

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

MASTER THESIS

**FAILED TO COOPERATE: THE US-CHINA RIVALRY
IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. WAHABUDDIN RAEES**

ISTANBUL, 2022

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**FAILED TO COOPERATE: THE US-CHINA RIVALRY
IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

by

HEBA TURKMANI

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Political Science and International Relations**

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ISTANBUL, 2022

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science and International Relations.

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This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

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ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

BAŞARISIZ İŞBİRLİĞİ: COVID-19 PANDEMİSİ DÖNEMİNDE ABD-ÇİN
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Bu araştırmanın amacı, Bu araştırmanın amacı, bozulan Çin-Amerikan ilişkilerinin genel olarak Dünya Sağlık Örgütü ve özeld Küresel Covid-19 pandemisi üzerindeki etkileri ile birlikte çatışmanın nedenlerini, tırmanışını ve yönetimini araştırmak, analiz etmek ve cevaplar sunmaktır. Cevapları üretmek için kullanılan yöntem nitel yöntem olup, yayınlanmış kitaplar, özel dergi ve gazete makaleleri, hükümet verileri, yetkili bir üst düzey resmi ifadesi ve bir demeç şeklinde güvenilir, özgün kaynaklardan maksimum düzeyde yararlanır. Tez, konulara doğrudan dâhil olanların alıntıları da dahil olmak üzere birincil ve ikincil veri toplamayı kullanır. Trump Yönetiminin DSÖ'nün performansından, şeffaflığın olmamasından ve giderek Amerika'nın düşmanı haline gelen Çin'e taraflı davranmasından rahatsız olduğu sonucuna varıldı. Ayrıca, etkilenenlerden biri de ABD Hükümetinin imajıdır, bununla birlikte bir uzman fon kesintisinin gelecekte ABD'ye uluslararası kuruluşlar üzerinde daha fazla nüfuz kazandırabileceğini öne sürmüştür. Bunun anlamı, DSÖ'nün fonunun kesilmesinin Çin dışında herkes için olumsuz sonuçlar doğurmasıdır. ABD'nin, sorumsuz ve zalim olarak eleştirildikten sonra Biden'ın yönetiminde DSÖ'ye yeniden katılmasının nedeni budur. ABD-Çin ilişkilerinde stratejik, ekonomik ve siyasi tüm açılardan, geçmişte ve yakın zamanda yaşanan tırmanışa Çin'in agresif haksız ticaret, askeri yığınak ve fikri mülkiyet hırsızlığı uygulamalarının neden olduğu bulunmuştur. Ancak kesin olan tek bir şey var, o da ABD, Çin'i savuşturma gayretiyle diğer büyük güçlerle ortaklık

kurarken her iki taraf da gerginliđi tırmandırdı. Bu eğilim, gümrük tarifeleri her iki ulus tarafından uygulanmaya devam ettiđi sürece öngörülebilir gelecekte bir deđişiklik olmayacağı anlamına gelir. Dolayısıyla, gizli veya açık gerginliklerle birlikte mevcut durumda bir deđişiklik yok gibi görünmektedir. Çatışmanın yönetimine gelince, kelimenin gerçek anlamıyla, yani diplomasi ve sosyal beceri çabalar açısından, çok az çaba sarf edildi ve doğal olarak bahsetmeye deđer hiçbir iyi sonuç elde edilmedi. Ancak bu tez, çatışma çözümü ve yönetim stratejilerini daha geniş bir perspektiften incelemektedir. Kötü çatışma yönetimi açısından sonuç, ABD güdümündeki ilgili ülkelerin, çatışmayı kimsenin çıkarına olmayacak çirkin bir çatışmaya dönüşmesini önlemek için daha agresif kontrol yöntemlerini seçmesi olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD-Çin ilişkileri, Covid-19, Çatışma, DSÖ, Rekabet, Süper güç

ABSTRACT

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It is both apt and relevant to include content on the theory of Realism in global international relations – an approach of political science, statesmanship and diplomacy that has influenced war and peace over the centuries and continues to do so today. In fact, the current Chinese-US conflict may be characterised by Realism more than any other school of thought.

One cannot help but wonder why the US and Chinese government did not live up to the expectations of other nations and world citizens who would love to see them share their immense resources and collaborate on fighting the new, threatening Covid-19 disease, by sharing information and expertise, working on a vaccine-producing program, and planning together. That, unfortunately, did not transpire.

The purpose of this research is to explore, analyse, and provide answers on why the Chinese-American relations deteriorated in the World Health Organization, in general, and the Global Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, I analyse the reasons for the conflict, its escalation, and management. The methods used for producing the answers utilise the qualitative method, making maximum use of reliable, authentic resources in the form of published books,

specialised magazine and newspaper articles, government data, an authoritative high-level official testimony, and a speech. Content and thematic methods have been used, and the trustworthiness of the data thus established. The thesis uses primary and secondary data collection, including quotes of those directly involved in the issues.

Keywords: Competition, Conflict, Covid-19, Great Power, US-China relations, WHO



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

As the news broke out about the latest coronavirus pandemic, the likes of which the world had never seen since the Spanish Flu (1918), people from all walks of life as well as governments, looked to leading nations, such as the United States and China for leadership expecting them to cooperate, rather than disputing each other. However, the reality was dissatisfying, while people were falling victim to the novel, and deadly, virus. The US accused the Chinese government of hiding the truth about the origin of Covid-19 and the Chinese responded with their accusations, alleging the virus had originated in American territory. This occurred at a time when collaboration on vaccine production could have been valuable. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the reasons behind the lack of cooperation between the US and China during the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically with respect to World Health Organization's funding and global health services.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The main problem discussed was the lack of cooperation between the US and China as well as the causes behind conflict and its ramifications. Troubling, perilous, and costly, these dramatic tensions which threaten to worsen, inadvertently or mistakenly, and turn into an armed conflict, have many ramifications on the economies of the two nations, as well as those of most other nations. A global security system was put at risk during the conflict, and lives were endangered, Secondly, these frictions had, to a great extent, brought on the American administration's withdrawal and consequent defunding of the World Health Organization, thereby jeopardising global health programs; and the efforts to fight off Covid-19 itself. Yet, no conflict should be allowed to escalate and left untreated; thus, conflict management methods were used. The aims were to control, or at the very minimum, relieve emerging and ongoing

threats whose escalation causes and consequences were tackled here-the third problem discussed. The foregoing issues called for serious research and profound understanding of the issues at stake that would help guide this thesis which treated these three challenges in a well-thought-out and objective way.

Due to the troubling and threatening impact of Covid-19, cooperation was expected on a global scale. Thus, the lack of cooperation between the two leading economies as well as the nature of the current tensions and the ramifications of such action set off an alarming trend for humanity and set back recovery from such unexpected natural disasters.

1.2. Research Questions

The purpose of this paper was to discuss the reluctance of the Chinese and American governments to cooperate on the vital issue of Covid-19 at the crucial initial stage when it was spreading at transcendent speed. The reluctance illustrates the depth of their deteriorating relations that is due to egotistic and rivalry considerations, in addition to a longstanding tradition of lack of collaboration. Realism theory in international relations, a way of regarding the state and its practices to be of primary importance, while placing less importance on ethical aspects, seems to best express the relations between the US and China; in view of such practices as human rights abuses and unethical theft of industrial, intellectual, and trade secrets, which cross the line. Additionally, I discuss the causes and ramifications of the US-China rivalry, in general, and in more particular, on the World Health Organization and its efforts to combat the novel Covid-19 pandemic. In addressing these issues satisfactorily, the question of this thesis was:

Why did we not see the US and China cooperate during the Covid-19 pandemic, even though the virus is a global health issue and nations are expected to cooperate to solve it, especially powerful countries?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Tackling a distinct yet correlated question, this thesis unites answers to otherwise disparate subjects. Founded on good sources, this study expanded on the information and logical analyses, and sheds new, penetrating light on vital issues affecting states, organisations, and ordinary persons. Thus, this thesis, within its capacity and scope contributed to research in this area, hence, its significance. As far as I know, this paper was the first to delve into this topic.

It was noteworthy that the relations between China and the USA have worsened, instead of improving, judging by the elevation in military, diplomatic, and trade aspects of the conflict.

This study was written to contribute to the literature by drawing attention to the relations between China and the USA during the pandemic era, by examining the results such as military, economy, and ideology.

1.4. Importance of the Research

By contributing quality content, within its scope and area, this research provides a comprehensive view of information. It promotes well-analysed data and shares valuable information that can be used by other researchers in the field.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

Pragmatism places much importance on government and its interests. Realism explains politics and international relations more in terms of human competitiveness and egotism. There is reason to believe that this theory applies to inter-state relations.

