

Transcription:

Season 5, Episode 1

Trump 2.0's Foreign Policies: For better or for worse?

[00:17] Asst. Prof. Aaron Mallari (Host): Magandang araw sa lahat ng mga naka-tune in ngayon dito sa DZUP 1602, and welcome to the first episode of the newest season of The Katipunan Dialogue Podcast –where we hold conversations about national security and foreign policy. Nagbabalik ako, Aaron Mallari of the UP Diliman Department of Political Science, as your host for this season.

[00:41] The Katipunan Dialogue Podcast is brought to you by the Strategic Studies Program of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies o UP CIDS. Ang UP CIDS ay ang Policy Research Unit ng University of the Philippines at isa ang Strategic Studies sa mga research programs sa ilalim nito.

[01:01] Sa fifth season ng Katipunan Dialogue Podcast, muli tayong magkakaroon ng talakayan tungkol sa mga issue na may kinalaman sa national security, international relations, at foreign policy.

[01:14] At sa ating unang episode, tatalakayin natin ang tungkol sa mga nagbabagong foreign policies ng United States under the second Trump administration.

[01:25] Less than 100 days in office, binigla ni Trump ang buong mundo sa mga inilabas niyang mga patakaran sa pagtataas ng U.S. tariffs sa mga produktong pumapasok sa kanilang bansa. Pinakamalaki ang natanggap ng China, Mexico at Canada. Ganoon din, nagkaroon din ng pagsuspinde sa funding at mga proyekto under the USAID, pag-alis sa World Health Organization at sa Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

[01:52] Ganoon din, nagkaroon din ng pakikipag-negotiate sa Russia para matapos na ang kaguluhan sa Ukraine. At panghuli, makikita natin ang pagtutulak sa ibang mga kaalyadong bansa ng United States na gumastos ng mas malaki sa kanilang military capacity.

[02:09] Sa Pilipinas, nanindigan si President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na hindi dapat mangamba ang mga Pilipino dahil sa pronouncement ng US that it maintains its ironclad commitment to the country.

[02:23] Sa harap ng tumitinding rivalry ng US sa China, ano ang implications ng foreign policy ni Trump sa sinasabing nagbabagong world order? Nakakatulong ba ito para i-maintain ang kapangyarihan ng Estados Unidos sa buong mundo? Or is it doing the other thing and the other way around?

[02:43] Ngayong araw, makakasama natin si Assistant Professor Edsel John Ibarra mula sa UP Diliman Department of Political Science para magbigay ng kanyang mga insights sa ating topic ngayong episode na ito.

[02:56] Assistant Professor Ibarra is a distinguished scholar in the field of strategic studies. He is the managing editor of the Philippine Political Science Journal and he once served as the officer in charge of the Strategic, Territorial, and Maritime Issues section of the Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies (CIRSS) ng Foreign Service Institute. Ito yung think tank ng Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs.

[03:23] Welcome sa Katipunan Dialogue Podcast, Edsel.

[03:26] Asst. Professor Ibarra (Guest): Hello, magandang araw sa iyo, Aaron. Maraming salamat sa pag-imbata sa akin.

[03:31] Host: Siguro bago tayo pumunta sa mga ipinatutupad na pagbabago ni Trump in terms of the U.S.' diplomatic approach, kumbaga, baka mahalaga din na i-discuss natin kung saan ba nanggagaling o ano yung pinag-uugatan ng mga nakikita nating pagbabagong ito. So bilang paunang tanong siguro, paano natin i-dedecscribe iyong sitwasyon ngayon sa United States, at least domestically, and to some degree internationally, at ano 'yong nakikita nating influence nito doon sa pakikipag-ugnayan ng Estados Unidos sa ibang mga bansa?

[04:13] Guest: Okay, let's focus on the domestic factors first, right. So ayon sa mga survey na inilabas bago at pagkatapos ng election, re-election, ni Donald Trump, merong sabihin natin tatlong issue na namamayagpag sa kanilang lipunan na concerns ng mga Amerikano.

