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PRESIDENT TRUMP'S FIRST TERM

His campaign tells us a lot about what kind of Commander-in-Chief he would be.

By Evan Osnos

With the polls virtually tied, the possibility of a Trump victory is no longer the stuff of dark comedy or fan fiction. It is fair to ask: What would he actually be like as President?

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On the morning of January 20, 2017, the President-elect is to visit Barack Obama at the White House for coffee, before they share a limousine—Obama seated on the right, his successor on the left—for the ride to the Capitol, where the Inauguration will take place, on the west front terrace, at noon.

Donald Trump will be five months short of seventy-one. If he wins the election, he will be America's oldest first-term President, seven months older than Ronald Reagan was at his swearing-in. Reagan used humor to deflect attention from his age—in 1984, he promised not to "exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." Trump favors a different strategy: for months, his advisers promoted a theory that his

Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, who is sixty-eight, has a secret brain illness and is unable to climb stairs or sit upright without help, and, in speeches, Trump asked whether she had the "mental and physical stamina" for the Presidency.

The full spectacle of Trump's campaign—the compulsive feuds and slurs, the detachment from established facts—has demanded so much attention that it is easy to overlook a process with more enduring consequences: his bureaucratic march toward actually assuming power. On August 1st, members of his transition team moved into 1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, a thirteen-story office building a block from the White House. The team is led by Governor Chris Christie, of New Jersey, and includes several of his political confidants, such as his former law partner William Palatucci. As of August, under a new federal program designed to accelerate Presidential transitions, Trump's staff was eligible to apply for security clearances, so that they could receive classified briefings immediately after Election Day. They began the process of selecting Cabinet officials, charting policy moves, and meeting with current White House officials to plan the handover of the Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and other agencies.

Trump aides are organizing what one Republican close to the campaign calls the First Day Project. "Trump spends several hours signing papers—and erases the Obama Presidency," he said. Stephen Moore, an official campaign adviser who is a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, explained, "We want to identify maybe twenty-five executive orders that Trump could sign literally the first day in office." The idea is inspired by Reagan's first week in the White House, in which he took steps to deregulate energy prices, as he had promised during his campaign. Trump's transition team is identifying executive orders issued by Obama, which can be undone. "That's a problem I don't think the left really understood about executive orders," Moore said. "If you govern by executive orders, then the next President can come in and overturn them."

That is partly exaggeration; rescinding an order that is beyond the "rulemaking" stage can take a year or more. But signing executive orders starts the process, and Trump's advisers are weighing several options for the First Day Project: He can renounce the Paris Agreement on greenhouse-gas emissions, much as George W. Bush, in 2002,

"unsigned" American support for the International Criminal Court. He can re-start exploration of the Keystone pipeline, suspend the Syrian refugee program, and direct the Commerce Department to bring trade cases against China. Or, to loosen restrictions on gun purchases, he can relax background checks.

But those are secondary issues; whatever else Trump would do on January 20th, he would begin with a step ("my first hour in office") to fulfill his central promise of radical change in American immigration. "Anyone who has entered the United States illegally is subject to deportation," he told a crowd in Phoenix in August.

After more than a year of candidate Trump, Americans are almost desensitized to each new failing exhumed from his past—the losing schemes and cheapskate cruelties, the discrimination and misogyny—much as they are to the daily indecencies of the present: the malice toward a grieving mother, the hidden tax records, the birther fiction and other lies. But where, in all that, is much talk of the future? By mid-September, Trump was in the final sprint of his campaign, having narrowed the gap behind Clinton in the popular vote from nine points, in August, to reach a virtual tie. His victory is no longer the stuff of dark comedy or fan fiction. It is fair to ask: What would he actually be like as a President?

Over the summer, I interviewed several dozen people about what the United States could expect from Donald Trump's first term. Campaign advisers shared his plans, his associates relayed conversations, and I consulted veterans of five Republican Administrations, along with economists, war gamers, historians, legal scholars, and political figures in Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

Most of the people I spoke with outside the campaign expected Trump to lose. But they also expected his impact to endure, and they identified examples of the ways in which he had already altered political chemistry far beyond the campaign. After seventy years of American efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, Trump has suggested that South Korea and Japan might be wise to develop them. Returning from a recent visit to Seoul, Scott Sagan, a political-science professor at Stanford who is a nuclear-arms specialist, told me, "These kinds of statements are having an effect. A

number of political leaders, mostly from the very conservative sides of the parties, are openly calling for nuclear weapons."

Many of Trump's policy positions are fluid. He has adopted and abandoned (and, at times, adopted again) notions of arming some schoolteachers with guns, scrapping the H-1B visas admitting skilled foreign workers, and imposing a temporary "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." He has said, "Everything is negotiable," which, to some, suggests that Trump would be normalized by politics and constrained by the constitutional safeguards on his office. Randall Schweller, a political scientist at Ohio State University, told me, "I think we're just at a point in our history where he's probably the right guy for the job. Not perfect, but we need someone different, because there's such calcification in Washington. Americans are smart collectively, and if they vote for Trump I wouldn't worry."

