



Coronavirus Pandemic Crisis (Covid-19)
The Domestic, Regional and International Repercussions
(Contribution by the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs)

Editing by:

Ambassador/ Dr.Ezzat Saad

Director of ECFA

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- The views expressed in this Book do not necessarily reflect the vision of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs or the authority in which the writer works.

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Introduction
Assessing the Repercussions of (COVID-19) Pandemic
on World Order-

Sameh Shoukry- Foreign Minister

Our world today is full of many unprecedented political, economic and social challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Whereas, since the end of World War II, contemporary human history had never witnessed a crisis with such a huge volume in terms of its wide scope of spread, long duration, and severity, which will have grave repercussions on the international system in the coming years. At the economic level, the pandemic outbreak has led to the disruption of global supply and production chains. The crisis has undermined global economic and development gains achieved over the past decades, particularly in developing countries; up to the extent of the International Monetary Fund predicting that the world economy would experience its worst recession since the Great Depression of 1929. While the International Labor Organization predicted that the number of unemployed persons would rise by tens of millions in 2020. Developing countries will undoubtedly suffer the most from the consequences of this pandemic, as many of its people work in the informal sector, such persons are therefore more vulnerable to the lack of stable income or adequate social security. Such states also rely to a greater extent on their exports of raw materials and components to developed markets for driving their growth engine.

Socially, the pandemic forced countries to adopt policies that were subjected to various patterns of application by states, all

of them aimed at reducing the spread of the pandemic along the lines of voluntary or compulsory locking down of citizens, as well as achieving a balance between maintaining public health on the one hand and economic considerations on the other. At the level of international relations, the pandemic has affected the majority of world countries, and forced states into isolation and to close their borders, leading to unprecedented polarization among states. The pandemic also revealed the inability of the current international system to face and deal with the consequences of the crisis; moreover, the fragility of a number of existing regional arrangements was revealed amid the absence of the manifestations of solidarity with the disaster-stricken States, in view of their national interests at the expense of their solidarity with the States of the region.

These unprecedented challenges resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic put the mechanisms of contemporary international system to a real test; a situation in which the principle of cooperation and solidarity must be entrenched to meet such challenges. In the short term, international efforts must be combined to eradicate the pandemic and address its economic and social effects, foremost among them being the provision of support to developing countries to overcome the negative economic effects through providing their economies with stimulus packages, as well as alleviating their accumulated debt burdens, and taking advantage of the tools possessed by the international financial institutions, notably the IMF and the World Bank.

Caution must be taken, over the medium term, with regards to the manifestations of the expected polarization at the international level which may reflect on some conflicts, particularly those in

the Middle East. Meanwhile, the international community must exploit this pandemic in the long term to advance the development of international mechanisms, including those related to the maintenance of international peace and security and the termination of existing conflicts, as well as seeking to establish a more just international order that allows developing countries to have greater access to technology and medicine and promotes growth in more sustainable economic sectors for the benefit of all.

In conclusion, I would not miss to point out that Egypt was not far from these efforts of international solidarity, as it was one of the first countries to lend the stricken countries a helping hand, and has sent them urgent humanitarian and medical aids. Egypt also participated in a number of summits and virtual mini-meetings aimed to discussing the means of dealing with the repercussions of the novel Coronavirus crisis on African countries and setting the continent's priorities for fighting the virus in coordination with the international community. In addition to that, Egypt participated in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, via video conference, titled "United against the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic", with the participation of a number of heads of state and government of NAM members. Meanwhile, Egypt exerts redoubled efforts at the domestic level to maintain the health and safety of its citizens, while working towards reducing the negative effects of the preventive measures on economic activity and maintaining the recently achieved gains of the economic reform program.

The New Global System in the aftermath of (COVID-19) Pandemic

Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran- Chair of ECFA

The COVID-19 Pandemic Developments:

Since December 2019, COVID-19 spread from the City of Wuhan in South China, as an epidemic to other states in Asia, then to Europe, USA, and Canada, and then transmitted to Africa and Latin America. Thus the disease became a universal pandemic and affected the human race over the surface of the globe according to what the WHO Director General has announced on 11th of March 2020.

COVID-19 infections increased to more than 6 million people in various parts of the world, of which more than 1.8 million were in the USA. World mortalities increased to more than 375,000 victims, of which 103,000 were in the USA according to Johns Hopkins University statistics on May 31st, 2020.

The UN and WHO warned against the possibility of the death of hundreds of thousands of children and more than 3 million people in African states due to the global economic shrinkage resulting from that pandemic, with the possibility of the falling of tens of millions of people into extreme poverty as a result of the spread of such pandemic.

With the closure of commercial and productive activities and pushing more than 3 billion people to stay at home in order to avoid the spread of the virus, the IMF expected

that the global economy in 2020 would suffer the greatest shrink since the world's great depression of the twentieth century 1930s. Moreover, the UN estimates the losses of the African continent to be US \$ 29 billion since the appearance of the virus.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and The International System:

The USA and European states had previously directed investments of hundreds of billions of US Dollars to the major sub-provincial city of Shenzhen in the South West of China for the production of several goods needed by the American and European markets for the sake of re-exporting them to such markets in order to take advantage of the cheap wages of Chinese under the non-appliance of international work standards, absence of labor syndicates, and the non-respect of the international labor standards in addition to China's non-compliance with environmental standards and the Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

Before discovering this epidemic, economic growth rates in China increased by more than 8% annually at the beginning of the third millennium, with an increasing US trade balance deficit, and China's investment of its trade balance surpluses and balance of payments in purchasing US treasury bonds by more than \$ 1.3 trillion, and in return for this, the US trade deficit increased to unprecedented levels.

Thus, China emerged as an important international player at the economic level, and at the military level, in parallel with China's launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI)

to dominate world trade.

Some have raised a question of the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international system that emerged after the Second World War had emerged in 1945 with the establishment of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds, including program International Monetary Fund (IMF), the UNDP and Children's Fund (UNICEF, etc.); and wondered whether such a system is going to be subject to a reform.

The Chinese economy shrank by 6.8% during the period from January to April 2020 as compared to the statistics of the similar period in 2019, recording the first contraction of the Chinese economy since 1992. A spokesman for the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics stated that the potential for the growth of Chinese economy in the long run will not be affected by the short-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

China urged the World Bank to allow the poorest borrowing states to suspend their payment of the bank's debts, while such states suffer economic difficulties in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic; stressing the importance of concerted international efforts to confront the debts of such states to trade partners at the bilateral and multilateral levels. In addition the G20 urged in April 2020 the creditor countries to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries.

This situation became worse, following, President Trump and some European leaders that accused the Chinese government of having hidden the seriousness of the new Coronavirus spread and infection, and held it responsible for the

spread of the pandemic, some of them claimed that China should pay compensation to the affected countries that demand was supported by Germany.

In response to the US campaign, China decided to conduct its transactions in commercial, financial, and stock markets in its national currency, the Yuan, and to disengage from the US dollar. This step was supported by the seven member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), that include, beside China, Russia and India; which will be reflected over the value of the US dollar in international markets.

In the latest reports of the Asian Development Bank in mid-May 2020, the bank monitored the global losses due to the Coronavirus spread, which may reach 8.8 trillion dollars in 2020, while the most optimistic forecasts indicate that the various measures for containing the virus will lead to global economy paralysis, and development losses estimates ranging between 6.4% and 9.7% of gross world product (GWP). The said bank added that its expectations regarding the maximum losses assume the continuation of restrictions imposed on the movement and companies for a period of 6 months, and that the virus spread containment measures may cause economic losses ranging from \$ 1.7 to 2.6 trillion in Asia, and between \$ 1.1 and 1.6 trillion in China. In addition, shrinking of the US economy by 4.8% has been declared since the outbreak of the new Coronavirus in the USA in 2020.

We are facing one of the global economic crises that began since the thirties of the twentieth century; passing

through the 2008 financial crisis that struck the international financial system and the impact of successive economic crises on the liberal world order, the principles of freedom and democracy, and fundamental freedoms.

Relations among states are expected to be affected after the US suspension of its 450-million-dollar WHO funding following the accusations directed to WHO, of negligence in confronting the COVID-19 and requesting China to bear the responsibility for the Coronavirus spread, and accusing China of bearing the responsibility, holding it legally responsible for spreading the virus to the world with the financial consequences which resulted from that spread. Moreover, a number of states, especially Saudi Arabia volunteered to provide alternative financial contributions to WHO in order to compensate for the suspension of the US funding; in addition to the contribution of the Bill Gates Foundation and Twitter to compensate WHO. This was subject to criticism by the UN Secretary-General and a number of other states, especially Germany as a reaction to President Trump's stance.

The Security Council failed to take action for confronting the Coronavirus pandemic due to the disputes that raged among the permanent members of UN Security Council, especially between the United States on the one hand, and both China and Russia on the other.

A question about the possibility of amending the current international system was raised, and establishing a new international system based on equality of sovereignty among all member states with the abolition of the right of veto in

the new system; and thus the permanent members of the UN Security Council (The P5) bear the responsibility for the inability of the international system to face the novel Coronavirus spread crisis and the threat, it represents to the survival of the human race. The P5 possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD), especially nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. The novel Coronavirus is considered to be a weapon of mass destruction. The US bears the responsibility for blocking the verification regime of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) that was negotiated in the conference on Disarmament in the nineties of last century .

Societies most at risk of the pandemic:

A UN statement was issued on April 23, 2020, in New York; considered immigrants, refugees and displaced persons to be the categories that are most at risk of the pandemic and of becoming its victims; as more than 131 states closed their borders as a protective measure against the risks of the pandemic; only 30 states allowed exemptions for asylum seekers.

UN Secretary-General *António Guterres* stated that in light of the increasing national, ethnic, populist and authoritarian trends in addition to curtailment of human rights in some States, the crisis was used as a pretext to conducting repressive measures within such States for purposes that are unrelated to the pandemic. The Secretary-General appealed to governments to be transparent in their policies. The Secretary-General called for upholding the values of civil liberties and freedom of the press. He added that confronting the

crisis with inequality impedes the access of some people to health services.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned on April 23, 2020, of the speedy easing of closures to face the Coronavirus pandemic. He explained that the Coronavirus will remain a global pandemic for a long time, which will affect public health and precautionary measures in various world States, as well as affecting the welfare of humankind.

The urgent need for finding a vaccine against the novel Coronavirus has been stressed by WHO, due to the ability of the virus to overcome the defensive systems and the precautionary measures taken to prevent its spread; which requires the allocation of increasing budgets for scientific research, especially within the framework of public health and vaccinations including a Coronavirus vaccine.

In a statement on April 23, 2020; WHO added, that in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, it is necessary to continue with the routine vaccinations, due the pivotal role that vaccinations play in protecting lives and economies, emphasizing the need for the continuation of vaccination practices by governments against other diseases, and to ensure the fair access to a vaccine against the novel Coronavirus; once such a vaccine becomes available.

Actions to confront the pandemic:

In a statement made by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Washington on April 23, he renewed his criticism of China for its negligence in reporting the risks of the Coro-

navirus after it was discovered in China in December 2019, which led to spreading the virus on a global scale. Pompeo added that his country has a strong belief that Beijing did not report the spread of the virus in a timely manner, which he considered to be a violation of WHO rules, that led to the transmission and spread of the virus to all provinces of China, and from there to the world such accusations are considered as a continuation of the trade war that President Trump launched against China and turned it into a biological war after exchanging accusations between the two countries over the origin of the virus? Did the confrontation between the US and China evolve to include the use of biological weapons? If that assumption is true; it is the least costly war to the budgets of the contending states? Another question arises, is why did the US oppose the adoption of the Biological Weapons Verification Protocol that was negotiated in the Conference of Disarmament (C.D)the 1990s?

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on April 22, 2020, that he had contacted many heads of state, including President Trump, to garner support for an investigation into the origins of the Coronavirus. Moreover, Morrison demanded the participation of all WHO members in the investigation.

As for the exchange of accusations between China and the US regarding the origin of the pandemic after the spread of the novel Coronavirus pandemic and becoming a weapon of mass destruction, especially biological weapons that harvest hundreds of thousands of human beings from all world continents starting from China, where it was discovered for

the first time. Many thinkers and researchers have imagined that the international system, from which the Second World War had emerged, became unable to meet the challenges generated by this pandemic. Therefore, the current international system, and the foundations on which it was based, its principles and rules should be subject to change. That reform which cannot be achieved without amending the UN Charter and abolishing the right to veto in the UN Security Council (S.C) which is stipulated in Chapter V of the Charter. However, this reform would be impossible to go through due to the provisions of Articles 108 and 109 of the Charter, which require the approval of two third majority of members States including all permanent members of the Security Council.

It is envisaged that the international system change will be subject to the influences and forces that are to be identified and defined, to which the contribution of research centers in their research and analysis would be inevitable through a scientific vision with the contribution of specialists in the fields of international organization, political sciences and various disciplines including weapons of mass destruction that would include biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons; and experts in health fields including disease experts, epidemiologists, virologists, environmentalists, energy and water experts, etc.

It is conceivable that the recent developments witnessed on the Earth's surface are linked to several influences; especially the rapid development in the scientific and technological fields, as well as the development in the field of space,

especially outer space, which contains influences and effects that States attempt to control through outer - space invasion and possession of the related technology.

Developing countries, especially Egypt and Sri Lanka, have long demanded coordination for issuing resolutions from the UN General Assembly to enhance the UN efforts to achieve the peaceful use of outer space after the conclusion of the outer - space Treaty on the use of the Moon and other Celestial bodies for peaceful purposes at the beginning of the 1970s of the twentieth century, through negotiating an international treaty to ban the use of outer space for military purposes, and to forbid the placement and installation of weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction, in outer - space, thus threatening the survival of human kind with such weapons. Many of such resolutions were issued by the UN General Assembly including GA Resolution A/73/30. But the Conference on Disarmament (CD) failed to adopt a work program, including the negotiation of that treaty and a treaty banning the use of nuclear weapons until achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Mobilizing the international multilateral system to combat the pandemic:

1. In view of the spread of the Coronavirus from China to the whole universe and the increasing number of infections and mortalities in various world continents in a manner that threatens the annihilation of humankind since the use of the nuclear weapon in 1945 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The United States has attempted to use the UN Security Council to condemn the spread of this pandemic with

attributing it to China; but the attempt of the US, to pass a UN Security Council resolution failed due to the opposition of both China and Russia. It is worth noting that the victims of (COVID-19) are more than 375,000 deaths by end of May 2020 which are several folds the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs that were dropped over Japan in August 1945, as the victims in Hiroshima were 140,000 and in Nagasaki 80,000.

2. The role of the UN General Assembly in promoting international (multilateral) cooperation to confront the COVID-19 pandemic has been partially successful by the issuance of more than one resolution in this area:

Resolution No. 170/74 of 2 April 2020, preceded by resolution no. 2/74 of 10 October 2019, were the basis of the adoption of Resolution No. 472/74/[A] of 20 April 2020, that was submitted by Mexico on behalf of 179 States. **Its main provisions were based on:**

1) Promote international cooperation to ensure access to medications, vaccinations and medical supplies to cope with the new Coronavirus pandemic (Covid19).

2) Avert the threat to human health and welfare caused by the threat of that pandemic which has spread throughout the world, and its unprecedented effects on societies, economy, world trade, and travel, as well as the devastating reflections on peoples' lives.

3) Ensure the right of mankind without discrimination to enjoy the best health care, taking into account that the poor are the most vulnerable people to the disease, and its consequences, and the most affected by such disease that hinder

development efforts, especially achieving the objectives of sustainable development, especially objective no.

4) Highlighting the key role of the United Nations in coordinating international efforts to monitor and control the virus and its spread and in supporting the efforts of member states, and taking into account the leading role of the World Health Organization (the United States had reservations on it.

5) Requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in close coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant United Nations agencies, including international financial institutions, to produce and promote supply networks in a transparent, equitable and effective manner, to distribute the pandemic preventive tools and analyses needed to eradicate the new Coronavirus, including vaccinations, with a view to making it available to all who need it, especially developing countries;

6) Mobilizing resources for financing vaccinations, medications and technology to support the international scientific cooperation needed to confront the pandemic, and to promote coordination with the private sector (companies) for the development, manufacture, production and distribution of anti-virus, preventive equipment and vaccinations to achieve efficiency and safety within the framework of equilibrium and equity;

7) Requesting the Secretary-General to coordinate with the World Health Organization (WHO) in taking the necessary action to coordinate and follow-up the efforts of the United Nations system to achieve that goal (The United States had

reservations about the role of WHO).

8) Establishing a working group from various agencies to achieve this objective within the available resources; and the results of those efforts, shall be brought to the attention of the General Assembly, wherever possible.

The President of the UN General Assembly (Nigeria) has selected both the Ambassadors of Afghanistan and Croatia to coordinate the international efforts in this regard.

COVID-19 and The Collective Security System⁽¹⁾

**Ambassador/ Abdel Raouf El-Reedy-
Honorary Chairman of ECFA**

I start with a question: Will the global conflict against the COVID-19 pandemic be a motivation for the world to consider the appropriateness of the collective security system included in the UN Charter for the protection of international peace and security?

With the storm of World War II (1939-1945) and after the signs of Allies' victory came along following the battle of El-Alamein, a number of experts in law and international regulation met at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, adopted by the administration of President Roosevelt, in Washington, D.C., the aim of this conference was to study the establishment of a new international organization after the League of Nations had failed in preventing the three axis powers, Germany, Italy, and Japan, from attacking neighboring states; which led to the outbreak of the biggest war, history has ever known.

The attendants of this meeting represented the victorious allies in that war. Hence, the invitation to attend the San Francisco Conference was restricted to the victorious countries; this is what had led the late Ahmed Maher,

(1) This Article was issued in Al-Ahram Journal, on April 25th 2020, <http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/2399847.aspx>

Egypt's Prime Minister at that time to declare war on the Axis powers so that Egypt would have a seat at the Conference of the Victors in San Francisco that drafted the Charter of the United Nations which was signed on October 24th 1945. Late Ahmed Maher Pasha paid his life as the price for this step as he was assassinated at the Pharaonic lobby of the Parliament, while he was heading from the House of Representatives to the Senate. Perhaps the most important of what have been mentioned in the Charter was the collective security system which was deposited in the Security Council with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. When the UN Security Council was paralyzed due to the use of veto power by the Soviet Union on the Korean crisis, the US legal thought invented a means of circumvention of the council by issuing what is known as the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, by which the United Nations General Assembly may issue appropriate recommendations to UN members for collective measures, in order to maintain or restore international peace and security; with the aim of maintaining the collective responsibility for security. Perhaps Egypt was the first to benefit from such resolution after the Korean War; when England, France and Israel attacked Egypt (October 29, 1956) following the nationalization of the Suez Canal; and then each of England and France, being two permanent states in the Security Council, resorted to using their veto power in order to prevent the issuance of the resolution for stopping the aggression; this led the two big states, the United States and the Soviet Union, to resort to the "Uniting for Peace" reso-

lution and thus transferring the responsibility to the General Assembly, and then it was possible to mobilize the international public opinion and issue the necessary resolutions to stop the aggression and constitute the international emergency forces for supervising the withdrawal of the attacking forces from the territories it had occupied, and this era was the most prosperous of all UN periods. Suez remained the turning point that led to the major liberation movement and decolonization in Africa.

This era was gone, and then came another one, whose godfather was Henry Kissinger, who said that maintenance of international peace and security is mainly achieved through realistic policies and balance of power. This era witnessed the greatest stock piling of nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union; turning the balance of power, between the two countries, into a balance of terror.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the advent of the unipolar world, the biggest war witnessed by the world took place on the basis of lies and fabrication of evidence; that was the 2003 war on Iraq. But with the advent of President Trump, the principle of balance of power changed and was replaced by another principle, namely, the 'America first' principle. Then comes the COVID-19 pandemic to prove that there is no defender, even for the United States, against an aggression launched by the virus. The Coronavirus crossed continents and oceans, and directly penetrated the victim's body; who could have been, for example, a Prime Minister of a UN Security Council Permanent Member.

Corona, this virus which is not seen by the naked eye,

kept all countries in the state of maximum activity; there was no defender except purity, personal hygiene, isolation and seclusion, as we see it now in all parts of the globe. This raises the same question: did the collective security system become an event of the past? The concept of collective security was brought at the hands of the Second World War victors, so who will be the victor in the world's struggle against the Coronavirus? The victor will not only be a group of states, but all of humanity, Allah willing, and the war against COVID-19 was not launched with a nuclear weapon, but with knowledge as stated in the words of The Almighty: "... and teaching you the book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know.", The Noble Quran, Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 151(2: 151).

So how will the collective security system be after the COVID-19 pandemic, or what way must it be? The main theme will be based on international cooperation, which in turn is one of the principles of the UN Charter. Collective security can only be achieved through cooperation among states and this principle stated in the international organization will become more important than ever. I finally read Henry Kissinger's article on the Coronavirus and its imminent danger; he did not speak about the theory of political realism or balance of power as he had spoken in the past, but he spoke about the urgent need for international cooperation. Richard Haass, President of the US Council on Foreign Relations, published an article in the "Foreign Affairs" magazine, in its latest issue, on 'How a World Order Ends' after the storm of the Coronavirus; and Haas sees, in brief,

that the world will be more of what it used to be.

What matters to me in what I write is not the analysis but what I see as to what Egypt can demand from the world. I believe that the post-Coronavirus period will be mostly a period of liquidity in the international arena, and therefore I think that Egypt can adopt an initiative originating from the fact that COVID-19 was not a war against a state or group of states, but a war on humanity as a whole, i.e. against all countries. The world or all humanity, Allah willing, will be the victor in this war; and therefore we have to study what the case is, as did the Second World War victors when they studied how the prewar world was.

The main lesson that the world should understand is that the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction over the last 75 years and the trillions of dollars have not fulfilled security even for those who have stockpiled such weapons. Moreover, those who called for the theory of political realism and balance of power and that the state that regarded itself to be before all, is the state having the largest number of COVID-19 victims today.

I want Egypt to call on for the return to the true concept of collective security, that is, security for all and by all. Egypt has the right to alert the world that there is a fact that we must not forget; that is, the whole world was a party to such conflict against the hidden enemy, namely, the new Coronavirus, and that the victor has the right to learn the lesson and call for a better future for the world and to think within the framework of maintaining public health for all the world. Here a new principle that exceeds public health,

namely, the global public health, may emerge and humanity will need more effective institutions to maintain the global human public health, and its requirements such as scientific research institutions and an international organization of global public health. Thus, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction become meaningless and the spending allocated to them should be directed to what is more important for achieving global health and prosperity.

I know that many of those who are going to read these words will say that they originate from an ideal view that does not belong to reality. Perhaps we are today in more need for an idealistic view, after seeing how costly were the theories of political realism, the balance of terror, and the superiority of one state over the rest of other states; how much did that cost us and cost humanity? And that it is better for us today to be inspired by the ideals for the sake of the post - COVID-19 world.

What is the Next?²

**Amr Moussa - former Egyptian Foreign Minister
and former Secretary, General of the Arab League**

I mean, what after the end of the storm or the “COVID-19” pandemic, which placed the whole world in the face of an enemy that attacked everybody without considering borders or law, and that made no differentiation between the powerful with all meanings of power and the weak with all elements of weakness. **This has led to the emergence of two views:** One of them was said by those who believed in democracy as the basis for good governance, by which the peoples’ well-being is brought to its anchors; they say: the management of major crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be achieved at the expense of democracy, fundamental freedoms and free economy. They also added that with adherence to the principles, policies, laws and governance of democracy, states can succeed in dealing effectively with such serious challenge.

The meaning here is clear: It would not be appropriate for democracy to become the victim of COVID-19; The other view is that facing major crises like COVID-19 requires a lot or a little of centralization and coercion, and perhaps to call back dormant laws and to develop new ones which would enable the state to control the course of affairs, including

² * This Article was issued in Al-masryalyoum Journal, on April 17th 2020, <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/1969167>

those laws as well as sovereign and administrative orders that restrict freedoms and guide the course of the economy. This second view has always prevailed, but, as a temporary policy, which is to be actually lifted by the end of the crisis. Then situations return to what they were before within the framework of democracy and its systems. The US history is full of examples in this regard, since the 1930's, whether in the face of greater wars or economic collapse.

As for states and societies ruled by dictatorships, all such opinions and questions are not applicable, and what is important is that there was no difference between democracies and others in the face of COVID-19. The important thing is the efficiency of confrontation and the extent of its success; but then, we will see and hear different opinions and approaches. But the first decisions to be taken will be related to returning life to normal, and to remove the restrictions imposed, particularly those related to social distancing. There will be a ceremonial feeling that the gloom is over, which makes me fear that we (and others of course) will return to what we were before without the least change, or with a slight change that will soon be gone with the wind. This will be the first failure, and then comes the major failure, which is that the US is going to return back to its elections with its hustle and bustle. China will return to follow through on its revered project (The Belt and Road Initiative), and Europe to its internal disagreements and to attempting to reconcile differences among the EU members. Russia will be back to its narrow differences with the US, and to its competition for some influence over the European continent. The

decades-long talk, will return, on UN reform, expansion of the UN Security Council and increasing the number of its members, as well as other problems that the lines of these pages will not be enough for them. But the most important is the return of the tug of war, exchange of accusations and then tensions, between the US and China. The cold war has already begun between the two superpowers; then comes COVID-19 with acceleration of the competition and more fanning of the flames between them, which I believe will continue beyond COVID-19.

The conclusion, in my opinion, is that the post-pandemic world will witness the following:

- The US-China relationship will be intensely managed.
- Cracks in relations within the western alliance.
- Turbulence in US-Russian relations.
- Attempts to reform the multilateral system, also including specialized agencies, and to review the performance of those agencies and mechanisms, particularly the World Health Organization.
- The review of a number of details on globalization, in particular the management of global economy, trade and industry, whose elements of production are distributed among many centers around the world, especially in China, and the West's response to the fact that China has become the world's largest factory and working to put an end to it. Here, major changes could be expected; at least redistributing strategic-goods producing factories away from China, on a broader map, and according to more comprehensive

economic and geostrategic needs.

- The most important change due to COVID-19 will be related to the confidence rates of investing in public health, serum and medicine, hospitals, doctors and medical staff, as well as emphasizing transparency and ensuring its implementation. There will be many new investments in this area, and developing economies will have to take this into account and study the possibilities for taking advantage of this.

- Accordingly, and so as not to lose the opportunity for a real change in the management of the twenty-first century life that the pandemic has provided; I have stressed the need and importance of harnessing such opportunity, and I feel it is important to put forward the following:

- Calls for change need agreement upon a new concept of real threats to international peace, and that the definition based on the developments and consequences of the Second World War is today deficient, not exhaustive, and its related provisions in the UN Charter require reconsideration.

- The “COVID-19” pandemic has clearly threatened international peace and stability, and accordingly, the epidemics of our time must be officially considered a threat to international peace and security, and also climate change, population explosion, as well as the clash of civilizations, and calls for hatred and discrimination in all its manifestations, which would lead to an escalation of tension within and among societies. I was very pleased by the convening of the Security Council to consider a “collective remedy” for the Coronavirus on April 9th, but unfortunately it failed (as usual) to be up to the level of challenge due to the differ-

ences and interests of the superpowers, despite the emphasis made by the UN Secretary-General that COVID-19 and what he posed are considered to be a threat to international peace and security. It is, in other words, at the core of the Council's competence. Also, unfortunately, the UN General Assembly has failed.

- It is necessary, in my opinion, to mobilize world public opinion (research institutes, think tanks, civil society organizations, universities, federations, trade unions and parties) worldwide to press for and demand these amendments to the Charter of the United Nations and to expand the competence of the Security Council to include them, and also the proposed amendments should provide for the redrafting of the "purposes of the United Nations", to include in its top priorities public health affairs, in addition to international security affairs and development.

- In this regard, I believe that we should work towards developing a proposal for demanding the General Assembly of the United Nations to call for or convene a comprehensive conference, similar to the San Francisco Conference that endorsed the Charter of the United Nations, in order to consider and adopt such amendments to the Charter. And by the way, it is worth considering that the "right to veto" should not be applied to affairs related to health, climate and population.

- On the other hand, in parallel with the rehabilitation of the multilateral system to meet the new challenges of international peace and stability, it is necessary to discuss the status and results of the policies and practices of globaliza-

tion, in particular the tough globalization that would damage the interests, stability and prosperity of many developing countries and societies; and others as well.

- The serious economic conditions that are expected to be met in various parts and regions of the world as a result of the decline, as well as the paralysis that affected many aspects of world economy as a result of COVID-19, require serious reconsideration of the entire economic system, which was led by the Bretton Woods agreement after the Second World War. Here, it may also require calling for a new “Bretton Woods” (as already demanded by a number of thinkers) to be convened for this purpose.

