

# The Influence of COVID-19 Epidemic on China's Public Diplomatic Relations under Global Governance

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**ABSTRACT.** *At present, the interconnection and interaction between China and the international community has become unprecedentedly close. China's dependence on the world and its participation in international affairs are deepening, and the world's dependence on China and its influence on China are also deepening. From the current situation of China's public diplomacy, the competitive public diplomacy front is in a passive situation, while the cooperative public diplomacy front has achieved remarkable results. Many recent events in the world economy show that the pneumonia epidemic in COVID-19 is likely to lead to a global economic crisis, which will fundamentally change the connotation of globalization, the pillar of the world's overall stability for decades, and promote the major reshaping of China's current public diplomacy. Based on this, this paper discusses the impact of COVID-19 epidemic on China's public diplomatic relations under global governance.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Global governance; COVID-19 epidemic; Public diplomacy*

## 1. Introduction

With the in-depth development of globalization and the rapid advancement of information revolution, the links between countries are getting closer and closer, and people's access to information is becoming more and more diversified. Especially, the emergence and prosperity of the Internet makes it easy for ordinary people in various countries to obtain the information resources they need, which has a great impact on the lives of the country and people. Participation in international affairs should have a three-dimensional, pluralistic and time-space perspective, and it is necessary to coordinate and use various resources [1]. International anti-China forces exploit the topic, make hype, create chaos, and attempt to interfere and block the development of our country. In view of this, the Chinese government has repeatedly stressed that China will not threaten other countries, and that China will pursue the concept of "peaceful development".

In January 2020, pneumonia broke out in COVID-19, which was initially regarded as a local crisis and rapidly evolved into a global public health crisis in just two months. During the months when the epidemic spread, governments and diplomatic departments of various countries actively participated in the work of curbing the spread of pneumonia in COVID-19, and made efforts in promoting international cooperation, providing assistance to overseas citizens and accelerating the flow of medical materials. The outbreak of pneumonia in COVID-19 has swept over 200 countries and regions so far, and many of them have declared a state of emergency because of the serious outbreak. This epidemic has been called an important event with the influence of the times, forcing people to rethink how it will affect China's current public diplomacy.

## 2. Focus on the Changing World Pattern

No matter how the world changes, the historical trend of China going to the world and the world embracing China will not change. The global prevalence of pneumonia in COVID-19 shows the fundamental attribute and characteristics of the times of human society. Countries all over the world have a deeper feeling of the urgency of carrying out extensive multi-field cooperation and realizing common development and security. Novel coronavirus epidemic prevention and control is a typical case of China's participation in global health governance [3]. By participating in global health governance, China seeks international resources through multilateralism to improve its own health status; On the other hand, through the interaction with international organizations, it can enhance its global influence. The current contradiction in America is the contradiction between Wall Street and America. In order to maintain dollar hegemony, Wall Street must maintain oil; Strategic contraction and the return of manufacturing to the United States are beneficial to the United States. Trump is the president of America, and

Hillary Clinton is the spokesman of Wall Street, so she has occupied Wall Street instead of the White House. The COVID-19 outbreak is a sudden global crisis, which has a more obvious impact on the balance of power in the international system and the strategic relationship between major international actors, and this impact further affects other aspects of the international system.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 epidemic has had a great impact on the world economy, which has a certain impact on the strength structure in the international system because its impact on countries all over the world is not uniform. People weaken the debate on the connotation of public diplomacy dimension, pay more attention to the research of foreign dimension, and expand the connotation of foreign dimension, while the research of domestic dimension has been weakened to a certain extent; Historically, the United States has been alternately dominated by realism and idealism in the formulation of foreign policy [4]. The diplomatic logic of idealism is to pay more attention to in-depth and meticulous work at the grassroots level of the people, and pay more attention to moral actions full of emotions to win the support of the people. Different policy manifestations and anti-epidemic concepts caused by COVID-19 epidemic should not be simply resolved into institutional competition. Instead, human society has jointly obtained a window to open different systems and policies to deal with diversity, providing a rare opportunity to learn from each other's experience and lessons in anti-epidemic and coordinate economic reconstruction after the disaster.

In material diplomacy, China provides the European Union and the United States with tight medical supplies such as respirators and masks. Up to now, there have been 30 live webcasts of the "Global Epidemic Meeting Clinic" organized by CGTN, with over 100 million visits by independent users. These measures have reversed the prejudice of global public opinion on China's plan to a certain extent through the wide spread of social media. In order to effectively guide the international public opinion on epidemic prevention and control, it is necessary to timely inform the World Health Organization, relevant countries and regional organizations of the treatment of patients and prevention and control measures through public diplomacy, share the experience of prevention and control and diagnosis and treatment, and obtain the support of the international community.

