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DOWN BUT NOT OUT

A Liberal International American Foreign Policy

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INTRODUCTION

An ongoing debate among prominent scholars of international relations concerns the future direction of American foreign policy.¹ In particular, scholars, pundits, and commentators wonder whether the United States will continue to pursue a liberal internationalist stance. At its core, liberal internationalism entails international engagement, not isolationism. And despite the “liberal” terminology, it is not a policy skewed toward Democrats or political liberals and away from Republicans and political conservatives. Instead, the liberal component of internationalism embodies many bipartisan principles: support for freedom, democracy, human rights, a free press, as well as an open world economy for the movement of goods, services, people, and ideas. Not surprisingly, an amazing amount of ink has been spilled over what the election of Donald Trump as president means for the trajectory of US foreign policy and a possible break from liberal internationalism.

In this chapter, we argue that the Trump administration and a Republican-controlled Congress will find it *in their own interests* to maintain many existing elements of US foreign policy, which will continue to have substantial liberal internationalist components. In part, this is because liberal internationalism still advances America’s vital national interests. America’s many allies help it coordinate its defense and security and, for

a price, make America more powerful; they help extend American influence and assist in the fight against global problems like terrorism. The trade and investment agreements the United States has negotiated and its World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments help ensure a fairer and more open world economy in which the American economy can prosper. The international institutions the United States created after World War II, such as the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank, still enable it to influence—though not determine—the structure of all international economic and political relations. Exiting or ending these agreements will not enhance US power or security; renegotiating them may give the United States a bit more leverage in the short run, but in the longer run may also destroy any goodwill the country possesses. Moreover, disengaging from the world will only leave it more susceptible to the influence of other powerful countries that might not have America's interests at heart, like China or Russia.

Some scholars have argued that liberal internationalism is no longer in the United States' national interest² and that the government should pull back from its foreign commitments, abandoning its allies and treaties, and even pursue a policy of economic nationalism. While these policies may appear cheaper in the short run, it is not clear that they will provide more security, prosperity, or peace in the medium to long run. One can imagine a world of spheres of influence where Russia and China dominate much of the world, leaving the United States with few friends or markets.

The many problems the Trump administration seeks to remedy are least of all caused by global forces and most of all self-inflicted by domestic politics. The financial crisis had few international sources; inequality is deeply related to tax and fiscal policy in the US and also technological change; the Iraq war was one of choice. Changing America's international relations is unlikely to fix any of these problems, and most likely to make dealing with the interdependent world even more costly. America's allies and its multilateral engagements help it project its influence and make the country more secure and prosperous.

The crux of our argument concerns two sets of constraints on Trump's foreign policy actions. First, domestic politics and the institutions that shape American foreign policy will be powerful constraints on Trump's ability to depart completely from a liberal internationalist foreign policy. The individuals who have influence over American foreign policy have a

wide array of heterogeneous policy preferences, and they inhabit institutional positions that give them powerful tools to resist radical changes. No matter the energy of the president and his policy team, politics in the American democracy, with its many checks and balances, is hard and time consuming, and policy directions that are deeply ingrained are difficult to change.

Second, structural factors of the international system will continue to position the United States as most likely to benefit from liberal internationalist policies. The US occupies a favored position in many international institutions, which already allow it to enjoy favorable policies. Abandoning these institutions will be costly and painful for the United States—for its public, its economy and firms, its military, and its political elites. The loss of a leadership position in world affairs will not be costless, and the loss of legitimacy abroad will have consequences that make achieving American goals harder. Moreover, countries can retaliate if the United States adopts extreme policies that hurt them. The importance of international pressures has been evident many times before and after the end of the Cold War.

We note at the outset that we are intentionally optimistic, much more so than many of our colleagues. On those who are optimistic about American foreign policy in the wake of Trump's election, political commentator Philip Stephens recently quipped that "there are precious few of them around these days."³ We simultaneously recognize that Donald Trump, as president of the United States of America, along with the millions of Americans that voted for him, desires change. But as the saying goes, with great power comes great responsibility. So we would urge the executive branch and all policymakers to recognize the tremendous opportunities available to President Trump (i.e., *not candidate Trump*) and to continue the ongoing process of engagement that continues to make America great.

Our intentional optimism might turn out to be misplaced. Many of our arguments and predictions emerged in the early months of the Trump presidency. The first eight months of the Trump presidency, while undoubtedly tumultuous and fast-paced, have, on balance, made us feel confident in our stance. More often than not, the constraints we describe have blunted efforts to move away from liberal internationalism.

We lay out a set of arguments that *we hope* provide positive reasons for following a path forward that recognizes America's important role in

the world. The United States has a mandate: not just for making America great, but also for making everyone else great.

We recognize this is a tall order. We also recognize that in the coming years bipartisan and nonpartisan forces in Congress, in the courts, in cities, and in dining rooms will be necessary to check, and guide, the awesome power of the president of the United States of America. Democracy is about disagreement, reasoned argumentation, and the upholding of core principles that are not beholden to one set of partisans.

Our analysis unfolds as follows. First, we provide a brief overview of the concept of liberal internationalism and then discuss whether or not it declined during the Barack Obama presidency. Then we point out the domestic and international constraints that make deviating from liberal internationalism more difficult for any American president. We analyze several policy areas, like trade and immigration, to explore whether or not we should expect a retreat from liberal internationalism. We consider this first from a domestic political-economy perspective and then from a more international strategic view.⁴ We then consider an issue area that might seem particularly imperiled by the Trump administration: global climate change.

LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM: AN OVERVIEW

Often lost in prognostications about Trump's future foreign policy is that Trump's election is but the latest data point in an ongoing debate among academics and pundits over the past, present, and future of liberal internationalism.⁵ This debate seems especially urgent today because Trump's election has also coincided with watershed events like Brexit, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's failed referendum, and the rise of populist movements in a range of Western countries, such as France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Denmark.

