“America First” Meets Liberal Internationalism¹

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Introduction

Candidate Trump, and then President Trump, advocated for a dramatic change in the direction of American foreign policy which he labelled “America First.” His vision stood in stark contrast to the liberal internationalism (LI) pursued by most presidents since World War II. For Trump, unilateralism would replace multilateralism; isolation would replace global engagement; pursuit of short-term, transactional American interests above all else would replace international cooperation. These dramatic changes in direction were to be accomplished through many smaller steps taken in relation to each issue area and across many countries.

A central claim we made in our original article² was that Trump’s attempts to change American foreign policy would be constrained by domestic and international forces. In terms of domestic constraints, elements of American democracy—its checks and balances—would make radical change difficult. As we show below, key institutions of democracy pushed back against many of the Trump administration’s policy changes. The usual suspects, like Congress, interest groups, and the American foreign policy and military bureaucracies, also played a role.³ The judicial system was a surprisingly strong and somewhat unexpected constraining force. The press and media also kept keen attention on the changes being proposed by the administration. Trump would have been able to make many more changes had he faced fewer domestic constraints. Democracy may have advantages in slowing policy change down, and tuning it more to structural constraints, rather than idiosyncratic leadership preferences.

Our second set of constraints arose from international pressure on the US, and especially reactions to confrontational and isolationist policies that Trump might pursue. Trump wanted to change relations with our allies by making them do more for themselves and pay more. He wanted to negotiate new deals with our partners, competitors, and enemies. But the US’ allies

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and enemies remain the same today as four years ago. The US’ fundamental common interests with its allies and its differences with particular enemies continue. Isolationist and unilateral policies are unlikely to be successful in bringing peace, prosperity and security to the US in the world in which we live. This interdependent planet we all inhabit favors engagement, cooperation, and multilateralism. Isolationist and unilateral policies are unlikely to advance America’s main goals; indeed, they are likely to backfire and undermine its security and prosperity. And so multilateral engagement remained (and remains) in America’s national interest as the best strategy for securing peace and prosperity.

We think that overall, Trump was not able to fundamentally change the direction of US foreign policy. While the tone of US foreign policy did change (especially as proxied by his many tweets), the underlying policies were often constrained, as we expected. Thus we believe that Biden will be able to return to a more LI posture. The Biden administration will be more attuned to structural pressures. Trump’s foreign policy has weakened the US. His undiplomatic rhetoric, his norm-breaking behavior, and his inconstant policy maneuvers have alienated America’s allies and friends, and instilled greater boldness in its competitors and enemies. All of this has left the US with a less secure position in world politics at a time when China’s rise creates new uncertainties. The Biden administration will have to try to reverse this debilitating course.

In this article, we review the same areas that we focused on in our earlier essay: foreign aid, international trade, immigration, non-multilateral institutions, a collection of security instruments (e.g., the NATO alliance, military deployments, arms control), and climate change. An exhaustive list of every foreign policy decision made under Trump is beyond the scope of this essay. These areas cover some of the most important pillars of foreign policy.

We argue that domestic and international constraints were most restrictive for Trump’s desired changes to foreign aid, NATO, multilateralism in general, and immigration. They were least constraining on trade. Domestic institutions, in the first of these areas, prevented radical change. And for some of these areas, international reactions also prevented greater change. We conclude by looking ahead to the Biden administration and reflecting on implications for IR theory of the Trump administration.

Domestic institutional constraints did bind for many issue areas. The biggest departures between our arguments about domestic constraints and the empirical record came from our underestimation of the degree to which the courts, not the legislature, would constrain Trump and our underestimation of the degree to which Trump would use unilateral Executive actions. The good news about the latter is that - what the Executive Order gives, the next administration’s pen can take away.

Several important examples demonstrate our second set of constraints - that the nature of the international system would constrain Trump. Since US withdrawal ceded ground to countries like China, Trump was frequently pushed to stay with status quo policies though his preferences were for larger breaks. In many cases, especially those involving the military or directly dealing with China or Russia, this prediction found support. International systemic factors were least
To be clear, we don’t expect that a Biden administration will return to the liberal internationalism “of old.” The country faces new circumstances domestically and internationally to which American foreign policy must respond. Underneath the bluster, President Trump’s actions occasionally revealed genuine faults with existing policy that need to be rectified. Re-adopting the exact policies of previous decades will not fix those, or any new, problems. Ultimately, though, we think that the United States’ foreign policy will continue to adapt and address these problems through a lens of international engagement.

Taking Stock

Overview

We proceed by breaking apart US foreign policy into six separate domains and compare Trump’s claims about what his administration would accomplish and what actually happened. Predictions are often difficult to make or interpret, especially when the specific foreign policy issues and crises that will arise during a four year administration are not known ex ante. We therefore focus on benchmarking our arguments by assessing the degree to which domestic and international constraints limited Trump’s policy-altering ambitions. In particular, we discuss US foreign aid, international trade, immigration, non-military international institutions (e.g., WHO, IMF), a collection of security instruments (including the NATO alliance, military deployments, arms control), and climate change. Throughout, we discuss the role of both domestic and international constraints.

We focus on policies, rather than rhetoric or soft power. Undoubtedly, Trump’s words and events like the Capital riots damaged both. However, rhetoric can be changed relatively quickly. Policies endure.

Foreign Aid

In our earlier article we argued “We think foreign aid will continue roughly in the same size because it supports U.S. national interests, but with different primary aims and targets.” Despite repeated attempts by the Trump administration to slash budgets, Congress each time funded US bilateral foreign aid budgets at levels close to but slightly lower than the Obama

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administration. Even multilateral development banks were funded at the same level as those seen under the George W. Bush administration.\(^5\)

Foreign aid priorities changed some as they do with any administration. Like previous administrations, eg President George W Bush and PEPFAR, the Trump administration advanced some targeted, specific foreign aid agenda items. Ivanka Trump led efforts around investing in women’s economic development\(^6\) and Vice President Pence led efforts around the protection of religious minorities. When aid cuts were being proposed, these projects were spared.

