



Pandemic Reflection

The Destructive CCP Model(II)

(Commentaries & Viewpoints)

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Norway, Here We Come



Stunning Fjord in Norway. (ELG21/Pixabay)

Norway, Here We Come

Lucio Saverio-Eastman

February 15, 2022

Commentary

Norway! Land of the midnight sun, phenomenal fjords and lakes, fanatical skiing culture, and spectacular northern lights. Sounds like a delightful place.

Now the Norwegian government has added a new reason to visit this region of the Scandinavian Peninsula. On Feb. 12, 2022 Norway has completely opened their borders to all tourists and lifted all travel restrictions, face masking, social distancing, quarantining, and vaccination requirements throughout the country (with the exception of Svalbard.)

Could this be the beginning of a domino effect across the globe? One would certainly hope so.

The Before Times

International travel a century ago came to define modernity and liberalism, the desire, willingness, and ability to go anywhere as free people regardless of one's national attachments. That reality was the culmination of the long crawl out of feudalism, aided by technology and bolstered by the democratization of prosperity.

Anyone, even without a passport (before the Great War) could hop on a boat and discover new lands, new peoples, new experiences, new ways of living, thus broadening minds and leading to an intensification of the enlightenment idea: the "brotherhood of man."

Nearly the entire world was open for travel, tourism, commerce, and free trade. Hardly anyone questioned it. It was not threatened. It seemed to be baked into how the world worked and how we lived. We had rights, among which was the right to travel.

In November of 2019, I made a two-week long trip to Estonia, a country that has moved their entire government on to a blockchain, to meet with the e-Residency team and pick up my Estonian Digital Residency card. It was exciting! It felt like the opportunities for entrepreneurship, free trade, and global friendship were flourishing.

The New Normal?

Suddenly, in March of 2020, the entire globe was shut down. Commerce, trade, tourism, and the liberty to cross borders was frozen. All of what we took for granted; our freedoms, our friendships, our families and ancestry, the connection to our heritages and communities were cut off. All of the progress made over the centuries came to a complete halt. The resulting regression into tribalism, backslide into authoritarianism, resultant collateral damage, and destruction of confidence in public health has been disheartening.

Nearly two years later, protests against enforced mandates continue in places like Canada and New Zealand. The leaders of those countries, Justin Trudeau and Jacinda Ardern, are facing falling popularity amid a growing resistance to their overbearing policies. The blowback seems to be getting worse as these politicians project a willingness to sacrifice their own constituents in order to save face.

Italy and Austria continue to double down and restrict their citizens with draconian, authoritarian, and tyrannical regulations. Vaccine passports are mandated for employment, grocery shopping, dining out, going to the gym, or attending cinema. And in addition, heavy fines are levied for non-compliance.

Protests have also continued for months in Israel, Italy, Austria, Belgium, France, and many other countries. As of this writing, the news cycle changes so often it is difficult to ascertain what will happen next. There is much hope, but there is yet much to be concerned about.

Yet, even as these lockdown countries continue to burden their populations with a heavy yoke, there is relief appearing as restrictions are lifted in other locations. Washington, D.C. is lifting the vaccination requirement to enter businesses. Sweden and Denmark have removed most restrictions inside of their countries, but have yet to fully open their borders.

The CDC and Kayak publish maps and charts with information about travel restrictions and border closures and openings that, during the height of the pandemic, were updated daily. Now that countries are lifting mandates, it seems the updates come slow, if ever. It makes one wonder if they've lost interest or if there's a narrative to keep reinforced.

Bring Back Balance

In what seems to be a related issue, the former Soviet Bloc countries bordering Russia now have much more to worry about than just pandemic policies. Without a solid tourist base and reasonably unrestricted global economic and entrepreneurial interests, the citizens of Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Armenia, and many others are left without an international buffer.

Previous to 2020, the growth of digital nomads and expats bringing their businesses to and residing in these countries created a compelling argument for balance and stable foreign relations. Without that buffer, there is a real risk of sliding back into isolationist policies and nationalist populism that threatens to push the world back into Cold War territory. Perhaps worse.

The governments of these vulnerable countries might want to look toward Norway for a possible solution.

This Is Normal

What is the lesson Norway offers the rest of the world? It seems that the official memo from the Norwegian authorities is mirroring much of what the Great Barrington Declaration prescribed and is embracing a focused protection protocol. Protect the vulnerable, take precautions, and live your life without fear. This is how it should have been from the beginning.

The message from the official Norwegian travel site is: “You can travel to Norway without having to worry about anything more than having a good time!” This sounds reasonable and welcoming.

I may take them up on that offer. Maybe you should too. Let’s begin to rebuild a world of trust, free enterprise, voluntary interaction, and the ethos of Enlightenment.

This is the positive path forward. This is what normal looks like. This is pre-Covid living. Or should I say: This is living!

Norway is the future and the rest of the world needs to get on board and ride this enlightened, public health cluetrain into the next chapter. Invite the world back into your country. Open the borders to commerce and trade. Bring back adventure and discovery for everyone.

Norway, here we come!

From the Brownstone Institute

In the End, Sweden Did It Right



People chat and drink outside a bar in Stockholm, Sweden, on April 8, 2020. (Andres Kudacki/AP Photo)

In the End, Sweden Did It Right

Stephen Moore

February 22, 2022

Commentary

What if two years ago, when COVID-19 first hit these shores, our politicians hadn't panicked?

What if the government did what it has done every time we were confronted with a deadly virus, such as the Spanish flu or polio? Instead of locking down our schools, churches, and businesses, the government could have simply informed citizens of the risks of getting sick and urged people to be extra careful about hygiene, stay out of crowded places, and protect the vulnerable.

It turns out there was one country that mostly rejected lockdowns and let life go on as normal as possible under dire circumstances. That country was Sweden.

There were some restrictions and temporary lockdowns, but they were minimal.

The hero of this story is Anders Tegnell, Sweden's chief epidemiologist. He was Sweden's Anthony Fauci, but unlike the now-widely discredited Fauci, Tegnell eschewed lockdowns. The international media pilloried him for not following "the science." At first, it seemed the Swedish live-and-let-live strategy was a miserable failure. Death rates soared higher than in other European nations.

But to their credit, the Swedes ignored the "mad modelers" such as Britain's Imperial College team, which predicted multiple times that the number of deaths around the world would be more than actually occurred.

Sweden made some mistakes at the beginning. Like many states in the United States, the Swedes failed to protect elderly nursing home residents adequately, which was a significant reason that deaths in Sweden were higher than in neighboring Norway or Denmark. But Tegnell argued that the collateral damage of lockdowns would outweigh what good they do on a societywide basis. He was proven right.

Two years later, Sweden's COVID-19 death rate is 1,614 per million people—much lower than Britain (2,335) or the United States (2,836), which both had much more stringent lockdowns.

Sweden appears to have achieved herd immunity much more swiftly and thoroughly than other nations. Deaths were higher at the start of the pandemic but fell much lower than other lockdown nations in succeeding months.

What is clear today is that the Swedes saved their economy. This year, it's projected to be 5 percent larger than before the pandemic, compared to a 2 percent gain for Germany and a 1 percent gain for Britain. Moreover, the extra debt Sweden has had to take on is a fraction of that of lockdown countries. So it will not have to spend decades paying for the costs of lockdowns.

Swedish schools stayed open with no face masks. Test scores are up, and there is no talk in Sweden about "lost" years of education.

What is sadly ironic about the Sweden story is this should have been the United States. We're the land of the free, not Sweden. We are the nation of rugged individualism, not Sweden, with its more socialist economy and collectivist mindset. We have more solid constitutional protections to guarantee citizen rights against heavy-handed government.

But the politicians from local health officials and mayors all the way up to the top federal medical experts and lawmakers opted for deadly decisions to shut down the engines of our economy and lock people in their homes. Those policies did irreparable harm that will be felt for many years to come. Those who supported this great mistake need to be held accountable.

Sweden's successful response strategy reminds us that we must never again shut down our businesses and schools. I just pray we have all learned that enduring lesson before another virus wave arrives.

Stephen Moore is a senior fellow at FreedomWorks and co-founder of the Committee to Unleash Prosperity. He served as a senior economic adviser to Donald Trump. His new book is entitled: "Govzilla: How the Relentless Growth of Government Is Impoverishing America."

https://www.theepochtimes.com/4294529_4294529.html

If Lockdowns and Mandates Failed, Why Are They Still Pushed?



A sign reading 'Go straight home and Isolate' in Australia. (Photo by Asanka Ratnayake/Getty Images)

If Lockdowns and Mandates Failed, Why Are They Still Pushed?

Joseph Mercola

March 21, 2022; Updated March 22, 2022

Hundreds of studies show lockdowns failed to meaningfully reduce COVID-19 deaths, while COVID-19 shot mandates are counterproductive and harmful. Despite this, these totalitarian schemes are ongoing.

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- In a literature review and meta-analysis of the effects of lockdowns on COVID-19 mortality, researchers revealed lockdowns had little to no effect on COVID-19 mortality
- The Brownstone Institute compiled more than 400 studies showing that lockdowns, restrictions and closures failed to do what was promised
- A team of 12 researchers from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Harvard Medical School, the University of Oxford and other institutions outlined key reasons why COVID-19 shot mandates have been counterproductive and harmful
- COVID-19 injection mandates could lead to reactance and entrenchment, cognitive dissonance, stigma and scapegoating, and distrust
- If you don't agree with COVID-19 restrictions and mandates in your area, now is the time to speak out in peaceful protest

Scientists the world over have done a deep dive into the unprecedented lockdowns and injection mandates that characterized the COVID-19 pandemic response. Over and over again, the results confirm what many instinctively knew all along — that these totalitarian schemes didn't work and may have caused more harm than good.

Despite the writing on the wall, health officials and academics continue to defend the Draconian measures. It's difficult to admit wrongdoing, especially of this magnitude, but sooner or later it will become widely known that, as Jeffrey Tucker, founder and president of the Brownstone Institute, put it, "these interventions turned a manageable pandemic into a catastrophe."

Hundreds of Studies Show Lockdowns Didn't Work

Public health policies that restrict movement, ban international travel and close schools and businesses, commonly known as lockdowns, were implemented in virtually every country around the globe during the pandemic, beginning in China, then Italy and spreading like wildfire from there.

Simulated computer models conducted by Imperial College London researchers in 2020 suggested that lockdowns would reduce COVID-19 mortality by up to 98% — an estimate that had many scholars raising eyebrows, and which did not come to fruition, not even close.

In a literature review and meta-analysis of the effects of lockdowns on COVID-19 mortality, researchers from Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise, Lund University and the Center for Political Studies in Copenhagen, Denmark, revealed lockdowns had little to no effect on COVID-19 mortality.

