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74



**DEMOCRATS IN SEARCH OF A POST-TRUMP FOREIGN POLICY:
Toward a UN-Centric World Peace - 'Rebuilding America'
National Security-Domestic Renewal Paradigm?**

ABOUT IGD

The IGD is an independent foreign policy think tank dedicated to the analysis of and dialogue on the evolving international political and economic environment, and the role of Africa and South Africa. It advances a balanced, relevant and policy-oriented analysis, debate and documentation of South Africa's role in international relations and diplomacy.

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Kornegay served two stints in the US Congress as a professional staffer, among other things, developing financial sanctions legislation on South Africa. He established the Research and Evaluation Unit for the African Development Foundation, an independent US agency. In South Africa, he served as the country director of the African-American Institute (AAI) and was involved in electoral support activities. Since then, among other things, he has focused on South-South co-operation issues on which he has written and published extensively.

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Acronyms

AfCFTA – African Continental Free Trade Area

AIIB – Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

AIPAC – American-Israel Political Action Committee

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AU – African Union

BRI – Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

CBC – Congressional Black Caucus

CELAC – Community of Latin American and Caribbean

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CPTPP – Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

DLC – Democratic Leadership Council

DNC – Democratic National Committee

EAEU – Eurasian Economic Union

ECOSOC – Economic and Social Council

EU – European Union

FDR – Franklin D. Roosevelt

FTA – Free Trade Area

G20 – Group of Twenty

G7 – Group of Seven

GOP – Grand Old Party

ICC – International Criminal Court

ICJ – International Court of Justice

IDPAD – International Decade of Persons of African Descent

IONS – Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

IORA – Indian Ocean Rim Association

JCPOA – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

MBS – Mohammed bin Salman

NAM – Non-Aligned Movement

NATO – The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

P5 – Permanent Five

R2P – Responsibility to Protect

RCEP – Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

RIC – Russia, India, China

SAARC – South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SADR - Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic

SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization

TPP – Trans-Pacific Partnership

TTIP – Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

UAE – United Arab Emirates

UMA – Arab Maghreb Union

UN – United Nations

UNASUR – The Union of South American Nations

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

US – United States

USA – United States of America

USMCA – United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement

ZPCSA – Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic

Acknowledgements and Memoriam

I am indebted to my South African colleagues at the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) at the University of South Africa in supporting me in putting together and publishing this occasional paper. Challenging as it was, it would have been an uphill struggle without colleagues in our Geopolitical Dynamics and Governance Programme, especially the excellent quality control editing and helpful comments of its co-leader, Arina Muresan who is pursuing her doctoral studies at the University of Johannesburg. Given my impatient 'old school' bibliographical background, Ms. Muresan and IGD's Department of Science and Technology-National Research Foundation (DST-NRF) Intern, Simphiwe Mongwe, were instrumental in making sure this publication would be up to acceptable academic standards in complementing its somewhat polemical thrust. All in all, IGD colleagues were in a sense 'returning favour' so to speak for my own anti-apartheid involvement in their struggle which always paralleled the similar historical and contemporary predicament of a United States increasingly confronting its own minority-rule challenges with foreign policy resonance.

In a sense, the US and South Africa are north-south Atlantic mirror images of one another. As such, thanks also goes to our IGD executive-director, Dr. Philani Mthembu, and my fellow anti-apartheid Capitol Hill veteran-in-arms heading the Centre for International Policy in Washington, Salih Booker. He who was a staffer on the House Subcommittee on Africa during the chairmanship of the late Congressman Howard Wolpe from my home state of Michigan.

Steve McDonald

This is where acknowledgements become especially personally poignant. Steve McDonald, who was to have contributed an 'Afterward' to this publication, passed away on 4th November 2018. He will be deeply missed by me as one of my closest of colleagues and dearest of family friends. Hailing from the Missouri heartland of America, Steve leaves behind a lengthy, varied and distinguished African affairs legacy. Among numerous roles, he succeeded Howard Wolpe in heading the Africa Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre of Scholars. Steve was also instrumental in my visiting fellowship there in 2012 and subsequently, my becoming a Wilson Centre Global Fellow. This hardly scratches the surface of Steve's role in my life. We were in constant email contact with one another, comparing notes on just about everything up to the very end. Without his unfailing brotherly support, I might not have achieved much of what I have managed to accomplish. And this is not to mention his significant contributions in advancing the cause of a post-apartheid democratic South Africa and a progressive US-Africa policy overall. Words do not do justice to his many accomplishments and the legacy he leaves behind. Thus, in Steve's memory, this occasional paper is dedicated as a modest tribute.

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Preface

In this timely occasional paper authored by Mr. Francis Kornegay, he challenges members of the Democratic Party, and indeed the broader foreign policy and national security establishment in the United States (US) to begin preparations for America's role in the world beyond the Trump Presidency. This will be a world vastly different, where a 'business as usual' approach will simply not be sufficient to favourably position the United States in a world vastly altered by the current administration. The United States will thus not have the luxury of simply pressing a reset button with the world to return to earlier days. Indeed even longstanding US allies have begun to envision a world where they are able to exercise a greater level of strategic autonomy with the United States following the strong economic nationalism and unilateralism exercised by the Trump administration. The occasional paper thus challenges scholars and practitioners alike to envision, and indeed begin preparations for that world in order to navigate a constantly changing domestic and geopolitical terrain.

Central to the theme of the occasional paper is the need for a more explicit linking of domestic and foreign policy considerations in the budgetary process and national discourse, where foreign policy adventures and misadventures abroad have at times deprived America's own citizens of much needed domestic resources for a national renewal process from within instead of nation building abroad. While US military spending continues to be prioritised by the current administration, a corresponding question should be to what extent this delays much needed domestic spending on a wide range of priority areas essential for internal renewal in areas such as education, infrastructure, and healthcare.

The inability to reprioritize military spending is partly due to an inability to envision and invest in the creation of a world that is not necessarily dependent on a global hegemon, yet one which places greater emphasis on international cooperation and reform of global governance institutions such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). These reforms are crucial for tackling 21st century challenges such as human and environmental security, and would usher in a post-hegemonic world centred on a strong and reformed UN system and a greater role for multilateralism and regional economic and political communities in global governance. This would in turn place less pressure on US military spending and allow the US to channel those resources towards a domestic process of renewal that repositions the US in a changing global order.

However, besides making changes at a foreign policy level, domestic reforms are also advocated in this occasional paper, with overall electoral reform being one of the key suggestions being advocated. Indeed looking from a South African perspective, a country that struggled for many years to move away from minority rule towards a government elected by the majority; it remains difficult for ordinary South Africans to understand how candidates can win an election despite receiving less votes. This is a question political actors in the United States will have to address in assessing to what extent the Electoral College remains relevant in contemporary society.

The issues raised and the recommendations presented in the occasional paper require a complete shift in the paradigm of thinking in foreign policy and national security circles, a challenge that few have been willing or able to take up. This occasional paper will thus act as a catalyst in having further dialogue about the role of the United

States in a changing geopolitical landscape. Whether it is able to adapt in order to position itself well within a changing international landscape will depend on how scholars and practitioners resolve some of the key questions raised by Mr. Kornegay in this occasional paper.

It should be noted that this occasional paper forms part of the broader work being led by Mr. Kornegay under the Geopolitical Dynamics and Governance Programme at the Institute for Global Dialogue, associated with the University of South Africa. An important element in the work is to avoid being bogged down by the everyday events in the geopolitical landscape, which can lead to research that is constantly reactive. Such work is especially important given the growing need for strategic and longer term thinking when it comes to the formulation and practice of foreign policy in an ever-changing geopolitical terrain. His work thus reminds us to not miss the forest while focusing on the trees, and to consider the bigger geopolitical picture and long-term trends when considering the most important geopolitical developments and strategies.

Dr Philani Mthembu (Dr. rer. pol.)

Executive Director

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Co-founder: Berlin Forum on Global Politics

Foreword

Francis Kornegay calls on the Democrats and democratically-minded people in the United States to demilitarize US foreign policy and invest in a domestic democratic renewal. He understands the high costs of maintaining an unsuccessful military-industrial complex in support of poor national security strategies resulting in unsustainable pentagon budgets and soaring interest on the U.S. debt. He posits that Donald Trump's disruption of Washington's international relations norms offers a rare opportunity to set a new course just, perhaps, in the nick of time. He points the way toward a new form of connective global leadership and the use of diplomacy for international cooperation to address the real global challenges of our times (e.g. climate change, migration, violent conflict, refugees, the spiralling arms trade, nuclear proliferation, global poverty and inequality, corruption and illicit financial flows – to name a few).

I happen to think he's right – it's paradigm time!

I met Francis during the heady days of the early 1980's in Washington, D.C. as we joined a growing cadre of young black folks who had set out to upend US foreign policy toward apartheid South Africa. The previous decade had witnessed a dramatic increase in African American political power, with black elected officials changing the face of the Democratic Party from city councils and mayor's offices to the US Congress. The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) was making waves on domestic policy and had helped launch a black foreign policy lobby named TransAfrica where I landed my first job out of college. That's how I came to know Francis who was blazing a trail at the African Bibliographic Centre after consulting for Congressman Charles Diggs, the legendary first Chair of the CBC and the first black Chair of the US House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa.

Reading Francis' latest thesis, on creating a new US National Security – Domestic Reform Paradigm, I am reminded of some of the critical lessons learned during the successful overthrow of Ronald Reagan's racist embrace of South Africa (under a pernicious policy known as *constructive engagement*).

When Ronald Reagan became president in 1981 there was great despair among progressive-minded people and many sceptics said that the anti-apartheid movement would never be able to achieve the goal of imposing US economic sanctions against the racist regime in South Africa during Reagan's tenure. Five years later, the US Congress passed comprehensive sanctions under the anti-apartheid act of 1986 – over the veto of President Reagan in his second term in office. This unprecedented victory was achieved by a movement that built power at the local and national level led by students, workers, faith communities, civil rights organizations, and others who forced the imposition of sanctions through divestment strategies at Universities and Churches, and through the retirement funds of State employees and trade unions, among other institutions. But the movement also needed scholars and analysts who could debunk the false rationales that Washington used to defend its alliance with the apartheid regime such as the anti-communism de jour or access to strategic minerals. We needed to change the paradigm that passed as conventional wisdom and that policymakers used to justify an unjustifiable policy.

The experience of the anti-apartheid movement taught us that to achieve a real paradigm shift in long-standing US foreign policy you need both intellectual power in the government suites and protest power in the streets. And even then, you still need the political moment to provide the opportunity to push change through.

In this essay, Francis Kornegay demonstrates once again that he has the muscle to do the heavy lifting work of analysis where scholarship, Democratic party politics and militant activism all intersect (or collide).

As, Americans we need to change how we think about national security and US foreign policy. We need to change the disastrous paradigm that has long served as the foundation of the military-industrial complex. This old paradigm relies on global military dominance, the willingness to use military force (to achieve what would otherwise be diplomatic objectives) and the threat of nuclear annihilation.

This approach makes the entire world less secure.

Today, US military spending is roughly \$720 billion including the Pentagon's budget, a separate "war budget", and work on nuclear weapons through the Department of Energy. That's greater than the next eight countries in the world combined, three times what China spends, and more than eight times what Russia spends.

How much military spending is enough, and why do American policymakers leave it to the arms industry to provide the answer? Over \$100 billion of the total above goes to just five defence contractors in a big corporate welfare arrangement facilitated by the employment of former generals and admirals along with another 1,000 lobbyists and think tank employees dedicated to this lucrative model. The United States is currently involved in 7 different seemingly endless wars which, post-September 11, 2001, have cost a total of \$5.9 trillion, over 240,000 civilian deaths and 21 million displaced people. The U.S. government maintains 800 military bases around the world in over 80 countries, and about 4,000 nuclear weapons in the active stockpile.

The policies inspired by this paradigm not only fail to achieve peace, justice and security around the world, they are robbing us of desperately needed resources to address the economic and social priorities of our nation today, from education (paying teachers a living wage) to paying everyone a living wage, to investing in infrastructure, creating new green jobs, and protecting the environment. Moreover, the global challenges that humankind faces from climate change to extreme poverty to violent extremism will not be addressed by this disastrous old approach to international security. We need to understand that we do not achieve "peace through strength" as Reagan claimed, but rather we can gain "strength through peace!" – and not only as a nation, but as an international community.

What Francis provides in this article is a clear articulation of the current moment where the shifting tectonic plates of global politics provide the opportunity (and indeed the demand) for a new paradigm. He also demonstrates how the domestic economic realities will not survive any kind of return to business as usual post-Trump.

And he gives us a roadmap for how we can get there.

2017 marked the 50th anniversary of Dr Martin Luther King's famous anti-war speech at the Riverside Church in New York City entitled "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence." In this powerful address, King told us that, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defence than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." King warned of a time of endless war, when the US would be trapped in one overseas entanglement after another while the gap at home between the rich and poor grew ever larger.

King exhorted that, "We as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values, ... we must rapidly begin the shift from a 'thing-oriented' society to a 'person-oriented' society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism," will not be defeated.