Concerned by increases in Central American migrants coming to the US, Trump threatened to cut foreign aid to these countries. Aid to Guatemala and El Salvador stayed roughly the same or grew during the Trump administration,\(^7\) while Honduras faced the brunt of cuts.\(^8\) In June of 2020, Secretary of State Pompeo announced new funds to be directed to these countries, writing “This assistance will promote U.S. national security and further the President’s goal of decreasing illegal immigration to the United States.”\(^9\)

Initially, the Trump administration wanted to completely eliminate the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).\(^10\) Coming out of the bipartisan Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) Act, the International Financial Development Corporation was created. In many ways it is similar to the OPIC,\(^11\) and its revitalization reflected the growing perception that China’s increasing soft power capability requires sustained investment.\(^12\)

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\(^11\) The main difference between the institutions comes down to the new ability to make equity investments.

\(^12\) “The IDFC has bipartisan Congressional support, reflecting the long-standing tradition of working across the aisle when it comes to development and humanitarian assistance...It looks as though concern...
Organizationally, the Trump administration made some significant changes. The appointment of David Malpass at the World Bank in 2019 made a brief impression, given that he had been critical of the institution in the past. But the impact of his appointment on the organization appears to have been minimal. Several accounts portrayed his efforts to distance himself from the President, and he notably broke with the Trump administration around climate change.\(^\text{13}\) Attempts to fold USAID into the State Department did not happen, and some development advocates highlighted that organizational changes at USAID have been positive.\(^\text{14}\) The United States continues to have one of the highest percentages of its bilateral aid that is tied to purchases from US companies, reflecting the powerful domestic political economy forces present in US aid policy.

By and large, little changed in the domain of foreign aid. In general, both domestic and international constraints pushed back against large foreign aid cuts. Congress repeatedly halted attempts to cut funds or make dramatic organizational changes. Prominent military officials recognized the international constraints that bind when trying to cut foreign aid. Foreign aid isn’t a gift; it’s a strategically deployed asset to advance US interests. As General James Mattis -- then Trump’s Secretary of Defense -- said regarding Trump’s proposed cuts, “if you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.” And the rise of Chinese soft-power reinforced the need for tools like foreign aid and investment instruments.

**International Trade Policy**

The area of international trade policy is probably where our arguments found the least support. President Trump opened up a multi-front trade war with virtually all major trading partners, catching a wide array of products in the crosshairs. The ensuing foreign retaliation, as we predicted, targeted geographic areas in the US, with the goal of maximizing political pain for Trump.

The major trade events were less consistent with our predictions, because we expected Trump and the Republican Party to engage in “backwards induction,” by recognizing the consequences of a widespread trade war and therefore choosing not to start one in the first place. Analyzing the 2018 midterm elections, academic researchers estimate that the trade war cost Trump

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approximately five seats in the House of Representatives. We incorrectly anticipated that this type of cost -- stemming from international and domestic constraints -- would dissuade Trump from engaging in a protracted, all-out war to begin with. Congressional pushback against the trade war and industry opposition did materialize, but they failed to convince President Trump from conducting a large scale trade war. President Trump mollified some pushback from the agriculture producers hit hardest by trade retaliation with a multi-billion dollar bailout. But all told, Trump had relatively free reign to conduct an unsuccessful trade war. As some scholars have noted, this may have been due to the fact that even more aspects of trade policy have been delegated to the president over time, thus eroding constraints on the executive.

Ironically, even with the most significant trade war in over three decades, the US trade deficit grew slightly. US exports and imports stayed relatively stable until the pandemic hit in 2020. Figure 1 shows the real value of imports (red) and exports (blue), quarterly from 2015 until December 2020. While the pandemic clearly had a tremendous effect on global trade, Trump’s trade war did not achieve its main goals of shifting the US balance of trade.

Figure 1: Real US Exports and Imports, 2015-2020.


Additionally, the Senate passed the USMCA (aka “New NAFTA”) by an 89-10 margin, and it passed the House 385-41. In terms of its substance, the USMCA drew heavily from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an Obama era agreement that Trump left in his first year in office.\(^\text{19}\)

However, the United States missed opportunities as China proved willing to forge ahead with the US on the sidelines. In late 2020, most of the largest Asian economies signed onto the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.\(^\text{20}\) Analysts suspect that the Biden administration would like to join the Comprehensive Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (the renamed TPP), as a way to reassert US leadership in the region. Though, it is unclear whether he would find sufficient Congressional support.\(^\text{21}\)

The common theme of these events, which also applies to the Biden administration, is the fundamental international constraint that the world is willing to move on without the United States. The lack of US leadership on trade is quickly filled by other countries with their own preferences. The European Union is set to implement a border tax policy to address climate change, which will be one of the most powerful policy linkages between trade and climate change to date. As President Biden considers how to address climate change using trade tools, he will face a similar dilemma: whether to sit back and let others lead or inject a US presence and its preferences into these international policies.\(^\text{22}\) We return to this topic in the section on climate change.

**Immigration**

The Trump administration’s efforts around immigration policy were probably the most contentious of any policy area, other than, perhaps, his efforts to overturn his election loss. While many of these efforts were ultimately thwarted, they nonetheless were profoundly disruptive.

In our first essay we argued that the rising number of Latino citizens in key states would constrain what the Republican party, and the Trump administration, would be willing to do. And that the economic interests of a number of large, technology-oriented, companies would mollify


opposition to the H-1B program. We also noted that Trump was likely to follow through with attempting to limit travel to the US from Muslim countries.

What ended up happening is that the US court system would provide the largest check on Trump's immigration policies, even if some policies eventually were allowed to proceed. These checks came in several forms: judicial rebukes based on the policies themselves and rebukes based on various procedural mistakes by Trump and others.

