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To Stop the Pandemic, Change Your Axioms!

Never in most of our lifetimes has an existential threat to the whole of humanity been so immediate and so widely acknowledged, as the threat posed by the probable imminent emergence of a human-transmissible form of the avian influenza type A/H5N1.

Since our decision several months ago to devote our Fall issue to this topic, the level of public awareness of the danger has been raised by the devoted efforts of a number of leading figures, prominent among them the infectious disease specialist Dr. Michael Osterholm. Many media outlets have not hesitated to present the danger.

Yet, the level of government response remains vastly, obscenely, inadequate to the need. Listen to even the best-informed public figures, such as the National Institutes of Health's Dr. Anthony Fauci, as they describe the looming catastrophe with considerable precision. Then hear their proposed responses. Anyone who has truly internalized the magnitude of the threat, cannot but feel like one of the thirsty and starving citizens of New Orleans in the first week of September, as they listened to government posturing and promises of help on the way.

The failure to act adequately in face of a perceived threat of this magnitude can only be explained as a form of mass insanity. So future generations—the post “great-influenza outbreak” generations—would see it. And so must we, who wish to be history's active instruments in averting such a disaster.

The specific insanity is a cultural problem with roots in the mid-1960s. It is the shift which took place in America and Western Europe in the period following the John F. Kennedy assassination and the buildup of the Vietnam War. The dominant theme of that cultural paradigm shift, defined by figures such as Lord Bertrand Russell, was the abandon-

ment of a commitment to the scientific outlook as a means of solving the problems facing mankind. Russell, who had just a few years earlier argued for pre-emptive nuclear strikes against Russia, changed the argument: Science made war. Give up your brain, and get in touch with your feelings. If you found the taste bitter, the favorite poets and authors of the Congress of Cultural Freedom's menagerie of pessimism were there to make you feel good about feeling bad. And there were always drugs and sex.

Symptomatic was the dismemberment of the U.S. space program, even before the first astronauts set foot on the Moon. In place of the manned mission to Mars, we got the Star Trek television serial, whose principal spinoff, the “Trekkies,” were the living embodiment of the shift in popular axioms from science to intellectual mass suicide.

Where Katrina Came From

Take the case of Katrina, as exemplifying the kind of mass cultural insanity we address. Following Hurricane Betsy in 1965, the Johnson Administration got Congress to authorize a project to be completed in 10 years, which included protecting the city of New Orleans with 16-foot levees. But before the 10 years was up, the decision was made not to spend the money. The cultural paradigm shift of the '68-er generation had already set in. Science was out. Infrastructure was too expensive. “Get it now while you can, and let someone else worry about the future.” The process set in the economy as a whole, as the essential costs of maintaining a modern agro-industrial economy were abandoned.

Some wise guys figured out that we didn't have to produce anything at home any more. It was a lot cheaper to shop it out to cheap-labor markets in South America and Asia. Those things



Courtesy of Tien Chiu

Vietnamese peasant farming: Traditional practices provide an opening for flu virus mutation under conditions of globalized agriculture

that couldn't be imported, like health care for the poor and elderly, we'd just cut. First, it was called the Jimmy Carter Administration, a receivership under control of such Trilateral Commission and Council of Foreign Relations figures as James "Rodney the Robot" Schlesinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Then it was re-invented as Newt Gingrich's Conservative Revolution. The premise is the same: You don't have to actually work to make a living (unless you're poor), and government can persist forever cutting taxes for the rich.

Worse, under globalized agriculture we have developed a vulnerability in our food supply chain which will exacerbate the effects of any pandemic, and poses a catastrophic problem in its own right—the threat of worldwide famine. As elaborated in the article featured on page 34, the alarming worldwide reduc-

tion of just-in-time inventory systems—which will mean immediate shortages in production in the event of a pandemic-induced shutdown of transportation—a point recently emphasized by Dr. Osterholm—has the same origin. Worse, under globalized agriculture we have developed a vulnerability in our food supply chain which will exacerbate the effects of any pandemic, and poses a catastrophic problem in its own right—the threat of worldwide famine. As elaborated in the article featured on page 34, the alarming worldwide reduc-

Flu Threat Has Same Origin

Our dangerously weakened ability to respond to the now-threatening avian flu pandemic is provably a result of those same policies implemented on a global scale. Among the consequences:

- The conditions for reassortment and spread of the viral organism are provably fostered by the patterns of globalized agriculture which have developed, particularly in Asia.
- The present weakness of our public health infrastructure, has the same ideological origin.
- The same causes are behind such economic vulnerabilities as the preva-

lence of just-in-time inventory systems—which will mean immediate shortages in production in the event of a pandemic-induced shutdown of transportation—a point recently emphasized by Dr. Osterholm—has the same origin.

