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| --- | --- |
| **Jihad Report** **Mar 28, 2020 -** **Apr 03, 2020** | |
| Attacks | **29** |
| Killed | **97** |
| Injured | **70** |
| Suicide Blasts | **1** |
| Countries | **9** |

**Ballots R Us**

There is another new term in our lexicon – “ballot harvesting.”  It has begun to spread across the country and there could not be anything that is more destructive to protecting the sanctity of our democracy than this idea.  Just look at North Carolina and California.

All vote by mail ballots cast under this division shall be voted on or before the day of the election. After marking the ballot, the vote by mail voter shall do any of the following: (1) return the ballot by mail or in person to the elections official from whom it came, (2) return the ballot in person to a member of a precinct board at a polling place within the jurisdiction, or (3) return the ballot to the elections official from whom it came at a vote by mail ballot drop-off location, if provided pursuant to Section 3025. However, a vote by mail voter who is unable to return the ballot may designate any person to return the ballot to the elections official from whom it came or to the precinct board at a polling place within the jurisdiction. The ballot must, however, be received by either the elections official from whom it came or the precinct board before the close of the polls on election day.

Ballot harvesting is the process where organized workers or volunteers--people you don't know--collect absentee ballots from voters and drop them off at a polling place or election office. Nothing can go wrong there; right?

Some are so hungry to have voters participate in the process that they are willing to lower the bar for how ballots end up at the election office.  They are so anxious to do this that they will sanctify any hare-brained scheme to raise the voter count.  They forget we live in a free country where it is the right of everyone who meets the requirements to vote or *not to vote*.  Not voting is a statement and a right of every citizen.

Many think they are just not knowledgeable enough to vote.   Many of the positions on a ballot -- like some of the propositions or who should be county assessor or judgeships – cause many people angst if they have no clue which way to go.

Then you must think why are people trying to make it so effortless to vote.  You don’t have to think about the act of registering.  The ballot gets mailed directly to you.  Someone comes to your door and picks it up.  Never having to prove you are actually a person eligible to vote. One might think that someone should have to put a little effort into wanting to vote.  Learning about the issues.  Eager to receive their ballot so they can participate in the election process.  No some want to dumb this down to the lowest common denominator and toward what end?

It makes sense that the same people who encourage ballot harvesting are against voter ID laws or having county registrars clean the voter rolls.  It is not a farfetched idea to think they have ulterior motives other than getting a higher voter turnout.  If they do not have an ulterior motive when they are ballot harvesting, why are they only doing that at homes they believe support their partisan interests instead of all homes to enhance the overall voter turnout?  This is for purely partisan political interests; thus, it is obvious to common-sense minds that there will be fraud involved.  Someone will take the process to the limit and then exceed the limit.

That could be what happened in North Carolina.  A political operative who had worked for both parties was engaged by an inexperienced Republican candidate who won election to Congress in a close race where the number of ballots in question could have changed the outcome.  In North Carolina ballot harvesting is illegal, but it appears that some Democrat ballots were picked up by door-knockers.  The ballots are supposed to be handled by the voter only, or a close relative in case someone is physically limited.

That happened where ballot harvesting is illegal.  Some states like California legalized anyone delivering a ballot.  Both parties participated in the practice in California.  Matt Fleming, spokesperson for the California GOP, told me “We were well aware of the process and did it ourselves.”

The difference here is that the Democrats had vast sums of money to ballot harvest and did so in key races.  Dale Neugebauer, former chief of staff for Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA), stated:

“I have a little bit of professional admiration for how well the Democrats executed their plan.”  That can happen when billionaires pour millions of last-minute dollars into a district as both Tom Steyer and Michael Bloomberg did.  But just because it is legal and no charges were made in California doesn’t eliminate the opportunity for fraud as part of the process.

Orange County, California -- which was a Republican stronghold for a long time -- had 250,000 harvested ballots turned in on election day.   The Republicans have no infrastructure to pursue testing as to how or whether this process was manipulated or fraud was part of the process.

Think of how dubious this process is by its very nature.   You have someone show up to your house.   They state they are there to collect your mail-in ballot for you.  And you just hand over your ballot to a stranger who comes to your door.  Government officials warn you about strangers coming to your door and trying to sell you anything from magazines to solar panels, but they legalize someone coming to your door with potentially ginned-up credentials to take your sacred ballot to the election officials.

[](https://townhall.com/tipsheet/bethbaumann/2020/04/04/colorado-teacher-and-wuhan-coronavirus-survivor-gives-a-hopeful-eye-opening-acco-n2566355?utm_campaign=inarticle)

**Recommended**

[**Colorado Teacher and Wuhan Coronavirus Survivor Gives a Hopeful, Eye-Opening Account of Her Experience**](https://townhall.com/tipsheet/bethbaumann/2020/04/04/colorado-teacher-and-wuhan-coronavirus-survivor-gives-a-hopeful-eye-opening-acco-n2566355?utm_campaign=inarticle)

Beth Baumann

The same people who have been decrying how Russians attempted to manipulate our election process for three years now are perfectly willing to let strangers pick up ballots from your house and you are supposed to trust that this process will work out just fine.  We have strangers who have been doing that for us for a long time.  They are called postal workers and they have done quite a fine job. They take ballots that are placed in a secure box – a USPS mail box – and no one questions what political party you are from. Why are we allowing partisan hacks unsupervised to invade our election process just because they are not Russians?

Currently 16 states address the issue of ballot harvesting with many outlawing it.  You can bet your house that Democrats are going to attempt to pass this process in every state where they control the legislature and/or governorship.  They see what they were able to do in California with ballot harvesting in place and buckets of money to take advantage of the law.   They will attempt to permanently lock out Republicans by this process arguing it is making voting more accessible.

What it really is doing is opening up our election system to greater and greater levels of fraud.  They will not investigate whether there were irregularities and then tell anyone talking about voter fraud they are just being silly.

They are not.

President Donald Trump said on Friday that he rejected the idea of mail-in voting and endorsed the concept of Voter ID, which he referred to as "the real deal."

"I think a lot of people cheat with mail-in voting," Trump said at Friday's coronavirus task force meeting from the White House. "I think people should vote with Voter ID. I think Voter ID is very important, and the reason they don't want Voter ID is because they tend to cheat."

Voter ID laws have been the subject of controversy in the past, with the ACLU calling the concept "discriminatory" against minority voters.

Trump said people should show up to the polls in person and cast their votes after presenting the proper identification.

"You should have a picture for voting," Trump said. "It should be called Voter ID, they should have that. And it shouldn't mail-in voting, it should be you go to a booth and you proudly display yourself."

"You don't send it in the mail, where people pick up all sorts of bad things can happen, by the time they signed that, if they signed that, if they signed that, by the time it gets in and is tabulated, no," Trump continued. "It shouldn't be mailed in, you should vote at the booth, and you should have Voter ID. Because when you have Voter ID, that's the real deal."

