

# The Return of Jacksonianism: the International Implications of the Trump Phenomenon

The rise of President-elect, Donald J. Trump, and his unconventional policy remarks have inspired alarm across the political spectrum in the United States and throughout the world. Even though a celebrated neoconservative compared him to the “Frankenstein Monster”<sup>1</sup> and Republican foreign-policy experts collectively opposed his presidential candidacy in an open letter,<sup>2</sup> no “insiders” in the GOP could contain the soaring tide of the populist movement and its champion, Mr. Trump. Given that only a few successfully predicted the election of this scandalous “outsider,” many pundits and op-ed writers perceive his victory in the 2016 U.S. presidential race as a shocking accident.

However, we should note that the Trump ascendancy is no fluke. Indeed, it is embedded in the long history of political struggles between liberal internationalism of the intellectual elite in metropolitan areas and the Jacksonian tradition<sup>3</sup> of common Americans in rural communities. Although America has usually been depicted as a Lockean, secular, and cosmopolitan country, such an image only reflects the cultural hegemony of elites in the coastal cities. In contrast, “folks” in the interior have constructed another political ideology, Jacksonianism. Originated from frontiersmen in the middle of colonial “Indian Wars,” this nativist discourse imagines the United States as an exclusive ethno-religious community of

---

Taesuh Cha (Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University) is a lecturer of Political Science and International Relations at Seoul National University. He served as a full-time instructor at the Republic of Korea Air Force Academy and a researcher at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA). He can be reached at [taesuhcha@gmail.com](mailto:taesuhcha@gmail.com).

---

Copyright © 2016 The Elliott School of International Affairs  
*The Washington Quarterly* • 39:4 pp. 83–97  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2016.1261562>

white Christians. In other words, the two antagonistic social forces have produced the two competing political traditions from the earliest years of the United States.<sup>4</sup>

In this historical context, the radicalization of the Republican Party and then the Trump syndrome signal the reentrance of the Jacksonian tradition against the liberal “American Creed” into the U.S. political scene today. Trump’s rise is symptomatic of the ongoing great transformation of U.S. society during the worldwide economic stagnation. Angry populist forces have to a large extent altered the U.S. political landscape, thereby pushing the establishment to turn away from orthodox positions. In particular, existing liberal internationalist grand strategy is likely to be revised and gestured toward “neo-isolationism.” We are witnessing a historical watershed during which the direction of U.S. hegemony and the post-war liberal world order is beginning to change.

### **The Jacksonian Doctrine: Its Genealogy and Grand Strategy**

---

**The Trump phenomenon is a known U.S. historical event: it is the latest Jacksonian surge.**

For all of its unexpected success, the Trump phenomenon is a known event in U.S. history. It can be interpreted as the latest version of the Jacksonian surge in the southern and interior western states. Since historian Frederick Jackson Turner first identified the importance of sectionalism in U.S. politics,<sup>5</sup> several scholars have focused on the existence of conflicting sectional interests in U.S. political development and their foreign policy implications.<sup>6</sup> It is argued that all key regions possess their own identities and interests, and

their coalitions and contestations have constituted the central drama of modern U.S. history. In addition, the intellectual revolt against the conventional wisdom of the liberal consensus (or “the Tocqueville-Hartz Thesis,” which characterizes American political development in terms of a continuous commitment to liberal principles, following the works of political thinkers Alexis de Tocqueville and Louis Hartz) has advanced the so-called “multiple traditions approach” as an alternative genealogy of U.S. political thought.<sup>7</sup> Instead of a triumphalist depiction of the ongoing march toward more liberal and more democratic politics, we can actually find various anti-liberal and undemocratic discourses that have greatly pressured marginalized groups in the serpentine trajectory of U.S. democracy.

In this theoretical context, the Jacksonian worldview has been analyzed as an illiberal, populist ideological system that stems from the early modern inter-

civilizational conflict between European settlers and Native Americans. This tradition imaginatively constructs the United States as “a folk community bound together by deep cultural and ethnic ties,”<sup>8</sup> as Mead describes, and there has long been “a strong sense of White identity and violent hostility to other races”<sup>9</sup> at its kernel, to use the words of political scientist Anatol Lieven. Other political scientists Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell’s definition of populism as “an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous ‘others’”<sup>10</sup> helps us understand Jacksonianism as a variant of the U.S. populist movement.

On one hand, this ideology was built against the secular and cosmopolitan ruling elites in the East Coast. From the Founding era, settlers in the South and West expressed their “regionalist hatred of the metropolitan elites” or of “the decadent, exploitative, and above all commercial East,” as Lieven describes.<sup>11</sup> Jacksonian folks believe that capitalists and intellectuals in urban areas aim to exploit country workers economically and tarnish their authentic national (i.e., white and Christian) identities in the name of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism.

