

TRUMP’S SECOND TERM AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL SECURITY

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**Abstract**

The return of President Trump brought many shifts in US foreign policy and turned global concerns into a new chapter. A new phase of economic war opened especially with China putting 52% tariff and 10pc baseline tariff on all countries. If this new wave of economic war rocks the globe but the US generates \$2 billion per day which is a boom for the US economy yet a push for the world to a brink of isolation. A shift in the future of arms race and security for NATO and in the EU has been rising and expanding. He suspended USAID, one of the US global programs that benefited millions of needy people, withdrew from the world health organisation and U-turned the US foreign policy. The tensions in the middle east are on higher peak than ever though the Russian-Ukraine Peace Deal and US-Iran direct negotiations about Iran nuclear program is expected to be a hope for global security. This paper will extensively and deeply explore the consequences of the new turn in the US foreign policy, its advantages for domestic and global development, especially global security. President Trump shocked global security and markets but proved the goal of “Make America Great” by dealing over the Panama Canal, targeting houthis in the middle east, evacuating millions of migrants and cutting off US foreign aid. This paper will also discuss how this unprecedented shift in the US foreign policy would take the US to a corner, boost domestic economy and security, push the world to a unilateral system and how it could impact the global security and arms race. The paper uses a qualitative approach analysing secondary data including articles, reports, news and primary data derived from limited semi-structured interviews with scholars and professors in the relevant field via email.

**INTRODUCTION**

The second term of President Trump shocked the whole world by immediately issuing executive orders to bring a huge shift in US foreign policy to focus on national interest domestically. He suspended one of the most historical global programs which benefited millions of needy people: USAID. However, it was not just one order, limiting or withdrawing from the World

Health Organization (WHO) was another blow to global health especially in developing countries. This research article will deeply analyze the impact of Trump’s strict policies and how it dragged the US from a multilateral approach to a unilateral approach in the realm of soft and hard power.

It has mainly centered on four major issues which could have global and domestic implications: first, a shift in the US Foreign Policy. Second, the Russia-Ukraine Peace Deal and Foreign Policy of the US. Third, a Shift in the Global Arms Race and the Role of the US. Fourth, US Strategy and the Middle-East Case. Each topic has been deeply analyzed the causes, implications and consequences using secondary data such as news, reports, articles, books and limited primary data derived from semi-structured interviews with scholars and professors in the relevant field, via email.

“There are major questions facing U.S. foreign policy – and the second Trump administration – in 2025. Efforts to resolve conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, relations with China, and global economic challenges will all test the United States and its policymakers. Members of the Reimagining U.S. Grand Strategy team examined assumptions that they believe are central to U.S. foreign policy and will likely be tested in 2025.” (Matamis, 2025).

The Trump Administration promised to bring peace and stability in Ukraine and the Middle East by putting an end to the involvement of the US in foreign wars. However, it tried to broker a deal between the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The deal was focused on a direct, face-to-face diplomacy which President Trump favored the most. They also wanted to close a deal with Ukraine to sign contracts for minerals between Ukraine and the US to help Ukraine build their economy. This article will examine the strategies and efforts President Trump utilized to bring President Putin to the negotiating table and boost the US economy by brokering a deal between Ukraine and Russia.

A shift in the US foreign policy is not only benefiting the domestic economy of the US but also impacting the global arms race. Limiting US contribution to the NATO defense expenses has not only warned the European countries but prepared them to enhance their internal security and increase their defense budget. This has already been implemented by Germany. However, this article will analyze how the

withdrawal or limited contribution of the US to the NATO could escalate the arms race across European nations and undermine the leadership role of the US as a global player.

Ultimately, the US strategy and the Middle East case is one of the major ongoing conflicts that needs to be brokered. The Trump government has promised to put an end to the Israel-Hamas conflict, abolish Houthis in Yemen and stop Iran from achieving nuclear weapons but the situations not only remained unresolved, it worsened. The final topic of this article will critically examine how Israel’s attack on Iran sabotaged Iran’s nuclear talks and gave them an opportunity to enhance their defense capabilities, withdraw from the NPT, and pave the way to pursue nuclear weapons and what its regional and global implications will be.

