



# **Global Viewpoints Forum**

## **Top 10 Geopolitical Risks for 2021 - *What Are They, and What Can We Do?***

**Harborfields Public Library – Zoom Video – March 9, 2021**

**Facilitator: John Busch**



## Top 10 Geopolitical Risks for 2021 – *What Are They, and What Can We Do?*

**Relevant Data:** (Eurasia Group Top Risks 2021 Report, January 2021, Related Ian Bremmer writings and statements)

### Background

#### *Top 10 Geopolitical Risks* (As determined by the Eurasia Group)

1. *46\** – Biden winds, democrat losses in congress and statehouses – Calcified political polarization – Declining global alignment – Domestic challenges: Covid, immigration, inequality, economy – International challenges: China, Russia, global order – Questioned legitimacy of institutions
  2. *Long Covid* – Vaccine availability and distribution – Disparate impact on communities and countries – Stratified recoveries – Anti-incumbent anger – High public debt/interest rates – Economic/political instability – Long term impact on work, travel, real estate, tourism
  3. *Climate: Net Zero Meets G Zero* – Warming temperatures - Paris accords – International climate actions/commitments – Advancing technologies – Competition and lack of coordination – Clean energy supply chains and arms race – Costs/constraints to private sector – Lack of G leadership
  4. *US-China Tensions Broaden* – Bilateral tension spillover to US allies – Vaccine rivalry/diplomacy – Green technologies and supply chains – Re-shoring clean energy – Less confrontational/more multilateral approach – Continuing China provocations – Increased danger
  5. *Global Data Reckoning* – Open global internet vs. government control of data – Data as element of political sovereignty – Innovation ahead of regulation – EU restricts data transfer – Limits on 5G and AI applications – Disruption on international business models – The new Great Game
  6. *Cyber Tipping Point* – Vulnerable devices/absence of diplomacy/instability in cyberspace – Explosion of devices – Internet of things - Government malicious hackers – Cyber tipping point – NotPetya Russia hack caused \$10B damages – Risk of miscalculation – Quantum computing
  7. *Out In The Cold Turkey* – Economic policies hitting political base and patronage – Brewing social tensions and crackdowns – Support from Trump/Merkel fleeting – Risk of pressure on Cyprus/Greece for support at home – EU sanctions vs. need for investment – S-400 vs NATO
  8. *Middle East: Low Oil Takes a Toll* – Covid induced drop in global oil demand – Lower oil prices/cash flow – Economic and political instability – Regional balance impacted – Sunni/Shi conflicts intensify – US outreach to Iran - Anti-Saudi sentiment – Continuing regional conflicts
  9. *Europe After Merkel* – Merkel/Germany EU’s strongest leaders – Will look inward towards elections – Expanding internal EU conflicts - French leadership desires vs. realities – Lockdown economic challenges – Turkey tensions could increase refugee crisis/risk of military conflict
  10. *Latin America Disappoints* – Covid intensifies existing political/social/economic problems – Limited vaccine availability and distribution infrastructure – Growing inequality – Uncontrolled migration – Weak/failed governments spur populists’ candidates – Increased investment risks
- *Red Herrings/Black Swans* – International realignments – Big tech blowback – Iran – Other (?)



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**Discussion Questions:**

***. . . Top 10 Geopolitical Risks for 2021 . . .***

- **Do these risks align with your own thinking – why / why not?**
- **Are there risks that you think should be excluded / included?**
- **Do you see any potential Black Swans over the coming year?**
- **Any thoughts on potential next steps or solutions?**

***Next Forum – April 13, 2021***

**Topic:** CRISPR – *Understanding the Benefits, Risks, Ethics and Unintended Consequences of Gene Editing.*

**Suggestions for Future Topics?**

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