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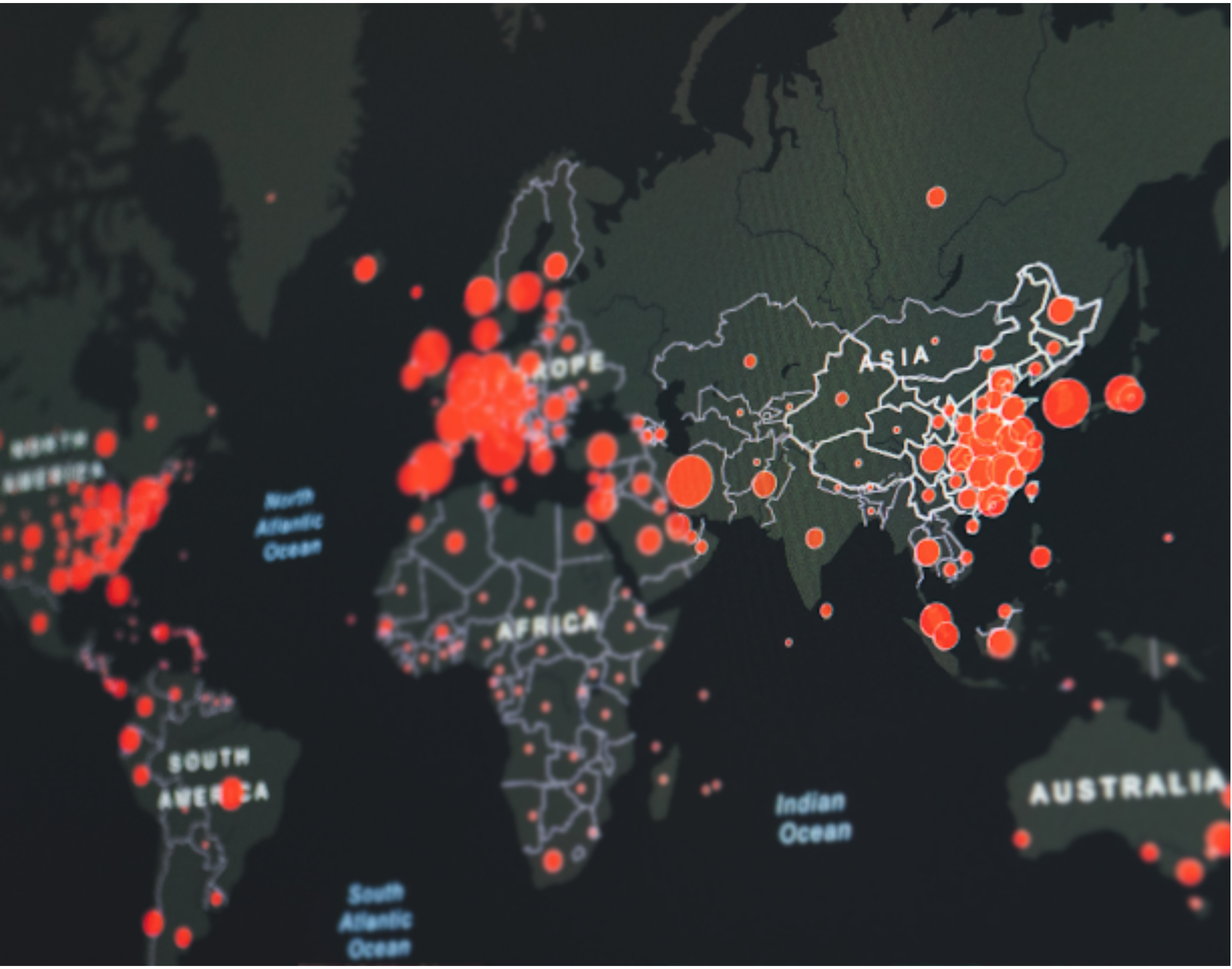
EAST ASIA IN THE POST COVID-19 WORLD



COVID-19 Policy Research Task Force
Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies
Johns Hopkins University SAIS
June 2020

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By COVID-19 Policy Research Task Force
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- **East Asia's successful COVID-19 response is accelerating its geopolitical rise.**

