

January 15, 2017 - FOREIGN POLICY

We take this occasion to examine some of the issues facing Donald Trump when he turns away from domestic concerns. Using Henry Kissinger's ideas about foreign policy, historian Niall Ferguson applies some structure to how we might view the world and our position in it.

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*... Donald Trump therefore enters the Oval Office with an underestimated advantage. Obama's foreign policy has been a failure, most obviously in the Middle East, where the smoldering ruin that is Syria—not to mention Iraq and Libya—attests to the fundamental naivety of his approach, dating all the way back to the 2009 Cairo speech. The President came to believe he had an ingenious strategy to establish geopolitical balance between Sunni and Shi'a. But by treating America's Arab friends with open disdain, while cutting a nuclear deal with Iran that has left Tehran free to wage proxy wars across the region, Obama has achieved not peace but a fractal geometry of conflict and a frightening, possibly nuclear, arms race. At the same time, he has allowed Russia to become a major player in the Middle East for the first time since Kissinger squeezed the Soviets out of Egypt in the 1972-79 period. The death toll in the Syrian war now approaches half a million; who knows how much higher it will rise between now and Inauguration Day?*

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*... The "Obama Doctrine" has failed in Europe, too, where English voters opted to leave the EU in defiance of the President's threats, and where the German leadership he recently praised has delivered, first, an unnecessarily protracted financial crisis in the European periphery and, second, a disastrous influx to the core of migrants, some but not all of them refugees from a region that Europe had intervened in just enough to exacerbate its instability. The President has also failed in eastern Europe, where not only has Ukraine been invaded and Crimea annexed, but also Hungary and now Poland have opted to deviate sharply from the President's liberal "arc of history." Finally, his foreign policy has failed in Asia, where little remains of the much-vaunted pivot. "If you look at how we've operated in the South China Sea," the President boasted in an interview published in March, "we have been able to mobilize most of Asia to isolate China in*

*ways that have surprised China, frankly, and have very much served our interest in strengthening our alliances."<sup>11</sup> The new President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, apparently did not receive this memorandum. In October he went to Beijing's Great Hall of the People to announce his "separation from the United States."*

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*... who should serve as Donald Trump's strategic role model? Although his name did not come up in Kissinger's interview with Goldberg, there is an obvious answer, clearly articulated in the former Secretary of State's classic work of synthesis, *Diplomacy*. That answer is Theodore Roosevelt, the antithesis of Woodrow Wilson, Kissinger's *bête noire*.*

*"Roosevelt," wrote Kissinger, "started from the premise that the United States was a power like any other, not a singular incarnation of virtue. If its interests collided with those of other countries, America had the obligation to draw on its strength to prevail."<sup>13</sup> Roosevelt did not build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border, but he did formulate the "Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted the right of the United States to exercise "however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of . . . wrong-doing or impotence . . . an international police power" in Latin America and the Caribbean. That principle became the basis for interventions in Haiti, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba—and for the acquisition of the territory on which the Panama Canal was constructed: one of the great infrastructure projects of the early 1900s.*

*Moreover, Roosevelt was dismissive of liberal designs such as multilateral disarmament and collective security, enthusiasms not only of Woodrow Wilson but of the three-times-defeated Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan: ...*

*... He called for legislation to exclude and deport anarchists—legislation duly passed by Congress and signed into law in March 1903. Today, for anarchism read radical Islam.*

*In a speech he gave in St. Louis in May 1916, Roosevelt summed up his views on immigration in language that resonates today, a century later. "If the American has the right stuff in him, I care not a snap of my fingers whether he is Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant," he declared. "But unless the immigrant becomes in good faith an American and nothing else, then he is out of place in this country, and the sooner he leaves the better." The target of Roosevelt's rhetoric was the wartime habit of accentuating the identities and supposedly divided loyalties of "Irish-Americans" and "German-Americans." The context was different, but the issue is as relevant today, when Islamists assert that American Muslims owe a higher loyalty to their religion, if not to the caliphate.<sup>23</sup> "Our duty," Roosevelt said,*

*... is to the United States. This duty should constrain us . . . to treat the other nations primarily according to the way such treatment serves American interests. . . . The attempt to keep . . . a half citizenship, with a divided loyalty, split between devotion to the land in which they were born and which their children are to dwell, and the land from which their fathers came . . . is certain to breed a spirit of bitterness and prejudice and dislike between great bodies of our citizens.<sup>24</sup> ...*

*If it is this spirit that animates the Trump Administration, then its new order will not be so new, nor altogether so bad as many fear.*

**Bret Stephens** asks important questions about the "two state solution."

*... Would a Palestinian state serve the cause of Mideast peace? This used to be conventional wisdom, on the theory that a Palestinian state would lead to peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, easing the military burdens on the former and encouraging the latter to address their internal discontents.*

*Today the proposition is ridiculous. No deal between Jerusalem and Ramallah is going to lift the sights of those now fighting in Syria, Iraq or Yemen. Nor will a deal reconcile Tehran and its terrorist proxies in Lebanon and Gaza to the existence of a Jewish state. As for the rest of the neighborhood, Israel has diplomatic relations with Turkey, Jordan and Egypt, and has reached pragmatic accommodations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.*

