

# After Coronavirus Crisis - Food Crisis?

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## Abstract

As the novel coronavirus first emerged in China late last year, more than a dozen U.S. researchers, doctors, and public health officials were working at the World Health Organization's Geneva headquarters. President Trump has accused the United Nations' health agency of not clearly communicating early on how big a threat the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic was, in an attempt to protect China. Last week, he said the U.S. will halt funding to the WHO and conduct a review "to assess the WHO's role in severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of the coronavirus."

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## Introduction

Caitlin Oakley, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), confirmed to the Post that in January, 16 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employees were at the WHO "working on a variety of programs, including COVID-19 and Ebola." She added that "just because you have Americans embedded in WHO providing technical assistance does not change the information you are getting from WHO leadership. We have learned now that WHO information was incorrect and relied too heavily on China." Officials told the Post that from the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, CDC staffers consulted with their WHO counterparts on the disease, and that CDC Global Disease Detection Operations Center Director Ray Arthur has participated in daily "incident management" calls, sharing information gleaned from WHO officials. That information is sent to HHS via telephone calls and written reports, one official said [1-3].

Sensitive information, including details on actions the WHO

is planning on taking, was shared in a secure facility at the CDC headquarters in Atlanta, the official told the Post, with Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar among those receiving updates in the early days of the outbreak. Read more at The Washington Post. Birx, like Trump, suggests China or WHO warned late about human-to-human transmission. A day after President Donald Trump said he was putting a hold on U.S. funding for the World Health Organization amid the ongoing pandemic, White House coronavirus response coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx echoed the president, saying that "someone had to have known" that human transmission was happening, whether China or the WHO, and signaled many lives could have been saved if it been known earlier [4-6].

"I think once this is over, we'll be able to look back and see, 'did China and the WHO say and do everything to alert the rest of the world to the nuances of this virus' -- because when it first explodes someone had to have known that there

was human to human transmission,” Birx told co-hosts of ABC’s “The View” Wednesday. “You really have to go back and ask yourself, why wasn’t there this level of transparency when this virus exploded?” she added. “I think people would have prepared differently if they had known the level of transmissibility of this virus.” Dr. Deborah Birx, White House coronavirus response coordinator, appears on ABC’s ‘The View,’ April 15, 2020. (ABC News) MORE: Coronavirus updates: Americans should prepare for ‘another battle,’ CDC director says Even as the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 soared to more than 26,000 lives Wednesday morning, Birx said that the rate of new cases of COVID-19 is slowing and that some areas, with a data-driven approach, can start looking to decreasing social distancing restrictions. “We do see hope and the actual number of new cases decreasing day over day, but, you know, the mortality will lag and we’ll continue that through this week,” Birx said. “We really want to still ask every American to do what they’ve doing -- I’ve been so proud to watch American social distance and do what’s needed to stop the spread of this virus,” she added [7-8].

Asked when Americans might see a return to normalcy, Birx didn’t give a date but said some places without could “do very well” with decreasing restrictions due to increased respiratory disease surveillance systems that have become available in the last month. “You can see states where they have good surveillance up and running now, where they haven’t really seen significant increases in cases, and so this has got to be done in a very laser focused data driven manner,” Birx explained. “But as the data has come in, I think we’re very confident that we can actually see places that could do very well with some decreasing restrictions”. “I have confidence in our surveillance systems and matching that with our testing capacity. We can see states, if you go on the CDC site, that really have not had any respiratory or significant respiratory diseases, and therefore don’t have COVID-19 circulating,” she added. MORE: Coronavirus official explains why millennials are ‘key’ to stopping the spread Then asked if it frustrates her that not every government and public health official are not on same page in responding to the virus, Birx jokingly said, “I’m used to this”. “I’m used to this. I work, you know, all around the world and what’s been really exciting to me, when you do global health work, is listening to the community and listening to officials and really understanding how people are looking at things differently”, she said. White House coronavirus response coordinator Deborah Birx speaks while flanked by President Donald Trump following a meeting of his coronavirus task force in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House, April 6, 2020. Before Birx was detailed to the White House coronavirus task force six and a half weeks

ago, she led the government response in the fight against HIV/AIDS, as a global AIDS ambassador, a role held since 2014 [11-12].

