

EYEBALL-TO-EYEBALL POLITICS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER DONALD TRUMP

Elechi, Felix Aja¹, Ohazuruike, Kennedy² & Elom, Andrew Chibueze¹

¹Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

²Department of General Studies, Nile University, Abuja

E-mail: elechifeze2007@gmail.com

Abstract

The emergence of Donald Trump as America's president has begotten a foreign policy departure from his predecessors. Many analysts has categorized his foreign policy as a little to the left and a little to the right. Trump has been known to blow hot and cold at the same time. This paper sets out to analyze Americas foreign policy under Donald Trump, to ascertain why his perception seem to change for good after a one-on-one meeting with other world leaders perceived to be US foes. The paper relied on documentary analytical technique as our method of data collection, while qualitative descriptive method was adopted in our discourse. The paper is anchored on the trait theory. Findings among other revealed that; the FBI, CIA and other intelligence agencies' presentation of leaders and events are sometimes different from what they are; things often turn out different when leaders meet one-on-one; also most of Trump's policies are influenced by his trait as has been demonstrated by some of his actions; furthermore, dealing directly with the issues has help Donald Trump achieve some of his foreign policy goals as against relying solely on the reports of the intelligence community as can be seen in the case of North Korea, Russia and lately China. The paper recommends among others; that there is need for leaders to go beyond intelligence reports of events and meet one-on one in order to resolve some foreign policy impasse as this has always help to reduce international tensions; and also, there is need to take into cognizance leaders personality trait in order to understand their foreign policy goals.

Keywords: Eyeball-To-Eyeball Politics, Foreign Policy Goals, Trait Theory, American Foreign Policy, Intelligence Community

1. Introduction

The United States of America (US) has for decades strived to maintain and sustained a multilateral liberal international order which she was very instrumental to molding and shaping through her foreign policy posture. Donald Trump entered the White House intent on reshaping US foreign policy. While some of his cabinet officials adhered to a traditional, rules-based approach to foreign policy, he has argued loudly and frequently that the United States must stop underwriting the security and prosperity of other countries at its own expense. Further, he has called for the United States to withdraw from key international agreements or renegotiate existing deals and said that any new deals struck under his administration would deliver the lion's share of the benefits to the United States. These views are the essence of his “America First” platform. President Trump coupled this rhetoric with bold action (Paterson, P. (2018).

Donald Trump foreign policy is anchored on security; by fighting terrorist abroad, strengthening border defense, immigration control, expansion of the U.S military and an “America first” approach to trade and diplomacy whereby “old enemies become friends”.

Policies like “immigration control” and an “America first” approach to trade and diplomacy seem to be somewhat contradictory to the traditional America's foreign policy as the former can be said to be

America-Centric while the latter is World-Centric. The officially stated goals of the foreign policy of the United States, including all the Bureaus and offices in the United States department of state as mentioned in the foreign policy agenda of the department of state, are “to build and sustain “more democratic, secure and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community”. In addition, the United States' house committee on foreign affairs states as some of its jurisdictional goals: export controls, including non proliferation of nuclear technology and nuclear hardware; measures to foster commercial interaction with foreign nations and to safeguards American business abroad, international commodity agreements; international education; and protection of American citizens abroad and expatriation.

Donald Trump's immigration control foreign policy goal has led him to logger leads with most countries i.e. As part of an effort to control immigration, he proposed the construction of a border wall with Mexico and deportation of some Africans from the United States. Trump's America first foreign policy has equally led to the imposition of higher tariffs on Chinese goods coming into the U.S. in response to this, China equally imposed higher tariffs on U.S good coming into China. Trump placed tariffs on billions of dollars worth of goods from around the world, in particular China (BBC News, 26 July, 2018). Trump's America first foreign policy had led him to toe the part of protectionism. A the start of March 2018, before his latest moves against China, the president announced a 25% tariff on all steel imports and 10% on aluminum (BBC News, July 26, 2018). In what many analysts could tag a furtherance of Donald Trump's “old enemies becoming friends, the U.S president and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un shook hands on Tuesday, June 12 2018 in Singapore (CNN politics, June 12, 2018).

Deriving from the brief exposition above, the paper examines Americas foreign policy under Donald Trump, to ascertain why his perception seem to change after a one-on-one meeting with other world leaders perceived to be US foes. The paper relied on documentary analytical technique as our method of data collection, while qualitative descriptive method guides our discourse. The paper hypothesized that when leaders meet one-on-one; also most of Trump's policies are influenced by his trait as has been demonstrated by some of his actions; furthermore, dealing directly with the issues has help Donald Trump achieve some of his foreign policy goals as against relying solely on the reports of the intelligence community as can be seen in the case of North Korea, Russia and lately China. The paper is however divided into eight sections namely; introduction, theoretical framework, conceptual clarification, American foreign policy, trump's major trade policy actions, trump's America first slogan, trump eye-ball-to-eye-ball (face-to-face) bilateral meetings with world leaders and the pursuit of America's first foreign policy, and conclusion and recommendation

2. Theoretical Framework

Our discourse in this paper is anchored on the Trait approach as enunciated by Stodgill (1974). Personality- and trait-based approaches to leadership argue that certain individuals have innate characteristics that make them ideally suited for leadership, and these traits or characteristics are what differentiate these leaders from everyone else. Early approaches in this genre included the great man theories, which were based on the assumption that the capacity for leadership is inherent—that great leaders are born, not made or developed. These theories often portrayed great leaders as heroic, mythical, and uniquely destined to rise to leadership when their skills were needed (Bligh, 2011).