[04:36] Una dito, immigration. Ang perception ng mga Amerikano ay masyadong maraming illegal migrants.

[04:44] Pangalawa, binabanggit din sa mga survey na Americans are also concerned about crime. And this has an intersection with immigration as well. In America, the perception is that crime rates are, crimes have been increasing. Although 'pag tinignan mo 'yong totoong datos, crime rates are relatively stable. But people are perceiving that crime has increased and that they have ascribed part of that perceived increase in crime to the rise of illegal migrants. So sinisisi nila 'yong illegal migrants sa pagtaas 'di umano ng krimen sa kanila.

[05:23] Pangatlo are economic problems. Chief among these is inflation, pagtaas ng presyo. Another problem that has been a core concern among Americans ever since is 'yong budget deficit o 'yong masyadong malaking paggastos ng kanilang gobyerno relative sa revenues ng kanilang gobyerno. And after the COVID pandemic especially, there has been a rise in homelessness in the U.S.

[05:53] But I think it's important to highlight, at this point, that these are perceived economic problems. If you look at the hard data, ironically, the economy of the United States is quite strong for an advanced industrial country. But even though, for example, mayroong GDP growth na naranasan in 2024, people are not perceiving it as such, in part because there's this real problem of falling wages or falling real wages. Tumataas naman 'yong wages nila, but because of the high prices, people are not feeling it. So, there's this disconnect between the real performance of the economy and their perception that the economy is not functioning.

[06:41] In all these three problems, economics, crime, immigration, only Donald Trump and the Republican Party has been able to present themselves as having the solution. So, for example, in economic problems, 'yong sa budget deficit, matagal na 'yang plataporma ng Republican Party, that the government should spend less so that the deficit is not that huge. But Trump also campaigned on lowering prices and he did so by promising tariffs. Iyong mga naikita nating ginagawa niya ngayon. And most dramatically, Trump has presented himself as the solution to the immigration crisis. Because of those enduring factors, meron naman na itong mga factors na ito even during the Biden administration, but because of these enduring factors among American voters, they decided to re-elect Trump.

[07:38] Host: May nakikita ka bang difference noong Trump 2.0 from Trump first term?

[07:45] Guest: The main difference is that Trump is bolder now. I think in part because alam niya na how it works. He has been a president already. The second part of it is that he has been persecuted politically, legally by many of his enemies. And so, he now is bolder to do things, alam niya na kung ano 'yong kailangan niyang gawin, alam niya na kung sino 'yong mga kailangan niyang targetin.

[08:13] Ang description nga dito sa first 100 days ni Trump has been that Trump is in a blitzkrieg, signing executive orders left and right. Ironically, even though the Republicans gained a trifecta, meaning mayroon silang control of both houses of Congress and the presidency, President Trump is not relying on Republicans in Congress. He's doing things on his own, like a proper strongman, if you want to put it that way, and doing things fast because, again, he knows what to do already and he knows whom to target, unfortunately.

[08:55] Host: Iyong mga immigrant 'yong isa doon.

[08:57] Guest: Yes.

[08:58] Host: So 'yong ganitong posturing, kung masasabi natin na posturing ni Trump at 'yong mga policies na pinipirmahan niya noong first 100 days niya, marami 'yong nagsasabi that the U.S. seems to deviate from the world order that it helped in creating, especially in the post-World War II period. So, nakikita natin na nagiging mas isolationist siya. Tapos may mga nagsabi na rin naman na Trump's foreign policy is very transactional. So, ano sa tingin mo 'yong

magiging epekto nito? Ano 'yong pagtingin mo doon sa ganitong view that the U.S. under Trump is dismantling 'yong world order that it helped create?

[09:47] Guest: Yeah. First, I agree that Trump is doing this. Kung titignan natin 'yong history of U.S. foreign policy, it has always swung between interventionism slash internationalism and isolationism. So may instances in American history wherein they really have favored an isolationist foreign policy.

