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#### CP text: The United States should publicly renounce its support for any COVID TRIPS waivers.

#### Dip cap key to check climate

Yu 20 Alan Yu, a senior fellow and the director of International Climate Policy at the Center for American Progress. Previously, he was a career foreign service officer at the State Department., 12-8-2020, "How U.S. Diplomacy and Diplomats Can Help Get International Climate Action Back on Track," Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2020/12/08/493528/u-s-diplomacy-diplomats-can-help-get-international-climate-action-back-track/, accessed 7/27/2021 EH

Throughout the 2020 presidential campaign and in the early days of the transition, President-elect Joe Biden has made clear that climate action will be a core element of his plan to “build back better,” driving toward a more resilient, sustainable economy that will put the United States on an irreversible path to achieve net-zero emissions by no later than 2050.1 President-elect Biden’s first foreign policy actions have also demonstrated a commitment to make climate change a central pillar of his foreign policy. He has announced a senior national security team that recognizes the linkage between U.S. national security and climate change and is committed to climate action.2 He has raised climate action in every congratulatory call he has received from foreign leaders.3 And, most notably, he has created the new position of special presidential envoy (SPE) for climate change and enlisted former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Washington’s leading climate champion—a strong signal that President-elect Biden intends to return the United States to global climate change leadership. President-elect Biden’s intention to position climate action as a central focus of U.S. foreign policy aligns with recommendations by the Center for American Progress and other leading international climate and U.S. foreign policy experts.4 Although President-elect Biden and SPE-designate Kerry will lead this transformation, it will be the U.S. Department of State and U.S. diplomats who will execute this new charge. This will require fundamental changes to the U.S. foreign policy apparatus and the work of its diplomats. At a time when experts are calling for reform and repurposing how the State Department executes a foreign policy to fit changing global challenges, now is the time to design for the centrality of climate action in the department’s mission and operations.5 There is no alternative to the United States for driving all countries toward climate ambition and action—including China, the world’s largest carbon emitter.6 Restoring U.S. leadership in the global fight against climate change is in the U.S. national interest and the global interest. But while the world would welcome the United States back to the fight against climate change, four years of head-snapping changes in U.S. policy—such as reversals in domestic climate policies and actions, withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, and retreat from global cooperation—have eroded trust in the United States’ consistency and commitment. America must demonstrate that it is a reliable global leader and partner. In order for the Biden administration to restore U.S. climate leadership and then drive global action, it will need to determine what the U.S. government will do and how it will do it. The president and his special envoy must lead, but they should put U.S. diplomats and the State Department in the central role to drive global climate action. This issue brief offers some priority actions for the new administration to consider and a series of detailed recommendations on how to execute these changes through leadership and actions by the president, the secretary of state, and U.S. ambassadors overseas. It concludes with recommendations on management reforms, including a boost in foreign service personnel, which the State Department should adopt to make the centrality of climate diplomacy in U.S. foreign relations built to last. A progressive U.S. agenda on global climate action President-elect Biden has been clear that a return to the Paris Agreement would be the first necessary step for the United States to reclaim its place in international climate leadership,7 but his administration will have much to do to repair the United States’ reputation and move to counter climate change. A U.S. agenda for international climate policy that prioritizes urgent and consequential outcomes should include the following core actions: Promptly deliver an ambitious and credible plan to demonstrate to the world that the United States will act domestically to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.8 Reengage diplomatically in key multilateral processes and with major climate players such as China, India, the European Union, and Brazil to drive stronger and faster collective and country actions. Restore and elevate the United States’ work with developing countries to support their efforts to achieve their development goals in a clean energy pathway that aligns with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s recommendation to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and that strengthens their resilience to the impacts of climate change.9 Accelerate work across U.S. agencies—such as the departments of State, Defense, Treasury, Agriculture, and Energy and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—and with key foreign governments, research institutions, and other stakeholders to deepen America’s understanding and planning to address the national security risk implications of climate change and develop measures to address them. Draw from the U.S. trade and financial policy toolkits to catalyze increased climate action by major emitters beyond U.S. borders. How can the Biden administration best position itself to drive climate action internationally? CAP identifies two key factors: Washington’s demonstration of climate leadership and a strategic use of the full power of U.S. diplomacy. Presidential leadership: The centrality of international climate action in words and deeds As noted earlier, President-elect Biden has demonstrated both in his statements and senior appointments his intention to prioritize climate action in his foreign policy agenda. As a practical matter, the new administration’s first priority on climate will be to deliver an ambitious and credible domestic plan to make up for lost progress. Demonstrating bold action at home is also the first step to regaining U.S. climate influence abroad to drive global action. In turn, helping to drive action internationally will be critical in order for the administration to sustain public support for domestic climate ambition. After he is sworn in, President-elect Biden should use the occasion of his first foreign policy speech to speak directly to the American people about the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for action—and explain how he will deliver climate results globally at the same time he calls for consequential domestic transformations. He should make the case that combatting climate change globally is in the economic and security interests of the United States and declare that, under his National Security Strategy, he will make achieving meaningful climate action beyond U.S. borders a central priority of U.S. foreign policy. President-elect Biden and senior leaders in his administration must reinforce that message and vision to both domestic and international audiences—and, importantly, to his own government. To reinforce his words, the president-elect can take the following steps to put climate at the center of U.S. foreign policy: Engage in presidential climate diplomacy. President-elect Biden has demonstrated this commitment to engaging on climate change in his congratulatory calls from foreign leaders. Once in office, he should continue to make clear to foreign governments that the U.S. government will prioritize addressing climate change in all bilateral relationships. He should commit to making climate an ongoing leader-level topic with key global climate players such as China, India, the European Union, and Brazil, and he should include it on his agenda at the G-7, G-20, NATO, and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, commonly known as APEC. Appoint senior officials committed to climate action. The president should select senior leadership who embrace this new paradigm and are committed to leading this transformation in U.S. foreign policymaking. His nominees for secretary of state, secretary of the treasury, national security adviser, and director of the national economic council do just that. He should look for those same qualities in his nominees for secretaries of defense and energy, U.S. trade representative, USAID administrator, and ambassadors to China, India, the European Union, and Brazil. Give his special presidential envoy for climate change resources and authority. Former Secretary of State John Kerry’s appointment to the SPE role gives the administration immediate credibility in foreign capitals and a leader with diplomatic experience, substantive expertise, and policy passion. To deliver on this central foreign policy priority, the White House must grant the SPE sufficient authority to lead across the government, mobilizing cabinet agencies to align diplomats and technical experts, as well as development assistance and other policy tools. His seat on the National Security Council is critical for that reason. The secretary of state-SPE relationship will also be critically important. Boost the federal climate budget to meet the crisis. To reinvigorate U.S. diplomatic and development strategies, the president-elect should seek funding from Congress to hire 500 new diplomatic positions and boost U.S. climate-related foreign assistance programs to $25 billion over five years. The Biden administration should use the additional funding to make good on U.S. funding commitments to the Green Climate Fund.10 Reenvisioning U.S. diplomacy and climate change For U.S. diplomacy to deliver on global climate action, State Department leaders will need to work seamlessly with SPE-designate Kerry, as the State Department will be the lead agency responsible for executing the reorientation of U.S. foreign policy to a climate-centric vision. The State Department will also need to partner with and rely on the contributions from a wide range of U.S. economic, development, and technical agencies, but it will be ultimately accountable for delivering results. The success of this reorientation will rely critically on the strategic vision and bureaucratic stamina of the secretary of state, who will face both the urgency to act on the climate crisis and the challenge of driving change to the State Department’s outmoded culture, structure, and incentives, which hamper its capacity to deliver stronger climate action. Secretary of State-designate Antony Blinken’s previous experience as deputy secretary in leading and managing the department would enable him to understand the scope of the challenge and lead the change, if confirmed.11 But change will not happen overnight or without the right mix of incentives and structural support. Setting diplomatic course direction at the State Department The Biden administration can draw useful lessons from then-Secretary of State Kerry’s efforts to elevate climate change as a top foreign policy issue and his attempts to implement cultural and operational change at the State Department. Current Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s whole-of-department approach on China policy also offers insights and a potential model for climate policy management. Both examples illustrate that for climate change to be central to U.S. foreign policy—and not just a niche issue that may or may not be considered more broadly—State Department leaders will need to fully integrate it into department policy and operations, including by embassies worldwide. The secretary of state and State Department leadership should take the following key steps to elevate and center climate action in the work of the department: Set the secretary’s vision for climate diplomacy. One of Secretary-designate Blinken’s first tasks will be to translate the administration’s broad framing of climate change policy into a strategic vision and operational guidance for U.S. diplomats across the world and in Washington. During the Obama administration, Secretary Kerry’s focus on climate shook up the department’s tradition-bound bureaucracy. In his first months in office, he used the secretary’s traditional first message to U.S. embassies worldwide to issue a very nontraditional directive, declaring that climate action would be a top department priority. He identified core objectives and directed bureaus and embassies to realign resources and effort accordingly—and they did.12 In the department’s 2015 Quadrennial Diplomatic and Development Review, Secretary Kerry declared “mitigating and adapting to climate change” to be one of four department priorities.13 Transformative while he was there, Secretary Kerry’s efforts to lock in the primacy of climate in U.S. foreign policy went dormant after the change in administration. CAP recommends that the new administration take policy and administrative steps to build sustainability of climate as a State Department priority. Engage in secretarial climate diplomacy. The single most important action the incoming secretary can take to elevate and give urgency to climate in U.S. foreign policy is to do so in his own diplomacy. Secretary Kerry put climate change on the agenda in all of his foreign diplomatic engagements. For some engagements, climate was a top, extensive discussion topic. For others, it was a secondary but present issue. He took a direct role in securing the Paris Agreement. The department and embassies quickly adjusted and followed his new policy direction. Domestically, Secretary Kerry was a persistent and effective advocate with the White House, federal agencies, Congress, industry, and