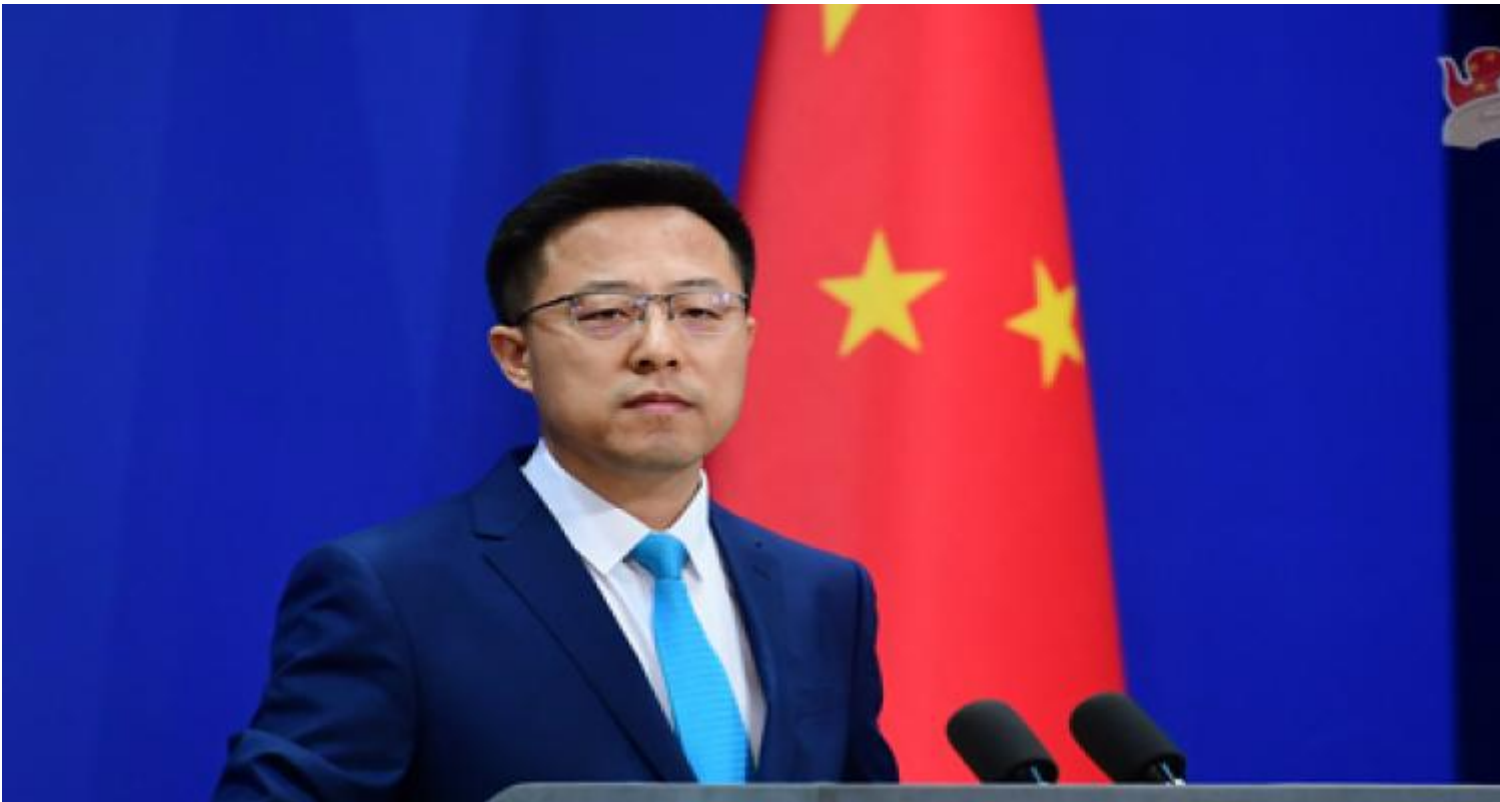


China blasts U.S. decision to cut funds for World Health Organization



Beijing, April 15 (RHC)-- Beijing has blasted U.S. President Donald Trump for cutting funds for the World Health Organization (WHO), warning it would have serious implications for the global COVID-19 response.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, said the battle against coronavirus is now “at a critical moment.” He added that the U.S. decision to withdraw funding from the WHO will “undermine the international cooperation against the epidemic,” which makes China “seriously concerned.”

Zhao emphasized that China is urging “the United States to earnestly fulfill their responsibilities and obligations, and support the WHO-led international action against the epidemic,” because the WHO is playing an “irreplaceable role.”

The criticism comes after Trump’s decision to suspend funding the WHO until further notice. According to the president’s tweet, the organization “really blew it” when responding to the coronavirus outbreak. In the same tweet, he also accused the body of being “very China centric” in its actions.

The U.S. has historically been by far the largest donor to the organization – contributing nearly \$400 million to the WHO's \$6 billion annual budget. The U.S. also currently has by far the highest number of confirmed coronavirus cases -- 601,472 so far and 24,429 COVID-19-related deaths.

The WHO has urged countries not to “politicize” the crisis, while other international actors have also come forward to criticize Trump’s decision to cut America’s funding. The American Medical Association called this move a “dangerous step in the wrong direction,” while EU foreign policy chief Josepp Borell said that the EU “deeply regrets” Trump’s announcement.

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