



THE FUNDAMENTALS AND IMPACT OF THE TRUMP DOCTRINE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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The election of Donald Trump as president represents a shift in the US's global stance and has accelerated geopolitical competition and interactions between great and middle powers. Trump's isolationist orientations, combined with his view of ineffective international cooperation, are in contradiction to the American approach to world affairs over the past 70 years. President Trump's "vision" can be interpreted as a focus on domestic issues and a return to global leadership, approaches that are connected and mutually reinforcing. Exploring the variation in the Trump administration's security policies compared to previous administrations, it emerges that the correct label applied to the Trump doctrine is that of isolationism doctrinally propelled by conservative nationalism. The Monroe Doctrine – the guiding star of US diplomacy towards the Western Hemisphere – under the Trump administration is back in vogue and is being invoked to implement America's vital and fundamental national interests.

The research methods used, in order to highlight the essence, content, features, change, continuity, coherence and variations of the Trump 1.0 and Trump 2.0 security doctrines, as well as in relation to other major national security doctrines, starting with the first "George Washington's Farewell Address – 1796", are comparative research and case study.

Keywords: security doctrine; security strategy, competition; threats; interests;

INTRODUCTION

The US's centre of strategic interest or action has increasingly stabilized in the area of *competition between great powers* with peer rivals – in terms of economic, military and geopolitical dimensions – China and Russia, realizing that success in this competition depends, to a large extent, on preserving its economic and technological power. President Trump's National Security Strategies and subsequent documents – the National Defense Strategies, have created the foundation for this process, with reference mainly to the following dimensions: the general context of competition, national power and competitiveness, international position and influence, and the form and status of bilateral competitions (Mazarr, 2022, pp. 1-2). The great powers, part of the competition, creatively approach and try to capitalize on opportunities related to the inadequacies and risks of the existing order, to promote their own interests (Laqua, 2026, pp. 1-3).

The United States of America is going through a period in which the structure of international relations, which is largely based on international rules and norms, alliances, and the preeminence of American military power, is being challenged (Bishop, 2015, p. 1). In 1946, speaking at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered his famous *"Iron Curtain"* speech, declaring the end of the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union and the beginning of the *Cold War*. Eighty years later, speaking on 22 January 2026 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney declared the end of the *"rules-based international order"* that had won the Cold War but lost the resulting peace. It is hard to recall a similar speech by any national leader in the past century (Kilian, 2026, pp. 1-3). Many analysts say that the edifice of the liberal world order is in danger of collapsing. Among the main events that have contributed to the deterioration of the pillars of this order, with geopolitical consequences, the following

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can be mentioned: the sending of Russian forces to South Ossetia, Georgia and its invasion in 2008, the 5-day war, associated with the *indifference and lack of reaction* of the West and the USA in favour of better relations with Moscow, in order to avoid future confrontations. The Russo-Georgian war established a *modus operandi* that Putin would use against Ukraine almost exactly six years later in 2014 and later in 2022, the real goal being to *restore Russian hegemony over the former Soviet republics* (Kagan, 2018, p. 1).

In terms of time, the Modern World System has existed for about 500 years, first emerging when certain European states developed the capacity for global options. Since 1494, the global political system has displayed a recurring or cyclical pattern, *5 full systemic cycles*, entered a *sixth* since the end of the Cold War, the late 1980s and early 1990s, being now in a period characterized by specific *transitional actions* towards the *seventh cycle* for the succession to world leadership. It is not possible to predict exactly when this transition will occur, whether it will be the result of a hegemonic war waged for succession to world leadership, and the resulting new hegemonic structure (which satisfies essential global needs, public goods for global governance, order, security, stability, innovation, trade) – as has happened in the past, or other events. Since 1914 the USA has been the *dominant world power*, the entity that dominates the *global political system*.

A country's national security policy is determined by many factors, including: external threats, geography, political culture, military capabilities, economic needs, elite opinion, popular opinion (in democracies), and the perceptions of leaders regarding the country's interests. The latter factor is frequently translated into what has been called a *national security or foreign policy "doctrine"*. A *national security doctrine* serves as a *guide* by which leaders conduct a country's foreign policy. Most effectively, *a national security doctrine is the organizing principle that helps statesmen identify and prioritize their country's geopolitical interests* (Sempa, 2004, p. 1). Given that *external factors* – rather than *internal* concerns – are the most decisive in selecting the *grand strategy* that established the *objectives and means* of security policy, in the post-1945 period, *four* major ideas have competed for dominance in the American grand strategy: *defensive realism, offensive realism, defensive liberalism, and offensive liberalism*. Whether the USA

pursues a *realist or liberal* foreign policy, and whether it does so *offensively or defensively*, this ideological competition has been mediated in the international system (by *two systemic factors*), namely by *variations in the global balance of power* and the *level of threats* faced by the USA. These various strategies are, in effect, *competing ideas* about how to best maximize the state's *national security*. While domestic politics and leaders' perceptions always play an important role in shaping the debate over strategy selection, *variations* in the international system play a key role (Miller, 2020, pp. 9-10).

There are long debates among foreign policy specialists, strategists and policymakers, which lead to the conclusion that we are in a "*multi-order*" world, rather than a *multipolar* world, a more unpredictable, fragmented and continuously diversifying world, generated by the complexity, significance and scale of recent changes. The concept of a "*multi-order*" world *adds theoretical space* to observe new actors of global significance, the new global structure of relations, and *changing power patterns* that are different from the international system that existed a century ago. Now the architecture of global ordering – fundamentally different and evolving – will be neither bipolar nor multipolar, but "*multi-order*" (Flockhart, 2026, pp. 1-2).

An analysis of the significant doctrines of the United States of America reveals that, while each was conceived and adopted by *US presidents in response to immediate foreign policy interests*, each doctrine also addressed certain *fundamental issues* for US national security that guided future presidents in achieving their overall policy objectives and directions. Moreover, each successive *national security doctrine* built on the *foundations* of the preceding doctrines, results in a *continuity* of policy that has served America better (Sempa, 2004, pp. 1-5). In the 250 years since the *Declaration of Independence* of the United States of America, on 4 July 1776, US national security doctrines have evolved from a reserved and detached armed neutrality expressed in George Washington's "*Washington's Farewell Address*" of 1796, to George W. Bush's national security doctrine, popularly called "*Preemption*" 2002, a doctrine that allows for *preventive and unilateral military action anywhere in the world*. Certain analysts, including Francis P. Sempa, believe that throughout its existence the USA has had several *major national security doctrines*, including: "*Washington's*



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The role of the USA in the world is undergoing a transformational phase with potentially historic consequences, affecting in some way the world order. These changes will significantly influence US policy, the alliance system, the economy, defence capabilities, and the rights and freedoms of citizens.

