



An Institute for Civil Services

# Global World Order Post COVID-19

Gist of **RStv** Debate  
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# GLOBAL WORLD ORDER POST COVID-19

## INTRODUCTION

The world is witnessing unprecedented times due to the coronavirus pandemic. Not even the best of minds are aware of the treatment or the prevention in terms of a vaccine or a medicine. These extraordinary happenings will definitely impact the world order. The lethal combination of an interconnected world and a deadly virus without a cure is taking humanity into uncharted waters. COVID-19 in all likelihood will fundamentally transform the world as we know it. On this edition of the big picture we analyse the Global World Order Post Covid-19.

## EDITED EXCERPTS FROM THE DEBATE



### What is a world order?

- Based on the philosophies of **Immanuel Kant** and **Arthur Schopenhauer**, and including **Albert Einstein's theories**, this approach proposes a definition of the 'will to life as the desire for order'.
- This is put into perspective using **Friedrich Nietzsche's determination of two fundamental desires** based on his studies of Greek tragedy:

- ▶ the Apollonian
- ▶ the Dionysian
- The approach discusses and proposes several theories about world order to be rethought based on the definition of world order as will and representation and the will to life as the desire for order.
- Inspired by the paradigm shifts that have changed the interpretation of Nature in theoretical physics since Einstein's theory on gravitation and the development of quantum mechanics it argues that time has come for a theoretical paradigm shift in the study and understanding of international relations.

### Background:

- After the Cold War (1940s to 1991), the world would be a peaceful place and conflicts would be solved multilaterally.
- In the West it was expected that the only superpower and 'leader of the free world', the US, would indeed lead the fulfilment of the new world order.
- Russia, China, and other power centres understood world order differently. As did transnational jihadists.
- Thirty One years after, the same politicians and scholars in international relations that announced the new world order are now arguing for the end of a liberal world order.
- The world is facing a future with competition and rivalry between the great powers.
- The US prioritizes the 'America First' policy, China is a rising power and Russia challenges the American position in the world, especially in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.



### How the new debate on global economic order started?

- The debate on an emerging new global economic order had been floating since China announced its **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** seven years ago.
- With BRI being a global development strategy involving infrastructure development and investments in nearly 70 countries to exploit cheap factor markets and expanding product markets, it was thought to be rocking the status quo of the occident ruling the roost.
- The idea of the status quo in the global political and economic order was challenged further with the emergence of strong leaders, the dominance of nationalistic fervour emerging from a xenophobic discernment of some major nations, and the insulating tendencies of economies that were once the major proponents of free-market economies and globalisation.
- Such tendencies can be witnessed in the US' withdrawal from the TPP, the prolonged US-China trade war, Trumpian disregard of the Climate Change crisis and Brexit.
- On the other hand, China's BRI began obtaining momentum with nations from the EU, Asia and Latin America joining in.
- This marked the ride of China on its BRI horse, which was attempted to be combated by some coalitions like the "Quad" in the Indo-Pacific — a potential security arrangement among the four large democracies, Australia, India, Japan, and the US.



## How COVID-19 can change the game?

- Today, the world is facing the biggest challenge i.e., COVID-19, which started in Wuhan.
- In the globalised world, more than 210 nations were affected in varying degrees.
- The most interesting observation is that the economies with the highest levels of exposure to China either through BRI or otherwise are the ones most affected by the virus.
- Today, tourism, trade and investment, can largely explain the spread of such kind of virus.
- Major themes of the last decades, such as the global war on terror, the rise of populism and the retreat of democracy in countries like Russia have all reshaped the world.
- However the rise of COVID-19 builds on these trends as it rapidly changes relationships between states.
- It is a black swan event that suddenly closed the previously open borders of the European Union in a way terror threats and migration could not.

While the pandemic has not transformed the region's order in terms of borders, it has caused countries to become even more insular than they otherwise would be.



## Where this pandemic will lead to?

- **Isolation in West:** The end result will likely be a more divided and chaotic world order, with Western states being more isolationist in the short term.
- **No global deal:** With the wealthiest countries in the world unable to deal with the tsunami of cases from the virus, poor countries will be overwhelmed.
- **A near end to mass migration:** Border closures against pandemic threats will mean an end to the mass migration that has occurred to places like Europe, or it will mean more hostility to those migrants who force their way in.
  - ▶ This creates a growing divide between the global south and others amid the pandemic.
  - ▶ It also creates a divide between the arc of instability that links ungoverned spaces across the Sahel to Afghanistan where militant groups thrive.
- Weak states such as Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Syria only stand to get worse.
- China, Russia and Iran will take advantage of the crises to continue their policies that together seek to challenge the United States, the West and Western allies.
- The economic downturn in Western states in the wake of the lockdowns and stimulus packages will empower other countries that weathered the storm better. China is one of those countries so far.
- The debt incurred by stimulus has a ripple affect of potential inflation or other hangovers.



## How changing order can benefit India?

- A changing global economic order will make many focus on India as a preferred destination for investment. From that perspective, India's eastern states will be critical.

- They have all four factors of business in abundance: namely
  - human capital
  - social capital
  - natural capital
  - an improving physical capital
- This part is relatively less explored and can be the fulcrum of development of the region in the post-Covid world.
- While the global economic system is slated to go to a slump, opportunities and challenges for India occur through all avenues.
- Whether India will be a net winner or loser depends on the sensitivities of the coefficients of the economic variables, the dynamics of the global order, and the "soft power" that the nation can wield in the international domain.

## CONCLUSION

The global pandemic of coronavirus will fundamentally re-shape the world order as it upends systems which publics have come to take for granted. Internationally, it is also accelerating the breakdown of the liberal international order. It will be a major turning point with a great effect on the kind of world order that emerged at the end of the Cold War. Now, the new normal may be a world where much less global action is usual and countries focus more on national or regional approaches

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