

## ***Pandemic Geopolitics and India***

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*By now, the world seems to have learned to live with the Corona virus which is likely to cast its spell for some more months. Meanwhile, active and new infection cases have started to decline in many countries, along with a growing momentum in the vaccination drive around the world. Nevertheless, the aftershocks of the pandemic are real. No event since World War II has triggered such distinct global effects on human and state behaviour so rapidly. The pandemic's transformational effects on global affairs are yet to surface fully. While there is no unanimity yet on the ushering in of a new world order, the pandemic's upshot is consequential for the current world order.*

*Will 2019-20 be viewed as another turning point in the geopolitical history of the world? Will 2019-20 be a hinge in human history with an ex-post shift in the core concepts that defined pre COVID-19 world politics? Has a transformation process of the fundamental factors of global politics – like the distribution of power, the calculation of interest, or the constitution of global actors – begun?*

The debate over the pandemic's transformative effects on geopolitics is gradually unfolding. Many argue that the effects of the pandemic will be more sweeping; others think 2019-20 is unlikely to be an inflection point. Undeniably, pandemics and politics are always intertwined and, for most of human history, pandemics have had considerable effects on international affairs.

### **Extrapolating the Pandemic-Geopolitics Nexus**

Historically, pandemics have altered the geostrategic dynamics of the time they have occurred: be it the spread of plague from Ethiopia to Athens in 430 BC; the French expedition plans in North America which were disrupted by

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the endemic of Yellow fever in Haiti against which the French Armada had no immunity; the epidemic disease that felled Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia; the Spanish flu that occurred during 1918-19; or the 2003 SARS outbreak, and the H1N1 pandemic in 2009. All these shook world politics in their time. However, such precedents cannot be extrapolated fully to the current pandemic situation as the COVID-19 effects seems to be comparatively muted, owing largely to contemporary advancements in healthcare systems and global cooperation. Therefore, the pandemic's lasting effects may be minimal, even though the aftershocks of COVID-19 will be real.

Furthermore, it is absorbing to enquire into the state of inter-state relations and global political discourse during the pandemic. Has the common threat of the pandemic helped to improve or to worsen inter-state relations? One can already see the tense relationship between China and the USA owing to their 'trade war' and its worsening conflict dynamics, especially in the accusations and counter-accusations between them regarding the origin and spread of the Corona virus. Ever since the unfolding of the pandemic, US-China rivalry has become intense. The pandemic, therefore, has adversely affected the relations between major powers that were already beset by a variety of pre-existing conditions<sup>1</sup>.

Germany has also slapped a 130 billion Euros damage claim on China for its mishandling of the Corona virus pandemic. In response, China has accused Germany's claim as an act of xenophobia and racism. Japan-South Korea relations worsened when Japan decided to quarantine all arrivals from South Korea. This resulted in Seoul questioning whether Tokyo had other motives than containing the outbreak. A similar trend is discernible in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Russia over oil production and price fixation. Iran, on the other hand, spread the narrative that the virus is an American biological invasion and the result of a conspiracy. Taking cognizance of the worsened conflict dynamics in various parts of the world, the UN Security Council has adopted a resolution demanding a global ceasefire in all the conflicts.

On the positive side, countries hitherto at odds, such as Iran and the UAE, are cooperating at least temporarily. China has reached out to some worst-affected countries in Europe enthusiastically, signalling its strength in trying to provide crisis-time leadership to the world. India has also exhibited its leadership capability to shoulder global responsibility, especially when there is a paucity of global leadership to manage the pandemic. All these developments warrant an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of international politics during the COVID-19 pandemic in general and challenges and opportunities for Indian diplomacy in particular.

The sections that follow delve into the changing dynamics of international relations in the wake of the pandemic, and how India, as a leader in global crisis-management, has manoeuvred diplomatically; what opportunities it brings for India; and what challenges it is facing while driving through this difficult time.

