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RESEARCH ARTICLE

At a Crossroads or Business as Usual? British Foreign Policy and the International Order in the Wake of Brexit-Trump

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ABSTRACT

In 2016, the Brexit-Trump watershed resulted in two consecutive shocks for British foreign policy, which under the May governments has been rearticulated around the goal to forge 'Global Britain'. This article discusses how the 'Global Britain' strategy may play out in two broad international domains – trade and security – to elaborate on implications for the international order. The analysis especially elucidates the dubious feasibility of compensating 'hard Brexit' with free-trade agreements around the world, and the pitfalls of extrication from the EU as regards common foreign policy, data-sharing and sanctions policy. Trump's election is argued to bring about a more protectionist trade environment while facilitating the prospect of a UK-US trade deal, which however compels the British government to uneasy balancing acts. Finally, an interest-oriented Global Britain about to face diplomatic overstretching and economic difficulties is suggested to have turned into a more precarious defender of the rules-based international order.

KEYWORDS: United Kingdom; Brexit; Trump; Global Britain; international order.

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1. Introduction

In the eyes of pundits and ordinary citizens alike, the Brexit referendum qualified alongside the election of Donald Trump as the defining political moment of 2016. Hailing the British vote from his Scottish golf resort of Trump Turnberry in its aftermath – in stark contrast with the stances expressed in London by President Obama in April – the then Republican nominee linked it with his own campaign in the name of a common will to ‘take the country back’. The two eye-catching events have been widely read – not just framed by radical right political actors – in conjunction, having brought into the limelight an array of undercurrents spanning other European democracies. Rising populism, resentment against globalisation, anti-establishment sentiments, identity politics, nativism and sovereignty have all been ascribed to that *Zeitgeist*, engendering a sense that time-honoured logics now provide weaker guidance.

Other than as an internal challenge to liberal democracy, the developments of 2016 were viewed as casting a shadow over the American commitment to the liberal international order (e.g. Bunde & Ischinger, 2017), in a context liable to become subject to ‘a diversification of preferences among the [major powers] concerning the functioning of international institutions and fora’ and thus the global order (Sus, 2017, p. 117). The director of Chatham House alluded to a ‘demise of Anglo-American economic leadership’ brought about by popular demand for control, reversing liberalisation and leaving room for competing powers to promote their regional models (Niblett, 2016).

In fact, like a couple of rocks thrown into a pond, the combination of the EU referendum and the American presidential election perturbed the multiple linkages among the UK, the US, the EU and some of its member States, with political and economic repercussions onto the international environment. This article aims to contribute to the debate on the resilience of the international order by specifically elaborating on the likely features of British agency in the wake of Brexit-Trump. To that end, it discusses how the two shocks – consecutive but discrete, especially in terms of international politics – have reshuffled British foreign policy, now called to

tackle head-on, against an unsettled backdrop, a tangle of economic, diplomatic and security-related issues.

Besides being predicted to substantially weaken Britain's economic prospects in the medium-to-long term, the Brexit scenario gave rise to variously nuanced understandings. It was interpreted, for instance, as a blow to the hard and soft power of both the UK and the EU, affecting their capabilities and reputation in areas such as development policy and enlargement (Smith, 2017) or sanctions policy (Keatinge, 2017), and leaving both weaker vis-à-vis external challenges (Freedman, 2016). Furthermore, Brexit was portrayed as a military and diplomatic loss for the EU (Smith, 2016; Whitman, 2016b), but also as British self-removal from influencing EU decision-making and a renounce to the 'multiplier' effect of the EU clout (Lain, 2016; Smith, 2016; Whitman, 2016b).

The possibilities for Britain to adopt a more comprehensive approach in its foreign relations (Chalmers, 2017a), while distancing itself from unwanted aspects of EU security (Lain, 2016), were measured against expected difficulties in re-establishing external policies across domains (Whitman, 2016b) – a massive undertaking when simultaneously having to cater to the Brexit process and to a re-orientation of global trade strategies (Ricketts 2016) – and against the risk of a counter-productive 'pivot to Europe' prompted by negotiations on extrication from the EU (Bew & Elefteriu, 2016). Brexit was alternatively suggested to increase EU security dependence on NATO (*ibidem*), to facilitate bolder European moves towards defence integration, but also to unveil related intra-EU dissonance (Lain, 2016; Whitman, 2016b).

Months later, Trump's triumph grafted itself onto this already elusive landscape and changed calculations. It was argued to contain in the short term the post-Brexit reputational damage undergone by the UK, however without concealing diminished diplomatic and economic usefulness of Britain in American eyes (Wilson, 2017; Rees, 2017) and enhanced 'potential for estrangement' between Europe and the US (*ibidem*, p. 569). The similarity of British and European positions in terms of security dependence on the US (Oliver & Williams, 2017) pointed to a rationale for

an EU-UK *rapprochement*, and alignment dilemmas were foreseen for Britain in the event that the US ended up uniting European countries by trying to trample on their interests, e.g. on the Iran nuclear deal (Smith, 2016) or regulatory standards (Niblett, 2016). Sterner American removal from European security was alternatively predicted to spur EU security developments even more, compounding British disconnection (Whitman, 2017), or to strengthen Britain's hand in the Brexit negotiations, by making its cooperation appreciate (Munro, 2016).

With several outcomes yet to unfold, degrees of uncertainty and multiple interpretations linger on, and the sequence of the two recent shocks hinders proper disentanglement of their analytically separate effects. Anyway, an immediate consequence of the Brexit referendum must be factored in: British international agency after Brexit-Trump – and its significance for the international order – are now linked to a reframing of British foreign policy, enacted by the May governments, around an existential quest to forge ‘Global Britain’. Hence, the article draws from primary sources – official documents released by the British government, speeches held by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary – alongside secondary literature.

The first section recapitulates the predicaments of Britain in the post-1945 international order, briefly dwelling on the relevance of national identity. Consistent with two main concerns presented in Theresa May's Florence speech, the second and third section refer to two broad international domains – trade and security – in which the impact of Brexit is contextualised with reference to the *status quo ante*. The fourth section updates the picture of British prospects on the basis of the ‘enter Trump’ scenario. The fifth section binds the threads, by connecting the likely features of British agency to their relevance for a changing international order.