After speaking about Voter ID, Trump left the podium as reporters called after him.

With state primaries being postponed and the Democratic National Convention being bumped to August 2020, advocacy groups saw Trump's remarks as not only reckless during the coronavirus pandemic, but as an attempt to suppress voting. They will do everything in their power to protect the operations of Ballots R Us, lest they lose more than the predicted 70 seats in the US Congress. Voter ID would lead to the wholesale bankruptcy of the DNC.

President Trump said that he would not cancel the Republican National Convention scheduled to take place in Charlotte, North Carolina in August.

"We're going to have the convention," Trump said. "It's going to be incredible."

**Surfing is Not Social Distancing**

A paddle boarder was arrested Thursday after ignoring lifeguards' orders to get out of the ocean near the Malibu Pier despite beach closures amid the coronavirus pandemic, authorities said.

County lifeguards patrolling the shore by boat tried to get the man to come ashore. Despite repeated orders to exit the water, the man continued paddle boarding for at least 30 minutes. Lifeguards eventually flagged down Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies who responded by boat to help, according to the Sheriff's Department.

Video of the incident taken by bystanders along the shore and later posted to social media shows the man paddling toward the pier while being pursued by lifeguard and sheriff's boats.

The man, who was not identified by authorities, eventually made his way to the beach, where he was arrested on suspicion of disobeying a lifeguard and violating Gov. Gavin Newsom's stay-at-home order, a misdemeanor. Photographs from the scene show the man in handcuffs being led down the beach by two deputies.

He was booked at a sheriff's station in Calabasas and released on a promise to appear in court, sheriff's officials said. The man faces a fine of $1,000 or six months in jail, or both, if convicted of violating the state order.

While many police agencies have taken an educational approach to keeping people off the state's coastline, this isn't the first time someone has faced consequences for being in the ocean.

A surfer in Manhattan Beach was fined $1,000 last weekend after he was accused of similarly ignoring warnings by police and lifeguards cautioning him not to go in the water. It's not clear how many people in the region have been arrested for violating the governor's order.

Staying at home was somewhat slow to catch on, with people packing beaches, parks and hiking trails in the early days, a move that eventually forced officials to order closures. Public health officials say beaches pose a threat by drawing large crowds of people who congregate too closely and could easily spread the virus.

The California Coastal Commission, the gatekeeper of the state's landmark law that deems access to the beach a fundamental right, has allowed local officials to put up temporary signs and barricades citing the need to protect public health and safety.

Kim Prather, a leading atmospheric chemist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, told The Times this week that she fears SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, could enter coastal waters and transfer back into the air along the coast.

“I wouldn’t go in the water if you paid me $1 million right now,” she said.

**Stay At Home Making Matter Worse**

COVID-19 is severe. There is no doubt about that. We are now also learning that it is not a matter of if but when many of us will get coronavirus, whether we develop symptoms or not. Our only hope is to “flatten the curve,” relieve stress on the medical system, and wait for a vaccine.

So, we isolate ourselves and stay at home. As a result, the economy is being devastated. Many people are out of work and unhappy. We accept these inconveniences to allow the medical system to handle the many people who become infected.

But what if I were to tell you that our current isolation strategies may actually result in more deaths from coronavirus itself? I’ll explain.

The only way we are going to beat COVID-19 is by developing something called “herd immunity.” Herd immunity basically means that once a certain percentage of the population develops immunity to a virus, the rest of the population will also be protected. That percentage varies, but is often around 60-70 percent. This is why we don’t need to vaccinate 100 percent of people to eradicate or severely limit the spread of infectious diseases (e.g., polio, smallpox, and measles).

The media and policymakers seem to have accepted that we will depend on herd immunity to defeat COVID-19. If we had a vaccine, everything would be different. But since a vaccine is not available, we must wait for enough people to be exposed and develop immunity.

In the meantime, we are being told to quarantine as much as possible so the medical system can deal with the many people who become infected. Simple, right? Unfortunately, it’s more complicated than this.

What the media and policymakers are not telling us is that the longer we delay the development of herd immunity, the more elderly or high-risk people will become infected and die, even if we were to maintain the quarantine indefinitely. Why is this the case?

The reason is that only young and healthy people contribute to herd immunity. Elderly and medically ill people generally do not contribute to herd immunity because their immune systems are not strong enough to develop an immune response.

This is not new or breaking science. To illustrate what happens when you don’t have herd immunity, look no further than the outbreaks we’ve had in areas where that immunity has dipped below the necessary levels.

In 2019, there was a [massive outbreak](https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html) of the measles in New York City for that reason. In 2014, a [measles outbreak in Disneyland](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/23/us/disneyland-measles.html) sent the number of cases to a 20-year high. Without herd immunity, where enough people have had the disease to avoid driving major outbreaks, future spikes will likely be much bigger.

Indeed, the [Imperial College modeling](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/medicine/mrc-gida/2020-03-16-COVID19-Report-9.pdf) says as much: “Once interventions are relaxed (in the example in Figure 3, from September onwards), infections begin to rise, resulting in a predicted larger peak epidemic later in the year: The more successful a strategy is at temporary suppression, the larger the later epidemic is predicted to be in the absence of vaccination, due to lesser build-up of herd immunity.”

Importantly, in this report, the Imperial College COVID-19 Response Team’s partial quarantine did not include isolating high-risk individuals or those infected (!) from their households, which would be critical for a partial quarantine to work. In fact, in their models, the elderly and medically ill people had *more* contact with everyone in their household (i.e., except in their one scenario in which only cases are quarantined, which is not an adequate strategy by itself). This would greatly bias their findings in favor of a full quarantine.

Therefore, if we stop the quarantine for all low-risk people now, herd immunity would develop more quickly. If we also were to keep the elderly and high-risk people isolated from everyone else during this time, including their own family members (i.e., a partial quarantine), we would save countless lives, while also decreasing the stress on the medical system.

This strategy would also limit the stress on the medical system caused by the fear and panic induced by the full quarantine, a variable that has not been considered in most models and to which any physician on the frontlines can attest. And there would be limited impact on the economy.

Furthermore, limiting isolation to only high-risk individuals and cases would be much more practical and likely to work since the more people need to be quarantined, the less effective is the quarantine. It would also still relieve much of the stress on the medical system since most of the severe outcomes occur in the elderly, [according to the Centers for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6912e2.htm).

A partial quarantine would still cause some initial stress on the medical system since the overall number of young or healthy individuals who would contract COVID-19 will not change with either a full or partial quarantine. The vast majority of these cases would be mild, however. Therefore, there may still be a slightly higher use of the medical system up front if we move to a partial quarantine as described herein. This could also lead to some deaths.