- **The heightened evaluation of South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore due to their effective pandemic responses and dynamic medical diplomacy, together with the enormous potential of Japan, carry potential global geopolitical implications.**

- **China has launched an ambitious medical diplomacy effort as its COVID-19 cases have declined, even as conditions elsewhere in the world have worsened. The PRC faces reputational problems and new obstacles to the Belt and Road Initiative, however, even as its investment opportunities in many nations deepen, relative to those of others still immersed in the pandemic.**

- **East Asia's centrality in the world medical supply chain may be reconfigured as Europe and the US legislate medical supply-side reforms, although production cost and market scale create obstacles to change.**

INTRODUCTION

East Asia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been the most effective of any advanced, industrialized region in terms of limiting the spread of the coronavirus and minimizing mortality rates. As of May 26, East Asia has suffered between 3 and 6 deaths per million, compared to 296 in the United States and 478 in Western Europe. Our April task force report identified and explained the public health policies, including contingency planning, rapidly scaled-up testing, and contact tracing, which have proven successful in much of East Asia. This follow-on report identifies and assesses the emerging implications of COVID-19 for East Asia's role in international politics.

Our bottom-line finding is that East Asia's successful pandemic response is accelerating the region's relative geopolitical rise. We also identify three themes within that general trend.

First, South Korea and Taiwan have won broad global recognition for their effective and democratic pandemic responses. Japan and Singapore have presented intriguing alternative variants. Combined with the intensive diplomatic efforts of these market-oriented East Asian actors, success in combating COVID-19 is enhancing their collective influence worldwide. It is also reviving sensitive questions about the proper role of Taiwan in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, and about prospects for regional stability in the future.

Second, China appears to have quickly contained the spread of COVID-19 in the PRC itself, and has won praise for its medical diplomacy initiatives. Lingering questions about the origin and early transmission of the coronavirus, however, complicate its ability to reap a geopolitical windfall. Moreover, the economic consequences of the pandemic raise questions about the debt sustainability of some portions of the Belt and Road Initiative, especially in Africa.

Third, COVID-19 has dramatized East Asia's pivotal role in worldwide medical product supply chains. This role could be reconfigured, however, as Western countries enact reforms to reduce their vulnerability to future medical supply interruptions, and as multinational firms diversify offshore supply chains from China toward other East Asian nations.

An Opportunity for East Asia's Middle Powers

- **South Korea's and Taiwan's pandemic policies and public health diplomacy are raising their international profiles.**
- **South Korea's public health capacity could serve as leverage to restart negotiations with North Korea, itself facing the COVID-19 challenge.**
- **Taiwan's success with containing COVID-19 is fueling calls to enhance the island's international standing, which could aggravate cross-strait and US-China relations.**
- **Singapore could serve as a mediator in deepening US-China tensions.**

South Korea and Taiwan rolled out rapid, technology-driven public health responses informed by their experiences with SARS and MERS, containing the first wave of the pandemic. Their fast response was notably compatible with their efficient bureaucracy and democratic politics, simultaneously pressuring and enabling them to begin lifting restrictions on everyday life. Elements of their responses, and those of Singapore, including digital contact tracing and drive-through testing, have been emulated elsewhere, drawing global attention and praise for the resilience of these "Asian Tigers". To capitalize on this goodwill, the Korean, Taiwanese, and Singaporean governments have leveraged their well-resourced domestic medical supply bases to transfer surplus personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 tests to countries in need. The geopolitical consequences of this crisis diplomacy rest on (1) the durability of public health policy influence, and (2) whether such influence can produce leverage on delicate pre-existing issues like alliance policy, negotiations with North Korea, and Taiwan's diplomatic isolation.

The rising credibility of South Korea and Taiwan, in particular, on public health matters, flows from the power of their policy examples and their capacity to distribute medical supplies. The slow pace of global recovery, coupled with uncertainty over the future persistence of the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, suggests the former could be enduring. The fact that a successful vaccine has never been created for any type of coronavirus and the sporadic reemergence of hotspots even in a country that, like South Korea, seemed to have controlled the coronavirus, suggest that the strengths of the Asian Tigers in high-quality medical supply may be of broader geo-economic importance for some time to come in the future.

