COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
EMERGENCE OF A NEW GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Policy Review

Ayesha Ilyas
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Key Messages

- The dynamics of geopolitics are shaping up very quickly. Geopolitics is paving the way for a major change in global power structure. Avoiding conflict in long-term will require concise efforts broadly transforming the governance, economic and security structures for common goods globally.

- Starting from the restructuring of the UN Security Council, veto power culture needs to be abrogated. Regional chapters on the basis of population and economic size of the United Nations need to be introduced with the right of veto power. Regional forums like EU, ASEAN, SAARC, etc. can serve the purpose as part of UN Security Council.

- There is a need to alter the structures of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) making them more concentrated on ‘human interests’ and not merely the economic interest of certain countries. The voting formula of IMF and World Bank should also be changed. The design of these institutions should also be changed to consider agendas exclusive to SDGs, etc.

- Belt and Road Initiative may be in jeopardy right now, but more multi-lateral initiatives, with a facet of lifting the low-income economies using sustainable business models, are required to create more balance in the living conditions across the world and to enable economies all over to increase expenditure on health and public wellbeing.

- The world needs a concise effort under an international security framework to stop the way of such diseases or catastrophe in future, considering pandemics like COVID-19, a collective enemy of all.

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1. Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic has brought social life, health systems and economies of the world to their knees, bringing all activities to a halt, albeit a majority of the affected being highly developed. The spectrum of this pandemic is so broad that 210 countries and territories have been hit so far with around 2.8 million affected cases and over 190,000 deaths rising day-by-day. Fear has grappled everyone and there is a widespread panic everywhere across the world. Entire communities are isolated and life is brought to a standstill that many are witnessing for the first time. The global shutdown has sent the world’s economy into a tailspin (Elliott 2020). Stock exchanges across the world are on course for fall. Global markets have seen their largest single-day drop since 1987 (Sraders 2020). Supply chains have been disrupted and will be difficult to restart (Campbell and Doshi 2020). The pandemic impact can be felt in all sectors and is getting worse as it spreads further to countries with fragile governance and economies (Yong 2020).

Moreover, layoffs are putting additional stress on the governments. With an increase in the duration of suspension of business activities, job losses will become inevitable. Pandemics magnify the existing inequalities in systems (Lewis 2020). The toll on the common people is multifaceted from livelihood insecurity, lack of access to normal health care facilities, threat of the virus infection to self-isolation in cramped settlements where lives a majority of the world population. Democratic rights are hard hit as countries are moving towards lockdowns, suspending public gatherings, restricting mobility and enforcing policies to monitor movements in order to curtail the spread of the disease (Candia 2020).

National economies and wellbeing of common citizens are major losers in the scenario. The situation is urging the world leaders to devise ways for combating the challenge through cooperation and joint working mechanisms. On the contrary, there is little to no cooperation rather a surge in individualism (Fieschi 2020). The crisis seems all but certain to reinforce and deepen trends toward de-coupling and de-globalization (Wright and Campbell 2020). The United States (US), the only superpower of the world, has been ‘irresponsibly’ pointing fingers at China which is not only increasing tensions between the two countries at a crucial time but also fuelling racism in the increasingly dividing world. The US stubborn response to the pleas from Iran for lifting sanctions, the European Union’s apathy towards the seriousness of disease in Italy and the Balkans’ increasing distrust in European Union (EU) signal towards a grim
reality, i.e. lack of will in the developed world for a concerted effort (Alexander and Jaffer 2020). The situation is an indicator of one thing, i.e. change. As the only superpower, the US recedes into the cocoon of “America First” and the glorified democratic norms are suspended all around the world, a new power structure shaped by the pandemic is emerging.

The world undergoing these challenging circumstances needs a very realistic picture of the current scenario. Some main objective of the study is to analyze the changes in geopolitical perspective occurring on the global stage amid COVID-19 spread.

2. Economic Choices in Times of Corona

As pointed out by Yafei (2020) at the moment, countries across the globe are struggling to fight the disease on three fronts:

1) Resources allocation to strengthen against COVID-19,
2) How to minimize the impact on common people?
3) Designing of stimulus packages to revive economy in post-COVID-19 era

The choices are difficult, as the world economy was already under stress. The projected world growth rate was 3.3 per cent, which is 0.1 point lower than the earlier estimates (International Monetary Fund [IMF] 2020). COVID-19 will further lower the growth. Although the extent is not clear at this point of time, negative impacts are certain on every country. Conservative estimates suggest that it can bring down growth by 1 per cent (Ramay 2020).

