

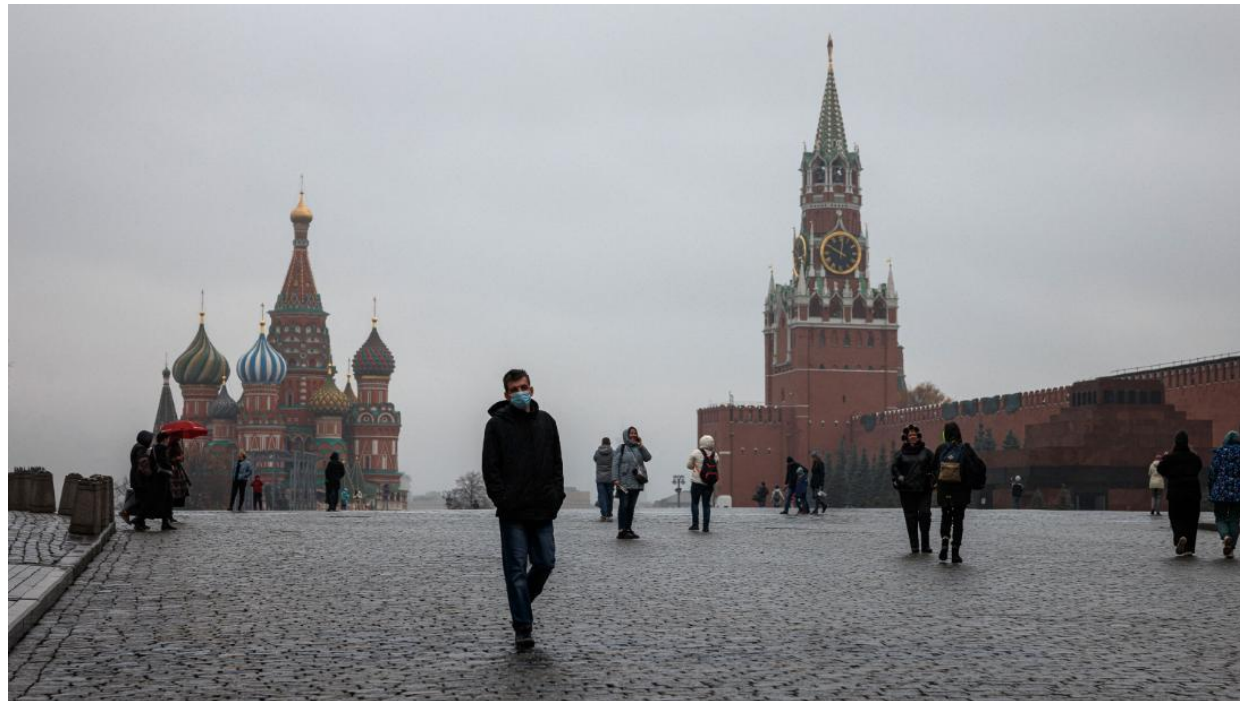
Richard Tempest

The World After Covid:
Prospects, Dangers, Temptations

Lecture Eight

Taking Stock, Summing Up, and Looking to the Future

News of the Week! On October 28, Russia, which is experiencing its worst wave of Covid-related deaths (40,096 infections, 1159 deaths on that day alone), entered a ten-day lockdown. According to official figures, which severely underplay the impact of the disease, the pandemic has cost the country 235,000 lives



On September 9 of this year, former president Trump was interviewed by Fox news journalist Greg Gutfeld, who complained that his Russian-born wife refuses to be vaccinated. Elena Moussa is a former model and photo editor of *Maxim Russia* magazine



Covid will be with us for a long time. For short-term projections (global as well as by country, with a variety of scenarios), see the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluations website at <https://covid19.healthdata.org/global?view=cumulative-deaths&tab=trend>. Based in Washington, DC, the IHME was established by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Covid deaths as of October 31, 2021

