SELECTED ARTICLES


Source: The Diplomat (8. June 2020)

Ken Moritsugu

China has released a lengthy whitepaper report on June 6 stating the measures that the government took in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic from the beginning. Ken Moritsugu analyses this 84-page report as well as highlights the claims made by China in its propaganda battle, which has always been focused on demonstrating how effectively it has handled the pandemic. In that sense, the report is clearly targeted towards an international audience, writes Moritsugu.

Economic distancing from China and the world would carry heavy costs

Source: East Asia Forum (7. June 2020)

Shiro Armstrong, ANU

Shiro Armstrong highlights the role played by China in the global economy and stresses the need for more globalisation to overcome the COVID-19 health and economic crises. China is the world's largest trading nation and second largest economy, hence it will be very costly for nations to impede economic engagement with China. The author explains how economic distancing will deepen the economic crisis and prolong the path towards recovery, and also sheds light on how China gains by participating in the global economy.

Supply Chain Dependency: Decoupling from China?

Source: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore (29. May 2020)

Yogaananthan S/O Theva. Associate Research Fellow

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly exposed how heavily reliant the world is on China as a manufacturing hub and the pitfalls of this dependence. This global economic fallout has impelled governments from the West and Asia to find ways to attain greater strategic autonomy.
Yogaanathan presents three strategies through which nations can build resilient supply chains. Firstly, investment should be made in building ‘multi-source’ supply chain networks. Secondly, firms should also invest in circular supply chains either as part of their main or alternative supply chain network. Thirdly, firms should gain maximum visibility of all their supply chain networks to anticipate disruptions and have the capability to quickly switch to alternative supply chain networks when there is a requirement.

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South Korea and Japan’s COVID-19 image war

Source: East Asia Forum (4. June 2020)

Sarah A Son, Sheffield University and Juliette Schwak, Franklin University Switzerland

South Korea and Japan have been investing in strategic narratives to tell the world their version of the crisis and present themselves as safe, efficient and reliable actors. However, while presenting this narrative, both the countries have indulged in drawing direct critical comparisons with one another. The authors outline the strategies of how the two rivals are pitting themselves against one another. To their opinion, the world has much to gain if Japan and South Korea cooperate in the fight against the pandemic, but this can only happen if the two nations re-orient their image-management strategies away from constant competition and one-upmanship.

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The middle power alignment in public attitudes about Covid-19

Source: Lowy Institute, Australia (29. May 2020)

Malcolm Cook, Non-resident Fellow

In the face of the rivalry between USA and China, public opinion seems to be supporting middle power cooperation. There has also been a rise of middle powers cooperating together more in initiatives and groupings without the United States or China. Malcolm Cook presents the outcomes of the various polls conducted in Australia as well as in other countries which clearly indicate that global views of the Trump and Xi administrations are worsening. He expects that the results of these polls will definitely encourage more joint diplomatic responses from nations.

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A New Consensus About How to Best Govern

Source: The Diplomat (8. June 2020)

Amitai Etzioni, Professor, The George Washington University

The responses of different governments have led to the debate over the best ways to govern a country as well as which government measures can be categorised to be the most superior while dealing with the pandemic. While prior to the pandemic the focus was on the Beijing Consensus and the Washington Consensus, after the pandemic the global perception of the two countries has changed. Amitai Etzioni looks at the prospect of a third model, and analyses the responses of countries like New Zealand, Australia, South Korea and Germany. While he states the third model is best exemplified by New Zealand which has succeeded in the fight against the pandemic, he also notes that one need not adopt authoritarian measures to effectively fight COVID-19 or govern well.

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Asean's response to Covid-19: A report card


Tommy Koh, Former Diplomat of Singapore

Tommy Koh analyses ASEAN’s reaction to COVID-19 by answering five questions. First, the author assesses if ASEAN was prepared for the pandemic. Second, he appraises the response of ASEAN member states. Third, an evaluation of the coordination efforts of ASEAN with its dialogue partners is provided. Fourth, the author reviews if the doctrine of ASEAN solidarity was reflected in the behavior of the ASEAN member states. Fifth, ASEAN’s attitude towards the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been examined. Tommy Koh concludes by calling for speed up of regional coordination for the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases among the South East Asian nations.

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ASEAN and the Post-Pandemic Economy: Role of Global Value Chains

Source: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore (5. June 2020)

Dipinder Singh Randhawa, PhD Student

Dipinder Singh Ranhawa emphasises the need for ASEAN to coordinate and deepen its participation in the global value chains. The benefits of such action as well as how this has led ASEAN member countries to develop sizeable manufacturing bases is elucidated. The author also states how ASEAN states have consolidated their industrial growth and have gained by shifting their investment out of China. As the world after COVID-19 is likely to see shorter supply
chains, policy makers should focus on building resilience in the face of ongoing uncertainties. While the author puts forward four issues post COVID-19 which warrant ASEAN's urgent consideration, he hopes that ASEAN will develop coherent region-wide policies to upgrade skills, and coordinate policies to attract investment, enhance competitiveness and build resilience.

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**Singapore coronavirus clusters awaken Asia to migrants' plight**


Kentaro Iwamoto, Nikkei staff writer

The dormitory clusters of COVID-19 pandemic in Singapore has brought into light the need for support and social inclusion of foreign workers. Kenataro provides an overview of the situation in Singapore as well as the steps taken by the Singapore government to improve the conditions of the dormitories and to provide more support to these workers. We also get an insight into the plight of the migrant workers in other countries in Asia.

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**Effects of COVID-19 on South Asia's International Relations**

Source: Institute of South Asian Studies, Singapore (3. June 2020)

Shivshankar Menon, Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the trajectory of relations between the South Asian countries. With India and South Asia's trajectory towards a developed future now at risk, Shivshankar Menon explores the development prospects in South Asia. The relations between the South Asian countries as well as the potential opportunities to recalibrate these are also assessed. The author examines the impact of global relations on South Asia. He points out that the problems of our times require global cooperative solutions and if the rising great power contention continues, South Asia is likely to be in for a rough ride for some time to come.

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**Rising Islamophobia in India: Exploiting the Pandemic?**

Source: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore (3. June 2020)

Nazneen Mohsina, Senior Analyst and Joseph Franco, Research Fellow

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage in India, there also has been a rise in communal tension. The anti-Muslim narrative which has been on the rise since BJP accession to power in 2014 has greatly increased and has led to the marginalisation of the Muslim community. Nazneen Mohsin and Joseph Franco elucidate how right-wing Hindu nationalist continue to exploit the Hindu-Muslim divide to hype up threats from COVID-19, leading to the upsurge in
anti-Muslim hate crimes. The authors also highlight how the vilification of Muslims can be problematic for India’s national security as well as for its reputation in the international community.

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Source: Observer Research Foundation, India (8. June 2020)

Sheetal Ranganathan

The role of technology in the fight against the COVID-19 is crucial. Sheetal Ranganathan looks at the role of the healthcare force in delivering a digital based health care system. While acknowledging that the healthcare workforce is not ready for this digital transformation, the author puts forward ways through which professionals can upskill and rewire their mind set to adopt digital tools. The role of the government in supporting this upskilling as well as the call for the reform of the medical education system is emphasised. Health care professionals will need a combination skillset in technology and clinical sciences or “techclinical” skills to increase efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of aid and improve patient outcome in the future.

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