Today the American President seeks to ban Muslims from coming to the US, defends Nazis, and other white supremacists, while showing his disdain for African Americans in every manner possible, and he deports young Latino Americans because they have dreams for the country that is their home.

Donald Trump is animated by vanity, and addicted to opulence and materialism. He boasts of selling more weapons to the rest of the world than ever before – especially in the greater Middle East, a region awash in these instruments of death. Trump has surrounded himself with Generals who kowtow to his every narcissistic whim. The 'giant triplets' that Martin warned against have never been more manifest in one administration. But we are right to think and plan beyond this present (and ephemeral) obscenity.

While President Trump may simply be the most vulgar manifestation of systemic American problems that we are all too familiar with, we need to do more than just critique his policies and behaviour. We must present a progressive alternative and build the power necessary to influence the public, members of Congress, and other political leaders to embrace such ideas and begin to implement them, and provoke media institutions to include them in the daily discourse. That would be the first step. Francis is pointing us toward that path. He is also mindful of the fact that demographic change in US means that by 2045 whites will comprise less than 50% of Americans (because 26% will be Hispanic, 13.6 % African American, and nearly 10% Asian and persons of 2 or more races). He knows that the first minority white generation was born in 2007 and that for youth under 18—the post-millennial population—people of colour will outnumber whites in 2020. For those age 18-29—members of the younger labour force and voting age populations—the tipping point will occur in 2027.

Overall, this demographic trend is due less to immigration than natural increase. And so, this essay, without delving into the details of this impending demographic change, has foretold one important possible future.

I happen to want that future! Don't you?

Salih Booker

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Introduction

While assaulting America's democratic institutions, by the end of 2018, President Donald J. Trump accomplished what no post-war US President had ever achieved: totally ripping to shreds the foreign policy establishment's national security strategy playbook – except, he was taking America and the world backward into the yesteryears of the 19th century in the build-up to World War I; which means there is a tough road ahead in putting together a new foreign policy-national security playbook for the remainder of the 21st century in an ecologically challenged, overpopulated and hyper-connected world of humanity: 7 going on 9 billion! On top of that, this playbook has to address America's urgent domestic challenges as well. There can no longer be a separation of foreign and domestic policy. The new playbook must be predicated on a *world peace security strategy linked to domestic renewal* – replacing fixation on geopolitical great power politics with the survivalist imperative of international cooperation.

Meanwhile, as 2018 came to a close, Trump's anti-Iran and anti-Palestinian pro-Likud 'Arab NATO'¹ Mideast strategy had totally imploded in the wake of the Jamal Khashoggi murder in Istanbul prompting rare bipartisan congressional rebuke of a policy centred on Saudi Arabia. This was followed up by Trump's abrupt decision of a total troop withdrawal from Syria prompting resignations of bipartisanly respected Defence Secretary Jim Mattis and special envoy Brett McGurk (Faris 2018).²

Based on these latest developments, this 'think piece' on the Democratic Party's post-Trump approach to statecraft argues for holistic integrated linkage in domestic and foreign policy: between urgent demilitarizing of national security strategy toward multilateral strengthening of a reformed UN-centred stabilizing security architecture on the one hand, implementation of an equally urgent domestic renewal reform agenda on the other. This may need to be accompanied by constitutional reforms in democratizing an historically imbalanced electoral system. Messaging implications require a dominant thematic of rebuilding and renewal: reformist American re-strengthening at home in restoring global leadership credibility abroad. The Democratic Party lacks a dominant messaging theme and propaganda strategy; this reflects total exhaustion of outdated Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) Clintonism. Out of power in all branches of governmental checks and balances until January 2019, Democrats still face an uphill struggle in redressing imbalances of power in an increasingly minority-ruled political system favouring right-wing reactionary ascendancy. This carries with it major US foreign as well as domestic policy challenges associated with America's accelerated relative decline in the global political economy.

The Backdrop

The outcome of the 2016 presidential election and its consequences over the past two years emphasizes how critical a domestic political level playing field is to an optimal US foreign policy and global leadership posture. The 2016 election of a minority president introducing a destabilizing neo-patrimonial 'strongman' administration ushered what might be termed an equally neo-patrimonial transactional approach to statecraft. In effect, an old

fashion throwback focus on the geopolitical power politics of personalities: potentate-to-potentate diplomacy among dictators and autocrats.

This uniquely Trumpian neo-patrimonialism, with its unpredictability as in suddenly pulling the US out of arms control treaties negotiated between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev on the pretext of countering China (testament to national security adviser John Bolton), calls into question the sustainability of the post-war, post-cold war and global 'war on terror' phases of US foreign policy and national security strategy; and this is at a time of major geopolitical, geo-economic shifts and environmental instability in a fast emerging post-western multipolar landscape for which the US is ill adapted. Given how these trends occur in tandem with major demographic shifts underway in the US – and globally – accompanied by deteriorating internal conditions in social and capital infrastructures vital to global competitiveness, it is argued that only a post-hegemonic American global leadership posture will, over the long-term, secure national security while strengthening America internally and, in the process, contribute to sustainable global security within a reformed UN system.

As such, the Democratic Party dare not contemplate a post-Trump return to foreign policy 'business as usual.' What follows is an analysis of the changing geopolitical-strategic background associated with the Trump administration's anti-Obama confrontational transactional initiatives. These interact with the Democrats challenging domestic political context accompanied by illustrative policy-political and strategic options that might advance an adaptive renewal in US internal re-strengthening and global leadership posture.

Ending Democrats 'business as usual'

By the time Donald Trump departs the White House, the rest of the world will have found ingenious ways of working around Samuel Huntington's (1999) 'Lonely Superpower' or well on the way to putting such strategies in place (Huntington 1999).³ A back-handed favour from The Donald! In any case, US global power will be diminishing as 'strategic autonomy' becomes the choice of necessity for allies and adversaries alike. Washington will have to renegotiate its way back into bilateral and multilateral relationships once taken for granted. The geopolitical and domestic policy-political dynamics of this transition and their post-hegemonic implications and imperatives is what this essay attempts to convey; that is, amid proliferating critiques emerging regarding where Democrats and the left stand – or should stand – on US foreign policy-national security strategy, including from aspirational 2020 presidential primary contenders (Warren 2019). For the most part, these critiques appear devoid of geopolitical trends analysis of where other countries and regions of the world are trending amid populist panic gripping the West.

One thing crystal clear as Donald Trump's 'Art of the Non-Deal' bombastic con-jobs passing for a 'winning' foreign policy reflects, is that in essence, the US is without any semblance of foreign policy coherence under Republicans – much less a bipartisan consensus on one (which began evaporating as far back as the Vietnam war). US foreign policy was already undergoing uncertain transition well before Trump arrived at 2400 Pennsylvania; this was with President Barack Obama struggling to reshape grand strategy into a more off-shore balancing geo-economic posture. Unfortunately, Obama never got around to articulating a coherent vision

though bits and pieces were discernible. Then, The Donald arrived! Welcome to America's neo-patrimonial 'strongman' presidency and transactional foreign relations!

I.

'Deep Sixing' the Playbook

So now, the question arises: can America, post-Trump, ever go back to what passed for foreign policy-national security normality? The short answer is 'No'. Before Trump arrived in the White House, the global strategic landscape was already well underway in shifting toward reconfigured multipolar power relationships. This global transition in power balancing is speeding up under Trump as he destructively flails about confronting US friend and foe alike in his own personal – not national – interest. In this process, Trump's rogue behaviour exposes major weaknesses within the US-led hegemonic approach to world order; also exposed are potential vulnerabilities in the global sustainability of American power and domestic stability. The two are interlinked. The time for approaching foreign policy separated from and out of context with the domestic policy agenda should come to an end.

Yet, foreign policy-national security thinking in the US seems imaginatively uninspired despite understandable Trump-induced laments. There seems a dearth of ideas, reflecting a broader crisis in public policy imagination generally, domestic and foreign alike. It is a crisis of major magnitude in as much as, now-a-days, foreign and domestic policy have to be or should be conceived as an integrated package in guiding the budgeting and investing of taxpayers resources underwriting America's national agenda – whatever that agenda is. And this is where the Democratic Party, including its left-wing under Democratic Socialist of America – among other constituencies – comes up short (Beauchamp 2017; and Jackson 2018). For one thing, the domestic political environment, in its hyper-polarization, reflects a reasserting of never healed civil war fault lines with inherently undemocratic race-based minority-rule overtones threatening long-term authoritarianism with a belligerently isolationist foreign policy to match.

While Trump is essentially waging a cultural civil war along racial and urban-rural fault lines, a whole slew of diverse and promising centre-left Democratic candidates emerged to contest the midterm elections espousing social-democratic reforms. However, among positions including a 'Green New Deal,' single-payer *Medicare/Medicaid For All*, progressive education, affordable housing, prison and immigration reforms and urgently needed spending on America's crumbling infrastructure, nowhere is there an integrated articulation of domestic renewal and matching foreign policy. Otherwise, the Democrats' agenda would suggest urgently necessary budgetary shifting of fiscal resources to address national renewal challenges.

Meanwhile, Republicans, whose unchanging and thoroughly bankrupt propaganda mantra against 'tax and spend' Democrats, now reinforced by fear mongering about electing left-wing extremists – without any return fire from 'high-minded' Democrats – are well on their way to exploding the federal deficit with Trump's mega-

Tax Cut for the Rich with vast over-spending on defence: standard Grand Old Party (GOP) military-industrial Keynesianism. Democrats have long been rhetorically and ideologically intimidated by the GOP as being 'soft on national defence'; while Republicans tout themselves as patriotic sentinels of 'peace through strength.' And since their hardlinism demands an enemy, *China-a-la-Pence* will do just fine! Thus, GOP posturing amounts to a morally and strategically bankrupt unilateralist penchant for 'might makes right' regardless of consequences for America's standing. Thus far, Republicans continue getting away with their flim-flam without serious push-backs in mainstream media or from Democrats.

Trump's Inadvertent Multipolarity

Master of the flim-flam as Trump undoubtedly is, he has succeeded in branding everything that has gone before him as the 'worst deals ever' to which he alone, personally, can achieve the 'greatest' of zero-sum 'victories'. Thus, what was an impressive multilateral achievement of Obama's Iran Nuclear Deal – aka the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – is denigrated as the worst ever while we witnessed the con-job of the Trump-Kim Jong-Un made-for-reality TV glorified Photo-Op resulting in no deal at all while mainstream media and Democrats avoid making critical comparisons between the Iran deal and the shadow and non-substance of Trump's North Korea 'denuclearization' non-deal. The strategic winners out of the 2018 North Korea-USA Summit, held in Singapore, were China and Russia, North Korea, and especially South Korea with benefits for Japan as well (NBC News 2018).

South Korean president Moon Jae-in has a major economic vested interest in a 'peace before denuclearization' agenda in the national interest of heading off projected "long-term economic headwinds: increasing export competition from globalised emerging markets, a fatigued industrial model, and an aging and stagnant population", demographic trends that also confront China and Japan (Richey 2018). As such, Seoul must navigate adapting to changing balances of forces in a Eurasian landscape being reshaped by the China-led Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Couple this with Trump's spiteful withdrawal of America from Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and 'Peace Through Strength' is beating a hasty retreat into 'Fortress America'.

This all benefits the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free trade agreement between Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)⁴, and is joined by China and Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand (South China Morning Post 2017). Thus, the implications of Trump's 'America First' behaviour and retreat from international activities become clear. This should raise major questions as to how a post-Trump strategic readjustment in the Asia-Pacific will happen and on what and who's terms. Under Japan and Canada's leadership, TPP has now become the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership* to which a future US administration may re-join, but on terms set by others (Financial Times 2018).

The genius of the TPP together with its Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) counterpart coupled with the opening to Havana, which would eventually lead to ending the Cuba embargo, set up Obama's geo-economics promise of a re-centring of America's position within the overall west-to-east gravitating calculus in the global economy to a US advantage (McCoy 2015 cited in Wilson Quarterly 2016). But Obama, in all his

'audacity of hope' modesty, never spelled any of this out in selling TPP. It is ironic how Trump's 'Nafta 2' US-Mexico-Canada is widely seen as reflecting the broader TPP, which Obama had already included provisions for Nafta updating (Rampell 2018a).

So with Trump, America faces an accelerated strategic decline (the relative decline is inevitable as in any case it is rooted in post-war recoveries and reconstruction of Europe and Japan), which is reinforced by aggressively isolationist unilateralism through punitive tariffs and sanctions. This cocktail of coercion, minus any human rights considerations, sets in train potential major geopolitical realignments. These will advance trans-Eurasian integration of the European Union (EU) in some sort of pragmatic accommodation with Sino-Russian SCO-Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). However, If a German-South African strategy emerged (both going onto the UN Security Council as non-permanent members in 2019) that succeeds in revising the European Union (EU)-Africa Partnership over the next two years into a more substantively AU-EU Eur-African arrangement, such a scenario might balance an Eurasian integration calculus.

