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WEBINAR

REVIVING TRAVEL IN THE COVID-19 ERA:
ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. BERLIN: Good morning. My name is Celia Belin. I am a visiting fellow at the Center on the U.S. and Europe at the Brookings Institution. Welcome to our event today dedicated to the topic of travel and mobility in the COVID-19 era.

I will soon be joined by four excellent panelists with whom I hope to engage on a conversation that is both timely and of the utmost importance. Many of us who live and work far from home have experienced firsthand one of the intended consequences of national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. They meet travel restrictions which were imposed haphazardly by countries all over the world and which have kept families and loved ones separated for months if not years. There are signs however that countries with stringent travel restrictions have started to reopen slowly.

Australia, for example, recently announced its intention to reopen to international travels starting in November. Similarly, this past Friday, the White House announced that starting on November 8th a new international travel regime will be in place for entry to the United States. This will conclude an 18-month policy that has banned entry to the U.S. to non-American travelers entering either through land borders with Canada and Mexico or flying from 33 countries including most of Europe, the U.K. but also China, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, and India.

We have yet to learn the details of the new regime, but it is expected that it will replace a blanket country ban within individual requirements for vaccines and testing. With this new policy, the U.S., Europe but also Australia and others are converging towards a similar international travel regime which includes some form of health certification and offering severe restrictions for the unvaccinated.

As we speak, policymakers around the world are discussing the details of the travel regime they seek to adopt. And these decisions will deeply impact the norms of safe travel in the future, which is why I am personally really excited to host this event today and discuss what we are hearing during this pandemic. What standards should be put in place in the long run and what type of world we might live in or want to live in?

To discuss this and much more, we have gathered an excellent group of experts that I'm happy to welcome. First is Edward Alden. Ted is the Bernard L. Schwartz senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. Ted is an expert on trade, competitiveness, and immigration policy. He is also a

columnist for foreign policy where he has been writing regularly on the human and economic impact of travel restrictions during COVID. Ted is joining us from Washington State where it is really early in the morning so extra thank you to Ted for joining us.

We also have Meghan Benton who is director of research for the International Program at the Migration Policy Institute. Meghan has been monitoring the impact of the pandemic on international mobility and she is the author of a fantastic report published in July of this year and called, "Future Scenarios for Global Mobility in the Shadow of the Pandemic."

Elizabeth Collett is special advisor to António Victorino, the director general of the International Organization for Migration, IOM, which is the leading U.N. related organization on migration. Liz is a long courier as a migration specialist including in Brussels where she founded MPI Europe. Liz is joining us from the other side of the pond, and she brings this unique perspective to our virtual table.

Finally, Tom Wright is senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a director of the Center on the United States and Europe. Tom's new book coauthored with Colin Kahl is called, "Aftershocks: Pandemic Politics and the End of the Old International Order." It is a brilliant account of what happened during the COVID-19 crisis and the geopolitical ripple effect that the pandemic will have on the world order.

So, I'm very happy. Thank you all four of you for joining me today. In putting this event together, we are thankful for the support of Robert Bosch Stiftung. This event is part of the Brookings/Bosch Transatlantic Initiative or BBTI, which aims to expand our network and work on how best to further trans-Atlantic cooperation to address global challenges. We are grateful for the respect of Bosch Stiftung as shown with regard our research independence. Today's event, as well, reflects only the views of the speakers themselves.

This event wouldn't have happened without the help and talent of my colleague, Agneska Bloch and the support of all at the Brookings Foreign Policy program. Thank you to all of you.

One last housekeeping item. Please feel free to send in questions via email at events@brookings.edu or if you have Twitter using #RevivingTravel.

So, to start this conversation, let me first turn to Meghan. Meghan, as a migration expert who has in the past looked at the labor migration but also challenges to mobility in Europe, across Europe

in particular in light of (inaudible). You have sort of the long view on migration issues.

Can you give us a sense of what happened in the last 18 months overall in terms of the scope and the reach of restrictions on migration and travel that have taken place around the world? How have countries used their power to control their own borders? And were you surprised by any of it?

MS. BENTON: Just a small question to kick us off. Thank you so much first of all for inviting me. This is terrific. I'm really pleased to be here.

So, I guess the first thing to say is that the last 18 months has really been unprecedented dent in human mobility of all kinds. We saw refugee resettlement shutdown. Countries turning away clemency because in the name of public health. Families separated. Migrants and travelers stranded. Tourism and business travelers a little bit destinated. These are prices that unfolded.

While most of these channels have restarted, I think we're still really far from a return to normal. And what's quite striking is how in some countries this total lockdown of movement has become almost highly normalized. So, the new South Wales premier described Australia as the hermit kingdom. It has deprived many just how the popular walling off from international mobility has (inaudible) country for the sake of internal openness.

And then, you know, you asked about what's happened in terms of restrictions? You know, we see this as a broad trend towards opening. But even if countries -- even if governments try to lift restrictions, it's been this kind of dance of two steps forward, one step back. And there's been so much switching and chopping and changing like which countries are on red list or safe list. And what measures were imposed on travelers and what exceptions were in play?

I think this constantly shifting landscape has made it really hard for people to plan their lives and make any decisions that require cross border movement for going on holiday, to moving continents. So, I just wanted to make two points about takeaways for me looking back.

The first is that this was really failure of international coordination. So famously, the World Health Organization came out very early on against travel restrictions and have been insufficient. But in the absence of clear guidance, we saw countries copying each other, but not really in a coordinated way. It was in the way that people copy each other when there's a run on banks or a run on petrol and gas stations.

You know, they didn't by in large tie in travel restrictions effectively to contain the virus. The exceptions they had for citizens and residents and family members know that they were pretty leaky, and these groups weren't necessarily appropriately screened. And then, you know, back in Spring 2020, the Russian many migrants, and travelers to return home was chaotic. It created congestion. There wasn't, you know, very good contact tracing early on.

So, I think we can say that travel restrictions didn't prevent any outbreak becoming a pandemic. They also enforced a huge amount of suffering especially in the way that they lingered on beyond that immediate utility. I think, you know, as of a few months ago, we have this kind of worst world scenario where many governments will try to navigate complex tradeoffs and how to balance public policy and economic benefit by half opening up. But with so many frequent changes and inconsistent rules, there's no stability there, predictability to restore movement.

And the other striking thing is, you know, even these recent decisions from the United States, from Australia, the European Union, Canada, you started with it's all unilateral. This very little viscosity going on here in the decision-making process.

