

Poll Shows Majority Think Federal Government Doing A Poor Job Containing Virus; New York Times reports, Fauci To Issue Stark Warning On Risks Of Reopening Too Soon; Trump Abruptly Ends Briefing After Clash With Reporters. Aired 7-7:30a ET

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Byline: John Berman, Alisyn Camerota, Sanjay Gupta

Guests: Andy Slavitt

Highlight: New York Times reports, Dr. Anthony Fauci to warn at Senate hearing of needless suffering and death if U.S. reopens too fast. Trump, McConnell falsely claim former President Obama left them unprepared for coronavirus pandemic. Study shows hydroxychloroquine shows no benefit against coronavirus. Trump's history of attacking journalists who question him. Trump misleads again on coronavirus testing numbers. Trump tells Chinese-American journalist to ask China in clash

Body

[07:00:00]

JOHN BERMAN, CNN NEW DAY: It shows the majority of Americans believe the federal government is doing a poor job with this pandemic and they are overwhelmingly afraid or concerned about a second wave of the virus hitting us. We're going to break down all of these numbers in just a moment.

ALISYN CAMEROTA, CNN NEW DAY: As of this morning, more than 80,000 Americans have been killed by coronavirus. Still, the president seems to be trying to claim victory. On Monday, he said, quote, we have prevailed on testing. It's true, the U.S. is doing much more testing than it was, but we do not lead the world in testing. We lag well behind many countries. And most scientists say the U.S. needs to ramp up testing before people can safely return to work.

The president then abruptly ended his White House briefing yesterday after facing a simple question from a Chinese-American reporter.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REPORTER: Why is this a global competition to you if every day Americans are still losing their lives and we're still seeing more cases every day?

DONALD TRUMP, U.S. PRESIDENT: Well, they're losing their lives everywhere in the world. And maybe that's a question you should ask China.

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REPORTER: Sir, why are you saying that to me specifically that I should ask China?

TRUMP: I'm telling you, I'm not saying it specifically to anybody, I'm --

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BERMAN: All right. Joining us now, CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta and Andy Slavitt, the former acting Administrator of Center of Medicare and Medicaid Services under President Obama.

Sanjay, I want to read you the statement that Dr. Anthony Fauci emailed to The New York Times overnight, which is part of the testimony he will deliver under oath before Congress this morning. He will say, quote, if we skip over the checkpoints in the guidelines to open America again, then we risk the danger of multiple outbreaks throughout the country. This will not only result in needless suffering and death, but would actually set us back on our quest to return to normal.

There are two things that strike me here. Number one, just the tonal difference between what Dr. Fauci is saying or will say before Congress today and what the White House is saying, we have prevailed on testing. Numbers are going down everywhere. Dr. Fauci saying we are at risk of blowing this and will say it under oath today. And then he uses a conditional here, if we skip over the checkpoints in the guidelines, when he full well knows that states are skipping over the checkpoints. All we have to do is throw up the map so people can see this, that many states are seeing an increase in coronavirus tests from last week to previous weeks, or stagnant, not the decreases that are on the White House guidelines.

Sanjay, Dr. Fauci's comments, how do they strike you?

DR. SANJAY GUPTA, CNN CHIEF MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT: Well, one thing I'll say about Dr. Fauci is that he has been consistent in this way. He's talked about the fact that, you know, that these gating criteria exist for a reason. And they were released quite a while ago and it's been quite, quite stunning to me, I think, to a lot of people in the public health community, that look at this and say, what happened to the conversation about the gating criteria, the 14-day downward trend, having testing in place?

And it's worth explaining not only the what, but the why, the gating criteria were the what and the people knew what these gating criteria were for states to reopen. I don't think any state has met this if you look at the criteria overall in terms of downward trend of cases, downward trend of influenza-like symptoms and also having the testing in place. But the why is, John, is that there's going to be more cases as states start to reopen. There's no question about it. No matter when that happens, there's going to be more cases. The question is how many more cases and do you have testing in place to prevent the increase in cases from going exponential?

