

Kevin Roberts, President of the Heritage Foundation and responsible for “Project 2025”, which has served as the policy blueprint for the second Trump administration, argues that we are in the midst of a “second American Revolution” (Astor, 2025) A conservative revolution is an oxymoron, and Edmund Burke would be turning in his grave at the sight of those two words together; yet the truth is that the United States is now governed by a new right willing to break things that until only a few months ago seemed untouchable.

President Trump, who has played a decisive role in creating this new brand of conservatism that now dominates the Republican Party and has brought him to power for a second time, is a charismatic leader, but not necessarily an ideological one. His most deeply held beliefs are America First nationalism, an aversion to trade deficits, and the deportation of irregular immigrants. In other respects, however, he is proving to be more pragmatic than doctrinaire. Nevertheless, Trump seeks to maintain the support of the various ideological factions within the MAGA movement and has recruited many of its members to senior positions in his administration. Others are not in government but wield considerable ideological influence through their media platforms and think tanks. Consequently, it may be useful to begin with an analysis of the ideas of the MAGA world and attempt to understand how they influence current US foreign policy.

All these approaches stem from a shared diagnosis: the United States has fallen into a decline, partly as a national phenomenon and partly as a consequence of what is perceived as the exhaustion of Western civilisation, whose symptoms are shared by Europe and North America. As Curtis Yarvin, an agitator of the new right, graphically states, “this country has lost its place in History” (Rufo and Yarvin, 2023).

At the core of this “second American Revolution” lies a sense of anxiety stemming from profound demographic changes with deep cultural consequences. Hence, the populist nationalism that prevails in today's conservatism carries an undeniable racial connotation. Indeed, in 1970, non-Hispanic whites accounted for 83% of the population, a figure that today stands at around 53%. This dwindling white majority is set to become a minority by the 2040s, according to demographic projections. Professor Samuel P. Huntington, in his work *Who Are We?* (Huntington, 2004), which addresses the crisis of American identity, argues that this shift in the racial balance, to

the detriment of whites, creates the perception of a loss of the centrality of Anglo-Protestant culture, since these three elements were present from the very beginning in the nation's origins. As Huntington notes, contrary to popular belief, the United States is not a country of immigrants, but of settlers. Later immigrants encounter a society created by settlers to which they must adapt. This argument has been used by a figure of the new right such as Charlie Kirk in some of his university engagements before his tragic death in 2025 (Kirk, 2024). Huntington was a liberal Harvard professor who died in 2008, yet it seems clear that contemporary activists of white nationalism have read his works.

The idea among populist nationalists is therefore that, for the United States to remain the United States, it must remain white. The nation's decline is essentially attributed to the erosion of the foundations of national identity. The cause of these changes in the racial balance, which in turn bring about a transformation of the country's cultural identity, is seen as mass immigration encouraged by liberal elites who have lost their sense of patriotism. However, the new right has a long list of grievances against progressives that go beyond the aforementioned dissolution of national identity: the end of a merit-based system through minority quotas; the weakening of the traditional family through policies promoting LGBTI rights and *queer* theory, which have in turn influenced declining birth rates; the forced secularisation of society to the detriment of Christianity; the embrace of globalisation associated with offshoring, leading to the loss of millions of industrial jobs; and the launching of endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that yielded no benefit for the country while costing many lives and a trillion-dollar drain on the treasury.

The conservative revolution now underway aims to reverse these negative trends and galvanise the country's best energies to overcome this decline and revitalise society, culture and the economy by promoting the greatness of the United States.

However, the coalition of forces that secured Trump's victory first in 2016 and then in 2024 is not homogeneous nor does it always agree on its objectives. Silicon Valley tycoons (popularly known as "*tech oligarchs*") disagree with the restrictive visa policies advocated by populists, as these prevents them from accessing the world's best talent. In turn, national populists such as Steve Bannon advocate a gradual and prudent policy on the development of artificial intelligence (AI) to avert the danger of massive job losses

among the middle class. Silicon Valley, by contrast, is committed to massive investment in AI to secure an advantage for American companies in competition both amongst themselves and with those in China.

