

# The Unz Review: An Alternative Media Selection

*A Collection of Interesting, Important, and Controversial Perspectives Largely Excluded from the American Mainstream Media*

## American Pravda: Our Coronavirus Catastrophe as Biowarfare Blowback?

RON UNZ • APRIL 21, 2020 • 7,400 WORDS • 76 COMMENTS



Nearly 30,000 Americans have died from the coronavirus during the last two weeks, and by some estimates this is a substantial under-count, while the death-toll continues to rapidly mount. Meanwhile, measures to control the spread of this deadly infection have already cost 22 million Americans their jobs, an unprecedented economic collapse that has pushed our unemployment rates to Great Depression levels. Our country is facing a crisis as grave as almost any in our national history.



For many weeks President Trump and his political allies had regularly dismissed or minimized this terrible health threat, and suddenly now faced with such a manifest disaster, they have naturally begun seeking other culprits to blame.

The obvious choice is China, where the global epidemic first began in late 2019. Over the last week or two our media has been increasingly filled with accusations that the dishonesty and incompetence of the Chinese government played a major role in producing our own health catastrophe.

Even more serious charges are also being raised, with senior government officials informing the media that they suspect that the Covid-19 virus was developed in a Chinese laboratory in Wuhan and then carelessly released upon a vulnerable world. Such “conspiracy theories” were once confined to the extreme political fringe of the Internet, but they are now found in the respectable pages of my morning *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*.

Whether plausible or not, such accusations carry the gravest international implications, and there are growing demands that China financially compensate our country for its trillions of

dollars in economic losses. A new global Cold War along both political and economic lines may soon be at hand.

I have no personal expertise in biowarfare technology, nor access to the secret American intelligence reports that seem to have been taken seriously by our most elite national newspapers. But I do think that a careful exploration of previous Sino-American clashes over the last couple of decades may provide some useful insight into the relative credibility of those two governments as well as that of our own media.

During the late 1990s, America seemed to reach the peak of its global power and prosperity, basking in the aftermath of its historic victory in the long Cold War, while ordinary Americans greatly benefited from the record-long economic expansion of that decade. A huge Tech Boom was at its height, and Islamic terrorism seemed a vague and distant thing, almost entirely confined to Hollywood movies. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the possibility of large scale war seemed to have dissipated so political leaders boasted of the “peace dividend” that citizens were starting to enjoy as our huge military forces, built up over nearly a half-century, were downsized amid sweeping cuts in the bloated defense budget. America was finally returning to a regular peacetime economy, with the benefits apparent to everyone.

At the time, I was overwhelmingly focused on domestic political issues, so I only paid slight attention to our one small military operation of that period, the 1999 NATO air war against Serbia, intended to safeguard the Kosovo Albanians from ethnic cleansing and massacre, a Clinton Administration project that I fully endorsed.

Although our limited bombing campaign seemed quite successful and soon forced the Serbs to the bargaining table, the short war did include one very embarrassing mishap. The use of old maps had led to a targeting error that caused one of our smart bombs to accidentally strike the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, killing three members of its delegation and wounding dozens more. The Chinese were outraged by this incident, and their propaganda organs began claiming that the attack had been deliberate, a reckless accusation that obviously made no logical sense.

In those days I watched the *PBS Newshour* every night, and was I shocked to see their U.S. Ambassador raise those absurd charges with host Jim Lehrer, whose disbelief matched my own. But when I considered that the Chinese government was still stubbornly denying the reality of its massacre of the protesting students in Tiananmen Square a decade earlier, I concluded that unreasonable behavior by PRC officials was only to be expected. Indeed, there was even some speculation that China was cynically milking the unfortunate accident for domestic reasons, hoping to stoke the sort of jingoist anti-Americanism among the Chinese people that would finally help bind the social wounds of that 1989 outrage.

Such at least were my thoughts on that matter more than two decades ago. But in the years that followed, my understanding of the world and of many pivotal events of modern history underwent the sweeping transformations that I have described in my *American Pravda* series[1]. And some of my 1990s assumptions were among them.

Consider, for example, the Tiananmen Square Massacre, which every June 6th still evokes an annual wave of harsh condemnations in the news and opinion pages of our leading national newspapers. I had never originally doubted those facts, but a year or two ago I happened to come across a short article by journalist Jay Matthews entitled "The Myth of Tiananmen"[2] that completely upended that apparent reality.

According to Matthews the infamous massacre had likely never happened, but was merely a media artifact produced by confused Western reporters and dishonest propaganda, a mistaken belief that had quickly become embedded in our standard media storyline, endlessly repeated by so many ignorant journalists that they all eventually believed it to be true. Instead, as near as could be determined, the protesting students had all left Tiananmen Square peacefully, just as the Chinese government had always maintained. Indeed, leading newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* had occasionally acknowledged these facts over the years, but usually buried those scanty admissions so deep in their stories that few ever noticed. Meanwhile, the bulk of the mainstream media had fallen for an apparent hoax.

