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THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER

HOARDING GLOBAL SUPPLIES

**BEIJING IMPORTED BILLIONS OF
MASKS, FUELING WORLDWIDE
SHORTAGE**

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**Beijing Concealing True
Number of COVID-19 Cases **2****

CCP VIRUS

Chinese Regime Concealing True Number of COVID-19 Cases, Evidence Shows

HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



A man wearing a face mask holds a portrait as he stands outside the Biandanshan cemetery in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on March 31, 2020.

BOWEN XIAO

The Chinese Communist Party has deliberately masked the total number of COVID-19 cases in China in a bid to safeguard its image both nationally and internationally, according to China experts as well as

evidence documented by The Epoch Times. As more countries express anger and frustration over Beijing's botched handling of the virus—fueled by a wide-reaching cover-up—half a dozen experts told The Epoch Times the regime is undeniably underreporting cases of the virus, but to what extent is up for debate.

Beijing itself publicly admitted to hiding the number of people with the disease when it announced it would start reporting cases of asymptomatic carriers on April 1, revealing that it hadn't been doing so. China's National Health Commission also acknowledged that asymptomatic carriers can infect others and cause outbreaks, which it had previously dismissed.

John R. Mills, former director of Cybersecurity Policy, Strategy, and International Affairs at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said the communist regime is "all about legitimacy, stability, and no one questioning their preeminence."

"The CCP virus changes everything ... All of this chaos shakes the Chinese people's confidence in the system and they are hopping mad," he told The Epoch Times.

Mills said recent claims pushed by the regime of zero new cases in China are "patently absurd" adding that in totalitarian bureaucracies "everyone learns real quickly to stop reporting."

The regime is expelling U.S. journalists based in China who work for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post, highlighting the country's dismal track record on press freedom. China ranks 177 out of 180 in the 2019 Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index.

"Bad things happen to people that report bad numbers," Mills said about China. "In these systems and forms of government, everyone learns that to survive, lying is the norm. Everyone lies to everyone about everything—there is no truth."

In the past three months, the number of Chinese cellphone users dropped by 21 million, suggesting that deaths due to the CCP virus may have been a factor. Since Sept. 1, 2010, China has required all cellphone users to register phones with their real identification.

A series of internal government documents obtained by The Epoch Times paint a damning picture of Beijing's coverup.

In China's Shandong province alone, daily new infection numbers were up to 52 times higher than officially published data by the Shandong health commission and China's National Health Commission. Information

provided by residents in Wuhan also indicates the death toll there could be more than 32,000–12.7 times the official figure.

Mills said that while no government or leader can act perfectly in a fast-moving, complex situation like the current pandemic, which has forced more than 1.5 billion people across the world to stay in their homes, the CCP is willfully consistent in its obfuscation and lying. There has been little if any good faith, cooperation, or diligence in pursuit of truth by the CCP, he added.

Before President Donald Trump took office, the CCP took advantage of the United States' open society, and for years, "they got away with it," Mills said, adding that "many have come to the conclusion that the CCP is pushing a false narrative for craven political purposes."

Truth: The Greatest Obstacle

Yang Jianli, a Chinese dissident and son of a former Communist Party leader who now heads the Citizen Power Initiatives for China, a pro-democracy NGO in the United States, said the downplaying of cases is crucial to Beijing's "broader goal of global leadership and domination."

"The truth about COVID-19 inside China is the greatest obstacle to [Chinese leader Xi Jinping's] ambition," Yang told The Epoch Times. "As long as Xi is seen as being successful, there is little room to challenge his rule."

"Should that assessment change, however, it is not hard to imagine grudge-holding Party members and angry people—independent intellectuals, dissidents, and ordinary people—attempting to coalesce in an effort to challenge him."

Yang agrees with U.K. advisers who state that China's cases are likely downplayed by a factor of 15 to 40 and urged the international community to "hold the CCP accountable."

Scientific advisers warned the United Kingdom's prime minister that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) official statistics on the virus could be "downplayed by a factor of 15 to 40 times" and that Downing Street believes Beijing is attempting to exploit the pandemic for economic gain, reported by The Mail on March 28. The Epoch Times reached out to the No. 10 press office; a spokesperson declined to comment.

Movie theaters across China had slowly started to reopen under permission from the CCP, until last week—when officials suddenly reversed course and ordered all theaters to revert back to shutdown mode. Medical professionals in Spain and the Czech Republic, meanwhile, reported that CCP virus rapid tests imported from China failed 70 to 80 percent of the time.

"The CCP, which for years has claimed to be a responsible member of the global community, showed once again its true colors when this crisis hit," Yang said. "If the CCP gets away with this, or worse yet, if it actually earns global plaudits for its actions, then no country will feel the need to be honest

with the world if it deems being honest politically unfavorable."

Chinese officials and state-run media have attempted to shift the blame for the regime's failure to contain the virus by pushing conspiracy theories targeting the United States as part of an aggressive global disinformation campaign.

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John R. Mills, former director of Cybersecurity Policy, Strategy, and International Affairs at the Office of the Secretary of Defense

CCP bots have been swarming Twitter to defend the communist regime, attack the United States, and parrot propaganda narratives in concert with Chinese officials. Chinese overt influence accounts have published "over 32,000 posts related to COVID-19 on several Western social media platforms," according to a recent report by cybersecurity company Insikt Group.

Yang cautioned that if left unchecked, an emboldened CCP "will grow only more aggressive externally and repressive internally, having learned that it can fool and bully the world into submission."

The Epoch Times has documented stories of some Chinese citizens—including whistleblower doctors, citizen journalists, scholars, and business people—who have been silenced by the regime for exposing the truth. Joseph Bosco, a former China country desk officer at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, told The Epoch Times that the regime is evading and suppressing the truth about the virus, like it does most other things, "to preserve the myth of the competence and infallibility of the CCP."

In recent days, thousands of ash urns were delivered to a funeral home in Wuhan, further prompting questions of the true scale of the outbreak and its severity. Photos of the long lines circulated on Chinese social media before they were promptly deleted by the regime's censors. The Epoch Times previously reported.

"It is clear that for Xi, political self-preservation is more important than lives that can be saved, in China and around the world, by accurate media coverage," Yang added.

A Totalitarian Regime

Frank Gaffney, vice chairman of the Committee on the Present Danger: China, told The Epoch Times that Beijing has done a masterful job at concealing the truth and deflecting blame.

"These are the sorts of things that totalitarians do and I think that [China] will be regarded as a pariah when the public more

generally—not just in China, but beyond—properly understands the role that the Chinese government has been playing and the magnitude of the damage that's been done worldwide as a result," he said.

Gaffney, who was assistant secretary of defense for international security policy during the Reagan administration, said anyone who believes claims from the CCP on any basis is "making a terrible mistake."

