



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**International Policy Tackling the Covid-19 Pandemic: China and US Strategies and Antipathies**

**Dr. Unsa Jamshad <sup>1</sup> Syed Mudasser Fida Gardazi <sup>2</sup> Amar Jahangir <sup>3</sup>**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, Women University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Bagh, AJK, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Law, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, AJK, Pakistan
3. Research Associate, Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, AJK, Pakistan

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**ABSTRACT**

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**\*Corresponding**

**Author**

jamshed.unsa@yahoo.com

Covid-19 has shaken the real foundation of human being within a period of just one and a half year. Economic, social and health sector of more advanced and leading nations of the world was paralyzed by this pandemic. Health sector of developed nations were even proved to be insufficient to cope up covid-19. The sole super power was also affected worse from this global pandemic. China from where this pandemic took a start tried their best to develop a strategy to control this pandemic although they succeed domestically to achieve their goal but unfortunately it spread drastically all over the world. This paper is an attempt to high light what strategies China and America have adopted to control this pandemic individually and collectively. Though America and China are counted as economic rival and having mistrust in each other yet the study highlights their collaborations which they expanded to each other to cope up the pandemic. Alongside, it discusses the challenges faced by them to tackle this virus due to their mutual differences.

**Introduction**

Covid-19 was declared as pandemic by World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 just after the four months of its emergence. World has never faced such pandemic before. This Pandemic has started its journey in late 2019, from the Hua Nan market of Wuhan where seafood had been sold, and now it has been reached to almost every nock and corner of the World. This pandemic has victimized millions of people irrespective of gender, caste, creed, and social status. It spread across the globe even without considering the political and geographical boundaries of the states. According to WHO it has consumed 1.7 million people within one year and the ratio of effected

ones were not less than 79.2 million (WHO Covid-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update, December 29, 2020).

As the number of cases increases the Chinese government put Wuhan in quarantine. No one was allowed to move out from Wuhan to other parts of China but there was no ban on international travel. People were allowed to leave Wuhan, the epic center of Covid-19, for all parts of world but they were not allowed to move within China. Besides taking strict measures to avoid the spread of virus even then till January 23, Covid-19 victimized twenty-five provinces of China (WHO Situational Report, January 22, 2020).

To avoid the spread of Covid-19 different states took different measures as per their capability and ability. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Russia took lead in this regard, the government of these states made it compulsory for all those who were coming from China would be passed through screening test. Later on, Thailand and Vietnam followed their foot-steps. This was happened for the first time in the history of mankind that screening test was made compulsory for people at various entering points of different states. The only purpose of this test was to avoid the spread of pandemic in their respective states and to save the lives of their own citizens. North Korea the most ally of China also took preventive measures and on February 18, it had also shut its border with China to avoid the spread for virus.

After victimizing East Asia virus travelled to Southeast Asia. Thailand was the second states after China and first state of Southeast Asia that became the victim of this virus. On January 13, 2020 first case of Covid-19 was reported in Thailand, then on January 15 Japan reported first case and on 20<sup>th</sup> January Republic of Korea confirmed their first case. After affected the few neighbouring states of China the virus jumped to the continent of Europe and America. All these states imported Covid-19 from Wuhan (WHO Situational Report, January 21, 2020). Italy the most effected state of Europe confirmed its first case on February 21 (Emanuel, 2020). These states took strict measures to prevent the spread of this contiguous virus but they had lost a huge number of their citizens and faced huge economic losses. In few months of this epidemic 40 million American citizen had lost their jobs (Fukuyama, 2020). Besides economic there were social and psychological effects of Covid-19 too.