Herein lies the dilemma, or Sophie’s choice, of dealing with COVID-19. A full quarantine will result in the deaths of more elderly and medically ill people because more of them will become infected. A partial quarantine would likely result in a greater number of mild infections in young and healthy individuals upfront (but not total).

How many more elderly or medically ill people will die due to a full quarantine? It is hard to say, but a *conservative* estimate would be 5-10 times the number of young and healthy people who may die from a partial quarantine, based on [fatality rates published by the CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6912e2.htm).

Fortunately, I am not responsible for making policy.

**Who’s WHO?**

Authored by Paul Joseph Watson via Summit News,

The Director-General of the World Health Organization is a former member of a violent revolutionary communist party in Ethiopia that denied emergency medical treatment to an ethnic group. He personally managed the extradition of dissidents who were later imprisoned and tortured. That means he started it, maintained it, and actively obstructed the world from finding out through murder and subterfuge, according to documentation recently obtained.

The head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus takes his orders directly from the Chinese government, repeatedly parroted Chinese Communist Party talking points, constantly heaping praise on Beijing’s response to coronavirus despite the fact that China hid the truth about its spread and viciously silenced scientists and doctors who tried to warn the world.

Now we know why.

As John Martin explains in his excellent piece ‘The Crimes of Tedros Adhanom’, during his time in Ethiopia, the WHO chief was a member of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), a violent communist revolutionary party which was listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. government as far back as the 90’s. Once you direct a genocide, you don’t all of a sudden come to Jesus and then stop being that person.

According to one Ethiopian newspaper, Adhanom was listed as the 3rd most important member of the politbureau standing committee in the TPLF. Martin writes how the TPLF engaged in “systematic discrimination and human rights abuses” by refusing emergency healthcare to the Amhara ethnic group because of their affiliation with the opposition party. In other words, when anyone in the Amhara got sick, Tedros let them die, rather than let them receive health care. The Ministry of Health that oversaw these abuses was led by him personally.

Birth rates were recorded to be significantly lower in the Amhara region compared to other regions and 2 million Amhara people “disappeared” from the subsequent population census. Why? Because Amhara mothers were refused prenatal care, and pediatrics were denied to Amhara babies.

How did Tedros get this special position of power working for the Chinese government? Simple; he covered up cholera outbreaks in his home country” of Egypt. That disease spreads when basic hygiene is denied a community.

Tedros has, of course, denied the allegation, which centered around claims he had downplayed cholera epidemics in Ethiopia in 2006, 2009 and 2011 by passing them off as “acute watery diarrhea,” a symptom of cholera. That is not surprising at all. It is standard procedure to hide the gun behind your back while facing the cameras.

“International organizations were pressured not to call it Cholera (despite the UN testing the infected and finding Cholera), and were pressured by government employees not to reveal the number of infected. Another stunning victory for the health minister,” writes Martin.

After he was appointed foreign minister of Ethiopia in 2012, dissidents and journalists across the country were subjected to a brutal government crackdown, leading some to flee to exile in nearby Yemen. Adhanom was personally responsible for negotiating the extradition of these dissidents back to Ethiopia, some of whom were subsequently imprisoned and tortured.

“One such case was a British citizen Andy Tsege who was arrested at Sana’a airport and twice given a death sentence in Ethiopia,” writes Martin. “This led to the involvement of the British government who threatened denial of aid to Ethiopia unless he be granted asylum. Tedros responded that Tsege was “being treated very well. He even has a laptop, have you ever heard of a political prisoner with a laptop?” Andy of course, after his return to the UK told a somewhat different story of being tortured for days on end, alongside dozens of other prisoners.”

Dissidents being imprisoned and tortured? No wonder Adhanom is so effusive in his praise for China.

It gets worse. Much worse.

As recently as 2016, the Tedros’ Ethiopian government department attempted to force relocate 15,000 people in the Oromia region because it wanted to requisition their land. This led to mass protests followed by mass shootings and a stampede that killed 500 people according to Human Rights Watch. Tedros then embarked on another brutal crackdown, arresting 70,000 people. They were tortured and sent to forced labor camps building roads or chopping sugar cane.

Tedros subsequently tried to downplay the violence, falsely claiming the police weren’t armed and that the numbers weren’t as high as stated.

After ascending to his lofty position within the World Health Organization, where he got to wear a tie and a suit, Tedros appointed mass murdering dictator Robert Mugabe to be a “goodwill ambassador” to the WHO while also defending Uhuru Kenyatta, under whose government 1,300 people were killed following rigged elections.

“Tedros of course takes every chance he can to praise the good governance of China, and given the human rights record of the People’s Republic, it’s no wonder he likes them so much,” writes Martin.

“From projects like media propaganda centres, mass relocations, and social credit style score cards, Ethiopia’s governance in many ways resembles a carbon copy of the Chinese authoritarian model. Complete with a one party state and focus on profit over human rights.”

In the immediate aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak, the World Health Organization, under Adhanom’s direction, amplified Chinese fake news that there was no “human to human” transmission of COVID-19 as late as January 14th, despite this having already occurred in December.

The WHO and Adhanom also repeatedly demanded countries not impose border controls, exacerbating the spread of the disease, while appearing to be more concerned about political correctness and the “stigmatization” of Chinese people.

“In a sane world, instead of leading a global organization, Tedros and his cronies should be arrested, tried for espionage and crimes against humanity the likes of which we have not seen since in decades at the International Criminal Court, and if found guilty, should spend the rest of his life in prison,” concludes Martin.

This is the man that all but ensured that hundreds of thousands of Americans were infected with the Wuhan virus, while he downplayed the health effects.

**TDS, The True Pandemic**

Today is April 5tth. You know as late as March 11, Mayor Bill de Blabio was still telling New York City residents to carry on life as normal: “If you’re not sick, you should be going about your life.” Two days earlier, Italy had announced a national lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus, and cases were already beginning to appear in New York, but de Blabio did not close the city’s schools until March 15.

Now that New York City has become the epicenter of this pandemic — more than 32,000 cases as of Sunday, with nearly 700 deaths — Mayor de Blabio’s response to the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak appears astonishingly irresponsible. Jim Geraghty of National Review has compiled a timeline of how New York City officials dealt with the crisis, and their recklessness seems mindboggling in hindsight. Early on, their main concern was that the virus might discourage city residents from attending Chinese New Year celebrations. “I want to remind everyone to enjoy the parade and not change any plans due to misinformation spreading about #coronavirus,” the city’s health commissioner Oxiris Barbot said in a Feb. 9 tweet, promoting festivities in Chinatown.

