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From Nixon to Trump:

**Cycles of Globalization and De-Globalization
in American Economic and Geopolitical Policy**

By

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2 September 2025

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Executive Summary

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1. Introduction and Historical Context

- ✦ *Nixon and Trump - Two Republican Party Facets:* While Nixon represented the pro-business internationalist wing, Donald Trump embodies the pro-tariff isolationist stance. Trump's MAGA movement effectively "hijacked" the GOP as a direct response to Nixon's globalization forces.
- ✦ *Fifty-Year Globalization Cycle:* "Liberation Day" (April 2, 2025) marks the potential reversal of the globalization cycle started with China's opening following Nixon's 1972 visit to Beijing.
- ✦ *Enduring Crisis Management Frameworks:* Nixon created the National Security Council (NSC) and shuttle diplomacy; while Trump established federal intervention precedents. Both frameworks continue influencing current federal responses.
- ✦ *Permanent Governance Visions:* Their competing visions became permanent features of American politics. This is essential for predicting future policy directions.

2. Monetary Policy and Financial System

- ✦ *Gold Standard vs. subtle Re-dollarization:* Nixon abandoned the gold standard (1971), ending Bretton Woods system. Dollar's anchor shifted from gold to U.S. Treasury bonds (taxpayer backing). Trump revalue gold reserve, while his Big Beautiful Bill abandons any residual fiscal anchor for the U.S. dollar.
- ✦ *Stablecoin Re-dollarization:* Stablecoins purchasing U.S. Treasuries creates an alternative fiscal anchor and new debt demand mechanism.
- ✦ *Fed Independence Challenges:* Both presidents pressured Fed Chairs (Burns/Powell) for political objectives and threatened central bank independence for electoral gains.
- ✦ *"Our Currency, Your Problem":* Connally's quote encapsulates post-Bretton Woods unilateral monetary power. Legacy reflected in Trump's aggressive financial policies.

3. Geopolitics and Triangular Strategy

- ✦ *Strategic Reversal and Historical Irony:* Nixon exploited Sino-Soviet split, enabling China's rise. Trump now laments China's power, partly created by Nixon's policies.
- ✦ *Alliance Approaches:* Nixon strengthened traditional alliances as global stability pillars, while Trump adopted transactional approach, straining alliances for immediate gains.
- ✦ *Israel - Iran conflict:* The recent U.S. direct intervention in Israel-Iran conflict using B-2 bombers and bunker busters demonstrates a synthesis of Nixon's alliance support and Trump's overwhelming force.
- ✦ *Real-Time Validation:* June 2025 events prove both strategic frameworks continue influencing contemporary crisis management with a blend of diplomatic and unilateral approaches.

4. Globalization and De-globalization

- ✦ *China Opening vs. Trade Wars:* Nixon initiated China's global integration, while Trump responded with tariffs and trade wars. This represents a symbolic reversal of fifty-year engagement and marks the end of the phase of globalisation started by Nixon and implemented by Deng Xiao Ping.

- ✧ *Prosperity and Dislocation:* Globalization has created wealth but also economic inequality, thus providing the conditions for Trump's national-populist rise.
- ✧ *Institutional Construction vs. Destruction:* Nixon built post-war global order foundations. Trump sought to restructure or destroy international institutions and agreements.
- ✧ *America First Reversal:* Trump's policies directly challenged Nixon's globalization legacy as they prioritized national interests over multilateral cooperation.

5. Comparative Analysis and Political Impact

- ✧ *Tactical Differences, Strategic Similarities:* Despite opposite methods, both sought to reassert American power. Nixon stabilized the bipolar order, while Trump is fighting multipolar emergence.
- ✧ *Crisis Management Synthesis:* International conflicts employ Nixon's diplomatic style; domestic crises reflect Trump's federal intervention approach.
- ✧ *Permanent Institutional Changes:* Nixon implemented "imperial presidency" reforms, while Trump continues challenging democratic norms. Their combined influence continues shaping American governance and polarization.

