



# THE AMERICAN QUESTION: IMPLICATIONS OF DONALD TRUMP'S RETURN TO THE U.S. PRESIDENCY

## LA CUESTIÓN ESTADOUNIDENSE: IMPLICACIONES DEL REGRESO DE DONALD TRUMP A LA PRESIDENCIA DE EE.UU.



**Dr. Youness El Hamzaoui**

Doctor en Ingeniería y Ciencias Aplicadas. Maestro en Ciencias en Ingeniería Industrial. Catedrático de la Universidad Autónoma del Carmen, Campeche (UNACAR).

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5287-1594.

**Abstract:** Donald Trump's recent return to the U.S. presidency has garnered significant global attention. This article analyzes the immediate and long-term repercussions of Trump's second administration, emphasizing shifts in U.S. foreign policy, multilateral alliances, and international economic relations. Through comparative legal and political analysis, the discussion highlights how Trump's first-term precedents in trade protectionism, alliance management, and global security policy may evolve in his current term. Special attention is given to constitutional checks, institutional constraints, and the current international context shaping his presidential decision-making process. The findings suggest Trump's second administration may heighten geopolitical tensions in Europe, significantly transform global trade dynamics, and challenge existing multilateral frameworks, generating considerable implications for international law, global governance, and international stability.

**Keywords:** Donald Trump, U.S. foreign policy, NATO, trade policy, international law, multilateralism.

**Resumen:** El reciente regreso de Donald Trump a la presidencia de Estados Unidos (EUA) ha captado una atención mundial significativa. Este artículo analiza las repercusiones inmediatas y a largo plazo de la segunda administración de Trump, destacando los cambios en la política exterior estadounidense, las alianzas multilaterales y las relaciones económicas internacionales. Mediante un análisis comparativo jurídico y político, la discusión resalta cómo los precedentes del primer mandato de Trump en protecciónismo comercial, gestión de alianzas y política de seguridad global podrían evolucionar durante su actual periodo. Se presta especial atención a los controles constitucionales, las limitaciones institucionales y el contexto internacional actual que influyen en su proceso de toma de decisiones presidenciales. Los hallazgos sugieren que la segunda administración de Trump podría aumentar las tensiones geopolíticas en Europa, transformar significativamente las dinámicas comerciales globales y desafiar los marcos multilaterales existentes, generando considerables implicaciones para el derecho internacional, la gobernanza global y la estabilidad internacional.

**Palabras clave:** Donald Trump, política exterior estadounidense, OTAN, política comercial, derecho internacional, multilateralismo.

Summary: I. Introduction; II. Theoretical framework and methodology; II.1. Theoretical framework; II.2. Methodology; III. Trump's foreign policy legacy; III.1. NATO and european security; III.2. Trade policy and relations with China; III.3. The Middle East and Israel; III.4. Global alliances beyond Europe; IV. Potential geopolitical consequences; IV.1. Escalation of great power competition; IV.2. Risks to multilateralism; IV.3. Economic implications and the prospect of a trade war; V. Constitutional and institutional constraints; V.1. Congressional oversight; V.2. Judicial review of Executive Actions; V.3. Role of public opinion and media; VI. Discussion: potential scenarios; VII. Conclusions; VIII. References.



## I. Introduction

A pressing question in contemporary international affairs concerns the potential reelection of Donald Trump as President of the United States. President Trump's first term defied expectations on multiple fronts, from criticizing NATO spending to renegotiating trade agreements, and from withdrawing from certain international treaties to adopting unconventional diplomatic strategies. Trump's rhetoric and policies significantly diverged from traditional U.S. diplomatic norms, prompting speculation on how a second term might reshape global relations.

Historically, the United States has influenced international security through NATO leadership, shaped the global trade regime under the World Trade Organization framework, and played a pivotal role in mediating conflicts worldwide. A new Trump presidency could, however, mark a departure from these patterns, creating ripple effects across Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia. Indeed, some observers argue that this scenario might precipitate an era of heightened protectionism or undermine the multilateral order. Others suggest that U.S. institutional checks –and shifts in global geopolitics– could temper the impact of another Trump presidency.