On the other hand, the exclusivist strategy of marginalizing or even exterminating “Others” has been adopted as a solution to a variety of current socioeconomic problems. Mead describes how Jacksonians make an absolute distinction between those who belong to the American folk community and those who do not, thereby excluding “Indians, Mexicans, Asians, African Americans, obvious sexual deviants, and recent immigrants of non-Protestant heritage,” from the official political sphere. Furthermore, these “outsiders” have been vulnerable to “economic oppression, social discrimination, and mob violence” throughout U.S. history.<sup>12</sup>

We can find recurrent waves of populist movements in U.S. political trajectory, especially when the liberal elite-led industrialization and financialization gave rise to economic turbulence that imposed hard pressure on country farmers and workers at the turn of the twentieth century. One prominent example is the Farmer’s Alliance and the People’s Party in the late nineteenth century. Concerned about “their declining relevance in a modernizing economy,” sociologist Martin Eiermann points out how cotton farmers, sharecroppers, and landowners in rural areas were allied together to confront “Washington elites” and industrial capitalists, as well as called for collectivist or socialist alternatives.<sup>13</sup>

Looking abroad, Jacksonians have a fundamentally unorthodox set of grand strategies. Compared with other dominant liberal exceptionalist traditions, the Jacksonian doctrine is a maverick in the history of U.S. foreign policy, which Mead says reflects “the cultural, political, and class distance between Jacksonian America”<sup>14</sup> and the American establishment. Jacksonian quasi-realist international theory rests upon “the very sharp distinction in popular feeling

between the inside of the folk community and the dark world without.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, Jacksonians are deeply suspicious of the globalist belief in world reform through international law, multilateralism, and humanitarian interventions. In particular, during bad economic times, the tradition’s Hobbesian understanding of the anarchical world—coupled with pre-millennialist thought that has apocalyptic expectations, such as the battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming—can incite a paranoid response to aliens, with charismatic leadership and popular anger.<sup>16</sup>

Although Jacksonians are usually isolationist and are not concerned much about international affairs, once provoked, they are known for their very militaristic, merciless approaches to international conflicts. Related to the legacies of ruthless frontier warfare and southern cavalierism, Jacksonians tend to ignore the law of wars *vis-à-vis* “dishonorable” (usually colored) enemies,<sup>17</sup> such as the Native Americans before the twentieth century, the Japanese in the Second World War, and Muslim terrorists today. Additionally, nativist Jacksonians espouse economic nationalism and anti-immigrant policy in order to secure the economic well-being and social cohesion of the American folk community.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Trump Doctrine: Its Social Basis and Foreign Policy**

---

Several things have energized Trumpism. These include the 2008 global financial crisis and the deterioration of socioeconomic conditions that have been underway for the last decades in interior white communities.<sup>19</sup> The negative effects of neoliberal globalization—such as growing economic polarization, endured income stagnation for the middle and working classes, declining life expectancy among white country Americans—have “undermined trust and confidence in the ‘establishment’” that championed *laissez-faire* capitalism, as Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz says in a recent essay.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the growing mass immigration as another facet of globalization has not only threatened white workers’ sense of economic security but also destabilized their national (racial) folk identity.

In this historical environment, the emergence of the right-populist Tea Party faction in 2009 betokened a huge political storm. The Tea Party was an early harbinger of the rising populist revolt against the Republican entrenched elites and intellectuals in the twenty-first century. Riding on the tide of popular anxieties and anti-establishment sentiment, the movement and its poster child, Ted Cruz, strengthened the populist passion in the GOP and radicalized the existing doctrinaire conservative policies. Indeed, the culmination of this populist, anti-intellectual trend is the victory of Donald Trump.<sup>21</sup>

The advent of the Tea Party and then Trump's surge are signs of the final collapse of the traditional liberal consensus in post-war American society and the "roaring return of Andrew Jackson's spirit into the political debate."<sup>22</sup> Average people, especially the non-college educated white working class, who have been most devastated by no-holds-barred globalization and deindustrialization, have rallied around Trump to express their anger and opposition to the mainstream and its "failed" national vision. Stephen Walt, in *Foreign Policy*, wrote how ordinary, aggrieved white voters were "fed up with a political class that repeatedly engages in self-serving misconduct yet walks unscathed, leaving others to pay the price of their mistakes," including the 2008 financial crisis and the endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup> In this sense, the Trump phenomenon fundamentally rests upon the Jacksonian populist movement and its anti-establishment spirit. Mead points out how Trump is a "blank screen on which Jacksonians project their hopes."<sup>24</sup>

**T**Trump's surge is a sign of the final collapse of the traditional post-war U.S. liberal consensus.

Although he is an inherited billionaire, Trump sets himself against "big business, elite media and major donors" or America's "most powerful special interests."<sup>25</sup> Whereas Hillary Clinton was depicted as the "puppet" of the establishment, Trump considers himself as a tribune of the plebs, as Jackson did almost two centuries ago. He said, "Every day I wake up determined to deliver for the people I have met all across this nation that have been neglected, ignored, and abandoned. I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country. People who work hard but no longer have a voice. I AM YOUR VOICE."<sup>26</sup> [Capitalization in original.]