In foreign policy too, there are numerous contradictions among the various ideological factions that make up the MAGA movement, which will be examined in these pages. Trump's leadership has so far managed to find compromises acceptable to both sides and, ultimately, has succeeded in imposing its own judgement even against powerful figures within the movement. The National Security Strategy 2025, published on 5 December, aims to bring together in a single doctrine the different emphases of the MAGA ideological currents, be they nationalist, populist, Christian or *tech oligarchic*. However, President Trump's nationalism, summed up in the slogan *America First*, is ever-present in the document and sets the central tone. Based on this principle, Trump's style is centred on achieving objectives without being bound by any prior criteria and without hesitation in changing his approach from one day to the next. It is not, therefore, a leadership style based on strategic vision. For this reason, this document is of particular interest in attempting to identify a degree of coherence in the foreign and security policy of Trump's second term.

It is important to stress that this is the Strategy of the second term, as the differences with the equivalent document from the first term are very significant. The National Security Strategy 2017 was coordinated by the then National Security Advisor, H. R. McMaster, with an approach inspired by the realist school of international relations. Its principal novelty was to declare the return of great power competition as the central organising principle of geopolitics. China and Russia were both revisionist powers seeking to reshape the international order in line with their interests, with China emerging as the principal strategic competitor of the United States (Sanger, 2025).

By contrast, the 2025 Strategy seeks to mark the end of the liberal order promoted by previous Administrations and to design a policy that serves as the external projection of the revolution of the new right represented by MAGA and by Trump himself (The White House, 2025). Its guiding principles are therefore as follows:

- The defence and promotion of the national interest as the sole guiding principle for US action. Moreover, the national interest is defined restrictively, focusing on

- priorities and avoiding the expansive approach (which had led previous administrations to overextend themselves globally).
- Other countries are encouraged likewise to pursue their national interests. It is understood that when these come into conflict with those of the United States, the latter will prevail on the basis of superior power. To that end, the United States must unhesitatingly utilise those elements of its power (economic, technological, security) that provide the necessary leverage to resolve any negotiation in its favour. It must also avoid dependencies on value chains that could create vulnerabilities to an adversary (Fishman, 2025).
 - Although the world in which this Strategy operates is governed by the law of the strongest, the aim is to avoid at all costs endless conflicts such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq. The document's watchword is peace through strength. When force is used, as in the joint operation with Israel against Iran's nuclear facilities or in the capture of Nicolás Maduro in Caracas, Washington ensures that the conflict remains limited and does not escalate or drag on.
 - Sovereignty is a fundamental principle and, therefore, multilateralism cannot under any circumstances take precedence over it. Throughout the document there is explicit hostility towards transnational organisations and, in particular, towards the European Union, as will be seen later.
 - It rules out the use of influence to impose democracy on countries with systems different from that of the United States, thus deviating from a long-standing line in US foreign policy, which reached its climax with the neoconservative policy in the Greater Middle East. However, there is room for pressure on like-minded countries (Europe, the Anglosphere and other democratic nations) to uphold fundamental rights and freedoms as currently interpreted in Washington (that is, so as not to curtail the political space of the rising new right).
 - Alliances are regarded as an international asset of the United States, but there must be an equitable sharing of the burden. Allies must assume primary responsibility for their regions, must spend more on defence, and must compensate the United States for decades of trade surpluses by investing there. In fact, two of these three conditions have already been agreed with the allies. At

the 2025 NATO summit in The Hague, it was decided to increase defence spending to 5% (3.5% on military expenditure and 1.5% on security infrastructure). As for massive investments in the United States, these were included in the trade agreements signed in 2025 with the EU, Japan and South Korea, amongst others. It remains to be seen how the allies' primary responsibility for the security of their regions will be implemented. The National Defence Strategy and the National Posture Review, which the Pentagon traditionally publishes following the National Security Strategy, will provide the key insights on this point, including the redeployment of US military units.

- Mass immigration is no longer merely a social or political problem but has risen to the status of a major national security challenge. Hence, border control and the strict enforcement of immigration laws are no longer simply a matter of public order but the primary political concern. In this regard, Latin America's rise to the top of the Strategy's priorities can be interpreted as an expansion of the United States' security perimeter to address, with these countries (with or without their cooperation), internal issues such as immigration and drug trafficking (Landgraf, 2025).
- The Strategy also includes as priorities certain economic objectives to be pursued "in the interests of the American worker", in a nod to the more populist sectors of MAGA, such as those represented by Steve Bannon, as opposed to the "plutocrats" of Silicon Valley who, in Bannon's words, are only interested in money and are not patriots. There is another reference that will have pleased this sector, when it states that the search for "global talent" cannot be at the expense of American workers (Douthat, 2025).
- In any case, the economic priorities are as follows:
 - The reindustrialisation of the country, a *leitmotif* of Trump and MAGA, who blamed globalist liberals for the loss of industrial jobs due to offshoring. In this case, an additional security concern is added: avoiding US dependence on current or potential adversaries with regard to critical products.
 - Economic security, which includes both the promotion of balanced and fair trade and ensuring access to supply chains for critical materials by "confronting