Matthews himself had been the Beijing Bureau Chief of the *Washington Post*, personally covering the protests at the time, and his article appeared in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, our most prestigious venue for media criticism. This authoritative analysis containing such explosive conclusions was first published in 1998, and I find it difficult to believe that many reporters or editors covering China have remained ignorant of this information, yet the impact has been absolutely nil. For over twenty years virtually every mainstream media account I have read has continued to promote the Tiananmen Square Massacre Hoax, usually implicitly but sometimes explicitly.

Even more remarkable were the discoveries I made regarding our supposedly accidental bombing of the Chinese Embassy in 1999. Not long after launching this website, I added former *Asia Times* contributor Peter Lee as a columnist, incorporating his *China Matters* blogsite archives that stretched back for a decade. He soon published a 7,000 word article[3] on the Belgrade Embassy bombing, representing a compilation of material already contained in a half-dozen previous pieces[4] he'd written on that subject from 2007 onward. To my considerable surprise, he provided a great deal of persuasive evidence that the American attack on the Chinese embassy had indeed been deliberate, just as China had always claimed.

According to Lee, Beijing had allowed its embassy to be used as a site for secure radio transmission facilities by the Serbian military, whose own communications network was a primary target of NATO airstrikes. Meanwhile, Serbian air defenses had shot down an advanced American F-117A fighter, whose top-secret stealth technology was a crucial U.S. military secret. Portions of that enormously valuable wreckage were carefully gathered by the grateful Serbs, who delivered it to the Chinese for temporary storage at their embassy prior to transport back home. This vital technological acquisition later allowed China to deploy its own J20 stealth fighter in early 2011, many years sooner than American military analysts had believed possible.

Based upon this analysis, Lee argued that the Chinese embassy was attacked in order to destroy the Serbian retransmission facilities located there, while punishing the Chinese for allowing such use. There were also widespread rumors in China that another motive had been an

unsuccessful attempt to destroy the stealth debris stored within. Later Congressional testimony revealed[5] that among all the hundreds of NATO airstrikes, the attack on the Chinese embassy was the only one directly ordered by the CIA, a highly-suspicious detail.

I was only slightly familiar with Lee's work, and under normal circumstances I would have been very cautious in accepting his remarkable claims against the contrary position universally held by all our own elite media outlets. But the sources he cited completely shifted that balance.

Although the American media dominates the English-language world, many British publications also possess a strong global reputation, and since they are often much less in thrall to our own national security state, they have sometimes covered important stories that were ignored here. And in this case, the *Sunday Observer* published a remarkable expose in October 1999, citing several NATO military and intelligence sources who fully confirmed the deliberate nature of the American bombing of the Chinese embassy, with a US colonel even reportedly boasting that their smartbomb had hit the exact room intended.

This important story was immediately summarized[6] in the *Guardian*, a sister publication, and also covered by the rival *Times of London* and many of the world's other most prestigious publications, but encountered an absolute wall of silence in our own country. Such a bizarre divergence on a story of global strategic importance—a deliberate and deadly US attack against Chinese diplomatic territory—drew the attention of FAIR, a leading American media watchdog group, which published an initial critique[7] and a subsequent follow-up[8]. These two pieces totaled some 3,000 words, and effectively summarized both the overwhelming evidence of the facts and also the heavy international coverage, while reporting the weak excuses made by top American editors to explain their continuing silence. Based upon these articles, I consider the matter settled.

Few Americans remember our 1999 attack upon the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and if not for the annual waving of a bloody June 6th flag by our ignorant and disingenuous media, the "Tiananmen Square Massacre" would also have long since faded from memory. Neither of these events has much direct importance today, at least for our own citizens. But the broader media implications of these examples do seem quite significant.

These incidents represented two of the most serious flashpoints between the Chinese and American governments during the last thirty-odd years. In both cases the claims of the Chinese government were entirely correct, although they were denied by our own top political leaders and dismissed or ridiculed by virtually our entire mainstream media. Moreover, within a few months or a year the true facts became known to many journalists, even being reported in fully respectable venues. But that reality was still completely ignored and suppressed for decades, so that today almost no American whose information comes from our regular media would even be aware of it. Indeed, since many younger journalists draw their knowledge of the world from these same elite media sources, I suspect that many of them have never learned what their predecessors knew but dared not mention.

