Welcome to the OLLI Great Decisions 2021 Zoom Discussion Group.

Before we get started, here are some guidelines to help us learn and share as we explore the eight topics selected by the Foreign Policy Association for nationwide discussion groups.

1. I strongly suggest that you purchase the Great Decisions 2021 Edition Briefing Book and that you read each essay during the week prior to the Thursday afternoon class session. Each of the essays does a particularly good job presenting both background information as well as alternative solutions for issues related to the topic.

2. Each session will open with a brief statement from me as your moderator followed by a 25-minute video that supplements the information contained in the related essay in the briefing book. The videos include quite a few sound bites that go by quite rapidly. So some of them may be difficult to remember unless they reinforce information and opinions in the essays.

3. Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Foreign Policy Association recommended holding two-hour long sessions that included showings of the week’s video followed by about sixty to seventy-five minutes of discussions among members of breakout groups composed of about eight participants each. The last fifteen or twenty minutes would be devoted to sharing of synopses of each group’s discussion findings and recommendations with the entire group. Meanwhile, we at OLLI at UNT have made some adjustments to the Foreign Policy Association’s meeting format recommendations. First, OLLI class sessions are 90 minutes long. Hence, time available for group discussion and related comments from me as group moderator has been limited to less than an hour. In past years, my comments on some of the topics took as much as half of that time. Moreover, participants voted to discuss each issue as a large group of 30 to 40 plus participants even though we experimented with short breakouts of smaller groups of about six participants each. We shall be using the large group format rather than break out groups this spring.

4. Given the Zoom format required due to the Pandemic as well as suggestions from previous participants as well as the OLLI at UNT Curriculum Committee, there will be some changes in each week’s class meeting format. In order to maximize time available for group discussion, I am providing you with written comments on each week’s topic followed by a set of three or four questions to provide a basis for group discussion. At the beginning of each class session, I will give a one- or two-minute introduction to the week’s topic followed by a showing of the related 25-minute video. You will be muted during that time. However, feel free to use the Zoom chat function to type questions or comments during the video. With the exception of the first week’s class, we will devote about 15 minutes each for discussion of three sets of questions I will be providing as well as related insights each of you want to contribute. During that time, you may elect to use the chat function or to unmute yourself in order to share orally with fellow group participants. Although your questions and opinions are particularly important, remember that they carry more weight if backed up by facts, data and/or personal experiences.
Global supply chains and U.S. national security

KEY TERMS

**foreign direct investment (FDI)** — investment of capital, technology, or management made by an individual or firm in one country directly into a business located in another country

**logistics** — the coordination of all aspects of production, including manufacturing and shipping

**malware** — malicious software (such as computer viruses) intended to damage computer networks or gain unauthorized access to proprietary data

**multinational corporation (MNC)** — a (usually large) corporation headquartered in one country that oversees production and facilities in more than one other country

**outsourcing** — obtaining products or services from a supplier outside of one's home country or moving business functions to a firm located in another country, usually to reduce costs

**supply chain** — a network of all the activities and components required to produce and deliver a finished product to the consumer
Topic 1 – Global Supply Chains

A supply chain refers to the combination of distribution and manufacturing processes that must occur prior to a product’s final purchase by a consumer. These processes include the extraction of raw materials, harvesting of agricultural produce, refining of minerals or liquids, manufacturing of component parts and subassemblies, final assembly and packaging of finished goods, inventory control, transportation, and warehousing. The concept is closely related to terms such as logistics, materials management, and physical distribution. Logistics includes all of the distribution related functions that occur between the sourcing of raw materials and the ultimate consumer. Those distribution functions are broken into two parts: those that occur between the extraction of raw materials and the point of final assembly (materials management) and those that occur between final assembly and the ultimate consumer (physical distribution.) A supply chain can be considered to be international when a subset of these processes takes place in more than one country and global when subsets of these activities take place on more than two continents.

Supply chain management has become an important (and extraordinarily complex) subject in business school curricula. For example, the Brint Ryan College of Business at UNT offers baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees with majors in this field of study. Moreover, it has a center for the study of this complex subject. The DFW region has significant aviation, highway, rail and warehousing infrastructure that supports national and global supply chain activities.

