

What the Next Year (or Two) May Look Like

Scientists Foresee Long Road in U.S.

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.

The coronavirus is spreading from America's biggest cities to its suburbs, and has begun encroaching on the nation's rural regions. The virus is believed to have infected millions of citizens and has killed more than 34,000.

Yet President Trump last week proposed guidelines for reopening the economy and suggested that a swath of the United States would soon resume something resembling normalcy. For weeks now, the administration's view of the crisis and our future has been rosier than that of its own medical advisers, and of scientists generally.

In truth, it is not clear to anyone where this crisis is leading us. More than 20 experts in public health, medicine, epidemiology and history shared their thoughts on the future during in-depth interviews. When can we emerge from our homes? How long, realistically, before we have a treatment or vaccine? How will we keep the virus at bay?

Some felt that American ingenuity, once fully engaged, might well produce advances to ease the burdens. The path forward depends on factors that are certainly difficult but doable, they said: a carefully staggered approach to reopening, widespread testing and surveillance, a treatment that works, adequate resources for health care providers — and eventually an effective vaccine.

Still, it was impossible to avoid gloomy forecasts for the next year. The scenario that Mr. Trump has been unrolling at his daily press briefings — that the lockdowns will end soon, that a protective pill is almost at hand, that stadiums and restaurants will soon be full — is a fantasy, most experts said.

“We face a doleful future,” said Dr. Harvey V. Fineberg, a former president of the National Academy of Medicine.

He and others foresaw an unhappy population trapped indoors for months, with the most vulnerable possibly quarantined for far longer. They worried that a vaccine would initially elude scientists, that weary citizens would abandon restrictions despite the risks, that the virus would be with us from now on.

“My optimistic side says the virus will ease off in the summer and a vaccine will arrive like the cavalry,” said Dr. William Schaffner, a preventive medicine specialist at Vanderbilt University medical school. “But I’m learning to guard against my essentially optimistic nature.”

Most experts believed that once the crisis was over, the nation and its economy would revive quickly. But there would be no escaping a period of intense pain.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MISHA FRIEDMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From top: Picking up food at a nonprofit in Manhattan's Washington Heights neighborhood; testing samples in Brooklyn; few commuters on the Staten Island Ferry. President Trump's rosy outlook for reopening is not shared by experts.

G.O.P. Aiming To Make China The Scapegoat

Bid to Shift Blame Off Trump for Response

By JONATHAN MARTIN and MAGGIE HABERMAN

WASHINGTON — The strategy could not be clearer: From the Republican lawmakers blanketing Fox News to new ads from President Trump's super PAC to the biting criticism on Donald Trump Jr.'s Twitter feed, the G.O.P. is attempting to divert attention from the administration's heavily criticized response to the coronavirus by pinning the blame on China.

With the death toll from the pandemic already surpassing 34,000 Americans and unemployment soaring to levels not seen since the Great Depression, Republicans increasingly believe that elevating China as an archenemy culpable for the spread of the virus, and harnessing America's growing animosity toward Beijing, may be the best way to salvage a difficult election.

Republican senators locked in difficult races are preparing commercials condemning China. Conservatives with future presidential ambitions of their own, like Senators Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley, are competing to see who can talk tougher toward the country where the virus first emerged. Party officials are publicly and privately brandishing polling data in hopes Mr. Trump will confront Beijing.

Mr. Trump's own campaign aides have endorsed the strategy, releasing an attack ad last week depicting Joseph R. Biden Jr., the presumptive Democratic nominee, as soft on China. The ad relied heavily on images of people of Asian descent, including former Gov. Gary Locke of Washington, who is Chinese-American, and it was widely viewed as fanning the flames of xenophobia.

“Trump has always been successful when he's had a bogeyman and China is the perfect bogeyman,” said Chris LaCivita, a longtime Republican strategist.

But there is a potential impediment to the G.O.P. plan — the leader of the party himself.