Key Picture: Nixon and Trump Together, With US Treasury Secretary Connally ("Our Currency, Your Problem")



Source: [Nicolas Collins](#)

1. Introduction and Historical Context

The tapestry of American political history is woven with figures who, despite belonging to the same party, embody profoundly different visions of the nation's role in the world. Richard Nixon and Donald Trump, both Republican presidents, stand as prime examples of this dichotomy, serving as opposing poles in a cycle of globalization and de-globalization that has fundamentally reshaped the global order¹. Nixon, with his pro-business and internationalist outlook, laid the groundwork for an era of accelerated global economic integration, culminating in his historic opening to China in February 1972. This seminal event effectively initiated a fifty-year cycle of globalization, fundamentally altering global trade patterns, supply chains, and geopolitical alignments².

Donald Trump, conversely, embraced an economic nationalism and isolationism that, while possessing historical antecedents, introduced an unprecedented populist element. The "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) movement, far from being a mere slogan, effectively "hijacked" the Republican Party, shifting its ideological centre of gravity away from traditional conservative tenets towards a more populist, protectionist stance³. It can be compellingly argued that Trump's national-populism emerged as a direct, and perhaps inevitable, response to the very forces of globalization unleashed by Nixon's policies – a dialectical reaction to the perceived economic dislocations and cultural shifts brought about by decades of unchecked global integration⁴.

Despite their stark ideological and stylistic differences, both presidents left an indelible mark on American crisis management and foreign policy. They established enduring frameworks for responding to national and international challenges that, in adapted forms, remain influential today. For Nixon, this included the significant reorganization and empowerment of the National Security Council (NSC), transforming it into a central hub for strategic planning and crisis coordination⁵. His administration pioneered "shuttle diplomacy," exemplified by Henry Kissinger's tireless efforts in the Middle East following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, demonstrating a proactive, high-level engagement in conflict resolution⁶. For Trump, his approach to domestic unrest, particularly during the widespread protests of 2025 in Los Angeles, set new precedents for federal intervention, signalling a willingness to use federal power to quell civil disorder⁷.

Their competing visions of governance, though often in direct opposition, have become permanent features of the American political landscape. Understanding this intricate comparison is not merely an academic exercise; it is an essential tool for predicting future policy directions and anticipating American responses to evolving global challenges⁸. The interplay between Nixon's internationalist legacy and Trump's nationalist resurgence continues to shape the fundamental debates within American foreign and economic policy.

2. Monetary Policy and Financial System

Monetary policy represents one of the most significant and contrasting chapters in the presidencies of Nixon and Trump, though both leaders demonstrated a willingness to manipulate the financial system for political ends. Nixon is famously remembered for his momentous decision on August 15, 1971, to unilaterally suspend the convertibility of the U.S. dollar into gold, effectively dismantling the Bretton Woods system⁹. Established in 1944, this system had anchored the dollar to gold at \$35 per ounce, with all other major currencies fixed to the dollar, providing a framework of exchange rate stability but limiting monetary flexibility. With the "Nixon Shock," the dollar transitioned into a pure fiat currency, no longer directly backed by gold. While other currencies initially maintained their peg to the dollar, the dollar's own "anchor" effectively shifted from gold to U.S. Treasury bonds, meaning the U.S. government's ability to tax and borrow became the ultimate guarantor of the currency's value – effectively making the American taxpayer the ultimate backing¹⁰.

The Trump era witnessed an acceleration of post-Bretton Woods dynamics, particularly concerning the dollar's fiscal anchor. The exponential increase in U.S. public debt, partly fuelled by massive spending initiatives (colloquially referred to as the "Big Beautiful Bill" by some, encompassing tax cuts and increased expenditures), raised significant concerns about fiscal sustainability.