From a private sector standpoint, the goal of a supply chain is to minimize the sum of the total costs of supply chain activities including extractive, manufacturing and distribution processes wherever in the world they can be most efficiently accomplished while delivering a satisfactory level of final customer satisfaction and growing sale volume.

Both the essay and the video elaborate on these concepts. However, the international relations issues they discuss relate more to locations of supplies of raw materials and points of final manufacture rather than to the broader issues of distribution efficiency. In particular, the essay and the video put emphasis on recent shortages (especially from Chinese sources) of supplies of pandemic related supplies such as masks and drugs, rare earths and other minerals such as lithium and cobalt used in high tech components and batteries, bulk power supply equipment, surveillance cameras, small drones, railcars as well as (potentially) electric passenger cars. The essay also addresses concerns about competing versus cooperating in semiconductor research.

Another issue relates to the offshoring of manufacturing activities by US based multinationals that may have led to decreases in domestic manufacturing employment. International business scholars have suggested that the decline in manufacturing jobs may be caused more by automation than by offshoring of production. (You might want to
check out the website of Rutgers University Professor Farok Contractor, who was my first graduate assistant when we were both at the University of Michigan in 1970. His website is globalbusiness.blog. See his slide show for November 2020 and if you have time watch his video lecture for December 2020.)

In his Great Decisions online master class, Professor Morton added the following points to consider with respect to global supply chains:

1. Many manufacturing companies and other entities in the supply chain prefer to minimize costs by relying on just in time inventories. Hence, some critical supplies they and their ultimate consumers need could be cut off by natural causes such as weather, labor problems such as strikes and political factors such as government decisions to withhold or cut back shipments.

2. Multinational firms make their sourcing decisions based on the concept of comparative advantage (developed in the early 1800s by David Ricardo who drew upon the earlier thinking of Adam Smith) that production should take place where it is most profitable (e.g., least expensive) to do so. Hence, these firms put profits before some people (such as factory workers) – even though ultimate consumers will gain from lower prices. Even though factory workers might lose their jobs due to import competition, they could be retrained to do other jobs such as coding software. However, they would have to lose their traditional lifestyles if they did so.

3. The major policy issue centers on the concepts of mercantilism (government intervention to advance the interests of the home country such as is practiced by China and Japan) versus free trade (supported by multilateral policies developed by western countries after World War II and dialogue using the apparatus of the World Trade Organization.)

4. International trade can reduce global military tensions. The more you trade, the less you want to go to war.

The essay as well as Professor Morton suggest three policy options:

1. Renewed engagement with Chinese suppliers that returns to a policy of openness of trading and investment relations that existed prior to the Trump administration

2. Decoupling further with Chinese exporters of critical products and replacing them with domestic or third country sources of supply

3. Developing an industrial policy whereby the US Government would identify selected industries that would receive special treatment such as grants for industry-related applied research, tax holidays and other financial incentives such as worker retraining and relocation adjustment assistance.
The foregoing observations lead to a set of key questions for us to discuss:

1. What should be done to address the decline of manufacturing employment in the US?
   a. Retraining and relocation assistance for workers (adjustment assistance)
   b. Buy America programs (Government sourcing favoring domestic suppliers)
   c. Continue and perhaps expand existing restrictive trade policies (tariffs etc.)
2. Should China be considered to be an economic partner or a strategic threat (or both?)
   Give examples of future economic activities in which the U.S. could share with the
   Chinese versus situations in which competition is inevitable.
3. Which of the following policy options will offer the greatest likelihood of success?
   a. Reengaging with Chinese trading and direct investment partners
   b. Decoupling from China
   c. Enhancing Federal Government support for expanding domestic public/private
      sector activities related to critical technologies and/or raw materials
   d. Developing a US based industrial policy (for which industries?)
      i. What would be the pros and cons of industrial policy?
      ii. What can the US learn about the success formulae for industrial policy
          programs developed in Japan (keiretsu) and South Korea (chaebols)?
2. The future of Persian Gulf security

KEY TERMS

Arab Spring: A series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and rebellions that spread across the Arab world in the early 2010s. Rulers of the Persian Gulf states responded to these events by increasing their authoritarian power and becoming less tolerant of criticism.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Established in 1981, the organization is a loose political and economic union consisting of the Persian Gulf nations of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA): The 2015 agreement reached between Iran, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and the European Union addressed the Iranian nuclear program. In the agreement, Iran agreed to stop its development of nuclear weapons in exchange for the ending of economic sanctions and increased foreign investment. In 2017, the Trump administration withdrew from the agreement and “snapped-back” economic sanctions on Iran.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC): Created by the Ayatollah in 1979, the Iranian military branch is tasked with protecting Iran’s political system. Since the nation’s 2009 post-election protests, the group has exerted a growing influence on Iran’s domestic and foreign policy.

