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[Conflict-ready? Western Foreign Policy in Times of Systemic Rivalry](#)

“Jeffersonians” on the Rise

Traditional Internationalists in the US
Are Running Out of Supporters

Paul Linnarz

Americans have lost their appetite for “nation building” and being the “world’s policeman” – problems at home are getting out of hand. But the US still defends its claim to global leadership, either with “enlightened nationalism” or “America First”. Europe’s preparation should go beyond addressing Donald Trump.

Donald Trump, one of the most controversial US presidents in history, will run again. Following the 8 November mid-term elections, the Republican announced his intentions to be his party’s candidate to the 2024 presidential elections. With Trump supporters cheering and his political opponents dismayed, in Europe, worries about a possible new “ice age” in transatlantic relations arise.

During his four years in the White House, President Trump manoeuvred transatlantic relations to a low point – many observers thought that the damage would have been irreparable if he had won a second term. The Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from international agreements and cooperation with multilateral organisations. The US responded to trade spats with import tariffs; via Twitter, allied countries were slighted and autocrats flattered. The reputation and credibility of the US was in ruins in many countries around the world. According to a survey of the polling institute YouGov at the end of 2019, Germans even thought that Donald Trump was a greater menace to world peace than Russian President Vladimir Putin or Chinese President Xi Jinping. While 41 per cent of respondents thought the US president was especially dangerous, only eight and seven per cent saw Putin or Xi, respectively, as the greatest danger to peace.¹

After President Biden took his oath of office, respect for the US in Germany rose greatly. However, fears have long been growing that Donald Trump might be more than just a painful episode in the relations with the US. For months now, political guests from Germany in

Washington have been worriedly asking their American counterparts, “will Trump return to the White House?”

Although his Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) was “permanently suspended” at the beginning of January 2021 in the aftermath of the Capitol riots,² the former president has been back in the spotlight since war broke out in Ukraine. For months, it had not even been certain whether Trump would run again in 2024. At countless rallies, he only needed to mention that he “may have to” run again – and the cheering started. This summer, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* noted that, “as incredible as it may sound”, the former president was raising a quarter of a million dollars every day. “If Trump declares his candidacy for 2024 in the near future, the Republican nomination would likely be his for the taking,” the paper stated at the end of August.³

The fact that Trump has been on everyone’s lips again for months shows how uncertain, dismissive, and uncomprehending not only his political opponents at home, but indeed the majority of US allies abroad are at the idea of a Trump comeback. At the same time, the renewed focus on the person and political style of the former president obscures the view of a whole series of other problems: for instance, despite the good cooperation with Western allies in a number of policy fields, it would be naive to assume that there will be no disputes in transatlantic relations just because there is a Democrat in the White House. Moreover, many US foreign policy priorities have changed significantly less from Trump to Biden than they may appear. The confrontation with China is a case in point. The current



US administration also conditions its favour and willingness to cooperate upon very specific expectations and performances. The desire for “reliability” in tackling international challenges is not a one-way street.

Moreover, attributing all conflicts in transatlantic relations to “Trumpism” is not nearly nuanced enough. Fixation on an individual implies that US policy reversed itself in all areas when Trump took office, and that there had been no problems before Trump. Of course, Trump’s term in office marks a turning point – and not just because his

“America First” and “drain the swamp” slogans achieved a resonance that none of his predecessors were able to generate. But these slogans were not new, and “Trumpism”, to stick with the term, will continue to influence political discussions in the US even if its namesake is not re-elected. So, it is sensible, despite all the uncertainties, to consider not only the former president, but also positions and trends in the American population as a whole, and within the Republican Party in particular. Political scientist Torben Lütjen, who served as associate professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee until 2020,



Unilateral action as a last resort: Even though the Biden administration has significantly improved coordination with US allies overall, the withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 caught partners unprepared. [Source:](#) © U.S. Air Force, Taylor Crul via Reuters.

