


Research Article

QJantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (QJSSH)

America First 2.0: Assessing the Global Implications of Donald Trump's Second Term

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Abstract: Donald Trump reelected to the American presidency has the ability to seriously reshape the geopolitics and economics of the world by introducing America First 2.0. This study looks at the consequences of a second Trump term with regard to international relations, global trade, multilateral institutions, and strategic alliances. The research analyses how the renewed emphasis on nationalism and protectionism will impact global stability, economic interdependence, and America's leadership role by examining his first-term policies, campaign rhetoric, and the proposed agenda. Special emphasis is placed on the weakening of multilateral agreements, change in US-China relationship, the future of NATO and the transatlantic partnerships, and their ramifications for emerging economies and global governance. This dissertation undertakes a comprehensive, qualitative, and quantitative analysis of how America First 2.0 could redefine the U.S. role in the world and its implications for 21st-century global order.

Key Words: America, China, Global South, Global North, Canada, Mexico, European Union

Introduction

As Donald Trump epitomized his America First doctrine, the United States shifted its foreign affairs to entirely change the country's historically rooted dedication to multilateralism, free trade, and its strategic partnerships. Trump, who assumed the presidency of the United States in 2017, sought to strengthen nationalism and economic protectionism at the expense of international cooperation in the foundations. This shift was shown in his administration's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, his renegotiation of NAFTA into the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), and through introduction of tariffs on Chinese goods under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. These policies not only transform global trade but also completely remold America's diplomatic attitude, antagonizing allies, and similarly antagonizing adversaries. Trump's first term was unable to revise the global economic order as their trade deficit with the U.S. rose to a \$419 billion peak in 2018 but declined as tariffs increased, and the impact of it is still being brought about in international relations. (Borg, 2024; Mateo, 2024).

With the 2024 U.S. presidential election drawing near, a prospective second Trump term hammers out more than a few questions about what the global landscape will look like as the America First 2.0 agenda continues. Trump's campaign rhetoric suggests that his first-term policies will continue — and perhaps

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• **To Cite:** Bukhari, Q. S. R. H., Jalal, S. U., Ali, M. Haq, I. U., & Irsha, A. U. R. B. (2025). America First 2.0: Assessing the Global Implications of Donald Trump's Second Term. *QJantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(1), 51–63. <https://doi.org/10.55737/qjssh.vi-i.25296>



even intensify — such as further restrictions on trading, saying less friendly things to China, and re-examining US commitments to NATO and other international alliances. In his first term, for example, Trump regularly berated NATO members for not fulfilling their pledge to spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense by 2021, which just 10 out of 30 manage to do. The second term could extend past evident tensions, force the allies to further strain, split transatlantic relations, and put more pressure on the post–World War II liberal international order years, with which global diplomacy had defined itself for decades. A second term under Trump has global implications, complex in nature. Reviving protectionist policies would also continue to jolt already stressful fractured global supply chains and on top of that throw them on a more disrupted knife's edge, due to COVID-19 and rising geopolitical tensions. Under the U.S.–China trade war, the two countries put tariffs on \$550 billion worth of Chinese goods and \$185 billion of U.S. exports to China, which could intensify, bringing global growth to a standstill. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the trade war lowered the global GDP by 0.8% in 2020 and a new war could bring about even graver economic consequences, interfering in markets and undermining international trade laws (MacDonald, [2018](#)).

A second Trump term would geopolitically speed up the transition towards a multi-polar world order, with China and the other rising powers taking over a more inward-looking United States. Trump's skepticism of global governance structures such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations will also be likely to further weaken them. For example, in his first term, Trump blocked the appointment of judges to the Appellate Body of the WTO, effectively paralyzing it to its appeals capacity in economic disputes. A second term could bring even less engagement with such institutions, and Iran might really have no interest in solving 'pressing global challenges,' like climate change, pandemics, and nuclear proliferation, through needed coordinated multilateral action (Ilyas, [2024](#)).

The purpose of this research article is to weigh the global implications of "America First 2.0" by analyzing the probable policies of a second term of a Trump presidency and their repercussions on international relations, global trade, and geopolitics. The study will focus on using data from Trump's first term, current promises for his campaign, and expert analyses to explore how a renewed focus on nationalism and protectionism will change the global order. The areas of investigation focus on U.S.–China relations in the future, the stability of NATO and the alliances between Europe and the U.S., the importance of emerging economies, and the challenges to global governance. This article offers a comprehensive analysis in order to contribute to the ongoing debate on the future of U.S. foreign policy and its effects on the world in an epoch of rising volatility and geopolitical contestation (McCormick, [2023](#)).