As is often required of debates over concepts that have been used over long periods of time, it is helpful to first isolate what we mean by liberal internationalism. First, there is the internationalist component of liberal internationalism. Many scholars seem to agree on what this element of the concept means.⁶ Does the United States engage abroad or not? Is it

willing and does it feel responsible for dealing with the major problems around the world, or should it let others take care of their own problems? Such engagement is the opposite of isolationism and a retreat from global affairs. A key question is: how much of what type of engagement? The US has many policy instruments it can use.⁷ And it can employ these singly or in combination to pursue many different types of goals. An internationalist foreign policy is one that actively tries to use those policy instruments to deal with myriad problems outside the country, and even ones that do not directly threaten its core national security. Internationalism in today's context is similar to what it meant in President Woodrow Wilson's time.

The question then is whether the internationalist foreign policy the United States has followed since World War II will continue. Will the US maintain its alliances and build coalitions or will it leave others to fend for themselves and go it alone? Will it maintain its commitments to international institutions or abandon them? Will it support an open world economy or turn to protectionism?

The liberal component has been more contentious to define, but is essential to understanding the direction of policy. Russian President Vladimir Putin today seems to be following a much more internationalist foreign policy than at any time since the fall of the Soviet Union, but it is not a liberal one. As discussed earlier, this is not an antonym to conservatism. Instead, we take the term to derive from the traditional political theory notion of liberalism, and thus in foreign policy to be about valuing and promoting democracy—especially liberal democracy—as well as human rights broadly construed and an open world economy. A liberal internationalist policy is actively trying to use policy tools to forward these types of goals. We further add that liberal internationalism does not foreclose the use of military force when it comes to protecting and promoting these values.

In light of this, how should we interpret Trump's expressed foreign policy views? Are Trump's expressed positions the antithesis of liberal internationalism? A useful starting point is to ask: does his slogan of "America First" mean isolationism? The answer is no. Trump is often talking about renegotiation, not withdrawal. Wanting a "better deal" does not mean abandoning all existing agreements or severing all relations. On many occasions, he and his policy team have emphasized searching for better deals within existing international institutions. For example, he has

expressed, at times, a desire to take disputes with China to the World Trade Organization. And while calling for an end to US intervention abroad, Trump agreed in August 2017 to deepen US involvement in Afghanistan by increasing American troops there.⁸ Domestic political pressures and the international system may prevent Trump from any hasty move to end American engagement with the rest of the world.

Similarly, his evaluations of existing foreign policies have focused on transactional cost–benefit analysis. As evidenced by the approach of his transition teams, he has asked, “what does this foreign policy cost us and what do we get in return?” While that question often belies a belief that the benefits may not justify the costs, the question itself does not imply a departure from liberal internationalism. As much as past politicians might have protested otherwise, liberal internationalism in American foreign policy has never been about benign charity for the world beyond US borders. It has been a calculated policy to protect and advance American interests.

It might be argued that Trump’s view is antithetical to liberal internationalism because he sees the world in purely zero-sum terms and only wants a short-term transactional relationship with other countries that entirely benefits the United States. In contrast, liberal internationalism, it is argued, implies a positive-sum worldview and a more diffuse, long-term reciprocity among countries. Political scientist John Ikenberry’s work on liberal internationalism might be construed this way.⁹ However, as any businessperson who has made deals knows, voluntary agreements occur only if both sides gain something. How much each side gains is a matter of negotiating power, but both sides must get enough to accept the agreement. And as we note, characterizing liberal internationalism as failing to maximize the gains the United States gets from any agreement seems naïve. The US built the postwar system to maximize its influence over the long run. Hard but polite bargaining with other countries has been the norm, despite Trump’s unsupported claims to the contrary.

Trump’s commitment to liberal policies is less clear. Promoting democracy and human rights has not to date been a cornerstone of Trump’s foreign policy remarks. He does not appear likely to support the International Criminal Court (ICC), especially if it moves forward with its investigations into torture committed by US forces in Afghanistan. Trump also appears unlikely to commit the United States to new obligations, such

as the long-standing UN Convention on the Law of the Seas or a new climate change treaty. He has been unmoved by criticism of his positive overtures toward those with poor human rights records, like President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines.

Yet, even during purported periods of the “heyday” of liberal internationalism, the United States regularly violated principles of democracy promotion and human rights in its policies.¹⁰ Even before Trump, the United States had failed to ratify international agreements like the UN Law of the Sea Convention, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the Kyoto Protocol. These failures to engage have largely been due to domestic politics and the failure of Congress to ratify the agreements.¹¹ Casting Trump’s policies as a major deviation might be a mistake.

THE DECLINE OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM? THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

During the decades of debate over liberal internationalism, there has been a strong temptation to select particular windows of time or events and extrapolate from them broad temporal trends and predictions. This approach discounts the extremely slow-moving nature of ideological changes in American foreign policy. Our entries into previous debates¹² over liberal internationalism were well-timed to demonstrate this phenomenon. In 2010, we wrote about trends in the politics of liberal internationalism, ending in the mid-to-late years of the George W. Bush administration. We revisited this debate in 2011, with greater emphasis on predictions regarding the Obama administration.

In 2011, many predictions were dire. One side of the debate (not ours) argued that deepening political polarization meant that American foreign policy was turning its back on liberal internationalism. For example, political scientists Charles Kupchan and Peter Trubowitz argue: “In contrast, the Obama administration has backed away from this [liberal internationalist] agenda. As we predicted in “Dead Center,” growing income inequality and economic troubles at home have curtailed the appetite for further liberalization of US foreign trade, particularly among Democrats sensitive to trade union support.”¹³

The fear was that Obama was abandoning America's long-standing role in world politics. Ironically, much angst over Trump's current trade policy surrounds his willingness to roll back the gains of the Obama administration's later years. President Barack Obama received trade negotiating authority from Congress (admittedly after a drawn-out fight with Republicans), negotiated several major free trade agreements, and ratified several preferential trade agreements.¹⁴ To be fair, our own prediction was also wrong, because it was so understated. In early 2011, we wrote that Obama's ability to "avoid rampant protectionism against the backdrop of the current global economic climate" was evidence that his administration would stay the course on free trade.¹⁵ Clearly, he far surpassed that low hurdle with his concrete actions to deepen free trade, even as the economic recovery remained less than stellar.