Realism and Liberalism are diametrically opposed. While the former stresses state rights, national interest, and fiscal conservatism over high moral considerations, the latter gives greater weight to personal freedoms, human rights, and more spending to

promote racial and financial equality. To realists, such as former President Donald Trump, their approach is valid to push national interest through patriotism, ensure social cohesion, fight crime, and create jobs, even when that means a certain degree of anarchy or violence, as seen from the storming of the US Capitol building, in January 2021.

Realism Theory, or political realism views the international scene as characterised chiefly by conflict and rivalry rather than cooperation, which is a view encouraged by other theories. Its adherents are sceptical about ethics and their place in politics, since the world experiences great injustices that are seldom remedied, at least, not effectively or lengthily. There is an emphasis on power struggles among political entities and leaders, as well as security. The world is seen as a stage where nations continue to engage in conflict, rather than cooperate. The author differentiates between Classical Realism, whose proponents are Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau, and Radical Realism, the former school of thought acknowledges the importance of the state and its interests, it does not subscribe to achieving them by any means necessary, nor does it deny morality in international affairs, or glorify conflict in a fatalistic way as some do. Classical realists stress good judgement and cautiousness in the pursuit of political processes. They included such thinkers as Hobbes, Thucydides, and Machiavelli are most often associated with Classical Realism. It is Thucydides who attached morality to international relations and expounded the causes of that war in realistic terms in his ground-breaking book which chronicled the Peloponnesian War, *History of Peloponnesian War* (1972).

The widely-quoted and controversial philosopher Machiavelli did not consider immoral action in politics evil, in his Realistic view. His nineteenth century admirers developed his thought into private and public ethics, thereby making them more radical in the application of international relations.

No historical perspective would be complete without mentioning Hobbes (1651), who maintained that individuals submit themselves to a ruler in order to avoid a war of all against all. His views of human beings as essentially individualistic and in pursuit of power are echoed by Hans Morgenthau's (1904–1980). Though criticised, Hobbes'

ideas influenced realism as a way of dealing with international relations (Hobbes, 1651).

Realism, however, has been supplanted in the twenty-first century by what is known as neorealism – a scientific study of international relations. A watershed moment for Realism occurred when a group of scholars, in mid-twentieth century, initiated an effort to replace ancient wisdom of international relations with a new, science-based one, the field of International Relations was divided into three: Traditional, Scientific, and post-positive, Treated the subject of realism by providing a historical perspective of the major thinkers who have contributed their political philosophies to produce today's realism and neorealism theories that are important in the way international relations is regarded and treated (Korab-Karpovicz, 2017).

Treated the subject of realism by providing a historical perspective of the major thinkers who have contributed their political philosophies to produce today's Realism and Neorealism theories that are important in the way international relations is regarded and treated.

A major present-day theory in the realm of international relations and politics, realism is adopted by those who cast doubt on the validity and usefulness of Idealism, legalism, progressivism, or liberalism. While other theories may place greater importance on ideals and values, Realism is primarily concerned with the survival of the state and national interests, as it explains the difficulties experienced in the political arena in terms of human egotism which drives relations among nations, much more than moral considerations.

Influenced by Protestant thought, Morgenthau regarded Realism as a method of viewing international relations and held that conflict is rooted in human nature and that human beings are naturally motivated by a thirst for power. Through his works, including *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (1948)*, Realism evolved into a new theory of international relations.

The authors maintain that today's approaches to international relations, mostly founded on major projects and pictures, do not harmonise with unsupportable diplomatic efforts that classical realism and its efforts to support diplomatic efforts to confront burgeoning challenges. They warn against seeing modern realism as static, or immoral, but instead as ever-evolving and pragmatic, especially since its last major changes of the 1970s.

With major political thinkers contributing thought, Realism has played a major role in the arena of international relations, as it emphasises state power, rivalry, and national interest over moral considerations, blaming human nature as culpable in an ever-simmering international conflict. This study is important because it provides all the necessary information, in addition to the viewpoints of the authors that are established on facts. It is relevant because realism is today as it was in the days of Hobbes and Machiavelli, although it has been watered down into other forms such as Neorealism. Realism can be interpreted to mean governments' implicit acceptance of a status quo of conflict and the adoption of Machiavellian attitudes and practices. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (1999) offers a good contribution to those interested in learning about realism with reasonable depth. As an important political theory, Realism, which has survived much criticism and many attacks over the years is relevant here as it is reflected in the way the US-China conflict has manifested, emphasising power struggles and competition over cooperation and ethics, particularly in the two governments' inability to cooperate in the fight against the novel Coronavirus.

Political realism and its offshoot, Neorealism, have been found to be considerable forces in the international relations arena, despite their shortcomings in terms of morality in the conduct of international affairs. Given the present state of affairs between China and America, there is little evidence of adopting a more ethical practice, although that may change in the future. Until that happens, Realism seems to hold sway.

1.6. Background

In an *East Asia Forum* article, the author Li (2021), confirmed a clear lack of cooperation between the United States health authorities and their Chinese counterparts. Contrasting that deficiency with their collaboration in efforts to thwart back the SARS pandemic, back in 2003, he ascribed the abandonment of their obligations toward their own peoples and the global population to China's assertion that it is on par with the United States which has no right to dictate to China how it should respond to the pandemic, or formulate its healthcare policies. He further states his belief that this poor cooperation has made the pandemic worse. A situation caused mainly by a "mismatch in perceptions" of internal healthcare policies, as well as other factors of propaganda and trade differences (Li, 2021).

While the United States has long anticipated the strategic rise of China – a topic widely on the minds for the past decade or so, recently, concerns and intensified efforts, on the part of the US, have been underway, to respond to the first strategic threat to America's national security. It is apt to quote America's Director of National Intelligence, John Ratcliffe, who stated clearly: "The People's Republic of China poses the greatest threat to America today, and the greatest threat to democracy and freedom world-wide since World War II" (Ratcliffe, 2020). Accusations in Washington even swirled about Chinese interference in America's elections, undermining its democracy, and targeting its institutions through cyber warfare. Now, such intense rivalry as the US-Chinese must not be left to fester. International conflict management and resolution is a serious diplomatic activity seeking to prevent, intervene, and manage a conflict, in order to preserve the national security of nations, protect the peace, as well as lives, and livelihoods. Certain methods employed to control conflict, such as the US-Chinese cone, to stave off political ramifications beyond the borders of either nation are herein discussed.

The US withdrawal from the WHO during the administration of US President Donald Trump exemplifies the consequences of a relationship gone wrong, and the ensuing financial shortfall of that world body. During the Covid-19 disaster, Trump accused the WHO of being too friendly to China and too critical of the US, claiming that China

influenced the organization's response. While the controversial pull-out cannot be blamed completely on the deteriorating relations between the world's first economic power, the United States, and the second, China, it certainly played a major role at the height of the harrowing Covid-19 pandemic, when the world was scrambling to come up with a vaccine, to save lives and relieve much suffering (Chorev, 2020).

As the World Health Organization relies solely on member-state and non-member state financial contributions, its finances are fragile and susceptible to cuts in donations, due to political or economic reasons. However, in general, it has more or less managed to sustain itself and its operation through difficult circumstances, most recently represented by the US's abrupt ceasing of funding.

Here, a historical background is provided of the conditions which have given rise to the present tension between the US and China, to help understand what has led to such damaging consequences as WHO defunding. Whether China, the United States, or both, are to blame, the WHO's troubles are a direct result of the frigid US-Chinese relations. Many around the world were anxious, or angry, by the dramatic defunding of the World Health Organization, some regarding it as a reflection of former President Donald Trump's, aggressive, unfriendly, reckless attitudes.

The WHO member states who were financially able to fund the organization do so arguably because of a moral obligation to help those who cannot afford healthcare i.e., the people's values, stop their suffering, and make an effort to control epidemics and pandemics that can spread and reach their citizens, as is the case with Covid-19. It is also true that widely-spread illnesses contribute to poverty and refugee issues, which negatively affects wealthier nations. These are the reasons why the United States, as a leading nation, supports international organizations through assessed contributions such as the WHO. It is assumed that China and other nations do so for the same reasons, although one must take into account the desire to be seen as a contribution.

The shortfall in the WHO budget, which the Trump administration blamed on the organization's bias toward China, at a time when the relations between the two powers were at an all-time low, happened during a peak in Covid-19 infections worldwide. It

is, therefore, safe to say that some deaths almost certainly resulted from the impact on WHO's health operations, not least in its vaccination programme.

The biggest of all the "Asian Tigers" are Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea, China's catching up with the likes of Japan and others was widely anxiously anticipated. The forced labour camps of the 1940s and 1950s were soon replaced by the giant factory of the West's greatest manufacturers, employing cheap Chinese labour which was, day by day, becoming no longer cheap. The new information age saw China enter into force, buying such major American brands as IBM's personal computer company, to manufacture it under Lenovo, a respectable brand in its own right. Soon, China's persistence saw it overtake Japan to rank as the world's second-largest economy, after the United States which itself was often considered history's greatest economic and military power. China started developing its own original brands, after having produced cheap knockoffs. The Chinese car company, Geely, and others were learning from such leading Western car makers as BMW and Mercedes-Benz. Today, Chinese brands have found their way into all the world's markets. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the United States feels threatened.

