



## A Comparative Study on the Obama and Trump Administrations' Foreign Policy Approaches

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### Abstract:

The present article is written using a descriptive-analytical method, the data having been compiled using library resources, and it tries to explain the foreign policy of the Obama and Trump administrations. This study seeks to answer the question that how the Obama and Trump administrations' foreign policy approaches differed. Therefore, it first considers and compares the discourse and orientation of US foreign policy during the presidencies of Obama and Trump, and then goes on to examine the case-by-case policies of each US president towards NATO, terrorism, East Asia, Iran's and North Korea's nuclear program, as well as world trade. Finally, the research findings show that the policies of Obama and Trump are fundamentally different because the announced and applied policies of the Obama administration have emphasized a multilateralist approach and the issue of security, while the Trump administration has adopted a unilateral approach with the slogan "America First" and has put an emphasis on the economy in its foreign policy agenda.

**Keywords:** Structure of international system, Identity, Islamic Republic of Iran, EU, Conflict

### Introduction

During Barack Obama's presidency in the United States, the US National Security Strategy was codified twice in 2010 and 2015. The 2010 National Security Document addresses issues such as violent extremism (terrorism), nuclear proliferation, Arab-Israeli peace, climate change, economic growth and environmental threats, as well as threats to nuclear independence, and the 2015 National Security Document addresses issues such as

the continuation of US leadership, support for allies, the expansion of democracy and human rights, the expansion of free trade, cyber security and human security, the Iranian nuclear issue, the need to pay attention to Asia-Pacific and environmental pollution. Trump's National Security Strategy was also released in 2017, and these documents reflect the policies of the US presidents, which can reflect their strategy in practice, but Trump priori-

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tizes US interests and as he said the country can no longer pay for the security. Trump's strategies include withdrawing from the World Migration Forum, banning travel and applying financial sanctions, and lifting membership in UNESCO, opposing the North Korean's as well as Iran's nuclear issue. The present article has been compiled in a descriptive and analytical manner using library sources to examine the differences between the Obama and Trump administration's foreign policy approaches. To examine the policies of each US president, the article hypothesizes that the declared policy of the two US presidents has led to a different approach to NATO, terrorism, East Asia, Iran's and North Korea's nuclear program, as well as world trade.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Discourse in the field of foreign policy is interpreted as the system and semantic structure governing foreign policy that makes possible a particular way of acting and behaving. With such a view, discourse theory in the manifestation of foreign policy seeks to show how different phenomena become meaningful in foreign policy and how these concepts are built on and evolved. In this context, the elements and realities of countries' foreign policies such as national interests, threats, national identity and national security are not objective and preconceived realities, but are evolved socially and in semantic networks, so that language and discourse structures play a decisive role in the process of their meaning finding. Therefore, discourse is a framework and context in which the foreign policy of a country finds meaning (Jafari and Janbaz, 2016, p. 97).

In the discourse perspective, the change of foreign policy influenced by ideas is accompanied by the change of the rules and regula-

tions of the discourse, and consequently we will see the change of the object in the discourse. Discourses that define objects are based on representations and symbols that themselves change the equation of power and affect the "declarative" and "perceptual" nature of countries' political positions. In other words, the formation of discourses into the world of ideation changes the object and leads to the emergence of a new identity that can cause the reconstruction of the power equation and define the relationship with these actors. As a result, it can be said that the discourses are reflected in the identities and constant actions of the actors, and considering such an assumption, it is possible to consider the processes and patterns of foreign policy behaviors of the actors.

Contrary to its similarities to Foucault's theory, Laclau and Mouffe's view of explaining discourses is more limited, but the common denominator of both is the belief in the influence of representations and symbols on power equations. According to the issues considered, the foreign policy of countries in the regional and international environment is a reflection of a new equation of power that has been able to impose its existence on others (Mahmoudkhani and Keshishyan, 2016, p. 12)

