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This post is part of a larger collection covering the Global Insights webinar series, hosted jointly by Balsillie School of International Affairs (Canada), the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick (UK), the Institute for Strategic Affairs (Ethiopia), American University's School of International Service (USA), Ritsumeikan University (Japan) and Konstanz University (Germany). Global Insights webinars take place on Thursdays at 11:00h (EST). You can access a recording of this webinar from November 5th [here](#).

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For decades, the economic, military, and soft power of the USA has been unlike anything the world has ever seen. Paraphrasing former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, living with the USA is like sleeping with an elephant: we are affected by every twitch and grunt of the behemoth. Yet, what the differing policies, personas, and governing philosophies of former US President Barack Obama and current US President Donald Trump indicate, is that the impact of US Presidential elections sends profound shockwaves across the globe in markedly different ways, depending on who, and what party, is elected to lead the USA. Although there is no question that the power and influence of the US is waning from its post-World War II heyday, the US election matters not only for America, but for the world. This Global Insights panel examined the international impact of the US Presidential Election in depth, discussing how the next US administration will handle today's COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises, climate change, the rise of nations like China, and the deleterious influence the Trump administration has made on multilateral efforts to solve global governance problems.

Why was the election so close?

While many scholars and commentators held an expectation that the November 3rd, 2020, US Presidential election was going to be a repudiation of President Donald Trump due to his increasing unpopularity and his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, a clear rejection of Trump did not occur. While the Democratic party's Presidential nominee Joe Biden received more votes than any other presidential candidate in US history, President Trump also broke previous records, such as receiving the most votes cast for a sitting President; Biden's win in the Electoral College matches the margin of victory that Trump himself won over Hillary Clinton in 2016, but both of these electoral successes were due to relatively narrow shifts in swing states. Ultimately this demonstrates the stark polarization between the two main parties that goes beyond red and blue states and finds itself rooted in divisions playing out between suburban and rural areas. This

is in part a polarization between those who perceive benefits from globalization and support Biden, and those who feel that they've been harmed by the global socio-economic system and support Trump.

On a more positive note, there are two additional takeaways from the US election. Firstly, voter turnout was exceptionally high with two-thirds of the eligible American voter population casting ballots, which ranks amongst the highest turnout in American history. Secondly, American democratic institutions are maintaining their functionality, despite Trump's efforts to question and challenge their legitimacy.

What should we expect from Trump over the next month?

Trump's ongoing claims that the American election has been fraudulent will not only undermine his image and legacy, but they could very well have a lasting impact on the perceived legitimacy of the Biden administration among certain constituencies. While it may have been expected, the difficulties for Biden are made worse by Trump's refusal to begin the transition process in a reasonable timeframe or reasonable manner.

Now that we know Biden is the President-elect, all eyes have shifted to the runoff Senate races in Georgia. These two seats will determine whether Republicans retain control over the Senate, effectively ensuring that, at minimum, Biden's next two years will be made more difficult. On the other hand, if the Democrats win these seats, they will gain a slim majority in the Senate, alongside its retention of a majority in the House of Representatives.

Foreign policy implications

Over the next month, as the dust settles from the US election, attention from both the Trump administration and from the media will remain preoccupied with the election results. This lengthy deliberation may leave the door open for countries to cause trouble overseas. Also, given that Trump lost this election, he may seek a big win on foreign policy before leaving office, or he could even try to create a problem as something that the future Biden administration will be forced to deal with.

What should we expect from a Biden administration?

The most important thing that a Biden administration will do is to signal to the rest of the world that the US is once again serious about multilateral engagement on international issues, emphasizing cooperation and reinvigorating the weakened liberal international order. Biden has signalled he will do this by re-entering the Paris climate accord and the World Health Organization (WHO), pursuing an extension to the New START nuclear arms agreement with Russia, and making efforts to rejoin the Iran nuclear deal. Biden's attitude towards multilateralism and his approach to orderly and normal diplomatic relations will be welcomed by most foreign leaders. We can also expect a Biden administration to work multilaterally as the world strives toward containing the COVID-19 pandemic through the development and distribution of vaccinations.