Global Biological Holocaust

Our record on this matter goes back to physical economist Lyndon LaRouche's 1973 warning of the inevitable onset of a global biological holocaust resulting from the effects in Third World nations of the early phases of that mid-1960s cultural paradigm shift. Policies such as the replacement of village-scale agriculture with exportable mono-crop production in impoverished regions of Africa, temporarily supporting displaced populations with a flood of PL-480 food aid, were the sort of thing to be noted. Behind this came a crushing burden of debt service requirements, and the inevitable International Monetary Fund austerity programs. In the effects of those conditions on already impoverished and often deeply demoralized populations, could be found the conditions for the outbreak of old and new forms of pandemic disease.

LaRouche's associates sounded the warning in 1974 through the formation of the Fusion Energy Foundation's global Biological Holocaust Task Force. The appalling 1973 famine in the African Sahel, when this once self-sufficient region was struck by one of

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Senate Proposes \$3.9 Billion To Fight Avian Flu

The proposal by Senate leaders Democrat Harry Reid and Republican Bill Frist, to appropriate \$3.9 billion to fight avian flu, is a move in the right direction. But don't get too excited yet: Some \$3.1 billion of it is reported to be allocated to build U.S. stocks of the antiviral Tamiflu, in order to have enough for 50 percent of the U.S. population. That comes to \$22 per person for 140 million Americans for a drug that is not certain to protect against the coming flu. How far is the other \$0.8 billion going to go in face of a pandemic that could be more severe than the 1918 Spanish flu,

which killed 40 to 50 million?

The proposal was announced on Sept. 29 by Democrat Tom Harkin of Iowa and backed by Senators Harry Reid, Barack Obama, Ted Kennedy, and Evan Bayh, as an amendment to a \$50 billion-plus emergency Defense Appropriation for Iraq, about to come before the Senate. Republican Majority leader Frist endorsed the effort in a joint appearance with Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid on ABC-TV's "Nightline," Sept. 29. Key points include:

- Double global surveillance of avian flu;

- Restore Bush's \$122 million budget cuts to local and state public health departments and emergency preparedness activities;

- Increase stockpiles of the Tamiflu antiviral to provide for 50 percent of the population;

- Build up and strengthen vaccine infrastructure;

- Provide new resources for outreach and education.

All the points are necessary, but they don't even begin to face the requirements of a global pandemic that could strike as early as this flu season.

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its periodic droughts, was a harbinger of worse to come.

The appearance of HIV/AIDS in epidemic form in parts of Africa in the mid-1980s, became the occasion for LaRouche's call for a crash mobilization of scientific resources to defeat this deadly threat to the whole human race. LaRouche called for a Manhattan Project-style mobilization of both existing and frontier resources of biomedical research, with a special emphasis on pursuing unexplored pathways, such as some promising results in optical biophysics applications spun off from military-related research. The response of then Surgeon General C. Everett Koop was to argue that we could not afford it.

In 1986-1987, the Fusion Energy Foundation conducted a proof-of-principle experiment in the efficacy of eliminating flying locusts by use of appropriately tuned directed-energy beams. That approach to solving the locust crisis then devastating West Africa and surrounding locations was added to LaRouche's call for mobilization against biological holocaust.

The trend of culturally dictated negligence of the need for scientific mobilization for defense of human life, from the failure to implement the response to Hurricane Betsy launched under President Johnson, through disregard for our own and others' validated warnings of a pending Sahel crisis, through our warnings on the subject of the global "AIDS" pandemic during the early 1980s, and the horrifying negligence of the Cheney-Bush administration in failing to prepare for the clear threat from "Katrina" are now expressed in the most terrifying of all such threats of pandemics, pestilences, and related categories of "New Dark Age"-like calamities today.

The mid-1960s paradigm shift, away from science-driven approaches to serving the common aims of mankind, is the problem. It's time to face this deeply embedded error in our cultural outlook, to change it, and to have the courage to tell others to do the same.

—Laurence Hecht
Oct. 1, 2005