Literature Review

Extensive studies have been made of the America First doctrine, which is one of Donald Trump's main beliefs during his presidency, in the field of the influence of the said doctrine on global politics, economics, and international relations. This is because, in the case of a second Trump term, America First 2.0 needs to be properly looked at through the prism of what has already been written about Trump's first term policies, their global consequences, and the possible trajectory of the renewed nationalist agenda. The article synthesizes key themes and findings on the statement gathered from both scholarly research as well as policy analysis and from expert commentaries on the topic. (Jost & Kertzer, [2024](#)).

This paragraph also explains the return of the *America First* slogan which is more connected to the historical period of the United States' isolationism before World War II. Back in 2016, the Donald Trump presidential campaign brought the slogan back to life in order to capture the spirit of key nationalist ideas of national sovereignty, economic protectionism, and a negative view of multilateral cooperation. For instance, Patrick Porter (2018) has traced the historical roots of this ideology, which according to him, appeared as a reaction to the negative/globalization effects like job losses, income inequality, and cultural displacement. Loss of jobs among workers in developed nations resulting from globalization often resulted in industries moving overseas and fed into a backlash. Two concrete examples of this shift are mentioned, Trump's policies during his first term pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Paris Climate Agreement as other harmful environmental stories outlining environmental policies by governments around the world are also cited. With these actions, United States movements differed from its traditional role as a leader of the world and cooperation. Ivo Daalder and James M. Lindsay (2018)

showed that these steps were an affront to the stable liberal international order that has hitherto called for cooperation between nations, free trade, and multilaterally minded tackling of global challenges. In short, this paragraph highlights how the "America First" ideology, embodied in Trump's policies, stresses becoming involved less in international affairs and offers questions into the trend of the future of global governance and international relations.

There has been a lot of economic research on Trump's trade policies, especially the U.S.-China trade war. The study disruptive effects of tariffs in global supply chains and growth. In addition, bilateral trade was dramatically reduced when the United States imposed tariffs on about \$550 billion worth of Chinese goods and China responded with similar measures. As a consequence, the U.S. trade deficit with China went down from \$419 billion in 2018 to \$310 billion in 2020. Yet, these measures also resulted in U.S. consumers and businesses paying more. The Tax Foundation estimated that the tariffs shaved 0.2% off of U.S. GDP in 2019. Second, such policies could continue or be compounded under a second Trump term, resulting once again in more economic fragmentation and the already low growth in global trade volumes (Jervis et al., [2018](#)).

Twenty-four hours after his phone call, Russia offered to send 200 doctors and another 2,000 medical workers to Italy to help the country battle the coronavirus. The pressure on transatlantic relations was created by the demands of Trump for increases in defense spending by NATO members. Some allies, like Poland and the Baltic states, were hurried to up their contributions, others, like Germany, were accused of failing to meet 2 percent GDP. If returned to office, a second Trump term could make these tensions even worse, further eroding the cohesion of NATO and supplying room for adversarial powers such as Russia and China to raise their influence (or at least to push their neighbors off balance). Moreover, many scholars have studied the impact of Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) and his 'maximum pressure' approach towards Iran, it justifies how such policies destabilized the Middle East and weakened U.S. credibility in diplomatic efforts (Ingber, [2020](#)).

This then serves to illustrate the U.S.-China rivalry, which is a defining feature of 21st-century geopolitics and has been greatly influenced by the behavior of Donald Trump. The trade war together with barriers on the tech giants from China including Huawei has sharpened strategic competition between the two powers. Further decoupling of the U.S. from Chinese economies in a second Trump term would have implications for globally accepted technology standards, supply chains, and innovation. This rivalry could potentially end up in a 'Thucydides Trap,' in which this rivalry could escalate into a conflict. But, some other scholars like Joseph Nye, ([2021](#)) have insisted that economic interdependence and the existence of some forms of shared global challenges, for instance, climate change, ought to offset the risk of outright confrontation.