As idiotic as such declarations seem now, we must note that hindsight is always 20/20, and very few Americans in early February believed that we faced any great danger of this disease becoming rampant here. Democrats and the media (but I repeat myself) have spent recent weeks blaming President Trump for this crisis, but it is important to point out that the same people were downplaying the coronavirus threat just a few weeks ago. Trump’s critics want us to forget, for example, that when the president announced a ban on travel from China on Jan. 31, many of them condemned this measure as a racist overreaction. “This is no time for Donald Trump’s record of hysteria and xenophobia — hysterical xenophobia — and fearmongering to lead the way instead of science,” Joe Biden said the day after the China travel ban was announced, while falsely claiming that Trump had made “draconian cuts” to federal health agencies.

At that time, the known worldwide death toll from the Wuhan virus was still less than 200, and, because the Chinese government had sought to suppress facts about the disease, the scope of the danger was not apparent. The liberal media weren’t sounding the alarm, but quite the opposite. The headline on a Jan. 28 BuzzFeed article advised Americans, “Don’t Worry About The Coronavirus. Worry About The Flu.” On Jan. 29, Farhad Manjoo published a column in the New York Times with the headline “Beware the Pandemic Panic.” Manjoo downplayed the danger of the virus and instead cautioned, “What worries me more than the new disease is that fear of a vague and terrifying new illness might spiral into panic, and that it might be used to justify unnecessarily severe limits on movement and on civil liberties, especially of racial and religious minorities around the world.” One thing we can never expect from elite journalists is accountability. Rather than admitting his own errors, Manjoo simply pivoted to blaming Trump: “Coronavirus Is What You Get When You Ignore Science” was the headline on his March 4 column, in which he asserted that the president had “gut[ted] the United States’ pandemic-response infrastructure.”

This is the “Orange Man Bad” theory of causation, where everything bad is ultimately Trump’s fault, and the proponents of this theory evidently can’t understand why it has cost them their credibility. When journalists insist on interpreting every event from a partisan perspective — “How can we spin this to hurt Trump?” — their errors follow a predictable pattern. Thus, at one point, the danger of coronavirus was Trump’s “xenophobia,” which threatened “racial and religious minorities.” Now, we are told, the problem is that Trump is “anti-science.” Last week, one New York Times columnist blamed “the science denialism of [Trump’s] ultraconservative religious allies” for the coronavirus pandemic. The “evidence” cited in such tendentious arguments is irrelevant; what matters to liberals is the conclusion, i.e., Trump is always wrong.

Because they imagine themselves infinitely superior to the rest of us, the journalistic elite think we don’t notice the methods by which they dishonestly manipulate the narrative. They believe we won’t notice, for example, how they ignore the bungling of Democrats like Mayor de Blabio. Nor are we expected to contrast the media’s alarmism over COVID-19 with the way they treated the swine flu (H1N1) pandemic of 2009–10. According to CDC estimates, about 60 million Americans were infected with swine flu, which caused more than a quarter-million hospitalizations and more than 12,000 deaths. Yet cable-news networks didn’t provide 24/7 coverage of the swine flu outbreak or blame President Obama for the spread of the disease, so why is the Chinese coronavirus such an emergency? Obvious answer: “Orange Man Bad!”

We might not resent this belated effort to blame this plague on Trump so much if Democrats and the media (again, I repeat myself) had spent January and February spreading the alarm about COVID-19. But for much of that period, Democrats and their media allies were consumed with impeaching the president over Ukraine, and when that anti-Trump crusade failed, their attention next turned to trying to stop Bernie Sanders from winning the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination. It was not until early March — after Biden’s wins on Super Tuesday stopped the Sanders threat — that the coronavirus pandemic became the media’s obsession. It was March 6 that an MSNBC panel discussion hosted by Nicolle Wallace turned into a sort of pep rally for coronavirus, with the guests expressing the enthusiastic hope that the pandemic would become “Trump’s Katrina.”

Having made clear their intention of scapegoating the president for this virus from China, the media are now astonished that Americans aren’t buying their blame game. After polls showed Trump’s approval ratings had risen during this crisis, the networks decided to stop carrying live broadcasts of Trump’s coronavirus briefings. This is more evidence of media bias that we’re supposedly too stupid to notice, in the same way we’re not supposed to notice either (a) Joe Biden’s rapid descent into senility or (b) the media’s effort to promote New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo as a substitute presidential nominee for the Democrats.

So far, U.S. deaths from COVID-19 are still only a single-digit percentage of the more than 30,000 Americans who die annually from ordinary flu infections. As bad as the coronavirus outbreak is — and it’s likely to get much worse before it gets better — we must keep it in perspective. We must be able to distinguish between real risks from this disease and the politically motivated fear campaign being hyped by the media. Eventually, the coronavirus pandemic will end, but the media’s liberal bias is incurable. From now until November, the blame game will continue, and if Trump gets reelected, we’ll have another four years of the same shrieking journalistic hysteria: “Orange Man Bad!”

**The True Source**

2016 documents show that the Wuhan Institute of Virology, an organization increasingly suspected of being linked to the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak, has been studying the virus over the last several years. This comes as a growing body of evidence suggests the disease did not originate in a seafood wet market as the Chinese government claims.

If the unconfirmed reports are true, it would not be the first time a deadly disease has escaped from a Chinese research facility. In March 2004, 9 people became infected with 1 fatality after the deadly SARS virus escaped from the National Institute of Virology in Beijing, China. The current coronavirus outbreak may have a similar origin.

According to reports from the South China Morning Post, Hong Kong’s newspaper of record, the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak may be monumentally more severe than the government is admitting. Academics from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) now estimate that the number of infected in Wuhan has reached 43,590 – a staggering 1456% higher than the official figure which stands at 2800.

A data-driven mathematical model from HKU academics predicts the number of infections of the Wuhan coronavirus could see 150,000 new cases every day in the Chinese megacity of Chongqing alone between late April and early May. The Chinese government continues to claim that only 2,800 people are infected. But their actions suggest even they don’t believe this figure.

Authorities had allocated a record-breaking $9 billion in funding to combat the coronavirus outbreak. They have also quarantined entire cities with a total population of over 60 million. This is in addition to erecting several brand-new 1,000-bed hospitals from scratch. These don’t look like the actions of a government that believes only 2,800 people are infected.

According to data published in The Lancet medical journal, 13 of the 41 initial cases of Wuhan Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) had no link to the seafood market purported to be the origin of the disease. If you ask Daniel Lucey, an infectious disease specialist at Georgetown University, that number is too big to ignore.

He states the following:

“No epidemiological link was found between the first patient and later cases. Their data also show that, in total, 13 of the 41 cases had no link to the marketplace. That’s a big number, 13, with no link.”

He goes on to add:

“The virus came into that marketplace before it came out of that marketplace. China must have realized the epidemic did not originate in that Wuhan Huanan seafood market.”

Did the Virus Leak from the Wuhan Institute of Virology?

