



The book explains US-Ukrainian foreign policy during the Trump presidency from the outlook of US national interest. It also analyzes the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election and the future of US foreign policy under a Biden presidency.

US FOREIGN POLICY AND UKRAINE: Russian Aggression, Rebellion, and War

By Richard R. Matheny

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US

FOREIGN POLICY AND UKRAINE

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION, REBELLION, AND WAR



Richard R Matheny

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Chapter Two: American Foreign Policy and Ukraine

“Let me remind you all that the first task of American foreign policy is to reduce threats to the United States.” Michael Mandelbaum

“Foreign policy must be about priorities. The United States cannot do everything everywhere.” Richard N. Haass

“My view of foreign policy is that we need to be careful and circumspect about United States intervention in any foreign nation.” Michele M. Bachmann

“America has been a force for good in the world. But we should learn from the mistakes of an over-expansionist foreign policy and return to the restraint that George Washington and John Quincy Adams advocated.” Khann (Ro) Khanna

“I am proposing a new foreign policy focused on advancing American’s core national interests-so important-promoting regional stability, and producing and easing the tension within our very troubled world.” Donald J. Trump

“This is the Trump revolution, pragmatic, non-ideological. He approaches issues as a businessman. It’s a revolution in ideas and it goes way beyond foreign policy.” Steve M. Hilton

“Trump promised an ‘America First’ foreign policy rooted in the national interest, not nostalgia.” Lawrence A. Kudlow

“What America first means is we put the national interest of the United States and well-being of our country and our own people first.

Our foreign policy, first and foremost, should be focused on the defense of American freedom, security and rights.” Pat J. Buchanan

When asked to characterize American-Ukrainian foreign policy, I think to myself, that task is a difficult one, especially since I am just an ordinary citizen and a non-specialist on the subject. Nevertheless, when I explain that to those Ukrainians questioning me, it does not matter to them. They want to hear from me, one ordinary citizen to another and they want it explained in plain ordinary language. Maybe they have already heard what the experts say and do not understand them because of technical language or the expert’s tendency to get down into the weeds and forget the forest or they may think ordinary Americans have a say in the formulation of US foreign policy, which we do not. For whatever reason, they insist that I describe and explain my government’s attitude and policies relating to Ukraine and their struggle with Russia. Such a description will require that I paint with broad strokes and do so without any inside information. My analysis is based on public information, common sense, knowledge of the American political system (history, political culture, and institutions), and a modest understanding of international relations and political philosophy. The analysis that follows is divided into four topical parts: Asymmetrical, Presidential Rationality and the National Interest, Domestic Politics, and American Assistance to Ukraine.

Asymmetrical

The Doctrine of Equality Among Nations asserts that the United States and Ukraine are equals in terms of international law since they are both sovereign nation-states. However, this equality is not the case in the real world of international relations, where the concept of asymmetry better characterizes their relationship. Asymmetrical is derived from the Greek word “*asymmetria*” which means “lack of” or

“ill-proportioned”, which perfectly describes the political relationship between Washington and Kiev. The United States and Ukraine are not the same or equal insofar as the exercise of political power since one, the US, is a superpower and the other, Ukraine, is relatively weak and a minor actor on the world stage. These facts have enormous consequences insofar as the formulation of American foreign policy toward Ukraine is concerned. To state the proposition differently and less diplomatically, Ukraine needs Washington’s support most urgently and critically, while it has only minimum or minor importance to the American national interest. That reality means that if morality is taken out of the equation, Ukraine can only count on American support to a limited degree and Ukraine’s relationship with the US cannot be separated from Washington’s relationship with its rival, the Russian Federation. In other words, as the old saying goes, “my enemy’s enemy is my friend” but I would add as well, at best, a fair-weather and temporary friend.

To understand most of Washington’s policy regarding Ukraine, it is necessary to comprehend how the US government views the Russian state today. During the Cold War, the USSR was viewed as a bitter rival, the evil empire, and an existential threat to the security of the American people. US policy was one of containing Soviet expansion beyond Eastern Europe and Ukraine by ringing the USSR and allies with military alliances. Soviet control of Ukraine as well as the rest of Eastern Europe was tolerated, viewed as a part of Russia’s sphere of influence, and was not seen as an existential threat to the West. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine in the early 1990s, there was hope that the new Russian state would reform itself into a liberal democracy but with the rise of Vladimir Putin that reformation did not happen. Today, Russia is an authoritarian oligarchy that has, some people argue, the intention of restoring its empire in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia. There have been several negative events with its neighbors other than Ukraine where Moscow has violated international law, interfered in the domestic affairs of

other nation-states, and used military force (Götz & Merlen, 2019). It has also challenged the US in the Middle East, Persian Gulf, and other areas of the world.

The reaction to the resurgence of Russian aggressive power has been mixed and confused in Washington, with some politicians characterizing Moscow once again an existential threat to the security of the US. Still, other policymakers who are less threatened, seek solutions in accommodation, compromise, or ignoring the problem altogether. With Russia's aggression in Ukraine, however, both sides now agree that Russia should again be contained and punished for its unapologetic use of military force and that agreement is where Ukraine fits into US policy. It is in the interest of the United States to provide support to Kiev to deny Moscow total control over Ukraine as well as frustrate Russian policy in general. It is also recognized that the loss of Ukrainian independence will not be an existential threat to the US just as it was recognized during the Cold War. In other words, the stakes for Ukraine are loss of territorial integrity, sovereignty, and the very survival of the Ukrainian state itself, while the stakes for Washington are losing a minor chip to its Moscow rival. The situation is appropriately characterized as an asymmetrical condition with Ukrainians having everything to lose but Americans not so much.

While the above discussion of power politics between the United States and the Russian Federation with Ukraine in the middle as a pawn is a familiar and sad story for Ukrainians due to their unfortunate geography, there is another question to ask, should history, common political culture, and family ties also be considered in the formulation of American foreign policy toward Ukraine? The answer is affirmative but again, Ukraine is not in a good symmetrical position. Note that only one million American citizens are of Ukrainian ancestry, which is less than one percent of the population of the United States. That number is too small for any significant

impact on foreign policy considerations in terms of kinship ties or lobbying (Wolowyna, 2018). Additionally, Ukraine does not share a common historical heritage with the American people as do the British and people of Western Europe. Americans do not view Ukrainians as family as they do Canadians, British, Australians, New Zealanders, or other Anglo-American people. Americans also do not share a common political culture with Ukrainians. The political culture of the United States is based on individualism, constitutionalism, and Protestant/Roman Catholic Christianity, which until recently was largely missing from the authoritarian past that Ukraine shares with Slavic Russian culture. Thus, for these reasons, the ones discussed above, and the reasons set forth below, the United States will be cautious to get too heavily involved in Ukrainian political affairs.

Presidential Rationality and the American Nation Interest

Before presidential rationality can be linked to the American national interest and then related to both President Trump and Ukraine, it is appropriate by way of introduction to say a few things in general about foreign policymaking in the US political system. The first thing is that there are many actors to consider in the formulation of American foreign policy. Some act in cooperation with one another, while others pursue their agenda and goals independently of anyone else. These actors are both governmental and private in nature. They are individual people, groups of people, businesses, think tanks, universities, the news media, international and domestic organizations, foreign governments, and private foreign groups as well as US governmental entities including states, Congress, the federal courts, and bureaucracies. Sometimes the American people as a whole influence the making of foreign policy, nonetheless by far the most important party in the process is the President of the United States. Article II of the Constitution of the United States gives the

President broad and largely undefined power to conduct the foreign policy of the country and that authority has expanded over the years with the approval of Congress and the Supreme Court. While the lower House of Congress, the House of Representatives, has some say in the conduct of foreign policy through its control of the purse and the ability to criticize through oversight, and the Senate is legally required to concur with some presidential decisions and also has oversight authority, these congressional powers, for the most part, are not proactive but mainly defensive checks. It is therefore the President who sets the foreign policy agenda of the United States and is responsible for executing that policy. The planning and execution of policies require the assistance of the President's close advisers. Foreign policy bureaucrats can drag their feet or directly oppose the President's policies, but that opposition is the exercise of extra-constitutional power and should be viewed as illegitimate.

In thinking of presidential decision-making in the realm of foreign policy, two things should be kept in mind. First, as compared to the Congress and the federal courts, the American executive branch of government in terms of constitutionality is singular, one human being, and although that person is influenced by what previous presidents have done and what current advisers and bureaucrats think, in the end, the buck stops with him. The President, unless he is willing to abrogate his responsibility to others, as a single person, decides what are right or wrong policies and those decisions will be influenced by his theoretical views of realism, liberalism, or something in between and to be sure by the idiosyncrasies of upbringing and personality. Second, presidents as individual persons compared to multi-person institutions like the Congress, the bureaucracy, and other organizations are more inclined to use the rational compensative model of decision-making to determine their desired foreign policy outcomes rather than rely on semi-rational decision-making like organizational processes (use of standard operating procedures, SOPs) or governmental compromise politics.

(Allison & Zelikow, 1999). Rational process decision-making means that within the assumptions of realism, liberalism, or something else, the president rank-orders competing goals, gathers the appropriate facts, and then chooses the best policy alternative that suffices. He then considers the decisions consequences for domestic self-interest politics and makes a final decision, or he chooses to not make a decision. Then, he awaits the armchair quarterback attacks from his critics that are sure to come. Naturally, some presidents like other human beings are better at rational decision-making than are others.

We should turn now to the linkage between presidential rationality and the national interest. While foreign governments are aware of what Congress and other American foreign policy actors think about their countries, they all pay close attention to what the President and his close advisers say regarding the foreign policy of the United States since he, the President is their most dependable empirical reference of what is the American national interest. Although many academics scoff at the use of “the national interest” claiming no such thing exists and foreign policy interest in the United States is simply a collection of pluralistic interests, the concept of national interest, at the very least, serves as a heuristic device for foreign governments to reduce and simplify the complexity of US policy so they can understand and respond to it. So, in that sense, the national interest of the United States is what American presidents say it is. This point is not to argue that the President’s views are necessarily correct in an empirical or normative sense or that all people agree with him.

Democrats, academia, and foreign policy bureaucrats criticized President Trump severely and unreasonably even before his election. As for the Democratic Party criticism, it can be dismissed summarily since it is mainly partisan opposition in nature. Most of it makes no sense, although most of the leadership of the Democratic Party does agree with the assumptions of liberalism insofar as the making of foreign policy is concerned. Academic critics, on the other hand, do

not like President Trump's crass, undiplomatic style of communication, which they view to consist of ignorant inconsistencies. Further, he does not conform rigidly to their theories/research, and additionally, many of them are themselves a part of a ruling elite establishment that favors and befits financially from liberalism as an approach to foreign policymaking. The criticism of Trump by the bureaucrats is that they are experts and how dare an "uneducated, fool like President Trump" disregard their advice, which is, for the most part, based on liberal assumptions. Still, while the purpose of this section of the book is not to defend President Trump, I will say that in democratic republics, elections have consequences and in electing Donald Trump, to a large degree, the American people rejected liberalism as an approach to foreign policymaking. Additionally, many Americans like the way President Trump communicates since he speaks to them in a non-condescending, honest manner and they are well aware that the human condition makes total consistency impossible. It is also a fact that most Americans are unimpressed with academic theories, which have little or no connections to their real world. As for the bureaucrats, the American people see them as too immersed in the minutia of diplomacy to see that liberalism is not working. Most Americans believe the bureaucrat's job is to conduct presidential foreign policy instead of opposing it at every opportunity.

The central point here is that commonly held assumptions based on liberalism unite most of the ruling elite in the United States, and their foreign policy preferences are based largely on liberal ideas. That unified faction includes the leadership of the Republican Party before President Trump, the current leadership of the Democratic Party, and many academicians and bureaucrats. In the election of 2016, the American people rejected President Bush's war in Iraq and the failed attempt at democratic nation-building in the Middle East and elsewhere. They further rejected President Obama's apologetic appeasement of Iran and other countries as well as his other liberal

foreign policy initiatives. In that regard, citizens saw an overlap between neoconservatism and liberalism in that the Bush administration embraced significant aspects of the liberal tradition. Although the American people did not reject morality in foreign policy per se, they did make clear by electing Donald Trump President of the United States that they wanted the line redrawn clearly in favor of realism. So, in the minds of most Americans, President Trump, for the most part, thinks like a realist and as a realist, insists that the American national interest, as he sees it, takes precedence over considerations of morality. This does not mean that President Trump does not have moral feelings for the people of Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe, which are tied to him by marriage, and other peoples of the world, but it does mean the national interest of the American people comes first in the formulation of US foreign policy. While some academicians have labeled him as a “classical realist” or some other realist label, these labels do not matter that much to the American people (Korab-Karpowicz, 2017). What matters to them is stopping the abuse of liberal globalization, which is draining American resources in terms of American blood and other resources. They also want the United States to stop engaging in foreign wars that are not in the national interest since they do not want to be the world’s policeman. Americans, as well, want Washington’s social engineering of other countries to convert them into democracies stopped since these efforts have proven a waste of time and effort and are not necessary for American security in the first place. Americans want our allies to pay their fair share for defense and they are tired of our competitors taking advantage of us in trade matters. They are also tired of international organizations and countries taking US handouts and then knifing the US in the back.