predatory practices". This reference is directed at China (without explicitly naming it) and recurs throughout the Strategy. This emphasis stems from the trauma suffered by the Administration and by the President himself, due to the restrictions imposed by China on the United States (and also on Europe) regarding the export of rare earths and the magnets produced from them, which are essential for the manufacture of electric cars and other high-tech equipment, including missiles. This strong-arm tactic was taken by Beijing in retaliation for the 140% increase in US tariffs on Chinese goods in February 2025. Finally, in October of that same year, both sides reached a provisional agreement whereby the United States cut tariffs and China eased restrictions on the export of rare earths. This episode was generally interpreted as a Chinese victory (Doshi, 2025) and hence the obsession with which the Strategy addresses this issue, as an episode that must not be repeated in the future.

- Revitalising the defence industrial base. One of the lessons of the war in Ukraine has been the speed at which stocks of missiles and ammunition were depleted, and the difficulties faced by the United States and Europe in replenishing them due to a lack of industrial capacity. The AUKUS agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia – to supply the latter with nuclear submarines – also set alarm bells ringing, due to the inability of US shipyards to build their own submarine programme on schedule and, furthermore, to deliver those promised to Australia.
- Restoring dominance in the energy sector. This point is a true MAGA statement of principles, as it includes only oil, gas, coal and nuclear energy and makes no mention of renewables. It also rejects the ideology of “climate change” and “zero emissions”. This position is based on ideological principles dear to Trump, but some analysts, such as Simon Nixon, add that the United States had fallen behind in the technological race with China in renewable energy, and rather than attempting to regain the lost advantage, Trump has preferred to focus on traditional energy sources, which the country has in abundance and at low prices. This provides a productivity advantage, allows for increased production for the data centres required for AI, and enables

exports to friendly nations, preventing them from becoming dependent on others (Nixon, 2025).

- Preserving and enhancing dominance in the financial sector by maintaining the role of the dollar as the world's reserve currency. At their 2023 summit in South Africa, the BRICS countries expressed their intention to reduce dependence on the dollar, which is used in 80% of global trade transactions. To this end, they proposed creating a new currency to minimise the risks of their exposure to the US dollar. Trump then threatened (although he had not yet been elected president) to impose punitive tariffs should this initiative go ahead. However, no progress has been made in this area since then.

Having set out its objectives and principles, the Strategy examines different regions in order of priority according to United States vital interests:

- 1 The Western Hemisphere. It may come as a surprise that the United States' immediate neighbourhood is receiving strategic attention it has not had for over a century. One reason for this focus is that, for this Administration, vital interests are those of a domestic nature (an end to mass immigration and drug trafficking) and those which, therefore, primarily affect citizens. The Americas are treated here as an extension of the nation, with the aim of tackling the problems afflicting the country, but which have their origins partly in the southern neighbourhood. One example that received significant media attention at the start of Trump's term was based on his good relationship with the Salvadoran president, Nayib Bukele, and enabled the deportation to high-security prisons in El Salvador of a number of drug traffickers and gang members residing in the United States. Equally swift have been US attacks on drug traffickers' boats coming from Venezuela. But the prime example of this new hemispheric policy has been the military operation to capture Nicolás Maduro and his wife and transfer them to New York to stand trial for drug trafficking. Given the opposition of the MAGA grassroots to repeating the mistakes of the "endless wars", this operation was based on three premises: that there would be no US casualties; that there would be no cost to the US Treasury (hence the insistence on oil revenues); and that there would be no intention of engaging in a democratic reconstruction effort, such as those that had failed in Iraq and Afghanistan. These objectives have been met to date, albeit at the cost of creating

no small number of contradictions due to the regime's leaders remaining in charge of the government. The militarisation of US policy in the region is also intended to have an intimidating effect on those countries whose policies run counter to Washington's interests. But the aim of controlling Venezuela and its oil by decapitating the regime also has a geopolitical purpose: to begin curbing China's growing presence and influence in the region. Venezuela, with a debt to China of sixty billion dollars, backed by oil, is a good place for the US administration to start. Although there may be others on the list, such as Cuba itself – the home country of Secretary of State Marco Rubio, whose hand many analysts have detected in the drafting of this chapter of the document.