Finally, if there is consensus, as it is clear, that the matters after COVID-19 will not be the same as before; therefore, shaping the future is the responsibility of all of us, not just the responsibility of the major Powers; especially after we have seen their poor performance; and even their bad intentions, and selfishness during the confrontation of the pandemic. The world will not trust such states alone to lead the global march after COVID-19.

Considering The Impact Of The Crisis Of The Coronavirus Pandemic On The International System

**Professor / Dr. Ali El-Din Hilal-
Member of Board Member of ECFA**

Researchers around the world are preoccupied with the effects that the novel Coronavirus pandemic will have on international relations, the balance of power among major countries, and the shape of the international system. There is a diversity of prospective prediction attempts ranging from drowning in optimism along with expecting the occurrence of fundamental changes, to being pessimistic or rather realistic, with a view that relations and interactions will revert to their previous state, and that their pace may change here or there, but there will be no structural or constructive change within, and a third prospective prediction attempt adopting an intermediate stance.

It is therefore extremely important that we consider the research methodology of such effects. Three elements were mentioned in this regard, **first of which** is: The necessity to distinguish during analysis between “creative” effects and “detective” effects. In other words, to distinguish between the effects created by the crisis as a result of its influence on the existing structure of interactions, and those which have been detected or accelerated, in the sense that they existed before and the crisis came to highlight and accelerate them. **Second** is: The distinction between short, medium and long

terms of the crisis, and not to be impressed by events that take place in the short-term, which then gradually decline and then disappear later. **Third:** To distinguish between what the researcher wishes and desires, and what reality indicators and their interactions show.

When discussing issues related to what is prevailing with respect to relations among states, the balance of powers, their common interests, as well as the patterns of cooperation, competition and hostility, we should arm ourselves with caution before making generalizations. But it is more likely that the world will not revert to its previous pre-January 2020 status and situations in many areas, and that this year will be pivotal to the evolution of politics among countries. I believe that the impact of the current crisis will be essentially embodied in the acceleration of processes and developments that were already occurring in the international system, and which will be deepened and emphasized by the crisis.

This article focuses on two topics: The first topic being the balance of power among major powers, and the second one is globalization and the future of the international system.

Firstly: The Balance of Power Among Major Powers:

I refer to three developments in this regard:

1. Deterioration of U.S. position:

This indicates a decline in the role of the U.S.A as a leader of the Western camp or the international system. This development was represented economically by the decline in the contribution of the U.S.A. to global GDP from about 50% in the mid-1940's to less than 20% in the second ep-

och of this century. This has made it more difficult for the United States to shoulder global leadership burden.

Then the crisis emerged to confirm this development, as Washington failed to present itself to the world as being in the position of political leadership or the moral model that should be imitated. The behaviour of U.S. administration in facing the crisis was characterized by hesitation, delayed responses and short comings in facing the spread of the pandemic in the country. But Even its health system has been proven to be unable to provide preventive and medical care supplies in an efficient and timely manner. This lack of performance and achievement has led to an increase in the number of infections and deaths.

The U.S. president sought to exonerate himself of any responsibility for what happened, and assigned blame to other parties. He once accused China of being behind the spread of the disease, another time accusing the World Health Organization of negligence and collusion with China, and in the third time he asked state governors in his country to play a greater role. In any case, his primary concern was focused on the next presidential elections and employing such matters in a way that increases the chances of his reelection. Then came the protests and riots that swept U.S. cities in early June after the death of an African American citizen due to the cruelty of a police officer, casting a negative shadow on the ethical and moral standing of the United States and its president.

The U.S. President used a racist term in his comment on those events. His insistence on using military force, which

reached to the extent of threatening to deploy troops, has been an assertion of the battered moral standing in his administration.

2. China's Rising:

Following the same logic, the crisis supported China's political and economic rise process, and the transfer of sources of power and influence from West to East. Although China was the first country in which the disease has emerged and spread, it was able in a short period, through a firm political administration and a competent administrative apparatus, to control the situation using various artificial intelligence technologies, as well as isolating the areas of the epidemic. Its health system has proven its great ability to cope with the emergency situation. Two months later, on March 10, 2020, President of China visited the city of "Wuhan", the epicentre of the epidemic, and China declared its victory over the virus. While new cases of disease subsequently appeared, they remained isolated and limited.

After proving its organizational, administrative and medical competence, China sought to improve its image in the world, so it provided aid to other countries that have been hit by the pandemic, including Italy, France, Spain and Serbia in Europe, as well as Japan, Malaysia and Cambodia in Asia. This aid extended to more than 100 countries, prompting their governments to praise China's moral standing.

3. Russia Taking Advantage of the Opportunity:

Along the same line, the Russian Federation used the opportunity to confirm the foreign policy trends pursued by President Putin, aiming at introducing its presence as a major

power and extending its influence to world countries through trade, as well as technical and technological cooperation. Russia has developed its relations with most Arab countries, regardless of the type of their regimes and foreign alliances, and has intervened militarily in Syria to support the regime against the armed opposition factions and extremist militias backed by Western countries. This intervention has changed the balance of power in favour of the Syrian army and its restoration of most of the provinces that had been controlled by armed opposition and extremist militias for years and reduced their presence in Idlib governorate.

In this context, Russia stood firmly alongside and militarily supported the Syrian army earlier this year against the attempts of the armed opposition factions and the extremist militias supported by Turkey to regain the territories it has liberated from their control in the governorate. This led to the rolling back and defeat of these attempts, and President Erdogan's acceptance of the cease-fire, provided that the Syrian army forces remain in the sites they liberated and not to withdraw from them, contrary to what was previously stated.

With the drop in oil prices due to suspension of transportation and the decrease in demand for it, Russia has had its own stance on how to deal with the issue. At the beginning, it disagreed with the Saudi proposals on reducing production, and insisted on continuing with its production rates, while being keen on declaring that this disagreement does not affect joint cooperation projects and programs between the two countries. And then later, a solution acceptable to the two countries has been reached.

Russia provided medical aid to Italy and Spain; the two European countries worst-hit by the pandemic. The support it provided was not limited to preventive tools such as face masks, gloves and protective suits, but also included sending dozens of military doctors specialized in fighting epidemics to Italy who carried out disinfection and sterilization processes in the Lombardy region, the epicenter of the pandemic. For the first time, Russian military aircraft landed at the airport of a European NATO member state.

The political and moral significance of the Chinese and Russian support for Italy increased in light of the Italian government's call on the EU countries to assist it, and it has submitted a similar request to the European Commission in this regard, which has called on the EU countries to respond to Italy's request. At the same time, Germany and France imposed restrictions on the export of medical supplies, and the rest of the member states did not respond. This provoked the resentment of broad segments of the Italian public opinion, not only within the right-wing populist circles. A manifestation of this resentment was the Italian ambassador's statement to the European Commission on March 23 that the European Union should not leave Italy to handle this crisis alone, as it has left it alone in the face of the refugee crisis.

In sum, the leadership role of the U.S. has been shaken, and Beijing and Moscow sought to play alternative roles, but Washington continued to hold the cards in many international crises. It is true that China's handling of the COVID-19 epidemic has added to the international positive

view of China, because it has succeeded in controlling the epidemic. But the flip side of that was China being accused by the U.S. of causing the disease to spread because it has concealed the full information about the issue. And President Trump once described the disease as the “Chinese disease”, and several times as the “imported disease.”

Secondly: Globalization and the Future of the International System:

This section focuses on the effects of the crisis on globalization, and whether or not these effects promise a new international order?

1) Effects of the Crisis on Globalization and Relations Among States:

The March 21, 2020 issue of the British Economist magazine was published, with an image of the globe on its cover, with “closed” written on it in large font, in reference to the atmosphere of shut-down and retreating into the interior that hit the countries of the world, and which led to the closure of land borders, the suspension of air lines, the cessation of international trade, industrial and commercial supply lines, and the postponement of international and continental sports activities. This was hailed by the supporters of right-wing, populist, and anti-globalization isolationism trends, considering it a victory for state sovereignty and protectionist policies and a defeat of globalization. Their voices grew louder stating the dangers of globalization and the crises that it has brought to the world, such as the financial and economic crisis of 2008, the crisis of climate change, and

the Coronavirus crisis. Some even predicted that the current crisis would be the end of globalization.

The truth is not that simple, and no final opinion can be made in this regard. The indicators that exist so far are mixed in the sense that some of them contain aspects that are hostile to globalization and others supporting it.

As for the indicators of the retreat of globalization, this was represented in the decisions of closure, prevention, and re-treating into the interior to stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic during the March-May period. Such decisions are natural responses, as countries are keen on maintaining the health, safety and well-being of their citizens, a concern that should precede any other consideration. This probably explains the inaction by Germany, the Netherlands, and the rich Nordic countries, to support Italy and Spain.

Governments have been forced to take these actions under the weight of the pandemic and the increasing numbers of infections and deaths. Therefore, they quickly took decisions to reduce such measures due to the heavy losses inflicted on their economies. In the last week of May, several measures were announced to be implemented in June and July, including: Allowing flights to and from the countries of the European Union, the return of commercial flights to and from a number of world capitals, and the return of Greek tourism companies to provide their services to the citizens of 31 countries. Moreover, the first prayers have already been held at Al-Masjid an-Nabawi (The Prophetic Mosque), Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Nativity; and the wheel turns quickly.

As for the indicators of globalization, we find them in the way the virus spreads, the mechanisms to combat it, and the scope of its impacts. They all indicate that globalization has become a reality in our contemporary world. The spread of the epidemic from China to impact the entire globe with all its continents in a short time indicates the magnitude and intensity of human communication, and the interdependence of states and societies.

The manifestations of globalization also seem to be evident in the scope of the impacts of the pandemic, most notably the economic impacts. The world's stock markets and financial markets have retreated, and each is affected by what happens to the other, showing that we live in a globally interdependent economy. Halting the New York Stock Exchange on March 16 was the beginning of a series of downturns and crashes in other world stock markets, and an indication that the global economy is on the verge of a recession. This has been evidenced by the successive estimates from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and central banks in developed industrialized countries, which all pointed out to a decline in the global economic growth rate, and indicated the great losses that countries will have to incur, which will exceed the losses they experienced in the wake of the Great Depression in the 1930s of the twentieth century.

This was accompanied by a state of disorder due to irregular "supply lines", and the dependence of factories in many countries on their production components from other coun-

tries, which led to halting work operations in such factories. The Volkswagen automotive manufacturing company closed a number of its factories in Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Portugal, and Spain. Renault and Nissan took similar actions.

Globalization has had a different effect, as communication and information technologies have enabled many government bodies and companies that do not produce material goods to continue working and to have their employees perform their jobs from home. Social media platforms have contributed to reducing the negative effects of social distancing and spatial isolation that this pandemic has imposed on millions of people.

In this context, leaders of states and international organizations increasingly felt that we are facing a global cross-border threat that necessarily requires global solutions, and many conferences were held aimed at achieving international cooperation against the pandemic, and the means of support to developing countries, especially the least able to provide the necessary needs for combating the pandemic. These included the meetings of the Group of Seven (G7), the Group of Twenty (G20), and a global summit organized by the United Nations with the participation of fifty countries and a meeting of the leaders of the EU countries, a number of heads of state of the African Union, the Association of South-East Asian Nations “ASEAN” and the Organization for Economic Cooperation in South Asia.

What is the impact of all of the above on globalization? If what is meant by globalization is the engagement and interdependence of the economies of countries in a global

market, or that giant companies plan for their activities to be in the fields of global supply, production and distribution, and that high value store and supermarket chains expand their branches around the world, then it is more likely that it will continue after the crisis ends. There will be a decline in its activities due to global economic recession, but it will return to its previous state at a later time. States are also more likely to re-evaluate the supply lines of the strategic commodities they depend on, and to review their health policy to ensure the availability of the necessary preparations for medical emergencies.

2) The International System between Change and Continuity:

The international system concept refers to the relationships and interactions that take place among its parties, which consist of States, international and regional organizations and non-state actors. Such relationships are characterized by a mixture of cooperation, competition, and conflict. In any international system, there is usually an “incremental” or a “hierarchical” order dividing its parties into great, medium, small and micro parties, according to the distribution of the sources of power, influence and effect. The international system continues as long as it protects the interests of the major and most influential States in the course of world affairs, and becomes subject to crises and change in the event of conflicts of interest and disagreement arising among those states.

In history, international organizations have emerged in

the wake of wars that have brought about dramatic changes that affected the parties to that system. After World War I, the victorious states established a new international organization which they called the “League of Nations” in June 1919. The League continued to exist as long as commonalities of interest continued to exist among major countries, while its crises began when these interests diverged and clashed with each other, which led to its inability to maintain international security and the outbreak of war.

After World War II, the scene was repeated. The victorious nations met at the San Francisco Conference in October 1945 and set up a new international organization, which was basically the “United Nations Body”. The charter of the new body codified the status of the victorious countries, so they became permanent members of the Security Council, and they had the right to veto its decisions. The fledgling organization was soon hit by a crisis due to the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which had used this right to prevent the issuance of decisions that they did not agree with, which brought the work of the council into stalemate.

Although no third world war broke out in the Nineties of the last century, a new international order emerged in the wake of the Soviet Union’s collapse and its disintegration into fifteen countries. For four previous decades, the international system had lived through a period of “bipolarity”, which created some sort of balance between the Western and Eastern camps. With one side taken out of the equation, and dozens of world countries converting to adopt the pre-

vailing systems in the West, the United States has become the country that has the upper hand in running the affairs of the international system as being the “only one pole”.

This situation continued for several years until the emergence of a “Russian-Chinese” counterbalance that has put an end to U.S. unilateralism, but they did not reach the degree of strength that would enable them to impose their conceptions on the U.S. and its allies. The Western- U.S. side continued to possess sufficient strength, allowing them to adapt to these changes without submitting to them.

The key to understanding the crisis of the current international system is to distinguish between “system institutions” on the one hand, and “system interactions and values” on the other hand. **The first aspect** relates to texts that working according to them is a must; and which are, by definition, fixed.

The second aspect refers to the reality of international relations and interactions, which by definition are evolving and changing. The crisis of the current international system stems from the fact that the texts governing its institutions no longer reflect international realities, as well as patterns of behaviour and balance among major Powers. The crisis lies in the fact that most of these institutions were established in the wake of the Second World War, and reflect the conditions and balances which existed at that time and that no longer exist now.

Suffice it to refer to the great changes in the economic field and state contributions to gross world product (GWP); as China has progressed rapidly in the last four decades to

compete with the U.S. for the position of the world's top after the U.S. and European countries have once lead the global economy. .

A number of Asian economies shared this progress with China, so that some researchers believe that if the nineteenth century had been a European century, and the twentieth century was American, then the twenty-first century would be the “Asian century.” They demonstrate this by the position that Asia occupies, **according to a number of indicators**: Its population is 5 billion people, or two-thirds of the world's total population. Moreover, two-thirds of the world's mega cities are located in Asia, and it contributes to a third of the gross world product (GWP), as well as two-thirds of its economic growth rate. Furthermore, it owns 6 of the world's ten largest banks, and 8 of its largest armies. There are 4 countries in Asia possessing nuclear weapons, as well as having tremendous capabilities in the field of technological innovation and advanced universities, according to the data presented in a book published in February 2019, by the Indian author, “Parag Khanna”, entitled “The Future is Asian”.

By linking China's economic strength with the growing Russian military capabilities supported by an economy that emerged from its stumbling block to rank eleventh among the economies of the world, according to the estimates by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for 2019, in addition to the strategic alliance between the two countries, we find that they represent an “unfriendly” counterbalancing force against the United States.

Thus, the world's data around us indicate the widening gap between the institutions of the current international order that emerged 75 years ago and the developments that took place in the course of international political and economic relations. The coalition of the Second World War's five victorious nations collapsed, and even disagreements have been escalating within the Western camp between the U.S. and the EU. Washington is no longer the greatest economic power as was the case at the time of UN establishment, and China's role has grown, but the global economy is still dependent on the dollar as a base for its transactions, as it continued to be the preferred currency used in the transactions of international trade.

Over the last ten years, Russians and Chinese have put forward ideas and thoughts for changing the institutions of the international system and many developing countries have supported them, but they have not received a response from the United States and most major Western countries.

As a result, the current international order is a system "in crisis" because of the discrepancy between its institutions and its reality, as well as between what should be in accordance with the texts and what should be in accordance with the facts of life. The institutions of the system need to be changed, but the conditions for the occurrence of such change are not yet available. There is no consensus on this change among the major countries, and no single power can impose it.

Management of the Crisis in The United States And the Future of U.S. Role In Post-Pandemic International System

Ambassador/ Mohamed Tawfik- Member of ECFA

The global crisis generated by the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID -19) has exposed the existing rifts in both the international system and the U.S. political system, and since the U.S. remains, and will remain in the foreseeable future, holding a central position in the global system; its domestic responses to the crisis and its consequences will have worldwide implications.

As major crises often do, the crisis has exposed the deficiencies and strengths of American society. While the U.S. quickly turned to be the country having the largest number of reported infections, the world's most expensive health system became exposed, and the U.S. leadership resorted to flimsy excuses and blatant politicization. The U.S. political elite succeeded in mobilizing unprecedented resources to confront the crisis and its effects through the allocation of two trillion dollars by the Congress for this purpose. The strength of the scientific institution, with its experts and research centers, has been revealed by the numbers of researches and studies conducted, the ability to conduct large numbers of tests, and mapping disease spread in the American society, till setting the systematic plans needed for dealing with the pandemic. The multiple decision-making centers at federal,

state, and local levels have also proved useful in containing leadership failures, setting out policies that vary according to local circumstances. Moreover, the capacity of the civil society and media to mobilize, educate, direct policies, or limit the vagaries of politicians, has been evident.

In any case, it is useful to monitor the phenomena that have developed in the American society in recent years and have been more sharply crystallized during the crisis, away from political and moral judgments, with a view to anticipating their possible repercussions upon the international system and on ourselves.

Firstly: Most Prominent U.S. System Rifts:

1- Wealth Distribution : Previous statistics on the (COVID-19) crisis published by Inequality.org indicate that the richest 1% of Americans own 42.5% of national wealth, while data issued by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2018 show that 38.1 million Americans live below the poverty line. This gap, which has been widening since 1995 (according to a study by the Brookings Institution), resulted in exacerbating the political polarization and growing influence of the populist right on the one hand, and the socialist left on the other, at the expense of centrists in both the Republican and Democratic parties alike. This gap is expected to widen due to the crisis, with the consequent emergence of winners and losers, and it became clear that the mortality rate among the poor exceeds that of the rich, as well as the rise in unemployment rate jumping to 14.7% in April 2020 (according to The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics), raising the number of unemployed persons

to 23.1 million in the same month, and then the number of applicants for unemployment benefits has increased to 40 million people filing unemployment claims by the end of May 2020. Such situations will undoubtedly cause further U.S. domestic political turmoil in the foreseeable future.

2- The Balancing between the pro-openness currents and those adopting isolationist policies: This is a well-known duplicity of U.S. foreign policy, but President Trump's coming to power with a right-wing populist program, and then the crisis of the (COVID-19) pandemic, have both led to prevalence of the isolationist movement. Especially after the president has worked in a systematic manner towards holding the World Health Organization and China responsible for the spread of the pandemic in the United States; for electoral purposes on one hand, and on the other hand for electoral and strategic purposes with regards to China. This general rejection of the international system sharply contradicts with the inability to abandon the advantages it provides, thus creating disequilibrium in U.S. foreign-policy approaches.

3- Immigration: The United States, as is well known, is a country of immigrants, and immigration has been one of the most important contributory factors to American Renaissance and one of the elements of strength of its economy, but the issue of immigration has turned into one of the most prominent domestic policy issues after having been politicized by populist currents, and President Trump has been keen to exploit the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to take new immigration restriction mea-

asures, in addition to the unprecedented measures that he has already taken, which compounds the isolationist atmosphere in general.

4- The State versus individual, federal rule versus local governance: The crisis imposed precise choices between closure policies to contain the pandemic on one hand and coexisting with it to save the economy on the other; which highlighted the existing counter attraction status in the American society between supporters of the active state role in achieving public interest and those who want to restrict its role to the maximum extent possible. Counter attraction has also been evident between federal government authorities and the powers of states and localities, consequently the U.S. witnessed demonstrations and armed incursions by those belonging to the far-right on the one hand, and defiant attitudes of some state governors towards U.S. president as well as implementing varying policies at the city level according to local conditions, on the other.

5- The scientific approach in confrontation with myths and conspiracy theories: The ideological contrast between fundamentalist religious and moderate religious movements as well as the confrontation between racist right-wing groups and minorities on the other hand reflected the spread of myths and conspiracy theories, which unfortunately were encouraged by the state of sharp political polarization, revealing the magnitude of ideological and cultural differences in American society. The gap among such religious and ideological currents is not likely to be on its way to settlement but will be seriously widened.

6- The choice of economic actors between conservation and risk policies: The crisis revealed the risks taken by companies in order to achieve large and rapid profit margins via efficiency maximization, which often requires reliance on precise and complex global supply chains, as well as large liabilities. While opportunities for resiliency have increased for firms that have pursued policies not rendering them vulnerable to abrupt changes. Many economic actors are expected to pursue risk-reducing policies in light of the escalating U.S.China Tensions, and the anticipated overall instability in the near future.

7- The major choices: The Coronavirus crisis swept the United States and the world at a time during which the capitalist system has suffered a conceptual crisis, and many questions were raised about the sustainability of the current economic systems, as they are based on growth and consumption without sufficiently considering environmental safety and human life quality. The controversial choice between economic health and human health indirectly posed such questions, which will inevitably lead to redefining national security concepts, and that will be reflected on the main lines of public spending, and raises more than one deferred question about the U.S. defense spending exaggerations compared to social spending.

Secondly: Projecting Previous Orientations onto Post-Crisis Stage:

1- It is obvious that the U.S. political system desperately needs a new social contract similar to the New Deal that saved it in the 1930s. However, the current political climate

does not predict creating a consensus on such a step in the near future. This indicates that domestic policy turmoil will continue in the next phase, resulting in domestic policy considerations being raised in the decision-making process, and willingness to sacrifice those external relations and alliances that do not meet urgent and immediate needs.

2- At the international level, the Chinese rise is the most important strategic challenge facing the United States. This was reflected in former President Obama's Asian Pivot policy, then more directly crystallized in the Trump administration's national security and defense strategies at the beginning of his reign, as well as in the trade war with China, the conflict over fifth-generation communications technology, imposing stricter control on technology transfer, and in the most recent White House report of May 20, 2020, on U.S.-China relations, considering a new stage of confrontation with China. While Trump's violent attack on China during the pandemic was obvious to be primarily for electoral purposes. However, this was based on a dominant trend within the ruling establishment to move more effectively towards disrupting Chinese economic growth, as well as reducing dependence on China as being the world's primary industrial center, and to contain its growing political influence, which predicts what would be similar to a new Cold War, that would be negatively reflected on the entire international environment.

3- Economically, the crisis will intensify the rise of giant telecommunication and software technology companies, revolutionize health and education through the deployment

of advanced technological systems, as well as adding a relative advantage to sectors and companies relying on artificial intelligence and robots at the expense of intensive labor. The difficulty of predicting what to come, will force companies and investment funds to adopt generally cautious policies. And on the other hand, the climate of the new cold war with China (or with The Russia-China Axis) may force companies to rearrange the supply chains on which they depend, with the difficulty of expecting a complete collapse of the globalization system due to the overlap of interests and supply chains in a manner that raises the cost of its complete disintegration.

Thirdly: Post-Crisis Global Environment:

While expectations of research centers regarding the post-crisis situations were varied depending on projecting the phenomena, that can be currently monitored, on future situations. It is important to bear in mind that the previous major global crises have resulted in shifts that often went far beyond what could be expected through the projection mechanism, as such events generate Paradigm Shifts, thus proposing ideas and alternatives that were not considered in the past.

It is noticeable that the current pandemic comes within the framework of a set of major transformations sweeping the world, which are largely caused by the demographic explosion (world population increased from one billion in 1800 to 1.6 billion in 1900 and then to 7.8 billion nowadays), and the consequent doubling of the consumption rates of most natural resources several times during that period by

human beings in addition to their aspirations, and human activity has led to disturbance of the natural balance, causing various negative phenomena (Climate change - signs of a new wave of mass extinction of living organisms - rapid spread of epidemics - major human migrations in legitimate and illegitimate forms - widening the gap between rich and poor at the international and domestic levels). While the remarkable scientific and technical progress in terms of its scope and speed has opened up new prospects and several opportunities to meet rising needs, it has triggered a series of overlapping revolutionary patterns with respect to production, communication and war, as well as imposing conceptual qualitative leaps and deep social transformations, which have led to cultural fragmentation, dismemberment of identities and destabilization of the nation-state, which is the global environment in which the Coronavirus crisis emerged, foretelling that such crisis would not be the last; but it is likely to be followed by other global crises in various forms, and more than one crisis may overlap at the same time.

What is remarkable is that the trends currently taking place in the United States tend to be inclined towards turning inward and being in favor of unilateral solutions, abandoning international cooperation and collective obligations, shirking the leading role and responsibility it has assumed since the end of the Second World War, and recreating the Cold War atmosphere under completely different circumstances, which is an extremely irrational approach as most of the coming challenges and crises will be of a global

cross-border nature, indicating the difficulty of effective confrontation with the coming crises waves, resulting in the further deterioration and instability. It is a phase that will continue until the United States and international community become more receptive to the need for building a new world order.

Fourthly: Egyptian Interaction with Changing Situations:

1- Indicators confirm that the United States will remain at the heart of world order regardless of its internal mood changes, and that the Egyptian-U.S. relations will continue to achieve Egyptian interests and remain a key element to maintaining a minimum degree of stability in our region. In order to maintain those relations, we should work towards expanding our circles of relationships within U.S. institutions for defending our interests on the one hand, and facing the movements of the opposing regional powers that act against us on the other, this will require employing the elements of our regional and international roles, and using our soft power in a more developed manner and over a broader scope than what we used to do before.

2- At the same time, it is important to widely diversify our economic and security relations, and to reduce our dependence on any particular party.

3- In any case, it is essential to develop our own capabilities, focusing on the productive and research aspects that do not collapse completely under climates of instability, keeping pace with the rapid successive economic and technological developments, and employing new technolo-

gies to revolutionize public administration, education, and health-care system.

4- The expectations that major companies will reassess their supply chains to reduce their dependence on China and limit new investments therein offers us important opportunities, especially for attracting global as well as Chinese investments to the Suez Canal Zone, with the importance of starting early preparation for such step.

5- On the other hand, we must be prepared for the possibility of reducing foreign aid to Egypt, including all types of U.S. Foreign Assistance to Egypt.

6- At the international level, expecting a future phase in which the international system is characterized by liquidity and prevalence of the confrontational spirit must not dissuade us from thinking about the shape and characteristics of the new world order that we hope to form even after a while, early planning of our policies, advocating for its formation, and actively working towards forming new groupings with states sharing common interests with us to achieve such goal in a manner that meets our needs.

The Pandemic Crisis In Context Of The U.S/China Competition

Ambassador/Dr. Ezzat Saad- Director of ECFA

A number of senior American writers, including Richard Haas, president of the Council on Foreign Affairs⁽³⁾ and Joseph Nye, a professor at Harvard University⁽⁴⁾ agree that the crisis of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) does not represent a turning point in the geopolitical competition that has been going on for some time between the United States and China. But it is a stop on a path in which the international system has been going on for some time in the direction of multipolarity, although the United States still retains most of the trump cards.

And what Haas, Nye, and others mentioned, is consistent with the fact that the pandemic has hit the world in the midst of a fierce geopolitical competition between the two most powerful world economies, namely, the United States and China; coinciding with a political-cultural crisis for the West against the rise of the East. The crisis management revealed the success of the Asian countries, including South Korea, Singapore, Japan and Taiwan, with their disciplined cultural heritage and their tendency to work together, as well as their superiority in the use of advanced

3- Richard N. Haass: "The Pandemic Will Accelerate History Rather Than Reshape It", Foreign Affairs, April 7, 2020.

4- Joseph Nye, Jr., "No The Coronavirus Will Not Change The Global Order", Foreign Policy, April 16, 2020.

technology, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI) systems, in controlling and containing the pandemic, while on the other hand the United States and Western European countries were floundering and facing a clear stumbling block to the management of the crisis.

