

The US National Security Strategy 2025

Motivations, Trends, and Outcomes

(Translated)

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The US National Security Strategy (NSS) represents a high-level directive document issued by the US President, in accordance with a procedural obligation stipulated in the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, without being legally binding or having direct legislative effect, as it does not generate rights or obligations enforceable before the courts. Nevertheless, the document acquires significant political weight as it is the most official expression of the US President's doctrine on national security and foreign policy, and it serves as a strategic framework that directs the policies of the Departments of Defense and State and the intelligence agencies, as well as being used in managing relations with the US Congress and justifying defense budgets, and in sending clear political messages to allies and adversaries regarding America's priorities and major directives. Thus, the document combines a formal legal character with a substantive political character, making it one of the most important tools for strategic decision-making in America.

Key points of the US National Security Strategy 2025

In a radical departure from the American National Security Strategy of 2022, which called for strengthening democracy under the current global order, the Trump administration published yesterday, Friday 12 December 2025, a new strategy that emphasized the principle of non-intervention and putting "America First."

America's announcement of a major strategic shift in its foreign policy stems from the realization that the era of sole global leadership is over, to be replaced by the priority of protecting the American homeland, and reducing global military commitments. This new vision relies on the principle of obligating allies to bear a larger share of the costs of their security, with the transformation of the American army into a force with less deployment and more technology, relying on deterrence through air and missile power, instead of traditional ground armies, and reducing direct engagement in foreign wars. This policy focuses on Latin America and the southern borders as a major priority, in the context of confronting direct threats such as unregulated migration and transnational organized crime.

In confronting the fundamental threats, America adopts differentiated regional policies based on reducing the direct role. In confronting China as a major competitor, the strategy relies on economic and military deterrence around Taiwan while avoiding direct war, demanding that allies such as Japan and Korea bear more. And in Europe, which it sees as threatened by a "civilizational collapse," Washington rejects any expansion of NATO and demands that Europeans protect themselves. In the Middle East, America maintains limited support for maritime stability and containing Iran, while avoiding new wars and shifting responsibility to local partners. All this reflects a deep domestic focus on rebuilding industry, tightening border security, and reducing

dependence on foreign supply chains, especially Chinese, considering that economic security has become equal in priority to traditional national security.

Thus, the strategy combines preserving American leadership of the international order with reshaping its priorities according to an equation of a global power that wants to remain strong, but at a lower cost, with less intervention, and stronger, “independent” allies.

Why “America First”?

The Trump administration’s “America First” approach is not the result of a single motive, but rather the result of the interaction of four levels: an isolationist, nationalistic idea that goes back to the Monroe Doctrine, economic calculations related to declining industry and the trade deficit, societal pressures resulting from fear of ethnic marginalization and immigration, and political contexts aimed at mobilizing the electoral base and redefining America’s role globally. Thus, “America First” is considered a doctrine with multiple sources that combines nationalistic thought with economic, political, and social considerations.

The US National Security Strategy under Trump reflects a clear return to the philosophical foundations of the Monroe Doctrine (1823), through prioritizing the American homeland, reducing foreign military and diplomatic commitments, and considering international participation a burden that should be limited, unless it achieves direct benefit for America. The strategy transforms the concept of America First into an institutional framework closer to selective isolation, where America intervenes only when vital interests are involved, while distancing itself from playing the role of the world’s policeman or bearer of the banner of democracy globally, which constitutes a modern extension of Monroe’s approach in strategic withdrawal from the conflicts of the Old World.

Selective isolationism combines protecting nationalistic interests and maintaining essential tools for international cooperation, while pushing allies to bear greater burdens without completely abandoning the tools of deterrence and global governance, and without slipping back into the role of the world’s comprehensive policeman. This means a foreign policy that does not reject the world as much as it recalculates its interests, according to the framework of immediate interests, with a tendency to be wary of long-term commitments.

Trump’s Directions Are Not an Exception

The Trump administration’s approach does not represent a complete departure from the historical course of American foreign policy, but rather a radical hardening within a consistent general guideline based on the principle of prioritizing nationalistic interest. Since World War II, America has maintained a firm doctrine consisting of four enduring principles: global leadership as the “indispensable state” to regulate the international order, preventing the emergence of a dominant rival power in sensitive regions, such as Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, expanding American economic influence and protecting global trade, and managing a broad network of alliances, within NATO, Asia and the Middle East, with a thinking of protection in exchange for influence. These principles remained fundamental across successive administrations from Truman to Obama, confirming the existence of a fixed strategic framework.

However, the style adopted by Trump, and the degree to which he implemented it, made this approach seem like a reversal of American traditions, even though it was essentially a solid extension of existing trends. The real change was represented first by the transformation of the slogan of protecting the homeland from an implicit principle to a confrontational rule in all issues, through an explicit withdrawal from international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, direct financial pressure on allies, a declared trade war with China, and a reduction of foreign military commitments, firstly. Secondly, Trump adopted the framework of bilateral relations instead of international multilateralism, considering the world an arena for deals and not an institutional partnership, and questioned, in an unprecedented way, the value of historical alliances that his predecessors considered America's long arm, describing them as unfair deals. He also raised the ceiling of economic nationalism from a limited idea, to a comprehensive strategy through tariffs, campaigns to return manufacturing to the homeland, and targeting global supply chains.

Nevertheless, Trump's policy remains a continuation of the deep general guideline, as it falls within entrenched American trends: reducing involvement in foreign wars, as began with Obama, focusing on strategic competition with China, which was planned since Bush Junior, protecting the class harmed by globalization, a domestic concern since the nineties, and requesting burden-sharing from allies, an idea repeated since Nixon. Therefore, Trump did not change America's deep strategic goals, but changed their means and degree of intensity, transforming collective leadership into deal-based leadership, traditional alliances into alliances conditioned by strict financial terms, and open globalization into aggressive economic nationalism. Therefore, it is not a deviation, but a sharp return to the roots of isolationism.

In conclusion, choosing isolation and withdrawal means that America, and behind it the capitalist order, is incapable of leading the world. After the fall of communism, the end of capitalism as a universal ideology became imminent due to its selfish individualism and the destruction, world wars, and deviation from sound human nature that it brought upon humanity.

Islam remains the only ideology suitable for humanity, because it is the Deen of Allah (swt) that conforms to sound human nature, and also because conveying the risaalah message to the world and making Dawah for Islam to all people is a Shariah obligation incumbent upon every one of the Muslims individually and their Ummah collectively, and the primary function for their state. It is not a political choice or a matter of self-interest. Just as Islam led the world for more than ten centuries in which the light of justice and benevolence shone, its return is certain and imminent, and its state will soon be established to bear the banner of truth and mercy for all humanity.