation and China’s nonparticipation in overseas conflicts.
7. Their main job is to report on facts from the front line and explain the origins, causes, occurrences and effects of the conflicts to the Chinese audience and decision makers. Chinese war correspondents’ emphasis on ‘facts’, ‘balance’ and ‘neutral stance’ corresponds to professional aspirations in the West.

8. However, the state ownership of Chinese media determines that Chinese journalists are also propagandists and patriots who need to cover news from the Chinese national perspective, uphold China's overseas interests and transmit China's voice on the world stage.
9. They encounter various barriers in their war reportage in areas such as state foreign policies, military and politics, and constraints from editorial policies of news organisations, editorial procedures and journalists' personal experiences and values.