civil society to align effort and resources in support of the department’s climate agenda. Make the right senior State Department appointments. The department will need senior leaders who accept the strategic imperative of embedding climate action as a central pillar of foreign policy. The secretary of State, deputy Secretary, and undersecretaries14 will be instrumental in driving this change from the top. But it will be the department’s regional bureau assistant secretaries15 and U.S. ambassadors overseas who will direct U.S. diplomats on whether to take up and act on climate as a priority in the nation’s foreign policy. Their appointments will be critical. Sync climate policy coordination between the secretary of state and SPE Kerry . Clear communication and close coordination between Secretary-designate Blinken and SPE-designate Kerry will be critical for the administration to best leverage the expertise and policy connections of U.S. diplomats, who typically look to their chains of command for instruction. For good, SPE-designate Kerry knows how the department works and how it conducts climate diplomacy, but unity of communication between the secretary’s office and SPE-designate Kerry will be critical for foreign service officers (FSOs) to implement the administration’s climate action agenda with speed and effectiveness. Importantly, it will be the secretary of state and the department’s leadership who will ultimately drive U.S. diplomats to integrate climate change in their conduct of foreign policy. The success of this effort will be key to ensuring that climate action as a department priority is not vulnerable to changes in leadership or administration. China “core policy” offers a model for departmentwide climate policy action. Secretary Pompeo’s mobilization of bureaus and embassies to execute the administration’s China adversary strategy provides an interesting model that the next administration could draw from to unify and direct all department elements to advance its climate change strategy. Secretary Pompeo instructed the deputy secretary to chair a monthly meeting with all bureau assistant secretaries to identify and prioritize specific policy actions and align resources and efforts to act accordingly. The East Asia assistant secretary coordinated departmentwide efforts; each bureau identified a senior official and staff to coordinate China action within the bureau; and each embassy designated China-responsible officers. For example, under the deputy secretary’s direction, relevant regional and technical bureaus coordinated on a worldwide diplomatic strategy to counter China’s commercial 5G buildout by engaging foreign governments, corporations, and other stakeholders to explain the security risks Chinese technology pose to domestic networks.16 For climate purposes, the deputy secretary could adapt this mechanism to coordinate and leverage the efforts of senior State Department officials and ambassadors to engage senior foreign government leaders—particularly at the presidential or prime ministerial level—to address specific climate policy objectives or strategies. That could be at a global level—for example, a global hydrogen research and development strategy—or at a regional level, such as a Gulf states engagement strategy. Administratively, the assistant secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs could serve as the department coordinator. Regional bureaus and embassies could create structures to coordinate climate-related work within bureaus and between bureaus and embassies. Climate action on the ground: Ambassadors and embassies The urgency for global action requires the State Department to scrap its past practice of putting U.S. climate diplomacy solely in the hands of Washington-based climate policy experts and instead put its ambassadors, diplomats, and local embassy staff at the forefront of advancing U.S. climate policy in host countries. Climate diplomacy for the early 2020s has a very different charge when compared with the mission during the Obama administration and even earlier. At that time, the State Department was focused on negotiating the new design of an international climate regime, and long-time Washington-based climate experts carried the diplomatic load. FSOs, who often have generalist backgrounds, largely played supporting roles or watched from the side. A smaller team was able to successfully carry out the mission.17 But with the Paris Agreement framework now established, countries are focused on implementing their commitments. Climate policy has pivoted from U.N. negotiations to domestic governance. Governments are deciding development pathways; passing legislation and setting rules; debating economic and energy policies with business and labor; and communicating their climate policy vision to the public. It is at this governance stage where U.S. diplomats—advancing U.S. climate policy with government, business, and civil society—do their best work. To put climate at the center of every embassy’s policy mission, the administration can: Make clear embassy senior leaders’ intent. The president’s letter of instruction to chiefs of mission18 should direct all ambassadors to make climate change a priority issue in their embassies’ work in host countries. Just as the secretary would communicate to the entire department the centrality of climate change, U.S. ambassadors should do the same to embassy staff and in their own diplomacy. Ambassadors should prioritize climate change action appropriately in their Integrated Country Strategy, the strategic and priority-setting policy document for U.S. foreign policy in the host country.19 Institute a whole-of-embassy effort. Economic or science sections traditionally manage U.S. embassies’ climate change diplomacy. But because climate change policy spans the equities of nearly all parts of a typical embassy, the ambassador’s office should lead and direct a holistic approach to the embassy’s policy strategy. Under the deputy chief of mission’s (DCM) direction, for example, the embassy country team should make briefings on embassy actions on climate change a standard agenda item in its regular meeting. Forging a cohesive team that includes State Department economic and public affairs officers; defense attaches; and Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, and USAID officers is vital to a successful, full-court press to advance a U.S. climate agenda. Also, U.S. embassies have long benefited from the talent and experience of local professional staff, many of whom previously served in prestigious roles in government, industry, and academia. They are an invaluable resource that embassies should elevate to serve as full partners to advance the U.S. climate agenda. Leverage the diplomatic tool of climate assistance. There have been few more effective tools for U.S. technical agencies and embassies to drive on-the-ground climate policy implementation than the Obama administration’s Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI), particularly in developing countries. Under the GCCI, the State Department funded the overseas climate-related activities of experts from the U.S. departments of Agriculture, Energy, and the Treasury and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,20 who advanced climate policy objectives and built important political and economic connections. The Biden administration should revive and boost GCCI-like activities. As noted above, CAP recommends seeking $25 billion over five years. Launch State Department annual climate country reports. The State Department’s annual Human Rights Country Report is one of the U.S. government’s most powerful instruments for monitoring and potentially driving improved human rights performance around the world.21 An annual State Department Climate Change Country Report could serve a similar catalytic function. Embassies could provide annual updates on host country greenhouse gas emissions; their climate policies and actions; climate adaptation preparedness; transition trends in the power, transportation, and other sectors; and more. Climate country reports could serve to increase transparency of country actions—or inaction and highlight creative solutions. Making climate diplomacy built to last in U.S. foreign relations Nearly all the leadership and management changes recommended in this issue brief are subject to the risk of fading or termination should a subsequent administration take a less urgent approach to climate change. To sustain prioritized climate action, the Biden administration, in any broader State Department reform strategy, should incorporate new measures to ensure climate change is mainstreamed into how the department and the foreign service conduct U.S. foreign relations. The secretary of state and the department leadership team can take administrative measures in the following areas to make “built to last” the goal of embedding climate action into U.S. foreign policy. More people Executing climate action effectively, both under the Biden administration and over the long term, will require many more foreign affairs professionals. The administration should create 500 new foreign service and local U.S. embassy staff positions at the State Department, USAID, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Agriculture—all dedicated to the international climate brief. An exodus of diplomats in recent years22 might tempt the State Department to direct new officers and resources to traditional foreign policy priority areas. It should resist doing so. Looming global challenges such as climate change require the department to reorient its strategic outlook and resources. More climate-smart people For most foreign affairs professionals, climate change is a subject that is expansive, complex, and new. That can no longer stand. The department should implement training across a range of climate policy functions and at all seniority levels to elevate and sustain climate policy and program management competencies. A departmentwide climate training program should include climate policy familiarization modules at entering-officer orientation, as well as DCM and ambassador courses; required courses on topics such as climate diplomacy, decarbonization policy measures, and climate science for all officers with climate policy responsibilities; and distance learning units on priority climate policy initiatives for all personnel. The department should also offer promising officers one-year external assignments at agencies such as USAID, the Department of Energy, the U.S. Development Finance Corporation, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency to learn about these agencies’ climate-related tools and capabilities. To realize those training and detail opportunities without compromising the State Department’s operational readiness, the department needs more “float” personnel slots, which the 500 new-hire positions would help make possible. More climate-as-career people The Biden administration can further embed climate change as a core State Department policy priority over time and across changes in administration with changes to organizational incentives that influence the culture of the foreign service.23 Foreign service job assignments and promotion are two areas where the department can act.24 If you were to speak to any FSO, she would tell you that her career path decisions are largely influenced by two incentives: onward job assignments and promotion potential. For any number of historical reasons, the personnel system rewards both in assignments and promotion those officers who specialize in regions—such as Europe, the Middle East, or East Asia—over those who specialize in global or transnational issues, such as climate change, nonproliferation, or refugee matters. To rebalance the system to make climate change a desirable career path for FSOs, the department should take the following actions: Create more embassy climate change jobs. Officers see little foreign service career growth opportunity in climate. At a typical embassy, climate change responsibility is given to one midlevel officer. Supervisors engage on an ad hoc basis, ambassadors and DCMs even less so. The department should create clear career ladder opportunities from midlevel to senior positions, both in Washington and at embassies. Embassies in major capitals should have senior climate officers who lead multiofficer teams. Consider climate performance in foreign service promotion decisions. Given the up-or-out system, all FSOs focus on how a job’s responsibilities and visibility can help them move up the ladder. The foreign service promotion system discourages an officer from considering a climate change assignment or career focused on climate. The system rewards accomplishments that support department-specified priorities, of which climate has long been absent. The department should work with the American Foreign Service Association to add to its promotion precepts a specific expectation that officers demonstrate positive performance on climate to be considered for promotion at each professional level. Reward and recognize climate performance. The department’s servicewide awards program is another signal of the low priority it places on climate change. There are awards for DCM performance, political reporting, consular management, and other areas. There is no department award recognizing foreign service performance on climate change.25 The department should create such an award. Conclusion The majority of Americans expect President-elect Biden to act promptly on climate change, both at home and abroad.26 The gravity of the threat of climate change to the United States and the world requires the Biden administration to make climate change a central focus of U.S. foreign policy, aligning the resources and influence of the United States to help drive global action. The president must lead, but he should put U.S. diplomats and the State Department in the central role for executing this new charge and driving global action. These recommendations should go a long way in enabling them to do so.