However, the United States and its allies could live with the rise of the new economic power, so long as it did not pose a military threat. Closely monitored, Chinese behavior has been giving worrying signs, in this respect. To face off the novel menace, US allies, which have always opted to act in unison have resorted to several strategies, including security pressure of military manoeuvres, selling arms to Taiwan, and building up forces in the region. For example, in defiance to China's declaration on the South China Sea Chinese territory, the US dispatched a jet fighter carrier and its flotilla to sail those waters, enraging Chinese leadership. In fact, the US military's top general even threatened to "strike China with nuclear weapons from submarines," should President Trump give him the order. Furthermore, according to *Bob Woodward's and Robert Costa's* book, *Peril 2021*, General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff secretly called general Li Zuocheng, of the People's Liberation Army twice, assuring them that the US had no plans to attack China with nuclear weapons. The authors shared that Milley was concerned that the President was "delusional" and was worried the former president could "go rogue," (Woodward & Costa, 2021). This

illustrates the low degree to which the relations between the two nations had sunk and their possible catastrophic consequences. Hence, there was an urgent need for serious sustained efforts to mitigate conflict and prevent its mushrooming into a devastating armed struggle.

For a long time, the United States did not have a clear strategy to stop China's unfair trade practices, stating as a reason the fact that China owned two trillion dollars' worth of the American national debt. However, when trade negotiations stalled over matters of intellectual property and unfair commercial practices, it was obvious that a strategy was warranted to thwart back China's attempt to change the international order in its favour, sidestepping the United States of America which has been the world's foremost power, at least since World War II.

The following quote from the White House sums up the government's approach to addressing the Chinese challenge: "Our approach is not premised on determining a particular end state for China. Rather, our goal is to protect the United States' vital national interests, as articulated in the four pillars of the 2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSS). We aim to protect the American people, homeland, and way of life; promote American prosperity; preserve peace through strength; and advance American influence." (Trump, 2020).

The US-China heated competition must be managed, else, it can spiral out of control, resulting in an open confrontation in the South China Sea and beyond. Here, these methods are discussed, and historical background is presented of the economic, strategic, and political conflict. The repercussions of a collision, whether military or economic, can have severe consequences for the world, its economy, and peace.

Finally, this major global rivalry is complex and extensive in the factors leading to it, as well as the new economic and security realities it gives rise to. The two nations use various tools to win the competition, but also methods to keep it in check. Its negative repercussions on innocent, uninvolved civilians are illustrated in the US's withholding of WHO's funding. While the escalation has its reasons which the two parties disagree on, and which can be summed up as China's determined path to grow using strategies

the US disapproves of, and the US's refusal to compromise on the issues of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and trade, from China's viewpoint. Few really know whether the tensions will lead to war, or normal, peaceful relations.

The causes of the US-China tensions which have adversely impacted the WHO's monetary allocations have their origin in military and economic rivalry and China's insatiable, raw ambition. The conflict has been contained, thus far, although, in all likelihood more needs to be done using available diplomatic methods and strategies. So far, however, mostly brinkmanship and newly-forged military and economic alliances are used as methods of deterrence, as evidenced by the newly-minted American-British-Australian alliance.

According to foundation.net (n.d), conflict arises due to a clash in interests, understanding, values, style, and opinion. Bridging these differences, threatening lives and livelihoods, is possible only when the parties understand the problem, are willing to discuss it, and sincerely seek a peaceful resolution. Three reactions are identified: Aggressive (fighting), assertive (negotiating), and passive (ducking it.) (Foundation.net, n.d). Now, the parties calculate well before committing to a peace process, which needs sincerity to be realised. Therefore, certain conditions must be met, else, peace is an illusion. As conflicts arose colossally in the 1990s, conflict resolution efforts have as well, even though the results are dubious. For example, failure was clear in Rwanda, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, mostly due to the lack of the warring parties' cooperation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

When a major conflict, regardless of whether it is strategic, economic, or political occurs, it impacts the globe in more ways than one. The Chinese-American rivalries which have been visible for the past decade, One of the victims is the World Health Organization's American funding. Whereas the wider conflict has been researched and discussed broadly, in several forums, it can be argued that its impact on the Covid-19 pandemic has received less attention than it should. In my thesis, that gap would be filled, and fresh insights would be provided.

Research has been done into the effects of the America-China competition on the WHO's health programs, in terms of the United States terminating its membership and the subsequent withholding of its crucial funding. However, a gap in research exists to show the minor impact on the WHO, rather than the major, much-feared, and anticipated one by global organizations, governments, and private donors. Here, light is shed on this area. This research agrees on certain areas of the research already done but diverges in other areas.

2.1. Lacking Cooperation Between China and the US on Covid-19

Li (2021) explained the reasons for the absence in collaboration to control the disease, when many expected the two main global powers to do so, at a time when everyone's cooperation was desperately needed vis-à-vis the much-feared and dangerous new coronavirus. As a Chinese writer, Li observed the real reason might not be due to poor relations, as much as stark differences in seeing healthcare realities, in addition to national pride. This happened despite the two nations' signed Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology, in 1979. Acknowledging Chinese lack in preparedness against SARS, Li reaffirms America's help in such a way that would

make a marked progress in China's modern healthcare system. China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi's statement, "The United States does not have the qualification to say that it wants to speak to China from a position of strength," reflects distrust and sensitivity that played their roles which prevented cooperation. Additionally, the Chinese believed America's healthcare model was ineffective, which drove mistrust even further. While not ruling out cooperation, the author writes collaboration hinges on the US's recognition of China's substantial progress in the area of health, which hints at Chinese sensitivity or inferiority complex. The author closes his article by quoting a Chinese disease expert, Zhong Nanshan, who expressed his hope of future cooperation, to be facilitated by the US's recognition of Chinese progress and a better knowledge of each country' (Li, 2021).

2.2. Conflict Management Strategies and US-China Tensions

Being a prime cause of concern today, economically, politically, and militarily, the US-Chinese conflict receives ample coverage and research. The research is done by numerous American, Chinese, and European scholars, journalists, and academics, who base their work on facts, present their own findings and give their own viewpoints. However, the research can be somewhat lacking concerning the strategies of the two nations to prevent their tensions from mushrooming and breaking out into a full-blown military confrontation that can kill people in the tens, if not hundreds of millions. In fact, previous and present developments, such as the People's Liberation Army's military manoeuvres, in close proximity to Taiwan, show that the escalation in the US-Chinese conflict can lead to a more dangerous path than previously thought, and has received less attention and research than it should. Thus, new insights contributed to understanding the causes leading into the latest escalation. Some of the research done of this subject is presented, while adding my own reading and inferring conclusions particularly in terms of preventing escalation.

Conflict resolution, which is an ambitious effort, needs men and women of peace. True humanists and theological activists to bring it to pass. Those must be supported by powerful governments or global organizations. Great examples include former US President, Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and the late South

African leader, Nelson Mandela. Unfortunately, no such luminaries are involved to assuage the US-China tensions. One person who could make a difference, the Dalai Lama, is frowned upon by the CCP.

Looking at the *US-China tensions from an international relations angle in US-China Relations: The Way Forward 2019*, P.H. Yu dissects the problem historically and analytically and offers a way out of the conflict. He argues that, since both countries have a successful past experience of overcoming dangerous challenges, such as in Indochina or North Korea, it follows that they are likely to be successful in averting a catastrophic war this time around as well. The author quotes government officials and expounds the different positions to arrive at a coherent conclusion. He agrees with the view of former American Secretary of the Treasury, Hank Paulson, who stated that the rise of China is at the expense of the United States. To win the rivalry, Paulson says, “We need to craft a new framework that works for today’s world, not the world of the past”. Paulson notes a “decoupling” process between the two economies amid growing consensus in the American halls of power that China must be seen now as a major rival and a threat. He even goes further to predict an “Economic Iron Curtain.” (Paulson, 2018).

Hass (2020) saw a tit-for-tat pattern in China’s strategy toward the US (i.e., not much conflict resolution) such as in the way either side’s reporters are treated, consulate closures, exchanges of accusations of the origin of Covid-19, as well as sanctions on important persons. He rightly believes that Beijing mimicked America’s economic pressure strategies, such as export controls, national security investment screening, black-listing unwanted visa applicants, and other regulations the CCP deemed powerful.

