

Coronavirus outbreak: 70th Anniversary of the CCP Regime **Perfect Dictatorship or Empire's Afterglow? Part Two: The Plague**

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The plague)

In 1643, a fierce plague erupted in China. As the capital of the Great Ming, which was the last imperial dynasty of China ruled by Han Chinese, Beijing was also a severely infected city. According to historical records, at the height of the plague over ten thousands of residents died every day and the contingents transferring coffins to graveyards blocked traffic out of town. Modern historian estimates that a total of approximately 200,000 people eventually deceased, accounted for 1/5 to 1/4 of the capital's population.

In March 1644, a rebel army of more than half a million people led by Li Zicheng arrived outside the wall of Beijing. Most of Li's soldiers were the victims of prolonged plagues, wars, famines, droughts and miscellaneous taxes, who were like lambs when facing professorial government troops in previous battles. However, the elite capital garrison had also been severely weakened by the plague. Half of the 100,000-strong guarding force had been killed by the disease, and the majority of the survivors were too weak to hold their weapons. Two days after the beginning of the siege, the Forbidden City was breached and the Emperor hung himself on a old locust tree.

For the Great Ming, the 1643 plague was the last straw that crushed the camel. In 2019, the CCP had also been thrashed by a range of hassles: the Anti-Extradition Movement in Hong Kong, the presidential election in Taiwan, trade negotiations with the U.S., bad economic performance, swine fever outbreak, etc. Then at the end of the year, the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV, which now has been officially named as SARS-CoV-2) appeared as the last strike, in spite of that most ordinary people in China knew nothing about it until January 20, 2020. Thanks to the slow response of the state, the whole country now has been plunged into catastrophe, in both the epidemiological and sociological senses. It is too early to claim that this plague will ring the death knell for the CCP regime, but it definitely has exposed how feeble and disgusting the state apparatus and its bureaucracy are to the people.

Man-made Crisis

We cannot verify the conspiracy theories about where the virus came from, but one thing is for sure:

the negligence and controlocracy of the Chinese government in December and early January was the major cause of the outbreak.

According to a paper published by *The Lancet*, a hospital in Wuhan received the first 2019-nCoV infected patient as early as on December 1. However, the Wuhan government only publicly notified there was a unknown pneumonia epidemic for the first time till December 31, and it did so because on social networks some doctors and nurses from hospitals in Wuhan said they were treating patients who were likely infected by SARS virus. Then on January 1, many state-controlled media reported that 8 rumour spreaders were investigated and punished.

On January 20, the government finally admitted the human-to-human transmission, probably due to concerns raised by other countries. Ironically, a banquet attended by more than 40,000 families was still held in Wuhan on January 19, which showed that the general public had got no warning from the authority previously.

The prevention measures are not complicated: wash hands, wear masks, ventilate home and workplace, avoid crowded places, stay at home when you are sick. If the government told people to do these things a couple of weeks earlier or did not hinder free speech on this issue when the doctors and nurses started warning people, the outbreak would be much more containable. This logic is so clear that even the most patriotic Chinese are now angry about the cover-up.

The government has not given explanation for the delayed release of truth. The loyalists argue that the central government should not be blamed because the authorities of lower levels failed to convey the seriousness to Beijing. The fans of Xi believe that this is due to corrupt elements in the bureaucracy have not been completely cleared. Some others think this is the result of incompetence at the top, since Xi told the General Director of WHO that he has been 'personally commanding' the response to the outbreak.

Nevertheless, each case could insinuate some kinds of weaknesses of the CCP: the local authorities are unwilling or afraid to report unreservedly; the communication channels between Wuhan and Beijing are not unobstructed; the national epidemic prevention mechanism is inadequate or sluggish; the economy is a higher priority; the decision-makers of the regime do not understand or give a shit about the consequences of delay; the party's central leadership is not united; etc. Or very likely, all of them exist.