### **Examining the discourse of the Obama and Trump administrations**

Barack Obama was elected president in 2008 with the slogan of change. Obama promised to approach issues with a new, rational approach. He spoke of the future tenets of his administration, including rebuilding alliances, countering common threats to cooperation with allies, reviving US leadership, and strengthening soft government. Obama and his administration are defined as liberal internationalists whose roots in Wilson's

thinking, including liberal idealism, the expansion of civil and democratic liberties, selective interventionism, and peace, are of particular importance to them (Hosseini Matin, 2012, p. 192). Obama's first national security document was released in 2010 under the title of Change, which can be assessed in response to the challenges posed by the Bush-era hegemonic power to the United States, as well as the restoration of American legitimacy and global confidence (Qarib, 2011, p. 49). In this regard, Obama has tried to show the power of American hegemony with nonviolent and peaceful expressions of power. To rebuild the legitimacy of American power, Obama introduced a multilateralist approach to his new doctrine of national security, the effects of which must be seen in the strategic and organizational areas of NATO. Another issue emphasized in this doctrine is the importance of the economic element and doing away with the challenges it has faced for the US economy, especially since the 2008 crisis. Meanwhile, avoiding excessive focus on military intervention is also highlighted. He sought to reshape the international system and fight global terrorism. Thus by applying his policies, such as preventive warfare through multilateral diplomacy, close cooperation with allies and international organizations, including the United Nations, promised dialogue with countries such as Iran and Syria, he planned for the solution of complex international problems such as the Arab-Israeli conflict. Obama based his program on soft power and at least in his declared positions, he did not want hard power (Mahmoudi & Goodarzi, 2012, p. 442).

With the arrival of Donald Trump in the United States, we have seen a lot of criticism of Obama's policies, which can be seen in his National Security Doctrine, published in 2017. The US National Security Document

for 2017 is theoretically realistic. This document states that this strategy is derived from the concept of realism principled. In this realism, power plays a central role and he believes that independent governments can better build a peaceful world. Thus, power is the central concept of this document and distances itself from liberal ideas based on the participation and giving role to international organizations and institutions. Trump defines international alliances and institutions as being in the national interest of the United States. "Trump is skeptical about the value of multilateral institutions, and unlike previous presidents, he sees a limited range of American national interests" (Jervis, 2017, p. 2).

The 2015 US National Security Strategy was released in February to outline the United States' outlook for the outside world for two years. The text of the 2015 US National Security Strategy states: "The shift in approaches towards Asia and Pacific Ocean has led to deeper relations with a wider range of allies and partners. When the Transatlantic Partnership Agreement is completed, it will create high-quality business and investment opportunities and jobs within the United States and in regions (targets of the agreement) that account for more than 40 percent of global trade. We are at the peak of untying the knot of potential power in our relationships. "The extent of our cooperation with China is unprecedented, although we remain vigilant about China's military modernization and reject any role of intimidation in resolving territorial disputes."

In this document, the Iranian nuclear issue is the most important issue that stands out. An issue, if resolved, would lead to solving many of the United States' concerns in the Middle East. Concerns such as terrorism, extremism, ISIS, ensuring the continued security of America's Arab allies and even beyond,

ensuring Europe's energy security depends on resolving the nuclear conflict between Iran and the United States. The 2015 National Security Strategy document also states that US dependence on foreign energy sources has reached its lowest level in 20 years, and that its only concern is Russia's use of gas for political purposes and disrupting Europe's energy supply.

The Trump National Security Doctrine, published in 2017, states: The new US National Security Strategy is based on greater cooperation with members of the Indian Brix, Japan and Australia, while encrypting old suspicions in the form of official policy. The document also emphasizes the continued unilateral use of US economic diplomacy and the imposition of multilateral sanctions on opposing countries. Dominance of energy power is another key goal of the new US security strategy, which supports the advancement of its economic policies in the world. In a speech, Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. The Democratic administration of the United States joined the agreement in 2015 during the presidency of Barack Obama. Trump expressed dissatisfaction with the agreement, under which the United States voluntarily agreed to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions. Trump claimed that the Paris Climate Agreement poses risks such as: limiting US sovereignty, harming the working class and creating obstacles to the use of all economic and industrial potential (Parsa, 2017, Anna News Agency).