Official news channels, such as the BBC, confirmed Hass’s facts, but I would add that China’s, or the US’s strategy for that matter, toward each other is subject to change depending on shifting interests and the regional and international scene. BBC reported China’s closing of the American Consulate in Chengdu, an unhelpful move that shows a desire on the part of the Chinese to escalate, or engage in a tit-for-tat type reaction, at best. For its part, the US State Department closed down the Chinese Consulate in

Houston, a move which, the Chinese said, was based on “A hodgepodge of anti-Chinese lies.”

Clearly, the United States government recognizes the behaviour of the CCP as aggressive and fair, a justifiable view, given China’s totalitarian, undemocratic communist style of government. Mike Pompeo expresses that view as well: “Today, China is increasingly authoritarian at home and more aggressive in its hostility to freedom everywhere else. The free world must triumph over this new tyranny.” (Hass, 2020).

Still, there may be light at the end of the tunnel, as both major world powers have every interest to cooperate, rather than clash, to avoid the tremendous costs of conflict for both, as well as for the world. This research validates this, as the two governments recently engaged in negotiations.

An alternative viewpoint does not see China’s rise necessarily as a decline for the United States, just as America’s rise at the turn of the twentieth century did not bring about the demise of Great Britain or of Europe. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the later National Security Advisor during the Carter Administration, saw China’s aspiration to be a world power as “neither revolutionary nor messianic nor Manichean” (Brzezinski, 2012). Brzezinski (2012) believed China wanted to avoid a rapid falling apart of the US, as that could mean great damage to China, itself, obviously, due to the interconnectedness of the two powers and of today’s world. This is a positive view of China’s rise. The Former US Secretary of State does not seem to consider China as great a threat, as many consider, mentioning China only in passing in his book on the US foreign policy. For his part, Yu (2019) maintains that China’s new Belt and Road initiative is an endeavour to develop the nations that are connected to China economically, thereby benefiting from their growth.

It can be argued that the tensions are here to stay, so long as the root causes are the same: China’s intellectual piracy, the dividing issue of Taiwan’s independence and China’s policy against that, China’s espionage in the United States and its

cyberattacks, as well as serious differences in trade policies. Whether a large-scale confrontation would ensue is an open-ended question.

China and the US are markedly different, in terms of the stage of development, economics, culture, history, demographics, and global relations.

The United States strategy toward China can be summed up in former President Barack Obama's policy of "pivot of the US strategy to East Asia," due to the ever-increasing importance and threat of that region of the world, without necessarily ignoring other regions. America's recognition of the Chinese threat and economic prowess of that area of the world also produced the Trans-Pacific Pact 2021, as a concerted economic and potentially implicitly strategic reaction to the threat coming from the Asian tiger, which seems to be gathering pace, with the UK Government's decision to start talks on joining soon (Holden, 2021).

A Rand Corporation research paper by Kelley et al. (2019) outlines four criteria undergirding US strategy: clear, realistic goals originating in American interests, consideration of the two nations' necessary cooperation on global security and the economy, flexibility and responsiveness to China's policy changes, and finally, taking into account the situation in Asia and China's military and economic power. The authors argue that the US should both engage with as well as deter China, taking into consideration the regional context. They recommend these strategic steps for the US military: Training and supporting allies and partners, defending key facilities. Providing key enabling support for the joint forces, projecting expeditionary combat force into the conflict zone, developing new conventional deterrence capabilities, and encouraging China's participation in military exercises (Kelley et al., 2019).

Ironically, the above-mentioned strategies serve as conflict management ways, by establishing parity, so to speak, which keeps either side from venturing into war. It is the same argument favouring nuclear weapons which are said to protect the world from major war for three-quarters of a century.

2.3. Impact of the Deteriorating US-China Conflict on the WHO and the Covid-19 Pandemic

Reddy (2018) examined the possible solution to the decrease in funding i.e. resolving the US-China issues, since their conflict is a main cause. However, he does not discuss the effects of the reduction on the WHO's funding on global health, although he does show that the organization continues to suffer major financial difficulties, which has brought on serious exchanges, especially in light of the member states' reluctance to raise their assessed annual contributions. As a consequence, the prospects of greater autonomy for the organization which remains largely supported by voluntary contributions from state and non-state actors was reduced. Closely tied to the political economy of sovereign states, WHO's funding must be stabilized, in order to level up its accountability, efficiency, and transparency, in a crowded global health governance climate.

Davies (2019) examined how the conflict affected the global economy and the WHO budget, as a result. Further, Chinese decisions, represented by suspension of negotiations with the US, exacerbated the problem. While Trump worked for a better economy to help his re-election, China worked for a stronger economy to create job opportunities for its new generation and to lift many of its citizens out of poverty. Simply put, the impasse badly influenced the global economy, and certainly, global organizations, such as the WHO.

Ian Brooks, an American health expert who liaises with the WHO cites several harmful effects because of that organization's budgetary shortfall. These include seriously limiting cooperation efforts between the US and the WHO, especially the formal ones, setbacks for the US Centres for Disease Control in staffing and global standing. Whereas others typically criticized China's influence over the WHO, Brooks vindicates both, giving logical reasons (Heckel, 2020).

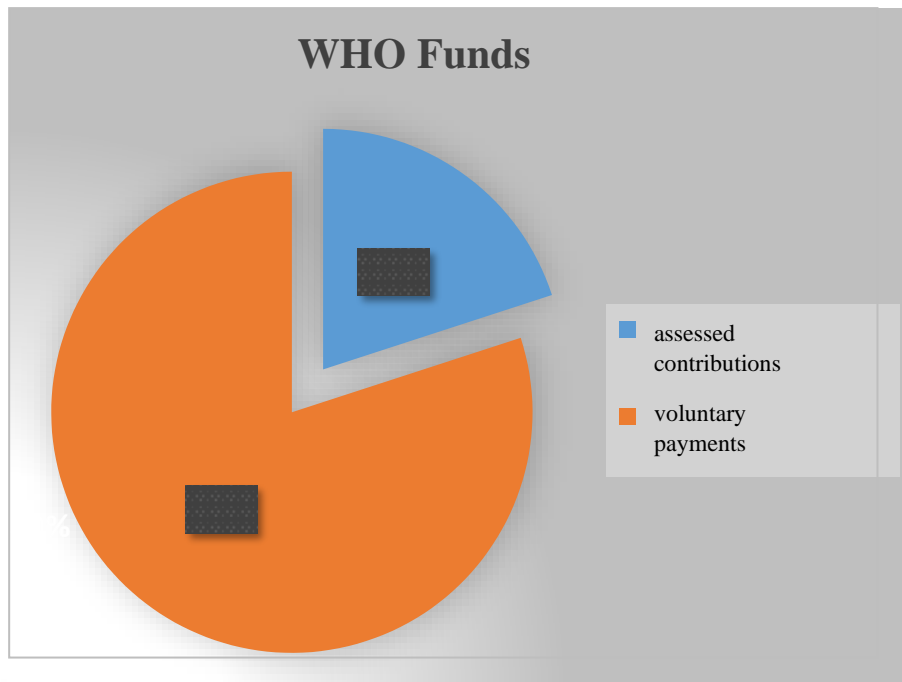


Figure 2.1. Total Outstanding Overdue Member State Payment (Philip Fei Wu, 2011)

The view of certain researchers who have laid excessive blame on the US government, accusing it of intentionally damaging the health of developing nations' citizens, maybe exaggerated, as the Trump administration pledged to divert the same amount of funding that would have gone into the purse of the World Health Organization to other global health programs in 2019, which is an error repaired by the Biden Administration in 2020. In Table 2.1 below, I discuss the trajectory and major activities of WHO.

Table 2.1. WHO Activities

Year	Activity
1967	The World Health Organization created the Special Program for Training and Research in Tropical Diseases and the World Health Assembly voted to enact a resolution on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation, with a focus on community-driven care.
1974	The Expanded Program on fortification and the control program of onchocerciasis was started, an important partnership between the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Bank.

Table 2.1. (cont.)

1977	The first list of fundamental medicines was created, and after one year, the ambitious objective of “health for all” was stated.
1986	The organization began its global program on HIV/AIDS. After two years preventing discrimination against sufferers was attended to and in 1996 UNAIDS was formed.
1988	The Global Polio Eradication Initiative was created.
1998	The organization’s Director-General highlighted gains in reduced infant mortality, child survival, increased life expectancy and reduced rates of "scourges" such as smallpox and polio on the fiftieth anniversary of the World Health Organization’s founding.
2000	The Stop TB Partnership was created along with the UN's formulation of the Millennium Development Goals.
2001	The measles initiative was formed and credited with reducing global deaths from the disease by 68% by 2007.
2002	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria was drawn up to improve the resources available.
2006	The organization endorsed the world's first official HIV/AIDS Toolkit for Zimbabwe, which formed the basis for a global prevention, treatment, and support plan to fight the AIDS pandemic.
2019	The WHO identified three priorities for its work over the next several years: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Providing health coverage to one billion more people;● Protecting one billion more people from health emergencies such as epidemics● Ensuring another one billion people enjoy better health and well-being, including protection from non-infectious diseases such as cancer.

