

Air Pollution Drops Sharply as China Factories Close for Coronavirus

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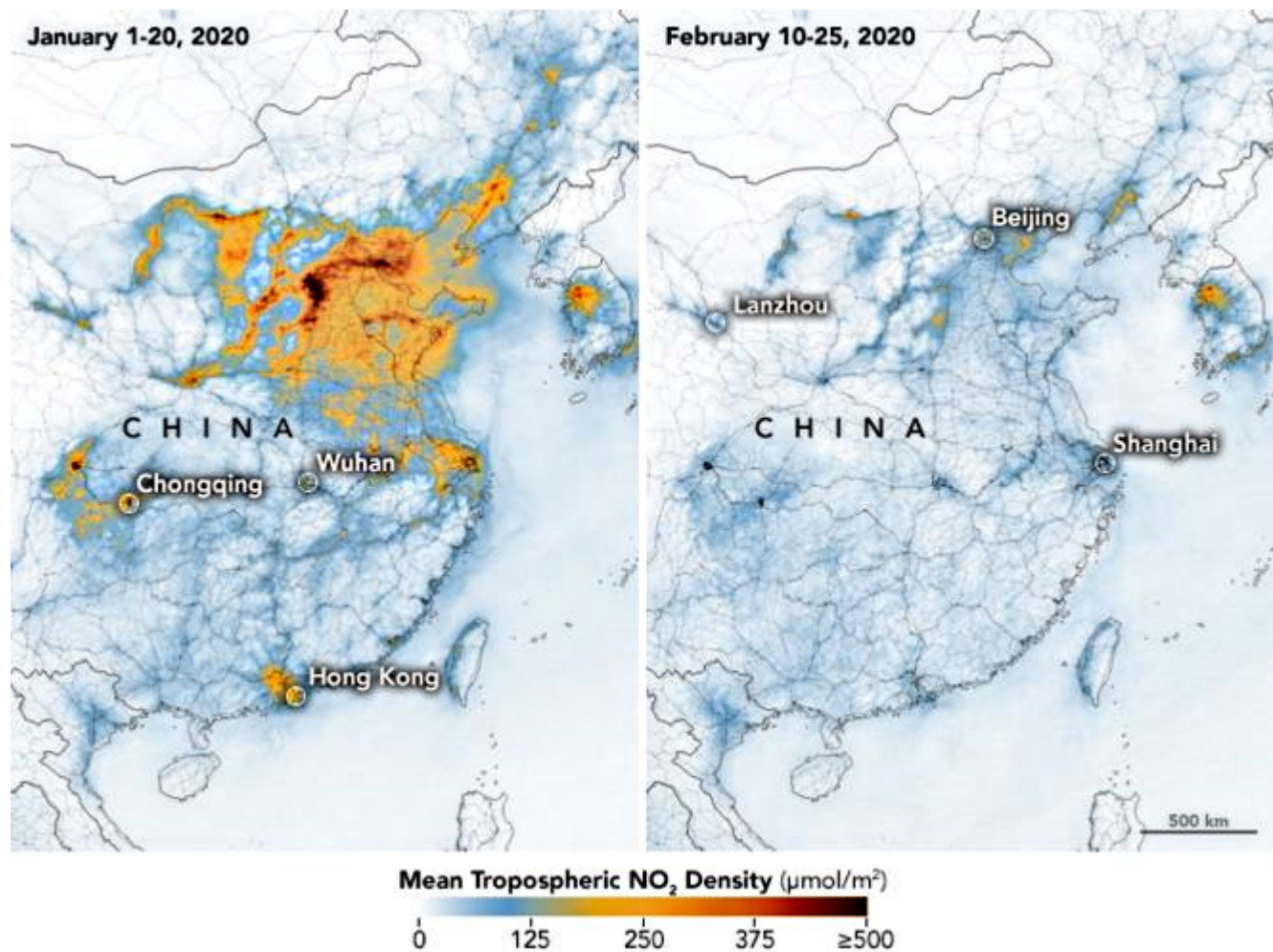


Image Credit: NASA

China is the manufacturing center of the world, and the country has a massive population, so a large volume of

pollution is generated in the region on a regular basis.

In the past two months, most of China has been shut down as a result of the novel coronavirus outbreak, which has caused a drastic reduction in the levels of air pollution in the country. Of course, China, and the entire world is in the midst of a very dangerous public health emergency, and while this is not a situation to make light of, the air pollution data shows us how much of a drastic difference can be made in a short amount of time.

Satellite images from [NASA](#) show falling levels of nitrogen dioxide in the past two months, correlating with the massive factor and travel shut down that has been taking place throughout the country. Scientists with NASA say that the reduction in nitrogen dioxide was first noticed around Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak where the quarantine was first imposed.

