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Donald Trump and the Geopolitical Landscape



Photo by [The Now Time](#)

“It was like a scene from the final hours of the Roman Empire: Everywhere you looked, some prominent politician was degrading himself in public.”

— Hunter S. Thompson

With America staring down the barrel of another reactionary Trump regime, it's easy to discern what the domestic agenda for the Republican Party is. Which is to say it's the same as it's always been: utter servility to corporations, dismantling regulations, defunding social welfare programs to line the pockets of the wealthy and a fundamental restructuring of American society that overturns all the progressive reforms from the

1890s-1970s. This is not a new story. What's far less clear to most observers, however, is how Trump's second presidency will end up playing out geopolitically. The international landscape is vastly more complicated and complex now than when Trump first took office in 2017.

DONALD TRUMP, NATO AND THE RUSSIANS

Many people seem to believe Trump back in the White House means the multilateral alliance system the US has been using to run the world since the 1940s is in jeopardy. Though I believe much of Trump's supposed disdain for institutions like NATO are often overstated. While Trump absolutely makes asinine proclamations that threatens the glue and highlights the fragility holding allies together under the banner of American empire, the cavalier statements he spouts are being taken by many people as evidence that Trump is indeed friends with Putin, and that he will in fact abandon NATO allies in Eastern Europe should Russia invade the Baltics or any other member states not spending enough on defense (2% GDP) to have a place in the alliance.

I personally don't believe this for a second and all one has to do is think critically, use the available evidence of his behavior and assess the situation objectively. For starters, the possibility of Russia invading the Baltics or other NATO members in Eastern Europe isn't steeped in tangible reality. Russia can't even conquer all of Ukraine and people think Moscow is going to invade countries protected by NATO's Article 5? Meaning direct conflict with the US military? That's not going to happen because Putin doesn't have the death of the Russian state or planet earth on his wish list. Trump knows by disparaging America's alliance system that he's making implications which likely won't come to pass and was simply saying what he needed to in order to get elected. The exact same thing he did in 2015-2016 when he was campaigning on "draining the swamp" in Washington. You know, the very swamp that he is actively participating in.

The Republican voter base is increasingly hostile towards funding for Ukraine, global military alliances like NATO, and believes America should place its interests first, ahead of all others. This is why Donald Trump is always disparaging the alliance; he's garnering support in an election year that was his last chance at returning to power where he can use the Presidency to kill his legal issues, line his own pockets, as well as that of his rich buddies, and bask in the spotlight of being the "leader" of the most powerful empire in world history. The fact many people think a guy who bombed several countries in and around the Middle East during his first term is a "peace candidate" is astounding, but this

is what a good deal of Trump voters believe. While the opposing narrative espoused by liberals and Democrat supporters is that Trump is essentially in Putin's pockets.

I mean, at what point in Trump's first presidency was the US a friend to the Kremlin and an enemy to NATO? Let's analyze the situation, if only for clarity. Trump continued sanctions on Russia post-Crimean invasion, was the first US President to provide lethal support for Ukraine (Javelins/anti tank weaponry) in 2018 for the Donbas phase of the Ukraine War, expanded economic warfare on Moscow's allies in Tehran to achieve "maximum pressure" on the Iranian economy, initiated an ugly trade war with their friends in Beijing, and used US military power against Russian forces in the 2018 Battle of Khasham where American commandos killed hundreds of Wagner and Syrian troops in a defacto massacre billed by corporate media as "the first deadly clash between citizens of Russia and the US since the Cold War." It was also the first open fighting between American and Russian forces since WWI a century earlier.

These were all measures taken by the US in direct conflict with overarching Russian geopolitical objectives, which align directly with the Chinese and Iranians in what I call the Neo-Cold War. A Cold War that has its roots in the collapse of the Soviet empire that allowed for rapprochement between Russia and China. With Beijing no longer fearing Moscow but the power of Western sanctions in light of the Tianamen Square massacre, and the weaponization of the US Dollar, and with Moscow not trusting Washington in light of a their rather tumultuous history and renegeing of a promise to not expand the NATO alliance any closer to their doorstep, the Chinese and Russians initiated a long term strategy of upending the Western dominated system but they would have to bide time until they were strong enough to directly challenge American power.