This led to pre-emptive credit rating downgrades by agencies like Moody's, signalling a weakening of confidence in the U.S. government's long-term fiscal health¹¹. To be sure, America debt has been growing and ballooning well before Trump 2.0, showing unwillingness by American political leaders across the aisle to address seriously the power. However, Moody's downgrade offers a plastic representation of this worrisome trend. Such developments fuelled fears of an accelerating de-dollarization trend, as various nations and institutions sought alternatives to the dollar as the primary reserve and trade currency, driven by geopolitical shifts and concerns over U.S. financial leverage¹².

Paradoxically, a nascent "re-dollarization" movement is emerging through the proliferation of stablecoins. These cryptocurrencies, designed to maintain a stable value pegged to the U.S. dollar, require their issuers to hold substantial reserves, predominantly in the form of short-term U.S. Treasury bonds. This mechanism creates a new, significant source of demand for U.S. government debt, potentially providing an alternative fiscal anchor and mitigating some of the traditional de-dollarization pressures¹³. While Trump's administration did not explicitly champion stablecoins in detail, his broader emphasis on maintaining American financial dominance and exploring new economic frontiers aligns with the potential for stablecoins to reinforce the dollar's global standing, albeit through unconventional means.

Both presidents leveraged monetary policy as a tool of influence and a source of domestic tension, often challenging the traditional independence of the Federal Reserve. Nixon famously exerted immense pressure on Fed Chairman Arthur Burns to keep interest rates low in the run-up to the 1972 presidential election, a move widely criticized for compromising the central bank's autonomy and contributing to the rampant inflation of the 1970s¹⁴. Similarly, Trump repeatedly and publicly criticized Fed Chairman Jerome Powell, demanding interest rate cuts and even threatening his position, clearly demonstrating a desire to subordinate monetary policy to his administration's political and economic objectives¹⁵. The infamous declaration by John Connally, Nixon's Treasury Secretary, "Our currency, your problem," perfectly encapsulates the post-Bretton Woods American attitude of unilateral monetary power, a legacy of financial assertiveness that found new and often more aggressive expressions under the Trump administration¹⁶.#

Gold's Revaluation: Yet Another Rabbit Out of Trump's Hat?

At the end of July, the US administration and its agencies produced a series of important regulatory innovations regarding digital assets which we discussed in our research. Two additional pieces have since been added, namely the Report on Digital Assets issued by the US Treasury department, which provides the institutional framework for the entire digital asset strategy, and "Project Crypto", led by the SEC's new leader Paul Atkins and Commissioner Hester Peirce, which marks a 180 degree inversion compared to Pierce's predecessor Gary Gensler.

All of these innovations will have the result of increasing revenues for US Treasury, in order to finance its increasingly large deficit – especially following the approval of the Big Beautiful Bill. It will also create new forms of private-sector money, which will promote the re-dollarisation of the global economy and likely provide a boost to economic activity. When new money is put in circulation, economic activity increases: typically, this happens with the issuance of new credit by banks; in this newest form, it will likely happen by the creation of stablecoins, or tokenised deposits, by banks.

There is an additional rabbit that the Trump administration may take out of its hat: the re-evaluation of gold reserves. This operation was done in 1934 by the Roosevelt administration to fight the Great Depression and associated deflation and would mirror what Nixon did in 1971. The mechanism was simple. The Treasury purchased the Federal Reserve's gold, and gave it in return gold certificates, which still appear at the very top of the Fed's balance sheet. At that time, the revaluation was able to inject USD 2.8bn into the Treasury's coffers.

The Trump administration has provided more than one indication that this is what it intends to do. On February 3rd, when Trump, Scott Bessent and Howard Lutnick presented the plan for the US Sovereign Wealth Fund,

Bessent said: "We're going to stand this thing up within the next 12 months. We're going to study best practices as done around the world. There'll be a combination of liquid assets, assets that we have in this country, as we work to bring them out for the American people."