South Korea's and Taiwan's steps to adapt everyday life to the outbreak serve as concrete, positive paradigms. On April 15, for example, South Korea successfully held national legislative elections with social distancing measures in place, recording an impressive voter turnout of 66.2 percent, Korea's highest in nearly three decades.[1] Western countries have also mirrored South Korea's protocols such as drive-through testing sites, as well as its rapid development and production of efficacious diagnostic tests. In Taiwan, life has largely continued on as normal during the crisis, with public venues, schools (with the exception of an extended New Year's holiday in February) and restaurants all remaining open.

COVID-19 dramatically revealed the impressive scope and flexibility of the medical supply industries in both South Korea and Taiwan, which both have been leveraged for diplomatic gain. Taiwan significantly expanded its production of protective masks, creating 92 production lines in 40 days. By late May, it had donated nearly 28 million masks to friendly nations throughout the world, with plans to donate over 20 million more as well as a broad range of other medical equipment.[2]

South Korea's early and massive expansion of test kit production has enabled it to engage in large-scale "test kit diplomacy", just as Taiwan is actively exporting high-quality PPE. In the first four months of 2020, South Korea exported $225 million worth of COVID-19 tests to 103 countries.[3] Seegene Inc., one of the largest producers of such tests, reported that its test exports increased from three million tests in April to over five million in May.[4]

In the long run, European countries and the United States appear poised to enact supply-side policies designed to boost domestic PPE and test production, as South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore themselves have done. Japan also will likely expand supply. Yet the reputation of the Asian Tigers as rapid, innovative, and high-quality suppliers at a reasonable cost is not likely to disappear. In addition, they serve as attractive alternatives over China.

COVID-19 has not radically transformed any of Northeast Asia's long-standing geopolitical problems. It may, however, add to the leverage of South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore in key regional stalemates. The possibilities vary, with issues ranging from US-South Korean host-nation support negotiations to Singapore's leadership role within ASEAN.

By itself, COVID-19 will not eliminate North Korea's perceived need for nuclear weapons nor produce a breakthrough in stalled nuclear negotiations. The resolution of doubts surrounding Kim Jong-Un's health and April missile tests suggest little deviation from past behavior. Depending on the spread of COVID-19 in North Korea, however, Pyongyang's domestic public health needs could provide an opportunity for South Korea, the US, or China to offer assistance to the DPRK as a catalyst for restarting negotiations. Pandemic-induced disruptions to military readiness and exercises on both sides of the 38th Parallel could also lower obstacles to a revived North-South dialogue.

Taiwan was remarkably successful in combating the initial spread of COVID-19: it suffered only 441 confirmed cases and 7 deaths during the first four months of the coronavirus outbreak while demonstrating maximum transparency and government accountability.[5] Early perception of the crisis in Wuhan, in large part due to the group of Taiwanese public health experts that visited in early January, may have accelerated Taiwan's response. The island's efforts have garnered respect from nations around the world and noticeably enhanced its global profile.

The COVID-19 crisis has, however, also escalated hostility between Taiwan and Mainland China, which still views the island's persistent standing in many international venues as both diplomatically unacceptable and domestically sensitive. Beijing's own controversial response to the coronavirus, along with its continued efforts to apply pressure on Taiwan and to exclude the island from multilateral response efforts, has provoked backlash both on the island and in much of the international community. By casting a global spotlight on Taiwan's rapid and effective pandemic response, the island's diplomatic isolation, and its role as a potential flashpoint in great power relations, are being substantially transformed by the COVID-19 crisis.

The growing international dispute over Taiwan's inclusion in the World Health Organization (WHO), provoked by COVID-19, has led to rising animosity in cross-strait relations. As the coronavirus has spread worldwide, global scrutiny of the WHO for its alleged pro-Beijing sympathies, combined with Taiwan's efficient and early containment of the coronavirus, has produced increasing criticism of Taipei's continued exclusion from the international health agency, even observer status.