2. Britain and National Identity in the Post-1945 Order

Laying the groundwork requires touching upon the place of Britain in the international system since World War II, also to recall how national identity has been a long-term source of disquiet. Throughout the seventy-year span the UK has

broadly abided by ‘a privilege for Anglo-American relations, with NATO as corollary; insular reserve towards the European continent; a maintained global presence with special preference for the Commonwealth; a policy based on pragmatism rather than principle; and, finally, a liberal belief in international trade’ (Bratberg, 2011, p. 331).

The main interpretative pillar was provided by Churchill's doctrine of the ‘three circles’, whereby Britain was to receive – or rather maintain – its exceptionalism from its position at the crossing of the Commonwealth, the Anglo-American special relationship and Europe. Without prejudice to interpreting the ‘three circles’ as a necessary, future-oriented redefinition of national identity (Wallace, 1991), their uneasy coexistence has caused the doctrine to be seen as a balancing act actually obfuscating fundamental questions (Bratberg, 2011). At any rate, a geopolitical malaise was soon certified by the Suez crisis, harshly forcing a recognition that the heyday of British power had gone; by the withdrawal from military bases ‘East of Suez’, following the 1967 devaluation of the pound (Hill, 2018); and by the application for membership of an increasingly successful European integrated market, presented amidst economic difficulties only to be vetoed twice by De Gaulle. Hence the famous quote pronounced in 1962 by Dean Acheson, whereby ‘Great Britain has lost an Empire and has not yet found a role’, and which went on (as reported by Oliver, 2016, p. 1325) by contending that

[t]he attempt to play a separate power role apart from Europe, a role based on the ‘special relationship’ with the United States and on being the head of a ‘commonwealth’ which has no political structure, unity or strength – this role is about played out.

Obviously, determinants of British power had not simply vanished. In the world of the Cold War, permanent membership and veto power at the UN Security Council added to a key role in the Western alliance. Cultural, political and military closeness to its keystone country remained enshrined in the mythical, almost ahistorical notion of the ‘special relationship’. Prominence as a large State in Europe, the status of nuclear power, the prestige of British armed forces and diplomats up-

held confidence in the standing of a country whose role in Second World War had, after all, validated national pride.

As a peculiar subset of foreign policy – European policy – entered the domestic political struggle, British ruling elites framed the decision to join the European communities as ‘a continuation, rather than a transformation, of the political order [and] a way of stabilising and strengthening pre-existing conceptions of British interests and identities in the wake of imperial decline’ (Gifford, 2008, p. 53). A long-standing connection arose between the European policy of the UK and national identity, with Euroscepticism sharpening ‘as "Europe" became something to mobilise against in order to construct and assess conceptions of British national identity and alternative projects for national renewal’ (*in v*). Meanwhile, despite their manifold – if not unproblematic – contributions to the integration process, successive British governments maintained a ‘Janus-faced approach’ (Oliver, 2017, p. 522) entrenching utilitarian caution, not positive commitment, as the dominant narrative in internal debate.

In the early 1990s, Wallace detected – and attributed to the political elite, at a time when aggregate pro-European attitudes among British citizens amounted to an all-time high – ‘an underlying crisis of national identity: a self-image which does not fit our daily experiences and interests, and which differs more and more widely from the image which others have of Britain’ (Wallace, 1991, p. 68). Cuttingly remarking that a number of past British resources were not in place anymore – the second reserve currency in the world, high technology leadership, a first-rank industrial power, a large merchant fleet, etc. – he concluded that

[i]f we are to escape from a posture in which successive British governments are pulled reluctantly backwards towards closer European political integration, babbling of sovereignty and past centuries as our economy loses autonomy and our society becomes more multinational, then we have to set about redefining the self-image and the sense of national purpose which lie at the root of foreign policy (Wallace, 1991, p. 75).

In itself, the bond between national identity and the definition of foreign policy is no news. In a nutshell, conceptions of national identity can be argued to

inform the interests to be pursued, and to be in turn (re)constituted by their furthering (Edmunds *et al.*, 2014), so that ‘grand strategy’ definitions of foreign policy are ultimately about national identity itself: ‘the sources of national pride, the characteristics which distinguish a country from its neighbours, the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad’ (Wallace, 1991, p. 65).

However, and additionally, the connection has now acquired in Britain a much tighter character, given the nexus of both elements with the European issue. As regards the arrow going from identity to European policy, oft-cited insights about a significantly identity-driven ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009) apply well to the British case, where identity is in fact salient among both public opinion and the political elites. If anything, this linkage has been strengthened in recent times by vociferous political entrepreneurs in UKIP and the Conservative Party. Furthermore, the Conservative, Brexit-friendly government emerged from the earthquake of the referendum, has reframed its mandate to deliver Brexit as implying a ‘hard Brexit’, thus building from European policy the foundations of a ‘Global Britain’ platform, which is going to constitute a powerful shaping force in British foreign policy in the oncoming years.

3. ‘Global Britain’ and Trade: Plans for Damage Limitation

Beyond an abrupt fall of the pound and a slowdown in the annual GDP growth rate to about 1.5%, no ominous developments have marred the British economy. However, no major unfolding of Brexit has occurred yet, either. In view of expected relocations of investments and disruption caused to supply chains – with Britain headed for exit from both the customs union and the Single Market – long-term predictions of British economic prospects remain grim (Portes, 2017). Limping economic credibility can restrain the international leverage of a country: perceptions matter, not least insofar as they determine the strategic context of negotiations (Oliver, 2017), and a risk exists that Brexit becomes ‘the latest instalment in a narrative of decline that has been building up’ (Bew & Elefteriu, 2016, p. 3).

Alternatives to Single Market membership had been considered in the Review of the Balance of Competences: a comprehensive audit on the appropriateness of the EU-UK distribution of powers, launched by the coalition government in 2012 and published in 2014 without drawing official conclusions. The Review considered six alternative EU-UK trade settlements: ‘going it alone’ or WTO terms, a free-trade agreement limited to goods or also encompassing services, customs union membership like Turkey, EEA membership like Norway, a bundle of *ad hoc* agreements like Switzerland. With option six being unfeasible, customs duties would go with option one, while non-tariff barriers in the form of ‘rules of origin’ would still accompany option two and three. Option four would hinder an independent trade policy but also fully guaranteed single market access, while option five, allowing both, would leave the UK with no say over the development of the single market itself (Emerson, 2016, pp. 70-71). Towards the latter, therefore, ‘any post Brexit option is damage limitation, so the overall impact of Brexit in terms of trade relations depends what the UK can achieve through an independent trade and investment policy’ (Smith, 2017).