And my second lesson, I think it's very interesting how the pandemic has shown that free movement and the way we understand it isn't an unconditional right. But even returning nationals can be prevented from boarding a plane because of their test results failing to load on their smart phone or prevented from entering a country because they test positive, or their paperwork doesn't line up.

And this is not new for people in the global space. They always face trouble with their travel visas or perhaps boarding to go custom travel. But this mostly has been exacerbated these inequalities were kind of layering on COVID health requirements over existing inequities. And I think the world, as a result is being divided much more starkly into those who can move and those who can't.

And of course, the big question here is, is this a tipping point after which much more of human mobility becomes irregular? Thank you.

MS. BERLIN: Thank you, Meghan. And to follow up on that I want to bring in Liz. Liz, if you don't mind. So, Meghan was just mentioning how travel restrictions is not new developing world.

Maybe looking with your IOM lens and how would you -- can you tell us a bit more about the experience of mobility under COVID for vulnerability populations? Not just the developing worlds in

general, but I was thinking of if you can tell us how it might have affected those who were already in a precarious situation. So stranded migrants, refugees and more in general those who face travel restrictions outside of health consideration on a regular basis? You're muted.

MS. COLLETT: Failure at the first hurdle. Just what I want to say on Meghan's point which is the different strategies that were taken around the world.

The strategies chosen dependent an enormous amount on the previous contacts that governments were coming to this with. You know whether they have previous experience with health outbreak including in the developing world. And whether that mindset preexisted when the pandemic arrived. The capacity governments have to be able to actually put in place border closures and other measures and manage social distancing.

And then also the role that mobility played socioeconomically within a country. How much caused border mobility and how hard wired is that into a particular country or region? All played into these decisions and the migrants themselves also had, I think, a strong impact on how they were treated around the world.

I mean one of the key issues from IOM's perspective was the number of stranded migrants that we saw requesting assistance who were unable to get home because they were either unable to get the documents to take a flight because costs had risen or because the information was constantly changing, and they didn't have access to the information to return home.

And those guys are on the frontline, you know, really stranded in the most brutal sense of unable to return home whereas there is a larger population to underlying that people who had lost jobs. People who didn't find themselves included in economic support measures, for those on furlough. So, they suddenly found themselves with no income, limited to access to housing and other services. And also, you know, unable to get home perhaps because they have no longer any incomes. So, there's that caused issues around sudden changes like this for people who are living overseas could be really, really dramatic.

And at the same time, you know, we typically seen in a number of countries that it has been particularly difficult for particularly vulnerable populations. And here for us, particularly in camplike situations when (inaudible) gets displaced persons or refugees but also within urban settings. People in

poor socioeconomic condition unable to take the social distancing measures that others were able to take. Finding themselves in, many migrant workers particularly, in poor work accommodations did not take into account those social distancing measures. All of these pieces coming together in other contexts.

And then finally, really trying to understand what's we often overlook which was throughout the pandemic in many countries around the world, migrants did not have the luxury to stay at home in lockdown. They were the essential workers going out, whether it's in agriculture, whether it's in logistics, whether it was in healthcare. Many migrants were on the frontline and really responding to the crisis in the most urgent sense possible.

And so, they were impacted I think in different ways. And we often forget that, I think that side of that issue. Well, migration was, as Meghan said, came to an unprecedented stand still. Migrants themselves were a huge contributor to the pandemic response at large.

MS. BERLIN: Thank you. I want to continue looking back and try to reflect on what has happened in the past 18 months both on the human cost and more generally on the type of lack of international cooperation you pointed out, Meghan.

Ted, early in this crisis you observed and wrote exactly about this human cost of travel restrictions pointing to the mental and personal pain endured by separated friends and families with a special focus, of course, on Canada, which you know very well, but also U.S. and Europe and other countries.

These restrictions have started relaxing, but yet 18 months into the crisis, the restrictions are actually still in place. So, November 8 is getting closer for a lot of people, but they're still in place. So why do you think this crisis, these travel restrictions have lasted for so long? Was it a failure of attention on part of government unable to see that the human cost of the restrictions? Or was it voluntary policy to crack down on travel at all costs including this one?

And so, my question is was it collateral damage or was it intentional?

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Celia. It's a great question. Thank you for organizing the panel. And, you know, just to be clear on the accounting. We are, you know, at least in North America at 19 months now and it will be about another 18 days or so until the opening. And, you know, the initial

closings to China were back in February of 2020. So, we're going to get close to two years and there will be a lot of the measures still in place.

I think, you know, if I had to explain the overall failure here, it was the lack of any sort of risk management framework. You know, so you go back to February or March or April of 2020 then, I think, you know, broadly based blanket travel restrictions were pretty reasonable, right?

I mean we were locking down at home. Countries were locking down everywhere. There wasn't really any sense of how rapidly the pandemic was spreading. There were no effective vaccines or effective medicines particularly. And so, I think there was a lot of support at the beginning for those sorts of widespread lockdowns.

As Meghan suggested, they became politically very popular. You know, many countries -- we saw it here in the United States. We saw it in Australia, New Zealand, Canada even Europe to some extent that this seemed like a reasonably painless way to try to slow the spread of the pandemic. You know, we're going to put this onto other people, right? We're all dealing with lockdowns at home, so we need to keep other people out because, you know, that's how we behave safely in the pandemic.

The problem was as that this went along, it made less and less sense. And we can talk more about the international coordination piece. I think, you know, Tom gets into this some in his excellent book, and we'll probably talk more about it. But, you know, politicians discovered, you know, watching this in Canada. It was kind of shocking from a country very, very open to migration. Sees itself as very connected internationally.

It became clear to the liberal government that these travel bans were tremendously popular. And even small efforts to open up experienced some kind of political backlash. You know, just one example from the Provence of Alberta. They put in place a pilot program. This was well into the pandemic. This was 10 months into the pandemic that said, okay, maybe not everybody coming back needs to quarantine for 14 days.

If you get an advance test before you come and you get another test after you arrive and they're both negative, you can have a shortened period of quarantine. This seemed to work very successfully but immediately got shut down as the delta variance started to spike. So, every one of these efforts, and we can talk in other places in the world, to sort of ease the measures appropriately as

conditions change just got shut down.

So, we really ended up I think in this -- and, you know, I can talk a little bit if you want about what I saw after 911 because there are some parallels. But in this sort of all or nothing scenario that either borders are closed, and we have strong mandatory quarantines or else we're open and most countries opted for some form of closure. We can talk a bit more about Europe. I think Europe maybe found a better balance. But, you know, the results that, and I hope we do go back to the human cost, is that it became very difficult for governments to make intelligent exceptions, right?