Anticipating the future, countries have started devising tools to combat the impact. Emergency budget allocations have risen manifold during the last few weeks. China has allocated ¥110.48 billion (US$ 16 billion) to implement the required instruments to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Reuters 2020). US President Donald Trump has approved US$ 2 trillion in total emergency spending bill (Pramuk 2020). Italy, which has the world’s highest number of deaths, has allocated US$ 28 billion (Balmer and Jones 2020). Numerous other countries are left with little choice but to follow suit.

Multilateral institutions are also announcing packages and relaxing payment schedules to buy the poor and developing economies more time, though not with the zeal that is required at times. The World Health Organization (WHO) had, as of 1st February, estimated new global spending requirements of $675 million for three months of “priority public health measures” (Parker 2020). United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres launched a $2 billion global
humanitarian response plan to fund the fight against COVID-19 in the world’s poorest countries (United Nations 2020).

World Bank Group (2020) has also approved an increased $14 billion package of fast-track financing to assist companies and countries in their efforts to prevent, detect and respond to the rapid spread of COVID-19.

The International Monetary Fund has already received financing requests and inquiries from nearly 80 countries (Gallagher, Ocampo and Volz 2020). Iran has sought US$ 5 billion emergency funding from IMF to tackle the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic (Iran and IMF 2020). As the country’s economy, health and governance infrastructure are in shambles due to US sanctions, it needs an urgent relief. However, despite the willingness of IMF, there is no indication of any relaxation from the US which has a decisive role in the approval of assistance. Thus, politicization of the plight of the poor continues.

Further course of action would be the allocation of resources to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Many industries are already going through crises and projecting huge losses. Total losses to aviation industry have been projected around US$ 63-113 billion (International Air Transport Association [IATA] 2020). Wall Street has already come down along with many other stock markets across the world. Financial sector, especially banks, are also under pressure and investors are looking for safe places to invest even at the negative interest rate. However, the job losses have started and the biggest loser would be the common people during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Norwegian Airline has announced to shelf half of its employees on temporary basis. Spanish airline has also halted its operation. Most airlines have suspended flights to the worst hit countries, but as the pandemic spreads further, there is a fair chance for a complete holdup of operation. Flybe, a UK airline, has declared bankruptcy as its business dwindled further for the already struggling carrier. Qatar Airways has pledged for a government bailout, and many will be forced to follow suit (ibid).

The livelihood of a segment of society, which depends upon informal or gig economy, has perished without prior warning. Tourism economies, for example, are already feeling the burn. Ireland has lost 140,000 jobs in a matter of weeks. Services sector overall is the worst hit. According to a CNBC report, millions of Americans will lose jobs in the coming days, and 3.5 million people are likely to be left without any source of income (by applying the situation of world war-II) (Iacurci 2020). The real impact can be calculated after recovery from COVID-19, most probably after June.
The urgency of allocation and efficiency in dispensation show that the task of recovery will be gigantic. Further, the required resources will be well beyond these allocations. Right now, the immediate concern is the job loss and job creation in the near future. Maintaining supply chains and attracting investment is a challenge waiting ahead. A frequent question haunting many across the world is do we have enough financial resources to come out of this crisis and more dauntingly what if the threats keep resurfacing and striking back time and again. The impacts will be far ranging on multiple other sectors than health and economy, both through forming a basis for all the other changes. As of now, the geopolitical front is not lagging behind acting to the whim of the virus as it transcends the man-made borders and the natural boundaries.

3. Impact on Geopolitics

3.1. US-China relations

The fallout from the global pandemic threatens the US - China relations and given the importance of both countries, undermines global stability. A much-affected sector of the strife would be international trade. The ongoing crises are likely to have long-term implications for the perception of the two countries globally. China which initially challenged US supremacy in the realm of military defence has geared up to take over the global leadership role as it offers aid and assistance to countries jeopardised by the virus spread.

