



South Korean Health Diplomacy in Facing COVID-19

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Abstract

This study aims to discuss the economic impact caused by the COVID-19 virus outbreak and look at South Korea's steps in suppressing the spread of the COVID-19 virus and diplomatic actions to help three priority countries, namely the United States, United Arab Emirates and, Indonesia. This study uses qualitative research methods that use the concept of health diplomacy and data collection techniques by conducting library research. The results of this study indicate the global economic and health impacts, collaboration of various parties by conducting health diplomacy is a solution to improve health and relations with multiple countries. South Korea conducts health diplomacy in the form of rapid test kits to detect the spread of the COVID-19 to America because there is an agreement on currency exchange and new virus cases there, the UAE maintains cooperation in various sectors, and Indonesia as an essential partner in ASEAN to realize the new vision of South Korea. So health diplomacy is not just about health in the face of COVID-19, but also to improve relations between countries.

Keywords: *COVID-19, health diplomacy, economic impact, South Korea*

Introduction

In early 2020, the world was shocked by the spread of a virus that attacks the human respiratory tract known as the coronavirus or COVID-19. This virus was found in China's Wuhan province at the end of 2019 and has infected thousands of Chinese citizens. Furthermore, in early 2020, this virus spread rapidly to various countries and regions throughout the world. According to the latest WHO report on April 7, 2020, there are about 178 countries that have been infected by COVID-19 (World Health Organization, 2020). It shows that almost all countries on all continents have been exposed to COVID-19.

Globally, COVID-19 has a devastating effect on world health. Thousands of people have died as a result of being infected with the coronavirus worldwide. The number of deaths due to coronavirus increased significantly from February to the present. The latest data shows the number of victims who died due to infection with the coronavirus reached 79,235 people (World Health Organization, 2020). Besides death, another health impact is damage to the lung organs. Even the damage was left despite recovering from COVID-19 (DW.com, 2020).

Besides the effect on health, the COVID-19 epidemic also had a negative effect on the global economy. Since it first became an epidemic in China, the global economy has been disrupted due to production disruptions in China, so that the global supply chain has also been disrupted. Many companies around the world depend on supplies from China, so they also experience a contraction in production. Transport activities that are heavily restricted between countries also further slow down global economic activity. Financial markets also experienced a decline; the exchange rate of money and global stock indices showed a significant decrease

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(McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). Therefore, economic problems are also a concern for leaders of countries around the world.

So far, South Korea is one of the leading countries that are able to reduce the number of deaths caused by COVID-19, based on data from 31 January 2020 to 30 March 2020 there were 158 deaths from a total of 9,661 people who were affected by COVID-19 and recovered 5,228 (World Economic Forum, 2020). So the total percentage of deaths in South Korea is 0.97 percent (Al Jazeera, 2020). South Korea's success in suppressing the spread of COVID-19 was used to establish diplomatic relations of priority countries, namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United States of America (USA), and Indonesia as an effort to help fight the spread of COVID-19 (Kompas.com, 2020).

This is called health diplomacy, which is an effort to resolve a health crisis by collaborating between countries and non-countries. For example, what was done by Africa when facing Ebola and Zika in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), several donors from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and philanthropy (Anderson, 2018); the handling of HIV / AIDS by Indonesia together with all domestic and foreign parties (Seiff, 2013); as well as American actions that make health diplomacy an effort to promote maternal and child health, nutrition, family planning, and other health priorities (Jaffe, 2013); Japan which helped in the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000 the establishment of the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a health diplomacy effort (Abe, 2013); This health diplomacy can also solve several health problems in Thailand and Sub-Saharan Africa which directly involve the local community (Kevany, et al., 2012).

So, health diplomacy is important for dealing with epidemics such as COVID-19. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explain health diplomacy as a solution in suppressing the spread of COVID-19 by clearly seeing what South Korea is doing in handling this case and efforts to provide assistance to three main priority countries, namely Indonesia, the UAE and USA to handle this case.

