OPINION

Trump's Trade Policy Triumphs

GLOBAL VIEW
By Walter Russell Mead

In the past 10 days, President Trump has nailed down deals that, unless the courts judge his assumption of sweeping trade powers unconstitutional, will stand as his most consequential achievements to date. In the deals with Japan and the European Union, major trading partners and key security allies made significant concessions to the administration's demands—without extracting equivalent concessions from the U.S.

The EU will accept 15% tariffs on most exports to the U.S., with potentially much higher levies on steel and aluminum, without retaliating against American products. The bloc also agreed to make large purchases of American energy and military equipment.

The agreement with Japan features similar terms. In addition to accepting a 15% tariff on exports to America, Japan agreed to invest $550 billion in the U.S., open its markets to more American agricultural exports, and increase purchases of American-sourced fossil fuel, nuclear energy, civilian airliners and other high-tech products.

From Team Trump's perspective, the agreements vindicate the administration's disruptive approach. Past presidents have compartmentalized American negotiations, keeping security relations and trade negotiations on different tracks. Mr. Trump thought this was stupid. The combination of access to the American market and American security guarantees was so valuable, he believed, that foreigners would pay a much higher price than his predecessors ever got. The recent deals with the EU and Japan support his view.

The president also believes that global institutions like the World Trade Organization don't serve American interests as well as bilateral or, in the case of the EU, regional agreements. One doesn't need to be pro-Trump or pro-tariff to see that the WTO has disappointed the high hopes with which it was launched. The new EU and Japan trade agreements demonstrate the potential of Mr. Trump's divide-and-conquer strategy.

There are, of course, questions about the durability and ultimate value of these agreements. Having seen how the impulsive Mr. Trump tears up old deals (even, in the case of the tripartite trade agreement among the U.S., Mexico and Canada, one he negotiated and signed), foreign countries may wonder whether and for how long Mr. Trump will honor these new pacts. As time runs out on his second term, foreign governments will fear the president less and perhaps hedge on fulfilling their commitments.

The Trump administration trade strategy faces other obstacles. Challenges to the constitutionality of the administration's use of emergency powers to justify massive shifts in tariff policy are making their way through the courts. Tariff-related price hikes may dim public support for protectionist trade policy. And over the long term, most economists agree that tariffs distort incentives, direct investment to less productive uses, and slow growth. They also note that shifting from trade agreements enshrined in treaties to executive agreements that cannot bind a given presidents' successors will in itself increase risks and chill cross-border investment.

His disruptive, hard-power style has allies making concessions and sharing burdens.

There are also questions about the long-term consequences of disruptive Trumpian diplomacy and realpolitik on alliance systems that historically have given priority to both stability and values in international life. Mr. Trump appears to believe that our traditional allies' economic and strategic dependencies on the U.S. will keep them aligned with us even if they don't like much of what we do. Denmark hasn't flounced out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization over Mr. Trump's threats against Greenland. Japan isn't aligning with China because it resents the new American tariffs.

While some argue that this will change over time, and that disillusioned American allies may seek strategic independence or even align with our rivals, that seems unlikely. Russian aggression and predatory Chinese trade and security policies are doing more to strengthen American alliances than Mr. Trump has done to weaken them.

But those are concerns for the future. In the meantime, even those who deplore the long-term consequences of Mr. Trump's trade policy can take lessons from his success. For decades, American presidents sought to cajole American allies to do more burden-sharing and open their markets more to American goods—and got nowhere.

Then Mr. Trump came charging in, breaking rules and shattering norms. After six months of this, America's NATO partners (Spain excepted) and Taiwan are all stepping up their defense spending. Japan is pursuing increasingly activist policies even as the Trump administration revises the terms of trade. In a dark and dangerous world, even America's most liberal-minded and pro-democracy allies care vastly more about hard power and economic interests than they do about appeals to common values.

Donald Trump may not get a Nobel Prize in economics anytime soon. But he's teaching a master class in the real motivations and priorities of American allies that his successors will forget at their peril.