In the face of pandemic, both countries have been engaged in a war of rhetoric with one side terming the virus as a “Chinese virus” the other didn’t lag behind declaring it as a tool of bio-war from US. Beijing, unlike its policy of restrain, is unwilling to slow down in face of US’s adversary this time and has expelled journalists working for US based media outlets (Karnitschnig 2020).

The rift between the two countries embed far-ranging consequences, which even the economic team of the US President has warned of. Provoking China in the current times where the global economy is run by interdependence role of China is crucial to the wider global economy. China has a substantial influence over the global health supplies and is in a position to affect the supply chain of medical goods to US. The team also fears that increased criticism by the POTUS on China may also trigger into upholding significant information about the virus outbreak that can help in controlling, curing or the discovery of a vaccine. There is a continued criticism of China in the US official circles for purchasing a major portion of the global supply of medical masks and calls for decreasing dependency on the global supplies and an increase in local production of pharmaceuticals (Crowley, Wong, Jakes 2020).
This depicts the future course of business not only between US and China but also between many other countries.

Meanwhile, criticism from Washington has infuriated Chinese officials, who accused the US making an attempt to start blame game. Souring relations between two major players have vast ranging impacts on the various small players all around (ibid).

Besides, the crises have made one thing clear that US is no longer a world leader, as it did not look up to others in times of need while China is all geared up to take over the role. US has refused to lift economic sanctions on Iran which has been hit harder than any other Middle Eastern country with the number of cases elevating minute by minute. Iranian Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif criticized US sanctions on Tehran as “mass punishment,” preventing Iran and the world from being able to effectively counter the pandemic (Hafezi 2020). Iran’s regime, already in hot waters for the downing of the Ukrainian airliner after the murder of the Quds leaders by the US and is also widely criticized for mismanaging the pandemic. Regaining confidence in a system once you’ve seen its essential fragility is difficult, How the landscape of Iranian politics changes once the world attains a semblance of stability is a difficult question to answer. Iran though is not the only case, the pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities of the current political order across the world while many developed countries struggle with controlling the spread, health systems falling apart, governments struggling to facilitate the social needs of the populations amid massive lockdowns curbing civilian liberties and dwindling livelihood.

3.2. Corona Coup

Extra-ordinary measures are taken even in the model democracies of the EU; many have imposed emergencies while others have taken equivalent measures. Number of these measures are feared to be dismantling checks and balances vital to the continuity of democratic practices. As has been history; pandemics have provided states the excuse to expand their powers, as fear has made people comply to stricter orders. Italy, Spain, Poland, and France are heavily fining people who are out without a reason. Countries have closed their borders to any and all activity, some even leaving their own citizens stranded offshore. Governments are getting massive civilian support for these measures, even in a country like Italy where politicians are generally not trusted. The parliament of Hungary was presented with a bill giving dictatorial powers to the President for an indefinite period. The new law creates two new crimes broadly explained
as publicizing of false or distorted facts and obstruction of curfew a crime punishable by five years in prison (Scheppele 2020)

Countries are working on using telecom data for tracing those possibly affected by the virus and for ensuring isolation of people during quarantine. A handful of member states of the Council of Europe have already announced partial suspension of the provisions of European Convention on Human Rights, thus allowing suspension of civil rights during the current state of emergency. Slovakian government has passed a law allowing the state to access the citizens telecom data for the purpose of monitoring and tracking the movements of those affected (Slovakia to track coronavirus 2020). The Serbian Opposition claims that the country’s President has brought Serbia "one step away from dictatorship" by imposing an emergency (Verseck 2020). The scenarios are no different in other parts of Europe. In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has imposed an emergency, despite losing elections recently. The situation has not only allowed him to continue as Prime Minister, but also to postpone the proceedings of a criminal trial against himself; the emergency has also allowed him to introduce new surveillance measures and assigned him unabated powers - all beyond constitution. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s popularity was dwindling amid growing economic inequality in the country. Russia was scheduled for April 22nd, to take a nationwide vote on amending the constitution to allow for Putin to remain President until 2036. Restrictions on the size of public gatherings in view of the outbreak limiting the opposition's options for protest and postponement of the referendum only help extend Putin’s hold on power (Rodgers 2020) (Higgins, 2020). With the outbreak bringing the world economies to their knees, Putin administration is seizing on the opportunity to multiply its efforts through overt and covert influence campaigns, undermining confidence in the US political system (Ivanova and Osborn 2020). In India, supposedly, the largest democracy in the world, the public was for months protesting the newly-introduced controversial citizenship law; the government’s iron hand usage against the protesters further complicated the situation earlier in February, using the lockdown to control the spread of pandemic as an excuse, the capital police removed the protestors from the site of the longest-running sit-in at Delhi’s Shaheen Bagh without much hassle and media frenzy (Shaheen Bagh 2020).