In reality, beyond the domestic reasons for making the Western Hemisphere the main priority of this Strategy, the exclusion of China from what is considered the United States' backyard constitutes a strategic objective. "The United States must be pre-eminent in the Hemisphere," the document states explicitly, dubbing this policy "Trump's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine". On this occasion, the aim is not to expel the Europeans, as in the 19th century, but China (without naming it). The purpose is to prevent these "extra-hemispheric competitors" from positioning military forces on the subcontinent or acquiring critical infrastructure and strategic assets.

To this end, the Strategy proposes to engage regional champions, both in terms of like-minded countries such as Argentina—to which Washington granted a \$20 billion swap loan in 2025— and among less closely aligned states with which shared interests nonetheless exist (as in the case of Mexico and Brazil). The objective, in addition to preventing China from increasing its influence in the region, is to jointly develop strategic resources (such as critical minerals) with which Latin America is richly endowed.

This will not be an easy task for Washington. It is true that some countries in the region, such as Brazil and Mexico, resent China imposing a trade relationship on them in which the import of raw materials and agri-food products and the export of manufactured goods prevail, thereby delaying their industrialisation plans. However, most states on the subcontinent have opted for a strategy of trade and investment diversification that involves having China and Europe as partners, in

order not to depend exclusively on the United States. In this regard, it does not seem feasible to convince Peru to abandon the Chancay mega-port, built and operated by the Chinese company COSCO, which is a strategic project for the country. Nor will it be easy to persuade Chile to abandon the alliance between the Chilean state-owned company Codelco and the Chinese firm SQM to mine and export lithium from the Salar de Atacama, given that China accounts for 70% of Chilean lithium exports. These are just two examples illustrating the difficulties facing this new US policy. A different matter is a country like Panama, whose canal remained under US sovereignty until the Torrijos-Carter Treaty. In this case, pressure from Washington has relatively easily succeeded in persuading the Hong Kong-based company CK Hutchison to agree to sell all the canal's port facilities to a consortium led by Blackrock.

- 2 Asia is the second priority region for the United States, although it has already become clear that concern over China's growing penetration in Latin America and the aim of resisting it is one of the fundamental reasons why the Western Hemisphere has become the top priority.

The chapter begins by describing the region's economic importance (50% of global GDP in purchasing power parity terms) and China's rise to a position almost on a par with the United States. The tariffs imposed by Trump in 2017 (and subsequently maintained by the Biden administration) led to a diversification of Chinese trade towards emerging markets, from some of which China continued to export to the United States. Even so, Chinese exports to the United States fell from 4% of its GDP when Trump began his first term to the current 2%. The US objective is for economic relations with China to be governed by reciprocity and fairness, with mutually balanced trade focused on non-sensitive sectors. This last sentence points to the disconnect between the two economies in cutting-edge technologies. The truth is that China, with its dual-circulation economy, also aims to achieve maximum technological autonomy and not to depend on the United States in critical sectors where vulnerabilities could arise.

To protect its economy, the United States intends to put an end to predatory practices, state subsidies and industrial strategies (it does not explicitly state whose, but given the context it can only refer to China); the theft of intellectual

property; preventing US access to critical materials and minerals (once again, resentment is evident at the realisation of existing dependence on China in this field); and the export of fentanyl precursors causing the opioid crisis in the United States.

To this end, the United States must work together with its allies and partners to prevent these economic practices. In this context, reference is made to trade relations with India and its contribution to security in the Indo-Pacific, including through the Quad (the United States, Japan, Australia and India).

The United States expects these coalitions of countries — to which others are added on a case-by-case basis, such as Canada, Mexico, Europe, and Korea — also to serve in persuading China that it must focus its energies on its domestic market, since neither Southeast Asia, nor Latin America, nor the Middle East will be able to absorb the excess capacity that China is currently exporting. The wealthier allies, including Europe, Japan and Korea, are expected to contribute funding to build physical and digital infrastructure in the countries of the Global South. Without naming it, the Strategy is referring to the “Chinese New Silk Road” and the need not to leave the field open to China and to compete with it in third countries. Specifically, the United States is inviting its European and Asian allies to strengthen their common positions in Latin America and Africa (in this case, with regard to critical minerals).