Champaign County: 27,407 (+89) cases, 206 (+0) deaths

Cook County: 644K (+2,244) cases, 11,844 (+18) deaths

Illinois: 1.71M (+6078) cases, 28,695 (+75) deaths

United States: 46.1M (+125K) cases, 747K (+1,153) deaths

World: 247M (+427K) cases, 5.01M (+6,210) deaths

The future of Covid in a global context as described by science journalist and pandemic expert Laura Spinney

The endgame has been obvious for a while: rather than getting rid of Covid-19 entirely, countries will get used to it. The technical word for a disease that we're obliged to host indefinitely is "endemic". It means that the disease-causing agent – the Sars-CoV-2 virus in this case – is always circulating in the population, causing periodic but more-or-less predictable disease outbreaks. No country has entered the calmer waters of endemicity yet; we're all still on the white-knuckle ride of the pandemic phase

As a geopolitical and geosocial factor, Covid confirmed and exacerbated governance flaws and societal discontinuities in some cases (Russia, the United States, India, Mexico, Brazil), while strengthening political regimes and social cohesion in others (China, Britain, New Zealand). Lockdowns, however, will eventually have to cease: in the long run, they are simply unsustainable



News of the Week! Hungary's united opposition leads prime minister Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party in the opinion polls. The photo shows the opposition candidate for prime minister, Péter Márki-Zay (on left), mayor of the southern city of Hódmezővásárhely, a former Fidesz stronghold. Orbán (on right), whose political trajectory as an "illiberal democrat" bears comparison to that of Turkish president Recep Erdogan, may be in trouble



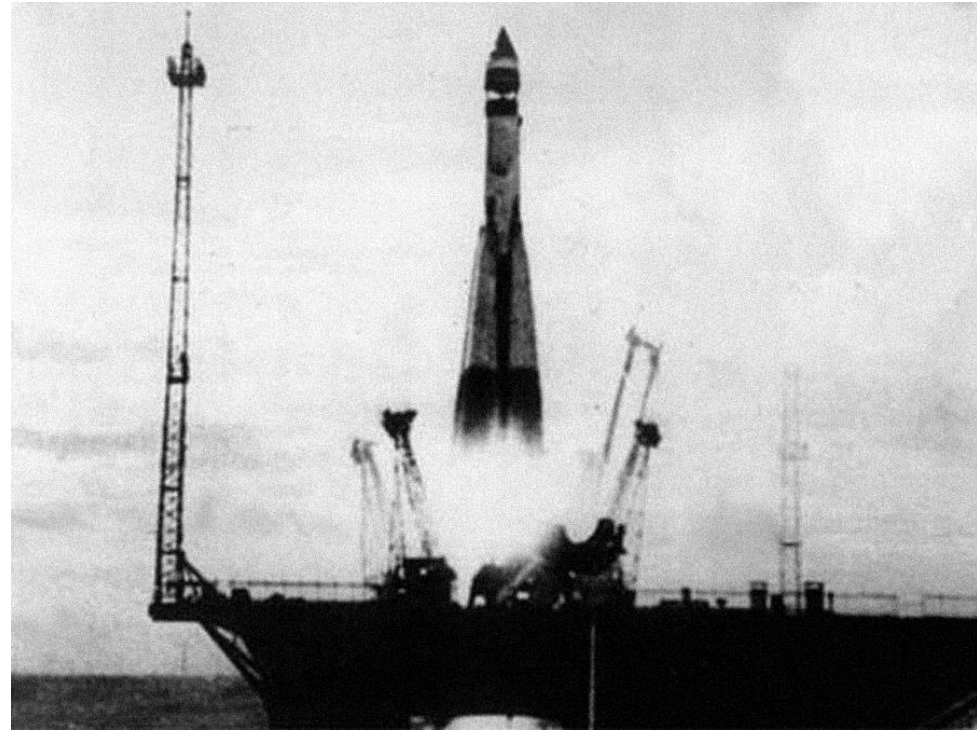
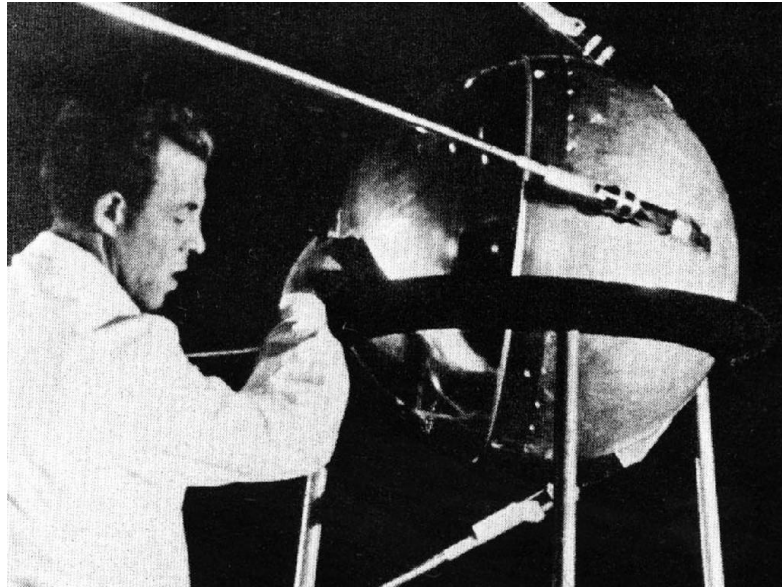
...while Poland's Law and Justice government finds itself in conflict with the EU. The photo shows Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the behind-the-scenes leader of Law and Justice and twin brother of late Polish president Lech Kaczynski, who died in the April 10, 2010 Smolensk air disaster