BERMAN: I want to share with you --

GUPTA: There will be more cases --

BERMAN: I'm sorry, Sanjay.

GUPTA: Yes, you've got to prevent that.

BERMAN: I want to show people something that just came out in the new CNN poll just released. We asked Americans, Andy Slavitt, if they trust information on coronavirus coming from certain entities. And when we ask them, do you trust the president on coronavirus, only 36 percent of Americans say they trust the president. Dr. Fauci is at 67 percent. And the CDC, and we're going to hear from Dr. Redfield, the head of the CDC, he's at 74 percent today. So keep that in mind when you hear these mixed messages. You heard the president yesterday saying, we're prevailing on testing and the numbers are going down in cases and Dr. Fauci giving this warning today. Why is this warning to you, Andy, important?

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ANDY SLAVITT, FORMER ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, CENTER FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES: Dr. Fauci, to issue a statement like that, he is concerned about another outbreak or set of outbreaks. And let us distinguish, and Sanjay and I, I think, did full (ph) a bit last night, but it's distinguished between more cases and an additional outbreak, more cases we're going to get. More cases can be managed, more cases can be contained. If, as Sanjay says, we follow the very simple guidelines the White House has put out, that takes a little more patience, it takes a little more work, but it's absolutely within our power to do that.

[07:05:00]

What -- if we don't do that, then we have outbreaks. And outbreaks are incredibly hard to contain. And America should just understand that choosing between cases, a few cases here and there or even more than a few and an outbreak is pretty significant.

I want to go to the comments here about Americans trusting Dr. Fauci and Dr. -- and -- and President Trump. The thing that occurred to me when I heard that was not that more people trust Dr. Fauci, I'm pleased to hear that just simply because he's a scientist. But the fact that 36 percent of people do actually listen to what President Trump has to say. And President Trump's messages have been a little bit all over the map. Some of them may have been things that have not been in people's best interest, a lot of them have been in things done in the interest of public health. And that 36 percent number actually worries me.

BERMAN: Well, it is interesting, his approval rating in our new poll us 45 percent, just 36 percent say, they trust him. So even some people who do approve the job he's doing don't buy what he's saying on coronavirus, which, to me, is interesting.

Sanjay, I do want your take on where the testing is right now and what the increased need is. The choice of the word, prevail, it's ridiculous word, first of all, in this circumstance. We've prevailed over nothing at this point. The testing is getting better, right? The positive rate is below 10 percent, which is a terrific sign. The number of cases that we are turning up is going down. But where does testing need to be in order for people to feel safe as they return to work, Sanjay?

GUPTA: You know, interestingly, we get a little bit of a view of this from looking at what's happening inside the White House itself, right, as they had people who have been diagnosed with this infection in the White House and now they've created their own strategy, which is some people get tested on a very regular basis. They're doing aggressive contact tracing and the masks and all that, that's aside, obviously, from the testing. But they've come to this conclusion within the White House that in order to have people feel safer, maybe not totally safe, but safer, that they really have to increase the level of testing.

And I think that's what struck me about this from the start. I mean, you'll hear all sorts of numbers. The Harvard roadmap resilience says that, ultimately, by the summer, the middle, end of summer we need to be doing 20 million tests a day. If you do the math on that, that's basically the whole country every two weeks. Some people say that's too many tests.

I think the idea that it needs to provide the confidence for people to feel like they can return safely to work, that they think that they are not harboring the virus and will unintentionally infecting other people and that the people around them won't be infecting them. I mean, this spreads asymptotically, which people know this by now.

But what that means is that the standard sort of screenings of temperature checks and things like that, while they may remain, aren't going to be nearly as effective. We need to do a lot more testing. We've learned as we've gone along. Maybe we thought we would need fewer tests in the beginning. But we clearly are going to need a lot. I mean, what the exact number is, I don't know, but we'll have the confidence for people to start returning to work.

