



THE SELF-INTERESTED NATURE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AS REVEALED IN THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY.

Laouidji karima

University of Tlemcen

Karima.laouidji@univ-msila.dz



Co-author: Professor Senouci Faiza

University of Tlemcen

senoucif@hotmail.fr

Abstract

In the field of international relations, the concept of national interest has been used to describe the foreign policy goals of any nation state, for without it we cannot talk about the existence of well organized or clear foreign policy agenda which is determined and motivated by a set of interests. In the case of the United States, the concept was

prominent during the period following World War Two, when the American foreign policy took new directions different from that adopted by the two wars period. Hence, any single move was hailed under the slogan of the protection of America's national interests and security at home or abroad. Tens of America's involvements in external regions and countries have been justified by the concept of national interests. So, one should not neglect the fact that these foreign policy traditions were implemented in the American soil and culture starting from the first day of its establishment. The realist school was an important school that has far reaching effect on structuring American foreign relations as it considered the pursuit of national interests as its core principle besides its emphasis on the role of nation state as a key actor in field of international relations. The presidency of Donald Trump represents a good occasion to affirm the self interested nature of American foreign policy. Starting by the slogan raised by that American president when he said "America first" by which he affirmed the realist spirit of American foreign policy, since he promised a foreign policy that puts America first and the priority of its interests over other nations interests.

Key words: National interest; Foreign policy; Realism; Donald Trump; America first.

1. Introduction

The concept of national interest is a fundamental building block of policy making. All countries in the world whether small or big rely on a set of national interests to decide over their foreign policy priorities. This paper aimed at investigating the history of that concept and its development in the United States, taking the presidency of Donald Trump as an example to show how national interest is deep rooted in American culture.

In American politics and diplomacy, the search for national interest has been constant, from the founding of the republic till the present. The first sign of national interest was seen by the time of the establishment of the United States of America as an independent nation. So preserving American independence was the first national interest

for Americans through the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century. It was by the end of that century that Americans developed new meanings of national interest, to include besides preserving their independence another important meaning talking here about territorial acquisition that was considered a vital element to American prosperity (foreign markets, investment and the defense and the promotion of democracy). By the end of World War Two, the Soviet Union emerged as a world power. America's national interest was seen in fighting the Soviet Union and containing the spread of Communism. In the period following the Cold War, American policy makers worked to reconsider American foreign policy and to redefine their national interests.

The 21st century brought with it new challenges and new threats to American vital interests (national security, economic well being). The presidency of Donald Trump is to be taken as an example to explain the self interested nature of American foreign policy. President Trump made clear that he would work to make America great again rising the slogan of 'America First'. What is remarkable here is not the fact that Trump is going to defend America's national interests; rather it is the way in which he wanted to promote them. He adopted a selfish foreign policy that did not consider the position of America as the leading country in the world. He disregarded international institutions and worked to repeal or reconsider America's political and economic alliances.

2. Theoretical Background

National interests is not a new term, it is dated back to the time of establishing the first nation-states and exactly to the founding of the first form of government in sixteenth century Italy and England, the term was used as a diplomatic tool¹. The famous Italian thinker Niccolo Machiavelli (Mai 3, 1469- June 21, 1527) also dealt with the concept of interests in his master book the *prince* (originally published in 1532), that book paved the way to what to be known later as the Machiavellian doctrine

¹ Alfred Marleku ,National Interests and Foreign Policy: The Case of Kosovo, Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 4 No 3 September 2013,
<http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/492/520>

which dictates that the end not only justifies the means, but that all political actions and policies pursued by countries can be properly judged by their outcomes, meaning that ideals and intentions are not important only if they helped nation-states to realize their goals. For Machiavelli, moral goals are not enough to win the war and power is what needed.²

In recent times, the notion of national interest became a more organized and less severe term compared to that of the times of Machiavelli. Following the end of World War Two, the American scholar Hans Morgenthau (February 17, 1904-July 19, 1980) provided an extensive literature about the field of international relations and more precisely about the concept of national interests. *Politics Among Nations* (1948), *In Defense of the National Interest* (1951) and *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (1946), all of them are books that sought to provide a clear idea about the nature of international relations from a realist point of view focusing on the role that national interests play in determining the goals set by each state in the international system and the very reason for its existence. Morgenthau put national interests at the heart of policy making and as a fundamental element of any national policy, “as long as the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in world politics”³.