As a reminder of the fact that such geopolitical conflict existed before the pandemic harshly struck the world, the National Security Strategy⁽⁵⁾ (2017) and National Defense Strategy⁽⁶⁾ (January 2018) and the U.S. National Intelligence strategy⁽⁷⁾ (January 2019) classified China as a geopolitical rival that must be confronted as a threat to national security and the key challenge Washington must address. China also dominated the geopolitical discussion of the last Munich Security Conference (MSC) which was held on last February 14-16. Participants from the United States and Western Europe have emphasized, in different ways, what China's economic and security policies mean for the rest of the world. In this context, U.S. Secretary of Defense Esper emphasized the security challenge China poses to his country and its allies, and Foreign Minister Pompeo denied that tension of any kind exists between Washington and its European allies, stressing the need for a unified response to face China's expansion⁽⁸⁾.

5-The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (December 2017). Available at the website of the White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

6-On National Defense Strategy of USA (2018). The Document is available at website of the American Department of Defense <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

7-The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America https://www.dni.gov/files/odni/documents/national_intelligence_strategy_2019.pdf

8- Dan Baer : Munich Report: Who And What Was and Wasn't at the Mu-

In other words, Washington used the Munich conference to convey a message to Europeans that the great common challenge that can bring transatlantic relations together is China. But few European countries seemed willing to take this message seriously.

The U.S. global campaign to prevent its closest allies from using the Huawei 5G network has failed spectacularly, as no one has listened to it, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Spain, with the exception of few states (Australia, Japan, and Poland). The battle against Huawei is one of the U.S.-led confrontation stations against China, aiming at containing Beijing's influence and power and ensuring that the world's second-largest economy does not dominate the advanced industries that might provide it with economic and military power⁽⁹⁾. In this context, Washington has led an intensive diplomatic campaign under the previous administration to persuade its allies not to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which was established by China in 2015 and its membership was opened up to all world countries, but this campaign has also failed spectacularly. As U.S. allies raced to join the bank as founding members, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Egypt, Canada, Israel, India, Turkey and many others.

nich Security Conference, FEBRUARY 19, 2020 <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/02/19/munich-report-who-and-what-was-and-wasn-t-at-munich-security-conference-pub-81109>

9 - David E. Sanger & David McCabe: Huawei Is Winning the Argument in Europe, As the U.S Fumbles to Develop Alternatives, The New York Times, Feb. 17, 2020: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/17/us/politics/us-hvawei-59-html>

Beyond the U.S.-China Trade War:

President Trump's trade war with China since 2018, and his focus on addressing the major trade imbalance, between the two countries which is not in the interest of the U.S.A, has obscured the main source of tensions between the two sides, namely the transfer of technology and the flow of knowledge among States. In this regard, the United States regards China's success as an unfair insult to the economic competitiveness and geopolitical status of the United States of America, and also as evidence of the naivety of the slogan of economic integration and economic globalization⁽¹⁰⁾. Indeed, the major problem facing the international community, since the spread of the pandemic, is the lack of coordinated political commitment among world economic and trade powers in order to stop international protectionist measures against the movement of international trade. The pandemic has put the international trading system to a rigorous test, and Trump's protectionist policies have left the WTO less prepared to deal with the pandemic than it could have done before Trump⁽¹¹⁾. The administration has gradually and reluctantly lifted tariffs on respirators and surgical masks imported from China since March 11, covering 75% of its imports, but 10 days later, Trump restricted his country's exports of respirators and masks on the basis of the

10 - Yukon Huang, Jeremy Smith: Pandemic Response Reflects Unlearned Lessons of U.S. China Trade War, April, 27, 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/27/pandemic-response-reflects-unlearned-lessons-of-u.s.-china-trade-war-pub-81651>

11-Chad p. Bown: COVID -19 Could Bring Down the Trading System, Foreign Affairs, April, 28, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-28/covid-19-could-bring-down-trading-system>.

Defense Production Act (DPA). Due to the USA's stance, the G20 Ministers of trade Meeting on March 30, failed to merely discuss the pressures of protectionist measures and what the G20 countries could do about them.

In the aforementioned context, and for the purposes of restricting technology transfer to China, the United States intervened, under the imperatives of protecting national security, to restrict broad scientific cooperation among research institutions in the two countries. One aspect of such intervention was the investigation and deportation of Chinese-American scientists and researchers, including a chemistry professor at the University of Florida who, upon his return, developed a coronavirus test that gives results in 40 minutes⁽¹²⁾.

The Pandemic is a New Tension Point:

Many people believe that some of the shortcomings in Washington's management of the COVID-19 pandemic were due to Washington itself⁽¹³⁾. This is indicated by the U.S. not replenishing the strategic reserves of medical supplies that have fallen back ten years before the pandemic, and the worsening deficit due to tariff escalation on Chinese medical products. They also believe that the U.S. response to the pandemic was consistent from the start with the slogan of "America First" that Trump has raised since entering the White House. Before the crisis, the U.S. administration began to reduce the volume of foreign aid, especially those

12-The previous reference.

13- Philip H. Gordon: "America First": Is a Dangerous Fantasy in a Pandemic, Foreign Affairs, April 4, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2020-04-04/america-first-dangerous-fantasy-pandemic>

related to global health. And amid worldwide news about the spread of COVID-19 last February, the U.S. government decided to reduce foreign financial aid for fiscal year 2021 by 21%, including the aid directed to global health programs by 35%. In his speech to the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly on September 25, 2018, President Trump declared that “The future does not belong to globalists ... The future belongs to sovereign and independent nations, who protect their citizens, respect their neighbors and honor the differences that make each country special and unique.” And he added: “We will examine whether the countries who receive our dollars and our protection also have our interests at heart. Moving forward, we are only going to give foreign aid to those who respect us and, frankly, to our friends⁽¹⁴⁾.” In China, with the discovery of the first patient infected by the epidemic on December 8, 2019 in the city of Wuhan, the country went into a state of complete closure and isolation, and by January 7, 2020 the virus was identified as the Novel Infectious Coronavirus; whereas the Chinese Government has approved numerous prevention and control measures and launched a well-coordinated and comprehensive campaign to defeat the virus, and on March 12 China announced that the peak of the epidemic on its territory has ended and that new cases are declining and the situation is generally improving⁽¹⁵⁾.

China has been the target of a campaign launched by the

14-The White House, Remarks by president Trump to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 25 Sept. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings/statements/remarks-president-trump-73rd-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-ny/>
15 - Xinhua: China Says Its COVID – 19 Peak Is Over,<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020/03/21/c-138870547>.

U.S. media, including for example that the crisis will put an end to the Chinese Communist Party, that China will inevitably be out of the international system and that it must be decoupled from this system, as the pandemic will force the major international companies operating there to move their production chains out of China, which the Chinese call “Chiext”, modeled on the term that refers to Britain’s exit from the EU, and even saying that unstable Chinese financial markets may be more dangerous to the world than wildlife markets that produced the Coronavirus⁽¹⁶⁾. They provided projections of the imminent collapse of Chinese power and the deterioration of its financial situations⁽¹⁷⁾.

In fact, with the start of China’s success in controlling and containing the pandemic, and in light of the clear reluctance of the U.S. to lead any alliance in this regard, as happened during the Ebola epidemic for example, Beijing began an active, broad and multi-dimensional diplomatic campaign to provide relief aid and assistance to various world countries, in which for the first time using its armed forces, parading its military logistical capabilities, and transporting medical equipment and teams outside the borders to at least 20 countries out of a total of more than 170 countries and five international organizations that have received Chinese aid. Although Beijing has not yet explicitly announced a coordinated official strategy on its pandemic associated humanitarian assistance, it has made enormous efforts to ac-

16- Among them is Walter Russell Mead, an American Professor of Foreign Affairs and the Humanities, in his article, on February 3, in The Wall Street Journal.

17- Alexander Lomanov: Cold War Virus: U.S Plunges Into Information Confrontation With China, March 23, 2020. Valdai Club. <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/cold-war-virus/>.

tivate various diplomatic mechanisms through which it has provided its aid. In this context, China has moved on a purely bilateral basis, without coordinating or participating with the multilateral health system, which has been completely absent because of the U.S. position that has prevented any binding UN Security Council resolution on the pandemic. Such situation has given China a unique exceptional advantage for which no other donor had contended.

China has provided assistance not only through the central government, but also via the armed forces, provincial governments, local councils, non-governmental organizations and businesses. It is important to point out to China's interest within the framework of its diplomatic activity to convey its successful experience in addressing and containing the epidemic by communicating with countries and regions that have partnerships and cooperative relations with China, via video conferences between health officials and their counterparts in Europe, Africa, the Arab region, Asia and Latin America. China's global health diplomacy also included intensive communication at the presidential and ministerial levels with the leaders of a large number of friendly countries, including Egypt; during which solidarity to confront the pandemic and cooperation in dealing with its effects, including joint cooperation to produce the vaccine needed to overcome it, were stressed. Chinese assistance has extended to areas of conflict and tension, such as Syria, Iraq, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya and others.

Indeed, the logic and facts on the ground call on any objective observer of the events, to acknowledge that China's

experience in addressing the novel Coronavirus is full of inspiring lessons that other countries can benefit from. In this context, any positive assessment of China's experience in combating the epidemic remains a major irritant for the U.S. leadership and media. In both cases, there is a clear determination, in collusion with the World Health Organization, to hold China guilty of spreading the epidemic all over the world. This comes at a time when well-known American writers, such as Nicholas Kristof, argue that "Thousands of Americans would be alive today if President Trump had spent more time listening to the World Health Organization instead of trying to destroy it," pointing out that stopping the U.S. contribution to funding the organization's budget amidst a raging pandemic is a dangerous attempt to find a scapegoat for his failures⁽¹⁸⁾, adding that Trump did not provide any global leadership against the Coronavirus, and "feared China's rapid response to the pandemic," and he tweeted on January 24, saying: "China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus ... I want to thank President Xi," Kristof also added "But if Trump insists on holding people accountable ... He can gaze in the mirror." Others emphasized that the current administration's efforts were directed only to the U.S. and ignored the outside. And in this connection, Trump tweeted, saying: "I am the president of the United States of America...not the president of other countries, so we have to focus on this country, while

18- Nicholas Kristof, Trump's Deadly Search For A Scapegoat , The New York Times, April 15, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/opinion/coronavirus-trump-world-health-organization-who.html>

they work for their countries”⁽¹⁹⁾.

In fact, until February 27, 2020, Trump and his assistants believed that the outbreak of the virus would not exceed China’s borders, confirming that the number of infections inside all U.S. states was close to zero. White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow affirmed that “Washington has already been able to contain the risks of the spread of such virus against a backdrop of the near-total closure of its borders”⁽²⁰⁾. President Trump’s focus has always been on the need to preserve the pre-pandemic economic gains, mainly for electoral purposes. In contrast, China’s assistance campaign provided to the world in connection with the pandemic has reinforced the fact that much of what the world depends on in fighting the pandemic is being manufactured in China⁽²¹⁾.

In fact, despite the failure of the U.S. administration in managing the crisis as efficiently as required, in comparison to China, and moreover focusing on the interior in addition to its stance towards the World Health Organization and the multilateral cooperation frameworks in general as previously discussed, and its reluctance to exercise its leading role as was previously the case; but China, for its part, does not seem ready to take on the mantle of global leadership, although it has provided support and assistance to many countries, and Chinese officials have not at any

19-Philip H. Gordon: “America First” Is a Dangerous Fantasy in a Pandemic – a previous reference.

20- The previous reference.

21- KURT M. Campbell & Rush Doshi: The Coronavirus could Reshape Global order, foreign Affairs, March 18, 2020.<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-03-18/coronavirus-could-reshape-global-order>.

time claimed this role for themselves, as they remain steadfast in their sense of belonging to developing countries, they also see that the current international system, in its entirety, fulfills their interests and indeed, they do not deny that they owe the environment provided by this system a debt for their huge economic and commercial progress, despite their reservations about some of its aspects. In this context, China does not view the new Coronavirus crisis as a globalization crisis, but as a crisis of the current global governance with its economic and political dimensions. Whereas, the United States does not seem ready to take the interests of the rising economic powers into account, adopting an approach based on international competition rather than cooperation and working to reduce or even abandon its responsibilities and pledges in many fields. China does not conceal its emphasis on the fact that the Asian rise and its leadership of the international economic development process is turning the focus from transatlantic relations towards the Asia-Pacific region, which requires reconfiguration of the global power structure as well as the pattern of distribution of interests, a reconsideration of the situation that has lasted too long during which a minority of Western countries have dominated global governance, and that the international community must recognize such imbalance and seek to adopt new mechanisms and means to allow all powers to interact positively with the international system.

The previous analysis thus leads to emphasizing the fact that no superpower can alone meet the world's needs, and that cooperation among the U.S., China, and a third party

like the EU is needed to fill such gap, as nationalism and protectionism cannot rebuild the global economy or combat pandemics that know no borders. As some have rightly emphasized, supporting a balanced and structured flow of goods, individuals, ideas and public health services will require a new international consensus and a vision based on broad cooperation rather than competition⁽²²⁾. In this context, it is important for Egypt to continue its foreign policy strategy of diversifying and expanding its economic, political and security options by opening up to all, with sufficient attention given to developing and modernizing Egyptian capabilities in the fields of education, science and advanced technology, including the applications of artificial intelligence (AI), where their vital importance in containing the pandemic has been revealed by the pandemic itself.

22 -Yukon Huang, Jeremy Smith: Pandemic Response Reflects Unlearned Lessons of U.S.-China Trade War – April 27, 2020 – a previous reference.

International Confrontation Of The Pandemic

Ambassador/Dr. Hussein Hassouna
Member of the U.N International Law Commission

The world has been exposed to many epidemics throughout history, among which we may mention those that had spread in the last few years and resulted in thousands of victims, including the SARS epidemic of 2002, the 2005 Dengue epidemic, the Ebola outbreak of 2007, the 2009 Flu pandemic, the MERS outbreak in 2012, and the current (COVID-19) pandemic in 2019. In this context, we can ask what international efforts have been made to address such epidemics, whether through specialized conferences, international conventions or international organizations such as the UN, which is currently facing the (COVID-19) pandemic.

It is primarily noted that the international community began to address the consequences of epidemics in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the first International Sanitary Conference was held in Paris in 1851 to unify international regulations on quarantine regarding the spread of cholera, plague and yellow fever epidemics. This was followed by convening fourteen conferences on epidemics from 1851 to 1938. The International Office of Public Health (Office International d'Hygiène Publique (OIHP)) was also established in 1907, just before the establishment of the WHO in 1948. As for international conventions, the first International Sanitary Convention was concluded in 1892, which was then amended in 1903 until WHO adopted the 1969

International Health Regulations (IHR) that must be adhered to by its member states in accordance with the constitution of the organization. Although a number of international conventions have generally addressed the health field, they did not address the issue of epidemics per se, as they remained subject to special regulations. We believe that it is time for the international community to replace these organizations with a comprehensive multilateral legal document dealing with epidemics within the framework of the rules of international law relating to health, human rights, sovereignty, international responsibility, international trade, cross-border movement, and the role of international organizations, etc. The UN International Law Commission (ILC), of which I am a member, may be the competent body to study this issue to prepare a draft international treaty, by reviewing state practices, conventions and national legislations, with a comprehensive preamble that includes rules, standards and mechanisms for cooperation among states in the prevention, containment and eradication of epidemics. Such treaty will represent an important addition to the set of international treaties previously adopted by the UN in the area of legal regulation of relations among states.

As for the role of international organizations in confronting epidemics, the UN has recently shown increasing concern about the repercussions of “COVID-19” pandemic. The General Assembly unanimously approved on April 2 a resolution entitled “Global Solidarity to Fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, reaffirming the commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism and its strong support for the central role of the United Nations system in the global response

to the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and also calling on the UN Secretary-General to lead the mobilization and coordination of a global response to the pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial impact on all societies. The resolution also emphasized the need to respect human rights and oppose any form of discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the response to the pandemic, then stressed the need to help the most vulnerable populations and communities that are the hardest hit by the pandemic. In our view, the adoption of this resolution by all UN members is a strong political message reflecting the concern of the international community over the spread of the “COVID-19 pandemic” and the increasing numbers of its deaths among states in addition to its economic and social repercussions. It also reflects its concern to remind all states of the importance of dealing with the pandemic through solidarity and cooperation in all its forms, taking into account the central role of the United Nations system in guidance and coordination. Emphasizing such UN role and mandating the UN Secretary-General to lead the pandemic fighting campaign could result in re-enhancement of the UN role on the international scene, after having lost credibility and effectiveness in resolving global issues as a result of lacking the support of the influential states within the international organization. The resolution may also be viewed as an indication of the belief of states that despite temporary restrictions on cross-border movement of persons and goods, international cooperation and mutual assistance among states are unavoidable to meet the current challenges facing all humanity.

It has been proven that it is more difficult for the UN Security

Council responsible for maintaining international peace and security to reach a unified position towards dealing with the “COVID-19” pandemic , due to its being influenced by the political orientations of the major countries having permanent membership in the council. Perhaps this is the reason why convening a council session to discuss the various dimensions of the crisis and to issue an agreed upon resolution among all its members has been hindered for a long time. The Council only convened a meeting on April 9 at the request of its non-permanent members to listen to an intervention by the UN Secretary-General, during which he stressed that the pandemic poses a great threat to the maintenance of international peace and security, which may lead to increasing social unrest and violence in various countries. He also pointed out the importance of any indicator of the Council’s unity and its determination to confront the crisis at this critical stage the world is passing through.

Despite the Secretary-General’s warning, political differences among the major Powers continued to paralyze the work of the council and preclude the agreement on a unified resolution in the face of the crisis, as some of those states insisted on referring to the source of the pandemic, while others opposed that. Some of them also tended to object to the council’s consideration of a public health issue which in their view is not related to international peace and security; and which would be considered a deviation from the powers of the council. The content of this objection obviously does not agree with the Secretary-General’s opinion on the council’s responsibility for dealing with the crisis, which also contradicts the stance previously taken by the council in 2014 regarding the “Ebola virus” epidemic that

had spread in West Africa, and which was considered as posing a threat to international peace and security. Does the council apply the same approach to the “COVID-19” pandemic? Especially that the Peace and Security 4 Council (PSC) of the AU expressed its deep concern over the spread of the current pandemic on February 20, adding that it could constitute a threat to peace and security on the African continent. Let us also recall that in his 2005 report to the international organization, late Secretary-General Kofi Annan had already asserted that epidemic diseases in the twenty-first century constitute, with other global risks, a threat to international peace and security due to their catastrophic effects. There is no doubt that such disastrous description certainly applies to the effects of today’s COVID-19 pandemic.

In spite of the continuous divisions among its major powers, the Security Council unanimously adopted on 1 July 2020 resolution 2532 expressing its support for the U.N. Secretary - General’s appeal for a global ceasefire which he issued in March to help unify efforts in fighting COVID- 19 in the most vulnerable countries.

The council called upon all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days in order to enable the safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance, including medical evacuation. But regrettably , this humanitarian pause was not observed by those parties, and the Security Council has refrained from enforcing it.

We may conclude by stating that the corona pandemic has been a test to the concept of international cooperation. In fact

it has demonstrated that in spite of the importance of collective multi lateral action to overcome major international crises facing the world, the international community is still unable to meet that challenge. This should lead Egypt, on the basis of the current pandemic experience, to work with other developing countries for the creation of a new international multilateral order founded on effective cooperation and solidarity among all nations.

The pandemic and the Intended Role of the United Nations to Promote the Concept of a Nation State and to Establish a New International System

**Ambassador/Dr. Mahmoud Karem-
Member of the Board Member of ECFA**

The UN Secretary-General recently stated that the “COVID-19” pandemic is “an unprecedented wake-up-call for all inhabitants of Mother Earth; he maintained that fossil fuel subsidies must end, and polluters must pay for their contamination”; calling for “the investment of public funds in sustainable sectors along with pro-environment and climate projects.”

We stand before these statements that put the international community under a great responsibility to rearrange the international order after the world has failed to maintain the status quo in the face of this pandemic. Rather than proceeding to citation of what is known and what we have learned from the daily follow-up to this pandemic, I suggest adopting a resolution by the UN General Assembly that addresses such negative effects by developing alternatives and solutions, as was approached by the UN Secretary-General in the statement referred to in this article through setting some workable ideas. **Noting that the elements I would propose, might constitute the so-called “elements of an explanatory memorandum of the proposed draft resolution”, and they are not comprehensive, final, and inclu-**

sive proposals, but a constructive contribution to brainstorming that can be built upon and other additions to the formulation of the intended resolution on the basis of the following explanatory elements:

1- The error of the defenses calling for the replacement of the international system based on the centrality of the role of the state and destruction of the «nation-State» system has been clearly evident. Where the last thirty years had witnessed, in the UN and other international negotiations, a series of hidden and unclear attempts to introduce new concepts, that lack in recognized practical values and carry behind them a series of undefined malicious purposes, into the international diplomatic dictionary and to state them in international resolutions. It seems to me that some of such concepts targeted only one goal, namely, the downfall of the state and the formation of the international system on the basis of generalizing and internationalizing only the concepts of Western democracy and liberalism to the whole world, without offering a viable alternative to what might happen if the state disappeared for example, or became a failed state leading, for instance, to the problems of illegal immigration. It is strange that those who call for the downfall of the state and its institutions ignore the necessity of a political solution to the raging conflicts that led to the emergence of refugee camps, which have also spawned humanitarian problems and became hotbeds of the virus; and they ignore the restoration of the legitimate right of peoples such as the permanent and inalienable right of the Palestinian people.

Therefore, we call on the international community to take decisive action to prevent some states from exploiting such crisis while the world is preoccupied with it, to entrench the occupation or to deal a deadly blow to international legitimacy, such as what Israel is now doing to annex parts of the West Bank or to accelerate the pace of settlement building. I wonder, where are the human rights situated from the suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories while facing the consequences of occupation, isolation and COVID-19?

Those concepts and malicious attempts were numerous under several titles that convey the concept of the right to interfere in the internal affairs of states, changing regimes by force, humanitarian intervention, human security, and conditionalities for international cooperation under certain names; which has been faced by the Arab negotiator in international forums, and let me cite some of them:

- Democratization of the military
- Shared values
- Regime change
- Material breach as in the case of Iraq
- Responsibility to protect

Here, we must emphasize that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of the role of the state and its institutions to confront its risks, something that must be stressed by the UN. We proudly recall that President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, was the first to call for supporting the concept of the nation-state in international forums

and from the UN rostrum.

2- The magnitude of military expenditure of the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) and the raging spending on scientific research to improve nuclear weapons and to provide nuclear arsenals with modern, small-sized, and highly destructive generations, are entrenching international demands for the necessity of nuclear disarmament. Global military expenditure was reflected by figures of 1822 billion dollars in 2018, with an increment of 6.2% as compared to the previous year. The magnitude of what the US alone spent on nuclear weapons amounted to 37 billion dollars annually; and while the world is amid the COVID-19 crisis, the US President demanded to increase that budget by 25% in the middle of last February 2020. Therefore, the urgent demand of the non-aligned countries to reduce and reverse military spending and direct it to serve health, medical treatment, social, economic and educational issues was a just and key demand, which was among the demands of the non-aligned countries in the first special session on disarmament (SSOD I) convened by the UN General Assembly in 1978, without any response from the nuclear-weapon states (NWS). If we compared the amount of spending on developing new generations of nuclear weapons to the globally spent budget on health and medical treatment, we would have found a huge gap which is not in humanity's interest. It is no secret that during the past weeks while the West were amid their most severe suffering from the coronavirus ordeal, we have seen actions taken by nuclear states to raise the Nuclear Preparedness to maintain mili-

tary nuclear superiority rather than focusing on confronting the pandemic. Not to mention spending more than 5 billion dollars over the past weeks to ensure the safety of storing nuclear weapons, as announced by the US Department of Energy, while humanity is in greatest need for researches to find a cure or vaccine against the pandemic.

3- The crisis showed the ease with which a very tiny, highly effective and lethal germ and biological weapon, can be created and manufactured from germ cells, in small-scale laboratories that perhaps consist of only one room; something the international community cannot pass over in silence. What I mentioned is subsumed under the name of “Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)”, which reminds us of the Egyptian initiative that was proposed to the International community on the fourth of April 1990 to establish a region free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Egyptian diplomacy was in the lead by proposing the initiative and defending it before international forums and repeatedly alerting to the need to prevent such technology from arriving at the hands of terrorist groups which might use it in a random and destructive manner. The international community should therefore take tougher measures against the possibilities of possessing a biological weapon or a similar virus, classified under weapons of mass destruction, by terrorist groups; which makes us call for the necessity of activating the Egyptian initiative.

It is worth referring here again to the lead taken by Egypt through launching an initiative to convene a conference on weapons of mass destruction held in New York last Novem-

ber; that is to be convened again next year; and which is the same conference boycotted by the US and Israel; while on the other hand, was supported by all non-aligned countries, **with a statement that emphasized:**

“The Group welcomes UN General Assembly resolution 73/546 entitled “Convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction”, and calls for its support by the Review Conference, and urges all Middle East States, without exception, to actively participate in the Conference and to conduct negotiations in good faith towards the conclusion of a treaty to establish such a zone. The Group stresses that the 1995 resolution and other decisions on the subject adopted in the context of the NPT Review Conferences remain in force until the objectives are achieved.”

4- The disarmament negotiations have suffered from the fragility of the current international system and the fact that the world continues to exist under the threat of having more than 865.13 nuclear warheads, as well as other serious problems such as the mistrust among nuclear-weapon States (NWS), militarization, lack of negotiation among themselves on renewing arms control agreements, proliferation of threat sources around the world, the absence of an international agreement dealing with and limiting missiles so far, the absence of a mechanism for dialogue on the military doctrine among nuclear states as a confidence-building measure, and returning back to dialogue and negotiation among these nuclear powers over arms control

mechanisms, with a central emphasis on the principle of the inadmissibility of using nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Rather than moving towards nuclear disarmament, nuclear powers are heading towards the secret development of modern, tactical, and small nuclear weapons for targeting densely populated areas. We have highlighted in many international forums the most important current international risks, including cyber warfare, the development of super-fast hypersonic missiles, the fifth-generation warfare (5GW), the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in developing modern weapons systems such as drones, militarization of outer space and introduction of a nuclear weapons system into the galaxy. Moreover, developing new generations of **small, low-yield tactical** nuclear weapons. All this took place at a time during which the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) were not concerned with what was most sacred; such as public health, medical treatment research and the fight against the pandemic.

5- International trade, conducted through direct meetings, travelling and meetings crowded with individuals with an increased risk of spreading infection, suffers a major setback that requires us to consider alternative and creative solutions to increase the effectiveness of digital trade. The United Nations, regional organizations and their economic agencies should establish mechanisms for supporting digital inter-trade as a necessary alternative while working towards assisting to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries, especially in Africa. It is worth noting that distance learning, even

tourism, culture and museum visits, will be the beneficiaries; as I watched, at the beginning of the Grand Museum Project planning in 2003 during my mission in Japan, the arrangement of remote visit programs to all artifacts at the Grand Egyptian Museum through accurate four-dimensional display of each piece, along with an adequate historical explanation, for a subscription fee and a reasonable internet price.

6- Even in the area of human rights, the West focused solely on civil and political rights issues, using them as a cause for attacking and rebuking some States, while forgetting the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which included the main rights, and that has entered into force in 1976, such as the right to life, the right to health, the right to treatment, the right to housing, the right to clean water and the right to education; whereas the Egyptian experience has shown a balanced and parallel focus on both economic and political rights through the projects implemented to shelter those who cannot afford it, and to promote social justice. Here we must take into account the negative effects highlighted by the efforts made to confront the pandemic, and the inevitability of simultaneously promoting economic, social, political and civil development efforts. I recall here the visit made to Egypt by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, more than a year and a half ago, during which she visited El-Asmarat and Gheit-El-enab neighborhoods, as well as other housing and giant new housing projects, and she was briefed on what the

Egyptian state has spent on the right to housing. And then, upon her return to Geneva, she surprised everyone with her attacking statements against Egypt, that are completely deviating from her mandate and the terms of her employment, clearly confusing the main human rights.

7- The contemporary international system and its most important pillars, represented by international and regional organizations, has largely failed to meet the pandemic challenge and to confront a health problem that has had a major impact on human behavior during this crisis. It was strange to hear in the UN Security Council corridors that such health crisis cannot be discussed under international peace and security because of the desire of some to blame the others and politicize the problem. As a result the international efforts faltered and the fragility of those organizations appeared. In the case of EU's failure; individual self-interest has prevailed over the interests of the rest of the member states, and many have ignored the pressing demands of Italy and Spain without showing any support or sympathy. NATO boasts that it had the proactive role in preparedness and rapid response by inviting more than 1,600 NATO scientists to contribute with researches on the pandemic and how to increase knowledge of the pandemic, rapidly conducting disinfection procedures, and setting up field hospitals; explaining that NATO took concrete quick steps more than that adopted by the EU within the framework of the so-called «NATO Crisis and Emergency Response Modeling».