Unconfirmed reports suggest the Wuhan Institute of Virology may be a possible source of the deadly virus outbreak. If the Wuhan coronavirus leaked from the institute, it would not be the first time such a breach has occurred in China.

In 2004, five top officials from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention were punished for a SARS outbreak that occurred due to a leak in their facility. The leak occurred at the Beijing Institute of Virology where researchers were conducting live and inactive SARS coronavirus experiments. Two workers became infected with SARS and later spread the disease to others.

SARS originally emerged in 2002 before spreading to infect 8,000 people around the globe. The virus killed 800 people.

**The 1st Amendment War**

Americans have always valued the right to speak freely, especially against our government, above all else. History has shown us that in order for tyrants to force socialism into power over the people, they must first terminate free speech. Speech with swift and terrible retribution is the key to success for socialism. That being said, even the socialists have the right to speak. They have the right to assemble. They have the right to organize and attract voters, if they can. One of the ways they do this, is by changing their name. They relabel themselves as something that doesn’t sound socialist. The alphabet world of non-profits is the favorite breeding ground for wealthy predators to gain power and seek their victims; the poor, the stupid, and the uninformed.

Progressive media group Free Press—there is that sheep’s wool pulled over their teeth—has petitioned the FCC to censor broadcasters from showing President Donald Trump’s press conferences on the coronavirus pandemic. In its petition to the federal agency, the group called it a “life and death issue.”

Free Press urged the FCC to prominently disclose when broadcasters allegedly disclose information that is “false or scientifically suspect” and air disclosures prominently on television when broadcaster air allegedly false information.

“When the president tells dangerous lies about a public health emergency, broadcasters have a choice: don’t air them, or put those lies in context with disclaimers noting that they may be untrue and are unverified,” Free Press [wrote](https://www.freepress.net/sites/default/files/2020-03/free_press_petition_for_inquiry_to_fcc_re_broadcast_misinformation.pdf). “And certainly the FCC has a duty to rein in radio broadcasters that seed confusion with lies and disinformation.”

Carr called this petition a “dangerous” attempt to weaponize the FCC against free speech. He noted that while this proposal may not pass through the Republican-controlled FCC under Trump, it may gain more traction under a future Democrat administration like how Free Press lobbied former President Barack Obama and the then Democrat-controlled FCC to pass net neutrality.

“It’s a dangerous and sweeping attempt by the left to weaponize the FCC against broadcasters and conservatives and politicians. The real danger here, among other things, is that this particular group is very influential in Democrat media and telecom policy circles. You can look at this petition and say this isn’t going to get traction with this FCC, but remember when it comes to greater government control of the Internet, it’s called net neutrality,” Carr said. “That group was at the vanguard of pushing utility-style regulations and heavy-handed regulation of the Internet [net neutrality] at a point in time that people on the right and the mainstream left thought it was a third-rail issue and that the FCC would never do. And what did they do? They campaigned to flip then President Obama, who then flipped the FCC, and we ended up for a long time what was unthinkable — heavy-handed government control of the Internet.”

Free Press cofounder and board member Robert McChesney has [advocated](https://thefederalist.com/2020/04/02/far-left-media-group-asks-fcc-to-censor-trump-press-conferences/) for a socialist revolution in the United States.

“In the end, there is no real answer but to remove brick by brick the capitalist system itself, rebuilding the entire society on socialist principles,” McChesney said at one point.

McChesney also said, “We need to do whatever we can to limit capitalist propaganda, regulate it, minimize it, and perhaps even eliminate it.”

Carr also noted that Free Press has called for a “fully-funded, government-funded media. And so when I think you put that all together, it’s part and parcel of an effort to control the political narrative and complete intolerance of any views that don’t fit with their orthodoxy.”

“This is part of the broader left to take advantage of the pandemic to press their extreme agenda. We’re seeing it here with this petition and asking the FCC to shut down speech and broadcasters that doesn’t fit their orthodoxy, and we’re seeing it with this push for the Green New Deal through the coronavirus packages,” he added.

Free Speech’s call for censorship in the name of the public interest has been echoed by FCC Democrat Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel. Rosenworcel wanted to censor e-cigarette ads in 2019.

Carr said that Americans should fight against censorship irrespective of its political leanings.

“Well, if history won’t be kind to silence, let’s speak up on both sides of the issue. My position on the First Amendment has been consistent. I’ve spoken up against efforts to censor conservatives, and I’ve spoken up against efforts to censor Democrats. For instance, people tried to censor a tweet from presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg. And I’ve spoken up against attempts to censor nonpolitical speech, like when Commissioner Rosenworcel said that the FCC should play a role in shutting down broadcasters for e-cigarettes based on her view of the public interest,” Carr said.

“My record is clear that I’ve spoken about left, right, and nonpolitical. It’s interesting that people find their First Amendment footing when it fits their political views. And when it doesn’t, it’s crickets,” he added.

**Palm Sunday Message**

*“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” —*[Luke 23:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2023:34&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

*“Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” —*[Luke 23:43](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2023:43&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

*“Woman, behold thy Son.” —* [John 19:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2019:26&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

*“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” —*[Mark 15:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2015:34&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

*“I thirst.” —*[John 19:28](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2019:28&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

*“It is finished.” —*[John 19:30](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2019:30&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

*“Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” —*[Luke 23:46](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2023:46&version=NIV&src=tools#_blank)

**The Durham is Moving Forward**

U.S. Attorney John Durham’s review of the Russia investigation is putting increased scrutiny on former CIA Director John Brennan, searching for any undue influence he may have had during 2017’s intelligence community assessment of Russian interference.

Durham, selected by Attorney General William Barr last year to lead this inquiry, drove to Washington, D.C., in March to ensure the investigation stayed on track during the [coronavirus outbreak](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/william-barr-says-john-durhams-russia-investigation-persists-during-coronavirus-outbreak). The top Connecticut federal prosecutor is looking into highly sensitive issues, including whether Brennan took politicized actions to pressure the rest of the intelligence community to match his conclusions about Russian President Vladimir Putin’s motivations, according to sources [cited by the](https://www.wsj.com/articles/investigation-into-origins-of-trump-russia-probe-continues-despite-coronavirus-11585868529) *Wall Street Journal.*

Officials said Durham has been [interviewing](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/prosecutor-john-durham-examining-interagency-turf-war-over-obama-emails-hacked-by-russia-report) CIA officials this year, zeroing in on those at the National Intelligence Council, a center within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence which oversaw the collaboration between the CIA, FBI, and National Security Agency in putting together the 2017 assessment, and looking at how the work product was finalized.

The 2017 assessment [concluded](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf) with "high confidence" that Putin “ordered an influence campaign in 2016” and Russia worked to “undermine public faith" in U.S. democracy, "denigrate" former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and "harm her electability and potential presidency,” and “developed a clear preference" for Trump. The NSA diverged on one aspect, expressing only “moderate confidence” that Putin actively tried to help Trump win and Clinton lose.