### **A shift in the US Foreign Policy**

As the return of President Trump shocked everyone and surprisingly won the 2024 election, a shift in his foreign policy surprised the whole world too. He stood firm to promote his ideology of “Make America Great Again” and made strict, steadfast decisions the day he took the office, and issued executive orders the same day he took an oath. Immediately, he dismissed one of the major US foreign funding and aid departments “USAID” providing humanitarian, health and educational programs to millions especially children in the conflict zone. It left behind thousands Americans, foreigners jobless and put hundreds of nonprofit organizations at stake. Cutting this aid off affected thousands of lives, putting the world in danger since the US is the champion of Humanitarian Aid. Many countries particularly Sudan, Syria, Gaza, the Democratic Republic of Congo and educational institutions were provided assistance through this historical program. Millions of schools were shut overnight only in Lebanon, they mainly relied heavily on USAID. Somehow, it will indirectly impact all of us and especially cause havoc to children in war torn countries and also in war zones. Rob Williams, CEO of the War Child Alliance explains why:

“A 90 day suspension means there is a 90 day interruption of funds flowing to the organisation delivering it. NGOs and their local partners do not have sufficient cash reserves to cover this gap from their own resources. They are forced to cut their staff and stop their work. Food is not delivered. People starve. “Even organisations who can bridge the cash flow gap have no certainty that the funding they rely on will eventually come back. There is a lot of confusion. The chaos and unpredictability mean local partners and even some large NGOs will be forced to close.”(War Child, 2025).

Freezing funds for the foreign aid and dismissing USAID has already alarmed thousands of humanitarian services. Over 100,000 pregnant women would not only face the death themselves but also their babies who were facilitated the essential care through USAID. 40 nutritious centers in crisis areas such as Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Afghanistan would be facing challenges to stay alive who would receive medical support, special foods like peanut paste to help them recover, and malnutrition prevention support for families 24/7. Infectious diseases like malaria, dengue and HIV/AIDS would spread across the borders if not prevented and managed properly and 3,300 facilities only at IRC could be collapsed. (IRC, 2025). Moreover, president Trump called on Canada to become the 51th state of the United States which was provoking for the Canadians and they harshly denied and condemned it. This isn't just a friendly invitation to annex Canada with the US but a clash between these decades' long neighbouring allies over an island. “Machias Seal Island is a tiny dot on maps of North America. But the fogbound rock is significant for its location in an area known as the "Grey Zone" – the site of a rare international dispute between Canada and the United States ".( Zurcher,2025). During the new election in Canada, the recent statement of President Trump sparked the passion for electing a suitable candidate. He not only offered Canada zero tariffs but also showed that funding Canada for security and defense purposes would be hard for the United States to continue. "Look how beautiful this land mass

would be. Free access with NO BORDER. ALL POSITIVES WITH NO NEGATIVES. IT WAS MEANT TO BE!" This was not only condemned by many republicans domestically but immediately became controversial in Canada as well. (BNN, 2025).

President Trump not only showed interest in Canada but also demanded control over the Panama Canal because in the 20th century, the United States had naval passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans which was and is strategically important for the US even in terms of climate change. Panama spent \$6 billion to build infrastructures and expand globally. Since President Trump is a businessman and pledged to boost the US economy, he is trying to gain control back on the Panama Canal which was given to Panamanians during the president Carter and Omar Torrijos treaty in 1997. It is not only important to enhance the US economy but also due to the economic war between China and the US for a Chinese company C.K. Hutchinson won a bid to construct and manage the new ports. This will allow the US to renew the treaty, gain control over the Panama Canal, enhance shipping between Atlantic and Pacific oceans and compete with China's dominance. This gain and control will also help the US boost its influence in Latin America and strengthen their economic security. This deal will link the US with the East and West Coasts economically. (Hausmann, 2025). Trump also curtailed the relations with NATO which is unilateral in the US foreign policy but will add \$600 bn to the US economy if fully withdrawn. President Trump alarmed all allies of NATO in his first term that burdening the US to lift huge part of the economic expenses would be hard to continue and all others should take equal part. Now, in his second term, this will be another bold and unilateral step to be taken if withdraw from NATO which was a significant alliance 75 years ago and vital for the security of the EU and Americas. However, to withdraw from such key treaty, involving a two third majority would be needed from the congress or court will be halting his ways if he take an executive step. This is going to put the UK and France in the line to lead and be the ones leading

