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Coronavirus Whistleblower: Exclusive Fox News Interview



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CORONAVIRUS · Published 43 mins ago

EXCLUSIVE: Chinese virologist accuses Beijing of coronavirus cover-up, flees Hong Kong: 'I know how they treat whistleblowers'

Li-Meng Yan told Fox News that she believes China knew about the coronavirus well before it claimed it did. She says her supervisors also ignored research she was doing that she believes could have saved lives.



By **Barnini Chakraborty, Alex Diaz** | Fox News

00:00 / 13:42 CC

Coronavirus Whistleblower: Exclusive Fox News Interview

Dr. Li-Meng Yan, a virologist from Hong Kong, tells Fox News in an exclusive interview about the early research she says she conducted into COVID-19, and why she believes that research was withheld from the world.

EXCLUSIVE: [Hong Kong](#) scientist Dr. Li-Meng Yan was stepping into uncharted territory.

Hours before she boarded an April 28 Cathay Pacific flight to the United States, the respected doctor who specialized in virology and immunology at the [Hong Kong School of Public Health](#) had plotted her escape, packing her bag and sneaking past the censors and video cameras on campus.

She had her passport and her purse and was about to leave all of her loved ones behind. If she was caught, she knew she could be thrown in jail -- or, worse, rendered one of the "disappeared."

Yan told Fox News in an exclusive interview that she believes the Chinese government knew about the [novel coronavirus](#) well before it claimed it did. She says her supervisors, renowned as some of the top experts in the field, also ignored research she was doing at the onset of the pandemic that she believes could have saved lives.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION SUBMITS NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

She adds that they likely had an obligation to tell the world, given their status as a [World Health Organization](#) reference laboratory specializing in influenza viruses and pandemics, especially as the virus began spreading in the early days of 2020.

Yan, now in hiding, claims the government in the country where she was born is trying to shred her reputation and accuses government goons of choreographing a cyber-attack against her in hopes of keeping her quiet.

Yan believes her life is in danger. She fears she can never go back to her home and lives with the hard truth that she'll likely never see her friends or family there again.

CHINESE AUTHORITIES DETAIN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF XI JINPING

Still, she says, the risk is worth it.

"The reason I came to the U.S. is because I deliver the message of the truth of COVID," she told Fox News from an undisclosed location.

She added that if she tried to tell her story in China, she "will be disappeared and killed."



Photo of Dr. Li-Meng Yan at her wedding. (Yan)

Yan's story weaves an extraordinary claim about cover-ups at the highest levels of government and seemingly exposes the obsessive compulsion of President Xi Jinping and his Communist Party to control the coronavirus narrative: what China knew, when it knew it and what edited information it peddled to the rest of the world.

CHINA CHURCHES ORDERED TO PRAISE XI JINPING'S HANDLING OF CORONAVIRUS BEFORE REOPENING, WATCHDOG SAYS

Yan, who says she was one of the first scientists in the world to study the novel coronavirus, was allegedly asked by her supervisor at the University/WHO reference lab, Dr. Leo Poon, in 2019 to look into the odd cluster of SARS-like cases coming out of mainland China at the end of December 2019.

"The China government refused to let overseas experts, including ones in Hong Kong, do research in China," she said. "So I turned to my friends to get more information."