## II. Theoretical framework and methodology

### II.1. Theoretical framework

This study draws primarily on international relations and constitutional law perspectives to analyze the possible outcomes of a second Trump presidency. From the lens of realism, states act to maximize power; thus, Trump's emphasis on economic advantage and "America First" aligns with a realist reorientation of U.S. foreign policy. From a liberal institutionalist viewpoint, international organizations such as NATO and the WTO function as constraints on unilateral action, suggesting that U.S. commitments might be more enduring than Trump's rhetoric implies. Finally, a constitutional law perspective helps clarify the balance of powers between the executive, Congress, and the judiciary, underscoring the legal boundaries of a president's unilateral authority.

### II.2. Methodology

**Approach:** This research employs a qualitative, scenario-based analysis of both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources include official statements, press releases, and policy documents from Trump's first term, the U.S. Congress, and relevant international organizations.

Secondary sources consist of scholarly articles, think-tank publications, and legal analyses of presidential powers and U.S. foreign policy.

**Scope and limitations:** The article primarily focuses on potential foreign policy outcomes in NATO, Asia, and the Middle East, as well as on legal constraints within the U.S. The unpredictable nature of politics, however, means that actual developments could deviate from these scenarios.

### III. Trump's foreign policy legacy

#### III.1. NATO and european security

During Trump's first term, he repeatedly criticized European NATO members for underfunding defense and threatened to reduce or withdraw U.S. support. A renewed Trump presidency could thus raise questions about collective security commitments, potentially emboldening Russia or destabilizing the balance of power in Europe.

#### III.2. Trade policy and relations with China

Trump engaged in a protectionist approach, imposing tariffs on Chinese goods and negotiating bilateral deals that departed from multilateral frameworks. Under a second term, these measures might intensify, resulting in an extended trade war with China or renegotiations of existing trade agreements. This could produce significant economic disruption, affecting not only the U.S. but also third-party economies integrated into global value chains.

#### III.3. The Middle East and Israel

Under Trump, the U.S. administration moved the embassy to Jerusalem, acknowledged Israeli sovereignty claims, and withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal. Another Trump presidency may reinforce unilateral strategies, intensifying regional tensions and raising questions about the prospects for renewed dialogue with Iran.

#### III.4. Global alliances beyond Europe

Trump's approach to alliances and partnerships often focused on transactional calculations. Nations such as Japan and South Korea –key U.S. allies in East Asia– could face heightened pressure to increase defense spending or renegotiate security arrangements. Furthermore, pivoting away from broad-based international treaties, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change may again isolate the U.S. on critical global issues.

## IV. Potential geopolitical consequences

## IV.1. Escalation of great power competition

A new Trump presidency might amplify rivalries, especially with China, due to enhanced tariffs, rhetoric on intellectual property theft, and geopolitical tensions around Taiwan. European states would likely seek to mitigate the impact of renewed U.S.-China tensions by pursuing either strategic autonomy or recalibrating relations with both powers.

## IV.2. Risks to multilateralism

Critics argue that Trump's previous unilateral decisions –e.g., withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and challenging the WTO's dispute resolution mechanisms– undermine the credibility of international institutions. Should these trends resume, multilateral cooperation on trade, security, and global governance may diminish, potentially spurring regional blocs to fill the vacuum.

### IV.3. Economic implications and the prospect of a trade war

Trump's approach often focused on bilateral deals favorable to the U.S., but potentially at the expense of longstanding alliances. Should a renewed administration impose further tariffs or retaliatory measures, a significant fragmentation of global trade structures could occur, possibly resulting in economic slowdowns or recessions worldwide.