Most leading Chinese media outlets are owned or controlled by the Chinese government, and they tend to broadly follow the government line. Leading American media outlets have a

corporate ownership structure and often boast of their fierce independence; but on many crucial matters, I think the actual reality is not so very different from that in China.

I tend to doubt that Chinese leaders have any overwhelming commitment to the truth, and the reasons for their greater veracity are probably practical ones. American news and entertainment completely dominate the global media landscape and they face no significant domestic rival. So China recognizes that it is vastly outmatched in any propaganda conflict, and as the far weaker party must necessarily try to stick closer to the truth, lest its lies be immediately exposed. Meanwhile, America's overwhelming control over global information may inspire considerable hubris, with the government sometimes promoting the most outrageous and ridiculous falsehoods in the confident belief that a supportive American media will cover for any mistakes.

These considerations should be kept in mind as we attempt to sift the accounts of our often unreliable and dishonest media in hopes of extracting the true circumstances of the current coronavirus epidemic. Unlike careful historical studies, we are working in real-time and our analysis is greatly hindered by the ongoing fog of war, so that any conclusions are necessarily very preliminary ones. But given the high stakes, such an attempt seems warranted.

End introduction. Begin COVID-19.

When my morning newspapers first began mentioning the appearance of a mysterious new illness in China during mid-January, I paid little attention, absorbed as I was in the aftermath of our sudden assassination of Iran's top military leader and the dangerous possibility of a yet another Middle Eastern war. But the reports persisted and grew, with deaths occurring and evidence growing that the viral disease could be transmitted between humans. China's early conventional efforts seemed unsuccessful in halting the spread of the disease.

Then on Jan. 23rd and after only 17 deaths, the Chinese government took the astonishing step of locking down and quarantining the entire 11 million inhabitants of the city of Wuhan, a story that drew worldwide attention. They soon extended this policy to the 60 million Chinese of Hubei province, and not longer afterward shut down their entire national economy and confined 700 million Chinese to their homes, a public health measure probably a thousand times larger than anything previously undertaken in human history. So either the China's leadership had suddenly gone insane, or they regarded this new virus as an absolutely deadly national threat, one that needed to be controlled at any possible cost.

Given these dramatic Chinese actions and the international headlines that they generated, the current accusations by Trump Administration officials that China had attempted to minimize or conceal the serious nature of the disease outbreak is so ludicrous as to defy rationality. In any event, the record shows that on December 31st, the Chinese had already alerted the World Health Organization to the strange new illness, and Chinese scientists published the entire genome of the virus on Jan. 12th, allowing diagnostic tests to be produced worldwide.

Unlike other nations, China had received no advance warning of the nature or existence of the deadly new disease, and therefore faced unique obstacles. But their government implemented public health control measures unprecedented in the history of the world and managed to almost completely eradicate the disease with merely the loss of a few thousand lives. Meanwhile, many other Western countries such as the US, Italy, Spain, France, and Britain dawdled for

months and ignored the potential threat, and have now suffered well over 100,000 dead as a consequence, with the toll still rapidly mounting. For any of these nations or their media organs to criticize China for its ineffectiveness or slow response represents an absolute inversion of reality.

Some governments took full advantage of the early warning and scientific information provided by China. Although nearby East Asian nations such as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore had been at greatest risk and were among the first infected, their competent and energetic responses allowed them to almost completely suppress any major outbreak, and they have suffered minimal fatalities. But America and several European countries avoiding adopting these same early measures such as widespread testing, quarantine, and contact-tracing, and have paid a terrible price for their insouciance.

A few weeks ago British Prime Minister Boris Johnson boldly declared that his own disease strategy for Britain was based upon rapidly achieving “herd immunity”—essentially encouraging the bulk of his citizens to become infected—then quickly backed away after his desperate advisors recognized that the result might entail a million or more British deaths.

By any reasonable measure, the response to this global health crisis by China and most East Asian countries has been absolutely exemplary, while that of many Western countries has been equally disastrous. Maintaining reasonable public health has been a basic function of governments since the days of the city-states of Sumeria, and the sheer and total incompetence of America and most of its European vassals has been breathtaking. If the Western media attempts to pretend otherwise, it will permanently forfeit whatever remaining international credibility it still possesses.

I do not think these particular facts are much disputed except among the most blinkered partisans, and the Trump Administration probably recognizes the hopelessness of arguing otherwise. This probably explains its recent shift towards a far more explosive and controversial narrative, namely claiming that Covid-19 may have been the product of Chinese research into deadly viruses at a Wuhan laboratory, which suggests that the blood of hundreds of thousands or millions of victims around the world will be on Chinese hands. Dramatic accusations backed by overwhelming international media power may deeply resonate across the globe.