Overall, Trump believes that the main task of foreign policy is the economy, while previous presidents considered security to be the main task. Trump believes that the United States did not provide enough support to its allies, and that the United States should have taken over Iraqi oil after the 2003 war. In

fact, the most important dimension of Trump's doctrine is economic nationalism, which he has always emphasized and proudly refers to as the way to save the United States (Kahl & Brands, 2017, [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)). Trump has always insisted on a set of unconventional ideas that could reduce America's role in the world. He also believes in unilateral action by the United States for getting profits. He has always emphasized the reduction of US commitments during his campaign, including alliances such as NATO and security system's cooperation with Japan and South Korea (Fisher, 2016, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

More than any other US president, Trump seeks to reduce spending abroad by bringing together allies of the United States. All in all, Obama and Trump, as presidents of the United States from 2008 to 2020, have had many differences in their views, and these differences can be seen in their policies. While Obama has emphasized security and multilateralism with the cooperation of EU countries, Trump has made economics a more important priority than security, and unilateralism with an emphasis on the national interests of the United States in the field, which indicates that it is a sign of its lack of commitment to international and regional treaties.

## Comparing Obama and Trump policies

### 1. NATO Alliance

The election of Barack Obama as President of the United States is an important historical event. His election showed the world that a minority could be the free president-elect of the United States. Saying this is the only progress that has been made by this country (Canto & Wiese, 2018, p. 355). Cooperation with institutions such as NATO and the UN Security Council was a top US priority, according to the 2010 Obama-era National Se-

curity Strategy. In evaluating Obama's performance under this strategy, it must be admitted that the US government was relatively committed to these strategies during his first term. However, experts have various speculations about the French-led invasion of Libya by NATO, the US withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, the use of diplomacy to resolve the Syrian crisis and disputes with Iran over the nuclear program, and have positive and negative assessments of the goals and motives of the US government regarding these approaches, but the sum of these developments shows that Obama has kept his promises in this strategy. An important feature of Obama's approach to foreign affairs under former presidents of state is interaction through negotiation and persuasion, rather than confrontation.

The US National Security Strategy document under the Obama administration in 2015 states that NATO is the most powerful alliance the world has ever seen and is the center for the development of the global security network. Our commitment to the collective defense of NATO members is serious. We are also committed to helping the coalition maintain its readiness and ability to deal with crises and to cooperate in the security sector. We will continue our efforts to deepen relations with the European Union, as this cooperation has contributed to the development of peace and prosperity in the region. We will also work to develop and deepen relations between NATO and the European Union, as this cooperation is essential to strengthening security in the Atlantic area. Preventing NATO from weakening is one of the major US strategies under the Obama administration in relation to the European Union. This is important because 22 European countries are joint members of NATO and the European Union. According to US

officials, there is an inextricable link between crises in Europe and the effectiveness and coherence of decision-making in NATO. Indeed, the emergence of fragmentation of decision-making in the European Union also undermines NATO's decision-making consensus and, consequently, weakens NATO. In this context, a weaker European Union will lead to a weaker NATO (Mofidi Asl, 2016, Iranian diplomacy).

Since Trump was elected as a president, whose positions are in line with unilateralism, we have seen a change in his approach to NATO. One of the most important differences between Trump and former US presidents is their worldview. An issue that is to some extent influenced by the differences or confrontations between nationalist and globalist discourses. For example, Trump does not look at NATO as a bilateral shield to preserve the values of the Western world, but recognizes NATO as a small group of weak countries that are unable to defend themselves and therefore have to pay for US for protecting their security (Mofidi Asl, 2018: IRIB News Agency). In his campaign promises, Trump emphasized the obsolescence of the NATO security alliance, arguing that the cost of deploying NATO forces was too high and could be better spent in other areas showing that the traditional US mission in NATO is over. (Cherkaoui, 2016, p. 3). His views were criticized by many formal and informal institutions and politicians. Beyond its security function, NATO contributes to the economic growth, political stability and prosperity of its member states. An issue that Trump has come to realize over time and seeks to change in his policies. Over time, he has pursued a realistic and pragmatic policy under pressure from domestic institutions and political elites, leading to convergence with NATO.

Indeed, for years the governments of the United States, on behalf of the Republican and Democratic parties, have called on their European allies (and Canada) to bear a greater share of the burden of defense, because the imbalance between allies has spread unequally in the decades after the Cold War. At the 2014 NATO Summit, for the first time, Allied leaders affirmed the goal of spending 2% of GDP on defense, setting 2024 as the target date for achieving that goal. While this commitment depended on economic growth in Europe, leaders reaffirmed this goal at the 2016 NATO summit. At the political level, the Trump administration is focused on boosting Europe's defense expenses, as well as increasing NATO's role in counterterrorism measures. Although President Trump has abandoned the position, that NATO is obsolete, there are still suggestions that the United States could adjust its commitment to defending NATO members in the future if it does not share more than the financial burden. This has led European leaders to simultaneously strengthen their role in defending NATO (Lewis, 2018, p. 21).