the EU and governing NATO which would never be welcomed by the dominant nature of the US nor president Trump fully withdraw from the treaty. All he tries is to boom the economy of the US and take it into a high peak of the globe. (Peck, M. 2025)

These shifts are not only based on security purposes but merely an economic boost and saving billions of dollars the US has been dispatching worldwide, and that led president Trump to withdraw from the World Health Organization. In the first 26 days of the executive orders, all communications were cut off with the World Health Organisation which works for better health worldwide, putting and dividing the burden of funding on other veto powers' shoulders. It's a shocking step for the experts that leaves hundreds of aid workers and the people who greatly were backed by WHO in an unprecedented and unknown situation. This not only limited the part of the US contribution but also affected millions of people facilitated by this organization. USAID not only contributed to the development globally but also worked with many non-governmental and private organisations to distribute vaccines and medicines worldwide. Cutting it off will not only engadget millions of lives but fragile national security. USAID helped the world fight against smallpox which killed one third of the people, made policies to invest in research and development for properly handling pandemics and epidemics. Contributed to eradicating polio worldwide which also saved US\$ 27 billion in 2017 and will save up to \$50 billion by 2035 and provided assistance to better handle and cure dangerous diseases. This whole shift in the US foreign policy will cause a diplomatic turn in favor of China since they heavily invested in Asia and Africa through its Belt and Road Initiative. It will be challenging for the US to gain its foreign policy objectives. (Hassoun, 2025)

The president also announced a 10pc baseline tariff on all countries other than Canada and Mexico, especially 125% on China that concerned them and made them take the same action. To compete with China, the United States needs more than tariffs and economic

rivalries. The former Biden administration officials say "it will take a full suite of economic incentives, public-private partnerships, and investment and trade deals to reduce the United States' and its partners' reliance on China. U.S. partners, concerned about Chinese influence themselves, are eager to work with Washington. If Trump can embrace a more ambitious economic and trade policy, his second term can supercharge the global shift away from dependence on Chinese supply, bolstering the U.S. economy and enhancing U.S. national security" , (Lindsay,2025).This turn in the US foreign policy does not only affect the globe but has domestic implications too. The withdrawal from Asia and Europe, and imposing tariffs especially on China, Canada, European Countries and India will have retaliatory measures that will hit severe inflation and price hikes in the US, (Ahmar, 2025).

## **The Russia-Ukraine Peace Deal and Foreign Policy of the US**

It has been three years since Russia escalated a full scale war in Ukraine that started in 2014 when they annexed Crimea. Taking proper measures for a peace deal to bring a perpetual peace in Ukraine were not properly practiced but the new Trump administration is moving forward strategically to bring peace in Ukraine, signing a deal full of minerals and resources with Ukraine and opening new doors with Russia. To close a permanent deal, Trump is dragging Putin to face the peace process himself and attend the dialogue which may be odd and unexpected if it happens. This peace deal will be hard and simple if both President Trump and Putin do not meet, though it will be an accomplishment in the foreign policy of the US. This move will not only allow the US to be champion of peace, promoting soft power over hard power and gaining billions rather than dispatching millions of dollars to Ukraine and backing it militarily. (Rawnsley, 2025).