#### Biden is currently avoiding disagreements with other WTO members over TRIPS. The plan flips that to create consensus, expending critical diplomatic capital

Day 7-19, Meagan Day is a staff writer at Jacobin. Jacobin, 7-19-21. “Biden Just Turned Down a Golden Opportunity to End Vaccine Apartheid” <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2021/07/biden-administration-covid-19-vaccine-apartheid-global-south-distribution-merkel> brett

The protest on Thursday was organized by a coalition of progressive trade advocacy organizations who object to Merkel’s obstruction of the patent waiver proposal in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO operates by consensus, which means that, in principle, any intransigent party can successfully block the implementation of a policy backed by more than a hundred forty countries. “The protection of intellectual property is a source of innovation and this has to remain so in the future,” Merkel has said in defense of her opposition to the waiver, which would exempt COVID-19 vaccines from the patent protection rules spelled out in the WTO’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement, or TRIPS. To improve global vaccine access, Merkel prefers instead to rely on the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative (COVAX), a program that has agreements with current vaccine patent holders and would not challenge their intellectual property rights. COVAX caps vaccine doses at 20 percent of a country’s population, and is meant only as a supplement to the ordinary market-based system. Critics say that while it will protect corporate profits, it will be insufficient to end the pandemic worldwide. Merkel’s opposition to a waiver of TRIPS nominally puts her at odds with Biden, who publicly avowed his support for the patent waiver in May. Biden was praised by progressives and censured by the pharmaceutical industry for his position. But now groups who want to see the policy implemented say that Biden isn’t doing enough to convince allies like Merkel and make the idea a reality. The White House meeting on Thursday came and went with no apparent change in Merkel’s position. Biden did not mention the TRIPS waiver in his post-meeting press conference, suggesting either that it was not discussed or that Biden felt no need to publicly pressure Merkel after she privately reiterated her position. Biden and Merkel’s discussion appeared to focus more on Nord Stream 2, a Russian oil pipeline to Germany that Biden worries will give Russia greater influence over the European energy sector and undermine US dominance. He was willing to give airtime to this disagreement, but said nothing about their disagreement over the vaccine patent waiver. “For Merkel to get a high-profile White House victory lap and have Pres. Biden proclaim that she ‘never fails to stand for human dignity’ while Biden has failed to get Merkel to stop blocking the WTO COVID vaccine waiver delivers a punishing blow to efforts to end the pandemic,” said Lori Wallach, director of the group Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch. “To show global leadership, Biden had to get Germany to stop blocking what he says is a U.S. priority to save tens of millions of lives,” she added. “This summit was a failure.” COVID deaths have risen 40 percent in Africa in the past week alone. Only 1 percent of Africans have been vaccinated, as wealthy nations on other continents have preordered vaccine doses well into the future. Africa’s COVID spike illustrates the urgency of waiving vaccine patents so that global production can scale up immediately, even though to do so would undermine pharmaceutical profits. Every month that passes without a patent waiver, COVID deaths increase in countries without the resources to buy vaccines. So do the chances of viral mutations whose risks won’t necessarily be contained to the Global South. Merkel’s rejection of a TRIPS waiver is a deadly policy rooted in her politics of centrist market liberalism — a politics that, in this case, will result in many more deaths worldwide if not swiftly reversed. Biden just had a chance to take a stand and push for that reversal, but he neglected to spend his political capital pushing the chancellor to get on board with our best shot at ending the pandemic globally. He has taken the right public position on TRIPS, but so far it’s still an open question how serious he is about making it a reality.

