THE CHINA VIRUS CAME FROM THE CESSPOOL OF CHICOM TYRANNY

Want to know why the U.S. economy is in free fall?

Why restaurants and bars are closing, putting millions out of work, and why the airline industry is facing possible bankruptcy? Why schools across the nation are shutting down, leaving students to fall behind and parents without safe places to send their children everyday?

Why the stock market is plummeting, wiping out the retirement and college savings of millions of Americans? Why the elderly are isolated in nursing homes and tens of millions who don't have the option of teleworking have no idea how they will pay their bills?

Answer: Because China is a brutal totalitarian dictatorship.

We are in the midst of a pandemic lockdown today because the Chinese Communist regime cared more about suppressing information than suppressing a virus. Doctors in Wuhan knew in early December that the coronavirus was capable of human-to-human transmission because medical workers were getting sick.

But as late as Jan. 15, the head of China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention declared on state television that "the risk of human-to-human transmission is low."

On Jan. 18, weeks after President Xi Jinping had taken charge of the response, authorities allowed a Lunar New Year banquet to go forward in Wuhan where tens of thousands of families shared food — and then let millions travel out of Wuhan, allowing the disease to spread across the world.

It was not until Jan. 23 that the Chinese government enacted a quarantine in Wuhan.

If the regime had taken action as soon as human-to-human transmission was detected, it might have contained the virus and prevented a global pandemic. Instead, Chinese officials punished doctors for trying to warn the public and suppressed information that might have saved lives.

According to the Times of London, Chinese doctors who had identified the pathogen in early December received a gag order from China's National Health Commission with instructions to stop tests, destroy samples and suppress the news.

This is what totalitarian regimes do.

First, they lie to themselves, and then, they lie to the world. The system creates such fear that people are terrified to report bad news up the chain, causing "authoritarian blindness."

Then, when those at the top finally discover the truth, they try to cover it up — because leaders who abuse their people are less concerned with saving lives than making sure the world does not discover the deadly inefficiency of their system.

The ongoing pandemic should serve as a reminder of the lesson that President George W. Bush tried to teach us after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks: What happens thousands of miles away in a foreign land can affect us here at home.

Both viruses and virulent ideologies fester in the fever swamps of totalitarianism and then emerge to kill us in our cities and our streets. Two decades ago, it was a terrorist attack; today, it is a once-in-a-generation pathogen. But in both cases, the lack of freedom in a distant land created conditions that allowed an unprecedented threat to grow, bringing death and destruction to our country.

What Bush called the "freedom agenda" is out of vogue today. But we can now see that President Trump's caring about freedom is putting America first, because how China treats its people affects the health and security of the American people.

The same totalitarian system that lied about putting 1 million Uighurs in concentration camps lied about the outbreak of this virus, creating a global pandemic. If China were an open and transparent society, with an accountable government, Americans might not be on lockdown today.

What can we do about it?

We obviously can't turn China into a democracy. But we can hold China accountable for its behavior and put a price on its lies and oppression.

We can reaffirm that the advance of freedom, transparency and rule of law are central objectives of U.S. foreign policy, because the lives and safety of our citizens depend on it.

And we can lay the blame for this crisis where it belongs: at the feet of the Chinese Communist Party. Once the crisis has passed, President Trump should calculate the damage and demand that Beijing pay for the death and destruction it unleashed on the United States and the world.

Some have suggested that calling this pathogen the “Wuhan virus” — or as President Trump recently called it, the “China virus” — is racist. That is absurd.

MERS is called the “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome” because that is where it originated. Moreover, the Chinese regime continues to lie, spreading a conspiracy theory that the source of the virus is really the U.S. Army.

It is important this virus be forever linked to the brutal regime that facilitated its spread. The China Virus grew in the cesspool of Chinese Communist tyranny. It’s time to drain that swamp.

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