The open declaration in 1997 from Beijing and Moscow, denouncing the unipolarity (I.E. US dominance) of world affairs, coupled with NATO expansion into Central and Eastern Europe shortly after, may one day be viewed by historians as the beginning of the Neo-Cold War between the US/West and China/Russia. Most like to say it began during the Russian invasion of Crimea and subsequent Donbas phase of the conflict, while political scientists like John Mearsheimer point to Russia's invasion of Northern Georgia in 2008 after US planners crossed clear red lines by openly declaring Ukraine and Georgia would eventually become NATO members.

In my view this was the real beginning of the geopolitical shift dominating world affairs today. After this you see China and Russia greatly expand their relations, economically and militarily, and you see the acceleration of expansion from both into Africa where they

seek to create an imperial hub to import cheap raw materials while exporting infrastructure and weapons/security. Also worth noting is the increased Russian military presence in the Middle East after this, where they intervened in Syria to prop up the Assad regime alongside their kleptocratic partners in Iran.

Given the contexts of the world at the time and his own behavior, how exactly was Trump soft on Russia or under the influence of the Kremlin? He maintained the exact course of the Obama administrations, and in fact substantially increased tensions by withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and assassinating the Quds Force (Tehran's Special Forces/CIA equivalent) military commander. In moves that were vehemently condemned by Putin and other Kremlin elites. Trump is likely on speaking terms with Putin, which hardly means they're friends, but co-conspirators threatening American imperial interests together? Putin even stated leading up to this past election season that he preferred an experienced politician like Biden as opposed to someone who knows much less like Trump.

Implying Trump and Putin are friends conspiring together is engaging in pure fantasy. This narrative being pedaled was likely concocted by the same kind of Democratic strategists who had people believing the Kremlin deliberately impacted Trump being elected in 2016 with the Russiagate nonsense. Did Moscow engage in election interference? Yes, though all imperial states try influencing elections to get their friends in power or cause more chaos and division in the affairs of a geopolitical rival. Did Moscow directly impact the outcome of the 2016 election or engage in collusion with Trump? The Mueller Report found no credible evidence, but corporate liberal media maintain the false claim. And liberals think only Fox News is propaganda? The jokes write themselves.

What's happening is these are two factions (GOP-DNC/Democrat-Republican) fighting for control of the American empire. The only part of this situation that I think is very real is the fear amongst US partners in Europe that a second Trump presidency could destabilize the NATO alliance, with countries wondering whether or not the US military will show up to defend them. Which, in turn, would cause American treaty allies in the Middle East and Asia to wonder if Washington will then similarly abandon them and threaten imperial control of these colonies. Which is why it most likely won't happen; the corporate American regime must dominate the world (markets) and maintain obedience into peripheral regions of the empire. To do so, you need countries fearing your power and respecting your credibility. If NATO collapses then so will American global dominance, meaning less money for corporate America. NATO is going nowhere anytime soon. As far

as how the American empire will exert its power in other regions during Trump's next term, let's assess the likely outcomes.

DONALD TRUMP, LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA

I don't expect much change whatsoever with regard to US foreign policy in Latin America and Africa. Corporate America will continue to strangle Latin America, western power will continue to decline in Africa and I don't expect these regions to be a particular focus of Trump's administration. Javier Milei coming to power in Argentina surely bodes well for American imperial interests, with the third largest economy in Latin America drifting from its turn to the East under the openly far-right regime. Argentina will simply be used to blunt Chinese and Russian influence in the region. Meanwhile Brazil has been taking an openly tougher stance on Venezuela—much to the delight of Washington—who seek to keep the largest economy in the region from drifting completely out of the Western orbit. Despite Trump ally Jair Bolsonaro being defeated by Lula de Silva, an openly left leaning populist, US-Brazil relations will continue to be robust in trade and security, though the Brazilians have been able to exert considerable strategic autonomy in recent years and are really a middle power attempting to forge their own destiny. This will not change now that Trump is going to be in power again.

The economic warfare on enemies of the American empire in the region—Cuba and Venezuela for example—will continue and may even intensify under Trump. While the mass deportation plan of Republicans will be felt throughout the region, as well as at home in America when several key industries (agricultural, construction, landscaping, restaurant, etc) lose a significant amount of their workforce. Trump will further militarize the Southern border, though I highly suspect the rhetoric emanating from Republicans to use military force in Mexico to clean up the drug cartels is just that—rhetoric. The status quo in Latin America is likely to remain under Trump barring any major developments that cannot be forecast at the current moment.