"It would be the height of folly to trust the Chinese on anything, particularly when lying about their statistics, whether it's the effects of the disease or in other cases, the impact on their gross domestic product," he said. "Anything that they tell you, I think, has to be treated with intense skepticism, if not downright disbelief."

A China insider told The Epoch Times in January that public health authorities were attempting to cover up the severity of the virus by limiting the number of diagnosis kits sent to Wuhan hospitals.

The Epoch Times has also spoken to Chinese residents who complained about being turned away from hospitals and weren't diagnosed. Many of these people later died as a result.

The United States and China

The global pandemic has raised broader concerns surrounding the United States' relationship with China.

"It certainly seems to me that a wholesale reconsideration of the kind of engagement that we've had with China to this point is not only overdue but absolutely mandatory," Gaffney said. "I think that more and more Americans are feeling that way."

Author and China expert Gordon Chang said the CCP is trying "to give the impression that China has recovered" as part of a deeper battle with the West. He believes China is either being hit with a second wave of infections, or it never recovered from the first.

"They are relentlessly promoting the line that China's system is superior to America's," Chang told The Epoch Times. "Moreover, Beijing has gone on the attack by pushing the notion that the U.S. is in decline."

"Just about everyone in China knows the coronavirus still ravages the country. And soon the rest of the world will know, too," Chang said. "Regime fibs, lies, and untruths will not last long. The virus gets the last word."

Dr. Deborah Birs, the response coordinator of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, suggested at a March 31 briefing that the United States response was slow because of flawed data from China.

"When you looked at the China data originally ... you start thinking of this more like SARS [severe acute respiratory syndrome] than you do a global pandemic," she said.

"The medical community interpreted the Chinese data as, this was serious, but smaller than anyone expected," Birs said. "Because, probably ... we were missing a significant amount of the data."

CHINESE INFLUENCE

Beijing's 'Mask Diplomacy' Draws Growing Backlash

LINTAO ZHANG/GETTY IMAGES



CATHY HE

Beijing's efforts to promote itself as a global leader in combating the COVID-19 pandemic have recently encountered blowback.

Eager to burnish its image amid the crisis, the Chinese regime has sent medical experts and much-needed supplies, such as masks and respirators, to countries ranging from Italy to Peru.

While many recipient countries initially welcomed the assistance, there are signs of a growing backlash after the Netherlands, Spain, and Turkey last week reported faulty equipment from China.

"After an initial burst of positive publicity, the narrative about Chinese aid to Europe has soured," Peter Rough, an expert on U.S. foreign policy and senior fellow at the Washington-based think tank the Hudson Institute, told The Epoch Times in an email.

The Netherlands on March 28 announced it had recalled around 600,000 masks that had arrived in a shipment of 1.3 million purchased from a Chinese manufacturer a week earlier. Some of the masks had already been distributed to frontline health workers.

Dutch health officials said the masks didn't fit properly or had defective filters.

"A second test also revealed that the masks did not meet the quality norms. Now it has been decided not to use any of this shipment," the health ministry said in a statement to AFP.

Spain had similar problems with rapid test kits ordered from a Chinese company.

Spain's health ministry on March 26 said it had withdrawn around 58,000 Chinese-made test kits after discovering they had a detection accuracy of just 30 percent. The normal accuracy rate is more than 80 percent, local media reported.

The Chinese embassy in Spain responded on Twitter that the company selling the kits, Shenzhen Bioeasy Biotechnology, hadn't been licensed to sell the tests.

Meanwhile, Turkish health officials raised similar issues on March 27, saying that rapid testing kit samples purchased from a Chinese company didn't meet local effectiveness standards. Another Chinese firm has since been chosen to supply the kits.

These developments, Rough said, have "burst China's carefully cultivated aura of competency."

Deflecting Blame

The regime's "mask diplomacy" forms part of a broader campaign to change the global narrative—with the ultimate aim of deflecting blame away from Beijing's initial mishandling of the outbreak that eventually metastasized into a global pandemic.

"China's humanitarian gestures are meant to cover up its own complicity in the spread of the virus, peel away European countries desperate for an economic and medical lifeline, and win over gullible Westerners inclined to proclaim a Chinese century," Rough said.

Pedestrians wear protective masks as they walk on a footbridge in Beijing on April 2, 2020.

Alongside its humanitarian endeavors, the regime has deployed a sweeping disinformation campaign peddling claims that the CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus, didn't originate in China, and may have been brought into Wuhan by U.S. Army personnel.

"That is how authoritarian regimes deal with crises," Helle Dale, senior fellow for public diplomacy at Washington-based think tank The Heritage Foundation, told The Epoch Times. "They tend to deflect anger and criticism outward."

Dale said the regime has stepped in to fill a vacuum in the international space, while traditional leaders such as the United States are busy handling the outbreak domestically.

Such assistance, however, is accompanied by a "massive propaganda drive for the recipients to show their gratitude to the PRC [People's Republic of China] as the savior," Katerina Prochazkova, an analyst at the Czech-based, China-focused think tank Sinopsis told The Epoch Times.

She also noted that unlike much of the aid Beijing received from other countries during the early stages of China's outbreak, much of the goods supplied by the regime have been sales through export agreements.

Countries in Europe and elsewhere have begun pushing back against the propaganda campaign.

The European Union's chief diplomat, Josep Borrell, recently warned of a "global battle of narratives."

"China is aggressively pushing the message that, unlike the U.S., it is a responsible and reliable partner," Borrell said in a March 23 statement.

"There is a geopolitical component including a struggle for influence through spinning and the 'poli-

tics of generosity,'" he said. "Armed with facts, we need to defend Europe against its detractors."

Capitalizing on Global Shortage

Prochazkova noted that the global shortage of masks and protective equipment is partly due to the regime having imported stockpiles of supplies during the height of the outbreak in China.

"This very shortage from which China is 'saving' us was caused by much of the medical material being sent to China in the first place," she said.

After an initial burst of positive publicity, the narrative about Chinese aid to Europe has soured.

Peter Rough, senior fellow, The Hudson Institute

As China heavily ramped up domestic production of masks and protective gear for internal use in late January, it also launched a campaign to source medical supplies from abroad—through its vast network of state-run and state-affiliated enterprises, and overseas Chinese associations.

China's customs agency announced on March 7 that from Jan. 24 to Feb. 29, it had inspected around 2 billion masks and 25 million protective suits imported into the country.

Chinese state media also touted the efforts of several state-run companies in mobilizing international resources to ship millions of medical supplies to China.

Greenland Group, a global property giant whose largest shareholder is the Shanghai government, is one of those state-backed firms involved in the worldwide drive. State-run media Xinhua reported on Jan. 31 that the company had shipped to China 3 million masks, 700,000 medical protective suits, and 500,000 pairs of medical gloves.

