



PANDEMIC QUOTABLES

Views and News

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172. The World's Pandemic Response – Part 2



Marion Koopmans, right, and Peter Ben Embarek, center, of the World Health Organization team say farewell to their Chinese counterpart Liang Wannian, left, after a WHO-China Joint Study Press Conference held at the end of the WHO mission in Wuhan, China, on Feb. 9, 2021. (Ng Han Guan/AP Photo)

The World Continues to Follow China's Lead in Containing the Pandemic

Part 2 of the 2-part series: The World's Pandemic Response



Antonio Graceffo

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Commentary

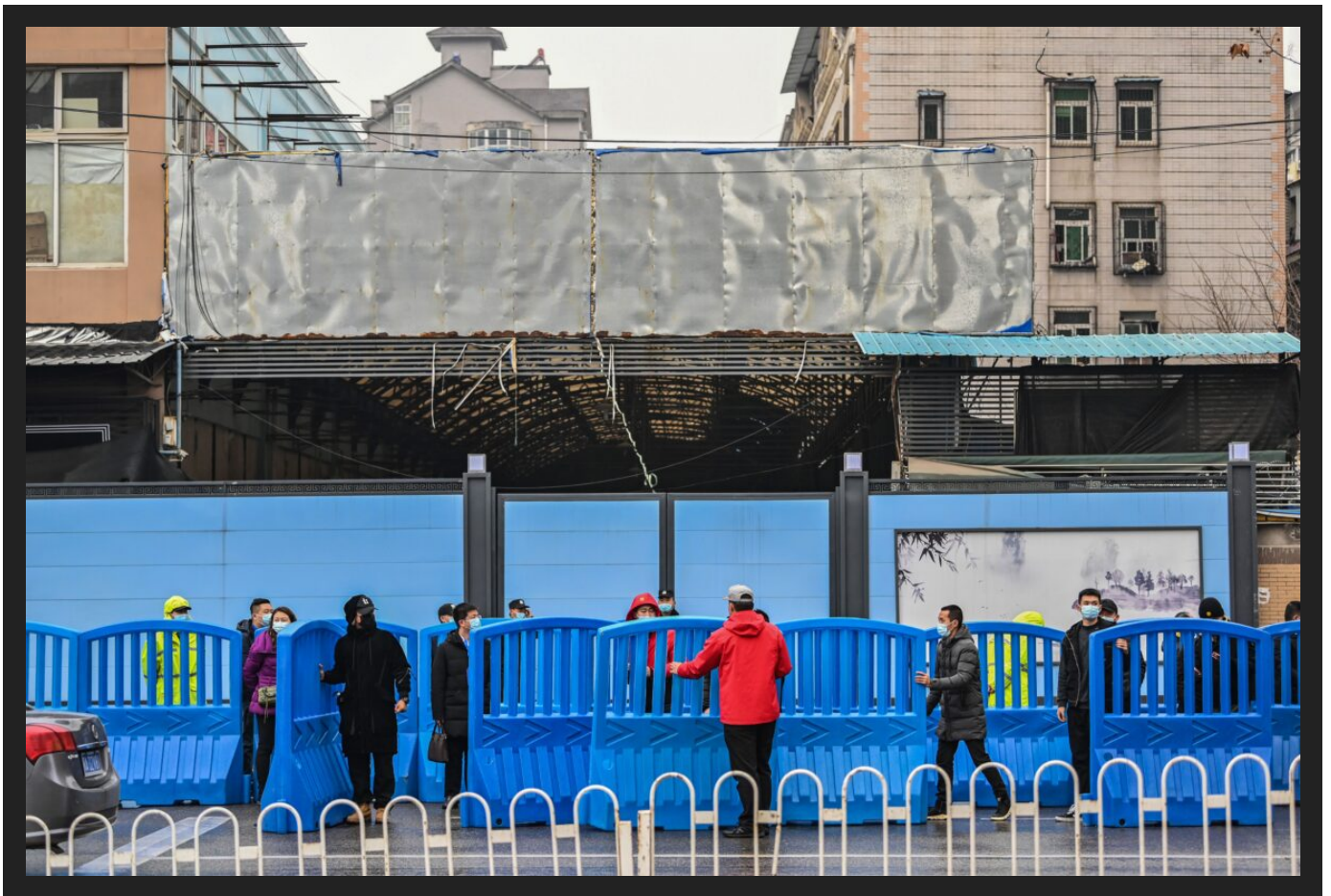
It appears the Chinese regime is under pressure, as the international community criticizes its “zero-covid” policy that’s wrecking the economy. However, the world continues to follow China’s pandemic measures to varying degrees.