Many from Trump's party say they do not expect him to fulfill some of his most often stated vows. According to a Quinnipiac poll in June, twelve months after he began pledging to build a "big, beautiful, powerful wall" on the southern border, only forty-two per cent of Republicans believed that he would achieve it.

"Ding-dong."

But campaigns offer a surprisingly accurate preview of Presidencies. In 1984, the political scientist Michael Krukones tabulated the campaign pledges of all the Presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Jimmy Carter and found that they achieved seventy-three per cent of what they promised. Most recently, PolitiFact, a nonpartisan fact-checking site, has assessed more than five hundred promises made by Barack Obama during his campaigns and found that, to the irritation of his opponents, he has accomplished at least a compromised version of seventy per cent of them.

To turn intentions into policy, previous transition teams have produced confidential guides, known as "promise books," that pull from the candidate's words in order to shape the priorities of officials across the government. During the 2008 campaign, the Obama transition team distributed a memo to staff members on "what qualifies as a promise." It explained, "Words like 'will,' 'would,' 'create,' 'ensure,' 'increase,' 'eliminate' are good signals of specific policy commitments."

When Trump talks about what he will create and what he will eliminate, he doesn't depart from three core principles: in his view, America is doing too much to try to solve the world's problems; trade agreements are damaging the country; and immigrants are detrimental to it. He wanders and hedges and doubles back, but he is governed by a strong instinct for self-preservation, and never strays too far from his essential positions. Roger Stone, a long-serving Trump adviser, told me it is a mistake to imagine that Trump does not mean to fulfill his most radical ideas. "Maybe, in the end, the courts don't allow him to temporarily ban Muslims," Stone said. "That's fine—he can ban anybody from Egypt, from Syria, from Libya, from Saudi Arabia. He's a Reagan-type pragmatist."

William Antholis, a political scientist who directs the Miller Center, at the University of Virginia, pointed out that President Trump would have, at his disposal, "the world's largest company, staffed with 2.8 million civilians and 1.5 million military employees." Trump would have the opportunity to alter the Supreme Court, with one vacancy to fill immediately and others likely to follow. Three sitting Justices are in their late seventies or early eighties.

As for the Trump Organization, by law Trump could retain as much control or ownership as he wants, because Presidents are not bound by the same conflict-of-interest statute that restricts Cabinet officers and White House staff. Presidential decisions, especially on foreign policy, could strengthen or weaken his family's business, which includes controversial deals in Turkey, South Korea, Azerbaijan, and elsewhere. Trump would likely face pressure to adopt an arrangement akin to that of Michael Bloomberg, who, when he became mayor of New York City, withdrew from most management decisions for his company. Trump has said only that he plans to turn over the Trump Organization's day-to-day control to three of his adult children: Donald, Jr., Ivanka, and Eric.

As President, Trump would have the power to name some four thousand appointees, but he would face a unique problem: more than a hundred veteran Republican officials have vowed never to support him, and that has forced younger officials to decide whether they, too, will stay away or, instead, enter his Administration and try to moderate him. By September, the campaign was vetting four hundred people, and some

had been invited to join the transition team. An analogy was making the rounds: Was Trump a manageable petty tyrant, in the mold of Silvio Berlusconi? Or was he something closer to Mussolini? And, if so, was he Mussolini in 1933 or in 1941?

Michael Chertoff served both Bush Presidents—as a U.S. Attorney in Bush, Sr.,'s Administration, and then as Secretary of Homeland Security under George W. Bush. He was one of fifty senior Republican national-security officials who recently signed a letter declaring that Trump "would be the most reckless President in American history." Chertoff told me that he has been approached for advice by younger Republicans who ask if joining Trump, after he has already been elected, would be regarded as patriotic, rather than political. "I think anybody contemplating going in will have to have a very serious look in their own conscience, and make sure they're not kidding themselves," Chertoff said.

Trump's Presidential plans are not shaped by ideology. He changed parties five times between 1999 and 2012, and, early on the campaign trail, he praised parts of Planned Parenthood (while opposing abortion), vowed to protect Social Security, and supported gay rights (while opposing same-sex marriage). He is governed, above all, by his faith in the ultimate power of transaction—an encompassing perversion of realism that is less a preference for putting interests ahead of values than a belief that interests have no place for values.

Trump has relied heavily on the ideas of seasoned combatants. Newt Gingrich, who, as House Speaker in the nineties, pioneered many of the tactics that have come to define partisan warfare, is now a Trump adviser. Gingrich told me that he is urging Trump to give priority to an obscure but contentious conservative issue—ending lifetime tenure for federal employees. This would also galvanize Republicans and help mend rifts in the Party after a bitter election.

"Getting permission to fire corrupt, incompetent, and dishonest workers—that's the absolute showdown," Gingrich said. He assumes that federal employees' unions would resist, thus producing, in his words, an "ongoing war" similar to the conflict that engulfed Madison, Wisconsin, in 2011, when Governor Scott Walker moved to limit public-sector employees' collective-bargaining rights. After five months of protests, and

a failed effort to recall the Governor and members of the state senate, Walker largely prevailed. Gingrich predicts that that chaotic dynamic can be brought to Washington. "You have to end the civil-service permanent employment," he said. "You start changing that and the public-employee unions will just come unglued."

