Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-III).07

Populism in the United States: Binary Constructions by Donald Trump in the Domestic and Foreign Policies

Muhammad Nadeem Mirza [*] Lubna Abid Ali [†] Irfan Hasnain Qaisrani [‡]

Abstract *This study intends to explore the rise of Donald Trump to the White House. Why was Donald Trump considered a populist leader, and how did his populist rhetoric and actions impact the contours of American domestic and foreign policies? The study adopted qualitative exploratory and explanatory research techniques. Specific methods utilised to conduct the study remained political personality profiling. It finds that the populist leaders construct the binaries in the society by dividing the nation into two groups: 'us' the people, against 'them' the corrupt elite or other groups presented as a threat to the lives and livelihood of the nation. Though populism as a unique brand of politics remained active through most of the US history, yet these were only two occasions that populists were successful in winning the American presidential elections – Andrew Jackson in 1828 and Donald Trump in 2016. Structural and historical reasons became the biggest cause behind the election of Donald Trump, who successfully brought a revolution in American domestic and foreign policies. And if structural issues in the United States are not addressed, there is a clear chance that Trump – who is not withering away – will come back to contest and challenge any competitors in the 2024 presidential elections.*

- DOI: 10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-III).07
- Vol. VI, No. III (Summer 2021)
- Pages: 59 – 71
- p- ISSN: 2520-0348
- e-ISSN: 2616-793X
- ISSN-L: 2520-0348

Key Words: Populism, Jacksonianism, Donald Trump, American First, the US Versus them, Free Riders

Introduction

Though Donald Trump lost the 2020 elections, yet he never accepted his defeat and remained adamant that the elections were stolen from him. His influence on the Republican Party and appeal in a particular section of society point to the fact that he is not out of the scene and will try his very best to win back the presidency in the 2024 elections. This is clear from his recent political activities in which he came with the slogan 'Save America' (Bernstein, 2021; Fedor, 2021).

Trump's tenure in the White House is considered a unique and "one-of-a-kind presidency" (Dimock & Gramlich, 2021), yet his policies reflected a continuity of the Jacksonian tradition that has animated American political scenery through most of its history. No populist leader has ever been elected in the United States as chief executive since Andrew Jackson (Weyland & Madrid, 2019). His 2016 and 2020 election campaigns, filled with populist rhetoric, attracted the disgruntled masses who have seen their lives disturbed and jobs taken away by the recurrent economic recession, specifically of 2008. Moreover, the rise of Barrack Obama to the White House in 2008 created optimism about race relations in the United States – terms like colour-blindness and post-racial future became part of the media discourse (Dyson, 2016). Yet Obama's two terms in the office created resentment in the far-right groups – infuriated by the election of an African American – who ultimately influenced a major chunk of the white Americans. Candidate Trump capitalized upon these issues and made them a part of his populist

[*] Faculty Member, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: mnadeemmirza@qau.edu.pk
[†] Dean, Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University Islamabad, Pakistan.
[‡] Faculty Member, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Citation: Mirza, M. N., Ali, L. A., & Qaisrani, I. H. (2021). Populism in the United States: Binary Constructions by Donald Trump in the Domestic and Foreign Policies. *Global Social Sciences Review, VI*(III), 59-71. https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2021(VI-III).07

rhetoric. Millions of Americans suddenly found someone speaking their language, leading to his ascendance in the Republican party first and later to the White House.

Populism, as a movement, needs a discontented society who share feelings of frustration with each other against the existing system and elite whom they consider as exploiting them. This discontent is exacerbated by leaders who claim to represent their feelings and speak their language. If some leader happens to have a charismatic personality, tone, or ideas, then this movement transforms into a political storm targeted against the settled elite. Populist leaders usually do not draw their support from the military or economy; rather, their power lies in the strong rhetoric (Eiermann, 2016). Populist leaders need not belong to 'the people. They can be part of the disgruntled elite and claim to know the tactics and techniques using which the corrupt elite controls and manipulates 'the people'. Populist leaders emerge successful only if they are strong in their tone, rhetoric, claim to be punitive, and divide the society into clear binaries of 'us versus them'. Us, the people, and 'them' need not be a specific and single group. 'Them' can be different individuals or groups who are allegedly challenging the culture, norms, values, traditions, lifestyle, means of livelihood, and jobs of 'us'. Donald Trump, during the election campaign, adopted xenophobic, exclusionary and racial rhetoric to instigate the fears among the white Americans. He castigated immigrants, specifically Mexicans and Muslims, who, according to him, have threatened the American way of life and are involved in heinous crimes. Donald Trump claimed that Mexicans are "bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists" (Trump, 2015b). He promised to 'build the wall' with Mexico and also to force Mexico to fund the wall. This populist rhetoric has been heard through most of Europe, specifically in the last two decades, in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, France, yet one could rarely imagine listening to such rhetoric in the United States and that too from the leading presidential candidate. The equally important fact remains that such a person got elected as President. Interestingly, after his election, he continued his divisive policies. Cleavages in the American society and even Congress reached such a level that he became "the first president" in US history "to be impeached twice" (BBC, 2021). While building upon this discussion, this study intends to find answers to the questions of what actions have led scholars to term him a populist and often a Jacksonian president and how his rhetoric and policies impacted the US domestic and foreign policy behaviour?