2.1 Interests and power

The concept of power seemed to be hard to define because of the different meanings and the ambiguous use of that term, however most of the scholars of international relations agree over the importance of power in studying the processes of international system. In a way, power was viewed as means to achieve a giving end, some use the term to refer to the military force of a giving country ⁴.According to

² Ibid

³ Hans J.Morgenthau, Another Great Debate: The National Interest of the United States?, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol 46, No 4 (Dec 1952), 48.

⁴ J Holsti, *The Concept of Power in The Study of International Relations*: University of British Columbia, Published by: Wiley on behalf of The International Studies Association, 1964, <https://professorbellreadings.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/30136441.pdf>

Morgenthau and his realist followers, the world is said to be in anarchy because of the absence of central authority that would control the world and put end to conflicts, as a result the nation-states are looking for self-help through increasing their power in order to reach their goals and safeguard their own interests.

... Forget the sentimental notion that foreign policy is a struggle between virtue and vice, with virtue bound to win. Forget the utopian notion that a brave new world without power politics will follow the unconditional surrender of wicked nations. Forget the crusading notion that any nation, however virtuous and powerful, can have the mission to make the world over in its own image. Remember that the golden age of isolated normalcy is gone forever and that no effort, however great, and no action, however radical, will bring it back. Remember that diplomacy without power is feeble, and power without diplomacy is destructive and blind. Remember that no nation's power is without limits, and hence that its policies must respect the power and interests of others..... And, above all, remember always that it is not only a political necessity, but also a moral duty for a nation to always follow in its dealings with other nations but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: The National Interest.⁵

The year of 1951 saw the publication of Morgenthau second book "*In Defense of the National Interest*". The view presented by Morgenthau was a clear affirmation for the superiority of a foreign policy derived from a pure national interest over one inspired by universal moral values and principles. The after math of WW2 presented the Soviet Union as a super power and at the same time a threat to the free world lead by the United States (Western World).For Morgenthau, power and interest are two characteristics of humans and of states too. Thus, the use of military power is justified when the security and the very reasons for existence of a nation state is at stake.

2.2 Interests and ideals

⁵ Hans Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951),241-242.

The events of the early twentieth century highlighted the debate between the supporters of two prominent schools of international relations, the idealist school and the realist one. The idealist school centered on the view that the lonely solution to interstate problems was through the creation of a system of international law and organizations that would settle down conflicts between states and maintain order. They built that view on the ground that they sought common interests of humans rather than individual state interests, for them war did not originate in an egoistic human nature⁶. Realism came as a response to that idealist perspective criticizing the inability of idealist school to prevent a second world war, and in particular the failure of the League of Nations to maintain peace with its norms and values. Being the most important actors in the world, nations are always seeking to adopt certain moral principles to guide their behavior in dealing with each other. There are two kinds of behavior, one that is based on moral principles by which nations would act in order to preserve the welfare and the common good of the international society. The other is acting in favor of its national interests, meaning here the welfare of that particular nation⁷.

For the first glance, the terms of interests and ideals seem to be contradicting each other in a hostile world characterized by greediness and constant tension between nations to preserve their own interests; however, it is worthy to mention here that the realist ideas advocated by Morgenthau never detached its self from a profound moral foundation. Nation-states are not blamed for prioritizing their national interests over that of others, but this should be done with the minimum concern for common good of the international society and leaving space for compromise. In that sense Morgenthau argued that "In the absence of an integrated international society, the attainment of a modicum of order and the realization of minimum values are

⁶ Julian Korab-Karpowicz, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, first published Mon Jul 26, 2010,

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/realism-intl-relations/>

⁷ David McCabe, the idea of the national interest, the philosophical forum, Volume XXX.No.2, June 1999

predicated upon the existence of national communities capable of preserving order and realizing moral values within the limits of their power”⁸.

