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This is Not Just a Virus; it is a 21st Century Plague

"Let the virus rip through the clustered areas, run its course and take the hit."



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**Interview conducted by:
 Bud Wayne, Editorial Executive
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CEOCFO: *Mr. Malak, why did you decide against writing a second op-ed about covid-19?*

Mr. Malak: To write an accurate piece on this subject requires a lot sourcing of medical journals and scholarly publications. I prefer instead to discuss what I have learned from my recent research on the subject.

CEOCFO: *Is this coronavirus similar to the Spanish Flu?*

Mr. Malak: Yes, it is extremely similar. The Spanish Flu infected about 500 million people, over a fourth of the world's population of about 1.8 billion at the time. It's believed to have killed between 50 million to as many as 100 million over a three-year period from January 1918 until December 1920. If we assume the Spanish Flu model, the coronavirus could linger for the next 18 months or so.

CEOCFO: *What do you know about mutations?*

Mr. Malak: Remember I am not a scientist, but I have read many scientific publications over the past few weeks and I have asked a lot of questions. Recently, I have read articles that suggest the virus has already mutated and there are currently two different strains infecting people. The ancestral, or first strain is weaker than the 2nd strain. If that continues, this will be very difficult to contain.

CEOCFO: *Is this an airborne virus?*

Mr. Malak: There is a concern covid-19 could be airborne. Airborne viruses can spread through air conditioning and ventilations systems and droplets can live for 30 minutes or more. South Korea has over 7000 confirmed cases. More than half are linked to a large church where one elderly lady started the infection. It is not conceivable that such a large and rapid spread came from a single source if it were not airborne.

If that is indeed the case this will be even more difficult, if not impossible to contain.

"There is a concern covid-19 could be airborne. Airborne viruses can spread through air conditioning and ventilations systems and droplets can live for 30 minutes or more. South Korea has over 7000 confirmed cases. More than half are linked to a large church where one elderly lady started the infection. It is not conceivable that such a large and rapid spread came from a single source if it were not airborne."- Emil Malak

CEOCFO: *In your last [op-ed](#), you said the 14-day quarantine period might not be adequate. Can you explain why?*

Mr. Malak: As I pointed out, 14-days is not an exact number. It can take longer to develop symptoms if you develop symptoms at all. There was at least one case in China where a 70-year-old man in Hubei Province did not display any symptoms until 27 days after he was infected. Assuming a 14-day incubation period gives a false sense of security.

CEOCFO: *So, if someone gets the virus and they fight it off, make a full recovery and test negative, is it 100% certain they will not relapse?*

Mr. Malak: That remains to be seen. Apparently, it's possible to feel recovered and even test negative but have residual traces in the lower lungs and still spread the virus. More research is needed to know how long it actually takes to cease being contagious to others after testing negative. More testing and research are needed to make a proper determination.

CEOCFO: *Do you think the United States, Europe and Canada will experience the same numbers of coronavirus infections as China?*

Mr. Malak: I would say percentagewise, it will probably be worse than China. The coronavirus is spreading at the same rate in Europe and the U.S. as it did in China early on. The difference is the west doesn't get it. They have been watching and waiting for too long. The Chinese government jumped into action and took the drastic measures necessary to contain the virus. They did things the west would never do. The only way to rapidly and effectively contain this virus is by enacting martial law. This is an extreme measure which is unfathomable to us, but is what China did to mitigate the damage.

The U.S., Germany, Italy, etc. are just 4 to 6 weeks away from seeing their numbers of infected cases jump to more than 100,000. We are in trouble for waiting so long and have no one to blame but ourselves. Currently the death toll is between 3% to 5%, but that rate could increase significantly, if and when the healthcare system becomes overwhelmed with cases, and if the virus continues to mutate into more resilient strains.

There is no way the U.S. and Europe can properly deal with hundreds of thousands of infected patients, never mind potentially millions by year end. Sacrifices may have to be made. We must wake up and be prepared.

CEOCFO: *How have Europe, the United States and Canada done so far in handling covid-19?*

Mr. Malak: I advise government leaders to be factual and stay on "message discipline"; even if the medical outlook is bad. Otherwise, it creates fear, confusion and leads to overreactions in the stock market. Governments need to let the military get involved and treat the coronavirus as public enemy number one. This needs to be dealt with ASAP. It's also ridiculous to see how politicians are politicizing the virus.

They need to stop the blame game and get to work addressing this current disaster which they have completely underestimated.