8- The crisis management has shown the centrality of civil society and civil institutions in supporting the state's

efforts to confront the pandemic and therefore we must emphasize the importance of civil society and civil action in confronting such disaster and supporting the state's efforts.

9- Peacekeeping operations suffer a setback due to this pandemic, and conflicts are exacerbated in some countries, such as Syria and Libya, by transporting foreign terrorist fighters to conflict areas without any international condemnation; which cannot be passed in silence; especially since the UN Secretary-General has called for an immediate global ceasefire in all conflict areas during the pandemic. Accordingly, the Security Council must act quickly to ensure the implementation of this initiative, with the full support of that procedure by all the permanent members, and to expand the role of the Security Council's military committee for planning, monitoring and implementation. Here I would like to ask a question; where is the Security Council with regards to its resolution 2396 of 2017 on the movement of foreign terrorists? And where are the system and mechanisms of Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) with regards to Turkey, the state that had seized stolen Iraqi oil in full cooperation with ISIS at the lowest prices? Turkey violates international legitimacy resolutions, and transports terrorist fighters across its territory to Libya and provides them with a safe haven as well as financial and logistical support.

10- If we take the concept of crisis management as a criterion for analysis, let us highlight the wisdom of the Egyptian political leadership in its proper management of the crisis and in providing medical assistance to its inter-

national partners in a manner that is completely far away from any hidden agenda or individual interest. While in the same crisis, we see a state that seizes shipments of medical equipment in an unparalleled form of international piracy.

11- All this prompts us to call on the UN Secretary-General to form an international committee of prominent international figures from around the world to study what has been proposed, including new decisions to preserve the environment, and to assign The International Telecommunications Organization (ILO) with the authority to prevent any new generations of telecommunications in the galaxy such as the 5G unless it is confirmed that it bears no risks to humanity, with the urgent setting up of solutions and recommendations to the UN Secretary-General.

The Initial Repercussions of (COVID-19) Pandemic on the Future of the European Union And the Possible Reflections on Egyptian-European relations

Ambassador/ Raouf Saad- Chairman of the National Bureau for the Implementation of the Association Agreement between Egypt and the European Union

Firstly: The direct initial repercussions on world economy and the multilateral international system:

- The crisis highlighted a severe disruption in the entire world order structure that emerged in the aftermath of World War II, after which the fragility of international solidarity and the absence of international leadership and vision were clearly demonstrated, as well as the growing resort to upholding national interest and meeting local needs, in addition to a stupendous uncovering of the willingness and readiness of governments, especially in Western countries, to deal with the crisis. Not to mention the dull routine performance of the multilateral institutions which were established in the aftermath of World War II.

- The cracks appearing in the multilateral system have been linked to the erosion of the U.S. role in leading the international system and formulating its basic rules since establishing that system after the end of World War II, in the lack of an efficient and effective alternative. On the other hand, the EU does not seem able to bear the burden of leading the international community's agenda, despite its efforts, whether in terms of climate negotiations or the reformulation of WTO rules, nor does China

seem to be willing to engage in such endeavor, and so far it is satisfied with seizing opportunities and selecting the form and locations of its progress, in a manner that has contributed to further cracking of the international system.

- The pandemic came to add to the pain of world economy, as most expectations have been indicating that 2020 is ahead of a new and deep global crisis, and the world is facing radical challenges, the most prominent of which are the consequences of the US-China trade war on the world trade system and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the incompleteness of recovery of the EuroZone from the 2008 crisis due to the diverging traditional stances between the Northern and Southern states of the Union towards tackling the issue of recovery, and the continued containment of the crisis by focusing economic stimulus packages on the financing of large firms in order to avoid their collapse in exchange for the abandonment of small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition to the incompleteness of recovery of the emerging markets from the crisis of their deteriorating currency, as well as the recent slowdown of the Chinese economy.

- The most prominent of what the pandemic has spawned is the pivotal role of the nation state, but not the central role, in crisis management, contrary to the prevailing approach guided by the market forces of supply and demand, as well as the importance of serious reconsideration of the localization of industries rather than continuing with the current approach of fragmenting production stages, in light of what the crisis has entrenched that it is necessary for countries to possess a productive industrial base that allows them to have a degree of control and self-suf-

efficiency by deepening and localizing the manufacture of some or all stages of production without getting affected by external factors such as supply chain stoppage or the resort to imposing restrictions on the export of certain important goods by some states in the manner that was adopted by some world countries during the crisis.

Second: The direct initial repercussions of the pandemic on the EU and the union's approach to dealing with it:

- The EU and the EuroZone have received the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic while suffering multiple troubles, because, since the conclusion of the Treaty of Lisbon of 2007, the Union has not been able to reach a contractual framework to push ahead with the European project; as the European bloc crises since the 2008 debt crisis have posed a structural challenge to EU's institutions. Although the union has passed the crisis and rescued the southern European states (Greece/Portugal/Italy/Spain), rescue mechanisms and growth paths have been flawed at the recovery stage, as well as facing pressing external challenges such as the flow of illegal migration, the succession of terrorist attacks and the escalation of rifts among member states; ending with the shock of the BREXIT that revealed structural deficiencies in the union, that has a massive structure, slow movement, and weak response towards major political challenges; not to mention the rise of the popularity of the extreme right-wing movements opposing the identity of European unity caused by the British exit (BREXIT).

- Politically, following the developments of the European project process shows that the EU leaders have managed through highly flexible mechanisms to allow the greatest degree of accommodation of differences within a broader framework

of consensus, allowing some degree of diversity among the EU's member states within the union's legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms; as only some EU member states are members of the EuroZone but not all of them, and only some EU member states are parts of the Schengen zone but not all of them, and vice versa, some states that are not member states of the EU are parts of the Schengen zone; enabling the European project to overcome challenges and move forwards with its future plans and programs.

- The coming of the pandemic crisis has deepened the wide gap between the North and South within the Union, as the stances of the Northern countries, led by Germany, were characterized by a slowdown in providing rescue packages as well as following a strict approach towards the commitment of the states affected by the crisis to rigorously apply the measures of reform, in anticipation of a slow implementation of the necessary reforms by the Southern countries and placing the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the Northern countries. While the Southern countries demanded that the Northern countries should pay the price of their successes that would not have been achieved except at the expense of the markets of the South and East countries.

- The only way out for the meeting of the EuroZone finance ministers in early April 2020 was to provide a rescue package of more than 500 billion euros as the first phase for the Southern countries as being the most exposed to the crisis. Following the meeting, the Italian-led southern countries proposed issuing "Corona bonds" to alleviate the Italian debt burden, while the Northern countries saw that existing European mechanisms would suffice to face the crisis without starting new debt-relief mechanisms;

which might even increase the crises of the EuroZone as a whole.

- The German Chancellor, under the continuous pressure and criticisms directed to the stances of the Northern countries towards supporting the Southern countries of the union, was forced to declare that Germany will show a spirit of solidarity that will keep up with the reverberation of the pandemic crisis during the next meeting of the European Council, as well as its readiness to increase its share in the EU budget to enable the European Commission to prepare a vision for additional rescue packages. The meeting actually came out with the establishment of the Recovery Fund, and mandating the Commission to prepare the Fund's work plan with regards to the total value of the Fund's allocations that could be obtained by each member state (which would reportedly exceed 1.5 trillion euros), distribution of member states contribution quotas for financing the fund as well as how to access the Fund, in order to present it to the council.

- In the same context, as a result of the momentum created by the crisis over the proposals to update the mechanisms of work and rules of the European Union and the EuroZone, some old proposals have again returned to the scene, such as creating the post of a "EuroZone finance minister" to ensure a reasonable degree of harmony and consistency in the financial policies of the member states, as well as establishing a EuroZone parliament to ensure greater democratization of the decision-making mechanisms of the area and to include the views of its peoples on the policies that are being decided.

Third: Features of EU future in the post-COVID-19 phase:

- Before the outbreak of the crisis, the EU was about to launch a new phase for achieving greater cohesion and push forwards

the European project, as the new Commission has announced, in early 2020, two key priorities for its mandate, whereas the first is represented by: the Green deal, which is a package of commercial, industrial and consumer programs and actions aimed at bringing about a profound and radical change in European production and manufacturing pattern by gradually moving away from the current pattern of dependence on fossil fuel , as well as changing consumption and nutrition patterns to reduce food loss, maximize means of food security, and apply the concept of circular economy based on avoiding the use of single-use items, so as to achieve Carbon neutrality by 2050 as the ultimate goal. The second priority addresses the digital transformation and applying the concepts of digital economy and its applications in all aspects of European industrial and service sectors and structures.

- Despite the challenges, crises, and predictions of the imminent disintegration of the European Union, we believe that these predictions are characterized by an inconsistent oversimplification, in light of the intertwined interests and the overcoming of many challenges by the union. Moreover, the European construction has achieved unprecedented economic and political integration in history, as well as the ability to guarantee the continuation of peace in Europe, and the consolidation of an entrenching role and weight for the European Union among old and new powers and poles.

- In this context, the crisis confirmed that despite the divergence of European stances, there are red lines that are difficult to politically cross them and bear their consequences, as the countries of the South, especially Italy, cannot maintain its stances by

insisting all the time on a specific form of European support, especially since its debt size exceeded 135% of GDP before the outbreak of the pandemic, and it is expected to exceed 160% of GDP by December 2020. Otherwise, the alternative would be to return to the national currency and declare bankruptcy, which represents a dark tunnel that no Italian politician knows the dangers of its consequences. On the other hand, it is difficult for the Northern countries to take the historical blame for hesitating to provide the necessary financial aid to the Southern countries that pay the price of a grave crisis that they did not cause, in addition to the fact that the countries of the South are the main market for the exports of the Northern countries within the European Common Market and so they are concerned with their recovery. More importantly, Providing support to the Southern countries today would be less expensive than the next day, as Germany and the Northern countries cannot afford for the debts of the third “largest European economy” (after Germany and France) to get out of hand.

- It is worth noting, in this regard, the role of the German rotating EU presidency (July-December 2020) under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s long-experienced history in pushing Germany to the forefront of the European scene through many European and global crises and challenges; in addition to French President Macron’s endeavor to exert precious efforts for more stability within the European Union and to cross this crisis with the least possible losses so that he can suppress the rise of extreme right-wing movements inside France and be re-elected for another term (his presidential term ends in 2022), not to mention his international ambition that the EU will occupy

a major and influential position on the international stage amid the new balances of the post-coronavirus world.

Fourth: Features of the Egyptian economy's interaction with current developments and features of the European future:

- The volume of commodity trade exchange between Egypt and the European Union reached 27.7 billion euros at the end of 2017, and Egyptian commodity exports during that period recorded about 8.5 billion euros, while imports from the European market amounted to about 19.2 billion euros. This increased the EU share to 30% of the total Egyptian foreign trade volume. The EU remains Egypt's largest investor with a total direct investment of 39.7 billion euros by the end of 2017, and the latest International Trade Point data indicate that the main destination of Egypt's agricultural exports during 2018-2019 was directed to the European Union, which alone acquired 53% of the total Egyptian agricultural exports abroad, with revenues of 2.3 billion dollars (compared to 2.2 billion dollars in 2017-2018).

- The economic reform program, which the Egyptian government has been committed to implementing carefully since 2016, has certainly contributed to strengthening the Egyptian state's capabilities in the face of the consequences of the pandemic, starting from absorbing the first wave of its negative repercussions. The pandemic coincided with the accumulation of the largest volume of foreign exchange reserves in the history of the Egyptian economy, exceeding 45 billion dollars. In addition to the ability to switch from being a net fuel importer to becoming its net exporter, especially natural gas, in parallel with the promising discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean region, in addition to Egypt's preparedness for playing a leading role in the Eastern Mediter-

ranean Gas Forum, and becoming an exporter of electricity (the electricity linkage project with Cyprus and other states) as well as other structural, fiscal and monetary reforms.

- The movement of the Egyptian state towards confronting the pandemic, was based on pumping the necessary liquidity into the economy's facilities by announcing a 100 billion-pound stimulus financing package and providing cash liquidity to the most affected segments such as irregular labor, as well as Egypt's agreement with the IMF on another financing agreement aimed primarily at preserving the gains of the political leadership's bold economic-reform program, which the segments of the society have accepted to endure its hardship in recognition of its importance for achieving the real development of the Egyptian economy.

- However, we must realize that the pandemic represents a severe blow to the tourism and Suez Canal sectors in particular⁽²³⁾ as well as the loss of jobs of many expatriate Egyptians, especially in the Gulf, thus reducing the volume of Egyptian remittances from abroad, which means a sharp decrease in dollar revenues, and thus a continuous decrease in the volume of foreign currency reserves (Already, 8 billion dollars have declined, so far), thus threatening the foreign-exchange reserves that Egypt has accumulated over the past five years.

- In the same context, the CBE is moving between two tracks, both of which are extremely bitter, one is slowing the pace of an

(23) Mentioning in this regard the decisions taken by the largest shipping line companies (such as MAERSK and MCM) to divert some of their container line sailing routes to pass via the Cape of Good Hope rather than the Suez Canal in light of the sharp drop in oil prices, where longer sailing routes are less expensive. Although the Suez Canal Authority announced a package of reductions in the Canal crossing fees to attract international transport lines, but the impact of these measures has not yet shown its effects on the decisions of international companies.

inevitable reduction in the volume of foreign currency reserve, and the second is stabilizing the Egyptian pound's exchange rate to contain inflation rates with the possible maximum capacity without chaos, and returning back to the memories of 2015 and 2016. Not to mention the prevention of the occurrence of some kind of "dollarization" in the Egyptian market, which imposes taking great care of the sources of the flow of the available foreign exchange revenues, especially exports, the most important of which are exports to the European market, which almost represent the main artery for the success of this difficult equation.

In light of the pandemic that has swept the world, the ongoing transformations in the European Union countries in order to find a way out of the crisis seem to be important, so that these transformations may be taken into account when we deal with Egypt's main trading and investment partner. It seems noticeable in this context, the approach taken by Germany specifically to adjust its industrial transformation structures, as one of the lessons learned from the pandemic; with German industrial activities focusing on meeting the needs of the German market first. Taking into account that "industrial transformation" needs more time and programs to qualify and train workers to adapt them to new manufacturing models as well as having a strong capital to purchase new manufacturing supplies and equipment, in addition to the EU's endeavor to maintain multilateral frameworks, to face the counter-movements of the current U.S. administration, as an attempt to fill the void created by the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as well as the Union's endeavors to establish an interim arbitration mechanism at the World Trade Organization as an

interim alternative to the Appellate Body of the WTO dispute settlement system and to contain its attempt to undermine the authority of the WTO represented by the Appellate Body which is the only guarantor for the enforcement of the provisions of the agreements establishing the multilateral trading system, in addition to attempting to contain China's influential trade and political expansion.

- The crisis also proved that Egypt should benefit from using the expected trend of international economic companies and institutions to gradually move away from focusing on locating their sites in China and to redistribute production sites and stages in separate geographical areas to allow for the maximum degree of flexibility. This can be achieved by developing the capabilities of the Egyptian economy, and working towards localizing and deepening the industry to attract foreign direct capital and investment to the country; as they will search for sites other than China with alternative production chains, taking into account the existence of competitors in the region, such as Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE as well as from outside the region, especially from the Asian continent, such as Vietnam and Cambodia.

- In connection with the above, it is important to diversify the investment and finance portfolios within the structure of the Egyptian economy by reducing the intensity of foreign investments> focus on the sectors of securities, debt instruments and fossil energy, and also to reduce focusing government investments, as well as the financing packages and the financial facilities provided by the banking system on the real estate sector. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the risks of the payment

facilities that real estate development companies in the Egyptian market adopt, which sometimes exceed 12 years and more, and thus playing a similar role to that of the banks without having the tools of analysis and evaluation possessed by the banking system that determines if a client is eligible. This poses the threat of bubble creation, which could affect the stability of the whole banking system if the repercussions of the current crisis are added to that.

Fifth: Conclusions:

- Perhaps the Union is fortunate that the unprecedented global and European crisis has been violently knocking its doors while being led by a capable elite group, which is well aware of the facts of the current moment and the future challenges; Germany is headed by Angela Merkel, who regards the EU as the impregnable fortress of Germany and its interests, and France is led by Emmanuel Macron, who adheres to the European project to achieve his national and European aspirations. Moreover, a competent and ambitious German figure is at the head of the commission and who is seeking to shift the European Union towards geostrategic levels, and the European Central Bank is headed by a distinguished French figure having high economic and monetary experiences, all of which have given the EU ship a good leadership in the midst of a sea hit by successive crises and uncertainties.

- Despite the catastrophic consequences of COVID-19 pandemic on the whole world, it could provide Egypt with a rare opportunity to bring about radical changes in the concepts and means of running the Egyptian state and prepare it to join, with new competency, a new world economy and a different interna-

tional system. In this regard, the importance of the economic reform program that preceded the pandemic is highlighted, without which the Egyptian economy could not have withstood the first shock of the pandemic; which could be the starting point; not only in deepening and continuing reform, but, more importantly, in the application of “fresh thinking” with respect to the fields of industrialization, export, agriculture, irrigation, health, education and societal culture of the Egyptian citizens, establishing good governance, and laying the scientific and technological foundations for a new world governed by digitization, the green system, e-commerce and other tools of the contemporary world.

- The Egyptian government’s urgent task during the next stage is to develop the competitiveness of Egyptian goods and services to diversify and increase the destinations of the Egyptian exports, while seeking to increase the current market shares of Egyptian exports to European markets for the continuous flow of dollar revenues into the arteries of the Egyptian economy.

- The high priority given by the international community to the environmental dimension and changing consumption, production and nutrition patterns supports the view of some studies that the current method of industrial and food production adopted by humans is one of the causes of viral biological structure mutations, including the coronavirus, and perhaps humanity will witness other, more vicious strains if life patterns continue as they are.

- Under pressure whose effects are similar to those of world wars, the international relations system and international institutions may experience significant changes in the concepts,

tools and priorities of international relations, existing alliances and regional arrangements, in addition to the emergence of the health-care field, which is expected to be of particular importance as a fundamental human right.

- In connection with the above, the whole world will remain to be captive to the US-China conflict for quite some time after overcoming the first wave of the pandemic, and the future of the multilateral system, including the existing international economic and trade system, will remain to be held hostage to the outcome of this conflict and perhaps one of its victims, and the transition to new rules of the international system similar to what was achieved after the First and Second World Wars. In this context, the “positive” effect of the possibility of a Democratic President winning the White House should not be overlooked, who is expected to adopt policies which would differ from that of the U.S. administration and to mend the current rift within the structure of the multilateral system; a shift which will contribute, in case it happens, as well as restoring the alliance between the two shores of the Atlantic to its normal state, and giving priority to environmental and other issues, which in turn provides a favorable international environment for European institutions to continue implementing their new priorities; most notably, the green and digital transitions.

Repercussions of the Coronavirus at the Arab World

**Ambassador/ Sayed Abu Zeid Omar- Member of the
Board Member of ECFA**

Preface:

We should admit that some states in the Arab region are going through situations that make them unable to face this pandemic. Regardless of the numbers of infections being reported therein, as these numbers vary in their veracity; as bloody confrontations, and disruption of internal situations, do not allow access to the real figures. Not all Arab states deal with this pandemic with the same sense of its seriousness. Not all of them have the same capabilities for confrontation. It is enough to compare the capabilities of the UAE and Yemen.

In light of the fact that each state is acting alone without much coordination with the other States, even the neighbouring ones; the role of the League of Arab States in confronting the pandemic has been confined **to the following in particular:**

1. An appeal by the Secretary-General of the League to stop wars and armed conflicts so as to direct efforts towards combatting the pandemic. In this context, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States wrote an article in Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper on the occasion of the diamond anniversary of the League of Arab States on March 22, that included reference to “the simmering crises” facing some Arab countries (including Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon and Somalia). Indicating that these dangerous humanitarian situations are a symptom

of the underlying ailment, namely, the persistence of conflicts. Adding that the time has come for silencing the guns with which compatriots kill each other, especially since the current situation in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic renders the continuation of such conflicts a sort of futility. We are now in great need for the value of joint collective action, as ambition is still ahead of reality and what is hoped for is much greater than what has been achieved.

2. During the 53rd regular session of the Arab Council of Health Ministers in Cairo on February 27, the issue of tackling the novel coronavirus pandemic was discussed. **A statement was issued by the meeting, which included the following in particular:**

❖ Convening an emergency expert-level meeting to review preparedness, as well as monitoring and sharing experiences on combatting the virus, which is to be held in the second week of March (a meeting not yet held).

❖ Announcing solidarity with China and supporting the efforts exerted by its government to fight the pandemic. The statement also hailed China's open approach in cooperation and the transparency over means of combating the outbreak of the pandemic. It also praised the "proactive steps" taken by China to confront the disease, emphasizing confidence in the capabilities of China in overcoming this ordeal.

❖ The importance of coordinating Arab efforts to combat the virus and enhancing joint Arab work based on a clear methodology for addressing this disease. The statement stressed the importance of applying preventive measures and procedures that would reduce infection rates, taking into account the guidance

and scientific evidence published by WHO for dealing with the virus at the global and the state levels.

The turbulent political reality in the region poses many questions about its ability to settle its problems that are known to everyone, cure its bleeding wounds which grieves us all, as well as the possibility of dedicating time to facing this pandemic as being a humanitarian disaster, finding solutions to the economic and social problems that will arise, considering the changes that might follow such global situations, and the means of adapting to them. But all of this would take place in the absence of the will to implement joint Arab action, as well as the weak medical, scientific, economic and security capabilities.

Political and Security Repercussions:

The Arab region has been plagued by bad neighbors filled with greed and hatred, as well as wreaking havoc on the region, and they do not care much about the lives of the people therein. Since the so-called Islamic revolution, Iran has made exporting this revolution to the Islamic world its main objective; spending most of its income from oil, which God has blessed it with, for this purpose by providing its proponents and supporters in neighboring countries with money and weapons to achieve control over the resources of these countries, or at least influence their policies and orientations. Recent statements have even been made by some Iranian officials stating that Tehran has seized control over the fortunes of a number of Arab capitals. This was not going on in peace with the extension of Iran's direct and indirect influence in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon. The fear of Iran has grown as it has become obvious that Iran is seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction in addition

to its interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours. The situation has become more complicated by the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal (the nuclear deal is an agreement between Iran and what's called the P5+1 (the US, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany)) and re-impose sanctions against Iran to force it to return back to negotiations on its nuclear capabilities once more.

On the otherside, Turkey stands with all its dreams of restoring the Ottoman Caliphate and its ambitions for Arab lands; and continuing its blatant military intervention in the Libyan affair, based on the two agreements (which are already facing a credibility challenge) concluded with Fayez Al-Sarraj, Head of the Libyan Presidential Council, as well as supplying militias with weapons, and sending several thousands of Syrian mercenaries to confront the Libyan National Army (LNA) within the framework of its endeavour to control the capital and unify the country. Turkey also continues its military intervention in the north of both Iraq and Syria, under the pretext of establishing a security zone to prevent Kurdish PKK fighters of the opposing Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from operating on Turkish soil. Moreover, Turkey has been hostile towards Egypt after overthrowing the Muslim Brotherhood and entrenching national governance, in addition to its success in confronting Turkey's ambitions to exploit Mediterranean gas fields.

It is worth noting that Israel's ambitions in regard to Palestine are evident. The latest projects, foremost among them is the so-called Deal of the Century, can only be described as a cruel liquidation of the Palestinian cause, which is taking place gradually, starting with the annexation of the Jordan Valley and a part

of the West Bank. And Israel gives itself the right to bombard what it sees as a threat to its full control of the Golan Heights, and hitting Iranian fighters in Syria. As Israel has declared its clear intention of ending Iranian presence in Syria.

Moreover, the matter does not stop at this point, but has reached a state of deterioration that has rendered the region, for its most part, open to violation by all international powers, as well as by extremism and terrorism in all its forms, foremost of which is ISIS, that has started to become active in the rural areas of Syria and Iraq, taking advantage of the entire world's preoccupation with the pandemic. It is well known that some countries, such as Turkey and Qatar, protect, support, cooperate and coordinate with them. I believe that such destructive forces do not care much about the negative effects of the pandemic; which would be deemed to weaken the confrontation efforts against it.

Despite the calls and appeals by the UN Secretary-General and his envoys for conflict areas to stop fighting in order to take full time to face this humanitarian tragedy. Some parties took unilateral initiatives to stop fighting, and even a country like Yemen was exposed to floods that affected thousands of people. However, this did not alleviate the exaggeration made by parties in conflict areas. But their disunity and intolerance have been growing further. The situation in Yemen has even reached up to the unilateral declaration of autonomous rule in the south. While in the north, the Houthis have further hardened their stance under Iran's support.

Economic Repercussions:

Governments have no choice but to resort to the social distancing formula as the primary means of fighting the spread of

the pandemic, as long as the world has not reached an effective treatment or immunization, and which demanded the cessation or suppression of economic life, as well as taking measures that might reach up to isolation, imposition of curfews, and stopping means of transportation. The Arab Thought Foundation says that the international institutions concerned, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, expect a worldwide economic recession, though at varying rates from one country to another, ranging between 6 and 12% of current GDP rates depending on the duration of this crisis (And of course such rates would increase if the duration is prolonged). For its part, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that the sectors most vulnerable to the repercussions of the crisis would be focused in specific areas, the most important of which are: food, tourism, entertainment, industry, construction and trade in general, as more than one third of the world's total labor force work in those fields, half of whom lack protection or social insurance.

An unprecedented rise in unemployment rates is expected to be between 15 and 20% of the total labor force, which ranges from double to triple the rates in the wake of the crisis, with the resulting increase in poverty rates. This would be in addition to the already difficult global economic conditions; which brings to mind the Great Depression of 1929.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) also expects the numbers of the undernourished to increase to 52 million people, and a total of 101.4 million people in the region will be classified as below the poverty line, which are poised to increase with its persis-

tence. The consequences of this crisis are particularly severe for vulnerable groups, especially women, youth and private sector workers who do not benefit from social protection systems (especially daily employment). The commission also expected that the GDP of Arab countries will decrease by no less than 42 billion dollars this year due to falling oil prices and consequences of the pandemic.

This period witnesses a sharp increase in public spending on matters that have not been taken into account, foremost among them the items related to health, precautionary measures, and unemployment benefits appropriations resorted to by some Arab countries (including Egypt), especially daily labor and the expenses of returning expatriates. Adding to that are the costs of quarantine which will necessarily exacerbate deficits, public debt, and erosion of the monetary reserve (from \$45 billion to \$37 billion so far in Egypt), bearing in mind that the current crisis differs from others in the current situation, as governments were the ones that agreed to freeze economic activity.

As for the Gulf states, it is noted that unemployment and loss of income will have a lower impact on Gulf citizens than foreign workers, most of whom work in the private sector.

It was natural for the demand for oil to drop dramatically with the outbreak of the pandemic, disruption of aviation traffic, slowing economic activity and restrictions on movement, leading to the collapse in its prices. After the painstaking negotiations on April 12, 2020, OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and other independent oil producers led by Russia, managed to conclude an agreement to reduce production, which is expected to contribute to reducing the sup-

ply glut and global inventory accumulations. Oil markets show some positive indicators, especially if industrial activities and transportation movement are resumed, which could have a positive return on prices starting from the third quarter of this year. The United States is expected to cooperate to maintain price balance, as U.S. shale oil producers match their production prices within the range of 40-50 dollars a barrel.

Medical and Health Conditions in the Region:

The Arab world did not stay away from the pandemic for a long time, for it has gradually spread to reach all its parts, as most Arab countries are open to the sources of virus transmission and its main hotbeds, such as China, Italy, France, U.S. and Iran, due to tourism and trade movement, and also as millions of Asian and Arab workers flock to the Gulf countries. While it was clear that most health systems in the Arab world have not been at the desired level, as health development indicators in most countries were low according to global standards. It is worth noting here that the health and medical infrastructure differ among countries of the region in terms of budgets allocated to health, equipment, facilities and medical staff, as well as varying in their population, size and economic capabilities, which are considered to be important factors in the response to the virus. The Gulf countries, Egypt and Jordan are highly ranked according to the global ranking for the quality of health care, and other countries like Algeria, Lebanon and Tunisia have good medical capabilities. While on the other hand, there are other countries that are among the worst countries in the world with regards to their health care system due to wars, ruined infrastructure and economic collapse.

