

The Philosophical Underpinnings of Trump's Foreign Policy: Analyzing Key Influences and Implications

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Received: 03 Dec 2024; Received in revised form: 06 Jan 2025; Accepted: 13 Jan 2025

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Abstract

Donald Trump, the forty fifth President of the United States, has attracted and continues drawing sharp criticism regarding his foreign policy. Apart from being described in some circles as a nationalist, there is no denying that the President holds an extraordinary set of beliefs that are completely different from the rest of the world and dedicates himself to achieving them regardless of any type of backlash. 'America First', Mr Trump's campaign slogan, sends messages which offer a glimpse to the intertwining principles of his policies and strong anti-globalist sentiment of the American people which results in a revolutionary view of a world order that focuses on restraint and traditionalism. In this scientific commentary, we will discuss the basic philosophical formatives that are guiding Trump's foreign policy and explaining how this world's perceptions not only impact the President's decisions, but also the international relations as a whole. Furthermore, we explore what this means for the wider understanding of politics where ideology and practice grow in opposite directions. We trust this will provide useful insights into what to expect out of US diplomatic relations in the subsequent years after the end of Mr. Trump's presidency.

Keywords— Trump's presidency, Basic Philosophy, foreign policy, character based, psychology of candidates

I. OVERVIEW OF DONALD TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY

Unlike his predecessors, Mr. Trump's foreign policy evolved into a philosophy, which was cut down from the norm starting with its basic principles¹. This is how he viewed the policy paper he wrote as a combination of history, personal experience in life and global affairs, where both nationalism, realism and a pragmatist attitude are intertwined². More specifically, it can be said that the central theme of Mr. Trump's foreign policy is the rejection of internationalism in favour of bilateralism and 'America First' rhetoric. This particular philosophy, This America

abroad worldview slogan affects how all policy decisions are made, and has a very broad reach³.

Indeed, that is not just a vision of I The America abroad. Indeed, it was because Mr. Trump's vision of America as A New World Order was confronted with an overly bilateralist approach to this definition of America abroad. The United States under Trump's administration also took the stance of withdrawing from multinational agreements on various issues such as the Paris climate accords or even the Iran Nuclear Accord simply put owing to the reason of reinstating national interests and promoting bilateral relations⁴.

¹ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Mohammad Alizadeh Jamal, "From Containment to Americanism," May 15, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381002365_From_Containment_to_Americanism.

² Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (2024): 26–28, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>.

³ Radoslaw Fiedler and Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review," *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2024): 109–13, <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.92.18>.

⁴ Radoslaw Fiedler and Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review," *International Journal of English,*

When grasping Trump's philosophies on foreign relations policies, the populist did play a role to his rise. He harnessed the discontent of a sizable number of Americans with the wave of global policies and neglect of domestic issues. This feeling shaped his positions on immigration, business, military involvement as focusing on the American blue collar's opinion was a must. The flip side is that Trump could not have done an effective job without social media. His direct connection with potential followers allowed him to avoid filter of the mass media whenever it was required for articulation and support of his views. This approach was not only peculiar to his presidency but also exemplified the

new tendency in which leaders communicate with citizens in the internet era. Through Trump's foreign policy strategy, we are able to see the damages his decisions enacted on global relations; and on the other hand the factors which influenced his decisions. Looking at it through the prism of his foreign philosophy and the internal and external policies, we can appreciate the controversies that the tasks and policies of his team brought about in the perception of the world and that of Americas. But there are factors in which captivated global policy and polarized it at the same time⁵.

