

# American Foreign Policy in the Age of Trump

John Mearsheimer  
University of Chicago

Korea University  
March 21, 2018

# What Is Trump's Foreign Policy?

- Not Easy to Discern
- It Is Still Early in His Presidency
- He Has Radical *Views* on A Number of Issues

# Framing Points

There are three key actors in the story:

1. Candidate Trump
2. President Trump
3. Foreign Policy Establishment or “The Blob”

# Framing Points

- Candidate Trump > the Blob
- President Trump versus the Blob
- Who Will Win?

# Outline of Talk

- The Blob's Views on Foreign Policy
- Candidate Trump's Views on Foreign Policy
- President Trump's Foreign Policy So Far
- What Lies Ahead?

# Key Foreign Policy Issues

- The Liberal International Order
- U.S. Alliances in East Asia & Europe
- Nuclear Proliferation
- Potential Rivals
- Greater Middle East
- Climate Change

# The Liberal International Order

## 3 Key Elements:

1. Effective International Institutions \*\*
2. An Open International Economy \*\*
3. Democracy Promotion \*\*

# U.S. Alliances in East Asia & Europe

- NATO \*\*
- Bilateral Alliances with Japan & S. Korea \*\*
- Other Asian Countries \*\*

# Nuclear Proliferation

- Allies like Germany and Japan \*\*
- Iran & North Korea \*
- Proliferation More Generally \*\*

# Potential Rivals

- China \*\*
- Russia \*\*
- Iran
- North Korea

# Greater Middle East

- Iran
- Syria \*\*
- Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States
- Afghanistan \*\*
- Israel \*

# Climate Change

- General Attitude toward Climate Change \*\*
- Paris Climate Agreement (December 2015) \*\*

# Key Foreign Policy Issues

- The Liberal International Order
- U.S. Alliances in East Asia & Europe
- Nuclear Proliferation
- Potential Rivals
- Greater Middle East
- Climate Change

Candidate Trump > The Blob

Now, it is President Trump vs. the Blob

# President Trump vs. The Blob

- The Blob Wins
- Trump Wins (His radical *views* become *policy*)
- It's a Draw (Each side wins and loses some)

# The Blob Wins

## Structure > Agency

### 1. Domestic Structure > Agency

The Blob is formidable

Lack of experts with Trump's views

Checks and balances

The Deep State

### 2. International Structure > Agency

# President Trump Wins

- International Structure is Changing in Ways that Play to Trump's Advantage
- Why Trump Was Elected
- Agency > Structure
  - He is sui generis
  - Success by 1000 cuts

# What Has Happened So Far?

The Blob Has Largely Prevailed

# The Evidence So Far

Afghanistan

Syria

Israel and the Palestinians

Russia

China

Climate Change \*\*

# The Evidence So Far

NATO and the East Asian Alliances

Nuclear Proliferation

North Korea

Iran \*\*

Saudi Arabia

# The Evidence So Far

## The Liberal International Order

International Institutions

Democracy Promotion

Open International Economy \*

# Where We Are Headed

The world is changing – independent of Trump

1. The Rise of China & The Return of Great Power Politics
2. The Collapse of the Liberal International Order

# \$64,000 Question

Is President Trump the American leader best suited to deal with the world ahead?

The answer: regrettably, no.