*What about the interests of Palestinians? Aren't they entitled to a state?*

*Maybe. But are they more entitled to one than the Assamese, Basques, Baloch, Corsicans, Druze, Flemish, Kashmiris, Kurds, Moros, Native Hawaiians, Northern Cypriots, Rohingya, Tibetans, Uyghurs or West Papuans—all of whom have distinct national identities, legitimate historical grievances and plausible claims to statehood?*

*If so, what gives Palestinians the preferential claim? Have they waited longer than the Kurds? No: Kurdish national claims stretch for centuries, not decades. Have they experienced greater violations to their culture than Tibetans? No: Beijing has conducted a systematic policy of repression for 67 years, whereas Palestinians are nothing if not vocal in mosques, universities and the media. Have they been persecuted more harshly than the Rohingya? Not even close.*

*Set the comparisons aside. Would a Palestinian state be good for Palestinian people?*

*That's a more subjective judgment. But a telling figure came in a June 2015 poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, which found that a majority of Arab residents in East Jerusalem would rather live as citizens with equal rights in Israel than in a Palestinian state. ...*

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## **American Interest - Lessons From History**

### **Donald Trump's New World Order**

#### ***What a Kissinger-inspired strategy might look like***

by Niall Ferguson

Ten days after the election of Donald J. Trump to be the 45th President of the United States, there is a more or less complete lack of certainty as to which direction his foreign policy will take, but a great deal of speculation—much of it alarmist—based on things Mr. Trump has said in speeches and interviews. Yet few if any Presidents base their foreign policy strictly on campaign rhetoric. Few if any break entirely with the policies of their predecessors. And, indeed, few if any can be said, in practice, to have anything so coherent as a foreign policy doctrine,

much less a grand strategy. Experience also suggests that the foreign policy of the Trump Administration will depend a good deal on who gets the key jobs—Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, as well as National Security Advisor—and on who wins the interdepartmental struggle that will inevitably ensue: the battle for bureaucratic priority, the fight for regular access to the President, the war of leaks to the media.

Rather than speculate about such transitional questions, it may be more constructive for now to ask what Trump's strategic options actually are as seen against the widest parameters that reality may bear. In this context, it is helpful that the nation's most respected living strategic thinker and practitioner has already aired some of his views. Having endorsed neither leading candidate for the presidency, but having met with both during their campaigns, Henry Kissinger deserves to be heeded. There is, of course, no certainty that his views will be heeded by the President-elect or his national security team. It would be foolhardy to assume that the President-elect does not take his own oft-stated views seriously, and these do not align especially well with those of Henry Kissinger. But Kissinger's advice is being sought, and prospective cabinet officials may be more amenable to it than not. There is therefore no reason to assume that the embryonic administration is so wedded to a particular strategic doctrine that what follows can be dismissed out of hand.

Let us begin with the geopolitical landscape that Trump inherits from his predecessor. In his most recent book *World Order* (2014), Kissinger argues that the world is in a parlous condition verging on international anarchy. This is not only because of shifts in the material balance of power from West to East, but also because the legitimacy of the postwar world order is being challenged. Four competing visions of world order—the European-Westphalian, the Islamic, the Chinese, and the American—are each in varying stages of metamorphosis, if not decay. Consequently, real legitimacy inheres broadly in none of these visions. The emergent properties of the new world disorder are the formation of "regional blocs" with incompatible worldviews.<sup>1</sup> These, he fears, are likely to rub up against one another in a way that escalates: "A struggle between regions could be even more destructive than the struggle between nations has been."<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to those who claim the world has transcended any prospect of major systemic war, Kissinger argues that the contemporary global context is highly flammable. There is a profound tension between economic globalization and the political persistence of the nation-state, which the 2008 financial crisis laid bare. Second, we are acquiescing in the proliferation of nuclear weapons far beyond the Cold War "club." We also have the new realm of cyberwarfare, a novel version of Hobbes's "state of nature."<sup>3</sup> Here and in his recent interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, as well as in private conversations with his biographer,<sup>4</sup> Kissinger has outlined four scenarios he regards as the most likely catalysts for a large-scale conflict:

1. a deterioration in Sino-American relations, whereby the two countries tumble into the so-called "Thucydides Trap" that history sets for every incumbent power and the rising power that challenges it;
2. a breakdown of relations between Russia and the West, based on mutual incomprehension and made possible by:
3. a collapse of what remains of European hard power and/or the will to use it, due to the inability of modern European leaders to accept that diplomacy without the credible threat of force is just hot air; and/or
4. an escalation of conflict in the Middle East due to the Obama Administration's readiness, in the eyes of the Arab states and Israel, to hand hegemony in the region to a still revolutionary Iran.

One or a combination of these threats, in the absence of a coherent American strategy, threatens to turn mere disorder into a conflagration.

In an increasingly "Westphalian" Asia, the United States might be expected to play the balancing role, but it is simultaneously

*an ally of Japan and a proclaimed partner of China—a situation comparable to Bismarck's when he made an alliance with Austria balanced by a treaty with Russia. Paradoxically, it was precisely that ambiguity which preserved the flexibility of the European equilibrium. And its abandonment—in the name of transparency—started a sequence of increasing confrontations, culminating in World War I.*<sup>5</sup>

Kissinger does not say explicitly in *World Order* that the Administration's abortive "pivot to Asia" represents a repeat of the mistake made by Germany's leaders after Bismarck; he does not need to.

