

A Global Re-Alignment and the Future of NATO in the Age of Trumpism: Has America lost its place in the world order

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Abstract

The new era of the Second Trump administration has placed the United States in an unprecedented position that it has never occupied before. Allies no longer trust America to uphold its previous principles of equity, fair play, and advocacy for global democracy. The age of Trumpism has seen America walk away from commitments to fight world hunger, provide tepid support for Ukraine--a country fighting for its own independence-- criticize the members of NATO while simultaneously threatening to withdraw support, confront Venezuela in what appears to be a series of war crimes, and launch an ill advised attack on Iran creating an economic ripple effect felt around the world. This raises a critical question: Is the United States still the leader of the free world, or is it becoming another autocratic state?

Key Terms

Iran

NATO

United Nations

War

Trump

United Kingdom

Allies

Strait of Hormuz

Foreign Policy

Alliances

Research Methodology

Qualitative

I. Introduction

The Second Trump administration has created a new global environment where previous principles and goals are no longer assured. In this current environment, the continued existence of NATO is no longer assured and receives tacit U.S. support. Long term alliances, (formed after World War II with the commitment of preventing more global conflicts), are weakening, shifting, and are no longer wholeheartedly embraced. American principles of inclusion, global leadership, and support of international democratic goals, are no longer in place. In its place, this administration has championed America first principles, and deliberate isolationism. It will take much effort and years of proof before we are trusted again.

As a response to the actions of this administration, former friends, allies, beneficiaries, and partners, are now looking elsewhere for the protection and support that the United States has historically provided. The Trump “America First” doctrine is remaking global democracy, and the results are not good. This administration’s policies suggests that the United States wants to move toward broad disengagement in world affairs. However, what we are now discovering is that this disengagement is a self-inflicted wound that threatens the U.S.’s own best interests at the very least, and at the most, threatens world peace.ⁱ(Al Jazeera, 2026).

The foreign policy actions of this administration are akin to a child receiving a new toy and not bothering to read the instructions or safety precautions before operating. Such actions as raising tariff barriers and withdrawing from significant international collaborations are some of the most notable substantive changes, but there are many others. These changes noted herein are substantively atypical of long established American foreign policy goals and initiatives. For example, withdrawing from the world health organization, withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement, and pulling out of the Iranian Nuclear deal. Additionally, This administration has failed to support NATO and has publicly criticized the organization as being ineffective, not paying its fair share, and calling it a “paper tiger.” Outlined below are actions and events that underscore a change in U.S. foreign policy and responses to those changes.

II. A change in support and the constant criticism of the NATO alliance

Donald Trump has a long-standing history of criticizing Nato, going as far back as 1987ⁱⁱ (Auerswald, 2024), often calling it obsolete and demanding that members increase their defense spending. He has frequently stated that the United States bears an unfair burden financially and has gone so far as to threaten not to protect “delinquent allies” even suggesting that Russia could do “whatever the hell they want” to them. Critics argue that his rhetoric weakens the NATO alliance and damages United States Credibility, even encouraging adversarial threats. Several critics have called his comments appalling and unhingedⁱⁱⁱ[Anniek, 2026]. In an address to the nation, Trump stated that his callout to NATO was not out of necessity, in fact, he stated, in a juvenilistic retort “I never needed NATO, honestly, I just wanted to see what they would do.”^{iv}Evoking grade school logic of “I didn’t want it anyway” upon being denied a request.[Clarke, 2026]

III. The formation of strategic alliances by former allies which excludes the United States

Traditional U.S. allies, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and other European Nations are forging new, independent security and economic partnerships with China and India, these actions are largely due to dissatisfaction with the Trump Tariff policies and the America first and only rhetoric coming out of the white house. The world is not standing still while the Trump administration blunders and fumbles along in foreign policy. These are some of the actions that have been taken:

- a. European/UK-China Ties: The British Prime Minister Keir Starmer initiated a comprehensive strategic partnership with China in January 2026, seeking alternatives to the US market.
- b. Defense Diversification: Canada and European partners launched a new security and defense partnership in June 2025 that limits dependence on American made defense systems.
- c. Indo-Pacific Realignments: European nations are bolstering trade security pacts with India and Australia, often bypassing the US
- d. Intelligence Reassessment: Longtime partners, including the UK and Canada have begun reviewing or scaling back intelligence sharing with the US due to concerns over legality and trust.
- e. A UK led coalition of 40 countries, excluding the United States, met on April 2, 2026, to discuss diplomatic means for re-opening the Strait of Hormuz. This meeting explicitly and intentionally, omitted the United States^v[CNN Live, 2026].

