

Paradigm Shift in the US Foreign Policy towards NATO during Trump Administration

Sidra Khan*

Abstract

Committed to restore America to its former glory by advertising the slogan of “America First,” Trump’s leadership exhibited his antagonism to honour the international agreement and partnerships, among which NATO agreement holds the top priority. Former US President Donald Trump’s, labelling of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as obsolete did not only question the significance of NATO as an organisation, but also challenged the traditional values shared among the transatlantic partners as well as the liberal international order it promoted. The article aims to highlights the features of Trump’s personality which impacted the formulation of US foreign policy towards NATO using the theoretical tool of psychoanalysis (understanding Trump’s personality traits and analysing their impact on making of the US foreign policy during Trump’s administration). Although, Trump was not the first US President who accused NATO partners of their inadequacies. However, due to Trump’s aggressive style of conducting the US foreign policy, the NATO partners demonstrated a positive change by making up for their individual lacking in NATO alliance particularly with the issue of burden sharing.

Keywords: US Foreign Policy, NATO, Trump’s Leadership Style, Neoclassical Realism, Foreign Policy Decision-Making.

Introduction

The presidential tenure of Donald Trump is regarded as something of a historical exception in the scholarly world. Former President Trump’s inconsistent and incoherent approach towards the international system perplexed the studies conducted in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis

* *The author is PhD Scholar, School of Politics & IR (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.*

(FPA) which earned Trump's doctrine the title of unpredictable.¹ Ex-President Trump during his office years was often seen resonating to the idea where America lacked a sound and comprehensive foreign policy since the post-cold war and the subsequent collapse of former Soviet Union. In Trump's perspective, following the end of Cold War, the US policymakers began to amuse themselves with the formation of an international world order. While neglecting critical matters at hand, American policymakers focused more on how they wished to look at the world rather than looking at the world, the way it is.

Boldly put, the transatlantic alliance is regarded as the foundational structure of the post World War II (WWII) global order, anchored by both, the US and Europe's mutual commitment towards the values of freedom, justice, human rights, right to democracy and free trade. And despite numerous alterations over trade, global security or diplomatic practices, the transatlantic alliances proved its resilience for decades. Needless to say, this resilience was put to test by the former US president Trump, with his foreign policy of 'America first,' which prioritises American interest above all other discrediting the long-standing international values and traditions.

Early in 1950s, as the study concerning FPA was evolving by tapping into the psychological and the cognitive understanding of a leader,² the association between presidents' attributes and his behaviour in dealing with foreign policy issues became prominent. David Barber³ while conducting his pivotal study on presidential traits argued how the personality of a president becomes significant during foreign policy formulation. Because the intangible variables of his conduct become significant even on insignificant matters. On the other hand, Hermann⁴ concluded that the foreign policy decision making is indeed the manifestation of leader's personality which is slightly influenced by the constraints of both the internal bureaucratic machinery (domestic matters) or the international

¹ Fuchs, "Trump's Doctrine of Unpredictability," *Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/13/donald-trumps-doctrine-unpredictability-world-edge>.

² Farhan Siddiqi and Nadeem Mirza, *Introducing International Relations: Concepts, Theories, Practices* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming), 80.

³ James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House* (Routledge, 2019), 34.

⁴ Hermann and Karboo, "Leadership Styles of Prime Ministers," *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 9, no 3, <https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-984390029-7>, 254.

system which generally confine the president to conform to the norms. This was evident during the time of sovereign presidencies partially due to immense constitutional power disposed to the president. This ultimately leads the president towards defining his administration, the goals to achieve its foreign policy, restructure the machinery which design foreign policy by making the appointments of his favourites in that machinery and making it into an image of president's own liking.⁵ Since the US administrative system is based on hierarchy; therefore, it is safer to assume that most of the foreign policy decisions would be reflection of president's personality.

Following the existing literature on FPA, especially emphasising on the individual leadership style, particularly arguing how foreign policy making is a product of conceptual complexity. The importance of personality, in the realm of foreign policy making entails leaders motives and ideas and the basic assumption that decision is being taken by the individual human ultimately and not the state. This complexity is thereafter demonstrated in the leadership style by judgment of values, the perspective of right or wrong, undertaking risk or averting risk and sound reasoning.⁶ In the case of Trump's leadership style, the conceptual understanding is transactional – money first spectrum. Confined to a transactional spectrum of understanding, the former president Trump used to assess and categorise the information provided to him accordingly which states he can call as allies and which states are enemies of the US.