Of course, the Trump phenomenon (along with the rise of Bernie Sanders across the political spectrum) can be positively interpreted. Francis Fukuyama suggests that it means that the U.S. political system, which has been encumbered by corrupt oligarchs for decades, is "finally responding to the rise of inequality and the economic stagnation" in America.<sup>27</sup> However, Trump's populist initiatives neither guarantee judicious prescriptions nor suggest liberal democratic procedures of reform.

In Trump's political program, in line with the traditional Jacksonian approach, both attacking the U.S. power elites and scapegoating a variety of "others" are suggested as solutions to various present ills, domestic and international. In this narrative, Clinton (and other established politicians in the Republican Party) represent a "massive agglomeration of power, intellect, wealth and talent,"<sup>28</sup> i.e., the American mainstream that has caused all of the current political, economic, and

cultural discontents. This ranges from the chaos in the Middle East, to free trade, to economic polarization, to increasing crimes, to Obamacare, and to transgender bathroom rights.

On the other hand, Clinton and her “PC crowd” are allegedly colluded with a variety of outsiders, such as Muslims, Hispanics, Mexicans, immigrants, and refugees,

**T**ump’s main supporters perceive that the American folk community is in danger.

who threaten “authentic” American identity. Put differently, Trump’s main supporters—rural working-class whites in the South and interior West—perceive that the American folk community is in danger because of Democrat-led “identity politics” over cultural issues and cosmopolitanism.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, under the banner of “Make America Great Again,” the corrupt liberal orthodoxy must be replaced with “the politics of ‘NO!’”<sup>30</sup> that reject the

status quo, or the hegemony of the liberal, boomer consensus. Also, un-American aliens must be contained and excluded from the genuine American ethno-religious collective by the border wall, deportation, and similar initiatives.

In addition, we should note that the Trump ascendancy is part of a “broad populist/nationalist backlash” against neoliberal globalization in advanced capitalist countries today.<sup>31</sup> Those established conservative and progressive parties that have supported laissez-faire economic liberalism for decades are now challenged by “populist, nativist/nationalist anti-establishment” political forces, as economist Nouriel Roubini describes.<sup>32</sup> Harvard professor Jeffrey Frankel points out how the Brexit vote and the rise of anti-globalization leaders in continental Europe indicate that “globalization’s have-nots” in developed economies are “far angrier than establishment leaders realized” and are looking for radical solutions to their discontents.<sup>33</sup> By lauding British voters’ decision to leave the European Union as a victory of the people’s longing for national sovereignty and safe borders,<sup>34</sup> Trump expressed his sympathy for the exploding populist passion in Europe. It shows that his syndrome is intimately related to the present anti-globalization and nationalist awakening across the West.

In the same vein, Trumpist grand strategy signals the emergence of an unorthodox foreign policy in the Republican Party, not only departing from the existing bipartisan consensus in general,<sup>35</sup> but attacking the main tenets of post-Reaganite Republican foreign policy in particular, such as internationalism, pro-democracy promotion, pro-free trade, and pro-immigration, among others.<sup>36</sup> This new vision of foreign policy means a return to another maverick tradition, i.e., the Jacksonian *weltanschauung* of popular nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Resonating with the Jacksonian sentiment of anti-establishment, Trump expresses his strong suspicion of the foreign-policy establishment inside the Beltway. (While Obama and others

sometimes use elements of populist, anti-establishment rhetoric to mobilize voters, Trump is the most prominent example of a Jacksonian politician today.) The mainstream experts are actually responsible for “a long history of failed policies and continued losses at war.”<sup>38</sup> Therefore, his team should search for new people outside.