The meta-analysis included 24 studies separated into three groups: lockdown stringency index studies, shelter-in-place order (SIPO) studies and specific non-pharmaceutical intervention (NPI) studies. They found:

“An analysis of each of these three groups support the conclusion that lockdowns have had little to no effect on COVID-19 mortality. More specifically, stringency index studies find that lockdowns in Europe and the United States only reduced COVID-19 mortality by 0.2% on average.

SIPOs were also ineffective, only reducing COVID-19 mortality by 2.9% on average. Specific NPI studies also find no broad-based evidence of noticeable effects on COVID-19 mortality.”

The Brownstone Institute actually compiled more than 400 studies showing that lockdowns, restrictions and closures failed to do what was promised. Among them is a study by Dr. Gilbert Berdine, an associate professor of medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

It used data on daily mortality rates for COVID-19 to track the course of the pandemic in Sweden, New York, Illinois and Texas, which each used different pandemic responses, and has suggested that lockdowns may turn out to be “the greatest policy error of this generation.” This isn’t to say that lockdowns had no noticeable effects, however. While they failed to meaningfully reduce COVID-19 deaths, they took a massive toll on other measures of public health:

“While this meta-analysis concludes that lockdowns have had little to no public health effects, they have imposed enormous economic and social costs where they have been adopted. In consequence, lockdown policies are ill-founded and should be rejected as a pandemic policy instrument.”

‘Fact Checkers’ Try to Defend Lockdowns

When the Johns Hopkins meta-analysis received some media attention, bringing the dismal results of lockdowns mainstream, “fact checkers” sprung to action to rebut the study.

Among them was the Science Media Centre (SMC), variations of which exist in a number of countries, including the U.K., Canada, Australia and New Zealand, with a reported mission to provide “high-quality scientific information” to journalists. Their mission, as stated on their website, is:

“To provide, for the benefit of the public and policymakers, accurate and evidence-based information about science and engineering through the media, particularly on controversial and headline news stories when most confusion and misinformation occurs.”

But SMC is not an independent news agency as it claims to be, as it counts among its biggest funders a number of high-level industry players with worldwide agendas, including the Wellcome Trust, GlaxoSmithKline, CropLife International, Sanofi and AstraZeneca.

Tucker teased out a particularly arrogant commentary in the SMC piece — a comment by Seth Flaxman, an associate professor in the department of computer science at the University of Oxford, who said:

“Smoking causes cancer, the earth is round, and ordering people to stay at home (the correct definition of lockdown) decreases disease transmission. None of this is controversial among scientists. A study purporting to prove the opposite is almost certain to be fundamentally flawed.”

But categorizing lockdowns as completely without controversy, like the fact that smoking causes cancer, is wrong. Yet, Flaxman’s work is continually cited in defense of lockdowns, even though he has no background in medicine. Tucker wrote:

“See how this rhetoric works? If you question his claim, you are not a scientist; you are denying the science! ... To say that this is not controversial is ridiculous, since such policies had never before been attempted on this scale. Such a policy is not at all like an established causal claim (smoking increases cancer risk) nor a mere empirical observation (the earth is round). It is subject to verification.

... That Flaxman would still claim otherwise after all experience shows that he is not observing reality but inventing dogma from his own intuition. Flaxman might say that he is sure that transmission might have been higher had people not been ordered to stay home, and there might be settings in which that is true, but he is in no position to elevate this claim to the status of ‘the earth is round.’

... The dogma that ordering people to stay home – for how long? – always reduces the spread comes not from evidence but from Flaxman-style modeling plus a remarkable capacity to ignore reality.”

Injection Mandates Counterproductive and Harmful

The rapid emergence of widespread COVID-19 injection mandates, vaccine passports and restrictions based on injection status is also unprecedented and led to controversy on ethical, scientific and political grounds.

A team of 12 researchers from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Harvard Medical School, the University of Oxford and other institutions outlined key reasons why these mandates have been counterproductive and harmful.

“While vaccine policies have largely been framed as offering ‘benefits’ with freedoms for those who take up a full COVID-19 vaccination series, they include elements that are punitive, discriminatory and coercive, including conditioning access to health, work, travel and social life on vaccination status in many settings,” the preprint paper reads.

Four domains are explored, with potential unintended consequences of injection mandates outlined as follows:

1. Behavioral psychology — COVID-19 injection mandates could lead to reactance and entrenchment, cognitive dissonance, stigma and scapegoating, conspiracy theories and distrust
2. Political and legal effects — Injection mandates could cause erosion of civil liberties, polarization and disunity in global health governance
3. Socio-economics — Injection mandates could cause disparity and inequality, reduced health system capacity and exclusion from work and social life
4. Integrity of science and public health — Consequences include erosion of informed consent, trust in public health policy and trust in regulatory oversight

The authors maintain that segregating society into those who have gotten the shots and those who have not, while restricting access to work and education based on injection status, is a violation of human rights that's promoting social polarization and adversely affecting health and well-being. In light of this, they note:

“The adoption of new vaccination status policies has provoked a multilayered global and local backlash, resistance and polarization that threaten to escalate if current policies continue. It is important to emphasize that these policies are not viewed as “incentives” or “nudges” by substantial proportions of populations, especially in marginalized, underserved, or low COVID-19-risk groups.

Denying individuals education, livelihoods, medical care, or social life unless they get vaccinated does not appear to coincide with constitutional and bioethical principles, especially in liberal democracies.

While public support appears to have consolidated behind these policies in many countries, we should acknowledge that human rights frameworks were designed to ensure that rights are respected and promoted even during public health emergencies.

... We argue that current COVID-19 vaccine policies should be reevaluated in light of negative consequences that may outweigh benefits. Leveraging empowering strategies based on trust and public consultation represent a more sustainable approach for protecting those at highest risk of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality and the health and wellbeing of the public.”

2006 Study: Lockdowns Don't Work

In 2006, public health officials went through a list of mitigation actions that could be used in the event of pandemic influenza, along with their potential repercussions.

Lockdowns, including quarantine and extended school closures, were not recommended, as this overriding principle was explained: “Experience has shown that communities faced with epidemics or other adverse events respond best and with the least anxiety when the normal social functioning of the community is least disrupted.”

In the case of quarantines, the researchers explained there is “no basis” for quarantining either groups or individuals, as it raises “formidable” problems. “Secondary effects of absenteeism and community disruption as well as possible adverse consequences, such as loss of public trust in government and stigmatization of quarantined people and groups, are likely to be considerable,” they noted.

Closure of schools beyond 10 to 14 days was also not recommended, unless all other points of contact, such as restaurants and churches, were also closed. But, they noted, “Such widespread closures, sustained throughout the pandemic, would almost certainly have serious adverse social and economic effects.”

They also advised against cancelling or postponing meetings or events involving large numbers of people, explaining that “cancelling or postponing large meetings would not be likely to have any significant effect on the development of the epidemic” and “... communitywide closure of public events seems inadvisable.” Still, Tucker wrote, “a decade and a half later, governments all over the world tried lockdowns anyway.”

With increasing recognition that lockdowns were useless and COVID-19 injections don't work as advertised, people are rebelling. COVID-19 shots were supposed to set you

free and bring life back to what it looked like in 2019 — no masks, no lockdowns and freedom for everyone, regardless of vaccination status.

Lockdowns, too, were supposed to be a means to an end — an end to the pandemic that, two years later, is still going strong. If you don't agree with COVID-19 restrictions and mandates in your area, now is the time to speak out in peaceful protest in order to compel positive changes in support of health and overall freedom.

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As Restrictions Continue to Be Lifted, the COVID-Zero Crowd Don't Want to Let Go



Protesters show support for students, teachers, and health-care professionals at the Alberta legislature after students walked out of their classrooms to protest the government's decision to lift a mask mandate in schools, in Edmonton on Feb. 14, 2021. (The Canadian Press/Jason Franson)

As Restrictions Continue to Be Lifted, the COVID-Zero Crowd Don't Want to Let Go

*Shane Miller
March 22, 2022
Commentary*

Most mask mandates in Ontario were lifted on March 21, with the exception of places such as public transit, retirement homes, and shelters. In his statement announcing the

move, Premier Ford described the day as an “important milestone in our fight with COVID” and thanked Ontarians for their “hard work, sacrifice, and willingness to rise to the occasion.”

Indeed, this is a milestone, as what was for much of the pandemic the most restricted jurisdiction in North America is acknowledging that it is finally time to move on from the pandemic and is, so far, sticking to that plan despite the inevitable outrage from those who are dominated by their COVID obsession.

Though Ontarians can rejoice in the return to something resembling pre-pandemic normalcy, it is clear that we will also be entering a new phase of lunacy courtesy of the COVID-Zero faction.

Footage captured from Queen’s Park on March 21 as members returned after the mandate came to an end demonstrate this dynamic quite well. The majority of those in the Ford government were not wearing a mask, while all the opposition members were wearing them and making it known that they were, at least when the cameras were on, not going to go along with the government’s move.

Undoubtedly, as the mandates are removed, things such as masks are going to be mercilessly deployed as a battering ram in a culture war. And will be amplified as yet another way to define one’s political identity.

In a piece published in the Atlantic last May titled “The Liberals Who Can’t Quit Lockdown,” American writer Emma Green argued that for many of a liberal persuasion, “diligence against COVID remains an expression of political identity—even when that means overestimating the disease’s risk or setting limits far more strict than what public-health guidelines permit.” Green also documented instances of well-to-do, liberal-minded women being shamed and even accused of promoting “white supremacy” by rabid COVID obsessives for simply arguing for lifting restrictions.

Similar conduct is seen among the COVID-Zero crowd in Canada who are evidently addicted to the platform COVID has provided to them. Prominent doctors have stigmatized children and shamed teachers who choose not to mask at school, and have expressed sentiments to the effect that those who don’t mask are indicating that they don’t care about the community and should be treated as such. Nili Kaplan-Myrth, a family doctor and COVID-Zero proponent, has accused the Ford government of racism, classism, and ableism for moving on the mask mandate, with no explanation as to how these labels apply.

Though continuing to claim their absolute fidelity to the science, they still show no interest whatsoever in having an honest debate about the science as it evolves. For if they did, they would have to honestly contend with other experts who have claimed in recent weeks that despite any concern over possible new variants, with vaccines and better tools, Canada is unlikely to experience another significant wave. To add to the laundry list of reasons why their panic is more so a cultish neurosis than prudent caution, news continues to establish that the lethality of COVID is not as high as initially understood and needed to be more contextualized throughout the pandemic.

As recent documents released by the Ontario government divulged, the number of reported deaths as a result of COVID is actually lower, going down to under 60 percent from the initial 75 percent of the numbers previously reported. Moreover, the documents also state that “with the very high Omicron case counts, some people with COVID-19 infection were dying from causes unrelated to their COVID-19 infection.”