Mohammad bin Salman (MbS): The Saudi crown prince who is likely to succeed his father as King of Saudi Arabia. In the past few years, he has introduced major internal reforms dubbed “Saudi Vision 2030” and pursued an aggressive foreign policy to counter growing Iranian influence in the Gulf region.

Shi’a Islam: One of the two main branches of Islam; Shi’a followers make up a majority in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain. The sect believes leadership is vested in the family of the Prophet Mohammad and is historically associated with martyrdom and revolt.

Sunni Islam: One of the two main branches of Islam; Sunni’s acknowledge the first four caliphs as rightful successors of Muhammad. This sect is known for its orthodox and traditionalist beliefs that bestow legitimacy to the power of rulers.
Today’s security issue in the Persian Gulf region centers on a cold war between the two largest countries: Saudi Arabia and Iran. The remaining countries in the region are small but wealthy sheikdoms bordering the Gulf including Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Prior to the Shiite inspired Iranian Revolution of 1979, U.S. relations with the region were largely peaceful but centered on guaranteeing continual supply of petroleum to supplement domestic production. The US deployed troops to the region to protect the flow of oil shipments as well as to support other US policy interests such as our close relationship with Israel and possible geopolitical and military threats posed initially by the Soviet Union and later by Russia.

Two events have occurred in the past couple of months that impact the region. First, Kuwait brokered a deal the ended a cold war between Qatar and the other sheikdoms. Qatar had allegedly championed Iranian interests in the region whereas the other sheikdoms had sided with the Saudis. Second, President Biden announced that the US would cut off arms shipments to the Saudis that would be used in the armed civil war in Yemen (a proxy war between factions supported by the Saudis on one side and the Iranians on the other.) Nevertheless, Biden pledged to continue arms sale to the Saudis for other purposes such as defending against attacks from Iran and its supporters. Biden suggested that the US would not reduce sanctions on Iran and would not immediately rejoin the Iranian nuclear agreement. Iranian leaders stated that the further implementation of the nuclear agreement would hinge on the removal of the incremental sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. Journalists and various policy experts in Iran suggest that any rapprochement between Iran and the US would not likely take place until after Iran’s next presidential election in June 2021. Moreover, they expect the next president to be one of Iran’s generals and that voter turnout will be extremely low (between 5 and 15 percent of eligible voters.)

On the positive side, there has been a rapprochement and renewal of diplomatic ties between Israel and some of the Gulf sheikdoms including the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. This could be a prelude to a much more significant rapprochement between Israel and the Saudis. Time will tell.

Here are three key questions for today’s Great Decisions discussion:

1. Should US troops and military bases remain in Gulf countries or should they be withdrawn or closed? Why?
2. Should the US rejoin the Iran nuclear deal? Even though the Iranians state that they do not want to renegotiate terms, this is likely an opening position. What terms might be added to the agreement that might benefit both sides?
3. Should the US promote the formation of a regional security organization that would include the nations on the Arabian Peninsula as well as Iran and Iraq? What measures might be included in such an agreement that might satisfy all potential member states and reduce the level of military brinkmanship and uncertainty?
3. Brexit: taking stock and looking ahead

KEY TERMS

British Commonwealth – a cooperative association of the United Kingdom and many former British colonies

compilation government – a form of government in a parliamentary system where two or more parties join or formally cooperate to form a ruling government with a legislative majority

devolution – the transfer of power from the central or national government to subnational units; in the case of the United Kingdom devolution refers to the transfer of powers from the British Parliament to the legislative bodies of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Downing Street – refers to the British Prime Minister who resides at 10 Downing Street in London

Euro – the single European currency that replaced the currencies of 19 member nations (not the UK) of the European Union in 2002

Euroskepticism – a political position that advocates disengagement from the European Union

European Common Market – the single economic market of the member nations of the European Union and certain other states

Gini index (or Gini coefficient) – a statistical measure of income inequality where one equals perfect inequality and zero represents perfect equality