Measures taken for the purpose range from postponement of elections to journalists forced to work remotely, right of assembly being suspended to governments using geo-tracking to identify possible cases. The unlimited authority necessitated and ceased by the governments may or may not be rolled back if the threat lasts as long as is expected, a year (Zalan 2020).
3.3. Lack of solidarity in EU

It is not just the democratic values that are hit hard by the global epidemic; alongside the health and economic crises, COVID-19 has done a huge blow to the idea of ‘international cooperation’. Italy, a member of EU that is considered more than just a coalition, has long surpassed China in the number of casualties. The EU had long maintained a reputation of being an organization for limitless cooperation for well-being beyond mere financial cooperation of its member states. Yet, COVID-19 exposed its lack of cohesion when none of the member states responded to the plea of Italy from the Emergency Response Coordination Centre of the EU, seeking supplies of medical equipment. Despite none of the European countries suffering remotely as badly as Italy at the time (Braw 2020). To Italy’s dismay, the EU slashed Italy with a 7.5 million Euro fine amid the outbreak in a case running against Italy since 2008 (Stephanie 2020). The unlikely Messiah for Italy in the times came in form of China, Cuba and Russia furthering the disappointment in the current system of not only Italy but also the Baltic states, which feel abandoned by their closest neighbor, the European Union, amid the export restrictions on healthcare supplies. It is fair to say that to many in the EU, the borders are becoming a more profound reality than a unity they would look for in times of a crisis. The Chinese state media outlets were quick to make headlines out of the Serbian President’s speech as he called European solidarity a hoax accusing the union of hypocrisy. Serbia, a Balkan country forerunner for the EU membership along with Montenegro, openly praised the Chinese President and criticized EU for its unwillingness to neither provide nor sell the necessary to equip for the health emergency (Ruge and Oertel 2020).

Many in the west are already fearing a rise in the Chinese influence in the region as it extends a helping hand to the struggling nations in their time of need furthering the impression that democracies are incapable of handling crises and authoritarianism is what has proved effective (Berzina and Soula 2020).

3.4 Altering the ways of populism

As the refugee crisis worsened, with the threat of global terrorism and the 2008 economic fallout at the back, the world has seen a rise in populist politics all over (Wright and Campbell 2020). From Trump winning a majority in the US owing to his hardline stance on the Mexican immigrants flooding the job market and the threats of Islamic radicalism materializing as the population of Muslim immigrants increases in the states, to Narendra Modi seizing a second term in the office is cashing in on Indo-Pakistan war hysteria. Torri’s winning UK amid Brexit
and Jair Bolsonaro representing Brazil crises have mainly given way to populist ideals, diverting the blame of failures of governance to the marginalized or external forces. So is expected to happen with the COVID-19 pandemic as more and more countries have failed to work out prevention. In the US, a surge has been witnessed in the approval ratings of President Trump as he openly blames China for the spread of what he and his administration at multiple occasions has termed as the “Wuhan Virus” or the “Chinese Virus”. A promise of more inward policies and pulling out US’s contributions from international collations and financial forums, building more walls metaphorically and literally could take center stage in Trump’s November 2020 election agenda. In the EU, a resentment has existed for refugees before the pandemic. In fact, migrants bringing diseases and ailments to the society is a popular anti-refugee argument. Poland, Greece and Italy have already cited the reason to turn down refugees and asylum seekers. The coronavirus could, therefore, become a tool in Europe’s wider, and gloomier, political battle over migration (Zerka 2020). The pandemic has strengthened the narrative of those vouching for stricter borders, the perils of the debates however are not limited to that only, they’d further the spread of racism and national superiority. Populist politics though will also have to divert its focus towards strengthening institutions internally then an outright reliance on the military might and the notion of national superiority in the near future (Scott 2020).