News reports appearing in the *Wall Street Journal*[9] and the *New York Times*[10] have been reasonably consistent. Senior Trump Administration officials have pointed to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, a leading Chinese biolab, as the possible source of the infection, with the deadly virus having been accidentally released, subsequently spreading first throughout China and later worldwide. Trump himself has publicly voiced similar suspicions, as did Secretary of State and former CIA Director Mike Pompeo in a *FoxNews* interview.[11] Private lawsuits against China in the multi-trillion-dollar range have already been filed[12] by rightwing activists and Republican senators Tom Cotton and Lindsey Graham have raised similar governmental demands.

I obviously have no personal access to the classified intelligence reports that have been the basis of these charges by Trump, Pompeo, and other top administration officials. But in reading these

recent news accounts, I noticed something rather odd.

Back in January, few Americans were paying much attention to the early reports of an unusual disease outbreak in the Chinese city of Wuhan, which was hardly a household name. Instead, overwhelming political attention was focused on the battle over Trump's impeachment and the aftermath of our dangerous military confrontation with Iran. But towards the end of that month, I discovered that the fringes of the Internet were awash with claims that the disease was caused by a Chinese bioweapon accidentally released from that same Wuhan laboratory, with former Trump advisor Steve Bannon and *ZeroHedge*, a popular right-wing conspiracy-website, playing leading roles in advancing the theory. Indeed, the stories became so widespread in those ideological circles that Sen. Tom Cotton, a leading Republican Neocon, began promoting them on Twitter and FoxNews, thereby provoking [an article](#)[13] in the *NYT* on those "fringe conspiracy theories."

I suspect that it may be more than purely coincidental that the biowarfare theories which erupted in such concerted fashion on small political websites and Social Media accounts back in January so closely match those now publicly advocated by top Trump Administration officials and supposedly based upon our most secure intelligence sources. Perhaps a few intrepid citizen-activists managed to replicate the findings of our multi-billion-dollar intelligence apparatus, and did so in days while the latter required weeks or months. But a more likely scenario is that the wave of January speculation was driven by private leaks and "guidance" provided by exactly the same elements that today are very publicly leveling similar charges in the elite media. Initially promoting controversial theories in less mainstream outlets has long been a fairly standard intelligence practice.

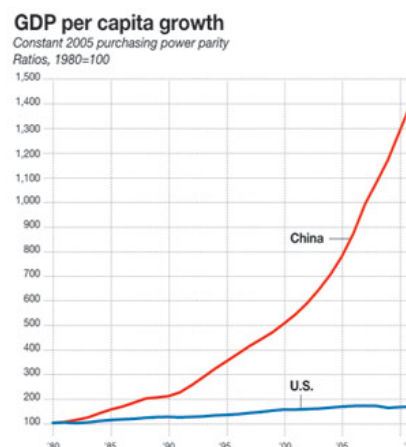
Regardless of the origins of the idea, does it seem plausible that the coronavirus outbreak might have originated as an accidental leak from that Chinese laboratory? I am not privy to the security procedures of Chinese government facilities, but applying a little common sense may shed some light on that question.

Although the coronavirus is only moderately lethal, apparently having a fatality rate of 1% or less, it is extremely contagious, including during an extended pre-symptomatic period and also among asymptomatic carriers. Thus, portions of the US and Europe are now suffering heavy casualties, while the policies adopted to control the spread have devastated their national economies. Although the virus is unlikely to kill more than a small sliver of our population, we have seen to our dismay how a major outbreak can so easily wreck our entire economic life.

During January, the journalists reporting on China's mushrooming health crisis regularly emphasized that the mysterious new viral outbreak had occurred at the worst possible place and time, appearing in the major transport hub of Wuhan just prior to the Lunar New Year holiday, when hundreds of millions of Chinese would normally travel to their distant family homes for the celebration, thereby potentially spreading the disease to all parts of the country and producing a permanent, uncontrollable epidemic. The Chinese government avoided that grim fate by the unprecedented decision to shut down its entire national economy and confine 700 million Chinese to their own homes for many weeks. But the outcome seems to have been a very near thing, and if Wuhan had remained open for just a few days longer, China might easily have suffered long-term economic and social devastation.

The timing of an accidental laboratory release would obviously be entirely random. Yet the outbreak seems to have begun during the precise period of time most likely to damage China, the worst possible ten-day or perhaps thirty-day window. As I noted[14] in January, I saw no solid evidence that the coronavirus was a bioweapon, but if it were, the timing of the release seemed very unlikely to have been accidental.

