

THE AGE OF TRUMP

FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



Foreign policy challenges for the left

EDITED BY
Ian Kearns and Kate Murray

FOREWORD BY
Andrew Harrop and Ernst Stetter

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FOREWORD

Andrew Harrop and Ernst Stetter

How should the European left respond to President Trump and the nationalist foreign policy he has brought to the White House? The answer cannot be to disengage. The United States is our most important and powerful partner: we share values, we trade together, we love each other's cultures, and our security interests are intertwined. These deep transatlantic bonds will outlive the term of office of a single man. But the answer cannot be business as usual either. Emily Thornberry, the UK shadow foreign secretary, is correct when she writes in her contribution to this book that the question is not only how close does Donald Trump want to be to us, but 'how close do we want to be to him?'

In the democracies of Europe mainstream political parties, governments and the EU institutions all have a fundamental commitment to human rights and international law. President Trump does not. Since the birth of the liberal global order after World War II, Trump is the first American president to explicitly renounce provisions such as the prohibition on torture or the pillage of conquered nations. His predecessors may have breached rules covertly or sought to blur their boundaries, but Trump's open rejection of global standards is different. It must be publicly contested, no matter how awkward or inconvenient that may be.

But this is not the only way in which relations with the US will need to change. 'America First' appears to imply a new isolationism alongside a new nationalism, with the US engaging and leading less often. That means Europe will need to step up, not to compete with the US but to fill a vacuum. Once this might have been impossible, but the world is now multi-polar and Europeans can work with other powers while the US stands by, on issues such as trade, international development and climate change.

The values and leadership of the European left will be essential. Our aim must be to prove that multilateral institutions and high global standards can be to everyone's advantage, working with strong democracies in every region of the world. We can also forge partnerships with progressive forces within the United States who share our goals: responsible businesses, charitable foundations, cities and states. And where our interests align, European democracies must have the confidence to work positively with China, even if US-China relationships turn sour.

On security, relations between the US and Europe must remain strong of necessity. European nations must raise their game and prove their commitment to their region's defence. But they must also insist on America's commitment to the principle of mutual security as well as the reality that this can only be achieved through international law and a strident challenge to those who breach it, including Russia.

By championing the rules-based, multilateral liberal order, rich democracies beyond the US can earn renewed global respect and build soft power. This will matter if the US refuses to take steps to prevent and tackle tensions and conflicts, except when its immediate interests are under threat. For example, while the US may be robust in using military force against Islamic extremism, it is likely to do far less now to address its causes. Europe must build the trust it will need to lead in this domain.

Europe also needs to decide how to respond to the wild unpredictability of the Trump administration, which seems to be half-temperament, half-tactic. The new president may believe uncertainty brings strategic advantage but, really, erratic brinkmanship only heightens international tensions. In response, Europe should explicitly set out to de-risk global relationships, by creating room for dialogue and cooperation even where the US has chosen a different path. This approach is particularly important with respect to nuclear weapons, where President Trump seems unaware of the dangers that his overturning of US policy and doctrine could bring.

In all of this, we write as if the nations of Europe share a common view and policy. But, of course, Donald Trump's term of office will coincide with the UK's departure from the EU. There is a grave risk that, in dealing with Trump, Britain's Conservative government will choose to stand apart from its European allies, even though our interests are aligned. It would be a huge mistake for the UK to deepen its foreign policy ties with the US under Trump, just because it has chosen to weaken its European partnerships. We have already seen the danger, when Theresa May initially refused to condemn President Trump's 'Muslim ban', for fear of derailing future talks on trade.

We know that populists and neo-conservatives will try to use Trump's presidency to wedge apart UK and EU diplomacy. Progressives in the UK and the rest of Europe must not let that happen. We must undermine Europe's homegrown nationalists and protectionists, by tainting them by association with the Trump regime. And we must make the case for intensive joint action by the UK and EU that strengthens multilateralism and the application of our shared values. The way that the UK and the EU work together to respond to Trump can set the tone for a foreign policy partnership between us for decades to come.

INTRODUCTION

Ian Kearns

The election of Donald Trump to the US presidency suggests we are in for a turbulent and controversial few years. During the election campaign, his rhetoric dripped with venomous attacks on other countries and on established norms, institutions and agreements. He dismissed international law, declared himself in favour of a robust use of American military power, and talked of democratic politicians and allies around the world in dismissive terms while lauding autocrats. If rhetoric is turned into reality, US policy toward a wide range of issues and actors on the world stage is about to change in near unprecedented ways.

It therefore seems vital that the left in the UK and in Europe begins to think through what Trump is and is not likely to do, what this means for European and world affairs, and how we should respond. This publication aims to contribute to that process. It brings together a collection of essays from leading thinkers on key international issues to push beyond Trump's rhetoric in pursuit of a deeper understanding of what he represents. It explores the considerable areas of uncertainty that remain. And it asks what dangers progressives should be alert to, and what action we can take to mitigate those dangers while articulating a more positive agenda for change. For in today's politics, and consistent with the timeless progressive belief

that the future can and must be better than the past, it is change and not the status quo that we must stand for.

In this introduction, the aim is to offer a brief overview of Trump's policy positions on the most pressing issues on the international agenda and to consider what he represents by way of an attack on progressive ideas and values as these relate to international affairs. It is also to consider how Trump might affect UK and European interests, and how progressive politicians across Europe should respond. Needless to say, in the space available it is not and cannot be exhaustive. But in pursuing these aims, it highlights key themes to emerge in the chapters that follow, and draws on each of them to inform both the account of the Trump challenge offered, and the solutions we might proffer to meet it.

Trump as a threat to European security, the European Union and its neighbourhood

At the Munich Security Conference in February of 2017, just weeks after Trump took office, Vice President Pence and Defence Secretary Mattis attempted to soothe European concerns that the new administration was ambivalent at best, hostile at worst, to both the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The fact that they had to do so, however, tells its own story, because Trump has been dismissive of both.

He has described NATO as obsolete and largely irrelevant to today's main security threats and has talked admiringly of President Putin and of the need to build a more cooperative relationship with Russia. With regard to the EU, he has been not only dismissive, but openly hostile. As Vassilis Ntousas points out in this collection, Trump welcomed the Brexit vote and stated he hoped others would replicate Britain's decision to leave the EU. He has called the European Union a vehicle for German interests not European interests, and aligns himself

publicly with Nigel Farage of Ukip. His chief strategist in the White House, Steve Bannon, talks admiringly of the whole Le Pen family in France. In recent weeks, Trump's trade adviser, Peter Navarro, has suggested the US and Germany should be engaged in bilateral trade talks, essentially attempting to bypass the EU on trade.

These positions taken with regard to NATO, the EU and Russia are moreover, related to each other. If carried through into genuine diplomatic initiatives, they would suggest a desire to remake the entire Euro-Atlantic economic and security order. For many Europeans, particularly in the east of the continent, to talk of a rapprochement with Putin while questioning NATO's *raison d'être* so soon after Moscow's annexation of Crimea is to table the prospect of a Russian sphere of influence in eastern Europe. It is to suggest the future should be a return to history, not the EU's dream of an escape from history. It is to be the harbinger of a Europe where the great powers do as they wish while the smaller and weaker powers on the continent do as they must. It is a direct assault on the kind of Europe the EU was created to build.

Trump's position with regard to the Middle East is also troubling, not only in its own terms and for what it means for the people who live in the region, but because it suggests that far from acting to stabilise Europe's southern neighbourhood and Europe itself, the US under Trump's leadership could actually destabilise both further. As Lina Khatib's chapter makes clear, part of this is about the primacy, in the minds of Trump and those around him, of the need to defeat ISIS militarily while neglecting the development of a political and diplomatic strategy to stabilise Syria and Iraq. But it is also about the rejection of the two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, talk of moving the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, and an apparent willingness to use military force to seize ISIS oil installations and revenues outside of any framework of

international law. The potential blowback to Europe from such an American approach to the region, in terms of terrorism and additional flows of migrants, could be huge. And the danger is that such blowback interacts with other forces already at work to destabilise and weaken Europe, from the rise of the Eurosceptic populist threat inside many European states, to Russian meddling in elections and the continued austerity and economic malaise affecting much of the continent. The combination could prove fatal to Europe's unity.

Trump as a threat on global issues

The scene is no better at global level where, across the issues of trade, climate change, nuclear weapons and the management of great power relationships, Trump's views are deeply problematic.

Press reports in early March this year suggested there had been a major Oval Office row between the economic nationalists and protectionists in Trump's entourage and those in favour of a more assertive US trade policy but one that was still recognisably being conducted within the framework of World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. The scrapping of the multilateral Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiated by the Obama administration, the threat to scrap the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) if it is not re-negotiated to the US' liking, and measures to force US companies to move investments in Mexico back to the US, all point to a significant change in US trade policy. Whether this is a turn to full-blown protectionism or a shift away from multilateral trade agreements to more transactional bilateral ones is yet to be seen. Either way, it spells likely turbulence for the world economy.

One of the proving grounds, as Andrew Small makes clear in this collection, will be US relations with China,

where the chance of a trade war is now much higher than it was before Trump's election. Talk by Trump of the US economy being 'raped' by the Chinese will be hard to row back from. If a trade war does come to pass, it will be deeply damaging to the global economy as a whole but it will also put Europe in a very difficult diplomatic position. European-Chinese trade is huge and if a dispute between the US and China is seen as the product of an overly aggressive American approach, the Europeans may find themselves having to choose or, at best, adopting a posture of neutrality. This would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, but is a sign of the changing times.

The US-China relationship matters on more than trade of course. Trump's rejection of the One China policy that has been the bedrock of the relationship for decades, before his later apparent re-affirmation of it, signalled just one of the many points of strategic tension between the two countries. Whether it is over Taiwan, developments in the South China Sea, or North Korea, the Trump administration has the challenge of trying to manage the strategic relationship between itself, the world's pre-eminent super power, and its major emerging challenger. Historically, this kind of challenge has rarely been managed successfully without war and pulling it off would require extraordinary diplomatic skill and foresight, a cool assessment of the core interests of both sides, a willingness to think and act long-term and a commitment to consistency. To say that Trump comes up short in each of these areas is an understatement. But if he gets it wrong, a military conflict between the US and China cannot be ruled out and its consequences would extend far beyond the actors directly involved. Not only would such a conflict be one between two nuclear armed states, but the potential impact on wider regional stability in Asia and on the global economy could be massive, not to mention the pressure that allies on both sides would be under to

become directly involved. Again, in this scenario, Europe would be in a difficult position, particularly if any conflict was thought to have been primarily caused by ill-judged American belligerence rather than by the Chinese.

When it comes to nuclear matters more generally, as Daryl Kimball points out in his chapter on Trump and the bomb, it is impossible to feel re-assured, and hard not to feel terrified, by the fact that Trump's finger is on the nuclear button. The concern is not only one about general temperament, but about specific, though at this stage, informal policy pronouncements. Trump has speculated about using nuclear weapons against terrorist groups, rejected an apparent offer from President Putin to negotiate an extension to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) that limits US and Russian nuclear weapons, and has talked about the need to greatly expand the US nuclear arsenal. He has ordered a nuclear posture review that may contain recommendations to create new, 'more usable' nuclear weapons and is thought to be considering resumption of explosive testing of American nuclear warheads, in violation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which the US has signed but not ratified. Against decades of US nuclear non-proliferation policy, he has also speculated about it being inevitable, and potentially a good thing, if countries like Saudi Arabia, Japan and South Korea acquired their own nuclear weapons, a development that would add a new or greater element of nuclear risk to relations in what are already some of the most dangerous and unstable regions on earth.

On the face of it, Trump's position on climate change is equally troubling. The chapter by Liz Gallagher makes clear that he appears to be a climate change denier, and has appointed a Secretary of State in Rex Tillerson who, if not a denier, appears to believe the threat is greatly exaggerated. Trump has also threatened to withdraw the US from the Paris climate change agreement. If he follows through,

or even if he chooses to keep the US inside the agreement while trying to disrupt it from within, this could weaken the international effort to take effective action to meet the threat and could diplomatically empower some of the leading fossil fuel states, such as Russia and Saudi Arabia, who might wish for a similar effect.

Trump as an attack on progressive ideas

If we step away from consideration of Trump's attitude to specific issue areas and ask what he represents in terms of a set of ideas for shaping the world order and the US role within it, some further common themes begin to emerge.

Despite the fact that we live in an era when no state, not even Donald Trump's America, can solve all the problems it faces by acting alone, Trump's 'America First' agenda is a rejection of multilateralism and multilateral institutions. This is clearly visible in his attitude to the EU, to trade, to climate action, to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and in negative attitudes to the United Nations.

More than this, Trump also appears to represent a rejection of attempts to build and sustain a liberal, rules-based, international order. As Ken Gude points out in his chapter, Trump speaks admiringly of autocratic leaders like Putin and he communicates no interest in protecting and preserving democracy and human rights, even going so far as to say that he supports torture himself. He peddles religious intolerance and, when it comes to US behaviour on the world stage, including the use of American military power, he is utterly dismissive of the very concept of international law.

Trump's world is a world of raw power politics unconstrained by rules, and of transactional bilateral deals wherever they can deliver narrow advantage. There is no wider concept of American leadership responsibility, no sense of global leadership in defence of a more enlightened

sense of self-interest. From the economic sphere to efforts to avoid major power conflicts, Trump appears to represent a rejection of the ideas and institutions developed at the mid-point of the 20th century as an answer to protectionism and devastating war. He is at best a throw of the dice on an epic scale, at worst a prophetic reminder of Mark Twain's dictum that history does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme.

Trump's attitude to international development, where he is planning massive cuts to the aid budget, and his approach to conflict and refugees will be particularly abhorrent to progressives. As Laura Kyrke-Smith points out in this volume, Trump is an attack on 'the presumption of a moral responsibility to alleviate poverty and suffering, on the prevention and protection of people from war, and on the preservation of people's inherent rights and dignity.'

The three 'uns' of the Trump administration

Steve Andreasen's chapter, ostensibly focused on security relations in the Euro-Atlantic area, points up something else for us to worry about, or a possible source of hope, depending on one's perspective. The Trump administration, Andreasen points out, is characterised by three 'uns': it is uncertain, undisciplined and unpredictable.