Good Friday Agreement – a peace agreement signed in 1998 that included a power-sharing arrangement between the Irish Unionists and Loyalists, reducing political violence in Northern Ireland

House of Commons – the lower and primary chamber of the British Parliament; consists of elected members from England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland

Boris Johnson – the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and leader of the Conservative Party
KEY TERMS (cont)

**multilateralism** – the cooperative pursuit of common goals by multiple nations

**passporting** – the right of a business in one E.U. member state to do business in another

**Schengen Area** – the area represented by the E.U. member states where internal border controls were eliminated so that E.U. citizens could travel freely among the member states

**Tory** – refers to members of the U.K.’s Conservative Party

**special relationship** – refers to the long-standing close ties between the United Kingdom and the United States and their leaders

**vote of no confidence** – a vote in the House of Commons on whether the members of Parliament have enough confidence in the Prime Minister and cabinet for the government to continue ruling; can trigger the resignation of the Prime Minister and a new parliamentary election if another confidence vote is lost by the government in 14 days
**Topic 3: Brexit and the European Union**

The divorce of the UK from the EU is final. But the marriage had never been fully consummated. First, the UK was a late comer to the European experiment. It was not a part of the original Coal and Steel Community nor was it a member of the original European Economic Community partly by its own choice and partly due to the fear on the part of France’s President Charles de Gaulle that the UK was too closely tied to political and economic interests of the USA. Once de Gaulle was replaced by President Pompidou, the UK was able to join the EEC (which included the rights for Parliament to select members of the administrative European Commission and the “legislative” European Council of Ministers.) The people of the UK could also vote for their representatives to the European Parliament (that has significantly less power than either the appointed Commissioners or the members of the Council of Ministers.)

As the EU evolved through time, the UK agreed to the provisions of various treaties that enhanced common technology standards among EU member countries, but it did not choose to abandon the pound and have it replaced by the Euro nor did it choose to be part of the Schengen Agreement that allowed the free movement of persons among countries without the need to show passports at international boundaries between member nations.

Why did the British electorate vote in favor of Brexit? The essay suggests that it was a combination of historic nationalism, fear of significant inbound immigration, a rise in populist sentiments and a negative reaction to the increasing volume of directives from the European Commission (an appointed rather than elected political institution.) Note also that much of Northern Ireland and all of Scotland along with urban areas in England and Wales voted in the majority to remain while rural areas in England and Wales voted in the majority to leave. (Also note the similarity of such voting patterns in the USA during the most recent presidential elections.)

Some of the negative impacts of Brexit include a limitation of 90 days for stays in the EU by British citizens, the need for them to obtain work visas for employment in EU countries, higher roaming charges for cell phones in EU countries, more difficulty obtaining emergency healthcare in EU countries, and higher tax rates on retirement properties owned by UK citizens in EU countries. Although there were negotiations related to a continuation of free trade in goods and services, the continuation of duty-free international exchanges is unclear but probably unlikely. Moreover, politicians in Scotland and Northern Ireland have proposed referenda that would lead to the secession of these regions from the UK with both regions rejoining the EU and Northern Ireland reuniting with the Republic of Ireland. On the other hand, the spotlight will be on Glasgow in November 2021 when the UK hosts the summit of the world’s leaders during which they will consider ways to amend and update the Paris climate accords. Therefore, secession of Scotland from the UK is unlikely in calendar 2021.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has recently announced an initiative called Global Britain that includes substantial increases in military expenditures to supplement the UK’s international diplomatic efforts. It ids also relevant to remember Britain’s close political and economic relationships with Commonwealth nations (Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc.)
The foregoing observations lead to three discussion questions:

1. What is the likelihood that other EU member nations might vote to leave the EU? What would be the consequences for them and the EU? Can the EU amend its founding treaties in order to discourage future national withdrawals from membership?

2. The UK has already approved a free trade agreement with Japan? Should it do the same with the USA?

3. If the UK has another referendum in the future to rejoin the EU, what provisions should it make, if any, to ease the fears of its electorate as well as the Eurocrats on the continent?

Extra credit question: Germany has been the strongest national political and economic power within the EU (most recently under the chancellorship of Angela Merkel, whose successor will shortly be selected.) Can the EU survive and prosper after her successor is chosen or could another European leader such as France’s President Macron emerge as the next unofficial leader of the European regional international experiment? Can he or she convince Europeans that facts related to economic and political results should outweigh their emotions as they consider the continuation and expansion of European unity?

