



Pandemic: The Deadly **CCP Factor**

(A Collection of Essays and Op-Eds)

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Editorial: Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows

Severe COVID-19 outbreaks highlight different countries' entanglements with Beijing

Epoch Times Editorial Board

March 11, 2020 Updated: April 2, 2020

In the final weeks of 2019, a novel coronavirus outbreak occurred in the city of Wuhan, in central China. As the world welcomed a new decade, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) opted to suppress information about the emerging crisis until it could no longer remain hidden.

Nearly two months after mainland Chinese authorities acknowledged the outbreak and the existence of the contagious virus, the crisis has spread around the globe, assuming epidemic proportions in multiple regions. The number of infected beyond China's borders is now in the tens of thousands, with more than 1,000 having succumbed to the virus. The stock market has plunged as experts warn of a possible economic recession.

A variety of factors have facilitated the rapid spread of the coronavirus, officially termed SARS-CoV-2, and the disease that it causes, COVID-19. Globalization has brought the peoples of the world into closer contact, increasing the risks of a worldwide pandemic.

Yet the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing.

Medical Crisis, Political Peril

Under political or economic influence from the People's Republic of China (PRC), many foreign entities and politicians, including international organizations, have been swayed to the extent that they take the side of the CCP, accommodating the pernicious communist system and turning a blind eye to unspeakable crimes committed by the mainland Chinese authorities.

Recent decades have seen the PRC greatly expand its power in economic and geopolitical affairs. Deceiving the world with a narrative of "China's peaceful rise," the communist regime has lured foreign governments and international firms to invest in China's rapidly developing markets.

But the CCP has never abandoned its ideological tenets of class struggle and totalitarian control. In the 30 years since the Tiananmen Square massacre, and from the start in 1999 of the persecution of the spiritual practice Falun Gong to today's systematic persecution of all faiths and independent thought, the state of human rights in the PRC has only worsened.

The true nature of the CCP and communism has long been known to readers of The Epoch Times. Fifteen years ago, The Epoch Times published the editorial series "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party," igniting a grassroots movement in China to reject communism. Since 2004, more than 350 million people have renounced their ties to the Party and its affiliated youth organizations.

Seen in conjunction with the CCP-hijacked geopolitical environment of today, the geographical distribution of what the World Health Organization (WHO) now calls a coronavirus pandemic highlights the ultimate peril facing those who align themselves with the specter of communism.

Outside China, the spread of COVID-19 has been most severe in Italy, Iran, South Korea, and Japan. Not all of these countries are located near China, but all have extensive interests in the PRC.

Italy, the most heavily affected country outside China as of March 10, was the first (and only) G-7 nation to sign onto the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road). In an attempt to prop up its weakening economy, Italy has also sought to capture the Chinese market for selling its luxury goods.

With the outbreak now forcing Rome to put the country under lockdown, such prospects have been put on hold.

Italy also has signed scores of sister-city agreements with China, with the cities of Milan, Venice, and Bergamo included among them. These are the areas hardest-hit by the virus.

In the Middle East, Iran has seen a surge in the number of infections, particularly among government officials.

The Iranian regime has had a comprehensive strategic partnership with China since 2016, and its ties with Beijing began years before that. In violation of international sanctions, Iran has imported embargoed materials from China, while continuing to sell oil to the PRC. The Islamic Republic allowed flights in and out of four major Chinese cities until the end of February.

On-the-ground footage taken by Iranian citizens is reminiscent of the tragedy playing out in Wuhan, with overworked medical staff, despondent patients, and body bags lining hospital floors.

And while official figures released by the Iranian authorities show deaths and confirmed cases trailing behind Italy's numbers, it is likely that the real

scale of the outbreak remains grossly underreported. Reviewing available data, an epidemiologist cited by The Washington Post on March 5 estimated that the actual number of people infected in Iran could have been up to 28,000, nearly five times what the regime had reported.

In South Korea, the public has grown increasingly critical of President Moon Jae-in for refusing to ban Chinese tourists at large and instead only barring entry for those who recently traveled to Hubei Province, the epicenter of the epidemic in China.

More than 1.4 million people have signed a petition to the Presidential Blue House calling for Moon to be impeached. The petition text reads, “Seeing Moon Jae-in’s response to the new epidemic, we feel that he is more of a President for China than Korea.”

History’s Lessons

Despite its proximity to, and extensive business with, mainland China, Taiwan has seen a relatively small number of infections.

On Jan. 26, Johns Hopkins University identified Taiwan as having the second-highest risk of epidemic spread outside China. However, robust prevention measures have proven effective.

Taiwan officials began to board planes and assess passengers on Dec. 31, 2019, after Wuhan authorities first confirmed the outbreak. In early February, Taiwan banned entry to foreign nationals who have traveled to the PRC. As of March 10, there are just 47 confirmed cases in Taiwan. The self-ruled island has been held as a model for epidemic control, despite being repeatedly denied participation in the CCP-friendly WHO.

As China affairs commentator Heng He put it, Taiwan has a clear understanding of the communist regime and may be the only state that

learned the lessons of the 2003 SARS outbreak, which also began in China.

In Hong Kong, which has seen millions of residents stand up to Beijing's encroachment on the city's freedoms and rule of law since last year, the outbreak has been similarly subdued.

By contrast, Japan, albeit not geostrategically aligned with the PRC, placed profit over prudence. With millions of Chinese traveling to Japan for shopping and sightseeing annually, the country was slow to close its borders to mainland arrivals. Japan was among the first countries to report cases outside of China.

Recently, the CCP has attempted to portray its draconian handling of the coronavirus epidemic as a triumph for the Party's authoritarian system. But the Chinese historical record is more sobering. Throughout the centuries, plagues and other calamities signaled the downfall of imperial dynasties.

Taking history as a mirror, as ancient Chinese scholars did, it is apparent that the coronavirus pandemic is a calamity linked with the CCP and its 70 years of brutal rule. And today, the world is an interconnected community. Any country, community, or organization that keeps too close to the CCP and falls for its deception will taste the bitter fruits of that involvement.

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

Commentary by Tian Yun

April 3, 2020 Updated: April 7, 2020

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

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

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

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

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

Reddening the Big Apple

Early outbreaks of the CCP virus outside China were most pronounced in countries with extensive economic or strategic relations with the PRC, such as South Korea, Italy, and Iran. Lured by trade benefits or caving in to Beijing's pressure, governments and officials in many regions have taken accommodating or even supportive stances on the Chinese regime.

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

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

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

Making Capital Serve the Communist Party

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

In 1999, then-PRC premier Zhu Rongji visited New York, where he met with a number of Wall Street executives to discuss China's potential

membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). President Bill Clinton thereafter supported Beijing's entry into the WTO, which it joined in December 2001. Economic relations continued to strengthen as the United States became embroiled in the War on Terror.

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

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

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

Robinson noted that more than 1,000 Chinese companies were listed in the three major American stock exchanges, with more than 650 PRC-based firms listed on the New York Stock Exchange alone. These include Chinese state-run companies, many of which play roles in the CCP's human rights abuses, mass surveillance, and military industry. Being listed in U.S. stock indices means these companies receive investment via the stock portfolios of millions of Americans.

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

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

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

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

He Qinglian, a U.S.-based Chinese economist, wrote that the recognition of A shares by these three major financial institutions was equivalent to endorsing the Chinese regime’s unfavorable bonds. Thanks to Wall Street, the resulting influx of foreign capital thus helped allay the PRC’s domestic economic troubles and the recent pressures brought about by the trade war.

Bribing CCP Companies

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

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

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

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

Buying Political Power

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

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

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

Zhang Qiyue, then-consul general of the PRC Consulate in New York, named the state as the “bright spot” for Sino-U.S. cooperation. “As we

continue to grow stronger bilateral ties, there is growing awareness and increasing cooperation at the sub-national level.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reshaping the Media Environment and Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Taken In by the Party Line

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yet the same vigilance appears sorely lacking in the Empire State, even as the CCP promotes its supposed success in controlling the disease in China, and painting the U.S. response as the epitome of administrative incompetence. The narrative is reinforced by many foreign media outlets, in

large part because they tend to report the PRC's official numbers of confirmed cases and deaths at face value.

On March 18, the New York Times published an article titled "Its Coronavirus Cases Dwindling, China Turns Focus Outward."

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

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

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

Leo Timm contributed to this article.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/with-myriad-links-to-chinese-regime-new-york-is-now-americas-ccp-virus-epicenter_3297320.html

Perspectives on the Pandemic: Why Ecuador Has a Serious Outbreak

Tian Yun

April 19, 2020, Updated April 19, 2020

“Guayaquil is at this moment a great gray cloud,” María Leonor Inca, an indigenous journalist based in Ecuador, posted on Twitter on April 2.

Guayaquil, the largest city and the main port of Ecuador, has been hard-hit by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus. Its mayor also recently tested positive for the CCP virus.

Up to 150 corpses, all people who died due to the CCP virus, are picked up daily, Jorge Wated, leader of a government task force, told the El Universo newspaper. With the municipal morgue at capacity, a greater number of bodies may be waiting on sidewalks and inside homes, he added.

Though the country is geographically far from the epicenter of China, why is Ecuador hit hard by the virus?

The Epoch Times editorial article, “Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows” suggests that “the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing.”

In fact, there are Beijing-friendly elements within Ecuadorian politics.

Strategic Cooperation between Ecuador and the CCP

In January 1980, the CCP established diplomatic relations with Ecuador. China and Ecuador established a “political consultation” system in 1997, held once every two years.

On Nov. 8, 2007, Ecuador’s El Oro province and China’s Hubei province formally established sister-province relations.

In December 2010, the China-funded Confucius Institute at the San Francisco University of Quito was jointly established with the China University of Petroleum in Beijing.

In January 2015, then-Ecuadorian President Rafael Vicente Correa Delgado visited China, and China and Ecuador established a strategic partnership. In November 2016, Ecuador and China elevated their relationship to a “comprehensive strategic partnership.”

In August 2016, Ecuador and China waived visa requirements for their citizens in a bid to increase two-way tourism. Ecuador was the first Latin American country to do so.

On Dec. 12, 2018, Ecuador’s President Lenin Moreno Garces visited China. According to Chinese state media reports, “the two leaders witnessed the signing of several cooperation documents, including a memorandum of understanding on jointly promoting Belt and Road (also known as One Belt, One Road), Beijing’s initiative to build infrastructure projects across Latin America, Africa, and central and south Asia.

China welcomed Ecuador to promote cooperation between the two sides in infrastructure, agriculture, information technology, and new energy.

Currently, China is also Ecuador’s third-largest trading partner.

Chinese Companies in Ecuador

According to Chinese media, at present, more than 90 Chinese companies are operating in Ecuador, with projects covering water conservancy and hydropower, roads and bridges, copper mines, public safety, and other fields.

Yachay is 120 kilometers north of the capital of Quito. On Nov. 25, 2015, China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) signed a phase I contract to build a Silicon Valley for Ecuador in Yachay. The project includes planning and designing a number of tech research centers, labs, and universities, which would be integrated with industrial parks and tourism development zones. The entire project is expected to last through 2049.

On Aug. 16, 2016, Ecuador's then-Vice President Jorge Glas inaugurated Ecuador's first fiber-optic cable plant, built with Chinese assistance, in the southern province of Guayas. Wang Yulin, China's ambassador to Ecuador also attended the opening ceremony.

The fiber optic plant is the result of a joint venture with Ecuador's Holding Telconet and China's Fiberhome Technologies.

This was China's largest fiber-optic cable plant in Latin America. The total investment was estimated to be \$15 million to 20 million. Fiberhome Technology Group accounted for 51 percent of the shares, while Telconet owned 49 percent of shares, according to China's commerce ministry.

On July 18, 2019, Ecuador President Lenín Moreno attended the first test of 5G, or fifth-generation, technology in Quito, presented by the Chinese telecom giant Huawei and Ecuador's National Telecommunications Corporation. Moreno praised China's technological advances at the ceremony.

Canceling Shen Yun Performances

In 2015, the New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts was set to perform a production of the dance drama “Monkey King” in the capital of Ecuador. However, less than a week before the performance, the Ecuadorian House of Culture suspended activities at the National Theater, impacting Shen Yun performances planned for May 23 and 24, 2015.

Alejandro Nadal, a spokesman for Shen Yun’s presenter in Ecuador, told local press advocacy group Fundamedios.org that the suspension of activities was illegal, as they had all the relevant permits. He said he believed the incident was part of an explicit goal by the Chinese embassy in Ecuador to cancel the performances.

The embassy had allegedly been looking for ways to get the event canceled for the last month. “We have tried telling them in every possible way that they are violating the freedom of expression of the Ecuadorian people, that they are censoring culture in a democratic country and are doing so through a foreign country,” said Nadal.

According to Shen Yun Performing Arts, theater venues where the company performs have often been pressured by local Chinese officials to cancel Shen Yun’s performances. This was the first time Shen Yun was canceled in Latin America.

The CCP has extended its censorship overseas, and the Ecuadorian government succumbed to its demands.

Ecuadorian officials instead attended performances organized by the Chinese embassy, such as a February 2016 Lunar New Year presentation with an arts group from Henan province in China, and a January 2020 gala at the Chinese embassy for commemorating 40 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Many top Ecuadorian officials

attended, including the ministers of culture, national defense, and education.

Dam and Hydropower Station

The Coca Codo Sinclair Dam is a hydroelectric project under CCP's Belt and Road Initiative in Ecuador. The dam was built some 75 kilometers (46.6 miles) east of the capital Quito, on the Coca River. It is the largest energy project in Ecuador.

The dam was constructed by state-owned Sinohydro Corporation for \$2.25 billion. The Chinese would provide Ecuador with a \$1.68 billion loan to cover 85 percent of the roughly \$2 billion price tag, with 6.9 percent interest.

The project has been criticized for cost overruns, technical flaws, and corruption. Ecuador also faces a huge budget deficit because of loans it received from China. Interest alone would require that Ecuador send an annual paycheck of \$125 million to China for 15 years.

A full power test failed when the dam opened in 2016.

The New York Times reported about the dam's many problems in a December 2018 report. "This giant dam in the jungle, financed and built by China, was supposed to christen Ecuador's vast ambitions, solve its energy needs and help lift the small South American country out of poverty... Instead, it has become part of a national scandal engulfing the country in corruption, perilous amounts of debt — and a future tethered to China."

It also said: "Nearly every top Ecuadorean official involved in the dam's construction is either imprisoned or sentenced on bribery charges. That includes a former vice president, a former electricity minister, and even the

former anti-corruption official monitoring the project, who was caught on tape talking about Chinese bribes.”

In an LA Times report, the newspaper obtained a 2018 report issued by the Ecuador government controller’s office, which said the project’s Chinese contractor ignored a stipulation in the contract—that the dam be built according to rigid standards set by the American Society Of Mechanical Engineers.

The government report also revealed shady practices by Sinohydro Corp., according to the LA Times, including the project’s “irresponsible and incomprehensible” use of substandard building materials and construction methods, including inferior welds. “The Chinese used bad-quality steel and fired inspectors who said to change it, “ former energy minister Fernando Santos told LA Times.

However, the CCP has avoided talking about the project’s flaws and the corruption behind the dam. It has lauded the “success” of the project, calling it a landmark project for Chinese companies.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/perspectives-on-the-pandemic-why-ecuador-has-a-serious-outbreak_3317932.html

Perspectives on the Pandemic: China's Influence on Hollywood

Wang Jin

April 21, 2020. Updated April 21, 2020

Currently, there are over 730,000 cases of the CCP virus and over 160,000 deaths in the United States. Many of the high-profile cases were Hollywood celebrities.

Why would the CCP virus hit Hollywood hard?

The Epoch Times editorial article, "Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows," suggests that "the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing."

Chinese Regime Funds Hollywood's Productions

More than half of the 10 best movies of 2019 selected by Time magazine were financed by Beijing-friendly firms, such as Tencent Pictures, Sunac Group, Shanghai Road Pictures Film and Television, Media Asia Film, and Bona Film Group.

Meanwhile, "Terminator: Dark Fate," released in November last year, had an estimated production budget of \$185 million with investment from Paramount Pictures, Skydance Media, 20th Century Fox at 30 percent each, as well as Tencent Pictures at 10 percent.

"Midway" was made with \$80 million from Bona Film Group, accounting for 70 percent of the film's budget.

Chinese conglomerate Fosun International invested in the founding of Studio 8, an American entertainment company, in 2014 and took part in the investment of movies such as “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk” and “Gemini Man.”

At the end of 2014, China’s largest interactive entertainment group Guangdong Alpha Group established a partnership with U.S. company New Regency Productions. It agreed to invest up to \$60 million in three movies that New Regency would produce, including The Revenant.

The 2014 film “Transformers: Age of Extinction,” produced by Paramount, received investment from M1905, a new media subsidiary of the China Movie Channel (CCTV6).

Meanwhile, Alibaba Pictures, the Chinese film studio set up by e-commerce giant Alibaba, started its investment and marketing partnership with Paramount in 2015. Following collaboration on “Mission: Impossible—Rogue Nation,” it invested in two Paramount films, “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows” and “Star Trek Beyond.”

CCP influence also manifests through mergers and acquisitions with U.S. companies.

Buying Up Studios

Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda, acquired U.S. cinema operator AMC Entertainment for \$2.6 billion in May 2012. In 2016, Wanda acquire Hollywood studio Legendary Entertainment and theater operator Carmike Cinemas. The former was the studio behind blockbusters like “Jurassic World” and “The Dark Knight.”

Dalian Wanda announced a strategic partnership with Motion Picture Group, the film unit of Sony Pictures Entertainment, on September 23, 2016.

Wang Jianlin, founder of Dalian Wanda, is a member of the Chinese Communist Party, and has been a delegate to the Party's rubber-stamp legislature, the National People's Congress.

Wang's acquisitions, however, have Congress concerned about the regime's growing influence in entertainment and view these acquisitions as CCP's political outlets to spread propaganda and wield cultural influence over the way CCP is portrayed on American television and cinema.

On March 17, 2015, Lionsgate Entertainment entered into a multiyear deal with Chinese state-run broadcaster Hunan TV for co-financing, distribution, development, and production.

On April 1, 2015, Chinese film production company Huayi Brothers Media Corp. signed a three-year deal with Hollywood studio STX Entertainment to jointly finance, produce, and distribute up to 15 movies annually by 2016.

On September 20, 2015, China Media Capital (CMC) and Warner Bros. Entertainment announced a joint venture, Flagship Entertainment Group Limited, 51 percent owned by CMC and 49 percent by Warner Bros.

In January 2017, Paramount made a deal worth \$1 billion in slate funds with Shanghai Film Group Corp. and Beijing-based Huahua Media. The two Chinese firms would fund 25 percent or more of the studio's entire film slate for the next three years, with an option for a fourth, according to Deadline magazine.

However, Paramount announced in November that year that they ended the agreement following changes to Chinese foreign investment policies.

Chinese Market = Censorship

China's box office cashed in \$9 billion in 2018—just behind the United States and Canada, which brought in a total of \$11.9 billion that year, according to data compiled by the Motion Picture Association of America.

By 2020, China will be the world's largest cinema market, with box office revenue expected to jump from \$9.9 billion in 2018 to \$15.5 billion by 2023, according to a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Experts have warned that China's lucrative market has led to Hollywood's self-censorship in order to cater to what Chinese censors want.

Timothy Doescher, associate director of coalition relations at the Heritage Foundation's Institute for Economic Freedom, said: "Hollywood is relying more and more on the Chinese markets to make profits on movies. That means our films are being written with China in mind."

Aynne Kokas, a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center, told the Financial Times: "You would be hard pressed to find a producer in Hollywood willing to make a film that portrays China negatively."

Mike Gonzalez, a senior fellow at the Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at The Heritage Foundation, explained why the Chinese regime has keyed in on Hollywood. "The Chinese Communist Party is communist, and the communists understand very well, then, the culture stands upstream from policy and from politics, and if you seize the culture, you've gone a great way towards impacting the population."

On October 4, 2018, during a speech in which Vice President Mike Pence spoke of the administration's new approach to U.S.-China relations, he

criticized Beijing's track record of "rewarding and coercing" American movie studios—which he said successfully resulted in plot revisions for films.

"'World War Z' had to cut the script's mention of a virus originating in China. 'Red Dawn' was digitally edited to make the villains North Korean, not Chinese," Pence said at the Hudson Institute.

He continued: "Beijing routinely demands that Hollywood portray China in a strictly positive light. It punishes studios and producers that don't. Beijing's censors are quick to edit or outlaw movies that criticize China, even in minor ways."

Movies Banned by the CCP

Beijing hasn't been shy about banning certain films that are too sensitive for the regime.

"Red Corner" was a 1997 film starring Richard Gere as an American businessman falsely accused of murder in Beijing. The film had an ominous tagline: "Leniency for those who confess, severity for those who resist."

As a supporter of Tibetan independence and an ally of the Dalai Lama, Gere has been critical of the Chinese regime.

He said in an interview with The Hollywood Reporter that his political views have limited his work. "There are definitely movies that I can't be in because the Chinese will say, 'Not with him'."

In a more recent example, the 2019 Netflix film "Laundromat" was banned. Directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Meryl Streep, the movie exposes corruption, including in China.

One segment of the film portrays the state-sanctioned practice of forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in China.

This global pandemic—caused by the Chinese regime’s mishandling of the outbreak—has demonstrated that dealing with China carries a heavy price.

Can Hollywood—long been stifled and shaped by China’s economic interests—wake up to the fact and distance itself from the Chinese regime in the future?

Only time will tell.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/perspectives-on-the-pandemic-chinas-influence-on-hollywood_3320631.html

Perspective on the Pandemic: British PM's Ties With the Chinese Regime

Tian Yun

April 17, 2020. Updated April 21, 2020

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on March 27 that he tested positive for the CCP virus.

Johnson is the leader of the ruling Conservative Party. Since taking office as prime minister on July 24, 2019, he has encountered pressure and criticism on issues such as Brexit, Huawei, and its role in Britain's 5G networks, British–U.S. relations, and China policy.

Johnson, 55, is one of the highest-profile patients in the world to be infected with the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus.

The Epoch Times editorial article, “Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows,” suggests that “the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing.”

So what are Johnson's ties with the CCP?

In ancient China, every time disasters befell the empire, leaders and officials reflected on themselves. In history, there were 79 emperors that issued a “Condemnation on Oneself” to examine their own faults, hoping to seek forgiveness and protection from heaven. Applying traditional

principles of governing the country, we can also draw lessons for today's society.

This article attempts to analyze some missteps of Johnson's governance.

Britain Gives Green Light to Huawei

On Jan. 28, Johnson announced that Britain would allow "high-risk suppliers" to participate in the construction of the "non-sensitive part" of the UK's 5G network to a limited extent, which means giving a green light to Huawei. Some U.S. officials and British conservative politicians were disappointed with Johnson's decision.

On the same day, Zhang Jiangang, vice president of Huawei, welcomed the UK's decision of allowing Huawei to participate in its 5G network. "Huawei is relieved because of this," Zhang told Chinese state-run media Xinhua.

On Jan. 30, the BBC stated in a report that the UK's decision "is undoubtedly an endorsement that will make Beijing happy."

Huawei insiders reveal that the company has close ties with the CCP, and has been accused of stealing from others to develop its own technology. The Trump administration has sought to convince allies to ban Huawei from 5G networks over security concerns. However, Johnson ignored the U.S. warning and concerns voiced by British lawmakers.

Tom Tugendhat, Conservative member of Parliament (MP) and former head of the British Parliament's foreign affairs committee, opposed Johnson's decision to allow Huawei access to Britain's 5G networks. He used the analogy of "allowing the fox into the hen house when really we should be guarding the wire." Tugendhat wrote on Twitter that the

government's "statement leaves many concerns and does not close the UK's networks to a frequently malign international actor."

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), member of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, called for "a thorough review of U.S.-U.K. intelligence-sharing" after the UK decision was announced. He said, "I fear London has freed itself from Brussels only to cede sovereignty to Beijing." He added that the British decision "is like allowing the KGB to build its telephone network during the Cold War."

On Feb. 18, Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage criticized the decision to let Huawei into 5G networks and called it "the worst decision any British government has made in years."

"It threatens the Five Eyes partnership, our prospects of a new trade agreement with the US and Australia and perhaps even the future of NATO," he said.

After the official decision, 38 members of the British Conservative Party who advocated the exclusion of Huawei proposed an amendment to the Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill. The proposal would require the UK to terminate Huawei and other "high-risk" companies' participation in domestic 5G network construction by Dec. 31, 2022.

On March 10, the parliament rejected the proposal, with Johnson's government winning the vote by 306 to 282, Reuters reported.

Huawei in London

The UK is one of the European countries that cooperate with Huawei closely. Although the British government is aware of certain security issues with Huawei's products, it believes that the risks are manageable. The

British approach represents the European mode of acceptance of Huawei, which allowed it to slowly expand in the past decade.

After Johnson took office, Huawei's business activities in London remained high-profile and active. In September 2019, Chinese mainland media quoted U.S. news outlet Business Insider, revealing that Huawei had already set up a new artificial intelligence (AI) research laboratory in London. It is reported that the new laboratory is part of Huawei's OpenLab global research and collaboration center network. A source familiar with Huawei's plan pointed out that the company planned to staff the office with 200 AI research engineers.