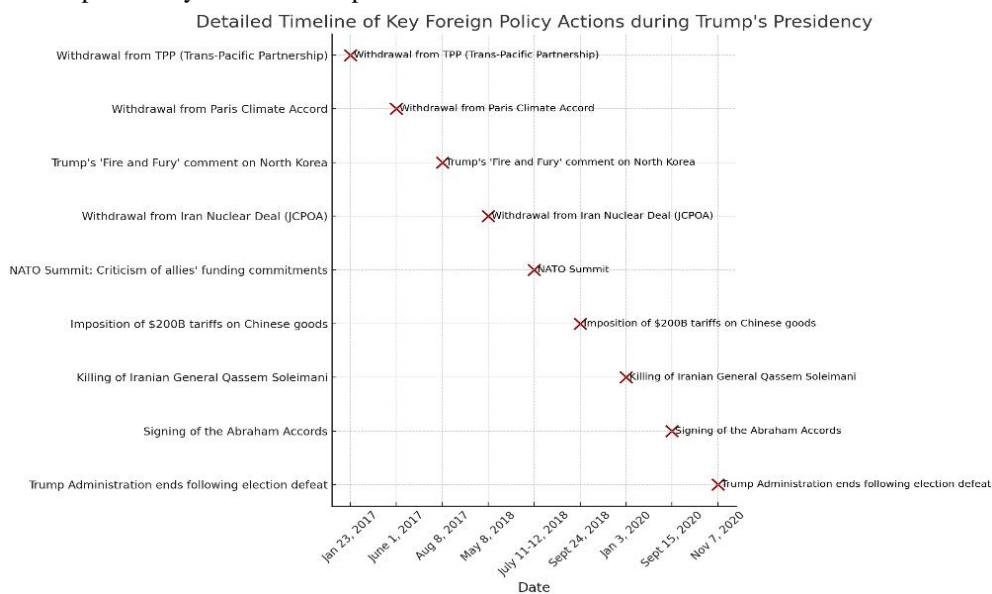


Fig.1.

II. THE NATIONALISM ELEMENT IN TRUMP'S STRATEGY

According to Trump's ideology, nationalism supersedes everything else in the broad context of his foreign strategies as well as the practices of his administration. The extension of this ideology can also be seen in US histories where UQ was able to provide a narration that whenever the country's sovereignty and interests clouded every consideration including military aggression and trade relations. Similar sentiments were expressed by millions of Americans who felt dissociated with the political establishment and the dream of globalization⁶.

Fundamentally, nationalism as crusaded by Trump can be summed up by a single phrase, "America First." This comes as a sendoff remark for Trump's intentions of bring back the country's industrial base, creating, and sustaining jobs, and securing America's borders. This goes against the trend of internationalism that has enveloped us foreign policy for the last decades, for what reason engagement in the world comes at the expense of the American nation, workers included. Trump's administration aimed to modify the content of the former so-called free trade agreements including the NAFTA agreement with an intention to suit

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⁵ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, "Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

⁶ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Morteza Nourmohammadi, "Factors of the Prevalence of Authoritarianism and the Push on Democratization in the Middle East," *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 659–63, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368297277_Factors_of_the_Prevalence_of_Authoritarianism_and_the_Push_on_Democratization_in_the_Middle_East.

the trade terms he believed would help Americans and their businesses which greatly benefited⁷.

Apart from that, Trump's populism also showed itself as a certain skepticism with regard to international organizations, almost treating such structures as NATO or the United Nations in a rather commercial way. He challenged how 'most' countries contributed and how resources were distributed in these unions, and thus forced debates regarding the position of the U. S. in international order and the responsibilities of the states to their partners. This businesslike attitude not only transformed diplomatic relations but provoked considerations concerning prospects of international collaboration and collective security as well⁸.

However, nationalism in Trump's foreign policy has its flaws as well. Critics claim that this self-absorption

approach does not only ignore the existence of global partnerships, but is also a recipe for disintegration in an increasingly interdependent world. On top of that, the stress on identifying oneself with the nation can at times be dangerously close to exclusionary language that raises fears of xenophobia and its ramifications on the perception of America overseas⁹.

To conclude, the importance of nationalism in the foreign policy of Trump has been striking, and indeed much closer to the trend of the US being more inward looking and protecting American interests. While it has been, but it also poses serious dilemmas facing America now and in the future in terms of its position in the global hierarchy and the ethics of pursuing an aggressive policy of self-interest rather than internationalism. Would self-interested nationalism now make relations and cooperation stronger?

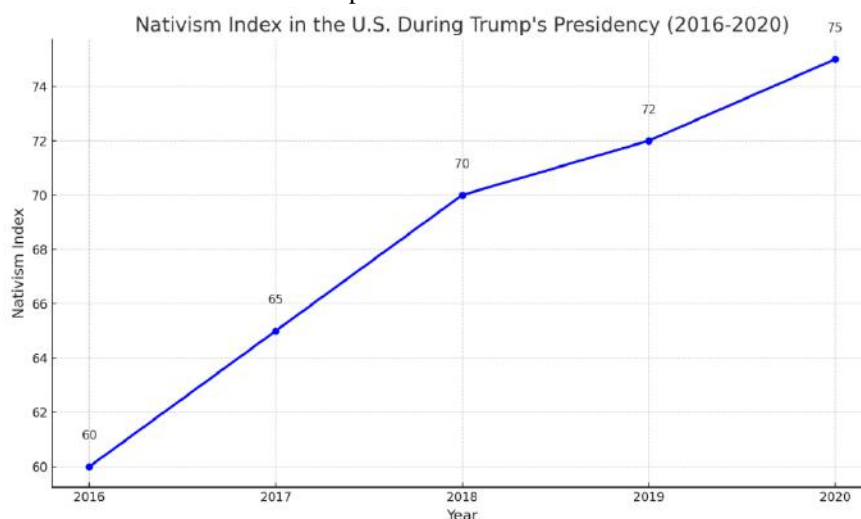


Fig.2.