Farewell Address” 1796; *“Monroe Doctrine*” 1823; *“Manifest Destiny*” 1839-1898; *“Open Door*” 1898; *“Off-shore Balancer*” 1917-1945; *“Containment*” 1945-1980; *“Liberation*” 1953-1956; *“Preemption*” 2002; and *“America First*” 2017, 2025 (Sempa, 2004, pp. 1-9).

In recent times – as many analysts and observers suggest and perceive – after being generally constant for about 70 years, since the end of the Second World War in 1945, *the role of the USA in the world* is undergoing a *transformational phase* with potentially historic consequences, affecting in some way the world order. These changes will significantly influence US policy, the alliance system, the economy, defence capabilities, and the rights and freedoms of citizens. The role of the USA in the world since the end of the Second World War in 1945 has generally been outlined as a **global leader** (*superpower, global hegemon*) and *significant involvement in international affairs* with the following *key elements*: first, *the creation and defence of the liberal international order*; second, *the defence and promotion of freedom, democracy, and human rights*, while criticizing and resisting authoritarian and illiberal forms of government; and, a third element of the role was to *oppose the emergence of regional hegemons in Eurasia* or a world with spheres of influence (O’Rourke, 2019, pp. 1-3, 33). During the second half of the 20th century, American policy crystallized around *three basic objectives*: *preserving Western hegemony* during the Cold War over the region, considering the strategic importance for the defence of Europe had been recognized since the time of Napoleon; *ensuring inexpensive access to Middle Eastern oil*; and, *ensuring the security of the State of Israel*. In recent times, US policy has also assumed the *suppression of anti-American terrorism* as a fundamental objective (Curtis, 2001, p. 1).

The Trump Doctrine was strongly influenced by American *isolationism*. Charles Kupchan argues that the grand strategy of the United States of America has known *three distinct periods*. *The first* of them was more than a century long. It is the period from 1789 to 1898, a deeply *isolationist* one, in line with the strategic vision of the founding fathers of the United States of America. *The second* period, between 1898 and 1941, was one marked by episodes of *realism and idealism*. After the *attack on Pearl Harbor* in December 1941, the American grand strategy entered the era of *liberal internationalism*.



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An internationalism that was materialized in the *international institutions built after the Second World War* that constituted the foundation of *Pax Americana* (Dumitrescu, 2021, p. 244). In the foreign policy debate over the most effective way to defend and advance America's national security interests in the 21st century, *four general approaches* to the world can be mentioned: (1) "*retrenchment*"; (2) *maintaining the regional and global balance of power*; (3) *liberal internationalism*; and (4) *conservative internationalism*. "*Retrenchment*" – *temporary, limited, or extended* – (a strategic, often voluntary, *reduction* in global commitments, military presence, foreign aid, and spending to *avoid* the costs of managing an overly expanded international role, *transferring responsibilities* to allies, and *prioritizing* domestic needs) and *maintaining the regional and global balance of power* (using power only when necessary to correct a global imbalance of power that threatens core US interests) involve a more *restrained use of US power*, often criticizing "*excessive imperial expansion*" and favouring a more nuanced and multilateral approach to international disputes. Supporters of liberal internationalism tend to be more interventionist abroad, believing that American power should be used to promote democracy, freedom, and human rights (Sempa, 2014, pp. 1-15).

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The confrontation of great powers in geopolitical competitions is a constant of the global political system. The analysis of historical cases and theoretical literature on great power rivalries *highlights the main characteristic areas of competition* – areas of confrontation for power and influence, goals, objectives – to the present day: *relative power* (economic and military); internal security; *status*, reputation and prestige; *resources*; *territorial claims*; values and ideology; and, the power to shape the *character of the system* and paradigm (norms, values, rules, institutions). Competitions, more often than not, are the result of conflicting interests and objectives of great powers – which locate the core or essence of the emerging competition. It includes the *struggle for leadership of the international system* and its institutions, rules, norms, processes and informal coalitions; the *orientation* towards certain *values* and the practical alignment based on *interests* of the main geopolitical actors; and *leadership* in key emerging technological areas (Mazarr, 2022, pp. 6, 7, 26). Threats and risks have a relevant



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influence on security doctrines. Among the greatest *global risks* that the world has been facing in recent times and increasingly undermine global stability can be mentioned: geopolitical risk, reflecting the impact of global instability, trade tensions and regulatory uncertainty; cybersecurity risk; raw material shortages and large-scale warfare. Supply chains are the backbone of any organization's ecosystem, they are global, interconnected and inherently complex. Persistent tensions and conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, and more recently, the US pressure on Greenland, Canada, Cuba, the capture of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, together with US and Israeli actions against Iran have added further tension. This context could favour China for "*reunification*" with Taiwan (Sølvsten, 2025, p. 1). China is seeking to undermine existing international institutions, norms, and US global leadership, while simultaneously taking steps to assert its own authoritarian hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. China continues its efforts to build an alternative world order in which it occupies a central position, supported by Russia, North Korea, Iran, and other largely authoritarian countries (Price, 2025, pp. 10, 19).

The Monroe Doctrine – the guiding star of American diplomacy – was presented in President James Monroe's Seventh Annual Message to Congress on 2 December 1823. *European powers, according to Monroe, were obligated to respect the Western Hemisphere as the exclusive sphere of interest of the United States of America*, warning European nations that the USA would not tolerate further colonization or puppet monarchs, and "*it soon became a watchword of US policy in the Western Hemisphere*". The Monroe Doctrine – *the best-known US policy toward the Western Hemisphere* – was invoked and used to justify American interventions in Latin America. (Milestone Documents, 2022, pp. 1-3). The doctrine's *three main concepts: separate spheres of influence* for America and Europe, *non-colonization, and non-intervention*; were designed to express a *clear break between the New World and the autocratic sphere of Europe*, the Old World (Office of the Historian, 2020, p. 1). President Ulysses S. Grant helped expand the *Monroe Doctrine* during his second term (1873-1877), by promoting *a policy of European non-intervention* and strengthening *US influence* in the Western Hemisphere, supporting the self-determination of the peoples of Latin America. President *Theodore Roosevelt* announced

the *Corollary* in response to a German-led naval attack on Venezuela in 1902-1903, immediately proclaiming the right of the United States of America to exercise an *“international police power”* in the Americas, *as elsewhere, to combat such “chronic lawlessness”* for flagrant cases of such misconduct, in the so-called *Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine*.