[10:09] Host: Monroe Doctrine.

[10:09] Guest: Yes. Or more interventionist foreign policies. And Trump, to a certain degree, fits that pattern of the U.S. being isolationist at one point in time and then magiging interventionist, internationalist siya in another. But the difference, I think, with Trump is 'yong nabanggit mo ngang transactionalism niya.

[10:33] When we say transactionalism, what matters more for Trump is scoring points, however he defines it. The danger in that is that, the priority is scoring points even to the detriment of values.

[10:49] So even though, for example, the U.S. has been isolationist or interventionist, democracy promotion has been a pillar of its democracy and democracy promotion have been pillars of its foreign policy. But under Trump, because he's transactionalist, wala na 'yon.

[11:07] Even though the United States was isolationist at certain periods in time, they did support international institutions and as you mentioned, they created the milieu of international organizations that we have right now. They are partly responsible for it, in part because they believed in multilateralism. But even that is under threat under Trump because he does not believe in the value of internationalism.

[11:37] May economic dimension 'yong post-World War II order na ginawa ng U.S. And that economic dimension is favorable to what we call neoliberal policies.

[11:45] Host: Iyong Bretton Woods institutions.

[11:47] Guest: Yes, so, privatization, free trade, minimal government intervention, etc. Unfortunately, under Trump, even that economic dimension is under threat.

[11:59] Trump seems to be, in summary, Trump seems to be undoing what the United States has done. And some have said that the U.S. has depended, that the U.S.'s hegemonic power has depended on these post-World War II institutions. And so therefore, Trump is also undermining the basis or the foundations of U.S. power.

[12:24] Host: I think pwede natin i-dovetail 'yong next question ko doon sa binanggit mo about the neoliberal world order. Napakalaki noong naging impact, lalo na sa mga new cycle, noong

polisya ni Trump ng pag-iimpose ng higher tariffs. Para sa'yo, ano 'yong magiging impact sa international order at sa mundo noong approach ng U.S. na ganito, na nagcre-create siya ng ganitong mga tensions? Tapos, 'yong context din na mayroong mga nagcha-challenge doon sa U.S. Ito ba 'yong nakikita natin na the fall of the U.S.? Ito na ba 'yon? Ito ba 'yong simula noon?

[13:08] Guest: So, una sa lahat, I'm not an economist, so I should preface my answer by saying that I'm not very well versed about how these things work. But I'd like to begin by saying that one of the biggest ironies of the tariff thing is that, sa aking palagay, it's impossible for you to become a superpower without incurring trade deficits. Meaning, as a superpower, you really have to import more than you export. Kasi kailangan mong maglabas nang maglabas ng pera—not exports, but pera—which will eventually go around and become things that you import back to your country. So, that's one.

[14:01] I think, therefore, that the United States' economic influence in many countries will wane because of this. Kasi ang ibig sabihin nito, if they want U.S. companies not, if they want U.S. companies to manufacture in the United States, that means they don't want investment to be foreign, to be made in foreign lands. They want investment back to the U.S. So that means that FDI is not going to be an economic leverage anymore by the U.S. And for developing economies such as the Philippines and many countries in Southeast Asia, foreign direct investment is such a huge incentive. Malaking impluwensya 'yan sa mga bansa na nandito sa Southeast Asia. So 'yon 'yong sa palagay ko in the long run, this is not tenable.

[14:52] Host: Nag-ano na nga siya ngayon, nagba-backtrack siya.

[14:57] Guest: Yeah, oo. 'Yon nga eh, kailangan nating makita, if Trump really does insist on these tariffs, I would agree to you that we can mark this as the day that the United States has begun to decline. But perhaps it's too early to tell kasi baka mag-backtrack si Trump.

