

Muslim Economist: China Will Triumph Over America Due to Coronavirus Pandemic, So Learn Chinese

by Hugh Fitzgerald



At MEMRI.org, we find the predictions of one Saeed Tawfiqi, a Kuwaiti economist, as to the inevitable rise of China and the decline of the West.

Tawfiqi said in a March 30, 2020 interview on Diwan Al-Mulla Internet TV (Kuwait) that in light of the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. and Europe will enter a sharp decline, and China will become stronger. He advised people in the Gulf states to start learning Chinese instead of English and using yuans instead of dollars.

Here are excerpts from the interview:

“Saeed Tawfiqi: “After the coronavirus the world will change its theories.”

“Interviewer: “The American-Chinese conflict will change..”

“Saeed Tawfiqi: “I’m telling you: The Chinese are coming. They are coming in strong. Not that they are not present now, but I’m advising you to change the currency of your credit card from the dollar to the yuan.

[..]

“American companies will face problems. The Americans will lose faith in the general political and economic system once their hospitals are overwhelmed and we will start to see patients in the hallways and in the streets – just like what happened in Italy... All the companies will move to China.

Mr. Tawfiq has been misinformed. There has been no discernible loss of faith “in the general political and economic system.” The Americans seem, rather, to be pulling together in this time of crisis. Unlike the Chinese government in Wuhan, violence has not been used to impose compliance with the new rules for social distancing, for curfews, for quarantines. The American public has been kept soberly aware by Dr. Anthony Fauci and his team of how the Coronavirus is spread, of how many have been infected, and how many have died, and what is the likelihood of success of various therapies and of potential vaccines. They are not being misinformed about the spread of the disease as have people in Iran; they are not being filled with crazed conspiracy theories as are so many people in the Muslim world. There are many people in the U.S. who have lost their jobs as a result of restaurants and stores being shut down; already about ten million are now unemployed. But can Saeed Tawfiqi really be unaware that in China, which he so admires, there are as many as 30 million Chinese workers who, as of early April, cannot find jobs or are unable to return to their previous posts.

Then there is the American stock market. No doubt it experienced in March and April some astonishing declines, but Saeed Tawfiqi chooses to ignore the fact that it has also exhibited some astonishing increases, and it appears to be stabilizing, not with a 35% loss since January 1, but after the recent rises, with a 15% loss – not good, but not nearly enough of a loss to begin predicting, as the Kuwaiti economist does, the dramatic decline of America and the irresistible rise of China.

America is in a recession, not a depression. The bipartisan support for the first \$2 trillion dollar stimulus package and the promise of more to come show that the government has not been, and will not be, passive. After the stock market sank, predictions of worse to come followed, but it didn't; the economy did not "collapse"; now that the market has recovered nearly half of what it had lost, perhaps Saeed Tawfiqi should be a bit less certain of his grim futurology.

"The headquarters of [multi-national companies] will now move to China. They will say that in China, it is easier to deal with.. Sometimes, decision-making is easier in non-capitalist, non-bureaucratic regimes.

Saeed Tawfiqi should know that foreign companies have over the past six months been leaving China – that is, even before the coronavirus outbreak. They don't want to depend for such critical goods as medicines and medical equipment, on China, and have made the decision to bring such businesses back home. They don't like their supply chains so dependent on decisions made by Communist Party apparatchiks. They are well aware, too, that the Chinese steal intellectual property from Western companies.

Decision-making may be "easier" in top-down Communist China, but Party bureaucrats in their ideological straitjackets are not necessarily more effective economic actors than are

Western businessmen.

The closing of many Chinese factories during the coronavirus outbreak revealed to Western companies just how dangerously reliant they had allowed themselves to become on the Chinese, both for parts and for finished products, too. Their conclusion has been not to move even more of their operations to China, as Saeed Tawfiqi claims, but to do the opposite: they are replacing Chinese suppliers of parts with those in other low-wage countries, such as Vietnam. And even more significant, American companies are abandoning China altogether. The global manufacturing consulting firm Kearney released a report on April 5 that shows American manufacturing companies are leaving China en masse, spurred first by the trade war and solidified by China's inability to contain COVID-19 for months after unleashing it on the global community. Americans are especially determined never again to rely on China either for medicines or medical equipment, and are hurriedly moving those operations back home. In the midst of all this movement out of China, it is at least bizarre to have Kuwaiti economist Saeed Tawfiqi predict the very opposite: a move of all the large multinationals to China, bringing about the permanent Decline of the West and the Rise of China.

"No civilization lasts forever. Western civilization now..."