I mean, you know, should we allow kids to cross a border in order to see their dying mother? Or is this somehow a breach of the lockdown? Even though, of course, we're allowing truckers to go back and forth all the time. A real lack, I think of kind of sensible discrimination in how the border restrictions and travel measures were imposed. And I think they created a lot of unnecessary human suffering.

I mean some of the suffering was necessary for pandemic control, but I think a lot of it was unnecessary.

MS. BERLIN: Thank you for saying that Ted. I think a lot of people watching maybe share that insight.

I want to bring in Tom especially because you sort of raised this idea by saying, you know, it was both at the beginning a popular from -- as perceived by the public. But also, that it became harder and harder to lift. And also, that in many ways, it was politically expedient to just leave it in place. And government became less pragmatic about lifting those restrictions.

Tom, I wonder in your book *After Shocks*, you explain that some of the worst effects of the pandemic have been magnified by the deteriorating context in which the pandemic took place. So, I wonder if you could reflect on this regarding travel restrictions. How did this even happen? Was it just because these travel restrictions were politically expedient that these stayed in place so long? Or does it say something bigger about the context in which they were taking place that it proved to be -- to last for so long because of a deteriorating geopolitical context? Tom?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Thanks, Celia. And it's a great pleasure to be on with everyone and I've learned so much already. And I very much agreed, I think with Edward's sort of comments on just

immediately proceeding in terms of how this came to be.

I mean it's interesting. You know, prior to the pandemic the WHO's sort of official advice was that travel restrictions were unhelpful. And the general sort of conventional wisdom amongst those who sort of looked at this issue was that travel restrictions wouldn't be productive in terms of curving a pandemic.

And when Trump imposed his initial sort of partial travel ban on China, there was quite a bit of sort of disagreement with that in terms of that that wasn't, you know, where his focus should have been. But interestingly, when the pandemic then started to hit, you know, major sort of industrialized countries, they all started to put in place counter restrictions very rapidly.

And one of the sort of takeaways from that is that the WHO's, you know, advice I think was out of date, you know, because they hadn't really, they had advice against travel restrictions because of the way in which it effected some countries. Previously, they wanted to create an incentive structure to encourage countries to report, you know, outbreaks. And they didn't really account for sort of the exposure in global travel. And of course, the pandemic did spread in part, you know, because of travel.

And so, I think, you know, a starting point is that some travel restrictions are sort of reasonable and we probably didn't do anyone a service or the international sort of experts and the WHO, you know, didn't really do anyone a service by not sort of tackling that in advance to say, yes, travel restrictions are important but here's how we might coordinate them, right?

Instead, we have sort of the general opposition. Governments rejected that immediately when they had to and imposed travel restrictions. And then it was completely uncoordinated, right? And nobody really knew what they were doing. And I think the point has already been very well made that as time went on many of these were sort of irrational.

The travel banned most, you know, a clear example of that. But what we all discovered is that there's basically no real political constituency for easing travel restrictions, right? It was just easy for governments to leave them in place. And it was certainly easier to preserve the status quo than to try to tailor or, you know, reform, or refine the restrictions to make them sort of smarter or sort of more effective.

And I have to say that really, you know, surprised me. I didn't think that, you know, that

there will be so little pressure on the governments including sort of free democratic societies. You know that the public would essentially allow their political representatives just to keep countries closed. And I'm not sure anybody, you know, really appreciated that so I think as we sort of progress, right? You know, throughout the pandemic there was some pressure in Europe because of the Schengen zone to sort of loosen travel.

But even there, you know, those borders were closed pretty unilaterally probably in violation of treaties or certainly against sort of the spirit of the Schengen zone and the European Union sort of early on so this was very widespread. The point you made, Celia, just the point you made in the book is that there is this geopolitical context of course rivalry between the U.S. and China and also many more nationalists populace in the parliamentarian leaders.

Although, it's interesting. I think -- I'm not sure if it's a huge correlation between, you know, travel restrictions and sort of nationalist or populace leaders. I mean Trump did impose, you know, restrictions for lots of other more liberal leaders did too. And of course, President Biden kept them and continued with them up until the present day. I mean it's been lifted obviously on November 8.

So I think this is something we're going to have to sort of really look at in the future and I totally agree that this is something the G20 or the G7 or even the U.N. should address, you know, in an early point to try to figure out how do we do this in a way that's effective and smart and can be, you know, restored to the way it was before. But that just did not happen this time around.

MS. BERLIN: We actually have received a question. Yeah, an email which is a nice follow up to this conversation. And maybe I'll direct it to Liz because it's from a Driz Larafi (phonetic), Professor at the University of Ebna Toefl (phonetic) who asks, why didn't the U.N. push back during COVID-19 and support strongly the right to travel and mobility?

And so, more in general, Liz, do you think -- what sort of adversity was coming from the U.N. or from U.N. related organization on travel and mobility? And should it have been stronger and more forceful? And with the better indications on how to behave?

MS. COLLETT: I think it's an interesting question because obviously as it has already been mentioned, you know, WHO said very early, we resist border restrictions for this type of situation, which immediately sort of sets the stage then for a different kind of conversation.

But I think there are several other factors that played into this. The fact is that the immediate concern as the pandemic was in its early stages were primarily humanitarian and about loss of life. So, this is an issue that was slightly lower on the agenda in that, you know, the U.N. came together for crisis management of a different type. It was really about do we have sanitation. Do we have social distancing? Can we manage the issue of stranded migrants, for example?

So not dealing with that bigger picture of the border closures as such but rather how do we make sure people are safe? And we've seen a slow switch particularly over the last, I'd say, three to six months as we're lifting the heads up and saying, okay, well what are the long-term implications of what we've just experienced?

I think a second challenge is that the issue across border mobility forward between the continents is the number of different agencies and actors. So, there will be those actors who are thinking about this from an aviation perspective. Though, those actors are thinking specifically about refugees, which is in an HCR. So, we're looking at particular populations. We're looking at particular types of mobility.

For example, the issue of stranded maritime sailors who were trapped onboard boats was a particular concern at some point during this issue. What we lacked was then that overarching perspective. IOM joined together with the IMO with participants of the crisis management teams to look at travel and mobility.

But it was much more from a technical perspective at that point. And I think now we're looking towards asking the bigger questions about, well, how can we learn the lessons from this pandemic about when would a closure be useful? And why and how do you use them?

But also, then preparing for the next health crisis or global crisis or pandemic? Let's hope not the pandemic. And thinking through how do we build the capacity and infrastructure? How do we look at points of entry in a different way? A lot of the work IMO was doing on the ground was assessing how countries could actually manage the border closures or manage border mobility in a health safe way? Can you manage the different measures that you want to put in place in order to allow people to cross borders safely?

