

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

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“Democracies Respond Best to Crises”
Ambassador Edward T. McMullen, Jr.

Throughout the global COVID-19 crisis, Switzerland and the United States have shown that it is democracies that respond best to crises. Democracies guard liberty and freedom by protecting health and safety through transparency. Democracies do what you see both of our great nations doing – taking care of our people and sharing information and resources to help others fight the global pandemic.

The United States moved quickly to take aggressive action at home and abroad when this virus first emerged. We were one of the first countries to help the Chinese people when reports emerged from Wuhan of an outbreak. In early January, the United States government offered immediate technical assistance to the Chinese Centers for Disease Control. In the first week of February, when China was the epicenter of COVID-19, United States charities and non-profit organizations delivered more than 17 tons of high-quality medical supplies donated by the American people to help keep Chinese health care workers safe. We initially pledged \$100 million in assistance to countries to fight what would become a pandemic. This included an offer to China, which was declined, but we continue to offer assistance to the people of China. The same offer was made to Iran, but they too declined assistance.

President Trump led from the front, restricting travel to the United States, discouraging Americans from traveling abroad, and repatriating our citizens overseas, in order to limit the global COVID-19 spread. Early intervention has been key to the results we are starting to see today in flattening the curve in the United States. Similar early action by other countries affected, including the country of origin, would have helped to contain this devastating global pandemic. The White House Coronavirus Task Force is an effective hub for convening medical, scientific, government, and health industry experts to share information across public and private sectors and with the press, perhaps a model for others in future crises.

These public and private collaborations include many between U.S. and Swiss businesses and researchers. Innovative private companies are working together to find solutions to this terrible pandemic, once again proving the efficacy of our free market economies. A few examples: U.S. company Huntsman Corporation is answering calls for help in the fight against COVID-19, producing 50 tons of hand sanitizer at its location in Monthey to donate to hospitals & pharmacies in Switzerland that are facing shortages. Swiss Technology Award Winner HeiQ Materials is working with U.S. apparel company Kayser Roth to adopt HeiQ's antiviral textile treatment, which proves effective against coronavirus, for a new

protective glove. Novartis, Roche, and other life sciences companies, and the U.S. Gates Foundation have also joined forces to develop vaccines, diagnostics, and treatment for COVID-19.

The United States is also providing unequalled assistance to countries around the world, demonstrating once again that we are the world's leader in health and humanitarian aid.

Our response now far surpasses our initial \$100 million pledge. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the U.S. government has committed nearly \$500 million in assistance. This funding is improving public health education, protecting healthcare facilities, and increasing laboratory, disease-surveillance, and rapid-response capacity in more than 60 of the world's most at risk countries. The United States enthusiastically welcomes high-quality, transparent, no-strings-attached contributions from other donors to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Our assistance will help provide lasting, long-term institutional benefits to years to come.

The U.S. has also been the single largest funder of the World Health Organization (WHO) since its founding in 1948. Our citizens gave more than \$400 million to the institution in 2019 – nearly double the second-largest contribution and more than the next three contributors combined. With this generosity comes the responsibility to ensure accountability. When it became clear the WHO failed in its duty to ensure transparency and early dissemination of information on the COVID-19 outbreak, President Trump temporarily halted our funding. For now, the United States is directly contributing to countries in need with a current commitment of nearly \$500 million. We are currently reviewing the WHO's mismanagement of the coronavirus outbreak, which has cost hundreds of thousands of lives – including here in Switzerland - and inflicted widespread economic damage on the world.

Those who would assert this diminishes U.S. leadership on global health are misguided. For more than five decades, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health security. We built the foundation upon which the global health system is based, contributing more than \$140 billion in global health assistance in the 21st Century alone. Our holistic approach is helping people around the world through the generosity of private businesses, nonprofit groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, and individuals, as well as through the ingenuity of our scientists, researchers, and innovators. Together, Americans have provided nearly \$3 billion in donations and assistance, in addition to what the U.S. government has already provided. And as U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein, I am proud to work with the many Swiss companies that are partnering with American companies to innovate new technologies for vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and ventilators.

As we have done throughout history, the United States will continue to aid others during their time of greatest need. Just as the United States has made the world more healthy,

peaceful, and prosperous for generations, so will we lead in defeating our shared pandemic enemy through partnership, cooperation, and sharing of both information and assistance.