On Dec. 16, 2019, Huawei's 5G Innovation and Experience Center in London was unveiled. The center is located in one of the largest shared office spaces in the Europe-Kekong Global Building.

On Feb. 24, Huawei held a virtual press conference on new products and solutions, themed "TOGETHER, Connecting Possibilities."

American columnist Nick Kristoff said in his opinion article, "I've Seen the Best and Worst of China": "If a company like Huawei is asked to cooperate with Chinese State Security spies, its executives simply can't say no."

Johnson's China-Friendly Stance

On July 23, 2019, the day before Johnson took office, Hong Kong Phoenix Television interviewed him. Johnson said, "We are very enthusiastic about the Belt and Road Initiative. We are very interested in what President Xi is doing [for the plan]."

Johnson also mentioned in the interview that the UK is the first Western country to join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and he would do his best to keep the UK as the "most open economy in

Europe.” Johnson said: “Don’t forget [we are] the most open international investment [destination], particularly [for] Chinese investment. We have Chinese companies coming in to do Hinkley, for instance, the big nuclear power plant.”

Johnson’s Interactions With the CCP as Mayor of London

In October 2013, Johnson led a trade delegation as the then Mayor of London to go to China for a six-day visit. They met with China’s top entrepreneurs, major investors, and high-ranking officials, hoping to establish a closer cooperative relationship with China.

During his term as mayor, he promoted a partnership between London and Shanghai, two financial hubs. On June 17, 2019, the China Securities Regulatory Commission and Financial Conduct Authority of the United Kingdom made a joint announcement of their approval of the new Shanghai-London Stock Connect. On the same day, the inauguration ceremony was held in London.

According to the rules, eligible companies listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange would be able to issue Global Depository Receipts (GDRs) to the UK and global investors and apply for them to be listed on the London Stock Exchange’s Main Market. Eligible companies listed on the London Stock Exchange would be able to issue Chinese Depository Receipts (CDRs) to Chinese investors and apply for them to be listed on the Main Board of the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Some commentators pointed out that the establishment of the Shanghai-London Stock Connect is tantamount to a “blood transfusion” to support the CCP.

Post-Brexit UK-China Relations

After the Johnson administration left the European Union, it naturally needed to find new trade partners. On the one hand, the UK maintains its friendship with the United States, but it is also eager to strengthen economic and trade ties with China. China has become its second-largest trading partner outside the EU. From January to August 2018, the bilateral trade volume between China and Britain was as high as \$51.05 billion.

From January to Aug. 23, 2019, Chinese companies completed 15 major acquisitions in the UK, worth approximately \$8.3 billion. For example, Alibaba's Ant Financial acquired London-headquartered payments company World First in February. Hillhouse Capital acquired the shares of the Scotch whisky brand Loch Lomond Group for 400 million pounds in June and became its largest shareholder.

In September last year, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange attempted to acquire the London Stock Exchange for \$36.6 billion but was rejected. The Chinese government is the largest shareholder of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and holds 6 seats among its 13 board members. It is foreseeable that if the acquisition was successful, the CCP would have control of the entire European financial market.

On Jan. 2, 2020, five sources told Reuters that the Chinese regime temporarily suspended the Shanghai-London Connect plan because of the British stance on Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests and the UK's response to the detention of a former employee of the British Consulate in Hong Kong. The next day, the China Securities Regulatory Commission nonetheless claimed that Shanghai-London Connect was not affected.

The CCP is accustomed to using economic interests as a bargaining chip—to coerce Western governments and commercial enterprises to remain silent about the CCP's violation of human rights.

Perhaps Johnson has not yet realized that the path of economic and trade cooperation with the CCP is extremely unstable. Any nation that partners with the CCP may be forced to give up its conscience at a certain point.

UK Politicians Criticize Johnson and His Family

On Feb. 22, 2020, Brexit Party leader Nigel Paul Farage published an article in Newsweek titled, “We Didn’t Free Britain from Brussel Only to Bow Before Beijing.” He opposed Johnson’s plan to allow Huawei to help build Britain’s 5G network and criticized him for inching closer to the CCP in recent years.

“Sadly, under Boris Johnson’s regime, not much appears to have changed. Just look at one of our key strategic industries, British Steel. It appears to have been sold to another Chinese firm, Jingye, despite competitive bids from other parts of the world. I believe that the same establishment that sold out our nation to the European Union is now selling us out to China,” Farage wrote.

He also pointed out that Johnson has been influenced by many pro-China figures, including members of his own family.

“Only a couple of weeks ago his father, Stanley, had a 90-minute meeting with the Chinese ambassador to London, Liu Xiaoming. Afterwards, Johnson Snr emailed UK officials outlining Xiaoming’s worries that his son Boris had failed to send a personal message of support after the coronavirus outbreak. This fascinating insight only became public because Johnson Snr accidentally copied the BBC into his message,” Farage wrote.

“Then there is Boris’s younger brother, Jo, who was Britain’s Universities Minister until 2019. During his time in post, he endorsed the University of Reading’s partnership with China’s Nanjing University, which specialises in—you guessed it—information, science and technology,” he added.

Farage exposed that the prime minister's step-brother Max also has close ties with the Chinese regime. According to public information, Max Johnson got his MBA from Beijing University before working for Goldman Sachs in Hong Kong. He is now running his own investment company, which caters to firms that sell products to China.

The Epoch Times editorial article, "Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows," points out that the CCP virus specifically targets the Chinese regime and those who support it. The spread of the virus around the world shows that countries and regions with close ties to the CCP have been seriously affected. The CCP is evil in nature. I hope Boris Johnson will learn a lesson from his illness and reflect on his policies.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/perspective-on-the-pandemic-british-pms-ties-with-the-chinese-regime_3316330.html

Taiwan Keeps Businesses Open But Manages to Fend Off Coronavirus

April 25, 2020 | By Yiyan, a Minghui correspondent in the U.S.

(Minghui.org) The number of cases of infection and deaths from COVID-19 has been astonishingly low in Taiwan, with most of its businesses remaining open amid the pandemic. Even though the country did not enforce lockdown, about a week after a 4-day national holiday in April, there were zero new confirmed cases in Taiwan.

To show just how well Taiwan is doing in this pandemic, compare it to Australia, which is also an island nation with a similar population of around 24 million. Both countries have close business ties with China, so there is frequent travel to and shipping with China. Since the outbreak started, about 6,649 cases have been confirmed in Australia and 426 in Taiwan (as of April 22).

Let's take a look at what Taiwan has done that has made it a sanctuary in this global disaster.

Distrusting the CCP

For historical and political reasons, Taiwan has taken a tough stance against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the past two decades. In their 2020 presidential election, indignant at the CCP-instigated police brutality in Hong Kong during the anti-extradition protests, the Taiwanese showed their intolerance for the CCP's totalitarianism and said a big "no" to the pro-Beijing candidate.

At the same time, having learned its lesson the hard way from the SARS outbreak in 2002, the government did not take the CCP's words at face value this time.

Just when the CCP claimed that the virus was under control, Taiwan quickly enacted necessary policies and took preventative measures. Its people worked closely with the government instead of feeling confused and panicking.

As it turned out, Taiwan was right about not trusting the CCP's official messages and numbers. The CCP's cover-up of the severity of the highly infectious virus at an early stage led to the global pandemic we are all now living with.

Imposing a Timely Travel Ban

As soon as the government heard about the outbreak, it quickly closed its border and banned entry to people from certain parts of China. The government's precautions and hard stance against the CCP were supported by the people, who know all too well it is not a good idea to trust the CCP in such situations.

Not Relying on Chinese Production

Instead of relying on China to supply their face masks and PPEs, Taiwan quickly expanded its domestic production of masks and banned their export. The medical supply factories bumped up production to three shifts to meet their domestic needs. When there was a shortage of manpower, the government mobilized the military to help.

In 40 days, the production of masks went from 1 million to 12 million per day. After satisfying its domestic demand, Taiwan donated 10 million masks to the EU, the U.S., and other allies that had serious shortages. They are currently exporting supplies to over 20 countries. All the masks are

medically certified because the country insisted that the PPEs must work in every situation.

The CCP, on the other hand, hoarded medical supplies and exported faulty masks and testing kits to other countries. Some masks were even found to have fly remains on them.

Not Copying the CCP's Authoritarian Lockdown Model

While locking down cities or states later became the most important preventative measure in many Western countries, most people have been allowed to go about their lives as usual in Taiwan, except for delaying the reopening of schools for several weeks after the Chinese New Year. But with the above-mentioned preventative measures, Taiwan successfully stemmed the spread of the virus.

Schools Re-open with Aggressive Measures to Protect Students' Safety

All schools are allowed to stay open with students sitting in their classrooms. All teachers and students are required to wear masks during their classes, and the schools carry out routine disinfections. A class is suspended and teaching goes online if one student tests positive. If two people on any campus test positive, the school is shut down and all teaching is done online.

People Gather and Travel

The government advises its people to wear masks and observe social distancing whenever and wherever possible. In early April, there was a 4-day national holiday when people traveled home to worship their ancestors. Many took the opportunity to get out and scenic destinations were heavily visited. The tourists wore masks and maintained social distancing. Government employees warned people not to overcrowd tourist

attractions. Weeks later there was no sign of the community spread of the virus the doctors had worried about.

<http://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2020/4/25/184192.html>

Editorial: There Is A Cure for the Chinese Communist Party Pneumonia—Say No to the CCP

The Epoch Times Editorial Board
April 26, 2020 Updated: April 27, 2020

This year, the CCP virus (commonly known as the Wuhan virus or the novel coronavirus) spread rapidly while the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) concealed the real situation in China, causing incalculable losses to the world.

The plague seems to be unpredictable, but the way it spreads indicates the virus has a goal and a purpose: it is seeking out the CCP in order to eliminate it and the factors associated with it.

So far, the CCP virus has spread to most countries in the world, with more than 2.6 million people infected and 205,000 dead—assuming one takes at face value the official Chinese death report of 4,642. In fact, many Chinese believe the real death toll is at least ten times the published numbers.

Facing a huge loss of lives and economic devastation, the governments and peoples of various countries urgently need to reflect on the relationship between the plague and the Communist Party, and what individuals and countries should do to avoid the epidemic and to save themselves.

The Communist Party's dark history is intertwined with war, famine, plague, and death. The Epoch Times editorial series "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party" points out that "the essence of communism is an evil

specter” whose ultimate goal is to destroy mankind. The CCP is the last representative of the evil specter of communism in the world.

The CCP’s 70-year tyranny has killed 80 million Chinese people and destroyed traditional Chinese culture and morality. In the past 30 years, from the Tiananmen Square massacre of pro-democratic students in 1989, to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, which began in 1999, to the current suppression and bullying of Chinese people on a larger scale, the CCP’s violence and lies have brought catastrophes to China and the world.

For nearly 40 years, the CCP has used the bait of economic incentives to infiltrate and corrupt other countries. Under the cover of globalization, Confucius Institutes, and the “Belt and Road” initiatives, and through various channels such as politics, economy, culture, education, science and technology, and so on, the CCP has sought to spread the communist ideology, luring people away from the path set by God and to betray God. It thus achieves its ultimate goal of destroying people.

When those countries and regions that are lured by economic interests increased their engagement with the CCP and endorsed it, they did not know that bad fortune tagged along. The path of the CCP virus as it has spread around the world goes through the countries, cities, organizations, and individuals that are closely related to the CCP.

New York City the Hotspot

As of April 23, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University statistics website, there were more than 840,000 confirmed cases and more than 40,000 deaths in the United States. The number of confirmed cases in New York State accounts for one-third of the national total, and the number of deaths accounts for nearly half.

Ever since President Nixon 's visit to China in 1972, the United States has provided critical support to the CCP in various forms in the fields of politics, military affairs, diplomacy, economics, finance, education, and science and technology. Later, when the United States helped China to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), it gave the CCP access to the international community and caused huge amounts of Western wealth to be transferred to China, making China the "world's factory."

American political circles and think tanks believe that the United States has built China up and enriched the CCP. The reevaluation of what stance to take toward the CCP and subsequent policy changes have only happened in the last few years.

Without the help of the United States, and without the support of so many multinational companies, high-tech giants, and large financial groups, the CCP could not quickly have developed from a regime on the verge of economic collapse to an emerging hegemon capable of challenging the United States.

As the world's number one metropolis, New York City is the global center for the economy, finance, commerce, and media. It also has a great influence on global politics, education, and entertainment. It is also the location of the United Nations headquarters. In view of its special status and influence, the city of New York has played a major role in helping the CCP to achieve its agendas and advance its interests.

Wall Street, which represents American financial capital, has "transfused blood" to the CCP for many years and has become the behind the curtains financier helping the Chinese Communist regime prolong its life.

By infiltrating New York's economy, finance, commerce, media, culture, education, Chinese-American community, and other fields, the CCP has channeled wealth and technology back to China. While exporting its

ideology and abuse of human rights to the world, it has attempted to seize world leadership and challenge the United States.

These factors have made New York a major target of attack by the CCP virus.

Devastating Situation in Iran

The CCP considers Iran an intimate comrade-in-arms. While the official epidemic figures from Iran are not as high as some other Western countries, analysts believe Iran's figures of confirmed cases and death toll must have been greatly underreported. Similar to the CCP, Iran is an authoritarian regime that has likely concealed the true scale in an attempt to "maintain social order."

Many high-ranking Iranian officials have been infected and many have died as a result, including Iran's first Vice President and the deputy health minister.

The CCP has been supporting Iran for years, offering economic aid and weapons. It has even provided key nuclear weapon technology to Iran in order to threaten and constrain democratic countries.

In the past ten years, the CCP also made huge investments in Iran, becoming Iran's largest trading partner. The CCP openly violated sanctions on Iran and imported a large amount of oil from it.

For the Belt and Road Initiative, which the CCP launched in 2013 to export communist hegemony, Iran is an important geographical and strategic hub from which the CCP can penetrate Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Countries in Europe

Besides China and Iran, of states with higher numbers of cases (5,000 or more), Spain has the highest relative number (355 per 100,000 people), where 200,000 people were infected and 20,000 died. Three close relatives of Prime Minister Sanchez and the deputy prime minister of the cabinet have been infected.

The severe epidemic sent a strong warning to Spain that the government's pro-communist policies have brought misfortune to the country.

Spain was the first EU country to make friendly gestures to the CCP after the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 1989.

Prime Minister Sanchez chose to build closer relationships with the CCP after taking office in 2018. Not only did he re-confirm Spain's "strategic partnership" with it, but also praised the CCP's Belt and Road initiative. When the CCP was criticized by various countries for concealing the epidemic, Sanchez still repeatedly expressed support for it.

Italy is the hardest hit area in Europe.

The root cause of its being hit hard by the CCP virus is due to the intimate relationship between the Italian government and the CCP.

Italy is a member of the G7, a developed and democratic country. Despite the opposition of its Western allies, it formed an alliance with the CCP in March 2019 to "strengthen a comprehensive strategic partnership." Italy is also the first EU country to sign onto the CCP's Belt and Road initiative.

Italy has 74 sister cities with communist China, including Lombardy, the city with the highest number of infections and deaths, and cities such as Milan, Venice, and Bergamo.

Major European countries such as Britain, France, and Germany are now also caught in the CCP virus. People have suffered huge losses, and even the British prime minister has been infected.

One thing these countries have in common is that they have been “close to” the CCP in recent years. For instance, the CCP wants to use Huawei 5G to infiltrate the world, but Britain, France, and Germany have ignored U.S. warnings and given the company a green light.

The regions with the worst outbreaks in these countries—London, Oise, France, and North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany—have also forged friendly relations with the Chinese Communist Party.

When the pandemic hit the world, the experiences of European countries sounded the alarm to the world.

Severity in China’s Neighboring Countries Varies

Compared with European and American countries, the situations in the areas near mainland China more clearly illustrate the relationship between the epidemic and the CCP.

Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are all close neighbors of mainland China. The number of people infected in Hong Kong and Taiwan is far less than that of Japan and South Korea. The key difference is their attitudes towards the CCP.

Currently, both Japan and South Korea have more than 10,000 infected people. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, which have closer trade and economic relations with mainland China, the number of confirmed cases is only 1,038 and 429, respectively. Among them, the early cases in Hong Kong were imported from the mainland, and later infected persons include riot police

and pro-government personnel. The vast majority of cases in Taiwan are imported from abroad.

Since establishing diplomatic relations with the CCP regime in 1992, South Korea has gradually strengthened its economic and trade relations with the CCP. After the current government came to power, it has moved closer to the CCP and has increased bilateral investment.

Although the relationship between the Japanese government and the CCP is not close, a large number of Japanese companies have invested in China, thereby relying on the CCP and transferring vital resources to it. Japan and the CCP have formed 256 pairs of friendly provincial and municipal relations. Among them, Hokkaido, Tokyo, Aichi Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture, and other regions have serious epidemics of the CCP virus.

Although Hong Kong and Taiwan have extremely close economic and trade relations with the mainland, the people of Hong Kong and Taiwan have not been blinded by their financial interests. In 2019, the people of Hong Kong launched large-scale protests against the CCP's control and even risked their lives to stand up to it.

The brutal suppression of the Hong Kong protests lay bare the true face of the CCP and awakened the Taiwan people. Voting this January for a pro-free world president showed the determination of the people of Taiwan to keep their distance from the CCP. The results of the presidential election saved Taiwan.

In Taiwan today, the people are not quarantined at home, the economy is not suspended, but the number of infections and deaths is among the lowest in the world. The key to Taiwan's anti-epidemic success lies in its distrust of the CCP and its refusal to blindly follow the WHO, which is being controlled by the CCP.

The epidemic situation in Hong Kong and Taiwan reveals the secret of the success of epidemic prevention and self-help during the CCP virus pandemic—only by rejecting the CCP can we resist the CCP virus!

An Effective Cure for the CCP Virus

Major plagues always come all of a sudden and then at a certain point disappear without a trace. Historical records show they all have a clear target.

The bubonic plague at the end of the Ming Dynasty was a typical example. The transition from Ming to Qing, also known as the Manchu conquest of China, was a decades-long period of battles between the Qing army, established by the Manchu clan in Northeast China, the Ming army, and the Li Zicheng army, a rebel peasant army.

The bubonic plague in this period of time pointed at the Ming army only, leaving the Qing army and Li Zicheng's army unaffected.

The Roman Empire was hit by four major plagues. According to historical records, Christians were immune to these plagues, which are considered a punishment imposed on those who had persecuted Christians.

It can be seen that the arrival of a plague is not accidental. The CCP virus epidemic was triggered by the CCP's evil crimes and it spread globally due to the CCP's concealment. The spreading of the virus shows a clear pattern, which is, it is selectively targeting the CCP and is aimed at eliminating the CCP and those who are pro-communist or who have close ties with the CCP.

All regions that are hard-hit by the virus outside China are those having intimate ties with the CCP, those who have supported the CCP in terms of trade, investment, or helping the CCP improve its international image.

Likewise, individuals who have been the CCP's supporters often find themselves vulnerable to the CCP virus.

In fact, this spreading pattern helps to point out a life-saving path for all nations and people all over the world. It is a path that directly connects to the spiritual side of all beings.

Recently, there are several cases of people recovering from the CCP pneumonia miraculously after they condemned the CCP. Some cases can be found in media reports.

In March, three key politicians of the Vox Party, Spain's third-largest party, contracted the virus. They are Santiago Abascal, president of Vox, Javier Ortega Smith, secretary general and the second most prominent position in Vox, and Macarena Olona, member of the congress of deputies for Vox.

Amazingly, all three recovered from the CCP pneumonia shortly after they strongly condemned the CCP.

At an EU meeting, Vox actively proposed a resolution against the CCP and WHO. At a domestic parliament session, Vox requested an international investigation into the culpability of the Chinese communist regime.

In February, Connie Brix, a Danish woman, was infected with the CCP virus while traveling in Spain. Her condition worsened in March. After Connie learned about the CCP's cover-up of the outbreak, she berated the CCP angrily for wreaking havoc on the entire world. Two days later, Connie's symptoms disappeared and she, too, recovered miraculously.

In mainland China, after a patient was diagnosed with the CCP pneumonia, he denounced the CCP for concealing the epidemic and other evil doings. He then recovered with all symptoms gone completely.

However, he was then deceived by the CCP's brainwashing propaganda and thought the CCP's medical system was his savior, having provided an effective cure. He even felt thankful for the CCP. As a result, the CCP virus returned—he had a relapse and tested positive again.

These true stories tell us that one's understanding of and attitude toward the CCP will determine whether he or she is immune to the CCP virus. Rejecting and condemning the CCP is an effective cure to the CCP virus.

Conversely, supporting the CCP, endorsing the CCP, or establishing a close partnership with the CCP, will likely invite the CCP virus. Some may even experience a relapse if they choose to side with the CCP.

Everyone longs for peace and health amid a global pandemic. Facing this sudden disaster, the limitations of modern technology and management methods are obvious. Please keep in mind that God has been caring for humanity for thousands of years.

Look up at heaven, uphold your inner goodness, reflect on your actions, and reject the CCP—the representative of the greatest evil. By doing so you will be protected by God. This is the most fundamental protection for mankind.

If someone is unfortunately infected with the CCP virus, we suggest that you sincerely say “down with the CCP demons.” Maybe a miracle will happen.

Staying away from the CCP, condemning the CCP, not supporting the CCP can help any individual, organization, and country alleviate or even avoid the attacks of the CCP virus. They will then embrace a wonderful future.

The pandemic occurred because of the CCP, and the situation will change when people change their attitudes towards the CCP. For various reasons,

some people are reluctant to accept and believe in this statement. They are also reluctant to face this serious issue.

Out of concern for the health of mankind and out of a sense of responsibility, we intend to reveal the truth and let more people benefit from it, so they can be free from the pandemic. We hope all kind-hearted people will get through this catastrophe as soon as possible.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/editorial-there-is-a-cure-for-the-chinese-communist-party-pneumonia-say-no-to-the-ccp_3327913.html

How Much ‘Capital Transfusion’ Has New York Provided to Communist China?

Wang Jin

April 30, 2020, Updated: May 1, 2020

Commentary

New York, the world’s top financial and business center, has been hit hard by the CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus.

Amid the Chinese regime’s cover-up and mishandling of the outbreak, which has caused a global pandemic, many countries and institutions are reevaluating their relationship with Beijing.

Could New York’s powerful institutions, such as Wall Street and the pharmaceutical giants headquartered in the city, ever consider “decoupling” from China, given their long history of close economic ties?

How much “blood transfusion” have they provided to the CCP in the past?

During an interview with CNBC on April 25, 2019, former White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon said, “The entire operation of the Chinese Communist Party and what they’re running in China is being funded by Wall Street. Corporate America today is the lobbying arm of the Chinese Communist Party and Wall Street is its investor relations department.”

According to a document released by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC), which reports regularly to the U.S. Congress, as of Feb. 25, 2019, there were 156 Chinese companies listed on the NASDAQ, New York Stock Exchange, and the NYSE American (formerly known as the American Stock Exchange)—the three largest U.S. stock exchanges—with a total market capitalization of \$1.2 trillion.

This document also shows that among the Chinese companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges, Alibaba had a market value of \$458.6 billion. Its main investment institutions include top U.S. financial institutions such as New York-based Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, and Citigroup, among others.

PetroChina has a market value of \$123.6 billion. Its major investor institutions include New York-based BlackRock Group, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, and Goldman Sachs. BlackRock Group is one of the largest investment management corporations for listed companies in the United States. PetroChina is a state-owned enterprise directly controlled by the CCP.

Sinopec, another Chinese state-owned enterprise, has a market value of \$5.4 billion, and Morgan Stanley is one of its major investor institutions.

Needless to say, the funds Chinese companies obtained from the U.S. stock market have fallen into the pockets of the CCP or these financial institutions.

If any Chinese company is delisted from U.S. exchanges, apparently both China and the U.S. financial institution would have to suffer the loss.

How Much Has Wall Street Invested in Listed Chinese Companies?

Wall Street has invested hundreds of billions of dollars in Chinese companies listed in the United States.

Statistics from Bloomberg at the end of November 2017 revealed that one-third of the 215 major investment funds on Wall Street bought Alibaba's stocks.

In October 2019, BBC compiled a table based on data provided by Refinitiv and CNN, which showed that BlackRock held about \$9 billion worth of Alibaba shares, nearly \$1 billion worth of Baidu stock, and tens of millions of dollars' worth of Tencent shares.

Among all U.S. institutional investors, BlackRock, T. Rowe Price Associates, and Vanguard Group are the top three in total investments in China. Their combined investments in Chinese companies exceeded \$40 billion.

Two other major investment funds—State Street Global Advisors US and Invesco Advisers Inc.—also held a large amount of Chinese company stocks, with a total market value of approximately \$15 billion.

What Is the Return on Investment?

In 2019, data released by the Washington State Investment Board showed that from 2017 to 2018, the internal rate of return on investment (ROI) in Warburg Investment China Fund reached 24 percent, while the fund's private equity portfolio ROI was only 15.3 percent in 2018.

Chinese state media touted Alibaba as an outstanding performer for investors. The return was usually several times that of the initial investments.

So, to what extent has the CCP penetrated the U.S. capital market?

In an interview with NTD reporter Simone Gao at the end of 2019, Roger Robinson, former economic and financial strategist under U.S. President Ronald Reagan, gave an estimate of the scale of investments in China. He said, “I’ve seen a number of \$1.9 trillion from the equity or stock side alone and as much as another trillion in bonds.”