He is more explicit with respect to the Middle East, where he categorically rejects arguments advanced by Obama himself in his January 2014 profile in the *New Yorker*. Obama assured David Remnick that his goal was to achieve balance between Sunni and Shia forces.<sup>6</sup> Kissinger's objection is that "America can fulfill that role only on the basis of involvement, not of withdrawal."<sup>7</sup> In effect, Obama has combined the rhetoric of Wilsonianism with a strategic retreat driven mainly by domestic political calculation.

In his interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, Kissinger goes further. As he puts it, with reference to Obama's fateful decision not to intervene in Syria when Assad crossed his "red line" on the use of chemical weapons, the decision to use military force "should not be a compromise between contending domestic forces." Whatever the rationale of Obama's effort to achieve a new equilibrium between Sunni and Shi'a, the President has "created the impression—and the reality—of an American strategic withdrawal from the region." The Iran deal was simply too favorable to Iran because it lifted sanctions without requiring Iran to curtail "its imperial and jihadist foreign policy" in the region: "The assumption that a weapons-specific negotiation would produce a psychological breakthrough in their thinking did not reflect Iran's 2,000 years of imperial experience." Age has not diminished Kissinger's ability to penetrate the minds of other statesmen. "Obama seems to think of himself not as a part of a political process," he observes mordantly,

... but as *sui generis*, a unique phenomenon with a unique capacity. And his responsibility, as he defines it, is to keep the insensitive elements of America from unsettling the world. . . . Since [the Administration] believes as well that the global trends are moving in a direction favorable to our values, the overwhelming strategic obligation of the United States becomes to avoid getting in the way of the inevitable. . . . [But] his vision of the arc of history produces a . . . passive policy. . . . [He prides] himself most on the things he prevented from happening. . . . Another view of statesmanship might focus to a greater extent on shaping history rather than avoiding getting in its way.<sup>8</sup> ...

Donald Trump therefore enters the Oval Office with an underestimated advantage. Obama's foreign policy has been a failure, most obviously in the Middle East, where the smoldering ruin that is Syria—not to mention Iraq and Libya—attests to the fundamental naivety of his approach, dating all the way back to the 2009 Cairo speech. The President came to believe he had an ingenious strategy to establish geopolitical balance between Sunni and Shi'a. But by treating America's Arab friends with open disdain, while cutting a nuclear deal with Iran that has left Tehran free to wage proxy wars across the region, Obama has achieved not peace but a fractal

geometry of conflict and a frightening, possibly nuclear, arms race. At the same time, he has allowed Russia to become a major player in the Middle East for the first time since Kissinger squeezed the Soviets out of Egypt in the 1972-79 period. The death toll in the Syrian war now approaches half a million; who knows how much higher it will rise between now and Inauguration Day?

Meanwhile, global terrorism has surged under Obama. Of the past 16 years, the worst year for terrorism was 2014, with 93 countries experiencing an attack and 32,765 people killed. 2015 was the second worst, with 29,376 deaths. Last year, four radical Islamic groups were responsible for 74 per cent of all deaths from terrorism: ISIS, Boko Haram, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda.<sup>9</sup> In this context, the President's claims to be succeeding against what he euphemistically calls "violent extremism" are absurd. Much opprobrium has been heaped on Donald Trump in the course of the past year. But there was much that was true in his underreported August 15 foreign policy speech on the subject of Islamic extremism and the failure of the Obama Administration to defeat it.<sup>10</sup>

The "Obama Doctrine" has failed in Europe, too, where English voters opted to leave the EU in defiance of the President's threats, and where the German leadership he recently praised has delivered, first, an unnecessarily protracted financial crisis in the European periphery and, second, a disastrous influx to the core of migrants, some but not all of them refugees from a region that Europe had intervened in just enough to exacerbate its instability. The President has also failed in eastern Europe, where not only has Ukraine been invaded and Crimea annexed, but also Hungary and now Poland have opted to deviate sharply from the President's liberal "arc of history." Finally, his foreign policy has failed in Asia, where little remains of the much-vaunted pivot. "If you look at how we've operated in the South China Sea," the President boasted in an interview published in March, "we have been able to mobilize most of Asia to isolate China in ways that have surprised China, frankly, and have very much served our interest in strengthening our alliances."<sup>11</sup> The new President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, apparently did not receive this memorandum. In October he went to Beijing's Great Hall of the People to announce his "separation from the United States."

All of this means that merely by changing Obama's foreign policy President Trump is likely to achieve at least some success. The question is, how exactly should he go about this change?

Kissinger's analysis of Trump's victory is that it was "in large part a reaction of Middle America to attacks on its values by intellectual and academic communities." As such, it presents an opportunity to close or at least narrow the "gap between the public's perception of the role of U.S. foreign policy and the elite's perception." However, there are clear and present dangers. Terrorist groups may seek to provoke an inexperienced and impulsive President into an overreaction. Unfriendly states have been biding their time, waiting for the U.S. election result before making their next move. In other words, Trump may be only a few months away from his first foreign policy crisis. Between now and then, he needs not only to staff his Administration, but to formulate some kind of strategic framework, without which crisis management will quickly degenerate it into the kind of institutional free-for-all that followed 9/11, when (as we now know) the Vice President and Secretary of Defense successfully launched from the rubble of the twin towers an invasion of Iraq that was one of the great *non sequiturs* of U.S. foreign policy: a crypto-imperial project that (as some of us correctly predicted at the time) the American public lacked the appetite—or attention span—to pursue to a successful conclusion.<sup>12</sup>