There are rumours in the market, which suggest that gold could be revalued from the current USD 42.20 per troy ounce to USD 15,000 or even USD 20,000, and this could bring as much as around USD 4 trillion dollars into the coffers of the Treasury. A less "heroic" revaluation (from 42.20 to current market value, around USD 3,500 per ounce), would bring less money in the Treasury's account, but with much less distortion to market prices. Combining the estimated effects of stablecoin regulation (which could lead to USD 2-3 trillion purchases of US Treasury bills by issuers) and gold revaluation (which could bring in \$1-2 trillion), the US Treasury would have found the way to finance the extra debt deriving from the BBB, estimated to be around \$3-5 trillion by the Congressional Budget Office.

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For this operation to take place, on 25 May 2025 the Financial Accounting Manual for Federal Reserve Banks was amended, at section 2.10 on "Gold Certificate Account (110-025)", page 12: "The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to issue gold certificates to the Reserve Banks to monetize gold held by the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury). At any time, Treasury may reacquire the gold certificates by demonetizing the gold."

If the US Administration proceeds with this move, when is it likely to carry it out? A historical precedent could be useful here. President Nixon announced the end of USD convertibility into gold on August 15th, 1971. So, August, when most people are distracted by the holiday period, could be the right time for such an announcement.

What would be the risks of such a move? Again, the historical precedent could be a guide. The 1970s – following Nixon's announcement – were characterised by raging inflation. Even OPEC's increases in oil prices (in 1973 and 1979) may be read as a reaction to the West's attempt to devalue the dollar, which reduced the real value of US dollar receipts from oil sales. Inflation would be the most likely risk.

Is the Fed's assent necessary? Nixon needed the approval of the Fed's Chair, Arthur Burns, and was advised by its future Chair, the mythical Paul Volker, who was then Undersecretary for International Monetary Affairs. Given the ongoing tensions between Trump and Fed Chair Jay Powell, the latter is unlikely to provide the support needed for such an operation. In this respect, the appointment of a new Fed governor following the resignation of Anne Kluger from the FOMC (as a result of Trump's firing of the BLS Commissioner) may provide an opportunity for Trump to install a member that would work as a de-facto shadow Chair for the rest of Powell's mandate.

The combined effects of stablecoin proliferation and gold revaluation is likely to result in a massive period of "monetary illusion," which will be both a cause and effect of very elevated inflation in coming years, with potential ramifications for financial stability.

3. Geopolitics and Triangular Strategy

The geopolitical strategies of Nixon and Trump, while diverging sharply in their tactical execution, reveal a shared underlying pragmatism and a willingness to redefine global power balances. Nixon is celebrated for his "triangular strategy," a diplomatic masterstroke that exploited the Sino-Soviet split to achieve a historic rapprochement with China in 1972¹⁷. This move fundamentally reshaped the Cold War, creating a strategic counterweight to the Soviet Union and, crucially, laying the groundwork for China's eventual economic integration into the global system. This strategic opening, however, ironically set the stage for the rise of a powerful China that Donald Trump would later lament as a primary threat to American supremacy.

The notion that Trump might attempt to use Russia against China, mirroring Nixon's Cold War manoeuvre, has been a subject of discussion among analysts. This situation highlights a recurring pattern in U.S. foreign policy: the tendency to create "monsters" to combat existing enemies, only for these new allies to eventually become

adversaries themselves. But also represent a widespread common geopolitical rule: when power n. 1 fights against power n.2 it usually allies with power n.3. Historical examples abound: the U.S. supported China against the USSR, Saddam Hussein against Iran, and provided aid to Mujahideen (including figures like Bin Laden) against the Soviets in Afghanistan – all instances where former strategic partners later became significant challenges or direct threats¹⁹. However, as in everything in life and even more so in geopolitics, it's always a matter of execution, and what makes sense on the paper not necessarily materializes in a good strategic outcome.

While Nixon was a staunch proponent of traditional alliances, viewing them as indispensable pillars of global stability and deterrence against the Soviet threat, Trump peeled the layer of diplomacy off to show the transactional and often confrontational approach of international relations.

