

South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > The Battle with Corona Virus:

The Battle with Corona Virus:

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Sun, 04/19/2020 - 05:12

Paper No. 6564 **Dated 19-April-2020**

BY Kazi Anwarul Masud:(Former Secretary and Ambassador of Bangladesh:)

Best brains of the world are yet to tell us when the world will be free from scourge of Covit-19. But the leaders and highly prized intellectuals are already worried if the institutions created in post-second world war and after the fall of the Berlin Wall would remain intact or even with modification will be recognizable to the global populace who had become used to deal in a certain regulated manner.

Will Joseph Nye's End of History will be considered an illusion and Robert Kagan's The Return of History will be taken more seriously than before. Will Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, vilified by so many, will be put on a pedestal by populists, sectarian minded and majoritarian theocrats as a panacea for the removal of the evils of the world. Writing in the Wall Street Journal Henry Kissinger predicted that The Coronavirus Pandemic Will Forever Alter the World Order. He also advised that the world's democracies need to defend and sustain their Enlightenment values. A global retreat from balancing power with legitimacy will cause the social

contract to disintegrate both domestically and internationally. Yet this millennial issue of legitimacy and power cannot be settled simultaneously with the effort to overcome the Covid-19 plague.

Already the Chinese are portraying their success in plateauing the Covid-19 curve by following strict lockdown of Wuhan province-the origin of the pandemic- which in democratic countries would be characterized as draconian. But then to many who are dead, identified “positive” and living in seclusion and others in lockdown conditions may not be enamored by the by the institutions to which they can appeal if the measures imposed by the authorities appear burdensome. In Hungary Orbán’s power to rule by decree, Marine Le Pen’s Front National’s expansion in votes coupled with Germany’s Alternative for Germany (AFD) and the Dutch far right Party for Freedom in 2010 General Elections won 24 seats making it the third largest party in the country. Another new right wing Dutch political party-FVD--t shocked the establishment, winning the most votes of any party nation-wide in the March 20 2019 elections by becoming the largest in several provincial legislatures.

Dutch voters, wrote The Economist, whose Hegel was shaky turned to Google to work out what the Eurosceptic, climate-change-skeptic foe of immigration was on about, and concluded that he was proclaiming the election a dialectical shift in Dutch history.- Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz writing on internationalizing the Coronavirus crisis has warned that the developing and emerging economies will be ravaged far more by the pandemic than the advanced economies have been. After all, people in lower-income countries tend to live in closer proximity to one another. A higher share of the population suffers from pre-existing health problems that render them more vulnerable to the disease. And these countries’ health systems are even less

prepared to manage an epidemic than those of the advanced economies (which have hardly functioned smoothly). He adds “When people are living hand to mouth in the absence of adequate social protections, a loss of income could mean starvation. Yet these countries cannot replicate the US response, which features (so far) a \$2 trillion economic package that will blow up the fiscal deficit by some 10% of GDP (on top of a pre-pandemic deficit of 5%)”. The world was never fair to all of its inhabitants. In the 15th to early 20th century the European countries through force colonized Latin America, Africa, most of Asia primarily the Indian sub-continent and carried on most brutal extraction of resources from the colonized countries and shipped the resources to the metropolis. While this large scale stealing was going on the colonizers took over the mantle of being more “civilized” than those they held in bondage. Today’s Covid-19 however does not distinguish between the rich and the poor as the death tolls in the US, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, France and several other industrialized countries bear testimony.

One however should not take pleasure from the death and destruction wrought because it is a fight for survival of humanity. No finger pointing will serve any good result or spare some at the expense of others. We have to remind ourselves that we might have entered Orwellian *Nineteen Eighty Four* or his *Animal Farm* or Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* or Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale*. Is it too late to heed Stephen Hawkins’ warning that stupidity and greed will end the human race. Hawkins had also warned us of air pollution which was getting worse by the day. He had advised that a back-up planet was maybe the only way to save ourselves. Hawkins warned the people against pursuing artificial intelligence as it was the wrong time for the pursuit. He feared that people were being exposed to machines all the time, and these machines were becoming more and more

intelligent on one hand, and people more and more stupid on the other. So, the machines control people, and not the other way around as it should be. A replay of the Planet of the Apes.

One may wonder whether corona virus was manufactured by us and somehow the virus escaped the confines of the laboratory. Be it as it may be given the projection that half of the global population may enter the camp of poverty, that in the US alone unemployment may touch more than forty percent mark, that trade may be lost by one third, that the world may enter a period of depression more horrific than the Great Depression of the Thirties. If the financial and political institutions are destroyed, if monetary and fiscal stimulus do not work as intended, if religious differences come to the forefront as the guideline on social distancing is being challenged by orthodox elements in some religions due to the ignorance of the “religion teachers”.

Despite the dystopian darkness seem probable it becomes impossible that the human race that conquered both the land and the space is going to be annihilated by as yet an unknown virus. Today or tomorrow we shall win the battle.

Tags:

Wuhan Virus ^[1]

Category:

Papers ^[2]

Countries:

South Asia (General) ^[3]

Topics:

General ^[4]

Source URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2593>

Links

- [1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/2098>
- [2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>
- [3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/south-asia-general>
- [4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/general>