

Post COVID-19: Projections on Social, Medical, Globalization, and Defense based Parameters

Authors

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Abstract

The world is experiencing a novel and deadly pandemic of COVID-19. The disease primarily manifested in Wuhan, China but has now spread all across the globe. This study is aimed at giving viable deductions regarding the Post COVID-19 changes that will occur in various aspects of global life. It highlights probable changes in post-Covid 19 world. Authors claim that it will produce inevitable long-lasting changes e.g. joblessness, social distancing and avoiding large scale social gatherings. This pandemic has made all countries realize their vulnerability due to the fragile state of their health sectors. Pandemic evinces that governments will introduce massive reforms in the health sector. It entails short as well as long term reforms. The present crisis of health will leave a mark on how we access and interact with the environment. It is premature to assume as to what the pandemic will entail unequivocally for defense sector, but the effect will be there.

Keywords: Defense, pandemic, COVID 19, social distancing, health, globalization, regionalization.

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Introduction

Many pandemics have occurred during human history on this earth. Each century brings with it a new and far deadlier strain for which we are not ready, both socially and economically. It is equally true that the time required for overcoming this pandemic both financially and socially will take a long time as well as diligent exertion. At present, the world is experiencing a novel and deadly ailment called COVID-19, or Coronavirus Disease as it is more colloquially known. The symptoms that this disease evinces include cough, shortness of breath, and fever with some more severely afflicted cases experiencing more grievous symptoms as well. These include diarrhea, loss of sensation of smell, and pain in the abdominal region (Coronavirus, 2020).

The disease primarily manifested within China in December of 2019. From there, it has spread all across the globe. The number of countries across which this virus has spread ranges into about 185 and it has afflicted more than 2.34 million subjects (Pandemic, 2020). The death toll is also staggering and more than 161,000 people have fallen victim to this disease to the date of writing this paper. However, many have recovered as well, and they are more than 602,000 in number. At present, the pandemic is still deadly and the number of affected is rising with each passing day. The death toll is also elevating at an alarming rate and there is a substantial need for practicing stringent and meticulous methods of caution to circumvent infection.

COVID-19: A Global Impediment

COVID-19 has created an atmosphere of emergency and unrest. It has coerced many of the affected countries to adopt a policy of isolationism. This policy, unfortunately, extends to encompass the export of supplies and materials of medical treatment. While it may seem like a workable solution: isolating one's nation from the rest of the world to deter proliferation, this should not be the case. According to Chicago Booth's Raghuram G. Rajan, Coronavirus is a global predicament. Ultimately, its resolution rests in cooperation on an international level (Rajan, 2020). COVID-19 will undoubtedly have a profound and irremovable effect on the various strata and dimensions of the World. There will be palpable transitions inset trends and inclinations which will be noted across integral fields and components of life. This will range from socio-cultural parameters to more nuanced ones like national policymaking and so on.

This study is aimed at giving viable deductions regarding the Post COVID-19 changes that will occur in various aspects of Global life.

Societal Changes

COVID-19 is quite like a tsunami due to its parallels in destruction and deterioration-based potential. That is why it has obscured foresight in a way that has made it impossible for a prediction to be made as to what the world will be like after a few weeks, let alone years. Still, deductions can be made about how COVID-19 will affect the world and the social lives of us humans. Society will be changed after the whole trend of COVID-19 concludes and these changes will be long-lasting indeed.

Social and Behavioral specialists are especially concerned with the post-COVID-19 scenario that this disease will entail. There is a consensus amongst them that there will most certainly be a change in the hygiene techniques and focuses amongst people due to COVID-19. There are many changes that the society will experience and is experiencing at present in this COVID-19 infested world. These changes started once the number of coronavirus cases started to increase. According to a study conducted by the University of Southern California, this pandemic has already created prominent changes in the lives and behavior of people all across the world (Svoboda, 2020).

Some of the major findings made can be enumerated as follows

- 85 percent of people reported that they were washing hands more frequently;
- 85 percent reported increased usage of hand sanitizers and using the latter more than once;
- 61 percent of respondents reported that they were stringently following the protocols of social distancing;
- 22 percent reported that they became prone to stockpiling essential goods like water and food.

