

A day does not go by without some news or media update about the spread of COVID-19. It is impossible to even remember exactly when it was not like this. Such is the nature of the pandemic that is crisscrossing the world.

Cities and countries are on lockdown. People are hoarding. Health services are being overtaxed. Racism has also grown rampant as non-involved Asians around the world are being blamed for what originated from a bureaucratic cover-up in Wuhan, China.

There are innumerable lessons to be learned from this, far too many to be listed here. This article will focus on two.

The first deals with the macro-level reality of an ever-developing paradigm shift from a global village to a global home and what that means.

Globalization has been entrenched in practice for centuries as nations regularly participated in intercontinental trade and commerce.

Its practice only became associated with the name “global village” as the links between raw materials, manufacturing, marketing and distribution became unavoidably evident after World War II. Companies needed a new business model and name.

However, viruses do not respect borders, names or business models. You cannot forbid them, command them to follow orders or tell them to stay in place.

Like the plagues and pestilences of old, they cross all borders with impunity and strike at people of all ages. They can savage a “village” just like a nation, a continent or a world; they force people to realize that wherever they are, they live in the same house.

Similarly, ideologies, religion, race, color, class, culture etc. mean nothing to a virus. It is a great leveler and disrespects them all. That is the macro message it brings.

On this macro level, businesspeople could easily come to accept the “global village paradigm” because in that paradigm they could still maintain a certain sense of boundaries. A village can have its rich and its poor; it can have a fashionable side where the “haves” live and another side where the “have nots” live. It can still maintain exclusive sections and divisions.

A global home paradigm is philosophically more difficult to accept because it pushes all to admit to a home equality; people do not want to say they live in the same home as those who they are prejudiced against or whose background they disapprove of.

However, as COVID-19 scours the planet, that admission becomes unavoidable. A different message is now heard, one by which the consciousness of humanity’s interconnectedness becomes evident and promotes the global home image.

That message is: “We are all in this together.”

This message calls for a shift in thinking from the old paradigm. True, on the one hand, borders can be and have been sealed; likewise within those borders, social distancing can be and has been required.

However, to carry this out, people still must acknowledge that “we are all in this together.”

No nation, no city, no neighborhood, no person is exempt. The only way to defeat such a virus is with a united effort from all.

Wherever one is, whether within or outside any locked down area, complete cooperation is needed. A neighborhood, a city, a nation, a continent — the world is only as strong as its weakest link. No one person can claim that the rules only apply to others.

This is the global home consciousness that fits. Regardless of race, religion, creed, and even linguistic practices and/or cultural beliefs, everyone belongs to one family: the human race. Everyone lives in one home, on one planet: the planet Earth. We are all in this together.

This same message had been heard before with global warming, but in that instance the effect was never that immediate. There, the sense of eventual destruction could be put off to sometime in a vague future. Life could go on.

It has taken a rampant virus and a worldwide pandemic to wake everyone up to the reality of this new perspective. Death is swift and the body count is unavoidable.

What follows this message of interdependence therefore is that no group, no people, no individual can be left out of finding a solution, most especially if they can make a solid contribution.

That brings us to the micro message of COVID-19 and the continued exclusion of Taiwan from the WHO and the World Health Assembly (WHA). In each, Taiwan cannot even participate as an observer.

Why then is Taiwan, a capable nation with a strong medical history that is willing to assist, not allowed to help find a solution?

Taiwan is clearly part of the global home and global family. Independently, Taiwan has sealed its borders, set its own quarantines and handled its virus cases far better than most. Yet, like an orphan it is rejected by the WHO and WHA; it is not allowed at the table.

The reason is simple. The People's Republic of China (PRC) still makes unsubstantiated claims to Taiwan's territory, and continues to put the world in clear and present danger simply because it wishes to play zero-sum games with organizational membership.

The game the PRC is playing has a most deadly, but realistic added irony. At the end of last year, because of its strong medical knowledge and experience with SARS, Taiwan, looking in from the outside, had warned the WHO of the possibility and threat of human-to-human transmission of COVID-19. This warning was ignored because of the PRC.

Even if the PRC tries to play catchup, other nations must remember that despite its current efforts, it initially tried to cover up the reality of the source of the virus. After that, it stonewalled Taiwan's contribution, until finally three weeks later it was forced to admit the truth.

By then the damage had been done: The virus had been loosed around the world, resulting in lockdowns, insufferable economic disruption and rising death tolls.

This is the hypocrisy of the PRC and even that of the WHO/WHA. It is a hypocrisy that must be dealt with in the micro reality that the virus reveals. Taiwan belongs in the WHA.

The PRC, of course, still insists that it is Taiwan's "parent" and should represent the *de facto* independent Taiwan. If it cannot, the PRC still irresponsibly claims that it will take its ball and go home.

Zero-sum games do not work in a global home paradigm and it is time for other nations to face up to this, as death tolls around the world rise.

Likewise, there are no parents in the global home paradigm. Solutions must be worked out by all nations as family members living and working under the same roof. The human race is at risk.

This virus will have its death toll and eventually pass. However, there will always be another virus.

## Taiwan, COVID-19 and the world

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The time has come, therefore, for all nations to tell the PRC that if it wants to play its zero-sum games, it can only play them in non-essential matters. Taiwan must be recognized for the reality it is and the contributions it can make.

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