The chart illustrates the trend of the Nativism Index in the United States during Donald Trump's presidency from 2016 to 2020. The data shows a steady increase in the index, starting at 60 in 2016 and rising to 75 by 2020. This upward trend reflects the growing emphasis on nationalist sentiments, including anti-immigration views and policies, during this period.

The increase is likely influenced by key policies and rhetoric from the Trump administration, such as stricter immigration controls, "America First" economic strategies,

and skepticism toward multilateral agreements. The chart underscores the administration's impact on shaping public opinion and policy dynamics related to nationalism during these years.

III. A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING FOREIGN POLICY: REALISM AND IDEALISM

In order to grasp the intricacies of Trump's foreign policy, one needs to venture into the aspect of realism and idealism

⁷ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, Mohammad Mahdi Niafar, and Kanan Ahmadzade, "An Overview Regarding the U.S Domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (January 1, 2024): 82–92, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.12>.

⁸ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Morteza Nourmohammadi, "Factors of the Prevalence of Authoritarianism and the Push on Democratization in the Middle East," *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies* 3, no. 1

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⁹ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Seyed Mohammad Tabatabaei, "Principles and Positions of US Foreign Policy against Terrorism," *ResearchGate* 5, no. 2 (November 21, 2021): 2541, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism.

which is central to understanding the international relations. As realists assert, states are self-surviving beings. To that end, the international system is described as anarchic, for there are power relations between states. This outlook implies that political units, namely nations, are self-seeking and self-advancing, and consequently their decision making is based on utilitarianism and at times harsh¹⁰.

Idealism, on the other hand, claims that the pursuit of foreign policy would enhance global partnership, moral aspirations, promotion of democracy and the values of democracy. Indeed, idealists argue that international need and the international order can make the world a more peaceful and orderly place and that countries do not always act solely for their own benefit¹¹.

Trump's views on foreign policy appear to be in line with the realist school of thought. His strategies advocate for prioritization of America, coupled with a distrust of diplomacy¹². His policies like exiting agreements like the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran nuclear agreement highlight an overarching theme of self-interest where deals which do not instantly appeal to the United States are best ignored. This sense of self interest is also seen where he has a practical perception of international relations where the relevance of trade and military treaties are reevaluated depending on the benefit, they bring to the US¹³.

Most of the time, Trump was critical of democracy and authoritarianism, quite a contrast to the pragmatism seen in his past works. These views, however, seem more reactive than ideological as they are rarely followed consistently and thus, to have a coherent foreign policy invariably one has to oscillate between these two modes.

There are many questions that arise when one looks at the global chess board with a sense of relevance to Trump and the ideals he followed. Trump's views have significant

relevance to issues such as international treaties, state politics, and the relative picture of the global arena when looked at strategically. The need for sustained and prominent efforts of cooperation and strategy-building for boosting state's ethics becomes vital when considering Trumps administration and how it favored and advocated for realistic politics theories¹⁴.

IV. THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC POLITICS IN THE INFLUENCING OF DECISION-MAKING IN FOREIGN RELATIONS¹⁵

The association between domestic politics and foreign policy has emerged as a prominent aspect within the analysis of Trump's foreign policy which is characterized by populism as well as electioneering and party politics. The electoral base disillusioned with political elites provided the foundation for shaping his foreign policy as well as domestic policies. His choice of bilateral agreements over multilateral institutions represented a dedication towards America's interests and the disdain for internationalism which appealed to the supporters who favored national interests over global ones¹⁶.

Tribalism was another important aspect that evidently shaped Trump's foreign policy. Congressional dynamics in some instances determined who held the power to support or oppose a stance and often the agreement was bipartisan or split in cases where national policy was set around trade, military, and immigration policies. Decisions made by Trump were consistently at times in harmony with his supporters including leaving international treaties such as the Paris Accord and taking a staunch stance towards enemies such as China and Iran¹⁷.