January 20 was just the beginning of the public show of the party's chaotic behaviors and habitual corruption. At 2 o'clock in the morning of January 23, the decision to seal off Wuhan, a city with a population of 14 millions, was announced. Such a sharp shift of government policy meant that most ordinary people and hospitals were unprepared for the epidemic and lockdown. Masks, medicines and disinfectants quickly became scarce, then food price soared. The lockdown was clearly a hasty decision without feasible supply plan. For instance, even the medical teams sent to Hubei from other provinces in early February could not have stable supply of health and nutritious food — news report shows that doctors and nurses carry boxes of instant noodles when dispatching.

While front line medical staff were wearing disposable raincoats and face shields converted from transparent plastic folders to protect themselves, people found that a mountain of medical supplies was held in the warehouse of the Wuhan Red Cross. The Red Cross Society of China is a government agency directly led by the party and its current honorary president is Wang Qishan, who is one of the most powerful party leaders and Xi's close ally during the anti-corruption campaign. According to a new regulation, all the donations to the plague-affected areas must be received and distributed by the Red Cross or other government-controlled charities. However, scandals were revealed one after another: hospital staff asking for masks were blocked outside the Red Cross warehouse like

beggars while a government official walked out with a whole box; donated masks were sold online; journalists from the state-owned CCTV were kicked out of the Red Cross warehouse during live broadcast by security guards; etc. The public anger is so widespread that the government had to appoint a private logistics company to take over the warehouse.



According to public data as of February 11, the national mortality of virus infected people outside Hubei province is 0.39%; meanwhile the numbers are 3.07% in Hubei province and 4.05% in Wuhan! The first number indicates that the virus is not highly lethal if patients are properly treated at early stage of illness. But in Wuhan and the other cities of Hubei province, a considerable number of treatable patients died due to the scarcity of essential resources, especially hospital beds. Instead of transforming existing sites into hospitals or dispatching PLA's field hospitals, the government announced on January 23 that it would build a completely new hospital with 1,000 beds in Wuhan, specializing in treating 2019-nCoV infected patients. Two days later, the plan of building another new hospital with 1,600 beds was appended. The rapid construction became the party's propaganda tool — construction sites were live-streamed 24/7; anthropomorphic social media accounts of the two hospitals were set up; even forklifts and cranes got their own fan clubs. During this period, patients had to crowd in or wait outside the overloaded existing hospitals, inevitably causing cross infections. Although the two new hospitals started operation on February 3 and 8 respectively, the number of patients in critical condition had jumped to 4,052 on February 7. Now virus infected people in Wuhan are still desperately asking for help online, striving for getting hospitalized and dying at home. In early February, the government finally decide to transform schools, stadiums and convention centers into temporary hospitals for patients with mild symptoms.

Nevertheless, the status of scarcity has not been relieved. On February 11, one of the new hospital mentioned above issued an announcement requesting social donation of masks, protective suits and other medical supplies. The Wuhan Red Cross had handed most of the money donated by the public, 2.7 billion out of the 3 billion RMB, to the Wuhan government. How has the money been spent? We do not know. But we do know that the lack of protective equipment and rest has caused great casualties of doctors and nurses. According to a social media post on February 11, 150 [1,150?] staff had been infected or on suspicion of infection in one single hospital in Wuhan.



As the factory of the world, why does the scarcity of simple protective gears exist in China? A recent online video may give a hint about the answer: a group of party members put on full sets of protective gears just for taking a joint photo with the CCP flag and dumped their protective suits straight into rubbish bins afterwards. Another guess is that the government has stored a large amount of supplies such as masks and disinfectants for industries that are struggling to restore production and more importantly, to acquire profit.

Humanitarian Disaster

The lockdown had extended to the whole province of Hubei by the end of January and the situation is very likely to develop into a widespread humanitarian disaster.

In a village in Huanggang, a two and half years old girl with epilepsy is about to run out of her prescription. This family only planed to stay here for the Chinese New Year holiday so only carried the dose for the corresponding number of days. Her parents want to drive back home to take the medicines, but all the roads out of the village are blocked by local authority. When the postal delivery of medicines will arrive is also unknown. More than one hundred families with children with epilepsy in Hubei province are facing the same problem and what they can do is trying to ask for help on the Internet.