In terms of international institutions, Obama forged ahead in some areas and resisted retrenchment in others. For example, the New START treaty with Russia was ratified with bipartisan support, as thirteen Republicans crossed the aisle to vote for it. He decreased the leftover animosity toward the ICC from the Bush administration, even offering military assistance in locating suspect Joseph Kony, a Ugandan guerilla leader accused of crimes against humanity by the ICC.¹⁶

Obama's record on the use of force to promote liberal internationalist ideals is more difficult to assess. Much like the Trump campaign, his record provides a screen on which pundits can project their own leanings, with Obama having done too much or too little depending on the particular commentator. His military force drawdowns in Afghanistan and Iraq tended to be too slow for those on the Left, while his increases in troop deployments in response to changing conditions on the ground were too little, too late for those on the Right. Depending on the commentator, his refusal to commit troops to Syria was either prudence or cowardice. Some might call this an illiberal decision since he refrained from an opportunity to promote democracy in Syria and overthrow a dictator. Others might give him liberal credit for at least not helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad destroy the rebels. In Ukraine, some might fault Obama for failing to prevent the decidedly illiberal annexation of Crimea, while others might credit him for a tough sanctions regime that hurt Russia. In Libya, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces helped speed the overthrow of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, yet then also failed to stay and build

peace. (Again, ironically, following a policy trajectory in which the United States wins a war over regime change and then loses the peace, as occurred during the George W. Bush administration in Iraq and Afghanistan.)

In sum, the Obama administration was marked by some distinct victories for liberal internationalism, especially on trade and climate change, but also was checkered in areas like democracy promotion. What is clear, however, is that the historical record of the Obama administration cannot be characterized as an abandonment of the liberal internationalist agenda, driven by partisan rancor. Rather, it was generally favorable towards liberal internationalism, with significant strides forward in certain areas. Yet, it was also decidedly transactional in other areas, making cost-benefit calculations about each decision based on the facts on the ground of a particular issue.

THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM PREVENTS ISOLATIONISM, ENCOURAGES LIBERALISM

While the pessimists often point to partisan rancor as a constraint on pursuing liberal internationalism, they also overlook how the diversity of interests and opinions in domestic politics, combined with democratic institutions, are powerful constraints on attempts to roll it back. It is extremely difficult to turn the battleship of American foreign policy; there are many captains, each tugging in different directions on the steering wheel, and each representing constituencies with particularist interests.

We think that the US domestic political system and economy will help to prevent a turn to isolationism. While the Republican Party has unified control of government, this does not mean that pro-isolationist forces will have unlimited freedom to enact favored policies. The Republican Party has long supported free trade, an open world economy, and democracy abroad, as emblemized by President Ronald Reagan. Nor does it mean that the incentives of individual legislators—of both parties—will be the same as the president's. As David Greenberg points out in the *Wall Street Journal*, “controlling the White House and Congress is no guarantee of success. As often as not, presidents who have enjoyed one-party rule have found themselves at war with their fellow partisans on Capitol Hill.”¹⁷

FOREIGN POLICY TOOLS AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Following the framework in Helen Milner and Dustin Tingley's book *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*,¹⁸ we now turn to discuss several foreign policy tools and how their use is conditioned by the incentives created by American political institutions.¹⁹

TRADE

International trade, almost without exception, has attracted the ire of presidential candidates on the campaign trail. Often forgotten in prognostications about Trump is that President Obama also called for a renegotiation of North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) during his primary battle with Hillary Clinton, who herself expressed displeasure with the agreement.²⁰ While we have no doubt that Trump will attempt to be more antagonistic toward trade than his predecessor, it is unclear how significant and different his policy will be.

The main reason is that many other parties beyond the Oval Office have influence over trade policy. Congress has always been extremely assertive on trade issues since the Constitution gives it the legislative power over trade. It was not easy for President Bill Clinton to pass NAFTA because of legislators in his own party. And there is ample reason to suspect that many Republican legislators have substantial interests in remaining in an agreement much like NAFTA. As with Central American–Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement and every other free trade agreement in modern history, it the Republican Party that drives free trade policy. And while no one would suggest that the Republican Party is the same as it was in 1993 when NAFTA passed, free trade still featured prominently in the 2016 Republican platform.²¹ While at times aimed at undermining passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), this Party document clearly cements the importance of trade liberalization to the Republican Party.

Vast portions of the US economy depend on free trade.²² According to one estimate, imports and exports play important roles in more than 41 million American jobs.²³ Trade also has an outsized impact on

the economics of many traditionally Republican states. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, “one in three acres of America’s farms is planted for exports.”²⁴ Thus, while the Republican platform states that “Republicans understand that you can succeed in a negotiation only if you are willing to walk away from it,”²⁵ individual legislators whose constituents depend on the economic gains from trade will not readily support high tariffs, rancorous renegotiations, and other policy changes that would have devastating consequences for their states and districts.

Thinking about NAFTA specifically, Republican senators have much to lose from a trade war with Mexico. Corn is a major export to Mexico and has been mentioned as a likely target for Mexican retaliation.²⁶ The top five corn-producing states in the United States are represented by five Republican senators.²⁷ During the spat over trucking duties, Mexico retaliated against US apple exports.²⁸ Michigan and Pennsylvania, states of clear importance on the electoral map, are two of the top four states in apple production.²⁹

Over the first eight months of the Trump presidency, a pattern emerged in which the president or one of his spokespeople floated particularly hostile proposals regarding NAFTA, only for supporters of the agreement, often Republicans, to immediately reiterate the importance of the agreement. At his infamous Arizona campaign rally in August 2017, President Trump restated his willingness to terminate NAFTA. Republican senators from states that would be significantly harmed by withdrawal quickly talked down the desirability or feasibility of withdrawal. As Trump floated proposals to remove the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions of NAFTA, powerful business lobbies, like those of the traditionally Republican-aligned gas and energy sector, immediately pushed back on this. The Business Roundtable, National Association of Manufacturers, and Chamber of Commerce made this explicit in a letter to the Trump administration stating that their support of any NAFTA renegotiation hinged on retaining ISDS.³⁰

