

National Security & Defense

Outlook for the 119th Congress & the Trump Administration

Key Takeaways

- The Trump administration will adopt an “America First” defense and national security posture that aligns with President Trump’s previous term, likely building on or reimplementing many of his previous policies, including on immigration.
- President Trump will commit to a preserving peace through strength philosophy, in which the United States militaristic assets remain unrivaled.
- Strengthening strategic military and diplomatic capabilities will remain front and center for President Trump, and in particular, to deter foreign malign actors.

Additional Insights

- Increasing military spending in pursuit of fully modernizing the Defense Industrial Base.
 - President Trump will boost defense spending with a strategic emphasis on modernizing the military’s technological assets, particularly in artificial intelligence, domestic missile defense, space technologies and cybersecurity—areas where the President has already made significant progress in his first term—as a means of countering intensifying competition and military aggression from our adversaries.
- Expanding support and fostering peace in the Middle East.
 - President Trump will stand with Israel by continuing to provide militaristic support while seeking to leverage and expand the historic Abraham Accords to normalize relations, a bilateral agreement signed during his first term to foster security and stability in the Middle East.
- Reimplementing President Trump’s first-term immigration policies.
 - President Trump will maintain his tough on immigration stance, and likely seek to re-implement many executive actions enacted during his first term that ushered in sweeping changes to curtail the flow of asylum seekers from the southern border, with a focus on deportations, tighter security measures and resuming border wall construction.
- Maintaining skepticism toward the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and seeking resolution in Europe’s eastern flank.
 - While President Trump is unlikely to sever all ties with the 75-year treaty, he will likely pressure NATO allies to increase their own defense spending in order to reduce the United States’ outsized role. Among the first

steps for assessing President Trump's ambitions for NATO may hinge on his pursuit of a swift resolution to end the Ukraine-Russia war, which he is vowing to prioritize. Absent a swift resolution, however, President Trump will likely face pressure to continue providing militaristic support.

- Strengthening strategic alliances to combat competing security risks.
 - In general, President Trump will prioritize strengthening strategic alliances based on cooperation and reciprocity in the Indo-Pacific and Europe, likely maintaining the Biden-Harris administration's existing defensive coalitions, which are viewed as a bulwark against China and other malign actors.

Contributors: [Jon Poling](#), [Ryan Thompson](#), [Christina Barone](#)