Research Method

This study used qualitative research methods that explain health diplomacy efforts as a solution by South Korea, Indonesia, the UAE, and America in handling COVID-19 cases. To explain that, this study used the concept of health diplomacy. The data collection technique was carried out with a literature study that observed various documents such as reports, books, articles, online news, and other secondary sources that were relevant to this research. This research went through the stages of collecting data, presenting data, to drawing conclusions.

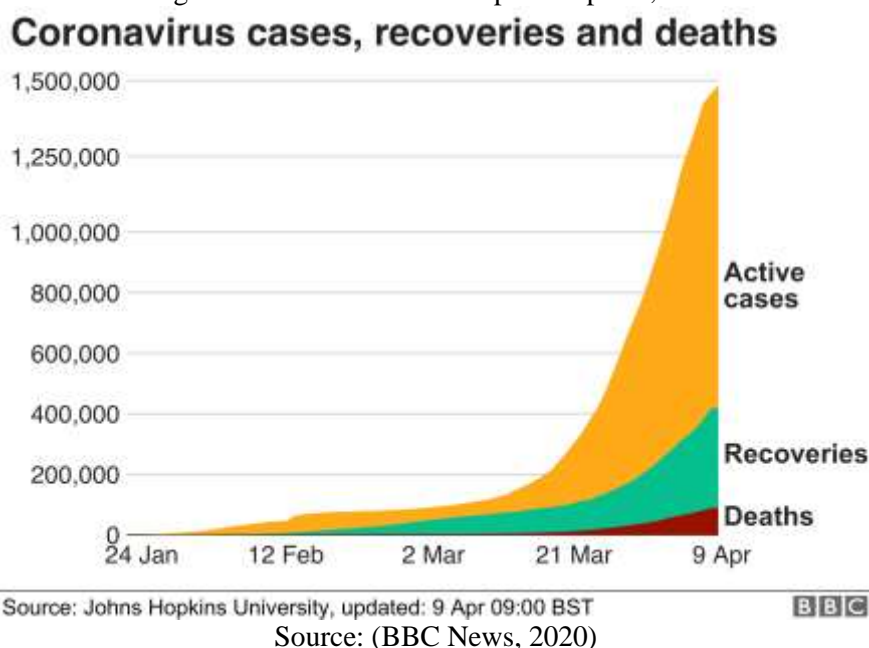
Result and Discussion

The Origin of the Corona Virus (COVID-19) and the Global Economic Impact

Coronavirus was initially thought only to be able to infect animals. But after the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2002 in Guangdong, China, it was found that the coronavirus (SARS-CoV) can infect humans. In 2012, a new coronavirus was discovered in the Middle East called Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), causing endemic in the region. December 2019, found a new coronavirus that spreads rapidly in Wuhan Province, China. The coronavirus was first named by Chinese researchers with the name of the Wuhan coronavirus or the 2019 corona novel virus (nCoV-2019). Later the Wuhan coronavirus was internationally named as SARS CoV-2 and the disease as COVID-19 by the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV) (Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir, & Siddique, 2020).

