TRUMP AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CHAOTIC NATURE

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ABSTRACT

This essay serves as an introduction to the special issue on Donald Trump and Unpredictability in International Relations, which will appear later this year. In addition to analyzing each of the contributions to the special issue in turn, as they appear in the running order, it also elaborates on the intellectual and political environment in which the special issue as a whole has been written and published. Following the theme of the special issue, this introduction begins by outlining the difficulty of understanding the very notion of unpredictability as a general concept; then moves on to unpacking that theoretical complexity in more empirical terms by asking how we can understand unpredictability in relation to Trump's foreign policy; and finally investigates the contestation of that understanding by analyzing alternative explanations for unpredictability and whether this constitutes doctrine.

KEYWORDS: *Doctrine, Foreign Policy, International Relations, Political, Unpredictability.*

1. INTRODUCTION

We initially contacted the publishers of the Cambridge International Affairs Review in October 2019 with a special edition. Trump had therefore spent almost three years in politics, pundits, and journalists in a world where their phones might at any time buzz with news of the odd tweet, which could cause a possible external policy problem. The Commander-in-Chief has now been generally recognized as unpredictable compared to his predecessors and conventional standards for presidential conduct. Analysts even started to speak about Trump's unexpected behaviour as, more precisely, the 'doctrine of unpredictability.' The supporters and defensemen of the president believed that this strategy might better disrupt world politics, pushing friends to cease accepting American leadership and spread. Detractors said that it would lead to instability, undermine crucial ties, and eventually upset the US-led liberal world order[1].

But the problem is that of incorporating the concept of unpredictability into a method of international political analysis, so often based on what we know to be certain, and that unpredictability could involve a method of political interaction – instead of simply being unreliable – has tested existing disciplinary instruments to understand foreign policy These problems have come to light at a special academic discussion at the 2018 British International Studies Association (BISA) Annual Conference, organized by Michelle Bentley and Clara in

Bath, United Kingdom. This panel discussion on the role of the unpredictable person in international relations and the long-lasting potential of the postulated "unpredictability doctrine," has brought up a number of deeper issues for foreign policy analysis and IR research. Can unpredictability serve for the leader of the free world as a cohesive doctrine? How did this relate to the function of advisers to the White House, the Cabinet and the US Congress? In fact, did Trump's appointed employees stabilize or increase foreign policy unpredictability? The panel discussion also likened the alleged ideology of Trump to the 'Madman Theory' of Nixon, a policy that itself sparked important wise debate[2].

These concerns are more significant in the face of the black swan epidemic that has stirred up international politics and overshadowed other external policy issues. Although other foreign leaders worried about the epidemic, unstable President Trump appeared particularly unqualified to lead an inter-national response and handle its consequences domestically. The 45th President never showed much affinity for scientific understanding nor did he show much regard for the function of research in influencing government. Even for the business world, for whom Trump usually earned his greatest ratings, his favorite method to optimism, while engaging the corporate sector in tax cuts, was a bad match to the chaos caused by virus-induced lockdowns. After a year of problems, ranging from the first impeachment of the President to a particularly bad US performance in the suppression of the virus, Trump lost more than 7 million votes to the 2020 elections in November.

In spite of the difficulties of fast-changed conditions, the irony of the US president's unpredictable penchant for unpredictability, which could scarcely have been anticipated, has only underlined the significance of the enquiry into this particular subject. Although the environment of US foreign policy has significantly altered, there remain certain underlying problems. The highest standard of scientific research has long been regarded prediction[3]. Unpredictability implies for academics who are keen on nomotheticgeneralization to quarantine some non-systematic realms in the social world to purposefully concentrate on other, probably systemic areas. But is such isolation possible given the extremely complex, overlapping and open structure of international political systems? Post-positivist academics who have typically shied away from forecasts, however, may nevertheless prove disturbed by the increase in unpredictability.

1.1 Theorizing Unpredictability:

The first difficulty encountered by the authors to this special issue was the mysterious nature of the notion of impermissibility. Unpredictability is not only the reverse of prediction, it raises very significant concerns ontological and epistemological about the world of academics, about their position and the trustworthiness of their processes of knowledge creation. The researchers thus discuss these theoretical problems in the first article of this special issue, which examines the philosophy of scientific discussions which inform various views of predictability and unpredictability. Although the students of many methodological guidelines have to grasp the possibilities and processes of forecasting the social reality in fundamentally different ways, he acknowledges that basic philosophical discrepancies demand for unity with respect to unpredictability. If unpredictability implies the potential of philosophical assumptions being incorrect, Lerner argues that epistemologically humble academics from many insights may embrace a shared language about the outside boundaries of the social science survey[4].

