



From #CoronaVirusCoverUp to #NukeChina:

An analysis of conspiracy theories, hate speech and incitements to violence across Twitter related to Covid-19.

April 2020



Introduction

Moonshot gathered 676 million Tweets posted between 21.02.20 and 17.04.20 that included at least 1 of 113 variations of 'coronavirus', 'COVID-19', or a closely related term, across 18 languages. From this dataset we isolated 193,000 Tweets that contained one or more of 69 English language hashtags, which we identified during research as being indicative of conspiracy theories, hate speech, or incitements to violence related to COVID-19.

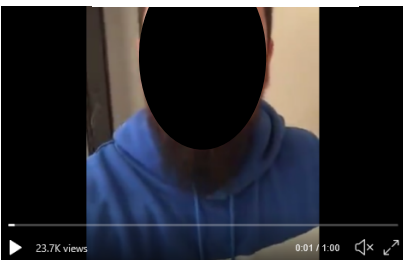
Key findings

- A 300% increase in the use of hashtags that encourage or incite violence against China and Chinese people.
- Anti-Chinese conspiracy theories dominated the conspiracy theory discourse on Twitter.
- There are a smaller number of racist and/or conspiratorial hashtags seeking to exploit COVID-19 as a vehicle for anti-Semitism.
- References to broad conspiracy theories (#coronaviruscoverup) declined in volume, while those linking COVID-19 to the rollout of 5G (#5GCoronavirus) increased significantly.