When President Trump sits in his office early in the morning or cannot sleep late at night worrying about American foreign policy, he is not thinking in academic terms like “realism versus liberalism”, “classical realism versus neorealism” or “neoclassical realism versus something

else” (Dawood, 2016). Instead, he is thinking in common-sense realistic terms about power politics, and how the security of the United States can be ensured. In other words, he is thinking about the world as ordinary Americans do, which is what is known as realism in a generic sense. In that regard, there are several assumptions in the President’s mindset relating to foreign policymaking in today’s world. First, he assumes that the nation-state is the central actor in international politics and interactions among these actors, especially the major (most powerful) ones, are the center or core of world politics. Their intentions are critical in the formation of foreign policy. These nation-states are further assumed to be unitary actors, who are for the most part rational in their pursuit of a national interest, which is designed mainly to ensure the survival and welfare of their people. Second, realism for President Trump is accepting the fact that there is no world government or supranational authority to enforce rules which address serious disputes between and among nation-states, particularly the most powerful ones. The political environment in which the United States operates is therefore anarchical and although Washington has allies, the bottom line for President Trump, as a realist, is that the US depends primarily on itself to ensure its national interest. Third, in dealing with world leaders, the President, as a realist, knows he should exercise great caution since they are self-centered individuals who are fearful of other countries, and motivated by the desire to strengthen their nation’s power to survive. They therefore seek as many resources as possible (Korab-Karpowicz, 2017). Having worked in the brutal world of New York City real estate for most of his life, President Trump knows well that some people are not inherently benevolent, but instead are primarily self-centered, competitive, and egocentric. He knows how to deal with President Putin. The world is therefore in constant antagonism as the leaders of most nation-states work hard at building up their military and other resources, which in turn threaten other states and leads to security dilemmas, which in turn leads to strategies of power balancing or hegemony. The good foreign policymaker is therefore an

anti-idealist who views the world as it actually is so he can rationally and cool-headedly employ the means necessary to preserve security and the national interest of the political community he is sworn to protect. Finally, President Trump as a realist believes, as did the classical realist Han J. Morgenthau, that morality does have a place in American foreign policy, but it should be secondary and never override the national interest of the United States and that security requirement is what President Trump calls “America First.” To quote Morgenthau on the point, “the state has no right to let its moral disapprobation...get in the way of successful political survival...Realism considers prudence...to be the supreme virtue in politics.” (Morgenthau, 1955, p.9).

If one carefully reads President Trump’s speeches and studies his decisions, the above explanation of realism is an accurate characterization of his thinking, which is contrary to the assumptions of liberalism. Note that the public statements of the President have made clear that he does not believe that nation-states are naturally cooperative, or that international organizations like the UN are the key to a peaceful world, or that international trade and economic interdependence ensure political cooperation and peace, or that allies should get free rides financially, or there is a “world order” which the US should police every time a military conflict occurs in some corner of the world. Nor does he think that in the real world there is an “international community” where nation-states will necessarily abide by international law and universally accepted norms of behavior, or that Washington should intervene cooperatively or hostilely in other parts of the world to engineer democratic political regimes (Schadlow, 2018).

Finally, one more issue before we, at last, get to Ukraine. This point involves academic characterizations and critiques of President Trump’s thinking and approach to foreign policymaking. Academicians, for the most part, use various labels to describe the

President, which are based on only a few of President Trump's words and decisions. They often leave important events out altogether, or they parse words and events to justify their particular prejudice toward the President Trump, which is overwhelmingly negative. While some of these people are plain dishonest, I think most of them are simply trying to justify their theories that most of the time have little to do with real-world happenings. President Trump as a realist, however, must contend with the task of making policy in the real world of power politics.

Now we finally turn to America's Ukrainian foreign policy as envisioned by Donald J. Trump, President of the United States. As stated above, a priori to thinking about Ukraine, the President thinks in realistic terms about the Russian Federation. That way of thinking is prudent because Russia is a direct threat to the American national interest, it is a major power in world politics, and it is a historical rival of the United States, while Ukraine is no threat, is weak in power, and has a little-shared history with the United States as rival or friend. Like most foreign policymaking, Washington's relationship with Moscow is complicated and contradictory in that the Russians are an existential threat to the American national interest, simultaneously they are potential allies. Kiev, on the other hand, is caught in the middle with very limited power to protect its national interest. To describe Ukraine's perilous position between the Russian Federation and the United States, it can be said that Kiev is caught between "a rock and a hard place" or "the devil and deep blue sea". These scenarios between Washington and Moscow consist of competition and confrontation on the one hand, and cooperation and accommodation on the other. Let us first consider the ongoing situation of competition, which characterizes current American foreign policy toward Russia. The situation will require a discussion of possible nuclear and conventional confrontations. As for the nuclear situation, since the US and Russia have been in competition with one another for many years and it has produced a stalemate, most people

think Washington's relationship with Moscow, while strained, will not produce nuclear confrontation. Both sides have everything to lose and nothing to gain in the event of a nuclear exchange, but that does not necessarily mean nuclear weapons will never be used. Empirically speaking, the data showed that Hitler did not have much of a chance to defeat the western democracies, much less the USSR as well, but he plowed ahead into WWII anyway. The fact that Russia has a deadly nuclear arsenal that can destroy the United States and the rest of the world several times over leads to three facts. First, until technology makes nuclear weapons obsolete, Russia, despite its weak economy and global weakness in relationship to American conventional power, will remain a major actor on the world stage. Russia also will be able to project its power beyond its immediate borders into Eastern Europe and beyond, and if nothing else, its nuclear capabilities have some blackmail value in power struggles with other nation-states. Moscow, nonetheless, is unlikely to push this advantage too far since mutual destruction is not in its self-interest.

Second, President Trump, as a realist like most Americans, fears Russian nuclear power and because of a history of rivalry, Moscow's good intentions are open to question. That fact means that Washington will continue to try to stay ahead of Russian nuclear technology but will be cautious about pushing Moscow too far in power struggles. Three, Ukraine has absolutely no say or role in the "Washington versus Moscow" nuclear competition. Like other nation-states, with few exceptions, Kiev does not have any power to influence a nuclear confrontation, and should a nuclear exchange occur, it is only a victim. It can be stated that would not be the case had Ukraine not surrendered its nuclear weapons in 1994. If Kiev had kept its nuclear arsenal of 3,000 to 5,000 strategic and tactical weapons and been able to maintain them, which seem unlikely, it could use nuclear brinkmanship against Moscow as North Korea uses it against Washington and Iran desires to do. Why Ukrainian policymakers decided to abandon their nuclear arsenal is a mystery

because they should have known better than to trust the Russians or anyone else to guarantee their independence and security. Some analysts say with Russia on its knees and Washington looking invincible, the delirium of freedom seduced Kiev into thinking the struggle for power among nation-states was over, or politicians were bribed, or the stronger powers forced the issue with the threat of force. Whatever happened, and historians will have to tell us, it was a mistake (Ukraine's comparative power weakness suggests it had little choice in the matter) and because of that blunder, Ukraine today is in a hazardous, if not impossible, position because of overwhelming Russian military superiority. One thing is certain. The United States and President Trump are not going to risk nuclear war to protect Ukraine; and Russia, whatever its foreign policy intentions, will not push conflicts too far since it also sees avoiding a nuclear exchange as being in its national interest. That is a good thing because Ukrainian independence means little if everyone is dead. Presidents Trump and Putin know that nuclear war is a disaster for everyone, so they will be cautious in the power struggle over Ukraine and other areas and not push these conflicts to the point of nuclear warfare.

Most Ukrainian citizens I have spoken with agree that it was a mistake to surrender their nuclear weapons. They agree that Ukraine has no say in the American nuclear competition with the Russians, and Ukrainians also believe that stalemate will not lead to a nuclear exchange. Their main concern is whether the current armed conflict in eastern Ukraine will escalate into full-scale conventional warfare. They worry Russian tanks will be in Kiev and Ukrainian independence will be lost, and Ukraine again will be under Moscow's yoke. Ukrainian citizens, therefore, inquire about the possibility of a full-scale Russian invasion and if that assault does happen, they ask, what will the American government do about it? Although scholars characterize the goals of Russian foreign policy in many different and contradictory ways (Götz & Merlen, 2019, pp.133-153), whatever is the case, no one knows for sure what is in President Putin's mind, but

he like President Trump is a realist, and for a realist, national security and border defense take priority over everything else. So President Putin views a total conventional war with Ukraine to not be in the Russian national interest, since it will have serious diplomatic, economic, and military consequences for Moscow's relationship with the US, Eastern and Western Europe, and much of the rest of the world, which is a threat to his country's national interest and security. To be sure, in addition to the American response, more worldwide economic sanctions result, which Russia can ill afford, and Moscow is branded again as an aggressor and isolated even more diplomatically. Further, it would be a difficult financial, military, and psychological burden for Moscow to govern the forty-two million conquered Ukrainians who are poor and hostile.

The fact is, Russia's economy is declining (Nye, 2019), and they cannot afford to conquer Ukraine and occupy it for a long period of time. More important is that a military occupation of Ukraine is unnecessary to ensure that Moscow is safe from a Western invasion. The people of Ukraine, Americans, and most other people in the world see Moscow's move into the outer edges of Ukraine as outright imperial aggression designed to overturn the Western liberal international order and create a Tsarist empire on the land of the old Soviet Union (empire building). They also see the expansion done for domestic reasons to deflect Russian public attention from a failing economy by hyping patriotic nationalism and thus limiting the spread of democratic norms into the Russian authoritarian political culture. These foreign views are not the way the leadership of Russia thinks, however, including their realistic thinking president. President Putin has made it clear in numerous speeches that Russia wants new security architecture in Europe because he fears NATO's eastward enlargement and the European Union's ever-growing encroachment into neighboring economies like Ukraine (Putin, 2007; Putin, 2014). See Appendix C. So, in addition to enjoying domestic popularity for reclaiming lost Russian pride and empire as well as frustrating the

West, Putin sees his military offensive against Ukraine as defensive. It is a clear warning to both Kiev and Washington that he views Ukraine as within the Russian defensive sphere of influence. President Dmitri Medvedev made that fear clear in 2008 when he said that Moscow has a “privileged interest in the neighborhood,” which was a veiled threat to use military force to protect that interest (Oliker, Chivvis, Crane, Tkacheva & Boston, 2015). Consequently, President Putin definitively views Ukraine as within the Russian defensive sphere of influence. He also believes it to be an existential threat to him and the motherland for Ukrainians to ally themselves with the United States and Western Europe. Putin’s position is also the view of some academic writers who go so far as to blame the US and Western Europe for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They say that Kiev was seduced to move westward in terms of its defense and economic ties (Oliker, Chivvis, Crane, Tkacheva & Boston, 2015; Götz & Merlen, 2019). The argument blaming the West, however, is a stretch in my mind because it treats Ukrainians as mindless pawns that are easily manipulated by foreign governments instead of people who want self-determination, respect, liberty, and economic prosperity. Does anyone think Ukrainians needed to be nudged by the West in 2014 to throw out the corrupt, pro-Russian government of President Viktor Yanukovich? The people of Ukraine were so desperately tired of Russian economic bullying, poverty, corruption, and plain bad government to the point that they were willing to risk Russian tanks for the possibility of a better life. The risk was a noble and brave undertaking and the Russian aggression that followed shortly after was not the fault of the West, even though Moscow maintains it was. Second, in addition to the Russian fear of Western encroachment mentioned above, there have also been domestic political reasons that explain in part Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine. The Maidan uprising in Ukraine in 2014 put a cold chill down Putin’s spine in that he saw it as encouraging popular opposition and unrest in Russia itself because of economic decline and thereby a threat to his grip on power (Oliker, Chivvis, Crane, Tkacheva & Boston,

2015, p.23). It is difficult to see then if that concern of President Putin was the case, why the West was at fault for the Russian leadership's fear of its own population and regime change, which supposedly led Putin to invade Ukraine to distract Russian citizens from domestic failings. Whatever was the case, the point here is that although a desire to resurrect the Tsarist or Soviet empires is in the back of Putin's mind, his main reasons for invading Ukraine were fear of the growing power of the West in Eastern Europe and fear that his fellow citizens will force a regime change in Russia itself. In his mind, these fears justified a limited offensive military move against Kiev as a defensive warning to all concerned parties (Oliker, Chivvis, Crane, Tkacheva & Boston, 2015).

Still, the 2014 invasion of Ukraine does not mean that President Putin will escalate the ongoing stalemated military conflict with Kiev in the east to the point of total conventional warfare since his strategy is one of simply bleeding Ukrainians dry in terms of blood and treasure to eventually force a negotiated settlement. Once Kiev has had enough, Russia will keep Crimea and Putin can use the eastern Ukraine conflict as a bargaining chip to move Kiev away from allying itself with the West. Thus, Putin will have made his point clear to the United States and Western and Eastern European allies as well as to Ukraine and the Kremlin's other neighbors: in the real world of power politics (like it or not), there is a Russian sphere of influence and if foreigners interfere in that sphere too much, Moscow will view this defensively as an existential threat to its security and a measured military response will be forthcoming. From the Russian perspective of realism, I say to my Ukrainian friends, for Moscow to achieve its national interest, it is not necessary for Russia to engage Ukraine in total conventional war, invade Ukraine and occupy the whole country. The national interest of Russia as President Putin perceives it can be achieved through the creation of a Moscow-controlled Ukrainian buffer zone by limited, protracted economic and military bullying, which is precisely what is happening. The question now is

how does President Trump see the Russian bullying affecting the American national interest?

President Trump by his statements, decisions, and personal relationship with President Putin shows that while he does not like Russian aggression in Ukraine, he does not see it by itself as an existential threat to the security of the American people. The policy he is pursuing is one of caution and moderation, which is particularly characteristic of classical realism. On the one hand, by language and sanctions, he is signaling Moscow that its aggression in Ukraine and other places will not go unpunished, but on the other hand, he is not overreacting and is offering the Russians an opportunity to improve their relationship with the US, which he feels will benefit the national interests of both countries immensely, that is, if the Kremlin will reconsider the military chauvinism that has characterized its foreign policy especially since 2014. To Ukraine, he is saying, Americans sympathize with you and Ukrainians are in the right morally, but we will proceed cautiously, and Ukraine can only count on us for a limited amount of support. In particular, his decision to arm Ukrainians with advanced weaponry was a moral and national interest decision in that it said to Kiev, it is your moral right to defend yourself and we will help but it also warned the Russians that although Washington understood that Russia is capable of imposing its military will at any time, it will cost them dearly in terms of blood and material because the United States will assist Ukraine in its self-defense. The American President is therefore trying to walk a middle ground or fine line, allowing Kiev moral and moderate defensive assistance but not enough to threaten the Russians to the extent that they will be fearful enough to increase hostility or decide to engage in unrestricted conventional war seeking total victory over Ukraine. President Trump has in mind a negotiated political settlement, which serves the American national interest well in this case. In the hope of a negotiated settlement, there is some common cause with Putin and Ukraine but because of domestic American politics at this point (the

Democratic Party's big lie of Trump being a Russian asset or stooge) any US negotiation with Moscow on the Ukraine crisis is highly improbable. For Ukraine, a negotiated settlement should come soon as possible since Ukrainians cannot afford the war with Russia over a long-extended time-period because of loss of blood and economic resources. The saddest part is that Kiev will hold a weak hand in negotiation, even with American support. More will be said of that below.

