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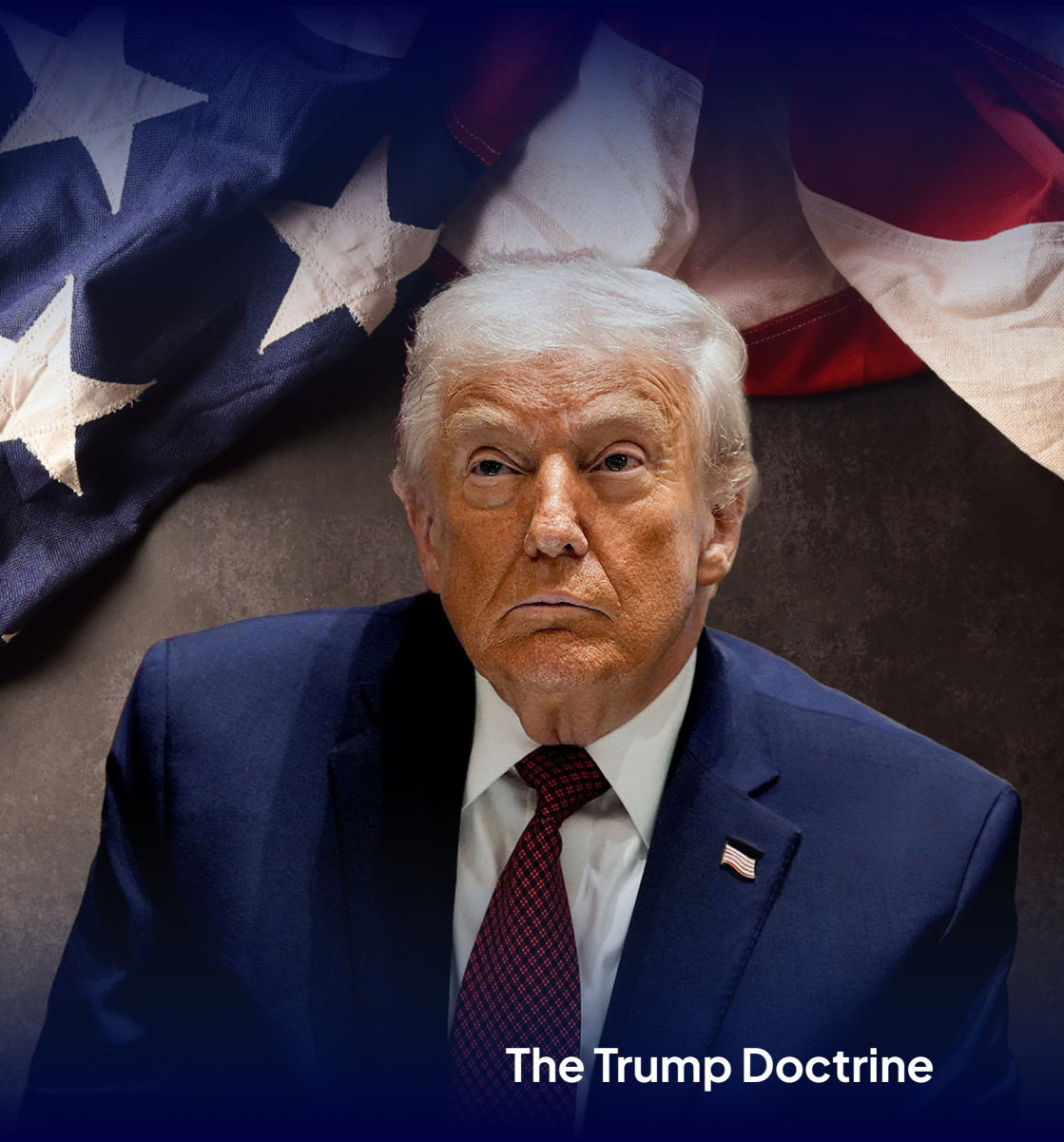

The Trump Doctrine

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THE TRUMP DOCTRINE

INTRODUCTION

The Trump Doctrine that has been emerging under the presidencies of Donald Trump composes a set of policy frameworks and component strategies that are redefining America's alliances, trade, and security commitments through the prism of renewed great power competition. It has been articulated by various individuals associated with the first and second Trump administrations through policy memos, U.S. think tank reports, books, speeches, and official U.S. policy documents, with some continuity from previous administrations. It has been executed by leveraging America's economic and military power as well as recalibrating its soft power. Under Trump, hard power is what counts most. Primarily, this power has been wielded as a tool of bilateral coercion rather than multilateral consensus, while rejecting the moral universalism that underpinned the post-WWII liberal order.

Therefore, the Trump Doctrine is one of the most radical, yet rational, grand strategy frameworks in U.S. history.[1] Its radicality stems from how it seeks to fundamentally reconfigure the post-war, American-led international order to readjust and reassert American global power in a new era of great power competition and multipolarity. Its rationality stems from the fact that those involved in the decision-making and execution of the Trump Doctrine recognize that we are in this new era and do not seek to deny that reality. The doctrine is a product of objective assessments of the global position of the United States, made principally by those advising and working for Trump, as well as others outside the administration, and thus its newfound priorities in the international system.

That position is now being defined by its relative decline in hard power due to other rising great powers. If European policymakers are serious about strategic autonomy, a greater understanding is needed about the direction to

1 John J. Mearsheimer and Sebastian Rosato, *How States Think: The Rationality of Foreign Policy* (Yale University Press, 2023).

which U.S. grand strategy under Trump—and beyond—is headed. This report is an attempt to provide a comprehensive dive into the frameworks and strategies being employed by the Trump administration to help inform Europeans on how to respond. Although Trump has appeared to have oscillated unpredictably during the first year of his second term, for example pursuing a sharp decoupling from China one day and then a grand bargain the next, he—and those around him—have translated the "America First" vision into a set of policy frameworks and principles out of which a vision of a new settlement in a new world order can be discerned.[2] In this way, this report hopes to formulate a unified field theory that synthesizes the themes of Trump's foreign policy into a single analytical framework to discern where the administration places value and where it is going on a range of issues.

The Trump Doctrine, as this vision[3] shall heretofore be called, has five main pillars: first, interstate strategic competition is the primary concern of U.S. foreign policy; second, the rules-based order must be restructured; third, the U.S. prioritizes resources to deny China hegemony in Asia while offloading the burden of European security to Europeans; fourth, the United States seeks to reconfigure the Middle East's security paradigm; fifth, the U.S. seeks to reassert American power in the Western Hemisphere as part of a reemphasis on homeland security.

WHAT ARE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL DOCTRINES?

Generally speaking, presidential doctrines "have a defensive and explanatory component that serves to defend actions already underway or to persuade others to support new plans."[4] Definitional debates over what constitutes a presidential doctrine are, however, wide and varied, not least because it is not entirely self-evident which presidents had doctrines and which did not.[5] Further, it is often

2 Oren Cass, "A Grand Strategy of Reciprocity," *Foreign Affairs*, October 17, 2025, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/grand-strategy-reciprocity.

3 Hal Brands, "The Vision Thing," Miller Center of Public Affairs, January 14, 2016, https://millercenter.org/issues-policy/foreign-policy/the-vision-thing.

4 Aiden Warren and Joseph M. Siracusa, Understanding Presidential Doctrines: *U.S. National Security from George Washington to Joe Biden* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), xiii.

5 The author's PhD thesis studied U.S. presidential doctrines. See: Bailey Uwe Schwab, "'The Use of the Word "Doctrine" is Intentional': Presidential Doctrines and the Legitimation of Foreign Policy Choices, 1981 – 2009," (PhD diss., York St. John University, 2025), https://ray.yorksj.ac.uk/id/eprint/12076/1/The%20use%20of%20the%20word%20doctrine%20is%20intentional%20Presidential%20Doctrines%20and%20the%20Legitimation%20of%20Foreign%20Policy%20Choices%2C%201981%20-%202009..pdf; During an interview in 2012, George W. Bush's Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, echoed the slipper nature of proclaiming doctrine when she said that she did not think "President Bush much liked the notion of doctrines." This is despite the Bush administration's frequent assertion of an operational pre-emptive doctrine defining their approach to the War on Terror

the case that the brainchild of the doctrine is not the president after whom it gets named. For example, the Monroe Doctrine, or the U.S. unwillingness to accept foreign intervention in the Western Hemisphere, was not written by James Monroe, but the Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Similarly, the containment strategy, or the Truman Doctrine, was developed by George Kennan, not Harry Truman.

The reason the president receives the credit is because the buck stops with the president.[6] In this way, the president serves in both an oversight and decider role.[7] While they may set the agenda on what to work on, and the degree and manner in which that agenda is enforced varies from president to president, they do not do the actual work of formulating and executing foreign policy.[8] However, since the president is also the decider and bears the final responsibility for approving decisions, their name gets placed in front of their administration's doctrine.[9] Moreover, every president, at various moments during their presidency (whether or not they explicitly proclaim it[10]) gets a doctrinal signification attached to their name after a policy statement or decision—this is often just a journalistic,[11] politicized,[12] or editorial simplification of a set of policy practices or a statement of intent.[13] American doctrines have no standing in international law and, to the extent they are endorsed, applied, and articulated by an administration, are simply underwritten by American power.

throughout the presidency. For instance, see: Condoleezza Rice, "Condoleezza Rice," interview by Peter Robinson, *Uncommon Knowledge*, posted on February 23, 2012, by Hoover Institution, YouTube, 1:09:43, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzu_QZaUbPQ at 21:58:00.

6 "'The Buck Stops Here' Desk Sign," Harry Truman Library & Museum, accessed January 5, 2026, https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/trivia/buck-stops-here-sign.

7 Peter L. Strauss, "Overseer, or 'The Decider'? The President in Administrative Law," *The George Washington Law Review* 75, no. 696 (2007), 696–760, https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/1436/.

8 James D. Barber, The Presidential Character: *Predicting Performance in the White House* (Routledge, 2020).

9 John Kreiser, "Bush: The Decider-In Chief," *CBS News*, April 20, 2006, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bush-the-decider-in-chief/.

10 George W. Bush, "Bush Doctrine," speech, posted on July 16, 2016, by CNN, YouTube, 16 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWA3r9KiQQ4.

11 Thomas L. Friedman, "Iran and the Obama Doctrine," *The New York Times*, April 5, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/06/opinion/thomas-friedman-the-obama-doctrine-and-iran-interview.html.

12 Matthew Continetti, "The Biden Doctrine Goes Bust," American Enterprise Institute, October 16, 2024, https://www.aei.org/op-eds/the-biden-doctrine-goes-bust/.

13 Jessica T. Matthews, "What was the Biden Doctrine?," *Foreign Affairs*, August 14, 2024, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/what-was-joe-biden-doctrine-leadership-hegemony-jessica-mathews.

As of 2025, notwithstanding charges of inconsistency in decision-making,[14] Trump's populism,[15] and bombastic approach to politics,[16] "America First" is essentially how the Trump Doctrine is defined—often crudely and through a critical left-wing perspective—by scholars, critics, and journalists. These interpretations are, however, too narrow and polemical in nature to be analytically practical in any sense, either to create a conceptual framework of Trump's foreign policy or to inform the decisions of global policymakers. Thus, there is a prevailing assumption, as it pertains to the discourse surrounding Trump's foreign policy, that grand strategy no longer has meaning.[17] This conveys a misunderstanding of the organic nature of American grand strategy as expressed over three centuries in multiple presidential doctrines, of which the Trump Doctrine is the most recent manifestation.[18] In turn, the Trump Doctrine represents a recalibration of American grand strategy within a broader historical continuity defined by the maintenance of American preponderance.[19]

To analyze this doctrine, then, a definition which encapsulates the bureaucratic, policy, and rhetorical nature of a presidential doctrine is necessary to operationalize the concept for analysis to factor in both its form and substance. I define presidential doctrines as unilateral statements of strategic and/or defensive purpose(s), which represent a codification of U.S. grand strategy at a particular time in history, and that are intended to put allies and adversaries on notice about America's intention(s), often outlining conditions on the use of force, as well as to influence the bureaucracy in accordance with the doctrines' objective(s). Katarina Brodin argued that the role of a doctrine in decision-making is to serve as "a system of normative and empirical beliefs about the international system and the role of one's own country in that system, as declared

14 Michelle Bentley and Maxine David, "Unpredictability as Doctrine: Reconceptualising Foreign Policy Strategy in the Trump Era," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 34, no. 3 (2021), 383–406, https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2021.1877616.

15 Thorsten Wojczewski, "Trump, Populism, and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16, no. 3 (2020), 292–311, https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orz021.

16 Gretchen Frazee, "Is Trump Undermining America's Most Persuasive Form of Global Power?," *PBS News*, September 21, 2018, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/is-trump-undermining-americas-most-persuasive-form-of-global-power.

17 David Smith, "At Home and Abroad US Policy Chaos Has One Constant: Trump's Self-Interest," *The Guardian*, August 24, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/aug/24/trump-policy-putin-summit.

18 Lamont Colucci, "American Doctrine," *World Affairs* 181, no. 2 (2018), 133–160, https://doi.org/10.1177/004382001879079.

