

Unilateralism and Global Disorder: An Analysis of the International Consequences of Trump's Second Term Fascist Policies

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ABSTRACT

The liberal international order contributed to rising global instability in economic, security, and institutional spheres. Using an analytical-descriptive approach, a qualitative research design was employed to test the proposed conceptual framework. The research draws on recent scholarly debates, policy analyses, and empirical data on trade measures, alliances, security agreements, and changes in foreign aid to understand better how American global engagement has evolved and what that shift means for the wider world. The findings suggest that renewed economic protectionism, expansive tariff regimes, withdrawal from multilateral agreements, reduced support for international institutions, and sharp nationalist rhetoric have collectively disrupted established patterns of global cooperation. These developments have strained long-standing alliances, intensified U.S.-China rivalry, unsettled global trade systems, weakened arms-control arrangements, and reduced support for humanitarian and climate initiatives. The study underscores the importance of rebuilding trust, revitalising multilateral cooperation, and strengthening international institutions to prevent deeper systemic fragmentation. By examining economic, institutional, security, and ideological dimensions together, this research offers a comprehensive and accessible account of how Trump's second-term policies have contributed to a more fragmented and uncertain global order.

Keywords: Unilateralism; Liberal International Order; Economic Nationalism; Trade Protectionism; Multilateralism; U.S. Foreign Policy; Global Problems.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of several protracted and destructive wars that characterised much of the twentieth century, conflicts that profoundly eroded the institutional foundations of the international community and destabilised the global economy. American policymakers, alongside their international counterparts, concluded that the effective pursuit of national interests required the construction of a stable, peaceful, and cooperative international environment. Consequently, the United States emerged as the principal architect and foundational pillar of the postwar international order. It played a central role in establishing the alliances, institutions, and normative frameworks that have defined the structural and procedural contours of this order. These include the U.S.-dollar-based global trading system, security alliances underwritten by American military capabilities, and a liberal-democratic governance model grounded in the separation of powers, political rights, and civil liberties. For nearly a century, successive U.S. administrations have recognised that global challenges demand institutionalised cooperation and mechanisms to peacefully manage disputes, promote human rights, and advance democratic norms. Such arrangements, they have argued, are essential for preventing the recurrence of large-scale armed conflict and mitigating the economic devastation associated with unrestrained geopolitical rivalry (McManus, Mulholland, Miller, et al., 2025). With the end of the Cold War, the world entered a new historical era in which globalisation, along with expanding cooperation and exchange among nations, became the operative foundations of the international order. Liberal democracy, peace, and the protection of human rights were increasingly promoted as guiding principles of global governance. However, following Donald Trump's return to power for a second

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term, the world appears to be turning away from the era of globalisation and from what had been widely described as a “rules-based international order” (Rees, 2025).

During the era of globalisation, a broad international consensus emerged in which the United States, as the world's sole superpower, committed itself to maintaining global peace and security. In this capacity, it actively sought to promote and support liberal democracy, human rights, and the work of international organisations and charitable institutions worldwide, aiming to strengthen and advance these principles and structures globally (Schoen & Mangel, 2025). Unfortunately, the contemporary international system is undergoing significant fragmentation. The United States, long regarded as the principal architect and guarantor of this order, has withdrawn its unconditional support for the very institutions it once nurtured. President Donald Trump's “America First” doctrine has further intensified the structural forces driving a shift in global hegemony (Acharya, 2018).

The re-election of Donald Trump in the 2024 U.S. presidential election has had profound and lasting negative implications for international relations, particularly through his political rhetoric, policies, and strategies in trade, defence, and diplomacy. Upon assuming office, Trump's approach diverged significantly from the United States' previous policies, established norms, ethical frameworks, values, and traditional beliefs. This divergence has posed challenges not only for U.S. allies but also for its strategic competitors, exerting a deep impact on international relations, global interdependencies, and the strategic balance among nations (Abdulrasheed & Nurain, 2025).

During Trump's tenure, his leadership consolidated multiple spheres, technology, media, finance, global security, and geopolitics into a concentrated nexus of influence. At the same time, President Trump demonstrated a limited interest in advancing global peace: the commitments he made to end deadly conflicts largely served as instruments to secure victory in the 2024 election rather than genuine policy initiatives. His approach left populations in Ukraine and Gaza largely unsupported. At the same time, he aligned himself with non-liberal and authoritarian leaders, such as Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Vladimir Putin of Russia, signalling a preference for strategic partnerships with illiberal regimes over promoting international norms and human security (McManus, Mulholland, Miller, et al., 2025). In particular, Trump imposed substantial tariffs in the commercial and economic sectors. Overall, these tariffs, combined with broader economic protectionist measures, represent the most extensive protectionist policies implemented by the United States in the trade sector over the past six years, with the total number of such measures exceeding 11,000 (Rees, 2025). Unfortunately, since Trump assumed office, his administration has imposed unprecedented tariffs. On April 2nd, in conjunction with the announcement of “Freedom Day,” Trump enacted tariffs that raised the average U.S. tariff rate above 22 per cent. This level surpassed even the notorious Smoot-Hawley tariffs, which had contributed to the deepening of the Great Depression. Although some retaliatory tariffs were quickly suspended, a general tariff of at least 10 per cent remained in effect for all countries) (McManus, Mulholland, Miller, et al., 2025).

The role of the United States under the Trump administration concerning the liberal international order is more nuanced and multifaceted than it may initially appear. It differs across institutional regimes such as trade, security, and diplomacy across regions, including Asia, Europe, and the Global South. It is further shaped by domestic contestation among various political actors within Congress and American society itself (Böller & Werner, 2021).

The objective of this research is to demonstrate that, following Donald Trump's re-election for a second term, he implemented a series of policies that have created new challenges and issues for the contemporary world, the current international order, international law, global organisations, charitable institutions, human rights, mutual respect among nations, noninterference in the affairs of other states, and several other areas. These Trump fascist policies have generated a range of direct and indirect threats to the existing global order. In this research, we will explain the following issues.

1. U.S. Unilateralism and the Transformation of the Liberal International Order.
2. The emergence of a new international order with conflicts and tensions.
3. Intensified capitalist competition, the imposition of trade tariffs, and the preservation of the dominance of the U.S. dollar.

4. Redefinition of the concept of global security, including the use of coercive and imperialist strategies to assert American control over foreign territories and waters, thereby expanding U.S. regional influence.
 5. Weakening of international institutions and charitable organisations, including the suspension of funding and support.
 6. The imposition of global policies framed within a nationalist and fascist-oriented agenda, exemplified by the “Make America Great Again” and “America First” doctrines.
 7. The creation of strategic and political challenges for U.S. allies and partners.
- Through these measures, Trump's policies pose direct risks to the stability, unity and normative frameworks of the international system.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The characteristics and dimensions of the new policies of the United States during the Trump era are defined by a Unilateralist, protectionist and nationalist approach (Masror, 1404). After the end of the Cold War, the international system entered a new phase characterised by intensified globalisation and expanding multilateralism, cooperation, and interdependence among states. During this period, liberal international order, liberal democracy, the promotion of international peace, and the protection of human rights were increasingly institutionalised as core principles underpinning global governance (Rees, 2025).

A potential second presidential term for Donald Trump would likely intensify antagonism toward multilateralism, thereby weakening global cooperation and the institutional mechanisms designed to uphold a rules-based normative order. Building on his previous administration's efforts to restructure and, in some cases, diminish international collaborative frameworks, a renewed Trump presidency could further accelerate global fragmentation. Effective multilateral governance depends on collective, coordinated responses to pressing global challenges, including international security threats, climate change mitigation, economic instability, the Russia–Ukraine war, ongoing crises in the Middle East, pandemic preparedness, and other transnational concerns. However, Trump's foreign policy orientation has been characterised by scepticism toward key multilateral institutions, including criticism of NATO, threats to withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO), and broader opposition to the United Nations (Nisar & Rahim, 2025).

By implementing Trump policies abroad, the United States challenges the liberal international order established after World War II. A potential return of Trump to the presidency could transform existing threats to American multilateralism into reality, compelling allies, particularly within the European Union, to reconsider and restructure their defence arrangements, while simultaneously creating opportunities for countries like China or regional blocs to expand their influence. Under these circumstances, the U.S.-led multilateral system risks collapsing alongside America's waning global leadership (America Hernandez, 2025).