These are just some of the many changes that started brewing as soon as the count of corona patients started to escalate. Some of these changes, that are still ongoing, are fathomable while some are not.

According to Valeria Martinez Kaigi, a Psychologist at Yale School of Medicine Health, many people have also started bracing themselves for possible unemployment as they might lose their jobs (Svoboda, 2020). They also face consternation over probable contraction of the virus. However, according to specialists and social scientists, these fears are borne from the current atmosphere of corona-based phobia. This type of fear-based modification can be sustained, however. That is why newly formed habits including an enhanced tendency towards hygiene, isolation, and hoarding of goods may mitigate in potency in a post-COVID-19 society. Still, these propensities will not disappear entirely since survivors of such a traumatic experience will most certainly develop a heightened level of vigilance. The latter will be embedded within them as a reflexive response which will be effective at dealing with any future viruses. However, the number of such subjects in a society will be considerably lower. Another shift will most certainly occur in the fabric of society post-COVID-19. This is the one about changing the trend of hygiene for the whole society irrevocably. For one, the common etiquette of covering one's mouth while coughing or sneezing is likely to stick. This is a manner that will be reinforced as a common courtesy in the post-COVID-19 world, which is a positive development indeed.

Many other habits that were adapted during COVID-19 are likable to continue as well. For instance, people will become more focused and vigilant in regard to disinfecting and cleaning

surfaces. This fact has been supported by many behavioral scientists such as Dr. Kate White, a Behavioral scientist affiliated with the University of British Columbia(Svoboda, 2020). While initially people will develop a more gregarious approach towards life and start meeting friends and family, it is a strong possibility that new modes of communication like video chats and conference room chats will continue to some degree. That is because this mode of communication has become a part of our professional and occupational structure. So, it is highly probable that the resulting society will be more reliant upon digital means of communication for official and academic purposes. That is because currently these means of video call communication are being utilized by universities, colleges, and faculty members from wide and diverse fields of specialization for teaching purposes. This is a trend that might just survive in a post-COVID-19 world, albeit in a considerably moderated manner. Still, the most pervasive and certain effect that will linger on after the world has moved on from COVID-19 is a realization that the world is utterly capricious.

The societal structure will also acclimate itself to the truth that life is fragile and fleeting. The Prospect Theory states that we tend to give more weightage to prospective losses than gains when trying to reach a decision/verdict. It also states that we tend to overestimate the chances of an adverse incident from occurring e.g. dying from a disease. In a post-COVID-19 society, this propensity to perceive a threat as being imminent is bound to be enhanced in certain individuals. There is also a possibility that some people might become more reclusive and introverted in post-COVID-19 society. They may resort to extreme measures to avoid social engagement to be safe in their bubble. This will also manifest in other forms as well such as refraining or ignoring social events and giving up on communal means of transportation such as a bus.

Religious tendencies will probably either increase or decrease in society. Many consider COVID-19 to be a test from God. They also consider a workable and potent countermeasure to be a staunch and unwavering belief in God. In some ways, this is responsible for them being so nonchalant about the potential dangers that this disease evinces. On the other hand, some of the more scientific individuals of the society are convinced of the virus's lethal capacity. They have emancipated themselves from the concept of this being a test of divine proportions. In a post-COVID-19 society, those who face and survive this disease will either become more religious while some might even lose their faith. This might be in large part due to the loss of a dear one to COVID-19 or deterioration inflicted upon their business or occupation as a ramification of the virus. Either way, there will be a transition in the rate of religiosity which will be attributed to COVID-19 (Svoboda, 2020).

Global Health Development in a Post COVID-19 World

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought about disruption in the worldwide health network in a way that was never seen before. The organizations responsible for combating diseases, health workers, social service providers and other ones that are responsible for public welfare have acquired distinction and prominence. This limelight comes at a terrible cost however, as the risk to their health and wellbeing has increased many folds as well. It does not help that matters like obstacles in supply chain logistics, financial duress, safety, etc. also complicates matters further for them.

