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February 2020 Op-Ed A Global Pandemic Has Already Started

I am NOT a scientist or an economist, but I do conduct a lot of research. I speak with many experts in various fields, and I love acquiring knowledge. The opinions expressed in this article are my own. They are straight to the point, hard hitting and presented in a take no prisoners' manner. I am NOT an anti-vaxxer, nor do I subscribe to any crazy conspiracy theories. On the contrary, I am a proponent of vaccines so long as they are safe. Vaccines have played an important part in the safety of the public and have eradicated the threat of diseases like polio and the measles, and we need to continue research to develop new vaccines in the future.

No political angle: only opinions based on scientific information

My name is Emil Malak. I am a Canadian citizen with a British passport. I have previously written five published op-eds related to the U.S. patent system and the unfair and hostile treatment of small inventors and patent owners. Like many concerned citizens I have been closely following the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus from afar.

Recently, the threat of the virus hit close to home. On February 6, my eight-year-old daughter came down with flu symptoms and doctors tested her for the coronavirus, fearing she may have been exposed at her school. There are no words to describe what my wife and I felt as parents when we were told our little girl might be infected with a potentially deadly virus. To our great relief, test results showed she did not have the coronavirus, and her symptoms have since abated. This experience made me understand firsthand the pain and fear being experienced by so many in China and the surrounding regions where the coronavirus abounds.

Dr. Christian Drosten

I have the utmost respect for Prof. Christian Drosten, Director of the Institute of Virology on Campus Charité Mitte, Berlin, Germany, and one of the world's foremost experts on this novel coronavirus. He is scientifically cautious about his statements but he is not afraid to speak truth to power when it matters. German medical experts have succeeded in curing 14 out of 16 coronavirus patients with a combination of drugs. This is crucial as we are now finding out the coronavirus emergency maybe much more widespread than first thought.

A recent report from an infectious disease modeling team based at Imperial College London is estimating about two-thirds of Covid-19 cases worldwide have gone undetected. The analysis suggests the global spread of the novel coronavirus is significantly greater than the current number of confirmed cases.

<https://newatlas.com/health-wellbeing/two-thirds-global-coronavirus-covid19-undetected-imperial-college>

Prof. Drosten maintains the problem with the coronavirus is that a person can carry the virus and be asymptomatic or present only very mild symptoms. All the while, that carrier can transmit the infection to many others, some of which may die from the disease.

https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/panorama/id_87392862/rasante-ausbreitung-in-italien-die-angst-vor-dem-coronavirus-waechst.html

Experts can no longer say with certainty that a 14-day quarantine period is adequate. We already know of at least one person, a 70-year-old man in Hubei Province China, who did not display symptoms until 27 days after being infected. This would suggest that the quarantine procedure should be reviewed and combined with an accurate test for the virus to assure that infected people are diagnosed and treated and not released.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-china-health-incubation-idUKKCN20G072>

Researchers at Johns Hopkins conducted an outbreak simulation almost a year ago. They singled out the coronavirus for their 2019 simulation. Their results were shocking! The Johns Hopkins models showed 65 million potential deaths from the coronavirus. Although we are told the selection of the coronavirus was purely coincidental, the Johns Hopkins simulation tells us this virus has to be taken very seriously.

<https://hub.jhu.edu/2019/11/06/event-201-health-security/>

Dr. Drosten's research together with the Johns Hopkins simulation and the Imperial College data asserting two thirds of coronavirus cases go undetected is extremely alarming. The US CDC is also preparing for the possibility of a pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control's Dr. Nancy Messonnier confirmed the CDC is taking all necessary precautions and preparing for the "possibility this outbreak could become a **pandemic**."

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/02/21/us-health-officials-prepare-for-coronavirus-outbreak-to-become-pandemic.html>

We must also ask ourselves the important question regarding the large numbers of undetected coronavirus carriers. How many people are unknowingly infecting others each and every day? If this is the case a global pandemic looks to be unavoidable.

Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist from Johns Hopkins University, said last week the spread of the virus already constitutes a global pandemic, despite the WHO's reluctance to deem it so officially. "I am of the belief ... that we are in the early stages of a pandemic," said Nuzzo. "I think it's important for us to ... talk openly about whether

containment of an epidemic is possible, or whether we are exacerbating pandemic spread).

<https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/02/20/coronavirus-carey-799-em0-art0-ga-health/>

How Does this Coronavirus Spread?

It is well documented that person-to-person contact is one of the key mechanisms. Sneezing and coughing leads to virus containing droplets being transferred to persons in proximity.

It has also been shown that the Coronavirus can survive on surfaces for more than a week. Infection through fecal matter is another pathway to spread the disease. However, there is now concern that the infection process could also be airborne.