Kissinger's recommendations to Trump may be summarized as follows:

1. Do not go all-out into a confrontation with China, whether on trade or the South China Sea. Rather, seek "comprehensive discussion" and aim to pursue that policy of dialogue and "co-evolution" recommended in *World Order*. Kissinger sees the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, quite regularly. When he says that Xi regards "confrontation as too dangerous" and thinks that "adversarial countries must become partners and cooperate on a win-win basis," he speaks with authority. The questions the Chinese want to ask the new President, according to Kissinger, are these: "If we were you, we might try to suppress your rise. Do you seek to suppress us? If you do not, what will the world look like when we are both strong, as we expect to be?" Trump needs to have answers to these questions. The alternative, as Kissinger has said repeatedly, is for the United States and China to talk past each other until they stumble into 1914 in the Pacific, not to mention in cyberspace.
2. Given a weakened, traumatized, post-imperial Russia, the recognition Putin craves is that of "a great power, as an equal, and not as a supplicant in an American-designed system." Kissinger's message to Trump is well calibrated to appeal to his instincts: "It is not possible to bring Russia into the international system by conversion. It requires deal-making, but also understanding." The central deal, Kissinger argues, would turn Ukraine into "a bridge between NATO and Russia rather than an outpost of either side," like Finland or Austria in the Cold War, "free to conduct its own economic and political relationships, including with both Europe and Russia, but not party to any military or security alliance." Such a non-aligned Ukraine would also need to be decentralized, increasing the autonomy of the contested eastern regions, where there has been intermittent conflict since separatist movements received Russian support in the wake of the Crimean annexation. The alternative to such a deal is that we may inadvertently over-use our financial and military superiority, turning a post-Putin Russia into a vast version of Yugoslavia, "wracked by conflict stretching from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok."
3. Treat Brexit as an opportunity to steer the continental Europeans away from bureaucratic introspection and back to strategic responsibility. ("They're talking about tactical matters while they're in the process of giving up the essence of . . . what they've represented throughout history.")
4. Make peace in Syria rather as we made peace in the former Yugoslavia nearly twenty years ago. Kissinger now recommends a "cantonization" of Syria similar to the federalization of Bosnia under the Washington and Dayton agreements, with an "off-ramp for Assad" lasting around a year, all under the "supervision" of the interested outside powers. Iran must be contained, much as the Soviet Union was in the Cold War, because it poses a similar threat, acting as both an imperial state and a revolutionary cause. But keep the Iran agreement because to abandon it now "would free Iran from more constraints than it would free the United States." And finally take advantage of the new-found, albeit tacit, anti-Iranian and anti-ISIS alignment of the Arab states with Israel to achieve a new kind of Arab-sponsored peace deal that would "improve the lives of Palestinians to the greatest extent possible, perhaps including quasi-sovereignty . . . that is, de facto autonomy without a legalistic superstructure."

Might there be a role model for the new President, should he choose to heed Kissinger's advice? Not surprisingly, he and Goldberg talked a good deal about Richard Nixon. Yet for all Nixon's qualities as a strategic thinker, the context of 2017 is unlikely to sufficiently resemble that of 1969 for the analogy to be helpful. By comparison with Vietnam, U.S. forces today are engaged in only a few conflicts, and rarely in frontline roles. The opening to China lies in the past, not the future; what is at issue today is a potential closing. Xi is not Mao. Likewise, Putin's Russia is not the Soviet Union, which only seven years before Nixon's inauguration had

deployed nuclear missiles to Cuba and continued to foment global revolution around the world throughout the 1970s. Europe is not divided as it was in 1969, with Soviet troops still in the streets of Prague. And the Middle East has been profoundly transformed, not least by the rise of Shi'i and Sunni fundamentalism, a far more potent force than Iranian or Arab nationalism ever was. With the passage of nearly half a century, perhaps Quneitra, on the Israeli-Syrian frontier, is the only fixed point in the region.

If not Nixon, then who should serve as Donald Trump's strategic role model? Although his name did not come up in Kissinger's interview with Goldberg, there is an obvious answer, clearly articulated in the former Secretary of State's classic work of synthesis, *Diplomacy*. That answer is Theodore Roosevelt, the antithesis of Woodrow Wilson, Kissinger's *bête noire*.

"Roosevelt," wrote Kissinger, "started from the premise that the United States was a power like any other, not a singular incarnation of virtue. If its interests collided with those of other countries, America had the obligation to draw on its strength to prevail."<sup>13</sup> Roosevelt did not build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border, but he did formulate the "Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted the right of the United States to exercise "however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of . . . wrong-doing or impotence . . . an international police power" in Latin America and the Caribbean. That principle became the basis for interventions in Haiti, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba—and for the acquisition of the territory on which the Panama Canal was constructed: one of the great infrastructure projects of the early 1900s.

Moreover, Roosevelt was dismissive of liberal designs such as multilateral disarmament and collective security, enthusiasms not only of Woodrow Wilson but of the three-times-defeated Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan:

... I regard the Wilson-Bryan attitude of trusting to fantastic peace treaties, to impossible promises, to all kinds of scraps of paper without any backing in efficient force, as abhorrent [wrote Roosevelt]. It is infinitely better for a nation and for the world to have the Frederick the Great and Bismarck tradition as regards foreign policy than to have the Bryan or Bryan-Wilson attitude as a permanent national attitude. . . . A milk-and-water righteousness unbacked by force is to the full as wicked as and even more mischievous than force divorced from righteousness.<sup>14</sup> ...