Biden Administration: No Guarantee of an Endless Honeymoon

Although it took months for the Senate to confirm many candidates for important governmental and ambassadorial posts upon which they could finally assume their duties, the Biden administration began to plaster over many of the cracks in transatlantic relations as soon as the president took office. Contentious issues, including, in relation to Germany, continued construction and future operation of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, were avoided, and other conflicts laid aside at least temporarily. The US administration also leaves no doubt that – with its sanctions against Russia and billions of dollars of support for Ukraine since the war began – it has been acting in close cooperation and complete agreement with its European allies.

However, the Biden administration, too, takes into account its allies' constraints on action only on the condition that they involve themselves as much as they can. "When our allies shoulder their fair share of the burden, they'll reasonably expect to have a fair say in making decisions. We will honour that," promised US Secretary of State Antony Blinken two months after taking office.⁵ Conversely, those who fail to "shoulder their fair share" cannot expect to have a say in all matters.

An improvement that can scarcely be overestimated is of course that the Biden administration has returned to the table for an open-ended negotiation process that could result in benefits that unilaterally imposed measures could not achieve. The US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC)⁶ is a good example of this. If, however, a comprehensive involvement of all participants is determined to run counter to its

rightly noted that "by focusing so extremely on him, we have sometimes overlooked the fact that he is just the symptom, not the cause, of many problems"⁴. If, instead of Donald Trump, another Republican candidate moves into the White House, policymakers abroad will have to adjust to very similar priorities. Despite a general sigh of relief at the thought of returning to professional, respectful cooperation with its allies, the Biden administration – in the face of domestic policy requirements and the balance of power in Congress – could not afford to jettison everything the preceding administration had done.

interests, either in terms of the time required or the desired results, the Biden administration is not above operating unilaterally.

Thus, even after more than a year, the partial details available about the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan certainly do not give the impression that the effort was closely coordinated with partner countries. And the announcement, in September 2021, of the new trilateral Indo-Pacific AUKUS security partnership between the US, Australia, and the United Kingdom blindsided the French government. Within the framework of the alliance, Australia is to receive nuclear-powered submarines from the US – eliminating France as a supplier. The multi-billion-dollar contract, signed with Paris in 2016, for the delivery of twelve French submarines was cancelled by the Australian government just hours after the AUKUS alliance was announced. In a damage control mode, President Biden admitted, “what we did was clumsy”⁷.

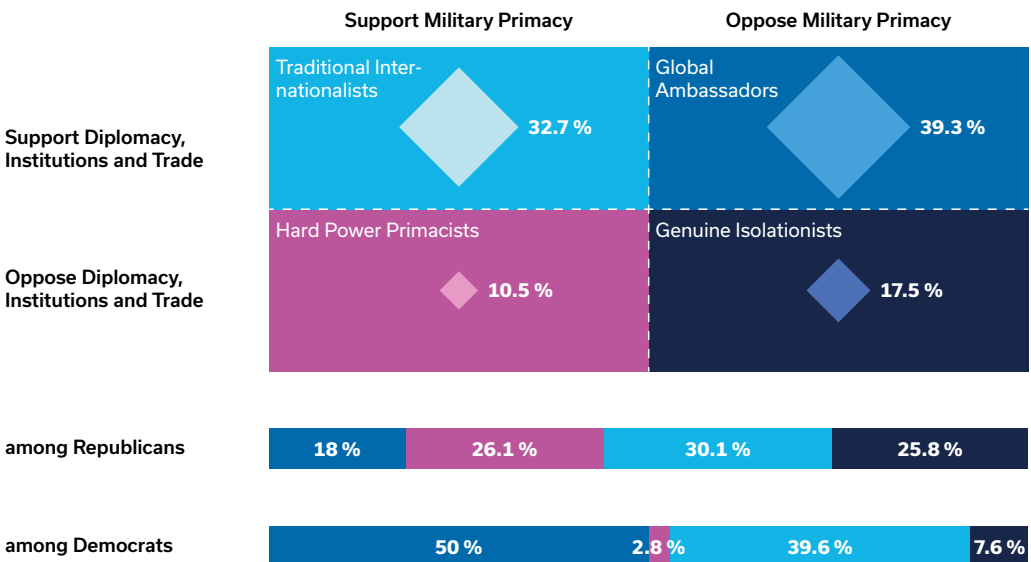
This year’s summit of the Organisation of American States was supposed to seek solutions to refugee movements, inter alia. But several of