In the second half of the 20th century, the Monroe Doctrine was not invoked, but under the Trump administration, it is back in vogue (Barrett, 2026, pp. 5-7). President Donald J. Trump in the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS 2025), in chapter II, point II.2. lists *America’s vital and fundamental national interests* in foreign policy, and for the implementation of the first interest, the application of the *“Trump Corollary”* is mentioned. The provisions of the *“Trump Corollary”* are as follows: 1) *ensuring that the Western Hemisphere remains reasonably stable* and sufficiently *well-governed* to prevent and deter mass migration to the United States of America; 2) *building a hemisphere whose governments cooperate* with the United States of America against *narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal organizations*; 3) *denying competitors* from outside the hemisphere the ability to *position forces or other threatening capabilities* or to *possess or control strategically vital assets* in the Western Hemisphere, thereby supporting *critical supply chains*; and 4) *ensuring continued access to key strategic locations* (Trump, 2025, pp. 5-15).

“Si vis pacem, para bellum” is a Latin phrase that is associated with the 4th century, meaning *“If you want peace, prepare for war”*. The origin of the concept is even more distant, in the 2nd century, and the authorship belongs to the Roman emperor Hadrian, to whom the axiom is attributed, *“Peace through strength – or, failing that, peace by threat”*. US President George Washington capitalized on this concept: *“If we wish to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our growing prosperity, it must be known that we are constantly prepared for war”*, he told Congress in 1793. The idea was echoed in President Theodore Roosevelt’s famous dictum: *“Speak softly, be cautious, and carry a big stick”*. Ronald Reagan, a presidential candidate in 1980, borrowed the idea directly from Hadrian when he pledged to achieve *“peace through strength”*, and later fulfilled that promise.



In 2017, President Donald Trump brought this ethos back to the White House, introducing it in his September 2020 speech to the UN General Assembly, stating that the United States of America is *“fulfilling its destiny as a peacemaker, but it is peace through strength”* (O’Brien, 2024, pp. 1-15).

TRUMP 1.0 – CONTENTS, CHARACTERISTICS, KEY ASPECTS, IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The global policy of the Trump 1.0 administration oscillates between the “America first” approach, focused on its own territory, and the “Make America Great Again” approach by restoring the US’s superpower status and leadership position in the world.

The interests and political, economic, and military influence of the USA and American popular culture still have a global footprint. The United States of America is still the *only full-fledged world power* in the international system, but the *influence* that status provides is *no longer as extensive* as it was immediately after the Cold War. The election has raised *questions* about: *rejection of multilateralism; involvement in the creation and interpretation of the rules* that govern the world’s political, economic, and military interactions; *pursuit of unilateral advantages* through fragmentary bilateral agreements; *retreat* from US preeminence and the creation of a geopolitical and geo-economic power vacuum; whether responsibility for maintaining the global political, economic, and military order *will be transferred* to the regional level; and whether *global military supremacy* guarantees dominance in the world’s regions and is equivalent to *political leadership* at global or regional level (Freeman, 2017, pp. 1-12).

After a century of American world order established by US President Woodrow Wilson at the end of the First World War – which all US presidents have followed in one way or another – we are facing a change in the global attitude of the USA. The global policy of the *Trump 1.0* administration oscillates between the *“America first”* approach, focused on its own territory, and the *“Make America Great Again”* approach by restoring the US’s superpower status and leadership position in the world. President *Trump’s “vision”* can be interpreted as a focus on domestic issues and a *return to global leadership*, approaches that *are connected and mutually supportive*, according to the theory that prioritizing domestic issues results in American prosperity and, implicitly, the US’s return to its historic status as a *superpower and global leader* (Israeli, 2019, pp. 4-20). President Trump’s

statements have triggered extensive debates on: 1. *the role of the USA*, namely whether it will continue to play the *active internationalist* role it has played for the last 70 years or adopt a *more limited role*, which would reduce US involvement in world affairs; 2. *how to harmonize the promotion of strictly defined American interests with the objective of defending and promoting American values* (democracy, freedom and human rights); 3. *achieving a balance between the use of so-called hard power* (primarily, but not exclusively, military combat power) and *soft power* (diplomacy, development assistance, support for international organizations, education and cultural exchanges, as well as the international popularity of elements of American culture) in *US foreign policy* (O'Rourke, 2019, p. 1).

Exploring the variation in the security policies of the Trump administration compared to previous administrations, which correctly captures the “essence” of the Trump doctrine, it results that the correct label applied to the Trump doctrine is that of *isolationism* (Dumitrescu, 2021, p. 241), doctrinally propelled by *conservative nationalism* (it is the oldest democratic tradition in US foreign relations). Nationalist populism is the most relevant trend of the recent period. *Conservative American nationalism* is the oldest existing political tradition in the USA. However, the accumulated frustration with US foreign policy in the 21st century, not only military, but also political and economic, has led to the reemergence of a distinct form of *right-wing American nationalism*, emphasizing the need for *burden-sharing with allies, defence of US sovereignty, and the advancement of American material interests*. *Conservative nationalism* is a form of civic *patriotism oriented toward democracy*: attachment to national territory, holding that the world is best governed by *independent nation-states*, and that only within the context of such states can a free population experience constitutional forms of self-government. In terms of foreign policy, conservative nationalists focus on preserving and promoting one's own country's interests, rights, values, security, traditions, and way of life, believing it is entirely legitimate to do so (Kupchan, 2019, pp. 1-15). We can say that the Trump doctrine also has accents of future-oriented realism, supported by the reality that the USA has entered a prolonged period of geopolitical competition with other major powers (Colin, 2019, pp. 1-5). *“Isolationism is a grand strategy*



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that aims to lack alliances with foreign powers and avoid lasting strategic involvement beyond the North American space” (Dumitrescu, 2021, p. 245). Donald Trump’s victory in the presidential election reflects an unsurprising loss of domestic support for an *internationalist* foreign policy. In short, Trump represents the beginning of the *third era* in America’s journey toward isolationism – a turn toward *neo-isolationism*. But it is not the cause, but a symptom of underlying conditions. The United States of America is not the only country affected by this phenomenon (West, 2024, pp. 1-5). It is possible that Trump can also be interpreted as a realist because Trump’s policies, at times, respect the dictates of the balance of power and offer a goal to foster attachment, solidarity towards the nation and maintain America’s global hegemony. He supports the *state-centred assumption*, states are the most important actors, the assumption of the *unitary rational actor* – rational pursuit of *self-interest*, and promoting its *own values*, being the one who sets the agenda, forms rules of behaviour, changes images, acts to *hold a preponderance of power* in the system of international relations, uses power to promote its interests.