19 Rebecca Friedman Lissner, "What is Grand Strategy? Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 1 (2018), 52–73, http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/868.

in public by the official decision-makers of that country."[20] In this way, there does exist something that can be legitimately called the Trump Doctrine, and it is based on a set of beliefs about America's place in the international system and the various roles it should play in that system, including when it should use military force, which geographical regions are strategically significant and why, and what values should and should not be prioritized in its diplomacy.

While not every foreign policy decision the Trump administration makes is guided by the doctrine, not least because international politics is far too complicated for such an approach, it is a coherent and rational doctrine providing a new grand strategic direction through a recalibration of policy frameworks and modes of diplomacy. Further, it is emerging as a strategically effective doctrine, albeit elastic and evolving, because its underlying policies and frameworks have been articulated in such a way that lend themselves to successful regional and institutional applications. The Trump Doctrine is based on credible assumptions and strategies, including assumptions and strategies developed by Trump's predecessors and those no longer working for him, thereby indicating a rational aggregation process, and it is being enforced from the top (the administration) downward (in the respective agencies and departments).

Although the contours of the doctrine emerged during Trump 1.0 (2017–2021), the first presidency was marked by resistance to a lot of the initiatives implemented in the second one by what Trump termed the "deep state," defined by bureaucrats with entrenched institutional interests thwarting the will of the people and undercutting the constitutional authority of the president elected to lead the people.[21] Those agents, such as John Bolton and Mike Pompeo, are no longer involved in the America First agenda, which has led to a much more disciplined policy outlook in the second term. There can be no doubt that Trump values loyalty and unity in the executive branch. Notwithstanding criticisms of a messier inter-agency coordination process due to the removal of personnel critical of certain decisions made, the Trump approach to diplomacy has successfully advanced on many fronts. This has included the initiation of negotiations with the Russians to bring an end to the Russia–Ukraine conflict, resolving the Israel–Gaza war with a genuine—though not perfect—framework for peace accepted by both sides, one-sided trade agreements with the European

20 Katarina Brodin, "Belief Systems, Doctrines, and Foreign Policy," *Cooperation and Conflict* 7, no. 2 (1972), 97–112, https://doi.org/10.1177/001083677200700203.

21 Stephen Skowronek et al., *Phantoms of a Beleaguered Republic: The Deep State and the Unitary Executive* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

Union, and agreeing on a trade deal with China that secured access to rare earths. Understanding what is driving these processes is crucial to know where U.S. foreign policy is going in the next few years.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF THE TRUMP DOCTRINE

1. Interstate Strategic Competition is the Primary Concern of U.S. Foreign Policy

What concerns U.S. administrations changes according to structural shifts in the international system and contingencies that require adaptations in national strategy. During the Cold War, containing communism and the Soviet threat were the primary concerns of U.S. grand strategy. In the immediate post-Cold War era, enlarging the number of market democracies under the U.S. security umbrella naturally followed the doctrine of containment. After 9/11, America had a newfound mission: to go after terrorists and the states that harbored them. With the rise of China, international terrorism was then downgraded as a priority. In 2018, the U.S. government's National Defense Strategy (NDS) declared that "interstate strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security."[22] It proposed reorienting American priorities to prepare for great power competition and conflict. One analyst noted that the document presented the pursuit of military power as an end in itself, but as a statement on strategy, the document was wanting as it offered no theory of victory and no theory of how and why the specific force structure "should be expected to achieve the desired outcomes."[23]

Therefore, the 2018 NDS document did not fully articulate the Trump Doctrine. However, in hindsight, it can be judged as a first step in doing so by identifying what did and what did not have meaning for U.S. national security going forward, with a rationale that has persisted to this day, including through the Joe Biden presidency).[24] The conclusion was clear: A vast military build-up

22 U.S. Department of Defense, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge," accessed January 5, 2026, https://media.defense.gov/2020/May/18/2002302061/-1/-1/1/2018-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-SUMMARY.PDF.

23 Kelly A. Grieco, "The 2018 National Defense Strategy: Continuity and Competition," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 12, No. 2 (2018), 3–8, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-12_Issue-2/Summer2018.pdf.

24 Nik Martin, "How Biden Took Trump's China Policy and Raised the Stakes," *Deutsche Welle*, May 3, 2024, https://www.dw.com/en/united-states-china-joe-biden-took-donald-trumps-policy-and-raised-the-stakes/a-68403233.

in Asia is what the United States should focus on going forward to contain the revisionist power that is the People's Republic of China.

In 2017, the year in which Trump assumed the presidency, the administration announced a military build-up in what became labelled as the "Indo-Pacific" region.[25] This region is the source of half of the world's GDP based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), which means it will continue to be among the next century's key economic and geopolitical battlegrounds.[26] China is upending the global order that the United States established. By global order we mean the combination of coercion, consent, and legitimacy that allows the United States to stipulate how things are going to be and to get its way over others; order is, therefore, fundamentally about hierarchy and it is built upon foundations that are being tested and blunted by China.

China out scales the United States on modular reactors, nuclear power, and solar panels, key industries that the next phase of the new industrial revolution defined by AI, quantum computing, AI-driven manufacturing, and biotechnology will rely on. China constitutes 31 percent of the world's manufacturing output, whereas the United States comprises only around half of this share.[27] In essence, China controls the chokepoints of the modern manufacturing era. Peter Navarro, Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing in the White House, told the Council on Foreign Relations in October 2025 that his job is much easier in the second term than it was in the first in terms of convincing people of the threat China poses, particularly to global supply chains.[28] Further still, the PRC now possesses a highly capable, well-armed, and technologically advanced military across all domains. These developments all threaten the global primacy of the United States that the Trump Doctrine seeks to maintain.

The 2025 National Security Strategy, in turn, further elaborated on this evolution of U.S. grand strategy. It differed from Trump 1.0's strategic documents in both substance and tone. Broadly speaking, it did so by defining what strategy

25 Lindsey W. Ford, "The Trump Administration and the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific,'" Brookings Institution, May 2020, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-trump-administration-and-the-free-and-open-indo-pacific/.

26 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (The White House, November 2025), 19, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf.

27 Brian Hart et al., "China Dominates Global Manufacturing," Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 21, 2025, https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-dominates-global-manufacturing.

28 Peter Navarro, "A Conversation with Peter Navarro," moderated by Ana Swanson, posted on October 17, 2025, by Council on Foreign Relations, YouTube, 59 min., 43 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7a-2YgerunI.

is and by making linkages through ends and means. It did so, vis-à-vis China especially, by acknowledging that previous administrations held mistaken beliefs that opening up to China would lead to its entry into the so-called "rules-based international order" when, in reality, "China got rich and powerful, and used its wealth and power to its considerable advantage."[29] Under Trump 2.0, interstate competition between the United States and China will be a central feature of U.S. grand strategy. It is through this lens that other issues will be viewed and acted upon throughout the Trump presidency.