The Muslim travel ban went through a series of decisions in a variety of forums with a string of rebukes issued by various Federal judges and courts of appeal. The policy came to the Supreme Court several times. Ultimately after some changes to the policy, the Supreme Court upheld the Trump administration's policy based on the administration's claim that travelers from these countries were a security threat. The 5 person majority decision argued that the Executive Branch has the right to set policies that deal with security threats to the nation.23

The DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) policy was a major target of the Trump administration. While the administration was able to put various restrictions in place and tried to circumvent a range of legal decisions that prevented his closing the program down, DACA remains in place. In June of 2020 the Supreme Court ruled that the administration’s termination of the program was judicially reviewable and violated the Administrative Procedures Act due to its “arbitrary and capricious manner”. In December of 2020 a Federal judge ordered the administration to begin allowing new applicants to the DACA program.24 However, challenges in other circuits may produce inconsistent rulings.25 A December 2020 Pew survey found that “about three-quarters of respondents, including majorities of both Democrats and Republicans, favored extending a pathway to permanent legal status to dreamers.”26

Visas

Throughout Trump’s presidency he sought to target the various visa programs that enable foreign workers to come to the United States. The three main visa programs at the H-1B (specialty occupations like in technology), H-2A (temporary agricultural workers), and H-2B

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(temporary non-agricultural workers). Before discussing these programs, Figure 2 presents data on the total number of visa petitions approved at the first stage of the approval process and the percentage of petitions requests approved.\textsuperscript{27} Throughout the majority of Trump’s tenure, all of these programs had similar or even higher levels of approved petitions. The only exception is in 2020 when, as discussed below, Trump began to especially focus on decreasing H-2B visas.\textsuperscript{28}

![Figure 2: Department of Labor visa petition approvals for H1-B, H2-A, and H2-B visas.](image)

The Trump administration tried a variety of ways to reduce the ability of companies to use H-1B visas. In doing so, it faced strong pushback by companies relying on the program.\textsuperscript{29} These companies rely on technical talent that is in short supply from American workers. Trump’s H-1B efforts also faced substantial push back in court. For example, the administration tried to substantially increase the required wage of H-1B visa holders. This was designed to make these visas less attractive to firms and redirect them to hiring domestic labor. Court challenges to this

\textsuperscript{27} This data comes from the Department of Labor. The visa process is complicated and has multiple stages. The Department of Labor statistic on total visas petitions represents the first stage of this process. Data from the US Citizen and Immigration Services and Department of State stages so broadly similar patterns with no substantial drop offs through most of the Trump administration.

\textsuperscript{28} Processing times of petitions by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) did slow substantially during the Trump administration.

effort led to a string of losses, in part due again to violations of the Administration Procedures Act.³⁰ Whether the administration can modify policies and processes in a way that will pass legal muster remains to be seen. Even after Trump’s election loss, his administration has tried to put in place H-1B restrictions that will run into the Biden administration. As of writing, it remains to be seen how the Biden administration will deal with these restrictions.³¹

The Trump administration’s approach to the H-2A visa program also drew pushback from economic interest groups and faced court challenges. At one point, the administration stopped a biannual survey of wages with the expectation that this would lead to pay decreases for H-2A holders. This effort was opposed by a range of actors, and faced challenges in court.³² Supported by agricultural producers, the Trump administration recently took a different tact and simply froze wages.³³ While this could be undone under the Biden/Harris administration, this will take time especially given the competing economics interests at work.

H-2B visas for non-agricultural temporary workers in fact grew under the Trump administration (see Figure 2). In 2017 he expanded the program, which was immediately followed by an expanded request from Trump’s hotel properties.³⁴ However, in 2020 the Trump administration both tried to grow the program³⁵ but also reduce it.³⁶ As with other visa programs, restrictions on H-2B visas have been opposed by corporations and organizations like the US Chamber of Commerce.³⁷

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³⁵ Camila DeChalus, “Trump administration allows 35,000 more H-2B seasonal worker visas for the year,” *Roll Call*, 5 March 2020, [https://www.rollcall.com/2020/03/05/trump-administration-allows-35000-more-h-2b-visas-for-the-year/](https://www.rollcall.com/2020/03/05/trump-administration-allows-35000-more-h-2b-visas-for-the-year/)


In the midst of the COVID pandemic, the Trump administration tried to force foreign students studying at US universities from being able to remain in the US if their school was not conducting in person classes. Essentially, their visa status would be revoked if they did not leave the country or transfer to an institution offering in person classes. Initiated by Harvard and MIT, but joined by universities across the country, this rule was challenged in federal court. The Trump administration reversed course on the policy, but still was presumed to maintain these restrictions towards incoming students. All expectations point to a Biden administration welcoming foreign students.

Of course, immigration policy does not exist in a vacuum and powerful international economic forces are important to consider. For example, some suggest that restrictions on H-1B’s will simply lead to more off-shoring of work. Recent empirical work backs up this view. This could even accelerate as firms now have substantial remote work experience due to the Covid-19 disruptions.

**Border Restrictions and the Wall**

Perhaps the most symbolic piece of the Trump administration was “the Wall.” Trump said Mexico “would pay” for the wall, which, of course, they did not. Countries, no matter how strong, cannot simply unilaterally compel another country to do something like this just via a verbal declaration. The audacity of the demand also made it politically poisonous for the target government to capitulate. Furthermore, Congress introduced substantial barriers to funding the wall, and for much of the Trump administration other fiscal accounts (like military construction and US Treasury forfeiture accounts) were used to fund these efforts. Money for the wall was included in the end of 2020 bi-partisan spending bill. Most of the construction progress has been on rebuilding or enhancing existing barriers rather than new construction. While the Biden

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administration has indicated they will stop construction, the Trump administration has continued to award construction contracts even for parts of the wall where private property has not yet been obtained. By and large, there was more talk than action on the Wall; however, we expect Trump will continue to exaggerate his success in this signature effort.

Despite the Wall being largely a flop, the Trump administration was successful in implementing a range of restrictions targeting migration from Mexico and Central America. These included changes to asylum policies that made it difficult or impossible to qualify, as well as requirements that asylum seekers wait outside of the United States while cases were heard. The administration also stepped up interior enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). While a number of municipalities pushed back on these interior enforcement efforts, the numbers of non-criminal arrests increased during the Trump administration until the Covid crisis. Finally, the Trump administration pursued utterly deplorable tactics aimed at deterring migration, such as the separation of families.

Demographics

Immigration will continue to be a hot-button issue and linked to the rhetoric and policies of various right-wing and populist parties. Whether the looming changes in the demographic makeup of the US will lead the Republican party to modify its immigration policies remains to be seen. In 2020, regions with a high number of Latino residents characteristically voted for Democratic candidates. However, in some of these places there were swings towards more support for Trump. We suspect both parties will begin to pay more attention to different blocks of Latino voters—whether it be by country or origin (e.g., Cuban vs. non-Cuban), gender, religious commitment, or economic status. It is unlikely that this attention will take on the xenophobic hue that Trump touted during his 2016 campaign, as Republicans seem to have learned from the 2018 elections and enduring popularity of programs like DACA that immigration is less effective as a wedge issue for mobilizing the base and shifting swing state voters. These domestic constraints on Trump-style anti-immigration efforts do not seem likely

to go away, especially if the Biden administration succeeds in addressing the economic anxiety that fomented them in the first place.47

Non-military international institutions

For several important international institutions - the WTO, the IMF, the ICC, and the WHO - Trump’s efforts at dismantling the institutions met with domestic and international constraints.