Although the probable outcome of the ongoing limited war between Ukraine and Russia is a negotiated settlement, no one can predict the future, so anything is possible, even a total conventional war in which Moscow decides to conquer Ukraine. While escalated conventional warfare is hypothetical and it is problematic at best to speculate about a future happening, I will briefly do so since some of my Ukrainian friends have requested that the issue be addressed, especially concerning what President Trump's response will be to an all-out Russian invasion with the purpose of conquest and annexation of Ukraine. To say first what President Trump will not do is more instructive than to speculate about what he will do in an affirmative, proactive manner. If the Russians invade Ukraine, the President of the United States will not send the American Air Force and army to fight the invading forces and Kiev will be overwhelmed within a short time. Ukraine is not a member of NATO and Kiev has no defense treaty with Washington, so there is no legal obligation requiring President Trump to intercede and what is more, the dictates of realism say that it is irrational and foolish to fight a major land war with another great power in its sphere of influence where it has a significant advantage. Of course, Kiev is aware of these facts, and it desperately needs a negotiated settlement since it is in a no-win situation. Ukraine cannot win a war against Russia, it cannot afford to fight a limited war forever, and it knows Washington will not save it from an overwhelming attack since the Americans do not view its loss of sovereignty as an existential threat to the national interest of the

United States. It is sad but true if unlimited conventional warfare breaks out between Russia and Ukraine, the Ukrainian state as presently constituted will not survive and the people of Ukraine will suffer total Russian tyranny once again.

While the Ukrainian state will not survive a total conventional war with Russia, that does not mean that the United States and the rest of the world will sit on their hands and not punish Moscow severely for its aggression, although it is unlikely they will use direct military force. Without doubt, there is not any nation-state including the United States that is going to war for the sake of Ukrainian independence but all-out aggression in Ukraine will not make Moscow safer insofar as its national security is concerned, which was Putin's goal in the first place in starting a war with Ukraine. That situation is a reality because the Russian national interest will suffer great damage by diplomatic outrage and isolation, economic sanctions, and a threatening military buildup in both Eastern and Western Europe, which results in a net loss for Russian security. As for the American President, in addition to a diplomatic campaign to isolate the Kremlin as "an evil empire builder" as was done in the Cold War, he will initiate more economic sanctions, increase defense spending, and most alarming of all, he will send additional military assets to NATO allies in Eastern and Central Europe, which now account for half of NATO's membership. Such a move is particularly threatening to Moscow with hostile troops on its borders or near-borders with Poland, Hungary, and Romania or the three Baltic states. An unrestrained military offensive by the Russians against Ukraine will also cause a re-wakening of fear and hostility toward Russia among most of the Western European members of NATO, such as Germany, the UK, and France, and result in more defense spending and military buildup and possibility oil and natural gas embargoes and other economic sanctions, which greatly weaken, or destroy the energy-based Russian economy, which is now strongly linked to the EU. 52% of Russia's exports go to the EU and 42% of its imports are

from the EU. All of these Western reactions create an unstable and dangerous situation for everyone since they threaten Russian security and invite counter military moves from Moscow, which Russians view as defensive but the West sees as offensive and further evidence of Russia's aggressive intentions. Events then coalesce and get out of control and result in World War III but President Putin knows of the danger and being the realist that he is, he is unlikely to gamble on conquering Ukraine as a way of enhancing Russian national security, especially since he can achieve his goals simply by continuing his strategy of bleeding the Ukrainian state by limited, attrition warfare, which places Kiev in a lose-lose situation or as said above between "a rock and a hard place".

Due to the struggle for power between the United States and the Russian Federation, Ukraine is caught in the middle but hopefully will survive and maintain its independence but not without much loss of blood and treasure, and in the end, the odds are against it regaining control of Crimea. Further, in the short-term at least, Kiev will have to moderate its plans to join the EU to become a nation-state in the image of those in Western Europe because if it does not modify its plans, it will be subject to continued Russian bullying, blackmail, and even more military coercion. How, on the other hand, will the people of Ukraine fare if President Trump or some president after he was to create an American foreign policy where the United States and Russia were on better terms instead of bitter rivals and their relationship was based more on compromise and accommodation than on competition and confrontation? While most experts say, there is no way such a cooperative relationship will happen soon, President Trump has made the point that there is nothing in international relations that forecloses the possibility and there are some areas where Washington and Moscow share common foreign policy goals, so it is possible to negotiate and compromise on many issues where there is disagreement. Although an American-Russian détente partnership in world politics is difficult to comprehend considering

the hostility toward Russia today by many American politicians and Washington's distrust by Moscow, it is not necessarily an idealistic dream but is a possibility found in the assumptions of realism.

Despite what some people think is moral naivety rather than realism in President Trump's hope for better relations with the Russian Federation, the realist rationale for the position will have to wait for argumentation for another time but I will nevertheless briefly consider what improved relations between Washington and Moscow will mean for Ukraine. Unfortunately, at least in the short timeframe, it will not necessarily improve Kiev's position in terms of morality and just treatment. If détente happens Washington and Moscow will continue to see Ukraine as a pawn in the world of power politics and the Americans will likely concede under the table that Ukraine is in Russia's sphere of influence, that they will not encourage it to ally itself militarily with the West, and Crimea will remain under Russian control. While US concessions are a big win for Putin, it is something that already reflects political reality. The Russians for their part promise to stop meddling in eastern Ukraine and cease their military and other types of proactive and assertive pressure on Ukraine in general (respect Ukrainian sovereignty). They will also agree to pay Kiev some nominal compensation for Crimea to satisfy Ukrainian national honor and make concessions in other parts of Eastern Europe or the world like with Iran. Such a big power settlement, of course, is unjust, but some people argue it does beat continuous warfare or total loss of Ukrainian independence. The Americans also again draw a clear, unambiguous line in the sand: aggression against US Eastern European NATO allies will lead to an American military response. International relations scholars call such a strategy by Washington offshore balancing or plain "balancing."

A ray of hope exists in the future for Ukraine if Washington and Moscow improve their relationship, although improvement is a long-term prospect, in the meantime, however, Kiev is heavily damaged

by the border war in the east. Should Russia's economy continue to decline, Moscow will eventually lose the economic and military resources to dominate Ukraine and its other neighbors and by default, it will pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence in the "neighborhood." Here, should Ukraine grow stronger simultaneously, Moscow better hope "little brother" does not decide to get even. It is also possible that a more democratic regime will come to power in Moscow that will see its national interest improved by fully integrating Russia into the existing US-led liberal world order and that change in policy will finally also ensure cooperation and peace between Ukrainians and Russians.

Domestic Politics

In characterizing US foreign policy concerning Ukraine, two issues in particular, should be considered under the topic of American domestic politics with the first being political parties in the United States and American people are divisively divided over what constitutes social justice. The Democratic Party leadership and its supporters control the lower house of the Congress, most of the news media, large parts of the bureaucracy, and academia. They view social justice in terms of liberalism that emphasizes group identity, equality of outcome, political correctness, and open borders. As for world politics, the leadership of the Democratic Party and their supporters also favor liberalism in American foreign policy, which means support for globalization, international organizations and multilateral corporations, free trade, and interference as well as interventions outside the US to promote the development of democratic regimes throughout the world, especially recently in the Middle East. Both Presidents Bush and Obama devised their foreign policies with many liberal assumptions in mind, although there were also elements of realism embedded in their decision-making. (Academic writers disagree among themselves as to the mixture of liberalism and

realism in those policies.) That confusing mixture was especially the case with President Obama's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, where he was cautious in providing Kiev with any assistance, fearful of Russian's great power status and thinking that Ukraine was not core or critical to the American national interest (Pifer & Herbst, 2016). (He said as much in an interview.) Other than harsh rhetoric, some sanctions, and limited amounts of aid, Obama's answers to Moscow were ambiguous and inept. It is particularly noteworthy that the Obama administration refused to support Ukrainians by supplying them with advanced lethal weaponry for self-defense. Overall, it is fair to say that President Obama demonstrated confusion and weakness despite Russian aggression against Ukraine and did not know what to do about it. What he did was stall and passed the problem on to the next President who turned out to be Donald Trump.

President Trump was inaugurated in 2017 a little less than three years after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on a platform in part opposed to global liberalism in American foreign policy, which was explained above. Trump's approach to politics, which I have characterized in another essay, has eight elements: individualism, accountability, pragmatism, strong executive leadership, constitutionality, nationalism, exceptionality, and patriotism (Matheny, 2020). These characteristics are in strong opposition to the advocacy of "correct political speech," identify politics, equality of outcome, open borders, globalization, and other liberal foreign policies supported by the Democratic Party. In all eight elements of Trumpism, the realism assumptions that were associated with President Trump, as explained above, are evident. Like the Obama administration in dealings with Ukraine and the Russian invasion, President Trump at first proceeded cautiously, although he did increase sanctions on Moscow and provided Kiev with lethal weapons for defense and other military hardware. Most important, President Trump made clear that his threefold policy provides Ukrainians with limited aid to

defend themselves but the amount is not enough to provoke an existential threat to Moscow and it also makes clear to the Russians they will pay an increasingly higher cost for their aggression in Ukraine, and last it suggests to Moscow that it should improve its relationship with the US, so negotiation, compromise, and accommodation can settle issues like the war in Ukraine.

While the defensive position of Ukraine has improved during the Trump administration, Kiev has also suffered because President Trump's hateful political opposition has dragged Ukraine and its war against the Russians into American domestic politics to discredit the President and remove him from office. As some Ukrainian citizens are aware, at the beginning of the year 2020, the Democratic Party-controlled lower House of Congress, urged on by the liberal news media, impeached President Trump, falsely accusing him of endangering the national security of the US by withholding military aid from Ukraine until Kiev was willing to do him a personal favor by investigating his political rival Joe Biden for alleged corruption in Ukraine. Without going into detail, these charges were politically motivated, without foundation, or legal support, and President Trump was acquitted of all charges later by trial in the US Senate. The reason it is necessary to mention this American domestic political charade is it was watched by Ukrainian citizens, even if only a few, and some have gotten the wrong impression about US foreign policy by listening to the ridiculous arguments made by the Democrats during the impeachment trial. According to the Democratic leadership, President Trump betrayed the national interest of the United States by withholding aid to Ukraine, although Kiev did not know about the delay, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky denied any blackmail attempt, and the aid was delivered only after a short delay. The most disturbing part of the Democratic argument, in addition to the fact it was without merit, was it misrepresented the US national interest by saying Ukraine and the United States were best friends, the national security of the US depends on maintaining

the sovereignty of Ukraine, Ukrainian soldiers were fighting America's fight, Ukrainian soldiers died because of a delay in the delivery of some American aid (denied by Kiev), and Washington did not fulfill its solemn "moral duty" to defend Ukraine against Russian aggression.

The argument was not only misleading but false in the way it characterized America's relationship with Ukraine as well as the way it defined US national interest in Kiev's war with Russia. It did a disservice to those American and Ukrainian citizens listening by giving them bogus information and a false hope of how far Washington will go to support Ukraine. The argument, in other words, was a partisan, Democratic Party falsehood set forth by President Trump's opposition to mislead the American people, Ukrainians, and anyone else paying attention. Ukrainians should therefore disregard it for what it was, a barefaced hypocritical propaganda stunt and understand that President Trump, although a realist and cautious person provided more support to Ukraine than did the Obama administration. Should a Democratic administration replace him in the future, its liberalistic approach to the making foreign policy will not well serve Ukrainian national interest. If Ukraine is to survive and prosper in the brutal world of power politics, it should base its decision-making on realistic assumptions. My guess is that the Ukrainian government is well aware of the fact and did not appreciate being dragged into America's domestic dirty politics.

The second consideration concerning domestic American politics and its influence on US-Ukrainian foreign policy is in November 2020, there will be a presidential election in the United States and there is a possibility that America will have a president other than Donald Trump. President Trump's chances of reelected were good before the onset of the COVID-19 health crisis. The economy was roaring, and he had a good record of accomplishments. But his chances have since dimmed. It now looks like his prospects are only 50 percent or less. His Democratic Party opponent former Vice-President Joe Biden,

however, is an elderly man who is a weak candidate because of poor mental health. Much depend on how the COVID-19 health problem in the US evolves, whether Biden makes foolish blunders and if Trump haters turn out to vote in larger numbers than Trump loyal supporters or if the ruling elite allow a fair election. Whatever happens, I will briefly speculate about how the election impacts Washington's Ukrainian foreign policy. Since President Trump cannot run for the third term, if he wins reelection it will free him from the Democratic Party's political coercion, to pursue some kind an accommodation with Moscow, which helps him negotiate an end to Ukraine's war with Russia. If the Russians refuse to negotiate, he will continue his policy of moderation and balance, which means cautiously assisting Kiev in defense so Moscow pays a stiff price for aggression, but at the same time, he will take care to not do anything that the Russians will view as an existential threat to their security. It is also the case that Kiev will receive fewer conflicting messages from the State Department and other parts of the US foreign policy bureaucracy since by that time the President will have removed from the top and mid-level leadership positions those liberal-oriented holdovers from the Bush and Obama administrations. While the Russians are in a better position to wait out Ukrainians in their war of attrition, the same thing cannot be said of their competition with the United States. Under President Trump, American military power will grow, but Russian power will weaken due to the continuing decline of their economy and their foolish interference in Syria, which will prove a severe drain on their limited resources. Another thought is that Moscow should have learned something from its disastrous experience in Afghanistan and the American experience in the Middle East but it has not, nonetheless, misgivings about overextension are a future incentive to bring the Russians to the table to negotiate an end to their war with Ukraine, at least there is hope for that result.

I turn now to a brief look at what a Biden victory brings for US foreign policy concerning Ukraine. But first we note that Ukrainians will

remember Vice President Biden from the Obama administration when he came to Ukraine and demanded that the prosecutor who was investigating his son for corruption (he worked for a Ukrainian company) be fired and threatened to hold up US aid for Ukraine if he did not get his way. That is the same thing President Trump was falsely accused. At this time, it is not an exaggeration to say Biden has not aged well and his mental ability to lead is highly questionable, which means the ruling elite that put him in the office will control him and that condition is a problem for Americans and Ukrainian citizens for several reasons. First, those who control him are proponents of the liberal school of international relations and foreign policy, but they will give him conflicting marching orders. Wall Street will not want a confrontation with Russia for financial reasons but many of the foreign policy bureaucrats, academia, and Democratic politicians, in contrast, will want to ignore the reality of power politics and demand some form of confrontation with Russia, diplomatic, legal, economic, or something else. The conflict will be in the White House, Security Council, Cabinet, and other decision-making centers of government. President Biden will not have a clue as to how the problem can be managed and resolved. It will produce policy chaos. Second, since Biden will have trouble making decisions, there will be a power struggle among his advisors, which will again mean policy chaos. Third, liberalism as an ideology has many contradictions in it and if international law does not work and the aggressor is too strong to use physical force, it does not tell the policymaker what to do to resolve the problem. Joe Biden with his reduced mental capacity will be stumped as was President Obama. That situation means chaos again. Last, Biden is weak as a leader and he will have little chance of standing up to a powerful realist leader like President Putin who will either ignore him or take advantage of him, which will produce more chaos. With these considerations in mind, it is difficult to see how Ukraine can improve its situation with Russia, with a President Biden in charge of a chaotic American foreign policy. If a Biden administration negotiates the war with Russia, the final results will

turn out poorly for Ukrainians. If I were making decisions for Kiev concerning negotiations, President Donald Trump is the one I should want in the room backing me up in dealing with the hard-nosed realist President Putin. While Trump is a realist who first looks to the American national interest, he, within the constraints of power politics, should do a much better job protecting the national interest of Ukrainian people.

American Assistance to Ukraine

In the final section of the essay under the topical heading “American Foreign Policy and Ukraine,” it is appropriate to spend some time answering in more detail the question of how much assistance Ukraine can expect from the US in its war effort against Russia, although my answer will do little other than scratch the surface since I lack information and expertise. The answer is that while the United States will continue to help Kiev and will increase its aid in the future, the amount of assistance will be a relatively small amount of the total Ukrainian war effort. It will not allow Ukraine to win the war. That means Ukraine will have to continue to rely mainly on self-help to defend itself from Russian aggression, but most Ukrainians already understand that reality from their experience in stopping the invasion of the Donbas in 2014. At that time, it was not the small 6,000 Ukrainian combat-ready professional army or US/Western aid that saved Ukraine’s independence but the battalions of untrained citizen volunteers, funded by private citizens, who stopped the rebel/Russian advance in the eastern part of the country. That action of patriotic volunteers was self-help (which realists emphasize) at its highest level and in the eyes of those Americans watching at the time, it was a rare, noble, and courageous self-defense to behold. Today, at least in part, due to training and technical assistance supplied by the United States and several of its Western allies as well as the

experience of bloodshed on the battlefield, the Ukrainian army is a battle-hardened force of 200,000 to 250,000 soldiers with a ready reserve of 80,000. It also has close to one million other reservists, so the Ukrainian army is capable of inflicting serious damage should the Russians initiate a full-scale conventional war (Peterson, 2019). Further, for self-help, Ukrainians possess a large stockpile of weapons from the USSR period and a strong military and defense industrial base, which produces small arms and missiles, tanks, and other lethal weapons, although not jet fighters, helicopters, modern air defense systems, and warships. In fact, Ukraine is an exporter of war materials, ranking fourteen in the world (Peterson, 2019). The survival of Ukraine in its war against the Russians then is mainly dependent on self-help and although a poor country, Kiev possesses significant military resources. Still, it is also a fact that continuing American military assistance, although relatively small comparatively speaking, will save Ukrainian lives and will help deter the Russians from expanding trench warfare in the east into an all-out conventional attack. Since US aid does help Ukraine, let us take a brief look at the amount of military aid provided by Washington, the type of assistance, and whether it will impact the Russians.

Starting in 2014, the United States has provided Ukraine with a little less than two billion dollars of military assistance, which is about 90% to 95% of its foreign military aid, 200 to 500 million a year (Kim, 2019; Altman, 2020). The aid is only about eight to ten percent of Kiev's military budget over the years. In 2020, Ukraine's military budget is a little more than ten billion dollars (Ukrainian Parliament Approves Government Budget for 2020, 2019). To understand how little assistance Washington provides to the Ukrainian war effort, one does not have to look beyond the 2020 US military budget, which was about 738 billion dollars compared to the ten billion dollars Ukrainians will spend (Gould, 2019). The two billion dollars given to Kiev (from 2014 onward) amounts to less than one percent of this year's American military budget (2020). The amount is not a great

sacrifice or recognition that Ukraine's war with Russia is a high US priority. In the 2020 budget also note that the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen received 71.5 billion dollars for military operations and Israel received 3.8 billion while Ukrainians received only 300 million dollars, a comparatively minuscule amount. Considering the Russian population (147 million) is three times the size of the Ukrainian population (42 million) and Moscow spends 85 to 90 percent (61.4 billion in 2018) more on the military than Kiev can afford, US expenditure on the Ukrainian military does not look like it makes any real difference in terms of gross numbers (Military budget of the Russian Federation, 2020). So, it appears, either Washington does not care much about Ukraine, is afraid of the Russians, or is using a careful balancing strategy, which is designed to get Moscow's attention without directly threatening Russia too severely. When comparing gross spending numbers in Ukraine's current war with Russia to the American war against North Vietnam, the US had an even greater advantage in population and material assets than Moscow currently enjoys today over Kiev. Washington still lost the war, although in some ways the comparison is of apples to oranges, it is nonetheless, a fact that war is an unpredictable enterprise, a gamble and in a few instances the much weaker nation-state prevails.

Still, it should be acknowledged that the two billion dollars in military aid given to Ukraine by the United States helped Kiev in important ways to hold back the Russians and Ukrainian rebels. Four ways, in particular, are identifiable with the first one being that some of the American assistance given to the Ukrainian army saved lives and made it a more effective fighting force. This type of aid is mainly defensive and includes counter-artillery radar systems, night-vision technologies, medical support technology, sniper rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and other defensive weapons and technologies. Even more important, the United States with some of its allies, established a training base in western Ukraine that trains thousands of Ukrainians to be better professional soldiers, with

better equipment, and a superior command structure. I note with pride that some of these army trainers are from the 101st Airborne Division and National Guard in my home state of Tennessee. Currently, there are 300 US military personnel on the base training Ukrainian soldiers and the number will increase in the near future (Friedman, 2019). Second, the fact that the US has a small military physical presence in Ukraine and provides material assistance, although modest, is an important morale builder for the people of Ukraine as well as for the army. It is scary to face one of the most powerful armies in the world and know you are alone but with American military aid trickling in, Ukrainians know they are not isolated. This gives them renewed fighting spirit and the hope that one day the US will help end the war. I remember well attending a huge military parade in Kiev on Ukrainian Independence Day last year and witnessing the show of emotion and cheers from a large crowd of local citizens as a small group of American soldiers marching with the Ukrainian army passed in review carrying the flag of the United States of America. Third, the US without doubt supplies Ukrainians with valuable intelligence information, cyber support, and other deep-state support-services that do not show on the books. Four and most important of all, the American military assistance provides a strategic deterrence, if only symbolic at this time, to stop further escalation of the war by the Russians. As made clear above, President Putin as a realist is well aware that war is a gamble with unpredictable outcomes, so to be sure he is closely watching every move the US makes in Ukraine. He certainly got a headache when President Trump decided to sell the Javelin Missile (FGM-148), an anti-tank missile, to Kiev in 2018. While these weapons will not halt a sustained tank offensive by the Russians into Ukraine, they will ensure Russia pays a heavy price in blood and material. President Trump, on the other hand, introduced them as mainly a symbolic deterrence hoping it will not be necessary to use them. That reason is why Washington, as a condition of the sell, insisted that the missiles be stored 600 miles away from the front lines in western Ukraine (Martinez, Finnegan &

McLaughlin, 2019). Hence, these cat and mouse games between Washington and Moscow definitively have a deterrent effect on the Russians, which in turn serves Kiev's national interest. It is a good thing that Presidents Putin and Trump do not know for certain what the other will do since that uncertain condition should produce caution, which is a good thing in the struggle for power. It is especially positive in ensuring a limited war does not become an unlimited one. Look for more of this back and forth in the future. If the Russians escalate more, as they did recently in the waters off Crimea, Washington will supply maritime capabilities (2020 US military budget). Should the escalation continue Ukraine will get improved missiles, a better air defense system, planes and helicopters while the Americans will be careful to restrict their assistance to defensive weaponry. Although all parties are aware that the war between Russia and Ukraine will eventually end by negotiation, the question is who will blink first and how well will Washington's balancing strategy work out?

The first possibility here concerning the aforementioned question results from the fact the Russian economy is in freefall and if it continues to fall, it will become too expensive, as was specified above, for Moscow to continue to fight wars of aggression against Ukraine and its other neighbors. It is a fact that there is no way that Moscow can win a spending competition with the US, as was demonstrated in the Cold War period. Today, Washington spends more on its national defense than the next ten nation-states combined (2020 figures) with two others spending more than Russia (Peter G. Peterson Foundation, 2020). President Putin is well aware that economic prosperity is a central component to any state's foreign policy and without substantial economic means he cannot expect to influence the world stage or neighborhood in as much as a less strong military makes the pursuit of the national interest more difficult. In addition to the possibility of a lack of military resources, which will force Moscow to reconsider its position, there are

domestic pressures as well, as was mentioned above, on Putin to exit eastern Ukraine because of economic hardship on ordinary Russian citizens at home. Consequently, should President Putin sometime in the future decide it is in Russia's national interest to get out of Ukraine, the US is in a good place to help him save face by expediting negotiations to bring about that change of policy.

The second possibility is that American assistance to Ukraine will cause President Putin to double down despite the high cost and as a result, he will decide to prolong the war until he achieves his objective of making Ukraine once again a buffer zone between Moscow and the West. President Putin has committed large amounts of political capital (and personal ego) as well as treasure and other scarce resources pursuing a policy based on the view that Ukraine's geographic proximity to the motherland creates a dangerous situation and it is an existential threat to allow Kiev to ally itself with the US and West. Therefore, for President Putin and Moscow, the potential exists to escalate the war in Ukraine since they think Russia should dominate. Such escalation would mean there is no way the Russians will allow Kiev to defeat the Ukrainian separatists, regardless of how high costs are in lives, arms, and equipment. It is also a fact that Moscow has already shown that it is willing to incur substantial economic costs in the pursuit of foreign policy goals in other areas of the world as well as Ukraine. If such a scenario is reality then it makes little sense for Washington to continue its military assistance to Kiev and draw itself deeper into a war that does not impact on the American national interest. Worse still, it is wrong-headed policy because it damages the US-Russia relationship, which does directly relate to the national interest of the United States. Such a conclusion brings us back to the earlier point made under the topical heading "Asymmetrical," which is, the national interest of America is not inextricably linked to the national interest of the people of Ukraine. For the Americans, Ukraine is best considered in the context of Washington's relationship with Moscow and here Putin has a lot

more to lose in Ukraine than does President Trump, which means the Russian President is willing to risk more than the United States.

Donald J. Trump 45th President of the United States



Assumed office January 2017
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Trump

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AFTERWORD

The American presidential election of 2020 is now over and the Electoral College on December 14, 2020, voted Joe Biden as President-elect of the United States. He will be confirmed by Congress on January 6 and take office January 20, 2021, and President Donald J. Trump will return to his private life as a citizen. This political happening is quite a shock to many citizens of the USA and Ukraine, and they ask how a weak, feeble candidate like Joe Biden beat President Trump? After all, most of the campaign, Biden hid in his basement and when he did come out he made mental mistakes that were embarrassment for Biden himself, campaign workers, and other supporters. Some people without conclusive proof other than their own eyes and ears think that Biden is suffering from some form of old age dementia. Let us all hope these observations are exaggerated and the President-elect's health is good enough to assume the great challenge of being President of the United States. To answer the question of how Biden "won" the election and several other questions, the third next to last textual section of my book entitled "Afterword" is divided into three parts. First, I will address the presidential election itself and attempt to explain its result. Some Ukrainians in particular are curious about the US election and seek answers as do many Americans as well. Second, I will speculate on the consequences of a Biden presidency for the American people and the general health of the American Republic. Third and last, I will briefly assess the new Biden administration concerning its impact on US foreign policy in general and specifically toward Ukraine and its war with Russia and the eastern rebels. Many Ukrainians and some Americans are concerned about what will happen here.

It is appropriate that I make clear from the onset that my analysis, although presented as objectively as I know how, is not without

subjective normative judgments. I openly admit I support President Donald Trump and voted for him in 2016 and again voted Trump the year 2020. My openness is in contrast to many writers who hate and oppose the President, but they present their conclusions as if they are free of value judgments and are only empirical in nature, when in fact they are bias, political partisan comments that are designed to distort facts to show Donald Trump in the worst light possible. Yes, in the United States citizens are entitled to their political views (opinions) but these views do not make them necessarily enlightened. Take for example the non-rational hatred Hollywood stars reek on President Trump. These are the same people who live in security guarded fenced off mansions, travel in private jets, and wear \$5,000 plus suits and gowns. Their education regarding political issues is so shallow that most of them do not even know the difference between a political fact and value but they think themselves expert enough to tell the rest of us how to live, who to vote for, and who to hate. These people are in fact overpaid, ignorant grandstanders or lap pets of the ruling elite and they along with the pundit class and most of the American news media “journalists” should be read with considerable skepticism. For the most part, they are stooges of the ruling elite but do not have intellect or education enough to know they are being manipulated or either they do not care as long as they are paid well. They do not speak for the average American citizen. We also should be able to expect more from academic writers, but most of them also allow their personal dislike for President Trump’s abrasive personality and their ideological biases to warp their political writings and other commentaries and they also as well fail to distinguish between political facts and values, although they know better. In contrast to these writers, I accept the ownership of my normative beliefs, but they are not arbitrary and capricious but are soundly reasoned and when possible I employ facts without dishonest distortion to make my arguments. In view of some of the outrageous and detestable political events occurring in the United States today, I also use a strong normative language to make

my points more robust, although as a gentleman and open-minded person, I try respecting all reasonable contrary points of view. I do not care, however, if mean spirited people who insist on “politically correct” language are offended. My usage of value judgment charged words is not merely based on anger but hard cold analysis that is linked to a search for the “truth” and “justice” and if that is offensive to some people, too bad. All ideas are not of equal value and civility is a matter of separating sound ideas from those that are not without engaging in personal attacks.