A whistleblower employee from Greenland Group's Sydney office in Australia told local media that workers were instructed to put normal work on hold to source bulk medical supplies for shipping back to China.

"Basically all employees, the majority of whom are Chinese, were asked to source whatever medical supplies they could," the employee recently told The Sydney Morning Herald, adding that the work went on for weeks, from January to February. The Australian government banned exports of medical supplies on March 29.

Overseas Chinese associations were also enlisted.

For instance, the largest overseas Chinese association in the Czech Republic, the Czech Qingtian Hometown Association, collected 780,000 masks and more than 30,000 single-use surgical coats and N95 respirators for shipping to China, according to a Feb. 17 report by Chinese state-run news website China Internet Information Center. The head of the association is Czech-Chinese businessman Zhou Lingjian.

The country's counter-intelligence agency warned the Czech government in early March about the Chinese embassy coordinating an operation to make bulk purchases of medical material for shipment to China, according to local media. The health ministry then banned the export of masks and respirators on March 4.

On March 16, Czech police raided a warehouse of a private company in the northwestern town of Lovosice, where they confiscated 680,000 masks and 28,000 ventilators. About 100,000 masks were labeled as Chinese Red Cross aid to Italy. The seizure was part of an anti-trafficking operation.

In a turn of events, Zhou recently made headlines when an investigative report by Aktuálně.cz found that he was the importer of the goods seized by police.

The outlet reported that Zhou sold some of the masks found in the warehouse to a local reseller, who then attempted to sell the supplies to the Czech government at twice the normal cost.

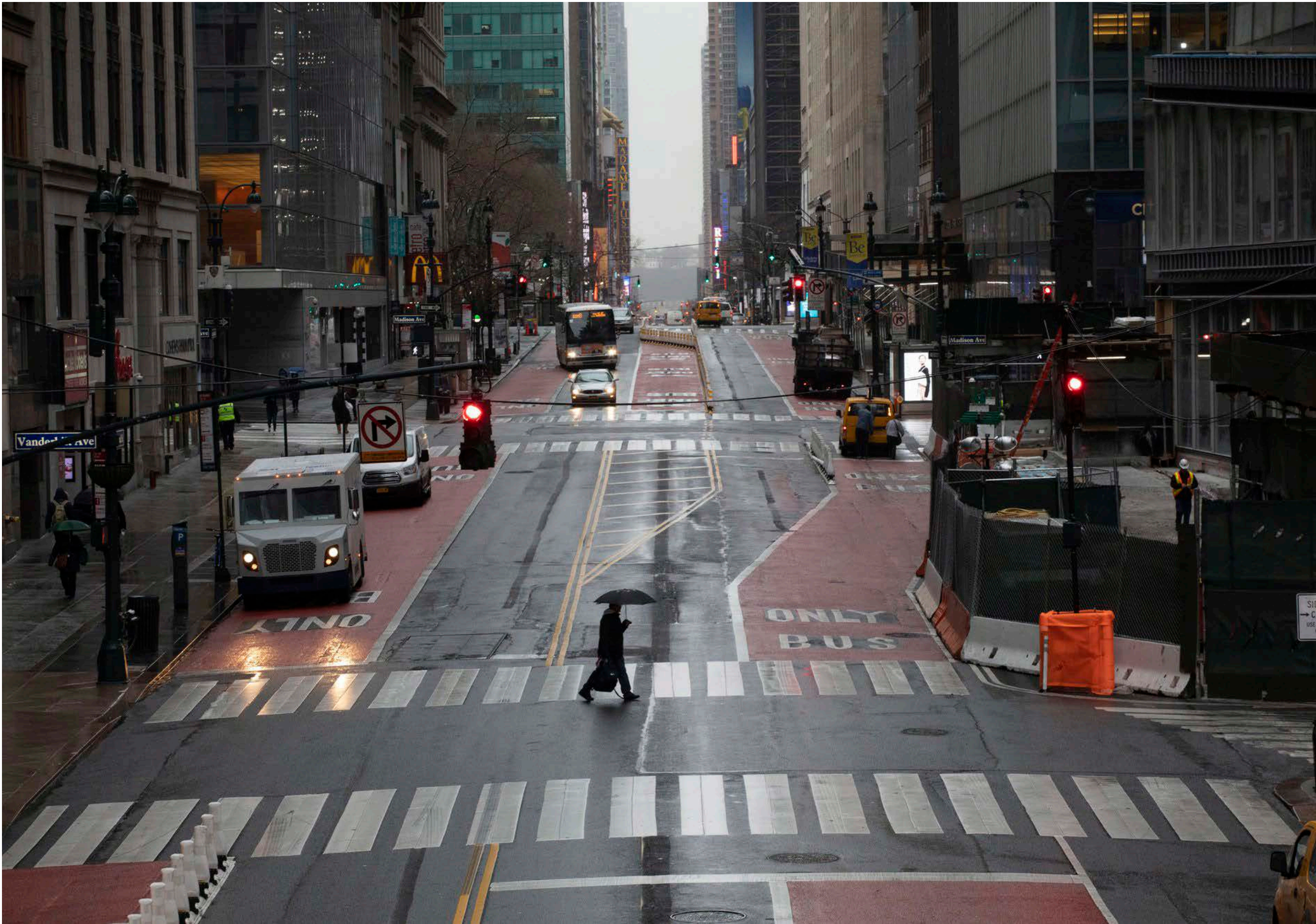
Zhou's associate, however, denied any wrongdoing, claiming the matter was a "misunderstanding."

Meanwhile, the Italian embassy said that Czech authorities confirmed the humanitarian aid slated for Italy found in the warehouse was stolen, local media reported.

Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia and director of the China Power Project at Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies, told The Epoch Times that to counter the regime's attempts to elevate its international standing amid the crisis, media should highlight that Beijing is trying to profit from the global shortage.

Outlets should "explain that China ramped up its supply of masks and other medical supplies as the epidemic raged in China, and now China has a lot of surplus that it wants to make money on," Glaser said in an email. "Global demand for other products is likely to remain suppressed, so the best way to earn money through exports is to sell medical supplies."

Milan Kajinec contributed to this report.



A commuter crosses 42nd Street in front of Grand Central Terminal during morning rush hour in New York on March 23, 2020.

OPINION

With Myriad Links to Chinese Regime, New York Is Now America’s CCP Virus Epicenter

TIAN YUN

Outbreaks of the CCP virus around the world have been strongly correlated with the affected regions’ ties to the Chinese communist regime.

In the United States, epidemic figures in Washington state—known for being the first port of entry for trade goods coming from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) following the United States’ establishment of diplomatic relations with Beijing in the late 1970s—were the highest nationwide as late as March 16, when it had more than 900 out of roughly 4,300 confirmed U.S. cases.

