

USA Can Respond Better to Future Pandemics

By Mr. Jan Greylorn

In November, we will have an election.

Covid-19 will be an issue.

We may be in a harsh "second wave" as happened with the 1918 Influenza.

We may see Covid-19 decline and the glimmer of a vaccine.

Regardless, the economy will be different.

Change will accelerate.

Each candidate will have to deal with our experience, real costs (lives and treasure), problematic preparation and execution, and the risks of the "next one".

A candidate may choose to ignore the painful experience.

To a certain extent, we did that after 1918¹.

Or they may release thick position papers and promise to do better with what we have.

Or a candidate may understand his base and look to Applied History for real measures that will resonate with voters and do the necessary hard things.

Covid-19 is the most serious attack on the United States in our collective lifetimes.

To date, the virus has killed 100,000+ of our citizens and cost over \$4,000,000,000,000 (4 trillion dollars). More death and economic damage will certainly follow.

The US Covid-19 response was fragmented, leading to a shutdown which led to an economic crisis and the worst unemployment since the 1929 depression. Social unrest is already evident. Political and national security upheavals may follow.

We now know the very real Pandemic risks and consequences.

We were warned². In 2015³ Bill Gates laid out four things we need to meet the threat of pandemics: surveillance & data, personnel, treatments, and equipment. He said the failure to prepare would lead to increased death and cost. He was right.

Gates urged the development of a medical reserve corps, joint medical and military efforts, germ-focused war games, and stepped-up medical research. Covid-19 is what he called the "next one" after the well-studied 1918 Influenza pandemic. The one after Covid-19 could be even worse.

Globalization and mass air travel have turned weeks or months of warning into days

Applied historical analysis⁴ tells us that we will need a unified response, an integrated system of planning, preparation, and execution.

In 1946, memories of the Nazi blitz, Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, and the frightening power of massive aerial attacks were the basis for the creation of the Strategic Air Command (SAC)⁵. SAC's mission was to deter and counter threats with effective reconnaissance, intelligence, planning, resources, and operations. SAC had money, people, material resources, R&D, plans, coordination, and war game verification. SAC also had a SIOP, a Single, Integrated Operations Plan⁶. We need something similar now – a Strategic Pandemic Command (SPC) with a single, integrated operations plan for Pandemics (PSIOP). Its mission would be to defend the country against biological threats *and* to plan for post-threat recovery.

SPC would monitor all points of entry for biological threats. SPC would protect key interior assets like the health care system, economic nodes, senior citizen life care facilities, and supply chains. It would muster necessary resources including dedicated operational bases, communications equipment, and strategic stockpiles for its partners in city, county, state, and regional jurisdictions. It would refresh and update strategic stockpiles as they age. It would use and support US vendors with periodic purchasing through the domestic supply chain, monitor how that chain integrates globally, and test the chain's capacity to meet surges.

The SPC would use global reconnaissance to detect threats. International cooperation would be important. A "trust but verify" process would include the support of nations and international entities with converging interests.

The SPC would coordinate research and development for threat detection, defense, mitigation, treatment, and other needs. It would also conduct its own research and supply grants to other organizations, including foreign allies.

The SPC would coordinate with both public and private entities across the health and education sectors. It would provide those entities with federal resources and templates for action.

Finally, the SPC would use war games to test operational responsiveness under normal, partial, and full-scale deployments of its resources. It could also use standard events, like the annual flu season, to test its responsiveness. Lessons learned from these simulations would strengthen SPC's preparedness and pave the way for effective post-threat recovery.

The Strategic Air Command's SIOP was both detailed and flexible. Roles and responsibilities were clear. It evolved and changed over time as threats and capabilities mutated. The Strategic Pandemic Command and its PSIOP should have all that and more.

The next pandemic, natural or man made, could be far, far worse. No plan is perfect, but a plan and an effective planning process and execution beat hope and luck. We can and must do better.

A Strategic Pandemic Command with an integrated plan modeled on SAC which protected us for a half century is a path to a better way.

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¹ American Experience (PBS). **Influenza 1918**, Video 1 hour, 2008

² Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense. **A National Blueprint for Biodefense**. 2015

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³ Gates, Bill. **TED talk: The Next Outbreak? We're not ready**. April 2015

⁴ <https://www.belfercenter.org/project/applied-history-project>
<https://www.belfercenter.org/project/applied-history-project#!contest:-applying-history-to-covid-19>

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- ⁵ Strategic Air Command https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command
Moody, Walton S. **Building a Strategic Air Force: The Official US Air Force History of the Strategic Air Command 1945-1953**. 2019
- ⁶ SIOF https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_Integrated_Operational_Plan
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Resources

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Magazines

Economist	Covid 19 articles
Foreign Affairs	Pandemics August 2005 Covid-19 July/August 2020
New Scientist	Covid 19 articles
Technology Review	Covid 19 May 2020 issue

Newspapers

Guardian
 New York Times
 Seattle Times
 Washington Post

Nodes

Washington State Dept of Health Pandemic Influenza Plan Summary

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Flu/Pandemicflu/PandemicInfluenzaPlanSummary>

King County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/emergency-preparedness/preparing-yourself/~/media/depts/health/emergency-preparedness/documents/pandemic/pandemic-flu-response-plan.ashx>

City of Seattle Pandemic Plan

<https://www.seattle.gov/emergency-management/plans>

CDC Center for Disease Control

DHS Department of Homeland Security

WHO World Health Organization

Amazon

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/>

Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense

<https://biodefensecommission.org/>

CSIS Global Health Policy Center (GHPC)

<https://www.csis.org/programs/global-health-policy-center>

Facebook (Seattle)

Global Health Institutes

<https://www.cugh.org/programs>

Global Health Security Index

[https://www.ghsindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-Global-](https://www.ghsindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-Global-Health-Security-Index.pdf)

[Health-Security-Index.pdf](#)

Google (Seattle)

Harvard Global Health Institute

<https://globalhealth.harvard.edu/>

Jewel, Nicholas

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

John Hopkins

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

John Hopkins

<https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org>

Konyndyk, Jeremy

<https://www.cgdev.org/expert/jeremy-konyndyk>

Microsoft Research

Morrison, J. Stephen.

<https://www.csis.org/people/j-stephen-morrison>

Paul Allen Foundation

Tableau Foundation

University of Michigan Center History of Medicine

University of Washington Dept. of Global Health

<https://globalhealth.washington.edu/>

US Health Policy & Management Institutes

[https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-public-affairs-](https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-public-affairs-schools/health-management-rankings)

[schools/health-management-rankings](#)

Washington (WA)Global Health Alliance

<https://www.wghalliance.org/>

PBS American Experience

PBS Frontline

PBS Nova

Guides

Applied History

<https://www.belfercenter.org/project/applied-history-project>

9/11

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks

Bipartisan Cm Biodefense

<https://biodefensecommission.org/>

Bioterrorism

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioterrorism>

Bio Warfare

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_warfare

Covid19 Pandemic

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic

Dark Winter Operation

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Dark_Winter

Epidemiology

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epidemiology>

Exercise Reforger

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exercise_Reforger

Great Depression

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression

Medical History

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medical_history

Pandemics

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemic>

Pandemics List

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_epidemics

SAC

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_Air_Command

SIOP

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_Integrated_Operational_Plan

Sputnik

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sputnik_1

US Demographics
US History

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_the_United_States
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States

Oxford Very Short Introduction

Bacteria
Epidemiology
Pandemics
Plague
The Cell
Virus