In essence, Trump’s international theory stands for the resurgence of the Jacksonian doctrine in the narrative of U.S. diplomacy. In his first coherent speech on foreign policy, Trump presented his quasi-realist<sup>39</sup> understanding of world politics as an image of the Hobbesian world, and suggested neo-isolationist and neo-sovereigntist countermeasures (“America first!”<sup>40</sup>) against dominant multilateralism or globalism: “No country has ever prospered that failed to put its own interests first. Both our friends and our enemies put their countries above ours and we, while being fair to them, must start doing the same. We will no longer surrender this country or its people to the false song of globalism. The nation-state remains the true foundation for happiness and harmony... [U]nder my administration, we will never enter America into any agreement that reduces our ability to control our own affairs.”<sup>41</sup>

With regard to the international economy, Trump insinuated that the whole architecture of economic multilateralism can be either redesigned or abandoned to initiate an era of bilateralism and protectionism against the long-cherished principle of free trade. In order to turn the United States’ “bad” trade agreements that kill U.S. jobs and destroy the middle class into “great” trade agreements, he declared, “I will make individual deals with individual countries. No longer will we enter into these massive transactions, with many countries.”<sup>42</sup> In his view, NAFTA is “one of the worst trade deals ever signed anywhere in the world.” Thus, he stressed, “If I don’t get a change, I would pull out of NAFTA in a split second.”<sup>43</sup> Relatedly, he defined “China’s entrance into the World Trade Organization” as one of Bill Clinton’s “colossal mistakes.”<sup>44</sup> In addition, the Obama administration’s Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), he argues, will “not only destroy our manufacturing, but it will make America subject to the rulings of foreign governments.”<sup>45</sup>

Trump’s nativist energies aim to build a “Fortress America,” or a large gated ethno-religious community in the United States, mainly against Hispanics and Muslims. He promised that he will deport eleven million illegal immigrants and build security walls against Mexican immigrants around the southern border, walls that he would make Mexico pay for.<sup>46</sup> Concerning radical Islamic terrorism, Trump scandalously called for “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.”<sup>47</sup> He then proposed an “extreme vetting” test, or an ideological purity exam, asking immigrants whether they “share our values and respect our people.”<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, the Trump Doctrine shows hostility to several international liberal norms, especially those related to the War on Terror. For example, as an outspoken supporter of torture, Trump argued, “Don’t tell me it doesn’t work—torture works.” Because America is facing barbaric terrorists, he plans to “bring back a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding.”<sup>49</sup> More generally, when asked whether the Geneva Conventions were obsolete, Trump responded, “I think everything’s out of date. We have a whole new world.” He also added, “I am a person that believes in enhanced interrogation, yes. And by the way, it works.”<sup>50</sup> Criticizing that the United States is “fighting a very politically correct war,” Trump even went further to promise that he would kill the families of terrorists to win the war against the Islamic State.<sup>51</sup>

This brutal attitude is definitely founded upon the Jacksonian double-standard of “honorable” and “dishonorable” enemies. The Jacksonian ethic rejects any moral limits on “innocent” American response to its barbaric foes.<sup>52</sup> In his speech at Iowa Central Community College, Trump presented his crude, bellicose solution to the rise of the Islamic State: “I’d bomb the shit out of them. I would just bomb those suckers. That’s right. I’d blow up the pipes; I’d blow up the refineries. I’d blow up every single inch. There would be nothing left.”<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, it was reported that Trump repeatedly asked a foreign policy advisor why the United States could not use nuclear bombs to deal with its difficult problems such as the Islamic State.<sup>54</sup>

### How “Others” Are Terrified: the Rest of the World’s Views of Jacksonianism

All over the world, foreign leaders have attempted to understand how serious the Jacksonian ascendancy is in the United States, and worry about what this fundamental

**The prospect of a great shift in U.S. grand strategy has triggered intense international reactions.**

“isolationist” turn means for them. Indeed, the prospect of a possible great shift in U.S. grand strategy delineated by the Trump Doctrine has triggered intense reactions from other nations.

Most Western leaders have expressed concern that a victory for Jacksonianism in the United States would be bad news for transatlantic relations by imposing harsh burden-sharing on NATO members. To Europeans, it is profoundly alarming that Trump was clearly against multilateralism and single-mindedly

pursues pure U.S. national interests. Germany’s foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, argued that “‘America First’ is no proper answer” to contemporary

world affairs.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the election of Trump “would complicate relations between Europe and the United States,” as French President Francois Hollande said. Furthermore, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg insisted, “A lot of what Donald Trump says make for a more unstable world” in general.<sup>56</sup>

Across the Pacific, East Asian allies have also watched the rise of Jacksonianism closely. South Korea and Japan are concerned about the United States possibly turning toward a more isolationist orientation, and were annoyed to hear Trump describe them as greedy freeloaders. Whereas politicians and government officials tend to decline comment on the Trump phenomenon, major media outlets in the region followed the U.S. presidential campaign with excruciating detail and harshly criticized Trump’s false assertion that Seoul and Tokyo do not contribute financially to the U.S. security umbrella. Indeed, his retrenchment or “abandonment” position has sparked intense discussion in the media of the two nations. Both countries commonly worry that the absence of the United States in Northeast Asia will lead to dangerous Chinese expansionism. From a different angle, some in Seoul fear that Trump’s neo-isolationism could embolden Japan’s ultra-right-wing and its aggressive foreign policy, reminiscent of imperial Japan during the Second World War.<sup>57</sup>