Africa, meanwhile, is likely to be even less of a concern for Trump. During his first term he openly referred to many of these nations, and others in the Global South, as “shit hole countries.” Trump will likely continue the path set forth by the Biden administration of expanding relations with key allies in Africa. Somalia is a vital African colony of the US as it's next to key waterways. Hence the US military intervention in their civil war that began under Bush II and has continued under every President since via airstrikes, special forces missions, training, intelligence, etc. Morocco is also becoming increasingly important militarily as the US looks to fortify its position across Africa's Mediterranean

coast. Biden even began construction of a new industrial US military base and this will surely continue under Trump.

I expect American power to continue declining in Africa as the Chinese and Russians seek to consolidate their power and bring the continent directly into their sphere, but the US still holds favorable positions in Egypt, Cameroon, Kenya and a few others at the moment as well. While I don't expect this region to be a focus for Trump, as mentioned, limited military intervention in Somalia will proceed forward and American rapprochement with Sudan's post-revolutionary government will likely continue. Though I don't see anything happening in the region that sparks a robust invasion from the US, one can't rule out the possibility of military intervention as there is seemingly endless conflict across the continent. The countries in the region are easy prey and possess a wealth of minerals, oil and other resources that the American state will need if it wants to compete economically with China as we move deeper into the 21st century.

DONALD TRUMP AND EAST ASIA

Tensions are sure to increase in East Asia with the Chinese and North Koreans. Trump's visit with Kim Jong Un during his first term yielded no significant progress in US-North Korea relations and tensions have risen precipitously in the years since on the Korean Peninsula. Trump and the hawks that will surround him likely won't be able to reverse this course even if they wanted to, which I find highly improbable.

Meanwhile the trade war with the Chinese will only intensify with Trump announcing his plans to hike tariffs to 60% on Chinese imports. All this does is harm ordinary Americans and increase tensions with Beijing. I can only imagine the look on the faces of Trump supporters when they learn that his tariffs and trade wars increase costs for consumers, protect the industrial production of major US corporations and puts more money in the governments hands by collecting additional tariff revenue from citizens. Revenue that will almost certainly wind up being used as subsidies for big business (corporate welfare).

Washington's economic battle with Beijing—initiated by Obama's military build up (East Asia pivot) and Trump's trade war—only drives things closer to a direct clash between the two world powers. When asked whether or not he'd defend Taiwan militarily with American soldiers, Trump said he "wouldn't have to" because Xi Jinping "respects me and he knows I'm fucking crazy." I imagine Trump and any US President would in fact intervene militarily—given the strategic significance of Taiwan being used to contain Chinese power—but I don't think Trump will act recklessly here as a war between the two largest economies is not in the interests of the international financial system or his

criminal buddies who control it. Though you could see Trump take an even tougher stance on China, generally speaking, as well as take steps in Washington's relations with Taipei that further increase the perception in Beijing that Taiwan is seeking independence and formal recognition in the international community.

Trump has said Taiwan should pay for US defense, likening the relationship to insurance, but he was also the first US President to accept a call from a Taiwanese President since the US officially recognized China in 1979. This spoke volumes and did not sit well with the Chinese. While I don't expect a US-China war to occur by any stretch, though the dangers are certainly real given the geopolitical contexts of the Chinese attempting to forge a new global order dominated by their multinationals and political leaders, which conflicts with American global dominance (the explicitly stated goal since the end of WWII), I do expect Trump to expand the Neo-Cold War with Beijing and increase tensions globally as America shifts firmly into containment mode. Again, how is Trump seriously considered a peace candidate by increasing tensions that bring the world closer to global war? Anyone thinking such nonsense has buttons for eyes and walnuts for brains. Just look at what's likely to happen in the Middle East as a result of another Trump presidency.

DONALD TRUMP AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine recently stated: "We do not expect any positive development from a Donald Trump administration; Rather, we anticipate an escalation in hostile policies against our people, fully biased in favor of the Zionist entity." David Hearst, the editor-in-chief of Middle East Eye, notes that "this time, with the Republican Party projected to have control over both houses of Congress, there will be no adults in the room to temper the president's wildest impulses," and that Trump's return to power would only "accelerate the dismantling of the status quo in the Middle East that he began in his first term." I'm inclined to agree with both.

What's likely to occur in Palestine during Trump's next four years is expanded settlements in the West Bank, as well as more annexations of land in Area C and dismantling of Palestinian communities and infrastructure. As far as what's happening in the West Bank during this phase of the Palestinian genocide (Israeli-Hamas War), let's break things down for those unfamiliar with the details.