What, exactly, can a President do? To prevent the ascent of what the Anti-Federalist Papers, in 1787, called "a Caesar, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian in America," the founders gave Congress the power to make laws, and the Supreme Court the final word on the Constitution. But in the nineteen-thirties Congress was unable to mount a response to the rise of Nazi Germany, and during the Cold War the prospect of sudden nuclear attack further consolidated authority in the White House.

"These checks are not gone completely, but they're much weaker than I think most people assume," Eric Posner, a law professor at the University of Chicago, said. "Congress has delegated a great deal of power to the President, Presidents have claimed power under the Constitution, and Congress has acquiesced." The courts, Posner added, are slow. "If you have a President who is moving very quickly, the judiciary can't do much. A recent example of this would be the war on terror. The judiciary put constraints on President Bush—but it took a very long time."

Some of Trump's promises would be impossible to fulfill without the consent of Congress or the courts; namely, repealing Obamacare, cutting taxes, and opening up "our libel laws" that protect reporters, so that "we can sue them and win lots of money." (In reality, there are no federal libel laws.) Even if Republicans retain control of Congress, they are unlikely to have the sixty votes in the Senate required to overcome a Democratic filibuster.

"How about you just shout out ideas and I'll keep writing them down until this Post-it is all filled up."

However, Trump could achieve many objectives on his own. A President has the unilateral authority to renegotiate a nuclear deal with Iran, to order a ban on Muslims, and to direct the Justice Department to give priority to certain offenses, with an eye to specific targets. During the campaign, he has accused Amazon of "getting away with murder tax-wise," and vowed, if he wins, "Oh, do they have problems."

Any of those actions could be contested in court. The American Civil Liberties Union has analyzed Trump's promises and concluded, in the words of the executive director, Anthony Romero, that they would "violate the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth Amendments to the Constitution." Romero has said that the A.C.L.U. would "challenge and impede implementation of his proposals," but that strategy highlights the essential advantage of the President: the first move. "The other branches are then presented with a fait accompli," according to a 1999 paper by the political scientists Terry M. Moe and William G. Howell. After the September 11th attacks, Bush signed an executive order authorizing warrantless surveillance of Americans by the National Security Agency, and, though lawmakers voiced concerns, and lawsuits were filed, the program continued until 2015, when Congress ordered an end to bulk phone-metadata collection. Similarly, Obama has used his powers to raise fuel-economy standards and temporarily ban energy exploration in parts of Alaska and the Arctic Ocean.

Modern Presidents have occasionally been constrained by isolated acts of disobedience by government officials. To confront terrorism, Trump has said, "you have to take out their families," work on "closing that Internet up in some ways," and use tactics that are "frankly unthinkable" and "a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding." General Michael Hayden, a former head of the C.I.A. and of the National Security Agency, predicts that senior officers would refuse to carry out those proposals. "You are required not to follow an unlawful order," he has said.

Donald Trump would be the first Commander-in-Chief with no prior experience in public office or at high levels of the military. As a candidate, he has said that he would not trust American intelligence officials ("the people that have been doing it for our country") and declared, "I know more about ISIS than the generals do." Once he became the nominee, Trump received his first batch of top-secret information. During a national intelligence briefing at his offices in New York, he was accompanied by retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, a senior adviser who reportedly kept interrupting the briefing with questions and comments until Christie asked him to calm down. (The campaign denied that account.) Trump later told a television interviewer that the briefers' "body language" indicated that "they were not happy" with Obama.

Intelligence professionals faulted Trump for publicly discussing, and politicizing, a classified briefing. Several national-security officials told me that a determining factor in any President's approach would be his response to a shock—say, a crippling power outage that might be terrorism or might not. "Would he or she be impetuous?" Jim Woolsey, a Trump adviser who served as director of Central Intelligence from 1993 to 1995, asked. "One thing you can be pretty sure of is that the first report is almost always wrong, at least partially. When the President of the United States says, 'I just got a report—the United States military forces are under attack,' it is very hard for anybody to stand in the way of that."

In "Trump: Think Like a Billionaire" (2004), Trump wrote that others "are surprised by how quickly I make big decisions, but I've learned to trust my instincts and not to overthink things." He added, "The day I realized it can be smart to be shallow was, for me, a deep experience." He prides himself on vengeance and suspicion. "If you do not get even, you are just a schmuck!" he wrote, in 2007. "Be paranoid," he said in 2000.

For many years, Trump has expressed curiosity about nuclear weapons. In 1984, still in his thirties, he told the Washington *Post* that he wanted to negotiate nuclear treaties with the Soviets. "It would take an hour and a half to learn everything there is to learn about missiles," he said. "I think I know most of it anyway." According to Bruce G. Blair, a research scholar at the Program on Science and Global Security, at Princeton, Trump encountered a U.S. nuclear-arms negotiator at a reception in 1990 and offered advice on how to cut a "terrific" deal with a Soviet counterpart. Trump told him to arrive late, stand over the Soviet negotiator, stick his finger in his chest, and say, "Fuck you!" Recently, a former Republican White House official whom Trump has called on for his insights told me, "Honestly, the problem with Donald is he doesn't know what he doesn't know."