### **Theories about Covid-19**

As the no of Covid-19 affected surge, many theory persisted about the spread of this deadly virus. Initially it was believed that this virus spread only by getting in contact with animals but later on it was proved that the virus spread from human to human contact. Another theory was that as the temperature rises or moves towards the summer this virus would automatically disappeared. This theory was repeated by President Trump many times in his speeches and statements and even he mentioned it when he called President Xi. He said as temperatures would rise the virus would die because virus could not survive at high temperatures that was also endorsed by President Xi. But as the summer approached and temperature raises this theory died

rather than virus. Trump also emphasized on the use of hydroxychloroquine an anti-malarial medicine useful for covid-19 but later on it was proved that the use of this medicine may cause heart problems. So doctors and scientists prescribed not to use this medicine for covid-19 treatment. Another theory was that virus spread by only those who have the symptoms of covid-19 like cough, flu, sneezing, body ache, fatigue, vomiting, nausea, temperature, throat infection, shortness or difficulty in breathing but later on this virus was also found or detected in many those people that had no such symptom but they were transmitters so hand shaking and human contact was restricted to avoid the spread (CDC, 2020).

There were also two more theories regarding the covid-19 that this virus was prepared by China in laboratory but unfortunately they were unable to control it and responsible for the spread all over the world. Chinese denied such news and theory. Second theory was that China believed that U.S had launched this virus as a biological warfare tactic to destroy the economy of China and this allegation was highly rejected by American authorities (Bob Woodward, 2020).

### **Chinese Response towards Covid-19**

After the detection of Covid-19 in December 2019, the CPC Central Committee and State Council launched a rapid emergency response at state level. Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism was developed for quick and timely response to tackle covid-19 and took strict measures to prevent the export of covid-19 to other provinces of China. President Xi had declared that the prevention and to control the outbreak was the top priority of his government at all levels. He personally directed and deployed the prevention strategies. Within the short span from January to May, President Xi called eighteen meetings regarding Covid-19. The prime purpose of these meetings was to directly get the suggestions and recommendations from the heads of healthcare administration and made plan and strategy accordingly for further improvement to control pandemic (The Lancet Editorial, 2020). Central Leadership Group for Epidemic Response was established under the supervision of Primer Li Keqiang. Li visited the Wuhan to check the preventive measures and coordinate with the relevant departments to stop further flow of pandemic. These visit boosted the morals of workers and helpful to enhance their efficiency to combat Covid-19 collectively. Vice Premier Sun Chunlan also worked in Wuhan for prevention and control of covid-19. The top hierarchy of China not only developed prevention strategies but also personally participated to control and prevents the covid-19 flow to other areas. The top priority was to control the pandemic at early stage without maximum loss (WHO Report, 2020).

The Chinese authorities closed the Hua Nan seafood market on January 1, 2020 because this was the epic entre of covid-19. Chinese government took very strict measures to control the spread, they installed Infrared thermometers at bus and railway stations, airports and even they installed street cameras to keep a check on individuals who were not wearing mask and not having good health condition and they were roaming at public places. Everything was put under lock-down, no one was allowed to came out from their residential apartments only those were allowed who

came out to take food. If someone went out for some other purpose than to take food their neighbours reported that to police and police came and take strict action against such people. Mobile app was also introduced to keep a check on the health condition and travel history of people (Cimpanu, 2020). In fact, China had adopted a national strategic approach to handle covid-19. Chinese people feel covid-19 a common threat to all. Although sensing the threat to their own provinces and municipality the Mayors and Governors generously sent Personnel Protective Equipment's (PPE) and other necessary related items to covid-19 to Wuhan and Hubei provinces (WHO Report, 2020).

As the number of cases soured, on January 24, China closed the cities of Wuhan and Hubei provinces and lock down almost 35 million people. No one was allowed to leave or enter in the cities of these provinces. All airports and public transports were restricted. The timing of this shutdown or ban was very significant because this was the time of Spring Festival at China and a heavy population was expected to move from one place to another, so the decision was taken to restrict the public gatherings to avoid the spread of Covid-19. But before this announcement 5 million people left Wuhan and became the cause of wide spread. Decision was also taken to construct two sophisticated hospitals in Wuhan city to facilitate the Covid-19 patients. Huoshenshan Hospital has the capacity of 1000 patients became functional on February 3 and Leishenshan Hospital has the capacity of 1500 patients completed on February 5. This was the quickest response of the government to deal the emergency patience of covid-19, only in ten days they have constructed two hospitals with all high-tech and sophisticated facilities to deal with almost 2500, covid-19 patients. Many other Quarantine and medical centers across the country was also established, separate centers were also established to treat the critical patients and old-ill people. Besides all this 40,000 healthcare workers were deployed to support the Wuhan medical condition. From 19 to 22 March no new case was found due to these preventive measures. As the condition improved on April 4 China open the Wuhan and lifted all travel ban and open the economic activities in the province (Al Takarli, 2020).