In terms of its engagement with non-military international institutions, the Trump administration was frequently adversarial, though its largest threat - withdrawal from the WTO - never materialized. Even as late as Spring 2020, some Republican Senators called for full withdrawal. Anticipating the certain failure of such a move and not wanting to force its Senators to take an official stance, the GOP-controlled Finance Committee used parliamentarian maneuvering to scuttle a vote.48 And even though any serious effort towards a move like initiating withdrawal from the WTO deserves attention, it is worth remembering that the House defeated a 2005 measure calling for withdrawal, 86-338, which was only slightly closer than a 2000 withdrawal vote of 56-363.

The Trump administration, however, did succeed in hamstringing the Dispute Settlement Understanding’s Appellate Body (AB) in late 2019 by blocking the appointment of any new judges. After several judges stepped down, as scheduled, this left the AB without enough judges to rule. Though, it is worth remembering that the practice of blocking AB judges began with President Obama.49 While this effort has put the AB on indefinite hiatus, international constraints have blunted its overall impact. The European Union and 15 other WTO members formed the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement (MPIA), in April of 2020, which functions as a parallel appellate body among its members.50 The US has blocked a popular candidate for Secretary General of the WTO, though it is unclear how much this affects world trade.

Given candidate Trump’s antipathy towards international economic institutions, the IMF seemed a likely target for Trump’s ire. In the early years of the Trump administration, the IMF and the World Bank’s leadership took a quiet tack, avoiding anything that might provoke the Trump


administration into a confrontation.51 From 2018 and through the pandemic of 2020, the Trump administration’s record with respect to the IMF is a glass half-full versus half-empty appraisal. When the pandemic hit in 2020, the US Congress approved increases in IMF funding as part of the CARES Act.52 Many foreign policy elites and IMF member governments then called for a tremendous expansion in the IMF’s Special Drawing Rights, which allow governments to access a fund of “synthetic” currencies. The Trump administration blocked this effort, because most of these funds would be made available to countries outside of the low-income brackets, who did not need them.53 The Administration also opposed funding that would eventually go to Iran and Venezuela.

The constraints of the international system appear to have been the biggest check on Trump’s potential antagonism towards the IMF. Then-IMF President, Christine Lagarde, mused in 2017 that she could imagine IMF headquarters moving to Beijing by 2027, with the implication that China was waiting in the wings if the United States should significantly withdraw from the IMF.54 The United States also controls a 16.5% voting share at the IMF. Since decisions require approval from 85% of voting shares, the United States holds a de facto veto over many IMF decisions. The IMF also likely avoided substantial Trump ire, since - as we originally argued - its rules are set up to heavily favor US interests already.

With respect to the International Criminal Court (ICC), Trump has taken unprecedented, antagonistic steps. While the Obama Administration’s approach to the ICC included tacit support and even behind-the-scenes assistance, Trump’s approach has been to employ a policy of scorched earth. In 2019, the US denied the ICC Chief Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, a US visa, though this was largely symbolic since she could still visit and address the UN General Assembly. In 2020, however, the US placed Bensouda and another ICC official on a State Department sanctions list previously reserved for terrorists and narco-traffickers. The sanctions were very harsh, resulting in the freezing of the targets’ bank accounts and credit cards. The move was globally criticized and amounted to a naked use of power to antagonize the Court.55 The US also withdrew from participating in the UN Human Rights Council. Neither domestic opposition nor international responses prevented these actions. The US courts, however,

issued an injunction against Trump’s executive order on the grounds that it limited free speech. The Trump Administration must respond to the injunction on the day before Biden’s inauguration, and Biden is expected to rescind the order or let the injunction stand.  

Trump took several strong steps to sanction China for its human rights abuses. The US sanctioned several companies and individuals for their participation in oppressing Uighurs in Xinjiang Province. The US also revoked Hong Kong’s “special status,” which is a move designed to counter Chinese crackdowns on democracy. Both moves originated in Congress, where domestic constraints forced the President to at least take action on these especially egregious human rights violations. The sanctions on abuses in Xinjiang originated from a House bill that passed 413-1. The Hong Kong actions originated from a Senate bill passed by unanimous consent.

With regards to the World Health Organization and global health in general, the Trump Administration initially took antagonistic steps but then backed down. In early 2018, the Trump Administration surprised global health officials by recommending that Congress cut funding for Ebola preparedness and prevention, even as the disease was showing signs of resurgence. Shortly thereafter, Trump rescinded the budget cuts, obviating the need for Congress to decide on whether to keep the funding. The Administration had a brief spat with the WHO over breastfeeding recommendations, which Trump eventually denied starting and did not pursue.

COVID triggered the largest battle between Trump and the WHO, as Trump accused the WHO of coddling the Chinese and shielding them from scrutiny about the origins of the virus. He suspended funding to the Organization, issued a lengthy list of demands, and then promptly announced plans to withdraw. Here, the United States Congress - albeit the 1948 Congress - provided an unexpected check on Trump’s efforts. That year, both chambers passed a resolution requiring the US to have a one-year waiting period before withdrawing from the WHO and to pay any outstanding funding promises. President-elect Biden has already announced plans to remain in the WHO.

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57 Trump also approved some sanctions under the Magnitsky Act in response to Russian and Chechen human rights violations.
Candidate Trump campaigned about the obsolescence of the Atlantic alliance and the failure of European countries to pay their fair share. He openly questioned whether the United States would honor its collective defense obligations. President Trump continued this grumbling, but with less intensity over time. By the end of 2020, these complaints had largely died down, as both the United States and Europe have *increased* their monetary contributions to NATO.

Figure 3 shows the contributions to NATO in billions of USD from the United States (in blue) and European countries plus Canada (in red). The vertical line marks 2017, the first year of the Trump administration. The United States reversed a 5 year downward trend in NATO contributions and its allies continued a steady increase that began at the end of the Obama administration. As Charles Kupchan notes, “NATO at 70 is actually in remarkably good shape.”

Both domestic political constraints and the international system explain why none of the worst threats against NATO under Trump ever materialized. On the domestic side, “defenders of the alliance [came] out of the woodwork, especially in the US Congress,” again according to Kupchan. Writing in 2019, Kupchan provides myriad examples of how domestic political actors recognized and defended the value of NATO, constraining President Trump’s worst impulses.

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There [was] virtually no support—in his own administration, among the American public, or in Congress—for taking a wrecking ball to NATO. Even as Trump cycles through foreign policy advisers of various ideological persuasions, they are all competent enough to understand the abiding strategic value of NATO. The electorate similarly knows better than Trump. ...

Congress, though currently a wasteland when it comes to cooperation across the aisle, has responded to Trump’s NATO-phobia by becoming a bipartisan cheering squad for the alliance.

On the international side, the value of the alliance and the danger it counters provided constraints on any meaningful pullbacks from NATO. The presence of Russia as a strategic rival made it clear what would happen if the US and Europe weakened their commitments. Only a few years removed from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it was abundantly clear to all that Russia would happily step into any void left by the United States. Defense spending among NATO allies naturally increased as “they [reassessed] their presumption that Western Europe is safe from outside threats.”\(^{62}\) Quarrels over burden-sharing within NATO have been commonplace for its entire history, and will likely continue. As we argued in our original piece, “the Trump administration ... [found] it in their own interests to maintain many existing elements of us foreign policy,” a sentiment echoed again by Kupchan: “NATO is entering its eighth decade in quite good health because it succeeds admirably in advancing the shared interests of its members.”

**US Military Deployments**

In his 2019 State of the Union speech, two years into his administration, Trump claimed he would be proactive in bringing troops back to the United States. What actually happened? As one commentator put it, “But after nearly three years in office, Trump’s promised retrenchment has yet to materialize. The president hasn’t meaningfully altered the U.S. global military footprint he inherited from President Barack Obama.”\(^{63}\)

Figure 4 plots the percentage of active duty personnel deployed within the United States using data from the Defense Manpower Data Center. Starting in December of 2017, this excludes all personnel deployed in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This is because the Trump administration stopped reporting deployments for Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan in December 2017. So while total overseas deployments dropped from around 198,000 active duty personnel at the end of the Obama administration to around 174,000 in 2019, this reflects an accounting trick rather than a new strategic direction. Some reporting suggests only minor changes in deployments to

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these countries,\textsuperscript{64} and a pending lawsuit seeks the restoration of this data.\textsuperscript{65} Nonetheless, Figure 4 shows that the percentage serving in the US has remained largely flat, and it becomes even more flat if one factors in deployments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.\textsuperscript{66} Contractors working in these areas have also not been decreased during the Trump administration.\textsuperscript{67}

![Figure 4. Percentage of active military troops stationed within the United States. Note, beginning in December 2017, deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria not included in calculation. Including estimates for these cases decreases the percentage deployed in the US. Similar, flat, results are obtained in looking at civilian Department of Defense employees.](image)

Nor has he shifted the costly burden of defending U.S. allies. To the contrary, he loaded even greater military responsibilities on the United States while either ramping up or maintaining U.S. 


\textsuperscript{65} Kate Brannen and Ryan Goodman, “We’re suing the Pentagon to find out where U.S. troops are deployed,” \textit{PostEverything} (blog), \textit{The New York Times}, 7 October 2020, \url{https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/10/07/were-suing-pentagon-find-out-where-us-troops-are-deployed/}

\textsuperscript{66} Another contentious region has been East Africa. Here Trump administration efforts to cut US presence has faced Congressional push back (Robbie Gramer, “U.S. Congress Moves to Restrain Pentagon Over Africa Drawdown Plans,” \textit{Foreign Policy}, 4 March 2020, \url{https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/04/africa-military-trump-esper-pentagon-congress-africom-counterterrorism-sahel-great-power-competition/}) and many (though not all) changes have been within region redployments ( Kyle Rempfer, “US forces pack up in Somalia for elsewhere in east Africa,” \textit{Army Times}, 21 December 2020, \url{https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2020/12/21/us-forces-pack-up-in-somalia-for-elsewhere-in-east-africa/}).

involvement in the conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{68} These claims to “bring back the troops” extended back to his 2016 campaign.\textsuperscript{69}

Trump also claimed that he would invest more in the military after the Obama administration had decimated spending. Unsurprisingly, neither had Obama decimated funding for the military nor was Trump able to increase spending.\textsuperscript{70} Several additional patterns warrant discussion.

First, Trump’s whiplash approach to drawing down troops and then reversing his decision characterized most of his administration’s tenure. In both Syria and Afghanistan, Trump made sudden announcements of withdrawal, only to in fact walk those decisions back. On top of this were new commitments due to emerging threats from countries like Iran. And here too we saw a back and forth with carrier forces being brought home on one day and then days later a reversal due at least in part to changing threat assessments.\textsuperscript{71} Rather than adopting an anti-liberal internationalist strategy, Trump in this domain adopted little in the way of a strategy.

Third, Trump’s efforts have been repeatedly stymied by bipartisan Congressional opposition to dramatic changes. Historically, Congress has often tried to prevent deployments and bring troops home. But under the Trump administration the opposite has been in effect. Congress has used a number of legislative vehicles, including mandating that such efforts be certified as not negatively impacting US national security. Coupled with little in the way of strategy and a lack of interagency coordination, these efforts have hobbled the President.\textsuperscript{72}

\textit{Arms Control}

In the area of arms control, the Trump administration made no progress on arms control and withdrew from several important agreements. Trump withdrew from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in 2019 and the Open Skies treaty in 2020, both of which were designed to reduce tensions between the US and Russia. The former limits shorter range
nuclear force numbers and the latter ensured that both countries had surveillance fly-over rights to assess military buildups by the other side. Trump failed to negotiate an extension to the New START treaty, which is set to expire shortly after he leaves office.

