

THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND TURKISH POLITICS

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Abstract

The main issues addressed in this article will be how the current pandemic will conclude, what the consequences will be for the world and Turkish politics, and how will the pandemic will affect government actions as well as any changes caused. The article will argue that states, national and international organizations, and individuals will inevitably change their *hierarchy of priorities* eventually in search of a *new normal*. Moreover, although the outbreak does not necessarily have to lead to a new era, the article forecasts that a new era will begin characterized by an increase in public authority in politics and authoritarian tendencies. The influence of COVID-19 on the international system, global governance and cooperation, the rise of the nation-state, globalization, and strategic priorities will be discussed within the framework of these claims and axioms.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, politics, governments

Introduction

In the studies and evaluations conducted from now on, a distinction between pre and post coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak should be made. Although it may seem too early to predict to what extent this will happen, a common belief that the pandemic will be an important milestone in the history of mankind has already emerged. No viral outbreak has had such a global effect on any period of history. Therefore, in line with common claims, it is not reasonable to oppose assumptions that “nothing will be the same from now on” and that a “new normal” will appear. The main argument made about the assessments of the outbreak and its consequences will be based on these claims throughout the study. Accordingly, there will be no need to expect normalization of the current circumstances since the actions and measures taken so far have been intended to last for the medium- and long-term rather than the short term. Individual behavior and state policies reveal this. Although no one predicted the disaster would turn into a global pandemic at the beginning, current circumstances have forced everyone to think this way. The abundance of already existing literature on COVID-19 in almost every field is strong evidence supporting this view.

On the other hand, among all segments of society, questions about when and how the COVID-19 process will reach an end is at the top of the agenda. What will be the results of this global outbreak? What will be the consequences of COVID-19 for Turkish and world politics? Will it affect the steps that states take from now on, and if so, how? As such, dozens of critical questions are waiting to be answered driven by great curiosity. Strictly speaking, as the pandemic process is ongoing, it remains impossible to arrive at a single and precise answer to any of these questions. Yet, some predictions can be made. In line with these questions, this study intends to offer some explanations and predictions of these issues. This study aims to conduct an assessment of the positive and negative political repercussions of COVID-19 in Turkey and on a global scale. Remarks will also be made about what kind of transformations might take place. We have not yet been able to see precisely the direction the process has taken. However, rather than waiting for the end of the process and implementing the necessary policies, a more responsible attitude would be to evaluate the conditions we live in and present a projection for the future. We have chosen the second option in the study. Within this context, the political impact of COVID-19 will be addressed initially, and then an assessment of the future will be conducted. In all sections of the article, it will be claimed that COVID-19 constitutes a turning point in many respects. Moreover, states, national and international organizations, and individuals will be forced to change their *hierarchy of priorities* and many have even begun to do so in search of a *new normal*. In this study, claims

about evaluations of the pandemic end post-pandemic world will argue that nothing will be the same from now on, and a “new normal” will appear in global politics and in Turkey as it has already in many areas. Additionally, although the outbreak does not necessarily have to lead to a new era, the article forecasts that a new era will begin and that the impact of public authority in politics and authoritarian tendencies will increase. The influence of COVID-19 on the international system, global governance and cooperation, the rise of the nation-state, globalization, and strategic priorities will be examined within the framework of these claims and axioms.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the International System: The Continuing Increase of Uncertainty, Disorder, and Lack of Principles!