the affected Central and South American countries were not even at the table. The US, hosting the summit for the first time since the inaugural summit in 1994, had refused to allow Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to participate. Colombia’s then president Iván Duque supported the decision: “I think no dictatorship shall participate in the Summit of the Americas.”⁸ Mexico’s President Andrés Manuel López Obrador boycotted the summit in protest. Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bolivia, and Uruguay were also absent from Los Angeles. As a result, the US administration was forced to carry on with the “improvised” summit strictly according to domestic constraints arising from party politics, as William Neuman argued in *The Atlantic*: “[w]ere Biden to have invited Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, there would be hell to pay in Florida and in Congress.”⁹

US Population: War-weary and Half “Jeffersonian”

Not even Trump operated in a vacuum as president. On the domestic policy front, he underestimated the COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented effects for too long. In foreign

Fig. 1: Attitude of the US Population towards Their Country’s International Engagement



Inconclusive answers were not included in the survey. Source: Hannah/Gray/Robinson 2021, n. 15.

policy, however, his pugilistic manner even towards allies was to the taste of nearly all his supporters. The hope abroad that Trump would grow into his office never came to fruition. Instead, he remained in campaign mode throughout his term of office (and beyond), and said and did exactly what his base expected of their president.

At most, behind closed doors, his political opponents concede that some of Trump's foreign policy demands were precisely on target. In his speech to the UN General Assembly in 2018, the president warned that "Germany will become totally dependent on Russian energy if it does not immediately change course. Here in the Western Hemisphere, we are committed to maintaining our independence from the encroachment of expansionist foreign powers."¹⁰ Trump's supporters have not forgotten the reaction of the international audience at the UN General Assembly. After the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Dean Karayanis recalled that "European leaders laughed. Today, they're learning just how right he was, as they pay a steep price for not heeding the warning."¹¹ What has long been forgotten, of course, is Trump's assertion during his presidential campaign in 2015 that Vladimir Putin "is not going into Ukraine, OK, just so you understand. He's not going to go into Ukraine, all right? You can mark it down. You can put it down."¹² The fact that Trump's "great again" ambitions come – as Frank-Walter Steinmeier put it at the 2020 Munich Security Conference – "if necessary, even at the expense of neighbours and partners" has never bothered Trump's supporters.¹³

Democrats also expected increased financial commitment for defence on the part of Europe.

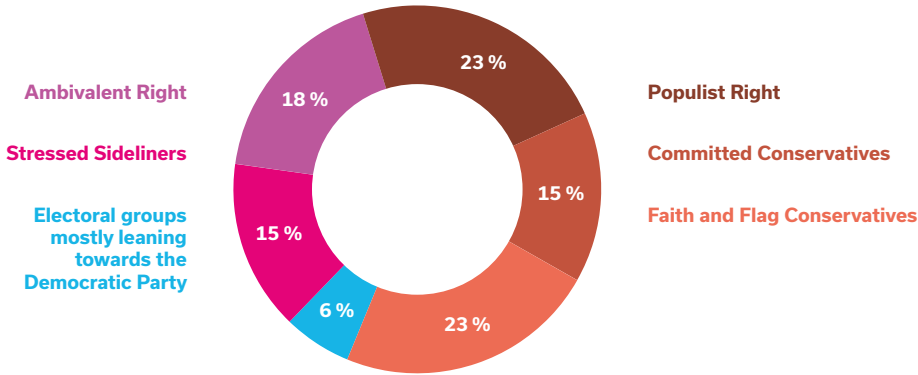
But Biden, too, has always opposed Nord Stream 2 and excessive European dependence on Russian energy imports. In 2014, he was

vice president when the NATO member states adopted the target of two per cent of GDP for defence expenditure at the Wales summit. In the same year, Russian special forces without rank or nationality markings occupied strategic points in Crimea. A critical attitude towards Russia, and the expectation of greater financial commitment for defence on the part of Europe, were thus also widespread among Democrats. During the 2016 campaign, Trump asked, "Why is it that other countries that are in the vicinity of Ukraine, why aren't they dealing? Why are we always the one that's leading, potentially the third world war with Russia."¹⁴ The second question at least was one many progressives were also asking, and not only about Russia, but about global US military commitment. This trend has continued since 2016.

