

State of the Union under Donald Trump Presidency: Problems, Policies and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

On November 8, 2016 President-elect Donald Trump emerged as an unconventional, anti-establishment candidate and Washington outsider. On the campaign trail, he identified four major problems: economy, health care, immigration, and foreign policy under President Obama that he owed to fix if elected. He declared that our economy is choked by NAFTA, TPP, outsourcing and tax hikes. He called Obama care disastrous. He claimed our immigration policy was without borders and illegal immigration is out of control; and, as for our foreign policy, all nations around the world are laughing at us. He promised through his 'Contract with America,' with a list of 18 policy measures, to turn the issues around in his first 100 days and "make America great again." This paper examines the problems, policies and prospects based on his presidential undertakings in the first month-and-a-half in the White House.

Keywords: State of the Union, Trump Presidency, American Health Care Act, Affordable Care Act, Travel Ban, Executive Orders, protests, Russian connection.

INTRODUCTION

Donald Trump's victory as the 45th president of the United States attracted a variety of reactions from at home and abroad. Conservatives and Trump supporters were happy; liberals reacted with fear, frustration and anger; and, optimists said that he deserves a chance (Hoilman 2016). Some attributed his victory to a lack of enthusiasm for Hillary Clinton, the Electoral College, low voter turnout, and Russian propaganda (Krieg 2016). Others gave credit to his focus on the political economy.

For example, Robert Johnson, Senior Fellow and Director of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (2017: Para 2) wrote:

Trump won by challenging the credibility of both the political and academic establishments, relentlessly highlighting discrepancies between their depiction of the United States' political economy and the reality that many voters experienced. Like Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary, he started drawing large crowds by breaking ranks with his party's mainstream. While Hillary Clinton and Republican rivals such as Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio tried to build coalitions based on cultural issues and partisan traditions, Trump and

Sanders set their sights squarely on what mattered most to voters: a political economy in which elected officials strongly promoted a broad-based prosperity that included them.

That may be the case. But, anti-Trump protesters let their feelings be known via protests and marches in several major cities like Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Oakland, Portland, Seattle, Washington, D.C.; and at college campuses in California, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania (Mele and Correal 2016). Democratic senators vowed to stand up to Trump's bigotry, if it continued. For example, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren made her position on Trump bigotry clear (Silva 2016: Para 3):

We will stand up to bigotry. No compromises ever on this one. Bigotry in all its forms. We will fight back against attacks on Latinos, on African Americans, on women's, on Muslims, on immigrants, on disabled Americans, on anyone. Whether Donald Trump sits in a glass tower or sits in the White House, we will not give an inch on this, not now, not ever.

Some Republicans, who were 'never Trump conservatives' like George H.W. Bush, Mitt Romney, Ben Sasse, Mike Lee, and Bill Kristol, to list a few, rapidly switched to support post-

election Trump (Sheffield 2016), perhaps due to his growing popularity at the time. In an early tracking poll conducted by Politico.com during November 16-18, 2016, 46 percent of 1,885 registered voters surveyed viewed president-elect Trump very favorably or somewhat favorably—higher than the majority leader Mitch McConnell (21%), house speaker Paul Ryan (38%), Republicans in Congress (39%), or Democrats in Congress (42%). Although Trump's popularity did not change by a big margin (stayed within a range of 4 percent in most polls) since his inauguration on January 20, 2016, people seemed to be increasingly worried that his actions will divide the country further. In a Quinnipiac poll of 1,155 voters during February 2-6, 2017, 58 percent said that Donald Trump would do more to divide the country, rather than unite the nation; and, 64 percent said that they were very or somewhat dissatisfied with the way things were going in the nation, at least in part, because of his personal qualities: not honest (52%), does not have good leadership skills (50%), does not care about average Americans (52%), not level-headed (60%), and does not share their values (58%). Gender-wise, 58 percent of women voters disapprove of his job performance, compared to only 36 percent of their male counterparts (Quinnipiac University 2017). Furthermore, Americans find it hard to escape from media-saturated news and interviews focused on the ever-mounting controversies of his "America First" foreign policy, his infamous travel-ban executive order on immigration, his claims of Obama administration wiretapping Trump Tower phones, and the Russian involvement in presidential elections, whether they are at a public gatherings, at work places, or at private parties. Thus, Trump's presidency to date, for the most part, is a combination of noise and signals (Cohen 2017).

