
THIS is why China is succeeding in war on Covid-19 and US is on path to disaster

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China's outperformance of the US in both the 2008 crisis & the Covid-19 outbreak will see a geopolitical shift in Beijing's favor. The longer the US continues with its disastrous pandemic response, the greater the shift will be.

The pandemic has a clear global course. Despite the coronavirus outbreak beginning in China, Beijing has brought it rapidly under control – the number of domestically transmitted cases was reduced to virtually zero by the end of March. In the US and Western Europe, on the contrary, the number of cases is rising vertiginously with no peak in sight.

In absolute terms, the number of US and Italian coronavirus cases is already greater than China's. But comparisons in absolute numbers greatly understate the severity of the coronavirus crisis in the US and Western Europe – due to their populations being far smaller than China. In reality, the relative severity of the US and Western European coronavirus pandemic is already far worse than at the worst point of the crisis in China and is still rising. This disastrous US and Western European failure will be more severe than the international financial crisis and will have profound geopolitical consequences.

What does China's success mean?

Two key issues immediately follow from China's success – how did China achieve this, and what is its international impact?

Technically, China's means of controlling the coronavirus were not unknown – quarantines, deliveries of essentials to homes to allow the population to stay indoors, compulsory mask wearing, testing, transfer of medical personnel to affected areas. China certainly implemented these far more rigorously than the US and Western Europe. But behind that technical difference was a clear understanding of society by China.

The most fundamental issue was that China started from a real understanding of human rights as they affect the real lives of people – not the artificial constructs of Western, purely formal 'human rights.' In a lethal epidemic, the

key human right is to stay alive.

More generally, for real human beings, the most fundamental issue in your life is not whether you can use Facebook, or cast a vote for a politician who promises one thing at an election and then does something completely different after it in a system which gives no real control over them, but the real ability to stay alive when faced with a deadly threat, and to have a decent and rising standard of living, to have health care, to have education, and innumerable other real concerns of people.

Within that context, the struggle against the coronavirus was on such a scale that it had to be carried out as a war – in China, it is frequently referred to as a ‘People’s War’ against the virus.

This explains China’s measures. Its strategy was strictly logical once this starting point was understood. Above all, it was necessary to do everything possible to confine the virus to Wuhan and Hubei – if it had spread throughout China it would have been impossible to control. Therefore, the first decisive measure was strict travel restrictions.

If people had been allowed to leave Wuhan/Hubei, overwhelming numbers would have fled with the virus spreading uncontrollably throughout China – this is precisely what is occurring in the US or Spain where people fleeing infection centers such as New York or Madrid are spreading the virus.

There is no doubt this caused tremendous suffering in Wuhan/Hubei. By preventing people from leaving, this placed inconceivable pressure on Hubei’s health system. China poured tens of thousands of medical staff into Hubei but this necessarily took time.

It may be compared to one of the greatest battles in Soviet history – Stalingrad. There, it was vitally necessary for the defenders within Stalingrad to tie the German Army down in combat within the city itself while the Soviet Army prepared the encirclement which finally smashed the Nazis to pieces. The result was that Soviet casualties within Stalingrad itself were terrible – the city’s defenders gave their lives to ensure the Soviet people’s decisive victory. In a parallel manner, people in Wuhan gave their lives to protect the people of the whole of China. Hubei and Wuhan’s medical staff are rightly regarded as heroes of the Chinese people.

Once the decisive task of preventing the virus’ spread had been achieved, then China could put pressure on the virus in Hubei and finally Wuhan. I have good friends in Wuhan. I know the people understood this national strategy despite the intense suffering it meant in Wuhan.

Catastrophic failure of ‘human rights’ in the West

But what was the response of the so called ‘human rights’ organizations in the West to this? Total and criminal condemnation of China’s successful strategy!

Kenneth Roth, executive director of ‘Human Rights Watch,’ declared: “In typical Chinese Communist Party fashion, Beijing confines 35 million people rather than pursuing the transparent and targeted approach to the Wuhan coronavirus that public health and human rights require.” The Guardian in Britain published article after article attacking China’s methods of dealing with the virus before finally admitting on March 20, almost two months after China started its decisive actions: “Rigid travel restrictions and social distancing requirements appear to have had their desired effect.”

Joshua Wong, a supporter of the Hong Kong rioters, called for the WHO director general’s resignation because the organization supported China’s successful strategy.

By the end of March, most of the world recognized that China had been correct. For example, a recent column on Bloomberg in the US had the self-evident headline: “The rest of the world is falling in step with Beijing’s way of fighting the coronavirus.”

“Had China not imposed such steps, one simulation suggests there could have been eight million cases by February... In fact, each government seems to be reinventing the wheel, though events eventually force them to take China’s path: closing schools and public places, shutting borders, imposing curfews, inhibiting movement,” the column read.

If the advice of Roth, the Guardian, or Wong had been taken, by now thousands more people, more probably tens

of thousands, would be dead.

Failure in US

This wrong approach in the West has now created a disaster in the US and Western Europe. The catastrophic scale of this is simply disguised by making comparisons in terms of absolute numbers between China and individual Western countries. This conceals the fact that the impact of the coronavirus epidemic in Western countries is many times greater than during the worst period in China – because China's population is far larger than any Western country – more than four times that of the US and 23 times Italy's.

So, for example, WHO data for March 28 shows the US had 16,894 new daily coronavirus cases – 4.3 times as high as China's worst daily peak of 3,887. But China's population is 4.25 times that of the US. So, in proportion to China's population, the US figures are equal to 71,799 (16,894 x 4.25). The relative intensity of the impact of the coronavirus in the US is therefore already more than 18 times as great as the worst day in China! And the number of daily cases in the US is on a strongly rising upward curve. A literal catastrophe is unfolding in the US.

To understand the impact of this, US troops abroad have many times suffered severe war casualties – World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq. But only twice in American history have there been mass death events on US soil itself – the Civil War and 1918-19's Spanish flu epidemic. Unless there is a dramatic, and unlikely, change in US policy within days, there will be the third mass death event in the US. This will necessarily hammer the US economy with a downturn worse than the international financial crisis.

Geopolitical consequences

The geopolitical consequences of this situation are both immediate and long term. In the short term, so far, the coronavirus has only hit three regions with mass force – China, the US, and Western Europe. Countries in other regions will feel its full force in the coming weeks. They can either attempt to follow the successful path of China or they can follow the disastrous one of the US.

Furthermore China, the world's greatest manufacturer, can be of decisive practical aid to them. Such a simple fact as that France can order one billion facemasks from China shows what is possible. The nonsense of the formal Western concept of human rights will be demonstrated to billions of people. This will inevitably produce a geopolitical shift in China's favor.

How deep the longer-term geopolitical consequences will be depends on how long the US continues on its present catastrophic course. It is now impossible for the US to avoid a severe recession – certainly the sharpest decline in output since the Great Depression and possibly worse. How quickly the US economy can recover depends on how rapidly it can solve its medical crisis. But to achieve this means, for the reasons already given, the US abandoning its totally false concept of human rights, its subordination of human lives to the economy and, in essence, admitting that China was correct. Such a tremendous shift is unlikely to come nearly fast enough in a pandemic in which literally every day counts.

In the last 12 years, the world has passed through two huge global tests – the international financial crisis and the coronavirus pandemic. In both, China has far outperformed the US. This will necessarily lead to a major shift in geopolitics in favor of China. The longer the US continues with its present disastrous response to the coronavirus, the greater that shift will be.