High-engagement Tweets

Retweet if you think we should place the [#Chinese Communist Party](#) at NUMBER 1 on the "Terror List"

[#COVID19](#) [#ChineseVirus](#) [#CCPVirus](#)




23.7K views 0:01 / 1:00

903 Retweets 1.3k Likes

[#China](#) Wants to Use the [#ChinaVirus](#) to Take Over the World
nationalreview.com/2020/04/corona...

Mao once said, "Everything under heaven is in utter chaos, the situation is excellent."

[#ChinaLiedPeopleDied](#) [#China_is_terrorist](#)
[#CoronavirusPandemic](#) [#WuhanCoronavirus](#)
[#WuhanChinaVirus](#)



China Wants to Use the Coronavirus to Take Over the World
The great-power competition has begun in earnest.
nationalreview.com

140 Retweets 97 Likes

Top hashtags

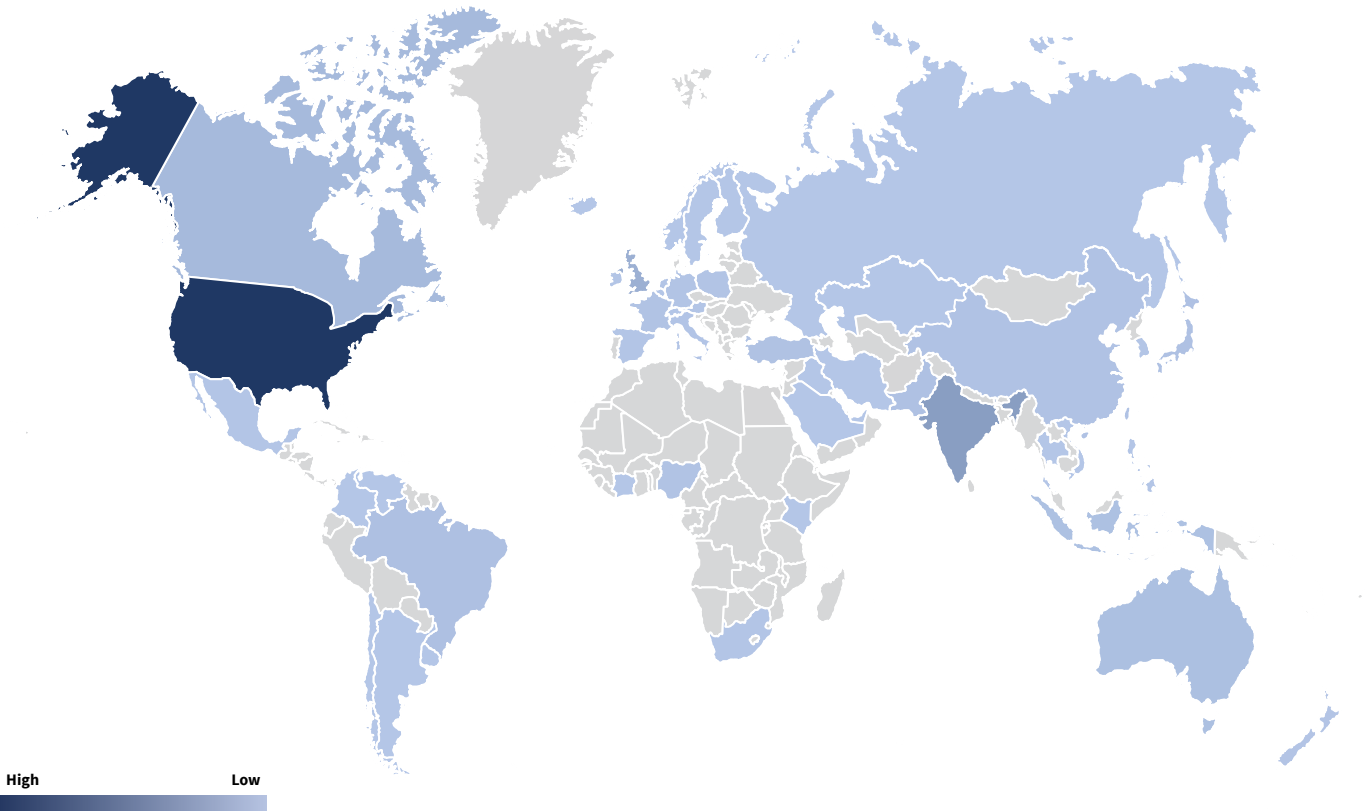
- [01] [#CCPVirus](#)
- [02] [#ChinaLiedPeopleDied](#)
- [03] [#KungFlu](#)
- [04] [#Chinazi](#)
- [05] [#CoronaVirusCoverUp](#)
- [06] [#China_is_Terrorist](#)
- [07] [#FuckChina](#)
- [08] [#Depopulation](#)
- [09] [#HoldChinaAccountable](#)
- [10] [#DeepstateVirus](#)