The classical realists do not reject the possibility of moral judgment in international politics. Rather, they are critical of moralism-abstract moral discourse- that does not take into account political realities. They assign supreme value to successful political actions based on prudence: The ability to judge the rightness of a given action from among possible alternatives on the basis of its likely political consequences⁹.

2.3 Levels of National Interests

The notion of national interest is a useful process for policy makers, since it helps them identify their goal before engaging in any domain of international affairs. Hence taking in consideration the domestic and the international environment is a key element for a successful foreign policy.

In an article entitled “*To Die For: National Interests and Strategic Uncertainties*”, P.H.Liotta defined national interest as a starting point and not an end for he argued that national interests demand the willingness of a state to uphold its moral and national values with the commitment of its blood, treasure, time and energy, to achieve sometimes specific and sometimes unspecific ends¹⁰. Thus, national interests have to do with national identity and this identity changes over time and place. Nineteenth century America had interests different from that of post WW2 America .The same thing can be said about American foreign policy priorities before and after 9/11 events.

In trying to give a better idea about national interests, scholars and international relations theorists tended to put different levels of classification for national

⁸ Morgenthau, In Defense of the National Interest, 38.

⁹ korab-karpowicz,2010.

¹⁰ P.H.Liotta, “To Die For: National Interests and Strategic Uncertainties”,
<https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/articles/00summer/liotta.htm>

interests. These levels were ranged according to certain standards related to elements like the importance, duration, specificity and compatibility.

Types of national interest¹¹

National interest	
Importance	Vital
	Secondary
Duration	Temporary
	Permanent
Specificity	General
	Specific
Compatibility	Complementary
	Conflicting

Among the four categories of national interest, it seemed that the first category is the most important one simply because the other categories fall under the category of importance. Since policy makers when deciding about a given national interest, they would ask the following questions: Is it important to our country? Then they would discuss about its duration, specificity and compatibility.

3. America's National Interests

3.1 The Roots of the Concept

¹¹ The table is adopted from the table designed by: Micheal G. Roskin, National Interest: From Abstraction To Strategy (Strategic Interests Institute, USA, 1994), 6.

As we have mentioned earlier, the concept of national interest is not a new one and it dates back to the time of Niccolo Machiavelli by which he put the first seeds of Realism as a major theory in the field of international relations. Political Realism is said to have far reaching impact on the American politics and this impact dates back to the early days of the republic. Prominent founding fathers like Alexander Hamilton(January11,1757-July 12,1804), Thomas Jefferson(April 13,1743-July 4,1826) and George Washington (February22,1732-December 14,1799) practiced a cautious realism in preserving and expanding the thirteen original states, indicating they understood the concept of national interest¹².Moving to the first American president Washington's farewell address in which he showed a shrewd appreciation of national interest: "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. " ¹³

Prior to his election in 1788, Washington wrote a letter to the Continental Congress Camp Committee in January 1778 in which he noted that self interest is a part of the human nature and that in one time or another self interest seemed to have priority over others interests.

...A small knowledge of human nature will convince us, that, with far the greatest part of mankind, interest is the governing principle; and that almost every man is more or less, under its influence. Motives of public virtue may for a time, or in particular instances, actuate men to the observance of a conduct purely disinterested; but they are not of themselves sufficient to produce persevering conformity to the refined

¹² Micheal G. Roskin, National Interest: from Abstraction to Strategy,
https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1994/ssi_roskin.pdf

¹³ Henry Steele Commager and Milton Cantor, eds.Documents of American History (10th ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1988), I, 174.

dictates and obligations of social duty. Few men are capable of making a continual sacrifice of all views of private interest, or advantage, to the common good. It is vain to exclaim against the depravity of human nature on this account; the fact is so, the experience of every age and nation has proved it and we must in a great measure, change the constitution of man, before we can make it otherwise. No institution, not built on the presumptive truth of these maxims can succeed¹⁴.

The concept of national interest is generated from a set of primary obligation to the community that constitutes the nation in the first place. “Under every form of government rulers are only trustees for the happiness and interest of their nation,” Hamilton wrote in the *Pacificus* Essays, “and cannot, consistently with their trust, follow the suggestions of kindness or humanity toward others, to the prejudice of their constituents”¹⁵. Here the founding fathers thought of themselves as representatives of the people of the United States who would protect the interest of the country.

