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April 3, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary  
Department of State  
2201 C St NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I write to you today to urge the State Department to work with our allies around the world and fully investigate China's response to the emergence of the virus causing COVID-19. As you are well aware, China's initial response to reports of an atypical pneumonia being detected by medical personnel in Hubei province in late 2019 were ham-fisted with government officials hiding cases, punishing doctors who dared to speak-up, and resulted in delays that worsened the impact of COVID-19 on public health and the economies of countries around the world.

As you know, prior to China locking down Wuhan and Hubei Province on January 23, 2020, there were early indications that a SARS-type virus had jumped from an animal host and had begun to infect humans. What is more alarming was that despite official denials, indications of human-to-human transmission were clearly evident by early January. The suppression of this critical piece of information alone significantly delayed any early international response. The well-publicized punishment, by local government officials, of the now deceased doctor Li Wenliang for posting about the presence of a new illness among his patients is a chilling reminder of official Chinese government attempts to hide and distort the truth. China's difficulties with the truth are continuing even now with its diplomats spreading baseless conspiracy theories of US military culpability in a simplistic attempt to muddy the waters for those that are easily swayed or misinformed.

Americans are suffering from both the effects of the disease and from the real harm to our economy as public health officials are forced to implement restrictions to control this pandemic. The American people deserve to have the information to truly understand why they are making the sacrifices that they are. Additionally, we must discover the truth about the origins of this disease in order to better prepare ourselves against another future pandemic. That is why I urge you to lead efforts with international partners to investigate China's initial response and culpability related to the COVID-19 pandemic and consider any appropriate punitive actions necessary to hold China accountable.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your commitment to discover the truth about China's obfuscation of this pandemic.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator