

This House Would Vote Trump: The Case For the Motion

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This essay features a transcription, with some minor modifications, of an address given in a public debate conducted at the University of Bath. In it, Matthew Alford takes the positive position by supporting Donald Trump in, "This House would vote Trump." It forms part of his opening speech and represents the lecturer's best effort in defending 'The Donald'. He was criticised by one of the panellists as representing the "far left" now undergoing a "strange contortion." For the record, Alford admits that he does not subscribe to a far left ideology but is, rather, opposed to the present deadly consensus.

Donald Trump | Hillary Clinton | drone strike
American exceptionalism | Russia | China

Well, this is a poison chalice. Whether it's one I ever have to pass on, we'll discover next month. I don't think Trump is a good man or that he would be a good leader of the USA, especially on domestic policy, where he often reflects reactionary views, which I don't like. He seems boorish, opportunistic and thoughtless.

Equally, despite her sour countenance, I cannot quite bring myself to actively dislike Hillary Clinton as a person – the conspiracy theories that have swirled around her have never amounted to anything decisively disgraceful, at least no more than one would expect from a morally flexible person inveigling herself in high society. Nothing criminal proven or likely to be proven, at least not on the worst accusations like murder, embezzlement and drug-running.

However, this motion is about whether we would vote Trump. And by we, I am taking that to be if we as Europeans had a vote. For that, if we take a step right back, there is a strong case to be made.

First, let me flag up some supporting points: if Hillary wins, the Democrats could put lipstick on a pig in 2020 and still expect to pull in their base voters, to the detriment of a more popular candidate or a third party candidate. The Democratic National Committee members worked extensively to undermine Bernie Sanders and they should pay a price for that.

I also think we shouldn't be alarmist about Trump's stupid rhetoric – he is a brilliantly theatrical person and he knows that saying "I'm gonna build a wall" is a thousand times more powerful than saying "I'm going to be a bit tougher on immigration."

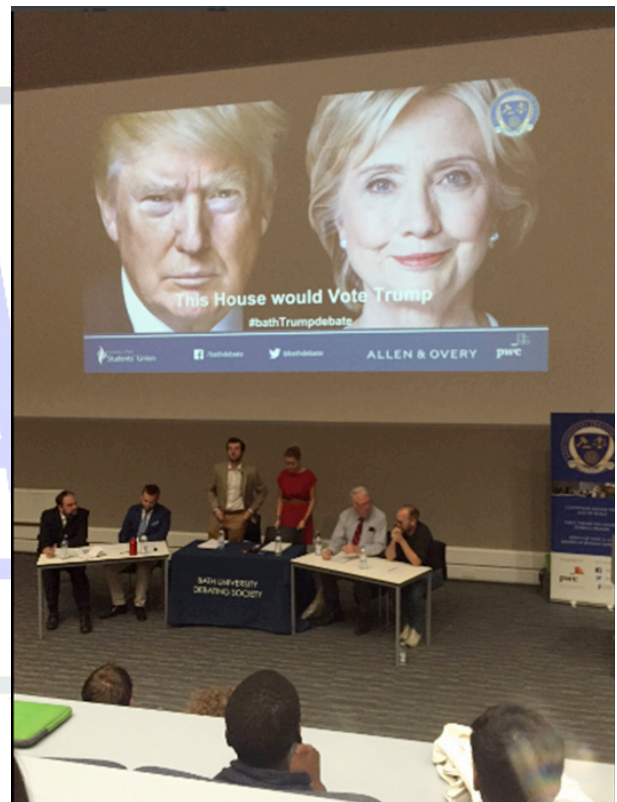
Similarly his "total and complete" ban on Muslims entering the country soon shrunk to being temporary, and would apply only to people originating from countries with a "proven history of terrorism against the United States."

Trump has been ahead of the curve (and Hillary), on being opposed to an uber-corporate mentality on TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), which would give companies leverage to sue national governments.

But here are my two big points: Trump is much less likely than Clinton to enact counter-productive military interventions overseas. Trump is much less likely to trigger war with nuclear-armed states.

During my lifetime, the US has used deadly force in two-dozen countries. These interventions were typically very careless. Hillary and Bill were leading architects behind several of these wars, including Somalia in 1993, Sudan in 1998, Kosovo in 1999, Iraq and Libya more recently. Each killed several thousand people, with Libya hitting the tens of thousands mark and Iraq knocking on the door of one million.

Worse, Hillary has reflexively supported a hard-line, neoconservative approach to Ukraine, NATO expansion, China — the full-on American exceptionalism package. As a consequence, we buzz constantly on the brink of war between nuclear powers. This is not to say that it's going to happen next week or next month but over a period of years, small, constant risks build towards certainty. Accidental nuclear war already came within minutes of occurring in 1983 and 1995, for example — scarcely known but well documented.



Something has to change.

US relations with Russia have been worsening for two decades, and it doesn't take a great leap of imagination to foresee some blunder or other sparking a wider conventional war, at the very least.

In Asia: the documentarian John Pilger has just completed a new film called [The Coming War on China](#), expounding a nightmare scenario that some leading International Relations scholars argue is unavoidable.

The Gordian knot is similarly tied over North Korea.

Anything going wrong in these locations could result in millions of deaths or even an end to all our lives in a way that would make the dinosaurs wince. This is not scare-mongering: it is the consequence of a world order with structural similarities to 1914 but with leaders like Clinton who believe and say it's 1938.

On Iraq, Trump quickly recognised the folly of that foreign policy decision. Hillary Clinton was an important driver behind the war, following the comparably rapacious sanctions regime under her husband. Trump did support the 2011 invasion of Libya but at least he didn't revel in it like Mrs. Clinton — “We came, we saw, he died” — and later clarified that he would have preferred simply to see targeted airstrikes on the Libyan leadership. Just prior, Clinton had been asking aides, in all seriousness, whether she could murder the founder of Wikileaks by drone strike.

Trump does want to “Bomb the hell” out of Isis but at least this would be in concert with Russia, rather than at loggerheads with it. Hillary's plan is to invade Syria with ground troops, somehow destroying both Isis and Assad — obviously with untold consequences for the region.

Trump calls for regional powers to do more of their own fighting and defending. He would consider recognizing Crimea as Russian territory. He would drop sanctions on Russia and says he'll get on well with Putin. Meanwhile, Clinton funds proxies in the Ukraine and calls the Russian leader Hitler.

Trump says he'd talk to the North Korean leader on US soil and encourage China to intervene more there, whereas Hillary's husband came within hours of bombing Pyongyang in 1994 and the shuddering stalemate persists under her watch.

Trump is all about the art of the deal and where deals end in total destruction, they have not been successful. On Iran, Clinton has been a leading hawk and although I broadly welcome the nuclear agreement under Obama, her demonization of Iran in those negotiations could quickly backfire.

For all the concerns about Trump getting his finger on the button, he is the only mainstream candidate who has ever pledged no first use of nuclear weapons and he has done so in no uncertain terms (“I would certainly not do first strike. Once the nuclear alternative happens, it's over.”)

Donald Trump, the candidate who rejects the term American exceptionalism, is the least bad option if we're serious, globally, about taking one step back from the nuclear abyss — and the moral abyss.

It's time to roll the dice; snake eyes or three sixes? Consensus has formed that Hillary — Henry Kissinger's dear friend — is the lesser evil. I'm worried it's the other way around.

Reflections on the event: Of course, outside a contrived debate, Trump is too erratic a candidate ever to endorse in all seriousness, even on these grounds. In reality, I would vote for a third party candidate. However, if Trump DOES win the Presidency, we should be pushing him to deliver on the more progressive aspects of his foreign policy positions, as indicated above.

Bio

Dr. Matthew Alford is a teaching fellow at the University of Bath, where he runs a module in American Politics. His research focuses on the relationship between entertainment, political power, and propaganda, particularly in the West. His book, [Reel Power: Hollywood Cinema and American Supremacy](#) (Pluto Press, 2010) is an in-depth exploration of these relationships.