The future of global governance is in tatters due to Trump's stance against multilateral institutions. This weakness of international cooperation has manifested recently through his withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO) during the COVID-19 pandemic and his denial of appointment to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Appellate Body. For researchers, these moves contend how they effectively impede the capacity of these institutions to tackle global issues. Trump's policies have stressed mechanisms intended to address global problems such as public health, climate change, and nuclear proliferation by withdrawing from important global agreements and impeding important functions of international bodies. Fears persist that if Trump gains a second term he will worsen the approach to multilateral institutions that has been on a downward trajectory since his election. If this were to come to fruition, a split global system would not be sufficient to tackle issues crying out for global, such as pandemics, climate change, and nuclear threats. But, some scholars are convinced that the liberal international order could still remain resilient. Other nations, in particular the rise of such nations as China or the European Union, could take their place, they suggest and were to do so, that could create a shift in global sources of leadership. The long-term ramifications of Trump's views on multilateralism are considered in this section, as what his policies mean for the future of global governance: more or less, the strengthening transition into decay; or on the other hand, the drowning of other countries into their roles as global governance leaders.



The literature has explored the domestic underpinnings of Trump's "America First" agenda as well. Economic anxiety and cultural backlash in parts of the U.S. population gave Trump's nationalist policies their backing. If Trump wins again, internal polarization in America will deepen, and that will damage U.S. foreign policy credibility and coherence. Efforts to address international challenges are further complicated by the fact that domestic instability could undermine the U.S.'s capacity to project power and exercise influence on the global level (Al-Bayati, [2020](#)).

"America First 2.0" has a robust foundation in the existing literature for a global assessment of its implications. Much of the research, however, concentrates on how Trump's first-term policies could affect America's future, and there is an increasing pile of work that looks at what could be on the horizon should he win a second term. The main issues include the economic and geopolitical risks of restored protectionism, the pressure on traditional alliances, the aggravation of the U.S. versus China competition, and the depletion of structures of global governance. Yet we lack clarity not only regarding how rational global stakeholders will respond if Trump is reelected but also just how a second Trump term would play out against other world trends that are starting to take shape the ascendancy of digital economies, the energy transition, the growing prominence of nonstate actors and more. The purposes of this research are to build the current basis and to present a thorough analysis of how "America First 2.0" may transform the world order in the near future (Kaarbo & Lantis, [2024](#)).

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to assess the global implications of another Trump term if he conducted "America First 2.0" as a foreign policy agenda through a mixed methods approach that incorporates qualitative and quantitative analyses. It assesses the economic, geopolitical, and institutional impacts of Trump's first-term policies: trade tariffs, abandoning of international agreements, and shifting of alliances. The study starts with a literature review in order to help form a theoretical framework and to find the most important themes. Quantification of the economic impacts is done using data available from the historical period using such sources as the World Bank, IMF, etc. The paper combines scenario analysis that explores the possible scenarios based on Trump's campaign promises and first-year actions with semi-structured interviews to import knowledge from experts to supplement the analysis. Regression and time series analysis to look into the effects of tariffs on trade deficits and the global supply chain are included in quantitative analysis. Regional responses to Trump's policies are compared by means of comparative case studies carried out in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The research hypothesis is tested with transparency in the assumed model and triangulation across sources of data to make a nuanced, fact-based assessment of a second Trump presidency's global impact.

Discussion

The foreign policy of Donald Trump during his first term (2017–2021) was shaped by the 'America First' doctrine based on national sovereignty, economic protectionism, and a critical attitude towards multilateralism. Spiraling out of control, the United States pulled further into itself, and in so doing represented a break from a post—World War II liberal international order in which the United States had become a key global actor in fostering cooperative relationships, free trade, and democratic values. Trump's policy was laid out to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, exit the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and impose tariffs on key trading partners like China previously let the U.S. lose its global leadership role. The deviation had far-reaching implications for global governance. Supporting nationalism and protectionism, Trump pushed established alliances to their limits and made them much weaker than international institutions. U.S.'s withdrawal from agreements reduced its influence on international norms shaping and leadership impact in dealing with global challenges on questions of trade disputes, security as well as climate change. On the one hand, some saw Trump's policies as a reaction to the downside of globalization such as job losses, and economic inequality as well as the erosion of national sovereignty, and discussions ensued on the future of the liberal international order and the balance of power in global governance. This foreign policy has far-reaching implications with regard to the dynamics of trade, multilateral cooperation, and geopolitical alliances. Understanding these shifts helps to explain the global implications of "America First 2.0" for a second Trump term. (Malis, [2024](#)).

