



## The Role of the Media in COVID-19 Response

Friday, May 8, 2020

This conference call focused on the role of the media during the coronavirus pandemic, including how it has changed and what it will look like after the pandemic ends. It convened three experts in journalism as they discussed the challenges they face in trying to provide the most accurate information to the general public.

Webinar panelists included:

- **Curtis S. Chin (Moderator)**, Milken Institute Asia Fellow; Former US Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank
- **Steve Herman**, White House Bureau Chief, Voice of America
- **Gary Liu**, CEO, South China Morning Post
- **Maria Ressa**, CEO and Executive Editor, Rappler Inc

The panelists touched on the following:

- Ressa spoke about how the government has curbed the freedom of the press during the pandemic. She referred to the shutdown of one of the biggest newsgroups (ABS-CBN) in the Philippines by the government and about how misinformation is perpetuated on social media by the government. She postulated that as long as governments allow biased and false information to be reinforced, they can use social media to wield political power.
- Herman touched on how the partisan divide in America (that leads to differences in how severe people consider the COVID-19 crisis to be) has compelled Voice of America to think critically of what is reported and how they can share accurate information with the rest of the world. Herman also made a comment regarding Twitter's responsibility to be more active in preventing the spread of misinformation on its platform.
- Liu highlighted that because South China Morning Post is located in Hong Kong, which faced the SARS epidemic, they were able to rely on "institutional memory" and "pattern recognition," and therefore avoid previous mistakes and advocate for the severity of the crisis much earlier. He also brought to attention the difficulty news outlets have in maintaining a balance between being objective and preventing the perpetuation of misinformation.
- Chin ended the discussion by asking the panelists if they had any advice for people looking for accurate information. They all highlighted the importance of taking in and tracking accurate information during this pandemic to maximize one's health—especially because false information can have serious consequences.

If you would like to listen to recordings of this webinar, please visit our [website](#).