### **3. Influence of COVID-19 Epidemic on International Pattern and Trend**

#### ***3.1 The COVID-19 epidemic has had a phased impact on the strength of big countries***

The global pandemic of COVID-19 epidemic has had a great impact on the world economy, which has a certain impact on the strength structure in the international system because its impact on countries all over the world is not uniform. In addition to all kinds of false information about health, the prevalence of conspiracy theories during the crisis has become an important symbol of this "information epidemic". In the absence of information and trust, the public often regards conspiracy theories as a cognitive framework to understand what is happening now. Among the major international actors, countries with relatively small losses are objectively relative beneficiaries. In the stable state of the international system, the relative return is not a serious problem in the relations between countries [5]. The goal of public diplomacy is to establish inter-state relations, including understanding other countries' cultures and people's needs, conveying their own values, correcting other countries' people's misconceptions, finding their own interests and so on.

The last round of globalization of single-dimensional cognition is facing its own counter-attack, but multi-dimensional globalization will not end. Reorganized globalization in the post-COVID-19 period may gradually form multiple parallel or nested time and space globalization scenarios. In this multiple time and space dimensions, the interaction among the state, society and market produces a variety of combination forms, which should explore the realization of the new concept of global "cooperative governance in mobility" and provide policy, system and ideological guarantee for the community of human destiny.

#### ***3.2 The epidemic has had a great negative impact on the international image and strategic reputation of the United States, and has reduced the leadership of the United States in international affairs***

In today's world situation, the United States continues to maintain its superpower status, and China seems to have better conditions to become a superpower than Russia and Japan. Under this situation, it is inevitable for the United States to keep an eye on China's development trend. Open diplomacy only involves the government's disclosure of relevant foreign policies to let the public know the inside story of diplomacy, but more importantly, it lies in publicizing the government's diplomatic behavior and accepting public supervision. Since March, 2020,

many problems and mistakes in the anti-epidemic process in the United States are hard to imagine beforehand. The number of infections and deaths in the United States far exceeds that in other countries, and after a long time of efforts, it still failed to effectively prevent the large-scale spread of the epidemic, which is inconsistent with the impression of the world that the United States is the most powerful and technologically advanced country in the world, and has damaged the international image of the United States. By amplifying public anxiety and diverting public attention to the development of the epidemic, conspiracy theories weaken people's trust in the government, dispel people's trust in legitimate media, and breed doubts and fears about other countries. The current epidemic did not unite European countries, but made their contradictions more prominent. It remains to be seen whether the EU can give full play to the role of maintaining European unity in the future.

### ***3.3 The global epidemic has had a rather complex impact on the strategic relationship between major powers***

Among them, the most obvious manifestation is that Sino-US relations continue to deteriorate. Against the background of the epidemic, the United States still does not relax its strategic squeeze on China. At present, the tangible or intangible losses caused by the epidemic in the world are difficult to estimate, and the destructiveness is still increasing. It can be seen that confrontational factors have been injected into international relations, especially the relations between major powers, and there is a voice that intends to politicize China's anti-epidemic actions. At the same time, economic globalization is facing new challenges, and a series of voices of "de-globalization" and arguments of "the end of globalization" appear in the international community [6]. Public diplomacy tries to influence the foreign public's attitude towards their country by publicizing their foreign policies and strengthening cultural exchanges between countries, thus improving their national image. From the perspective of China's diplomatic situation, the main goal of public diplomacy lies in how to establish a good image of China among people all over the world and eliminate the negative understanding of China's rapid development by foreign people. Although the arguments advocated by some Americans, such as "Clash of Civilizations" and "Thucydides Trap", have not yet become mainstream ideas, they still have a great influence on the China policy being formulated by the United States. In this regard, we should have strategic determination, unswervingly adhere to peaceful development, promote international cooperation and build a community of human destiny.

As two global powers, no matter what happens, the spillover effect of China and the United States is definitely much greater than that of other countries. There is no doubt that cooperation between the two countries will get twice the result with half the effort, while conflict between the two countries will get twice the result with half the effort. With the spread of COVID-19 epidemic in urgent need of international cooperation, which is generally in line with the interests of the United States, the Trump administration still has a very negative attitude towards international cooperation, which not only causes the epidemic situation in the United States to get out of control, but also makes it difficult for the World Health Organization, the most important international organization related to the fight against the epidemic, to give full play to its role in coordinating and organizing countries to cooperate in the fight against the epidemic.