If the virus was released intentionally, the context and motive for such a biowarfare attack against China could not be more obvious. Although our disingenuous media continues to pretend otherwise, the size of China's economy surpassed that of our own several years ago, and has continued to grow much more rapidly. Chinese companies have also taken the lead in several crucial technologies, with Huawei becoming the world's leading telecommunications equipment manufacturer and dominating the important 5G market. China's sweeping Belt and Road Initiative has threatened to reorient global trade around an interconnected Eurasian landmass, greatly diminishing the leverage of America's own control over the seas. I have closely followed China for over forty years, and the trend-lines have never been more apparent. Back in 2012, I published an article bearing the provocative title "China's Rise, America's Fall?"[15] and since then I have seen no reason to reassess my verdict.



### China's Rise, America's Fall[16]

*Which superpower is more threatened by its "extractive elites"?*

RON UNZ[17] • THE AMERICAN CONSERVATIVE, APRIL 17, 2012 • 7,000 WORDS

For three generations following the end of World War II, America had stood as the world's supreme economic and technological power, while the collapse of the Soviet Union thirty years ago left us as the sole remaining superpower, facing no conceivable military rival. A growing sense that we were rapidly losing that unchallenged position had certainly inspired the anti-China rhetoric of many senior figures in the Trump Administration, who launched a major trade war soon after coming into office. The increasing misery and growing impoverishment of large sections of the American population naturally left these voters searching for a convenient scapegoat, and the prosperous, rising Chinese made a perfect target.

Despite America's growing economic conflict with China over the last couple of years, I had never considered the possibility that matters might take a military turn. The Chinese had long ago deployed advanced intermediate range missiles that many believed could easily sink our carriers in the region, and they had also generally improved their conventional military deterrent. Moreover, China was on quite good terms with Russia, which itself had been the target of intense American hostility for several years; and Russia's new suite of revolutionary hypersonic missiles had drastically reduced any American strategic advantage. Thus, a conventional war against China seemed an absolutely hopeless undertaking, while China's outstanding businessmen and engineers were steadily gaining ground against America's decaying and heavily-financialized economic system.



Under these difficult circumstances, an American biowarfare attack against China might have seemed the only remaining card to play in hopes of maintaining American supremacy. Plausible deniability would minimize the risk of any direct Chinese retaliation, and if successful, the terrible blow inflicted to China's economy would set it back for many years, perhaps even destabilizing its social and political system. Using alternative media to immediately promote theories that the coronavirus outbreak was the result of a leak from a Chinese biowarfare lab was a natural means of preempting any later Chinese accusations along similar lines, thereby allowing America to win the international propaganda war before China had even begun to play.

A decision by elements of our national security establishment to wage biological warfare in hopes of maintaining American world power would certainly have been an extremely reckless act, but extreme recklessness has become a regular aspect of American behavior since 2001, especially under the Trump Administration. Just a year earlier we had kidnapped[18] the daughter of Huawei's founder and chairman, who also served as CFO and ranked as one of China's most top executives, while at the beginning of January we suddenly assassinated Iran's top military leader.

These were the thoughts that entered my mind during the last week of January once I discovered the widely circulating theories suggesting that China's massive disease epidemic had been the self-inflicted consequence of its own biowarfare research. I saw no solid evidence that the coronavirus was a bioweapon, but if it were, China was surely the innocent victim of the attack, presumably carried out by elements of the American national security establishment.

Soon afterward, someone brought to my attention a very long article by an American ex-pat living in China who called himself "Metallicman" and held a wide range of eccentric and implausible beliefs. I have long recognized that flawed individuals can often serve as the vessels of important information otherwise unavailable, and this case constituted a perfect example. His piece denounced the outbreak as a likely American biowarfare attack, and provided a great wealth of factual material I had not previously considered. Since he authorized republication elsewhere I did so, and his 15,000 word analysis[19], although somewhat raw and unpolished, began attracting an enormous amount of readership on our website, probably being one of the very first English-language pieces to suggest that the mysterious new disease was an American bioweapon. Many of his arguments appeared doubtful to me or have been obviated by later developments, but several seemed quite telling.

He pointed out that during the previous two years, the Chinese economy had already suffered serious blows from other mysterious new diseases, although these had targeted farm animals rather than people. During 2018 a new Avian Flu virus had swept the country, eliminating large portions of China's poultry industry, and during 2019 the Swine Flu viral epidemic had devastated China's pig farms, destroying 40% of the nation's primary domestic source of meat, with widespread claims that the latter disease was being spread by mysterious small drones. My morning newspapers had hardly ignored these important business stories, noting[20] that the sudden collapse of much of China's domestic food production might prove a huge boon to American farm exports at the height of our trade conflict, but I had never considered the obvious implications. So for three years in a row, China had been severely impacted by strange

new viral diseases, though only the most recent had been deadly to humans. This evidence was merely circumstantial, but the pattern seemed highly suspicious.