PROBLEMS

Problems of Trump's presidency can broadly be categorized into four: lies, leaks, lawsuits, and chaos.

Lies

A lie, in general terms, is a statement that contradicts a known or verifiable fact. Here are some selective recent examples that took considerable amount of debate media time: (1) On February 16, 2017, when Trump said that he won most electoral college votes since Ronald Reagan, a reporter at the news conference quickly contradicted with factual data that he

only won 306 electoral votes, which is a smaller number than George H. W. Bush (426 in 1988), Bill Clinton (370 in 1992 and 379 in 1996) or Obama (365 in 2008).⁽²⁾ On February 10, 2017, Trump said that thousands of people were "brought in on buses" from Massachusetts to vote illegally in New Hampshire, which was also reported by the Associated Press; but officials at New Hampshire's secretary of state, US Attorney's Office, Massachusetts's attorney general's office said there was no evidence to support Trump's claim. ⁽³⁾ On February 7, 2017, Trump told a group of US sheriffs that the murder rate in the U.S. was the "highest it's been in 45-47 years," though the 2015 FBI statistics show that the US murder rate is nearly at an all-time low at 5 homicides per 100,000 persons. ⁽⁴⁾ On January 26, 2017, the day after he signed an executive order to extend a wall along the southern border and insisted that Mexico would pay for it. Trump said that he and Mexico's president agreed to cancel a meeting, but hours later, Pena Nieto tweeted that he called the White House to cancel the meeting because of his disagreement over building a wall (For a complete list of Trump's lies from the day after his inauguration, see Georgantopoulos 2017). Additionally, Trump aids like White House Press Secretary, Sean Spicer and Counselor Kellyanne Conway also joined in making false claims in varying degrees (see Bobic 2017). "The man who boasts that he habitually tells the truth is simply a man with no respect for it," said Henry Louis Mencken (1922:274).

Leaks

Leaks are the unauthorized disclosures. Clearly, they pose problems, especially if they are big ones. Durden (2017) listed the 10 biggest leaks of the Trump presidency. Of them, the following three appear to be the most significant in terms of their impact on the President and his administration: First, a draft memo from Secretary John Kelly, dated January 25, 2017, regarding *Implementing the President's Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements Policies*. The 11-page memo covered: (A) Policies regarding the apprehension and detention of aliens described in Section 235 of the INA; (B) Hiring more border patrol agents; (c) Identifying and quantifying sources of aid to Mexico; (D) Expansion of the 287(g) program to include state guard units in the border region; (E) Commissioning a comprehensive study of border security; (F) Border wall construction and funding; (G)

Expanding expedited removal pursuant to section 235(b)(1)(A)(III)(I) of the INA; (H) Implementing the provisions of section 235(b)(2)(c) of the INA to return arriving aliens to contiguous countries; (I) Restoring integrity to asylum referrals and credible fear determinations pursuant to section 235(b)(I) of the INA; (J) Allocation of resources and personnel to the southern border for detention of aliens and adjudication of claims; (K) Proper use of parole authority pursuant to section 212(d)(5) of the INA; (L) Proper processing and treatment of unaccompanied alien minors encountered at the border; (M) Prioritizing criminal prosecutions for immigration offenses committed at the border; and, (N) Public reporting of border apprehensions data (for a complete memo, see Savitsky 2017). On February 17, 2017, Trump tweeted that “the real scandal here is that classified information is illegally given out by ‘intelligence’ like candy. Very un-American!”

Second, on February 2, 2017, the *New York Times* reported that a phone call between Trump and Australian prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, turned contentious “after the Australian leader pressed the president to honor an agreement to accept 1,250 refugees from an Australian detention center.” Trump reportedly called the agreement a “dumb deal,” and that he would “study this dumb deal,” as he tweeted the same later. The call was “shorter than planned, and ended abruptly,” according to a Trump administration official (Thrush and Innis 2017).

Third, a few anonymous military personnel leaked to the press that the death of the U.S. Navy SEAL, William “Ryan” Owen during the first Special Operations raid that took place on January 29, 2017 in Yemen was the result of Trump’s decision to approve the raid without proper intelligence. Trump called the raid successful because three top al Qaeda leaders were killed, ignoring that 15 women and children were also killed, and six American were injured in the raid. Arizona Republican Senator and leader of the Armed Services Committee, John McCain disagreed.