Shortly after taking the oath of office, Trump would be assigned a military aide who carries the forty-five-pound aluminum-and-leather briefcase that holds "a manual for conducting nuclear war," according to Dan Zak, the author of "Almighty," a new book on nuclear weapons. The briefcase, known in the White House as "the football," contains menus of foreign targets: cities, arsenals, critical infrastructure. To launch an attack, Trump would first verify his identity to a commander in the Pentagon's war

room, by referring to codes on a one-of-a-kind I.D. card, known as "the biscuit." (According to Zak, "Jimmy Carter is rumored to have sent the biscuit to the dry cleaners accidentally. Bill Clinton allegedly misplaced the biscuit and didn't tell anyone for months.")

On rare occasions, a President's nuclear orders have been too unsettling for his staff to accept. In October, 1969, Richard Nixon told Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird to put nuclear forces on high alert. According to Sagan, the Stanford nuclear-arms specialist, Nixon hoped that the Soviets would suspect that he was willing to attack North Vietnam. Laird was appalled, and he tried an excuse: the alert would conflict with a scheduled military exercise. Sagan recalls, "He understood that Richard Nixon believed in the so-called 'madman theory' "—deterring aggression by encouraging America's rivals to suspect that Nixon was irrational. "But Mel Laird believed that the madman theory was pretty crazy, and that threatening to use nuclear weapons over something like Vietnam was not going to be effective, and might actually be dangerous. He tried to delay implementing the President's orders, in the hopes that Nixon would calm down. Nixon did that a lot; he would make an angry comment, and if you ignored it he wouldn't come back to it." In this instance, Nixon did not forget, and Laird eventually complied. The operation, hastily organized, went poorly: eighteen B-52s, loaded with nuclear weapons, flew toward the Soviet Union. Some came dangerously close to other aircraft, an incident that an after-action report ruled "unsafe."

Later, another aide sought to interrupt Nixon's control over nuclear weapons. During the final weeks of the Watergate scandal, in 1974, some of Nixon's advisers regarded him as unsteady. James R. Schlesinger, who was Secretary of Defense at the time, issued a directive to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that "any emergency order coming from the president" should be diverted to Schlesinger before any action was taken, according to James Carroll's "House of War," a history of the Pentagon. The directive may have been illegal, but it remained in place. Because many Republicans are boycotting Trump's campaign, those who agree to join risk being viewed, as a former Cabinet secretary put it to me, as part of "a staff full of Ollie Norths." (In 1987, testifying to Congress about his role in the Iran-Contra scandal, the White House aide Oliver L. North said, "If the Commander-in-Chief tells this lieutenant-colonel to go stand in the corner and sit on his head, I will do so.")

Watching Trump on the campaign trail, Timothy Naftali, the former director of the Nixon Presidential Library, said, "Trump tweets what Nixon knew not to say outside his inner circle, and we know what he said from the tapes. What Nixon would do is project onto situations the conspiracies that he would have concocted if in the same position. Nixon was convinced that the Democrats were spying on him. So he spied on them. To himself, he rationalized his actions by saying, 'I'm only doing what my enemies are doing to me.' "

Nothing in the campaign has presented Trump with a broader range of new information than the realm of foreign affairs. Asked about the Quds Force, an Iranian paramilitary unit, he has expressed his view of "the Kurds," an ethnic group. During a debate in December, 2015, a moderator requested his view of the "nuclear triad," the cornerstone of American nuclear strategy—bombers, land-based missiles, and submarine-launched missiles—and it became clear that Trump had no idea what the term meant. Trump replied, "I think, to me, nuclear is just the power, the devastation is very important to me."

In April, at the request of the campaign, Richard Burt, a former senior State Department official in the Reagan Administration, contributed elements to Trump's first major foreign-policy speech. Burt, who was the American Ambassador to Germany from 1985 to 1989, had been attracted by Trump's talk of a more restrained, "realist" vision of American power. Burt told me, "We were a singular superpower. That has changed. We no longer have the unique situation of living in a unipolar world. Either way, it's probably just as well. We fucked it up, and not just Iraq. In a lot of ways, we've been too concerned with those ambitions of nation-building, regime change, and democracy promotion. We learned that those things are a lot harder than we thought they were."

Although Burt contributed ideas, he is not an active Trump supporter. In April, Trump delivered the foreign-policy speech, but Pratik Chougule, a campaign adviser, sensed his discomfort with the subject. "You can see his mannerisms, when he is reading the speech—everything about it just looked uncomfortable," Chougule, who left the campaign and is now a managing editor at *The National Interest*, told me. "We were dealing with a candidate who had made his own judgments, whether correctly or not; a

traditional policy approach was not going to be a good fit." When Trump was asked, in March, to name the person he consulted most often on foreign policy, he said, "I'm speaking with myself, number one, because I have a very good brain and I've said a lot of things." He struggled to attract well-known Republican advisers, in part because his slogan, "America First," went beyond isolationism, to an extractive conception of American power. "I want to take everything back from the world that we've given them," he said in April, 2015.