2. The Rules-Based Order Must be Restructured

During his keynote speech at the Senate hearings before Trump's second inauguration, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "That a foreign policy that served the national interest could now be replaced by one that served the 'liberal world order.' And that all mankind was now destined to abandon national identity, and we would become 'one human family' and citizens of the world.' This wasn't just a fantasy; it was a dangerous delusion." He continued, "The post-war global order is not just obsolete; it is now a weapon being used against us."[30] One month after this statement, in February 2025, Vice President J.D. Vance asked European leaders at the Munich Security Conference, after stating that Trump believed Europeans should play a bigger role in burden sharing for their security, "How will you even begin to think through the kinds of budgeting questions if we don't know what it is that we're defending in the first place?"[31] This came after Vance criticized certain European leaders for censoring more populist and conservative political opinions, and parties, which were more critical of issues such as Europe's approach to mass migration and what these voices perceive to be the continent's declining moral standards, all of which were contributing to what the Trump administration's 2025 National Security Strategy termed Europe's "civilizational erasure."[32]

These statements reflect a fundamental shift in thinking vis-à-vis how U.S. policymakers conceptualize the transatlantic security alliance. While a cornerstone of Trump's transatlantic diplomacy has ensuring that America's

29 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 19.

30 "Secretary-Designate Marco Rubio SFRC Confirmation Hearing Opening Remarks," U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, January 15, 2025, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/6df93f4b-a83c-89ac-0fac-9b586715afd8/011525_Rubio_Testimony.pdf.

31 Benedikt Franke, ed., *Munich Security Conference 2025: Speech by JD Vance and Selected Reactions* (Mittler, 2025), 21, https://securityconference.org/assets/user_upload/MSC_Speeches_2025_Vol2_Ansicht.pdf

32 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 25.

European allies do not free-ride on America's security guarantee by making them agree to pay more, which they now have—and Trump was the only president to secure agreement from allies to spend 5 percent of their GDP on their security—this is not the be all and end all. Certain elements within the Trump administration believe that Europe has been heading in a dangerous direction that, if continued upon, may seriously throw into question the transatlantic alliance itself. This is because mass migration is leading to serious demographic and cultural change that is making Europe, in the words of Donald Trump at the World Economic Forum in January 2026, "unrecognizable."[33] Vance made similar remarks in 2024 when he posited that the United Kingdom could become the first Islamist country with a nuclear weapon due to the increasing Muslim demographic and anti-American sentiment emanating from certain European constituencies increasingly achieving positions of political power.[34] The implication being that, in the not-so-distant future, the United States may not be able to rely on certain European allies, or even be seen as an ally by them at all, which, in turn, will have serious implications for U.S. security policy in Europe.

Consequently, the Trump 2.0 administration, in its pursuit of negotiations with the Russian Federation to bring about an end to the Russo-Ukrainian war, has presented a conception to the Europeans that their security must mean more than an aggressive posture against Russia. Often, this has come to a dead end. Much of the European leadership, both at the European Union and national levels, view the defeat of Russia as a noble and necessary feat to salvage the rules-based order, which Russia supposedly violated by invading a sovereign country with liberal and democratic aspirations, for which Europe must spend much treasure (and, if necessary, blood). Under Joe Biden, and the broader liberal internationalist school of U.S. foreign policy (including neoconservatism), this is the correct interpretation. European security, under this paradigm, is essentially understood as hugging the Americans close to maintain their security guarantee for the principal purpose of defending Europe's liberal, democratic, and bureaucratic form of governance. Under the emerging intellectual architecture herby codified as the Trump Doctrine, this is the incorrect lens through which to view European security and America's role within it and the so-called rules-based order.

33 Maira Butt, "'Unrecognizable' Europe 'Not Heading in the Right Direction,' Trump tells Davos," The Independent, January 21, 2026, https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/trump-davos-speech-europe-greenland-b2904771.html.

34 Sam Francis and Henry Zeffman, "Rayner Dismisses Trump Running Mate 'Islamic UK' Claim," *BBC*, July 16, 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn07e2ep20no.

At the World Economic Forum in late January 2026, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney declared a "rupture in the world order, the end of a pleasant fiction and the beginning of a harsh reality, where geopolitics, where the large, main power, geopolitics, is submitted to no limits, no constraints."[35] Another key U.S. and NATO ally, Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany—who is assuming an increasingly larger managerial role within Europe's security architecture—recently stated, "If we want to be taken seriously again, we will have to learn the language of power politics."[36] According to this view, the rules-based order, which was predicated on a system of laws, rules, and norms—established after 1945—and underpinned primarily by the United Nations, was often used as a tool by a select group of nations to advance their own hegemonic or exploitative ambitions.[37] These nations, particularly the United States, made and broke the rules at will when it suited their interests. Notwithstanding the validity of this line of argument, Carney's declaration that the rules-based order had ended—which came after Trump's signaling that he would take Greenland, a territory of a fellow NATO member, by force and make it part of the United States—is a sentiment with which the Trump administration agrees.

While what replaces it, both intellectually and structurally, is open for debate, global actors are declaring its demise, and the major players are actively seeking its replacement. For example, within the 2024 Kazan Declaration by BRICS countries, it reads that BRICS is committed to further cooperation and expansion to enhance its strategic partnership through the promotion of peace and a "more representative, fairer international order, a reinvigorated and reformed multilateral system."[38] On the other hand, Trump's Board of Peace, the charter of which states that durable peace requires pragmatic judgement and the "courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed" (the United Nations), is intended to be results-oriented in securing peace where it has proven elusive.[39] Whether or not the Board of Peace will replace the

35 Mark Carney, "Davos 2026: Special Address by Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada," speech, World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, January 20, 2026, https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/davos-2026-special-address-by-mark-carney-prime-minister-of-canada/.

36 Nicholas Vinocur and Zoya Sheftalovich, "Europe Begins Its Slow Retreat from US Dependence," *Politico*, February 2, 2026, https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-begins-retreat-united-states-dependence-donald-trump-rocks-transatlantic-relationship/.

37 Parley Policy Initiative, "The 'Rules-Based International Order,' Explained," accessed February 2, 2026, https://www.parleypolicy.com/post/the-rules-based-international-order-explained.

38 *Kazan Declaration: Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security* (Russian Federation, October 23, 2024) 1, http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/en/RosOySvLzGaJtmx2wYFv0lN4NSPZploG.pdf

39 Jacob Magid, "Full Text: Charter of Trump's Board of Peace," *The Times of Israel*, January 18, 2026, https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-charter-of-trumps-board-of-peace/.

