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US Edition

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Trump brushes off 'kung-flu' remark and claims Asian Americans would agree with calling it the 'Chinese coronavirus'

[David Choi](#)

2020-03-18T18:34:20Z





President Donald Trump during an address to the nation about the coronavirus on March 11.  
Associated Press

- President Donald Trump said he did not believe the term "kung-flu" and other discriminatory phrases would put Asian Americans at risk of xenophobic attacks amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- The disparaging term was privately used by a White House official to CBS News reporter Weijia Jiang, a Chinese American, on Tuesday morning.
- "I wonder who said that," Trump said to reporters at the White House on Wednesday. "You know who said that? Say the term again."
- Trump said he did not believe Asian Americans would be negatively affected by the use of the phrase.
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President Donald Trump said he did not believe the term "kung-flu" and other discriminatory phrases would put Asian Americans at risk of xenophobic attacks amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The disparaging term was privately [used](#) by a White House official to CBS News reporter Weijia Jiang, a Chinese American, on Tuesday morning.

"Makes me wonder what they're calling it behind my back," Jiang said in a tweet.

Trump pressed for more details when he was asked if he believed Asian Americans could be subjected to increased racist attacks because of similar terms.

"I wonder who said that," Trump said to a reporter at the White House on Wednesday. "You know who said that? Say the term again."

After the reporter repeated the phrase, it was still not clear if Trump understood the belittling implication and the relationship it has with Asians.

Trump said he did not believe Asian Americans would be negatively affected by the use of the phrase, which he said had to do with coronavirus' origins in China. Trump and numerous Republican lawmakers have described the coronavirus as the "Chinese virus," based on the initial cases in the country. Critics — including the Chinese government — have urged them not to use the term.

"No, not at all," Trump said. "I think they'd probably would agree with it 100%. It comes from China. There's nothing not to agree on."

Robert Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, testified in a congressional hearing earlier in March that he agreed it was inappropriate to describe the virus as the "Chinese coronavirus" because it had spread across the world.

"Public health emergencies ... are stressful times for people and communities," the CDC wrote on its [website](#). "Fear and anxiety about a disease can lead to social stigma toward people, places, or things."

"For example, stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate a disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease," the CDC website said.

Several hate crimes and acts of [discriminatory behavior](#) against Asian Americans were documented across the US in recent weeks amid the coronavirus pandemic. An Asian man who declined to be identified alleged a 44-year-old man named Raoul Ramos screamed at him on Saturday for not wearing a mask while he was walking with his 10-year-old son in New York, the [New York Post reported](#).

"The guy walked past us. That triggered him. He was screaming at us and said, 'Where the f--- is your mask?'" the man said to the Post.

"You f---ing Chinese," Ramos said, according to the Post's police sources.

Ramos, who is accused of hitting the Asian man in the head before fleeing, was arrested.



*Do you have a personal experience with the coronavirus you'd like to share? Or a tip on how your town or community is handling the pandemic? Please email [covidtips@businessinsider.com](mailto:covidtips@businessinsider.com) and tell us your story.*

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