The trait approach to leadership concentrates on the specific traits, or qualities, that leaders possess. An analysis of a leader in terms of this approach to leadership must look at the leader's specific traits through

the lens of the traits that have been identified as important to effective leadership. These include intelligence, self-confidence, determination, and integrity,

Personality traits of political leaders are hard to hide (and often are covered by the media) and considered to be stable over time and closely related to behavior; they thus seem to be a perfect yardstick to predict what to expect from a candidate if elected.

The personality of Donald Trump is highly pragmatic, notably determined and shrewdly calculative. Being a pragmatist doesn't undermine his idealistic aspirations as he perceives himself to be endowed with a mission to usher his nation into a new era. Trump's mission is to "Make America great again," as the capturing slogan of the previous US elections, through the re-establishment of strength, glory and self-confidence to the US. Also, Trump aims to grow the US economy, which has never really been recovered from the recession precipitated by the collapse of the housing bubble in 2007. With these visions, he has surreptitiously portrayed himself as a political savior who will change the fate of his people through confrontation with their enemy.

Remarkably aggressive, blatantly blunt and highly boastful to a level of self-obsession, described by some as narcissistic personality disorder, Trump displays a complex leadership style. He is an unconventional politician with a sharp sensitivity to cost-effectiveness entrenched from his entrepreneurial expertise in business. He has an extraordinary determination not to be distracted by blaming, personal attacks, allegations, and criticisms from Democrats, human rights activists, world leaders, feminists, and former US Presidents, etc. He is unpredictable, eccentric, attention-seeking, and brash. In particular, he is an unusual leader, given his complete disregard for the consequences of his decisions, even though it may have him impeached, or cost him a next presidential term. His personality and leadership style, for the most part, encompass what is required to succeed in the task of making America great again.

3. Conceptual Clarification and Review of Related Literature

3.1 Foreign Policy

There is no generally acceptable definition for the concept of foreign policy. This is because of the countless definitions by various international relations scholars. Hence, in Aluko's words (1981), nobody has really formulated a universally acceptable definition of the concept and the probability of someone doing so is very slim. Irrespective of its countless definitions, this paper intends to view few definitions of foreign policy. Folarin (2014) likens foreign policy to a "wedding ring" with which the domestic context of a nation solemnizes its union with the international community. Northedge (1968:9) sees foreign policy as the use of political influence in order to induce other states to exercise their law-making power in a manner desired by the states concerned. It is an interaction between forces originating outside the country's borders and those working within them (cited in Oviasogie & Shodipo, 2013). Put differently, foreign policy is an interplay between the inside and the outside of a state. In line with the above definition is that of Akinboye (1999), who defines foreign policy as a dynamic process involving interaction between the domestic and the external environments. Foreign Policy, according to Frankel (1967) consists of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others. Accordingly, Keith and Morrison (1977) defined foreign policy as "a set of explicit objectives with regard to the world beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives." In other words, foreign policy of a state is pursued by the state, in the interest of the welfare of its people. Put differently, foreign policy could be seen as the totality of all

actions, decisions, overtures, or interactions between states in the international system. Such could be directed or based on economics, politics, culture or creating understanding or-cooperation (Adesola, 2004). Foreign policy is defined as purposive courses of action adopted by a state in the interest of the welfare of its peoples. In the words of Rourke (2008) foreign policy is the goal sought, values, set decisions made and actions taken by states and national societies and it constitutes an attempts to design, manage and control the foreign relations of national societies. Put differently, Waltz (2005) sees foreign policy as the strategy and tactics employed by the state in its relation with other states in the international system. In the same vein, for Henderson (2005) foreign policy is a pattern of behaviour that one state adopts in relating with other states.

On the other hand, Morgenthau (1989) ties the goals of a nation's foreign policy to what he calls national interest, which is a guide to the formulation of foreign policy. In sum and from the numerous definitions of foreign policy, one could state generally, that, foreign policy represents an attitude of the state towards the international environment. This is to say that, the state takes into consideration, not only its own objectives, interests, aspirations and problems, but also those of other states. This therefore suggests that, no nation can have a true guide as to what it must do and what it needs to do in foreign policy without accepting national interest as a guide.

Broadly speaking, foreign policy is defined as set of principles, aims and objectives of a state channelled abroad, which stand as the basis for interactions with other states, with the view of achieving her national interest.

Foreign policies are the general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. The development of foreign policy is influenced by domestic considerations, the policies or behavior of other states, or plans to advance specific geographical designs ([https://www.britannica.com>topic>foreignpolicy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreignpolicy)). To this end, a nations foreign policy can vary in content while dealing with different states in the global system. For example, the United States has a different foreign policy for almost every country and the politics can vary based on trade agreements in addition to many other conditions but this does not in any way alter the foreign policy goal.

3.2 Eye-ball to Eye-ball politics

The concept eyeball to eyeball politics popularly known as face to face politics made its way into international political discourse during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.