Domestically, Biden will have to straddle the divide between centrist and progressive wings of the Democratic Party, which could lead him to adhere more to leftist or progressive views, as well as forcing him to take a strong stance on human rights internationally. It is likely that Biden will not be able to restore America's long-term reputation abroad within one four-year term. This may hinge on another internationalist leader being elected in 2024.

What can we expect on trade?

While tensions will remain with regard to trade agreements, Biden will seek greater multilateralism with Europe and the UK. Trump's support for Brexit made him popular among some Conservative MPs in the UK, under Biden we can expect the US to have a tougher stance on the border issue between Ireland and Northern Ireland. The achievement of a US-UK trade agreement could even depend on this issue under Biden. In a similar vein, Biden is likely to seek improved relations at the WTO while continuing the push to have China adhere to the WTO's rules. We should not have high hopes for the re-energizing of discussions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement under Biden, at least in the short term, especially in light of the recent signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Implications for Canada-US relations

Under Biden we can generally expect warmer diplomatic relations between Canada and the US given his and Trudeau's shared vision of multilateralism and commitments to global efforts such as climate change. On the other hand, Biden's focus on purchasing American provisions, especially when it comes to government procurement and the never-ending issues related to dairy and softwood lumber, will remain problem areas for Canada.

US position on adversaries and international security

We should expect Biden's approach to engaging with adversaries to be very different from that of Trump. Biden will likely try to find common ground while also holding leaders to account on certain issues, including, for example, Russia's ambitions in the Middle East. Biden believes in a strong military and, as needed, in projecting American power internationally. Biden's administration will have a strong emphasis on security and will not shy away from using necessary force to 'hold the line' against advancements in the Middle East or South China Sea. This should not be surprising given his previous support for measures that were taken by Obama in pursuit of security and peace in the Middle East and elsewhere, in particular the use of special forces, drones, and targeted killings against suspected terrorists.

How will this election impact US-China relations?

The US-China relationship can be described as a hegemonic rivalry and a long-lasting competition between two powers that shows no signs of dissipating in the near future. While Biden and Trump may have similar goals in terms of protecting American workers and being tough on China, we can expect that the Biden administration will take a more multilateral approach to dealing with China relations, moving away from the trade wars experienced under Trump. This will be further complicated by the fact that US public opinion of China has worsened over the last four years, and by pressures within the Democratic Party for a tougher stance on human rights issues and abuses.

What are the implications of the US election for the Liberal International Order?

Biden may seize the opportunity to rethink the future of the international order and develop another that seeks to more evenly distribute benefits. This possibility is further strengthened by the fact that US public opinion is more supportive of internationalism than Trump is, suggesting that Trump was more of an anomaly in this regard. Beyond the US election, the increase of populist and nationalist governments being

elected around the world are also threats to the liberal international order and need to be considered, though their fortunes may wane in the light of Trump's defeat.

What can we expect from foreign leaders in response to the US election and its results?

Even though we had expected no international support for Trump's dispute over the legitimacy of the election results, there have been a handful of notable leaders who withheld congratulations from Biden, including those of Mexico, Russia, Brazil and North Korea. While the silence of these leaders may have given some support to Trump's allegations of fraud, the congratulations and subsequent phone calls to Biden, as well as to VP-elect Harris, from many more foreign leaders, including the UK, Canada, Australia, France, Ireland, South Korea, Israel, and eventually China and others, will only serve to further legitimize the results.

Recommendations for leaders and publics around the world

1. Be patient and do not give up on the US. Even though democracies have hiccups, American public and elite support for international cooperation remains high.
2. Understand that it will take time for Biden to heal the fabric that has been frayed.
3. There is a need to continue to try to understand the deep divisions occurring within the US and other nations around the world.
4. Nations must continue to pursue common interests, whether or not these include working multilaterally with the US.