

Covid-19 is spreading rapidly in America. The country does not look ready

As of March 11th, almost 1, 300 Americans had been diagnosed with covid-19. Several times more probably have the disease undetected and are transmitting it within communities. And still the country looks behind in its preparations for what now threatens to be a bruising pandemic.

How America got here was the result of two significant failures — one technical, the other of messaging.

In America the testing regime has worked badly, because of faulty test-kits manufactured by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and **tangles** in administrative **red tape** between the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Whether **skimpy** budgeting, **bureaucratic blockages** or both were to blame is as yet unclear and sure to be the subject of a future investigation.

tangle 缠结；混乱

red tape 繁文缛节；官样文章

skimpy 不足的；吝啬的

bureaucratic 官僚的

blockage 堵塞；封锁

A successful testing regime also buys time for the right messaging. But from the start, President Donald Trump has **downplayed** the chance of big disruption to ordinary lives and the economy. His insistence that virus hysteria was being amped up by his political enemies has distracted from the crucial message, which is to get ready.

downplay 轻视；贬低

Correcting the course of the outbreak is vital because America's health infrastructure, like that of most countries, is not equipped to deal with an enormous surge in serious cases. Health care is also extraordinarily costly. Some insurers insist that patients will not be made to pay for testing. But as yet there is no such policy at national level.

To fight the outbreak, America needs clear, *unvarnished* public information and policies based on the best science. Is the president capable of endorsing that?

unvarnished 无装饰的; 无掩饰的