Shortly after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, the Eurasia Group Foundation (EGF) published the results of a survey that showed that Democratic Party supporters increasingly viewed US-led military interventions to end human rights violations with scepticism.¹⁵ Instead, support rose for international organisations, such as the United Nations, to take the lead on such matters – an almost 30 per cent increase between 2020 and 2021 alone. Among Republicans, support for humanitarian interventions by the US military fell by 32 per cent in the same period.

Slightly less than a third of respondents supported maintaining or increasing the number of US troops stationed in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and continuing to assume significant responsibility for regional security there. The number of respondents favouring reduction of troops stationed abroad and incremental transfer of regional security responsibility to allies was much higher (42.3 per cent). About a quarter of respondents had no opinion on the matter. Young Americans (aged between 18 and 29) believe that combatting the consequences of climate change (33.2 per cent) is much more important than military support (7.2 per cent). In this group, 45 per

Fig. 2: Political Typology of Supporters of the Republican Party



The data were collected in July 2021. Source: Pew Research Center 2021, n. 20.

cent of respondents agreed that “peace is best achieved by keeping a focus on domestic needs and the health of American democracy”.

In its analysis of the survey results, the EGF divided respondents into four groups: “Traditional Internationalists”, who favour strong engagement and close cooperation with other countries for both military and diplomatic solutions to global problems; “Global Ambassadors”, who favour close diplomatic cooperation with foreign powers, but oppose military primacy and believe the US should reduce its overseas troop levels; “Hard Power Primacists”, who think the US should maintain its global military presence and security commitments, but reduce diplomatic cooperation in multilateral organisations and integration into international treaties; and “Genuine Isolationists”, who oppose both military and diplomatic engagement and think the US should be less involved on the world stage.

The survey shows that the largest group in the US population is the “Global Ambassadors” (39.3 per cent), followed by the “Traditional Internationalists” (32.7 per cent). The “Genuine Isolationists” account for 17.5 per cent, and a bit more than a tenth are “Hard Power Primacists”. The picture changes when the four groups are weighted by political party affinity. Half of Democrats are “Global Ambassadors”, but only 18 per cent of Republicans. Instead,

almost 26 per cent of Republicans are “Genuine Isolationists”, a position held by only 7.6 per cent of Democrats. At the same time, the share of “Hard Power Primacists” amongst Democrats is vanishingly small (2.8 per cent). In the ranks of Republicans, however, in addition to the comparatively high number of isolationists, there are 26.1 per cent of “Hard Power Primacists” who believe the US military should set the tone in foreign policy.¹⁶

According to a slightly different classification, the “Traditional Internationalists” of the last three decades may also be called “Wilsonians”, named after the former president who focused on promoting democracy, the rule of law, and the spread of American values. “Jeffersonians”, meanwhile, wish to consolidate and defend democracy at home rather than on the world stage. Donald Trump fits into neither category; Joe Biden cannot be considered a “Wilsonian” because he himself said that nation-building on the basis of American values has “never made any sense to me”.¹⁷ As early as 2003, he spoke of “enlightened nationalism”¹⁸ that must be reflected in US foreign policy and of “sustained commitment to the expansion of liberal democracy – not by imposing it from the outside, but by building it from within”.¹⁹ Either way, according to the EGF survey, almost half of the US population now appears to consist of “Jeffersonians” for whom the primary concern is democracy at home.



Conservative Voters: Traditional Focus Fades

The campaign strategy of the conservatives is coordinated by the Republican National Committee. A member of the committee recently said in an interview that three groups are decisive for an election victory: entrepreneurs, evangelicals, and Trump supporters. Republican candidates who hope to have a chance in the 2024 primaries must gain the support of a majority of at least two of these groups. Of course, there are many Republican voters who fall into two or even all three of those categories. The typology developed by the Pew Research Center in Washington, published in November 2021,²⁰ presented here in a simplified form, can be more helpful in understanding the internal party situation.