Realists agree that power *drives* international politics, but they disagree about *when and where* it should be exercised or controlled. There is no unified view of which international distribution of power best preserves peace and stability – *multipolarity* (favoured by most traditional realists), *bipolarity* (Kenneth Waltz and John J. Mearsheimer), or *unipolarity* (Geoffrey Blainey, Robert Gilpin, William Wohlforth). *Balance of power*: ideals or *interests* are what drive conflict; in a world without a world government, power is the ultimate arbiter of whose claim prevails; and, consequently, what forces should be developed and prepared in peacetime to *deter* adversaries (Taub, 2015, pp. 1-5). Historians who have assessed Trump’s “*America First*” vision, 20 January 2017 – a protectionist doctrine of national economic security – have stated that it is clearly both a *break with the past* and a *continuation* of it. Trump has boldly defied the norms of American foreign policy, expressing his hostility to international agreements and diplomacy in general. Trump’s *isolationist orientations*, combined with his view of *international cooperation as ineffective*, are at odds with the *American approach to world affairs* of the past 70 years (Murnane, 2017, pp. 2-7).



Like any security doctrine, the Trump doctrine is *a response* to an event, a context, a major change at a regional or global level and has a *theoretical and practical body* that includes: 1. the explicit or tacit definition of the *object to be secured*; 2. the *relevant external/internal context* (security environment) related to the object to be secured and its characterization (*definition, risks, vulnerabilities, identification of the enemy etc.*); 3. the *principles of action* – justified/explicit or not; and, 4. the *objectives* pursued through its implementation (Dungaciu, 2021, pp. 12-14). *Trump 1.0 Security Doctrine* changed the role of the US President. Trump's first term was marked by the "*America First*" foreign policy in action – a *strategic vision* to protect the American people and preserve the American way of life, promote prosperity, *defend peace through strength*, and develop American influence in the world. It promoted a balance of power that favoured the United States of America, its allies, and partners (Trump, 2017, p. 1) – the US network of alliances and partnerships remaining the backbone of global security (Pompeo, 2018, p. 1).

The "*America First*" security doctrine is consistent with American principles and interests adapted to the challenges it faces. It is a strategy of principled realism, guided by *results*, not *ideology*. The United States of America will respond to the growing political, economic, and military competitions it faces around the world. It considers that China and Russia are challenging American power, influence, and interests. It defines *four vital national interests*: 1. *defending the American people, homeland, and way of life*; 2. *promoting American prosperity*; 3. *maintaining peace through strength*; and, 4. *promoting American influence in the world*. The theoretical and practical body of the Security Doctrine explicitly details actions to fulfil *the four national interests*; each interest being considered a pillar of the doctrine. Priority activities are mentioned for each action (Trump, *ib.*, pp. 1-2). *Pillar I: Defending the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life* is supported by the following actions: *securing US borders and territory*; defending against weapons of mass destruction; combating biological threats and pandemics; strengthening border control and immigration policy; pursuing threats at their source; defeating jihadist terrorists; disrupting transnational criminal organizations; keeping America safe in the cyber age; and, promoting American resilience.

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Promoting American Prosperity – “Economic Security is National Security” is supported by the following actions: rejuvenate the domestic economy; promote free, fair, and reciprocal economic relations; lead in research, technology, invention, and innovation; promote and protect the US national security innovation base; and, embrace energy dominance.

(Ib., pp. 7-14). *Pillar II: Promoting American Prosperity – “Economic Security is National Security”* is supported by the following actions: rejuvenate the domestic economy; promote free, fair, and reciprocal economic relations; lead in research, technology, invention, and innovation; promote and protect the US national security innovation base; and, embrace energy dominance (Ib., pp. 17-22). *Pillar III: Defending Peace Through Strength* is supported by the following actions: renew America’s competitive advantages; renew capabilities: military, defence industrial base, nuclear forces, space, cyberspace, intelligence; diplomacy and effective statecraft: competitive diplomacy, tools of economic diplomacy, information statecraft. A key continuity in history is *the contest for power*. The current time period is no different. There are three main sets of *competitors*: the revisionist powers *China and Russia*; the states that threaten global stability, *Iran and North Korea*; and the *organizations* that pose *transnational threats*, especially jihadist terrorist groups. Although different in nature and scope, these rivals are engaged in a general competition in the *political, economic, and military* spheres, and they use technology and information to accelerate these *competitions* with the aim of shifting regional balances of power in their favour. These fundamentally political competitions are between those who favour *repressive systems* and those who favour *free society* (Ib., pp. 25-34). *Pillar IV: Promoting American Influence* is supported by the following actions: *encouraging aspiring partners; achieving better results in multilateral forums; and, defending American values* (Ib., pp. 37-41).

Strategy in a Regional Context: The United States of America will act to maintain the regional balance of power so that it does not shift to the detriment of its interests and to defend them anywhere in the world to maintain its security. Markets, raw materials, supply lines, and human capital are located in or are shifting their location, position or condition between key regions of the world: the Indo-Pacific; Europe; the Middle East; South and Central Asia; the Western Hemisphere and Africa (Ib., pp. 45-55).

Trump has avoided new wars and endless costly counterinsurgency operations, and his presidency was the first since Jimmy Carter in which the United States of America did not enter a new war or expand an existing conflict, but he did carry out a limited but effective

airstrike on Syria in 2017 in response to the use of chemical weapons against its own people by the Bashar al-Assad regime. Trump also ended a war with a rare US victory, destroying the Islamic State. In contrast to Carter's tenure, during Trump's tenure, US adversaries *have not exploited the US predilection for peace*. Under Trump, Russia did not continue its 2014 invasion of Ukraine, Iran did not directly attack Israel, and North Korea stopped testing nuclear weapons as a result of diplomatic actions combined with military deterrence. China maintained an aggressive posture during Trump's tenure, but its leadership has understood that it cannot cross certain red lines without unacceptable costs. *"America first is not America alone"* is a slogan often used by the Trump administration. Trump recognizes the effectiveness of alliances, coalitions, and partnerships for a successful foreign policy. Trump's foreign and trade policy can be understood as a reaction to the ineffectiveness of *neoliberal internationalism*, or *globalism*, as implemented or used from the early 1990s to 2017. It is possible that a second term for Trump would constitute a return to *realism with a Jacksonian flavour* (O'Brien, 2024, p. 1).