On the ground, the index shows that most Arab countries occupy globally lower ranks and suffer weak capabilities that affect their ability to detect diseases, control them, and rapidly respond to health emergencies, as well as having gaps in their health systems, which may affect their readiness to face the spread of the pandemic. In fact, the majority of the most efficient health systems in the world were unable to keep pace with the large waves of infection with the virus in terms of the number of hospital beds, the number of doctors and nurses, as well as resuscitation and intensive care systems, and it became clear to them that health sector budgets are less than necessary to cope with the pandemic. Global Health spending rates constitute 9.9% of GDP, compared with 4.91% in the Arab world, while the worldwide average per capita health expenditures amount to 1,095 U.S. dollars, compared with less than half of that amount for Arab countries. World Bank and World Health Organization statistics, in addition to figures issued by the health ministries of Arab countries, indicate the fragility of the health sector infrastructure in the Arab world.

This reality raises questions about the ability of Arab countries to face a long conflict with the coronavirus, the availability of appropriate health systems, medical and financial capabilities to avoid more severe situations if the pandemic is aggravated and its duration is prolonged.

It is worth noting, according to a report by ESCWA on the rates of water availability which has become a necessity to resist this pandemic, that about 87 million people (out of the total Arab world population of approximately 400 million people) do not have access to water in their places of residence, nor is the

water supply to homes sufficient in 10 countries out of 22 Arab countries.

Expectations and Recommendations:

There has been widespread talk about the post (Covid-19) pandemic world, and the possibility of structural changes occurring in the current pattern of globalization, the capitalistic world, and the future of its relationship with regimes, as well as expecting a transition to lesser form of globalization, as compared to the current pattern of globalization, which is likely to be mutual or bilateral and more balanced. Moreover, the trend towards protectionism, reining in international monopolies and multinational corporations, and the revival of the nation state, is likely to increase. Furthermore, it is likely that there will be an increase in moving towards higher added value productive economies, as well as an increase in moving towards industrial and technological production, development of national food industries, and giving special attention to health infrastructure and education.

This is perhaps the most appropriate time for an Arab collective effort to take place, the focus of which would be on finding appropriate solutions to the Arab confrontations, effectively stopping the bloodshed without external interference, or at least freezing those which are hard to solve, coordinating collective efforts to combat this pandemic, and unifying Arab scientific efforts to share the world its research on effective medicines. It is not reasonable for everyone in our Arab world to wait for someone to offer treatment from abroad and then get paid exaggerated prices for that. The group should also pay attention to the financial and nutritional conditions among member states,

some of whom have reached the threshold of “a failed state”; in other words, reaching bankruptcy. And finally, we must participate in foreseeing the expected and possible situations after this pandemic ends in order to take them into account.

Regional Situations And Crises In The Light Of (COVID-19)

**Ambassador/ Dr. Mohamed Badr-aldine Zayed-
Member of ECFA**

This paper discusses an important premise that deserves academic and practical attention with regard to the overlap of crises, or specifically with regard to management of interactions of an existing crisis in light of the variables stemming from the emergence of a new crisis.

It is possible in this regard to say that there are two main narratives, which can be considered to be compatible with human nature. **The first narrative would be:** Freezing the management of a certain crisis with the purpose of dedicating the full time to managing a larger or more pressing crisis which is more affected by time pressure; the parties to the crisis may voluntarily or coercively agree upon that. **And the second one would be:** All crises continue to be interactive, either because one of the parties considers the pressures of the other crisis to be a supporting element for achieving better gains, or because the conflict is so complex and overlapping that it is difficult to ignore the exigencies of its management in light of the other crisis.

In the case of our topic, the COVID-19 crisis emerged with its special nature and its resulting repercussions at the international level as well as within all world countries; due to which normal life has been upended. At the regional level, this has emerged under multiple complex hotbeds of conflict in more than one

place; in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, as well as Palestine, and in addition to another battleground in Lebanon.

It is worth mentioning that with the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis outbreak, Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit called for stopping armed conflicts in the region, and the dedication of its peoples time to combat the COVID 19 pandemic. Then the UN Secretary General followed him with a comprehensive global appeal; the two appeals as well as others fall within the first narrative. **The next presentation will address, with a degree of brevity and focus, the situations of conflict dossiers and regional crises, and the extent to which they have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Firstly: The Libyan Crisis

It is first noted that the COVID-19 crisis outbreak occurred during a phase of ambiguity and hidden escalation in Libya. According to arrangements of the Berlin conference held last January, a ceasefire was supposed to take effect and negotiations were to be initiated within the framework of a joint military committee between the two sides of the armed conflict, namely, the Libyan army and the Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayez Al-Sarraj. This committee has been constituted with great difficulty, as a large number of the GNA forces belong to extremist militias, including ISIS Syrian fighters transferred by Turkey. Such communications did not achieve any progress in this regard. It was also assumed that serious measures were to be implemented to prohibit the transfer of weapons and individuals to Libya, but this did not happen. Situations were initially characterized by some semblance to a state of preparation for

a new escalation rather than a genuine truce, and there is much evidence that Turkey continues to move extremists and weapons to Libya. Following a period of cease-fire violation and exchanging accusations, fighting and hit-and-run tactics around the capital Tripoli and a number of cities in the western region returned. With the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, calls emerged for a ceasefire and for starting a political process amid warnings against the danger of virus spread under situations of turmoil in Libya. However, what happened was exactly the opposite with the Turkish side taking advantage of global and European preoccupation in particular, to accelerate the transfer of more extremists and weapons, attempting to resolve the military conflict to the benefit of its political Islamist allies. This was facilitated by the fact that Libya was one of the countries least affected by the Coronavirus in the north of the continent. Paradoxically, with evidence of GNA's improving position in the battles, Haftar's initiatives conflicted with initiatives proposed by the House of Representatives. While Chairman of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh, announced an initiative calling for the creation of a new Presidential Council, which did not receive any response from Al-Sarraj party, Haftar came out declaring the end of his recognition for the Skhirat Agreement, and announcing that he received a popular mandate to rule the country. Evidence suggested by external reactions indicate that Haftar's move was not in coordination with most of his foreign allies, as well as inside Libya. However, Aguila Saleh stated on this May 2 that he is in regular contact with Haftar to relatively reduce the existence of sharp disagreements within this front. However, the entire scene during the first Coronavirus phase

indicates that Turkey has exploited the world's preoccupation with COVID-19 to expand its intervention in Libya. Not only that, but world countries have also used the crisis to hide their weak responses to a Turkish intervention stemming from a strategic vision considered to be the most crystallized in the face of the stances of most parties.

On the other hand, Al-Sarraj's announcement of accepting the return to the political process, and the truce announced by Haftar, all of which might be some introductions that are still under development for the revival of a political process, which perhaps might have been motivated by the parties' realization of the inability to resolve the military issue or for remobilization and allowing breathing room during the month of Ramadan, followed by the resumption of fighting once more. In all cases, the Libyan scene does not stop interacting until the preparation of this paper.

The main conclusion in this scene with respect to what might be related to the COVID-19 crisis remains to be that the Turkish player has chosen escalation and exploitation of the world's preoccupation with this crisis for further expansion and escalation in Libya till the first week of this month; in response to which the meeting of the foreign ministers of Egypt, France, UAE, Greece and Cyprus was convened. We will need time to determine how much will the extent of change in the situation be in the coming short period. However, it remains important to take into account Erdogan's political behavior and that this move towards Libya is largely consistent with this pattern of behavior, in terms of insistence on following his strategic vision and his ability to mobilize national resources to serve such vision.

Secondly: The Syrian crisis

The main observation here, is the continuing large degree of stagnation that characterized the conflict or dispute in Syria before the Coronavirus outbreak. With reference to the dramatic escalation of the conflict in Idlib, Turkey's direct confrontation with Syria and Russia, and deterioration of situations into the risks of costly and dangerous military confrontations that could lead to uncontrollable slippage of situations; relatively fragile temporary arrangements have been reached that include recognition of temporary Turkish presence till the resumption of joint patrols. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, this stalemate has been perpetuated, infused with warnings of fears regarding the spread of the virus in Syria, especially in the displaced persons camps, which suffer a lot of difficult living conditions. All this was accompanied by new talk of Russian criticism of President Assad's performance, which was interpreted by some sources as Russian economic demands and pressure against partnership with Iran. In general, there is no place here for the in-depth discussion of the denotations of the current Syrian crisis and its current dynamics, but rather it is for finding out the position of the other crisis. It is assumed that the most influential factors are related to Turkey's desire to be more focused on the Libyan front, and the uncertainty of Russia, along with Syria, of the timing of mobilizing the conflict and tightening the noose around Turkey at the current stage. The aim here might be to provide implicit Russian-Turkish arrangements to transfer the largest number of extremist militias or the Turkish reserve army to Libya so as to facilitate the task of Turkey's retreat or saving face by achieving a victory, even a tactical one,

in Libya, which would ease the situation of its retreat before Russia in Syria. In conclusion, it is difficult so far to link the logic of the Syrian crisis interactions with the COVID-19 crisis, and that the determinants of the crisis in addition to its own dynamics are the ones governing developments so far. One final matter remains with respect to Syria, which is the expansion of Israeli military operations against Iranian targets, where the Coronavirus issue represents an opportunity for both Syria and Iran to conceal their weak responses to Israeli aggressions amid the world's preoccupation with the pandemic.

Thirdly: The Iraq Crisis:

It can be summarized the interactions of the Iraqi situations in a number of dimensions:

First dimension: There exists a U.S.-Iran competition in Iraq, and the U.S. withdrawal, which began with accelerated steps, precipitates a total imbalance, in Iraq, in favor of Iran.

Second dimension: Continuation of the Sunni-Shi'ite polarization, but with very slow interactions.

Third dimension: The state of political stalemate, the regime's inability to achieve political stability and social peace, along with the widespread corruption since the occupation of Iraq, as well as the destruction of its national institutions, and the promotion of sectarian polarization; all of which have triggered the wave of protests and delayed the formation of government for several months until Mustafa Al-Kadhimi has been recently appointed.

COVID-19 crisis emerged under such dimensions and only resulted in stopping protests and gatherings. With the continuing state of political paralysis, the extent of Kadhimi's ability

to overcome it will be revealed after a while. Moreover, with the continuation of the U.S. withdrawal, ISIS returned back to the scene once more. Contrary to the belief that such return was due to the preoccupation with the COVID- 19 crisis, we believe that this has been nurtured by the environment of continued political polarization and frustration in the Iraqi society, and that it has been based on an attempt to fill the gap resulting from the U.S. withdrawal. It is possible to say, in association with this, that the Iraqi situation has continued its repercussions which are derived from the variables and determinants of the crisis itself, and that the main consequence of the COVID-19 crisis was ending demonstrations and popular protest, without extending to providing better opportunities for a new national dialogue that overcomes the crisis. This is related to the persistence of same determinants and variables before and after the coronavirus, and their failure to produce new effectors sufficient enough to move the complex situation.

Fourthly: Yemen Crisis:

As is the case with all ongoing conflicts; at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, calls were launched for warning against its risks under the deteriorating health and living conditions in Yemen. And in this regard, the Saudi-led coalition announced a ceasefire initiative. But the Houthis responded by firing a number of missiles towards Saudi Arabia. This again provoked negative international reactions, with the return of the fragile ceasefire atmosphere which reflects that reaching an achievable political settlement is not close, but rather reflecting the inability of any of the parties to the conflict to resolve issues, with the Houthis tak-

ing control of the capital and many strategic centers. On the other hand, the legitimate government, which has recently suffered a severe setback, has retreated, along with the rush of the Southern Transitional Council to take steps towards separation and transferring the hotbed of the conflict in Yemen to new dimensions. Once again, the repercussions of the Yemeni scene seem to be unrelated to the COVID-19 crisis as they are the product of the repercussions of the Yemeni crisis itself and its complex paths.

Fifthly: The Palestinian Cause

The Palestinian situation presents a different model compared to most previous models, after Netanyahu's failed attempts to form the Israeli government after holding three elections, having marginal result differences, the last of which was the third round in which Netanyahu succeeded in obtaining the largest bloc, but which was not sufficient for achieving a comfortable majority. Then the second bloc, led by Benny Gantz, failed to achieve a sufficient majority, and an attempt to form a coalition government was assigned to Netanyahu and Gantz on the pretext of the need for an emergency government to confront the Coronavirus pandemic, whereas rounds of negotiations failed between the two sides. This was followed by Gantz's representatives announcing that the reason behind that was due to the Likud's goals which were not directed towards reaching an agreement on the formation of a coalition government under the pretext of COVID-19 crisis, but was rather to find a formula that saves Netanyahu from trial; and in this regard, their conditions revolved around dissolution of the Knesset in the event of issuance of a Supreme Court order that would bar Netanyahu from acting as head of government or

a court ruling preventing him from assuming premiership. Likud also submitted a request for Basic Law amendment so that the Supreme Court would abstain from discussing the issue of suspending a government minister's mandate on the basis of his being indicted. Moreover, Likud requested to appoint three members in the judiciary committee, and by revealing the truth about the deal and its failure, the efforts to form a government returned to the Knesset; then to surprise the world less than 48 hours later, by announcing the formation of an emergency government, the real title of which would be the rescue of Netanyahu and passing his plan to annex new parts of the West Bank that may reach up to its one third. In fact, tracking Gantz's behavior since his participation in the Trump-Netanyahu "Deal of the Century" conference, as well as attempting to conceal his real stances on the peace process, and demonstrating fake tolerance towards Arab Israelis and the attempts to compromise; indicate that political opportunism is the main driver of Gantz, and that the Coronavirus issue that was used as a cover and justification for this coalition government is no more than a pretext to conceal such transformations. This has been confirmed by the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo on May 13 to encourage the establishment of the coalition government, which confirms that this step is fully under the auspices of the U.S.A, as if liquidation of the cause was more of a U.S. concern than of an Israeli one.

Conclusion:

The following can be found through reading the developments on the map of regional conflicts:

1. In general, the developments of such conflicts have taken

place so far within the context of their own parameters and influencing factors. The two examples in which the impact of the COVID-19 crisis has been revealed to a certain degree are Libya and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the Libyan case, the Coronavirus pandemic represented an opportunity for Turkey in light of the world's preoccupation during the first stage, prior to the Five-States Joint Statement issued by France, Greece, Egypt, UAE and Cyprus. In the case of Israel, it was just the smokescreen behind which lies the plans of the Israeli political actors to move forward with the Palestinian cause liquidation plan.

2. In this way, Coronavirus has played a role which is more like the role of a cover and saving face in some of the above-mentioned situations of regional conflicts, and the Libyan model remains the most affected by the Coronavirus variable that influenced conflict balances at an earlier stage, and we still need time to find out the changes that have taken place therein.

3. It was also notable that the impact of the COVID-19 crisis was not following the same pace with respect to regional crises; in other words, it varied from one period to another during the time of the study.

4. The ongoing regional conflicts must be viewed from a comprehensive strategic perspective, and a major number of players are engaged in the conflict in light of the map of the entire regional balances and are looking forwards to the gains that can be achieved within the framework of such comprehensive view.

5. Finally, the fact that the previous analysis extends back to mid-May should be taken into account, as the impact of protracted crises such as COVID-19 may have additional repercussions and effects that become apparent over time.

The Pandemic And Its Regional Extensions: The case of Africa

**Ambassador/ Ahmed Hajjaj- Chair of the Egyptian
Bagwash Association and Member of ECFA**

Introduction:

- 1- The world has been surprised since last January by a global invasion that included all corners of the globe. There were no prior preludes to this sudden invasion, which included all continents, all states, and their various villages and even all parts of the globe. It took no account of the existing governments, did not recognize the borders between states, and did not get a visa that would permit them to enter, even by way of a stealthy escape.
- 2- This pandemic is one of the main causes of spreading panic and fear among humans, and at the same time making them slightly humbled after believing that they have controlled the world, invaded the moon and space, as well as having been able to develop massive nuclear and military capabilities that never miss any sign of hostility anywhere in the world.
- 3- This pandemic has also threatened the economies of all rich and poor states, and there is a great specter of a stifling unemployment in all countries, as well as a reduction in their exports and imports. It also changed people's behavior, and revealed the hidden sentiments of populism, xenophobia, and the phenomenon of racism has also increased, etc.
- 4- This pandemic has also shown how fragile some, if not all, capitalist systems are; as their untrained health systems suf-

fering from shortage of health equipment were found to be poor in the face of a pandemic; on the other hand, most developing countries have submitted to this devastating pandemic for which they possess nothing worth mentioning to resist it with.

5- Why Africa? Because this large continent having a population of 1300 million people was once regarded as an example of non-transparency, corruption, dictatorship, and lack of manpower, especially medical doctors, and everyone expected the pandemic to spread therein very rapidly in a much greater manner than in rich countries. Since Egypt is its part which abuts the Arab world, with which Africa is geographically, humanly and economically linked; therefore, the spread of the pandemic in Africa will harm Egypt and the Arab world.

6- Egypt and its presidency have been alert to the repercussions of such pandemic and participated in the relevant meetings at an earlier stage. President Al-Sisi participated in two urgent meetings for the African summit and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, in which he called for the necessity of interlacing all international efforts to combat this epidemic. Egypt has even sent some shipments of medicines and health equipment to some rich countries, emphasizing that this pandemic has become universal and requires solidarity among all world countries, as there is no country that can face it alone. In recent years, Egypt used to provide many African states with the necessary vaccines and train African health personnel for their various institutes.

Africa

1- This pandemic poses a life challenge for Africa, which for hundreds of years, used to be the home of all major epi-

demics witnessed by humanity; from cholera to malaria, AIDS, Ebola, tuberculosis, measles and poliomyelitis, which claim millions of people's lives every year.

2- The world expected the virus to spread fiercely and with a frightening speed all over the continent, exceeding other continents; yet, it was surprised that the extent of infections in some of its states was much less than that witnessed, for example, by the European states and the US.

3- Africa has previously witnessed attempts through the Organization of African Unity and the AU in cooperation with the UN and WHO to resist such widespread and endemic epidemics all over the continent and achieved some successes, though partial in this regard, but they could not eliminate any of them. This is due to lack of experience on the one hand and lack of financial resources on the other. But mainly due to the lack of sufficient political will to mobilize locally available resources, address all State organs and mobilize people; since this is the key test of economic, educational and social progress and for lifting many Africans out of extreme poverty. Also, cooperation among African States themselves has not been enough to implement the plans that are agreed upon with every sincerity and seriousness. Some have been hiding behind the claims of sovereignty over their territory to block any implementation of such plans across borders, and have continuously argued that they do not have the necessary financial resources.

4- Many African peoples had a low view of their governments, and there was not much conviction that such governments could care for and provide adequate health care to their people. Some of these states only had very few doctors at the

time of, and even long after, their independence. Which by the way is something that the former colonialists were keen about and emphasized it by working towards avoiding the enrollment of Africans in universities - if any - to study medical sciences. The number of hospitals and health centers in Africa was at its lowest, in addition to the high price of medicine, if any, as well as mainly relying on folk prescriptions in the absence of any health insurance systems.

5- The initial reactions to the emergence of this epidemic have been either by denying its existence in the first place or believing that it will not affect them for being away from its source, or due to the reluctance to take any decisive and preventive measures in advance on the grounds that it will end shortly or soon. These states have balked at getting prepared for this pandemic, as for example trying to obtain the necessary medical equipment such as face masks and ventilators, or preparing enough places for isolation and early detection, taking measures for performing comprehensive medical examination and follow-up, as well as minimizing citizens' criticisms or educating them not to mingle directly . They were even too late in closing the borders and stopping the departure and arrival of foreign and international flights, etc.

6- Although there is an African center for the follow-up of infection and epidemics under the AU and WHO, but African Governments have not shown sufficient interest in that center, its recommendations, or in urging it to run adequate training programs. This center has innovated what is called the Africa Comprehensive Plan for addressing any emergence of a major epidemic. African leaders even devoted a special summit in

Abuja, Nigeria, in 2001, to focus on health affairs in Africa, and issued a special declaration calling on all governments to allocate at least 15% of their national income to the health sector; but unfortunately, most of these governments ignored these recommendations and considered them to be a mere non-binding declaration.

7- The evidence for this was the experiences of some African countries in the fight against the Ebola epidemic which has mostly failed, due to the belief of some that this was particularly confined to the West African region and did not spread throughout the rest of the continent. This has been extended to an indifference towards the spread of AIDS in a large number of African countries as being a strange disease manufactured by Western countries, or to the spread of malaria, which claims the lives of millions of people in the continent every year. This was accompanied by the persistence of unhealthy and primitive habits, as well as not giving attention to hygiene and hand washing, in addition to the indifference on the part of Governments and peoples as well. Nor did the AU have any early-warning system that could alert governments to the possibilities and timing of the emergence of such epidemics, which would give them some time to prepare themselves and alert their populations. It is worth noting that Africa has, since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, an operational organ for the forecast of conflicts and crises.

8- African economies are expected to fall by at least 20% of their national income as a result of the emergence of that virus, with the impact of the international financial crisis which is expected to hit all world countries, and that will significantly

affect the foreign trade of at least 15 African countries; which is mainly confined to exporting raw materials and oil, whose prices, in record, have abruptly fallen, as well as the end or decline of revenues from tourism and transfers of expatriate remittances to their countries, which have been considered one of the most important sources of governments funding so far. All of these issues come in a stage of increasing risks of famine in several parts of the continent and a growing import bill for food products and various commodities from abroad. Such situations are aggravated by the spread of massive waves of locust in several regions of the continent, especially in East Africa, which will be a main cause for the occurrence of disasters that would affect agricultural production in these countries.

9- Such difficult situations will be aggravated by announcing the postponement of implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is supposed to allow the entry of African goods and services across borders without any customs duties or administrative obstacles, and the agreement was expected to enter into force next July.

10- As mentioned earlier, there are questions all over the world about the reasons for the lower spread of the virus in Africa than in other different regions of the world. Although Western experts and WHO believe that Africa will witness a major wave of epidemic spread in the near future. It was said that the reason for the decline in the rate of infections is mainly attributed to the late arrival of the epidemic and not to the response of governments, with claims that infections are much higher than that announced by African governments, which lack organized statistical agencies, in addition to the continued presence of millions of

refugees and displaced persons in Africa not receiving any health care or education, and governments do not pay them attention, especially in Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and Burkina Faso, as well as the continuation of armed African conflicts, and the increased terrorist operations that are trying to exploit the pandemic outbreak situations.

11- Some theories have emerged trying to explain the little number of people infected with Coronavirus in Africa, the most important of which was that the epidemic did not originate from within the continent but rather from its outside, even from some European tourists who were visiting Africa and were carriers of the disease. Africa's population is 17% of the world's population, but its share of infections so far does not exceed 1.1 % of total global infections, in addition to having a low mortality rate. Another study says that the epidemic in South Africa, for example, will reach its peak beyond next September, i.e. to coincide with the beginning of winter months, as it usually thrives under cold conditions, as happens with the seasonal flu epidemic every year, which begins with the onset of winter. Another reason in their opinion is that the pandemic cannot spread in high temperatures or survive under sunlight. Also some British researches suggest that respiratory diseases are less prevalent in hot and dry areas. But the experts of the Pasteur Institute in Paris do not share this view.

12- Another reason not yet fully proven is that the majority of Africa's population is made up of young people, who have greater immunity, which they might have acquired from the immunizations they have received during their childhood; such as

malaria, measles, and tuberculosis. Moreover, the number of the elderly population in Africa is much lower than in European countries and countries of the North in general, where prevails the phenomenon of the growing proportion of elderly population who cost their countries large sums of money in order to care for them, since their immunization is much less as evidenced by the increased numbers of their deaths in health care centers. Another reason is saying that Africans travel less than do other people in the world. But all such theories are not yet confirmed.

13- Amidst all such positive and negative speculations, a WHO report was recently published, expecting 190 thousand deaths and 10 million infections to happen in Africa in the coming twelve and six months respectively. The organization also expects the persistence of the pandemic in Africa for many years, and here health systems in a large number of countries on the continent will not be able to be in a situation that would enable them to face the increasing numbers of infections. The report recommends that African states focus on attempting pandemic containment rather than trying to concentrate all efforts on its eradication, which will be extremely costly to a great extent. Africa also lacks the capabilities or resources needed to carry out the necessary and rapid investigations for detecting the infection, as the current ability does not exceed performing such investigations for more than 23 thousand cases per million of the population, whereas they reach up to 685 thousand cases in Europe, America and Asia.

Conclusion and recommendations:

1. It should be highlighted from now on that there is a potential for a large-scale spread of the epidemic among Arab and African

border countries abutting borders, which are considered to be a major transit point for illegal immigration and a source of labour for Gulf States and Europe. And here lies the importance of interlacing all efforts in order to work together through the AU, the League of Arab States, and WHO in particular, for contributing to the attempts of finding a vaccine that prevents its future emergence.

2. Arab and African states suffer chronic problems of low education and lack of appropriate awareness among their peoples on the seriousness of the pandemic and the necessity for not mingling, but the situation even reached to the extent of an almost deliberate indifference to the compliance with governments instructions in this regard, and here awareness efforts must be intensified by various means and to the maximum extent possible.

3. To prevent this sudden pandemic, establishment of an early warning system should be internationally sought to alert officials and peoples around the world of the possibility of emergence of such pandemics in order to take the necessary action for combating them, and this matter should be discussed at the UN General Assembly meetings next September.

4. Countries should reconsider their economic priorities in the light of the prospect of very large reductions in their national income, and reach an international agreement to help poor and developing countries. Studies indicate that Africa will lose approximately 88 billion dollars this year, with its debts rising from 1.8 trillion dollars to 2 trillion dollars and at least 20 million Africans losing their jobs. It is not possible for Africa and the world to move along the same path which they were used to before this pandemic, that could have serious implications for the future of humanity, and indeed, for the existing international alliances as well.

**Africa And The Response to the (COVID-19)
Pandemic and Its Repercussions Within
The International Framework**

**Ambassador/ Dr. Salah Halima
Member of ECFA and Vice-President of the Egyptian
Council on African Affairs**

The world was surprised at the beginning of the new year in 2020 **by an unforeseen pandemic, i.e. a deadly epidemic**, called the Corona or (COVID-19), which is believed to have been born out of the womb of a previous virus that had mutated itself, namely, SARS. **Its mission was focused on killing people, destroying state economies, and oppressing peoples and societies.** This pandemic does not recognize homelands or borders, and is characterized by spreading in an extremely rapid manner with an unprecedented power to kill and destroy. According to WHO data of early May 2020, the number of infections in the world exceeded 4 million people, the number of people who recovered was 37,905, and the mortalities were around 300,000 people, and 85% of them were estimated to be in the US and Europe; which were the worst hit regions in the world.

Controversy on the origin of the pandemic is still raging; is it :-

Is it man-made, in a biological laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan, and thence it is included in the framework of biologi-

cal war as a form of weapons of mass destruction, through its spread as a deadly pandemic; as it has become one of the threats to the national security of states, and moreover, to international security; requiring an international approach within a cooperative framework to deal with it in relation to weapons of mass destruction .]

Or is it **nature-made** as asserted by the World Health Organization, in a manner that revives the Malthusian theory of population, despite reservations, which theorizes that epidemics, diseases, and natural disasters work towards achieving a balance between natural resources and human needs, which was originally imbalanced. Whereas, the first increases in an arithmetic progression, while the second increases in a geometric progression, necessitating an international approach within a framework of international cooperation to deal with such epidemics in order to secure such balance through scientific research and technological progress.

The controversy on the origin of the pandemic has turned into a conflict and exchange of accusations between the US and China, and is heading towards a political clash and escalation of their economic warfare, in a manner that may lead to international polarization between the US and China, which could, in addition to other factors, affect **the current international system which is based on globalization and unipolarity**. While there is a prevailing tendency for heading towards **a new multipolar international system, that would be characterized by a greater state role in** all aspects of life, especially the environmental and social aspects in a return to the phenomenon of nationalism; there is another contradicting hypothesis, which

perhaps in our belief is more likely, which is to **keep, develop and modernize the existing system, without changing it.**

Despite the frantic race among research centers in the world, and what is being said about the imminent discovery of a serum or vaccine for terminating the pandemic in more than one state and research center, and there are even talks about the use of effective medications that have been approved in different states, including Madagascar. But what has affected the states and peoples of the world and made them suffer serious economic damage, **exemplified in an unprecedented recession** by declining demand, i.e. consumption, and declining supply, i.e. production with declining investment and international trade, ending with a sharp decline in development rates, hence GDP, rising inflation, and rising unemployment. This requires reconsidering the productive structure of the various economic sectors with priority emphasis on the health, education, technology, environment, climate, and infrastructure sectors, and attracting investment to those sectors along with the energy, agriculture and water sectors. **And such issues, in their entirety, require a review of the UN 2030 program, and the AU 2063 Sustainable Development Program;** and the priorities of the latter were focused on governance, good governance, democracy, and human rights, except for Egypt's presidency period of 2019, which focused on attracting and providing investments into the productive sectors and infrastructure. Contrary to what some believe that containing the pandemic and addressing economic conditions will lead many countries to recover internally and will dismantle regional groupings such as the European Union, but it is in hypothesis that the pandemic crisis will lead to great-

er cooperation between states as well as regional and international organizations, and will push forwards towards reform and development. This includes WHO to which criticisms, that are not yet verified, were directed. Overcoming the recession and confronting the pandemic, require greater cooperation, which is already partially existing, among the states, peoples, institutions, and funds of the world, as well as its continental and international financial and monetary systems. In this context, the trend toward **a balance between health and economy is growing**, in coexistence with the pandemic under precautionary measures, until it can be confronted with an effective vaccine and serum. By reviving economic activities in all fields, in order to overcome a devastating recession and strongly push the development process under the effective management of the energy, food, water, health and education sectors.