As an international organization, the World Health Organization depends on state and non-state contributions for its revenue. When those fail to come up with the required funding, the institution suffers, as does global health. Such was the situation of the WHO when the United States Government ceased its membership payment, largely

influenced by that organization's presumed pandering to China, the country which directly rivals the US in many respects. While the issue has received the reporting and research it deserves, more work should have gone into the direct impact of the US-China strains as they relate to the WHO's budget woes, beyond President Trump's cutting off payments. This gap is bridged somewhat by this thesis.

Research shows that governments are tempted to withdraw from international organizations that do not align with their policies or underperform, are seen to have little to no utility, or have political affiliations that counteract them. The latter is the case with the US's withdrawal, which saw the WHO and its director-general as unfairly siding with China vis-à-vis the United States.

President Donald Trump's announcement that the US would withdraw from the WHO hardly surprised anyone, as such a move was expected. ; after all, some expected him to find a scapegoat to blame for the covid-19's catastrophic effect on global health and economy. As a matter of fact, the move must be viewed from the wider angle of US-China worsening relations (Sridhar, 2020).

In "*The World Health Organization Between China and the US*," the author, *Nitsan Chorev (2020)*, describes the US withdrawal and its impact on the Covid-19 campaigns against the virus: "The solution will also necessarily be at the global level—through science but also coordinated practices and mutual support. US withdrawal will further weaken an international organization that could be our guide in directing and coordinating standards and norms in the midst of this deadly global unknown. Other researchers, such as the BMJ editor, agree on the impact on the WHO: "In the medium term the US withdrawal from WHO will cause serious financial damage. The US is one of the largest contributors of 'extra-budgetary funds,' which make up 80% of WHO's total budget. Although influential organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the European Commission are important donors in global health, the potential funding gap left by a US withdrawal will be hard to fill." Having comprehended the import of this research, it is believed, it should be widely shared and built on. For one thing, it would contribute to increasing the support for the WHO, resulting in better global health.

However, in describing the causes and effects of America's leaving the WHO and condemning the move, few researchers foresaw that the United States, under a new administration, would rejoin and resume its normal funding. Here, I, on the other hand, have done some research on the WHO's situation following America's reinstatement (Chorev, 2020).

Writing for Nature magazine, Amy Waxmen assesses the repercussions of the US withdrawal from the WHO on the Covid-19 health disaster. She notes that the schism is poorly timed and quotes the director of the Center for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University, in Washington D.C., Rebecca Katz, as saying, "It's surreal to even be having this conversation since it's so hard to get one's head around the massive implications," referring to the implications on global Coronavirus infections (Waxmen, 2020).

To illustrate the scope of the problem, as projected at the time of the defunding, the following data are presented on the areas of global health: %27 of the WHO budget is provided by the US, %19 of which goes to fighting tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, and other preventable conditions, such as measles, while %23 is dedicated to emergency health operations. It is, therefore, no wonder that many health experts feared the worst for global health because of the Trump Administration's decision. Heymann (2020), for instance, an epidemiologist from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said the move would result in regression in polio fighting efforts which had cost the US hundreds of millions of dollars.

Furthermore, the damage would not only affect WHO's global health programs, including its crucial vaccination campaigns and other health conditions getting sidelined, but collaboration efforts between the organization and US health agencies and researchers, as well as undercutting America's capacity to shape global health policies, when China and others move to fill in the vacuum (Whitehouse.gov, 2020). This is all the more reason to reverse such a move, which is what happened, when the US re-joined, three months after its funding withdrawal.

By contrast, China’s contributions rose by %52, since 2014, to \$86 million. Collins (2020) of the Council on Foreign Relations, points out the errors of the WHO staff, including its director whose delayed declaration of Covid-19 as an international emergency happened when the cases had already increased by tenfold. And his refusal to hold the Chinese Government accountable for arresting its citizens for spreading “rumours” about the disease, and other violations, indicate the WHO directorship takes some responsibility, as regards Covid-19 spiralling out of control. He writes, “It is, therefore, clear to me, that the US withdrawal from the health organization cannot be blamed alone for the world’s Coronavirus woes” (Collins, 2020).

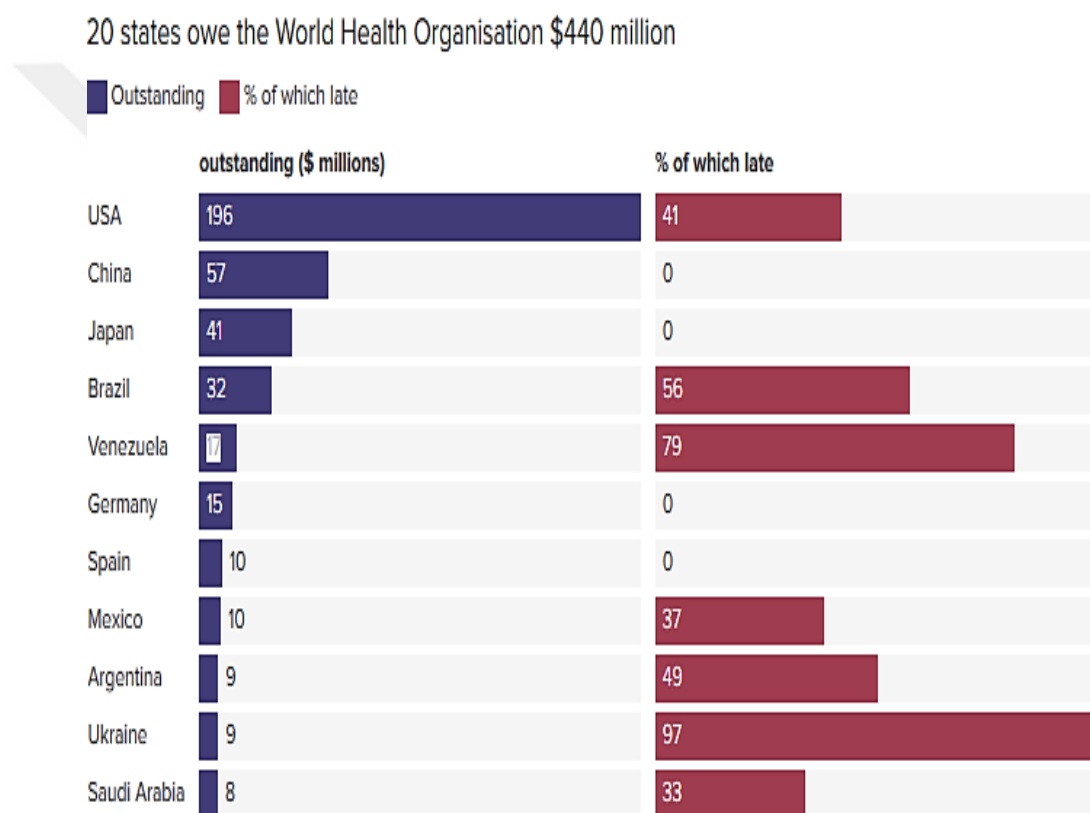


Figure 2.2. Total Outstanding Funds by Member States (Parker, 2020)

2.4. The Causes of the Escalation of the China-America Conflict

While tensions have existed between the world’s oldest democracy and the communist People’s Republic of China for many decades, during which the United States turned a blind eye to the Chinese violations that have caused the unease in relations to deteriorate. According to this research, these causes are, intellectual property

violations, theft of scientific knowledge from leading US and Western institutes, the threat against Taiwan, and unfair trade practices, of which the two world powers traded with each other, and still are, it only surfaced recently.

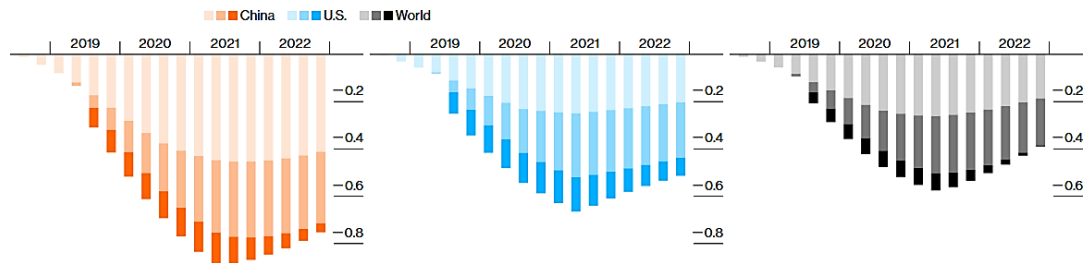


Figure 2.3. Tariff Escalation Plus Equity Market Shock Percent Impact on Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (Holland and Sam, 2019)

Taiwan is a major flash point in the conflict. China’s objections over Taiwan’s behavior, such as its recent joining of a major Trans-Pacific Pact, recently have translated into repeated air manoeuvres very close to Taiwan’s doggedly defended airspace, by groups of stealth Chinese jet fighters over Taiwan’s airspace, in a show of defiance. Since 1949, when the Taiwanese ROC government which had fought the Chinese Communist Party moved to the island. China sees Taiwan’s independence as a challenge to its hegemony over the South China Sea and its historic control of the island, to the degree that Taiwan’s independence is a red line.