### **World Politics amidst the Pandemic**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic since the early months of 2020, a surfeit of scholarly arguments has been advanced on the effects of the pandemic on international politics. Many have confidently predicted that the pandemic would be consequential for the global order which has started to reshape and wilfully transform to its new *avatar*<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, some other scholars think that the pandemic is unlikely to have transformative effects on international politics: “compared to past pandemics, COVID-19 is likely to be relegated to a footnote in international relations scholarship”<sup>3</sup>.

One may not be able to decisively conclude at this point in time whether 2019-20 is the epoch-changing year. However, owing to the pandemic, there are discernible socio-political-economic transformations or breakaways (discussed subsequently) which have now come to be accepted as the ‘new normal’ in every sphere. Such transformations would facilitate the inception and culmination of a new era in the long-run. Expecting a radical redefining of the balance of power in international politics in the aftermath of the pandemic, as it occurred historically, would be unrealistic since technology prowess and defence preparedness, besides trade, determine ‘status consistency’, or inconsistency in international politics now. Undoubtedly, the pandemic has adversely affected the global trade and supply chain; but it did not derail the technology drive and the war fighting capability of any major power significantly. Therefore, 2019-20 may not be an inflection point. Rather, as Richard Haass says, it may be just “a way station along the road that the world has been travelling for the past few decades”. Trends like waning American leadership; faltering global cooperation; great-power discord, etc. that characterized the pre-COVID-19 world will be “brought into sharper-than-ever relief”, which might culminate in a new world order in the long-run. But, in the short-term, the world that will emerge post-pandemic “will be recognizable”, and unlikely be radically different from the one that preceded it<sup>4</sup>.

Although it is difficult to conclude on the post-pandemic world order – that is, whether “the post-corona virus world is already here”<sup>5</sup> – some broad

contours of the post-pandemic world are increasingly evident. According to a Carnegie India report (September 2020), “the pandemic has exacerbated existing geo-economics, geopolitical, and strategic fault lines”<sup>6</sup> globally. Secondly, the role and importance of the state has been increasingly re-emphasized; cross-border movements between and among nations have become more restrictive than before; nationalist sentiments have grown sharper; and protectionism and populist politics have gained more traction. In essence, the pandemic has “reinforced the democratic recession”<sup>7</sup>. “The principal responses to the pandemic have also been national or sub-national, not international” in the true sense<sup>8</sup>. Third, global governance structures, constituting the supranational institutions like the UN and the WHO, are now struggling to mediate the global response to the pandemic. Fourth, no one country or group of countries can claim global crisis-time leadership alone. It is argued that, for the first time since 1989, great power rivalry has, once again, become a defining feature of global politics as the pandemic is exacerbating friction between China and the USA, and the split between them is wide open now.

Undoubtedly, the current state of international politics seems to be under stress as the distribution of power and interests in global society has been adversely affected by the pandemic. First, there seems to be an acceleration of a hegemonic transition between China and the USA. This is visible from the trend in which the USA continues to flounder while China offers supplies and coordination to countries badly affected by the virus. No doubt a Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) snap poll conducted in May 2020 suggests that the majority of IR scholars (54 percent) in USA disagree with the notion that the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered the distribution of power in world politics<sup>9</sup>. However, this is far from the consensus view, as 31.7 percent scholars believe the opposite. In support of the former opinion, analysts argue that China has become “powerful but unliked”<sup>10</sup> the world over, and its soft power has not borne much fruit. The Chinese medical supplies to other countries have been found to be substandard. The USA, on the other hand, became inward looking and could not offer global leadership during the pandemic. However, by rejuvenating its own economy with an injection of US \$ 2 trillion (the world’s biggest monetary stimulus), it acted as the world’s lender of last resort, dwarfing the IMF<sup>11</sup>. In contrast, China still faces harder budget constraints. However, despite the China-USA trade war, and the increase in hostile attitudes towards each other (especially during the Trump presidency), their economic interests are not yet fully decoupled. It has even been predicted that drastic shifts in global supply chains are unlikely.

Historically, rapid shifts in the distribution of power, or the global power hierarchy, have come about only after great power wars, and after the collapse of communism. Will the COVID-19 pandemic lead to great power wars or ideological altercations in the world? The answer to both the suggestions is definitely 'No'. No apocalyptic notion can be traced to this pandemic phase, except, perhaps, a "substantial shock to the post-war order, established by the United States"<sup>12</sup> – that is, the rule-based order predicated on liberal democratic values established seven decades ago now seems challenged.

