

## The Impact of Donald Trump's 'America First' Policy on the Position of the United States in the Global Scene



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**Abstract:** This article tackles the issue of America First foreign policy performed During Donald Trump's term. The study depended on Qualitative and analytical methods to reach its objectives. It aims at decoding Trump's foreign policy and attempts to draw its implications on the global scale during and after Trump's term. The study has concluded that Trump's policy has shrank the role of the United States in the world and widened the gap that separates it from its allies pushing it to embrace unilateralism.

**Key words:** America First; Donald J. Trump; Unilateralism; US foreign policy.

**ملخص:** يتناول المقال السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة "أمريكا أولاً" خلال حكم دونالد ترامب. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج النوعي والتحليلي للوصول الى اهدافه. تتمثل اهداف هذا البحث في معرفة مضمون هذه السياسة وتحديد التداعيات والنتائج المتعلقة بها على المستوى العالمي. في الاخير الدراسة وصلت الى ان سياسة ترامب صغرت موقع امريكا في العالم وقلصت دورها وابعدها عن حلفائها جاعلة اياها تحت مظلة الاحادية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** أمريكا أولاً ؛ دونالد جاي ترامب ؛ الأحادية؛ السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة.

## **Introduction:**

The modern history of the United States has done much to support the impression that the promotion of the American national security and economic prosperity, along with idealism, is the top priority among all interests. Since the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy has taken a new direction; from containment that shaped U.S. foreign policy to the embrace of a new leading role and the launch of the war against terror. In 2016, the United States witnessed, as it used to do every four years, the presidential election of Donald J. Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. The new president has outlined the major and overriding theme of his administration calling it ‘America First’ which directed the U.S. foreign policy.

Trump’s term has witnessed intensive media hype and the decisions that were made under ‘America First’ had caused much controversy. Through the observations of Trump’s speeches and declarations, international relations and economic experts’ analyses, the study will attempt to highlight the main outcomes of US involvement in international affairs after acquaintance with some elements of ‘America First’ vision. The study objectives can be put through the following questions: How did the American foreign policy set the political international scene during and after Trump administration? Where do these changes, if any, situate America as a world power in the global arena? The study will go through the global impact of the new policy then it will, in the light of Trump’s policy impact, move to considerations of the current status of the United States of America under Joe Biden.

## **I-The global impact of the US foreign policy under the trump administration**

‘America First’ policy takes shape in the area of foreign affairs and international relations. It is imperative, thus, to shed the light on the different global events in different areas where the United States was supposed to play its traditional role, and figure out whether the new policy has strengthened or dismantled that role over the period of 4 years. In order to reach the stated objective, we need first to understand the components of Trump’s foreign policy that were novel and different from what was, if one may say, traditional.

### **1-The Nature of US Foreign Policy ‘America First’ under Trump:**

Every foreign policy has to be outlined by the president so that the public would follow the administration’s moves in the international arena. Before we investigate any effect of Trump’s foreign policy, we need, first, to understand its content.

“It has to be first . . . that would be the foundation of every single decision that I would make, America First will be the major and overriding theme of my administration” (CNN, 2016). The slogan ‘America First’ has been used by the American President Donald Trump in his presidential campaign. He has declared that ‘America First’ will be the major theme of his administration. The slogan has historical roots and its meaning in the past may differ from that in the modern time. Actually, it has never been new in the last hundred years. In the field of politics, the slogan often referred to anti-interventionism, isolationism, and anti-expansionism. In this vein, President Woodrow Wilson promised, in his re-election campaign in 1916 not to, under any condition; enter the war, using the slogan “He kept us out of War, America First” (Clark, 2005, p. 205). Later, in his critique of Wilson’s move towards the fierce European chaos, the newspaper Publisher William Randolph Hearst, used the slogan ‘America First’ stating: “Keep every dollar and every man and every weapon and all our supplies and stores at home, for the defense of our own land, our own people, our own freedom, until that defense has been made absolutely secure. After that, we can think of other nations’ troubles, but until then, America first!” (Rubino, 2017). In some organizations, the term was also embraced to express attitudes that favor racism and support Nazism and anti-Semitism. (Emery, 2018)

Generally, we can understand that when one states ‘America First’, they certainly elude to priority of America to Americans making any kind of too much economic or political foreign involvement for the benefit of other party other or more than America unacceptable. We can easily taste such statement in Trump’s inauguration speech on January 20, 2017: “Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families” (Rubino, 2017). Many observers and critics related Trump’s use of ‘America First’ to isolationism justifying their claims by Trump’s intentions and promises to withdraw from different pacts and alliances (Emery, 2018). Donald Trump on the other hand refuted such claim and commented: “America First does not mean America alone!” (World Economic, 2018). This point gives rise to the main discussion of the article where we would attempt to check the extent to which the implemented policies had isolated or in a sense, contributed in the unilateralism of the United States of America since Trump took office in 2017. To put the issue of ‘America First’ into a clearer spot, we shall set the main problems that Donald Trump, as a candidate then a president, has signaled. Then, we would highlight the main points he saw appropriate to fix US foreign path.