Chinese four ways strategy was very helpful to control the pandemic, "early detection, reporting, isolation and in time treatment". Patients were categories into three broad classes on the bases of their symptoms, critical or severe, mild and asymptomatic or with light symptom. Patients were treated according to their conditions at different facilities designated for them. The success of China lies in the coordinated and cooperative efforts of all from top to bottom everyone was vigilant to respond in optimistic manner. The collective efforts although bearing the economic and social loss but brought significant result to combat national disaster. The top most factors behind this collective effort were the vision and genuine efforts of President Xi and its teams. Xi's team had well communicated the vision of their leader and put their maximum efforts to materialize the efforts of their leader to save the lives of their citizens (Francis, 2020). People also had deep trust in their leader's sincerity and they had cooperated with their leader to combat novel coronavirus even bulk of volunteers

worked for Wuhan coming from all over China to save the lives of people there. The efforts of governors were also appreciable because rather than only focusing on their own provinces and municipalities, they sent their medical worker, equipment's, volunteers and Covid-19 related item to most effected provinces of Wuhan and Hubei. All these efforts brought positive results and the reported death toll did not cross the figure of 5000 and effected cases were less than 10,000 (Eddie, 2021).

Chinese way to control the pandemic even open new avenue for researcher whether the democratic ways were effective to control the pandemics or authoritative ways were more effective in this regard.

### **U.S Response towards Covid-19**

On January 7, 2020, American Centre for Disease Control (CDC) established 2019-nCoV Incident Management Structure and activated an Emergency Response System on January 21 (WHO Situational Report, 2020). The first case was detected in U.S on January 20, 2020 having travel history from Wuhan. Just after one and half month on February 29 health officials declared first death from Covid-19 in U.S. The National Security Advisor, O'Brien threatened Trump by saying that the biggest enemy of his Presidency was virus (Covid-19) no one else if President manage to control it in an effective way then there would be no one that can defeat him but if he failed to do so then no one can safe him from defeat in up-coming election. He declared Covid-19 as biggest national security threat to trump's presidency. O'Brien was supported by Matt Pottinger, Deputy National Security Adviser (Bob, 2020).

On January 29, 2020 White House announced to create Coronavirus Task Force on the recommendations of Health Officials. On the last week of January almost 100,000 people entered in U.S from China and posing a big threat for the spread of pandemic in U.S. But according to U.S law the citizens of U.S could not be restricted to enter in U.S from all over the world so then there was one option left that was if someone is coming from China they have to be quarantine for 14 days that was the time of incubation of virus. After passing of half century the citizens of American have faced such quarantine before this the nation had faced such situation in 1969 to avoid the spread of smallpox (Bob, 2020).

On January 29, Peter Navarro, Trump's trade adviser, wrote a memo to the National Security Council warning that when the coronavirus in China reached U.S. soil, it could risk the health or lives of millions and cost the economy trillions of dollars. But on the same day, Alex Azar, the health and human services secretary, told the president that the potential epidemic was under control as reported by 'The Wall Street Journal' (Michael, 2020).

On January 31, finally President approved the travel ban from China on the strong recommendations of health officials included Dr. Anthony Fauci, member of White House Task Force and Immunologist, Alex Azar, Health and Human Services Secretary, Redfield CDC head. These recommendations were also supported by O'Brien and Pottinger. Health official were concerned about the influx of people

coming from China and they for-seen the consequences they had to face later on and their medical capability. Although Trump admiration took too long to take this decision but still it was not too late. If ban decision would be taken earlier or strict measures would be taken before the detection of first case in American the consequences would not be such grave and American citizens had not suffer such badly. Even decision was taken after the recommendations of health officials but Trump use to take credit that his health officials were not in favour of travel ban from China, he solely took the decision to curtail the virus. After ban decision, the flight operation of three main airlines namely, Delta, United and American were suspended between China and America for next few months. President also gave approval of “temporarily suspending the entry into United States of foreign national who pose a risk of transmitting the 2019 novel coronavirus”. This decision was in the better interest of America and had altered the course of many expected deaths (Bob, 2020).

