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Dealing with Trump's America

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This essay on a rare political phenomenon – the election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States – was as unexpected as is hard to explain. It will also have consequences for the United States and the world at large that will be profound and leave their mark on history. Over time a great deal will get to be written on the subject in popular books and in scholarly journals. This is an early attempt to cover the ground in several short sections. There are three main conclusions I will reach here.

One, very few scholars who studied the phenomenon of globalization took note of the fact that while the relatively free flow of goods, commodities, capital, technology and – sometimes of people as well – the process of globalization led to a very large number of people who felt left out. Political systems in the West gave them the voice which they exercised in surprising ways. A small majority in Britain voted to take the country out of

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Britain. A minority voted for Trump who was elected president because of the archaic process of electing the president through an electoral college.

Two, the man who will take charge of the United States on January 20, 2017 has had no experience in political management. He is impulsive and prone to take decisions without much thought and reflection. It is too early to tell whether the team he will select to help him govern will be able to guide him to govern responsibly.

Three, there is no doubt that some of the old traditions of governance and some of established ways of dealing with the world will be dispensed with by the Trump presidency. The United States and the world will look very different when Donald Trump passes on the reins of power to his successor in four or eight years from now.

The Trump victory: The Unexpected happened

Early on the morning of November 9, Hillary Clinton conceded the election to her Republican Party rival, Donald Trump. As the votes began to be counted, it became clear that polls and pollsters had wrongly predicted the elections. There was a widespread belief that Trump would be defeated soundly and that the margin of his defeat would be so large that the future of the Republican Party would be put in jeopardy. Instead, Trump won the electorate vote although he did not win a majority. This was an utterly unexpected turn in events. Before the results started to come in on the evening of the day before, no serious political analyst had predicted a Trump victory. The real estate tycoon's supporters had either not been covered by the experts or had kept their views to themselves until they entered the voting booth. They turned out massively to vote for their hero.

Now that the voters in the United States have cast their votes and elected a new president to succeed Barack Obama in the White House, it is a good time to ask a few questions. It will take time – in fact, a great deal of time – before satisfactory answers can be provided to most of these. That said it is not inappropriate to attempt some “day after the event” analyses. This is the purpose of this essay. How will the elections affect the evolution of the United States political system? Will the United States abandon the world order it had

helped create after the end of the Second World War? Will America give up on international commerce as the central plank in this system? What will be the consequences for the role of the state in the management of the economy? Will the new president be able to satisfy the aspirations of the tens of thousands people who attended his many rallies and cheered. How will the white majority, activated by the Donald Trump campaign, deal with the people of color in their country's population? Will the elections influence America's relations with the world's various regions – Asia, Europe the Middle East? How will Trump's election affect relations with the Muslim world? How will South Asia, in particular Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan be affected?

One of the more important consequences of the way the election was fought was to remove the veneer of respectability from public discourse. Donald Trump scoffed at this tendency to be polite as “political correctness.” Certain things were not to be said openly; they may have been acceptable in “locker room” talk but not in the public space. But that was not the right approach he believed and often said. People should express themselves openly. Only then they will get response from the policymakers. This attitude gave latitude that was quickly exploited by the “angry white men” who are Trump's largest support group. It gave prominence to movements such as the alt-right which stood for asserting white identity – if not what supremacy – in public affairs.

But this loss of inhibition was not confined to the political right. It also affected the left, it crept into even the commentary in newspapers and magazine of repute. To take just one example from the many that are available. It is hard to find some many pejoratives in one sentence written by a highly respectable columnist. This is what Roger Cohen had to say about Trump in an article published by *The New York Times* on November 5, three days before the national elections. “The campaign, thanks to Trump, has involved a kind of magical mystery tour of all that is vile, vulgar, repugnant, primal, violent, bullying, petulant, hateful, dishonest, superficial and hazy in human nature.” Cohen went beyond name-calling, a Trump specialty, but worried, in the sentences that followed, about the consequences for the nation. Trump's behavior “has offered a primer in how democratic societies can veer off the rails into forms of horror that, in hindsight, seem unimaginable. Small compromise by small compromise, craven step by craven step, is a Republic

undone...There's nothing new about mass popular delusions or the madness of crowds. [Trump] has reminded us, at a time of shifting global power, that the world is a dangerous place.”²

This type of sentiment was not confined to the intellectual elite. Even some members of the Republican Party – the organization Trump was to lead and won the White House for it – were equally dismissive of him. Ted Cruz, the senator from Texas who was the last won to drop out of the seventeen-man race with which the Republicans started the primary season described Trump as a pathological liar. “The man is utterly amoral,” declared the senator. Marco Rubio, the senator from Florida who was also one of the 17 contestants said Mr. Trump was an “erratic individual” who could not be trusted with the nuclear codes. Mitt Romney, the 2012 Republican nominee who lost to Barack Obama, described Trump as “an extraordinarily dangerous to the heart and character of America.” He had refused to endorse Trump when he won the nomination. On election day the Bush family revealed it had not voted for the Republican candidate. Paul Ryan, the Speaker of the House and as such the senior most elected Republican official before the Trump electoral triumph refused to appear on stage with his party’s nominee, describing his comments about women “sickening.”

While the establishment on both sides, the left and the right, were aghast at the emergence of Donald Trump, it became clear that he had the passionate following of a large number of people. This was the case in particular with the relatively poor white population in the country’s “rust belt” where the people were looking for a voice that could articulate their suffering. Trump became their voice. He used their grievances to build a powerful case for change. The making of public policy was not to be the exclusive domain of those who had established themselves at the center of policymaking. Trump in many rallies attended by enthusiastic crowds promised that if elected he will govern in order to bring those left behind relief and release them from the pressures that weighed on them.

The president-elect’s cabinet choices revealed how he was likely to govern once he was in office. Three things stood out in the selections he made. He went for retired military men

² Roger Cohen, “Still feeling the Bern,” *The New York Times*, November 5, 2016, p. 11.

who had experienced combat in America's war on terror. He chose people with strong views about a number of issues on which the United States will need to act in order to influence global policy. These included America's attitude towards international commerce; how the country was planning to deal with climate change which, during the campaign, Trump had called a hoax; and policies that would affect the poorer segments of the population, the working class that had voted overwhelmingly for the president-elect. It was the turn to the military to man several the senior ranks of the administration he assembled as he waited to take office that seemed most puzzling. Also surprising was his choice of people who will be responsible for regulating how employers treat their workers.

Trump chose retired Marine Corps Gen. James "Mad Dog" Mattis to lead the Department of Defense. His choice for the large Department of Homeland Security was Marine Gen. John F. Kelly. Both had led the United States's regional commands; Mattis the Central Command with responsibility for the Middle East and much of the Muslim world while Kelly was in charge of the Southern command that had a role in securing the country's borders against the entry of illegal migrants. Both were respected and well-liked. It was the choice of retired Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn who was chosen to lead the National Security Council that did not go down well with several segments of the US population. He had expressed strong views about Islam and Muslims.

Will the generals succeed in governing under Trump? Their past records were mixed. President Obama's first choice to head the National Security Council was Marine General James L. Jones who did not do well and was replaced early. Army Gen. Eric K. Shinseki was another Obama choice who did not work out well in his job as Secretary of Veteran Affairs. But some generals had done exceedingly well. Brent Scowcroft, a retired Air Force General, had performed remarkably well as President George W. Bush's national security adviser as did General Colin Powell. The latter went on to become Secretary of State. "Trump's heavy reliance on military leaders marks a departure from previous three presidents, who tapped a few generals for the highest jobs with mixed success and relied mostly on people who had spent decades in civilian service, as politicians or academics or lawyers," wrote one analyst. "Most military officers have spent their entire careers within structured organizations with large staffs and clear chains of command. Sometimes they

struggle in the more freewheeling world of politics and policy – to say nothing of what is expected to be the Trump White House unpredictable environment.”³

The choice to lead the Environmental Protection Agency was Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt who described himself as a leader in the fight against the agency he was set to lead and had written that the debate over climate change is “far from settled.” How the issue of global warming is likely to be handled by the Trump administration is the subject of another section in this paper.

What produced Brexit and then the Trump presidency?