“I wouldn’t call it a discrepancy, I’d call it an honest difference of opinion between three different organizations,” former NSA chief Adm. Mike Rogers [told](https://www.c-span.org/video/?428023-1/nsa-director-rogers-russia-poses-threat-congressional-elections) the Senate in 2017. “It didn’t have the same level of sourcing and the same level of multiple sources.”

Durham has [interviewed](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/john-durham-interviewing-former-nsa-leader-who-told-court-about-other-fisa-abuses) Rogers and is also reportedly [reviewing](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/durham-scrutinizing-john-brennans-handling-of-russian-interference-in-2016) Brennan’s handling of a secret source said to be close to the Kremlin. The prosecutor wants to know what role that person's information played in the assessment.

Durham is also [scrutinizing](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/prosecutor-john-durham-examining-interagency-turf-war-over-obama-emails-hacked-by-russia-report) Brennan in relation to British ex-spy Christopher Steele’s dossier. In particular, the prosecutor is looking for answers on whether it was used in the 2017 assessment, why former FBI Director James Comey and former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe insisted upon it being part of the assessment, how allegations from the dossier ended up in the assessment's appendix, and whether Brennan [misled](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/durham-calls-on-john-brennan-to-explain-steele-dossiers-use-by-intelligence) about the dossier’s use.

The *Wall Street Journal* [reported](https://www.wsj.com/articles/investigation-into-origins-of-trump-russia-probe-continues-despite-coronavirus-11585868529) that sources said United Kingdom authorities refused Durham's request to interview Steele. The former MI6 agent also [declined](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/done-our-duty-christopher-steele-refuses-to-cooperate-with-john-durham-review) Durham’s request to speak, saying he and his business had already “done our duty” by cooperating with DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz’s [investigation](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/not-just-carter-page-doj-watchdog-finds-flaws-in-dozens-of-fisa-applications) into alleged Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act abuses, which found [glaring flaws](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/doj-inspector-general-unable-to-say-if-bias-tainted-carter-page-fisa-process) with Steele’s dossier and the way the FBI used it to obtain warrants to wiretap Trump campaign associate Carter Page.

“I stand by the integrity of our work, our sources, and what we did," Steele [told Oxford Union students](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/christopher-steele-defends-dossier-and-criticizes-trump) last month.

Sir Andrew Wood, the former British ambassador to Russia, was also contacted by Durham’s team but told them he had nothing to add beyond what he has said publicly. Following Trump's victory in November 2016, Wood talked to former Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona at an international security conference about Steele's dossier. It was after this conversation that McCain sent his associate, David Kramer, to London to retrieve a copy. McCain, who died of brain cancer in August 2018, gave a copy of Steele's research to Comey, although the bureau had begun receiving Steele's dossier as early as July 2016.

Wood [told](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-russia-dossier-leak-sir-andrew-wood-john-mccain-british-ambassador-spy-a7524931.html) the *Independent* in 2017 that while he knew Steele and believed him to be "very professional," he had not seen the dossier when he spoke to McCain.

The former ambassador [told](https://web.archive.org/web/20190806104119/https:/www.bbc.com/news/uk-38607456) *BBC Radio 4's Today* that Steele was a "very competent, professional operator."

“I do not think he would make things up,” Wood said of Steele, adding, “I do not think he would necessarily always draw correct judgments.”

Wood called the Steele dossier “dangerous knowledge” and said that “Russia would like to know where he got his information from — assuming this information is basically true, and he has not just made it up, which I do not believe for a moment.”

Last month, the British diplomat [told](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/british-ex-ambassador-who-alerted-john-mccain-to-anti-trump-dossier-stands-by-christopher-steele) the *Washington Examiner* that “I have no reason to change my judgment.”

The *Wall Street Journal* also said another official claimed the interviews within the top spy office weren’t antagonistic, though the new report did note that a former CIA official has sought legal representation recently.

Durham has also [interviewed](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/durham-scrutinizing-john-brennans-handling-of-russian-interference-in-2016) agents and analysts from the NSA and FBI.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Durham’s inquiries have increased the strain between DOJ investigators and spy officials, with one intelligence official who helped compile the 2017 assessment saying neither Brennan nor anyone else involved interfered politically and the 2004 law reforming the intelligence community worked the way it should.

That [bipartisan](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/media/majority-media/collins-lieberman-intelligence-reform-bill-passes-senate-sent-to-president-bush) law [implemented](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/08/politics/house-overwhelmingly-approves-broad-overhaul-of-intelligence.html) reforms suggested by the 9/11 Commission, including the creation of the position of director of national intelligence to increase cooperation between the various intelligence agencies.

Another U.S. official aware of Durham’s actions and with knowledge of the Russian interference report said the 2017 intelligence assessment has stood the test of time.

An investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller [concluded](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/mueller-says-russias-gru-stole-clinton-dnc-emails-and-gave-them-to-wikileaks) Russian military intelligence [was responsible](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/analysis-trumps-ukraine-crowdstrike-conspiracy-theory-front-and-center-in-impeachment-hearing) for hacking thousands of Democratic emails and providing those stolen records to WikiLeaks, though Mueller did not establish a criminal conspiracy between Trump and the Russians.

The Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee [concluded](https://www.burr.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/SSCI%20ICA%20ASSESSMENT_FINALJULY3.pdf) in 2017 that the assessment on Russian interference was “a sound intelligence product.” The committee found the report “appropriately represents analytic differences and was reached in a professional and transparent manner.”

**The Surveillance State Ruling**

Anyone can see your home from the outside when they drive by. But does that give authorities permission to mount video cameras on nearby poles to monitor you for months on end?

The Electronic Frontier Foundation and other groups insist that's illegal, and the group has filed a friend-of-the-court brief in Commonwealth v. Mora in Massachusetts.

The fight is over the high-tech "pole cameras" fixed on the homes of Nelson Mora and Randy Suarez that allowed officers to monitor everyone going in and out of their homes in real time, "remotely control angle and zoom functions, and zoom in close enough to reach license plates."

The arguments submitted to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court are based on Fourth Amendment protections against warrantless searches.

Police officers were able to review months of footage even though they had no warrants.

"Mora and Suarez moved to suppress the video surveillance, arguing the use of the cameras violated the Fourth Amendment and article 14 of Massachusetts’s Declaration of Rights, which prohibit unreasonable searches," EFF reported.

The organization argued that "just as collecting cell phone location data over time reveals sensitive information about people, using stationary video surveillance to record all activity in front of a person’s home for months implicitly reveals so much more private, sensitive, and intimate information than the public sees merely walking by the house from time to time."