And in many countries those capacities do not yet exist. So, we're talking here much

more in a transatlantic environment. If you look globally, huge variances in capacity to address this. And I think that's something we need to look at going forward as well as filling the gaps. I think it was Tom who mentioned, you know, the lack of an international forum to discuss and exchange information which led to that kind of unilateral policymaking. I think there's an opportunity there to say, what can we create to at least give people the opportunity to inform and exchange in a faster way.

And I'm struck by what Tom was saying about having no critical constituency. And I think that is a point of reflection. Everyone has constituents, but did they overlap sufficiently to come together and mobilize it into sort of earlier and more urgent thinking about these issues.

MS. BERLIN: Ted, this reminds me of a conversation we've had earlier on when you compared the sort of travel constituency with the trade constituency. And actually, the trade and travel were treated very differently over the course of this crisis.

I'm wondering if you reflect on this and tell us a bit what's your thinking on this?

MR. ALDEN: Yeah. Thank you, Celia. It's a great question. I have tried to reflect a lot on the comparisons between what happened after 911, which I wrote a whole book about the post-911 border restrictions and what happened in the pandemic.

I'll acknowledge there's some big differences, right? I mean post-911, the concern was potentially a very small number of people who might be traveling to do terrible things. The concern was not with the vast majority of travelers.

In a pandemic, obviously, we were all a threat in that sense. We were all potentially carriers so there was a much better argument there for a long lockdown, but I also think there are a lot of parallels. I mean what we saw after 911 was a very quick lockdown. You know, air travel was shut down. The border was effective shut temporarily. And then a quick recognition that this was not sustainable. And what happened in the 911 case, it was the trade side.

You know, Ford and General Motors and others were saying, you know, we can't get parts coming across the border from Canada and air freight is shut down. We've got to deal with that. In the pandemic, you saw that dealt with very upfront. I mean, it's quite interesting that I think, you know, there is a system of rules in place for international trade that I think helped trade stay remarkably robust during the pandemic. And of course, we've seen it take off as we're coming out of the pandemic. So, I

think there have been a sort of set of lessons and understanding about how to manage trade.

On the movement of people side, there was nothing comparable. There are no sorts of real binding international rules, sets of norms. And so, we saw a very different approach. And again, the contrast post-9ll to me is striking because, you know, what we had after 911 was these intense government to government efforts to say, okay. Look, our goal here is to identify the risks and try to stop those risks while continuing to allow lawful trade and travel to proceed to the greatest extent possible.

And there were a whole series of mechanisms set up. Many of which we're still living with today to do that. Strikingly, in the pandemic after some initial accommodations for trade. I mean at the U.S./Canada border, which I follow closely. You know, the category of essential workers, truckers are going to be allowed to go back and forth. They're not going to be checked. They're not going to be tested. I mean who knows how many cases were brought across borders by truckers who came in?

But the decision was made, no, trade is critical. It's essential so we won't block that. But on the mobility of people, there was never an effort to sort of go to the next level and say, okay. Let's make some intelligent judgments about who can move and under what circumstances? What are the reasonable exceptions?

You know, should we make special exceptions for people and family relationships? What about crisis situations? What about testing requirements? Can we put those in place in a reasonable way? All that happened very, very slowly. And again, the contrast with the post-911 period is striking. I mean within several months after 911, these new frameworks were put into place.

Here we are almost 20 months into the pandemic and only now are we starting to figure out some rules to allow travel again. The response I think was so much less effective than what we saw in the post-911 period.

MS. BENTON: Can I comment on that point?

MS. BERLIN: Sure. I was about to ask you to join. Go ahead.

MS. BENTON: So, I think it's actually not that surprising that we haven't had rules. Because I think the absence of rules has itself been a pandemic management strategy because there's nothing particularly special about the cross-border movement of people rather than the domestic movement of people.

But it came out of (inaudible) strategy to try and determine (inaudible) at all times. And ordinarily easy way to do that and from using rules that change frequently or in a (inaudible) case are to stick to not changing frequently but very arbitrarily and difficult to understand and have lots of exceptions. But is in itself a deterrence from (inaudible).

Only really now that there's a kind of realism about the fact that we do need to create a framework of rules. And that will always bring an increase in the mobility to provide at least some simplicity and transparency and predictability in the way that people move.

And another thing I wanted to mention that we haven't spoken about in terms of, you know, looking back at the Spring of 2020 response is this making decisions in the context of such deep uncertainty. And I think that's one thing that is going to be really difficult to reflect on as we think about the next pandemic.

There is obviously this huge concern that if another viral outbreak happened countries would do exactly the same thing and they would lockdown in the same way, and it would be chaos once again. How can we prevent it from becoming a pandemic? Perhaps it would be overblown in a disproportionate reaction. Either way that would be hugely costly so what we do to learn this lesson?

But we don't really know how to respond to a new pathogen which has (inaudible) quality. I mean sure it's true as Liz pointed out that lots of kind of Asian countries are in a better position because of their experience of (inaudible), but they also didn't know how to deal with something with asymptomatic transition and such an incubation period.

And so, you know, how do you create a more predictable framework in the context of things that are likely to be just as unpredictable in the future? I think is a real challenge.

MS. BERLIN: Liz, you want to jump in? Go ahead.

MS. COLLETT: Yes, very quickly on that because I agree with Meghan and the unpredictability of this. But I'm also struck by what Ted was saying about the fact that there are trade rules. And the trade rules are not about -- they're about increasing flexibility and creating buffers, right, for shocks.

And can we create buffers systems even in the absence of complete knowledge about what the next crisis might look like? And it's gotten me also with Ted's points about trade rules. If some

of the more innovative work that we saw early on about cross border workers was attached to trade. It was attached to particular sectors where supply chains were at risk.

In some cases, cross border workers who need to go to hospitals. But in other places such as Mozambique in South Africa trying to get miners across the border because they were seen as essential workers. Those have all been merged in pockets very quickly. And I think they were also attached then very closely to the economic needs and the trade aspects of that.

So, there's an interesting part of this but I think did sort of attach itself to the sort of trade part of that conversation and away from the health and cross border mobility conversation at large.

MR. ALDEN: Can I just say one more thing on this, Celia? Because I think we need to be really transparent about the value judgments here, right?

I mean we made a value judgment during the pandemic that trade was critical. And you can say, okay. Well, if we're talking about trade and food or, you know, or energy or things essential to our life, okay, that's a reasonable judgment. And maybe we're prepared to take some risk with truckers and rail lines and other things moving around to deliver that stuff to us.