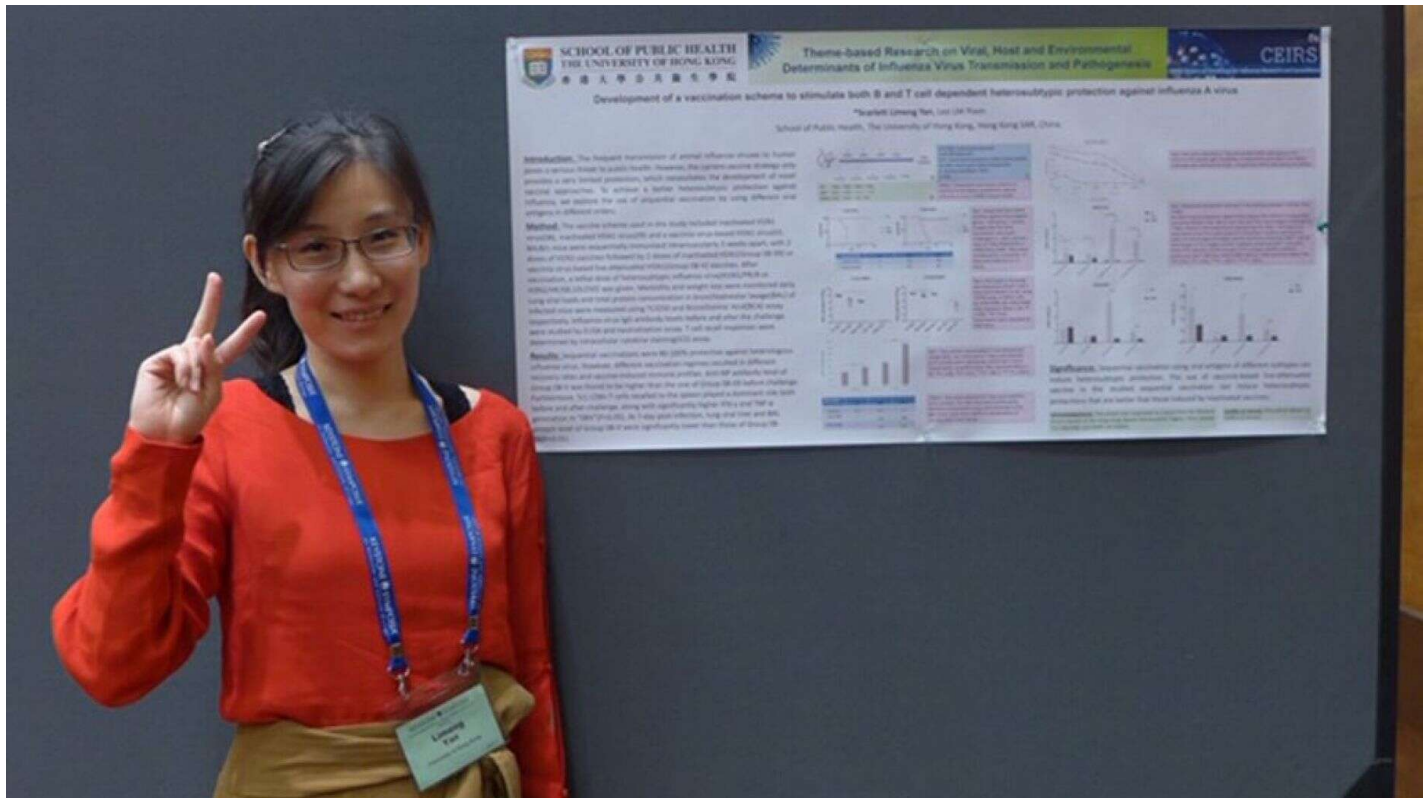
Yan had an extensive network of professional contacts in various medical facilities in mainland China, having grown up and completed much of her studies there. She says that is the precise reason she was asked to conduct this kind of research, especially at a time when she says her team knew they weren't getting the whole truth from the government.

One friend, a scientist at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in China, had first-hand knowledge of the cases and purportedly told Yan on Dec. 31 about human-to-human transmission well before China or the WHO admitted such spread was possible.

She reported some of these early findings back to her boss, Yan said.

"He just nodded," she recalled, and told her to keep working.

A few days later, on Jan. 9, 2020, the WHO put out a statement: "According to Chinese authorities, the virus in question can cause severe illness in some patients and does not transmit readily between people... There is limited information to determine the overall risk of this reported cluster."



Dr. Li-Meng Yan in Hong Kong (Yan)

Yan said she and her colleagues across China discussed the peculiar virus but that she soon noted a sharp shift in tone.

Doctors and researchers who had been openly discussing the virus suddenly clammed up. Those from the city of Wuhan—which later would become the hub of the outbreak—went silent and others were warned not to ask them details.

The doctors said, ominously, "We can't talk about it, but we need to wear masks," Yan said.

'EMERGING EVIDENCE' OF CORONAVIRUS AIRBORNE TRANSMISSION INDICATED BY WHO

Then the numbers of human-to-human transmission began to grow exponentially, according to her sources, and Yan started digging for answers.

"There are many, many patients who don't get treatment on time and diagnosis on time," Yan said. "Hospital doctors are scared, but they cannot talk. CDC staff are scared."

She said she reported her findings to her supervisor again on Jan. 16 but that's when he allegedly told her "to keep silent, and be careful."

"As he warned me before, 'Don't touch the red line,'" Yan said referring to the government. "We will get in trouble and we'll be disappeared."

She also claims the co-director of a WHO-affiliated lab, [Professor Malik Peiris](#), knew but didn't do anything about it.

Peiris also did not respond to requests for comment. The WHO website lists Peiris as an "adviser" on the WHO International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for Pneumonia due to the Novel Coronavirus 2019-nCoV.