The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS 2018) presents the *security environment and its features* that has influenced security doctrine. America has faced increased global disorder, characterized by the *decline* of the long-standing rules-based, free and open international order – creating a security environment more complex and volatile than any it has experienced in recent memory, *defined by*: 1. *overt challenges to the free international order* by adversaries seeking to shape it according to their authoritarian model; 2. *reemergence of long-term strategic competition among revisionist powers*. *Interstate strategic competition*, not terrorism, is *now the primary concern for US national security*. Other changes in the security environment include: a) *a resilient but weakened post-war international order*. Regimes such as those in North Korea and Iran – *"rogue regimes"* – are trying to destabilize regions, supported by revisionist powers using all dimensions of power; b) *challenges to US military advantage*; c) rapid *technological changes* and developments and regarding the nature of war; d) threats posed by *non-state actors* and the increasingly sophisticated capabilities they have access to; e) *national territory is no longer a sanctuary*; f) *"rogue regimes"* in authoritarian states



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Other changes in the security environment include: a resilient but weakened post-war international order; challenges to US military advantage; rapid technological changes and developments; threats posed by non-state actors and the increasingly sophisticated capabilities they have access to; national territory is no longer a sanctuary; "rogue regimes" in authoritarian states seek to develop weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical and biological.



The international environment has rarely seemed so dangerous, and the need for a strong and resolute American foreign policy has never been greater.

seek to develop weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical and biological. *Strategic Approach to NDS 2018*. A long-term strategic competition requires the seamless integration of multiple elements of national power – diplomacy, intelligence, economy, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, military and involves: 1. *developing a more lethal force*; 2. *strengthening alliances and attracting new partners, sustainable coalitions and long-term security partnerships*; 3. *reforming the Department of Defense* (Pompeo, 2018, pp. 1-4).

The Trump administration left a legacy of *economic nationalism*, *rejection of multilateralism*, and questioning of allies. The incoming administration will operate in a completely different context: *the definitive emergence of a multipolar world, the emergence of more powerful adversaries*, deepening domestic polarization, and withdrawal from many international organizations.

TRUMP 2.0 – CONTENTS, CHARACTERISTICS, KEY ASPECTS, IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The first signs of Trump's re-election as president suggested that he would prioritize a protectionist trade agenda, immigration, withdrawal from the agenda specific to multilateralism and involvement in resolving international conflicts, and American foreign policy would be increasingly nationalistic. Trump's second presidency marks a turning point: geopolitical considerations have become major determinants of international trade. In a world of global economic interdependence, acceptance of globalization as an irreversible dynamic, and transatlantic military alliances, Trump is determined to rewrite the rules of the game (Gomart, 2025, p. 28). Trump's second National Security Strategy (NSS 2025) represents a radical departure – both in substance and tone – from previous strategies – including NSS 2017. That document, along with its accompanying National Defense Strategy (NDS 2026), set a new course for US foreign policy, bringing to the forefront the concept of great power competition with China and Russia (Lissner, 2025, pp. 1-10).

The international environment has rarely seemed so dangerous, and the need for a strong and resolute American foreign policy has never been greater. *The possibility of a Third World War has never*

been greater. For this reason, a second term for Trump, built on the principle of “*peace through strength*”, will be welcome not only for American public opinion, but also for the free world at large. Trump’s former national security adviser, Robert O’Brien, presents *seven key principles* that will guide the new Trump administration: 1) there will be no argument and justification for *promoting American strength and national purpose* (the greatest sources of peace and stability around the world); 2) *rejection of the globalist agenda* that has had negative consequences for the USA – it has favoured China’s ambitions for global hegemony, immigration and has been to the benefit of the American establishment; 3) *China – the most dangerous threat to US interests* since the USSR. Trump will oppose China on everything from trade and Taiwan to revitalizing and expanding alliances in the Indo-Pacific region; 4) *returning to maximum pressure on Iran* to stop its support for *terrorist groups* in the Middle East (Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthi), limit its influence, and neutralize its nuclear program while supporting Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates; 5) a *dichotomous policy for Europe* to pressure Putin to end the war in Ukraine and strengthen NATO; 6) *rebuilding the US military*, including investing in high-tech weaponry and reforming government procurement; 7) *developing stronger ties with free-market democracies* around the world (Herman, 2024, pp. 1-7).

The long-awaited new National Security Strategy 2025 presents a vision that seeks to reconcile US global dominance but also includes some US *withdrawals* from some actions specific to America’s *global leadership role* for decades. The strategy’s single line – which at different times promotes and, at the same time, criticizes interventionism – promotes US ambitions. Trump’s new national security strategy, like the one from his first term, promotes the “*America first*” vision (Iyengar, 2024, pp. 1-3). NSS 2025, like NSS 2017, follows the general structure of a security doctrine. NSS 2025 together with NDS 2026 define the characteristics of a significant strategic effort, establish priorities, identify the most serious threats and allocate resources accordingly, correlating goals, ways and means in a realistic manner (Bowman, 2026, pp. 1-3). *The preamble to the National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 25 November 2025 (NSS 2025), presents a balance sheet of *Admiration*, highlighting the emblematic achievements



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of the “America First” vision. It calls the Strategy “a roadmap to ensure that America remains the greatest and most successful nation in human history and the home of freedom on earth” (Trump, 2025, pp. i-ii). The theoretical and practical body of the Trump 2.0 Security Doctrine has the following content:

I. Introduction – what is American strategy? I.1. How American “Strategy” Went Astray, explaining “what we are trying to do and why”. For the first time, the Strategy is defined “a strategy is a concrete, realistic plan that explains the essential connection between ends and means: it begins from an accurate assessment of what is desired and what tools are available, or can realistically be created, to achieve the desired outcomes” and the purpose is specified “The purpose of foreign policy is the protection of core national interests ...”. It makes a brief x-ray of the doctrines of his predecessors, highlighting certain weaknesses in contrast to the viability of his administration’s doctrine. I.2. President Trump’s Necessary, Welcome Correction. It stipulates that the United States of America will *continue* on the path of the *Trump Doctrine 1.0*, which is the *main goal of the second administration*. Finally, he names the *questions* that the current National Security Strategy must answer: 1) What should the United States of America want? 2) What are our available means to get it? and 3) How can we connect ends and means into a viable National Security Strategy? Each of these questions is the title of a chapter (Trump, 2025, pp. 1-3).