It is uncertain in relation to policy because while Trump speaks and tweets forthrightly, there isn't much consistency to what he says over time. He has talked both about expanding the American nuclear arsenal and of seeking to reduce it; of binning the 'One China' policy but also being committed to it; of no commitment to the two-state solution in the Middle East while indicating that he might be willing to support it. The list goes on.

But the administration is uncertain in relation to personnel too, because huge numbers of senior staff positions

across the government have yet to be filled, raising questions about the ability to get much of anything done in practice, but also giving little clue as to which people and personalities are likely to be influential in shaping administration policy as time unfolds. The senior appointments Trump has made, such as to Secretary of State and Secretary of Defence, appear to be of individuals who actually disagree with his own policy pronouncements in some areas. Secretary of Defence Mattis in particular takes a more cautious, perhaps even hawkish, view on Russia than does Trump himself.

Trump is undisciplined, both in focus and in messaging, despite his claims that his administration is operating like a fine-tuned machine. This lack of discipline was a stand-out feature of his election campaign and has been carried over into both the transition and the administration.

And the fact that he is unpredictable from one day or from one tweet to the next is there for all to see.

For the optimist, this all holds out the tantalising prospect that much of what Trump says and has said in the past can be ignored because he doesn't mean it. It will be more important, the reasoning goes, to focus on what he does, not what he says. But this would appear to be over-optimistic for two reasons. First, the evidence suggests that when there is something Trump is clear about, like his desire to introduce the ban on refugees, he is willing to expend considerable time and energy on doing what it takes to get it done. Second, the uncertainty on substance and lack of ability to get a well-staffed administration together both point to the more alarming conclusion that either he doesn't know what he's doing or the insurgency he represents is so short of support in the policy-making establishment, including in the Republican foreign and defence policy establishment, that governing effectively at all is going to be beyond him. Some might suggest that this could limit the damage Trump can do and there may be

some truth in that. But more fundamentally, it would spell a diplomatic vacuum in any number of geographies and issue areas where American leadership has historically been important. Unless other democracies with progressive ideas can step in to fill this gap, we are likely to see the interests and designs of several non-western autocracies emerge as winners.

Trump as a challenge to the UK-US special relationship and transatlanticism

As Emily Thornberry points out in her chapter, this all raises some very profound questions for the UK in particular, since the so-called ‘special relationship’ has been a corner-stone of UK diplomacy for decades. Theresa May’s recent trip to Washington, and Boris Johnson’s claim that the election of Trump is a major opportunity, rather than a massive problem, indicates that the initial reaction of the British government is to stick to the default position of hugging the Americans close.

This amounts to a pretty big bet on Trump not being as bad in practice as he appears to be in both substance and tone. Because if he is as bad as his rhetoric suggests, hugging the Trump administration close is going to be a roller-coaster ride of historic proportions. Pulling it off could involve a softening of UK policy toward Russia while trying to retain any semblance of credibility with other NATO allies; trying to pursue a post-Brexit free-trade policy while the US opts for protectionism; arguing for a strong and stable EU while the US does things to undermine it; and generally attempting to be supportive of multilateral agreements and regimes on climate change, nuclear issues and a whole host of other issues while the Trump administration abandons or ignores them.

The pressure to align with the US is so intense, precisely because of the extent to which the UK is dependent on the

US for intelligence sharing and for missile and other technology used in the UK nuclear deterrent. But if Trump's policy in practice is as radical as seems possible, and in some areas as seems likely, the dilemma will be acute. The UK may be forced to choose between core elements of its national security strategy and interests on the one hand, and its dignity as a power of any independent standing and positioning on the world stage on the other.

The dilemma is just as acute for the rest of Europe and for the European Union as it is for the UK. The countries in the eastern part of the EU and of NATO rely fundamentally on American security guarantees to see off Russian pressure at a point when the new US president appears interested in a friendlier relationship with Vladimir Putin. A US-China trade war would be a confrontation between Europe's two most important trading partners, and therefore not only damaging to the world economy as a whole but diplomatically excruciating for the EU to navigate. At a time when the EU is deeply troubled by internal challenges and disagreements, and needs a US administration that is supportive to its existence and flourishing, it is faced potentially not by support or even ambivalence but by active suspicion and hostility.

What is to be done?

There is no doubt that navigating this mix of factors is going to be one of, if not the major, diplomatic challenge of the next four years for British and European policy-makers, unless something dramatic emerges or happens that leads to Trump being impeached. Trump is perhaps the only factor on the European agenda with the potential to dwarf Brexit. Controversy and protest appear inevitable during his time in office, but it is the practicalities of developing policy positions beyond protest that is the major challenge now.

A good start is perhaps to be clear about what should not be done. Here, Theresa May's claim to have secured 100 per cent commitment from Trump with regard to support for NATO is perhaps instructive, because in March, just weeks after she made that claim, Trump was taking to twitter to argue that Germany should pay the US in return for American commitment to the defence of Europe. Coming just hours after concluding his first meetings with the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, this appeared to indicate that Trump views NATO as an American protection racket that can be used to leverage cash out of long-term allies. It is hard to imagine a more apt illustration of just how unpredictable he is. The policy lesson in London and other European capitals ought to be not to rely on Trump for anything but to tread with great caution, either indefinitely, or at least until the positions of his administration appear settled.

A second trap to avoid is that of allowing anti-Trump protests to become anti-American ones. There will always be plenty of debate among progressives in Europe and the US about whether Hillary Clinton was the right candidate for the Democrats to run against Trump, and speculation that a Bernie Sanders versus Donald Trump election might have ended differently. It is also as well to remember that Clinton won the popular vote. The federal system of government in the US and the separation of powers embedded in the constitution also mean that opposition to Trump inside the US is not only alive and well but is delivering progressive change. That is true from the states mounting legal challenges to Trump's refugee ban, to the state and city level authorities vigorously pursuing low carbon policies or introducing a higher than federally mandated minimum wage for American workers. The US remains today a vibrant democracy made more vibrant by the mix of cultures, views and political positions represented within it. Trump legitimately won the right to

be president, but it is important to protest and campaign against what he represents, not to behave as though he represents America in its entirety, or even the majority of Americans.

Beyond that, the progressive response to Trump from Europe must consist of three things.

The first is the application of diplomatic pressure and argument to persuade the Trump administration that some of its goals can be achieved through a less disruptive and combative approach. It is true, for example, that the European allies in NATO do not pay enough for their own defence and that they should get on and meet the rhetorical commitments they have previously made to doing so. They should accelerate progress toward spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence but they should use progress on that as a platform from which to deliver a clear message to Trump with regard to relations with Russia. This message should stress that while US and Russian dialogue could deliver benefits in a range of areas, not the least of which might be avoiding another nuclear arms race in Europe, it is vital that no spheres of influence are agreed over the heads of the Europeans that would be affected. Stressing Europe's growing ability to deliver diplomatic, financial and other support behind some US goals and activities around the world could also be important.

Similarly, it is also the case that the EU has problems with the way China conducts its trade relations. It is at least possible that a less robust US approach within the framework of WTO rules but backed by additional European support might deliver results that the Trump administration believes are its due. European leaders should look for a potential course of action supportive of the US in this area while pushing back very hard to explain just how badly US economic interests and jobs would be harmed if either the European single market fell apart or the US and China engaged in a trade war.

There are other areas where creative diplomacy could be used to good effect. While Trump's position on climate change appears clear and deeply troubling, for example, there are important elements of the US bureaucracy and elite who do not agree with him. European leaders should look to exploit the view, held by many in senior positions in the American military, that climate change is not only real but a growing threat to US national security and economic interests around the world. Europeans can also try to work with those who believe a further major expansion of domestic US renewable energy production will deliver the energy security, free of overseas entanglements, that the US has so long craved. And at a variety of levels of government in the US from city leaderships to state administrations, the opportunities for Europeans to cooperate directly with partners beneath federal level are real.

Beyond this effort to influence the Trump administration and events in the US in more positive directions in discrete areas, UK and European leaders need to be active in a second sense, through articulating clear alternatives to Trump's positions across a wide policy terrain. Standing for the status quo is not an option. From reform of the United Nations Security Council, to demanding and contributing to a strengthened, not weakened, nuclear non-proliferation regime and seeking better regulated global finance, and fair as well as free trade, the task for European progressives is to offer a practical politics of hope that goes well beyond protest to offer solutions to the challenges of globalisation. At the heart of this position must also be an insistence on the value of multilateral cooperation and institutions and a commitment to international law and a rules-based order. Of necessity, this is going to mean working with new, not just old allies around the world.

Third, if the election of Donald Trump and what he represents does not strengthen European cohesion and lead to a renewed commitment of Europeans to work

together, both at home and abroad, then one wonders if anything ever will. The direction of travel set by Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, aimed at developing Europe's ability to take autonomous strategic action with a higher level of foreign and security policy ambition, is the right one. In the Trump era, we need more European leadership, not less, to compensate for some of the damage he has already done and will continue to do. Brexit should not be allowed to weaken this common European response. One of the main goals of Brexit negotiations should be to ensure that after the UK has left the European Union, the two sides continue to cooperate extremely closely on defence, security and foreign policy matters. Anything less would be to gamble with our own and our children's futures.

There is no doubt that Trump's election is a challenge of historic proportions. What we have to insist on now is that our own leaders rise to the level of events.

1 | THE THREE 'UNS' OF US POLICY: TRUMP AND THE EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY ORDER

Steve Andreasen

Making predictions about the Trump presidency is tricky, given that unpredictability is one of the president's defining features. Europe needs to proceed cautiously.

Despite Washington's renewed focus on Europe since Russia's occupation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine – including a combination of political and security reassurance measures reaffirming America's commitment to NATO – many Europeans woke up on the day after the US election less than reassured at the prospect of a Donald Trump presidency. Throughout the campaign, Trump repeatedly challenged NATO, referring to the alliance as “obsolete” while questioning America's commitment to defend all allies, in particular those who did not pay their fair share of defence. While the issues of NATO's relevance and burden sharing have been around for some time, rarely has a presidential candidate so pointedly, consistently and caustically highlighted their doubts about the value of the trans-Atlantic link – or raised such fears of a policy reset between Washington and Moscow that would come at the expense of NATO.

Moving through the transition and opening months of the Trump administration, an ad hoc policy frame may be emerging, albeit (perhaps) not deliberately, with respect to the Euro-Atlantic region including Russia, best characterised as the three 'uns' – uncertain, undisciplined and unpredictable.

Uncertain

Since election day in the United States, the word uncertain is perhaps the best single word summary of the Trump presidency. It applies broadly to issues of both personnel and policy, and to a large extent, has continued for a period of weeks and months beyond the norm of any new administration getting its sea legs.

With respect to personnel, particularly troubling is the continuing absence of senior officials and expertise in the relevant departments and agencies for the new president to draw upon. The White House National Security Council (NSC) staff is a mess. Even after the appointment of the highly respected Lt Gen HR McMaster as the new national security advisor to replace the departed General Michael Flynn, the NSC may lack relevance if it is not given its historic mandate by the president to effectively coordinate foreign and national security policy across departments and agencies. Such coordination will be critical in formulating and executing a strategy in the Euro-Atlantic region, including Russia, that will require years to implement and the involvement of several agencies. Key to the NSC's ability to do this will be the perception across the government that it knows the president's mind, and speaks for the president. This is uncertain with Donald Trump.

At the time of writing, in March 2017, Rex Tillerson, the new secretary of state and possibly the president's designee for conducting diplomacy with NATO and Russia (despite his curious absence from the Munich

Security Conference in February having been in Germany the day before the conference opened), is the only Trump appointee in the state department. If he and the president have agreed on who they want to staff the upper echelons of the department, it remains a mystery to outside observers. Even once nominated, it could still take months for the Trump/Tillerson team to be confirmed. The situation in the Pentagon is similar, with Secretary of Defence James Mattis still assembling – and clearing with the White House – his senior policy team. None of this bodes well for quick, agile, or thoughtful approaches to the issues surrounding Euro-Atlantic security and US policy towards Russia.

With respect to policy, despite efforts at the Munich Security Conference on the part of Secretary of Defence Mattis and Vice-President Pence to reassure NATO regarding the US commitment to the transatlantic alliance, the feeling running through Munich was one of uncertainty run amok. The broadcast of President Trump's 16 February press conference on the eve of Munich – where he asserted despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary that: "This administration is running like a fine-tuned machine" – only accentuated Europe's nerves.

The direction of US policy towards Russia remains at the heart of Euro-Atlantic security uncertainty. On the one hand, President Trump's professed willingness to improve US-Russia relations (albeit without specifying to what end and at what cost), along with his insistence that European NATO allies contribute more to NATO's defence capabilities, is one of the few constants that ran through his campaign, transition and the early weeks of his presidency.

Yet in early March, reports began circulating that Trump might shelve his plan to pursue better relations, at least temporarily, between Washington and Moscow, due to Russian "provocations" – including Russia's reported violations of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by deploying a new cruise missile. That

said, a White House official made clear that the president and his advisers have yet to settle on a formal approach to Russia.

Undisciplined

A close second to uncertain to describe Trump's approach to governing is undisciplined.

There was ample evidence throughout his campaign that Trump would not be captive to traditional norms associated with an American presidential campaign, where both candidates and their campaign staffs were historically given high marks by pundits – and arguably rewarded by the electorate – for having a clear 'message of the day' and staying on point. For much of the Trump campaign, the candidate was going off-topic, via his twitter outbursts or statements, without a lot of apparent thought as to how it might impact whatever theme might have been on the campaign chalkboard that morning.

Of course, one person's undisciplined approach is another's genius at work, and when it was all said and done on election day, Trump had succeeded in hammering home more recognisable themes than his disciplined and cautious opponent, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. "Make America Great Again," "Repeal and replace," "Lock her up," and of course, "We're going to build a wall ... Who's going to pay for that wall?" – these all became embedded in the country's psyche. That said, the process of getting there, including multiple campaign chairs and numerous rhetorical off-ramps taken on the road to victory, was undisciplined in the extreme, at least until the last two weeks of the campaign, when US FBI Director Comey's announcement that the bureau had reopened the investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails effectively paused the election and gave Trump one last opportunity to regroup.

Once in the White House, the undisciplined Trump and his staff are back in full view. True, any new administration goes through growing pains, as there is nothing quite like running the executive branch of the US government from the White House enclave. The lack of experience in governing that runs through many of Trump's staff and cabinet picks has exacerbated this. If government is an art form, a president is usually better served by bringing in some proven artists, rather than an eclectic group of finger painters. Unfortunately for the Republican artists, many of them – in particular in the area of national security and foreign policy – said during the campaign that they would take their brushes and go home if Trump won. And he did – and he does not forget a slight.