Chief Owen’s father, Bill Owens, who refused to meet with President Trump questioned, “Why, at this time, did there have to be this stupid mission when it wasn’t even barely a week into his administration?” However, as a measure of some solace, Chief Owen’s widow, Carryn Owens, was recognized with a 2-minute long applause from the President and all

members in the gallery, when Trump addressed joint session of Congress on March 1, 2017. Democratic and some Republican law makers demanded an emergency briefing (Fandos 2017; Kight 2017; Schmitt and Sanger 2017).

Thus, if the president is unable to contain these leaks effectively, whistleblowers may use selective leaks to make sure that people know what is really going on inside the White House. Trump’s anger, name-calling, and blaming of Obama loyalists is apparently not helping to stop these leaks. Meanwhile, the anti-secrecy organization, WikiLeaks, is doing its part to keep everyone, including CIA, on alert (see for the recent postings on CIA’s code named “Vault 7” confidential documents, WikiLeaks 2017).

Lawsuits

Trump’s lawsuit legacy continued even after his stepping into the Oval Office. By some accounts, he has been named in 55 federal lawsuits within the first two weeks in office. Of them, 40 pertain to Trump’s controversial executive order limiting refugees’ admission and blocking travel from seven Muslim-majority countries; 9 related to civil rights; 4 related to immigration in general; and, one each for financial conflicts of interest and federal funds to sanctuary cities (Rose and Yesko 2017). Within a week of his presidency, on January 27, 2017, Trump signed an executive order entitled, *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States* that banned nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries (Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen) from entering the U.S. for at least the next 90 days; stopped those fleeing from war-torn Syria indefinitely; stopped the admission of all refugees for four months; and, called for a review into suspending the Visa Interview Waiver Program that allows travelers from 38 countries including close allies. The estimated impact of this order is barring nearly 218 million people from entering the U.S. (Diamond 2017). Several travelers, who were already in transit when the executive order was signed, were detained when they landed in the U.S. airports. On the following day, a federal judge in New York, Ann M. Donnelly granted an emergency stay for those who arrived or were in transit. The judge also ruled that people with valid visas cannot be deported (For a complete transcript of the ruling, see Nusca 2017). On February 3, 2017, U.S. District Judge James Robart in Seattle granted a temporary restraining order to impose a nationwide hold on

Trump's travel ban as a result of the lawsuit filed by Washington's Attorney General Bob Ferguson on the grounds that the order is causing significant harm to residents and effectively mandates discrimination. On the very next morning Trump tweeted, "The opinion of this so-called judge, which essentially takes law enforcement away from our country, is ridiculous and will be overturned!" But, to his disappointment, it was not overturned. On February 9, 2017, the federal appeals court of ninth circuit ruled unanimously against Trump on the travel ban (Zapotosky 2017).

On March 6, 2017, Trump signed a second travel ban, which does not block travel from Iraq and exempts green card holders from the named countries unlike the first ban. Also, it had a delayed implementation and allowed for ten days to accommodate people in transit. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other groups that filed lawsuits against the original order seemed to still be unhappy, since it has some of the same fatal flaws (Campbell 2016). Therefore, on March 29, 2017, the federal judge in Hawaii, Hon. Derrick K. Watson, issued a nationwide preliminary injunction against Trump's second travel ban; and a few hours later, the Maryland federal judge, Theodore D. Chaung, did the same (Gonzales, Rose, and Kennedy 2017). On March 29, 2017, the city of Seattle filed a lawsuit challenging Trump's immigration executive order to withhold federal funds from sanctuary cities is "fatally ambiguous" and unconstitutional (Levenson 2017).

Chaos

Trump's tendency to make controversial statements during his campaign days continued even after his winning the presidential election. His dispute over the inauguration crowd size was characterized by the White House Counselor Kellyanne Conway as "alternative facts," (Robertson and Farley 2017). Anti-Trump protests (Sanchez 2016), marches (Watkins and Mathes 2017), impromptu rallies (Fins and Webb 2017), and noisy town hall meetings (Chang et al. 2017; Mai-Due 2017) all over the country became routine occurrences since his election. Scandals on Trump's cabinet members are mounting.

His national security adviser, Michael Flynn, resigned after a week of his confirmation, because of a scandal over a conversation he had with the Russian ambassador to the U.S. (For a letter of his resignation, see Singer 2017); and

earlier, his son, Mike Flynn, Jr. was fired from Trump's transition team for spreading conspiracy theories, namely "Pizzagate" on Twitter (Warren 2016).

