

# Remarks by H.E. Dmitry Polyanskiy, First Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations

Thank you very much, distinguished colleagues. Thank you, Mrs. LaRouche, for your very interesting presentation; there are a lot of things to process, and I am sure we will do it. I am a diplomat as you know, and being a diplomat implies a little bit different way of speaking, so I can add to your presentation a couple of observations from a political and diplomatic perspective.

It is absolutely sure that COVID-19 has created profoundly serious problems for the whole of mankind. The most important of which is saving lives, ensuring our common security, bio-medical safety, and the preservation of human environments which should be comfortable and pose no threats to life and health. It has become absolutely clear that no state, no matter how powerful and wealthy it is, has all the tools to fight the pandemic. Everyone had to introduce drastic measures that can be potentially harmful to the national economy, to contain the epidemic. We do not know yet the scope of these consequences that most of the countries of the world will face; it is still to be calculated. So far, after almost half a year since we first heard about the coronavirus, no one has the vaccine; and no one has the efficient treatment proposals, so far. We absolutely can win, but this is not the time of blaming and stigmatization. It is the time of cooperation and supporting each other. It is also not the time of contests—who did what, and who was more successful than others. It is not a beauty contest. It is really time to help, to share experiences, and to listen to each other, and to find ways to work together to face this unprecedented



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challenge in modern times for the whole of mankind.

## Russia's Response to the Pandemic

Russia is ready to face this challenge together with our partners. That is why, while taking all the necessary measures to combat the coronavirus at a national level, we also believe that is our duty to provide assistance to the others, to our partners. So, when we were still at the very early stage of the spread of coronavirus, at the beginning of February, we donated

items of personal protective equipment and medical supplies to China, which was very severely affected at this time. Teams of Russian doctors and virology experts were also sent to Italy and Serbia, which countries were in a more advanced stage of pandemic at that time.

Now my country is also facing a large struggle in combatting the pandemic. That is why we now also welcome any assistance that can be rendered to my country, and we cooperate in this regard with many



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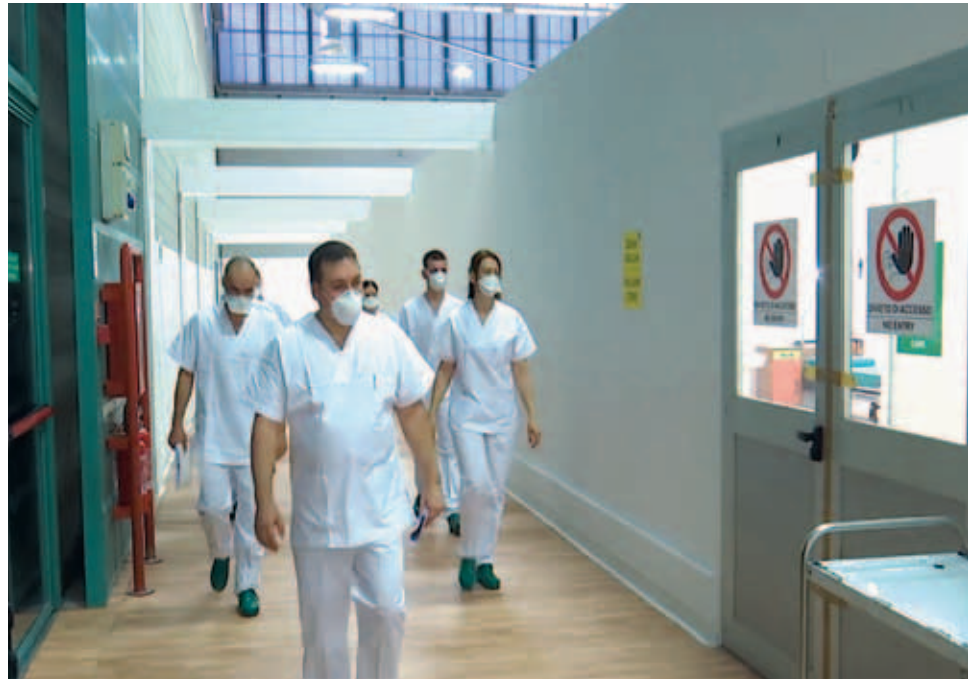
Russian doctors donning personal protective equipment in Italy.

countries—with China, with European states, with the United States. As you know, early in April we delivered a planeload of humanitarian aid to New York, and we said this was done with open hearts, and we would accept any assistance we deem necessary at a later stage, which we already understood at this time we would inevitably face. That is how cooperation is organized. Again, it is not a beauty contest; it is not a situation when somebody says we succeeded, and somebody failed the exam. It is not the time for this. It is the time to display readiness to render assistance and to give a helping hand. That is how all the responsible global actors should behave.

Now, when the situation in China started to stabilize, China was actually helping the whole of the world, including Russia, and we welcome very much this help. We think it is normal. Recently, a number of African states addressed Russia, asking for help in combatting the pandemic. We are considering these demands in Moscow, and I am absolutely sure that we will come to their rescue at a later stage when we expect to be making major breakthroughs in our fight with the pandemic. That is what we are doing right now. It is also particularly important to point out that we are convinced that the response to this global threat should also be global. It would be a mistake to fragment and limit matters to within our national borders.