Trump in his first term made it clear that he prefers direct diplomacy and face to face deal over traditional and multilateral ways. This peace, with straightforward and Trump style of diplomacy can make it possible to take place but

will also put US credibility at stake in front of their allies if in favour of Russia. Russia will be eased with sanctions and granted the annexed parts of Ukraine which is a price and a compromise for achieving historical peace and an unprecedented economic deal. This critical and strategically important deal surfed over a few short term and long term essential points and consequences: first, Brokering a deal with Russia will be a win for Trump's leadership and victory in his foreign policy. Second, the deal in favor of Russia will not only harm the credibility of the US domestically but also with key NATO allies and even Ukraine. Third, close ties with Russia will create a distance between Washington and most important allies who stood firm against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Fourth, the deal could open renewed conflicts if sovereignty of Ukraine is compromised and will cause long term instability if forced into the deal. Fifth, brokering a final deal and installing peace in Ukraine will give a positive message not only to Russia but to the whole world that the US is still willing to promote traditional western policy lines and promote soft diplomacy. (Anonymous, Email Interview, April 20,2025)

Moreover, the current US president's policy adopts a transactional nature. This means that the policy is largely about give and take. While the Russia-Ukraine war could possibly end, Trump's administration is likely to make a win-win deal with both Russia and Ukraine. This is possible through direct diplomatic approaches. Which is where the US wants to leverage the triangular game. What President Trump wants is to ensure that President Putin adheres to the peace deal's terms and conditions to end the war. Ukraine on the other hand wants peace as well as a place in NATO mainly to mitigate future security risks from Russia. Russia on the other hand wants certain western regions of Ukraine which Europe sees as a dubious move - making Russia territorially closer to the rest of Europe. The US in return wants to seize control of and invest in the natural reserves of Ukraine. This way the US can compensate for the financial contribution it has made in Ukraine in its war against the Russian occupation. Such a skirmish

makes all sides cynical of the peace deal. For example, if the deal only protects Russian interests, it may harm US's validation in Europe. In case the deal favors Ukraine, Russia is likely to step up for another war and raise questions about the long-term stability of such a deal. In case the Trump's administration wins the game by convincing Ukraine and Russia to accept the deal, it may open a new chapter with Russia. This as a result will cost Europe in terms of being vulnerable to the economic seizure of the US, the political prey of Russia. (Anonymous, Email Interview, April, 2025).

Russia, on the other hand, is not specifically desiring to have low level meetings with the US and easily put an end to this long war. They have annexed mainly four territories of the Ukraine and have full control over them. To recognize these areas as part of Russia is the first condition to a longer peace and the end of the war including keeping away Ukraine from becoming a part of Ukraine. However, Russia is seemingly and desirably trying to face a high level direct talks with the US not only to discuss and resolve the issue of Ukraine but to have concerns and discussions over wider or global security and Russia to be welcomed as a global player. (Baunov,2025)

President Trump has been fulfilling his promises he made during the election to bring all the parties to a table of negotiations, broker a peace deal and open a new chapter with Russia for the boost of the US economy. Bringing peace will not only benefit the US to have economic ties with Russia but the joint mineral deal with Ukraine will bring the two countries closer and together , politically and economically. However , the ongoing war to be ended with the mediation and help of the US can be achieved with: to provide enough economic and military support to the Ukraine and show that the US is firmly standing by the Ukrainian people, any economic pressure on China or a possible deal to stop sending weapons to Russia and a glimpse of more sanctions in case if Putin does not show any positive response to end the war and lastly to give a hint to the Russian President that Ukraine will likely be the part of NATO and article V of the

NATO be applied to involve all the western countries in the protection of Ukraine. Bringing positive peace may take time but it's not impossible, these steps will not only show that the US is seriously working towards a peace but will bring Putin to a table of negotiations to put an end to this long standing war in Ukraine. (O'Hanlon,2025).

