



Pandemic Treachery: The Intelligence Agent Who Shut Down America

Description

USA: Matt Pottinger, Deputy National Security Advisor in the Trump Administration, may go down in history as a modern-day Alger Hiss. Hiss was high-ranking State Department official ultimately convicted of being a Communist spy. He is also credited with the idea of creating the World Health Organization in 1948. This article shows that Pottinger was a conduit for lockdown policies that came straight out of China. ? TN Editor

In 1948, the US House of Representatives received a tip from a man named Whittaker Chambers that several federal officials had been working for the communists. One of these officials was more than happy to appear before Congress to clear his name—a leading State Department and United Nations representative named Alger Hiss.

The rakish Hiss was the exemplary American statesman: Polite, pedigreed, well-spoken, and a Harvard man to boot. During the 1945 United Nations conference, the Chinese delegation had proposed the creation of a new international health organization. After the Chinese failed to get a resolution passed, Hiss recommended establishing the organization by declaration, and the [World Health Organization](#) was born.

In Congress, Hiss coolly denied the allegations and denounced his deadbeat accuser for the libelous claims. The House came away newly reassured that the State Department was in excellent hands.

(Spoiler alert: He was then and always had been a communist.)

The next year, intelligence leaks from the federal service led to the Soviet Union's first successful nuclear test, ending the security afforded by America's nuclear monopoly 15 years earlier than experts expected. Shortly thereafter, Kim Il-Sung and Chairman Mao used the cover of Soviet nuclear weapons to invade South Korea. The ensuing war claimed over 3 million lives and resulted in the permanent recognition of the nation of North Korea.

Around this time, a little-known Congressman from California's 12th district named Richard M. Nixon pressed Chambers for more information. Chambers reluctantly led Tricky Dick to a package of State Department materials he had hidden in a pumpkin patch—including notes in Hiss's own writing. Alger

Hiss became the most high-level American official ever convicted in connection with working for the communists.

To be honest, I barely knew who Matt Pottinger was until I read that he'd appointed Deborah Birx as White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator in her bizarrely self-incriminating memoir *Silent Invasion*, which reads like it was written by the Chinese Communist Party itself. There's little information about Pottinger's role in Covid online.

Yet Pottinger is portrayed as a leading protagonist in three different pro-lockdown books on America's response to Covid-19: *The Plague Year* by the New Yorker's Lawrence Wright, *Nightmare Scenario* by the Washington Post's Yasmeen Abutaleb, and *Chaos Under Heaven* by the Washington Post's Josh Rogin. Pottinger's singularly outsized role in pushing for alarm, shutdowns, mandates, and science from China in the early months of Covid is extremely well-documented.

Pottinger's enormous influence during Covid is especially surprising not only because of his absence from online discussion about these events, but because of who he is.

The son of leading Department of Justice official Stanley Pottinger, Matt Pottinger graduated with a degree in Chinese studies in 1998 before going to work as a journalist in China for seven years, where he reported on topics including the original SARS. In 2005, Pottinger unexpectedly left journalism and obtained an age waiver to join the US Marine Corps.

Over several tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, Pottinger became a decorated intelligence officer and met General Michael Flynn, who later appointed him to the National Security Council (NSC). Pottinger was originally in line to be China Director, but Flynn gave him the more senior job of Asia Director.

Despite being new to civilian government, Pottinger outlasted many others in Trump's White House. In September 2019, Pottinger was named Deputy National Security Advisor, second only to National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien.

Pottinger is best known as a China hawk, but a smart and sophisticated one. He's been ahead of the curve in calling out China's increasingly aggressive geopolitical stance, articulating this challenge with near-perfect eloquence.

As Politico writes, **"While hawks like Bannon love his tough views toward China, even Democrats call his views basically mainstream. Still, some foreign policy experts...wonder what a nice guy like him is doing in a place like this."** **"He's a very effective bureaucratic player,** which is saying something because he's never had a policy job before," the New York Times agreed. **"Matt has an extraordinary sense of caution that, 'Let's not push something unless the president clearly has approved it.'** This is different from other members of White House staff," the Washington Post admired.