But of course, a lot of what happened during the pandemic is, you know, we ordered home exercise machines or weights or, you know, new computer systems because we were working remotely. All of that fell under the definition of essential.

But family reunification, you know, people who had parents dying, you know, really, really kind of things that most of us would consider rather fundamental to our lives. I mean, you know, I've talked to so many couples separated by this. The judgment was reached. Those things don't actually matter as much as ordering your home Peloton. We're willing to take risks for you to get your home Peloton, but we're not willing to take any risks to allow families to reunite.

And I, you know, perhaps that's defensible, but I think we ought to be explicit about the value judgments that were made.

MS. BERLIN: That's true. A lot of us felt the value judgment and sort of disapproved for as some of us on this sort of ranking that was emanating, but maybe it's a reflection of where the power lies. The power and the policymaking circles and also the fear that this was an easier metric to adopt, right?

You have you are able to control your trade flows. You are able to control your economy and this is an object of metric of things are going okay. For a lot of democratic government, it's important to demonstrate that within the crisis, you are in control versus maybe just demonstrating that people are still seeing their loved ones is not a very powerful metric to sell particularly.

I'm mindful of time and I want to take some time to look forward as well. Not just to look at the past, but we'll discuss in a minute on what to do now. But I was thinking that we can maybe take the long view and I wanted to bring in you, Tom, because we had a prior conversation on this issue, and you mentioned that you were noticing the world becoming more and more regional.

With each region increasingly isolated from one another. And it reminded me of one of the scenarios established by the National Intelligence Council in the global trans 2040 where they predicted one of the scenarios was a world of separated silos where, you know, everyone would live in its own silos because of the incompatibility between the different worlds. And in many ways, the travel restrictions and the new systems being put in place could increase that tendency.

So, are you seeing this? Is this what you were thinking? And are we going in this direction?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. I think, you know, I guess just to finish up I guess on the last conversation. I mean I'm more open to some of these restrictions I guess at the height of the pandemic, right? So last Fall, last Winter. I mean we did see countries that did ease travel restrictions to get hit pretty badly by variants and by COVID.

And I think that that's in some ways a distinct sort of challenge and issue that we can, you know, address in the future. But if you get hit with a very severe, you know, pandemic and you're in the middle of this, you know, maybe it does make sense to restrict travel.

I think to me that the more problematic piece is when you're coming out of this or, you know, if those restrictions sort of last for quite a period of time. And so, having Europe have that in place, you know, after Europe was largely probably vaccinated or 70 percent vaccinated and at higher vaccination rates than the U.S.

And having those inconsistencies in the regime that we talked about many times. I mean that I think was, you know, was very sort of unfortunate. And that was a particular sort of sign of the

problems we're facing could sort of I guess brings us to the future that many of these will persist, right?

And so, we won't have bans anymore, but we will have restrictions for those who are unvaccinated won't be able to come into the United States or maybe into Europe. What counts as a vaccination? Is it Sputnik? Is it Sinovac? Or is it just what we've approved by the FDA or approved by the FDA by European authorities in the EU and the U.K. which would exclude large parts of the world? But either aren't vaccinated or have Sinovac or Sputnik or some other vaccine.

And does that sort of put in place a two-tier, you know, world where, you know, that that is justified for public health plans, but it cuts along, you know, geopolitical, socioeconomic, and even net/net sort of lines and puts sort of puts turbocharged, you know, global inequalities. So that a question I think that leaders haven't really been asking themselves or dedicating themselves to and is this a type of world that we want?

And another sort of set of issues even within, you know, the regions that are sort of fully vaccinated with the very effective vaccines. So, if you just take the United States and Europe, anyone who has traveled recently knows that the number of forms you have to go through and fill in, you know, the expense of that at the risk that you will test positive on a PCR test to come back into your own country meaning you could be out for two weeks.

I think all of these are barriers to travel that will just disincentivizes people from going on trips in the way that they used to. So yes, they'll go for the holidays and the family trip to see their, you know, relatives, but they may not go on the business trip or that study trip or, you know, something else. Just a general sort of maybe shorter-term trip during the year.

And I think if you accumulate that over time, you know, that has a real impact on the nature of globalization particularly when it's mapped onto already pretty severe geopolitical tensions. So, in the context of, say, the U.S. and China, you know, it's the COVID sort of restrictions are in place but there's already a lot of restrictions on reductions in travel after geopolitical reasons in both countries.

And so, I guess my point, Celia, is just if you play the tick board sort of five or ten years and you have all of these legitimate concerns sort of in place. I think you may see real changes in patterns of travel and that that will have a real implication for mutual understanding and for interdependence and connections between peoples.

And so, we'll still have capital foes maybe. But still have, you know, trade, but this crucial part of globalization, I think the travel that we've seen will maybe eroded. And then just a final point is that at a certain point, industry is going to have to adjust, right?

So, we may see airlines just provide fewer, you know, options that sort of infrastructure will begin to trend as well. And so, I don't want to be too sort of alarmist about it, but I do think we're at a moment where it would be good for more leaders and for policymakers to actually think about what type of world of travel do we want to see in a decade? And how do we ensure that we get there? Don't just assume that it will happen of its own accord.

MS. BERLIN: On the type of world we may want, I think, Meghan, you've worked on scenarios that are extremely interesting that you published this summer.

Four scenarios for the future of travel, which I think it would be worth going back on them. And basically, for us to understand what are the tradeoffs? What are the potential options out there, but also this sort of nightmare scenario or what we may want to aim at?

MS. BENTON: Thank you. And so, yeah, I published this paper back in July. I actually wrote it back in January and it is quite interesting how I think these four scenarios do hold up fairly well.

The first one I called pandemic proofing or a 911 moment for health and borders where we see international standards and procedures for vaccine verification and risk assessment, expanded health data sharing and some for testing and screening. I think there you would want something for like emergency travel restrictions with a strong limit, which, you know, that's what we were talking about earlier.

And then you see a kind of consummation in border management. So there's much more of this how to fully contact this travel experiences. Maybe COVID (inaudible) at airports and things being automated as far as possible.

In terms of the tradeoff, I think that best case scenario definitely brings huge costs for people who can't access vaccines in particular. But at least it would create a kind of framework for human mobility that would be a bit more predictable.

The second scenario is perhaps the one which we're maybe moving towards which is what I call mobility with friends. This is where you have more reasonable standardization of public health

procedures and perhaps, we see the rival of the travel bubble model. Most travel bubbles that we set up, you know, very quickly and are better to get off the ground. But they could perhaps pave the way for more regional agreements but just one restricted to mobility but also kind of migration, tourism, development, and even educational migration.