Today, a new era of extremist nationalism has arrived. Trump says: “We make America great again!” This means that a strong world cannot be built, nor is it our responsibility to build it; we are responsible only for building a strong and great America. The policy and slogan of the U.S.A. exporting and establishing democracy is dead. America will no longer go anywhere in the name of democracy, nation-building, or state-building. The United States and other capitalist and Imperialist countries will instead directly pursue what they actually need from other nations and interfere in other Countries (Lusk, 2024). For several years, the trajectory of U.S. foreign policy has shifted toward a gradual withdrawal from its traditional role in supporting the liberal international order. The Trump administration not only maintained this trend but significantly intensified it. Washington distanced itself from several international organisations, and the administration withdrew from several landmark international accords and arms-control agreements (Böller & Werner, 2021).

Here, we scholarly debated the Changing of the contemporary international political order, usually beginning with the idea of the liberal international order (LIO) that emerged after the Second World War. This order was largely shaped and led by the United States. It rested on multilateralism,

multilateral institutions, open markets, collective security arrangements, and a commitment at least in principle to liberal democracy and human rights. However, after assuming office, Trump significantly transformed and effectively dismantled these multilateral policies by pursuing unilateral and fascist strategies.

Moving directly to Trump's presidency, Abdurashheed and Nurain (2025) argue that Trump's second-term policies reflect an egocentric and nationalist worldview. They suggest that his approach prioritises immediate domestic political advantages over systemic international stability. Rather than seeing the United States as a steward of global order, Trump's policies frame international engagement as a transactional arena in which gains and losses must be calculated in narrow national terms (Abdurashheed & Nurain, 2025).

However, the resilience of this order has been questioned. Amitav Acharya (2018) argues that the weakening of the liberal international order began well before Donald Trump. According to Acharya, three structural changes were already underway:

First, power was diffusing toward emerging states such as China and India.

Second, non-Western actors increasingly challenged Western-dominated norms.

Third, the United States itself was becoming less willing to provide global public goods, such as security guarantees and economic stability.

In Acharya's view, these long-term transformations created structural pressure on the American-led order, making it more fragile even before Trump entered office (Acharya, 2018)

John Ikenberry (2011) provides one of the most influential interpretations of this system. He describes it as a form of "liberal hegemony." In his view, the United States did not rule the postwar world simply through coercion or domination. Instead, it exercised power through institutions and rules that also constrained its own behaviour. Organisations such as NATO, the United Nations, and the Bretton Woods institutions were not merely tools of American control; they were mechanisms through which U.S. power was institutionalised and legitimised. According to Ikenberry, this institutional restraint made American leadership more acceptable to allies and therefore more sustainable (Ikenberry, 2011).

Building on this idea, Prys and Robel (2011) emphasise the importance of legitimacy and consent in maintaining international order. They argue that global leadership cannot rely only on material superiority. Instead, it depends on whether other states perceive that leadership as legitimate and beneficial. In their interpretation, the liberal order functioned because allies accepted American leadership voluntarily, rather than being forced into submission through imperial domination (Prys & Robel, 2011).

Nisar and Rahim (2025) take this argument further by describing Trump's shift as a movement from alliance-based leadership to strategic isolation. They famously characterise this transition as a move from "Make America Great Again" to "Make America Alone." In their analysis, Trump's diplomacy undermines long-standing partnerships by treating alliances as burdens unless they yield immediate returns. Over time, this approach erodes trust and reduces allies' willingness to coordinate with Washington (Nisar & Rahim, 2025).

Economic nationalism is another major theme in the literature. Chan and Hu (2025) analyse Trump's use of tariffs and protectionist tools. They argue that these policies represent the most aggressive trade interventions in decades. In their view, the reintroduction of large-scale tariffs disrupts supply chains and increases uncertainty in global markets (Chan & Hu, 2025).

Similarly, York and Durante (2025) compare Trump's trade policies to the protectionism of the 1930s, particularly the Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act. They argue that such measures trigger retaliatory trade wars and accelerate fragmentation in the global economy (York & Durante, 2025).

Böller and Werner (2021) place these economic developments within a broader framework of hegemonic transition. They argue that hegemonic powers traditionally exercise restraint to maintain system stability. Trump's rejection of such restraint, they suggest, weakens the very economic foundations that once sustained American dominance (Böller & Werner, 2021).

On the institutional dimension, Peters and Schaffer (2013) stress that authority beyond the state depends on the legitimacy and durability of institutions. If powerful states undermine those institutions, the system's stability deteriorates (Peters & Schaffer, 2013).

The ideological dimension of Trump's policies has also received scholarly attention. Lusk (2024) critically examines the racialised and exclusionary discourse within Trumpism. He argues that such rhetoric undermines international norms of equality and human rights by promoting biologically deterministic and nationalist narratives (Lusk, 2024).

Greer and colleagues (2025) focus on governance style. They argue that Trump's politicisation of humanitarian assistance and global health cooperation has generated uncertainty and weakened trust in American leadership across multiple policy domains (Greer et al, 2025).

Alliance politics remains central in this debate. Rees (2025) argues that Trump's conditional approach to NATO and other alliances has encouraged American partners to consider strategic autonomy. If allies no longer trust U.S. commitments, they may diversify their security partnerships (Rees, 2025).

In a later work, Ikenberry (2022) warns that weakening alliances ultimately reduces American influence within the system it once built. When alliance cohesion declines, the international order becomes more fragmented and competitive (Ikenberry, 2022).

Overall Synthesis of the Literature: Across these studies, there is broad agreement that Trump's unilateralist, nationalist and transactional policies represent a systemic challenge to the postwar international order. Scholars disagree on whether this shift signals irreversible decline or simply transformation. However, most agree that economic protectionism, institutional withdrawal, normative erosion, and alliance uncertainty collectively intensify instability in the global system. These debates form the intellectual foundation of the present study.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS:

This research is analytical-descriptive in nature and aims to systematically examine the policies and strategies implemented during Donald Trump's second term, assessing their impact on international relations, global economic dynamics, and the stability of the contemporary international order.

Capitalist competition and the imposition of trade tariffs:

The collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the early 1970s triggered a transformation in global economic governance. Capital account liberalisation opened new avenues for U.S. hegemony in international financial markets (Böller & Werner, 2021). Historically, before Trump's presidency, a key characteristic of American hegemony has been the self-restriction of its material capabilities, grounded in its commitment to the universal principles, regulations, and institutional frameworks of the liberal world order (Ikenberry, 2011). However, just two months after resuming office, Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs have shaken the foundations of international trade, unleashing a wave of retaliatory measures and exposing the world to the potential for long-term economic instability as a result of his "reciprocal tariffs" strategy (Chan & Hu, 2025). In Trump's second term, his nationalist economic approach continues to prioritise domestic policy while rejecting international economic agreements. The slogan "*Too Late First*" encapsulates his presidential strategy, which employed aggressive measures against global trade deals and demonstrated a confrontational stance toward international economic integration. The economic nationalism promoted by Trump 2.0 complicates the understanding of how the United States might reconstruct global economic governance and reverse or renegotiate previous trade arrangements (Nisar & Rahim, 2025).

The characteristics and dimensions of the United States' new policies during the Trump era are defined by a Unilateralist, protectionist, and nationalist approach. The economic policies of the Donald Trump administration, characterised by tariff chaos that appears unstable and unpredictable, actually pursue a clear and fundamental goal: "redefining the new global economic order to maintain the sustained dominance and supremacy of the United States." This approach, beyond a temporary policy shift, is an effort to reverse the trend of American deindustrialisation, weaken the dollar index, and reduce the trade deficit to strengthen the country's long-term economic and military power (Masror, 1404). The "America First" agenda, nominated by Mr Trump during his 2016 presidential election campaign and later applied during his first term in office, represents a shift toward a more unilateral, nationalist approach to U.S. foreign policy. Trump's discourse and policies were often centred around the agenda that the United States should prioritise its own economic interests over multilateral engagement and international cooperation (Abdulrasheed & Nurain, 2025). Under the slogan of "America First," Trump's second-term economic wars ignited a fire that scorched the veins of global trade, poisoned the atmosphere of trust, and challenged the international order in which the United States itself had long been a central pillar. As part of the "America First" Policy, President Trump has imposed 60% tariffs on all goods from China and 10-20% tariffs on goods from all other countries (Ha, 2024). This represents the most substantial increase in U.S. tariffs since the enactment of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 (Chan & Hu, 2025). Nevertheless, what is surprising is that Trump's economic assault did not target only "enemies." In a sudden and irrational move, he announced a universal 10 per cent tariff on all countries, including America's allied nations (Shalal & Kumar, 2025).

