

Brave new world: Wartime tactics against coronavirus foe

March 13 2020, by Aritz Parra and Lori Hinnant



Mist is seen on the goggles of a worker wearing a protective suit as he disinfects the city hall of Marikina, in Manila, Philippines on Friday, March 13, 2020. The Philippine president announced Thursday domestic travel to and from metropolitan Manila will be suspended for a month and authorized sweeping quarantines in the crowded capital to fight the new coronavirus. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some it can cause more severe illness.(AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

Coronavirus deaths accelerated in Europe and soared to their highest single-day toll in Italy on Friday, three weeks to the day since the nation identified its first cluster, and U.S. President Donald Trump prepared to invoke emergency powers as nations around the world warned of nearly wartime measures to contain the pandemic.

Tens of millions of students on three continents faced weeks without classes, security forces went on standby to guard against large gatherings, and bars, restaurants and offices closed as dozens of countries struggled to slow the spread of the pandemic.

The spreading pandemic showed that power and influence offer no protection. Among those testing positive were the Canadian prime minister's wife, a top aide to Iran's supreme leader, Miami's mayor, a Brazilian official who met with President Donald Trump, and an Australian Cabinet minister who met with the U.S. attorney general and Trump's daughter, Ivanka.

France's president announced that leaders of the world's largest democracies, the G-7, would hold a video-conference summit Monday to discuss coordinating research on a vaccine and treatments, as well as an economic response. Trump prepared to invoke emergency powers to free up more federal resources, according to two people familiar with the planning who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Channeling wartime rhetoric and tactics in the face of a microscopic enemy, leaders appealed for solidarity to battle a threat that appeared to expand exponentially. They vowed to protect not just the sick, but those sacrificing their livelihoods and education for the greater good. But new border checks were also on the rise, showing that solidarity had its limits in the face of a fast-moving threat.



Travelers wearing protective masks look at a smart phone at the Ministro Pistarini International Airport, in Ezeiza on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Friday, March 13, 2020. Starting next Tuesday, Argentina is banning flights from the U.S., Europe and China, as a precaution against the spread of the new coronavirus. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. (AP Photo/Marcos Brindicci)

With promises of financial support from the European Commission, France and Germany, stocks clawed back some of their losses on Wall Street and in Europe a day after the market's worst session in over three decades.

In Italy, new infections soared by more than 2,500 and virus-related deaths made their biggest single day jump, increasing by 250. On Friday,

three weeks to the day since the country identified its first virus cluster in the north, Italy had a total of 17,600 confirmed cases, with 1,266 deaths.

"Europe has now become the epicenter of the pandemic with more reported cases and deaths than the rest of the world combined, apart from China," said World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "More cases are now being reported every day than were reported in China at the height of its epidemic."



A health official sprays disinfectant in the wake of the new coronavirus outbreak ahead of the Friday prayer at a mosque in Jakarta, Indonesia, Friday, March 13, 2020. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover. (AP

Photo/Dita Alangkara)

New infections also rose sharply in Spain, and the government put 60,000 people in four towns on a mandatory lockdown Friday that echoed Italy's. In Madrid, which is struggling with nearly 2,000 infections, many in nursing homes, the government was pooling intensive care units and considering offers by hotel chains to transform rooms into sick wards.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced a two-week state of emergency beginning Saturday and pledged to "mobilize all resources," including military, to contain the country's sharp rise in coronavirus cases.

In just 24 hours, the numbers of confirmed cases were spiking ominously in some places: France saw an additional 800 cases to reach more than 3,600 by Friday; Britain went from 590 to 798 and New York state jumped 30 percent, hitting 421 .