Beyond Mexico and NAFTA, Trump’s other favorite target, China, is responsible for trade that is tremendously beneficial for many legislative districts. Even crucial members of his Cabinet have benefited from exports to China. For example, Terry Branstad, former governor of Iowa and current ambassador to China, oversaw a deepening of trade relations with China in agricultural products. China is Iowa’s second biggest export

destination (behind Canada) with \$2.3 billion in exports in 2015.³¹ This is a large number for a state with an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$150 billion.³² Iowa and Indiana are also major soybean producers, a product that has been mentioned as a likely target for Chinese retaliation against trade barriers.³³ Boeing, another target China has mentioned, employs thousands of workers in red states and swing states like Missouri and Pennsylvania.³⁴ In the first eight months of his presidency, Trump explored a Section 301 investigation into Chinese trade practices. This provision of the 1974 Trade Act would allow the president to implement significant unilateral restrictions on trade with China, if China is found to be in violation of trade regulations. The investigation will likely take a year or more, and its outcome is difficult to predict.

The political reality of trade policy already set in on Trump's plans for tariffs and renegotiations. One Republican senator has introduced legislation to limit the president's ability to implement tariffs.³⁵ This is particularly noteworthy given the fervor with which Trump vowed to retaliate against politicians who withheld their endorsements during the campaign.³⁶ Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has stated that he opposes efforts to raise tariffs.³⁷ Stock market and business analysts also think Trump's limitations on trade will ultimately be muted.³⁸

In his first week in office, Trump faced the constraints of Republican legislators whose districts stood to lose from antagonistic trade policy. To follow through on Trump's campaign promise to build a wall on the US-Mexico border and make Mexico pay for it, his spokesperson described an idea that was widely interpreted as advocating a 20 percent tariff on imports from Mexico.³⁹ Senators John Cornyn (R-TX), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Benjamin Sasse (R-NE), and John McCain (R-AZ), and several Republican representatives quickly and publicly objected to the plan. In less than twenty-four hours, Trump stopped emphasizing this proposal.

FOREIGN AID

Foreign aid was not a key issue in the presidential campaign, even though it is well positioned to be cut as part of any budgetary retrenchment. To the extent that Trump weighed in on the topic during the campaign, it was

in contradictory ways. At times he criticized aid, preferring that funds be spent at home, but at other times, he highlighted its importance for strategic and humanitarian purposes. His transition team's initial questions regarding Africa seem to fall more in line with the former, with some questions explicitly asking whether expenditures on aid in Africa could be better spent at home or whether initiatives like the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) were simply "entitlement programs."⁴⁰

Foreign aid does not have as strong a political backing behind it, although there are non-trivial numbers of supporters, many of whom are Republican. The major foreign aid initiatives of the last Congress were mostly bills sponsored by Republicans.⁴¹

Republican support for foreign aid is often founded on the same objectives that characterized the Trump electoral campaign. For example, the last major pieces of foreign aid legislation focused on accountability and mitigation of corruption and misuse. Strong Republican support for foreign aid also stems from its role in helping combat Islamic extremism, which is a goal that is clearly in line with the Trump campaign's preferences.⁴² Foreign aid also found direct support in the 2016 Republican convention platform, which lauded aid as a tool for advancing US security and business interests.⁴³ A large amount of foreign assistance is spent on products and services provided by US firms. Some academic research has suggested that major foreign aid donors use aid as a way to slow migration into their countries, an objective that clearly fits with Trump's goals.⁴⁴ The powerful backers of foreign assistance in the Republican Party are often connected to public health campaigns supported by evangelicals, the very same segment of the Republican base that spurred Trump's choice of Indiana Governor Mike Pence as a running mate.

What is most likely is a change in priorities. Support for programs that deal with climate change, LGBT issues, family planning will probably be challenged. But much foreign aid continues to be money spent by US companies. On the one hand, there is substantial consensus internationally that such "tied aid" can be inefficient.⁴⁵ On the other hand, proponents of foreign aid at least gain a domestic interest group. Promises to "drain the swamp" have not exactly been followed with government consultancies and lobbyists shutting down their shops. We think foreign aid will continue roughly in the same size because it supports US national interests, but with different primary aims and targets. In May 2017 Trump

proposed a 30 percent reduction on US foreign aid; this would have cut many different programs across the board. The proposed cuts and foreign policy budget were soundly rejected by Congress, however.⁴⁶ In his first eight months, thus Trump made cuts to foreign aid for Egypt for geopolitical reasons, but was not able to significantly cut foreign aid.

IMMIGRATION

Immigration was clearly a major campaign issue. But here too domestic political forces will make it difficult for Trump to deliver major anti-immigration policies.

First and foremost are simple demographic realities. Demographic trends point to rising percentages of Latino/a voters and a shrinking white population. Before Trump's victory, Republican strategists and candidates recognized their need to court votes from minorities, and especially Latinos/as, with whom they often shared similar views on social issues. In the primary, several Republican candidates touted their credentials as Spanish speakers or their ability to empathize with Latino/a voters.