[15:17] And the second thing is that I'm not so sure if other countries are prepared to undertake the role of global leadership. Love or hate the United States, ito na naman 'yong isang aspect of why it's impossible for you to become a superpower without incurring deficits. Because you have to provide for public goods. You have to send aid to countries. Nobody else would do it. If you are a superpower, you are the only country that could do it. And even other countries, China is not taking on global leadership roles. The European Union is not. They are not prepared to spend the way the United States has spent in preserving or in delivering these global public goods, so to speak. So, kung gusto mo talagang maging superpower, you have to pay, and America does not want to pay right now. And that I think will hurt its chances in maintaining its superpower status. In the long run, I think that's the effect. But since Trump is erratic, hindi natin sure, baka mamaya pagkatapos makinig ng podcast na ito, wala na pala 'yong mga taripa. Iba na 'yong ginawa niya.

[16:29] Host: Iba na yung issue. That's true. That's true.

[16:30] Guest: So, we don't know. But if this continues, I would agree that this would mark the beginning of the decline of U.S. power.

[16:37] Host: Kung ipilit niya?

[16:38] Guest: Kung ipilit niya.

[16:40] Host: So, ngayon, let's go to the Philippines. Siyempre, we all know that we are an ally of the United States. We have a standing treaty with them, the Mutual Defense Treaty. Pero, 'di ba, nagkaroon din naman ng 17% tariff increase sa atin, hindi ba? So, nag-impose din siya ng ganyan. So, especially with our, of course, strategic concerns in the region with our disputes with China and then, of course, many other economic and political concerns that we have. Ano sa tingin mo 'yong magiging epekto nito sa Pilipinas? 'Yong ganitong erratic behavior ni Trump? Or, if you may, ano 'yong, paano tayo mag-re-respond?

[17:21] Guest: Sa akin, the proper policies, I think, is not to further irritate him. Kasi, iba, if you incur his ire, baka kung ano-anong, he's not going to base his policy on some rational decision-making model. Kung anong maisipan niyang i-impose sa atin, baka bigla niyang nalang i-impose.

[17:43] This is why, to a certain degree, I agree with the policy of the current administration with regard to the tariffs. Dinownplay nila 'yong tariffs. I think that's the correct strategy for now. This is, it poses like a collective action problem kasi. I think it's good to fight back against these tariffs if you have a, if you get other countries on board, in fighting back.

[18:11] Host: But no one wants to do it. At least no one wants to like take the lead role na oh, let's fight back. Walang ganoon.

[18:17] Guest: Yeah. So, China is taking that role, but other countries are not supporting it, joining it.

[18:23] ASEAN, here in Southeast Asia, all countries in Southeast Asia have agreed not to retaliate.

[18:30] Host: Thailand is negotiating.

[18:32] Guest: Yeah. Thailand is negotiating. We are also going to negotiate, if we are not already starting it. So, they downplayed it. Sa totoo lang, in a sense, I was quite surprised that we were imposed a higher tariff. Pero come to [think of it], if you look into the bigger picture, the government spokesperson kind of makes sense. Sabi niya, we didn't receive the highest tariff. Which is true. That's in part because of our economic inefficiency. We are in this situation in part because hindi natin nakuha 'yong gains during the first Trump administration. So, remember, the first Trump administration launched a trade war against China and American

companies in China, ang tawag nila 'friend-shoring.' So lumipat sila sa mga bansa na friendly sa America, at ang nilipatan nilang mga bansa ay Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, hindi Pilipinas. Because even though the Philippines is a treaty ally of the United States, the Philippines does not have a friendly investment, investment climate.

[19:46] Meaning our economy was not attractive enough for and competitive enough for these foreign companies to 'friend-shore' to the Philippines. So, because we missed that, it made us resilient, so to speak, dito sa round of tariffs na 'to.

[20:03] Kaya relatively mababa 'yong tariff na na-impose sa atin dahil hindi tayo nag-benefit from the first trade war. Compare the situation with Vietnam, for example. Many American companies moved to Vietnam, and because they moved to Vietnam, they manufactured there. Vietnam now has tons of imports, tons of exports to America. And that means that the U.S. has a huge trade deficit with Vietnam. That's why Vietnam is imposed, I think, about or more than 50%. So, dahil nakinabang sila sa first trade war, 'yan ang napala nila, so to speak.

