

Coronavirus Consequences Coming into View

Democrats seeking electoral advantage from this crisis are in an untenable position. Even in suboptimal circumstances, it is hard to see where any case can be made for mismanagement by the administration.

by Conrad Black



The new Democratic pre-electoral chorus is already audibly arising like a Wagnerian finale from the largely hidden choir. President Trump, they intone, bungled this and must be investigated for his incompetence which is costing countless American lives. Because of his negligence and stupidity, the country must be shut down for months to ensure an economic disaster entirely attributable (unsurprisingly) to the contemptible ineptitude of the Bad Orange Man.

CNN's Brian Stelter, one of the battle-scarred, grizzled, veterans of the Long March of media Trump-haters, choreographically synchronized with the *Washington Post*, New

York Times, and MSNBC, has already kicked off this new campaign, on the air and on the internet. He has gathered together the usual sampling of Trumpophobic media group-thinkers, and followed Saul Alinsky's first rule, accusing the enemy of precisely what he and his comrades are doing. Stelter has gone forth to battle with the same grim earnest that he brought to the previous unsuccessful crusades for the Trump-Russia election rigging fable and the impeachment fantasy.

The pro-Trump media, outnumbered but victorious, will indeed have the effrontery to defend the president and join with the 60 percent of Americans who think that he has generally led well in this struggle against the coronavirus, despite an overly optimistic launch.

For so long Stelter has uttered the old stock phrases "walls are closing in," and "the drip, drip, drip," and the almost daily "bombshell" of each new damaging allegation (that evaporated overnight), that he could be operating on autocue as he storms out of the firehall again, tearing through the pandemic-deserted streets to assault the president on a completely spurious charge one more time. No one can deny the vigor and imperishability of the hate and vitriol that propels the president's media enemies again and again, no matter how often they are mowed down by the facts.

Theirs is a bloodless re-enactment of the Japanese defense of Okinawa 75 years ago: the Japanese defense force of 120,000 took 113,000 dead and 7,000 wounded, one of history's few large engagements where one side had a 100 percent casualty rate. It is mad, but it is bold, or as General Bosquet famously said of the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War of 1854: "It is magnificent, but it isn't war; it's insanity."

It isn't very professional, either.

Even less forgivable is the campaign, already begun by *New*

York Times hit-person [Maggie Haberman](#) to tear down the White House's coronavirus response coordinator, Dr. Deborah Birx, who is an indisputable expert doing an exceptionally capable job. Birx has an unblemished career of great distinction, being not only a respected medical doctor but a retired colonel and former ambassador. Her offense is not to slag off the president who has recruited her.

Aiding and Abetting Globalist Corruption

The same media outlets have been engaged in a scandalous attempt to represent the Chinese response to the crisis as brilliant and to accept Beijing's claim to have eliminated the virus within its own borders, in embarrassing contrast (they suppose) to Trumpian floundering about.

In reality, the Chinese were inexcusably dishonest in withholding the proportions of the coronavirus outbreak, has not uttered a truthful word about it up to and including this week—as they claim to have had almost no further fatalities and none at all in the past few days; and were extremely negligent in not moving promptly to restrict outward travel and warn the world.

The same American media which have acclaimed the official Chinese performance with an adulatory hallelujah chorus have railed against President Trump for following the normal practice of identifying the coronavirus geographically. The subordination of the World Health Organization as a cheerleader for China's odium and criminality will require that the entire leadership of the WHO to be sacked and replaced by people in whom it is possible to have some confidence.

By the time this horrible virus has ravaged the underdeveloped world—which is completely unprepared to deal with it and where the danger of horrific human devastation is the fear that dare not speak its name—the complacent support of the corrupt

leadership of the United Nations and its agencies by African and Asian states may have abated.

In the aftermath of this crisis, China's prestige will have been thoroughly besmirched and a number of states will have followed the lead of the United Kingdom in questioning the utility and efficacy of the European Union, which has provided no leadership at all.

Making Up for Lost Time

Without question, the United States lacked adequate preparation for a pandemic. There is no just reason for heaping abuse on the previous administration for not being prepared for what the country is now facing because it has not faced anything comparable since the Spanish flu a century ago. Nor is it just to hammer President Trump for his somewhat cavalier opening reflections on the coronavirus, as he was not at that stage being warned that it could achieve the proportions it is achieving, or that the virus was distinctly more dangerous than outbreaks of aggressive flu in the last several decades.

The charges of unpreparedness are based mainly on a lethargic start to testing; even three weeks ago it was necessary to send all tests, which only could be administered by appointment in hospitals, to Atlanta for evaluation. These complaints have been effectively answered by the swift development of immediate testing devices that can be administered anywhere by almost anyone and produce evaluations within 15 minutes.

The president made exactly the right decision on Wednesday in permitting the two Dutch cruise liners with coronavirus-infected passengers to land at Port Everglades, Florida, and to do "what is best for humanity." It was an admirable gesture and is widely interpreted in the world as generous and respectful of the universal character of the fight against

this disease.

Trump and his advisors have now prepared the country for 100,000 deaths, but that total will only occur if the incidence of New York ripples across all the heavily populated areas of the country and if California only peaks at the end of April.

Preliminary evidence, indicative and not at all dispositive, is that California is almost at its peak now. If this is the case, the death total will be far less than 100,000 and the country will likely reopen in May, if in stages, and the president will be deemed to have managed the crisis well and sustained and retrieved the economy well.

If the peak in California only comes late in April, however, the total number of fatalities could approach 80,000 and the country might not be substantially open for business until mid-June.

Tedious and Predictable Partisanship

Obviously, speculation is hazardous and these projections are rank guesses based on official statements of pandemic patterns. Even in a suboptimal circumstance, it is hard to see where any case can be made for mismanagement by the administration, especially by those who accused him of “racism” and “xenophobia” for stopping the direct flights from China, (e.g. Democratic presidential frontrunner Joe Biden and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer).

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s trial balloon on CNN on Sunday about an investigation like that which followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was preposterous. In 2001, there had been some badly misjudged intelligence, by the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. In the coronavirus crisis, the president moved quickly to end direct travel from China and then Europe,

saving many lives and giving the United States the lowest fatality ratio of any large country with a sophisticated medical system and reliable reporting except Canada and Germany.

The administration is taking fiscal and social advantage of the crisis in the national interest with desirable tax reductions and, finally, an infrastructure renovation program. This president is emulating the tactic of Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II in styling any legislation that involved official expense as a bill to assist members and veterans of the armed forces. If something of durable value can be legislated along with the measures necessary to strangle the public health crisis and rescue the economically vulnerable, it will be a commendable nugget in a rocky field. Pelosi's investigation will not get far off the ground.

First published in