Though it proved very contagious, the Omicron wave also saw concern drastically decrease among Canadians as more people knew someone who was infected and didn't have an overly problematic experience. The nail in the coffin, too, is that the Ford government's moves to “learn to live with COVID” are in line with a majority of Ontarians, with a new Angus Reid poll concluding that 60 percent support the process of lifting restrictions and mandates.

As we continue to venture into the post-pandemic phase, the politicization of the pandemic will intensify as unhinged politicians and public health officials try to desperately hold on to the relevancy they enjoyed during the pandemic. It might get them some applause within their online echo chamber, but most Canadians are ready to live again, and should be able to do so if they choose to.

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Shanghai Under COVID Lockdown—Would US Cities Go for It Again?



Empty roads during a phased lockdown due to COVID-19 in Shanghai, China, on Apr. 5, 2022. Shanghai reported more than 13,000 daily COVID cases for the first time, as a sweeping city lockdown and mass testing uncovered extensive spread of the highly infectious omicron variant. (Qilai Shen/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Shanghai Under COVID Lockdown—Would US Cities Go for It Again?

*Dominick Sansone
April 7, 2022
Commentary*

Looking back at the unprecedented economic lockdowns and draconian mandates during the more than two-year-long COVID-19 pandemic, many U.S. citizens could hardly posit a return to a similar state of affairs.

This is especially true given the flood of information now pouring out about the deleterious economic, physical, and psychological consequences that lockdowns have had (and will continue to have) on the American populace.

Of course, this is no attempt to discount or disparage the people around the world who struggled with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus, up to and including death. But those who choose not to imbibe the virtue-signaling talking points of the mass psychosis-inducing mainstream legacy media are indeed done with the phony “if it only saves one life” policy ploy.

We will struggle to understand the full impact of these decisions on ourselves, our economy, our political system, and our children for at least the next half-century. A definitive answer to the question of whether the cure was worse than the disease will remain elusive in the abstract but pretty clear for those who are forced to live with the ramifications of our leaders’ choices in their personal lives.

The powers that be—government authorities, health institutions, media, and tech giants—have all shown their hand: politics always takes precedence over real people.

When these principles are allowed to guide all of a society’s policymaking without the friction of popular resistance from below, the logical conclusion is an authoritarian police state in which the freedom of all is sacrificed for the enhanced security of some.

Nowhere has this dystopian reality become more fully manifest than in CCP-led China under its “zero-COVID” policy.



People line up for nucleic acid testing at a residential block during a citywide COVID-19 testing campaign in Shanghai, China, on April 1, 2022. (Zhang Suoqing/VCG via Getty Images)

Shanghai is the latest case study in this hypochondriac-engineering societal schemata. With cases spiking at over 13,000 on April 5, the city has chosen to extend lockdowns that were scheduled to end on April 8. Testing in Shanghai is mandatory for all of its 25 million residents. This major metropolitan area accounts for over two-thirds of China's total cases.

An even more important point is that most of these cases are asymptomatic, which is expected when a government uses its authoritarian power to mandate that all citizens submit to testing regardless of health status or age.

And as is to be expected, the CCP virus has had an exacerbated impact on those most at risk. There have been large-scale outbreaks in two of the city's elderly care hospitals, according to reporting by The Wall Street Journal. A large percentage of the elderly population has apparently not been vaccinated against the CCP virus, the report said.

Quarantining has been occurring, although questionable room choices are brought up in the article, such as the medical staff purportedly putting patients who tested negative for the virus in with individuals with confirmed infections. Shanghai's government has not responded to the accusations.



People with mild and symptomatic cases of COVID-19 are quarantined at the Shanghai New International Expo Center in Shanghai, China, on April 1, 2022. (Ding Ting/Xinhua via AP)

Despite wielding all of its tyrannical power to crack down in an ostensible bid to reduce the virus's effect on society, has the CCP still exhibited malfeasance in protecting Shanghai's most vulnerable citizens?

Maybe. But additionally, is it also possible that the notion of completely reducing the spread of one of the most highly contagious respiratory diseases in the modern era is a faulty presumption, to begin with?

Instead, perhaps a better approach would be to provide ready access to medical care and abundant health-related resources to the areas that are high in at-risk demographics.

This flawed strategy isn't necessarily endemic to China, though. The United States has had its own negative experience with nursing homes and COVID patients.

Former Democratic Governor of New York State Andrew Cuomo also failed to protect some of the most vulnerable citizens in his state from the worst effects of the outbreak while simultaneously kneecapping the (small, local) business environment in New York.

Perhaps the problem is, in reality, endemic to the proponents of heavy-handed government control generally. Unqualified belief in the ability of centralized authority to solve society's problems inevitably leads to tyrannical overreach. The antithesis of this secular faith is always curtailed freedom and unintended harm to those that a policy purports to help.

Even in Shanghai, citizens are losing their patience with the CCP policy as access to food and medical care is increasingly limited. The city is a major financial hub and has subsequently suffered from the inability to have normal daily operations.

Factories are also closed as manufacturing and industry take a severe hit. The impact on the global supply chain is something that even those in the United States and Europe are learning to understand all too well.



Shoppers rummage through empty shelves in a supermarket before a lockdown as a

measure against COVID-19 in Shanghai, China, on March 29, 2022. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

Meanwhile, Democratic policymakers who have a penchant for CCP-style governance are far from loosening their hold over the reigns of societal control in the United States. They have learned that they can continue amalgamating power and punishing political dissent under the auspices of “public health.”

Consider that New York City Mayor Eric Adams has recently announced that he is extending the city’s mask mandate—for preschoolers. Given what we have learned about the virus, it has become clear that the latter group does not constitute a high-risk demographic.

Covering the faces of developing children while the rest of society adopts a more voluntary approach to masking begs the question: how exactly is this about saving lives?

Questioning these choices is related to more than just the ability for an individual to perform a cost-benefit analysis over a health danger and its potential impact on our lives and the lives of our families, independent of a government authority.

We as a society cannot unsee what we have witnessed during the over two-year-long pandemic. Lockdowns, mandates, and restrictions predicated on selective science and mass psychosis have entirely reset the country as we know it. We now know that those who deem themselves our political, intellectual, and moral betters salivate at wielding the type of power that the CCP currently holds over Chinese society.

But in their excitement over the potential for accruing power provided by a public health crisis, these same individuals made a mistake. They overstepped and did not expect the blowback and resistance of the American people. They do not actually know any “people” outside the Washington beltway or the greater New York metropolitan area.

Their premature giddiness has exposed their true beliefs, designs, and intentions. Those paying attention will never countenance a return to the pandemic’s repression, intolerance, and shame.

Hopefully, the current situation in Shanghai will be another step on the road to the Chinese people recognizing the oppression that they are living through and undertaking the noble struggle of throwing off the yoke of the CCP.

Here in the United States, though, we've seen where the "Great Dream" leads—and we refuse to fall asleep ever again.

Dominick Sansone is a regular contributor to the Epoch Times. He focuses on Russia-China relations and U.S. foreign policy. Subscribe to his new Telegram channel at <https://t.me/dominicksansone>

https://www.theepochtimes.com/shanghai-under-covid-lockdown-would-us-cities-go-for-i-t-again_4384811.html

Recent Surge in China's COVID Cases Challenges Beijing's Narrative



Empty roads during a phased lockdown due to COVID-19 in Shanghai, China, on Apr. 4, 2022. China's COVID-19 situation is on a knife's edge, as a lockdown of its financial hub intensifies amid a surge in new cases and new sub-strains of the omicron variant emerge nationwide. (Qilai Shen/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

Recent Surge in China's COVID Cases Challenges Beijing's Narrative

*Stu Cvrk
April 8, 2022
Commentary*

While the rest of the world is finally getting out from under the fear-driven authoritarian lockdowns and mandates, China is doubling down on its “zero-COVID” policy to control the recent outbreaks in major cities.

If the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) “zero-COVID” policy measures actually worked, then why the numerous outbreaks in Chinese cities in recent weeks?

Why is Shanghai, in particular, undergoing a second week of horrible lockdowns, including reports of increasing food shortages and panic food-buying, with 38,000 medical workers deployed there to support citywide testing?

The CCP knew about the existence of the CCP virus in November 2019 yet did nothing to stop its spread through early disclosure of virus-related clinical data and other key information that could have helped other countries combat the virus. Indeed, Beijing did not even admit the problem until forced to do so by the world community as the virus spread around the world.

Despite relentless misinformation and misdirection by the CCP and state-run Chinese media over the past two years, all evidence points to the origination of the virus outbreak in Wuhan city in Hubei Province in late 2019.

Whether it was engineered or a natural mutation of an existing virus remains unknown (although much reporting on gain-of-function research would indicate the former to be true). But indeed, it is not coincidental that the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV)—which is where China’s only level four biosafety laboratory is located and which studies some of the world’s deadliest viruses—is located just 20 miles from the center of the original outbreak at a wet market.

Yet the CCP has vociferously denied that the WIV was even involved in so-called gain-of-function virus research, let alone had anything to do with the outbreak.

One example among many is this comment from the Chinese ambassador to South Africa last August: “The U.S. spared no effort to hype up the so-called Wuhan lab leak, and slander that China withholds information, refuses to cooperate and obstructs international investigation. These U.S. slanders have no grounds. The U.S. side is blatantly telling lies.”



The P4 laboratory on the campus of the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on May 13, 2020. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

It cannot be repeated too many times that China is a closed society. The CCP tightly controls all information, particularly anything that may be damaging or embarrassing to the regime.

At the beginning of the Wuhan outbreak, China expelled many Western journalists to clamp down on virus-related reporting that did not conform to the preferred CCP narrative (that the virus outbreak was under control through “Chinese methods”).

The CCP has also invested millions of dollars in Western media over the past two decades to influence and suppress negative information linking communist China to the virus. It is thus relatively easy to spot the pro-Chinese media trying to shift the blame for the virus from China to the United States. Simply compare which U.S. media companies received CCP money to their virus narratives, which parrot Beijing’s claims.

Does anyone seriously believe that the CCP’s “Chinese methods” in responding to the virus successfully resulted in zero Chinese deaths from May 2020 through a couple of weeks ago?

Or that communist China (with about 1.4 billion people) is 117th in the world in the ranking of countries with the most virus cases?

This is the kind of information control that the authoritarian-minded in U.S. media must be very jealous of! And Heaven forbid that the U.S. mainstream media would ever challenge the CCP on its highly questionable COVID statistics.

It is thus ironic—and perhaps schadenfreude for the CCP?—that after a period of relative quiescence in China and suppression of domestic virus-related information, the country is writhing under outbreaks and forced lockdowns in major cities such as Changchun (6.8 million), Shenzhen (12.8 million), and Shanghai (27.8 million).

China even added two deaths to the Worldometers COVID-19 statistics that had been frozen at 4,636 death toll for almost two years.

