

**Khalid Rehman**

What apparently seemed a mere health issue of a localized community has indeed emerged as a grave threat to mankind effecting in all ways possible. Tracing into the human history, the mankind today, in this 21st century, seems rightly overwhelmed with the scientific progress and material development it has achieved thus far. These are the times when everything from beneath the earth and the depths of the oceans to the expanse of space appears to be explored and conquered by him. The less than 100 days period of corona virus has challenged this paradigm head-on. Now it is there for even a layman to see that everything is not in human control. Despite all their progress and achievements, human beings are still vulnerable and bounded by limitations, whereas there exists someone, seemingly invisible but all powerful, who holds the leverage to 'Veto', and enjoys all the strength to disrupt human achievements spanning over centuries, within only a matter of a moment. Consequently speaking, it has to be the same authority which has the power to set everything right back again or facilitate any amount of rebuilding. Sooner or later, the Corona virus will eventually dissipate, just as all pandemics of the past have passed out. The challenge for the intellectuals and thought leaders however will be to do the reality check once again, and seek to rebuild a new global order based on renewed, pragmatic paradigm of life.

**Jawed Ludin**

Former Afghan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

“With the spread of COVID-19 pandemic we are facing a watershed moment in international cooperation. We don't yet know the real extent of the crisis, but it is clear that no state, big or small, poor or rich, could respond alone to this singular threat to all of humanity. The challenge is particularly acute in our own region, the greater Heart of Asia region which connects South & East Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, already marked by a deficit of multilateral cooperation dealing with common challenges. Today, in spite of the disparities we see among countries in the region, from the spread of the virus to the responses of states to it, the surest way to fight the pandemic would be for states to cooperate across borders. Even if closing these borders to movements of people is a necessary measure to stop the spread, ultimately states can only succeed when they reach out beyond their borders. Greater multilateral cooperation within the region and across the world has never been more important to our collective security and well-being.”

**Lt. Gen. Asif Yasin Malik (Retd)**

Historically, Pakistan has been at its best when in stress. Whether it was 1965 or 1971 wars, US sanctions of nineties, 2005 earthquake, War Against Terror and 2010 floods the nation has come out better than before. National capacity to meet challenges, unity in the face of threat, imaginative resourcefulness and self-reliance were the major achievements of these crises. Every disaster has an inbuilt opportunity as well as lessons both for the people and the leadership. Similarly, COVID-19 also brings losses and challenges, and how we fare depends on us and our leadership. In this particular crisis people are actually the ones who will have to fight, and the state and its leaders have to create the enabling environment. In this situation, the national behavior and character would decide the outcome of the battle. This is the test of discipline and unity of various strata of our society. The better we follow the guidelines and the more we help the needy the stronger we emerge after the crisis.

**Professor Anatol Lieven**

“One thing that the pandemic has done is to blur the divide (always an exaggerated one) between “democracies” on the one hand and “dictatorships” on the other. Democracies have found themselves forced to adopt measures which only a few weeks ago they would have denounced as authoritarian (and indeed, some of the Western media did indeed condemn China for its authoritarian response to the virus back in January). On the other hand authoritarian systems are finding that they have to pay close attention to the wishes and fears of their populations. The coronavirus does not give a damn about political ideology. What the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis do test mercilessly is national efficiency, and the ability to raise resources and deploy them urgently where needed. Some democracies like South Korea and some authoritarian systems like China and Singapore are meeting this test very well. Other democracies like the USA and authoritarian systems like Russia appear to be failing very badly. Perhaps this dreadful experience for the human race will therefore at least help to avert the “New Cold War” between the USA and China which hawks in Washington and Beijing have been so assiduously promoting.”