The question posed in the heading to this section was asked and answered by the followers of several social sciences – economics, history, political science, and sociology. There is now realization among those who governed the large Western nations as well as those who analyzed the content and making of public policy that the rise of reactionary forces was essentially a reaction against globalization. This was the term applied to the ability to move capital, goods and commodities, and technological know-how across national frontiers. Public policies adopted to promote globalization had also made it easier for people to move across national borders. The increasing ease with which this happened resulted in peoples and places that lost heavily. As Peter Goodman wrote for the special issue of *The New York Times*, devoted to understanding and analyzing what happened in the United States on November 8 this development was not unique to that country. Trump’s incredible political rise was an echo of what had already occurred in Europe. “Mr. Trump’s election and Brexit together underscore a central facet of these times. The old ideological divisions of left and right and have been eclipsed by a new economic taxonomy – those who have benefitted from globalization and those who have not.” The old left-right divide had lost its political relevance. Those differences stood for the role of the state. The left wished for a state that would assist those who had been left behind by the working of the unconstrained capitalist system. Those on the right emphasized the importance of the role of the individual. That

³ Philip Rucker and Mike DeBonis, “Trump pick is another general,” *The Washington Post*, December 8, 2016, pp. A1 and A8.

globalization will not work for all people around the globe was predicted by many thoughtful economists.

One Nobel Prize winner who had seen much of the world when he worked at the World Bank as the agency's Chief Economist saw a reaction to globalization coming. In *Globalization and its Discontents*, a book published in 2002, Joseph Stiglitz warned that globalization had not produced a state of nirvana. Looked in highly aggregated terms the benefits seemed great. "People in the West may regard low-paying jobs at Nike as an exploitation, but for many in the developing world, working in factory is a far better option than staying down on the farm or growing rice," wrote Stiglitz.⁴ Globalization's advantages had far-outweighed its disadvantages, he went on to enumerate. East Asia's success was based on globalization, especially on the opportunities for trade, and increased access to markets and technology. It had resulted in lowering the prices of goods of everyday consumption. "It has brought better health, as well as an active global civil society fighting for more democracy and greater social justice. The problem is not with globalization, but with how it has been managed."⁵

Some historians such as Kelly J. Baker, the author of *Gospel According to the Klan* have argued that Trump's appeal to a class of white voters that won him the election is a part of a trend long present in the United States history. A movement that went by the name of "alt-right" and was led by Richard B. Spencer who supported the creation of an "ethno-state" for white Europeans and "peaceful ethnic cleansing" won a great deal of attention as one of the explanations for the Trump phenomenon. "Part of the problem is a lack of historical awareness," wrote Baker. "When white supremacist organizations crop up in tellings of American history, they appear and recede from the story quickly, a footnote about racism to be overlooked, not a central component of the American story. Hence the alt-right appears novel only if we ignore the continuum of 'intellectual' white supremacy from which it emerged: scientific racism in the 19th and the early 20th centuries, the national Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, and the Citizens Council of the 1950s and '60s...While it might seem newsworthy that today's alt-right members wear suits and profess academic

⁴ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2002, p 4.

⁵ Ibid, p. 214.

sounding racism, they are an extension of these previous white supremacists movements, dressed up in 21st century language, social media and fashion. We ignore that continuity at our peril. Focusing on their respectability overlooks their racism, but more pressingly, by convincing ourselves that they are taking a new mainstream turn, it makes white supremacy appear normal and acceptable.”⁶

Some historians have also argued that the left in the West was a victim of its own success. “With the economic crisis [of 2007-09] and the negative effects of globalization, the socialists couldn’t convince the populations in their respective countries that the future lies in a liberal Europe,” writes Gerard Grunberg, a historian of socialism at Sciences Po in Paris. “This is the end of the European utopia.”⁷

Will Trump’s victory and the Brexit vote assuage the hurt feelings of globalization’s discontents? Most analysts believe that will not happen unless the new leadership is able to deliver what those who are angry at the direction of state policy. To quote from the Goodman article again: “But whatever happens from here, one may assume that populist ferment is unlikely to exhaust its vast reservoir of grievances anytime soon.”⁸ One by-product of this ferment is the preference for strong leaders. Those troubled by the ill-effects of globalization seem to have come to the conclusion that democratic systems as they have evolved in Europe and North America are not able to deal with serious structural issues such as income and wealth inequalities, demographic declines, and foreign competition. Only strong leaders are up to this task.

Reactions to the Trump victory

There were several different reactions to the Trump upset. Asian markets took a deep plunge when it became clear to the investors that the maverick billionaire was the American

⁶ Kelly J. Baker, “White-Collar Supremacy,” *The New York Times*, November 25, 2016, p. A25. Kelly is the author of *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK’s Appeal Protestant America, 1915-1930*, University Press of Kansas, 2011.

⁷ Quoted in James McAuley and Griff Wiite, “A new political order in West,” *The Washington Post*, November 25, 2016, p.A1 and A12.

⁸ Peter S. Goodman, “Populist fury may backfire,” *The New York Times*, Elections 2016, November 2016, pp. A1 and P19.

voters' choice. Following the Asian reaction Wall Street also seemed to stand at the edge of a financial abyss. In future trading Dow Jones fell by 600 points, a decline of almost 3 percent. There were reasons for the markets' initial nervous response. They worried, for instance, that Trump may interfere with the working of the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States, going to the extent of forcing its chairperson Janet Yellen to leave her office. "What the international financial markets were reacting negatively was the fear that candidate Trump would be unpredictable, perhaps unreliable, perhaps too spontaneous," said Thomas Barrack, chairman of Colony Capital and an adviser to the president-elect. He sought to ease concerns over the Federal Reserve, claiming that Trump, in spite of his election-period pronouncements understood the sensitivity of central bank policy. However, the markets recovered sharply. The Dow Jones Industrials index set several record highs once the markets began to factor in what in their view would be positive developments. These include possible reduction in corporate taxes and considerable dilution of regulatory requirements.

The shocked Democratic response came slowly as the magnitude of the change that Trump victory had brought about began to be understood. Hillary Clinton responded in her belated recognition speech which came a day after she had signaled to the Republican that she had accepted her loss. In her emotional public speech she promised to work with Trump but warned that she would continue to fight for the rights of the groups Trump had threatened – minorities, Muslims, women, the handicapped. Her voice occasionally breaking, she said: "This is painful and it will be for a long time. We have seen that our nation is deeply divided than we thought. But I still believe in America and I always will."

There was open rejoicing from several parts of Europe. Most prominent European voice was that of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said that his country was ready and wants to restore fully fledged relations with the United States. It won't be ready but we are ready to do our part." According to post-election report in the *Financial Times*, "Marine Le Pen, France's far-right politician who is running for president next year, rushed to congratulate Mr. Trump, and the 'free people of the US.' Nigel Farage, leader of the anti-EU UK Independence and Geert Wilders, head of the Netherlands' anti-Immigrant

Freedom Party also expressed satisfaction,” at the unexpected outcome of the U.S. election.⁹

Although those from the political right in the continent cheered his victory, the European political world went into a shock. Most worried were those who believed that world piece and development had been underpinned by an international order – including global financial and US-led alliances – that may be under threat if Trump’s campaign rhetoric. A stern warning came from Jens Stoltenberg, the NATO Secretary General, who reminded members of their treaty obligations to come to common defense. He hoped that “we just assume the US policy will, in the coming months, be less predictable for us.”

There isn’t any part of the world that will not feel the impact of Trump’s occupancy of the White House. That will come about on January 20, 2017 when he delivers the inaugural address. This will be listened to with as much enthusiasm as was the first speech by President Barack Obama who spoke to a crowd of a million people who had assembled on The Mall. This is the open space between the Lincoln Monument and the Capitol, the hill on which the US Congress has its house. The crowd will be large and loud since Trump has been able to respond to their anger. They had been ignored by what is generally referred to the political and economic heartland. These are the millions of people who feel that the policies adopted by the established order had resulted in mass unemployment in their communities, stagnation in their incomes and physical threats to their security. These were blamed on the Mexicans who have sent in millions of their citizens who have taken up the low-paying jobs on which these communities lived. China was blamed for providing home to thousands of industries who have left the industrial heartland of America. And Muslims are blamed for bringing as well as encouraging jihad in their country.

