

COVID-19 – Think Tank Update Asia (15. bis 29. Mai 2020)

SELECTED ARTICLES

[Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on Asia-Europe relations](#)

Source : Asia Europe Journal, Springer.com (19. May 2020)

Yeo Lay Hwee, Director, EU Center

Countries across Asia and Europe are now scrambling to find an exit strategy from the lockdown to re-start their economy and bring life to a certain level of normalcy. In this article, Yeo Lay Hwee elucidates why a multilateral approach is imperative while reopening the economies, and resuming normal trade and investment flows, as without it countries may face another wave of infections without a vaccine in sight. She further elaborates how ASEM could serve as the perfect platform for the two regions to cooperate, share information and experience and prevent the fragmentation of the world in closed blocs.

[Decoding Xi Jinping's Speech at the World Health Assembly](#)

Source : The Diplomat (19. May 2020)

Valérie Niquet, Head of Asia Program, Foundation for Strategic Research

Valérie Niquet analyses the speech of Xi Jinping on May 18 and puts a light on China's lines of defence as well as its weaknesses and priorities for the future. China is trying to transform the perception of COVID-19 being "China made" to a global health emergency "catching the world by surprise," where "races or nationalities are irrelevant." Xi Jinping speech clearly demonstrates how China is trying to regain lost grounds and reassert its leadership or "central position" on the international scene. The terrain lost in Western democracies amid the pandemic will be hard to win back, hence the main target of the speech is the global south and, more specifically, the African continent.

[Rethinking economic coercion as Australia-China relations fracture](#)

Source : East Asia Forum (23. May 2020)

Weihuan Zhou, UNSW

The relation between Australia and China continues to deteriorate amid the US-China 'blame game' over the origins of the COVID-19 outbreak. Despite Australia not supporting the US stance and calling for international cooperation, China has used economic restrictions and measures to retaliate against Australia's reactions in a series of politically sensitive areas. While both governments deny any connection between the trade measures and the COVID-19 investigation, the actions have provoked accusations from Australia of economic coercion by China. In order for the economy to not suffer more, Australia needs to rebuild its economic relation with China and not become a casualty in the crossfire between the two superpowers.

[Responding successfully to COVID-19: A case study of Taiwan's strategy](#)

Source : Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (May 2020)

Anne-Marie Schleich, Former German Diplomat

Taiwan has been credited for responding successfully to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this article, Anne-Marie Schleich analyses the key aspects of Taiwan's fights against this pandemic: an immediate response to the virus outbreak, a stringent coordination of state and private actors, efficiency in contact tracing, a compulsory mask policy, massive increase in the local production of masks, transparency about government's actions and an open information policy. We also gain insights on how Taiwan has used its pandemic strategy and its "Taiwan can help" campaign of mask donations to many countries to enhance its international standing and reduce its diplomatic isolation.

[Agile Governance Crushing COVID-19: Taiwan and South Korea](#)

Source : The Diplomat (22. May 2020)

Mark Manantan, Non-resident fellow National Chengchi University

Mark Manantan elucidates how South Korea's and Taiwan's agile governance can provide concrete solutions in navigating the state of affairs in the current and post-COVID-19 situation. Through collaboration, transparency, and accountability, these two countries have successfully fought the pandemic. As leadership in global health governance remains in limbo, the agile responses of these two countries are spread open for the world to emulate.

[COVID-19 threatens democracy in Southeast Asia](#)

Source : East Asia Forum (25 May 2020)

Murray Hiebert, Bower Group Asia

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected the health and economies of Southeast Asia but also threatened the quasi-democracies in the region. Murray Hiebert outlines the authoritarian policies being introduced in Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar in order to tackle the pandemic. While there is no evidence to prove that these measures are a more effective pandemic response, they are being considered as a threat to the advancement of democracy in the region.

[COVID-19 in Thailand: The Securitization of a Non-traditional Threat](#)

Source : ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore (22 May 2020)

Supalak Ganjanakhundee, Visiting Research Fellow

Supalak Ganjanakhundee examines the actions, steps and measures taken by the Pradyut government to deal with the pandemic. The author demonstrates how the introduction of the draconian emergency law and extraordinary emergency measures have led to the securitisation of this non-traditional security threat. The need for de-securitization of non-traditional threats and a reliance on existing institutions for threat management in the future is highlighted and a recourse to the normal parliamentary process to map out an exit strategy has been recommended.