Among other things, this could mandate resolving the Western Sahara stalemate. It would help stabilize the Mediterranean, and America's isolation in geostrategic transatlantic and trans-Pacific relationships with Europe and Asia as well as with Africa would become more clearly resolved in a reconfiguring global multipolar landscape; that is, unless Washington goes along to get along. Brussels, after all, has to be considered well on its way to navigating greater strategic leeway vis-a-vis Washington, as reflected in recent speeches and remarks by German Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas. This means Europe may prioritize its own 'pivot' to the Asian gravitational pull in the global economy, which is already consolidated in the EU-Japan trade deal. Thus, there will be no going back for the US, post-Trump.

US Dollar requiem? BRICS, EU-Iran, China-Japan

Amidst various projections, a larger and more accelerated threat to the position of the US Dollar's hegemony is Trump's 'America First' banner of aggressive tactics, which intersects with broader geo-strategic alterations in geopolitical-geo-economic dynamics and other countries' reactions to the constraints that the US Dollar places on their political and policy freedom of action in global financial transactions. For example, it was the US Dollar reserve primacy that was the main motivation behind the launching of the Brazil, Russia, India, China (BRICS) partnership at Yekaterinburg in 2009 (South Africa joining in 2011), along with the BRICS local currency agenda for lessening dollar dependency. The EU's Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for countering Trump's threatened secondary sanctions that intended to undermine the JCPOA, reinforces a trend towards a dollar bypassing agenda begun by BRICS (Escobar 2018; and Blanc 2019). Successful or not, the overall intent on different fronts: increasing urgency to loosen the grip of a US global hegemony gone rogue and suddenly a clear and present danger to international stability and security.

In addition, following Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's October state visit to Beijing, China and Japan have restored relations to a level that involve major strategic agreements with just such implications. Among the resumption of a bilateral local currency swap involving a three-year, \$30 billion pact between their central banks while boosting cooperation in the securities markets. A Yuan clearing bank to be set up in Japan will facilitate

companies and financial entities conducting cross-border transactions and investment free from interventionist dollar constraints. Thus, on October 26, 2018, the “No. 2 and No. 3 economies began setting up a bilateral infrastructure to at least begin phasing out the US currency.” And to cap all this off, there is prospect for an eventual Plus 3 *China-Japan-South Korea trade zone*. (Pesek 2018) Who needs Trumpian Pax-Americana in East Asia?!

This US predicament strikes at the very heart of what Peter Beinart, writing in *The Atlantic*, compellingly outlines as America’s “crisis of foreign-policy ‘solvency’” which applies to the nation’s domestic agenda as well (Beinart 2018). The loss of US dollar primacy as global reserve currency amid what will be trending as an era of local currency multipolarity and bypassing US-dominated financial arrangements, has to be imagined as intersecting within the context of America’s domestic challenges as they relate to foreign policy and national security strategic priorities.

There is a national deficit and threat in perceptions of Republican tax cuts for the wealthy, austerity for everyone else, and military mega-overspending threatening domestic renewal investment. This should be forcing Democrats into urgent public policy ‘grand strategy’ and brainstorming toward a total revamp of pre-Trump assumptions about America’s future at home and abroad within a ‘Green New Deal’ agenda. This should be with the expressed aim of not returning to the politics of ‘business as usual’ post-Trump. ‘Business as usual’, will no longer cut it.

‘Peace through strength’ amid eroding social and physical capital, interacting with likely decline in US dollar hegemony and further fuelled by Trumpian confrontational economic ‘diplomacy’ carries implications for financing America’s debt. This should force a radical rethinking of intersecting domestic socio-economic and foreign policy-national security equations. Republican policy, going back to the Rooseveltian New Deal, has been nothing but a class project of starving resources for social capital and physical infrastructure investment by over-investment in the military-industrial-congressional complex; which ignored Eisenhower’s warning on the one hand. On the other hand, the deficit-generating tax cuts for the wealthy are all at the expense of domestic socio-economic and infrastructure renewal.

Transactional Geopolitics of Folly

Such a formula underpins America’s global ‘full-spectrum’ strategic dominance and ‘world policeman’ foreign policy and national security strategy buttressed by costly interventionist presumptions; this is due to lessons not learned in Vietnam. Hence, leading to the cold war instigation of the ‘Soviet Vietnam’ in Afghanistan; which begat the post-cold war jihadism leading into the 9/11 bequeathing of the ‘global war on terror’ within the vortex of the truly global civil war within Islam, and pretext for wrong-headed Israeli-influenced neoconservative intervention in Iraq as well as Afghanistan. This unwittingly – that is, for Bush and his ‘New American Century’ gang – altered the regional sectarian power balance in Iran’s favour, thereby igniting the geopolitics of Sunni-Shia currently destabilizing the Levant. Trump compounds this folly in lock-step with Israel while Wahhabi extremists in Saudi Arabia al Riyadh compete with Turkey over regional Sunni leadership.

President Obama tried redressing the geopolitical sectarianism of the George W. Bush administration through JCPOA by laying ground work for a more sustainable off-shore balancing act between the US and Middle East posture. The disastrous UK-France-US military Libyan intervention that pre-empted the aborted African Union (AU) diplomatic initiative with Tripoli had seriously muddled Obama's better intentions in favour of the hawkish sisterhood of Hillary Clinton, Susan Rice and Samantha Powers. This was in the name of 'humanitarian intervention' followed up by irresolute proxy interventionism in a regionalizing Syrian civil war. A major side-bar in this folly was the delinking of the Arab League from the AU in Afro-Arab strategic cooperation.

The Syrian misadventure in sectarian geopolitics has further reconfigured eastern Mediterranean equations into a post-Obama reactionary US-Israel-Saudi Arabia-United Arab Emirates (UAE) alliance (with Morocco joining in) against a Russia-Iran-Turkish 'triple entente' spilling over into the Horn of Africa. This is where promising developments emanating from Ethiopia-Eritrean rapprochement could be compromised by Saudi-UAE-Qatar dynamics in conjunction with the humanitarian disaster of a proxy civil war in Yemen with Washington supporting the disastrous Saudi-led coalition.

As it appears, the Syrian civil war endgame reinforces a Russo-Iranian agenda in tandem with Turkish straddling as an east-west Euro-Eurasian 'swing state'. The geostrategic momentum of trans-Eurasian integration that is spearheaded by China's BRI via the SCO promises increasingly to roll-back US influence in Middle Eastern and Asian power dynamics, especially given the incompetent 'art of the non-deal' geopolitics of North Korean 'denuclearization'. The real 'Great Game' here could be an eventual Sino-Korean (North and South)-ASEAN+3 (including Japan) cooperation converging with Russia's Far-East economic agenda, which was unveiled in Vladivostok.⁵ With this essentially all-Asian agenda, it reiterates the point of: who needs a US regional presence?

Now while Trump accelerates this reconfiguring geostrategic calculus dealing America out of east-west integration prospects, the Boston-to-Washington Corridor foreign policy establishment dubbed 'the blob' by Obama and his close confidant, Ben Rhodes, must share equal if not more blame (Goldberg 2016; and Grunwald 2016). For decades, Washington has been dismissively disengaged from the geopolitics and inter-diplomacy dynamics of the 'third world' and its platforms such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and more recent global South iterations, including BRICS as well as the increasingly strategically potent SCO.

Multilateral engagement with the rising South has been marginalized in favour of 'divide-and-rule' tactics toward emerging markets and strategic cherry-picking relationships, as seen in the close US-India bilateral relationship at the expense of engaging a global South multilaterally on its own terms along with its regional dimensions, including as reflected in US-African and US-Latin American relations. The question to be asked is: can the US afford to continue along this path of a diplomacy of dismissiveness toward the global South post-Trump; especially when its northern hemispheric and trans-Pacific alignments have been forced into disarray by the Trump-John Bolton-Mike Pompeo trio at a global governance level?

Establishmentarian De-Blobbing: Mideast Predicament

The Trump administration's anti-Iran fixation is dictated by Israel's strategy of evading coming to terms with the Palestinians. As such, there are at least seven pertinent de-blobbing queries urgently in need of answering. These involve the Middle East as the epicentre of America's foreign policy-national security conundrum; since there no longer exists any 'fig leaf' of 'honest brokerage' on Washington's part between Israel and the Palestinians, and in light of the string of Saudi 'own goals' and outrages calling into serious question the competence of a retrograde monarchy:

1. With the Trump administration having abandoned US financial support for Palestinians on the basis of Palestinian rejection of a 'peace process' on the terms of Israel's most illiberal ultra-right-wing settler-dominated regime ever, what is the moral and political rationale for continued US financial and strategic support for an Israel no longer a democratic state and no longer committed to ending illegal occupation of the West Bank and arriving at an equitable settlement with the Palestinians?
2. Is there any convincing rationale for America's continued underwriting the no longer relevant Camp David Peace Accords between Israel and Egypt, including major budget-busting financial support for the repressive authoritarian regime in Cairo and its illiberal counterpart in Tel-Aviv?
3. Could the continued support for Israel be better predicated if Israel is able to commit to granting full democratic political and civil rights to Palestinians within Israel and the Occupied Territories, including Jerusalem, within whatever statehood political arrangements Israelis and Palestinians are able to arrive at, be it one state or two? (Avashai 2018)
4. Given the technological revolution in oil and natural gas extraction making the US competitively energy independent from the Persian Gulf, what is the strategic rationale for a continued US-Saudi alliance in the Middle East and US taxpayer underwriting of Saudi-UAE sectarian adventurism in the region? This is with particular reference to their humanitarian disaster of an intervention in Yemen?
5. Previously Obama advocated for an offshore balancing and repositioning attempt that called for Saudi-Iranian accommodation. However, Israel no longer has democratic credibility; Saudi Arabia must rethink Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's 2030 initiative for failure to attract the level of investment needed to lessen Saudi oil export dependence; and when Riyadh cannot submit to Trump's demand for expanding oil production to bring down the oil price to the level that undercuts OPEC and Russia? *That is, to compensate for a return to US sanctions against Iran's oil exports after Trump pulled the US out of JCPOA at Israeli-Saudi behest?! What is the strategic rationale behind a US-Israeli-Saudi-UAE alliance?*
6. Similarly, along these lines emerges the preposterous 'deal of the century' notion of the US-Israel-Saudi-UAE alliance expanding to include Egypt, Jordan and Bahrain in a Sunni 'Arab NATO.' The Turkish Threat of manoeuvres, which are associated with the geopolitics of the Khashoggi affair, may have already scuppered this anti-Iran agenda (Fuller 2018). Otherwise, with Israel's lobby support from the likes of the Foundation for Defence of Democracies, does this initiative make Democrats feel intimidated into acquiescing as an expression of uncritical support for Israel 'right or wrong' along with Trump's anti-Iran coalition?
7. Given the long, apparent reality that there cannot and will not be a military solution to the civil war in Afghanistan, that the solution must be political, why does Washington continue resisting a multilateral endgame involving China and Russia in a political settlement between the Kabul government and the Taliban, which could lead to a broader conflict resolution dynamic between Pakistan and India in the Hindu Kush region? Thus bringing to an end some of the longest and costliest of US overseas military commitments.

These questions (among many others that might arise) and how they might be answered may be illustrative of a broader strategic rethinking and the redesign of the post-Trump US foreign policy-national security geo-strategy and how it might be integrated with a sustainable domestic renewal agenda. Call it *a US National Security-Domestic Renewal Reform Agenda* building on Obama's GOP-sabotaged 'Nation-Building at Home' aspirations. However, the key has to be in coming to terms with the need for radical change in the US-Mideast policy and posture it at the centre of the American foreign policy transition crisis.

American Jewish-Israeli parting of the ways?

To some extent among Democrats, changing course in the US-Israel posture has already commenced with the assertiveness of Jewish former presidential candidate, Senator Bernie Sanders, in his critique of Israel under the scandalous ultra-right regime of Benjamin Netanyahu and the Tel-Aviv/Washington axis of abandoning the Palestinians. The seeds of Sanders' departure from the standard American-Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) bipartisan diktat emerged at the 2016 Democratic National Convention platform fight over Middle East policy between the Clinton and Sanders campaigns.

The magnitude of where this may be heading was recently reflected on by *Washington Post* columnist, Dana Milbank (2018), who opined "America's Jews are watching Israel in horror." In noting the growing split between American Jews and Netanyahu's Israel, Milbank cites an authoritative Israeli observation: " 'We are stunned witnesses of new alliances between Israel, Orthodox factions of Judaism throughout the world, and the new global populism in which ethnocentrism and even racism hold an undeniable place,' Hebrew University of Jerusalem sociologist Eva Illouz wrote in an article appearing this week on Yom Kippur in Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper titled 'The State of Israel vs. the Jewish people'." (Milbank 2018) This was on top of an American Jewish Committee poll revealing that while 77 percent of Israeli Jews approve of Trump's handling of the U.S.-Israeli relationship, only 34 percent of American Jews approve; this is in addition to only 26 percent of American Jews approving of Trump in contrast to Trump's popularity in Israel (Milbank 2018; and Levy 2018).

