Present at the Destruction: The Trump Administration and the Foreign Policy Bureaucracy

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Donald Trump has articulated foreign policy ideas at variance with the prior status quo of liberal internationalism. Trump's status as an ideological outsider poses an interesting question: Can an executive institutionalize unorthodox foreign policy ideas in the face of bureaucracies dedicated to an alternative set of norms? This article argues that the Trump administration has failed to create new institutions or reorganize existing foreign policy bureaucracies to better serve its policy aims. Trump's brand of populism succeeds more in the weakening of bureaucracies embodying liberal internationalism than in the creation of populist alternatives. While the institutional foundations for populism are likely to remain weak in the future, this administration's erosion of existing institutions will make any post-Trump restoration of liberal internationalism a difficult enterprise. This suggests that the literature on bureaucratic control cannot treat all ideas equally. Some ideas are likelier to thrive in a de-institutionalized environment than others.

A recurring narrative in American politics is a new president entering office, bursting with transformational ideas, only to succumb to the tyranny of the status quo in public policy. Almost by definition, bureaucrats are uncomfortable with radical deviations from their standard operating procedures. Significant policy change can be particularly difficult in decentralized presidential systems like the United States. Even though the executive branch dominates foreign policy, Congress needs to approve major institutional changes. Civil service protections designed to shield bureaucrats from undue political pressure act as another constraint on radical change.

There is no denying that Donald Trump articulated populist foreign policy ideas during the 2016 campaign (Mead 2017; Rehman 2017; Wright 2016). During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump espoused a number of policy positions antithetical to the liberal internationalism (Ikenberry 2011) that had animated US foreign policy for the previous 70 years. Trump's status as an ideological outsider poses an interesting question: Can an executive reorient a foreign policy in the face of institutions founded on an alternative set of norms?

This is not an unfamiliar question for political scientists. There is a voluminous literature devoted to political control over the bureaucracy (Brehm and Gates 1999; Orren and Skowronek 2016), including foreign policy organizations (Milner and Tingley 2015). Goldstein (1993) and others have explored how new ideas can be institutionalized within a foreign policy apparatus so that the founding idea can endure past the peak of the ideological movement that advocated for it. Post–Cold War history is replete with presidents creating new institutions to lock in their foreign policy preferences, such as the Clinton administration's National Economic Council or the Bush administration's Millennium Challenge Corporation. Many scholars have expressed concern that Trump will use his control over the executive branch to alter the liberal internationalist character of American foreign policy (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Milkis and Jacobs 2017; Snyder 2018).

This article argues that the Trump administration has largely failed in embedding its foreign policy ideas into new or existing foreign policy institutions. Trump's brand of populism has succeeded more in the enervation of existing institutions dedicated to liberal internationalism than in the creation of populist alternatives. Through a mixture of intention and incompetence, the Trump administration has succeeded in weakening foreign policy bureaucracies. While the institutional foundations for populism are likely to remain weak in

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the future, this administration appears poised to succeed in eroding the capabilities of existing institutions, making any post-Trump restoration of liberal internationalism more difficult. This suggests that the literature on bureaucratic control cannot treat all ideas equally. Some ideas are more likely to thrive in a deinstitutionalized environment than others.

The next section briefly frames the literature on political control of the bureaucracy in the context of Trump's foreign policy ideas. The subsequent section delineates the Trump administration's failure to embed populist foreign policy ideas into new or existing institutions. The penultimate section reviews the Trump administration's success in weakening the existing foreign policy bureaucracy, with a special emphasis on the State Department. The final section summarizes and concludes.

POLARIZATION AND THE POLICY STATE

American politics has observed two contradictory trends in the past few decades: the rise of the "policy state" and the increased polarization of American politics. To understand the Trump administration's haphazard efforts to control the foreign policy bureaucracy, the tension between these two trends needs to be properly understood.

Scholars in American political development have observed that "expertise and policy analysis have been central to the development of the American state" (Rocco 2017, 365). As voters have increased demands for the federal government to provide public goods, the bureaucracy has expanded and professionalized itself to be able to consume and produce policy expertise. In foreign affairs, the Second World War and Cold War concomitantly expanded the foreign policy bureaucracy (Zegart 1998). In addition to the expansion of the administrative state, a panoply of think tanks and other research institutes emerged to offer new policy ideas to the federal government (Drezner 2017b).