### **Inter-State Dynamics**

The most adverse impact of the pandemic can be seen on inter-state dynamics, especially in the context of global cooperation and crisis-time leadership for dealing with the challenges. "Actual responses of states" to the pandemic ... are predominantly competitive and self-centred"<sup>13</sup>. In the opinion of Li Haidong, a Professor in the Institute of International Relations, China Foreign Affairs University, published in *Global Times*, the "setbacks emerging in the fight against the virus" are threatening international stability. Global coordination and cooperation among major powers is almost non-existent. In fact, Haidong hints at the USA when he says,

Some major powers have become self-centred, blindly pursu[ing] national priorities, unilateralism and hegemony. This may not only worsen the situation in their own nations but international concerted efforts to curb the pandemic will also be impacted. The inherent detriments of hegemony and unilateralism are exposed amid the global war against the COVID-19<sup>14</sup>.

The absence of international cooperation during a global public health crisis is puzzling. In the midst of the Cold War, the USA and the former Soviet Union cooperated on smallpox eradication. Previously, USA and China have cooperated on a range of issues, including the Ebola outbreak during Barack Obama's Presidency. Coincidentally, when the relative decline of America as a super power is being perceived, no inclination has been shown by Washington to lead the world in this time of pandemic. Will it be logical to argue that the durability, or lack, of cooperation, is dependent on the hegemonic decline? There is no indication yet whether the USA wants to play the role of a benign hegemon.

With rising multipolarity in the economic arena, the hegemon could become less willing and able to provide public goods. The rising challenger itself may

not be inclined to do so either. The United States, beset by its own struggles, clearly has no appetite for leadership on the corona virus<sup>15</sup>.

In other words, “the corona virus pandemic is shaking bedrock assumptions about US exceptionalism. This is, perhaps, the first global crisis in more than a century where no one is even looking for Washington to lead”<sup>16</sup>. Meanwhile, “the strict adherence to alliances as a dominant force in the international order is losing appeal”<sup>17</sup>. For example, the US-China trade war has brought to the fore the dilemma in Japan: how to preserve economic cooperation with China while avoiding tensions with the USA, which is the only credible security guarantor in the region. Japan has to find balance between the two, and not devote itself solely to its alliance with America.

The idealistic expectations from countries to concertedly deal with the crisis do not really work. “Previous epidemics and pandemics didn’t alter the conflictive nature of global politics, and COVID-19 is unlikely to change the fundamental nature of it, which is the pursuit of power”<sup>18</sup>. Rather, competitive dynamics of the current world order prompt states to adhere to self-dealing and predatory behaviour, and not cooperation. Mutual vulnerability in recent years has been weaponized by states, with countries trying to use others’ dependency on them to extract benefits for themselves. It may be observed that powerful nations have instrumentalized the corona virus pandemic in their rivalry. For example, in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, to keep oil prices at moderate levels as a dramatic drop occurred in oil consumption, “Saudi Arabia orchestrated a worldwide decrease in oil production.” But, when Russia refused to reduce oil production, Saudi Arabia triggered an oil price war in March 2020, leading to oil prices becoming negative in April 2020, despite US pressure on both sides to end the hostility<sup>19</sup>.

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to be a testing time for international politics. In a way, the pandemic is testing the legitimacy of the present global order, and the crisis-leadership ability of its chief protagonists, especially the USA and other Western powers. First, it is testing the agility of the domestic governance of nation-states – the prime actors in the international system. Secondly, it is also questioning the relevance of global governance structures and institutions erected in the name of ‘lasting global peace and development’ in the post-World War II period. And third, it has revealed the inability and unwillingness of the existing ‘super powers’ to muster a global response to a global crisis. So far, in all these respects, the current world order has faltered.

