

# Discussing the Trump Administration's 2025 National Security Strategy

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## *Introduction:*

After the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy elites convinced themselves that permanent American domination of the entire world was in the best interests of our country. Yet the affairs of other countries are our concern only if their activities directly threaten our interests. Our elites badly miscalculated America's willingness to shoulder forever global burdens to which the American people saw no connection to the national interest. They overestimated America's ability to fund, simultaneously, a massive welfare regulatory-administrative state alongside a massive military, diplomatic, intelligence, and foreign aid complex.

They placed hugely misguided and destructive bets on globalism and so-called "free trade" that hollowed out the very middle class and industrial base on which American economic and military preeminence depend. They allowed allies and partners to offload the cost of their defense onto the American people, and sometimes to suck us into conflicts and controversies central to their

interests but peripheral or irrelevant to our own. And they lashed American policy to a network of international institutions, some of which are driven by outright anti-Americanism and many by a trans-nationalism that explicitly seeks to dissolve individual state sovereignty. In sum, not only did our elites pursue a fundamentally undesirable and impossible goal, in doing so they undermined the very means necessary to achieve that goal: the character of our nation upon which its power, wealth, and decency were built (1-2).

*What do We Want in and from the World?*

- We want to ensure that the Western Hemisphere remains reasonably stable and well-governed enough to prevent and discourage mass migration to the United States; we want a Hemisphere whose governments cooperate with us against narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal organizations; we want a Hemisphere that remains free of hostile foreign incursion or ownership of key assets, and that supports critical supply chains; and we want to ensure our continued access to key strategic locations. In other words, we will assert and enforce a “Trump Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine;
- We want to halt and reverse the ongoing damage that foreign actors inflict on the American economy while keeping the Indo-Pacific free and open, preserving freedom of navigation in all crucial sea lanes, and maintaining secure and reliable supply chains and access

to critical materials;

- We want to support our allies in preserving the freedom and security of Europe, while restoring Europe's civilizational self-confidence and Western identity;
- We want to prevent an adversarial power from dominating the Middle East, its oil and gas supplies, and the chokepoints through which they pass while avoiding the “forever wars” that bogged us down in that region at great cost; and
- We want to ensure that U.S. technology and U.S. standards—particularly in AI, biotech, and quantum computing—drive the world forward. These are the United States' core, vital national interests. While we also have others, these are the interests we must focus on above all others, and that we ignore or neglect at our peril (5).

### *Economics: The Ultimate Stakes (China)*

Going forward, we will re-balance America's economic relationship with China, prioritizing reciprocity and fairness to restore American economic independence. Trade with China should be balanced and focused on non-sensitive factors. If America remains on a growth path—and can sustain that while maintaining a genuinely mutually advantageous economic relationship with Beijing—we should be headed from our present \$30 trillion economy in 2025 to \$40 trillion in the 2030s, putting our country in an enviable position to maintain

our status as the world's leading economy.

Our ultimate goal is to lay the foundation for long-term economic vitality. Importantly, this must be accompanied by a robust and ongoing focus on deterrence to prevent war in the Indo-Pacific. This combined approach can become a virtuous cycle as strong American deterrence opens up space for more disciplined economic action, while more disciplined economic action leads to greater American resources to sustain deterrence in the long term.

To accomplish this, several things are essential. First, the United States must protect and defend our economy and our people from harm, from any country or source. This means ending (among other things):

- Predatory, state-directed subsidies and industrial strategies;
- Unfair trading practices;
- Job destruction and deindustrialization;
- Grand-scale intellectual property theft and industrial espionage;
- Threats against our supply chains that risk U.S. access to critical resources, including minerals and rare earth elements;
- Exports of fentanyl precursors that fuel America's opioid epidemic; and
- Propaganda, influence operations, and other forms of cultural subversion.

The United States must work with our treaty allies and partners—who together add another \$35 trillion in economic power to our own \$30 trillion national economy (together constituting more than half the world economy)—to counteract predatory economic practices and use our combined economic power to help safeguard our prime position in the world economy and ensure that allied economies do not become subordinate to any competing power (24-25).

