
Updated August 5, 2021

Some observers argue the COVID-19 pandemic could be a world-changing event with potentially profound and long-lasting implications for the international security environment. Other observers are more skeptical that the pandemic will have such effects.

In reports issued in March and April 2021, the U.S. intelligence community provided assessments of the potential impact of the pandemic on the international security environment.

Observers who argue the pandemic could be world-changing for the international security environment have focused on several areas of potential change, including the following, which are listed here separately but overlap in some cases and can interact with one another:

- world order, international institutions, and global governance;
- U.S. global leadership and the U.S. role in the world;
- China’s potential role as a global leader;
- U.S. relations and great power competition with China and Russia;
- the relative prevalence of democratic and authoritarian or autocratic forms of government;
- societal tension, reform, transformation, and governmental stability in various countries;
- the world economy, globalization, and U.S. trade policy;
- allied defense spending and U.S. alliances;
- the cohesion of the European Union;
- the definition of, and budgeting for, U.S. national security;
- U.S. defense strategy, defense budgets, and military operations;
- U.S. foreign assistance programs, international debt relief, and refugee policy;
- activities of non-state actors;
- the amount of U.S. attention devoted to ongoing international issues other than the pandemic; and
- the role of Congress in setting and overseeing the execution of U.S. foreign and defense policy.

Issues for Congress may include whether and how the pandemic could change the international security environment, whether the Biden Administration’s actions for responding to such change are appropriate and sufficient, and what implications such change could have for the role of Congress in setting and overseeing the execution of U.S. foreign and defense policy. Congress’s decisions regarding these issues could have significant implications for U.S. foreign and defense policy.
## Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

Background .................................................................................................................. 1

2021 Assessments by U.S. Intelligence Community .................................................. 1

March 2021 NIC Report on Global Trends ............................................................... 1

April 2021 DNI Threat Assessment ........................................................................... 3

Overview of Areas of Potential Implications ........................................................... 4

World Order, International Institutions, and Global Governance ....................... 5

U.S. Global Leadership and Role in the World ......................................................... 5

China’s Potential Role as a Global Leader ............................................................... 6

U.S. Relations and Great Power Competition with China and Russia .................. 6

Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Autocracy ....................................................... 6

Societal Tension, Reform, and Transformation, and Governmental Stability ........ 7

World Economy, Globalization, and U.S. Trade Policy ........................................... 7

Allied Defense Spending and U.S. Alliances ......................................................... 7

European Union ........................................................................................................ 7

Definition of, and Budgeting for, U.S. National Security ....................................... 7


U.S. Foreign Assistance, International Debt Relief, and Refugee Policy ................ 8

Non-state Actors ......................................................................................................... 8

U.S. Attention to International Issues Other than the Pandemic ............................. 8

Role of Congress ....................................................................................................... 8

Appendices with CRS Reports and Additional Writings ....................................... 8

Potential Issues for Congress ...................................................................................... 9

## Appendixes

Appendix A. Related CRS Reports ............................................................................ 10

Appendix B. Additional Writings .............................................................................. 13

## Contacts

Author Information ...................................................................................................... 33
Introduction

Some observers argue the COVID-19 pandemic could be a world-changing event with potentially profound and long-lasting implications for the international security environment. Other observers are more skeptical that the pandemic will have such effects. This report provides a brief overview of some potential implications the pandemic might have for the international security environment, and appendices listing CRS reports and other writings for further reading.

Issues for Congress may include whether and how the pandemic could change the international security environment, whether the Biden Administration’s actions for responding to such change are appropriate and sufficient, and what implications such change could have for the role of Congress in setting and overseeing the execution of U.S. foreign and defense policy. Congress’s decisions regarding these issues could have significant implications for U.S. foreign and defense policy.

Appendix A presents a list of CRS reports that provide more in-depth discussions of issues presented in this report. Appendix B presents a list of additional writings reflecting various perspectives on these issues.

Background

2021 Assessments by U.S. Intelligence Community

In reports issued in March and April 2021, the U.S. intelligence community provided assessments of the potential impact of the pandemic on the international security environment. Excerpts from these two reports are presented below.