The worried response by the exponents of the established order – political, economic and social – did not ease with the end of the counting of votes. As the president-elect and his transition team began to work on creating a new administration, the lack of comfort on the part of those who had opposed Trump increased. He announced appointments to the White House as well as to head the several departments. Only two appointments were not

⁹ Sam Fleming and Courtney Fever, “Trump moves to reassure shocked allies and nervous investors,” *Financial Times*, November 10, 2016, p. 1.

criticized. These were of Nikki Haley, South Carolina governor, to be the United States ambassador to the United Nations. A woman of Indian origin, she would become the first South Asian to become a members of the cabinet. The other appointment that was not critically received was that of Elaine Chao to head the Department of Transport. Having served President George W. Bush in the cabinet, she would bring management experience to her job which was not the case for several other appointments. Almost all other choices. This was the case in particular of Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn as the National Security Advisor who had expressed strong anti-Islam views in public addresses and had joined the chorus, “lock her up,” when he spoke at the Republican Party Convention in July. The slogan’s reference was to Hillary Clinton’s use of a private server to send and receive emails. Trump and his followers considered that to be a criminal act, which, properly investigated, could (should) land her in jail. According to some commentators, Flynn was “clearly unsuited to be president’s national security adviser. He cannot be the last one to whisper in Trump’s ear about some crisis, the one who determines what documents the president has to read, out to read , out to read or just plain might find interesting.”¹⁰

As discussed in the section that follows, in the view of the establishment the selection of Stephen Bannon as the chief strategic advisor in the White House was especially troubling. He was associated with the right-wing “alt-right” movement that used racist rhetoric to present its point of view about white supremacy.

Cabinet choices were also of concern. Jeff Sessions was picked to serve as Attorney General, a position where he would be required to pursue the law with regard to racial matters. As a senator he had openly expressed racist views. Several Wall Street insiders made it to important positions in the cabinet. These included Steven Mnuchin and Wilbur Ross, both billionaires. The former was the choice to head the Treasury Department; the latter to be in charge of the Commerce Department. According to one view, “taken together [these appointments] suggest an administration determined to alter course on immigration, abortion, housing laws, the environment, worker protections and privatization of federal functions.”¹¹ The president-elect took more time to assemble his foreign policy team. That

¹⁰ Richard Cohen, “Dump Flynn,” *The Washington Post*, December 7, 2016, p. A19.

¹¹ Michael D. Shear, “Cabinet picks portend a shift far to the right,” *The New York Times*, December 6, 2016, pp. A1 and A20.

said his actions in the period of transition “threw Sino-American relations into a new round of turmoil by speaking with the Taiwanese leader and by trolling a nation of 1.4 billion people on Twitter, Trump and his team set off new chaos between nuclear armed India and Pakistan, with Trump praising the repressive regime of the latter and pledging to visit, while a member of his transition team told the latter Trump supports designating Pakistan a terrorist haven.”¹²

The Trump victory: Bringing race into American politics

Some analysts have found a parallel between what is about to happen in the United States to what occurred almost 200 years ago. “Much like the populist wave that delivered the presidency to Andrew Jackson in 1828, Mr. Trump’s support coalesced around a shared hatred of elites,” wrote Edward Luce for the *Financial Times* in the “Big Read,” a page long article the newspaper publishes on most days. This one was headed “Welcome to Trumpworld.” Luce continued: “Its foundation was people without college degrees, who live in small towns and rural America and who are largely white and disproportionately male. Given the xenophobic tone of Mr. Trump’s campaign, it would be easy to echo Mrs. Clinton’s description of them as deplorable.”¹³ It was clear to the Republican Party establishment as it began to analyze the Trump victory that he, in the words of House Speaker Paul Ryan, “heard a voice out in this country that no one heard.” The president-elect spoke to and for the working class squeezed and ruined by technological and economic transformation. But Trump and many of his close associates went beyond economics in their attempt to reshape the United States’ politics. They introduced race into the equation.

The use of race, of course, is not new to American politics. It has been there from the beginning of the United States as a nation-state. Some of the enduring features of the American political system such as “state rights,” composition of the Senate, and the system of the Electoral College for choosing the country’s president were responses to the felt-

¹² Dana Milbank, “Trump’s only policy: Chaos,” *The Washington Post*, December 7, 2016, p. A19.

¹³ Edward Luce, “Welcome to Trumpland,” *Financial Times: Big Read*, November 10, 2016, p. 11.

need to limit the political presence of the black community. Some of the more defining moments in the nation's history were the consequence of racial politics. Race was the basis of the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement led by Reverend Martin Luther King. Race is now back in politics but the dynamics are very different. The earlier upheavals resulted from the efforts by the black population to fight for their political and economic rights. This time around it is a large segment of the white population that is asserting itself and in Donald Trump has found a champion for their cause.

The white population has reacted to what it regards as a demographic attack on its predominant position. The proportion of white in the population is declining. This is happening for two reasons. Immigration is bringing in non-white people into the country. And, the non-white have a higher rate of fertility. The white see their share in population declining; they are already in a minority in the state of California, the largest in the country. Already, more children are born in a year to non-white people than those that are white. According to the 2010 census data, the white population accounted for 56.1 percent of the population. The Hispanic and Latino Americans of any race made up 16.3 percent. Black or African-American constitute 12.6 percent; Native American's 0.9 percent and other races 14.1 percent. The last group also includes those that are of racially mixed blood.

The rapidly changing demographic composition of the population has strained the structures of politics and economics. The White are fighting back, often in ways that go against the professed values of America. The approach used was well articulated by Derek Black in a newspaper article. "I was born into a prominent white nationalist family – David Duke is my godfather, and my dad started Stormfront, the first major white nationalist website – and I was once considered the bright future of the movement." But that did not happen. Black, once in college, discovered that members of other communities had many virtues as those claimed by the white. And he was troubled by the rise of Donald Trump. In the November 2016 elections, "a substantial proportion of the American public has made clear that it feels betrayed by the establishment, and so its elected a president who denounces all Muslims as potential conspirators in terrorism; who sees black communities as crime-ridden; who taps into white American distrust of foreigners, particularly of Hispanics; and who promises the harshest form of immigration control. If

we thought that Mr. Trump himself might backtrack on some of this, we are now watching him fill a cabinet with people able to make that campaign rhetoric into real policy.”¹⁴

Among those destined to play an important role in implementing the Trump agenda is Stephen K. Bannon, who has the president-elect’s ear and was appointed as the chief strategist and counselor in the Trump White House. He was credited with engineering the Trump electoral triumph after he was brought in to head the campaign. Until then he had managed the Breitbart.com website which, according to a detailed, three-page long profile by *The New York Times*, had won a reputation for its “scorn for Muslims, immigrants and black-activists [and] drew a fervent following on the alt-right, a extremist fringe of message boards and online magazines popular with white supremacists, and after Mr. Bannon took control of the website in 2012, he built a raucous coalition of the discontented. More quietly, Mr. Bannon systematically courted a series of politicians, especially those who share his dark, populist world view: at home a corrupt ruling class preying on working Americans; globally, the ‘Judeo-Christian West’ in the ‘war against Islamic fascism.’ They were views that placed him closer to the European right than to the Republican mainstream.”¹⁵

Liberal America was aghast at some of the appointments made by the president-elect. “Increasingly as he picks his cabinet from among the fawning loyalists, it is becoming clear that by ‘Make America Great Again,’ he meant some version of ‘Make America a White, Racist Misogynistic Patriarchy Again,” wrote Charles Blow in an article contributed to the editorial pages of *The New York Times*. “It would be hard to send a clearer message to women and minorities that this administration will be hostile to their interests.”¹⁶

The rise of the right in the United States and Europe has led to the questioning of the long-held view that once countries develop democratic institutions, a robust civil society, widespread education and belief in the power of the marketplace ensures its continuity. For years global developments seem to support that idea. Freedom House an organization that

¹⁴ Derek Black, “Why I left White Nationalism,” *The New York Times, Sunday Review*, November 27, 2016, p. 7.

¹⁵ Scott Shane, “In Trump , populist provocateur found the man for his mission, *The New York Times*, November 28, 2016, pp. A1 and A14-A15.

¹⁶ Charles M. Blow, “Making America white again,” *The New York Times*, November 21, 2016, p. A21.

measures democracy and freedom around the world shows that the countries it classified as free increased in number from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s. But since 2005, the index shows a decline. However, research by two scholars, Yascha Mounk, at Harvard and Stephan Foa at the University of Melbourne have developed a three-variable formula to gauge the strength of political orders round the globe. Their research to be published in the January 2017 issue of the *Journal of Democracy* shows that democracies are not as secure even in the West as people had come to believe. Their findings were previewed in a newspaper article. The three variables are public support (How important do citizens think it is for their country to remain democratic?); public openness to nondemocratic forms of government; and whether anti-system parties and movements were gaining strength. “In the United States, Donald J. Trump won the presidential election by running as an anti-system outsider.”¹⁷ And support for anti-system populist parties such as the National Front in France, Syriza in Greece and the Five-Star Movement in Italy is rising.” In other words, the sudden appearance of Trump on the US political scene may be a sign of a broader trend.