Echoing calls for Britain to embrace ‘a global strategy for trade that repositions the UK at the heart of the world’s free-trade economy’ (Bew & Elefteriu, 2016, p. 3), the May governments – featuring a newly created Department for International Trade entrusted to leading Brexiteer Liam Fox – have largely framed ‘Global Britain’ around trade. In fact, a narration whereby the UK would prosper once freed from the shackles of the protectionist European bloc, by trading with the culturally akin nations of the Commonwealth and the fastest-growing economies of the planet, had been employed by pro-Leave politicians, seemingly nursing hopes of reaching better deals than those made available to the much wider EU market. Related talks, which must also provide for replication or renegotiation of dozens of international trade-related agreements concluded through the EU, have to be handled in parallel to the phases of Brexit negotiations, with Britain however unable to formally conclude trade deals before leaving the EU in March 2019.

Speaking at the 2016 Conservative Party conference, however, Boris Johnson claimed he could ‘think of few more positive forces in the global economy than the world’s fifth richest economy’, espousing an intention to ‘become the global champions and agitators for this phenomenon’ (Johnson, 2016) that was equally sponsored by May at a Republican Party conference in Philadelphia in January 2017, when she reiterated the wish to ‘act as one of the strongest and most forceful advocates for business, free markets and free trade anywhere around the globe’ (May, 2017b). According to her Lancaster House speech, delivered ten days earlier,

Countries including China, Brazil, and the Gulf States have already expressed their interest in striking trade deals with us. We have started discussions [...] with countries like Australia, New Zealand and India. And President Elect Trump has said Britain is not "at the back of the queue" for a trade deal with the United States, the world's biggest economy, but front of the line (May, 2017a).

Provisionally leaving aside Trump's US, British prospects with the Anglo-Saxon world seem to be a mixed bag. Following a political decision taken in 2015, the launch of EU negotiations with Australia and New Zealand was announced in September 2017. However, while in 2017 Australian Prime Minister Turnbull had appeared to prioritise a deal with the EU, his Foreign Minister recently embraced a more eager stance towards post-Brexit talks, subject to enhanced visa opportunities. With CETA having reached the ratification stage after seven years of negotiations, Prime Minister Trudeau referenced it as the basis – though not an immutable one – for Canada-UK talks, hoped to lead to ‘an even better or larger or more impactful deal’ (Stoddart, 2018).

Similarly, a deep, recent EU-South Korea agreement raises again the question of how much Britain could afford to drift away from EU market law, rather than base new deals on ‘piggy-backing on what the EU has achieved’ (Emerson, 2016, p. 33); provided that the counterparty does not actually wish to ground negotiations on more restrictive bases as regards services (Hix & Jun, 2017). Japan, expected not to reveal to the UK bargaining positions ‘for example over services and technical barriers to trade [...] that might undercut its negotiating position with the

much bigger EU' (Emerson, 2016, p. 33), has apparently coupled political openness towards Britain with scarce alacrity, agreeing in December 2017 the terms of a free-trade agreement with the EU.

Brazil, caught in a spiral of internal political and economic destabilization before an impending general election, seems at least at present an unlikely candidate for swift talks. While Indian Prime Minister Modi was duly courted at the Commonwealth summit in April 2018, India – engaged in its own negotiations with the EU, credited with a protectionist position services-wise and with a wish to secure concessions on UK-bound immigration (*ivi*; Adler-Nissen et al., 2017) – has shown tangible caution.

Courted by past and present British governments in relation to investment in infrastructure (e.g. the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station) and industry (Oliver, 2017), China is negotiating with the EU on investment but not on free trade and is argued to have economic strengths complementary to those of Britain (Yu, 2017; Yueh, 2017), that could consequently exploit promising negotiations as an *atout* on the European table (Yueh, 2017). However, following dissimilar arguments, the EU would be worried by Chinese market penetration, which it would counter with more extensive 'rules of origin' and anti-dumping measures (Emerson, 2016). Thus, arguing that the future UK-China economic relationship will depend on the future UK-EU ones (Oliver, 2017) looks plausible.

Finally, a reported British interest in entering the Trans-Pacific Partnership – which however raises scepticism, primarily because of geographic distances and limited volumes of trade (Hare, 2018) – seemingly vindicates an earlier remark whereby, against a trend of regional agreements in the making, 'Britain is rather unusually leaving one and embarking on bilateral trade deals' (Yueh, 2017, pp. 57-59). The need to secure a favourable future economic partnership with the EU could indeed prompt a paradoxical 'pivot to Europe'. In March 2018, May's Mansion House speech – devoted to this very topic – notably portrayed 'Global Britain' as a country 'which thrives in the world by forging a bold and comprehensive economic partner-

ship with our neighbours in the EU; and reaches out beyond our continent, to trade with nations across the globe' (May, 2018b).

4. 'Global Britain' and Security: How Much Extrication from the EU?

On security, an appropriate point of reference is the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, revising a 2010 predecessor 'widely perceived to [have been] a Treasury-led, cost-cutting review that resulted in major personnel and equipment cuts' (Brooke-Holland & Mills, 2016, p. 5). With one scholar having even regarded the 2010 SDSR as the end of the 'great power' status – as it 'effectively ended the UK's ability to deploy, long term, the sort of force used in the Gulf Wars in 1991 and 2003' (Gaskarth, 2014, p. 580) – austerity-oriented retrenchment and limited diplomatic drive towards the crises at the European borders in the following years attested to a dimmer British international agency (Aragona, 2015; Chalmers, 2017a). The 2015 SDSR published by the new Cameron government marked a kind of 'expansionary' move, e.g. by envisaging an enhanced budget for equipment commitments.