II. What should the United States of America want? II.1. What Do We Want Overall? Here, the following *needs* are listed for the promotion of *interests: survival and safety; protect this country, its people, its territory; control over the borders; resilient infrastructure; creation of the most powerful, lethal and technologically advanced armed forces in the world; maintenance of the most robust, credible and modern nuclear deterrent and missile defence in the world; economy – the strongest, most dynamic, innovative and most advanced in the world; industrial base – the absolute priority of national economic policy; energy sector – robust, productive and innovative; maintenance of primacy in the field of scientific and technological research; maintenance of the primacy of “soft power”; and, restoration and reinvigoration of American spiritual and cultural health.* II.2. *What Do We Want In and From the World?* Foreign policy is the focus

of the strategy, and the *Monroe Doctrine* is reaffirmed. America's *vital and fundamental national interests* in foreign policy are: *a) a stable, well-governed, cooperative Western Hemisphere free from hostile foreign incursions or seizure of key assets, and supporting critical supply chains and continued access to key strategic locations.* In conclusion, the *"Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine will be affirmed and applied; b) halting and reversing the damage to the American economy; c) supporting allies in preserving the freedom and security of Europe; d) preventing an adversary from dominating the Middle East; and, e) ensuring that American technology and standards – particularly in the areas of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and quantum computing – drive the world forward* (Trump, 2025, pp. 3-6).

III. What Are America's Available Means to Achieve What It Wants? America has the following *world-leading assets, resources, and advantages* at its disposal to *consolidate American power and preeminence: an agile political system; the world's largest and most innovative economy; the world's most important financial system and capital markets; the world's most advanced, innovative, and profitable technology sector; the world's most powerful and capable military; a broad network of alliances in key regions; an enviable geography; unparalleled "soft power" and cultural influence; and the courage, will, and patriotism of the American people* (Trump, 2025, pp. 6-8).

IV. Strategy. IV. 1. Principles. President Trump's foreign policy is *pragmatic* without being *"pragmatist"*, *realistic* without being *"realist"*, *principled* without being *"idealistic,"* *muscular* without being *"hawkish"* and *restrained* without being *"dovish"*. It is not anchored in *traditional political ideology. It is motivated* above all by what works for America – or, in two words, *"America First"*. *Stopping regional conflicts* before they escalate into global wars is a priority for this administration. President Trump has demonstrated, through evidence or argument, that *US foreign, defence, and intelligence policies* must be guided by the following *core principles*: focused definition of the national interest; peace through strength – strength is the best deterrent; predisposition to non-interventionism; flexible realism; the primacy of nations – the world's fundamental political unit is and will remain the nation-state; sovereignty and respect – the United States of America will unapologetically protect its own sovereignty; balance



The Strategy establishes the following priorities: the inalienable right of any country to develop and implement its own immigration policy; the protection of fundamental rights; the burden-sharing and burden-shifting of tasks and the distribution of responsibilities for collective defence; realignment through peace; economic security; reindustrialization, reviving of the defence industrial base, energy dominance, and preserving and growing America's financial sector dominance.

of power – the United States of America cannot allow any nation to become so dominant as to threaten its interests; pro-American workers; fairness; and, competence and merit. In subchapter IV.2. *Priorities, the Strategy* establishes the following *priorities*: the inalienable right of any country to develop and implement its own *immigration policy*; the protection of *fundamental rights and freedoms* that must never be violated; the *burden-sharing and burden-shifting* of tasks and the distribution of responsibilities for collective defence among allies in each region; realignment through peace; economic security – fundamental to national security, through: balanced trade, securing access to critical supply chains and materials; reindustrialization, reviving of the defence industrial base, energy dominance, and preserving and growing America's financial sector dominance (Ib., pp. 6-15). In subchapter IV.3. *Regions, the Strategy* selects regions that are relevant to *protecting America's fundamental national interests*. *The first region* that draws sustained US attention is "*The Western Hemisphere: The "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine*", a common-sense and robust restoration of American power and priorities, consistent with American security interests. Objectives for the Western Hemisphere can be summarized as "*Enlist and Expand*". *Enlist* – by recruiting regional champions (aligned with American principles and strategy) that can contribute to *building tolerable stability in the region*; and *Expand* – *strengthening partnerships* with countries with which America currently has strong relations while *expanding the network in the region*. The United States of America must be *preeminent* in the Western Hemisphere as a condition of security and prosperity – a condition that allows it to *act confidently and firmly where and when need to in the region*. It describes the determination to ensure that the Western Hemisphere is not manipulated and dominated by China. The content of the "*Trump Corollary*" was presented in Chapter 1 (Ib., pp. 15-19). *The second region* presented is "*Asia: win the economic future, prevent military confrontation*", which highlights the inadequate approaches of previous administrations towards China. America, capitalizing on its extraordinary assets, will *build and strengthen alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region – the cornerstone of security and prosperity*. *The main directions* of action will be: *Leading from a position of strength*;



Economy: The ultimate stake. The United States of America must protect and defend its economy and people from any danger from any country or source and collaborate with allies and partners – India, Australia, Japan, South Korea – to maintain its privileged position in the world economy; and, *Deterring Military Threats.* “America First” diplomacy seeks to *rebalance* global trade relations and *deter military threats*. In the long term, *maintaining American economic and technological supremacy is the surest way to deter and prevent a large-scale military conflict*. Taiwan provides direct access to the Second Island Chain (Japan, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Indonesia) and divides Northeast and Southeast Asia into two distinct theatres. *Deterring conflict over Taiwan, preferably by maintaining military superiority, is a priority – firm and direct language. The USA will build a military capable of deterring aggression anywhere in the First Island Chain (Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, Brunei) or control of the South China Sea – a related security challenge. Strong cooperation with India, Japan, South Korea to protect the First Island Chain. It will also strengthen military presence in the Western Pacific by cooperating with Taiwan and Australia. (Ib., pp. 19-25). The third region that matters – Europe – is mentioned in the Strategy “Promoting European Greatness” where the main problems facing Europe are highlighted: insufficient military spending and economic stagnation (political freedom and sovereignty, migration policies, freedom of expression and political opposition, birth rates and national identity and self-confidence). Managing European relations with Russia will require significant diplomatic engagement by the USA, both to restore the conditions of strategic stability throughout the Eurasian territory and to mitigate the risk of conflict between Russia and European states. The war in Ukraine had the perverse effect of increasing Europe’s external dependencies, especially Germany’s. The US goal should be to support Europe in correcting its current trajectory (Ib., pp. 25-27). The fourth region covered in the Strategy – The Middle East: Shift Burdens, Build Peace – begins by presenting the reasons why it was prioritized in the past (energy supplier, main theatre of superpower competition, and site of many conflicts that threatened to spread). Today, at least two of these dynamics no longer apply: energy supply and superpower competition. Conflict remains the most problematic*