William McGurn is away.

The Lesson of Ozzy Osbourne

By Matthew Hennessey

When they say time heals all wounds, what they mean is, "You see things differently when you're older." It's true of the social and emotional scars we carry from high school. It's true of politics, which can divide families and ruin friendships. It's also true of music.

The life and career of heavy-metal singer Ozzy Osbourne, who died last week at 76, is a perfect example of how this works. In the 1980s, Osbourne's music and personality were the stuff of middle-class parents' nightmares. It was a matter of established fact that the self-described Prince of Darkness was a satanist. He once led a band called Black Sabbath. He was known for biting the heads off bats on stage. His records were reputed to contain hidden messages that, if you played them backward, urged all manner of destructive behavior—including suicide.

If we can learn to like a bat-biting metal star, we can learn to like each other.

Reading all that now is enough to make you laugh. It sounds ridiculous. A few decades on, we know the truth: Ozzy wasn't a satanist or a guy who thought of suicide as a solution, he was a family man. His popular reality show, "The Osbournes," which aired on MTV from 2002-05, revealed that the Prince of Darkness actually had about him a bumbling domestic charm. We watched with delight as this ordinary living-room rock star called his kids to help him work the TV remote. We learned that he was friends with Christian crooner Pat Boone.

It didn't take long for Ozzy's image to flip from necromancer to neighbor of the year. Some of his music, if you listen to it with 2025 ears, no longer even sounds like hard rock. It's practically easy listening. That's how rapidly and completely time heals.

Where I went to high school we called kids who liked heavy metal "burnouts." They wore a uniform consisting of dirty jeans and a dirty jean jacket, typically with an airbrushed painting of a band on the back. They grew their hair long and hung out on the school's "smoking steps," where they killed time between classes arguing about bands—who rocked, who sucked, who was a poser.

For the burnouts of Northern New Jersey circa 1988, a poser was the worst thing you could be. At 15 I was on the edge. I wanted to cut class and sit on the smoking steps. I ached to grow my hair long and wear the double-denim uniform, but there was no way my parents would let me do any of those things. While they were generally cool people, they found my burnout friends scary. My parents tolerated a lot, but drew the line at Ozzy Osbourne.

When my friends got tickets for the "No Rest for the Wicked" tour, my parents said no way. We battled. I remonstrated. "Do you want people to think I'm a poser?" I cried. "A what?" they said. It went on like this for days, but the answer didn't change. Going to an Ozzy Osbourne concert was, to them, tantamount to attending a cult rally. Unthinkable.

I have my own kids now, which has fostered in me a strange new respect for my parents' point of view. Right or wrong, they had their reasons. Had you told us then that Ozzy's death 37 years later would prompt an outpouring of grief and emotion from the American public—that he would be eulogized and memorialized across the land as a beloved entertainer on par with Bob Hope or Tony Bennett—we would have said you were crazy. But that's how it goes.

There's a lesson about politics here. We've all experienced how the passage of time puts the fire out. As events recede, passions cool and we start to see things a little more expansively. Sometimes we even change our minds.

Consider: Republicans detested Bill Clinton when he was president. What would they give now for a more moderate Democratic Party like the one Mr. Clinton led in the 1990s? Hate is too mild a word for how Democrats felt about George W. Bush while he was in the Oval Office. Ask them now whether they'd prefer to go back to the Bush-era GOP. You know the answer.

We'd all do well to keep this in mind as we grope our way through the thicket of life, as overgrown as it is with political and emotional thorns. One day we will see the burnouts and posers who populate our politics in a different light. As bad as things seem in the here and now, the crazy train always gets crazier. Perhaps in the future we'll even look back on 2025 with sighs of longing for a simpler, more agreeable time.

Unthinkable? No. If the world can change its mind about Ozzy Osbourne, anything is possible.