While many Trump administration officials have floundered since Trump left the White House, “**things are going well for Pottinger,**” Vox gushed. “[T]hat subject matter expertise—plus the patina afforded by resigning on January 6—has helped Pottinger, a former journalist, expertly navigate the post-Trump landscape. He even emerged as **the White House hero of the initial Covid-19 chaos in New Yorker writer Lawrence Wright’s chronicle of *The Plague Year*...** One reason that Matt Pottinger was welcomed back into the establishment is that, unlike some of Trump’s unconventional appointees, he had already been a part of the elite.”

From the center-right to the center-left and the far right to the far left, it’s tough to find anyone on the Beltway short on praise for Matt Pottinger. Everything about Pottinger is silky smooth. Between the lines of glowing coverage are not-so-subtle winks and nudges that he’d make an excellent candidate for higher office.

1. Ratcheting Up Alarm via “Asymptomatic Spread”

In January 2020, Pottinger unilaterally called meetings and ratcheted up alarm about the new coronavirus in the White House based on information from his own sources in China, despite having no official intelligence to back up his alarmism, breaching protocol on several occasions.

In Washington, Matt Pottinger was first made aware of the new coronavirus after China’s CDC Director called US CDC Director Robert Redfield to report it on January 3, 2020. According to Pottinger, he grew increasingly alarmed due to the rumors he saw on Chinese social media. As Wright reports:

He was struck by the disparity between official accounts of the novel coronavirus in China, which scarcely mentioned the disease, and **Chinese social media, which was aflame with rumors and anecdotes.**

Pottinger therefore authorized the first interagency meeting on the coronavirus based on these social media reports. There was no official intelligence to prompt the meeting.

On January 14, Pottinger authorized a briefing for the NSC staff by the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services, along with CDC director Redfield. **That first interagency meeting to discuss the situation in Wuhan wasn’t prompted by official intelligence; in fact, there was practically none of that.**

On **January 27, 2020**, Trump’s staff attended the first full meeting on the coronavirus in the White House Situation Room. Unbeknownst to those in attendance, Pottinger had unilaterally called the meeting. Others urged calm, but Pottinger immediately began pushing for travel bans. As Abutaleb writes:

Few people in the room knew it, but Pottinger had actually called the meeting. The Chinese weren’t providing the US government much information about the virus, and Pottinger didn’t trust what they were disclosing anyway. **He had spent two weeks scouring Chinese social media feeds and had uncovered dramatic reports of the new infectious disease** suggesting that it was much worse than the Chinese government had revealed. He had also seen reports that the virus might have escaped from a lab in Wuhan, China. There were too many unanswered questions. **He told everyone in the Sit Room that they needed to consider enacting a travel ban immediately: ban all travel from China; shut it down**

...

[Pottinger] spent several days calling some of his old contacts in China, doctors who would tell him the truth. And they had told him that things were bad—and only going to get worse. Pottinger's discourse was measured but he conveyed the gravity of the threat. **He said that the virus was spreading fast. He said that dramatic actions would need to be taken**, which was why the government should consider banning travel from China to the United States until it had a better understanding of what was going on. **As he continued, people sat up in their chairs. This was not the “we’ve got everything handled” message that Azar had conveyed just minutes earlier.**

As Wright documents, the health officials thought travel restrictions would be futile.

Predictably, the public health representatives were resistant, too: viruses found ways to travel no matter what. Moreover, at least 14,000 passengers from China were arriving in the U.S. every day; there was no feasible way to quarantine them all. **These arguments would join a parade of other public health verities that would be jettisoned during the pandemic.**

Among those present, Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney appears to have been the only one to express skepticism of Pottinger's information. As Abutaleb writes:

Mulvaney intervened to wrap things up. He could tell that Pottinger and a few others were calling for a dramatic change, one that was an anathema to his libertarian instincts. **He was pretty skeptical of Pottinger's “sources” in China, too. They weren't going to be setting US policy based on what someone had heard from their “friend” thousands of miles away.** Mulvaney reiterated that they would reconvene the next day to discuss matters again before anything was settled. He warned attendees not to leak any details of the meeting to the media.