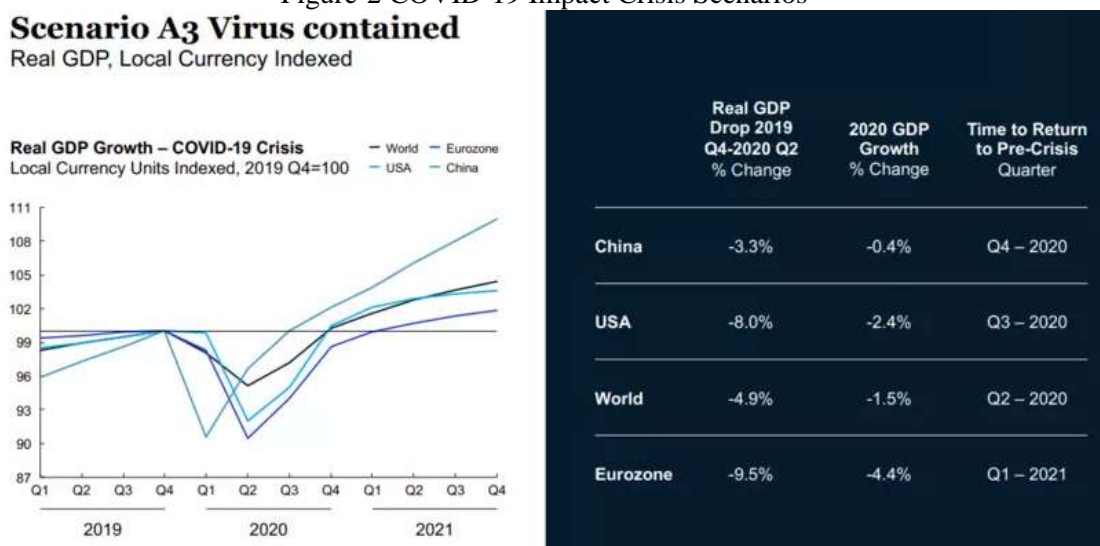
Based on data until 9 April 2020 from Johns Hopkins University, reported by BBC News that there were 1,510,419 cases, 341,990 recovered, and 90,654 deaths were confirmed:

Figure-1 COVID-19 Cases Update April 9, 2020



Based on these data it is explained that in the USA there are (431,331 cases, 14,786 deaths), South Korea (10,423 cases, 204 died), United Arab Emirates (2,659 cases, 12 died), Indonesia (2,956 cases, 240 died) (BBC News, 2020) The impact on the world economy is terrible due to COVID-19. Based on a report from consultant McKinsey & Company on March 25, 2020, America and the European region took three years to recover from the effects of this virus crisis:

Figure-2 COVID-19 Impact Crisis Scenarios



Source: (McKinsey & Company, 2020)

The industry sector most affected by COVID-19, including commercial space, travel, and insurance, may experience a slower recovery. The Travel Sector will experience a shake-up to demand to recover soon estimated to be five to six times greater than the economic crisis caused by the 9/11 attacks. However, recovery may be faster for domestic travel (World Economic Forum, 2020). Significant impact on the American economy.

For the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as one of the established economies having an

impact on tourism, trade, and non-oil business activities which accounts for 80 percent of the total UAE Gross Domestic Product. Therefore, to respond to the crisis, mitigation of the health sector is carried out by limiting public space, paying attention to hygiene, and employing employees from home; economic field The Central Bank of the UAE has announced plans to support USD 27 billion for banks, while Dubai has announced USD 409 million in direct stimulus for the energy, trade, retail, and tourism sectors (Middle East Business Intelligence, 2020).

While Indonesia is also having a bad impact on the economy due to COVID-19. Finance Minister Sri Mulyani stated that the worst possible condition of the Indonesian economy was minus 0.4 percent, growth of around 2.3 percent. This is due to lower household, government, and investment consumption (CNN Indonesia, 2020). This crisis will continue to have a devastating effect if not handled seriously and together.

South Korea's actions against COVID-19

South Korea is a country that is good at handling COVID-19 cases. Based on data from January 3 to March 30, 2020, shows 395,194 people have been tested, 13,531 in progress. The results were 372,002 negative, 9,661 were confirmed, 4,275 were active, 5,228 were cured, and 158 died. The main thing to do to reduce the spread of COVID-19, South Korea learned from the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak, which is to do social restrictions even if not lockdown, respond quickly when an outbreak occurs, conduct mass rapid tests, and contact tracking, and most importantly transparency in delivering information related to COVID-19 (World Economic Forum, 2020).