Bloomberg Intelligence analysts Francis Chan and Sharnie Wong estimate that—barring a major economic slowdown or change of course—foreign banks and securities companies could rake in profits of about \$9 billion a year in China by 2030, according to a market analysis report by Bloomberg in 2019.

Facing the temptation of huge profits, would Wall Street use its voice to support the CCP in Washington?

Wall Street Lobbies the White House Not to Label China as a Currency Manipulator

In fact, some top Wall Street executives have been acting as CCP lobbyists for many years.

In addition to lobbying former U.S. President Bill Clinton to allow the CCP to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), Wall Street also lobbied the White House not to label China as a currency manipulator.

The New York Times reported that former presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama both had considered designating China a currency manipulator, but Wall Street always opposed it. Both Bush and Obama eventually failed in their attempts.

Why did Wall Street help China to avoid being designated as a currency manipulator?

If the United States designates China as a currency manipulator, and gains support from the International Monetary Fund, it will be a lot easier for the U.S. government to intervene in the operations of American financial institutions. For instance, the White House would be able to ban American funds from buying U.S. debts issued by Chinese companies in Hong Kong.

It has also been reported in the media that Wall Street used its political power in the United States to influence U.S. policy toward China, such as intervening in U.S.-China trade negotiations.

Not only Wall Street, but also many American high-tech companies, including pharmaceutical giants, have also continually “transfused blood” to the CCP.

New York’s Major Pharmaceutical Companies Invest Heavily in China

In the current pandemic, the CCP once threatened to stop exporting active pharmaceutical ingredients and medical products to the United States. The Trump administration has therefore called on pharmaceutical companies to move production back to the United States, thus reducing their dependence on China.

However, lobbying organizations for several American pharmaceutical giants sent a letter to President Trump, opposing the “Buy American” executive order promoted by the White House.

White House economic adviser Peter Navarro criticized these pharmaceutical companies for their reluctance to move production back to the United States.

He specifically mentioned a lobbying agency PhRMA, which is working for at least two top pharmaceutical companies headquartered in New York—Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb.

For decades, these two well-known companies have made huge profits by investing in China.

Pfizer ranks among the Fortune Global 500 and is the world's largest pharmaceutical company. With three advanced production facilities in China and R&D centers in Shanghai and Wuhan, Pfizer has more than 11,000 employees in China, and its business covers more than 300 cities across the country. The company has invested nearly \$1.5 billion in China and has also profited hugely from its China investments and operations.

Bristol-Myers Squibb is also a Fortune Global 500 and a well-known multinational pharmaceutical company. It is best known for cardiovascular drugs, anticancer drugs, and central nervous system drugs. It also develops and produces anti-rejection drugs (Nulojix) for organ transplantation, which was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2011.

Where Is the United States Heading?

Communist China is the worst human rights violator in the world. “Blood transfusion” to the CCP is undoubtedly also a transfusion of blood to a criminal regime.

On March 11, 2020, the U.S. Department of State issued the “2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.” The report cited a study by Australian National University on China's official statistics of organ donations, which concluded that there was “highly compelling evidence” based on statistical forensics that the data was “falsified.”

In June 2019, China Tribunal, a London-based independent tribunal investigating allegations of forced organ harvesting in China, published its final judgment, confirming that the CCP had forcibly harvested organs from Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience “on a significant scale” for many years.

“On the basis of all direct and indirect evidence, the Tribunal concludes with certainty that forced organ harvesting has happened in multiple places in the PRC and on multiple occasions for a period of at least twenty years and continues to this day,” stated the Summary Judgment, which was later quoted by the U.S. State Department.

It also noted, “Waiting times [for organ donors] in the PRC ... are much shorter than usual in the rest of the world and often as little as two weeks.”

An independent investigation team, formed by David Kilgour, former Canadian Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), and human rights lawyer David Matas published a report on July 6, 2006 after two months of investigation and evidence collection. The report stated that with verification and re-verification of 18 categories of evidence, the team concluded that “there has been and continues today to be large scale organ seizures from unwilling Falun Gong practitioners.”

At a news conference, Matas called forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners “an unprecedented evil on this planet.”

At a press conference of the “Committee on the Present Danger: China” (CPDC) in June 2019, committee member Stephen Bannon criticized Western elites, such as Wall Street, for dancing with the CCP even though they were fully aware that the regime has severely violated human rights and freedom of religion.

“The problem is that the elites in this world, the capital markets guys from Frankfurt, the city of London, Wall Street, the international corporations—they have been running this scam for 20 years, financing and providing the technology to the radical cadre of the CCP that has built up such a Frankenstein monster,” he said.

In November 2019, the CPDC held another press conference, pointing out that Chinese companies financing in the U.S. capital market, including ZTE, Hikvision, and others, not only threaten U.S. national security, but also violate human rights inside China.

Roger Robinson spoke at the press conference, saying that the United States is now at a crossroads. He warned about the multi-trillion-dollar stakes associated with China’s access to U.S. capital markets, and the problematic nature of many of the Chinese companies now being financed by major U.S. corporations.

He said the CCP should stop receiving financing from the United States immediately. Otherwise, the consequences for the United States would be devastating.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/how-much-capital-transfusion-has-new-york-provided-to-communist-china_3332781.html

Social Elites With Ties to the Chinese Regime

Tian Yun

May 4, 2020. Updated May 4, 2020

Commentary

Since the pandemic spread from the Chinese city of Wuhan to countries around the world, some prominent figures have contracted the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus.

From politicians to high-power executives, the virus has infected well-known individuals from different facets of society.

Some of them have close ties with the Chinese regime.

Political Sphere

Prince Albert II of Monaco contracted the CCP virus on March 19, making him the first head of state to confirm a COVID-19 diagnosis. The monarch visited China ten times. During his tenth visit in September 2018, Prince Albert signed a series of cooperative agreements with Beijing, including the “Nation 5G” contract between Monaco Telecom and Huawei, making Monaco the first country in Europe to use a Huawei-built 5G network.

Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, tested positive for the CCP virus on March 27. At one point he was isolated at home and then moved to an ICU for treatment. After recovering from the virus, he returned to work in late April.

Johnson’s support for the Chinese regime became evident when he gave Huawei Technologies Co. the green light to help develop Britain’s next-generation 5G broadband networks. With this decision, Johnson

defied the UK's Western allies, in particular the United States and Australia, who warned of national security risks in using Huawei technology.

As reported by The Epoch Times, Huawei plays a key role in the CCP's mass surveillance technology. The Chinese tech giant is also accused of providing censorship and mobile phone tracking technology to Iran.

Eshaq Jahangiri, Iran's first vice president, tested positive for the virus, alongside more than 20 other Iranian officials, according to a report by Belt and Road News. As of March 16, at least 12 Iranian politicians and officials, both sitting and former, have died from COVID-19.

In 2019, Jahangiri congratulated Beijing on the 70th anniversary of the CCP's takeover of China. He wrote to premier Li Keqiang, assuring that "strategic economic relations" between Iran and China would materialize through cooperation, according to Iranian news reports.

China is Iran's top trading partner and a major importer of Iranian oil. From January to November 2018, bilateral trade between China and Iran stood at \$33.39 billion, according to data released by China's Ministry of Commerce in January 2019.

Financial Arena

A number of senior financial executives in the United States have also contracted the CCP virus. Top U.S. bankers and the Chinese communist regime have maintained close ties for years, as Beijing turned to big banks to help lobby for Chinese interests in Washington.

James Gorman, Morgan Stanley's CEO, revealed in a video released on April 9 that he had contracted the CCP virus and was recovering.

Peg Broadbent, CFO of Jefferies Group, died of COVID-19 complications on March 29. Broadbent joined Jefferies in 2007 after working at Morgan Stanley for 16 years.

Bill Pike, executive vice president at JPMorgan & Company from 1986 to 1989, died on March 21 after contracting the CCP virus.

In the midst of the China-U.S. trade war, the global MSCI index announced on Feb. 28, 2018 that it would quadruple the weighting of Chinese mainland shares in its global benchmarks later that year, Reuters reported. This activity could potentially draw more than \$80 billion of fresh foreign inflows to China.

According to Roger Robinson, a former member of President Ronald Reagan's National Security Council and president and CEO of RWR Advisory Group, Beijing has taken advantage of the proliferation of the MSCI All Country World Ex-U.S. Investable Market Index. Robinson said there has been no screening mechanism over U.S. capital markets in the past 20 years. As a consequence, Beijing has moved in aggressively with their stocks and bonds, pulling out as much as \$3 trillion thus far from U.S. investors, both institutional and individual, Robinson said in an interview with Zooming In, a news program on The Epoch Times' sister media NTD.

In November 2016, JPMorgan agreed to pay a \$264 million fine to settle claims over its hiring practices that violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Between 2006 and 2013, the bank hired about a hundred interns and full-time employees at the request of government officials in China and Asia, as part of its efforts to build banking relationships in the fast-growing region, Forbes reported. The hiring, dubbed internally as the "Sons & Daughters Program," enabled JPMorgan to win business that generated \$100 million in revenues for the bank.

Higher Education

Lawrence Bacow, president of Harvard University since July 2018, announced on March 24 that he and his wife, Adele Fleet Bacow, tested positive for the virus.

Bacow served as president of Tufts from 2001 to 2011, and before that he spent 24 years on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he taught environmental studies and also served as chancellor. As Harvard University president, he chose Beijing as the first stop on his Asia trip in 2019. He also met CCP leader Xi Jinping, and the two discussed educational exchanges between the United States and China.

As far back as January 1948, the Chicago Tribune called Harvard a “hotbed of communism,” and in 2001 Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun wrote that Harvard has become a training base for Chinese communist leaders. According to China expert Lin Chun, Chinese officials jokingly refer to Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government as China’s “second party school,” as senior officials are regularly sent there to learn modern thinking.

A review by Washington-based think tank Clarion Project found that since 2012, 87 U.S. universities were given \$680,273,016 in the form of gifts and contracts by the Chinese communist regime. Harvard received the most funds from Beijing, totaling \$79,272,834.

On Jan. 28, Charles M. Lieber, a nanoscientist and chair of Harvard’s chemistry and chemical biology department, was charged by federal prosecutors with making false statements about his participation in a Chinese recruitment program and his affiliation with a Chinese university. According to the court complaint, Lieber lied to both the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health about his affiliation with Wuhan University of Technology (WUT) and his involvement with China’s “Thousand Talents Plan,” a program designed to recruit Chinese expats and foreign scientists to work in China.

According to prosecutors, Lieber allegedly failed to disclose his work contract with WUT, including more than \$1.5 million to start a lab at WUT and a salary of up to \$50,000 per month, plus a stipend for living expenses.

The Media

Maria Mercader, a CBS News producer and executive, was the first American journalist who died of the CCP virus on March 29.

Headquartered in New York City, CBS is one of the three largest broadcasters in the United States. In recent years, CBS has continuously expanded its market in China and launched various online media businesses.

A Dec. 18, 2010 article by Chinese media YiMagazine titled “CBS’s Chinese business” stated, “Although the TV business is difficult to land in China, CBS has not missed this huge market, but silently became China’s largest vertical interactive media company.”

In May 2019, CBS censored an episode of “The Good Fight” television show, over a scene that mentioned the Chinese regime’s censorship tactics.

Jeff Shell, the CEO of NBCUniversal, tested positive for the CCP virus on March 26.

NBCUniversal is one of the United States’ largest media corporations. In recent years, its business dealings in China have spanned news, sports, film, entertainment, parks, and resorts.

On Nov. 23, 2010, Chinese state-run media Xinhua and NBC signed a memorandum of cooperation in New York, confirming that the two sides established a business cooperation in international broadcast news.

In September 2014, Beijing agreed to build the Universal Beijing Resort. Construction began in 2019 and is expected to be completed in May 2021. It will be the world's largest Universal Studios resort.

On March 30, Vint Cerf, vice president of research at Google, tweeted that he tested positive for the CCP virus.

In the spring of 2017, Google started a secret project to launch a Chinese search engine called "Project Dragonfly," which would filter out websites and search results that the Chinese regime deems too sensitive, such as topics pertaining to human rights, democracy, religion, and peaceful protests, the investigative news site The Intercept reported in 2018.

Arts and Entertainment

Lucian Grainge, chief executive officer of Universal Music Group Inc. (UMG), was hospitalized on March 15 after testing positive for the CCP virus.

UMG is the largest record company in the world. In May 2017, UMG and China's Tencent Music Entertainment Group (TME) signed a strategic agreement to expand the Chinese music market. Under the terms of the multi-year agreement, TME is UMG's partner in distributing and licensing content to third-party music service providers in China.

Famed tenor Plácido Domingo announced that he was diagnosed with the CCP virus on March 22.

Domingo has previously performed in Beijing with Song Zuying, then-mistress of former Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin, including a duet at the closing ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Hong Kong tenor Warren Mok Wah-yeun tested positive for the virus. Mok was treated at a hospital in Thailand before returning to Hong Kong. After his return, he tested positive again on April 12.

Mok has been a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference since 2015, an advisory body to the Party's rubber-stamp legislature.

In 2007, Mok performed a concert at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. On Oct. 31, 2010, he performed at the closing ceremony of the Shanghai World Expo. During the 2019 mass protests against a proposed extradition bill in Hong Kong, Mok participated in a pro-police rally and the recording of a video vilifying the protests. In January 2020, Mok sang "Dear China" on the Lunar New Year gala that aired on state-run broadcaster CCTV. After the pandemic, he filmed "Cheers to Wuhan," another CCP propaganda video praising the authorities' response to the virus.

Conclusion

People must realize that when they collaborate with the CCP, they are aiding and abetting an authoritarian regime that is involved in the most egregious human rights abuses.

Perhaps people and organizations should reconsider their choices made in the name of economic interests.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/social-elites-with-ties-to-the-chinese-regime_3331743.html

The Close Connections Between JPMorgan and the CCP

The financial giant is hit by the CCP virus

Commentary by Wang Jin

May 4, 2020. Updated May 4, 2020

In April the CCP virus (novel coronavirus) pandemic spread in the trading department of JP Morgan 's Manhattan headquarters. The Wall Street Journal reported on April 7 that about 20 employees on the fifth floor of JPMorgan Chase 's headquarters tested positive for the CCP virus, and 65 others were quarantined; many traders who buy and sell stocks and sell trading strategies to customers work on the fifth floor of the building.

Bill Pike, a former senior executive at JPMorgan Chase, also passed away on March 18 due to infection with the CCP virus.

JPMorgan Chase, headquartered in Manhattan, New York, is the largest financial services institution in the United States, with assets larger than Bank of America, Wells Fargo, or Citigroup. Why has the CCP virus hit JPMorgan Chase so hard?

An editorial in The Epoch Times points out that “the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing,” and “any country, community, or organization that keeps too close to the CCP and falls for its deception will taste the bitter fruits of that involvement.”

What is the relationship between JP Morgan and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? This article explores the symbiotic relationship between the two as a cautionary tale.

Chinese Companies Listed in the U.S. Market Finance the CCP Like Blood Transfusions

For decades, JPMorgan Chase has played a key role as a lead underwriter to help many Chinese companies secure IPOs (initial public offerings) in the United States or Hong Kong, raising an astonishing amount of U.S. capital for the CCP.

A lead underwriter, per the Divestopedia website, is “usually an investment bank that helps an organization to sell its shares to the public for the first time. In the case of large offerings, a group of underwriters come together to form a syndicate and the entity leading this syndicate is the lead underwriter.”

China’s WeDoctor plans to list in Hong Kong in the second half of 2020 and plans to make an initial public offering of U.S. \$1 billion. JPMorgan Chase is also one of the listed underwriters chosen by WeDoctor.

According to data from China’s Baidu Baike (Chinese online Encyclopedia), JPMorgan Chase ranks first in Asian stocks and stock-related issuances since 1993. Since then, the company has underwritten 88 stock transactions for Asian companies. Since this is not the latest data, the number of stock transactions it has actually underwritten is likely higher than this.

Which Chinese Companies Worked With JPMorgan Chase for U.S. or Hong Kong IPOs?

The following are just a few examples of Chinese companies working with JPMorgan Chase on IPOs, based on the public information released by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC), on Feb. 25, 2019 and reports from Chinese state media:

In 2014, Alibaba raised \$21.8 billion in its IPO in New York. JPMorgan Chase and six other investment banks acted as its lead stock underwriters. As of Feb. 25, 2019, Alibaba's market value exceeded \$458.6 billion.

In a document submitted to the U.S. securities regulator, Alibaba stated that the banks handling its IPO were set to receive a total of \$300.4 million in commissions, or more than 1% of the proceeds.

In November 2019, Alibaba re-listed its public offering in Hong Kong. Five well-known investment banks, including JPMorgan Chase, were underwriters of Alibaba's secondary listing in Hong Kong. Mainland China's media reported that the offering raised about \$15 billion.

Alibaba has a close relationship with CCP "princelings" (children of key communist officials). According to the New York Times, some of the executives of all four Chinese companies investing in Alibaba are the children and grandchildren of more than 20 CCP officials who served on the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee after 2002, including Jiang Zemin's grandson "Alvin" Jiang Zhicheng.

In 1996, Guangshen Railway was listed in New York and Hong Kong, raising more than \$500 million dollars. JPMorgan Chase was one of its underwriters. As of Feb. 25, 2019, the market value of Guangshen Railway exceeded \$3.1 billion.

In 2000, PetroChina went public in New York and raised more than \$680 million. JPMorgan Chase was one of its lead underwriters. As of Feb. 25,

2019, CNPC's market value exceeded \$123.6 billion. PetroChina is a Chinese state-owned enterprise.

In 2001, Chalco was listed in New York and Hong Kong, raising funds of \$486 million. JPMorgan Chase was one of its stock underwriters. As of Feb. 25, 2019, the market value of Chalco exceeded \$5.8 billion.

In 2002, China Telecom was listed in New York and Hong Kong, raising \$1.52 billion. JPMorgan Chase was one of its underwriters. As of Feb. 25, 2019, China Telecom's market value exceeded \$45.5 billion.

In 2014, China Momo (Momo, Inc.) listed in New York, raising funds of \$216 million, with JP Morgan Chase one of its lead underwriters. As of Feb. 25, 2019, the market value of Momo exceeded \$6.8 billion.

The USCC stated that, as of Feb. 25, 2019, there were 156 Chinese companies (the number does not including the offshore Chinese companies listed in Hong Kong) listed on the three major stock exchanges in the United States—the New York Stock Exchange, the NASDAQ, and the American Stock Exchange—with a market value of \$1.2 trillion.

Roger Robinson, the economic and financial strategist of former US President Reagan, estimated that “the U.S. has roughly \$1.9 trillion invested in Chinese stocks and another trillion in bonds.”

In addition to the stock market, another major market for the CCP's overseas financing is bonds.

Big Bond Funds

During this crucial time of the global fight against the CCP virus pandemic, JPMorgan Chase seemed to have made a big move quietly.

On Feb. 28, 2020, JPMorgan Chase included in its global emerging market government bonds index nine local Chinese government (CCP) bonds. According to the plan, the inclusion will be completed step by step within 10 months.

JPMorgan Chase announced this news in September 2019, and this time it was implemented as originally planned.

It is reported that after the inclusion, international investments that “track” the index automatically allocate Chinese bonds in proportion. Goldman Sachs calculated that this inclusion will hopefully attract \$3 billion in foreign funds into the Chinese bond market every month.

Industry insiders said that after the CCP government bonds are fully included in the JP Morgan Chase Index, they can reach the weight limit of 10% of the index.

According to mainland China media reports, Bloomberg calculated that when the weight of China’s bond inclusion reaches 10%, the scale of potential foreign capital inflows to China will exceed \$20 billion.

Incorporating the Chinese government’s government bonds into mainstream international bond indexes has contributed to the inflow of foreign capital into China. In February of this year, foreign ownership of Chinese bonds reached a record high.

During the Pandemic, JPMorgan Was Part of the Online Shanghai Opening Ceremony

Under the pandemic, Shanghai held an online opening ceremony for local branches of five global institutions including JPMorgan Chase, Invesco, and Russell Investment on March 20, 2020.

On Dec. 18, 2019, JPMorgan announced that the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) has approved a Securities and Futures Business Permit for JPMorgan Securities (China) Company Limited. The approval paves the way for JPMorgan's majority-owned securities company in China to commence business operations.

Filippo Gori, CEO for JPMorgan, Asia Pacific, said in the company's statement: "China represents one of the largest opportunities for many of our clients and is a critical component of JPMorgan's growth plans in Asia Pacific, and globally."

According to a report from Sina, JPMorgan has posted more than 30 career and job opportunities in China in 2020.

The business and investment of JPMorgan in China have a long history.

A Business With Deep Roots in China

The following historical information is taken from JPMorgan's official website.

1973

Chase Chairman David Rockefeller leads a U.S. delegation to China to meet with China's Premier Zhou Enlai. In the same year, Chase becomes the first U.S. bank to be designated as a correspondent bank for Bank of China.

1997

JPMorgan acts as a joint book runner for the People's Republic of China's \$500 million bond issuance.

2001

JPMorgan Chairman and CEO Bill Harrison meets with China's President Jiang Zemin in Beijing.

J.P. Morgan Chase Bank (China) Company Limited, the firm's locally incorporated bank, is established.

JPMorgan received approval from the China Securities Regulatory Commission to enter into a joint venture futures company, known as the J.P. Morgan Futures Company Limited.

2011

JPMorgan signs the investment agreements in Beijing to establish a Sino-foreign joint venture guarantee corporation as one of the major investors.

2015

JPMorgan Chase & Co. forms a strategic partnership with Postal Savings Bank of China.

2017

JPMorgan received a Type-A Bond Settlement Agent license in China.

JPMorgan received Debt Financing Instruments of Non-financial Enterprises Underwriting License in China's interbank bond market.

JPMorgan was appointed by the People's Bank of China as an RMB clearing bank in the U.S.

JPMorgan offers trading and clearing of Renminbi-denominated crude oil futures contract for its onshore and offshore clients.

JPMorgan submitted an application to the China Securities Regulatory Commission seeking to establish a new securities company in which it would hold a 51% stake.

JPMorgan China becomes a Bond Connect market maker, acting as one of the price providers to serve the Northbound Link leg of the connection between the mainland bond market and Hong Kong and the overseas investors.

The following are among the financial services provided by JPMorgan in China:

In September 2003, when China Telecom announced its up to \$10 billion plan to purchase six provincial phone networks from its parent company, Morgan Stanley was the sole financial advisor to the company.

In 2004, China's dominant offshore oil and gas producer CNOOC launched a \$750 million bond in the international capital market. JPMorgan served as one of the bookrunners.

Among the many financial services and investment projects carried out in China, what is the scale of revenue JPMorgan could make? The following case may illustrate.

In one of the biggest tech mergers ever, Dell bought EMC for nearly \$67 billion in 2016. Morgan Stanley was the lead financial adviser to EMC, while JPMorgan was the lead financial adviser to Dell. Together, they may have raked in up to \$210 million in advisory fees, according to estimates from consulting firm Freeman & Co.

JPMorgan's 'Sons and Daughters' Program to Win Favor of the Regime

A three-year investigation into JPMorgan marks one of the first major crackdowns on a big U.S. bank for running afoul of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). This legislation prohibits companies from making payments or giving “anything of value” to win business from foreign officials.

Wall Street Journal reported that JPMorgan Chase & Co. hired friends and family members of executives at three-quarters of the major Chinese companies it took public in Hong Kong during a decade-long boom in Chinese IPOs, according to a document compiled by the bank as part of a federal bribery investigation.

Obviously, this program was meant to safeguard business within JPMorgan by securing its communist connection.

Charles Li, the head of the Hong Kong stock exchange, was involved in controversial hiring efforts when he worked at JPMorgan Chase & Co., recommending that the bank employ children and acquaintances of Chinese officials, clients, and potential clients, according to people familiar with the matter and emails reviewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Among those recommended were a family friend of Huang Hongyuan, then a senior official at the China Securities Regulatory Commission and now the president of the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Other referrals included Liu Lefei, the son of Liu Yunshan, the current head of the CCP Propaganda Department and a member of the Politburo Standing Committee.

Also included is former Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying's younger daughter. She interned at a Hong Kong subsidiary of JPMorgan

Chase & Co. Leung Chung-yan did the internship in the summer of 2010 when she was in secondary school, when the bank's internship program offered in Hong Kong did not apply to secondary school students.

In 2016, JPMorgan agreed to pay a \$264 million fine to settle claims that its hiring violated the FCPA. Over a seven-year period between 2006 and 2013, the bank hired about one hundred interns and full time employees at the request of government officials in China and elsewhere in Asia as part of its efforts to build banking relationships in the fast-growing region. The hiring, dubbed internally as a "Sons & Daughters Program," enabled JPMorgan to win business that generated \$100 million in revenues for the bank.

Staying Away from the CCP and Be Self-reliant: The Way to Defend Against the CCP Virus

The only thing that enables the CCP to stay afloat is foreign investments from the United States and the West, according to Kyle Bass, founder of Hayman Capital Management. In the China Forum, an annual conference in Washington, D.C., Bass said on September 26, 2019 that without foreign investments, the CCP could not survive.