Again in Huanggang, a seventeen year old male with cerebral palsy was starved to death after being left alone at home for six days. He lived with his father and a eleven year old brother who has autism. On January 23, the father was suspected to be infected with the virus. The local CDC sent the father and his younger son to a quarantine site, but left the elder son in the village. The father posted a help letter online on January 28 but was told on the next day that his elder son had died.

Mr. Xiao is a fifty year old truck driver, who has been stuck on highway for nearly three weeks, just because of his Hubei license plate. He started a journey transporting goods out of Hubei on January 8. When he decided to go back home, many regions had begun to ban Hubei vehicles from entering. He had to eat and sleep in his truck until traffic police in Shaanxi province 'saved' him on January 29 and arranged a room for him in a highway service station. Mr. Xiao's misfortune is the microcosm of what many Hubei residents have recently experienced in the other provinces of China.

In Tianmen, a family was dragged out of their home and told that they would be quarantined in a hotel. However, the destination was a shabby factory dormitory with horrible condition: smelly room, moldy beds, dirty toilet, cold food, no daily necessities, no heating, no medical staff.



In Wuhan, a seventy year old man jumped out of his apartment on the ninth floor to commit suicide. The victim had got uremia for five years and was recently suspected of being infected with the virus. The hospital refused to do dialysis for him until his pneumonia was cured, but he could not be hospitalized as novel coronavirus pneumonia patient because the waiting list of the virus test was too long. Without dialysis, the man could not eat and suffered from diarrhea. After seven days of torment at home, he chose to kill himself.

Above are only a small number of sad stories we have heard. And there must be many other people who do not have a chance to make their misery known to public.

Non-stop Controlocracy

Many Chinese have decided to 'save' the history of this plague by downloading, saving and screen capturing the related pictures, video clips, news reports, discussions, commentaries, social media posts and any other information before they disappear from the Internet. This is a race between the people and the machine of censorship. If not doing so, all the stories mentioned above will be erased and replaced with tributes to the party and its great leaders after the plague.

One may think that the CCP would loosen the restrictions on freedom of speech since the current mess is largely the result of cover-up. However, the state is now doing the opposite.

During its epidemic response meeting on February 4, the Ministry of Public Security stressed that maintaining political security is the top priority and it will 'severely crack down on all kinds of disruptive activities committed by hostile forces at home and abroad'.

On February 6, independent reporter Chen Qiushi, who arrived in Wuhan on the second day of lockdown and started broadcasting the real situation of the city on YouTube, was arrested by the secret police and locked up in an unknown location since then. I guess he is a hostile force in the eyes of the regime.

At the same night, Dr. Li Wenliang died of the novel coronavirus pneumonia. He was one of the eight whistle-blowers in December. After being reprimanded by the police in early January, he went back to work in the hospital and get infected with the virus. I guess he is a hostile force in the eyes of the regime.

According to Reuters, banks in Beijing start issuing special loans for epidemic prevention. A surveillance technology enterprise named MEGVII applied for 100 million yuan to develop face recognition technologies that can accurately identify people wearing masks. I guess anyone who dares to demonstrate is a hostile force in the eyes of the regime.

According to an official news report published on January 28, the police department of a small city in Shandong province had set up a special task force to monitor local residents' online speeches related to the plague since January 22. One of the four cops in the task force told the journalist that they could only sleep four hours a day — the rest twenty hours had been used to peek at other people's phones and computers. A picture released with the report revealed that Facebook and Twitter are also their surveillance targets. I guess anyone who dares to tell the truth is a hostile force in the eyes of the regime.



Then the question is, if more and more people are not afraid to be labeled as hostile forces, does the regime have the power to crack down all of us?

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P.S.

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<https://borderless-hk.com/2020/02/17/70th-anniversary-of-the-ccp-regime□perfect-dictatorship-or-empires-afterglow-part-two-the-plague/>