For nearly two years, the Chinese regime has been touting its “zero-COVID” policy, which consists of a collection of authoritarian measures to “control” the virus, including mass vaccinations, universal mask mandates, surveillance and detection, rapid reporting, near-universal testing, isolation and quarantines, food delivery and quarantine checking, closed borders, and individual treatment of the infected.

Never mind the near-total loss of personal and economic freedoms required to implement these authoritarian methods!

Here are some recent headlines in state-run media that attempt to make a case for the continuation of Chinese methods to control the virus—or at least to try to convince the Chinese people that the CCP has it all under control:

- “China upholds dynamic-zero COVID strategy following 100,000+ domestically transmitted cases in a month” (Global Times, April 1).
- “China builds solid wall of defense against COVID-19 to protect people’s lives, health” (People’s Daily, March 29).
- “Dynamic zero-COVID approach effective, necessary” (China Daily, March 25).
- “Chinese vice premier demands full implementation of epidemic control measures” (People’s Daily, March 20).
- “Dynamic zero-COVID policy working, NHS [National Health Commission] says” (China Daily, March 16).

As usual, the headlines and the articles mask facts that are uncomfortable for the CCP.



People line up for nucleic acid testing at a residential block during a citywide COVID-19 testing campaign in Shanghai, China, on April 1, 2022. (Zhang Suoqing/VCG via Getty Images)

Note that the CCP tacitly acknowledged that the “zero-COVID” policy had to be renamed to account for the increasing number of cases detected. The recent outbreaks made “zero COVID” into an oxymoron.

The subtle label change now includes the word “dynamic” as if that will fool anyone into believing that the measures actually work, or that they have been enhanced in some magical way to “stop the virus.”

Also, note the first bullet above in which the Global Times claims in a headline that there have been over 100,000 new cases last month. How do 100,000-plus new cases square with only two people dying? Do the Chinese people believe in this “miracle”?

Given that the state-run media always shade the truth in their reporting—particularly when the underlying issue is suboptimal for the CCP—the actual number of cases is almost certainly much greater.

It would also appear that China is not very good at reporting its latest statistics to Worldometers and international authorities, with April 4 statistics showing a paltry 1,405 new daily cases. That works out to about 43,500 cases over a month.

Is the CCP losing control of the reporting and its own narrative?

Some Final Thoughts

While the CCP is on the receiving end of some well-deserved schadenfreude for its COVID-related lies over the past two years, the burden is, unfortunately, being borne by the Chinese people. And residents of Shanghai, in particular, are on the front lines in enduring the lockdowns, family separations, food shortages, personal loss of income, and other drastic restrictions mandated by the CCP.

One wonders if the propaganda is working in Shanghai (or anywhere else in China) these days.

Stu Cvrk retired as a captain after serving 30 years in the U.S. Navy in a variety of active and reserve capacities, with considerable operational experience in the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Through education and experience as an oceanographer and systems analyst, Cvrk is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he received a classical liberal education that serves as the key foundation for his political commentary.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/recent-surge-in-chinas-covid-cases-challenges-beijings-narrative_4382166.html

The Shanghai Catastrophe: Lockdown Ideology at Its Most Extreme



The skyline of Shanghai is seen in a file photo. (ssguy/Shutterstock)

The Shanghai Catastrophe: Lockdown Ideology at Its Most Extreme

Jordan Schachtel

April 12, 2022

Commentary

Highlight the hundreds of millions of victims of communism, and its advocates are known to try to rebut the evidence by claiming that **real** communism has never been tried.

As an extension of this debate, the global Public Health cartel, whose advocates relentlessly pursue totalitarian solutions to attempt to stop a virus from spreading, are known to defend their lockdown advocacy by claiming that real lockdowns have never been tried. When faced with the reality that lockdowns have failed everywhere they have been tried, the lockdown advocates push back by claiming that such lockdowns are not up to their Pyongyang Standard of authoritarian rule.

In Shanghai, however, we are finally witnessing the most ferocious lockdowns to date. The full Pyongyang Standard. This utopian “hard lockdown,” dreamed about for two years by the likes of Bill Gates, Anthony Fauci, the World Health Organization, Ivy League academia, and the rest of the global Public Health cartel, is now playing out in Shanghai.

To these individuals and groups, the horrific tyranny we saw in Wuhan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and elsewhere around the world were a good start, but still, **not tyrannical enough** for their liking.

Dr Fauci:

“.. best thing that we can do really is to get ...control over ...replication of the virus. This was something the US had not managed to do in the same way as Australia because Australia’s lockdowns were more stringent and effective.” <https://t.co/RrlqTnXLtg>

— *Bill Bowtell AO (@billbowtell) March 10, 2021*

Bill Gates singles out Australia for pandemic response praise
<https://t.co/XCDwwWsWvV>

— *The Sydney Morning Herald (@smh) October 6, 2020*

They finally got what they wanted in Shanghai. And just as expected, the result of the Pyongyang Standard has come in the form of unprecedented human carnage.

'Everyone is starving': Shanghai close to 'civil unrest' under strict COVID lockdown regime <https://t.co/SkulnE76vm>

— MSN UK (@msnuk) April 11, 2022

As I discussed previously in *The Dossier*, tens of millions of people in the Shanghai metro have been locked in their homes for several weeks. Their freedom of movement has been entirely eliminated.

Shanghai residents are only allowed to go outside to take a COVID test, and a positive test means they are hauled off to COVID detention camps for an indefinite period of time, while the state sends agents into their homes to murder their pets. There have been countless reports of suicides, starvation, mass civil unrest, and other forms of hell on earth for those trapped inside of Shanghai.

Shanghai quarantine centers

"It's for your health" pic.twitter.com/Xst2rWrkO7

— Jack Posobiec  (@JackPosobiec) April 11, 2022

Many under lockdown are facing impending starvation, as China's top-down tyranny is unsurprisingly, struggling to replace market forces in its attempt to micromanage food deliveries to an immobilized population.

People in the financial hub are reportedly running out of food, water and other necessities, with many said to be on the brink of starvation. #China #Shanghai
<https://t.co/i098tcxgNn>

— IndiaToday (@IndiaToday) April 10, 2022

Even worse, these shut downs have not even achieved the stated purpose of the lockdowns: stopping the spread of COVID-19. Now weeks into the lockdown, China continues to register massive amounts of COVID cases. On Monday, they reported a record high number.

Shanghai reports 26,087 new coronavirus cases, the biggest one-day increase on record, with 26 million people on lockdown

— BNO/Medrive Newsroom (@medrive) April 11, 2022

Chinese Communist Party authorities are not fazed whatsoever by the human carnage they have manifested. In media appearances Monday, CCP leaders took to doubling down on “the measures” most admired by the Public Health cartel. They remain tethered to “Zero COVID” fanaticism, defiantly declaring that living with the virus remains off the table.

China has reported over 270,000 new locally transmitted #COVID19 cases and asymptomatic infections since March, with its economic hub Shanghai battling the worst resurgence. Why dynamic zero-COVID policy remains best choice for Shanghai
<https://t.co/LAE6Vd3hui> pic.twitter.com/Kn3KM5UGnF

— China Xinhua News (@XHNews) April 11, 2022

Here’s a valuable segment from China’s People’s Daily, as reported by Tracking People’s Daily:

*At one point, Liang says that faced with the Omicron variant, **some countries opted for the policy of 躺平- lying flat—allowing the virus to infect people, causing great harm to the lives, health and social production. China, on the other hand, adheres to dynamic zero-COVID and its socialist system “has a strong ability to organise and mobilise,” which along with the support of the people, scientific tools and the***

experience of fighting the epidemic will help it ensure the success of the zero Covid strategy.

China has fully embraced the “public health” ideology, and notably, none of its top Western advocates have taken to celebrating the scene in Shanghai, which amounts to the culmination of their utopian vision.

Originally published on the author’s Substack, reposted from the Brownstone Institute

Jordan Schachtel is an independent investigative journalist.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-shanghai-catastrophe-lockdown-ideology-at-its-most-extreme_4398742.html

The China Model Unravels in Shanghai



Residential buildings have been locked down in Pudong district, Shanghai, China, on March 22, 2022. Shanghai is seeing a resurgence of covid-19 Omicron. (Robert Way/Shutterstock)

The China Model Unravels in Shanghai

Jeffrey A. Tucker

April 12, 2022

Commentary

At the end of the Cold War, the end-of-history theory was that every country in the world that desired prosperity and progress would necessarily have to embrace both economic liberty and political democracy. You cannot have one without the other, the theory went. It was inevitable.

The world waited for China to go the direction of Eastern Europe and so many other countries.

It did not happen. Despite liberalizing economic reforms, the CCP maintained hard-core political control for the decades following. Yet its economy grew and grew. This gave rise to a new theory: perhaps the most successful countries will foster economic liberalism while securing tight political control, thus dispensing with the inefficiencies of democracy.

China seemed to have it all going.

Now we have evidence of what's wrong with a one-party state with a powerful chief executive. It works until it doesn't. What stopped working in China could not have been expected years ago. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) believed it had solved the problem of pathogens via massive violations of human liberty.

Today, the people of Shanghai are suffering weeks of lockdowns, food shortage, and extreme quarantine of healthy people, all in the interest of eradicating a virus that the rest of the world has finally realized must become endemic. Even Fauci is admitting this now (following two years of urging more restrictions).

But in China? Children are being taken from parents, the pets of people with a positive test are being shot, people are screaming from skyscrapers, and food is rotting in warehouses even as people report to be starving. There are videos online of stores being ransacked. There is talk of revolution in the air.

Never forget: China was the birthplace of lockdowns. The head of the World Health Organization praised the early 2020 lockdowns in Wuhan. In one letter dated January 2020, the WHO congratulated China and urged the country to “enhance public health measures for containment of the current outbreak.” Director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus further underscored the point with a tweet.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus ✓
@DrTedros



In many ways, [#China](#) is actually setting a new standard for outbreak response. Our greatest concern is the potential for the virus to spread to countries with weaker health systems, and which are ill-prepared to deal with it. [#2019nCoV](#)



World Health Organization (WHO) ✓ @WHO · Jan 30, 2020

"We don't know what sort of damage this [#2019nCoV](#) virus could do if it were to spread in a country with a weaker health system.

We must act now to help countries prepare for that possibility"-@DrTedros

[Show this thread](#)

3:40 PM · Jan 30, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

548 Retweets **132** Quote Tweets **943** Likes

Neil Ferguson from the Imperial College did too. "It's a communist one party state, we said. We couldn't get away with it in Europe, we thought ... and then Italy did it. And we realised we could." And so China became a model for the world: Wuhan, Northern Italy, the United States, the UK, and then all but a handful of the countries in the world followed the lockdown paradigm.

To this day, Xi Jinping surely basks in the warmth of this glowing praise. It put China's policy prowess on display for the world. As I write, Yahoo reports concerning Shanghai:

China's President Xi Jinping praised the country's "tested" zero-Covid strategy on Friday, even as Shanghai authorities prepared nearly 130,000 beds for Covid-19 patients amid surging cases and mounting public anger.