News of the Week! General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, describes China's recent test of its DF-17 nuclear-capable hypersonic missile as "very concerning." He also said, "I don't know if it's quite a Sputnik moment, but I think it's very close to it"



The launching of Sputnik on October 4, 1957 marked the beginning of the US-Soviet space race while raising American fears of a “missile gap”



News of the Week! COP-26 summit in Glasgow, Scotland declares Breakthrough Agenda: clean electricity, electric vehicles, green steel, hydrogen, sustainable farming. Most observers were unimpressed, but then, they seldom are. Photo shows President Biden with UK prime minister Boris Johnson (on left) and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres



In other news, the climate change summit denied access to a disabled participant.
Boris Johnson apologized



The world: Listing the challenges

Global health

Gender equality

Food security

Climate change

Clean energy

Environmental degradation: air, land and ocean pollution, deforestation, declining biodiversity. Need to work toward sustainability on a global scale

Disruptive effect of technology

Aggression / revisionism by authoritarian and even totalitarian regimes. Threats to rule-based international order. Bad governance spill-over. National and international populist movements. The return of balance-of-power geopolitics. Nuclear proliferation

Migration: not just population movements from the global South to the global North, but also those within the global South itself

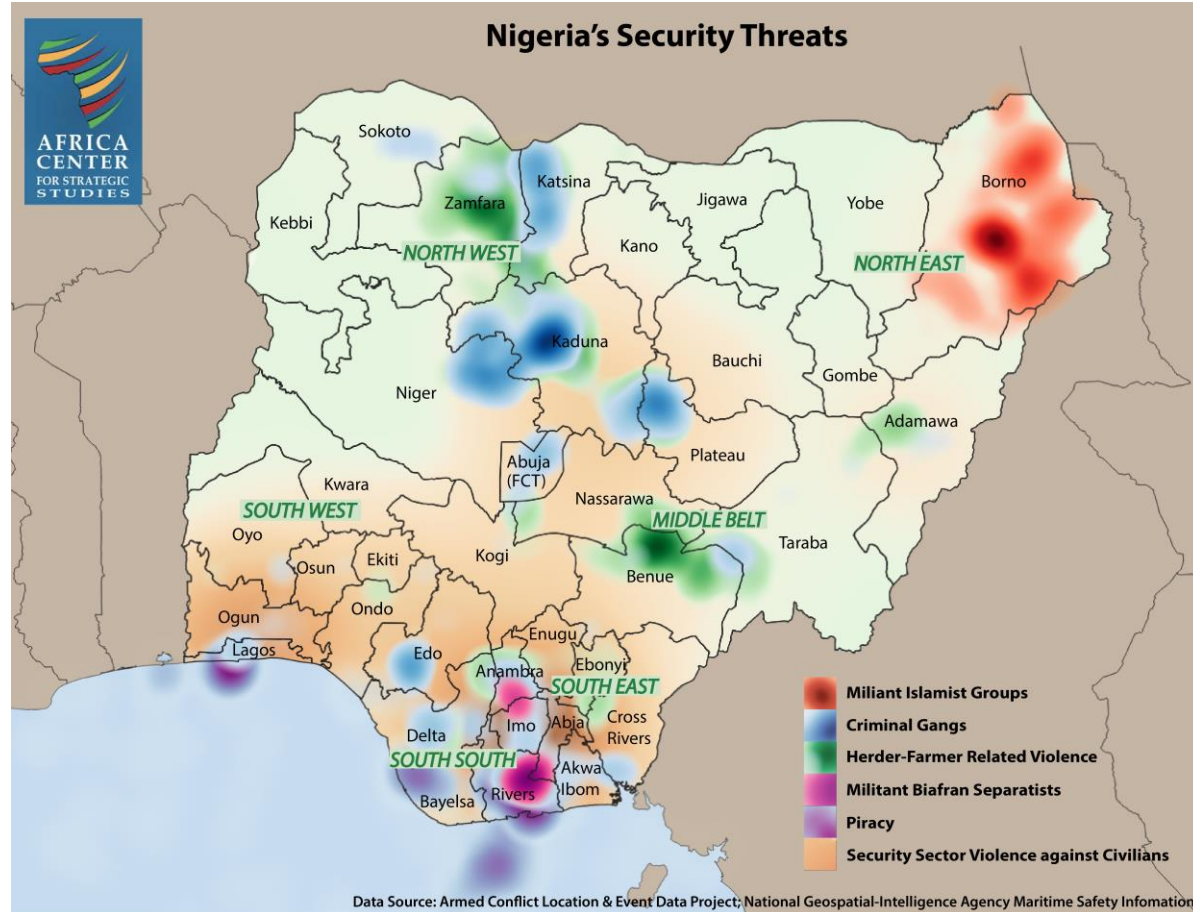
Africa is a continent to watch



South Africa. President Nelson Mandela listens to his aide Cyril Ramaphosa, who in 2018 rose to the presidency himself



Nigeria: quality-of-governance issues loom ever larger



President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, whose austere charisma and ruthless ways undergird an impressive but also disturbing experiment in nation-building