An airborne disease is any disease that is caused by pathogens that can be transmitted through the air. Infections such as anthrax are airborne diseases. There is some preliminary indication we might have to add the coronavirus to the list.

Are There Super-Spreaders?

South Korea's number of infected patients has skyrocketed in a matter of days from less than 100 confirmed cases to almost 1,000 people. This could be the result of a single carrier who was infected and attended frequent church services.

There were 691 infected passengers out of 3700 on the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan. The outbreak on the ship seems to have started with just one infected 80-year-old passenger.

Italy has also seen a significant increase in confirmed coronavirus cases jumping from less than 30 cases to 322 in just one week with 10 people dead. This outbreak is now linked to one person. The government has placed a dozen towns under quarantine and closed schools. Italy is considered the site of Europe's first major outbreak.

<https://www.ibtimes.com/police-checkpoints-events-scrapped-virus-fears-hit-italy-2927168>

<https://www.rt.com/news/481617-fight-italian-supermarket-coronavirus/>

The New Coronavirus Is Now Hitting Countries with Weak Health Care Systems. Turkey has announced they are closing their border with Iran after Iran's confirmed coronavirus cases jumped significantly. Many suspect the Iranian regime is drastically downplaying their real numbers. A recent news report stated "a staggering 50 people died in the Iranian city of Qom from the new coronavirus in the month of February, Iran's semiofficial ILNA news agency reported on Monday. The official numbers are equally concerning: 16 deaths out of 95 reported cases.

North Korea, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Africa could very well have undetected outbreaks.

<https://www.foxnews.com/health/global-outbreak-causes-pandemic-fears-after-cases-jump-in-italy-and-south-korea>

The number of cases in the United States has increased in recent days from 35 to 53 cases. It gives reason for concern that most of the new cases are in large population centers.

In outbreak clusters we have seen that the coronavirus is spreading exponentially, not linearly. We could be facing the unfortunate reality of a global pandemic within a matter of weeks. The virus is already present in many prominent western cities with large populations. The focus of western nations must be to prepare for a major outbreak.

Preparation

Now is the time to plan and prepare for potential outbreaks.

1. Nations should use this time window to plan for an outbreak emergency response.
2. The United States needs to be careful not to repeat the early mistakes they made in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Only after Lt. General Russel L. Honoré was put in charge of organizing the relief efforts, the situation in New Orleans improved dramatically. He was an excellent commander who was not afraid to get his boots dirty. He should be asked to come out of retirement and be appointed once again to a leading role to help save his country in a time of great need.
3. We must also learn from the Chinese response to the initial outbreak. They carried out quarantines of hundreds of millions of people across many large cities. The Chinese have learned how to establish and maintain quarantine and treatment plans. Such highly complex plans always go through iterations to eliminate mistakes and unintended consequences. It is time to learn from the Chinese and to adjust these plans for cultural and structural differences in the US.
4. Western countries could also learn from the experience made by the Japanese during the Diamond Princess quarantine. We need to find out what worked and what turned out to be mistakes. It is easy to point fingers at the Japanese response, but one has to understand that without warning and lead time it is impossible to provide 3,700 quarantine spaces.
5. Each country's health department needs to set up a plan and purchase essential medical supplies now. When there are drug shortages (as expected) are there substitute drugs that are available? This might require tight coordination with US FDA, EDQM, EMA, NMPA, PMDA and many other Regulatory Agencies around the world.
6. Consult with world experts in this subject matter like Dr. Christian Drosten of Charité Hospital in Berlin, home to more than half of all German Nobel Prize winners in physiology and medicine. Get the best advice on which

medical drug cocktail works best to prevent the very serious outcome of the disease of respiratory failure.

7. Consider the development of a passive immunization cocktail to add to the treatment toolbox in six months from now.

Medical supplies are now becoming a matter of national security and the ability to stage an effective medical emergency response. Western nations need to think about plan B when medical supply chains get disrupted. Beating up the pharmaceutical industry on pricing has become a very popular political move to divide the population into us against them. This behavior has sent pharmaceutical companies on a quest to outsource their production to the lowest-cost producers. US video games sales in 2018 topped US\$43 Billion and nobody complained about cost! It is time to re-think priorities and provide pharmaceutical companies with margins on their product sales that allow them to produce half of the local demand locally. The basket of drugs used every day (antibiotics, oncology drugs etc.) is supplied between 75% and 95% from China. The coronavirus is not likely to be the last outbreak disrupting global supply chains. A globally diversified production strategy for essential medicines might be a good approach for plan B.

8. Government agricultural departments must be prepared with adequate supplies of essential foods. How do people order supplies and how do they pay for their orders when they are under quarantine? Who will deliver the food to their doorsteps?

9. Sick people under quarantine should have a hotline to call and medical staff will go to their house to test them. This will prevent additional infections.