#### Diplomatic capital is finite---the plan distracts US focus

Anderson & Grewell 01 Terry L. Anderson is executive director of Political Economy Research Center / J. Bishop Grewell is a research associate with PERC, The Greening of Foreign Policy, Chicago Journal of International Law Fall, 2001 2 Chi. J. Int'l L. 427 (Lexis-Nexis), https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1422&context=cjil

Greater international environmental regulation can increase international tension. Foreign policy is a bag of goods that includes issues from free trade to arms trading to human rights. Each new issue in the bag weighs it down, lessening the focus on other issues and even creating conflicts between issues. Increased environmental regulations could cause countries to lessen their focus on international threats of violence such as the sale of ballistic missiles or border conflicts between nations. As countries must watch over more and more issues arising in the international policy arena, they will stretch the resources necessary to deal with traditional international issues. As Schaefer (2000, 46) writes, “Because diplomatic currency is finite . . . it is critically important that the United States focus its diplomatic efforts on issues of paramount importance to the nation.

#### Warming encompasses AND outweighs every existential threat

Torres 16 (Phil, affiliate scholar @ Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies PhD candidate @ Rice University in tropical conservation biology, Op-ed: Climate Change Is the Most Urgent Existential Risk, <http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/Torres20160807>)

Humanity faces a number of formidable challenges this century. Threats to our collective survival stem from asteroids and comets, supervolcanoes, global pandemics, climate change, biodiversity loss, nuclear weapons, biotechnology, synthetic biology, nanotechnology, and artificial superintelligence. With such threats in mind, an informal survey conducted by the Future of Humanity Institute placed the probability of human extinction this century at 19%. To put this in perspective, it means that the average American is more than a thousand times more likely to die in a human extinction event than a plane crash.\* So, given limited resources, which risks should we prioritize? Many intellectual leaders, including Elon Musk, Stephen Hawking, and Bill Gates, have suggested that artificial superintelligence constitutes one of the most significant risks to humanity. And this may be correct in the long-term. But I would argue that two other risks, namely climate change and biodiveristy loss, should take priority right now over every other known threat. Why? Because these ongoing catastrophes in slow-motion will frame our existential predicament on Earth not just for the rest of this century, but for literally thousands of years to come. As such, they have the capacity to raise or lower the probability of other risks scenarios unfolding. Multiplying Threats Ask yourself the following: are wars more or less likely in a world marked by extreme weather events, megadroughts, food supply disruptions, and sea-level rise? Are terrorist attacks more or less likely in a world beset by the collapse of global ecosystems, agricultural failures, economic uncertainty, and political instability? Both government officials and scientists agree that the answer is “more likely.” For example, the current Director of the CIA, John Brennan, recently identified “the impact of climate change” as one of the “deeper causes of this rising instability” in countries like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Ukraine. Similarly, the former Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, has described climate change as a “threat multiplier” with “the potential to exacerbate many of the challenges we are dealing with today — from infectious disease to terrorism.” The Department of Defense has also affirmed a connection. In a 2015 report, it states, “Global climate change will aggravate problems such as poverty, social tensions, environmental degradation, ineffectual leadership and weak political institutions that threaten stability in a number of countries.” Scientific studies have further shown a connection between the environmental crisis and violent conflicts. For example, a 2015 paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences argues that climate change was a causal factor behind the record-breaking 2007-2010 drought in Syria. This drought led to a mass migration of farmers into urban centers, which fueled the 2011 Syrian civil war. Some observers, including myself, have suggested that this struggle could be the beginning of World War III, given the complex tangle of international involvement and overlapping interests. The study’s conclusion is also significant because the Syrian civil war was the Petri dish in which the Islamic State consolidated its forces, later emerging as the largest and most powerful terrorist organization in human history. A Perfect Storm The point is that climate change and biodiversity loss could very easily push societies to the brink of collapse. This will exacerbate existing geopolitical tensions and introduce entirely new power struggles between state and nonstate actors. At the same time, advanced technologies will very likely become increasingly powerful and accessible. As I’ve written elsewhere, the malicious agents of the future will have bulldozers rather than shovels to dig mass graves for their enemies. The result is a perfect storm of more conflicts in the world along with unprecedentedly dangerous weapons. If the conversation were to end here, we’d have ample reason for placing climate change and biodiversity loss at the top of our priority lists. But there are other reasons they ought to be considered urgent threats. I would argue that they could make humanity more vulnerable to a catastrophe involving superintelligence and even asteroids. The basic reasoning is the same for both cases. Consider superintelligence first. Programming a superintelligence whose values align with ours is a formidable task even in stable circumstances. As Nick Bostrom argues in his 2014 book, we should recognize the “default outcome” of superintelligence to be “doom.” Now imagine trying to solve these problems amidst a rising tide of interstate wars, civil unrest, terrorist attacks, and other tragedies? The societal stress caused by climate change and biodiversity loss will almost certainly compromise important conditions for creating friendly AI, such as sufficient funding, academic programs to train new scientists, conferences on AI, peer-reviewed journal publications, and communication/collaboration between experts of different fields, such as computer science and ethics. It could even make an “AI arms race” more likely, thereby raising the probability of a malevolent superintelligence being created either on purpose or by mistake. Similarly, imagine that astronomers discover a behemoth asteroid barreling toward Earth. Will designing, building, and launching a spacecraft to divert the assassin past our planet be easier or more difficult in a world preoccupied with other survival issues? In a relatively peaceful world, one could imagine an asteroid actually bringing humanity together by directing our attention toward a common threat. But if the “conflict multipliers” of climate change and biodiversity loss have already catapulted civilization into chaos and turmoil, I strongly suspect that humanity will become more, rather than less, susceptible to dangers of this sort. Context Risks We can describe the dual threats of climate change and biodiversity loss as “context risks.” Neither is likely to directly cause the extinction of our species. But both will define the context in which civilization confronts all the other threats before us. In this way, they could indirectly contribute to the overall danger of annihilation — and this worrisome effect could be significant. For example, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of climate change will be “severe,” “pervasive,” and “irreversible.” Or, as a 2016 study published in Nature and authored by over twenty scientists puts it, the consequences of climate change “will extend longer than the entire history of human civilization thus far.” Furthermore, a recent article in Science Advances confirms that humanity has already escorted the biosphere into the sixth mass extinction event in life’s 3.8 billion year history on Earth. Yet another study suggests that we could be approaching a sudden, irreversible, catastrophic collapse of the global ecosystem. If this were to occur, it could result in “widespread social unrest, economic instability and loss of human life.” Given the potential for environmental degradation to elevate the likelihood of nuclear wars, nuclear terrorism, engineered pandemics, a superintelligence takeover, and perhaps even an impact winter, it ought to take precedence over all other risk concerns — at least in the near-term. Let’s make sure we get our priorities straight.

## 2

#### Innovation is high now

Kenan 6-9, The Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise develops and promotes innovative, market-based solutions to vital economic issues. With the belief that private enterprise is the cornerstone of a prosperous and free society, the institute fosters the entrepreneurial spirit to stimulate economic prosperity and improve the lives of people in North Carolina, across the country and around the world. Kenan Institute, 6-9-21, “Turbocharging Healthcare Innovation” <https://kenaninstitute.unc.edu/kenan-insight/turbocharging-healthcare-innovation/> brett

As COVID-19 began to spread around the globe, companies and entrepreneurs stepped up to develop new technologies and redeploy existing technologies in their portfolio to tackle the disease and cope with the constraints it brought. The pandemic forced telemedicine into the mainstream and brought mRNA vaccine technology to the forefront. At the same time, new technologies such as CRISPR gene editing and artificial intelligence (AI) approaches have been finding their niche for speeding up drug discovery and development.

Healthcare innovation was already on the fast train before the pandemic. Now, it’s been turbocharged. In this Kenan Insight, we explore why the 2021 Trends in Entrepreneurship Report names emerging technology in the healthcare industry as a key trend for entrepreneurship, along with some of the challenges that come with fast-moving technology advances.