Therefore, the typologies of researchers are the way academics conceive about these questions by providing three "buckets" of projection, each of which constitutes widely recognized investigation constraints. The first two is the result of a contradiction between risk and insecurity. On the one hand, the risks are predictions of systems that researchers usually agree on the distribution of the probability — for example, a fair coin or the outcomes of a forthcoming election with very thorough opinion polls. On the other hand, uncertainty relates

to circumstances where academics do not agree on a probable distribution of probabilities — namely, the behaviour of a really unpredictable actor or the chance to experience a catastrophic natural or industrial catastrophe that takes place in any given year. Researchers believes that, although analytically different, risks and uncertainty are best understood as ideal types, either extreme of the dense spectrum of researchers or disagreement about the distribution of probability of a system.

While many academics behave as if every system falls somewhere on this continuum, Lerner argues for a third bucket — the complexity — of recognizing the predominance in international politics of complex adaptive systems. Complex unpredictability comes from non-deterministic systems, with parameters that vary over time and thus alter probability distributions, unlike deterministic systems with fixed parameters that are best described by means of risk and uncertainty labels. Recognizing the predominance of complexity in international politics requires a major overhaul of the forecasting capability of research[5].

When international political systems with ever-changing characteristics are essential to their surroundings, predictions of them should be considered interim and unlikely to be helpful over extended periods of time as complex dynamics begin to take shape. Research on plea adaptive systems in recent decades has grown tremendously, stimulating IR researchers on the emerging qualities or even on the essence of the State as an actor. However, the bulk of political science still believes that the systems it examines are deterministic and therefore does not realize how changeable factors may temper, contextualize or even invalidate the robustness of findings. In his essay Lerner argues that acknowledgment of complexity as the norm in international politics compels researchers to reconsider how far foreign policy can be anticipated. It does not matter if it is a mistaken narcissist like Trump or an experienced statesman like his successor, President Joe Biden[6].

1.2 Doctrine Unpredictability:

Having laid down this theoretical basis, the problem proceeds to examine it empirically – if this analysis is guided by two important secondary issues discussed in this particular issue: Is an unpredictable doctrine possible? And is this an accurate depiction of the foreign policy of the Trump administration? These issues pose significant concerns about Trump's objectives, his position within his own government and how presidential ideologies should be defined. The authors to this special edition are particularly divided in their responses.To begin further exploration of this disputed topic, the second piece strongly advocates that Trump's unpredictability as a kind of doctrine is characterized, despite the significant discrepancies between this and more traditional academic readings of what the doctrine contains. In so doing, the authors begin with the laying out of current debate about Trump and the notion of doctrine, which identified two schools of thinking: those which reject Trump's belief of a doctrine, claim that Trump either is too erroneous or too inexperienced to formulate a clear doctrinal approach; In the discussion, Bentley and David show that the former president has made theological expressions of unpredictability. However, these ideals, communicated most clearly during the 2016 elections, stem from Trump's fantastic novels and exhibition-infused business transactions, long before he ever considered seeking for political office. In his statement, Trump identifies surprise as a strategic advantage explicitly and plainly[7].

Bentley and David presented two important points in considering unpredictability as doctrine. First, they define unexpected foreign-policy behaviour as trump's essentially intentional and strategic conduct. While some observers reduce the unpredictability of Trump to sheer chaos and erraticism, the same behaviour may be seen with a deliberate strategy wherein Trump is persuaded that nobody knows what to do next provides it an edge internationally. In addressing this matter, Bentley and David are addressing a key gap in the present Trump and Unpredictability debates: the unpredictability (as a Trump doctrine) is not fully recognized. Researchers argue in favor of a 4-pronged approach based on 'inconsistent,' 'incoherent,'

'unconstrained' and 'unreliable.' Recognizing that foreign policies are usually a dynamic and adaptive process – and thus that these elements frequently overlap – the authors show how the conceptual ailing of these divides helps understand the interaction between the personality of Trump and the worldview of his administration. The authors demonstrate in particular that this has to do with Trump's distinctive transactional approach to global policy, which has noticeably long-term effects[8].

Second, Bentley and David suggest that the reason why analysts may not consider Trump to have a doctrine, much alone a doctrine with unpredictability, is because of the limits of academic understanding of doctrine. Conventional conceptions of what doctrine is – frequently stated by expectations of the rational model of the actor – simply do not have the vocabulary to describe any kind of doctrinal concepts beyond this more conventional notion. In the wake of Lerner's appeal for unity, Bentley and David argue for a reconsideration of the notion of doctrine and how it relates to study of foreign policy. Their conclusions therefore reach far beyond the Trump Presidency, which serves as a powerful reprimand to conventional foreign policy analyses which, according to researchers, "do not recognize and evaluate forms of doctrine outside established conventions of the thinking as to what doctrine should include."