It may be time for the U.S. to reach out to China to offer assistance, and perhaps extend an olive branch to the Chinese government. The Chinese have done an extraordinary job at containing the virus after the initial outbreak while the west was asleep at the wheel and procrastinating rather than preparing. Western countries missed the opportunity to stop the virus in its tracks.

CEOCFO: *What do you mean by an "extend an olive branch"?*

Huawei's CFO, Meng Wanzhou

Mr. Malak: Sometimes you have to think outside of the box. China has not been forthcoming regarding the coronavirus. They are likely withholding valuable information from the rest of the world that could be crucial in fighting covid-19. This could be an opportunity for the U.S. to unleash the "Art of the Deal" and negotiate with China in exchange for that information about the virus that will save lives.

Huawei's CFO, Meng Wanzhou is currently being held under house arrest in British Columbia, Canada, awaiting extradition to the United States. The Chinese consider her arrest an act of bad faith and have claimed she is being held illegally. President Trump should consider lifting the extradition request as an act of good faith during this very difficult time for China and give them back their daughter. That move could pave the way for a better relationship with the Chinese in the long term and provide much needed details about the coronavirus now.

CEOCFO: *What are China's options?*

Mr. Malak: They will have some very tough decisions ahead of them. Option one is to continue their current efforts to contain the virus. If they can get the spread under control, they can then turn their focus towards treating the sick. I am of the opinion they can no longer continue to quarantine over 50 million people if the virus continues to spread throughout China, like it has in the city of Harbin. They may soon be faced with quarantining the whole country. Option one may have already failed to contain the virus despite their extraordinary efforts. Unfortunately, this virus is spread by silent vectors and it may already be too late. The Chinese may have already given up any hopes of containment. They are no longer providing any new or accurate numbers on the virus like the rest of the world. *If that turns out to be the case, as terrible as it sounds the Chinese may have no choice but option two; allow the virus to rip through the whole country and let covid-19 run its course.* Sadly, the Chinese may be faced with a possible death toll between 3% and as much as 10% of their population, depending on how quickly they can stop the virus from becoming fatal.

CEOCFO: *Germany has seen a sudden surge in coronavirus cases. How bad do you think things will get there for the Germans?*

Mr. Malak: The reason for the sudden surge is because 25 million people from all over Germany took part in the Rose Monday Karneval on February 24th. They've also had soccer matches over the past few weeks

with tens of thousands of fans crowded together into stadiums in close proximity to each other. It's conceivable many that attended these events could soon test positive. In the meantime, anyone infected could unknowingly be spreading the virus. Some of the top research universities have recently run simulation models on these types of occurrences and they may have some additional reliable data. If I were taking a calculated guess, I would say worst case scenario, as much as 70% of Germany's population could be infected within the next three to six months.

[Johns Hopkins](#) ran a simulation last year on what a coronavirus outbreak might look like and they estimated over 65 million people would be infected. [Harvard University](#), [Imperial College London](#) and other top research universities have also published very credible and alarming reports on how bad this can get.

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

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

<https://hms.harvard.edu/news/tackling-coronavirus>

The link below shows the coronavirus spread across the world:

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/national-international/map-watch-the-coronavirus-cases-spread-across-the-world/2303276/>

I trust the ability of Angela Merkel's government to prepare and more importantly, to gather all their medical resources together to come up with a possible short-term solution and perhaps even develop a vaccine. German scientists are among the world's best and German people are very tenacious. A German researcher I referenced in my [op-ed](#), Dr. Christian Drosten, Director of the Institute of Virology on Campus Charité Mitte, Berlin, Germany, treated sixteen very sick coronavirus patients with a cocktail of medicines. Fourteen of them got better. Dr. Drosten has proven himself to be one of the world's premier medical researchers in his field. In my opinion, he would be the ideal person to lead the global effort to develop **early treatment protocols** for patients with the virus and a covid-19 vaccine.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41573-020-00016-0>

[https://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674\(20\)30229-4](https://www.cell.com/cell/fulltext/S0092-8674(20)30229-4)

CEOCFO: *What about Northern Italy? Do they need total isolation?*

Mr. Malak: My wonderful wife's family live in Northern Italy which is currently under quarantine. The harsh reality is I think at this point it may be too late for quarantine to be effective in Northern Italy. The military needs to impose a total isolation protocol. No one in or out.

