



Emerging Views and News on China's Role in the COVID-19 Pandemic

12 March – 22 April 2020

As the world struggles with the spread of #COVID-19, emerging views on China's initial failures to curb the outbreak from becoming pandemic have emerged stronger. The country has been condemned for delaying the crucial information that could have otherwise helped activate the World Health Organisation's Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS). With more than two million infections and 165,000 deaths, debates for fixing accountability of this outbreak have also intensified. This edition of the News Wrap is thus an attempt to capture related development for the ready reference of our readers.

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
<p>The world wheezes as China fails test Times of India April 22, 2020</p>	<p>The setback India has suffered on testing, owing to faulty equipment sourced from China, has once again brought to the fore the world's precarious reliance on Chinese companies in the fight against Covid-19. The test kits that gave faulty results were procured by the central government from two Chinese firms, Guangzhou Wondfo Biotech and Zhuhai Livzon Diagnostics; India last Thursday received 500,000 of these kits.</p>
<p>US State files lawsuit against China on coronavirus handling The Economic Times April 22, 2020</p>	<p>Missouri has become the first US State to sue China, alleging that Beijing suppressed information, arrested whistleblowers and denied the contagious nature of coronavirus that led to the loss of lives and caused "irreparable damage" to countries globally. Filed in the US District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, the lawsuit was filed by Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt against the Chinese government, the ruling Chinese Communist Party, and other Chinese officials and institutions.</p>
<p>Trump threatens to terminate trade deal if China does not honour it citing coronavirus crisis India Today April 22, 2020</p>	<p>S President Donald Trump has threatened to terminate the trade deal with China if Beijing did not honour its provisions in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic that originated in the country. China and the US in January signed Phase-1 of the trade deal as the world's two top economic powers move forward to end their bitter tit-for-tat two-year tariff war that had rattled markets and weighed on the global economy. The deal, which calls on China to buy USD 200 billion worth of US products, is set to move ahead as planned.</p>

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
<p>China hoarded PPE, selling it at high rates: White House official Business Standard April 21, 2020</p>	<p>The United States has "evidence" that in January and February, China bought 18 times more amount of masks and personal protective equipment, which they are now selling at high rates, Peter Navarro, White House Director of Trade and Manufacturing, claimed. He alleged on Monday, 20th April, that several countries, including India and Brazil, were not having enough PPE because Beijing was hoarding them.</p>
<p>French Nobel prize winner claims coronavirus came from Wuhan's lab Business Line April 20, 2020</p>	<p>During the podcast by Pourquoi Docteur, French Nobel laureate Professor Luc Montagnier who co-discovered HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) claimed the presence of elements of HIV in the genome of the coronavirus and even elements of the "germ of malaria" are highly suspect, according to a report in Asia Times. "The Wuhan city laboratory has specialized in these coronaviruses since the early 2000s. They have expertise in this area," he was quoted as saying.</p>
<p>How China hid 'tens of thousands' of virus deaths Asia Times April 20, 2020</p>	<p>Yet one compelling argument has been put forward by Derek Scissors, an academic at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank based in Washington. His conclusions are startling after questioning the "figures" released by President Xi Jinping's government and suggesting that there could have been "tens of thousands of deaths."</p>
<p>Why is China silent over disappearances of Covid-19 whistleblowers? Times of India April 20, 2020</p>	<p>Human rights advocates fear that the Chinese authorities have been secretly terrorising lawyers and activists speaking up about the coronavirus outbreak and are being branded as enemies of the state in the process. Based on an investigation in the matter, The Daily Mail on Sunday uncovered a "cynical and orchestrated" campaign by the Chinese regime to stop the country's 1.4 billion citizens from even discussing the appalling COVID-19 outbreak among themselves.</p>
<p>US wants to send team of experts inside China to probe Covid-19 outbreak: Donald Trump India Today April 20, 2020</p>	<p>The US wants to send a team of experts to China to investigate coronavirus, President Donald Trump has said, a day after he warned Beijing of "consequences" if it was knowingly responsible for the spread of Covid-19 which has killed more than 165,000 people globally, including over 41,000 in America.</p>
<p>Trump warns China over Covid-19 outbreak as Europe approaches 100,000 deaths The Guardian April 19, 2020</p>	<p>Donald Trump has warned that China should face consequences if it was "knowingly responsible" for the coronavirus pandemic, as deaths in Europe from Covid-19 approached 100,000. "It could have been stopped in China before it started and it wasn't, and the whole world is suffering because of it," Trump said in his daily White House briefing.</p>
<p>Australia demands coronavirus enquiry, adding to pressure on China Reuters April 19, 2020</p>	<p>Australia on Sunday added to growing pressure on China over its handling of the novel coronavirus, questioning its transparency and demanding an international investigation into the origins of the virus and how it spread.</p>