This is the condition when viewed through the lens of short-term repercussions. The long-term effects of this pandemic and how they will reshape the health, medical, and developmental sectors is something that remains to be seen. However, deductions that are inundated with a degree of plausibility can still be made. The most prevalent one is that there will be a shift in priority amongst the global community in pertinence to public health and medical facilities. According to Jean Van Wetter, the Director-General at Belgium's Development Agency Enable, this pandemic will bring about an end to the paradigm of North and South (2020). It means that this paradigm will end and the 40 years domination of the conventional "Actors of Development" will deteriorate rapidly. He further elaborates by recounting that it wasn't that long ago that South Korea and China were the recipients of medical aid. At present, they are the ones helping countries like Italy and others from Europe to counter and oppose the abhorrent pandemic.

China is providing protective masks to the governments of European countries. This is quite similar to how European governments and the United States had been providing support to developing countries for so long. Also, we can see that the larger and well-equipped hospitals in Europe are soliciting donations from the public. It can also be seen that the MSF, or Doctors without Borders, is dispensing its operations in the middle of Brussels. This is incredible since this organization originally operated in countries overrun by conflict or suffering from poverty. *Viwanou Gnassounou is Assistant Secretary-General for Sustainable Economic Development and Trade at Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. He believes that the world will be driven onto a movement that will culminate in self-determination (Igoe & Chadwick, 2020).*

The present crisis of health will leave a mark on how we access and interact with the environment. It will also affect how we socialize and mingle with each other as well. Viwanou believes that there won't be a significant change in the level of formation and management of policies about cooperation in development (Igoe & Chadwick, 2020). The resulting economic derailment, temporary may it be, will do little to change the perspective of the development partners. This will extend to include the health sector as well and it is pertinent to mention here that this opinion was based on his earlier impressions from numerous regions. But this pandemic will certainly add to the drivers that are causing developing countries to more effectively and meticulously assess their determination in regard to their development track. It will also affect how the policies and partners responsible for the aforementioned development are chosen. It will not be sudden, but more exactly a gradual and progressive change.

This pandemic has made all countries realize their vulnerability, the fragile state of their health. This is further corroborated by the dependence that each country has had to accept on the world for satiating the upkeep of the common life standard. It has also made the role of international cooperation apparent in responding properly to a profound shock of exogenous proportions (Michael Igoe, 2020). Pre COVID-19, we saw that most hospitals didn't impart much emphasis when it came to tend to patients or increasing the number of beds. Some hospitals pushed for bringing about a reduction in the number of beds that they had on-site. The reasoning for this was the perception that with a shift in focus from acute to chronic care, there was a lesser need for

hospitals. The chance to provide care outside of the hospitals to patients in settings that they considered convenient was the main stimulus for this decision.

It is observed that the pandemic has demolished these earlier perceptions. Hospitals are becoming increasingly significant and people are clamoring for the addition of more beds. This pandemic has laid bare the realization that hospitals and pertinent capacity are integral for effectual public health maintenance. It is entirely possible that in a post-COVID-19 world, the health sector will receive the attention and focus that it so rightfully deserves. It is also possible that this current, egregious situation might sensitize governments and authorities to the gravity of the situation. However, it is also entirely possible that this might not be sustainable over the long-term period. The main stakeholders might grow complacent and fall back into the policy patterns of pre-COVID 19 world.

Telehealth, the deliverance of medical care on a remote level through technological means, wasn't a particularly hot topic. This program has received an influx of popularity and enhancement in the rate of usage during the present pandemic. The data shared by Obama's IT Coordinator shows that the rate of telemedicine usage increased tremendously in the period of Mid-March. While this may be a consequence of the current pandemic trepidation, the chances of this method of health care sticking around in a post-COVID-19 world are entirely possible as well. It will be dwindled in potency but will subsist to some level (David Shaywitz, 2020).

Globalization and Post COVID-19 World

The era of Globalization is under tremendous duress. This can be mainly attributed to open borders and value chains of the global sort. Protectionism change in climate, and populism are factors that are opposing globalization to quite an extent. The latest challenge to Globalization is this current COVID-19 Pandemic. Many are therefore inquiring whether if this pandemic is going to prove profoundly detrimental to economic globalization.