But even with an allowance for inexperience, Trump's undisciplined stamp with respect to policy and policy-making is unmistakable. Cobbling together a first executive order on immigration after only seven days without the appropriate vetting and consultations with Congress that would be second nature to most occupants of the White House and their staffs; a sloppily drafted executive order on organising the National Security Council that only served to cast doubt on the membership of two key principals, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and the director of national intelligence, in that crucial policy-making group; and the president's twitter accusation that his predecessor tapped his communications and that of his campaign's prior to the election, without any proof, all serve to underscore the undisciplined approach to both policy and messaging.

Unpredictable

Finally, the combination of uncertain and undisciplined inevitably equals the third 'un' – unpredictable.

Even with the two constants in Trump's Euro-Atlantic world view – his professed desire to improve US-Russia relations and emphasis on a greater contribution from NATO allies to defence – Europeans should be bracing for an unpredictable ride with respect to Trump and the Euro-Atlantic security order. In particular, Trump's attitude towards US-Russia bilateral relations and Russia's role in Europe, even if somewhat dampened now due to Russia's reported INF violations, could literally change overnight in the span of a single tweet (just ask former President Obama, praised by Trump throughout the transition, then reviled by Trump as a "bad or sick guy").

There are other actors, both domestic and foreign, on stage that will play a role in how US policy in Europe, including Russia, plays out. Both the new national security advisor, HR McMaster, and defence secretary James Mattis, reportedly hold cautious if not conservative views on Russia and Putin. NATO allies have reportedly been trying to send a message to Trump: that is, an early deal with Putin – in particular a deal not carefully coordinated first within NATO – would be a bad deal. Putin too has a number of choices to make with respect to Russia's course vis-à-vis the new US administration, some of which could provide an impetus to a dramatic US policy shift, one way or another.

In theory, we should know more following two early engagements: the NATO-Russia summit, now pencilled in for the last two weeks of May; and the first as of yet unscheduled meeting between presidents Trump and Putin. Yet for all the reasons noted, it would be a mistake for Europe to extrapolate the results of those two meetings in to a predictable pattern for US policy. No one should

unbuckle their seat belts: the three 'uns' are likely to underpin US policy for at least the next four years.

Variables

Finally, there are (at least) a few variables that could play into the three 'uns' – or perhaps lead to a more certain, more disciplined and more predictable US policy in the Euro-Atlantic region.

Most of these variables, at least today, are tied in some way to Russia. A congressional investigation is now underway with respect to Russian efforts to influence the US election, following up on the US intelligence community's assessment that the Russians did indeed conduct such a campaign. The outcome will, at a minimum, underscore again Russian meddling in the US election; and it may uncover Russian ties to members of the Trump campaign. Either or both could box the administration into a status quo posture in Europe for some time by making it too politically costly for Trump to pursue a rapprochement with Moscow.

Russian actions this year could also box the administration in. Revelations relating to Russian efforts to influence the outcome of upcoming elections in Europe, in particular Germany, could be a heavy brake – as could an escalation by Russia and its supporters of military activity in eastern Ukraine, or continuing the stalemate over the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

That said, betting on the normal laws of political gravity to guide the actions of the Trump White House is not a wager most observers would take today, after having lost that gamble consistently throughout 2016. The much safer bet in the Euro-Atlantic region, albeit one whose payoff is unknown, is to wager on the Three Uns. In practice, this means Europeans would be wise to proceed cautiously and hold their bets after any single experience with the

Trump White House. This was a lesson driven home with both Prime Minister Theresa May – showered by praise from Trump as his first foreign visitor and then rewarded weeks later with an unsubstantiated charge from Trump that British intelligence aided efforts by President Obama to tap Trump’s phones – and Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose first face-to-face meeting with Trump was followed one day later by a presidential tweet praising his ‘GREAT’ meeting with the chancellor then charging that Germany owes vast sums of money to the United States for security support.

2 | DEALING WITH THE 'SURREAL ESTATE' PRESIDENT: TRUMP AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN UNION

Vassilis Ntousas

The combined effect of Brexit and the election of Trump have caused angst across Europe. But could the new environment provide a spur to the EU to shape a genuinely forward-looking security and foreign policy? With the liberal order in jeopardy, progressives need to step up to the challenge.

After a seemingly never-ending 18-month election cycle, the election of Donald J Trump as the president of the United States sent shockwaves across the world. More than any other occupant of the White House in living memory, Trump's foreign policy pronouncements – bombastic, hyperbolic and contradictory – challenge the basic principles and assumptions on which American international engagement has been grounded over the past decades. For the European Union,¹ the historic proportions of Trump's election could not be more

1 This chapter makes reference to the European Union as a bloc of 28 member states. At the time of writing, Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon – the article stipulating the terms of withdrawal from the Union – had not yet been formally triggered by the United Kingdom.

significant. Europeans need to find a way to navigate the uncharted, murky waters of a Trump presidency. Given the potentially dire consequences on the horizon, it would be wise that this is done sooner rather than later.

America First

We do not yet know exactly what the specific contours of Trump's foreign policy might be. It is still early days for his already turbulent presidency, his administration is far from being fully staffed, and some of his most radical proposals and his innate incalculability will most likely be confined by the more *bien-pensant* members of the team surrounding him, including Secretary of Defence Gen. James Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and the newly appointed National Security Adviser Lt. Gen. H R McMaster. And of course not all of his campaign promises will be enacted, as behind the new president's sweeping rhetoric lies (a different) reality.

Nonetheless, the 'America First' credo emphatically introduced during Trump's inaugural address, along with his first policy actions, tweets, and statements, certainly set out a vision that represents a clear break with his country's and his party's established norms, customs and positions. Based on an aversion to globalism, this heterodox vision is of a more inward-focused, mercantilist approach built on a belligerent, zero-sum view of the world. It celebrates the hard-line nationalist notion that America's greatness can only be 'restored' through an oppressive use of power, doing down other players at the international level. It is a vision which puts a price on everything America does or offers to the world, therefore propagating a much narrower interpretation of US interests. This approach might be right for the new president to deliver on the promises his voters think matter, but this level of

revisionism is likely to stretch the US-EU relationship to extremes.

Why? The reasons are simple.

Transactionalism

First, transactionalism is indelibly woven into the 'America First' approach. Nothing, we are told, is to be taken for granted, if the right price is not paid. Not even the fundamentals of the transatlantic relationship. Trump has, for instance, often criticised NATO, calling it "obsolete" and pontificating on its utility (or lack thereof). Confusing the real need for more equitable burden-sharing with the introduction of a blunt *quid pro quo* logic in regard to alliance commitments, he has even gone as far as to suggest making the US defence of its European allies in case of an attack conditional on their sufficient contribution to their own defence. Putting America first apparently now means that the White House would be willing to jeopardise the principle of collective defence – NATO's strategic *raison d'être* – in favour of the populist bravado of securing a better deal from European allies.

For Europe, a continent that has for so long held the transatlantic alliance as one of the basic prisms through which it viewed its own engagement with the world, it is not difficult to see how this could have serious consequences. If the once permanent security protection offered by the US is thrown into doubt, that would not only deepen the fault lines between the US and the EU, but also increase European exposure to an already deteriorating regional security environment.

Bilateral deals vs. multilateralism

A second source of apprehension for Europeans is the new president's probable repudiation of multilateralism

in favour of bilateral deals. As a former businessman, Trump's foreign policy is expected to lean towards establishing direct gains from ad hoc arrangements with individual countries, rather than being primarily centred on multilateral institutions, regimes, agreements, and commitments. The underlying rationale here is obvious: the more direct a deal, the more leverage and gains that can be extracted from each negotiation.

With a president as erratic, impulsive, and thin-skinned as Trump, so inclined to announce policies echoing something he saw, something he read, or the last person he talked to, creating an arbitrary web of bilateral deals, including with the United Kingdom, instead of shaping the course of multilateral settings through the unique position the US occupies in them, is a bit like going to the supermarket without a shopping list. You get easily distracted, you greatly risk miscalculating what you need and you ultimately do not get the best deal.

Trade, climate change, and arms control are a few of the policy areas where such a shift could incur significant costs not only for the US, but also for Europe. Washington's lack of active participation in – and potential renegeing on – commitments made in multilateral settings would embolden other countries to do the same. This would diminish the capacity on both sides of the Atlantic to take joint action, and would create a vacuum for other global players to fill.

Disdain for the international liberal system

Trump's business past is of course not the sole reason for his backedpedalling on multilateralism. His approach is rooted in something much deeper, namely his disdain for the international liberal rules-based system (and he appears equally unhappy with each of these elements). There are several ways in which this mindset could translate into

actual policy, ranging from a unilateral withdrawal from the system to a systematic disregard for its rules and commitments. What is already clear is the new president's intention to reduce the US' role as a linchpin of this international system, while weakening American support for the norms, decorum, and values underpinning it.

We have already seen this in his frequent positive portrayals of adversarial autocrats as examples of good governance, and there are numerous other examples. Here we have the third reason for the growing concern in Europe. European security and prosperity has been dependent upon the international liberal rules-based system since the end of the second world war. An erosion of the system would disrupt the continuity of the transatlantic relationship even further, putting the EU in an even more precarious situation.

Dismissiveness towards the EU

A fourth and final destabilising factor for Europe is the impact Trump's policies might have on the European project itself. This is a US president who has applauded Britain's decision to leave the EU, predicting that other member states would follow suit, a person who has bluntly termed the EU 'a vehicle for Germany', while aligning himself with Eurosceptic figures like Nigel Farage and Theodore Malloch, his rumoured pick as the next US Ambassador to the EU. Although they are counterbalanced by reassurances offered by other senior officials, including US vice-president Mike Pence, who recently underscored that the president supports a full US partnership with the EU, Trump's fulminations against Europe only serve to deepen the uncertainty over America's commitment to an enduring transatlantic bond.

The consequences of this are manifold. Crucially, they go far beyond Eurosceptic forces across Europe, which

certainly feel emboldened by having a powerful ally in Washington (as well as in White House senior adviser Steve Bannon); they also concern the very viability of European integration. The spectacular process of convergence that started with the 1950 Schumann Declaration has always gone hand in hand with the ever-present security guarantee provided by the US. Putting this guarantee in doubt and allowing an unprecedented level of Euroscepticism to shape US foreign policy could place serious obstacles in the way of further European integration, widening the political rifts that exist amongst member states.

Crafting a European response out of unity and need

Until more clarity is added to the mix, the feeling of angst felt by Europeans will not recede.

The recognition that President Trump's 'great-again' nationalism will force a recalibration of the transatlantic relationship, from its intricate trade links to its defence ties, has prompted a level of introspection that Europe has not seen since the UK referendum result. This introspection began before both Brexit and the advent of the new US administration, but the compounded effect of both events has served as a salutary shock. And in the process, it has created some much-needed political momentum.

This might be the opportunity the EU was searching for to generate a genuinely common foreign and security policy, although this will not be an easy undertaking. Europe is distracted and deep in the throes of an identity crisis. The hard blow of Brexit with its considerable policy ramifications for the rest of the bloc, lingering economic malaise, the migration crisis, a plethora of terrorist threats, a populist surge and a growing nationalist sentiment in many member states, all go to make up a very complicated picture.

Admittedly, these are not ideal conditions for a spectacular leap forward for the EU. There are still considerable internal fissures to be reckoned with, and important elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany, where far-right parties are creeping up as major disruptors of the political scene. So those who suggest that the EU could soon become a strategic counterweight to the US are likely to be wide of the mark.

Nonetheless, there is no reason for despondency

Instead, Europeans must stay the course in making the case for the strategic advantages of the transatlantic alliance to the new US administration. As the president is so fixated on deal-making in his foreign policy calculus, the EU should clearly communicate to him the costs of a potential transatlantic crisis. The value in doing so is not simply to avoid any unintentional or unnecessary clashes. It is also to prevent the nightmare scenario of a White House actively abetting all those centrifugal forces which threaten to disintegrate the Union, a fate which comes with an existentially high price tag for Europe.

The EU as a whole must also continue to defend unashamedly the international liberal democratic order and values, not only against the cohorts of leaders with autocratic or illiberal tendencies, such as the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, or Viktor Orbán, Hungary's populist prime minister, but also in the face of a White House which is less intent on condemning transgressions of international norms in cases where there are economic advantages to be gained. Whenever Europe sees its vital interests being endangered, it must be assertive, whether it is the prospect of non-implementation of the Paris climate agreement, a unilateral US withdrawal from the Iran deal, or a new US 'grand bargain' with Moscow that risks

creating a Russian sphere of influence in Europe's eastern neighbourhood.

Obviously for the EU to act confidently on these matters it must first put its own house in order. Just repeating that this is a wake-up call for Europe will not be sufficient.

Rediscovering the strength of Europe in the face of a precedent-breaking president will require more unity than simply agreeing on the unreliability of the US security umbrella. It will also involve a more determined push towards acquiring the means and creating the conditions for "an appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy", as set out in the EU's Global Strategy document. Upping the EU's game will also demand an intensification of diplomatic efforts; swift action on measures such as the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence and the European Defence Action Plan, put forward by Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; a muscular reaffirmation of solidarity as one of the prime directives of European common action; and a greater level of investment in a number of tools and assets, from defence spending to intelligence gathering.

Progressives should become the driving force in this shift in the way the EU works. Standing up against the pessimistic zeitgeist, they need to keep the momentum up during the long process of creating a truly European and forward-looking agenda. Not simply because of a reflexive antithesis to Trump's regressive vision. But because such a forward-looking approach will allow the EU to maximise its global relevance at the same time as taking on a bigger regional role.

Dealing with Trump, the 'surreal estate' president, certainly adds to the list of grim global challenges the EU needs to address. Yet, with the liberal order in danger of fraying and all of us attempting to decipher the president's

'America First' approach, Europe must be ready for the showdown. The continent's destiny is in the hands of the Europeans, we are told. It is more important than ever that we shape it in a progressive fashion.

3 | VALUES AND PRINCIPLES: TRUMP AND THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

Emily Thornberry MP

With the UK on its way out of the European Union, do we have to hang on to the special relationship at any cost? Or can we craft a more mature relationship, in which we stand up for our principles?