A trajectory of explosive growth

The healthcare industry has experienced extraordinary growth over the past four decades. Big pharma is driving much of this boom, accounting for 10% of the U.S. economy’s overall R&D spending at the end of 2020.1 The medical device industry, expected to generate $54.5 billion over the next four years, is another important player.2 This growth is catching the attention of investors. In 2020, health tech startups raised approximately $14 billion in venture capital funding, nearly double that of 2019.3 CB Insights estimates there are now 51 healthcare unicorns, defined as startups valued at $1 billion or more.

Health-tech venture funding reached record levels in 2020

Chart, bar chart, histogram

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Source: Deloitte analysis of Rock Health’s Digital Health Funding Database

Innovation is a critical driver in the healthcare sector. Increasing rates of innovation can be seen in the sharp rise of U.S. patents granted for pharmaceuticals and medical devices in recent years. Between 2013 and 2019, more than 60,000 pharmaceutical patents and more than 125,000 medical device patents were granted.4 Today, there are more than 18,500 drugs at various stages of the development process worldwide.5

Maturing technologies

The increasing numbers of patent applications, clinical trials and collaborations are leading indicators of a vibrant and growing biopharmaceutical ecosystem. However, the proliferation of innovation tools, rather than just innovative products, is what will allow the next generation of pharmaceutical drugs to be discovered more quickly and more efficiently, to provide more effective treatments and to target diseases that have so far evaded our collective intervention efforts. As scientists learn more about human genes and their connection to diseases, these insights can feed into tools that make drug R&D faster, less expensive and more precise.

AI technology has matured to the point where it can now be used reliably to analyze huge amounts of data and solve extremely complex problems. This has made AI attractive to the pharmaceutical industry as a tool that can enable more efficient identification of new drugs and drug targets. In 2020, drug discovery was the focus area that received the most private AI investment, with more than $13.8 billion invested globally. This was 4.5 times higher than the total for 2019.6

CRISPR gene editing is another hot technology that is enabling the development of more innovative and accurate therapeutic strategies. This tool is making it easier to determine the genes and proteins that cause or prevent disease and thus to identify new targets for potential drugs. As of the second quarter of 2020, there were 724 active companies around the world focused on using or developing CRISPR technology and almost 50 clinical trials involving CRISPR.7

mRNA was certainly one of the brightest technology stars of 2020. After decades of research, mRNA proved to be the ideal solution for developing a highly effective COVID-19 vaccine at record speed. However, this is likely only the beginning of the story for mRNA. Therapies based on mRNA technology are being developed to treat malaria, cancer and multiple sclerosis and we’ll likely see more mRNA-based vaccines designed to fight a host of current and future infectious diseases. As of February 2021, CB Insights reports more than 520 ongoing clinical trials worldwide that were applying mRNA technology to more than 20 disease classes.8

#### The plan undermines the economic certainty provided by TRIPS---that disrupts innovation in every sector

Lee and Holt 5-10 Tom Lee & Christopher Holt 5-10, Tom received a B.A. in Economics with a Statistics Minor from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2018. Christopher has a Master’s in Congressional and Presidential Studies from The Catholic University of America, and he studied political science as an undergraduate at Whitman College. American Action Forum, May 10, 2021. “Intellectual Property, COVID-19 Vaccines, and the Proposed TRIPS Waiver” <https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/intellectual-property-covid-19-vaccines-and-the-proposed-trips-waiver/> brett

Public posturing aside, the Biden Administration surely knows that a TRIPS waiver for COVID-19 related IP will likely be futile. Scaling up production, as Klain alluded to, has proven to be the main challenge to manufacturing larger quantities of vaccine.[4] Waiving TRIPS would do nothing to address this constraint. Waiving TRIPS would instead encourage IP abuse and distort market forces and innovation. TRIPS Provisions The TRIPS agreement is an international trade agreement among all 164 members of the WTO. It is one of three founding and central components of the WTO, along with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The purpose of the TRIPS agreement is to unify trade and provide increased certainty in international economic relations. Among other things, TRIPS specifically: Provides minimum IP protections and standards that apply to all WTO members; Outlines enforcement actions that countries can undertake to remedy violations of the above standards; and Establishes dispute settlement procedures to allow countries to negotiate an end to disagreements. TRIPS does, however, allow for compulsory licensing where in a public health emergency, a country may copy patented drugs without the permission of the original manufacturer with WTO approval. Proposal to Waive TRIPS The recent proposal submitted by India and South Africa and signed on by over 100 developing countries would waive four specific protections of COVID-19 vaccines and related medical products and services: Copyrights; Patents; Trademarks; and Undisclosed information procedures. The first three protections allow companies to prevent foreign companies from copying their products. They require the original company to disclose information about the product, however. Foreign companies are free to study the disclosed information of the patent but cannot copy it unless given a licensing agreement from the original company. Contrarily, companies can choose not to get patents for their products and instead keep their information secret. The fourth protection prevents the theft of trade secrets of foreign companies. While TRIPS has been waived previously, if approved, this would be the broadest waiver since the agreement’s enactment in 1995.[5] TRIPS and Manufacturing Capacity The primary justification for waiving TRIPS is that IP protections cause underutilized manufacturing capacity. By removing TRIPS, developing nations could copy patented drugs and use their own manufacturers to produce vaccines, thereby increasing access. This rationale, however, is flawed. Adar Poonawalla, CEO of the Serum Institute of India—currently the largest producer of COVID-19 vaccine doses in the world—has argued that access to IP is not limiting vaccine production, rather it is the time involved in scaling up manufacturing capacity.[6] It should also be noted that Moderna has already pledged not to enforce its own COVID-19 vaccine patents during the pandemic.[7] In addition, COVID-19 vaccines such as those produced by Pfizer and Moderna use emerging and very complex technologies and processes. These technologies and processes are essential to producing and increasing scale of COVID-19 vaccines. They are not published in patents but rather kept as trade secrets. The fourth protection mentioned above only prevents theft of trade secrets; it does not allow or disallow a company from keeping trade secrets. Waiving TRIPS therefore does nothing to speed up vaccine production even if there were excess manufacturing capacity, as manufacturers would not receive the essential trade secrets they would need. The issue at present is not underutilized manufacturing capacity, rather scaling up production has been the largest difficulty of vaccine manufacturing. It takes anywhere from 60 to 120 days to produce a single batch of vaccines. Even with manufacturing challenges, between 9.5 and 13.5 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines are projected to be produced in 2021. Eleven billion doses would be sufficient to vaccinate 70 percent of the world population and reach heard immunity, assuming 2-dose vaccinations.[8] TRIPS and Compulsory Licensing Separate from a broad IP waiver, TRIPS includes a compulsory licensing process. Foreign manufacturers are free to ask a patentee for a voluntary licensing agreement to manufacture a product. This process can be long, however, and the patentee can ultimately refuse. When this happens, TRIPS allows the manufacturer through its national government to grant a compulsory license provided the manufacturer has first sought a voluntary licensing agreement. This compulsory license is issued by that national government to the manufacturer to produce a patented drug without the original patentee’s permission. Each compulsory license must apply to a specific product. It is important to note that TRIPS does not have a governing body which oversees this process. At the same time, if a country grants an internationally unpopular compulsory license, it will face economic, political, and retaliatory ramifications from other governments and private firms, so governments must weigh these costs. In addition, if a country declares a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency, TRIPS allows a foreign manufacturer to immediately apply for a compulsory license, skipping the process to apply for a voluntary license. A TRIPS waiver, like the one suggested for COVID-19-related IP, is therefore entirely unnecessary—even if IP protections were an obstacle to vaccine access. In the case of COVID-19, compulsory licensing would not, however, address the real issues related to scaling manufacturing capacity. The Vagueness of the Proposed TRIPS Waiver Under the broad language of the proposed TRIPS waiver, any drugs that have use for patients with COVID-19, including those that predate the pandemic, could lose patent protection. Thus, a foreign company could produce a specific drug under the auspices of COVID-19 but sell it for another disease. Moreover, the foreign company would not have to provide any financial compensation to the company from whom they took the IP. The proposal’s language is so broad that other patented medical products beyond pharmaceutical drugs such as masks, non-pharmaceutical chemical compounds, and respirators would also be subject to the waiver. It is also noteworthy that the vaccines developed by Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are not currently approved by the Indian government for use in India, due to regulatory obstacles related to localized clinical trials. Effectively then, India is pointing to IP protections as an obstacle to obtaining vaccines they have not even approved for use in their country.[9] At the same time, a concerted global effort is underway to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines in all countries. The WHO, Gavi (previously the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization), and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations have partnered to establish the COVAX initiative, designed specifically to distribute vaccines to the developing world. COVAX is projected to distribute at least 2 billion vaccines by the end of 2021.[10] Johnson & Johnson has further announced plans to distribute 500 million vaccines to developing nations starting in mid-2021, in addition to those it already allocated to other nations.[11] TRIPS and Innovation The TRIPS agreement and its IP protections were created to increase unity and certainty in the global economy. The economic certainty provided by IP protections preserve competitiveness and increase value—i.e., IP protections provide incentives to companies to create new and groundbreaking technologies. In terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps it is these incentives that encouraged companies to produce vaccines quickly and successfully. Without IP protections, companies could not reap the rewards of their efforts. Waiving TRIPS would weaken the market forces that encourage innovation. Combined with the broad language of the TRIPS waiver, the loss of innovation would happen in many industries and sectors of the global economy. Conclusion The proposal to waive TRIPS is based on the misperception that IP protections serve as barriers to COVID-19 vaccine production. In fact, the difficulty of scaling up production is the key challenge. Waiving TRIPS will do nothing to increase vaccine production, represents poor policy toward IP, and will create a whole new set of trade policy challenges. A better approach is to build upon current global vaccine partnerships while ensuring that companies can secure their supply chains. Such efforts would increase access to vaccines while avoiding the potentially widespread and long-term problems associated with waiving IP protections provided by TRIPS.