Later on, in March Trump had announced the travel restriction from European countries for almost 30 days. This decision was taken due to two main reasons. Firstly in one day 1000 cases were reported in U.S with 37 deaths. This was the highest number of cases up till that. As the deaths surpassed the toll of 2000 in U.S.A, on 27 March Trump signed pandemic response bill of 2 trillion dollars. Second reason was the deteriorating health sector of Italy due to pandemic. Italy had although having better health care system among the European counties but still covid-19 had severely affected it. After sensing the rapid spread of COvid-19 the classes at school and college were announced to be suspended initially and later on switch to online. In the same way National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) not only cancelled basketball tournament but all upcoming seasonal games. All theaters in the states were decided to close and President Trump also cancelled his election campaign rallies and imposed national emergency on March 13. This was the sixth emergency announced by Trump during his tenure (Bob, 2020).

All these measures were taken to control the further spread of Covid-19 because U.S suffered worst by this pandemic. Their health sector was paralyzed by this global virus. During pandemic they come to know that they were not ready to coup up with any sort of pandemic. They did not have sufficient hospitals, beds and equipment’s like mechanical ventilators, N95 masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) to handle any emergency at national level. Even during pandemic the mandatory component was face mask and American health sector had not sufficient stock of face mask. Although, face mask was not only the basic requirement of medical staff but was also mandatory for general public during pandemic. The lack of basic medical equipment’s means the high risk of exposure to pandemic. First complain was received from Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, for shortage of necessary medical equipment. Andrew had registered complaint about the shortage of ventilators that is needed for critical patients on emergency grounds. Then this complain of shortage of ventilators was also received from other parts of state. The ‘Federal Emergency Management Agency’ demanded 130,000 more ventilators in the first week of April. The demand of ventilators increased rapidly from previous

months as the number of critical patients surge. In the second week of April the highest death toll was recorded from America as more than 20,000 and this number even surpass the mortality rate from Italy the most affected state of the world (Bob, 2020).

Although previous governments of U.S had worked and established such organizations that would respond in case of epidemic and pandemic but during covid-19 no effectiveness of such organizations come forwards due to certain reasons. The 'National Pharmaceutical Stockpile' that was established at Clinton's times. This Stockpile did not have abundant resources and funds to tackle the emergency at national level. The reason was after its establishment no consequent government had paid attention towards its functioning and betterment. So lack of dedication and devotion for the effective functioning of this stockpile, it was unable to respond any large scale emergency or disaster. Another foundation was setup in 2015 and properly launched in 2017 to work on Epidemics and its preparedness. This foundation was 'The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). The resources of CEPI mainly came from public, private, philanthropic, and civil society organizations. Initially the 'Welcome Trust' of Bill Gates had denoted almost \$ 460 million for this foundation and it also received donations from various states like Germany, Japan, and Norway. The prime purpose to launch this foundation was to develop vaccines for epidemics. CEPI has been engaged in the development of vaccine for virus 'SARS-CoV-2'. This 'SARS-CoV-2' is main cause of Covid-19 and according to scientists it would not be possible to defeat this virus without proper vaccination (CEPI, 2017).