- ▶ **Economic Protectionism and Trade Policies:** Trump's "America First" agenda prioritized reducing trade deficits and protecting U.S. industries through tariffs and renegotiated trade agreements. Notable actions included, during his first term, Trump's foreign economic policies were characterized by tariffs of \$550 billion on Chinese goods under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, and a trade war that he launched that continues to upend the world's global supply chains. He likewise hauled out of the TPP, a multilateral exchange arrangement planned to neutralize China's monetary lion's share in the Asia Pacific region. Also, Trump handled the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which turned to the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) with stricter labor and environmental laws. What motivated these actions was that they believed previous trade deals had unfairly harmed American workers and industries. But they have come at a cost of higher prices for US consumers and businesses, and have prompted retaliation against outside the US.
- ▶ **Skepticism of Multilateral Institutions:** On Brasidas: Brooks argues that the most significant fact about Brasidas is that he led the rearguard of the army that lost at Pylos. At Thermopylae, this same rearguard saved the rest of the army for another day of fighting. Among other key actions was a withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement due to worry over economic competitiveness and national sovereignty. Besides, he also left the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as they were all inefficient and biased. Trump also prevented the appointment of judges to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Appellate Body, rendering the organization's dispute resolution body dead. These actions reflected a telegraphed gesture of the United States' retreat from global leadership in steering the governance of the world and sparked discussions regarding the effectiveness and the security of international institutions to be able to counter global challenges in the future (Böller, [2024](#)).
- ▶ **Reevaluation of Alliances and Burden-Sharing:** Trump cast doubt on the value of traditional US alliances such as NATO and demanded other countries boost their defense spending. He hit at NATO members who had failed to meet the 2% GDP defense spending target, only 10 of 30 members would reach this level by 2021. Trump's administration also pushed for those ties in Asia with Japan and South Korea but also urged those allies to widen their defense contribution for hosting the US troops. This tested transatlantic and transpacific relations and left prospects for the U.S. commitment to and even the very existence of longstanding security partnerships uncertain (Paalo et al., [2024](#)).
- ▶ **Hardline Stance on Adversarial Powers:** Trump's approach, taking a confrontational attitude towards countries considered a threat to U.S. interests, has been in relation to China, Iran, and North Korea. Tighter political and economic relations with China along with the U.S.–China trade war and restrictions on Chinese technology firms such as Huawei set the stage for more intense strategic competition between the two powers. On the other hand, Trump also pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) and initiated a 'maximum pressure' campaign, consisting of sanctions meant to put a brake on both Iran's nuclear program and its regional influence. However, Trump's outreach to North Korea, even involving historic summits with Kim Jong Un, ended up failing to lead to denuclearization (Hepola, [2024](#)). Trump's aggressive stance toward adversities was most highlighted in these actions, which structured US foreign policy in a way that defied conventional diplomatic norms (Hepola, [2024](#)).

Implications for Global Governance

- ▶ **Erosion of Multilateralism:** Trump's choice to withdraw the international agreements and the institutions demorphed the global governance framework. As an example, the US exit from the Paris Climate Agreement impaired the effort at the global level to confront climate change, but only States and businesses were committed again. Like the paralysis of the WTO's dispute resolution mechanism, the organization was also unable to enforce trade conflicts, which contributed to increased unilateralism. These actions left a political leadership vacuum and other countries, e.g., the European Union and China started to assume more significant roles in international relations, on the international governance stage, and shifted the balance of political power and influence in international affairs.
- ▶ **Shift Toward Bilateralism:** This was in keeping with a wider changing direction in U.S. foreign policy under Trump, whereby multilateral agreements were given up for bilateral ones. While this technique



aided the U.S. to settle much preferred to its interests, it additionally spread out worldwide partnership also as damaged the productivity of regulating transnational issues.

- ▶ **Strain on Alliances and Trust:** Traditional U.S. partners lost confidence in them as Trump adopted a transactional approach that involved demanding burden sharing. This caused European leaders and others in particular to question the reliability of the U.S. as a guarantor of security leading to some to call for greater autonomy on a strategic level.
- ▶ **Rise of Geopolitical Rivalries:** Tensions with China, Russia and Iran were exacerbated by Trump's policies as the world became more polarized and competitive. In this regard, the U.S.–China trade war helped lead to acceleration of the decoupling of these two economies and increased great power competition.
- ▶ **Impact on Global Economic Stability:** Uncertainty in the global economy was caused by tariffs and disruption of global supply chains. The U.S. China trade war accounted for 0.8% decrease in global GDP in 2020 according to the IMF. The economy instability eroded people's faiths in the rules based international trading system.
- ▶ **Domestic and Global Polarization:** A second theme, Trump's foreign policy accentuated and amplified domestic polarizations in the US and these had repercussions on how the world sees American democracy and leadership. However, the "America First" agenda faced much of the US population that was skeptical of globalization but alienated others that put value in international cooperation.