On Jan. 21, Washington saw America’s first confirmed case of the CCP virus—often known as the novel coronavirus—a man living near Seattle who had contracted the disease while on a trip to Wuhan, where the pandemic started.

Since mid-March, however, Washington has been overtaken and far eclipsed by New York state in terms of confirmed cases. On March 20, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced a 10-point plan to put “New York State on PAUSE.”

At the time of writing, more than 102,000 New Yorkers have been sickened, making up almost 40 percent of the 260,000 cases across the country. The in-state death toll passed 1,000 on March 29 and has since tripled.

Reddening the Big Apple

Early outbreaks of the CCP virus outside China were most pronounced in countries with

extensive economic or strategic relations with the PRC, such as South Korea, Italy, and Iran. Lured by trade benefits or caving in to Beijing’s pressure, governments and officials in many regions have taken accommodating or even supportive stances on the Chinese regime.

Such attitudes likely fuelled acceptance of CCP propaganda regarding the virus, and made local authorities reluctant to take protective measures, increasing those countries’ and regions’ vulnerability during the critical first stages in the epidemic.

In recent decades, the CCP has established a formidable nexus of “soft power” in New York. China is the state’s biggest trade partner outside North America, and the PRC (including Hong Kong) forms New York’s largest export market. Bilateral investments are similarly large, with New York being one of the prime destinations for Chinese capital.

The significant volume of trade and investment has had wide-ranging effects in New York politics and society, from PRC-friendly attitudes among elected officials to Beijing’s incremental subversion of the local Chinese-American community. By extension, New York’s economic and cultural importance means that the PRC’s influence there is felt throughout the rest of the United States.

Making Capital Serve the Communist Party

Wall Street is one of the major conduits through which the PRC exercises its soft power abroad, and has long played the “dove” in influencing Washington’s China policy.

In 1999, then-PRC premier Zhu Rongji visited New York, where he met with a number of Wall Street executives to discuss China’s potential membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). President Bill Clinton thereafter supported Beijing’s entry into the WTO, which it joined in December 2001. Economic relations continued to strengthen as the United States became embroiled in the War on Terror.

Robert Kuhn, a financial executive and public intellectual, has had his writings appear in many Chinese state-run media. In 2005, Kuhn published a fawning biography of former PRC leader Jiang Zemin, despite the latter’s enormous crimes against humanity and “make a fortune while keeping a low profile” policies that encouraged corruption on an unprecedented scale.

In later years, pressure by Wall Street lobbyists influenced the decisions of presidents George Bush and Barack Obama to remove China from the list of currency manipulators. In August 2019, following an escalation in the Sino-U.S. trade war, the Trump administration redesignated the PRC a currency manipulator.

On April 25, 2019, Prague Security Studies Institute chairman Roger W. Robinson Jr. warned of the worrying degree to which the CCP had penetrated the U.S. financial market in a speech made to the Committee on the Present Danger: China.

Robinson noted that more than 1,000 Chinese companies were listed in the three major Ameri-

can stock exchanges, with more than 650 PRC-based firms listed on the New York Stock Exchange alone. These include Chinese state-run companies, many of which play roles in the CCP’s human rights abuses, mass surveillance, and military industry. Being listed in U.S. stock indices means these companies receive investment via the stock portfolios of millions of Americans.

Many Wall Street investors’ affinity with Beijing have become especially apparent following the start of the U.S.-China trade war in June 2018.

The month that the U.S.-China trade war began, Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) officially included A shares of Chinese corporations in its “Emerging Market Index” at a 2.5 percent inclusion ratio. This means that 2.5 percent of MSCI’s index consisted of Chinese A-share companies.

That September, FTSE Russell, the world’s second-largest index company, announced that it would include A shares in its global stock index system and classify them as secondary emerging markets. According to statistics from securities companies, this move was theoretically expected to bring incremental capital of more than \$500 billion to A shares.

Last April 1, Bloomberg announced the official inclusion of Chinese bonds in the Bloomberg Barclays Global Composite Index.

He Qinglian, a U.S.-based Chinese economist, wrote that the recognition of A shares by these three major financial institutions was equivalent to endorsing the

Chinese regime’s unfavorable bonds. Thanks to Wall Street, the resulting influx of foreign capital thus helped allay the PRC’s domestic economic troubles and the recent pressures brought about by the trade war.

Bribing CCP Companies

New York-based financial institutions have been investigated for illegally hiring the children of powerful Chinese families, whose fortunes are inextricably linked with the CCP regime.

In 2013, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Justice Department began probing JP Morgan Chase Bank for suspected bribery of foreign companies. The case is of particular note because it represents the first major investigation into Wall Street under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

According to investigators, in the seven years between 2006 to 2013, Chase employed about 100 people under its “Sons and Daughters” recruitment program, which ran from 2003 to 2013. The plan hired those with close ties to Chinese and other Asian officials as full-time employees or interns, which resulted in the bank gaining \$100 million in business profit.

The SEC investigation noted that Chase knew that doing so violated the FCPA, but continued the Sons and Daughters scheme anyway due to the generous returns and business opportunities it brought. According to the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. authorities have opened similar investigations into other financial institutions.

being planned,” as reported by the CCP-run Xinhua.

“We have trade offices and tourism offices in China, and we have people on the ground to make sure there is a wide opening doorway between our two countries, and our cities as well,” Hochul said.

The CCP appears to have seen the event as a way to deepen commercial links and foster closer relations with the governor. According to reports at the time, Hainan Airlines Group, a Chinese company with strong state ties, was the sponsor of the Blue Cloud Gala. Moreover, the award ceremony featured a performance by the Snow Lotus trio, consisting of three ethnic Tibetan singers from the Chinese province of Sichuan. Then-PRC Consul-General Zhang was also present at the gala.

In June 2019, the New York State Senate passed a resolution naming Oct. 1—the founding date of the communist regime in 1949—the state’s “China Day,” so as to commemorate the contributions of ethnic Chinese to New York. A PRC foreign ministry spokesperson praised the move as a “positive” development.

At an evening reception hosted that Sept. 16 by the New York Chinese Consulate to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the PRC’s founding, Consul-General Huang Ping delivered remarks praising “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and condemned the ongoing trade war for hurting the economic prospects of both countries. Many New York politicians, entrepreneurs, and representatives from the local Chinese diaspora were in attendance.

Reshaping the Media Environment and Society

As late as the mid-1980s, the most prominent Chinese-American organizations in New York were those aligned with Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC). But as mainland China came to dominate the economic and diplomatic landscape, the ROC’s Blue Sky with a White Sun flag began to disappear from the local Chinatowns, replaced by the five-starred red flag of the PRC.

Beijing’s growing influence was felt across the Chinese-American community as the CCP deployed its propaganda machine to sway overseas Chinese worldwide. PRC-funded organizations like the Confucius Institute were set up in U.S. colleges and schools, helping the Party cement its preferred take on Chinese identity, culture, and language in the minds of many young Americans.