March 2021 NIC Report on Global Trends

A March 2021 report of the National Intelligence Council (NIC) on global trends—the 2021 edition of a report that NIC publishes every four years to serve as an unclassified strategic assessment on key trends that might shape the world over the next 20 years—includes a section on the potential impact of the pandemic, which states:

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged globally in 2020, wreaking havoc across the world, killing more than 2.5 million people as of early 2021, devastating families and communities, and disrupting economies and political dynamics within and between countries. Previous global trends editions forecasted the potential for new diseases and even imagined scenarios with a pandemic, but we lacked a full picture of the breadth and depth of its disruptive potential. COVID-19 has shaken long-held assumptions about resilience and adaptation and created new uncertainties about the economy, governance, geopolitics, and technology.

1 The Office of the Director of National Intelligence states that the National Intelligence Council “supports the Director of National Intelligence [DNI] in his role as head of the Intelligence Community (IC) and is the IC’s center for long-term strategic analysis. Since its establishment in 1979, the NIC has served as a bridge between the intelligence and policy communities, a source of deep substantive expertise on intelligence issues, and a facilitator of Intelligence Community collaboration and outreach. The NIC’s National Intelligence Officers—drawn from government, academia, and the private sector—are the Intelligence Community’s senior experts on a range of regional and functional issues.” (Director of National Intelligence, “National Intelligence Council—Who We Are,” accessed July 9, 2021, at https://www.dni.gov/index.php/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=393&Itemid=778.)
To understand and assess the impact of this crisis, we examined and debated a broad range of our assumptions and assessments related to key global trends. We asked a series of questions: Which existing trends will endure, which trends are accelerating or decelerating because of the pandemic, and where are we likely to experience fundamental, systemic shifts? Are the disruptions temporary or could the pandemic unleash new forces to shape the future? Much like the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to produce some changes that will be felt for years to come and change the way we live, work, and govern domestically and internationally. How great these will be, however, is very much in question.

**ACCELERATING, SHARPENING SOME TRENDS**

The pandemic and corresponding national responses appear to be honing and accelerating several trends that were already underway before the outbreak. COVID-19 brought global health and healthcare issues into sharp relief, exposed and in some cases widened social fissures, underscored vast disparities in healthcare access and infrastructure, and interrupted efforts to combat other diseases. The pandemic also highlighted weaknesses in the international coordination on health crises and the mismatch between existing institutions, funding levels, and future health challenges.

**Catalyzing Economic Trends.** Lockdowns, quarantines, and the closing of international borders have catalyzed some pre-existing economic trends, including diversification in global supply chains, increased national debt, and greater government intervention in economies. Moving forward, the character of globalization may retain some of the changes from this crisis period, and debt, particularly for developing economies, will strain national capacities for many years.

**Reinforcing Nationalism and Polarization.** Nationalism and polarization have been on the rise in many countries, especially exclusionary nationalism. Efforts to contain and manage the virus have reinforced nationalist trends globally as some states turned inward to protect their citizens and sometimes cast blame on marginalized groups. The response to the pandemic has fueled partisanship and polarization in many countries as groups argue over the best way to respond and seek scapegoats to blame for spreading the virus and for slow responses.

**Deepening Inequality.** The disproportionate economic impact of COVID-19 on low-income earners has caused them to fall further behind. When COVID-19 is finally controlled, many families are likely to have experienced further setbacks, especially those working in the service or informal sectors or who left the workforce to provide dependent care—predominantly women. The pandemic has exposed the digital divide within and between countries while spurring efforts to improve Internet access.

**Straining Governance.** The pandemic is straining government capacity for services and contributing to already low levels of trust in institutions in countries that have not effectively handled the response. The pandemic is exacerbating the confusing and polarized information environment that is undermining public confidence in health authorities, particularly in open societies. Illiberal regimes in some countries are using the pandemic as a pretext to more severely crack down on dissent and restrict civic freedoms, conditions that may outlive the disease.

**Highlighting Failed International Cooperation.** The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the weaknesses and political cleavages in international institutions, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations, and called into question countries’ ability and willingness to cooperate multilaterally to address common challenges beyond infectious disease, particularly climate change. The WHO, which has faced significant funding difficulties and resistance to mandatory surveillance regimes, is facing its gravest shock in nearly two decades. The crisis, however, may ultimately lead actors to make deeper
reforms, standardize data collection and sharing, and forge new public-private partnerships.

**Elevating the Role of Nonstate Actors.** Nonstate actors, ranging from the Gates Foundation to private companies, have been crucial to vaccine research or retrofitting equipment to mass produce medical supplies and personal protective equipment. Nonstate networks will complement national and intergovernmental action in future health crises, including early warning, treatment, facilitation of data-sharing, and vaccine development.

