

From: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Sent: Wed, 26 Feb 2020 00:07:16 +0000
To: McNeil Jr, Donald G
Subject: Re: thought from a kibitzer...

You make some very good points, Donald.

On Feb 25, 2020, at 4:48 PM, McNeil Jr, Donald G <mcneil@nytimes.com> wrote:

I was just watching the HHS briefing online, and thinking about an article I read this morning, and Bruce Aylward's description of what he saw in China, and a lot of [videos I've watched](#) on the South China Morning Post website (they're doing great coverage.).

In China, we in the media tend to report the horrors and the lockdown and the government's early lies...

But the truth is that a lot of average Chinese behaved incredibly heroically in the face of the virus: 25,000 doctors and nurses went into Wuhan to help, knowing they might die. Average people gave up their stockpiles of masks so they could be shipped to Wuhan. Neighborhood committees brought food to thousands of little old ladies and checked on them every day, even as they asked them to stay behind their doors for fear of infection.

Meanwhile, in America, people tend to act like selfish pigs interested only in saving themselves. How can I hoard a mask? Where's my vaccine? This morning, I read [this appalling article](#) from Alabama. Here you have Americans coming back from a horrifying experience overseas, and the President -- who is popular in Alabama -- asks Alabamans to take some of those fellow Americans in. There is zero risk because they're going to be housed on a naval base.

And yet, the answer is "No! Keep them out!" And their legislators encourage it....

I dunno -- that's the kind of behavior I expect from my fellow New Yorkers, not from Alabama.

If the virus arrives -- and we both know it will -- America is going to have to do better than that. Like the Chinese, Americans are going to have to look out for each other the way we haven't since 9/11. Or maybe since World War II.

But that's not the tone of the HHS briefings. They're an aggressive, defensive, almost smart-alecky "we got this" tone. The only time the tone was right when you were the third to take the mike and explain things to that kid shouting from the back without a mike about "What's the real message? What do we do?"

Maybe there could be some thought given to mentally preparing Americans to work together in the face of the crisis? Quarantines are a very aggressive approach -- but they require a lot of compassion or the people quarantined suffer.

I might get around to writing an article about this, but my editors keep grabbing me for minute by minute stuff and I'm way behind.

Donald