

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By a guest author

By Lee Siu Hin 李小軒

26.07.2020

‘U.S. Chernobyl’: Why the U.S. failed and China won against COVID-19

This slightly edited talk was given at the July 16 Workers World Party webinar, “Why We Defend China.” The webinar can be viewed at tinyurl.com/yxbbpwwy/.



Lee Siu Hin

What's going on?

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

In January 2020, several cases of viral pneumonia of unknown origin were detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan. No one knew exactly what the virus was, hence the vague identifier of “coronavirus” so popularly known today.

Thousands of miles away in the U.S., when the virus was believed not to have reached its soil yet, right-wing U.S. elites, media and politicians began using cruel words and ridicule against China, calling the virus “China’s Chernobyl.” U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton, famous for his anti-China rhetoric, along with the right-wing media and the “liberal” Washington Post, began spreading the “Wuhan military-lab-made virus” conspiracy theory.

On the ground in China

I was in China at the time. As a Chinese American community activist, I had been working and traveling between China and the U.S. for the Bi-National Activist Solidarity Network project and working in the medical field. Due to the increased U.S. cold-war hostilities against China, we organized a 21-people U.K./U.S. activist delegation to China from December 2019 to January 2020.

We traveled from Beijing along the Silk Road to Urumqi, China, the capital of Xingjian province. Our main purpose was a fact-finding tour to fight U.S.-Western propaganda against China regarding [the Muslim Uyghur minority] in Xingjian. We met many people and talked to Muslims and Uyghurs about the true situation. (tinyurl.com/y46k2jtx/)

It was right after the New Year, on the tour bus to Dunhuang, China, when we heard the breaking story of the U.S. assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani and the small but developing news about a mysterious virus that had broken out in Wuhan. By the time we returned to Beijing at the end of the tour on Jan. 7, the situation in Wuhan seemed to be getting serious, with more and more local news coverage and public health warnings.

I stayed in China until Jan. 20 and flew back to the U.S., three days before the Chinese government ordered Wuhan’s lockdown and tens of thousands of medical workers were sent to the city. It became the biggest medical emergency mission in human history.

Based on my medical experience, I knew it could develop into a health crisis, but no one could have expected a pandemic to emerge and become a major global crisis that would

deeply affect each and every country. This was a turning point in history that occurred over the course of just a few weeks.

It seemed with every passing day less was known about the pandemic, yet China beat the odds by completely containing the virus within three months. When the Wuhan lockdown officially ended on April 8, it marked the official end of the COVID-19 crisis in China.

But no one could predict that the pandemic would spread rapidly to Europe or that the U.S. would become the COVID-19 epicenter in the world, with nearly a quarter of all global cases and deaths.

Again, we need to ask: What's going on?

U.S. cold war on China

The success of China's struggle against the virus and the U.S. failure demonstrates the success of China's socialist system and the failure and dysfunction of the U.S. capitalist system.

It also shows that the arrogance of the U.S., from left to right, due to the ceaseless anti-communist cold war against China, has meant that the U.S. could not put aside differences and learn from China's successful experience. This arrogance sent the U.S. into an abyss of corona disaster, with, as of this day, over 140,000 cases of COVID-19 deaths, millions of cases and trillions worth of economic losses, with no end in sight.

The first reported case in Wuhan came at the height of China-U.S. tensions. There was a U.S.-instigated trade war and a U.S.-Western-backed "color revolution" in Hong Kong, China. The U.S. was routinely sending its naval carriers and war planes to the South China Sea. The U.S. mobilized its entire state machine against Huawei, China's burgeoning telecom company. The U.S. Congress passed the so-called "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019" on Dec. 3, 2019, in a blatant example of interference in China's Xinjiang region.

Most of these China-bashing U.S. campaigns have failed. The U.S. was forced to sign the trade accord with China to ease the trade war. Huawei didn't fall. Hong Kong police are now under new leadership that has cracked down and arrested thousands of neo-Nazi

Hong Kong pro-independent rioters in mid-December 2019. Additionally, no uprising occurred in Xingjian after U.S. political pressure. The D.C. elite certainly felt humiliated and defeated by China. Now they are furious.

Just like a money-losing gambler in desperate need to make a comeback, the coronavirus was the perfect bet for turning the tables. Sinisterly calling it “China’s Chernobyl,” U.S. anti-communist, warmonger imperialists painted a sick fantasy that mirrored the Soviet Union’s Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986.

They made accusations that China covered up the problem. They hoped that China would have poor medical support, causing massive deaths — which would then lead to the country’s economic collapse, causing condemnation and isolation from the international community. This in turn would lead to mass anger and uprising and finally to the collapse and overthrow of Communist China.

Impact on U.S. workers

Ironically, China successively mobilized the masses to beat the virus quickly and effectively, while the U.S. under the Trump regime was led to total disaster. The U.S. not only became the hardest hit country with the highest rate of infected people and the highest casualties, but the country has spiraled into economic collapse with massive unemployment and has even been unable to provide enough personal protective equipment for medical workers.

While the rich feast, in the foodpacking, meat and farm industries, workers and “guest workers” from South of the U.S. border are suffering. The greedy pursuit of profit by capitalist bosses cares nothing about the workers who produce our food. In Evansville, Tenn., every one of the 200 farmworkers has tested positive for the virus. Southern New Jersey has seen hundreds of migrant farmworkers become infected with the virus. According to WHYY radio in Philadelphia, these workers are not covered by medical insurance and, simply put, no one cares about them. In fact, no one knows exactly how many have been infected or died from the virus.

It's the same situation at meat and poultry processing facilities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between April and May, 16,233 workers were infected in 239 facilities across the U.S., with 86 deaths.

No doubt, COVID-19 has been a “Chernobyl disaster” — for the U.S.!

Lee Siu Hin, a Chinese American long-time, low-paid immigrant worker activist, now working on community health, is the national coordinator of National Immigrant Solidarity Network (ImmigrantSolidarity.org). Lee's “Capitalism on a Ventilator: Impact of COVID-19 in China vs. U.S.” will be co-published with the International Action Center in August 2020. More information

at ActionLA.org, activistweb@gmail.com and [twitter@siuhin](https://twitter.com/siuhin).

Workers World 24.07.2020