During the 19th century the United States was careful in dealing with external powers and external conflicts. Most of the focus of that young nation was devoted to the building of its economy and its infrastructure rather than wasting time and money on foreign issues that did not serve the interests of the United States. This was not only the concern of the first US president George Washington but also the next US presidents like John Adam (October 30, 1735- July4, 1826), Thomas Jefferson and James Madison (March 16, 1751 – June 28, 1836) kept the same position regarding external entanglement, all of them realized that America’s national interest was to keep away from alliances to minimize the chances of war and to build a solid economic relation. So America pursued its national interests by means of cash and force in ridding its continent

¹⁴ George Washington, a Letter to the Continental Congress,

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0335>

¹⁵ Alexander Hamilton, “*Pacificus* No. IV,” *in* *The Pacificus–Helvidius Debates of 1793–1794: Toward the Completion of the American Founding*, ed. Morton J. Frisch (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), 33.

of non-hemispheric powers. Less and less, however, it called its actions “national interest,” the American historian and political scientist Charles Beard commented on this position saying that non-intervention can be named continental Americanism.

...A concentration of interest on the continental domain and building here a civilization in many aspects peculiar to American life and the potential of American heritage. In concrete terms, the words mean the non-intervention in the controversies and wars of Europe and Asia and resistance to the intrusion of European or Asiatic powers, systems and imperial ambitions into the western hemisphere as threatening to our security¹⁶.

During those years of non-intervention, American trade and cultural exchange flourished and America was in its way to become a leading country in the world, to do so America had to cope with the new realities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The period in between 1898-1919 was a turning point in American history, events that took place in those years changed the way in which Americans viewed and promoted their national interest. It was the time of a large scale of European imperialism, ideas like free trade and non-intervening was fading and European countries were engaged in establishing colonies and coaling stations around the globe, this was to include strengthening their armies and navies¹⁷.

¹⁶ Charles Beard, A Foreign Policy for America, published in 1940 The case for isolation, 332-335.

¹⁷ Ralph Raico, American Foreign Policy: The Turning Point, 1898-1919, Independent Institute, February 1, 1995
<http://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=1345>

These ideas of imperialism were to reach the United States with some politicians like Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and John Hay, who embraced this imperialist vision and got America more and more involved in international affairs.¹⁸ The major American involvement in a foreign war took place in the Spanish American war (1898) which to be followed by the conquest of Philippines (1899) and American late participation in World War One (1917). Woodrow Wilson was elected as president of the United States between 1913-1921, he was an idealist who advocated human rights and democracy and despised immoral approaches that used power, national interest, and recourse to violence as normal components of international relations. World War One was a real examination to the principles advocated by Wilson since he wanted to make the world safer for democracy and to settle down conflicts for the common good of humanity¹⁹.

However, new ways of thinking were coming to dominate the American political scene in the 1930s, those ideas were to be considered different from those supported by Wilson and his idealist followers. Realistic approach that used national interest as the primary building block. Hans Morgenthau was the man who introduced the idea of national interest to Americans, Morgenthau told Americans that they must arm and oppose first the Axis and then the Soviet Union, not out of any abstract love of liberty and justice, but because their most profound national interests were threatened. "International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power²⁰", he wrote.

By the end of World War Two, America would never return to the policy of isolationism. In the years after World War II, the United States was guided generally by containment -the policy of keeping communism from spreading beyond the countries already under its influence. The policy applied to a world divided by the Cold War, a struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, 95.

²⁰ Hans .Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 6 th edition. New York, 1985, 31.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, containment no longer made sense, so the United States has been redefining its foreign policy as the leading country in the world. In order to do so, America started redefining its national interests in a world without the threat of communism.

