

IMPACTS CONSEQUENCES AND RESPONSES TO COVID-19 IN BANGLADESH : A HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH



Background

Geopolitics is a dynamic process and before COVID-19 it was, to an extent, improving through different factors and platforms. The question is, if the world changes, then how will geopolitics change? The consequences of pandemics have always been ground-shifting. COVID-19 too will bring seismic shocks and fundamental shifts in inter-state relations and diplomacy.



Speaker:
Ambassador Shahidul Haque
Senior Fellow, SIPG
North South University



North South University



SIPG
South Asian Institute of Policy
and Governance

Email: cps@northsouth.edu

GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF COVID -19



Challenges

- Corona is exposing and accelerating geopolitical tensions, rivalries and polarization
Function and behavior of states are changing toward becoming more control-oriented
- Years-long existing concepts of security and human security are being redefined again
- Global political powers and globalized markets are being challenged (US-China, India-China)
- The European Union, though trying to steer efficiently, has come under threat
- Shifting “balance of power” from west to east is causing further turmoil
- Major sub-regional crisis as the entire South Asian collaboration is weakening, which is further increasing regionalism in South Asia. The countries of this part of the world are looking beyond South Asia, rather than to its surroundings
- Sharp rise of nationalism and xenophobia
- Multilateralism and international law (UN system) is under threat
- Multilateral arrangements and regulations for the financial system (IMF, World Bank) are failing to sustain the hope of sharing resources equally
- Rule-based open and free economy (WTO/ RTAs) is being abandoned with the rise of protectionism
- Supply chain altered, resulting in capitalism being questioned
- Humanitarianism, migration and refugee structures are being abandoned
- The new architect for the development of the world - Sustainable Development project is getting less attention, mostly due to massive resource constraints
- Paradigm shifts in diplomacy:
 - increasing tensions between and among states
 - involvement of increased number and types of state and non-state actors
 - Widening domain and scope of diplomacy in public and private policy beyond traditional ‘high issue’ foreign policy
 - Changing apparatus and machinery of diplomatic practice (AI)



Recommendations

- Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s 5-point guidance
 - New thinking on human well-being, climate change governance, migration and inequalities
 - Devise pro-people and pro-planet business and industry
 - Utilize technology to build a better world
 - Robust global leadership to re-energize multilateralism and partnership
 - Global compact to share burden and responsibility
 - Critical strategic thinking: assess geopolitical turns and twists keeping in mind national interests

Credible balancing: engage proactively and innovatively with global powers as well global initiatives

Coherent narrative: duly calibrate a foreign policy well-articulated to achieve national interests as well as serve humanity

Co-Leadership Building: strategize to lead global discourse on SDGs’ Migration and Climate Change

IMPACTS CONSEQUENCES AND RESPONSES TO COVID-19 IN BANGLADESH : A HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

Background

In a recent survey by the World Economic Forum on Global Risk (June 2020), Migration came out to be the fifth global risk; insinuating the devastating effect the COVID-19 pandemic is creating on migration and on migrants.

Often, we feel that migration is just a movement from one place to another, especially the labor migration, but it is not. Migration is not a simple movement,

it is a complex outcome of four sets of issues: new economic landscape, geopolitical tensions, new development paradigm, environmental risks. Due to this crisis, a new migration order is unfolding.



Speaker:
Ambassador Shahidul Haque
Senior Fellow, SIPG
North South University



North South University



SIPG

South Asian Institute of Policy
and Governance

Email: cps@northsouth.edu



MIGRATION AND REMITTANCE



Challenges

- COVID-19 impact on migration is having “highly disproportionate negative impacts on vulnerable groups including refugees and migrants” (SDG Report June, 2020)
- Due to pandemic, states adopted “migration tools” to combat it; stopping all kinds of mobility like goods/supplies
- Due to an upsurge of ultra-nationalist and populist mindsets, there is further politicizing of migration and mobility of migrants
- Migrants rights are being more frequently violated
- There is a drastic reduction of remittances, FDI and ODA
- As a state/ community, we have never really addressed migration and mobility holistically; we always addressed it separately instead of considering its mixed flow trait, which will be a major challenge when we try to address this issue during this pandemic
- There is a lack of information for migrants (e.g. those living abroad not fluent in the foreign country’s language)
- Migration flow has come to a halt, e.g. as of June 2020 about 200,000 Bangladeshis “waiting” to depart for work abroad (Shomokaal, 8th June 2020)
- Rise of migrants being stranded as more mobility restrictions increase
- Job loss, anti-migrant policies, xenophobia are forcing migrants to return home
- Sharp rise in Human Trafficking



Recommendations

- Narrative has to change; Bangladesh is a host, transit and also destination country
- Ensure rights of migrants and mobile populations
- Initiate sustainable reintegration for returnees
- In addition to the UN, we have to look to other States and their initiatives. World Economic Forum’s “Great Reset” can be an initiative we can closely try to work with (June 2020)
- Pandemic is not a migration problem, rather migrants can be a part of the solution for COVID-19
- We need a global dialogue on post-pandemic migration governance
- We need a new migration order based on the global compact
- We should keep migrants at the center of all initiatives