On March 30, 2017, Flynn offered to testify in exchange for immunity. His attorney, Robert Kelner wrote in a statement that, "Gen. Flynn certainly has a story to tell, and he very much wants to tell it, should the circumstances permit. ...No reasonable person...would submit to questioning...without assurances against unfair prosecution" (Schneider and LoBianco 2017). Trump's Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, is in the middle of controversy for denying his conversations with Russian officials, which Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) asked him about during his confirmation hearings (Benen 2017). In fact, many are wondering about the nature, scope, and duration of the Russian connections that Trump and his aides may have and a number of GOP senators are calling for an "exhaustive investigation" (Kaczynski 2017; Wright 2017). The State Department's entire senior administrative team resigned, including the undersecretary for management, Patrick Kennedy (Rogin 2017). As if these things are not enough, Trump and Conway interfered with Nordstrom's decision to discontinue Ivanka Trump's clothing and accessory line (Sarlin 2017).

As a consolation prize, Ivanka is promised to have an office in the West Wing of the White House, and access to classified information—not as a government employee but as the first daughter (Lucey 2017).

And then, emerges the unsubstantiated controversial Trump-Tower wiretapping by Obama! (de Moraes 2017). Then, Devin Nunes, the House Intelligence Committee Chairman, caught up in crossfire for the way he handled the classified information on Russian interference in 2016 presidential elections (McCaskill 2017). When all these events put together, it spells the word "chaos."

In sum, while no presidency can possibly be completely free of problems, it is quite uncommon to have so many problems in such a short two-month period. Moreover, the tone and tenor in which Trump defends and/or shifts blame to others including his predecessor Obama, either through social media or on television, is making some psychologists and psychiatrists wonder whether he is mentally capable of "completely discharging the duties of President of the United States" (Sword and Zimbardo, 2017).

POLICIES

Soon after the election, President-elect Trump unveiled policy agenda for the first 100 days in the office, using a video published online: (1) withdraw from negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, (2) cancel environmental restrictions placed by Obama, (3) ask his national security team to buttress against infrastructure attacks, (4) have the labor department investigate federal worker visas, and (5) impose broad new bans on lobbying by government employees. His big-ticket items like, building a wall on Mexican border, establishing deportation force, or repealing and replacing Obama care were not part of this video (LoBianco 2016). However, back on October 22, 2016, then presidential-candidate Trump presented his “contract with the American voter,” that outlined his 100-day action plan to “Make America Great Again.” The plan was to do 18 things on the first day itself—pursue 6 measures to clean up the corruption and special interest collusion in Washington, D.C.; begin 7 actions to protect American workers; and, take 5 actions to restore security and the constitutional rule of law. Then, he would work with Congress to introduce 10 broader legislative measures and fight for their passage within the first 100 days of his administration: (1) Middle Class Tax Relief and Simplification Act; (2) End the Off shoring Act; (3) American Energy & Infrastructure Act; (4) School Choice and Education Opportunity Act; (5) Repeal and Replace Obamacare Act; (6) Affordable Childcare and Eldercare Act; (7) End Illegal Immigration Act; (8) Restoring Community Safety Act; (9) Restoring National Security Act; and, (10) Clean up Corruption in Washington Act (For a complete document of the contract, see Trump 2016). Sam Altman, the Y Combinatory president, created a website called, “Track Trump” to compare Trump’s promises to policy changes in the first 100 days. According to this website (<http://www.track-trump.com/roundups>) Trump has thus far ventured about 40 percent of his “contract” promises because, “more ambitious legislative initiatives, which will require a large fiscal commitment and a certain degree of bipartisan congressional support, are starting to get pushed further down the calendar.” President Trump signed the first bill (SB 81) on the day of his inauguration (January 20, 2017) to provide an exception to limit against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular

commissioned officer of the Armed Forces. It allowed retired Gen. James Mattis to serve as defense secretary. Second, on January 31, 2017, he signed HR 72, GAO Access and Oversight Act of 2017—an uncontroversial bill to affirm that Government Accountability Office has the right to obtain whatever agency records it deems necessary for an investigation. Third, on February 14, 2017, he signed HJ Res 41, Providing for Congressional Disapproval Under Chapter 8 of Title 5, United States Code, of a Rule Submitted by the Securities and Exchange Commission Relating to “Disclosure of Payments by Resource Extraction Issuers,”—to nullify Obama-era rule that demanded US companies file reports on their deals with foreign governments for access to natural resources in an attempt detect or deter the suspicious business for which they had often been investigated. Fourth, HJ Res 38, disapproving the Rule Submitted by the Department of the Interior known as the Stream Protection Rule—to nullify a 2,000+ page rule implemented after years of review by the Department of the Interior’s Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). It is hoped by the mining industry that this action would save up to 78,000 coal-mining jobs and another 200,000 jobs in related energy-industry by avoiding needless environmental regulations. Fifth, on February 28, 2017, he signed HR 255, Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship Act, to recognize gender gap and low wages for women in STEM fields; HR 321, Inspiring the Next Space Pioneers, Innovators, Researchers, and Explorers (INSPIRE) Women Act to recognize NASA programs that mentor girls and young women to pursue careers in STEM fields; and, HU Res 40, Providing for Congressional Disapproval under Chapter 8 of Title 5 United States Code of the Rule Submitted by the Social Security Administration Relating to Implementation of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007—a third application of Congressional Review Act to undo an Obama-era rule that prohibited people, who: (1) receive disability payments from the Social Security Administration; and (2) have been judged to need someone to handle their financial affairs because they are mentally ill or disabled from owning guns, although there was a provision to appeal on a case-by-case basis.

Essentially, it is a victory for the gun rights lobby (For additional information on these policies, see Cheadle 2017). Thus, of the seven bills that Trump signed, three were to nullify

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Obama-era rules, two to recognize women and gender wage-gap, one to affirm GAO authority, and one to facilitate Gen. James Mattis' appointment.

Table1. *Trump signed 16 executive orders between January 20 and March 6, 2017.*

No.	Name of the Executive Order	Date Signed
1	Minimizing the Economic Burden of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Pending Repeal	January 20,2017
2	Expediting Environmental Reviews and Appeals for High Priority Infrastructure Projects	January 24,2017
3	Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States	January 25,2017
4	Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements	January 25,2017
5	Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States	January 27,2017
6	Ethics Commitments by Executive Branch Appointees	January 28,2017
7	Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs	January 30,2017
8	Core Principles for Regulating the United States Financial System	February 3, 2017
9	Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety	February 9, 2017
10	Preventing Violence Against Federal, State, Tribal, and Local Law Enforcement Officers	February 9, 2017
11	Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking	February 9, 2017
12	Succession within the Department of Justice	February 9, 2017
13	Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda	February 24, 2017
14	Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the "Waters of the United States" Rule	February 28, 2017
15	The White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities	February 28, 2017
16	Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States	March 6, 2017

Source: *Compiled from the White House Webpage. Accessed on 3/10/17 [https://www.whitehouse.*

gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/executive-orders?term_node_tid_depth=51]

President Trump issued 16 executive orders (Table 1). While many of them were similar to those of Obama and Bush after taking office, two of them (#5 and #16) that set Trump apart were in the realm of immigration. These two orders drew a great deal of attention all over the world; and, domestically the first one (#5) was challenged and ruled against in federal trial and appeal courts. Only time will tell the fate of the second one (#16) when it comes into effect. In addition, Trump signed eight proclamations in his first 45 days in the office. He is yet to implement policies "that would influence hiring on national scale, despite his aggressive rhetoric on job creation. Nor has his presidency hurt job growth, judging by declines in unemployment in Barak Obama's last month in the office and Trump's first. Trump takes undue credit for hiring that has yet to occur for the return of jobs from overseas that have yet to come back" (Woodward and Drinkard 2017: Para 2).

The Republican-dominated Congress spent much of its time in its first 45 days under Trump in confirming his nominations. On March 6, 2017, the House Republicans revealed their long-pledged 666-page long replacement of Obama's Affordable Care Act (ACA) [https://consumer.mediallc.files.wordpress.com/2017/03/americanhealthcareact1.pdf]. The American Health Care Act (AHCA), as named by Republicans, was approved by two committees: House Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce, following long arguments. Although House Speaker Ryan and President Trump support it, the 36-member conservative House Freedom Caucus is not finding it satisfactory because it clings on to some provisions of Obama care, like: Tax credits, Children staying on parents' insurance until the age of 26; Medicaid expansion; and, Coverage for pre-existing health conditions in some form of the other. To these conservatives, this bill is simply "Obama care lite and not what they called for "repealing and replacing" (Bryan 2017). The Congressional Budget Office (2017) and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) estimated that 14 million more people would be uninsured in next year (2018) under the AHCA than ACA, which would rise to 21 million in 2020 and then to 24 million in 2026. Further, proposed Medicaid enrollment changes would result in an estimated 52 million people would be uninsured in 2026 under AHCA, compared with 28 million under ACA. Massachusetts Democratic Senator Elizabeth

