

# The New York Times

## In Praise of Globalists

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I grew up in Mexico City and remember vividly the things that impressed me most as a child whenever I visited the United States. Water you could drink straight from the tap. Cops who didn't demand bribes. Competitive elections.

Unremarkable things for those who live in the U.S. Remarkable things for those who don't. If you really want to fall in love with America, try leaving it for a while.

Since then, I have lived in Chicago, London, Brussels, Jerusalem, New York and Hamburg. I suppose this makes me a "globalist" in certain eyes, though I've never seen myself that way. So does the fact that I am convinced of the overwhelming benefits to ordinary Americans of free trade, immigration (both skilled and "unskilled") and our overseas military alliances.

Oh, and I'm Jewish. Which, some say, is what happens to globalism after it's been circumcised.

I note these details since the term "globalist" is in the news again, thanks to a curious statement from Mick Mulvaney, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, following Gary Cohn's resignation as the president's top economic adviser.

"As a right-wing conservative and founding member of the Freedom Caucus, I never expected that the co-worker I would work closest, and best, with at the White House would be a 'globalist,'" Mulvaney said in a tweet. "Gary Cohn is one of the smartest people I've ever worked with. Having the chance to collaborate with him will remain one of the highlights of my career in public service."

That was meant to be gracious, I suppose — in the way that Joe Biden's 2007 description of Barack Obama as "the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean" was meant to be. Putting "globalist" in quotes suggests a jest or in-joke of sorts, so it's at least possible this wasn't intended as some kind of anti-Semitic dog whistle.

Then again, with this administration you never know. Maybe what Mulvaney was trying to say is that some of his best friends are Jewish.

Whatever the case, it's a revealing remark. Globalist belongs in a class of words ("cuck" is another one, as is "othering") that tends to say a great deal more about the person who uses it than it does about the person he says it about.

To be a globalist means almost nothing — even “Davos Man” has to trundle home somewhere after the annual forum draws to a close. Rex Tillerson is as much a globalist as Samantha Power. Ditto for John Bolton and John Kerry, Charles Koch and George Soros, Mike Pompeo and Julian Assange. A term that embraces opposites has almost no explanatory power.

To be an anti-globalist, on the other hand, does specify something. It means someone who is convinced that serious business is transacted at conferences like Davos or Bilderberg or Munich, and that 500 or so people run the world at the expense of everyone else. It means the notion that American prosperity would be well served by a return to a Smoot-Hawley world of punitive tariffs and other beggar-thy-neighbor economic policies. It means the suspicion that Americans whose cultural and geographic horizons are broader than America’s borders are deficient in patriotism.

In short, anti-globalism is economic illiteracy married to a conspiracy mind-set. The dark truth about Davos isn’t that it’s sinister or significant. It’s that it’s *booooring*.

With Cohn’s departure, Trumpworld may have lost the last person who knew what hokum anti-globalism is — and was willing to say so directly to the president. Re-reading the Mulvaney tweet, what’s striking about it isn’t the possible hint of anti-Semitism. It’s its toadyism, as if he’s bidding simultaneously to replace Cohn at the National Economic Council next week or work for him in the private sector next year. Who in the White House is left to tell the president he’s nuts when he tries to pull out of Nafta?

Maybe it’s time now to make “globalist” mean something after all. An earlier generation of globalists — they called themselves internationalists — had learned the lessons of the 1930s and understood that the U.S. could not cut itself off from the world and expect to remain safe from it. Successive generations of Americans — military and foreign-service officers, businessmen and teachers, humanitarians and entertainers — went out into the world and sought to make it a better place.

In 2016, the State Department estimated that as many as nine million Americans lived abroad, which is more people than live in Virginia. Even more so than the free trade champions at the Cato Institute or the foreign policy hawks at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, these expats are our real globalists, representing the things that make America great: adventure, engagement, commerce, openness to new ideas, and a love of America honed by a combination of critical distance and a new depth of appreciation.

The White House could use those same virtues. Too bad globalists need not apply.