Of course, the challenge would be, you know, Liz spoke about it at the beginning. Regions with much more limited (inaudible). And there would be limited interregional movement that perhaps it would create walled-up regions that you said about (inaudible) report. But that scenario is the one that I worry about.

This is the chaos scenario where, you know, we keep these sorts of unilateral and fully communicated decisions. And I think that just this approach to focusing on vaccines requirements and who's in and who's out isn't especially globally minded approach to managing the pandemic because countries will still be looking really inward on that than even for sort of those do you have access to vaccinations? There's all this confusion around (inaudible) rules.

And then maybe we'd see lots of different kind of access initiatives being developed that aren't interoperable. And a lot of augmentation and the initiatives emerge. And then I threw in the pre-pandemic as quo just for a sort of forced experiment. We all long for it. Perhaps some regions definitely the European Union, we're hoping that there might be a return back to that. And, you know, I know the EU digital vaccination certificate is thinking framed as a kind of burn after emergency use tool even though that's not really what anyone thinks is its future.

Even if we did see a huge improvement in COVID rates and on death rates and hospitalization, there would still be huge (inaudible) to think about the next pandemic. So, I just don't think that the pre-pandemic status quo as it relates to mobility is really a viable prospect.

MS. BERLIN: Thank you, Meghan. Because we're sort of hovering over this question. I want to bring in Liz and ask you about what is starting to emerge as the solution of choice for many countries which are a vaccine requirement to entry? Some in the European context call it an immunity certification.

So, it's not just the vaccine, it's potentially the test or the fact of having recovered from COVID. But in general, I wonder how you would assess those requirements especially in the context of a

world where access to vaccine is very limited in many parts of the world? What's your own take on this?

MS. COLLETT: Sure. So, I think, you know, vaccine equity is I think is core. To quote some statistic from Garvey, the vaccine statistics just last week in low-income countries less than four percent of the population have had at least one dose. In developed countries that's 61 percent. That is stark. And it's the dominance and in some cases exclusive criteria to differentiate is vaccine status and that is extremely limiting. And you do I think as Tom mentioned, you know, you do look at regionalization as being at least in the short to medium term a likelihood.

I think from an IOM perspective, what we've said is, sure. You know, vaccine certification, fine. But you also have to have other criteria to allow people entry. It cannot be exclusive. You have to allow immunity certification or other points of certification or other measures that would allow people to access safely, and we have to expand that toolbox. But expand that toolbox in a way that it is also equitable because many of the options then given, quarantining for 14 days are exuberantly expensive for people who may be coming on a trip or coming to work in effect that weren't necessarily repay them that investment.

So we have to really sort of think about how do you create equitable, cost effective and manageable way of a family can travel that still meet that sort of health safe criteria and also take into account that the infrastructure in the countries and it's not just the infrastructure at the point of entry and testing facilities and these sorts of things that might exist in a country that also questions now that are being weighed of civil registry and the ability to verify identity. And that in some countries it's still quite lacking.

So, we're going right back to transitional issues that feed into this inequality which is even if you can access the vaccine can you get the documentation that can then be verified? Do we have intraoperative ability across borders? How is data managed between countries where people are less trusting of their government in wanting to share data?

There's a whole myriad of issues that sort of need to be brought into the conversation. And I think, you know, one of the things that we do want to look at is also then predictability which is part of that cost analysis. Because one of the reasons flights are more expensive in some parts of the world is because they can't be sure they're going to be able to fill those flights with people or be able to go to

destinations.

You're seeing flight sort of limiting and changing across the world. And so, these sorts of costs that are attend with (inaudible) have to take your indications for those who have perhaps been migrating. And if I may pivot slightly as well. I see an opportunity here which is we're now seeing distinct labor issue emerge, backlog of immigration systems. A number of immigrants who have not been able to move in the last few years and jobs that are waiting for them to do that.

So, there is also this liquid moment to rethink some of this. And to really ask questions about the relationship between the government, the employer, and the migrant worker. And have to create a rebalance in these relationships that naturally encourage workers to move and play into those.

They have concerns now about if I move will I be able to go home and see my family or will I be stranded? Will I be included in recovery effort if I move across country? And so, there is a rebalancing moment that I think is worth exploring here. So, if we can address this sort of measures at the border and think about equity in that sense around people to move then where is the equity also in the migration journey itself at large that may have been opened up by the pandemic.

MS. BERLIN: Ted, I'm wondering if you share this sort of -- I wouldn't say optimism but sense of opportunity that Liz presented on this idea that maybe it's a liquid moment. Maybe it's a liquid moment that is comparable to what happened after 911 when processes and standards have been renegotiated.

And do you have this impression? Or do you see any impediment to that?

MR. ALDEN: I'm going to do something you probably are never supposed to do on a panel like this which is confess to massive uncertainty. Because I think an awful lot of this depends on how individual human beings react to the new risk environment.

I mean so you and I were talking about this a little bit in the prep, right? I mean people who have made decisions to work abroad or study abroad. Well, there's a new element of risk there, right? Are you going to do that if, you know, you have an awareness which we all have now that this could mean being cut off from your family and friends for a very long period of time? Will you go study abroad under those circumstance?

You know, a lot of migrant workers, the level of desperation maybe such that they have

no choice but to take those risks, but I suspect there's also been adjustment there. I mean people who have been forced back home. Haven't been able to go on the cruise ships. Haven't been able to work abroad and send remittances back. Maybe adjusting economically in ways, we don't quite understand and may not, you know, be eager to sort of jumping in and leave their families and go work abroad.

Or, you know, it's possible that what we will have is this huge pent-up demand. You know, we've all been stuck close to home for two years. And so, there may be an explosion of travel and mobility. I really confess to not having a very good crystal ball.

I mean, you know, what we saw to get back closer to home at the U.S./Canada border after 911. That's a kind of interesting study because those were very low commitment kinds of trips. A lot of the U.S./Canada border travels, people crossing to shop. Mostly Canadians coming down to the U.S. And it tends to vary with the relative value of the currencies. If the Canadian dollars are strong, more people come down.

After 911, there were new passport requirements, document requirements. The lines at the border got longer. Cross border travel never recovered at the U.S./Canada borders. Never reached the levels it reached in the 1990s. And I think, you know, this time maybe we will see the same thing on a more global basis. You know, reinforcing some of what Tom was saying. And I think the calculations are going to be different.

If I had to predict, I think that's what we're going to see. I think we are going to see a permanently much lower level of mobility. But I confess to a lot of uncertainty about it because sometimes human beings respond to these things in ways that, you know, are well. I've been locked down. Heck, I'm going to go travel as much as I can for the next period of time. So, I don't know which of those two things is likely.

