

NATIONALISM

Between Brexit, changes in Russia and the polarizing United States presidential election, our staff noticed nationalism popping up all over the world over the past year. This issue, we decided to use our Focus page to explore a variety of topics around this trend.

Opinion

Donald Trump's policies reflect nationalistic ideals

Zoya Shevchenko
Editor-in-Chief

On Nov. 8, 2016, the United States officially took a step toward nationalism, a reality concealed by the term "patriotism."

Donald Trump ran for president with the slogan "Make America Great Again," referring to a time before ample globalization, the kind that has supposedly "fragmented" our country. By amplifying worries that "immigrants are job-stealing, raping criminals" Trump was successful in instilling a fear of foreigners into the American people, fueling the country's nationalistic sentiment.

This growing mindset categorizing Americans into the "wanted" and "unwanted," which in most instances means "white" and "everyone else," has not only been demonstrated in Trump's domestic plans, such as building a wall and temporarily halting muslim immigration, but moreover in his foreign policy.

His claim that "imports from nations like China are destroying American manufacturing jobs" fosters the "all problems generate abroad" attitude. Trump promises to pull out from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a shared 12-country free trade pact extending from Japan to Chile, and also assures to either renegotiate or withdraw from NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), a trade pact between the United States, Mexico

and Canada. His related political platform writes that he will impose tariffs of 35 percent on Mexican imports and 45 percent on Chinese imports. According to Capital Economics, such a move could raise retail prices of these products an average of 10 percent, altering which products fit into an average family's price range.

In a similar attempt to benefit American business and workers, Trump intends to "require employers to hire from the domestic pool of unemployed immigrant and native workers before issuing new green cards to foreign workers."

It is pretty evident, however, how such efforts could lead to blatant racism within the workforce.

Contrary to Trump's claim on immigrants in the labor pool, a study conducted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found "little to no negative effects on overall wages and employment of native-born workers in the longer term," and rather concluded how the particular influx of high-skilled immigrants has only stimulated American labor advancements. According to CNBC, researchers argue that the source of disruptions in the labor market may in reality derive from advanced technologies and bettering of machines.

It is no doubt that Trump continuously using foreign nations as scapegoats has raised fright within his supporters of anything mildly "un-American" in their eyes. During a Republican debate in March of 2016, Trump was asked to clarify

whether his claim that "Islam hates us" meant that all 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide hate the United States—his response was, "I mean a lot of 'em."

Subsequently, for many of these Americans, intense fear has ushered in a need for supremacy and belief in American superiority. According to Newsweek.com, a poll of 4,000 Americans showed that 43 percent of respondents thought that the abundant natural resources in the U.S. were a sign that God wanted America to lead the rest of the world.

Fear, however, seems like more a reasonable reaction for minorities, especially Mexicans and Muslims, now living in Trump's America. In the heat of the election, the volume of harassment towards these groups became especially evident. Instances included pro-Aryan Nation statements in bathrooms at a high school in Minnesota, a girl in an L.A. school district teased she would be deported, a "wall" formed by middle school students in Michigan to keep minorities out, and countless other cases centered around schools and on campuses. A new "nationalistic" mindset passed on from parents to their children.

And so, the unpredictable journey with Trump as our president commences.

There is no telling what might happen in the next four years, whether or not these nationalistic proposals will actually be implemented, and what the future holds for minorities residing in the United States.

Alt-right organizations

Holden Santi
Web Editor

The Obama administration is out, Trump has taken office, and a new political era is upon us.

With that, a new trend has arisen. Known as the "alt-right," it has taken America by storm. But it's time we all call the alt-right what it is: white supremacy.

A mixture of racism, nationalism, and populism, the alt-right was allowed to fester throughout this election season, brought to light by the surprise victory of Donald Trump.

Not to say that Trump created this--the president himself has disavowed the alt-right, but his nationalist rhetoric opened the gates for the movement to grow.

It's almost customary to reference the

"alt-right" when talking about Trump and his supporters.

Trump may have condemned the alt-right movement, but his proposed Muslim ban and his wall along the US-Mexico border seem like candy specifically wrapped for alt-righters.

The alt-righters even have their own news source, Breitbart.