For Roosevelt, the principle of Cardinal Richelieu held: "In matters of state, he who has the power often has the right, and he who is weak can only with difficulty keep from being wrong in the opinion of the majority of the world." He sympathized with Japan when it attacked Russia in 1904. He acquiesced in the Japanese occupation of Korea four years later. For Roosevelt the only real law of geopolitics was the balance of power, and he relished the opportunity to play the powerbroker. Thus it was at Roosevelt's home at Oyster Bay that Russia and Japan began the peace negotiations that culminated the Peace of Portsmouth (1905), a treaty intended to limit Japan's gains from victory and re-establish equilibrium in the Far East. When war broke out in Europe in 1914, Roosevelt at first hesitated to take sides, but then concluded that a German victory would pose a more serious threat to the United States than a British one, because "within a year or two" a victorious Germany "would insist upon taking the dominant position in South and Central America."<sup>15</sup>

For Roosevelt, too, the cultural affinity between the United States and the United Kingdom was not unimportant. His only regret was that his fellow Americans—who opposed his call for increased armament to counter the German threat—could not be more wholeheartedly warlike, like their Old World cousins. "Our people are short-sighted, and they do not understand international matters," he complained to the English novelist and poet Rudyard Kipling during

the World War. "Your people have been short-sighted, but they are not as short-sighted as ours in these matters. . . . Thanks to the width of the ocean, our people believe that they have nothing to fear . . . and that they have no responsibility . . ." 16

In short, Theodore Roosevelt favored an American foreign policy that was firmly based on the national interest, the build-up of military force, and the balance of power. "If I must choose between a policy of blood and iron and one of milk and water," he told a friend, "I am for the policy of blood and iron. It is better not only for the nation but in the long run for the world."17 Wilson's League of Nations reminded him of Aesop's fable "of how the wolves and the sheep agreed to disarm, and how the sheep as a guarantee of good faith sent away the watchdogs, and were then forthwith eaten by the wolves." 18

Perhaps the only thing Roosevelt and Kissinger have in common with Barack Obama is that all three won the Nobel Peace Prize—which of course says a great deal more about the Nobel Committee than it does about peace.

Following Rooseveltian principles, then, what grand strategy might we expect President Trump to pursue? It seems clear that, like Theodore Roosevelt, Trump conceives of an international order no longer predicated on Wilsonian notions of collective security, and no longer expensively underwritten by the United States. Instead, like Roosevelt, Trump wants a world run by regional great powers with strong men in command, all of whom understand that any lasting international order must be based on the balance of power. In short, Trump already has more than he knows in common with Roosevelt. "To him," wrote Kissinger of the latter, "international life meant struggle, and Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest was a better guide to history than personal morality. In Roosevelt's view, the meek inherited the earth only if they were strong. To Roosevelt, America was not a cause but a great power—potentially the greatest." That does sound familiar.

"In a world regulated by power," Kissinger argued, "Roosevelt believed that the natural order of things was reflected in the concept of 'spheres of influence,' which assigned preponderant influence over large regions to specific powers." The reader will notice that this is precisely the kind of world that—according to Kissinger—we now find ourselves in, more than a century after Roosevelt's presidency.

A literal application of this analogy would of course imply a policy of orientation toward Japan against Russia in Asia, and towards the United Kingdom and France against Germany in Europe. However, that fails to take account of the great changes in the balance of power that have occurred in the intervening hundred years. To imagine a Rooseveltian strategy for 2017 we need to consider a different set of possible alignments.

As I reflected on Trump's options in the immediate wake of the election, I ran the following thought-experiment. What if Trump, against all expectations, decided to seek better relations with both Moscow and Beijing? This would combine both his own Russophile leanings with Kissinger's argument for a new policy of partnership with China. Such an arrangement would theoretically be achievable if Trump engaged only in *kabuki* theater with China over trade (which is what many influential Chinese expect him to do).19 It would also be consistent with the tough line on Islamic extremism that has been such a feature of Trump's campaign, for on this issue the three great powers—each with their worrisome and growing Muslim minorities—share an

interest. And it might be consistent with a re-ordering of the Middle East that re-imposes the *ancien régime* of kings and dictators in the Arab world and reinforces Israel, all at the expense of Iran, which has no historic reason to expect Russian fidelity, much less Chinese.

As a corollary, the three powers might agree on the demotion of Europe from great power status, taking advantage not only of Brexit but the increasingly fragmented and introspective character of EU politics. One possible way to do this would be for Trump to propose replacing "little" NAFTA with "big" NAFTA—the North *Atlantic* Free Trade Agreement, which would bring the United Kingdom directly into a post-EU Anglo-Atlantic sphere, while at the same time delivering on Trump's anti-Mexican (though not anti-Canadian) election pledge. At the same time, Trump could credibly apply pressure on other NATO members to increase their currently risible defense budgets. Finally, he and Putin could work together to help continental populists such as Marine Le Pen to win the elections of 2017. As Roosevelt put it in 1906: "France ought to be with us and England—in our zone and our combination. It is the sound arrangement economically and politically."

One striking feature of such a strategy is that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council would ultimately all be either populist or authoritarian controlled, assuming Le Pen can somehow be helped across the line against the French *pacte républicain*. Thus might the institutions of Wilsonian collective security end up serving the interests of the great powers as never before: the ultimate revenge of *Realpolitik*.