With China producing ever more military materiel, including mass production of a stealth bomber, the important question is, where is the situation headed? Tensions remain in the South China Sea, involving Taiwan, as well as the other major regional powers of Japan, Australia, and South Korea, and India. It would appear, a major confrontation in the offing is unlikely, given the fact that the Chinese military remains not on par with the US military and its many allies, plus the fact that such a war would be extremely costly to many. Writing for the Council of Foreign Relations, Kim (2018) holds that the current face-off is expected to intensify: “We can expect U.S. competition with China to intensify as Beijing continues to strengthen its military and technological capabilities, extend its economic reach, assert its territorial claims, and promote its own political model and values. Managing this conflict, however, does not necessitate a shift to pure containment. Rather it requires reinforcing the United States’

comparative advantages and enhancing a China strategy that has historically combined elements of both balancing and engagement. This view confirms the researcher's findings, which was based on the CCP's reluctance to give in on major contention issues.

Brands and Beckley (2021) argue that such a conflict as the US-China occurs because an ascendant power (China) challenges the existing world order which is constructed by the main power (United States.) As a result, hostilities develop, in addition to fear, and the possibility of armed conflict. The authors present, as an example, the dread that the rise of Athens, Greece, brought in Sparta, and the ensuing Peloponnesian War. Escalation, in my view, has occurred, due to the exponential, irregular, wildly ambitious, rise of China (Brands & Buckley, 2021).

The other side of the coin, however, is while many believe that major or rising powers are bound to collide. It is believed that is not necessarily true. A case in point is the Soviet Union and the United States, which did not wage nuclear war on each other, despite the world's great fears. In this context, both presidents, Donald Trump and Joseph Biden, have expressed their governments desire not to escalate, preferring instead, to do business and coexist with the Asian giant. After all, there are no winners in war; only losers.

For some governments, escalation is a natural outcome of progress, as their economic and cultural growth tempts them to expand strategically and collide with existing superpowers, albeit not necessarily militarily. That is the case here, today.

All in all, this research made into the impact of US-China relations on the WHO budget and the Covid-19, the causes of worsening relations, shows that other researchers have covered the issues well, but not entirely, for greater insight should be given to the historical missteps, actions, and inaction of the two powers, which has brought them and the world to the present point of conflict. Rather than sounding the alarm, an effort should be made to give a glimmer of light. In a sense, this is the case here. Other researchers should have presented Covid-19 as a perfect example of how poor international relations can have a deadly effect on the health of ordinary people.

2.5. Conflict Management Strategies and US-China Tensions

This research shows that despite mutual threats of slapping heavy tariffs on each other, trade of goods has picked up considerably between the US and China lately. That could be seen by many as bringing hope to a frightening situation. “Eighteen months after the Trump administration signed the trade deal, the agreement has turned out to be a truce, at best. The US trade deficit has not shrunk, most levies are still in place, and it hasn’t led to negotiations over other economic issues. And yet, bilateral trade in goods is a stabilising factor in a relationship that has otherwise continued to deteriorate, with rising tension over Hong Kong, which the Chinese Communist Party had long planned to incorporate as part of mainland China in every sense, quelling dissent and altering important laws. At issue are also Taiwan’s independence ambitions, human rights, the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic, and accusations of computer hacking, among other flashpoints.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The researchers have used different methods to research these questions, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches. The qualitative method is used here, as it is appropriate, in gauging the research and views of academics and other researchers. Such sources as books, authoritative magazines, and newspapers, as well as official websites, including that of the World Health Organization, were used.

3.1. Data Collection

- **Primary Data**

Primary sources are used, such as the WHO official website, as well as US and Chinese government websites, as well as opinion and direct statements from reliable sources from books, magazines, newspapers and official governmental websites.

- **Secondary Data**

The secondary sources included research done by others who quoted other sources and provided data they researched.

3.2. Variables

- Dependent variable: the lack of cooperation between the US and China.
- Independent Variable: national interests override the need for cooperation.

3.3. Research and Data Analysis Method

To that end, it is opted to mainly use the qualitative research method of written material, in the form of niche books by seasoned politicians, professional publications known for their authoritative content, and finally, news reports from world-renowned news organisations.



CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This chapter takes a deeper examination of the material used in this research, in seeking to provide fulfilling answers to its question about the absence of cooperation between the US and China within the framework of international and dual collaboration on Covid-19 during its initial stage in the scope of Realism theory. America's temporary withdrawal from the World Health Organization, which lasted three months, caused great fears in the global healthcare community and was seen as a direct repercussion of the frictions with China, as some of the texts herein discussed show. Finally, the escalation in the rivalry between the world's two largest economies is addressed as well as the conditions leading up to them.

4.1. Lack of Knowledge

Li (2021)'s article titled "Why China and the US Aren't Cooperating on Covid-19" outlined the reasons why he believes the two governments that are well-capable of making a real difference in the struggle to ward off the onslaught of the coronavirus did not produce any cooperative efforts, despite the pressing need for it and the clear and loud expectations of the world. He is objective in blaming the shortfall in collaboration not just on bad relations, but also on poor understanding of China's healthcare system by the United States Government, as well as historical insecurities. He acknowledges the US Centres for Disease Control's assistance in building up the Chinese virus surveillance system and health response and emergency management system. In explaining the situation, Li (2021) ends his article on a positive note, implying cooperation may take place in the future when other health challenges arise.

Also, the information herein provided indicates that the United States and China do not lack in past cooperation in health and scientific matters, although they did most

recently. However, that should and could change in the future. The importance of this article comes from the facts used which tackle an important point in the fight against Covid-19, i.e. why the US and China did not show cooperation when all others expected them to. This piece of writing is relevant because it provides good, edifying information on an important topic that interests many. While quoting other experts who attributed the absence of collaborative efforts to trade issues and sour relations, the author provides his own insights into the causes: insufficient knowledge of the nature of each other's healthcare systems, as well as friction, as evidenced by Chinese officials' sense that the United States still considered China not an equal, but as inferior. The implication drawn here is that better results could have been attained, had China and the US cooperated in this area. This can be achieved in the future, by overcoming their sensitivities and rivalries to do the meaningful work all expect them to do, as two of the world's great powers. The article is factual, rational, and full of relevant information that allows the reader to draw his own conclusion. This type of objective, insightful work is needed in research, as it provides a balanced outlook, founded on sound facts.

In this BMJ article titled "Covid-19: Lack of Knowledge is Driving Public Panic" the authors (2020) suggest that the sudden outbreak of the Coronavirus, first in China, its primary incubator, and then in most countries of the world brought about unpredicted and widespread fright among populations, sending panicked individuals to be unnecessarily anxious about restrictive quarantines, suffering, and untimely death. This had them resort to unproven remedies which might prove harmful and even deadly, in addition to imposing unnecessary burdens on public healthcare systems which would find it difficult to cope with the straining demands of large numbers of patients, many of whom either did not need medical care or could recuperate, at home. The writers attribute that to poor information provided to the public, and therefore, governmental failure, mainly in the first stages of the pandemic outbreak, despite the declaration of healthcare response emergency by as many as thirty Chinese provinces. This deficiency in knowledge, the writers assert, is manifest by a misunderstanding of the information provided, no matter adequate or inadequate, or blowing it out of proportion, making the matter worse, by raising the public's sense of alarm. This common issue in such a situation, the authors recommended, would be addressed by the proper authorities' publication of timely, accurate, and credible research

information concerning Covid-19, in an effective and straightforward way that would be well-received by the populace.

While the research was conducted and published in peer journals, it was aimed at researchers and specialists, rather than the general population, whose public awareness and knowledge of this crucial, life-impacting subject, was underserved.

Finally, the researchers call for effective, thoroughly selected scientific information on the subject, to be spread well to the general public which so needs it, in order to apply protective measures against the sinister virus. This process would require the active involvement of statisticians, epidemiologists, healthcare professionals, as well as evidence-based medical experts, to see through this effort.

This academic article is based on the scientific observations and inferences of the authors—Chinese health experts—on the lack, and ineffective dissemination, of fact-based healthcare information by the Chinese government to its public, which would, consequently, experience chaos, leading to poor protection against Covid-19.