The group that will probably be most important for Trump is the “**Faith and Flag Conservatives**”. It makes up 23 per cent of all Republicans, 14 per cent of all voters (as of 2020), and ten per cent of the US population. This group is very to extremely conservative, predominantly religious (more than 40 per cent evangelical), and older (a third are over 65, and only eight per cent are under 30). 85 per cent are “non-Hispanic White”, and almost 60 per cent are men. 39 per cent live in rural areas. Three quarters of this group (more than any other) say that a strong US military is more important in international relations than diplomacy. Almost 70 per cent are convinced that the US “stands above all other countries”. This value is also higher than that of any other group. 53 per cent of them also think that compromise in politics is just “selling out on what you believe in.” Donald Trump has



Outdated? The “traditional Reagan Republicans” are now in the minority in their party. Source: © Mark Leffingwell, Reuters.

more support from this group than from any other. Half of them consider him the best president of the last 40 years. 55 per cent want him to run again in 2024. 86 per cent are convinced that Trump was “definitely or probably the legitimate winner of the 2020 presidential election”. Along with the “Progressive Left” group, who make up the most extreme stratum of the Democratic Party, the “Faith and Flag Conservatives” are the most politically engaged of any group. Their voter turnout in 2020 was 85 per cent, much higher than the national average. Their willingness to donate is the highest of any Republican group. They regularly follow political issues in the media. The sole or primary media source for almost 75 per cent of them is Fox News. Almost 80 per cent think that “there has been too much attention paid to the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol”. They are the only group with a majority of members who think that the criminal penalties faced by the perpetrators were too severe.

A quarter of the “Ambivalent Right” voted for Joe Biden in 2020, and more than 60 per cent think that he legitimately won the election.

“Committed Conservatives” are, in a manner of speaking, “traditional, old school” Republicans. They represent 15 per cent of all Republican supporters, nine per cent of all voters (as of 2020), and seven per cent of the US population. This group shares the core political positions of the Grand Old Party (GOP) since the time of Ronald Reagan’s presidency: business-friendly, in favour of free trade and low taxes, opposed to far-reaching state powers. In foreign policy, it favours close diplomatic cooperation with allies while maintaining sufficient military influence. 68 per cent believe that the US “should take the interests of allies into account in foreign policy”. “Committed Conservatives” are a bit less critical when it comes to immigration. 49 per cent think

that Reagan was the best president of the last 40 years, albeit 35 per cent think that Trump was. Four of ten want to see Trump run again in 2024. This group is also very politically active: voter turnout was above average in 2020. 42 per cent follow political issues regularly (as compared to 34 per cent of all US adults). 80 per cent are White, ten per cent are Hispanic. The proportion of Asians (three per cent) and Blacks (one per cent) is negligible. Almost 60 per cent are men, and about a third are over 65. Of the various Republican groups, the “Committed Conservatives” have the highest levels of education and the highest average income. Unlike all other Republican-oriented groups, two thirds of them say that vaccination is the best defence against COVID-19.

Almost as important for Donald Trump as the most conservative group mentioned at the outset is the “Populist Right”. This group accounts for 23 per cent of all Republicans, twelve per cent of all voters (2020), and eleven per cent of the US population. Half of the “Populist Right” want to end not only illegal immigration, but legal immigration as well. A special feature of this group is its outspoken criticism of the US economic system: 82 per cent say that “large corporations are having a negative impact on the way things are going in the country” and about half of them “support higher taxes on the wealthy and on large corporations”. Almost 90 per cent think that the government is “almost always wasteful and inefficient”. 85 per cent of them are White. Only about 20 per cent have a university degree. The difference to the other groups is that women are in the majority, at 54 per cent. The group’s voter turnout was roughly the national average in 2020. 70 to 80 per cent think that Trump “definitely or probably” won the 2020 election. Almost 60 per cent want him to run again. The group’s income level is roughly in line with the average for the US population as a whole, as are levels of interest in media information on political issues. Fox News is the sole or primary source of information for 64 per cent of the “Populist Right” (out of a choice of 26 media outlets on the survey). 53 per cent of them are Protestant, another 27 per cent are

evangelical Protestants. The percentage of this group who are completely vaccinated against COVID-19 is much lower than the average of the US population overall (much like the “Faith and Flag Conservatives”). 60 per cent of the “Populist Right” support candidates who publicly state that Trump won the 2020 election.