Steve Bannon, former White House chief strategist, said "The Chinese Communist Party is the Frankenstein monster created by the elites in the West—the capital provided by the elites in the West, the technology that's provided by the elites in the West."

He urged Western countries to stop providing capital and technology to China. "We have to stop that. We have to hold ourselves accountable. This was not Xi, this was not Wang Qishan. This was us. We did this. That Frankenstein monster is our responsibility... We have a fiduciary, a responsibility to unwind this. "

“This is not about trade, this is not about soybeans, this is not about steel. This is the highest moral imperative we have,” he said.

“Now people are all shocked...It (China) permeates everything. It’s the central issue of our time. And the central issue, the core issue, is how we took the great values of the West and look the other way for money.”

“We are at an inflection point because the world is starting to awaken that something has gone terribly terribly wrong, and the reason it went terribly wrong is because of us.”

How do we stay safe in face of this global pandemic caused by the CCP virus? An editorial by The Epoch Times provides an answer: “Staying away from the CCP and condemning the CCP can help any individual, organization, or country alleviate or even avoid the CCP pandemic entirely. They may then embrace a wonderful future.”

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-close-connections-between-jpmorgan-and-the-ccp_3338393.html

Why the Virus Outbreak Is Severe in the Grand Est Region of France

By Wu Wo

May 6, 2020 Updated: May 6, 2020

The Grand Est region was the epicenter of the CCP virus outbreak in France in March. At present, the number of patients in the intensive care unit has slightly dropped, but local hospitals are still worried about the possibility of a second wave of infection.

As of April 23, the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus, has killed 3,770 people in Grand Est, according to the German newspaper Saarbrücker Zeitung. The number of infected patients was 5,479 as of March 25, according to Statista.

This region bordering Germany has reached the height of the epidemic, but doctors are concerned about France's plans to partially ease the lockdown.

The Grand Est region is among the worst-hit areas in France, with the health minister Olivier Véran describing the situation as "tense," especially around Mulhouse and Strasbourg.

Why Is the Outbreak Severe in the Grand Est?

A March 30 commentary by FranceSoir, titled, "Coronavirus: How the Epidemic Started in the Haut-Rhin," identifies the factors that caused the virus's spread in the region.

The article pointed out that Mulhouse has sister city relations with Bergamo in Italy and Jining in China, to promote cultural and commercial ties. Bergamo is in the Lombardy region, Italy's epicenter of the outbreak. Jining is in China's Shandong Province.

Many Chinese traveled abroad during the Chinese New Year holiday from Jan. 25 to Feb. 8.

Direct flights from France to China are rare. However, the Basel Mulhouse Freiburg airport offers nonstop flights to Jining, the article noted.

Colmar city in Grand Est has also become a very fashionable destination for Chinese tourists, according to the article. Colmar identified its first virus patient in December.

Strategic Cooperation With Sichuan Province

"Sichuan is a strategic region, a good gateway to the Grand Est region," said Jean Rottner, president of the regional council of Grand Est. He was also the mayor of Mulhouse from 2010 to 2017.

In May 2018, Rottner and a local delegation traveled to Sichuan, and signed an economic cooperation agreement between Grand Est and the Chinese province. "Health, agriculture and agrifood, industry of the future, tourism and gastronomy" were the four possible areas of cooperation highlighted by the Grand Est region, local newspaper L'hebdo du Vendredi reported.

The delegation did not mention China's human rights abuses during the meeting, the report said.

Since 2011, Chengdu city, located in Sichuan Province, has emerged as an industrial giant with three main flagship sectors: electronics, aeronautics,

and auto. A new rail link, that starts at Chengdu and ends at the Bettembourg freight platform in Luxembourg, completed construction in October 2019.

Rottner also said he hopes to see a direct flight open between Chengdu and Mulhouse to promote tourism.

Before Grand Est, Sichuan had already signed a cultural cooperation agreement with Champagne-Ardenne in 2010.

According to a 2018 report by L'hebdo du Vendredi, about 60 French companies were already established in Sichuan in the fields of energy (Areva, Suez), transportation (Alstom, Air France-KLM), retail distribution (Carrefour, Auchan, Décathlon), technology (Ubisoft, Alcatel), and luxury goods (Moët Hennessy, Pernod Ricard). Axon' Cable, a leading manufacturer of custom cables, is based in Montmirail, and has a branch in Chengdu.

Under Rottner's tenure as mayor, the Grand Est region became friendly with the Chinese regime.

The close ties continued after his time as mayor. On Sept. 24, 2019, local officials hosted a grand ceremony in Strasbourg to celebrate China's National Day, the 70th anniversary of the founding of communist China. Officials from other regions also attended the event.

Embracing Huawei

In 2011, Huawei began cooperating with the Paris Institute of Technology (ParisTech) to launch the Seeds for the Future program in France. In 2013, Huawei extended this cooperation to six new universities, including ESIEE Paris, HEI Lille, INSA Rennes, INSA Toulouse, INSA Lyon, Ecole Centrale de Lyon, and Institut du Service Civique.

The United States, concerned that the Chinese regime could use Huawei equipment for espionage, has urged its European allies not to include Huawei equipment in next-generation 5G mobile networks.

In late January 2019, the U.S. Department of Justice unsealed two indictments against Huawei, its chief financial officer (CFO), Meng Wanzhou, and several of the company's subsidiaries, in a pair of legal cases accusing the company of violating U.S. sanctions against Iran, and stealing trade secrets from U.S. mobile carrier T-Mobile.

On Feb. 28, 2020, Huawei announced it would spend 200 million euros on a new 5G factory in France.

Politico reported in February, citing documents it obtained, that the Chinese firm was using investment to influence EU countries. Being the first of its kind in Europe, the Huawei factory in France would hire 500 people, and produce radio equipment in 4G and 5G communications for the entire European continent.

Politico reported that Huawei's executives courted French local lawmakers in the Alsace region in the months leading up to Huawei's announcement on Feb. 28.

French business magazine Challenges reported on March 3 that Huawei plans to build its new factory in Strasbourg. The Grand Est region "confirms these discussions" and qualifies the dossier as "priority," the report said. Bruno Le Maire, then France's Minister of the Economy and Finance, said that this announcement would "not change an iota" the government's position on 5G. "We have ongoing discussions with Huawei, this issue is a priority," said Lilla Merabet, vice president of the Grand Est region in charge of innovation and digital technology.

On March 12, France announced it would allow telecom operators to use part of Huawei's 5G equipment, but only on insensitive parts of the network, CNET France reported.

Did Chinese Tourists From Wuhan Spread the Virus?

Colmar is a town in Grand Est and is known as "Little Venice" with about 70,000 residents.

In June 2018, Chinese state-run broadcaster Hunan Television filmed its reality TV show "Chinese Restaurant" in Colmar for three weeks. The episodes were filmed at a local restaurant, the Bistrot des Lavandières.

Due to the TV show's popularity in mainland China, many Chinese wanted to visit Colmar. "The Wuhan visa service notes that three travel agencies submit each week an average of a hundred visa applications for groups going specifically to visit Colmar," said the consulate general of France in Wuhan.

Colmar saw the volume of Chinese overnight stays jump by 70 percent that year.

"We welcome nearly 4 million tourists to Colmar and we are aware of what you will be able to bring in more, thanks to your program [the 'Chinese Restaurant']," said Gilbert Meyer, mayor of Colmar, according to a report by French cable channel BFM TV.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/why-the-virus-outbreak-is-severe-in-the-gr-and-est-region-of-france_3338130.html

Why Is a Small, Remote African Country Hit Hard by the CCP Virus?

Six lawmakers in Burkina Faso tested positive for Covid-19

Li Mingxiang

May 7, 2020

Burkina Faso is a small landlocked country located in West Africa. Although the country is not a transportation hub and far away from China, it is hit hard by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus. Among 23 cabinet members, six ministers have contracted the virus.

Burkina Faso spans 273,600 square kilometers, according to World Bank data in 2018. The United Nations estimates that the country's current population is around 20.8 million. Once a French colony, the country was renamed Burkina Faso, which means "Land of Incorruptible People" in the region's main native languages, in 1984.

Six Cabinet Ministers Infected With CCP Virus

Burkina Faso had 645 confirmed cases and 43 deaths caused by the CCP virus, as of April 30.

According to African News, Burkina Faso is experiencing one of the highest virus infection rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

So far six government ministers among the country's 23 cabinet members have been confirmed to be infected, including the Minister of Foreign

Affairs, Commerce, Mines and Quarries, Education, Interior, and Trade, Reuters reported on April 10.

The country announced its first COVID-19 death on March 17. The patient was 62-year-old Rose Marie Compaore, who was former vice president of parliament.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Alpha Barry confirmed he was infected with the CCP virus on March 20.

The number of confirmed cases probably represent just “the tip of the iceberg,” said Jerry-Jonas Mbasha, an official representing Burkina Faso at the World Health Organization (WHO).

The New Humanitarian, an independent media outlet, revealed that the only testing laboratory in the country is located in Bobo-Dioulasso—the second largest city and a five-hour drive from the capital. This means patient samples across the country will take at least 12 hours before getting diagnostic results.

There is currently only one hospital with 500 beds and one small clinic, each with just a few ventilators, designated to treat patients infected with the CCP virus, according to the report.

The report said the government wants to establish a second laboratory in the capital Ouagadougou, but no one in the country is qualified to set up the equipment.

In the past year, 135 health centers around the country were shut down due to escalating violence by extremist and local militant groups that have forced almost 800,000 people to flee their homes, the report said. The growing number of virus patients could overwhelm the weakened health system, resulting in a public health crisis.

Poor living conditions in Burkina Faso are also a major drawback in battling against the CCP virus. There is a severe water shortage in the country, meaning poor sanitation. Washing hands frequently is one of the key methods of preventing the virus from spreading.

In addition, many refugees live in close quarters, with five to ten people sharing a tent. It is therefore impossible to maintain social distancing.

WHO official Mbasha told the Arabic news outlet Al Jazeera that the international community needs to step in to help prevent a major crisis.

“We need technical and financial partners to come in and protect Burkina Faso,” he said.

Lessons Learned the Hard Way

Countries with close or lucrative relations with the Chinese regime are most affected by the CCP virus. Burkina Faso is no exception.

On May 24, 2018, Burkina Faso announced that it would sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan, which the Chinese regime considers to be part of its territory. Two days later, the African country’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Alpha Barry, signed an agreement with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi to resume diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Since 2016, Beijing has focused on luring away Taiwan’s allies by offering them Chinese investments and loans. Despite Taiwan being a self-ruled island with its own democratically-elected government, Beijing considers Taiwan a renegade province that should be united with the mainland, with military force if necessary.

Burkina Faso and China established a joint economic and trade committee shortly after resuming diplomatic ties. Since then, bilateral trade has rapidly

developed, and there have been a number of high-level officials' visits between both countries.

In September 2018, Burkina Faso's President, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, paid a state visit to China and attended the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

In January 2019, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi visited four African countries, including Burkina Faso.

In April 2019, the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso made another state visit to China.

In July 2019, when Chinese Vice-Minister of Agriculture Qu Dongyu was elected as the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Qu received "firm support" from Burkina Faso. State-run media China Daily reported that Wang Yi later said, "From now on, China has got another good friend, which is our African allies, inside the international organizations of the United Nations."

At the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2019, 22 countries condemned the large-scale detention of Uyghurs in China. Meanwhile, more than 50 countries collectively issued a joint statement expressing their support for the Chinese regime. Burkina Faso was one of the countries that chose to support the CCP. Some of the CCP's supporters included human rights violators, such as Russia, Venezuela, North Korea, Burma (Myanmar), and Cambodia.

The vast majority of African countries are developing countries, and they have been the focus of the CCP's diplomatic efforts. Beijing influences and manipulates these countries by offering lucrative deals, such as substantial economic assistance, investment, trade, as well as helping with local infrastructure projects.

At present, the African countries with the most virus infections have either close political or economic ties with the Chinese regime, such as Egypt, South Africa, Morocco, and Algeria.

Conversely, Swaziland, now officially known as eSwatini, which is the only country in Africa that has not established formal diplomatic relations with China, has far fewer virus cases. So far, there have been only 100 confirmed cases and one death as of April 30.

In today's globalized environment, it is quite common to establish diplomatic and trade relations with China. The key issue is whether a nation or an individual is able to understand the true nature of the CCP's communist ideology, and what stance they take with regard to the CCP's human rights abuses.

Two typical examples are Hong Kong and Taiwan. Despite close proximity to mainland China, as well as intimate trade and tourism to and from China, these two regions have few confirmed cases and low death tolls. Especially in the case of Hong Kong, large numbers of mainland Chinese entered Hong Kong every day, before the city partially closed its borders to the mainland on March 23. The success of virus containment in Taiwan and Hong Kong can hardly be explained by modern science.

Why is this happening? People of Hong Kong have explicitly said "no" to the CCP by participating in anti-government protests, and people in Taiwan publicly supported Hong Kong's democratic movement. Taiwan has adopted democratic elections and followed the will of its people to stay away from the CCP.

Burkina Faso, a landlocked African country far away from China, is suffering the bitter fruits of maintaining diplomatic relations with the CCP. It is truly a lesson learned the hard way.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/why-is-a-small-remote-african-country-hit-hard-by-the-ccp-virus_3342777.html

Spinal Atrophy a Problem When Dealing With a Tyrannical Regime

Commentary by John Robson

May 11, 2020 Updated: May 12, 2020

There's this mysterious new disease out of China with strange symptoms that poses serious risks. No, I don't mean SARS-CoV-19. I mean the one causing intermittent failure of the senses among Canadians in positions of authority.

The latest victim is our semi-self-quarantined prime minister. But it has also hit our foreign minister, health minister, minister of innovation, science and industry (that's one person), deputy MP, and a senior Canadian adviser with the World Health Organization. And although it "presents" as selective deafness or aphasia, specifically an inability to hear or speak the words "China" or "Taiwan," or a chronic blind spot when it comes to Chinese government misconduct, it seems to originate in quite another body part: the spine.

At a May 8 press conference, Justin Trudeau was asked: "The former Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull, says China is a bully, and that the way for Canada to deal with China is to stand up for it instead of backing down. Is your government standing up to China, or is it backing away from China?"

Before I proceed, is there anything unclear about that question? OK, smarty-pants, the syntax is garbled. It's standing up "to" not "for" and

“backing down” not “backing away.” But is the question in any way difficult to understand?

No? Good. Now let’s hear the answer. “My responsibility as prime minister is to make sure that we are providing for Canadians and keeping Canadians safe. That’s the job people expect me to do and that is exactly what I’m doing. We’re going to ensure that Canadians have the equipment, the supplies, the support they need to make it through this pandemic. Of course at the same time we will be asking difficult questions about how we’re making it through this pandemic, how this came to happen, how we can learn from this. There will be plenty of time for questions in the months to come. My focus, rightly, is on doing everything I can to help Canadians through this,” Trudeau said. Then he walked away.

Is that answer in any way easy to understand? Of course, you might attribute the PM’s lack of clarity to cunning. It might simply appear that his handlers had him memorize some anodyne incomprehensible boilerplate to be deployed in the event of an awkward question. Even the bit about it being important to ask difficult questions while dodging one, before patting himself on the back in case no one else felt inclined. But it’s not an isolated case.

In early April, health minister Patty Hajdu exhibited both blindness and logorrhea. She didn’t just say there was no evidence that Chinese Communist Party data on COVID-19 was unreliable. She said asking about it fed “conspiracy theories.” And sadly she infected her colleague, Deputy PM Chrystia Freeland. When asked, in context of Hajdu’s puzzling performance, whether she’d seen intelligence data questioning Chinese government claims, Freeland replied, “we have very frequent security and intelligence conversations with the United States. A reason we are able to have those conversations—which are very important in the crisis that the world is experiencing today—is because those conversations happen in

private and so I am not able to share details of what is discussed in those conversations.”

You see? A normal answer would have been “Yes I have” or “No I haven’t” while avoiding elaborating in ways that compromised confidentiality. Instead she either did not hear or could not say “China.” Whereas our foreign minister, Francois-Philippe Champagne, personally thanked China on Twitter for sending us (defective) medical supplies, but not Taiwan. And when asked in Parliament last week, “Will the minister now do the right thing and on behalf of Canadians, recognize the generosity of Taiwan and thank its government for that timely donation?” he replied, “Canada is grateful to all who have given supplies to Canada. This is a common endeavour.”

It is not certain whether Champagne could not hear or could not say “Taiwan.” But something was characteristically wrong. As it was when Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Navdeep Bains was asked on April 23 about defective equipment from China and did a deer-in-the-headlights response involving “challenges,” and “building up strong domestic capacity” and “made-in-Canada solutions” that failed to acknowledge let alone answer the bit about China or defective equipment. The exasperated CBC interviewer put the question a third time, pointing out that he had not answered it, and he failed again, stammering about “challenges” and “domestic capacity.”

Finally there’s poor Bruce Aylward, a Canadian doctor with WHO whose condition is far more acute, possibly because it struck him earlier. Back in March he first could not hear a reporter’s question about “Taiwan,” then could not speak, then suffered a spasm and disconnected the call, but still couldn’t hear or say it when reconnected. And now he’s actually become invisible, having failed to appear before the House of Commons health committee despite two requests followed by a summons, and inaudible: He can’t or won’t say why. (And in its response WHO apparently couldn’t even

type “Aylward,” instead emailing the committee that “Over the past weeks, we have received requests for information from several different Governments, parliamentary bodies and officials. With a view to facilitating the work of the Committee, WHO stands ready to consider any list of technical questions which may be provided in writing by the Committee”.)

So eyes, ears, fingers, and tongue fail. But the core problem is atrophy of the spine. As Aristotle said millennia ago, courage is first among virtues because without it we only exercise the others when convenient, safe, and painless. Whether the PM was standing up “to” China or possibly even “for” it, backing away or up or down, he didn’t dare say what he was doing or what he was thinking.

This disease has hit Western governments before. But this wave comes straight from China because its government is indeed a bully and one who thinks its moment has come. The Politburo is throwing its weight around in big ways and small, from the Belt and Road Initiative to claiming the South China Sea to threatening commercial boycotts. And from warning Western universities about loss of foreign-student revenue while undermining free speech on their campuses to that weird business where their consul-general crashed a press conference by Australia’s health minister. The question is, what are we going to do? And the answer must not be to pretend it’s not happening.

To be fair and end on a positive note, the Canadian government has finally joined the American one in pushing to include Taiwan in the World Health Organization. So there’s one vertebra. And let’s hope it’s the start of an entire spinal column because we’re going to need one.

The world is a dangerous place in any number of ways, from geopolitics to pandemics. And we need people in full possession of their senses to keep us as safe as possible. In the literal as well as figurative sense. And we’re not going to be kept safe by anyone whose nervous system has collapsed.

John Robson is a documentary filmmaker, National Post columnist, contributing editor to the Dorchester Review, and executive director of the Climate Discussion Nexus. His most recent documentary is “The Environment: A True Story.”

https://www.theepochtimes.com/ottawas-spinal-atrophy-when-it-comes-to-the-beijing-regime_3347037.html

The Pandemic Highlights the Vatican's Ties With the Chinese Regime

Chen Han

May 11, 2020, Updated May 12, 2020

Since the Vatican City (the Holy See) confirmed its first case of the CCP virus on March 5, a total of 12 people have been infected. Why did the small city fall prey to the pandemic?

The virus's spread has highlighted countries' ties to the Chinese regime. Let's examine the Vatican's developing relations with Beijing in recent years.

The Vatican has a population of approximately 800 people. On May 6, the Holy See press office announced that a 12th person tested positive for the CCP virus. The first cardinal to test positive was Angelo De Donatis, the Vicar General for the Diocese of Rome, on March 30.

On the evening of March 27, Pope Francis stood alone in St. Peter's Square and during the prayer service he said, "We find ourselves afraid and lost." The service was livestreamed around the world.

Why has the Vatican, the highest authority of the Catholic Church, been affected by the CCP virus?

The Vatican and Beijing severed ties in 1951 after the communist takeover. The Vatican does not recognize the so-called Catholic bishops appointed by the CCP through its "self-selection" and "self-consecration" procedures.

However, in the past few years, the situation has begun to change.

In September 2018, the Vatican signed an agreement with Beijing, allowing Chinese authorities to appoint China's bishops. The Holy See endorsed the legitimacy of these Beijing-appointed bishops.

Cardinal Joseph Zen, a former bishop of Hong Kong, criticized the Holy See for surrendering completely to the CCP and keeping silent about the CCP's record of human rights violations.

The BBC published an article stating that the Vatican signed the agreement with Beijing in order to promote good relations and to attract more mainland Chinese to join the Christian faith in the future.

In an exclusive interview with Hong Kong-based newspaper Asia Times in February 2016, Pope Francis urged the world not to fear China's "growing power" and he conveyed a message of friendship to Chinese leader Xi Jinping for the Lunar New Year. Francis avoided talking about human rights and the CCP's persecution of Catholics in China.

During the Hong Kong protests over a since-shelved extradition bill last year, the Vatican chose to remain silent on the issue.

In a blogpost, Cardinal Zen wrote that he flew to Rome to meet the Pope in June last year to plead with him in person to take a stance against Beijing's erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy. But five months later, the Vatican did not make any statement about the protests.

The Vatican's compromise with the CCP is not limited to the above.

In February 2017, the World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (WOIPFG) wrote a letter to the Pope, urging him to prevent

two Chinese officials from attending the Vatican's Pontifical Academy Summit on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism. Dr. Huang Jiefu and Dr. Wang Haibo have been heavily involved in organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in China, according to research by the WOIPFG. Huang was a former vice minister in charge of organ transplantation in the CCP's Ministry of National Health and Family Planning Commission. Wang was responsible for creating China's organ transplant database.

Huang himself later revealed in an interview with Phoenix TV that his invitation to the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences was condemned by 12 medical ethics experts from various countries who raised concerns about China's forced organ harvesting.

Huang also bragged to the reporter about the support he received from Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and the Pope, for his participation in the conference.

Bishop Sorondo not only welcomed Huang to the Vatican, but also looked forward to being invited to visit China. His wish was quickly fulfilled, and in subsequent interviews with the media, he praised the CCP and downplayed the CCP's organ transplant abuses.

In the past few years, Pope Francis has repeatedly extended an olive branch to Beijing, expressing his willingness to visit China. This may also be the next goal of the Holy See after signing the appointment agreement for bishops between China and the Vatican in 2018. The South China Morning Post reported in August 2014 that Francis told a group of reporters who traveled with him to South Korea and were flying back with him to Europe: "Do I want to go to China? Of course, even tomorrow."

The CCP's coverup and delayed response to the CCP virus outbreak caused the pandemic and now the world is suffering from the

consequences. However, Pope Francis publicly praised the CCP for its efforts in containing the CCP virus within its borders.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/the-pandemic-highlights-the-vaticans-ties-with-the-chinese-regime_3342850.html

New Jersey's High Virus Toll Correlates With Ties to the Chinese Regime

Commentary by Wang Jin
May 16, 2020

When COVID-19 broke out in the United States, New Jersey was soon hit severely, and now ranks second across the country just after New York for the highest number of confirmed cases and deaths. As of May 15, New Jersey had 143,905 confirmed cases and 10,138 deaths.

Around the world, areas with close ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have been severely harmed by the virus. Also, the CCP covered up the outbreak in China for weeks, which cost the whole world tremendously. Thus, an appropriate name has been given to the virus: the CCP virus.

The first case of the CCP virus was discovered in New Jersey on March 4. Increasingly, more confirmed cases followed. On March 9, Governor Phil Murphy declared a state of emergency and a public health emergency for New Jersey. Through April 18, he followed up with 30 administrative orders for schools, libraries, and businesses to close, for people to stay at home, and a curfew. Yet the measures were not effective: 3,000 to 4,000 more cases were confirmed every day afterward.

The Why and the How

People started to wonder why is New Jersey, in particular, so severely hit in the pandemic? How can we solve this problem?

In the editorial “Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows,” The Epoch Times points out that the virus tends to follow and extend in countries, cities, organizations and individuals with close ties to the CCP. If the CCP’s pernicious influence were removed, would the current pandemic be contained and future casualties prevented?

Dancing With the CCP

New Jersey has a history of closeness to the CCP economically, technologically, and in business. Could this be a deeper reason that New Jersey has been so severely hit in this pandemic?

New Jersey hosts many high-tech businesses, and is the headquarters of 20 Fortune 500 companies. Among the large, medium, and small-sized companies, many have close business contacts with the CCP.

I believe that the nation of China is good, and the Chinese people are good. But the CCP regime has ruled China through corruption, lies, and violence. It has fed itself with “blood”—money and technology—from U.S. companies and has grown strong enough to insinuate its values into American society.

Honeywell’s Big Capital Infusion

Darius Adamczyk, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Honeywell International, said to Chinese state-run media Xinhua in 2017, “‘The strategy of the east serving the world’ and China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ are very well matched.”

“To me, the ‘One Belt, One Road’ is an important measure for China to open to the outside and to further merge into the world. To Honeywell, we will apply the results of R&D, design, and production in China to other regions in the world,” said Adamczyk. One Belt, One Road is China’s

flagship foreign policy project, a bid to gain geopolitical power through financing infrastructure projects around the world.

Honeywell was ranked 77 among the Fortune 500 companies in 2018. Its annual revenues were \$41.8 billion. Its headquarters had been in NJ since 1958 and moved to North Carolina in 2019, but it has kept several R&D facilities in New Jersey.