In recent months, a number of nations and public officials have intensified calls for expanded Taiwanese representation in the WHO and elsewhere. In March, President Donald Trump signed into law the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act, which seeks to provide US backing for Taiwan's efforts to build and strengthen its own international ties.[6] Just this last month, 29 nations, including the US, Japan, and several major European allies, appealed, albeit unsuccessfully, for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Assembly.[7]

Beijing, however, has been resolute in its emphatic denials of Taiwan's legitimacy as an international actor. Even Taiwan's donations of protective masks, while well-received abroad, have aroused Beijing's ire and prompted the Chinese foreign ministry to accuse Taipei of "political tricks" designed to build support for WHO entry.[8] Tensions across the Taiwan Strait, exacerbated by COVID-19, have been even further intensified by the mid-May 2020 presentation of new national security legislation in China's National People's Congress and by a related worsening of unrest in Hong Kong.[9] By shifting the leverage and perceptions of various actors, ranging from China's leadership in Beijing to demonstrators in Hong Kong, COVID-19 has to a surprising degree begun to reconfigure the geopolitical map of Greater China.

In the long run, the COVID-19 pandemic cannot easily end Taiwan's diplomatic isolation, however much it may lead to an increase in hostilities with Beijing and at least a temporary strengthening of ties with the US and a number of other Western democracies. Despite increasing support from some powerful nations, the island's path towards greater diplomatic recognition remains fraught with obstacles. Many countries are reluctant to take a position on the island's controversial status, and when in doubt, will likely side with Beijing out of political prudence. ASEAN nations, for instance, have largely declined to support Taiwan's inclusion in the World Health Assembly.[10] Meanwhile, cross-strait relations will undoubtedly continue to be tense, as the COVID-19 crisis has sown deep distrust across the Taiwan Strait that will not easily be overcome, and which increased US antagonism toward Beijing will not dispel.

One little-noticed but possibly important actor in the unsettling East Asian turbulence produced by the coronavirus is Singapore. The tiny city-state, with its ethnic-Chinese majority population and leadership role in ASEAN, has both powerful stakes in regional stability and powerful transnational networks, as well as medical-supply capabilities and a strong record in coping with COVID-19. It can potentially supply assistance to nearby states such as Indonesia and the Philippines that are more adversely affected by the coronavirus. It has occasionally played a key role since the 1970s in mediating both cross-strait and US-China relations and may be helpful as an informal mediator and interlocutor among rival parties once again.

China's Mixed Post-pandemic Outlook

- **Strict lockdowns enabled China to control its domestic caseload and minimize deaths.**
- **China has launched an extensive global health diplomacy campaign in the face of severe public relations challenges.**
- **The Belt and Road Initiative faces COVID-19-induced financial headwinds in Africa, but Chinese economic interdependence with central and Eastern Europe, as well as the Mediterranean, looks set to deepen.**
- **Investments in "new infrastructure" like renewable energy and 5G will be key to sustaining an economic recovery.**
- **Global US-China accommodation is necessary.**

China, the first major nation to confront COVID-19, has successfully emerged from the pandemic. It has, to be sure, sustained substantial economic damage from its regional lockdowns and other stringent measures, resulting in a 6.8% GDP contraction in the first quarter of 2020.[11] In mid-May, Prime Minister Li Keqiang announced that the PRC would not set an annual GDP target for 2020, given persistent uncertainties about prospective economic performance. China is, however, months ahead of the US and Western Europe in suppressing the coronavirus—a development with potentially important global implications. The confidence of PRC leadership is further enhanced by seemingly broad domestic support for its extreme anti-coronavirus measures.

Despite the emergence of some new COVID-19 cases in China, including clusters of infection popping up in Wuhan, as well as Heilongjiang and Jilin Provinces among others, strict lockdowns have kept the PRC's COVID-19 death rates low and broadly comparable to those of capitalist Northeast Asia. One notable aspect of China's response has been the extensive use of digital tools in combating the coronavirus. For example, two new Wuhan hospitals with 2,600 beds were built within 12 days through industrial internet collaboration of hundreds of building information modeling designers across the country.[12] While the number of infected people skyrocketed in European countries and the US, China has used its huge medical supply base to engage in "mask diplomacy", supplying large amounts of PPE and testing kits while also dispatching Chinese medical staff abroad.