At the same time, the administrative state has also generated its own backlash. The increased polarization of American politics has had pronounced effects on the policy state (Milkis and Jacobs 2017). Both Democratic and Republican party elites have become more ideologically extreme than their broader party membership. Political elites are now more ideologically extreme than at any time in postwar history. Dimock et al. (2014, 6) conclude, "divisions are greatest among those who are the most engaged and active in the political process." In foreign policy, this effect has weakened the elite consensus for liberal internationalism (Kupchan and Trubowitz 2007).

As the ideal points of party elites have deviated further from the center, elected officials have pushed against the constraints of the policy state. This increases the impetus by both parties to embed their ideas into enduring institutions through a strategy of "displacement"—creating new agencies or offices that bypass the policy status quo to advance particular ideas (Orren and Skowronek 2016). As Goldstein (1993) and Mastanduno (1991) note, fair traders and free traders have engaged in bureaucratic trench warfare through the creation or reorganization of trade policy institutions. Drezner (2000) detailed how human rights advocates tried to entrench their ideas in the State Department bureaucracy.

Recent administrations have not been shy in efforts to remake the foreign policy bureaucracy to entrench their ideas. On foreign aid, the Bush administration created the standalone Millennium Challenge Corporation, merged USAID with the State Department, and created a new unit within it to handle refugees. The Obama administration created an array of special envoys while centralizing foreign policy power within the White House to bypass the State Department. The increase in ideological institutionalization stretches beyond the federal government. It has also triggered a new wave of more ideologically oriented think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation and the Center for American Progress (Drezner 2017b). The enervation of congressional oversight on foreign policy has further enabled presidents in their efforts to remake the foreign affairs bureaucracy to fit their preferences (Fowler 2015).

The election of Donald Trump should have accelerated this trend even further. Despite increasing partisanship, Trump's predecessors all fell within the liberal internationalist tradition of foreign policy. Trump does not. For decades, he has said that the liberal international economic order needed to be radically revised in America's favor (Wright 2016). To the extent that his presidential campaign developed policy ideas, they were heavily concentrated in the foreign policy realm. He embraced a slogan of "America First" to explain his foreign policy beliefs despite its association with 1930s isolationism. He disparaged numerous US-created multilateral regimes as antithetical to the national interest, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the United Nations. In an April 2016 foreign policy speech, Trump argued, "It's time to shake the rust off America's foreign policy. It's time to invite new voices and new visions into the fold." During his inaugural address, Trump declared, "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." Steve Bannon, Trump's first White House strategist, embraced an ideology fundamentally at odds with the postwar tradition of liberal internationalism (Reh-

man 2017). With this divergence of preferences between the Trump campaign and the foreign policy establishment, it would have been a rational strategy to create new institutions or reform existing bureaucracies to embed the ideas of populist nationalism.

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S LACK OF DISPLACEMENT

In his first two years in office, Donald Trump has tried to implement the populist foreign policy ideas that animated his 2016 campaign. On the policy side of the ledger, his administration has had successes. His administration withdrew the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Iranian nuclear deal, and the UN Human Rights Council. It has announced its intention to withdraw from the Paris climate change accords, Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, and the Universal Postal Union. On trade, the Trump administration has renegotiated both the North American Free Trade Agreement and the United States–Korea Free Trade Agreement and weakened the WTO's appellate body by refusing to approve replacement judges. His administration revived a little-used national security provision of the 1962 Trade Act to apply across-the-board tariffs on steel and aluminum and threatened to do so on automobiles. The administration has ratchetted up tensions with China on issues ranging from trade to cybersecurity to the treatment of Uighurs. Trump himself has delighted in lobbing rhetorical broadsides at long-standing allies in NATO, the G7, and the European Union.

These moves reflect significant deviations from post–Cold War foreign policy, a fact celebrated in the administration's own 2017 National Security Strategy.[1] That document concluded that the rise of China and Russia "require[s] the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (2018) has also criticized existing multilateral institutions: "Multilateralism has too often become viewed as an end unto itself. The more treaties we sign, the safer we supposedly are. The more bureaucrats we have, the better the job gets done. Was that ever really true?" Pompeo concluded, "Every nation—every nation—must honestly acknowledge its responsibilities to its citizens and ask if the current international order serves the good of its people as well as it could." Somewhat more crudely, a senior White House official told Goldberg (2018), "The Trump Doctrine is 'We're America, Bitch.' That's the Trump Doctrine."