Warren said, “Throwing 24 million people off their health care to give billionaires a tax break is heartless and irresponsible” (Reiss 2017). The arguments and controversies intensified on both sides of the House, as expected (Bryan 2017; Fulton 2017); and, on March 24, 2017, the bill was abruptly pulled from the House floor for lack of sufficient votes to pass it (DeBonis, L’Keefe and Costa 2017).

PROSPECTS

Prospects for the remaining period of Trump’s presidency depend on his ability to move away from self-humiliation and humiliation of the press. He needs to focus on broader issues that actually matter to the nation’s prosperity and lives of its people rather than on cherry-picking stuff to get a pat on the shoulder from his base supporters. He needs to stop allowing himself to be consumed in scandals and pay attention to what experts are saying, whether it be the economy or global warming or foreign relations—realizing that he is now working within the same “rigged” system that he ran against. Robert Johnson, Senior Fellow and Director of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute opined that (2017: Para 9), “If the Republicans pass a Keynesian growth package in the next two years that tightens labor markets and raises wages, they could secure their grip on power for many years to come. This, in turn, would enable them to appoint new Supreme Court justices willing to ignore or undercut women’s and worker’s rights, environmental protection, and public education. Such an outcome, given Trump’s campaign rhetoric, would be farcical, if it were not so tragic.”

The National Intelligence Council’s new report on Global Trends (2017:ix-xi) observed that in the next five years, we would see rising tensions within and between countries on issues ranging from the economy to the environment, religion, security, and the rights of individual—all of which threaten international security; that China and Russia would be emboldened, while regional aggressors and non-state actors see openings to pursue their interests; that home front for many countries would not be much better; and finally, the future for the next five or 20 years depends upon (a) the way in which individuals, groups, and governments renegotiate their expectations of one another to create political order in an era of empowered individual and rapidly changing economies; (b) the extent to which major state powers craft new patterns of international cooperation and

competition; and (c) the extent of governments preparing now for multifaceted global issues like climate change and transformative technologies.

Paradoxically, there are also greater opportunities for better outcomes over the long term if states and organizations remain resilient and invest in infrastructure, knowledge, and relationships that help managing shock—economic, environmental, societal, or cyber. In essence, it is up to governments and societies to develop shared consciousness and national endowments “in a way that yields sustainable security, prosperity, and hope.” But the global partnerships, intelligence or otherwise, do not work well, if Trump holds on to his penchant of unpredictability. In a television interview, for example, on January 25, 2016 (CNN 2016: Para 60) Trump responded to the question, “How aggressive would you be in trying to destroy [ISIS]?” thus:

I don’t want to tell you. You know why? We need unpredictability in this country. You are asking a question like that. I know it’s politically never good to say, I don’t want to tell you. But I have a good chance of winning. I don’t want the enemies and even our allies to know exactly what I’m thinking. We have got to be poker players. We have got to be chess players. You know what we are? We’re checker players, and we don’t play well. And part of the reason is, we always tell everything. Like, Obama goes -- and he has got 50 people that he’s sending over. Why does he have to make an announcement he’s sending 50 people? He’s sending 50 soldiers, our finest over there to Iraq and to Syria.

And he saw the price of acting alone without proper intelligence in his first authorized Yemen ride. Ali Wyne, a nonresident fellow with the Atlantic Council’s Brent Scowcroft on International Security and a security fellow with the Truman National Security Project, feared that (2017: Para 16):

...the administration’s recalibration could prove to be an end in and of it, divorced from a longer-term conception of America’s role in the world. Its execution of uncoordinated diplomatic transactions could eventually create a web of positions whose internal contradictions are too great in number and substance to permit the administration a coherent foreign policy; that ambiguity could unnerve allies and embolden competitors to further test the resilience of the postwar order. And Trump may

discover that business acumen does not readily translate into strategic foresight. The only evident certainty is that U.S. foreign policy these next four years will keep the world guessing, and hedging.