Honeywell's products range from masks, air conditioner thermostats, air purifiers, and water purifiers, to petrochemicals, and automotive materials, among others.

Honeywell is also the world's leading integrator of avionics systems.

Presently, the CCP has been bragging of its "independently developed" COMAC C919 civil aviation aircraft. But without Honeywell's parts, that aircraft could not have made it off the ground. Honeywell provides the C919 with fly-by-wire flight control systems, wheel and brake systems, auxiliary power units, and other equipment. Honeywell could not supply the products directly, but became a supplier of C919 through four joint ventures with Chinese firms.

The "joint venture" is a common tactic used by the CCP to force technology transfer. In light of this, how long can Honeywell maintain its advantage in the field of automatic controls and aerospace technology?

Honeywell was one of the first American companies to enter China. After President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, UOP, a subsidiary of Honeywell, entered China and installed China's first conversion unit in the Gansu Yumen Oilfield, opening a new era for China's oil refining industry.

The last two decades saw explosive investment and expansion from the West into China. Likewise, Honeywell moved the Asia-Pacific headquarters

of all business units to China. In 2016, Honeywell invested \$100 million in Zhangjiang Hi-Tech park in Shanghai to expand its Asia-Pacific head office and its China R&D Center. Its total investments in China has exceeded \$10 billion and it owns more than 50 enterprises, either joint ventures or wholly-owned, including more than 20 factories. Honeywell has established R&D centers in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Suzhou, and Xi'an.

However, in the eyes of the CCP, Honeywell is nothing but a pawn that can easily be sacrificed in its political games. In 2019, the United States approved the sale of weapons and equipment worth about \$2.2 billion to Taiwan. The CCP's Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said on July 12 that "China will impose sanctions on U.S. companies involved in the arms sales to Taiwan." An article from People's Daily, the CCP's mouthpiece newspaper, on July 14 named Honeywell directly—because on the list of arms sales to Taiwan, Honeywell provided key components, including gas turbines, for "108 M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks."

'Pro-China' Stance from New Jersey's Pharmaceutical Sector

New Jersey is known as the heart of the pharmaceutical industry in the United States and the world. Twelve of the country's top 20 pharmaceutical companies have headquarters or regional headquarters in New Jersey, including Merck (known as Merck East outside the United States and Canada), Johnson and Johnson, and Celgene.

During the financial crisis of 2008, pharmaceutical companies were in dire straits. In order to maintain market share and stock prices, improve efficiency, and reduce R&D costs, international pharmaceutical giants started to transfer their R&D centers to low-cost areas, or adopted the CRO (contract research organizations) model, outsourcing to other countries.

Among the "BRIC countries" (Brazil, Russia, India, China) advocated by American leftist newspapers at that time, China had low environmental

protection requirements. It became a major outsourcing destination for large pharmaceutical companies. Countless multinational companies poured investments into China, bringing advanced drug research and development technology and talent to the CCP. 2009 to 2019 is known as the “golden decade” of rapid growth in China’s pharmaceutical industry.

Merck’s Contribution to Chinese Society Kept Under Wraps

Merck had revenues of \$42.3 billion in 2018. In terms of revenues, Merck is the fourth-largest pharmaceutical company in the world.

Merck entered the China market shortly after the Tiananmen Square Massacre on June 4, 1989. In September 1989, under its president Roy Vagelos at the time, Merck decided to transfer the latest genetically engineered hepatitis B vaccine technology to China for only \$7 million. That price was not enough to cover the cost of dispatching employees to assist China to install equipment and train local employees, which cost far more than \$7 million.

In 1993, China successfully produced the first batch of genetically engineered hepatitis B vaccines. Data from 1994 to 2015 show that Merck’s hepatitis B vaccine helped nearly 200 million Chinese children avoid the threat of hepatitis B. However, Merck’s generosity and role were deliberately concealed by the CCP. The average Chinese person knows nothing about it.

After the financial crisis in 2008, Merck increased its investments in China. In 2011, Merck East invested \$1.5 billion to establish a China R&D center in Beijing. In April 2013, its 75,000-square-meter Merck East Hangzhou plant (with \$120 million invested) was officially put into production. It is one of the most advanced and largest pharmaceutical manufacturing and packaging plants in China and the Asia-Pacific region.

Johnson and Johnson's Huge Investments into China

Johnson and Johnson, a manufacturer of health care products, medical equipment, and medicine, is also the largest company based in New Jersey.

Janssen, a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson, entered China in 1979 and established a chemical and pharmaceutical workshop in China that meets international GMP (good manufacturing practices) standards. The workshop at Hanjiang Pharmaceutical Factory in Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province, produces mebendazole. In 1985, a joint venture pharmaceutical company, Xi'an Janssen, was established in Xi'an, which became a model for China's modern pharmaceutical factories.

Johnson and Johnson (China) Co. was incorporated in the Shanghai Minhang Economic and Technological Development Zone in January 1992, with a registered capital of more than \$100 million.

Over the past decade or so, Johnson and Johnson has become known for large acquisitions and investments in China.

For example, in 2008, Beijing Dabao Cosmetics Co was acquired for 2.3 billion yuan.

In May 2012, Johnson and Johnson acquired Guangzhou Beixiu Biotechnology Co. for 360 million yuan.

In January 2013, Shanghai–Johnson and Johnson acquired a 100 percent stake in Shanghai Aoya Maternal and Baby Products International Trade Co. for 650 million yuan.

In 2019, Johnson and Johnson announced that its pharmaceutical subsidiary, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, would invest \$397 million to build a

new large-scale production base for an innovative supply chain in Xi'an. Also, Johnson and Johnson Medical would invest \$180 million to build a new factory in Suzhou Industrial Park.

Celgene Put in Huge Sums but Got No Market Share in China

Celgene Pharmaceuticals in New Jersey, founded in 1986, kept pace with China investments too. In 2017, Celgene invested \$1.393 billion for the authorization of the PD-1 inhibitor BGB-A317, which was still in clinical trials at Chinese biopharmaceutical company BeiGene. During this transaction at that time, in order to obtain the global authorization, excluding Asia, of BeiGene BGB-A317—an antibody that can be used to treat tumors—Celgene paid \$263 million down payment in cash, \$150 million in equity investment at a 35 percent premium, and \$980 million for research and development expenses and sales royalties for future sales of BGB-A317.

But in 2019, Celgene Pharmaceuticals was acquired by Bristol-Myers Squibb. Because Bristol-Myers Squibb already had a PD-1 inhibitor Opdivo, Celgene Pharmaceutical once again paid \$150 million to cancel the global cooperation with BeiGene. So far, Celgene Pharmaceutical has thrown away hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars, all to the CCP's foreign exchange reserves.

Celgene Pharmaceutical has lost a fortune but could not prevent a disaster. On March 25, 2020, China's State Food and Drug Administration issued Circular No. 44, stating that due to problems such as inadequate sterility control measures in the production process, a temporary suspension is in place for the import, sales, and use of Celgene's Paclitaxel. This same medicine has not raised any questions with the U.S. FDA or European regulators. Celgene can only watch the Chinese market be divided among domestic pharmaceutical companies like Hengrui, Luye, Qilu, and CSPC.

China as a Chemical Plant for the World

While Chinese enterprises received money and technology from multinational companies, the Chinese regime also supported the development of its pharma sector. China became the world's chemical plant with small gram-scale laboratories and large-scale chemical projects that can mass-produce polyethylene, polyester, polypropylene, and PX Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API).

Chinese pharmaceutical companies rely on dumping goods at low prices in overseas markets, with the government supporting them with export subsidies.

About 80 percent of U.S. APIs are imported from foreign countries, especially from China and India. Many raw chemical materials in India are also purchased from China. China is the world's largest supplier of APIs and of basic chemical materials needed to produce many prescription and non-prescription drugs and vitamins.

At a hearing held by the U.S.-China Commission for Economic and Security Review (USCC) in the Senate on July 31, 2019, Rosemary Gibson, senior consultant at Hastings Research Center, said, "The dependence of several thousands of pharmaceutical ingredients and APIs poses a threat to U.S. health and national security. "

New Jersey Has Close Business Ties With China

Beyond the companies mentioned above, New Jersey has a close business and economic relationship with China.

The value of goods imported into New Jersey from China in 2017 was about \$18.17 billion, and in 2016 it was nearly \$17.7 billion. The most-imported products from China include petroleum, fossil fuels,

pharmaceuticals, and auto parts. According to data from the International Trade Administration, as of 2016, about 131,900 jobs in New Jersey depended on trade with foreign partners, of which 15 percent (about 19,000 jobs) originated from trade with China. During the pandemic, the CCP virus has severely damaged companies that rely heavily on China.

According to a report released by the U.S.-China Business Council in 2018, China was New Jersey's fourth-largest trading partner in 2017, with exports reaching \$1.6 billion, a 62 percent increase from 2008. Goods exported from New Jersey include: basic chemicals (\$159 million), computer equipment (\$144 million), non-ferrous metal products (\$122 million), waste items (\$138 million), and soaps, detergents, and toiletries (\$93 million).

China was also the fifth-largest export service partner of New Jersey in 2016, with an export service value of \$1.4 billion, an increase of 179 percent over 2007. Export services include: travel (\$352 million), education (\$252 million), passenger fares (\$120 million), industrial process concessions and user fees (\$165 million), and air and port services (\$59 million).

New Jersey Is One of the Bridgeheads for Chinese Companies

In the past 20 years, due to its convenient transportation, similar climate to Shanghai, excellent school districts, and cheaper housing prices than Manhattan, New Jersey has become a bridgehead for Chinese companies to enter the United States.

China UnionPay US is headquartered in Jersey City, New Jersey. For the first time in 2015, China UnionPay card surpassed Visa, Inc. in transaction volume and card issue volume, becoming the world's largest bank card clearing organization. China UnionPay announced on April 9, 2020 that UnionPay International and Huawei launched Huawei Payments in Hong Kong and Macau.

As early as 2011, Huawei established its northeast U.S. headquarters in Bridgewater, New Jersey. Huawei has been heavily scrutinized for its close ties to the Chinese military. Its unethical business practices such as stealing trade secrets have been prosecuted by U.S. authorities.

China Construction America, a subsidiary of China Construction Corporation (China Construction), was established in 1985. In 2013, China Construction America spent more than \$70 million to acquire an office building in Morris Township, New Jersey. In 2016, it renovated two buildings on the waterfront of Jersey City to become its headquarters office.

In addition, New Jersey established a “sister state” relationship with Zhejiang Province as early as 1981. In 2008, it reiterated its “sister” relationship with Zhejiang Province. That same year, New Jersey established a “sister” relationship with Shandong Province.

There are currently two Confucius Institutes in New Jersey, one at Rutgers University and the other at City University of New Jersey. Confucius Institutes are funded by the Chinese regime with the stated purpose of promoting Chinese language and culture, but they have come under fire in the United States for a lack of transparency, violation of academic freedom, and suspicions of spying.

When Xi Jinping—now the Chinese leader—visited as Secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Communist Party Committee in 2006, Kean University in New Jersey and Wenzhou University signed an agreement to co-found Wenzhou Kean University. However, since its launch in 2012, there has been continued negative news about Wenzhou Kean University. For example, enrollment giving priority to Communist Party members was clearly stated in advertisements. Students also complained about the school’s purchase of a high-priced conference table from Shanghai for \$219,000.

Conclusion

History and lessons drawn from past experience tell us that the epidemic is not accidental.

Where there are close ties with the CCP or where capital infusion is given to the CCP, the area is severely hit by the virus.

Perhaps the pandemic serves as a warning to stay away from the CCP. It is worth a sober look.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/new-jerseys-high-virus-toll-correlates-with-ties-to-the-chinese-regime_3352751.html

Pandemic Spotlights New York State's Close Political Ties With Beijing

Commentary by Kelly Song

May 15, 2020

Since March 2020, New York has become the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States.

The Chinese regime's coverup and mishandling of the outbreak has highlighted Beijing's deceptive tactics.

It has also prompted some countries and institutions to re-examine their relationship with Beijing.

Will New York State do the same, given its close political ties with Beijing?

New York has always been a highly coveted target to conquer for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). From finance to real estate, entertainment to media, Ivy League institutions to school boards, state government to community organizations, the CCP has been using a whole-of-country approach to extend its influence into every fabric of society.

Below, we take a look at Beijing's influence at all levels of government in New York State.

Investment and Cooperation on All Levels

The Canadian National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Annual Report released in 2019 said: “With deep coffers and the help of Western enablers, the CCP uses money, rather than communist ideology, as a powerful source of influence, creating parasitic relationships of long-term dependence.”

By the end of 2015, Chinese businesses had made a total investment of \$9.5 billion in 95 projects across the state of New York. By the end of 2016, the numbers rose to \$15.5 billion in roughly 120 projects across the state. China became New York State’s biggest trading partner outside of North America, with China as the top export destination for the state.

Since 2016, the New York state government has actively set up trade and investment cooperation relationships with six Chinese provinces or municipalities: Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Yunnan, Beijing, and Shanghai. Former New York lieutenant governor Kathy Hochul stressed that the scale of the U.S. and Chinese economies “really demands closer integration.”

In addition, there were 10 pairs of sister cities between the State of New York and China by 2015.

The ‘Western Enablers’

Such a relationship is not possible without the “Western enablers,” who are pro-Beijing groups and U.S.-based Beijing-funded businesses. For example:

China General Chamber of Commerce (CGCC), chaired by Xu Chen, President and CEO of Bank of China USA.

China Construction America (CCA), headed by Yuan Ning and based in New Jersey, is a subsidiary of the state-owned China State Construction Engineering Corp. Ltd. (CSCEC).

China Institute caters to a large pool of corporate members by providing them access to “expert guidance on building brand exposure in the Chinese market” among other perks. It also houses the first Confucius Institute (CI@CI) in New York, since 2006.

Asian American Community Empowerment (BRACE) was established in 2013. Its board members include community leaders, association presidents, and various business and trade corporations, with a total membership of nearly 10,000.

Sino-American Friendship Association has invited Beijing to participate in the Times Square New Year Eve celebration since 2011, enabling Chinese performance groups and Chinese consulate members to portray a positive image of the Chinese regime.

Beijing’s Diplomatic Efforts

Since 2017, there has been increasing international scrutiny of CCP’s industrial espionage; investments overseas, including its Belt and Road projects; military build-up in the South China Sea; and unfair trade practices.

All that drove Beijing to elevate its efforts to boost its image overseas, especially in New York State.

An Unexpected Transfer

In November 2018, then-Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Huang Ping, was unexpectedly transferred to the Chinese consulate in New York to become Consul General.

South China Morning Post quoted Robert Kapp, former president of the U.S.-China Business Council, who said the move was to counter a more aggressive stance toward Beijing since President Donald Trump took office. “This is a time of crisis in U.S.-China relations,” Kapp said.

CGCC hosted a welcoming event for Huang in December 2018. Over 100 local business leaders attended, including Andy Purdy, former director of the national cyber security division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and now chief security officer at Huawei Technologies USA; Ed Amoroso, former CSO of AT and T; and Tony Scott, former CIO at Microsoft and the Walt Disney Company.

Chairman Xu Chen pledged CGCC’s commitment to “work together with the Consul General to bring more Chinese companies to the ten eastern states, and to bring about a new era in Sino-U.S. trade and commerce.”

Meetings, Meetings, Meetings

In March 2019, Huang met with more than a dozen lawmakers in Albany and visited several city council offices.

Huang urged the New York State government and city governments to support exchanges and cooperation with China.

In return, a delegation of state lawmakers, led by Toby A. Stavisky, vice chair of the Senate Majority Conference, visited Huang at the New York Chinese consulate in May. Huang asked the legislature to “handle the

sensitive matters appropriately,” according to a post on the Chinese consulate website.

The ‘China Day’ Resolution

Such diplomacy resulted in the “China Day” New York Senate resolution, the first in the nation to commemorate October 1, the 70th anniversary of the CCP’s takeover of China.

On June 18, 2019, representatives of the Chinese consulate and pro-Beijing organizations were invited to witness the passing of the resolution on the New York Senate floor.

The groups instrumental to making the resolution possible were the American Chinese Commerce Association, Asian American Community Empowerment (BRACE), and American Chinese Development Center.

These groups hosted a celebration of the “China Day Resolution” in Brooklyn on July 20, 2019. State senators, assembly members, and city council members attended. Senator James Sanders was the sponsor of the resolution.

Sanders said that it was his wish that through the resolution, New York State will become the leader in the U.S. cooperation with China, according to a post about the event on the BRACE website.

Another celebration organized by 17 local pro-Beijing groups took place one month later at the David H. Koch theater in Lincoln Center. At the event, Sanders praised China, saying, “Chinese Americans built America, China built the world.”

Trips to China

The chairman of BRACE, John S. Chan, told pro-Beijing newspaper China Press that the group has been working for years on the resolution.

In April 2017, BRACE organized an 18-person “New York Economic Relations Friendship Delegation” to visit Beijing and Shanghai. The delegation consisted of five New York state lawmakers.

The lawmakers were welcomed by top officials in Beijing city’s rubber-stamp legislature.

On Sept. 15, 2019, the New York Economic Relations Friendship Delegation sponsored by BRACE and the American Chinese Commerce Association Hong Kong once again embarked on a two-week trip to China. The delegation, led by Sen. Sanders, visited eight cities. According to a China Press report, they discussed cooperation between New York State and China in areas such as commerce, education, and internet technology.

Bloomberg’s Support

Michael Bloomberg, mayor of New York City from 2002 to 2013, is a supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt One Road) and other China interests.

Two weeks after Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in June 2017, Bloomberg spoke at a high-level gathering of Chinese and foreign dignitaries that included China’s Ambassador Cui Tiankai, former Hong Kong Chief Executive C.H. Tung, Asia Society Policy Institute President and former Australia Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and Asia Society President Josette Sheeran.

In his speech, Bloomberg praised China's climate change initiatives, saying, "China does deserve a lot of credit for its leadership which sets a strong example for other countries."

On the financial front, Bloomberg Philanthropies hosted the first high level U.S.-China business forum in April 2017. He said, "Over the last year (2016), I've been chairing a working group to help make it possible to trade and clear the RMB (Chinese currency) in the U.S."

He spoke of milestones in China's finance sector cooperation with the United States. "Last year the Bank of China New York branch became the first clearing bank in the U.S. The first American CD in RMB was issued. The first U.S. based license to trade Chinese stocks and bonds was issued. In March, Bloomberg became the first financial data provider to provide Chinese bonds and fixed income indexes."

He went on to talk about BRI: "Investing in infrastructure is the best way to spur economic growth. Our company has hosted a series of events around the world called, 'China navigating the new silk road.' This year, it was held in Geneva, Hong Kong, Frankfurt, London, and attended by the Chinese ambassador in the country."

Chinese Construction in New York

Though the United States is not a participant in the BRI, China has many construction investments in the country.

In February 2019, New York Consul General Huang Ping visited the headquarters of China Construction America (CCA) in New Jersey.

CCA is a subsidiary of the state-owned China State Construction Engineering Corporation. An article on the website of the China General

Chamber of Commerce (CGCC) describes CCA as “shouldering the major responsibility of the globalization of Chinese construction assets, as well as an active enabler of the Belt and Road strategy.”

Huang told CCA President Yuan Ning, “Despite the difficulties caused by the trade war, CCA should continue taking advantage of the aging infrastructure in the U.S. to expand your market.”

CCA has close contacts with the Chinese consulate and local pro-Beijing groups. In 2017, CCA’s CEO Yuan Ning received a “Blue Cloud” award from the China Institute for “his significant contributions” to the U.S.-China relationship.

For two terms, Yuan was the chairman of CGCC. Cui Tiankai, Ambassador to the United States praised Yuan for “building up the most important bridge, CGCC, a perfect platform for China-U.S. trade and commerce.”

The other notable recipient of the Blue Cloud award in 2017 was New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Some of the projects CCA has completed in New York include the replacement of the first railroad bridge of the LIRR (Long Island Rail Road) expansion project. New York Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul visited the project team during construction.

CCA also built a luxury rental tower by the Hudson River in the city of Yonkers. Yuan, Consul General Huang, and Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano were present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in May 2019. Huang took the opportunity to advocate cooperation between the two countries: “This project further demonstrated that by cooperating together we can create a win-win result,” he said.

In June 2019, officials from Yonkers led by mayor Spano and deputy mayor Jim Cavanaugh visited the Chinese Consulate in New York, “to further promote and enhance the trade relations and cultural communication between China and the City of Yonkers. China Construction America and other China-invested enterprises were also encouraged to participate in local projects and further contribute to the healthy development of China-U.S. relationship,” the New York Chinese consulate wrote on its website.

Pro-Beijing Resolutions

On March 7, 2017, the NY State Senate and Assembly both adopted a resolution to welcome then-Consul General Zhang Qiyue and CGCC members.

Before CCP leader Xi Jinping’s planned visit to the United States in September 2015, the New York State Senate passed two resolutions—one to welcome Xi to the United States; and the other to “reaffirm the commitment to strengthen the ties between the State of New York and the People’s Republic of China.” The State Assembly also passed a similar resolution.

Events to Promote Cooperation With Beijing

In December 2018, BRACE, the pro-Beijing organization, held its fifth anniversary gala in Brooklyn. Five state senators, two city council members, and representatives of the Chinese consulate attended the gala.

The China (Guizhou)-U.S. Investment and Trade Promotion Conference took place in June 2017. The conference promoted cooperation in high-end manufacturing, big data, and the health industry. The Vice Governor of

Guizhou Province Lu Yongzheng, then-Consul General Zhang, and New York state lawmakers attended the event.

In July 2017, a forum on trade and investment between China and New York state was held in the city of Buffalo. Zhang, New York State Economic Development executive VP Jeff Janiszewski, and Buffalo mayor Byron Brown attended the meeting.

In July 2014, Governor Cuomo launched a global tourism initiative to promote New York businesses to the Chinese tourism market. Cuomo announced a partnership with China Southern Airlines, which kicked off on Aug. 6, 2014 with China Southern Airlines celebrating its inaugural direct flight from Guangzhou, China to JFK International Airport in New York.

Governors Warned About China Infiltration

During the National Governors Association meeting in early February 2020, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said: “The Chinese government has been methodical in the way it’s analyzed our system ... it’s assessed our vulnerabilities and it’s decided to exploit our freedoms, to gain an advantage over us at the federal level, the state level and the local level.”

“In fact, I’d be surprised if most of you in the audience had not been lobbied by the Chinese Communist Party directly.”

Pompeo warned state governors to be wary of China’s infiltration, citing a letter from a diplomat at the Chinese consulate in New York to the speaker of an unnamed state legislature, advising that U.S. officials refrain from independent interaction with Taiwan.

“You had a diplomat from China, assigned here to the United States, a representative of the Chinese Communist Party, in New York City, sending

a letter urging that an American elected official shouldn't exercise his right to freedom of speech," Pompeo explained.

As of Oct. 16, 2019, Chinese diplomats in the United States must notify the State Department in advance of "official meetings with representatives of state, local and municipal governments; official visits to educational institutions; and official visits to research institutions."

Epicenter of the CCP Virus

On Jan. 22, Consul General Huang rang the closing bell at NASDAQ to ring in the Chinese New Year. At the same time, China's Wuhan city went into full lockdown to curb the spread of the CCP virus, also known as the novel coronavirus. Yet the world did not receive enough warning about the severity of the outbreak in China, nor the potential spread of the virus via human-to-human transmission. Life largely went on as usual.

On March 1, New York Governor Cuomo confirmed the first CCP virus case in the state. At the time, over 70 cases had been reported in the United States, with most in the West Coast. However, over the next few weeks, New York State became the epicenter of the outbreak in the United States and New York City had been the hardest hit. To date, there are over 353,000 confirmed cases in the state, with over 27,000 deaths.

As the virus spread to other countries, the CCP quickly switched to "face mask diplomacy," portraying itself as the savior of the world by selling often defective PPE (personal protective equipment) to countries of strategic importance. Moreover, it expected gratitude from the world.

The Chinese Consulate in New York teamed up with Jack Ma, founder of Chinese tech giant Alibaba, and donated 1,000 ventilators to New York hospitals. Cuomo praised the Chinese regime for its help. In April, the State

Senate passed a resolution to express “sincere gratitude to the Chinese government for their thoughtful gift.”

https://www.theepochtimes.com/new-york-states-close-political-ties-with-beijing_3351309.html

Pandemic Shows Pitfalls of Auto Industry's Reliance on China Market

*Commentary by Fan Yu, The Epoch Times
May 10, 2020*

The global auto industry is currently mired in a crisis worse than the 2008 financial crisis.

J.D. Power & Associates, an industry research firm, estimated that since the outbreak of the CCP virus, auto dealers have sold almost 800,000 fewer cars and trucks than its 2020 forecast.

Virtually every auto plant in the United States has been shut since the end of March due to the pandemic. This unprecedented measure has sent auto production plummeting to levels not seen since World War II. Industry analysts expect a gradual reopening of assembly plants over the next few months, but it may take months, if not years, for production to climb back to pre-pandemic levels.

The challenges faced by the auto industry are multifaceted. Firstly, factories and assembly plants have been shut down. Secondly, car dealerships are closed to foot traffic in most states. Sales have moved online with curbside deliveries. But sales are just a fraction of normal levels, as unsold vehicle inventories are piling up at dealerships across the country.