Note that Boris Johnson is currently serving as this year’s president of the G7 nations.
KEY TERMS

Arctic Council: Created by the 1996 Ottawa Declaration to encourage cooperation in the Arctic region, the council originally consisted of the eight Arctic nations as permanent members and six organizations representing Arctic indigenous peoples as permanent participants. In 2020, it extended observer status to 13 non-Arctic nations.

Arctic Strategy: Originally published in 2013 and strengthened with the 2014 Implementation Plan, the document outlines U.S. efforts to continue its influence in the Arctic region. It emphasized advancing U.S. security interests, pursuing responsible stewardship, and strengthening international cooperation.

North American Aerospace Defense Command: Created in 1957 as the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), the binational organization coordinates air and space defense between the United States and Canada. In 2006, maritime defense was added to its mission.

Northern Sea Route: A trans-Arctic sea route connecting Europe and Asia that is shorter and safer than the more western Northwest Passage.

Northwest Passage: A trans-Arctic sea route that travels across the Canadian archipelago and along Russia’s northern coast.
**Topic 4: The Arctic**

Among the eight topics included in the 2021 Great Decisions discussions, this one probably receives the least media coverage. Yet it relates to three major themes:

1. Climate change and the significance of melting of polar ice caps
2. Global military security after the end of the Cold War between the US and the USSR
3. Multinational dialogue about common global issues faced by countries whose land masses include regions above the Arctic Circle

While the video and the essay do not focus directly on climate change, they each include sections that point out possibilities for new international shipping lanes north of the Scandinavian countries and Russia as well as those that might open up a Northwest Passage through the icy islands of northern Canada and the Arctic Ocean on the northern border of Alaska. The sea lane above Scandinavia and Russia is now ice free for substantial portions of the year and provides an optional “Arctic Silk Road” route between Europe and Asia to complement shipping through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. The Northwest Passage could be an option for ocean shipping between European and Asian ports as well as between ports on the East Coast of North America and those in East Asia. However, it will require substantial investment in more ice cutter ships to escort commercial ships through the passage that is not entirely ice free.

The North Polar region continues to be critical with respect to possible ICBM attacks between the USA and Russia. But that issue is much less serious than it was during the Cold War and has become even more so early this year with the agreement between the two nations to extend the START treaty for the next five years.

The multinational dialogue takes place under the auspices of the Arctic Council whose members include four Scandinavian countries (Denmark including its possession Greenland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland), Russia, Canada, and the United States plus representatives of a handful of ethnic groups who have traditionally lived in the Arctic Regions. Other nations (including China) have observer status. Topics under discussion include infrastructure development, protection of native wildlife, the maintenance of traditional lifestyles in native ethnic human communities, extraction of minerals, petroleum and natural gas as well as military security. The foregoing comments lead to the following questions for us to discuss:

1. To what extent should the Arctic Council member nations develop climate change strategies to limit the melting of ice? Do the economic benefits of melting ice offset those related to environmental protection?
2. Should the US Government spend more tax dollars to develop both climate change measures as well as infrastructure (e.g. ice cutter ships and port facilities) in the Arctic Region? Why or why not?
3. China sees the region as it relates to its Belt and Road Initiative to build and finance infrastructural projects as well as its other economic and military goals. To what extent is China’s activity in the Arctic region a threat to the US and in what ways might the US and China cooperate to develop their individual national as well as collective interests?
5. China and Africa

KEY TERMS

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): agreement made by the African Union in 2018 to create a continent-wide market for goods and services

African Union (AU): a continental body consisting of the 55-member states that make up the countries of the African continent established in 2002 with the goal to promote political stability and economic development

Agenda 2063: the 50-year strategic framework of the African Union for inclusive economic and social development as well as power in the global arena

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): China’s infrastructure project that stretches from east Asia to Europe launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013, also known as the New Silk Road

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC): the formal relationship between China and 53 African countries established in 2000 in which ministerial and summit-level meetings are held every three years, resulting in pledges by China to aid infrastructure and provide loans

Go Out strategy: an effort initiated in 1999 by the Chinese government to promote a global expansion of Chinese local and international investments; also known as the Going Global Strategy

