

**Alina Inayeh**

[Yesterday at 4:41 PM](https://www.facebook.com/alina.inayeh/posts/10204897840723786) ·

The US press coverage of the Trump-Putin summit— variously dubbed the “surrender summit” and the “treason summit” — has focused almost entirely on the president selling out his own intelligence institutions and US democracy itself to an adversary.
It is self-evident to all Americans who came of age in the cold war, and to many born since, that Russia is an adversary. But it is time to stretch our imaginations and picture the world — and the world order — that Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin would create if they could, and to take that vision seriously.
The Helsinki summit was a meeting between two macho megalomaniacs. Each identifies his country’s interests with his own personal aggrandisement. But both men also tap into a deep current of anger, resentment and nostalgia for an imagined past that was orderly, predictable and patriarchal. In this lost era, men were the heads of households and nations; their masculinity was measured in toughness, swagger and spoils. Women were obedient and decorative. White people were superior to non-whites; children married within the tribe in clearly demarcated cultures.

From this perspective, Putin supporters in Russia and Trump supporters in the US are ideological allies, working together to elect like-minded parties across Europe and to support leaders, from Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel to Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, who embrace the same values and methods. They reject a free press and the rule of law, preferring a tame media and loyal judges. They favour symbolism over substance; and rule in the name of tradition, nationalism and ethnic purity.
This ideology of authoritarian patriarchy rejects any constraint on the ruler at home or the state abroad. Mr Trump and Mr Putin support a return to an era of unfettered state sovereignty. They would dismantle international and supranational organisations of all kinds and return to multipolar “Great Power” politics, in which alliances shift and are transactional. As Mr Trump has said, America’s allies can be “foes” on some issues and “friends” on others, without any overarching loyalties based on niceties like a shared commitment to liberal democracy.
Above all, nations would not be subject to globalist dictates about how they should treat the people within their borders. They would control and protect their definition of national purity.
From this vantage point, Nato and the EU are intolerable exemplars of the “liberal international order” — an order built in support of a set of anti-nationalist values that were encapsulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty reaffirms the parties’ “faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,” including the universal principles of “democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law”.
Similarly, the EU proclaims as “fundamental values”, and indeed requirements for membership in the union, “respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law”. Not national dignity and rights, but human.
The Russian president may indeed have some kind of hold over Mr Trump, as former CIA director John Brennan has suggested. But opposition to the current international order does not require a scene out of a spy novel. The extreme right of the Republican party has been exaggerating the danger of the UN for decades. Mr Trump is only taking their views mainstream.
A 2017 poll shows more than half of Republicans say the US and Russia should work more closely together. That is still less than 20 per cent of the population, but they are “America first-ers”, the would-be architects of a new world. And they are reaching out to Britain-firsters, Hungary-firsters, France-firsters, Israel-firsters — wherever nationalists are to be found. They seek a return to the rules of the 19th century.
And why not? The post-second-world-war order is just 70 years old — a blip in the history of multi-polar diplomacy. The Soviet Union lasted 70 years. It collapsed but Russia endures. The EU could collapse and European countries would endure. Nato could collapse and transatlantic relations would endure, on a bilateral and plurilateral basis.
It is incumbent upon those of us who see an arc of progress bending towards peace and universal human rights to appreciate the full scope of the threat posed to our 20th-century global architecture. Our response has to be more than defending the status quo. We must begin sketching an affirmative counter-vision of state and non-state institutions that empower their members more than they constrain them and solve problems effectively together.

[Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin want to create a new world order](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcontent%2Fa5762736-8c01-11e8-affd-da9960227309&h=AT22P5_B6k-y3cFxD4ttR4ZNaeGsdJTlJFREN4D6Le92MOdt2VETln1HTk5XdyV4Tc02VLKMQphacWlYrb6hHHnE9Wz8ZLH-Wgj-NU1XuCFAU1Ioz5oEw_4vUO0CVq4f2FKuvzQ46N35RgFEempcqCjQIwUAL_cB3w)

We should take their vision of unfettered state sovereignty seriously

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