For the stand backs that prevented America to go back to the position it deserves, Trump stated that first, the American leaders overextended American resources. He mentioned that Obama has weakened the economy through illogical wasteful spending on alliances with countries that don’t pay their fair share,

unnecessary pacts, and open borders that allowed aliens to take jobs and enhance crime, he said: “we are rebuilding other countries while weakening our own” (CNN, 2016). Second, America has been taken advantage of. Allies are treating the United States the same as its enemies do, as they feel no obligation to stick with any agreement with the United States. They neither pay returns for their protection, nor pay their fair share within an alliance. Trump has brought NATO members as an example stating that only four, including America, out of twenty-eight members spend their minimum requirements for the mutual defense. Third, America made a disastrous deal with Iran and had totally abandoned Israel. In his speech, Trump declared: “president Obama has not been a friend to Israel. He treated Iran with a tender love and care, and made it a great power” (CNN, 2016). He insisted that America should never make concessions in any negotiation with Iran on its nuclear program, and it must be always ready to walk off whenever there is no clear outcome. Trump has also blamed Obama for allowing Iran to prosper and the Muslim Brotherhood to arrive to power in Egypt; the thing that threatened Israel and the whole region. Fourth, America has lost its respect, estimation, and prestigious position. America’s foreign policy was so weak that it stood helplessly in front of many serious issues, allowing North Korea to advance its nuclear program and missile reach, and granting China the ability to assault American jobs and wealth. Finally, America lacked a coherent foreign policy since the cold war. America, as Trump said, never intervened to help and when it did, nothing was achieved but chaos and disarray. America’s foreign policy had made the Middle East more unstable than ever before, allowing radical Islam to raise and expand. (CNN, 2016)

As a response to, as he describes, the chaos, foolishness, and randomness, he attempted to implement the following measures in his foreign policy: First, he focused attention on containing the spread of Radical Islam and extremism in the United States and the world, through quick unpredictable actions. Second, rebuild and reinforce U.S. army in order to ensure strength, and revolutionize trade deals to improve the economy. Third, develop a foreign policy based on the American interest. It involves improving relations with Russia and China, and supporting allies fighting terrorism. It involves also securing the homeland, bringing back jobs to America and establishing fair trade (CNN, 2016). In terms of international relations, Trump’s statement on Russia shows a shift in the American vision towards its foes, because Russia has been strongly opposed by Obama’s administration for its aggression in Ukraine and Syria. Trump believed in the possibility of a significant improvement in the relation with Russia. The improved relation for Trump would be fundamentally constituted by a shared aim and a strategic cooperation against ISIS. Fox News released a website article titled “Trump on Putin, Russia in Syria,” mentioning that Trump has expressed his acceptance of the involvement of Russia in fighting against ISIS. He referred to

Putin saying: “He, frankly, wants to fight ISIS, and I think that's a wonderful thing. If he wants to fight ISIS, let him fight ISIS. Why do we always have to do everything?” (Fox, 2015). With the case of China, Trump went fierce. He declared: “We can’t continue to allow China to rape our country, and that’s what they’re doing” (CNN, 2016). Through his expression, Trump pointed out that China exports a high number of products relative to the America pushing U.S. trade to decline, especially when china manipulates its currency for the purpose of maintaining more competitive products. The first step towards putting an end to China’s assault, as previously stated, is to tax every Chinese product that comes across U.S. border. In this way, Americans will get their jobs despite the fact that the prices of those products may go up high. America, therefore, will be able to make and sell its own products, because China will never allow American manufacturers to compete, and will never hesitate to impose tariffs on their products. Trump’s accusations and attacks went on to include cyber attacks on America, and creating the hoax of global warming and climate change. His attacks were seen as signs of a possible trade war against China as his declarations turned China to, economically speaking, a Scarecrow and mirrored it as a threat that America should get rid of. (Diamond, 2016)

