

Swine Flu in Manila

God's silences are His answers. If we only take as answers those that are visible to our senses, we are in a very elementary condition of grace.
(Oswald Chambers)

...Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Matt 6:25 (ESV)



The Department of Health (DOH) is currently searching for 50 people who were guests at a wedding in Zambales two weeks ago that two Taiwanese nationals infected with Influenza A (H1N1) also attended.

The two patients arrived in the Philippines on May 15 and flew back to Taipei on May 20. Duque said the DOH is coordinating with concerned local government units to track down the guests and advised them to observe self-quarantine.

On June 3, De La Salle University announced the suspension of classes for 10 days after a foreign exchange student tested positive for swine flu. The 21-year-old female student was

the 22nd patient to test positive for swine flu in the Philippines since the first case was announced on May 21. Since May 1, the DOH has monitored 111 travelers who manifested symptoms after visiting A (H1N1)-affected countries. Of this figures, 15 cases still have pending laboratory results.

Thermal scanning, a thing of the past?

Through all this, the DOH is mulling whether or not thermal scanning is an effective tool in warding off the virus. Duque admitted he now hardly knew of any nation that uses thermal scanner to screen passengers for fever.

"It's useless now. I've been to World Health Organization (WHO) office in Geneva, they are not using thermal scanning, no one was giving out alert notice or health declaration notice. It was the same in the biggest airport hub in Amsterdam," he said. The DOH, Duque claimed, is thinking of shifting to other strategy like "health alert" or massive information drive to prevent the virus from coming in.

"We'll talk about it because we might need to shift out resources to more effective strategy. The case fatality rate of A (H1N1) worldwide is very low – less than one percent. That means for every 1,000 affected individuals, 0.1 dies. And these are the ones who have co-morbidity or other illnesses like diabetes and hypertension. Those who are immuno-compromised or weak body resistance," he added.

The department is planning to coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs to check how precautionary measures against the disease is being implemented among American soldiers who are in the country for the Balikatan exercises.



Philippine health workers hand out health declaration forms and notices to arriving airline passengers to keep them aware of the effects of swine flu. (AP Photo/Bullit Marquez)



For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. Habbakuk 2:1

2008 DISASTER DATA

The human and economic losses caused by natural disasters in 2008 were devastating. More than 235,000 people were killed, 214 million people were affected and economic costs were 190 billion US\$. In 2008, 354 natural disasters were recorded in the EM-DAT database, which is less than the 2000-2007 yearly average number of 397. The death toll was three times higher than the annual average of 66,813 for 2000-2007, mainly caused by two major events: Cyclone Nargis which killed 138,366 people in Myanmar and the Sichuan earthquake in China which caused the deaths of 87,476 people.

Human impact in 2008: 10 MOST AFFECTED COUNTRIES

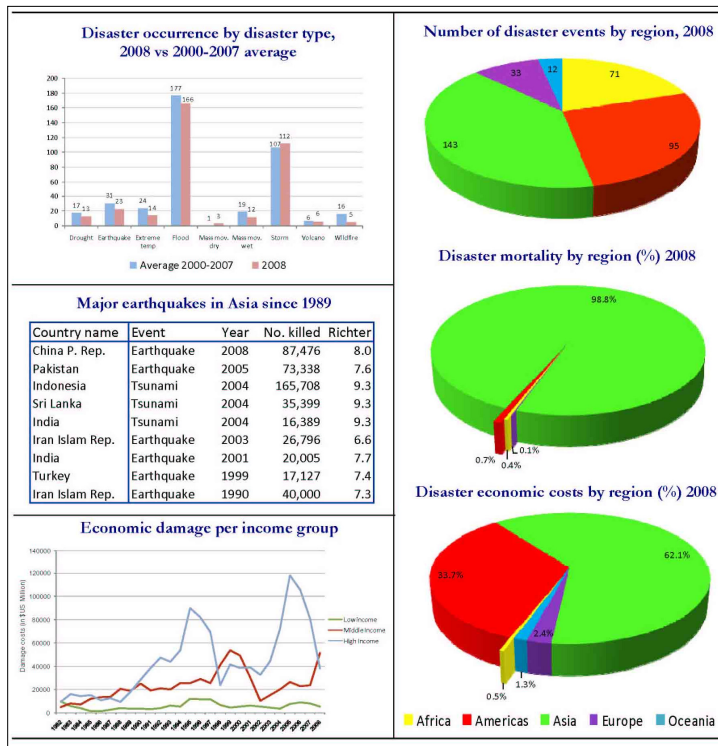
NO. OF PEOPLE KILLED		NO. OF PEOPLE AFFECTED (Million)	
Myanmar	138,	China	133.3
China	88,4	India	14.0
India	1,80	United	13.4
Afghanistan	1,31	Thailand	11.6
Philippines	959	Philippines	8.5
Haiti	698	Ethiopia	6.5
Viet Nam	411	Somalia	3.4
United States	303	Tajikistan	2.8
Pakistan	249	Myanmar	2.4
Brazil	203	Brazil	1.8



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Disaster costs in 2008 were more than twice the US\$82 billion annual average for 2000 -2007 and were mainly attributed to the Sichuan earthquake in China (US\$85 billion) and hurricane Ike in the U.S. (US\$30 billion). **Asia remained the most affected continent. Nine of the top 10 countries with the highest number of disaster-related deaths were in Asia.**



While China, the Philippines, the U.S. and Indonesia reported the largest number of natural disasters, Angola, Tajikistan, Djibouti & Somalia topped the list of number of victims per 100,000 inhabitants. In 2008 once again, large populations were affected by natural disasters.

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