### **Pivotal Role of the WHO**

We are absolutely convinced that the United Nations must play a pivotal role here. It is important that we all support the WHO [World Health Organization] as the main specialized UN agency, and help it to coordinate global measures and listen to its recommendations. These past months, the WHO has become the center of all information on the pandemic. I believe that anyone who studies the chronology of its actions, statements, and specific decisions, will be convinced that



Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation

*A team of Russian military doctors begin 'round-the-clock duty with their Italian colleagues, treating coronavirus patients in Bergamo, Italy, April 8, 2020.*

the WHO was efficient. Moreover, the fact that the WHO has played and continues to play a major role in countering the pandemic, is reflected in a recently adopted consensus resolution of the UN General Assembly, and the final declaration of the G20 extraordinary summit. It is also important not to forget about the declaration adopted by the G77 and China, that stresses the coordinating role of the World Health Organization in global efforts. We need to ensure universal medical service coverage through this organization. Again, it is time to be united and not to blame somebody, and not to stigmatize any country because of what it did or did not do. We should really support the WHO; we should make it a pillar of our efforts to combat the coronavirus now.

### **Impact on the Economy**

It is quite clear that the spread of the coronavirus has very badly impacted the economy. Again, I will repeat that it is still difficult to assess the damage and the consequences for economic development of the world and especially certain countries after the pandemic. Of course, the pandemic has also very badly affected business, trade, investments, as well as currency exchange rates. We are still in the middle of it, so we cannot really start rectifying all this damage and

finding workable solutions for this. You also can see that what is happening has increased demand for various products which have become in bigger demand than some countries could make them available. So, it is also time for coordination. We believe that the G20 countries should play this role, and they should be in the driving seat of working out an economic agenda to help all of us establish a common framework for mutual economic responses to reload the world economy after these deep and profound shocks that were caused by the pandemic.

It is also, I will repeat it once again, it is also time for deep and frank solidarity, regardless of political agendas and preferences. We especially need to pay attention to developing countries, which face enormous challenges and should be assisted first and foremost.

I want to mention one more topic in this regard. It is also important that the media and social networks behave in a responsible way because we are mostly speaking about the impact of the coronavirus on the healthcare system and economics. But it has very difficult to assess the damage that is being done to the minds, to the perception of the users; those who are now in self-quarantine. They really are very hungry for any information that is available for them. That is why in this time it is especially important that the mass media exercise restraint and a responsible approach and does not spread fake news and information that has not been verified. The consequences of this can be really very profound. We attach a very large importance to this, and we try in Russia at the national level to combat all this fake news that is being circulated. We try to counter it with information that is really proven to be good and to be reliable for the public.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Human Behavior**

It is also especially important to assess—and this is maybe a question for philosophers—what will be the impact on human behavior? Will we be shaking hands again? Will we be giving each other hugs after the coronavirus is over? Or, will, psychologically, people try to avoid closer contact? Will they still keep social distancing even after the virus is over? Because this might change the way mankind behaves, and this might also have very deep and serious implications for concrete individuals who are more vulnerable maybe and very eager to be embraced by the society, and for socializa-

tion. We need to think about this, and not to go into extremes in this regard; not to change the civilized behavior of mankind.

Another thing is also, we should avoid the situation where the world would totally go online. Now of course these online services have proved to be particularly useful, and they really are in big demand. This is normal; this is very good because it economizes a lot of resources. But it should not substitute for human-to-human contact. I can tell you that in diplomacy, there are a lot of things that can be conducted only through personal contacts. There are a lot of confidential discussions that cannot proceed online. There are a lot of limits even now to sincere communication and discussion of topics, because we cannot so far meet personally, and we have to rely on this electronic means of communication. Again, we should not go to this extreme, because it is very alluring to turn a lot of our activity online, and to organize a lot of meetings without physically looking at each other and feeling the emotions of each other. It is very practical, but it is very wrong. I think we also need to be aware of this trap which can await the world after the pandemic.

### **A Crisis Is Also an Opportunity**

I will not speak any longer. I will be ready to take any questions for the time I am here. I would also like to say in concluding that the Chinese language—China was mentioned here already several times and will be mentioned I am sure many times more. The word “crisis” contains one character which is also “opportunity;” so it is very wise that every crisis is also an opportunity, not only a challenge. So, we must come out even stronger out of this crisis, and we must work together and forget about certain things that seemed important to us because of some emotion or wrongly interpreted information. We need to see the end; we need to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We need to understand that only cooperation, coordination, and global response are what mankind needs right now. It is not the time for falling out and quarreling, and for finger-pointing and blaming anybody. It is time for helping; it is time to be compassionate; it is time to be generous. It is time really to listen to each other, and to propose common, workable solutions to the world, which is in big need of these solutions. Thank you very much, and I wish a big success to your conference. Thank you.