



Workers disinfecting a mosque in Istanbul earlier this month. Coronavirus infections in Turkey have risen to nearly 1,000.

Officials Race to Stem Outbreak
As New York Becomes Epicenter

By JESSE MCKINLEY

Three weeks after its first coronavirus infection was discovered, the New York City region reached an alarming milestone on Sunday: It now accounts for roughly 5 percent of the world’s confirmed cases, making it an epicenter of the global pandemic and increasing pressure on officials to take more drastic measures.

Moving to stem the crisis on multiple fronts, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York pleaded with federal officials to nationalize the manufacturing of medical supplies and ordered New York City to crack down on people congregating in public. He suggested some streets could be closed, allowing pedestrians more space.

The governor on Sunday announced measures intended to prepare for a wave of patients, including setting up temporary hospitals in three New York City suburbs and erecting a massive medical bivouac in the Jacob Javits

Center on Manhattan’s West Side.

Already, hospitals across the New York region are reporting a surge of coronavirus patients and a looming shortage of critical supplies like ventilators and masks.

A rapid increase in testing has revealed the extent of the outbreak: Community spread of the highly contagious virus now appears commonplace.

All told, more than 15,000 people in New York State have tested positive, with the vast majority in the New York City region. That is about half of the cases in the United States. Worldwide, the pandemic has sickened more than 314,700 people, according to official counts.

About one in eight patients in New York State has been hospitalized, and 114 people had died by Sunday morning, state officials said, though the toll in New York City rose rapidly during the

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Seeking a Balm for the Soul
But Imperiling Earthly Health

By VIVIAN YEE

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Down on earth, the coronavirus outbreak was felling lives, livelihoods and normalcy. A nation-spanning blessing seemed called for. So up went a priest in a small airplane, rumbling overhead at an epidemiologically safe distance from the troubles below, wielding a sacred golden vessel from a cockpit-turned-pulpit.

Before the Rev. Majdi Allawi’s boarded his flight over Lebanon, a soldier at an airport checkpoint asked if he had a mask and hand sanitizer.

“Jesus is my protection,” said Father Allawi, who belongs to the Maronite Catholic Church. “He is my sanitizer.”

Religion is the solace of first resort for billions of people grappling with a pandemic for which scientists, presidents and the secular world seem, so far, to have few answers. With both sanitizer and leadership in short supply,

dread over the coronavirus has driven the globe’s faithful even closer to religion and ritual.

But what is good for the soul may not always be good for the body.

Believers worldwide are running afoul of public health authorities’ warnings that communal gatherings, crucial to so much religious practice, must be limited to combat the virus’s spread. In some cases, religious fervor has led people toward cures that have no grounding in science; in others, it has drawn them to sacred places or rites that could increase the risk of infection.

In Myanmar, a prominent Buddhist monk announced that a dose of one lime and three palm seeds — no more, no less — would confer immunity. In Iran, a few pilgrims were filmed licking Shiite Muslim shrines to ward off infection. And in Texas, the preacher Kenneth

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Within the Bleakest Statistics,
A Life That Was So Much More

By ELLEN BARRY

Her name was Loretta, but they called her Lettie. She stood 4 feet 10 inches. She was outrageously friendly, the kind of person liable to invite the sales clerk at T-Mobile to join the family for dinner. This made her children cringe but was also something they loved. Pure Lettie.

She was tough. At work, she could stare down colleagues who were hairy, blustery and taller than her by a foot or two. And it was true of her husband, Roddy. He could not say no to her.

Roddy had not wanted to go on their February trip to the Philippines. He was watching the early news about the coronavirus, and worried it would put his wife, a cancer survivor, in danger. But she was adamant. There was something she needed to finish.

On March 11, Loretta Dionisio became a data point.

At the news conference where her death the day before was announced, the public health director in Los Angeles County did not name her, in accordance with federal privacy regulations.

The public health director referred only to a woman in her 60s with “underlying health condi-

tions” who was stopping briefly in California after travels in Asia, adding that “shortly after being hospitalized, she unfortunately passed.” In the continuing tally of fatalities associated with the coronavirus, hers was the 37th death in the United States, the first in Los Angeles County.

Nearly two weeks later, Ms. Dionisio’s family was still grappling with the bureaucracy that surrounds infectious disease. She died far from her home in Orlando, Fla., during a layover 2,500 miles away. Her son and daughter, on the East Coast, have been unable to see their father, who is in quarantine in California after giving their mother cardiopulmonary resuscitation. For days after her death, he barely spoke.

And in the painful logistics of hygiene and quarantine, no funeral Mass has been said for her.

“Through this whole ordeal, we didn’t want her to get lost in the story,” said her son, Rembert Dionisio.

