

Media Expert Calls for Congressional Hearings on Influence of Coverage Like Covid-19 Lab Leak by Anti-Democratic Forces

The author of bestselling new book *The Gray Lady Winked*, Rindsberg says US media blackout of COVID-19 lab-leak for over a year points to a widespread pattern of undue influence by anti-democratic forces like China; calls for support of US allies

District of Columbia, Washington, D.C, Jun 2, 2021 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Media expert Ashley Rindsberg issued a call today for congressional hearings into how anti-democratic forces influence media coverage—and what this means for US democratic allies like Taiwan, Australia, and Israel. Highlighting the media's campaign to discredit the COVID-19 "lab-leak theory," Rindsberg made his call [in a buzzed-about oped in the National Review](#) that raises the alarm on the growing trend.

"The media's campaign to discredit the lab-leak theory on the origins of COVID-19 is one of the most alarming journalistic scandals of our generation," said Rindsberg. "We need answers regarding why, for over a year, the media was in lock-step with Chinese government propaganda on this all-important question. Just as the Biden Administration is investigating the source of the virus, we also need Congress to look into the information blackout that obscured the truth."

Rindsberg—author of [The Gray Lady Winked](#), a bestselling book on the how New York Times misreporting alters history—similarly raised questions around why Australia's effort to resist Chinese political pressure, and the debilitating economic and diplomatic consequences it has suffered as a result, has received little or no coverage in the US. Along with this is the minimal coverage by US media of China's Uighur slave laborers.

According to Rindsberg, Congress must investigate this dangerous trend now to understand the:

- Pressure tactics being developed and deployed against the press
- Means used to organize, support, and finance media attacks
- Commercial interests and financial threats that sway media coverage
- Protocols news organizations must institute to safeguard the independence

Foreign correspondents and media outlets operating in Turkey, Russia, China, and Iran have seen the same pernicious trend of undue influence play out. Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has destroyed press freedoms in Turkey, filed a criminal complaint against two French editors of *Le Point* magazine in response to an issue of the magazine accusing Erdogan of ethnic cleaning.

Correspondents in Russia are tightly monitored and occasionally suffer drastic repercussions, as in the case of Belarusian journalist Roman Protasevich, who is widely believed to have been arrested at the behest of the Kremlin after his Ryanair flight was grounded. Iran has similarly arrested foreign correspondents, notably holding *Washington Post* journalist Jason Rezaian for nearly two years on false charges and waging a campaign of harassment against Iranian journalists working in Europe.

Rindsberg also flagged the intimidation tactics used by groups like Hamas on media agencies such as the Associated Press, which was revealed to have its Gaza headquarters in a building run by the US-designated terror group.

"We're living at a time when the tools of disinformation have never been more effective or more

available,” Rindsberg said. “We have to take action before it’s too late. This begins with congressional hearings so the American people can fully understand the extent to which the news they read is influenced by anti-democratic forces.”

CONTACT

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