## 2. Economic

The US National Security Strategy document, under the Obama administration in 2015, states that the United States has a deep commitment to a free, united, cohesive, and peaceful Europe. A strong Europe is an essential ally of the United States, especially in areas such as meeting global security challenges, developing prosperity, and safeguarding international norms. Our cooperation with Europe further strengthens our strong and historic bilateral relations with Europeans. We will continue to push for the Balkan and Eastern European countries to join the European Union and for European and Atlantic integration, to continue our efforts to

change our relations with Turkey and to strengthen our relations with the countries of the Caucasus region, and at the same time, we will support finding solutions for regional tensions (Obama National Security Strategy Document, 2015). The document also states that we support development goals in Europe to create millions of jobs, as outlined in the Atlantic Partnership Agreement, in order to strengthen and develop the region's economic recovery. We are also seeking an agreement within the framework of the Atlantic Partnership Agreement that strengthens exports, supports job opportunities, and strengthens international trade standards (Obama National Security Strategy Document, 2015). Contrary to the former US President Barack Obama, Trump made a special trade offer to Britain after his election. With the election of Trump, the implementation of the Transatlantic Partnership and Investment Agreement between the United States and Europe faced with a number of challenges while the main policy of the United States since the Cold War has been to maintain the unity and integrity of the European Union (Karimifard, 2018, p. 294). However, despite the support of European leaders such as Germany, Britain and France for Hillary Clinton in the election campaign, Trump's political views have gradually softened, by pressure from official and unofficial institutions on the new US administration. Trump has realized that his European allies are valuable assets for the United States (Larres, 2017, p. 9).

Trump's new dealings and economic war with European countries can be described as a slogan of America First, which was published in his national security strategy in 2017. In the economic sphere, too, Trump challenged the strategic US economic relationship with Europe by arguing that trade relations between Europe and the United

States should be equal and in the interests of both sides of Atlantic, and imposing tariffs on European goods exported to the United States. So in practice, the discussion of the US-Europe Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which reached its final point under Barack Obama, remained suspended.

### 3. Iran's nuclear program

An issue that has been slightly different during different periods of the US presidency: and almost all US presidents, both Democrats and Republicans, have opposed Iran's nuclearization. From the US point of view, Iran is using its initiative to shift the balance of power in the Persian Gulf region to the detriment of the US and coalition forces in Iraq, and worked to help Islamic Jihad among the Palestinian people, Hezbollah in Lebanon and disrupt activities of the West to establish democracy in the Middle East.

However, in the years before Trump came to power, the United States used different strategies and patterns of behavior that the European Union has largely followed too. This means the closeness of the tactics and policies of the European Union and the United States with Barack Obama's coming to power. In Obama's view, "the purpose of nuclear negotiations with Iran was to prevent Iran from being able to build a nuclear weapon" (Goldberg, 2016, pp. 37-47).

Regarding JCPOA, Donald Trump believes that this agreement is not in the interests of the United States. Trump called the deal a "very bad and embarrassing deal" for his country and kept saying in his election campaigns, "We paid \$ 150 billion and got nothing." "In this agreement, we gave billions of dollars to them (Iranians) that we should not have given. Because our country is a bankrupt country with a debt of more than \$ 19 trillion, we had to keep that money",

Trump said in an interview with the New York Times. Accordingly, he has always emphasized the one-sidedness of JCPOA, repeatedly citing reasons such as "Iran made money with JCPOA", "JCPOA does not stop Iran's missile tests", "International inspectors has limited supervision access", "Some parts of the agreement are not permanent", "Iran has not adhered to the spirit of the agreement" (Zamani & Niakouie, 2019, pp. 104-105). In conclusion, it should be noted as a final analysis that one of the most important divergences between the EU and the United States during Trump's presidency is the divergence of the EU-US about JCPOA, which in the Obama administration, we have seen as the EU and the US convergence. The differences in this regard have been so great that the European Union has sought an economic mechanism to compensate for the United States' breach of JCPOA obligations and has sought to establish economic and trade relations with Iran through this.

### 4. Terrorism

With the beginning of Barack Obama's presidency, the increase in non-state actors and the activities of transnational networks as the main threat to the national security of the United States caused a tactical change in the US counterterrorism strategy from widespread military attacks to limited and targeted attacks (Raisi et al., 2014, p. 79). Obama's national security strategy in 2010 refers to Russia and China as potential threats or to democratic India and Japan as counter-revolutions, and prioritizes terrorism, environmental issues and humanitarian concerns (Kaufman, 2014, p. 445). In this context, Obama in his May 2013 speech at the National Defense University on the future of the fight against terrorism and his government's counterterrorism strategy offi-

cially confirmed the killing of civilians in targeted attacks (Mohammadzadeh Ebrahimi et al., 2017, p. 137).

Some analysts believe that the Barack Obama administration is reluctant to invest in the fight against terrorism and does not follow the method of its predecessors, and therefore the fight against terrorism has been one of the least important priorities of Obama (Baybordi, 2015, pp. 105-146). But the US president's international behavior shows that Barack Obama has shown a new way of supporting terrorist activities by maintaining the place of terrorism in his foreign policy. This new approach is followed by the emergence of non-governmental terrorism in the last two decades (Gohari Moghadam, 2010, p. 178). According to Donald Trump, Iraq and Syria have been the most urgent priorities of US Middle East policy in recent years, and the US presence has led to guaranteeing peace and security in the region and the fight against terrorism. (Monfared, 2017, p. 4)

Under Obama, Europeans and Obama agreed that the root of terrorism should be found among the people of the region and their anti-Western movements, and their solution was to be closer to the countries of the region, especially Iran, and to security regimes and arms control such as JCPOA; But under Trump, there is disagreement. In addition to intending to send 4,000 troops to NATO to prevent ISIL from gaining power in Afghanistan, Trump has shown that he does not oppose the presence of ground forces to fight terrorism, in other words, he has shown that he has no strategy (Akrami, 2017, Strategic Thought Explanation).

## 5. Human Rights

For more than three decades, the United States government has designed human rights as an important part of its foreign policy. In

particular, two presidents - Democrat Jimmy Carter and Republican George W. Bush - made the promotion of rights the focus of their foreign policy goals, although both have been accused of failing to live up to their promises. Obama has also reaffirmed his commitment to improving and strengthening the United States' human rights record, while continuing to collaborate with countries such as China and other allies, who have human rights issues, for strategic interests. In fact, one of the challenges and problems of human rights in the Obama era is the selective approach and instrumental use of human rights in foreign policy; For example, the US view of the cases of Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia and other countries shows the incoherence, uniformity, ups and downs, intensity and weakness that justify the instrumental use of human rights. It seems that reviewing the change in foreign policy on the issue of human rights in the Obama administration deserves consideration. The United States has always taken a dual stance on human rights abuses and crimes against humanity by its allies, or has remained silent in the face of them and, worse, has supported them.

While Barack Obama defended human rights in his discourse during his presidency, his actual policies are often inconsistent with the discourse, such as the increase in casualties from drone strikes and the continued undermining of privacy rights through expansion of noted government supervision (Roth, 2017, p. 9). Even the Bush administration misused the promotion of democracy and human rights as a tool in the deadly behavior of the war on terror. What makes Trump unique in this regard is the convergence in rejecting his discourse of human rights norms through specific and harmful political actions. These include: threatening to trial by the International



Criminal Court (ICC) with travel bans and financial sanctions, expulsion from the Human Rights Council, withdrawal from the World Migration Assembly, cancellation of UNESCO membership, and removal of US aid to UN rescue agencies (Regilme, 2019, p. 159).

Trump's National Security Strategy for 2017 also states that any successful strategy to ensure the security of the American people and to advance the national security interests of the country must begin with the undeniable fact that the United States must lead. Strong and continued American leadership is essential to a law-abiding international order that promotes global prosperity and security, as well as human rights and human dignity for all human beings. The document underscores its long-standing commitment to advancing democracy and human rights and to forming new coalitions to combat corruption and to support open governments and open societies. Our closest allies in these efforts will, as always, be other democratic countries. But even where our strategic interests require engaging with governments that do not share all our values, we will continue to speak openly in our public and private diplomacy in support of human rights and human dignity. Any support we may provide will be balanced by being aware of the costs of repressive policies to our security interests and the democratic values on which we live.