All of these actions point to a very strategic shift toward greater autonomy, with allies diversifying and moving away from a central reliance on the United States.^{vi} [Dannenbaum, 2026].

IV. Condemnation by the United Nations

A 2026 UN panel condemned Donld Trump for “racist hate speech” and aggressive immigration policies noting that they fueled human rights violations around the world. Also, UN experts condemned US naval actions against Venezuela citing them as illegal acts contrary to international law. Un experts and international members criticized the US for committing “crimes of aggression against Venezuela.

The UN also criticized the administrations actions in Minneapolis and called for an investigation into the fatal shootings of US citizens. Additionally, the UN committee on the elimination of racial discrimination criticized dehumanizing language targeting migrants and refugees linking these comments to rising levels of discrimination worldwide.^{vii} [Danya, 2026]. The United Nations has condemned the U.S. strikes on Iran and over 100 international law experts warn that these strikes may in fact violate international law.^{viii} [Frayner, 2026]

V. The war with Iran signaled a new ominous reality for Trumpism

When the US began bombing Iran, in the midst of negotiations, the Trump administration ignited a Middle East conflict that quickly spiraled out of control. The expectation was that a few strategically targeted bombs would force Iran to concede, and a quick and speedy resolution would be the reward for Trump taking such bold action. The reality, however, could not be further away from this idealized goal.

The reality is that this war has not gone as planned, revealing that this administration greatly underestimated their effectiveness, and grossly underestimated Iran's response. This administration forgot Isacc Newton's Third law of Motion and a basic principle of physics which is "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction"^{ix} [Gates,2025]. What this administration thought was a bold move, a move that would be decisive and dispositive, was in fact, an ill-advised move, one that had been passed on by several previous administrations. Previous administrations, after careful consideration, determined that such a move would be resoundingly unwise and arrived at the conclusion that diplomacy, rather than war, would be the best course of action. This form of analysis clearly eluded this administration as they opted for what they believed would be a quick and victorious fix. They were wrong.

Specifically, what this administration failed to carefully consider was Iran's capability of striking U.S. partners throughout the region. They clearly did not consider that such a military action had little chance of effectuating regime change, and most significantly, they did not consider Iran's ability to effect global markets by cutting off the strait of Hormuz^x[Myre,2026]. This failure of careful and strategic considerations beyond the first U.S. strikes has caused world oil prices to rise across the globe,^{xi} [Smith.2026] and everyday Americans to feel the pinch of increased gas prices at the pump.

All of this is on top of the overall increased prices for goods, due to Trump's ill-advised tariff policies. Taken as a whole, it is not a stretch to state that at this point, the War with Iran has been a colossal failure, so too has this administration's foreign policy initiatives.

VI. Incompetence, Inconsistency, and Illogical Actions

The level of incompetence shown by the Trump administration's foreign policy team is staggering. In a few short months, this administration has alienated longstanding allies, plunged the American economy into a downward spiral, hampered trade around the world, increased inflation, and catapulted the United States into what has the early markings of an "endless war." Something Trump promised not to do when running for election on the campaign trail. Making matters worse, our allies are in no hurry to come to the aid of the U.S., in no small part due to Trump's constant badgering, and berating, of our allies. There is real resistance to this conflict among our allies with UK Prime Minister announcing flatly that "we will not be drawn into this war".^{xii} [Soo, 2024.]