MS. BERLIN: Sure. And the scenarios of Meghan are still wide open for the world to go one way or the other. And the scenarios for individual people whether or not they will want to travel are also quite open.

And, Meghan, I want to bring you in on one point because you've been a long-term migration expert and you've looked at migration issues on both sides of the Atlantic.

I wonder if you can discuss this idea that the transatlantic space might be a good place to

start for a common conversation to set up the norms and standards of the future? Maybe a future that you laid out in your scenarios.

And what type of standards should this community focus? And should it be on the certification part? And what type of requirements are needed? Or should it be on the technological side whether it's digital passes or a mobility? We have a question from Ellen Vasilina (phonetic) asking about this. Can we create a bridge of mobility across the Atlantic and then further across the globe with this idea that the transatlantic community will be working together?

MS. BENTON: Yeah. I think the transatlantic space could be a kind of test bed for things like interoperability on vaccine verification and an agreement of common standards.

But I think you mentioned this just in the word, norms that I said at the beginning and also just now. That I think we need to pay more attention to. We've got really focused on the question of the technical specifications of the digital kind of certificates for instance or this challenges which are very important.

But we haven't brought enough of like stepping back and thinking about what the common norms are that we want to at least see. You know, we've mentioned some of the things that we need. Like Liz mentioned predictability. I think one word that I've been floating around is the idea of being class harmonious. You only have rules if you really have to.

Like how do we shift away from this sort of maximalist displaying everything together there? There are still rules we have from 911 that don't really serve any purpose. I mean why do we take out shoes off, for instance, when there was only one shoe-based threat. Well, I think that we need to start talking about norms and maybe need to shift away from dividing people into vac'ed or unvac'ed and then deciding whether they can come in on that basis.

You know, when we think about like how you maintain cars driving at an acceptable speed limit, you don't enforce every single instance that someone goes over the speed limit. You create a framework for people to by and large follow the norm. And like what it would look like to have sensible norms in the global travel and the mobility framework?

Well, I think it would be encouraging vaccination everywhere. Not creating unintended consequences like saying like, certain vaccines won't be accepted and there's not (inaudible) system. I

mean what will happen if COVAX doesn't pass the emergency approval at the end of October and therefore people who receive that vaccine in India are not able to come in?

We don't want to see any kind of refusal of vaccines on (inaudible). That's a massive unintended consequence when the biggest tool we have at our disposal is vaccine rollout. So, I think we need to think about the enabling infrastructure instead of some of the enforcement which is, you know, about norms. It's about how do you make it possible for people to get vaccinated as part of their visa application process?

Do we do vaccinations on arrival? And what's the kind of complementary system for testing and quarantine that would make that safe? And then can you use like behavioral insights or nudges to encourage people to be vaccinated in the travel and mobility continuum without necessarily enforcing it, which, you know, has all those problems, right?

You can have priority boarding lanes for passport control. Airlines can have it as a kind of default option and make it a little bit harder to switch out of that.

So, I do think there's some creative ideas that we can kick around now. And I think that it could be around the idea of sensible norms not just getting hung up on this enforcement and interpretating issue.

MS. BERLIN: Liz, yeah. I want to bring you in and I was wondering if you can compare the experiences of border management across the world. You might have more of a global view than most of us. And did it vary a lot between Asia, Europe, Africa, or North America? And whether there are some experiments that are proving to be more successful than others? Either both, let's say, more successful in the health sense, but also in the freedom and mobility sense?

MS. COLLETT: So, I mean I think there's a wealth of experience and some very different approaches taken across the world, which again I keep feeling like I'm coming back to the same thing, same point which is capacity feeds a lot of this.

If you don't have the capacity to test your populations and you know your populations don't have the capacity for social distance, you're risk appetite, and your choices will be very different. So, you know, we are looking at a lot of very different capacities alongside a lot of different end games in mind.

I mean we've been talking the last couple of years about the fact -- the last couple of weeks specifically about the fact that in much of the Asian region there was a zero COVID strategy and pivoting away from that. And I think that then sort of takes us to the recognition that at different points in the pandemic, different countries may have got it right and then struggled as context changed to then adapt to a new context. And with bills that are figuring out what that timeline looks like and what's the best timeline to follow if there is indeed a best timeline.

But I wanted to come back to what Meghan was saying because I think this sort of diversity across the world, you know, where you're dealing with places with long porous land borders and low levels of digitalization and legal identity in one context and then highly regulated parts of the world where the only way in is through air or seaports. You know, when you look at those different contexts, you realize how much there is in between.

But I like Meghan's idea of instead of thinking about framework, norms are an extremely loaded word in the international community so I would suggest we use the phrase but rules of the game. Something more anonymous to sort of what are the parameters we're all willing to work in? Instead of talk about what is the common language that we can use for some of these things?

And how do we think about what works and what doesn't work in a way to create a little bit more continuity and consistency in how people approach things at different points in the pandemic? And I think this is the key part. It is changing over time has been one of the hardest parts of this pandemic because you constantly have to adjust and be flexible.

And if I can add one final point which is access to data has been highly variable across the world as well. Some countries have had access to extraordinary, you know, here in Switzerland, count on by counting data broken down and all sorts of information that you can really use in making risk assessments in other parts of the world really very difficult to manage offensive levels of infection across border mobility and all these sorts of things. So, improving some datasets I think would also be really important to think through as we go forward.

MS. BERLIN: Thank you, Liz. Tom, I want to ask you about this question of who should try and create the rules of the game or decide on the parameters or at least discuss some of it? As a director of the Center on the U.S. and Europe, you might think that the transatlantic framework is the most

appropriate. And yet, what we've seen over the past year and a half is lack of cooperation between the two sides. And clearly, a dichotomy when Europe decided to reopen to American travelers, the U.S. decided not to reciprocate and waited four more months before it finally announced that it would reciprocate.

We have a question from David Donohue who asks, would President Biden's Europe travel ban still be in place if he had not gone to the G7 meeting? So, I don't think there's -- I don't personally think that it's at the G7 meeting that he was convinced to lift the travel ban. But the point of David here is good.

Is this all a balance of power between the two sides? And what if the Europeans didn't ask repeatedly for the travel ban to be lifted, would the travel ban not have been lifted? And so, all to say whether or not the transatlantic framework is the right framework to discuss the rules of the game?

MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, thanks, Celia. You know, I think the main reason why it wasn't lifted was because leaders on both sides of the Atlantic didn't really see it as all that important, right? So, they weren't sort of focused on it as an important issue.