The Israeli state is essentially trying to transfer the West Bank from primarily military administration—since the occupation began in 1967—to "civil administration" under a guise of supposed sovereignty while effectively annexing most of the territory. Area C is where Palestinians essentially have no rights, hence the

settlement expansions in these areas even when these were supposed to cease, the settlers that are armed and force Palestinians off their lands, the Israeli forces ensuring it all takes place, etc. Changing things from military administration to civilian will allow the Israelis to expand settlements to a far greater extent and this area will become a defacto extension of Israel. This problem will only be exacerbated under Trump who Netanyahu calls the “most pro-Israel American President in history.”

The Oslo Accords were a predictable failure at safeguarding the rights of Palestinians as Area C was placed under complete Israeli control, while no concrete path towards statehood for Palestine in Areas A/B and Gaza was established in the following years.

Area B is where the Israeli forces provide security, while the Palestinian Authority (PA) oversees infrastructure and urban development. The Israelis routinely falsely accuse Palestinians of not abiding by permits, thus granting them legal authority to demolish Palestinian homes, property, etc. This is the area where Israel is seeking to transfer urban planning from the PA to the Israeli Government, thus effectively turning Area B over to complete Israeli control.

What will be left in Area A, where Palestinians have a semblance of authority, will be surrounded by Israeli settlements, military installations and will exist as little more than a rump state that can exercise little self determination. This should highlight the step by step process of how the genocide proceeds forward. Israel uses military force to pummel Palestine in times of heightened conflict, so as to destroy any functionality of Palestinian culture and society, while in times of supposed “peace” they simply try to destroy any control they have over their land, resources, administrative structures and lives. Trump is in favor of all this, as are all US leaders and corporate America who want the resources and profits present in these lands. I fully expect settlement expansion to increase under Trump, northern Gaza’s ethnic cleansing to be expedited and Israel to “finish the job” as Trump and Republican fascists have repeatedly called for.

Regarding the Iranians, this is likely the most serious danger for US military intervention abroad during Trump’s next term. Tensions with Iran have never been higher and out of the four primary adversaries the US State Department outlines for the American empire (China, Russia, Iran, North Korea), Tehran is the only one who has no nuclear deterrent. There have also been reports recently that could signal the Iranians are getting closer to nuclear weapons. Earthquakes were recently reported that originated in Iran and tremors were felt as far away as Israel, which is unusual. While Iran is highly seismic, an earthquake in North Korea in 2013 was in fact an underground nuclear test, and Tehran’s

maximal leaders would have to be crazy to not be pursuing nuclear weapons behind closed doors. Though the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization believes that data recorded during this seismic event in Iran is consistent with earthquakes previously recorded, the possibility cannot be ruled out. It would certainly provide good cover for the regime to pursue its nuclear ambitions. Ambitions that Biden's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan recently said would put them at odds with the US Government: "if they start moving down that road, they'll find a real problem with the United States."

The US Government is simply trying to force the Iranians into the corner of choosing between either leaving themselves vulnerable to attack—when nuclear deterrence is the only tried and true method to prevent American invasion as seen with China, Russia and North Korea—or pursue nuclear weapons. Thus becoming the self fulfilling prophecy, or pretexts, for the American empire to reconquer Iran. A long held goal of Washington's since losing access to these resources in the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Not at all unlike how providing Iraq the means to potentially build up its own nuclear capabilities became a self fulfilling prophecy in 2003 when Bush II launched his campaign to "change the way they live" in a war not on but of terror that has resulted in six million-plus deaths thus far. It just so happens that besides being rich in oil, Iran also has plenty of minerals (lithium for example) that will be needed for new and emerging technologies the US looks to compete with China on.

During Trump's first term, as mentioned, he brought us closer to direct war with Iran than perhaps ever before—certainly the closest since Reagan intervened in the Iran-Iraq War to bring a favorable end to the conflict—by assassinating Qasem Soleimani, Iran's top military commander and the defacto second most powerful person in the Iranian empire after Ali Khamenei. Advisers sitting around Trump in his next term, who will likely be even more overtly hawkish given the international and geopolitical landscape, may be telling him that if he'd handled the Iranians the first time he was in office, then they wouldn't be in the current predicament right now. I do believe Trump is likely more susceptible to influence from advisers than other Presidents given his supreme lack of geopolitical experience and knowledge, as well as that this will be his last chance at ruling the empire. Therefore more inclined to resort to reckless decision making, in my view.