3.2 America's core interests

America's core interests are America's vital interests for which there would be no compromise over them. These core interests seemed to be the same for all countries and not only the United States, since we are talking about national security, economic well being and cultural and political values

The first core national interest has to deal with the security of the United States. National security includes the safety of the American main land and the American people against any kind of armed aggression from other countries (state versus state behavior). However, after 9/11 events it seemed clear that the threat did not come from states but also from non-state organizations, Al-Qaeda is a good case in point. The second core national interest is the economic well being of America and its people. Economic well being includes high standards of living and high quality life. Here the government is responsible for providing all means necessary for a better life through providing jobs, health care, education and equal chances for success. The third core national interest has to do with ideals, principles and values related to American culture, society and politics²¹.

3.3 US National Interest in Post Cold War Era

For the United States, the Cold War was a much simpler time. For fighting the Soviet Union and preventing the spread of communism made it easy for American policy makers to define the country vital interests. As the dominant global power in the aftermath of the Cold War, the US became the leading defender of the status quo, working to preserve the geopolitical "New World Order" while promoting the "Washington Consensus" as a global economic vision. The successive American administrations, following the Cold War, pursued the role of the policeman of the world trying to maintain

²¹ http://lionelingram.com/561_National_Interests_rev2010.pdf

peace and defend weak friendly nations . During the presidency of Bill Clinton US Foreign Policy took another dimension through assuming the role of nation building in countries like Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Haiti.

The 9/11 Events were a turning point in American foreign policy. The Bush administration was engaged in a massive war against terror and get involved in wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) .Neoconservative concepts of preemption, unilateral action and the notion of freedom dominated the Bush administration and led to the creation of the Bush doctrine. ,the Obama administration entered office in 2009 with the goal of recalibrating US foreign policy, emphasizing “smart power”, coalition building, and increased reliance on regional partners, as well as a more limited use of military force.

4. Trump “America first”

From his first day in the white house, the American president Donald Trump set forth a radical vision to America’s role and its dealing with the rest of the world. The road map of this vision was clearly elaborated in his electoral campaign in which he advocated a foreign policy that would make America great again²².The two slogans of “America First” and “America great again” gave an idea about how that man would deal with America’s external issues .Like his predecessors, Trump put forth his National Security Strategy (NSS) that sought to protect America’s interests first and for most. Grand strategy based on a clear nationalist vision of the US role in world affairs, which is narrowly focused on US interests and material gains, and advocates an “America First” pragmatic deal-making approach in foreign policy aimed to face the main threats for US national interests, namely radical Islam and terrorism, “unfair trade deals” and entangling alliances, and illegal immigration, from the American point of view. In several occasions, Trump criticized his predecessors for wasting time and money on unnecessary engagements while neglecting American people and their needs arguing that:

For many decades, we’ve enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry; subsidized the armies of other countries, while allowing for the very sad

²² The slogan of “ make America great again” has been used by US president Donald trump during electoral campaign 2016

depletion of our military. We've defended other nations' borders while refusing to defend our own. And spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay. We've made other countries rich, while the wealth, strength and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon.²³

Terminating or abandoning multilateral treaties and agreements was and is central to Trump's vision of how America can best defend its interests. This applies to the Paris Climate Agreement, the agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the agreement on Iran's nuclear facilities and the laws in relations with Cuba initiated under president Obama. Along similar lines, there is the threat to hit China with protectionist measures and to embark on a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in order to tax Mexican products more heavily.

4.1 The foreign Policy of Donald Trump

The foreign policy of US president Trump centers around the fact that the United States should be essentially self sufficient, secure behind its oceanic ramparts and choose where and when to engage with the world. From this perspective, foreign entanglement is seen as a choice that can be rejected to concentrate on domestic concerns. Thus, the main features of American foreign policy under the Trump administration can be summarized in the following points. The first one is seen in his adoption of transactionalist approach to international bargains with the aim to negotiate treaties on a more favorable ground to US. This can be explained on the ground that president Trump is known as a successful businessman who won a lot of negotiations with his counter parts in corporate world²⁴. The second feature of Trump foreign policy is the

²³ 'Trump inauguration: transcript of Donald Trump speech', Time, 20 Jan. 2017, <http://time.com/4640707/donald-trump-inauguration-speech-transcript/>.