During the Cuban missile crisis, leaders of the U.S and Soviet Union engaged in a tense, 13 day political and military standoff in October 1962 over the installation of nuclear-armed soviet missile in Cuba, just 90 miles from U.S shores. Records have it that Fidel Castro was the one who invited the soviets to install the missile in Cuba. In a TV address on October 22, 1962, President John Kennedy notified Americans about the presence of the missiles, explained his decision to enact a naval blockade around Cuba and made it clear the U.S was prepared to use military forces if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security. Following this news, many people feared the world was on the brink of nuclear war. However, disaster was avoided when the U.S agreed to soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's (1894 – 1971) offer to remove the Cuban missile in exchange for the U.S promising not to invade Cuba. Kennedy also agreed to remove U.S missile from Turkey. <https://WWW.history.com/topics/cold.war/Cuban.missile.crisis>).

4.1 Trump Leadership Trait and Foreign Policy Making

The president of the United States is more than a chief executive. He (or she) is also a symbol, for the nation and for the world, of what it means to be an American. Much of the president's power to represent and to inspire comes from narrative. It is largely through the stories he tells or personifies, and through the stories told about him, that a president exerts moral force and fashions a nation-defining legacy. Donald Trump is *sui generis* among U.S. presidents, largely because his path to the White House was wholly without precedent. He needs to be assessed in terms of his personal history and experiences, and then consider how he and his close advisers are likely to organize decision making in the Executive Branch. Despite his outsized personality, he is largely unfamiliar with the governmental process. Having overseen his own business enterprises for decades and having never had to report to a board of directors or to shareholders, his prior experiences have not prepared him for the most important job in the world. In the week following his inauguration, Trump's actions were replete with tweets and statements about perceived slights to the legitimacy of his presidency and criticisms of his credibility, including his unwillingness to acknowledge incontrovertible facts.

According to the latest Forbes' world ranking of billionaires, Trump has an estimated fortune of \$3.1 billion, mostly earned on the back of property, making him the 766th richest person in the world. On top of this, he has had a successful career in reality TV, having starred in the U.S. version of *The Apprentice*, and he confounded the world by winning the U.S. presidential election in 2016. President Donald Trump was ranked by Forbes as the world's third most powerful person in 2018. Trump is an authentic leader in the sense that, he means what he says and he will say what he means, even if it is utterly unpalatable to the people who are listening to him. When he takes to twitter, he doesn't hold back in any way. He lets us know exactly what he thinks, whether we like it or not. When you think about it, the idea of the most powerful person in the world sharing his thoughts directly with the masses is a real social phenomenon that could completely transform the future of politics. Trump is said to refuse to read policy briefing papers before important meetings or decisions, or indeed at any other time. He has contempt for diplomacy and the officers who conduct it.

Wright contends that three core beliefs dominate Donald Trump's views of the world: repeated criticisms of U.S. security alliances and an insistence that America's allies pay vastly more for U.S. security protection; outright opposition to every trade deal signed by the U.S. across many decades (especially multilateral agreements); and “a soft spot for authoritarian strongmen, particularly of the Russian variety.” However, this soft spot does not appear to extend to China, which he appears to view as the preeminent threat to American predominance. His allegations of predatory Chinese economic practices, including currency manipulation, are very similar to comparable accusations he directed at Japan in the 1980s in virtually the same language. As Wright concludes: “Trump's frustration is that [he believes] the United States gets little for protecting other countries or securing the global order, which he sees as a tradeable asset that America can use as a bargaining chip with friend and foe alike” (Pollack, 2017)

“America first,” Trump's campaign slogan, says it all. He's not much of a collaborator, especially on the international stage. His disagreements with fellow world leaders Angela Merkel and Justin Trudeau are well publicized. He has imposed trade tariffs on China and the EU. He's publicly scolded NATO's European members for not pulling their weight with defense spending. And he's pulled the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord and the North American Free Trade Agreement. In addition, the White House seems to have existed in a constant state of flux since he moved into the Oval Office, due to the string of advisors who have either been fired or departed of their own accord. Aside from his apparent friendship with Emmanuel Macron and his attempts to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program, his

record as a collaborator is pretty poor.

Trump has insulted many of the leaders of America's closest friends, including Emmanuel Macron of France, Angela Merkel of Germany, and Theresa May of the United Kingdom. At the same time, he has regularly praised autocrats—Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, Xi Jinping of China, Viktor Orban of Hungary, Kim Jong-un of North Korea, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, and more. He has disrupted relations with Canada and Mexico, treating them as adversaries rather than friendly neighbors. The president has threatened to pull out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and has called into question whether the United States would fulfil its treaty obligations and come to the aid of its European allies if they were attacked. He has doubted the value of U.S. alliances in ways not shared by any of his predecessors since the end of World War II.⁶ He has seen NATO, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as commercial arrangements instead of the foundations of an international order led by the United States. He has made decisions that deeply affect the United States' closest partners around the world without consulting them. He has triggered trade dispute after trade dispute. Under his leadership, the United States is more unpopular with publics in many democratic countries than it has been at any time since such polling began in 2001. Despite the president's erratic stances on trade, the Trump administration has maintained robust relationships at multiple levels with Japan and other traditional regional partners (Blackwill, 2019).