BERMAN: Andy, I want to ask you something because you did work in the Obama administration. I want to preface this question by the fact that President Trump is having a sort of diarrhea of the tweet this morning. He has done a

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dozen so tweets. And as far as I can tell, one of them were actually focused on coronavirus. His head is somewhere else.

President Obama on a call with sort of Obama team alarms (ph) over the weekend was very critical of President Trump's response to coronavirus. We haven't heard directly from the president on this subject, but we did hear from Mitch McConnell on it last night. I want to play that sound.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY): We want to be early and ready for the next one, because, clearly, the Obama administration did not leave to this administration any kind of game plan for something like this.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BERMAN: Any kind of game plan. There actually was a specific game plan for pandemic response, wasn't there?

SLAVITT: There was. There was Ron Klain who put together not only a game plan, but the staffing to be able to react. And President Trump decided that he didn't -- he didn't want people, as he said, to be sitting around doing nothing, which is how he felt about the CDC.

And, look, I still think to this day, he looks at public health professionals within a scans (ph) eye, sort of similar to the way he looks at the EPA, as people who get in place of his agenda.

Now, as the political season comes forward, I think we can expect to hear two things pretty frequently. One it is it's all Obama's fault and the second is it's all China's fault. We've been at this for three-and-a-half- years and I don't recall President Trump saying anything, even a modest thing, if anything, that's been his responsibility, even though he's been in the job for three years.

So I hope that we don't devolve into this kind of rhetoric of blame when we've got lives to save. I mean, many of us are trying to put these political things aside.

[07:10:01]

I think we have much more to do and we can get on a path to do them. And I think that involves essentially the president more than anybody else saying, I am not going to view everything that happens as a reflection on me, I'm going to view my responsibility instead as to level with the American public and make sure we have good accountability to execute the plan that they've put in place that Sanjay was talking about in the beginning of this conversation.

BERMAN: I will note that 80,000 Americans have now died. Another thousand plus will be reported as dead today from coronavirus and the president is tweeting about Rose McGowan, among other things.

Sanjay, a medical update on hydroxychloroquine, a major study was published yesterday, which looked at some outcomes that people get on hydroxychloroquine and it says the same thing that other studies have shown over the last month.

GUPTA: Yes. I mean, there's not been any data that's looked promising on hydroxychloroquine. This is a new study that basically tries to compare, is this effective, especially in people who are severely or critically ill? Is it effective as a standalone, hydroxychloroquine? Is it effective with the azithromycin, which is that Z-pack? And it's just not. It does seem to increase the likelihood that people will develop heart problem as well, almost twice as likely. So this is another study.

And I think that there's a lot of people out there who say, okay, we've got our answer on this one, yet there is still a little bit of an open question as to whether this could be used as sort of a preventative or prophylactic medication, and perhaps those studies will continue.

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But we've got a big challenge in front of us with regard to this virus. There's lots of other drug candidates out there, this one is not looking promising at all.

BERMAN: Yes. Let's lean into the ones that are shown to work. Sanjay, thank you so much. Andy Slavitt, great having you on this morning. We really appreciate you waking up. I know you're in Central Time, so it's an extra hour early. I appreciate it.

So, President Trump walked off, abruptly ended his briefing in the rose garden after he faced a question from a reporter he did not want to hear.

Two of our White House Correspondents join us to talk about what happened, next.

[07:15:00]

CAMEROTA: President Trump abruptly ended his rose garden briefing yesterday after this contentious exchange with reporters. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REPORTER: Why is this a global competition to you if every day Americans are still losing their lives and we're still seeing more cases every day?

TRUMP: Well, they're losing their lives everywhere in the world. And maybe that's a question you should ask China. Don't ask me. Ask China that question, okay? When you ask them that question, you may get a very unusual answer.

REPORTER: Sir, why are you saying that to me specifically that I should ask China?

TRUMP: I'm telling you, I'm not saying it specifically to anybody.

Okay, anybody else? Please, go ahead in the back, please.

KAITLAN COLLINS, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: I have two questions.

TRUMP: No, that's okay.