She has since become a prominent face in the government’s response to COVID-19 since, and compares her approach this novel virus to her approach to HIV/AIDS: to chart all of the data and put it into context, citing trends so the government can identify when something might be working or falling short. Birx also that with both COVID-19 and HIV/AIDSs, because of asymptomatic transmission, “you have to do surveillance in a different way”. “I think the other complicating factor that worries me every day, because I see this in HIV, people passing the virus on to others because they’re asymptomatic and they don’t know they’re infected,” Birx said. “You can’t just wait for people to be identified as a case with symptoms you have to have surveillance in place to really look for cases and asymptomatic cases”. In the spirit of social distancing, Birx has isolated herself in Washington, D.C., avoiding her own family as she now meets daily with the president and vice president. She joined co-hosts of “The View” via video call. Birx has spoken several times of avoiding both her elderly parents into their 90s, daughter, and younger granddaughters amid the pandemic, who live a house in Maryland that she shared them before the pandemic [1-2].

She said at a task force meeting last week that she couldn’t seeing her flu-stricken grandchild, whom she would normally treat as the doctor of her family because, “You can’t take that kind of risk with the leaders of the country”. The 63-year-old physician and immunologist graduated from high school at 16, got married and graduated from college at 20, finished medical school at 23 and joined the U.S Army in the same year, according to a profile in the Washington Post.

Birx, like Trump, suggests China or WHO warned late about human-to-human transmission, says actions need to be examined ‘once this is over Citing coronavirus, Trump threatens to adjourn Congress to make recess appointments President Trump said Wednesday that he was considering taking the unprecedented step of adjourning both houses of Congress in order to make recess appointments to fill government posts, citing the emergency created by the coronavirus outbreak. “If the House will not agree to that adjournment, I will exercise my constitutional authority to adjourn both chambers of Congress,” Trump said at a Rose Garden briefing of the coronavirus task force. “The current practice of leaving town while conducting phony pro forma sessions is a dereliction of duty that the American people

cannot afford during this crisis. It is a scam what they do". Noting that the Senate, which has the responsibility for confirming executive-branch appointments, had "left Washington until at least May 4," Trump said that "the Constitution provides a mechanism for the president to fill positions in such circumstances, the recess appointment, it's called" [3,4,13,14].

Officials appointed in this manner can serve until the end of the following Senate session, although if Trump is not reelected in November the next president may choose to replace them with his or her own appointees. Trump cited Michael Pack, whom he nominated to head the U.S. Agency for Global Media in June 2018. "He's been stuck in committee for two years, preventing us from managing the Voice of America, very important. And if you heard what is coming out of the Voice of America, it's disgusting. The things they say are disgusting toward our country". Democrats have blocked Pack's confirmation because they see him as a threat to the independence of the agency he would run. While Trump said, "We especially need [these people] now because of the pandemic," he did not specify how Pack's appointment would help with the effort to curb the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. While past presidents have made recess appointments when Congress was adjourned, and used their constitutional powers to call Congress back into session, Trump would be the first in U.S. history to try to adjourn both chambers in order to fill vacant government positions. "Perhaps it's never been done before, nobody's even sure if it has, but we're going to do it. We need these people here. We need people for this crisis, and we don't want to play any more political games," Trump said [15-16].

The president appears to be referring to Article II, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution, which grants presidents the right to adjourn Congress "in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment". Such a move would be immediately challenged in court, however, and the logistics of carrying out such a plan immediately drew scrutiny. While Trump appealed to Congress to put politics aside and approve his nominees, he pinned the blame for what he said were "many, many positions that are unstaffed" on Democrats, who he said "are holding them up". At the same time Trump boasted of the number of judges he has been able to have confirmed in the Senate. "We've gotten judges because we've gone through the process. I guess we're up to 448 federal judges and that we've gotten because we've focused on it," Trump said. Harvard scientists predict coronavirus will infect up to 70 percent of humanity Harvard University epidemiologist Marc Lipsitch is predicting the