Once he arrived in the White House on January 20, Trump quickly set out to reverse the world order that the U.S. had established since the end of the Cold War 25 years earlier. In his first two weeks as President, he called NATO obsolete, withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and vowed to renegotiate NAFTA. He ordered an immigration freeze for travelers from seven Muslim-majority nations. He proposed a \$54 billion budget increase for the U.S. military and ordered more troops into Syria while at the same time slashing foreign aid and U.S. diplomatic budgets by 30%. He supported Israel's effort to build settlements in Occupied Territories and effectively abandoned the pledge for a two-state solution. He pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accord, making the country only one of two nations in the world (with Syria) who did not recognize the immediate urgency of global warming. Princeton professor and renowned foreign policy scholar G. John Ikenberry said, “U.S. President Donald Trump's every instinct runs counter to the ideas that have underpinned the postwar international system.”

His foreign policy preference is motivated by U.S. unilateralism, rather than President Obama's efforts to support international institutions like the United Nations and International Criminal Court. Trump like other conservatives preferred to “go it alone” rather than be encumbered by the international community. Like other Republicans, he prefers military decisiveness to inaction, and defense over diplomacy. He reversed the decision to withdraw forces from Iraq and Syria, something President Obama had ordered on behalf of a war-weary American public. Trump also lifted human rights restrictions on aid to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, downplayed the roll-out of the annual Department of State country reports on human rights, and cozied up to strongmen around the world like Putin in Russia, Al-Sisi in Egypt, Duterte in the Philippines, and Erdogan in Turkey. In sum, Trump will pursue an “America first” foreign policy that clearly reflects a realist perspective of international relations (Paterson, 2018).

Since Donald Trump's election in November 2016 the most common critique of his foreign policy is that it undermines the liberal international order which has been the basis for prosperity and stability across much of the Western world for the past 70 years. Whether it be his scepticism towards the US alliance system in Europe and Asia, his withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Paris climate change accords or his attacks on the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, President Trump is perceived by many as posing a direct threat to the system of global governance

established by the United States in the wake of the Second World War. This criticism of Trump often conceals a more serious charge: that by undermining the liberal international order he is actually diluting the power of the American idea itself, the core set of beliefs surrounding its self-image and role in the world (Curran, 2018).

US policy under Trump is no longer about enhancing a global liberal trade regime. It is about rectifying large bilateral trade imbalances wherever they exist and notwithstanding that much of the explanation for these imbalances is to be found at home in the US, where less than 1% of companies export anything at all and where thoughtful domestic policy reform could have a bigger impact on US export competitiveness than international retaliatory action (McKinsey, 2017). Of course, the US remains a commerce-minded international power. US foreign policy may not be isolationist and Trump's actions to make America great again may have been more rhetorical than real in the international trade domain to date (Boot, 2017). But the US under Trump is currently operating with a narrow, bilateral and transactionalist conception of interest. America First might not imply America Alone, but it does suggest that the US is no longer inclined to accept responsibility for the 70-year-old wider global order underwritten by a network of multilateral institutions. In the economic (and security) domain, US trade partners and political allies have to readjust to a less predictable, lower-trust environment where contest and conflict rather than cooperation and consensus in US trade relations (and the management of the global financial regime) is becoming the norm.

The Trumpian trade rhetoric and practice is disruptive and self-defeating for the contemporary trade order. Essentially mercantilist, Trump sees trade as zero-sum. He insists on reciprocal and fair trade, yet his only measure seems to be if the US is running bilateral deficits –sufficient proof for him of foreign cheating and/or poorly negotiated trade deals–. His view is both wrong and misleading. His focus on goods –primarily industrial and manufacturing– reflects in part atavistic thinking associated with classic economics regarding value and accumulation. Trump ignores that in the all-important service sectors –finance, banking, insurance, AI and intellectual property– US providers invariably run surpluses (Higgott, 2018).

5. Trump's Major Trade Policy Actions

5.1 Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) Withdrawal

Trump withdrew the US from the twelve-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) on his first day in office; a process simplified by the fact the Agreement was still awaiting ratification. This was the first time that the US had ever withdrawn from an international trade agreement it had previously championed. Shortly after Trump's announcement, the remaining TPP countries indicated that they would continue with the Agreement irrespective of US participation. At a meeting following the APEC summit in November 2017 they agreed a new draft excluding 20 provisions that had been insisted upon by the US. These mainly concerned investor protection and Intellectual Property (IP). Four minor outstanding issues were referred for further negotiation (Morning Trade at politico.com 13-11-17).

Trump's intention was clearly to increase US leverage over certain TPP countries with which it lacked pre-existing Free Trade Agreements (Gibbon & Vestergaard, 2017).

5.2 Renegotiation of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

During the 2016 presidential campaign, candidate Trump repeatedly called NAFTA “the worst trade deal . . . ever signed anywhere” and blamed it for the loss of thousands of American jobs. President Trump intended to announce U.S. withdrawal from NAFTA on April 29, 2017, the hundredth day of his presidency. However, most of the members of his cabinet (including otherwise pro-tariff Wilbur Ross) urged him not to do so, and after talking with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada and then President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico, Trump reconsidered and agreed to begin a renegotiation of the accord instead. Trump periodically threatened to withdraw from NAFTA throughout 2017 and 2018 but never acted on it (Blackwill, 2019).