**WHILE OTHERS DECELERATE OR REVERSE**

COVID-19 is slowing and possibly reversing some longstanding trends in human development, especially the reduction of poverty and disease and closing gender inequality gaps. The longest lasting reversals may be in poverty reduction across Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, followed by losses in gender equality. The resources devoted to fighting COVID-19 and social restrictions could reverse years of progress against malaria, measles, polio, and other infectious diseases by consuming key financial, material, and personnel resources.

The COVID-19 emergency may bring regions together in ways that previous crises have not.

Although European countries early in the crisis imposed restrictions on border traffic and exports of critical medical supplies, the European Union has rallied around an economic rescue package and other emergency measures that could bolster the European integration project going forward. COVID-19 could also lead to redirection of national budgets toward pandemic response and economic recovery, diverting funds from defense expenditures, foreign aid, and infrastructure programs in some countries, at least in the near term.

**MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS**

The unanticipated second- and third-order effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have reminded us how uncertain the future is—both in the long and short term. As researchers and analysts, we must be ever vigilant, asking better questions, frequently challenging our assumptions, checking our biases, and looking for weak signals of change. We need to expect the unexpected and apply the lessons of this pandemic to our craft in the future.²

### April 2021 DNI Threat Assessment

An April 9, 2021, report from the Director of National Intelligence (DNI)—DNI’s annual threat assessment for 2021—includes a section on the pandemic that states (emphasis as in the original):

*The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life worldwide, with far-reaching effects that extend well beyond global health to the economic, political, and security spheres. We expect COVID-19 to remain a threat to populations worldwide until vaccines and therapeutics are widely distributed. The economic and political implications of the pandemic will ripple through the world for years.*

*The pandemic is raising geopolitical tensions, and great powers are jockeying for advantage and influence. States are struggling to cooperate—and in some cases are undermining cooperation—to respond to the pandemic and its economic fallout, particularly as some governments turn inward and question the merits of globalization and interdependence. Some governments, such as China and Russia, are using offers of medical supplies and vaccines to try to boost their geopolitical standing.*

*The economic fallout from the pandemic is likely to create or worsen instability in at least a few—and perhaps many—countries, as people grow more desperate in the face*

---

of interlocking pressures that include sustained economic downturns, job losses, and disrupted supply chains. Some hard-hit developing countries are experiencing financial and humanitarian crises, increasing the risk of surges in migration, collapsed governments, or internal conflict.

- Although global trade shows signs of bouncing back from the COVID-19-induced slump, economists caution that any recovery this year could be disrupted by ongoing or expanding pandemic effects, keeping pressure on many governments to focus on internal economic stability. In April, the International Monetary Fund estimated that the global economy would grow 6 percent this year and 4.4 percent in 2022. This year’s forecast is revised up 0.5 percentage points relative to the previous forecast, reflecting expectations of vaccine-powered strengthening of activity later in the year and additional policy support in a few large economies. The global growth contraction for 2020 is estimated at 3.3 percent.

- The resurgence in COVID-19 infections early this year may have an even greater economic impact as struggling businesses in hard-hit sectors such as tourism and restaurants fold and governments face increasing budget strains.

- The effects on developing countries—especially those that rely heavily on remittances, tourism, or oil exports—may be severe and longer lasting; many developing countries already have sought debt relief.

- The economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, along with conflict and weather extremes, has driven food insecurity worldwide to its highest point in more than a decade, which increases the risk of instability. The number of people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity doubled from 135 million in 2019 to about 270 million last year, and is projected to rise to 330 million by yearend.

The COVID-19 pandemic is prompting shifts in security priorities for countries around the world. As militaries face growing calls to cut budgets, gaps are emerging in UN peacekeeping operations; military training and preparedness; counterterrorism operations; and arms control monitoring, verification, and compliance. These gaps are likely to grow without a quick end to the pandemic and a rapid recovery, making managing conflict more difficult—particularly because the pandemic has not caused any diminution in the number or intensity of conflicts.

COVID-19-related disruptions to essential health services—such as vaccinations, aid delivery, and maternal and child health programs—will increase the likelihood of additional health emergencies, especially among vulnerable populations in low-income countries. As examples, the pandemic has disrupted HIV/AIDS treatments and preventative measures in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as measles and polio vaccination campaigns in dozens of countries. World populations, including Americans, will remain vulnerable to new outbreaks of infectious diseases as risk factors persist, such as rapid and unplanned urbanization, protracted conflict and humanitarian crises, human incursions into previously unsettled land, expansion of international travel and trade, and public mistrust of government and health care workers.