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Who's Next? Remembering Tom Lehrer's Wit

By Faith Bottum

Tom Lehrer was a mathematician—and quite a good one, by all accounts. Which makes it all the more interesting that he was renowned mostly for sitting at a piano with a sly grin on his face. Always wearing a suit and horn-rim glasses, he would sing, typically to classical melodies, such lines as "Every Sunday you'll see / my sweetheart and me / as we poison the pigeons in the park."

Lehrer, who died Saturday at 97 in Cambridge, Mass., was a prodigy. He earned a math degree from Harvard at 18. He went on to teach math at MIT, Harvard, Wellesley College and the University of California, Santa Cruz. He kept teaching until his late 70s.

But his career as a songwriter and performer is what made him memorable. Lehrer's body of work was surprisingly small—roughly three dozen songs—but he captured audiences with his impish humor. What started as jokes to amuse his friends at school turned into songs that stick in the mind of everyone who's heard them. "The Masochism Tango." "Lobachevsky." "We Will All Go Together When We Go." The son of a successful necktie designer, he performed looking sleek and professional, all while singing his hilariously horrifying lyrics. "Let our love be a flame, not an ember / Say it's me that you want to dismember," he sang in his mild baritone.

The mathematician, songwriter and imp has died at 97.

His wit and musical talent brought him on tour in the 1950s and early 1960s. He released three albums during this run, and later added "Tom Lehrer Revisited," a live recording of a 1953 show. His life was full of bopping around. Lehrer contributed to the children's public-television show, "The Electric Company" with songs teaching phonics and grammar. "The Elements," set to a Gilbert and Sullivan melody, is a patter-song romp through the periodic table.

He also claimed to have invented the Jell-O shot while serving as a U.S. Army specialist third class to circumvent a ban on alcohol at a base Christmas party. He wasn't the originator, but his storytelling flair likely boosted the drink's popularity.

Lehrer had a special way of conveying his humor with a wink, a we're-in-on-it-together kind of nod. His twinkle and his songs have stood the test of time, and the comic bravado of those old tunes can still be felt nowadays. "So long, Mom / I'm off to drop the bomb." "Be prepared! That's the Boy Scouts' marching song."

I've always had a soft spot for Tom Lehrer. I discovered him when I was young going through my parents' old CDs. Somehow I still sing his songs with surprising regularity. After being stuck on the highway after the car broke down. To cheer up an old friend. To laugh when I'm feeling down. Lehrer's music was funny—funny enough for people to hum 70 years later.

Ms. Bottum is an assistant editorial features editor at the Journal.

BOOKSHELF | By Adrian Woolfson

Cardiac Chronicles

The Beating Heart

By Robin Choudhury
Apollo, 304 pages, $45

Following the death of Frédéric Chopin in Paris in 1849, and in accordance with the composer's wishes, his heart was removed and sealed in a jar of cognac. A few months later, fulfilling his precise request, his sister Ludwika spirited the preserved organ—hidden in the folds of her dress—across the Russian border into what was then partitioned Poland. There, she deposited it in the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw, returning the composer's heart to his childhood parish.

That Chopin chose to do this is illustrative of a curious and persistent phenomenon: our tendency to endow the heart with symbolic and emotional properties, far beyond its biological function—qualities that, as Robin Choudhury puts it, are "intuited, rather than reasoned." The resilience of such irrational beliefs—especially at a time when science has rigorously defined the heart's purpose—remains something of a mystery.

In "The Beating Heart" Mr. Choudhury, an Oxford cardiologist, leads us on a fantastic journey through the cultural and scientific history of the heart. Drawing on literature, philosophy and popular culture and exploring the work of artists as diverse as Tracey Emin, Frida Kahlo and Giotto, the author illustrates his point with a dazzling collection of visual depictions of the heart: woodcuts, prints, paintings, murals, anatomical drawings, kinetic sculptures and emoticons. In his quest to determine the origins of our beliefs about the heart and to understand why these "primal intuitions have persisted, undiminished," Mr. Choudhury traces the evolving perceptions of the heart across history and civilizations.