The Trump administration gave Congress notice of its intention to trigger renegotiation of NAFTA in mid-May 2017, with negotiations starting in August after a ninety-day period for domestic US consultation. At this time Lighthizer briefed journalists that it was the US's wish to renegotiate NAFTA on a trilateral basis, although bilateral negotiations would be also considered if trilateral negotiations proved unsuccessful (*Washington Post*, 18 May, 2017).

Trump decision to quit TPP is reinforced by his determination to renegotiate NAFTA (which he has called the worst trade deal ever made). Strongly supported by US Trade Representative Robert E. Lighthizer, Trump has also turned his rhetorical guns on the WTO as an institution and multilateralism as a modus operandi for trade. For Trump, the WTO is merely a forum where other states have for too long taken, and continue to take, advantage of the US. Wrongly asserting that the dispute mechanism discriminates against the US (which has, in fact, won 90% of its 100+ appealed legal disputes) he has set in train a campaign against the role of the WTO in dispute settlement (Higgott, 2018).

5.3 South Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS)

A desire to renegotiate the South Korea-US Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), signed in 2007 and already renegotiated once, was first indicated by Vice-President Mike Pence in mid-April 2017 during a visit to South Korea. Pence pointed to a 'concerning' US trade deficit of \$27 bn. in 2016 (*Financial Times* 18-04-17). The issue resurfaced during a meeting between Presidents Trump and Moon Jae-in at the end of June 2017, when South Korea signaled its reluctance to enter into renegotiation. However, a few days later the US invoked Article 22.2 of KORUS, thus triggering a special meeting of trade representatives within thirty days to discuss amending the pact. Besides the general issue of the US's trade deficit with South Korea, the White House's concerns fixed on claims that non-tariff barriers continued to obstruct South Korean imports of US automobiles and steel.

In early September, 2017, and apparently against opposition from Cohn, McMaster and Mattis, Trump instructed officials to begin preparations for withdrawal from KORUS. South Korea responded to this on 24 July 2017, agreeing to a meeting, but proposing that it should comprise a joint effort to 'objectively investigate, research and assess the effects of KORUS with a view to developing US-Korean economic and trade relations in an expanded and balanced direction' (Gibbon & Vestergaard, 2017).

5.4 Trump and the European Union (EU)

Trump has long criticized the European Union for supposedly ripping off America on trade and defense spending, and he openly supports rightwing populist movements seeking to upend a democratic Europe.

He has criticized Germany for its willingness to accept refugees. In June 2017, while in Poland, Trump highlighted a xenophobic goal of defending the West from “forces ... inside or out” that threaten the “bonds of culture, faith and tradition that make us who we are.” On the campaign trail, he called for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. As president, he publicly supported the right-wing opponent of then-candidate Emmanuel Macron during France's 2017 presidential election. President Trump apparently likes nothing about the European Union. As he has succinctly stated, “I think the European Union is a foe, given what they do to us in trade.” He believes that the EU by design makes U.S. businesses suffer because it entails a multilateral trade area that prevents the United States from making bilateral agreements; in his words, “the European Union, of course, was set up to take advantage of the United States.” And, as he later stressed, “the way they treat [the United States is] . . . hostile.” He also has encouraged cracks in the EU's cohesion. He insisted that Theresa May's Brexit plan would “kill” a U.S.-UK trade deal because it would have retained customs rates between the UK and the EU, and he also reportedly suggested to Emmanuel Macron that France should leave the EU to get a better trade deal with the United States. European leaders, who have long recognized that the strength of the European project depends to some degree on U.S. support, are now anxious that Trump will worsen the damage that it has suffered because of populist movements and economic stagnation across the continent (Blackwill, 2019).

Trump trade policy could be summarised under the following;

President Trump has launched a new era in American trade policy. His agenda is driven by a pragmatic determination to use the leverage available to the world's largest economy to open foreign markets, obtain more efficient global markets and fairer treatment for American workers. This policy rests on five major pillars; supporting our national security; strengthening the u.s. economy; negotiating better trade deals; aggressive enforcement of US trade laws; and reforming the multilateral trading system like the world trade organisation.

All the while, Trump has continued the Obama doctrine of avoiding large-scale conventional wars in the Middle East and has succeeded where his predecessor failed in enforcing a real redline against Bashar al-Assad's use of nerve gas in Syria by launching targeted air strikes in response. In North Korea, Trump's strategy of “maximum pressure” has cut the country's international payments by half, forcing Kim Jong Un to realize that his only choice is to negotiate. On the domestic front, the unemployment rate fell to 3.8 percent in May, a level not seen since the heady days of the dot-com boom—with unemployment at an all-time low among African Americans; at or near multi-decade lows among Hispanics, teenagers, and those with less than a high school education; and at a 65-year low among women in the labour force (Schweller, 2018).