#### Innovation is an impact filter---it encompasses AND outweighs every existential threat.

Matthews 18 Dylan Matthews . Co-founder of Vox, citing Nick Beckstead @ Rutgers University. 10-26-2018. "How to help people millions of years from now." Vox. <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/26/18023366/far-future-effective-altruism-existential-risk-doing-good> brett

If you care about improving human lives, you should overwhelmingly care about those quadrillions of lives rather than the comparatively small number of people alive today. The 7.6 billion people now living, after all, amount to less than 0.003 percent of the population that will live in the future. It’s reasonable to suggest that those quadrillions of future people have, accordingly, hundreds of thousands of times more moral weight than those of us living here today do. That’s the basic argument behind Nick Beckstead’s 2013 Rutgers philosophy dissertation, “On the overwhelming importance of shaping the far future.” It’s a glorious mindfuck of a thesis, not least because Beckstead shows very convincingly that this is a conclusion any plausible moral view would reach. It’s not just something that weird utilitarians have to deal with. And Beckstead, to his considerable credit, walks the walk on this. He works at the Open Philanthropy Project on grants relating to the far future and runs a charitable fund for donors who want to prioritize the far future. And arguments from him and others have turned “long-termism” into a very vibrant, important strand of the effective altruism community. But what does prioritizing the far future even mean? The most literal thing it could mean is preventing human extinction, to ensure that the species persists as long as possible. For the long-term-focused effective altruists I know, that typically means identifying concrete threats to humanity’s continued existence — like unfriendly artificial intelligence, or a pandemic, or global warming/out of control geoengineering — and engaging in activities to prevent that specific eventuality. But in a set of slides he made in 2013, Beckstead makes a compelling case that while that’s certainly part of what caring about the far future entails, approaches that address specific threats to humanity (which he calls “targeted” approaches to the far future) have to complement “broad” approaches, where instead of trying to predict what’s going to kill us all, you just generally try to keep civilization running as best it can, so that it is, as a whole, well-equipped to deal with potential extinction events in the future, not just in 2030 or 2040 but in 3500 or 95000 or even 37 million. In other words, caring about the far future doesn’t mean just paying attention to low-probability risks of total annihilation; it also means acting on pressing needs now. For example: We’re going to be better prepared to prevent extinction from AI or a supervirus or global warming if society as a whole makes a lot of scientific progress. And a significant bottleneck there is that the vast majority of humanity doesn’t get high-enough-quality education to engage in scientific research, if they want to, which reduces the odds that we have enough trained scientists to come up with the breakthroughs we need as a civilization to survive and thrive. So maybe one of the best things we can do for the far future is to improve school systems — here and now — to harness the group economist Raj Chetty calls “lost Einsteins” (potential innovators who are thwarted by poverty and inequality in rich countries) and, more importantly, the hundreds of millions of kids in developing countries dealing with even worse education systems than those in depressed communities in the rich world. What if living ethically for the far future means living ethically now? Beckstead mentions some other broad, or very broad, ideas (these are all his descriptions): Help make computers faster so that people everywhere can work more efficiently Change intellectual property law so that technological innovation can happen more quickly Advocate for open borders so that people from poorly governed countries can move to better-governed countries and be more productive Meta-research: improve incentives and norms in academic work to better advance human knowledge Improve education Advocate for political party X to make future people have values more like political party X ”If you look at these areas (economic growth and technological progress, access to information, individual capability, social coordination, motives) a lot of everyday good works contribute,” Beckstead writes. “An implication of this is that a lot of everyday good works are good from a broad perspective, even though hardly anyone thinks explicitly in terms of far future standards.” Look at those examples again: It’s just a list of what normal altruistically motivated people, not effective altruism folks, generally do. Charities in the US love talking about the lost opportunities for innovation that poverty creates. Lots of smart people who want to make a difference become scientists, or try to work as teachers or on improving education policy, and lord knows there are plenty of people who become political party operatives out of a conviction that the moral consequences of the party’s platform are good. All of which is to say: Maybe effective altruists aren’t that special, or at least maybe we don’t have access to that many specific and weird conclusions about how best to help the world. If the far future is what matters, and generally trying to make the world work better is among the best ways to help the far future, then effective altruism just becomes plain ol’ do-goodery.\*

## 3

#### A] Forecloses future improvement – we can never improve society because our impact is irreversible

#### B] Turns suffering – mass death causes suffering because people can’t get access to resources and basic necessities

#### C] Moral obligation – allowing people to die is unethical and should be prevented because it creates ethics towards other people

#### D] Objectivity – body count is the most objective way to calculate impacts because comparing suffering is unethical

#### abhorrent and makes debate unsafe

# Case

## AT Vaccine diplomacy

#### No Russia/China/India vaccine diplomacy—they’re having their own problems

Culbertson and Garcia 21 Alix Culbertson, News Reporter and Carmen Aguila Garcia, Senior Data Journalist 21, 2-24-2021, "COVID-19 'vaccine diplomacy': China, Russia and India cherry-picking the countries they help," Sky News, https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-vaccine-diplomacy-china-russia-and-india-cherry-picking-the-countries-they-help-12226865, accesed 7/28/2021 EH

"Russia and China are presenting themselves as saviours but there's a risk - they have had production issues, they're struggling to vaccinate their own populations so there's a big concern they will overpromise and underdeliver." China and Russia are not only providing vaccines to countries but they are also providing factories to make them and workers as part of their long-term strategy in some nations. India, which is only producing vaccines in India, is targeting neighbouring countries and is trying to beat China to them, development expert Dr Subir Sinha from The School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London said. He belives there is another strand of vaccine diplomacy for India in that the prime minister, Narendra Modi, wants to be seen on the world stage as a man of "great generosity". However, with the roll-out within India going slowly and some states refusing to administer the Indian-made Covivax vaccine due to efficacy concerns, there is a question over how far India's vaccine diplomacy can go. COVAX, the initiative aimed at ensuring all countries get the vaccine fairly, does not have any deals with Russia, China or India yet, but China has said its three developers have applied to supply their vaccines to the programme and is waiting to see if they are approved.