In connection with the aforementioned, information on the spread of the pandemic in many African countries is frequent, including **53 of the 55 states**. Although the number of people affected with the pandemic in the world has exceeded four million people. But despite the reduced number of infected people in the African continent, which seems to be lower than their counterparts in other continents and its rise is characterized by being relatively slow, WHO, however, strongly believes that **Africa will be the new focus of the pandemic under extremely poor circumstances and conditions**, and it cites as evidence according to its estimates that in six months, the number of people affected with the pandemic may reach up to about 10 million people, and the number of deaths may reach up to about 300,000 and may even increase; adding that every one million

African citizens have access to only 5 beds in intensive care units (ICU), and that the number of infections by early May has exceeded 51,000 cases. The increase in the number of infected cases is estimated to exceed 50%, and the number of deaths exceeds 2,000 people, jumping to more than 60%, and nearly 13,400 cases have recovered. North African states recorded about 15,700 cases, followed by West Africa with about 11,000 cases, South Africa, 6,400 cases, East Africa, about 4,100 cases, and Central Africa having about 3,800 cases. The seriousness of the future situation of the pandemic on the African continent is reflected in its rapid spread among the peoples and States of the continent, for many objective considerations, which make the African continent a special and unique situation. This risk is reflected by the estimates of the World Health Organization that, if the epidemic is not contained, infections in the first year could range between 29 and 44 million cases, which are beyond the medical potential and capabilities of African states; one of its indicators is that every million people can have access to only 9 beds in intensive care units.

These considerations - which we will mention - have led to an institutional African movement through high-level means of communication, **the most prominent of which is the holding of three mini-summits under the umbrella of the African Union**, to develop a coordinated and comprehensive continental vision and approach and to speak with one voice while collectively moving on with mechanisms to combat this pandemic and to prevent its risks. The summits included African heads of state and government, namely, the heads of state of the African troika, with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in the lead, on behalf

of Egypt, alongside presidents of South Africa and Rwanda, as well as heads of state representing the five African regions, and with the attendance of the Chairman of the African Union Commission, the head of Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Executive Council of the African Union was also held at the ministerial level, as well as convening a symposium in Geneva on the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic over the African economy and the means for its containment, and a similar discussion was held at the United Nations. It is worth noting the positive role played by The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the West African region, under the umbrella of the ECOWAS Community, and similarly in the Southern African region under the umbrella of the SADC Community, in coordination with WHO to combat the spread of the virus in a manner that should be supported and developed; and perhaps create an analogue to it in the other three African sub-regions.

In fact, the African countries face multiple levels of risks that require adopting a variety of strategies to confront this pandemic, **whose spread in Africa is reinforced** by the deterioration of security situations, wars and armed conflicts in a number of countries, in addition to the limited economic capabilities needed to confront the pandemic challenge, as well as the unique social conditions of the continent's peoples and States, in cities and peripheries, within a tribal and clannish framework.

African countries suffer a high poverty rate, poor health systems, and urban overcrowding; with hopes based on the deadly effect of the hot weather over the virus (which is not yet certain)

and on the population composition which is made up of a youth majority having strong immunological capabilities that would render infection with virus less than worst. **In terms of Africa's economic capacity to cope with the virus, it is relatively fragile, and about 95% of African economies depend on small and medium-sized enterprises.** Thus, the African states alone cannot confront such pandemic as intended, as this matter requires financial support and mobilization of financial resources to cope with the economic, social and health consequences resulting from such spread and confrontation. The laboratory and clinical capabilities of African countries are inadequate for meeting such challenge, this necessitates the immediate upgrading of their efficiency and capacities; moreover, African states suffer fragile security situations, both due to armed conflicts, which reach to about 15 African- African conflicts, and because of extremist terrorist organizations, particularly in the Sahel region. Each one of these two causes complicates the processes of confronting such grave danger threatening the continent, where it requires establishing humanitarian and commercial corridors to address the risks resulting from the spread of the virus. In addition, Africa's heavy economic burden lies in its debts owed, which are estimated to be about 40% of the GDP, which aggravates its weak capacity to address such challenge and pushes towards demanding to write off such debts.

In connection with the aforementioned in entirety, the main trend of African leaders was focused on two themes, the **first is self-reliance, i.e. to rely on the states and peoples of the African continent, by supporting the African Union's fund to combat the pandemic** established by the resolution of the first

Summit through African institutions, as well as working towards its enhancement, and also urging African businessmen and the private sector to contribute in this regard , as it was agreed to established the African Business Coalition to mobilize resources for contributing to the implementation of the related projects within the framework of community responsibility to combat the pandemic and to develop the health sector. This means, in entirety, increasing efforts of the state institutions with a pivotal role for businessmen and the private sector to confront a pandemic which is fatal to humans and devastating to the economy.

Second, addressing the continent's international partners and continuing to coordinate with them in the face of this pandemic, especially in light of the conclusion of the twentieth Summit on 26 March 2020, which has addressed the support of world economy by about 5 trillion dollars, within the framework of monitoring new risks threatening Africa due to health systems. The inability of African economies to cope with the combating of the epidemic has already pushed them towards demanding debt forgiveness, and the provision of aid packages through the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Bank (the Bank offered \$3 billion). That is what some African states have already submitted for. The African Union estimates that African states will need about 130 billion dollars for the sake of combating the epidemic which is fatal to humans and devastating to the economy, that costs the continent the loss of 20 million jobs.

A supportive stance by the UN through statements of its Secretary-General, which has been in line with African and international movements, during which he made an international call

for a cease-fire to contribute to stopping the spread of the pandemic as being a common enemy. The Security Council is also moving towards a consensus on a draft resolution that the pandemic is a threat to humanity, as well as to international peace and security, with the demand for an immediate ceasefire in areas of armed conflicts, within the framework of comprehensive international solidarity to confront this pandemic.

The most affected and hit African regions by this pandemic were the North, West and South, respectively. All African states took a package of preventive and precautionary measures to contain the pandemic, as well as financial and monetary measures of a motivational nature to reduce its economic and social consequences, which negatively affected the central banks' reserves. Precautionary measures included quarantine, curfew, declaring state of emergency, closure of borders, flight suspension, travel restrictions, closure of schools and universities, prevention of gatherings, suspension of sports activities, closure of restaurants and cafes, and stopping prayers in mosques and churches. With regard to financial and monetary packages, the most prominent of which were measures to postpone payment of outstanding taxes, loan benefits, reduction of interest rates, initiatives and programs to support the poor and be in solidarity with them, reducing daily cash withdrawals, with the allocation of material support for the health sector covering all its components to raise its capacity to confront the pandemic.

In sum, States and peoples of the world, including the nations and peoples of Africa, face an unprecedented challenge, where they are confronted by:

1. An invisible enemy; which is a killer of human life, a

destroyer of economic life and a social life scatterer, affecting both national and international security; and in this sense, it can be considered and addressed as one of the weapons of mass destruction in order to terminate and deal with, within a cooperative framework, as a form of biological warfare weapons that must be completely banned; and perhaps within a framework of declining global arms race with science race and technological progress being in the lead, in a manner that will secure human life and push it towards prosperity.

2. The importance of regional and international cooperation in meeting this challenge, to support and develop the economic sectors, especially the medical, educational, energy and water sectors, with emphasis on scientific research and paying attention to the environmental and climate sector, with the possibility of applying the term of soft security issues to them, which necessitates the reconsideration of the priorities of the United Nations 2030 program, as well as the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

3. Increasing State role to ensure the proper and steady workflow in the activities of those sectors, and implementation of economic reforms and their requirements of economic structures modernization and development in cooperation with the private sector and with the support of international financial institutions and funds as well as donor countries, and which necessitates debt cancellation for African countries, and the quest to end armed conflicts in the year of “Silencing the Guns in Africa”.

4. Finding a balanced formula for coexistence between the COVID-19 pandemic; under closure measures, curfew, and

precautionary measures until a vaccine and serum are found to eradicate it; and the return of all economic activities to normal life at ever-increasing rates to eliminate the rampant recession.

5. To recognize that the post-COVID-19 world will be heading towards reforming, developing and modernizing the currently existing international system, without reaching the point of changing it in such a way that it does not seem to us that we are facing the birth of a new international system that radically differs from the currently existing one, with the more likelihood of raising the status of human and social values within the framework of the divinely revealed teachings.

Repercussions Of The Crisis of The Coronavirus Pandemic On Gulf Region-

**Ambassador / Rakha Ahmed Hassan-
Member of ECFA**

The novel Coronavirus pandemic has spread with varying degrees from one state to another in the Gulf region according to the measures taken to confront it and their extent in terms of health care provision to infected patients, as well as prophylaxis and availability of hospitals, medical and nursing staff, and medicines to help with treatment or alleviation of the severity of infections, as well as in terms of the economic situations and their ability to absorb the negative effects of stopping many industrial activities, services, tourism, in addition to closure of airports, land, air and sea borders, and disruption to thousands of workers, especially temporary migrant workers in the Arab Gulf states.

The global spread of COVID 19 pandemic has compounded its economic impact on all countries. Consequently, economic and financial problems are no longer a matter of internal affairs, but are interactively linked to what is happening in most world countries, particularly countries and groups having the largest economies. Moreover, economic and financial crises are no longer localized and therefore require more international cooperation and the contribution of international financial organizations, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The Gulf region is considered to be one of the regions that have suffered great damages as a result of the fall of oil prices by more than 50%, as the countries of the region mainly rely on their oil and gas exports revenues. This has led to influential repercussions on Iran and the Arab Gulf states, **which we will briefly address as follows:**

Iran:

The novel Coronavirus appeared in Iran shortly before the parliamentary elections which were held on February 21, 2020. But authorities only admitted its spread after the death of four people affected with it, and denied its spread for fear that voters would not turn out to vote, and accused whom they called enemies of spreading rumours in order to negatively affect the elections. This affected the voter turnout rate, although it reached 42%; and the fundamentalists outperformed the reformers and the moderates.

Moreover, the Iranian authorities only began to carry out precautionary and sterilization measures against the Coronavirus after its spread on a large scale in Iran rendering it the epicenter of COVID 19 pandemic in the Gulf and Middle East. Then closure measures began in most Iranian cities; restrictions were imposed on transportation, movement of people, markets, as well as closure of schools and universities, in addition to banning Friday prayers and gathering for other prayers in Mosques, as well as suspension of sports activities.

These measures have been eased in view of the urgent need for the return of economic and trade activities due to their extreme importance to temporary labour. Iran has sought balance

between the precautionary measures for confronting the Coronavirus pandemic and keeping the wheel of economy and services running. The government has also allocated approximately 10 billion U.S. dollars to compensate for losses and assist the poor and needy. Furthermore, Iran's Supreme Leader has agreed for the government to take the equivalent of 1 billion U.S. dollars from the National Development Fund to deal with the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

It is noticed that the Coronavirus pandemic outbreak in Iran emerged amid a state of internal tensions, as represented by the following:

- A crisis of confidence between the regime and broad segments of the population, due to the persistence of the economic crisis, as well as the regime's failure to fulfill its promises of development and improvement of living standards.
- A major decline in the popularity of reformists and moderates due to the continuing restrictions on public freedoms, the stifling economic crisis, and the increase in unemployment and inflation rates.
- The Revolutionary Guards resorting to excessive violence in the face of peaceful demonstrations resulting in large numbers of fatalities.
- Discontent with the Guardian Council of the Constitution due to its persistence in rejecting thousands of reformist and moderate candidates for parliamentary elections, along with shouting slogans against the Supreme Leader and burning his picture. In addition to these internal factors, there are other factors that include:
 - The major effects of the U.S. economic sanctions on the

Iranian economy.

- The drop in global demand for oil and gas with the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and its effects.
- Cessation of religious and hunting tourism from Gulf states, as well as Shiite minorities from other countries.
- Further costs added to Iran's general budget in order to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic.

Iran's Request for Assistance:

As a result of the aggravation of the economic crisis, Iran requested assistance from several entities, including:

- Iran asked the European Union to exert efforts at Washington for easing the economic sanctions on Iran while dealing with the repercussions of the COVID 19 crisis, but Washington did not respond to such efforts, and offered to provide direct aid to Iran if Iran requested that from Washington. Iran has responded by saying that this represents a humiliation to Iran and it would not resort to it. President Hassan Rouhani said that Iran is facing the Coronavirus and the U.S. sanctions virus.
- Iran has applied for IMF assistance of five billion U.S. dollars, but the Fund has approved applications from other countries that have applied at the same time with Iran and has not approved Iran's request. Tehran accused Washington of being behind this rejection, which includes injustice and inequality between Iran and other countries.
- The European Union has activated the "INSTEX" mechanism for facilitating commercial and financial transactions with Iran to avoid imposition of sanctions by the United States on the companies of these countries. Meanwhile, Iran demands that

this mechanism should include Iranian oil and gas.

- As of late April 2020, Iran had received 28 shipments of Chinese medical aid, equipment and masks in order to confront the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Spread of Iran's Influence Across the Region:

Iran's strategy for spreading its influence across the region worries regional and international powers, and these powers work towards curbing such spread of influence, and even getting Iran out of the regions in which it has spread its influence if possible. However, Iran remains clinging to its positions, and the U.S., Israeli and other pressures have not affected its continued support for Hezbollah in south Lebanon; and such support persists despite the impact of U.S. economic sanctions on Iran, and the effects of the repercussions of the Coronavirus crisis on the amount and extent of this support.

Likewise, the Iranian-Syrian alliance has been continuing since the rule of late President Hafez al-Assad. Iran has been providing military, economic, political and cultural support to President Bashar al-Assad's regime over the nine years of the Syrian crisis. Moreover, Iran has developed a strong position in Syria which is not expected to falter in the near future despite U.S. and Israeli pressures, as well as the start of a rivalry and a competition between Russia and Iran for the reconstruction phase in Syria after achieving the political settlement. Signs of disagreement have even emerged between the two countries over the issue of whether to give the priority to the political solution or to completion of the military solution in light of the great gains achieved. And in this respect, Iran and the Syrian re-

gime are inclined to proceed with the completion of the military solution, while Russia attempts to pressure President Al-Assad into completing the peaceful solution in light of the crises facing Iran.

The state of severe tension and severance of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, tension with Bahrain and the state of political Luke warmness with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), did not stop economic and trade relations between Iran and the GCC states, the continuing excellent relations with Oman and Qatar, the normal relations with Kuwait, and the strong trade relations with the United Arab Emirates which has initiated an indirect dialogue with Iran.

Iran maintains a special weight in Iraq which has been supported and strengthened since the U.S. invasion of Iraq until now. Iran has effectively participated with weapons and fighters through the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in fighting ISIS, especially in Mosul, without objection or opposition from the United States. Iraq has become a land of rivalry and conflict between Tehran and Washington, and Iran has not been affected by the U.S. economic sanctions. Rather, Iraq has been exempted from adhering to some clauses of the U.S. Sanctions against Iran due to its need, by virtue of proximity, to many Iranian goods.

No fundamental change in Iranian policy towards the United States, Saudi Arabia or the Iranian zones of influence in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, is expected in the near future, unless any change comes within the framework of approaches and settlements based on common interests, as well as not placing Iran in the position of the besieged who is pushed to offer con-

cessions with nothing in return under economic and military pressures, because as result of that Iran would raise the slogan of defiance to confront the looming risks in order to maintain its internal security and stability, and that would be the strongest factor to determine whether or not a change will occur.

Arab Gulf States:

The novel Coronavirus was introduced to the Arab Gulf States via flights to and from China, members of the expatriate communities in those countries, and tourism. The rapid spread of the COVID 19 pandemic in Iran has led the Arab Gulf States to take all precautionary measures to confront the pandemic as well as closing airports and borders in varying degrees from one country to another. Saudi Arabia acted swiftly to stop Umrah trips and prayers at Al-Haram mosque despite the big financial losses that would affect several Saudi sectors in Jeddah, Mecca and Medina, especially during the peak seasons of Umrah trips, which are the months of Rajab, Sha'aban and Ramadan. It was noted that the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic was under control in Kuwait and Oman, as well as not widely spreading in the rest of the GCC states; moreover, the pandemic has arrived in Yemen at a later time than the other countries of the Arab Peninsula, and its arrival raised great fears due to the fragility of the therapeutic, health and economic systems in Yemen.

Then the Coronavirus pandemic was transmitted from Iran to Iraq across borders and through the visits of Iranian groups to sacred shrines in Najaf and Karbala, and then the Iraqi government acted swiftly to stop these visits. Precautionary measures and imposition of restrictions on movement, work, factories,

public interests, and fear of infection, have also led to cessation of protests and bloody acts of violence that Iraq had witnessed between political and ideological sects, each driven by an internal sect, regional or international forces. And as a result of these precautionary measures, it was made possible for rendering the political conflict to constitute a new Iraqi government within closed places and among the leaders and chiefs of these sects. The pandemic and its economic aftermath led to the formation of a new Iraqi government on May 7, 2020, after more than five months of attempts.

Economic Implications of (COVID-19) Pandemic:

Arab Gulf States economies are dependent on their oil and gas exports. Oil prices have fallen by more than 50% in global markets, owing to the abundance of oil supply on the one hand, and the state of closure that has affected most world countries due to the (COVID-19) crisis. Russia had been rejecting OPEC's request to cut oil production in order to maintain price stability, but under the pressure of the (COVID-19) crisis and the dramatic drop in oil prices, it has agreed with OPEC to cut production by 10 million barrels per day starting from May 1, 2020 to maintain price stability.

- The drop in oil prices and measures of closure, both domestically and globally, have reduced public budgets in most Gulf countries by 10%, and this has resulted in laying off large numbers of expatriate labour in these countries, the decline of foreign workers' remittances to their countries, and an increase in the ratio of public debt to national GDP in the Gulf and Middle East countries.

- Increased burdens of unexpected expenditures, whether to combat and treat the Coronavirus pandemic, or to care for the poor and non-regular employment, and to support some economic institutions of economic or social importance.

- Lowering interest rates and reducing the level of the core cash reserve.

This would be in addition to the educational effects of closing schools and universities, as well as the suspension of sports and other activities. Furthermore, this would lead to great losses, along with the costs of repatriating the citizens of these countries who are stranded abroad as a result of the closure of airports, as well as the repatriation of foreigners stranded in the Arab Gulf states.

Some countries have taken austerity measures, including Saudi Arabia, which reduced the 2030 plan programs by 10% and allowed authorities, institutions and the private sector to reduce salaries and wages by no more than 40% and that a leave could be granted to workers with or without pay in agreement with them. Furthermore, suspending the cost-of-living allowance for all employees, as well as increasing the value-added tax from 5% to 15%, in addition to several other financial measures.

Kuwait Central Bank confirmed the safety of the cash reserve, and affirmed that there is no fear for the Kuwaiti dinar despite the (COVID-19) crisis and its economic and financial repercussions. The UAE Central Bank has also coordinated with all banks operating in the country on the economic support plan estimated at 69 billion U.S. dollars, to meet liquidity demands from banks and alleviate the burden of the Coronavirus pandemic on companies and individuals.

Despite the burdens they bear as a result of the economic effects of the repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic, the GCC states have assets and resources that would enable them to overcome the crisis within two years or a little more; unlike Iran, whose economic situations, which were already difficult, have been broken by the crisis. And there remains Iraq, with its conflicts, wasting most of its resources and disrupting the reconstruction and development processes. In addition to its urgent need for internal as well as external loans and investments. Likewise, Yemen remains with the ongoing war taking place therein, its poor resources, and the association of its domestic affairs with regional and international intervention.

Political implications:

Political Implications of (COVID-19) Crisis on Arab Gulf States Can be Summarized as Follows:

- The closure measures as well as the health and economic burdens of confronting the Coronavirus pandemic have led each country of the GCC states to focus on its domestic affairs in order to control the spread of the pandemic and its repercussions, with the exception of the GCC states' approval of Kuwait's proposal to create a unified integrated Gulf food security network to achieve relative food security to the GCC states. And the request of some writers to support cooperation among the GCC states in order to confront the (COVID-19) pandemic and its repercussions due to the weak role of international and regional organizations.
- The coalition supporting legitimacy in Yemen declared a unilateral ceasefire in response to the appeal of the United Na-

tions Secretary-General to direct efforts towards combating the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic in Yemen, which neither has the health nor the economic capabilities to confront the crisis. But the Houthis stipulated that the siege imposed on Sanaa airport and the port of Hodeidah should be lifted as well as extending the ceasefire to include all Yemeni territories, and they did not declare their official acceptance of the ceasefire despite welcoming the UN Secretary-General's appeal.

- Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt continue to boycott Qatar, and this casts a shadow over the activities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), disrupting all its meetings with other regional councils and groups, whether the European Union, the United States, Russia or ASEAN. Moreover, a state of covert division is taking place within the GCC on reconciliation and relations with Qatar. Furthermore, this would also suspend the Kuwaiti mediation between Qatar and the boycotting countries.

- The continuation of tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran as well as the severance of their diplomatic relations. Oman believes that it is better to calm down with Iran and activate the principle of good neighbor lines based on the common interests between the Arab Gulf states and Iran, Kuwait shares this same opinion, and the United Arab Emirates tends to be inclined towards their opinion; but without achieving practical approaches in this direction. And doubts persist about Iran's several proposals for dialogue with Saudi Arabia.

- Iraq remains a conflict zone between Iran and the United States, and they have spoiled all Iraqi attempts to stay away from this conflict and to develop and strengthen Arab ties, good

relations and cooperation with Iran.

- Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf Arab states have not responded to the call for returning Syria to occupy its seat in the Arab League. Although the decision to suspend its membership was not unanimously adopted, some countries insist that its return to the Arab League should be made unanimously or by consensus without objections.

- Strong relations will remain in all fields between the Arab Gulf states and the United States, with the movement of these countries towards gradually normalizing their relations with Israel.

Conclusion:

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused health, economic, social, humanitarian and political effects in the Gulf region manifested in the prevalence of a state of relative calm. These effects may extend for some time, but it is noteworthy that, to date, there have not yet been fundamental changes in the policies of the various countries of the region towards the main issues and crises. Further interactions of economic and financial impacts may lead to changes in policies and stances, but this requires positive approaches and responses from all parties as well as staying away from the calculations of gains and losses in the short-term and to work for yielding gains for all in the long-term.

“Israel’s Management Of The Crisis Of The Corona Pandemic Along With Its Internal, Regional and International Repercussions”

Ambassador / Hazem Khairat- Member of ECFA

Israel, the “state” that enjoys permanent immunity under the sponsorship of its ally, the United States, imposing the policies of *fait accompli* as it desires, and flouting the resolutions of international legitimacy; has not escaped this time the blow of fate like others, and it has been hit by the coronavirus pandemic like other countries, which claimed the lives of about 281 Israelis out of a total of 16,757 people infected with the virus as of the date of editing this article, which led to a state of confusion within the “state” of Israel, whose population does not exceed 9 million people.

Mossad Takes Command:

According to the available information, Israel is trying to return to normal life again after the rate of infection has decreased in the hope that there will be no second wave of the pandemic. However, it failed at first to manage the crisis through quickly developing a strategy by the Ministry of Health to limit the spread of the pandemic. which prompted, or more precisely, imposed on the security services to quickly take the lead, as Netanyahu decided to create a special operations room for the COVID-19 crisis and entrusted its leadership to his close man and Mossad head “Yossi Cohen”, provided that he would lead the

operations of coordination with the relevant medical authorities and in cooperation with the Ministries of Defence and Health. Cohen's first mission, with his many relationships, was to secure the provision of all special supplies, medical equipment, and information on research findings that others have come up with, from all over the world, whether secretly or publicly.

The reasons for initial failures, and the increased rate of infections and deaths can be understood, whether taking into account that no country in the world, including the United States itself, was prepared to face such an unprecedented challenge in terms of its nature and size of impact due to the ambiguity of the virus and the speed of its mutation, or for reasons related to the nature of Israeli society and the extent of its adherence to the rules in the face of epidemics, especially the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, which we will discuss later.

The mechanism developed by Netanyahu adopted a strategy of action that focused on several themes, the **first of which is**: The logistical aspect and associated medical needs and equipment, especially those related to detecting the virus, as well as masks that prevent the spread of the virus and related scientific studies; **and the second is**: the internal precautionary measures, including tracking applications, providing a database and also using the army to impose curfews and complete closure of all facilities, especially during the Jewish holiday Passover (Pesach) and Easter. Within this framework, the Israeli government acted towards providing medical needs and transferring information about the experiences of other countries. In this way, Netanyahu's close man, Yossi Cohen, was able to bring

medical equipment and medicines from several countries, such as China, Japan, Germany, Italy, India and Turkey. The Israeli government also assigned the internal security service “the Shin Bet” the task of collecting citizens’ data, with the provision of a communication database among all state specialized sectors, with the purpose of reviewing the health status in some areas, as well as tracking phones and the places of those infected.

The Israeli army has also been assigned the task of participating in managing the COVID-19 crisis through the call-up of 2000 reservists to participate in resisting the spread of the virus, while preparing to call in additional forces if necessary, and also assigning the Research Division and Unit 8200 of the Military Intelligence Directorate “Aman” the task of assisting the Ministry of Health in finding new and innovative programs and applications to confront the virus in different regions of Israel.

Based on this, we can say that for the first time in the history of Israel, the security and intelligence services have embraced tasks that have nothing to do with security operations and the fight against what is described as terrorism. They are now harnessing their technological capabilities to confront the Coronavirus, which has spread exponentially and dramatically in Israel, and that also resulted in implementation of the State of Emergency to restrict movement and activity in the public sphere, in addition to closing borders and using digital means to locate and isolate COVID-19 patients and enforce penalties for those who do not abide by the quarantine.

All these unprecedented measures, especially those having a technological nature, and by referring to them I mean the fea-

ture of tracking phones and places of infected patients, have provoked widespread political reactions, prompting the “Arab Joint List” in the Knesset to file a complaint with the Israeli Supreme Court against the decision due to fear of using such technologies in security and political matters unrelated to the current crisis.

Israel’s Ambition to Find a Vaccine:

Israel for years, especially during the Netanyahu era, has adopted a propaganda strategy to show its progress and breakthroughs in the scientific and technological fields, with the aim of attracting many countries in the region for a rapprochement with them and for benefiting from them, which undoubtedly led to Israel’s success in getting out of its regional and international isolation without offering political concessions. The novel Coronavirus pandemic has emerged so as to be a favourable opportunity for Israel to find a treatment for the eradication of this deadly virus, especially since developed countries have not found a pure vaccine or a pure medicine for eradicating the disease, and if Israel finds a vaccine or treatment, then it will be the first country to have achieved a global breakthrough and terminated the crisis that has not been witnessed by the world since the beginning of the last century, which would achieve the ambitions and influence it seeks in order to be the most advanced country and a platform for saving human lives from the deadly virus.

The government has commissioned and encouraged a large number of scientists and specialists and provided them with all capabilities to develop a treatment for the virus, especially the

Israel Institute for Biological research (IIBR), which has recently found a vaccine and applied for a patent for 8 antibodies against the novel Coronavirus in order to develop an effective vaccine for Covid-19 patients. Once the patent is registered, researchers at the institute will turn to international companies for producing antibodies in commercial quantities, where the antibodies will be used to treat the virus.

The Dilemma of Ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredim):

The Israeli government faced a major dilemma at the beginning of the Coronavirus spread due to the non-commitment of the ultra-Orthodox Jews (Haredim) to government instructions and their adherence to their laws and religious beliefs that naturally led to the spread of the virus, such as performing collective prayers, holding wedding ceremonies, and funerals amid overcrowding, and not accepting in any case, the application of the social distancing rules, as imposed by their nature, which refuses integration into Israeli society, and tends towards living in closed and isolated communities that refuse and prohibit all modern means of communication and do not seek access to world news, satisfied with the very little information that they receive through religious posters and instructions of the chief rabbis whom they regard as being infallible, as well as imagining that the Torah will protect them, and that the principles of applying secular laws belong to Nazism and anti-Semitism. It was natural, because of this faulty way of thinking, to turn the neighborhoods they inhabit into hotbeds of the virus, with their infections constituting nearly 50% of the total infections in Israel, although they represent only 12% of the Israeli population.