He frequently challenged long-standing alliances (e.g., NATO, trade agreements with European partners), demanding greater burden-sharing and threatening withdrawals or renegotiations to secure what he perceived as immediate American gains. To be sure, this kind of discussion has always happened, and European were never under the illusion of being equal "allies", but rather "socii", in the Latin meaning of the term, allies with the control of their own internal policies but with no real agency over international relations and required to provide troops and money to Rome when requested.

However, Trump put this in plastic display, prioritizing bilateral deals over multilateral cooperation, and making clear who is really in charge. This is shown, for example, in the new "Coalition of the Willing" set up by different European and non-European States to provide Ukraine's support, that makes clear after every relevant meeting that US's decisions are anyways key to their course of action.

CASE STUDY N.1: IRAN

It's clear that both Presidents tried their best to navigate through uncertain times and rocky waters, and this is perceived by the allies too, not just in Europe, but even in Middle East, where one of US most important allies, Israel, counting much more than any EU country, is trying to force Trump's hand to escalate a regional war against Iran. The dramatic events unfolding in June 2025 offer indeed a stark, real-time validation of how both Nixon's and Trump's strategic frameworks continue to influence American foreign policy. As of mid-June 2025, the region plunged into open warfare between Israel and Iran, marking an unprecedented escalation of their long-simmering shadow conflict.

The Israeli Air Force conducted highly targeted and devastating strikes against critical Iranian strategic assets, including confirmed hits on nuclear sites (such as Arak and Natanz), key military bases, and missile production facilities. Reports indicated significant casualties, including high-ranking Iranian scientists and military officials. The Israeli General Staff publicly advised its population to prepare for a "prolonged campaign"²¹. Iran responded with multiple waves of ballistic missile attacks, including advanced models with multiple warheads, targeting major Israeli cities, causing significant casualties and widespread damage. Furthermore, Tehran issued explicit threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, a move that would trigger catastrophic consequences for the global economy by disrupting nearly one-third of the world's seaborne oil supply²².

In a decisive escalation that exemplifies the synthesis of both presidential approaches, the United States directly intervened in the conflict on June 21-22, 2025, launching a large-scale military operation dubbed "Operation Midnight Hammer." Ordered by President Donald J. Trump, this highly classified mission targeted Iran's key nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan. The operation involved seven B-2 Spirit bombers, marking the "largest B-2 operational strike in U.S. history." These bombers deployed GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators (MOPs), commonly known as "bunker buster" bombs, in their first-ever operational use, inflicting "extremely severe damage and destruction" to the deeply buried and fortified targets. Submarine-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles were also used against surface infrastructure at Isfahan. Over 125 U.S. aircraft participated, employing sophisticated deception tactics, including decoys, and maintaining strict operational security throughout the 18-hour flight from the U.S.²³.

President Trump declared that the Iranian nuclear sites had been "totally obliterated", he stated that his administration would take further action if Iran retaliated against the U.S., emphasizing a posture of overwhelming force²⁴ and followed on to declare a truce. Iran also, after having retaliated with rockets launched to US bases in Iran and Iraq, declared mission accomplished and the end of the "12 days war" with the same happening in Israel.

This is in line with Trump's style of single heavy blow, similarly with what he did in the first mandate with the killing of General Suleimani. He killed him with a drone strike, Iran retaliated but was unwilling to go to war with US. The blow might have also contributed to the weakening of Iran proxies in Syria and Lebanon as General Suleimani was the person in charge of the foreign military networks. In this scenario we see a mixed approach by Trump, combining robust support for a key ally (Israel) with a confrontational stance towards an adversary (Iran), coupled with the explicit threat of unilateral, overwhelming action, to then get to the negotiating table. This synthesizes elements of Nixon's alliance management (e.g., unwavering support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War) and Trump's characteristic decisive action.