[20:38] Host: Nandoon sila sa zone na pwedeng tirahin.

[20:42] Guest: Pero dahil tayo, because our economy is mediocre, it has made us, ironically, more resilient this time around.

[20:52] In terms of security cooperation though, I think our relationship with the United States will prosper under, not prosper, but be okay under the second Trump administration. I think this because we had a good experience during the first Trump administration. Kung nagpa-panic tayong ngayon, nag-panic din tayo noon, noong first Trump administration. But that panic has been felt before and the Philippines prepared for the worst. But the Philippines actually got the best outcome, I think it did, under the first Trump administration.

[21:28] And those outcomes include, for the first time, guarantees under the Mutual Defense Treaty that the Philippines will be protected by the United States in the South China Sea. Matagal na natin hinihingi 'yan.

[21:44] Host: Iyong statement na 'yon, iyong definitive na guarantee na 'yon.

[21:47] Guest: Yeah. That the mutual defense treaty applies to the South China Sea. Hinihingi na natin 'yon ever since, kay George W. Bush, kay Obama. They never gave it. Only Trump gave it to the Philippines. And Trump went further. Trump also said that paramilitary attacks or attacks coming from maritime militia vessels, which is what is the majority of Chinese vessels in the area are. So sabi ni Trump, even paramilitary attacks are covered by the Mutual Defense Treaty. And most radical, I think, is that the United States abandoned its position on neutrality on the maritime aspect.

[22:28] On the territorial aspect of the South China Sea disputes, the United States is still saying that we take no position on whoever owns whichever what feature in the Spratly Islands or Paracels or whatnot.

[22:46] Pero, they said that UNCLOS should apply in the South China Sea. So, because of that position, it allowed the United States to eventually explicitly endorse the South China Sea Arbitration Award which is like a huge thing for our government. Plus, mayroong freedom of navigation operations that a lot of it happened during Trump compared to the eight years of Obama and many more security and military aid. So, because of that experience during the first Trump administration, I think that that's going to continue.

[23:23] A big caveat here is that I think there is a bifurcation of U.S. foreign policy. What this means is that I think the United States now is carrying a different foreign policy towards Europe and the "West," than towards the Pacific. So dalawa ngayon 'yong, it's unfair to compare what's happening, what Trump is doing to Europe and infer from that the U.S. foreign policy in the Pacific. Because I think magkaiba na eh. Inaaway nila 'yong Europe, "spend more on your militaries before the United States will help you."

[24:07] Pero sa, in this part of the world, it's different. The messaging is different. The messaging of the United States is that in Philippines and Taiwan specifically, we will help you. We will help you counter the threat posed by China.

[24:21] Even in the Pacific though, meron ding a little bit of bifurcation within the bifurcation in the sense that iba 'yong treatment apparently towards Japan and South Korea and Australia, towards the Philippines and Taiwan. And I think it's a recognition that the Philippines needs help compared to these countries which can pay for their own defenses. It's a recognition by the United States that we still need help. And so, I think because of that recognition, we're probably going to be okay.

[24:54] Host: Siguro to close this conversation that we have; I want to pick your brain a little bit. Kasi sinasabi mo nga kanina na, it's highly unlikely for the U.S. to give up its security efforts dito sa Pilipinas, 'yong ating mga nakukuha mula sa kanila. Hypothetically, if ever maisipan ni Trump na gawin 'yon, na what if all of a sudden, sabi niya, i-push niya 'yong isolationism to its extreme, na wala na tayong bases sa [Pilipinas], we recall everything, we'll just be concerned about our own borders, we build walls around the country. Kung ganoon 'yong maging posturing niya, ano kaya 'yong magiging impact nito sa atin? And how should we respond, especially with our geopolitical concerns?

[25:46] Guest: Well, to be fair to the Philippines, I think we're going to be fine.

[25:51] Host: Pa rin?