His portrait of the country as a survivor in an anarchic world has caused other countries to reëxamine their assumptions about America. "It almost sounds like you'd have to pay to rent American troops," a European diplomat in Washington told me. Even discounting some of the rhetoric as due to the heat of a campaign, the diplomat said, Trump's success in the primary must be understood as a measure of changing American attitudes and his own intentions. "That feeling about burden-sharing is probably relatively deep in his gut: There's something wrong here—the U.S. is getting robbed."

In some cases, Trump's language has had the opposite effect of what he intends. He professes a hard line on China ("We can't continue to allow China to rape our country," he said in May), but, in China, Trump's "America First" policy has been understood as the lament of a permissive, exhausted America. A recent article in Guancha, a nationalist news site, was headlined "TRUMP: AMERICA WILL STOP TALKING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND NO LONGER PROTECT NATO UNCONDITIONALLY."

Shen Dingli, an influential foreign-policy scholar at Fudan University, in Shanghai, told me that Chinese officials would be concerned about Trump's unpredictability but, he thinks, have concluded that, ultimately, he is a novice who makes hollow threats and would be easy to handle. They would worry about the policies of a President Hillary Clinton, who, as Secretary of State, oversaw Obama's "pivot" to Asia, intended to balance China's expansion. "She is more predictable and probably tough," Shen said. "Human rights, pivoting—China hates both."

Trump is not uniformly isolationist; he has affirmative ideas, some of which have produced effects outside his control. When he labelled Obama "the founder of ISIS," the

Lebanese militant group Hezbollah rejoiced. Its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, who is allied with President Bashar al-Assad, of Syria, against ISIS, has claimed that the U.S. created extremist groups in order to sow chaos in the Middle East. Now, it seemed, Trump was confirming it. "This is an American Presidential candidate," Nasrallah said on television. "This was spoken on behalf of the American Republican Party. He has data and documents."

Other militant organizations, including ISIS, featured Trump's words and image in recruiting materials. A recruitment video released in January by Al Shabaab, the East African militant group allied with Al Qaeda, showed Trump calling for a ban on Muslims entering the U.S.; the video warned, "Tomorrow, it will be a land of religious discrimination and concentration camps."

One of Trump's most consistent promises is to "renegotiate" the Iran nuclear deal. Walid Phares, Trump's foreign-policy adviser, has said, "He is not going to implement it as is." There are reasonable criticisms of the terms of the deal, but refusing to implement it would be, in effect, "a gift to Iran," according to Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The hard-line forces in Iran are looking for a way in which this deal can unravel, but they won't be blamed for it," he said. "This would be their ideal solution. The Iranians would say, 'You've abrogated your end, so we're going to reconstitute our nuclear program.' "

"I have more underneath."

APRIL 20, 2015

In July, Trump made his most dramatic foray into foreign policy, declaring that if Baltic members of NATO are attacked he would decide whether to defend them on the basis of whether they had "fulfilled their obligations to us." I asked the President of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, what he made of that. Ilves rejected the suggestion that his country has not done its part for NATO. "Estonia has not sat back and waited for allies to take care of its security," he said. "Indeed, proportionally to our size, we were one of the greatest contributors to the mission in Afghanistan." Without mentioning Trump's name, he warned against improvising on matters of foreign policy involving President Vladimir Putin, of Russia: "Russia's aggression against Ukraine—and the impact that Russian policies and actions toward neighboring countries have had on

European security as a whole—marks a paradigm shift, the end of trust in the post-Cold War order."

After Trump expressed his hesitations about America's commitment to NATO, I visited the Arlington, Virginia, office of the RAND Corporation, a nonpartisan research institution. During the Cold War, RAND developed the use of political-military war games—the simulation of real-world scenarios—and four RAND contributors and analysts have received Nobel Prizes for their work on game theory. "A game is a kind of preview of coming attractions," David Shlapak, the co-director of RAND's Center for Gaming, told me.

Shlapak said that in the spring of 2014, after Russia seized Crimea, "the question surfaced: What could Russia do to NATO, if it was inclined to?" To test the proposition, RAND organized a series of war games, sponsored by the Pentagon, involving military officers, strategists, and others, to examine what would happen if Russia attacked the three most vulnerable NATO nations—the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.

To his surprise, the simulated Russian forces reached the outskirts of the Estonian and Latvian capitals in as little as thirty-six hours. The larger shock was the depth of destruction. American forces, which would deploy from Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, are not heavily armored. "In twelve hours, more Americans die than in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined, in sixteen years," Shlapak said. "In twelve hours, the U.S. Air Force loses more airplanes than it's lost in every engagement since Vietnam, combined." He went on, "In our base case, the Russians bring about four hundred and fifty tanks to the fight, and NATO brings none. So it turns into a fight of steel against flesh." (Based on the games, RAND recommended that NATO assign three heavily armored brigades to the Baltic states.)