The international community, including the United Nations, the European Union, Russia, and China, had previously issued urgent calls for immediate de-escalation. Following Operation Midnight Hammer, nations like Turkey expressed deep concern, warning that the U.S. attack had elevated the risk of the regional conflict escalating into a global one and called for immediate cessation of attacks and diplomatic solutions²⁵. Indeed, despite Trump's tactical manoeuvring, the current situation might very well be traced back from the breaking of the JCPOA, the nuclear deal with Iran that Obama signed and Trump walked away from.

Obama was also in favour of a nuclear free Middle East, and one could argue that approach might have fostered long term stability much more than the current scenario. Because the writing now is on the wall. If you don't want to get attacked, you might as well get the bomb. Israel did indeed weaken Iran by cutting its ties with Hezbollah and Assad, but its attack probably did not reach any long-term strategic benefit. Iran now knows that its security depends on having a nuclear deterrent and also other country in the region might think the same (ex: Saudi Arabia), therefore spurring further instability and a long-term arms race in the region, despite the efforts to pacify it (Abraham's Accords). The events of June 2025 provide compelling real-time validation of how both strategic frameworks continue to inform and shape contemporary foreign policy and crisis management.

CASE STUDY N.2: RUSSIA

The second and more recent example of this approach by Trump is the Alaska summit and the attempt at a peace deal over Ukraine. Trump welcomed Putin on shared geopolitical space (Alaska used to be part of Russia) and started to lay the ground for a de-escalation in Ukraine. While it's still too early to assess the success of the initiative, it's clear that Ukraine is losing importance for the US as many of its geopolitical objectives are achieved: Washington managed to drive a wedge between Western Europe and Russia, even by physically cutting the ties (Nord Stream), Nato has expanded towards Russia incorporating new members, Germany pushed its economy towards the defence industry and a ring of fire of countries (the Baltics, Poland, Romania) emerged along Moscow's borders.