There are four main things that South Korea has done in dealing with this outbreak, namely 1) mass testing by building test centers that can drive-thru, tests with a capacity of 20,000 per day and every day there are 12,000 - 15,000 who do the tests, and test results can be seen a maximum of 6 hours for free; 2) social restrictions as an effort to protect the vulnerable, by imposing a minimum distance of 1 meter, schools and offices are closed, and postponing large meetings; 3) protect the health sector by protecting workers, providing adequate equipment and protection, Hospitals prepare themselves if an increase in cases with the number of beds and ventilators is added; 4) coordinating and communicating by establishing consultation and testing sites in each hospital, sending mass messages to avoid infected areas, positive patients and suspect being monitored through applications, and providing information transparently so that the public can trust more (Katadata.co.id, 2020).

South Korean Health Diplomacy

Health diplomacy is an attempt by the state to deal with a health crisis in collaboration with other countries, INGO, NGOs, and other private sectors in dealing with health problems (Kickbusch, Lister, Told, & Drager, 2013). According to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in Kickbusch (2013) states that global health diplomacy is important to protect people, increase economic growth, achieve security, and help low economic countries. Health diplomacy becomes important because not only about health but also outside the health sector, such as political, economic, and social impact. Therefore, the collaboration between the government, non-state actors, and parliament needs to be taken into account, which pays attention to various policies related to national health (World Health Organization, 2016). Health diplomacy is carried out to increase awareness that health problems are not only national problems of certain countries, but there are global dimensions that cross borders because of the many health challenges in the 21st century that require political and technical solutions, health diplomacy is also an instrument to build relationships with other countries (World Health Organization, 2014).

In the current context, the world is faced with the COVID-19 outbreak, which has a significant impact on the world economy, thus requiring the collaboration of all parties. There are three objectives of health diplomacy, namely 1) increasing the security of human health for the better; 2) improve relations between countries and the commitments of various actors to work together to improve health; 3) to reduce poverty and inequality (World Health Organization, 2020). According to Wise (2009), the purpose of health diplomacy is to maintain global health

and maintain relations with other countries.

South Korea's success in suppressing the spread of this new type of virus makes various countries want to ask for help and cooperation. South Korea has placed the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia on its priority list for exporting quarantine supplies, such as coronavirus test kits, when nearly 120 countries are trying to approach. The reason for choosing the United States for the spread of the COVID-19 virus is still new and growing, President Donald Trump asked directly, the US has not banned the entry of South Koreans, and there was a currency exchange agreement. UAE, because the country has maintained cooperation in various sectors, and Indonesia, the main partner country in Seoul's New Southern Policy, which aims to improve relations with 10 ASEAN member countries (Korea Herald, 2020). South Korea has conducted health diplomacy in an effort to suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus in countries that are considered as strategic partners. So, as explained that health diplomacy in addition to dealing with health problems, can also improve relations with other countries such as South Korea with the United States, UAE, and Indonesia.

Therefore, it needs global steps such as the World Economic Forum as a liaison between the government, the business community, and the private sector to create a COVID Action Platform that focuses on three things: Galvanization of the global business community for collective action; protect people's livelihoods and facilitate business continuity; mobilize business cooperation and support for the COVID-19 response (World Economic Forum, 2020). So, one solution that can be done to deal with COVID-19 must be collaboration from various parties, cooperation between countries, NGOs, INGOs, private parties, and others in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus that is increasingly widespread.

Conclusions

The global economic impact of the COVID-19 virus outbreak is very significant, as seen from the United States which is projected to take three years to restore its economy due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, as well as the damages in the UAE where various non-oil sectors are heavily affected which constitute 80 percent as a source of GDP of the country, as well as Indonesia which is projected to only be able to grow 2.3 percent. More than that, deaths due to outbreaks of this virus also continue to grow. South Korea was able to suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus outbreak by coordinating and transparency, providing maximum services to sufferers, providing adequate health equipment, and most importantly having a mass test to find out the spread of the COVID-19 virus quickly.

One solution that can be done by various countries today is collaboration such as that of South Korea to help Indonesia as a strategic partner in Southeast Asia, UAE partners who maintain cooperation in the midst of an outbreak, the United States because it has just confirmed the COVID-19 case can immediately be tracked and to improve health and establish relations between countries. This is called health diplomacy, solving joint problems to improve health and relationships between countries.

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