TAZARA railway: the single-track railway financed by China and built in 1970–75 that provides a trade-route for land-locked Zambia through Tanzania to circumvent white-ruled South Africa and Rhodesia

South-South Cooperation: a unit of the United Nations established in 1978 to foster the exchange of knowledge, resources, and technology between developing countries in the Global South
Topic 5: China and Africa

China’s global economic and geopolitical strategy includes planning, implementing and financing projects that could enhance the living standards of people living in developing regions of the world including elsewhere in Asia, in Latin America, in Eastern Europe and in Africa. Earlier in the twenty first century, China and many African country governments established the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation as a mechanism to focus on the continent’s development priorities. In general, many African countries are among the poorest economically and physically in the world. The Chinese including several of their state-owned banks and production companies have proposed and to some extent have implemented programs to develop infrastructure, technological capabilities, and energy resources. However, the Chinese financing approach often takes the form of loans (whose provisions can be opaque) rather than outright grants. Given the economic poverty, administrative and political corruption, and minimal managerial as well as technological expertise in many African countries, some of them will not be able to repay loans from China when they are due. As part of the loan extension process, the Chinese often request access to projects to enhance China’s global commercial and military objectives. In fact, forty-four African country governments have signed agreements to participate in China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

When one views Africa, it is helpful to differentiate among the following regions:
1. The Arabic speaking Maghreb north (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt)
2. The less developed desert and jungle regions of west and central Africa (including Nigeria which is Africa’s most populous country)
3. The East African savannahs in Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, and neighboring countries (popular destinations for wildlife safaris)
4. The relatively wealthy Union of South Africa

These observations suggest possible tensions between the USA and China pertaining to their respective roles in the future development of Africa’s nations and lead to the following questions for us to discuss:

1. Is the United States behind China with respect to the future economic and political development of African nations? What are the China/US tensions as well as opportunities for cooperation with respect to African countries’ development?
2. What priorities should the US Federal Government as well as the private sector have with respect to each of the following. Give your rationale and suggestions.
   A. Attracting more African students to US higher education institutions
   B. Providing more transparent loans and expanding foreign direct investments (including joint ventures and World Bank funding) for infrastructural development projects as well as the service sectors in African economies
   C. Strengthening ties between US high tech companies and African startups
   D. Enhancing the role of African American media products as diplomatic tools
6. The two Koreas

**KEY TERMS**

**Pyongyang Declaration:** the agreement made between North and South Korea in September 2018 pledging denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and improvements in inter-Korean relations

**Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** China’s infrastructure project that stretches from east Asia to Europe launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013, also known as the New Silk Road

**Blue House:** the official residence and executive office of the President of the Republic of Korea located in the capital of Seoul

**byungjin:** the political philosophy of North Korean President Kim Jong Un that emphasizes parallel development of nuclear arms and the national economy

**Demilitarized Zone (DMZ):** an area from which weapons and military forces have been removed between North and South Korea

**Korean Armistice Agreement:** a cease-fire agreement that brought an end to the Korean War between the People’s Republic of China, United States, North and South Korea

**K-Pop:** short for Korean pop music that originated in South Korea

**Panmunjom Declaration:** an agreement made at the April 2018 inter-Korean summit between President of South Korea, Moon Jae-in and leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Un, declaring an official end to the Korean War and a commitment to improving the peace and prosperity of the peninsula

**Sino-U.S. Relations:** diplomatic relations between China and the United States

**South Korea’s Green New Deal:** economic plan launched by South Korean President Moon Jae-in in response to economic downturn from COVID-19 that involves an expansion of jobs and an investment in renewable energy
Topic 6: The Two Koreas

While the video focuses mostly on the economic and cultural success of South Korea, the essay adds concerns about the military threat posed by North Korea as well as the possibility of reunification of the two Koreas. There is indeed a stark contrast between the two Koreas. South Korea today is a fully developed country and has one of the highest standards of living in Asia (along with Japan and Singapore.) Its recent cultural successes in pop music and cinema amplify its global successes in automobiles (Hyundai and Kia) and consumer electronics (Samsung and LG.) Moreover, its national government headed by President Moon has taken significant steps to diminish corruption and to expand economic fairness to the nation’s populous. His administration helped draft free trade agreements with a number of nations including the United States (with whom it has an international trade surplus.) The US has maintained a military presence in South Korea ever since the truce occurred after the Korean War of the early 1950s. The US and South Korea remain close political and strategic allies.