coronavirus "will ultimately not be containable" and, within a year, will infect somewhere between 40 and 70 percent of humanity, The Atlantic reports. But don't be too alarmed. Many of those people, Lipsitch clarifies, won't have severe illnesses or even show symptoms at all, which is already the case for many people who have tested positive for the virus. That's precisely why he doesn't think the virus can be stopped. Viruses like SARS, MERS, and the avian flu were eventually contained in part because they were more intense and had a higher fatality rate. In other words, if you were infected by the virus that caused SARS, chances were you weren't out and about. But because the current coronavirus, known as COVID-19, can be asymptomatic, or at least very mild, there's a better chance people will likely go about their day as normal. The down side, though, is that it becomes harder to trace and prevent. In that sense it's similar to the flu, which can also be deadly, but often passes without the infected person seeking medical care [6-7].

The Atlantic reports Lipsitch is definitely not alone in his prediction. There's an emerging consensus that the outbreak will eventually morph into a new seasonal disease, which, per The Atlantic, could one day turn "cold and flu season" into "cold and flu and COVID-19 season." Read more at The Atlantic. Coronavirus government response updates: Trump says some states could reopen before May President Donald Trump on Tuesday evening reversed himself on a key argument he made just the day before, saying it would now be up to the governors of individual states to decide when their states would reopen amid the coronavirus pandemic, and the federal government would be available to help oversee that process [17-19].

On Monday, Trump had said he had "total" authority to make those decisions, drawing rebukes from several governors, including New York Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Speaking in the White House Rose Garden, Trump said 20 states were in "extremely good shape" and some could reopen even before the end of April when the current federal social distancing guidelines are set to expire. A global pandemic of the novel coronavirus has infected more than 2 million people worldwide. More than 136,000 people across the globe have died from COVID-19, the disease caused by the new respiratory virus, according to data compiled by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University. The actual numbers are believed to be much higher due to testing shortages, many unreported cases and suspicions that some governments are hiding the scope of their nations' outbreaks. Since the first cases were detected in China in December, the United States has become the worst-affected nation, with more than 638,000 diagnosed

cases and at least 30,844 deaths. The number of cases in New York state alone -- over 214,000 -- is higher than in any single country outside the U.S [20-21].

### **A food crisis looms as coronavirus forces farms to stay idle and countries hoard supplies**

- Large-scale lockdowns to contain the coronavirus outbreak have hurt the supply of manpower and disrupted supply chains in the agriculture industry.
- The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said the world risks a "looming food crisis" unless measures are taken fast to protect the most vulnerable, keep global food supply chains alive and mitigate the pandemic's impacts across the food system.
- As of now, disruptions are minimal as food supplies have been adequate. But price spikes are more likely for higher value products like meat and perishable commodities rather than for major staples which are still in adequate supply, said the FAO.



Agricultural laborers spray against insects and weeds inside the orchards of a fruit farm in Mesa, California. In this time of the Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic, agricultural workers have become essential workers in the race to maintain Americas food supply while simultaneously staying healthy. Brent Stirton | Getty Images

The coronavirus outbreak could affect food security as the global pandemic disrupts labor availability and the supply chain. "We risk a looming food crisis unless measures are taken fast to protect the most vulnerable, keep global food supply chains alive and mitigate the pandemic's impacts across the food system," said the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in a recent post on its website [9-10].

### **The Fao Said Disruptions Can Be Expected In April and May**

Restrictions on movements and "basic aversion behaviour" by workers could impede farming, said the FAO. Food processors, who handle the vast majority of agricultural products, could also be prevented from processing the farm products. "We are already seeing, however, challenges in terms of the logistics involving the movement of food (not being able to move food from point A to point B), and the pandemic's impact on livestock sector due to reduced access to animal feed and slaughterhouses' diminished capacity (due to logistical constraints and labour shortages) similar to what happened in China," said the FAO [22-24].