United Nations in any meaningful way, its establishment sets a precedent: The United States has established an organization to replace the United Nations—the cornerstone institution of the rules-based order dedicated to spearheading a Kantian perpetual peace—and many countries still believed it had the authority and legitimacy to do so and got behind it accordingly.

Another important aspect to the restructuring of the rules-based order is the Trump goal to recalibrate the post-war global monetary system. The overarching goal is to reassert and perpetuate the power and sovereignty of the U.S. dollar while simultaneously reindustrializing the United States. What those around Trump have argued is that the reserve currency status of the U.S. dollar has been just as much of a burden as it has been a privilege. This is primarily because the most significant macroeconomic consequence of serving as the world's reserve currency is that reserve demand for American assets pushed up the dollar, leading it to levels far exceeding what would balance international trade in the long term. However, the Trump administration is determined to ensure the United States remains the world's reserve currency. As Trump stated in October 2024 during a discussion with Bloomberg, "if you want to go to third world status, lose your reserve currency."[40] This has been a particularly acute concern given the recent de-dollarization drive of Russia and China, the selling of billions of dollars' worth of U.S. Treasury bonds, and the creation of alternative payment systems to outmaneuver American domination of global finance.

During the Bretton Woods and the neoliberal epochs, the size of the dollar inflated and led to deindustrialization because as the dollar appreciated, each foreign currency bought fewer dollars. In turn, this made U.S. goods more expensive in foreign markets while foreign goods became cheaper in the United States, automatically shifting demand away from American manufacturing and toward imports. Stephen Miran, an economic adviser to Trump, wrote a key text in 2024 entitled, "A User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System," in which he wrote that the desire to reform the global trading system and put U.S. industry on fairer ground has been a consistent theme for Trump.[41] "The deep unhappiness with the prevailing economic order," Miran wrote, "is rooted

40 Donald Trump, "Trump Vows to Protect the Dollar as Reserve Currency," moderated by John Micklethwait, posted October 15, 2024, by Bloomberg Podcasts, YouTube, 58 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmyMWY9LN70.

41 Stephen Miran, "A User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System," Hudson Bay Capital, November 2024, https://www.hudsonbaycapital.com/documents/FG/hudsonbay/research/638199_A_Users_Guide_to_Restructuring_the_Global_Trading_System.pdf.

in persistent overvaluation of the dollar and asymmetric trade conditions."[42] Further, Miran prophesized, "The Trump Administration is likely to increasingly intertwine trade policy with security policy, viewing the provision of reserve assets and a security umbrella as linked and approaching burden sharing for them together."[43] During 2025, the United States pursued specific steps to coerce nations into accepting its reordering of global trade and to undermine the consequences of further de-dollarization.

Firstly, there was the unleashing of tariffs. Tariffs have been used as a tool of negotiating leverage by the Trump administration, and it has even imposed them upon American allies. The purpose of reciprocal tariffs, such as the 10 percent minimum global tariff on imports from all countries effective from April 2025, was to equalize the playing field. During the first trade war between the United States and China, which began in Trump's first term, China got around it by trading with countries such as Mexico, who would then do trade with the United States. It is for this reason that the Unites States imposed tariffs on all countries; the truce between China and the U.S. agreed in November 2025 and the July 2025 trade deal between the United States and the EU show that tariff chaos as a form of leverage could actually serve American interests. Thus, it is plausible to conceive that after a series of punitive tariffs, certain trading partners may become more receptive to some form of currency accord in exchange for a reduction of tariffs.[44]

Another key element of this process is something called the Mar-a-Lago Accord.[45] This is the idea that the United States could force countries to accept a weaker dollar to maintain the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency and lower interest rates on U.S. Treasury investments in exchange for continued protection under the U.S. security umbrella. In this way, it resembles the Bretton Woods system (fixing currencies to the dollar, relying on the U.S. military for protection, and ensuring access to American markets) without the dollar—in turn—being pegged to gold. Under the Mar-a-Lago Accord, allies peg their currencies to the dollar, but when the dollar gets too strong, they appreciate their currencies against it. In return, they secure access to the world's largest consumer market and the American security umbrella.

42 Miran, "A User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System," 5.
43 Miran, "A User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System," 3.
44 Joeri Schasfoort, "Why Trump's Tariff Chaos Actually Makes Sense (Big Picture)," video, posted April 3, 2025, by Money & Macro, YouTube, 23 min., 55 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ts5wJ6OfzA.
45 Lars Mouland, "'Mar-a-Lago Accord' Explained: A New Era for the Dollar?," *Nordea*, March 31, 2025, https://www.nordea.com/en/news/mar-a-lago-accord-explained-a-new-era-for-the-dollar.

However, this upends the post-war system as a key component of the Mar-a-Lago Accord is making countries pay tribute for security. It is for this reason that the tariff chaos of 2025 makes sense: Since the current order does not benefit the United States, tariffs are to even the playing field for both neutrals and enemies, and, therefore, hints have been given that if a currency deal can be made, tariffs can be brought down. If countries do go along with this reordering, Trump can have a weaker dollar and thus maintain it as the world's reserve currency, which could help the reindustrialization of the United States, which itself is seen as a security issue. As Miran argued, "if the reserve asset is the lifeblood of the global trade and financial systems, it means that whoever controls the reserve asset and currency can exert some level of control trade and financial transactions [sic]. That allows America to exert its will in foreign and security policy using financial force instead of kinetic force."[46] Whether countries will think it is worth raising their currency's value in relation to the dollar to rely on U.S. military protection, and pay for it, is another matter.

Lastly, as part of its global monetary shake-up, there is the Trump administration's attempt to also peg cryptocurrencies to the dollar.[47] The Trump administration has framed crypto primarily in national security and anti-China terms. Over the course of 2025, the U.S. Treasury and the National Security Council have treated digital assets as tools of American strategy. In January 2025, Trump issued an executive order on Strengthening American Leadership in Digital Financial Technology, which defined stable coins as instruments that would promote and protect the sovereignty of the U.S. dollar.[48] Further, in March 2025, Trump established a strategic Bitcoin reserve and a U.S. digital asset stockpile, arguing that because there is a fixed supply of 21 million Bitcoins, "there is a strategic advantage to being among the first nations to create a strategic Bitcoin reserve… Just as it is in our country's interest to thoughtfully manage national ownership and control of any other resource, our Nation must harness, not limit, the power of digital assets for our prosperity."[49] The Genius

46 Miran, "A User's Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System," 10.

47 Yanis Varoufakis, "Trump Wants Big Tech to Own the Dollar," *Project Syndicate*, May 29, 2025, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/trump-wants-private-stablecoins-to-replace-dollar-by-yanis-varoufakis-2025-05.