6. Trump's America First Slogan

The US will strive to regain its leadership in new technologies and innovation and to adapt to the new competition in cyberspace and outer space. This will be done while prioritising US interests under the heading of an 'America First' foreign policy and placing more emphasis on competition than on cooperation. 'America first', economic security, nuclear, space and cyberspace capacities in a return to geopolitical competition between great powers (Encina, 2018). To establish a trade policy that promotes America's security and prosperity, the Trump administration will focus on five major priorities: (1) adopting trade policies that support our national security policy; (2) strengthening the U.S. economy; (3) negotiating better trade deals that work for all Americans; (4) enforcing U.S. trade laws and U.S. rights under existing trade agreements; and (5) reforming the multilateral trading system (Lighthizer, 2018).

Donald Trump has long maintained deeply held views about American foreign policy. His campaign slogans emphasized “America first” and “making America great again,” and he reiterated them during his earliest days in office, including in his inaugural address. These statements seem to hark back to an idealized past, which he has never explained in any detail. As Wright argues persuasively, President Trump “has a small number of core beliefs dating back three decades about America's role in the world. His overarching worldview is that America is in economic decline because other nations are taking advantage of it” (Pollack, 2017). In his inaugural speech, Trump gave hope to the average American when he made the statement as stated below:

The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of knowledge... This American carnage stops right here and stops right now... For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry... We've defended other nation's borders while refusing to defend our own... One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions upon millions of American workers left behind... Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families. We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength... We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams (Donald J. Trump, The Inaugural Address, January 20, 2017, as cited in Bown, 2017).

Regardless of whether Trump supporters voted for or despite his foreign policy positions, the “America First” vision, with its defiant nationalism and ruthless transactionalism, is a decidedly radical departure from the strategic mainstream. Indeed, it explicitly repudiates the core tenets of liberal internationalism and implicitly rejects the United States' position atop the liberal international order (Lissner & Rapp-Hooper, 2018). America First must be seen as a full-throated rebuke of liberal internationalism and the antecedent of an alternative grand strategic vision for the United States. By winning the presidency, Trump has succeeded where his predecessors have failed, in leading his populist-nationalist charge all the way to the White House. Trump has shown rejection by his actions and utterances to many of the core tenets of the liberal international order, the sprawling and multifaceted system that the United States and its allies built and have supported for seven decades. Questioning the very fabric of international cooperation, he has assaulted the world trading system, reduced funding for the UN, denounced NATO, threatened to end multilateral trade agreements, called for Russia's readmission to the G-7, and scoffed at attempts to address global challenges such as climate change (Schweller, 2018).

By retreating from multilateral agreements that require comity and compromise, the United States will pursue better bilateral relationships—especially more favourable trade deals—as well as fit-for-purpose partnerships designed to defend the West against the paramount threat of Islamic terrorism. In rejecting institutionalized and multilateral cooperation, Trump evokes the storied school of American unilateralism—a mode of thought that stretches back to the early days of the Republic, when George Washington and Thomas Jefferson warned against permanent alliances, which would endanger the national interest by compromising the United States' sovereignty and freedom of action. While unilateralism can manifest as isolationism, in Trump's case it is not: rather, America First implies a selective and unpredictable pattern of American global engagement, not a wholesale retrenchment from the world so much as a jolting abdication of leadership (Lissner & Rapp-Hooper, 2018).

Along these lines, the administration has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the Paris agreement on climate change. At the UN, it has proposed reducing U.S. contributions to the organization by 40 percent, forced the General Assembly to cut \$600 million from the peacekeeping budget, announced its intention to withdraw from UNESCO and the UN Human Rights Council, and abandoned talks on migration. Trump has also threatened to end the North American Free Trade Agreement and instead strike separate bilateral agreements with Canada and Mexico, which he contends are easier to enforce than multilateral arrangements (Schweller, 2018).

7. Trump Eye-Ball-to-Eye-Ball (Face-to-Face) Bilateral Meetings with World Leaders and the Pursuit of America's First Foreign Policy

Shortly after his election as U.S president, Donald Trump has gone beyond sending emissaries cum reliance on national intelligence to meeting with leaders one-on-one. This one-on-one meeting with world leaders have helped diffuse tension as well as settle certain issues. Below, we will Chronicle the series of one-on-one meeting between Trump and other world leaders and their outcome.

7.1 Donald Trump and Theresa May

As an indication of the strength and importance of the special relationship that exists between the United States and the United Kingdom, Donald Trump invited the British Prime Minister Theresa May to Washington just one week after his inauguration. Without much ado, May congratulated him on his election victory and expressed optimism that the relationship between the two nations will even grow deeper. Donald Trump on his own path told May, He believed Brexit will be a “wonderful thing for Britain and open the door to new trade deals for the two countries. Mr. Trump quickly stated that “Great days ahead for our two peoples and our two countries.” Prior to their meeting, Trump had tagged NATO an obsolete alliance but in the course of the press conference Mrs May made a point emphasizing that during their talks, Mr. Trump had given strong backing to NATO (*The Telegraph News*, January 28, 2017). This was a great stride that was only achieved through a face to face meeting.

