

What if another COVID is on the horizon? | Aggies GO

Jonah Carlson

12/10/2023



A picture of Gatwick International Airport, empty during the early COVID-19 pandemic, July 2020.

Jonah Carlson - Following an uptick in respiratory illnesses in China, some U.S. Senators have called for a travel ban between the two countries. An article by David Shepardson, published by *Reuters*, examines the motivations for the call, as well as responses from the Biden administration.

The Senators' concerns reflect the lessons learned about networks following the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID, which also originated in China, was able to spread thanks to our interconnected and global world, following its hosts home on flights, through airports and business centers, etc. as an unintended flow. The realization of this phenomenon led to the widespread shutdown of air traffic, with more than [80% of flights](#) being cancelled during the early pandemic. The pandemic was not only a global emergency but a political fiasco for many states globally, including the United States, where pandemic response became a hot-button political issue. Uncertain of the possibilities new respiratory cases in China could bring, these Senators appear to have called for an aggressive forward response, hoping not to walk into a repeat of COVID-19. Meanwhile, the Biden administration issued a statement indicating that nothing regarding the illnesses "is appearing out of the ordinary." The Biden administration doesn't want a repeat of the COVID experience, either – the slashing of global networks as a response resulted in a significant [collapse](#) in global trade, weakening the

U.S. economy for a stretch. It seems unlikely that the Biden administration will give the calls to ban travel much credence.

Furthermore, heightening tensions between China and the U.S. regarding military activity in the Indo-Pacific region is likely deterring the Biden administration from heavily altering its geopolitical code toward China. A travel ban, however brief, would enflame tensions between the two states, which could have serious repercussions for relations elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific region – something the Biden administration does not want to risk while it has two other international conflicts on its hands.

Photo [source](#). Mark Hodson Photos, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons.