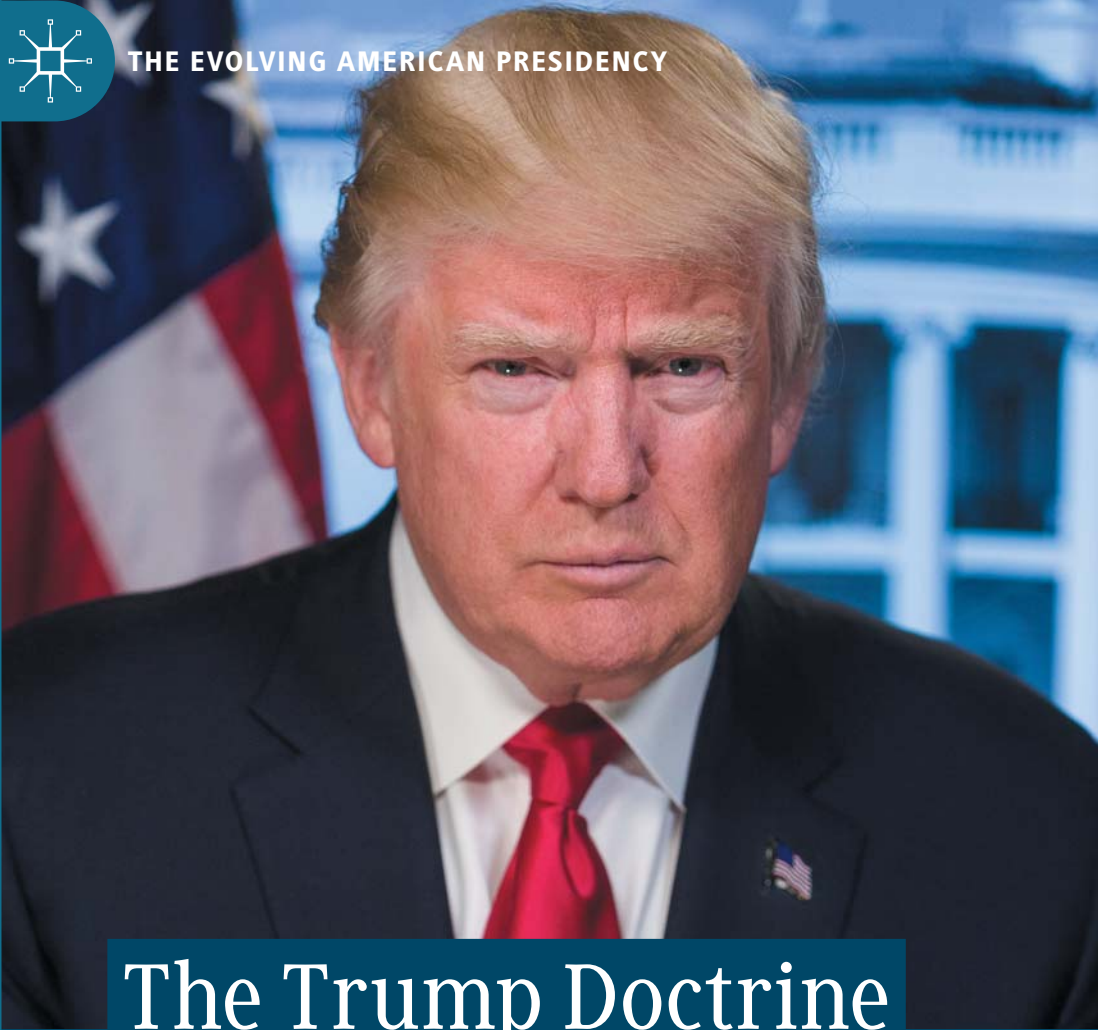




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# The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System

*Edited by*  
Stanley A. Renshon · Peter Suedfeld

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# The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System

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*Editors*

Stanley A. Renshon  
Department of Political Science  
City University of New York  
New York, NY, USA

Peter Suedfeld  
Department of Psychology  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, BC, Canada

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*For*  
*Harold D. Lasswell [1902–1978]*  
*and*  
*Alexander L. George [1920–2006]*  
*American Foreign Policy, Political Psychology, and International Relations*  
*Pioneers*

## PREFACE

The Trump Doctrine, like the president and his presidency, is enormously controversial and potentially extremely consequential. President Trump is attempting not only to change specific policies, but also change and reform the foreign policy paradigms that have dominated strategic thinking and analysis for the last several decades. Many of his policies—regarding Israel, Iran, trade, migration and immigration, and America’s role in the world, to name a few—have ignited concern, debate, resistance, grudging legitimacy; and from other sources, respect and approval. What Trump’s policies and doctrine have not sufficiently generated to date is fair-minded, evidence-based, and substantive analysis of their actual foundations, elements, applications, and implications. This book is designed to help provide that kind of analysis.