It is striking, however, that the Trump White House has not taken the necessary steps to embed its populist policy shifts within new or existing bureaucracies. Congress has not enshrined much of the Trump administration's foreign policy actions into law. In theory, almost all of Trump's actions could be reversed by an incoming president who subscribed to a different set of foreign policy ideas. While this is not unique to Trump, the extent to which his ideas have been at variance with his predecessors should have increased his administration's incentives to "lock in" its policy shifts.[2]

Nascent attempts at institutionalization quickly fizzled, however. Rocco (2017) notes that none of Trump's initial batch of executive orders created new foreign policy task forces. In the first few weeks of the Trump administration, White House chief strategist Steve Bannon was given a seat on the National Security Council (NSC) and had reportedly created a Strategic Initiatives Group designed to function as a parallel NSC. In short order, however, internecine conflicts within the White House caused a reversal of course (Dozier, Markay, and Suebsaeng 2017). Bannon's influence in the NSC was downgraded, and the Strategic Initiatives Group was disbanded. Bannon himself left the administration a few months later. Other White House efforts to promote Trump's pet projects—the creation of a US Space Force, the empowerment of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement with intelligence capabilities—have been fitful in their progress.

Efforts to build or connect with outside think tanks committed to populist nationalism also proved to be ephemeral. When elected, Trump generated enthusiasm in some Straussian quarters for his promotion of populist nationalism (Heilbrunn 2017). Nonetheless, efforts to forge stronger connections with populist foreign policy organizations proved to be unsuccessful. *National Review*'s Ramesh Ponnuru and Rich Lowry (2017) lamented, "The early months of the Trump administration have proven to be populism's false start." Julius Krein, the founder of the populist journal *American Affairs*, characterized the first half year of the Trump administration as "mediocre conventional Republicanism with a lot more noise" (Johnson and Dawsey 2017). Krein (2017) subsequently authored a *New York Times* op-ed expressing regret over his support of Trump. The conservative think tank with the

1. The document can be accessed on the White House website at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.

2. Trump's predecessor faced this problem to a lesser degree. Many of Barack Obama's signature foreign policies—the Iran deal, the Paris climate deal, and the Cuba opening—were primarily executive-branch exercises.

strongest connections to the Trump administration was the Heritage Foundation. In spring 2017, however, that think tank's board ousted its president amid concerns that he had debased the caliber of Heritage's research and hitched the think tank too closely to Trump (Cook, Johnson, and Vogel 2017). Two years into Trump's term of office, there remains little populist foreign policy thought in the American marketplace of ideas, including in think tanks.

Trump administration efforts to reorganize the existing national security bureaucracy were also largely stymied. One reason was the slowness in staffing the political appointees to top foreign affairs and national security positions. Despite GOP control of the Senate and the elimination of the filibuster as a stalling tactic, the Trump administration was far slower in filling Senate-confirmable positions at the State, Treasury, and Defense Departments than prior presidents. When Trump fired Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State in February 2018, eight of the top 10 positions at the State Department were vacant (Faries and Rojanasakul 2018).

When they did get around to foreign affairs staffing, the Trump White House preferred corporate executives to those with public-sector experience. The new administration dipped into the corporate world to hire numerous cabinet officials with foreign policy responsibilities. The most prominent example of this came when Trump tapped ExxonMobil CEO Tillerson as his first Secretary of State. Tillerson prioritized a grand organizational redesign of Foggy Bottom. To aid in the redesign, Tillerson spent tens of millions of dollars on consultants from Deloitte and Insigniam to survey Foreign Service officers (Toosi 2018c).

The redesign initiative met significant bureaucratic resistance within the State Department. Foreign Service officers scoffed at a survey that Insigniam sent out to department employees asking them to define a diplomat's mission in six words or less. One diplomat described the survey as "preposterous," telling Farrow (2018, 270), "[it's] a copy and paste from what a corporation would use, and even then, at almost any corporation, this would not be customized enough."[3] That was reflected in the outside consultants' work product. Throughout the process, they failed to understand the precise function of diplomats. In an apotheosis of management consultant parlance, one presentation sent to Congress declared that the redesign would lead the State Department to "align overseas and domestic footprint to leverage our greatest capabilities and align presence with priorities, driven by sophisticated data analysis."[4] This vacuous language alienated members of Congress as well as the Foreign Service.