Hard to find if you aren't looking for it, Breitbart News is famous for its conservative views, and wild allegations against muslims, gays, and many other institutions such as Planned Parenthood.

The former owner of Breitbart News, Steve Bannon, has found a way into the Trump administration as Chief Strategist and Senior Counselor.

"By hiring the owner of an alt-right website, Trump gave legitimacy to the alt-right movement," Gene Swan (Social

Great Britain faces repercussions

Johnny Mocny
Entertainment Editor

In a now legendary moment from last year, popularly known as "Brexit," 71.8 percent of British voters voted to take leave from the European Union.

The event was ridiculed by a large majority of the world, specifically the left-leaning people who found absurdity in the choice and the fact that many people in the UK had no idea what they were voting for. Our newly-elected commander-in-chief has shown his support of Britain's decision, despite the fact that the British pound is at a 30-year low. However, support has still been born from speculation that this slump only precedes success in the long run.

British Prime Minister Theresa May did not embrace the decision, but accepted it, unlike the previous Prime Minister David

Cameron who stepped down following the referendum. Since the decision, however, May has been criticized for being too optimistic about the matter.

"We want to get out into the world, to trade and do business all over the globe. Countries including Brazil and the Gulf States have expressed their interest in striking deals with us," May said.

Maya-Pegler Gordon (12) has lived in Britain, and is British citizen. She reflected on general feelings of Brexit to the vote.

"People didn't really expect for it to happen. Everybody was saying, 'You need to vote. There's no way we're leaving. That's crazy.' The pound dropped a ton right after and so they're trying to allow people who still live in Britain to keep their European passports," Gordon said.

As someone who was surprised

Nuclear weapons: different countries' arsenals

Paris Wilson
Staff Reporter

The world is finding itself on the verge of a nuclear weapons race. Nine nations out of the world have approximately 16,000 nuclear weapons. As nationalism happens in each respective nation, there has not been an actual nuclear weapons program started and only one nation



UNITED STATES

President Donald Trump has publicly voiced his interest in raising funds to support the nuclear weapons fund. In the past, America has put 1 trillion dollars towards nuclear weapons. With Trump now in office, he will be taking the steps he needs to see to it that his plans become reality by securing the border, rebuilding the military, upgrading infrastructure and moving people off welfare. With approximately 7,100 weapons of mass destruction America has not tested such weapons since September 1992 a year after Sept. 11, 2001.



INDIA

Last month, India's supreme court ordered that all movie theaters play the national anthem before showings with an image of the national flag. Moviegoers are not allowed to enter the theater as this is going on and must stand and acknowledge the action. The court believes by doing this, it will promote feelings of "patriotism and nationalism," reflecting "love and respect for the motherland." Currently, India has around 110 weapons of mass destruction, but has not tested any since May, 1998.



ISRAEL

Right now, Israel is the rise of Jewish nationalism known as Zionism, which fights for the reestablishment of the "holy land" and end attacks on Judaism as a whole. The nuclear weapons would be used to protect the territory if it is taken under attack by outside forces. Currently there have been no confirmed tests, but Israel has approximately 80 nuclear weapons.



FRANCE

After the Paris attack, the security in Paris has been tightened. The country has been in a state of emergency. "France is the home of security crisis." Far-right people are saying that Gauls were the "ideal" Europeans. France has been presenting a behavior. Nicolas Sarkozy said that Gauls were the "ideal" Europeans. France has not tested nuclear weapons since January, 1996.

Rising, opponents resisting

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Steve Bannon comes with his own baggage. In 2007 Bannon's ex-wife said in front of a judge that he "didn't want [his kids] going to school with Jews," and in early 1996 Bannon was charged with assault and battery against his then-wife.

It isn't hard to see why alt-righters take solace in Breitbart.

The rise of nationalism has been brewing for some time. During the summer of 2016 Great Britain infamously left the European Union, coining the term "Brexit."

Opponents to Brexit have called it a racist and nationalist movement, saying the only reason supporters voted to leave the EU was to keep out Eastern European immigrants.

In recent months the media has been

accused of normalizing the alt-right and making it seem commonplace.