There is an historical intersection between American Jewish public intellectuals and strategic policy elite influence. This has evolved in tandem with the US-Israel lobby's increasingly discredited Middle East agenda and on US foreign policy more broadly (which has tracked a post-war immigrant Jewish and non-Jewish generation of European refugees from World War II into the core of the American foreign policy establishment, including the likes of Henry Kissinger, the late Zbigniew Brzezinski, who more or less mentored Barack Obama, and Madeleine 'indispensable nation' Albright). Given what can now be considered an inflection point at this historical juncture, the corrupt Netanyahu-Trump inspired Israeli-American Jewish divide portends wider resonance on the future trajectory of US foreign policy-national security rethinking.

Bernie Sanders has basically given this the 'green light' at the political level within the Democratic Party. His and California Senator Dianne Feinstein's opposition to free speech-threatening anti-BDS legislation in the US Senate promises to open up for the first time a long-overdue debate over US-Israel relations in 2019 in build-up to what promises to be heated debates at the Democratic National Convention in 2020 (Haaretz 2018). An interesting

question here is how will this play out between Bernie Sanders and former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, if Bloomberg enters the Democratic presidential sweepstakes for 2020?)

With Clinton having lost the 2016 election and Trump, as president, making a total hash of what was already a Middle East policy status-quo lacking credibility, it is difficult to imagine a 2020 Democratic platform that conforms to the same stale unquestioningly uncritical pro-Israel assumption from a Democratic Party trending toward more pronounced progressive policy positions. It seems that Sanders' opening toward a more critical position on Israel with greater balance regarding Palestinian concerns should dictate future Democratic Party policy. Netanyahu's Likud-National Liberal Movement will continue dictating GOP's Middle East policy via casino tycoon Sheldon and Miriam Adelson and their investment in a right-wing extremist, pro-evangelical Republican Party. It will be interesting to see how such a calculus influences how potential presidential contenders navigate the next round of this controversy sure to be revisited at the 2020 Democratic National Convention (DNC).

Hindu-Kush east-west accommodation and UN reform?

However, it is on Afghanistan where the real centrepiece of an overall US foreign policy-national security strategy revamp may have to happen in reimagining a more progressive Democratic Party posture regarding America's post-Trump global posture overall. The Afghanistan-Pakistan-Indian 'Hindu Kush' – Indo-AfPak – triangle occupies the conflicted crossroads of historical and contemporary east-west fault lines pre and post-cold war, on into the 'global Islamic civil war' which dramatically spiked with 9/11. Tackling this intractable conundrum could might potentially serve as a springboard for a new global sustainable security strategic architecture. But this implies going well beyond the 'Obama Doctrine' of addressing regional conflicts with a light military footprint while capacitating indigenous forces into much more elaborated multilateral peace and security architecture that increases American defence dollar savings (Baron 2017; and Baron 2018).⁶ It would require a comprehensively thought out and articulated US doctrine of *Strategic Devolution into multilateral frameworks prioritizing international cooperation over geopolitical power great gamesmanship*.

For starters, it would call for a bold post-Trump strategic leadership initiative within the UN Security Council (UNSC) via NATO, while engaging China and Russia within the SCO framework to which Afghanistan has observer status and India and Pakistan are recent full members. Given the emergence of the Sino-Russian led SCO, for purposes of east-west geostrategic equilibrium and an ultimate transcending of historic east-west fault-lines, it is premature to consider NATO obsolete and un-strategic to call for US withdrawal from NATO as Trump (and Putin) would like and many on the left advocate. Stabilizing a Eurasian landscape unsettled by Syria as well as Afghanistan, including state fragility in Iraq requires NATO-SCO collaboration.

Of course, in the case of Afghanistan (with SCO observer status), such a scenario could be pre-empted by a Trump unilateral US troop withdrawal (beyond reductions already announced) returning the Taliban to power in Kabul placing the SCO under pressure to stabilize the Hindu-Kush. Here, the Zalmay Khalilzad negotiations bear close watching. Otherwise, a NATO-SCO arrangement would also mean re-joining the JCPOA and removing sanctions against Iran which, sooner or later, will also become a full SCO member. A US-Russian reset (yes, that

again!) focusing on strategic arms negotiations and their extension into a protracted trilateral exercise with China would also have to be factored into such a scenario.

The negotiating of a UNSC-mandated *NATO-SCO Eurasian Stabilization Pact* or ‘partnership’ underpinning an end to civil war in Afghanistan, defusing Afghan-related Indo-Pakistan tensions and resolving their *Civil War of Partition over Kashmir* could go a long way in disengaging the US from this most costly of quagmires under a geopolitically credible UN-sponsored multilateral security umbrella. Such an arrangement could potentially trigger any number of broader global security ‘strategic devolution’ spending spinoffs that are advantageous to defence-spending reductions and reallocations for Washington and investment in strengthening the UN as the centrepiece of global sustainable security governance. However, such re-budgeting would also need to take into account long-recommended integration of defence spending within a consolidated ‘national security budget’ factoring in non-defence foreign affairs and development assistance expenditures.⁷

In any case, an UN-backed NATO-SCO Eurasian stabilization arrangement might be coordinated with renewed UNSC reform extending a permanent seat to India, or a permanent five-year rotational seat between India and Pakistan. However, this would have to open up permanent seats and/or five-year rotationals for other aspiring nations from elsewhere in Europe (Germany), Africa (South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt), the Americas (Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico) and East Asia (Japan and possibly South Korea). Such reform should be coupled with establishment of a UNSC adjunct *Council on International Peace and Cooperation linked to negotiating a zone of peace and cooperation system governing the global commons and their interregional continental-maritime parameters*. This should also include the US joining the International Criminal Court (ICC) and recommitting to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as a restatement of Washington’s support for a rules-based global order.

Re-fighting 20th century wars in the Age of Climate Change?

The point is that under circumstances of urgency in rebalancing American priorities toward domestic renewal, it is more than ever in the US national interest to reinvest in the UN as the apex guarantor of international security – not the US continuing arrogating as world policeman. Rhetorically, there is a constant refrain against America being the ‘world’s policeman’ which never gets translated into actionable national security policy and strategy. This will require a protracted reconfigured demilitarizing reform process. With such a context spinning off a NATO-SCO Eurasian east-west security arrangement, America, Russia and China could apportion compliments of each of their troop and technological capabilities to building up a centralized multilateral force structure under Security Council command. Other UN member states should be called upon to contribute to either individually or (better yet) through their regional-continental governing institutions. This core force structure would be complemented at continental and regional levels. However, this would also call into the question the proliferation of military bases throughout the global South, especially in Africa which is fast becoming a partitioned protectorate of external power military expansionism!

Otherwise this latter dimension of continental and regional capabilities could introduce a decentralizing and further regionalization approach to UN multilateral military capacities beyond pure peacekeeping. This would involve strengthening continental governing institutions and regional economic communities within the UN’s

ECOSOC regionalized institutional framework to address the politically charged American debate over 'nation-building'; in Africa's case, proposed in Rwandan President Paul Kagame's Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the AU the beginning of such potential is reflected in already existing UN-AU peacekeeping and peace support operations (though these need to be coordinated in fleshing out African standby forces) (AU, 2017). There is no reason why the SCO, within the context of a cooperative security arrangement with NATO, could not be party to such arrangements along with an eventual Indo-Pak accommodation removing the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) out of its doldrums, while the ASEAN Economic Community would also be expected to similarly contribute to global security deployments and governance.

The strengthening of regional economic communities, doubling as security communities, would be in line with acknowledging 'global economic federalism' as the emerging pattern of multilateral governance in the evolving multipolar scenario. In this regard, the EU as well as potentially, the AU (in spite of its Potemkin essence!) can be considered forerunners of harbingers of models of cooperation to influence future directions in multilateralism, especially since the EU is increasingly having to consider independent military capacity-building as a corollary to NATO. Moreover, instead of the fighting witnessed during the last two world wars, World War III, which may already be underway, is unfolding as a protracted war between humanity and nature in the Anthropocene Age of Climate Change. A globally coordinated environmental security force structure and multilateral preventive capacity seems already a long-overdue urgent necessity. But this is an urgency reinforcing the global institutionalizing of the 'burden sharing' imperative.

That the EU is beginning seriously to consider strategic autonomy in defence as a result of Trumpian uncertainties is indicative of how a more decentralizing UNSC-coordinated global security architecture might evolve. But this is all contingent on major UN reform, not just of the Security Council but enhanced Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) empowerment as well (Royeppen, 2016). *Were a post-Trump US administration to become its champion, this might go some way toward restoring American leadership credibility in a non-hegemonic sense, irrespective of how successful a UNSC reform push might turn out to be.* The point is that championing UNSC reform might recapitalize US leadership sans hegemony! However, this would have to be accompanied in other areas of major rethinking of force structure assumptions on which notions of US 'full-spectrum' global primacy have rested.

For example, former Vice-President (and potential 2020 contender) Joe Biden's 2015 assertion that in today's world, there is no such thing as 'spheres of influence' cannot go unchallenged in what calls for a needed return to the Rooseveltian 'realism' cited by Beinart in his Atlantic critique. This is with reference to Roosevelt envisioning a 'four policemen' post-war alliance for keeping the international peace (Beinart 2018). Hence, the genesis of the Security Council with Roosevelt's reluctant addition of France (Dwan 2016).

Revisiting Roosevelt: Toward an Integrationist Order

In today's world a re-acknowledging of spheres of influence, which dictated the geopolitics of cold war bipolarity, may need revisiting within the context of UNSC reform as a concession in navigating the multipolar global terrain. To deny existence of spheres of influence or interests is to keep US foreign policy stuck in unproductive, hegemonic, zero-sum scenarios that are at their most farcical under Trump's tariff-sanctions binge and flip-floppery of bullying and retreat a la North Korea 'denuclearization'!. However, 'zero-sum' and 'win-lose' is also reflected in much of the US foreign policy-national security narrative and media reporting so it is hardly surprising that Trump, let alone more conventional politicians, including Democrats, communicate America's worldview and intentions in such terms as well as conveying 'strength' as opposed to the 'weakness' of 'retreat' in favour of 'prevailing'.

Post-Trump, a NATO-SCO Eurasian east-west accommodation facilitated by today's 'five policemen' – the Permanent Five (P5) – would seem about as natural a point for restarting an updated Rooseveltian vision as any. This would require Washington refocusing its Atlantic and Pacific spheres of influence and interest toward a western hemispheric pivot linked to fashion a global 'southern strategy.' Whereas in the Pacific, there are overt adaptive challenges to be navigated in geo-strategic power-sharing with China; when it comes to the Atlantic, it behoves the US to pursue a 'whole of Atlantic' strategy of engagement in the Afro-Latin South Atlantic.

This is needed to balance Washington's traditional priority afforded the northern Euro-Atlantic which, in any case as a result of EU-Brexit dynamics, has to redefine its terms of reference while the British rediscover their Commonwealth ties to Africa; Africa remaining very much the marginalized backwater in need of changing in the US calculus as well. But a 'whole of Atlantic' geo-strategy will have to focus on a post-Trump reconsolidation of relations with Mexico and Canada as points-of-departure in reconfiguring hemispheric relations within the context of a north-south transatlantic framework that factors in Africa as well as Europe.

Inter-Hemispheric Integration

Here, an argument might even be made for recouping US-Canada and US-Mexican relations by eventually restoring Nafta 2-cum- United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) to an elevated level of deeper North American integration. This might even include arriving at agreement on a confederacy or quasi-confederacy in the form of a North American Union that acknowledges the relentlessly multicultural diversity of North America; a Trump-inspired white nationalist populist reaction notwithstanding. However, these close-to-home foreign policy considerations impinge on the domestic renewal dimensions of a revamped regional national security calculus which will be turned to later.

Meanwhile, the key strategic hemispheric priority facing Washington, besides restoring relations with Canada and Mexico, is a return to an Obama era momentum in normalizing relations with Cuba. This is critical to moving forward a more economically integrated agenda for the Americas as the totally outmoded and indefensible embargo against Havana is long overdue for rescinding. But this should take place within the context of dialogue toward a Hemispheric Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that Washington navigates with Ottawa and Mexico City as well as with Brazil and/or Argentina.

Here, prospects of Pan-American relations that might emerge from such an extended and open-ended dialogue are disturbingly uncertain, given the changing inter and intra-state dynamics in South America; this is exacerbated by the regionally destabilizing meltdown in Venezuela. Regionalism within the Community of Latin American and Caribbean (CELAC) states has been essentially reversed given the turmoil in Brazil's domestic politics and Venezuelan implosion. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) spearheaded by incarcerated former Brazilian President, Ignacio Lula da Silva, has faded onto the geopolitical margins; as has Brazil's regional and global South leadership, and with the country on the precipice of a political crossroads as it approached national elections in October 2018.

The presidential election win by racist far-right populist candidate, Jair Bolsonaro could throw Brazil's politics and foreign policy into a tail-spin of instability. It could upset the BRICS apple cart as well. It is already reversing the progressive regionalism that was beginning to show promise under Lula; that is, had it not been for corruption dynamics interacting with the peculiar structural balance of partisan forces that led to the political coup ousting Lula's successor, Dilma Rousseff (Araujo 2018). Similar dynamics have destabilized South Africa's politics, while BRICS may also face headwinds in the domestic politics of economic challenges in Russia and China as well.