3.5 Shifting security paradigm

If the outbreak exposes in a full blow, it is the vulnerability of systems to the unsuspected non-traditional threats despite advanced technological and military capabilities. As new threats become more acute, threats that interconnected in the current global setup have made irrevocable; environmental security, natural disasters, cyber security and more recently public health, are bound to take a centre stage in the governance priorities (Fan et al. 2019). Non-traditional security threats seem to dominate the day-to-day world compared to the traditional wars and military conflicts that for many developed countries are the past stories, as wars dilute into proxies and non-state actors take over the frontline. States may no longer even be in a position to invest as much in the proxy wars though. The blow that the spread of the pandemic has done to the economies of even the great powers will require long-term cuts on military budgets to lift back the economy as investment in social recovery becomes mandatory. Estimates suggest that China’s GDP has gone down by more than 10% from the beginning of the pandemic to February this year (Weinland and Liu 2020). For US, the stocks have had an even bigger blow at the very beginning of it. The US Treasury department has estimated
unemployment to reach 20% during the pandemic (Wingrove, Mohsin and Jacobs 2020). For US, meeting the threat of the Chinese military might was not economically feasible even before the pandemic and spending more in this regard when it is in a dire need to take extreme measures to fight the health emergency along with the looming financial crisis that will be even a bigger challenge. The likelihood for US to maintain the traditionally expected budget flow to the Pentagon is grim. Evidently, governments all around will be compelled to increase their spending on social security and may also have to extend low interest loans and subsidies to businesses. As they are challenged with scarcity of resources, derisory lending opportunities will coerce them into diverting funds from other high-value budget components, inevitably including defence, which means more patent and long-term effects over the defence industry as it is one of the most exposed to externalities like politics, economics and social factors (Sreekumar 2020). For many middle-income countries and the great powers, whose relationship though is getting more averse, there will be substantial repairs to make to their societies and economies to deplete their capacity to induce direct harm (Stashwick 2020).

Future politics will require self-sufficiency as a prerequisite for the rather more developed at least; efficient public health care system, social welfare programmes, hi-tech and resilient industry, and local food production are the new proven vitals of social stability. More labour friendly policies will be in demand, more civilian expenditure will be an obvious expectation of the populous. Scientific research will be expected to reclaim its lost glory from business and management studies (International Corporate Governance Network [ICGN] 2020).

This will require a shift from the existing system of liberal economy, where wealth is concentrated in the hands of some and economies are run by multinationals corporations. States will be compelled and supported to take over the control in many a cases. China’s successful example in the battle against the pandemic will serve as an inspiration to many, further fortifying the assumption that the democratic rights abridged in- lieu of the current scenario may not see their former splendour for long. Authoritarianism may not be as despised as until recently, but it would surely require to adapt to some of the democratic values as human security become more profound a goal for development (Gallagher, Ocampo and Volz, 2020).

4. Findings and Conclusion

Governance system of the world is exclusively focused on the economic interests of countries and individuals. The structure of UN as well as International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is essentially limited in nature. Decision-making at the UN is done at the platform comprising of
five countries only, i.e. the United Nation Security Council. Those countries have a veto power and take any decision they deem necessary or just. Most of the international economic and financial institutions reflect a similar picture. For Example, the World Bank and IMF are usually under the influence of US and other great powers. Consensus-based forums and institutions like WTO, UNFCCC, etc. lack effectiveness.

Moreover, the powerful countries have made sub-groups to serve their purpose. G-7 and G-20 are the most prominent examples. These small groups have the authority over the key decisions due to their huge volume of economies.

The current economic model, which is running the business has some fundamental flaws which has led to the accumulation of wealth in a few hands. Inequality is on the rise. Humans are struggling for basic necessities like food, water, energy, etc. The main pillar of the system like free markets, over-emphasis on the private sector, and elimination of the role of state in business resulted in many problems like, inequality, poverty, degradation of environment, etc.