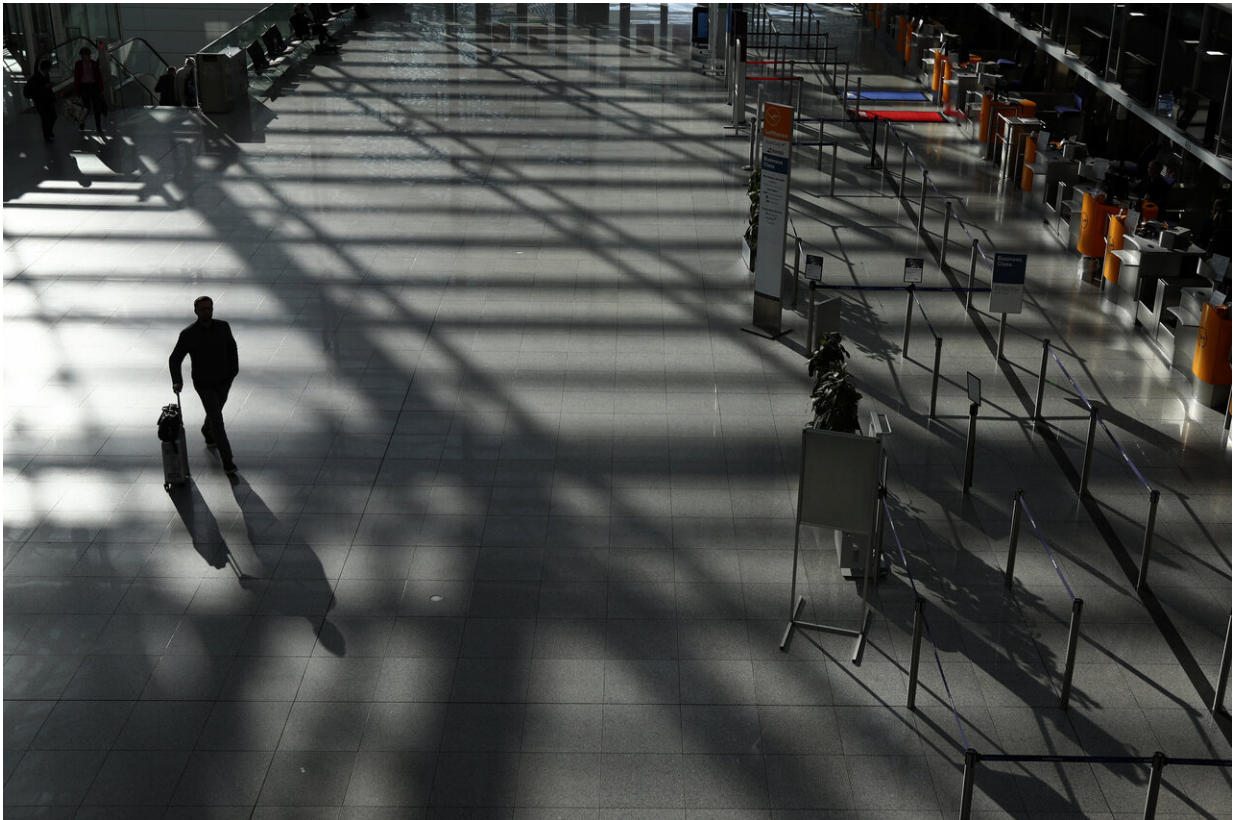
People take a selfie outside the Sagrada Familia basilica in Barcelona, Spain, Friday, March 13, 2020. The basilica closed its doors to visitors and suspend construction from Friday March 13 to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 coronavirus. Spain, along with Italy and France, is among the countries worst hit by the virus so far in Europe. (AP Photo/Joan Mateu)

In China, where new infections have tailed off, authorities mobilized to prevent a boomerang effect, quarantining new arrivals for 14 days. But the intensifying spread of COVID-19 beyond Asia dashed any hopes for containing the virus, despite drastic curbs on travel and social events.

In Europe and the United States, leaders and [medical experts](#) tried to predict the future—or at least the next few weeks—by scrutinizing the virus' trajectory so far, especially in China and Italy, the epicenters of

Asia and Europe. Congress and the Trump administration closed in on a sweeping aid package with sick pay, free testing and other resources. The governors of six states—Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, New York, Rhode Island and Washington – sought National Guard troops.

The Italian town of Codogno, which had all but shut down hours after recording Italy's first locally spread [coronavirus](#) infection, showed that changing habits does make a difference. New infections have slowed drastically there compared to the rest of Italy, where draconian measures came far later.



A man walks through the empty hall of Terminal II at the airport in Munich, Germany, Friday, March 13, 2020. Due to the Coronavirus a large number of flights have to be cancelled. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older

adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader)

"More than a sigh of relief, there was some concern over the risk that all of the sacrifices were in vain," said Mayor Francesco Passerini, who like most in the town wears a mask.

The goal is to slow the virus' spread to avoid overwhelming hospitals with those sickened by an illness that no one in the world has immunity to. Worldwide, 137,000 people have been infected and more than 5,000 have died, but half of those who had the virus have already recovered. Most patients have mild or moderate symptoms such as a fever or cold, but severe symptoms including pneumonia can occur, especially in the elderly and people with existing health problems.

While Washington scrambled to shape an economic rescue package, European officials pushed back against Trump's sharp restrictions on travel from Europe.



Brazilian tourists wear a mask as they visit the Mucem Museum in Marseille, southern France, Friday, March 13, 2020. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some it can cause more severe illness. (AP Photo/

"Instead of tending to the problems of his country, and to a virus that knows no borders, he thinks that he can fight it like people that have a different citizenship than American," said German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz.

"But this is a virus, if I may say so, and it actually shows that solidarity is the only way that we can move forward as human beings."

New travel restrictions sprang up practically by the hour on Friday:

Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Portugal, the Czech Republic—all started barring entry to Europeans considered at risk. Canada and Denmark joined the United States in advising citizens to avoid trips abroad, and Americans in Europe caught increasingly rare trans-Atlantic flights back home.