Trump, the US and the global economies

The Donald Trump campaign for the presidency did not have to be closely watched to reach the conclusion that what appeared to be an unlikely event if he did win, his tenure in the Oval Office will profoundly affect not only the US economy but the entire world economy. The election result produced what has come to be called the Trump effect. “For allies and adversaries alike, the election of Donald Trump represents the likely abandonment of a decades-old U.S. commitment to uphold the global order,” said Ivo Daalder, a former United States ambassador to NATO who is now president of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.¹⁸ Stock markets around the globe responded with euphoria. There was expectation that the Trump administration will ease the regulator burden on enterprises and dilute the Dodd-Frank restrictions imposed on the banks following the

¹⁷ Amanda Taub, “Warning signs ‘flashing red for democracies,” *The New York Times*, November 29, 2016, p. A7.

¹⁸ Quoted in Peter Baker, “‘Trump Effect’ is already shaping events and markets around the world, *The New York Times*, November 29, 2016, p. A21.

Great Recession of 2010-09. The Dow Jones industrial average broke several records and topped 19,000 two weeks after Trump emerged as the winner. But there were serious concerns that Trump will adopt policies that will worsen income distribution. The underprivileged and disadvantaged who voted overwhelmingly in his favor may not receive the expected rewards.

Some of the recent work on capitalism as practiced in the 21st century and its social and political consequences seem to have escaped the notice of the Republican Party in the United States, in particular the party's right wing. Thomas Piketty's book on the subject became a best seller in the United States which was quite an achievement for a dense book on economics. But it seems not have been read by the Republican Party's leadership, certainly not by Donald Trump. The French economist had argued convincingly that untethered capitalism leads to extreme income inequality. An activist state is needed in order not to produce that consequence. Inequality leads to political and social volatility.¹⁹ There is plenty of evidence from around the world that that is indeed what has happened and is happening. That said, the tax proposals put out by candidate Trump paid little heed to what Piketty had argued. They were likely to increase income inequality.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the Trump presidency will be on arresting the progress made by the working of the process described by economists as "globalization." Trump and other populist leaders in the West focused on international trade, flow of capital, and the movement of people across national borders features of the process in explaining why some segments of the population had been left behind. They came up with slogans and half-baked plans to deal with the first and the third aspect of globalization.

Trump adopted two strategies to deal with the growing influence of trade on the US economy. During the campaign he said if elected he will use public policy to prevent American companies from relocating their production facilities in the countries that could provide cheap and well-trained labor. And he vowed to cancel some of the major trade agreements the United States had concluded under some of his predecessors. These included the North America Free Trade Area (NAFTA) signed into law by President Bill

¹⁹ Thomas Piketty, *Capitalism in the Twenty-first Century*, Cambridge Mass. Balknap Press, 2015.

Clinton and the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) signed by President Barack Obama but was awaiting Congress's approval as the transfer of power began to take shape after Trump became President-elect. Given the position Trump had taken in the campaign it seemed highly unlikely that the TPP would get enacted. This worried America's partners who expressed their frustration openly at the summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation held in late November in Lima, Peru. This was the last meeting of world leaders President Obama was to attend before leaving office. In a thinly veiled rebuke of the language used by President-elect Trump, Malcolm Turnbull, Australia's prime minister said that the economic nationalism he deployed in campaign trail would have significant negative consequences for the world economy. "Protectionism is not a ladder to get you out of the low-growth trap. It is a shovel to dig it much deeper," he said in an interview with the *Financial Times*. John Key, New Zealand's prime minister, also warned that if Trump walked away from the TPP, he would leave the door open to China. "The TPP was all about the United States showing leadership in the Asia-Pacific region. We like the US being in the region. But if the US is not there that void needs to be filled, and it will be filled by China."²⁰

China was ready to move. It pushed ahead with its alternative to the TPP, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Seven of the 12 signatories of the TPP are included in the RCEP. But China was in no position to fill the gap that would be created if the United States were to withdraw behind a protective wall. China's share of global gross domestic product jumped from 4 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2016. The share of Asia, including Japan is 31 percent. Meanwhile the US and the European Union together account for 47 percent of global GDP. A better measure of the impact on world trade is the share in global imports. China accounted for only 12 percent in 2015, one-third that of Asia. The US and EU excluding intra-EU trade accounted for 31 percent of world imports.²¹ In his book, *The Great Convergence* Richard Baldwin of the Graduate School in Geneva, draws important distinctions between two periods of globalization, the first after the industrial revolution and the second after the information revolution of the late 20th century. In the first, trade

²⁰ Shawn Donnan and Andres Schipani, "China jockeys to fill US free trade role," *Financial Times*, 21 November, 2016, p. 3.

²¹ Martin Wolf, "Trump faces the reality of world trade," *Financial Times*, November 23, 2016, p. 11.

was limited by the cost of transport since fully developed products moved from one place to another. Now it is possible to break up the production process into many parts. Apples products, for instance, are designed in the United States, assembled in south China using parts and components imported from several countries in East Asia and finally shipped to the stores in the United States and Europe, their main markets. As Baldwin puts it: workers in South Carolina are not competing with Mexican labor, Mexican capital and Mexican technology as they did in the 1970s.

They are now competing with a nearly unbeatable combination of US know-how and Mexican wages.” America cannot be “made great again” by keeping foreign products out of the country. International trade contributed to a massive change in world economic order. Between 1820 and 1990, the share of world income going to today’s wealthy nations jumped from 20 percent to nearly 70 percent. That was the consequence of the first period of globalization. Since then the share has plummeted to where it was in 1900.²² It is this shift that has taken a toll on some segments of the US labor force.

How the power of the presidency will be used to influence location decisions by corporate America became apparent while president-elect Trump was assembling his cabinet. In late November he launched a concerted effort to stop Carrier, a firm that produced cooling equipment such as air conditioners, from closing its plant in Indiana and relocating it to Monterrey, Mexico. The planned relocation would have cost Indiana 2,000 jobs and Trump as a candidate had made it the focus of his attention during the campaign. Carrier was vulnerable to pressure as it is a part of the United Technologies group that is a major defense contractor. It received more than \$5 billion annually from the government as a supplier to the Department of Defense. The company confirmed on November 24 that its executives were in conversation with some members of the transition team. Kenneth G. Dau-Schmidt, a professor of labor and employment law at the Maurer School of Law at Indiana University said that Trump could win here because United Technologies are a defense contractor and the federal government has leverage. “Whether he can do something that benefits the working class is a different story,” said the professor. “The underlying

²² Richard Baldwin, *The Great Convergence: Information Technology and the New Globalization*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2016.

problems are very hard to address. Trying to hold back the economic tide of automation, and the loss of middle-class manufacturing jobs, is something I'm not sure anybody can do.”²³

US manufacturing has lost about 5 million jobs or 30 percent of its workforce since 2000. But these numbers don't tell the full story since factory output has kept growing and hit record highs in 2016. In the third quarter of the year, it was up by 32 percent from its low point during the Great Recession of 2007-09.²⁴

Climate change: An early Trump inflicted wound

The impression that some of what Donald Trump said as a candidate may not get translated into public policy was dispelled quickly two days after he became formally “president-elect.” His transition team included Myron Ebell who it was believed might be called upon to lead the Environment Protection Agency. He was the head of business-backed group Competitive Enterprise and had asserted that whatever warming is caused by greenhouse gas pollution is modest and could be beneficial. A *Vanity Fair* profile of Ebell called him an “oil industry mouthpiece.”²⁵ But the ultimate choice for the job was Oklahoma's Scott Pruitt who, as his state's attorney general, had sued the EPA. The new EPA chief comes from a state that has seen rapid development of horizontal fracturing or fracking for bringing out oil and gas trapped in shale rocks. Oklahoma ranks fifth in the nation in onshore crude oil output in 2014. The state's natural gas output accounts for 10 percent of the nation's total.

The EPA was given the lead by the Obama administration to implement the commitments the United States had made at the Paris talks held in December 2015. The Paris commitment became possible as a result of a historic understanding President Obama had reached with President Xi Jinping, his Chinese counterpart. Earlier in the summer the two

²³ Nelson D. Schwatz, “Trump leans on Carrier to keep U.S. jobs from moving to Mexico,” *The New York Times*, November 25, 2016, pp. A1 and A7.

²⁴ Ed Crooks, “US Economy: Cut out of the factory revival,” *Financial Times: Big Read*, November 2e, 2016, p. 9.