India: Trump imposed a 25% tariff on Indian goods. Currently, on August 6, 2025, the U.S. President Donald Trump imposed a 25% tariff on Indian goods, which will take effect on August 27, 2025, because of New Delhi's continued imports of Russian oil in a move that strongly escalated tensions between the two countries after trade talks reached a deadlock. This is the highest tariff among U.S. trading partners (Shalal & Kumar, 2025). In Trump's latest order, he invokes national security concerns resulting from the ongoing war in Ukraine and India's "massive" oil imports from Russia. The order cites legal regulations such as the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, the National Emergencies Act, and sections of the Trade Act of 1974. Mr Trump had earlier mentioned this order as a penalty against India over the oil trade with Russia. The government of India suggested that India's import practices are based on national needs, in contrast to other nations (Jaiswal, 2025). Trade between the USA and India, the world's biggest and fifth-largest economies, is worth over \$190 billion in 2024. Trump's new tariff policy marks the most serious downturn in United States-India relations since his second period return to office. The tariffs threaten to disrupt India's access to its largest export market, where shipments totalled nearly \$87 billion in 2024, surpassing sectors such as textiles, smartphones, footwear, gems, diamonds, and jewellery (Shalal & Kumar, 2025). Trump's new executive order holds the right to revise or extend the order in light of new data or retaliatory actions by other countries, agencies like the U.S. Departments of Commerce, State, and Treasury will oversee other countries' purchases of Russian oil, the Government agency are empowered to revise rules, manage tariffs, and implement necessary measures to enforce the order, additionally and finally Trump's new order Specifies that "Russian Federation oil" covers crude oil and refined petroleum products, regardless of whether they are imported through intermediaries (Jaiswal, 2025).

China: The United States imposed a 20 per cent tariff on all imports from China, supplemented by a 10 per cent baseline tariff beginning April 2, and a further 115 per cent reciprocal tariff effective November 12. Exemptions applied to goods covered under Section 232 or listed on the exclusion list, resulting in an overall effective rate of 145 per cent on the majority of Chinese imports (York & Durante, 2025). Trump's tariffs have provoked retaliatory measures from major trading partners, including China. China also raised tariff rates on U.S. goods to as high as 125%, alongside additional restrictive trade policies (Chan & Hu, 2025).

As of now, the average U.S. tariff on Chinese exports stands at 57.6 per cent across all goods. By comparison, China's average tariff on U.S. exports is 32.6 per cent, and it applies to all goods. Since the beginning of the second Trump administration on January 20, 2025, U.S. tariffs have increased by 36.8 percentage points, while Chinese tariffs have risen by 11.4 percentage points. Notably, U.S. tariffs on imports from China had reached a peak of 127.2 per cent in early May 2025 before being subsequently reduced (Bown, 2025).

The trade war with China has been particularly contentious, with both countries imposing heavy tariffs on each other's goods. Although the Trump administration claims these measures are necessary to address unfair trade practices, the reality is that the tariffs have increased consumer prices and

strained relations between the world's two largest economies. (Bukhari, Ikramulaq, & Shakuri, 2025). Alongside this, Trump may inaccurately hype up China's role in the Panama Canal, but China has unquestionably increased its (mostly economic) footprint in Latin America. A Chinese-funded deep-water port in Peru has raised U.S.A security concerns. Chinese investment in Mexico has created an important backdoor into the U.S. market; as a result, Mexico is now the U.S.'s largest trade partner (Wolff, 2025).

Canada: In 2025, a 10 per cent tariff will target Canadian energy and potash imports, while a 25 per cent tariff will apply to all remaining Canadian imports, rising to 35 per cent on August 1. Goods traded under the USMCA framework are exempt indefinitely. Based on 2024 trade figures, these tariffs would cover \$256 billion of Canadian exports to the United States, excluding USMCA-compliant goods (York & Durante, 2025).

BRICS Countries: Donald Trump also slapped a 10% tariff on imports from members of the BRICS group of developing Countries and said the BRICS group would end very quickly if they ever established in a meaningful way. also said he was committed to preserving the dollar's global status as a reserve currency and has repeatedly claimed, without evidence, that the group was set up to hurt the United States and the dollar's role as the world's reserve currency. Trump announced the new tariff on July 6, 2025, saying it would apply to any countries aligning themselves with what he called the "Anti-American policies" of the BRICS organisation (Shalal, 2025).

European Union: On February 26, 2025, President Trump announced his intention to impose a 25 per cent tariff on imports from the European Union, although the precise legal basis for the tariffs was not specified. On April 2, he clarified that the "reciprocal" tariff on EU imports would be 20 per cent. On May 23, Trump indicated plans to implement a 50 per cent reciprocal tariff starting June 1, which was later delayed to July 9. By July 12, the tariff was revised to 30 per cent, effective August 1, down from the previously proposed 50 per cent. Following negotiations, on July 27, the United States and the EU agreed to a reciprocal 15 per cent tariff. As part of the agreement, on August 21, Trump announced that tariffs on EU automobiles would be reduced from 27.5 per cent to 15 per cent, contingent upon EU legislation lowering tariffs on certain U.S. goods. In addition, any new tariffs on pharmaceuticals and semiconductors were capped at 15 per cent for EU imports. (York & Durante, 2025).

Under Section 232 retaliation, the European Union lifted the suspension of previous tariffs, imposing rates of up to 50 per cent on \$8 billion of U.S. exports, including whiskey, scheduled for April 1. Tariffs were further expanded to cover an additional \$20 billion of U.S. exports, effective April 13. On July 15, the EU published a list of \$84 billion in U.S. goods that would face retaliatory tariffs if no agreement is reached by August 1. On August 4, the EU postponed the implementation of these tariffs for six months (York & Durante, 2025).

Today, the United States faces global competition in electricity, electricity-based artificial intelligence (AI), information technology (IT), and robotic management fields that it seeks to dominate. In the new economic era, the old rivalries over energy resources are coming to an end, as electricity is replacing all other forms of energy.

The global expansion of China's economic exploitation poses a threat that the United States must prevent. With the help of new technology, the U.S. will further increase its control over raw materials, land, and

Rest of World: As a result of multiple actions by the Trump administration, the average U.S. tariff on all goods imported from the rest of the world rose from 3.0 per cent to 19.5 per cent between January 20, 2025, and September 25, 2025. This figure includes the 10 per cent tariff imposed on April 5, which did not simply raise the average by 10 percentage points because of sector-specific exemptions. Notably, on March 4, 2025, the United States imposed new tariffs on certain imports from Canada and Mexico that were ineligible for preferences under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA); these changes are not reflected here. Additionally, the U.S. average tariff temporarily increased to 16.2 per cent on April 9, 2025, before President Trump reversed some tariffs and paused their escalation for 90 days. Despite subsequent agreements with the UK, EU, and Japan, the current average tariff on imports from the rest of the world remains higher than the April 9 peak (Bown, 2025).

Result:

There is considerable variation in how state and non-state actors respond to this period of instability and disruptive transformation. Some actors seek to form new alliances or assert authority over policies or within institutions. Others, particularly U.S. allies such as Poland within NATO or Israel, which

heavily rely on the hegemon's security guarantees, decline leadership roles and instead attempt to persuade the United States to continue its traditional responsibilities. Middle powers, including India and Brazil, may find themselves caught between the U.S. and China, with severely constrained strategic manoeuvring space. Accordingly, a central objective of this volume is to analyse patterns of both contestation and support for the current hegemonic order (and its traditional hegemon) among these diverse actors (Böller & Werner, 2021).

The isolative and unilateral behaviour of the United States may prompt the development of a closed-loop economic system, which could provoke reciprocal resistance from its international partners. American economic nationalism limits its capacity to effectively challenge China and other foreign competitors, even though analyses indicate it attempts to do so. The U.S. withdrew from the U.S.-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) due to concerns over high standards and the desire to constrain Chinese regional influence. As a result of the U.S. retreat from such international trade agreements, Beijing has been able to strengthen cooperation among neighbouring countries through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), thereby diminishing America's ability to project power against Chinese influence (Nisar & Rahim, 2025). Also, American economic interests were adversely affected by inequitable foreign trade arrangements, which, coupled with outsourcing, imposed high import barriers on goods entering the United States. Global markets experienced significant disruptions after Trump 2.0 formally implemented unilateral trade tariffs, responded to Chinese trade duties, and renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA).