Yan was frustrated, but not surprised.

"I already know that would happen because I know the corruption among this kind of international organization like the WHO to China government, and to China Communist Party," she said. "So basically... I accept it but I don't want this misleading information to spread to the world."



The WHO and China have vehemently denied claims of a coronavirus cover-up.

The WHO has also denied that Yan, Poon or Peiris ever worked directly for the organization.

"Professor Malik Peiris is an infectious disease expert who has been on WHO missions and expert groups - as are many people eminent in their fields," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Ann Harris said in an email. "That does not make him a WHO staff member, nor does he represent WHO."

[HOUSE GOP ACCUSES CHINA, WHO OF 'FAILURE OF MONUMENTAL PROPORTIONS' IN SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS](#)

Yan says despite any pushback, she has been emboldened by a sense of right and wrong and says she had to speak up despite the personal and professional consequences.

"I know how they treat whistleblowers," she said.

"I know how they treat whistleblowers."

— Dr. Li-Meng Yan

Like so many before her, once Yan decided to speak out against China, she discovered her life was apparently in jeopardy, as well as that of those closest to her.

It was a fear directly relayed to her and seemingly confirmed by U.S.-based Hong Kong blogger [Lu Deh](#), she says.

After she shared some of her theories and suspicions with him, he told her she would need to relocate, perhaps to the United States, where she wouldn't have to constantly look over her shoulder. Only then would she be safe and have a platform to speak, he said.

Yan made the decision to leave, but things got complicated when her husband of six years, who also worked at her lab, discovered the telephone call between his wife and the blogger.

Yan told Fox News she begged her husband to go with her, and says while her spouse, a reputable scientist himself, had initially been supportive of her research, he suddenly had a change of heart.

"He was totally pissed off," she said. "He blamed me, tried to ruin my confidence... He said they will kill all of us."

"He said, 'they will kill all of us.'"

— Dr. Li-Meng Yan

Shocked and hurt, Yan made the decision to leave without him.

She got her ticket to the U.S. on April 27. She was on a flight the next day.

When she landed at Los Angeles International Airport after her 13-hour journey, she was stopped by customs officials.

Fear gripped her and Yan didn't know if she would end up in jail or be sent back to China.

"I had to tell them the truth," she said. "I'm doing the right thing. So I tell them that 'don't let me go back to China. I'm the one who came to tell the truth here of COVID-19... And please protect me. If not, the China government will kill me."

[The FBI](#) was allegedly called in to investigate. Yan claims they interviewed her for hours, took her cell phone as evidence and allowed her to continue to her destination.

The FBI told Fox News it could neither confirm nor deny Yan's claims; however, Fox News was shown an evidence receipt that appeared to confirm an interaction.

As Yan was trying to find her footing in America, she says her friends and family back home were being put through the wringer.

Yan claims the government swarmed her hometown of Qingdao and that agents ripped apart her tiny apartment and questioned her parents. When she contacted her mother and father, they pleaded with her to come home, told her she didn't know what she was talking about and begged her to give up the fight.

The University of Hong Kong took down her page and apparently revoked access to her online portals and emails, despite the fact that she says she was on an approved annual leave. In a statement to Fox News, a school spokesperson said Yan is not currently an employee.

"Dr Li-Meng Yan is no longer a staff member of the University," the statement read. "Out of respect for our current and former employees, we don't disclose personal information about her. Your understanding is appreciated."



The Chinese Embassy in the United States told Fox News they don't know who Yan is and maintain China has handled the pandemic heroically.

"We have never heard of this person," the emailed statement read. "The Chinese government has responded swiftly and effectively to COVID-19 since its outbreak. All its efforts have been clearly documented in the white paper "Fighting COVID-19: China in Action" with full transparency. Facts tell all."

The WHO has also continued to deny any wrongdoing during the earliest days of the virus. The medical arm of the United Nations has been taken to task recently by scientists challenging its official view of how the virus spreads. The WHO has also altered the coronavirus timeline on its website, now saying it got information about the virus from WHO scientists and not the Beijing authorities--as it has claimed for more than six months.

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Fox News has also reached out to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the scientists Yan accuses of suppressing her concerns for comment.

Yan says she'll continue to speak out--but knows there's a target on her back.

You can find Barnini Chakraborty on Twitter [@Barnini](#).

WHO admits China never reported the existence of coronavirus outbreak

by Jerry Dunleavy | July 02, 2020 04:31 PM

The World Health Organization backtracked on its assertion that the Chinese government [alerted](#) the United Nations agency about the coronavirus outbreak.