‘America First’ policy, for Trump, entails favoring American interest above all else. This includes both enemies and friends alike. In his remarks concerning US allies, Trump mentioned: “We can both benefit or we can both go our separate ways” (CNN, 2016). He stressed that no deal or alliance shall exist unless America benefits from it and not just spending wastefully as it used to do. In many times, Trump has been insisting on the obligation of all nations to pay for their protection provided by the United States. NATO country members don’t pay for the mutual defense budget as they were taking advantage from the United States and never felt commitment to do so. In his article “What’s Trump’s Position on NATO?” Gore gave an account of Trump’s will toward NATO, stating that Trump believed it to be obsolete, as it was founded to suit its time, and time actually went on (2016). As Trump is committed to his doctrine ‘America First’, he felt the need to gain the maximum benefit from any deal and any alliance, and not just get exploited by other nations in the name of friendship or alliance. He stated: “you have to really examine NATO. And it doesn’t really help us, it’s helping other countries. And I don’t think those other countries appreciate what we’re doing.” (qtd In Gore, 2016)

One of the noteworthy issues that Trump has sharpened his criticism on is the Iran nuclear deal or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action JCPOA which was signed under Obama administration and agreed between USA, UK, China, Russia, France, Germany and Iran. The agreement was made to reduce the Iranian nuclear capabilities in return for lifting the economic sanctions on Iran. Trump promised to scrap it and renegotiate the deal as America should never make concessions.



The overall conclusion that one may draw in the light of Trump's foreign policy plan for the future relation of America with Iran, is that America will not get along with Iran providing it poses a threat to the safety of America's friends including Israel and Saudi Arabia. The advancement in Iran's nuclear program, on the other hand, is a serious matter for Trump; however, he could not easily accept just a simple decrease in Iran's nuclear efforts in exchange for lifting the sanctions, a deal which Trump considers embarrassing, incompetent, and a total failure; therefore, he strictly called for a renegotiation for a far better deal that puts an end to the nuclear development and brings more benefits to the United States and promote the safety of Israel and allies in the region. (Tharoor, 2016)

Since 2011, the Middle East region and North Africa started to witness instability and disarray. The case of Syria among all took another direction, as it developed to a brutal armed civil war. The chaos and insecurity in the region caused by the war, lasted for years and the area witnessed the involvement of different powers that held two antagonistic aims toward the Syrian regime. The United States along with its allies called for EL-Assad's departure and a peaceful transformation of power, while Russia, Iran, China and other main parties such as Hezbollah, called for a political settlement with no interference, insisting on the legitimacy of EL-Assad's regime and the fact that the opposition is mostly nothing but a terrorist organization. The circumstances through the last years, however, provided a vital space where the largest terrorist organization after El Qaida, grew and prospered taking a great advantage of the situation in Syria, Iraq and Libya created through massive conflicts between different parties aiming at power. Donald Trump has severely criticized every decision made by the American leaders concerning their "disastrous" interventions in North Africa and the Middle East, claiming that people in Libya are still suffering from death and vagrancy even after the removal of a dictator, allowing ISIS to expand more (CNN, 2016). Johnson reported a noteworthy statement that was made by Trump, and that shows a non-interventionism policy and a total embrace of 'America First' policy especially when it comes to foreign affairs, stating that America has higher priorities that better serve its interests. He promised, therefore, to stay out of the Syrian civil war although he expressed his opposition to the Syrian President Bashar El-Assad. Concerning ISIS, he stated that he will take out and ultimately destroy ISIS as quickly as possible through a well designed plan during his first days in office. He explained that the difference between his administration and the previous ones would be effectiveness and quick advancement complaining about the incompetence of the American rulers. (Johnson, 2016)

Trump insisted on the nature of the world terror being radical Islamic, he often called to mention the name as "Radical Islamic Terrorism". The term refers to a terrorist action committed by an individual or a group of individuals who declare their Islamic affiliation and who intend to embrace the Islamic supremacy

above all (Encyclopedia, 2018). Actually, Trump has been calling to follow up measures to check on aliens entering the United States. He focused his attention on Muslims relating every terrorist act to every individual with an Islamic background. This was made that clear when he declared: “Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the is going on” (Associated Press, 2016). He directly expressed his view on a total ban on Muslims despite its possible implications worldwide.