Almost everyone has agreed that the pandemic which arrived on the agenda of global politics in March 2020 has become a milestone for the international system. The international system is typically the place where states break free from all kinds of normative values and their real faces can best be seen. For this reason, it deserves to be scrutinized. However, it should be noticed that changes and structural transformations in the international system are not new phenomena that emerged from the outbreak. In recent years, some norms from the past as well as the principles, customs, and practices of international law that have been compromised have also been violated. As many authors have stated for a long time, a period characterized by an increase in *uncertainty, disorder, and lack of principles* in world politics has begun (Güder et al., 2020, p. 165; Kut, 2019). Although the process stated above can be technically dated back to the collapse of the Soviets, it would actually be more appropriate to start with the September 11 attacks. In recent years, this process has become much more prominent, especially following the 2008 economic crisis when right-wing and populist leaders began rising to power one after another. For example, it is evident that the President of the United States (US) Donald Trump has violated international law tens of times since 2017 when he was elected president. Among these, most involve Trump’s decisions that have violated the international status of the Syrian Golan Heights and Jerusalem. Furthermore, despite the decision of the Russian Federation during the USSR period and the signing of the Budapest Memorandum, another striking example was the annexation of the Crimean Autonomous Republic of Ukraine in 2014 which ignored international law and the reactions of society. However, the countries that committed these violations are not merely limited to the USA and Russia. In addition, the majority of Israel’s actions in Palestine have been implemented by violating international law with the support of the USA in all circumstances.

Although there have been many violations in the past, explicit and imprecise violations have not dominated the international political agenda as they have in the past decade. In particular, global powers often do not refrain from interfering with other states' internal affairs, ignoring international law and customs. Accordingly, the state of *uncertainty, disorder, and lack of principles* in the international arena is expected to become increasingly prevalent, not only during the current period but also following the COVID-19 pandemic. Obviously, this situation is likely to continue unless a new agreement is reached by global actors about the functioning of the system (Güder, 2020). The acknowledged principle of "equal sovereignty" which forms the basis of binary and multiple relations remains an abstract principle. Many of the nation-states on a global scale face consistent challenges from global states due to the uneven conditions between them and their existing situations. Under these circumstances, the principle of "equal sovereignty" or "reciprocity" guaranteed by international law for all states is not enforced automatically. On the contrary, the sovereign states mentioned above intend to gain more power and increase their reputation for repression among their interlocutors to consolidate their "equally sovereign" positions. Nevertheless, ensuring stability in the international system, preventing arbitrary behavior by powerful countries, and enabling the operation of international law can be accomplished through international activism, since pressure from the international community cannot be ignored by any global power forever.

As a member state of the international system, Turkey must take a considered position in the current situation. It can be clearly observed that the international community remains incapable of eliminating the ongoing uncertainty, disorder, and lack of principles. Accepting that the principle of reciprocity between states and international law has been eroded does not accord with Turkey's claims from the past or present. In the meantime, Turkey has a historic responsibility to adopt a new approach to the functioning of the international system without surrendering to realpolitik. To disentangle from the negative effects of *uncertainty, disorder, and lack of principles* within the international system, the most plausible way for Turkey to assess the *balance of power* will be to maintain its position under the same institutional/organizational roof as its established allies. As an ongoing member of the UN, NATO, OIC, Kuala Lumpur Summit, and other regional and international organizations, Turkey will secure an advantage by taking a more active role in these organizations (Güder et al., 2020, pp. 165-66). Thus, Turkey will have an opportunity to disentangle from the pressure exerted by its inattentively preserved national interests in the international system.

From a different standpoint, “the world is bigger than five” discourse that Turkey has adopted in recent years aims to expose the unfair functioning of the international system and accelerate the quest for a “fairer” new world system. Issues rarely brought to the agenda normally could achieve wider coverage in a situation that threatens all humanity, such as the COVID-19 outbreak. Although “the world is bigger than five” could not expand beyond mere discourse in inadequate circumstances, if Turkey establishes strong and persistent relations with countries suffering from similar situations including India, Iran, South Africa, and Brazil, the scene at stake could become more influential. In this way, the structure, functioning, and legitimacy of the international system could be questioned more than ever. Moreover, it is notable that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is responsible for international security and world peace, does not make any effort to fulfill its responsibilities although this is not discussed aloud. However, as there are so many established institutions and policies, the transition to a new order and the expected radical changes in the system will not be easy. At the end of the day, more time is needed to see who will gain from the current situation and who will lose (Wintour, 2020; Sarıbay, 2020).