The next morning, **January 28, 2020**, Pottinger says he spoke to a doctor in China who told him the new coronavirus would be as bad as the 1918 Spanish flu, and that half the cases were asymptomatic. As Rogin writes:

The next morning, Pottinger had a conversation with a very high-level doctor in China, one who had spoken with health officials in several provinces, including Wuhan. This was a trusted source who was in a position to know the ground truth. “Is this going to be as bad as SARS in 2003?” he asked the doctor, whose name must remain secret for his own protection. **“Forget SARS in 2003,” the doctor replied, “this is 1918.”**

The doctor told Pottinger half the cases were asymptomatic and the government must have known all about it.

Later that same day, National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien brought Pottinger into the Oval Office, where he seized the first opportunity to repeat to the President what the doctor in China had told him that morning.

“This is the single greatest national security crisis of your presidency and it's now unfolding,” O'Brien told the president. **“It's going to be 1918,” Pottinger told Trump. “Holy fuck,” the president replied.**

Wright goes into more detail on this meeting, in which Pottinger interjected to alarm the President:

Later that day, the national security adviser, **Robert O'Brien, brought Pottinger into the Oval Office, where the president was getting his daily intelligence briefing. Far down the list of threats was the mysterious new virus in China.** The briefer didn't seem to take it seriously. O'Brien did. "This will be the biggest national security threat you will face in your presidency," he warned. **"Is this going to be as bad or worse than SARS in 2003?" Trump asked.** The briefer responded that it wasn't clear yet. **Pottinger, who was sitting on a couch, jumped to his feet.** He had seen enough high-level arguments in the Oval Office to know that Trump relished clashes between agencies. "Mr. President, I actually covered that," he said, **recounting his experience with SARS and what he was learning now from his sources—most shockingly, that more than half of the spread of the disease was by asymptomatic carriers.** China had already curbed travel within the country, but every day thousands of people were traveling from China to the U.S.—half a million in January alone. **"Should we shut down travel?" the president asked. "Yes," Pottinger said unequivocally.**

That same day, Pottinger and the White House staff reconvened in the Situation Room. Pottinger recalls that he'd been especially inspired into action by Xi Jinping's lockdown of Wuhan and by the hospital that the CCP claims to have built in 10 days, but did not actually build. As Abutaleb reports:

A few hours later, Pottinger and other government officials filed back into the Situation Room.

Pottinger knew he was going to be outnumbered. Mulvaney and his allies didn't want to allow the NSC to do anything that might be too disruptive. Blocking travel from China would be an unprecedented intervention. And over what? Five cases of the sniffles in the United States?...

On January 23, China announced that it was locking down Wuhan, a city of 11 million people. The shutdown was extended to several more cities in the coming days, with travel prohibited inside much of the country. Tens of millions of people were effectively locked in their homes. **The Chinese were rapidly building an entire hospital in Wuhan that was completed within days.** Everyone in the country was wearing a mask. People in hazmat suits took passengers' temperatures before anyone was allowed into the subway. China had gone from reluctantly admitting that there had been a few cases of person-to-person spread to shutting down the world's second largest economy. **If the virus had brought the world's most populous country to a standstill, some top US officials, especially Pottinger, knew they should be doing more.**

As Deputy National Security Advisor, Pottinger was supposed to "avoid arguing forcefully for any particular outcome," so he brought Peter Navarro to make his arguments for him. Abutaleb continues:

But as deputy national security advisor, Pottinger was in an awkward position. He was supposed to be chairing the meeting, which meant that **his job was to solicit input from others in the room and avoid arguing forcefully for any particular outcome.** That fact tied his hands. **He needed someone else to make the more pointed parts of his argument for him.** Someone who would stand up to everyone else in the room unflinchingly. **He knew just the person: a reviled troublemaker named Peter Navarro,** the director of the White House National Trade Council...

Pottinger's plan to use Navarro as his mouthpiece seemed to work initially, but then Navarro kept going. And going... They needed to ban travel, and they needed to do it now.

Pottinger had been waiting for an opening. He told his colleagues that he had come across some alarming information:

Chinese officials were no longer able to contact trace the virus. In other words, it was so widespread that they couldn't determine where people had contracted it. **And he relayed the Chinese suspicions about asymptomatic spread:** people who seemed perfectly healthy were transmitting the virus, not just in China but potentially everywhere, including in the United States.