Where are we going as a nation? On foreign policy we find ourselves at a crossroads, perhaps unlike any other we have faced since the withdrawal from East of Suez in the late 1960s and early 70s. Back then the transition marked a definitive end to the age of empire and the reordering of our relations with the rest of Europe. Now, as we face another period of prolonged uncertainty in terms of our place in Europe, we seem to be at a turning point just as momentous, if not more so.

If there was one constant through the often turbulent decades after the second world war, it was the vaunted ‘special relationship’ between the UK and the US. From Roosevelt and Churchill through Reagan and Thatcher to Bush and Blair, the transatlantic relationship has – for better or worse – been a cornerstone of UK foreign policy for as long as most of us can remember.

Today, we face unprecedented challenges. Just as we start to discover what it means for Britain to be *outside* the

EU, we also have to come to terms with what it means for Donald Trump to be *inside* the White House.

When I think of every new President in the last 30 years, the concern has always been how close they will want to be to Britain. But when I look at Donald Trump, the real question is how close do *we* want to be to *him*? Do we want to be close if it means cosyng up to Putin? Or denying climate change? If it means a new nuclear arms race? Or scrapping the Iran deal? If it means all those things and more, then the post-war era of Britain and America operating in lockstep on foreign policy will be in severe jeopardy.

Of course, some will argue that when we are losing one anchor of diplomatic stability because of Brexit, the last thing we can afford is to lose the other by letting the special relationship crumble. But the reality is that that attitude just reinforces America's position as a superpower. It isn't the way to carve out our own role as a leader in world affairs.

What we really need to rediscover is what we can offer the world that no-one else does – what gets us listened to above the cacophony of global debate. For me that's about rediscovering a foreign policy which starts from first principles. And by first principles I mean ethics and values, not just narrow self-interest.

We need to put human rights, a belief in multilateralism and a respect for international institutions back at the heart of foreign policy. These issues need to be central to our decision-making, not an uncomfortable afterthought. Sadly, however, this Tory government is taking us in exactly the opposite direction. None of us are likely to forget that infamous photo of our prime minister taking Donald Trump by the hand any time soon.

This was about more than just a photo-op gone wrong. The prime minister's meeting with Donald Trump was a serious lapse in Theresa May's judgement, particularly in light of her subsequent failure to speak out

in anything but the mildest terms against the administration's Muslim travel ban. That was – and still is – an appalling policy whichever way you look at it. It is discriminatory and wrong, and even runs the risk of undermining our own security by sending such an insulting message to countries who support us in the fight against terrorism. And yet the best the prime minister could manage – hours after other European leaders had already condemned the order – was a rather pathetic: 'immigration policy in the United States is a matter for the United States.' Which is about as helpful as 'Brexit means Brexit', 'negotiations are negotiations', or 'I gave the answer I gave'. These are not the words of a prime minister willing to stick her neck out for the sake of a principle, and indeed they make it hard to work out what her principles even are.

It wasn't just her run-in with Trump which illustrated the point. In December, May turned up at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Bahrain and insisted, despite decades of evidence to the contrary, that trade and security ties with Britain would eventually – by some mysterious process of osmosis – lead states like the Gulf monarchies to start respecting human rights. What Theresa May should have made clear to the GCC was that she would only continue to support them in Yemen subject to a full, independent, UN-led investigation into allegations of human rights abuses and potential war crimes.

And at January's Paris conference on peace in the Middle East, she should have been there to publicly reaffirm the UK's ongoing commitment to a two-state solution, not hiding away and waiting to see which way the wind would blow in Washington. She should have restated both our unequivocal condemnation of illegal settlements on the West Bank, and our unwavering commitment to security for Israel and an end to terrorist violence. The truth is

that both sides must play their part if we are ever to realise Ben Gurion's inspired vision of a democratic Jewish state living in peace with its neighbours.

The need for a foreign policy built around a core of respect for human rights is evident around the world – not just in the Middle East but from Venezuela to North Korea; from Belarus to Zimbabwe. The crucial thing about human rights is that they're supposed to be universal. That means that a foreign policy with integrity needs to apply the same set of standards to friends as we would to adversaries. Because if we turn a blind eye to Saudi abuses in Yemen, for instance, how can we expect anyone to listen when we speak out against atrocities committed by the Assad regime in Syria? There can be no double standards.

Taking a more principled approach in the age of Trump would not be easy, and the special relationship would likely face a rocky period. But in thinking about such the prospect of discord, we should also ask ourselves: what's the alternative? Unthinking, uncritical loyalty to the US is not an appealing idea. Indeed, it doesn't take much imagination to see the dangers in placing too much faith in the wisdom of Washington. I refer any doubters to the 12-volume report of the Iraq Inquiry, otherwise known as the Chilcot report.

But a foreign policy with integrity would not mean wilfully turning our back on the United States. Instead it would involve a balanced approach, taking the view that the special relationship is built on strong enough foundations to withstand a bit of turbulence every now and then. If we were just to accept the idea that keeping America close requires an obsequious kind of vassalage on our part, what kind of message would that send about our belief in Britain's ability to lead?

Even outside the EU, Britain can still be strong and influential enough to make ourselves heard on the world stage. But if we want to do more than that – if we want to

be not just heard but listened to – then we need to think about what exactly it is that we want to say. Which takes us back, once again, to values. So given that the question isn't whether to deal with President Trump but how, what will be crucial will be a British government that is prepared to stick its neck out for the sake of principle.

Whether that means standing up for the Paris agreement on climate change or the Iran nuclear deal; making the case for a two-state solution in the Middle East; telling Trump that he's wrong to cut funding for clinics that provide family planning services in the developing world; or pressing to maintain sanctions against Russia for as long as it takes to reach a peaceful settlement in Ukraine; when he goes against our values and our principles we should not be afraid to say so.

We must not forget that our historical ties to America have been as much about shared values as they've been about a shared language or culture, important as those may be. We should also remember that to be influential in today's world, a country needs to be respected. And nothing is more deserving of respect than to be principled, and to be seen to be principled.

So we must be prepared to show a stronger global lead in standing up for what *we* believe, and we must raise a voice that even Trump won't be able to ignore. We are not alone in entering a period of uncertainty. The rest of the world often seems to be holding its breath too. So we must step up. A voice of principle is needed now more than ever before.

4 | UNMOORED: TRUMP AND THE USE OF FORCE

Ken Gude

Decades of transatlantic consensus built on shared values is under threat from the Trump administration and normal rules of engagement no longer apply. Trump might like the uncertainty he is creating – but it could have serious consequences.

It is understandable that many in Europe are grasping at whatever straws they can find in the hope that President Donald Trump won't lead the United States and the world into uncharted territory. Vice-president Mike Pence and Defence Secretary James Mattis gave reassuring, if thin, speeches at the Munich Security Conference. Trump has already fired his wildly incompetent and dangerously radical first national security adviser and replaced him with a general who literally wrote the book on telling truth to power. And wasn't a major theme of his campaign that the Iraq War was a catastrophic mistake?

Don't be fooled. This is not a normal presidency. The traditional rules of engagement between allies with shared values and interests simply do not apply to the Trump administration. The sooner America's traditional allies recognise that reality, the better, because the first weeks of Trump's presidency only reinforce the concern that the United States is careening towards one or

more major global crises and the man at the helm is reckless, impulsive, and in way over his head.

Much more than President Barack Obama's foreign policy legacy is at stake. A more fundamental shift is on the horizon, given that Trump rejects the baseline bipartisan consensus that has guided US foreign policy for decades. That consensus has been built upon the shared values of democracy, respect for the rule of law, human rights, and religious tolerance.

Obama did make what at the time felt like major changes from the way the Bush administration had worked. He barred enhanced interrogation, shut down the secret CIA prisons, worked to close Guantanamo, and moved away from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Bush administration's policies certainly diverged from the principles outlined above, but critically, the Bush administration used those principles as touchstones. Whether accurately or not, the Bush administration steadfastly rejected the charge that it engaged in torture. And it argued that it was enforcing UN Security Council resolutions in its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Trump explicitly blows apart those principles.

Trump muses openly about torture. He has said as president, "I haven't seen [torture] work. But I think it works... we have to fight fire with fire." He has publicly expressed surprise that his defence secretary Mattis opposes torture. While he said during his press conference with British prime minister Theresa May that he would defer to Mattis, that was because Mattis "does not necessarily believe in torture," not because it is a *crime against humanity*.

Trump has also repeatedly explained that his military philosophy is based on wars of conquest and pillage. In his first speech to the CIA as president, Trump told the assembled US intelligence community, "We don't win any more. The old expression, 'to the victor belong the spoils' – you remember. I always used to say, keep the oil... So

we should have kept the oil. But OK. Maybe you'll have another chance." Stealing Iraq's oil during the Iraq War, also known as pillage, would have been a war crime. So Trump was lamenting that the United States had not committed this war crime in the past – and suggesting that we might yet get the chance in the future.

The Bush administration's invasion of Iraq and use of waterboarding and other torture techniques were an abomination that certainly eroded the principles and norms that had guided US policy through administrations of both parties for at least a century. But because President George W Bush actually cast those policies as operating within that consensus, it was easier for Obama to alter the trajectory of US policy and rebuild faith in an American global leadership based on respect for human rights and international law. Trump does not even recognise that those exist.

We should not be comforted by his campaign's emphasis on his opposition to the Iraq War because it is a complete fabrication. As has been extensively documented, there is no evidence that Trump said anything critical about the war until more than a year after it began. In fact, his only public comments prior to the war and in its early stages were supportive. That would be in line with positions at the time regarding every other US military action since the end of the Cold War. Trump supported the 1991 Gulf War but "wished [President George HW Bush] finished the war." He backed the US military action in Kosovo in 1999, with his only critique being that "at some point, you had to put troops in." He called the invasion of Iraq "a tremendous success from a military standpoint" in March 2003. And he said of US action in Libya: "We should go in, we should stop this guy [Gaddafi], which would be very easy and very quick."

Trump's belated opposition to the Iraq War received more attention, but perhaps another of his most often

repeated lines deserves more scrutiny. As a candidate, Trump said frequently he was “the most militaristic person ever.” He seems to be governing that way. He approved his first military raid over dinner in his first week in the White House outside the normal process. US military officials told the media that the raid – which claimed the life of US Navy SEAL and dozens of civilians, including one American – was given the green light by Trump “without sufficient intelligence, ground support or adequate backup preparations.” The first week of March alone witnessed more than 40 targets hit in Yemen by US aircraft, which “eclipsed the annual bombing total for any year during Obama’s presidency.” Fresh media reports indicate US marines are taking up posts outside of ISIS’s last remaining stronghold in Raqqa, Syria. Trump’s actions during his first weeks in office do not demonstrate any reticence to engage in deeper military actions in the Middle East.

Some have taken solace in the hiring of Gen HR McMaster as Michael Flynn’s replacement as national security adviser. The removal of Flynn is clearly something to be celebrated. He was a conspiracy theorist who was so incompetent that he only lasted 24 days before being forced to resign. And McMaster is clearly an accomplished and well-respected figure. His 1997 book about the failure of senior military leaders to give the president candid military advice during the Vietnam War, titled *Dereliction of Duty*, has reportedly shaped the thinking of a generation of military officers about the need to speak truth to power.

It is seductive to think that given his scholarly record, McMaster is the perfect person to serve in the Trump White House, that he can restrain the inexperienced and ignorant president’s worst tendencies. That is both unfair to McMaster, shifting responsibility away from Trump, and neglects the other recent example in which high hopes

were invested in a respected senior military figure who would bring to a new administration the experience of a career built on ensuring the US military would not repeat the mistakes of the Vietnam era: Colin Powell.

What is popularly known as the Powell doctrine, though really the credit should at least be shared with former Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger, was a series of tests designed to limit the use of military force and prevent long, drawn-out military debacles like Vietnam. But when Powell served as George W Bush's Secretary of State, he used his credibility to help sell the disastrous Iraq War that violated every one of the Powell doctrine tests. This does not mean McMaster is guaranteed to fail to keep the United States out of a terrible, ill-conceived war. But it would be foolish to expect that simply because he wrote a book about it two decades ago, McMaster can alter the reckless behaviour and instincts of the 70-year-old commander-in-chief he barely knows.

Those instincts are already creating the conditions for an unnecessary crisis. One of the most consistent views expressed by Trump on foreign affairs has been his desire to be more unpredictable. It was certainly unexpected that Trump would choose to so casually upend the 'One China' policy without a clear idea of what he wanted to achieve or how he would do it. Unfortunately, the uncertainty he is creating is exactly how wars start.

Trump, apparently without much consideration, accepted a congratulatory phone call shortly after his election from Taiwan's president. This seemingly innocuous action was the first direct communication between the leaders of Taiwan and the United States in nearly four decades and it was viewed in China as an incredibly hostile first move by the president-elect. Instead of attempting to clean up this error, Trump doubled down, saying, "everything is under negotiation, including One China."

Just a month later, Trump was forced to climb down completely while gaining no policy concessions from China, issuing a statement saying the United States would honor “our One China policy.” While the United States received no benefit from Trump reaffirming the One China policy, shortly afterwards the Chinese government coincidentally granted many long-stalled patent requests to the Trump Organization in China. Trump’s personal business interests aside, America’s adversaries saw Trump go hard at the Chinese and be forced to back off without putting up much of a fight at all.

The prospect of a major war with nuclear-armed China seems unthinkable. Less hard to imagine, however, is war with Iran, especially as Secretary Mattis was replaced as commander of the Central Command by President Obama because of his harsh views on Iran that have been described as a “33-year grudge against Iran.” It just so happens that the Trump administration has also started out aggressively with Iran, putting it officially ‘on notice’, whatever that means. Trump also said in a tweet, “Iran is playing with fire – they don’t appreciate how ‘kind’ President Obama was to them. Not me!” During the campaign, Trump said that any Iranian vessels that harassed US Navy ships would be, “shot out of the water”. Given his rapid retreat on China, it is not clear whether he would follow through on that pledge now in office and with Iran on notice.