Self-evidently, the rest of the world would be the losers of such a great power condominium. Japan and Germany would be the biggest losers, just as they were the biggest beneficiaries of the postwar international architecture designed simultaneously to disarm, constrain, and enrich them—although Kissinger would doubtless urge the new Administration to adopt a Bismarckian approach to Japan, maintaining the U.S. commitment to its defense despite the new partnership with China, while encouraging Germany to remain European rather than nationalist in its outlook.

The new American-Chinese-Russian tripartite arrangement would be looser than the post-Napoleonic Holy Alliance of Austria, Prussia, and Russia but, like their predecessors two centuries years ago, liberals would denounce it as an Unholy Alliance of populists and authoritarians, indifferent to human rights and international law. Other autocratic rulers would rejoice; their opponents would find themselves undone not only by a lack of Western support but, more fatally, by exposure through cyber-espionage. In economic terms, too, the new Greater Northern Hemisphere Co-Prosperty Zone would thrive at the expense of the other BRICS—Brazil, India, and South Africa—as well as many smaller countries that have been major beneficiaries of the age of globalization. For the Baltic States, this would be a calamitous turn of events. The Republic Ireland, too, would find its position—a European island in an Anglo-American ocean—suddenly forlorn. It would be bad for Mexico, worse for Ukraine. But for the world as a whole, it would at least be an order of sorts. And no world war would be likely to break out under its aegis.

What might stand in the way of such a Rooseveltian solution to the problems identified by Kissinger as the ones facing a newly elected President Trump? One obvious objection might be that a combination of the United States, Russia, and China, as well as Great Britain and France, is without precedent, but that is plainly nonsense: It was precisely that alliance which won World War II. A second might be that such an alliance is unsustainable in the absence of an aggressive Germany and Japan. Yet the Cold War did not begin until 1948 and the Communists

did not come to power in China until a year later: Up until that point, many reasonable people had hopes of sustaining the wartime coalition. Indeed, that had been Franklin Roosevelt's intention when he envisaged the permanent members of the UNSC as "four policemen" (plus France). He underestimated Stalin's malignancy and Chiang Kai-shek's incompetence. A third objection might be that Russia and China, with their 2,600-mile common border, are bound sooner or later to quarrel again, as they did in the late 1960s. Perhaps: but whatever frictions might have been anticipated from China's "One Belt, One Road" strategy of economic expansion into Central Asia have yet to materialize.

Let us consider more plausible counterarguments. First, the Trump Administration is committed to increasing the defense budget, reversing the "sequester" cuts, and building hundreds of new ships to police the western Pacific. The momentum within the U.S. Navy is to escalate freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, and to challenge Chinese claims to the Paracels and Spratlys. Trump may opt to go along with that as part of his shadow boxing with Beijing. This would be a golden opportunity for the Japanese government to exploit Trump's opening anti-Chinese stance. From the point of view of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe—of all world leaders the quickest to secure a meeting with the President-elect—the first hundred days of the Trump presidency is the brief period during which he must get Trump not only to reaffirm the U.S.-Japanese alliance but perhaps also to back the constitutional amendment that Abe wants, ending Japan's renunciation of war. Earlier this year, Beijing drew a "red line" of its own when it threatened to retaliate if Japanese ships joined the United States in freedom of navigation operations.

Yet the flaw with this argument is that China would be unwise to risk a naval war with the United States, or even with Japan alone. The Chinese fleet is incapable of winning such a war. Indeed, the People's Liberation Army's one and only aircraft carrier is said to be vulnerable even to Vietnam's naval capabilities. Historically, in any case, China tends to use force in territorial disputes only when it sees a shift in the balance of forces in favor of its adversary. That is not the case today. On the contrary, with the death of the Obama Administration's Trans-Pacific Partnership and the improving prospects of the Chinese-backed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the economic tide now runs in China's direction. A naval showdown, even if it did not end in humiliation for China, might undo the good work that has been done recently to conciliate countries like the Philippines and South Korea. In any case, Beijing's strategy is not to build up to a South China Sea version of Jutland. The Chinese are focusing their investment not on capital ships but rather on Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) systems and cyber. In due course, the mighty carrier groups of the U.S. Navy will become vulnerable to Chinese missile strikes, especially if they attempt to operate in or near Chinese coastal waters.

The only possible reason Xi would risk a naval showdown would be if he became convinced that it was necessary to bolster the legitimacy of the one-party state in the face of sharply falling growth. The two major wars in the history of the People's Republic—the Korean and the Vietnamese—helped the then leaders of the Party to consolidate power at home, even when the military results were unsatisfying. Yet even allowing for the mounting challenges facing China's economy, it seems doubtful that the social or domestic political situation could deteriorate enough in 2017 to justify what would be a gamble worthy of Kaiser Wilhelm II's 1914 Germany—and Chinese leaders know enough Western history to remember how that ended.

A further set of objections relates to the situation in Europe. Trump likes Putin and seems indifferent at best to the EU and NATO. But what if Putin overreaches? An obvious wrong move would be some kind of Ukraine-like incursion into one of the Baltic States. Could Trump resist the outcry from the foreign policy establishments on both sides of the Atlantic, urging him to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty? Likewise, Trump likes Brexit and may well imagine

offering the United Kingdom a trade agreement. But a major problem with a "big" NAFTA scenario is that Britain's divorce from the EU is far from over and may never be entirely complete. Indeed, it has not even begun, in the sense that Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty has not yet been triggered, and even after that the terms of Brexit are likely to take at least two years to hammer out. It seems unlikely that Theresa May (who managed to become Prime Minister despite half-heartedly opposing Brexit) would risk breaching Britain's existing treaty obligations, much as Nigel Farage might like to.