The editors of the volume, aside from our other academic work and our long personal friendship and mutual scholarly interests, have collaborated before on an edited volume on the Bush Doctrine that also combined a focus on presidential leadership, international relations, political psychology, and American foreign policy. (Renshon and Suedfeld 2007). Our focus in the current book is to bring together scholars with a range of theoretical and political perspectives to help analyze the foreign policy doctrine of one of the most controversial of modern presidents. We aimed to assemble the views of a diverse group of scholars, some of whom are moderately left or right of center, and many of whom have no

discernible location on that kind of political spectrum. What does distinguish the contributors is their proven scholarship, supplemented in many cases by substantial real-world policy experience.

The book's title—*The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System* reflects its dual frame of focus. One is President Trump himself and his views and strategies regarding American foreign policy. A substantial number of the president's policies run counter to the conventional wisdom, shared by foreign policy establishment figures on both sides of the political aisle, that have been the premises of traditional political narratives for decades. Trade, migration, and immigration, international institutions and their policy preferences, and relationships with allies, competitors, and adversaries, have all moved decisively in new directions by President Trump.

It is not surprising that the number and nature of these changes in policy direction have been controversial, especially among those who had been quite content with the performance of the dominant paradigms that the president is seeking to reform, and in some cases, discontinue. It is unusual and controversial that a president would seek to change so many core foreign (and domestic) policy areas, against the consensual wishes of the major establishment leaders and foreign policy institutions associated with both Democrats and Republicans. Yet, that is precisely what President Trump has done. Those efforts have provided the direction of his presidency, but also its purpose. It is unclear at this point whether, and to what degree, he will be successful. At the same time, it is equally clear that it takes a president with an unusual personality and character to undertake such an effort, against massive odds and relentless opposition, and to have a chance to succeed. Although we do not address President Trump's personality *per se*, several chapters do address the role that the president's psychology and worldview play in his doctrine.

The second point of focus of this book is the development of the international system itself since 1945. That system has, to state the obvious, changed since then. There have been periods of international bipolarity, multipolarity, and unambiguous American primacy. Moreover, in all these periods the United States has played variable leadership roles. There has been a period when the United States has been the only major power left relatively economically and politically intact after a brutal World War. There have been periods when it has been the world's sole "superpower," one of two superpowers, or one of many major international powers with nuclear weapons and all that they entail. Since the end of



World War II, the United States has been the sole undisputed leader of the free world, and it has led a coalition of its allies, even if sometimes “from behind” (a senior Obama White Official, quoted in Lizza 2011). It has concentrated on nation-building abroad, but also refocused on domestic policy concerns. It has led internationally as the “indispensable nation” (Albright 1998) in a broadly based coalition of liberal world order allies, and it has most recently made manifest what has always been present, but quietly latent: the view that a primary priority of American foreign policy is American national interest.

Some of these changes in the international system are a consequence of President Trump’s foreign policy initiatives. Some of them, however, are the result of changes in the nature and structure of the international system and America’s place within it. The international system has been changing, both before and since President Trump came into office. Therefore, a number of chapters in this volume reflect that comparative historical perspective by examining President Trump in the context of what some of his presidential predecessors faced and did.