Meanwhile, North Korea is governed by a Marxist/Maoist socialist regime with a third generation Kim family dictator who rules (with the support of a large military) over a population that lives mostly in poverty. Initially, the regime had been supported by the Soviets and the Communist Chinese. The latter continue to be the country’s major geopolitical ally and economic trading partner. President Kim’s regime is kept in place globally by its threat of using its small but lethal nuclear arsenal against Japan and perhaps the USA. Although atmospheric testing of its missiles has had a hiatus since the photo op summits with Donald Trump, the threat of using them remains a thorn in the side of many countries’ foreign strategic policy agendas.

Here are the questions we’ll discuss:
1. Can the U.S. hope to reach a deal with North Korea regarding denuclearization with or without the support of China? How can the U.S. bring China to the table?
2. If South Korea were forced to choose a close relationship between itself and China or the U.S., which of the two should it select? Why?
3. What are the chances that Kim Jong Un might launch a nuclear attack against either Japan or the USA? Does the U.S. risk provoking China if it were to retaliate?
4. The U.S. has maintained global leadership in the entertainment and automotive industries, but Korea has had some recent successes in both. What does this say about future prospects for the globalization of those industries? Will Korean products be accepted along with U.S., German and Japanese products as being world class?
The WHO's response to Covid-19

**KEY TERMS**

**aerosol transmission** – the spread of disease through the inhalation of infectious airborne particles

**convention** – an international agreement

**coronavirus** – any of a family of RNA viruses that cause respiratory, neurological, and gastrointestinal diseases in animals and humans such as MERS, SARS, COVID-19 and the common cold

**genome** – the genetic material (DNA or RNA) of an organism; genome sequencing allows for tracking a virus and developing diagnostic tests and vaccines

**International Health Regulations (IHR)** – legally-binding instrument of international law that regulates how countries should respond in an international health crisis by defining their rights and obligations to the international community

**non-paper** – an unofficial paper for discussion; a diplomatic method of international communication that does not go on record

**normative** – determining standards, models, and principles of behavior

**pandemic** – an epidemic that occurs over a wide geographical area and impacts a large percentage of the population

**Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)** – a formal declaration of the World Health Organization of an extraordinary public health risk requiring an international response

**sovereignty** – supreme power; authority to govern a particular territory and people

**therapeutics** – treatments for illnesses, including therapies and medicines
Topic 7: The World Health Organization

Concerns about the role of the World Health Organization (an agency of the United Nations) arose following the announcement that the COVID 19 corona virus had its origin in Wuhan, China. At issue were two concerns:

1. Did the virus have its source in animals from which it was transmitted to humans or did it come from an accidental “leakage” from China’s largest virus research laboratory based in Wuhan?

   According to preliminary statements from members of a WHO team who are charged with finding the root source of the virus in Wuhan, the observations suggest that the source from animal to human transmission rather than accidental leakage from the lab. Moreover, the team suggests that the origin have been between animal species prior to transmission to humans.

2. Once the virus was shown to be lethal to humans, did the WHO move fast enough with respect to declaring it to be a pandemic?

   The general consensus is that the WHO moved too slowly in declaring a pandemic and allegedly was heavily influenced by Chinese authorities who were lacking in transparency. The current WHO director general proceeded more cautiously that had his predecessor at the beginning of the earlier SARS epidemic whose consequences were vastly less harmful to the global human race than the current COVID 19 pandemic.

   The current pandemic points to two issues related to the effectiveness of the WHO. First, given the WHO’s vast mission to be a clearinghouse for all human related health matters worldwide, it is vastly understaffed and underfunded. Second, the WHO has no enforcement authority. It relies on the cooperation or (and hopefully coordination among) member country governments. With respect to the current pandemic, the Chinese government did not share data as quickly as it should have. In reaction, former President Trump withdrew US membership in the WHO. (Trump’s decision was consistent with his America First foreign policy that has recently been reversed by the Biden administration.) One of Biden’s first steps as president was to restore US membership in the WHO.