Populism: A Conceptual Analysis

Cas Mudde defined populism as "a thin-centred ideology, which is based not only on the Manichean distinction between 'the pure people and 'the corrupt elite', but also on the defence of popular sovereignty at any cost" (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Although the definition considers this concept to be an ideology, yet it may also be considered as a movement when instigated by a leader with the objective to unite 'the people' against the group of 'elite' (Wojczewski, 2020). Leaders construct and often reconstruct the identities in the form of 'us' versus 'them.' In parallel, leaders also construct their image as the saviours, only who has the capacity and 'will' to liberate the people from 'them's shackles. This discursive construction of the claim represents people_requires building rhetoric regarding existing cleavages in society (Wojczewski, 2020).

Besides, populist rhetoric is built around "the people", who are considered as the "prime reference point for creating meaning-system" (Wojczewski, 2020). Taking the point further, Müller notes that at the core of populism remains the "rejection of pluralism" (Müller, 2016). Populist leaders claim that only they represent the interests of people while excluding the 'others.' Once in power, they pursue exclusionist policies and remove anyone that they, and only they, consider as part of 'them.' In this process, the leader usually excludes anyone who challenges his position or stance, even if they belong to his most loyalist group of 'the people.' Populist leaders are, thus, more inclined to go for authoritarianism (Müller, 2016).

Populism is often linked with nationalism. But the two concepts are not only distinct but at times contradictory to each other. Populism takes 'the people' as "powerless" and "silent majority" who have been exploited by the group consisting of 'them,' often the "illegitimately powerful, out-of-touch elite" (Wojczewski, 2020). Nationalism, on the other hand, as an

© 2021 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

ideology does not distinguish between in-group and out-group, them and us. It sought to unite different types of people into one people on the basis of some identity such as culture, language, history, religion, and the like. Ernest Renan considers that the "fusion … of component populations" results in the formation of a nation (Renan, 1882).

Moreover, left-wing populism is different from right-wing populism. Left-wing populism puts too much emphasis upon liberties and equality while challenging the inequalities prevalent within the society. While the left-wing populism objects to the control held by multi-national and large corporations and the corrupt elite who they believe are exploiting the common man, right-wing populism targets the elite embedded in the 'deep state,' and the immigrants or anyone who they perceive are challenging the cultural traits of the host nation. While left-wing populism emphasises the idea of justice and equality, right-wing populism focuses upon hate, fear and threat (Huber & Schimpf, 2017). Right-wing populism, it is believed, emerged in response to the rise of liberalism, which attracted people throughout the world (Wang, 2017).

Methodology

This study is conducted using qualitative exploratory and explanatory techniques. The study utilised political personality profiling as the specific methodological tool with the objective to dissect the reasons behind the rise of Donald Trump and how has he impacted the contours of American politics and society. This analytical method is employed to understand that how different events influenced the personality of Donald Trump and how his political personality ultimately is translated into rhetoric and actions. Post notes that in this methodological tool, we try to find answers to two questions: "What were the events and experiences that helped shape the leader's personality (psychogenesis)? And what are the psychological forces within a personality that drives political behaviour (psychodynamics)?" (Post, 2008). In order to profile the specific personality traits related to the populism of President Donald Trump, it is tried to gather primary data in the form of his speeches and statements. Secondary data, wherever required, is used in order to dissect Trumpian domestic and foreign policies.

History of Populism in the United States

The US history is replete with both the tendencies of populism and elitism going parallel with each other. Elitism was evident when the first Presidential election in the United States saw seven out of thirteen states not holding popular votes and simply appointing delegates to the electoral college (Eiermann, 2016). Where Alexander Hamilton, the founder of Federalist Party and first Secretary of Treasury, proposed the establishment of a strong federal government, Thomas Jefferson, the first Secretary of State and the founder of Democratic-Republican Party, always believed in the ordinary citizen and agriculturalists – what Kazin termed as the 'populist persuasion' (Kazin, 1996).

With the establishment of political parties in the United States in the 1790s, the fear emerged that the political parties would turn the system into an oligarchy in nature – Robert Michels, a German sociologist, considered this behaviour to be an "iron law of oligarchy" (Robert Michels quoted by (Eiermann, 2016) Elite dominance is the natural outcome of the political parties' behaviour. With the strengthening of the political parties, a core group automatically develops with the parties (Eiermann, 2016). that holds sway over the decision-making process, thus moving the decision making further away from the common men.

Jacksonian Tradition and Populism

The first three decades of the United States saw only the election of leaders who were considered part of the elite. Besides, after the British American war of 1812-1814, any remnants of the Federalist Party vanished, thus leaving only one major party on the American political scenery. 1824 election of John Quincy Adams, son of second US President John Adams, resulted in the emergence of several controversies. Andrew Jackson, the defeated candidate, splintered and established his own Democratic Party. Hailing from a modest background, having little education and rising to fame as a result of his heroic efforts in the 1812 war, Jackson connected more with the common

men than with the elite. Above all, he was considered a folk war hero by the common men (Strother, 2019). Jackson immediately launched an offensive against Adams, claiming that the presidency was snatched from him through a 'corrupt bargain.' He denounced the elitist behaviour of the dominant political party and of President Quincy Adams (Mirza et al., 2021). 1828 election campaign, thus, started immediately after 1824 elections. He claimed to be fighting against the corrupt elite, corporate leaders and establishment, thus attracting common men. Andrew Jackson won the 1828 elections on the basis of his populist rhetoric. Immediately after coming to power, he rid of nine hundred plus officials from their federal job and appointed hundreds of his supporters, party members, and friends – what today is known as spoils or patronage system. He claimed that he is ridding the corrupt, inept, and arrogant individuals who develop these habits because of long tenure in office and have been considered as agents or part of the elite. At domestic level, Andrew Jackson extended the groups of 'them' and added the original inhabitants as part of it. In order to appease and attract the common Americans, he gets passed the Indian Removal Act 1830, resulting in the forced displacement of the "five civilised Indian tribes". The action caused annexation of Indian territories by the settlers and states and their relocation – resulting in a 'trail of tears' (Davis, 2010).

Jacksonian tradition – often synonymised with populism – remained active through most of American history. In the 1880s and 1890s, mass mobilisation and the formation of the People's Party in order to address the concerns of those attached with agriculture against the Washington elite. Similarly, the 1950s and 60 saw the rise of populist movements, which often excluded African Americans, immigrants, or liberals seeking reforms in the society (Eiermann, 2016).

Jacksonians avoid launching unnecessary wars. But once war starts, they believe in total victory, achieving which they may go to any length. They were not moved by the destruction and deaths during the First World War. But once American economic and security interests were threatened by the sinking of RMS Lusitania and the Zimmerman Telegram (Zimmerman, 1917), they rallied behind Woodrow Wilson to respond to Germany and bring the war to its logical conclusion. Similarly, they did not favour US entry to the Second World War until the Pearl Harbour attacks, when Jacksonians joined hands together to defeat Germany and Japan. On the night of "March 9-10, 1945 … [US] dropped 1,167 tons of incendiary bombs over downtown Tokyo; 83,793 Japanese bodies were found in the charred remains" (Mead, 1999). Besides, Jacksonian never considered dropping the nuclear weapons over Hiroshima and Nagasaki a mistake.

They were against US intervention in Bosnia because it did not directly threaten American security but supported the US war against Iraq when Saddam Hussain invaded Kuwait, thus threatening the supply of energy resources (Mead, 2016). Similarly, after the 9/11 attacks, they supported the Afghan invasion. They also supported regime change in Iraq once they learnt that Saddam Hussain was developing weapons of mass destruction that could be used against the United States. But once they found that the war was launched on false pretence, they felt betrayed and mostly voted for Barack Obama in the next elections in order to get rid of the neoconservative agenda (Mead, 2016).

In the last two decades, Sarah Palin and Tea Party movement within Republican Party was launched against the elite to engage people against 'them.' When John McCain – US presidential candidate against Barack Obama – nominated Palin for Vice Presidentship, she pronounced that as governor "when I stood up to the special interests, and the lobbyists, and the Big Oil companies, and the good-old-boys" (Palin, 2008).

Why did Trump get Elected?

The great recession of 2007-09, the election of Barack Obama, and Trump's capitalisation of people's fear provided the biggest impetus to his election. 2007-09 financial crisis resulted in the loss of millions of jobs. The year 2008 saw the loss of 2.6 million jobs (Uchitelle, 2009). The unemployment rate rose to 10 percent. Citizens' lives were destroyed because of the recession. Figures 1 and 2 show the impact of the recession on the jobs market. The United States, in order to resuscitate its economy, gave around a trillion dollars bailout packages to different banks, businesses, and Wall Street firms (Kessler, 2019).

The overall recession caused reduced governmental expenditures and enhanced taxes. People were furious that the individuals who caused the recession, instead of going to jails, received billions of dollars.

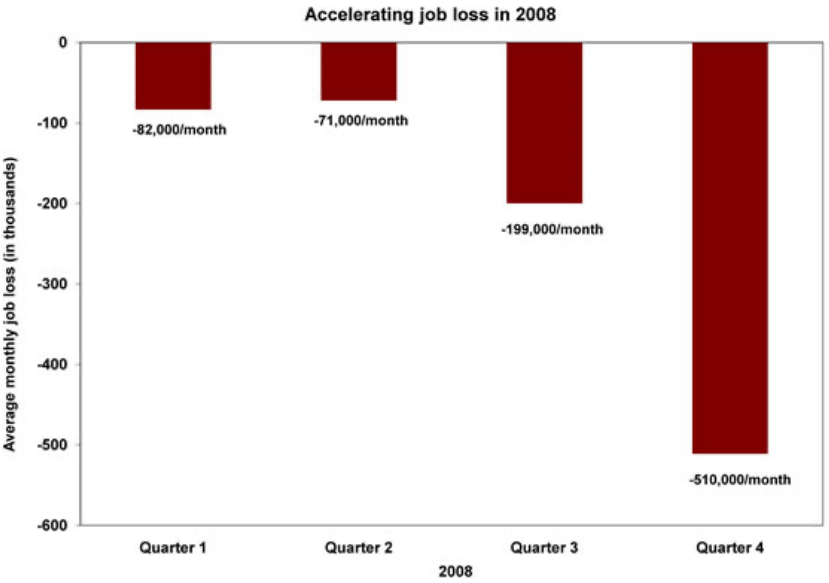

Figure 1
Source: (Shierholz, 2009)