COVID-19 and Global Governance and Cooperation: International and Regional Organizations Interrogated!

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only led to critical questioning on an individual basis but also provided an opportunity to reevaluate state administration and world politics. In terms of global governance and global cooperation, the presence and functions of international and regional organizations have been further questioned during the post-COVID-19 process. It is quite obvious that there is a weakness of governance in terms of global institutions (Babacan, 2020). However, the situation remains at the questioning phase. At the end of the process, these organizations are predicted to continue to consolidate their power, rather than weakening. Yet, the fact that crises like COVID-19 cannot be managed by any country alone has become apparent. Today, in a world where the capital flow is so complex, the transboundary dimension of the issue needs to be taken into consideration. A solution where regional alliances and international institutions/organizations remain weak or do not exist does not seem to be realistic. Our argument will be clarified with reference to the World Health Organization (WHO), which is a global organization, and the EU, which is a regional organization, as detailed examples.

The WHO in the days of Pandemic: A Scapegoat (?)

With COVID-19, the importance of global governance has been recognized once again. As the problem is global, local solutions and overcoming the problems on a local basis will not be sufficient to ensure the stability and security of the international system. Even the US as a superpower does not seem to be contributing to a solution to this global crisis. Furthermore, the superpower was far too late taking the necessary precautions and unable to solve even its own problems. This situation indicates inability and will eventually open the USA's world leadership up for discussion. According to *Worldometers* a website providing real-time statistics on the COVID-19 pandemic, the US is the country most affected by COVID-19 with 1,601,466 cases and 96,075 deaths as of May 21, 2020. Over 5.1 million cases worldwide and deaths exceeding 332,000 indicate that global governance is needed more than ever (Worldometer, 2020).

The following remarks about the US as a superpower provide significant clues about the cause of the crisis of global governance and is also linked to the COVID-19 process. Strictly speaking, it is a fact that the US as a global leader has had a serious impact on the emergence of such uncertainty and disorder in the international system. While the Washington administration has not recognized any boundaries when using superpower advantages on a global scale, it has always been hesitant to bear the burden of global problems. When global problems emerge the country avoids fulfilling its responsibilities as a global superpower by pursuing the "interest of the American nation" only. The US has revealed its approach by not signing the Kyoto Protocol and now freezing its funding to the WHO. The world leadership of the US has ramped down dramatically with the motto "America First".

During the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the presence of WHO, which is affiliated with the United Nations and conducts international studies on public health, has become more questionable. The WHO's performance during the pandemic has not painted a promising profile and many contradictions and question marks surround their processes. Since COVID-19 is a health issue, the WHO has quite rightly dominated the agenda in the eyes of world public opinion (Kalm, 2020). Although criticisms of the organization's shortcomings and its reaction to the pandemic have been reserved, the WHO's actions have been limited by its current structure and functioning. Moreover, the assessments and criticisms made have not been related to the *raison d'être* of the organization.

The US has had a serious impact on criticisms of the organization. For that very reason, the tender spot of the issue is here. The Trump administration has made critical failures in

managing the COVID-19 process and taking the necessary precautions. It is guilty of a series of shortcomings in its fight against the pandemic. Consequently, Trump has been subjected to intense criticism by American public opinion. The US administration did not have much difficulty finding scapegoats to blame for their failure to overcome the pandemic in the upcoming presidential elections. In line with this, the US has blamed the People's Republic of China because it failed to warn the world about the outbreak earlier, and has also blamed the WHO claiming that the organization is pro-Chinese. By doing this, the US has tried to deflect the criticisms directed at the government. The Trump administration has distracted attention from its territory both to cover up its loss of reputation and to calm the American public. For now, the US appears to have been successful.