Donald Trump's foreign policy decisions in the first term were a product of a mixture of his instincts as a person, the leverage of important advisors, the workings of Congress, and public opinion. The second factor is the interaction in complex ways between these factors to produce a particular approach that sometimes diverges from traditional U.S. foreign policy norms. Simultaneously, Trump's foreign policy also transformed with the passage of time with some turning points rooted in both domestic and international dynamics. Trump's foreign policy was shaped to a large extent by his advisors, who themselves represented competing ideological camps. People such as Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller were exponents of a fatal 'America First' course based on immigration restrictions, economic protectionism, and skepticism towards multilateralism. Whereas traditional Republicans, specifically former Secretary of Defense James Mattis, and former National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, were more traditional Republicans and wanted a more traditional foreign policy based upon alliances, military strength, and a rules-based international order. At the same time, transactional pragmatists – Jared Kushner and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo among them – fixed on deal-making and what they were able to produce: the Abraham Accords between Israel and several Arab states. The rift between these factions, in turn, resulted in inconsistencies and abrupt changes in policy as Trump played frequent side to advisors whose views matched his gut at any particular time (Peterson, [2018](#)).

During this period, Congress also shaped and hemmed in Trump's foreign policy, but it was hampered by divides that existed on both sides of the aisle (and for many of the same reasons) that limited its influence, and the president's willingness to free himself of Congress' constraints through the use of executive power. For instance, Congress had forced Trump to confront Russia with sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), despite the US president's reluctance to do so. Trump also ran into opposition from lawmakers on his efforts to pull back U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan as lawmakers voiced bipartisan support for keeping the troops in key regions. However, just as Congress attempted to curb Trump's use of executive orders and other unilateral measures used to bypass it on foreign policy issues, he similarly demonstrated an inclination to circumvent them regarding Afghanistan (Entman, [2009](#)).

Another factor influencing Trump's foreign policy decisions was public opinion. As a politician, his base consisted of nationalists and populists who had staked an opinion on immigration, trade, and military intervention. Last, Donald Trump appealed to voters frustrated with the Washington establishment by emphasizing rolling back 'endless wars' and reducing the U.S. role in overseas conflicts. And Trump was also held back by public opinion with, for instance, measures such as military interventions that did not have broad support at home. Trump's personal instincts and transactional worldview were the center of his foreign policy decisions. He often approached international relations much like a businessman, with

his background, and a penchant for deal-making that led him to view affairs as a series of negotiations, where short-term over strategic thought was more important. His resort to using tariffs as a tool of economic statecraft, his preference for personal diplomacy, and also his summits with North Korea's Kim Jong Un were all evident (Der Derian & Rollo, [2024](#); Ali, [2024](#)).

Under his watch, Trump developed and moved from one foreign policy to another depending on situations grabbing each moment. In certain respects, the foreign policies had continuities; but, there were also very notable shifts. Consistency, however, was the "America First" doctrine that ran throughout Trump's term as he kept consistently advocating economic protectionism, skepticism of multilateralism, and, most of all, the importance of national sovereignty. Nevertheless, his way of dealing with individual issues and in specific areas often changed according to domestic and international pressures. For instance, during the early years of his presidency, Trump had allowed the more isolationist stance to guide him; he championed more withdrawal from foreign conflicts and less U.S. military presence overseas. However, over time, his administration would go to a more selective engagement strategy, especially in the Middle East. However, Trump had initially planned to withdraw US troops from Syria, only to authorize military strikes against the Assad regime based on the use of chemical weapons (Kohut, [2024](#)).

Trump's engagement with North Korea was one of the most notable of his foreign policy. Tensions between Trump and Kim spiraled into a 'fire and fury' bluster before Trump walked away from the pastorate to diplomacy and held historic summits with Kim in 2018 and 2019. These efforts did not succeed in denuclearizing North Korea, but they represented a fundamental break with US policy toward North Korea. In the later part of his term, Trump's administration was behind the Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and some Arab states, a turn toward using diplomatic and economic leverage, such as trade negotiations aimed at achieving foreign policy goals.

As regards Trump's foreign policy, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the challenges to his policy, especially towards China. Trump at first backed China's handling of the virus but subsequently beefed up confrontational rhetoric, pinning the blame on China and slapping new sanctions. The shift also demonstrated a rising politicization of U.S.-China ties, as well as the evolving nature of his foreign policy. The range of plausible scenarios for global governance, international relations, and regional security during Donald Trump's potential second term relies heavily on both his own campaign promises and the general Republican foreign policy ecosystem in which his presidency would likely operate. The six scenarios listed below were analyzed regarding the impact, likelihood, and consequences for the world order (Friedman & Rapp-Hooper, [2018](#)).