7.2 The Trump-Shinzo Abe's Tête-à-Tête

On the 10th of February, 2017 Donald Trump Met with the Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe in the Oval office Washington (*Business Insider*, August 1, 2017). The meeting made Abe, the second head of government that Trump met after being sworn in the previous month. Prior to Trump's summit with Shinzo Abe on 10 February 2017, Japanese officials suggested that bilateral negotiations were unlikely, although at the summit the US and Japan agreed to launch a 'cross-sectoral dialogue' on trade and monetary policy, led by the US Vice President and Japan's Deputy Prime Minister, Taro Aso. It is worthy of mention that in the course of Trump's presidential campaign, Donald Trump opined that he would pull back from the mutual treaty between the U.S and Japan. However, in the course of the meeting between the two heads of state, Mr. Trump tried to dispel doubts about his commitment to the mutual defence treaty. He reaffirmed his support for the mutual treaty (*New York Times*, February 10, 2017). According to Davis J.H and Baker P. (2017), Donald Trump, hoping to put behind any friction remaining from his sometimes provocative statements during last year's presidential campaign, Mr. Trump hugged Abe as he arrived the white house, lavished praise on him and his nation and offered strong reassurances about America's commitment to Japan's defence. In his words “The bond between our two nations and

friendship between our two peoples run very, very deep” (Davis & Baker, 2017). From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that the tête-a-tête between the two leaders turned the diplomatic tables around for better.

7.3 Trump's Meeting with Justin Trudeau

Trudeau happened to be the third head of government to meet with Trump at the oval office few months after his inauguration. In the wake of Trump's statement on his plans to review the North Atlantic free trade agreement (NAFTA) and his campaign gibe on NATO as being an obsolete deal, the two leaders promised closer co-operation and broader security, economic ties between the two countries. According to Monsivais (2017), Trump and Trudeau jointly affirmed “Both of us are committed to bringing prosperity and opportunity to our people”. To further illuminate the warm spirit already in place, Mr. Trump was presented with a picture of him and Mr. Trudeau's father taken in Waldorf Astoria hotel in 1981. Mr. Trump remarked that he was honoured to be with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

7.4 Trump's Meeting with Putin

President Trump's admiration for Russian President Putin is well-known. As a result of the strong accusation from the U.S department of Russia meddling with the 2016 United States presidential Election, the relationship between the two big wigs grew more tensed and mixed with unprecedented level of suspicion. Before then, Russia was equally battling with sanctions from the United States for its activities in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea. The U.S department began its investigation into Russia's role in the election with the hope of indicting their age-long rivals.

When the news of Trump's meeting with Putin in the course of the G-20 summit in Hamburg came up, as expected, it was fraught with expectations, suspicion and security. The world turned its ears to grasp every iota of detail that came from the meeting. For Mr. Trump, it was one opportunity for him to douse the tension at home. Mr. Putin on his own part wanted a way out of the Western sanction. The two big wigs tête-a-tête was originally scheduled to last for 30 minutes but later lasted for 2 long hours.

The meeting was earlier expected to wear a regimental look as that between two strong opponents but contrary to expectation, it later seemed like a conversation between two friends who were eager to settle an issue. According to Davis and Thrush (2017) some people expressed dissatisfaction over the outcome of the meeting. One of them is Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island. According to the Senator, Mr. Trump had “Capitulated” to Mr. Putin on the election meddling issue.

Just like Senator Reed, a handful of people had expected the meeting to wear a tougher look and for question of election meddling to linger on and take greater part of their discussion.

The majority of people including Senator Reed had expected a heated argument mixed with suspicion but on the contrary, the magic of eyeball to eyeball diplomacy prevailed. In the words of Senator Reed, “The American people and the rest of the world are saying “wait a minute, let's figure out what happened here and how to protect ourselves from repeat offense”.

7.5 Trump's Historic meeting with Kim Jong Un

In a speech to the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2017, President Trump stressed that if the United States or its allies were attacked, the United States would “have no choice but to totally destroy

North Korea,” adding, “Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime.” On December 22, the UN Security Council, with China voting in favor, passed even tougher North Korea sanctions, which heavily restricted fuel imports and required countries that employed North Korean workers to send them back. Nevertheless, on January 1, 2018, Kim declared that his nuclear arsenal was “capable of thwarting and countering any nuclear threats from the United States.” But in March 2018, Kim surprised the world by offering to meet with Trump and discuss nuclear issues, Trump accepted on the spot. Kim presumably would not have proposed a summit meeting had Trump not escalated the crisis and thus disrupted the unsatisfactory status quo. Although Trump threatened to cancel the meeting after North Korea called Vice President Pence “ignorant and stupid” for warning that Kim could end up like Muammar al-Qaddafi, the summit occurred as planned on June 12, 2018, in Singapore. The two leaders stated that “President Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK, and Chairman Kim Jong-un reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” (Blackwill, 2019).

Trump's threats to “totally destroy North Korea” and unleash “fire and fury” on Pyongyang have now been credited with helping to bring Kim Jong-un to the negotiating table at a historic summit in Singapore on 12 June 2018 (Curran, J. (2018).

On the 12 of June 2018, Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un of North Korea met in a historic summit in Sentosa Island, Singapore. This was the first time a sitting United States President held such a meeting with a North Korean leader. According to Bays (2018), the summit came 364 days after North Korea was accused of torturing a U.S student, Otto Warmbier who later died in the United States after he was brought back home. Months after the two leaders had threatened to annihilate each other with nuclear weapon; the two leaders shook hands on Tuesday morning at a historic summit in Singapore to the amazement of everyone. The handshake which came as a surprise to the world and to the leaders in question lasted more than twelve seconds.