As a Muslim, Saeed Tawfiqi is used to thinking of the West as the only rival to Islam. Muslim animus, while it is theoretically directed at all Infidels, is in the main directed at Islam's historic enemy, Western Christendom, not China. Indeed, he seems unaffected by the savage Chinese mistreatment of the Muslim Uighurs. He is pleased with the thought that China will dominate the West; being non-Western, China in his reckoning is thereby closer to the Muslim camp. He's prepared to overlook the Uighurs.

Interviewer: "Europe is sick..."

Europe may be "sick," but if so, it is "sick" only because of one thing – its failure to protect itself from the horde of Muslim migrants who, by the tens of millions, now live in Western Europe. Their large-scale presence has created a situation for the continent's indigenous Infidels that is more unpleasant, expensive, and physically dangerous than would be the case without that presence. Late in the day, Europeans are waking up to what this Muslim presence has meant. Muslims are largely unwilling to integrate into non-Muslim host societies. They are not, however, unwilling to take advantage of the largesse that have lavished upon them by the European welfare states. They enjoy free or highly subsidized housing, free medical care, free education, unemployment benefits, family allowances. and more. At the same time, Muslims exhibit much higher rates of criminality, and much higher levels of unemployment, than either the indigenous non-Muslims or than other, non-Muslim immigrants. The quality of life in major European cities is diminished as the crime rate skyrockets due to Muslim criminals; single women no longer dare to go out at night, because of the rise in rapes; Christians hide their crucifixes, and Jews cover up their kippahs or other identifying garb, for fear of Muslim attacks. The police and firemen worry about entering No-Go areas where they may be attacked by Muslim residents. Teachers worry about antagonizing their Muslim pupils who have been known to object, violently, as to how certain subjects –the Crusades, the Holocaust, colonialism – are taught. And of course, Islamic terrorism has created a fear that all Europeans must now endure.

Saeed Tawfiqi: "In 1990, when the Berlin Wall and Communism came down, it was a surprise and it happened fast. So this is not out of the question. I'm not talking about collapse, but about a decline, and then a sharp decline in favor of China."

Interviewer: "Britain has left [the EU]..."

Saeed Tawfiqi: "I say that we should get ready. I said this a few days ago. In Kuwait and in the other countries, we are used to speaking English and saying: 'Hi, good morning..' From now on, we will say 'zaijian' – 'Goodbye.. Good evening..' If it isn't you and me, it will be our children."

Interviewer: "So you say to people in Kuwait, the Gulf, and other Arab countries that they should learn Chinese.."

Saeed Tawfiqi: "Yes. It's in their best interest."

Saeed Tawfiq offers no statistics on China's economy, on its unemployment figures, or on the country's GDP. It is strange that, though he is an economist, he offers not a single datum to support his assertions. All the signs are against his prediction of China surpassing America as an economic power. America's economy has been far less damaged by the coronavirus – judging by the unemployment figures – than China. The current numbers for the U.S. are 10 million unemployed, with some analysts suggesting a worst-case scenario of 30 million unemployed later in 2020. Meanwhile, in China, while the official figures are 10 million unemployed, unofficial figures have been as high as 60 million. And while no companies are pulling out of America, companies from all over the Western world are pulling their operations from China; they had started doing this even before the coronavirus outbreak. They do not want to be dependent on a supply chain that is controlled by a fundamentally hostile and aggressive Communist regime. As a health and security matter, they don't want to rely on China for medicines and medical equipment. They don't want to collaborate too closely with Chinese businesses, given that China has long been known to steal enormous amounts of intellectual property from Western companies.

Saeed Tawfiqi sees China as rising inexorably to become the world's largest economy. I find more convincing the many

Western analysts who have concluded that China saw its economic high-water mark just as the coronavirus began to spread in December, and that in the first quarter of 2020 China's growth streak ended when the economy contracted for the first time since 1976. More companies in the West have become anxious about the very great and –they now realize – dangerous reliance of Western companies on China, a reliance that has been laid bare by the shutdowns of Chinese businesses in Wuhan and elsewhere that led to the breaking of supply chains on which Western companies have long relied. There has been a steadily increasing exodus of Western companies out of China since late in 2019, a massive decoupling from the Chinese economy that accelerated when Wuhan shut down.

Saeed Tawfiqi's prediction of China's inevitable economic triumph is, I think, colored by his desire, as a Muslim, that a non-Western power should defeat the West's most powerful nation. In his view, the West has always been the main enemy of the world's Muslims, and while all Infidels are "the most vile of created beings," some are apparently more vile than others. Despite China's persecution of Muslims in "re-education camps," and the veritable war on Islam in Xinjiang that the Chinese state has declared, he is prepared to overlook all that – even encouraging Arabs to learn Chinese instead of English. In the Muslim worldview – despite the trillions of dollars America spent in trying to improve life for Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq– the Muslim's historic enemy, deserving of defeat, will always be America. Just ask Saeed Tawfiqi.

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