

# Yeni Şafak

## Calling up on America's sins of the past

Abdullah Muradođlu

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Both the U.S. and China have made mutual accusations against one other regarding the source of the novel coronavirus. Republicans have gone as far as suggesting that China foot the bill of the epidemic. Twenty-two Republican deputies have requested the Trump administration file a case against China with the International Court of Justice. Trump for his part has made statements endorsing the idea that the virus may have accidentally emanated from a laboratory in Wuhan.

Some state administrations in the U.S. have already taken action for a lawsuit against China. In Europe too, mainly the U.K., attempts have been made to hold China accountable for the disease. The same thing rings true for India, China's regional competitor. However, there is yet to be any international law written to make any country legally liable for an epidemic. Even the World Health Organization (WHO) doesn't have a clear-cut definition to apply to this situation.

On the other hand, there are Americans who emphasized that filing a lawsuit against China could constitute a "bad precedent" for the U.S. This view is mostly expressed by the "The American Conservative." The editorial board of the magazine, which positions itself as "libertarian conservative", are warning Americans against recalling "the sins of the past." Doug Bandow from the Washington-based "CATO Institute," in an article he wrote in the magazine on April 12, wanted the U.S. to be ready for dozens of cases in the event that a lawsuit was filed against China.

The damages lawsuit to be opened against China are being associated with the debts that Washington owes Beijing. According to Bandow, linking outbreak-related charges to Chinese debt is equivalent to declaring a "global economic war." Bandow emphasized that Americans suing China would lead foreigners to sue the United States due to the role it played in previous conflicts.

Bandow is calculating the financial repercussions of the possible lawsuits to be filed against the U.S. Accordingly, the damages that Iraq could demand from the U.S. could be over one trillion dollars. He predicts at least a "trillion dollar" destruction pricetag since the overthrow of the Mosaddegh government orchestrated by the United States in 1953. This bill also includes the losses incurred through the U.S. support of Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war.

The tally for the U.S.'s latest role in Libya has cost Libyans approximately 102 billion dollars, according to Bandow.

Bandow includes many countries from the Middle East, Africa and South America on the list. Emphasizing that the U.S.'s support of military coups in these regions has cost the peoples of these countries an outrageous sum, Bandow said, "Think of the price that will add up when everybody who is harmed by the U.S. government sues the Americans."

Saying that "Americans should be careful what they wish for," Bandow couldn't keep himself from expressing that a situation like this will have deeper consequences than ever imagined for the U.S.

Those writers who warn that U.S. cases against China could blow up in Washington's face reiterate that in 1952, the Soviet Union, North Korea and China accused American pilots of setting loose disease-spreading insects in rural areas. According to Chinese experts these insects were the source of many diseases, primarily the plague, typhoid, typhus, cholera and dysentery.

There are also those who are constantly reminding us that the U.S. was the source country of the Spanish influenza that broke out in 1918 and that it was spread across Europe by American soldiers. The Cuban administration on the other hand blamed the CIA of spreading the "Pig Virus" in 1972.

During the Cold War era, it was a well-known fact that the U.S. and Soviet Union were operating biological war programs within the context of militarizing bio-technology. Moscow and Washington were competing against each other to snatch up men from these secret programs. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union many biologists working in these programs sought asylum in the U.S. Aren't global forces today in a killer competition against each other for "bio-technological dominance"?