Towards a More Visionary Strategic US-Africa Relationship

Otherwise, the Brazil-inspired *Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic* (ZPCSA) provides a strategic outreach opportunity for Washington in elaborating a 'whole of Atlantic' geo-strategy that could also serve as a new point of departure for developing a more strategically compelling Africa policy as well as and in tandem with a new hemispheric agenda. However, the Africa-South American transatlantic multilateralism of the ZPCSA has languished because it has been underdeveloped. A progressive transatlantic diplomacy might envision reaching out to the ZPCSA for possible observer or 'dialogue partner' status. There is no reason why, ZPCSA could not, eventually, transform into a 'whole of Atlantic' zone of peace and cooperation system. In the process, this could also contribute to a new strategic continental-maritime security paradigm in US-African relations as well.

This would have to be based on American recognition of Africa's centrality to the global security future based on the continent's geographic interregionalism with Europe via the Mediterranean and with an increasingly pivotal Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific proximity to the Middle East and Asia. Africa's demographic dynamism will see it reach somewhere in the neighbourhood of over 2.4 billion by or before 2050 and equal to all of Asia by the 22nd century (Africa Population 2018). While a large portion of the world's population shrinks and ages, Washington should begin informing a longer-term strategic approach to Africa sooner rather than later. Former Assistant Secretary of State under Obama, Johnnie Carson has already enumerated a number of areas where, post-Obama, Africa policy needed to be upgraded and further elaborated (Carson 2016; and Carson 2018).

However, a more macro-strategically visionary *American* pan-African agenda would concentrate more on encouraging and assisting Africa's accelerated regional and continental integration; this is as the AU grapples with implementing the Kagame reform recommendations of January 2017, amid recommitment to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and its eastern and southern African 'Cape to Cairo' Tripartite Free Trade

Area (FTA) component bordering the Indian Ocean. On the other side of the Indian Ocean Rim is the looming RCEP and rival post-Obama of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) carrying strategic potential for convergence with the AfCFTA in evolving an eventual Afro-Eurasian Geo-economic Sphere including the EU as well.

A US-African Zone of Peace Global South Strategy

Here, the geo-economic strategic potential of African integration over the long-term ought to begin ringing some bells among US foreign policy planners in and outside the Washington 'Beltway' about a much needed rethinking of America's Africa calculus. This would, however, have to be informed by equal acknowledgement of how Africa's future is geo-strategically nested within an emerging global South, as well as west-to-east reconfiguring of an international system wherein the Indian Ocean Rim becomes the pivotal interregional hub of the global geopolitical economy of the future.

However, Africa and its Indian Ocean island states face major security vulnerabilities of the non-traditional but no less threatening dimension within and along its continental-maritime perimeter. Depletion of the fishing stocks of Atlantic and Indian Ocean littoral states; the ebb and flow of piracy threats; rampant illegal trafficking in the continent's natural resources; and decimated biodiversity through poaching syndicates, linked to China and Vietnam, demand an environmental security force structure within a UN-AU (as opposed to a purely AU) security architecture. Within such a framework, a continental and regional youth development academy system could be instituted in the interest of promoting long-term stability in managing 'the youth bulge.' (BBC 2015; and Booker and Rickman 2018)

This should govern US-Africa security assistance with a shift away from America's currently overly self-interest militarized approach to African peace and security. Indeed, this could extend throughout the rim of the Indian Ocean as the ASEAN economic community nations of Southeast Asia are similarly threatened. But how can such a US shift toward environmental security assistance in Africa and the global South be credible without Washington re-joining the Paris Climate Accord?

This could and should be accompanied by Washington engaging the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in its role as a 'dialogue partner.' This would include the eight others: China, Japan, Britain, France, Germany, Turkey, Egypt and South Korea. They could structure themselves into a possible IORA Dialogue Partners Forum for consulting IORA member states in joining with the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in establishing an inclusive UNSC-supported *Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans* – or PACINDO in Indonesian parlance (Kornegay 2016).

The fact that each of the IORA dialogue partners have a basing presence in Djibouti amid contested claims to the status of the Chagos would seem compelling logic for structuring such a multilateral dialoguing framework; especially given the strategic importance of the northwest Indian Ocean in proximity to it and extended Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Bab el Mandeb hinterland. However, unlike the South Atlantic ZPCSA case, an Indian Ocean rendition would realistically have to include the IORA dialogue partners as full members and concede on

aspirational 'nuclear free zone' notions. This is illustrative of the kind of multilateral geopolitics that America may need to refocus on in a 21st century context that is further removed from 20th century post-war and post-cold war legacy threat perceptions.

It also requires a more strategically considered and diplomatically nuanced off-shore balancing of the US defence posture in relation to Middle East dynamics. This is what Obama was moving toward. The Ahvaz terror attack on the military parade, in the Sunni Arab region of Iran, portends a dangerous weaponizing of complexities in what could become a tit-for-tat scenario given Saudi repression of its Shia minority in its oil producing region and Bahrain repression of its Shia majority (Parsi, 2018). Does Washington really want to aid and/or abet such sectarian dynamics or become quagmired in them? Such prospects do not augur well for the future of the Indian Ocean Rim peace and security.

By the same token, such global South adaptive considerations must take into account similar realities joining the fates of Africa and southern Europe. This relates to their mutual interregional vulnerability clearly impacting on the stability of the EU and the integrity of an AU system devoid of a regional economic community architecture in the Maghreb. This could contribute to a *Eur-African Zone of Peace and Cooperation*, also with UNSC buy-in, in elaborating a global commons zone of peace and cooperation centered on 'Island Africa.'

Such a development would be to the mutual benefit of both continents but is contingent on resolving the Western Saharan Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)-Morocco conundrum in activating the AU's Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) (Al-Monitor Staff 2018).⁸ Meanwhile, rather than bringing the UN's Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) mission to an end as Trump national security advisor John Bolton is pressing for, MINURSO should remain in place as precursor to a federated Sahrawi-governed SADR-UMA centrepiece of regional cooperation and integration in the Maghreb and the Sahel in tandem with ECOWAS. Such a refocusing of US-Africa peace and security relations in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean in terms of the South Atlantic ZPCSA model is illustrative of a possible alternative 'grand strategy' that takes Africa seriously. Washington needs urgently to begin contemplating in moving away from the post-war and post-cold war paradigms of the 20th century that have long since lost relevance in the second decade of the 21st century as we move rapidly toward mid-century.

However, the point of departure for such an adaptive US refocusing in geo-strategy would naturally extend from a 'whole of Atlantic' hemispheric linkage to a more strategically considered African calculus factoring in that continent's geographic centrality in the world system. It would also assume a more UN-centric approach to an American sustainable global security agenda taking into account America's urgent, long-neglected domestic renewal priorities and an urgently needed balance between domestic and military federal budgeting.

African continental integration will require a more comprehensively and integrated UN-focused multilateral involvement rather than the current bilateralism of the new 'scramble' for Africa, which only contributes to further divide-and-ruling of a hyper-fragmented and north-south partitioned continent with increasingly external military basing. Obviously, this presupposes pan-African leadership agency backed up by what once was a dynamically active US-Africa constituency, but is now in need of major post-apartheid reactivating. This will

also require an AU 'Global Africa' initiative in organizing Africa's diaspora in shaping external policies toward the continent. However, if this is to happen, there are a whole host of unanswered questions and issues that go begging concerning how substantive an AU-diaspora relationship via the AU's 'Sixth Region' can be expected to be. African-Americans, for example, were in the forefront of mobilizing anti-apartheid and Africa policy activism in the US which, among other things, overturned Ronald Reagan's 'constructive engagement' toward apartheid South Africa.

To what extent should/can African-Americans expect reciprocal solidarity against external forces subverting the American electoral process to the detriment of black America as in the case of Russia's targeting black voter suppression in the 2016 election to the benefit of Trump? Indeed, given Africa's continuing overall dependency on external donor funding of its institutions along with various and sundry bilateral trade, aid and investment agreements reinforcing Africa's fragmentation, is the AU even in a position to leverage solidarity with its 'Sixth Region' in influencing the extent to which external powers factor in the democratic interests of peoples of African descent in the diaspora?

At the end of the day, as Africa evolves demographically for better or worse in global security terms into the epicentre of humanity in the course of the 21st century, foreign policies of the US and the West will be forced to redirect their geo-strategic calculus accordingly. In the case of Asia, this is already occurring as the epicentre of the global economy shifts from west-to-east while both Asia and the West are vying for economic positioning in Africa. Yet, US-Africa policy remains a non-starter in terms of US national interest; this is amid the Trump administration's misguided intent in returning Africa into a cold war 'battleground' with China and Russia under the aegis of national security adviser John Bolton – save for the possibility of a breakthrough on Western Sahara. A post-Trump Africa policy will have to radically reset this calculus within a broader global South reorienting of foreign policy and national security strategy toward international cooperation mandating multilateralism.

II.

Toward a New Paradigm: Linking Foreign and Domestic

In foreign policy 'grand strategy' terms, an Africa-centred global South reorienting of US global diplomacy would pivot off a Pan-American hemispheric fulcrum in relating to both the Pacific, leading into the Afro-asiatic Indian Ocean coupled with a 'whole of Atlantic' linkage between the Americas and Africa. In the process, such geostrategic adaptive considerations could find organic linkage in the Democratic Party's 'tri-caucus' coalition of congressional black, Hispanic and Asian caucuses and their Democrats Abroad overseas counterparts. As such, this potential linkage, factoring in the Congressional Progressive Caucus and other compatible interest groups and constituencies, might serve as a basis for thinking through and imagining an integrated national security-domestic renewal reform strategy.

As the World War II immigrant generation at the ruling class apex of what Stephen M. Walt calls the “liberal-neoconservative coalition” presiding over American foreign policy fades into history, the congressional ‘tri-caucus’ and progressive allies in and outside Congress are in position to integrate a post-triumphalist foreign policy and national security strategy into a radical reformist domestic renewal agenda (Walt 2018). It is in the area of domestic policy reformism rather than in foreign policy rethinking where minorities and the left have been most focused in advancing any number of progressive reform imperatives within a ‘broad church’ Democratic Party. From a pragmatically, as opposed to a dogmatically progressive perspective, it seems more important that there emerge a rethought through Democratic Party foreign policy consensus linked to an enabling domestic renewal agenda than a manifestly ‘left foreign policy’ as such in all its elusiveness.

The fact of the matter is that a post-Trump foreign policy adjustment must come to terms with the imperative of sustainability in a manner prioritizing domestic renewal factoring in a technologically and financially integrated global economy – and an aging population (Rampell, 2018b). Yet it is far from certain that Democrats, including their think-tanking complements, have an international public policy handle on what this implies in terms of trade policy, especially on the left which converges with Bannon-Trumpian right-wing protectionist anti-globalism. And since Obama failed to mount a public education campaign on his geostrategic trans-Pacific and transatlantic initiatives, it led to Hillary Clinton flip-flopping during her 2016 primary campaign against protectionist Sanders. Herein lies a gaping intellectual hole in how Democrats would gain credibility on trade within a broader foreign policy-national security progressive revamp. In this regard, a recent thoughtful Vox reflection on “Why labour is a foreign policy issue” by Todd N. Tucker (2018) is suggestive of how this aspect of a Democratic foreign-cum-policy might achieve greater coherence.

Otherwise, a no-longer coherent Republican Party has, for decades, been weakening America from within, while brow-beating Democrats (and a complicit mainstream media) for pursuing American ‘weakness’ abroad. The GOP since the George W. Bush administration, replete with Donald Rumsfeld’s ‘old versus new’ Europe precursor to Trump, has eroded America’s global credibility. Furthermore, America has been genuinely weakened in ‘Munich Syndrome’ flim-flammy of ‘Peace Through Strength’, while advocating budget-busting defence spending and tax-cuts for the rich despite warnings about the deficit. Democrats have largely been complicit in the flim-flam. Could this be due to how, ever since Reaganite military Keynesianism and ‘supply side’ tax-cuts, these have benefited Democratic and GOP elites alike, all at the expense of middle class working Americans and poor, irrespective of race?

‘Better Deal’: Really? – Muddle-messaged Democrats

Perhaps this explains why Democrats do not seem to have a ‘message’ or compelling ‘narrative’ at election time; this is in addition to the ‘broad church’ diversity of the Democratic Party coalition. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer’s ‘Better Deal’ says it all! Thus mealy-mouthed Democrats, largely in cahoots with mainstream media ‘equivalence,’ are never able or politically willing to call out the flim-flam. Even when it’s obvious! Meanwhile, an increasingly right-wing extremist Republican Party manages to sustain a permanently mobilized voting base at the expense of Democratic voter demobilization amid aggressive gerrymandering and voter suppression. At

the same time, the GOP succeeds in propagandizing Democrats as the party of ‘weakness’ even as their hard-line stance, no longer of cold war relevance, contributes to the internal hollowing out of American capabilities by ignoring urgently needed reinvestment in social and capital infrastructures.

