



The Impact of the COVID Pandemic on the International System

Our speaker for March 18 is Dr. Hal Brands, the Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

He will address the COVID pandemic's impact on the international system in a Q&A format moderated by the FPA's Alan Stolberg. The talk is part of our webinar series sponsored by Legend Financial.

Dr. Brands has authored or edited several books, including most recently *COVID-19 and World Order*, which he co-edited with Francis Gavin, and *The Lessons of Tragedy: Statecraft and World Order*, co-authored with Charles Edel.

Dr. Brands served as special assistant to the secretary of defense for strategic planning (2015-2016) and as lead writer for the Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States. He has consulted with a range of government agencies in the intelligence and national security communities.

Dr. Brands is a columnist for *Bloomberg Opinion*.

Among the books he has authored or edited: *American Grand Strategy in the Age of Trump* (2018); *Marking the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (2016); *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (2014); *Latin America's Cold War* (2010); *From Berlin to Bagdad: America's Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* (2008); *The Power of the Past: History and Statecraft* (co-edited with Jeremi Suri 2015), and *The Last Card: Inside George W. Bush's Decision to Surge in Iraq* (co-edited with Jeffrey Engel, Timothy Sayle, and William Inboden, 2019).



Brands on COVID-19 and World Order

Dr. Hal Brands co-edited a book in 2020, *COVID-19 and World Order: The Future of Conflict, Competition, and Cooperation*. The book describes how the ongoing pandemic, which has killed 2.53 million people and sickened many more, has also devastated the world economy. Moreover, its consequences threaten the fabric of national and international politics. In the words of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, "The coronavirus epidemic will forever alter the world order."

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted global public health and the world economy, but its consequences potentially go much further - threatening democratic values and the fabric of national and international politics. In a series of essays, international experts in public health and medicine, international security, technology, ethics, democracy, and governance imagine a bold new vision for the future.

In a discussion of the work, Dr. Brands noted that COVID-19 erupted amid an unhealthy global order, emphasizing the growing disjuncture between the need for global cooperation and actual commitment to collaboration. Others questioned whether COVID-19 is the big reordering moment for global security and urged the need to learn how to redefine the meanings of power and purpose in a post-COVID-19 world. The pandemic could do positive things for the United States' global role and will likely create a renaissance for American appreciation of the value of international engagement.

Dr. Brands stressed that politicians and leaders of nations need to find a balance between creation of a world where progress is made, global health and climate change are responsibly addressed, and institutions are refined. As current situations stand, there has been a growing divide instead of much-needed unity. "The need for global cooperation has never been higher, but the challenges to getting that cooperation also hasn't been this high either, because of geopolitical strains in the world," he said.

Countries with the Highest COVID-19 Death Rates

Country	Deaths Per 1,000 Population
San Marino	2.16
Belgium	1.93
Czech Republic	1.87
Slovenia	1.84
United Kingdom	1.83
Italy	1.60
Montenegro	1.59
Portugal	1.57
United States	1.55
Bosnia - Herzegovina	1.52

(Source: Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Research Center)

The Foreign Policy Association
of Harrisburg, Inc.
P.O. Box 60665
Harrisburg, PA 17106

Regional Power Competition in the Middle East

Scribed by Abigail Boland
Global Affairs and Political Science
Freshman, Lebanon Valley College

Competition for power in the Middle East is one that spans multiple countries, ethnicities, and religions, says Dr. Larry Goodson, who teaches Middle East studies at the U.S. Army War College.

Dr. Goodson addressed the Foreign Policy Association via a webinar on February 26. He has appeared in person before the FPA on several occasions in the past.

The utilization of new tactics, including what he called "hybrid warfare," has changed the way these countries interact with one another, he said.

Dr. Goodson cited three major rivalries in the region:

- Iran v. Saudi Arabia: Iran is predominantly Shia Muslim and Persian, while the Saudis are mostly Sunni Muslim and Arabic. In addition to religious and ethnic differences, the two countries are divided over control of the Persian Gulf.
- Iran v. Israel: Israel sees Iran as a military threat, so has aligned itself with the Saudis and other Arab states who fear Iranian aggression. Iran sees Israel as attacking its territory.
- Turkey v. the Kurds: Kurdish people are spread across the region and would like their own state. Turkey sees the Kurds as a security threat because they occupy part of the country which is the source of hydroelectric power.

Dr. Goodson said the United States lacks a coherent Middle East policy. There are inherent opportunities and difficulties present for whatever course we decide to take. He said the U.S. could:

- Return to the Iran nuclear deal despite opposition from our allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia,
- Discourage Iran and the Saudis from engaging in proxy fights in Yemen and other neighboring countries,
- Urge Turkey, a NATO ally, to step away from employing a Russian-made air defense system and remove troops from Kurdish areas of northern Syria.
- Pressure Israel to resolve its Palestinian problem.

However, Dr. Goodson said none of the above strategies appear likely at the present time, resulting he believes in a de-emphasis of U.S. policy focus on the Middle East.

FPA 2020-2021 Program Schedule and Topics

Please note several changes in the schedule.

All events via webinars.

We hope to return to the West Shore Country Club in the fall, but only if it is safe to do so.

March 18	The Impact of the COVID Pandemic on the International System (Note the topic change.)
April 8	International Fellows Reception (Cancelled due to the pandemic.)
April 22	Turkey at the Crossroads (An addition to the schedule.)
May 11	U.S. Department of State Visit (virtual)
May 12	European Union Delegation Visit (virtual)
May 20	Iran: How Did We Get Here And What Do We Do Now?

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