Since the Second World War, the Korean Peninsula has never witnessed a political stability, as the region was occupied by the two main antagonistic blocks during the cold war. North Korea has been proceeding with its nuclear project since 1989 to pave the way to be a nuclear nation, and as Kim Jong Un, the current leader, achieved a further advancement in the project, tension grew between North Korea and the west (Davenport, 2018). In his campaign, Trump has expressed his intention toward an unprecedented official move in the history of the United States, stating that he would be ready to initiate personal talks with Kim Jong Un. In their article “Trump Would Talk to North Korea's Kim,” Holland and Flitter mentioned that Trump’s intended move has not been done by President Obama who used to send his senior officials to negotiate with their North Korean counterparts. (Holland & Flitter, 2016)

In short, the overall theme of Trump’s ‘America First’ foreign policy can be put as follows: improve relations with Russia, antagonize China in the name of American economic nationalism, Europe, NATO and allies that don’t pay their shares in mutual trades and defenses. Also, implement bold measures to fight terror and embrace bold names such as Radical Islam, band immigrants on the basis of religious and racial affiliations and finally, implement all necessary measures to secure Israel.

## **2-The Global Repercussions of Trump’s ‘America First’ Foreign Policy:**

Having been acquainted with the nature of Trump’s ‘America First’ policy, and with the consideration of the different international events, we can now come out with a conclusion on the different outcomes of this policy.

Many observers have stated that according to the new administration’s rhetoric including the president and his team, the United States was going to the unknown. Both Trump and his team lacked coherence, the strategic vision, and experience leading us to expect so little if not the total opposite. This was highlighted by Stephen Walt, professor of international relations, who stated:

“Foreign and defense policies are going to be a train wreck, because they don’t have enough good people in place . . . Trump himself lacks the discipline or strategic vision to manage this process and may not care to try. Even if you agree with his broad approach, his team is going to make a lot more rookie mistakes before they figure out what they are doing.” (Walt, 2017)

The question that has to be raised other than the competency of Trump’s surrounding team, is whether ‘America First’ policies really served America. It is agreed that it does not entail isolation; however, Trump has made a kind of shift from America’s traditional place in the world which has already begun to decline. Therefore, Walt warns saying: “Get ready for a lot of unexpected developments and unintended consequences. If the United States is giving up its self-appointed role as the ‘indispensable nation’ and opting instead for ‘America First’, a lot of other countries will have to rethink their policies, alignments, and commitments” (Walt, 2017). The United States being a superpower, affects many nations through its foreign policy. Their policies are built upon the American statements and perspective. Thus, when America changes its vision towards both allies and foes, and makes statements that do not meet its actions, its position will be shaken and probably altered to be worse. To improve the latter, it is imperative to explore the ways Donald Trump saw suitable to handle the different international issues around the world.

## **2-1.The Middle East**

When it comes to the Middle East, Trump didn’t seem to be working on promoting peace in the region, as he went on with unpredictable moves that were to put the region and the world in a much worse state than it is now. His decision of recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on December 6, 2017, has been one of the most controversial issues and one that would probably have led to huge problems and unintended consequences on the Israeli-Palestinian already tense relations. That bald move created more tensions in the Middle East and the Arab and Muslim world in general. The decision project was strongly rejected by 128 countries, including Russia, France, and Britain, in The United Nations general assembly; an action which was faced by threats by the American side describing it as a disrespect to America and promising to impose sanction on the nations that voted against the American decision on Jerusalem (Beaumont, 2017). The reaction of the United States shows a great decline in its foreign policy. Imposing sanctions and cutting funds to whoever opposes the US policy reveals a new method of Political bullying. The decision itself was described as immature and foolish, as its outcomes will never serve the interest of the United States in the



first place, and it will never promote the chances of peace in the region, especially when it comes to Jerusalem which is the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The act, however, was seen from another angle by various observers. Taking the idea of the Israeli lobby in the United States into consideration, would pave the way to a more logical explanation of such a bald action. Donald Trump probably knew how would that decision affects America and the region, and he probably expected the vast opposition from various countries, although he did not seem to have realized it after he went threatening the countries that voted against the decision. The only logical explanation that may, in a way, justify Trump's ambiguous action, is that he wanted to satisfy the Israeli lobby in the United States, a power that is believed to attempt to direct US foreign policy to be pro-Israel. Mearsheimer and Walt have provided a detailed analysis of the situation concerning the United States' decision making process. It is so true that the United States foreign policy attempts to maintain the country's national interest; however, that foreign policy takes shape from domestic activities especially when it comes to the case of the Middle East. Mearsheimer and Walt have also hinted that the conclusion that has been drawn comes from an observation of the situation in the Middle East throughout the past decades, as far as the United States is concerned (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 30). That is to say, the United States has prioritized another state's interests, that of Israel, over its own through creating hostility towards the United States in the Arab and Muslim World, and exposing the country to terrorist attacks, not to forget the 1973 oil embargo that was to drag the United States economy to an unpleasant status. From that point, we can see that US foreign policy did not take the American national security and interest as serious as Israel's own interest; therefore, a powerful lobby that succeed in directing U.S. foreign policy probably exists.