To my knowledge, such criticisms of WHO are based on the US' long-running struggle against China's rise. China being well aware of the situation pledged \$30 million in extra funds shortly after the US stopped funding the WHO (Shih, 2020). Nevertheless, the claim that China concealed the pandemic from the world must be followed up by the international community. As soon as the pandemic is over, many countries, especially the US and European countries, are expected to confront China's communist regime by holding China responsible for the outbreak. However, pressure against China should be applied without political considerations.¹ Any kind of unfounded claim against China will eventually help China to manipulate the outcome.

Therefore, caution about criticisms of the WHO is advised because it involves political considerations. When problems are global, local solutions will fail to achieve the required results. For this reason, it would be more appropriate to ensure that institutions lacking legitimacy become more functional through structural changes rather than identifying them as totally dysfunctional due to their deficiencies. After the epidemic, all states will probably reach a common agreement to ensure that organizations like the WHO become more functional initially. Countries like Turkey that have been more successful at managing the outbreak have a more constructive approach to the organization, rather than being critical. By the same token, unlike global powers, Turkey as a mid-sized actor trying to be a global power by making assertions on a global scale, and therefore bears much more responsibility in the fight against the disaster. Many countries demanded medical equipment assistance from Turkey. Although it was not expected, Turkey sent medical equipment and healthcare

¹ China's deputy ambassador Chen Wen told BBC that it has rejected the independent inquiry because it was politically motivated and would divert China's attention from fighting the pandemic (Landale, 2020). Hence, I am of the opinion that China will not give a green light to such an inquiry.

products to ten countries, including those with highly developed industries.² Furthermore, with its strong health infrastructure, Turkey's leading role in the possible reform of the WHO will improve its credibility in world politics. In a nutshell, if questioning the international organizational governance of the issue is confined only to the WHO, it will invite similar disasters in the future. Moreover, uncertainty about the future and the crisis that turned daily life upside down has a high probability of affecting other areas in the future beyond being a health risk. The international community will face several risks after the pandemic. To overcome these, a common agreement must be reached and constructive contributions ensured. For example, in the near future, no international organization/country will be able to guarantee that a global cyber threat will not cause an economic crisis, and no country will be able to overcome it alone, as in the case of COVID-19.

The EU Failed to Manage the Crisis: Necessary Notes Have Been Taken!

First seen in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the next epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic became Europe. EU countries, which were unprepared for the pandemic, like many other countries, have failed to manage the situation. Not only the member states but also the EU has failed to contain the struggle against the pandemic, despite all its institutions, which have not been able to provide the necessary support to member states. Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the EU Commission, admitted this fact at the General Assembly of the European Parliament during the most intense period of the crisis in Italy. Stating that no one was really ready for the outbreak, Leyen said: "Too many were not there on time when Italy needed a helping hand at the very beginning. For that, it is right that Europe as a whole offers a heartfelt apology" (Çetin, 2020). By the same token, it has been observed that EU member states did not act in solidarity with the "European spirit" between themselves. At the beginning of the pandemic in countries such as Italy and Spain, and later the United Kingdom and France, the EU had difficulties providing basic medical and healthcare equipment despite the highly standardized regulations implemented in almost all cases. During the days the pandemic hit the peak, very little evidence emerged of positive cooperation and solidarity in the EU. For this reason, during the days the pandemic was most severe in Europe, many analysts began to make negative judgments stating that the EU vision and ideal had collapsed (Babacan, 2020). European writers and American media who are against EU integration did not miss the opportunity to express a pessimistic attitude toward the issue. Questions about the approach the Union will take to repair the serious damage caused by the pandemic have been asked

2 As of April 14, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated that Turkey delivered aid to 34 countries including England, Italy, and Spain and 104 countries requested medical supplies. (Baykan ve Allahverdi, 2020).

frequently. So, what is really the case? It will be necessary to take the claims made above seriously and elaborate on them.