That dual perspective allows us to ask a number of important questions. Have the considerations that govern the use of deterrence, containment, and their strategic siblings changed since they became tried and trusted strategies during and after the Cold War? How has President Trump used, or modified, or abandoned, some of these strategies? How have changes in the international system and the Trump presidency affected relations between the United States and other nations whether allies, rivals, or adversaries? And, what do these developments mean for President Trump, the United States, and the world going forward? One major question, among many covered in this book, is whether President Trump’s efforts to change existing dominant foreign policy paradigms are, in reality, reformist or restorative and meant to address “new realities” that characterize the emerging international system.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK’S CHAPTERS AND ANALYSIS

This book was designed, and the chapters written, as the Trump Administration enters its fourth year in office. It therefore lays no claim to being a final analysis or assessment of the nature or outcomes of the Trump Doctrine. Mr. Trump is a president who likes to be unpredictable, and often is, in his strategies and tactics. Yet this should not obscure an equally important truth. President Trump’s basic policy premises and

goals are clearly and publicly evident in his policy choices and initiatives. On a host of central issues—immigration, trade, climate, relationships with allies, international liberal institutions, and the cosmopolitan outlook that supports them, to name a few—that form a basis for his Doctrine and his core positions are quite clear. At this point, the same, however, cannot be said of their eventual impact.

As the president nears the end of his first term, the question is how to interpret, understand, and evaluate the strategies and policies that constitute his foreign policy doctrine. Answering those questions is a primary purpose of this book. Within the parameters of that purpose, the analysis that follows lays no claim to comprehensiveness. The book does not cover every Trump foreign policy initiative or response, nor is its purpose to provide a grand policy tour of Trump’s policies in every geographical area of the world. Like every president, Mr. Trump’s responsibility as worldwide steward of American foreign policy does not mean or require that he be equally attentive to everything that happens in the world. President Trump has made his priorities very clear, and they in turn provide the most productive venues in which to explore the meaning of his foreign policy premises and doctrine. An overview of the book’s four major structural parts and the chapters within them follows.

### *Part I: Theoretical Foundations of the Trump Doctrine*

This part analyzes the basic foundations and core elements of the Trump Doctrine. Any presidential doctrine reflects the worldview of the president himself, his purposes and his strategies for achieving them. Stanley Renshon argues in his chapter that Trump’s core domestic and foreign policies are linked through *Conservative American Nationalism*, and that the personal psychologically based origins of his strategies are a key element in understanding his doctrine.

Basic to the Trump Doctrine is his starting premise of “America First.” What exactly does that mean? Realists argue that all countries pursue their self-interest, so what is new or different about the Trump Doctrine in this respect? Peter Suedfeld, Bradford Morrison, and Lawrence Kuznar explore how Trump actually uses that phrase and what it means to him. Their data provide an interesting perspective and not a few surprises.

What are President Trump’s ultimate goals for his doctrine, and how are they related to the goals of his presidency? In one respect, one can discern Trump’s foreign policy purposes by analyzing his approach to key geographical areas and actors as the book does in Part III. Yet, it is also

possible to take a step back to look at the large theoretical picture and conclude, as Henry Nau does in his chapter, that Trump wants to change the world by blending America's nationalist and realist traditions. Paradoxically, there is ample evidence that in the historical context of American foreign policy Trump is, in many ways, a traditionalist.

Finally, this section closes with one of the most controversial elements of the Trump Doctrine: its relationship with the Liberal International Order. James Carafano's chapter examines the origins and development of that order in some detail and asks whether Trump is trying to reform or destroy it. He concludes that Trump is the latest in a long line of American presidents who have been trying to balance national interests with support for transnational institutions that contribute to global stability.

### *Part II: Functional Foundations of the Trump Doctrine*

Using theoretical lenses to understand the Trump Doctrine is a starting point for understanding the functional foundation of the doctrine's applied impact in the real world. Every president must organize a White House capable of informing him about the problems he faces and his choices in dealing with them. As Martha Cottam's chapter makes clear, Trump is a particularly difficult president to work with in this regard, because of his tactical and strategic flexibility and his pride in being "unpredictable." As a result, his relationships with advisors are also changeable. Even at this point, almost four years into his presidency, the sources and nature of the advice he requests, receives, accepts, or rejects, are difficult to bring into clear focus.

The key to any president's foreign policy doctrine involves the question of how he mobilizes and uses America's vast resources to marshal and project diverse forms of power in pursuit of American national interests. Does a president rely on threats, and if so, what kind? Do his threats, whether subtle or overt, clear or implied, carry any real consequences? Is he more likely to use diplomacy or deterrence? What are the circumstances where he feels the use of force may be necessary? These questions are the focus of Thomas Preston's analysis.

As Douglas Foyle's chapter makes abundantly clear, Trump's policies and his presidential leadership are controversial both at home and abroad. Foyle examines how publics, both domestically and abroad, understand, support, or oppose the Trump Doctrine and its major elements.