The WHO quietly updated its “Timeline of WHO’s response to COVID-19” on Tuesday following the House Foreign Affairs Committee Republicans’ mid-June [Interim Report on Origins of COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (led by ranking member and China task force Chairman Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas), which concluded that “despite public reporting to the contrary ... China never notified the WHO about the outbreak in Wuhan.” The change was spotted by McCaul and [first reported](#) by the *Washington Free Beacon*.

“I’m glad to see the WHO and the Chinese Communist Party have both read my interim report on the origins of the pandemic and are finally admitting to the world the truth — the CCP never reported the virus outbreak to the WHO in violation of WHO regulations,” McCaul said in a statement to the *Washington Examiner*. “The question now is whether the CCP will continue their false propaganda campaign that continues to claim they warned the world or whether they will come clean and begin to work with the world health community to get to the bottom of this deadly pandemic.”

McCaul’s June report said the WHO found out about the coronavirus outbreak when Chinese media reports about an atypical pneumonia outbreak began to leak online and that the organization also discovered a post on the Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases, a U.S.-based open-access platform for early intelligence about outbreaks, on the last day of 2019.

The previous iteration of the [timeline](#) said the “Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, China, reported [a cluster of cases of pneumonia](#) in Wuhan.” The [updated timeline](#) states that the WHO’s country office in China “picked up a media statement by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission from their website on cases of ‘viral pneumonia’ in Wuhan” and that the WHO’s Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources platform “also picked up a [media report](#) on ProMED ... about the same cluster of cases of ‘pneumonia of unknown cause’ in Wuhan.”

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus sought to downplay the early warnings about the outbreak that Taiwan says it provided to the organization and stressed that the “first report” came from Wuhan, where the outbreak is believed to have originated.

“The first report came from Wuhan, from China itself, so Taiwan was only asking for clarification, and as some people were claiming, Taiwan didn't report any human-to-human transmission; this has to be clear,” Tedros [said](#) in April, adding, “So, the report first came from China — that's fact number one — from Wuhan itself.”

There's evidence that China [covered up](#) the coronavirus's spread, [muzzled](#) whistleblowers, [intimidated](#) doctors, [misled](#) the WHO, and [blocked](#) outside health experts. China knew by [late 2019](#) that human-to-human transmission was occurring, but on Jan. 14, the WHO [tweeted](#): “Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission.”

As Tedros and the WHO publicly praised China's [response](#), internal recordings show WHO leaders privately complained about China's opacity.

In April, the U.S. Intelligence Community [was reported to believe](#) the Chinese Communist Party downplayed the outbreak and that China continued to mislead the world.

Numerous news outlets reported that China directly alerted the WHO about the coronavirus outbreak on Dec. 31, and the WHO never publicly sought to correct the record.

China repeatedly claimed it had reported the outbreak to the WHO, including as recently as early June through the [state-run China Daily](#), but Beijing appears to have backed off this assertion.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian was asked about McCaul's report in late June and replied that “this so-called report ... spreads disinformation in an attempt to smear China.” But when the Chinese official went through a [lengthy timeline](#) of China's alleged response, he dropped China's claims about reporting to the WHO on Dec. 31.

The House GOP report in June said China “bears overwhelming responsibility” for the coronavirus outbreak becoming a pandemic following the country's efforts to conceal its “spread and novel nature.” The 50-page report highlighted China's “failures to share accurate information” and its “suppression of voices seeking to warn the world.” GOP investigators concluded Chinese President Xi Jinping was aware that a pandemic was underway weeks before the public was warned.

The WHO “enabled the CCP cover-up ... while at the same time praising the CCP's response,” according to GOP investigators, who also [determined](#) “the COVID-19 global pandemic could have been prevented if the CCP acted in a transparent and responsible manner.”



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Wuhan lab had three live bat coronaviruses: Chinese state media

AFP • May 24, 2020



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The Chinese virology institute at the centre of US allegations it may have been the source of the COVID-19 pandemic has three live strains of bat coronavirus on-site, but none match the new global contagion, its director has said.

Scientists think COVID-19 -- which first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan and has killed more than 340,000 people worldwide -- originated in bats and could have been transmitted to people via another mammal.

But the director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology told state broadcaster CGTN that claims made by US President Donald Trump and others the virus could have leaked from the facility were "pure fabrication".

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In the interview filmed on May 13 but broadcast Saturday night, Wang Yanyi said the centre has "isolated and obtained some coronaviruses from bats".

"Now we have three strains of live viruses... But their highest similarity to SARS-CoV-2 only reaches 79.8 percent," she said, referring to the coronavirus strain that causes COVID-19.