Certain figures such as Richard Spencer, a noted white-nationalist, have been featured on various major news outlets.

However, this does not mean the public agrees.

Spencer was recently punched in the face on live television while attempting to explain how the meme "Pepe the Frog" is the new symbol for the alt-right.

Through all of these waves of alt-right supporters, and the potential emergence of white nationalism, there has still been strong opposition. The recent Women's Marches on all seven continents is a testament to that.

Members of the left are not ready, nor willing, to let the so called alt-right reign.

Reasons after leaving United Kingdom

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the vote, Pegler-Gordon offered insight on exactly what mindset led to Britain's startling choice.

"The driving force behind it is wanting to protect our own jobs and wanting to keep them away from outsiders," Pegler-Gordon said. "In America, those outsiders are Mexicans, according to our president. In Britain, the outsiders were really anyone from those surrounding countries because everyone is learning English, and not everyone is learning German and French, so people move to England. It's the wanting to separate ourselves from the others and protect ourselves that is that wave that's happening right now I think."

Support for Britain's choice seems to have derived from a long defunct idea of nationalism, which appears to be resurfacing, particularly in hearts of individuals whose pride for their country led them to the decision that Britain should no longer participate under the same boundaries as

other European nations.

"There's this huge sense of nationalism that comes with that and I think that's a big underlying wave that [Trump] picked up on. It's kinda interesting because some countries have nationalism around their culture, [being] so deeply rooted in their culture and these songs and attire that we wear and religion and everything, but for us, our culture that we're trying to protect so greatly is millions of dollars and the whole capitalist culture I guess," Pegler-Gordon concluded.

As speculations for the future of Britain waver, it is becoming more and more clear that a universal nationalist movement has been born, which has taken common ideas to extremes and brought strong opposition as well.

Theresa May intends to begin the two year process of agreeing to the terms of the split by the end of March.

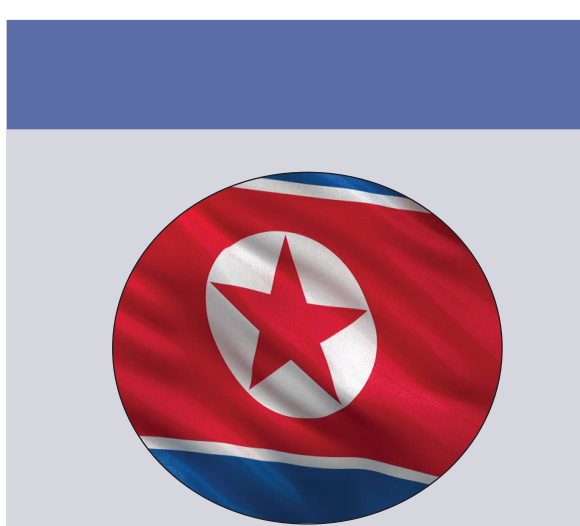
Weapons at a glance

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NORTH KOREA

Lots of failure in North Korea's economy over the years has led to more confrontations with the United States on issues such as nuclear weapon production in the 1990s. Granting first priority to the military as protectors of the nation, Songun regimented society and allotted massive resources to military preparedness. North Korea has since built their army up and is under the rule of Kim Jong-un. North Korea is the only nation that has tested any form of nuclear weapons in this century.

Russian interventions yield domestic and international consequences

Scott McWilliams

Guest Writer

In this age of increasing globalization, information and cultural diffusion, technological advancements have allowed emergence of a new type of historian: one that can use the abundance of technology to learn and apply lessons of the past to the present like never before.

Good international relations have become more necessary since the end of the 20th century as we strive to maintain global peace in this age. Though of all the nations that are big players in the post 21st century world order, the Russian Federation sticks out, not only for its state's actions, but for its symbolism of past history.

Vladimir Putin, a man of many personas and a master of public relations, inherited a fledgling democracy upon his presidential victory in 2000. Under his rule, The Russian state has morphed into a corporate state-based kleptocracy blended with Soviet and Tsarist authoritarianism. The New Russia's mediums of governing include complete state control of political institutions, economic privatization and free speech, while enhancing militarism and the slavik identity as a means of increasing nationalistic loyalty to the state. All of these are trademarks of the Soviet Union.

