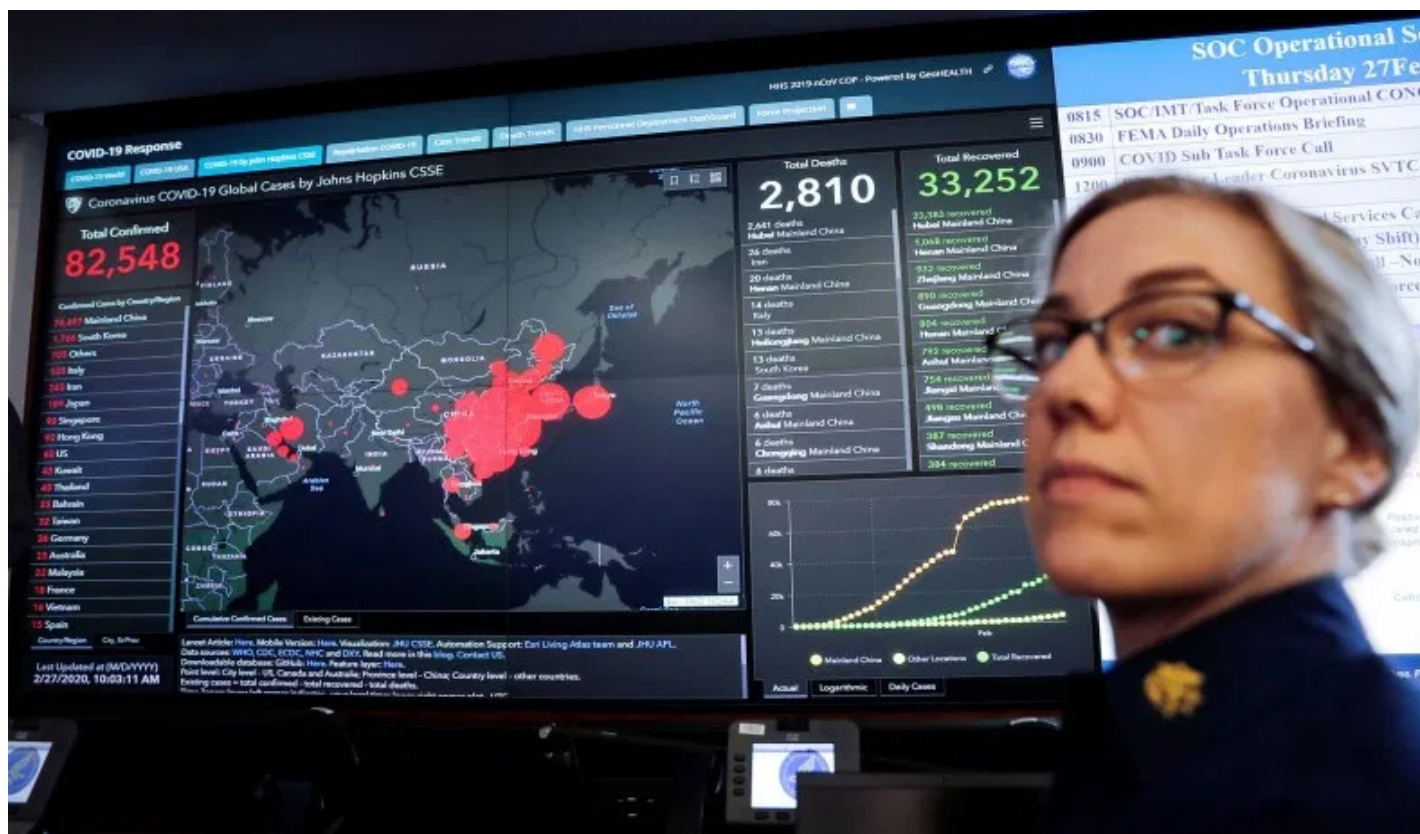


# Globalization Bleeding

By VICTOR DAVIS HANSON | March 3, 2020 6:30 AM



A staff member stands in front of a coronavirus global map at the secretary's operation center during a coronavirus task force meeting at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C., February 27, 2020. (Carlos

Barria/Reuters)

The recurring dream — or nightmare — of being a 'citizen of the world'

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By the early 21st century, cosmopolitans were gushing that high-tech, instant communications, transnational

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and even the nation-state itself all irrelevant. Nationalism was apparently relegated to dustbin of history, as we hit peak Socratic citizen-of-the-worldism.