If anything, the data means that concerned scientists, writing sincerely and addressing their government, make educated suggestions, after having witnessed the troubling situation surrounding Chinese citizens' ill-preparedness to fight the virus, in part, due to misinformation, or poorly communicated public information, leading to insufficient precautionary measures. Citing established facts, the exposition is objective, and the authors make their point effectively. They are straightforward in recommending improvements to the way their government handled the public information aspect of the fight against the novel disease, as well as candid about describing the public's poor understanding as resulting from lack of knowledge. This article derives its importance from the valid point the writers make on a crucial healthcare and national security issue, which likely alerted the Chinese government to the necessity of improving their Covid-19 public awareness campaign. Addressing what was arguably the world's primary health threat and public scare, this piece of writing is relevant, simply because it is needed and makes a difference. It does not lack insights, as the authors make intelligent, fact-based recommendations. The authors imply here that more must be

done, and done in a well-thought-out, deliberate fashion, in order to win the public information war in the fight against this latest pandemic. This article can be interpreted to indicate certain freedom of speech used by these Chinese health experts in addressing a sensitive issue, a freedom that is used responsibly and well. The implication is that this writing, while meant primarily for the Chinese healthcare authorities and media, can equally benefit foreign governments, especially since the points made here are valid. Authored by experts in their field, this paper is founded on facts examined and conclusions reached to effect change in this vital arena that touches the lives of many. It is recommended that other researchers would follow suit and write similar pieces that would contribute to better communication of Covid-19 healthcare knowledge to the public, which would help stem the spread of such communicable diseases (Wen et al., 2020).

According to Wake (2020) in the article titled “Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, and Associated Factors Regarding the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Pandemic” (2020), healthcare authorities and medical cadres must be well-prepared and armed with knowledge, as the lack thereof may well lead to undesired, irreversible consequences, namely, deaths and impairment of patients around the globe. Knowledge, which is of prime importance in the fight against the pandemic, is subject to such factors as, age, education level, residence, marital status, attitude, income, and gender. He argues for better education and up-to-date training of medical care workers, as well as the general public, to combat a new illness that caught everyone off-guard, causing a high rate of death and injuries. The author of the study maintains that all must do better. Given the insufficient measures put in place to fend off the global contagion and rise of the cases of the disease, such as school closures, quarantines, self-isolation, travel restrictions, and frustrated efforts to find an effective vaccine, a comprehensive new study is warranted. Wake holds that such a step would gauge the effectiveness of those protective measures, and make the necessary changes, to encourage all to follow better precautionary measures and seek medical care, if need be. He recommends “normalising safe practices,” by urging the public to regularly use cautionary measures, in addition to using social media to communicate a powerful, focused message, in the promotion of Covid-19 health education.

Wake (2020) conducted interviews, based on the interviewees' knowledge that the virus is transmitted through human-to-human contact, the way it is spread, whether those surveyed knew any patients, and if they had knowledge of hygienic and other protective measures. His study included several countries. Wake's study confirms the correlation between the hygienic, public awareness, and medical worker competence factors and the rate of Covid-19 transmission among individuals, and across national borders, with societies that score lower, having an inexcusable level of the spread of the disease. While the study results vary, according to the development levels of the nation and its healthcare system, it is concluded that more needs to be done, to reach the threshold of reasonable safety through the application of the researcher's aforementioned recommendations.

This study means that the spread of the novel Coronavirus has underlying causes and that, once these are individually addressed by the concerned authorities, the illness can be better contained, as shown by the author's survey. Indeed, the writer's work establishes a clear relationship between age, gender, income, education level of both public and health workers, and so on, and the rate of infection. This may be a new way of looking at the disease and how to better fight it. This research is important because the ideas it posits can truly contribute to equipping the public and the healthcare authorities with the knowledge and training needed to keep the virus at bay, or better yet, defeat it. It comes at a crucial time when the world searches for answers and seeks vaccines and remedies. It is relevant, particularly to the societies affected and looking for a way out of a painful, life-threatening condition which defied the finest medical knowhow and healthcare systems. The author's recommendations are insightful, offering valuable expert advice, founded on a scientific survey of disparate virus-impacted global communities. His ideas are addressed to the governments, as well as the layperson, although the party to lead such educational efforts is, clearly, the healthcare establishments. This paper can be interpreted to indicate a genuine concern on the part of the author and a desire to help in the effort to alleviate the Covid-19 health disaster. He does so through concrete, workable suggestions. The results of this research paper can have far-reaching implications, especially if the authorities take heed and implement its points. Such valuable work is highly recommended for other researchers to put together studies along the same lines that would help with efforts to deal with similar national and international threats, in the future (Wake, 2020).

4.2. National Interest

When two major governments show no sign of cooperation on a pressing issue, such as a new disease that threatens to wipe out millions without discrimination whether Chinese or American, it begs the question, whether national interest plays a role. Was it economic, or political interest that might have played a role here? While suggestions of economic reasons may be levelled, it is also true that both peoples had much to lose from a pandemic that took a major toll on their economies. Therefore, cooperation would have helped them lessen the harm done to their economies, in terms of loss of jobs and business, including export (Li, 2021).

In terms of politics, the absence of collaboration only represented a continuation of hostile behaviour and disengagement between the two governments, which is discussed in this thesis. No political gain could be thought of, when the matter drew criticism from many, throughout the world, and tarnished their reputations.

While the author accepts competition between the US and China as a fact in his article titled “The US and China Must Learn to Balance Competition in the Coming Era”, he nonetheless states it must be managed, lest it devolves into a violent scenario, which no one wants, but everyone fears. After all, the heated exchanges are alarming, and so, the leaders ought to learn a new way of leadership that stresses and promotes cooperation, protecting peace, while vying for economic progress, wherever possible. The charged atmosphere in the midst of a dangerous pandemic threatens both nations and requires their cooperation coupled with a vision, to meet the challenges of the future, as well as Covid-19, the author maintains. Citing the latest technological advances, such as the internet that change industry, in addition to the two nations’ technological rivalry, Yang recognizes both countries’ assertive protection of their knowledge and interests, in seeking supremacy. The writer points out that cooperation is, evidently, in the national interest of either nation, as leaders have stated, time and time again. China has made strides towards technological development and has begun work on the Internet of Things, 5G, smart cities, and numerous flashy projects, like airports and buildings. The writer wonders whether his country will continue to lead in these areas, going forward, and sees a fine balance between economic growth and

national security. America, on the other hand, still leads in scientific research in many areas, including pharmaceuticals and new technologies. Hence, in the midst of the intense competition and, even threatening atmosphere, the United States strategic approach to China, while spelling out multiple schemes to face off with China, nonetheless, leaves the door open for cooperation, the author notes, to the national interest of both parties. The fact is, the latest scientific advancements, accelerated by Covid-19, demand the cooperation of both powers by devising creative ways to coexist and find new commonalities, or else their national interests would suffer. Examples include the environment, public health, and natural disaster relief. Additionally, the world needs such cooperation to address such ethical challenges as adoption and cybersecurity, as well as defining standards for emerging technologies. Mr. Wang makes the observation that the technologies developed by both nations, at the end of the day, benefit humanity, as a whole. However, he asserts, little would materialise without the good leadership of those at the helm.

The importance of this article stems from the ideas and recommendations of the author, which are rooted in well-established facts. The topic is, certainly, of prime importance, as it tackles the relationship between the world's two major military and economic powerhouses which must collaborate on several fronts, in order to protect and enhance their national interests, as well as those of the globe. This is precisely why this piece of writing is relevant to us and our time, as it is written amidst a series of challenging world events, namely, Covid-19 and geopolitical tensions. The new insights of the author are helpful and creative, particularly his suggestion that the US and China find a new "framework" for functioning together, as well as his call to the authorities to exert better leadership to implement the required steps, to the protection of their national interest and the balance of global security and economic system. This data can be interpreted to mean that the relationship between the US and China has reached a point where they must take measures to protect their national interests, not by confronting each other, but by collaborating, and that they ought to make an effort to find areas to do just that. The implication of the points made by the researcher is, that recent changes on the world stage, including Covid-19 and the advent of challenging and promising new technologies, at once, necessitate, even forces, wise, well-informed cooperation. Finally, the usefulness of such an exposition should encourage other

researchers to think up and make equally helpful points, to be used by policymakers and leaders, everywhere (Yang, 2020).

4.3. Economic, Military and Ideological Factors

From an economic standpoint, one would be forgiven to think that competition in vaccine production, i.e., producing and selling a different, better and cheaper vaccine might be a motive. Indeed, this has been suggested by some, although not in a credible way. One thing is for sure, competition has played a part in vaccine production and sale to other nations.

As regards a possible military component in the lacking cooperation, some Americans have accused the Chinese of producing the coronavirus in a laboratory, as a biological weapon, which then somehow escaped and found its way to the local population, prior to spreading to the entire planet. That said, there exists no evidence to suggest that is the case. To the contrary, global health experts have asserted the virus originated in certain animals at a Chinese market, in the city of Wuhan (Davidson, 2021).