We can only intuit what is happening here. For Xi Jinping, lockdowns were his greatest triumph. They seemed to work two years ago. He earned plaudits the world over, and the world followed his model. Perhaps this filled him and the CCP with a sense of incredible pride and confidence. They had done it correctly and the rest of the world copied the idea, without having practiced the art of lockdown as perfectly as China.

Eventually governments can convince themselves of their own propaganda. That appears to be what happened here. That illusion prevented Xi and the Party from observing what should have been obvious to anyone with a modicum of knowledge about viruses such as this one: in a functioning society and market, it will spread no matter what. As Vinay Prasad has constantly reminds us, everyone will get Covid. And through that path, we finally move beyond the pandemic.

What has happened now in China is as predictable as the failure of “Zero Covid” in Australia and New Zealand.

This means that cases are nowhere near stopping in China. They will spread to every city, every town, every countryside until vast numbers of 1.4 billion are exposed. This could mean rolling lockdowns for years to come, along with all the damage and political instability that they necessarily entail. This will surely have a profound impact on economic growth and possibly the credibility of the CCP itself.

The CCP has made a profound error. Most places in the world did. The United States was not Shanghai-level terrible but this is a matter of degree because the theory was tried out here too. In political democracies, politicians and bureaucrats have mostly tried to soft land their gross errors while manufacturing excuses for reopening without apology. Many want everyone just to forget this whole disaster.

Will that happen in China? The trouble is the incredible centrality of lockdowns to China’s perceived achievements over the last two years. So long as there are powerful people in Beijing who genuinely believe that lockdown is the path forward—and no opposition party in place to take a different point of view—this will likely continue, raising fascinating questions about the political and economic future of this country.

The magic combination of political and economic freedom turned out not to be the end of history. But China-style dictatorship is not the end either, simply because it contains no operational mechanism for the correcting of egregious errors. What saved the United States from lockdown terror was political pluralism and federalism; China has institutionalized neither. Thus does intellectual error lead to egregiously immoral outcomes.

Lockdowns are nowhere a solution to pathogenic spread, contrary to the assurances of the WHO or celebrity scientists in the UK or the United States. When governments of the world tried to prove their competence by declaring war on cell biology, they finally met their match. No matter how powerful a state, there are forces of nature that will always outsmart it.

Tucker Carlson on the COVID lockdown in Shanghai: “Has there ever been a clearer picture of what hell is like?” pic.twitter.com/6l1RPtjPIV

— The Post Millennial (@TPostMillennial) [April 12, 2022](#)

From the [Brownstone Institute](#)

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including “Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty.”

[Website](#)

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-china-model-unravels-in-shanghai_4399307.html

What Happened on the Junket to China in February 2020?



The busy port of Xuwen is seen in Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, China, on Jan. 1, 2022. (Xiao Wei/Shutterstock)

What Happened on the Junket to China in February 2020?

Jeffrey A. Tucker

April 15, 2022 Updated: April 16, 2022

Commentary

The last two years have been such a disorienting blizzard of shock and awe that it is truly hard to keep up. We went from lockdowns to mitigation theater to mandates so quickly, and now one gets the feeling that we aren't supposed to think or talk about any of this.

We are just supposed to forget it all. Or believe that this is normal. Where are the investigative journalists and commissions? Where is the focus? Who is writing a serious, detailed, and critical history of this calamity?

There are so many features of the timeline here that need investigation and explanation.

- Who came up with this 6-feet of distance rule and on what basis?
- Who pushed the idea of festooning the country with plexiglass?
- Who was instrumental in pushing the panicked school and church closures?
- Who came up with the idea of shutting the hospitals nationwide to non-Covid patients even in places that had not yet met the virus?
- Why so little concern for small businesses and why were big-box stores exempted from shutdowns?
- What exactly was the relationship between federal and state health officials that enacted so many similar policies so quickly?
- At what point did pharmaceuticals get involved and why were only three makers selected for the United States and on what basis?
- Who was responsible for suppressing facts about natural immunity?
- How did the boosters get approved without support of top FDA officials who later resigned?
- How did the federal government so easily conscript social-media platforms into its disinformation campaign?
- How did it happen that the Department of Health and Human Services released a confidential lockdown blueprint on March 13, 2020, even before the idea had the green light from the White House?
- Gain-of-function research anyone?

That's only a brief list of questions but there are potentially hundreds.

Let me zero in on one weird thing that jumped out at me from the first tranche of FOIA'ed emails from the account of Anthony Fauci.

In mid-February 2020, we know for certain that Fauci, Francis Collins, and Jeremy Farrar were obsessing about the possibility of a lab leak from Wuhan. During that period, the World Health Organization worked with the National Institutes of Health and many other nations to organize a trip to China. This took place Feb. 16–24, 2020, two weeks after Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of WHO had told the world that China was “setting a new standard” for virus response. All involved in this junket came back with

glowing praise for how China handled the virus during its month-long lockdowns in Wuhan.

Here is a sample email, the first mention I can find.

On Feb 18, 2020, at 12:38 AM, HAN, Mansuk Daniel [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Cliff,

Sorry to bother you during a very busy mission but DGO requested to clear two questions from your DOI:

1. Research support from Gilead: is there any relationship between the present mission to China and any of your ongoing research regarding COVID-19?
2. Travel costs: could you please tell us who contributed toward your mission travel costs, and the amount contributed?

Thank you,
Dan

Mansuk Daniel HAN
Technical Officer
WHO HQ, Geneva, Switzerland
Office: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Skype: dan.han3
<image001.gif>

To which Cliff Lane of NIH responded:

From: Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E] [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 6:57 PM
To: HAN, Mansuk Daniel [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Two DOI questions

1. Gilead will provide the drug remdesivir free of charge to the study team that is developing a protocol to test that drug. The protocol team is multi-national and this is done in coordination with the R and D blueprint team. This drug is also being tested by the Chinese in Wujan.
2. All my travel expenses are covered by the US government (NIH) in accordance with standard travel policy.

Cliff

Later too, a Chinese journalist made an inquiry that went unanswered.

From: (b) (6)
Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 9:40 AM
To: "Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: A Question from China's Caixin Media regarding WHO Joint Mission's Report

Dear Dr. Lane,

My name is ZENG Jia, and I'm a journalist from China's Caixin Media (caixin.com, caixinglobal.com). I'm writing to see if you would like to answer a question about the Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), because you were among the members of this much anticipated joint mission.

Please allow me to give you a brief introduction of Caixin first: We're the leading independent media in China for investigative journalism, and we went on publishing reports about the coronavirus disease during the time when Chinese health authorities remained silent on the issue. The New York Times published an op-ed about how Chinese muckraker media tried to deliver truth to the Chinese public, and Caixin came on top (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/05/opinion/coronavirus-china-news-journalism.html>). It's been over a month since the lockdown of the city Wuhan, in the past several weeks Caixin has devoted all its people and resources to the coronavirus outbreak and hope to improve the transparency in public discussion, and we will keep on doing it. By the end of 2019, Caixin has more than 300,000 subscribers, in terms of number of subscribers we're only second to the Japanese Nikkei News in Asia.

So my question is, in the Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/who-china-joint-mission-on-covid-19-final-report.pdf>), it says on Page 6 that there was at least one clinically diagnosed case of coronavirus on December 2th, 2019 in Wuhan; and from Jan 11th to 17th there were new clinically diagnosed and confirmed cases every day in Wuhan, which is not consistent with Wuhan Public Health Committee's numbers (<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020011309038>). I wonder if you could share with us the data source of diagnosed cases of Wuhan in the WHO report. Also, has the joint mission team or WHO communicated with China about the differences in cases data?

Journalist Jon Cohen (who later co-authored a puff piece on China in Science, March 2, 2020) asked for some photographs of the team but apparently did not get any.

From: Jon Cohen (b) (6)
Date: March 4, 2020 at 11:27:25 AM EST
To: "Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E]" (b) (6)
Subject: Re: COVID-19

And do you by any chance have photos of you in China with the team doing your work? Higher the resolution the better...

Thanks,

Jon

On Mar 4, 2020, at 7:49 AM, Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b) (6) wrote:

Jon,

I was cleared to speak. If still interested please call my cell (b) (6) whenever convenient.

Sorry for the delay.

Cliff

On 3/1/20, 1:42 PM, "Jon Cohen" (b) (6) wrote:

Jennifer,

Yes, as you might imagine, I have seen the report. Is Cliff forbidden from speaking or denying my request?

Thanks,

Jon

The report that came out from WHO (with NIH approval) was full of praise for how China crushed the virus.

Achieving China's exceptional coverage with and adherence to these containment measures has only been possible due to the deep commitment of the Chinese people to collective action in the face of this common threat. At a community level this is reflected in the remarkable solidarity of provinces and cities in support of the most vulnerable populations and communities. Despite ongoing outbreaks in their own areas, Governors and Mayors have continued to send thousands of health care workers and tons of vital PPE supplies into Hubei province and Wuhan city.

At the individual level, the Chinese people have reacted to this outbreak with courage and conviction. They have accepted and adhered to the starkest of containment measures – whether the suspension of public gatherings, the month-long 'stay at home' advisories or prohibitions on travel. Throughout an intensive 9-days of site visits across China, in frank discussions from the level of local community mobilizers and frontline health care providers to top scientists, Governors and Mayors, the Joint Mission was struck by the sincerity and dedication that each brings to this COVID-19 response.

Here is the full report.

Cliff Lane of the NIH summed it all up well:

From: Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Sent: Sat, 22 Feb 2020 10:01:23 +0800
To: Dr VAN KERKHOVE, Maria
Subject: Re: Inputs needed

China has demonstrated this infection can be controlled, albeit at great cost. That is the bottom line of the report from my perspective.

The global community needs to decide the way forward. That room needs more than this group.

From: Maria VAN KERKHOVE [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Saturday, February 22, 2020 at 9:59 AM
To: "Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Inputs needed

Agreed – I think we will start with China – first and foremost and then other areas – we can label this differently

From: Cliff Lane [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Saturday, 22 February 2020 at 02:56
To: Maria Van Kerkhove [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: Re: Inputs needed

Initial reaction – we are getting out of scope. I agree with the comments from the China co-chair. We need to focus on the situation in China; perhaps indicate a lessons learned for others.

From: Maria VAN KERKHOVE [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Date: Saturday, February 22, 2020 at 9:40 AM
To: "Lane, Cliff (NIH/NIAID) [E]" [REDACTED] (b) (6)
Subject: Inputs needed

As discussed, please have a look. Bruce will be revising this morning – so they will likely change a lot, but I need your views on the thinking (so far)...

We know now that the strategy did not work. China did not contain SARS-CoV-2. What is happening in Shanghai today illustrates that. The lockdowns are more brutal than ever, effectively wrecking one of the major financial capitals of the world, and with no prospect for eradication in this country or any country.