Overview of Areas of Potential Implications

Areas of potential change reflected in writings from observers who view the pandemic as a potentially world-changing event include but are not limited to those discussed below. Although these areas of potential change are presented separately, they overlap in some cases and can interact with one another.

---

World Order, International Institutions, and Global Governance

Some observers have focused on the possibility that the pandemic could cause or accelerate changes to the U.S.-led liberal international order that has operated since World War II, to the international institutions and norms that contribute to it, and consequently to global governance. Changes to the international order and its supporting institutions and norms could affect the international context for addressing not only the pandemic, but other international issues as well.

U.S. Global Leadership and Role in the World

The pandemic could influence discussions over the costs and benefits to the United States of acting as a global leader, not only with respect to global health but across a range of issues.

In the earlier months of the pandemic, some observers focused on how the pandemic may have illustrated the strengths or weaknesses of the Trump Administration’s “America First” approach to the U.S. role in the world. Some observers argued that the pandemic demonstrated that the United States was maintaining or reasserting its role as global leader, while others argued that the pandemic demonstrated that the United States was choosing to withdraw from or was no longer capable of performing that role, and that the pandemic was the first major international crisis since World War II for which the United States did not serve as the leader for spearheading, organizing, or implementing an international response.

Other observers have argued that the U.S. response to the pandemic has focused international attention on what they view as a need for reform at the World Health Organization (WHO), demonstrated the strength and innovativeness of the U.S. scientific and pharmaceutical establishments in terms of developing and manufacturing vaccines, and demonstrated the flexibility and resiliency of the U.S. federal system in terms of permitting states and localities to respond to the pandemic in ways that are tailored to local conditions.

Prior to the start of large-scale vaccinations in the United States, some observers, including some foreign observers, argued that the U.S. domestic response to the pandemic was demonstrating weaknesses in U.S. democracy, governance, and public health, particularly in comparison to how certain other countries responded during that period to the pandemic within their own borders, and that this would reduce the ability of the United States in the future to offer itself or be accepted by other countries as a global leader on other international issues or as a model for other countries to emulate. As vaccines have become more widely available in the United States, some observers have argued that the United States should export large numbers of vaccine doses to

---

4 The term international order or world order generally refers in foreign policy discussions to the collection of organizations, institutions, treaties, rules, norms, and practices that are intended to organize, structure, and regulate international relations during a given historical period.

Other terms used to refer to the U.S.-led liberal international order include postwar international order, rules-based international order, and open international order. Observers sometimes substitute world for international, or omit international or world and refer simply to the liberal order, the U.S.-led order, and so on. In the terms liberal international order and liberal order, the word liberal does not refer to the conservative-liberal construct often used in discussing contemporary politics in the United States or other countries. It is, instead, an older use of the term that refers to an order based on the rule of law, as opposed to an order based on the arbitrary powers of hereditary monarchs.

Though often referred to as if it is a fully developed or universally established situation, the liberal international order, like other international orders that preceded it, is incomplete in geographic reach and in other ways; partly aspirational; not fixed in stone, but rather subject to evolution over time; sometimes violated by its supporters; not entirely free of might-makes-right behavior; resisted or rejected by certain states and non-state actors; and subject to various stresses and challenges.
other countries that need them so as to demonstrate U.S. global leadership and help protect U.S. public health and the U.S. economy by helping to end the global pandemic more quickly.

**China’s Potential Role as a Global Leader**

Some observers have focused on how the pandemic may be providing insight into whether China desires and is working to become a global leader on par with (or in the place of) the United States, to what degree China has a capacity for doing so, and how other countries might view China acting in such a role. China’s transparency, particularly regarding its actions in the early days of its COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan and trial data on the efficacy of its vaccines, as well as China’s actions to send vaccines, other medical supplies, and medical personnel to other countries, perhaps for political or diplomatic purposes, have become elements of a broader ongoing discussion regarding China’s capacity or suitability for acting as a global leader.

**U.S. Relations and Great Power Competition with China and Russia**

Some observers have focused on how the pandemic has become a significant element in U.S.-China relations, and in U.S. great power competition with China and Russia. For some observers, the pandemic presents an opportunity for U.S.-China cooperation on an important international issue of common interest. For other observers, the pandemic is a major source of dispute and an arena of competition between the two countries, and is contributing to a hardening of U.S.-China relations into a Cold War-like adversarial situation.