- ▶ **Escalation of U.S.-China Rivalry:** A full term of another Trump could result in a massive heightening of U.S.-China rivalry with further trade wars, technological decoupling, and stronger military tensions in the Indo-Pacific. He has consistently accused China of unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, and how it deals with the COVID-19 pandemic. In a second term, he may enforce more tariffs, clamp down further on Chinese access to US technology, and broaden alliances with regional partners e.g. Japan, India, and Australia by working with the Quad. Bifurcation of global supply chains as a result of this scenario could mean a process of countries opting to isolate and choose between the U.S. or Chinese economic spheres. Considering Trump's first term and campaign rhetoric, the possibility this scenario plays out is high. Were the impact to be global, it could cripple multilateral institutions in which it was based, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and increase geopolitical tensions enough to potentially create a new Cold War.
- ▶ **Further Disengagement from Multilateral Institutions:** Further US disengagement from international organizations and agreements is possible because of Trump's skepticism towards multilateralism. The U.S. could then disengage from regulation for a second term, withdrawing even more treaties — the WHO, and the UNFCCC, and preventing the appointment of judges to the WTO's Appellate Body. In this case, global governance structures would be made weak, and crucial challenges like climate change, pandemics, and nuclear proliferation are currently poorly addressed. This scenario is moderate to highly likely considering Trump's first-term actions and 'America First' ideology. That vacuum would be filled by other countries including China and the European Union, which would reshape the global order, and would lead to crippling political consequences including a leadership vacuum (Chow & Levin, [2024](#)).



- ▶ **Renewed Pressure on NATO and Transatlantic Relations:** While Trump gained no new mandate for the rule of law in Washington, a second term also could bring renewed pressure on NATO allies to increase defense spending and take on more of the load on collective security. This could mean that some members reach the target to spend 2% of GDP on defense but could strain transatlantic relations and weaken NATO's cohesion. If Trump follows a transactional approach to the alliance, it may result in a reduced U.S. military presence in Europe capable of encouraging allies, with the help of Russia, to emulate greater strategic autonomy. This scenario is likely due to Trump berating NATO during his first term. If backed by Russia, this could seriously damage regional security further embolden us enemies, and increase doubt about the USA's commitment to its allies.
- ▶ **Diplomatic Breakthroughs in the Middle East:** Having initially succeeded in normalizing their relations with the UAE and Israel, a second Trump term could lead to more diplomatic breakthroughs between Israel and other Arab states. On the other hand, Trump could also try to jump-start a renewal of a peace process between Israel and Palestine, although this would have significant difficulties. This could make the regional situation more stable and bring down tension, but it could also sideline the Palestinian question and aggravate cleavages among the Arab people. The odds of this situation are medium in likelihood, referred to as likely, due to Trump's emphasis on deal-making and his administration's past success in the region. However, this would have mixed consequences for international relations as it would increase the US's influence in the Middle East but can anger other stakeholders holding stakes in Syria (Dorani, [2019](#)).
- ▶ **Increased Military Confrontations with Iran:** But a second Trump term could bring closer military confrontation with Iran if pressure fails to work. Iran, on the other hand, might strike Israeli or American targets elsewhere in the region, resulting in wider war. If this scenario were allowed to play out, it would be too dangerous to regional security whereby other powers such as Russia and China could also get involved and further destabilize the Middle East. It's plausible, judging the Donald's hardline stance on Iran and his propensity for miscalculation. As a result, it would have dire consequences for global governance as it could jeopardize the work on preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and increase tensions in already tense areas (Humire, [2024](#)).
- ▶ **Selective Engagement in Global Conflicts:** In Trump's second term we might see a carousel strategy for global conflicts where he coordinates further involvement only in cases that involve direct U.S. interest and abandons all the rest. Consider, for example, that Trump could be lowering the number of US troops in Afghanistan and Syria but raising counterterrorism funding in Africa or the Indo-Pacific. It would conform to Trump's preference for ending wars that become 'endless wars' and putting American resources to use. With Trump's first-term actions and promised actions for his second, this scenario is likely. For international relations, it would mix consequences as involvement in protracted conflicts in the U.S. would reduce, but power vacuums would also likely be created that adversary powers might fill.