The Iranians must be wondering too, because they seem to be testing where the line is for Trump. On March 5, according to the US military, several small Iranian naval boats harassed a US Navy surveillance ship near the Straits of Hormuz. Nearly a week later, there has been no acknowledged or reported response from the United States. Trump may like the uncertainty his statements and actions have created. But the Iranians might keep testing Trump and might unintentionally stumble across the line. At that point, Trump will have decide what action to take,

but the novice president with no previous government or national security experience will certainly not look to the norms of behaviour that have guided other democratic leaders, multilateral security and diplomatic institutions, or to international law. Instead he will call on the advice of his top defence adviser who has a “33-year grudge against Iran” and his new national security adviser he just recently met.

Such a scenario might not ever play out due to Trump’s domestic troubles. He is currently mired in the scandal over his campaign’s alleged connections to Russia’s influence operation targeting Hillary Clinton. The scandal has already claimed his first national security adviser and now threatens his attorney general. Trump’s approval ratings are at historic lows for this point in a first term and the American people are fighting back against his major initiatives, with opposition from across the political spectrum to his Muslim travel ban and his efforts to repeal Obamacare. The courts have shown unprecedented willingness to question the rationale of his supposed national security policies. And Trump barely even has an administration, with some key cabinet departments operating with only the secretary and none of the dozens of other senior level officials that run them.

All of this simply underscores the Trump administration’s extreme departure from the norm. Trump has no grounding in principles that have shaped the transatlantic alliance and American allies should not approach their relationships with the United States as if it were business as usual. We are going to have to fight for our values, and if that means fighting against the president of the United States, so be it.

5 | THE SUPERPOWER DYNAMIC: TRUMP AND CHINA

Andrew Small

A more competitive – and confrontational – relationship between the US and China would have global consequences. In some areas, it might even mean Europe finds itself more closely aligned with Beijing than Washington.

As in most other areas of US foreign policy, there is still considerable uncertainty about what Trump's China policy will amount to. There were indications during the election campaign and the transition that the new administration might pursue a markedly different path from its predecessor, whether in jettisoning traditional allies in Asia or in adopting a more confrontational stance on issues ranging from Taiwan to the South China Sea. Yet to date there has been a high degree of continuity. Following an unusually extended period without contact between the US and Chinese leaders, Trump's phone-call with Xi Jinping was a tightly scripted exchange that reiterated the traditional parameters of US policy on Taiwan. The new US defence secretary, James Mattis, made his first overseas trip to reaffirm the most critical US alliances in the region, Japan and South Korea. Belying fears that Trump's persistent grievances about Japan might reshape the strategic map in Asia, the Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, is widely seen as having been the US ally to

have the most successful dealings yet with the new administration. In the diplomatic and security fields, there have been no jarring shifts so far in Asia.

Probably the area where the greatest differences in approach are expected, however, is trade policy. Peter Navarro, the head of Trump's newly established National Trade Council, and co-author of the campaign's economic policy platform, is an academic who is best known for his hostile stance towards China and his unorthodox beliefs about trade deficits and global value chains. While Navarro has been the lightning rod for critics of the new administration's protectionist bent, other key figures – including the picks for commerce secretary and US trade representative – also represent the self-described “economic nationalist” strand in the administration's thinking. The implications, if this agenda is pursued, will go well beyond China. But it is China, described by Trump on the campaign as “raping our country” and the “biggest trade cheater in the world”, that remains the primary target. At the time of writing, actual policies that might put any of this rhetoric into effect are the subject of fierce debate. They range from a more robust deployment of existing trade defence instruments to a set of measures that would effectively amount to a global trade war and a potentially fatal undermining of the WTO. More orthodox economic figures in the administration are pushing back against the more extreme options, but unlike other policy areas where campaign rhetoric might be finessed, the economic nationalist agenda was a central part of Trump's platform and appears to reflect his own longstanding beliefs. The new administration has already abandoned a central plank of the Obama administration's China strategy by withdrawing from the (unratified) Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The goal of influencing Chinese economic practices was one of the main drivers behind US efforts to negotiate this new set of high-standard trade platforms – TTIP being the

Atlantic counterpart – that would set rules and regulatory norms among advanced economies on issues ranging from state-owned enterprises to intellectual property, and in the process exert pressure on China to follow suit.

The discussions in Europe about how to adjust to the new administration's China policies have focused on two main areas: first, the potential for a broader US-China confrontation; and second, the risk that a trade confrontation alone could become debilitating to the global trade system, even if China is the sole target rather than part of an all-fronts attack on the EU, Japan, Mexico and other major US trading partners.

Despite the degree of policy continuity we have seen so far, the perception remains that there is greater danger of a more competitive set of US-China dynamics under the Trump administration than its predecessor. This stems from a number of factors: a view among senior Trump administration officials that China is likely to back down if the US pursues more forceful military and economic policies, as the Chinese will “quickly understand they are facing strength”; the prospect that a US-China trade war will escalate beyond the economic realm; the risk that the dysfunctionality of the new administration will heighten the risks of miscalculation and misinterpretation, especially during a period when China may probe to test its limits; the potential ramifications of rising tensions over the North Korean missile and nuclear programmes, which are already provoking contention over the deployment of a US missile defence shield for South Korea; and the removal of stabilisers in the US-China relationship, including important areas of cooperation such as climate change that are unlikely to persist under the Trump administration.

The challenge for Europeans is partly intrinsic – the consequences of a US-China confrontation in either the security or economic spheres would evidently be severe. But these scenarios also present an invidious decision about which

side to take in the disputes. Ordinarily this would not even be in question, given a choice between their most critical ally and an authoritarian and increasingly assertive power. Europe and the United States also have a very similar set of concerns when it comes to Chinese economic practices, including intellectual property theft and enforced technology transfer, the large-scale dumping of excess capacity in various sectors, unfair subsidies and a long list of other issues. Yet under a Trump presidency, the choice is less intuitively apparent. For all of China's faults, there are economic measures that the US administration could pursue that would be more systemically damaging to the global economy than any steps Beijing has taken. There are plausible scenarios in which the EU, despite its own bilateral trade disputes with China, could end up cooperating with Beijing to ensure that an overtly protectionist US trade strategy fails. Moreover, while it is inconceivable that Europeans would take China's side in a military confrontation, it is not hard to imagine circumstances in which they could perceive a Trump administration to be pursuing an unjustifiably belligerent approach and retreat into what would amount to neutrality. These choices are all the more fraught for a post-Brexit UK, which will be simultaneously attempting to deepen trade relations with China and the United States, while being even more reliant on a well-functioning WTO just as it comes under threat.

Beyond the issues directly relating to US China policy, there is a wider set of questions over how Europe should deal with the dynamics around the respective US and Chinese global roles. Until November, the implicit framework in place was one in which Europe cooperated with the United States in upholding, however imperfectly, some loosely defined "international liberal order", and at the very least a rules-based global order, based on a commitment to international law, human rights, democracy, and open economies. The election of Donald Trump has cast

that framework into doubt. In its aftermath, China has sought to position itself as the defender of globalisation – and even the global order writ large – as multilateral institutions and the open global economy come under populist attack. In ordinary circumstances, this would have been a wholly implausible thing to sell, given China's own protectionism, illiberalism, and military posturing. It is only by means of a very sharp set of contrasts that it has even a shred of credibility. In the Trump administration, there are figures whose politics are avowedly reactionary, or even counter-Enlightenment in nature: nativist, anti-rationalist, hostile to international institutions, supportive of notions of a civilisational clash with Islam, and actively seeking to cooperate with populist right-wing forces in Europe and Russia to roll back social progress and wield the 'will of the people' against the institutional constraints of liberal democracy. Unlike Moscow, which is fully aligned with this agenda, Beijing is deeply concerned about the threats these dynamics pose to the globalised economy and the international system. Despite its authoritarianism at home, China has no habit of attempting to undermine western democracies, bolster the far-right, or encourage the unravelling of the European Union. If the reactionary ideologues win out in the struggle over the trajectory of US foreign and economic policy, China is going to look like a far more appealing partner than it did a few months ago. Europe may find itself more closely aligned with Beijing than Washington on some genuinely existential issues for Europeans, from climate change to the future of the EU itself.

Since these are still early days for the Trump administration, which has been characterised more by incoherence and infighting than clarity, drawing any of these further-reaching conclusions is still very premature. But for European progressives, there are at least few considerations worth bearing in mind.

The first is to look at the policies themselves rather than the president responsible for them. During a period in which almost every Trump policy is seen as another egregious aberration, it is less clear that China policy will fall into the same category. It remains conceivable that the US approach to China will proceed on a track that differs from the Obama administration by a matter of degree rather than being a radical recasting. A Clinton administration, for instance, would also have pursued somewhat harder-edged policies on issues such as the South China Sea. If there is a confrontation in the region, the likeliest scenario is still one that involves Chinese brinkmanship rather than belligerence from Trump. Even in the trade realm, any new US administration was going to toughen up its stance against various Chinese practices, a process that is also underway in the EU, whether proposals for a new Committee of Foreign Investment in the US-style investment screening or strengthened trade defence instruments. If the United States is able to restrict itself to credible, legal instruments rather than system-wrecking measures, then both Europe and the United States have interests and principles that are significantly aligned, whether it comes to steel dumping or the lack of a level playing field for western companies. While Europe needs to avoid supporting practices that amount to pulling the ladder up for developing countries in the global economy, engendering shifts in Chinese economic behaviour is also going to be essential in maintaining consensus for a non-protectionist trade order.

The second consideration for European progressives is to be careful not to take steps that fundamentally damage the capacity to pursue a liberal, internationalist agenda, whether with the United States under a future administration or with other like-minded democracies now. Suggestions that the EU might consider lifting its arms embargo on China, for instance, as a way to gain leverage

over the Trump administration or as a means to upgrade ties with Beijing during this fraught period for the global order, would be seen by other democratic partners and by the entire US foreign policy community as a serious violation of basic values. There will be pragmatic ways to cooperate more closely with China on trade, climate and other areas that are potentially under pressure from the new US administration without compromising principles on human rights or Chinese coercion of its neighbours, and taking steps that would make a liberal democratic order harder to piece together again in the aftermath of Trump.

The third, nonetheless, is to be ready for a potential redrawing of geopolitical dividing lines. If Europe faces the combined efforts of the White House, the Kremlin and far-right populist movements to unravel the EU and multilateral institutions, roll back liberal, progressive values, and undermine the possibility of a politics that pays respect to truth, expertise, science, and reason, then the foreign policy emphasis in the coming years is going to shift very markedly. In these circumstances, working with a largely cautious, geopolitically conservative power like China to hold fundamental aspects of the global system together will become substantially more important. But while China is clearly going to be a central actor, working with the likes of Japan, India, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Indonesia and Australia is also likely to become a more significant part of future diplomacy, as is ensuring that Europe's autonomous capacity to act is strengthened. During a period of enormous uncertainty in relations with the United States and a heightened risk of major power clashes, holding the multilateral system – and Enlightenment values – together will not just depend on the largest of the great powers but on ensuring a depth of resilience that involves a wide spectrum of

actors. There are clearly risks involved in overreacting to the current tumult and making impulsive strategic choices that will have damaging long-term repercussions. But, sadly, hedging against some of the worst-case scenarios is going to be an increasingly central element of European strategy.

6 | SECURITY, DEMOCRACY AND POLITICS: TRUMP AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Lina Khatib

Security above democratisation has been a defining feature of US policy towards the Middle East for decades – and that doesn't look likely to change under President Trump. But there can be no long-term solutions to the problems in the region without resolving the root causes of instability and there is now a more urgent need than ever for international cooperation.

A new administration is in place in the United States, bringing with it much uncertainty about the direction that US foreign policy towards the Middle East might take. Although it is unlikely that the new administration will head in a direction that is radically different from that of its predecessor, it is clear that there are a number of issues in the region that the Obama administration did not handle adequately, and that the current US administration will need to address. Getting it right in the region is not only in the interests of the people of the Middle East, but will also have a direct impact on US national interests as well as those of its allies in Europe.

A priority for Trump's administration, judging by his own statements and those of his appointees so far, is the fight against extremism. This is not a new line. Although the Obama administration was vocal in its support for

democratisation and reform in the Middle East after the Arab uprisings of 2011, this support was, in reality, often no more than lip service. When Egypt's first president after the fall of Hosni Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi, acted undemocratically – such as with the presidential decree of November 2012 that put him above the rule of law – the United States turned a blind eye.

When Morsi himself was ousted in a military coup, the United States refrained from using the word 'coup' to refer to the transfer of power in order to maintain its relationship with the new regime. It has continued to turn a blind eye to the transgressions of the current president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi as he cracks down not just on the Muslim Brotherhood but also on any opposition voices in Egypt, including secular civil society movements. Obama did freeze military aid to Egypt for two years but restored it in March 2015 on the basis that this aid would support Egypt's fight against extremism. The change of presidents from Obama to Trump has not shifted the American stance.

President Sisi was the first world leader to call to congratulate Donald Trump on winning the election, seeing in Trump's victory an opportunity to consolidate his own position domestically and internationally. Sisi has been lobbying the United States to list the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation and has also appealed for help in securing Sinai, which has in recent years seen a proliferation of terrorist activity. The Sinai-based terrorist group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis pledged allegiance to the Islamic State organisation (ISIS) in 2015 and another ISIS-affiliated group attacked Coptic Christians in the area in early 2017. The US Department of Defense has hinted at the likelihood of restoring military exercises in Egypt to help counter terrorism there. Security has overshadowed discussions about human rights infringements in Egypt. But the supply of military aid is an

opportunity for the US to insist on human rights safeguards in return for its help.

Prioritising security and stability over democratisation has been a defining characteristic of US foreign policy towards the Middle East. The Arab uprisings of 2011 were a disruptive moment in this trajectory, putting the issue of political reform and good governance at the forefront of debates about the region. However, the protest movements have not led to a significant change in US policy. There was much rhetoric about support for human rights and reform under Obama, but not a lot of policy to follow through on it. Under Trump, although it is early days, it seems that even the rhetoric has been abandoned. In some ways, the Trump administration may end up being more predictable than that of Obama, since Trump is not even indirectly hinting that his interest in the Middle East is anything but security related.

Syria is at the heart of this matter, and should be seen in the light of the cautionary tale of Iraq. Given that the priority for President Trump is the fight against extremism, Syria will be one of two key sites (the other being Iraq) in which this fight will be at its peak. Until now, the international anti-ISIS coalition led by the United States has focused on military activity to eradicate ISIS and other groups. While the military campaign against ISIS is resulting in it losing territory, the United States and its allies must not repeat the mistakes made almost a decade ago in Iraq, when al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) was defeated militarily through the US-supported Awakening of Iraqi Sunni tribes. There, the key failing came in not paying attention to the political dimension of the problem. The US-allied Shia-dominated government of former prime minister Nouri al-Maliki discriminated against Iraqi Sunnis, leading to sustained sectarian grievances. These grievances ended up paving the way for the emergence

of ISIS, which was able to capitalise on the narrative of Sunni victimhood.