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/us-dependence-pharmaceutical-products-china>

Economic Fall

The coronavirus is not going away anytime soon. Even if a vaccine is developed within the next 18 months, we will not be sure of its effectiveness since the virus can mutate. The Chinese supply lines may take a long time to fully recover. Twenty percent of the world's manufacturing comes from China. The western world is very dependent on the Chinese producers for many essential goods such as medical supplies, drugs, machinery, and spare parts. The massive ripple effects caused by supply line disruptions will impact the economy. The stock markets could take big hits similar to 2008/2009. The West will likely respond by making investments into domestic production capacities.

Geopolitical Consequences

In the short to medium term the Chinese Government will have to navigate some rough waters. Bring workers out of quarantine too early back to the factories and face a backlash on the infection control or keep the workers in quarantine and sink the

economy. These are super tough choices. Both choices could have a destabilizing impact on the Government. The dominant choice is to bring people back to work sooner to provide the Chinese people with urgently needed supplies and to supply international customers. The Chinese are a very tough, smart and hardworking people. They will survive this and rebuild their country. Their national pride of what they had achieved before Corona hit will carry them through these dark times. They also will remember for a very long time who helped in a time of need and who didn't.

The Potential Breakup of the European Union

European outbreaks as we see it now in Italy will disrupt the economy as we have seen it in China. That means that the revenue base of Europe will shrink. When money gets tight the EU has two choices:

1. Print money like there is no tomorrow and call it quantitative easing.
2. Shrink the bloated EU apparatus in Brussels and Strasbourg in an austerity program to match the financial facts on the ground (that should also include the €75 Billion hole left by Brexit).

The current EU annual budget proposal is greater than €1 Trillion!

If the past is a predictor of the future the choice will be to print money like there is no tomorrow. There is only one small problem with this pathway: Zombie companies! With their 0 % interest policy the EU has kept companies alive which are the equivalent of a horse that has died in a stall that's too tight to fall over. When quantitative easing is pushing up the interest rates these Zombie companies will go the way of the dodo bird. In the last 5 years the interest rate policies might have led to an accumulation of up to 15% Zombie companies with bad strategies and outdated products. When these companies go they will trigger a big banking problem. Most banks, in a time of 0% interest, had to get creative. Since there was less default on loans, they have run down their reserve accounts for bad loans to show that money as an asset. When the Zombies go, the banks will be in real trouble. What will be the choices? Too big to fail! Government bail out! When the going is good, they privatize the gains, when the game fails they socialize the losses. In addition, we will see all the workers from the Zombie companies out of work. When the money runs out it will be time to make the hard choices. That will be one amazing spectator sport!

The World Health Organization (WHO) is not taking a pro-active role. They are agonizing urgently need decisions for too long. They should speak truth as soon as they know the data is supporting their decisions. That will give the world a head start for preparations before the disease hits.

It also does not help if people like Prof. Dr. Klaus-Dieter Zastrow are telling people that Corona is just like regular flu. Downplaying the danger of this virus in TV interviews was wrong. Misleading people about the truth of the real situation delays orderly household preparations for a potential emergency and leads to panic buying as we see in Italy after the emergency has arrived.

The American media need to do their job. They should stop their infatuation with trying to bring down President Trump and move their focus to the pending global pandemic. This is not likely to be a short-term problem. We could be in this for 12 months.

What Can Individuals Do for Their Families?

It's a matter of time before we see quarantines like in China and Italy. Everyone must look out for their own family. Now is the time to take the steps to ensure their protection.

1. Stock up on a three-month supply of nonperishable, essential foods.
<https://headtopics.com/sg/grocery-store-shelves-emptied-in-milan-during-coronavirus-quarantine-11492915>
2. Stock up on essential medical supplies, anti-inflammatory medications, antibiotics, prescription drugs, hand sanitizers and other hygiene supplies. Also, a three-month supply is recommended.
3. Keep a supply of battery-operated lights, batteries, candles and other daily essential items
4. Water bottles, propane cooking stoves and spare tanks.
5. Have cash on hand in the event of a run on the banks.
6. Consider home schooling children.

Follow the example of the Mormon church. They teach principles of individual and family emergency preparedness and encourage food storage to be ready for all types of emergencies.

I sincerely hope by my sounding the alarm people will now prepare for what could be a long and drawn-out pandemic, the likes of which has never been experienced in our lifetime.

Lastly, we must show compassion to all the Chinese people residing in and outside of China. This is a difficult virus to deal with and even more difficult for the people in China and their families abroad who have been the hardest hit and forced to deal with the loss of their loved ones to the deadly coronavirus. Now is the time to come together with one purpose to stop a pending medical disaster.

The video gives a glimpse of the perils being experienced by the Chinese.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-nv7j9HEgY&feature=youtu.be>

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