## **A Shift in the Global Arms Race and the Role of the US**

A shift in global security has been taking place and the world order has been shifted and intensified more than a pandemic, climate change by a multipolarity that is impacted by economic and political influence of the new world players including China, India and Russia. China by its economic strategies like BRI, India by its growing economy and independent foreign policy and Russia in Ukraine are shaping their places in the global order as key players. This shift also has an impact on the evolving deterrence and strategic stability of South Asia (Gul et al, 2021). Despite them, Turkey and Brazil are influencing regional and middle states by their economic and military advancement undermining the supremacy of the western in specific regions. These rising powers not only fade the supremacy of the US but push it to a corner of singular power to lose its influence in certain regions where the US has the ability to influence each state on its own. The US, to sustain its global influence and dominance, to be reliable in controlling global terrorism, security, pandemic and climate change; they need to readjust their foreign policy to counter the shift in the global security, arms race, world order and extremism, because the US has challenging plights: war in Ukraine, Gaza and these challenges can only be resolved when build partnerships, response to the global issues, collectively and strategically move forward as a global leader. President Trump believes in "America First" which is only focussing on domestic growth and limiting foreign involvement in conflicts pave a bridge to resolve conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. This also means that the focus is on bringing peace and stability

in certain regions where only the national interests of the US are seen and benefited. This shift in the US foreign policy will boost its domestic security and economy but will allow the emerging powers and especially the EU to equip militarily and build arms if the US isolated itself. (Serhal & Alkhaja,2024)

The shift in the US foreign policy in terms of NATO and EU to boost security and strengthen the defense budget is not something odd or immediate but President Trump in his first term alarmed the NATO allies to share the burden of the expenses for security purposes. This time, it's more strategic and autonomous to let the EU increase their defense capabilities, independently enhance their military in order to compete with China in all terms. Dr. Rabia Akhtar, professor of IR and Dean of Faculty of Social Science at the University of Lahore explained that a shift in U.S. foreign policy is happening which is marked by intense strategic competition with China but also a recalibration of transatlantic commitments. It has encouraged discussions in the EU about strategic autonomy and enhanced defense capabilities of their own. This shift is not entirely new though. Washington, during Trump 1.0, had encouraged European NATO countries to increase their defense spending and burden-sharing.

However, Europe is now thinking one step ahead, not only about rearmament but building their own independent nuclear posture in case U.S. extended deterrence loses its credibility and U.S. cuts NATO funding. A parallel deterrence architecture in Europe will certainly strain the alliance. It will further undermine arms control norms. If Europe breaks out, other U.S. allies who rely on U.S. extended deterrence will also rethink their own security and may feel compelled to follow. The world will then be looking at a renewed arms race with multiple players, especially U.S. allies, South Korea and Japan. While it may not be a direct threat to U.S. national security, global nonproliferation norms will erode in the absence of credible security guarantees and extended deterrence arrangements with the U.S. losing global

influence. (R.Akhtar, personal Communication, April 17, 2025).

“Trump woke up Europe, whether he intended or not,” Aron told RFE/RL. “The Europeans don't like it, but actually, the end result was, I think, salutary.” Trump's strategic decision to reduce or cut off defense expenses to NATO woke up Europe. This halt will also get Germany, the second largest economy in NATO on board, to expand its defense budget. However, Trump's move is not only to contribute less for the NATO expenses but to shift his focus into the Asia-Pacific to deter China. (Aron, 2025).

So, any strategic move by President Donald Trump to withdraw from such a historical and strategic partnership of NATO will harm the credibility of the US for the EU but this won't be the case. The US may cut off or reduce the financial assistance to NATO but fully withdrawing will be a more bold and in terms of strategic security position, a blaming step. This stepping down will allow the EU countries to act themselves and enhance their defense capabilities as Germany is expanding their capabilities. Adil Sultan, Professor of Strategic Studies Dean Faculty of Aerospace and Strategic Studies (FASS) Air University Islamabad, explained that the US may no longer be seen as a credible ally by the EU and some countries are already thinking of building their own capabilities or to forge a new military alliance, consisting of EU members. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by EU members may be problematic, but there could be a possibility of a new EU conventional force, where France may be willing to offer a nuclear umbrella. Such an arrangement, if it happens, will not be in the US interest as it would like to keep the EU dependent on the US. (A.Sultan, personal Communication, May 02, 2025).