One more housekeeping task is appropriate before offering my analysis and this presentation involves briefly explaining the electoral process that Americans use to select their presidents. The process is complex and not easy for people in other countries to understand so I will describe it in distinct phases of which there are five: party nominations, national electoral campaign, Electoral College vote, Congressional confirmation, and inauguration.

Party Nomination

The first step in the presidential election process is to gain the party nomination and the task is accomplished by candidates winning primary elections, caucuses, and nominating conventions conducted in the 50 states, Washington D.C., and US territories. The nongovernment political party organizations control the nomination process. These primary elections and caucuses are conducted between January and June before the general election in November, while party-nominating conventions are held in big cities in the summer. While the electoral results of the primaries and caucuses are routinely accepted, delegates to the national party conventions have the final say as to who will represent the party in the upcoming presidential election.

National Electoral Campaign

After winning party nominations, presidential candidates then campaign across the United States explaining their views to voters and they also take part in debates with candidates from other parties, with the nominees from the Democratic and Republican parties dominating. On November 3, a general election for president and his or her running mate (the vice-president nominee) is held in each state and Washington D.C., which is conducted by government administrators, but when people cast their ballots, they are voting for a group of men and women called electors. In the 50 states and the District of Columbia, if a candidate receives the most votes, then that candidate receives all electoral votes of that state or District, except in Maine and Nebraska, which have a mixed system of first-past-the-post method where some delegates are awarded state-wide and others by district. Note that the system of electing a president is a first-past-the-post system in which the winner is not determined by how many votes a candidate gets nationwide but winning is determined by how many electors he or she gets in the individual states and Washington D. C. where numbers of electors are based on representation in the US Congress. Therefore, in American presidential elections, although there is much talk about who won the national popular vote that does not matter since a candidate can lose the nationwide popular vote and still be elected by winning most state electors in the individual states and the District of Columbia, Washington D.C. That situation was the case in the 2016 election and a few other times before that election.

Electoral College

Following the November 3, election in the states and the District of Columbia, Washington D.C., there is a process on December 14, where the electors or representatives from each state and the District in proportion to their populations cast votes and determine which

candidate is the President-elect. As said, each state and the District receive electors based on its representation in Congress making for 538 electors, which are selected in accord with each state's laws. Each state elector then cast his or her vote in the Electoral College and the candidate who wins more than half, 270 votes are declared winner and officially named President-elect. For the most part, the process is a ministerial process, but the importance of the electoral votes in swing states like Georgia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan is clear with their combined 62 electoral votes. In the Electoral College vote of 2020, President-elect Biden got 306 votes to President Trump's 232.

Congressional Confirmation

On January 6, 2021, the United States Congress will meet in joint session to count the Electoral College votes and declare a winner, which is the final reaffirming step in electing the American president. The process too is mainly a routine, ceremonious function, although technically the Electoral College results are open to challenge in Congress, nonetheless any objection is voted down, at least historically such is the case.

Inauguration

The inauguration of Joe Biden occurs on January 20, 2021, when he receives the oath of office administered by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. The ceremony will mark the end of the presidential election process in the US and start the four-year term of the new president of the United States, President Joe Biden, 46th president. To re-emphasize a point, when thinking about presidential elections in the United States, it should be remembered that the American president is not determined by the most votes garnered nationwide. A candidate can be elected president and lose the national vote by five to seven percentage points. It is the vote of

populations in the 50 states and the District that counts in first-past-the-post systems of voting, which determines the candidate who gets the 270 electoral votes necessary to win. This fact is the result of the federalism principle that is the very foundation of the US Constitution. The Founding Fathers feared the tyranny of states with large populations so they created a voting system controlled by the individual states, that provides a smaller state more voting power than their populations should otherwise receive in a strictly nationwide voting systems and the decision, in my view, was wise because of the radical left-wing politics of the heavily populated states on the east and west coasts, such as New York and California, that are out of touch with much of the rest of the country.

The American Election of 2020

Every fourth year the American people elect a president and the incumbent who this time was Donald J. Trump won fairly easily but not this time, so why not? The answer is complex and there are many interrelated reasons. First, President Trump is not a professional politician and member of the ruling class in the United States. He never served as an elected representative or government official before his election to the American presidency in 2016. He ran on a platform in direct opposition to the self-centered, less than competent political class and he pledged to serve and protect average citizens and make America first and great again. The political class and ruling elite, of course, hated him for the opposition and from the day of his inauguration, they did everything possible to oppose and remove him from office. President Trump was therefore a direct threat to the globalist interest of the Democratic Party, displaced leadership of the Republican Party, entrenched bureaucracy, academicians, corporate and big tech companies, and Wall Street, in short the American political class and ruling elite.

Among the many difficult things President Trump had to tolerate during his years in office from a vengeful ruling elite was a two-year special investigation that accused him, the President of the United States, of being a Russian agent and a disruptive impeachment proceeding that falsely charged him with corruption for engaging in a routine phone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The charade was without exaggeration political persecution at the worst since there was no credible evidence to justify the “Russia, Russia, Russia investigation” or later impeachment proceedings. Nevertheless, President Trump’s reelection campaign was negatively impacted by these political smears because if a lie of corruption is repeated enough, inevitably some people will believe it and these falsehoods cost the President some votes in the 2020 election.

Second, Machiavelli emphatically stated in *The Prince* (The LitCharts, n.d.), that fortune plays a controlling role in political affairs and the COVID-19 virus health crisis hurt President Trump’s presidency in the worst way possible. Before the onset of the virus crisis, President Trump and his administration were confident of reelection and few doubted his chances of gaining another four years with the US economy at all time high and his other impressive record of accomplishments, but when the virus suddenly appeared, the optimism soon disappeared as some people due to their ignorance, fear, and frustration irrationally blamed President Trump for their suffering. More damaging for the President, the ruling elite and Democratic Party messaging with the help of corrupt news media were highly effective in presenting a false narrative that convinced large numbers of people that President Trump was mishandling the virus crisis, although he was doing about as well as other world leaders in dealing with an unknown and unexpected act of nature. President Trump was especially levelheaded about balancing the necessity of protecting against the virus with the equally urgent need to not destroy the American economy with long shutdowns that

subvert the Constitution with tyrannical violations of civil liberties. His Democratic Party opposition and the news media did their best, on the other hand, to convince people that the President was responsible for the virus, was mismanaging the crisis, and he was murdering fellow citizens. Unsurprisingly, all of these falsehoods for rational thinking citizens were obvious political lies, but the Democrats and news media representing the ruling elite played it well to their political advantage and the tactic worked to a considerable disadvantage against President Trump's reelection aspirations. Machiavelli was right that fortune or "fortuna" as he called it can be a most difficult enemy for any prince or president to overcome.

Third, fair objective reporting of the news in the United States is dead. Today corporate America and big tech controls most journalists in my country, and it is not a distortion to say that mainstream news media operations are merely ideological arms of the Democratic Party. They not only have political biases in "reporting the news" but they lie outright and withhold important information from the public. They are also responsible for censorship of any opposition to their "reality" on social media. Their favorite tactic is to report the so-called anonymous leaks from deep state bureaucratic "sources", which are designed to discredit President Trump and his administration. Since these sources are secret, they are difficult to defend against and many people simply believe them when in fact they are misinformation, exaggerations, or outright lies, and on occasion they come from made-up sources. The dishonest and shoddy "reporting" of the news is American politics at its dirtiest and what is more since American law overly protects media companies from these abuses, it is extremely difficult to hold them accountable in courts of law for their malfeasance. American courts assume wide-open, largely unrestrained freedom of speech and press will eventually produce the facts and truth and will enable citizens to make informed judgments about their elected representatives but the opposite is

more the case, and the biggest, ugliest lie prevails, and that injustice was the case with the disgraceful character assassination of President Trump.

In addition to the fact that individual journalists are beholden to big corporations with bias political agendas for their salaries, individual journalists today are poorly educated due to the post-modernist takeover of higher education, which makes them ignorant and incapable of objective reporting. Thus, instead of receiving an education that allows them to think for themselves, many students of journalism are indoctrinated into the left-wing Democratic Party ideology that teaches them to hate President Trump and his 75 million supporters. They therefore are only too eager to accept and report the big lie that the President is a threat to democracy and because of that propaganda deception they see their job as “saving democracy” from Trump rather than objectively reporting the news. Empirical research has documented that over 90% of all “news” coverage of President Trump has been negative, designed to discredit him and his administration (Wemple, 2017). The big lie then, is a hard burden for any president to overcome, especially a man like President Trump who speaks plainly to the American public regardless of whether it is politically correct or the ruling class likes it or not.

While there are many pressing challenges facing struggling government in the USA in the modern age, the non-independent, partisan nature of the press is most troubling. The United States and the rest of the world are large complex political happenings and Washington is far away from most American homes so how are people to know about the world beyond their personal sight, if the media organizations will not report the news objectively? The answer is people cannot know what is happening beyond their neighborhood, particularly since most do not have the education necessary to help them sort out propaganda from facts. It is no surprise that America’s ruling elite knows that fact and is expert at

controlling a large part of the population by using news media propaganda and higher education indoctrination of younger adults. The need for the American political class to use military force to get its way, is therefore unnecessary since most of the time it can control by using soft power to win elections (money, propaganda, and formal education indoctrination) and it was nothing short of a political miracle that Donald Trump prevailed in 2016 and it is equally amazing that he came close to reelection in 2020. Some analysts including this one think that news media bias is the single most important factor explaining Biden's or more precisely the ruling elite's ability to prevail in the 2020 presidential election.

Fourth, there have been many studies attempting to explain why Americans vote the way they do and most of these confirm the conclusion that a positive view of a candidate's personality is more important to a large number of voters than are ideology and policy positions (Lumen, n.d.). In that regard, President Trump in the 2020 presidential election was at a distinct disadvantage with some voters who saw him as a person who is unlikable. To these people, Trump is seen as a self-centered, narcissistic person who cares for no one else. Other voters did not care for his straight, crass leadership style of taking no prisoners and his well-known disdain for political correctness and the herd mentality of the mob political culture. That false and largely mistaken view of an insensitive Trump personality without question hurt him in the 2020 election with some voters and hindered his ability to expand his political base.

More important still is that President Trump is a businessman and a non-politician who is goal oriented, thinking if he kept his promises, he should be rewarded with reelection, or he did not care what the other side and uninformed people thought when doing what he thought was right for the country. Every professional politician knows, however, that alienating the fewest number of voters as possible is the secret to gaining reelection. The winning strategy is to promise a

lot but be careful what you deliver because any concrete accomplishment will alienate some part of your constituency and it will vote against you to get even. Trump nevertheless does not live in the subjective, self-centered psychological world of the professional politician who is obsessed with gaining reelection. His world is damn the torpedoes and build what is of value. His world is grounded in concrete accomplishments: the best economy in history that benefited average Americans and encouraged business growth, immigration reform and control, foreign policy changes in general that improved US security, strengthening the US armed forces, energy independence, fair trade agreements, convincing US allies to pay their fair share for defense, limiting the American involvement in foreign wars, brokering peace in the middle east between Israel and the Arab nations, standing up to Iranian terrorism, defeating ISIA, confronting the Chinese threat, and many other solid accomplishments.

The Trump personality is then divisive, which produces extremes of love or hate in people and such a reaction has consequences for voting behavior. On the one hand, the Trump personality of a straight shooter, doer, fighter, and a man who talks like “me” endear him to the 75 million Americans who admire, love and voted for him. President Trump’s abrasive personality and his ability to win, accomplish promised goals, and hold the political class accountable, on the other hand, enraged the ruling elite and their millions of propagandized minion followers and they turned out in large numbers to vote against him. The ruling elite cannot stand a personality like Donald Trump, which places a mirror in front of them exposing their hypocrisy and hidden agenda. President Trump caught the ruling elite by surprise in 2016, but they were ready to fight him tooth and nail in 2020.

Despite his solid record of accomplishments, the Trump personality and leadership style above all other considerations, results in

controversy, conflict, and divisiveness and that with the ruling elite's relentless drive to discredit and remove him from office, produced great fatigue that wore out a large number of voters. Some people cannot deal with conflict, political or otherwise, and they naively insist that people should simply love one another and get along. Never mind to them the fact that one side or the other is wrong-headed and seeks to destroy the Republic since these voters only want the bitter conflict to end so they are willing to desert a righteous cause and a candidate like Donald Trump for the sake of peace and tranquility at any price. To be sure, the ruling elite are well aware that these voters are extremely pliable and that is why they maintained their relentless, acrimonious pressure on President Trump. Rather than focus on policy questions of right or wrong and accomplishments, they made Trump's personality the sole focus of problems and for some voters the solution was to move away from the President and vote for well meaning "nice Uncle Joe" who will supposedly restore "civility, unity, normalcy, and peace" to the polity. "Trump political fatigue syndrome" then with some voters in part doomed the President's reelection hopes and that reality is unfortunate because good governance in the United States as in the rest of the world is a long-term affair if anything is to be accomplished.

Fifth, last, and most important, President Trump did not prevail because the ruling elite, Democratic Party, and bureaucrats in some states arguably rigged the election against him and the American court system allowed them to get away with it. To be specific, a greatly altered, if not entirely new voting system was created at the last moments in 2020 and rushed through that allowed widespread if not universal mail in voting that was prone to fraud. These questionable election manipulations or alternations were especially true of the so-called "swing states" or battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Georgia. These are the states (and a few others) where political allegiances are fairly evenly divided

between Democrats and Republicans, so the winning party in these swing states in a take all system of counting votes (referred to as “first-past-the post voting”) win the election. Note that before the 2020 presidential election, the overwhelming number of American citizens casts their ballots by doing it in person at physical polling sites, although some citizens did vote by casting absentee mail in ballots. These absentee voters (ill people, some elderly, and displaced persons due to travel, business, or military service), nonetheless, were relatively modest in numbers and rarely did they make a difference in the final vote count. Without question there was some fraud involved in absentee mail in voting before 2020 but it was minor while voting in person was mainly secure in terms of each citizen voting only once with reliable identification and the citizen knowing his or her vote was recorded correctly and counted. Most citizens therefore had confidence in the integrity and legitimacy of American presidential elections and when a winner was declared the losing candidate was willing to concede. Unfortunately, confidence waned in the 2020 presidential election when as explained above administrative officials in some states, for well-meaning or fraudulent purposes, usurped the authority of their state’s constitution and statutory laws and made it possible for 40%-50% or more of all voting to be conducted by mail in ballots. (Note that statistics are not yet official, so they vary slightly from source to source.) The 40% plus figure compared on average to only 15% for mail in ballots for the six previous presidential elections with the numbers for the four highly contested battleground states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Georgia respectively at 61%, 45%, 40% and 27%, plus, or minus a few percentage points (PEW Research Center, 2020; The Guardian, 2020; Hartig, Jones & Gomez, 2020).