COLLINS: But you pointed to me. I have two questions, Mr. President.

TRUMP: Next.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAMEROTA: All right. That was a CBS correspondent you first heard and then, of course, our own Kaitlan Collins. Kaitlan joins us now along with CNN Political Correspondent Abby Phillip.

So, Kaitlan, you have covered President Trump for several years now every day. Why do you think he got so rattled yesterday and had to walk off?

COLLINS: Well, it's not entirely clear. I think if he wanted to rebut the question that he was facing from the CBS reporter, he could have just done that and moved on. He had called on me, which is why I was standing there, because, of course, because of social distancing rules, we're mainly seated with several feet in between us in the rose garden now. And the president had called on me. But then because I let my colleague finish, he then wanted to move on to another reporter.

And then you saw the president abruptly ended the press conference pretty quickly. He turned and walked back into the Oval Office. It was kind of quiet in the rose garden for a few seconds after there because people didn't seem

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sure about exactly what to do. And the question was just a simple one, about why the president was talking about where the U.S. ranks globally when we're talking about testing.

And I just think the way that the press conference ended, detracted from what really the White House had intended the press conference to be about, which is their ramped up efforts to increase testing, of course. Something that we've seen many public health experts say is needed to really restart the nation again and open up the economy. And that, of course, is not the takeaway given how things ended.

CAMEROTA: Abby, I can't know what was in the president's head or if he knew that CBS correspondent's ethnicity when he told her to go talk to China or call China. But what we do know is that he has a well- documented history of insulting reporters and of particularly demeaning comments to female reporters.

And so just to remind our viewers, we have a montage of some of his ugly remarks. So listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REPORTER: Are you going to include the congressional black caucus and the congressional --

TRUMP: I would. I tell you what, do you want to set up the meeting? Do you want to set up the meeting?

REPORTER: No, no. I'm just a reporter.

TRUMP: Are they friends of yours?

ABBY PHILLIP, CNN POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT: Do you want him to rein in Robert Mueller?

TRUMP: What a stupid question that is. What a stupid question. But I watch you a lot. You ask a lot of stupid questions.

Why don't you act in a little more positive? It's always trying to get you.

REPORTER: My question to you --

TRUMP: Get you, get you. And you know what, that's why nobody trusts the media anymore.

REPORTER: My question is that going to impact --

TRUMP: Excuse me, you didn't hear me. That's why you used to work for The Times and now you work for somebody else.

Look, let me tell you something, be nice.

REPORTER: Mr. President, my question is --

TRUMP: Don't be threatening. Don't be threatening.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAMEROTA: Abby, we should let people know that you were the reporter that he was referring to in the middle of that montage where he said something about a stupid question. So what did you think when you saw that exchange yesterday?

PHILLIP: Yes, Alisyn, I mean, it's part of a pattern. And it's a really clear pattern that's been going on for years now.

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Kaitlan knows it as well. She's been in those kinds of interactions with the president before. He seems to not be tolerant of taking difficult questions, particularly from women.

And then I think what happened yesterday in the rose garden with Weijia was really, I think, disturbing to a lot of people, because Weijia is a Chinese-American journalist but she works for CBS News. She's been covering this president for years. And for the president to turn the question on her and then say, why don't you go ask China seemed to imply that he believed that somehow she ought to talk to the Chinese government as opposed to her own government, which is what she was trying to do.

Again, it's part of a pattern. The first clip that you played when he looked at April Ryan, a black reporter and said, are the members of the congressional black caucus friends of yours? The president making assumptions about reporters based on their ethnicity is a pattern here. And I think it is part of the overall theme of some of these press conferences.

This used to play out as reporters were -- as he was walking to Marine One on the south lawn. Now, it's playing out in the context of these coronavirus briefings. But they are off topic. The president is not able to stay on message.

And it's one of the many reasons why people close to the president kind of want these briefings to end because they are not productive, they're not helpful, and they just evolve into these really personal attacks and sparring matches with reporters that are not helpful to, you know, the 80,000 Americans who lost their lives and their families who are looking for answers from the government.