The disastrous situation of this group prompted the Israeli government to take strict measures against them, and forced the Haredi rabbinic leader, Rabbi “Chaim Kanievsky” to order the banning of group prayers, closing religious schools and synagogues, as well as reducing the number of worshippers at the Wailing Wall. Surprisingly, Israel’s Health Minister, Yaakov Litzman, a Haredi rabbi, initially followed the same strict approach and violated the precautionary emergency instructions that his ministry was responsible for and leading its implementation, so he and his wife contracted the virus.

Economic Repercussions:

Despite the qualitative leap that Israel has achieved in recent years in terms of economic growth and human development, during which it has relied on advanced technology and industrialization in various fields, in addition to the recent discoveries of huge reserves of natural gas on its coasts, the pioneering role of the solar energy industry , and focusing on the quality of university education, which has been a major factor for the technological boom and the rapid economic development. However, there is no doubt that the Coronavirus pandemic has negatively affected the Israeli economy like other countries, and there has been an obsession with the recurrence of the economic recession experience that Israel had witnessed after its defeat in the October 1973 War, by which the economy had been hit for a period that extended to about ten years.

Financial institutions in Israel estimate that the GDP would lose about NIS 117 billion (one dollar equals NIS 3.5), as a result of the precautionary measures taken by the government, by the

end of the year in the event of rapid recovery. But in the event of an extended crisis and continued closures, the loss may reach NIS 133 billion. Due to the decline in shopping and wages, there will be a gap in tax collection ranging from NIS 70 to 81 billion, and with the increase in unemployment benefits paid by the Israeli government to those affected by the crisis; the budget deficit may reach NIS 173 billion, or more than 10% of GDP.

It seems that the new government, which was formed after a long marathon, will face the most difficult issues at the start of its work, which is how to get out of the economic crisis and avoid further deterioration. Therefore, it is expected that it will take the initiative to ease measures, start the economic revival and return to normal life, especially since the rate of infection is declining, even if there happens to be a second wave of covid-19 infections, according to most economic experts in Israel.

Political Repercussions:

At the level of domestic policy, the fact known to everyone having experience and knowledge of the Israeli affairs is that Benjamin Netanyahu is one of the most brilliant politicians in the world in seizing opportunities, and even in turning challenges into opportunities and exploiting them to serve his interests or defend himself against any harm that might affect him, even his opponents, before his allies, called him “the magician” who makes a timely move that dazzles those around him and is characterized by an unpredictable or unexpected speed; he is not bound by any moral rules, political rules or restrictions, he breaks promises as easily as they are made. In the words of an Israeli academic: he puts his interests first, before the interests

of Israel itself. His first priority is to remain in the seat of power and enhance his prestige in Zionist history in the future.

In light of the above, I did not feel optimistic when the Coronavirus pandemic hit the region, including Israel, as I assumed, at the time, that some gap has been opened in the wall surrounding Netanyahu, and by that I mean charges of corruption and breach of trust which could have led him to prison.

And the intuition has been true, when the Israeli government took the constitutional oath on Sunday, May 17, 2020, after nearly 500 days of political crisis that paralyzed the country and during which three election rounds were held, which has never been witnessed by Israeli history; and then the fifth government headed by Netanyahu came to prove to his opponents, before his enemies, that he is “the king,” who rules one of the democratic countries that prides itself on its democracy before the world and the countries of the region, based on a network of corruption of businessmen, media professionals and others.

Indeed, Netanyahu was able to intelligently seize this opportunity to form a government of national unity to confront the pandemic and its impact on the economy, after offering his rival Gantz, with enormous political flexibility, to participate with him in that government (which is an inherited Israeli custom during wars and disasters).

And let Gantz realize that his rejection “now” of the partnership offer will undermine his popularity and be in Netanyahu’s benefit, who will appear as a national hero who is fought by his opponents, even if at the expense of Israel’s interest, so Gantz fell into the trap at his own will, according to the rule of escap-

ing forward, to disprove his credibility by himself after he had repeatedly refused the participation with Netanyahu under the pretext of not accepting to participate with corrupt officials.

Then his acceptance of joining a partnership with Netanyahu led to a split within the blue and white bloc after having stirred Yair Lapid up, a promising left-winger centralist star, accusing Gantz of betraying his voters and participating in a major corruption play witnessed by Israel.

Thus, Netanyahu will have secured himself after guaranteeing the post of the prime minister for sometime, which means giving him protection against prosecution after he has been so close to it.

At the level of his foreign policy, and although the Coronavirus pandemic could have been a glimmer of hope for an Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement to combat the virus, which strikes all the peoples of the world without distinction, and the inevitability of exerting concerted efforts to confront it, paving the way for the restoration of political communication between the two sides in case a political will is available. But Netanyahu took advantage of the global panic to continue to adapt to the policies of the Great Pole (The United States), by grabbing a semblance of a no-objection at its minimum level. This is within the framework of the policy of imposing the U.S. and Israeli fait accompli, which started with the transfer of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and its recognition as a capital, then the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan, then the fertile land of the West Bank, thus preventing the establishment of a viable and developing Palestinian state with its parts fused together, in ad-

dition to the policy of draining sources and political liquidation of the cause by cutting off UNRWA funding, and the political and economic blockade imposed on the Palestinian Authority and cutting off its aid.

Indeed, reaping the harvest of the above signifies that Netanyahu has achieved for Israel, in an unprecedented historical moment, and under a U.S. cover that exceeded all limits, something similar to Israel's own birth at the hands of the generation of parents such as Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, Begin, Rabin, Peres and others.

At that watershed moment that the world has not experienced for one hundred years, since the Spanish flu, we find on the other side that the Palestinian Authority is still unable to bring the various Palestinian factions and include them together; those factions that have proven that they prioritize their interests over the interest of the national cause.

Turkey and The Coronavirus

**Ambassador / Abdel-Rahman Salah-
Member of ECFA**

1. Domestic, Regional and International Consequences of Erdogan's Policy Against the Pandemic:

Some believe that authoritarian regimes like China have dealt with the current Coronavirus pandemic more effectively than other countries, which is already controversial, especially among the people of countries suffering from a lack of democracy. However, this hypothesis certainly does not apply to Turkey, as Erdogan's one-man rule failed at first to respond properly to the threat of the novel Coronavirus known as "COVID-19", but Turkey's performance in addressing the pandemic has improved since it began taking action for dealing with the spread of the virus.

Erdogan has officially become Turkey's president since July 2018, and ever since he has been enjoying broad political executive powers as he has essentially turned himself into Turkey's one and only unrivalled leader through constitutional change and a series of procedures and legislation issued by the ruling coalition under his leadership.

The Turkish government has begun its confrontation with the virus by denying its spread in Turkey, although it has received more than 50 million tourists in 2019, including more than half a million tourists from China, and it has close commercial links with the Chinese province of Wuhan that has witnessed the be-

ginning of the disease spread. Moreover, Turkey received three million tourists from Iran last year, which was considered to be the second largest epicenter for the spread of the virus after China. The Turkish authorities continued to insist on denying the outbreak of the disease until the first case was announced in Turkey on March 11, 2020.

And It was soon revealed in less than a month that Turkey ranks ninth in the world in terms of the number of cases confirmed to be infected with the virus in Turkey, which by early April stood at 30,217 cases. Erdogan's critics exposed his attempt to hide the failure of his policies and reminded their citizens that during the same period Germany had only 26 cases on the twenty-sixth day after the first case was reported. South Korea, with a population of 51.5 million, reported its first case on January 20, and it had only 29 cases on the twenty-sixth day. After reporting the first case on the twenty-sixth day, Turkey had approximately 1,144 times more Coronavirus cases than Germany and 638 times more cases than South Korea (after adjustment of the population ratios).

Today, Turkey still ranks ninth among the world countries that are most affected by the virus. While Turkey's population stands at 84 million, the number of people infected with the novel Coronavirus stood at 150,000 cases in mid-May, claiming 4,000 lives. Although Turkish economy ranks seventeenth in the world in terms of its size and competitiveness, the Turkish opposition revealed that the share of each million Turkish citizens in the tests conducted for detection of the disease till mid-May, does not exceed 20 thousand tests per million citizens. This renders Turkey to approximately occupy the fifty seventh rank among world countries as compared to Israel, which has

conducted about 60 thousand tests per million of its citizens and ranked nineteenth among world countries, and Spain, which has conducted 65,000 tests per million of its citizens and occupied the sixteenth rank.

Since the end of April, owing to the relative efficiency of Turkish medical facilities and the government's strict measures to shut down economic activity, impose social distancing and isolate sick patients infected with the disease and their contacts, the number of new infections and daily deaths began to decline and the number of daily recoveries has increased, as has been shown by one of the virus statistics monitoring sites in all world countries. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

2. Evolution of Turkish Government's Response to COVID-19 Spread:

Erdogan, as always, did not listen at first to his advisers, particularly the Minister of Health, who called on people to stay at home, explaining how the Coronavirus spreads among people. Instead, Erdogan gave priority to preserving the Turkish economy, which has been suffering from problems of increasing deficits in the budget and in the balance of payments before the pandemic, in addition to a sharp decrease in the rate of development and in the value of the Turkish lira as well as the inability of many Turkish companies to repay their debts that they have borrowed in foreign currencies under the guarantees of the Turkish government.

Erdogan's response to the virus was late. Three months after the outbreak of serious COVID-19 cases in China, and only on March 27, did Erdogan announce restrictions to counter the

spread of the virus due to the reaction of the opposition and intellectuals. These restrictions included mandatory curfews for people over 65, cancelling international flights, and restricting public transportation in cities.

When COVID-19 infections exceeded 20,000 cases on April 3, with 425 confirmed deaths, Erdogan was forced to respond once again to public outrage. This time, a new curfew has been announced for people over 65 and under 20 as well as people suffering from chronic diseases in an attempt to slow the spread of the pandemic.

Although Turkish health minister continued to urge Turkish citizens to practice social distancing, he failed, however, to persuade Erdogan to impose a complete closure, including the closure of non-essential companies. Meanwhile, the number of people infected with the disease stood at 30,217, with 649 deaths, on April 7. Yet Erdogan insisted on keeping the wheels of the economy turning. And citizens continue going to work as well as continuing to maintain production.

Turkey has entered into this crisis with one of the largest number of ICU beds in Europe relative to the population, thanks to the policy of health care services privatization for the purpose of attracting medical tourism while maintaining the development of public health services that the Turkish government has pursued ten years ago. Before the pandemic, the Turkish opposition criticized the policy as inappropriate for a country with a mostly young population that does not need such a large number of intensive-care beds and respirators. Concentrating health care services in the urban areas of Turkey, which has long been criticized by the opposition as being a symbol of inequity in

the access to health care, has turned into an effective tool in the hands of the government to manage this crisis, as large cities have been the epicenter for COVID-19 spread in the country.

As of May 9, the Turkish response to the COVID-19 crisis was rated 80.4 out of a possible 100 in the stringency index published by the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OXCGRT). The government began to install thermal cameras at major airports during the last weeks of January. Although Turkey has been slow to stop flights from Iran (the second global epicenter of the pandemic); it has made a quick response by suspending flights to and from China (February 3), followed by banning successive flights to and from other high-risk countries. A 14-day quarantine was introduced for international travelers on March 11, when the first confirmed case was announced. In addition, more than 5,000 teams, each consisting of two or three paramedics, have been assigned to follow up the contacts of infected patients and conduct the tests for them.

Social distancing measures began to be implemented around mid-March, and despite starting later than the rest of the G20 countries, Turkey has preceded several Western countries in implementing such measures. Schools have been closed and collective prayers were suspended; restaurants, cafes and sporting and cultural facilities suspended their activities and all major events were cancelled. The work from home order was issued for non-essential civil servants.

And on March 27, Turkey restricted travel, and closed borders to entry and exit for all except for citizens returning back to their country. Moreover, it also halted intercity buses, trains and significantly limited domestic flights. Furthermore, the residents of 31

large cities were not allowed in or out. Turkey has imposed a partial age-related curfew, banning unnecessary movement of people aged over 65 as well as those who are under 20. There was no ban on the movement of the working-age population, reflecting the priority given by the government to not halting production in the country. And subsequently, in mid-April, a complete curfew has been imposed only during the weekends and national holidays.

But such age-related measures did not prevent the rapid spread of the disease. Yet it has played an important role in protecting the healthcare system from being overburdened. In fact, Turkish social habits which are against the placement of elderly people in nursing homes, and curfews for those aged over 65 who have been assisted in meeting their daily needs with the help of a large number of social workers and volunteers, have contributed significantly to Turkey's low mortality rates.

The government adopted the strategy of “class-immunity” in the face of an unfavourable economic environment after the Great Recession of 2008. The strict and long lock down for people aged above 65 years in Turkey has both reduced infection/death rates and enabled less strict containment measures for the younger and lower-risk groups. This, in turn, helped to reduce contraction in production that could have been much worse with a comprehensive lock down policy that has been pursued by the major industrialized countries. Thus the Turkish working class bore the brunt of the health crisis in terms of human costs.

Turkey announced an economic stimulus package of 15 billion dollars on March 18, which is one of the lowest economic stimulus packages in one of the G20 countries, and only 300 million dollars from this economic stimulus package were al-

located for the assistance of the needy families. However, Turkey's faltering economy did not prevent Erdogan from holding the first tender related to the controversial Canal (Kanal) Istanbul project. Participants in that project include shareholders who are close to Erdogan as well as members of his family; including his son-in-law and Treasury and Finance Minister, Berat Albayrak; and the ruling family of Qatar.

Turkish production of textiles, clothing, leather, cars and furniture decreased by more than 40% in April as compared to March. Any decline in the activity of these main sectors represents a painful blow to the Turkish economy, as they are among the largest productive and most export-intensive sectors in Turkey. The main reason for the decrease in production was the significant decline in the levels of international and domestic demand due to the economic and psychological effects of the crisis.

The Turkish economy was still suffering from the negative effects of the Great Recession of 2008 at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. And projections of declining economic growth began to suggest the imminence of an unprecedented global economic slowdown since the Great Depression. In early May, the European Commission lowered the projected negative economic growth figures for 2020 for the global economy to -3.5% and the EU economy to -7.2%, and expected for Turkey to experience a negative growth of -5.4% according to the same scenario.

3. How Erdogan Treated the Opposition During the Crisis:

Erdogan's regime started to crack down on the people who

dared to criticize his policies regarding the Coronavirus, opening a new front of dissidents in Turkey with respect to this issue inside the parliament. Erdogan realized that the economic package he announced was not enough to help the working class and small businesses cope with the economic impact of the pandemic, so he announced the launch of a “national solidarity campaign” to mobilize people behind him, announcing that he was pledging seven months’ worth of his salary to help the needy.

With Erdogan and his party controlling the Turkish media, the campaign was prioritized by the television networks they control, and the government bureaucracy and companies close to Erdogan had to make donations to his campaign and promote it. Erdogan’s government also closed other campaigns to help those in need during the pandemic, such as those launched by the recently-elected mayors of Istanbul and Ankara, both of whom are from the opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP). The opposition criticized the lifestyle of Erdogan and his close family members, including the construction of three new presidential palaces costing more than 1 billion dollars, a fleet of 16 presidential air planes and 268 luxury armored vehicles.

Turkey is the first country in Europe to have about 300,000 prisoners (including 780 children under the age of 18). The Turkish opposition highlighted fears about the spread of the virus in overcrowded prisons, as the pandemic could spread to more than seventy thousand officers working in the Turkish prison system, and thence to the rest of the Turkish people. The opposition demanded a general amnesty for prisoners, especially the tens of thousands who have been arrested after the July 2016 coup attempt; when Erdogan began arresting thousands of

opposition figures on fictitious charges, including journalists, officers, doctors, teachers, police and army officers, as well as more than 3,000 judges and public prosecutors.

Erdogan refused to include political prisoners in the amnesty. And on April 3, a draft bill proposed to grant early release to 100,000 prisoners (excluding political prisoners) was approved by the Turkish Parliament's Justice Commission. But the amnesty did not include those in pre-trial detention, a procedure often used to detain opposition leaders for long periods without trial.

Moreover, Turkish journalists cannot criticize the situation even on social media, as press crackdown continues, even during the pandemic, and people are arrested for tweeting. Turkey has been ranked 157th out of 180 countries ranked by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on its 2019 World Press Freedom Index.

Turkish Regional Actions During the Pandemic:

Turkey announced that despite the pandemic, it will accept the admission of some patients from 31 friendly countries to its hospitals, through exemption from entry restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These countries include: Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Greece, Ukraine, Russia, Djibouti, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Somalia, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Turkey has provided shipments of protective medical aid against the spread of the virus for many friendly developing countries, as well as for the United States, Russia and NATO

countries, through NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC).

Turkey took advantage of the pandemic to escalate its military intervention in Libya so as to support Al- Sarraj government in regaining control of Al-Watiya air base, west of Tripoli, where Turkish naval forces and Turkish drones supported conduction of strikes against Haftar's forces and forcing them to withdraw from the base. Turkey doubled the number of mercenaries it has transferred from Syria to Libya to fight on the side of Al-Sarraj. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) indicated that the number of militants who were so far transferred by Turkey to the Libyan territories stood at 9 thousand militants, including a group of non-Syrians, while the number of new mercenaries who arrived at Turkish camps to receive training in preparation for their transfer to Libya has reached four thousand trainees.

Unconfirmed media reports indicated that the Turkish forces present in Qatar for the purpose of protecting the royal family there have intervened and used weapons to put down a coup attempt by some Qatari soldiers. The attempt was aborted. And this caused the imposition of a full curfew under the pretext of confronting the pandemic.

Erdogan and his foreign minister have been active in a series of international communications with U.S., Russian and European officials to support the Turkish intervention in Libya and Syria and try to portray it as serving Western interests at a time when the United States is willing to withdraw from the region and avoid military intervention, and NATO countries are preoccupied with facing the effects of the pandemic and are unwilling to repeat the mistakes of their military intervention in Libya to overthrow

Gaddafi in 2011, especially since the Greek and French stances opposing Turkey stand as a stumbling block to reaching a unified position in its favor within NATO regarding the ongoing war in Libya.

Erdogan focuses in his statements on his country's internal success in confronting the pandemic, despite the opposition's accusation to the government that it was late in its response, as well as helping friendly countries to face the disease, supporting the legitimate government in Libya and the Syrian opposition against the authoritarian Assad regime.

Egypt's Economy and (COVID-19)

**Ambassador/ Magda Shahin- Memeber of ECFA&
Expert in issues of Commercial and International Con-
flict's Settlement**

ABSTRACT:

Due to COVID-19 over 100 countries have requested or expressed interest in assistance from the IMF. The IMF has doubled access to its emergency facilities, which will enable them to meet up to \$100 billion in anticipated demand. Egypt is among the countries requesting assistance from the IMF. Egypt's performance has been good, but the country is now facing a pronounced economic slowdown and an urgent balance of payments need due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Real GDP is expected to decline by 4 percent in 2020, but projections are subject to more than the usual uncertainty. Lower exports, standstill of tourism, and weaker remittances are widening the current account deficit in 2020. Rising global risk aversion is likely to reduce private financial inflows and delay investment. The authorities have sought to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and cushion its economic impact but face a balance of payments gap of \$1.8 billion for 2020-21 (11.4 percent of GDP). The government of Egypt (GOE) intended to launch a new phase of reforms focusing on structural issues before the onset of the COVID pandemic. This is why Egypt resorted to the two facilities of the IMF, the 'Stand-By-Arrangement' (SBA) and the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI). Otherwise, Egypt would have only requested the access to the RFI.

This brief policy paper has a core message to transmit. The COVID-19 crisis has brought to the surface the increased dependence of the Egyptian economy on foreign exchange earnings, which are at the mercy of exogenous factors, such as tourism and remittances. This makes it all the more incumbent on Egypt to reshuffle the sources of foreign exchange away from sources more vulnerable to external shocks. The envisaged structural reforms should aim at positioning the economy to diversify its sources of foreign exchange earnings. Egypt need to think thoroughly at moving away from a structure of rent economy drawing rents from its geostrategic situation and natural resources including those enabling tourism and workers remittances.

The COVID crisis should be seen as an opportunity to reshape the economy, improve its competitiveness, focusing on education and health for sustainable development and growth.

INTRODUCTION:

The Coronavirus crisis wreaking havoc on economies around the world, Egypt is no exception. As a multifaceted crisis, COVID 19 has hit hard the health sector as well as the social and economic fabrics of Egypt's society and well-being. After a 3-year successful structural adjustment program, Egypt was on the verge of taking off to the next level towards an inclusive, private sector led growth of the economy. However, Egypt's successful structural adjustment did not vow for it in these dire times of COVID 19, which had its grip felt, pushing Egypt to resort back to the IMF programmes for Structural Stand-by Arrangements (SBA) and Rapid Financial Instruments (RFI), lest it loses its pre-COVID achievements.

Yet, sooner rather than later, the economy is set to rebound. Egypt will have to be ready, as the government will have to move forward with structural adjustment to tap the potential of the private sector and to modernise its economy, while endorsing inclusive and sustainable growth.

In the following, we endeavour to look at Egypt's pre- and post-COVID 19 period. We will study the extent of the latter implications on the economic growth, as well as delve into the question of whether Egypt's economy is apt for a quick rebound. Lastly, we explore the way forward for Egypt's economy to survive the crisis with the least possible damages and to move towards a sustainable, inclusive and dynamic economic growth.

I- THE SUCCESSES OF THE 3-YEAR ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM:

Starting with ever-bold reforms including the liberalisation of the exchange rate in November 2016, Egypt showed resilience throughout to bring its reforms to success. Prior to the eruption of the COVID crisis growth had been improving steadily and expectations were to remain in the same vein for the coming years. Egypt was prone to take off to deeper institutional reforms after having stabilized its macroeconomic indicators in its three-year arrangement with the IMF (2016-19). Inflation as well as unemployment levels were at single digits; Egypt had reached an unprecedented level of growth as well as driving public debt to a downward trajectory.⁽²⁴⁾

Orchestrated by the Central Bank, Egypt managed to achieve tangible progress in the fiscal situation, which prompted private and public consumption and gave a breathing space to the

(24) IMF Press Release, July 2020.

economy to grow. A reduction in interest rates due to the rise in foreign reserves was meant to incentivise the domestic private sector to lead the second wave of reforms. Despite of the decline in foreign reserves from a peak of \$45.5 billion in 2019 to \$40 billion in the first quarter of 2020, reserves remain solid, covering nearly an 8-month period of merchandise imports.⁽²⁵⁾

One of the priority objectives of structural reforms was geared in essence towards boosting job creation, not as a trickle-down effect but on its own merit, providing social safety nets, particularly to the vulnerable groups, notably youth and women.

Prior to the crisis, the outlook was favourable for Egypt with a projected GDP growth of 6% in 2020, that would have counted among the highest worldwide, a readiness for further institutional and transformational reform, as well as a more conducive business environment for the private sector. To say the least, the reform program was able to provide confidence and the right impulse for the economy to grow.

II- THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON EGYPT'S ECONOMY:

COVID-19 came to hit the very indicators that Egypt worked so hard throughout the adjustment programme to stabilise and the heavy sacrifices the people had to undergo to support. As noted, the crisis is multifaceted and the government of Egypt has no easy task to mitigate the combined socio-economic and health implications of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Without going into much detail, it suffices to point out that the IMF forecast re-evaluated the increase in real GDP growth to drop to 2% in 2020 from initial expectations close to 6% with the continued impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Measured

(25) Trading Economics, Egypt Foreign Exchange Reserves; <https://tradingeconomics.com/egypt/foreign-exchange-reserves>

against the 2.3% rate of population growth, which is one of the highest global growth rates, means that Egypt will equally suffer a negative per capita growth rate. In addition, unemployment rates returned to their previous level five years ago to attain nearly 12% after having reached 8% in 2019, the lowest level ever within 20 years because of implementing the reform program. Furthermore, the public debt declined from 103% in 2016/17 to about 85% in 2018/19, which is a healthy downward trend, nevertheless remains high in proportion to GDP, thus continuing to pose sustainability risks. This will exacerbate if the crisis causes a discontinued fiscal consolidation.

It is not unique that due to the global impact of the pandemic and the worldwide lockdown, Egypt is encountering a huge drop in its net financial inflows. It is most unfortunate that such a shortage of finance comes at a time when the prevailing conviction was that Egypt was pulling itself out of the bottleneck. Egypt lost its income from the tourism sector, faced significant drop in the Suez Canal revenues, and sharp contraction of export proceeds. The steep descent overnight in global oil and gas prices, from \$60 per barrel to no more than \$25 per barrel, are leaving their marks on Egypt's budgetary outlays. Adding to all this, the fall of remittances by 20% globally will have a devastating effect on Egypt's economy, as the world fifth largest recipient of remittances.⁽²⁶⁾ To put things into perspective, the World Bank stipulates that the decline in remittances is "unprecedented," with the closest comparison being the Global Financial Crisis (2008/9), when remittances

(26) The five largest recipients are India, China, Mexico, Philippines and Egypt. Egypt's remittances totalling \$28.9bn in 2018 and constituting 9% of its GDP, according to the Migration and Remittances publication that was issued by the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and the World Bank Group.

fell around 5%.⁽²⁷⁾ Remittances and tourism are the two largest sources of foreign currency for Egypt and the two have dried up in the post-Corona era that will be difficult to recoup in the short term. In light of the huge losses that Egypt incurs in its revenues, it will have to, according to its Minister of Finance, reassess its budget downward and review ways of maintaining and increasing public spending on sectors such as education and health.

Placing Egypt's rate of growth in a regional context, it is useful to look closer at the projected changes the IMF has made to the 2020 GDP forecasts as a result of (COVID-19).

	Pre-COVID 19 2020 IMF Growth Forecasts	Post-COVID 19 IMF Growth Forecasts
Algeria	2.6%	-5.0%
Bahrain	2.5%	-4.3%
Kuwait	3%	-2.5%
Oman	2.5%	-5.0%
Qatar	3.6%	-5.9%
Saudi Arabia	2.5%	-4.3%
UAE	3.0%	-5.0%
Egypt	5.9%	%+2
Jordan	2.4%	-3.7%
Lebanon	0.9%	-12%
Morocco	3.7%	-3.7%
Tunisia	2.4%	-4.3%

While it is obvious that all countries are hard hit by COVID-19 sliding to negative growth rates, Egypt is apparently bet-

(27) Frey Lindsay; World Bank: Global Remittances Set To Decline Sharply As A Result Of Coronavirus, 22 April 2020

ter off than other countries. Losing a 4% of its growth level, Egypt's positive rate of growth will wither, as noted, once we factor in the rate of growth of the population. Additionally with the high disparity in the standards of living in Egypt, the vulnerable segments of the population will be the hardest hit. According to United Nations figures, over 30 percent of the population live below the poverty line.⁽²⁸⁾

One thing is also clear; Egypt will hardly be able to resort to its Gulf friends to ease its quandary, as COVID-19 has spared no one. All are obviously in the same boat.

EGYPT IS WELL-DISPOSED FOR ADDITIONAL FINANCE:

Having shortly completed a stringent structural program with the IMF, under which it obtained a loan of \$12 billion, to restructure its economy and stabilize macroeconomic indicators; Egypt is in a better shape over its peers. It started getting its first tranche in October 2016 and got the last one in December 2019. Egypt implemented this program with merit and succeeded in enhancing business/investors' confidence in its economy and fixing its international credibility, which made it fully eligible to borrow to face the pandemic, which no one knows its extent.

Despite the huge difficulties, Egypt did not hesitate to make every strenuous effort to tackle the Coronavirus crisis at an early date to limit its spread. It took preventive plans and strict measures to confront the pandemic in the governorates, equipping hospitals, examining, and sterilizing streets and squares to combat the transmission of infection. The government of Egypt has

(28) <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Africa/Egypt-POVERTY-AND-WEALTH.html#ixzz6LXdUALg9>

The report said 32.5% of Egyptians lived below the poverty line in 2018, up from 27.8% in 2015 and 16.7% in 2000.

also embarked promptly on effective steps to mitigate the economic impact on the most vulnerable households and irregular workforces, including fiscal stimulus. This amounts to cover million people working in construction, agriculture, fishing, plumbing and other fields. The Central Bank has also taken other steps, including monetary easing, and liquidity and regulatory measures for the financial sector and for borrowers. There is need for further stimulus, especially expenditures on health, food, and income support for vulnerable households and support for businesses.