With the onset of the COVID-19 virus crisis of early 2020, the American system of selecting a president therefore changed drastically and for the worse insofar as the credibility of presidential elections is concerned, particularly relating to the four battleground

states mentioned. As made clear, politicians and bureaucrats in the battleground and some other states introduced a massive system of mail in voting that radically altered the traditional way Americans have elected their president and other federal representatives and that system on its face was not necessarily a bad thing since it was justified in the name of the virus crisis, which gave voters a chance to cast their ballots without leaving their homes. The trouble with mail in voting systems, however, is that there is a sinister and dysfunctional side to them in that they are fraud ridden and that is why France and other countries have abandoned them in favor of more secure in person-voting systems. Although most Democrats and the mass media naively or dishonestly denied any fraud occurred in the 2020 election, it is a fact that there has been fraud in every election ever conducted in the US or anywhere else in the world, but the question is how was the fraud executed and was it enough to change the election results. Of course, it is easier to commit election fraud than prove it in a court of law. Nevertheless, despite denials by Democrats and ruling elite controlled news media that there is any evidence of widespread cheating and to the extent there was on occasion, they argue it was “unintentional human errors” and “minor” and made “no difference” in the election outcome, President Trump’s campaign and other concerned American citizens thought otherwise and they presented enough “evidence” to make millions and millions of American suspicious that the election was stolen from the President, especially in the aforementioned battleground states, which were only narrowly won by Biden and I mean, very narrowly won. Who then, it is appropriate to ask, should a rational person believe? To answer that critical question, I list below what I believe are some facts, logical deductions, and reasonable suspicions that widespread fraud did occur in some of the battleground states and it did make a difference in the election outcome and the courts were biased and negligent in not adjudicating the “evidence” in a more fair and careful way. Taken together and overall, the charge of election

illegalities and fraud is not conspiracy theory as the ruling elite and corrupt news media want people to believe.

1. Commonsense tells us that it is easier to cheat with a mail in ballot system than to go to a poll, present an identification document and vote in person in front of witnesses.
2. It is a fact, as made clear above, that mail in voting in the 2020 election increased from 15% in the six previous presidential elections to 40%-50% or higher and that radical change was rushed through in a few months in a thoughtless, careless manner that favored the Democratic Party.
3. In the abovementioned four battleground and some other states, bureaucrats made discretionary and arbitrary decisions in violation of constitutions and statutory laws that grossly expanded mail in voting systems in their states. In some states mail in ballots were sent to the wrong addresses, to people who did not request them, dead people, people who had moved out of the state, and other unqualified persons, ballots were accepted without proper applications, signature identification procedures were weak or nonexistent, poll workers were allowed to arbitrarily correct or cure flawed ballots, the dates of ballot submissions were backdated or accepted beyond the lawful deadlines, unsecured drop boxes collected ballots, administrative rules regarding balloting were applied arbitrarily and unequally throughout the various state jurisdictions, independent poll observers were sometime obstructed or barred outright from doing their jobs, and there as well were many other administrative violations of election laws. In many stances unelected bureaucrats took it upon themselves to decide how the new mail in systems works without authorization from the people's elected representatives, the state legislatures. They

and state courts simply made it up and to the surprise of no one their decisions worked to the advantage of the Democratic Party and against President Trump.

4. Hundreds if not a thousand or more American citizens stepped forward to sign affidavits under the threat of perjury that said they personally had witnessed voting fraud being committed right before their eyes. They witnessed filling out of numerous ballots by unauthorized people, back dating of ballots, the same ballot batches run through the counting machines multi-times, people who no longer lived in state voting, and many other examples of blatant cheating. Is it reasonable to believe that all these citizen witnesses are liars or stupid? Rational people think not.
5. Several machine “glitches” in the battleground states were documented that transferred thousands of votes for President Trump to Vice-President Biden, which has led people to question whether these machines were malfunctioning or secretly programmed by some nefarious party or foreign government to steal the election. A forensic audit ordered by a Michigan judge did in fact find that the Dominion Voting Systems software used in Antrim County showed a 68% plus error rate, with auditors reporting that the system purposefully generates errors so the manipulation of machines allows unscrupulous people to alter the results (Adam, 2020). Note the Federal Election Commission permits a maximum error of only 0.0008 percent for computer-voting tabulation. The audit which was conducted by the Allied Security Operations Group concluded that “The system intentionally generates an enormously high number of ballot errors. The electronic ballots are then transferred for adjudication. The intentional errors lead to bulk adjudication of ballots with no oversight, no transparency, and no audit

trail” (Adam, 2020). Since the swing states of Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin all used the same type of machine produced by Dominion Voting Systems that were audited in Antrim County, are we to conclude that citizens are ignorant and stupid for being suspicious? I think not. Further, other auditors report that in some cases the tabulation machines subtracted votes from Donald Trump, which is impossible without cheating. These audits cause citizens to wonder about election fairness to say the least. One more suspicious consideration is that a group of Pennsylvania legislators reported that voting machines in their state tabulated 200,000 plus more votes than there were voters in that state. If 200,000 unexplained ballots are not “evidence” of ballot stuffing, the average citizen wants to know, what should be considered proof of voting fraud? We ordinary citizens are slow, but we are not stupid.

6. Also, numerous other unusual and suspicious activities were reported: polling places shut down at night and observers sent home but ballot counting continuing into the dead of night unobserved and unsupervised, out of state trucks showing up at night and boxes of ballots entering polling places through the back door, boxes of ballots hidden under tables from view mysteriously showing up, and many other unexplained irregularities that were not fully accounted for.
7. Most suspicious of all, when Americans went to bed on election night President Trump was well ahead in the swing states by hundreds of thousands of votes, a lead some experts say was insurmountable but when people awoken in the morning the lead had disappeared in a few hours, meaning Biden had received 95% of the votes or more counted in the night. The mid-night loss of the lead in and of itself is suspicious to many citizens but statisticians and

mathematicians also produced calculations showing that Biden closing the lead in such a short time was implausible. Yet, these data were ignored or downplayed as unimportant by the election officials and courts. It is also suspicious that the number of mail-in ballots rejected for defects were grossly down in the 2020 election compared to previous elections, so are we to conclude that voters were all the sudden smarter and more careful? No, more plausible, bureaucrats took it on themselves to “cure” these defective ballots in violation of state law to the advantage of Biden and while statisticians and mathematicians presented the numbers to back the assertion up, they were again largely disregarded and dismissed.

It is possible that some charges made above are mistaken or plain wrong but while recognizing the possibility, there are still more than enough other reasons to suspect that the 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump. Although the ruling elite and their media crony yell at the top of their voices, “baseless, baseless, and baseless” and “conspiracy theory” that propaganda changes no one’s mind. Such unreasonable defensiveness causes many citizens to ask, who do these people think they are? They have no natural right to unilaterally decide what the “facts” are without challenge, and they have no right to force their “moral” code on other citizens, not to mention the fact that their definition of “justice” and “fairness” is open to both empirical and normative challenges. These people are not gods. It is then appropriate to ask, what are American citizens to do to address and correct suspected injustice caused by flawed mail in voting systems? The answer is other than protest in the streets, all they can do is file lawsuits and filing is what the Trump campaign did along with the Republican national and state parties and public interest groups as well as elected representatives and individual citizens. These suits nevertheless went nowhere as both state and federal courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States, used technicality after technicality to dismiss them and avoid ruling on the

merits of the cases and provide appropriate remedies. Worse still, some judges had the gall to complain that the suits should not have been filed in the first place, invoking the “Doctrine of Standing,” and the “Doctrine of Laches,” or some other obscure legal technicality that enabled them to dismiss the cases without fair hearings and what is more to the extent that in a few courts where Trump’s lawyers did introduce evidence, it was found to be unconvincing. These court created legal obstructions left the average citizen scratching his or her head and wondering what was “credible” evidence in the eyes of the court? Did courts expect 1,000 people to raise their hands and say “yes I stuffed the ballot box” or did they expect the plaintiffs to produce 100,000 witnesses instead of a thousand to testify they saw fraud-committed right before their eyes? Why most courts refused to even consider audits of voting machines and dismissed the statistical and mathematical evidence of fraud as meaningless is still a mystery to citizens like me. What upset millions of citizens the most, however, is the fact that even when it was well documented that state officials had counted mail in ballots that were cast contrary to law, the courts ruled the unlawful ballots should still be counted anyway. Where in the Constitution does it say ballots cast unlawfully should be counted? Does a citizen get a driver license, social security card or any other consideration if the lawful processes are not followed? No, they do not. Apparently, courts were making up a constitutional right out of thin air. Many people wonder if voting by mail is even a right or is it just a privilege.

Now a judge will answer back saying, you average citizens do not understand the “law”, but millions of ordinary citizens like me say while it is true “We the People” are not lawyers, we are not stupid either. We know that the “law” is not something written in giant letters in the sky so everyone can see and accept without questions. While it is necessary to interpret the law, judges are merely men and women trained as lawyers (most of whom are Democrats) and there is a majority opinion, minority opinion, or the court is tied in its

opinion. Why then we “average uninformed citizens” want to know, did 100% of 60 plus lawsuits filed in five or six states go against President Trump and his supporters without the merits even being addressed in most cases. Only two logical answers to the question make sense: one, there was absolutely no evidence of election fraud, but such a contention is an absurdity on its face because if true it is a first in human history or two, the courts were bias against the “Great Disrupter” Donald Trump because of his undiplomatic comments against them or they were mere agents of the ruling elite, or they were afraid of the left leaning mob. Since tens of millions of citizens reject the big media lie of no fraud and scolding from the courts that there was no evidence of wide-spread lawbreaking and fraud, (“baseless” they say over and over again), “We the People” the ultimate sovereign of the Republic answer back to the hypothetical judge spoken of above, that “judge-made law” in the disputed election was unjust and we will not obey it for long and what is more we will not respect judges either if they continue to walk a less than straight and unjust road. Courts have no army to enforce their authority and if “We the People” stop respecting the legitimacy of elections and we distrust courts to adjudicate the “election laws” and address election fraud then judges can kiss their judgeship goodbye and further if fair elections disappear so will the Republic.

In my view and millions of other citizens, American courts were derelict in their duty in taking no responsibility for ensuring at the least the appearance of a fair election in 2020 and in hiding under their desks of legal technicalities. This neglect and abandonment of judicial duty I think were serious errors in judgment because had the courts particularly the Supreme Court given the President Trump and his 75 million supporters a fair hearing even had they decided against us on the merits, most Americans are patriotic enough to accept the result gracefully and give the Biden presidency some respect and legitimacy. The Supreme Court, however, relies on the Doctrine of Political Question that asserts that some political disputes like ones

over elections are too hot for courts to handle in that they “require a non-legal character or the use of techniques not suitable for a court [and furthermore most of these disputes are] explicitly assigned by the Constitution to the US Congress” (Political question, n.d.) or state legislatures to resolve. Other analysts are less diplomatic and argue that the courts cowardly bowed to the leftist mob, which threatened to riot in the streets and burn down half the country should Trump receive a fair hearing and there are the most cynical analysts among us who think American courts are merely the tools of the ruling elite who has little interest in justice but simply want to manage conflict and ensure order so the ruling elite can maintain their grip on power and control. So, if the courts are merely agents of the ruling elite, they do not have an interest in overturning a less than fair elections so the “Great Disruptor” Donald J. Trump the people’s champion of change can serve another four years. Whatever the case, the courts proved themselves to be no friend of President Trump or his supporters and half of the nation’s population. Although that conclusion is based on my own observations and common sense as is also the case with tens of millions of other American citizens, the reader is invited to consult an article by Bob Anderson published by The Federalist that details the courts negligence and the negative consequences for American democracy (Anderson, 2021).

Finally, with the long answer detailed, what is the short answer as to why a weak feeble candidate like Joe Biden with little going for himself beat a strong leader like Donald Trump who had an impressive record of accomplishments? To answer the question: Biden did not beat Trump, the President was defeated by a conspiracy of the powerful ruling elite with the help of the COVID-19 pandemic and corrupt news media but with all their positional authority, money, propaganda, dirty tactics, and help from mother-nature in the end, tens of millions of citizens are convinced, they still had to cheat to prevail. The full truth will never be known because of the ruling elite’s ability to cover up, news media misinformation, and the

negligence of the courts and that situation understandably upsets tens of millions of fair-minded American citizens who insist that elections be conducted in a manner that instills trust and confidence in all rational people. Why many Americans earnestly inquire, if there is nothing nefarious occurring has our legitimate concerns been largely dismissed summarily, which is a perfectly reasonable question to ask? What is the ruling elite hiding? Why has the documentation of hundreds of thousands of ballots in Georgia and other states simply disappeared or been destroyed? Every politician, lawyer, and judge knows appearance matter, so why do they not matter in the case of elections for the President of the United States and other federal representatives, which go to the very heart of constitutional governance? The ruling elite offer no reasonable answers.

