

Search

- U.S.**
- World**
- Business**
- Tech & Science**
- Culture**
- Newsgeek**
- Sports**
- Health**
- The Debate**
- Vantage**
- Weather**

WORLD

AS EUROPEANS FLAG CONCERNS OVER FAULTY CHINESE CORONAVIRUS EQUIPMENT, STATE MEDIA IS LEADING BEIJING'S FIGHT BACK

BY **DAVID BRENNAN** ON 3/31/20 AT 12:19 PM EDT



WORLD

CHINA

CORONAVIRUS

EUROPE

Chinese state media has gone on the offensive against suggestions that medical supplies sent from the country to European states to help them battle coronavirus was faulty or otherwise inadequate.

Countries including the Netherlands, Spain, Czech Republic and Turkey have all reported in recent weeks that supplies from China—such as protective masks and testing kits—were not fit for purpose.

The rejection of such gear has stirred up animosity, with Chinese state media stubbornly defending Beijing, blaming sinophobia and insecurity for the behavior of Western nations.

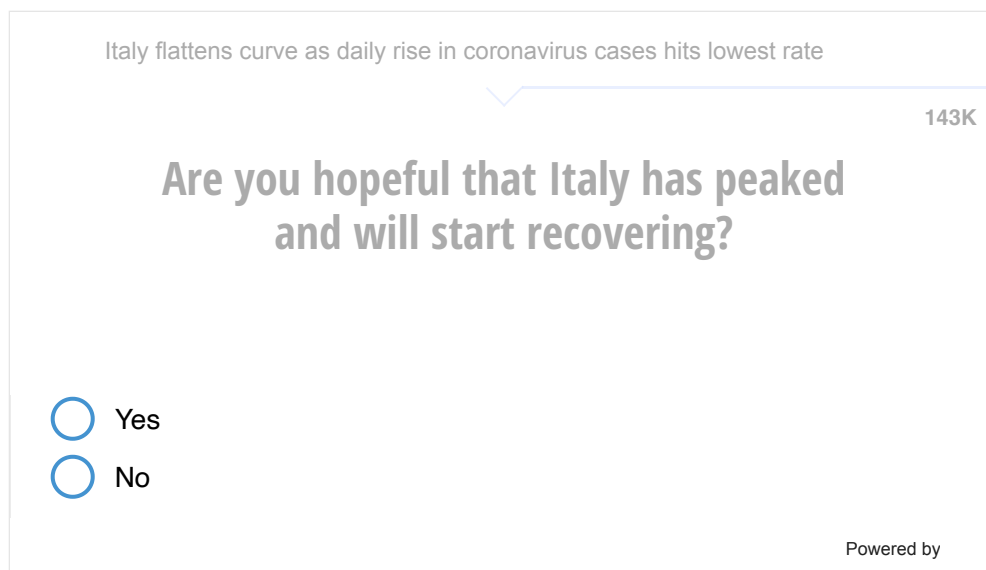
The Chinese city of Wuhan was home to the initial outbreak of COVID-19 coronavirus, which has since spread across the world infecting more than 800,000 people and killing over 38,000. Some 172,000 people are so far known to have recovered.

Though it bungled—and hid—the initial outbreak, China imposed tight restrictions that appear to have stemmed the spread of the virus within the country, though President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are among those who have cast doubt on reports from China.

Beijing is now pivoting to assist worse-hit nations, while attempting to dodge blame for the crisis and avert a second wave of infections. Chinese medical supplies and professionals have been flown to Europe to help the continent, which along with the U.S. has become a new center of the outbreak.

But for all the goodwill, some officials have complained that they cannot use what they have received.

Global Times—a regime backed newspaper that often follows the most nationalistic attitudes within the Chinese Communist Party—described assisting Western nations as "a hard but thankless job." Though it admitted it was "theoretically" possible that some of the equipment was not up to scratch, the editorial also claimed all Chinese products are "undoubtedly reliable."



Regardless, *Global Times* said Western nations should not "exaggerate" the problem, warning, "If public opinion in relevant countries makes a big deal of the quality disputes, this could easily be seen as deliberate provocation by the Chinese public."

This weekend, the Dutch health ministry said it had recalled 600,000 face masks that arrived from a Chinese manufacturer earlier this month. Some of the masks did not fit and their filters were faulty, the ministry said, noting they had already been given to frontline health workers.

Spain said 60,000 coronavirus test kits produced by a Chinese manufacturer were unable to determine if patients were infected while Turkey had similar complaints about a portion of the tests it had ordered.

European Union Foreign Affairs Minister Josep Borrell warned against the "geo-political component" or the "politics of generosity." He added that China is pushing the message that it is a "responsible and reliable partner," though urged Europeans to "defend Europe against its detractors" while "armed with facts."

RELATED STORIES

- [China State Media Says Coronavirus Death Toll Cover-Up Theory Is 'Nonsense'](#)
- [CDC Offers Advice for Reducing Stigma Amid Coronavirus-Related Hate Crimes](#)
- [The U.S. Now Has Over 20 Percent of the World's Total Coronavirus Cases](#)

Another *Global Times* editorial published Monday and carried by the *People's Daily* online—the official newspaper of the CCP—suggested Chinese foreign assistance had "touched a raw nerve" in the West. "Some in the West are once again politicizing the assistance China provided, making it another weapon to slander China," the author claimed.

It dismissed allegations of faulty gear as "nonsense" and said such reports stem from a "deep sense of anxiety" among Beijing's critics. "Through the virus battle, the superiority of China's domestic governance has been fully displayed, and through China's timely assistance to others, the country's international influence has been greatly enhanced," the article claimed.

China has been accused of a slow initial response to the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, plus of silencing medical workers who tried to alert the world to the problem. Chinese media and officials have also spread disinformation about the virus, for example suggesting without evidence that it was caused by the U.S. Army.

The CCP has railed against Trump and his senior allies for describing the sickness as the "China Virus" or the "Wuhan Virus," claiming that the White House is seeking to embolden racists and nationalists in the U.S. while deflecting blame for what has become the world's worst outbreak.

The Trump administration has refused to take world leadership on the coronavirus issue, grappling with domestic controversies rather than coordinating a unified approach. The CCP will be eyeing the power vacuum, not least as a way to take the focus off of its own early failings.

Jacques deLisle, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and an expert in Chinese law and politics, told *Newsweek* that the coronavirus pandemic is a crisis-turned-opportunity for Beijing, though noted that fractious diplomacy and equipment failings show the country is not yet "ready for the prime time" of global leadership.

China's situation has, however, allowed the CCP to demonstrate the strengths of its system—the authoritarian ability to shut things down and redeploy resources—while the U.S. is "running behind every other developed country in terms of the adequacy and promptness of its response," deLisle said.

"The U.S. failure of competence allows China to look very competent and to not take the heat it deserves," deLisle added, whether over coronavirus or other authoritarian behavior.

World Health Organization advice for avoiding spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Hygiene advice

- Clean hands frequently with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wash hands after coughing or sneezing; when caring for the sick; before, during and after food preparation; before eating; after using the toilet; when hands are