International criticism of Beijing's perceived lack of transparency regarding the coronavirus' origins and initial spread, however, has left China with major external public relations problems, contrasting to the more favorable view of Beijing's response within China itself. Relations with the US, already threatened by persistent strategic mistrust, have deteriorated since the COVID-19 pandemic began, in a cascading, interactive vicious cycle. The US has decided to leave the WHO over alleged favoritism toward China, cast suspicion on the role of a Wuhan laboratory in initiating the outbreak, and accused China of opportunistic militarism and intimidation of Taiwan.[13] Assertive Chinese crisis diplomacy has also complicated ties with core EU countries, especially in Western Europe. China has also faced backlash for inadequate quality control of its medical exports. Spain, for example, reported Chinese testing kits having 30% accuracy rates dramatically lower than the expected 80%, with nearly 60,000 kits reporting false positive COVID-19 cases.[14]

On the positive side, China reacted much faster than the EU in implementing its "mask diplomacy" initiatives in Europe. China responded particularly smoothly to BRI partner countries like Greece, Portugal, and Italy. China was, for example, the first country to ship ventilators to Italy. While the EU struggled to coordinate a response, China was proactive in sending PPE, test kits, and medical personnel to several other European nations, including France, Spain, Serbia, Greece, and the EU as a whole. China is also systematically promoting an expanded "soft" infrastructure in the health-care area as the pandemic continues, by reiterating its proposal for a "Health Silk Road", originally proposed at the 2017 WHO summit.

Economic ties across the continent are also deepening, with the COVID-19 crisis reinforcing prior trends. The number of trans-Eurasian freight trains has increased massively over the past several years, from 308 round trips in 2014 to over 8,000 trips in 2019.[15] COVID-19 has led shipping companies to rely even more on trains for shipping than on sea or air due to higher prices and logistical interruptions. China Railway Corporation, which operates all of China's trains, recorded an unprecedented 976 cargo trips in April, a 47% jump in operation compared to the previous year.[16] This acceleration of transcontinental rail traffic reinforces Chinese mask diplomacy, which is also intensifying. Deepening Sino-European interdependence thus appears to be one emerging geo-economic consequence of COVID-19.

With the global economy in freefall due to COVID-19, however, one potentially serious complication to China's global economic diplomacy is the growing inability for developing countries to repay their debts to the PRC for helping finance their respective infrastructure projects under the BRI program. China's BRI lending since 2013 totals almost $500 billion, with loans to Africa comprising roughly one-third of that amount. On April 15, China signed onto a G-20 plan to freeze bilateral loan payments, but Pakistan and several African BRI partners have started lobbying the Chinese government for debt relief.[17]

This debt-relief movement could lead to project delays and possible conflict between China and some BRI partner countries, especially in the developing world. Furthermore, China's pandemic diplomacy has also complicated relations on the perceived reliability of China in the eyes of multilateral and EU organizations. China will no doubt need to begin thinking more carefully and strategically about lending for future BRI projects.

While China's economy shrank dramatically in the first quarter of 2020, it is reopening faster than the West, and rebounding quickly. In April, the IMF projected strong bounce-back growth of 9.2% in 2021.[18] Yet long-run obstacles remain. Fixed asset investment remains the largest component of Chinese GDP at just over 40% of total expenditure.[19] Debt-financed expansion of this sector helped power China's recovery from the Global Financial Crisis, but left its corporate sector with a heavy debt load. In 2019, China's total debt burden (private plus public debt) hit 300% of GDP, similar to developed country levels.[20]

Before the pandemic, the government was trying to rebalance the economy away from investment and towards private consumption. These concerns may explain why China's COVID-19 economic stimulus measures so far amount to only 4% of GDP, compared to the 8-10% of GDP packages announced by the US and Western European countries.[21] Announced measures include tax cuts, state bank lending rate cuts, and the distribution of "consumption vouchers" with expiration dates and other stipulations in lieu of cash. Nevertheless, China's growth has become increasingly dependent on stimulus over the past decade and other sources of demand — private consumption and exports — are vulnerable to pandemic-induced shocks. China, like other major nations, may struggle to return to its pre-crisis growth trend in the absence of further measures.

The destabilizing effects of the COVID-19 outbreak could also reinforce recent steps by foreign companies to diversify their supply chains away from China, despite dense local supply networks and skilled workforces, in part due to political pressure from their home countries. The Japanese government, for example, has appropriated $2.2 billion to assist Japanese companies with this exit process.[22] Meanwhile, senior US officials, such as White House advisors Larry Kudlow and Peter Navarro, have called for diversifying medical supply chains, and reducing America's dependence on China for essential medical goods.