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One of their research teams, led by Professor Shi Zhengli, has been researching bat coronaviruses since 2004 and focused on the "source tracing of SARS", the strain behind another virus outbreak nearly two decades ago.

"We know that the whole genome of SARS-CoV-2 is only 80 percent similar to that of SARS. It's an obvious difference," she said.

"So, in Professor Shi's past research, they didn't pay attention to such viruses which are less similar to the SARS virus."

- Plans for more labs -

Conspiracy rumours that the biosafety lab was involved in the outbreak swirled online for months before Trump and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo brought the theory into the mainstream by claiming that there is evidence the pathogen came from the institute.

The United States and Australia have called in recent weeks for an investigation into the origins of the pandemic.

Chinese scientists have said that the virus first emerged at a market selling live animals in Wuhan, though officials in Beijing more recently cast doubt about its origins.

Chinese Foreign minister Wang Yi on Sunday blasted what he called efforts by US politicians to "fabricate rumours" about the pathogen's origins and "stigmatise China".

He said China would be "open" to international cooperation to identify the source of the novel coronavirus, as long as any investigation is "free of political interference".

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'I'm looking for the truth': States face criticism for COVID-19 data cover-ups

NBC News

The World Health Organization has said Washington offered no evidence to support the "speculative" claims about the Wuhan lab.

The Wuhan lab has said it received samples of the then-unknown virus on December 30, determined the viral genome sequence on January 2 and submitted information on the pathogen to the WHO on January 11.

Wang Yanyi said in the interview that before it received samples in December, their team had never "encountered, researched or kept the virus".

"In fact, like everyone else, we didn't even know the virus existed," she said. "How could it have leaked from our lab when we never had it?"

At a press conference Sunday, Zhao Chenxin, deputy secretary-general of the National Development and Reform Commission, said every Chinese prefecture must have its own P3 laboratory to ramp up preparations against infectious diseases.

Apart from the P3 lab plans -- the second-highest biosafety classification for labs handling pathogens -- Zhao said each city should also have a lower-level P2 laboratory so they could "quickly respond in a major epidemic".

The Wuhan institute has both P3 and P4 labs.

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CBS News

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 18, 2020

His Excellency
Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General of the World Health Organization
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Dr. Tedros:

On April 14, 2020, I suspended United States contributions to the World Health Organization pending an investigation by my Administration of the organization's failed response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This review has confirmed many of the serious concerns I raised last month and identified others that the World Health Organization should have addressed, especially the World Health Organization's alarming lack of independence from the People's Republic of China. Based on this review, we now know the following:

- The World Health Organization consistently ignored credible reports of the virus spreading in Wuhan in early December 2019 or even earlier, including reports from the Lancet medical journal. The World Health Organization failed to independently investigate credible reports that conflicted directly with the Chinese government's official accounts, even those that came from sources within Wuhan itself.
- By no later than December 30, 2019, the World Health Organization office in Beijing knew that there was a "major public health" concern in Wuhan. Between December 26 and December 30, China's media highlighted evidence of a new virus emerging from Wuhan, based on patient data sent to multiple Chinese genomics companies. Additionally, during this period, Dr. Zhang Jixian, a doctor from Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, told China's health authorities that a new coronavirus was causing a novel disease that was, at the time, afflicting approximately 180 patients.
- By the next day, Taiwanese authorities had communicated information to the World Health Organization indicating human-to-human transmission of a new virus. Yet the World Health Organization chose not to share any of this critical information with the rest of the world, probably for political reasons.
- The International Health Regulations require countries to report the risk of a health emergency within 24 hours. But China did not inform the World Health Organization of

Wuhan's several cases of pneumonia, of unknown origin, until December 31, 2019, even though it likely had knowledge of these cases days or weeks earlier.