If Donald Trump is reelected for a second term, the regions of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East are most definitely in for a bumpy ride under his "America First" doctrine. A renewed Trump presidency would bring different challenges and opportunities for each region, with particular countries and issues serving as particular interests in understanding the broader impact on global governance and international relations. A second Trump term will put further strain on transatlantic relations, specifically with regard to NATO and U.S.–EU trade in Europe. Although Trump has routinely blasted NATO members for failing to spend 2% of GDP on defense, a second term would likely mean more pressure on others to pitch in to secure the collective. It could be more strategic autonomy in the EU because France and Germany are trying to disengage it from the U.S. defense policy. But it could also start unraveling NATO, providing Moscow further opportunities to extend its long reach east. Ukraine is an important case study of where Trump's approach could have great implications. Trump's dealings with Ukraine were plagued with controversy during his first term, including his withholding of military aid if Ukraine refused to help in politically favoring him. In a second term, Trump could become a more transactional advocate of U.S. support for Ukraine at the expense of a strategy to counter his Russian aggression. Such an act could embolden Russia and further destabilize the region, as does so during the ongoing euro crisis and the growing rivalry between Shanghai and Washington. Their response may be to beef up their own defense capabilities and deepen cooperation with other partners like the UK and Canada in order to fill the American void.

In the second Trump term in Asia, the U.S.–China rivalry would most likely intensify with devastating impacts on regional security and economic stability. But if the circumstances that brought the U.S. and China to the current position remain unaddressed, Trump will continue his focus on trade imbalances, and technological competition, which could include more tariffs, further restrictions on Chinese companies, and additional measures to decouple the U.S. and Chinese economies. The South China Sea remains a vital problem in this area; the Chinese military facilities and their territorial claims in the sea have significantly raised tensions. With a second Trump term, US naval presence and freedom of navigation operations in the region could increase, along with more support for especially Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. Trump's transactional, relationship-driven approach to working with other countries will make them question the US commitment to regional security, and so will hedge their bets with China or even move to self-reliance. A case in point would be Vietnam or Indonesia in Southeast Asia, or Japan and Australia, who may opt to engage both the U.S. and China in balancing their relationships and at the same time strengthen their security cooperation through, for example, the Quad. If U.S. and China relations grow more antagonistic, big implications would play out for global governance as the multilateral institution would take a beating and worsen geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific (Kneuer & Demmelhuber, [2024](#); Baum & Potter, [2008](#)).

A second Trump term would have far-reaching security ramifications in the Middle East most notably on Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. With contributed to tensions in the region, Trump's campaign of maximum pressure against Iran – at which point he had already withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal or JCPOA – does not help either. Iran may strike at US interests in the region in a second term, or the US also could take the offensive, striking at Iranian nuclear facilities and proxy groups, which could escalate to a broader conflict. This would have a knock-on effect on regional stability, involving other countries such as Russia and China and furthering sectarian divides. There is a key case study of that, the Iran nuclear deal that Trump repeatedly railed against as flawed. In a second term, he would likely try to negotiate a new agreement with more stringent terms but, Iran would resist and European allies would not be enthusiastic. Such a tougher U.S. stance against Iran might play well with regional actors such as Saudi Arabia and Israel but will expose them to the added risk of Iranian retaliation. Trump's emphasis on deal-making may even produce other breakthroughs on the diplomatic front, including more normalization agreements between Israel and Arab states. The developments could subsume the Palestinian cause and deepen the Arab world divisions or otherwise create new lines of cooperation and new regional alliances. This would all be more confrontational with Iran and create wider implications for global governance as the U.S. approach to Iran could undermine efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation while also adding further tension to what is already a volatile region (Gultom & Miftah, [2024](#)).

In all of these regions, regional actors would most likely react to Trump's policies according to how they fit into their own strategic interests and constraints. In Europe, the EU could pursue more strategic autonomy and deeper common work with other partners, whereas in Asia, states could try to maintain their relations with the U.S. and China. Regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Israel might become closer partners of the U.S.; other regional powers such as Iran might work to increase their ties with Russia and China. The response of any or all of these states would have major repercussions for global governance, as they would entail the fragmentation of the existing international order and the making of new alliances and rivalries. As such, understanding these dynamics is important for predicting the challenges and opportunities of a second Trump term and for developing strategies for what a second term could mean for world order (Kanat, [2024](#)).