Finally, let us consider the potential problems of a Rooseveltian strategy in the Middle East and North Africa. A harder line toward Iran makes some sense: Trump can and should threaten to retaliate militarily if Iran continues to violate the terms of the nuclear deal, for example by conducting ballistic missile tests and retaining more heavy water than the agreement allows. However, the coming defeat of ISIS in Iraq may unleash anew the centrifugal forces that have long threatened to tear the country apart. Iran will be the beneficiary, as usual. Moreover, the Trump Administration will soon face some complex choices with respect to the Kurds, who have done much of the heavy lifting against ISIS. Does he back the various Kurdish factions in the region, perhaps to the extent of recognizing an independent Kurdistan? If so, it is hard to see any future for relations between Washington and Ankara. This might obviate the kind of settlement of the Syrian conflict that Kissinger has envisaged, since Turkey would need to be party to it.

Nevertheless, these objections, too, may overlook a fundamental historical reality. The current amity between Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seems unlikely to become a permanent feature of the region's geopolitics; it resembles a mere marriage of convenience, the utility of which will vanish the moment Donald Trump sets foot on Moscow tarmac. The longest-standing rivalry in the Greater Middle East is, after all, between the Russians and the Turks. And another obvious loser of a U.S.-Russian *entente* would be Turkey.

That would be less than tragic. For too long, Erdoğan has feigned an interest in EU membership, while all the while eroding the secular legacy of Atatürk, weakening the country's military leadership, and steadily pushing Turkey in the direction of political Islam. Yet his pretensions to neo-Ottoman regional power have largely foundered on Arab suspicions, while his domestic power has come to depend on draconian repression of free speech and a massive purge of the public sector. Far from being a future member of the strongman club, Erdogan looks like another of the weaklings of the new order.

As I write, the key positions in Donald Trump's national security team are only beginning to be filled. What we know of the President-elect's own strategic thought is largely confined to stump speeches and interviews. Much that I have written here must therefore necessarily be speculative. I do believe, however, that a new American foreign policy—if not a new world order—is already taking shape. Not only is it foreshadowed in the recent, and not so recent, writing of Henry Kissinger; it is also implicit in the current constellation of geopolitics. And Mr. Trump need look no further than Theodore Roosevelt for a congenial role model.

Trump's August 15 speech may one day be read as the first draft of a Trump Doctrine. With its explicit farewell to "the era of nation-building" and its declaration of intent "to halt the spread of radical Islam," Trump explicitly drew an analogy between it and the 20th-century threats posed by fascism and communism. "The fight will not be limited to ISIS," he declared. "We will decimate al-Qaeda, and we will seek to starve funding for Iran-backed Hamas and Hizballah." And Trump made it clear with whom he intended to fight this war:

... We cannot always choose our friends, but we can never fail to recognize our enemies. . . . We will work side-by-side with our friends in the Middle East, including our greatest ally, Israel. We will partner with King Abdullah of Jordan, and President Sisi of Egypt, and all others who recognize this ideology of death that must be extinguished. We will also work closely with NATO on this new mission. I had previously said that NATO was obsolete because it failed to deal adequately with terrorism; since my comments they have changed their policy. . . . I also believe that we could find common ground with Russia in the fight against ISIS. They too have much at stake in the outcome in Syria, and have had their own battles with Islamic terrorism.20 ...

Today President-elect Trump is loathed by nearly all American liberals. Yet it was Trump who in August pledged that his Administration would "speak out against the oppression of women, gays and people of different faith" in the name of Islam. While the Obama Administration has shunned proponents of Islamic reform, Trump pledged to "be a friend to all moderate Muslim reformers in the Middle East, and [to] amplify their voices. This includes speaking out against the horrible practice of honor killings," as well as establishing as "one of my first acts as President . . . a Commission on Radical Islam which will include reformist voices in the Muslim community."21

Trump's declaration that "we should only admit into this country those who share our values and respect our people"—screening would-be immigrants for links not just to terrorism but also to political Islam as an ideology that promotes *sharia* law and all that goes with it—is entirely consistent with the measures the United States took and continues to take to exclude Communists from its territory. It is also precisely the way Theodore Roosevelt spoke when anarchists posed a threat to American values. After all, Roosevelt became President only because the anarchist Leon Czolgosz murdered President William McKinley in September 1901, and Roosevelt himself narrowly avoided assassination in 1912. He was unsparing in his condemnation not only of the terrorists but also of the ideology that inspired them:

... [T]he teachings of professed anarchists, and probably also by the reckless utterances of those who on the stump and in the public press, appeal to the dark and evil spirits of malice and greed, envy and sullen hatred. The wind is sowed by the men who preach such doctrines, and they cannot escape their share of responsibility for the whirlwind that is reaped. . . . The man who advocates anarchy directly or indirectly, in any shape or fashion, or the man who apologizes for anarchists and their deeds, makes himself morally accessory to murder before the fact.22 ...

He called for legislation to exclude and deport anarchists—legislation duly passed by Congress and signed into law in March 1903. Today, for anarchism read radical Islam.