Neither domestic nor international constraints prevented Trump from making these moves. These constraints likely failed to affect Trump’s decision making because of the US’ belief that Russia already committed frequent violations of the INF and Open Skies treaties. These skepticism about Russian compliance with the agreements was bipartisan; the US, even under the Obama administration, had accused Russia of violating its arms control obligations. Though, it is worth noting that Biden and Putin agreed to extend New START for five years, just a few days into Biden’s term.

In its relations with North Korea, the Trump administration aimed unreasonably high, demanding denuclearization, and ultimately fell short. Some of Trump’s actions raised the possibility of progress. His “fire and fury” bluster - for all of it’s fear-inducing rhetoric - preceded the Hanoi Summit, a meeting that had potential to yield results. But ultimately, Kim Jong Un made unacceptably large demands of Trump and the summit yielded no results. In terms of liberal internationalism, Biden inherits a North Korean situation similar to that faced by Trump: an unclear path forward for halting or rolling back North Korean proliferation, addressing the regime’s egregious human rights situation, or integrating it into the world economy.

In 2018, Trump unilaterally left the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the US, Europe, and Iran. Here, too, neither domestic and international constraints prevented Trump from taking this action. On the domestic side, the agreement faced significant Republican opposition even at its origin under the Obama Administration. Some administration officials, like then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and national security adviser HR McMaster, advocated for staying in the deal. However, international constraints blunted the effectiveness of the US withdrawal. Trump hoped that Europe would follow suit and join the US in forcing Iran back to the negotiating table to accept a worse deal. Instead, they remained in the deal and declined to re-impose sanctions. Since the US withdrawal, Iran has violated the terms of the agreement. The European members triggered the agreement’s dispute settlement provisions over the violations, but as of late 2020, Europe had not reimposed sanctions. In an ideal

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world, Trump would have correctly anticipated the likelihood that unilateral withdrawal would only leave the US isolated as the original JCPOA participants continued the deal. The power of US secondary sanctions helped Trump retain a great deal of influence over Europe with respect to Iran, which likely helped incline him toward unilateral action. The path forward for the incoming Biden administration remains unclear, as domestic politics in Iran could potentially take a more hardline, anti-US turn.  

Climate Change

In late 2016 we argued that we expected that Trump would be no advocate for climate related issues, but that his efforts would be limited by a variety of forces. We argued that green related investment and job opportunities would continue to grow, some state and local governments would push back against federal efforts to block or unwind climate policies, and that international constraints (e.g., other countries continuing with the Paris agreement, other countries getting an advantage in green technologies) would remain relevant. Trump, as expected, was no friend of the environment and pursued a number of policies that had negative impacts. However, the constraints we identified were present and important.

Green job growth

Despite Trump’s desires, employment, production, and revenue from US coal production continued its decline during the Trump administration. And employment in revenue in green related jobs grew. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that wind turbine technicians will be the fastest job category growth area in the country. This, of course, overlooks whether growth in these areas would have been higher without a Trump administration. Indeed, some have argued that Trump’s tariffs on solar panels as part of his China trade war have constrained solar installation growth. Needless to say, all indications point to a substantial focus by the Biden administration to accelerate the green economy.

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Of course, Trump’s efforts to roll back environmental regulatory frameworks have been substantial and often linked to an argument that these rollbacks will create jobs of their own. How much the Biden administration can reverse these changes will depend on a number of factors, including procedural constraints around new rule-making/changes to previous rules. The January 2021 striking down of the Trump administration’s Affordable Clean Energy rule by a Federal Appeals court will make it easier for the Biden administration to pursue climate friendly policies. Politically, an important question will be whether changes pursued by the Biden administration help produce green jobs.

**Pushback by state and local government**

States and local municipalities around the country have pushed back against the Trump administration both by challenging his policies in court, but also by passing their own environmental policies and commitments. California has been at the front of these actions, but in many cases have been joined by other states. After revoking California’s right to set emissions standards for vehicles, California was joined by 22 states and several large cities in a lawsuit against the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. California’s battle against Trump’s revocation of Clean Air Act waivers (which enable California to adopt more stringent rules) will be determined during the Biden administration. It seems unlikely that Trump’s policies will remain in place.

Some of this pushback has been aided by large firms. For example, Ford agreed to work with California and push for higher mileage standards. General Motors originally signed on to support the Trump administration lawsuit challenging California’s setting of higher mileage standards, but subsequently withdrew following Trump’s election loss.

In reaction to Trump’s decision to leave the Paris Agreement, mayors and governors throughout the US have come together under the banner “We are still in.” Along with other more formalized efforts like the C40 (now representing 97 cities and 1/12th of the world’s population),

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85 Nathan Hultman and Paul Bodnar, “Trump tried to kill the Paris agreement, but the effect has been the opposite,” *PlanetPolicy* (blog), *Brookings Institution*, 1 June 2018, [https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2018/06/01/trump-tried-to-kill-the-paris-agreement-but-the-effect-has-been-the-opposite/](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2018/06/01/trump-tried-to-kill-the-paris-agreement-but-the-effect-has-been-the-opposite/)
sub-national political actors remain highly involved in the climate change space. Some argue that the incoming Biden/Harris administration will be able to leverage this more local mobilization to great effect.\textsuperscript{86} Here we see an example of domestic constraints that extend well beyond Congress.

\textit{International Constraints}

On June 1st 2017, Trump announced that the United States would be leaving the Paris Agreement. Due to the rules of the agreement, the formal withdrawal took place the day after the US election where Trump lost his bid for re-election. Biden has signalled that the US plans to rejoin. Trump’s decision to withdraw from Paris was not met with an unwinding of the agreement, with other countries also leaving the agreement or revising their voluntary pledges downward. Some countries have even started to increase their goals. Though given the voluntary nature of the agreement, with minimal monitoring and reporting processes, details on exactly how these countries will meet their goals remains less clear. In addition to sustained efforts by other countries, and state and local efforts discussed above, transnational actors continue to play an important role as well.\textsuperscript{87}

It will be interesting the extent to which achieving climate goals will get linked to other policy areas, like trade (put in some academic cites as this is not new). The European Union has set its sights on a border adjustment mechanism that would essentially tax the carbon content of goods imported into the EU. The goal is to have these in place by June 2021, and public consultations have been conducted throughout 2020.\textsuperscript{88} How policies like these, which would have large consequences for the US, get evaluated by the World Trade Organization remains to be seen. It would seem that the WTO could play a valuable role for many parties in helping to put in place an efficient and principled way of implementing such adjustments, especially if other


countries beyond the EU begin to put them in place. Multilateral cooperation on these carbon taxes would be preferable to unilateral adoption of multiple conflicting policies.