The impending trade war will not only transform global economic, geopolitical, and supply chain dynamics but also destabilise the existing international trade regime and the broader world economic order (Chan & Hu, 2025). Economists across Europe and around the world agree that raising tariffs and engaging in retaliatory trade practices reminiscent of the 1930s could substantially slow global economic growth and generate inflationary pressures, without a clear route to improved economic outcomes. Such crises adversely affect population health, increase reliance on social support systems, and often force governments to cut healthcare spending (Greer and others, 2025).

Therefore, in the terminology of political science, Donald Trump is not considered an institutionalist; he does not perceive himself as constrained by established precedents, conventions, or the customary rules and norms that traditionally guide political conduct. Ironically, when compared with Trump 2.0, China demonstrates a more institutionalised policy process. Although much has been written about the growing personality cult surrounding Xi Jinping and his consolidation of power, which places him at the apex of the Chinese political system, China's policymaking still retains a structured bureaucratic framework. However, the dominance of personal authority raises concerns that the system lacks sufficient safeguards against impulsive, personality-driven decision-making, historically exemplified by the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution under Mao Zedong (Chan & Hu, 2025).

Trump's tax reforms primarily benefited the wealthiest Americans, with households in the top 1% receiving reductions more than three times as large as those granted to households in the bottom 60%. Furthermore, his administration placed numerous corporate elites in key government positions and reversed several public-interest policies, including environmental regulations, to serve the interests of major industries, particularly Big Oil (Lusk, 2024). The tariff package introduced by the second Trump administration would apply to nearly all U.S. merchandise imports, with only a limited number of exceptions, primarily goods traded under the USMCA framework (worth \$405 billion in 2024) and certain energy-related and miscellaneous imports covered by the April 2 measures (valued at \$644 billion in 2024, or \$459 billion when excluding Canada and Mexico). Using 2024 import levels as a reference, the new tariffs would apply to roughly \$2.2 trillion in imported goods, about 69% of total U.S. merchandise imports, excluding de Minimis shipments. If the IEEPA-based tariffs are ultimately struck down, the remaining tariff measures would still cover more than \$500 billion worth of imports, representing about 16% of all goods entering the United States. (York & Durante, 2025).

Efforts to weaken international organisations and International Agreements:

The current liberal international order is anchored in institutional pillars that entrench its core principles and safeguard prior agreements regarding its ideational foundations. Examples of such institutions include economic organisations like the WTO, IMF, and World Bank, as well as security-focused

bodies such as the United Nations Security Council (Peters & Schaffer, 2013). For several years, the trajectory of U.S. foreign policy has shifted toward a gradual withdrawal from its traditional role in supporting the liberal international order. The Trump administration not only maintained this trend but significantly intensified it. Washington distanced itself from several international organisations and, in some cases, refused to honour previously committed financial contributions. It effectively incapacitated the World Trade Organisation's dispute settlement system and imposed secondary sanctions on both partners and rivals, compelling them to comply with U.S. preferences. Moreover, the administration withdrew from several landmark international accords and arms-control agreements, including the Paris Climate Agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia (Böller & Werner, 2021). The Trump administration's America First policy ultimately devolved into an America Alone stance, undermining trust in international organisations and eroding the United States' long-standing tradition of global leadership (Borger, 2019).

A second presidential term for Trump would likely exacerbate hostility toward multilateralism, undermining global cooperation and institutional frameworks that aim to establish normative order. A renewed Trump administration, which previously initiated structural changes to weaken international collaboration, could accelerate global fragmentation at an unprecedented pace. The multilateral agenda requires coordinated action to address global challenges, including security concerns, climate change mitigation, economic stability, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Middle Eastern crises, pandemic preparedness, and other transnational issues. Trump's approach also entails attacks on NATO, threats to withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO), and opposition to the United Nations (Nisar & Rahim, 2025). The Trump administration's central strategy has relied on unilateral confrontation and coercive tactics rather than multilateral dialogue and compromise. President Trump made clear that he does not endorse a U.S. leadership role oriented toward providing public goods for the liberal international order; instead, he adopts a strictly transactional approach to international relations (Böller & Werner, 2021). Trump's emphasis on safeguarding U.S. industry and scaling back international obligations could further undermine global institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, and NATO. During his first term, the U.S. withdrew from major international agreements, including the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran Nuclear Deal, imposed tariffs on China, and questioned NATO's relevance. Pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement and cutting funding to international bodies such as the WHO have raised concerns about weakening global norms for collective action in areas like climate change and public health. (Abdulrasheed & Nurain, 2025).

The U.S. formally withdrew from the Paris Agreement following Trump's executive order on his first day in office in January 2025. The Paris Agreement, a legally binding accord adopted at the UN COP21 in 2016, seeks to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This move reflects Trump's isolationist perspective, enabling the U.S. to retain its position as a leading industrial power while postponing the shift toward greener energy. Furthermore, Trump has revoked the Biden administration's mandate requiring 50% of new vehicles sold in the U.S. to be electric by 2030, indicating a broader rollback of climate-related regulations (The Guardian, 2025). Even so, a second U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement will make consensus-building on climate action more difficult among its traditional UN allies, including Europe and the G7, as well as with all remaining parties to the Agreement (Testa, 2025).

One major concern is the potential dismantling of U.S. scientific institutions and research initiatives that do not align with Trump's policy priorities. Such measures could hinder the systematic collection of data on crucial issues ranging from public health to arms control and environmental monitoring. For example, during his first term, he cut funding for NASA's satellite-based Earth observation programs, which play a key role in climate science. In a subsequent term, similar actions could include terminating the Global Change Research Program and weakening the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Moreover, U.S. financial support for international agencies such as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and UNESCO could also be significantly reduced (Parkinson, 2025). Furthermore, Trump terminated major arms control agreements, including the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), despite their critical role in multinational security cooperation, prioritising personal political motives over international collaboration (Borger, 2019).

By implementing Trumpian policies abroad, the United States challenges the liberal international order established after World War II. Under these circumstances, the U.S.-led multilateral system risks collapsing alongside America's waning global leadership. The ongoing deterioration of Trump-EU relations may further push the EU to explore alternative strategic partnerships with powers such as Russia and China (America Hernandez, 2025). Meanwhile, the United Nations Fifth Committee plans to begin talks on reducing U.S. payments for peacekeeping missions during 2025–2027, as current contributions exceed the 25% budget ceiling traditionally imposed by the U.S. Congress (Testa, 2025).

Racial Politics and establishing national-fascist dominance at the international level

After gaining independence, the United States first focused on strengthening its own national power. Once the country had established itself on firm foundations, it turned its attention to continental politics, intervening in Latin America, supporting Cuba's independence from Spain, acquiring the Panama Canal from Britain, and securing the Panama Canal Treaty. Subsequently, the United States expanded its policies beyond the American continent, acquiring territories in the Pacific such as Hawaii and Pearl Harbour, and taking control of Guam and the Philippine Islands, developments that ultimately transformed the U.S. into a rising power on the global stage (Meesaq, 1399).

A dominant lesson in U.S. foreign policy over the past century is that efforts to remove even highly objectionable regimes often produce adverse outcomes. Over two decades, the United States was unable to establish a durable political order in Afghanistan, and its intervention in Libya replaced authoritarian rule with political fragmentation. The enduring fallout of the 2003 Iraq War continues to shape instability in both the United States and the broader Middle East. More pertinently, U.S. attempts to forcibly topple governments in Latin America, such as in Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, have periodically generated significant destabilisation across the region (The New York Times, 2026).