And yet here we have officials from the NIH, presumably with the approval of Fauci, taking a trip to China, visiting several cities, meeting untold numbers of Communist

Party members, and returning with glowing praise for how the government handled the virus. This trip might have been what set up the lockdown model for the entire world.

Clifford Lane even bragged about it all:

When Dr. H. Clifford Lane, an assistant to Dr. Anthony Fauci, traveled to China a year ago as part of a delegation of scientists studying how the deadly COVID-19 virus had emerged in that country, he found a population determined to confront the disease.

“There were all sorts of measures put in place ... social distancing, masks. Public awareness of the pandemic was known daily, said Lane, who spoke Feb. 18th via Zoom as part of the South Haven Speakers Series. “The entire country was at war against the virus.”

However, when Lane, who is deputy director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease, returned from his two-week trip to China in February 2020, he found a much different reaction to the virus in this country.

Unlike China, whose national government issued strict orders for the country’s inhabitants to follow, the U.S. federal government left much of the methods for controlling the spread of the virus to individual state governments.

The result was a mixture of control measures. While some governors in states like Michigan and New York forced closure of schools to in-person learning, and temporarily shuttered businesses considered “non-essential,” other governors took less stringent measures.

Even though health officials urged people to wear face masks to stop the spread of the virus, there was a resistance by people, in general, to do so. Even a number of federal

officials, including President Donald Trump and some governors and senators, mainly Republicans, appeared in public with no masks on.

“There was a playbook for the federal government But was it applied? No. It was politics to a degree,” Lane said. Fauci, who heads up the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, also has been a critic of the mixed reactions to controlling the virus in America.

At that time, flights to and from China were banned for regular people. Did these officials charter a plane? Did the White House know this was happening? Who pushed for this and who approved it? When the WHO report came out (Feb. 28, 2020), did anyone at the White House see it? The report mentions “mission members” (most from China) but how many staff from the NIH came along?

The meta-properties of the document mention that an American working for WHO, Maria Van Kerkhove, was the author. She is a highly trained scientist with long experience. She later found herself in hot water for telling the world that asymptomatic spread was not driving the spread of Covid, a statement she had to dial back (even if she was correct).

Why did she prove to be so gullible about China’s glorious success in crushing Covid? What does she have to say now about this report that influenced the entire world to lock down?

There are so many questions and far too few answers. This one junket is just the beginning but it is a massively important one. We know now that the idea that China managed the virus well is a complete myth (it did not “demonstrate that the infection can be controlled”). The countries that locked down less or not at all had better outcomes in every area: health, economics, culture, and education.

Why was the United States so quick to adopt the tactics and strategies of the Chinese Communist Party and to what extent did this “joint mission” to several cities in China in mid-February influence that?

From the Brownstone Institute

Jeffrey Tucker is founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. He is the author of five books, including "Right-Wing Collectivism: The Other Threat to Liberty."
Website

https://www.theepochtimes.com/what-happened-on-the-junket-to-china-in-february-2020_4407299.html

Surveying the Biological Warfare Landscape



Scientists are working inside the bio-level 4 lab research at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Maryland, on Sept. 26, 2002. (Olivier Douliery/AFP via Getty Images)

Surveying the Biological Warfare Landscape

A look at US and China biological warfare history and capabilities

*Stu Cvrk
April 17, 2022
Commentary*

Biological warfare may already be underway.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sensitized the world to the spread of dangerous viral diseases. The Russo-Ukrainian war has exposed the presence of U.S.-funded biological research labs in Ukraine. Do either of these issues actually involve biological warfare in violation of the 1972 Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention that has been signed by over 100 nations?

Let us examine the topic.

US Bioweapons Testing

The United States did not “invent” bioweapons. Bioweapons have actually been used in various forms since ancient times. Methods included using arrows dipped in feces, using dead bodies to poison wells during wars in the Middle Ages, and intentionally spreading smallpox during the French and Indian War in the 18th century. The Germans and the Russians conducted small-scale biological attacks during World War I.

After World War I, the Geneva Protocol of 1925 was signed by 108 nations, including the United States, that “prohibited” the development and use of biological agents (and chemical weapons such as those used in the World War I trench warfare on both sides). But that treaty had no verification measures, and many nations continued their research and development.

A Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) was signed in 1972, with the signatories agreeing “not to develop, produce, stockpile, or acquire biological agents or toxins ‘of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective, and other peaceful purposes,’ as well as weapons and means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.”

The United States learned a great deal about bioweapons from World War II adversaries, particularly the Japanese at the notorious Unit 731. The Japanese weaponized cholera, typhus, and the plague to kill over a half-million Chinese in at least 11 separate biowarfare attacks on Chinese cities during the war.

Experiments in the use of biowarfare agents—such as botulism and anthrax—were also conducted against prisoners of war (POWs) at the Mukden POW Camp in northeast

China. By the end of the war, the Japanese had stockpiled 400 kilograms of anthrax to be used in a specially designed fragmentation bomb that was never deployed. The United States interrogated survivors of Unit 731 after the armistice and learned the full extent of the Japanese program.



Chinese and Japanese experts investigate and categorize munitions excavated from a site known to contain Japanese chemical weapons left behind from World War II in Mudanjiang, in China's northern Heilongjiang Province, on July 5, 2006. (Natalie Behring/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

The United States conducted considerable biological warfare-related research during the Cold War before the BWTC was negotiated and signed in 1972.

In 2015, the Smithsonian Magazine published an article describing a U.S. Navy bioweapons test in 1950, two miles off the northern California coast, using a bacterium that produced a red pigment to make it easy to examine its effects. Eleven residents later were determined to have urinary tract infections related to the bacteria.

That article further stated that the U.S. military performed other biowarfare-related tests in the United States until President Richard Nixon halted biowarfare research in 1969.

Francis Boyle, now a professor at the University of Illinois College of Law, was the principal drafter of the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989 (BWATA), which implemented the 1972 Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.

According to LewRockwell.com, Boyle made the following allegation: “Since Sept. 11, 2001, we [the United States] have spent somewhere in the area of \$100 billion on offensive biological warfare.”

Was Boyle’s sensational claim correct?

Fast-forward to the Russo-Ukrainian war and allegations by Russia and China about U.S.-funded “bioweapons-related research laboratories” in Ukraine. Although there has been much circumstantial evidence, speculation, and propaganda swirling about this topic, a final determination of what transpired in those biological research labs will probably have to wait until a thorough investigation is completed after the war.

Questions certainly need to be answered, but the continuing accusations by China, in particular, raise an obvious red flag since the Chinese communists are masters at psychological warfare and disinformation in order to shift attention away from their own transgressions.

Let us examine China’s biowarfare history. What might the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) be hiding on this topic?

Communist China and Biowarfare

Since the Chinese themselves had been victims of Imperial Japan’s biological warfare campaign during World War II, it is no surprise that communist China began research into the development of bioweapons after 1949.

An excellent 2020 article from Air University makes several key points about China’s likely biological warfare program:

- China signed the Geneva Protocol of 1925 in 1952.
- China signed the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in 1984; the Chinese were assessed as having a robust biowarfare research program before they signed the convention.

- Before signing the BTWC, China insisted on the insertion of a clause that meant the treaty was only binding if all other signatories were also following the guidelines, thus giving the Chinese an out to not only pursue biological weapons but to use them if determined “appropriate.”
- While denying the existence of an offensive biological program, China has developed a robust biodefense infrastructure and a biotechnology industry that **has substantial dual-use capabilities** that can be used for both biodefense and bioweapons.
- By 2005, China was the biggest violator of export restrictions under the BTWC. It sold dual-use equipment and vaccines with both civilian medical applications and biological weapons applications to other countries.
- It is believed that China has helped Iran and other Middle Eastern nations build their own biological weapons programs.
- According to a 2014 U.S. State Department report, it is clear that “China possesses the required technology and resources to mass-produce traditional [biological weapon] agents as well as expertise in aerobiology.”

At least two flu pandemics in the past century—in 1957 and 1968—originated in China and were triggered by avian (“bird flu”) viruses that evolved to become easily transmissible between humans.

The 1957-1958 H2N2 pandemic killed an estimated 1.1 million people worldwide and 116,000 in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

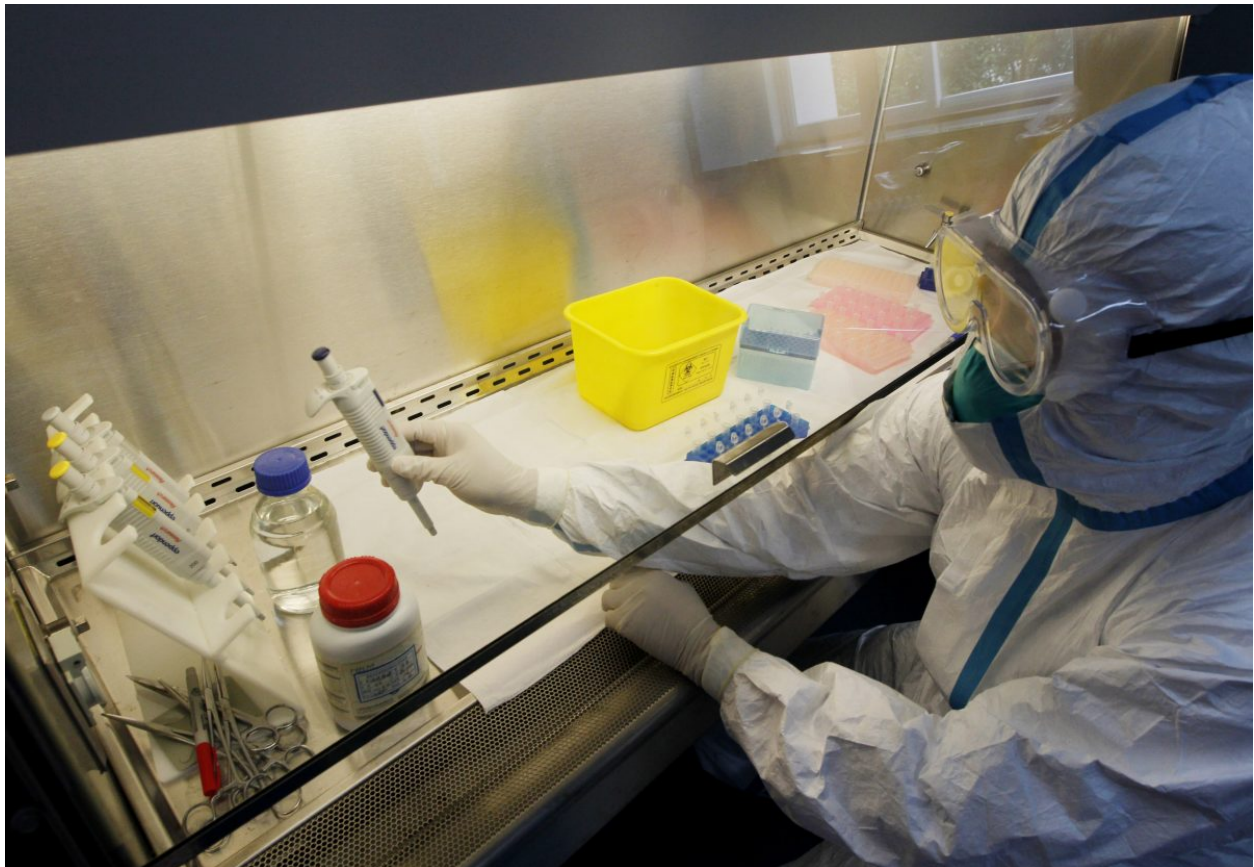
The 1968 H3N2 pandemic killed an estimated 1 million people worldwide and about 100,000 in the United States, according to the CDC.