48 The White House, "Strengthening American Leadership in Digital Financial Technology," January 23, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/strengthening-american-leadership-in-digital-financial-technology/.

49 The White House, "Establishment of the Strategic Bitcoin Reserve and United States Digital Asset Stockpile," March 6, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/establishment-of-the-strategic-bitcoin-reserve-and-united-states-digital-asset-stockpile/.

Act of July 2025 saw yet another attempt by the U.S. government to strategically assert more control over cryptocurrency by pegging stable coins to the dollar, which extends the dollar's dominance into digital markets, thereby reinforcing its global financial influence and regulatory leverage.[50]

All of this is to say that Trump's grand strategy does not see the order the United States established after the Second World War, and the end of the Cold War, as serving America's interests in the new multipolar world order. Rather, from the free trade system to NATO to the United Nations, these institutions are now seen more as burdens—in their current configuration, at least—to the perpetuation of U.S. global primacy. As the primary focus of U.S. foreign policy is now interstate competition, reconfiguring the world order so it can more effectively compete is a key part of the Trump foreign policy.

3. The Solution to the Simultaneity Problem is Denying China Hegemony & Offloading in Europe

It was during the presidency of Barack Obama (2009–2017) that the concept of a "pivot" or a "rebalance to Asia" was first espoused. The Obama administration realized that with Asia constituting nearly half of the world's population, nearly half of the world's GDP, and some of the world's most capable militaries, Asia and the Pacific increasingly constituted the world's political and economic center of gravity.[51] It was Obama who enacted a form of containment through the creation of a so-called Asia-Pacific security and prosperity area that emphasized security to gather a common front, consisting of U.S. and regional allies, as well as enforcing a military presence to deter China's expansion. During the 2016 election, then, China's challenge to the American-led order and its assertions in the South and East China Seas were key themes for candidates.[52]

While the pivot to Asia was initiated under Obama, there are two key texts written by current and former Trump officials that have greatly defined the current denial defense strategy vis-à-vis China, through their answer to the simultaneity problem, and thus the development of the Trump Doctrine itself. The simultaneity problem refers to a geopolitical circumstance when a great power is confronted by more than one peer competitor at the same time and

50 U.S. Congress, "S.1582 - GENIUS Act," July 18, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1582.

51 Hillary Rodham Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," speech, East–West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, November 10, 2011, https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/11/176999.htm.

52 Warren and Siracusa, *Understanding Presidential Doctrines*.

is, consequently, unable to fight two great wars at the same time.[53] As Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs under Trump from 2017 to 2019 A. Wess Mitchell wrote in his 2020 paper advising the then-DOD's Office of Net Assessment, "These are clarifying moments, in which the margins of error shrink and leaders must accurately match finite means to expansive ends."[54]

Those key texts articulating the concept's relevance to America's China problem were the 2021 book A Strategy of Denial and the Heritage Foundation's "The Prioritization Imperative: A Strategy to Defend America's Interests in a More Dangerous World" report published in 2024.[55] The former, written by current Under Secretary of War for Policy and author of the 2018 National Defense Strategy Elbridge Colby, has influenced key figures in the second Trump administration and lays out how China aspires to dominate the Indo-Pacific region, which would undermine American security, freedom, and prosperity. In response, the United States must deny China this goal through a sequential balancing strategy. According to Colby, this necessitates working with Asian states to form an anti-hegemonic coalition focused on preventing Beijing dominance over the region. More importantly, leveraging the U.S. military is central to the denial strategy because "Beijing will likely not be able to dominate Asia without resorting to military force."[56] Colby shows that Washington's credibility in Asia is linked to Taiwan's defense because Taiwan is in the first island chain that currently constrains China's military power projection.

This is significant because what the U.S. foreign policy establishment fears most is the PRC seizing control of Taiwan, especially through military force. This is for two main reasons. First is Taiwan's position in the first-island chain. America's island chain strategy is a core component of its military force projection in the region. Taiwan is located at the midpoint of the first chain and thus occupies a strategic position as it gives the United States, Japan, Indonesia, and the Philippines a naval advantage against China's growingly powerful

53 A. Wess Mitchell, "Strategic Sequencing: How Great Powers Avoid Multi-Front War," The Marathon Initiative, September 14, 2020, https://www.themarathoninitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ONA-Report_Mitchell_TMI_FINAL-220214.pdf.

54 Mitchell, "Strategic Sequencing," 4.

55 Elbridge Colby, A Strategy of Denial: American Defense in an Age of Great Power (Yale University Press, 2021); Alexander Velez-Green and Robert Peters, "The Prioritization Imperative: A Strategy to Defend America's Interests in a More Dangerous World," The Heritage Foundation, August 1, 2024, https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-prioritization-imperative-strategy-defend-americas-interests-more-dangerous.

56 Elbridge Colby, "A Strategy of Denial for the Western Pacific," U.S. Naval Institute, March 2023, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2023/march/strategy-denial-western-pacific.

amphibious forces.[57] If China conquered Taiwan and successfully subdued it, one analyst noted that the PLA Navy would have freedom of access to break out of the first island chain, which could then threaten allies and U.S. bases, and Chinese nuclear submarines could sail toward the American coastline since there would be no defensive line as provided by the first island chain.[58] Further, it would be a psychological blow to regional allies if the PRC were able to successfully employ military force against Taiwan as it would undermine the efficacy of America's security guarantee. Second is Taiwan's importance for world trade. Half of the world's container ships pass through the Taiwan Straits, and Taiwan is where most of the world's semi-conductor chips are made. Consequently, if China annexed Taiwan, there would be major disruptions to world trade with estimations of destruction in the trillions.[59]

Simultaneity, therefore, is a primary driver of the size, shape, and composition of military forces. America's military role in this strategy is central under the Trump Doctrine as China will not likely dominate Asia without resorting to military force. Alexander Velez-Green, Colby's number two as Under Secretary of War for Policy, in the Heritage Foundation's report asserts in more detail, "Washington must therefore surge investments in America's deterrent posture in the Western Pacific. Particular attention should be given to strengthening the ability of U.S. forces to deny a Chinese fait accompli—an attempt by Beijing to seize control of Taiwan rapidly before the United States and its allies can respond effectively."[60] Velez-Green suggests that the United States needs to accelerate the delivery of such asymmetric defense capabilities to Taiwan to the greatest extent possible and that "this will require prioritizing efforts to arm Taiwan over efforts to arm Ukraine." This does not mean the United States under the Trump Doctrine is not committed to Ukraine's security. Rather, it means where the United States lacks the ability to resource both sets of requirements at the same time, Taiwan (in other words, the containment of China) will be prioritized. Under the Trump Doctrine, the best way for NATO to help the U.S. is by "taking primary responsibility for Europe's conventional

57 Julian McBride, "PacNet #16 – Taiwan's True Regional and Existential Importance, Outside of Semi-conductors," Pacific Forum, March 17, 2025, https://pacforum.org/publications/pacnet-16-taiwans-true-regional-and-existential-importance-outside-of-semiconductors/.