### AT Strengthens authoritarianism

#### Turn—Covid stresses authoritarianism and strengthens democracy

Brands 20 Hal Brands, historian and the Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies,, 9-9-2020, "Historian Hal Brands on COVID-19's effect on world order," Cbs News, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/historian-hal-brands-covid-19s-effect-world-order/#app>. Accessed 8/9/2021 EH

But the second theme, and the one that many of our contributors pointed to, is that even though COVID has had terrible effects on the world in many ways, it's creating as many opportunities as challenges. It's obviously a cliche to say that "You should never let a crisis go to waste," but it may actually be true in this case. And so just from the perspective of the United States, the United States has handled this crisis abominably in many respects. We're still struggling to get a handle on it domestically where there's no sign of a national public health strategy. But nonetheless, when it comes to America's position in the world, there are a variety of opportunities that the crisis reveals. It could lead to a stronger counterbalancing coalition against a rising China, because China's assertiveness during the pandemic and its lack of forthcomingness at the outset of the pandemic has in many ways been more effective at rallying the world against the prospect of a rising authoritarian China than anything the United States has done over the past several years. It's entirely possible that the pandemic is going to place more stress on authoritarian regimes, which tend to be brittle, rather than democratic ones. Just look at what's happening in Belarus as we speak. This could be the first example of COVID-themed regime change, although we will see how that turns out And the states that have done best in dealing with COVID are usually either democracies -Taiwan, South Korea, New Zealand – or soft authoritarian states like Singapore. A third way in which covid could be an opportunity is that it could lead to a geopolitically savvier version of globalization. So I think what the crisis did in this respect was wake people up to the fact that the United States and other democracies have become heavily reliant on authoritarian rivals like China for critical goods like PPE and pharmaceuticals. Now, obviously, the answer to that can't be autarchy, but what it could be is deeper integration within the democratic world as a way of allowing a selective decoupling from areas of vulnerability vis a vis China

## AT COVID

### Access turn

#### Turn—aff causes higher costs and prevents distribution.

**McMurry 8/18** [Michelle McMurry-Heath Aug. 18, 2021, 8-18-2021, "Waiving intellectual property rights would harm global vaccination," STAT, <https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/18/waiving-intellectual-property-rights-compromise-global-vaccination-efforts/>] EH

The resurgence of Covid-19 cases in the United States and around the world, in large part due to the highly transmissible Delta variant, makes it even more crucial to step up the pace of the global vaccination campaign. To do that, some countries have sought to suspend intellectual property (IP) protections on Covid-19 vaccines and therapies. India and South Africa [sponsored a proposal](https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/IP/C/W669.pdf&Open=True) to that effect at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The proposal has since [been endorsed](https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/IP/C/W669R1.pdf&Open=True) by other countries, [including the United States](https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/06/waiver-of-patent-rights-on-covid-19-vaccines-in-near-term-may-be-more-symbolic-than-substantive/). They argue that eliminating IP protections would allow any willing company to produce lifesaving Covid-19 vaccines, making them cheaper and more widely accessible in low-income nations. If true, that would be a compelling argument. But it isn’t. Covid-19 vaccines are already remarkably cheap, and companies are offering them at low or no cost to low-income countries. Poor access to clinics and transportation are barriers in some countries, but the expense of the shot itself is not. In fact, if the World Trade Organization grants the IP waiver, it could make these vaccines more expensive. Here’s why. Before Covid-19 emerged, the world produced at most [5.5 billion doses](https://www.barrons.com/articles/a-plan-to-break-the-vaccine-manufacturing-bottleneck-51621952245) of various vaccines every year. Now the world needs an additional [11 billion doses](https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-g7-summit---12-june-2021) — including billions of doses of mRNA vaccines that no one had ever mass-manufactured before — to fully vaccinate every eligible person on the planet against the new disease. Even as Covid-19 vaccines were still being developed, pharmaceutical companies began retrofitting and upgrading existing facilities to produce Covid-19 vaccines, at a cost of [$40 to $100 million each](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/healthcare/reports/2020/07/28/488196/comprehensive-covid-19-vaccine-plan/). Vaccine developers also licensed their technologies to well-established manufacturers, like the Serum Institute of India, to further increase production. As a result, almost every facility in the world that can quickly and safely make Covid-19 vaccines is already doing so, or will be in the next few months. The cutting-edge mRNA vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech face an even bigger capacity issue. Since the underlying technology is new, there are no mRNA manufacturing facilities sitting idle with operators just waiting for licensing agreements to turn on the machines. Nor are there trained personnel to run them or ensure safety and quality control. Embedding delicate mRNA vaccine molecules inside lipid nanoparticle shells at temperatures colder than Antarctica isn’t as easy as following a recipe from Bon Appetit. Another big barrier to producing more shots is a shortage of raw materials. Suspending intellectual property protections and allowing any manufacturer to try to produce these vaccines, regardless of preparedness or experience, would increase the demand for scarce raw materials, driving up prices and impeding production. Nor could all companies that suddenly get a green light due to suspended intellectual property rights produce vaccines as cheaply or quickly as existing manufacturers. Building a new vaccine manufacturing facility costs about $700 million, takes many months — if not years — to build and, once opened, requires another [four to six months](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/healthcare/reports/2020/07/28/488196/comprehensive-covid-19-vaccine-plan/) to start producing vaccine doses. And because negotiations surrounding the WTO waiver, which began this summer, could take until December before they are completed, it wouldn’t be until well into 2023 or later that any additional doses would become available. That’s slower than our current production rate. According to a report from Duke University’s [Global Health Innovation Center](https://launchandscalefaster.org/covid-19/vaccinemanufacturing), companies are on track to manufacture enough shots in 2021 to fully vaccinate at least 70% of the global population against Covid-19 — the level required to achieve herd immunity. Covid-19 vaccines are saving millions of lives and protecting trillions of dollars of economic activity for an exceptionally low cost. Israel, for example, which has one of the world’s highest vaccination rates, paid [$23.50 per dose](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-to-be-paying-average-of-47-per-person-for-pfizer-moderna-vaccines/) for early shipments, for a total of about $315 million. That’s approximately equal to the gross domestic productivity losses incurred during [just two days of shutdowns](https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n281) in the country. Many countries are buying shots for under $10 per dose. India and South Africa — the two countries leading the petition to gut IP rights — are paying just $8 and $5.25 per dose, respectively. For reference, a regular flu shot costs about $14 in the United States, and pediatric vaccines average about $55 per dose. Meanwhile, low-income countries that can’t afford even modest prices are getting their vaccines at no charge. [COVAX](https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax), the international nonprofit vaccine distributor, aims to deliver 2 billion doses to developing nations by the end of the year. President Biden vowed to make America the world’s [“arsenal of vaccines.”](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/05/17/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-covid-19-response-and-the-vaccination-program-4/) The U.S. has already committed $4 billion to COVAX, has donated more than 100 million vaccine doses abroad, and is on track to donate [500 million more](https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2021/08/03/1023822839/biden-is-sending-110-million-vaccines-to-nations-in-need-thats-just-a-first-step) by the end of summer. Other countries are following the administration’s leadership and ramping up their donations. To be sure, the United States and other wealthy nations still need to give considerably more. But the fact remains that ramping up production in bona fide facilities and donating doses are the most straightforward steps to producing the vaccine doses needed to end the pandemic. The effort to strip intellectual property rights, by contrast, would put success against the global scourge of Covid-19 even further out of reach. Michelle McMurry-Heath is a physician-scientist and president and CEO of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization.