There were always two flaws to these adolescent giddy reports from world-bestridding *New York Times* op-ed journalists about win-win globalization, with their praise of gleaming airports and superior high-speed rail in what was otherwise Communist China, or accounts of flying first-class on Qatar Airlines was heavenly compared with backward United or American Airlines.

### ***Nothing New under the Sun***

One, globalization was not the end of history. It is a recurrent, cyclical, and at best morally neutral phenomenon that has always, at least in relative terms, waxed and waned over the past 2,500 years of civilization — although recent transcontinentalism carries greater consequences in the era of electronic interconnectedness.

By A.D. 200, there was a globalized Roman world of 2 million square miles, stretching from Hadrian's Wall to the Persian Gulf, and from the Rhine to the Atlas Mountains. Like frogs around the pond of *Mare Nostrum*, all official business was conducted in Latin or, increasingly in the East, Greek. A Roman citizen could enjoy habeas corpus from Bithynia to the Atlantic. Thousands of small towns were marked by fora and agorae, colonnades, and basilicas. While multiracial and non-Italian, otherwise uniformly equipped and trained legions secured the vast borders. It was quite an achievement of providing aqueducts, security, and property rights to 70 million disparate peoples, but it was no longer really the earlier Roman Republic of the Scipios, either.

Yet by A.D. 500, the vast sameness was eroding. Most of the Empire in the West

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History's succession of subsequent would-be imperial globalists — the Byzantines, the Caliphates, the Ottomans, Napoleon, Stalin and Hitler — for a while collapsed national borders and spread uniform language, architecture, customs, and culture until their dreams eventually imploded, usually from overreach, military defeat, corruption, bankrupt ideology, demographic calcification, rampant inflation, or sheer inefficiency and bloated bureaucracy.

It was never set in stone that the European Union could forever abolish national borders and invent something permanent called Europeanism. Or that the new Chinese Silk Road would tie the world together under Chinese hegemony. Or that the World Health Organization's international protocols would make something like the coronavirus virtually impossible. Or that the world would shrink as tens of millions flew on identical Boeing 737 Maxes.

History does not end in something, it continues on with everything.

Tribalism, nations, empires, and globalizations all grow and collapse, not unlike natural long-term changes in climate. Or, as the Greeks believed, societies are like the endless cycles of natural birth, aging, and decline of humans themselves.

### ***One World, One Bigger Problem***

A second problem: Why did we assume that globalization was inherently superior to, say, nationalism, or that pancontinental conglomeration was superior to small autonomous countries? Of course, absorption of local customs and protocols into a uniform culture could be beneficial in some areas, but why by extension would it be in most all areas? Why were globalized projects and empires per se to be preferred to local republics?

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Globalization's supposed selling points — worldwide markets, shared popular tastes, a common commercial language and currency, a nationless elite culture, ease of travel, dissemination of information, and communications — were never so simple. Was the easy transoceanic networking that linked Christopher Steele, John Brennan, Stefan Harper, Joseph Mifsud, and various Russian oligarchical gossip-mongers proof of the attractions of a common global culture?

After all, do we really feel comfortable with Westernized virology labs under the control of the Chinese Communist Party that might have the ability to spread a mistake throughout the world in a matter of hours? Is it really a great thing that imported toxic Chinese drywall or tainted Chinese dog food undercuts American suppliers, and thereby makes us more “competitive,” and creatively destroys those businesses that “need” to be destroyed? Do we think it is good business to have everything from our heart medicines to chemotherapy produced in China?

Trump got elected in part because voters were wary of asymmetrical globalization. He campaigned on secure borders, legal-only immigration, and an end to the outsourcing of key industries (defense, strategic industries, and manufacturing) to a totalitarian and hostile China, and he promoted general American independence in fuel, food, and key components of everyday life. Is the antithesis of his agenda — open borders, the free flow of all foreign nationals, more production of key U.S. consumption in China — the way to combat the coronavirus?