Today, the United States is more aware of the importance of addressing sectarian divisions in Iraq, but when it comes to Syria, the fight against ISIS remains strictly devoid of politics. Although Syria does not have the same sectarian tensions that exist in Iraq, it has its own set of complications that the United States must address in its strategy to fight extremism. President Bashar al-Assad and his allies have sought to sectarianise the Syrian conflict, especially with the involvement of Iran in support of the regime and its reliance on Shia militias like Hezbollah fighting alongside the Syrian army. ISIS has capitalised on the ensuing sectarian tension and, as in Iraq, is using the narrative of Sunni victimhood as a way to rally popular support.

But the major driver behind the emergence of ISIS and other jihadist groups in Syria is not sectarian but political and has much to do with the continuation of the Bashar al-Assad regime. Although many believed ISIS' narrative that it is an alternative to the Syrian state, its main fight has not been against the Syrian regime but against the Free Syrian Army. The United States' cutting of funding to the already poorly supported Free Syrian Army has only made the latter more vulnerable in the face of both ISIS and the Syrian army, and this has made jihadist groups like the al-Qaida affiliated Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (which has now rebranded again to form Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham) more appealing to those committed to the removal of Assad from power at any cost.

What has sustained this trajectory is the absence of a political solution to the Syrian conflict. The United States has not exhibited the leadership and real commitment needed to bring this conflict to an end. Although the Geneva talks continue in fits and starts, political transition is no longer the main issue on their agenda. Without

a clear and comprehensive strategy which shows that there are real prospects for political change in Syria, local fighters will continue to try to remove the Assad regime through whatever means possible. The options for these fighters have narrowed considerably, especially after the US' latest funding cut to the Free Syrian Army. So the very approach that the United States has been pursuing in the fight against extremism in Syria is ending up aggravating the problem.

What Syria desperately needs is an internationally backed political solution that is acceptable to the local voices inside Syria, who should play a role in brokering this solution. Russia's campaign in Syria is systematically weakening both those voices and the Syrian opposition abroad by chipping away at their credibility. While Russia seeks to keep Syrian state institutions in place, it does not care what shape the Syrian state might take. This raises real concern about the political system that might emerge in Syria as part of a Russian-led political settlement. In seeking to keep the Alawi community in power, Russia might propose a political system based on sectarian representation in Syria, similar to the ones in Iraq and Lebanon, or accept a smaller Syria containing Alawi territories and major cities in the west of the country but abandoning the east. The United States must push back against such a proposal. The cases of Iraq and Lebanon vividly illustrate that confessional-based so-called 'democratic' systems end up entrenching differences among communities instead of ensuring that all elements of society have a political voice.

President Trump has characterised the Syrian regime (or just 'Syria', as he put it) as an entity that is fighting ISIS, which some have read to indicate an acceptance of keeping Assad in power. Yet although there have been several battles between the Syrian army and ISIS, the latest being the second retaking by the Syrian army (with Russian

backing) of Palmyra from ISIS, it is the Syrian regime that has facilitated the expansion of ISIS whenever it saw that ISIS could be a useful tool to weaken the Free Syria Army (as when Palmyra first fell to ISIS). Trump's remark is another reminder of the security-first approach that has been a defining characteristic of American foreign policy towards the Middle East for decades. But as the Arab uprisings illustrated, the stability that might come with authoritarian regimes is a false one and will backfire in the long run. A key challenge for any foreign policymaker is designing a strategy that knowingly outlives their term in power. Without long-term thinking and addressing the root causes of instability, regions like the Middle East will end up in a vicious circle of turmoil.

A new multi-author report from Chatham House, *Western Policy Towards Syria: Applying Lessons Learned*, lays out parameters for Western engagement in the Syrian crisis based on a critical reflection on the West's actions – and inaction – over the past six years. The report focuses exclusively on Syria and most of its attention is directed at the United States. But the parameters it outlines apply beyond the case of Syria and should be guiding principles for all Western countries in their engagement with the Middle East: Foreign policy rhetoric must be accompanied by action, otherwise it risks making enemies comfortable and allies angry. Military action and security measures alone will not eradicate extremism. There can be no long-term stability without resolving the political dimension of the security problem. Keeping authoritarianism in place will exacerbate grievances, leading to future instability.

It is questionable whether the Trump administration will embrace those principles. The Middle East does not appear to be high on its priority list. In some ways, the Trump administration could be seen as the culmination of the increasingly isolationist path that the United States took under Obama. But brushing the problems of the

Middle East under the carpet so long as they are not seen to threaten the US national interest is a grave mistake. As the region's conflicts continue to brew, they will eventually find their way onto US soil, whether literally or metaphorically. The United States' allies in Europe have already been directly exposed to the knock-on effects of the Syrian conflict, not only in the form of multiple terrorist attacks but also in the migrant crisis. The American administration is partly responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of its allies, and there is now a more urgent need than ever for international cooperation against common threats.

It is high time the west in general and the United States in particular learned the lessons of the recent past. Almost a decade and half on, the world is still suffering the consequences of the Iraq invasion of 2003. As things stand in Syria today, it is likely that the conflict will continue to evolve, but not to be resolved, for a considerable period of time. This in itself is partly a consequence of the lack of US leadership and vision. If US foreign policy continues along this trajectory, the outlook for the Middle East will be bleak.

7 | MAKING THE CASE FOR AID: TRUMP AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Laura Kyrke-Smith

In the face of US isolationism and hostility to overseas aid, both the values and the institutions of international development are at risk. It is time, then, to make the public case for overseas spending in line with our best values and traditions.

So the world's most famous populist is in power and the most extreme experiment in populist government in recent memory has begun. Just weeks into the experiment, the norms and institutions of international development are under threat like at no time since John F Kennedy passed the Foreign Assistance Act in 1961.

Some of the specifics of President Trump's intentions are yet to be confirmed. But the 'global gag rule', blocking US funds to any organisation involved in abortion advice and care is firmly in place by executive order and could cause US funding shortfalls of anything between \$600m and \$9.5bn to global health initiatives. Syrian refugees have been banned from entering the US while resettlement of other refugee populations has been put on hold, leaving more people trapped in danger and poverty elsewhere in the world. Trump has pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and informed Congress of

his intention to break away from the World Trade Organisation, threatening the market access for exports that has helped to facilitate decades of growth for developing countries.

US foreign assistance now looks set for major cuts to fund increased military spending, despite the fact that aid spending already only sits at less than 0.1 per cent of the federal US budget. In the run-up to the election, Trump consistently made the case that overseas aid is not in the best interests of the US. Announcing his candidacy in 2015, Trump said the US should “stop sending foreign aid to countries that hate us” and should instead “invest in our infrastructure ... our tunnels, roads, bridges, and schools.” Later in the campaign, he pledged to end “our current strategy of nation-building” abroad. Aid to Africa, he said, is “stolen”, through corruption.

Trump’s stated aim is to “cancel” the Paris agreement, the historic deal in which 132 countries pledged to prevent the most catastrophic effects of climate change, including for the developing countries that are most often hit hardest. We are yet to see how exactly, but we know his views. “The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive”, he said in 2012. In 2015, in what has become his typically inflammatory style, he tweeted: “It’s really cold outside, they are calling it a major freeze, weeks ahead of normal. Man, we could use a big fat dose of global warming!”

Trump also has the UN in his sights. Having dismissed it on the campaign as a “club” for people to “have a good time”, he now has a rumoured plan to cut funding to international organisations by 40 per cent, with UNFPA, because of the global gag rule, and the UN’s peacekeeping operations singled out as targets. That means 16 UN peacekeeping operations with 117,000 troops, police, military observers and civilian personnel from more than

125 countries are now at risk. Their work is far from perfect but their valuable role in preserving fragile peace settlements, from Lebanon and Haiti to Darfur, undisputed.

The list of decisions, threats and their potential consequences could go on, but the point is clear. We no longer have US government support for the core values of international development: The presumption of a moral responsibility to alleviate poverty and suffering, the prevention and protection of people from war, the preservation of people's inherent rights and dignity. And the current rules and institutions that embody those values may not survive a Trump presidency.

This is despite all the evidence pointing to a continued global human need for international development. Yes, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day has been reduced, from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015, thanks to the concerted efforts of all who supported the millennium development goals. But there are still, for example, a record 65 million people who have been displaced from their homes by conflict and persecution. Some 93 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide, in places like Syria, Libya, Afghanistan and South Sudan.

It is despite too the evidence showing the growing effectiveness of international development. Each year, the UN provides food to 80 million people and vaccinates 40 per cent of the world's children. The previously lethal polio virus has almost been eradicated as a result of immunisations for children, 2.5 billion of them since 1988. The last Labour government in the UK helped lift 3 million people out of poverty each year and made it possible for an additional 40 million children to go to school.

And it is despite bipartisan and public support in the US for many aspects of international development. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, two significant US aid programmes, were initiated not by Democrats but by former President Bush and approved by Congress. A Republican Congress enacted the Global Food Security Act, which was then signed by President Obama. A new poll by the Better World Campaign shows that 88 per cent of Americans support active engagement at the UN.

Money, multilateralism and the masses: how the rest of the world should adapt

So what to do about it? While it is easy to see the Trump presidency only as a threat, both to the values dearly held by many, and to the people the international development and humanitarian community aims to support, this is not going to help either cause. Instead, Europe and the rest of the world must double down on efforts to advance international development. That does not mean pretending that established approaches are perfect and simply pushing them harder. It means finding ways to make aid go further, faster, knowing that we cannot count on US support, and at the same time building the public support for international development that populists seek to erode.

Money

The first and obvious response is to address the shortfall in funding left by Trump's cuts. In some areas, we already know what this will take and it is encouraging to see European governments stepping up. Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway are among those who have promised tens of millions for family planning in response to the global gag rule. The Department for International Development, with the Gates Foundation

and others, will host a family planning summit later this year.

In other areas, such as climate change and support for multilateral institutions, we can predict budgets being slashed but we don't yet know what the shortfall will be. It is likely that some US aid will continue to flow, perhaps to health programmes with strong domestic support, and to fragile states where there is a security imperative. Vice-president Pence in fact pushed strongly for US support to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis when on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. But many existing aid programmes, to LGBT or minority ethnic communities, or for women's protection and empowerment, for example, are likely to go.

At a time when government aid budgets are under pressure across the world, it is important to stress that addressing the shortfall in US support does not have to mean increased overall spend elsewhere. It could mean adjusting government donor priorities, knowing that some forms of health programming for example will remain well covered by the US. It could mean capitalising more effectively on corporate expertise, as we have seen work with Mastercard on cash assistance. Or establishing stronger partnerships with voluntary organisations rooted in communities in developing countries. Or supporting self-financing initiatives like the African Risk Capacity, an insurance scheme to protect African countries against climate change.

And of course aid budgets are not the only source of support to developing countries. Post-Brexit, the UK could move to offer trade deals to developing countries that work to our mutual advantage; the competition is tough, as developing countries seek closer ties with China and the Gulf, for example, but doing so is essential if we want to shape development in these places in line with our values. Or the UK could invest in skills

and labour from developing countries if, as remainers have predicted, a decline in immigration from EU countries proves detrimental to the UK economy.

Multilateralism

Second, as Trump builds his walls and seeks to isolate America, the rest of the world must step up to advance the multilateral international order that has delivered the continuous, peaceful development that was unimaginable as it was founded after the second world war. Without the US this won't be easy; cuts in US funding to the UN would be crippling and leave that central global institution severely challenged. But the more the rest of the world works with and through the multilateral institutions, the stronger they will be. This means supporting UN assistance to refugees, for example, which delivers lifesaving support and helps reduce vast, destabilising population movements. To food programmes that go further than any bilateral aid, to women's development programmes that boost economic growth for all of us, and so on.

Aside from the established multilateral institutions, all those who seek to protect the liberal international order – Canada, Australia, Japan and others – must seek out new and creative multilateral alliances to make progress on the global issues that affect us all and cannot be solved by one nation alone. The EU could become the most attractive partner for China on combating climate change and maintaining the global trading system. Groups like the G7+, set up to advance peacebuilding and statebuilding and led by fragile states themselves, will only become more important, partnering with progressive donor countries to take their work forward.

Indeed, Trump's 'America First' policy, likely to alienate many countries, should be viewed as an opportunity for the UK and European states to engage more deeply in

the world. Take the refugee crisis as an example. President Obama worked hard to get a global refugee and migration compact off the ground in 2016. EU member states, together with Canada and other progressive allies, can now seize the opportunity to take these forward. Resources to support refugees in developing countries are scarce and we have seen the potential of initiatives like last year's Syria Donors Conference, hosted in London, to mobilise them. Places for refugees to resettle in via resettlement schemes in wealthy countries are scarce too, and dramatically reduced by Trump's executive orders, and again European countries are fortunate to have expertise and resources to offer more. Europe will find willing partners in many US companies and civil society groups, which support this agenda and no longer have a leader in their own president.

The masses

Third, and perhaps most importantly, it now falls to Europe and the rest of world to make international development popular again. After decades of growing support and mobilisation, public backing for international development in Europe is now steadily declining. Trust in governments is down, trust in charities is down, and people are feeling economic pressures at home that bring overseas aid budgets into sharp relief. In the UK, 56 per cent of the public want to see cuts to the aid budget. Across Europe, almost three-quarters of people feel compassionate towards refugees but this does not translate into support for hosting refugees in their own countries.

Winning back support won't be easy. In Europe populist parties are also surging, without Trump's power yet, but with control over parliamentary majorities or influential groupings in six countries, and share in government in three others. This year's election campaigns in Europe will give their rhetoric even more oxygen. Meanwhile

centrist and left-leaning politicians and parties simply are not competing: The established language of progressive internationalism, human rights, dignity and tolerance does not resonate at a time when popular anxieties are running deep. Up against populist mantras of terrorist and immigrant threats from overseas, facts about past progress and future potential for international development are not enough to give people hope or win them over.