#CoronaVirusCoverUp
Conspiracy theories using this hashtag centre around alleged negligence from President Trump and the Republican Party in combating the virus, and the sacking of US Navy Captain Brett Crozier, who was fired for publically raising concerns about an outbreak of coronavirus on a US Navy Carrier.

#DeepstateVirus
Conspiracy theories using this hashtag centre around anti-vaccination stories and articles, and Tweets blaming philanthropist Bill Gates for the spread of the virus. Over half of these Tweets made reference to QAnon.



Location of Tweets using hashtags indicative of Covid-19 conspiracies, hate speech and incitements to violence



Rank	Country	Percentage of global share
1	USA	43.16%
2	India	12.29%
3	UK	6.80%
4	Canada	3.84%
5	Australia	2.09%
6	Brazil	1.83%

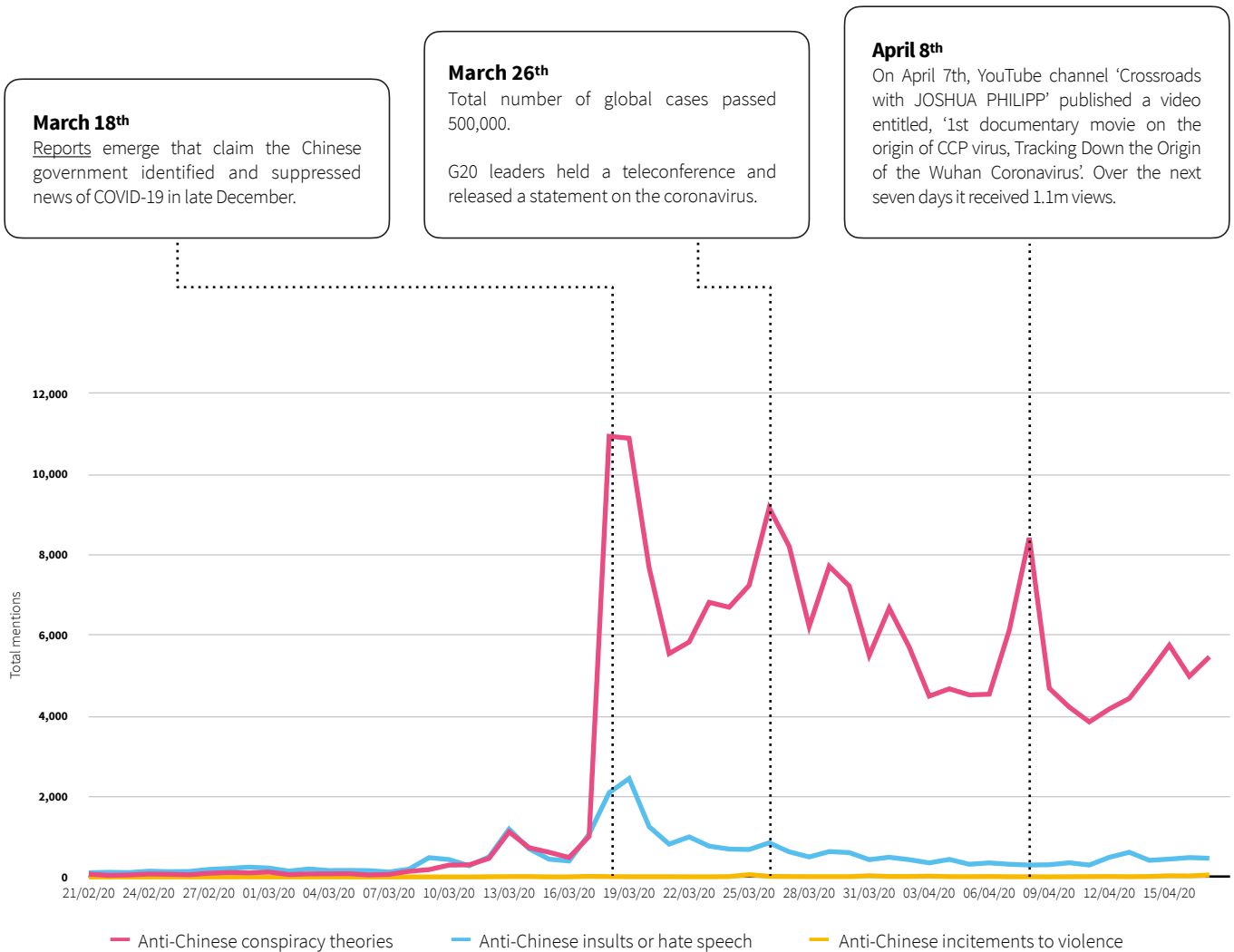
Rank	Country	Percentage of global share
7	Pakistan	1.57%
8	Japan	1.57%
9	Turkey	1.39%
10	China	1.31%
11	France	1.05%
12	Nigeria	1.05%

Using social media intelligence software, we were able to determine the location from which 47% of all recorded tweets were posted. These results are likely impacted by multiple variables, including the fact that all 69 hashtags analysed are in English, and the relative ease with which location can be algorithmically derived in different geographies.

Only a small percentage of social data contains geolocation data. The software's enrichment process expands beyond that by analysing user profiles and location fields, and turning that into structured geographic metadata. This process increases the coverage of geographic metadata on Twitter from less than 2% to as much as 50%.



Volume of Tweets using hashtags indicative of anti-Chinese conspiracies, hate speech and incitements to violence