## **4. The Influence of COVID-19 Epidemic on China's Public Diplomatic Relations under Global Governance**

### ***4.1 The spread and prevention of the COVID-19 epidemic have profoundly affected Sino-US relations at a critical turning point***

The arrival of the global risk society means that the risks faced by mankind will be normalized in the future, and the worldwide social and political "implosion" brought by transnational risks will significantly affect the occurrence of mainstream discourse in the international community. In the global anti-epidemic war, the absence of international institutions and organizations is obvious, and the global anti-epidemic mainly relies on nation-states to play a leading role. However, it cannot be concluded that the enhancement of the role of nation-states will inevitably weaken the development of globalization. At present, the leading role of nation-states in the anti-epidemic battlefield is not alone, and it is also inseparable from the influence and role of globalization. The American people and local counties have shown their willingness to have close contacts with China to gain experience and materials for epidemic prevention and control, and the local and civil foundation for Sino-US cooperation against epidemic is solid. There are differences of interests and historical entanglements between China and the United States and Japan, and it is sometimes counterproductive for the Chinese government to participate in public diplomacy with the United States and Japan as a clear identity. The government is neither a maker of public opinion nor a powerful lobbyist. Many countries began to rethink the function of national

boundaries and the importance of national sovereignty. This technical change brought by the epidemic has objectively promoted the return of "nationalism" and influenced the momentum and direction of globalization.

#### ***4.2 The protection and development of public diplomatic resources have been strengthened***

The strength of public diplomacy depends not only on specific strategies and tactics, but also on the amount of resources and the ability to develop them. Therefore, the Chinese government should pay attention to the cultivation of non-material resources while actively expanding material resources. Different from traditional intergovernmental diplomacy, in today's world where diplomacy is no longer mysterious to the public, governments will probably take into account the possible reactions of the public at home and abroad before conducting intergovernmental diplomacy, so they will conduct intergovernmental diplomacy in detail, carefully design and prudently. The global epidemic has caused the importance of non-traditional security issues to overwhelm traditional security issues for the first time, and this phenomenon will continue for a period of time. The epidemic of infectious diseases will be regarded as a potential international security risk for a long time to come. The rising importance of non-traditional security issues means the relative decline of the importance of traditional security issues. Therefore, in the process of interaction with the United States/Japan, we should not only reduce the non-governmental activities and economic cooperation between China and the United States/China and Japan, but give priority to them in terms of economic cooperation and investment projects, so that the two sides can establish an "economic symbiosis" relationship that is difficult for each other to give up, so that people can form a consumption dependence model, thus ensuring that the positive image of the country will always stay in the hearts of foreign people.

#### ***4.3 International cooperation against epidemics has been strengthened and the quality of partnerships has been improved***

At present, China has established partnerships at different levels with more than 80 countries in the world, forming a global partnership network with multiple levels and wide geographical coverage. This partnership network is the result of China's efforts to carry out mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation with other countries on the premise of adhering to the foreign policy of "partnership and non-alignment". In view of the current international situation, it is urgent to rebuild trust. After the epidemic, the North American economic circle and the European economic circle are likely to be re-consolidated, while the Asian economic circle is difficult to be fully integrated because of its great differences in values and low political trust. Every time a risk comes, it has to undergo a severe test for the main body of the country. During the risk period, the secondary issues of global public opinion are intertwined with the main issues, and the international public opinion field struggle intensifies. In the long run, China's public diplomacy will influence the image and credibility of the country in the key field of public space. As far as the foreign policy process of our government is concerned, the scientific and democratic decision-making requires that the government should actively understand and master the information of the domestic public, satisfy their demands for participating in politics on foreign policy issues, and actively respond to or even adopt the foreign policy propositions of the domestic public. This is an international embodiment of the correct view of justice and benefit, which further enriches the connotation of building a community of human destiny and helps to strengthen the determination of some countries to strengthen cooperation with China.

### **5. Summary**

Public diplomacy is of great urgency and practical significance to China. The Chinese government's activities of explaining and explaining the domestic dimension to its own public are conducive to the development of foreign dimension public diplomacy, because many of them will participate in foreign dimension public diplomacy supported by the Chinese government as domestic social forces. The epidemic is a common crisis faced by all mankind living in the same "global village". How to successfully deal with non-traditional security threats such as the epidemic has become a big test to test the comprehensive abilities of international organizations, countries and governments around the world, social grassroots and people's quality. Generally speaking, the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the theory and practice of international relations will be all-round, and the course of the world's response to the epidemic will probably provide some enlightening thoughts for shaping a more stable and reasonable Chinese public diplomacy.

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