As it can be seen from the framework established above, it is as plain as a pikestaff that the EU could not manage the crisis in question. Across different platforms, EU officials have already highlighted their incapacity to manage. Since it was founded after World War II, the Union has encountered its most difficult days during this pandemic and had not encountered such a crisis before. The most recent viral outbreak in Europe was *the Spanish flu* that emerged between 1918-1920 infecting more than 500 million people and causing the deaths of 50 to 100 million people in 18 months. It was the most severe pandemic ever recorded in the history of humankind (Rosenwald, 2020). As soon as this crisis passes, the EU will draw a road map to prevent similar crises in the future as the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stated in *The Guardian* (Sánchez, 2020; Sarıbay, 2020). Unlike disaster scenarios, a new era will be introduced where cooperation and solidarity constitute the cornerstone/benchmark of European agreements between EU members. There has never been a reason to question the legitimacy of the Union, yet instead of protecting the Union's own interests, something beyond "European solidarity" occurred. EU countries had to act according to their national interests. As stated above, COVID-19 has instigated a process that has increased uncertainty and disorder in world politics and the international community. In this "chaotic environment", it is only by maintaining the existence of a strong Union that EU countries will be able to protect their interests and security at the highest level. Despite all the uncertainty in the international system, the EU is a safe and protected zone for member countries. Hence, the EU's records of its shortcomings and incapacities will enable members to investigate ways to compensate for them after the pandemic at the first opportunity. It is estimated that the Union will consolidate its power at the end of this process. The EU has already signaled that the policies followed in the future will change. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said: "Some countries, such as Spain and Italy were hardest hit by the virus. In this regard, we need to find common answers. Europe is more important than it used to be in such a situation". As such, she stated that the fight against the pandemic will be a stress test for the EU presidency of Germany, which begins in July 2020, and that social solidarity will be increased (Başay, 2020). She also expressed similar statements from officials in EU institutions and stated that they are on the verge of proposing key economic packages for the normalization of life after the pandemic.

Briefly, due to the global governance and cooperation required after COVID-19, it seems very unlikely that these organizations will face a serious legitimacy crisis in the future, as

both the WHO and EU case studies have shown. Undoubtedly, institutions such as the UNSC and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will also need to be discussed in detail over a short period of time. It is clear that the UNSC as stated above, will face a much more difficult process in the future than in the past. The IMF will have to dominate the agenda in the near future due to the high number of countries affected by the pandemic and the serious economic damage the crisis has caused. Many countries will have to reconsider their relationship with the IMF although this does not apply to Turkey yet. According to IMF President Kristalina Georgieva, as of 23 March, nearly 80 countries have requested economic support to fight COVID-19 (Elliott, 2020).

The Return of The Holy State (?): States as The Winners of The Pandemic (?)

Along with COVID-19, nation-states have been engaged in a serious fight against the pandemic within the bounds of their capacity. Although citizens have been generally satisfied with this approach, the fact that the state has had such a strong presence generated some concerns, which will need to be considered after the pandemic. How will individual freedom and security be balanced when the reputation of the nation-state has been eroded by globalization for the past twenty years? Will this cause a reconsideration of national borders? These are just two of the questions waiting to be answered.

Since the outbreak, almost all segments of society have been affected economically in addition to people's health. In particular, dependence on government support packages has risen among people with an income below a certain level and those running small and medium-sized enterprises. During these corona days, the two issues that citizens consider most are the health system and economic conditions. Everything else is of secondary importance. In this respect, it is clear that security (including food, health, and cybersecurity) outweighs freedom for most individuals. What is interesting is that citizens (either liberal or conservative) determinedly demand state support for the process. Pamuk reminds us that in the past, it was not usual to appeal for the intervention of state power so intensely (Pamuk, 2020). It appears that nation-states have been waiting for this *way of performing actions* for a long time, and it seems likely to continue after COVID-19. The state administrations are entering a new era where authoritarian tendencies will increase, especially decision-making processes. Fundamentally, this process does not necessarily entail authoritarianism itself. However, tendencies in this direction began long before the pandemic as mentioned above. Whether governments succeed or fail in managing this process, the course of events indicates that the power of public authority will scale up. Apparently, after COVID-19, globalists, pro-nation-state and populist movements will be the main actors in the new power struggle (Kalm, 2020).