One bright spot for the PRC is that China's COVID-19 stimulus has focused on "new infrastructure" sectors like 5G and renewable energy technologies. Indeed, President Xi Jinping is backing a $1.4 trillion six-year plan to invest in such new forms of infrastructure.[23] Out of the top 13 companies worldwide that are investing most heavily in 5G development, four are Chinese (Huawei, Hisilicon, ZTE, and CATT). They made up nearly 40% of the standard technical contributions to 5G growth in 2018.[24]

Despite China launching its 5G last November, which was later than both the US and South Korea, most Chinese cities now have accessible 5G coverage. In March 2020, China also introduced 70 domestic 5G-compatible smartphones available for consumer purchase, a figure that is expected to rise to 100 by the end of the year.[25] Moreover, China has already delivered 56 million 5G smartphones to consumers and the country is also approaching a share of 70% on global 5G subscribers by the end of 2020.[26]

COVID-19 has only accelerated the use of 5G technology in China. 5G networks connected Wuhan hospitals and clinics with Beijing to facilitate real-time COVID-19 consultations. 5G-powered drones have been used for delivering masks and meals, relaying pandemic measures, spraying disinfectant, and scanning thermal imaging checks.[27] During the shutdown, Chinese schools have relied upon 5G for broadcasting education platforms with more than 1.57 million online classes.[28] Furthermore, President Xi Jinping has officially earmarked 5G as one of the main targets for specialized government support in economic recovery.[29]

COVID-19 has, by bringing China early out of the crisis, certainly given the country the chance to display, test, and monetize its 5G technological capabilities at a critical moment, on a greater international stage.

Despite the very real economic and human costs of the COVID-19 crisis and an accumulation of bad debts among many BRI partners, especially in the developing world, China will emerge earlier from the coronavirus crisis, and with a more digitally sophisticated economy. It will be a powerful force to be both reckoned with and cooperated within international affairs, especially on issues of international finance, global governance, and economic development.

East Asia in the Global Medical Supply Chain

- **East Asian countries are central to important medical supply chains, but there is some international discontent with heavy import dependence on China.**
- **European and American lawmakers are moving to reshore select medical supply chains and build larger strategic medical supply reserves, despite the practical short-term difficulties of doing so.**
- **The US has an opportunity to replace dependence on China with deepened dependence on its East Asia allies that are also competitive in the medical-supply area.**

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has highlighted that East Asian countries are central to certain medical supply chains instrumental in containing the global outbreak while also causing the US and Europe to likely rethink and reshore certain medical supply chains, as well as build larger strategic reserves of medical supplies. China by itself produces half of the world's face masks and was also the greatest exporter of masks in 2019,[30] supplying 25% of the global mask market.[31] In addition, China maintains a 10% share in the global breathing apparatus market, producing respirators and ventilators, essential hospital equipment for fighting COVID-19.[32] Data from the Peterson Institute for International Economics show that China accounted for 48% of US import demand and 50% of EU import demand for PPE in 2018.[33] Since the crisis began, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have leveraged their nimble manufacturing sectors to dramatically ramp up production of masks and test kits. Japan also has enormous future prospects in the medical-supply area.

The capabilities of the Northeast Asian players have been discussed above, but Singapore should not be ignored. Japan will be discussed in detail in future reports, as its role in the medical supply area could be highly important in the coming years. Prominent examples are already beginning to appear. Fuji Film of Japan, for example, already produces a drug (Avigan) that appears to have promising therapeutic qualities at the early stages of COVID-19 treatment. Shionogi, Medicago, and Anges, among others, are also working on vaccines.