When comparing satellite images of the past two years, it is apparent that nitrogen dioxide levels this year are significantly lower than last year.

There is typically a slight reduction this time of year due to the Lunar New Year holiday that is celebrated in China, but experts say that this year is much different.

Fei Liu, an air quality researcher at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center, said that this is the most drastic change that he has ever seen.

"This is the first time I have seen such a dramatic drop-off over such a wide area for a specific event," Liu said.

Pollutant Drops in Wuhan—and Does not Rebound

Unlike 2019, NO₂ levels in 2020 did not rise after the Chinese New Year.

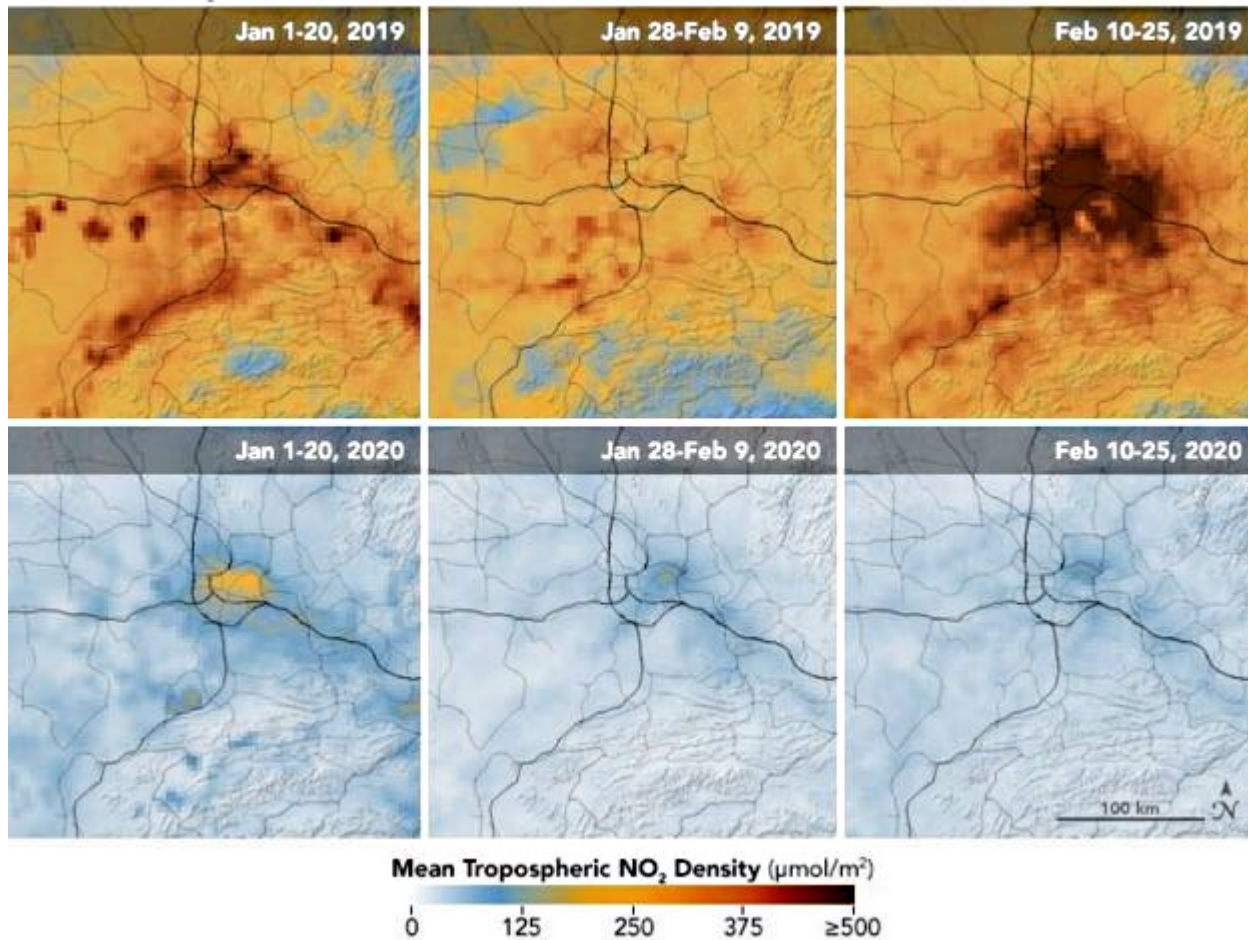


Image Credit: [NASA](#)

"I am not surprised because many cities nationwide have taken measures to minimize spread of the virus," she added.

Liu said that a similar decline was observed just after the economic crash of 2008, although it was much smaller, and more of a gradual change, as opposed to the nearly overnight change seen in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak.