

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Richard Giragosian
Regional Studies Center

11 November 2016

NOTE OF CANDID CAUTION

This assessment is not our usual evidence-based analysis; rather, given the lack of data, this assessment is more of a predictive analysis

2016 Presidential Election



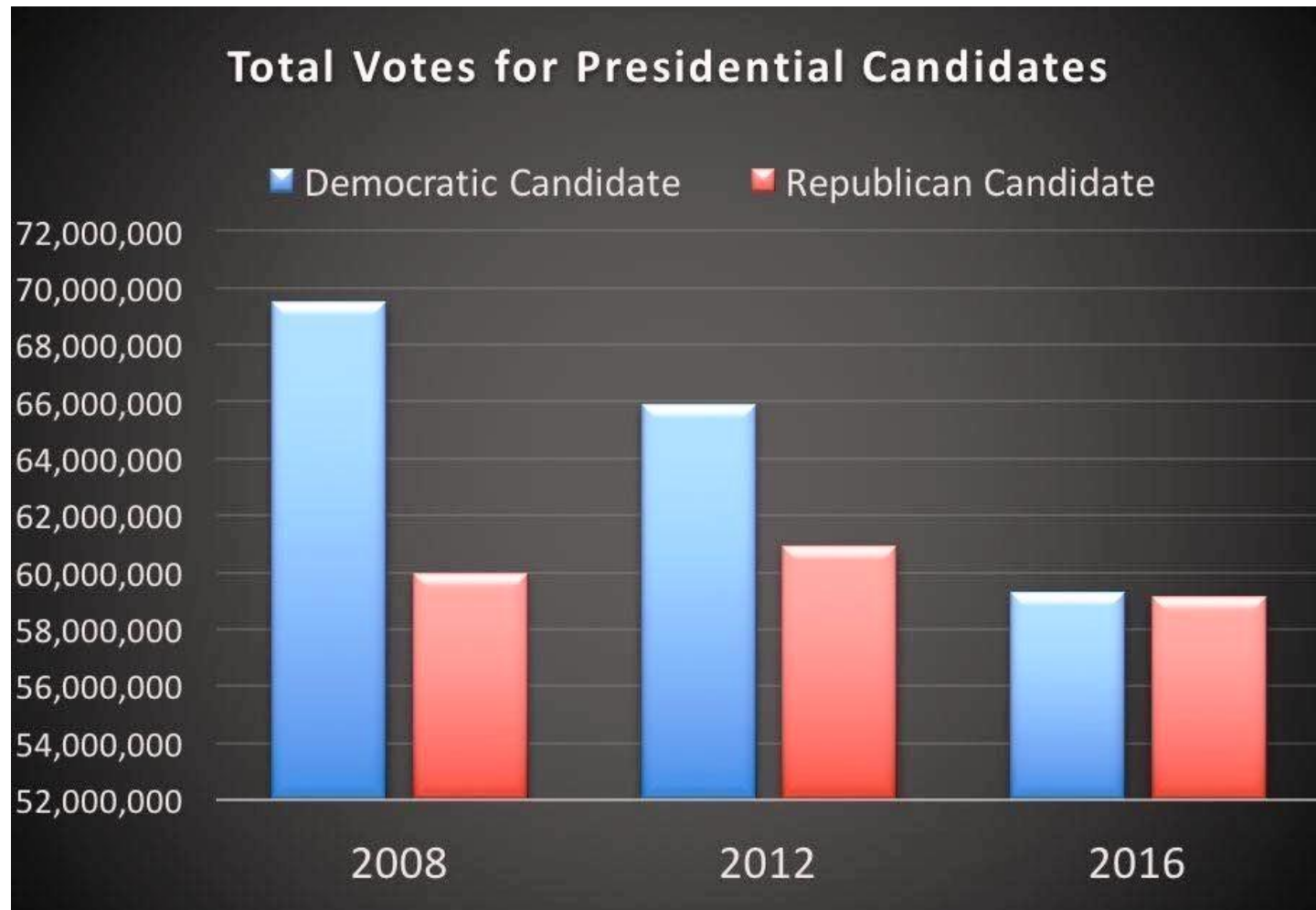
Moment in History

Mood of the Electorate

- Despite popularity of Obama, deep unease over core issues
 - U.S. global standing (61%), crime (57%), race (67%), immigration (55%)
 - Urban-Rural divide
- Pronounced distrust of Clinton
 - Private email
 - Clinton Foundation

The Election

Dispelling the Myth

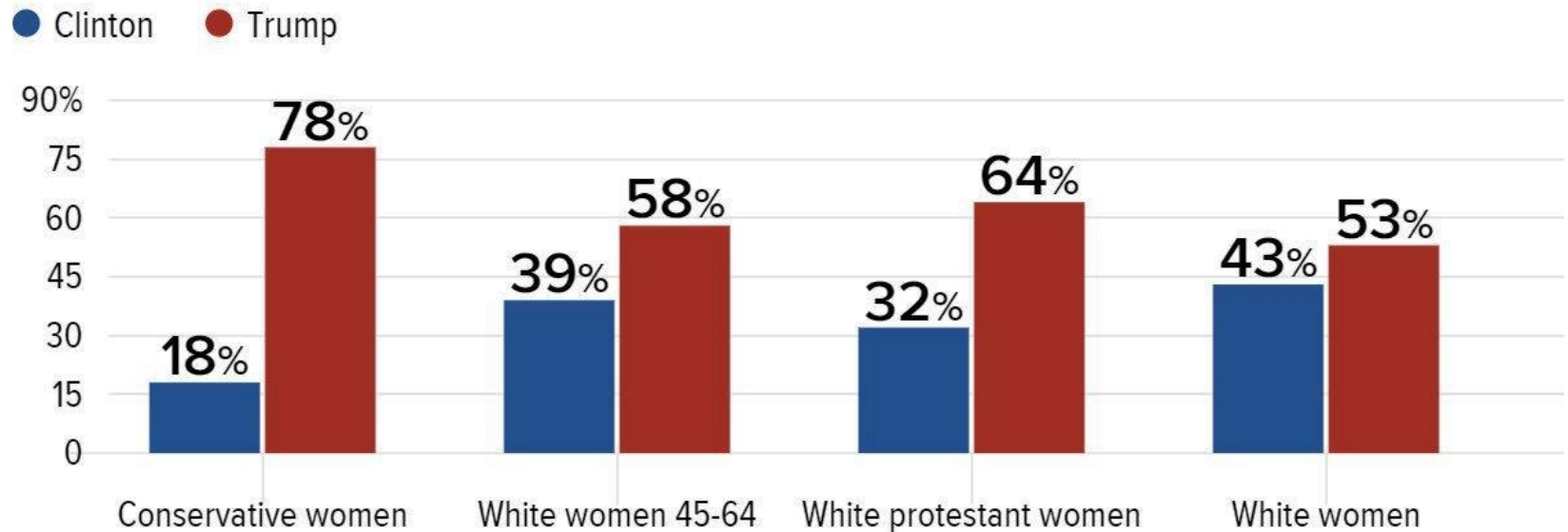


The Election

Dispelling the Myth

Voters Nationwide

Women: Key Groups for Trump



The Election

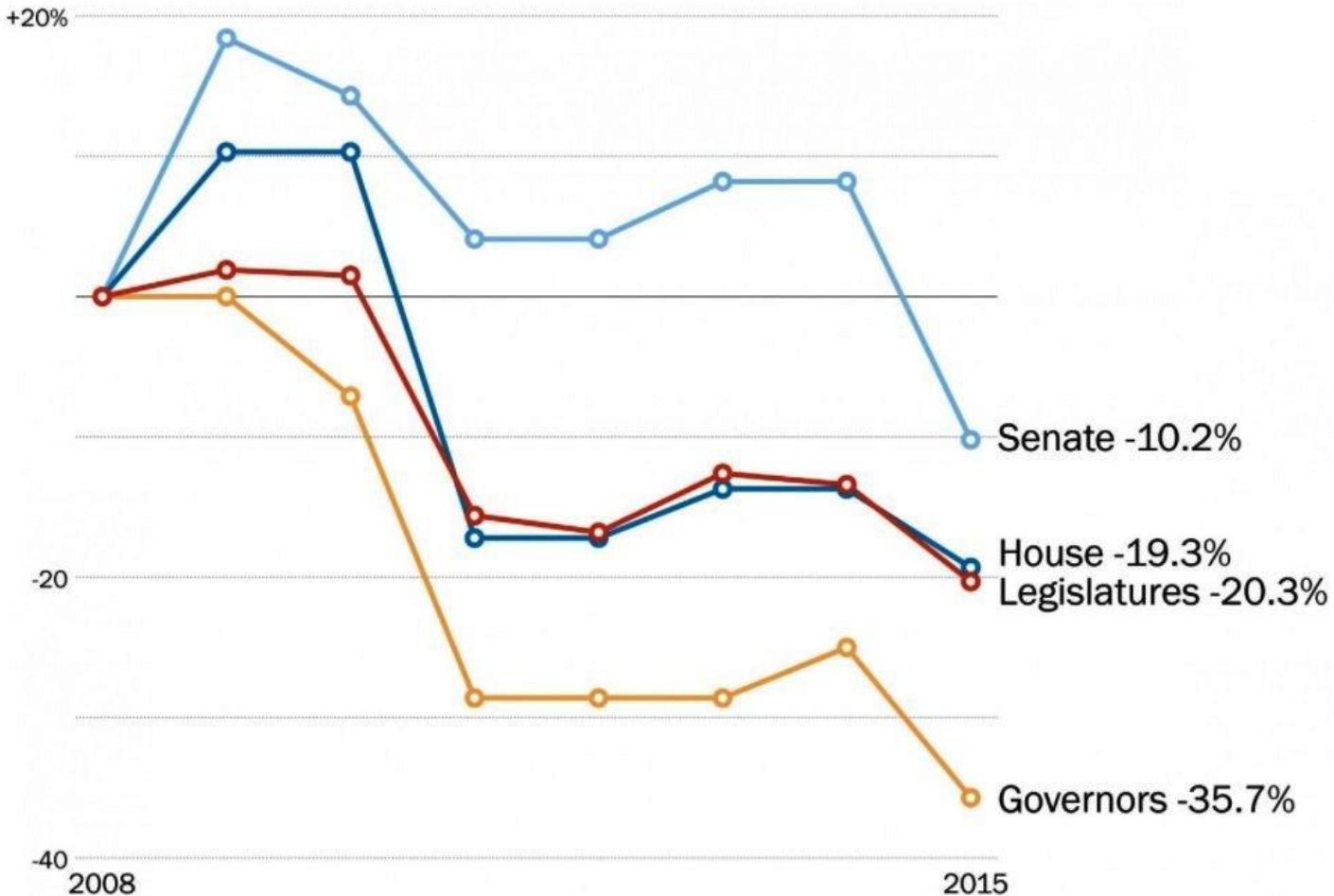
Dispelling the Myth

income			
	clinton	trump	others
under \$30,000 17%	53%	41%	6