Egypt, however, amidst these hardships has refrained from relinquishing its reform efforts. In fact, one should give tribute to the government to having reacted quickly to lessen the negative impact on the economy. The GOE did not shy away from resorting once again -- in spite of the adverse reaction incited and promulgated by the media -- to the IMF for programs to pursue its structural reforms and attenuate the financial blow on the country's economy of the its own and international lockdowns. The GOE clearly understands that the completion of the Extended Financing Facility (EFF) reform programe with the Fund does not mean at any rate ending its dealings with the Bretton Woods institutions. Like other developing countries, Egypt is in constant need of technical advice and capacity development in many fields that it requires from these institutions, which have high professional expertise. The IMF - and there, is no shame in it - monitors and supervises the development of Egypt's economy, comparable to all developing and developed member states through 'Article IV'.

Throughout its long history and credibility in its dealings with the Fund as well as with other international and regional institutions and creditors, Egypt has proven worthy of their con-

fidence. There is nothing wrong, as many would like to think, resorting once again to the Fund. It is to the GOE's credit to have recourse to emergency programmes that the IMF assigns to its member states affected by unforeseen crises. It is the sign of governance maturity and responsible membership of the international community of nations.

The fight to contain the Coronavirus has not derailed Egypt's authorities from pursuing its pre-Corona achievements and in continuing with its second wave of reforms. In fact, the 'Stand-By-Arrangement' (SBA) with the Fund is particularly geared towards averting the potential risks of losing the accomplishments of Egypt's IMF-supported structural adjustment programme and ready it for the next set of reforms. Accordingly, the GOE submitted a request for additional financing from the Fund to benefit from the SBA.

But, Egypt is also entitled to profit from another specialised window, the 'Rapid Financing Instrument' (RFI) to address specifically the immediate needs of the balance of payments and support the most affected groups. It is well-established that all eligible member states facing urgent financial needs are in a position to benefit from either of these two programmes or both. However, the SBAs, which are more precautionary in nature and for balance of payment support are used more by the developed and middle-income countries (Egypt is a low-middle-income country), as the least developed countries (LDCs), a recognised UN defined group, have other instruments that are more concessional and accessible to their needs, of which Egypt is not a member. The RFI provides fast financial assistance to countries facing an urgent need for balance of payments. It is a

more flexible tool for meeting the diverse emergency needs of member states. The access for countries under this instrument is up to 100 percent of their quota share, however, the precise amount is to be decided by the IMF Board. According to the IMF regulation, the country will have to commit in its letter of intent, to ensure that this assistance is used for the urgent purpose agreed under the emergency financing. Both mechanisms, SBA and RFI, are essentially short-term for one or two years. However, in case of necessity they can be extended to three years at most. As all Fund's arrangements, the IMF follows and monitors closely the expenditures in both credit lines, SBA and RFI and follows ex-post assessment procedures. The conditions of the Fund prevails, such as transparency and anti-corruption measures to its loans, requiring governments to conduct independent audits, publish procurement plans, including the names of beneficial owners, et cetera. Anti-corruption measures are part of the macroeconomic issues within the framework of the Extended Fund Facility arrangement for structural reforms.

By responding to Egypt's demands, the Fund is keen not to risk the successes previously achieved by the reform programme and macroeconomic policies. Egypt and the IMF need to work jointly to protect the significant gains made in the framework of the three-year reforms. And, as approved by the IMF Executive Board on 11 May, a \$2.772 billion (100% of quota) for the new comprehensive package of financial support will achieve a dual-purpose. First, help Egypt cope with its current plight due to the repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic. Second, safeguard previous successes, support future reform needs and help provide the basis for a strong economic recovery through accelerated reform efforts

aimed at supporting broad-based private sector led development and at making growth more inclusive and sustainable. As the IMF Board has acquiesced to Egypt's loan, it is expected that other financial resources, from the sister and other regional institutions (IFC, EBRD, Afrexim Bank and others), each with its own defined objective, will flow easier into the country, assisting in overcoming the predicament at hand and stimulating development.

III- THE WAY FORWARD:

In a related context, there is no doubt that, in the aftermath of the pandemic, Egypt will have to delve into the structural transformation of its economy. Egypt is compelled in light of the Corona pandemic to move swiftly from a rent economy to a more dynamic, diversified and competitive economy based on the ability to produce goods and services. Egypt will have to dispense largely – in the short to medium term – on the income it receives from tourism, workers' remittances and perhaps counts on less returns from the Suez Canal and its oil exports after its price collapse. The situation will continue to be fluid and volatile long after the world abates the Coronavirus pandemic.

The challenge is the consolidation and the effective implementation of the long-spoken about private-public partnership. The GOE will have to continue the efforts to kick-start private sector led inclusive growth, which requires - now as before - the alleviation of longstanding constraints, lessening the red tape and further enhancement of the business environment. This, however, should not deny the government its continued role in several areas post-Corona, as public investment in the health and education sectors remains key to inclusive growth.

Moreover, the government should continue with its mega-

projects needed in the framework of the overall program. It needs also to expedite the restructuring and upgrading of its institutions and the adaptation of adequate regulatory framework. One cannot but envisage successful cooperation between the public and private sectors in information and communication technology, where disbursement of domestic private investment, as well as FDIs is necessary, while the government is compelled to work harder on compatible rules and regulations to enhance purposefully the digitalisation of the administration and the economy at large. Though the efforts made in financial regulation deserves praise, the government needs to exert additional effort to align domestic regulation and compliance in areas, such as information and communication technology, trade and standards with international practice to boost international cooperation and exports of goods and services.

Egypt has no option but to convert quicker to the digital economy. It needs to accelerate the completion of laws and rules in favour of more electronic commerce, as well as more use of digitization in financial policies (Fintech), and certainly boosting non-oil exports and relying on developing local production chains and feeding industries instead of exaggerated import with a view to reaching an appropriate balance between efficiency and security requirements.

This requires industrial and commercial policymakers to recognise fast enough that the production and supply chains in general will be subject to severe turbulences. It is incumbent upon them to account more for potential localization of a number of industries, such as the textiles and clothing industry instead of over-reliance on China and others in importing textiles and fabrics. Egypt should develop and support domestic production chains

- whenever the situation permits - in the household appliances, electrical products, pharmaceuticals, and food industries and support Egypt's capabilities in these areas, which are industries in which Egypt has a competitive advantage on the regional and international levels. Egypt needs to focus on developing export industries where it has or can develop comparative advantage while maintaining certain activities locally at a cost for security reasons.

The best way forward to Egypt is to transition into a digital economy. This should give a positive twist to the negative impacts of (COVID-19). The ITC sector is topping the priority list for investment to allow the economy to grow. The lockdown of the Coronavirus pandemic has made it all the more necessary to move into digitalisation of practically all sectors of the economy, health, education, finance, and trade. There is no alternative to e-commerce, digital marketing, e-learning, hybrid-learning, online platforms, and delivery businesses to rise to the top in the Egyptian market. We already witness the fundamental changes in the education sector because of the crisis, and the overwhelming trend towards distance education using modern technology. Egypt was fortunate to have already introduced – though on a narrow scale – the tablet that provides the hardware needed for this new type of education, which became very useful in the face of the crisis. Egypt is also to invest in health, as the call to link all health units in all villages with technology has shown its vitality to combat the pandemic. Digitalisation will certainly help advance the inclusion of the more disadvantaged population in economic growth, so that no one is left behind.

However, in all this Egypt has to be careful that the basic infrastructure of servers and technology allowing the digitaliza-

tion do not remain in exclusive foreign hands that may endanger fundamental security.

IV- CONCLUSION :

In conclusion, it is compelling for Egypt to undertake a review of its budgetary outlays in light of the Coronavirus impact on Egypt's revenues. Egypt needs to look into a completely new system with new sources of revenues and of public spending with new priorities in which the state takes a greater role in the areas of healthcare, education and localization of investment in technology and infrastructure without crowding out the private sector.

There is no room for complacency. Egypt should not shy away from the second wave of reforms. It is as important as the first one in order to tap the potentials of the private sector, sustain growth, enhance productivity and ultimately create jobs. In fact, without pursuing the second wave of economic reforms targeting a more conducive business environment and an inclusive growth, Egypt will fail to benefit from its previous successes. It would have ended by paying the expenses of the first wave of reforms, without acquiring its dividends.

The private sector has much at stake here. The government leveraging itself by supporting the economy at the time of the crisis is now compelled to advance particularly in the regulatory framework. When the crisis ends, private and public sector investment in digital technology, artificial intelligence and localization of the industry are key for the modernization of Egypt's economy. The time is for bold actions to go for digital solutions. COVID-19 has only paved the way.

Towards the Adoption of a Universal Declaration to Establishing a Post-Pandemic World

Ambassador/Dr. Mohamed Hegazy- Member of ECFA

Two visions and schools of political analysis are imposing in the current covid-19 epidemic era. The first is ambitious seeking to lay the foundations for a new form of international relations, based on collective and multilateral actions to face health, environmental, economic, security and political challenges. It further seeks a new prosperous, participatory world with concepts that exalt scientific research and its results, in which countries exchange experiences, knowledge, tools and tasks that improve everyone's ability to tackle pandemics, economic risks and fluctuations.

A vision which is based on the belief in science and technology, and academics as a national wealth for their countries of origin and the rest of the world.

It believes in the importance of white armies, and that complements traditional armies in preserving the concept of a new development for national security that includes the health of societies, health and the environment, as well as attention to the concepts of political and economic security as determinants of national security.

A world devoid of wars and conflicts; dedicated to good, public health, environment, economic development, working together towards peace and stability, integration and construction. It promotes the establishing of needed institutions

and committees which will act like platforms to achieving each objective. A sincere and advanced vision committed to service all humanity and realizes the value of the information age and the future of artificial intelligence. It develops concepts such as working remotely and with an achievement no less than the daily presence in work and government offices, which relaxed people and lightened the burdens on traffic, the environment and the costs of daily life and its problems.

A vision which promotes a new participatory system free of exploitation based on the belief in the human being and his happiness, welfare, security and health. It exerts all efforts to ending conflicts, wars and the occupation, instead of an ancient system based on exploitation oppression and injustice.

The second vision is the pre- epidemic, with all its protagonists who benefited from an vexing atmospheres of political and economic exploitation, and conflicts. A system which is run by few profiteers from other nations sufferings either by prolonged wars or debts. Therefore, many will die hard to protect and go back to the fundamentals of the old regime to regaining their power and interests as before.

And since we were original stakeholders in a new, more humane and participatory world order based on the principles and values that protect people, and confront the defenders of the ancient world and those that lurk in their burrows. We must work from now to launch, promote and protect the values of the first vision,.

I suggest that the best mode of action to achieve that is its launching in a Universal Declaration of Principles, an international Agreement that includes all these principles.

The first vision preserves, defends and promotes it, and guarantees an international commitment and its application in national levels

There is no better place and timing than the next meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September, where the international community and the leaders of the countries of the world meet.

From now until next September, I call upon several diplomacies to work together to draft the declaration and mobilize support from other world leaders. The initiative should come on heads of state level. This the summit level is important say for example, president for Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to speak with French President Macron and German Chancellor, and they will communicate together with US President Trump and Russian Putin and Chinese Xi Jean Ping to launch of drafting the document.

After consulting from now on summit level, each president is tasked with putting the initiative on the reinstatement of the presidents to form an international supportive public opinion and exchange diplomats from the three countries, Egypt, France and Germany, a measure that is distributed by the new global declaration.

From now until next September, there will be an international consensus on the rules and foundations of our new world, and the release of its hopes and aspirations in the form of enforceable principles that take their legitimacy from the consensus of the leaders of the countries of the world and its institutions, and some may be satisfied with the change, but the letter or the international pact will precede their position and influence. The

good will fade with the days and will impose its mechanisms and dynamics and as a reference to a new world that we all deserve.

The proposed perception that the announcement should begin with a high-level philosophy introduction tend then after we include all the mentioned principles and hopes in the declaration which will be endorsed by the leaders in the General Assembly next September.

To conclude, documenting our aspirations for a new future is important in spite of any expected resistance as principles of any great revolutions or changes requires its registration for possible present or future use. The French Revolution principles, did not implement its rays in the world, except after decades of setback and return to old regressive régime and then they radiated and dazzled.

(Huge Economic Losses In the Fields of Culture, Arts and Sports due to (COVID-19)

Ambassador/ Hisham El-Zimaity
Secretary General of ECFA

The “Stay at Home, Culture in between Your Hands” initiative launched by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture has been successful in positively reaching out to the public who were obliged to stay at home. Such positive communication with the public has been achieved through social media by broadcasting impressive high-quality artistic performances, on a special YouTube channel.

In the past, family members used to gather in the evening around the fireplace, chatting with each other, as well as having conversations and exchanging experience and advice. The prestige of reading, where beauty resides, which Adonis described as “pivotal in every house”, as the reader finds in the text or the painting an endless topic open to infinity; something that neither reading nor meditation can drain, thus revealing a different and new form of vision and expression together, especially with respect to the genius linguistic usage, where dimensions extend beyond what we are up to in our time, and the reader views a comprehensive encompassment of knowledge with the written or illustrated material, thus artwork is not limited to a certain period of time and remains unchangeable not affected by the passage of time.

Then emerged the television or the modern fireplace as they used to call it, and families used to watch it in the evening but chatting and exchanging ideas decreased. Soon after that emerged the transistor radio followed by the cassette player then the walkman cassette player and finally arriving at the smart phone till every member of the family became isolated in his own virtual world, and there is no longer any family reunification as was the case at the time of the fireplace, until the coronavirus surprised us, forcing family members to stay together at home for months, and so millions of families around the world have closely rediscovered their members' musical and artistic talents, and many have returned back to their libraries to remove the dust of the mad years of globalization from over their books, recalling the joy and beauty of reading, the love of learning, and intellectual depth.

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak resulted in the disruption of artistic, cultural, and sports life worldwide. Hundreds of concerts, performances and international festivals were canceled altogether. Curtains at the cinemas and theaters were drawn, and sports competitions, including the Tokyo Olympics themselves, were postponed until next year. Artists and those working in the cultural field found in social media platforms a means for continuing their activity, and some of them experienced performing live streaming over Youtube and Facebook and the question that everyone is concerned with is about how would the future of culture and arts be if the pandemic continues to exist? And will arts be transferred to the virtual world? What about those which require direct interaction with the audiences such as the theater for example? As theater is a fine art, based on the direct relation-

ship between actors and audiences, and it is unimaginable that it could turn to the virtual world.

Since imposing social distancing, the sectors of arts, culture and sports suffered grave losses estimated to be in hundreds of billions of dollars, film studios ceased to produce movies and series; theater and cinema shows, concerts, art exhibitions, amusement parks, circuses, Disney land, and all sorts of dazzling and innovative means that nurture thought and spirit together have been cancelled. The losses of such sectors amounted to more than four hundred billion dollars in the U.S., about 150 billion in Europe, and approximately 130 billion in China which has just started to build its soft power since few years, particularly in the fields of cinema, series, and electronic games.

The world's most famous theatres of Broadway will remain closed till September at the earliest without specifying a date for reopening, whereas all performances have been suspended in New York's famous neighborhood near Times Square since March. With every week of closure Broadway theatres lose more than thirty million dollars of their ticket sales revenue. At the time of suspension, 31 play performances were being staged on Broadway theatres and other works were being prepared for launching in the spring.

While in Egypt, estimations indicate that losses have exceeded 30 billion Egyptian pounds till the end of May 2020 especially since the producers of Ramadan movies and series were forced to reduce the numbers of supporting actors and technicians to the minimum. It is hoped that this important vital sector providing Egypt with its soft power, employing about three million citizens, and to which the whole population is linked, will

be able to start working again soon.

As we have pointed out, the “Stay at Home, Culture in between Your Hands” initiative launched by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture included broadcasting many artistic and cultural activities among which were a hologram concert for Umm Kulthum as well as another one entitled Kalthoumiyat, the “Big night (El-leilah El-Kabira)” ballet performance for the two great figures Sayed Mekkawi and salah Jahin, director Khaled Galal’s play “Qahwa Sada (Black Coffee),” musician Omar Khairat’s concerts and other beloved artists from the pyramids plateau, and the children’s “Arousty (My Doll)” show with the voice acting and singing performed by the star Ahmed El-Sakka.

Famous ballets including the Nutcracker, Zorba the Greek, the Swan Lake, Aida Opera, and Carmen as well as the Talent Development Center Ceremony at the opera house were also broadcast. The Theater House also participated with thirty theatrical performances by the major celebrities including El Malek Howa El Malek (the king is the king), Ahlan ya Bakawat (Welcome Beys), Al-Eskafi malekan (the shoemaker is the king), Awlad Al-Ghadab Wal Hob (Children of Anger and Love), and Rajol Al-qal’a (The man of the castle), as well as distinguished performances by the young artists of the Theater House including Chaise longue, and Al-Sira Al-Holamiya (An Epic with indefinite features), which achieved great success among the stay-at-home audiences.

The Ministry of Culture made its various book publications available in pdf form on the websites of the General Egyptian Book Organization and the National Center for Translation, as well as launching the virtual visits service for a number of his-

torical and artistic museums introducing a huge selection of the works of fifty visual artists to the visitor.

An artistic initiative entitled “Art for the good” was launched by the visual artist and film director Wahid Mukhaimer. The aim of which was to gather the participations of 100 male and female artists and direct their revenue to support the coronavirus confrontation efforts in Egypt. The participation included artists of different generations and various art schools, who were keen to support the initiative with outstanding artistic works, and whose revenue was allocated for supporting the efforts of government hospitals in confronting the virus.

The visual artist Mohamed Abul Naga felt the beauty of practicing art during the COVID-19 crisis, and invested the lockdown period in drawing some manuscripts. As he sometimes relied on old Egyptian and Arab manuscripts for inspiring him with some of his works, so he mixed the reality he is living in with his relationship to manuscripts. Moreover, he published some manuscripts via social media about the relationship between man and woman during the Corona era, as well as pictures of love and trees planted in the earth symbolizing the good link between earth and heavens to which man resorts to create a mixture of optimism and love, especially as people discovered that the face mask, that small cloth, is more important than a gun; as that tiny virus did not differentiate between rich and poor, religious belief or skin color, and due to which the relations of world countries will be reformulated in one way or another.

On the other hand, the administration of the International Music Academy in Los Angeles decided to honor artists electronically this year via video conferencing. Egyptian guitar player

Emad Hamdi won two awards, the first being the title of “Artist of The Year 2019” in the field of classical music, and the second one was the “Artist Vision Award”. A Part of Emad Hamdi’s concert was broadcast from inside the Egyptian Opera House, whereas he emphasized that his goal is to provide more meaningful Egyptian art to the world, and to encourage boys and girls to love music and learn it at an early age.

On the negative side, the matter was not just limited to the financial losses, as a number of artists died due to coronavirus infection. The first was the international Cameroonian saxophone player Manu Dibango, who has been considered as the legend of the Afro-jazz. He was followed by John Paul “Bucky” Pizzarelli, the American guitar player carrying the title of “Master of the Jazz Guitar”; Dave Greenfield, the great keyboardist; well-known gospel singer Troy Sneed; the famous DJ Mike Huckaby; rapper Fred the Godson; and others. The mighty actor Tom Hanks and his wife were also infected during their tour in Australia. Egypt lost in the time of Corona the mighty actor Hassan Hosni; visual artist Sameh El-Bennani; Ibrahim Nasr, the star of the most famous prank programs, and actor Mahmoud Masoud. Our Arab countries also lost a group of artists, including the Iraqi Manaf Taleb, the Yemeni Hassan Alwan, the Kurdish Atta Gawshin, and the Algerian Nouredine Zaidouni. While Africa lost Pape Diouf, the Senegalese football legend and the former president of the French football club “Olympique de Marseille”; and the Congolese Aurlus Mabélé, known as the “king of Soukous,” the music that simulates Rumba music with a Pure African flavor; in addition to others.

In spite of that, new artistic and cultural experiences were

made available to the audiences via social media, as cultural life has not stopped, and many people were given the opportunity to engage in cultural and artistic life that perhaps might not have been previously available to them due to shortage of time and the pressures of the economic situations.

Many artists have invested more meaning and details than just preventive isolation and precautionary measures, especially as social media has provided a favorable medium for their artistic ideas, so they tried to view the crisis and interact with it, despite its severity, from a different angle, to alleviate its impact, and reduce the panic of citizens by challenging the horror of Corona with art, creativity, and positive pleasing ideas. Millions of people watched on Youtube the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performing lonely, a solo concert on the occasion of Easter, at Milan's Duomo cathedral, presenting a unique celebration that served as a prayer for countering the coronavirus under the slogan of "Music for Hope."

Under the slogan of One World: "Together at Home," millions watched a concert in which hundreds of international artists have participated; led by the two legends Stevie Wonder and Paul McCartney as well as the Rolling Stones team, with the aim of thanking doctors and frontline workers; during which 128 million dollars were raised and allocated to develop medical institutions and support those affected by the spread of the coronavirus.

Millions also enjoyed the charity concert hosted by the international rock singer Elton John from his kitchen featuring many celebrities participating via their smart phone cameras, raising eight million dollars allocated to help those with the professions that are required to continue during the pandemic, despite los-

ing sixty million pounds due to the cancellation of his farewell tour, which was scheduled for this summer.

For its part, The Perm Tchaikovsky Opera and Ballet Theatre (often named “Tchaikovsky’s House”) of the Russian industrial city of Perm, which is one thousand kilometers from Moscow, launched a number of artistic performances which were streamed online, with only one spectator randomly selected before each show from among those wishing to attend, as part of an initiative called “One-On-One”. The theater director, Marat Gatsalov, explained that they are ready to hold performances for one person, as one spectator has the same value as a full house.

Another artist, who called himself “the ugly lover,” imagined how the famous paintings drawn throughout art history would look like if they were drawn during the coronavirus era. So he redrew the paintings, publishing most of them with masks worn on their faces. The Mona Lisa painting by Leonardo da Vinci was on top of those paintings adorned with the face mask, and he created an account on instagram in order to post the paintings on which he laid the facemasks, and he chose for his Profile picture a painting for the Virgin Mary wearing a facemask.

A 1942 painting by the American artist Edward Hopper titled *Nighthawks*, simulating the reality in which the world lives today in terms of isolation and loneliness, was circulated on social media platforms; so how did Hopper predict our situation today?

The story of Osama Qashoo, a film director, a Palestinian refugee and a restaurant owner in London, is worth telling. On the day he announced the closure and asked the workers to stay at home, Osama called his workers asking them to choose between staying at home doing nothing, or returning back to cook-

ing and offering free food to front-line workers at no charge; as doctors, nurses, and support staff were under increasing pressure and worked longer hours, finding it difficult to leave the wards for lunch or buying food after the end of the shift because shops were closed. Driven by the spirit of community service, Osama's team began to produce 250 meals per day for distribution to hospitals, with provision of a special portion of these meals to the night staff.

As for Osama; it only takes a few seconds for a Palestinian to cope with difficult circumstances, as he lived difficult situations in Palestine and Lebanon for long periods, and realizes the meaning of one being locked in his house, in a shelter or in a detention centre, where access to food is not easy. But the conflict experience is not the only one. He even found that the habits of Arab hospitality and the culture of generosity that emerges during periods of austerity are part of the current experience with which human beings must adapt. And as Palestinians, they should, whenever they can, convey a true message of their continuing suffering under the occupation and their just cause.

For its part, the League of Arab States called for developing the cultural system in Arab states, by retrofitting theaters and cinemas in a manner that maintains the minimum social distancing space that protects spectators from the transmission of diseases and epidemics. The league also called on the ministries of culture and specialized cultural institutions to establish an Arab electronic platform that includes national public and specialized museums, with the provision of adequate explanation about the exhibits of these museums, and the creation of virtual museums that rely on digital audio and video technology, in ad-

dition to broadcasting artistic, creative and intellectual activities and linking these sites to each other to render the possibility of viewing them easily accessible.

And finally, the fundamental question remains: will arts be transferred to the virtual world because of the coronavirus? What about the fate of those arts requiring direct interaction with audiences such as theater and circus? What about the right of the author and the special exclusive rights to protect the works of authors and creative artists, the rights of public performance and broadcasting rights, which are the main source of income for writers, composers, singers, photographers and cameramen, actors, painters and other creative artists working in the field of culture and arts, if the art show in the next stage becomes confined to social media?.

The World After Coronavirus⁽²⁹⁾

Dr. Mona Makram Ebeid- Member of ECFA

What are the features of the world after the COVID-19 crisis? This is the question imposing itself on the agendas of Arab and foreign governments, after the coexistence with the virus has become an inevitable issue following the end of the stay-at-home first phase of the global dealing with the crisis, and beginning the phase of re-opening and coexistence with the virus.

There are several important steps for dealing with the current situation, **of which the most important is:** finding a vaccine or a treatment for the virus, through the racing of world states to find a rapid treatment in order to save humanity from this danger, amid promising results and clinical trials of drugs that are currently being tested. But all of this should be done under UN monitoring to ensure a fair distribution of treatment or vaccine immediately after being announced, so as to be available to all world countries and not to turn into a profit-driven economic activity, as the next stage does not require more exploitation of the concerns of common people for trading purposes in various world countries. Unless a consensual formula is reached from now on, on the mechanism of dealing with and fairly distributing the treatment, we may find ourselves facing a new war, especially as the current indications point to the racing of world countries in search for taking the lead in saving the world from the current danger, even if its hidden purpose was to achieve a

(29) This article was published in Almasry Alyoum newspaper, on Thursday, May 14, 2020, <https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/1977581>

political or economic victory by governments.

Second step: Seeking to question China and holding it accountable for hiding the details about the outbreak of the virus at the earlier stages which resulted in its transmission to all world countries, and forcing governments to impose the stay-at-home orders on their citizens to prevent transmission of infection to others.

The US administration may have alluded to the necessity of holding China accountable and demanding its punishment, or even demanding financial compensation for the damage inflicted on the world, and recently Australia followed the same approach as the U.S. by demanding to hold China accountable, and I expect the escalation of such step, which most probably would be Trump's election trump card in his campaign to win a second term.

A number of countries are expected to follow this approach demanding China to compensate for these losses. For example, the French government announced that the coming period will witness an economic recession that has not been witnessed in France since the 1940s. Germany also expects an economic decline of 6.3%, the largest of its kind since 1970. Therefore, it is necessary for some country or entity to bear these losses; and states are currently restricting their efforts to protecting their citizens, but no doubt the time for accountability will come.

Third step: Relates to the extent of how governments deal with the year-end holiday and the tourist season. And the next step would be to overcome the quarantine and full lockdown phase; with the attempt of restoring market movements, the return of factories and companies back to work, and the return of

domestic and international travel to their normal in a manner that would not result in exacerbation of the crisis again and lead some states to go through the full lockdown phase once more.

The Pre-coronavirus world will not return back as it used to be before, and I expect future changes in the employment structure of the WHO, as the U.S.A will not leave the situation without accountability or merely stopping funding. Foreign government budgets will also be adjusted in the future, in addition to paying attention to the health sector in a way that will be as equally important as armies and armament.

History is certainly changing, as Thomas L. Friedman's recent New York Times article showed that the world is experiencing a new history; and, although we follow the Gregorian calendar before Christ (B.C.) and after birth of Jesus Christ (A.D.), the next stage will be witnessing a new pattern that will reveal the world as before Corona (B.C.) and after Corona (A.C.).

I recall the statements of the president of the European Commission Ursula Von Der when she called for maintaining European Unity at the time of her inauguration for her new post last November, but now the matter has changed as there are states feeling that the EU entity is not as strong as before for absorbing shocks and crises, as well as having a noticeable weakness in its structure; and therefore its results in the near and far future are not in favor of the continuation of the Eurozone.

Perhaps a discussion will be held about the behavior of citizens and states in dealing with such situations, and what the famous "Science" magazine referred to years ago; classifying societies into "strict" and "lax" according to the degree of priority given to the freedom of following the rules. Strict societies such as China,

Singapore, and Austria have many rules and penalties governing social behavior. Citizens of those states have become accustomed to a high degree of censorship that aims at promoting good behavior, while rules tend to be weaker and more tolerant in the lax cultures in states such as the U.S., Italy, and Brazil, which explains the increasing numbers of infections in countries having lax rules while such numbers decrease in more strict countries.

Therefore I call on the UN to intervene urgently in this crisis which is no less than a universal war threatening the fate of millions of humans; and as the Adviser to the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), I call on the UNAOC to engage in the crisis, to prepare an ambitious action plan to assist the countries affected by this issue, to help the families of the victims psychologically and financially, and to reach an action plan that can serve as a guide for governments in dealing with the situation, especially since all reports indicate that we are on the verge of an economic recession that has not been witnessed by the world, and will be even more severe than what the world had experienced in 2008. So are we ready for such event and capable of facing it?!