[25:52] Guest: Pa rin. In part because we're not relying on the United States too much anymore. I say this because the government in recent years has really become serious in undertaking 'yong defense modernization. And if you look at where the Philippines procures its defense modernization assets, some of it yes, are from the United States, but some of the big players are South Korea, for instance. For the ships and aircraft, we buy from South Korea. For the missiles, we're buying from India. So, hindi tayo ganoon ka-reliant defensively in our defense modernization effort to the United States. It's good that the United States is helping us modernize our own military, but if you look at the breakdown of where we actually buy, hindi lang naman sa U.S.

[26:46] The other aspect of it is that since 2014, I think there has been a market shift in our strategic policy, in the Philippine strategic policy. And that market shift is in trying to reduce our security reliance in the United States. So, I'm not sure if it's 2014 or 2015, but in 2014 or 2015, for the first time ever, we signed a strategic partnership with Japan. A strategic partnership is like an alliance-like. Ngayon kasi tino-throw around 'yong word na alliance lightly. In international relations, the only true alliance is one that you have a treaty with, a collective defense treaty with. But the next level to that is strategic partnership. Short of an alliance, short of a formal...

[27:38] Host: Without the full commitment.

[27:40] Guest: Yeah, short of a formal full commitment, a strategic partnership is like an informal commitment that we're going to help you and we're going to help defend you, and we did that for the first time ever with Japan. And since then, we have been expanding our strategic partnerships. So, hindi na lang Japan sa ngayon, we also signed strategic partnership agreements with Vietnam, with Australia, and with South Korea. And I think there are more in the way.

[28:09] And even if we look, for example, sa Visiting Forces Agreement, we always think Visiting Forces Agreement na 'ah, U.S.' But the more technical term for Visiting Forces Agreements in general is Status of Forces Agreements. Mayroon tayong Status of Forces Agreements with other countries. In mid-2000s, we signed one with Australia. Very recently, meron tayo with Japan, the Reciprocal Access Agreement, which is also a status of forces or visiting forces agreement, and they say we have also or are also finishing negotiations for one with New Zealand and Canada, and one is on the way with France.

[28:56] So, all of these to me indicate that we're reducing our security reliance on the United States. If the United States tries to do that, 'yong talagang full-blown isolationism, to be fair to our government...

[29:10] Host: May pinaghahandaan naman siya.

[29:12] Guest: Yeah, we have been resilient. What an optimistic take. But this is what we've been doing. We are not without agency in world affairs.

[29:22] Host: I think that's a very good way to end this conversation. We are not without agency in what is happening around us.

[29:27] So, maraming, maraming salamat, Assistant Professor Edcel Ibarra ng UP Diliman Department of Political Science for sharing your insights for today dito sa ating episode na ito.

[29:40] So, what a way to start our season. Sa harap ng hindi maitatangging changing world order, nagiging mas malaking challenge para sa Pilipinas ang pagpapalakas ng ating sariling kakayanan na ipagtanggol ang ating pambansang interes at itaguyod ang kapakanan ng mamamayang Pilipino.

[30:00] So, maraming salamat sa lahat ng mga nakinig sa ating episode ngayong araw, at nanood ngayong araw na ito sa ating first episode sa bagong season ng Katipunan Dialogue Podcast.

[30:12] Pakinggan ang mga previous episodes at seasons ng Katipunan Dialogue Podcast sa aming Spotify account, *The Katipunan Dialogue Podcast*. For more updates about other projects ng Strategic Studies Program ng UP CIDS, you may visit of course our website, cids.up.edu.ph

[30:32] We also invite you to like and follow ang official Facebook page ng UP CIDS at of course ng DZUP para sa mga episode at susunod na talakayan dito sa ating podcast.

[30:44] So once again, I am Aaron Mallari, your host for this podcast at thank you for being with us today. Join us sa mga susunod pang episode ng Katipunan Dialogue Podcast, where we hold conversations about national security and foreign policy, dito lang sa DZUP 1602. Kasali ka!