The redesign did not end well. In January 2018, USAID informed the State Department that it would no longer participate in any redesign efforts (Wadhams 2018). Tillerson downgraded the redesign into an "impact initiative" that focused primarily on modernizing IT services. After Trump fired Tillerson by tweet, the redesign was left in a moribund state. One former State Department official blasted the entire exercise, telling Toosi (2018c): "You had years of blueprints for reform developed internally. . . . Civil servants who crave change and reform and would've been thrilled to work on this effort at no added taxpayer expense. Instead, they chose to lavish money on contractors and consultants who knew nothing about the organization." Not a single former Secretary of State of either party defended Tillerson's approach to reforming the institution (Farrow 2018, 276–78).

The evidence suggests that efforts to embed populist foreign policy ideas into the foreign policy and national security bureaucracies largely failed.[5] There are multiple possible explanations for this failure of institutionalization. Bannon's departure after little more than six months exemplified the unprecedented level of personnel churn within the Trump administration, which could have hampered institutionalization. Tenpas (2018) found that in its first year, the Trump administration's White House staff turnover rate was more than twice as high as any of the previous five administrations. The *New York Times* analyzed the tenure of 21 top White House and cabinet positions (Lu and Yourish 2018) and found significantly higher departure rates under Trump. The president of the Partnership for Public Service described the burn rate as "unprecedented." Still, this explanation is unsatisfying. Many of Trump's replacement hires—Pompeo at the State Department, John Bolton at NSC, John Kelly at the White House—were closer in spirit to Trump's populist nationalism than the people they replaced. As a causal explanation, disorganization is of limited utility.

Another possible explanation, embraced by both observers (Woodward 2018) and supporters (Lewandowski and Bossie 2018) of the Trump administration, is that establishment officials and bureaucrats have sabotaged the president. This was best exemplified by an anonymous *New York Times* (2018) op-ed in which a senior official wrote that "many of the senior officials in his own administration are working diligently from

3. This sentiment matched the sentiment expressed during my own informal interviews with US diplomats on the redesign efforts.

4. The presentation can be accessed on *Politico* at https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000015f-c584-dc43-a37f-c5c409d20002.

5. An important exception would be in immigration, in which the White House has appointed key loyalists throughout the national security bureaucracy. See Lind (2018) and Toosi (2018b).

within to frustrate parts of his agenda and his worst inclinations." The author highlighted foreign policy as a key area where Trump had been constrained. These same accounts, however, also note that over time, Trump grew less constrained by his establishment advisors (Woodward 2018, 225–26). This means that efforts at institutionalization should have gained momentum in 2018. The opposite appears to be the case, however.

THE POPULIST APPROACH TO INSTITUTIONS

The Trump administration has been ineffective in creating new institutions or reorganizing old ones to promote its ideas. It has, however, had greater success at weakening foreign policy bureaucracies it views as antithetical to its populist agenda. This is particularly true of the State Department. Even before Trump's inauguration, his transition team told career diplomats not to have any direct contact with Trump appointees and dressed down two senior State Department officials who talked to UN ambassador-designate Nikki Haley after Haley initiated the conversation (Zengerle 2017). In the first week of Trump's term of office, its Muslim travel ban triggered a State Department dissent channel memo that garnered more than 1,000 signatures. The dissent channel was established precisely to protect diplomats making an argument contrary to existing US foreign policy. Nonetheless, in response to this particular use, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said: "These career bureaucrats have a problem with it? I think they should either get with the program or they can go" (Toosi 2017).[6] In the weeks before Rex Tillerson was confirmed as secretary of state, the Trump White House forced several senior career ambassadors out of their positions, a move that Farrow (2018, ix) labeled the "Mahogany Row massacre."

Throughout its first two years, the Trump administration continued to take actions designed to limit the influence of Foreign Service officers. This occurred through imposing harder budget constraints and professional penalties for recalcitrant members of the diplomatic corps. Tillerson prioritized budget cutting upon being sworn in. He implemented this through a variety of means, including an across-the-board hiring freeze. This freeze included new restrictions on the hiring of spouses at embassies, limiting the career options of married diplomats. Tillerson also exercised direct veto power over State Department travel. In his first year in office, he cut the State Department's work force by 8%.