The Future

As we reviewed above, Trump’s claims to lead an America First foreign policy and the policy outcomes from his administration are not consistent. He was, by and large, unable to change US foreign policy in terms of resources and policies; however, the tenor of his administration was very different from previous ones and poisonous to American interests. In terms of foreign aid, his calls for radical reductions did not occur. And we think he was unable to redirect aid to different countries and tasks. He did not get rid of or downrange the World Bank or IMF, whose goals are to help developing countries by providing expertise and aid. In these cases, the Congress and foreign policy bureaucracy and interest groups seems to have constrained him. In trade, he was able to launch a trade war with China and other countries using tariffs and unilateral measures. We expected him to be more constrained here by Congress, interest groups and foreign retaliation. And his administration has hamstrung the WTO badly. The problem is that all these actions have left everyone globally worse off, as trade wars do.

In terms of immigration, he decried it and tried to stop most of it. But our data suggest he was often stymied by Congress, interest groups, and most unexpectedly the courts. Similarly, he has denounced NATO time and again. But Congress, the US foreign policy bureaucracy and the military have prevented any further degradation of US involvement; the government for decades has complained about burden sharing so this is nothing new and will continue. Trump also demanded redeployment of American troops back to the US, but once more he was stymied in this by Congress and the foreign policy establishment, as well as by international pressures for US engagement. And finally on climate change and the environment, his administration has weakened many environmental policies and regulations at home and he did pull out of the Paris accord. But local governments, business firms and international pressures have kept these issues alive and it seems likely the US will rejoin the Paris agreement in 2021. Overall, Trump may have poisoned relations with allied and friendly nations through his comments and Twitter talk. But in reality, his administration was unable to change many foreign policies because of the strong constraints exercised by domestic institutions and foreign pressures. A policy stance of American first does not provide for American security and prosperity and this generates much resistance to such a direction.

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91 For analyses of this dynamic in previous administrations, see Helen V. Milner and Dustin Tingley. Sailing the water’s edge: The domestic politics of American foreign policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)
We, among many other scholars, expect the Biden administration to reverse many of the directions of the Trump administration's foreign policy. From American First, we expect a return to a more Liberal Internationalist posture. This means less unilateralism, more multilateral cooperation, a revival of American diplomacy and soft power instruments, stronger ties with our allies, less coddling of autocrats like Putin, and more engagement with international institutions for dealing with transnational problems like climate change and pandemics. We don’t expect a wholesale return to the policies of the period before Trump. Competition, mixed with cooperation, with China will prevail; new trade agreements will be less likely; immigration will be somewhat restrained; military interventions abroad will be less likely. But the tenor of America’s foreign policy will change greatly.

Policies that promote liberal internationalism are in America’s best interests. They are the best way to advance American security and prosperity. Engagement, openness to the world economy, strong ties with our democratic allies, deep multilateral cooperation often within international institutions, and use of all instruments of statecraft including sanctions and foreign aid to deal with our rivals and enemies are critical to American success. As Jervis, et al. in their introduction to the earlier book about Trump that sparked this essay notes, “The clear national interests and the obvious economic benefits to powerful and widespread economic interests should provide incentives to maintain if not deepen the sorts of arrangements that have brought the United States and the West such peace and prosperity.”

The world is greatly changed from that imagined by Realists where anarchy is the central and sole characteristic of the global system.

We now live in one where interdependence is the key. American security depends on the actions of other countries, not just its own. Nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons, not to mention cyberweapons and space ones, have global ramifications. Large scale use of these instruments can destroy much of the world’s population and lands. Every country’s security depends on what others do. This is also true for the economy. Interdependence shapes all nation’s economies. Innovation occurs in few countries; most are dependent on other countries for new technologies. Wages and the distribution of income domestically and globally are deeply affected now by global flows of people, capital, services, and goods. And as we have seen with the COVID crisis, the nation’s health depends on what other countries do and don’t do. A final example is climate change, which is a global process that can only be managed successfully with international cooperation.

Failure to recognize this interdependence and adopt policies to deal with it will leave the US more vulnerable and less secure and rich. International cooperation and agreements are necessary means to manage global interdependence. The US, like other countries, must engage to make sure that other countries mutually adjust their policies so every country does not end up worse off. Global economic and security interdependence pressure countries to engage globally and exert constraints on those that fail to do so, much as Realists such as

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Waltz claim for anarchy. But instead of power balancing, interdependence pushes states to bargain and create multilateral cooperative solutions to their global problems. Ignoring the rest of the world will not make Americans safer or richer, it will just leave everyone worse off, as Trump’s trade war reveals. The constraints imposed by global interdependence force American engagement with the rest of the world. A bipartisan group of prominent thinkers, advising JP Morgan Chase, forcefully and publicly articulated every view on this last day of the Trump administration, arguing for a “reset” back to a time when global engagement was not construed as weakness.93

Even before the inauguration of Joseph Biden, some scholars have already preemptively recycled versions of past predictions about the demise of liberal internationalism. According to Walter Mead, a variety of factors like the strength of China and Russia and technological change, in addition to previously touted game-changers like political polarization, ensure that Trump’s administration was merely another data point in an ongoing death spiral of liberal internationalism.

Today, however, the most important fact in world politics is that this noble effort [of liberal internationalism] has failed. ... the dream of a universal order, grounded in law, that secures peace between countries and democracy inside them will figure less and less in the work of world leaders.94

This view of what liberal internationalist entails is misleading. And we do not think that previous predictions about the demise of liberal internationalism have come to pass either.95

The myth of global interdependence is that it implies harmonious relations and unilateral disarmament in a general sense, as implied by the idea of a rules-based international order. This view of foreign affairs is mistaken and not based on the theories of cooperation that underlie an interdependent world--i.e., theories of liberal internationalism. Cooperation in this interdependent world relies on retaliation, sanctioning, and threats and use of economic and military statecraft. Interdependence implies that other countries’ policies exert effects, often negative, on the home country. Getting that foreign country to change its policies relies on cooperative gestures offering to change your policies and on sanctioning policies if the country resists changing its policies. An interdependent world can look very nasty or very nice depending on whether threats of non-cooperative behavior descend into mutual defection or whether they achieve cooperative outcomes by the mutual adjustment of policies.