In November 2002, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was discovered in southern China. According to the CDC, a coronavirus (SARS-CoV) infected 8,098 people worldwide, including eight in the United States, and killed 774 people worldwide (none in the United States)—a death rate of 10 percent. It was largely “contained” by July 2003.

The Smithsonian Magazine published an article about the bird flu in 2017 that is almost a precursor of the spread of the SAR-CoV-2 virus. It stated the following:

- The Avian influenza A (H7N9) virus first spread from birds to humans in 2013.

- There have been five waves of that “bird flu” virus (now six, per the CDC: “China is currently experiencing its sixth epidemic of Asian H7N9 human infections”).
- The fifth wave began in October 2016 and infected 766 people—far more than any of the four preceding waves.
- There have been 1,589 total cases of H7N9, with 616 of them fatal (a 39 percent mortality rate).
- If H7N9 were to mutate further and develop the ability to pass readily from person to person, it could spread rapidly and kill millions of people worldwide.



A technician conducts tests for the H7N9 bird flu virus at the Kunming Center for Disease Control in China on April 10, 2013. Chinese scientists believe new cases of H7N9 bird flu in East China may indicate the risk of a fresh outbreak of the virus during winter. (ChinaFotoPress/Getty Images)

Then there is another coronavirus that first made its appearance in 2019 in China’s Wuhan city: the SARS-CoV-2 virus or CCP virus. Thousands of articles have detailed the worldwide COVID pandemic over the past two years!

Are all these China-originated viruses merely acts of nature or something more sinister?

It is alleged that the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory is just a cover for the research and development of Chinese bioweapons. Could SARS-CoV-2 have been bioengineered at the Wuhan Institute of Virology?



An aerial view shows the P4 laboratory at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan in China's central Hubei Province on April 17, 2020. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

Despite open-source speculation by reputable scientists and others, the origin of the CCP virus remains unconfirmed, albeit very likely.

Have the Chinese communists given us any clues to the puzzle?

A document written by Chinese scientists and public health officials in 2015 actually predicts that biological warfare will be the basis for conducting "World War III." Is this document a harbinger?

The document, titled "The Unnatural Origin of SARS and New Species of Man-Made Viruses as Genetic Bioweapons," stated that *SARS coronaviruses could be engineered* as a "new era of genetic weapons" that can be "artificially manipulated into an emerging human disease virus" and then weaponized and released into the general population in unprecedented ways.

Another piece of the puzzle was an obscure FBI tactical intelligence report from November 2019 that detailed an incident in which a Chinese scientist was caught carrying viruses from China into the United States in November 2018.

As reported two years after the incident by yahoo! news, the details are shocking: “Inspection of the writing on the vials and the stated recipient led inspection personnel to believe the materials contained within the vials may be viable Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) materials. ... [T]he FBI concluded that the incident, and two other cases cited in the report, were part of an alarming pattern [of ongoing U.S. biosecurity risks].”

There are no such things as coincidences! And a clear pattern emerges.

Conclusion

Available open-source information from U.S. government agencies and news reports enables a logical conclusion that communist China has an ongoing offensive biological warfare program that is camouflaged by an extensive Chinese dual-use biodefense infrastructure and a biotechnology industry developed over the past several decades.

Chinese authorities have suggested that World War III may be fought with biological warfare weapons. A Chinese scientist was caught entering the United States with MERS and SARS virus samples in 2018. The world continues to endure waves of viral pandemics that originated in China. The SARS-CoV-2 was almost certainly engineered by humans. Has World War III already started?

Stu Cvrk retired as a captain after serving 30 years in the U.S. Navy in a variety of active and reserve capacities, with considerable operational experience in the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Through education and experience as an oceanographer and systems analyst, Cvrk is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he received a classical liberal education that serves as the key foundation for his political commentary.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/surveying-the-biological-warfare-landscape_4392080.html

What Have We Learned After 2 Years of COVID: Lockdowns Don't Work



People visit Clearwater Beach after Governor Ron DeSantis opened the beaches at 7am, in Clearwater, Fla., on May 4, 2020. (Mike Ehrmann/Getty Images)

What Have We Learned After 2 Years of COVID: Lockdowns Don't Work

*Stephen Moore
April 18, 2022
Commentary*

Last week, University of Chicago economist Casey Mulligan, COVID expert Phil Kerpen, and I released a study in the National Bureau of Economic Research that graded the

states on their COVID performance. The study's findings have spread throughout the country at warp speed. The Wall Street Journal, Fox News, New York Post, Daily Mail, and even media in Europe and Japan have picked up the findings.

We examine three metrics: health of the citizens and death rate from COVID, the economic performance of the state, and days of school lost to children.

The conclusion was that those states that locked down their economies and schools for the longest periods of time ranked worst, because lockdown mandates were only marginally effective at reducing deaths, but they did severe damage to children. States such as Utah, Montana, and Florida had minimal lockdowns so their economies remained vibrant with persistently low unemployment. The schools remained mostly open in these states.

Here are the top states and bottom states:

Worst Performers

- New Jersey
- New York
- New Mexico
- California
- Illinois

Best Performers

- Utah
- Nebraska
- Vermont
- South Dakota
- Florida

As you may imagine, the pushback has been high in volume, but feeble in persuasion. Our favorite came from the Soros group Media Matters, which couldn't come up with a coherent argument, except that we are "right-leaning."

But the California and Florida comparison speaks volumes about what did and didn't work. California had harsh lockdowns for many many months, while Florida had relatively few government orders on COVID. California wrecked its economy with bankruptcies and long unemployment lines; Florida remained mostly open as life went on as usual with beaches, schools, and restaurants closed.

Yet, California and Florida had roughly the same death rate when adjusting for the age of the population. So it is NOT true, as California Gov. Gavin Newsom says, that "lockdowns saved thousands of lives in California."

It's clear to us from the chorus of indignation that the left has every intention to lock down schools, businesses, restaurants, parks, and churches AGAIN at their first next opportunity.

We suspect, and this is NOT based on science, that Democrats and socialists just like being miserable and they think it is "fair" that everyone should be equally miserable. Remember the indignation from the left when Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis opened the beaches and restaurants.

Those who STILL think that lockdowns keep us safe and healthy need to explain the near-zero correlation between lockdown severity and death rates in the 50 states. I've been waiting for two years for such an explanation.

And I'm still waiting.

Stephen Moore is a senior fellow at FreedomWorks and co-founder of the Committee to Unleash Prosperity. He served as a senior economic adviser to Donald Trump. His new book is entitled: "Govzilla: How the Relentless Growth of Government Is Impoverishing America."

https://www.theepochtimes.com/what-have-we-learned-after-2-years-of-covid-lockdowns-dont-work_4409431.html

Chinese State Media Exposes True Purpose of 'Zero-COVID': A Battle of Systems and National Power



Police and workers in protective gear next to some lockdown areas after the detection of new cases of COVID-19 in Shanghai on March 14, 2022. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

Chinese State Media Exposes True Purpose of 'Zero-COVID': A Battle of Systems and National Power

Justin Zhang
April 19, 2022

Xinhua News Agency, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) official media outlet, said in an April 13 article that the CCP demonstrated the advantages of its leadership and the socialist system in fighting the novel coronavirus and accomplished what other countries wanted to achieve but could not.

It has been more than two years since the outbreak of the CCP virus. Some Western countries have chosen to "live with the virus," with the epidemic controls gradually being lifted and people returning to normal life. The CCP however, vehemently opposes "living with the virus" domestically, and instead implemented a draconian dynamic zero-COVID policy and elevated events into a battle of ideology and political system.

Shenzhen Special Zone Daily, a state media, said on March 20 that whether the government adhered to "dynamic zero-COVID" or chose to "live with the virus" was actually a contest of "system, national strength, governance capacity, and even civilization" between the CCP and western countries.

China.org.cn, another state media, also said on April 6 that zero-COVID was a decisive battle that would determine the fate of the regime.

"The CCP is playing politics. To be more specific, the CCP wants to prove its brilliance and greatness by achieving zero-COVID. It will do so at any cost," Commentator Chao Jie told The Epoch Times.

Chao believes that the CCP has made a political campaign of zero-COVID, resorting to all sorts of extreme means. "It often puts a certain indicator, a certain issue in the most prominent, overriding position [during its political campaigns]," he said.

As of April 14, 30 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities in China have been affected by the pandemic. Chinese society has already paid a huge price for the CCP's insistence on implementing its draconian dynamic zero-COVID policy.

In early April, during the Shanghai zero-COVID campaign, the CCP authorities forcibly took infected children from their families and isolated them in separate facilities. More than 200 children were isolated at the Shanghai Jinshan Public Health Clinical Center, with only 10 nurses to take care of them. In some of the details that have come to light, multiple children have been placed in one bed, while others have had their skin festering because it took so long for their diapers to be changed.



Footage of babies left crying at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center emerged on the Chinese internet in early April. (Screenshot via Weibo)

In order to “zero-COVID,” Shanghai continued the lockdown, resulting in a shortage of basic supplies and many Shanghai residents being in a constant state of hunger.

The zero-COVID policy has made China’s economy more vulnerable. The Caixin Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) fell 2.3 percentage points to 48.1 in March, the lowest since March 2020. The CSI 300 index and the Shenzhen component index (SZI) fell about 15 percent and 18 percent, respectively, in the first quarter, their biggest quarterly declines since the third quarter of 2015.

Meanwhile, the CCP is shifting the cost of zero-COVID internationally. The policy has disrupted Chinese companies’ production plans and expectations. Production cuts and shutdowns have reduced supply, while production uncertainties are driving up the cost of made-in-China products and fueling global inflation.

“The CCP has gone to great lengths for zero-COVID. It wants to prove that its socialist system is superior to the Western capitalist system,” Ji Da, a U.S.-based China expert told The Epoch Times. “It also wants to establish the so-called ‘credibility of a great power’ and prove its national power. It’s actually a deceptive attempt to save the Party.”