Some maintained that China would welcome Jacksonian retrenchment policy as a chance to build Chinese hegemony over East Asia, preferring the “pragmatic” businessman who rarely cares about promoting liberal norms abroad to Hillary Clinton, who has outspokenly criticized China’s human rights record.<sup>58</sup> However, Trump’s continuous China-bashing campaign indicated that Sino–U.S. relations under a Trump presidency could seriously have deteriorated. Trump seems to have little intention to engage China through the well-known recipe of liberal internationalism. The long-cherished initiative to include China in the existing world economic multilateral architecture, such as the World Trade Organization, is hardly appreciated by Jacksonians. In their eyes, China is not an economic partner but the arch-enemy that manipulates currency, steals U.S. jobs, and consequently destroys the backdrop of the U.S. economy. Thus, Trump declared, “We can’t continue to allow China to rape our country.”<sup>59</sup> In this context, Trump suggested a militaristic solution, strengthening the U.S. military presence in the East and South China Seas in order to “discourage Chinese adventurism that imperils American interests in Asia and show our strength as we begin renegotiating our trading relationship with China.”<sup>60</sup>

Although most Chinese officials tried to remain silent on Trump’s provocations, major Chinese newspapers, usually regarded as Beijing’s mouthpiece, have insisted that the Trump phenomenon demonstrates the limit of corrupt U.S. democracy, warning that “if he could move forward with the [anti-China] campaign, then we should show him what China can do when the time comes.”<sup>61</sup>

What is more worrisome is that due to the recent growth of national power and the CCP's ideological policy, Chinese people have also developed strong chauvinistic patriotism in recent years. What would happen if the U.S. populist anger—founded on the fear of economic recession and the decline of U.S. hegemony—pushed for a hawkish strategy toward China? It could lead to an incredibly confrontational response from Beijing, driven by a Chinese militant nationalism still haunted by the so-called hundred years of national humiliation.<sup>62</sup>

Last but not least, Trump's blunt rhetoric on Muslim immigrants caused particular disquiet in the Middle East. Accordingly, he would have made a significant contribution to volatile anti-Americanism in the Muslim world. In his Twitter feed, Saudi Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal called Trump "a disgrace not only to the GOP but to all America."<sup>63</sup> The editorial team of Dubai's Gulf News warned that Trump's "shutdown" speech, or his call for a shutdown of Muslims entering America, "creates a near-perfect toxic soup where extremists on both sides thrive in the shadows, and where the moderates and innocents suffer. His extremism is no different than that of *Daesh* [the Islamic State]."<sup>64</sup> In fact, it was reported earlier this year that at least two jihadist groups, Al Shabaab (the East African affiliate of al-Qaeda) and ISIS, used Trump's anti-Muslim statements in their recruiting propaganda.<sup>65</sup> Hence, we can infer that Trump's Jacksonian doctrine based on macho militarism would seriously clash with radical Islamism.

### **The End of an Era: the Coming Collapse of the Liberal International Order?**

---

As a "liberal leviathan," the United States has created and maintained the liberal international order since the end of World War II. Such an internationalist and hegemonic grand strategy as the old, agreed-upon approach among U.S. decision makers has informed U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War and beyond.<sup>66</sup> Conventional globalists on both sides of the political spectrum emphasize that the United States should persistently play its role in world hegemony in order to maintain post-war peace and prosperity.

Despite its many problems and controversies, contemporary internationalists hold that the United States is still the world's strongest power and that the U.S.-led liberal order is the best international arrangement, much better than other illiberal alternatives in which authoritarian leaders pursue nationalistic *realpolitik*.<sup>67</sup> Until recently, it was widely believed that the United States should promote "democratic peace," thereby ushering a benevolent Pax Americana. The Bush presidency, coupled with the "neoconservative moment," was the pinnacle of this rosy *zeitgeist*.