Future Directions

At the diplomatic level, policymakers should endeavor to strengthen multilateral engagement and active alliance building as a mitigation strategy to the unforeseeable foreign policy of Trump. Countries can avoid risks derived from a protectionist US policy by investing in regional trade agreements and the process of economic self-sufficiency to reduce foreign dependency. Other factors include enhanced defense and security cooperation with allies to keep regions affected by U.S. commitment shifts from coming undone. Thus, it is essential to work on avoiding diplomatic misunderstandings by practicing transparent communication and de-escalating potential conflicts by adopting crisis management strategies.



It is necessary that scholars analyse the long term consequences of Trump's policies by providing evidence based opinions that decision makers can use. Bipartisan dialogues about the future of U.S. foreign policy looking towards a more global cooperation should be promoted by think tanks and academic institutions. Awareness of public campaigns, too, has to accentuate the consequences of isolative policies and the advantages of international entanglements.

Global stakeholders, and business leaders, should engage with governments, and international organizations and push for business policies and economics that are stable and predictable. Diverting to different partners with whom to trade and reinforcing regional supply chains help dilute the reliance on U.S. policies and the downturns in the traded market. Reviewing existing international cooperation mechanisms, civil society organizations have a firm place in promoting people-to-people diplomacy, especially through cultural exchanges, educational programs, and grassroots cooperation to guarantee that such partnerships continue when governmental actions fade away.

To effectively coordinate the global response it needs to work at the strategic level of diplomacy, economic and intellectual engagement. It is possible for the international community to adapt to these policy changes while collaborating, working within this new policy framework, and maintaining open dialogue about it with all sides of the world to safeguard global stability and uphold the rules based world order (Noonan, [2020](#)).

Findings

At the end of Donald Trump's second term, his 'America First' program has even more firmly taken root, exerting a heightened impact on global trade, foreign policy, and international cooperation. The president has taken to a new extent by expanding a series of tariffs on major trading partners such as Canada, Mexico, and China, which has escalated tensions and precipitated retaliation. These trade disruptions are predicted by economists to leave countries heavily reliant on trade with the U.S. heading toward recession, and American consumers are likely to have higher prices which will contribute to inflationary pressures.

Trump's aggressive approach to foreign policy is manifested in his relations with both allies and adversaries, as a central tool of his foreign policy, economic pressure is being used to obtain political goals. For example, the presence of economic threats from the U.S. against Colombia makes it possible to force the latter to carry out controversial policies, for example, deportations of illegal immigrants. However, this strategy has the downside of potentially injecting more instability into key U.S. areas of concern like South Korea, Eastern Europe, and Taiwan.

Illustrating a major move of unilateralism, the administration backed out of agreements with the world, such as the Paris Climate accord and the World Health Organization. These are actions which go directly against collective, global efforts to solve pressing issues such as climate change and global health crises, and leave international cooperation areas of silence.

Territorial ambitions, including attempting to claim Greenland and deliberations for annexing Canada, have likewise strained foreign relations with America's conventional companions and fanned debates regarding the USA's political request. Adding to the trend of a more fragmented and increasingly protectionist global economic landscape, aggressive foreign policy moves are coming together with trade policy in an attempt to set up alternative partnerships and trade agreements among nations.

Trump's second term has served to strengthen the implications of his first term policies, remolding the international relations, revitalizing trade mechanics and deteriorating global initiatives on cooperation. Their long term implications are likely to have profound implications on the way the global power balance will move to a more fragmented, less cooperative international environment.

Conclusion

The continuation of Donald Trump's second term has set Trump's 'America First' agenda in high gear, reconfiguring the global dynamics and propelling the world into a context of trade tensions, changing alignments, and challenging cooperation. Looking at trade, foreign power, and international agreements, his administration has left the global economic and political systems in such a state of uncertainty through

its bold protectionist trade policies, assertive foreign stances, and its pullback from key international agreements. Intended to advance US interests or to favor them above those of other nations, these moves have sparked economic retaliation and increased geopolitical friction, thus threatening the position of America on the world stage. Most of all, the future of America First 2.0 depends on what other nations do about these things. Others may strive to increase independence and some may strive to recalibrate their relationship to the US, for the sake of stability. In this complex terrain, what the world has to do is for policymakers, scholars, and global leaders to engage in diplomatic dialogue, diversify their economies, and pursue multilateral solutions. Whether the U.S. and the rest of the world continue to move toward greater dependence on one another or towards a more self-reliant America or a fragmented global order, in the end, is ultimately a question of how Trump leaves a mark on foreign policies, which he had less than two years in power.



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