Once again, without explicitly mentioning China, but in the context of competition between the two superpowers, the Strategy emphasises the need to redouble efforts in research and development to maintain and expand the US lead in military and dual-use technologies, as well as in those that will determine future military power, such as AI, quantum computing and autonomous systems. In the long term, the document states, “maintaining economic and technological pre-eminence is the best way to prevent a large-scale conflict”.

In this context, the Strategy refers to the attention given to Taiwan, not only because of its semiconductor capacity but also because it provides access to the second island chain (Guam, Yap, Palau). Hence, deterring a conflict over Taiwan

is a priority. At the same time, the traditional declaratory line on maintaining the *status quo* for the island is upheld.

These brief statements will undoubtedly have had a reassuring effect not only in Taiwan itself, but also on like-minded countries in the region such as Japan, South Korea and Australia. Despite being a strategy for a revolutionary policy, there has been no change in position regarding Taiwan. This is notable given that, since Trump's inauguration, a number of gestures had appeared to suggest that the United States might abandon Taiwan as part of a major trade agreement with China. Indeed, a few months ago, during his Senate confirmation, Elbridge Colby, the Pentagon's number three and now responsible for drafting the National Defence Strategy (which traditionally follows the National Security Strategy), stated that Taiwan was not an existential interest for the United States (Moriyasu, 2025). It was also significant that Washington did not authorise a stopover in New York for Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te in the summer of 2025. And by November 2025, a crisis had erupted between Beijing and Tokyo when the new Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, stated that an attack on Taiwan would be regarded as an existential threat, allowing Japan to deploy its Self-Defence Forces to support the island. In addition to warnings issued by a Chinese official threatening to "cut the Prime Minister's throat", Beijing implemented various retaliatory measures, including a boycott of Chinese tourism to Japan. According to leaks, during the conversation between Takaichi and Trump, the latter reportedly advised her to exercise caution, causing considerable frustration within the Japanese government over Washington's failure to provide a firmer response to its ally. Added to this is the report published by the *think tank* Defense Priorities, authored by two experts very close to the current administration (Kavanagh and Caldwell, 2025), who argue that the United States should renounce defending Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack, and ensure that Japan and the Philippines remain outside China's sphere of influence.

All these signs appeared to confirm the supposed vision of Trump of an international order based on a concert of strongmen — Putin, Xi Jinping, and himself — leading powers endowed with exclusive spheres of influence (Goddard, 2025).

These concerns have not been reflected in the text. On the contrary, in addition to the mention of Taiwan, it is stated that the United States will have the necessary military capability to prevent an attack on the first island chain (Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines), although allies in the region are required to spend more on defence and make a greater effort to assume their responsibility for regional security.

The document also mentions the objective of maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, through which some of the world's most important trade routes pass.

Critics of the Strategy, such as New York Times columnist David Sanger, have pointed out that, unlike the 2017 Strategy issued during Trump's first term, this document focuses more on economic competition with China, sidelining strategic issues such as China's nuclear expansion in recent years and the repeated cyberattacks on government agencies and businesses. Nor is North Korea mentioned even once, as if the ballistic and nuclear threat posed by that country had vanished.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has explained that the US approach to China is aimed not at dominance, but at a balance of power. To this end, the United States wants China to take note of US military strength and to respect American interests in the Indo-Pacific, whilst avoiding unnecessary confrontations. In return, the United States respects the rearmament on a historic scale that China is undertaking (Chávez, 2025).

In short, this Strategy does not fundamentally alter the security policy pursued towards China in recent years. It could be said that the main objectives regarding its major competitor are economic and that Trump has sought to avoid hostile language towards Beijing as he has a visit to China scheduled for April, during which he hopes to secure a major trade deal.

- 3 Europe. The Strategy addresses three major issues in relations with Europe, but the first has attracted the most public attention because it describes a cultural factor that had never before been present in previous documents devoted to national security: the decline of European civilisation. This decline is attributed to

a combination of mutually reinforcing causes: birth rates in freefall accompanied by the accelerated ageing of the population; a loss of identity caused by mass immigration of a cultural profile not always compatible with free and open societies; and European Union activities that stifle growth through excessive regulation and erode political freedom and sovereignty. The result is a loss of confidence in Europe itself and a weakness which, within twenty years, could mean that many of the continent's countries no longer have European majorities and, therefore, no longer be reliable allies within NATO, presumably because their values will no longer be predominantly Western but will be tinged with various shades of Islamism which, in their most extreme forms, border on jihadist terrorism.