²⁵ Michael Shnayerson, “Letter from Washington: A convenient untruth,” *Vanity Fair*, April 17, 2007.

leaders agreed to speed up their efforts to slow down the rise in global temperatures to exceed no more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit, the point at which many scientists say the planet will be locked into an irreversible future of extreme and dangerous warming. The trend is already in that direction. The World Meteorological Organization said that it was 95 percent certain that 2016 would be the warmest year since records began to be kept in the 19th century. 2014 and 2015 were also the hottest years, each breaking the record set in the previous year. It was gratifying how quickly the global community moved to ratify the Paris accord. It had to be endorsed by 50 countries accounting for 55 percent of total carbon emissions. That goal was met in October.

President Obama used the authority Congress has given the EPA to reduce the amount of carbon emissions into the atmosphere. “The Clean Power Plan is the ambitious centerpiece of Mr. Obama’s climate change legacy and the key to his commitment under the Paris accord,” wrote Coral Davenport in an assessment for *The New York Times* of what the Trump presidency may result in. “At its heart is a set of Environmental Protection Agency regulations intended to curb planet- warming pollution from coal-fired plants. If enacted the rules could transform the American electricity sector, close hundreds of coal-fired plants and usher in the construction of vast new wind and solar farms. The plan is projected to cut the United States power plant emissions 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.”²⁶ This was the central element in the agreement Obama reached with Xi in the summer of 2015. Under that understanding the Chinese emissions will drop after 2030. During the campaign, Trump had ridiculed the Paris accord, promising to shred it into bits once he was in office. His pledge was taken seriously by the residents of the state of West Virginia where he polled one of the highest proportions of the votes cast. It became the most Republican state in the nation after Wyoming.

America’s 250 million cars together with other modes of transport now emit more carbon dioxide than any other carbon-burning segment of the country’s economy. President Obama intended to reduce auto-pollution and drive up gas mileage, one of the single most important steps any nation had taken to fight global warming. Fuel economy and emissions

²⁶ Coral Davenport, “Climate policy faces reversal by new leader,” *The New York Times*, November 11, 2016, pp. A1 and P5.

rules have been set to become progressively more stringent starting with the cars manufactured in 2017. Those rules were designed to deliver a new-car fleet average consumption of 54.5 miles per gallon compared with only 36 miles per gallon in 2016. Automobile manufactures sensing an opportunity in Trump's skepticism about climate change have begun to campaign for the loosening of Obama's standards. "These possible easing of federal emissions rules throws a wrench in good news from scientists at the Global Carbon Project, an international science policy advisor group, which projected on November 14, 2016 that carbon emissions would grow by just 0.2 percent this year concerned, compared with levels in 2015, the third consecutive year emissions have stayed flat." ²⁷

The liberals continued to press the President-elect to change his stance on climate change. "At the same time, please understand, if you appoint a climate-change denier to head the Environmental Protection Agency and walk America away from the Paris accord, which committed 190 countries to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide pollutants that warm the planet, you will trigger a ferocious reaction from within America and across Europe. The backlash in Europe will totally undermine your ability to lead the Western alliance," wrote Thomas L. Friedman, an articulate advocate of a strong role by the state in managing climate change. He also worried that the United States could lose out to those countries that had accepted technological advances in new low-carbon technologies. He quoted Hal Harvey advisor to major companies on energy and climate policies saying that "the cost of solar energy has dropped more than 50 percent since 2008, wind costs dropped more than 70 percent since 2008, and LED lighting costs dropped more than 90 percent since 2008. As a result, a clean future now costs less than a dirty one." Friedman urged Trump to take the lead than be a follower in this energy revolution.²⁸

How will the world react if the United States indeed pulled out of the Paris accord? China will go ahead, promised Xi in a meeting with Secretary of State John Kerry. "Tackling climate change is not something anybody asked us to do," Xi told Kerry. But the Indian

²⁷ Hiroko Tabuchi, "Climate advocates fear a rolling back on emissions," *The New York Times International Edition*, November 16, 2016, p. 11.

²⁸ Thomas L. Friedman, "Mr. Trump, help heal the planet," *The New York Times International Edition*, November 17, 2016, p. 15.

response might be different. Interest in controlling climate change was an important part of the special relationship that had developed between Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. “I think most certainly it will affect the momentum in negotiations because it throws up a lot of questions,” said Arunabha Ghosh, chief executive of the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, a New Delhi policy group. The Paris accord had promised \$100 billion a year to be provided to developing nations to move towards cleaner energy. The Trump administration is not likely to abide by that pledge. “The chances of public funds coming from climate finance are much more dismal now,” continued Ghosh, “Right now I don’t feel very optimistic.”

Since intended global action on climate change is kept under international review, a meeting to assess the situation was held in Marrakesh, Morocco as President-elect Trump began the process of assembling his team. Several large US companies began an effort to force Trump to reverse the position he had taken while he was campaigning. Matt Patsky, chief executive of Trillium Asset Management, the US investment firm, said business support for policies to address global warming “cannot be ignored by the Trump administration. That train has left the station, and to stand in its way is folly.”²⁹

While global action to control warming may slow down the process, the developing world is being hit by another crisis: air pollution. Lahore was blanketed by a lung-choking smog in early November. The situation in New Delhi was even worse. Air pollution is the fourth top cause of death globally after poor diet, high blood pressure, and smoking, with more than one in ten deaths linked to it in 2015, according to the Global Burden of Disease, a vast data trove compiled by more than 2,000 researchers led by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington. The group estimates that roughly 6.5 million died in 2014 from both indoor and outdoor pollution. Two million died in India alone. Deaths from outdoor pollution have risen to 4.2 million in 2015 from 3.5 million in 1990.³⁰ In other words developing countries have to work doubly hard to protect their citizens from environmental degradation.

²⁹ Pilita Clark, “UN summit clouded by threat to dismantle Paris accord,” *Financial Times*, November 17, 2016, p. 2.

³⁰ Sabrina Tavernise, “Lessons for India from London smog,” *The New York Times International Edition*, November 16, 2016, p. 13.

Trump and the world

While much of the world was fascinated by the Trump phenomenon, most in the world were also worried by the impact America will have beyond its borders. There was apprehension that the new American president may take his country towards isolationism, moving away from the world order that was created after the end of the Second World War. The American stance after that conflagration was totally different from the one adopted after the conclusion of the First World War in 1918. Then America rejected continued foreign engagement and turned inward. This opened up space anti-democratic forces happily filled. Populist and nationalist movements rose and bullied those who were weaker than them. After World War II American leadership was determined not to repeat this fateful mistake.

American statesmen took the lead in building a network of alliances and institutions that promoted open economic order, international security, and human rights. The United Nations and its agencies brought the world together and the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, were established to promote financial development and orderly economic development. The balance sheet was impressive. The world the United States has led since the mid-1940s is more prosperous, more secure and more democratic than it would have been had the country stood aside. If his pronouncements during the presidential campaign are to be taken as guide to where he will take the world after he is sworn in as president, it would appear that we may see another period of American isolations from world affairs. According to William A. Galston, a columnist of *The Wall Street Journal*, “if the stated positions to which Donald Trump has adhered consistently for decades are to be believed, he rejects America’s postwar project.”

It is not clear whether the often-expressed admiration for Vladimir Putin by the candidate Donald Trump was well thought out or whether it reflected real admiration for a strong leader. Mr. Trump by all accounts is not given to deep thought and was simply voicing his preference for macho-leadership. Whatever the reason, the United States began to lose respect in the world. This was particularly apparent in Europe. Putin’s Russia won two quick victories in its neighborhood when Bulgaria and Moldova, two states formerly under Kremlin’s yoke, elected pro-Russian presidents in the elections held on November 13,

2016. While the presidencies in these two countries are largely ceremonial, the elections reflected the mood of the populace. “But the swing away from pro-Western candidates toward those urging better relations with Moscow offers more evidence of growing disenchantment in Eastern Europe with Western liberal attitudes, exacerbated by the tide of immigrants,” commented *The New York Times* in an editorial. “Bulgaria and Moldova were the latest to be affected by nationalist and anti-globalization sentiments that have spread across Europe and that helped elect Mr. Trump in the United States. President Vladimir of Russia is bound to take comfort in these developments, which give him hope that Western sanctions over Russian annexation of Crimea will soon be lifted.”³¹

In developing the Trumpian world view, the new president will seek advice from some of the people who will work closely with him. Among them will be South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, who was appointed to be next US ambassador to the United Nations. The 44-year old governor is of Indian origin; her parents migrated from India and settled in the United States to run a textile business. “It is unusual for an incoming administration to name a U.N. ambassador so early, especially before the nominee for secretary of state is decided,” wrote Carol Morello in *The Washington Post* while commenting on the announcement made by the transition team on November 23. “Presidents Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama did not name ambassadors until after their inauguration. By naming Haley, Trump seems to be signaling that he considers the post an important podium for his foreign policy agenda.”³² Or the appointment may have been made to use one stone to bring down several birds. Haley, a woman of Indian origin would bring diversity to the cabinet the new president was assembling. She was also acceptable to the black community. She came to national prominence after an openly racist young man was charged with killing nine African-Americans in the Emanuel African Methodist Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. In the aftermath of the mass killing she was at the forefront of efforts to persuade state lawmakers to remove the Confederate battle flag from its prominent position on the grounds of the state capitol. The alleged killer had posted his picture with the flag in the

³¹ *The New York Times*, editorial, “Presidents who tilt towards Russia, November 17, 2016.