In the short term, the nation-state has claimed its position against globalization. Ultimately, however, it has become evident that even the most liberal states will approach issues from the perspective of security or display authoritarian tendencies. In addition, states are predicted to continue as the main actors in the international system by becoming even stronger.

COVID-19, Globalization Debates and Strategic Priorities: It is Too Early to Make Radical Judgments!

It is noticeable that precise and assertive sentences have been expressed frequently in almost every field since the COVID-19 pandemic. Among these, the most common is the claim that globalization will decline. Such assertive judgments and generalizations arise from the process we have been navigating. Analytical thinking skills become weakened by increased existential life concerns during times of crisis (Bozkurt, 2020).

Judgments of globalization have reflected a downward trend in overall globalization discourse over a long period, although no such decrease had been identified in its institutions and processes previously. Since COVID-19, debates about globalization have escalated as they did in the 1990s and 2000s. The most outstanding feature of COVID-19 is that it is a global pandemic that will cause a lot more losses due to globalization. Cities with the heaviest toll during the outbreak are those characterized by the most intensive globalization. However, there has been a dramatic decrease in current data (flight numbers, import-export figures, human mobility, capital circulation, etc.) that monitors globalization. As mentioned above, it is explicit that states will follow more protective and strict procedures in areas such as food distribution, energy supplies, transportation, and cybersecurity. Nevertheless, following this short-term decline in globalization it will at least resume from where it was in the medium to long-term, and for some authors, it is likely to intensify and deepen (Çemrek, 2020: 5). As the German sociologist Ulrich Beck stated, globalization is an inevitable and irreversible process like modernization (1992, p. 79). Just like when it began, globalization is not a choice but a necessity that will entail the *securitization* of each state's products and services which will differ from one country to another. All remaining forms of relations will resume. Just as no country will be able to overcome global problems alone, nor will it be able to supply the products and services it needs independently. Briefly, the question of whether globalists or nationalists will win during the post-COVID-19 era will lose its meaning to a large extent according to the standpoint adopted in this paper. As Atılı expressed, "Globalization is currently in an intensive care, but when it is discharged, it will be stronger and get rid of the problems arising not only from the virus but also from the issues weakened its immune system before the virus." (2020, p. 55).

Moreover, COVID-19 has changed the definition of risk. Establishing a relationship between the coronavirus pandemic and Beck's concept of a "risk society" enables us to understand the role played by globalization during the emergence and spread of the outbreak. The concept of a "risk society" proposed by Beck has been used frequently recently to comprehend the problems of today's modern societies and offer solutions. The main reason Beck's concept has found favor is that it identifies potential risks that will affect the daily life of individuals in many respects (Kaya, 2020; Erşen, 2020, p. 58). Specifically, the author's risk society conceptualization seems similar to the threat we face today with COVID-19. The danger of the risk society proposed by Beck exists on a global scale and affects a wide range of people. It stems from random, unconscious, and uncontrolled modernization in its most advanced form. The risks are uncertain, unforeseen, and unpredictable, and it is quite difficult to take measures against unknown risks. Again, according to the author, although the risks (just like post-corona) occur in certain geography, they will spread to the whole world and affect everyone. Interestingly, the implementation of scientific, technological, social, and economic developments that have emerged in industrial society without questioning, and the risks fed by the lack of authority and control, will eventually have a boomerang effect on those who have created them and benefited most. However, what the author calls "self-reflective modernization" consists of efforts to overcome the risks and threats at stake and raise awareness of their effects (Beck, 1992, pp. 21-22, 27).³ In the meantime, changes in nation-states' *strategic priorities* and *new risk* definitions should not be underestimated. As these issues are much-debated topics during these corona days, their importance should be better understood. States listed certain products and services using the labels "safety" and "priority" before the pandemic. Some laid more emphasis on "energy safety" as key, while others paid more attention to "data and cybersecurity" as more substantial. Due to the nature of the pandemic and the challenges it poses, a new period will be experienced where new topics are taken under the security umbrella and priorities are revised. Revisions will be made in the liberal economic mindset and the ideas of Adam Smith that had initially persuaded global economies. The principle of *absolute advantage* that motivates each individual/company/state to produce products and services that are better and bigger will also be revised. Seeing the COVID-19 pandemic clearly shows us that the production or supply of a product is associated with a matter of life or death beyond profit and loss. Accordingly, health, food, and cybersecurity issues have begun to dominate the list of priorities of all states without exception. Likewise, countries that survived COVID-19 with the least damage are not the more industrially prosperous and more developed states but those with the strongest health,