On the other hand, the unique support that Israel has received over the last century and that was represented in the diplomatic support, military assistance, and ignoring Israel's acquisition of the nuclear capability, shows that Israel is the most important strategic asset for the United States (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 76). In the light of these stated facts, Trump's move towards Jerusalem is not a surprise because the United States used to harm its national interest and image for the sake of Israel. However, a unilateral recognition of a state or moving an embassy from a place to another does not serve any strategic goal that would deter Iran or its allies including Hezbollah. It seems to only satisfy the Israeli lobby that is zealous to deter all Israel's Arab and Muslim neighbors including Iraq, Syria and Lebanon which in turn represent Iran's influence in the area; an influence that threatens Israeli borders.

The question that can be raised is why would Trump feel the need to satisfy the Israel lobby at the time when he is financially independent? Trump was severely attacked by the media which he used to call 'fake news'. In addition, it

is widely agreed that Jewish people own large companies and have big influence in the United States; an influence that certainly includes the media. Therefore, his endeavor to Jerusalem comes in return for, at least, lowering the media's intensity towards him especially when it comes to his relation with Russia as well as his moral scandals. The United States, on the basis of these findings, has greatly shrunk its vision towards its national interest and security, leading the already boiled Middle East to be even worse, after it started acting in the international arena only to satisfy a lobby or react to just a sexual scandal.

To some, it was not really apparent where the United States wanted to go for the Middle East. In a session that was hosted by the Washington Post, titled "the Global Impact of America First," deputy prime minister of Lebanon Ghassan Hasbani stated that there was no clear intention in the Middle East under Trump's administration. He added that although America did good fighting ISIS, it is still unclear whether it really wanted to preserve stability in the region. During the same session, professor of economics Jin Keyu, said that despite the fact that the United States follows its 'America First' policies, it is still responsible for its role in the global coordination. (World Economic Forum, 2016). Keyu's view, until the present day, seems to be true only in the incident of the tripartite strike on Syria, but Iran nuclear deal is a strong proof that Keyu's view is no longer the case. The international community including the participants in the deal: UK, Germany, France, Russia, and China, have ensured the importance of the deal in promoting peace and security, and reducing Iran's nuclear threat to the Middle East and the world. On the other hand, they have warned of any action against the deal, as it will bring nothing but destabilization in the area. Trump did not seem to ever care.

Actually, Trump has never been more reckless than he was when he decided to tear up the deal. Trump's obsession of getting the maximum benefits at the expense of allies serves, in a way, the ultimate meaning of the term 'America First' entailing a kind of isolationism. The European nations including UK, Germany, and France have expressed their commitment to the deal; therefore, when Trump withdrew from the deal, it was considered a unilateral step and the United States had to impose sanctions on Iran by its own. This somehow isolated the United States from its allies and increased the chances of a war in the Middle East. In his article "Decertifying the Iran deal is putting the US in 'rogue-state territory,'" Woody hinted at the implications that are likely to occur if Trump withdraws from the deal, stating that Trump's action will certainly affect the international view of America as a key indispensable partner in the promotion of peace in the world. The gap between America and its allies will be widened as they become less sure of the United States' will towards them. If we look closer to the policies of European allies made in response to different crisis in the world, we would sense such an act (Woody, 2017). The European partners as well as the

international community seemed to have agreed that such acts will only increase conflict in the area and harm both US and European interests. More importantly, it won't only be a matter of getting allies away from US. The German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel pointed out the biggest possible outcome of Trump's scrap of the deal, saying that it will push the EU closer to Russia and China. "It's imperative that Europe sticks together on this issue," said Gabriel, "We also have to tell the Americans that their behavior on the Iran issue will drive us Europeans into a common position with Russia and China against the USA" (qtd. in Woody, 2017). The global outcome will be represented in a serious deviation in the United States foreign policy from Multilateralism to Unilateralism.