In addition, today the global governance structure centred around the UN and the Bretton Woods system has been under serious stress and has been subject to manipulation during the last few decades by their champions themselves. The obstruction of the UNSC meeting to discuss the pandemic-related issue by China, and the WHO position regarding China's dealing with the pandemic, have renewed the longstanding debate about whether the world body is "sufficiently independent to allow it to fulfil its purpose". These and many such instances in the past give rise to a perception that the current global governance structure has become inept, and therefore, warrants a complete overhaul.

A global power vacuum appears to have emerged. Given the fact that all major powers are consumed with internal problems, they have become inward looking while fighting the pandemic. All are aware of the fact that no nation is powerful enough to provide global 'crisis leadership' at the moment. The absence of American leadership to manage the pandemic provides a new opportunity for Moscow and Beijing. China is already asserting its leadership aggressively as the USA falters. But many also feel that 'China as world leader' just died, given the massive negative impacts of its efforts to be helpful. Given the change of political leadership in America, one has to wait and watch if there will be any change in Washington's strategy in the future.

Moreover, during this time of paucity in global leadership, will the world see the arrival of a new super power to lead the new world order? Will the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) arrive at a consensus to recompose the high table by accommodating a new influential power like India which is wilfully shouldering at least some crisis-time leadership?

### **New Geopolitical Dynamics in the Post-Pandemic World**

There are many other indications of new geopolitical dynamics which are still unfolding. The sections that follow recognise nine overlapping symptoms to identify the broad contours of the post-pandemic world order<sup>20</sup>. They are not all likely to engulf the global sphere all at once; rather their gradual unfolding would herald the historic moment "when the world changes permanently, when the balance of political and economic power shifts decisively, and when, for most people, in most countries, life is never quite the same again"<sup>22</sup>. These symptoms are listed below.

#### **Spread of Authoritarianism**

Given the right-wing political upsurge and consequent authoritarian political

trends in various parts of the world today, it would be safe to assume that the post-COVID-19 world order will be marked by a relative decline of democracy, along with the legitimizing of authoritarianism. In the name of prompt implementation and the containment of the pandemic, political authorities and the administrative machinery have used discretionary powers. Visibly, “democracies being hampered by inherent inefficiency and political division[s]” have been proved ineffective in dealing with crisis situations in comparison to the authoritarian systems<sup>22</sup>. Democratic decline and increased political centralization have led to the concentration of power and could come to mark the ‘new normal’. “The trend towards centralised, authoritarian rule is evident in many countries. Some are now attempting to weaponise the virus for political ends,” writes Simon Tisdall in *The Guardian*<sup>23</sup>. In essence, the post COVID-19 order will nurture “a world that is less open, less prosperous, and less free”<sup>24</sup>.

### **The Retreat of Hyper-Globalisation**

A downturn in the Western economies leading to a global depression has culminated in protectionism and authoritarianism in different parts of the world. International bodies designed to safeguard public health appear weak and unable to contain the crisis, and alliances with transatlantic partners are fraying as nations turn inwards and close borders. It would safe to assume that the post COVID-19 world will be a re-aligned world, with a “retreat from this phase of hyper-globalisation, as citizens look to national governments to protect them, and as states and firms seek to reduce future vulnerabilities”<sup>25</sup>. On the one hand, the world may see “increased post-pandemic protectionism if, as some predict, countries attempt to limit future exposure to global threats.”<sup>26</sup> The re-globalized world (“Globalization 2.0” as Robert Kaplan names it)<sup>27</sup> will be marked by the emergence of

...great-power blocs with their own burgeoning military and separate supply chains, ... the rise of autocracies, and ... social and class divides that have engendered nativism and populism, coupled with middle-class angst in Western democracies. In sum, it is a story about new and re-emerging global divisions...<sup>28</sup>.

Robert Kaplan sees “the corona virus pandemic as an economic and geopolitical shock”, “the historical marker between the first phase of globalisation and the second ... In sum, it is a story about new and re-emerging global divisions”<sup>29</sup>. “The primacy of the states, state sovereignty, state borders, border controls seems to loom large ... and health and demographic security concerns are virtually tormenting statesmen and policymakers alike”<sup>30</sup>.