### **U.S-China: Collaboration and Challenges to Tackle Covid-19**

U.S-China moves towards normalization in their relations after 1972. They have seen new trends of competition and economic rivalry in 21<sup>st</sup> century, although both states have often declared one another as top partner in trade. The covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected their relations. Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the rivalry between the super power and emerging super power. U.S. accused China for the outbreak and spread of Covid-19. U.S authorities blamed that Covid-19 was initially released from the laboratory in Wuhan or the spread of this pandemic was the outcome of bioweapons produced by China. U.S authorities' further moved on by saying Chinese government failed to properly manage this global pandemic domestically and was responsible for the spread all over the world. These allegations were rejected by China. The Chinese government in its counter attack raised allegation against American authorities for launching intentionally covid-19 in China by sending its soldiers to China in participating in summer sports 2019 (Jacques, 2021). China had also raised serious concerns over the calling of Covid-19 as 'Chinese Virus' by Trump as President Trump use to say Covid-19 as China Virus in his statements and speeches. American authorities raised reservation over the statement of Chinese Foreign Ministry to blame American soldier to bring Covid-19 in China (Bob, 2020).

American authorities had reservations that China had deliberately not disclosed the Covid-19 at its early stages to world. They also had not shared information regarding the covid-19 at global level. They had disclosed first case on

December 31, 2019. Chinese government had overruled the warning given by Li Wenliang, ophthalmologist who gave an alert to public of eruption of pandemic. The first report on covid-19 was issued by the 'Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy' on December 31, 2019. The report indicated the detail description of the virus and declared it as novel coronavirus. After this report the WHO started to develop a test that would be helpful to diagnose this virus (Michael, 2020).

Initially the Director of American CDC, Redfield had contacted his counterpart in China, Dr. George Gao for the collaboration to figure out the solution of this virus by sending him email. The purpose of offering collaboration was to work closely with the experts in China to find out the real cause of spread of infection after visiting the epicenter of pandemic. But the response of his counterpart was not so encouraging. Then Redfield officially requested to Chinese authorities to allow their team of expert to visit the epicenter of Covid-19 as Geo told him that he was unable to invite them so they have to extend request for visit. Even then the response was not affirmative. After three week the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Azar tried to contact his counterpart Mr. Ma Xiaowei for the same purpose. But Ma in response appreciated the cooperation offered by Health Secretary. He said we have the team of experts and we could manage and control it by our own. After the calls and assistance offers to China by Director CDC and Secretary Health the President took the matter in his hands. On February 6, Trump called the President Xi of China for assistance on Covid-19. Trump told Xi that he had a team of experts that had ability to fix the virus as they had played significant role to control African Ebola crisis. He said these experts would also be helpful for China to tackle Covid-19 but they need permission from Chinese authorities to get enter in China and visit the primary source of outbreak. But the response of Xi was quite cool. He said U.S health official can join the WHO delegation for assistance and Xi also gave the expression that situation in his state was under control. Xi expressed that Chinese experts were not only trying to save the citizens of China from this pandemic but also trying their best to save the people across the world (Bob, 2020).

Finally in the second week of February, the WHO delegation of scientists got permission to enter in China for investigation. American Director CDC had wished to send his team for investigation but unfortunately one American CDC member got permission to be part of this delegation other than Dr. Clifford Lane, Deputy Director at 'National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease'. The visit was schedule for nine days between 16-24 February under the headship of Dr. Bruce Aylward of W.H.O and Dr. Wannian Liang of China. This delegation was also joined by the experts from Germany, Russia, Singapore, Korea, Japan, and Nigeria. The delegation had submitted their final report on 28 February after visiting different places in China including Wuhan, meeting with local experts and visiting hospital designated for Covid-19 patient (Bob, 2020). Dr. Lane had not been to China before. On his return he reported that there was disease more than it was anticipated and it was spreading rapidly. He also reported that Chinese government was putting its maximum resources and adopting number of effective strategies to control it. Lane was



impressed by the sophisticated technology that the hospitals of Beijing were possessing but he did not get permission to visit the epic center of Covid-19. His comments and observation was supported by the team of W.H.O in their report. WHO report said about China “perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history.” The report of W.H.O also revealed the measures to minimize the spread of covid-19 that were “surveillance, public engagement, cancellation of mass gatherings, traffic controls, rapid diagnosis, immediate case isolation, rigorous tracking and quarantine of close contacts.” The members of delegation unanimously gave the opinion that they were much satisfied with the strategy and plans adopted by Chinese government to save their people from covid-19. The direction and plan of Chinese government was in right direction. They also acknowledged the vision of President Xi and his keen interest to tackle this pandemic as President Xi had already declared that to tackle and control pandemic was the top priority of his government (WHO Report, 2020).

