



China and Covid-19: Lessons Disastrous Lies, Cruel Suppression Warrant Pushback

China lies, Americans die. This is the primary lesson to be learned from China's coverup of the coronavirus. The question is why did China lie? Why did the Chinese government not step forward to warn the world of a potential global pandemic? Why did the Chinese government place travel restrictions in their own country, but allow hundreds of Chinese to travel to other countries, spreading the virus? Why were hundreds of Chinese citizens, scientists, doctors and average people arrested who tried to report the outbreak?

The Covid-19 pandemic raises fundamental questions about the nature of the Chinese Communist one-party dictatorship in China today. Asking these questions is a bit like asking why a rattlesnake bites. It is the nature of the creature. Communist regimes are always about power and control.

Karl Marx's dictum of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat was translated by Lenin to mean dictatorship of the party. Once in power, Lenin converted this to a dictatorship of one man—himself. Every loyal communist leader subscribed to this approach including Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, Castro and other tinhorn dictators who later came to power declaring themselves Marxist.

The Chinese regime is especially ruthless in enforcing the one-party, one-man dictatorship. Its use of technology and measures of social control are instruments that Lenin and Stalin would have loved. The regime's crackdown on its citizens and its refusal to announce to the world the potential of the pandemic followed the logic of a dictatorial regime that presents itself as omniscient.

What is truly perplexing is that some in the West have gone along with the Chinese narrative that China's government acted quickly and the West's failure to contain Covid-19 was its own fault. The Chinese government initially convinced the World Health Organization (WHO) that Covid-19 was not a person-to-person infectious disease. When President Trump placed travel restrictions on Chinese entering the United States in late January, referring to the "Wuhan virus," he was denounced by the Chinese government, and the left-wing

media and progressive politicians called Trump a racist and a xenophobe. U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) went so far as to organize a trip to San Francisco's Chinatown just to show she was not a racist and there was no reason to worry about a pandemic.

Most American progressives are not avowed communists or agents of the Chinese Communist Party. U.S. progressives don't have the deep loyalty to communism that the older American left had for the Soviet Union. What today's progressives and the Chinese government share, though, is a love for power.

Do progressives in the West understand how brutal the Chinese regime is? Let's review some of the facts in the case and the continuing human rights violations by this regime, and then look at implications for future U.S.-Chinese relations.

The Coverup

There should be no doubt that the Communist Chinese government tried to cover up the coronavirus outbreak that occurred in the Wuhan province in late 2019. This coverup has been **confirmed by the so-called "Five Eyes" alliance made up of intelligence agencies of the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.**¹ A 15-page report from the intelligence agencies concluded that China intentionally hid and destroyed evidence of the coronavirus. U.S. intelligence agencies believe that the virus likely escaped from a research lab in Wuhan, the Institute of Virology, where a naturally occurring strain was being studied as part of a Chinese effort to show that its efforts to identify and combat viruses are equal to or greater than those of the United States. Reports by U.S. officials visiting the lab two years earlier, concluding that this laboratory was not taking necessary precautions against a potential release of virus, were ignored by Chinese officials.

Furthermore, the "Five Eyes" dossier found that China began censoring news of the virus on search engines and social media beginning on December 31. Government-controlled search engines and social media began deleting terms includ-

ing “SARS variation,” “Wuhan seafood market” and “Wuhan unknown pneumonia.” On January 5, the report found, Wuhan’s Municipal Health Commission stopped releasing daily updates on the number of new cases.

Wang Guanfa, a respiratory specialist at Peking University First Hospital, asserted on January 10 that the outbreak was “under control” and was largely a “mild condition.” Just two days later a Shanghai professor’s lab was closed down when it shared data on the virus’s genetic sequence with the outside world. On January 24, the Chinese government ordered the Wuhan Institute of Virology to stop sharing samples with a lab at the University of Texas. Up until January 20, Chinese officials continued to claim that the virus could not be spread by human-to-human contact.

This narrative that the virus was not spread by person-to-person contact was challenged by experts in Taiwan and Hong Kong as early as December 31. The WHO continued to deny the fact of human-to-human transmission in this period. Downplaying the potential of a global pandemic, the Chinese government continued to advise the U.S., Italy, India, Australia and southeast Asian countries that there was no need to protect themselves via travel restrictions. China did not lock down Wuhan until January 23, after millions had fled Wuhan and hundreds of thousands of Chinese traveled to Europe and the United States. Even after locking down internal travel in China, the regime pushed for continuing international flights out of China until late March.

China’s Manipulation of WHO

Further evidence of the Chinese government’s coverup came in mid-May when the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* reported that **German intelligence overheard a January 21 conversation between Xi and WHO leader Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus in which China urged WHO to “delay a global warning”** about the pandemic and to hold back information on human-to-human transmission of the virus.² The concealment of critical information on human transmission cost four to six weeks in the fight against Covid-19. WHO responded to the German report by calling the allegations “unfounded and untrue,” but given the coverup conducted by the Chinese government it seems likely that the conversation did take place. President Trump responded by freezing U.S. payments to WHO pending investigations by the intelligence community.

