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SAVING LIVES IN AMERICA, CHINA, AND AROUND THE WORLD

The world is now in the midst of a once-in-a-century global health pandemic that threatens the lives and livelihoods of billions. This coronavirus transcends borders and nationalities, and until a vaccine is found, a cluster of cases in any one country will endanger the health and safety of people everywhere. For this reason, there has rarely been a time in which the fates of the world's nations were so clearly linked and where American leadership and purposeful international coordination were so urgently required.

The most urgent task before us is to mount a much more effective campaign here at home at the local, state, and federal levels that stops the spread of the disease and protects our most vulnerable populations. In addition to addressing our own shortcomings, the United States must simultaneously work with allies and friends to meet the common coronavirus challenge together and lead a broader global effort to contain and defeat the virus abroad, particularly in developing countries in Africa, Latin America and other parts of Asia that will otherwise be ravaged by the disease.

No effort against the coronavirus – whether to save American lives at home or combat the disease abroad -- will be successful without some degree of cooperation between the United States and China. China's factories can make the protective gear and medicines needed to fight the virus; its medical personnel can share their valuable clinical experience in treating it; and its scientists can work with ours to develop the vaccine urgently needed to vanquish it. Through forums like the G-20, the United States can work to develop a framework for a shared global response that draws China and others together in sharing relevant scientific data; comparing best medical practices; aligning efforts to step up production and distribution of medical supplies; and coordinating funds and clinical trials for vaccine and treatment research, testing, production, and distribution. The goal should be to eliminate this disease at home and abroad at a cost that is affordable to all.

Despite recent progress against the disease, China has much to answer for in its response to the coronavirus: its initial coverup, its continuing lack of transparency, its failure to cooperate fully with U.S. and international medical authorities, and its blatant propaganda campaign to shift the blame for the crisis to the United States. It is possible that future revelations will raise more questions. Notwithstanding this, we the undersigned believe that the logic for cooperation is compelling.

Recent steps taken in Washington and Beijing suggest that both governments appreciate the significance of this moment and are taking some initial steps together. The purpose of this statement is to encourage further steps in that direction and to show

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that there is broad bipartisan support for such cooperation. It is in that spirit that this statement is offered.

The kind of cooperation we are promoting has precedent: during the height of the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union worked together to vaccinate the entire world against smallpox. It is true that the United States and China are increasingly in competition and have serious differences in interests and values. But America need not concede its interests or values, or condone China's handling of the crisis, to cooperate on coronavirus. Nor should such differences impede cooperation among local governments, NGOs, corporations, scientists, and private citizens on both sides of the Pacific that together form the core of any joint effort.

In time, in order to prevent or prepare for future outbreaks, there will be a need for a global review of the coronavirus pandemic: its origins, the conditions that allowed it to spread, the failure of the institutions tasked with response, and the potential fragility of medical supply chains so critical to the health and safety of billions. But for now, as the pandemic sweeps the globe, the focus should be on finding the resolve to work together to contain and defeat the virus at home and abroad. Millions of lives in both countries and around the world will depend on it.

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