

White House Oval Office [via NewsNation]

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12:00:11 p.m.

2 minutes and 24 seconds

SWAPNA VENUGOPAL RAMASWAMY: What do you think about the handling of the hantavirus by the U.S.?

PRESIDENT DOANLD TRUMP: I think —

RAMASWAMY: Do you regret withdrawing from the WHO given that —

TRUMP: — no. I'm glad. So we were paying the World Health Organization \$500 million a year. Look, it's a lot of money. But in the overall scope, it's not that much, but it's a lot of money. And we weren't being treated well, and they were making the wrong diagnoses. I was the one that said it came from Wuhan. They didn't say that. They refused to say that because they were totally owned by China. So, I was saying it came from Wuhan. They didn't want to say that. Now it's turned out, I think it's been conclusive that it came from Wuhan. But I said that on the first day because I saw satellite pictures with body bags all over Wuhan, literally all over Wuhan. So, I said that they lied to me or they didn't know. So, we were paying for, let's say, 350 million people. We were paying \$500 million a year to the World Health Organization. That's a lot of money. What the hell are they going to do with that kind of money? And China is paying \$39 million a year for 1.4 billion people. So, I said, you know, you got your story wrong because we should be paying about \$10 million not 500 million, and they were willing to negotiate. But it was so popular when I pulled out, they gave us all the wrong information on Covid. They were totally wrong. And I looked today, and I saw the same doctor that was there — he's a good politician. I don't know how the hell he kept his job, but he was there telling us about this. Now, the one thing with this one is that it's much harder to catch, and we've had it for a long. We've — it's been around for a long time. People are very familiar with it. So, you know, I hope it's fine. All I can do is everything that a president can do, which is some which is actually somewhat limited. But — but it seems like it is not easy to spread. In fact, it's, in certain ways, very hard to spread. It's been — we've — we've lived with it for years, many years. And we think we're in very good shape. We're very careful. And Nebraska has done a fantastic job. They have a — a — a place there that. Those doctors are unbelievable. The job they've done.

(...)

12:14:16 p.m.

2 minutes and 7 seconds

RAMASWAMY: What do you say to infectious diseases experts who say they are worried the country may not be prepared to deal with something like hantavirus because of all the HHS, you know, funding and staffing cuts?

TRUMP: Well, I think we take care of that. Doc, do you want to answer that?

CMS ADMINISTRATOR DR. MEHMET OZ: It's just not true. Jay Bhattacharya has taken this task on. Secretary Kennedy is involved with them. You can speak to him perhaps even better than best in the room, but the country is prepared and the CDC is focused on it. And — and the agency is — is well aware of the opportunities to actually treat this problem, not just try to prevent it in the future, but treat it if it happens now. Secretary.

HHS SECRETARY ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.: Yeah. I mean, we've had CDC teams on it from day one. I was speaking with the University of Nebraska since the second day of the outbreak. I was speaking with governor of Nebraska. We had a CDC team at Tenerife. We had airplanes ready to take the patients — the 17 patients off the vessel and transport — two of them into Atlanta. One of those was symptomatic. They are in a biocontainment lab in Atlanta. The other 16 are now in Nebraska. One of them is symptomatic. He is in the biocontainment lab. The other ones are being tested and supervised and given plans for going home. We have this under control and we're not worried about it.

RAMASWAMY: But the CDC took four days after the WH issued its — you know, alert. Why was it — why — why did it take the U.S. four days to issue an alert?

KENNEDY: It's not true. We — as soon as we determine that the virus was out there, we issued an alert. The alert means nothing.

TRUMP: They acted very quickly. I saw the alert.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

TRUMP: Give me — give me a break. They acted very, very quickly. And it looks like — and, you know, you can't bet anybody's life on it, but it looks like it's just a disease that we've had around in a very small way for a long time. Not a good one to catch because, you know, it's a very severe disease if you catch it, but it's very hard to catch.