For instance, NATO allies who have been paying their fair share in NATO were considered as allies of the US, whereas the allies whose payments were lacking or not following the agreed rule of two per cent were regarded as free-riders and an enemy of the US. Similarly, all the diplomatic questions that were complicated in nature and were meant to be handled by cautious negotiations were taken up as economic opportunities which resultantly surpass the overarching geopolitical undertakings of the US. In summation Trump's perspective of world can be well understood from a plutocratic standpoint – a government that comprises of wealthier individuals.

⁵ Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*.

⁶ Nadeem Mirza, "The Role of Leadership and Idiosyncrasy Towards Pakistan," *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Winter 2018): 45.

This plutocratic view of Trump is reflected in his foreign policy that displayed an extreme kind of disparagement for the multilateral agreements. Fitzsimmons drew a link between presidents' personality attributes and their inclination towards constraints, if they avert them or accept them. The idea set forth by Fitzsimmons marks distinction among leaders based on their personalities. Leader having strong believes to control events are more inclined to challenge the constraints as compared to those with slightly lower believes in controlling events. Secondly, the leaders having higher level of mistrust towards others are again prone to challenge the given constraints than those whose level of mistrust is lesser towards other. These personality attributes give a clear understanding of whether the leader would be a constraint contender or a constraint considerer. Leaders who are constraint contenders are more prone towards withdrawing from international understandings.

Shannon and Keller in their book, *Leadership Style and International Norm Violation*⁷ have argued a similar aspect that certain personality characteristics as a stimulus for the leaders into breaking traditional norms. These inclinations of nonconformity and breaking norms as a contender especially when constraints faced by leaders are opposite to leaders own personal belief. In other words, right after Trump took his presidential oath, Robert Kagan in his article predicted the future of the US by stating, "the US will be out from the world order business."⁸ His prediction proved to be right as Trump started to threaten and break the core fabric of liberal institutionalism which took decades for all the previous US presidents to build and exert their influence over the globe system. Trump's belief in his capacity of controlling events convinced him to challenge the constraints which were put on the US as being a key member of international agreements and transnational treaties.

⁷ Vaughn P. Shannon and Jonathan W. Keller, "Leadership Style and International Norm Violation: The Case of the Iraq War," *Journal of Foreign Policy*, vol. 3, Issue no.1 (January 2007): 89

⁸ Robert Kagan, "Trump Marks the World with Indispensable Nation," *Financial Times*, November 19, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/782381b6-ad91-11e6-ba7d-76378e4fef24>

Shades of Trump's Leadership Style

There is no denying the fact that former President Trump disapproved several international multilateral treaties. However, if one takes out the emotionalism and theatrical flavour from Trump's statements, evidence to his logic seems to prevail. Dumbrell in *Evaluating President Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Leadership* noted "Ex-President Trump has rejected the set of principles put forth by Woodrow Wilson in 1919, then any other US president."⁹ Wilson's ideologies signalled towards the value of collective security, the commitment US made towards the global market, preserving the alliance among democracies, regulated by being a party to various multilateral organisations. But on the same hand, the "America first" identity of the US foreign policy under Ex-president Trump was limited and an interest-based policy that was disposing the narrative of American exceptionalism.

On the contrary, the scholars who tried to justify Ex-president Trump's ways of decision making have also emphasised upon Trump's radical diversion with respect to past administrations. Randall Schweller declared that "Trump should have revoked the older generations of the US presidents if he meant to achieve his goals. Since the previous presidents proclaimed their enactments for either the preservation of liberal institutionalism or neo-conservatism and were to be blamed for more harm than good."¹⁰

Since Trump's saw the world from the perspective of a classical realist, his understanding towards the Trans-Atlantic partnership was based on a zero-sum game. Seeing that, the US has been assisting and covering for its European partners with their contribution in NATO alliance drove the US to increased financial debts, while simultaneously agreeing to least beneficial deal from their partners. Such sentiment has acted as Trump's driving force to renegotiate the poor investment deals made by the American and European allies along with the raging statements and policies leading to

⁹ Dumbrell Jhon, "Evaluating President Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Leadership," European Consortium for Political Research, <https://gc.ecpr.eu/Filestore/paperproposal/a05de729-4edb-4901-b909-42b78667cd7a.pdf>

¹⁰ Randall Schweller, "Three Cheers for Trump's Foreign Policy: What the Establishment Misses," *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol 97 (Summer 2018): 140.

increased tensions among the European nations vis-à-vis the American stance on NATO alliance.