*Part III: Allies, Adversaries, and Rivals: The Trump Doctrine  
in the World Arena*

The Trump Doctrine has worldwide consequences, though not equally everywhere. Trump himself has clearly chosen the areas, issues, and specific countries on which he has focused his attention. He has spent considerable presidential time on these key areas of Russia, Asia, and the Middle East. As already noted, we are not pursuing a case-by-case analysis of the workings of the Trump Doctrine everywhere in the world; this part is comprised of selective considerations of some of the major foci of the president's policies.

Trump has been involved in the dispute between South Korea and Japan (Reuters 2019), but we treat in detail only the centers of gravity of his Doctrine's Asian policies: China and North Korea. Similarly, with regard to the Middle East we have an overview and a specific consideration of policy toward Israel.

Another area for which we do not include specific, focused chapters is Latin America. President Trump has imposed sanctions on both Cuba and Venezuela (Crowley & Anatoly 2019; DeYoung 2019), but the real center of Trump Doctrine gravity in the Americas has been the southern border of the United States and the challenging migration problems fueled by Central Americans and the countries that they pass through on their way to the United States. That situation is usefully considered within the rubric of Trump's *Conservative American Nationalism* (Renshon, Chapter 1) and Douglas Foyle's chapter on "The New Normal?: Public Opinion, Partisanship, and The Trump Doctrine" (Chapter 7).

To begin this Part, Jeremy W. Lamoreaux looks through the dual lenses of the "Trump Doctrine" and the "Putin Doctrine" to analyze the relationship between the United States and Russia, two leading rivals for global influence. Since 2016, the situation has been made even more complicated by the seemingly perennial controversy about Russia's role in the election of Donald Trump. The chapter considers how the two leaders' personal relationship, foreign policy objectives, and other factors such as the changing nature of the international system affect the relationship, and how this relationship may develop in the future.

Next, Michael Beckley examines the history of the United States–China relationship and the policy twists, turns, miscalculations and wishful thinking on both sides that got us to this complex point. China is one of the triad of Great Power competitors in today's world, challenging the

United States for global influence. President Trump is the first president in nearly 50 years to wage full-spectrum competition with China, short of war but spanning major domains—military, strategic, and economic, as well as the new competitions in both cyberspace and outer space. Yet, although Trump’s policy goals are clear, the outcomes at this point are not. He has reached a major Phase 1 economic agreement with China, but the overall relationship between the two countries is still evolving and has soured because of Trump’s view that China could have done much more to warn the world and contain the Coronavirus.

Another focus of Trump’s foreign policy in Asia has been the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Lawrence Kuznar makes use of a powerful methodology that examines the communications of Presidents Trump and Kim Jong Un over time in relation to their unfolding circumstances. He charts their seemingly mercurial alterations of invective, bombast and declarations of rapprochement, to examine the underlying and often hidden meanings of their public stances. His data are both interesting and surprising.

Our next area of interest is the Middle East, which before and since 9/11 has commanded enormous presidential attention. Great Power proxies, the flow of oil, and a strategic location combine to attract American involvement up to and including warfare. Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the invasion of Iraq are now over, and the Afghanistan war once again appears to be winding down (Mashal 2019a, b). However, the situation continues to be unstable, and made even more so by political-religious hostilities between Iran, one of America’s fieriest adversaries and a continuous sponsor of anti-US propaganda and terrorism, and Israel, one of America’s most reliable allies.

Michael Doran provides a comparative analysis of the policies of Presidents George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump in the Middle East generally and concerning Iran in particular. He examines the Iran policies of Presidents Obama and Trump and their approach to the nuclear question and the strategies of amelioration of the regime’s extremism and hostility, including coercive deterrence as a strategy.

Amnon Cavari then focuses on Trump’s policy regarding Israel. He examines this alliance through the prism of the personal affinity between President Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the long-time leader of Israel. He analyzes the effects of this partnership on their domestic political and partisan interests. He then assesses the costs and

benefits of their policies to American standing in the world and their long-term consequences to the way Israel is viewed by American political elites and the mass public.

*Part IV: The Trump Doctrine in Comparative and Historical  
Perspective*

Part IV places the Trump Doctrine in comparative perspective and examines its prospects. Robert Singh's chapter provides an in-depth look at the nature of presidential doctrines, which serves as a framework for the comparative analysis of the Bush, Obama, and Trump Doctrines. He concludes that Obama and Trump parsed elements of isolationism, primacy, leadership, and restraint, tailored to specific problems, that defied easy categorization. None fully adhered to pre-written scripts.