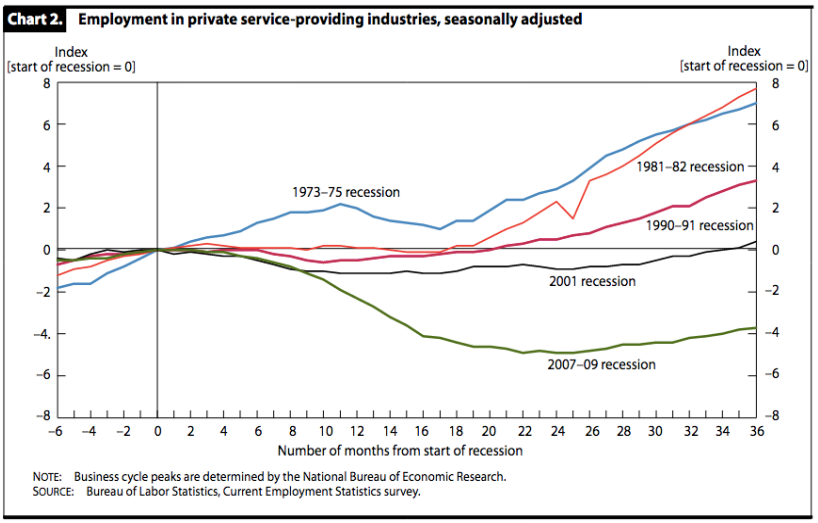

Figure 2
Source: (Goodman & Mance, 2011)

Both right-wing and left-wing populist tendencies emerged in US politics. Trump specifically targeted the Rust Belt of the United States, which has seen de-industrialisation since

the 1980s and where hundreds and thousands of people have lost their jobs. Trump claimed that they had lost their jobs because of the poor trade policies and agreements. He noted, "I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals … These are people who work hard but no longer have a voice. I am your voice" (Trump, 2016d).

Moreover, two consecutive terms of Barack Obama in office created resentment in the White supremacists. Race relations continued to affect American society. Protestors against President Obama raised slogans such as "Obama's Plan: White Slavery, The American Taxpayers Are the Jews for Obama's Ovens, Traitor to the Constitution" (Dyson, 2016). Trump knew that in order to win the election, he had to launch a campaign on the negativities of the societies and of the former administrations. Andrew Jackson did the same after his defeat in the 1824 elections. He launched the 1828 election campaign immediately afterwards, which is considered as one of the dirtiest campaigns in US history in which both candidates launched personal attacks against each other. Jackson was accused as a murderer, slave-trader, a cannibal, whose wife was blamed as bigamous and mother a whore (Mirza et al., 2021). Similarly, Adams was accused of pimping while a diplomat in Russia. Similar character assassinations were experienced by Donald Trump during his 2016 election campaign and afterwards. Donald Trump equally criticised his opponent on the same line. Kazin considers that naming your opponents and enemies as octopus, fat cat, a leech, animal, or alien enhances populist leaders appeal in the dejected masses. "Character assassination was always essential to the rhetorical game" (Kazin, 1996).

Moreover, populist leaders like Trump usually go beyond the control of political parties. Several dominant Republicans distanced themselves from the populist rhetoric of Trump and even gave statements against him. Trump at times challenged the Republican elite considering it to be working antithetical to the American people. Trump had no history in the party establishment – which was working against his candidature initially. Bogaards considers the institutional and historical reasons behind Trump victory in wining Republican candidature (Bogaards, 2017).

Trump as A Populist Leader

Creating Fear and Cleavages in the Society

Fear remains one of the biggest tools in the hands of populist leaders. Villainising the opponents and enemies and equating them with the animals remains a peculiar feature of the populist rhetoric. Even after getting elected, Trump villainised the protest movements – such as black lives matter – by equating those to be acts of terrorism, thus legitimising the use of force to quash them. At the acceptance speech of the Republican National Convention, he proclaimed that "I am the law and order candidate … Beginning on January 20th 2017, safety will be restored (Trump, 2016d)."

He divided the American society to a level that by the end of his presidency, around 70 per cent of Democrats claimed that it is "a lot more difficult" to be a black American as compared to the 56 per cent in 2016 (Dimock & Gramlich, 2021). Similarly, 56 percent of Americans consider that race relations have worsened since Trump's coming to office. Cleavages in the society can also be judged from the fact that in a poll, 86 percent of the Republicans approved of his handling of the job as compared to only 6 percent of the Democrats – one of the greatest partisan gaps in the recent history of the United States (Dimock & Gramlich, 2021).

Otherization of the Immigrants and Muslims

Trump specifically associated people's suffering with the rising number of immigrants – both legal and illegal – who have trounced the share of jobs for Americans. He made immigrants – Mexicans and Muslims – the scapegoats for the failure and weaknesses of the security situation under his tenure. Racial attacks became a new normal in the United States, with the white supremacists' groups flourishing under his nose. He also equated the immigrants with the criminals who are damaging the American society and culture. He claimed that "Nearly 180,000 illegal immigrants with criminal records, ordered deported from our country, are tonight roaming free to threaten peaceful citizens" (Trump, 2016d). He specifically targeted Mexican immigrants whom he considered as bringing drugs, weapons, and other crimes to the United States.