But then Trump won the election despite winning less than a third of Latino/a voters.⁴⁷ While some within the Republican Party see this as proof that they need not work so hard to court minorities, others see Trump's success as one-off and do not think Republicans can ever go back to a perceived lack of attention to minority voters. Henry Barbour, a Republican National Committee (RNC) member who coauthored a 2013 RNC strategy guide that explicitly emphasized the need to improve the GOP's standing with Latinos/as, described this as still a "fundamental truth," even after Trump proved that he could win without strong minority support.⁴⁸

Demographics mean that the Republican Party simply cannot afford to cede 70 percent of the Latino vote to the Democrats because its policies and rhetoric that continually antagonize immigrants and recent-generation citizens. The successful strategies of the GOP over the last few electoral cycles—gerrymandering and voter restriction laws—are tools whose effectiveness may wane over time in part due to more organized Democratic responses. At some point, Republicans will have to make a positive case to these citizens to attract their votes.⁴⁹ Social

issues seem to be sufficient to sway approximately 30 percent of these voters, but alienating the other 70 percent cedes millions of votes to the Democrats.⁵⁰ Even Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the House and Trump advisor, has recognized this reality, urging Trump (unsuccessfully) to include at least one Hispanic person in his Cabinet.⁵¹

Second, many of the constituencies Trump has emphasized his support for, such as the high-tech industry, desperately need to fill high-skill jobs with immigrants. Trump's campaign initially mentioned H1-B visas, which admit workers with specialized skills, with contempt, arguing that they were overused. However, Trump's inner circle is also comprised of many who advocate for *increased* H1-B visa use⁵² and Trump has also signaled a more positive position.⁵³ They recognize that the program brings in highly skilled individuals for jobs that many Americans are not qualified for, and that the overall economic effect is net-positive for American jobs.

Trump delivered on his promises to target Muslims, preventing their entry into the United States or even curtailing the civil rights of American Muslims. He signed an executive order in January 2017 barring entry for non-US citizens (and eventually green card holders) originating from several Muslim-majority countries. The order also suspended immigration for refugees from those countries for a certain period of time. While judges, citizens, and lawmakers have challenged this ban, causing the administration to refine it to focus on specific countries, many have argued that the intent to target Muslims through the ban still remained in place.

This policy is clearly illiberal. And it is misguided. Terrorism is an issue that has to be dealt with, but not with blanket policies against a community that by and large respects the values and principles of America. It may in the short term be tempting to ban immigrants, but in the long run, this can create damaging results.

The political reaction to the Executive Order 13769 was mixed, to put it mildly. On one hand, some polls showed a slight majority disapproving and others a slight majority approving of the policy.⁵⁴ On the other, the policy triggered massive protests. And while the most common response from Republicans was silence, many spoke out against the ban. The influential politically active billionaire Koch brothers have spoken out against the ban. Trump would do well to claim improved scrutiny of immigrants and their vetting procedures and move on.

OTHER DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS

Finally, it is important to consider two additional constraints that we have not emphasized: the electorate and the judicial branch. With respect to the “voice of the people,” there are signs that overall support among the public for liberal internationalism has not plummeted. While the media has a tendency to cover communities that appear to have been negatively impacted by trade, on the whole the public still supports trade and immigration. A YouGov 2016 nationally representative survey showed a majority of Americans (and individuals from nineteen other countries) supporting trade.⁵⁵ Similar majorities showing positive attitudes toward other liberal internationalist policies, such as immigration and US engagement, can be found in other surveys.⁵⁶

Our analysis has largely focused on lawmakers, yet the judicial branch will undoubtedly have a large say in the legality of many of Trump’s policies, just as they were involved in much Obama’s signature policy initiatives, like the Affordable Care Act. Legal challenges to the immigration ban began almost immediately, and immigration is one of the areas that we have covered in which the president is thought to have the *most* legal discretion.

Withdrawal from treaties and agreements is a murkier legal question. The president can clearly withdraw from ongoing negotiations of agreements and treaties that have not yet been signed or ratified, for example the TPP. The president also has broad discretion in withdrawing from mutual defense pacts; for example, Jimmy Carter’s administration withdrew from a defense pact with Taiwan in 1978. Withdrawal from Congressional-Executive Agreements, of which NAFTA is the best known example, or formally ratified treaties like the US accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) are a legal grey area, and the courts have generally preferred that the other branches reach a compromise on these political situations, rather than intervening judicially. Raising tariffs is also possible, but changes are constrained by a dense set of laws that govern the conditions under which the president can raise tariffs and by how much.

So far, the Trump administration seems to be willing to take actions even if their legality is not clearly established by previous precedent. Ultimately, the judicial branch may prove to be an ineffective constraint on

President Trump's ability to change foreign policy, especially in the short to medium run. He will likely win some cases, and even defeats often take years to play out in the courts.

International judicial bodies, like the WTO's Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU), are unlikely to be particularly constraining in practice. WTO disputes take years to resolve, and the ultimate enforcement mechanism is retaliation by other member states. Those states will likely resort to retaliation before waiting for the full dispute settlement process to play out, meaning that the threat of international legal sanction does not add additional constraint.

THE WORLD PREVENTS ISOLATIONISM

In addition to these domestic constraints, American presidents face international pressures that support an ongoing liberal internationalist foreign policy.⁵⁷ We think that liberal internationalism remains in the United States' best national interests. This means that policies that go against it will have great costs that outweigh the benefits for American security and the national economy. In part this is because the way other countries react to American policies or threaten to react to them can create costs and benefits for the United States that change its foreign policy calculus. Actions that seem to have net benefits for the US at first, such as decreasing funding for an international organization, may trigger reactions from foreign countries that make the policy very costly for the United States in the end. Most of all, American withdrawal from the international system will open the doors to the influence of other countries that do not share American priorities, such as China and Russia.

First, the United States benefits a great deal from the institutions it set up after World War II. These institutions help the US coordinate policies globally and engender willingness to share burdens with other countries. Were it to exit these institutions, other countries might take them over and make them—or replace them with ones—much less beneficial to the US. Second, American behavior that creates serious costs for other countries can be met by all sorts of retaliatory behavior. The United States cannot count on other countries to do nothing if it drastically changes its

policies toward them, and these reactions can be very costly. Finally, it is not clear that if the US retreats and leaves foreign problems for others to deal with that it will not be hurt by its failure to engage. For instance, ignoring poverty and war in other countries may seem smart until it leads to the massive migration of people into the US or global epidemics that infect the US as well. A closer example is Mexico; the biggest forces driving immigration from there into the United States are the disparities between the two countries' economies. Putting America first and making its economy boom at the expense of the Mexican economy—if it is even possible to decouple the two in this age of interdependence—is simply going to create massive pressure for migration into the United States. Climate change may be another example of this, as we discuss later.