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dynamic in the Middle East, although the region no longer represents, to the same extent as in the past, a source of permanent tensions and a potential imminent trigger for events with catastrophic global consequences. *The last region* mentioned is Africa. The region is important for developing *partnerships, ameliorating conflicts, capitalizing on natural resources, and promoting mutually beneficial trade relations* (Ib., pp. 27-29).

In its first year, it achieved remarkable results in the following areas: securing America's borders and putting Americans first; keeping communities safe; rebuilding an economy for Americans and supporting American industry; boosting American innovation, research, and technology; reaffirming American leadership on the world stage; building a modern military; governing at the service of the people; and energy dominance (The White House, 2026, pp. 1-30).

TRUMP 1.0, TRUMP 2.0 – RADICAL CHANGES, MODERATE CHANGES, CONTINUITIES AND OMISSIONS

"Continuity" is not the same as *"inertia"*. Inertia resists and delays change. Continuity of principles, however, strengthens any transition (Bishop, 2015, p. 1). The Trump administration presented its new strategic documents NSS 2025 (*Trump II*), NDS 2026 (the second policy document) as *a break* from those of the first term. Russia, Europe and climate change are no longer found as elements requiring a precise assessment or a relevant response from the USA, but hemispheric security and the transfer of tasks to allies are included. Many changes are indeed substantial, even *radical*, and others are more *moderate*, with some *continuity* with previous strategic documents (Cancian, 2026, pp. 1-10). NSS 2025 along NDS 2026, establish the second Trump administration *vision of the world*, political goals and hypothetical ways to meet them.

Radical changes: Homeland Security and the Western Hemisphere are elevated to the rank of absolute priority. The focus on the Western Hemisphere is perhaps the biggest change in the document, as was the case in 1987, 1990, and 2006, the increased presence in the Caribbean is not a *temporary* increase but a *permanent* feature, and the forces will come from lower-priority theatres of operations, such as Europe and the Middle East (Lissner, 2025, pp. 8-10). Europe is handed

over to the Europeans to defend, with the support of the United States of America. The strategy does not see *China, Russia, or North Korea* as relevant factors that would determine their placement at the centre of American strategy (Cancian, 2026, p. 1). In Trump 1.0, China was the *main focus* for both the national security and trade goals of the administration, adopting a more competitive and tough policy towards China. In Trump 2.0 he has adopted a softer line and it is no longer given the same importance due to the effects of the first term and the security environment that is very different. The language about the Indo-Pacific region, China, Asia and Taiwan is not about isolation or withdrawal. China's threats to Taiwan are also *a threat* to US interests and an affront to whoever is in the Oval Office. The US attack on the Iranian nuclear program and the action in Venezuela are generally very useful for the credibility of US commitments around the world. Robert O'Brien, considers Trump to be a *"reverse Kissinger"* – trying to separate Russia from China and detach Xi from Putin (Feith, 2026, pp. 1,11, 21, 22).

NSS 2025 makes no explicit reference to *great power competition*. It adopts a considerably more conciliatory tone toward competitors, framing the challenge as *"managing Europe's relations with Russia"* and working to *"rebalance America's economic relationship with China"*. The implication is that the United States of America is less focused on *strategic competition* and more open to *spheres of influence*. NSS 2025 focuses overwhelmingly on the Western Hemisphere, trade, immigration, and other issues close to home (Anderson, 2025, pp. 1-2). *"Trump Corollary"* to *Monroe Doctrine* will be affirmed and applied. NDS 2026 criticizes allies for cutting defence spending, investing instead in public welfare and other domestic programs, and shifting the burden of defence to the United States of America. NDS 2026 offers a dual assessment of Russia: *a continuing but weakened threat* to NATO's eastern front, and a country *whose nuclear arsenal poses a threat to US territory*. Russia is no longer considered a *major geopolitical rival* as it was under the first administration – it has moved from the status of a *"revisionist power"* in 2018 to the status of *"a persistent but manageable threat to NATO's eastern members"* in 2026 (Hegseth, 2026, pp. 1-15). The era of great power competition with China and Russia, from the NSS 2017 (*Trump I*), ended in the NSS



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2025 to benefit domestic priorities. The NSS 2025 makes it clear that the economy is the *“ultimate stake”*, with geopolitics relegated to a secondary role with regard to China – which is no longer framed as a *systemic challenge*, with a vision of the world order incompatible with US interests, and is considered primarily an *economic competitor*. The NSS 2017 highlighted Iran and North Korea as *second-tier* threats, the NSS 2025 does not mention North Korea at all and downplays the danger posed by Iran. The NSS 2025 states that US foreign policy will focus largely on limiting *three threats: mass migration, organized crime* and *“hostile foreign incursion”*. NSS 2025 suggests a *“civilizational”* approach as the main *lens* through which it analyses its relationship with Europe (Lissner, 2025, pp. 2-8, 10).

Moderate changes: Missile defence expands with new *“Golden Dome”* concept. North Korea is seen as a threat, but mainly for South Korea and Japan, USA only assesses missile capabilities that can strike US territory. Shift from *“compete, deter, and win”* approach, prioritizing *“great power competition”* to *“America First”* approach prioritizing *“national and hemispheric security”*. The second Trump administration is less confrontational, focusing on deterrence and *“peace through strength”*. Global terrorism, in NDS 2018 (*Trump I*), is a *“persistent condition”* but no longer a *“primary concern”* and in NDS 2026 (*Trump II*) terrorist organizations *“severely degraded... continue to adapt and pose a credible threat”* (Park, 2026, pp. 2, 5, 11-13). NSS 2025 places a greater emphasis on Taiwan than NSS 2017, and on deterring Chinese aggression against the island, while maintaining the ability to defeat aggression anywhere in the *First Island Chain* – a priority, and uses some fairly harsh language (Lissner, 2025, p. 10).