In a bid to ease the concerns of European states, with respect to the US commitment to the NATO alliance, Mike Pence in 2017 Munich conference stated that “America is the biggest supporter of NATO and there is no doubt in America’s firm commitment to the trans-Atlantic partnership.”¹¹ However, Pence’s words could barely unease the European of their distress, for the reason that later in May 2017,¹² Trump refused to acknowledge the NATO’s collective defence Article 5 during the Brussels summit. However, Trump double backed after few weeks and endorsed America’s complete commitment to the Article 5 of NATO charter during a press conference in Poland taking the world by surprise.¹³

Plutocratic Foreign Policy of Trump

Considering the Ex-President Trump’s resolve from the above explained example, he carried almost all the merits of a leader with an aggressive behaviour as pointed out by Hermann.¹⁴ Such a leader can be expected to undertake confrontational practices in any opposing situation, desiring for a swift resolution at the same time, being influential and domineering without hesitating to utilise brute force. The political constraints are regarded as mere bump in the road for Trump and therefore did not restrict him from exerting his power, rather such constraints acted as a challenge which he deemed to conquer. Since these traits were deeply rooted in Trumps personality for being a real estate tycoon who was a part of his background. Before being president, (currently former president) Trump in his business

¹¹ Macaskill, “Pence’s Speech on NATO, Leaves European’s Troubled Over Alliance Future,” *Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/18/trump-pence-eu-nato-munich-conference-germany-britain>

¹² Rosie Gray, “Trump Declines to Affirm NATO’s Article 5,” *The Atlantic*, May 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/trump-declines-to-affirm-natos-article-5/528129/>

¹³ Jacob Pramuk, “Trump Endorse Nato’s Mutual Defence Pact in Poland, After Failing to do so on First European Trip,” *CNBC* July 6, 2017, <https://www.cnb.com/2017/07/06/trump-us-stands-firmly-behind-nato-article-5.html>

¹⁴ Hermann, *Assessing the Foreign Policy Role Orientations of Sub-Saharan African Leaders*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1987), 87.

practices always relied upon his own instincts, thus affecting this neglect for systematic procedures and dismissal to counsel.

The core believes held by Ex-President Donald Trump about the US foreign policy were archaic in nature. From his campaign slogans to his presidential inaugural address, he maintained the idea of American role in world where the US acts as a hegemon of the international system. Trumps motto of “America First” or “Making America great again” resonated with his long-held viewpoint. Thomas Wright, research fellow at Brookings institute, argued that Trump’s perspective of the US can be traced back in an idealised past.¹⁵ As currently America is facing economic downfall because the rest of the nations are profiting from the US.

Wright also asserted that there are three core convictions that overwhelm Trump’s perspective while making decisions on foreign policy issues.¹⁶ His frequent criticism towards security alliances of the US and his firm resolve that the American allies should have paid more for the security granted to them by the US; condemning almost all multilateral trade agreements; and lastly having a preference towards authoritarian regimes especially in Russia. Then again, this inclination did not include China, as Trump deemed China as an eminent threat to the US dominance globally. Trump boldly accused China’s practices as predatory like manipulation of currency. Briefly put, Trump annoyance stemmed from his opinion that the US was getting very less for the protection it offered to various nations and also for rescuing and ensuring global peace and order, which Trump recognised as a negotiating chip or a marketable asset to be used with either friends or foes.

At one-point Bob Woodward in his book *Fear*,¹⁷ it is stated that Trump during a conversation said that if Mattis wished that he (Trump) should heed his advice towards NATO’s members then Mattis should retire and become their rent collector.” While in Woodward’s other book *Rage*,¹⁸ the author has quoted an incident where Mattis realised his failure to sway Trump’s

¹⁵ Thomas Wright, “What a Second Trump Term Would Mean for the World,” Brookings Institute, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/01/what-a-second-trump-term-would-mean-for-the-world/>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Bob Woodward, *Fear Trump in the White House* (Simon and Schuster, 2018).