BENEFITS FROM INSTITUTIONS

Doubters of a liberal internationalist future for the United States might suggest that a Trump administration will end or substantially reduce US participation in forums like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the WTO, NATO, the UN, and the World Health Organization. Trump's constant refrain regarding these institutions is that they no longer promote US interests, are obsolete, and that a better deal awaits. He wants to bargain for a new relationship or to try to bilaterally negotiate a new deal with each partner. It remains to be seen how close this is to the thinking of Prime Minister Theresa May and her Brexit supporters in the United Kingdom.⁵⁸

We suspect the Trump administration will eventually realize a very different picture: that many of these institutions were designed with American interests very much at heart. Lofty rhetoric of past administrations aside, these institutions were shaped and supported by the United States predominantly because they furthered American interests, not because of an altruistic worldview. The US negotiated hard in each case and got much of what it wanted, as the most powerful country in the world. Other countries joined in these multilateral deals because they too gained. One feature of media coverage and punditry regarding these international institutions is that they are quick to highlight the times in which foreign nations and their actions in these institutions diverge

from American interests. However, these events are generally the exceptions that demonstrate the rule. For example, it is not headline-grabbing or noteworthy to say, “The International Monetary Fund again makes a decision that is clearly based on US interests.” Nevertheless, a wealth of scholarly evidence demonstrates how American interests shape the recipients, amount, conditionality, and enforcement of IMF loans.⁵⁹ Moreover, if one believes that the United States is actually weaker today than in the past, then one should not renegotiate these deals since the United States will get a worse outcome.

Trump’s Cabinet picks have frequently mentioned the recent United Nations resolution condemning Israeli settlements as an example of the UN run amuck. Yet the resolution’s significance for US foreign policy lies not in the fact that other nations condemned Israel, a regular occurrence, but rather that the Obama administration declined to veto the resolution. Defunding or defanging an institution in which the United States has complete veto power over the most meaningful institutions will not advance US interests. The United States’ Security Council veto ensures that absolutely no policy can get through that body if the US decides that it is not in its interests. There is no way to re-negotiate that deal to make it any sweeter on paper. Abdicating a leadership role in such institutions will simply open up opportunities for other countries to occupy a position of greater power and even rewrite the rules in their favor.

Furthermore, other countries need to agree to any arrangement posed for a new bargain to be struck. The terms of a bargain get more favorable as a party’s bargaining power increases, and it is not clear that the United States is in a better negotiation position today compared to the 1950’s when these institutions were created. The Trump administration has focused on its willingness to walk away from institutions as their source of leverage, and few would argue that it has failed to convey this willingness at top volume. But Trump also presides over a country that has seen its soft power, another important component of bargaining leverage, decline because of the Iraq and Afghan wars as well as the United States’ role in the global financial crisis. The Trump administration has focused solely on its stick, ignoring its paucity of carrots. The most effective strategy will be able to use both tactics.

As demonstrated by Brexit, brinkmanship with international counterparts is a high-risk, low-reward strategy. The potential gains are often

minimal. The United States pays approximately \$10 billion annually to the UN. Its annual military budget is close to \$600 billion, and its annual government spending is almost \$4 trillion. Even if Trump cut US contributions in half, with no strings attached, a savings of \$5 billion is a drop in a drop of the bucket for the United States. Yet, consider the consequences if other countries called Trump's bluff and the United States is forced to follow through on withdrawal or defunding. As the UK is learning, bargaining power evaporates and leaders whose bluff fail are forced to start from square one. The situation with international institutions is even worse for the United States than Brexit is to Britain; other countries, like China, would happily step in to cover those contributions in exchange for greater influence. The international institutions the US created are part of the global balance of power; they shape that balance in ways that are favorable to the United States.

A bilateral approach to dealing with the issues covered by these international institutions, with the hopes of gaining better bargaining power, would be ineffective and extremely time consuming. Banding together with other countries that share some common interests with the US enables it to get a lot of what it wants, while sharing some of the burdens of paying for these institutions.⁶⁰ This sets up a classic tradeoff that we have studied elsewhere.⁶¹ Going it alone gives a country more control over policy, but it also costs that country any chance of burden-sharing. The Trump administration may try to navigate mechanisms for contributing less while retaining the same power. This approach may at times be effective, but it will be less effective in organizations like the IMF where power is nominally linked to contributions. The same will go for other institutions like the World Bank, which has long played a role in foreign aid and economic development.

Furthermore, foreign aid is increasingly dispersed by a range of multilateral actors, and new bilateral actors like China. Recent work suggests that this increased competition will only make it harder for the US to use foreign aid to influence the policies of other countries.⁶² Thus, bilateral approaches to aid that try to achieve US foreign policy goals will become harder, not easier, than multilateral engagement.

A similar set of considerations applies to the role of the United States in the world militarily. Continuing the discussion about multilateral institutions, the same burden-sharing versus control tradeoff obtains.⁶³ Take

NATO for example. During the campaign Trump actively used rhetoric about NATO “ripping off” the US, claiming that other countries did not pay their fair share. In a campaign, these types of statements might persuade individual citizens who do not know the details of United States’ and other country’s contributions to NATO. But as president, Trump will face the facts at the negotiating table. US *direct* contributions to NATO are calculated based on gross national income.⁶⁴ As such, contributions across all members are now proportionate to their economies and do change over time.⁶⁵ Instead of being focused on dramatically renegotiating NATO as an institution, his focus seems to be on others spending more on their own militaries overall.⁶⁶ But if countries like Germany, Italy, and Canada spend more on their militaries due to this push, the US should expect these countries to demand a greater say in NATO. In the first few months of his presidency, Trump antagonized Chancellor Merkel of Germany, in particular, for Germany’s alleged debts to the United States. These moves were widely panned, and so far, have not moved past posturing to anything concrete.

It will also be interesting to see how Trump handles playing hardball on this while maintaining the United States’ role as the world’s top arms exporter. Would a US president really pull back from its alliances and see these American jobs evaporate?⁶⁷ US arms sales abroad are measured in the tens of billions of dollars. Changes in foreign purchasing decisions would offset any gains from renegotiation.