Beyond tax-cuts and military spending along with crying deficits and small-to-no government, Republicans are totally bankrupt morally and intellectually in proposing public policies in the American national interest. Unpaid for trickle-down tax cuts, deregulation and military-industrial-congressional complex overspending is the extent of the GOP agenda. In addition, Republican minds are captured by socio-racial electoral demography that draws a stark contrast of a white voter base amid threat perceptions of ‘majority-minority’ demographic expansionism. The previous Sunbelt ‘southern strategy’ that propelled the electoral victories of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and both George Herbert Walker and son George W. Bush is steadily being reversed as reflected in midterm electoral outcomes in several southern and south-western states.⁹

Yet, only now, after Trump’s upset 2016 election, are Democrats and minorities (in differing degrees one might add) waking up to the historical constitutionally entrenched ‘white minority’ protections (for the antebellum slavocracy). This exacerbates the intensifying racist threat to American democracy. The controversial 2000 election that placed George W. Bush in the White House at the expense of Vice President Al Gore, should have signalled the urgency of constitutional reform as a priority for Democrats and allied constituencies and interest groups.

This conundrum, reaching the crisis level of farce as Trump succeeded Obama who cleaned up after Bush who succeeded the healthy economy left behind by President Bill Clinton has, and has had, serious foreign policy repercussions. These interact with domestic renewal policy setbacks, in turn, further eroding America’s internal resilience at home and credibility abroad – now, threatening the integrity of the US dollar’s reserve currency primacy. This is without any notion of American urgency in financing its internal renewal and re-strengthening while having to navigate international currency multi-polarity propelled by Trump’s inward looking ‘America First’.

Hence, the urgency of a radical revamp in US foreign policy and national security posture; which entails an adaptive shift toward prioritizing a global peace and international cooperation diplomacy and security grand strategy that enables domestic renewal and reform momentum. Paradoxically, within the black-Hispanic-Asian congressional ‘tri-caucus’ context, the Democratic Party’s leading and most dependably loyal black political voting bloc is actually most vulnerable and most in need of a fundamental rebalancing in foreign vis-a-vis domestic policy priorities. Yet, African-Americans are virtually if not totally absent from foreign policy-national security intellectual discourses which are actually beginning to be driven by an emerging Asian-American intelligentsia (right as well as left) within the dominant white US public policy establishment (Mathis 2018).¹⁰

2018: Recouping 2016?

On the more hopeful side for African-Americans, is the impressive number of stellar candidates at congressional, state and local levels who placed their hats in the 2018 midterm electoral ring with potential for lending greater

inter-generational renewal and depth to black political leadership, female and male alike (Johnson 2018). The electoral contest outpouring during the 2018 midterms is the best indication yet of the black political stimulus generated by Barack Obama's emergence as America's first black president. As such, Obama may be considered an historically influential figure in renewed black political and activist momentum since the civil rights integrationist-Black Power cultural nationalist 1960s and 70s; and this is in spite of Obama himself being ambivalent in how he related to black America and Africa as well. Otherwise, majority-minority politically ascendant momentum is widely considered to reside among Hispanics – but with important qualifications.

From a comparative black-Hispanic-Asian perspective, the weak link, as November approached resided in a constantly uncertain Hispanic vote and voter turnout amid contradictions in this multi-ethno-nationality demographic (The Democratic Strategist, 2018). The fact that several promising Arab/Muslim-Americans as well as progressive Hispanic and Asian candidates, including female candidates of all races, were part of this 2018 surge, is equally noteworthy in terms of what their election may hold for a more multiculturally diverse political class emerging in American politics. Although 2018 saw a surge in political diversity, the Democratic Party struggles to regain electoral competitiveness, and questions abound as to what kind of substantive policy outcomes will be forthcoming.

As the GOP voter suppression rolled back the historic gains of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, it became increasingly apparent the extent that the civil rights-Black Power movement of the 60s to mid-70s constituted unfinished business in a struggle far from finished – and open to reactionary reversal. That said, will the new black political class along with their Hispanic, Asian and female cohorts of 2018 transform what was a seminal civil rights-minority empowerment movement into a full-blown democracy movement with a rebalancing constitutional reform agenda realigning America's historically imbalanced electoral system with its changing demography? And will such a possibility be accompanied by a new narrative of American 'national unity in *diversity*' elevating the principle of Democratic Cultural Pluralism into the norms and values nexus inspiring a Pluralist Internationalism as the updated successor to liberal internationalism in keeping with the multipolar realities of the unfolding post-Western global order? (Risse 2012)¹¹

An all-American democracy movement of progressive multicultural pluralism with internationalist resonance will have to be 'caucus specific' agendas and programmatic public policy-legislative initiatives that address the particularisms of African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians in all their *internal diversities* – and contradictions. In some ways, this potentially harkens back to the activist 'third worldism' inspired by the Black Panther Party of yesteryear's radicalism except that for the 21st century. Each minority caucus agenda would have to feed into an overall 'Nation-Building at Home' narrative of internal American strengthening underpinning a new post-triumphalist US world role.

For African-Americans, this has to involve internal reconsolidating and renewal of institutional, social, cultural and economic infrastructures neglected in post-civil rights integrationist assumptions misinformed by the faulty presumption that 'the promised land' had been reached (even as the FBI's covert Counter Intelligence Program gutted much of the activist leadership and organizations!). Whether the CBC and other elements of the elected

and non-elected black elite have the political will and capacity to mount such a 'Black Nation'-building campaign embedded within a broader all-American democracy and renewal struggle committed to a 'green new deal' (still in search of consensus) is an open question.

An innovative non-racial initiative that might address reparations implications of such a campaign is New Jersey Senator Cory Booker's "American Opportunity Accounts Act." It aims to close the racial wealth gap through creating and seeding savings accounts for every American child (Wells 2018). With respect to Africa policy, as African momentum toward greater continental trade integration gathers force, there should emerge endless African and global South minority enterprise opportunities for propelling greater African-American integration into the global economy. This would be linked to African nation-building and regional integration in rethinking a more dynamic US-Africa agenda.

Among other things, in this *UN International Decade of Persons of African Descent* (IDPAD), black America itself is increasingly diverse; this is as African-Americans of African immigrant descent join much longer-standing Afro-West Indian elements within black America's national fabric along with Afro-Latinos who may, in fact, see themselves as members of the multi-nationality diverse Hispanic community. However, these diversities are politically managed. African-Americans in coalition with Hispanics, Asians, and important white class constituencies, should recognize a vested interest in the national crafting of a more sustainable foreign policy enabling domestic priorities to be addressed without being budget-squeezed by military over-spending and wealth-concentrating tax-cuts. This extends well beyond black foreign policy awareness, which has always been limited, up against the ever-present burden of race struggling from behind the 'veil' reflected on in W.E.B Du Bois' seminal *Souls of Black Folk*.

Public policy civic education a defence against external threats?

Democrats seem severely disadvantaged by the general civic-political illiteracy of the American public overall. This is Trump's happy hunting ground. Hence, a major national security threat to American democracy given how Russia's successful cyber-attack on Hillary Clinton's 2016 election campaign advanced in the Kremlin's interest in getting Trump elected (CNN 2018). This is a predicament compounded in complexity by the mental partitioning capacities of social media that ushers in its own malleable 'opiate of the masses' in the dumbing down of public consciousness about the world around us. As such, any new departures in foreign policy might do well to be coupled with a sustained foreign affairs and domestic public policy civic education campaign linked to international civil society solidarity initiatives, such as the Bernie Sanders-Yanis Varoufakis 'Progressive International' and including revival of the World Social Forum. This could occur within a context such as proposed in the wide ranging recommendations set out in the 2015 Madeleine Albright-Ibrahim Gambari Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance (Institute for Global Justice and Stimson Centre 2015). Such an internationalized civil society dimension for Democrats would seem urgently needed as a means by which Americans are made aware of how our everyday lives are impacted by the economically integrated world at large and the consequences we bring upon ourselves and the nation at large resulting from decisions taken or not taken, especially since we cannot separate ourselves from the rest of today's humanity.

Hence, the reason why socializing of corporate capitalism via co-determination such as provided for in Senator Elizabeth Warren's *Accountable Capitalism Act* may be imperative in linking domestic and foreign policy agendas impacting the economy along with other 'radical centrist' proposals on the table as well (Teles 2019). Otherwise, Democrats and progressives generally no longer can afford for foreign policy, national security and especially trade issues to remain in the domain of elite discourse separated from the lives of 'average folk' condescendingly viewed as 'fed up with politics', when politics is ultimately the salvation of a healthy democracy. Hence, the co-determinative democratic imperative: labour representation on the boards of multinationals and in trade negotiations.

The Trump disruption should raise awareness of the possible dangers to democracy by allowing popular perceptions on any number of critical foreign and domestic policy issues to be left adrift without sustained political-civic education and international solidarity campaigning linked to redefining patriotic American terms of reference. At the level of narrative, this means appropriating notions of 'strength' from Republicans as central to a new messaging of re-strengthening and Rebuilding America through rebalancing domestic renewal and military spending. The latter has to be re-budgeted for investing in a strengthened and reformed UN as the centre piece of sustainable global security – not a hegemonic Pax-Americana.

This should be in conjunction with strengthening continental and regional economic communities, and multilateral institutions as the governing infrastructure of global economic federalism. For the US and its foreign policy establishment, this would seem to imply coming up with a new grand strategy concept; perhaps a national security-domestic renewal reform paradigm, and relentlessly selling this to the American people.

III.

Pluralist internationalism in a multipolar order

A national security-domestic renewal paradigm as an alternative to a business as usual foreign policy-national security strategy should realign US domestic realities of multicultural diversity with the global realities of cultural pluralism as variations along a theme characterizing virtually all societies in a pluralistic world order. Fundamentally, the greatest challenge facing humanity is how to achieve global unity in diversity. The question of the 21st century, is not the DuBoisian 'Colour Line' as much as a multiplicity of other identity lines of contestation: inter/intra-sectarian, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, urban-rural, gender. Applied to the US, the normative principle of democratic cultural pluralism might form the basis of reinterpreting the American domestic, and global pluralist reality into a post-hegemonic narrative. In the process, this might facilitate its translating into a pluralist internationalism. Amending liberal internationalism in this fashion might well accommodate a multipolar terrain within the context of a global economic integration that substantially softens the sovereignty of the nation-state into more consolidated continental and regional communities of nations. This would, in effect, acknowledge a 21st century post-Westphalian reality as opposed to reverting to a Trump-Bannon neo-Hobbesianism!

The current world reality is both post-western and post-Westphalian. As such, the 'neo-Hobbesian' anti-globalist reaction fuelling populist international turmoil seems unlikely to define the future world order beyond serving as an interregnum of instability in a transitioning strategic landscape amid a domestic politics of rebalancing within major state actors. This predicament applies to both the US and China as co-superpowers on the verge of Trump-Bolton 'cold war' revival.

Democratic cultural pluralism I: The United States

Here, the question of how democratic pluralist scenarios might mediate class struggle dynamics becomes a pertinent consideration in trying to discern the global future. As the world's first and second largest economies, the domestic and international political contingencies of transition in the US and China, and in conflicted Sino-American relations under Trump, would seem likely to determine the broader landscape of the global political economy. In the American scenario, the domestic political scenario in what might be dubbed the Obama-Trump 'dialectic' reflects what could likely unfold as an era of instability. It is defined by polarizing confrontation between rival demographics coalescing within Republican and Democratic Parties. The GOP presiding over what is considered an insecurely aging and shrinking white 'Christian nationalist' social base occupying constitutionally advantaged rural-small town, 'out state' electoral districts; and the Democrats ascendant over a growing multicultural urban-metropolitan demographic political geography south and north as well as bicoastal with contested 'rustbelt' heartland districts. What has thus far held constant in American politics are the 19th century Civil War fault lines that endure while mutating from a clear-cut north-south divide into a more salient urban-rural divide gerrymandered to GOP advantage.

Thus, demography fails to guarantee partisan political destiny in the Electoral College as 2016 attests. Despite surging left-Democratic counter-mobilization to Trump rightist-populist reaction, it is far from certain that contemporary contingency will see Democrats sustain sufficiently disciplined cohesion over several electoral cycles to enact the urgently required domestic renewal reforms and compatible foreign policy revisions necessary to restore US global credibility within a new and more pluralist strategic landscape. National security-domestic renewal reformism may require a more concerted pro-democracy politics of constitutional reform, as opposed to the uncertainties of gradualist incrementalism in the electoral and representational contours of federalism in ushering in a more level playing field in domestic politics. Here, a Constitutional Review Commission, factoring in historical justice, should be a considered governance reform initiative.

Such an initiative would seem preconditional to firmly enshrining the principle of democratic cultural pluralism in the American political and electoral system. The aim would be to finally overcome residual Civil War divisions and pave the way for a pluralist internationalism in negotiating a more federated UN-centric pluralistic order, as opposed to the thoroughly exhausted triumphalist American-centric one.

Democratic cultural pluralism II: China

As for China, change in Beijing's Communist Party-state system of government cannot be predicated based on the principle of democratic cultural pluralism within the multipolar world reality. Although the essentially democratic implications of how a younger Chinese millennial generation are interpreting Maoism may heighten

contradictions among generations toward such a transition. Such contradictions are inevitable irrespective of whether a country is governed as a multiparty democracy of some form or fashion of specimen of party-state authoritarianism. China's pluralist contradictions are of its own making as it went through historical cycles of regionally chaotic fragmentation versus periods of centralized control over a sprawling geography.