Shlapak, who has a silver goatee and wears horn-rimmed glasses, has been at RAND for thirty-four years. I asked him if he thought that Trump's suggestion of withholding support from NATO will have any impact beyond the campaign. RAND takes no positions in U.S. elections. He said, "Deterrence is inherently psychological. It's a state of mind that you create in a potential adversary, and it rests on a couple of foundational criteria. One of them is credibility—your adversary's confidence that if it does the thing that

you are prohibiting, the thing you seek to deter, the consequences you are threatening will happen."

Raising the prospect of relaxing America's defense of NATO suggests that, for some portion of the American public, the long-standing American commitment to defending Europe is, in a word, negotiable. "We've had seventy years of great-power peace, which is the longest period in post-Westphalian history," Shlapak said. "I think one of the reasons we don't think about that, or don't understand the value of that, is that it's been so long since we've been face to face with the prospect of that kind of conflict."

Closer to home, Trump's criticism of Mexico has fuelled the rise of a Presidential candidate whom some Mexicans call their own Donald Trump—Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a pugnacious leftist who proposed to cut off intelligence coöperation with America. In recent polls, he has pulled ahead of a crowded field. Jorge Guajardo, a former Mexican diplomat, who served in the United States and China, warns that the surge of hostility from American politicians will weaken Mexico's commitment to help the United States with counter-terrorism. "Post-9/11, the coöperation has gone on steroids," Guajardo told me. "There have been cases of stopping terrorists in Mexico. Muammar Qaddafi's son wanted to go live in Mexico, and Mexico stopped him. But people are saying, If the United States elects Trump, give them the finger."

Trump has always been most comfortable on the home front, with domestic policy, built around his central promise of, as he put it recently, "an impenetrable, physical, tall, powerful, beautiful southern border wall." That is not, strictly speaking, a fantasy. Chertoff, who oversaw the construction of border fences while he headed the Department of Homeland Security, said, "It will take a lot more time than he says it is going to take, but it's not logistically impossible."

Trump's political fortunes have become so intertwined with the wall that his advisers believe he has no choice but to try. Gingrich told me, "He has to build a wall or a fence. That's got to be almost right away."

Trump envisages a structure of steel and precast-concrete panels that is between thirty-five and fifty feet tall ("There's no ladder going over that"), has a foundation deep enough to prevent tunnels, is a thousand miles long—half the length of the border, because physical barriers divide the rest—and costs up to twelve billion dollars. Independent analyses give the cost as at least twenty-five billion dollars, adding that to build it would take at least four years.

Other details of the plan are a delusion. To force Mexico to pay for the wall, Trump intends to confiscate remittances sent back to Mexico by undocumented immigrants and increase border fees and tariffs, but the legal and practical obstacles to those actions are overwhelming, and Mexican officials promise not to contribute. ("I'm not going to pay for that fucking wall," Vicente Fox, the former President, said last year.) Therefore, Trump would need Congress to appropriate the money, and, for now, Republican leaders are believed to consider that a nonstarter. Nevertheless, Gingrich says that he would try to use the election schedule to pressure vulnerable incumbents into supporting it. "Remember how many Democrats are up for election in the Senate in 2018," he said. Twenty-five. "Do you really want to go home as the guy who stopped the fence? Then, by all means, but we'll build it in '19."

The most likely scenario is that, after negotiations, Trump's wall would end up as a small, symbolic extension of the federally financed border fence that is already in place. Its construction was approved by the Senate in 2006, with backing from twenty-six Democrats, including New York's junior senator at the time, Hillary Clinton.

From the beginning, Trump's most ambitious promise has been that he would remove 11.3 million undocumented immigrants through mass deportations and by pressuring people to leave on their own. "They have to go," he said, and he predicted that he could accomplish this removal in two years. That would raise the pace of arrests twentyfold, to roughly fifteen thousand apprehensions per day. Trump explained his idea by praising an Eisenhower-era deportation program that "moved them way south; they never came back," he said in a debate last November. "Dwight Eisenhower. You don't get nicer, you don't get friendlier."

MAY 6, 2013

Eisenhower's program, Operation Wetback, was launched in June, 1954. Led by retired General Joseph M. Swing, it used spotter planes to locate border crossers and direct teams of jeeps to intercept them. According to "Impossible Subjects," a study of illegal-immigration history, by Mae M. Ngai, in the first three months the program apprehended a hundred and seventy thousand people, and some were returned to Mexico by cargo ship. After a riot during one such voyage, a congressional investigation described the conditions as those of "an eighteenth-century slave ship" and a "penal hell ship." Overland routes were harrowing; during one roundup, in hundred-and-twelve-degree heat, eighty-eight laborers died. Many American citizens were also deported by mistake.