Its 'Allies, partners and global engagement' section approached first the Euro-Atlantic area and, within it, NATO, 'at the heart of the UK's defence policy' (HM Government, 2015, p. 50) in terms of guidance over decisions. Singling out the US, France and Germany for coveted deepening of security relationships, the document highlighted the 'unparalleled extent of UK-US cooperation on nuclear, intelligence, diplomacy, technology and military capabilities' (*ibidem*, p. 51) and a British preference for related interoperability, joint planning and training. The references to France included the close relationship built through the 2010 Lancaster House Treaty, a new Joint Expeditionary Force and equipment collaboration. Ambitions concerning the EU – modestly mentioned (Lain, 2016; Lain & Nouwens, 2017) after other European partners and intergovernmental groupings, in relation to the UK-commanded Operation Atalanta and other CDSP missions – merely aspired to closer EU-NATO coordination and to EU reforms in line with Cameron's renegotiation pledge. In fact, considering the 2015 and the 2010 SDSR alongside

other government core documents, such as the 2010 and 2015 National Security Strategy, Whitman (2016a, 2016b) read the referendum result as ‘facilitating the acceleration of a trend’, since ‘the two recent Conservative-led governments had already sought to re-calibrate Britain’s place in the world to "de-centre" the EU from the UK’s foreign policy’ (Whitman 2016b: R43-R44).

Recent speeches by May and Johnson convey an assertion that even in this day and age ‘[t]he objective elements of British power are unchanged’ (Bew & Elefteriu, 2016, p. 3; Ricketts, 2016), be it in relation to the economy, soft power or hard power. At Lancaster House, in Florence and at Mansion House the Prime Minister consistently claimed that, whatever the UK-EU relationship, strong fundamentals would always lift Britain: ‘a legal system respected around the world; a keen openness to foreign investment; an enthusiasm for innovation; an ease of doing business; some of the best universities and researchers you can find anywhere; an exceptional national talent for creativity and an indomitable spirit’ (May, 2017c). A climax in the Foreign Secretary’s cited 2016 speech was built around ‘the gentle kindly gunboats of British soft power’ (Johnson, 2016). From Jeremy Clarkson to J.K. Rowling, from the English language and the BBC to a diaspora of several million citizens supposedly making Britain the most ‘formidable exporter of human talent’, Johnson listed all sorts of assets ensuring that ‘in expressing our values [...] Global Britain is a soft power superpower’ (*ibidem*); on another occasion, he added the ‘youngest and fastest-growing population of any major EU economy’ and the ‘best [universities] in the world, with just one Cambridge college responsible not just for more Nobel prizes than France but indeed for more than Russia and China combined’ (Johnson, 2017). Both his further claim that ‘with 2 per cent of our GDP spent on defence we will be the leading military player in Western Europe for the foreseeable future’ – and his praise for ‘the world’s most superb intelligence services’ and ‘finest diplomatic service’ (Johnson, 2016) – were reiterated in May’s Florence speech.

Arguably, such remarks served another post-Brexit need: ‘demonstrat[ing] (to allies and foes) that Britain is now even more open (for business), engaged (in

global politics) and committed to international security (as an active and burden sharing partner in NATO)' (Bew & Elefteriu, 2016, p. 3). In this vein, May's proposal of an unprecedentedly broad and deep UK-EU strategic agreement, 'provid[ing] a comprehensive framework for future security, law enforcement and criminal justice co-operation' (May, 2017c), was fleshed out at the Munich Security Conference in February 2018, where she restated that 'Europe's security is our security' (May, 2018a). Johnson, too, guaranteed continuing commitment 'to all kinds of European cooperation at an intergovernmental level' and boasted that 'there are some ways in which we will be liberated to be more active on the world stage than ever before' (Johnson, 2016). Moreover, in her speech in Philadelphia, May painted a 'future that sees us step up with confidence to a new, even more internationalist role, where we meet our responsibilities to our friends and allies' (May, 2017b):

It is why Britain is the only country in the G20 – other than yours – to meet its commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence, and to invest 20% of that in upgrading equipment. It is why Britain is the only country in the G20 to spend 0.7% of gross national income on overseas development. It is why my first act as Prime Minister last year was to lead the debate in Parliament that ensured the renewal of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent. And it is why the Government I lead will increase spending on defence in every year of this Parliament. It is [...] why we have agreed to send 800 troops to Estonia and Poland as part of NATO's forward presence in Eastern Europe (May, 2017b).

Commitment after Brexit, anyway, requires 'Global Britain' to address a key security-related conundrum, namely the degree to which it seeks structured integration into EU decision-making and implementation procedures, as opposed to formal detachment from CFSP and CSDP venues (Whitman, 2016b). The other side of the coin is European partners' uncertain willingness to grant it 'special roles', with a bespoke settlement standing in contrast to 'standard' arrangements, e.g. occasional alignment with common EU positions and a Framework Participation Agreement respectively (*ibidem*; Wright, 2017; Martill & Sus, 2018).

On foreign policy, the Review of the Balance of Competences largely reflected a majority view whereby working through the EU was in the best interest of

Britain, due to its effect as a ‘multiplier’ of national influence, also via its economic weight. The problem of extrication would be compounded by multi-layered interdependence between the CFSP and non-CFSP policies in sectors such as trade, energy, border management, etc., with which the external relations of the UK are intertwined (Emerson, 2016; Smith, 2016; Whitman, 2016b). This interdependence was deemed to force post-Brexit Britain ‘to work hard to ensure that its policy inputs are not an afterthought to the results of US/EU dialogue’ (Chalmers, 2017a, p. 6).

As to sanctions policy, where the UK is a leading European actor, new-found autonomy would be ineffective in practice: discrepancies would offset it through multiplied compliance costs for financial institutions and the private sector, while the overriding priority of concluding trade deals could subject it to conflicts of interests (Keatinge, 2017; Keatinge *et al.*, 2017). As to development aid – where Britain starts as a strong contributor to the European Development Fund and the EU budget (Smith, 2017; Chalmers, 2017b) – its influence in regions sensitive to the economic leverage of the EU would be jeopardised, possibly including even those areas of Eastern Europe that, besides being sympathetic to British EU-related attitudes, are harbouring a British protective deployment in the framework of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (Chalmers, 2017a, 2017b; Bew & Elefteriu, 2016, 2017; Wright, 2017).