By March 2020, the world began to follow the Chinese model of pandemic control, including masks, lockdowns, and school closures, despite significant evidence of the negative impacts of these decisions and almost no evidence that they were effective at ending the pandemic.

The director of the WHO Collaborating Center on National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University, Lawrence O. Gostin, identified “major human rights” concerns that arise from the strict lockdowns enforced in China, and later adopted, to varying degrees, by countries around the world, including the United States. Rather than these extreme strategies, Gostin said, standard public health measures were “scientifically justified.”

In April 2020, Dr. Bruce Aylward, the leader of the World Health Organization team that visited China, told The New

York Times that Beijing's strategy of extreme measures could be replicated anywhere. He said that there were no indications from China that COVID-19 posed a threat to people under the age of 20; and yet, in the same interview, he recommended closing schools, as China did. He also acknowledged that by closing schools, central authorities were forcing roughly half the workforce to stay home and take care of the children.



Workers place barriers outside the closed Huanan Seafood wholesale market during a visit by members of the World Health Organization (WHO) team, investigating the origins of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China's central Hubei Province on Jan. 31, 2021. (Hector Retamal/AFP via Getty Images)

When asked about the role social media played in China's pandemic response, Aylward said, "They had Weibo and Tencent and WeChat giving out accurate information."

He failed to mention the censorship of dissenting opinions or that phones were taken away from people in quarantine, or that citizens were prohibited from talking about deaths or posting first-hand accounts and photos that challenged the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) narrative. Like the lockdowns themselves, this type of censorship of only allowing "accurate information," and the state deciding what was "accurate," was adopted across U.S. social media.

In the United States, the Trump administration opposed lockdowns, but mainstream media criticized former President Donald Trump for downplaying or mocking the wearing of masks. He was against school closures, but governors and local school boards still moved to close schools. In November 2020, The New York Times actually published an opinion piece that supported Trump's position that schools should not have been closed. And yet, many schools remained closed.

Western media continued to support Beijing's narrative, in spite of mounting evidence that its pandemic measures

were destructive, ineffective, and self-serving.

In November 2020, The Conversation ran a report, headlined “China beat the coronavirus with science and strong public health measures, not just with authoritarianism.”

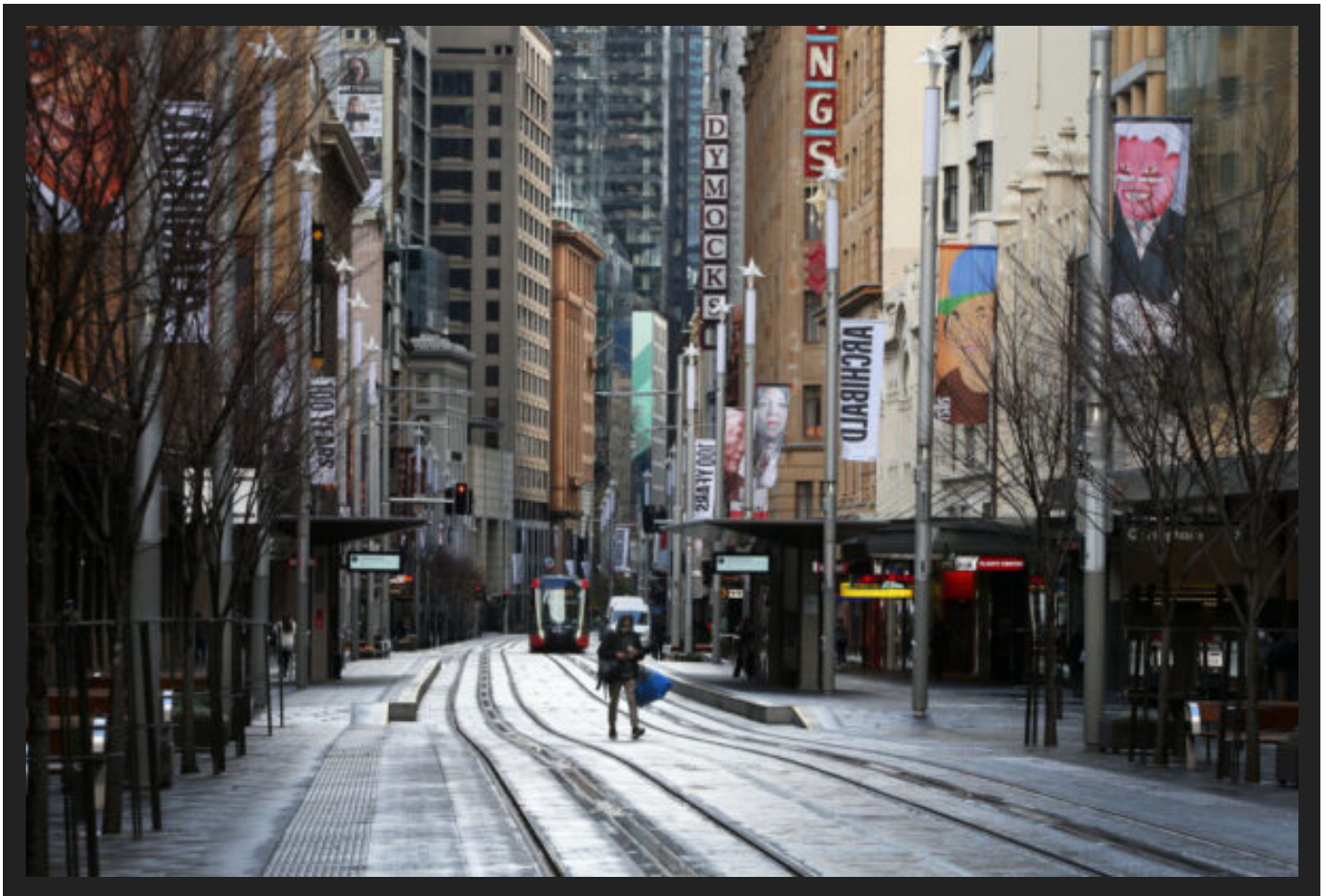
Then in February 2021, The New York Times published an article, headlined “Power, Patriotism and 1.4 Billion People: How China Beat the Virus and Roared Back.” Even when it had already become clear that masks, lockdowns, and school closures only brought misery, and did not end the pandemic, the Times was still supporting the CCP’s policies. Even the claim that China came roaring back is a myth. The Chinese economy stands on the brink of the worst stagflation in decades.