## **2-2.China**

Donald Trump is probably the first president to sharpen his policy on China. He promised to implement policies against China which he believes as the nation's economic enemy. When it comes to confronting another economic power, the United States needs its allies the same as it needed them against ISIS or any other threat whatsoever. Trump did not seem to realize the importance of mobilizing allies as well as international institutions against any unfair trade practices that do not follow the rules imposed by the west. In this vein, Porter adds: "Washington could strengthen the global institutions that support its own view of fair play . . . . That is not, however, what Mr. Trump is doing." (Porter, 2018)

Trump's 'America First' method in the international scene did not only allow China to gain more space, but also provided a fertile territory for it to practice further influence. Trump's vision on Latin America has been shrunk through ignoring Latin American countries, initiating a kind of hostile statements on Latin immigrants especially those from Mexico, and threatening to end NAFTA with Canada and Mexico. Trump's 'America First' project in the American continent has led him to be unpopular in the region which he has alienated. In the article "Trump eyes Latin America," Phillips has mentioned that China, as the former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stated, has already become the largest trading partner of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. With continues negligence of Latin America, the United States allowed China to invade its space and negotiate bigger deals with Latin America countries. (Phillips, 2018) Phillips has also reported that Margaret Myers, director of the Inter-American Dialogue's China and Latin America program, has expressed his concerns on the growing pace of China's activities in the region saying: "There is a sense that China is increasingly active in Latin America ... and that we are seeing bigger announcements, bigger numbers, bigger deals, bigger projects." (Phillips, 2018)

When it comes to the issue of dealing with rival powers, the leader usually highlights his strategic moves that should be implemented to reach long term

goals. From a geopolitical point of view, Rivalry demands containment. That is to say, implementing different ways to prevent or at least limit the rival nation's exercise of its power in any place in the world, especially when it comes to areas near the rival's shores or borders. In this vein, when China, the world's second largest economic power, represents that rival, things go stricter and measures become more complicated; therefore, the United States or any other country facing such an economic monster, has to take into account two main aspects: First, the need to be strongly aware of the geopolitical confrontation, and the need to draw a strategic view that goes beyond simple deterrence. President Donald Trump did not seem to be interested in fulfilling that goal; instead, he went on with pointless measures concerning bilateral dealings with China such as imposing more tariffs on Chinese imports to the country.

Trump seemed to be unaware about the geopolitical rivalry with China that attempts to create a hegemonic spot in Asia. According to Walt, the theme of Trump's administration 'America First' benefits America only when it exists in an extreme unipolar world in terms of politics, military capabilities, and most importantly, economy. He stated:

“It's easier to favor 'America First' when no other great power is active near our shores, but that fortunate position may not last if China establishes a position in its neighborhood akin to the one the United States has long enjoyed in its backyard. With its surroundings secured, China could forge alliances around the world and interfere in distant regions . . . including areas close to U.S. soil. This development would force Americans to worry a whole lot more about defending our territory, something we haven't had to worry about for more than a century.” (Walt, 2017)

Second, the need to maintain and preserve alliances in order to coordinate all efforts to fulfill a certain goal; something that the United States has strongly worked on since the cold war. It is agreed to a great extent that the United States has emerged as the greatest effecting power in terms of economy, strength and foreign policy. All those privileges allowed it to practice its role as the indispensable dominant nation. However, it always needed its allies to maintain its interests as well as of the allies themselves. Despite being a super power, the United States cannot perform alone on the international ground, as it will always need its allies concerning any issue whatsoever. In the case of China, Russia or even Iran, the United States has to match with its allies whether it was NATO, EU, South Korea or Latin America, for better fulfillment of its interests and more effective containment of its rivals along with countries and parties that represent the Axis of resistance in the East. President Trump, again, and through his

‘America First’ policy, was excluding his allies and widening a serious gap that other competing nations had certainly taken advantage of. Tearing up the Trans-Pacific Partnership as mentioned earlier and sharpening the words to NATO, Latin American countries and even Arab and Muslim allies, have led the United States to deviate from its standard path and will ultimately change its position in the world. Walt has also tackled Trump’s behavior towards allies saying: “The United States is not located in the Western Pacific. As a result, its ability to prevent China from becoming a hegemonic power there requires close cooperation with Asian partners. The United States should not try to shoulder this burden by ourselves, but we sure ain’t gonna do it alone.” (Walt, 2017)

As mentioned in previous discussions, countries around the world shape their policies on the basis of the United States’ statements as well as its actions. Trump’s method against allies and enemies alike had pushed other nations to reconsider their plans and subsequently draw different views on America. This became a fact today which signals a new turn that is not in favor of the United States. One of the Latin American diplomats reflected on that idea saying: “The United States isn’t respected as much now . . . Before, whatever Americans said seemed to be the right thing - the voice of reason. Now whatever they say is questioned” (Rampton & Taj, 2018)