Concerning defence, Britain has distinctively shifted from the co-proponent of the 1998 Saint-Malo declaration to a recalcitrant laggard (Whitman, 2016a). Its political and military investment in a common European approach has unrelentingly dwindled (Heisbourg, 2016; Black *et al.*, 2017; Hadfield, 2018; Martill & Sus, 2018; on the causes, see Rees, 2017; Wallace, 2017), leading it to doggedly prevent actual deployment of the EU Battlegroups or the establishment of a EU Headquarters (Whitman, 2016b; Lain & Nouwens, 2017). By extricating itself, the UK – whose planning is not based on the CSDP (Whitman, 2016a; Hadfield, 2018) – was reputed not to lose much more than its share in EU-level decisions over defence cooperation (Whitman, 2016b; Black *et al.*, 2017), also because intergovern-

mental ties to European partners remain strong. And yet, Britain will have to deal with an additional dossier: '[d]efence has emerged as a central theme of the EU's response to Brexit' (Black *et al.*, 2017, p. 145; Martill & Sus, 2018), spurring the launch of a European Defence Fund, a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence, and an 'embryonic operational headquarters' (Wright, 2017, p. 37). The most crucial initiative, a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) envisaged by articles 42(6) and 46 TEU, was established in December 2017 featuring 25 of the EU member States: this 'marks a major turning point', although one whose value will depend on continued political commitment and adequate resource endowments (Fiott *et al.*, 2017, p. 53; Billon-Galland & Quencez, 2017; Black *et al.*, 2017; Wright, 2017; Martill & Sus, 2018).

More immediate trouble arises from EU-level information-sharing and judicial cooperation mechanisms, (Ricketts, 2016) which Britain partakes in, and which it was often instrumental in advocating and designing, in line with its recognised capabilities on intelligence data gathering and analysis (Lain, 2016; Keatinge *et al.*, 2017; Curtin, 2018). Such mechanisms include Europol and its Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA); the Schengen Information System 2 (SIS II); the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS); the Passenger Name Record Directive (2016); and the Prüm framework (see Lain & Nouwens, 2017). The preservation of existing arrangements, essential for internal security against transnational threats, has been regarded as 'too big to fail' (Black *et al.*, 2017; Hadfield, 2018), but according to the compelling arguments presented by Lain & Nouwens (2017) the Brexit process will especially endanger British access to the Prüm framework, SIS II and ECRIS, thus enmeshing the UK in yet another set of negotiations.

While, in November 2016, the British government duly announced an opt-in to the new Europol Regulation (Curtin, 2018) – thus retaining Europol membership at least until Brexit – debate on retaining the other planned opt-in to the Prüm framework exposed lasting tensions within the ruling party, especially over the judicial control role of the ECJ. Significantly, in February 2018 May recalled the contri-

butions of the UK to the European Arrest Warrant, Europol, SIS II and passenger data management, expressing a wish to protect ongoing cooperation: her Munich speech even included a reference to acceptance of the remit of the ECJ in case of future British participation in EU agencies (May, 2018a).

5. Enter Trump: Threats, Opportunities and Uncertainty

The foreign policy of ‘Global Britain’, given the American weight and role in the international system at large, hinges on how the stances taken by the Trump administration will impact on it. These depend, in turn, on an ‘America First’ outlook whose strategic cohesiveness has been discussed at length, often presupposing that a unified ‘grand strategy’ across areas of foreign policy remains practicable (Dombrowski & Reich, 2017). Two open letters, signed by dozens of Republican foreign policy notables during the 2016 party primaries and the presidential campaign, respectively accused Trump of ‘swing[ing] from isolationism to military adventurism within the space of one sentence’ (Adelman *et al.*, 2016) and belittled his very understanding of vital national interests, diplomatic challenges, alliances and foundational democratic values (Ayer *et al.*, 2016). Enduring ambiguities are still reflected in a tendency to divine the orientations of his administration from penchants exhibited by Trump's unstable team of advisers and top-level officials (Munro, 2016; Bew & Elefteriu, 2017; Oliver & Williams, 2017; Wilson, 2017).

Anyway, Trump's posture has been identified in many ways: as ‘unilateralist’ (Haines, 2017); as a ‘foreign policy ideology based on 19th century, sovereigntist principles’ (Oliver & Williams, 2017, p. 2); as a ‘different view of America’s role [...] that prizes loyalty and pro-activity in US allies above all else’ (Bew & Elefteriu, 2017, p. 12); or as the idea that ‘Washington would be better off handling its interactions with the other countries on a case-by-case transactional basis, making sure it "wins" rather than "loses" on each deal or commitment’ (Nye, 2017). Although not to be conflated with Trump's actions once in office, his campaign ‘reject[ion of] the network of institutions that the United States had worked to create since the Second World War’ – and his view ‘that the United States should be motivated by its own

self-interest and not by its principles or sense of obligation as a hegemonic power to maintain the international order' (Wilson, 2017, p. 552) – were enough to lead some observers to the gloomy conclusion that 'Trump's quest is nothing less than ending the US-led liberal order and freeing America from its international commitments' (Wright, 2016).

What is clearer is that the global economy is not shielded from the 'America First' approach. The protectionist turn exemplified by the recent *querelle* on steel tariffs potentially entails the resort to trade wars (Niblett, 2016; Wilson, 2017) and a global 'return to an era of more selective and transactional trade deals' (*ibidem*). At a time when it urgently craves free-trade agreements, Britain is confronted with the risk of a more unstable and adversarial international trading environment:

[w]hile [Trump] might leave an opening for Britain (albeit one Britain is not necessarily guaranteed a good deal over, given there are no special relationships in trade negotiations), [his protectionist approach] risks much larger damage to the wider open global trading system that Britain remains a committed member of. Britain's hopes of securing global trade deals depends on the rest of the world being open to such approaches (Oliver & Williams, 2017, p. 9).

In fact – and here a direct 'Trump effect' on the Anglo-American relationship is ushered in – the 'Global Britain' strategy would ideally feature the US as the very first country with which to stipulate a highly symbolical free-trade deal. After her quoted words at Lancaster House, May restated right away at the mentioned Republican conference British eagerness to pursue talks, hailing the priority given to the deal by the new administration and seeking to frame the topic in Trump-friendly, globalisation-wary, interest-stressing ways.

Indeed, Trump himself has publicly and repeatedly backed the initiative. At a bilateral meeting at the G20 summit in July 2017, for instance, the president claimed he expected a 'very, very big deal' to see the light 'very, very quickly' (Bienkov 2017). A few weeks later, a handful of tweets backed up the remarks, e.g. 'Working on major Trade Deal with the United Kingdom. Could be very big & exciting. JOBS!'. According to Oliver & Williams (2017), however, while the prospect

of an agreement is not bereft of substance, whether Britain is accorded a favourable one is an altogether different question. In November 2017, US Commerce Secretary Ross emphatically deplored EU regulatory and health standards and urged Britain to align to American ones; and a polemic on American chlorine-cleaned poultry, symbolising the eventuality of lower food standards on British markets, reminds that even a prospective deal is no political ‘magic bullet’ for the UK (Wigle, 2017).