“April auto sales took the biggest hit we’ve seen in decades,” said Jessica Caldwell, executive director of insights at car shopping website Edmunds, in a statement on April 30.

Ten million people in the U.S. auto industry, including those employed at manufacturers, parts suppliers, dealerships, and other businesses have been put out of work due to the pandemic, according to a Bloomberg report. IHS Markit estimated that April's vehicle production in North America was only 4,300, the lowest total since 1945 during World War II.

"Fleet sales," or car sales to rental car agencies, make up a portion of total sales to automakers. But that channel has all but dried up. Bloomberg reported that Avis Budget, Hertz, and Enterprise—three of the largest car rental agencies—have notified U.S. automakers to call off their planned purchases through the summer.

Every major automaker has seen its sales plummet in April. Hyundai Motor America posted a 39 percent sales decline in April from a year ago; Mazda North America announced a sales slump of 45 percent in April year-over-year; Toyota Motor North America saw its April sales drop 54 percent last month; while Honda sales also fell 54 percent. The big three U.S. automakers—General Motors, Ford, and FCA US—have not yet disclosed their respective April sales figures, although they are believed to be similarly down year-over-year.

Historical Reliance on China

At a macro level, such widespread calamity within a single industry should bring some pause and introspection to executives and economists.

In an April 26 editorial, The Epoch Times suggested that intimate engagement with the Chinese Communist Party and China—where the virus originated—could be a factor in the pandemic's spread.

"All regions that are hard-hit by the virus outside China are those having intimate ties with the CCP, those who have supported the CCP in terms of trade, investment, or helping the CCP improve its international image.

Likewise, individuals who have been the CCP's supporters often find themselves vulnerable to the CCP virus," the column states.

If this correlation is true, then could the global auto industry's reliance on its China sales, and the acquiescence of technology to the CCP's state-owned enterprises, play a part in the current industry downturn?

China's 1.4 billion people have always been a draw. Ever since American Motors (shuttered after being acquired by Chrysler) formed the first foreign joint venture in China in 1984 to manufacture "Beijing Jeep" vehicles, automakers have been eyeing the potential of the Chinese market.

Vehicle manufacturing is an industry that the CCP mandates a domestic-foreign joint venture model. Foreign automakers must form a joint venture with a Chinese counterpart in order to manufacture and sell vehicles in China. The joint venture benefits from the know-how and technology of its foreign partner. For example, Ford is a 50 percent owner of Changan Ford, a joint venture between Ford and Changan Automobile. SAIC-GM is a joint venture between General Motors and SAIC Motor, which manufactures and sells GM-branded cars such as Buicks, Cadillacs, and Chevrolets.

In the fiscal first quarter of 2020, GM reported a net profit of \$294 million, a whopping 87 percent decline from a year ago. GM issued \$4 billion in new bonds last week to shore up its financial position.

But GM's China operations have already been under pressure before the CCP virus hit, due to the country's slowing auto market and the trade war. Profitability had declined and GM has lost market share, CFO Dhivya Suryadevara said during a February conference call with Wall Street analysts. In addition, the CCP's restrictive policies also mandate a one-year delay in dividend payments to the parent company.

At GM, for instance, China sales have exceeded those in the United States. In 2019, SAIC-GM vehicle sales totaled 3.1 million, exceeding the 2.9 million cars and trucks sold by GM in the United States, according to an SEC filing.

Despite U.S. government support during the financial crisis and a relatively healthy U.S. auto sales market over the last few years, automakers have been moving jobs away from the United States and to countries such as China. Ford is building its Focus compact car in China, not in Mexico or Michigan. GM employs 58,000 workers in China, as of mid-2019, which is almost 20 percent more than the 49,000 union workers it has in the United States.

German auto giant Volkswagen's first-quarter 2020 sales fell 23 percent globally, and its operating profit declined 81 percent compared to 2019. Volkswagen, whose FAW-Volkswagen joint-venture is one of the biggest foreign automakers in China with 3.2 million vehicle deliveries in 2019, has restarted production in China this month.

Global economies hope for a V-shaped economic recovery and healthy communities, but there is great uncertainty. While sales and profits could ebb and flow on a monthly or quarterly basis, the virus and the associated public health crisis could loom longer and cripple the long-term outlook and health of companies and economies.

Investors, board members, and company executives must take a long-term view regarding the well-being of the companies they steward. Reassessing their relationships with the CCP could well be part of the antidote.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/is-the-auto-industrys-reliance-on-china-a-f-austian-pact_3344581.html

Why Top Pakistani Officials Are Getting Infected With the CCP Virus

*Commentary by Yang Ning
May 20, 2020*

One of Pakistan's key political figures has tested positive for the CCP virus. According to the Pakistani ministry of national health services, there are 37,218 confirmed cases of infections and 803 deaths in the country as of May 15.

Asad Qaiser, speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, announced on Twitter on April 30 that he self-quarantined after testing positive for the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus. Local media also reported that a number of senior Pakistani officials have also tested positive, including Sindh Governor Imran Ismail.

As speaker of parliament, Qaiser is a powerful figure. He is a senior leader of the Pakistan Justice Movement Party (the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, or PTI). He served as the speaker of a provincial legislature from 2013 to 2018. In July 2018, PTI emerged as the single largest party in the general elections for National Assembly. In August 2018, Qaiser was elected as speaker of the National Assembly. He won the position with 176 votes out of a total of 330 votes. PTI was founded in 1996 by former international cricket captain, Imran Khan, who is the current prime minister of Pakistan.

After winning the seat, Qaiser met Chinese ambassador Yao Jing on Aug. 27, 2018. During the meeting, Qaiser said that the two countries would work on deepening economic relations. Speaking at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Qaiser said that the project promises

opportunities for the entire region and the Pakistani government would fully support its implementation. In response, Yao said China values its relations with Pakistan and wants to assist in developing the entire region.

On Sept. 9, 2018, Qaiser met with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi to strengthen bilateral relations. Referring to the CPEC, Qaiser said the project was a "game-changer" for regional development, and only made possible through mutual cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Meanwhile, Wang said China would continue to support Pakistan in technology, infrastructure development, and exploration of renewable energy resources.

On Feb. 12, amid the COVID-19 outbreak in China, Qaiser said, "the government and people of Pakistan will be standing with China and will provide all our support in these difficult times." However, when Pakistan was hit by the pandemic, China, which had previously promised to send high quality N-95 masks to the country, instead sent masks made out of underwear, Pakistani media reported. A news anchor of a Pakistani channel said in a local dialect, "China conned us." She explained that the Sindh provincial government sent the masks to hospitals without checking their quality.

The Chinese regime's mouthpiece Xinhua said that Pakistan and China were "true friends and good brothers." But the regime chose to honor its so-called "all-weather strategic partnership" with underwear masks.

Looking back in history, CCP-Pakistani bilateral relations have been strong since both have border conflicts with India. The CCP and Pakistan developed a relationship as early as the 1960s. In 1970, the Pakistani government began to play the role of facilitator, leading ultimately to a secret meeting between then-U.S. national security adviser Henry Kissinger and the Chinese leadership in Beijing in 1971. Then, Pakistan

supported China's membership in the United Nations, and took China's side during diplomatic rows with other countries such as the United States, Japan, Taiwan, among others.

Since the Soviet War in Afghanistan in 1979, China has joined Pakistan in supporting Afghan guerrillas fighting Soviet forces. China also started to invest in Pakistan with constructing roads, railways, telecommunications networks, and developing weapons.

In May 2017, Pakistan and China signed a \$50 billion agreement that included full funding for the Diamer Basha dam and four other dams in the Indus River Cascade. Under the CPEC, construction of roads connecting Xinjiang in western China and Pakistan's port city of Gwadar was promoted. In December 2017, Pakistan also agreed to accelerate the construction of nine industrial parks as part of the CPEC.

On Jan. 2, 2018, Pakistan's central bank allowed the Chinese yuan to be used for bilateral trade and investment activities, replacing the U.S. dollar for transactions in CPEC projects.

In Feb. 2018, the Pakistan Air Force inaugurated a new JF-17 (a combat aircraft developed jointly by Pakistan and China) fighter squadron in Quetta, Balochistan province.

In June 2018, the Pakistan Navy confirmed its contract to acquire two Type 054A frigates from China.

These active bilateral relations with the Communist regime have pushed Pakistan into a debt trap. In July 2018, the State Bank of Pakistan borrowed \$2 billion from China. Chinese loans to Pakistan stood at \$6.5 billion in the fiscal year of 2018.

Maintaining “all-weather” diplomatic relations with the Communist regime may sound attractive, but speaker Qaiser and other Pakistani officials ended up contracting the CCP virus, a pathogen originating from China. The question is: did Pakistani officials learn any lessons from this?

https://www.theepochtimes.com/why-top-pakistani-officials-are-getting-infected-with-the-ccp-virus_3355810.html

Pennsylvania: Case Study of the CCP's Infiltration into the Free Market and Erosion of Liberty

May 21, 2020 | By Tong Yun (Minghui.org)

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic offers an opportunity to rethink our relationship with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), whose cover-up of the virus information has resulted in one of the worst health crises in history.

There is evidence that countries and regions with close ties to the CCP were hit hard by the virus. The CCP, which survives and thrives on the ideology of class struggle, violence, deceit, and lies, has a track record of brutality against its own citizens—killing about 80 million people since it came to power a few decades ago. As the CCP grew its influence internationally, thanks to the long-term appeasement policy adopted by Western society, it has also exported its ideology and harm to the rest of the world.

The West didn't hit the pause button to stop economic collaboration with China when the CCP committed human rights abuses time and again. The CCP-run China was able to join the WTO in 2001, which in turn enabled it to grow into the largest exporter of goods by 2009 with exports of \$2.5 trillion in 2018.

China's growing economy gave the CCP unparalleled leverage for domestic suppression of people of faith (such as Falun Gong practitioners) and dissidents (such as students in the 1989 democracy movement and

whistleblowers during the coronavirus pandemic), as well as for international expansion of influence (such as silencing human rights criticism from other countries and the United Nations, and influencing organizations such as the WHO during the coronavirus pandemic).

In this article, we would like to use Pennsylvania in the U.S. as an example to highlight the CCP's infiltration of the global financial markets, and erosion of liberty.

As of May 17, 2020, Pennsylvania has over 65,000 confirmed coronavirus cases (6th place in U.S.) with a death toll close to 4,500 (4th place in U.S.).

Stocks and Mutual Funds

“China's Ant Financial, Vanguard announce China advisory venture,” read the title of an article published by Reuters on December 14, 2019.

China-based Ant Financial, also known as Alipay, is an online payment service affiliated with Alibaba, the largest e-commerce company in China. Vanguard Group, based in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, is the largest provider of mutual funds in the world, with close to \$6 trillion in assets under management. The joint venture will be operated by Ant Financial (with 51% of the ownership), while Vanguard (with 49% of the ownership) will provide strategies on investment and funds allocation, according to information from qz.com and Bloomberg.

Such collaborations have raised concerns from analysts because they provided nearly unlimited resources to fuel the CCP regime. For example, after long-time rejection due to various concerns, Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI), FTSE Russell, and S&P have all added Chinese stocks to their flagship benchmarks. As one of the biggest index compilers, MSCI alone has about \$12.3 trillion in assets benchmarked to its products,

wrote an article on May 6 from Washington Post with the title of “How Ordinary U.S. Investors Own a Piece of China.”

This series of actions had assured that global investors would pour more money into the Chinese equity market. Over 1,000 Chinese firms had been added to various equity indexes and about \$265 billion of mainland China equities are owned by international investors as of March 2020, according to the Washington Post article.

In addition to stock investments, China also holds sway in mutual funds, which many retirement funds invest in. For instance, 39% of the \$51 billion Vanguard FTSE Emerging Markets exchange-traded funds come from Chinese securities.

Financial Fraud

Investment in China not only strengthened the CCP’s political power, but also introduced risk into the financial stability of the free world.

Dan David, a money manager in Pennsylvania, was one of the whistleblowers who noted how some Chinese companies defrauded U.S. investors and retirees. He was featured in a 2017 documentary titled The China Hustle. This film documents a systematic security fraud that happened after the 2007-2008 financial crisis, as investment firms sought higher returns for their clients and more commission money for themselves.

These investment firms hyped up small, nondescript, private Chinese companies with the help of paid celebrity appearances, and got the companies merged with defunct American public companies. Such mergers were called reverse mergers because they allowed a private company to occupy and operate in a publicly trading company's legal shell.

The reverse mergers enabled the Chinese companies to get listed on the New York Stock Exchange and see their prices spike. As the prices of these Chinese companies later crashed to their real value, investors were left with worthless stocks in their portfolios (many being retirement accounts).

One case covered in the documentary was China-based Advanced Battery Technologies (ABAT), which raised nearly \$90 million through reverse mergers in three separate offerings, with a market-cap of \$250 million. Even after being delisted by NASDAQ and later deregistered by the SEC, the company did not notify shareholders and continued to make false statements.

Reverse-mergers were common and the documentary said that one out of forty CEOs in China was jailed for committing such fraud. Cases like these were reported to the FBI, but little was done to address them.

Alex Gibney, one of the producers for this documentary as well as a 2005-documentary *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*, explained the danger of investing in Chinese companies during an interview with *Market Watch* in 2018, “Yes, a lot of money is flowing around, but can you count on the kind of stability that you hope for if you’re a pensioner, or a nurse, or a doctor just hoping to keep their retirement savings in tact?”

“Investors need to understand the risks of what they are investing in: Every single Chinese company that goes public in the U.S. has a complex and convoluted structure, ostensibly a loophole to enable Western investment in a market that prohibits outside investors. But it also protects the core Chinese company through a host of offshore shell companies and subsidiaries,” wrote an article in *Market Watch* on May 16 regarding the scandal of Luckin Coffee (a Chinese company known as “China's Starbucks” and caught recording bogus sales that were never made).

The article continued, “On top of these structural issues is the biggest problem of all: that the accountants who sign off on company financial statements in China don’t have access to those company’s actual books and records, only what they are allowed to see.”

Infiltration of U.S. Educational Institutions

Data shows that hundreds of non-U.S. organizations, with China being the biggest donor, had made financial gifts to the University of Pennsylvania since 2013, reported an article in The Philadelphia Inquirer on February 24, 2020, titled “Penn got \$258 million in foreign money, and there may be more it hadn’t disclosed.”

Since July 2019, “10 schools have disclosed \$3.6 billion in “previously unreported” foreign money, including two Pennsylvania colleges: Penn and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh,” the article wrote. These educational institutions are required by law to report such transactions, said U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. “Unfortunately, the more we dig, the more we find that too many are under-reporting or not reporting at all,” she remarked.

The Philadelphia Inquirer article also cited a Bloomberg report that found that the University of Pennsylvania received the third-highest funding from China, totaling \$67.6 million, behind Harvard and the University of Southern California. But the actual numbers could be much higher since the Higher Education Act only requires disclosure for gifts or contracts of \$250,000 or higher.

The CCP’s infiltration of U.S. higher-education institutions through donations gives it leverage to influence American colleges. Take the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton Business School as example. After

launching the Center for the Study of Contemporary China (CSCC) in 2012, Wharton China Center was opened in Beijing in March 2015.

Zhang Qiyue, Chinese Consul General in New York, visited the University of Pennsylvania in July 2016 and emphasized China's commitments to collaborate with the U.S. His visit was followed by the establishment of the annual Penn Wharton China Summit.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was proposed by the CCP in 2013 and was viewed by many Western countries as China's expansion of influence into Europe, Asia, and Africa. A report issued by Wharton in April 2019 titled "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Why the Price Is Too High," however, only discussed the risk and return of the initiative for China, without analyzing the initiative's effect on other countries' sustainability and long-term stability.

Although carrying a message similar to the CCP's official assessment of the initiative, this Wharton report was widely circulated to world leaders and policy makers globally to aid in their evaluation of the BRI initiative.

Unprecedented Challenge for the Free World

Both being situated at 40° North latitude, Beijing and Philadelphia are like day and night when it comes to what the cities represent. As the capital for both the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Beijing had inherited the thousands-year-long traditional Chinese culture, which has unfortunately been nearly wiped out due to the CCP's violence and atheism, during the past few decades. As a former and first capital of the United States, and also the birthplace of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, Philadelphia embodies the spirit of freedom laid by American founding fathers.

But such a difference has become insignificant as a result of deep infiltration from the CCP. Similar to other major cities, including New York, Sydney, and London, a four-day exhibition was held in Philadelphia City Hall on July 10, 2018, for the CCP's propaganda, titled, "40 Years of Reform and Opening-up."

On another occasion, during a China Day celebration at Kimmel Center in Philadelphia attended by the city mayor and Chinese Consul General in New York, the Philadelphia Symphony played music pieces including Liuyang River, one of the most well-known melodies in China that promoted Mao Zedong's legacy.

In both cases, nothing was mentioned about the CCP's brutality and human rights violations against its own citizens.

When a journalist from New York-based NTD Television attended a Chinese New Year Festival at the University of Pennsylvania in 2004, she was expelled because the Chinese sponsor didn't want her to raise the issue of the CCP's persecution of Falun Gong. The university remained silent on her expulsion from the festival.

Pennsylvania is not alone. The CCP has successfully infiltrated many regions and countries in Eurasia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. Few countries dare to openly criticize the human rights violations in China, as the CCP's global influence has reached an unprecedented level. After the world witnessed how the WHO failed to alert the world of the coronavirus due to pressure from the CCP, China was appointed to a United Nations Human Rights Council panel on April 1, 2020 and will play a key role in selecting the world body's human rights investigators, according to Unwatch.org.

While China provides much less funding to UN than the

U.S., it heads four of the body's 15 specialized agencies. "No other nation leads more than one," wrote an article on May 6 from The Atlantic titled, "China's Bargain on Global Influence Is Paying Off." "Beijing is working to rewrite the rules of the liberal system." The article wrote, "...human-rights agenda [at UN] is not about human rights... It's about Chinese politics."

When the CCP plays a dominant role, the entire world loses. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic attests to this observation.

<https://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2020/5/21/185140.html>

Death of Russian Spaceflight Chief Highlights Russia Space Agency's Ties to China

Commentary by Yang Ning

May 22, 2020, Updated May 22, 2020

The head of Russia's human spaceflight program, Yevgeny Mikrin, recently passed away at the age of 65 after contracting the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, the national space agency Roscosmos announced on May 5. President Vladimir Putin offered his condolences to his family and friends.

Since 1981, Mikrin has worked for Energia, Russia's largest aerospace company. He helped to develop crewed and cargo spacecraft control systems, multimodule space complexes, and automatic spacecraft. His death is a significant loss for Russia's rocket and space industry.

Dmitry Rogozin, the director-general of Russian aerospace firm Roscosmos, tweeted on May 1: "Data on space and rocket industry workers infected with a new coronavirus infection (2019-NCOV) at 20:00 on 04/30/2020 TOTAL DISEASE – 173, RECOVERED – 16, DIED – 6."

As of May 22, Russia has 326,448 confirmed cases of the CCP virus, with 3,249 deaths, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University.

Why are there so many COVID-19 cases within Russia's space and rocket industry? Countries, regions, and organizations that have close ties with the Chinese regime have been heavily affected by the CCP virus, which broke out in China in late 2019. What is the connection between the Russian space and rocket industry and the Chinese Communist Party?

The arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War intensified as the two powers raced to put man on the moon. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, due to an economic downturn and lack of funds, Russia's aerospace program diminished as technology and talent lagged behind. The United States has also slowed down its space programs due to the lack of strong competitors.

On the contrary, the CCP has invested heavily in China's space program with strong capital accumulated after economic reforms in the 1980s, especially in launching satellites and carrier rockets. However, there is still a huge gap to fill in aerospace technology for China. The CCP knew it would be impossible to collaborate with the United States. So it turned to Russia for technical support in exchange for economic benefits.

On Nov. 1, 2017, China and Russia agreed to work together on six space-related technologies for the period from 2018 to 2022. The deal was one of roughly 20 agreements signed by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev in Beijing at the 22nd regular meeting between the two countries' heads of state.

According to a press release from Roscosmos space agency, the six sectors of cooperation are lunar, deep space, joint spacecraft development, space electronics, earth remote sensing data, and space debris monitoring.

"Cooperation in the field of space transport services could involve the launches of Chinese spacecraft on board Russian carrier rockets to deploy China's multi-satellite constellation, as well as possible deliveries of rocket engines," Russian state news agency Sputnik quoted Roscosmos director-general Rogozin as saying. "[From] China, it is the supply of microelectronics that we need." He also said satellite navigation was a potential area of cooperation, with China set to complete its BeiDou

Navigation Satellite System by next year, and Russia rolling out its GLONASS constellation.

Sergei Anatolyevich Gavrilov is deputy head of the lower chamber in Russia's legislature, representing the Communist Party. According to the Chinese regime's mouthpiece People's Daily, Gavrilov has said Chinese collaboration in space programs will bring tremendous benefits to Russia.

To the Chinese regime, collaboration with Russia would boost China's technical advancements, allowing it to potentially overtake the United States in satellite navigation, and to exert the CCP's influence around the world.

On Nov. 29, 2017, Russia approved an agreement with China to protect classified technologies used in space activities, signed on June 25, 2016 in Beijing during President Vladimir Putin's official visit to China.

Multiple collaborations have also taken place between Russian and Chinese research institutes and universities. In 2017, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Aeronautics and Moscow Aviation Institute launched a joint educational program.

Samara State Aerospace University also collaborated with Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and conducted academic exchanges within the former's Institute of Engines and Power Plant Engineering created in 2014.

On March 3, 2018, Roscosmos and China's National Space Administration signed a deal to work together in the field of moon exploration and deep space, and the creation of a data center on lunar projects.

On June 12, 2019, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the China Manned Space Agency announced the winners of their joint

opportunity initiative to conduct experiments onboard the China Space Station. The China Manned Space Agency selected nine projects, which involved scientists from 17 nations. Among the projects was an Indian–Russian observatory.

At the 2019 International Aviation and Space Salon held from Aug. 27 to Sept. 1 in Zhukovsky, a small town near Moscow, China showcased its domestically-developed drones, carrier rockets, and amphibious planes. China was the country partner at the event that year.

In an interview with Chinese state-run media Xinhua, Alexander Zheleznyakov, a member of the Tsiolkovsky Russian Academy of Cosmonautics, said he was impressed by China's competitive edge in the international commercial launch market and the Chinese rockets' technical advantage.

Satellite navigation systems are known to have multiple applications for communications, military, and navigation. The United States developed the Global Positioning System (GPS) which has been used in large-scale combat operations, such as the Gulf War. Likewise, GLONASS is Russia's global navigation system. China's BeiDou will be the fourth global satellite navigation system to be created, after the U.S. GPS, Russia's GLONASS, and the European Union's Galileo.

Through collaboration with Russia, China developed its own advanced positioning, navigation, and timing system, known as PNT, for the BeiDou navigation system. China plans to expand BeiDou with a military-driven objective. Now, the BeiDou system has moved to its third phase of development, which will feature middle-earth orbit satellites, three geostationary satellites, and three inclined geosynchronous orbits. The system currently has 33 satellites in orbit. The plan is to finalize the program in 2020 with 35 satellites in orbit.

China is marketing BeiDou to countries that are part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road) by offering them incentives. Through this initiative, Beijing invests in countries' infrastructure projects while building up geopolitical clout.

According to Spaceflight Now, when the system is complete, BeiDou will have eight satellites in geosynchronous orbit, being the only country to do so.

A 2017 report by the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) details the implications the BeiDou system will have on the United States global positioning system. "BeiDou could pose a security risk by allowing China's government to track users of the system by deploying malware transmitted through either its navigation signal or messaging function (via a satellite communication channel), once the technology is in widespread use," according to the report.

It is no doubt the speedy development and advancement of China's aerospace programs and projects were supported by Russian experts and research institutes. Shall we say that the real factor behind the virus outbreak among many Russian aerospace experts is the space agency's lucrative and political ties to the Chinese Communist Party?

https://www.theepochtimes.com/death-of-russian-spaceflight-chief-highlight-s-russia-space-agencys-ties-to-china_3361126.html

High Virus Death Toll in Northern Italy Highlights Ties With Beijing

Yuan Li

June 3, 2020

Commentary

Italy, one of the heaviest hit countries outside China, has more than 233,836 confirmed cases of CCP virus infections and more than 33,601 deaths, as of June 3.

As indicated in The Epoch Times editorial, “Wherever Ties to the Chinese Communist Party Are Close, the CCP Virus Follows”: “The path of the CCP virus as it has spread around the world goes through the countries, cities, organizations, and even individuals that are closely related to the CCP.”

This article would like to stress the consequence of forming an alliance with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In March 2019, Italy became the only European country to join China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as Belt and Road). Being the first Group of Seven (G-7) country to join the BRI, Italy hoped it would boost its sluggish economy by establishing a strategic partnership with China.

Italy has 74 sister cities or twin towns formed with China, including places that were hit-hard by the CCP virus, such as Milan, Brescia, and Bergamo of the Lombardy region.

A Chinese Couple Spreads the Virus

On March 23, China's state-run media reported that Italy's first two confirmed virus patients were an elderly Chinese couple. They both recovered after being hospitalized for 49 days. The wife, Hu Yamin, is a faculty member of Central China Normal University, which is located in Wuhan.