However, a big difference between the Russian Federation and the Soviet Union is that the Soviet Union implemented policies intended to distinguish their system of government as uniquely superior to the West. Putin, on the other hand, is trying to make the new Russian model of a democratic government appear similar to the West.

In reality, his governmental structure has promoted "democracy as decoration rather than direction," in the words of Putin's biographer Kareen Dawisha.

The definition of 'kleptocracy' originates from ancient Greece and literally translates to "rule by thieves." Under Putin, the emergence of Russian oligarch class—the modern equivalent to the American Robber Baron or "the one percent"—has ushered in an era of unprecedented wealth inequality in a developed nation.

According to an international Credit Suisse financial service company, as of 2014, 110 billionaires control 35 percent of total household wealth in modern Russia. The top 10 percent of Russia owns 85 percent of the wealth.

The Russian economy essentially depends on oil and gas, 70 percent of its exports come from the oil and natural gas industries. The Kremlin monopolizes all the private oil/gas companies, eliminating all private competition. According to the research conducted by Kareen Dawisha in her book *Putin's Kleptocracy*, the top Kremlin members have net worths ranging from 800 million to 15.4 billion and each have majority stockholds in a substantial percent of Russian oil and gas businesses.

This corruption affects every reach of Russian society and business. The tragic reality of this is that the average Russian median household wealth comes around to \$871 dollars as of 2014, even with Russia being an oil exporting-based economy. In comparison, oil importing countries that also have much larger populations still have higher median household wealths such as India (\$1,040), China (\$8,023) and Brazil (\$5,117). As evidenced by these statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the average people of Russia bear the brunt of this systemic corruption facilitated by the state that's supposed to serve them. Despite the declining quality of life for Russians in recent years, the Kremlin still maintains high approval ratings and nationalism has become embedded in the modern Russian psyche in a way not seen since the Soviet Union.

Though corruption has never been new in Russian history, the era of Putin has revived it to new heights. The 2012 Russian elections brought about a new period of enhanced repression and centralized control that symbolized the Kremlin's domination of Russian society.

Following his victory, Putin instituted a Soviet-like system of censoring free speech to combat the great wave of protests for democratic reforms sparked by

his fraudulent win of a third term as president. These marchers all received vocal support from the West, particularly U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Protesting and media outlets underwent tight regulation by the Kremlin state. Anyone who publicly speaks or posts negative beliefs of the Russian State are subject to fines ranging from \$17,000 to \$28,000 or prison sentences ranging from one year to five years, all often without trial according to Moscow based Glasnost Defense foundation and New York based Committee to Protect Journalists. Nine of the 34 murdered journalists under Putin's reign occurred after 2011. 91 percent of these 34 murders went unsolved and most of the victims were political, military, or government officials. The 9 killed after 2011 were all outspoken government critics said to have incriminating evidence of Kremlin activities and before they died under questionable circumstances.

The reach of Kremlin's absolute power isn't limited to Russia. The most relevant current events that pertain to Russia are its direct forms of foreign interventionism, in Chechnya, Georgia, Crimea and more recently, Syria.

All of these Russian military interventions have had grave ramifications, domestically and internationally. Each intervention always sparks worldwide condemnation while worsening relations.

The Kremlin's justification for forcefully intervening and annexing Georgia, Crimea, and Chechnya is based on cultural ties, which resonates with many Russians. Taking advantage of this national sentiment allows the Kremlin to conceal its true intentions. The abundant fiscal opportunities for taking

emphasised daily "that "83 percent of the Crimean people showed up to vote and 97 percent voted in favor of annexation."

However, Putin's own Council for the Development of Civil Society concluded that there was actually "only a 30 percent to 50 percent turnout rate and of those only 50 percent to 60 percent voted in favor of annexation," thus reaching a midpoint estimate of 22.5 percent voting in favor of annexing. The state media was silent on these numbers.

In 2014, Putin was separately nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering a deal between the Syrian government and the United States. The compromise was for the Syrian government to give up its use of chemical weapons against Syrian civilians (both are declared war crimes) and The United States to not send troops into Syria.