As regards international security – while Britain is expected to partly maintain its usefulness for the American ally, also by retaining influence outside the European neighbourhood (Chalmers, 2017a) – its role as an efficient diplomatic bridge with Europe is endangered (Black *et al.*, 2017; Rees, 2017). If there is still a bidirectional core to the ‘special relationship’ – beyond various kinds of military benefits (Rees, 2017) or easiness of access (Wilson, 2017) for Britain – it lies in ‘links in three core areas: intelligence, Special Forces, and nuclear weapons [...] that are protected from tensions and arguments elsewhere, for example the vagaries of presidential and prime ministerial relations’ (Oliver & Williams, 2017, p. 5). For May, following the dilemma noted by the two authors, closely embracing Trump’s choices would widen gaps with European partners on issues such as the Paris Agreement or the Iran deal, but positioning the country at a distance may cause politico-economic retaliation and a blow to the ‘core’ (*ibidem*).

The British leadership has certainly sought to show receptivity to a key issue: a neglect of the NATO defence spending benchmark on the part of the European countries, bluntly and controversially framed by Trump as a debt incurred by European allies that should have paid for their protection. Portrayed by former National Security Adviser McMaster as ‘tough love’ (Dombrowski & Reich, 2017, p. 1026), Trump’s stance towards NATO is argued to have ‘highlighted rather than created the structural rift between the US and Europe’ (ten Brinke, 2018), turning out to be ‘the extreme voice of a chorus of US politicians who have warned Europeans that the United States will not eternally assume the lion’s share of the transatlantic defence burden’ (Bunde & Ischinger, 2017, p. 27; see also Bew & Elefteriu,

2017). Thus, May's speech in Philadelphia stressed Britain's good record, also in comparison to other EU countries:

I call on others [...] to join us in that effort and to ensure they step up and contribute as they should. That is why [...] I have already raised with my fellow European leaders the need to deliver on their commitments to spend 2% of their GDP on defence – and 20% of their defence budgets on equipment (May, 2017b).

Delivered shortly after Trump's election, the speech tellingly reveals a troubled balancing act insofar as it pays lip service to his orientations while maladroitly redefining some of them in partial retractions, e.g. on an 'interests first' line or on substantive issues like the Iran deal. Just like the *volte-face* in Johnson's tones after Trump's victory (Hope *et al.*, 2016), May's words testified to British decision-makers' need to make the most out of the unpredicted scenario, even appeasing Trump as much as possible (Wilson, 2017). In fact, May was the first head of government to visit Trump as President-elect, immediately inviting him to a State visit. The event has not taken place yet – reportedly amidst fear of mass protests – but the Conservatives' posture seems to have reaped some benefits, in the form of Trump's upholding of UK-US closeness, praise for his relationship with May and openness to a free-trade deal. Moreover, some commentators have extolled May's influence in getting him to commit to being '100% behind NATO' (Bew & Elefteriu, 2017).

However, the relationship visibly reached sudden, awkward lows. In March 2017, the then press secretary of the White House took up a Fox News analyst's comments accusing the British intelligence service to have spied on Trump at the behest of President Obama during the presidential campaign. In June, after the London Bridge terrorist attack, the president twice tweeted against the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, forcing the Prime Minister to criticise his statements as 'wrong'. In November, Trump retweeted three anti-Muslim propaganda videos originally posted by the deputy leader of the far-right Britain First, then responded to May's inevitable criticism by scathingly tweeting: '@Theresa_May, don't focus on

me, focus on the destructive Radical Islamic Terrorism that is taking place within the United Kingdom. We are doing just fine!

More crucially, no British influence could apparently restrain Trump from deciding to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, withdraw from the Paris Agreement or repudiate the Iran deal. Overall, it is arduous to dispel the perception that the American president is holding most of the cards, with British ministers reduced to occasional, mild criticism lest they alienate the necessitated ally. Furthermore, a decision by the US Department of Commerce ‘to impose a punitive 219 percent tariff on the Canadian aircraft manufacturer Bombardier – potentially placing thousands of British jobs at risk in a Northern Irish factory [...] – was a textbook example of how a big player in global trade will often ruthlessly pursue its own interests and grind down smaller partners, even supposedly close allies’ (Cooper, 2017).

Finally, a ‘known unknown’ of the Trump presidency (Oliver & Williams, 2017, p. 10) concerns the president's relationships with Nigel Farage and other British figures through Steve Bannon, formerly head of Breitbart and White House chief strategist. Farage, who had addressed the crowd at a Trump rally in Mississippi in August 2016, met him hours after his election at Trump Tower, where he had reportedly gone to meet Bannon. Shortly afterwards, Trump unprecedentedly tweeted: ‘Many people would like to see @Nigel_Farage represent Great Britain as their Ambassador to the United States. He would do a great job!’. Bannon's apparent fall from grace does not remove unknowns on the meaning of linkages tying Trump to him, to Farage and the likes of Arron Banks, high-profile donor in UKIP and then on the Leave side; Robert Mercer, Trump donor and founder of Cambridge Analytica, whose dubious activities have recently brought all these names to public attention; and possibly, WikiLeaks mastermind Julian Assange and Russian connections (e.g. Cadwalladr, 2017a, 2017b).

6. Britain and the Rules-based International Order

After disentangling the constellation of matters at stake for ‘Global Britain’, leveraging it, for an appraisal of the likely agency of the UK within an international order in flux, requires a note of caution. Speaking about the ‘international order’ is not unambiguous, nor can notions of a ‘liberal’ and a ‘rules-based’ international order be instantly equated. Some realism-inspired accounts actually contend that a ‘rules-based’ order only exists in the strategic documents and rhetoric of major powers, not in reality: each one of them ‘has on occasion significantly violated international law, or rejected the rulings of international courts’, *in primis* the US (Porter, 2016).