If the partisan political rhetoric and rabbit holes are set aside what then is the bottom line? According to the ruling elite, Democratic Party, news media, bureaucrats administering the election, left-wing academy, many lawyers, and courts, the result of the 2020 presidential election should be accepted without question by the American public, despite numerous common sense reasons to suspect the election were grossly flawed, until direct, irrefutable empirical evidence to the contrary can prove fraud and the average American citizen who challenges it is either ignorant or a conspiracy theorist. While the political class does not say what “irrefutable evidence” is acceptable to them, they will not be satisfied with anything short of hundreds of thousands of dishonest persons holding up their hands and admitting they cheated or actual video recordings of them in the act of election fraud or God and the angels directly testifying before a human court that the election was rigged. The obtuse summary denial of election fraud and obstructionism by the ruling elite, however, is not the way a democratic election should legitimately work. The burden of proof should not be on 75 million citizens to prove their suspicions or simply kowtow to the ruling elite denial of fraud. When people demonstrated in the streets of Belarus

was the burden of proof placed on them to prove the election was rigged by the government or has this proof been demanded for other foreign people who question whether their government conducted a fair election? The American ruling elite had the motive (extreme hatred for President Trump), the opportunity of the 2020 presidential election, and means (control of the election apparatus) to rig the 2020 presidential election. They and the bureaucracy along with the courts therefore have a pro-active, affirmative responsibility and duty to convince tens of millions of doubting Americans, half the country, that the election was fair. Despite their propaganda that it is Trump supporters who endanger the Republic, that assertion is an insincere argument since democracy does not work that way and what is the most revealing and suspicious of all is the ruling elite have not even tried so far to explain anything of significance that fully justifies the way they conducted the election. Instead, they have summarily dismissed most challenges to its legitimacy through the news media or by the use of legal technicalities in the courts. Consequently, for reasonable men and women, it is common sense not conspiracy theory for citizens to demand answers. The political class in the United States and state Democratic Party controlled bureaucrats are responsible for the suspicions and questions concerning the fairness of the 2020 presidential election in the United States. Donald Trump and his supporters are not the blame because they refuse to accept a propaganda cover up. At best the flawed mail in ballots systems in several states were designed and executed by incompetent politicians and bureaucrats who did not know what they were doing or worse still they were purposely constructed to cheat President Trump and his supporters out of a fair election. The ruling elite and allies, of course, resort to name calling when their bias narratives are challenged but rather than answer questions and challenges with facts and reason, "baseless, ignorant, and conspiracy theory" they protest at the top of their voices, but they are talking to themselves because "We the People" are not listening to their "truth" and propaganda.

Consequences of Biden's Victory for Domestic Policy and Health of the American Republic

Four concepts help explain the probable result or consequences of President-elect Biden's electoral "victory" over President Trump. These concepts are legitimacy, mandate, chaos, and most important of all, stalemate.

Legitimacy

First starting with legitimacy, it does not take a prophet or a genius to predict that a President Biden will be greatly hindered in attempting to govern because one-third to half of the people in the United States does not see his election as legitimate. They see the election as stolen from President Trump and therefore they will oppose Biden in anything he tries to do. It is highly unlikely that Biden can unite the nation and except for the news media, there will not be any honeymoon for his administration. The reality is both partisan political and other groups in civil society will oppose every policy he proposes and will work hard to remove him from office. This partisan hostility is why Biden himself, allies, and the courts should have done more to reassure voters that the election was fair but instead they tried deflecting all legitimate questions and challenges by charging Trump and his supporters with ignorance and sour grapes.

Biden's ability to govern, in addition to questions about the legitimacy of his election, is in further danger from citizens who are infuriated by the way the ruling elite, Democratic Party, and news media treated President Trump during his four years in office. For these citizens and there are tens of millions of them, their primary political goal will not be cooperation with Biden but revenge and following the example set by the ruling elite, Democrats, and news media, in addition to an avalanche of lawsuits, there will be numerous bureaucratic anonymous leaks and investigations, particularly should

Republicans continue to control the Senate and as well in the House if the Republicans win back control in 2022, which many analysts see as happening. All of these happenings to be sure will be designed to embarrass, emasculate, and hamstring Biden and his administration. The Democrats and Joe Biden will surely reap what they have sown. The question is whether Biden has the mental and physical toughness and health necessary to stand up to the vicious political and personal assaults that will come his way. It is my guess he does not, and many other people agree he will accomplish little of substance during his four years in office. All citizens should remember, and President-elect Biden is already aware of the fact due to his 50-year experience in public office that democratic government only functions reasonably well when citizens believe that elections reflect the general will as determined by legitimate elections. While most citizens are willing to be loyal opposition when they believe the other side legitimately won, they will not cooperate, when the leadership of the government is viewed as illegitimate. There will only be hostility and obstruction. Legitimacy then is the very heart of democracy and to deny it is to reap the world wind, so President-election Biden is well advised to put on his raincoat, hat, and rubber shoes and prepare for miserable windy, stormy weather. His four years in the White House are primed for failure in terms of accomplishing an overall record of legislative success. The warning is sad but consistent with the facts that are known at this time.

Mandate

Turning now to the concept of mandate that is closely related to the legitimacy issue, it is clear from the election results that President-elect Biden did not receive permission from the American people in large enough numbers in accordance with the way the US election system works to pursue his policy goals, although Biden has never made clear what he stands for other than irrational hatred and opposition to President Trump. Despite the election irregularities,

which favored the Democrats, Biden prevailed by only a super slim margin. In the battleground states deciding the election, Biden won Arizona, if the official count is correct, by 10,457 votes (.3%), Georgia by less than 12,000 votes (less than .1 %), Wisconsin by 20,682 votes (.8%), Pennsylvania by 81,660 votes (.1%), and Michigan by 154,188 votes (2.8%), (NBC News, 2020). Consequently, had Trump won any combination of three of these five states he wins the election, which gives him the 270 electors necessary to prevail in the Electoral College. In other words, President Trump “lost” the election by 50 to 100 thousand votes, so when one considers there are 328 million people in the USA and about 155 to 159 million citizens voted, with Trump winning the vote in half of the states but losing the three battleground states necessary to win by less than 100 thousand votes, it is difficult for Biden to claim he has a mandate to govern. Yes, Biden won the popular vote nationwide but as previously explained that is not the way the American president is chosen.

The clear mandate to govern is absolutely critical for any president including Biden if his government is to move its policy agenda forward and there are only two ways for an American politician to gain the permission from the American people to implement his or her vision for the future. One way is for a president to be elected in a landslide and be so popular personally that the public will follow along with anything he or she proposes. A landslide nevertheless does not apply to President-elect Biden who generates little enthusiasm among voters. The Democratic Party primaries showed Biden to be a candidate with little support among the public for him as a leader. His candidacy was in fact on the verge of collapse until the ruling elite came out of the shadow and stepped in to rescued him because they feared socialist Bernie Sanders was about to win the Democratic Party nomination. For the ruling class and corporate America, Sanders was unacceptable and they also feared his support among voters was less than President Trump’s, so they literally brought Joe Biden back from the dead and forced all other candidates out of the

race except Sanders. Then, after Sanders was defeated, they flooded Biden with money and kept him in the basement for most of the rest of the campaign, gambling that their Trump character assassination strategy and the virus health crisis ensure a Biden's election. The strategy along with mail in voting irregularities of course worked but there was never any illusion that Biden was a great leader who people follow due to charisma or leadership ability. He was simply viewed as anti-Trump and a caretaker who the political class was capable of controlling. The 2020 presidential election then was all about defeating President Trump and stopping the rebellious average American citizen, it was not much about electing Biden as a person. Biden therefore cannot claim a mandate to govern based on his popular appeal or special leadership ability. He truly is a creation of the swamp and a pawn of the ruling class and leftist socialists.

It is also the case that Biden cannot claim to have a mandate based on a rational, well thought out policy program that the public endorses. If Biden does have answers to America's problems, he did not articulate them in the campaign since his only theme was hate President Trump and when he was pressed to state his own policy positions he was either evasive or he flip-flopped. It is anyone's guess what is in President-elect Biden's head and according to some analysts he does not have a clue either. He will vacillate between the orders the ruling elite provide him and the pressure for radical change from his socialist leaning leftist allies. Nothing will happen and Biden cannot claim to have a mandate based on well-conceived policy proposals. He will spitefully try to roll back as many of President Trump's accomplishments as possible, but that strategy will not gain him much support since most of President Trump's policies were popular with the public, even with those who voted for Biden because they did not like Trump's combative, crass personality.

Rather than providing either President-elect Biden or President Trump a mandate that is necessary to solve America's problems, the

2020 presidential election again showed that Americans are still bitterly and evenly divided and that unfortunate fact is not a good sign for the health of the Republic. At a time when the USA needs a real leader, Americans are struck with an elderly, health challenged caretaker president who will take orders from the self-interested ruling elite and who also has a less than strong character that is subject to giving in to pressure from extremist dreamers on the left. I truly regret reporting the news but unfortunately President-elect Biden is not the same man as he was in his younger days. The next four years will be hard on everyone and absolutely little of significance will be accomplished.

Chaos

Another revealing result of Biden's "fortune" in prevailing in the 2020 presidential election alluded to above and was briefly discussed in chapter two, is that because he made an unholy alliance between the ruling elite and socialist minded rebels on the political left to gain victory, he committed political suicide insofar as rational policymaking is concerned. They are strange bedfellows, and in terms of ideology, they are irreconcilably incompatible. The only thing they have in common is an irrational hatred for President Trump and even if the President-elect were the man he was 20 years ago and in good mental health, it is impossible for him to not bridge the ideological differences between these two allies of convenience. As made clear above, Biden is not a strong leader anymore and will constantly be caught between these contradictory and competing forces. He will fight with them as much as with the Republicans and whichever way he chooses to go, one side or the other will get angry and oppose his initiatives every step of the way, with some opposition coming from inside his own administration. Very little of significance in domestic policymaking can be accomplished under these circumstances and even before the inauguration, the fight has already started over cabinet appointments and the hostility will get much worse insofar as

legislation, administrative rule making, and other presidential prerogatives are concerned. The word of the day inside the Democratic Party and Biden administration will soon be “betrayal.”

Equally disturbing is the fact that since Biden is mentally challenged and impotent as a decision-maker, inevitably competition will develop among his inner-circle of advisers for power to control him and to make decisions for the country. The competition will just be another impediment to rational policymaking and that problem along with the others discussed above will create chaos all over the place in the US government. The American people will be confused, our foreign allies will not understand, and those nations unfriendly to us will take advantage of the USA or they will make serious miscalculations based on the chaos. Chaos, chaos, and more chaos are in store for the Biden presidency and such helter-skelter is not a happy and healthy situation for the American Republic.

Stalemate

Finally, for the reasons set forth above and the ones I now discuss, utter stalemate is the key to understanding and characterizing the Biden presidency. Most people not familiar with the American Constitutional system of government think the President of the United States to be an all-powerful figure but that conclusion is not the case in reality since the US Constitution places all kinds of checks and roadblocks in his way. Of course, President-elect Biden knows that reality and he will soon experience the difference between criticizing President Trump without any responsibility for governing and him having to govern himself. Below I detail each structural roadblock in Biden’s way that will cause stalemate.

First, the American political structure is constitutional in design, which by definition means “limited government” and there are numerous areas outside government control that are the

prerogatives of individual citizens, of civil society, and our free enterprise economy. Should Biden and socialist allies interfere with these prerogatives, state governments, Congress, and especially the courts will block him. Protecting the American Bill of Rights is a particular concern of the Supreme Court of the United States and lower federal courts and the conservative judges appointed by President Trump will not tolerate its violation by a Biden administration. Second, federalism is arguably the most important part of the American political structure, some people say the very foundation, and the state and local governments exercise some decision-making authority that is beyond the control of the central or federal executive authority located mainly in Washington D. C., which will be controlled by Biden and his people. What are more, most state governments are controlled by the Republican Party: 22 are Republican, 15 are Democratic, and eleven are split (Walsh, 2020). That political reality means Biden will have little influence in those states fully or partly controlled by Republicans, so although the Democratic Party controls the American presidency it has lost too many state elections to be entirely in control of American governance. Third, the separation of powers in the federation government itself restricts Biden's decision-making authority. In addition to the checks on executive power exercised by the federal court system, Congress too can block the Biden administration with the two houses of Congress acting jointly or in some circumstances with the chambers acting separately on their own. Note that US Senate is still controlled as of December 2020 by the Republicans at 50 to 48, although there are two seats yet to be decided on January 5, 2021, and the Republicans made major gains in the House in the 2020 election, and they are favorably positioned to retake the House in 2022. So again, in the down ballot situation the Republicans did not completely suffer defeat in the 2020 election and some analysts say they won.

Last, when these structural roadblocks to Biden's political power are added to the other constraints set forth above, it is unlikely he will be able to accomplish much in his four years in office. He will without doubt try undoing many President Trump's executive orders like immigration policy and make subtle changes to both domestic and American foreign policy but his chances of major domestic legislative success or foreign policy change are slim to say the least. He will be a caretaker president doing the ruling elite's self-interested bidding, which is to maintain the status quo and protect their special place in the political system so they can continue to enrich themselves at the expense of average American citizens. For those of us who have supported President Trump and want real change and the power of the ruling elite curtailed, we will have to tolerate stalemate and more stalemate. Stalemate, however, is written into the US Constitution and it is not a new thing to American politics and governance, and it has on occasion proven to be a good thing but with so many crises facing the American nation in today's hazardous world, one cannot but conclude that Biden's election is not good for the health of the Republic. Still, the nation is strong enough to survive the election of a weak president and we have done that before, and we are still standing. Nonetheless one thing happened in 2020 that threatens the very foundation and survival of the American political experiment and that is conducting a presidential election that many citizens think was unfair and, to a large degree rigged. "We the People" will not tolerate that again so Congress, state legislatures, and courts best take notice and fix the problems with mail in voter fraud, because if the government cannot ensure the legitimacy of elections, the Republic is doomed.

President-elect Biden's Foreign Policy in General and Ukraine

Ukrainians and Americans want to know what will Joe Biden, soon to be President of the United States, offer as a general foreign policy and more specifically some want to know, what if anything does he have in mind for Ukraine? Will he help Kiev in its fight against Russian aggression and the rebelling eastern pro-Moscow rebels and if he does decide to assist how much aid will Ukraine get from a Democratic Party controlled White House and Congress? They further ask whether Biden's policy toward Ukraine will be any different from the policy of President Trump.

