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17/SMS09/097

The current global public health crisis, caused by a novel coronavirus disease that was later designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as COVID-19, has caused a global pandemic as over a million people worldwide have been infected and many deaths recorded. Governments, worldwide have imposed stay-at-home rules and closed borders, bringing much of global economy to a grinding halt. The first cases of COVID-19 were reported in late December 2019 in Wuhan, a city in central China that has over 10 million residents. To prevent its spread, the Chinese government imposed a lockdown of Wuhan on January 23 2020. As the Chinese government was waging an unprecedented nationwide campaign against the novel coronavirus, most Western governments apparently did little to brace themselves for a similar public health crisis, nor did they seem interested in reaching out to China for its valuable experiences in combating COVID-19. Unsurprisingly, when faced with the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus in their own borders, these governments appeared poorly prepared. Their authority and legitimacy seem to have suffered considerably from underperformance, while those of Beijing apparently have been significantly enhanced due to its overperformance. However, there have been several conspiracy theories about corona virus generating from suspicions that this virus maybe man made by the Chinese to counter the power of the United States in the international system and rise as the new superpower and hegemon of the international system by being one of the only successful countries to adequately deal with the virus.

The United States, in particular, is widely perceived to be conspicuous in the global fight against COVID-19 for its lack of responsibility and leadership. As the leader of the West, the world’s only superpower, and the self-designated “indispensable nation,” the United States embroiled itself in a war of words with Beijing in March over what is the appropriate name to call the virus. A long list of U.S. officials have been much more concerned with blaming China for the global pandemic than with leading the American people, as well as the West and the rest, in combating the novel coronavirus. Meanwhile, the Trump administration failed to take precautionary steps early on that could have effectively mitigated the spread of COVID-19 within the United States. The West records most of the coronavirus casualties and deaths as Italy, with 3,405 coronavirus deaths, is the country with the most casualties, overtaking China with 3,248 casualties. In spite of lockdown, Italy’s numbers have continued to soar, reaching over 41,035, compared to China, where infections seem to have stabilised at 81,000. Meanwhile, Coronavirus cases, and deaths in the UK began to rise as National Health Service staff worked tirelessly to stem the spread of COVID-19 and treat people who had contracted it. There were shortages of personal protective equipment and masks for health professionals, as well as a lack of testing for health National Health Service staff, though the government emphasised it was working to address that.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on April 9 said that the coronavirus had instigated an economic downturn with many countries in lockdown and the less function of their economic sectors. Companies like Apple revised its revenue guidance, due to a slowdown at manufacturing sites in China as well as reduced demand by Chinese consumers. Also, it has been said that the coronavirus could cost the global economy $2.7 trillion as the economic fallout could include recessions in the U.S., euro-area and Japan, the slowest growth on record in China, and a total of $2.7 trillion in lost output—equivalent to the entire GDP of the U.K.

In conclusion, in light of the glaring gap between international expectations and the actual performance of the West, there is renewed discussion in some corners of the world about the decline of the West in general and the decline of America in particular. Implicit in these declinist predictions is the assumption that China will soon replace the United States as the new role model of responsibility and leadership.