If the US is still struggling to recover from mid-19th century 'half slave-half free' fault lines of race and regionalism, China seems not fully confident it has recovered from its 19th century traumas. The Opium wars commencing a century of successive imperialist penetration and centre-periphery destabilization, ending only in the mid-20th century, and then succeeded by two decades of auto-genocidal Maoist totalitarianism before post-Mao stabilization and capitalist bourgeois revolution presided over by Deng Xiaoping have certainly left their mark on Chinese society. Perhaps, as a result of this traumatic history, overwhelming Han Chinese dominance over and within the party-state is unable to translate 'one China, two systems' into the kind of democratically plural cultural autonomy for Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and especially Taiwan that would make it credible. Otherwise, this could help Beijing consolidate its superpower status as peer co-hegemon with an internally embattled US.

As such, it may not be outside the realm of political risk that eventual convergence between resistance to the Communist Party's policy of coercive ethno-linguistic cultural assimilation and intergenerational class contradictions destabilize the incumbent system (Hernandez 2018). This would be pending a more democratic face-saving adjustment to a more culturally and socially tolerant communist dispensation of a 'one China, two systems' arrangement. The geo-strategic logic of such a scenario for Xinjiang at the gateway into Beijing's trans-Eurasian integrationist Belt-Road grand strategy would seem an obvious beneficiary of such a culturally democratic departure from the current policy of mass re-educational internment justified as 'counter-terrorism.' Apart from how such adaptive adjustments might also benefit Beijing in the case of Tibet (and its relations with fellow BRICS, India) and Hong Kong, acknowledging the sovereign autonomy of Taiwan's 'political culture' might serve a better purpose in normalizing cross-strait relations than the possibility of a military solution to Taiwan's status (Greer 2018).

Beinart points out, Taiwan may be "the most dangerous example of American insolvency in the world" were Washington to really seriously consider making good on its 1979 Taiwan Relations Act to resist any use of force Beijing might employ against the island (Beinart 2018). In Beinart's estimation, "the United States cannot defend Taiwan today" and almost certainly "won't be able to in a decade or two" and should therefore try and work out an understanding that the US supports China's reunification with Taiwan along the "one country, two systems" principle wherein China commits "not to station troops or Communist Party officials in Taiwan, and to let Taiwan manage its domestic political affairs" (Beinart 2018).

However, this would have to be negotiated between Beijing and Taipei. It would imply Beijing respecting Taiwan's autonomous political *culture* which, in the process, Beijing might consider for Hong Kong as well where it has pretty much discredited 'one country, two systems' in practice: ditto Tibet and Xinjiang. In fact, such a possibility regarding Taiwan was implied in President Xi Jinping's otherwise hard-line remarks on unification at

the beginning of 2019 when he said “China would respect the Taiwanese people’s *religious and legal freedoms* in a unified ‘one country, two systems’ framework.” (Buckley and Hornton 2019; and Hornton 2019) This has not turned out to be the case with Hong Kong’s similar political culture.

Whether or not the Communist Party is internally confident enough to seriously contemplate such interpretations of its ‘One China’ dictum, Beijing’s party-state seems sure over time to face increasing class contradictions that might interact with unresolved centre-periphery dynamics that combine, and also its hybrid totalitarian communist-capitalism under the challenge of sustainability. Certainly, once US-China relations are over the current contretemps of Trump’s reckless tit-for-tat trade war; however, as the status of Taiwan and a formal ending of China’s civil war unfolds, it might serve as a fitting point of departure for Washington and Beijing renewing engagement leading to a more wide-ranging global strategic dialogue (Beinart 2018). This could focus on how the two superpowers might jointly work toward an accommodation in global governance in both their national interests, factoring in consideration of a possible NATO-SCO cooperative security arrangement in the Indo-AfPak and Hindu-Kush, and how that might serve as the beginning of a US-Russia-China UNSC reform scenario. The bilateral Sino-American connection seems seminal to a future sustainable world order of peace and security beyond Trump’s trade war against Beijing.

Post-Trump Sino-American Relations and Beyond

The US and China might be considered at the sub-ordinal apex of the G7¹² and BRICS. Respectively, the two countries could potentially navigate a G7-BRICS dialogue within something of a UNSC-G20 format in managing a protracted transition toward a more democratically normalized pluralist world order (Cilliers, 2016). Former President Jimmy Carter, in marking the 40th anniversary of his 1979 normalization of US-China relations advocates a US-China partnership in promoting Africa’s development (Carter 2018a; Carter 2018b). Russia’s role in this apex equation is something else altogether. Moscow’s current hybrid warfare against the US and the west aims at fuelling destabilizing primarily right wing fragmentation. This compels defensive postures of containment and pre-emptive preparedness in strengthening democratic electoral and governing infrastructures. Pending a time when the Kremlin is under a less revanchist regime, one more conducive to constructive engagement, and a more normalized diplomacy should be in order. Indeed, the Trump administration attempts a confused transactional ‘divide-and-rule’ gambit between Moscow and Beijing while being played by both. China is emphasized as the greater threat in what some see as a ‘new cold war’ when strategy might better dictate a neo-Rooseveltian US-China-Russia triangular strategy. This could place emphasis on a tacit Sino-American ‘G2’ interaction that extends to Moscow via the Sino-Russian ‘comprehensive strategic partnership.’ Certainly the arms control and nuclear non-proliferation imperatives introduce a sense of urgency in this regard.

Such prospects might even include India as well in terms of the Russia-India-China ‘RIC’ triangle. RIC stands at the nexus of the BRICS-SCO sub-ordinal clade within a global order wherein the US-led G7 suborder will reflect a more strategically autonomous Europe. As such, Brussels may be better positioned in mediating east-west dynamics against the currently polarized standoff with Moscow. Hence, the importance of an eventual NATO-

SCO accommodation revolving around Afghanistan's conflict resolution that includes America joining China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and possibly the BRICS New Development Bank as well.

Such moves could facilitate broader east-west Eurasian settlement evolution. They would be inclusive of Russia's imperatives while parlaying such prospects into a UNSC reform scenario. These are the geopolitical strategic dynamics in a more global South-oriented refocusing of geostrategy that needs to inform the US Democratic Party foreign policy-national security thinking for extricating Washington from the zero-sum triumphalism thinking, which was generated during the Bill Clinton administration from 1993 to 2001. Instead, a Democrats position should have built on the non-NATO expansion understanding that emanated from George Herbert Walker Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev's interactions that ended the cold war.

As such, the cold war ended but the east-west struggle continued. Hence, the potential importance of a NATO-SCO Afghanistan-focused condominium. Still, intimately intertwined with central Eurasian stabilization is the Middle East conundrum. This is the legacy of the Israeli-neoconservative-instigated Iraq war by a George W. Bush-Dick Cheney destabilization of Iraq. Whereby Iran became the chief regional power beneficiary accompanied by a Bush-Cheney sectarian geopolitical agenda, which has gained new life with a vengeance under Trump after Obama's bid to defuse it via JCPOA. On the basis of Obama's seminal Atlantic interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, the JCPOA was to have commenced a process of evolving the US toward a more even-handed off-shore balancing posture rather than the re-quagmired scenario unfolding under Trump (Goldberg 2016). It will therefore be up to a future Democratic administration to go well beyond Obama in unravelling the US from the untenably retrograde commitments that pro-Israel GOP administrations have committed Washington to; done at the expense of a more strategically sustainable global posture as well as at the expense of internal renewal domestic imperatives.

Kaganism Beware

All said, Democrats may want to be on guard regarding prospects of Stephen Walt's "liberal-neocons" mounting a comeback bid to reassert hegemony over the party's foreign policy-national security policy apparatus. The closing William Kristol's neoconservative flagship, *The Weekly Standard* has been viewed as signalling a broader migratory trend among 'Never Trumpers' on the intellectual right back into the liberal establishment (Heilbrunn 2018).¹³ *The New York Review of Books'* Jacob Heilbrunn cites prominent pundits including Max Boot at the Council on Foreign Relations and regular CNN commentator along with Kristol, Jennifer Rubin, formerly with *Human Events* and the American Jewish Committee's *Commentary Magazine* along with the "decamping" of Bari Weiss and Bret Stephens from *The Wall Street Journal* to the *New York Times* as indicative of what could be interpreted as a re-mainstreaming; such a process has the potential to greatly complicate any major departure from the interventionist foreign policy-national security playbook keeping America mired in 'imperial overstretch.' (Heilbrunn 2018)

Here, selectively short memories via Gil Scott Heron's 'amnesia express,' are an ever-present danger given the renewed vigour of commentary emanating from another prominent member of this lineage, Robert Kagan, now a contributor to the *Washington Post's* stable of punditocracy and such outlets as *Politico* (Kagan 2018). Kagan

is emblematic of the Obama-Rhodes 'blob' of a foreign policy establishment that has resisted adaptive departures from bipartisan triumphalism in contradiction to growing foreign policy polarization amid tectonic shifts in the international system.

Kagan, once with Kristol's Standard and a leading light at the Iraq war-mongering Project for the New American Century now hangs his hat at the Brookings Institution.¹⁴ He was one among the more prominent 'Never Trumpers', who emerged among Republican foreign policy thinkers opposed to Trump's hostile takeover of the GOP during the 2016 presidential campaign. Kagan, in many ways personifies the "liberal-neocon" chameleon be-devilling American foreign policy. It should not be forgotten how Kagan and the entire neoconservative intelligentsia paved the way for Trump in their redirecting George W. Bush away from refocusing a so-called 'compassionate conservatism' on the domestic front into the immediate post-9/11 adventurism that quagmired the US in Iraq. In the process, this upset Clinton's 'dual containment' to the benefit of Iranian regional resurgence and fuelled sectarian geopolitical dynamics that Trump has dangerously elevated to the level of farce in his embrace of Netanyahu and Riyadh's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

It should also be remembered how Kagan gave intellectual 'Venus' vs. 'mars' cover for former defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld's European 'divide-and-rule' in Rumsfeld's differentiating 'Old' and 'New' Europe in what has to be seen as precursor to Trump's Euro-contemp.¹⁵ Kagan's US as 'masculine'-Europe as 'feminine' dichotomy is unmistakable when arguably long evolving circumstances in the international system indeed dictate a more feminist imperative in the conducting of global relations. Yet, in 2016, Kagan was already gravitating from the GOP back into the Democratic camp of candidate Hillary Clinton (not an unlikely move since his wife, Victoria Nuland held the position of Clinton and John Kerry's Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, currently CEO of the Centre for a New American Security). Such chameleonism may be expected given the history of neo-conservatism dating back to Washington Democratic Senator Henry 'Scoop' Jackson's Coalition for a Democratic Majority. This became a way-station for those who became 'Reagan Democrats' on their way to substantially taking over the GOP foreign policy establishment along with the domestic policy critique spearheaded by Daniel Patrick Moynihan's problematizing President Lyndon Johnson's Poverty Program.¹⁶

As a result of Trump's rise, this outdated ideological cohort is homeless, in search of a place to 'hang their hat' amid the farcical chaos Trump has made of conventional Republican hard line-ism. Democrats, and America, may be in for serious trouble if neoconservative recycling is allowed to gain the degree of momentum that could be forthcoming from likes of such influential commentators. For example, Kagan's reflections on the interactive great power-regional bloc rivalries leading up to the first world war are not accompanied by serious acknowledgement of the more multilaterally international cooperation possibilities of 21st century regionalism. Today's geopolitical context mediated by global economic integration complicates great power state actors in ways not encountered at the turn of the 19-20th century (Kagan 2018). As some commentators remain in latter day great power rivalry frame of analytical reference, it is old fashioned geopolitical power politics of zero-sum, win-lose imagining that drives discourse. Moreover, whether or not American leadership has the 'resolve' to

maintain hegemonic primacy that remains triumphalist in trade, a more nuanced emphasis on international cooperation of 'Venus' vintage is urgently required.

Intervention conundrums

This lack of nuance assuredly carries with it the age-old interventionist impulses that have misguided past Democratic and Republican administrations alike into fiscally wasteful overseas quagmires from which 'lessons learned' seem never to be processed. A rethought Democratic foreign policy departure from liberal and conservative interventionist inclinations will have to articulate a much stronger case for suppressing such tendencies while channelling them within a more robust international cooperation architecture embedded in a reformist strengthening of the UN system. Thus, creating conditions for multilateral interventionism through a reformed UN system would also have to carry with it a large degree of subsidiarity in interventionist responsibilities and institutional governance that strengthens regional and continental organizations and groupings.

This complicates US interventionist inclinations informed by humanitarian and/or responsibility to protect (R2P) urgings as well as more realpolitik considerations. It might also deprioritize a standard democratic and governance process liberalism, which can be easily manipulated in favour of arriving at more stabilizing imperatives of managing differing aspects of cultural pluralism. However, such interventionist restraining UN-centred multilateralist decentralization as the crux of what could serve as American foreign policy reform should be inextricably linked to advancing a progressive domestic renewal agenda within the national security calculus.

