

Pentagon not denying report on discrediting of Chinese vaccines

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Reuters said in its report posted on Friday that the US military in particular had pursued a campaign of discrediting China's Sinovac vaccine against the coronavirus in social networks for the purpose of lowering the influence of China in Southeast Asian nations. The campaign staged most proactively in the Philippines was aimed to cast a doubt on efficacy of Chinese vaccines and other items supplied from China, including face masks and test kits.

"The Department of Defense (DoD) conducts a wide range of operations, including operations in the information environment (OIE), to counter adversary malign influence. DoD activities, including OIE, conducted outside areas of armed conflict are coordinated and deconflicted with other departments and agencies, as appropriate. This process is deliberate, methodical, and comprehensive," DoD Spokesperson Lisa Lawrence told TASS.

"Several state and non-state actors use social media platforms and other media to spread disinformation and conduct malign influence campaigns against the United States," the spokesperson noted. "The DoD uses a variety of platforms, including social media, to counter those malign influence attacks aimed at the US, allies, and partners," Lawrence added.

"As it relates to Covid-19 disinformation, China [in 2020] initiated a disinformation campaign to falsely blame the United States for the spread of Covid-19," Lawrence noted. "In line with the US National Defense Strategy, the DoD continues to build integrated deterrence against critical challenges to US national security, including deterring the PRC's spread of disinformation under the scrutiny of the Department's coordination and deconfliction process," she said.

Reuters said in its publication that news agency's reporters had identified at least 300 accounts on the X platform created in summer 2020, with provocative messages calling not to trust China

posted there, that matched descriptions shared by former U.S. military officials familiar with the Philippines operation.

The anti-vax effort took place from the spring of 2020 and until mid-2021, Reuters informed. **(TASS)**