Julie Myers Wood, who headed Immigration and Customs Enforcement during the Bush Administration, told me that she is appalled by parts of Trump's immigration plan and cautioned critics not to assume that it is impossible. "It's not as binary as some people suggest," she said. "You could think of some very outside-the-box options." A President Trump could permit ICE officers to get access to I.R.S. files that contain home addresses. (Undocumented immigrants who pay taxes often list real addresses, in order to receive tax-refund checks.) He could invoke provision 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, in order to detail thousands of local and state agents and police officers to the deportation effort. "You'd put people on a train," she said. "Again, I'm not recommending this. You could have a cruise ship."

The American Action Forum, a conservative Washington think tank, ran budget projections of Trump's plan: raids on farms, restaurants, factories, and construction sites would require more than ninety thousand "apprehension personnel"—six times the number of special agents in the F.B.I. Beds for captured men, women, and children would reach 348,831, nearly triple the detention space required for the internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War. Thousands of chartered buses (fifty-four seats on average) and planes (which can accommodate a hundred and thirty-five) would carry deportees to the border or to their home countries. The report estimated the total cost at six hundred billion dollars, which it judged financially imprudent.

In August, when Trump's poll numbers dropped, he spoke of "softening" his immigration plan, but supporters balked, and, in a speech on August 31st, he abandoned the pretense of moderation, promising to create a "deportation task force" and go further than Eisenhower. "You can't just smuggle in, hunker down, and wait to be legalized," he said. "Those days are over." The groups he identified as priorities for deportation constitute at least five million people, according to the Washington *Post*.

Trump also refashioned his proposed ban on Muslims. In July, Khizr Khan, the father of a soldier killed in Iraq, criticized Trump's proposal, and the candidate responded by mocking Khan's wife, Ghazala: "She had nothing to say. She probably, maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say." (She subsequently spoke out eloquently.) Under sustained criticism, Trump proposed, instead, to "screen out any who have hostile attitudes towards our country or its principles—or who believe that Sharia law should supplant American law."

Gingrich called for re-creating the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was established in 1938 to investigate accusations of subversion and disloyalty. "We're going to presently have to go take the similar steps here," he said, on Fox News. "We're going to ultimately declare a war on Islamic supremacists, and we're going to say, If you pledge allegiance to ISIS, you are a traitor and you have lost your citizenship." The committee is not often praised; before it was abolished, in 1975, it had laid the groundwork for the internment of Japanese-Americans, and led investigations into alleged Communist sympathizers. In 1959, former President Harry S. Truman called it the "most un-American thing in the country today."

Trump's overarching argument to voters has been, in the end, economic: as President, he would draw on his business experience, "surround myself only with the best and most serious people," and lead Americans to greater prosperity. Some aides did not help fortify that proposition: Trump fired his first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, who manhandled a female reporter, and then forced out his chief strategist, Paul Manafort, after Manafort was weakened by allegations of unreported lobbying and secret cash payments from leaders in Ukraine. (Manafort has denied these allegations.)

To understand whom Trump trusts to put policy vision into practice, I contacted Stephen Miller, his national director of policy, who serves as a fiery warmup speaker at Trump rallies. Miller, who is thirty-one, worked for Michelle Bachmann, of Minnesota, and, later, for Senator Jeff Sessions, of Alabama, a prominent Republican critic of free-trade deals and illegal immigration. Miller has been described by Politico as "a deeply unsettling figure, even to many in his own party," in part because of his writings in college and high school. While attending Duke University, Miller accused the poet Maya Angelou of "racial paranoia" and described a student organization as a "radical national Hispanic group that believes in racial superiority." Miller asked me to speak to several of Trump's advisers on the economy and trade.

For economic advice, the campaign enlisted the Heritage Foundation economist Stephen Moore, who co-founded the Club for Growth, a conservative lobbying group. At fifty-six, Moore is amiable and unpretentious, "a little bit scatterbrained," by his own description. (During the 2000 campaign, he forgot to mark on his calendar an invitation to brief the candidate George W. Bush, foreclosing the prospect of a job in the White House.) In 2012, he helped Herman Cain, the former C.E.O. of Godfather's Pizza, develop his "9-9-9" plan, which would have narrowed the tax code to three categories, capped at nine per cent.

Moore visited Trump on his plane, and, during a series of meetings, he and others crafted an economic plan based on the cornerstone of supply-side economics: cut taxes to encourage people to work and businesses to invest. "That's basically the theory there," Moore said. "This is the signature issue for conservatives since Reagan went into office. This has been the battle between the left and the right. The liberals say tax rates don't matter"—for stimulating growth. "We say they do."

Trump's team focussed, above all, on reducing the business tax rate. Moore said, "What I recommended to him is this should be your stimulus to the economy—do this in the first hundred days." Economists' reactions have been mixed. Paul Krugman, the left-leaning Nobel laureate, argued that the supply-side argument was refuted by a basic fact: job growth has been higher under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama than under George W. Bush. Moore counters that Reagan achieved job growth through tax cuts.

The other half of Trump's economic thinking is his view that "we are killing ourselves with trade pacts that are no good for us." As President, he would have the legal authority to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal and the North American Free Trade Agreement, to impose tariffs on categories of goods from China, and—if the World Trade Organization objects to his actions—to withdraw from the W.T.O., just as President Bush withdrew from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, in 2002.