Security and common goods are more linked today than they were ever at any point of history. The economic fallout will increase the public grievances from governments, more so in the countries already struggling with economic problems and fragile governance structures. Population divide is inevitable on the basis of ethnicity, social class, race and religion as countries are likely to regress further into poverty and health emergency. Terrorism is not a very unlikely outcome of the situation. Number of them owe money to the IFIs and in bilateral loans that will sooner or later further the burden on their economy. A number of these countries had high hopes from China’s Belt and Road Initiative, the funding to which has stopped indefinitely at the moment and thus for many the future course of action is dimly lit or rather dark.

It is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened many sectors of social wellbeing and economy worldwide. Lack of coherence between the states in finding a combined solution to the problem is further intensifying the perils for middle- and low-income countries, increasing their grievances with the current world order which is proving inefficient in the time of need for its own perpetrators. Glorious concepts of liberal economies and democracies are coming out fairly dismissible as for more and more countries suspending civil rights is becoming a need of the hour and bailing out private businesses with the public money in order to sustain is taking a toll over the government reserves. The world is undergoing a change rather swifter to guarantee the steadiness of it but it is easier to say that the system may not work the same way
as it did prior to the pandemic. As human security takes centre stage in the world politics and combined threats like climate change, environmental depletion, cyber security and pandemics take the better of it, domestic politics will become more isolationist than global. As more promises of building walls dominate the public office biding, feeding mere nationalistic slogans to the public would come out as a harder task, public well-being and self-sufficiency would have to replace war mongering in the fragile contexts, an increase in the number of which is inevitable to avoid civil conflicts. What is yet to be discovered is whether the overbearing financial damage will leave any of the countries in a position to focus as much on self-sufficiency while providing for the social sectors as expected by the public or governments will retort to more authoritarian measures to cover for the lapses in governance. One thing is for sure, the world can no longer function on the principles that reigned it until December 2019.

5. Recommendations

The dynamics of geopolitics are shaping up very quickly. Although, the struggle for power has been there for centuries but the pace of current changes has no parallel in history. Geo-politics is paving the way for a major change in global power structure which seems inevitable now. Though the current developments have limited the scope of armed conflict between the countries, internal conflicts, civil wars, insurgencies and terrorism are coming off as a bigger threat in case of failure of government to handle the expected economic fallout.

Avoiding conflict in long-term will require concise efforts broadly transforming the governance, economic and security structures for common goods globally.

As Coronavirus exposes the preparedness of world institutions for any global emergency, a reform in their current structure is imminent. A starting point can be restructuring of the UN Security Council. The veto power culture needs to be abrogated. Regional chapters on the basis of population and economic size of the United Nations need to be introduced with the right of veto power assigned to them instead of individual countries. Reginal forums like EU, ASEAN, SAARC, etc. can serve the purpose as part of the UN Security Council.

There is a need to alter the structures of International Economic and Financial Institutions making them more focused on ‘human interests’ without any discrimination. A change in the voting formula of IMF and World Bank is also need of the hour. The design of these institutions should also be redefined to consider agendas exclusive to human security like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNFCCC, etc. (Shalal 2020).
Security and common goods are more associated today than they ever were at any point of history. The economic fallout will increase the public grievances more so in the countries already struggling with economic problems and fragile governance structures. Population divide is inevitable on basis of ethnicity, social class, race and religion as countries are likely to regress further into poverty and health emergency. Terrorism is not a very unlikely outcome of the situation. A number of the low-middle income economies owe money to the IFIs and as bilateral loans that will sooner or later further the burden on their economy. A number of these countries had high hopes from Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the funding to which has stopped indefinitely at the moment and thus for many the future course of action is dimly lit or rather dark. It is vital thus that on a global level, the concept of security is structured more around common good than arms race. BRI may be in jeopardy right now, but more multi-lateral initiatives, with a facet of lifting the low-income economies using sustainable business models, are required to create more balance in the living conditions across the world and to enable economies all over to increase expenditure on health and public wellbeing.

‘A chain is as strong as its weakest link’; COVID-19 has but all the more proved this true. The pandemic spread has exposed the entire world to an unprecedented threat, transcending all borders and boundaries, making military power and economic might irrelevant. The world needs a concise effort, an international security framework to stop the way of such diseases or catastrophe in future, considering pandemics like COVID-19, a collective enemy of all.
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