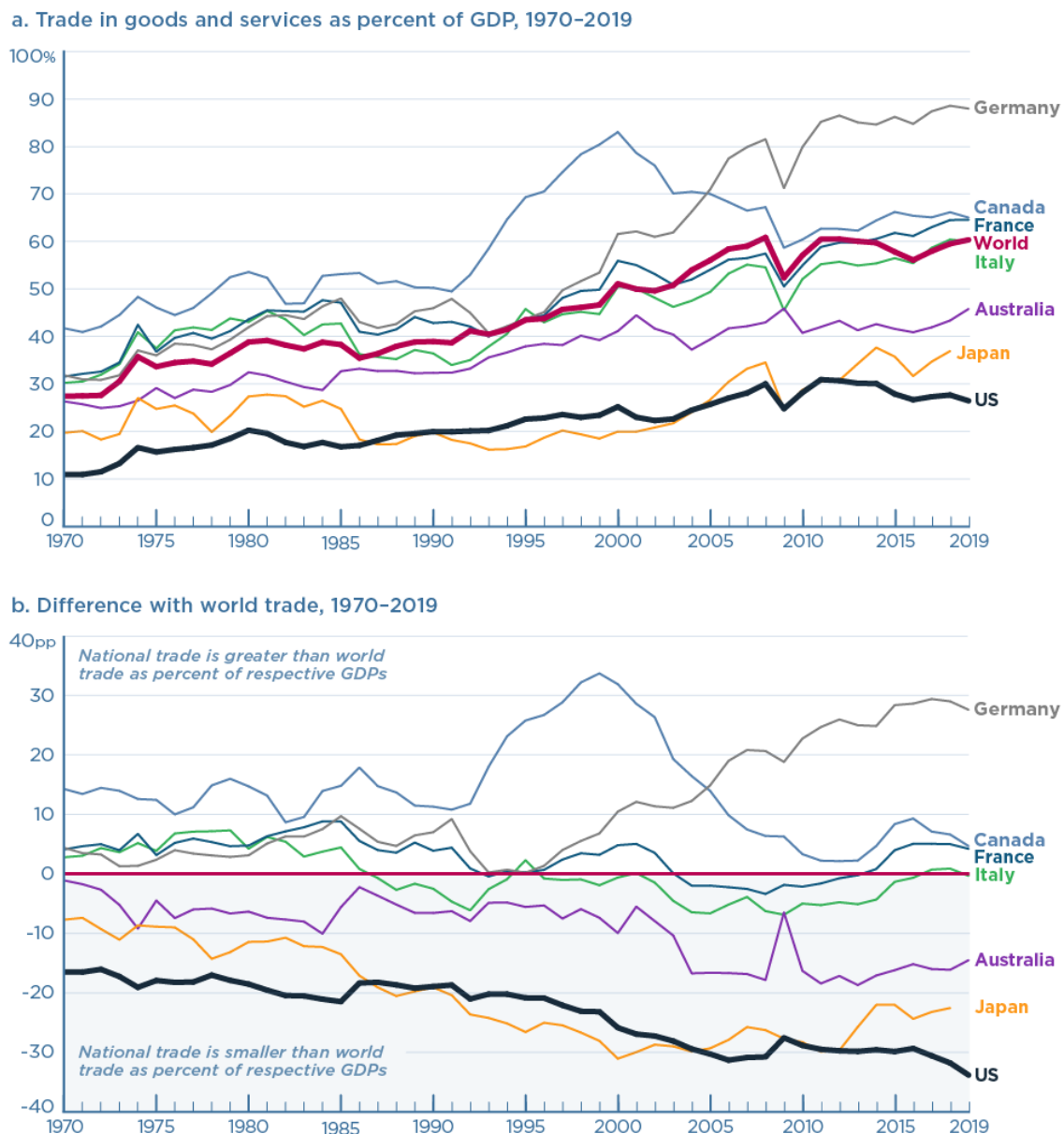
So, the US might want to lift a bit the tension on Russia by giving Putin the international recognition he was looking for on the world stage and divesting from Ukraine, leaving the EU to shoulder the main economic burden. Also, Trump recently brokered a deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan for a joint economic logistic corridor, directly stepping into Russia's southern neighbourhood and pulling off a diplomatic sting Moscow was too focused on Ukraine to do. In the light of this, we can see as Alaska's summit removed the risk of a direct confrontation between the two countries and probably gave Putin a change to have a last crack at Ukraine's lines before winter and let slowly slip the situation out of the international headlines. It also signalled that Eastern Europe is not a priority anymore and relationships can be resumed, in the backdrop of new coordination on the arctic and the American confrontation with China. As mentioned, it's still early to assess the success of this strategy, but the direction seems clear.

4. Globalization and De-globalization

The most pronounced contrast between the presidencies of Nixon and Trump manifests in their respective stances and actions regarding globalization. Richard Nixon is widely recognized as one of the principal architects of the modern era of globalization²⁶. His historic visit to China in 1972 not only re-established diplomatic ties after decades of isolation but also paved the way for China's eventual integration into the global economy, culminating in its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001²⁷. This pivotal move ushered in an era of unprecedented expansion in international trade, the widespread offshoring of manufacturing, and an intricate web of economic interdependence that defined the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This trend has recently reversed (**Figure 1**).

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Figure 1: US Trade Openness Has Declined While That of Other Advanced Economies Has Increased



Source: [World Bank, World Development Indicators Database on Peterson Institute For International Economics](#)

While globalization undeniably generated immense prosperity and significantly reduced global poverty, it also created substantial economic dislocations within developed nations, particularly in the United States. The loss

of manufacturing jobs, wage stagnation for certain segments of the workforce, and rising income inequality fuelled a growing sense of discontent and economic anxiety. These socio-economic conditions provided fertile ground for the rise of economic nationalism and populist political figures like Donald Trump, who skilfully capitalized on the widespread resentment against the perceived negative consequences of globalization²⁸.