Eager to continue trade talks, uneasy about further rattling the markets and hungry to protect his relationship with President Xi Jinping at a moment when the United States is relying on China's manufacturers for lifesaving medical supplies, Mr. Trump has repeated

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RIISING SHORTAGE OF DIALYSIS UNITS ALARMS DOCTORS

AN OVERLOOKED THREAT

Kidneys Failing in Large Percentage of Patients Sickest With Virus

This article is by Reed Abelson, Sheri Fink, Nicholas Kulish and Katie Thomas.

For weeks, U.S. government officials and hospital executives have warned of a looming shortage of ventilators as the coronavirus pandemic descended.

But now, doctors are sounding an alarm about an unexpected and perhaps overlooked crisis: a surge in Covid-19 patients with kidney failure that is leading to shortages of machines, supplies and staff required for emergency dialysis.

In recent weeks, doctors on the front lines in intensive care units in New York and other hard-hit cities have learned that the coronavirus isn't only a respiratory disease that has led to a crushing demand for ventilators.

The disease is also shutting down some patients' kidneys, posing yet another series of life-or-death calculations for doctors who must ferry a limited supply of specialized dialysis machines from one patient in kidney failure to the next. All the while fearing they may not be able to hook up everyone in time to save them.

It is not yet known whether the kidneys are a major target of the virus, or whether they're just one more organ falling victim as a patient's ravaged body surrenders. Dialysis fills the vital roles the kidneys play, cleaning the blood of toxins, balancing essential components including electrolytes, keeping blood pressure in check and removing excess fluids. It can be a temporary measure while the kidneys recover, or it can be used long-term if they do not. Another unknown is whether the kidney damage caused by the virus is permanent.

“The nephrologists in New York City are going slightly crazy making sure that everyone with kidney failure gets treatment,” said Dr. David S. Goldfarb, chief of nephrology at the New York campus of the New York Harbor VA Health Care System. “We don't want people to die of inadequate

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Meat Producers Are Weak Link In Food Supply

By MICHAEL CORKERY and DAVID YAFFE-BELLANY

The modern American slaughterhouse is a very different place from the one that Upton Sinclair depicted in his early-20th-century novel, “The Jungle.”

Many are giant, sleek refrigerated assembly lines, staffed mostly by unionized workers who slice, debone and “gut snatch” hog and beef carcasses, under constant oversight of government inspectors. The jobs are often grueling and sometimes dangerous, but pork and beef producers boast about having some of the most heavily sanitized work spaces of any industry.

Yet meat plants, honed over decades for maximum efficiency and profit, have become major “hot spots” for the coronavirus pandemic, with some reporting widespread illnesses among their workers. The health crisis has revealed how these plants are becoming the weakest link in the na-

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Germany Tries Antibody Tests As a Way Back

By KATRIN BENNHOLD

BERLIN — Felix Germann was not expecting anyone when his doorbell rang. Outside was a doctor who looked like she had just stepped out of an operating theater, green scrubs, face mask and all — and a policeman.

“I didn't do it!” Mr. Germann said, throwing up his hands, and everybody laughed.

The unusual visitors had come with an unusual proposal: Would he allow them to test his blood for Covid-19 antibodies? Every month? For a year? Starting next week?

He would be helping to further the science that would ultimately allow for a controlled lifting of social and economic restrictions and save lives.