- According to Dr. Zhang Yongzhen of the Shanghai Public Health Clinic Center, he told Chinese authorities on January 5, 2020, that he had sequenced the genome of the virus. There was no publication of this information until six days later, on January 11, 2020, when Dr. Zhang self-posted it online. The next day, Chinese authorities closed his lab for "rectification." As even the World Health Organization acknowledged, Dr. Zhang's posting was a great act of "transparency." But the World Health Organization has been conspicuously silent both with respect to the closure of Dr. Zhang's lab and his assertion that he had notified Chinese authorities of his breakthrough six days earlier.
- The World Health Organization has repeatedly made claims about the coronavirus that were either grossly inaccurate or misleading.
 - On January 14, 2020, the World Health Organization gratuitously reaffirmed China's now-debunked claim that the coronavirus could not be transmitted between humans, stating: "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) identified in Wuhan, China." This assertion was in direct conflict with censored reports from Wuhan.
 - On January 21, 2020, President Xi Jinping of China reportedly pressured you not to declare the coronavirus outbreak an emergency. You gave in to this pressure the next day and told the world that the coronavirus did not pose a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Just over one week later, on January 30, 2020, overwhelming evidence to the contrary forced you to reverse course.
 - On January 28, 2020, after meeting with President Xi in Beijing, you praised the Chinese government for its "transparency" with respect to the coronavirus, announcing that China had set a "new standard for outbreak control" and "bought the world time." You did not mention that China had, by then, silenced or punished several doctors for speaking out about the virus and restricted Chinese institutions from publishing information about it.
- Even after you belatedly declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020, you failed to press China for the timely admittance of a World Health Organization team of international medical experts. As a result, this critical team did not arrive in China until two weeks later, on February 16, 2020. And even then, the team was not allowed to visit Wuhan until the final days of their visit. Remarkably, the World Health Organization was silent when China denied the two American members of the team access to Wuhan entirely.
- You also strongly praised China's strict domestic travel restrictions, but were inexplicably against my closing of the United States border, or the ban, with respect to people coming from China. I put the ban in place regardless of your wishes. Your political gamesmanship on this issue was deadly, as other governments, relying on your

comments, delayed imposing life-saving restrictions on travel to and from China. Incredibly, on February 3, 2020, you reinforced your position, opining that because China was doing such a great job protecting the world from the virus, travel restrictions were “causing more harm than good.” Yet by then the world knew that, before locking down Wuhan, Chinese authorities had allowed more than five million people to leave the city and that many of these people were bound for international destinations all over the world.

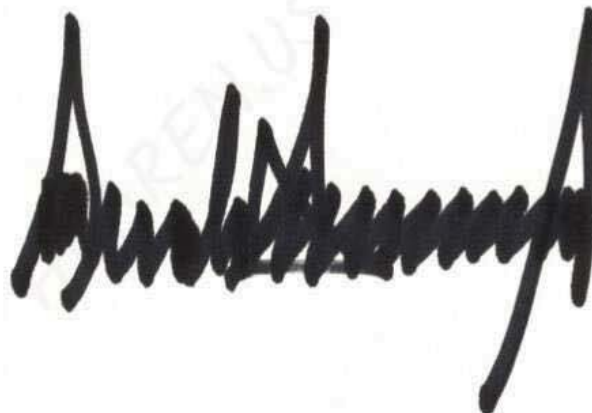
- As of February 3, 2020, China was strongly pressuring countries to lift or forestall travel restrictions. This pressure campaign was bolstered by your incorrect statements on that day telling the world that the spread of the virus outside of China was “minimal and slow” and that “the chances of getting this going to anywhere outside China [were] very low.”
- On March 3, 2020, the World Health Organization cited official Chinese data to downplay the very serious risk of asymptomatic spread, telling the world that “COVID-19 does not transmit as efficiently as influenza” and that unlike influenza this disease was not primarily driven by “people who are infected but not yet sick.” China’s evidence, the World Health Organization told the world, “showed that only one percent of reported cases do not have symptoms, and most of those cases develop symptoms within two days.” Many experts, however, citing data from Japan, South Korea, and elsewhere, vigorously questioned these assertions. It is now clear that China’s assertions, repeated to the world by the World Health Organization, were wildly inaccurate.
- By the time you finally declared the virus a pandemic on March 11, 2020, it had killed more than 4,000 people and infected more than 100,000 people in at least 114 countries around the world.
- On April 11, 2020, several African Ambassadors wrote to the Chinese Foreign Ministry about the discriminatory treatment of Africans related to the pandemic in Guangzhou and other cities in China. You were aware that Chinese authorities were carrying out a campaign of forced quarantines, evictions, and refusal of services against the nationals of these countries. You have not commented on China’s racially discriminatory actions. You have, however, baselessly labeled as racist Taiwan’s well-founded complaints about your mishandling of this pandemic.
- Throughout this crisis, the World Health Organization has been curiously insistent on praising China for its alleged “transparency.” You have consistently joined in these tributes, notwithstanding that China has been anything but transparent. In early January, for example, China ordered samples of the virus to be destroyed, depriving the world of critical information. Even now, China continues to undermine the International Health Regulations by refusing to share accurate and timely data, viral samples and isolates, and by withholding vital information about the virus and its origins. And, to this day, China continues to deny international access to their scientists and relevant facilities, all while casting blame widely and recklessly and censoring its own experts.