Today, a new era of extremist nationalism has arrived. Trump says: "We make America great again!" This means that a strong world cannot be built, nor is it our responsibility to build it; we are responsible only for building a strong and great America. The policy and slogan of the U.S.A. exporting and establishing democracy is dead. America will no longer go anywhere in the name of democracy, nation-building, or state-building. The United States and other capitalist and Imperialist countries will instead directly pursue what they actually need from other nations and interfere in other Countries. This phenomenon first became evident through President Trump's disparaging comments concerning immigrants from non-white nations. In a 2018 meeting, for example, he allegedly described Haiti, several African states, and El Salvador, all with majority non-white populations, as "shithole countries," asking why the U.S. could not have more immigrants from Norway, which is a vastly white population (Lusk, 2024). Trump sometimes praises and describes Western countries as "civilised," implying that Eastern societies are the opposite, uncivilised and potentially dangerous to Western ideals of progress and modernity. Such language deeply dehumanises non-Western nations. Additionally, Trump's lack of strong condemnation of white nationalist movements, particularly his failure to denounce the "Proud Boys," drew significant backlash from political figures and citizens alike (Ronayne & Kunzelman, 2020).

In a 2023 interview, President Donald Trump once again used biologically determinist rhetoric, asserting that undocumented immigrants, mainly Mexicans, were "poisoning the blood of our country" and spreading disease. Such language closely mirrors the propaganda and racialised discourse once employed by Adolf Hitler, who infamously associated Jewish people with typhus to justify persecution and dehumanisation (Lusk, 2024). The statements made within the MAGA movement have been among the most overtly racist of the entire Trump administration, with Trump repeatedly targeting immigrants both during his presidency and on the campaign trail. In a 2024 radio interview with conservative host Hugh Hewitt, Trump sparked widespread concern with remarks reflecting a fascination with genetics. When asked about Vice President Kamala Harris' immigration policies, he falsely claimed that she had allowed 13,000 "murderers" into the United States, further asserting, "A murderer, believe this, it is in their genes. Moreover, we have a lot of bad genes in our country right now." Scholars, including Beth Shapiro, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UC Santa Cruz, have argued that Trump's statements reflect support for **eugenics**, a practice infamously used by the Nazis in the persecution and attempted eradication of European Jews (Calmes, 2024).

If Russia carries out a cruel invasion in Ukraine, Ukraine will undertake military resistance against Russia's aggression not only to defend its own sovereignty but also to safeguard the security of Europe, NATO, and the United States. Nevertheless, following Trump's reelection, he reportedly engaged in negotiations with Russia regarding Ukraine, seemingly prioritising his personal strategic and political interests over broader international security concerns. The consequences for Ukraine became evident when both USAID and military assistance were suspended, and the administration emphasised that it prioritised maintaining "normal" relations with Russia over supporting Ukrainian sovereignty and independence (Greer and others, 2025).

In recent months, President Trump has concentrated a substantial U.S. military presence in the Caribbean as part of a campaign to pressure Venezuela. This force, comprising a U.S. aircraft carrier, at least seven additional warships, numerous aircraft, and approximately 15,000 U.S. service members, was initially deployed for what the administration described as operations against small vessels allegedly transporting narcotics. However, in a significant escalation of his approach, Mr Trump announced a large-scale military operation in which Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was captured, marking a dramatic intensification of U.S. involvement in the region (The New York Times, 2026). If President Trump intends to justify an invasion or the assumption of authority over a foreign state, the U.S. Constitution outlines a clear legal procedure: he must seek authorisation from Congress. Any such action taken without congressional approval constitutes a breach of U.S. law, but Trump did this without the mentioned process. Venezuela appears to be the initial test case for this renewed form of U.S. imperialism, reflecting a perilous and unlawful reinterpretation of America's global role. By acting in the absence of any credible international legitimacy, legal mandate, or domestic consent, Mr Trump risks normalising similar behaviour among authoritarian regimes in states such as China and Russia, which seek to assert dominance over neighbouring countries. In the near term, this strategy also threatens to replicate the same hubristic miscalculations that enabled the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 (The New York Times, 2026).

Greenland occupies a strategically important position along the shortest route between North America and Europe and hosts a major American space facility. In recent years, interest in Greenland's natural resources, including rare earth minerals, uranium, and iron, has increased. While the island enjoys broad autonomy, it remains part of the Kingdom of Denmark. President Donald Trump has expressed his belief that the United States will gain control of Greenland, and he demands Greenland and says, "Give it to me, because I need it for a strong America, following renewed attention to the autonomous territory. Speaking to reporters on Air Force One, he stated, "I think we are going to have it," and added that the island's 57,000 residents "want to be with us (Aikman, 2025).

Geographically larger Canada is told it must become the 51st state because it serves the interests of a powerful America. Since the election, Trump has also suggested aggression against the United States allies, including repeated proposals to annex Canada. If Israel attacks Iran, or if it conducts aggression in Lebanon and Yemen, the U.S. backs it because Trump aims to make America stronger. The Panama Canal is America's need, and it must take control of it; it does not matter what kind of government Panama has. Similarly, Americans no longer fight Vietnam under the pretext of spreading democracy; they go directly and say, "This and that are mine," because America must become strong. From its Western ally and partner, Denmark, what are you going to do about it?" The territorial integrity and national sovereignty of countries no longer matter; for Trump and his team, the important thing is that America becomes strong. All international norms recognised by the United Nations have now lost their meaning, just as have the ceremonial protocols. We can only hope that the current global crisis caused by Mr Trump's policies will have less severe consequences than anticipated. However, it is far more likely that his adventurism will result in greater human suffering, heightened regional and international instability, and enduring damage to U.S. interests worldwide. The international community widely recognises that Mr Trump's militaristic approach constitutes a breach of legal norms (The New York Times, 2026).

Emergence of new challenges in global Politics and security:

Today, the world is interdependent, and life on Earth is impossible without cooperation. However, actions by countries such as the United States, Israel, China, Russia, and others, including increasing

military budgets, conducting military training, and planning and launching wars and invasions, are issues that have endangered global order and stability. Unfortunately, we are not far from a world in which power speaks first, where great powers make deals and put smaller countries under pressure. One of those is Trump's, which claims that, after 80 years of costs, the United States will finally benefit from its superpower status. According to *The Economist*, this approach will make the world more dangerous and leave America weaker and poorer (donya-e-eqtesad, 1403-12-10). Among the most pressing global challenges are the escalating climate crisis, the looming threat of nuclear conflict, the transgression of multiple planetary boundaries, rising inequality and poverty, the proliferation of conventional wars, the emergence of disruptive technologies, and recurring disease pandemics. Virtually all of these issues carry significant security implications (Parkinson, 2025).

Such policies of the Trump era have created new challenges in the world, such as: Global military expenditures have already reached an unprecedented \$2.4 trillion, with the United States alone spending more than the next nine highest-spending countries combined, including China and Russia. Policies under Trump are likely to increase this spending further, including investments in nuclear programs, thereby intensifying global arms races. While Trump may believe that the United States can "win" any international arms competition, whether nuclear or conventional, such races are extremely costly and destabilising. Moreover, the country is simultaneously grappling with significant economic challenges. Throughout his presidency, Donald Trump often relied on military-oriented language, threats, and massive defence spending to advance his political agenda. During his first term, he authorised the largest defence budget in American history, \$1.3 trillion in 2018, including \$700 billion devoted to strengthening U.S. armed forces. He justified this unprecedented expenditure as a step toward creating "the strongest military ever" and ensuring national security (Ferdinando, 2018).

During his first term as president, Trump withdrew the United States from three major nuclear arms control agreements. The first was the Iran nuclear deal, established in 2015, which limited Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from international trade sanctions. Second, Trump exited the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which prohibited the deployment of nuclear-capable missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometres in Europe. The third agreement was the Open Skies Treaty, which permitted member states to conduct surveillance flights over each other's territories to monitor compliance with arms control commitments (Parkinson, 2025). For instance, the termination of the INF Treaty created an opportunity for Russia to develop a new intermediate-range ballistic missile, the Oreshnik. In November, a non-nuclear variant of this missile was launched against Ukraine, representing another escalation in the ongoing conflict. During a potential second term, New START and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) could face significant threats. New START limits the number of deployed "strategic" nuclear warheads for both the United States and Russia to 1,550. The CTBT prohibits all nuclear weapons test explosions. If Trump were to withdraw from this treaty and resume U.S. nuclear testing as part of his so-called "nuclear modernisation" programs, it could not only trigger a highly dangerous and widespread nuclear arms race but also significantly increase atmospheric radioactive contamination. Notably, during his first term, Trump ordered the development and deployment of "more usable" nuclear weapons, indicating a potential for further undermining international norms in a second term (Parkinson, 2025).