However, such triumphalism of the post-Cold War era has dramatically given way to a sense of pessimism and alarm about the future of the U.S.-centric

interstate system. Are we not at the brink of the “end of the liberal world order as we know it”?<sup>68</sup> Nowadays a growing number of experts warn that the post-WWII internationalist consensus held by both mainstream liberals and conservatives is profoundly imperiled: journalist Roger Cohen explains how “the forces of disintegration are on the march” and “the foundations of the post-war world ... are trembling.”<sup>69</sup>

In particular, what would happen if, with the start of Brexit, a series of right populists in Western Europe came to power<sup>70</sup> and turned to unilateralist initiatives against past multilateral frameworks, such as the EU and NATO? The scenario looks even gloomier when we add the list of rising authoritarian powers, such as China and Russia, and the soaring fundamentalist forces in the Muslim world.<sup>71</sup>

The 2016 U.S. presidential election was crucial at this historical juncture. Americans are asking themselves about the future of American statecraft. The U.S. foreign-policy establishment (both Democrats and Republicans) and its liberal grand strategies are perceived to have done a poor job, leading to the increasing disorder in the Middle East and the global economic meltdown.<sup>72</sup> In response, the majority of the American public prefers an isolationist approach at present. According to Pew Research Center polls, 57 percent of Americans think that the United States “should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their problems as best they can.”<sup>73</sup> In this regard, Trump and his supporters do not share the conventional liberal internationalist assumptions and no longer want to play the global hegemonic role. Rather, Trump claims, “We are not the same country and the world is not the same world.” Hence, the United States, as the past liberal leviathan, does not have the “luxury” of performing the active strategy of liberal hegemony.<sup>74</sup> In short, the Trump movement emerged to destroy the liberal international order, even though the order was built and maintained by its main beneficiary—that is, the United States.

As the American people increasingly embrace the idea of the United States being freed from the burdens of global leadership, we are watching the ideational foundation of U.S. hegemony being fiercely contested internally in this putative hegemonic transition period. This situation represents the latest phase of the long historical conflicts between two Americas—that is, liberal internationalism of the urban establishment and popular isolationism in predominantly rural white communities.<sup>75</sup> Considering the fact that even Clinton, a former unapologetic liberal internationalist, shifted toward protectionist trade policies,<sup>76</sup> we can assume that the unraveling of the U.S.-led liberal international order, or an “Amexit,” became one possible product of the 2016 election. No one can predict what comes next for sure.

**The ideational foundation of U.S. hegemony is being fiercely contested internally.**

And yet many overseas, as well as in the United States, are concerned that we have arrived at an historical interregnum with surging popular anger—and no certain future prospect.

## Notes

1. Robert Kagan, "Trump is the GOP's Frankenstein Monster," *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-is-the-gops-frankenstein-monster-now-hes-strong-enough-to-destroy-the-party/2016/02/25/3e443f28-dbc1-11e5-925f-1d10062cc82d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trump-is-the-gops-frankenstein-monster-now-hes-strong-enough-to-destroy-the-party/2016/02/25/3e443f28-dbc1-11e5-925f-1d10062cc82d_story.html).
2. Ken Adelman et al., "Open Letter on Donald Trump from GOP National Security Leaders," *War on the Rocks*, March 2, 2016, <http://warontherocks.com/2016/03/open-letter-on-donald-trump-from-gop-national-security-leaders/>.
3. The term was popularized by Walter Russell Mead, "The Jacksonian Tradition," *National Interest* 58 no. 5 (Winter 1999), pp. 5-29.
4. Taesuh Cha, "The Formation of American Exceptional Identities: A Three-Tier Model of the 'Standard of Civilization' in U.S. Foreign Policy," *European Journal of International Relations* 21, no. 4 (December 2015), pp. 743-767.
5. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932).
6. Richard Franklin Bensel, *Sectionalism and American Political Development, 1880-1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
7. Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).
8. Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), p. 226.
9. Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004), p. 96.
10. Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell, "Introduction: The Sceptre and the Spectre," In *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 3.
11. Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*, p. 98.
12. Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 236.
13. Martin Eiermann, "How Donald Trump Fits into the History of American Populism," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2016), pp. 32-33.
14. Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 263.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
19. Francis Fukuyama, "American Political Decay or Renewal?: The Meaning of the 2016 Election," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2016), pp. 59-60; Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: the State of White America 1960-2010* (New York: Crown Forum, 2013).