In the earlier months of the pandemic, some observers focused on what they viewed as a competition or race between the United States, China, Russia, and other countries to develop, manufacture, and administer effective vaccines, and thus be able to restore their economies to full operation sooner than other countries. Some observers have focused on whether China and Russia are attempting to use exports of their vaccines as levers to gain advantages in their relations with recipient countries. The terms *vaccine nationalism* and *vaccine diplomacy* are being used by some of these observers to refer to such perceived activities. Some observers have expressed concern that decisions by countries to pursue vaccine development and deployment in a competitive, individual manner rather than a cooperative, multilateral manner could reduce the overall effectiveness of efforts to develop, manufacture, and administer effective vaccines and thereby prolong the global pandemic.

Some observers have focused on the pandemic as a factor in the discussion of whether the United States should decouple its economy from China’s and reduce its dependence on China for key materials and products, including hospital supplies and pharmaceuticals. Some observers have focused on whether the U.S. and Chinese responses to the pandemic will affect views around the world regarding the relative merits of the U.S. and Chinese forms of government and economic models as potential examples to emulate.

**Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Autocracy**

Related to the point above about forms of government, some observers have focused on the potential impact of the pandemic on discussions in various countries regarding the merits of democracy compared to those of other forms of government. Some observers have focused on whether the pandemic is providing national leaders with an opportunity or rationale for taking actions to seize greater power and move their countries away from democracy and toward authoritarianism or autocracy, or strengthen or consolidate their already-existing authoritarian or autocratic forms of government.
Societal Tension, Reform, and Transformation, and Governmental Stability

Beyond the specific point above about potential movement toward greater authoritarianism and autocracy, some observers have focused on the possibility that the pandemic more generally could cause increased social tensions in certain countries, could lead to (or present opportunities for) societal reforms and transformations, and could destabilize and perhaps cause the downfall of governments, akin to the effects of certain past world-changing events, such as World War I.⁵ Such changes could alter the political orientations, national strategies, foreign policies, and defense policies of the countries in which they occur, potentially inducing follow-on effects among governments and other global actors that interact with those countries.

World Economy, Globalization, and U.S. Trade Policy

Some observers have focused on the possibility that the pandemic could lead to significant and potentially long-lasting changes to the world economy that in turn could reshape the international security environment. Noting that the pandemic reduced world trade volumes and disrupted and altered global supply chains, they have focused on the question of whether economic globalization will as a result be slowed, halted, or reversed. Observers are monitoring how such effects could influence or be influenced by U.S. trade policy.

Allied Defense Spending and U.S. Alliances

Some observers have focused on the possibility that costs incurred by U.S. allies—particularly NATO allies in Europe—to support their economies during stay-at-home/lockdown periods could lead to offsetting reductions in their defense expenditures. More generally, some observers have asked whether reductions in economic growth caused by the pandemic could lead to reductions in the defense budgets of U.S. allies in both Europe and Asia.

European Union

In the earlier months of the pandemic, some observers focused on the question of whether the pandemic was creating tensions—or, conversely, opportunities for greater coordination—among the European Union member states, and what impact the pandemic might ultimately have on the cohesion of the European Union.

Definition of, and Budgeting for, U.S. National Security

Some observers have focused on the question of whether the pandemic will (or should) lead to a revised definition of U.S. national security, particularly one that is less military-centric and more focused on what are sometimes called human-security-oriented challenges or global issues, such as climate change, that have sometimes been more at the periphery of U.S. national security

---

policy and plans. Such a change in definition could lead to a changed allocation of funding between the Department of Defense (DOD) and other government agencies that perform national-security-related tasks, a realignment of resources within DOD between combat-oriented programs and other programs (such as those related to DOD’s mission of providing defense support of civil authorities), and perhaps a changed allocation of funding among the agencies other than DOD that perform national-security-related tasks.


Some observers have focused on the question of whether large federal expenditures made in response to the domestic U.S. economic effects of the pandemic, and the impact of these expenditures on the federal budget deficit and federal debt, could lead to greater constraints in coming years on U.S. defense spending levels. As a follow-on matter, these observers are additionally focusing on the question of whether responding to such increased constraints will (or should) lead to revisions in U.S. defense strategy, changes in U.S. defense programs, and a reduction or termination of certain overseas U.S. military operations.

**U.S. Foreign Assistance, International Debt Relief, and Refugee Policy**

Some observers have focused on the question of whether the pandemic is providing a new lens through which to measure the value of U.S. foreign assistance, international debt relief, and refugee policy in promoting U.S. interests, particularly in connection with the previously mentioned issue of whether to revise the definition of U.S. national security to make it less military-centric.