According to Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero*, the couple left Wuhan on Jan. 22—a day before the city was locked down—and arrived in Milan the next day. A few days later, the couple developed a fever and cough. On Jan. 30, their conditions deteriorated. Then the couple was hospitalized and tested positive for the CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus.

The media report had caused widespread disturbance on Chinese social media. Netizens responded with the following comment: “Spread the virus thousands of miles away, indeed.”

On March 26, Italian journalist Marco Respinti wrote an article titled, “Don't Call It a Chinese Virus. Call it the CCP VIRUS.” He criticized the Chinese regime's botched handling of the initial virus outbreak and its human rights abuses.

CCP Blames Italy for the Pandemic

While the Chinese regime was being criticized unanimously by world leaders for its delayed response and concealment of the severity of the outbreak, China's Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, issued a series of tweets on March 12 blaming the United States for the virus. However, China's ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai, referred to the statement that “the virus originated in the U.S. military laboratory” as “crazy rumors.” When asked again about Zhao's claim on March 22, Cui said, “That was my position then, and that's my position now.”

Italy quickly became the target of China's conspiracy theory. China's state-run mouthpiece China Global Television Network (CGTN) published an article on March 22 that claimed the origin of the Wuhan coronavirus (COVID-19) remains unknown but that Italy might be its birthplace. Statements made by Italian doctor Giuseppe Remuzzi were taken out of context in the article.

In fact, concurrent with spokesperson Zhao's tweet, CGTN's report on March 12 also implied the virus came from Europe by distorting the statement of Massimo Galli, head of the university research group and of the infectious-diseases department at Milan's Sacco hospital.

Remuzzi refuted that Beijing's attempts to twist his words to suggest the novel coronavirus originated in Italy is a textbook example of "propaganda."

Mattia Ferraresi, a writer for Italian newspaper Il Foglio said, "Italy is an ideal outpost for China's wide-reaching propaganda effort to cover up its own responsibility for the global spread of the new coronavirus, all the while presenting itself as a compassionate power aiding Western countries in need."

The Hard-hit Northern Region

As of April 29, there were a total of 75,134 confirmed cases and more than 13,679 deaths from the CCP virus infection in Italy's Lombardy region.

Lombardy welcomed Chinese business in the past.

China's Minister of Science and Technology, Wang Zhigang, visited Bergamo for the 9th Italy-China Science, Technology and Innovation Week in early December 2018. He also visited the Kilometro Rosso Science and Technology Park, located along the A4 motorway at the gates of

Bergam—the area hosts research companies and industry leaders, such as Brembo, a company known for its braking systems.

According to Chinese state media, 19 cooperation agreements in trade and research were signed between Italy and China during the opening day of the China-Italy Science, Technology, and Innovation Week.

Wang said that “Italy is a strategic partner,” and “...we will keep working together on pilot projects in many sectors, from aerospace to intelligent manufacturing. Particular attention will be paid to sustainable energies.”

The mayor of Brescia, Emilio Del Bono, met with the president of the Chinese Association in Brescia in the city hall on Feb. 17. At the meeting, the mayor expressed his solidarity with the Chinese community: “To our fellow citizens I say that there is no danger or risk of contracting the epidemic by visiting restaurants or shops run by Chinese people.”

However, as of April 29, there were more than 12,000 confirmed cases of CCP virus infections in Brescia, only second to the hardest-hit Milan.

Piacenza is also one of the hardest-hit regions in northern Italy. On July 9, 2018, the mayor of Piacenza, Patrizia Barbieri, welcomed a Chinese delegation from Jiangbei District of Ningbo city. Piacenza and Jiangbei signed a sister agreement to promote economic and cultural ties.

On March 4, Barbieri announced that she had tested positive for the CCP virus.

Virus Infection Rate Plateaus

In early April, the CCP virus infection rate in Italy started to plateau. Different opinions and voices were heard about the phenomenon.

On March 26, Italy journalist Marco Respinti stated in an article on Rete Liberale, “Italy was the first country to be hit hard by the pandemic, and its people have been paying a great toll in human lives.” He claimed, “Under international law, China and/or the CCP could and should be sued for the enormous damages they caused to the world.”

On April 21, the website for “COVID 19 Class Action” was established. Its goal is to obtain compensation for people who suffered damage from the spread of the CCP virus. The chief financial officer and head of the Ferdinando Perone project explains, “We estimate that there will be more than 500 thousand adhesions to the class action and therefore it is not impossible that the request can exceed 100 billion euros (approximately \$108 billion).”

The most influential media in Italy, Corriere della Sera, commented on April 26: “Too many ambiguities about China ... the M5S looks favorably on Beijing despite doubts about its responsibilities spreading around the world. Government allies will have to clarify their positions.” The M5S, Five Star Movement, is a political party in Italy.

On April 29, Paolo Grimoldi, deputy of the League and secretary of the Lombard League Salvini Premier, announced that Lombardy will ask China for 20 billion euros for damages caused by the CCP virus. Members of the political party Forza Italia asked the president of the northeastern region of Veneto to do the same.

It is worth noting that since these Italian politicians issued the appeal, the number of infections and deaths across Italy had significantly dropped.

Only when the Italian people jointly denounce and blame the Chinese Communist regime for the losses brought to Italy can they ensure a bright future for their country.

Massimo Marcon contributed to this commentary.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/high-virus-death-toll-in-northern-italy-highlights-ties-with-beijing_3369493.html

Cuba and COVID-19

Commentary by Orlando Gutierrez-Boronat and Otto Reich

June 8, 2020

As if the COVID-19 pandemic were not sufficiently destructive, now Cuba, with the help of China, is again attempting to expand its influence abroad and totalitarian control at home by weaponizing it.

The political atmosphere in Cuba before the pandemic was charged with unusually large public protests, creating serious challenges to the police state. Facing disappearing subsidies from the insolvent Maduro regime in Venezuela, and the Trump administration's targeted sanctions against Cuba's military, security, and intelligence machinery, the Castro regime was desperate to avoid losing income from the tourism sector.

In his end-of-year speech on Dec. 21, 2019, "President" Miguel Diaz-Canel predictably blamed the United States for his government's failures before the Cuban National Assembly of People's Power, the Communist Party's rubber-stamp legislature: "[I]n our economic results, is the impact that this [United States'] aggression has caused. Virtually every sector was obliged to face interruptions or delays in production." Days before, the regime had taken small liberalization steps and released a few political prisoners.

When the pandemic struck, the regime pretended it would not affect Cubans or visitors "because of the tropical sun's warmth." When the virus became impossible to contain, however, information about it became tightly controlled.

Newly appointed Prime Minister Manuel Marrero adopted an unprecedented conciliatory tone in a speech directed at the political opposition, calling for unity “beyond political preferences. ...” Repression, however, remains unabated, so the meaning of these words is in doubt.

Internationally, the Castro regime, with Chinese regime support, launched a propaganda campaign touting a Cuban “miracle drug” that could cure COVID-19 patients. On Feb. 7, Diaz-Canel tweeted, “Interferon alpha 2B: Cuban drug used in China against coronavirus. Our support to the Chinese government and people in their efforts to combat the coronavirus.” The claim was false.

Embarrassing Cuban propagandists, on March 18, the international news agency AFP reported: “The Cuban antiviral Interferon Alfa 2B is used in China to treat patients with the new coronavirus, but it is neither a vaccine nor a cure.” Dr. Nils Graber, a biotechnologist and health anthropologist at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, told APF the Cuban drug was a “me too” antiviral, an imitation of existing drugs on the market.

Shifting its disinformation focus back to the island, the regime announced the successful containment of the coronavirus. It also announced sending Cuban medical missions to many countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. In the last two years, however, Cuban medical workers have been expelled from three countries in Latin America, accused of interference in domestic affairs in Bolivia and Ecuador, and “slave labor” practices in Brazil.

Through the government’s exploitation of medical personnel, the missions serve two main regime political purposes: First, they are the largest single source of foreign exchange to Havana, and second, they serve as intelligence and propaganda operatives in the host countries.

One example of the medical missions' ulterior objectives was revealed by Cuban doctors who defected from Venezuela and informed the New York Times that Cuban officials had ordered them to withhold medical supplies and treatment from a number of impoverished patients until a date closer to the Venezuelan presidential election on May 20, 2018, in order to ensure that patients would vote for Cuban ally Nicolas Maduro.

Months later, in November 2018, Brazilian president-elect Jair Bolsonaro accused Cuba of violating Brazilian law by keeping 75 percent of the doctors' wages under the medical program Mais Medicos, and forcing them to work under surveillance and in conditions akin to "slave labor."

In November 2019, the Ecuadorian government ended the Cuban medical program whereby 250 Cubans had traveled to Ecuador during a wave of violent protests a month earlier. The same month, the Bolivian government expelled four Cuban doctors who, according to eye witnesses, were distributing cash among supporters of ousted strongman Evo Morales, attempting to overthrow the new government of Jeanine Áñez.

As of June 7, the Castro regime claims that only 2191 people have been infected and 83 Cubans have died from the virus. The data are difficult to accept, given the long-established regime reputation of manipulating statistics for political objectives, and of no supporting public data or independent auditing.

Dissident sources in Cuba believe that the rate of COVID-19 spread is significantly higher, as illustrated by the regime's recent reinstatement of draconian food distribution controls, forcing Cubans into ever-longer food lines where social distancing is impossible and compounded by a shortage of face masks.

Independent Cuban sources report regime censorship of COVID-19 outbreaks in Cuban prisons, such as La Pendiente, in the province of Santa

Clara, a widely acknowledged virus “hot spot” where prisoners are overcrowded in small cells, with poor hygiene, insufficient food, and constant abuse from guards.

In March, political prisoner Roberto Quiñones denounced conditions in the Provincial Prison of Guantanamo: “Despite reports of the vulnerability of older adults ... to COVID-19, many of them are kept in cubicles where they live in overcrowded conditions with almost two dozen people.”

More recently, Jose Daniel Ferrer, one of Cuba’s key opposition leaders, released from Aguadores Prison in Santiago de Cuba as a result of international pressure in April, told the authors that, “COVID-19 is spreading in the population. The statistics provided by the regime can’t be trusted.”

Cuba’s tireless resistance has not ceased its activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through sophisticated underground coordination and support from the exile community, activists continue to attend meetings and access the Internet occasionally to generate prayer circles and virtual “human chains” in an effort to support the release of thousands of Cuban political prisoners.

In 2020, dissidents on the island launched the “Yo los Quiero Libre” (I want them free) campaign demanding the release of political prisoners amid the pandemic. The campaign is an outgrowth of the “Pa la Calle” (to the streets) campaign that saw citizens openly demanding political and social rights.

Many Cubans joined the Yo los Quiero Libre campaign, creating a prayer chain, sharing messages of support, and promoting the plight of political prisoners by posting pictures and videos of Cubans wearing yellow, the color of the Cuban resistance. Given the dangerous conditions imposed by

the repressive apparatus, the campaign is more evidence of the people's will to fight for liberty and freedom.

As a realignment of U.S. foreign policy occurs, given new international realities caused by the pandemic, it is essential to address the continuing danger to this hemisphere of a totalitarian regime in power for over 60 years. In addition to the innumerable lives extinguished, and the destruction of what once was one of the most prosperous economies of Latin America, Cuba's communist rulers have long used false information to undermine U.S. interests in the region.

Otto Juan Reich is a former U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela and former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Orlando Gutierrez-Boronat, Ph.D., is an author, educator, and analyst. He is the co-founder and spokesman for the Cuban Democratic Directorate (Directorio).

https://www.theepochtimes.com/cuba-and-covid-19_3378304.html

Brazil Faces a Choice With Soaring Pandemic Death Toll

Yu Qingxin, June 15, 2020, Commentary

The pandemic has taken a toll on Brazil since the Health Ministry confirmed the first case of CCP virus infection on Feb. 26. What is the reason behind this phenomenon? A recurring pattern shows that countries with close ties to the Chinese regime experience high CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus infection rates and deaths. What is the relationship between Brazil and China?

More than 13,000 graves were being dug in the city of São Paulo, according to media reports on May 1. Over 10,000 daily new cases have been reported in the city since May 13. As of June 11, the number of confirmed cases have gone up to 772,416, with 39,680 deaths—making Brazil second place in severity, behind the United States (the concealment of data by both China and Iran has made it impossible to compare both countries in the data).

Brazil's president Jair Bolsonaro has rallied against a lockdown policy. He said, "There are many governors, in my view, who are taking measures that will harm our economy a lot." However, his campaign to reopen the economy was met with resistance.

João Doria, the governor of São Paulo, started the quarantine in the city nearly two months ago—businesses, schools, and public spaces were closed and people were asked to stay at home.

“We are taking this measure out of respect for medicine and science,” Doria stated.

São Paulo has a population of about 12 million.

Since early April, São Paulo has become the CCP virus epicenter in Brazil. As of June 10, the confirmed death toll was 9,862. The already burdened local hospital system suffered from lack of facilities, with more than 3,000 hospital workers placed under quarantine, and 700 confirmed to be infected with the virus. From aerial photos, one can see the enormity of the mass graves for people who died of the virus.

Brazil and China Solidify Ties

Diplomatic relations between the Chinese regime and Brazil officially began in 1974. The China-Brazil High Level Coordination and Cooperation Commission (COSBAN) was formed in 2003. COSBAN has functioned as a strategic partnership development tool between both countries, bringing forth concrete actions such as the 2010-2014 action plan, the 2015-2021 action plan, as well as the 10-year plan 2012 to 2021. Years of collaboration has allowed the Chinese regime to infiltrate and spread its communist ideology in Brazil.

In 2018, Bolsonaro, as a conservative presidential candidate, warned that China was a predator looking to dominate key sectors of Brazil’s economy.

The Belt and Road Initiative Trap

For years, the Communist regime has tried to lure investment from Brazil through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road). The project involves building infrastructure projects throughout Latin America, Africa, eastern Europe, and southeast Asia.

China is Brazil's largest trading partner. From 2003 to June 2018, Chinese firms have invested almost \$54 billion in about 100 projects in Brazil, according to figures from Brazil's planning ministry.

In 2017 alone, investments nearly hit \$11 billion.

According to Chinese state media, before 2010, Chinese funds flowing into Brazil were primarily focused on assuring food and energy supplies for the Asian giant. But in recent years, that strategy has expanded to include the telecommunications, automotive, renewable energy, and the financial services sectors.

In the field of infrastructure and communication, China completed its acquisition of one of Brazil's most profitable container terminals. It's the biggest port investment ever made in Brazil or Latin America in 2018.

In capital investment, China has become a major foreign capital source for Brazil. From 2005 through 2017, Brazil has been the recipient of 55 per cent of all investments made by Chinese businesses in Latin America, according to the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

São Paulo's Water Treatment Facility Controlled by Chinese Firm

China Gezhouba Group Overseas Investment Co., Ltd. (CGGC), through its Brazilian subsidiary, has acquired 100 percent equity interest of Sistema Produtor São Lourenço S.A., which is owned by Camargo Correa Group and Andrade Gutierrez Group of Brazil, and has obtained related water supply concessions.

The deal is funded by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and its total investment amounts to approximately \$860 million.

Upon completion, the water treatment facility will be able to provide 410,000 tons of daily water supply to meet the needs of 1.5 million people.

A 2017 study published by the Chinese Academy of Sciences concluded that “water resource scarcity issues will become the core issue of the development of countries along the Belt and Road.” Nonetheless, as this article details, the water-related impacts of the Belt and Road are likely to have a significant effect on local and regional politics in BRI countries.

It is worth noting that the company CGGC is headquartered in Wuhan, the epicenter of the CCP virus outbreak in China. It has overseas outlets in 99 countries, 33 of them in countries participating in BRI.

Brazil Welcomes Confucius Institutes

The Chinese regime has also infiltrated Brazil’s education system. The first Confucius Institute (CI) in Brazil was established through an agreement between São Paulo State University (UNESP) and the Confucius Institute headquarters in Beijing, with the support of Hubei University in Wuhan. The Confucius Institute at UNESP is part of a network of more than 600 CI’s distributed in more than 140 countries.

The CI at UNESP began operating in the first half of 2009. Since then, more than 12,000 Brazilians attended its regular Chinese-language courses, including UNESP students, elementary and junior high school students, and community members in the 13 cities of São Paulo State, on UNESP campuses.

Brazil has the highest number of CI’s in Latin America. Brazilian think tanks and universities have established a number of Chinese research centers and project teams to promote Brazil’s understanding of China through publicity campaigns. The number of Brazilian students and tourists to China

has also increased rapidly, and more than 30 Chinese universities offer majors in the Portuguese language.

The Chinese Communist regime has deeply penetrated Brazil with years of strategic partnership. As Brazil is hit-hard by the pandemic, will its leadership recognize the true face of the predator and exit the Brazil-China bilateral trap?

https://www.theepochtimes.com/brazil-faces-a-choice-with-soaring-pandemic-death-toll_3386871.html

Why Did Russia Experience a Steep Rise in CCP Virus Infections?

Tian Yun, June 16, 2020, Commentary

By June 15, the number of Russian residents infected with the Chinese Communist Party virus (CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus) exceeded 530,000, the third highest number after the United States and Brazil.

Two high-ranking officials, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Culture Minister Olga Ljubimova, also tested positive for the virus. The development of the pandemic in Russia is somewhat unexpected. What went wrong that caused this steep increase?

Russia adopted quick and decisive measures at the onset of the pandemic. On Jan. 31, Russia closed its 16 border crossings with China and stopped issuing electronic visas to mainland Chinese. Russian authorities also completely stopped the trains going to and from China and North Korea. Major airlines either suspended or substantially reduced flights between China and Russia.

Voice Of America once characterized Russia's pandemic control measures to isolate itself from China were the most stringent. As of March 16, fewer than 100 cases were identified throughout Russia.

However, the good times didn't last long. Russian leaders began to restore the relationship with the CCP, praising China, and advocating cooperation. Since then, the number of confirmed cases increased rapidly, and there was a sharp surge in April. In early May, more than 10,000 cases were reported each day for ten days in a row.

I believe that it is Russia's pro-communist stance that has caused its defenses against the virus to collapse.

Russia's Attitude Towards the CCP's Pandemic Control

President Putin had three phone conversations with Chinese leader Xi Jinping after the CCP virus started to noticeably spread outside China. Both the Russian Presidential Office and Xinhua News Agency reported on these three conversations.

The first phone call on March 19 was actually a delayed communication between the two countries, as Xi had already talked to over a dozen state leaders prior to this conversation with Putin. Russia's quick action to close the borders with China, as well as showing a cold attitude towards China, might be the reason behind the delay.

The CCP's Xinhua News Agency claimed in a press release that Putin appreciated China's efforts to fight the pandemic, saying that China "sets a good example" for the international community. Russia hopes to continue a mutually supportive and cooperative relationship with China in fighting the pandemic, and at the same time, continue to deepen the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between Russia and China.

The English announcement from the official website of the Russian Presidential Office stated that "The Russian side highly assessed the results achieved by the Chinese leadership and the Chinese people in countering the spread of the disease."

On April 16, Xi and Putin talked over the phone for the second time. Xinhua News Agency reported that Putin said that some people tried to "smear" China with regard to the origin of the virus, and "Russia is willing to

continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with China in various fields such as fighting the pandemic.”

Russian Presidential Office again reported the phone conversation on its official website. “Mutual support in countering this global threat is further evidence of the special nature of the Russian-Chinese comprehensive strategic partnership. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their cooperation in this area... Vladimir Putin praised the consistent and effective actions of Russia’s Chinese partners, which helped stabilize the epidemiological situation in the country. He stressed that it was counterproductive to accuse China of releasing information to the global community on this dangerous infection in an untimely manner.”

On May 8, Xi congratulated Putin on the 75th anniversary (May 9) of the Soviet Union’s victory of “the Great Patriotic War.” The Xinhua News Agency reported that Putin mentioned that “A few forces blame China for the pandemic. Russia opposes their conduct and will stand firmly with China.” However, there is no such statement from the Russian Presidential Office.

Although the two sides differ in their statements of the three phone conversations, Putin’s stance certainly helped to tide the CCP over during a difficult time. Currently, among influential nations, he is the only state leader who openly opposes the United States blaming the pandemic on the CCP. When the CCP is facing worldwide condemnation, the support from Russia is of great significance to Chinese regime.

Take a look at the timeline. The pandemic in Russia worsened drastically from late March, which coincides with Putin’s praise and support for the Chinese communist leaders. This is no accident.

Statement by Russia’s Foreign Minister

Foreign Ministers of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) held a video tele-conference on April 28 on battling the CCP virus pandemic. Russia's Foreign Ministry publicized Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov's statement and answers to media questions.

Speaking of the role of WHO, Lavrov said, "We share the opinion that the WHO is a critically important tool which has now become an unparalleled platform for gathering information and facts from various states... We will continue to support the WHO regardless of what other countries might say about its activities."

He also said, "As for our evaluation of the Russia-China interaction in fighting the coronavirus, we believe that it deserves high praise. From the outset, we provided assistance to Wuhan in China, and I hope we have made our contribution to China overcoming this threat fairly quickly. Now Beijing is helping everyone, including our country, to curb the spread of this infection."

It is well known that WHO has acted as China's puppet in handling the global pandemic. When pandering to the CCP, WHO caused serious delay in global pandemic prevention. However, Lavrov spoke highly of WHO and praised the cooperation between China and Russia. His statement is a strong endorsement of the CCP.

The Russia-China Strategic Partnership

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Russia actively made friendly overtures to the West and left the CCP aside. It wasn't until the end of 1992 that China and Russia restored normal diplomatic and trade interactions.

When Putin came to power in 2001, Russia and China signed the "2001 Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship," which established an equal and

cooperative strategic partnership. In 2010, the two countries confirmed the “Comprehensive Strategic Collaboration Partnership.”

After Xi Jinping came to power, interactions between Beijing and Moscow became more frequent. In July 2017, the Chinese and Russian navies held their first joint military exercise in the Baltic Sea. In September 2018, China participated in Russia’s annual military exercise code-named “Oriental 2018” (Vostok-18) for the first time. These actions have drawn great attention from the outside world.

Conclusion

Russia experienced 73 years of communist rule and has provided support for the CCP. Although Russia has now abandoned the communist system, it has not yet got rid of the imprint of communist toxins. Today, the CCP has replaced the Soviet Communist Party to become the “communist boss” on this planet, hoping to hold onto the communist red flag forever. It continues to persecute people with lies and violence and violates basic values.

Although Russia has vacillated in its attitude toward the CCP in recent years, it has basically maintained a close partnership with the CCP. Moscow often stands on the side of the CCP on human rights issues and fails to uphold justice. In recent years, Russian officials have even restrained and obstructed Falun Gong practitioners’ activities in Russia.

On Oct. 30, 2017, Putin personally unveiled “the Wall of Grief,” a monument to victims of Soviet-era political repression. Speaking at the ceremony, he condemned the Soviet Communist Party’s political persecution, saying, “Our duty is to not let it slip into oblivion.”

Now that Putin knows well the evil nature of the Communist Party, he should no longer take the old path. Recently, Russia made a very unwise choice to endorse the CCP on the handling of the pandemic.

The CCP often brags about the “degree of mutual trust,” “the level of cooperation,” and “strategic value” between China and Russia. In fact, this relationship is driven by immoral interests and deviates from universal values. It is dark and wicked. For any government, having a good relationship with the CCP will only bring about endless troubles. The dramatic reversal of Russia’s pandemic outbreak is a profound lesson.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/why-did-russia-experience-a-steep-rise-in-ccp-virus-infections_3389355.html

Perspective on the Pandemic: The Ties Between Canada's Elite and Powerful and the Chinese Regime

Commentary by Yao Liang, Tanya Du

June 18, 2020

Canada is among the top 20 countries in the world with the most cases of COVID-19 infection, despite its relatively small population and low population density. Within Canada, Quebec has been the hardest-hit region by far.

By mid-June, Canada had around 100,000 cases of infection and more than 8,000 deaths. Of that, over half of the infections and 65 percent of the deaths have been in Quebec, which has less than a quarter of the country's population.

The Epoch Times editorial article "Wherever Ties to the Chinese Communist Party Are Close, the CCP Virus Follows" notes that "the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing."

For decades, high-level Canadian leaders, well-connected elite, and powerful corporations, many of them based in Quebec, have pushed for closer ties between Canada and China.

Ottawa played an instrumental role in enabling the Chinese regime to gain world recognition in its early days and helped it along the way as it became

one of the world's emerging superpowers, while the regime continued to suppress its own people at home and spread its tentacles of influence abroad. Meanwhile, Canadian leaders have often turned a blind eye to Beijing's human rights abuses during critical times.

Setting a Course

In 1970, the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau became one of the first Western governments to establish diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as the ruler of China. Canada's recognition of the regime paved the way for other Western countries to follow suit and for the CCP to join international bodies such as the United Nations.

Establishing relations with communist China and bringing it into the United Nations was one of Trudeau's primary foreign policy objectives after he became prime minister in 1968.

Long before becoming prime minister, while on a visit to Moscow to attend a propaganda conference in the 1950s, Trudeau, then a political activist from Quebec, had reportedly told the wife of the U.S. chargé d'affaires that he was a communist and a Catholic and had come to Moscow to criticize the United States and praise the Soviet Union, according to the 2013 book "The Truth About Trudeau" by Bob Plamondon.