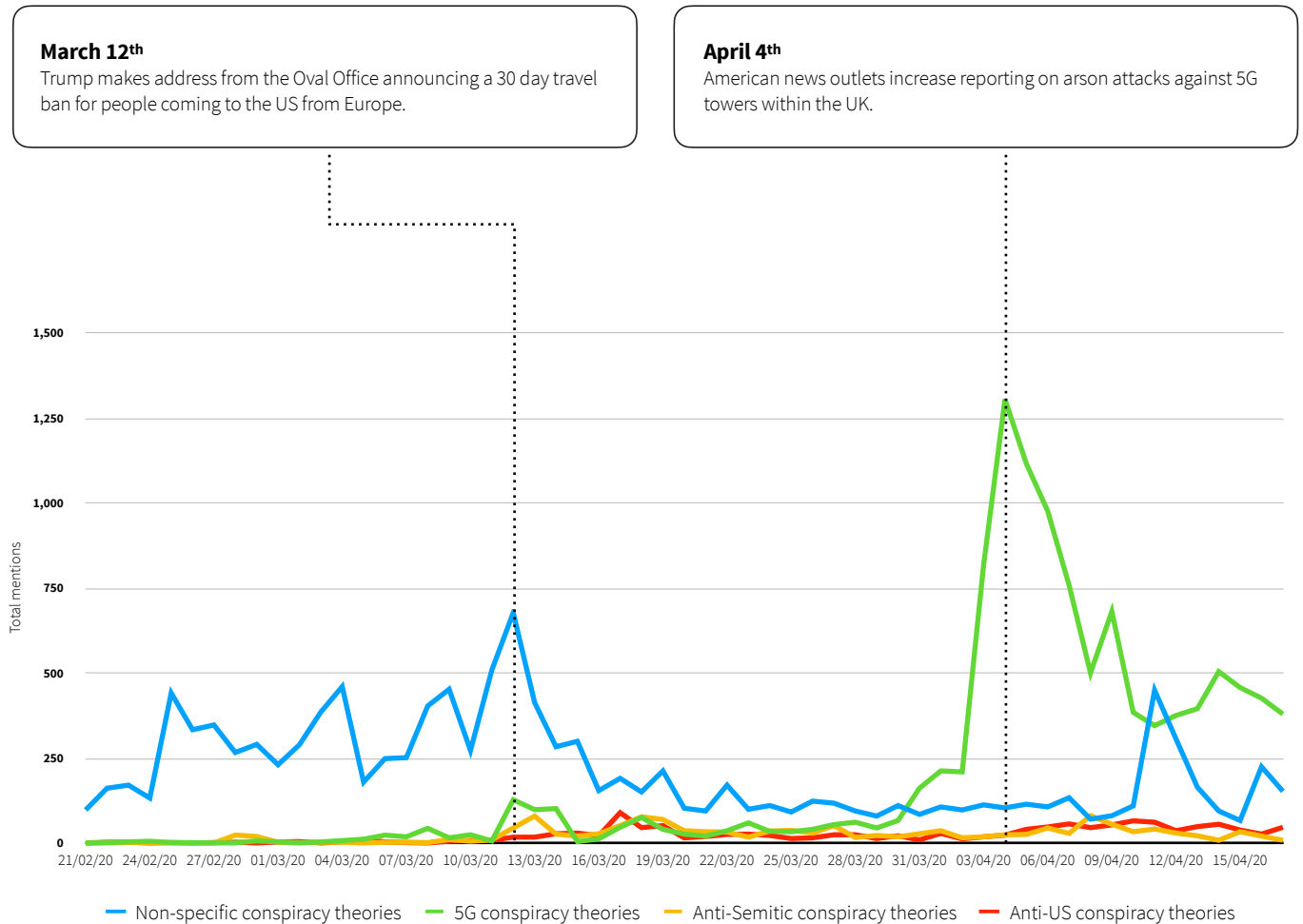
Anti-Chinese conspiracies and hate speech constituted the vast majority of the dataset, with the two most popular hashtags - **#CCPVirus** and **#ChinaLiedPeopleDied** - gaining significant traction following allegations that China initially attempted to cover up the virus. These two hashtags alone accounted for 85% of all Tweets recorded within the two month reporting period.

More so than other categories, 'anti-Chinese conspiracy' hashtags act as an umbrella under which we found a multiplicity of varied and often conflicting theories. These ranged from speculations on the origin of the virus (from the consumption of bat soup, or the accidental release of a bio-weapon from a laboratory), to theories that China deliberately developed and spread the virus (e.g. through contaminated testing kits), to stories that China is exploiting global turmoil (including blackmailing countries to accept Chinese 5G in exchange for medical supplies).

While comparatively low in volume, we recorded 300% weekly increase in mid-March in the use of hashtags that support or encourage violence against China and Chinese people. The most popular of these included **#NukeChina**, **#BombChina**, and **#DeathtoChina**, and typically also contained - or stemmed from posts which contained - overt references to anti-Chinese conspiracy theories.



Volume of Tweets using hashtags indicative of other COVID-19 conspiracy theories




While anti-Chinese conspiracy theories dominate the most popular coronavirus hashtags, there has also been a clear, albeit much smaller rise in the use of anti-Semitic hashtags, such as **#SorosVirus**, **#IsraelVirus**, and **#NWOVirus**. These Tweets typically employ anti-Semitic tropes, such as the notion that a Jewish-led ‘world government’ or ‘deep state’ is using the virus to suppress and kill large swathes of the population in an effort to control the global economy. These Tweets often make reference to the QAnon conspiracy and vilify notable Jewish figures such as George Soros.