CAMEROTA: Look, Kaitlan, you and Abby have much more experience with this than the rest of us. But we've also heard him, obviously, insult -- you know, ask anybody, Jim Acosta, Jonathan Karl, Serge Kovaleski. He doesn't spare male reporters, but is it your impression as well, Kaitlan, is as Abby's, that female reporters -- he has a much heard time with female reporters?

COLLINS: Well, I think it depends which press conference it is. Generally, who the president goes after, there have been times when he's focused on reporters from NBC News, Peter Alexander, people like that. It really depends on also the question. A lot of this is a time where if the president doesn't like a question, he doesn't want to answer that question, this is how he reacts or he believes they're unfairly worded and unfairly negative to him because that is how the president views all of this, and so the coverage of what the reporter is saying about him.

And you saw it several times when the president does get defensive, as he did yesterday, when people were asking questions where they were framing it as, look at this coronavirus outbreak that's happening here at the White House where you guys do have daily testing, where you find out in 15 minutes or not whether or not you have it, how can you guys have that and still have an outbreak and people don't feel comfortable coming to work here as his top economic adviser said, but then, on a bigger scale, you want Americans go back to work when they don't have that luxury of those 15-minute tests?

The president instead of answering that and viewing it through the lens of those Americans and people who work at schools, meat packing plants, things like that, takes it as a criticism that they're testing White House officials. No one is against them testing White House officials or doesn't think that members of the president's cabinet or vice president or whatnot should be tested. But, Alisyn, he views these things always as a critique of him instead of seeing it through the broader scope of the nation and how people are responding to this.

And as Abby is pointing out, this is a pattern that the president has had. But it does take on a different tone when it's during a pandemic. And people are watching these briefings to get answers to find out more information about what is going on with testing and when everyone will be able to get a test. And when they don't get those answers, that's when it raises the questions of, you know, what information are they getting from a venue like that?

CAMEROTA: Abby, I am just being told that the president just tweeted about this very thing about just what we're talking about, so I will read it cold. This is always a little dicey. Asian Americans, he says, are very angry at what

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China has done to our country and the world. Chinese-Americans are the most angry of all and I don't blame them, exclamation point.

Abby, I'm so -- I am truly confused about why President Trump thinks it is the reporter's job to ask China and to speak to China. Isn't it the president of the United States' job if he has this huge issue with China, which he brings up over and over again, shouldn't he ask China? Shouldn't he be dealing with China? I mean, he has been, as we know, you know, rhetorically used kid gloves with President Xi. Why?

PHILLIP: Yes. I mean, that is the natural follow-up. I mean, the question for the president now is have you raised this issue with President Xi?

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And, you know, I think that that's one of the -- the president wants to use China as a political tool.

And I think that it's fair for him to raise questions about whether China was being forthright with the world. But let's get back to what actually happened yesterday. You know, the CBS reporter, Weijia, was asking the president about why he is so focused on competing with other countries, not just China, but other countries around the world on the issue of testing when Americans want to know what is going on here in the United States. And instead of answering that question, he flips it back on China. That's just another topic. It doesn't respond to the real concerns people have about whether the United States is getting on top of the issue of testing in this country and it's a little bit of a strawman in this particular context.

And then secondly, Weijia Jiang is not responsible for the actions of the Chinese government. And to imply otherwise, I think, is really inappropriate for someone who is a reporter who has been covering him for many years. He knows Weijia. She's in the briefing room all the time talking to him. So he ought to know that she works for CBS News in this country and is responsible for asking him questions about the state of affairs in this country.

CAMEROTA: Yes, great point. Not only is she not responsible for China, who does he think is responsible for China? I mean, if not President Xi, who does he want everyone to ask in China? Anyway, we will see what happens, what unfolds with all of this today. Abby, Kaitlan, thank you both very much.

So, a battle on Capitol Hill over another round of stimulus. Why Democrats say trillions more are needed.

[07:30:00]

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