For over two weeks the financial capital of China, Shanghai, has been locked down tight. Some 26 million people languish in their apartments, staring at their now-empty refrigerators, unable to set foot outside to forage for food for fear of arrest and incarceration.

Foreigners are in the same predicament, as one complained on Twitter:

Yet the homebound are the lucky ones.

The unlucky ones are those who test positive for COVID each day, like the 17,077 Shanghainese who did on Wednesday. Symptomatic or not – and nine out of 10 show no signs of illness – they are hauled off to hastily erected quarantine camps.

The Shanghai lockdown, the largest since the first Wuhan lockdown two years ago, is China’s latest attempt to achieve COVID Zero. An army of health care workers, some 38,000 in all, have been sent to Shanghai, with instructions to completely stamp out the coronavirus within the city. They are frantically testing and retesting everyone.

- Unable to protest their lock-up any other way, people have taken to venting their anger by yelling out of their apartment windows. Most of their complaints have to do with food. “We have no food to eat,” they scream. “We haven’t eaten in a very long time. We are starving to death.”
- One starving lockdowner found a quieter way to protest his growling stomach. He rolled his refrigerator onto his balcony and opened its doors. The inside is completely empty.
- Other protests have taken more tragic forms. As they did in Wuhan two years ago, people are once again jumping off the balconies of high-rise apartment buildings. One

For more information, please visit the linked article on the Population Research Institute's website.
A video circulating in China shows a couple falling to their deaths. The husband was said to be distraught because the lockdown had cost him his business.

- Those desperate enough to venture outside in their search for food are hunted down by “Big Whites” – members of the security forces who owe their nickname to the white hazmat suits they wear. Patrolling the streets day and night, the “Big Whites” arrest and jail anyone caught breaking quarantine, who often get beaten in the process.

- **Those sent to mass quarantine** camps for testing positive for COVID have it scarcely better. These makeshift facilities often lack basic necessities. One video from Shanghai’s Nanhui camp shows people fighting over limited supplies of blankets, water and food.

- No one, not even small children, is exempted from the quarantine rule. Hundreds of infants and toddlers have been separated from their parents after testing positive. As one grieving mother complained on social media: “I’m so upset ... This is inhumane.”

Like China’s previous efforts to contain the highly infectious Omicron variant, this one too is doomed to fail, although not before extracting an enormous cost. The dimensions of human suffering comes through in some of the videos posted by the suffering residents.
No one, not even small children, is exempted from the quarantine rule. Hundreds of infants and toddlers have been separated from their parents after testing positive.

As these stories suggest, China has unleashed yet another COVID Horror Show on its population. But why?

Virtually every person on the planet now recognizes that they are simply going to have to live with the coronavirus from now on, in the same way that we have learned to live with the seasonal flu. Even countries that clung to China’s mass containment model well into 2021, such as Australia, New Zealand and Germany, are now abandoning it.

Yet the Chinese Communist Party continues to pursue the impossible dream of COVID Zero.
Now, you might say that no political organization likes to admit it was wrong. In fact, when asked recently why China refused to recognize that COVID was now endemic, a top official of the National Health Commission simply said, “If we stop all containment measures now, it means all the previous efforts are for nothing.”

But at an even deeper level, I see the Chinese Communist Party’s insistence on lockdowns as an expression of its drive for total control.

I am reminded of the CCP official who, in 1980, at the very beginning of the one-child policy, confidently proclaimed: “We are a socialist country. We can control reproduction in the same way we control production: under a state plan.”

Now Xi Jinping’s attitude seems to be: “We are a socialist country. We can control the replication of a virus in the same way we control production: under a state plan.”

I doubt it.

Steven W. Mosher is the president of the Population Research Institute. He is an internationally recognized authority on China and population issues, as well as an acclaimed author, and speaker. He has worked tirelessly since 1979 to fight coercive population control programs and has helped hundreds of thousands of women and families worldwide over the years.