RETALIATION

The preceding section presumed that US partners abroad would demand a greater say in return for greater burden-sharing. However, a more direct way in which the international system can exert pressure on the United States is, however, via retaliatory measures. These measures need not be explicit nor directed to the same area, and often they are not. But they can change the cost–benefit calculus of policies. For instance, during the George W. Bush administration, Europeans retaliated against the US for its attempt to reduce steel imports in 2002 through key products exported from the United States. The Europeans were particularly savvy. They targeted politically important congressional districts with

their retaliatory measures and they took the case to the WTO. They targeted oranges from Florida, motorcycles from Ohio, and textiles from South Carolina—all states of electoral importance. Once the Bush administration understood the political implications of these measures, it recalculated the benefits of steel tariffs.⁶⁸ In 2003, just as the European measures were coming into play after the WTO ruled against the United States, the Bush administration gave up on the steel tariffs. Such direct, explicit retaliation is rare in international politics; more often it is tacit and aimed at other areas and thus is harder to pinpoint as the cause of a policy reversal. But retaliation and its threat are potent sources of international constraint on states.

One way to think about retaliation is to put it in the context of the many large, multinational, firms that constitute a sizable part of the US economy. These multinational companies have huge globally distributed production chains.⁶⁹ Analysts expect that the Chinese might target retaliation to include major US manufacturing firms like Boeing and Caterpillar, as well as the agricultural exports mentioned above. Apple also seems to be in the crosshairs, perhaps because of Trump's praise of the company during the campaign.⁷⁰ Indeed, in his "summit" with technology leaders Trump pledged he would help these firms.⁷¹ It would hardly be in Apple's interest, for example, to have its global supply chains disrupted, which would happen if retaliatory tactics were used.

Finally, even if the United States did not face retaliation for applying tariffs on imports, efforts to punish importers will punish the big US exporters: as economist J. Bradford Jensen argues, "While it might sound like a good idea to punish firms that import and help firms that export, the fact is that most exporters, and certainly the biggest exporters, are importers too. (Likewise, most of the biggest importers are big exporters.) Therefore, there is no way to punish importers without hurting the top US exporters."⁷² The most recent economics research on the subject highlights just how interconnected all of these flows are for the largest global firms. Their choices of sourcing for inputs as well as their ability to export are interrelated, meaning that disruptions or changes on one margin—say a US tariff on imports of steel, a key intermediate good—have widespread reverberations in sourcing and exporting decisions that may reduce profits and hurt employment.⁷³

EXTERNALITIES

A failure by the United States to engage is likely to have consequences back home. Many global problems have externalities that will affect the US directly. Allowing countries to fail and then become havens for drug production, terrorists, and crime is likely to enable those forces to become stronger and more threatening to the United States. This is the sad story of Afghanistan for the past thirty years. But it is also important in other areas such as global health, where the US wants and needs other countries to prevent epidemics and control them if they start; immigration, which can spike if a country descends into violence (witness Syria) or is plagued by poor development;⁷⁴ and financial regulation, where crises can spread globally and undermine the global economy. For example, if the United States makes Mexico's economic situation worse, and takes away opportunities for jobs there (including ones by foreign firms), then it makes disparities between the countries larger. The temptation to migrate increases, as discussed above. While a retreat into isolationism may appear costless and appealing, it will actually have many costs and few benefits in the interdependent global system.

AN EMERGING AREA FOR LIBERAL
INTERNATIONALISM: GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

When it comes to foreign affairs, key issues for the United States are not just trade, foreign aid, immigration, and the role of the US military. Emerging issues like climate change will arise. While the president and his director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are climate sceptics,⁷⁵ there are some reasons to suspect that this scepticism will be moderated when it comes to policy outputs.

On the domestic political economy side, there are also several forces at play. Most important is the fact that the development of low-carbon technology is a source of growth and jobs. The fact that Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton proposed a detailed path forward on this,⁷⁶ rather than President Trump, does not undermine the economic arguments in

the industry's favor.⁷⁷ Does the Trump administration want China to control the market in green technology?⁷⁸ Second, local level (state and city) efforts that the federal government will struggle to overturn⁷⁹ are already highly developed.⁸⁰ These movements have only become stronger in the face of Trump's rhetoric against climate change abatement efforts. Third, the US military, a nonpartisan institution, has repeatedly called climate change a major issue that is not just a projection but an existing reality.⁸¹ Fourth, deniers that humans are causing climate change are in the minority, a result replicated across numerous public opinion polls.⁸² It is not just American scientists, or scientists throughout the world, or publics across the world, it is also the American people who want solutions.

Nevertheless, Trump's reluctance about acknowledging the connection between human fossil fuel emissions and climate change is perhaps justified by a desire to protect the livelihoods of individuals working in coal and related industries. Here we find an opportunity. Take, for instance, what political scientist (and chapter coauthor) Dustin Tingley calls "Climate Adjustment Assistance." Analogous to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), this program would help workers in these sectors transition away from these industries and retrain. It is not the fault of American citizens working in coal or other carbon-intensive industries to be in an industry that contributes to health and other problems, just like it was not the fault of those working in asbestos when it was outlawed. In a recent nationally representative poll, Tingley finds dramatic bipartisan support for this policy.

During the first eight months of his term, Trump announced his desire to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. This step was decidedly contrary to liberal internationalism and is one of the largest data points contradicting our overall assessments. We think, however, that the future for the United States with respect to cooperation over climate change is brighter than it currently appears. While we have no doubt that the next three-plus years will be less favorable towards international cooperation on climate change, that does not portend an indefinite collapse. The United States' position could drastically change, sooner rather than later: the US withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement does not take effect until 2020, a day after the next US presidential election. If Trump loses the next election, the incoming president could decide to rejoin the agreement.

