

China says U.S. addicted to quitting groups and scrapping treaties



Beijing, June 3 (RHC)-- China has criticized the United States for its decision to sever ties with the World Health Organization (WHO), accusing Washington of pursuing a “selfish” and unilateralist policy. During a daily briefing in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said the United States has become “addicted to quitting groups and scrapping treaties.”

Zhao said the response from the international community has shown that many disagree with the U.S. withdrawal from the WHO. “The international community generally disagrees with such U.S. acts of selfishness, evasion of responsibility, and undermining of international cooperation against the epidemic,” Zhao said.

Since U.S. President Donald Trump took office in 2017, the U.S. has quit the UN cultural agency UNESCO, cut the UN funding and announced its withdrawal from the UN-backed Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear deal.

Last week, Trump announced that he was permanently cutting U.S. relations with the WHO, accusing the Geneva-based organization of failing to do enough to rein in the initial spread of the new coronavirus.

The president first suspended funding to the UN agency last month over accusations of mishandling the global pandemic.

Earlier this month, Trump accused the WHO of being a "puppet" of China and said the funding freeze would become permanent if it failed to make "substantive improvements." The United States contributed \$400 million to the WHO last year, roughly 15% of its budget.

Zhao further said the WHO "cannot possibly serve only one country, and should not follow the will of the country that pays the most to it." He also noted that "in the face of the epidemic, any suppression or even blackmail of the WHO is a disregard of life, challenge to humanitarianism, and destruction of international cooperation."

The spokesman further said China would "play its due role as a responsible big country" to support the WHO, calling on the international community to unite and provide more political support and funding for the world body.

The new coronavirus, which causes a respiratory disease known as COVID-19, emerged in the city of Wuhan in December last year, incrementally affecting the rest of the world.

The White House has been seeking to deflect criticism of its own sluggish response to the COVID-19 crisis by putting too much emphasis on the virus' likely origins in China, with Trump and other US officials, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, referring to the coronavirus as the "Chinese virus."

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