Trump openly challenged the prevailing consensus on globalization through a series of protectionist policies, most notably the aggressive trade wars initiated against China. His administration-imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of Chinese imports, aiming to reduce trade deficits, bring manufacturing jobs back to the U.S., and force China to alter its trade practices²⁹. These actions represented a profound symbolic and practical reversal of fifty years of engagement and complex relations with China that had been painstakingly built since Nixon's opening.

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While Nixon actively built and strengthened the institutional foundations of the post-war global order (e.g., reinforcing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), establishing the G7), Trump sought to restructure, de-structure, or even "destroy" some of these very institutions or international agreements (e.g., withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), criticizing the WTO, pulling out of the Paris Agreement)³⁰. His "America First" rhetoric signalled a clear intent to reverse the trajectory of globalization, prioritizing immediate national interests over multilateral cooperation and global integration.

5. Comparative Analysis and Political Impact

A comparative analysis of the Nixon and Trump presidencies reveals that, despite profound tactical and stylistic differences, there are striking strategic similarities in their fundamental objectives. Both sought to reassert American power and influence in a changing world, albeit through diametrically opposed means. Nixon operated within a bipolar system, skilfully balancing powers and seeking to stabilize the existing international order through diplomacy and strategic alliances.

Trump, conversely, acted within an emerging multipolar context, aiming to disrupt the status quo and renegotiate the terms of international relations to what he perceived as America's advantage³¹.

The management of contemporary crises eloquently synthesizes the approaches of both presidents. International conflicts, such as the ongoing war between Israel and Iran and the U.S. intervention via Operation Midnight Hammer, often see the application of elements from Nixon's playbook: the pursuit of alliances, multilateral diplomacy (even if an administration like Trump's might simultaneously consider unilateral intervention), and the careful management of escalation through strategic communication channels³². In contrast, domestic crises, such as mass protests or civil unrest, tend to reflect Trump's style: an emphasis on "law and order," direct federal intervention, and the assertive use of force to restore authority, often bypassing local governance³³. This hybrid approach underscores the enduring legacy of both leaders in shaping the American response to complex challenges.

Crucially, both presidents left a legacy of permanent institutional changes that continue to shape American politics. Nixon's presidency, particularly in the aftermath of Watergate, led to a re-evaluation of the "imperial presidency" and spurred reforms aimed at strengthening congressional oversight³⁴. Trump, through his consistent challenge to democratic norms, institutions, and the very concept of objective truth, tested the resilience of the American political system and accelerated a process of political polarization that is likely to have lasting effects on governance, public trust, and the functioning of democratic institutions³⁵. Their combined influence continues to meld how the United States addresses challenges both on the domestic front and in its engagement with the international community.

6. Conclusion and Future Prospects

The presidencies of Richard Nixon and Donald Trump, though separated by nearly half a century and characterized by seemingly opposite styles and ideologies, are intrinsically linked by a continuous thread that weaves through the cycles of globalization and de-globalization. Nixon, through his visionary diplomacy and economic decisions, opened the door to an era of unprecedented economic interdependence and geopolitical redefinition. Trump, in turn, attempted to close that cycle and fundamentally renegotiate its terms, in direct response to the perceived consequences and dislocations of that very opening.

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Their comparison is far more than a mere academic exercise; it is an essential lens through which to understand the current dynamics of American and global politics. The dramatic events of June 2025 in the Middle East, with the open warfare between Israel and Iran and the U.S. intervention via Operation Midnight Hammer, serve as a stark and compelling real-time demonstration of how the world is changing and what geopolitical stakes are at play. The synthesis of Nixon's approach (alliance management, geopolitical pragmatism) and Trump's (changing role of US on the world stage, unilateralism) is vividly evident in the American response to this crisis.

Looking to the future, it is highly probable that the fundamental debate between internationalism and nationalism, between globalization and de-globalization, will continue to define American foreign policy and domestic politics. The legacies of Nixon and Trump, far from being confined to history books, remain active forces shaping the choices and challenges facing the United States in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Their contrasting yet interconnected approaches provide a critical framework for anticipating future policy directions and understanding the enduring tensions within the American political psyche.

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