20. Joseph Stiglitz, "Globalization and its New Discontents," *Project Syndicate*, August 5, 2016, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/globalization-new-discontents-by-joseph-e-stiglitz-2016-08>.
21. Max Boot, "How the 'Stupid Party' Created Donald Trump," *The New York Times*, July 31, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/01/opinion/how-the-stupid-party-created-donald-trump.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/01/opinion/how-the-stupid-party-created-donald-trump.html?_r=0).
22. Walter Russell Mead, "Andrew Jackson, Revenant," *The American Interest*, January 17, 2016, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/01/17/andrew-jackson-revenant/>.
23. Stephen Walt, "The Madness of Crowds," *Foreign Policy*, July 15, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/15/the-madness-of-crowds-2016-trump-clinton-accountability-afghanistan-iraq-obama/>.
24. Mead, "Andrew Jackson, Revenant."
25. Donald Trump, "Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech," July 21, 2016, [https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/DJT\\_Acceptance\\_Speech.pdf](https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/DJT_Acceptance_Speech.pdf)
26. *Ibid.*
27. Fukuyama, "American Political Decay or Renewal," p. 59.
28. Walter Russell Mead, "The Meaning of Mr. Trump," *The American Interest*, May 23, 2016, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/05/23/the-meaning-of-mr-trump/>.
29. Fukuyama, "American Political Decay or Renewal," p. 63.
30. Mead, "The Meaning of Mr. Trump."
31. Nouriel Roubini, "Globalization's Political Fault Lines," *Project Syndicate*, July 4, 2016, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/globalization-political-fault-lines-by-nouriel-roubini-2016-07>.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Jeffrey Frankel, "Brexit, Trump, and Globalization's Have-Nots," *Project Syndicate*, July 14, 2016, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/print/brexit-us-election-parallels-by-jeffrey-frankel-2016-07>.
34. Ewen MacAskill, "Donald Trump Arrives in UK and Hails Brexit Vote as 'Great Victory,'" *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jun/24/donald-trump-hails-eu-referendum-result-as-he-arrives-in-uk>.
35. David Graham, "Donald Trump's Radical Foreign Policy," *The Atlantic*, July 29, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/07/how-trump-turned-the-us-foreign-policy-consensus-upside-down/493439/>.
36. Max Boot, "Is a New Republican Foreign Policy Emerging?" *Commentary* 141, no. 2 (February 2016), p. 16.
37. Jacob Heilbrunn, "The New Foreign-Policy Populism," *National Interest* 142 (March/April 2016), pp. 5-9.
38. Donald Trump, "Transcript: Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Speech," *The New York Times*, April 27, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/28/us/politics/transcript-trump-foreign-policy.html>.
39. On the difference between Trump's *pseudo*-realism and *real* realism, see Stephen Walt, "No, Real Donald Trump Is Not a Realist," *Foreign Policy*, April 1, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/01/no-realdonaldtrump-is-not-a-realist/>.
40. Trump denied that the term was related to Charles Lindbergh's meaning and insisted that it was used as an authentic, brand-new phrase, signifying "we are going to take care of this country first before we worry about everybody else in the world." Donald Trump, "Transcript: Donald Trump on NATO, Turkey's Coup Attempt and the World," *The*

- New York Times*, July 22, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/22/us/politics/donald-trump-foreign-policy-interview.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/22/us/politics/donald-trump-foreign-policy-interview.html?_r=0)
41. Trump, "Transcript: Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Speech."
  42. Trump, "Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech."
  43. Trump, "Transcript: Donald Trump on NATO, Turkey's Coup Attempt and the World."
  44. Trump, "Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech."
  45. *Ibid.*
  46. Boot, "Is a New Republican Foreign Policy Emerging?" p. 34.
  47. Tessa Berenson, "Donald Trump Calls For 'Complete Shutdown' of Muslim Entry to U.S.," *Time*, December 7, 2015, <http://time.com/4139476/donald-trump-shutdown-muslim-immigration/>.
  48. Dan Roberts, "Trump Proposes 'Extreme Vetting' Test for Immigrants Who May Support ISIS," *The Guardian*, August 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/aug/15/donald-trump-immigration-test-isis-islamic-state-foreign-policy>.
  49. Jenna Johnson, "Trump Says 'Torture Works,' Backs Waterboarding and 'Much Worse,'" *The Washington Post*, February 17, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-torture-works-backs-waterboarding-and-much-worse/2016/02/17/4c9277be-d59c-11e5-b195-2e29a4e13425\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-torture-works-backs-waterboarding-and-much-worse/2016/02/17/4c9277be-d59c-11e5-b195-2e29a4e13425_story.html).
  50. Steve Benen, "Trump Sees Geneva Conventions as 'Out of Date,'" *MSNBC*, July 27, 2016, <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/trump-sees-geneva-conventions-out-date>.
  51. Tom LoBianco, "Donald Trump on Terrorists: 'Take Out Their Families,'" *CNN*, December 3, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/02/politics/donald-trump-terrorists-families/>.
  52. Peter Beinart, "Trump's Self-Pitying Aggression," *The Atlantic*, May 19, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/the-jacksonian-candidate/483563/>.
  53. Jill Colvin, "10 Moments from Trump's Iowa Speech," *CNS News*, November 14, 2015, <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/10-moments-trumps-iowa-speech>.
  54. Matthew J. Belvedere, "Trump Asks Why U.S. Can't Use Nukes," *CNBC*, August, 3 2016, <http://www.cnb.com/2016/08/03/trump-asks-why-us-cant-use-nukes-msnbc-joe-scarborough-reports.html>. Trump's campaign spokeswoman Hope Hicks denied this *CNBC* report later. Melissa Chan, "Here's What Donald Trump Has Said About Nuclear Weapons," *Time*, August, 3 2016, <http://time.com/4437089/donald-trump-nuclear-weapons-nukes/>.
  55. David Smith and Julian Borger, "President Trump Fills World Leaders with Fear: 'It's Gone from Funny to Really Scary,'" *The Guardian*, April 28, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/apr/28/donald-trump-president-world-leaders-foreign-relations>.
  56. Adam Taylor, "61 Not-Very-Positive Things Foreign Leaders Have Said about Donald Trump," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/05/06/47-not-very-positive-things-foreign-leaders-have-said-about-donald-trump/>.
  57. Frances Martel, "South Korean, Japanese Media Responds to Donald Trump's Nuclear Comments," *Breitbart News*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2016/04/01/south-korean-japanese-media-responds-to-donald-trumps-nuclear-comments/>.
  58. Jamil Anderlini, "Why Trump is the Natural Choice for China," *Financial Times*, April 21, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/21a225ca-063b-11e6-9b51-0fb5e65703ce>; Isaac Stone Fish, "A Vote for Trump is a Vote for China," *Foreign Policy*, April 12, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/12/a-vote-for-trump-is-a-vote-for-china/>.