¹⁸ Bob Woodward, *Rage* (Simon and Schuster, 2020).

opinion with regards to NATO members, particularly the unilateral decision to pull out from the Syrian crisis, without informing the alliance members. Both examples mentioned above, illustrate Trump's inclination of walking away from their allies when it no longer serves an American interest, which not only highlights Trump's transactional way of conducting American foreign policy while also orienting back to Trump's primary belief that allies has been tricking the US for long, therefore, the US should act alone now.

Trump's commitment and extreme condemnation towards NATO was his expression of voice.¹⁹ Since the US belief system is circled around institutionalised understanding, therefore constraining the president to make any choice falling out the institutional norms. Since Trump was known for norm breaking, surrendering to institutional constraints was never an option. However, this also undertook that the US under Trump, never intended to exit from NATO.

As maintained in the above paragraphs regarding Trumps plutocratic perspective of world and treating all matters as business deals with appointing millionaires and billionaires for his administration. One such example is the Trump's first visit after being president was to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia mainly to finalise business deals worth billions of Dollars, and not to Canada or Mexico like the previous US presidents.²⁰ Additionally, his enthusiasm in the American longest security alliance, the NATO, has been to pump the European allies into paying the two per cent of the GDP from their total on NATO. Apart from that Trump lacked any desire to invest his efforts in political, diplomatic or security issues globally or at home. Thus, demonstrating Trump's motivations are derived from money and making business deals and not looking towards global policy forming or indulging into shared endeavours with other nations which resulted in Trump receiving heavy criticism from other leaders.²¹

¹⁹ Sperling and Webber, "Trump's Foreign Policy and NATO: Exit and Voice," *Journal of International Studies*, vol. 3, Issue no. 45, (June 2019): 470
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/trumps-foreign-policy-and-nato-exit-and-voice/CECD6A4DA95D3C177531E8C10A6E562B>

²⁰ Christopher and Asaf, "Low-Conceptual Complexity and Trump's Foreign Policy," *Journal of Global Affairs*, vol. 1, Issue no. 6 (February 2020),
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/23340460.2020.1734953>

²¹ Ibid.

Eugene B Kogan has expressed Trump's ways of negotiating as, "At the start, Trump is acting as an observer, beginning the negotiation by judging the power and vulnerabilities of his opposing correspondent. Next, he acts and being aware of the consideration media supplies, he uses that media attentiveness publicly into leveraging a constructive negotiation. Lastly, he is driven by instincts, goal achiever with a high tolerance of taking risks and derive strength from calamity."²²

Implications for NATO

The most striking issue in the US foreign policy where Ex-President Trump's leadership style started to affect the American security ties even before Trump was elected. It was predominantly related to the US understanding of Trans-Atlantic relations: NATO. Like all the US security alliances, Trump viewed the European members of NATO from the prism, if they are meeting the minimum two per cent contribution of their entire GDP into NATO or not. Originally this percentage target was approved during the 2014 NATO summit accommodated by a commitment in meeting the percentage target by the year 2024. Using Hans Speier statement as a reference which states, "You can disengage from a friend or ally by unilateral action."²³ Disengagement from an enemy requires bilateral action." Trump began to implement his policy towards NATO in a confrontational manner. From refusing to acknowledge Article 5 of NATO charter (the article of collective defence) and violating the conventionally long-standing norm of ensuring European allies of the US security protection towards them in case of any attack from Russia, Trump shook the foundation of the US values.²⁴

In 2016, Trump announced his narrative about allies paying their "equal share" in NATO which members were not. This narrative was supplemented with an affirmation of NATO being useless and obsolete and

²² Kogan, "Art of the Power Deal: The Four Negotiation Roles of Donald J. Trump," *Journal of International Negotiation*, vol. 1, Issue no. 35 (January 2019): 65
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/nejn.12265>

²³ Speier and Max Boot, *Disengagement* (Rand Corp: CA, 1958).

²⁴ Doug Bandow, "Donald Trump Dismisses US Foreign Policy Elite," *Forbes*,
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dougbandow/2016/05/16/donald-trump-dismisses-u-s-foreign-policy-elitewould-he-save-americans-from-unnecessary-war/#ed8d8b64b802>

whether the US would even need NATO.²⁵ During an interview, when asked if Trump would reach to help out a NATO member if it was attacked, Trump came out to declare that his decision would be based upon member state's contribution into the NATO alliance. These statements show Trump's disregard for international norms set forth by the US itself and his head on approach to conquer the constraints presented by the member states in not meeting the minimum percentage. On one occasion, Woodward quoted Trump while complaining about NATO: "I think US (we) would be really rich only if the US (we) were not stupid. The US (we) are being played especially by the NATO members."²⁶ Trump's perception of NATO here credits to his plutocratic viewpoint and the only benefit which could have been achieved was in monetary ways.