As to the future of the Trump Doctrine, Colin Dueck concludes that future Republican leaders will have to strike balances among more purist versions of non-intervention, hardline unilateralism, and conservative internationalism. Coalition-building will be inevitable. However, the specific way in which this is done, in terms of character, style, and substance, will be up to future presidents, just as it has been in the past. Contingent events will no doubt provide new, currently unexpected opportunities for one or more factions. For conservatives of all varieties, because of President Trump and his doctrine, the possibilities on foreign policy are now more widely open.

New York, USA  
Vancouver, Canada

Stanley A. Renshon  
Peter Suedfeld

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# PRAISE FOR *THE TRUMP DOCTRINE AND THE EMERGING INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM*

“A needed assessment of US foreign policy during the Trump Administration that goes far beyond recent journalistic accounts. Putting the psychological and policy dispositions as well as the decision-making processes and policy outcomes into historical and comparative perspective, this volume makes an important contribution. It includes chapters by leading scholars each taking a dispassionate look at the aspect of Trump’s foreign policy closest to their own expertise. It includes excellent analyses of Trump’s Conservative American Nationalism and its relation to previous traditions in American conservatism and nationalism, as well as insightful studies of the decision-making process in the administration and how the policy outputs relate both to the institutions of the liberal international order and to previous doctrines and strategies. Area specialists delve carefully into the Trump Administration’s policy toward China, North Korea, and the Middle East.”

—Richard K. Herrmann, *Emeritus Professor of Political Science,  
The Ohio State University, USA*

“President Trump’s foreign policy will be debated for years to come, but a great place to start is with *The Trump Doctrine and the Emerging International System*, which brings multiple methods and careful analysis to a



topic that is more often characterized by heat than by light. Both comprehensive and penetrating, these essays can be read with profit by students, scholars, and members of the interested public.”

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“This is far and away the best book on Donald Trump’s foreign policy. Its thoughtful essays by distinguished contributors explore the President and his policies from historical, psychological, and comparative perspectives. They recognize that Trump is highly idiosyncratic but also that his policy visions are rooted in American traditions. The chapters tell us much about this outlier but also about American foreign policy more generally because of the appeal and tensions inherent in the kind of nationalism that Trump espouses.”

—Richard Ned Lebow, *Professor of International Political Theory,*  
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“Renshon and Suedfeld have brought together an excellent group of scholars from a variety of theoretical and political perspectives to analyze President Trump’s world views, goals, and strategies in the context of a changing international system. The book’s theoretical and comparative historical studies provide wide-ranging and provocative analyses of the foreign policy of an idiosyncratic and unpredictable president. It is important reading for scholars, students, and policy analysts.”

—Jack S. Levy, *Board of Governors’ Professor of Political Science,*  
*Rutgers University, USA*

“It is tempting to believe that Donald Trump’s foreign policy goals are as ephemeral as his tweets. The studies in this book bring a different view, that Trump has shown persistence and flexibility in pursuing his vision of ‘America First.’”

—Clark R. McCauley, *Research Professor of Psychology,*  
*Bryn Mawr College, USA*

“The surprise win of the 2016 election by Donald Trump has triggered, among other outcomes, dramatic changes in American defense and foreign policies. The President, an opinionated novice in foreign policy, is determined to eliminate his predecessor’s heritage and stamp his

own imprint on core strategic policies, including relationships with allies, adversaries and rivals, as well as the reform of the post Second World War global institutions. These ambitious goals and their pursuit were driven more by the President's intuition rather than knowledge-based. This turbulent policy style has often left observers at home and abroad puzzled and perplexed in search of comprehension and policy consistency. Professors Stanley Renshon and Peter Suedfeld, two of the foremost experts on political psychology, presidential politics and foreign policy analysis, rise to the challenge of clearing the underbrush and provide a detailed interdisciplinary picture of the Trump Doctrine and its implications for the international system. With a team of expert contributors, they produce a well-crafted volume that covers systematically the most important issue areas of foreign policy and the underlying ideological concepts of the Trump Doctrine. This book is simply indispensable to students and practitioners of American foreign policy. No future studies of Trump's administration policies could ignore this authoritative volume."