Trudeau had travelled to China in 1949 as a young man, and again in 1960 on a trip sponsored by the regime. He chronicled the latter trip with co-author Jacques Hébert in their book "Two Innocents in Red China."

During their visit, the two witnessed scenes of one of the darkest periods of the communist regime, the Great Leap Forward, as noted in an article in The Globe and Mail. During this period, lasting from 1958 to 1962, Chairman Mao Zedong wanted to quickly bring industrialization to China

and forced farmers to produce steel rather than crops, with those deemed not complying facing torture and even death. The Great Leap Forward led to a devastating famine that killed tens of millions of people.

In their book, however, Trudeau and Hébert write, “We are convinced that we are witnessing the beginning of an industrial revolution.”

During his official visit to China as prime minister in 1973, where he met with Mao and Premier Zhou Enlai, Trudeau praised the regime for its governance, saying the system it had developed “in comparison with all previous Chinese social systems, is striving to provide human dignity and equality of opportunity for the Chinese people.”

Trudeau’s comment came at a time when Mao was in the middle of his disastrous and bloody Cultural Revolution, which resulted in an estimated death toll ranging from hundreds of thousands to 20 million, with millions of Chinese suffering from torture and humiliation, seizure of property, and the destruction of the economy and traditional culture.

At Beijing’s insistence, Trudeau refused to issue permits to allow Taiwan to take part in the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, even though the team was recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). To refuse entry to a country recognized by the IOC was unprecedented and met with strong objections by the United States.

Trudeau’s admiration for the CCP had long-term implications and set in motion decades of China-appeasing policies.

In 2013, when his son Justin Trudeau, then the leader of the Liberal Party seeking to become the next prime minister, was asked which country he admired most, he said: “There’s a level of admiration I actually have for China. Their basic dictatorship is actually allowing them to turn their economy around on a dime.”

Corporate Ties

Behind some of the most aggressive lobbying efforts for stronger Canada-China ties is a handful of big corporations with extensive business operations in China, many of them based in Quebec.

The Montreal-based Power Corporation, a multibillion-dollar financial services company, has been described as “the premier gatekeeper of [Canada’s] formal relations with China” by author Jonathan Manthorpe in his 2019 book “Claws of the Panda.”

In 1968, the company came under the control of Paul Desmarais Sr. and was run by his sons Paul Jr. and André serving as co-CEOs until last year, when they announced they were stepping down from their roles as CEOs but staying on as chairman and deputy chairman respectively.

Some of Canada’s most influential people have links to Power Corp., including four former prime ministers.

Former prime minister Jean Chrétien’s daughter is married to André Desmarais. Chrétien, Pierre Trudeau, and former prime minister Brian Mulroney all served as advisory board members of Power Corp. after leaving office. Former prime minister Paul Martin was president of one of the company’s subsidiaries, Canada Steamship Lines, and later bought it with a partner in the 1980s.

In 2019, Chrétien said Canada’s justice minister should use his authority to stop the extradition of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested in Vancouver in December 2018 on a U.S. extradition request. Mulroney advised that Chrétien and André Desmarais be sent to China on behalf of Canada to negotiate the release of two Canadians arrested by Beijing in retaliation for Meng’s arrest.

Several other prominent Canadian politicians, including former cabinet ministers, have also worked for Power Corp.

Another influential executive at the company was Maurice Strong, who later worked as the under-secretary-general of the United Nations. Strong is the nephew of prominent pro-communist reporter Anna Louise Strong.

According to the Epoch Times series “How the Spectre of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” Maurice Strong was deeply influenced by his aunt and described himself as “a socialist in ideology and a capitalist in methodology.”

After retirement, Strong moved to Beijing, where he lived for the rest of his life. In a 2010 interview with the Guardian, he said he still maintained some cooperation with the United Nations “in particular to China and that region.”

Power Corp. is a founding member of the Canada China Business Council (CCBC), which was spearheaded by Paul Desmarais Sr.

Canada China Business Council

The CCBC advocates for strong relations with China and has counted among its ranks former politicians or individuals who went on to become politicians.

Paul Desmarais Sr. was the founding chair of CCBC. His son André is an honorary chair of the organization, and the current chair is André’s son, Olivier.

CCBC, formerly called the Canada China Trade Council, was founded in 1978 by eight major Canadian corporations and the Chinese state-owned company CITIC.

Half of the Canadian founding members—namely Power Corp., BMO Financial Group, Bombardier, and SNC-Lavalin—are based in Montreal. The other founding members are Barrick Gold Corp., Export Development Canada, Manulife Financial, and Sun Life Financial, the latter based in Montreal until 1978.

The book “Claws of the Panda” says the founding CCBC members “became a persuasive lobby for enhanced relations with China, for which the benefits of trade were held to be of paramount concern.”

The Canada-China business community has strong links with a once-powerful Chinese official, Bo Xilai.

Bo was a rising star of the CCP until he was removed from his post as Party chief of the megacity of Chongqing after a scandal involving Chongqing official Wang Lijun. Wang gave accounts of the involvement of Bo and Bo’s wife, Gu Kailai, in the murder of a British businessman to the American Consulate in Chengdu.

Bo was part of a faction loyal to former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin, a rival of current leader Xi Jinping. According to some accounts, Bo and some other officials in Jiang’s faction had been plotting to overthrow Xi, and this was one of the main reasons Bo was removed from power.

Both Bo and wife Gu were heavily involved in—and profiting from—the state-sanctioned harvesting of organs from Falun Dafa prisoners of conscience.

Chrétien once called Bo an “old friend,” and he was called “one of our key bridges” by Sergio Marchi, a former Liberal trade minister and a past president of the CCBC, according to The Globe and Mail.

The relationship between Bo and the business community is rooted in the close ties he had with the Desmarais family.

The Globe reported last year that Bo's son, Bo Guagua, is working for Power Corp. But the ties go all the way back to the time of Paul Desmarais Sr. and Bo Xilai's father. According to the Globe, Bo's father, Bo Yibo, at that time vice-premier of the CCP, visited Paul Desmarais Sr. in the 1970s while en route to Washington to lay the groundwork for U.S. President Richard Nixon's trip to China.

Shortly after Bo became China's commerce minister in 2004, Power Corp. was one of the first foreign companies receiving designation to buy and sell yuan-denominated shares on Chinese stock exchanges, the Globe notes.

CITIC-Power Corp. Ties

CITIC Group Corporation, the only China-based founding member of the CCBC, is one of the Chinese entities that Power Corp. has deep ties with. The company is a state-owned investment company established to bring in Western investment to China.

CITIC was founded with the personal approval of Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the Chinese regime after Mao's death. Its founder, Rong Yiren, later a vice-president of the People's Republic of China, was known as "the red capitalist."

André Desmarais was a board member of CITIC Pacific, a subsidiary of CITIC, from 1997 to 2014. During this period, Power Corp. bought stakes in CITIC Pacific.

Power Corp. also has a 13.9 percent ownership in China Asset Management, an affiliate of CITIC. Mackenzie Financial Corporation, an indirect subsidiary of Power Corp., has a 13.9 percent stake in China Asset Management as well.

“With a direct stake in such a broad swath of China’s economy, the Desmarais surely stand to benefit from Canada’s increasingly cozy relationship with the communists in Beijing,” says a 2005 Western Standard article titled “Puppets of Beijing.”

CITIC has included many CCP “princelings”—children of Party leaders—in its leadership ranks, including Wang Jun, who is the son of one of the CCP’s eight elders, and Bo Xicheng, the brother of Bo Xilai and son of Bo Yibo, one of the Party’s most senior political figures.

Paul Desmarais Sr. and André first met Rong during a business mission to China at the invitation of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, according to La Presse. Before Power Corp. bought a stake in CITIC, the Desmarais-Rong relationship had resulted in another joint venture in 1986: an investment in a sawmill in British Columbia.

‘Expanding the Relationship’

Former prime minister Mulroney, who has provided professional services to Power Corp. on different occasions, also sat on the board of CITIC after leaving office. According to a Globe article, Paul Desmarais Sr. was one of Mulroney’s two main mentors as a young man. Power Corp. regularly used Mulroney as a labour lawyer.

According to the 2014 book “Engaging China,” after a 1986 official visit to China as prime minister, Mulroney wrote, “Much remains to be done in expanding the relationship but persistent work by successive Canadian prime ministers, principally Pierre Trudeau, is clearly paying off.”

Following the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, when much of the Western world shunned diplomatic ties with Beijing, Mulroney told Zhu Rongji, China’s vice premier at the time, that Canada “would be prepared to

fully engage with China in the years ahead” but would need to be cautious because of Canadians’ concerns about human rights.

Mulroney played a key role in forging a partnership between Desmarais and entrepreneur Peter Munk to invest in gold deposits in China in 1994, a year after the end of his prime ministership. During a trip to China, Munk was impressed that Mulroney was able to arrange a dinner with Zhu Rongji, then head of China’s central bank, without whom they wouldn’t be able to get access to China’s gold deposits.

“This is a good example of how Brian [Mulroney] uses his connections and contacts and turns them into international business opportunities for the companies he’s involved with,” Munk told the Globe.

‘Pro-Beijing Turn’

The article “Puppets of Beijing” notes that Ottawa took a “distinct pro-Beijing turn” under Chrétien.

Chrétien once told the Chinese state-owned news network CGTN that he visited China “many, many” times when he was prime minister.

“For the 10 years as the prime minister, I met the president of China 17 times, so I was close to China,” Chrétien told CGTN. The Chinese leader during Chrétien’s tenure was Jiang Zemin, who came to power following the Tiananmen Square massacre, as the previous leader, Zhao Ziyang, was deemed too sympathetic to the protest movement. Jiang went on to launch a brutal campaign of persecution against the traditional meditation discipline Falun Dafa in 1999.

After the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, Chrétien was one of the first world leaders to bring China out of isolation, rebooting relations with Beijing after the West had shunned the regime for its killing of unarmed protesters.

Chrétien made a trade visit to China in 1994, bringing along premiers, foreign affairs officials, and some 400 business executives. The delegation signed \$9 billion in trade deals while in China.

Ahead of the trip, Chrétien and other officials said they would be using the visit to discuss the issue of human rights. But that issue was put aside, a Maclean's article notes.

"We do not practise megaphone diplomacy, but we do not practise doormat diplomacy either," a senior Foreign Affairs Department official told Maclean's at the time.

The article notes that the closest Chrétien came to discussing the issue was in a meeting with Chinese premier Li Peng.

"Chrétien raised the issue so briefly that a Chinese foreign affairs ministry official later insisted it had not come up at all, and Nova Scotia Premier John Savage, who was at the meeting, did not initially recall any mention of the subject," the article says.

During Chrétien's tenure, Canada withdrew its support for a U.N. resolution censuring China for human rights abuses in 1997. Instead, any talk of human rights was reserved for private meetings, where Chinese representatives simply brushed off the issue.

The year 1997 was also a key year for Power Corp.'s foray into CITIC, as that was when it acquired a significant stake in the company's subsidiary CITIC Pacific and André Desmarais became a board member of the subsidiary.

Chrétien also supported China's admission to the World Trade Organization, which was instrumental in enriching the regime's coffers.

Martin, who succeeded Chrétien as prime minister, maintained his predecessor's China policy. During a 2005 trip by Chinese leader Hu Jintao to Canada, Martin and Hu agreed to build a "strategic partnership" between the two countries.

Some of the biggest orders for Martin's shipbuilding business before he became prime minister came from China. According to an article published in the *Walrus*, in 1995 his Canada Steamship Lines company commissioned three new self-unloader vessels from the Chinese state-owned Jiangnan shipyards.

Resuming Close Ties

When Stephen Harper became prime minister in 2006, there was a considerable change in Canada's China policy, with Harper more vocally calling out Beijing's human rights violations. He also refused to go to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, which angered the CCP.

However, in the later years of his tenure, his government began to ease its tone on China.

Manthorpe writes in "Claws of the Panda" that behind this warming up in tone was "a major lobby operation mounted using the CCP's agents of influence in business and academia to get the Harper government to change its attitude toward China."

After the Liberal Party won the 2015 federal election, it almost immediately began a policy of seeking closer ties with China, at one point even considering an extradition treaty with the regime. The government also spent money on public relations initiatives to warm up Canadians to having closer ties with China.

Trudeau visited China in 2016 and 2017, pursuing preliminary talks toward a free trade agreement, despite a \$50 billion imbalance in trade between the two countries in China's favour. The talks failed in 2017 after the Chinese side didn't want to entertain Trudeau's request to consider progressive values in the deal.

The same year, Canada committed hundreds of millions of dollars in investment in Beijing's prestige-building initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, meant to rival other multilateral development banks such as the World Bank.

Despite a clause in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) preventing member countries from forming free trade deals with "non-market" economies—a clear reference to China—Trudeau said in 2018 that Ottawa intends to pursue deeper trade ties with the Chinese communist regime.

The Liberal government was criticized by the opposition and U.S. politicians for allowing the takeover of two security-sensitive high-tech companies by Chinese companies. One was Norsat, a Vancouver-based satellite communications firm, and the other was ITF Technologies, a Montreal-based laser technology company.

In 2016, Trudeau's attendance at cash-for-access events became a source of controversy after it was revealed that one of the guests was Zhang Bin, an adviser to the Chinese regime. The event was held at the mansion of Benson Wong, president of the Toronto Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The cost of attendance was \$1,500 per person. Zhang donated \$1 million to the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and the University of Montreal Faculty of Law, where Pierre Trudeau had taught.

Also in attendance at one of the events was Liu Meng, chairman of the Yangtze River International Chamber of Commerce and a member of the

CCP, according to the Globe. Another attendee was Shenglin Xian, founder of Wealth One Bank of Canada, who at the time was waiting for approval from federal regulators to start his bank operation in Canada.

The Liberal government has yet to rule out including Chinese telecom giant Huawei's equipment in Canada's 5G networks, despite security concerns from the intelligence community and the United States, which has warned it would limit intelligence sharing with Canada if it allowed Huawei in the country's 5G.

Quebec and China

A note on the website of the government of Quebec says, "China is a major focus of Quebec's international relations."

The province opened an office in Beijing in 1998, and another in Shanghai a year later. The total trade volume between Quebec and China was nearly \$13.8 billion in 2016, with imports from China accounting for close to \$11 billion and exports to China just \$3 billion.

There are nine cooperation agreements between China and Quebec in a variety of fields, such as trade and higher education. The province also boasts that besides its relations with the Beijing regime, it has close ties with the province of Shandong and the municipality of Shanghai. Montreal and Quebec City both have twin cities in China.

Successive Quebec premiers have led many delegations to China, in an effort to deepen business ties.

During a trip to China in 2014, then-Liberal Quebec premier Philippe Couillard said he wouldn't be bringing up the issue of human rights, saying "you have to listen to the point of view of your hosts on these questions."

He later confirmed that he never discussed human rights, saying he went to China only to discuss “investment and employment.”

After leading another delegation to China in 2018, during which he signed 40 agreements worth \$262 million, Couillard said he didn’t want to “defeat” the purpose of the mission with “misguided comments.” He said others shouldn’t “dictate to China how they govern themselves internally.”

Former Quebec premier Jean Charest, who was premier from 2003 to 2012, criticized the Harper government in 2014 for not pursuing trade ties more aggressively with China.

“What we hear between the lines is that there may be some concerns about dealing with China because of concerns of human rights issues, because of other issues. But if that was the case, you’d think that would have been taken into consideration before you negotiate the agreement,” Charest said in an interview with CBC, referring to the negotiation of a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement.

Charest, who visited China several times during his tenure as premier, is now providing consulting services to Huawei to help the company in Meng’s extradition case and in its bid to be involved in Canada’s 5G network.

https://www.thepochtimes.com/perspective-on-the-pandemic-the-ties-between-canadas-elite-and-powerful-and-the-chinese-regime_3392583.html

Perspectives on the Pandemic: The Severity of CCP Virus Outbreak in Netherlands Puts Spotlight on Beijing Ties

Commentary by Li Yan

June 18, 2020

The Netherlands, a small nation that ranks globally at 133rd in land area and 69th in population, is one of the countries most seriously affected by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus.

As of June 17, the Netherlands has reported more than 49,000 confirmed cases and more than 6,000 deaths. The city of Tilburg and North Brabant Province have become ground zero for the virus's spread, as the first patient in the Netherlands was identified in Tilburg and it also has the highest number of patients in the country.

The tragic spread of the virus in The Netherlands comes as the country has forged closer ties with Beijing in recent years. Especially Tilburg is of pivotal importance in China–Netherlands cooperation in the CCP's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road). It has numerous business interactions with China.

Chengdu–Europe Express Rail: A Landmark of Belt and Road

North Brabant is an important component of the CCP's Belt and Road project in the Netherlands. In 2016, the Chengdu–Europe Express Rail, which connects Chengdu and Tilburg, was officially opened. This was the only direct freight railway from China to the Netherlands. Compared with 45

days to ship by ocean, it takes only 15 days to travel on land via this express rail, with a cost as low as a quarter of that of air freight.

Tilburg is the sixth-largest city in the Netherlands, with a population of 217,000. The Wilhelmina Canal flows through the city. Because of its advantageous location, Tilburg is a commercial and transportation hub. Key industries in the city include wool, machinery, electrical appliances, and leather.

While the Netherlands is an important gateway to Europe, Tilburg is known as the “logistics gateway” of the country, directly connecting to Rotterdam, as well as Moerdijk in North Brabant, and also to the United Kingdom and France. In addition, many large international companies have distribution sites here. That’s why the Dutch GVT company was chosen by the CCP to operate the Chengdu–Europe Express Rail.

The express rail is a landmark of the CCP’s Belt and Road Initiative, and has established a new logistics route for BRI to penetrate into Asia and Europe. It passes through China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, and the Netherlands, spanning a total of 10,947 kilometers (6,802 miles). Through the express rail, a large number of Chinese electrical products, clothing, shoes, and hats are swiftly shipped to the Netherlands and beyond, while wines, milk powder, finished vehicles, and other goods from the Netherlands, France, and Spain can easily enter the China market, taking the BRI project to a new level. The two endpoints, Tilburg and Chengdu, have also become sister cities, laying the foundation for the Port of Rotterdam to become a pivotal part of the BRI in the Netherlands.

In fact, the economic and trade relationship between North Brabant and China has a long history. Deputy Gov. Bert Pauli of North Brabant Province told Chinese state media People’s Daily on Sept. 22, 2017, that more than 30 years ago, Philips, a well-known Dutch company headquartered in the

province, set up a factory in Nanjing, China, to make TV components. Today, more than 130 companies in the province have established branches in China's eastern coastal areas. With this foundation in place, it was natural that Tilburg would be chosen as an important location for the BRI project.

Port of Rotterdam Joins Belt and Road

The Netherlands, known as the gateway to Europe, has a well-developed logistics industry. With its superior geographical location, it has established a highly advanced water, land, and air transportation network and has become one of the most important commodity sorting centers in Europe. As a result, China's BRI project has chosen the Netherlands as the nexus for its land and sea transportation networks.

Through the Port of Rotterdam and the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, the two major freight hubs in Europe, cargo from the Netherlands can arrive at any major EU market within two days.

When the CCP promoted the BRI in the Netherlands, its primary goal was to have the Port of Rotterdam and the local logistics industry cooperate with it, so as to open up a major hub of the "Silk Road by Land and Sea."

The Port of Rotterdam transports goods to and from more than 1,000 ports around the world. Various terminals also have rail transshipment facilities, which means cargo can be loaded directly onto a train at the terminal, making it a perfect choice to access European destinations in the hinterland.

The Euromax container terminal in the port is today's most advanced unmanned loading and unloading terminal, with an annual handling capacity of about 7 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs), of which 25 percent of the container throughput comes from China.

The Dutch thought that joining the “New Silk Road” would allow their network of facilities to be extended and gain greater benefits. In particular, the authorities at the Port of Rotterdam were tempted by the fact that, in addition to the traditional maritime business from Asia, land and sea joint transport would allow it to connect to the Chengdu–Europe Express through Tilburg and Duisburg, Germany. Asia–Europe logistics would have more options. With improved connectivity, the port would also have greater profits.

China’s BRI project marched into European ports through the state-owned China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO Shipping). In May 2016, COSCO Pacific Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of COSCO Shipping Group, signed an equity transfer agreement with ECT Participations B.V., a subsidiary of Hutchison Port Group controlled by Li Ka-shing. COSCO Pacific bought a 35 percent stake in the Euromax container terminal owned by ECT for 125 million euros. After the completion of the acquisition, together with previously existing shares, COSCO Pacific had a 47.5 percent stake in the Euromax container terminal, thus becoming its largest shareholder.

COSCO Shipping holds controlling shares or ownership in many terminals in EU countries such as Spain. As its investment holdings keep increasing, it has more power and influence and is capable of choosing which ports it prefers and which to avoid. After China’s BRI brought to the Port of Rotterdam the largest shareholder, the port does have greater connectivity and business expansion, but the Netherlands itself sees no improvement in its ability to allocate logistic routes among various ports.

More Express Rail Lines Connecting to China

In addition to pushing the Port of Rotterdam, Europe’s largest port, to join the BRI, the city of Tilburg also led many Dutch companies to build express railways leading to China.

Following the inauguration of the Chengdu–Europe Express Rail in 2016, Dutch logistics company Nunner opened a new freight route to China two years later. The first train departed from Amsterdam on March 7, 2018, and traveled 11,000 kilometers (6,835 miles) before arriving in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province.

This is the first direct train line between a Dutch port and China. Erwin Cootjans, president of Nunner, said that Amsterdam was chosen as the starting point for a through train because the port offers inland waterway connections to a number of Dutch cities such as Kampen, Groningen, Meppel, Leeuwarden, and Harlingen. There are also fast connections from Amsterdam and Antwerp via short-sea shipping to Great Britain and Scandinavia.

In May 2018, CH Robinson, an international freight logistics group, announced the opening of a new rail freight service, with one end connecting to eight Chinese cities including Zhengzhou, Suzhou, Wuhan, Xiamen, Yiwu, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Chongqing, and the other end reaching eight European cities including Malaszewicze, Hamburg, Duisburg, Milan, Tilburg, Lyon, Paris, and Barking, located in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

The More Trade With China, the Larger the Deficit

The Netherlands is a major trading country and has maintained a trade surplus for years. However, the authorities found that under the framework of the BRI, although the logistic services brought more business opportunities, the country didn't get many actual benefits. On the contrary, there's an increasingly large trade deficit.

Statistics from Eurostat show that in 2016, import and export between the Netherlands and China totaled \$82.49 billion, a decrease of 1.9 percent

from the previous year. Specifically, the Netherlands' exports to China were \$11.51 billion, an increase of 11.9 percent; the Netherlands' imports from China were \$70.98 billion, a decrease of 3.8 percent; and the trade deficit for the Netherlands was \$59.47 billion.

In 2017, the total import and export volume between the two countries was \$107.4 billion, an increase of 30.9 percent. The Dutch export to China was \$13.54 billion, an increase of 19.1 percent; the Dutch import from China was \$93.86 billion, an increase of 32.8 percent. The trade deficit that year was as high as \$80.32 billion.

In 2018, the bilateral import and export of goods totaled \$112.64 billion, an increase of 4.7 percent. The Netherlands' exports to China were \$12.56 billion, a decrease of 6.4 percent; imports from China totaled \$100.80 billion, an increase of 6.2 percent. Although the Netherlands elevated its ranking from China's third-largest trading partner in the EU to the second largest in the previous year, the trade deficit between the Netherlands and China further increased, reaching \$87.52 billion in 2018.

More and more people have come to realize that the Belt and Road project actually has become "the Pandemic Belt and Road." The Netherlands is yet another case in point. All important partners of the BRI, such as the Netherlands, Iran, Italy, and Spain, have become the most severely affected areas in the world by the CCP virus. Even Switzerland, a neutral country, was one of the top 10 hardest-hit countries for some time. It has also signed a letter of intent with the CCP on the Belt and Road initiative.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/perspectives-on-the-pandemic-why-the-netherlands-is-hit-hard-by-the-ccp-virus_3392217.html

PS: It's Time to End the CCP

In its 100-year history, the crimes committed by the Chinese Communist Party include: Causing 80 million deaths among Chinese people; Confiscating private properties at will; Destroying culture, tradition, and environment; Persecuting faith, religion, and free speech; Suppressing dissidents, minorities, and students; Covering-up corruptions, disasters, and, of course, the current pandemic; Exporting revolution, propaganda, and class struggle; Forced organ harvesting; Infiltrating the West; Intellectual property pirating; Drug trafficking; Technology stealing; Internet hacking; Debt trapping and so on, not to mention its genocide crimes against the people of Tibet, Falun Gong, Uyghur, and Hong Kong...

The world could have prevented the COVID-19 pandemic if the CCP did not lie. However, the way Covid-19 spreads around the globe foretells the CCP's demise. And history may keep judging each of us as well on the individual's standing towards the CCP...

One Reaps What One Sows. It's time for the world to join the epic endeavor to end the CCP's rule without a war, just like the fall of the Berlin Wall. You are invited to sign the "End CCP" Petition(<https://endccp.com>). By rejecting the CCP you will join the 300 million+ courageous Chinese CCP Quitters in choosing and securing a bright future.

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