Trump's foreign policy was also influenced by his electoral cycle which saw him scrutinize whether a decision would

¹⁰ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (2024): 26–28, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>.

¹¹ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, Mohammad Mahdi Niafar, and Kanan Ahmadzada, "An Overview Regarding the U.S Domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (January 1, 2024): 82–92, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.12>.

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¹³ Radoslaw Fiedler and Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review," *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2024): 109–13, <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.92.18>.

¹⁴ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (2024): 26–28, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>.

¹⁵ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi et al (2024), Policy Recommendations by U.S. Think Tanks: Sanctions vs. Diplomacy An Educational Analysis of differing strategies proposed by leading think tanks on Iran, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(11) 896-901, Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i11.8886

¹⁶ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Seyed Mohammad Tabatabaei, "Principles and Positions of US Foreign Policy against Terrorism," *ResearchGate* 5, no. 2 (November 21, 2021): 2541, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism.

¹⁷ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Seyed Mohammad Tabatabaei, "Principles and Positions of US Foreign Policy against Terrorism," *ResearchGate* 5, no. 2 (November 21, 2021): 2541, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism.

increase voter support. Military action and diplomacy were stylistically executed around the concepts of projecting dominance and strength in order to control the perspective that the public had on the administration¹⁸.

To conclude, it can be argued that Trump's foreign policy was largely influenced by domestic politics. His embrace of his constituency, management of partisan differences and critical decisions in office shifted the direction of American foreign policy with reverberating effects across the world¹⁹.

V. KEY PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES: MACHIAVELLI, HOBBS AND OTHERS

When interpreting Donald Trump's political philosophy and foreign stance, we come across some fascinating ideas which resonate with the thoughts of famous political philosophers such as Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. Although these philosophers were born in different times and systems their thoughts correspond to what Trump does in the field of international relations, which is to form policies based on the pragmatism of American power, American power relations and an understanding of the nature of mankind. This is quite realistic to put it bluntly²⁰.

Machiavelli is widely described and known as the father of modern political science where the concepts of power and national interest are regarded as legitimate and necessary evil. His statement that "the end justifies the means" is what stirs us into an understanding that can best be described as the mind of Trump world where relations are transactional with regard to the upper hand in the matter. This is visible in the way Trump interacts with his allies and enemies where very often the means to an end is to negotiate on seemingly unrelated terms which are in design at least indirectly mathematical in taking advantage of Machiavelli's concepts of an opportunist and manipulation.

Likewise, Hobbes' understanding of man as a competitive and self-seeking being subscribes to Trump's view of international relations. One of the most famous quotes by Hobbes is the following: 'when there is no power, all men in that condition where there is no common power, all men are in a state of war and life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short'. Such a conception of mankind indeed raises certain questions including the need for a strong organization to provide security and order in the society. This, in turn, justifies the expansion of this powerful state's apparatus and ideology²¹. Very often, this dimension is perceived as a civilization project, such as the one offered by Trump's foreign policy. He pursues the "America First" policy, which constructs an approach where the foreign politics are subordinated to the security and economic needs of the nation. This not only supports the ancient reason stating 'the world is anarchic', but also confirms the sense of conviction that aggression and muscle flexing protects the nation from any external threats²².

Trump presents a deviation from the classical and widely accepted Machiavelli and Hobbes which set of hundred and eight norms when he enunciates his foreign policies. Focusing on the works of Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, one can derive that according to them and Trump's views, national power and national interests do matter resulting in America being in competition with other nations on an international level. This attitude evidently presents an existence of suspicion on global governance which explains the reasons behind Trump's announced withdrawal from a number of international governance treaties and organizations which, according to US President, limit the independence of the United States²³.

In the end, the elements of worldview that shaped Trump's foreign policy provide hints of a leader that stems from a rich world of thought but ideas are only useful in helping him solve the problems associated with global politics. Trump has changed characteristics of America's interaction

¹⁸ Radoslaw Fiedler and Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review," *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2024): 109–13, <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.92.18>.

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²⁰ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Radoslaw Fiedler, "Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in Their Foreign Policy: Manifestation of Think Tanks in a Literary Work," *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 9, no. 3 (January 1, 2024): 277–81, <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.93.35>.

²¹ Radoslaw Fiedler and Ellias Aghili Dehnavi, "Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A Review," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 51–56, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.1.7>.

²² Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, "The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (2024): 26–28, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>.