### **Towards a Virtual Civilization**

The post COVID-19 world will nurture a “virtual civilization”<sup>31</sup> as the physical mobility of people is significantly curtailed, and will remain so during the foreseeable future. Most nations would be reluctant to support and facilitate human migration anymore. It has been seen how many European and West Asian countries have pushed back migrants in the recent past. As far as the control of the pandemic is concerned, the only effective method is ‘social distancing’ and the restriction of movement. During such a situation, connectivity through virtual platforms or the cyber domain is the only medium which has grown exponentially and is sustaining the globalised world. While social or physical distancing is the ‘new normal’ or *nom de guerre*, virtual cohesion and capability will shape and drive global discourse from now onwards. But, the world is likely to confront a new dilemma: *of how to make the virtual reality*, as it is prone to intense manipulation and disguise.

### **Crisis-Generated Alliances**

The post-pandemic world will see the shifting and formation of alliances on the basis of crisis-time cooperation, and the blame game involving the source of the outbreak of COVID-19. While conspiracy theories involving the virus origin and spread have worsened the China-USA rift, the pandemic-time collaboration might prompt strange alliances and counter-alliances elsewhere. The split between the two is wide open; which way it would escalate is a matter of concern. Logically, the world will see coalitions for fighting the pandemic. The leading countries with advanced virology expertise will rally around to form a super-league to fight the pandemic, as was the case in the ‘global war on terror’.

### **The Global Bio-Defence Regime**

Within the prism of the new apprehension of biological warfare and conspiracy theories about the corona virus, the building of a permanent bio-defence force would be a national security imperative in the post COVID-19 global security discourse. The ninth review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention is scheduled for November 2021 where an assessment might be undertaken by state-parties on how the COVID-19 situation would be managed from the biological weapons standpoint<sup>32</sup>. The reinforcement of the biological convention with an additional verification mechanism might be pressed upon the regime, or a new regime would take shape. Besides, the post-COVID-19 global

discourse would press for a multilateral bio-defence regime, with mandatory compliance mechanism to monitor national pandemic prevention policies, measures, and commitments.

### **India: The Emerging Power**

If human history codifies the COVID-19 outbreak as an epoch-changing event that shook the global balance of power, India will be placed on a high pedestal. Post-pandemic, the global power hierarchy may not remain the same, and the redistribution of global power is unfolding. It would not be far-fetched to argue that there is enough scope for nations who have been relatively resilient in fighting the pandemic, and shouldered crisis-time global responsibilities. India has shown such a leadership quality even as all other major powers have become inward looking. India's message for the world is that it is willing and prepared, within its limited resources and capabilities, to undertake responsibilities in preserving and promoting the global common good<sup>33</sup>. The initiatives New Delhi has shouldered so far "underline India's commitment to become a credible global player", says S. D. Muni<sup>34</sup>.

Besides, there are many other transformative trends that have emerged as offshoots of the pandemic that might complicate the global order, if not addressed early. The pandemic has put "hard security threats between nations back into the spotlight. The geopolitical rivalry between the great powers is likely to worsen as the American and Chinese economies become less interdependent"<sup>35</sup>. A trend of intensifying conflicts and increased insecurity has been observed, as "policy responses to the pandemic give opportunities to state and non-state actors alike to tighten or advance their power and undermine their opponents while leaving civilians more exposed and vulnerable"<sup>36</sup> to violence. Else, this pandemic "might be a harbinger of larger shocks to come"<sup>37</sup>. Sensing this, the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, made an unprecedented demand for "a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations", and called for a global ceasefire of all hostilities<sup>38</sup>. The call raises hope that the pandemic might serve as a catalyst for the cessation of armed hostilities.

### **India's Crisis-Time Global Leadership**

Even though international cooperation to address the pandemic concertedly seems grim at the moment, and the global situation itself is in a state of flux, the crisis is ripe with opportunities for countries like India to showcase its

global leadership capabilities, and resolve. In fact, India has demonstrated that it is a responsible member of the global community by bringing “its domestic requirements and global responsibilities in sync”<sup>39</sup>. India’s pandemic response and diplomacy has so far been steadfast. It has gone the extra mile in extending its cooperative hands to whoever is in need.