## V. Constitutional and institutional constraints

### V.I. Congressional oversight

Although the U.S. president wields significant influence on foreign policy, Congress retains constitutional powers over treaties, appropriations, and war declarations. A second Trump presidency would thus face scrutiny and possible checks from the legislative branch, especially if partisan dynamics differ from his first term.

### V.2. Judicial review of Executive Actions

Some unilateral executive actions –especially those related to immigration bans or trade tariffs– can prompt judicial review if deemed unconstitutional or inconsistent with statute. The courts have occasionally limited executive authority, demonstrating an additional layer of checks on presidential power.

### V.3. Role of public opinion and media

Public opinion may also influence policy choices; if Trump's approach to foreign affairs faces widespread domestic resistance, it could constrain the scope of unilateral action. Likewise, negative media coverage –particularly of drastic measures like leaving NATO– could generate political costs, encouraging moderation.

## VI. Discussion: potential scenarios

Based on the analysis above, several scenarios emerge for a future Trump presidency:

- 1) Deepening U.S. unilateralism: Trump doubles down on "America First," imposing more tariffs, reconsidering NATO commitments, and reducing participation in international treaties. This scenario risks economic and diplomatic fallout but appeals to a domestic constituency focused on sovereignty and protectionism.
- 2) Selective engagement: Trump renegotiates key alliances on a more transactional basis while maintaining certain commitments (e.g., strategic partnerships to contain China or to sustain pressure on Iran). Institutions like NATO and the WTO remain intact, but they function under mounting strain.
- 3) Institutional moderation: Congressional and judicial checks, along with pressure from key interest groups, restrain radical policy shifts. In this scenario, policy changes resemble Trump's first term but do not escalate to a complete break with core alliances.



## VII. Conclusions

**FIRST: ALIGNMENT WITH RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.** This article set out to examine how a renewed Trump presidency might affect global geopolitics, specifically focusing on NATO, trade relations, and the broader multilateral order. The preceding analysis underscores that Trump's governing style could intensify great power competition and challenge existing alliances, although constitutional checks and global shifts may mitigate the most extreme outcomes.

**SECOND: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS.** From a theoretical standpoint, a second Trump presidency highlights ongoing tensions between realist arguments about state power and liberal institutionalist commitments to international cooperation. In practical terms, foreign ministries worldwide may need to adapt swiftly, forging alternative alliances or regional frameworks to address security and economic needs –particularly if the U.S. withdraws leadership from critical global institutions–.

**THIRD: CONTRIBUTION SIGNIFICANCE.** The potential return of Donald Trump to the White House has significant legal and policy ramifications. By applying an international relations lens, constitutional scrutiny, and scenario-based analysis, this article contributes to understanding how domestic political changes in the U.S. can reverberate through international law and global governance. Policymakers, scholars, and legal practitioners should closely monitor the evolving political context, given that major shifts in U.S. foreign policy remain plausible.

## VIII. References

BRANDS, H., "The last Trump? The future of U.S. foreign policy and alliance politics", en *Survival*, vol. 63, núm. 1, 2021.

CHOW, D.C., "United States trade policy toward China under the Trump administration", en *Washington International Law Journal*, vol. 29, núm. 1, 2020.

GOLDGIETER, J. y P.J. Saunders, "America's Russia policy in the Trump era", en *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, núm. 3, 2023.

IRVIN, D.A., "Trump's trade war timeline: an up-to-date guide", working paper, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2023.

KAPLAN, R.D., "The coming anarchy: Ukraine, Russia and the future of world order", Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2022.

WEBBER, D., "European security in the Trump era: the death of multilateralism?", en *European Security*, vol. 30, núm. 2, 2021.

WRIGHT, T., "The point of no return: the 2020 election and the crisis of american foreign policy", en *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 99, núm. 4, 2020.

### Multimedia

EL-GARHY IBRAHIM, "Nest Productions" 2024 [en línea], <[www.youtube.com/@NestProductions](https://www.youtube.com/@NestProductions)>.