



Fear:
Trump in
the White
House

By Bob Woodward

London: Simon and Schuster, 2018. 448 pp., Paper.
£11.95 (Hardcover). ISBN: 9781471181290.

*Reviewed by Iana Iuzepovych
PhD student in International Relations and Political History of
the Middle East at Marmara University*

When Trump became a candidate for president of the United States, it was clear from the first day that if he were to be elected, his presidential performance would be unusual. In fact, the first year of the presidency was very turbulent, as we witnessed the resignation of some employees of the White House, Trump's unpredictable decisions in US foreign and domestic policies, conflicting statements in the media and scandalous tweets. Trump's presidency became an interesting topic of discussion not just in the United States, but also in other countries. This is why the book *Fear: Trump in the White House* by famous American journalist Bob Woodward is remarkable. This book is about the first year of Donald Trump's presidency, from 2017 to 2018. The fact that Bob Woodward is one of the most prominent investigative journalists in the United States makes the book even more interesting. Woodward, who is currently an associate editor of the Washington Post, is one of those who forced US President Richard Nixon to resign by unveiling the Watergate Scandal. He has also written 19 books about US presidents.

Woodward's latest book discusses Trump's first year, based on secret diaries, government documents, and numerous interviews. The exclusive interviews were made with witnesses of the events described in the book, and Trump himself had been approached for an interview (which he refused). Woodward also used literature on the subject and news from Washington Post, New York Times and CNN. Tweets from Trump and other employees of the White House were used as an important resource.

Woodward's goal in the book is to examine Donald Trump's performance at the White House during his first year of presidency and to explain how he made decisions on key issues of US foreign and domestic policies. The author's basic argument is that Trump's main motivation for decision-making is lies and fear. According to the author, all of Trump's decisions in US foreign and domestic policy stem from his intention to arouse fear among other people. The author highlights that it is a form of pressure and manipulation. In this way, Woodward argues, Trump wants to appear in the eyes of the press and his electorate as a fearless person who can solve all the

problems that other American governments could not solve in the US foreign policy and economy.

Bob Woodward believes that one of Trump's annoyances with prior US foreign policy was the sending of the US troops to South Korea and the spending incurred on the THAAD American anti-ballistic missile defense system. According to the book, Trump insists that South Korea must pay for its own security. With regard to Afghanistan, the author claims that it is a deadlock for the United States. Although Trump wanted to reduce military spending and withdraw American troops. He concludes that Trump could not find a way out of this situation, and ultimately had to follow Barack Obama's strategy. The book also analyses Trump's relationship with America's allies. Woodward stresses that Trump is skeptical about the loyalty of America's European allies and point to his attempts to withdraw from NATO, cut US military spending, and withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran.

The author provides insight into the manner in which Trump is trying to solve domestic economic problems. According to the book, Trump believes that the foreign trade deficit was the main problem of the American economy. For this reason, Trump has constantly demanded the withdrawal of the trade agreements like KORUS and NAFTA. Bob Woodward also touches on important issues such as an investigation against Trump on the suspicion of obstruction of justice when James Comey was FBI Director. As a matter of fact, this investigation angered Trump and these feelings made it difficult for him to perform his duties effectively. Similarly, the author criticizes the performance of the White House during Donald Trump's first-year presidency. The author believes that in this period there was chaos and disorder in the White House. To prove his argument, he cites an example when White House employees stole important documents like the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement, also known as KORUS from Trump's desk, so Trump could not withdraw from this agreement. The author also analyses Trump's personality and family relationships, and believes that they impact his performance of his duties. Here, he cites an occasion when Ivanka showed his father photos of the victims of Bashar al-Assad's chemical attack, upon which Trump immediately expressed a wish to destroy Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The author claims that Ivanka would take part in any meeting even if she was not invited, but Trump did not try to change his daughter's behavior. The author highlights that Ivanka would interfere in presidential affairs without permission. For example, she tried to prevent her father from withdrawing from the Paris Agreement. In the subsequent chapters, the author also focuses on Trump's love for Twitter. According to him, the president believes Twitter is a place where he can communicate with his supporters without intermediaries, and has reported many of his decisions on Twitter without consulting his White House advisers. The White House advisers, on their part, considered Donald Trump's tweets unsuitable as an official message from the American president.

The book is a useful resource as the author addresses the major problems of US foreign policy, details their background and gives examples of how previous governments wanted to solve these problems. However, it is highly critical of Donald Trump, based only on one year of his presidency, and does not make much mention of his achievements. In this regard, the author is rather subjective and creates a negative image of the American president. The author definitely discusses important issues in simple language that makes the book easier to understand. But it is far from being an academic work, since it is written in a narrative form. There are no titles in the chapters, which confuses the reader and makes it difficult to understand. There are many names and locations in the book that can easily become confusing. Nevertheless, this book is useful for anyone who is interested in Donald Trump's presidency, and may also be useful as a secondary source for academicians studying US foreign policy.