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Security Nexus Report

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCKDOWN AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

By Noel Miranda *

What urges me to write this letter is my sense of wanting to support my country and government in achieving absolute success in controlling and mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

I have been closely observing how this pandemic is being managed globally. As I have also been living in China for three years, I have experienced the unfolding of COVID-19 in China, right up to the stages of Lockdown order in Wuhan and the entire Hubei Province, and China-wide strict restrictions.

Our advantage today is that we are now more aware of how some countries succeeded, and some failed or are failing. China had two ingredients that made the difference in their lockdown success—these are, 1) central authoritative and people-caring leadership, and 2) all-out peoples' selflessness—supporting the same end/s shared by the leaders and the people.

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It is proper to note that the lack of understanding of the key principles of COVID-19 mitigation could prevail in some countries attempting to initiate their mitigation plans, as many were caught unprepared- i.e., relating to social distancing and lockdown most especially.

Right now, the Philippines is implementing lockdown, but with the consequence of countering its intention to stop this pandemic by putting people in close-contact situations. People are being crowded together in vehicles and lines and in enclosed spaces for prolonged periods of time, and where contacts (touching IDs, checking peoples' temperatures, etc.) have increased several folds due to checkpoints procedures. Lockdown and social distancing are two integrated principles that can break the chain of transmission and stop this pandemic if they are made to synergize and not allowed to contradict each other. In the absence of an effective and safe vaccine that can be produced in large quantities for global use, social distancing that is forced under a lockdown measure is our best weapon to overcome this epidemic- if properly done. The target for breaking virus transmission in a population is to vaccinate at least 70% of the entire susceptible population (up to 90% is best). This is effective "Herd Immunity." Social Distancing-Lockdown can achieve "Herd Protection" by preventing close contact among >70% of the affected population. It is, therefore, our "vaccine" at this critical moment.

Enforcing wide-scale lockdowns with effective social distancing (PEOPLE STAYING HOME), and implemented sustainably in a manner that will avoid global economic peril will bring about success.

I have outlined the modalities of implementation of Lockdown and Social Distancing (TWO SYNERGIZING APPROACHES - DALAWA MAGKABALIKAT).

1. Lockdown and Social Distancing must go hand and hand- Consistently and Always. Lockdown does not mean- do not escape. Its aim is "Forced Distancing through a Stay-Home Mindset"

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2. Lockdown is done by defined geographic boundaries (where no one gets out or in and with more than 70% of the people being forced to Stay Home)- The Luzon Lockdown is a good strategy, but better is an entire-country lockdown.
3. The critical parameter and timeframe to observe is: NO ONE SHOULD BE OUTSIDE FOR 2 WEEKS. Then repeatedly monitor for COVID cases. Then extend another two weeks. (Think there is war/violence for two weeks etc.)
4. Only Emergency Forces are outside (medics, police, military, utility maintenance, etc.)
5. Social distancing is fully enforced
 - a. Those providing services would have to carry out their functions with appropriate infection control guidelines
 - b. NO police checkpoints necessary. Only police patrols to monitor unnecessary movements
 - c. NO public transportation allowed (no trains, buses, jeepneys, taxis, tricycles, vans, pickups)
 - d. Limit transport with vehicle monitoring by GPS
 - e. NO air or sea travel
 - f. All means for people to come near each other or together should be prevented
 - g. Allow only 5 DAYS for FINAL MOVEMENT of people\
6. Operations/businesses are limited to essential services (food, water, communication, power, sanitation, security, health/medical)
 - a. Including all critical supply chain providers (food, medicines, repair/maintenance)
 - b. These entities are under strict monitoring
 - c. NO government transactions (all affected must be supported by government and whole-of-society)
7. Movement of people within the lockdown zone is limited (only for essential purposes), and there may be schedules
 - a. COVID suspected or infected households or persons are under strict home quarantine (under BHERT oversight)
 - b. The rest of the community are able to move within the zone, However:

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- c. This requires all means to prevent people from needing to move outside their homes/dwellings
- d. Food and supplies delivered to homes are always allowed and sustained (with police and military support)
- e. Medical home visits allowed (with military escort)
- f. Work from home for all workers
- g. Suspend all schooling (No electronic schooling for undergraduates, as this is not feasible for all)
- h. ONLY essential movements allowed- health workers, utility engineers, security agencies of critical services and residential establishments, supply chain workers, etc. (these will be issued GPS tracking devices that can record temperature, or monitored by scanning QR code, etc.)
- i. Those who will lose livelihood and daily wages are to be given welfare support. Local governments must be quick to classify these people and provide badly needed support

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