58 Thomas G. Mahnken, "A Maritime Strategy to Deal with China," U.S. Naval Institute, February 2022, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2022/february/maritime-strategy-deal-china.

59 Patrick Wintour, "If China Invaded Taiwan It Would Destroy World Trade, Says James Cleverly," *The Guardian*, April 25, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/25/if-china-invaded-taiwan-it-would-destroy-world-trade-says-james-cleverly.

60 Velez-Green and Peters, "The Prioritization Imperative," 10.

defense while the United States focuses its own forces on the China threat. The United States should urge NATO allies to act accordingly."[61]

Given that a primary feature of the Trump Doctrine is the prioritization of resources to address the most pressing matters affecting the global balance of power, Russia—as opposed to China—is judged as a threat, but a more tractable and less consequential one. Consequently, the United States will prioritize the defense of Taiwan and its key strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific above any efforts to defend NATO's eastern flank.

4. The United States Seeks to Reconfigure the Middle East's Security Paradigm

Under the Trump Doctrine, the Middle East will not be subjected to lectures on how to structure their forms of governance or nation-building through U.S. military force.[62] Rather, Trump wants to see a Middle East of sovereign nations, economically and technologically well-developed, in which Israel and Islamic countries normalize their relations. In terms of geographical importance to the Trump Doctrine, the Middle East ranks fourth—after the Western Hemisphere, the Indo-Pacific, and Europe respectively. The primary reason is, as Velez-Green wrote in "The Prioritization Imperative: A Strategy to Defend America's Interests in a More Dangerous World" report, that the Middle East "lacks the market power of the Indo-Pacific or Europe. As a result, even if a rival gains control of the region, it will have difficulty contending for global hegemony."[63] Nonetheless, a Middle Eastern regional hegemon could still threaten U.S. interests. However, a key component of Trump's Middle Eastern approach is to make Israel's security less dependent upon United States' support which, in turn, could lead to it becoming the region's most dominant power; this is especially true since it is the only Middle Eastern country with nuclear weapons.[64]

The current structure of the Middle Eastern regional order consists of an unpopular American primacy. During the Cold War, states tended to favor either the American or the Soviet camp. After 1991, the question became who wanted

61 Velez-Green and Peters, "The Prioritization Imperative," 10.

62 The White House, "In Riyadh, President Trump Charts the Course for a Prosperous Future in the Middle East," May 13, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/05/in-riyadh-president-trump-charts-the-course-for-a-prosperous-future-in-the-middle-east/.

63 The White House, "In Riyadh, President Trump Charts the Course."

64 International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, "Israeli Nuclear Weapons: Risks, Consequences and Disarmament," September 2024, https://www.icanw.org/israeli_nuclear_weapons.

to be inside and who wanted to be outside of the American camp.[65] Those inside, such as Israel and the Gulf states, enjoyed benefits such as security guarantees and diplomatic protection whereas those outside, such as Iraq and Libya, faced sanctions and military interventions. The way in which the Trump administration has sought to pacify the region is through the forging of agreements that enhance regional deterrence and ensuring partners shoulder more responsibility. A number of factors have caused problems in this regard. For example, Israel's attack in Qatar against the Hamas negotiating team in July 2025 represented a turning point because Trump decided Israel had gone too far. Trump even made Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu apologize to the emir of Qatar, which, one analyst noted, was "emblematic of the shifting geopolitical moment that led to the initial cease-fire in Gaza."[66] Trump also took the unprecedented step of issuing an executive order to reaffirm Washington's commitment to Qatar, stating that an attack against Qatar would be considered a threat to U.S. security.[67] By doing this, Trump reaffirmed the importance of the Gulf to U.S. and regional security and made Washington realize that deterrence in the region no longer depends solely on a U.S. security guarantee, but a more integrated and politically viable framework.[68] Israel is now the region's most militarily dominant power, but this remains contingent on American assistance. Even Israel's war in Gaza relied heavily on American resupply of munitions, and Israel's appeals to Washington, for example when Iran bombed it, demonstrate its dependence.[69]

In this vein, in March 2025, national security experts at the Heritage Foundation published a report titled, "U.S.–Israel Strategy: From Special Relationship to Strategic Partnership, 2029–2047."[70] The report argues that the United States should elevate its relationship with Israel to one of a strategic partnership, which, in practical terms, means that just as the United States phased out financial aid to Israel, it should transition Israel from a military financing

65 Marc Lynch, "The Fantasy of a New Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, October 31, 2025, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/middle-east/fantasy-new-middle-east.

66 Lynch, "The Fantasy of a New Middle East."

67 The White House, "Assuring the Security of the State of Qatar," September 29, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/09/assuring-the-security-of-the-state-of-qatar/.

68 James F. Jeffrey and Elizabeth Dent, "A New Path to Middle East Security," *Foreign Affairs*, November 13, 2025, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/middle-east/new-path-middle-east-security.

69 Danielle Pletka and Daniel J. Samet, "Israel Must Be Self-Sufficient, for Its Own Sake," *National Review*, November 23, 2025, https://www-nationalreview-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/www.nationalreview.com/2025/11/israel-must-be-self-sufficient-for-its-own-sake/amp/.

70 Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy, "U.S.–Israel Strategy: From Special Relationship to Strategic Partnership, 2029–2047," The Heritage Foundation, March 12, 2025, https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/us-israel-strategy-special-relationship-strategic-partnership-2029-2047.

recipient to a security partner. To achieve this, the U.S. "must continue to work deliberately to change Israel's geopolitical position within the region" through enhancing security and commercial ties between Israel and Arab neighbors and ending Israel's reliance on U.S. financing. This means that going forward, the United States should transition its military financing of arms procurements to direct military sales to Israel. As the logic goes, "Israel will then be positioned to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2048 as an independent and full partner to the U.S."[71] Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—himself—confirmed this in January 2026 when he told an interviewer that he hopes to "taper off" Israeli dependence on U.S. military aid in the next decade and that Israel is currently working to achieve this end.[72] This would require a situation in which Israel is not threatened by its peer competitor in the region, Iran. Only time will tell how that issue will be resolved.