²³ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Morteza Nourmohammadi, "Factors of the Prevalence of Authoritarianism and the Push on Democratization in the Middle East," *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 659–63, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368297277_Factors_of_the_Prevalence_of_Authoritarianism_and_the_Push_on_Democratization_in_the_Middle_East.

on the international scene by adopting, out of many, a Machiavellian and Hobbesian realist strategy first engaging the international relations discourse with the Central issue of power. When we start being more specific about some of these nuances, it seems to be the case that those are his explanatory frameworks one needs to comprehend in order to understand the configurations engaged in Trump's decision making of US foreign policy and how that is going to impact the present world order²⁴.

VI. AMERICA FIRST: HOW THIS POLICY CAME TO BE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The phrase 'America First' definitely can be associated with the former president Donald Trump as it is regarded as one of the significant pillars of his foreign policy. It certainly is a pretty remarkable change from the general foreign policy that is followed in the United States of America. However, in order to understand its implications, it is prudent to explore its evolution, historical and ideological²⁵. Considering the phrase 'America First' – the first thing that comes to mind is a feeling which has been prevalent in the history of the nation since time memorial – it is the isolationism practiced in the US in the beginning of Toroh whaling and for that its gold storages in the US in World War II²⁶.

The core idea behind the phrase 'America First' is that instead of global engagements, one should engage in nationalistic tendencies. This doctrine developed as a result of a number of factors inclusive of the attitudinal shift to anti-globalization, adverse effects of earlier vault policy interventions, and growing distrust against international agencies. The fear of the spillover effect of the 2008 financial meltdown added impetus to these views as nearly every American could connect with domestic trends, thus

leading to the rise of populist ideas advocating increased production and limiting international trade²⁷.

Furthermore, the doctrine bears the distinct imprint of the realist philosophy of international relations, which emphasizes the concept that states only look after their own interests. This is the approach Trump's administration adopted, as it sought to revamp trade relations, strengthen the frontier and exit international pacts that appeared to compromise the United States sovereignty. That pivot has triggered an equally fierce argument, with supporters saying it restores American dignity and strength, victims warn of the danger of what the world is going with American isolationism²⁸.

Thus, it is important to understand the origins of 'America First' in order to be able to understand its bearing on USA foreign relations and the international situation. In the event that the doctrine is still operational influencing US diplomatic conduct and alliances, then it is journeys of as far looking into the future how America would see itself, as well as how other countries will view America, who is self-seeking.

VII. HOW POPULISM HAS AFFECTED INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Populism affected national diplomacy in the light of the US presidency of Donald Trump, with more inclination towards national needs rather than global considerations and traditional alliances. The 'America First' philosophy brought an end to the practice of diplomacy based on the principle of 'majority vote', undermined historic partnerships such as NATO, and broke new ground in standard practice. He theorized diplomacy according to populism which means, his decisions, for which he sought support from people who felt globalization has disappointed them, favored Americans²⁹.

²⁴ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Radoslaw Fiedler, "Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in Their Foreign Policy: Manifestation of Think Tanks in a Literary Work," *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 9, no. 3 (January 1, 2024): 277–81, <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.93.35>.

²⁵ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, "Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

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This politica estrategia debilitated the growth of international relations, through the belligerent policies towards China and the often reckless withdrawal from treaties, like the one for Paris Agreement or the one for Iran denuclearization. These moves led to increased international pressure, hydrophobia in economic markets and an increase in global nationalism. While the implications of this populist wave on the subsequent populism global political scene may be in the distant future, the change that it brings in the nature of engagement and global reality is irreversible³⁰.

VIII. CASE STUDY: TRUMP'S TRADE WAR WITH CHINA

The trade war which exists between the USA and China has a beginning which can be traced to the reign of Donald Trump. During this period, many of his foreign policies can be understood better if the philosophical basis behind each is examined, case in point, the trade war with China. This case is of utmost significance as it goes to the core of Trump's presidency that was marked with protectionism, nationalism, and a transactional outlook towards international relations, as well as ideational rifts which have shaped the modern world order and are themselves shaped by war³¹.

American perception of the relationship between the United States and China paved the way for Trump's approach. While this relationship has developed over the years, it was Trump's presidency that most of the American public viewed China as a nation which engaged in unfair trade practices through stealing American intellectual property rights, cutthroat price wars, and deliberately non floating currency values. This perspective is reflective of a strain of thought for the US which centers on maintaining per capita

economic boundaries rather than being part of the global order. Trump was quoted as stating, "trade wars are good, and easy to win," and so he was able to carry out an aggressive brand of politics whilst reassuring voters about his intent to safeguard American manufacturing³².