Tillerson further bypassed Foreign Service officers by empowering his Policy Planning staff to an unprecedented degree. His director of Policy Planning, Brian Hook, relied on conservative media to prune out career diplomats believed to be sympathetic to Obama-era policies (Toosi 2018a). One diplomat was told that a Trump appointee would oppose any Foreign Service officers for leadership positions unless they passed the "Breitbart test" in reference to the online outlet that espouses populist nationalism (Zeya 2018). The State Department's inspector general launched investigations into whether Trump appointees were taking punitive actions toward Foreign Service officers deemed insufficiently loyal to President Donald Trump (Lynch and Gramer 2018). One stratagem was to assign suspect senior diplomats to perform mundane tasks, such as the processing of routine Freedom of Information Act declassification requests (Farrow 2018; Zengerle 2017).

Even career diplomats who were not directly punished found reduced influence and access to policy-making decisions, causing them to depart on their own accord. Nancy McEldowney, the director of the Foreign Service Institute, stepped down in June 2017 despite her plan to stay in that position indefinitely. She described the State Department under Tillerson as "a toxic, troubled environment and organization." The US ambassador to Qatar also resigned, warning about the "complete and utter disdain for our expertise" among Trump's political appointees (Cohen 2017). After US Ambassador to Mexico Roberta Jacobsen stepped down in May 2018, she penned an op-ed (Jacobsen 2018) in which she noted, "the disconnect between the State Department and the White House seems intentional, leaving ambassadors in impossible positions and our allies across the globe infuriated, alienated and bewildered." As of August 2018, no active Foreign Service officer had been appointed to a senior policy position at the State Department (Clark 2018).

The combined effect of these moves on the State Department were pronounced, according to American Foreign Service Association data. In the first eight months of the Trump administration, approximately 12% of foreign affairs officers left the department, an unusual drop in the first year of an administration. That reduction was concentrated in the upper tiers of the Foreign Service (Stephenson 2017): the departures included 60% of career ambassadors (the diplomatic equivalent of a four-star general), 42% of career ministers (three-star general), and 17% of minister counselors (two-star general). The self-imposed hiring freeze dropped the intake of new Foreign Service members from 366 in 2016 to approximately 100 new entry-level officers. Applications to join the Foreign Service also plummeted by 26% in the first year of the Trump administration (Farrow 2018, 274; Lippman and Toosi 2017).

Given this pattern of budget and staffing constraints, it is unsurprising that dissatisfaction among the diplomatic corps surged. The State Department dropped from the fourth best place to work in 2016 to eighth among 18 large agencies in

6. The dissent channel memo can be accessed on DocumentCloud at https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3438487/Dissent-Memo.pdf.

the 2017 Partnership for Public Service survey of federal employees. This was the first time that the department had not been ranked in the top five large agencies since 2011.[7] Even Trump appointees at the State Department were forced to recognize low staff morale. The State Department's chief spokesperson Heather Nauert acknowledged on the record (Lee 2018) that "there is a morale issue in this building and that's why I say, you know, folks, hang in there. . . . Please don't give up. Don't give up on this building." The result has been a State Department that has shed experienced employees and is also less diverse than in prior administrations (Zeya 2018). It remains understrength and incompletely staffed. There is little indication that this will change in the second half of Trump's term under Mike Pompeo. He has prioritized the investigation of negative press leaks in his interactions with career diplomats, over the staffing of the higher echelons in the department (Diehl 2018).

It should be noted that at least some of the State Department's dysfunction was not intentional on the part of the Trump White House. The White House's initial efforts to nominate political appointees faced a roadblock in Tillerson, who deemed many of the choices as unsatisfactory (Woodward 2018, 132–33). Nonetheless, the weakening of the State Department bureaucracy is consistent with Trump's brand of populism. The president's worldview fits the standard political science definition of populism, which disdains any constraint on executive power (Drezner 2017a; Mudde 2004; Müller 2016). The essence of populism is a strong leader ruling according to the general will, free from any constraints. The essence of institutionalization is to act as a constraint on political action.