Localization in place of Globalization

There is a possibility that this pandemic will culminate in the collapse of global value chains. That is because the governments will start to take up policies of protectionism and will coerce companies to have their production factories moved closer to their indigenous region. This will be done to mitigate dependence on foreign suppliers. There will be a notable reduction in the rate at which companies take part in inter and intra-regional value chains. This outbreak of COVID-19 might potentially entail a negative impact that is parallel to the one brought about by the Financial Crisis of 2008. The latter showed that a grievous crisis can hurt the structure of Globalization. COVID-19 might evince a similar effect as well.

Before the financial crisis of 2008, globalization was flourishing. Global Value Chains' (GVCs) value-added activities of production were thriving at a much stronger level in contrast to the value-added production activities of the localized type. This showed that Globalization was certainly burgeoning but after the financial crisis, the growth of GVCs became considerably slower. It never managed to restore itself to the state that it was in before the crisis in question. There is a

chance that participation in value chains within inter-regional settings will decrease. That is because COVID-19 will hasten the process of decoupling at a far greater rate than the trade war. This will happen as businesses and countries ruminate about their chain of supply in the long run (Tan, 2020). It is also possible that the value chains of the intra-regional level will also be affected detrimentally. This may be the case in the European Union. According to Time Magazine, the free movement of people and commodities that acted as the supporting base for the European Union has been crushed. This is because the borders closed up and governments started accumulating medical commodities without any concern for their neighboring countries (McDonald-Gibson, 2020).

An example of this fact is that of Hungary's. The latter banned the export of hydroxychloroquine sulfate on the 25th of March, a component that is utilized in the production of drugs for treating coronavirus (Gergely Szakacs, 2020).

Regionalization in place of Globalization

This pandemic may exert an impact on the intricate inter-regional value chains that will be stronger in intensity as compared to the one it exerts on value chains of the intra-regional sort. This pandemic will probably entail in a potent process of Regionalization instead of bringing about the destruction of Economic Globalization. Phillippe Legrain is a senior fellow at the London School of Economics. He posits that COVID-19 could be the decisive point that stimulates businesses to shorten and reorganize their supply chains. This can be corroborated by the fact that US-based companies are moving their production units to Mexico and European countries to Turkey and Eastern Europe (Legrain, 2020).

The process of regionalization had already probably commenced about 2 decades ago. That is because there has been a spike in the number of agreements of new regional trade over the last 2 decades. The USMCA agreement between the US, Mexico, and Canada is a good example of this. The COVID-19 pandemic might enhance this process of trade regionalization. It is also possible that this pandemic ends up strengthening the European Union's economic independence related ambitions. It has already started undertaking endeavors for mitigating dependence on third countries in sectors of security, health, public order, etc. Von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, voiced concern about protecting their economic and security sovereignty amidst the stressful conditions of corporate and industrial assets is something that supports this fact (Union, 2020). Therefore, it is possible that COVID-19 would irrevocably alter economic globalization as regionalization and shorting of supply chains will occur as a ramification of the pandemic.

Defense and COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic most certainly entails an influence for ministries of defense around the globe. Still, is it possible for Defence ministries of this world to locate a viable and effective solution for reallocating military expenditures and resources? This is a question that only time will answer. The effect of Coronavirus is being felt tremendously all around the world. Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, France, etc. are facing this pandemic and many

predicaments have arisen as a ramification. They have also started facing immense delays in delivering a viable and effective solution for delivering plans in various sectors. These include defense, security, and foreign policy amongst others. National governments and Ministries of Defence will have to contend with the urgent and far-reaching ramifications that this pandemic will have. This especially includes the effect imparted upon their countries' expenditures on military and pertinent resources.

Changing Times

It is a definite and openly apparent fact that this Pandemic has affected the entire world's plans about Defense-related spending. Growth projections suffer from cutbacks and large portions of government finances are being utilized to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. According to Angel Gurría, the General Secretary of OCED (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) said that the scenario of slashing growth on a global scale by 1.5% for 2020 appears quite positive. He warned that there was no swift recovery of world recovery after this current pandemic (2020).