"A fire hydrant, you say? No, but I'll keep my eyes peeled."

OCTOBER 5, 2009

But interviews with Trump's trade advisers leave no doubt that this is a kind of theatre—a bluff, which, they believe, will achieve their aims without actual tariffs. In 2006, Dan DiMicco, the former C.E.O. of Nucor Corporation, the largest steel producer in the United States, which has faced heavy Chinese competition, self-published a book called "Steeling America's Future: A CEO's Call to Arms." Long before most Republicans foresaw the political backlash against free trade, DiMicco wrote, "Shame on our government leaders if they refuse to provide us with a level playing field on which to compete."

DiMicco, a blunt, barrel-chested New York native, used his position at Nucor to publicize his argument in television interviews, and Trump contacted him. "We had a discussion about China back then, about trade, cheating, and all those issues," DiMicco told me. Now a member of Trump's Economic Advisory Council, he has visited Trump in New York, and he prides himself on offering unconventional advice. To deal with China, he says, the United States should act like an aggressive patient at a dentist's office: "Here's how the patient deals with the dentist: sits down in the chair, grabs the dentist by the nuts, and says, 'You don't hurt me, I won't hurt you.' "

Peter Navarro, Trump's senior policy adviser on trade and China, is a business professor at the University of California at Irvine. He does not speak Chinese, and he is at odds with many mainstream China scholars, but he has directed documentaries, including "Death by China," and written books such as "The Coming China Wars." During a lull at the Republican National Convention, Navarro told me that he argues for the need to "balance the trade deficit." He said, "If you simply do that, it sets in motion a process where you grow faster, there's more employment, that pushes real wages up, and that

floods the government coffers with tax revenues, and then you're able to pay for the infrastructure and social services and defense, which have been neglected." He added, "You focus on the trade deficit and good things happen. That's the philosophy of Donald Trump."

The Economist Intelligence Unit, an economic-and-geopolitical-analysis firm, has ranked the prospect of a Trump victory on its top-ten risks to the global economy. Larry Summers, the Harvard professor and former Treasury Secretary, predicts that, taken together, Trump's economic and trade policies would help trigger a protracted recession within eighteen months. Even if Trump stops short of applying tariffs, Summers told me, "the perception that we might well be pursuing hyper-nationalist policies would be very damaging to confidence globally and would substantially increase the risk of financial crises in emerging markets."

If Trump followed through on tariffs, the effects could be larger still. Mark Zandi, a centrist economist who has advised Republicans and Democrats and is now the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, a research firm, forecasts that Trump's trade plan could trigger a trade war that would put roughly four million Americans out of work, and cost the economy three million jobs that would have been created in Trump's absence.

But Trump would not need to take any of those steps to have an abrupt effect on the economy. His belief in the power of the threat, which he has used in private business, takes on another meaning if he is the leader of a country with national-debt obligations. In May, Trump, whose businesses have declared bankruptcy four times, said, "I've borrowed knowing that you can pay back with discounts," and "if the economy crashed you could make a deal." The notion that he might try to make creditors accept less than full payment on U.S. government debt caused an outcry. Under criticism, he clarified, to the *Wall Street Journal*, that U.S. "bonds are absolutely sacred," but the incident left an enduring impression on the financial community.

Anthony Karydakis, the chief economic strategist at Miller Tabak, an asset manager, told me that a Trump victory is now generally regarded as "a major destabilizing development for financial markets." He went on, "If he ever even alludes to

renegotiating the debt, we will have a downgrade of U.S. debt, and that event will cause a massive exodus of foreign investors from the U.S. Treasury market." In 2011, when feuding in Congress delayed raising the debt limit, the stock market fell seventeen per cent. This would be a far larger event. "The rating agencies could not ignore the comment," he said. "The cornerstone of the right to raise sovereign debt is the willingness and ability of the government to service it normally and fully." He added, "The markets have no patience for stupidity or ignorance. They get scared."

For more than a year, Trump has encouraged supporters to regard him as a work in progress—"Everything is negotiable"—and the ambiguity has ushered him to the threshold of power. But envisaging a Trump Presidency has never required an act of imagination; he has proudly exhibited his priorities, his historical inspirations, his instincts under pressure, and his judgment about those who would put his ideas into practice. In "Trump: Think Like a Billionaire," he included a quote from Richard Conniff, the author of "The Natural History of the Rich": "Successful alpha personalities display a single-minded determination to impose their vision on the world, an irrational belief in unreasonable goals, bordering at times on lunacy."

Trump's vision, even his "irrational belief in unreasonable goals," was never a charade. In the early decades of this century, Americans have sometimes traced our greatest errors to a failure of imagination: the inability to picture a terrorist, in a cave, who is able to strike; the hubris to ignore extensive State Department predictions of what would come of the invasion of Iraq.

Trump presents us with the opposite risk: his victory would be not a failure of imagination but, rather, a retreat to it—the magical thought that his Presidency would be something other than the campaign that created it. ♦

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