### **2-3. Russia**

Under Obama administration, U.S. and its allies including Germany have been following a deterring policy against Russia, Trump has revealed the possibility of getting along with Russia to the best level. When Trump took office, he had the same view; however, US foreign policy was not that smooth on the ground. This is seen as the biggest contradiction in Trump’s history since he took office. Many observers and political analysts came into a shared conclusion that when it comes to Russia, there were two Trumps. Beauchamp has described the Russian situation with America saying: “On Russia, it’s Trump versus the Trump administration” (Beauchamp, 2018). Earlier during Trump’s term, America has been acting bold against Russia in the Syrian territory. Although the tension never went beyond tweets and few air strikes against targets, Russia, was seen as a empty giant that was a part of the bipolar world only on paper. However, through a close observation of the previous world events, not only in Syria, we do not really see Trump’s victory over Putin, because Russia was still a major player on the Syrian ground, and the American strike was not the big shot that could seriously hurt its targets and that was overblown on twitter

### **2-4. Europe**

When speaking about European- Trump relations, NATO is usually at the core of the talk. As he constantly promised to urge NATO allies to pay for their



share in his campaign, he directly went through implementation putting pressure on them to pay the United States; however, there is no indication, until now, whether Trump has succeeded to have them pay their share. NATO has been and still America's most important alliance, therefore, any tension or less cooperation as Trump was likely to do, will never be in favor of either parties. The British Prime Minister Theresa May, reflected on this side saying: "With the threats we face, it's not the time for less cooperation" (Slaon, 2018). Any wrangle, thus, within the Trans-Atlantic alliance that represents the core of the American-European political and security cooperation, will certainly not serve the United States under any policy whatsoever. In an open session supervised by The Washington Post discussing Trump's foreign affairs, the Senior Fellow from the Centre for a New American Security CNAS, Robert Kaplan stated that Trump has shrunk his vision towards Asia through retreating from the Trans-Pacific partnership, focusing on North Korea's program, and negotiating better deals with China, paving the way from free trade to bilateral trade. The challenging tone and the tendency towards economic nationalism made European allies less sure of the United States' will towards them, especially when they learnt that Trump was not committed to U.S. allies from the beginning. In addition, according to Kaplan, and as the case with Russia, there seems to be less or no cooperation between the white house and state departments (World Economic Forum, 2016). The president states something and his administration states something else. When the statements of a superpower like the United States do not meet its actions, the country will be undermined, its influence abroad will be weakened, and its decisions will not be as heavy as it used to be in the international ground. Russia has begun expanding further influence in Eastern Europe and the Middle East; therefore, any possible weakness or shake in the American alliance with Europe, will probably provide an advantage to Putin. Trump's rip of treaties with countries including Mexico, Australia, Japan, and other Latin and Asian countries had certainly made them think about another power to deal with, whether it is Russia or China.

## **2-5. North Korea**

In his speech to the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2017, Trump used war words clearly insisting that he will not hesitate to attack and ultimately destroy North Korea to defend the United States and its allies (Hamedy & Tseng, 2018). The later events have reinforced how unpredictable Trump is. After he had called Kim "Rocket Man," "Madman," and "Sick Puppy," Trump described him as an honorable man during a meeting with the French President in Washington DC, regarding Kim's announcement to stop his nuclear program and his readiness to have a historical summit with the South Korean president Moon Jae-in (Hamedy & Tseng, 2018). The Korean summit was considered as the greatest shift in the Korean peninsula's history and the world in general, as the two counties

lived in a period of hostility since the 1950s. Later, another big summit followed after the meeting between Trump and Kim that brought a lot to consider as great change in the international political course. Many have hinted to give credit to Trump for such a move towards peace in the area; However, it does not seem to be completely right that Trump takes big or even little credit if we look at the event from another angle. On the basis of Trump's method of pushing allies to pay the United States in return for their protection and military existence, the Korean summit does not reflect the American success. On the contrary, it reflects the American great failure and the triumph of China and its allies from the axis of resistance.