The writer also noted that shortly before the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, that city had hosted 300 visiting American military officers, who came to participate in the 2019 Military World Games[21], an absolutely remarkable coincidence of timing. As I pointed out[22] at the time, how would Americans react if 300 Chinese military officers had paid an extended visit to Chicago, and soon afterward a mysterious and deadly epidemic had suddenly broken out in that city? Once again, the evidence was merely circumstantial but certainly raised dark suspicions.

Scientific investigation of the coronavirus had already pointed to its origins in a bat virus, leading to widespread media speculation that bats sold as food in the Wuhan open markets had been the original disease vector. Meanwhile, the orchestrated waves of anti-China accusations had emphasized Chinese laboratory research on that same viral source. But we soon published a lengthy article[23] by investigative journalist Whitney Webb providing copious evidence of America's own enormous biowarfare research efforts, which had similarly focused for years on bat viruses. Webb was then associated with *MintPress News*, but that publication had strangely declined to publish her important piece, perhaps skittish about the grave suspicions it directed towards the US government on so momentous an issue. So without the benefit of our platform, her major contribution to the public debate might have attracted relatively little readership.

Around the same time, I noted[24] another extremely strange coincidence that failed to attract any interest from our somnolent national media. Although his name had meant nothing to me, in late January my morning newspapers carried major stories[25] on the sudden arrest of Prof. Charles Lieber, one of Harvard University's top scientists and Chairman of its Chemistry Department, sometimes characterized as a potential future Nobel Laureate.

The circumstances of that case seemed utterly bizarre to me. Like numerous other prominent American academics, Lieber had had decades of close research ties with China, holding joint appointments and receiving substantial funding for his work. But now he was accused of financial reporting violations in the disclosure portions of his government grant applications—the most obscure sort of offense—and on the basis of those accusations, he was seized by the FBI in an early-morning raid on his suburban Lexington home and dragged off in shackles, potentially facing years of federal imprisonment.

Such government action against an academic seemed almost without precedent. During the height of the Cold War, numerous American scientists and technicians were rightfully accused of having stolen our nuclear weapons secrets for delivery to Stalin, yet I had never heard of any of them treated in so harsh a manner, let alone a scholar of Prof. Lieber's stature, who was merely charged with technical disclosure violations. Indeed, this incident recalled accounts of NKVD raids during the Soviet purges of the 1930s.

Although Lieber was described as a chemistry professor, a few seconds of Googling revealed that some of his most important work had been in virology, including technology for the detection of viruses. So a massive and deadly new viral epidemic had broken out in China and almost simultaneously, a top American scholar with close Chinese ties and expertise in viruses was

suddenly arrested by the federal government, yet no one in the media expressed any curiosity at a possible connection between these two events.

I think we can safely assume that Lieber's arrest by the FBI had been prompted by the concurrent coronavirus epidemic, but anything more is mere speculation. Those now accusing China of having created the coronavirus might surely suggest that our intelligence agencies discovered that the Harvard professor had been personally involved with that deadly research. But I think a far more likely possibility is that Lieber began to wonder whether the epidemic in China might not be the result of an American biowarfare attack, and was perhaps a little too free in voicing his suspicions, thereby drawing the wrath of our national security establishment. Inflicting such extremely harsh treatment upon a top Harvard scientist would greatly intimidate all of his lesser colleagues elsewhere, who would surely now think twice before broaching certain controversial theories to any journalist.

By the end of January, our webzine had published a dozen articles and posts on the coronavirus outbreak, then added many more by the middle of February. These pieces totaled tens of thousands of words and attracted a half million words of comments, probably representing the primary English-language source for a particular perspective on the deadly epidemic, with this material eventually drawing many hundreds of thousands of pageviews. A few weeks later, the Chinese government began gingerly raising the possibility that the coronavirus may have been brought to Wuhan by the 300 American military officers visiting that city, and was fiercely attacked by the Trump Administration[26] for spreading anti-American propaganda. But I strongly suspect that the Chinese had gotten that idea from our own publication.

As the coronavirus gradually began to spread beyond China's own borders, another development occurred that greatly multiplied my suspicions. Most of these early cases had occurred exactly where one might expect, among the East Asian countries bordering China. But by late February Iran had become the second epicenter of the global outbreak. Even more surprisingly, its political elites had been especially hard-hit, with a full 10% of the entire Iranian parliament soon infected[27] and at least a dozen of its officials and politicians[28] dying of the disease, including some who were quite senior[29]. Indeed, Neocon activists on Twitter began gleefully noting that their hatred Iranian enemies were now dropping like flies.