Syrian and other Middle Eastern crises caused an influx of migrants to Europe and the United States. Rising influence of the ISIS in the

world and fears it generated in Americans were accentuated by Donald Trump. He proclaimed that he would ban entry of Muslims from these countries to ensure that terrorists may not enter the United States. Specific focus remained upon the Trump's claim that they refuse to assimilate and acculturate in the United States. He issued Executive Order 13769 in January 2017 with the title "Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorists Entry Into the United States," often termed as the "Muslim Ban" that barred entry of citizens from seven predominantly Muslim states (ACLU, 2020). Later on, he extended the list of countries from where citizens were barred from entering in the United States. By equating Muslims with terrorists and considering that they do not assimilate and acculturate in the American society, Trump strengthened his support base within white supremacists. Targeting, constructing, and assigning some groups to the category of 'them' populist leaders intend to unite the group of 'us.' Around two centuries ago Andrew Jackson, similarly, targeted the Red Indians resulting into the 'trail of tears' – mass migration, mayhem and deaths of around 4000 Indians, and allocating around 25 million additional acres of land to the white farmers (Strother, 2019), in order to strengthen and unite the group of 'us.'

While talking about Mexico, he noted that "Our southern border is a pipeline for vast quantities of illegal drugs, including meth, heroin, cocaine and fentanyl … More Americans will die from drugs this year than were killed in the entire Vietnam War. In the last two years, ICE officers made 266,000 arrests of aliens with criminal records including those charged or convicted of 100,000 assaults, 30,000 sex crimes, and 4,000 violent killings." He claimed that he will build a wall with Mexico to prevent this influx (Trump, 2019a). He had proclaimed in 2016 that he would make sure that wall would be funded by Mexico. His supporters were enthralled by the idea leading to further deepening the cleavages against the immigrants in the American society.

Anti-Elite / Anti Establishment and Narcissist Behaviour

His main target remained the elite and establishment in the United States. Hillary Clinton was presented as the establishment candidate, and probably that became one of the biggest reasons of her defeat. He once claimed Ms. Clinton should write 'secretary of the status quo' on her resumé (Trump, 2016c). He claimed that the establishment and the elite has lined up against him in order to maintain the status quo and keep the people, the 'us', in shackles. He criticized media being biased, Congress being unable to address the issues facing American society, and even gone to the length of criticizing the judges. He claimed that "our lawyers and judges, the reflective 'wise men,' have been stepping all over the U.S. Constitution, the bulwark of our democracy. They have recklessly appointed themselves to be policymakers, because our actual elected officials are paralyzed by partisanship" (Trump, 2015a). He claimed that all these problems and mess we are seeing today are because of the politicians, elite and special interests in Washington. He also criticised the executive branch of its incompetence and for crippling the United States (Trump, 2015a).

A peculiar feature of his being a populist leader remains his narcissist and authoritarian behaviour (Mirza et al., 2021). He always maintains that only he knows the real truth and every other truth if supporting his truth is right, and if not, then is wrong. What he believes is right, anything and anyone who contradicts him is wrong. Goodheart claims that "Trump's truth is all about himself in contrast to the fake truth of the media and the scientific hoax of global warming" (Goodheart, 2018).

Trumpian Foreign Policy

Trumpian foreign policy was animated by the 'America First' rhetoric. He claimed that "America First will be the major and overriding theme of my administration" (Trump, 2016a). He withdrew the United States from several multilateral and bilateral institutions and commitments, pressurized American allies, played cool with Putin's Russia, strengthened ties with Israel, and went for a trade war with China. Being a Jacksonian president, he avoided unnecessary wars and interventions. Though McGurk notes that Trump's foreign policy is "all pressure, no diplomacy," (Ashbrook, 2020) yet it is evident from his actions that he always pursued the goals set by himself, though in an incoherent way. He went for de-escalating hostilities with North Korea, drawing down American commitment and forces from Syria, Central Asia, and Afghanistan, forcing NATO

members to share the burden – President Obama once asked British Prime Minister to increase the defence spending to 2 percent, as is require by NATO, or UK will lose the 'special relationship' with the United States – and maintaining cool relations with Russia. Trump, being a Jacksonian, avoided "the Bushian and Clintonian forms of interventionism" (Douthat, 2020).

Dealing with Iran

Though he claimed victory over getting the United States out of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran (Trump, 2018), yet he avoided going to war and launching pre-emptive strikes against its nuclear installations, actions espoused by his National Security Advisor John Bolton. It is evident from the fact that when John Bolton, being a proponent of the regime change in Iran and a prominent neoconservative, continued to pave way for hostilities with Iran (Beinart, 2019), Trump fired him. Following the Trumpian style he even tried to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, without any preconditions (Brennan, 2021), but the meeting could not materialize. At the same time, he did not shy away from ordering killing of General Qasem Suleimani, who he believed was damaging American interests in the Middle East. Trumpian behaviour was also evident in the paradigmatic shift in the US foreign policy vis-à-vis North Korea. Though he named North Korean President Kim Jong Un as the 'rocket man', yet he arranged meeting with him – the first sitting US president to meet a North Korean leader (Easley, 2020). The meeting resulted in creating a soothing impact over the Korean Peninsula.

Trumpian Behaviour towards Allies' Free Riding

On the one hand he met with the North Korean leader, and on the other he pressurised South Korea to enhance the payment for the defence services that the United States is providing. His dislike for free riding the United States remains evident through most of his presidency. He was specifically wary of the trade imbalance with South Korea. He once said that "They're rich because of us … We have a huge deficit with South Korea … They think we're stupid" (Trump, 2016b). Trump adopted similar rhetoric vis-à-vis Japan and claimed that they should be ready to go it alone if they are not ready to pay for the staying American forces.