American lawyer Michael Senger, author of “Snake Oil: How Xi Jinping Shut Down the World,” told Sky News in September 2020 that COVID-19 lockdowns are based on Xi’s policies, rather than science.

The WHO’s stance on lockdowns was that, while they could slow transmission, “these measures can have a profound

negative impact on individuals, communities, and societies by bringing social and economic life to a near stop.”

Furthermore, the WHO recognized that “Such measures disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups, including people in poverty, migrants, internally displaced people and refugees, who most often live in overcrowded and under resourced settings, and depend on daily labour for subsistence.”



A pedestrian moves along an almost empty George Street in the Sydney CBD, Australia on June 28, 2021. (Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images)

Experts, both inside and outside of China, pointed out that the extreme measures were unsustainable. Eventually, most countries adjusted their expectations about the containment of COVID-19 and began opening up. As of November, even the holdouts are beginning to ease their restrictions. But this gradual trend toward adjusting policies—based on logic, reason, and data—took nearly a year and a half. For some reason, English speaking countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, had the strictest and longest lockdowns.

China seems to be the last country that still maintains a zero-covid policy. Recently, more than 30,000 people were locked inside of Shanghai Disney because of one person being informed that she had tested positive for COVID-19, after she had left the theme park. All these visitors were tested, and not one was positive.

Global public opinion has turned against China for isolating itself from the rest of the world. However, while politicians and Western media are criticizing China for maintaining zero-covid policies, they have not admitted that the policies were misguided and should never have been adopted in the West.

Since the world knows all of this information about why the China model is bad, why are we still following it? Yes, most countries have dropped the zero-covid policy, but to varying degrees, masks, lockdowns, school closures, restrictions, travel bans, and even vaccines are still being forced on the populations of both democracies and totalitarian states.

Since these measures came from the Chinese regime, and China has not conquered COVID-19, and since we know that Beijing took advantage of the lockdowns, which it encouraged, to enrich itself and to raise its global standing, would it not make sense to do the exact opposite of what the regime recommended?

Other questions remain. Why did the international community allow Beijing to take the lead in containing the pandemic, which wrecked their economy and robbed citizens of their basic rights? Why does the West continue to go along with a scaled-down version of the China-model?

While there has been a gradual moving away from the CCP's COVID-19 policies, parts and remnants remain, and it looks like there will never be a return to full human and civil rights as we had before the pandemic.

Read Part 1 here.

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