While the connection between China and negative COVID-19 sentiment is obvious, the connection with anti-Semitism is not. However, when examined alongside some of the other COVID-19 conspiracy theories, it seems best understood as an opportunistic tethering of old conspiratorial tropes with new subject matter.

Although we have grouped these hashtags by broad themes, within each grouping sits a multiplicity of conspiratorial, racist and incendiary views - and importantly, none of them are new. ‘Anti-US conspiracy theories’ contains hashtags that pin the blame on, variously, Bill Gates, the CIA, and America in general (**#GatesVirus**, **#CIAVirus**, **#AmericaVirus**). Similarly, ‘Non-specific conspiracy theories’ includes **#MassControl**, **#AnActofWar**, and **#depopulation**. The exploitation of the topicality of COVID-19 as a means of revitalising tired theories is made clearer still through the content of the Tweets themselves.



 Soros owns the lab in wuhan. Bill gates part owns the patent to Coronavirus (for anti viral research) Mr Gates claiming world is over populated (Oct 2019) n people think this came from Chinese eating habits

[#DeepStateVirus #PuppetsToPower](#)

The Soros' owned Lab, "WuXi AppTec" is located in Wuhan, at 666 Gaoxin Road East Lake, Wuhan, China.


It's Objective is described as "Small Molecule Drug Discovery and Research Services"

Check out the address 666 No can't be.


Who I wonder will come up with the Miracle Cure ?

[Show this thread](#)

12:06 pm - 17 Mar 2020 • [Twitter for Android](#)

 [#deepstatevirus](#). DEMS PLOT IS TO HYPE THE VIRUS, CAUSE PANIC AND CRASH THE ECONOMY SO THEIR COMMUNIST CANDIDATE [#SANDERS](#) CAN WIN. CNN: Coronavirus could cost Trump the election, Goldman Sachs warns. [cnn.com/2020/02/27/bus...](https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/27/bus...)

via [@GoogleNews](#)



Coronavirus could cost Trump the election, Goldman Sachs warns
A market meltdown. Surging recession fears. And a sudden spotlight on America's health care system. Goldman Sachs is warning Wall Street that the coronavirus ...
[cnn.com](#)

4:38 pm - 28 Feb 2020 • [Twitter for Android](#)

 [#DeepStateVirus #DeepStateVaccine #DeepStateFauci @BillGates #EnemyOfThePeople #WHO #FireFauci](#)

They do not want cures! Look at this craziness. WHO Chief working with Lady Gaga to raise money for the WHO/UK at a press conference for #Covid_19 twitter.com/QBlueSkyQ/Stat

11:06 pm - 6 Apr 2020 • [Twitter Web App](#)

#DeepStateVirus has been used to theme Tweets that otherwise seek to advance quite different theories, including that George Soros and Bill Gates are working together to reduce the population; the Democratic Party are trying to use COVID-19 to their political advantage; and that the virus is a money-making scheme involving the WHO, the UN, and Lady Gaga.

The rise and impact of the 5G Covid-19 conspiracy

While several of these hashtags surged in volume through February to mid-March, they have since been in relative decline. In their place are thousands of Tweets using hashtags to support conspiracy theories which link COVID-19 to the rollout of 5G. Again, these theories are nothing new; the first reference on Twitter to a 5G conspiracy theory was in January 2017. The coupling of the two topics through hashtags is no different from #SorosVirus in its opportunism.

But the rise of the 5G COVID-19 conspiracy is different in two other ways. First, it is gaining traction at a far greater rate than the other hashtag topics analysed in this report. This is in part due to the second reason, which is that it has already resulted in real-world action inextricably linked to the theory itself, through the vandalising of 5G masts. The theory entered the public consciousness both through mainstream news about the vandalism, and more recently as part of a lengthy YouTube interview with David Icke ([later removed from the platform](#) only to reappear on Bitchute, where it has received more than 900,000 views to date). While hashtags indicative of vandalism ([#burn5Gtowers](#)) are used in far lower numbers than general demands to [#stop5G](#), images are circulating on Instagram naming May 3rd 2020 as 'International Burn Down a 5G Tower Day'. This particular act of online opportunism has created a threat to public safety in a matter of weeks, as part of a global crisis set to last months, if not years.

Related reports

#5GCoronavirus: How the global pandemic has given new life to an old conspiracy theory.

The impact of social distancing on engagement with violent extremist content online in the United States.