### Uniqueness

#### Squo solves

Crosby et al. 6-8, Daniel Crosby specializes in international trade, investment and matters related to public international law. A partner in our International Trade practice and the manager of our Geneva office, Daniel helps sovereign and business clients to achieve practical economic objectives around the world by applying and negotiating international agreements. JDSUPRA, June 8, 2021. “Update on the Proposed TRIPS Waiver at the WTO: Where is it Headed, and What to Expect?” <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/update-on-the-proposed-trips-waiver-at-8411942/> brett

Proponents have advanced the proposed TRIPS waiver in the name of meeting global vaccine demand. But even in the absence of a waiver, pharmaceutical manufacturers have continued efforts to expand global production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and therapies, with a focus on expanding access to developing countries. For example, Pfizer announced its plan to deliver two billion doses to developing nations over the next 18 months, with one billion doses coming this year.8 One forecast estimates that, by the end of 2021, total global COVID-19 vaccine production may exceed 11 billion doses – an amount potentially sufficient to achieve global herd immunity.9 Several pharmaceutical industry groups have also proposed a five-step plan to “urgently advance COVID-19 equity,” including: (1) increasing dose sharing among countries through COVAX and other mechanisms; (2) optimizing production of vaccines and raw materials; (3) eliminating trade barriers for critical raw materials; (4) supporting country readiness to deploy vaccination programs; and (5) driving further innovation.10 Manufacturers have also continued to partner with other companies in efforts to scale up global production. For example, Moderna recently engaged Samsung Biologics to provide fill-and-finish manufacturing for Moderna’s vaccine.11 Merck and Gilead also each entered into or expanded voluntarily licensing programs with manufacturers in India to produce the companies’ respective COVID-19 antiviral agents molnupiravir and remdesivir.12 Some WTO members have also considered using the existing TRIPS flexibilities to expand their vaccine access. For example, Bolivia has continued to pursue its effort to import the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine from Canadian company Biolyse Pharma, under a compulsory license pursuant to TRIPS Article 31bis (if one could be obtained).13

#### The waiver is too slow

Rajesh Vellakkat 21, LLM Student, London School of Economics and Political Science and Partner of Fox Mandal and Associates LLP, Advocates and Solicitors, India. SSRN, June 7, 2021. “IP Waiver during COVID Pandemic – Salvage or Apostacy ?” <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3861961> brett

In addition, neither are there news reports of any other critical drug used for Covid 19 treatment or their shortage nor about a patent related hurdle in the manufacture of any drug used for Covid 19 treatment. For argument’s sake, let us assume that many other patented drugs are being used for Covid -19, which is in short supply and there is no such voluntary license given by the patent owner. Then will this patent waiver help? The answer is simple, unlikely for a year or more. It will be impossible to reverse engineer and set the entire manufacturing process so quickly. If the present technology owner is not willing to support, it would not be easy to find a parallel process of creating the drug in a short duration. Procurement of the active ingredients and raw materials is another challenge. Getting the required approvals and thereafter manufacturing a drug is a time-consuming process. To launch a new drug requires certain safety protocols and clinical trials. A waiver of IP rights will not waive regulatory requirements for drug approvals. Hence, even if a new Indian manufacturer attempts to make a drug, it invariably may take minimum of two to three years. By a waiver of patents, no one can compel the existing manufacturer to share the know-how. So, a waiver of patents on drugs relating to Covid-19 may not give any immediate effect in sourcing drugs for managing Covid19.

### Solvency

#### They have the burden to prove TRIPS is obstructing vaccine production---no evidence exists.

Spadt and Koopman 5-24 Jonathan H. Spadt & Andrew J. Koopman 5-24, Jonathan H. Spadt is the Chief Executive Officer and President of RatnerPrestia. Andrew J. Koopman, J.D., Temple University Beasley School of Law (2008) Vice President, Intellectual Property Law Society Member, Intellectual Property Moot Court team Staff Writer, International and Comparative Law Journal B.S., Engineering Physics, Cornell University (2005) Minor in Electrical Engineering. 5-24-21, RatnerPrestia. “The “Moral” Waiver of IP Protection For COVID Vaccines: Why The US Proposal Creates More Problems Than It Solves” <https://www.ratnerprestia.com/2021/05/24/the-moral-waiver-of-ip-protection-for-covid-vaccines-why-the-us-proposal-creates-more-problems-than-it-solves/> brett

The reservations expressed by European and US leaders reflect a combination of short term practical concerns and long term policy interests. Most relevant to the goal of the waiver is the notion that IP restrictions, rather than export controls or logistical factors, represent the primary barrier to vaccine distribution. At this point, there is little evidence in support of this notion. In the great majority of nations, no patents have yet issued that would interfere with the manufacture of vaccines. Even were there such patents, the TRIPS Agreement already provides for the grant of compulsory licenses in the event of a national emergency. That such a provision has not yet been invoked is itself a blow to the argument that vaccine patents are interfering with vaccine production.

The consensus opinion is that the primary obstacle to vaccine supply across the globe is distribution. The short term problem of vaccine supply would be more directly remedied not by a waiver of IP rights, but by a willingness of nations with a vaccine surplus and manufacturing wherewithal to share their supply. Indeed, the Biden administration recently announced that 20 million doses of currently authorized vaccines would be shipped overseas beginning in June, on top of an earlier pledge of 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine once authorized. This commitment by the United States to ship 80 million doses overseas, presumably by the end of June, would be a more effective response to pressure from the EU than the Biden administration’s waiver support.

#### Moderna proves IP isn’t the issue

Osenga 21 Kristen Osenga [Kristen Osenga is the Austin E. Owen Research Scholar and Professor of Law at the University of Richmond School of Law.], 5-28-2021, "The Biden Administration's IP Waiver Is a Huge Mistake," RealClearMarkets, <https://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2021/05/28/the_biden_administrations_ip_waiver_is_a_huge_mistake_778895.html> , EH

Proponents of the waiver argue that the prospect of quicker vaccinations outweighs suppressing innovation. In reality, waiving IP protections is a largely symbolic move that is unlikely to speed up either the production or distribution of vaccines. For one thing, Moderna has already voluntarily waived IP protections for its vaccine, which means any company can manufacture the Moderna vaccine. Additionally, international law already allows for compulsory licensing of vaccines. Both of these factors mean that there is little need for additional intervention because if a country wants to manufacture a coronavirus vaccine, it may already do so. Even under the most optimistic timeline imaginable, it would take months to implement this waiver and begin manufacturing vaccines. By the time the change is effective, most countries will likely already have enough vaccines because of companies like Moderna and humanitarian aid from countries like the United States.

#### The plan leads to counterfeit vaccines.

James M. Roberts 21, Research Fellow for Economic Freedom and Growth in the Center for International Trade and Economics, of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy, at The Heritage Foundation. Gavin Zhao of the Heritage Young Leaders Program assisted in the preparation of this report. The Heritage Foundation, CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMICS. No. 3628 | June 9, 2021. “Biden’s Wink at Global Theft of U.S. Vaccine Patents Is Bad for America and the World” <https://www.heritage.org/economic-and-property-rights/report/bidens-wink-global-theft-us-vaccine-patents-bad-america-and-the> brett

The theft by actors in foreign countries of the trade secrets in patented pharmaceutical products made by American companies constitutes a Special 301 violation.

Waiving patent protection also opens the door to the overseas production of counterfeit vaccines that could be ineffective—even deadly. As the authors of a study commissioned by the National Institutes of Health report:

Counterfeit drugs pose a public health hazard, waste consumer income, and reduce the incentive to engage in research and development and innovation.… [C]ounterfeit drugs may raise concerns among consumers about safety and may reduce patient medication adherence.13