³² Carol Morello, “Haley is chosen to be U.S. ambassador to United Nations,” *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2016, p. A8.

background before he went on the killing rampage. The Haley appointment presented a somewhat softer image of Trump's America to the world outside. This was especially the case after he had appointed Steven Bannon as his chief executive advisor.

There is a worry about the tendency on the part of Trump to lie his way out of difficult situations. This could lead to embarrassing situations in foreign affairs. "When it comes to foreign policy, American presidents have had a habit of telling the truth," wrote Daniel Drezner in an article. "Sure they sometimes lie – John F. Kennedy lied to hide the fact that Soviet removal of nuclear weapons from Cuba in 1962 was contingent on withdrawing Jupiter missile from Turkey. But that was a lie to the American people."³³ In his book *Why Leaders Lie*, political scientist John Mearsheimer came to the conclusion that foreign policy leaders rarely lie to other leaders and governments.³⁴ Once he assumes office, Trump will have to be careful about what he says in both public and private. As *The Atlantic's* David Frum noted, "It's really a terrible thing that the word of the president-elect of the United States cannot be believed or trusted."

A world disillusioned by the rise of Donald Trump in the United States and his strong preference for extreme rightist views will no doubt look for other leaders in the global system. Would China be prepared to play that role? In a bi-polar world which is what it is today, international affairs turn into a zero-sum game in which loss by one power turns into gain for the other. This is the way things seem to be moving at the time of the beginning of the Trump era. I have discussed in another section how the space created by the likely withdrawal of the United States from a leadership role in international trade is likely to be filled by China. Beijing is moving in other areas as well including its view that the old, post-Second World War order needs to be strengthened. This was an unexpected position to take since China at one point seems to be creating a system that would rival the old order. But the "unexpected" will be the new norm with Trump in charge in Washington. With the United States under Trump not inclined to use its considerable economic and military leverage to stay involved in world affairs, Beijing sees an opportunity. This was

³³ Daniel W. Drezner, "What happens when presidents make policy on the fly?" *The Washington Post, Outlook*, November 27, 2016, p. B2.

³⁴ John Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie: The Truth About Lying in International Politics*, New York, Oxford University press, 2013.

articulated by the end-November visit to Beijing by Antonio Guterres, the incoming United Nations Secretary General.

During the visit, the Chinese President Xi Jinping praised the United Nations, using the language not heard in Beijing with reference to the way it views the world body. The president called the UN “the most universal, representative and authoritative intergovernmental organization.” China’s leaders focused in particular on some of the UN initiatives. There were references to the Paris climate accord reached in December 2015 which became effective after it was formally ratified endorsed by the number of countries that needed to come on board. The Chinese support for the climate initiative was of critical importance since it was not clear how the Trump administration will position itself once it takes office. During the election campaign, Trump had called global warming a hoax advanced by China to deindustrialize the United States. He had promised to tear into shreds the accord once he took office.

According to the New York Times’ Jane Perlez, “China’s campaign to enhance its role at the United Nations dates from September 2015, when Mr. Xi made his first visit to the annual General Assembly meeting in New York. There he pledged that China would establish a permanent force of 8,000 troops and donate \$1 billion to a United Nations’ ‘peace and development fund.’ Of the five permanent members of the Security Council, China has deployed the most troops in peacekeeping operations, including to conflict zones like South Sudan where two Chinese soldiers were killed on a mission in July.”³⁵

While China is making a serious play for leadership in world affairs, there are areas in which it will need to do more. One of these is of special interest for the new Secretary General. Guterres headed the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees since 2005 and had become a powerful advocate of the rights of refugees. His voice was prominent in 2015 while Europe dealt with the refugee crisis that brought more than a million people into the continent to escape the wars being fought in the various parts of the Middle East. China had not strictly followed the practices advanced by UNHCR in dealing with those who came into its territory to escape the rigors of life in North Korea. The

³⁵ Quoted in Jane Perlez, “Welcome reflects China’s hopes for its role at U.N.” *The New York Times*, November 30, 2016, p. A6.

Chinese treated them as “economic refugees,” the category that allowed them to be deported back to their country of origin.

While Guterres welcomed the warmth of his reception in Beijing, he made it clear that the treatment of refugees was not the only issue that required more work from the Chinese. With Foreign Minister Wang Yi at his side in a meeting with the press, the incoming Secretary General called for “an effective combination in human rights, of civil and political rights and the economic and social rights in a balanced way.” He will no doubt give the same advice to President-elect Donald Trump who has taken a rather cavalier approach to the use of torture, banning the entry of Muslims into the United States and enhanced surveillance of their communities, and forced deportation of foreigners living in his country.

Before taking office on January 1, Guterres visited the heads of governments that hold permanent seats in the Security Council. He met Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping but no meeting was scheduled with Donald Trump for weeks after the elections in the United States. China’s various moves to create a larger presence in the global system is more of a zero-sum game than was the case during the years of the Cold War. Then the United States and the Soviet Union competed for global dominance. Moscow was kept out of many parts of the global system. While it was in the United Nations Security Council it was not invited to join other global institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group and the World Trade Organization. China was in these institutions and will be more effective in competing with the United States from within the system rather than from the outside.

Trump and the Muslim world

The United States does not require its citizens to identify their religion when they are counted in the censuses held every ten years. Estimates of people belonging to different faiths are based mostly on surveys. There are varying numbers mentioned for the size of the country’s Muslim populations. Muslim organizations put the number of people belonging to their faith at more than 6 million. Some other estimates are as low as 3.5

million or a bit more than one percent of the total population. Not surprisingly, a sizeable proportion of these are from South Asia, the sub-Continent where a significant proportion of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims live. Since the South Asians have English as their second language, they have found it easier to live in Britain and the United States. More than a million South Asian Muslims are from Pakistan, half a million from India and a quarter million from Bangladesh. Together the South Asian Muslims account for 1.75 million people of the Islamic faith. This would be between 30 to 50 percent of the total Muslim population. Whichever approach the Donald Trump administration develops towards the country's approach towards the Muslim citizenry in particular and towards the world of Islam in general will have consequences for its relations with south Asia.

Some of the senior appointments announced by the President elect's transition team don't augur well for the country's Muslim citizens may be looked at or treated. What caused a great deal of concern to the US Muslims was the announcement that Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn had been offered the powerful position of national security advisor, a position where he will be a critical gatekeeper for the president with little experience in military or foreign policy issues. This appointment will put a retired intelligence officer who believes Islamist militancy poses an existential threat to the United States. In a front-page story *The New York Times* examined in some detail the views Gen. Flynn has about Islam and how he may have already influenced Donald Trump. "They both exhibit a loose relationship with facts: General Flynn, for instance, has said that Shariah, or Islamic law, is spreading in the United States (it is not). His dubious assertions are so common that that when he ran the Defense Intelligence Agency, subordinates came up with a name of the phenomenon: They called them 'Flynn facts,'" wrote the newspaper. "As an adviser, General Flynn has already proved to be a powerful influence on Mr. Trump, convincing the president-elect that the United States is in a "world war" with Islamist militants and must work with any willing allies in the fight, including President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia." The general wrote a book in which he laid out his world view that sees the United States as facing a singular, overarching threat that can be described in only one way: "radical Islamic terrorism." The Muslim faith itself is the source of the problem, describing it as a political ideology, not a religion. He called Islam a cancer that needs to be taken out.

This world-view has already begun to influence the way Trump has begun to work with world leaders. To go back to *The New York Times* both men “believe that the United States needs to start work with Mr. Putin to defeat Islamist militants and stop worrying about his suppression of critics at home, his attempts to dismember Ukraine or the Russian military’s bombing indiscriminate bombing of Syrian cities. The same goes for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt who took power in a coup and who was the first world leader to speak with Mr. Trump after the election...General Flynn and Mr. Trump also agree that the United States needs to sharply curtail immigration from predominantly Muslim countries, and possibly even force American Muslims to register with the government.”