Let us consider the implications of these facts. Across the entire world the only political elites that have yet suffered any significant human losses have been those of Iran, and they died at a very early stage, before significant outbreaks had even occurred almost anywhere else in the world outside China. Thus, we have America assassinating Iran's top military commander on Jan. 2nd and then just a few weeks later large portions of the Iranian ruling elites became infected by a mysterious and deadly new virus, with many of them soon dying as a consequence. **Could any rational individual possibly regard this as a mere coincidence?**

Biological warfare is a highly technical subject, and those possessing such expertise are unlikely to candidly report their classified research activities in the pages of our major newspapers, perhaps even less so after Prof. Lieber was dragged off to prison in chains. My own knowledge is nil. But in mid-March I came across several extremely long and detailed comments on the coronavirus outbreak that had been posted on a small website by an individual calling himself

“OldMicrobiologist” and who claimed to be a retired forty-year veteran of American biodefense. The style and details of his material struck me as quite credible, and after a little further investigation I concluded that there was a high likelihood his background was exactly as he had described. I made arrangements to republish his comments in the form of a 3,400 word article[30], which soon attracted a great deal of traffic and 80,000 words of further comments.

Although the writer emphasized the lack of any hard evidence, he said that his experience led him to strongly suspect that the coronavirus outbreak was indeed an American biowarfare attack against China, probably carried out by agents brought into that country under cover of the Military Games held at Wuhan in late October, the sort of sabotage operation our intelligence agencies had sometimes undertaken elsewhere. One important point he made was that high lethality was often counter-productive in a bioweapon since debilitating or hospitalizing large numbers of individuals may impose far greater economic costs on a country than a biological agent which simply inflicts an equal number of deaths. In his words “a high communicability, low lethality disease is perfect for ruining an economy,” suggesting that the apparent characteristics of the coronavirus were close to optimal in this regard. Those so interested should read his analysis and judge for themselves his possible credibility and persuasiveness.

[Was coronavirus a Biowarfare Attack Against China?\[31\]](#)

OLDMICROBIOLOGIST • MARCH 13, 2020 • 3,400 WORDS

One intriguing aspect of the situation was that almost from the first moment that reports of the strange new epidemic in China reached the international media, a large and orchestrated campaign had been launched on numerous websites and Social Media platforms to identify the cause as a Chinese bioweapon carelessly released in its own country. Meanwhile, the far more plausible hypothesis that China was the victim rather than the perpetrator had received virtually no organized support anywhere, and only began to take shape as I gradually located and republished relevant material, usually drawn from very obscure quarters and often anonymously authored. So it seemed that only the side hostile to China was waging an active information war. The outbreak of the disease and the nearly simultaneous launch of such a major propaganda campaign may not necessarily prove that an actual biowarfare attack had occurred, but I do think it tends to support such a theory.

When considering the hypothesis of an American biowarfare attack, certain natural objections come to mind. The major drawback to biological warfare has always been the obvious fact that the self-replicating agents employed will not respect national borders, thus raising the serious risk that the disease might eventually return to the land of its origin and inflict substantial casualties. For this reason, it seems very doubtful that any rational and half-competent American leadership would have unleashed the coronavirus against China.

But as we see absolutely demonstrated in our daily news headlines, America’s current government is grotesquely and manifestly *incompetent*, more incompetent than one could almost possibly imagine, with tens of thousands of Americans having now already paid with their lives for such extreme incompetence. Rationality and competence are obviously nowhere to

be found among the Deep State Neocons that President Donald Trump has appointed to so many crucial positions throughout our national security apparatus.

Moreover, the extremely lackadaisical notion that a massive coronavirus outbreak in China would never spread back to America might have seemed plausible to individuals who carelessly assumed that past historical analogies would continue to apply. As I wrote[32] a few weeks ago:

Reasonable people have suggested that if the coronavirus was a bioweapon deployed by elements of the American national security apparatus against China (and Iran), it's difficult to imagine why they didn't assume it would naturally leak back in the US and start a huge pandemic here, as is currently happening.

The most obvious answer is that they were stupid and incompetent, but here's another point to consider...

In late 2002 there was the outbreak of SARS in China, a related virus but that was far more deadly and somewhat different in other characteristics. The virus killed hundreds of Chinese and spread into a few other countries before it was controlled and stamped out. The impact on the US and Europe was negligible, with just a small scattering of cases and only a death or two.

So if American biowarfare analysts were considering a coronavirus attack against China, isn't it quite possible they would have said to themselves that since SARS never significantly leaked back into the US or Europe, we'd similarly remain insulated from the coronavirus? Obviously, such an analysis was foolish and mistaken, but would it have seemed so implausible at the time?