#### **6. North Korea's nuclear program**

Under Barack Obama and since 2008, North Korea has been on the US State of Emergency, and sanctions against it have been renewed every year. This issue goes back to the US view of North Korea, which even during the Trump era and despite the Washington

and Pyongyang agreements, did not cause the non-extension of sanctions (Bagheri Dolatabadi & et al, 2018, p. 150). By adopting a policy of strategic patience, the Obama administration stepped up sanctions against North Korea and tried to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table through regional and international allies so that it might reach an option like JCPOA, but failed and encountered Pyongyang missile and nuclear tests (Carlin & Lewis, 2008, pp. 17-18).

US President Barack Obama stated that South Korea will never agree with North Korea as a nuclear state. After 9/11, the United States has turned North Korea into a hotbed of violence and intensified pressure on the country. Rising tensions between the United States and North Korea are raising concerns in the European Union. The EU has pursued a policy of critical engagement (meaning maximum pressure with dialogue) towards North Korea, focusing on reducing tensions, pursuing policies to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and improving human rights (Lewis, 2018, p. 26). Most EU member countries have formal diplomatic relations with North Korea, and the European Union established diplomatic relations with the country in May 2001. The European Union has been directly involved in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities in North Korea and conducting regular political talks with the country between 1998 and 2015. North Korea is recognized as the most restrictive country in the world (EU External Action, 2016, p. 26).

In his first foreign trips in November 2017, during a 12-day trip to East Asia, Trump held bilateral and multilateral meetings with the leaders of Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Philippines, one of the most important goals of which was to strengthen the global will for making North

Korea nuclear free (Campbell, 2017, p. 13). In this regard, the US, Japanese and South Korean armies have held joint naval exercises in the Pacific and Korean Peninsula waters, as well as air exercises over the peninsula. The exercises were aimed at enhancing deterrence against North Korea's missile and nuclear threats, as well as strengthening defense against a possible invasion against the United States and its allies in East Asia. Trump unveiled his proposed budget for 2018, in which he demanded a historic increase in the US defense budget (Soleimanzadeh & et al., 2018, p. 280).

### 7. East Asia

The Obama administration has cooperated with other multilateral bodies, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization, to engage the region more in the US economy. The United States has paid a lot of attention to Asia during the Obama administration, so that he has visited the region at least once a year since the beginning of his presidency and has significantly increased his activities there (Mohammadzadeh Ebrahimi et al., 2017, p. 139). During this period, the United States has sought to prevent China from gaining hegemony over Asia, a policy that requires the United States to show its willingness and readiness to assist Asian governments in countering China. US actions stem from the fact that China's goals in the region go beyond Japan and, in fact, limit the ability of the United States to defend Taiwan and its other allies in Asia (Kelly, 2014, p. 484).

In the final year of his presidency, Obama focused his attention on the ASEAN Summit on the Free Trade Agreement between the two sides of the Pacific Ocean or the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which he had pursued for

years and sought to terminate in his last year in office. The Obama administration believed that free trade with Asian countries, and in particular the agreement of both sides of the Pacific, was one of the most important steps that could ensure US security. Nevertheless, the Obama administration, despite its policy of turning to Asia, eventually turned its attention to its efforts in the Middle East and Europe, which led to a shift to all three regions. In the Middle East, Obama has sought to avoid unnecessary intervention while proceeding essential interventions such as the war against ISIS.

With Trump entering the political arena, we are witnessing the importance of East Asian countries for the United States, which can be seen in Trump's practical and declarative policies. During a 12-day trip to East Asia in November 2017, Trump held bilateral meetings with the leaders of Japan, South Korea and China, one of the most important goals of which was to strengthen the global will to denuclearize North Korea. According to Trump, by reducing the military budget, the Obama administration has weakened the US military power and, due to its inability to use military power, has sent false messages to other governments and made them bolder towards the United States (Babakan, 2018, p. 63). Among the reasons for Trump's view of East Asia are the development of relations with India and the reduction of Indian oil purchases from Iran. An important part of Trump's national security doctrine is the US strategy in the six regions of the Indo-Pacific, Europe, West Asia, Central Asia, the Western Hemisphere, or Latin America and Africa. These documents describe China and Russia as revisionist powers seeking to change the world according to their ideals. Based on this, it can be said that Trump has tried to have allies in this region. Due to the presence of