### *Promoting European Greatness*

It is a core interest of the United States to negotiate an expeditious cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, in order to stabilize European economies, prevent unintended escalation or expansion of the war, and reestablish strategic stability with Russia, as well as to enable the post-hostilities reconstruction of Ukraine to enable its survival as a viable state. The Ukraine War has had the perverse effect of increasing Europe's, especially Germany's, external dependencies. Today, German chemical companies are building some of the world's largest processing plants in China, using Russian gas that they cannot obtain at home.

The Trump Administration finds itself at odds with European officials who hold unrealistic expectations for the war perched in unstable minority governments, many of which trample on basic principles of democracy to

suppress opposition. A large European majority wants peace, yet that desire is not translated into policy, in large measure because of those governments' subversion of democratic processes. This is strategically important to the United States precisely because European states cannot reform themselves if they are trapped in political crisis.

### *The Mideast*

For half a century at least, American foreign policy has prioritized the Middle East above all other regions. The reasons are obvious: the Middle East was for decades the world's most important supplier of energy, was a prime theater of superpower competition, and was rife with conflict that threatened to spill into the wider world and even to our own shores. Today, at least two of those dynamics no longer hold. Energy supplies have diversified greatly, with the United States once again a net energy exporter.

Superpower competition has given way to great power jockeying, in which the United States retains the most enviable position, reinforced by President Trump's successful revitalization of our alliances in the Gulf, with other Arab partners, and with Israel. Conflict remains the Middle East's most troublesome dynamic, but there is today less to this problem than headlines might lead one to believe.

Iran—the region's chief destabilizing force—has been

greatly weakened by Israeli actions since October 7, 2023, and President Trump's June 2025 Operation Midnight Hammer, which significantly degraded Iran's nuclear program. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains thorny, but thanks to the ceasefire and release of hostages President Trump negotiated, progress toward a more permanent peace has been made. Hamas' chief backers have been weakened or stepped away.

Syria remains a potential problem, but with American, Arab, Israeli, and Turkish support may stabilize and reassume its rightful place as an integral, positive player in the region. As this administration rescinds or eases restrictive energy policies and American energy production ramps up, America's historic reason for focusing on the Middle East will recede. Instead, the region will increasingly become a source and destination of international investment, and in industries well beyond oil and gas—including nuclear energy, AI, and defense technologies.

We can also work with Middle East partners to advance other economic interests, from securing supply chains to bolstering opportunities to develop friendly and open markets in other parts of the world such as Africa. Middle East partners are demonstrating their commitment to combatting [sic] radicalism, a trendline American policy should continue to encourage. But doing so will require dropping America's misguided experiment with hectoring these nations—especially the Gulf monarchies

—into abandoning their traditions and historic forms of government. We should encourage and applaud reform when and where it emerges organically, without trying to impose it from without.

The key to successful relations with the Middle East is accepting the region, its leaders and its nations as they are while working together on areas of common interest. America will always have core interests in ensuring that Gulf energy supplies do not fall into the hands of an outright enemy, that the Strait of Hormuz remain open, that the Red Sea remain navigable, that the region not be an incubator or exporter of terror against American interests or the American homeland, and that Israel remain secure. We can and must address this threat ideologically and militarily without decades of fruitless “nation-building” wars.

We also have a clear interest in expanding the Abraham Accords to more nations in the region and to other countries in the Muslim world. But the days in which the Middle East dominated American foreign policy in both long-term planning and day-to-day execution are thankfully over—not because the Middle East no longer matters, but because it is no longer the constant irritant, and potential source of imminent catastrophe, that it once was.

It is rather emerging as a place of partnership, friendship, and investment—a trend that should be welcomed and encouraged. In fact, President Trump’s

ability to unite the Arab world at Sharm el-Sheikh in pursuit of peace and normalization will allow the United States to finally prioritize American interests (27-29).