Once again, Mulvaney was skeptical of Pottinger. Three months prior, Navarro had been [caught](#) citing himself as an expert source using the pseudonym "Ron Vara":

Mulvaney couldn't believe what he was witnessing. Pottinger and Navarro had nearly pulled off a policy ambush. "Look," Mulvaney told someone at the meeting, **"I've got Pottinger with a friend of his in Hong Kong as a source. I've got Navarro, who makes up his sources,** and then on the other side of the equation I've got Kadlec and Fauci and Redfield, three experts, who say not to shut down flights just yet."

A health expert pointed out that the statistic Pottinger had reported from the doctor in China about asymptomatic spread couldn't be true.

One of the government health experts pulled Pottinger aside. The stat Pottinger had cited, the one about half of all people with the virus being asymptomatic, there's just no way that can be true, the person said. **No one has ever heard of a coronavirus similar to SARS or MERS whose spread can be driven in part by asymptomatic carriers.** That would be a game changer.

On **February 1**, Mulvaney tried to rein Pottinger in. As Rogin reports:

Concerned about the political implications, **Mulvaney tried to rein in Pottinger. He took O'Brien aside and told him, "You've got to get Pottinger under control." Pottinger was too young, Mulvaney said, and too immature to be deputy national security adviser.** Mulvaney was among the most skeptical of all the White House officials that the virus threat was real. In late February, as the markets tanked, Mulvaney said the media was exaggerating the threat in an effort to bring down President Trump, calling it the "hoax of the day." As he prepared the White House's first budget to respond to the emerging crisis, Mulvaney pegged the total cost at \$800 million. (Mulvaney was pushed out in early March.)

2. Pottinger's Crusade for Universal Masking

In February 2020, Pottinger, who has no background in science or public health, began a months-long campaign to popularize universal masking and travel quarantines in response to the coronavirus based on information from his own sources in China.

Beginning in February 2020, Pottinger began a crusade for Americans to adopt universal masking in response to the new coronavirus based on recommendations from his own sources in China. As Abutaleb writes:

Back in February, Matt Pottinger had relayed what he had hoped would be received as good news by the Coronavirus Task Force. **His contacts in China had found a way to significantly slow the virus's spread: face coverings.**

Pottinger began wearing a mask to work in early March to convince his White House colleagues to

take up the practice.

A mask, however, could significantly stem transmission, Pottinger argued. If people's noses and mouths were covered, they would emit far fewer respiratory droplets, lowering the risk of infecting others. **Pottinger began wearing a mask to work in early March.** But he didn't wear a simple cloth face covering; he wore what other White House aides thought was a gas mask. **He looked like a lunatic, some snickered, and it reinforced his reputation as an alarmist. One staffer described him as "being at a hundred" as early as January (on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of concern).**

Pottinger, who has no background in science or public health, pushed for mask mandates in the White House and for staff to be quarantined if they traveled outside Washington.

Having lived in China during the SARS outbreak, he saw the importance of the speed with which Asian countries had mobilized. **In early February, he recommended that NSC staffers who traveled outside Washington—even to other parts of the United States—quarantine before returning to work.** He also wanted NSC staff to telework when possible, limit in-person meetings, restrict the number of people who could be in a room at one time, **and be required to wear masks. That struck many White House aides as absurd. There were just a handful of known cases at the time; the virus was barely a blip on most people's radars.** No one else was changing their workplace standards...

Pottinger urged the adoption of universal masking as had been ordered by "governments in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong."

Pottinger pointed to a handful of Asian countries where the use of face coverings was universal. The governments in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong had ordered their citizens to wear masks with seemingly indisputable results.

Pottinger saw no "downside" in universal masking, though there was no data and research to show it was effective.

Pottinger's heart sank as he saw the tweet and the ensuing messages. **What was the downside in having people cover their faces while they waited for more data and research about how effective masks might be?**

Pottinger proposed delivering a mask to every mailbox in America. As Wright reports:

Pottinger and Robert Kadlec, an assistant secretary at Health and Human Services, came up with an idea to put masks in every mailbox in America. Hanes, the underwear company, offered to make antimicrobial masks that were machine washable. "We couldn't get it through the task force," Pottinger told his brother. "We got machine-gunned down before we could even move on it." **Masks were still seen as useless or even harmful by the administration and even public health officials.**

Matt Pottinger's crusade for the adoption of universal masking based on information from his own sources in China is especially peculiar because, as of the time of this writing, though there are hundreds of [pictures of Pottinger online](#), there does not appear to be a single one in which he is wearing a mask anywhere on the Internet.