The Strategy thus implicitly incorporates the notion of *civilisational security*. Its origins lie in Vice-President J. D. Vance's speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2025, in which he stated that the main threat to Europe stemmed from internal factors, such as the erosion of democratic norms through censorship and the suppression of dissent. The Strategy elaborates in greater depth on this assessment of a Europe in decline that poses a danger to the United States. These ideas stem largely from Christian authors, who do not necessarily subscribe to the New Right's agenda, but who have had and continue to have considerable influence in conservative academic and intellectual circles. The best known is George Weigel, who in his book *The Cube and the Cathedral* (Weigel, 2005) addressed this issue and asked why it should matter to the United States that Europe had fallen into a trajectory he perceives as self-destructive. His fundamental thesis is that "a United States indifferent to the fate of Europe is a United States indifferent to its own roots". In other words, the United States must not make the same mistake as Europe by succumbing to historical amnesia regarding its origins as a civilisation, starting with Christianity. But Weigel also mentions the threat posed to the United States by the consequences of a demographic vacuum that will be filled by a radicalised Islam convinced that its revenge against European civilisation is imminent. Weigel frequently quotes in his work the Jewish professor Joseph Weiler, who was highly critical of the European Union's attempt, in its *still-unborn* draft Constitution, to base European identity exclusively on the Enlightenment, whilst overlooking what he considered to be the

indispensable contribution of Christianity to the creation of Western civilisation. Joseph Ratzinger, too, both before and after becoming Pope Benedict XVI, had devoted considerable attention to this issue of European decline, particularly its demographic aspects, which he associates with a lack of will for the future. Ratzinger said that “it is necessary to draw a comparison with the Roman Empire in decline: it continued to function as a grandiose historical framework, but in fact they were living off those who were going to dissolve it, because it had run out of vital energy” (Starcevic, 2025). In short, as Weigel put it, “the European problem is also ours”. Whether out of fear that the United States might follow the same path as Europe, or out of the realisation that the weakness of the European wing of Western civilisation would ultimately undermine its American wing as well. (Sendagorta, 2007).

It is true that this contribution of so-called Christian nationalism within MAGA, very much present in some of its leading figures, such as Vice-President Vance himself, Charlie Kirk, Jonathan Keiperman and Steve Bannon, has been criticised in part by the current Pope Leo XVII, who expressed his unease at the division the current administration was creating between Europe and the United States.

In conclusion, the document calls for “cultivating resistance” to these negative trends and, in this regard, views with optimism the growing influence of patriotic parties that could promote a revitalisation of the true European spirit.

The United States is therefore committed to a Europe of nations as opposed to a European Union which is criticised for stifling economic regulation and a migration policy that contributes to the dissolution of national identities and weakens political freedoms and sovereignty.

Trump's hostility towards the EU has always been evident, and he has at times remarked that the organisation was created “to harm” the United States. But now this personal animosity has been enshrined in a full-fledged doctrine, the implementation of which will become apparent in the coming months and years. In fact, the publication of the Strategy has coincided with the European Commission imposing a fine of €142 million on X (formerly Twitter) for issues relating to a lack of transparency. Elon Musk's reaction was swift, and he created a hashtag called

#AbolishtheEU. Vice-President Vance and Secretary of State Rubio immediately backed Musk with harsh criticism of the EU.

It is true that the document expresses support for a Europe that is “strategically and culturally vital to the United States”, but it does not refer to a united Europe, but rather to the nations that compose it. However, with this argument favouring the nationalist parties of the new right, contradictions immediately come to the fore. Indeed, these parties may identify with this document in its diagnosis of decline, in the need to end mass immigration and to combat *wokeness*, which, in their view, has hijacked European institutions. However, the MAGA slogan is *America First* and nationalist parties in Europe advocate *Germany First*, *France First* and so on. The national interests of European states are bound to clash with those of the Americans on more than a few issues and, therefore, in this sphere outside cultural disputes, the affinities between nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic come to an end. This has been evident in Le Pen's criticism of the US operation in Venezuela for undermining the principle of national sovereignty. And the same would hold true if Trump were to achieve his aim of taking over Greenland.