The effects of this trade war were more than just about tariffs and trade deficits. It was a turning point in US-china relations, going from a policy of engagement to one of enmity. The enforcement of tariffs on Chinese goods worth billions of dollars was not merely an instrument of economic leverage, but a statement that showed a desire to challenge the existing order. This confrontation initiated a greater restructuring of global supply chains, forcing businesses to rethink their dependence on China and look for alternatives³³.

Furthermore, the trade conflict exposed the liberal isolationism and internationalism dialectics. On one hand, while rest of Trumpism made America first policy great, other critics reasoned that this was a blow to the cooperative structures created since World War II. The trade war depicted the difficulties of interdependence; where the actions of one country can produce chain effects on friends as well as foes³⁴.

With the ongoing trade war, the focus was automatically on the economy. National security issues, technological rivalry, and the fight between democracy and authoritarianism are contested as well. The purpose of the U.S. in relationships with China was intended to formulate not only a trade approach but a dispute toward fundamental interests as America has used prior possibly strategies concerning method of performing overseas relations³⁵.

In conclusion, the provided context illustrates the transcendental attitude with regard to the United States and its authoritative competition with China in the trade warfare

³⁰ Radosław Fiedler and Ellias Aghili Dehnavi, "Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A Review," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 51–56, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.1.7>.

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³⁴ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, "Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

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with respect to Trump's policy. It makes us question the prospects of globalization, the unique place of the United States with all its resources and sovereignty in the dynamic world, as well as places of ideas with all their prevailing features. Making the scope of the case study from this standpoint, it is absolutely visible that the resulting consequences of this warfare shall affect the geopolitical configurations for the assistant years.

Timeline: Trump's Trade War with China

Date	Event
March 22, 2018	Trump announces tariffs on \$60 billion of Chinese imports.
July 6, 2018	Start of the trade war: U.S. imposes 25% tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese goods; China retaliates.
December 1, 2018	G20 Summit: Temporary truce agreed to allow trade negotiations.
May 10, 2019	U.S. raises tariffs from 10% to 25% on \$200 billion of Chinese imports.
January 15, 2020	Phase One trade deal signed, with China committing to increased U.S. imports.

IX. ALLIANCE RELATIONS IN THE COURSE OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Out of so many perspectives to look at Donald Trump and his administration's foreign policy, one of them is quite uncomplicated difference in tone regarding alliance relationships. Whereas today's more comparative leaders thought of partnerships with nations as indispensable links that maintained the balance of order politics around the world, Trump took on a far more unilateralist perspective. This evolution is entirely consistent with his deeper logical premises where emphasis is on America First policies whereby multilateralism, national sovereignty, or economic self-reliance are all pretty much the order of the day³⁶.

For Trump, alliances were redefined again in terms of alliances cost – benefit ratio. The administration was looking to disband old alliances, like NATO, and claimed it

was because other countries in the alliance were not carrying their end of the deal. The somewhat dismal outlook was echoed around the world, causing disquiet among traditional Allies who depended on the United States for protection. Instead of 'diplomacy through cooperation', the focus changed to adversarial dynamics and sometimes outright violence³⁷.

Nevertheless, Trump's administration, in its second term, sought to seek new alliances that would better reflect its geopolitical interests. The Abraham Accords, which recently normalized relations between Israel and several Arab states, were such a strategic move. Here the administration was able to demonstrate an ability to negotiate deals that not only served America's interests in the Middle East, but also demonstrated that the United States was willing to alter the existing order. Through these pragmatic partnerships, Trump's foreign policy aimed at forging relationships that would counterbalance Iran and China³⁸.

Trump's strategy, in regard to forming alliances proved to be revolutionary, forcing nations to rethink their alliances with others. This was in part because even as some allies sought to develop their own defense capabilities, having perceived America as an unreliable partner, other allied nations sought new allies out of a common desire to counter such threats. This shift in alliances posed serious challenges when it came to issues of global governance and the ability for alliances of a similar form to exist in a world of rival nationalisms³⁹.

Fundamentally speaking, we can assert that Trump shattered the ideological conventions concerning alliance formation and construction within the landscape of global politics. Moving forward with our analysis of this time period, it is evident that the dynamics of the alliances during Trump's tenure shifted the paradigm of US foreign policy but also changed the course of international diplomacy permanently.

³⁶ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, "Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

³⁷ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Mohammad Alizadeh Jamal, "From Containment to Americanism," May 15, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381002365_From_Containment_to_Americanism.

³⁸ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Mohammad Alizadeh Jamal, "From Containment to Americanism," May 15, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381002365_From_Containment_to_Americanism.