3. Popularizing Shutdowns

In January 2020, Pottinger popularized shutdowns within the White House using a dubious study on the 1918 flu pandemic comparing outcomes between Philadelphia and St. Louis, a month before this study received any significant media attention.

If you live in the United States, you probably remember the ludicrous study that made the rounds among major media outlets in March 2020 comparing outcomes in Philadelphia and St. Louis during the 1918 Spanish flu. According to the [study](#), St. Louis canceled its annual parade, closed schools, and discouraged gatherings in 1918, while Philadelphia did not, so Philadelphia was punished when thousands of residents died of flu over the coming weeks. Therefore, these media outlets argued, it somehow logically followed that we should shut down the entire United States economy in 2020.

One man who was several weeks ahead of media outlets in citing this claptrap was Matt Pottinger. As Wright reports, Pottinger began popularizing the idea of shutdowns within the White House by circulating this study among his White House colleagues on **January 31, 2020**.

Matt Pottinger handed out a study of the 1918 flu pandemic to his colleagues in the White House, indicating the differing outcomes between the experiences of Philadelphia and St. Louis—a clear example of the importance of leadership, transparency, and following the best scientific counsel.

4. Appointing Deborah Birx as White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator

Beginning in January 2020, Pottinger began petitioning for Deborah Birx to be appointed as White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator. Birx then embarked on a months-long scorched earth campaign for lockdowns that were as long and strict as possible across the United States.

On January 28, 2020, Pottinger began to reach out to Deborah Birx to have her come to the White House to lead the response to the Coronavirus. As Birx recalls in her book:

On January 28, after meeting with Erin Walsh to solidify the planning and schedule for the upcoming African Diplomatic Corps State Department meeting, **I received a text from Yen Pottinger**. Aside from being the wife of my friend Matt, the deputy national security advisor, Yen was also a former colleague at the CDC and a trusted friend and neighbor...

Matt had apologized for the short notice and said he hoped we could meet face-to-face. Yen arranged so that I could meet him in the West Wing, and once we were both there, **Matt got to the point quickly. He offered me the position of White House spokesperson on the virus.**

Abutaleb goes into more detail on Birx's relationship with Pottinger. Pottinger was married to one of Birx's subordinates who'd developed a widely-used HIV test at the CDC.

[Birx] made a number of powerful connections along the way. **When she became head of the CDC's Division of Global HIV/AIDS, one of her subordinates was a bright virologist named Yen Duong, who developed a widely used HIV test while working at the agency. Duong would eventually marry**

a Wall Street Journal reporter turned marine named **Matt Pottinger**, a connection that would eventually bring Birx into Trump's orbit.

According to Pottinger and Birx, he pleaded with her over several weeks to head the Coronavirus Task Force, and she reluctantly agreed. The hero we didn't need. As Birx recalls in her book:

It is March 2, 2020. I've just flown in overnight from South Africa to take on the role of response coordinator for the White House Coronavirus Task Force, a job I didn't seek but felt compelled to accept. I'm physically tired but mentally alert. **After weeks of urging from Matthew Pottinger—President Trump's deputy national security advisor, a task force member himself**, and the husband of a former colleague and friend of mine—I finally gave in to Matt's request that I come on board to help with the response to the coronavirus outbreak...

Matt Pottinger, was one of the good ones in the Trump White House. A former journalist turned highly-decorated U.S. Marine who served as an intelligence officer for part of his time, **Matt had deep experience in China (including during the 2002–2003 SARS outbreak there) and was fluent in Mandarin.** Matt took a position in the National Security Council in the earliest stage of the Trump administration, while still serving in the Marine Reserves.

As documented in her bizarre tell-all book, which received uniquely excellent reviews from Chinese state media, Birx then embarked on a months-long, largely clandestine, scorched-earth crusade to orchestrate lockdowns that were as long and strict as possible across the United States. These lockdowns ultimately killed tens of thousands of young Americans while failing to meaningfully slow the spread of the coronavirus everywhere they were tried. By her own admission, she lied, hid data, and manipulated the president's administration to drive consent for lockdowns that were stricter than the administration realized until finally stepping down soon after breaking her own travel guidance to visit her family for Thanksgiving in November 2020.