Further complicating matters is the fact that the normal places of support and diplomacy are no longer in place. This administration has failed to fill ambassadorships around the world, removed international experts, and replaced them with incompetent political hacks, dismantled USIP^{xiii} [Soo, 2024] which could have rendered valuable aid and advice at every stage of this international conflict, and deconstructed alliances that could have provided valuable intel but for the lack of trust of this administration. Rather than an effective foreign policy agenda, this foreign policy apparatus is more aptly described as incompetent, inconsistent, and illogical.

VII. Conclusion

The actions of this Trump administration in the foreign policy arena have placed the United States in an unfamiliar position---on the outside looking in--- and falling behind on leading the crusade for democracy around the world. It is obvious that our allies do not trust the U.S. to live up to previously set standards and are moving away from reliance on the United States as much as possible. With the Trump administration's attempt to place America first, it has placed America on the outside. It is troubling to see that we are now more closely aligned with our foes, rather than our allies.

Is it a coincidence that the majority of the foreign actions taken by this administration actually benefits Russia? Is it incidental that the weakening of NATO inures to the benefit of Putin? Is it a coincidence that at this time, we are moving away from full throttle support of Ukraine, a country literally fighting for their own democratic independence? What a strange and uncomfortable place the United States finds itself in.

It is clear that the eyes of the world are watching, trying to discern if we can pull ourselves back from the brink and remember the promises that we made to world after World War II, to fight for humanitarian treatment for all, and to be the champion of democratic causes. It remains to be seen how the rest of this story will unfold. While things are uncomfortable and disappointing now, I believe the winds of change are blowing, and that this darkened season will pass soon. Meanwhile, we would all do well to recall the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but bends toward justice"^{xiv} [King, 1968].

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Notes:

ⁱ Clarke, Kevin, *When Trump betrays our allies, America loses*, American Magazine, January 22, 2026, <https://www.americanmagazine.org/politics-society/weekly-dispatch/2026/01/22/america-trump-pope-leo-multilateralism/> retrieved 3/31/2026.

ⁱⁱ Auerswald, Phillip E., *Trumps NATO hostility and Russia relations trace back to 1987*, The Hill, April 4, 2024, <https://www.thehill.com>

ⁱⁱⁱ Soo Rin Kim, Lalee Idssa, *A closer look at Trumps years of criticizing NATO, particularly on defense spending*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.Goodmorningamerica.com>

^{iv} CNN, live broadcast, April 2, 2026, 6.53 am.

^v Al Jazeera Staff, AP and Reuters, *UK-led coalition of 40 countries vows action on Hormuz Strait gridlock*, Al Jazeera, April 2, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com>

^{vi} Lauren Frayer, *U.S. allies looking to China for deals as Trump threatens them with tariffs*. National Public radio, January 28, 2026, <https://www.npr.org>.

^{vii} David Smith, *US Foes and allies denounce Trumps crime of aggression in Venezuela at Un Meeting*, The Guardian, January 5, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com>.

^{viii} Tom Dannenbaum, et al, *Over 100 International Law Experts Warn: U.S. Strikes on Iran violate Un Charter and may be war crimes*, Just Security, April 2, 2026. <https://www.justsecurity.org>.

^{ix} The Physics Classroom, <https://www.Thephysicsclassroom.com>, retrieved on April 2, 2026.

^x Greg Myre, *Iran effectively closes Strait of Hormuz as U.S. Israel strikes continue*, March 12, 2026, NPR, <https://www.npr.org>.

^{xi} Annie Bao, *Oil Prices Soar 13% as Trump Iran's war speech stokes fears of further escalation*, April 1, 2026, CNBC, 9:17 pm EDT, <https://www.CNBC.com>

^{xii} Danya Saperstien, *The UK will not be drawn into war, will free energy bills from Russia, Iranian control, PM says*, April 1, 2026, the Jerusalem Post, <https://www.jpost.com>

^{xiii} Megan Gates *Timeline of a Takeover: what happened at the U.S. Institute of Peace*, July 7, 2025, ASIS, <https://www.asisonline.org>.

^{xiv} Martin Luther King, *Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution*, (1968), Speech delivered at the National Cathedral, Washington, DC, March 31, 1968.

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