He emphasised reciprocal trade agreement and asked friendly states to buy 'US made' products. At the same time, he curtailed the agreements where he thinks that the United States is at a disadvantageous position. This is evident from the fact that Canada even filed a complaint against the United States in World Trade Organisation that the US is violating international trade rules (Zurcher, 2018). His behaviour towards Saudi Arabia was peculiar as he was very candid and direct in demanding that it pays to the United States. In parallel, he disregarded any demands, specifically from Congress, for naming the Saudi Crown Prince in Jamal Khashoggi murder.

US foreign policy vis-à-vis NATO remained one of the most controversial aspects of the Trumpian foreign policy. He considered NATO to be 'obsolete' and claimed that he would be fine if it collapses. His main reason for disliking NATO remained his claim that NATO members are leeching the United States and are not fulfilling their obligations to meet up the budgetary demands – that is they are not spending minimum 2 percent of their GDP on defence. In 2017, on the occasion of "NATO Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials", he again claimed that "NATO members must finally contribute their fair share and meet their financial obligations, for 23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be" (Trump, 2017a). As a president he discussed several times the idea of pulling the United States out of NATO (Barnes & Cooper, 2019). His arm twisting NATO members resulted into the possibility of their enhancement of share of the allied running costs in order to reduce American share (Emmott, 2019).

ISIS and Baghdadi's Killing

While signalling the threat posed by the ISIS to the American interests, he once, using the Trumpian language, pronounced that I would "bomb the shit outta them. … I'd just bomb those suckers. … I'd blow up the pipes, I'd blow up the refineries, I'd blow up every single inch, there would be nothing left" (Trump, 2015c). In parallel, despite facing criticism, he simply withdrew American support for the Kurds who fought along-side the United States against ISIS (Galbraith, 2019), because the direct threat to the US has been dissipated. Killing of Abubakar Al-

Baghdadi was the high point for Trump administration who claimed that he "died like a dog. He died like a coward" (Trump, 2019b). The language he chose to name his enemies remained typical of a populist leader – the street language.

Afghanistan Peace Deal and Paris Agreement

One of his biggest achievements in foreign policy remained to sign the deal with the Afghan Taliban. He started his Afghan policy with an R4+S Strategy – Regionalize, Realign, Reinforce, Reconcile, and Sustain (Mirza, 2017) and dropped MOAB (sarcastically called Mother of All Bombs) in Afghanistan. He ended with his appointment of Zalmay Khalilzad as Special Representative for Afghanistan and approaching Pakistan for the help smoothed the way for the deal (Mirza, Abbas, & Baneen, 2020).

His withdrawal from the Paris Agreement remained typical of the Jacksonian behaviour. He claimed that Paris Agreement might have put constraints on the US behaviour resulting in 2.7 million Americans losing their jobs by 2025. All this will be done in order to benefit other countries at the cost of shutting American factories and lowering economic production (Trump, 2017b).

Conclusion

Trump believed in the national honour that could only be achieved if he is the president and is leading the country. He considers that presidents before him have destroyed the American economy and betrayed its people. His behaviour remained largely contrary to the liberal internationalism that the United States has adopted since the Second World War. 2016 elections were held "between two versions of the United States: an inward-looking-nationalist-isolationist America vs an outward-looking-globalist-liberal-internationalist America" (Mirza et al., 2021). Although it is believed that his policy remained mostly hardliner and based upon zero-sum calculations, yet he remained successful in some respects that no other US president in history could achieve. His meeting with Kim Jong Un, his deal with the Taliban, his forcing NATO members to enhance their defence spending, his cautious yet pragmatic approach vis-à-vis Syria and other hotspots of the world – though criticised for obvious reasons – were the main success stories. At the same time, by pursuing 'America First' policy, his rhetoric and actions caused uneasiness in the US allies and led scholars to claim that he re-ignited isolationist tendencies (Brands, 2017) in the US discourse. He maintained disliking for free riders who, according to him, have been leeching the United States. One the one hand, he withdrew the United States from JCPOA and re-imposed sanctions on Iran and, on the other hand, fired his National Security Advisor John Bolton for adopting a too harsh policy vis-à-vis Iran. On the one hand he called him the 'little rocket man' and on the other hand he became the first sitting US president to meet King Jong Un. As a Jacksonian president he avoided unnecessary wars, but if situation demanded, went for striking the enemies and causing maximum damage – as is the case in Syria.

The United States under President Trump distanced itself from several international arrangements – thus creating a vacuum only to be filled by the rival great powers, China and Russia. China remained the biggest beneficiary of Trump's policies because his rise to power coincided with China's rise (Mirza, Abbas, & Nizamani, 2020). Though the United States has been experiencing a relative decline, yet its biggest strength remained its appeal in the soft power as the promised land, and leader of the free world, who was ready to commit its energies for protection and promotion of its ideals throughout the world. Under President Trump, the biggest loss the United States saw was the not the relative decline of its power, but it was the tarnishing of its image – something which makes the US an exceptional power.

As a populist leader, he divided the nation and accentuated already existing cleavages within the societies by constructing and strengthening binaries of 'us' versus 'them'. He targeted not only the opposition but also the elite of his own party who he thinks has tried to deprive him of his rightful position and created problems in the smooth functioning of his government. He united the groups of 'us' consisting of 'the people', ostensibly white Americans and supremacists.