Is diversity actually our strength when over a million illegal immigrants over the past three years from impoverished Central America and southern Mexico — without legal sanction, without criminal background checks, mostly without high-school diplomas and skills, without health audits, and without any

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rival gangs; shade-tree illegal barber shops, illicit day-care centers, and unlicensed, unvaccinated packs of dogs — are these all teaching me to celebrate diversity and to get with the culture of most of the world?

Do we really know which particular Chinese technology students in Silicon Valley — with shades, Levi's, and flip-flops — are in the sometime employment of the Chinese military? Does it matter?

Are those who jet into Davos the sort that we trust to guide our political, commercial, corporate, and entertainment future, to protect the American Bill of Rights? Is it so neat that the NBA players now tailor their political expression to fit the wishes of their financial enablers in China? Has Angela Merkel's globalized visions of immigration come down to earth at the fetid refugee camps of Turkey and Lesbos and Chios?

I can understand why brilliant or powerful or at least well-connected grandees — Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, George Soros, Barack Obama, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Emmanuel Macron, the geniuses of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the European Union — applaud the globalization of the world. But I am not reassured that their money, titles, influence, degrees, or connections mean that they are either wise or even always well-intentioned. Mike Bloomberg's description of supposed know-nothing farming, ancient and modern, reminds one of how global commercial brilliance and practical stupidity are often symbiotic.

Did we really think that fundamentalist Islam would simply accept Western encroachment on its Dark Age culture and allow the disruption of its fervent

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Was it really unforeseen that Bin Laden or the Taliban or the creepy al-Baghdadi might find Westernized social media and the Internet useful in expediting anti-Western terror? The fact that Bin Laden was once a playboy in Beirut or in his dotage supposedly sat glued to Westernized porn on his computer did not suggest he felt anything but hatred for the Westernized modern world and wished to use its own protocols to destroy it. How strange that most of the worst Islamists were creatures of globalization, without which no one would have cared much about their usual local hell-raising and thuggery in the streets of Baghdad, Damascus, or Cairo. Or were they virtual creatures of the Western strip mall: hooked on consumerism while despising the forces that created it, like veteran old bass at the bottom of the pond that still cannot resist biting on the shiny lures that will reel them in.

If our globalized future is what is regurgitated nightly on the standard homogenized CNN or BBC international news, the political orthodoxy of Davos, the platitudes of Brussels and Strasbourg, or the globalized ethos that sent Bill Clinton to Moscow for a quid pro quo \$500,000 honorarium or Hunter Biden to Burisma, or Google to data-mine and massage the international Internet searches of over a 3 billion people, then I would prefer to live under the customs and culture of a flyover nation.

Yes, unfettered globalization gave the impoverished people of sub-Saharan Africa a shot at lifesaving pharmaceuticals, and it spread market capitalism that lifted billions out of poverty. The irony is that the most reliable and trustworthy custodians of dangerous globalized and internationalized science — or volatile harmonized culture, commerce, and politics — were not Orwellian international and stateless technocrats but viable *nation-states* that still might regulate and filter out globalism's excesses and dangers. In the end, we have no control over

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been demonized as chauvinism and protectionism. But it once was a reassuring fact to Americans that most of their lifesaving drugs and pharmaceuticals were produced in North America and Europe under Western auspices rather than in China and India, as it is now reassuring that most Americans consume oil and natural gas that are extracted at home and not imported from the Middle East, Russia, or North Africa. One of the reasons that maximum pressure is working on Iran, and that the theocracy is desperate, is that the Great Satan doesn't need Iranian oil — and that the Little Satan doesn't need it, either.

We should be relieved that the U.S. is still self-sufficient in grains, fruits, meats, and vegetables — and can export its fuels and foods to others rather than solely vice versa, given that it produces them according to standards that are far superior to China's, Russia's, or what is found in Africa and Latin America.

When we become citizens of the world, that is, citizens of everyplace, then we end up citizens of utopia. That is, as citizens of οὐ τόπος — of “no place.”



# World Confronts Coronavirus

South Korean soldiers in protective gears sanitize shacks at Guryong village in Seoul, South Korea, March 3, 2020.

Heo Ran/Reuters



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