

U.S., CHINA SPAR OVER THE ORIGINS OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Hua Chunying

The U.S. and China on Monday sparred over the origins of the coronavirus pandemic, the latest in a growing list of tensions that have left relations strained as President Donald Trump leaves office.

In recent weeks, Washington and Beijing have clashed over trade issues, the sanctioning of Chinese companies, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In a reflection of the state of relations, China's official Xinhua news agency issued a commentary, headlined "Good riddance, Trump administration and its final madness", hitting out over the sanctioning of six Chinese officials related to Hong Kong.

The latest spat followed the U.S. State Department on Friday releasing a "fact-sheet" linking the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) to the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, which brought another sharp response from Beijing.

The fact-sheet said while the U.S. "does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus — known as SARS-CoV-2 — was transmitted initially to humans", it had "not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China."

"The CCP's [Chinese Communist Party's] deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world," it said, adding that it was making public "previously undisclosed information", saying "the U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses." The fact-sheet also noted WIV researchers had "conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar)".

China's Foreign Ministry reacted sharply to the claim, with spokesperson Hua Chunying on Monday calling Mr. Pompeo "Mr. Liar" and accusing the U.S. of deflecting blame away from the Trump administration's response to the pandemic.

'Final madness'

"The statement and the list are full of conspiracies and lies, which are consistent with certain U.S. officials who have dealt with the pandemic in a passive way and constantly shifted the blame to others," Ms. Hua said, adding it "showed that some U.S. politicians ignored public safety and lives, go against science and are obsessed with making propaganda about conspiracies and spreading 'the political virus'," the Party-run *Global Times* quoted her as saying.

"This is also the final madness staged by Pompeo, this Mr. Liar," Ms. Hua said.

A team of scientists from the WHO arrived in Wuhan last week to research the origins of the outbreak. The agency said on Friday the world may never find “patient zero” as it continues its study into tracing the origins in China.

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Start your 14 days free trial. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper, crossword and print.

You can support quality journalism by turning off ad blocker or purchase a subscription for unlimited access to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com