And yet popular support is everything, because ultimately the case for funding shortfalls or for greater multilateralism in light of Trump's presidency will not be won unless the voting public give it their backing. So those who support international development have to throw themselves into the competition for public support. This means asking and answering tough questions about why taxpayers should endorse their money being spent overseas. It means arguing and proving that international development is in line with our best values and traditions. It means getting out there, into communities, rather than talking to ourselves (in the way that this contribution risks doing!). It will take not just an international development sector but an international development society to beat Trump and his populist allies elsewhere in the world.

It will both befit and benefit us

Money to address shortfalls, multilateralism to remain powerful, and mass engagement to remain popular: These are three ways in which Europe and the rest of the world need to adapt to advance international development during Trump's populist presidency. Popular attitudes matter more than ever, and the challenge will be finding the sweet spots where the best of our evidence about what works in international development – whether in programmes or in institutions – meets the best of our

evidence about what the public want to see from international development.

It's a challenge. But who knows, if we get it right we may even prompt Trump to give it second thought, and to consider at least some international development policies that draw on the best not the worst of American history and tradition. As Robert F Kennedy, then attorney general, said when the US started its international development programme in 1961, it would "both befit and benefit us".

8 | UNSTOPPABLE AMBITION: TRUMP AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Liz Gallagher

Under the last administration, the US was finally facing up to its responsibilities on climate change. While the new president and his team might want to sabotage their climate commitments, they are likely to find that the global momentum for change on the issue is irreversible.

Every winter, the international climate community congregates to negotiate the global climate rules and frameworks that guide our response both to curbing dangerous greenhouse gases and to adapting to the impacts of climate change. On 7 November 2016 in Marrakech, almost a year after the historic Paris climate agreement when all governments agreed to decouple our societies from fossil fuels, we came back to the negotiating table to flesh out the details. But what should have been a jubilant moment, was overshadowed by ‘events’.

Progressive environmental politics have not been welcomed by some powerful incumbents within the US. There have been long stretches when previous US administrations and Congress have done their utmost to sabotage international climate action, the most infamous being the Senate’s refusal to ratify the Kyoto protocol. But spurred on by Superstorm Sandy and with strong steers from the US military, President Obama decided to pick fights with

the Republicans. Climate became a clear wedge issue. President Obama exhausted his executive authority in order to curb US emissions while avoiding congressional approval. Meanwhile, Secretary of State John Kerry, using the full diplomatic resources of the US government, was able to forge an ambitious joint emissions reduction agreement with China. Under Obama, the US was finally owning its global responsibility.

So when President Trump was elected, alongside a deeply Republican Congress, those congregated in Marrakech felt the blow. President Trump has called climate change a 'hoax' invented by the Chinese and spoken of his intention to take the US out of the Paris agreement. But, overall, the results of the election do not represent a fatal blow to global climate action. The resilience and sense of optimism from the climate community to withstand these events is encouraging. Unlike the Kyoto protocol, the Paris agreement is explicitly designed to rise above political cycles, by embedding a common, universal, long-term vision to exit a fossil fuel-based economy, and to come back to the table every five years until we succeed. What's more, the agreement was unprecedented in its approach to empowering action from players beyond national governments. Whilst it is an agreement between nation states, it provides a big platform for companies, cities and regions to showcase their work, collectively raise ambitions and demand more action from their governments. It is this aspect that has been most significant since the US elections.

On 9 November, three days into the global climate meeting in Marrakech, the troops rallied. More than 30 countries, including the UK, Australia and Japan, decided to ratify the Paris agreement as a show of commitment. Major economies like China, Germany, France, EU, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, India and Japan asserted their intent to deliver the Paris agreement. Vulnerable countries, representing more than one billion people agreed to plan how

they would exit from fossil fuels and prosper at the same time. The show of force and unity was exceptional. But critically it was the commitment from the non-federal actors within the US that really buffered the blow. Going low carbon is clearly in the US national interest, with the solar and wind industries both creating jobs 12 times faster than the rest of the US economy. What's more, as a result of reduced use of coal and other polluting fuels, meeting the US's Paris contribution¹ was expected to prevent some 7,000 premature deaths each year from air pollution. Since the election, nearly 900 companies and investors have come together to demonstrate that the US national interest lies in being more efficient and low carbon, and 66 US mayors have called for President Trump to embrace the Paris agreement. So the trends in the real economy are going in the right direction, despite federal politics.

Whilst the prospects of the US pulling out from the Paris agreement may be weakening, withdrawal is still a possibility, and vigilance is crucial. But what is more likely is that the US will remain in the Paris agreement but dismantle its commitments and even attempt to sabotage from within. Neither of these scenarios is acceptable. The potential for four years of federal malaise or even worse, active sabotage of domestic climate policy will make life harder for those companies, investors and cities on course to decarbonise. The individuals appointed by President Trump to his administration do not bode well for those who hold dear the premise that honest, robust, coherent evidence should inform policy. In particular, former ExxonMobil CEO, now Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson couldn't be any more different from his predecessor John Kerry. In his Senate confirmation hearings and subsequent

1 The US's commitment in the Paris agreement committed it to a target to reduce emissions by 26 per cent to 28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025.

clarifications, Tillerson questioned whether the combustion of fossil fuels was the most significant contributor to rising greenhouse gases. He has also questioned the scientific consensus on the threat levels associated with human-induced climate change. Some commentators have likened his understanding of climate change to a new form of climate denial, known as 'lukewarmism' – the belief that man-made climate change is real, but not dangerous and that the combustion of fossil fuels is not the main contributor to climate change. In this context the climate community will need to be conscious that the 'fox is in the hen house'. Our best line of defence is to make climate change more personal. We need to demonstrate to those who don't believe in the severity of the problem the daily impacts climate change has on their lives now, and the benefits of the transition to a brighter future.

There are still many unknowns over the US administration's likely engagement on climate change. Firstly, now that the Marrakech galvanising moment is behind us, how other countries fill the political vacuum in the medium term whilst the incoming administration develops its priorities and strategies will make a difference. This could be either beneficial or detrimental to the climate debate, depending upon which countries set the agenda and broader foreign policy atmospherics.

Secondly, the tensions between the President's response and the interests of the State Department and those responsible for security are evident through the recent confirmation hearings. It is highly unlikely that the State Department will deploy an assertive and progressive climate diplomacy agenda. But a big question mark looms over the ability of the State Department to pursue any clear, proactive diplomatic strategy. More likely it will pick up the pieces of President Trump's brash diplomatic approach. In the case of a more assertive diplomatic strategy by Tillerson, the power of the fossil fuel incumbency

could prevail, but, the focus on energy security and protectionism could also benefit the renewables industry. The more reactive/passive the US diplomatic strategy, the more likely that others will fill the political vacuum. An emboldened Russia, accompanied by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and a key swing country such as India or Brazil could defend the interests of the global fossil fuel elite.

Third, the US election cycles will resume soon (with mid-terms in 2018 and presidential in 2020). Until 2020 demonstrating to the world that climate action both continues and thrives in the US amongst states, regions, cities and companies will be essential in helping the Paris agreement rise above political cycles. It will calm the nerves of the international community to know there is a bedrock of support for accelerating action, despite federal politics. In turn, this will build up expectations of enhanced federal action in future.

And finally, the potential for the issues of energy and infrastructure to reassert themselves on the international agenda is high given the increasing tendency toward protectionism and the economic disruption of energy markets in recent years. Whilst renewables are increasingly considered a mainstream energy source and thus could benefit from such a debate, this could result in the marginalisation of 'climate' as a longstanding agenda in international political forums. Economics, finance and planning ministries would no longer be required to incorporate 'climate' into their decision-making, significantly rolling back the achievements made over the past decade.

Whilst the 'known unknowns' continue to evolve, it is clear that the international climate community is in a new era. This new era must result in as many countries as possible coming back to the table in 2020 to revise their outdated short-term offers made ahead of the Paris agreement. We can no longer rely upon the US to expend its political capital in engaging the likes of China, India and

Brazil to do more. Instead, a more distributed climate leadership will be required. Many countries will overachieve their current emissions reduction targets given the astonishing developments in the renewables sector. As such it will be incumbent upon Europe, in particular the UK, France and Germany, to proactively seek out new partnerships with the likes of China, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, India and South Africa to raise the bar on how we approach 2020.

The G7 and G20 meetings this year will both be a test for how countries respond to President Trump on climate change. These forums shape and codify the norms and assumptions that drive the global political economy. They will test European resolve in particular, offering significant opportunities for Europe to champion and affirm the importance of rigorous, evidence-based values and debate. Emphasising the sound, robust nature of the evidence will send a strong signal to Congress that human-induced climate change and its subsequent threats are established as consensus amongst European and global leaders, and that addressing the severity of climate impacts is a core component of the European project and responsible leadership. European countries must be willing to assert strongly the gravity of climate risks and impacts. This will help build the foundations of confidence and trust amongst Europe's allies in developing countries that Europe is willing to defend its own interests and stand in solidarity with theirs.

Whilst President Trump, his administration and some members of Congress will likely do all they can to sabotage the US climate commitments, taking action on climate change is inescapable both in reality and politically. Non-federal action by business, cities and states will continue, albeit slower if President Trump fights back hard, but the direction of travel is clear. The consensus on the threat posed by climate change is now considered a top-tier foreign policy priority. The reality of climate change is undeniable and the evidence demonstrates that early

action saves lives, money and prevents conflicts. And finally, climate action reaps rewards, offers value for money and is heading down an irreversible path. One country, albeit one of the biggest emitters and most powerful in international affairs, now no longer commands and controls the global level of climate ambition.

9 | TROUBLING TIMES: TRUMP AND THE BOMB

Daryl G Kimball

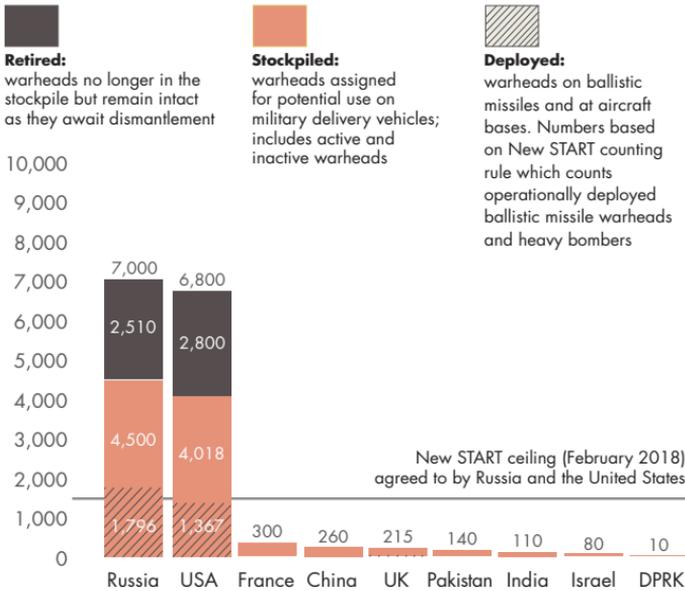
Concern is growing over Donald Trump's stance on nuclear weapons and nuclear arms control. US allies both in Europe and Asia have a key role to play in encouraging the Trump administration to maintain US nuclear risk reduction commitments.

The most serious and consequential responsibility for any US president is providing leadership in reducing the threats posed by nuclear weapons. Over the years, Republican and Democratic leaders have negotiated agreements to limit and cut nuclear arsenals, taken the lead in efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons such as the 2015 EU-3+3 nuclear deal with Iran, and they have tried to reduce the risk of nuclear miscalculation and catastrophe.

Russia remains America's major peer competitor in the area of nuclear weapons capabilities. Today the US and Russia are estimated to have 4,018 and 4,500 warheads stockpiled and assigned for military use. Under the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), each is limited to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear weapons on as many as 700 nuclear delivery vehicles until 2021. If these weapons were used even in a 'limited' way, the result would be catastrophic.

Figure 1: 2017 Estimated Global Nuclear Warhead Inventories

The world’s nuclear-armed states possess a combined total of roughly 15,000 nuclear warheads; more than 90 percent belong to Russia and the United States. Approximately 9,600 warheads are in military service, with the rest awaiting dismantlement.



Sources: Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris; U.S. Department of State. Updated February 24, 2017.

The next largest nuclear arsenals are those of France, with 300, and China, with 280 warheads of all types. With the conclusion of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, all nuclear-armed states except for North Korea have halted nuclear testing.

Today, US and Russian nuclear stockpiles are down from their Cold War peaks, but the global nuclear threat remains far too high.

Even before the arrival of Donald Trump at the White House in Washington, tensions between the world’s

nuclear-armed states were on the rise. With Trump's election, the situation is even more precarious.

Worsening US/NATO relations with Russia over Moscow's violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and other issues increase the possibility of a direct confrontation that could escalate into the nuclear realm. With hundreds of long-range thermonuclear weapons on each side poised for action within minutes of any sign of a nuclear attack, the fate of the world still depends on the good judgment and restraint of the US and Russian presidents in a crisis, and the risk of nuclear war due to miscalculation or accident remains.

The United States and Russia are planning to spend hundreds of billions of dollars in the next decade to replace their Cold War-era nuclear strike systems. Washington has recently determined that Moscow is deploying ground-based cruise missiles in violation of the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, putting that treaty and future arms control agreements in doubt.

The nuclear geometry in Asia is also becoming more complex and dangerous. North Korea may soon have an operational arsenal of nuclear-armed ballistic missiles that can hit all of East Asia. India and Pakistan continue to amass more fissile material and both are deploying new and more destabilising nuclear delivery systems. China has begun to put multiple warheads on its arsenal of some 100 long-range missiles and may increase the launch readiness of its nuclear forces.

"Today, the danger of some sort of a nuclear catastrophe is greater than it was during the Cold War and most people are blissfully unaware of this danger," warned William J Perry, the former US secretary of defence, in his 2016 memoir, *My Nuclear Journey*.

Donald Trump, in his rambling first news conference as president on 17 February, made it clear he is aware, in general terms, of the danger. Speaking about Russia,

Trump said: "...We're a very powerful nuclear country and so are they. There's no upside ... nuclear holocaust would be like no other."

So far, however, he has not made it clear whether he knows how to avoid it. Trump made a number of controversial, seemingly impulsive, and sometimes contradictory comments on nuclear weapons, before and after election day. In some cases, Trump's cabinet appointees have disagreed with his statements, raising further questions about the new administration's nuclear policies.

