Vietnam: SARS

Six years into Vietnam you found yourself *in the middle of SARS* - thereby cementing a close relationship with another communist regime, the CCP. The number of Covid Conspirators who cut their teeth on SARS *is* striking - yourself, Lipkin, Dwyer, Embarek, Shi, Holmes, Daszak - to name a few - all rusted-on CCP fans - who are *taking the politics out*.

As you say, through SARS, you *got to know China's CDC very well* - you count George Gao, the head of China's CDC, as an *old friend*.

By 2014, during the pivot to China, you were praising the CCP openly, saying: *Ten years ago, China blocked access. But now China is transparent and superb* - which is weird language to describe a health regime that was simultaneously involved in the systemic organ-harvesting of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience.

But you were *very, very happy(?)* to turn a blind-eye to that?

Because if you did, you were allowed a seat amongst the power-elites of totalitarian countries? Where big picture stuff can/*does still happen*?

In the clinic - you felt too *downstream* - dealing with patients who are the results of something else - you felt helpless. A colleague/friend, Carlo Urbani contracted SARS in Hanoi as part of an outbreak started by Johnny Chen on Feb 28, a Chinese/American businessman, who caught it from Liu Jianlun, a doctor from from Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hospital in Guangdong, who was the index case in Hong Kong. Urbani was the first WHO official to identify the new respiratory disease as SARS. He experienced symptoms whilst on a flight to Thailand and died in a hospital there. It's a story you frequently recount in moving speeches (apart from the Thailand bit - your version has him quarantining the hospital in Vietnam, with himself locked inside, which stopped the spread of the disease). This tragic experience lead you to conclude:

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...you can (only) do so much as a doctor or a nurse. It makes you question your whole professionalism. It makes you question why you're there and why you're in the hospital looking after people.

You needed to get *upstream* - with the big boys - where things *happen*. That first exercise of *real* power was an adrenaline rush - instantly addictive - you revelled in the surge of this *incredibly strong central CDC in China* taking large-scale action. It affirms in your mind: centralized government *gets shit done*. It's a constant theme in your speeches. As you say with Singapore:

(TS 10:20) *You may or may not like the political system - but never-the-less - enormous progress over time.*

From SARS the key lesson you learned is: in a crisis, act fast - *don't wait for the data*. That's quite radical for a scientist. Especially bearing in mind we don't know the origin of SARS-1. Which is something i'm dying to ask you - you would know:

We know SARS escaped post-1st outbreak 6 times from labs. Did it escape 7 times?

My impression is the the nitty-gritty of data and science is not your bag - you'd rather talk about cricket? Or, to a smaller audience, the big-power-overarching politics of science - the secret stuff - like SARS - like how to get societies to accept our entrenchment as the *authority-on-everything*.

If that is the quest, then yes, you *are* the chosen one. The brilliant general in *The War on Freedom*.

The goal in this war, as you say, is to *change the fundamentals* *... through locking-down and* ***behaviour change*** *and .. particularly vaccines* - all geared towards making individuals subservient to the state. This requires the impost of draconian/*new normal* rules - best enforced by a centralized system of government.

The paradox, as you impressed upon the DI interviewer, is that for those orchestrating the above *... there are no rules* - *there are no textbooks to follow here* - *these are judgment calls made in the very best faith.*

That's the thing about totalitarianism - yes it has its dark-side - but it offers *such hope* for what can be achieved in the One Health sphere - by virtue of this paradoxical dynamic: enforcement of rules - by a benevolent, *free* overlord - unencumbered by rules. It's just more effective like that. (Ask the experts if you don't believe me.)

In Vietnam, your mind - from *a place of intense individuality* - solidified ideas of the *global-good*. Calculated how best to manifest them.

Totalitarianism made sense - the best system to institute your ambitious plan to *change the fundamentals*.

Reminds me a little of Julius Caesar - another man with a strong sense of individual destiny who realized early he needed a base of monied, militaried forces - to *change-the-world*.

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