IV.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, not only does "liberal-neocon" incumbency in American statecraft come up short on the problematique of interventionism, it also comes up short in the interrelated areas of defining 21st century threat perceptions and preparedness. Here again, a more global South reorientation of the US foreign policy calculus has to confront the matrix of challenges recently summarized in the *Financial Times* review of Martin Rees' *On the Future: Prospects for Humanity*: threats caused "collectively to the biosphere, and threats that stem from the greater vulnerability of our interconnected world to error or terror induced by individuals or small groups,"; interactively implicating proliferating 'non-traditional threats' associated with international illegal trafficking, criminal and insurgent-cum-terror networks along with uncontrolled, rampant resource depletion complicity from governments and commercial interests (Cornwell, 2018).

This threat matrix mandates an alternative much less 'masculine' mind-set and preparedness instead of re-fighting the wars and cold wars of the 20th century. Rather, it is the combined complex challenges emanating from the legacies of colonialism driving inter and intra-state geopolitical instabilities destabilizing localities and regions in the developing world interacting with demographic pressures, environmental threats from resource

depletion and global warming. Here, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Africa and Latin America provide the battlegrounds of engagement with the mass migratory and humanitarian spill overs they produce.

This is why the Trump administration's reversals at the global level on strategic arms control negotiations and nuclear non-proliferation are of such concern in terms of international security. An incipient multipolar arms race would be a nightmare scenario on top of the new set of challenges confronting the global community. Thus, strategic stability and equilibrium is required in order to shift focus onto stabilizing the geopolitical terrains of human and environmental security.

As this relates to US security strategy in the global South, 'nation-building' challenges emanating from such a matrix of diffuse and interconnected security threats cannot, and should not, reside in the superpower domain of a 'lonely superpower' in urgent need of its own democratic national rebuilding in coping with relative decline challenges. Rather, such 'nation-building' challenges, accompanied by environmental and humanitarian security imperatives, must reside in the domain of a reformed and continentally and regionally decentralized UN system. A more multifaceted humanitarian-environmental multilateral security force structure seems a more urgent priority than conventional military preparedness, including the prevailing imperfect peacekeeping architecture.

In the final analysis, sooner better than later, Africa will have to be elevated to a much higher priority in Washington's calculus given the Rees focus on "the population clock" over the next three decades wherein he "predicts a world population of 9bn by 2050, and perhaps a decade or so earlier" as he argues that Africa's demographics "could even push us towards 11bn beyond 2050." By that point, he projects that half of the world's children will live in Africa as well as the poorest 'bottom billion.' (Cornwell 2018)

"Their predicament is invidious. They have mobile phones, social media, but no proper toilets and clean water. So '...these same technologies mean that those in deprived parts of the world are aware of what they are missing', triggering 'greater embitterment, motivating mass migration or conflict'."

Is Rees' future prospects for humanity sufficiently on the radar screen of the Democrat's foreign policy intelligentsia and think-tanks to motivate a tectonic shift away from the increasingly embattled "liberal-neocon" blob of an out of touch Washington establishment? At present, Republicans are in 'know nothing' denialism on just about the entire panorama of 21st century threat perceptions or are reflexively committed to hard-line unilateralist responses to such challenges. This may rule out the kind of cross-partisan left-right convergence advocated by Walt and others though congressional outrage over the murder of Jamal Khashoggi could (wishful thinking?) portend such possibilities that could conceivably lead eventually to a new bipartisan foreign policy-national security consensus.

But to regroup down that path, Democrats will first have to reimagine a new foreign-domestic policy renewal and re-strengthening paradigm for managing America's relative decline; it will need to be informed by shifting geopolitical, geo-economic and strategic realities demanding a sharp break from post-war, post-cold war and war-on-terror legacies and threat perceptions. This takes us back to the African challenge raised by Rees. Given the economic rapprochement unfolding between China and Japan and Japan's collaboration with India in their

African Growth Corridor initiative, there is no reason why the African Union could not negotiate a 'quad' involving the US; and perhaps a 'quintet' bringing in the EU within a UN-centred framework.

This may be where African-Americans, including those of us of African immigrant descent, and the wider African affairs constituency may need to enter into urgent conversation with our African counterparts in brainstorming such a scenario. This scenario would thus prepare for Africa's return to its origins as the centre of the human future while integrating the global South into a sustainable world order. The health of the planet and humanity's future depends on it. This is why post-Trump 'business as usual' in American foreign – and domestic – policy must be avoided. The Democratic alternative should be prepared for this imperative. *A luta continua!*

Postscript

Much has happened since this essay was written and periodically updated over the past several months. This period predates the midterm elections, extending on into the pre-Christmas Trumpian-GOP shutdown of the Federal Government in 2018, national security adviser John Bolton's attempt to qualify Trump's Syrian troop withdrawal with a protective pro-Kurdish caveat along with Secretary of State Pompeo's petty counter-Obama Mideast policy address in Cairo; it amounted to little more than a hard-line evangelical creed of anti-Iran simplicities pandering to Israel and Saudi Arabia in the vain hope of constructing an Israeli-Sunni strategic alliance against Tehran while abandoning Palestinian self-determination and the no longer credible 'two-state solution.' Meanwhile, one of the casualties of Trump's shutdown in the Senate was the shutting down of the freedom of speech-challenged Israel Anti-Boycott Act (now, post-shutdown, back before the Senate in a vote that could polarize Democrats on Mideast policy going into 2020). However, with Democrats assuming decisive control of the House of Representatives amid a bevy of presidential contenders cranking up their 2020 primary campaigns, the partisan policy skirmishes over the future of American foreign policy were shifting into high gear by the beginning of 2019. *Politico* reported intentions of incoming House Foreign Affairs Committee chair, New York congressman Eliot Engel to reign presidential war-making powers by revisiting the 9/11 inspired Authorization for Use of Military Force Act (Bender and Hellman 2018). If so, this would come none too soon as the New York Times recently reported on how "Pentagon Officials Fear Bolton's Actions Increase Risk of Clash With Iran." (Bender and Hellman 2018)

As hawkish as most of the US military and national security elite are on Iran, there is virtual unanimity against the US initiating military hostilities with Tehran, an aversion shared by Israel's military elite as well. It is against this backdrop of heightened instability in US national security strategy on just about every theatre of global engagement that neoconservative 'Never Trumpers' within the foreign policy establishment have begun attacking Democratic 2020 presidential contenders vying for the honours of taking on Trump. Hence, Council on Foreign Relations 'house neocon' Max Boot opening up on 2020 contender Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren in her *Foreign Affairs* article calling for "A Foreign Policy for All" by "strengthening democracy – at Home and Abroad." This prompted Eric Levitz, a leading analyst and commentator for *New York Magazine* to summarize Boot's attack on Warren as "Opposing Neo-conservatism Makes You As Bad As Trump, Neocon Explains." (Levitz 2018) Playing left against right to occupy what – the 'radical centre'? – is the neocon strategy of re-establishing Pax-Americana as Washington's default posture.

Hence, a follow-up *Washington Post* Robert Kagan article co-authored with former U.S. deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser in the Obama administration, Anthony J. Blinken on how "'America First' is only making the world worse" while "here's a better approach" in terms of 'preventive diplomacy and deterrence,' 'trade and technology,' 'allies and institutions,' and of course 'immigration and refugees.' (Blinkin and Kagan 2019) A 'kinder gentler' neo-conservatism perhaps? Taking a page from Obama's 'nation-building at home' Blinkin and Kagan end up acknowledging: "Nation-Building at home and promoting the stability and success of others go hand in hand." Of course they do – 'motherhood and apple pie'! Yet no mention is made of revisiting the United Nations as the premier institutional burden-sharing centrepiece of global governance and

how NATO will have to come terms with the trans-Eurasian SCO in re-stabilizing the Eurasia-centred strategic landscape. Of course this implies post-hegemonic multilateral power-sharing which Walt's 'liberal-neocons' cannot bring themselves to acknowledge in coming to terms with Zakarian 'post-American world' realities. But the world is not just post-American. It is post-western.

This does not have to negate American leadership. It does mean radically redefining American leadership in non-hegemonic terms in committing to a World Peace international security strategy in a pluralistic multipolar global order; it places a premium on continued multilateral construction allowing for redirecting resources toward re-strengthening America's social and economic fabric weakened over decades of Republican assault on the Roosevelt-Johnsonian welfare state. What is required is a progressive agenda integrating American foreign and domestic policy into a holistic grand strategy of global sustainable security based on multilateral power-sharing imperatives as opposed to unilateralist full-spectrum strategic dominance. These, it would seem, ought to broadly set the terms of policy-political debate rather than narrow-based single issue tendencies out of strategic context.

Democrats have managed to claw back an important portion of what was threatening to turn America into an illiberal one-party right-wing dictatorship. This has been achieved with a brand new generational crop of activist congressional Democrats. Moving forward, much of America's and the world's future hinges on how this new political cohort carries forth debate over interlinked foreign and domestic policies; this includes to what extent this debate gathers force outside the eastern seaboard elite 'revolving door' of foreign policy and partisan think tank establishments – and to what extent minorities, especially blacks and Hispanics are able to intellectually influence its parameters and context beyond/in addition to purely inner-focused concerns. It may, in turn, also hinge on whether or not a broader and more extensive mass democratic movement dynamic emerges off of the 2018 midterm electoral mobilization not unlike that which overcame a minority dictatorship that once ruled the roost at the bottom of the African continent.

Ultimately, a legislative initiative such as advocated by Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania professor Eric W. Orts involving congressional passage of a Senate Reform Act to bypass the constitutionally entrenched 'one state, 2 senators' rule, increasingly accentuating the minority rule distortion in American politics will be required (Orts 2019). In the final analysis, a post-hegemonic American leadership posture hinges on the expansion of democracy and majority-rule in the United States itself.

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¹ An international intergovernmental military alliance similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

² Poignantly pointed out by Faris (2018) "When Defense Secretary James Mattis resigned last week, he took with him one of the last bastions of D.C.-as-usual foreign policymaking in the Trump administration...On the other hand, Mattis was largely aligned with a D.C. policy consensus about America's role in the Middle East that has been one of the country's worst foreign policy disasters."

³ In Samuel Huntington's, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1999, pp.35-49. Perhaps the most conceptually accurate description of the global power hierarchy which Huntington defined as 'uni-multipolar,' by the end of the last century, he observed "in the eyes of many countries, America is the rogue superpower" while "most of the world does not want America to be its policeman."

⁴ ASEAN member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

⁵ The 4th Eastern Economic Forum was convened on September 10, 2018, by Russian President Vladimir Putin, which included Chinese President, Xi Jinping, as a main guest.

⁶Ironically, US participation in Iraq and Syria that was conducted by the Obama administration also addressed regional issues through smaller units that recruited, trained and assisted local forces that allowed Iraqis and Syrians to fight for themselves as well as support a strategic US interest. This effort had started to come to fruition and by 2016 and 2017, when the Trump administration had taken office, these operations had started yielding very positive results.

⁷ In a thoughtful critique of 'American exceptionalism,' arguing the linkage of national security to domestic renewal that strengthens the middle class, it is suggested that "the U.S. should rebalance its priorities" by among other things, grouping defence, diplomacy, development, trade, investment and technology into "a unified national-security budget, which would allow for shifting money from outdated military systems and bloated line items to, say, investments in artificial intelligence and resilient infrastructure." (Sullivan 2019)

⁸ For the most part, US and European diplomacy has favored Morocco in this stalemate. However, Trump's national security advisor John Bolton is seen as at least equally open to Algeria.

⁹ Post-midterm electoral analyses in a variety of media such as *Politico*, *The Democratic Strategist*, *Five-Thirty-Eight* and *Cook Political Report* to name just a few of the more prominent sources have regularly tracked US interregional electoral demographics.

¹⁰ Where the black intelligentsia has become well represented is among the American literary cultural elite.

¹¹ Although Mathias Risse has referred to pluralist internationalism in reference to reconceptualising global justice, in this context it is intended to address the need for liberalism to acknowledge the geopolitical realities of multipolar pluralism as naturally endemic to a global order that will never reflect norms and values universalism and that will have to accommodate regional power dynamics and spheres of influence within a ruled-based order.

¹² Group of Seven (G7) consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Previously known as the G8, however Russia permanently withdrew in 2016. BRICS emerged out of G8 failure to expand to include China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico.

¹³ Kristol is son of Irving Kristol, considered the 'father of neoconservatism' and former editor and co-founder with Daniel Bell of *The Public Interest*.

¹⁴ The Project of the New American Century was housed at the establishment conservative American Enterprise Institute.

¹⁵ It was Kagan's *Of Paradise and Power: American and Europe in the New World Order* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2003, 103pp.) that propelled him into neocon prominence in follow-up to his 2002 *Policy Review* article titled "Power and Weakness." *Policy Review* has been a long prominent conservative journal published by the Hoover Institution.

¹⁶ Curiously, there is a Social Democrats USA lineage including the likes of current long-serving President (for life?) of the National Endowment of Democracy, Carl Gershman and organizer of Martin Luther King's March on Washington, Bayard Rustin. They both co-authored "Africa, Soviet imperialism and the retreat of American power," *Commentary Magazine*, October 1977.