

Trump's New National Security Doctrine: Israel Is Not the Cause of the Middle East's Problems

In new outline of national security strategy, Trump doctrine to declare that 'states have increasingly found common interests with in Israel' in confronting threats such as Iran and radical jihadist terrorist organizations.

Prioritizing national sovereignty over alliances, President Donald Trump is poised to outline a new national security strategy that envisions nations in a perpetual state of competition, reverses Obama-era warnings on climate change, and de-emphasizes multinational agreements that have dominated the United States' foreign policy since the Cold War.

The Republican president, who ran on a platform of "America First," will detail his plan Monday, one that if fully implemented could sharply alter the United States' relationships with the rest of the world. The plan, according to senior administration officials who offered a preview Sunday, is to focus on four main themes: protecting the homeland and way of life; promoting American prosperity; demonstrating peace through strength; and advancing American influence in an ever-competitive world.

Trump's doctrine holds that nation states are in perpetual competition and that the U.S. must fight on all fronts to protect and defend its sovereignty from friend and foe alike. While the administration often says that "America First" does not mean "America Alone," the national security strategy to be presented by Trump will make clear that the United States will stand up for itself even if that means acting unilaterally or alienating others on issues like trade, climate change and immigration, according to people familiar with the strategy.

The last such strategy document, prepared by then-President Barack Obama in 2015, declared climate change an "urgent and growing threat to our national security." A senior official said the Trump plan removes that determination — following the administration's threat to pull out of the Paris climate accord — but will mention the importance of environmental stewardship.

Despite the risk of potential isolation presented by Trump's strategy, its fundamentals are not a surprise. The Associated Press last week reviewed excerpts of a late draft of the roughly 70-page document and spoke to two people familiar with it. The draft emphasizes that U.S. economic security is national security and that economic security must be ensured with military might. And they said it would stress the U.S. is interested only in relationships with other countries, including alliances like NATO, that are fair and reciprocal.

Trump, according to the senior officials, is also expected to discuss threats he'll deem as "rogue regimes," like North Korea, and "revisionist powers," like Russia and China, who aim to change the status quo, such as Moscow and its actions with Ukraine and Georgia, and Beijing in the South China Sea. Trump is also planning to renew his call for the member states in the United Nations and NATO to spend more on defense, saying that the United States will insist on its alliances being fair and reciprocal.

The senior officials said the document refers to China as a "strategic competitor," rather than the stronger accusation of "economic aggression" previewed last week by National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster.

Despite international challenges, the document cites emerging opportunities to advance American interests in the Middle East. "Some of our partners are working together to reject radical ideologies and key leaders are calling for a rejection of Islamist extremism and violence," it says. "Encouraging political stability and sustainable prosperity would contribute to dampening the conditions that fuel sectarian grievances."

The strategy document asserts that "for generations the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been understood as the prime irritant preventing peace and prosperity in the region. Today, the threats from radical jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the region's problems. States have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats."

The president is also set to make the case that U.S. economic security is national security and that economic security must be ensured with military might.

The criticism of Russia will come as a break from recent warm words between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The leaders have spoken twice in

four days, with Trump calling Putin to thank him for kind words about the U.S. stock market and Putin reaching out to Trump to thank the CIA for help in stopping a terror plot in St. Petersburg.

The strategy document will not make explicit reference to Russian attempts to meddle in the U.S. political system, but an official said it would highlight the importance of ensuring the resilience of U.S. democratic institutions.

The early draft of the strategy reviewed by the AP lamented that America had put itself at a disadvantage by entering into multinational agreements, such as those aimed at combating climate change, and introducing domestic policies to implement them.

The senior officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the plan before the president's remarks.

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