Among the actions leading to *a change* in the sense of those presented above, we can also mention: reconsidering the value of certain allies, especially those in Europe, and the *“transactionalization”* of these relationships; diminishing support for regional or multilateral trade agreements and the World Trade Organization; selective indifference to the promotion of universal values; preference for *hard power*, especially military power, to the detriment of *soft power*. Trump emphasized the *“America First”* vision and the concept of *national sovereignty*, reduced funding for US *foreign assistance* programs, and ordered the US withdrawal from several agreements: trade, climate,



Iran, migration, cooperation with the International Criminal Court, or the Optional Protocol on the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. He had critical assessments of the value of allies, of the NATO Alliance; he demonstrated an apparent reluctance to criticize Russia and an apparent determination to improve relations with Russia, despite some of its controversial actions; he achieved a US disengagement from the conflict in Syria and the acceptance of Russia as a major intermediary in the Syrian situation and in the Middle East in general; the absence from certain human rights forums associated with *inconsistent statements* in support of democracy and human rights or against the practices of authoritarian and illiberal governments; the US withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council (O'Rourke, 2019, pp. 1-5).

Continuity – consistency: The second Trump administration maintains the position that China – mentioned in the strategy 21 times – is a formidable military and economic power, “*the second most powerful country in the world*” and in the 2018 NDS China is a “*revisionist power*” and “*strategic competitor*” (Cancian, 2026, pp. 1, 11). Among the actions leading to less change and *more continuity* can be mentioned: NSS 2017 highlights competition with China and Russia and strong support for US alliances; NDS 2018 includes a perspective on the US role in the world, generally consistent with the US role over the past 70 years; The October 2018 Counterterrorism Strategy can be considered largely consistent with the counterterrorism strategies of previous administrations; the continuation of US military operations in Afghanistan and the Middle East; statements by senior US officials reaffirming US support for NATO; improving US military capabilities in Europe to deter potential Russian aggression in Europe; encouraging NATO allies to spend more on defence; implementing additional sanctions against Russia in response to its actions; more aggressive, hostile policy toward China and assistance programs to counter its influence in Africa, Asia, and the Americas; promoting the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific region (O'Rourke, 2019, pp. 8-10).

NSS 2025 sees China as a serious and ongoing problem – one that is striving to dominate the Indo-Pacific region, and one that poses a technological challenge. The USA wants to maintain room for negotiation with China, even though China is an obstacle to achieving

The second Trump administration maintains the position that China – mentioned in the strategy 21 times – is a formidable military and economic power, “the second most powerful country in the world” and in the 2018 NDS China is a “revisionist power” and “strategic competitor”.



NDS 2026 considers modernization of the industrial base, improvement of nuclear capabilities, and missile defence to be essential, citing a “changing global nuclear landscape” marked by a massive Russian arsenal, Chinese expansion, Iranian ambitions, and North Korea’s growing capability.

most of its goals. A theme that runs throughout the document is the desire for stability and keeping the lines of communication open, but not at the cost of undermining American interests (Schadlow, 2025, pp. 1-2). NSS 2025 calls for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region. It firmly continues its long-standing and consistent support for Taiwan and *deterrence of conflict over Taiwan* and countering China, meaning that the *USA does not support any unilateral change* to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait (Cancian, 2026, p. 1). NSS 2025 does not see the Middle East as a focal point of US policy – a position supported by Trump during his three presidential campaigns – but as a theatre of operations with reduced potential, but with Iran and terrorism continuing to attract attention. NDS 2026 maintains the concept of *two conflicts* of recent decades – a lasting reference for decision-makers – but *transfers* the second conflict to the responsibility of allies and does not see a conventional conflict with Russia or North Korea. The 1993 “Bottom-Up Review” report introduced the “two-war” concept, sizing the armed forces to “*fight and win two major regional conflicts ... simultaneously*” (Cancian, 2026, pp. 17- 18).

NDS 2026, in terms of *simultaneous conflicts*, recognizes the “*problem of simultaneity*” and the need “*to be prepared for the possibility that one or more potential adversaries may act together in a coordinated or opportunistic manner in multiple theatres of operations*”. NDS 2026 continues the “*one plus*” approach to conflict, but with one adaptation: responsibility for the second conflict will be transferred to US allies. Thus, if the United States of America is involved in a conflict with China, defending Europe against any Russian aggression will be the responsibility of Europeans. Preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons has been a foreign policy goal for several administrations since the 1979 revolution. Similarly, administrations have considered North Korea a threat since the beginning of the Korean War in 1950. NDS 2026 considers modernization of the industrial base, improvement of nuclear capabilities, and missile defence to be essential, citing a “*changing global nuclear landscape*” marked by a massive Russian arsenal, Chinese expansion, Iranian ambitions, and North Korea’s growing capability. *Force Structure and Posture*: The priority given to national defence and the Western Hemisphere

in NDS 2026 will result in changes to the location of US military forces – for example, establishing a long-term presence in the Caribbean, expanding bases in Greenland, and eventually a permanent presence in Panama (Cancian, 2026, pp. 13-17).

Omissions: The absence of diversity, equity, inclusion, and climate change were expected. Surprising are the omission of any mention of the all-volunteer force or the Department for Government Efficiency (Ib., p. 2).

CONCLUSIONS

The intensification and diversification of US competition with China and the Russian Federation over the last decade, frequently referred to as *great power competition* or *strategic competition*, has generated profound changes or emphasis in the Trump administration's security doctrines with implications for foreign policy, grand strategy, geopolitics, diplomacy, trade and finance, energy and foreign assistance, and ultimately the global order.

President Trump's approach to *US involvement* in world affairs and *the American world order* established by President Woodrow Wilson at the end of the First World War – which American presidents have followed in one way or another – is different, highlighting a much more drastic acceleration of withdrawal from the USA's historical position as a key global superpower, although the NDS 2026 mentions *America's preeminence*. Donald Trump's trade protectionism – he has overturned the global order – is distinctive and different from what has been done so far in multilateral economic diplomacy or in the previous trade policies of other countries.

In the post-Cold War period, America, as *the sole superpower*, had two options to maintain its status as a global leader: either *directly confronting* the rising power or *avoiding adversaries*, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. Donald Trump does not intend to confront China, but the history of his actions argues that if the situation evolves and reaches a certain point that does not allow the development of options without the use of force and at the same time advantageous for US interests, he will *not hesitate to act militarily* against China.



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