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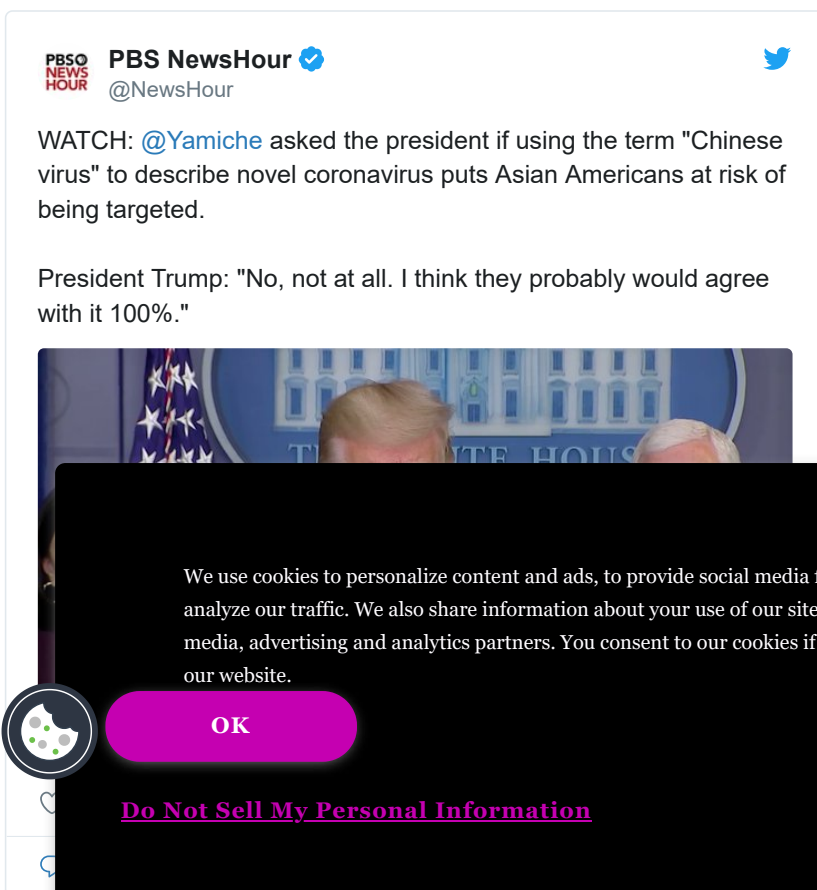
BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP via Getty Images



By [Tanya A. Christian](#) · [March 18, 2020](#) [March 23, 2020](#)

It appears that Donald Trump has found a new target for his overt racism—the Chinese. During a press conference on Tuesday, the impeached President essentially told reporters that he didn't find a problem with someone inside of his administration calling [COVID-19](#) the “kung flu.”

Yesterday an Asian White House reporter said that an unidentified White House staffer called the global pandemic the “kung flu” to her face and wondered what they were calling it behind closed doors. The tweet, and subsequent conversation that stemmed from it, prompted [PBS's Yamiche Alcindor](#) to ask Trump about it during his daily coronavirus update on Wednesday.



“There are a lot of people who are saying that the fact that this virus started in China. Is that acceptable? Is it wrong?” Alcindor asked before seeking further comment from

Trump about if he condemns the use of the term and if he is fearful of what his constant use of the term “Chinese virus” could mean for Asian-Americans?

Trump, as expected, did not disavow the term ‘kung flu,’ excusing it away by saying that its origins are in China. He also doubled down on his own use of the term “Chinese virus,” claiming that Asian-Americans would likely agree with the racist epithet “100 percent.”



WASHINGTON, DC – MARCH 11: US President Donald Trump addresses the nation from the Oval Office about the widening Coronavirus crisis on March 11, 2020 in Washington, DC. President Trump said the US will suspend all travel from Europe – except the UK – for the next 30 days. Since December 2019, Coronavirus (COVID-19) has infected more than 109,000 people and killed more than 3,800 people in 105 countries. (Photo by Doug Mills-Pool/Getty Images)

Experts, actual Asians, and anybody who doesn’t regularly practice overt racism would likely disagree. A rise in hate crimes suggests that the spread of COVID-19 has actually prompted an [uptick in hate crimes](#) against Asian-Americans. Trump’s incessant need to call it the “Chinese virus” or a “foreign threat” does little to help the growing hostility toward the ethnic group.

And Trump is not alone. His nonchalant attitude toward the fears now felt by Asian-Americans is one shared by a number of GOP officials. On Wednesday, just hours after Trump’s press conference, [Texas Senator John Cornyn said](#) that “China is to blame because the culture where people eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that, these viruses are transmitted from the animal to the people, and that’s why China has been the source of the coronavirus. So I think they’re the ones who brought it’s coming from.”

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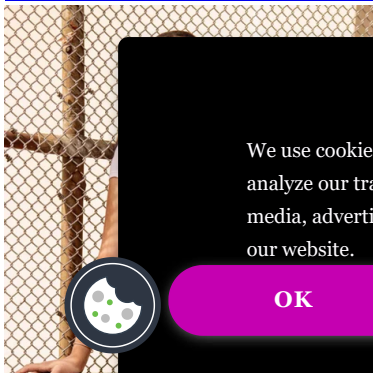
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