Climate change and air pollution are among the greatest challenges and disasters of the 21st century, and Trump's policies in this regard have exposed the world to a serious threat. Trump, a confessed climate denier, is therefore one of the last people the world needs as president of the world's largest economy right now. His policies include withdrawing the United States from the PCA and dismantling national low-carbon energy programs. He supports expanding oil production in areas like the Alaskan Arctic and resuming US exports of high-carbon liquefied natural gas. New tariffs on imported goods are likely to push up the prices of low-carbon technologies such as solar panels. His pick for Energy Secretary is Chris Wright, an oil and gas industry executive who endorses Trump's extreme views and policies (Parkinson, 2025). Immediately after taking office, Trump issued several executive orders to reorient U.S. energy policy toward greater reliance on fossil fuels. The measures entailed significant restrictions on new wind turbine installations, the opening of federally protected lands for oil and gas drilling, and the declaration of an "Energy Emergency" to accelerate hydrocarbon exploration and output. Although executive orders lack the authority to repeal existing legislation, the Trump

administration pursued an extensive strategy to weaken it. For instance, the Department of Transportation was directed to “identify and eliminate any actions that make reference to or are connected with climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, racial equity, or environmental justice.” (Greer and others, 2025).

Trump's pro-Israel position is well known, and during his first term, it resulted in the U.S. halting financial contributions to UNRWA, the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees (Beaumont et al., 2018). Trump supports Israel's brutality, oppression, and violence in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza, because Israel is his ally and partner. For this reason, America no longer values its former humanitarian ideologies. The United States needs Israel in the Middle East to maintain its global dominance, imperial influence, and strength; therefore, it supports Israel's violence and brutality and considers the killing of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians as legitimate for Israel. Furthermore, it also claims that Palestinians should leave their own land and hand it over to Israel.

Trump's administration seeks to create conflicts among countries worldwide and then use them to advance its own interests. For example, it can be seen that Trump has tried to carry out a military intervention against Venezuela, attempted to take over Greenland from Denmark forcibly, suggested merging Canada with the United States, and firmly supported Israel's actions in Gaza. Finally, Trump's disruptive approach to foreign policy, particularly his intensified focus on strategic rivalry with the People's Republic of China, raises the possibility of an open military confrontation in Asia (Greer and others, 2025).

In his second term, Trump initially sought to improve relations with Russia over Ukraine and wanted to strike a deal with Moscow on Ukraine to gain concessions in the Middle East and other regions, as well as to divert Russia away from China. However, when faced with reactions from Ukraine, Europe, and other allied countries, he turned to supporting Ukraine with the intention of securing agreements over its natural resources. He did not solve the Russia-Ukraine war, but also the fierce ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. The Don Corleone-style approach to America in Ukraine is now being staged. U.S. officials, who initially demanded \$ 500 billion from Ukraine, agreed to a vague deal to establish a joint state fund to develop Ukraine's mineral resources. In this way, the United States aims to exploit Ukraine's mines for a long period of time. It remains unclear whether the United States will provide security guarantees in return. (donya-e-eqtasad, 1403).

Reduction of aid from the U.S.A. to national charitable organisations and international humanitarian organisations:

U.S. foreign aid has long played a critical role in tackling poverty, hunger, and inequality worldwide (Oxfam, 2025). According to government data, the US spent \$68bn (£55bn) on international aid in 2023. That total is spread across several departments and agencies. However, USAID's budget constitutes more than half of it, at around \$40 bn, which is about 0.6% of total US annual government spending of \$6.75tn (Seddon, 2025). The exact amount of aid carried out by USAID varied from year to year, but until 2025, it was less than 1% of the federal budget, amounting to about \$105 per U.S. citizen per year (Oxfam, 2025). The vast majority of USAID money is spent in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, primarily on humanitarian efforts in Ukraine. The US is the world's biggest spender on international development, by some margin (Seddon, 2025). Although public opinion strongly supports U.S. foreign aid, the Trump administration has closed down USAID, the primary agency responsible for delivering American humanitarian and development assistance globally, particularly to populations facing extreme crises. These cuts have dramatic implications: approximately 23 million children may lose educational opportunities, while up to 95 million individuals could be deprived of basic healthcare, potentially causing more than three million preventable deaths each year (Oxfam, 2025).

At the beginning of Trump's second presidential term, he introduced a set of executive directives that substantially altered the landscape of U.S. foreign aid. Among these were: an order requiring a comprehensive 90-day assessment of all foreign assistance; a “stop-work” mandate that suspended funding and halted ongoing operations; the dismantling of USAID along with significant reductions in its personnel and contracting base; and the revocation of most foreign aid grants. Although an exemption was later provided to permit limited life-saving humanitarian responses, this waiver has been narrowly applied and difficult for implementing agencies to secure. Despite several legal

challenges attempting to block or reverse these actions, judicial intervention has so far offered only limited relief. As a result, U.S. global health initiatives have faced major interruptions, and some programs have been terminated. Furthermore, proposed restructuring and funding cuts within the Department of Health and Human Services are expected to impose additional constraints on these efforts. This fact sheet forms part of a broader series reviewing the condition of U.S. global health programs (KFF, 2025).

Although Agenda47 and the Republican Party platform did not specifically address foreign aid policy, Trump signed Executive Order 14169, Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid, on his inauguration day, January 20, 2025 (Greer and others, 2025). According to Trump's executive order, the U.S. foreign aid bureaucracy and associated institutions are frequently misaligned with American interests and, in many instances, contradict core American values. Under current policy, no further U.S. foreign assistance shall be allocated in a manner inconsistent with the President's foreign policy objectives. A 90-day pause has been instituted to assess programmatic efficiency and alignment with U.S. foreign policy. All department and agency heads responsible for foreign development assistance are required to immediately suspend new commitments and disbursements to foreign nations, implementing NGOs, international organisations, and contractors until such reviews are completed within 90 days. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is tasked with enforcing this pause through its apportionment authority (The White House, 2025).

In this way, the future of the U.S. foreign aid budget remains uncertain at the time of writing, as the administration has dismantled USAID. However, funding has already been appropriated, and the agency's operational status is currently subject to ongoing litigation. The reallocation and reduction of U.S. foreign aid have already resulted in significant immediate health crises, particularly in HIV treatment and reproductive health programs. The continued reduction of aid is likely to generate widespread challenges globally across multiple sectors (Greer and others, 2025).

Cuts to U.S. foreign aid will disproportionately affect populations experiencing conflict, severe emergencies, and extreme poverty, with women and children among the most vulnerable. Displaced individuals in refugee camps or informal settlements face heightened risks of waterborne diseases, such as cholera. The suspension of childhood immunisation and maternal health programs further increases the likelihood of preventable illness among mothers and children (Oxfam, 2025). The human consequences of USAID reductions have already been observed in countries including Ukraine, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Following a 7.7-magnitude earthquake in Myanmar in late March, Oxfam President and CEO Abby Maxman emphasised that the shutdown of USAID severely undermines the U.S. government's capacity to respond effectively to humanitarian crises. Speed, coordination, and resources are critical in disaster response, where delays can mean the difference between life and death. Beyond development assistance, humanitarian aid workers in conflict zones are facing immediate challenges due to the U.S. freeze on foreign disaster aid (Oxfam, 2025).

Another highly impactful initiative is the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which has saved millions of lives since its inception in 2003. The program has prevented millions of HIV infections and supported countries in controlling HIV epidemics, achieving notable successes in expanding HIV testing, delivering life-saving treatment, and strengthening health systems globally. Under the current aid freeze, however, PEPFAR's continuity is at risk, potentially leaving over 20 million people, including 500,000 children, without sufficient HIV treatment and services (Oxfam, 2025). An evaluation conducted shortly after the issuance of the stop-work order indicated that 71% of PEPFAR implementing partners experienced the cancellation of at least one activity category, 50% reported staff reductions, and only 14% indicated they could sustain operations for 1 month or longer without PEPFAR funding. Subsequent analyses revealed that disruptions in PEPFAR financing were linked to decreased access to HIV related services and commodities, including antiretroviral therapy, PrEP, and diagnostic tests such as HIV, CD4, and viral load assessments (KFF, 2025). The effects of the USAID shutdown are being felt globally. In 2024, USAID assisted approximately 130 countries. The nations most dependent on life-saving aid are experiencing the greatest reductions, including Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Syria (Oxfam, 2025).UNAIDS offices have documented multiple impacts, including the loss of thousands of HIV healthcare workers in Kenya,

Malawi, South Africa, and Mozambique; interruptions to diagnostic and treatment services for pregnant women and children in Zimbabwe; partial or complete suspension of community outreach services in Angola and Eswatini; and the anticipated reduction of one-quarter of the workforce within Ukraine's largest network of people living with HIV. Additionally, a rapid survey of 108 WHO country offices found that nearly half reported moderate to severe disruptions in HIV services, including medicines and health products, attributable to the U.S. foreign aid freeze and other shortages (KFF, 2025).

