



**Center for Global & Strategic Studies  
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## **Trade War, Populism, and Intolerance— Are We Sliding to**

### **Chaos?**

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Deterrence, Soft Power and Indirect Strategy. These three words explain the order of situation of the world affairs today. A tectonic shift has occurred after the cold war; a transition from one world to two or more worlds. Globalization has emerged with new and daunting challenges for the world. The world revolves around an endless greed for money and power. End of twentieth century was an end to the long war. Whereas the

21<sup>st</sup> century is entirely based on xenophobia, resources, nationalism, ideas and technological advancements. A radical shift has left the world into a constant ring of competition. The fragmented society and the anarchic nature of humans as well as states all aid in; a nail in the coffin. Countries being at war inside and isolated from abroad is a common tactic used today. Some echoes of contemporary trends today will faint our tomorrow, and are alarming.

### Trade War

An old African proverb states that,

“When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers”. Whenever there are clashes between geo economic states, it is always the developing states that



suffers. Recently, the war of tariffs and counter tariffs between China and US is a so called ‘tit for tat escalation’. China and US getting off ramping, leaving the developing or under developing states in throes. Besides the statistics of imports involved between both the parties, they are fighting a losing game because in trade war nobody wins. The attempts of an unfair trade practices by President Trump and its counter retaliation by Chinese encompasses some serious impacts upon developing countries especially Africa. Trade expansion does not benefit everyone equally. In trade war countries will probably lose their profit and the workers will lose their jobs. Government will provide fewer choice of products thus causing inflation. On average, tariffs applied on

developing countries' exports could rise from 3 percent to 37 percent. Whereas average tariffs affecting countries like Nigeria and Zambia probably would not go above 10 percent, those against Mexico could reach as high as 60 percent. Likewise, countries like Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Turkey could face average tariffs of 40-50 percent. No doubt A trade war is a strong blow to the developing countries and even a worse blow to the under developed or least developed countries. The countries will compromise on their economies and will fall into financial crisis. Henceforth, poor governance and dysfunctional institutions will be fated. Not only them but also countries like Europe, Canada are already justifiable worried.

### Populism—Lugenpresse

The millennial challenges today has fault lines of our own. In contemporary times, mainstream press is often associated to the Lugenpresse (Lying press). Fake news, misinformation, media propaganda, false imaging all of these hurt the National Security of a state. Populist being elitist or anti-pluralist expressed through claims of moral monopoly over popular representation. The typical style of the government when populists come to power consists in hijacking the State apparatus, gaining the loyalty of the greatest number through mass clientelism that is exchange of material and immaterial favors by elites for mass political support, and developing profound hostility towards civil society actors, particularly the media and discriminatory legalism. The role of lugenpresse in a populist government is like mandatory. The populist leaders tend to run everything according to their own will. Populism started with Brexit

and Trump. Leaders like them exercise discriminatory legalism. The changing terms place new demands, opportunities and risks on the performance of the other political persona. Populism and lying press is like a double edge sword. It is important to acknowledge that globalization, technological progress and tax reductions elevate the quality of life of society as a whole; but in the short term, they deliver a direct blow to certain pockets of the population, especially in rigid labor markets that hinder the unemployed from quickly finding a new job. The vulnerable media is exploited by the hands of populists, as media shall eject the power of truth rather it is owned by the puppets.

#### *Intolerance and Rapid Transformations*

Nationalism, racism, xenophobia, arms race, cyber warfare, and space weaponization/militarization all aid in intolerance among the nations and their leaders. Their constant race in the world affairs leading the world into a situation where all think it is only the need to survive in the present circumstances which is essential. Leading on tracks of realistic approach the state's top priority at the moment is survival. In this competition no state realizes where they are heading too. Are they heading to end the world through such rapid transformations and globalization techniques or they want to reach back to the scratch because after all the destruction and deter- ability the only way left would be to trace back to the Stone Age. Optimistic and a peaceful approach should be taken in order to avoid such patterns. Rise of cultural violence and structural violence leading to direct violence to the people resulting in crisis and disruption. State

fragility is the leading cause of violent conflicts; the perfect example in this case is that of Syria. The lines are blurred between religion and politics. Lack of mechanisms of political selection is the major reason of the chaos today.

### Conclusion

From order to chaos the world needs to establish rules of the road at the moment. Now is not the time for blind nationalism; now is the time for an informed and self-critical patriotism. As according to Herbert Hoover 'All men are equal before fish' such a slogan shall be naïve to all. Discrimination, racism, nationalism must be made avoidable for they add fuel to the fire. This disconnect is in no measure to the blinkered effects of seeing the world through a fragility lens. Should we expect a harmonious world? Not until someone finds a more politically successful way of meeting the needs and anxieties of the ordinary people.