Both the United States and Israel have been cooperating toward this end for decades. During the War on Terror, the George W. Bush administration was often charged with applying its doctrine of preemptive strike against states that harbored terrorists or possessed weapons of mass destruction inconsistently, since it was argued that Iran (and North Korea) met these criteria, yet no military action was taken, as it was in the case of Iraq. Under Barack Obama, during the administration's negotiations with Iran, the New York Times discerned an Obama Doctrine as being defined by engaging in diplomacy as a way to deter potential adversaries. This approach eventually led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), whereby an agreement was made to limit the Iranian nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. However, this was controversial among both the American and Israeli right wing. In turn, during Trump 1.0, the JCPOA was scrapped, and a much more aggressive posture was taken as the deal was thought to permit Iran greater nuclear capabilities than was compatible with the position the Trump administration wanted it to hold in the Middle East. This manifested in the assassination of the Iranian military officer Qasem Soleimani in January 2020. Former Mossad chief Yossi Cohen said that Soleimani's strategies had "tightened a noose around Israel's neck."

Fast forward to Trump 2.0, an even more forward and offensive posture has been adopted to bring about a newly configured Middle East. While the Trump

71 Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute, "U.S.–Israel Strategy."

72 "Netanyahu Hopes to 'Taper' Israel off U.S. Military Aid in Next Decade," *NBC News*, January 10, 2026, https://www.nbcnews.com/world/israel/netanyahu-hopes-taper-israel-us-military-aid-decade-rcna253301.

administration has been engaging in negotiations with the Iranians to prevent them from enriching uranium and basically having any nuclear capabilities, the use of military force has been a core aspect of the Trump 2.0 approach to weaken Iran. Towards the end of the Twelve-Day War lasting from June 13 to June 24, during which Iran and Israel launched thousands of missiles and drones at each other, the United States launched Operation Midnight Hammer, where the U.S. Air Force bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities. In February 2026, Trump declared "major combat operations" against Iran with the U.S. and Israel launching a tranche of new military strikes against the country. As the Iranians view the conflict as an existential one, seeing what they call the satanic forces of the U.S. and Israel seeking their destruction, they have decided to raise the stakes by involving the Gulf countries, sending drones and missiles to U.S. bases in these countries to destroy critical infrastructure.

The reason they have done this is because it brings to a head America's attempt to de-risk the region, which Trump has stated can only be done when Iran's ability to project military power has ended.[73] Further, Iran's projection of military power through its sending of drones and missiles to the Gulf states undermines their unique selling point and business models of being safe and prosperous economic hubs, which have underpinned their rise. In sum, Iran has displayed a significant capacity to project military power across the region, which is, in turn, leading to the expansion of the war's scope and objectives.[74] Whether or not those objectives can be achieved, which Trump has now stated includes an "unconditional surrender" by the regime, remains an open question.

5. The United States Will Reinvigorate Homeland & Hemispheric Defense: The Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine

This aspect of the Trump Doctrine, regarding the reassertion of American power in the Western Hemisphere, has been addressed in a recently published HIIA Perspective piece.[75] Refer to that analysis for an in-depth look at how this aspect of the doctrine has played out—particularly following the January 3 attack on Venezuela, the subsequent capture of Nicholas Maduro, and how this followed

73 Bailey Schwab, "The Geopolitics of Water in the Conflict Against Iran," *World Geostrategic Insights*, March 3, 2026, https://www.wgi.world/the-geopolitics-of-water-in-the-conflict-against-iran/.

74 CNN, "Day 7 of Middle East Conflict—Trump Says No Deal with Iran Until 'Unconditional Surrender,'" March 7, 2026, https://edition.cnn.com/world/live-news/iran-war-us-israel-trump-03-06-26.

75 Bailey Schwab, "Attack on Venezuela and the Removal of Maduro from Power: The Trump Doctrine in Action," Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, January 6, 2025, https://hiia.hu/en/attack-on-venezuela-and-the-removal-of-maduro-from-power-the-trump-doctrine-in-action/.

from a buildup of the U.S. military throughout 2025. In sum, as the 2025 National Security Strategy laid out, the U.S. intends to restore preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, unwind the influence of other powers who have been able to encroach in the region due to American neglect, and ensure access to key geographies throughout the region.[76] Further, the authors of the NSS stated, "Our goals for the Western Hemisphere can be summarized as 'Enlist and Expand.' We will enlist established friends in the Hemisphere to control migration, stop drug flows, and strengthen stability and security on land and sea. We will expand by cultivating and strengthening new partners while bolstering our own nation's appeal as the Hemisphere's economic and security partner of choice."[77] That project has begun in earnest.

For example, the 2026 National Defense Strategy asserts the U.S. will guarantee military and commercial access to key terrain in the Western Hemisphere, especially the Panama Canal, the Gulf of America, and Greenland.[78] Thus, from the deployment of a much more forward military posture in the region to the discussions raging about whether Greenland should be taken by force for national security reasons, it is clear the Trump administration is serious about its efforts to ensure American primary in the Western Hemisphere. According to its perspective, the region has been neglected by recent administrations who not only felt that defenses were no longer necessary, but by their desire to "ease border controls and facilitate the illegal migration of people and the unchecked, unfair flow of goods."[79] To comprehensively tackle these issues, from illegal migration to the encroachments of hostile powers from Greenland to Latin America, the 2026 NDS declares the Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which includes the following initiatives: defending America's skies with the Golden Dome and other drone-specific measures; modernizing and adapting U.S. nuclear forces with focused attention on deterrence and escalation management; deterring and defending against cyber threats; and countering Islamic terrorists with the capability and intent to strike the U.S. homeland.[80]

76 The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 15.

77 The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 16.

78 U.S. Department of War, *2026 National Defense Strategy: Restoring Peace Through Strength for a New Golden Age of America* (January 23, 2026), 3, https://media.defense.gov/2026/Jan/23/2003864773/-1/-1/0/2026-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY.PDF.

79 U.S. Department of War, *2026 National Defense Strategy*, 8.

80 U.S. Department of War, *2026 National Defense Strategy*, 16–17.

CONCLUSION

The Trump Doctrine represents a recalibration in the history of American grand strategy. It rejects the moral universalism and multilateral pretenses that underpinned the post-war liberal order in favor of a transactional, nationalistic approach and preference for statecraft. By redefining U.S. alliances and defense priorities through a transactional and interest-driven lens, it accepts the multipolar reality of the twenty-first century rather than denying it. Therefore, the doctrine seeks to consolidate American power where it matters most: to match finite means to strategic ends and compel allies to assume greater responsibility for their own security. The Trump Doctrine stands as rational attempt to translate America's recent relative global decline into a durable framework for renewed strength in an era of great power competition.

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