What grocery stores are doing to protect their workers and customers: As of now, disruptions are minimal as food supplies have been adequate. But price spikes are more likely for higher value products like meat and perishable commodities rather than for major staples which are still in adequate supply, said the FAO. Indeed, Fitch Solutions says global food supply is relatively ample with the outlook for the 2020 to 2021 crop year positive thanks to mild weather conditions in key producing regions. "Grain production in developed markets, usually done on large farms in low-density areas are less prone to contagion, but labour-intensive sectors such as plantations (palm oil) and manufacturing (meat processing) are more at risk of employee contagion and therefore of temporary lockdown measures," said Fitch Solutions in a recent note. Some countries could resort to trade restrictions or aggressive stockpiling in a bid to safeguard food security, which could quickly escalate and support grain and oilseed prices. Malaysia's largest palm oil producing state, Sabah, ordered the closure of palm oil plantations in three districts after some workers tested positive for the coronavirus disease, formally known as COVID-19. "Any restriction of movement, including the workforce, will affect the stability of food production. The situation has now been exacerbated by the global increase in demand for food," said Abdul Halim Saim, president of the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance in a press release on Monday. ASEAN refers to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. "Even the slightest measure affecting the free movement of people and goods will strain the global food chain further," added Abdul Halim.

## Food Protectionism

Even though there are adequate supplies of staple food, notwithstanding manpower and logistical challenges, any restrictions by countries reserving strategic supplies would heighten risks [9]. "Some countries could resort to trade restrictions or aggressive stockpiling in a bid to safeguard food security, which could quickly escalate and support grain and oilseed prices," said Fitch Solutions. Among the major crop producing countries that have implemented export restrictions are Vietnam, which has curbed rice exports and Russia, which has halted processed grain exports. Kazakhstan has also suspended exports of wheat flour, buckwheat, sugar, sunflower oil, and some vegetables. During a lockdown, if governments across the region put in place policies that hinder production across supply chains as well as trade barriers, this could lead to regional food shortages. Food Industry Asia and the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance: Such moves could lead to an acceleration of food price inflation during a time when consumers are concerned about lockdowns and have created their own stockpiles at home, said Fitch Solutions. "The potential implementation of food protectionism measures at the country level in an attempt to safeguard food security, such as export restrictions in key suppliers or aggressive state stockpiling could also significantly disrupt the global food supply," said Fitch Solutions. On Monday, Food Industry Asia and the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance called for governments across the region to ensure the unhindered production and supply for food and beverages [25-28].

"During a lockdown, if governments across the region put in place policies that hinder production across supply chains as well as trade barriers, this could lead to regional food shortages, especially when looking across the world and seeing the continued but unnecessary panic buying behavior," said the two industry bodies. Countries most exposed to a rise in food price inflation include those with elevated imports as a share of domestic food supply, such as the Middle East, China, Japan and South Korea, said Fitch Solutions [9]. Economies with weakened currencies, such as India and Indonesia are also exposed, as most commodities are denominated in the dollar on the international market. This story was updated with additional comments from Food Industry Asia and the ASEAN Food and Beverage Alliance.

## Conclusion

COVID-19: Apartheid and Holocaust of the Elders (Seniors)? We can outgo from the well-known classification of 4 big eras in the History of Discrimination:

1. Discrimination of Women against Men,

2. Discrimination of Blacks against Whites,
3. Holocaust against hebrews, Jews,
4. Apartheid and Holocaust of the Elders by COVID-19 in the year 2020.

I can give one example to illustrate above Conclusion in Hungarian journal ezalenyeg.hu. It was published only several days ago. Journal suspected the Government of the Prime Minister Viktor Orban from the repulsion of the big amounts of Elders from the Hospitals in Hungary as preparing to incoming extreme phase of the COVID-19 epidemic in the month April 2020 [29-34]. Above instruction can give about 60% places in Hungarian hospitals. This political decision of the Hungarian Government led to big amounts of protests from the side related germanes of the Elders in hospitals in Hungary. The article of the journal www.ezalenyeg.hu than has accused Orban's Government from the realizing a Holocaust Trial against the Hungarian Elders (Seniors) [10]. The Vice-President of the Slovak Association of the Psychologists warned in Pravda Daily that the restrictions against Elders (Seniors) caused by the COVID-19 may discriminate its own citizens.

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