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Photo:Global Times

While China is going all out combating the novel coronavirus epidemic, US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross claimed Thursday that the deadly virus would help accelerate the return of jobs to the US. It's hard to believe that such immoral remarks were made by a US commerce secretary.

Basic compassion and morality are the yardsticks of human behavior. But Ross's comments show that extreme selfishness seems to have dominated his mindset and values. He is so cold-blooded that he has ignored diplomatic etiquette, taking the public health epidemic that a country with 1.4 billion people is grappling with as an opportunity to realize American interests.

His extremely inappropriate remarks are bound to irritate, and be condemned by, the international community, including the American people.

The H1N1 influenza pandemic, known as swine flu, that first broke out in the US in 2009, was also declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a public health emergency of international concern. Scientists estimated that the flu pandemic that swept more than 200 countries and regions killed about 280,000 people worldwide.

In the US, the influenza virus led to the deaths of an estimated 10,000 people. Imagine if a Chinese senior official had said the swine flu would hit the US economy and accelerate the flow of global investment into China when the US was combating the virus, what would Americans and international society have thought? The only thing Ross cares about amid the novel coronavirus outbreak is the return of manufacturing to the US. He is too narrow-minded.

There is no boundary for this epidemic. The novel coronavirus is the common enemy of mankind. As the commerce secretary of the world's most powerful economy, instead of exploiting China's crisis, Ross should fairly appraise the efforts made by the Chinese government in fighting the coronavirus. As the Director-General of WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, China deserves the international community's gratitude and respect for its efforts in containing the novel coronavirus outbreak and prevent exporting cases overseas.

If it weren't for the Chinese government's determination to take responsibility and endure short-term economic shocks to combat the epidemic, the world would have suffered great turbulence. Had China not adopted such a responsible attitude and rigorous measures, the US could have been hit hard by the epidemic before manufacturing is brought back to the country.

Facing global public health events, what China and the US most need is to curb the development of the epidemic through cooperation and develop vaccine to overcome the epidemic as soon as possible.

China has demonstrated transparency amid the coronavirus outbreak, revealing information to the world timely and accurately. At the same time, China extended thanks for support from the US, sending a clear signal of its willingness to strengthen cooperation with the US. President Donald Trump said the US and China "are working very closely" in combatting the coronavirus. This is what the two countries should do to deal with public health emergencies.

Even from the perspective of manufacturing, Ross showed a lack of knowledge.

Although the epidemic will have some negative impacts on the Chinese manufacturing industry, the effects will be short-term. As various responsible measures have been taken, the epidemic will be eliminated as soon as possible.

The fight against the coronavirus overlapped the Spring Festival holidays, which will help minimize negative impacts on the Chinese economy as much as possible. The Chinese manufacturing industry will re-vitalize after the epidemic is overcome.

Besides, whether manufacturing will return to the US or not does not depend on the will of the US. Based on relevant data of the US manufacturing industry, a solid foundation is still lacking for manufacturing's return. The novel coronavirus outbreak is not an opportunity for the US, and it cannot shake the Chinese manufacturing industry at all.

Ross shouldn't naively combine the return of manufacturing with the epidemic. If he really expects the coronavirus to bring manufacturing back to the US, his hope will be shattered with the epidemic coming to an end. It's hoped Ross's improper comments only represent the thinking of a very small number of American politicians and he should apologize in an appropriate way.

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