In his first term, he may have felt that he simply didn't know enough to make such rash decisions and erred on the side of caution listening to military advisers that he's long since been chastising, and stating that had he been reelected in 2020 he'd have fired every single one of them. I expect Trump to appoint nothing but people who sing his praises to

his national security council, joint chiefs of staff, etc. Hence, who will realistically caution Trump this time around once he gets nothing but “Yes Men” around him? One also cannot discount that Trump would surely love to get his name in history books as the US President who finally reconquered Iran. He’s like the Roman emperor Commodus in that he’s consumed by his own vanity, reactionary and cares little for governance but seeks the fame and notoriety that power possesses. Taking out the Iranians would not only boost his ego—of which there’s little doubt—but also his historical legacy as the head of the American empire at the same time, in his view.

It’s also no secret that the US Government has been salivating over the idea of taking out the much hated Islamic Republic for over four decades now. The forces at work in the American state want to attack to Iran and expand market penetration. With tensions increasing across the region more precipitously than ever before, and with American weapons manufacturers (a significant component of the national economy, as are the oil/gas and mineral extraction sectors) likely gearing up for another major war after the withdrawal of US forces from many combat theaters during the war on terror over the last decade, effectively ending the main phase of that campaign, the US Government could be thinking it’s now time to make their move.

A war in Iran would be far uglier, bloodier and more protracted than America’s war in Iraq was. Perhaps even worse than the empire’s war in Indochina was from 1946-1975 (America used French mercenaries from 1946-1954, then the US Government took over the operation using their puppet regime in South Vietnam before moving to a full scale land invasion in 1965). Hence, even more profitable for corporate America. Not to mention it would serve major geo-strategic interests by taking out a formidable foe being used by Beijing and Moscow as their headway into the greater Middle East. Given the region’s strategic significance to global power (oil/energy), the risks of such an event (including WWII and nuclear war but at the very least hundreds of thousands to several millions dead in Iran and across the region, not to mention the economic impact and indirect blowback or consequences) may pale in comparison to the imperial objectives of ensuring American primacy in the region, and indeed the world, for the foreseeable future.

DONALD TRUMP AND RHETORIC

I do think Trump is unstable in that his severe lack of geopolitical understanding leads to short term thinking and threats— which might work in business but is more dangerous in geopolitics—but it’s really not much worse than the general lack of knowledge held by American politicians regarding world affairs and their confidence in a constructed

propaganda narrative that doesn't correspond to actual reality. The “why do they hate us” crowd is just as bad as the, “we know why they hate us; we're enemies and competitors, and we plan on winning” crowd.

I think Trump's unhinged rhetoric, often rooted in false narratives intended to seduce domestic audiences, is a real factor in how allies respond to American foreign policy, and he can be antagonized very easily, which is surely attractive to enemies of the empire. Even still, the permanent interests of US National Security—the advancement of market control and profits for corporate America—far outweigh any individual decision or feeling that Trump, or any other President, may personally feel or want. And if Trump were serious about weakening NATO, trying to exert pressure on other members to spend more on their defense is a strange way of doing so. And yet, the way he makes such bold statements could actually serve to undermine NATO—if allies aren't sure they'll be protected, the value of the alliance immediately drops.

Then again, his strategy could work and there's increasing signs that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has helped in doing so. There's been an 11% increase in NATO spending the last year and nearly half the members (18) are on track to spend 2% of GDP on defense this year, whereas only 3 had been prior. Part of Putin's “gift to the West” as Noam Chomsky and Chris Hedges call it. American power has expanded in Europe rather than declined. If these trends continue, it will definitely strengthen NATO, while also likely contributing to further global escalation with China, Russia and Iran correctly viewing NATO as an imperial American instrument that's now trying to make its way into the Middle East and East Asia to contain the expansion of their empires.

Ironically, I could see Trump paving the way to create some kind of mutual non-aggression pact between NATO and Russia far more than any Democratic hawk like Biden. He certainly wouldn't care about ceding the Donbas in exchange for peace and being able to take public credit for it—nor does the American foreign policy establishment once Russia is sufficiently weakened to their liking—and Ukraine doesn't really have a choice but to accept if Washington's dictates if US planners decide America is done funding their war effort. I think this all helps explain why Trump and other Republicans take the public stances they do on NATO, as well as the geopolitical landscape Trump's second administration will encounter.

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