### **US Strategy and the Middle-East Case**

The Middle East Case for the 2.0 Trump is not only strategic, essential but challenging and conflicting even more than before which is not only Israel-Hamas conflicts but to tackle down Houthis in Yemen, help Syria to rebuild, containment of Iran from building nuclear weapons and also settle Israel-Saudi disputes

because he prioritized the region to relieve it from any kind of conflicts and instabilities. Bringing Hamas and Israel into a table of negotiations, dealing with Iran and bringing stability in the Middle East will strengthen US credibility but to fail will lose the influence in the region. However, since Trump is more focussed on the economy, making economic oriented policies, the Middle East plays that role to sharpen the strategies and install new phases. The approach to bringing stability in the region unilaterally might contribute to losing the dominant position but to align with regional partners can guarantee more than just peace: regional partnership, stability, and economic gains. (Katulis, 2025).

The Iran backed Houthis in Yemen which pose a serious threat to the security and military of the US especially in the Red Sea because they are around one of the most strategic ship lanes: Bab al Mandab Strait, one of the world's most active shipping lanes. Trump tried to calm them down and de-escalate the conflict when he ordered them to strike. This shift in the US policy and strategy that redesignated Houthis as Foreign Terrorist Organisation in March 2025 paved a way to fully strike them and bring them down. However, the assistance from Iran let them prepare again and continue to disturb traffic in the Red Sea, attacked Israel and targeted the US unmanned aircrafts. President Trump to mitigate these security threats from Iran backed Houthis will not only enhance maritime security in the Red Sea to boost trade but will put an end to a historical war which took 377,0000 lives till 2022. The threat from Houthis to the interests of the US, middle eastern regions and humanitarian crisis is predictable if not eliminated. (Blanchard, C. M., 2025, April 17).

“While the ongoing Oman process between the U.S. and Iran is a positive development, the threat of Iran's nuclearization still looms. There are three reasons why this is the case. First, the trust deficit between the two parties is hard to mitigate. Iran remembers Trump's first term and his approach toward the Iran nuclear deal in particular and Iran in general. Second, Trump's threats of military coercion will make Iran more

vulnerable, with hardliners, including Ali Khamenei, likely to see nuclear weapons as their best deterrent. Third, the disintegration of its Axis of Resistance has left it with no other option but to get a deterrent of its own. All of this means that jingoism must give way to prudence and deft diplomacy". (Jaffery,2025). Unfortunately, the sixth round of talks scheduled to take place in Oman , ruined by the Israeli strikes on Iran's nuclear program and military leadership was not only a sabotage but to force Iran to hold back from even building nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and change the regime in Iran which was backed by Donald Trump. This attack not only left the negotiations shattered and incomplete but created a robust distrust between the United States and Iran which is a rising power in the middle east. Dismissing this negotiation by Iran after Israel killed several military leaders will not raise a question on the credibility and joint missions of US-Israel but also halt President Donald Trump to take the credit of bringing peace in the middle east and stopping Iran from building nuclear weapons. On the other hand, NPT allows all the signatory states to use nuclear energy for civilian purposes but Israel and US forcing Iran not to even have it; is discriminatory which undermines the supremacy of the US because Israel itself is a nuclear weapon state. (Millar, 2025)

The efforts to force Iran not to pursue nuclear weapons are going to be failed with the Israel strikes. It gave Iran an opportunity to withdraw from the NPT mentioning the real threat from Israel and thier national interest are at stake.They will be free from any global surveillance, monitering and inspectioin from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Hence, Israel attack on Iran not only failed the diplomatic efforts but endangered JCPOA and strengthen Iran's efforts towards building Nuclear Weapon. Iran's withdrawl from NPT will not only bring regional and global implications but provoke Saudi Arabia to pursue nuclear weapons to balance the power. (TRT Global,2025) .

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