On September 20, 2021 Paul Rusesabagina, whose story forms the basis for the Oscar-winning movie *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) starring Don Cheadle, received a twenty-five-year sentence after having been found guilty on terrorism charges. His trial was a classic judicial teaching moment



Botswana is ranked 33 (out of 167 states) on the Democracy Index, which qualifies it as a “flawed democracy.” This is the highest ranking in Africa.
Transparency International ranks Botswana as the least corrupt country on the continent, comparable to Portugal and South Korea



In the decades to come, Muslim countries, and their subset in the Arab world, will face an efficient governance and open-society test. Clockwise from left to right: Presidents Recep Erdogan (Turkey), Shavkat Mirziyoyev (Uzbekistan), Joko Widodo (Indonesia), and Kais Saied of Tunisia, and prime ministers Imran Khan (Pakistan) and Ismail Yakoob (Malaysia)



Russian-American lawyer and civil rights advocate Julia Butterslim on the situation in Russia: “The dividing line is drawn not according to the principle that conscience and the law are the same for all, but according to an ‘us’ vs. ‘not one of us’ dichotomy, so that the former get everything they want, and the latter get the law.” In effect, this has become the formula for professionally run authoritarian regimes in the twenty-first century



The United States: Listing the challenges

Political and cultural fracturing. The national story is getting lost in the retelling and the reyeelling

Jobs and education

Economic inequality

Infrastructure

Democracy and efficiency deficits in national and local institutions

Competing with revisionist powers abroad while sustaining global and regional alliances

Ongoing relative decline in global standing, which may become absolute

Two poetic takes on the future

In the dark times
Will there also be singing?
Yes, there will also be singing.
About the dark times.

Bertold Brecht

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.
And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the grey expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast—
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

Mathew Arnold