- The World Health Organization has failed to publicly call on China to allow for an independent investigation into the origins of the virus, despite the recent endorsement for doing so by its own Emergency Committee. The World Health Organization's failure to do so has prompted World Health Organization member states to adopt the "COVID-19 Response" Resolution at this year's World Health Assembly, which echoes the call by the United States and so many others for an impartial, independent, and comprehensive review of how the World Health Organization handled the crisis. The resolution also calls for an investigation into the origins of the virus, which is necessary for the world to understand how best to counter the disease.

Perhaps worse than all these failings is that we know that the World Health Organization could have done so much better. Just a few years ago, under the direction of a different Director-General, the World Health Organization showed the world how much it has to offer. In 2003, in response to the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in China, Director-General Harlem Brundtland boldly declared the World Health Organization's first emergency travel advisory in 55 years, recommending against travel to and from the disease epicenter in southern China. She also did not hesitate to criticize China for endangering global health by attempting to cover up the outbreak through its usual playbook of arresting whistleblowers and censoring media. Many lives could have been saved had you followed Dr. Brundtland's example.

It is clear the repeated missteps by you and your organization in responding to the pandemic have been extremely costly for the world. The only way forward for the World Health Organization is if it can actually demonstrate independence from China. My Administration has already started discussions with you on how to reform the organization. But action is needed quickly. We do not have time to waste. That is why it is my duty, as President of the United States, to inform you that, if the World Health Organization does not commit to major substantive improvements within the next 30 days, I will make my temporary freeze of United States funding to the World Health Organization permanent and reconsider our membership in the organization. I cannot allow American taxpayer dollars to continue to finance an organization that, in its present state, is so clearly not serving America's interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Donald Trump", written in a cursive style.

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Home / India News / Eye on China, India backs 62-nation coalition's push for probe into Covid-19 origin

Eye on China, India backs 62-nation coalition's push for probe into Covid-19 origin

India has supported a 62-nation coalition led by the European Union and Australia to seek an independent investigation into the coronavirus outbreak at the WHO's annual World Health Assembly (WHA) meet

INDIA Updated: May 18, 2020 09:34 IST

 **Shishir Gupta**
Hindustan Times, New Delhi



Tedros Adhanom, WHO director general has been accused of pushing the Chinese agenda of playing down the coronavirus outbreak in the initial stages. Seen in this photo, with President Xi Jinping (REUTERS)

India has backed calls to identify how the Sars-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19 was transmitted from animals to humans and conduct an 'impartial' evaluation of the World Health Organisation's response to the pandemic, according to a draft resolution proposed for the WHO's annual meet beginning tomorrow.

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killed over 60,000 people worldwide and devastated the global economy.

But Prime Minister Modi did indicate New Delhi's stand at the G20 summit in March where he backed WHO reform and referred to the need for transparency and accountability.

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China, which has been accused of concealing information about the virus in the early days of the outbreak, had later contested that the deadly Sars-CoV-2 pathogen detected in its territory could have originated just about anywhere. Chinese foreign ministry officials even shared conspiracy theories that accused the US military of starting the coronavirus outbreak.

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World Health Organisation and its director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on the other hand, have been blamed for playing along with China till the virus reached enough countries and spread rapidly. Ghebreyesus, a former Ethiopian minister, was elected with support from China in 2017. The accusations - he has denied them - also led United States President Donald Trump to suspend funding to the UN global health body.



Bei zor Ma reli

Diplomats in Geneva, where the WHO headquarters is located, told Hindustan Times that the draft resolution - supported by 62 countries including Bangladesh, Canada, Russia, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Japan - was an effort to bring about transparency and accountability for the spread of the disease that has been widely-acknowledged to be the worst crisis since the second world war.



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To be sure, the draft resolution does not mention China or its Wuhan city.



Eye on China, India backs 62-nation coalition's push for



Bengal containment zones to shrink as Mamata offers more



3 migrant workers killed, 12 injured after vehicle



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It asks the WHO director general to work with the World Organisation for Animal Health to conduct “scientific and collaborative field missions” and “identify the zoonotic source of the virus and the route of introduction to the human population, including the possible role of intermediate hosts”.

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The seven-page draft resolution seen by Hindustan Times also proposes to ask the WHO chief to start, “at the earliest appropriate moment”, a stepwise “impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation” to review experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to Covid-19.

This, the document says, should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the mechanisms at WHO’s disposal and “the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic”.