A reasonable counterargument states that ‘[t]he test of whether there is a rules-based international order is whether the norms affect state and state actors’ behaviors, not whether one hundred percent compliance is achieved’ (Bracknell, 2016); and the US may be seen as having ‘displayed a general preference for democracy and openness’ after 1945 despite the several ‘cynical self-interested moves [made] along the way’ (Nye 2017). However, one question remains: which are the ‘rules’ that are constitutive of the ‘order’? The ‘thickness’ and integral properties respectively ascribed to a ‘rules-based’ and a ‘liberal’ international order may differ, leading to diverging insights about its resilience, its acceptance on the part of China (Porter, 2016; Nye, 2017; Yu, 2017) and so on. According to a somewhat ‘maximalist’ definition,

[t]he liberal international order is based on the three-fold principle of sovereignty, non-intervention, and a comprehensive prohibition on the use of force to alter borders. [...] Maintaining an open, non-discriminatory world economy is a second principle upon which the Western liberal world order rests. [...] A third principle building the basis of Western liberal order is the protection and promotion of human rights and democracy (Schwarzer, 2017, p. 24).

Generally speaking, conflicts between these principles could be eased in directions that render the international system less ‘liberal’ though still ‘rules-based’. (Oliver & Williams, 2017; Oliver, 2017), while discussing contemporary threats to the ‘liberal world order’, seemingly compared rules to the boundaries of a boxing

ring, where rising powers promote a new transition to a previous, sovereignty-based version of the current order.

Much consternation between powers like the US, China, and Russia have been over the "rules" of the international system. Russia and China prefer a more sovereignty based system akin to the 19th century, whereas the last three US administrations have sought to rewrite the rules of the system. A Trump White House will see the US move to policies that coincide better with the Sino-Russian world view. For those that believe in the rights of individuals this would be a big blow, but a win for realists (Oliver & Williams, 2017, p. 4).

As has been outlined, Britain has been straightforwardly associated – and has associated itself – with the post-1945 liberal order having arisen in the West, and the institutions having articulated and extended it. Yet the content of fundamental ‘rules’ has implications: for instance, the ‘longstanding supporter of the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention so central to international law (and order)’ was said to have become a ‘revisionist’ power in 1998-2003, ‘over whether international criminal law and human rights conventions should be upheld over legal norms of sovereignty and non-intervention’ (Gaskarth, 2014, p. 572). In any case, it is ‘embeddedness’ in the international order that has consistently allowed the country to ‘punch above its weight’ (Wright, 2017). Hence the claim – though overly non-utilitarian in its wording – that ‘Acheson’s famous aphorism [...] is arguably belied – at least in part – by Britain’s long-standing commitment to multilateralism and the maintenance of a rules-based multilateral system’ (*ibidem*, p. 6).

Accordingly, the 2015 SDSR remarked that membership of a dense network of international institutions places Britain ‘at the heart of the rules-based international order’ (HM Government, 2015, p. 14). The section entitled ‘Strengthening the rules-based international order and its institutions’ evoked the British contribution to shaping and expanding ‘the norms that govern use of force, prevent conflict, advance human rights and good governance, promote open and fair international trade relations and support freedom of navigation’ (*ibidem*, p. 60). It mentioned in sequence the UN, international financial institutions, the ICJ and the ICC, sanctions governance, counter-proliferation, human rights, humanitarian law and

women's rights. One passage stated that '[o]ur long-term security and prosperity depend on the rules-based international order upholding our values' (*ibidem*, p. 62).

While the 2015 SDSR predated Brexit-Trump and the May governments, May's Florence speech contained a plea for 'likeminded nations and peoples to come together and defend the international order that we have worked so hard to create – and the values of liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law' (May, 2017c). May's official discourse, anyway, consistently featured a precarious conflation of interests and values. The proposed European security partnership was justified on the grounds that '[a]ll of us share interests and values in common, values we want to see projected around the world' (May, 2017a), and later referred to as a 'new partnership of values and interests', meant 'to promote our shared values and interests abroad' (May, 2017c). A convoluted attempt to bind commitment and Trump-friendly non-interventionism at the Republican conference serves as another example:

It is in our interests – those of Britain and America together – to stand strong together to defend our values, our interests and the very ideas in which we believe. [...] The days of Britain and America intervening in sovereign countries in an attempt to remake the world in our own image are over. But nor can we afford to stand idly by when the threat is real and when it is in our own interests to intervene. We must be strong, smart and hard-headed. (May, 2017b).

And in the opening of the Munich speech, the conflation imbibed the rules-based international order itself:

The fundamental values we share – respect for human dignity, human rights, freedom, democracy and equality – have created common cause to act together in our shared interest. The rules-based system we helped to develop has enabled global cooperation to protect those shared values (May, 2018a).

On the future relationship of 'Global Britain' with either Trump's outlook or the substance of the international order, these words offer little in the way of calibrated guidance. Towards the former, they convey rhetorical balancing, rather than strategic criteria to be followed when push comes to shove. Furthermore, they fit –

and seemingly extend to the latter – a proneness of contemporary British official discourse, noted by Gilmore (2014), to adopt a clichéd merger of interests and values: ‘a convenient means of packaging British foreign policy to appeal to a wide range of constituencies’ (*ibidem*, p. 555), which arguably signals hesitation in investing political capital. In sum, in order to sketch British international agency in the wake of Brexit-Trump, it seems judicious to ground reflections in the shock-induced sets of issues highlighted in previous sections, ‘corrected for’ the ‘Global Britain’ strategy.

At present, Britain can hardly escape an overwhelmingly reactive posture. Risks of diplomatic and bureaucratic ‘overstretching’ approach certainty, especially in view of recent, austerity-laden retrenchment having affected State capabilities. Negotiations in Europe concern a withdrawal agreement, transitional arrangements and a future EU-UK economic settlement; and also the status of the UK vis-à-vis the CFSP, the CSDP and information-sharing mechanisms; plus augmented bilateral diplomacy, indispensable to make an indirect impact while not being ‘in the EU room’ anymore (Whitman, 2016a). Worries about an unwanted ‘pivot to Europe’ appear justified – as the slight redefinition of ‘Global Britain’ in May’s Mansion House speech may imply – which spells trouble for the lengthy, complex trade talks to be held with extra-European economies.

