

**US Foreign Policy amidst the Decline of a Global Pandemic**

Ige Kehinde Moses

Graduate, Faculty of Political Science and Economics

East Stroudsburg University

200 Prospect St., East Stroudsburg PA,

USA

**ABSTRACT**

The outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic changed the global outlook and trajectory of socio-cultural, political, and human affairs as all facets of society across the world were impacted. It also changed global perceptions about the world's capacity to handle such a global health crisis. Hence, beyond rhetoric and round table, peripheral discussions, this paper seeks to define and critically evaluate US foreign policy amidst the decline of a global pandemic. This inquiry also seeks to understand and appraise the numerous factors that informed newly-evolving structural changes within the foreign policy framework of the United States of America; such as the dire need to tackle health crisis, not only within the United States but across the globe; to evaluate the impact of the global pandemic, and the geopolitical implications of the pandemic.

Even now in the year 2023, we see numerous transitions and consolidation of ideas in the form of policies and their systematic application. The pandemic further helped to deepen international relations amongst states as countries and sovereign entities were forced to coordinate with one another as a result of the nature of the crisis. In retrospect, international organizations such as the World Health Organization were quite instrumental in facilitating medical aid and relief to several parts of the globe; as nations worked hand in hand to ensure the development of vaccines and treatments for Covid 19.

In third-world countries, traditional and herbal remedies were adopted. These long ancient medical practices were put on display through mediums such as television shows, and social media platforms amongst others. Most importantly, this helped to inform the US government and governments across the world on the complex set of concerns such as geopolitical tensions, health concerns, and economic considerations.

**Keywords:** foreign policy, decline, global pandemic, economy

**INTRODUCTION**

The grappling realities of the Covid 19 pandemic informed the US government of the need to establish a transitional bodywork beyond its traditional foreign policy issues to more contemporary and immediate needs within the United States. It also informed the US government to prioritize the well-being of its citizens at home and abroad and to focus more on dealing with issues such as the health and economic crisis within the United States.

One undeniable reality was the fact that the Covid 19 pandemic brought to the fore, the interconnectedness of the world vis-a-vis the need to foster international cooperation in addressing global. This goes to prove that no nation, country, or sovereign entity is self-sufficient. America's economy was largely impacted which also influenced the application of some of its foreign policy endeavors such as the reduction of funding for international and development programs. The United States adopted this measure soon after the global market crashed; an outcome of the global pandemic. During the Trump era, we saw numerous proposals on significant cuts in foreign aid in its budget proposals. Mahmood and Cheema

believed this approach to have undone decades of American diplomacy, evoking intense reactions from friends and foes (Mahmood & Cheema, 2018).

Hence, during the Trump era, public opinion polls, consistently indicated that between two-thirds and three-quarters of Americans did not find him (President Trump) trustworthy. Most citizens of traditional US allies, such as Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, South Korea, and the United Kingdom stated that they had no confidence in former President Trump (Yarhi-Milo, 2018).

The existing inequalities and vulnerabilities in the global system were deepened and further exposed as some nations of the world could not manage the inherent complexities and repercussions of such a crisis. The United States was largely criticized during the heat of the pandemic as calls for greater international solidarity and cooperation were established. The pandemic precarity was largely caused by inequalities in the economic crisis. This became reflected in the realities, ethnic, racial, and social construct of people in the United States.

**Table 1. Changes in unemployment rates by race/ethnicity and gender in the US (February and May 2020)**

Group	Unemployment Rate (% of workforce) February, 2020	Unemployment Rate (% of workforce) May, 2020
Black women	5.2	17.2
Hispanic women	5.5	19.5
White women	2.5	11.9
Black men	7.3	15.8
Hispanic men	4.3	15.5
White men	3.5	9.7

Source: Pew Research Centre, 2020; Bamba et al., 2001

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The term research methodology deals with the systematic and scientific approach adopted by a researcher in the process of scientific investigation and inquiry. This process often takes a route of reviewing numerous pieces of literature, for collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. The subject of research, the objectives of the study, and the required process of investigation often define the sequence and pattern of analysis. The research methodology of essential because it ensures the reliability and validity of the research process and outcomes. It dictates the research design be it a quantitative or qualitative research design. It also helps to address ethical issues in both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. The image of science as intrinsically neutral, beneficial, and value-free was largely eroded after World War II. Be that as it may, the consideration of ethics is made even more essential because of the commitment of quantitative methodology to a reflective stance on the research process and its intellectual, emotional, and political outcomes including the power relationships between researches and researched (Bresler, 1995).