What is certain is that China continues to suppress information about Covid-19 research. Strong evidence suggests that the Chinese government has downplayed the number of Covid-19 infections and deaths in China.³ In April, two websites for leading Chinese universities, Fudan University in Shanghai and the China University of Geosciences in Wuhan, published and then removed pages on Covid-19 research.

As a senior researcher at Monash University in Australia succinctly put it, “They [Chinese officials] are seeking to transform a massive disaster to one that the government did everything right and gave the rest of the world time to prepare.”⁴ Indeed, senior Chinese diplomats and the state media have encouraged speculation that the virus came from outside China—perhaps even the United States. There is no evidence for this brazen speculation.

Roundup of Chinese Whistleblowers

While orchestrating an international coverup, Chinese authorities were arresting those in China who dared to raise questions about the pandemic in their country. **Physicians, research scientists and whistleblowers were arrested and placed in undisclosed detention facilities by police authorities.**⁵ Arrests continued into May. The first known crackdown occurred when Dr. Li Wenliang tried to warn fellow medics to wear protective clothing due to a SARS-like illness among patients at Wuhan Central Hospital. He was forced to sign a police document confessing to having “seriously disrupted the social order.” Dr. Li, 34, died of Covid-19 at the Wuhan Central Hospital.

The day before Li’s death, Chen Qiushi, a lawyer, disappeared after posting videos of chaotic scenes in Wuhan hospitals with coronavirus victims lying in hospital corridors. A day before his disappearance, Chen told his 400,000 followers on YouTube and 250,000 on Twitter, “As long as I am alive, I will speak about what I have seen and what I have heard. I am not afraid of dying. Why should I be afraid of you, Communist Party?”

Three weeks later Li Zehua, 25, a reporter with Chinese state TV, began to report on the death toll in Wuhan. He live-streamed his own arrest. Just before he disappeared, he made it a point to tell his viewers that he was healthy. Fang Bin, a textile trader in his 40s, refused to shut up after posting a video of people dying of the virus in Wuhan in early February. When he posted a second video, this one with a message, “Citizens resist. Hand power back to the people,” he was arrested again and put into an undisclosed detention center.

They were not alone. In the first weeks of the pandemic in Wuhan, an estimated 5,000-plus people were arrested for sharing information about the virus. Hundreds of others were arrested for sharing information about hospital lines, mask shortages and the deaths of relatives. The police publicly acknowledged on February 21 that they had penalized 5,111 people for “fabricating and deliberately disseminating false and harmful information.”⁶ Most were detained for five to ten days, but some of the more prominent whistleblowers have disappeared into detention centers.

Frances Eve, deputy director of the Hong Kong-based Chinese Human Rights Defenders, warned that **“Everyone who has disappeared is at very high risk of torture”** in these

detention centers. She added that the early arrests and detentions were to instill obedience to orders not to criticize the government's handling of the virus. She quoted an old Chinese proverb, "You kill the chicken to scare the monkey."⁷

Since this first crackdown, Chinese authorities have detained even more prominent people, including Chinese attorney Zhang Xuezhong, for posting a statement questioning the leadership of Xi Jinping during the crisis. Dr. Ai Fen, another lawyer/activist, has not been seen for weeks, after challenging the government's narrative. Zhang's criticism went beyond the government's handling of Covid-19 to question the legitimacy of the communist regime itself. He boldly declared, "I do not believe you [Xi] are a legitimate representative of the Chinese people, neither do I believe that the National People's Congress is a legitimate parliament. Unfortunately, the current 'constitution' of our country is a fake."⁸

Even billionaires were not protected if they spoke out against the government. Ren Zhiqiang, a retired real estate tycoon with close ties to the party leadership and a member of the Communist Party, disappeared on March 12, when he accused the regime of "serious violations" of human rights. While not directing his remarks specifically at Xi, he referred to the top leader of the country as "a power-hungry clown." He said, "I saw not an emperor standing there exhibiting his 'new clothes,' but a clown who stripped off his clothes and insisted on continuing being an emperor." In a video that went viral, he protested that "people's lives are being ravaged by both the virus and the major illness of the system."⁹

The Covid-19 coverup and the mass arrests of dissidents should have torn the mask off this barbaric communist regime. It has not. Much of the media is focused on showing how Trump did not act quickly enough in containing the pandemic. Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) tweeted on May 13, "Mr. President, you ignored the threat of the virus, and now 80,000 Americans are dead." Mainstream media ignore their own early downplaying of Covid-19.