The plutocratic view was again displayed by Ex-President Trump on May 2017, NATO's Brussels summit.²⁷ Trump was seen pressurising and giving the allies an ultimatum, into meeting the required spending commitment. During the summit, Trump also confronted French President by asserting his dominance onto him with eyebrow rising and called Germany evil only because of the German car export to the US which was booming and yet they didn't contribute in the NATO as they should have done. Trump was also seen tweeting repeatedly about member states sharing NATO's burden and questioning if they will ever repay the US back?²⁸

Though Ex-President Trump's aggressive stance towards NATO members was maintained with his occasional threats of withdrawing from NATO. This also earned him the title of being famous critic of NATO.²⁹

²⁵ Ashley Parker, "Donald Trump says NATO is Obsolete," *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/02/donald-trump-tells-crowd-hed-be-fine-if-nato-broke-up>

²⁶ Woodward, *Fear*, 56.

²⁷ "Donald Trump Tells NATO Allies to Pay up at Brussels Talks," *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-40037776>

²⁸ Lutz, "Trump Privately Discussed Destroying NATO Alliance," *Vanity Fair*, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2019/01/trump-privately-discussed-destroying-nato-alliance>

²⁹ Jackson, "Donald Trump, NATO Leader Meet Amid Tensions Over Military Spending by US Allies," *USA Today*, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/04/02/donald-trump-nato-leader-jens-stoltenberg-meet-70th-anniversary/3330366002/>

However, by the end of 2019, his stance was mellowed. Upon NATO's 70th anniversary, Ex-President Trump proclaimed that "when he came, the situation of NATO was not good but now member states are catching up."³⁰ Trump stood in approval of allies' defence spending which endorsed Trump's money first logic in a subtle way.

Besides, Ex-President Trump's attention to small details can also be not ignored. Trump for a large part seems to be ignorant of the US militarist involvement in Europe and may be due to that Trump has never tried to lead any NATO summit. Apart from his consistent emphasis upon meeting the two per cent GDP limit. On one instance time he didn't even studied the files on which he agreed upon in 2018.³¹

Despite Trump's arrogance for ignorance and his obvious will to disregard diplomatic practices, his actions were not devoid of reason. Trump's continuous pressure upon allies may cause him to be hated by all the NATO members but it did complete the objective which Trump wanted to gain in the first place. As the defence spending figures today match to the numbers during 2014 Ukraine crisis, this increase was solely due to Trump's incessant probing.³² By indicating the possibility of the US exit from NATO, Ex-President Trump, installed the fear of abandonment among the NATO members, acting potent urgency in increasing their defence spending. Members like France, Germany and Canada, who openly rejected the American influence upon them, had to justify their sudden defence spending publicly, rendering Trump's stance as conclusive.³³

³⁰ Toosi and Herszenhorn, "NATO Aims for More Birthday, Less Bash, in Trump's Washington," *Politico*, <https://www.politico.eu/article/nato-aims-formore-birthday-less-bash-in-trumps-washington/>

³¹ Sperling and Webber, "Trump's Foreign Policy and NATO: Exit and Voice," *Journal of International Studies*, vol. 3, Issue no 45 (June 2019): 470, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/trumps-foreign-policy-and-nato-exit-and-voice/CECD6A4DA95D3C177531E8C10A6E562B>

³² "President Trump Remarks about Missile defence," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-announcing-missile-defence-review/>

³³ Reader Advocate, "Justin Trudeau Answer to Trump Spending Call," *Readers Advocate*, <https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/news/trudeau-bills-10-year-defence-spending-plan-as-answer-to-trump-spending-call/>

The prominent increase in defence spending was done by the eastern European nations who are quite exposed to Russian interference,³⁴ (Croatia, Lithuania and Baltics) whereas the states with higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) like Germany failed to reach the two per cent metric of NATO's contribution. In any case, the issue of burden sharing has given primary importance in all NATO summits even after the departure of President Trump.