On March 26, after the arrival of W.H.O team from China, Trump called the President Xi second time. The agenda of talk was again pandemic and to discuss the prevailing situation from it. He asked from Xi that would be effective to control this pandemic, he replied ‘lockdowns, quarantine and social distancing’. Xi expressed his reservation about calling the covid-19 as China virus while Trump showed his concerns over the statement issued by the Chinese foreign Ministry that America had launched this virus in China. Although President Trump called two times to Xi during the early days of this pandemic but he and his team had not trust what Xi was saying about the control situation in China. Trump believed that Xi had miss-guided him and hide the information regarding pandemic. Like Trump did not believed in Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft who had predicted about the pandemic almost three years before its arrival in December 2016 but Trump did not pay attention towards the prediction. Bill Gates also suggested that vaccine would only be helpful to prevent the pandemic and Trump replied to him that he was thinking to establish a commission to find the side effects of vaccines (Bob, 2020).

As an out of Trump labeling covid-19 as China virus China restricted the export of ‘protective medical equipment’ to America that also include face mask. Face mask that was most effective tool to curtail the covid-19 and China produced 80% of world mask and this time America was already facing the shortage of face mask for its medical workers. Later on Trump announced that he was going to stop the funding for W.H.O. because it had provided the funds to China during this crisis. Bill Gates highly criticized this announcement of Trump and said this was the time when world needed W.H.O most and halting the funds would prove to be dangerous (James, 2021).

China had produced Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccine for covid-19. Sinopharm produced by Beijing Institute of Biological Products, was approved by the Technical Advisory Group of WHO for its “safety, efficacy and quality”. This was the first vaccine approved by WHO that was not produced by any Western state. Before its approval it was widely used in Pakistan, UAE and Hungary besides China. Sinovac was also under the consideration of WHO. Before Sinopharm, WHO had only approved the western vaccines like Pfizer, AstraZeneca Moderna and Johnson and

Johnson (BBC, 2021). The western countries criticized even China for exporting its vaccine to all over the world by calling it "Vaccine Diplomacy". According to these states China was expanding its influence all over the world by exporting Covid-19 vaccine. Chinese totally dislike the term "Vaccine Diplomacy" used by western media for them and they had showed strong reservation against this because in World Health Assembly President Xi called collaboration and cooperation for the developing a vaccine to counter the covid-19. China was also getting appreciation and praise from developing countries for providing vaccine that was cost effective.

### **Conclusion**

Covid-19 unfortunately now expected to enter in its fourth wave. World had not suffered from any pandemic in this way as affected by covid-19. It had exposed the readiness and preparedness of world to face any pandemic. This was not the first and last pandemic of the world but it was an eye opener for the world that was rushing towards the sophisticated nuclear and biological warfare. Their credibility was challenged by a tiny virus. The advancement in the medical field that was claimed by American and its allies were exposed and collapsed in front of world.

China the emerging Super-power and U.S the sole super-power of the world, both states suffered badly due to covid-19 but the later one was more affected than the earlier one. Both states blamed each other for the origin of this global pandemic to counter their influence at global level. The analysis showed that the Chinese government had taken strict and timely measures to tackle this pandemic as compared to American government. The Chinese officials and messes were on the same page to carried out the vision of Xi to eliminate the covid-19 while this unity was absent in American case.

China and America had not collaborated with each other in an effective way to tackle this pandemic both have their own political motivates at global level to handle this pandemic. China had not extended cooperation to America for mutual working on this pandemic even they had shared the sample of covid-19 effected patients they also did not allowed American scientist to visit Wuhan. The blame game between the two states halted the way of cooperation. If both leaders rather than blaming each other more focused on collaboration and engaged world renowned scientist to tackle this pandemic than the situation would be changed.

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