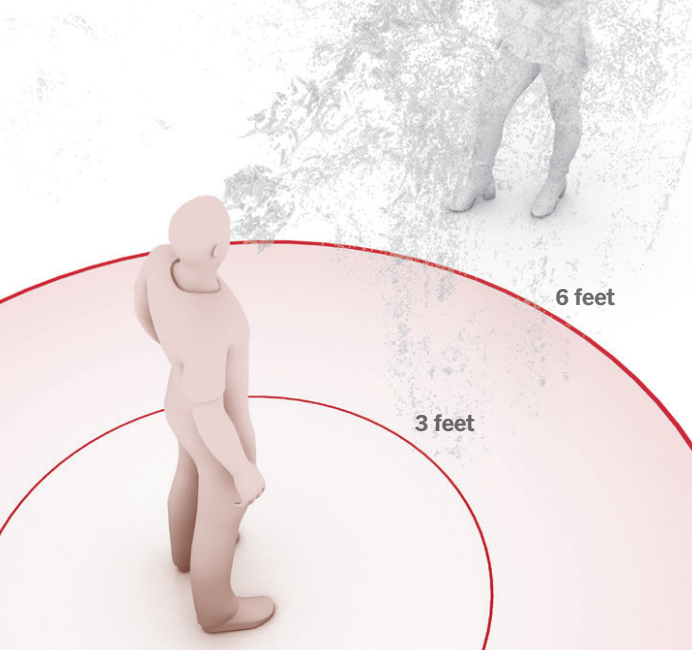
“Of course I said yes,” said Mr. Germann, a 41-year-old project manager at a media company. “I want to help. This is a collective crisis. The government is doing what it can. Everyone needs to do

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Is Six Feet Enough?

A cough produces respiratory droplets of varying sizes. Inside a room, small droplets known as aerosols can remain suspended or travel through the air before they eventually settle on surfaces.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

When It Comes to ‘Essential,’ It’s a Woman’s World Today

By CAMPBELL ROBERTSON and ROBERT GEBELOFF

Every day, Constance Warren stands behind the cold cuts counter at a grocery store in New Orleans, watching the regular customers come and go.

They thank Ms. Warren and tell her they do not like being stuck indoors, waiting out the epidemic. She wraps their honey-smoked turkey and smiles.

It is good to have a job right now, the mixed fortune of being deemed an essential worker. But she wonders whether, once everyday life is safe again, people will remember the role she played when it was not.

“Don't forget that we were open to serve you in your time of need,” she said on a break one recent afternoon. “You never know when you might need us again.”

From the cashier to the emergency room nurse to the drug-store pharmacist to the home health aide taking the bus to check on her older client, the soldier on the front lines of the current na-



HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Andrea Lindley, 34, is an I.C.U. nurse in Philadelphia.

tional emergency is most likely a woman.

One in three jobs held by women has been designated as essential, according to a New York Times analysis of census data crossed with the federal government's essential worker guidelines. Nonwhite women are more likely to be doing essential jobs than anyone else.

The work they do has often been underpaid and undervalued

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NATIONAL 23-27

‘The Woman in Michigan’

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has her hands full these days, between the outbreak, gun-toting protesters and all the president's tweets. Not to mention the vice president talk.

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Households Split by TV News

A pandemic has made avoiding political talk nearly impossible for families who see the danger of the virus differently based on whether they watch Fox News or MSNBC.

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SUNDAY REVIEW

Viet Thanh Nguyen

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INTERNATIONAL 19-22

Brazil Tribes Fear ‘Ethnocide’

President Jair Bolsonaro is moving aggressively to open up the Amazon to development. Promises Made.

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‘Indonesian Idol,’ but for Birds

A fascination with songbird competitions contributes to poaching that devastates the wild population.

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SUNDAY BUSINESS

Taking On Amazon

A monopoly critic knew she was fighting an uphill battle. But as the pandemic has made Amazon more essential, it has made it vulnerable.

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A Changed Global Economy

The coronavirus may lead to “a rethink of how much any country wants to be reliant on any other country.”

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THE MAGAZINE

Diary From the Trenches

What an emergency room doctor saw as the pandemic engulfed New York's hospitals.

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SUNDAYSTYLES

When Prom Is Canceled

We photographed 10 students from the Omaha area who had been looking forward to their last dance.

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SPECIAL SECTION

Pandemic Parenting

How to stay healthy, busy and sane.

ARTS & LEISURE

The Lost Voices of War

Anne Frank wrote the most famous diary from the Netherlands, but there were others. Archivists are now dusting them off and putting them online.

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TRAVEL

Postcards to Soothe a Plague

Our 52 Places traveler returned to isolation, but reaching out around the world, he feels far from alone.

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