\$30k-\$49,999 19%	51%	42%	7
\$50k-\$99,999 31%	46%	50%	4
\$100k-\$199,999 24%	47%	48%	5
\$200k-\$249,999 4%	48%	49%	3
\$250,000 or more 6%	46%	48%	6

The Demise of the Democrats

Change in number of Democrats since 2008

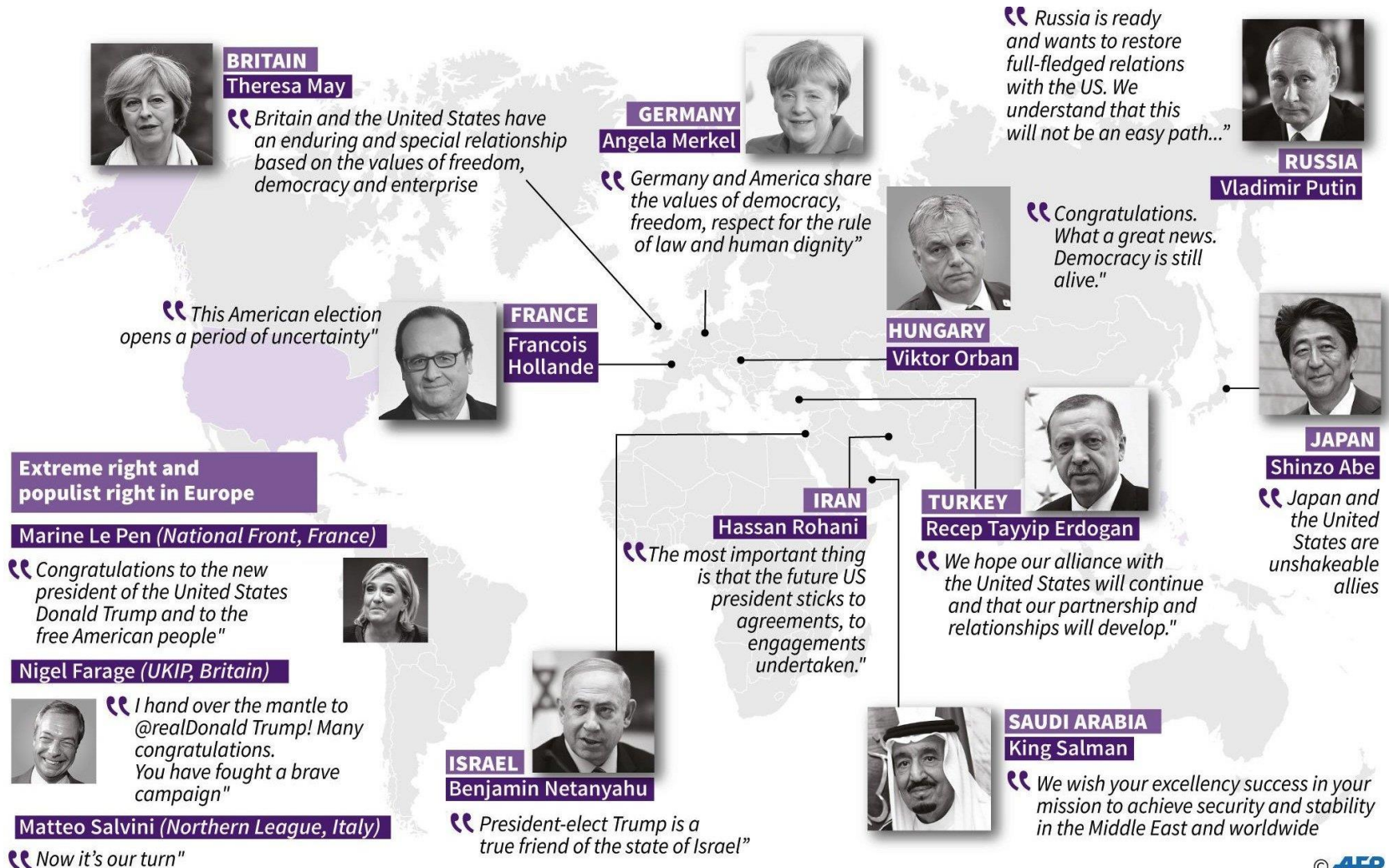
Data from House.gov, Dr. Carl Klarner, Ballotpedia, Statista.