[Updated Assessment of the Potential Economic Impact of COVID-19](#)

Source : Asian Development Bank, Philippines (May 2020)

Cyn-Young Park, James Villafuerte, Abdul Abiad, Badri Narayanan, Eduardo Banzon, Jindra Samson, Ammar Aftab, and Mara Claire Tayag

In this report by the Asian Development Bank, the global economic impact in the next 3 to 6 months is estimated using the Global Trade Analysis Project model. While it is predicted that government policy response could soften the COVID-19 impact on economies, the report clearly states that in order to limit the adverse effects of the pandemic, policy makers should work together. The longer the containment period, the more difficult and prolonged the recovery will be.

[WHO, the battleground for cold war 2.0](#)

Source : Observer Research Foundation, India (22. May 2020)

Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, Visiting Fellow

While President Trump continues to accuse China of covering up its lapses in the worldwide spread of COVID-19 and WHO of playing the role of a “puppet of China” in aiding the cover up, the demand for accountability by China has acquired ballast globally. Beijing has realised that it cannot duck out of an international investigation and has traded off the inevitable investigation with milder words like “systematic review”, the wording which was used in a resolution passed by 122 countries. The author elaborates why this resolution is not the end of the tug of war but rather the beginning of a new cold war.

[Re-envisioning the future of Asian regionalism in the Post COVID19 era](#)

Source : Observer Research Foundation, India (25. May 2020)

Vindu Mai Chotani, Visiting Associate and Gayathri Iyer, Junior Fellow

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to create prodigious disruptions across economic, security, and social sectors, and will have far-reaching and long-lasting effects across the globe. In this article, Vindu Mai Chotani and Gayathri Iyer identify and examine the four most important, yet vulnerable areas requiring maximum attention following the pandemic: trade, infrastructure and connectivity, maritime security and multilateralism. Despite all the risk and the vulnerabilities, there is still hope for Asia regionalism to be renewed.

[Technology, e-health and telehealth key to combatting COVID-19](#)

Source : East Asia Forum (20. May 2020)

Pradeep Kumar Ray and Soong-Chul Ro, University of Michigan –Shanghai Jiao Tong University Joint Institute, and Junhua Li, Sydney

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to overwhelm health and medical capabilities, potentially causing hundreds of thousands of deaths and triggering severe social and economic disruptions. Technology can play a significant role in the management of a pandemic. An overview about E-health and telehealth technologies, and how it can assist investigations and responses to disease outbreaks in four key areas have been analysed in this article.

[Cyber Attacks on Healthcare Systems: Infrastructure Protection Critical](#)

Source : S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore (11. May 2020)

Eugene EG Tan, Associate Research Fellow

There have been numerous attacks on health care systems globally as the fight against COVID-19 rages on. Hospitals and healthcare providers have been prime targets even before COVID-19 because cyber security was not prioritised. This situation will most likely worsen, if the lack of capacity in dealing with the pandemic continues. Hence, Eugene Tan highlights why these are termed as critical infrastructure, and the importance of protecting them. The author further emphasises on the importance of critical infrastructure being protected by governments during the pandemic as well as after its end.

[COVID-19 speeds up China's 'Health Silk Road'](#)

Source : East Asia Forum (26 May 2020)

Ngeow Chow Bing, University of Malaya

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the concept of China's Health Silk Road very relevant. The concept which was first introduced in a document prepared by China's health authorities in 2015 has been receiving increasing attention as China continues its medical diplomacy. In this article, Ngeow Chow Bing presents the main tenants of the Health Silk Road concept as well as how China is slowly raising the idea of the Health Silk Road amid the ongoing outbreak. The author also sheds light on how China is packaging its 'medical diplomacy' activities during the pandemic under the rubric of the Health Silk Road concept, and using this concept to reposition itself as a responsible leader in global health governance.