CCP organizations in New York have established links with the local triad gangs, and sometimes even allow the Party to project its political repression into the

Buying Political Power

Chinese economic inroads gave the CCP many opportunities to win political allies across the United States, particularly in salient regions like New York.

On April 11, 2016, New York lieutenant governor Kathy Hochul and Zhang Xiangchen, the PRC commerce ministry’s deputy representative of international trade, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formally establish the China Provinces-US State of New York Trade and Investment Cooperation. The agreement linked New York with six Chinese provinces on various forms of economic and industrial exchange.

“It speaks to the possibility of building on where we are today,” Hochul described the agreement, according to PRC mouthpiece China Daily. “Businesses from China come to our state; businesses from our state are looking for export opportunities.”

Zhang Qiyue, then-consul general of the PRC Consulate in New York, named the state as the “bright spot” for Sino-U.S. cooperation. “As we continue to grow stronger bilateral ties, there is growing awareness and increasing cooperation at the sub-national level.”

On July 18, 2017, the China Provinces-US New York State Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum was held in Buffalo. The event was co-sponsored by the Foreign Trade Development Bureau of the PRC Ministry of Commerce, the New York State Economic Development Agency, the PRC consulate in New York, and the state government.

That November, Gov. Cuomo was awarded the Blue Cloud Award by the PRC-leaning China Institute, which is headquartered in Manhattan. Hochul, who accepted the award on Cuomo’s behalf at the Blue Cloud Gala, noted that the “governor has truly made this [China-New York] relationship one of his high priorities, we have had our three trade missions and the fourth is

A commuter crosses 42nd Street in front of Grand Central Terminal during morning rush hour in New York on March 23, 2020.

Beijing’s growing influence was felt across the Chinese-American community as the CCP deployed its propaganda machine to sway overseas Chinese worldwide.

A woman wearing a face mask walks along Wall Street in New York on March 6, 2020.

United States.

In 1999, the CCP launched an all-out persecution of the Falun Gong spiritual practice and its tens of millions of adherents. The deadly campaign continues to this day.

Groups linked to the extralegal Communist Party commission tasked with overseeing the persecution of Falun Gong have been peddling hate speech against the practice in New York’s Chinatowns for over a decade. Individual members of these groups have been prosecuted for physically assaulting local Falun Gong practitioners.

Since the early 1990s, when the state-linked Chinese-language daily China Press was founded to serve overseas Chinese audiences, the CCP’s international propaganda efforts have ballooned into a multi-billion-dollar operation, officially termed the “Great External Propaganda Plan.”

In 2010, Xinhua News Agency launched a round-the-clock English-language TV channel, CNC World. In August 2011, Xinhua ran an advertisement worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in Times Square. Brian Turner, the president of Sherwood Outdoor Advertising Co., said at the time that he hoped leasing the screen space to Xinhua would encourage other Chinese brands to advertise in Times Square.

Since 2011, both Xinhua and the People’s Daily Online, another CCP mouthpiece, have had offices in Manhattan, with the latter operating out of the 30th floor of the Empire State Building.

This February, the U.S. State Department designated Xinhua and four other PRC-controlled media in the United States as “foreign missions” to reflect their role in Beijing’s external propaganda strategy.

Taken In by the Party Line

The effectiveness of the CCP’s propaganda offensives among overseas Chinese is readily observed. Thousands of Chinese residing abroad have purchased plane tickets back to China, convinced by the Party’s latest narrative that the United States, not the Chinese “motherland,” is the new epicenter of the virus.

Having long served as the gateway to America for immigrants and shipping, New York seems uniquely susceptible to the spread of the pandemic. On March 25, Gov. Cuomo said that New York “has more cases than other U.S. states ... because we welcome people from across the globe, and we live; move; commune, and do so many other things close to one another.”

But in the CCP virus pandemic, globalization isn’t the only factor to blame.

Due vigilance and realistic views of the mainland Chinese regime, as demonstrated by the people of Taiwan and Hong Kong, provide no small measure of inoculation against the medical crisis. Despite their proximity to, and extensive trade ties with, mainland China, these two regions did not delay measures to stop the virus. As of April 3, the number of infections in either territory has remained in the hundreds.

In South Korea, the authorities were slow to cut down on trade and travel with China. However, knowledge of the epidemic and its seriousness rapidly spread among the public. In January, videos exposing the bleak situation in the virus epicenter of Wuhan were widely viewed and shared by Koreans. Millions of people criticized President Moon Jae-in for placing business above national health.

While South Korea had one of the worst early outbreaks outside China, the combination of public awareness, popular pressure, and civic cooperation seems to have brought the virus under control.

Yet the same vigilance appears sorely lacking in the Empire State, even as the CCP promotes its supposed success in controlling the disease in China, and painting the U.S. response as the epitome of administrative incompetence. The narrative is reinforced by many foreign media outlets, in large part because they tend to report the PRC’s official numbers of confirmed cases and deaths at face value.

On March 11, the New York Times published an article titled “Its Coronavirus Cases Dwindling, China Turns Focus Outward.”

The article’s subhead echoes the CCP’s propaganda: “Beijing is mounting a humanitarian aid blitz in countries struggling with their own outbreaks. In doing so, it’s stepping into a role the West once dominated.”

A March 16 editorial by the Washington Examiner criticized the Times report as perhaps “the most shameful piece of Chinese disinformation published by any newsroom in the United States since the COVID-19 outbreak first became a story.”

“The article parrots China’s claim that its daily coronavirus cases have dwindled ‘into the single digits,’” the Examiner notes. “No attempt is made to verify these numbers. ... With the media acting like this, who even needs the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China?”

Leo Timm contributed to this article.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