**Non-state Actors**

Some observers have focused on how non-state actors such as international terrorist and criminal organizations are reacting to the pandemic, and on how much priority should be given to countering such actors in the future, particularly in a context of a changed definition of U.S. national security.

**U.S. Attention to International Issues Other than the Pandemic**

Some observers have focused on whether responding to the pandemic is affecting the time and resources that U.S. leaders and agencies can devote to addressing other international issues of concern to the United States that predate but continue to exist in parallel with the pandemic. In the earlier months of the pandemic, U.S. officials warned other countries to not take actions during the pandemic to challenge U.S. interests around the world or otherwise test U.S. resolve or responsiveness on the thinking that the pandemic was distracting the U.S. government from other concerns or reducing U.S. capacity for responding to any such challenges.

**Role of Congress**

In the earlier months of the pandemic, a few observers focused on the issue of how the pandemic had affected Congress’s activities for conducting oversight of the Administration’s foreign policy actions.

**Appendices with CRS Reports and Additional Writings**

For further reading on the topics outlined above, see the CRS reports presented in Appendix A and the additional writings presented in Appendix B.
Potential Issues for Congress

Potential issues for Congress regarding implications of the pandemic for the international security environment and the U.S. role in the world include but are not limited to the following:

- Will the pandemic change the international security environment, and if so, in what ways? How clearly can potential changes be anticipated?

- How should the United States respond to potential changes in the international security environment arising from the pandemic and its effects, particularly in light of uncertainty regarding the precise nature and likelihood of these changes? How might U.S. action or inaction influence or accelerate these changes?

- What does the pandemic demonstrate about the role of the United States as a global leader? What impact, if any, will the U.S. domestic response to the pandemic have on the ability of the United States in the future to offer itself or be accepted by other countries as a global leader on other international issues, or to serve as a model for other countries to emulate in terms of their own political systems, governance, and economic models?

- What actions is the Administration developing to respond to potential changes in the international security environment arising from the pandemic? Does Congress have sufficient visibility into these actions? Are these actions appropriate and sufficient? What metrics should Congress use to assess them?

- What implications do potential changes in the international security environment arising from the pandemic have for the role of Congress in setting and overseeing the execution of U.S. foreign and defense policy? Is Congress appropriately organized for maintaining Congress as a co-equal branch of government relative to the executive branch in addressing these potential changes? If the pandemic becomes a world-changing event for the international security environment and the U.S. role in the world, what implications, if any, might that have for congressional organization and operations?
Appendix A. Related CRS Reports

CRS reports that provide more in-depth discussions of specific issues discussed in this report include the following, which are presented in alphabetical order of their titles:


Additional CRS reports that do not include COVID-19 in their titles and are not listed here may include discussions of the international implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.


- CRS Insight IN11481, COVID-19 International Responses: Resources for Comparison with U.S. Policies, by Hannah Fischer and Sara M. Tharakan.

- CRS Insight IN11583, COVID-19 International Responses: Resources for the 117th Congress, by Hannah Fischer and Sara M. Tharakan.


- CRS In Focus IF11434, COVID-19: U.S.-China Economic Considerations, by Karen M. Sutter and Michael D. Sutherland.


- CRS In Focus IF11635, Europe, COVID-19, and U.S. Relations, by Kristin Archick et al.

- CRS In Focus IF11551, Export Restrictions in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, by Christopher A. Casey and Cathleen D. Cimino-Isaacs.


- CRS In Focus IF11548, Helping U.S. Citizens Abroad During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other International Crises: Role of the Department of State, by Cory R. Gill.

- CRS In Focus IF11796, Global COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution, coordinated by Sara M. Tharakan.


- CRS In Focus IF11537, Intelligence Community Support to Pandemic Preparedness and Response, by Michael E. DeVine.