### **Global Health Crisis-Leadership**

When the paucity of global leadership was palpable across the world, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the SAARC conference on Covid-19, and suggested a coordinated response among the SAARC neighbours to combat the virus at the regional level. The video conference of SAARC leaders, in which Pakistan was also on board, welcomed Modi’s proposal. Modi proposed the creation of a Covid-19 emergency fund, with India making an initial contribution of US \$10 million<sup>40</sup>. Prime Minister Modi also proposed the setting up of ‘rapid response teams’ of doctors and specialists, and arrange for testing equipment, besides imparting online training to emergency response staff so as to build capacity to fight such challenges across the region. “Modi’s initiative came much before any other such regional initiatives and drew a positive response not only from regional states but also from countries like the USA and Russia as well as the World Health Organisation”<sup>41</sup>.

### **Faith in Rule-Based Order**

A close observation of India’s diplomatic activism in the wake of the pandemic reveals that India has expressed its commitment to a rule-based global order and multilateralism. It took the difficult task of resurrecting a couple of moribund and obsolete platforms to present a united front against the pandemic<sup>42</sup>. Prime Minister Modi became the first global leader to call for a G20 summit via video conferencing to advance “a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its human and economic implications.” This was accepted by Saudi Arabia, the current chair of the G20. In the Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders’ Summit, he underscored,

the need to put human beings at the centre of our vision of global prosperity and cooperation, freely and openly share the benefits of medical research and development, develop [an] adaptive, responsive and humane health care systems, promote new crisis management protocols and procedures for an interconnected global village, strengthen and reform inter-governmental organisations like WHO, and work together to reduce economic hardships resulting from COVID-, particularly for the economically weak<sup>43</sup>.

Similarly, in the NAM platform, Prime Minister Modi also highlighted how India has promoted coordination in the neighbourhood; and ensured medical supplies to partner countries, including 59 member countries of NAM. Moreover, he called on the leaders to help usher in a new globalisation for the collective well-being of humankind, and have a multilateral focus on promoting the shared interests of humanity.

### **India as the Pharmacy of the World**

While catering to the explosive demand for drugs and medical supplies, India stood by 150 countries through initiatives such as Operation Sagar and Operation Sanjeevani, and through these proving itself to be the “pharmacy of the world”<sup>44</sup>. India’s Rs. 1 billion COVID-19 medical assistance plan targets 90 countries<sup>45</sup>. In addition, India has undertaken tangible humanitarian measures like the evacuation of nationals, the supply of medical resources and support teams, and, above all, moral support to the needy while managing huge challenges at home. While evacuating its own nationals stranded in parts of the world, India has also extended this support to nationals from Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, the USA, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa, and Peru<sup>46</sup>. Requests for emergency medical equipment from Bhutan and the Maldives have also been responded to by India. India provided 15 tonnes of medical supplies worth Rs. 2.11 crore to China on 26 February 2020<sup>47</sup> for which China has expressed its appreciation<sup>48</sup>. India has exported 90t of medical protective equipment to Serbia under the guidance of the UNDP. Most importantly, as part of India’s measures to assist neighbouring countries in dealing with the COVID19 pandemic, “six Navy ships have been kept ready and five medical teams are on standby by India for deployment in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan when required”, as the Ministry of Defence has said in a statement<sup>49</sup>. This brings to the fore India’s political will and capability to secure those in the vicinity.

### **Vaccine Diplomacy**

As Harsh Pant has pointed out, given India’s comparative advantage over China in vaccine manufacture and distribution, New Delhi now “can play a crucial role in health and safety in an increasingly interdependent world. ... The world’s pharmacy is looking to inoculations to build friendly ties around the world - and compete with China.”<sup>50</sup> Committing to its crisis-time leadership resolve, India is reaching out first to its South Asian neighbours as a goodwill gesture with free shipments of the vaccine developed by the Serum Institute of India to Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Seychelles, Bhutan, and Maldives.