—Yaacov Vertzberger, *Professor of International Relations,  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem*

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Michael Beckley** is an Associate Professor of political science at Tufts University and a Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. Previously, he worked for Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the US Department of Defense, the RAND Corporation, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He continues to advise offices within the US Intelligence Community and US Department of Defense. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University. His first book, *Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World's Sole Superpower*, was published in 2018 by Cornell University Press.

**James Jay Carafano** currently serves as The Heritage Foundation's Vice President, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, assuming responsibility for Heritage's entire defense and foreign policy team. Carafano is a graduate of the US Military Academy at West Point and served 25 years in the US Army, retiring as a Lt. Colonel. He holds a Master's Degree and a doctorate from Georgetown University as well as a Master's Degree in strategy from the U.S. Army War College. His recent research has focused on developing the national security required to secure the long-term interests of the United States.

**Amnon Cavari** (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) is Assistant Professor and chair of the M.A. program in public policy and political marketing at the Lauder School of Government at IDC Herzliya.

Amnon specializes in the inter-relationship between public opinion and public policy in the United States and Israel. He is the head of American Public Opinion toward Israel (APOI), a research group that tracks trends in American elite and mass opinion toward Israel; and is co-chair of the Israeli Policy Agendas Project, which assesses comparatively the policy agenda of political actors and institutions in Israel.

**Martha Cottam** is a Professor of Political Science in the School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs, at Washington State University. Her areas of specialization include political psychology, American foreign policy, and international politics. She has authored or co-authored *Images and Interventions: U.S. Policies in Latin America* (1994), *Nationalism and Politics: The Political Behavior of Nation States* (2001), *Introduction to Political Psychology* (2016, 3rd ed.), *Confronting al Qaeda: The Sunni Awakening and American Strategy in al Anbar* (2016) and *The Role of Female Combatants in the Nicaraguan Revolution and Counter Revolutionary War* (2019).

**Michael Doran** is a Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC, specializing in Middle East security issues. He served in the White House as a senior director in the National Security Council with responsibility for the entire Middle East except Iraq in the George W. Bush administration. His latest book, *Ike's Gamble*, is a study in the evolution of President Eisenhower's Middle East strategy. He was a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and taught at NYU, Princeton, and the University of Central Florida. He received a B.A. from Stanford and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton.

**Colin Dueck** is a Professor in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, and a non-resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. Dueck has published four books on American foreign and national security policies: *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton, 2006), *Hard Line: The Republican Party and U.S. Foreign Policy since World War II* (Princeton, 2010), *The Obama Doctrine: American Grand Strategy Today* (Oxford, 2015), and *Age of Iron: On Conservative Nationalism* (Oxford, 2019.)

**Douglas C. Foyle** teaches political science at Wesleyan University, where he researches US Foreign Policy and the influence of public opinion and on foreign policy. He is currently working on projects examining

the foreign policy attitudes of millennials, the public's views about the extent to which leaders should consider public opinion when making foreign policy decisions, and a book examining the influence of elections in foreign policy decision-making. He completed his undergraduate work at Stanford University and received his Ph.D. in political science from Duke University.

**Lawrence A. Kuznar** (Professor of Anthropology, Purdue University-Fort Wayne, Chief Cultural Sciences Officer, NSI, Inc.) Dr. Kuznar has been a Professor of anthropology at PFW since 1990. His most recent research focuses on analyzing how the language of terrorists and world leaders reveals motivations, values and anticipates their future actions. Dr. Kuznar's research has published numerous articles in journals such as *American Anthropologist* and *Current Anthropology*, and is also author or editor of five books, including *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology* (1997, 2009), and *From the Mind to the Feet: Assessing the Perception to Intent Dynamic* (2011).

**Jeremy W. Lamoreaux** is a Professor of Political Science and International Studies at Brigham Young University—Idaho. His research focuses on security and societal tensions between Russia and the West. He is published in academic journals such as *IJSCC*, *Palgrave Communications*, *Journal of Baltic Security*, *European Politics and Society*, *European Security*, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, *Geopolitics*, and is a contributing author in books published with *Routledge* and *Rodopi*. He most recently contributed to research conducted by *NSI* on behalf of the Pentagon, and by the *Free Russia Foundation*.