- CRS In Focus IF11581, *Latin America and the Caribbean: Impact of COVID-19*, by Mark P. Sullivan et al.
- CRS In Focus IF11480, *Overview: The Department of Defense and COVID-19*, coordinated by Kathleen J. McInnis.
- CRS Insight IN11365, *President Trump Criticizes VOA Coverage of China’s COVID-19 Response*, by Thomas Lum and Matthew C. Weed.
- CRS In Focus IF11029, *The Venezuela Regional Humanitarian Crisis and COVID-19*, by Rhoda Margesson and Clare Ribando Seelke.
- CRS Insight IN11369, *U.S. Funding to the World Health Organization (WHO)*, by Luisa Blanchfield and Tiaji Salaam-Blyther.
- CRS In Focus IF11494, *Wildlife Trade, COVID-19, and Other Zoonotic Diseases*, by Pervaze A. Sheikh and Katarina C. O'Regan.
Appendix B. Additional Writings

In presenting sources of additional reading, this appendix includes some examples of writings reflecting various perspectives on the potential implications of the pandemic on the international security environment and the U.S. role in the world, organized by specific themes or topics. Within each section, the items are presented in chronological order, with the most recent on top. For most of the sections, additional citations with dates earlier than that of the last item listed in the section can be found in previous versions of this CRS report.

**General/Multitopic**


Phillip Y. Lipsy, “It’s Too Soon to Call Coronavirus Winners and Losers, Given how much remains unknown about the virus, talk of success may be premature,” *Foreign Policy*, May 12, 2020.


Joseph Cirincione, “How to Prevent War During the Coronavirus Pandemic, How Will the

Frank Hoffman, “An American Perspective on Post-Pandemic Geopolitics,” RUSI, April 20,
2020.

Gordon Bardos, “Will the Coronavirus Crisis Force America to Look in the Mirror and Reform?”

Nicholas Eberstadt, “The “New Normal”: Thoughts about the Shape of Things to Come in the

Yorker, April 17, 2020.


Edith M. Lederer, “UN Chief Warns COVID-19 Threatens Global Peace and Security,”

Richard Haass, “The Pandemic Will Accelerate History Rather Than Reshape It, Not Every Crisis
Is a Turning Point, Foreign Affairs, April 7, 2020.


Daniel W. Drezner, “The Most Counterintuitive Prediction about World Politics and the

Ali Demirdas, “Western Values May Not Survive the Coronavirus. European Unity and American

John Allen et al., “How the World Will Look after the Coronavirus Pandemic,” Foreign Policy,
March 20, 2020. (Includes short contributions from 12 authors.)

Maxine Whittaker, “How Infectious Diseases Have Shaped Our Culture, Habits and Language,”
The Conversation, July 12, 2017.

World Order, International Institutions, and Global Governance

Simon Frankel Pratt and Jamie Levin, “Vaccines Will Shape the New Geopolitical Order, The
Gulf Between Haves and Have-Nots is Only Growing,” Foreign Policy, April 29, 2021.

Nina Schwalbe, “The World Should Treat Pandemics Like It Treats Chemical Weapons, Plans for
a Global Pandemic Treaty Don’t Solve the Problem of China’s Refusal to Cooperate,” Foreign
Policy, April 14, 2021.

Scott Neuman, “Many World Leaders Call For Treaty On Future Pandemics,” NPR, March 30,
2021.

Helen V. Milner, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, Michael J. Tierney, and Erik Voeten, “Trump,
COVID-19, and the Future of International Order. In a New Survey, International Relations
Experts Are Pessimistic About the Years to Come,” Foreign Policy, October 8, 2020.

Seth Center and Emma Bates, editors, After Disruption: Historical Perspectives on the Future of
International Order, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), September 2020, 65
pp.


U.S. Global Leadership and Role in World


CSIS Commission on Strengthening America’s Health Security, Time to Escalate U.S. Leadership on Covid-19 and Beyond, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), July 2021, 16 pp. (Posted online July 21, 2021.) (The report states on its final page that its authors are Julie Gerberding, Susan Brooks, J. Stephen Morrison, Anna McCaffrey, and Katherine E. Bliss.)


David Adesnik, “America’s Syrian Allies Deserve the COVID-19 Vaccine, They Vanquished the Islamic State and Are Now in Desperate Need of Aid,” Foreign Policy, June 22, 2021.


Tom Frieden and Marine Buissonnière, “The U.S. Has the Power to Tamp Down Coronavirus Variants—If We’re Willing to Use It,” *Politico*, March 2, 2021.


Colm Quinn, “G-7 Scrambles for Global Vaccine Plan, After Months of Warnings, the Group of Wealthy Nations Has Begun to Put Forward Solutions to the Lopsided Distribution of Coronavirus Vaccines,” *Foreign Policy*, February 19, 2021.


Ethan Guillén, “End the Pandemic Faster by Listening to Developing Countries, Biden Has a Golden Opportunity to Help with Global Vaccines,” *Foreign Policy*, February 8, 2021.