3 For detailed information, see (Beck, 1992).

food, and cybersecurity infrastructure instead. To illustrate, countries far ahead of Turkey in terms of economic growth and financial development indicators such as the US, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy all fell well behind Turkey during the outbreak. Contrary to expectations, Turkey's aid to these countries must be highlighted for a better understanding of the issues previously discussed.

Evaluation and Future Projections

The new type of coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 and became a global pandemic. After influencing the whole world, all existing agendas became of secondary importance. Almost no one was able to recognize controversial issues of global politics during the pre-COVID-19 era, the complexities of which have been exposed by the COVID-19 humanitarian disaster. Hence, the pandemic has had many implications and will continue to do so. Particularly, it has instigated a process where the future has become uncertain and *normal* life has been reversed. Thus, it has had a serious impact on global politics and the international system. The approaches and capacities of global powers and global actors during the pandemic will be decisive for the post-corona world. Discontent based on uncertainty, irregularity, and lack of principles (*stemming from anarchy*) in the international system will continue to escalate. Yet, the current situation should *somehow* be concluded, and the new world order discourse needs to be configured. On one hand, the COVID-19 outbreak has hastened the process. Moreover, it has caused the structure, function, and legitimacy of the international system and US leadership, in particular, to be questioned more than ever. On the other hand, the US-China conflict is likely to escalate further and become more severe than before. The outcome of this conflict is likely to have significant implications for the functioning of the post-corona international system. Yet, breaking points in the system cannot be foreseen in the short term.

The role of global and regional organizations, which frequently top the agenda, should be a matter of serious discussion right after the pandemic. It has been forecast that they will eventually become more legitimate, powerful, and functional organizations that will react more quickly to changing events. On top of debates about this issue will be why current global cooperation models have failed. Once understood, humanity will be well-prepared for any global outbreak it may encounter later on. During an era characterized by intense global interaction, no other way forward can be expected.

It is quite clear that the international community will offload the blame on China for the pandemic. This move will be used to keep a tight rein on China, whether it is in charge or not.

It is difficult to foresee how China will eliminate this pressure. If China manages to persuade countries such as Russia and Iran of its innocence, it may overcome the outbreak with less damage. The truth is, although it will take time to investigate whether China was responsible for the spread of the outbreak, and its role in spreading the disaster to the world, the effort required to turn the crisis into an opportunity should be clarified immediately. China has to eliminate suspicions toward itself in the international community. If China is held responsible for the spread of the pandemic following investigations, hard times will be ahead for China. Particularly, China's alternative globalization pathways such as the Belt and Road Initiative may be interrupted (Temiz, 2020, p. 131). However, as China will not open its doors to international auditors, leaving China in a tight spot may stimulate a global conflict although this is a small possibility.

The most important change brought by the outbreak will manifest itself in priorities. All countries, without exception, will have to reconsider their security hierarchy in terms of what is necessary for their safety. Health services, food distribution, and cybersecurity will be moved to the top of the hierarchy from the previously low positions they occupied. *Evaluation* of products and services apart from their capital value will be required. During these evaluation processes, an emphasis on state self-sufficiency and strong state themes will come to the forefront much more than previously. Nonetheless, a regression of trends toward globalization is not expected in the medium- and long-term. A much greater/stronger motivation/wave than the COVID-19 outbreak is needed to reverse our journey along the river of time.

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