



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on March 27, 2020

## Can This Pandemic Usher in a New Era?

To fight the coronavirus at home, France is removing all military forces from Iraq.

When NATO scaled back its war games in Europe because of the pandemic, Russia reciprocated. Moscow announced it would cancel its war games along NATO's border.

Nations seem to be recognizing and responding to the grim new geostrategic reality of March 2020: The pandemic is the real enemy of us all, and while we fight it, each in his own national corner, we are in this together.



Never allow a serious crisis to go to waste, said Barack Obama's chief of staff Rahm Emanuel during the financial crisis.

Emanuel was echoed this month by House Majority Whip Rep. James Clyburn, who called the coronavirus crisis "a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision."

What Clyburn had in mind is what Democrats advanced as their alternative to the \$2.2 trillion emergency bill. It was designed to force President Trump either to swallow it whole or to take responsibility for vetoing a critical transfusion of federal funds to keep the economy alive.

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Among the items stuffed in the Democrats' proposal:

A \$15-an-hour minimum wage imposed on companies receiving funds. Blanket loan forgiveness of \$10,000 for students. New tax credits for solar and wind energy. Full funding of Planned Parenthood. Federal dollars for fetal tissue research.

\$300 million for PBS, which has been promoting the LGBT agenda to school kids. Mandating "diversity" on corporate boards as a condition of companies receiving funds. Election "reforms" to increase Democratic turnout. Insistence that airlines, to get a bailout, offset carbon emissions from jet engines. \$35 million for the Kennedy Center.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and congressional Republicans ash-canned almost the entire leftist wish list.

But Trump should go further, turn the tables, and seize this crisis to do what he was elected to do — impose a new foreign policy.

Isolate America, not from the world, but from the world's wars.

The New York Times and Washington Post editorialized Thursday for an easing of the economic sanctions we have imposed on Iran.

This would be a humanitarian gesture when Iran is suffering more than any country in the Middle East from the virus. More than that, it would be a statement that America is not at war with the Iranian



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people.

This unilateral gesture by Trump, asking nothing in return except negotiations, would put the onus for Iran's isolation squarely with the ayatollah and his regime.

As for Vladimir Putin's cancellation of war games in response to NATO's cancellation, Trump could seize upon this as an opening to engage Russia as candidate Trump promised to do.

Does anyone believe Putin wants a war with NATO?

Should he do so, does anyone think Italy and Spain, two of the largest NATO allies, but both suffering greatly in the coronavirus crisis, would invoke Article V and declare war on Russia?

When Hitler was our foe, America created a wartime alliance with Stalin in the common cause of crushing the Axis powers. Liberals and leftists yet defend the Popular Front between the democracies and Stalin. If we could unite with Bolsheviks to defeat Nazis, surely we can join with Iran's rulers to cope with and crush the coronavirus.

When, if ever, will there be a better time to make good on Trump's campaign pledge to extricate America from the wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan?

Consider also the Korean Peninsula.

Kim Jong Un has been testing rockets again over the Sea of Japan.

Transfixed by the coronavirus crisis, however, the world is paying him no attention. We should make a final offer to Kim Jong Un to pull our U.S. forces from South Korea and lift sanctions for verifiable reductions and restraints on his nuclear arsenal.

We are ready for a deal. But if Pyongyang refuses to talk, we should tell him we are going home and are allowing South Korea and Japan to develop their own nuclear weapons. And let Kim deal with them.

The coronavirus pandemic is the greatest crisis since the Cuban missile confrontation of 1962. After that crisis, John F. Kennedy sought to use the world's brush with Armageddon to establish a detente with the Soviet Union of the Communist dictator who had put the missiles in Cuba.

Following our Cold War victory, we have not done that. Instead, we plunged into wars that were none of our business to deal with imagined threats and advance utopian causes like establishing Jeffersonian democracy in lands where tribalism and dogmatism are rooted in the very soil.

The coronavirus is the enemy Saddam Hussein never was. And the ayatollahs never had tens of millions of Americans "sheltering in place."

What the coronavirus crisis tells us is not that we should turn our backs on the world but that, in engaging with the world, we should put our own interests first, as every nation in the world is doing now.

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