No sooner had we convinced the Trump administration to implement our version of a two-week shutdown than I was trying to figure out how to extend it. Fifteen Days to Slow the Spread was a start, but I knew it would be just that. **I didn't have the numbers in front of me yet to make the case for extending it longer, but I had two weeks to get them.** However hard it had been to get the fifteen-day shutdown approved, getting another one would be more difficult by many orders of magnitude.

In October 2020, while visiting Utah, Pottinger admired his handiwork in appointing Birx. Wright reports:

Utah had just hit a record high number of new cases. On the ride, an alarm sounded on Pottinger's cell phone in the saddlebag. **It was an alert: "Almost every single county is a high transmission area. Hospitals are nearly overwhelmed. By public health order masks are required in high transmission areas." Pottinger thought, "Debi must have met with the governor."**

5. Promoting Mass Testing

Sometime in February 2020, Pottinger, who has no background in science or public health, appears to have promoted within the White House the idea of mass testing for the coronavirus. Wright recounts:

At a Coronavirus Task Force meeting, **Redfield announced that the CDC would send a limited number of test kits to five "sentinel cities."** Pottinger was stunned: **five cities? Why not send them everywhere?**

He learned that the CDC makes tests, but not at scale. For that, you have to go to a company like Roche or Abbott—molecular testing powerhouses which have the experience and capacity to manufacture millions of tests a month.

Using the standard PCR cycle thresholds of 37 to 40 later provided in the testing guidance [published](#) by the WHO, approximately 85% to 90% of these cases were false positives, as later confirmed by *The New York Times*.

6. Endorsing Remdesivir

In March 2020, Pottinger appears to have endorsed use of the drug remdesivir as a possible Covid therapy based on information from a doctor in China. Wright reports:

In the early morning of March 4, as Matt Pottinger was driving to the White House, he was on the phone with a source in China, a doctor. Taking notes on the back of an envelope while holding the phone to his ear and navigating the city traffic, **Pottinger was excited by all the valuable new information about how the virus was being contained in China. The doctor specifically mentioned the antiviral drug remdesivir.**

The health outcomes of remdesivir remain unknown, but no benefit to the mortality of its recipients has been proven.

7. Pushing Intelligence to Believe Covid Came From a Lab

Pottinger has continually promoted the idea that the coronavirus came from a lab, and specifically prodded the US intelligence community to do the same, regardless of evidence, while urging the global adoption of China's virus containment measures.

In January 2020, Pottinger began directly prodding the CIA to look for evidence that the coronavirus came from a lab in Wuhan, China. As the New York Times disclosed:

With his skeptical—some might even say conspiratorial—view of China's ruling Communist Party, Mr. **Pottinger initially suspected** that President Xi Jinping's government was keeping a dark secret: **that the virus may have originated in one of the laboratories in Wuhan studying deadly pathogens.** In his view, it might have even been a deadly accident unleashed on an unsuspecting Chinese population.

During meetings and telephone calls, Mr. **Pottinger asked intelligence agencies—including officers at the C.I.A. working on Asia and on weapons of mass destruction—to search for evidence that might bolster his theory.**

They didn't have any evidence. Intelligence agencies did not detect any alarm inside the Chinese government that analysts presumed would accompany the accidental leak of a deadly virus from a government laboratory. But Mr. Pottinger continued to believe the coronavirus problem was far worse than the Chinese were acknowledging.

Though the CIA did not return any evidence to support his theory, Pottinger has continued to promote the conclusion that the coronavirus leaked from the Wuhan lab, despite quietly admitting that the virus

was not man-made or genetically modified. As CBS reported in its interview on February 21, 2021:

MARGARET BRENNAN: U.S. intelligence has said COVID, according to wide scientific consensus, was not man-made or genetically modified. You are not in any way alleging that it was, are you?

MATT POTTINGER: No.

Much of the initial alarm that Covid might be a supervirus from the Wuhan lab arose because of the frightening videos of Wuhan residents spontaneously dying in January 2020, and because Xi Jinping decided to shut down Wuhan, where the lab was. However, all of those videos were soon proven fake, and US intelligence has confirmed that the virus was spreading in Wuhan by November 2019 at the latest. A growing body of research suggests that the virus did not start either in the Wuhan lab or the Wuhan wet market, and a number of studies from various continents have shown that the virus was also spreading undetected [all](#) over the world by November 2019 at the latest, many months before lockdowns began.