In a speech he gave in St. Louis in May 1916, Roosevelt summed up his views on immigration in language that resonates today, a century later. "If the American has the right stuff in him, I care not a snap of my fingers whether he is Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant," he declared. "But unless the immigrant becomes in good faith an American and nothing else, then he is out of place in this country, and the sooner he leaves the better." The target of Roosevelt's rhetoric was the wartime habit of accentuating the identities and supposedly divided loyalties of "Irish-Americans" and "German-Americans." The context was different, but the issue is as relevant today, when Islamists assert that American Muslims owe a higher loyalty to their religion, if not to the caliphate.23 "Our duty," Roosevelt said,

... is to the United States. This duty should constrain us . . . to treat the other nations primarily according to the way such treatment serves American interests. . . . The attempt to keep . . . a half citizenship, with a divided loyalty, split between devotion to the land in which they were born

and which their children are to dwell, and the land from which their fathers came . . . is certain to breed a spirit of bitterness and prejudice and dislike between great bodies of our citizens.24 ...

If it is this spirit that animates the Trump Administration, then its new order will not be so new, nor altogether so bad as many fear.

## Wall Street Journal [On Palestinian Statehood](#)

*The heretical views of Trump's ambassador to Israel recommend him for the job.*

by Bret Stephens

Diplomats from some 70 countries will assemble in Paris on Sunday for another Mideast conference, intended to preserve the two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians. The timing is not accidental: With five days to go in the Obama administration, there are whispers that the conference may lead to another U.N. Security Council resolution, this time setting out parameters for an eventual Palestinian state.

The question is: For what?

Climate change aside, the cause of Palestinian statehood is the central obsession of contemporary global politics. It's also its least examined assumption.

Would a Palestinian state serve the cause of Mideast peace? This used to be conventional wisdom, on the theory that a Palestinian state would lead to peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, easing the military burdens on the former and encouraging the latter to address their internal discontents.

Today the proposition is ridiculous. No deal between Jerusalem and Ramallah is going to lift the sights of those now fighting in Syria, Iraq or Yemen. Nor will a deal reconcile Tehran and its terrorist proxies in Lebanon and Gaza to the existence of a Jewish state. As for the rest of the neighborhood, Israel has diplomatic relations with Turkey, Jordan and Egypt, and has reached pragmatic accommodations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

What about the interests of Palestinians? Aren't they entitled to a state?

Maybe. But are they more entitled to one than the Assamese, Basques, Baloch, Corsicans, Druze, Flemish, Kashmiris, Kurds, Moros, Native Hawaiians, Northern Cypriots, Rohingya, Tibetans, Uyghurs or West Papuans—all of whom have distinct national identities, legitimate historical grievances and plausible claims to statehood?

If so, what gives Palestinians the preferential claim? Have they waited longer than the Kurds? No: Kurdish national claims stretch for centuries, not decades. Have they experienced greater violations to their culture than Tibetans? No: Beijing has conducted a systematic policy of repression for 67 years, whereas Palestinians are nothing if not vocal in mosques, universities and the media. Have they been persecuted more harshly than the Rohingya? Not even close.

Set the comparisons aside. Would a Palestinian state be good for Palestinian people?

That's a more subjective judgment. But a telling figure came in a June 2015 poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion, which found that a majority of Arab residents in East Jerusalem would rather live as citizens with equal rights in Israel than in a Palestinian state. No doubt part of this owes to a desire to be connected to Israel's thriving economy.

But it's also a function of politics. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas just entered the 13th year of his four-year term. Fatah rules the West Bank through corruption; Hamas rules Gaza through fear. Humanitarian aid is routinely diverted for terrorist purposes: One terror tunnel stretching from Gaza to Israel consumed an estimated 800 tons of concrete and cost \$10 million to build. Every three years or so, Hamas starts firing missiles at Israel, and hundreds of Palestinian civilians get killed in the crossfire. How does any of this augur well for what a future Palestinian state might bring?

But isn't a Palestinian state a necessity for Israel? Can it maintain its Jewish and democratic character without separating itself from the millions of Palestinians living west of the Jordan River?

In theory, Israel would be well-served living alongside a sovereign Palestinian state that lived in peace with its neighbors, improved the welfare and respected the rights of its people, rejected extremism and maintained a monopoly on the use of force. In theory, Palestine could be the next Costa Rica: small but beautiful.

But Israelis don't live in theory. They live in a world where mistakes are mortal. In 2000 and 2007 Israeli prime ministers made good-faith offers of Palestinian statehood. They were met on both occasions with rejection, then violence. In 2005 Israel vacated the Gaza Strip. It became an enclave of terror. On Sunday, four young Israelis were run over in yet another terror attack. The ideal of a Jewish and faultlessly democratic state is a noble one. Not at the risk of the existence of the state itself.

The Paris conference takes place on the eve of a new administration that's indifferent to prevailing orthodoxies regarding the Palestinians. David Friedman, Donald Trump's nominee to be ambassador to Israel, is unequivocal in his support for the Jewish state, determined to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, unscandalized by settlements and unmoved by suggestions that Israel's safety requires the empowerment of her enemies. These heresies alone recommend him for the job.

Meanwhile, anyone genuinely concerned with the future of the Palestinians might urge them to elect better leaders, improve their institutions, and stop giving out sweets to celebrate the murder of their neighbors.