In any case, the vision of Europe adopted by this Strategy has a clear mirror effect: “a projection across the Atlantic of US domestic politics, with its culture wars and clash of identities, a family affair” (Areilza, 2025)

Furthermore, the section devoted to the war in Ukraine begins by reiterating that Europe's loss of self-confidence is the reason why European governments feel weak in the face of Russia and, consequently, regard it as an existential threat. Hence, they are unable to support the inevitable concessions that Kyiv will have to make to end the conflict, despite the fact that the desire for peace is widespread among European populations.

For this reason, negotiating a swift end to hostilities is a key interest for the United States, the Strategy states, in order to avoid escalation, restore strategic stability with Russia and enable the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Some commentators criticise this approach, in which Russia is not condemned for its aggression and, furthermore, the United States presents itself as a neutral negotiator between Russia and Europe. In fact, the text is less biased towards

Russia than the positions held by this Administration since the beginning of its term. The tense meeting between Trump and Zelensky at the White House in February 2025 marked a crisis point in the bilateral and personal relationship, as Trump's approach—that the weaker party was the one that had to make the necessary concessions, “because their cards are bad”—was laid bare in all its harshness. In contrast, the Trump-Putin summit held in Alaska a few months later highlighted the closeness between the two presidents and the American understanding of Russian positions.

Beyond this mediating stance, cultural affinities between MAGA and Russia have been present since before Trump's first term and have undoubtedly influenced Republican perceptions of the Russia–Ukraine war, further widening the gap between Europe and the United States. Indeed, for the MAGA world, starting with its media leaders such as Tucker Carlson and Steve Bannon, Putin's Russia—white, Christian, with traditional values and based on the authority of a strong leader—was more compatible with their own views than a weak and “woke” Europe (Hayward, 2025).

In addition to these cultural factors, Trump is convinced that Russia, with its vast energy and mineral resources, would be a more attractive economic partner than Ukraine. He has not denied — indeed, he has suggested — that his relationship with Russia also has strategic dimensions linked to the American interest in distancing Russia as much as possible from China, even though the partnership between those two powers is currently closer than ever.

It is noteworthy that the Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, publicly praised the Strategy, stating that “its approaches correspond in many ways to Russia's vision” (Faulconbridge and Kelly, 2025).

To conclude this section, it is worth highlighting the contradiction that this Strategy criticises Europe for its weakness whilst at the same time seeking to contribute to it by undermining the process of European integration. Indeed, the United States wishes to secure European cooperation in certain sectors related to its rivalry with China, such as the fight against unfair trade practices; cooperation in Latin America and Africa to ensure the supply of critical minerals; and controls on the export of

sensitive dual-use technologies. The EU is active in all these fields, in some cases with its own powers and in others with the capacity to coordinate the actions of member states. In this regard, it can be concluded that ideological considerations have prevailed in this document over the defence of shared interests between Europe and the United States.

4 The Middle East

In contrast to the highly ideological section on Europe, the Middle East section is clearly pragmatic. Indeed, it seeks to distinguish itself from the neo-conservatives' ambition within the Bush administration to impose democracy and nation-building by force of arms. However, when it comes to defining national interests in the region, it reflects a fundamental shift: the United States no longer depends on oil and gas from the Gulf, as it now has substantial domestic production of its own. Its current economic interest is therefore focused on promoting technological investment in partnership with countries possessing capital derived from hydrocarbons.

As for the conflicts that have periodically destabilised the region, the document praises the agreement reached by Trump to end the war between Israel and Hamas and the military operation launched against Iran in collaboration with Israel to weaken its nuclear programme as much as possible. Overall, an optimistic view of the region is evident, in which these diplomatic and military successes, combined with collaboration with Israel and Arab partners to eventually expand the scope of the Abraham Accords, can lead to progress towards greater stability. In this context, the Strategy mentions, for the first time, the fight against terrorism and Islamist radicalisation, in cooperation with local countries, but without the sense of urgency that this issue has had in the recent past as a national security priority.

However, this essentially pragmatic approach to the Middle East must not obscure the ideologically charged undercurrent that is stirring the waters of the MAGA world and threatening to create deep divisions within the movement. This concerns the highly contentious debate surrounding relations with Israel. During the Gaza war, it began to become apparent from opinion polls that those opposed to Israel were not only Democrats, but also young Republicans. In fact, the rift within this party is

generational, with the dividing line falling around the age of forty: below this age, there are predominantly anti-Israel positions, whilst above it, the opposite is true.

