

Covid-19 Is the Perfect Catalyst for Trump's War Against China

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The phrase 'Yellow Peril' – pertaining to the alleged threat of the Far East – was coined by Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany in the 1880s after he had a dream featuring a Buddha riding a dragon threatening to invade Europe. It's unclear whether Donald Trump has experienced a similar premonition during his lifetime but one thing is certain: he leads an administration which has been intent on escalating tensions with China, even prior to the outbreak of coronavirus.

It was just a matter of time before the blame game would begin. Donald Trump has long viewed China as an economic adversary. On the presidential campaign trail in 2016 he was accusing China of 'raping' the US and that the nation was responsible for the 'the greatest theft in the history of the world'. The rhetoric has not changed much since then. Trump vigorously pursued his trade war with China in 2018 when he literally 'ordered' US companies to cease trading with the east asian nation. The President has attempted to influence policy beyond its borders too; pressurizing the UK not to embark on a deal with Huawei, the Chinese mobile phone network provider, to set up 5G across Britain. The US has never disguised its hatred of the firm, launching its own special vendetta against it, including the organisation of the arrest of the Huawei founder's daughter and Chief Financial Officer in Canada in 2018.

The coronavirus pandemic has therefore provided the perfect catalyst to a war which began much earlier against China (see John Pilger's [film](#) The Coming War with China). The main difference before was that the US was pretty much on its own. The UK for its part had been courting China for years, trying to be its 'best friend in the West' so as to encourage inward investment. Not any more, the Tory hawks say now. According to Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab there will be 'no more business as usual with China'. He has promised a 'deep dive review' as to how coronavirus was able to spread from China. And he's not alone. Last week a new Conservative China Research Group was founded with the goal of reassessing Britain's future relationship with the country. There's to be a completely new approach. A senior Conservative MP [told](#) the FT:

"The pressure from our MPs and the public to punish China is huge. They are going to be blamed for the worst effects of this pandemic and we will have to shift our foreign policy to be more aligned to [US president Donald] Trump's'.

And therein lies the rub. For Trump's posse aren't holding back when it comes to threats against China. US **Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** has already warned he will 'make China pay' for the Covid-19.

Trump lays full responsibility at Beijing's door for the outbreak, despite how effectively the nation of 1.4 billion people has managed the crisis. (Through a range of measures, including strict quarantine and thorough testing it has drastically reduced the number of cases across the country, with the city of Wuhan, the official source of the virus, back open for business.) The US needs a scapegoat now; more to the point Donald Trump needs a distraction if he is to have any chance of winning the next election.

But for the UK to go along with any such aggressive policy against China is ludicrous at a time like this when the world ought to be pulling together. The British security services announced last week they would begin their 'investigation' into precisely where the coronavirus originated, focusing on the laboratory in Wuhan, which, it has been speculated, the virus could have escaped from before appearing at the fish market (the location that was first publicised as being the source of the outbreak).

However the reality is we have no evidence that the virus has any connection with the Wuhan laboratory. Further still, there is scientific evidence to indicate that the disease did not originate in Wuhan at all, but in southern China.

Cambridge scientists have carried out [research](#) suggesting that coronavirus may be months older than originally thought and did not come from the fish market. Peter Forster, a geneticist at the University of Cambridge said that the virus may have mutated into its final 'human-efficient' form months ago, but stayed inside a bat or other animal or even human for several months without infecting other individuals.' Even more interestingly, Forster said that if pressed, he 'would say the original spread started more likely in southern China than in Wuhan.' The idea that Wuhan is not the original source is backed up by Chinese reports which now state the [first](#) case of coronavirus can be traced back to Hubei province, not Wuhan, in December 2019.

'I listen to the scientists' UK **Prime Minister Boris Johnson** keeps saying. Well, surely this is the one time when our conclusions must be led by the scientific evidence. Or will we dance to the tune of President Trump, whose understanding of science begins and ends with the possibility of injecting people with [disinfectant](#) to treat Covid-19? We cannot allow this pandemic to be used as an excuse for waging a war, whether hot or cold, against China. Such thinking belongs, and should stay in the 19th century. Enough people have suffered as a consequence of this pandemic already. China as a nation, wants to be successful, wants to have a thriving economy and is extremely proud. If provoked, despite not having a history of invading other countries, one can be sure it will defend itself to the hilt.

'Handle with care' says the label on the package I just ordered from China. That says it all really, doesn't it?...

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