

Message

From: [redacted] /O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=D21258C9254E4E32942F15C21EE78F6F [redacted]
Sent: 03/02/2020 12:06:31
To: [redacted] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=731ae41932914a2b90daa92ec8cc56dd [redacted]
Subject: FW: SofS meeting with FCO SofS and CX

From: [redacted]
Sent: 03 February 2020 11:00
To: Reed, Emma <Emma.Reed@dhsc.gov.uk>; Dodds, Kevin <Kevin.Dodds@dhsc.gov.uk>; Baxter, Tim <tim.baxter@dhsc.gov.uk>; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk
Cc: Senior Copylist <Senior_Copylist@dhsc.gov.uk>; WN-CoVspoc <WN-CoVspoc@dhsc.gov.uk>; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk; [redacted]@dhsc.gov.uk
Subject: SofS meeting with FCO SofS and CX

All,

Please see the below for a quick informal readout from SofS's meeting with the CMO, CX and FCO SofS on travel restrictions to China this morning. FCO will be sharing a fuller readout. Please treat sensitively.

- CMO commented on the two most likely outcomes, that China successfully contain the virus and that we isolate and treat individual persons with symptoms in the UK as and when they appear. However there is another likely option where the disease spreads, and when a travel ban (implemented by the UK alone or in conjunction with others) could help delaying the spread but would not make this inevitable. A travel ban is most likely to only provide a 2 week delay of spread – which would not be insignificant. CMO commented that the UK has not seen a model of how successful the US think that their ban will be. CMO commented that a self-imposed Chinese travel ban would be more beneficial (but commented that this would not be in their interests to impose).
- FCO SofS asked whether the UK is already behind the curve (and therefore a ban would not be significantly helpful) and whether the Coronavirus spread is likely to fizzle out independently in any case. CMO thought that this was unlikely at the current rate of spread and commented that the doubling rate is currently about 5 days.
- FCO SofS asked how helpful the two week delay would be for the NHS. CMO commented that if there were no negatives to the travel ban then this could be hugely helpful, but that he was unsure on whether this would be proportionate for the economic disruption imposed.
- CX commented that it's tricky to determine the economic impact. When SARS broke out China was 4% of the global economy, currently China is 17% with the UK dependant on a several imports (notably some medicines). CX would not wish to be the first country to do so given the diplomatic impact.
- SofS commented that Germany are supportive of taking action, that the French health Department is less so but are facing pressure from the centre. SofS commented that our voice would be strong within European debate and that a conversation is needed with G7 countries and other European countries.
- CX commented on the need to understand the situation of current health services in China (FCO SofS commented that this is near impossible to determine) and the links with Hong Kong. I.e we would need to understand the impact on British citizens in Hong Kong given the impact on freedom of movement. SofS commented on the current pressure to close the border.
- SofS mentioned the informal European council discussion on Coronavirus (potentially on Friday), FCO SofS agreed that we should co-operate and take part. **Health SofS could attend if needed.**

- FCO SofS commented that he will discuss our travel advice options with other countries. The agreed line will be that the UK is grappling with the pros and cons and actively considering whether we should ban travel to China but would be interested in the views of other countries.
- SofS commented that he prefers the nuanced approach of preventing Chinese immigration to the UK (dependant on HO views) rather than advising others to not travel to China.
- It was commented that advising people against travel to china would have a knock on effect to airlines cancelling flights.
- CX commented on the need for HO views on border control and issuing visas. **Health SofS to reach out to Ho SofS on her views ahead of G7 call this afternoon.** *Katie is setting up a call prior to the G7 call this afternoon, SofS has asked for officials to attend. Details to follow.*
- CMO asked that HMT work up an economic model of the impact.

Let me know if any questions.

Thanks,

PD



Department
of Health &
Social Care

PD

Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

E: PD @dhsc.gov.uk T: Irrelevant & M: Personal Data

39 Victoria St, Westminster, SW1H 0EU

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