2. DISCUSSION

However, as previously pointed out, the special question then examines the disputed character of this stance. The researchers conclude from their contribution that Trump's administration is not defined by an unexpected ideology, but by its "low conceptual complexity leadership style," which is unpredictable. In their instance, the two writers provide five crucial assumptions that have to be fulfilled in order to establish that for Trump administration unpredictability was a unique philosophy of foreign policy. These include if it was "consistently portrayed as a primary belief," whether it was "accepted by Trump officials as a common policy paradigm," and if it is "coherently articulated to the public" in speeches and papers explaining actions. These assumptions were then tested in a huge data collection of Trump's language, including White House documents, books released, campaign speeches, media interviews, news releases and tweets by Hassan and Featherstone through the use of computer based qualitative data analysis tools. By monitoring Trump's invocation of unpredictability through time, the authors show why they do not think that the presidential doctrine is used enough and consistently with polygonal reasons.

Although Trump's allusions to unpredictability were ephemeral and inadequate to form a doctrine, Hassan and Featherstone argue for a line between Trump's foreign policy language and actions: little conceptual sophistication. The two writers describe conceptual complexity in two ways: (1) difference and (2) integration. The first is the capacity of a person to 'conquer more than one dimension' and the second refers to his ability to 'connect these many levels in a larger image.' The authors claim throughout his campaign and administration that Trump has shown to be 'a great example of a low-conceptive leader in complexity[9].'

For example, Trump used the same black and white slurs as "nasty" to characterize many competitors, without distinguishing his problem from him or integrating it into a broader criticism. Trump also constantly delegitimized any dissent based on a populist premise that any personal disagreement to him was an opposition to the American people. Hassan and Featherstone contend, however, that Trump's perception of unpredictability is based mostly on this low conceptual complexity and not on any cohesive ideology. 'There was no causal belief in a theory' they write, 'but due of the ad hoc and misinformed character of decisions at the administration, it was the consequence of unprevisibility.'Unlike Bentley/David and Hassan/opposing Featherstone's views, at this time it is worth going briefly back to the initial article on the subject in order to illustrate Lerner's alternative. Instead of establishing precise causal linkages between Trump's comments and foreign-policy choices, Lerner focuses on the

broader development of an unpredictable language, encompassing his utterances in media, policy and academics on the campaign path and his interpretations. This perspective corresponds to Lerner's notion that doctrines are not only account of the foreign policy agenda of the presidential administrator, but are a "discursive fruit of the interpretation of mentorship together with the presidential pronouncements explaining the logic of these acts." Such an approach may pose important issues for academics and scholars keen to discuss theories of foreign policy. While President James Monroe clearly stated his 'Monroe Doctrine' before Congress, experts labelled a broad range of presidential worldviews or doctrines of foreign policy even when the presidents reject this terminology in recent years. Instead, given the difficulties of discerning a true political leader's underlying thoughts and of connecting it to a wide variety of decisions taken by both the chairman and his administration, this discursive approach focuses the debate on how leading interpreters express and understand the approaches of the presidents[10].

3. CONCLUSION

The President of Trump has caused scholars and practitioners to contemplate the man and his political approach. One recurrent issue is if Trump is just chaotic and unreasonable. Is he a guy who behaves with no reason other than what he thinks about right now? A guy who proposed we should inject bleach into Covid-19? That we should construct a Sahara wall? Can he grab ladies with impunity impulsively? Alternatively, one may ask if Trump's apparent lunacy has a method. In reality, is he a cannier actor than this behaviour would suggest? Is this so-called erraticism part of a planned and controlled performance aimed at achieving his political goals and shaping his political field?These concerns emerge partly because Trump's behaviour is nothing that a US president has experienced before (even taking into account any similarity with Madman Theory). This scenario not only raises issues as to how an impermissible and anomalous president is understood by IR discipline; it also asks if the intellectual, academic and epistemological instruments we employ in this discipline enough to grasp the case when it presents itself. The articles to this special issue address various degrees of unpredictability—from continued scientific and methodological philosophers to unknown struggles or quarantines, to the dynamic interplay between unpredictable and impulsive players and well-packed foreign policy processes.

While these contributions provide a comprehensive overview of Trump's philosophy of unpredictability and the legacy of his external policy, they also mention the enormous limits of the social sciences long-term prediction—let alone IR. Although the number of datasets and sophisticated statistical methods is growing, the uncertainty over Trump shows (a) that the prediction capacities of IR continue to be surprisingly low and (b) that knowledge needs to be adapted in the event of unusual players.Epistemological adaptation may be paradoxical for academics, not least when precedents constitute a crucial element in their position as leading knowledge-makers. Nevertheless, the Trump Presidency has challenged predictability and the validity of traditional analytical and cognitive processes. Unpredictability creates a serious conflict with current beliefs about the workings of the universe, both as a concept and as a kind of political behaviour possibly consecrated in doctrinal development. This is especially relevant given the tendency that IR researchers have in their actors, even those who don't adhere to realistic ways of thinking, to look for a sense of conventional logic. The mere notion of unpredictability may be a scary thought in this academic environment, but those who cannot theatrically adapt to understand it are most likely to be intimidated by individuals like Trump.

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