It wasn't sort of a first order question, you know, for President Biden and the Biden administration. You know, they were tapping, you know, the pandemic at home. Obviously, Trump lifted the ban the way out of office just to try to create a political trap for the incoming Biden administration. They reimposed it and then I think they focused on other things.

And as you sort of well know because you've written so well about it and about this whole period. European leaders didn't really raise it very much. I think Ivan Marquez may have been the first leader to raise it directly with Biden. And when that's not raised as an issue or it's very rarely raised, it's hard to convince, you know, officials to sort of break that log jam to go past that inertia when, you know, the pandemic is still a threat and when you still have delta, and they're warry about sending sort of signals.

And so, I think, yes, there's blame. You know, certainly I think in Washington in terms of persisting with this policy, you know, when it was clear that the science had sort of overtaken it. But I think also in, you know, in Europe, you know, yes diplomats were raising it throughout the summer, but many leaders just didn't see really in their interest to put it on the bilateral agenda.

And I think that gets to a larger, you know, issue going forward. And, you know, you've again written about this and other topics too, but summed up in the hashtag, you know, love in tourism or travel in tourism. But this is a pretty important issue that gets to the heart of what type of, you know, international community, international order do we want to see? What nature of globalization do we want to see?

And I still haven't seen a lot at the sort of senior political level anywhere really looking at that. Even in the EU, you know, when they lifted some of these restrictions, it was mainly because, you know, Greece wanted tourism and Spain wanted tourism over the summer and there were pressures there. The vaccinations were in place and now there are still, you know, restrictions, of course. But they're address precocity or, you know, openness to countries that are sort of largely vaccinated.

But what about, you know, as we raise already what about the unvaccinated? What about those vaccines that aren't necessarily accepted? And what about the restrictions even for vaccinated travelers that may create sort of adverse incentives to traveling? And what does all that sum up to?

So, I would like to -- you know, I don't think this is really going to be discussed by the G20, but I think it should be discussed by future summits of world leaders. And they need to put this on the agenda in the same way that they do, you know, protection measures that might inhibit trade or the need for sort of trade on the stabilizing capital flows. Other elements of globalization that they're seeking to manage. I think this should take its place on that agenda.

MS. BERLIN: Ted, you don't want jump in? I wonder if you think North America and in particular Canada and the U.S. can be a place of discussion to decide on some basic parameters together?

But also, what type of world do we want to see emerge if travel doesn't bounce back by itself, but that maybe North American region or larger regions of the world have to demonstrate what type of mobility they are hoping for their own citizens? And I wonder if you have any take on this?

MR. ALDEN: I mean, you know, I think Tom really summed it up very well. I don't actually see North America reemerging as a center of leadership on this. I think it's more likely to happen in the transatlantic context where we have been seeing some encouraging things on trade and others.

But, you know, I want to circle back to something you talked about at the outset, Celia, which is the question of constituencies. And I think one of the things that has been quite striking here is that the constituency for open trade and travel is actually fairly small. And that's from, you know, people who are migrants themselves who are obviously a small percentage of the global population.

Within countries, right, you know, most Americans still don't have a passport. Still don't travel much within countries. It's a minority of people. People living cross borders is a small minority. The industries that are affected by this -- some countries very significant. Some countries are tremendously dependent on tourism. But in most countries, it's a small piece of the overall economic pie.

You have some border towns where this has been a terrible thing. You know, Point Roberts, Washington out here in my neck of the woods has been destroyed by the shutdowns. But I mean they've had no ability to make their voice heard nationally. So, I guess I'm not entirely optimistic that what Tom is suggesting. What I very much agree with, which is that this should be a high-level concern. I don't know that it gets there, right?

Because political leaders at the end of the day make calculations about what the majority of their population cares about. And I think it was pretty clear as a result of this experience that border lockdowns are kind of okay with the majority of the population depending on the circumstances. I don't know if it's going to rise to that level. And I do worry and Tom, I think articulated this very well about the long-term consequences of that. Because I think mobility, you know, cross border education, business travel, exchanges of all sorts, I think are an important pillar of globalization along with trade and capital movements.

And if that pillar is really diminished, what does that mean for the sort of world we're moving into? And it worries me in the same way it worries Tom, I think.

MS. BERLIN: Thank you. We are at the end of our time. I will just ask Liz and Meghan for maybe passing concluding thoughts that you might have on the issue of one last message you want to leave us with. Liz?

MS. COLLETT: So, on the idea of the international community coming together. I mean it may be obvious to know that someone from the U.N. agency would be fully behind that conversation.

I think one of the challenges is that some of the conversations at an international level

around migration have been so sensitive in recent years. And so, polarizing that there's a nervousness about taking on this issue, but I think certainly at IOM we want to take on this issue and start this dialogue and say, you know, that there are some practicalities here that we still have to figure out.

And so, it certainly has to stay on the agenda in whatever form. I don't disagree with Ted, though. It is sort of in a difficult to accept that there is a small proportion of people who are necessarily constituents in this. And maybe even it's a tourism issue, which does have severe impacts on a large number of countries and does affect a large number of the population.

I may not live in the U.K., but I do read the U.K. newspapers and if I believe those, everyone is obsessed on going on holiday for half term. So, there is a constituency somewhere. It's having bringing us together to begin that conversation and bring the different parts of industry together who were deeply affected by this from the aviation industry to the tourism industry to those who depend on flexible access to work and skills.

So, I hope there's potential to continue this conversation and deepen it because I personally think there is a huge need for it at a global level. Whether it starts in the transatlantic space or whether it starts -- and it has already started in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa where regional leaders got together and said, how can we facilitate free movement? How can we not do this again? So, there are places where this is igniting. How do we make sure that creates some momentum that continues on as the impact of the pandemic start to diminish?

MS. BERLIN: Meghan?

MS. BENTON: Well, perhaps just quickly I'll be a good researcher and say, we started the pandemic knowing very little about how to use travel restrictions to manage a pathogen like COVID. And I think right now the big evidence gap that we're facing is not really knowing very much about how to manage the spread of variance.

And I do think that there is a risk that, you know, we have a more concerning variant come along and, you know, countries go back to the previous approach. So, if we want to move forward, we need better evidence on how to manage variances especially as we shift to vaccinated travel as not being tested. You know, are there other ways to make sure that we track the geographical spread of variance and manage this on a global level.

MS. BERLIN: Well, thank you. And on a more optimistic note, not to think too much about the future scary variance that are being coming along. Thank you very much to all four of you for making travel and mobility a topic today of the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. I think it's extremely important that we try to cross those bridges between different areas of expertise so thank you very much. This was a fascinating conversation. And I will see you around. Bye-bye.

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