“The CCP wants to establish the credibility of a great power in order to give investors an expectation, so that the outside world will have an impression and psychological

expectation that ‘the CCP is strong,’” Katherine Jiang, a financial analyst in Hong Kong, told The Epoch Times.

“Expectations are important because people’s behavior and decisions are often based on expectations. This is especially true in the economic sphere and in the capital markets.”

“This is why one of the ‘six stable’ economic policies proposed at the Political Bureau meeting of the CCP Central Committee on July 31, 2018 is ‘stabilizing expectations,’” Ji said.

For the first time since the outbreak in 2020, disobedience has been seen at the social level during the ongoing zero-COVID campaign in Shanghai.

After the lockdown of Shanghai, the extreme shortage of supplies triggered a series of protests for material resources and food: some citizens shouted from the balconies and windows of residential buildings; some came out of their homes and gathered in protest; some, after being hungry for days, asked the police to let them out to get food on their own; others have kicked out street workers, the lowest administrative unit of the CCP, and set up their own service management systems to distribute food.

Commentator Li Yiming told The Epoch Times that in the narrative of the CCP’s propaganda system, the zero-COVID campaign is for “the people,” but it is the people who actually suffer. “The CCP’s claim of ‘serving the people’ does not include the people. They only serve the powerful and the rich. The people are just the price of sacrifice for the CCP,” he said.

Epoch Times reporter Ellen Wan contributed to this report.

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https://www.theepochtimes.com/chinese-state-media-exposes-true-purpose-of-zero-covid-a-battle-of-systems-and-national-power_4412555.html

The Shanghai Model of Pandemic Combat



A resident behind barriers sealing off an area under lockdown in Shanghai on April 14, 2022. (Aly Song/Reuters)

The Shanghai Model of Pandemic Combat

Joseph Cheng

April 20, 2022

Commentary

Early last week, the pandemic situation in Shanghai continued to deteriorate. But according to official reports, there was only one serious case. Netizens naturally raised the question: was it worthwhile to lock down the city with a population of 25 million for a single serious case? Public opinion, however, is not expected to have an impact. Local officials understand that the leadership demands strict accountability in the combat of the epidemic; those who perform will be promoted and those who fail to deliver will lose their positions, especially when the 20th Party Congress is approaching.

A few months ago, experts suggested in the media to adjust the “zero case” approach and consider western countries’ experiences; but such views were suppressed immediately. Till now, the official propaganda machinery adopts a unified stand, the “zero case” approach becomes an unshakable state policy. The combat of an epidemic is a scientific medical issue. Most governments recruit experts as advisors, and largely rely on them to explain to the public the necessary policy measures. The Chinese authorities also recruit experts, but they can only toe the government line; they are not supposed to openly deliberate on different options and refer to successful foreign experiences. This is typical politicisation of the issue, and it is related to the leadership’s prestige.

Up till the end of last year, Shanghai performed quite well in containing the epidemic, and local leaders boasted of their accurate and concentrated policy programme. Recently, the metropolis has been accused by its neighbours for passing the virus to them. Chinese netizens often try to find a scapegoat for their troubles; not long ago Hong Kong was similarly blamed by Shenzhen.

Chinese leaders accord a high priority to the combat of the epidemic, partly to demonstrate the superiority of their political system, especially its mobilisation power. Besides North Korea, China’s mobilisation power probably tops the world. On April 3, 2022, over ten thousand medical personnel arrived at Shanghai to help; and on the following day they completed the COVID test for the entire city’s population. A few days later, more than thirty thousand medical personnel reached the city from several neighbouring provinces to help. Basic isolation facilities were also promptly set up.

For the people of Shanghai, however, this impressive mobilisation power had not delivered satisfactory services. Under severe lockdown measures, some families could not receive food in time. Families with sick members were worried about their medical supplies. A few patients could not produce satisfactory test records and died because of delays in seeking medical treatment. The most unreasonable arrangement was the separation of young symptomatic children from their parents.

Although the Chinese authorities tried hard to block news of the grievances, international media still managed to produce broad coverage of the Shanghai situation. The image of the Chinese authorities as an effective administration has been considerably damaged. The Indian economist Amartya Sen observed that in the modern era, serious famines had never occurred in democratic countries. This was because their governments accord a priority to the people’s interests, and would not impose dictatorial and unreasonable policies. The Shanghai situation offers a clear counter-example.

In a democratic country like New Zealand, the serious epidemic situation forced the authorities to impose a lockdown on cities like Auckland some months ago. Yet people were still allowed to go to nearby supermarkets to get their supplies, and take a walk within five kilometres from home for an hour every day. The government understands the needs of the people's psychological health; and this is an important consideration regarding people's rights.

The Shanghai situation was quite different. After a lockdown of a week or so, some people obviously suffered from mental stress. For the less serious cases, inhabitants loudly yelled in their apartments, and attracted similar behaviour from neighbours. In more serious cases, people fought with staffers implementing the lockdown, and some even went to the streets to curse the Party. Chinese officials refused to acknowledge the problem of mental stress in quarantine.

Politburo member, Vice-premier Sun Chunlan was in Shanghai to take command. On April 2, she announced the upholding of the "zero case" policy. Then on April 6, she demanded both the normal functioning of the city and the effective containment of the epidemic. Obviously while it was easy to give orders, it was far more difficult to implement them.

In the beginning of last week, the Shanghai authorities announced some relaxations, and the metropolis was divided into three zones. But the relaxation was limited, 60 percent of the population was still in the lockdown zone and could not leave their residences. Only one fifth in the precautionary zone could go to the streets and markets nearby.

It has been suggested that a country's civility and human rights are best reflected in its prisons. Actually a country's human rights conditions are quite clearly shown in its combat of a serious epidemic.

Joseph Yu-shek Cheng is a retired professor of political science at City University of Hong Kong. He publishes widely on the political developments in China and Hong Kong, Chinese foreign policy, and development in southern China. He has been an activist serving the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong for four decades. In his retirement, he continues to work as a current affairs commentator and columnist. Email: josephcheng6@gmail.com

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-shanghai-model-of-pandemic-combat_4413017.html

We Followed the Directives of the Central Committee of the CCP



A transit officer, wearing protective gear, controls access to a tunnel in the direction of Shanghai's Pudong district in lockdown on March 28, 2022. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

We Followed the Directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

*Steve Keen
April 20, 2022
Commentary*

The horrific scenes in Shanghai in the last few weeks, as residents face starvation because of the way China's Zero-COVID policy is being enforced, reminded me of my

first trip to China over forty years ago, when I ran a conference between Australian and Chinese journalists in November 1981.



Australian and Chinese participants at the press seminar in Beijing.

Figure 1: A photo of the participants in the “Sino-Australian Press Seminar” that I organized on behalf of the Australia-China Council and the All-China Journalists’ Association. I’m the young man with a beard in the front row. (Steve Keen)

The seminar itself was a fascinating experience, but the key issue which today’s catastrophe brings to mind was a bizarre pair of economic statistics. Just before the Australian delegation departed for Beijing, China announced that light industry output had risen by 17 percent in the previous year—but heavy industry output had *fallen* by 7 percent.

This pair of numbers simply didn’t make sense. Light industry—bicycles, lights, consumer goods in general—requires inputs from heavy industry—steel, cement, etc. How on earth could light industry rise so much while heavy industry fell? Getting to the bottom of this conundrum was a key objective for the seven Australian journalists who attended this conference.

Our Chinese counterparts at the seminar couldn't give a satisfactory explanation, but the subsequent tour finally provided an answer; one which I believe is relevant to the heavy-handed way in which China is enforcing its anti-COVID lockdown today.

To every question we asked of virtually anyone, the first answer was the quote that headlines this article: "We followed the directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China." If you asked someone what they had for breakfast, that's what they'd first say, before mentioning Congee or Dòujiāng. This obsequious reply became key to my understanding of the China that Mao created.

The answer to our statistical conundrum was provided by an official whose title was translated to us as the "Economic Boss of Shanghai." He gave us that stock standard answer to our question: "We followed the directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China."

After it, one of the journalists asked him "But what does that mean?" He elaborated that "the Central Committee sent out a directive to promote light industry." Someone else followed up with "So, what did you do?" His answer, translated for us by our wonderful guides, remains etched into my brain over four decades later: "We stripped heavy industry factories and turned them into light industry."

Good grief. That is no way to manage an economy. Why on earth was that done?

It came down to how one survived a totalitarian regime when one was actually part of it. The Central Committee of the Communist Party was all-powerful, but it was also factionalized. One faction would be dominant, and its orders would be transmitted from its 300 or so members to the 30 million members of the Communist Party itself as a slogan—like "promote light industry"—rather than a detailed set of plans, because communications were primitive, as were the education levels of the recipients of the orders.

These orders would inevitably lead to catastrophes, and the only way that the hapless enforcers of these orders could protect their butts from the inevitable backlash was to carry them out *to the letter*. Then, if you were to be punished, so would be the people who gave them to you—the dominant faction in the Central Committee itself. As an underling, you would survive, while the consequences of the failure would play out in the endless factional battles within the Central Committee.

So, if the directive was to "promote grain," local officials would order the peasants to pull up legume crops and plant grain instead. One year later, there would be bountiful grain,

but not enough protein, and children would be born with Kwashiorkor, the protein deficiency disease—as we observed in Sichuan province on that tour. The consequence of the dominant Central Committee faction being pro-grain was not a balanced emphasis upon legumes, but local officials ordering peasants to dig up legume crops and planting grain instead.

The peasants, who had no choice but to obey the “promote grain” orders, would rise up when their newborn children paid the consequences, the revolt would percolate up the Communist Party system, the dominance of factions would swap, the new directive would be “promote legumes,” grain crops would be dug up and replaced with legumes, and a year later there would be a famine.

This crazy cycle of command, catastrophe, and reaction is what ultimately led to Deng Xiaoping’s pragmatic overthrow of the Gang of Four. But the dominance of the Central Committee remains, and with it, the same excessive adherence to its directives seems afoot in Shanghai. So, because the Central Committee has decided upon a zero tolerance approach to COVID, doors are welded shut rather than locked, and all because the best defense to criticism when the policy causes catastrophe continues to be that “We followed the directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.”



Figure 2: The Australian journalists stroll through Tiananmen Square in November 1981. (Steve Keen)

Professor Keen is a distinguished research fellow at University College London, an author, and has received the Revere Award from the Real World Economics Review. His main research interests are developing the complex systems approach to macroeconomics and the economics of climate change. He has entered politics as the lead candidate in New South Wales for the new Australian political party The New Liberals. His main research interests are developing the complex systems approach to macroeconomics, and the economics of climate change. In an unusual step for a retired academic, he has entered politics as the lead candidate in New South Wales for the new Australian political party The New Liberals.

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