Covid's origins remain a mystery, and leading scientists and policymakers were nowhere near transparent enough about their [panic](#) that the virus might have come from a lab in early 2020. However, given that the national security community has quietly admitted Covid is not genetically modified, it began spreading undetected globally many months before lockdowns, and it did not cause Wuhan residents to spontaneously die, the question of whether Covid came from the lab would appear to be a moot point from a national security perspective.

Furthermore, in my [book](#) and elsewhere, there is a growing body of evidence that the CCP used a variety of clandestine means to promote the idea that Covid came from a lab, both to stoke fear and to mislead the western intelligence community from the CCP's well-documented campaign for global adoption of China's virus containment measures. Likewise, Pottinger has continually promoted the idea that Covid came from a lab, and prodded the intelligence community to do the same, while urging the adoption of China's virus containment measures. Pottinger's credulousness in sharing and promoting scientific concepts and policies from China including asymptomatic spread, universal masking, quarantines, shutdowns, and remdesivir further belies the notion that the fixation on the Wuhan lab serves any legitimate national security interest.

In summary, as Deputy National Security Advisor, Matt Pottinger played a singularly outsized role in shaping America's disastrous response to Covid by taking the following actions:

- 1. Throughout January 2020, Pottinger unilaterally called White House meetings unbeknownst to those in attendance and breached protocol to ratchet up alarm about the new coronavirus based on information from his own sources in China, despite having no official intelligence to back up his alarmism.**
- 2. Despite having no background in science or public health, beginning in February 2020, Pottinger embarked on a months-long campaign to urge the adoption of universal masking and travel quarantines in response to the coronavirus based on information from his own sources in China. However, there does not appear to be a single picture of Pottinger wearing a mask anywhere on the Internet.**

3. **Pottinger popularized the idea of shutdowns within the White House using a questionable study on the 1918 flu pandemic comparing outcomes between Philadelphia and St. Louis, a month before this study received any significant attention from media outlets in 2020.**
4. **Pottinger specifically courted Deborah Birx to serve as White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, who then embarked on a months-long campaign for lockdowns that were as long and strict as possible across the United States.**
5. **Despite having no background in science or public health, Pottinger appears to have promoted the idea of mass testing for the coronavirus.**
6. **Pottinger appears to have endorsed use of the drug remdesivir as a possible Covid therapy based on information from a doctor in China.**
7. **Pottinger has continually promoted the conclusion that the coronavirus came from a lab, and specifically prodded the US intelligence community to do the same, regardless of evidence to support that conclusion, while simultaneously urging the global adoption of China's virus containment measures.**

In Pottinger's speeches, he often discusses the need for more grassroots populism in China.

Pottinger may have simply been overly-trusting of his sources, thinking they were the little people in China trying to help their American friends. But why did Pottinger push so hard for sweeping Chinese policies like mask mandates that were far outside his field of expertise? Why did he so often breach protocol? Why seek out and appoint Deborah Birx?

Pottinger's zealotry in endorsing these sweeping policies is even more bewildering because it's widely known in the intelligence community that the CCP's primary focus is on information warfare—"superseding their cultural and political values" to those of the west and undermining the western values that Xi Jinping sees as threatening, outlined in his leaked Document No. 9: "independent judiciaries," "human rights," "western freedom," "civil society," "freedom of the press," and the "free flow of information on the internet."

Though political conditions in China have deteriorated rapidly, Pottinger is supposed to know that—that's why he had the Top Secret security clearance and the big job in the National Security Council. In fact, we know how rapidly conditions in China have deteriorated in part because Matt Pottinger is the one who told us. The only reason anyone accepted all this information and guidance from these Chinese sources is that it came through Pottinger.

I certainly can't pass judgment. But from where I'm sitting, it looks like we've been struck by a smooth criminal.

POSTED BY: MICHAEL P. SENG

Category

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Disasters-Crisis-Depopulation-Genocide
3. Health-Wellness-Healing-Nutrition & Fitness
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