Populist ideas and institutionalization do not mix well (Drezner 2017a), which helps to explain Trump's language about the "deep state." One month into the Trump administration, Bannon proclaimed a daily war aimed at the "deconstruction of the administrative state" (Rucker and Costa 2017). The January 2019 government shutdown hit the State Department particularly hard (Gramer 2019). A Trump official penned an anonymous *Daily Caller* (2019) op-ed claiming that "Senior officials can reprioritize during an extended shutdown, focus on valuable results and weed out the saboteurs." The Trump administration's approach to the State Department has been consistent with its deconstructionist efforts toward other, less visible bureaucracies (Lewis 2018). For Trump in particular, a leader who values the capacity to tactically surprise above all else, institutionalization is not a desirable quality. When asked in the fall of 2017 about the dearth of State Department appointees, Trump replied, "Let me tell you, the one that matters is me. I'm the only one that matters, because when it comes to it, that's what the policy is going to be" (Hannon 2017). It is unsurprising that morale within the civilian parts of the foreign affairs bureaucracy remains low (Seligman 2018). The Trump administration has failed at reorganizing the State Department, but it has had more success in changing the composition of its staff.

CONCLUSION

The Trump administration represents a puzzle for scholars of ideas and bureaucratic politics. On the one hand, an administration that possesses a less mainstream set of foreign policy principles should be motivated to institutionalize them upon taking office. On the other hand, the evidence shows that the Trump administration failed to engage in serious efforts to institutionalize its populist foreign policy ideas. There was no displacement strategy. Rather, the influence of existing foreign policy bureaucracies was weakened. A combination of budget cutting and politically motivated personnel moves winnowed the senior ranks of the diplomatic corps. This is consistent with Trump's brand of populism because it reduces the bureaucratic constraints that could limit his freedom of action. This enables him to pursue more unorthodox foreign policy initiatives, such as the attempted rapprochement with North Korea's Kim Jong-un.

If Trump's brand of populism is antithetical to institutionalization, will his foreign policy platform outlive his presidency? It is possible to see how, more than other ideologies, populism benefits from a lack of institutionalization. Orren and Skowronek (2016, 40) note that "a decision not to set a policy can be a programmatic determination to let existing arrangements drift and atrophy." It is possible to extend this line of thought to institutionalization more generally. One key to populism is the absence of institutional checks and balances on the executive. If the Trump administration can denude foreign policy bureaucracies of expertise and authority, letting those agencies drift and atrophy, it could pave the way for future presidents to carry on Trump's agenda of populist nationalism. Even if the next president can reverse Trump's policies, there are policy arenas where the legacy effects of current policies can be long lasting—such as immigration.

Furthermore, Trump was elected at a moment when underlying trends—political polarization and the erosion of trust in expertise and authority—had already weakened the power of countervailing institutions (Drezner 2017b; Nichols 2017). Even if Trump does not beget future populist presidents, it will take time to strengthen countervailing institutions. This suggests that some foreign policy ideas are more likely to

7. The survey results can be accessed at Partnership for Public Service, https://bestplacestowork.org/analysis/agency-profiles/#doj-state.

thrive than others in a less institutionalized environment. Not all foreign policy ideas are created equal.

That said, there are two reasons to believe that the populist moment might end with the passing of the Trump administration. First, while Trump possesses a coherent foreign policy ideology, he lacks expertise (Wright 2016). Trump's demonstrated ignorance of international relations will make it difficult for him to implement populist ideas even in a less institutionalized policy space. Inexperienced foreign policy leaders are less able to constrain their subordinates from bureaucratic conflicts or pursuing risky foreign policy actions that contravene their preferences (Saunders 2017).

Finally, the paradox of Trump's foreign policy populism is that his foreign policy positions have become less popular over time. Public opinion survey on alliances, trade, and immigration all reveal public sentiment shifting away from Trump's stated positions. According to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs' 2017 survey (Smeltz et al. 2017, 2), "Aside from the president's core supporters, most Americans prefer the type of foreign policy that has been typical of U.S. administrations, be they Republican or Democrat, since World War II. . . . Indeed, in key instances, Americans have doubled down on these beliefs." Gallup's 2018 survey data confirm greater public enthusiasm for trade and immigration. In June 2018, CNN found that Americans preferred maintaining good relations with allies over imposing tariffs by 63% to 25%. Sixty-five percent of Americans believed that other world leaders did not respect Trump.[8] After his first two years in office, Trump has convinced some Republicans to embrace his brand of populist nationalism—at the cost of alienating the entire rest of the electorate. It is possible that, by the end of his time in office, Donald Trump will have unwittingly made liberal internationalism great again.

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