CCP VIRUS

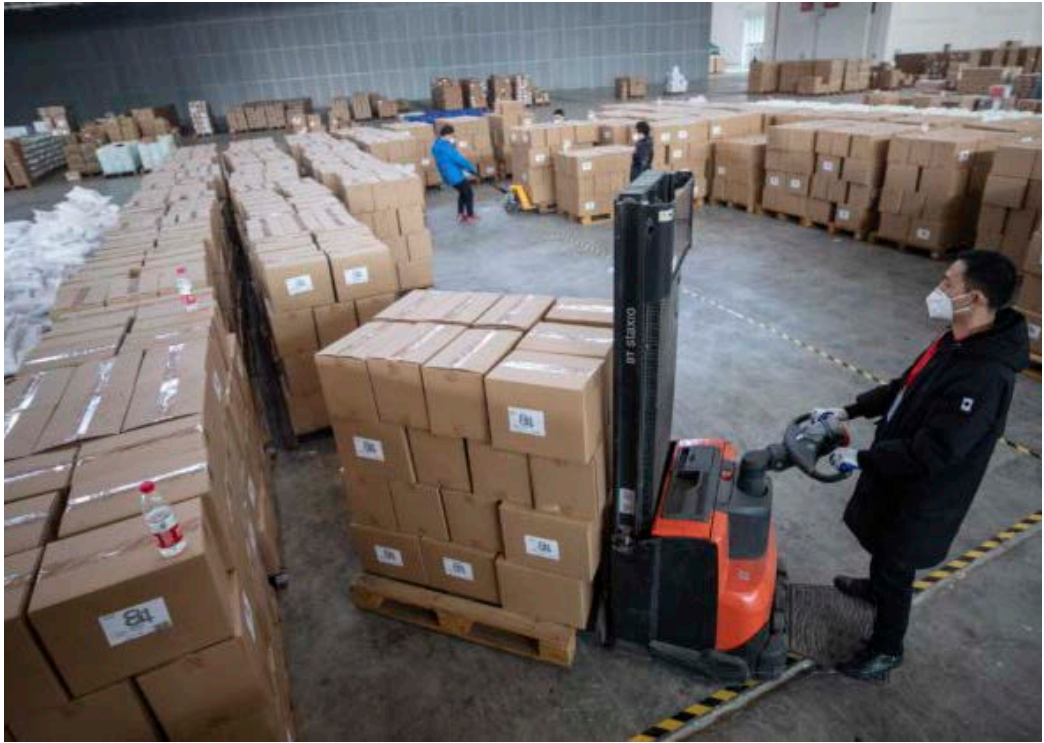
Chinese Regime Hoards Global Inventory of Medical Supplies, Leading to Growing Shortage Outside China

NICOLE HAO

As the pandemic has spread throughout the world, hospitals have become overwhelmed by CCP virus patients. N-95 masks, medical protective suits, goggles, surgical gloves, disinfectant, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) machines, and medical ventilators have become critical supplies to treat patients or protect medical workers from being exposed to the virus. As many countries deal with escalating outbreaks, evidence has emerged that Chinese authorities have bought up billions of masks, as well as hundreds of tons of other critical medical supplies globally. Meanwhile, China, itself a major manufacturer of such medical supplies, has stopped exporting since January—just as the outbreak in China became severe. Chinese firms and overseas Chinese organizations are the main means to realize Beijing’s global sourcing, buying up stock from the United States, Europe, Australia, and other countries. In some instances, Chinese companies negotiated with major international manufacturers and asked them to sell or donate their stocks to China. Having sold their inventories to China and unable to purchase new products from China, countries around the world are now running low on medical supplies.

Government Actions Beijing authorities mobilized the Chinese diaspora to help buy up goods. “Keep on buying while sending back to China [medical supplies], and try your best to buy as much as possible,” read one article posted on the official website of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s United Front Work Department, an agency dedicated to spreading the regime’s agenda inside and outside China. In the West, United Front organizations are usually Chinese student unions at colleges and universities, Chinese chambers of commerce, and Chinese associations. The United Front encouraged all overseas Chinese to follow in the association’s footsteps to buy up all available medical materials and send them back to China. The article explained that overseas Chinese in the United States, Canada, UK, Argentina, Australia, United Arab Emirates, and Seychelles have already bought up goods in the tons. Some overseas Chinese organizations in those countries buy from local manufacturers and major wholesalers directly, such as DuPont. Others buy from whatever retailers they can find, according to the article. The groups then hired Chinese and international shipping companies to transport the goods, such as FedEx and SF Express. The United Front also encouraged Chinese nationals to purchase goods and transport them in their personal luggage when they travel back to China. China’s Foreign Affairs Ministry also directly instructed nationals to buy up medical supplies. The Chinese consulate general in Los Angeles issued a notice encouraging donations on its official website on Jan. 26, listing supplies that were urgently needed in China, including: medical protective masks—even specifying the manufacturing serial number; protective suits; goggles, quick-drying hand sanitizers; Oseltamivir, an antiviral medication typically used to treat the common flu and other types of medicine; touch-free infrared thermometers, and more. On Feb. 27, the consulate general updated its request, saying that Chinese communities in the Los Angeles area had donated more than 60 tons of medical supplies since the epidemic ignited in China. Chinese embassies and consulates in other countries made similar announcements. China’s embassy in Japan, for example, announced on its website on Feb. 4: “At present, China urgently needs medical protective suits...medical masks (N95 and better), goggles, and other protective materials.” It asked Chinese nationals to purchase these goods and donate them to China. China’s embassy in the UK announced that “on Jan. 31, the embassy received nearly 500,000 British pounds worth of donations.”

Global Sourcing Since January, Chinese state-run enterprises, companies with government entities as majority shareholders, and private firms began sourcing medical supplies to ship into China. “Between Jan. 24 to Feb. 29, China’s customs authorities inspected 2.46 billion shipping cartons of supplies for epidemic prevention, valued at 8.21 billion yuan (\$1.158 billion),” China’s General Administration of Customs announced on March 7. “[Among them,] there are 2.02 billion facial masks and 25.38 million protective suits.”



Staff members and volunteers are transferring medical supplies at a warehouse of an exhibition center in Wuhan, China, on Feb. 4, 2020.

If more than 2 billion medical masks were shipped to China during the first two months of the year, that means China imported about half of the world’s annual production of medical masks.

State-run Beijing News reported on Feb. 10 that roughly 50 percent of the world’s supply of masks is manufactured in China. In 2019, China produced more than 5 billion masks, 54 percent of which were medical-grade masks. If more than 2 billion medical masks were shipped to China during the first two months of the year, that means China imported about half of the world’s annual production of medical masks. Many state-run businesses are directly involved in this effort. According to a Feb. 4 report by state-run media People’s Daily, those included China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm), China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC), China Energy Engineering Corporation (Energy China), and China Re-

sources, a conglomerate with businesses in mainland China and Hong Kong. “Sinopharm sourced from Europe, the Americas, and Asia. By Jan. 31, it ordered 2.78 million packages of medical supplies, which include 2.38 million masks, 166,000 protective suits, 15,200 goggles, and 190,000 pairs of protective gloves,” the report said. Furthermore, Sinopharm was preparing to buy up more. Greenland Group, a Chinese real estate developer with the Shanghai government as a majority shareholder, also joined in. “By now, Greenland has bought 3 million protective masks, 700,000 medical protective suits, 500,000 pairs of medical gloves from overseas, and shipped them back to China,” Chinese state-run media Xinhua reported on Jan. 31. Greenland had bought medical supplies from North America, Europe, Middle East, Asian countries, and Australia—where public outcry over the bulk-buying led the government to ban exports of medical supplies. Country Garden is a private real estate company headquartered in the city of Foshan, in China’s southern Guangdong province. It has businesses all over the world. On Feb. 24, state-run China News Service reported that employees from Country Garden sourced medical supplies from Australia’s Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide, and New Zealand’s Auckland. In three days, Country Garden’s Australian arm, called Risland, purchased goods and organized them to be transported on a cargo plane flying to China directly. On Feb. 8, state-run newspaper Foshan Daily reported that Country Garden also purchased from Germany, Indonesia, Thailand, and other countries. At the State Council’s—China’s cabinet—press conference on Feb. 3, the deputy minister of transportation and deputy minister of commerce both said that China’s e-commerce businesses, such as JD.com, Walmart, and SF Express, have sourced and donated masks, protective suits, goggles, and sup-