The talk of registering the United States’ Muslim population coincided with the news of the appointment of General Lynn to the sensitive positions of national security adviser. The talk began with a suggestion from Kris Kobach made in TV news program that the new administration could reinstate a national registry for immigrants from countries where terrorist groups were active. He was supported by some other members of the Trump transition team. These people refereed to the 1944 Supreme Court ruling that the order for internment camps for America’s citizens of Japanese origin was constitutional. The suggestions ran into immediate opposition not only from the groups representing Muslims in the United States. The official twitter account of the Anti-Defamation League posted a statement from its chief executive, Jonathan Greenblatt saying that “if one day Muslims will be forced to register, that is the day that this proud Jew will register as a Muslim.” In the face of this controversy, the Trump transition team issued the following statement that left his position not totally clear. “President-elect Trump has never advocated for any registry or system that tracks individuals based on their religion, and to imply otherwise is completely false. The national registry of foreign visitors from countries with high terrorism activities that was in place during the Bush and Obama administrations gave intelligence and law enforcement communities additional tools to keep our country safe, but the President-elect plans on releasing his own vetting policies after he is sworn in.”³⁶

³⁶ John Engel Bromwich, “Muslims denounce talk of Japanese internment as ‘precedent’ for registry,” *The New York Times*, November 18, 2016, p. A8.

With so many senior policy positions going to hard liners with strong anti-Muslim sentiments, it would not be surprising if the incidence of hate crimes committed against the members of the Islamic faith continues to increase. Official data seriously under-reports the number of incidents that occur. Even then law enforcement agencies across the country reported 257 anti-Muslim incidents in 2015, up nearly 67 percent from the year before according to FBI data released on November 14. Anti-black incidents rose by about 7.6 percent, anti-Jewish incidents rose by 9 percent and incidents based on sexual orientation increased by 3.5 percent. According to Brian Levin of California State University at San Bernardino who studies hate crimes, the much higher rise against Muslims can be attributed to three factors: anger after terrorist attacks like those in San Bernardino and Paris; a generally elevated level of prejudice against Muslims; and “the coalescence of a sociopolitical movement that labels Muslims as an enemy.”³⁷

Even under President Obama, the Justice Department was alleged to have overused force against Muslims who came under suspicion. The Muslim organizations’ protests resulted restrictions that were being placed in terms of surveillance in their communities. These are likely to be loosened under Trump. In response to the terrorist attack in Orlando, Trump said he would renew surveillance on mosques. It is likely that the Trump’s Justice Department would allow grater space to local jurisdictions, especially those that have large Muslim presence. “Legal analysts said the core mission of the Justice Department – enforcing the nation’s federal laws – should remain the same.”³⁸ These have been enforced by civil right’s division. After Obama took office, then-Attorney General Eric Holder Jr. moved to give it teeth, taking aim at policies the officials thought resulted in racially or religiously disparate outcomes, even if the intent of those policies was not explicitly racist or religious. That may not be the case under Trump. If there is greater devolution to local authorities, it is likely that Muslim communities in some jurisdictions will feel discrimination.

³⁷ Matt Zapotosky, “Anti-Muslim hate crimes at highest levels since 2001,” *The Washington Post*, November 15, 2016, p. A3.]

³⁸ Matt Zapotosky, Wesley Lowery, and Mark Berman, “Justice Department focus expected to change greatly,” *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2016, pp. A1 and A4.

Other than how Muslims in the United States gets to be treated while Trump is the country's president, there are two other aspects of relations with the Muslim world that would be consequential in the Trump presidency. The first is how Trump deals with the stunted political development in the Muslim world. The second, how the United States will handle the many internal conflicts that are raging in the world of Islam. It is clear that unlike some of his predecessors, Trump has no interest in encouraging the democratization of the Muslim world. He seems much more comfortable dealing with strong leaders than those who draw their power from democratic systems. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, the first Arab leader to congratulate the president-elect, said that his presidency would "pump new life" into Egyptian-American relations. "Egypt's president had good reason to be optimistic. When he met with Mr. Trump in September during the United Nations General Assembly meeting, the then-Republican nominee did not even bring up Egypt's human rights record. Instead, Mr. Trump called Al Sisi a 'fantastic guy' who 'took control of Egypt. And he really took control of it.'"³⁹

Trump and Obama's Asia pivot

Donald Trump succeeded a man with deep knowledge and interest in the Asian continent. Barack Obama was born in Hawaii, an island in the Pacific. He spent some of his formative years with his mother in Indonesia and went to school in a Jakarta neighborhood. Upon assuming office in January 2009 he declared that his aim was to be America's Pacific president. Asia was the most visited continent by America's 44th president. He went to Asia eleven times and visited all but two large countries in the region. Bangladesh and Pakistan remained unvisited for reasons of security. He had spent some time in Pakistan when his mother took a brief assignment in the country.

Obama would have liked to leave the "Asia pivot" as an important legacy of his presidency. This was to shift his country's attention away from Europe and the Middle East and to move it towards Asia. He believed that America had done its work in Europe helping it to

³⁹ William A. Galston, "Politics and Ideas: Trump threatens the postwar order," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 2016, p. A11.

rebuild its war-shattered economies and to protect it from the Soviet Union's territorial ambitions during the four decades long Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 removed that threat. Also, the European Union gradually evolved into a powerful economic and political entity that encompassed 27 nations. Moscow it appeared did not pose a threat to Europe. It was only during Obama's last year in office that the European model of regional integration came under strain.

While Europe had settled down, the Obama years saw the Middle East plunge into chaos. The president was not inclined to support the authoritarian regimes in the area that had managed to keep peace in their countries in the post-colonial era. But demographic change and the rapid development of information and communication technologies brought the restive youth in the area into the political picture. The region's populations were very young but the youth felt excluded from both political and economic systems. Starting in 2011, the youth staged the Arab Spring – street protests organized with the help of social media to bring down the governments that had long remained in power. The youth brought down a number of regimes in the area while launching civil wars in Syria and Yemen. But Obama was not prepared to intervene, letting the area's nations deal with their problems on their own. This approach came to be called the “Obama Doctrine.”

Asia did not have the problems Europe had once faced and the Middle East had to confront while Obama was president. The United States could benefit by associating itself with the rapidly growing economies in the region. Initially Obama did not view China's rapid economic rise – the country's gross domestic product had increased 32 times since it opened its economy to the outside world beginning in 1980 – as a problem. He saw it as an opportunity. During his first visit to the continent, he chose Beijing as his main destination but stopped in Tokyo on his way to the Chinese capital. There at Tokyo's Suntory Hall he made it clear that he would seek to work closely with China to guide the global economy. He proposed a kind of G2 arrangement in which the United States and China would work together to lead the global economy. However, for the cautious President Hu Jintao who then led China, this was not the kind of limelight his country was looking for. Beijing still had work to do to reshape the domestic economy. Playing the leadership role in the global economy would be a distraction and could also be constraining.

Thus thwarted, Obama moved from cooperation to containment as the way for dealing with China's growing influence in the Asian continent. He wooed several neighbors of China to partner with his country. The group included India and several smaller countries that shared borders with China. When the elections in India brought Narendra Modi to power as prime minister, a special bond developed between the two leaders. Obama was attracted to Modi because of the latter's commitment to deal with climate change. Climate and Asia had become two Obama priorities and India was helpful in both.

Trade was to be the primary lever for the Asia pivot. Looking at the continent's growing presence in international commerce, Obama launched an effort to create the Trans Pacific Partnership, an arrangement that would have brought together 12 nations on either side of the Pacific. The aim was to have them agree on the framework within which trade among them would take place. Tariff reductions would not be at the center of this initiative; the TPP would focus instead on the regulations that would manage flows among these countries. These included labor laws, intellectual property rights, and environmental protection.

Donald Trump won the election in part by opposing trade arrangements. His emphasis on deal-making as a way of conducting public policy meant that spelling out strategic interests would not be the focus of his administration's attention. In his book, *The Art of the Deal*, he had emphasized that the entire focus should be on the details of transactions.⁴⁰ Bringing that notion to the making of public policy, he was against using broad strategies to conduct foreign affairs. This meant doing away with Asia pivot and the TPP as the frameworks within which the United States was to operate. Instead deals will be struck with Taiwan, for instance, and with Pakistan as well. He called Tsai Ing-wen, the president of the former country, breaking with four-decades of "one China" policy Washington had adopted in its dealings with Beijing. Articulated by Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, this meant recognition of Beijing's claim that Taiwan was not an independent country but a part of China. China's reaction to the call was predictable; it showed displeasure. However, the appointment of Terry Branstad, Governor of Iowa as ambassador to China was well received by Beijing. He had developed good relations with China's president Xi Jinping.