**China’s Potential Role as a Global Leader**


James Palmer, “China’s Vaccine Diplomacy Has Mixed Results, Concerns About the Efficacy of Sinovac and Sinopharm Has Dented Their Reputation, Even Among Allies of Beijing,” Foreign Policy, April 7, 2021.

Francisco Urdinez, China’s Improvised Mask Diplomacy in Chile, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2021, 30 pp. (Posted online April 6, 2021.)

Richard Javad Heydarian, “China’s Vaccine Diplomacy Stumbles in Southeast Asia, Delays and Concerns About the Efficacy and Politics of China’s Vaccine Shipments Plague Its Vaccine Drive in the Region,” Al Jazeera, April 5, 2021.


**U.S. Relations and Great Power Competition with China and Russia**


Samuel Ramani, “With Sputnik V, Russia Shot Itself in the Foot, High Prices, Delayed Deliveries, and Questions About Efficacy Raise Suspicions about Russia’s Vaccine Diplomacy in Africa,” Foreign Policy, June 24, 2021.


Tim Gosling, “Russia and China Are Exploiting Europe’s Vaccine Shortfalls, Slovakia’s Prime Minister Has Resigned Over a Secret Delivery of Moscow’s Sputnik V as Brussels Struggles to Keep the EU United,” Foreign Policy, March 31, 2021.


Michael J. Green, “Quad Summit’s Vaccine Deal Is Biden’s Bold First Move in Asia, It’s a Smart Step to Counter China, but the Next Ones Won’t Be as Easy,” Foreign Policy, March 12, 2021.


Prabhjote Gill, “India Is Asking the QUAD for Money to Boost Vaccine Production and Counter China’s Moves on the Global Stage,” Business Insider India, March 9, 2021.


Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Autocracy

Parag Khanna, “The Pandemic Proves Only Technocrats Can Save Us, Populist Politicians Love to Belittle Experts, but When It’s a Matter of Life and Death, the Precautionary Principle and Expertise Are What Counts,” Foreign Policy, June 24, 2021.

Uri Friedman, “COVID-19 Lays Bare the Price of Populism, A Raging Outbreak in Brazil Threatens Gains Against the Virus,” Atlantic, May 9, 2021.


R. Evan Ellis, Populism, China, and Covid-19, Latin America’s New Perfect Storm, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), April 2021, 6 pp. (Posted online April 20, 2021.)


Societal Tension, Reform, and Transformation, and Governmental Stability
Joe Parkin Daniels, “The Pandemic’s Legacy Will Spur New Protests in Latin America, Increased Economic Inequality Has Only Added to Widespread Discontent,” Foreign Policy, July 29, 2021.


World Economy, Globalization, and U.S. Trade Policy


James K. Galbraith, “The Death of Neoliberalism Is Greatly Exaggerated, The West’s Economic Orthodoxy of the Past 40 Years Has Been Shaken by the Pandemic—But the Fight Isn’t Nearly Over Yet,” Foreign Policy, April 6, 2021.


**Allied Defense Spending and U.S. Alliances**


**European Union**


Tim Gosling, “Russia and China Are Exploiting Europe’s Vaccine Shortfalls, Slovakia’s Prime Minister Has Resigned Over a Secret Delivery of Moscow’s Sputnik V as Brussels Struggles to Keep the EU United,” Foreign Policy, March 31, 2021.


Adam Tooze, “It’s a New Europe—if You Can Keep It, The Continent Has Managed to Take a Great Leap Forward—but There Still Might Be a Crash Landing,” Foreign Policy, August 7, 2020.


**Definition of, and Budgeting for, U.S. National Security**


**U.S. Foreign Assistance, International Debt Relief, and Refugee Policy**

Catherine Osborn, “How to Escape the COVID-19 Debt Trap, This Crisis May Be a Turning Point for How the IMF Treats Indebted Nations,” Foreign Policy, June 4, 2021.


Non-state Actors


Robin Simcox, “Terrorism After the Pandemic, Months of Isolation and Governments Grappling with Other Crises Could Lead to a Rise in Attacks,” Foreign Policy, July 2, 2020.


**U.S. Attention to International Issues Other than COVID-19**


**Role of Congress**


**Author Information**

Ronald O'Rourke
Specialist in Naval Affairs

Kathleen J. McInnis
Specialist in International Security

**Acknowledgments**

A third original coauthor of this report was Michael Moodie, who was Assistant Director of the Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division of CRS and a Senior Specialist in Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade until his retirement from CRS in December 2020.
Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS’s institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.