The “**Ambivalent Right**” accounts for 18 per cent of all Republicans, nine per cent of all voters (2020), and twelve per cent of the US population. This group is more moderate than the previously mentioned groups, especially on social issues (abortion, same-sex marriage, legal immigration). A quarter voted for Joe Biden in 2020. The group is younger (63 per cent under 50) and less White than the others: 17 per cent are Hispanic, eight per cent Black, and five per cent Asian. Nor are they as religious. Income and education levels are roughly at the national average. 63 per cent of the “Ambivalent Right” do not want Trump to remain “a major national political figure for many years to come”. Almost as many, and thus more than in any other Republican group, believe that President Biden legitimately won the 2020 election. But the group is much less politically active than the others: only 55 per cent voted in 2020. The “Ambivalent Right” is similarly less interested in media reports on political issues. While Fox News is the primary source of news for this group as well, consumption of other media is higher in this group than in any of the others.

“Old school” Republicans will have to move towards the positions held by the “Populist Right” to succeed in the 2024 primaries.

Lastly, the “**Stressed Sideliners**”. Unlike the “Ambivalent Right”, which holds many traditional Republican positions, this group tends to be conservative on social issues, but progressive (“left” in European political language) on economic

ones. Three quarters favour raising the minimum wage; 83 per cent think that the economic system “unfairly favors powerful interests”. Both education and income are lower in this group than the national average. 56 per cent are women; less than 60 per cent are White; 21 per cent are Hispanic; ten per cent are Black; and five per cent are Asian. Republicans and Democrats share this group: the “Stressed Sideliners” split evenly in the 2020 presidential election – just under half voted for Biden, the other half for Trump. The name of this group has to do with its members’ relatively low average income. At the same time, this group has the lowest voter turnout (45 per cent in 2020). Less than 20 per cent of this group regularly follows political reporting in the media. The group makes up 15 per cent of the US population. In 2020, it accounted for ten per cent of all voters. It makes up 15 per cent of all Republicans and 13 per cent of all Democrats. According to the Pew Research Center typology, a further six per cent of Republicans are distributed across groups whose members are primarily Democrat.

The percentage of the respective groups within the supporter base of the GOP may have shifted over the last few months, but in essence the various groupings reflect the balance of power among party members and supporters. These currents will decide which candidate has the best chances for nomination in 2024.

Republican Party: Pledges of Allegiance and Troop Build-ups

What is clear is that convinced Wilsonians and traditional “Reagan Republicans” likely have no chance in the primaries: their most important clientele, the “Committed Conservatives”, make up only 15 per cent of all Republicans. Those who hope to succeed with the “Populist Right” (23 per cent of Republicans) will have to part ways with the traditional, more moderate Republican position on immigration policy. And on economic issues, including free trade and corporate taxes, this group expects political positions that, until Donald Trump came along, were almost exclusively held by political opponents in the progressive camp. “Old school” Republicans hoping to



Political suicide: Until recently, anyone who openly opposed former President Donald Trump from within the Republican ranks, as Liz Cheney did, could expect a quick end to their political career. [Source: © Sarah Silbiger, Reuters.](#)

win the 2024 primary against the former president will therefore have to move towards the positions held by the “Populist Right”. The “Faith and Flag Conservatives” (23 per cent of Republicans) are also politically active and ready to donate. Almost all of them voted for Trump in 2020. But half of these very to extremely conservative Republicans do not think that he is the best president of the last four decades. The percentage of those who want to see a Trump comeback is lower in this group than in the “Populist Right”. It is also clear that Republicans need the votes of Blacks and Hispanics in the swing states if they wish to win in 2024. The challenge is to win over the “Ambivalent Right” (18 per cent of all Republicans) during the primaries and motivate them to vote. Unlike “Faith and Flag Conservatives”, this group does not believe that the US should stand uncompromisingly above the rest of the world.