²⁴ Giuseppe, Spatafora, The Jacksonian Foundation of Trump's American Foreign Policy, Oxford University Politics Blogs,

fact of being a value free foreign policy, in which relationships are judged based upon on what they deliver to the US, regardless of common values and shared historical bounds. A policy that is neither interested in freedom agenda nor in nation building and unwilling to criticize other countries human rights records²⁵.

Putting the military at the centre of the strategy is the third feature of this policy. This is seen through increasing military funding and appointing military staff to key positions in the administration (McMaster Mattis Kelly) and through giving the pentagon more influence in state department²⁶.

4.1.1 Military predominance

President Trump strategy concerning military predominance called for building and maintaining an overwhelming and preeminent military force which is supported by a massive increase in defense spending. For him, the use of military force is necessary to protect America's vital interests like energy supplies and geostrategic advantages, disregarding non vital issues like democracy promotion, regime change and nation building²⁷.

<http://blog.politics.ox.ac.uk/the-jacksonian-foundations-of-trumps-american-foreign-policy/>

²⁵ Grevi, Giovanni, "Lost in Transition? US Foreign Policy from Obama to Trump", European Policy Centre,

http://aei.pitt.edu/82224/1/pub_7240_lostintransition.pdf.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ John J Mearsheimer, and Stephen M. Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing. A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 95, N. 4, July/August 2016,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing>

Military assertiveness and readiness for confrontation are essential for the US, not to act as the global policeman, but the defender of its immediate interests. Trump emphasizes the need to restore US military power after years of declining budgets²⁸.

Concerning military strategy and intervention, Trump preferred to be free from alliances and commitments to external issues and wanted regional allies to assume responsibility over maintaining peace and providing security, that is to say doing the job of the United States. According to him, allies have to pay for their security and not to rely on US to pay the lion share for their defense²⁹.

In doing so, he affirmed the view that he defended while campaigning for the presidency, that his country should not invest strategic resources and money in troubled regions. In the Middle East, Trump continued his support for the Saudi regime and Israel as important regional allies to confront Iran. In Syria and Afghanistan, Trump planned to withdraw troops from both countries as he explained that they will try to make it better, but it is a troubled place. The United States will be a partner and a friend, but the fate of the region lies in the hands of its own people.³⁰

4.1.2 Economic interests

According to US president Trump, military predominance cannot be achieved without strengthening US economy. For Trump “economic security is national

²⁸ Alexander Gray, and Peter Navarro, “Donald Trump’s Peace through Strength: Vision for the Asia Pacific,” *Foreign Policy*, 7 November 2016,

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/07/donald-trumps-peace-through-strength-vision-for-the-asia-pacific/>

²⁹ Patrick Porter, “Crisis and Conviction: U.S. Grand Strategy in Trump’s Second Term”,

<https://warontherocks.com/2018/08/crisis-and-conviction-u-s-grand-strategy-in-trumps-second-term/>

³⁰ Lee Smith, “Trump’s Grand Strategy: Get the United States out of the Middle East, Now”,

<https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/281731/chinas-plan-for-global-supremacy>

security”³¹ To realize this national security goal, Trump administration withdrew from several economic deals and even international conventions, simply because those deals did not serve America’s economic interests. The reason behind such steps was to protect the American economy and American industries from foreign competition especially from the main economic counter part,China.Donald Trump made it clear that his administration would give priority to American economic interests over that of other countries and to put an end to the view of Give and Take in international agreements.Lot of examples can be given here, like America’s withdrawal from Paris Climate Agreement (PCA), despite the fact that the United States is a main producer of greenhouse gas emissions. On January 23, 2017, Trump signed an order to withdraw from further negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership. He promised to replace it with a series of bilateral agreements.On August 16, 2017, the Trump administration began renegotiating NAFTA with Canada and Mexico. The North American Free Trade Agreement is the world’s largest agreements. Trump had threatened to withdraw from NAFTA and hit Mexican imports with a 35 percent tariff³².

The Trump administration, driven by “American interests first,” hopes to reduce imports, increase exports, and thus improve its international balance of payments through policies of trade protectionism. This move will have a certain influence on the economies of other countries. Especially for those with close trade ties to the United States, the short-term impact could be great.