Trump's political bullying to his allies such as NATO and the Gulf states was also applied on South Korea which owes the United States billions of dollars for the strategic military bases and supplies especially the nuclear missile shield in addition the thousands of American troops in the area. According to the Lebanese researcher and specialist in the international relation Riad Aid, the South Korean president Moon did not want to follow the Gulf states example of submission to satisfy Trump's lust for money; rather, he intended to avoid the American pressure through establishing peace in the area. Moon's move in the area was a step that China takes the biggest credit for through pushing the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to initiate the historical summit with his neighbor (World Economic Forum, 2016). Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula means the removal of all nuclear arsenals as well as the nuclear deterrence and missile defenses, especially that of the United States. In this way, the United States would no longer have an excuse to stay there, and it will not be able to exercise pressure on South Korea to pay for any protection. China and Russia, on the other hand, will be safer and freer because the American strategic existence was made to target both of them in the first place. Belford reflected on the overall effect of Trump's 'America First' policy, saying that despite the fact that Trump takes little credit for the Korean summit, his policy has dismantled America's position in the world. Despite the fact that America is a huge economic engine, it will never win a fight against the world because the world, as a whole, is much bigger than the United States. This will be ultimately done when the United States abandons its allies.

## **II-The Trump Legacy and the United States in the International Stage under Joe Biden**

Trump's departure from the white house on January 20, 2021 did not only leave a bitter world relations but also, domestically speaking, a bitter America. Americans moved politically away from one another, more than any time within the last hundred years under Trump's term. The riots occurred by his supporters and the clash that resulted clearly speak of it (Spetalnick, 2021). Referring to this

respect, the civil rights activist and co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign William Barber mentioned: "Sadly, he is the natural outcome of the history of divide and conquer . . . The thing is, he just pushed it all the way." (Democracy Now, 2019)

Abroad, and as mentioned earlier in the paper, he broke the multilateral pacts including the Paris climate accord that represented a fundamental aspect to gas emissions as many heavy industrial nations were committed to do so. The negative impact was not only on environment and the world but also on the American foreign policy. The scrap of the Iran nuclear deal and withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were the greatest examples (Spetalnick, 2021). US greatest rivals were allowed more freedom to interfere and grow influence while its traditional partners were antagonized. Israel on the other hand was given too much attention by Trump's administration. The support seemed to be exaggerated that it was badly reflected on US itself. The support reached the level of pushing Israel's Arab neighbors to normalize relations with Israel creating more tension between the latter and other Arab nations.

The outcomes of Donald Trump's policies for America and the world will take years to be reversed. This can be achieved only in case the Biden administration really breaks with 'America First' and embraces 'America is back.' Basically, when nations experience a crack in relations due to certain policies that shifted what has been traditional for many years, it becomes really difficult to get things back the way it was. During Trump's term, Allies' confidence in the United States has been considerably affected as they every time come to the realization that America is no longer the leading state they rely on in major instances. States, now, will take a considerable amount of time to re-organize their policies with the United States. The world, even after Biden's clear endeavor to undo Trump's impact, is still unsure and skeptic about the United States leading role in international politics, economic regulations and climate change.

Biden has insured many times as a presidential candidate and as a president that he will promote security, prosperity and advance the values by renewing alliances (Biden, 2019). Something that Trump has been scarping through the last four years. Biden went on to ensure the United States back to its traditional role by hinting to its will to lead the world again against the global challenges. He mentioned in his foreign policy speech that America will lead by example and will take into account what has been neglected such as climate change and nuclear proliferation. It seems that Biden's job was mostly about reversing what Trump has done as he referred many times to Trump's impact saying that he had surrendered US global position, undermined its vital alliances and weakened its ability to mobilize allies to meet challenges. That would mean better treatment to NATO allies as the organization will, as we expect, keep its military capabilities

sharp. The same will be applied with other partners in North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa

His anti-Trump measures were not only intended for allies but also the entire world including what was considered a threat to the United States. The Termination of the Muslim travel ban and reversing immigration policies were prominent examples. Commitment to Israel's safety on the other hand remains the case as it used to be many years ago.

### Conclusion:

The aim of this paper was to examine its implications on the international relations and the world as a whole, and to see how these developments have set the world stage for the next administration led by President Joe Biden.

This study has highlighted the nature of President Donald Trump's 'America First' policy, and which included economic nationalism and anti-immigration tendency. The study has also concluded that the new policy widened the gap between the United States and its allies resulting in an American Unilateralism, caused more chaos and instability in the Middle East, and allowed it rivals to expand their influence. Economic nationalism embraced by the American President Donald Trump represented one of the essential aspects of his 'America First' project favoring the American production, trading on the protectionist mood, and avoiding foreign competition. This was usually the case for many other nations; however, it does not necessarily work all the time because China will certainly react. And its reaction would be formidable as it will simply do the same. These policies, however, did not take shape during Trump's term but, on paper, it was certainly doomed to failure. Donald trump's 'America First' has led to the first stages of America alone.

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