Also Read: [Early Covid lockdown in China could have reduced cases: Study](#)

The draft also asks countries to provide WHO “timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed public health information related to the COVID-19 pandemic as required by the international health regulations.

It is not clear if, and how the draft resolution would be discussed at the virtual meeting since the WHO leadership opted for a truncated agenda, a move that has been seen as an effort to silence its critics.

The showdown on Monday, where countries will push for the draft resolution to be taken up, is largely seen to target China which has come under scrutiny over the pandemic that has devastated the global economy.

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Politics

China Concealed Extent of Virus Outbreak, U.S. Intelligence Says

By [Nick Wadhams](#) and [Jennifer Jacobs](#)

April 01, 2020 8:15 AM Updated on April 01, 2020 10:21 AM

- ▶ Report submitted to White House on China's under-count
- ▶ U.S. has publicly reported more than twice as many cases



Airport employees wear full body protective suits at Pudong International Airport in Shanghai on March 28. *Photographer: Qilai Shen/Bloomberg*

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China has concealed the extent of the coronavirus outbreak in its country, under-reporting both total cases and deaths it's suffered from the disease, the U.S. intelligence community concluded in a classified report to the White House, according to three U.S. officials.

The officials asked not to be identified because the report is secret, and they declined to detail its contents. But the thrust, they said, is that China's public reporting on cases and deaths is intentionally incomplete. Two of the officials said the report concludes that China's numbers are fake.

The report was received by the White House last week, one of the officials said.

The outbreak began in China's Hubei province in late 2019, but the country has publicly reported only about 82,000 cases and 3,300 deaths, according to [data compiled by Johns Hopkins University](#). That compares to more than 189,000 cases and more than 4,000 deaths in the U.S., which has the largest publicly reported outbreak in the world.

[Read More: New York's Coronavirus Patients Skew Young, Surprising Doctors](#)

Communications staff at the White House and the Chinese embassy in Washington didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

"The reality is that we could have been better off if China had been more forthcoming," Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday on CNN. "What appears evident now is that long before the world learned in December that China was dealing with this, and maybe as much as a month earlier than that, that the outbreak was real in China.

While China eventually imposed a strict lockdown beyond those of less autocratic nations, there has been considerable skepticism toward China's reported numbers, both outside and within the country. The Chinese government has repeatedly revised its methodology for counting cases, for weeks excluding people without symptoms entirely, and only on Tuesday added more than 1,500 asymptomatic cases to its total.

Stacks of thousands of urns outside funeral homes in Hubei province have driven public doubt in Beijing's reporting.

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Republican lawmakers in the U.S. have been particularly harsh about China's role in the outbreak. Enhancing Beijing's role in the pandemic could be politically helpful to President Donald Trump, who has sought to shift blame for the U.S. outbreak away from his administration's delays in achieving widespread testing for the virus and mobilizing greater production of supplies such as face masks and hospital ventilators.

"The claim that the United States has more coronavirus deaths than China is false," Senator Ben Sasse, a Nebraska Republican, said in a statement after Bloomberg News published its report. "Without commenting on any classified information, this much is painfully obvious: The Chinese Communist Party has lied, is lying, and will continue to lie about coronavirus to protect the regime."

Deborah Birx, the State Department immunologist advising the White House on its response to the outbreak, said Tuesday that China's public reporting influenced assumptions elsewhere in the world about the nature of the virus.

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“The medical community made -- interpreted the Chinese data as: This was serious, but smaller than anyone expected,” she said at a news conference on Tuesday. “Because I think probably we were missing a significant amount of the data, now that what we see happened to Italy and see what happened to Spain.”

China isn't the only country with suspect public reporting. Western officials have pointed to Iran, Russia, Indonesia and especially North Korea, which has not reported a single case of the disease, as probable under-counts. Others including Saudi Arabia and Egypt may also be playing down their numbers.

[Read More: Mapping the Outbreak Across the World](#)

U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo has publicly urged China and other nations to be transparent about their outbreaks. He has repeatedly accused China of covering up the extent of the problem and being slow to share information, especially in the weeks after the virus first emerged, and blocking offers of help from American experts.

“This data set matters,” he said at a news conference in Washington on Tuesday. The development of medical therapies and public-health measures to combat the virus “so that we can save lives depends on the ability to have confidence and information about what has actually transpired,” he said.

“I would urge every nation: Do your best to collect the data. Do your best to share that information,” he said. “We’re doing that.”

– *With assistance by Justin Sink*

(Updates with Pence’s comment in sixth paragraph)

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