Western Myopia About China

Much of the American media and American progressives have turned a blind eye to well-documented human rights abuses. The European press has done a better job on reporting these abuses than the American press. The Vatican, global elites and the complicit media have avoided criticizing human rights abuses against ethnic Uyghurs, Buddhists including Falun Gong, and ever larger numbers of Christian churches.

Catholic churches have been torn down and denuded. Images of the Madonna and Child have been replaced with pictures of People's Leader Xi Jinping. Evangelical churches must forbid anyone under the age of 18 from entering them. Bible study groups may be held only with an approved Communist Party

leader. Images of the Ten Commandments have been painted over with quotes from Xi. Mosques and Buddhist and Taoist temples are not spared.

Even more chilling, **human right reports indicate that body organs are still being forcibly harvested** from prisoners of conscience, including Falun Gong and Muslim Uyghurs detained in concentration camps.¹⁰ An estimated 60,000 to 90,000 organs are harvested each year for transplantation, often on dates scheduled well in advance of the death of the organ "donor".¹¹

Covid-19 has allowed Beijing to crack down further on churches that are not officially sanctioned by the government.¹² Crosses have been removed during the pandemic because they were "too eye-catching" and attracted crowds, undermining the strict lockdown.¹³ Those protesting regime policies have been placed in mental institutions and given heavy drug doses.¹⁴ Despite these reports, China was recently appointed to a panel on the controversial U.N. Human Rights Council.¹⁵

Reduce Reliance on China

Long-time China watcher Steven Mosher understands that Xi seeks to portray himself as an infallible new god. The Covid-19 pandemic, brought on by what appears to be careless laboratory practices, revealed the fallibility of Xi and one-party rule.

The Chinese government's propaganda campaign to escape culpability in creating a global pandemic and a global economic meltdown is not working except in a few progressive circles. American public opinion, as Mosher observes, has shifted dramatically against China.¹⁶ Covid-19 is a wake-up call to Americans that **we cannot rely on China for our supply chain for foods, pharmaceuticals, microchips and industrial parts.** China is the world's largest economy, so we will need to continue to do some trade with China. But no longer should China get its way in unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, cyber espionage and buying its way into American higher education.

A major step in cutting reliance on China came when the Trump administration placed U.S. sanctions on Huawei, China's largest telecommunications company and smartphone company, last year.¹⁷ The sanctions were tightened further in mid-May. Separately, the U.S. has charged a string of university professors with receiving undisclosed payments from China in connection with research being funded with U.S. tax dollars, in violation of their grant conditions. In effect, China has been bribing U.S. professors to share tax-supported research with China. The jig is up.

Numerous universities in the U.S. and abroad have ended their "Confucius Institutes" funded by China, after pressure mounted against the institutes' pro-regime propagandizing.

Chinese university students, on whom overpriced American universities are scandalously reliant for tuition dollars, are currently barred from travelling to the U.S. due to the pandemic, though many opted to remain on their American campuses instead of returning to China. Before the pandemic, nearly 370,000 students from mainland China were enrolled in American universities.

Ultimately the Covid-19 pandemic will likely be addressed by antibody treatments and vaccines. America will be better prepared for the next pandemic. Meanwhile, most Americans now realize that China is not our friend. Communist China has been unmasked for what it is: a monstrous dictatorship, without regard for human life—of their own citizens or of the rest of the world.

Correction: The June 2020 issue of the *Mindszenty Report* inadvertently misspelled the name of Senator Richard Burr (R-NC). We regret the oversight.

‘Mrs. America’ TV Series Is Mostly Fiction

Our readers who have tuned into the lavish nine-part FX/Hulu series “Mrs. America” probably don’t need to be told this, but for the record the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation notes that many scenes in the series featuring our deceased co-founders Eleanor, Fred and Phyllis Schlafly never happened, and portray the Schlaflys in a false light. The errors are too numerous to describe in this space. We refer you to the web site RealMrsAmerica.com and many articles and videos on the internet fact-checking the star-studded series, which focuses on the successful fight against the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution from 1972

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		100 copies	\$30.00

THE PERENNIAL VIRUS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION. Long before the recent pork-laden U.S. spending bills to prop up the economy paralyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic, corruption has eaten away at the body politic. Revelations of enrichment of current politicians and/or their family members through public office should shock us, though they might not shock the American Founders.

Ask for 5/20

CAN HIGHER EDUCATION BE REFORMED? U.S. colleges and universities are in the grip of radical professors and administrators with little tolerance for intellectual diversity. Pressure to improve can and sometimes does come from parents, donors, legislators, boards of trustees and an occasional capable college president.

Ask for 4/20

to 1982 led by Phyllis Schlafly (played by the celebrity actress and executive producer Cate Blanchett). The depiction of our longtime CMF president Eleanor Schlafly is particularly egregious and unrecognizable to anyone who knew this strong, regal, vivacious lady.

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