The exponential spread of the virus in Europe, North America and the Middle East has drawn contrasts with waning outbreaks in the hardest-hit nations in Asia. China, where the virus emerged late last year, still accounts for more than 60% of global infections but on Friday reported just eight new cases and seven deaths.



A worker wearing a protective suit disinfected the city hall in Marikina, east of Manila, Philippines on Friday, March 13, 2020. The Philippine president announced Thursday domestic travel to and from metropolitan Manila will be

suspended for a month and authorized sweeping quarantines in the crowded capital to fight the new coronavirus. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some it can cause more severe illness.(AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

The size of permitted gatherings dwindled sharply in country after country, state after state. French President Emmanuel Macron, who announced the indefinite closure of all schools late Thursday, praised the French for taking action.

"That is what makes a great nation: Women and men able to put the collective interest above all, a human community held together by values: Solidarity and fraternity," he said.

The European Union urged member countries to put health screening procedures in place at their borders.

Chinese President Xi Jinping told the U.N. leader his nation was returning to normal and now wants to conduct joint research on drugs and vaccines and offer "as much assistance as it can" to countries in need. A Chinese medical crew arrived in Italy and surplus supplies were sent to Iran.



A man walks past a large display promoting the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Friday, March 13, 2020. U.S. President Donald Trump's suggestion to postpone the Tokyo Olympics for a year because of the spreading coronavirus was immediately shot down by Japan's Olympic minister. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some it can cause more severe illness. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

In South Korea, which had nearly 8,000 cases overall, Friday marked the first day recoveries outnumbered new infections since the country's first patient was confirmed Jan. 20.

Panic buying was seen around the continent.

In Iran, which exceeds 10,000 cases and 400 deaths, Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif urged the Trump administration to immediately lift sanctions over the country's nuclear program. He said they made it difficult to import medicine and medical equipment.

State-run TV reported a positive test and home quarantine for Ali Akbar Velayati, a trusted adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the 80-year-old leader of the Islamic Republic. Iran's senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials are also infected.



National Guard personnel stand at attention as they wait for patients to arrive for COVID-19 coronavirus testing facility at Glen Island Park, Friday, March 13, 2020, in New Rochelle, N.Y. State officials have set up a "containment area" in the New York City suburb, where schools and houses of worship are closed within a 1-mile radius of a point near a synagogue where an infected person with

coronavirus had attended events. State officials stress it is not a lockdown. The vast majority of people recover from the new coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization, most people recover in about two to six weeks, depending on the severity of the illness. (AP Photo/John Minchillo)



A man wearing a mask uses an escalator in the old city of Vitoria, northern Spain, Friday, March 13, 2020. For most people, the new COVID-19 coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)



A health official sprays disinfectant in the wake of the new coronavirus outbreak ahead of the Friday prayer at a mosque in Jakarta, Indonesia, Friday, March 13, 2020. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover. (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)



Empty supermarket shelves in London, as people stock up due to the coronavirus, Friday, March 13, 2020. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)



Students, some wearing protective masks as a precaution against the spread of the coronavirus, hold up their right hands as they recite the national anthem, in Havana, Cuba, Friday, March 13, 2020. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)



People wearing face masks walk at a street in Hong Kong Friday, March. 13, 2020. For most, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for a few, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illnesses, including pneumonia. (AP Photo/Vincent Yu)



People look on as a man puts a notice informing costumers the bar is closing to prevent coronavirus, in Pamplona, northern Spain, Thursday, March 12, 2020. For most people, the new COVID-19 coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)



A shopper walks through an empty aisle of shelves of toilet paper and pet foods at a local Ralphs supermarket in an attempt to stock up on supplies, Friday, March 13, 2020, in the Panorama City section of Los Angeles. Officials said Friday the Los Angeles Unified School District and San Diego school districts will close starting March 16 because of the coronavirus threat. The vast majority of people recover from the new coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization, most people recover in about two to six weeks, depending on the severity of the illness. (AP Photo/Richard Vogel)



A teacher works in an empty classroom at the Pompeu Fabra university in Barcelona, Spain, Friday, March 13, 2020. Over 60,000 people have been confined to four towns in Spain's first mandatory lockdown as infections for the new coronavirus increase sharply, putting a strain on health services and pressure on the government for more action. The government has closed museums and sports centers, sent home nearly 10 million students and has asked people to work remotely, while limiting crowds at public events in high risk areas in an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was isolating himself after his wife tested positive. The Australian home affairs minister was hospitalized in isolation after testing positive. He returned home on

Sunday from Washington, D.C., where he met with U.S. Attorney-General William Barr, Trump's daughter and Sen. Lindsey Graham, who has self-quarantined after also having contact with a Brazilian official who tested positive.

Despite also meeting with that Brazilian official at Mar-a-Lago, Trump has no immediate plans to be tested or to self-quarantine, the White House said. Trump did, however, halt his trademark political rallies, following the lead of Democratic rivals Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders. Cases have topped 1,700 across the U.S.

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