The virus has already established clusters all over Northern Italy. Hopefully it is not widespread throughout the rest of the country. They too may soon be faced with having to make the very tough decision whether to let the virus rip through the region and turn their focus to treating the sick with a medical cocktail like what Dr. Drosten has done in Germany, and hopefully minimize the loss of life. With help from NATO, they can use the military to contain the virus in the north, setting

up thousands of quarantine beds and concentrate on dealing with the most serious cases. They will need thousands of ventilators right away.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-italian-doctor-says-fighting-covid-19-outbreak-is-like-war-11954229>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-03-10/czech-republic-closing-schools-banning-events-to-fight-coronavirus-spread>

The Czech Republic is trying to stay ahead of the outbreak. They only have about 40 confirmed cases at this time, but they are being proactive and taking drastic action now to try to contain the virus. Most of the virus cases appeared from people coming from hard hit Northern Italy. The Czech's just closed schools and universities indefinitely, they banned all public gatherings of greater than 100 people, including movies, theaters, concerts, sporting events and religious gatherings. They had already banned flights from Italy and anyone returning from Italy is put in a mandatory two-week quarantine. For now, their borders remain open, but everyone coming into the country is being checked for signs and symptoms. **Prime Minister Andrej Babiš made the courageous call to keep his country safe.** The rest of the world should follow his lead. I will be keeping my eyes on the Czech Republic and hoping their efforts will be successful.

CEOFCO: *What about New Rochelle, New York? What should the authorities do there?*

Mr. Malak: New Rochelle possibly has the largest cluster of the virus in the United States. They were smart to bring in the national guard for containment. Once a cluster is identified and isolated, strict quarantine protocols need to be put in place. No one should travel in or out of the quarantined area. The entire country needs to come together at times like this and do everything in their power to ensure people in the quarantined areas have everything they need at zero cost.

Soon, they may be facing the same tough decisions as China and Italy, whether to let the virus run its course and shift their focus to treating the sick. This is a modern-day plague and we will all eventually have to deal with the fatal consequences.

CEOFCO: *Is it too late for Iran?*

Mr. Malak: Iran has been hit very hard by this virus and their leaders refused to quarantine. Sadly, that country is run by a lying, irresponsible, theocratic regime. Their country is collapsing, and the people are angry. Sooner or later the people will revolt and bring the regime down. I feel very sad for the wonderful and friendly people of Iran.

CEOFCO: *Those are very bold predictions. Are you staking your reputation on these estimates?*

Mr. Malak: Yes, I stand behind my predictions. I didn't pull these numbers out of the air, my guesstimates are based on analysis from reputable sources like the ones I have already mentioned [Johns Hopkins University](#), [Harvard University](#) and [Imperial College of London](#), as well as others. This is not just a virus; it is a 21st century plague. I hope to be proven totally wrong. I would be very happy if these predictions do not come true even if it damages my credibility.

CEOFCO: *Do you have any advice for the Trump Administration?*

Mr. Malak: President Trump should declare a national state of emergency and martial law. This would expand his powers as the Commander in Chief and allow him to put the military in charge.

In my [op-ed](#), I suggested appointing Retired General Russell Honore to manage this crisis. He led the recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina. The problem we are facing is going to require a military solution. Appointing civilians at this point is useless.

The President and his team should now consider using the military to impose an isolation protocol in the major clustered regions and let the virus rip through and take the hit. Have the military provide makeshift quarantine beds and medical assistance.

The U.S. and every other country should close off their borders for coming in and going out for the next three months, and hopefully get a major percentage of this pandemic under control.

CEOCFO: *Do you have confidence in Vice President Pence?*

Mr. Malak: I have 100% confidence in Vice President Pence's abilities and his credibility. As governor he dealt with a similar outbreak and did very well. I do think he and the administration have been badly advised. They need to change some key members of their team and begin being proactive and stop being reactionary.

CEOCFO: *Is shaking hands infectious?*

Mr. Malak: Yes! For starters we need to begin social distancing. Shaking hands, kissing cheeks and other forms of close touching are becoming less and less safe with new pandemics popping up every few years. I think it's time to change and incorporate safer, more graceful greetings that have less likelihood of spreading germs.

Recently, I saw a formerly used Turkish/Iranian greeting, which involved simply placing your right hand on your heart close to your chest and giving a slight head bow, leaving about 3 to 6 feet between the greeters. It was an elegant and respectful greeting that can be easily incorporated today. I think it would be a welcome societal change. More and more people including President Trump self-identify as germaphobes. President Trump once said shaking hands is "barbaric." I say, today shaking hands is infectious.

Previous op-ed <https://ceocfointerviews.com/voippaloped0220.html>