Since then, the brokered compromise has become irrelevant.

The Syrian Assad regime decreased its use of chemical weapons but continued to barrel-bomb its own cities into ruins and later got large Russian military assistance in doing so. The U.S didn't send combat troops but initiated a global coalition of air power, in which the U.S solely contributes 90 percent of the bombing campaigns against jihadists, according to Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

In response to Crimea, the West implemented the tough sanctions on Russia. They were specifically targeted to hurt the state-monopolized gas and oil industries controlled by the Kremlin. These sanctions caused Russia's annual GDP growth, 1.3 percent, to drop to a record low of 0.2 percent which affected every Russian, though the greatest

damage was inflicted upon the Oligarchs that hadn't already stashed their earnings in foreign banks.

After sanctions, Putin, in one of his rare press forums, publicly said: "All the sanctions targets are my friends, people who are close to me personally. These sanctions are designed to bust them, as our intellectuals say, to punish them for God knows what!"

The economic hardships culminated from all these factors spurred the exodus of 350,000 to 700,000 Russians from 2012 to now. In contrast to previous large-scale migrations, according to Russian polling Agency Levada, much of these new emigres were middle/upper middle class and educated. 50,000 have emigrated annually and "one in every three of the new Russian immigrants are college educated."

This has created a great "brain drain" in Russia and a major "brain gain" for the countries that take them in. 254,000 Russians have taken up temporary residence through visas in the U.S and 4,500 of the 100,000 who applied for permanent residence were admitted, all in 2015 alone. The Kremlin has done little to curb the emigration of its citizens. Perhaps, since most of the people leaving are educated, it's one less potential dissenter the Kremlin has to worry about.

Communities everywhere globally have received these new Russian inhabitants. In Okemos specifically, I interviewed six OHS students that were naturalized citizens of Russian, East European, or Turkish ancestry whose families came to America as political refugees. Our community, and all the others that take these people, becomes more diverse and economically advantaged by their presence.

History will be made, especially watching how Donald Trump maintains relations with Russia amidst such hostility between the U.S and Russian government. It seems we are in a time where the political future is becoming increasingly harder to predict.

There's an old Russian saying that was coined late in the 19th century by historian Vasily Klyuchevsky that describes the Russian state government of the 20th century: "The state grew fat while the people grew thin." It was this saying that paved the way to revolution. Now it is exactly 100 years after the Bolshevik Revolution. The Tsar's state is back, and they don't plan to leave anytime soon.

"In reality, his governmental structure has promoted "democracy as decoration rather than direction," -Kareen Dawisha

the neighboring Chechnya and Georgia states and Crimean Peninsula make it ideal for the Kremlin to economically plunder. According to studies done by the International spectator in 2006 and an Oxford Institute of Energy, the annexed countries and much of East Europe and Central Asia import most of their total gases from Russia. Meanwhile, Russian gas exports to Western Europe and America have declined and are expected to continue declining. For maintaining a steady source of revenue to counter losing the West as customers, Russia increasingly centralizes its economic control in other regions.

The tragic anomaly of these military interventions is that after the invasion of Crimea and the Ukrainian civil war that ensued, Putin's domestic approval ratings soared to his record high of 87 percent. Skyrocketing of approval ratings for Putin after waging war and intervening in other countries has always been a recurring pattern. In 1999 and 2000, three months after bombing Chechnya, killing up to 250,000 people, Putin's approvals went from 31 percent to 78 percent. After newly sending troops and occupying Georgia, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev has approval ratings of 75% and then prime minister Putin's ratings stayed at 83%.

Vladimir Shlapentokh—a recently deceased professor of sociology at MSU who was born in the USSR and exiled from it—recorded in his blog, shlapentokh.wordpress.com, the correlation between Putin's Crimean war and his soar in popularity: "The 87 percent actually reflects the efficiency of the state machine run by Putin, and particularly of the state TV, which the Kremlin has turned into a perfect brainwashing instrument that is much more cynical and deceptive than Soviet TV."

When a state controls the press/polls, the country's nationalism is easily bent to fit the state's agenda, Crimea in particular is a good recent example. Many Russian media outlets, excluding social media, such as the Russian Times,