Bipartisan agreement on climate change is possible. To take another example, efforts to support a carbon tax as long as it offsets income or payroll taxes have long appealed to conservatives and liberals (including former Vice President Al Gore).⁸³ We suspect there might be a larger gap between Congress and some of Trump's Cabinet and advisers than between Congress, President Trump, and the American people. This gap also appears to be shrinking with the intense turnover in the Trump Cabinet. The first eight months of 2017 saw the departure of Stephen Bannon and Sebastian Gorka, two advisors who strongly advocated against the "globalist" agenda. Bannon, in particular, was credited with persuading Trump to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement, over the protests of other Cabinet members.

The structure of the international system also creates an impetus for US leadership on climate change. Whether efforts to reduce climate change operate through government regulations via the EPA, market mechanisms that capture the negative polluting effects of coal, investment in safe nuclear energy,⁸⁴ geoengineering,⁸⁵ or other bipartisan ways to deal with this complicated issue, US leadership is a must.⁸⁶ The quickest way for the United States to get a bad deal on global climate change initiatives is to stay out of them and instead let other countries lead and control the future markets for energy technology, which may be a major source of jobs and profits.

CONCLUSION

The title of our chapter is "Down but Not Out" instead of "Business As Usual" because there are undeniable threats to liberal internationalism. Many Americans feel that liberal internationalism caused their problems, which led directly to Trump's "America First" mantra. But trade and international engagement are only partially responsible for the troubles Americans feel they face. Recent estimates, for example, suggest that technological change and automation have played a much larger role in determining these outcomes.⁸⁷ Moreover, inequality has grown worse in the United States than in other rich countries because of domestic policies related to taxes and spending. Solutions to America's problems will not

come from abandoning liberal internationalism but from making domestic policy changes.

Unfortunately, policies to help those who did not gain and those who lost from globalization and technological change have been largely stymied. Republicans have prevented any such measures for many years by opposing programs like TAA.⁸⁸ Such programs have been the cornerstone of what scholars called “embedded liberalism.”⁸⁹ And the numerous loopholes in the tax system that favor the wealthy made the tax system less progressive. So the rich got richer.⁹⁰

If Trump is serious about helping his fellow citizens who are working blue-collar jobs, he will need to be serious about more than cutting one-off deals with particular firms, and instead will have to develop policies to help US workers be more competitive against foreign workers and automation, readying them for new jobs that are coming. The trick will be to ensure that these new policies, whether they are renegotiations of trade deals or other strategies, do not lead to others losing their livelihoods or cause spikes in prices for consumers purchasing US manufactured goods, as happened in the “Carrier deal,” where a US manufacturing company was compelled to keep some US jobs from moving overseas.⁹¹

Retooling and retraining for the global economy of the next twenty years, or even four, will not be easy (no matter the negotiating prowess of the president), especially for individuals closer to retirement. Fortunately, though, the years of experience these older workers often bring to firms are an asset in their own right.⁹² But for both them and younger workers, the changing industrial basis of the United States is not to be taken lightly. A key guideline for policy should be to protect workers, not the industry in which they work. The government should improve its assistance programs for workers who lose their medical benefits and pensions when firms fail or depart, it should find ways to make such programs portable so that mobility is less costly, and it should look at novel and more generous ways of helping workers train for and find new jobs.

Yes, the United States’ role in the world does change and fluctuate. But our argument is that structural global as well as domestic institutional forces tether the United States to the rest of the world.⁹³ American policy may oscillate, but it seems unlikely that the American government will abandon liberal internationalism writ large. Some scholars like Kupchan and Trubowitz argue that large events like the Vietnam War and the end

of the Cold War should have undermined the political consensus that supported liberal internationalism. They predicted “wide oscillations in policy as power changes hands between Republicans and Democrats.”⁹⁴ Those two events were as important as they come. Yet, they did not cause a US withdrawal or rampant vacillation.

Liberal internationalism is still in the American national interest, and because of this, both domestic and international pressures will moderate any of Trump’s preferences for drastic measures to change US foreign policy.⁹⁵ What is interesting from a scholarly perspective is that this administration will also provide us with evidence for the strength of such institutional and external pressures. We could be wrong, of course. Trump and his team’s preferences for isolationism and economic nationalism may be so strong and persistent that their aggressive and undiplomatic rhetoric alone poisons US relations with allies, rivals, and enemies alike. Or it may be that domestic institutions with their checks and balances are undermined by other actions and policies, leaving the United States less liberal and presidential power more unchecked.

If Trump takes US foreign policy on a dramatic new course, then we will need to reassess our theories about foreign policy and international relations. It may be that leaders and their preferences are far more important than many of our theories allow. Or it may be that we need a better theory to assess the facets of national interest and how we can discern them. We may also need a more refined model of the political economy of foreign policy, in which the losers from globalization have a far more outsized impact on policymaking. In any case, Trump’s foreign policy will provide an interesting challenge for the study of international relations.

What we *do* expect to see, however, is an administration that makes some incremental changes in the directions it promised, with a very large amount of credit claiming. We have already seen this with the Carrier deal. According to the president’s rhetoric, he demanded and received a better deal from a traitorous US firm seeking to move jobs abroad and convinced the firm to invest in its factories. Others say the job gains were minimal and that the company plans on using its investment to increase automation in its factories, which decreases jobs. What is clear, however, is that small-bore, one-off deals with particular companies will not have an outsized impact on jobs or trade in either direction. These single actions are not a policy.

There is similar low-hanging fruit in other areas that would allow Trump to claim credit, without radically altering the status quo. For example, a modest increase in funding for border patrol could be sold as an achievement to curb illegal immigration, setting aside the fact that the US-Mexican border is already heavily patrolled and that Trump's estimates of the quantity of illegal immigrants are orders of magnitude beyond the actual numbers.⁹⁶

It will take something even more huge than the populist tide that swept Trump to the White House to dismantle the many positive aspects of US liberal international engagement. And for now, we hope that the president realizes that making America first does not mean making everyone else last. Good deals for the United States can be good deals for others as well; if not, they will not sign or enforce them. We hope that leaders throughout the country, from teachers to corporate decision makers to Congress to generals, realize how much they matter: yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

NOTES

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