One of his biggest legacies will remain his impact upon the American legal and electoral systems. He appointed around 226 judges in a single term as compared to 320 judges appointed by Obama in two terms, 322 by Bush, and 367 by Clinton. Most striking feature remains his appointment of 54 federal appellate judges as compared to 55 appointed by Obama in 8 years.

Appellate judges have the final say in most of the legal appeal in the United States (Gramlich, 2021). He also was successful in appointing three supreme court judges in a single term. These appointments will influence the American legal system for years to come.

Trump's another legacy would remain his refusal to attend his successor's inaugural ceremony. He refused to congratulate Joe Biden and continued to claim that the elections were rigged. Election officials complain that since Trump's claims of fraud in the elections, they feel that their job has become difficult. They remain in a continuous fear of attacks from Trump supporters. A recent survey found that one in three election officials feels unsafe (Reuters, 2021). Moreover Republicans are slowly removing coloured and Democrat official from elections' local boards (Corasaniti & Epstein, 2021). Trump's another legacy would remain the divisions within the American society that have accentuated to such a level that building rapprochement would take time. Astonishingly Republicans are still united around Trump (Cobb, 2021) raising chances that he would compete for another term in near future.

Besides all these issues, the damage to the United States' image will resonate through next few years, despite the fact that a Democratic President Joe Biden is sitting in the White House. The damage to the liberal world order caused by Trump's era and the continuous rise of China in order to fill the void will be very difficult to reverse.

Donald Trump is not going away anytime soon. He is very much active in the American politics, especially the Republican party is finding it really difficult to get out of Trump's influence. Scholars have gone to the length of calling Republican Party, the Trump's party (Barnstein, 2021; Guild & Rieger, 2021). It seems that Donald Trump has started campaigning for the 2024 presidential elections and is trying to ensure that no one in the Republican party should be able to challenge him. His populist rhetoric and appeal are the biggest items in his toolkit to challenge any adversary whether within the party or anyone from the American political scenery.

References

ACLU. (2020, February 10). *Executive Order 13769*: Timeline of the Muslim Ban. American Civil Liberties Union of Washington.

Ashbrook, C. C. (2020, March 1). *The Trump Legacy and Its Consequences. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*. https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/trump-legacy-and-its-consequences

Barnes, J. E., & Cooper, H. (2019, January 15). *Trump Discussed Pulling U.S. From NATO, Aides Say Amid New Concerns Over Russia*. The New York Times.

Barnstein, J. (2021, July 26). *How Trump Hijacked His Party's Best Resources*. Bloomberg Opinion. https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-07-26/how-trump-hijacked-the-republican-party-s-best-resources

BBC. (2021, January 13). *President Trump becomes first president to be impeached twice*. British Broadcasting Corporation News.

Beinart, P. (2019, June 20). *Bolton Keeps Trying to Goad Iran into War*. The Atlantic.

Bernstein, J. (2021, July 26). *How Trump Hijacked His Party's Best Resources*. Bloomberg. https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-07-26/how-trump-hijacked-the-republican-party-s-best-resources

Bogaards, M. (2017). Lessons from Brexit and Trump: Populism is what happens when political parties lose control. *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft, 11*(4), 513–518. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-017-0352-y

Brands, H. (2017). U.S. Grand Strategy in an Age of Nationalism: Fortress America and its Alternatives. *The Washington Quarterly, 40*(1), 73–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2017.1302740

Brennan, D. (2021, February 17). *Donald Trump tried to arrange Iran meet eight times but was rebuffed, Rouhani claims.* Newsweek.

Cobb, J. (2021, March 8). *What Is Happening to the Republicans*? The New Yorker.

Corasaniti, N., & Epstein, R. J. (2021, June 19). *How Republican States Are Expanding Their Power Over Elections*. The New York Times.

Davis, E. (2010). An Administrative Trail of Tears: Indian Removal. *American Journal of Legal History, 50*(1), 49–100. https://doi.org/10.1093/ajlh/50.1.49

Dimock, M., & Gramlich, J. (2021, January 29). *How America Changed During Trump's Presidency*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/2021/01/29/how-america-changed-during-donald-trumps-presidency/

Douthat, R. (2020, January 7). *Andrew Jackson in the Persian Gulf*. The New York Times.

Dyson, M. E. (2016, February). Whose President Was He? Politico Magazine. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/barack-obama-race-relations-213493

Easley, L. E. (2020). Trump and Kim Jong Un: Climbing the Diplomatic Ladder. *North Korean Review, 16*(1), 103–110.

Eiermann, M. (2016). How Donald Trump Fits Into the History of American Populism. *New Perspectives Quarterly, 33*(2), 29–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/npqu.12033

Emmott, R. (2019, November 26). *In gesture to Trump, US allies close to deal to pay more for NATO running costs*. Reuters.

Fedor, L. (2021, June 27). *Trump's return to the political stage has Republicans jostling*. Financial Times. https://www.ft.com/content/47332827-8c1b-49fd-9b6f-2200706a03de

Galbraith, P. W. (2019, November 21). *The Betrayal of the Kurds*. The New York Review of Books.

Goodheart, E. (2018). Trump's Cultural Populism. Society, *55*(1), 22–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-017-0207-9

Goodman, C. J., & Mance, S. M. (2011, April). *Employment loss and the 2007–09 recession: An overview*. Monthly Labor Review.

Gramlich, J. (2021, January 13). *How Trump compares with other recent presidents in appointing federal judges*. Pew Research Center.