For this qualitative research, non-numerical data were gathered from secondary sources, journal articles, and academic papers amongst others.

### THE DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES OF US FOREIGN POLICY

Throughout history, we have witnessed numerous definitions and interpretations of the objectives of US foreign policy. Many of which constitute today the fabric of numerous political and academic writeups of US foreign policy. In light of most recent years, it is imperative to categorically define and highlight the objectives of US foreign policy. While there are diverse ambitions and peculiarities to US foreign policy especially with regards to various regions. In no particular order, the core objectives of US foreign policy are as follows:

- The promotion and protection of American national security also include the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, fostering the war against terrorism, ensuring the safety of Americans both at home and abroad and the maintenance of military superiority through collective security.
- The advancement of American economic interest through its promotion of free trade, the protection of intellectual property rights, etc.  
According Jacobs and Page in their article titled “Who Influences US Foreign Policy”, they state three competing views that influence US foreign policy which is:
  - i. Neoliberalism and organized groups
  - ii. Epistemic communities and knowledge-based experts
  - iii. The influence of public opinion (Jacobs & Page, 2005).
- Lastly is the promotion of American democratic values which is a fundamental objective of US foreign policy.

### US FOREIGN POLICY AMIDST THE DECLINE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The Covid 19 pandemic is still an ongoing phenomenon but its effect is not as devastating as it was originally. The United States has been prompted to respond to the crisis by implementing in a sense, a scale of preference, such that prioritizes domestic issues which in the context of this research, it is largely related the controlling the speed of the virus and mitigating its economic impact. Issues relating to policy, population, agricultural sustainability, and the structure of both economic and demographic schemes are of huge importance (Ige, 2022).

During the Trump administration, there was a decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization which received widespread criticism, as it was believed to undermine global collective efforts designed to combat the Covid 19 pandemic much more effectively. We also witnessed a rise in tensions between China and the United States especially with regards to issues on the outbreak of the pandemic and the provision of medical supplies.

The pandemic also accelerated patterns in US foreign policy, as the United States has now taken a more confrontational approach towards China, through a series of approaches such as trade restrictions and diplomatic pressure. The Covid 19 pandemic also had a huge impact on US security policy. Because of this existential struggle caused by the pandemic, the United States has drastically changed its focus on two areas which are the medical and social domains. This was due to the existential nature of the threat and the great uncertainties that arose initially from the coronavirus crisis (Rogg, 2020).

While the catastrophic effect of the Covid 19 pandemic has very much subsided, it is however essential to state that the US foreign policy amidst the decline of a global pandemic is still an evolving phenomenon; as structural adjustment programs are still being put in place.

### REFERENCES

- Bambra, C., Lynch, J., Smith, K. E., & Pickett, K. (2021). Pandemic precarity: inequalities in the economic crisis. In *The Unequal Pandemic: COVID-19 and Health Inequalities* (1st ed., pp. 55–76). Bristol University Press.
- Bresler, L. (1995). Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research Methodology. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 126, 29–41.
- Ige, K. M. (2022). Population and Policy: The Evolution and Effects of China’s One-Child Policy. *Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs*, 10(1), 3841-3852.
- Jacobs, L. R., & Page, B. I. (2005). Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy? *The American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 107–123.

- Mahmood, N., & Cheema, P. I. (2018). Trump and the US Foreign Policy Crisis. *Strategic Studies*, 38(4), 1–18.
- Rogg, M. (2020). COVID-19: The Pandemic and its Impact on Security Policy. *PRISM*, 8(4), 54–67.
- Yarhi-Milo, K. (2018). After Credibility: American Foreign Policy in the Trump Era. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(1), 68–77.