However, keeping up with the above-mentioned argument, Trump's behaviour with allies and the ever-increasing substantial commitment of the US military in the Eastern Europe especially, to defend them against any attack represents logic of concealment. The idea of the US leaving NATO due to its uselessness to serve the American interest was verbalised by Trump as a deterrence measure. The US obligation to NATO has persevered through regardless, which ultimately conveys US interests and allows the US to demand that NATO members must follow them. Furthermore, Trump's personal conviction to be the sole reason, NATO allies began to invest in NATO's defence spending signifies that he had gained an individual stake in NATO's issues. Near the end of former President Trump's presidency, he declared: "I said NATO was outdated. Today NATO is no longer outdated" and has also conformed to the US obligation to Article 5, only when Trump yet just gotten affirmations on burden sharing.³⁵

For long the US has reaped the benefits from being NATO's head, but these benefits were managed at a price which America has been paying for long. Since the resources of an alliance are distributed equally among all members, the dominant asymmetry existing among members becomes a liability for one in an institutional setting.³⁶ This liability gradually undercuts the benefits thereby undermining the usefulness of such alliance.

³⁴ Sperling and Webber, "Trump's Foreign Policy and NATO: Exit and Voice," <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/review-of-international-studies/article/trumps-foreign-policy-and-nato-exit-and-voice/CECD6A4DA95D3C177531E8C10A6E562B>

³⁵ Herb Jeremy, "Trump Commits to NATO's Article 5," *CNN Politics*, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/09/politics/trump-commits-to-natos-article-5/index.html>

³⁶ Ikenberry and Deudney, "Liberal World: the Resilient Order," *Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 4, Issue no. 97 (Fall 2018): 16, https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/fora97§ion=76

NATO implemented the clause of burden sharing by all members equally right after the Cold War. Since then, the US has been contributing a major portion of its GDP towards NATO which reflected the American global responsibility and not only its commitment to the European defence.³⁷ Trump hostility towards allies as therefore a reminder of the forgotten understanding. The US' reliance on NATO is not only draining it but also counterproductive to its interests; therefore, Trump viewed the NATO members not as inescapable allies but as an unavoidable burden.

Trump may not be the first American President who suffered from institutional and bureaucratic restrictions, the blur lines of responsibilities and diplomatic ways. Trump was the first president who deliberately structured chaos.³⁸ Trump with his furious leadership style managed a long-standing issue of NATO's burden sharing by dropping bomb in a controlled manner. His business style of negotiating in intentional undercutting while chastening his staff and allies alike enabled him to secure selective and beneficial results for the US.

Conclusion

Being a former President, Trump's personality had limitations, such as inclination of shallow understanding towards matters of high importance, tendency to be overwhelmed with his official duties along with his likeness to be negligent of details, extreme proclivity to take impulsive decisions without realising their far-reaching consequences onto the US and the preference to favour old acquaintances over people with experience and capability in his cabinet and staff member. Thus, the presidency of Trump represented a risky arrangement of inadequate political and bureaucratic experience and high aptitude of arrogance and impulsiveness.

Trump identifies NATO as an organisation where allies should share equal burden amongst each other along with two per cent mandatory defence spending to be met by all the NATO members. This orientation is due to Trump's transactional modus operandi to view international relations.

³⁷ Osgood Robert, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 132.

³⁸ Wallace Thies, *Friendly Rivals: Bargaining and Burden-Shifting in NATO* (New York, Sharpe: Armonk, 2003), 175.

Fused with confrontational set of actions and the probability of violating diplomatic norms, Trump has been insensitive to intentional and public opinions, in his foreign policy dealings. It is affordable to state that his inclinations to act impulsively is because of his insufficient knowledge about the matter and his lack to heed counsel.

US grievances towards NATO's unequal burden sharing has a historic lineage but was only openly vocalised by the former president Trump. Trump's transactional and business first conceptualisation has taken a toll on the NATO as an organisation and its members. Nevertheless, Trump's harsh demeanour towards NATO was a blessing in disguise for NATO members. It was only because of Trump's deterrence which made NATO allies cognizant of their poor security measures in case of an unprecedented attack. Trump has used his voice to express grave international threats which were not accounted by the NATO allies. In connection with that, NATO has always been vital and instrumental for the promotion of the US foreign policy while Trump's evident dislike towards NATO demonstrate the change in the US traditional rhetoric and not the action.