**Bradford H. Morrison** is a doctoral student and researcher in social psychology at the University of British Columbia. He specializes in political psychology, especially violent extremism and the decision-making of political leaders. He uses content analysis to measure constructs such as cognitive complexity, motivations, and moral foundations. He developed a system that automates the scoring of verbal nonimmediacy, a measure of the use of language that distances the speaker from the topic. He is currently studying how political leaders think about the gray zone—foreign policy activities that are more extreme than peaceful competition, but less extreme than war.

**Henry R. Nau** is Professor emeritus of political science and international affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington



University. He holds a B.S. degree in Economics, Politics, and Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). His books include, among others, *Perspectives on International Relations: Power, Institutions and Ideas* (Sage, 7th ed. 2020); *Conservative Internationalism: Armed Diplomacy Under Jefferson, Polk, Truman, and Reagan* (Princeton, 2013); *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Cornell, 2002); and *The Myth of America's Decline* (Oxford, 1990).

**Thomas Preston** is *C. O. Johnson Distinguished Professor of Political Science* at Washington State University. A specialist in security policy, foreign affairs, and political psychology, Professor Preston is the author of three books: *The President and His Inner Circle: Leadership Style and the Advisory Process in Foreign Affairs* (2001), *'From Lambs to Lions': Future Security Relationships in a World of Biological and Nuclear Weapons* (2007/2009), *Pandora's Trap: Presidential Decision Making and Blame Avoidance in Vietnam and Iraq* (2011), and is the co-author of the popular *Introduction to Political Psychology* (2004/2010/2016).

**Stanley A. Renshon** is Professor of Political Science at the City University of New York, and a certified psychoanalyst. He is the author of over 100 professional articles and 18 books in the areas of presidential psychology and leadership, immigration and American national identity, and American foreign policy. His psychological biography of the Clinton presidency—*High Hopes: The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition*—won the American Political Science Association's Richard E. Neustadt Award for the best book published on the presidency and the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis' Gradiva Award for the best published work in the category of biography. His *The Real Psychology of the Trump Presidency*, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in Summer 2020.

**Robert S. Singh** is Professor of Politics at Birkbeck, University of London. He was educated at Christ Church (1986–1989) and Nuffield College (1989–1994), University of Oxford. And taught at Trinity College, Dublin (1994–1996) and the University of Edinburgh (1996–1999) before joining Birkbeck in 1999. His research interests are in the politics of US foreign policy. As well as many articles, Singh is the author or editor of eleven books, including: *The Bush Doctrine and the War on Terrorism* (Routledge, 2006); *Barack Obama's Post-American*

*Foreign Policy* (Bloomsbury, 2012); and *In Defense of the United States Constitution* (Routledge, 2019).

**Peter Suedfeld** Professor Emeritus of Psychology, The University of British Columbia (B.A. Queens College CUNY, Ph.D. Princeton University, Docteur *honoris causa*, Université de Nîmes). His over 300 publications concentrate on adaptation and resilience in challenging and traumatic situations, including decision-making under stress. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a full member of the International Academy of Astronautics, and has received both Canada's Polar Medal and the US Antarctica Service Medal. He previously co-edited, with Stanley Renshon, *Understanding the Bush Doctrine: Psychology and Strategy in an Age of Terrorism*.

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PART I

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Theoretical Foundations of the Trump  
Doctrine



## CHAPTER 1

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# The Trump Doctrine and *Conservative American Nationalism*

*Stanley A. Renshon*

Foreign policy is traditionally a setting in which the president is said to have more discretion because the checks and balances of domestic politics don't operate there. That has never been quite true since the international system has its own version of restraining checks and balances—economic, political, and military consequences for serious miscalculations. That is one major reason why presidential worldviews and foreign policy thinking weigh so heavily in assessing any president.

In my work on the G. W. Bush and Obama Doctrines (Renshon 2010, 2012, 2013, 2017; see also Renshon and Suedfeld 2007), I have pointed out what purposes doctrines serve and why they matter. Often they are policy markers for a president's thinking helping allies and enemies alike to gauge their policies and thus further the benefits and opportunities of deterrence theories for the international community (Pach 2006; Brinkely 1997).

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S. A. Renshon (✉)  
Department of Political Science, City University of  
New York, New York, NY, USA  
e-mail: [srenshon@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:srenshon@gc.cuny.edu)

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