The short answer to these questions is Biden does not have a rational foreign policy and he said little of substance on the subject during the presidential campaign other than offering a few empty platitudes that he will clean up "a mess made by President Trump" and he made a few vague references to a return to normalcy by regaining trust among America's allies, particularly healing the transatlantic rift, reinstating American cooperation in climate and pollution control, standing up to Russia and restoring Obama's failed policy on Iran as well as a few other confusing and senseless claims about what he will do or not do in the Middle East and other parts of the world. As for Ukraine, Biden has not recently said much of anything except to unfairly criticize President Trump during the farcical impeachment proceedings, although he does have a record of words on the Ukrainian war and Russia as Vice-President in the Obama administration. The record is one of rhetoric bashing the Russians, but little policy recommendations of consequence or action but also not much respect or concern shown for the people of Ukraine and Ukrainian nation-state. It is notable to his credit that Biden as Vice-President did recommend that Ukraine gets lethal military aid to defend itself. With that background in mind, I will now make a few speculative comments on President-elect Biden's prospective foreign

policy in general and his approach to Ukraine and the war effort in the east. The first thing to understand is the realities of power politics in the world and US fear of Russia, China, and other states such as Iran and North Korea have not changed simply because Biden will be the next American president and he is a Democrat. That reality is the reason why there was a significant degree of continuity between the Bush and Obama approaches to foreign policy, although one was a conservative Republican, and the other was a progressive Democrat but in the case of Trump there was more change than the usual glacier movement that some people have come to expect in foreign policy issues. In that regard, Trump did many things to shake up US foreign policy. He pivoted from Russia being the main threat to US security to China and directly confronted Beijing. He intimidated and pacified North Korea, at least in the short-term and directly confronted Iran and put extreme pressure on Tehran. As for our allies, he clarified that the US refuses to any longer tolerate unfair trade agreements, they will pay their fair share for the common defense, and America will not support them in mindless climate and pollution control agreements that unfairly discriminate against US interests. He also de-emphasized the value of international organizations in achieving peace and through bilateral negotiations made peace between the Arabs nations and Israel and that success was not a small achievement, although he has got little credit and last but not least, he began the process of bringing American troops home.

The primary question to consider here is whether a Biden administration, assuming it is rational, wants to change that much of Trump's foreign policy and whether the reality of world politics will allow for any such change. My answer is, if political rhetoric and partisan ideology are put aside, Biden will not change all that much because what Trump has done makes sense, it has worked fairly well, and most Americans support his foreign policy changes. Accordingly, as there was between Bush and Obama, there will be a large overlap between Trump's foreign policy and that of Biden's. Biden, of course,

will apologize to our allies for Trump's "rude behavior" but he will not urge them to give less for self-defense, nor will he try re-negotiating most of the trade agreements Trump carefully worked out, and although Biden will be more inclined to work through international organizations and formal alliances and pay them rhetorical homage, except for some successful cooperation in climate control and pollution areas, nothing much concrete will come from that collaboration.

As for Biden's approach to Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea, he will continue to criticize President Putin harshly but do little else to confront Moscow and he will also soften American criticism of China but continue the pivot to East Asia and the Western Pacific to contain Chinese expansion because that strategy is in America's self-interest. It is a no-brainer. In the case of North Korea, Biden will look the other way should Kim stir up trouble or he will attempt multi-lateral negotiations again with China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea that will prove useless. Only in the case of Iran will Biden seek significant change and here he will offer to ease sanctions and try revitalizing the dead nuclear agreement but I doubt that attempt will get him far in as much as President Trump has already closed that policy door. In all, at least in terms of rationality, except for plenty of phony rhetoric, Biden's approach to foreign policy will not change that much and most Americans and Ukrainians will not detect any change at all.

Other factors that will make a new rational Biden foreign policy difficult to achieve are three, so let us spend a moment discussing them. First, as made clear above, Biden's presidency lacks legitimacy and a mandate so he will be busy fighting for his political life on domestic policy and will de-emphasize foreign policy decisions, especially since Trump's foreign policy is sound and already in place. Second, although Biden has more flexibility in the area of foreign policy than domestic policy, the rationality and coherent of all his policies will suffer greatly as made clear above and in chapter two

from the ideological incompatibility of the Wall Street and socialist alliance that put him in the office as well ideological/policy disputes between his bureaucratic advisors some who favor a “restoration” policy and others a “reformists” policy. Contrary to Biden’s plans for change, these disputes will result in stalemate and largely a continuation of Trump’s foreign policy. Finally, as also made clear above and in chapter two, Biden suffers from old age, is lacking in energy and has health problems that will affect his mental decision-making ability, all of which make him a weak leader and subject to control from his close advisers. That condition inevitably leads to a power struggle among them to control him and that in turn leads to chaos and stalemate, which enhances the likelihood that Trump’s foreign policy remains intact.

In summary, although Biden spent most of his career pursuing a liberal-Democratic approach to foreign policy that emphasized globalization, cooperation with allies and with international organizations, democratic nation-building, and interfere in foreign wars, the approach has been largely discredited and world power considerations and a messy chaotic domestic situation will produce stalemate and lock him into the foreign policy of the previous administration that is Trump foreign policy. Other than hyperbole and other types of hypocritical phony rhetoric, Americans and Ukrainians will not see much change in America’s foreign policy in the next four years. The Biden administration will be a caretaker government insofar as foreign policy is concerned.

It is appropriate now to specifically take up the case concerning President-elect Biden’s approach to Ukrainian foreign policy and his approach to the war with Russia and the eastern Ukrainian rebels. As made clear in chapter two, the reality of power politics and Washington’s relationship with Moscow largely determines what US-Ukrainian foreign policy will be and Biden’s election does not change that reality. Although news media commentators and some so-called

“experts” are falling all over themselves predicting an enlightened, Ukraine expert by the name of Biden, who they say will alter US policy toward the Ukraine in an earth shaking way, he will not because Biden is no expert on Ukraine and the reality on the ground will not let him change much anyway. Realism forced President Trump to walk a careful line or do a balancing act between giving Ukraine modest support in its eastern war against the Russians and rebels, but at the same time he needed to avoid alienating Moscow to the extent that it viewed American support for Kiev as an existential threat. In other words, because of the reality of power politics, President Trump was careful and cautious regarding Ukraine and war, but contrary to the previous Obama-Biden administration, he did have a rational policy and he offered the possibility of peace negotiations with Moscow in the future. If America’s Ukrainian foreign policy is viewed in that realistic light, then it does not matter what Biden and his liberal globalist advisors think about Russia and Ukraine (and the truth is they have no particular affection or respect for Ukraine’s people), they too will have to walk Trump’s careful path and not deviate too far from it. The American national interest demands such an approach and Biden will have no choice but to accept it. While Biden does not like Putin and the President-elect and allies are paranoid about the Russian threat, he will not risk war or even a breakdown of US relationship with Russia over Ukraine. President Obama and Vice-President Biden demonstrated that only too well several years ago in 2014 when Russia invaded Crimea, that is, they had a loud bark but practically no bite. As was the case in the Obama years, all Ukrainians can expect from Biden is plentitudes, an excess of trash talk, a few more sanctions on the Russians, and a modest increase in domestic and military aid. At the least, Kiev should expect an aid increase after the position the Democratic Party put Biden in during the impeachment proceedings against President Trump by portraying Ukraine as America’s best friend and Kiev fighting the American fight. In the short run, this projected increase in aid is good news for Kiev because Ukrainians desperately need more assistance in their war

efforts and money for investment and technical support to develop the economy. Furthermore, Republicans will also support increased assistance for Ukraine and best is cooperation between the American political parties will enable Ukraine to get back to a position of bipartisan support from the US instead of the Democratic Party using it for domestic propaganda. The bad news, on the other hand, is that Biden is capable of interfering in Ukraine's domestic politics again by using his phony and hypocritical excuse of rooting out corruption. The warning is not to say that there is no corruption problem in Ukraine.

Eventually, in the long-term, however, Biden's and the Democratic Party's irrational paranoia and hatred for everything Russian will not serve Ukraine's national interest well. As made clear in previous chapters, what Kiev needs in the worst way is for the war to end through a negotiated peace settlement brokered by Washington but as explained in chapters two and four, under a Biden administration or even a Trump administration at this time, the negotiation is highly unlikely to happen. For domestic partisan political reasons, Biden's people will want to harass the Russian bear and make him uncomfortable rather than sitting down with him to negotiate a new security arrangement in Eastern Europe, which is what Moscow wants and Ukrainians will pay a heavy price for that mindless policy with the war in the east continuing for a long time in the future. Realistically, the best Ukraine can hope from Biden is he will join the feeble attempt by the Europeans to end the war but that is not what Moscow wants. As explained in chapter four, the Russians want direct negotiations with the United States regarding a comprehensive security agreement around their borders and if they do not get it, Putin will continue the war in eastern Ukraine in hope that pressure will assist in achieving his larger security goals in Eastern Europe. Such a detestable strategy is not much skin off Biden's and Washington's nose, but it is tragic for Ukraine. I refer the reader back to the section of my book in chapter two entitled "asymmetrical" relationship between the US and Ukraine that is the primary key to understanding

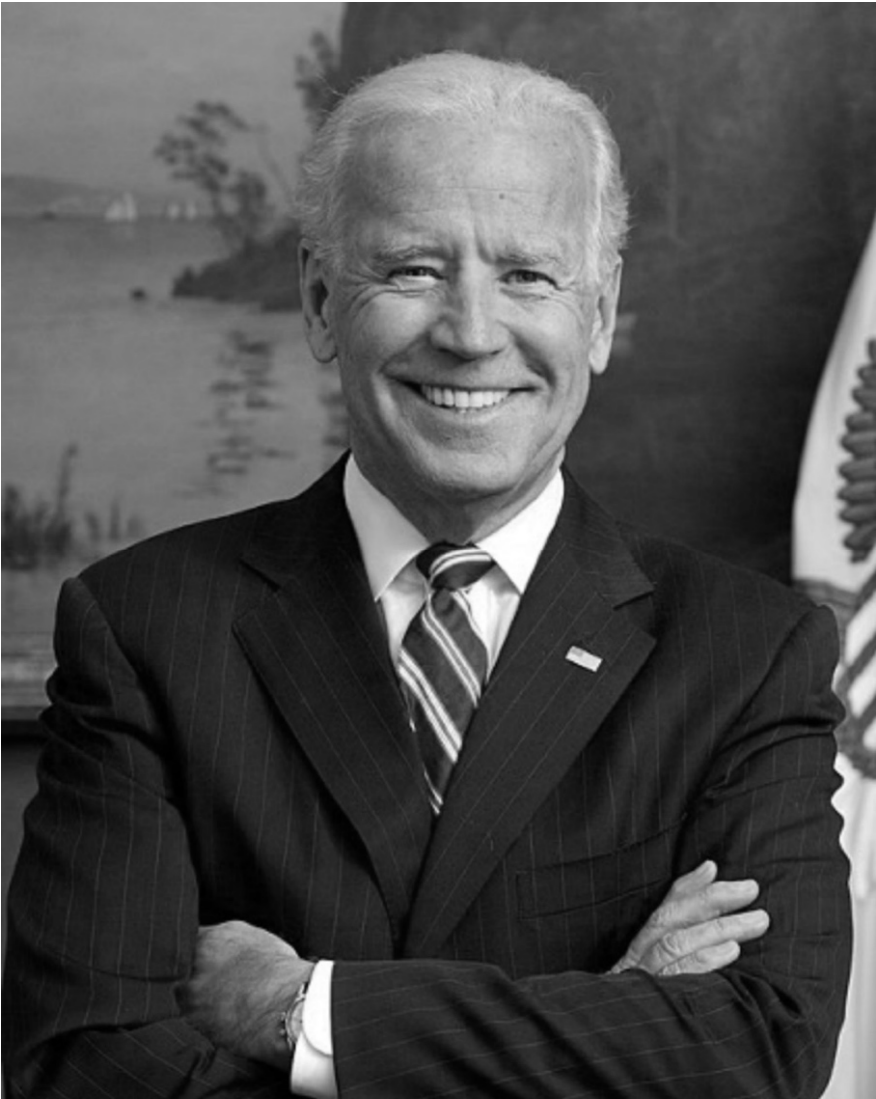
US-Ukrainian foreign policy and that key has not changed simply because Joe Biden is now President-elect of the United States.

In the footnote that follows (Biden-Harris, 2019; Wright, T., 2020; Wright, R., 2020; Hill, 2020; Kim, 2020; Prince, 2020; Krushelnycky, 2020; Dickinson, 2020; Aslund, 2020), I have listed nine publications shown on the internet that take issue with what I have argued here about Biden's foreign policy in general and his Ukrainian foreign policy possibilities, although they are written for the most part to ideologically glorify and justify Biden as well as to bad mouth President Trump. If readers wish they can read them at their leisure and decide whether the articles make sense or not, but he or she will note that even some of these biased articles support some of my positions, although I do not claim these writings as authoritative because they are mainly unenlightened opinions that are disguised as factual non-biased "expert" analysis.

Although speculation abounds about what Biden's foreign policy approach will be toward Ukraine and the rest of the world, I will leave it here because the point has been made clear enough that his policy other than rhetoric will change little from that of President Trump's approach. While the citizen in me has a bias for Trump's policies, especially his foreign policy, the more objective political scientist in me also does not think Biden's election to the Office of President of the United States will serve the people of the United States or Ukraine well but having said that I do not see much change occurring in Washington's foreign policy toward Ukraine. Yes, there will be subtle changes, but the policy will essentially remain Trump in design and execution. The tragedy insofar the Ukraine is concerned is that had President Trump won reelection détente with the Russians is on the table, which is necessary to end the war in eastern Ukraine. Biden as president forecloses that possibility and that reality are another reason why my recommendation of divorce from the eastern rebels in chapter five seems appropriate. Ukraine should move in a direction

where Ukrainians control their own political destiny rather than being controlled by the more powerful nation-states of Russia, the United States, and European countries and additionally as far as I can see only by divorcing the eastern rebels can that be realized. Finally, the big differences between Trump's Ukraine policy and that of Biden's will be misinformation and outright falsehoods coming out of the Democratic Party held White House. I take no pleasure in saying it or attacking President-elect Biden who has a nice enough personality and is well meaning with some of his policies but the Democratic Party of my youth, which I was proud of is no more. The Democratic Party of today is the vehicle of control that enables that the American self-interested ruling elite to dominate and rule, with assistance from their allies: the corrupt news media, deep state bureaucrats, left leaning academia and the well-meaning but wrong-headed socialist politicians on the extreme left of American politics. Their leadership is either sophists, or ignorant, but their skill in using propaganda is superior to every other political organization in the world. These then are my afterword thoughts in response to the ruling elite-Joe Biden "victory" over President Trump in the 2020 presidential election. I do not think they change much of what was said in the six previous chapters.

Joseph R. Biden, 46th President-elect of the United States



Assuming office January 20, 2021

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Biden

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The book explains US-Ukrainian foreign policy during the Trump presidency from the outlook of US national interest. It also analyzes the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election and the future of US foreign policy under a Biden presidency.

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