Guild, B., & Rieger, J. (2021, June 11). *How the Republican Party became the party of Trump*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/06/11/how-republican-party-became-party-trump/

Huber, R. A., & Schimpf, C. H. (2017). On the Distinct Effects of Left-Wing and Right-Wing Populism on Democratic Quality. *Politics and Governance, 5*(4), 146–165. https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000228385

Kazin, M. (1996). *The Populist Persuasion*: An American History.

Kessler, G. (2019, March 18*). Did Wall Street get a 'trillion-dollar bailout' during the financial crisis?* The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/03/18/did-wall-street-get-trillion-dollar-bailout-during-financial-crisis/

Mead, W. R. (1999). The Jacksonian Tradition: And American Foreign Policy. *The National Interest, 58,* 5–29.

Mead, W. R. (2016, November 13). *Donald Trump's Jacksonian Revolt*. Hudson Institute. http://www.hudson.org/research/13010-donald-trump-s-jacksonian-revolt

Mirza, M. N. (2017). *Emerging Geopolitical Entanglements and the US R4+S Strategy towards South Asia: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis*. Changing Regional Political Dynamics in South Asia, Lahore.

Mirza, M. N., Abbas, H., & Baneen, U. (2020). Mapping Contours of Reconciliation and Peace Process in Afghanistan: Policy Options for Pakistan. *Journal of Peace, Development and Communication, 4*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V04-I01-01

Mirza, M. N., Abbas, H., & Nizamani, M. Q. (2020). Evaluating China's Soft Power Discourse: Assumptions, Strategies, and Objectives. *Global Strategic and Security Studies Review, 5*(4), 40–50. https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2020(V-IV).05

Mirza, M. N., Babar, S. I., & Nizamani, F. Q. (2021). Leadership, Idiosyncrasies, and Political Behaviour: Personality Analyses of Presidents Donald Trump and Andrew Jackson. *Global Political Review, 6*(1), 12–23. https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021(VI-I).02

Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2013). *Populism. In M. Freeden & M. Stears (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199585977.013.0026

Müller, J.-W. (2016). *What Is Populism? In What Is Populism*? University of Pennsylvania Press. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.9783/9780812293784/html

Palin, S. (2008, September 3). *Transcript—Palin's Speech*.

Post, J. M. (2008). Political Personality Profiling. In A. Klotz & D. Prakash (Eds.), Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide (pp. 131–150). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230584129_9

Renan, E. (1882, March 11). *What is a Nation*?

Reuters. (2021, June 16). *One in Three U.S. Election Officials Feels Unsafe—Survey*. US News & World Report. www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2021-06-16/one-in-three-us-election-officials-feels-unsafe-survey

Shierholz, H. (2009, January 9). *Job losses ballooned in final quarter of 2008*. Economic Policy Institute.

Strother, D. (2019, February 24). *America lived through a Trump-like presidency before, with lasting consequences*. The Hill. https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/430927-america-lived-through-a-trump-like-presidency-before-with-lasting

Trump, D. J. (2015a). *Great Again*: How to Fix Our Crippled America.

Trump, D. J. (2015b, October 28). *Transcript:* Mexico going to pay for wall.

Trump, D. J. (2015c, November 12). *Trump: I'd 'Bomb the S**t' Out of ISIS*. The Daily Beast. https://www.thedailybeast.com/cheats/2015/11/12/trump-i-d-bomb-the-s-t-out-of-isis

Trump, D. J. (2016a, April 27). *Trump on Foreign Policy*. The National Interest. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-foreign-policy-15960

Trump, D. J. (2016b, June 3). *Despite Trump's Rhetoric, GOP Senators Try to Reassure South Korea*. The Diplomat.

Trump, D. J. (2016c, July 11). *"I am the law-and-order candidate."*

Trump, D. J. (2016d, July 21). *Full Transcript: President Trump's Republican National Convention Speech.*

Trump, D. J. (2017a, May 25). Remarks by President Trump at NATO Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials.

Trump, D. J. (2017b, June 1). Transcript: President Trump's remarks on leaving the Paris climate deal.

Trump, D. J. (2018, May 8). Full Transcript of Trump's Speech on the Iran Nuclear Deal.

Trump, D. J. (2019a, January 27). *Full Transcript*: Trump border wall speech.

Trump, D. J. (2019b, October 27). Text of Trump's Statement on Death of Baghdadi.

Uchitelle, L. (2009, January 9). *U.S. lost 2.6 million jobs in 2008*. The New York Times.

Wang, C. (2017). The "Enemy" Complex of Populism in American Ethnic Politics and Its Implications to Trump's Foreign Policy. *Chinese Political Science Review, 2*(3), 345–355. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41111-017-0063-1

Weyland, K., & Madrid, R. L. (2019). Introduction: Donald Trump's Populism: What Are the Prospects for US Democracy? In K. Weyland & R. L. Madrid (Eds.), When Democracy Trumps Populism: European and Latin American Lessons for the United States. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108692793

Wojczewski, T. (2020). Trump, Populism, and American Foreign Policy. *Foreign Policy Analysis, 16*(3), 292–311. https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orz021

Zimmerman, A. (1917). *The Zimmerman Telegram: Offering Alliance with the Mexico. German Government*. National Archive of the United States

Zurcher, A. (2018, January 12). *Ten ways Trump has changed America*. BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42653793