At the end of the summit, Kim and Trump signed a document in which they agreed to work towards complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In exchange, Trump agreed to “Provide security guarantees” to North Korea (Cable News Network (CNN), June 12, 2018).

According to CNN News, Trump expressed great optimism about U.S North Korean relationship after the summit. In his words, Trump said: “I think our whole relationship with North Korea and the Korean peninsula is going to be a very different situation than it has in the past”. He also added that he'd developed a “special bond” with Kim and would “absolutely” invite him to the white house.

Contrary to expectations, at the end of the summit, Trump was filled with encomium for Kim. In Trump's words, “we learned a lot about each other and our countries”, said Trump. “I learned he's a very talented man” (CNN News, June 12, 2018). While speaking to the press, Trump also said the talks had gone better than anybody could have expected”. After the two leaders had signed the document for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, Trump said, “It's been an honour to be with you”.

At the end of the eyeball to eyeball meeting between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un, a diplomatic deadlock was not just broken, a new dawn was brought into diplomacy, the two hitherto political enemies came to discover the angel in each other, unprecedented adulation was seen flowing from the mouth of the United State president for someone who he had earlier called “the Rocket Man” and also threatened to wipe out from the surface of the earth.

7.6 Donald Trump's Meeting with Xi Jin Ping in Buenos Aires

During the presidential campaign, Donald Trump took advantage of existing Sino-American tensions to castigate China for manipulating its currency, pursuing an imbalance of trade with the US, stealing manufacturing jobs from the US, fabricating the hoax of climate change, etc. (10) He also vowed to put “America first” and to “make America great again” by opposing multilateral free trade and reducing America's international obligations.

In the heat of the trade war between the two world's largest economies, the global market was hit real hard as investors waited anxiously for the outcome of the meeting between Trump and Xi. Before the G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Trump had threatened to raise tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods from 10% to 25% by New Year. According to Trump, the move was a way of cutting the trade deficit with China, a country he had accused of unfair trade practices since before he became president (*BBC News*, 26 July, 2018) Trump equally accused China of intellectual property theft among other things. He said the previous 10% Tariff was a reprisal for China's unfair trade practices. China on her own part retaliated by imposing tariffs on \$60 billion worth of U.S goods (*BBC News*, September 18, 2018).

However, when the two political giants met in Buenos Aires, a trade truce was declared. According to Borger (2018), Donald Trump delayed for 90 days his threatened imposition of 25% tariffs on Chinese imports after a dinner meeting with Xi Jinping. According to the report, Trump said that his meeting with XI “was an amazing and productive meeting with unlimited possibilities for both U.S and China. According to Borger, Sarah Sanders, the White House spokeswoman listed concessions the Chinese president was said to have made, including stopping Chinese exports to the U.S of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, and the death sentence for convicted traffickers. Trump on his own part said he would not follow through his threat to raise tariff on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods from 10% to 25% in the New Year.

Sanders also stated that, XI had agreed that China would purchase “a not yet agreed upon, but substantial amount of agricultural energy, industrial and other products from the United States to reduce the trade imbalance between the two countries (Borger, 2018)

The eye-ball to eye-ball meeting between Trump and XI was nothing but successful as the two heads of state reached a consensus to halt the mutual increase of new tariffs.

Trump was highly exhilarated by the outcome of the meeting as can be discerned from his comments to reporters while in air force one. According to Trump, “it's an incredible deal. If it happens, it goes down as one of the largest deals ever made (Bradsher & Rappeport, 2018)

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

A key part of Trump's foreign policy agenda was to rebalance the United States' trade accounts with the rest of the world. The goal was to correct systematic and excessive trade imbalances with wealthy East Asia and Europe, while protecting industries vital to U.S. national security. The final piece of Trump's foreign policy was his insistence that U.S. allies pay their fair share of the costs of their defence. NATO itself conceded that the United States accounted for 73 percent of the alliance's defence spending—a rather large amount for an organization with 29 member states and that is focused on European security.

The magic which emanates from the eyeball to eyeball diplomacy had often gone beyond a political explanation. There seem to be some kind o psychology that takes place when leaders meet each other face to face. For Donald Trump to address Putin as nice guy in the course of their meeting, for him to address

Kim Jong Un as a very talented man, then there must be something the psychologists are not telling us. The crux of the ongoing argument is that a tête-a-tête between heads of state seems to help a great deal in promoting diplomacy. In most cases, leaders find out that media reports about other leaders cum issues tend to differ when they meet each other through eye-ball to eye-ball. More so, the study equally found that Trump's personality has in a great way played a huge role in his presidency and foreign policy posture.

The paper therefore recommends among other things: An eye-ball to eyeball diplomacy, which is going beyond media report in confronting issues, to face-to-face meeting so as to get to the nitty-gritty of the situation, thereby taking cognizance of the personality traits in the leaders involve in the course of engagement in international politics. Secondly, there is need for leaders to go beyond intelligence reports of events and meet one-on one in order to resolve some foreign policy impasse as this has always help to reduce international tensions; and also, there is need to take into cognizance leaders' personality trait in order to understand their foreign policy goals. Also, the United States should work with its international partners on a bilateral basis whenever possible, rather than through multilateral arrangements and commitments.

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