plies via their “global supply chains.” Some international manufacturers who have business in China also joined this initiative. Medtronic is a medical device company headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It has manufacturing facilities in Shanghai, Beijing, Changzhou, and Chengdu. In a Chinese-language statement, Medtronic said on its website that the company donated its manufactured ventilators, blood oxygen saturation meters, and ECMO equipment to Wuhan. It also bought protective materials from other countries and donated them to different Chinese cities. FedEx confirmed in a Chinese statement posted on its website that those machines and materials were shipped by them from the global market.

Cut Off Exports On March 9, during a daily press conference of China’s foreign affairs ministry, a reporter asked whether it’s true that the Chinese regime has banned all exports of medical masks and raw materials for making medical masks. Geng Shuang, the ministry’s spokesman, answered: “China still needs a large amount of masks, and the supply cannot meet the demand. At the current phase, other countries will face difficulties when they try to purchase masks from China.” Geng denied the government was forcing businesses to stop exporting medical supplies. But state-run media have reported that some businesses are “selling products meant for export inside China.” Shandong Net reported on Feb. 1 that Weihai Jingcheng Special Fiber Products Company, located inside a free trade zone in Weihai city of Shandong province, mainly produces goods for export, such as medical masks. As the company mostly produces for the export market, it needs to pay tariffs if it wants to sell its products in China. It would not need to pay tariffs when it sources materials from overseas. But since Jan. 27, China’s customs authorities gave the company a special permit, allowing it to sell all its products inside China without paying tariffs. Weihai News reported on Jan. 29 that other factories based in the same free trade zone have also begun following the same policy and stopped exporting their goods. Jiangsu Net reported on Feb. 28 that 20 masks and protective suit manufacturers in Jiangsu province stopped exporting goods and only sold to China after the CCP virus outbreak. Xinhua reported on Feb. 2 that the government of Hubei, the province where Wuhan is capital, issued a special permit that allows all medical masks meant for export to be sold within the province. Authorities ordered the products, which were printed with packaging in foreign languages, to be placed with Chinese labels so citizens could read them. Caixin also reported on Feb. 1 that China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology was the government agency that supported the export ban, citing sources within the supply chain. For example, Rizhao Sanqi Medical & Health Company is an export-oriented manufacturer. The ministry asked Sanqi to produce 1 million surgical masks, 50,000 medical protective masks, and 5,000 medical protective suits every day, and only sell them to Hubei province, according to Caixin. White House economic adviser Peter Navarro spoke of China’s export ban during Fox News interviews on Feb. 23 and 24. “In terms of the immediate issue, face masks, the N-95 face masks, China put export restrictions on those masks, and then nationalized an American factory that produces them there,” Navarro said, adding that China had effectively “prevent[ed] them [3M] from sending us any stuff.” 3M, a Minnesota-headquartered manufacturer, has factories in China. The facilities were unable to export products out of China in February, according to Navarro. But recently, the Chinese regime switched gears, seeking to promote itself as a global leader in combating the pandemic. It has sent medical experts and much-needed supplies, such as masks and respirators, to European countries and the United States. But the supplies were found to be defective.



Protective N-95 face masks lie on a table at an office in Washington, DC, on Feb. 26, 2020.

CCP VIRUS

Chinese Regime Using Pandemic to Advance Global Ambitions, Expert Says

EVA FU & JAN JEKIELEK

As the world grapples with a sprawling health crisis, the Chinese Communist Party is using the pandemic to expand its global influence, according to China expert Robert Spalding. The Chinese regime has seized upon the fallout from the pandemic as an opportunity to extend its control on the global supply chain and to deflect responsibility for having created the disaster, the retired U.S. Air Force brigadier general and author told The Epoch Times in an interview. He describes it as “unrestricted warfare” in full force. A strategy crafted by Chinese military officials in the late 1990s, unrestricted warfare—as he explained in his book, “Stealth War: How China Took Over While America’s Elite Slept”—refers to using a series of unconventional warfare tactics designed to accomplish the goals of war without engaging in actual combat. In playing out this campaign, the regime has combined different elements of warfare—economic, trade, political, information—to “create a convergence of challenges” for the United States and other Western democracies, Spalding said. “It’s hard for people to grasp how powerful this new type of warfare is, because we’re so used to the traditional type of warfare, with planes and ships and bombs and tanks,” he said. On the information warfare front, Chinese diplomats and state media have recently peddled conspiracy theories speculating about the virus’s origin and putting the blame on the United States, while fake accounts linked to Beijing have flooded Twitter to act as “cheerleaders for the government.” “They’re covering up the actual truth while essentially creating a new truth on the ground and new facts on the ground,” Spalding said. “Because they control all the data coming out about the coronavirus or the CCP virus, then it’s all according to the narrative that they themselves control.”

Profiting Amid a Crisis As the outbreak strains the global health system and weighs on medical supply chains, there are concerns that China is using the much-sought-after supplies for its own gains. White House economic adviser Peter Navarro told Fox Business last month that China had been stockpiling the N95 face masks by imposing an export restriction. In the meantime, millions of the masks are flowing to European countries from China as part of aid packages. “They see the coronavirus as an opportunity to do that, particularly because countries are going to be relying on them for medical supplies because they’re going to have the only factories open,” Spalding said. “They’re trying to essentially make it look like the Chinese Communist Party is the savior of Western Europe.” The United States is heavily reliant on medical supplies from China, the world’s largest producer of active pharmaceutical ingredients, according to a November 2019 U.S. congressional report; the spreading pathogen only exacerbated the problem. While Chinese officials denied there were official export bans in place, from late January to February, protective equipment manufacturers were asked to sell their products internally. China also produced half of the world’s masks prior to the outbreak. China’s state-run news agency Xinhua, in an implicit threat in early March, said the United States would “plunge into the mighty sea of coronavirus” if China chooses to retaliate by controlling medical supply exports. “We’ve offshored it, we don’t



Two security guards gesture at the Great Wall in Beijing on March 24, 2020.

have it anymore. We can’t even produce for our own selves,” Spalding said. A number of countries, among them Spain, Turkey, and the Netherlands, recently complained about defects in Chinese exports of medical supplies for combating the virus. Meanwhile, Beijing has been outlining policy measures since February to bolster its economic ambitions, Horizon Advisory, a U.S.-based independent consultancy, said in a report. “Beijing intends to use the global dislocation and downturn to attract foreign investment, to seize strategic market share and resources—especially those that force dependence [on China],” according to the report. The municipal government of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, told a local newspaper that it’s “possible to turn the crisis into an opportunity—to increase the trust and the dependence of all countries around the world of ‘Made in China.’” The State Council, a Cabinet-like agency, also highlighted 5G technology and artificial intelligence—the signature tools for China’s pervasive surveillance state—as two of its top strategic objectives to showcase. “In times of fear, it seems attractive, but what you allowed them to do is essentially insinuate themselves even deeper into the veins of your society,” Spalding said. “Their goal is to be able to have this coercive power over the world, and



Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert Spalding in Washington on May 29, 2019.