³⁹ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Seyed Mohammad Tabatabaei, "Principles and Positions of US Foreign Policy against Terrorism," *ResearchGate* 5, no. 2 (November 21, 2021): 2541, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism.

X. TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL NORMS

Trump's foreign policy has fundamentally reshaped international norms as the traditional way of conducting foreign diplomacy has been turned upside down. During his presidency, American foreign policy was taken in a largely unilateral direction that often disregarded multinational agreements and institutions that for years had governed international politics. This turning point was characterized by a couple of high-profile withdrawals from international treaties like the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal which reverberated around the world⁴⁰.

One other potentially devastating consequence of the foreign policy propounded by Trump has been the collapse of accepted diplomatic protocols and operational modalities of international collaboration. By adopting an 'American first' policy, the administration not only complicated relations with historical allies, but also contributed the empowerment of authoritarian regimes across the globe. The foreign policy shift in America, especially in Trump's time, calls into question the future of global governance as countries seem to have the impetus to pursue bilateralism sacrificing the international coordination⁴¹.

Additionally, the foreign policy of trumping emphasized on deals between countries instead of relationships with them which changed the order of the certain countries. As a result, now countries have to operate in an even more disorganized international system and this makes defining a cooperating relationship more difficult. Hence, countries may either have more strong focus on enmeshed relations or make effort to have fresh affiliations which will create even more contention over the settled patterns⁴².

Within the context of greater changes, the paradigmatic shift affects not just the level of geopolitical politics; it confronts the very foundation of the unwritten rules that have for a long period dictated the interactions of states. Considering the use of power by populists and nationalists as demonstrated by Trump, it raises a possibility of the

decline of the existing order as well as the emergence of a new order, where strong rules over weak. In analyzing this historical day, there is guarantee that the international community will remember the style of conducting affairs by trump for a long time.

XI. LESSONS LEARNED: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

In examining the philosophical underpinnings of Trump's foreign policy, one must grapple with the intricate interplay of continuity and change that has characterized U.S. diplomatic strategies over the decades. While Trump's approach was often marked by a distinct break from the traditional norms of foreign engagement—favoring transactional relationships over multilateral agreements—there remains a thread of continuity that ties his policies to the broader historical context of American foreign relations⁴³.

One of the key lessons learned during Trump's presidency is the resilience of established geopolitical dynamics, even amidst radical shifts in policy. For instance, while Trump's administration pursued an "America First" agenda that emphasized bilateral trade deals and a withdrawal from international accords like the Paris Agreement, the fundamental priorities of national security and economic stability remained paramount. This duality illustrates an essential truth in foreign policy: while the methods may evolve, the underlying goals often remain consistent, reflecting the enduring interests of the United States on the global stage⁴⁴.

Moreover, Trump's foreign policy decisions have sparked debates about the implications of populism in international relations. The prioritization of domestic concerns over global cooperation has prompted a reevaluation of U.S. leadership in international institutions and alliances, challenging the status quo that has defined American diplomacy since World War II. As nations respond to the shifting landscape, it becomes crucial to assess how

⁴⁰ Radosław Fiedler and Ellias Aghili Dehnavi, "Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A Review," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2024): 51–56, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.1.7>.

⁴¹ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, "Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

⁴² Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Seyed Mohammad Tabatabaei, "Principles and Positions of US Foreign Policy against Terrorism," *ResearchGate* 5, no. 2 (November 21, 2021): 2541,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism.

⁴³ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, Mohammad Mahdi Niafar, and Kanan Ahmadzadeh, "An Overview Regarding the U.S Domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks," *Journal of Humanities and Education Development* 6, no. 5 (January 1, 2024): 82–92, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.12>.

⁴⁴ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, "Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan," *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

Trump's tenure may influence future administrations—whether they will seek to revert to traditional multilateralism or embrace a new paradigm of foreign engagement⁴⁵.

In this complex tapestry of continuity and change, one lesson stands clear: the evolution of U.S. foreign policy is not merely a reflection of the individual in power but also of the broader societal currents that shape public perception and political choice. Thus, understanding Trump's foreign policy provides valuable insights into the ongoing dialogue about America's role in the world, the expectations of its allies, and the nature of its adversaries, offering a roadmap for future leaders navigating the unpredictable waters of global diplomacy.

XII. ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES OF FOREIGN POLICY

Trump, under a somewhat unusual administration, did not often follow the basic rules of diplomacy when exercising American leadership. Yet, one of the critical tasks of all these exercises is to explore other philosophical perspectives on foreign policy. These perspectives can contribute towards understanding the situation better.