Janice Jenkins, a close friend of Ms. Dionisio’s, said that the days after her death had felt strange and disjointed, without the cere-

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Loretta Dionisio with her husband, Roddy, in a photograph from 2005. She died on March 10 after a trip to the Philippines.

Halting Virus Will Require
Harsh Steps, Experts Say

Near-Total Cooperation From Public Is Key
to Isolating Clusters of Infections

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.

Terrifying though the coronavirus may be, it can be turned back. China, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan have demonstrated that, with furious efforts, the contagion can be brought to heel.

Whether they can keep it suppressed remains to be seen. But for the United States to repeat their successes will take extraordinary levels of coordination and money from the country’s leaders, and extraordinary levels of trust and cooperation from citizens. It will also require international partnerships in an interconnected world.

There is a chance to stop the coronavirus. This contagion has a weakness.

Although there are incidents of rampant spread, as happened on the cruise ship Diamond Princess, the coronavirus more often infects clusters of family members, friends and work colleagues, said Dr. David L. Heymann, who chairs an expert panel advising the World Health Organization on emergencies.

No one is certain why the virus travels in this way, but experts see an opening nonetheless. “You can contain clusters,” Dr. Heymann said. “You need to identify and stop discrete outbreaks, and then do rigorous contact tracing.”

But doing so takes intelligent, rapidly adaptive work by health officials, and near-total cooperation from the populace. Containment becomes realistic only when Americans realize that working together is the only way to protect themselves and their loved ones.

In interviews with a dozen of the world’s leading experts on fighting epidemics, there was wide agreement on the steps that must be taken immediately.

Those experts included international public health officials who have fought AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, flu and Ebola; scientists and epidemiologists; and former health officials who led major American global health programs in both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Americans must be persuaded to stay home, they said, and a system put in place to isolate the infected and care for them outside the home. Travel restrictions should be extended, they said; productions of masks and ventilators must be accelerated, and testing problems must be resolved.

But tactics like forced isolation, school closings and pervasive GPS tracking of patients brought more divided reactions.

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The National Guard at a drive-through test site in New Jersey.

Partisan Divide
Threatens Deal
On Rescue Bill

This article is by Emily Cochrane, Jim Tankersley and Jeanna Smialek.

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats on Sunday blocked action on an emerging deal to prop up an economy devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, paralyzing the progress of a nearly \$2 trillion government rescue package they said failed to adequately protect workers or impose strict enough restrictions on bailed-out businesses.

The party-line vote was a stunning setback after three days of fast-paced negotiations between senators and administration officials to reach a bipartisan compromise on legislation that is expected to be the largest economic stimulus package in American history — now expected to cost \$1.8 trillion or more. In a 47-to-47 vote, the Senate fell short of the 60 votes that needed to advance the measure, even as talks continued behind the scenes between Democrats and the White House to salvage a compromise.

The failure to move forward shook financial markets and threatened an ambitious timeline set by the Trump administration and leading Republicans to move

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Trump Shifts
Image: Leader
For ‘Wartime’

This article is by Annie Karni, Maggie Haberman and Reid J. Epstein.

WASHINGTON — With the economy faltering and the political landscape unsettled as the coronavirus death toll climbs, a stark and unavoidable question now confronts President Trump and his advisers: Can he save his campaign for re-election when so much is suddenly going so wrong?

After three years of Republicans’ championing signs of financial prosperity that were to be Mr. Trump’s chief re-election argument, the president has never needed a new message to voters as he does now, not to mention luck. At this point, the president has one clear option for how to proceed politically, and is hoping that an array of factors will break his way.

The option, which he has brazenly pushed in recent days, is to cast himself as a “wartime president” who looks in charge of a nation under siege while his likely Democratic opponent, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., is largely out of sight hunkered down in Delaware.

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TRACKING AN OUTBREAK

- DEFIANT** Many have ignored the urgent calls for social distancing. How much they are worsening the crisis may never be known. PAGE A5
- PRESSURE** Workers at UPS and FedEx feel they have no choice but to keep showing up, even with coronavirus-like symptoms. PAGE B1
- OLYMPICS** Faced with growing pressure to postpone the Tokyo Games, Olympic officials promised a decision within four weeks. PAGE D1
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In northwestern Syria, children forced from their homes cannot remember a normal life. Volunteer teachers are trying to give them one, despite a lack of desks, chairs and books. PAGE A14

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The U.S. Embassy in Kabul is working to broker peace between the men who have claimed the presidency. PAGE A15

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Opponents of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked the Supreme Court to block what they called a power grab by the caretaker government. PAGE A15

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Danai Gurira, who stars on “The Walking Dead,” is walking, or maybe lurching, away from the show. PAGE C1



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Betty Williams shared the 1976 prize for starting a protest movement that demanded the end of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland during the time known as the Troubles. She was 76.

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