4.1.3 Trump Immigration Policies

³¹ Donald Trump, Remarks by President Trump on the Administration’s National Security Strategy, December 18, 2017,

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-administrations-national-security-strategy/>

³² Kimberly Amadeo,(Donald Trump’s Economic Plan),

<https://www.thebalance.com/donald-trump-economic-plan-3994106>

Immigration policies and illegal immigration to the United States was a centerpiece and a significant issue during president Trump presidential campaign, since he promised to pass orders and laws by which to put an end to illegal immigration and impose more restriction to legal immigration to the country. The slogan raised by Trump concerning his immigration policies was “buy American, Hire Americans”³³. In his campaign for presidency, Trump promised to send back illegal immigrants to their countries and to build a wall in the borders between Mexico and the United States, obliging Mexico to share part in paying for that wall construction.

As a president, Trump engaged in a set of executive orders to apply his immigration plans. In his first year in office, Trump banned nationals of seven Muslim countries from entering the country on the ground that they were posing a threat to American national security in an attempt to fulfill his campaign promise of a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States³⁴. Furthermore, he reduced refugee admission to the lowest levels ever since 1980 and repealed several advantages given to nationals and immigrants coming from countries like Sudan, Nicaragua and Haiti³⁵.

In his second year in office, Trump announced four pillars for his immigration policy reform. The first point addressed immigrants who came to the United States as children or dreamers as they were named by the president, by providing them with a path to citizenship. The second point addressed the issue of security in the borders

³³ Phillip, Abby (18 April 2017), “Trump signs 'Buy American, Hire American' executive order, promising to fight for American workers”. The Washington Post

³⁴ Donald Trump calls for halt on Muslims entering the US,
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/donald-trump-calls-halt-muslims-entering-151207220200817.html>

³⁵ Sarah Pierce and Andrew Selee, Immigration under Trump: A Review of Policy Shifts in the Year Since the Election,
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigration-under-trump-review-policy-shifts>

especially with Mexico, by which he continued his plan to build the wall between Mexico and United States despite the refusal of the congress to fund such a wall. The third pillar concerned the elimination of visa lottery, this point has to deal with limiting the number of legal immigrants entering US via programs like the Green Card without taking in consideration the individual skills or merit. The last pillar is aimed at limiting the number of family based immigration³⁶.

5. Conclusion

More than two years in office revealed a lot about the policies and the intentions of Trump's administration and its involvement with the rest of the world. Despite the different reactions to Trump's decisions, ranging from those who labeled his policies as being Nationalists and others who labeled his policies as being isolationists. However, Trump's policies cannot be deviated from mainstream realist thinking since all of his actions were to be judged by their end meaning here protecting America's national interests at home and abroad. This fact makes many leaders worldwide afraid and felt betrayed by a country who seeks his own interests.

It can be seen that Trump vision of foreign policy is the result of his belief that the United States was, for decades, working for the benefit of other countries, neglecting its own interests. So, it is time for the US to care about its security and its national interests without any kind of commitment or concern towards international community.

Additionally, what is remarkable about the Trump administration is its transactionalist nature, meaning that Trump, within the past two years, was aiming to negotiate the best deals that would serve the pure American national interests and that would make America great again. Decisions taken by the president received worldwide attention whether in East Asia, the Middle East or Europe.

All in all, what can be said about president Trump's world view was the absence of a coherent and well organized foreign policy agenda, added to that the surprising nature of his decision on several important issues. Some political analysts described Trump policy as being unpredictable and difficult to be analyzed and thus we cannot talk about the existence of a real

³⁶ Ashley K.Kerr President Trump's Four Pillars for Immigration Reform

<https://ogletree.com/insights/2018-02-06/president-trumps-four-pillars-for-immigration-reform/>

Trump Doctrine, for his policy is a day to a day reaction to what is happening at the domestic and the international level.

What is lost in the Trump doctrine is the critical importance of diplomacy, in building alliances, forming multilateral coalitions, and developing international institutions. In short, the art of persuasion – underlying collective action and the intangible quality of legitimacy – is absent.

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