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TECH

Bill Gates Has Regrets

Years before the Covid-19 pandemic, the billionaire tried to warn global leaders of the threat from new infectious diseases. Few listened. 'I feel terrible.'



Bill Gates last fall in Lyon, France. JEFF PACHOUD/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES



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glass vials?” he said. “You may think that’s a simple part of it, but nobody’s ever made 7 billion vaccines.”

He discusses the evolving science of the pandemic with U.S. and world leaders. In TV interviews and [his blog posts](#), he explains the logic behind lockdowns to slow the spread of the virus and the slow path to reopening commerce and schools. “Covid-19 has started behaving a lot like the once-in-a-century pathogen we’ve been worried about,” Mr. Gates wrote in a February article for the New England Journal of Medicine.

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His high profile during the pandemic has also made him a [target of conspiracy theories](#) and antivaccine groups.



The campus of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle.

PHOTO: ELAINE THOMPSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

the foundation help accelerate trials?

The foundation began committing funds to kick-start development of treatments and vaccines for the new coronavirus.

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Bill Gates and a child getting a vaccine against diarrhea at the Ahentia Health Centre in Ghana in 2013.

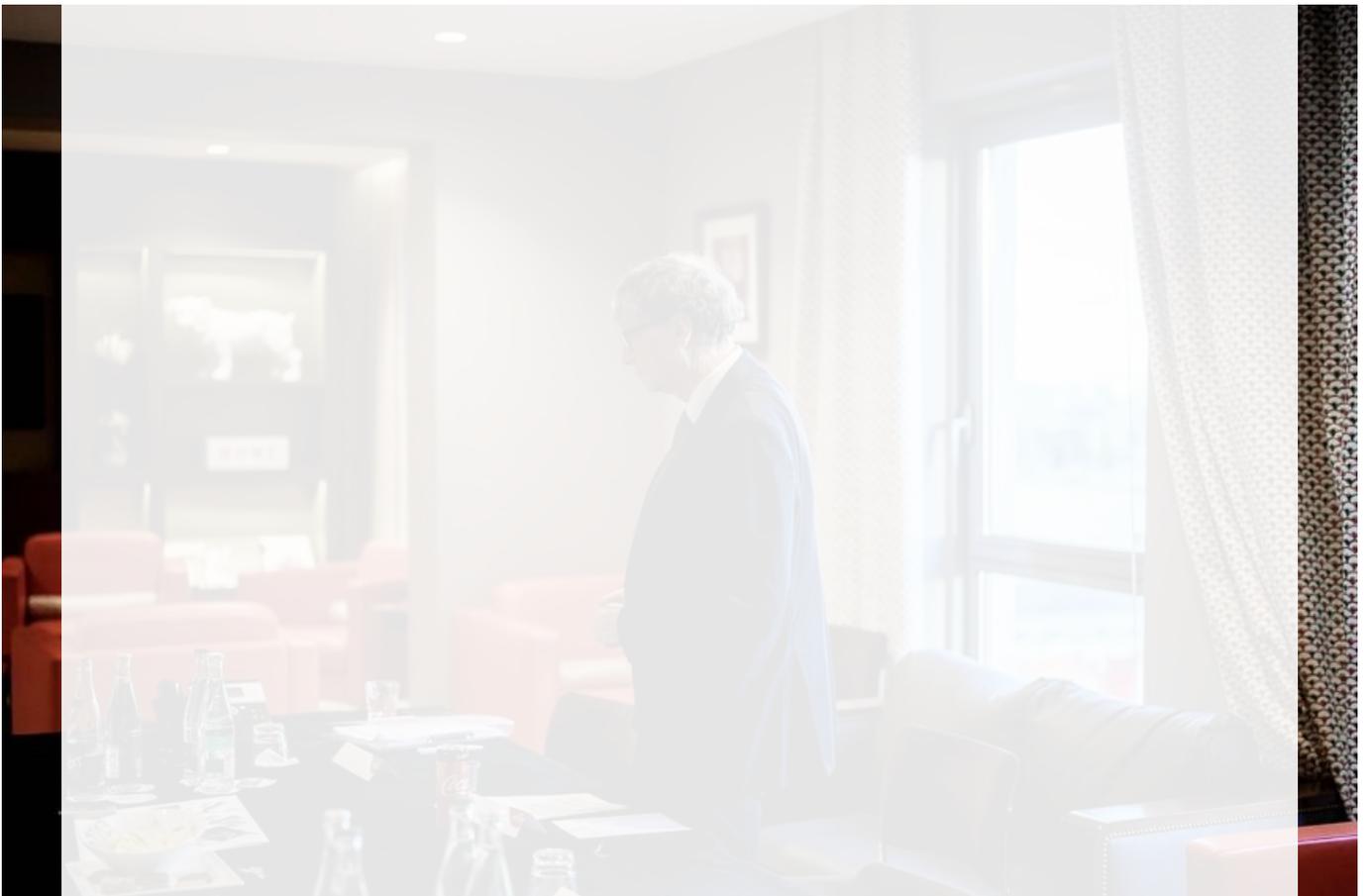
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Mr. Gates hosted a meeting of epidemiologists and global health experts in mid-February. The likelihood of Covid-19 being contained in China was probably less than 25%, he told his senior staff after hearing the experts, people close to him said.

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Mr. Gates said the world's efforts to thwart a pandemic "fell short of what ideally would have been done." Looking ahead, he is more optimistic.



Bill Gates during a conference call regarding the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on Oct. 9 last year in Lyon, France.

PHOTO: JEFF PACHOUD/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

"My hope now is that leaders around the world, who are responsible for protecting their citizens, will take what has been learned from this tragedy and invest in systems to prevent future outbreaks," he said.

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Write to Betsy McKay at betsy.mckay@wsj.com

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