Given this Republican landscape, which is increasingly dominated by conservative and populist tendencies, but is by no means homogeneous, it is fair to ask why, until not long ago, Donald Trump was never actually criticised from within his own ranks except by a very few dissenters. The reason is not only that the polarisation of American society between Republicans and Democrats has been deepening for years, but also that the power struggle between the moderate and the very conservative camps within the Republican Party started long before Trump’s 2016 win. Outlooks that roughly say “whoever is not for me is against me” have been on the rise among Republicans since at least the Tea Party movement in 2009. Trump capitalised on this fact: “Trumpism” is now the name for this sentiment.

6 January 2021, when they stormed the Capitol, was not the first time that radical Trump

supporters chanted “Stop the steal!” Originally, the slogan’s accusation of electoral fraud was not directed against Joe Biden or the Democrats. Loyal Trump fans had first used it against their own ranks, in the 2016 campaign.²¹ It was aimed at Trump’s most dangerous Republican competitor, Ted Cruz. At the time, wild allegations that Cruz had stolen the primaries in Colorado were intended to prevent a possible nomination of the Texas senator.

Meanwhile, even among “classic” Republicans (“Committed Conservatives”), in 2021, more than 60 per cent did not think that elected officials should criticise Trump publicly. This sentiment reached 75 to 80 per cent among “Faith and Flag Conservatives” and the “Populist Right”. Even in the “Stressed Sideliners” group, only about half expressed sympathy for public criticism of Trump. The only Republican group whose majority had no problem with a Republican attacking Trump verbally was the “Ambivalent Right”.²² It is not just Trump who demands unconditional loyalty; voters also reject dissenters in their own ranks. Until recently, open criticism or even declared party-internal opposition was very likely to end the political career of the person expressing it. A record of reliably supporting almost all Republican positions in Congress would not save the offender. Liz Cheney, probably the most prominent Trump critic, is an excellent example. She was punished in the Wyoming primaries when she defended her House seat this year, losing badly against a previously unknown politician named Harriet Hageman, whom Donald Trump supported. Given this climate, it is not surprising that there has so far been no discussion about the different internal party factions.

Instead, efforts have been ongoing for months to iron out what Trump and his inner circle likely consider to be his biggest weakness: when he won in 2016 to the surprise of almost all observers, he came to Washington as a political outsider without personnel of his own. That shall not happen again, which is why loyalists such as Mark Meadows, Jeffrey Clark, and Russ Vought are busy vetting candidates for a new Trump administration. New players, such as the American Moment

organisation, are in touch with universities and the offices of Republican senators and congressmen to groom students and young congressional aides for the time after the 2024 election, when they will form the junior cadre of a new administration.²³ Those who advocate for “loose borders, free trade absolutism, foreign adventurism” do not fit the profile. “For decades the American Right stagnated under an old consensus,” says the American Moment. “We will not go back.”²⁴

In June, Danielle Pletka of the American Enterprise Institute asked a question to clarify the party’s position: “where will the Republican Party be on defending Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack? Will isolationists on both left and right actually have the power to steer a course?” Pletka thinks not, but the devil is in the proverbial details: “Sanctions on China would hit the Republican base hard, raising costs for basic goods even higher.”²⁵ At the Hudson Institute, Mike Pompeo noted that he is often asked in his hometown whether the US should be involved in the war in Ukraine. He answers, “We’re not the world’s policemen.” In the same breath, the former Secretary of State, who is still “proud” to have served under Donald Trump “in a unique administration”, explains that “by assisting Ukraine, America bolsters our own security without the involvement in combat of our men and women”. If people are fighting for their own freedom, the US must be ready to support them. But “the United States should never again fight another nation’s war,” says Pompeo.²⁶ This means that internationally, the US will continue to defend freedom in its own interests. But allies must be able to defend themselves. Karin von Hippel, Director-General of the Royal United Services Institute in the United Kingdom, advised Europeans to be “less complacent”. After all, “Trump, or a politician like him, could return to the presidency soon.” NATO allies should therefore imagine “a world where the US is not there all the time”.²⁷

– translated from German –

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