One such perspective is realism, which looks at relationships between nations stressing the competitive and conflictual side of these interactions. The realists position is that nations primarily pursue their national self-interests which emphasize power and security of the nation rather than the ideals and the moral arguments. In this frame, the “America First” concept expounded by Trump is realist, in that, national interests come before internationalism. Many times, this position resulted in great disdain for the multiparty approaches and great disillusionment with the efficacy of multiple engagements, preferring a unilateral perspective⁴⁶.

Another significant perspective is liberalism that implies international cooperation, institutions, and democratic ideals. This said, the Trump administration had an apparently contradictory outlook towards these notions, especially when it came to its relations with allies or

international bodies. Still, some elements of liberal thought probably explain such policies as efforts to establish communication with North Korea. This makes one wonder if there is scope for a transatlantic alliance even when the past two decades have seen a growing liberal value gap with a more transactional US foreign policy on account of TFP.

Another perspective that also makes Trump's practice of foreign policy intriguing is constructivism which argues that international relations are built and transformed through social constructs, identities and norms. His administration regularly undermined previously settled norms and in doing so also sought to reconstruct the prevailing storyline of US leadership globally. This can also be seen through the lens of unconventional diplomacy, such as the historic meeting with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, which was aimed at shifting the US-North Korea relations from adversarial confrontations to peaceful dialogue⁴⁷.

In the final analysis, the study of these other philosophical traditions brings to light the diverse dimensions of foreign policy making during the presidency of Trump. Whereas his was perhaps an outlier in terms of traditional foreign policy practice, the relationship of realism, liberalism and constructivism sheds light on the purposes and effects of his administration's interactions globally. When looking back to this time, it is not surprising that the political philosophy of foreign policy is always abstract but rather structural influence in shaping the relations and the world order status.

XIII. THE FUTURE OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE TRUMP ERA

With Donald Trump's presidency ended, the world is now increasingly keen on how the foreign policies of the United States will be formed in the years to come. This sober concern about the future trajectory that US foreign policy is going after Trump. This center stage brought questions about the overall philosophical premise on which the foreign policy apparatus of US is based and its consequential threats to global tranquility. America's new leaders will face a primary problem in seeking to align expectation of global allies with a “transactional first”

⁴⁵ Ellias Aghili Dehnavi and Morteza Nourmohammadi, “Factors of the Prevalence of Authoritarianism and the Push on Democratization in the Middle East,” *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 659–63, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368297277_Factors_of_the_Prevalence_of_Authoritarianism_and_the_Push_on_Democratization_in_the_Middle_East.

⁴⁶ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi, “The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy,”

Journal of Humanities and Education Development 6, no. 5 (2024): 26–28, <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>.

⁴⁷ Ellias Aghili-Dehnavi and Hossein Daheshiar, “Changes and Indicators of Trump's New Immigration Policy Plan,” *Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, September 13, 2020, 71–81, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump.

approach toward foreign policy, which was characterized by Trump's America First policy. Gaining international credibility and trust will not be enough once the country decides to integrate back into multilateral coalitions as American foreign policy under Trump has left a lot of uncertainty as to how these disputes will be navigated.

In general, the US foreign policy will probably refrain from aggressiveness and focus on cooperation as well as collaboration with other nations in the pursuit of common goals such as countering terrorism, cyber threats and deepening of geopolitical rivalries. This re-engagement by the US in multilaterals coupled with the focusing towards international governance, could be very much indicative of the readiness of the country to reclaim their leadership in the world. Over everything, as the United States repositions itself on the world map, it is paramount that the question of global engagement in coexistence with national provision becomes a tool which propagates global unison and coordination at a time when the world is becoming ever more fragmented.

XIV. CONCLUSION: LEGACIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PHILOSOPHY

In conclusion, the legacy and philosophical implications of Donald Trump, who advocated populism, nationalism, and a transactional view of foreign affairs, represent a shift away from multilateralism and into an 'America First' philosophy. This raised questions regarding global order and international order institutions due to the focus on short-term American interests. Withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and the pursuit of bilateral trade agreements exemplified his administration's ideological principles and disrupted established diplomatic norms. That policy has had long lasting consequences and raised questions so as to whether the US aims for active confrontation and transnationalism in their foreign policy or collaborative international approaches. This emphasizes the central tension between power, responsibility, and the moral agency of the global order in all its facets.

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