A Chinese police officer stands guard below an underpass in Beijing on March 16, 2020.

they’re using the CCP virus to basically perpetuate, accelerate, and deepen that.”

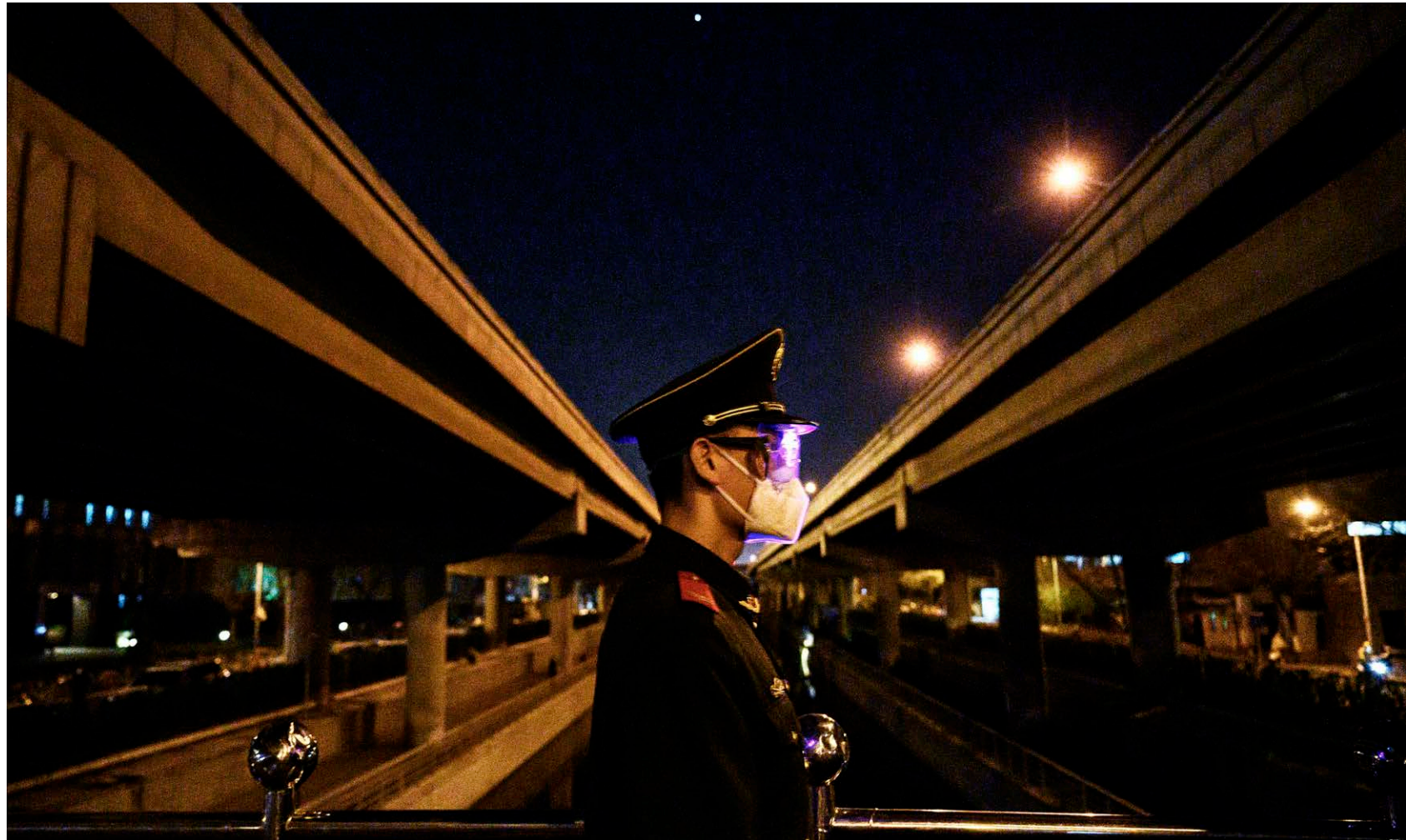
Rewriting History Throughout the outbreak, Beijing’s response can be characterized as a web of coverup, denial, and lies that make it the unmistakable culprit, according to Spalding. “What we can say with certainty, with absolute 100 percent certainty, is that the Chinese Communist Party created the global pandemic,” he said. On at least on two occasions—Jan. 1 and Jan. 3—Hubei and national health officials told Chinese labs to stop testing and to destroy existing evidence, according to reports by Chinese media outlet Caixin. While U.S. federal health authorities repeatedly offered to send researchers to China since Jan. 6, only two were eventually allowed into the country—more than a month later. By the time Wuhan imposed a drastic lockdown on Jan. 23, more than 5 million locals had left without undergoing a health screening, carrying the virus to other parts of the world. Then, as the outbreak became severe in the United States in March, Chinese diplomats began an aggressive disinformation campaign that accused the U.S. Army of bringing the virus to Wuhan. A central tenet about the nature of the regime is its need for control, Spalding says. “When it saw this virus come

out, it was worried about its legitimacy.” Internal documents obtained by The Epoch Times, as well as insider accounts, indicate that Chinese officials have made a top priority to control the outbreak narrative, both inside and outside of China. Spalding is critical of the World Health Organization’s name for the disease caused by the virus. The name COVID-19—which the WHO says stands for “coronavirus disease 2019”—doesn’t clearly designate its origin in China, allowing the Chinese regime to whitewash its bungled response to the outbreak, he said.

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Robert Spalding, retired Air Force brigadier general and China expert

“We, in some ways, are still perpetuating Chinese Communist Party propaganda because we allow them to name things,” he said. “Naming things is very powerful.” This crisis, he says, also demonstrates the limitations of global trade and the importance of being self-sufficient in the manufacture of crucial supplies. “We shouldn’t be reliant on a regime that repudiates everything that we stand for, and uses ... that supply chain tie to coerce us into abandoning our own principles,” he said.



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