As some must have surely noticed, I have deliberately avoided investigating any of the scientific details of the coronavirus. In principle, an objective and accurate analysis of the characteristics and structure of the virus might help suggest whether it was entirely natural or rather the product of a research laboratory, and in the latter case, perhaps whether the likely source was China, America, or some third country.

But we are dealing with a cataclysmic world event and those questions obviously have enormous political ramifications, so the entire subject is shrouded by a thick fog of complex propaganda, with numerous conflicting claims being advanced by interested parties. I have no background in microbiology let alone biological warfare, so I would be hopelessly adrift in evaluating such conflicting scientific and technical claims. I suspect that this is equally true of the overwhelming majority of other observers as well, although committed partisans are loathe to admit that fact, and will eagerly seize upon any scientific argument that supports their preferred position while rejecting those that contradict it.

Therefore, by necessity, **my own focus is on evidence that can at least be understood by every layman, if not necessarily always accepted.** And I believe that the simple juxtaposition of several recent disclosures in the mainstream media leads to a rather telling conclusion.

For obvious reasons, the Trump Administration has become very eager to emphasize the early missteps and delays in the Chinese reaction to the viral outbreak in Wuhan, and has presumably encouraged our media outlets to direct their focus in that direction.

As an example of this, the Associated Press Investigative Unit recently published a rather detailed analysis of those early events purportedly based upon confidential Chinese documents. Provocatively entitled “China Didn’t Warn Public of Likely Pandemic for 6 Key Days”[33], the piece was widely distributed, running in abridged form[34] in the *NYT* and elsewhere. According to this reconstruction, the Chinese government first became aware of the seriousness of this public health crisis on Jan. 14th, but delayed taking any major action until Jan. 20th, a period of time during which the number of infections greatly multiplied.

Last month, a team of five *WSJ* reporters produced a very detailed and thorough 4,400 word analysis[35] of the same period, and the *NYT* has published a helpful timeline[36] of those early events as well. Although there may be some differences of emphasis or minor disagreements, all these American media sources agree that Chinese officials first became aware of the serious viral outbreak in Wuhan in early to mid-January, with the first known death occurring on Jan. 11th, and finally implemented major new public health measures later that same month. No one has apparently disputed these basic facts.

But with the horrific consequences of our own later governmental inaction being obvious, sources within our intelligence agencies have sought to demonstrate that they were not the ones asleep at the switch. Earlier this month, an ABC News story[37] cited four separate government sources to reveal that as far back as late November, a special medical intelligence unit within our Defense Intelligence Agency had produced a report revealing that an out-of-control disease epidemic was occurring in the Wuhan area of China, and widely distributed that document throughout the top ranks of our government, warning that steps should be taken to protect US forces based in Asia. After the story aired, a Pentagon spokesman officially denied the existence of that November report, while various other top level government and intelligence officials refused to comment. But a few days later, Israeli television revealed[38] that in November American intelligence had indeed shared such a report on the Wuhan disease outbreak with its NATO and Israeli allies, thus seeming to independently confirm the complete accuracy of the original *ABC* story and its several government sources.

***It therefore appears that elements of the Defense Intelligence Agency were aware of the deadly viral outbreak in Wuhan more than a month before any officials in the Chinese government itself.*** Unless our intelligence agencies have pioneered the technology of precognition, **I think this may have happened for the same reason that arsonists have the earliest knowledge of future fires.**

Back in February, before a single American had died from the disease, I wrote my own overview[39] of the possible course of events, and **I would still stand by it today:** (April 21, 2020)

Consider a particularly ironic outcome of this situation, not particularly likely but certainly possible...

Everyone knows that America's ruling elites are criminal, crazy, and also extremely incompetent.

So perhaps the coronavirus outbreak was indeed a deliberate biowarfare attack against China, hitting that nation just before Lunar New Year, the worst possible time to produce a permanent nationwide pandemic. However, the PRC responded with remarkable speed and efficiency, implementing by far the largest quarantine in human history, and the deadly disease now seems to be in decline there.

Meanwhile, the disease naturally leaks back into the US, and despite all the advance warning, our totally incompetent government mismanages the situation, producing a huge national health disaster, and the collapse of our economy and decrepit political system.

As I said, not particularly likely, but certainly a very fitting end to the American Empire...

### Related Reading:

- [The Myth of Tiananmen](#)[40] by Jay Matthews
- [China's Rise, America's Fall](#)[41]
- [Was Coronavirus a Biowarfare Attack Against China?](#)[42] by OldMicrobiologist
- [Bats, Gene Editing and Bioweapons: Recent Darpa Experiments Raise Concerns Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#)[43] by Whitney Webb
- [How It All Began: the Belgrade Embassy Bombing](#)[44] by Peter Lee

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