What the new president and his fledgling administration will do – and how US allies and rivals respond – will have long-lasting ramifications.

The following is a brief examination of how US nuclear weapons policy could change under Trump and how the United States and its allies and partners might help to reduce rather than increase global nuclear weapons dangers.

Trump on nuclear weapons

Unlike Barack Obama who campaigned for the presidency in 2008 on the basis of a detailed nuclear risk reduction strategy that he first outlined in legislation he introduced in 2007, Trump has not yet, in any formal way, outlined his thinking on nuclear weapons.

If translated into formal US policy, however, some of his less formal pronouncements on nuclear weapons would represent a radical break from long-standing US policies to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons, thereby increasing tensions with other nuclear-armed states.

Nuclear use doctrine: On 3 January 2016, early in the campaign for the presidency, Trump was asked if he would rule out the use of nuclear weapons against terrorist groups. He said: "I'm never going to rule anything out ... because,

at a minimum, I want them to think maybe we would use it, OK?"

This contrasts sharply with the Obama administration's conclusions about the threat of use of nuclear weapons. In a 15 January 2017 speech, vice-president Joe Biden said: "Given our non-nuclear capabilities and the nature of today's threats – it's hard to envision a plausible scenario in which the first use of nuclear weapons by the United States would be necessary, or make sense. President Obama and I are confident we can deter – and defend ourselves and our allies against – non-nuclear threats through other means."

Preventing proliferation: In a 26 March 2016 interview with the New York Times, Trump suggested: "It wouldn't be a bad thing for us if Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia acquired nuclear weapons."

"It's going to happen anyway. It's only a question of time," he said about nuclear proliferation in another interview on May 4, 2016.

When asked about Trump's comments at his Senate confirmation hearing on 11 January 2017, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he did not agree. "I don't think anyone advocates for more nuclear weapons on the planet," Tillerson said.

"One of the vital roles of the state department ... has to be the pursuit of nuclear nonproliferation. We just simply cannot back away from our commitment to see a reduction in the number of these weapons on the planet," he said.

Nuclear disarmament: Trump has contradicted himself on whether he wants to increase or reduce the number of nuclear weapons.

As president-elect, Trump reportedly told Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev: "There is no more important issue than nuclear disarmament and nonpro-

liferation to be addressed in a global context,” according to a Kazakhstan-issued statement on their 2016 phone call in November.

In a pre-inauguration interview in January 2017 with the Times, Trump said “nuclear weapons should be way down and reduced very substantially,” and he suggested that such a deal might be linked to the easing of sanctions against Russia for its annexation of Ukrainian territory.

But Trump has also pledged to “greatly strengthen and expand” US nuclear weapons capabilities, which are already substantial, and he has criticised the New START agreement with Russia, suggesting he may be looking to change nuclear policy in significant ways.

On 22 December 2016 he posted a tweet declaring: “The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes.” When asked by MSNBC to clarify, Trump reportedly said: “Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them...and outlast them all.”

Shortly after inauguration day, Trump denounced the New START agreement in a phone call with the Russian president when the latter suggested the two countries might agree to extend the treaty for another five years (to 2026), according to a Reuters account published on 9 February.

In a 23 February interview with Reuters, Trump vowed: “if countries are going to have nukes, we’re going to be at the top of the pack” and called New START “one-sided.”

However, in his confirmation hearing in January, Trump’s secretary of state Rex Tillerson articulated a different approach. “We have to stay engaged with Russia, hold them accountable to commitments made under the New START and also ensure that we are in a position to meet our accountability as well,” he said. He’s right. New START has increased stability and predictability in the US-Russian relationship and put verifiable caps on both sides’ nuclear arsenals.

In response to a question from Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Tillerson also said he supported the long-standing bipartisan policy of engaging with Russia and other nuclear arms states to verifiably reduce nuclear stockpiles.

Trump's nuclear posture review

Sorting out what the Trump administration policies on nuclear weapons will actually be will take some time. In January, Trump ordered his defence secretary James Mattis to lead a new nuclear posture review (NPR), the fourth since the end of the cold war. There will be a parallel review of US missile defence policy. The nuclear review, which will likely take more than a year to complete, could potentially set into motion significant changes regarding:

- the role of nuclear weapons in US strategy;
- targeting requirements for US forces;
- the plans for maintaining and upgrading nuclear forces, nuclear force structure requirements and costs;
- whether new types of nuclear weapons are required, and
- the overall US approach to nuclear arms control and nonproliferation.

The review will be completed just as the Trump administration is making decisions on key nuclear policy matters with long-term implications.

Before the end of his term Trump, along with Russian president Vladimir Putin will need to decide whether to extend the 2010 New START and its monitoring regime past its February 2021 expiration date for another five

years, and whether to negotiate a follow-on agreement, or go forward without legally binding, verifiable limits on the world's two largest nuclear arsenals.

The NPR will also affect the course of the ongoing programmes to sustain and upgrade each of the elements of the US strategic arsenal, including: a new, long-range, stealthy strategic bomber; a fleet of 1,000 new nuclear-capable air-launched cruise missiles; a new fleet of 14 strategic submarines; 400 new ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles; and upgraded nuclear command and control systems.

The latest estimates from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) put the cost of ongoing programmes in excess of \$400bn between fiscal years 2017–2026, which is six per cent of the projected total costs of the fiscal 2017 national defence budget request. The CBO also estimates that over the next 30 years, the cost of US nuclear weapons could exceed \$1tn. If the forthcoming NPR accelerates or expands upon these plans, it would worsen global nuclear competition and undermine support for the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which requires the nuclear-armed states and other NPT parties to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.”

Though he appears unlikely to do so, Trump also has the option of scaling back the nuclear weapons recapitalisation plan. According to estimates from the CBO, tens of billions of dollars could be saved by scaling back or delaying key nuclear weapons programs.

The potential impact of Congress on US nuclear policy

US nuclear policy is never entirely determined by the executive branch. The Republican-led Congress may have a significant influence – positive or negative.

Trump's suggestion that the United States must increase the "capacity" of its nuclear stockpile could encourage some hawkish members of Congress to seek to overturn the Obama-era policy of 'no new nuclear warhead designs' and approve funding for the development of new types of 'more usable' nuclear warheads.

A December 2016 Defence Science Board report prepared for the new administration encourages the departments of defence and energy to build an entirely new nuclear warhead and questions their ability to maintain current warheads in the absence of explosive testing, which is prohibited by the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which the United States has signed but not ratified. The report recommends "a more flexible nuclear enterprise that could produce, if needed, a rapid, tailored nuclear option for limited use," ostensibly for a conflict in Europe with Russia.

There is already opposition to the concept from several Democratic senators who were part of earlier, successful efforts to thwart George W Bush administration proposals to enhance low-yield warhead capabilities. Senator Dianne Feinstein wrote on 3 March 2017 in the Washington Post: "There is no such thing as 'limited use' nuclear weapons ... This is even more problematic given President Trump's comments in support of a nuclear arms race."

Feinstein cited the 2015 testimony of Deputy Defence Secretary Robert Work who said: "Anyone who thinks they can control escalation through the use of nuclear weapons is literally playing with fire. Escalation is escalation, and nuclear use would be the ultimate escalation."

Other members of the House and Senate, including Senator Tom Cotton have introduced legislation to restrict funding for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation, which is responsible for monitoring global compliance with the CTBT. The bill also calls on Congress to declare that a UN Security Council resolution from

September 2016 does not “impose an obligation on the United States to refrain from actions that would run counter to the object and purpose” of the CTBT, which bans nuclear test explosions.

If Congress were to adopt this bill, it would signal to other states that that the United States is seeking to back out of its commitment to a global, verifiable nuclear test ban and is considering, after a 25-year moratorium, the resumption of nuclear weapons testing.

Trump has said nothing about nuclear testing so far, but his secretary of state Rex Tillerson said in responses to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in January: “So long as the reliability of our nuclear deterrent can be guaranteed through other means, I think the moratorium has served us well. It would not serve US interests to have Russia and China resume nuclear testing.”

In response to reports of Russian Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty non-compliant ground-launched cruise missiles, several influential members of the House and Senate, including Senator Marco Rubio, have introduced legislation to pursue development of a US ground-based cruise missile in Europe and to block funding for the possible extension of New START if Russia does not withdraw its INF non-compliant cruise missiles. Such a response would divide the NATO alliance and hasten the end of verifiable limits on US and Russian nuclear forces.

Key decisions and options

For decades, US presidents from both parties have sought to reduce the risk of a nuclear confrontation, cut bloated nuclear stockpiles, and prevent proliferation. Some have been more successful than others, but all have tried. Maintaining progress on US and Russian nuclear disarmament helps to lower tensions and maintain stra-

tegic stability and is vital to helping reinforce efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Trump's early statements on nuclear weapons and nuclear arms control are deeply troubling. Key US allies in Europe and Asia have an important role to play in encouraging the Trump administration to respect and uphold past US nuclear risk reduction commitments and to seek ways to further maintain progress in several key areas:

Reduce nuclear tensions: When Trump and Putin meet later this year, the two leaders could reduce worries about nuclear missteps by reaffirming the statement by US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985 that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." They should also be encouraged to reaffirm their commitment to the quarter-century-long US and Russian moratoria on nuclear weapons test explosions and the prompt entry into force of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which both have signed but only Russia has ratified.

Extend New START and seek deeper cuts: As President Barack Obama noted in his final press conference, "there remains a lot of room for both countries to reduce our nuclear stockpiles." With up to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear weapons allowed under New START, Russia and the United States can safely cut their bloated nuclear stockpiles further without negotiating a new treaty.

By agreeing to extend New START and its verification provisions by five years too, to 2026, Trump and Putin could confidently pursue further, significant parallel reductions of warhead and delivery system inventories by one-third or more and still meet their respective nuclear deterrence requirements. This step would ease tensions and reduce fears of a new nuclear arms race, plus it would reduce the skyrocketing price of nuclear weapons.

Address INF Treaty violations: Russia's deployment of ground-based cruise missiles prohibited by the

landmark 1987 INF Treaty is a serious matter. Trump said on 23 February 2017 he would take up the issue with Putin when they meet. He should, but he should remember that Russia's missile deployments do not significantly alter the military balance. The two sides should agree to discuss the United States evidence of the violation at another meeting of the treaty's Special Verification Commission and to work to resolve all outstanding compliance issues.

If Moscow continues to deploy the banned ground-launched cruise missiles, US and NATO leaders should insist that the weapons would need to be counted under the limits set in the next round of nuclear arms reductions. Washington should also continue to support ongoing NATO efforts to bolster the conventional defences of those allies that would be potential targets of Russian aggression or intimidation.

Adjust US missile defence plans: The United States has followed through on its phased adaptive approach for limited missile defences in Europe to counter Iran's medium-range missile arsenal. With the successful implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Washington can suspend the deployment of more advanced Aegis missile interceptors in Poland, as well as a possible ground-based, strategic interceptor site on the US East Coast – both of which are oriented to counter a long-range, nuclear-tipped Iranian missile threat that has not materialised. Failing to adapt missile defences will only deepen Russian suspicion the system is also directed at them and increase the likelihood of dangerous Russian countermoves.

Further reduce the salience of nuclear weapons: In the seven decades since the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have become less and less relevant to the security of possessor states and their allies and more harmful to international security and human survival. Today, the world's nuclear-armed states still face significant security threats, but none can be

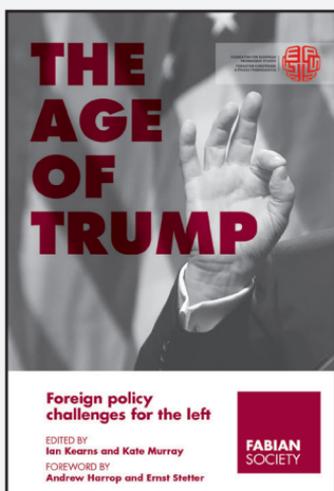
effectively resolved with nuclear weapons or the buildup of nuclear capabilities.

This year, multilateral negotiations on a “legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination” will be launched. Fundamentally, the initiative aims to spur action on nuclear disarmament and risk reduction and to further delegitimize their possession.

Although most of the world’s nuclear-armed states will likely boycott the negotiations, the process and the final product could help strengthen the legal and political norm against their use – a worthy goal, especially in light of the uncertainty surrounding US nuclear policy under Trump’s leadership.

Conclusion

The most serious test of any president is whether and how they reduce global nuclear dangers and avoid miscalculation in a nuclear crisis. There is ample reason to be concerned that Donald Trump and his team may not pass the test. To succeed or at least avoid major mistakes, the Trump administration must discard reckless rhetoric and learn how to build on previous presidents’ substantial efforts to reduce nuclear dangers and move toward a world without nuclear weapons.



Discussion Guide: The age of Trump

How to use this discussion guide

The guide can be used in various ways by Fabian Local Societies, local political party meetings and trade union branches, student societies, NGOs and other groups.

- You might hold a discussion among local members or invite a guest speaker – for example, an MP, academic or local practitioner to lead a group discussion.
- Some different key themes are suggested. You might choose to spend 15–20 minutes on each area, or decide to focus the whole discussion on one of the issues for a more detailed discussion.

**A discussion could address some
or all of the following questions:**

1. How can progressives best make the case for an outward-looking foreign policy given the nationalist and isolationist climate both in the UK and in other parts of the world? What are the key messages of internationalism and solidarity we should be promoting?
2. How will Brexit affect the UK – and Europe’s – relationship with and response to Trump? How can the left influence this debate?
3. We have grown used to the US/UK special relationship underpinning foreign policy-making. How do we adjust to the shifting relationship in the age of Trump?

Please let us know what you think

Whatever view you take of the issues, we would very much like to hear about your discussion. Please send us a summary of your debate (perhaps 300 words) to info@fabians.org.uk

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THE AGE OF TRUMP: FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES FOR THE LEFT

The first months of Donald Trump's presidency have been turbulent ones. We have come to expect the unexpected from the showman in the White House and his team. How should the left respond in these uncertain times? How does a progressive vision for the world fit with the challenges we now face?

This collection of essays aims to set out some ways forward. In it, policy experts in the UK, Europe and the US, outline some of the most pressing issues we face, from climate change to nuclear proliferation and from conflict in the Middle East to international aid. They highlight how the Trump administration might bring its influence to bear in these areas, and how we need to respond.

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