Officers could, for example, "learn or infer private relationships, medical information, and political or religious beliefs. And, as with the collection of location data, technological advances make video surveillance cheap and easy for law enforcement to implement, removing the practical privacy protections that existed when the police had to rely on physical surveillance such as covertly positioning actual officers in front of a house (and paying those officers their full salaries)."

And, the organization notes, "secret video surveillance like this disproportionately impacts minority and poorer communities. The prosecutors in this case argued that Mora and Suarez did nothing to hide their homes from public view, so they couldn’t expect privacy from government surveillance that would in essence 'see' the same thing that a worker on the top of a utility pole could see.

"However, utility poles commonly rise 20-40 feet in the air. Only the very wealthy can live in communities where their properties are either set back so far from these poles as to be hidden from view or the utilities are buried underground. Without the financial resources to live in neighborhoods and homes like this, under the government’s arguments, those with less means would face forced diminishment of their privacy expectations and disproportionate surveillance in direct proportion to their income level."

The timing of the decision is uncertain because court hearings have been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

**The End is Near**

House Republicans hope to reopen the American economy by the end of April if progress has been made combating the coronavirus pandemic.

“Our focus is on locking down the virus while we're taking the steps now to prepare to reopen the economy by the end of the month if the virus permits,” Rep. Kevin Brady, the top Republican on the House Ways and Means Committee, told reporters Thursday, according to the [Washington Examiner](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/house-republicans-want-to-reopen-economy-by-end-of-april-virus-permitting).

The Texas Republican said that the [unemployment](https://www.westernjournal.com/dr-fauci-right-depression-level-unemployment-stop-covid-just-inconvenient/) and gross domestic product numbers will "feel brutal over the short term. It's because they are."

"This economy is taking hits like we've not seen in most of our lifetimes," he said. "But it is just a short-term hit."

The [Department of Labor](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OPA/newsreleases/ui-claims/20200551.pdf) reported that 6.6 million people filed for [unemployment benefits](https://www.westernjournal.com/ap-weekly-us-unemployment-claims-double-previous-record-high/) during the last full week of March.

"We all know things are terrible. We all know millions of people are losing their jobs," Peter Boockvar, chief investment strategist at Bleakley Advisory Group, told [CNBC](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/03/markets-expect-depression-level-job-losses-but-the-duration-of-the-shutdowns-is-a-much-bigger-worry.html).

"We had this sharp decline in anticipation of this news. The next batch of news we don’t know is what is the duration of this and what is going to happen in May. We hope at the end of April that we are looking at a slow reopening."

Chris Rupkey, chief financial economist of MUFG Union Bank, told CNBC that March's 4.4 percent unemployment rate could rise into the teens.

“Everybody knows that people are going to be out of work," Rupkey said.

"Until the stay-at-home orders are lifted by states and local governments, the most important number for forecasting the economy is not job losses. The most important number is indication that the virus spread is slowing.”

Economists say the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act can help companies and workers get through the [shutdown](https://www.westernjournal.com/poll-large-number-small-businesses-brink-permanent-closure-coronavirus-shutdown-takes-toll/), but more financial aid is needed. Brady also praised the $300 billion in tax rebates, as well as the deferral of payroll taxes for businesses included in the CARES Act.

"This, in essence, applies to all businesses of all sizes. It is an interest-free loan," he said.

"It allows businesses to keep these dollars in their bank accounts, not Washington, until the end of the year and give them fully two years to pay it back."

President Donald Trump originally wanted to reopen the country on [Easter Sunday](https://www.westernjournal.com/trump-sets-target-date-re-open-america-love-open-easter/), which falls on April 12. But on Monday, Trump extended the coronavirus safety guidelines through the month of April in an effort to mitigate the effects of the [pandemic outbreak](https://www.westernjournal.com/500000-travelers-china-flooded-us-height-countrys-outbreak/).

"The better you do, the faster this whole nightmare will end," [Trump said](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-14/).

**Ships at Sea**

You'd think the last place you'd want to be during the coronavirus pandemic is aboard a cruise ship - especially given one horror story after the next about ships being placed under quarantine, not being able to find a place to dock and passengers getting sick and coming down with the coronavirus.

Which is why it's stunning to learn that there is still at least a half-dozen ships out at sea, with passengers and crew, navigating lengthy trips back to port, according to Bloomberg.

About a month ago, there were hundreds of ships still in service and dozens out to sea.

Recall, we covered the Diamond Princess cruise ship at length, a ship where 700 of its 3,000 passengers eventually tested positive for the coronavirus. Eight of those passengers wound up dying.

Around a month later, the Grand Princess cruise ship was struck with coronavirus - with 21 of its 3,533 passengers (2,422 gues and 1,111 crew) testing positive for the virus. The ship was held off the coast of San Francisco while testing was conducted.

Finally, just this past week, Carnival Corp's MS Zaandam was forced to dock in Ft. Lauderdale after 193 people were sickened - more than 10% of the ship - and four passengers died out of a total of 1,829 people on board.

Cruise companies have been forced to suspend operations, with companies like Carnival and Royal Caribbean seeing their stocks get decimated over the last month. The President even requested that Carnival Cruises, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line and MSC cruises halt outbound travel for 30 days.

And while the number of ships at sea has dropped off dramatically, it still hasn't gone to zero.

While more ships have returned to their respective ports, and many have been moved with just crew onboard, Carnival still has five ships with passengers aboard. MSC Cruises also has a ship with passengers that is out to sea. These ships were thousands of miles from their respective ports when operations were suspended and are in the midst of returning. No cases have been reported on these ships. Just wait until they get a load of this, when they dock. What would you do?

**The Only way Through Any Pandemic**

I think we’re now at the turning point in the fight against COVID-19.**Everyone’s now acting to stop the spread, and the early hot**spots in Europe, North America, and Australia are seeing signs of progress, just as the Asian nations did earlier. There is a long road ahead, and we have to decide which route to take, but Western societies are showing they can handle this too. In this post I’m going to show updated versions of my three favorite graphs, which tell the story and lead to the single biggest public policy-making challenge many nations may face this decade.

Los Angeles lost to the Bay Area on April 2 and became California’s new COVID-19 hot spot. Shelter in place has begun working for the Bay Area, but confirmed cases have still doubled in the past week. So on March 31, our local public health officials released what I call “Shelter-in-Place 2.0,” a tighter set of rules, to try to avoid the hospital-overload scenario which hit Wuhan, Milan, Madrid, and now New York. Face masks are also becoming trendy outside the home! Will the Bay Area get a “just-in-time deliverance”, or is the worst still yet to come?