⁴⁰ Donald Trump, *The Art of the Deal*, New York, Ballantine, 2015.

While Washington's China policy during the Trump presidency will influence the way the new president will work with Asia, it is unlikely that he will articulate an overall strategy for his country's relations with the continent. Individual transactions and deal-making will remain the central planks in the policy structure.

Trump's approach to Asia should be seen in the context of his overall approach to public policy. "Amid the swerves and the Twitter fusillades there are one or two constants," wrote Philip Stevens in the *Financial Times*. "Billionaires will pay less tax and foreign policy will be unashamedly nationalist. Mr. Trump belongs to a club of Americans that sees global rules and fixed alliances as a subtraction from, rather than an addition to, US power...Geopolitics is no different from business. Mr. Trump wants to make deals. He is right, of course, to think that the US can more than stand its ground in a world in which might replaces the currency of international relations. The US is still the sole superpower – the reference point for everyone else's foreign policy."⁴¹

China was quick to move into the space the United States was vacating as the Trump era started. One indication of the role the Chinese were now prepared to play came with the decision to have President Xi Jinping attend the annual World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland. Classical geopolitical theory maintains that in a struggle between established and rising powers, the upstart is the destabilizing force. But that is not the role China is playing. Xi's visit to Davos is a clear signal that China prefers stability over disruption.

Four major South Asian countries will deeply feel the impact of the change in Washington from President Barack Obama to President Donald Trump. Afghanistan will certainly be the most affected followed by Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. The United States fought the longest war in its history and pulled in Pakistan in several different ways. It began in October 2001 when the United States, having obtained the right to fly over the Pakistani territory, launched a massive airstrike on the country. Afghanistan was being punished for hosting the Al Qaeda, the terrorist group that helped plan the 9/11 attacks on the United States. The ground war was won by the National Alliance, a non-Pathan group that had resisted the Taliban to conquer most of the country and had established an Islamic State in

⁴¹ Philip Stevens, "Xi, Davos and world in 2017," *Financial Times*, December 9, 2016, p. 11.

Kabul. The Taliban-controlled state was called the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and was led by a cleric, the one-eyed Mullah Omar. The mullah, along with most of his senior colleagues, were able to escape to Pakistan. Once there they established a governing body called the Quetta Shura named after the city, the capital of the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. The Taliban leadership lived and worked in the surroundings areas of Quetta. The Shura commanded the insurgency in Afghanistan which picked up momentum as the American troops began to pull out. If President Trump decides to completely pull out of Afghanistan, the Taliban will have the infrastructure to run over most of the country. Were that to happen, the consequences for the neighboring countries would be enormous.

Pakistan is one of the countries that will feel the arrival of Trump to the White House. Not interested in prolonging America's many engagements in the world, Trump is very likely to pull out of Afghanistan leaving the struggling country to its own devices. This will produce enormous chaos on Pakistan's northwestern border. Pakistan can expect once again to have to receive millions of refugees from Afghanistan as the latter country is torn apart by internal strife. Pakistan's policy makers, therefore, need to urgently shape their approach to Trump's America. Their reliance on China, already great, will become even more encompassing.

Is Pakistan ready to enter the Trump world as a player? That world is still not born; its birth will take place on January 20, 2017 when Donald Trump will place his hand on the bible of his choice and take oath to office. However, the impact of what is likely to be a seismic event is already being felt in both domestic and international affairs. It should not have come as a surprise that as he heads towards the Oval Office, he would continue to operate in convention-defying ways. This was quite evident in the way he called scores of heads of state and government to speak about the relations his government will have with their countries. Pakistan's prime minister was one of the world leaders called by Trump.

According to one account, the Obama White House "weighed in with an offer of professional help. The press secretary, Josh Earnest, urged the president-elect to make use of the of the State Department's policy makers and diplomats in planning and conducting his encounters with foreign leaders...Mr. Trump's conversation with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan has generated the most angst, because , as Mr. Ernst put it, the

relationship between Mr. Sharif's country and the United States is 'quite complicated,' with disputes over issues ranging from counterterrorism to nuclear proliferation."⁴²

According to the account of the talk released by the Pakistani prime minister's office the US president-elect offered Nawaz Sharif "to play any role you want to me to play to address and find solutions to the country's problems." This remark drew a great deal of attention in India where it was interpreted as an offer by the United States to mediate Pakistan's border dispute with India in Kashmir, something that Pakistan have long sought and that India has long resisted.

How much comfort should Islamabad draw from this one call? The answer is not much. At this time the Americans have little interest in providing help to Pakistan, let alone in resolving the country's many conflicts with neighboring India. The extensive coverage in the American press of terrorism in Pakistan has left a deep impression on the public mind that the country is dangerous and unsafe. The San Bernardino couple that took more than a dozen lives when the husband opened fire on the people attending an office party was from Pakistan. The wife had posted on a social media site that she had become an Islamic State follower. The press revealed that Trump's conversation with Nawaz Sharif came a day after an attack at Ohio State University in which a Somali-born student rammed a car and stabbed several students who were in the area. He was shot dead by the police. It was revealed that he had spent some time in Pakistan before migrating with his family to the United States.

As discussed above in the context of the way the Trump administration is likely to deal with climate change, the very close working relationship between President Obama and India's Prime Minister was their common concern about the looming catastrophe because of global warming. But that was not the only link that had brought together the world's largest democracies. Economic forces were also at play. A rapidly increasing rate of economic growth and with continuing increase in its population, India offered attractive opportunities for American enterprises particularly those working in the areas where declining or stagnant domestic demand had become serious constraints. It was revealed,

⁴² Mark Landler, "Trump's breezy phone leave diplomats aghast," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2016, p. A17.

for instance, that two aircraft manufacturers were eyeing the growing Indian market for advanced fighter planes. There were negotiations that may result in moving the plant that manufactures the popular F16 fighter plane from Texas to India.

Conclusion

To appreciate the reasons that brought Donald Trump to power as the United States 45th president, it is important to understand the socio-economic situation of his most ardent followers. Trump had won the presidency by fighting a campaign that defied many if not most conventions. He had used the social media to communicate with his supporters, many of them flocked to his rallies attracted by his promise to disrupt the system in place. The established system his followers believed had not worked for them.

The most aggrieved segment of the society was identified as “middle-aged angry white men with no college education.” In a path-breaking study, the husband and wife team of Nobel Prizewinning economist Angus Deaton and his Anne Case painted a grim picture of this part of American society. They documented “a marked increase in the all-cause mortality of middle-aged white non-Hispanic men and women in the United States between 1999 and 2013. This change reversed decades of progress in mortality and was unique to the United States; no other rich country saw a turnaround. The midlife mortality reversal was confined to white non-Hispanics; black non-Hispanics and Hispanics at midlife, and those aged 65 and above in every racial and ethnic group, continued to see mortality rates fall.” For this group of whites, there was a sharp deterioration in the quality of life which “accounted for increasing death rates from drug and alcohol poisonings, suicide and chronic liver diseases and cirrhosis.” The overall health standard of this group had declined and interfered with their ability to work. “Self-reported declines in health, mental health, and ability to conduct activities of daily living, and increases in chronic pain and inability to work all point to growing distress in this population.”⁴³

⁴³ Anne Case and Angus Deaton, “Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st century,” *CrossMark*, Vol. 112, no.49, 2015.

There is no doubt that the United States and with it the world will change significantly during the Trump presidency. Exactly how that will happen is not clear at this time. Some of what he promised in the campaign will not get done when he takes office. He will not be able to build a wall along the Mexican-United States border let alone have the Mexicans pay for it. His promise to ban the arrival of Muslims into the country will not get implemented. He will not be able to have the Muslim communities in the United States kept under strict surveillance. His view that America should withdraw from the world and let the world manage itself will be difficult to follow, especially when he promised to finish off the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria quickly and completely. He will not be able to walk away from the several trade agreements the United States has concluded with many parts of the world. It is doubtful that he will weaken the 70-year NATO alliance, encourage the development of nuclear weapons by Japan and South Korea or pull out the American troops out of Europe and South Korea.

These and other promises were made to attract the support of the people – mostly lower middle-class white with no college education – by promising to focus the attention and the work of the Trump administration on their welfare rather than spend the government's resources and energy on managing the world.

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