Impact on the U.S.A. and Alliances:

The United States participated in the First World War and, by contributing to Germany's defeat, emerged as a new great power while strengthening its partnerships with European states. Following the Second World War, the U.S. became the world's leading superpower and consolidated alliances with European nations and other states opposed to the Soviet Union. Initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, the establishment of NATO, and, beyond Europe, the creation of SEATO and CENTO, all symbolised America's growing strength and influence on the global stage. After 1990, the United States stood as the world's sole superpower (Meesaq, 1399).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States, with the support of Europe and other allied countries, established the current international order. To maintain the stability and survival of the current international order, Europe and its allies have made significant efforts alongside the United States. They have supported this system not only by providing material resources to uphold the order but also by conferring legitimacy. The concept of legitimacy is essential for distinguishing hegemonic orders from other hierarchies that depend primarily on coercive power (Prys & Robel). With Donald Trump's rise to power, it appears America has gradually begun to lose its allies and will lose its dominant position in the world. During the Trump presidency (2017–2021), he redirected U.S. foreign policy along an unconventional trajectory. By advancing the slogans "America First" and "Make America Great Again," his administration openly distanced itself from the liberal internationalist framework that had long underpinned American global dominance. Trump's withdrawal from key international agreements, such as the Paris Climate Accord and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the Iran nuclear deal), together with his transactional, deal-driven diplomatic style, symbolised a broader retreat from traditional U.S. leadership in world affairs (Zhang et al., 2017). Despite its longstanding dominance, the United States has seen its global leadership erode amid growing international uncertainty about its strategic orientation. The COVID-19 pandemic further amplified scepticism about Washington's capacity to provide effective leadership both at home and abroad. In response, the Biden administration has sought to rebuild traditional alliances while simultaneously reclaiming a leadership role in addressing climate change and promoting democratic governance on the international stage (Ikenberry, 2022). Since Donald Trump's return to the presidency, his campaign slogan "*Make America Great Again*" has increasingly positioned the United States on a path of international isolation. Trump's second administration has significantly undermined America's historical partnerships with the countries that were pivotal in shaping the global order following World War II. The "*America First*" policy framework emphasises nationalist priorities in foreign policy while downplaying or rejecting multilateral commitments. Consequently, this unilateral and self-serving interpretation of American exceptionalism, disengaged from NATO, the European Union, and broader international cooperation, is likely to erode U.S. global influence and diminish its leadership role in the international system (Nisar & Rahim, 2025). Since the outset of its term, the Trump administration has exhibited a contradictory stance toward transatlantic security policy. On the one hand, President Trump made it explicit that U.S. solidarity with its transatlantic allies would be conditional on the extent of member contributions to U.S. defence. This stance sent shockwaves across numerous NATO member states and caused a substantial erosion of trust in Washington (Böller & Werner, 2021).

The 2018 G-7 summit in Canada and the NATO summit in Brussels intensified European concerns regarding the future reliability of the United States, particularly after President Donald Trump publicly humiliated his allies before television audiences. As Chancellor Angela Merkel remarked, "The times when we could completely rely on others are long gone. We Europeans really have to take our fate into our own hands (Böller & Werner, 2021). Throughout his presidency, Trump frequently criticised NATO, claiming that the alliance reduced U.S. financial contributions, a stance that signalled a potential significant withdrawal from multinational operations. Such actions destabilise Eastern

Europe, weaken the Western security architecture, and enable Russia to exert considerable influence (Borger, 2019).

Trump's policies have significantly impacted U.S. alliances, particularly within NATO and with major Asian partners such as Japan and South Korea. His demand that NATO countries "contribute their fair share" to defence and his doubts about collective defence obligations have prompted concerns regarding the future of these alliances. (Stancatis, 2024). From 1947 to 1991, the Cold War demonstrated America's ambition for global dominance and its resistance to Soviet ideological expansion. Following World War II, the world was divided into two competing blocs, with the United States emerging as the leader of the European nations and of countries aligned with democratic ideals. With European Countries, the U.S. created NATO, forged military alliances, implemented the Marshall Plan, and strengthened defence systems, thereby securing a strategic position that both curtailed communist influence and promoted economic opportunities for capitalism and liberal democracy (White, 1987).

After Trump 2, he supported an isolationist approach to the Russo-Ukrainian war, potentially compelling NATO and European states to boost further their military expenditures, consistent with the record-high defence spending of 2023–2024. At Zelenski's urging, NATO could assume primary responsibility for UN peacekeeping along the Russo-Ukrainian border. Trump might choose to either withhold U.S. participation or significantly scale back American troop deployments under the UN flag, which could make Russia more willing to accept a peacekeeping mission on disputed territory (Testa, 2025). This development is likely to undermine the United States' influence in global affairs. As the international system recalibrates its geopolitical alignments in reaction to Washington's posture, both China and Russia are expected to strengthen their strategic presence in the region. Moreover, Western states, more broadly, and European Union members in particular, are anticipated to respond to Trump's unpredictable foreign policy by pursuing independent economic arrangements and establishing alternative security arrangements (Nisar & Rahim, 2025). If NATO countries cannot regain mutual trust, the current hierarchical system may break down into a self-help structure where consequences rather than norms guide actions. NATO's future role would then focus primarily on defending against external threats rather than maintaining internal peace, with major consequences for the existing global power structure (Böller & Werner, 2021). European partners may find it strategically advantageous to explore independent defence arrangements to create a Europe less dependent on the United States. Simultaneously, authoritarian powers like Russia and China could exploit any erosion of the transatlantic liberal security framework to their benefit. Consequently, while NATO might persist institutionally, it would no longer function in the form familiar to the current international order (Böller & Werner, 2021).

In October 2019, the United States prevailed in a nearly 15-year-long dispute at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against the European Union. The WTO ruling authorised the U.S. to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on \$7.5 billion in EU products. Effective October 18, 2019, tariffs of 10 per cent were applied to aircraft and 25 per cent to agricultural and other goods. In the summer of 2021, the Biden administration reached a five-year agreement to suspend these tariffs on EU imports (York & Durante, 2025). Since 2008, Europe has grown more slowly than the United States, and further shocks to the global economy or to European exports could create additional difficulties. The EU overall runs a trade surplus with the United States, making it particularly vulnerable to tariffs imposed by the Trump administration. Some countries, such as Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK, are closely connected to the U.S. economy through mutual foreign investment. Others, such as France and Germany, are more exposed due to specific export industries and broader geopolitical differences (Greer and others, 2025).

4. RESULT AND FINDINGS

After digging deep into the effects of Trump's second-term policies on the global stage, a few major themes stood out. These findings pull together the data and help tell the story of how the U.S. role in the world has shifted and what that means for everyone else.

1. The Old Rules of the Game Are Falling Apart

For decades, the U.S. helped build and maintain the international systems that kept things running smoothly after World War II, alliances, treaties, and global institutions. Nevertheless, this research shows that during Trump's second term, the foundation began to crack. The U.S. stepped back from major global agreements and started treating foreign policy more like a business deal than a partnership. Pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement, the Iran nuclear deal, and key arms treaties, while blocking trade negotiations and threatening allies, sent a clear message: the old rules no longer apply. The result? Other countries stopped trusting that the U.S. would keep its word. Global cooperation became more difficult, and the entire system began to feel less stable.

2. Trade Wars Did not Bring Back Jobs, They Just Broke Things

If there is one area where the impact was impossible to ignore, it is trade. Trump's tariffs were bigger and broader than anything seen in nearly a century. From China to Canada to Europe, the U.S. slapped taxes on foreign goods like never before. However, instead of reviving American manufacturing, these moves backfired. Supply chains got tangled. Prices went up. Countries hit back with their own tariffs. Moreover, rather than bringing the world closer together, trade became another battlefield. What started as "America First" ended up looking more like "Everyone for Themselves."