Locally, Santa Clara County – the heart of Silicon Valley – [reports 30% of ICU space in use by COVID patients](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/DiseaseInformation/novel-coronavirus/Pages/dashboard.aspx), 38% used by other patients, and 32% available. So they can take a doubling in COVID ICU cases without overloading, and other Bay Area hospitals have headroom too. [Last week I noted “Minnesota Bends it Best,”](https://wolfstreet.com/2020/03/28/coronawar-battlegrounds-new-york-leads-in-growth-minnesota-bends-it-best-california-hot-spots-v-italy-south-korea-pain-in-spain/) and here we see the result — when an outbreak stalls out, it looks like the flat curve for Minnesota. And not only is it flat, but it’s the lowest sustained level in the US. There’s other good news — Washington has stabilized (albeit at a higher case rate), and even New York (top right) might be flattening out. But Connecticut, New Jersey, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and Michigan have more work to do (click on the chart to enlarge).

The US is third behind Spain and now Belgium, and in the same cluster with Italy, France, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands. **Growth in the US has started to slow, but it looks like we might still catch the same pain as Spain.**

Do we try to eradicate the virus — without a vaccine? Do we try to manage infection rates, to let the population “build immunity through suffering” until a vaccine is available? How can we revive the economy without risking thousands of deaths in fresh outbreaks?

**Some things are clear:** The recovered cases can get back to normal. The infirm elderly need to be protected as much as possible. Everyone else is in between, and without a treatment or vaccine, every economic or social activity comes with some level of infection and mortality risk.

***I can see two limiting-case scenarios.*** Both require that right now, everyone work together to suppress the virus, in every way we can. But we need to start the discussion of “what’s next” since it’s a tough policy choice, perhaps the biggest of the decade.

***The first scenario, “put out the fire,” is modeled on Korea.****Use shelter-in-place and face masks to suppress the growth of the virus, then use rapidly-growing testing capacity to trace and isolate the infected. With a return to “containment,” everyone else can get back to work. South Korea is doing well, and only has 100 new cases per day nationwide.****But even South Korea hasn’t been able to put out the fire completely. And “get back to work” involves major changes in how work is done,****to reduce infection risks every minute, every day.*

***The second scenario, “controlled burn,” envisions an “infection risk budget,” with a goal to keep caseloads at a level that hospitals can sustainably support, while allowing as much economic output as possible.****If we risk too many infections, hospitals overflow and thousands die – reruns of New York, Milan and Wuhan. But if we can minimize the risk throughout daily life, and keep our homes safe, then that frees up room in the budget.*

*With that extra room, more people could get back to work and get the economy going. Even if those activities might cause a bit of spreading, it might be worth the risk (for arena sports, cruise ships and other mass social gatherings, it might not).****A “controlled burn” would take a long time, but eventually everyone who needs to work will have immunity or received a vaccine, and we’ll have normal life again****(provided the virus doesn’t mutate too fast). But in the absence of an effective treatment or vaccine, it will cost thousands of lives to build herd immunity this way. Is there a better way?*

**No matter which path is taken, policymakers will have to decide how to balance lives vs. livelihoods.** And the rest of us need to learn how to prevent spread at every level, both to preserve lives and to revive jobs.

**White Dwarf Waves**

Astronomers have detected two stellar corpses whirling around each other, and they might be producing gravitational waves.

[White dwarf stars](https://www.space.com/23756-white-dwarf-stars.html)are what become of stars like our sun after they run out of fuel and turn into leftover hot cores. For many years, researchers have predicted that there should be [binary](https://www.space.com/22509-binary-stars.html), or two-object, systems made up of white dwarf stars. According to general relativity, two such masses orbiting each other should emit energy in the form of gravitational waves, which are ripples or disturbances in the fabric of spacetime.

Now, this is not the discovery of gravitational waves, rather it is the discovery of this binary which may be a source for gravitational waves. But, not only will this study advance our understanding of these systems and gravitational wave sources, it will also be important in validating the efficiency of an instrument that will launch in 2034.

The instrument, LISA (the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna) gravitational wave observatory, will use the J2322+0509 system to essentially train with. Because they already know they exist, it's a good test to make sure the instrument can correctly spot it.

"Verification binaries are important because we know that LISA will see them within a few weeks of turning on the telescopes," Mukuemin Kilic, a co-author on this study from the University of Oklahoma, said in the statement. "There's only a handful of LISA sources that we know of today. The discovery of the first prototype of a new class of verification binary puts us well ahead of where anyone could have anticipated."

In a new study identifying and exploring this binary, researchers at the Center for Astrophysics (CfA) at Harvard have detected, for the first time, a binary white dwarf system made up of two white dwarf stars (with helium cores) that are clearly separate stars. This system, known as J2322+0509, has a short orbital period of 1,201 seconds (just over 20 minutes) and is the first gravitational wave source of its kind ever identified.

"Theories predict that there are many double helium-core white dwarf binaries out there," Warren Brown, CfA astronomer and lead author on the study, [said in a statement](https://www.cfa.harvard.edu/news/2020-07). "This detection provides an anchor for those models, and for doing future experiments so that we can find more of these stars and determine their true numbers."

This system, whose orbital period is the third shortest period of all detached binaries ever found, was fairly tough to spot. "This binary had no light curve," Brown said in the statement. "We couldn't detect a photometric signal because there isn't one." So instead of using a photometric study, which looks at light itself, the team used spectroscopic studies, which observe how matter interacts with electromagnetic radiation like visible light, to identify the star's orbital motion.

But, while the system was tricky to spot, it turns out that this type of binary is an extremely strong source of gravitational waves, the team found using theoretical calculations, according to the statement and the study. The researchers determined that because of the system's alignment with respect to Earth, instruments should pick up a signal 2.5 times stronger than from the same system twisted a different direction.

This binary won't be a binary forever, though, as a consequence of the very gravitational waves the scientists hope to someday detect. "The orbit of this pair of objects is decaying," Brown said. "The gravitational waves that are being emitted are causing the pair to lose energy; in six or seven million years they will merge into a single, more massive white dwarf."

**Lights, Camera, Inaction**

The coronavirus pandemic has left most of the world's major cities, including London, New York and others, empty. It's also having one surprising effect on the planet as well. The Earth has essentially stopped vibrating. With travel effectively ground to a halt, seismologists around the globe have reported a drop in seismic noise, according to an article in the scientific journal Nature.

Researchers say the drop in activity, usually only seen to this magnitude around Christmas, could help experts find smaller earthquakes and monitor volcanic activity more effectively.

“You’ll get a signal with less noise on top, allowing you to squeeze a little more information out of those events,” Andy Frassetto, a seismologist at the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology in Washington, D.C., told Nature

“There’s a big chance indeed it could lead to better measurements,” Thomas Lecocq, a seismologist at the Royal Observatory of Belgium, added.

Lecocq told CNN that Brussels is seeing a 30 to 50 percent reduction in ambient noise since it went on lockdown in the middle of March. The Royal Observatory made sure to note the Earth is "still shaking," just at a significantly smaller measure.