Singapore also plays a strategic role in medical supply that could grow further in the future. 3M, for example, has a major plant for N-95 medical mask production in Singapore, and in early April, it agreed to make 166 million N-95 masks on a priority basis for the US market.[34] At a more technically sophisticated level, 60 percent of the world's microarrays, and one-third of the world's thermal cyclers and mass spectrometers—medical equipment utilized in researching the coronavirus and testing for COVID-19, are manufactured in Singapore.[35]

Singapore is prospectively an important source of medical supply, but at the same time, a support base for Western private-sector medical supply capabilities in a much more comprehensive sense, providing end-to-end capabilities ranging from product design to optimization and validation. Fifty regional headquarters of leading medical technology firms are based in Singapore, together with the research and development presence of 25 major multinationals.[36] In interaction with these firms, Singapore recently developed a new COVID-19 antibody test called cPass that specifically searches for neutralizing antibodies and provides results within an hour; the new test is currently being produced for a pilot batch in Singapore hospitals before prospective mass production.[37] Singapore is a hub for business model innovation, marketing and regulatory expertise, and e-commerce activities for multinationals throughout Asian markets.

Shortages of PPE and test kits in the West are leading to a consensus that some types of medical supplies should now be considered "strategic" and subject to industrial policy. After the pandemic, the US and European countries are likely to pass legislation designed to increase domestic production and domestic stockpiles, regardless of commercial viability. Reducing Western dependence on

East Asia for vital supplies will be the key goal of these policies, but they will likely focus on China more narrowly. As other developed Asian countries take their own steps to increase medical supply security, this raises the possibility that increased global import reliance on those countries could complement and substitute for reduced reliance on China. A US return to the Trans-Pacific Partnership could help facilitate this process, although that is unlikely in the short run.

US security alliances in Asia could play a key role in America's quest for improved medical-supply security, if they are expanded to include substantial pharmaceutical, PPE, and medical-equipment provisions. The US could propose, for example, to enter into medical supply compacts in which the US supports the expansion of Japanese and Korean medical-supply capacity in exchange for privileged access to their medical exports in the event of a future pandemic. Medical supply issues could also be made into consideration in sometimes tense alliance cost-sharing negotiations.

CONCLUSION

Our review of post COVID-19 prospects for East Asia's global relations has emphasized the prospective further rise of East Asia's role, although in a somewhat different fashion than that emphasized by traditionally Sino-centric analysis. We do not deny the rising technological capabilities or geopolitical centrality of China, as evidenced by its intensive digitalization campaign and its deepening interdependence with central and Eastern Europe. We do, however, note that translating these strengths into dominant global influence is excruciatingly difficult. Debt problems in BRI encounters with developing nations, as well as political backlash to its initiatives in the US and Western Europe, and political complications close to home in Hong Kong and cross-strait relations will complicate China's path to dominance.

Much clearer, we contend, is the enhanced prospective prominence of the Asian Tigers and possibly Japan in the post COVID-19 world. Like China, they have dealt rapidly and effectively with the pandemic, yet with democratic and largely free-market tools. They also show prospects of emerging with enhanced credibility and the prospect of revived economic growth. Japan also appears to have weathered the storm effectively as shown by the government lifting its state of emergency nationwide, with enhanced potential for the future, in a world where many major political economies have been more severely wounded.

While the profile of the post COVID-19 world is beginning to grow clearer as the pandemic itself shows prospects of waning, important questions about East Asia's post coronavirus future remain. Among the most fateful are these three:

- ***How will COVID-19 affect Asian regional stability?*** Will the enhanced tensions we have witnessed within Greater China—in Hong Kong, and across the Taiwan Strait—escalate into more serious conflict? Will the simmering rivalries of the region—China-Japan and Japan-Korea, in particular—deepen and grow more intractable? Can smaller states with nimble diplomatic skills, such as Singapore, make a difference in moderating broader conflicts?

- ***What kind of damage will US-China relations suffer?*** Will the acrimony over the origins of the coronavirus, and the role of the World Health Organization, interact with strained relations over territory and technology in a political year to produce serious, irrevocable damage to a core transnational relationship of the twenty-first century?

- ***How will COVID-19 change Japan's role in the international system?*** As the third-largest economy in the world, the largest international creditor, and the prospective forthcoming Olympic host, Japan has enormous stakes in global stability. It is also one of the largest nations still relatively spared by the crisis. How will Japan, Asia's strongest counterweight to China, move on the medical, economic, and diplomatic fronts to help arrest the prospective turbulence of the devastated world that COVID-19 will leave in its wake? What sort of global leadership and responsibility will Japan show and with what consequences for world affairs?

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