It also plans to supply the same to countries beyond the neighbourhood – like Brazil, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa.<sup>51</sup> This proves how India has become a leader in the bio-revolution, having the capability to cater to the demands of the entire world. It must be acknowledged that the External Affairs Ministry has efficiently converted pandemic challenges into opportunities “to do away with what has not been working and adapt systems to a changed external environment”.<sup>52</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Undeniably, India has walked a fine diplomatic line during the global health crisis, and its diplomacy has ably tried to turn the pandemic into an advantage for New Delhi’s leadership to be felt globally. This is not to discount the enormity of the pandemic India is facing at home. Owing to the huge population and inadequate medical resources at its disposal, the days ahead will be tough for India. However, India has “managed to bring its domestic requirements and global responsibilities in sync”, and showcased how India is a silent global player with new ideas, enlightened leadership, and can be a balancer in the global balance of the power game. It would not be farfetched to vouch that India would be the linchpin for rebooting or resetting the global order and international cooperation in the post-pandemic phase.

The pandemic, in fact, is a testing time for the resilience of global powers and, in the process, most of them have faltered so far. Even if drastic a transformation in the world order in vogue may not occur immediately, the emergence of a global power is not an aberration. In all calculations, India has made its way through, especially during the pandemic. India has arrived as a formidable power in the world that the pandemic has just reshuffled, or is in the process of overhauling. It is expected that India’s position in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member during 2021-22 will be utilized tactfully to fructify its clarion call for ‘human-centric globalization’ – a new form of globalization, which is based on fairness, equality, and humanity in the post-Covid world – and its new orientation for a reformed multilateral system (NORMS) to sustain its arrival.

#### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> “Historian Hal Brands on COVID-19’s effect on world order”, at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/historian-hal-brands-covid-19s-effect-world-order/>, 9 September 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Sitakanta Mishra, “The Post-Pandemic World Order: Nine Pointers”, *IndraStra Papers*, 2020; Simon Tisdall, “Power, equality, nationalism: How the pandemic will reshape the

- world”, *The Guardian*, 28 March 2020, at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/28/powerequality-nationalism-how-the-pandemic-will-reshape-the-world>; Kurt M. Campbell and Rush Doshi, “The Coronavirus Could Reshape Global Order”, at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-03-18/coronavirus-could-reshape-global-order>
- <sup>3</sup> Daniel W. Drezner, “The Song Remains the Same: International Relations After COVID-19”, *International Organization*, 74, Supplement 2020, p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup> Richard Haass, “The Pandemic Will Accelerate History Rather Than Reshape It”, *Foreign Affairs*, 07 April 2020, at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-07/pandemic-will-accelerate-history-rather-reshape-it>
- <sup>5</sup> Josep Borrell, “The Post-Coronavirus World is Already Here”, European Council of Foreign Relations, April 2020, at [https://pdpuelibrary.informaticsglobal.com:2083/stable/pdf/resrep24722.pdf?ab\\_segments=0%2Fbasic\\_SYC-5187\\_SYC-5188%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A2b242afd17faf239586c2a6ab6a61a01](https://pdpuelibrary.informaticsglobal.com:2083/stable/pdf/resrep24722.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_SYC-5187_SYC-5188%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A2b242afd17faf239586c2a6ab6a61a01)
- <sup>6</sup> Rajesh Bansal, “Recovery, Resilience, and Adaptation: India from 2020 to 2030”, Carnegie India, September 2020, at <https://carnegieindia.org/2020/09/21/recovery-resilience-and-adaptation-india-from-2020-to-2030-pub-82721#:~:text=India%20must%20treat%20recovery%20from,problems%20could%20precipitate%20other%20crises.> p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup> Haass, n. 4.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> TRIP Snap Poll XIII, May 2020, at [https://trip.wm.edu/data/our-surveys/snap-polls/Snap\\_Poll\\_13\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://trip.wm.edu/data/our-surveys/snap-polls/Snap_Poll_13_Report_Final.pdf), p. 3.
- <sup>10</sup> Drezner, n. 3.
- <sup>11</sup> Erica Werner, et al., “Senate, White House reach \$2 trillion stimulus deal to blunt coronavirus fallout”, *The Washington Post*, 25 March 2020, at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2020/03/24/trump-coronavirus-congress-economic-stimulus/>.
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