3. Military Muscle, Not Diplomacy, Took Centre Stage

Gone were the days of careful negotiation and quiet diplomacy. In their place: threats, shows of force, and a foreign policy built on intimidation. The U.S. spent more on defence, modernised its nuclear arsenal, and floated ideas that would have been unthinkable just years earlier, like buying Greenland or threatening military action in Venezuela. Arms control agreements were abandoned. Support for Israel in Gaza was unwavering. All of this sent a signal that military strength mattered more than international cooperation, raising the risk of new arms races and making the world feel less safe.

4. Foreign Aid Was Gutted, and People Paid the Price

One of the most heartbreaking findings was how quickly the U.S. turned its back on humanitarian programs. Foreign aid, including life-saving HIV/AIDS treatment through PEPFAR, was frozen or cut entirely. In countries across Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, clinics shut down, supplies ran out, and millions lost access to healthcare. It was not just a policy shift; it was a retreat from the idea that the U.S. had a responsibility to help others. The world noticed. Moreover, trust in American leadership took another hit.

5. A New Kind of Nationalism Took Hold, and It Spread

Under the banner of "Make America Great Again," the language coming from the White House changed. It was no longer just about policy; it was about identity. Immigrants were described in dehumanising terms. Democracy promotion took a backseat. Moreover, the U.S. seemed more comfortable embracing authoritarian leaders than standing up for human rights. That shift was not just rhetorical. It signalled to the world that the U.S. was no longer a reliable defender of the values it once championed, like equality, openness, and universal rights.

6. Allies Started Looking Elsewhere

When your closest friends stop trusting you, they start making other plans. That is exactly what happened. European allies began discussing seriously building their own defence systems. Countries like India and Brazil started hedging their bets, building ties with China and others. Even traditional partners grew wary of relying too heavily on the U.S. The message was clear: if American support came with strings attached or could vanish overnight, it was time to diversify.

7. The World Is Becoming More Multipolar Fast

Put simply, the U.S. is no longer the undisputed leader of the free world. Moreover, Trump's policies did not reverse that trend; they accelerated it. China stepped into the gaps left by the U.S., and middle

powers found new partners. The Global South stopped waiting for direction from Washington. Moreover, the idea of a “rules-based order” started to feel more like a memory than a reality. Instead of restoring American dominance, the strategy of going it alone ultimately shrank U.S. influence. So, what is the Big Picture?

When you put all the pieces together, this is not just a story about one president or one set of policies. It is about a fundamental shift in how the U.S. shows up in the world and how the world has started to adjust. We are looking at:

- Institutions that no longer work the way they used to
- Trade relationships that have turned hostile
- A foreign policy built on strength, not trust
- A retreat from humanitarian leadership
- A rise in nationalist ideology that echoes abroad
- Allies who no longer feel they can count on the U.S.
- And a global power structure that’s becoming more fragmented by the day

Taken together, these changes do not merely challenge the international order; they actively reshape it. Furthermore, the consequences for stability, cooperation, and the future of diplomacy are still unfolding.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study align closely with a growing body of literature that conceptualises Trump’s political agenda, particularly during his second term, as a fundamental rupture with the principles of the liberal international order. Earlier scholarship has emphasised that U.S. hegemony historically rested not merely on material power but also on institutional restraint, multilateralism, and the provision of global public goods (Ikenberry, 2011). The evidence presented in this article supports Acharya’s (2018) argument that the erosion of these foundations has accelerated under Trump’s leadership, contributing to a fragmented and increasingly unstable international system.

From a political-economic perspective, the analysis of Trump’s tariff policies reinforces existing interpretations of economic nationalism as a destabilising force in global governance. Böller and Werner (2021) argue that the liberal order depended on the U.S. willingness to embed its power within rules-based institutions. In contrast, the article demonstrates that Trump’s aggressive tariff regime—described as unprecedented in scale since the Smoot–Hawley era—signals a deliberate abandonment of hegemonic self-restraint. This finding is consistent with Abdul Rasheed and Nurain’s (2025) observation that Trump’s “America First” doctrine prioritises short-term domestic political gains over systemic stability, thereby intensifying retaliatory trade dynamics and weakening trust among economic partners.

The discussion also substantiates Nisar and Rahim’s (2025) claim that Trump 2.0 represents a transition from “Make America Great Again” to “Make America Alone.” The weakening of multilateral institutions such as the WTO, WHO, and UN agencies through funding cuts, withdrawal from agreements, and institutional obstruction illustrates a broader shift toward unilateralism. Peters and Schaffer (2013) previously warned that authority beyond the state depends on sustained legitimacy; this study demonstrates that Trump’s transactional approach undermines that legitimacy by reducing international cooperation to coercive bargaining.

Furthermore, the article's examination of racialised rhetoric and nationalist discourse complements Lusk's (2024) analysis of fascist tendencies within contemporary American politics. Trump's repeated dehumanisation of immigrants and non-Western societies does not merely function as domestic populist mobilisation; rather, it has international repercussions by normalising exclusionary and hierarchical worldviews. These findings reinforce the argument that ideological narratives are central to shaping foreign policy behaviour and cannot be separated from material outcomes in international relations.

In terms of security and alliances, the results corroborate earlier assessments that U.S. credibility as a security guarantor has been significantly weakened. Prys and Robel (2011) emphasise that hegemonic leadership requires legitimacy rather than coercion alone. The article shows that Trump's conditional approach to NATO, combined with threats of withdrawal and demands for transactional loyalty, erodes alliance cohesion and encourages strategic hedging by U.S. partners. This dynamic aligns with Ikenberry's (2022) later assertion that uncertainty surrounding U.S. commitments accelerates the diffusion of power toward regional actors and rival great powers.

Humanitarian consequences constitute another critical dimension of this discussion. The reduction of U.S. foreign aid and the dismantling of USAID structures, as highlighted in the article, support Oxfam's (2025) and KFF's (2025) findings that U.S. disengagement has direct and measurable impacts on global health and poverty reduction. These developments undermine long-standing norms of humanitarian responsibility and further weaken the moral authority of the United States within the international system.

Overall, the discussion confirms that Trump's egocentric and nationalist policies do not represent isolated deviations but rather form a coherent pattern of systemic disruption. As Rees (2025) argues, this trajectory signals the emergence of a more conflictual and fragmented global order in which norms, institutions, and cooperative frameworks are increasingly subordinated to raw power and narrow national interest. The article, therefore, contributes to the broader literature by demonstrating that Trump's second-term policies accelerate not only the decline of U.S. leadership but also the structural unravelling of the post-World War II international order.

6. CONCLUSION

This study finds that Donald Trump's second-term policies represent more than temporary deviations from established U.S. foreign policy traditions. Instead, they reflect a coherent transformation in how the United States engages with the world.

Historically, American leadership operated through institutions, alliances, and normative commitments. Trump's approach replaces those mechanisms with a more transactional, unilateral approach. Multilateral cooperation is treated as optional, alliances are evaluated in cost-benefit terms, and institutional constraints are viewed as obstacles rather than sources of legitimacy.

The economic consequences are significant. Aggressive tariff policies disrupt global trade regimes and weaken trust among allies and competitors alike. Because the United States was a primary architect of the rules-based economic system, its retreat from those rules accelerates fragmentation and retaliation within the global economy. Institutionally, withdrawal from agreements and obstruction of multilateral mechanisms weaken the foundations of global governance. When leading powers disengage from international institutions, the credibility of those institutions declines. This, in turn, encourages other states to pursue unilateral or coercive strategies.

Ideologically, the normalisation of exclusionary nationalism and racialised rhetoric signals a departure from liberal norms. When major powers shift away from commitments to equality and human rights, the normative environment of international politics changes accordingly. Illiberal practices become easier to justify.

In the security domain, uncertainty surrounding alliances and arms control increases instability. Allies reconsider their strategic dependence, while rival powers find opportunities to expand their influence. The overall effect is a more competitive and fragmented system.

Finally, reductions in foreign aid and humanitarian engagement represent a withdrawal from global responsibility. Beyond geopolitical consequences, these decisions produce tangible human costs in health, education, and crisis response. In sum, Trump's second-term policies accelerate structural change in the international system. Whether this transformation leads to the irreversible decline of the liberal order or to its adaptation remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that the assumptions, norms, and expectations that have guided international relations since 1945 have been profoundly altered.

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