Ideology can play a part, also. More precisely, Chinese assertive behaviour and refusal to take a back seat to America, which they view as imperialist, expansionist, unfair, and threatening. This attitude drove the communist Chinese government to stick to its own Covid-19 plan and refuse to share information at the crucial early stage, shutting down one of its major airports, while still allowing international passengers to travel. Accusing the US of “disrespect for common sense and arrogance toward science,” China’s vice minister of health refused a World Health Organization request for a second stage investigation on the origin of the virus. The probe would have included audits of biological laboratories. The vice minister further denied that the virus had a human origin and suggested the UN should “look in other locations.” He also suggested foreign media were involved in political interference in China’s affairs. These statements, as well as the refusal are a clear indication of a hardline position inspired by decades of communist stances (Davidson, 2021).

US-China rivalry, which takes on several forms, is ideological, as well as military and economic, Kroenig asserts in his article entitled “The Power Delusion”. It is a struggle between democracy and despotism, as well as for power. The author’s departure point is the contention by two prominent analysts, Robert Kaplan and Elbridge Kolby, that the competition is only for global dominance, that, even if China were democratic, the US would still be concerned, and that, to ascribe the matter to ideology is an exercise of in futility. Disagreeing with these views, the writer opines that it would be calamitous if America were to overlook the ideological aspect of the tense relationship: As a matter of fact, the longstanding conflict between Communist doctrine and practices and the democratic/capitalist value system is intensified by the practices of the Chinese Communist Party, not by a colourless China. The nation’s totalitarian domestic policies shape and influence the global competition with the United States, as do principles, such as human rights and democracy, which matter for concrete, as well as ideological reasons. The author states his belief that America’s faith in democracy and defending it abroad is an advantage; while China’s autocratic values are a downside. Even though autocracy has some advantages, America’s weaknesses still eclipse in comparison to its strengths which are manifest in making huge global wealth and power gains. In terms of power, the writer suggests China poses a threat because it is powerful and hostile, unlike smaller nations such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia which do not represent a threat to America’s national security. He quotes a Department of Defence official who believes a future war is possible with China. In economic terms, China engages the US in unfair trade practices, such as intellectual property theft, government subsidies, and placing limits on foreign corporations. Whereas free trade should be associated with free politics, China neglects this principle, as it seeks aggressive global gains. Furthermore, Koenig points out that China manipulates the world’s economic system and the World Trade Organization, which had been set up by democracies. For China to be a fair player, it must first give up its erroneous domestic practices. From a military perspective, China engages in coercive behaviour vis-à-vis the regional nations with which it has territorial disputes. He holds that a Chinese war with its neighbours is a possibility, should its policies persist. By contrast, a more democratic China would be unlikely to engage in such acts as ethnic cleansing, which makes the case for the impact of ideology. In contrast to the US and Chinese systems, the researcher observes that democracy is better at building alliances and winning wars and that since the second half of the nineteenth century,

the US has been the world's most prosperous nation. China, on the other hand, seeks to disrupt the international system built on democratic and moral values, mostly by the US. Therein lies the difference.

If anything, the article means there are more factors to consider when it comes to the present America-China relations than most experts recognize. A closer examination reveals that Chinese practices abroad are a reflection of and rooted in the internal policies and violations of the CCP. As far as importance is concerned, this article tackles major points that could turn existential for America, China, and other nations. Speaking from a place of foresight and knowledge, Koenig delves into the three-faceted nature of the conflict, but unlike many others, does not discount the ideological component. The article is pertinent mostly to those whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by US-China relations and their far-ranging ramifications, now, and for many years to come. This piece of writing by Koenig can be interpreted to place greater importance on the ideological dimension of today's greatest world powers, although he still acknowledges and briefly dissects the other aspects of military and economic factors. The implication of this exposition is that ideological differences must be considered when examining the American-Chinese tensions and trying to mend them, in addition to acknowledging the other differences, such as rule of law, human rights, and playing by international economic and military rules. The author presents new insights, particularly his point that democracy is more likely to win a war and forge successful alliances, and goes so far as to call the belief that a power struggle is the chief cause of the tensions "a delusion." Such insightful writing that is grounded in fact and analytically rich is recommended for other journalists and political scientists, alike, to produce equally good quality writing (Koenig, 2020).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter briefly discusses the findings of this research. It was found that reasons behind the heated relations between the United States and China were lack of information, national interest and economic, military and ideological factors. It discussed the underlying reasons behind the two nations' lack of cooperation on fighting the novel coronavirus, though other states expected them to. Lastly, the theory of Realism receives due coverage, as a major method to view politics and international relations today.

This research has revealed, however, that while much reporting went into the Trump defunding, little attention was given to the Trump Administration's diversion of the funds to other global health programs; and we would never know what impact those fund diversions would have made, had the decision not been rescinded. I argue that the WHO budget is a serious matter, as many lives depend on it; therefore, all member states must continue to commit resources for vital healthcare efforts, despite the organisation's presumed ineptitude. Additionally, the WHO should carry out its long-promised reforms.

This paper has shown that the turnaround in what used to be reasonably good and mutually beneficial relations between China and the US was brought on by China's intellectual property theft, unfair trade practices, and military threats toward what it considers the breakaway territory of Taiwan. Furthermore, China extended its hegemony to Hong Kong, banning dissent in the mainland, as well as in that economic hub which used to be under British rule, not to mention the Communist system's human rights abuses, and increasing military threat. Indeed, the state of suspicion and enmity could not be better illustrated than the words of former US Director of National Intelligence, John Ratcliff, who characterised the Chinese strategy for growth at the

expense of other world powers, especially the United States of America, as “rob, replicate, and replace.” Researchers, authors and statesmen provided advice in terms of new US strategies to confront the emerging Chinese threat. They suggested increasing military might, as well as economic and strategic alliances. China’s strategy, however, was military and economic expansion, often through aggressive means of tit-for-tat retaliation, such as US Consulate closures and raised tariffs on US goods. The Chinese counter-strategy has been built on three considerations: continued economic growth, social stability, and survival of the Chinese Communist Party. In other words, serious violations on the part of the Chinese have been cited by the Americans, which seem valid according to many sources. However, it behoves both nations to scale down their economic, but more importantly, strategic and nuclear build-up, to avert an all-out war.

All American and Chinese sources herein quoted were relatively fiery, warning and urging greater military preparedness and expansion – advice the US Government seems to have taken, strengthening and building new partnerships (with Vietnam, Australia, India, South Korea, and Japan). Whereas it is believed, major or rising powers are bound to collide, both American Presidents, Donald Trump and Joseph Biden have expressed their governments’ desire not to escalate, preferring instead, to do business and coexist with the Asian giant. After all, there are no winners in war; only losers. Still, the situation has seen a continuation of a heated rivalry.

To Covid-19 patients and their caregivers, perhaps, the absence of scientific and governmental cooperation between the United States of America and the Peoples’ Republic of China is inexcusable. Pundits may study the causes, whether trade, political, and strategic tensions, or personal and governmental sensitivities, insecurities, and lack of interest, but the harm to patients from all walks of life has been very real. This research found that a major reason, in addition to the aforementioned ones, lay in both nations’ poor familiarity of the workings of each other’s healthcare systems and China’s discomfort from America’s viewing of it as less than equal.

China's and the United States' lacking mutual cooperation in the efforts to control and defeat the Covid-19 virus was a stain in the arena of human and health cooperation, which is dictated by sense and necessity.

Going forward, such negative attitudes should not be repeated, and lessons must be learned from the setback to global health, as well as the individual interests of both nations. Instead, cooperation in healthcare should be increased on the governmental and organisational levels, as it impacts all. As such, new policies are to be made to facilitate real collaboration on such an important humanitarian and scientific area.

5.1. Research Limitations

Although greater access to more up-to-date resources would have been helpful, the available resources were adequate for the discussion and analyses on this theme. The use of quantitative data collection, by means of an interview, would have further supported our findings. However, I had no access to Chinese or American students or WHO experts on the subject. Nevertheless, these few limitations have been overcome by the provision of high-quality resources in the form of specialised books, articles, essays, and speeches, ensuring a strong foundation for our study and analysis, making possible good answers to the thesis question. A comprehensive literature review was made to provide ample background of the topic. While I have not encountered any major hurdles in this research, interviews with experts in the field would have been helpful and have contributed to a more voluminous, richer work. Unfortunately, that was far-fetched, due to certain constraints. Nonetheless, the methods employed adequately accomplish my purpose.

5.2. Research Recommendations

Having brought together several resources and added my own analysis, examination, and reflection, my thesis offers an opportunity for other researchers to use and quote, where appropriate, as a primary and a secondary source. One thing is certain, such a rich and important topic continues to call for greater, more insightful research.

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