   Here are the questions that we’ll discuss:

   1. In the case of future pandemics, how can national governments cooperate to ensure the rapid declaration of their existence and work with the private sector to speed up the development and deployment of vaccines globally? What pressures can groups of countries put on authorities in countries from which deadly viruses have their origins so that they will announce the existence of such viruses and hopefully stop their spread? Should the US increase its monetary contributions to the WHO?

   2. How can member nations develop cooperative agreements or treaties to enhance the oversight of the WHO’s handling of emergencies? (For example, the UK has proposed a treaty on international preparedness.) How can members assure adequate funding for the WHO to handle and respond to future health crises as quickly as possible? What should be the role of the WHO versus cooperative efforts of member country governments? Should the WHO’s mission be revised? In what ways?
8. The end of Globalization?

KEY TERMS

**customs union** – a bloc of countries that establish free trade among themselves and agree to a common external tariff

**General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** – a series of international trade agreements that began after World War II to encourage international trade by reducing trade barriers; preceded the World Trade Organization

**globalization** – the increasing interdependence and interconnectedness of countries, societies, and economies worldwide resulting from rapid growth in world trade and advances in communications and transportation technologies

**International Monetary Fund (IMF)** – an organization of 190 member countries that seeks to ensure the stability of the international monetary system, facilitate international trade, and reduce poverty

**Marshall Plan** – a U.S. plan that aided Western Europe in rebuilding efforts after World War II

**North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA)** – a trade agreement enacted in 1994 intended to facilitate free trade between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico by eliminating trade barriers

**Adam Smith** – a Scottish philosopher considered the founder of modern economics; his 1776 work The Wealth of Nations established the foundations of free market economics

**Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act** – a 1930 U.S. law that raised tariffs to protect American farms and businesses from international competition

**tariff** – a tax placed on imports from other countries to make foreign products less competitive against domestic products

**trade liberalization** – the removal of trade barriers such as import tariffs to facilitate free trade
KEY TERMS (cont)

Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – a proposed trade agreement negotiated during the Obama administration between Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, and the U.S.; replaced by the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2018 after President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the TPP in 2017

value chain – a series of activities or processes, such as marketing or services, that increase the value of a product beyond the cost of production, thereby increasing profits

World Bank – an international economic organization that seeks to assist developing countries by providing them with loans and technical assistance

World Trade Association (WTO) – an international economic organization dedicated to trade liberalization; the WTO seeks to regulate international trade by implementing international trade agreements and resolving trade disputes among nations
**Topic 8: Is Globalization Dead?**

Although elements of what we now call globalization have existed for centuries, the term came into prominence following the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of China’s role as a market oriented socialist society (following guidelines promoted in the late 1980s by Deng Tsao Peng.) Globalization takes many forms – cultural, economic and political. However, the key components discussed in the essay and the video are the free international movement of goods and investment capital and the concept and institutionalization of multilateralism. The essay gives emphasis to both while the video is largely devoted to the latter. Note that we looked at aspects of the former in our first meeting whose topic was global supply chains.

Between 1990 and the global economic recession of 2007/2008, there was enormous growth in global trade and investment coupled with a significant decline in the level of extreme poverty in developing countries. This expansion was supported by regional and multilateral agreements and organizations such as NAFTA, the European Union, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other agencies of the United Nations. Note that these trends slowed considerably following the Great Recession while recent gains from trade and investment have been unequally distributed. In addition, regional armed conflicts and repressive regimes led to significant out migrations from Syria, Central America and elsewhere. Many refugees fled to richer countries in Europe and North America. All of this led to high levels of dissatisfaction among members of some socioeconomic groups and to the rise in populist nationalist/isolationist political agendas such as the Trumpian America First policy. With the election victory of President Biden, the nation’s foreign policy agenda is returning back to global openness and a willingness to share problems and solution-oriented agendas with global allies. Among other policy initiatives, President Biden is hosting a summit of global leaders in Washington on April 22 focused on ways to address climate change.

Here are the questions for today’s discussion:

1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of globalization? Which stakeholder groups are most benefited and which stakeholder groups are most harmed? In what ways?
2. What steps could the public and private sectors take to lessen negative impacts of globalization?
3. What will the next stages of globalization look like as well look out two decades? What role should be played by international organizations versus national governments versus private enterprises? What steps could governments and the private sector take to ensure broader “buy in” of the concept of globalization among the masses of people especially those who currently hold intensely nationalistic and isolationist political and cultural world views?