On the domestic front, it is still unknown what impact Trump's proposals for an estimated \$21.6 billion to build a wall along the Mexico border (Reiff 2017), taxing Mexican imports at 20 percent (Dsouza 2017), \$54 billion to boost defense spending (Lockie 2017), etc. as well as the executive orders he signed to expedite environmental approvals, debunk wall street regulatory measures, or to enforce travel ban would have on our \$20 trillion national debt, job growth, and on GDP.

CONCLUSION

Trump lost the popular vote, but won enough to capture the required electoral votes, which he still baffles with. His taxes were never released. He has not put his finances into a blind trust and is unwilling to work with any government ethics office. His Russian connection is still not resolved. He still has court cases pending against him. He continues to make emotional and erratic statements. He continues to consider media, Democrats and some Republicans as his enemy. His family members continue to be involved in White House matters.

These facts, at least what are known for now, may create doubts about the prospect of his presidency for the next four years (Reynolds 2017). Eugene Robinson (2017: Para 1) questioned:

Wow, we went from no drama to all drama in the blink of an eye. An embattled President Trump spent the weekend raging in frustration at his inability to control events – and his administration is just in its second month. How will he make it through a year? Let alone four?

On the other hand, Trump still enjoys his stable 44 percent popularity. All his cabinet nominees, who have come up for vote have been confirmed: (1) Gen. James Mattis for Secretary of Defense; (2) Jeff Sessions for Attorney General; (3) Steven Mnuchin for Secretary of Treasury; (4) Wilber Ross for Secretary of Commerce; (5) Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education; (6) Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services; (7) Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State; (8) Gen. John Kelly for Secretary of Homeland Security; (9) Ricky Perry for Secretary of Energy; (10) Ben Carson for Secretary of Housing and Urban

Development; (11) Elaine Chao for Secretary of Transportation; (12) Ryan Zinke for Secretary of Interior; (13) David Shulkin for Secretary of Veterans Affairs; (14) Mick Mulvaney for Director of Office of Management and Budget (OMB); (15) Scott Pruitt for Administrator of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); (16) Mike Pompeo for CIA Director; (17) Nikki Haley for UN Ambassador; and, (18) Linda McMahon for Small Business Administration. Moreover, Republicans are voting with Trump in record numbers, and Trump's executive orders showed some policy implications, despite scandals and communication problems. So, there is still a possibility that the Trump's administration could last the term, unless things go wrong drastically. It is worthwhile to remember, in this context, Nate Silver's (2017) 14 versions of how Trump's presidency might turnout from #MAGA to Impeachment as we look ahead. They are:

Group I

Extrapolations from the status quo: (1) Trump keeps on Trumpin' and the country remains evenly divided; (2) Trump gradually (or not-so-gradually) enters a death spiral; or, (3) Trump keeps rewriting the political rules and gradually becomes more popular.

Group II

Trump changes direction; (4) Trump mellows out, slightly; (5) Trump cedes authority; (6) Trump successfully pivots to the populist center (but with plenty of authoritarianism too); or (7) Trump fails aimlessly after an unsuccessful attempt to pivot.

Group III

The three horsemen of the presidential apocalypse: war, recession, scandal: (8) Trump is consumed by scandal; (9) Trump is undermined by a failure to deliver jobs; or (10) Trump's law-and-order agenda is bolstered by an international incident or terrorist attack.

Group IV

Things fall apart: (11) Trump plunges America into outright authoritarianism; or, (12) Resistance to Trump from elsewhere in the government undermines his authority but prompts a constitutional crisis.

Group V

Trump Makes America Great Again: (13) Trump becomes Governor Schwarzenegger after a rough first brief period on the job; or (14)

Trump's button-mashing works because the system really is broken.

Some pundits and journalists are already predicting the 2020 political landscape. Bill Clinton and Barack Obama succeeded second term, despite their terrible losses in their first midterm election. Will Donald Trump have the same luck? Can he surprise us like he did in 2016 by defying gravity? As Amy Walter (2017, Para 9) said, "What is trending on Twitter or cable TV isn't necessarily the thing that's important to voters.

The fundamentals still matter too. The state of the economy is going to be more important to voters than the latest cable-generated outrage." We have to wait and see what will happen.

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