Remarks on the Opening of the International Symposium:

**Globalization in a Post-COVID World:**

**Retreat or Revival?**

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Colleagues and friends,

I am delighted to be able to help welcome you to this exciting international symposium on “Globalization in a Post-COVID World.” I want to especially praise the Foundation for Law and International Affairs, and the School of Foreign Studies, East China University of Political Science and Law for their innovative and forward thinking approaches that made this conference possible. I add my personal thanks to Shaoming Zhu, whose work on behalf of FLIA has been nothing short of spectacular.

You have been given a most formidable task. Each of you will contribute to a profound discussion about the effect of the pandemic on the forward or backwards trajectories of globalization. This presents one of the most important questions of the next several years. I am eager to learn from you as you move the scholarly discussion of the issues to a new and more sophisticated level.

Colleagues and friends,

Plague accelerates even as it transforms. There is no magic to plague; it operates in the environment in which it appears, and is both constrained by that environment (technology, societal taboos, hygiene and the like) and provides it with the openings through which rising societal contradictions, of its discontents, might be resolved or the level of their intensity advanced.  One sees both in the wake of COVID-19.  This conference brings together a group of distinguished scholars whose work will significantly advance knowledge of the precise ways in which COVID-19 has accelerated trends and in the process is transforming the global order as we once knew it.

I want to start the symposium off with six brief  considerations that may frame the way in which it may be possible to consider the profound effects of pandemic on the world order as it was and as it is becoming. This touches on the importance of the contributions to knowledge that is our collective task for this symposium.

First, it is important to underline that there WILL be effects on the current world order.  Yet it is too early to be able to confidently identify the long term effects.

Second,  the fundamental relationship between the individual, the collective and governing institutions will change in profound and quite noticeable ways.  While it is likely that the discourse of personal liberty or collective responsibility does not change in the short term, the application of those principles will change in both Socialist and liberal democratic systems.

Third,   the scope of governmental authority will likely change.  It is difficult, though to predict the direction of that change and it is likely to be highly contextual. Part will defend on the way in which a system disperses power between its public and private organs.

Fourth, the bureaucratization of all aspects of life actually signals the movement of power from the political to the managerial elements of institutions.  The pandemic revealed in all its majesty that the state and its principles are captive to the administrator, to the technician, to the field expert, and to those who design and operate systems that connect policy to implementation.  States that expose that connection tend to do well; states that seek to suppress this trajectory by muzzling or sidelining their technocrats often find themselves criticized and their efforts undermined.

Fifth, the nature of borders will change.  Borders will indeed matter more for the control of people.  At the same time, they will matter less for the organization of economic activity.

Sixth, there is an important role to be played by the emerging great regional economic collectives.  In particular, the role of the Belt & Road Initiative as a structure through which challenges like those presented by COVID-19 merit further study.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I welcome you to this symposium and look forward to what I expect to be quite profound contributions to knowledge that will now be made here.

Thank you.