However, the debate heated up when Tucker Carlson interviewed the ultra-conservative activist Nick Fuentes, whom his critics accuse of being pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic (Carlson, 2025). During the conversation, Fuentes said he was guided by the *America First* principle, which did not seem compatible with *Israel First*. When Carlson began to examine on his television programme the purposes to which the substantial American aid to Israel was being put — amounting to \$3.8 billion annually, excluding specific military assistance for the war — the responses he received were that it was not advisable to open a front against Israel when its security was under threat. An influential YouTuber of the new right, Ben Shapiro, even threatened to destroy him politically if he continued down that path. Fuentes told Carlson (who did not refute his arguments, but seemed to identify with them) that he had read Walt and Mearsheimer's classic book on the pro-Israel lobby and that it had opened his eyes to its power to steer Washington in directions that suited Israel, but not necessarily the United States (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007). In fact, in the days leading up to the air strike on Iran's nuclear facilities by Israel and the United States, Tucker Carlson, Steve Bannon and other MAGA leaders spoke out against an operation that could once again embroil the United States in one of those “*never-ending wars*” they so detested—this time on behalf of Israel's particular interests.

This debate subsided due to the lack of escalation with Iran, but discussions about the divergence of interests between the United States and Israel in foreign policy became intertwined on social media with conspiracy theories targeting Israel over the murder of Charlie Kirk and the Epstein case. These divisions within the conservative camp regarding Israel, with young people taking a stand against it, undoubtedly signal a loss of political support for Israel in Washington, which could influence US policy in the Middle East in the medium term.

The following provisional conclusions can be drawn:

1. The coalition supporting Trump is not united, and contradictions are beginning to emerge between the various groups. In both the National Security Strategy and

in practice, the so-called technocratic oligarchs prevail, allied with Trump in his aim of making superiority in artificial intelligence the principal asset of the United States in maintaining its economic and military pre-eminence over China in the coming years and decades. The more populist factions succeed primarily in imposing restrictions on immigration.

2. Nationalism is the adhesive that binds the movement together and explains most positions in foreign and economic policy. However, its stark pursuit of national economic interest, to the exclusion of others, erodes trust with allies and partners and hinders the cooperation that the United States seeks to organise against China's unfair trade practices and its use of rare earths as a geoeconomic weapon.

3. The priority granted to the Western Hemisphere is in reality an extension of the United States' security perimeter to encompass all countries in the region, in order to address more effectively issues such as immigration and drug trafficking — matters of domestic concern that are of greater importance to the MAGA base than foreign policy issues.

4. Despite the tendency to turn domestic priorities into foreign policy, China appears to be the United States' main concern. In the Strategy, the aim is to mark out territory, literally in the case of Latin America and, above all, with regard to its economic model, which it is intended to modify through positive and negative incentives. In any case, it is clear that Trump wishes to leave room for a major economic deal with China and has not wanted the Strategy to be excessively aggressive towards his rival.

5. Europe emerges as the principal casualty of Trump's foreign policy and, consequently, of the Strategy. MAGA — particularly its nationalist and Christian components — sees itself as a movement of national revitalisation aimed at overcoming a decline attributed to cultural factors and loss of identity. MAGA is not concerned with NATO or Russian aggression, but rather with the rebirth of Western civilisation and, consequently, of Europe. Its re-Christianisation, the restoration of the vigour of sovereign nations, and preventing immigration from creating a Muslim future for Europe are the priorities of the new American conservatives and their European counterparts.

6. The consideration of the Western Hemisphere as the Strategy's main priority, and the corroboration of this principle in the military operation in Venezuela and in Trump's intention to incorporate Greenland into US territory, have influenced analyses that attribute to Washington a vision of a world divided into exclusive spheres of influence corresponding to the three major powers. However, the only thing the Strategy and its practical applications in Venezuela and Greenland demonstrate is that this Administration regards the Western Hemisphere as its exclusive sphere. There is currently no recognition of a similar sphere for China that includes Taiwan. There is greater ambiguity regarding the possibility of recognising an exclusive zone for Russia with respect to Ukraine, an issue left to the balance of power on the ground.

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