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
<p>Covid-19 virus accidentally leaked by an intern at Wuhan lab, suggests US media</p> <p>Livemint April 18, 2020</p>	<p>US President Donald Trump on Wednesday acknowledged Fox News report that the novel coronavirus (nCoV) may have been accidentally leaked by an intern working at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China.</p>
<p>Coronavirus Outbreak: France says no evidence of link between COVID-19 and research lab in Wuhan</p> <p>Firstpost April 18, 2020</p>	<p>“We would like to make it clear that there is to this day no factual evidence corroborating the information recently circulating in the United States press that establishes a link between the origins of COVID-19 and the work of the P4 laboratory of Wuhan, China,” an official at the French President Emmanuel Macron’s office said.</p>
<p>How COVID-19 Will Reshape the World</p> <p><i>By Jacob L. Shapiro</i></p> <p>Modern Diplomacy April 18, 2020</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on global markets and shocking the global economy. In addition to the disease itself and its attendant supply chain disruptions, uncertainty is exacerbating the havoc and the shock. While there are still many unknowns related to both COVID-19 and its attendant political consequences, one thing is certain: the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate underlying, long-term political trends and lead to a more multipolar, more competitive, and less globalized world.</p>
<p>"All Countries Will Face This": WHO After China Revises COVID-19 Deaths</p> <p>NDTV April 18, 2020</p>	<p>The World Health Organisation said Friday (17 April) that many countries would likely follow China in revising up their death counts once they start getting the coronavirus crisis under control. Wuhan, the COVID-19 epicentre, admitted missteps in tallying its death toll, abruptly raising the city's count by 50 percent -- following growing world doubts about Chinese transparency over the outbreak.</p>
<p>China denies coronavirus cover-up, accuses US of trying to divert public attention</p> <p>The New Indian Express April 17, 2020</p>	<p>China denied covering up the extent of its coronavirus outbreak and accused the US of attempting to divert the public attention by insinuating that the virus originated from a virology laboratory in Wuhan. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian's comments came as China's coronavirus death toll mounted to 4,632 after it revised the fatality figures by 50 per cent in Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak.</p>
<p>Is Coronavirus Ushering in a Chinese Future?</p> <p>Intelligencer April 16, 2020</p>	<p>When, at a meeting of the G7 late last month, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo so fervently insisted that the group refer to COVID-19 as the “Wuhan virus” that the meeting dissolved rather than issue even an anodyne statement of concern, it seemed, at first blush, just another projection of Great Power xenophobia from the Trump administration — the U.S. trying to pin the blame for its own evident failures on another, more distant and more sinister enemy.</p>
<p>China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for 6 key days</p> <p>ABC News April 15, 2020</p>	<p>President Xi Jinping of China warned the public on the seventh day, Jan. 20. But by then, more than 3,000 people had been infected during almost a week of public silence. The delay from Jan. 14 to Jan. 20 was neither the first mistake made by Chinese officials at all levels in confronting the outbreak, nor the longest lag, as governments around the world have dragged their feet for weeks and even months in addressing the virus.</p>

News/Op-ed	Key Takeaway
<p>Former Liberal justice minister urges sanctions against Chinese officials who covered up early COVID-19 outbreak</p> <p>The Globe and Mail</p> <p>April 14, 2020</p>	<p>Former Canadian Liberal justice minister Irwin Cotler, a leading international champion of human rights, is blaming the Chinese government for the scale and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying he believes transmission of the novel coronavirus could have been dramatically reduced if China had acted earlier.</p>
<p>For China, the ‘USA Virus’ Is a Geopolitical Ploy</p> <p><i>By Renée DiResta</i></p> <p>The Atlantic</p> <p>April 11, 2020</p>	<p>The coronavirus that became a global pandemic first surfaced late last year in Wuhan, China. But according to one common narrative making its way around Chinese messaging apps, an American soldier was patient zero. “Chinese netizens and experts” are urging the United States to release health information about a U.S. delegate who attended the Military World Games in Wuhan, asserted a February 22 story from Global Times.</p>
<p>This Is Trump’s Fault</p> <p>The Atlantic</p> <p>April 07, 2020</p>	<p>That the pandemic occurred is not Trump’s fault. The utter unpreparedness of the United States for a pandemic is Trump’s fault. The loss of stockpiled respirators to breakage because the federal government let maintenance contracts lapse in 2018 is Trump’s fault. The failure to store sufficient protective medical gear in the national arsenal is Trump’s fault.</p>
<p>China, pushing conspiracy theory, accuses US Army of bringing coronavirus to Wuhan</p> <p>The Hill</p> <p>March 12, 2020</p>	<p>"It might be US Army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan," said Zhao Lijian, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, Business Insider reported. The comment, an alternate explanation Beijing is pushing amid global criticism of the country's failure to mitigate the virus, comes as the Chinese government has increasingly disputed widespread international reporting that the virus was first detected in Wuhan.</p>