

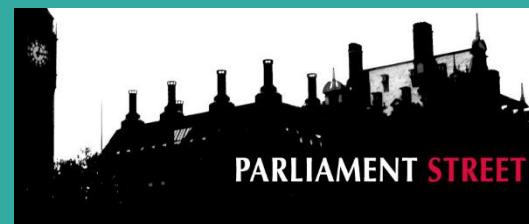


Post-Pandemic Britain must re-evaluate its Relationship with China

APRIL 2020

BRIEFING NOTE

Authored by: Jack Rydeheard



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A PARLIAMENT STREET BRIEFING NOTE

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JACK RYDEHEARD

PARLIAMENT STREET

partnership in policy

As the Coronavirus continues to spread within and to countries around the world, Beijing must now not just be concerned with its reputation, but its entire set of relationships with other nations. When the crisis is over, there will likely be a reckoning with the Communist superpower, the likes of which has never been seen before.

This will be attributed to the world's most populous state's egregious mismanagement of the crisis from start to finish, but what exactly is the extent of their neglect?

It is widely accepted that back in late December, the virus emerged from a carrier-animal in the Huanan open-air market in Wuhan. Due to its historic notoriety in carrying Coronavirus diseases such as SARS, it is most likely that a bat is 'animal zero'.

However, recent revelations from a whistleblower have shown that the first case of the virus could well have been recorded internally within China on 1st December, thirty days before the authorities alerted the WHO.

The arrest and disappearance of Dr Li Wenliang following his inspiring courage to share news of a new virus amongst his fellow medical professionals on WeChat, the Chinese version of WhatsApp, should tell us all we need to know. The forcing of the hand of the Chinese government in recent weeks to recognise his work and acknowledge him as a hero should tell us even more. This effectively means that the Chinese Government withheld vital nascent information for an entire month.

More recently in mid-March, [another prominent medical professional by the name of Ai Fen, the head of Emergency at Wuhan Central Hospital, vanished](#) after publicising a diagnosis on Weibo, China's version of Facebook, with eight of her colleagues also being reprimanded by authorities.

A cover-up becomes even more apparent when another whistleblower confirmed that a laboratory in Wuhan was ordered to stop tests, destroy its entire stock of samples and suppress the news in a [stark set of revelations reported in the National Review](#). Further, when Coronavirus disease-type expert Shi Zhengli successfully managed to map out the gene sequence of the then-new Covid-19 (a vital step in identifying the specific properties and make-up of the virus) by 2nd January, the expert who is endearingly nicknamed 'bat-woman' was [muzzled by her own state-controlled agency](#).

China then moved to further tighten its grip on Coronavirus research [as recently as 13th April](#).

This is indicative not just of a panicked response, but a systematic expurgating of legitimate medical fact-based conclusion.

It is not just their initial response which is attracting criticism. Ever since notifying the World Health Organisation, China has been suspected of under-reporting details of deaths and new infections,

recording a fraction of the number of deaths than Italy, Spain, France and less than a third of those recorded in the UK.

As China officially records less than 3,500 deaths nationwide, in a country of over 1.4 billion people, it does not help contain such suspicion when a single funeral home in Wuhan [orders 5,000 cremation urns in a single transaction.](#)

Treated with utter contempt by the Chinese government, how must we react?

We must not respond in kind, however sensible measures should be taken as a result of the previously unthinkable occurrences which have happened over the past few months. [As China now sets out to portray itself as the world's benefactor,](#) exporting medical equipment and expertise worldwide, we must remember just how we came to find ourselves in this situation.

We have a big dependency on China.

From telecoms to hand towels, the scale of our dependency on the far-Eastern state is startling. We must start to change that.

First, we must extricate our 5G network from the clutches of Huawei. The state-controlled telecoms giant currently stands to play a big part in the formation of our national mainframe, and significant compromisation concerns have been raised by our partners in the 'Five Eyes' security cooperation alliance about this.

Second, we must ensure that Chinese state contractors do not gain desired access to our rail infrastructure. The Department for Transport has [admitted to entering discussions](#) with the China Railway Construction Corporation following their assertion that they could build HS2 in far less time and at a far lesser cost. We cannot reward the Chinese state with access to our national rail infrastructure after an unprecedented cover-up of this scale.

Third, we must pressure China to close its open-air markets. Although regulated in China, illegal activity is rife and cross-contamination is easily facilitated, risking outbreaks of disease.

Fourth, we must push for [the world's largest creditor](#) to waive and cancel some or all of the world's debt reparations. China's lending is in the region of 5% of the entire world economy's GDP, and the effect of their mismanagement must be accounted for. This pandemic has cost the world trillions of pounds, and it cannot be right that China does not pay for some of the impact caused on other countries by its neglect. It is within Britain's power to seize Chinese state assets and halt debt repayments and we should do this without hesitation.

Fifth, we must provide wide-ranging and facilitational help to our companies who would like to move operations out of China. This would help to protect our interests abroad and kill our manufacturing reliance on China and potentially provide a massive

boost to our economy. Japan has already earmarked \$2.2 billion for this very purpose, and we should absolutely do the same.

Such is the dependency on Chinese manufacturing, that Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan has recently and infamously questioned why his country can make nuclear bombs but not ventilators.

Finally, and perhaps ironically most unattainably, China must be forced to apologise for its willful transgression of international law and protocol. It must recognise its mistakes and reassure us that this will never happen again.

Recent polls indicate that there is a clear appetite for change in our attitude towards China in Britain, and we must re-evaluate our relationship with China not just for our own self-gratification, but for our economic security as well.

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