President-Elect Trump



International Reaction



The Trump Worldview

There's nothing wrong with America's Foreign Defense Policy that a little backbone can't cure.

An open letter from Donald J. Trump on why America should stop paying to defend countries that can afford to defend themselves.

DONALD JOHN TRUMP

To The American People:

For decades, Japan and other nations have been taking advantage of the United States.

The saga continues unabated as we defend the Persian Gulf, an area of only marginal significance to the United States for its oil supplies, but one upon which Japan and others are almost totally dependent. Why are these nations not paying the United States for the human lives and billions of dollars we are losing to protect their interests? Saudi Arabia, a country whose very existence is in the hands of the United States, last week refused to allow us to use their mine sweepers (which are, sadly, far more advanced than ours) to police the Gulf. The world is laughing at America's politicians as we protect ships we don't own, carrying oil we don't need, destined for allies who won't help.

Over the years, the Japanese, unimpeded by the huge costs of defending themselves (as long as the United States will do it for free), have built a strong and vibrant economy with unprecedented surpluses. They have brilliantly managed to maintain a weak yen against a strong dollar. This, coupled with our monumental spending for their, and others, defense, has moved Japan to the forefront of world economies.

Now that the tides are turning and the yen is becoming strong against the dollar, the Japanese are openly complaining and, in typical fashion, our politicians are reacting to these unjustified complaints.

It's time for us to end our vast deficits by making Japan, and others who can afford it, pay. Our world protection is worth hundreds of billions of dollars to these countries, and their stake in their protection is far greater than ours.

Make Japan, Saudi Arabia, and others pay for the protection we extend as allies. Let's help our farmers, our sick, our homeless by taking from some of the greatest profit machines ever created — machines created and nurtured by us. "Tax" these wealthy nations, not America. End our huge deficits, reduce our taxes, and let America's economy grow unencumbered by the cost of defending those who can easily afford to pay us for the defense of their freedom. Let's not let our great country be laughed at anymore.

Sincerely,


Donald J. Trump

Isolationist “America First”

- Alliances as contractual transactions
- Challenges forward posture
- Opposes free trade deals
- Authoritarian appeal

Deeply-held beliefs (1987)

The Trump Administration

- Candidate promises vs. Presidential commitments
 - Limits of presidential pragmatism
 - Institutional constraints
- Concerns & worries
 - Limited experience
 - Differences with Republicans
- Character & personality driving policy

Broad Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy

- Despite domestic focus, other priorities
 - Russian “reset” – Sanctions & deal on Syria
 - Iran nuclear deal (difficult) & deeper commitment to Israel
- Reversal of Obama’s Pivot to Asia
 - Edging Japan & South Korea closer to nuclear security; Ignoring North Korea
 - Trade measures against China
- Degrading Euro-Atlantic security

Implications for the South Caucasus

- Accommodation of Russian power & influence in “near abroad”
 - Ukraine: annexation of Crimea endorsed
 - Georgian NATO aspirations weakened
 - Russian unilateral lead on Karabakh
 - Baltic insecurity
- Moving closer to Turkey’s Erdogan
- Regional irrelevance & insignificance

Conclusion