Additionally, courting the American ally remains an ostensible priority, not least to shore up the prospects of a feasible – but not necessarily advantageous – free-trade deal, which forcefully poses the problem of ‘regulatory alignment’ with the standards of either the American or the European market. On international security, alignment dilemmas exist but currently appear less pivotal, and the American outlook – while requiring the UK to comply with the NATO defence spending threshold and showcase reliability – should allow ‘Global Britain’ to revolve around narrowly defined national interest and to continue a trend of relative aloofness from international crises. This would resonate with Trump’s own ‘ideological’ approach, with nation-centred public attitudes that emerged in the Brexit referendum and with a more general public wariness towards military interventions. However, in case of

sudden American adventurism or unilateralism, a less autonomous British ally would be directly exposed to Trump's foreign policy vagaries.

In the short term, therefore, Britain can be regarded as an inward-looking and overburdened power, uneasily balancing between Europe and America. 'Ordinary' international commitments will surely remain in place, out of internationalist conviction as much as a continuing need to show openness in a situation in which – for the first time ever – in 2017 the UK failed to secure the election of a British judge to the bench of the ICJ. However, while Britain is entangled in its cluster of talks and balancing acts, the wheel continues to spin, which might unsettle negotiating equilibria at any step (Wright, 2017). Furthermore, a new international crisis would severely put the response capacity of the British State to the test, especially regarding the political capital and the availability of resources available for major foreign policy initiatives.

In the medium term, the constellation of circumstances for Britain will presumably entail a pronounced economic slowdown. Differently from information-sharing against cross-border threats or selective intergovernmental defence cooperation, single market access is the crux of the tug-of-war with the EU and, thus, likely to be curtailed. Despite the favour shown especially by some Anglo-Saxon countries, 'Global Britain' – forced to appeal to the political will of rising powers and medium-rank economies, many of which are already negotiating with the EU – will hardly be able to call the shots, also losing the EU economic clout at a time when Trump-propelled protectionist measures may spread out across the global trading system. Such a turn may take years to unfold, but so would many of the British trade talks, also because 'the service sector [...] is the most difficult area to open up' (see Hill, 2018, p. 189, also for an overall assessment of the viability of 'Global Britain'). Furthermore, the details of prospective trade deals could catch the eye of the British public opinion – comprising large numbers of Leave-backing citizens wary of rapid socioeconomic change – which reminds of an unsteady 'imperative to conclude beneficial agreements with other states while simultaneously main-

taining political electability in the face of increasing domestic nativism' (Houston & Briggs, 2017, p. 1).

Finally, economic hardship can be expected to 'spill over'. With national foreign policy centred on the effort to deliver 'Global Britain', an independent British sanctions policy is potentially crippled by conflicts of interest. The curtailing of State capabilities would not be reversed and – beside damages to Britain's international credibility – repercussions on the defence budget could counter, *inter alia*, the defence-leveraging opportunities expected from the 2015 SDSR provision to establish defence staffs in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Africa (Black *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, so far as British foreign policy remains closely bound to national identity and to longings for 'taking back control', more structural, extensive pooling in the defence domain, e.g. with European partners, may not be electorally defensible.

While Britain is suggested to be likely to turn into a more precarious defender of the rules-based international order, in the short and medium term, a final note touches upon the 'liberal' side of the latter. Embracing narrowly interest-based attitudes, or holding on tightly to Trump, are not the only routes through which Britain might come to weaken it by coming to prioritise more traditional, sovereignty-based rules. Indeed, the existential quest for 'Global Britain' via free-trade deals may come to take precedence over considerations about certain rules of the international system, e.g. on human rights.

7. Concluding Remarks

This article contributes to the debate on the resilience of the international order, focusing on the British case and elaborating on the likely features of the international agency of the UK in the forthcoming years. To that end, it details how the position of Britain has been affected by two recent, consecutive shocks – the Brexit referendum and the election of Trump – plus a third factor, namely the re-articulation of national foreign policy around the goal to forge 'Global Britain' under the May governments.

Firstly, contextualizing the ‘Brexit effect’ and the ‘Global Britain’ strategy in relation to the trade domain, the analysis elucidates the dubious feasibility of compensating a form of ‘hard Brexit’ with a series of bilateral free-trade agreements. Secondly, international security issues further underline how the UK is compelled to take on negotiations on multiple tables, dealing with the pitfalls of extrication from the EU as regards common foreign policy, data-sharing and sanctions policy. Discussing the ‘Trump effect’ separately, the article considers the eventuality of a more protectionist global trading environment alongside the prospect of a feasible – but not necessarily even-handed – UK-US free-trade deal, whose pursuit however constrains the British government to attentive accommodation.

In conclusion, one of the few certainties regarding contemporary Britain is that the country will be primarily concerned about its own ‘security and prosperity’ in the immediate future. In the short run, the UK will strive to maintain ‘business as usual’ as to its international commitments, but the challenges of overstretching of its civil service and uneasy alignment between the EU and the US are likely to force it into a reactive posture. In the medium term, chasing after free-trade agreements against a difficult economic backdrop, ‘Global Britain’ will be engaged in an existential quest holding sway over – and constraining – its foreign policy, e.g. sanction-wise. All in all, an interest-oriented Global Britain is likely to offer a more limping and less deliberately consistent contribution to the maintenance of either the ‘liberal’ or the ‘rules-based’ international order.

Certainly, venturing to express predictions is even thornier than reflecting on the arrays of issues at stake for British foreign policy. After all, Brexit alone was deemed likely to represent the ‘great[est] test of the law of unintended consequences’ (Freedman, 2016, p. 12): while the flow of events goes on, even the possibility of unforeseen interplays among the existing constellations of circumstances – e.g. in relation to multiple sets of negotiations bound to take place in parallel (Oliver, 2017) – should not be overlooked. Furthermore, this piece of research focuses on the factors of upheaval arguably endowed with the highest orders of magnitude, but other variables may play a part, too. The ‘Global Britain’ platform, for instance, is

the brainchild of a Conservative government whose own stability cannot be taken for granted. Equally, the medium-term state of affairs hitherto outlined would be affected by a second Trump term, as opposed to other scenarios.

Finally, while this article provides a mere sketch of the distinction between a 'liberal' and a 'rules-based' interpretation of the extant international order, one avenue for further research requires comprehensively tracing the related interpretations given by the British ruling elite. A constructivism-inspired perspective, focusing on the 'role orientations' they envisage for Britain – whether 'Global' or not – in the wake of Brexit-Trump (Gaskarth, 2014; McCourt, 2014), could surely help elucidating which elements and which 'rules' of the international order would be prioritised.

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