How did we come to associate the heart with religious ecstasy or romantic love and become accustomed to wantonly appending heart emojis to text messages? And why the heart and not, say, the liver, the pancreas or the kidney? Why, moreover, in defiance of modern science, do we stubbornly continue to enshrine heart-related metaphors in our everyday lexicon, linking, for example, the heart to memory in phrases such as "learn by heart"?

It appears, Mr. Choudhury suggests, that such conceptions are deeply rooted and convergent—arising independently in different cultures rather than being the products of a single intellectual lineage. The Aristotelian conception of the heart as the seat of the soul, as articulated in the philosopher's "De Anima," for example, finds resonances in Egyptian mythology, ancient Indian traditions (as recorded, for instance, in the Upanishads), Judeo-Christian Scriptures and even Chinese medical practices during the Han dynasty. This "common conscious experience" is striking. Like the repeated evolution of the eye across unrelated species, the idea of the heart as the center of life and emotions appears to emerge spontaneously across history.

It was Thomas Aquinas, Mr. Choudhury argues, who most persuasively articulated the heart's "cultural prominence." In his 1270 letter "De Motu Cordis" ("On the Motion of the Heart"), Aquinas identifies its three core features: intrinsic automaticity, independence from conscious control and responsiveness to "emotions and passions." We are viscerally aware of our heartbeat, as well as changes in its frequency and intensity, in different situations.

The biological basis of this automaticity—the heart's ability to beat spontaneously—was revealed in 1960 by Denis Noble, a British physiologist and biologist. While working at University College London when he was 23 years old, Mr. Noble used fine-glass microelectrodes to measure the tiny electrical currents in specialized cardiac-muscle cells called Purkinje fibers. He then used one of the earliest digital computers to perform the complex calculations required to interpret the signals. In doing so he simultaneously pioneered the science of mathematical biology and solved the so-called secret of life: the electrical nature of the heartbeat.

Aristotle viewed the heart as the seat of the soul. A similar conception appears in Egyptian mythology and Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

Early pioneers such as Richard Lower, a 17th-century English physician, had already demonstrated that the heart continues to beat when removed from the body and cut into pieces. Its activity was also determined to be independent of blood flow. But it was Mr. Noble who dispelled the romantic mysticism captured in "Vita Nuova," in which Dante wrote: "the spirit of life . . . dwells within the most secret chambers of the heart." Descartes's 1649 assertion, in "The Passions of the Soul," that the heart was subordinate to the brain, had now been established as fact.

Yet the true inflection point, the jewel in the crown of our medical understanding of the heart, came in 1628 with the publication of William Harvey's book, also known as "De Motu Cordis." In this brief work, the English physician proposed that the heart functions as a pump and that blood circulates through a closed system. The disruptive nature of this conclusion, a bold and definitive rejection of received authority, cannot be overstated. "Greatly afraid to suffer this little book," Harvey was reluctant about publishing it. His reformulation of the human cardiovascular system according to empirically defined scientific principles would overturn more than 1,000 years of orthodoxy issuing from the Greek physician Galen, including the Hippocrates-inspired practice of bloodletting that Galen's flawed anatomy supported. Harvey's work built on the foundations established by anatomists at the University of Padua such as Andreas Vesalius, whose vision of collating a complete and accurate atlas of human anatomy was, several centuries later, mirrored in the ambition of the Human Genome Project.

Despite the rational acid of scientific enquiry, we continue to adhere to our folk conceptions of the heart. We enthusiastically send out heart-themed Valentine's Day cards and woefully complain of heartbreak. In his study of street art in London, Paris and Rome, Mr. Choudhury notes the recurring appearance of black dots or crosses in cartoonlike representations of the heart. It is unlikely that the artists realized they were invoking medieval renditions that eschewed anatomical realism for the *nigrum granum* (black grain)—thought to be the point of origin of arteries and seat of the spirit. In the case of emotions, we appear incapable, it seems, of resisting irrational intuitions that defy the detached logic of science.

Mr. Woolfson is the author of "An Intelligent Person's Guide to Genetics."