many emerging economies in the Indo-Pacific region, the US National Security Strategy document pays special attention to this region to increase US influence. In this region, China has been defined as the main competitor of the United States, which is trying to take over the economic infrastructure of the countries in the region and expand its influence with the large investments they make. The Korean Peninsula crisis is important as an excuse for a long-term US military presence in the region. Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, India, the Philippines and Thailand have been identified as US allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. The role of India's leadership is also supported in the Indo-Pacific region. This is clearly in conflict with China's interests, which seem to be in line with the US attempt to retreat China's influence in the region (Trump National Security Strategy Document, 2017).

### Conclusion

Obama's domestic and foreign policy can be seen as a function of the structural needs and necessities of the United States. Between 2002 and 2006, there was room for criticism of George W. Bush's patterns of behavior in American politics. The bureaucratic structures and political elites of the United States concluded that the continuation of such a process would pose a pervasive security risk to the United States. Obama's policy of change was organized in such a process; but in practice, it faced significant alterations. Barack Obama's victory in the 2008 presidential election can be seen as a social transformation in American society in which an African-American once rose to the highest political position in the country. The victory sparked a glimmer of hope among American citizens, emphasizing the need for political

and economic reform. The reason for the failure of the Republicans can be traced to a series of failures of the Bush administration's eight-year policies, as well as the existence of a series of prejudicial policies and a pervasive crisis in the financial sector and its spread to other economic sectors. The war on terror and reign of terror in the United States as well as the unprecedented destruction of the image and legitimacy of American actions around the world have made things worse. This victory has raised growing expectations from the Obama administration inside and outside the United States. American citizens at the first stage call for appropriate economic policies to deal with the current crisis (Mottaghi, 2010, p. 521). Despite trust in soft power or smart power, the Obama administration did not pursue concepts such as democracy, human rights, the will to social engineering, and internal change in other countries like the previous administration. In fact, the combination of soft and hard power has been a prominent feature of the Obama administration in foreign policy. The first issue includes the following: refraining from unilateralism in solving international problems; Ensuring and strengthening US national security through cooperation with its allies, as well as emphasizing the expansion of cooperation with emerging powers such as China, India, and Russia; the need for a link between economic and military power; monitoring the democratization process in other societies instead of democratization policies or military aggression; raising new issues such as climate change, clean energy, global poverty and education; paying attention to immigration policies to attract the world's best talents; transforming the policy of preventive warfare into relations and cooperation. The second issue, with the need to consider military power if diplomatic efforts are

unsuccessful as a last resort, sees US military superiority as the basis for national defense and global security. Policy of unilateralism and isolationism is in Trump's foreign policy. Isolationists, unlike internationalists, agree to prioritize national goals over international goals, focus on specific countries and geographical areas, play a limited and unilateral leadership role, oppose involvement in international affairs, advocate civilism and non-interventionism (not anti-militarism or anti-interventionism) and, finally, are strongly opposed to globalization (in the field of economics). In their view, external commitments have serious costs at home. Also, the United States has no obligation to accept moral obligations abroad; because international commitments negatively affect the government's

duties at home. These features of the logic of isolationism are clearly evident in Trump's policies. Of course, by examining Trump's policies and actions, it can be argued that he is at best a follower of modern isolationism, not nineteenth-century isolationism. Nineteenth-century America had not yet entered the broader equations of the world, but contemporary America is heavily involved in global equations, and it will not be possible for it to follow the specific work of the nineteenth-century isolationist logic. Neo-isolationism wants to end or reduce some foreign policy commitments, but at the same time agrees with the continuation of some of them and proposes the acceptance of some new commitments.

**Table 1:**

<b>Obama's international views</b>	<b>Trump's international views</b>
Intelligence superiority	New nationalism and the priority of American interests
Multilateralism	Disapproving globalization
Using smart power	Opposition to immigration and the expansion of public relations
Extensive application of diplomacy	Ignoring the spread of liberal values
Reducing foreign policy costs	Emphasis on bilateral political and economic agreements and relations
The importance of international institutions and mechanisms	Discredit of international institutions and mechanisms
Strengthening the collective military power of the West	Ignoring common global issues
	Restraining the economies of rival powers and rebuilding the US economy

Source: (Bagheri et al., 2018: 185)

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