What does not work in such a world is a belief that a country can isolate itself and avoid all consequences of other countries behavior. Isolation from the externalities of others’ policies is simply not possible, or certainly not any reasonable cost. A country cannot shut itself off from climate change, from pandemics, from nuclear war fallout, or global economic shocks. Engagement with other countries and nonstate actors is necessary for security and prosperity. But this doesn’t mean unilateral opening or disarmament in any way. Threats, economic statecraft, and exploiting asymmetric interdependence are part of politics in an interdependent world.

This engagement is likely to be most contentious in regard to China. The Obama administration was already in the process of viewing China as a strategic competitor with whom they could work if the Chinese acted as responsible stakeholders in the international system. Concerns about China’s behavior from a US point of view have grown much during and after Obama’s time in office. The Trump administration's attacks on Chinese trade, firms, and foreign investment were aggressive, but they are part of Western countries’ realization of China’s pullback from a liberal world order. Its economy has become more state-directed and its polity more autocratic in the past decade. The Biden administration will have to deal with China as its major strategic competitor. We expect that like the Trump administration it will use threats and economic statecraft but unlike the past president it will be less verbally confrontational and also try to use its allies and friends around the world to rally support for a liberal international order.

The role of international institutions also needs clarifying. These serve not mainly as rules based organizations governing states’ behavior. Rather, they operate to implement the deals wrought by states to avoid mutual defection outcomes and to make cooperative efforts more efficient. Some scholars in dismissing Liberal Internationalism claim that these institutions (never did) no longer can help.96 But we think the Biden administration can and will use these to pursue American goals, as other states do and will.

While in the discussion above we claim that Trump was unable to dismantle and destroy many of these institutions, they do face challenges. Biden’s administration may restore their place in American diplomacy. But many international institutions need reforms to adapt better to global changes. The rising role of China is likely to displace American influence in these institutions and raises new questions about how they will operate. During the Cold war, institutions containing both the US and USSR were often hamstrung. China is now part of many institutions that undergird the liberal international order. Were China just another large capitalist democracy this would cause problems, but given that its state-led economy is not a typical capitalist one and that it is not a democracy, these problems are likely to be profound. On the other hand, the US may be (seen as) more inconstant than ever. Its domestic politics are

96 “Institutions such as NATO, the UN, and the World Trade Organization may well survive (bureaucratic tenacity should never be discounted), but they will be less able and perhaps less willing to fulfill even their original purposes, much less take on new challenges.” Walter Russell Mead, “The End of the Wilsonian Era,” Foreign Affairs, 8 December 2020, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-12-08/end-wilsonian-era
polarized between two similarly electoral sized groups who may alternate in office over time. How can US foreign policy--its threats and promises--be considered credible then?

On the domestic front, we expect the constraints that held back Trump to also operate for Biden. In Trump’s case the constraints operated to prevent more of a turn to America first policies. As we detailed above, the US bureaucracy, Congress, the courts, the press and public opinion to some extent blocked Trump’s pursuit of more isolationist, more unilateral, and more deregulatory foreign policies. This was an unusual position for Congress, the press, big business, public opinion and the courts. In most administrations since World War II, the executive branch has tended to be more internationalist than most of these domestic actors. Domestic pressure against more global engagement, more multilateralism, more military and foreign aid spending has been predominant in the past. We expect a return to this posture. The Biden administration, while pursuing more LI policies, will need to tailor that engagement to ensure better and fairer outcomes for the median US voter. Openness to trade, immigration and foreign investment will need to be conditioned by the domestic distributive effects of such flows. Asserting more demands for improving the treatment of labor, the environment, human rights, and other regulatory priorities in agreements with other countries in exchange for access to the US market will be important. Conditional openness is likely to a robust part of Biden’s foreign policy.

Much of our analysis considers the role of domestic and international institutions. We think that a future round of scholarship on the design of these institutions is warranted. For international institutions, the Trump presidency has brought a number of questions to the fore. For example, how can escape and exit clauses be specifically designed to maintain international cooperation while facilitating countries participating in the first place. Similarly, there are important questions around how much influence powerful and important countries, like the United States, should have in these organizations. While occupying an influential role in an institution can increase the incentives to meaningfully engage, it can come with the tradeoff that this can disadvantage other countries. Designing institutions to deal with this fundamental tradeoff remains important.

Domestically, a number of questions around institutional design are important to consider. Some of these are more pertinent to purely domestic issues, like rule of law and corruption, which is important given Trump’s disregard of previous rules and norms. But other questions that bear more directly on foreign policy are also present. Classic issues around the relative roles of Congress and the Presidency in shaping American foreign policy remain politicized and up for grabs. For example, the party out of power always laments the heavy reliance on Executive Orders. But these orders are used to circumvent constraints, and yet can be unwound by the next administration. It remains to be seen if American political institutions can be established

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that appropriately limit this dynamic and provide more consistency and credibility to American foreign policy.

As Jervis noted in his 2018 essay forecasting Trump’s foreign policy, Trump’s election offers a great opportunity to test IR theories. One major issue has been how important individual leaders are relative to the international system and domestic constraints. Trump tested this forcefully. He came forth with many non-traditional ideas that broke with decades of US foreign policy. We believe that he did not fundamentally change actual American policies anywhere near as much as he desired. Our view is that domestic and international constraints prevented many of these changes. Pressures from the international system and democratic institutions worked to frustrate his America First program.

Another issue is the relative role of interests and norms. Trump challenged and broke a number of norms in both domestic and foreign politics. We did not address the issue of norms above, but they are clearly important, especially at the domestic level in terms of democratic standards. Trump and his administration have criticized and violated many long-standing norms. This has been and will be costly to the US in the long run. American soft power has been hurt. Other countries now, especially non-democratic ones, can point to Trump’s words and behavior to justify their norm-breaking, and America’s ability to call out others’ bad behavior is diminished. On the normative side then, the Trump administration has had a sizable negative impact. Can these norms be reconstructed for the changed world we inhabit? Pursuing American national interests, we expect the Biden administration to try to renew American engagement with the world in ways that reinvigorate global norms for cooperative behavior.

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