59. Jeremy Diamond, "Trump: 'We Can't Continue to Allow China to Rape Our Country,'" CNN, May 2, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/05/01/politics/donald-trump-china-rape/>.
60. Tim Daiss, "A President Trump Would Have Limited South China Sea Options," *Forbes*, May 27, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/timdaiss/2016/05/27/tough-talking-trump-would-have-limited-south-china-sea-options/#6f1396b6a221>.
61. David Dollar and Wei Wang, "What Do Chinese People Have to Say about Donald Trump?" *Brookings*, July 22, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/07/22/what-do-chinese-people-have-to-say-about-donald-trump/>.
62. Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 167-178.
63. Sami Aboudi, "Saudi Prince Alwaleed Calls Trump a Disgrace," *Reuters*, December 12, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-alwaleed-idUSKBN0TV06820151212>.
64. Editorial Board, "Trump's Revelling in Toxic Territory," *Gulf News*, December 8, 2015, <http://gulfnnews.com/opinion/editorials/trump-s-revelling-in-toxic-territory-1.1634075>.
65. C. Eugene Emery Jr., "Donald Trump Now Being Used in Terrorist Propaganda Videos, Hillary Clinton Says," *Politifact*, May 20, 2016, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/may/20/hillary-clinton/donald-trump-now-being-used-terrorist-propaganda-v/>.
66. G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Robert Kagan, *The World America Made* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).
67. Ivo Daalder and Robert Kagan, "The U.S. Can't Afford to End Its Global Leadership Role," *The Washington Post*, April 22, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-cant-afford-to-end-its-global-leadership-role/2016/04/22/da297be0-062a-11e6-b283-e79d81c63c1b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-cant-afford-to-end-its-global-leadership-role/2016/04/22/da297be0-062a-11e6-b283-e79d81c63c1b_story.html).
68. Applebaum, "Is this the End of the West As We Know It?" See also, Stephen Walt, "The Collapse of the Liberal World Order," *Foreign Policy*, June 26, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/26/the-collapse-of-the-liberal-world-order-european-union-brexit-donald-trump/>.
69. Roger Cohen, "Europe and the Unthinkable," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/11/opinion/europe-and-the-unthinkable.html>.
70. Many European countries are already witnessing electoral gains for far-right and nationalist parties. See for a detailed illustration, BBC, "Guide to Nationalist Parties Challenging Europe," May 23, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>.
71. Michael Boyle, "The Coming Illiberal Order," *Survival*, 58, no. 2 (April-May 2016), pp. 35-66.
72. For a detailed analysis of this present "irony of American liberal internationalism" after September 11, see Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy*, Expanded edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
73. Bruce Drake and Carrol Doherty, "Key Findings on How Americans View the U.S. Role in the World," *Pew Research Center*, May 5, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/05/key-findings-on-how-americans-view-the-u-s-role-in-the-world/>.
74. Trump, "Transcript: Donald Trump on NATO, Turkey's Coup Attempt and the World."
75. Lieven, *America Right or Wrong*.
76. Bloomberg, "Hillary Clinton: I Oppose TPP Now, I'll Oppose It as President," August 11, 2016, <http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/videos/2016-08-11/clinton-i-oppose-tpp-now-and-i-ll-oppose-it-as-president>.

Copyright of Washington Quarterly is the property of Routledge and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.