The true effects and economic repercussions of this pandemic will appear and be felt consummately in the years following 2020. This will happen when the expenditures of the crisis will be shown in the spending policy of the Government. Global GDP wasn't able to recover till 2009 after the Financial Crisis of 2007-08. It is pertinent to mention here that the largest cutbacks on defense budgets weren't brought into force until 2012 and 2013. The United States Defence expenditures equaled to about 1.55 Trillion Dollars in 2011. It took the US 5 years to recover and it was in 2016 that the country was able to regain this level of spending (1.56 Trillion Dollars)(Khattak, 2020).

The increases in the US budget for Defence in the form of core expenditures were the main driving force behind the growth that the country experienced in 2011. This increase was further strengthened by Overseas Contingency Operations funding. The latter was decreased after this peak because the level of commitment in Afghanistan and Iraq lowered considerably. It was only through the emerging trade in markets like China, India, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, and India that facilitated the recovery in spending by 2016(Khattak, 2020). The holistic expenses of NATO states began to elevate after 2016. Each member of the NATO states from Europe is reeling from the initial onslaught of COVID-19. Italy has so far weathered the worst of this impact and the fatality rate is very high there. Spain and France are also suffering and are being counted amongst the top five affected countries in the world. The Netherlands and United Kingdom look like prime candidates for the next five countries profoundly affected by COVID-19.

Long-term Effects

The effects of COVID-19 will be felt by defense ministries across the world for many years to come indeed. The trajectory that these effects will take shall be following several themes. The holding of present lines in defense budgets will become increasingly difficult even if NATO states go for 2% of GDP target for this purpose. That is because the GDP will be affected by the fiscal effect that this pandemic entails. This fall in GDP could also result in the majority of the NATO

member states ending up spending less on defense despite attaining the 2% target. Programs for the acquisition will also be affected due to coerced change inside industries of defense as the latter evince their challenges from the pandemic. There are other consequences to consider as well and their implications will be felt across the medium- and long-term periods. The two things that changed after the financial crisis of 2007-08 were perceptions about the threat and the resurgence of competition for power. They were greatly responsible for accentuating the recovery of defense spending in the latter half of the decade by member states of NATO. It is highly likely that defense budgets might receive protection even during this widespread pandemic. But it seems that the discourse about defense and security over the globe will inexorably be affected.

First of all, the budgets for procurement and roles of the military might very well be reexamined. This would include the extent to which the military will consider the task of social resilience to be relevant and significant and there most certainly will also occur a shift in priorities of defense. Or is it possible that funding for defense could be shifted towards other more social resilience-based endeavors? Armed forces would certainly prefer to maintain their capability as being first responders to any catastrophe or situation where they are prominent for their malleability and reach. Still, it is possible that such mindset and pertinent pressures of the budget could culminate in hard decisions on platform-based priorities, at least in the proximate term. Also, efforts for modernization in meeting the larger needs for deterrence will be negatively impacted in the context of NATO.

After the financial crisis of 2007 to 2008, the total expenses for defense were borne by expenditures in the Middle East and rising new markets which also facilitated global manufacturers related to defense. This time, however, it is possible that this will not happen and will be applicable at least over a short-term period. The lag in the growth of the economy will be widespread as a ramification of the pandemic's impact. A testament to this can be provided by the fact that the OCED lowered the projections for economic growth in prominent economies of Asia like Japan, China, India, and South Korea in March of 2020. Similarly, the Middle East's defense expenditures for the period between 2012 to 2015 increased at a rate of 12% every year in real terms because the price for a single oil barrel exceeded \$100. The resulting decline in prices of oil during the period between 2014 to 2016 entailed in most of the Arab states, seeking consolidation on a fiscal basis. Oil prices have now fallen to the lowest that they have ever been since the year of 2003. That is because major players like Saudi Arabia are still striving to bring balance to their budgets while the process of economic collapse continues around them. This will potentially lead to increased emphasis on frugality amongst the governments of states that produce oil.

Conclusion

It is premature to assume as to what the pandemic will entail unequivocally for ministries of defense. There is one thing that can be stated without a shred of doubt and that is that there will indeed be an impact and it will be monumental. It is inexorable that duress on funding will increase which in turn will further convolute various challenges. The greatest challenge that will be complicated by this pandemic's effects is the one related to assigning limited resources across a

threat spectrum that now expands from conflict between peers to a pandemic that can disrupt the fabric of whole societies (Barrie, 2020).

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