

## DEPLOYMENT OF THREATS AND TRANSACTIONAL DIPLOMACY IN ADVANCING NATIONAL INTEREST: THE DONALD TRUMP REGIME EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the strategic deployment of threats by Donald Trump as an instrument for advancing United States national interests. Situating his foreign policy within the theoretical frameworks of coercive diplomacy and deterrence theory, the paper analyzes how economic sanctions, tariff escalations, military signaling, and alliance pressure were used to compel behavioral change from both adversaries and allies. Through case studies including the U.S.–China trade war, tariff threats against Mexico over migration enforcement, burden-sharing disputes within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and strategic confrontations with North Korea, Venezuela, Greenland, Denmark and Iran, the paper evaluates the credibility, effectiveness, and consequences of threat-based diplomacy. The analysis finds that Trump's approach was characterized by transactional realism, public signaling, and a willingness to impose or threaten significant costs to achieve concessions. While this strategy produced certain short-term tactical gains, such as increased allied defense spending and migration enforcement cooperation, it yielded mixed long-term structural outcomes and introduced risks of escalation, economic disruption, and alliance strain. The paper concludes that Trump's use of threats underscores both the utility and limitations of coercive statecraft in a highly interdependent international system, contributing to broader debates on the role of power, credibility, and bargaining in contemporary foreign policy.

**Keywords:** *Deployment, Threats, Transactional Diplomacy, United States, National Interest*

### **Introduction**

The conduct of international diplomacy has historically encompassed a wide spectrum of strategies, from formal negotiation and multilateral engagement to coercive posturing and strategic signaling. Traditionally, diplomacy has been understood as the management of international relations through dialogue and negotiation aimed at achieving mutually acceptable outcomes (Berridge, 2015). However, recent geopolitical developments have heightened scholarly interest in alternative forms of diplomatic engagement that explicitly incorporate coercive tools, such as threats, sanctions, and public pressure alongside conventional bargaining. This hybrid approach is often conceptualized within the broader framework of transactional diplomacy (Rosenberg, 2019). Transactional diplomacy emphasizes immediacy, reciprocity of interests, and material exchange in state interactions, often subordinating long-term institutional commitments to short-term wins (Kupchan, 2012). While this approach is not new, historical examples include Cold War realpolitik and balance-of-power negotiations (Huntington, 1993) its deployment in the contemporary era has gained greater visibility in response to shifting global power dynamics and rising populist leadership styles.

The administration of President Donald J. Trump (2017–2021) represents a distinctive case study in the use of coercive instruments within diplomatic practice. Trump's foreign policy was marked by rhetorical assertiveness, unpredictable engagement, and an unusual integration of economic coercion with diplomatic overtures (Nakamura & Costa, 2020). Scholars have characterized his strategy as a blend of threat-based bargaining, transactional negotiations, and unilateral pressure tactics that aimed to reshape international norms on trade, security, and alliance commitments (Ikenberry, 2018; Mead, 2019). For example, the Trump administration frequently utilized the threat of economic and military consequences as leverage in negotiations. In trade diplomacy, the imposition of tariffs and the threat of expanded trade barriers were central features of negotiations with China, the European Union (EU), and other partners (Bown, 2020). These tactics reflect a broader strategic orientation grounded in coercive bargaining theory, which posits that threats can alter an adversary's cost–benefit

calculus and compel concessions without resorting to armed conflict (Schelling, 1966; Fearon, 1997). However, scholars also note that the effectiveness of threats depends on credibility, clarity of intent, and the ability to follow through variables that have been contested in analyses of Trump's foreign policy (Mearsheimer, 2019).

In security diplomacy, similar patterns emerged. The administration's rhetoric toward North Korea, for example, vacillated between extreme threats of "fire and fury" and sudden overtures toward summit diplomacy with Kim Jong-un (Sanger, 2019). This combination of coercive signals and diplomacy illustrates the transactional nature of the engagement, where the specter of force was strategically intertwined with negotiations for denuclearization outcomes. Critics argue that such an approach risked legitimizing North Korea's nuclear capability while yielding limited substantive arms-control results (Tannenwald, 2020). Moreover, the United States' interactions with traditional allies under the Trump administration often reflected a transactional logic that conditioned security guarantees and defense commitments on reciprocal material benefit. Trump's insistence that NATO members increase defense spending and his reevaluation of bilateral trade agreements underscored a departure from institutionalized alliance management toward more contingent, performance-based relationships (Brands, 2018). This shift has sparked debate among scholars about the long-term implications of transactional tactics on alliance cohesion and U.S. global leadership (Allison, 2020).

Examining the deployment of threats and transactional diplomacy in the Trump era contributes to broader academic discussions about the changing nature of diplomatic practice in a multipolar world. A substantial body of literature suggests that rising great-power competition, domestic political pressures, and evolving norms of international engagement are transforming how states negotiate, coerce, and collaborate (Acharya, 2017; Ikenberry & Lim, 2017). As such, the Trump administration's foreign policy offers a salient case for analyzing how coercive rhetoric and transactional engagement function in practice, and what implications they hold for both U.S. foreign relations and the wider international order. Despite growing scholarly attention, there remain gaps in comprehensive analyses that systematically integrate threat deployment with transactional strategies across multiple policy domains. This paper aims to fill that gap by investigating the nature, effectiveness, and consequences of threat-based transactional diplomacy during the Trump presidency. By doing so, it will contribute to theoretical refinement and offer insights for practitioners navigating the complexities of 21st-century international diplomacy.

### **Threats and Transactional Diplomacy in International Relations**

The use of threats as instruments of statecraft has long occupied a central place in international relations theory. Classical realist scholars argue that coercion and power projection are intrinsic to the anarchic structure of the international system (Hans Morgenthau, 1948). Building on realist foundations, Thomas Schelling (1966) conceptualized threats as tools of coercive bargaining, emphasizing that the power to hurt is often more effective than the direct use of force. Schelling's theory of compellence and deterrence underscores the importance of credibility, signaling, and controlled escalation in influencing adversary behaviour. Successive scholarship refined this understanding. James Fearon (1997) highlighted the role of audience costs and signaling mechanisms in enhancing the credibility of threats, arguing that public commitments increase the domestic political costs of backing down. Likewise, Robert Jervis (1976) emphasized perception and misperception in international politics, noting that coercive threats often fail when signals are misunderstood or when adversaries question resolve. Together, these theoretical contributions suggest that the effectiveness of threats depends not only on material capabilities but also on credibility, reputational consistency, and strategic coherence. These insights provide a foundation for examining threat deployment in contemporary U.S. foreign policy.

Transactional diplomacy refers to a pragmatic, interest-based approach to foreign policy in which relationships are evaluated primarily in terms of immediate reciprocal benefits rather than enduring institutional commitments. Within debates on the liberal international order, G. John Ikenberry (2018) contrasts rule-based multilateralism with unilateral, deal-oriented approaches that prioritize national advantage over institutional continuity. Similarly, Charles Kupchan (2012) argues that shifts in global power distribution have encouraged states to pursue flexible alignments rooted in national interest calculations. From this perspective, transactional diplomacy reflects structural changes in the international system rather than mere leadership idiosyncrasy. Domestic political narratives also shape transactional approaches. Walter Russell Mead (2019) situates recent U.S. foreign policy developments within the "Jacksonian" tradition skeptical of multilateral entanglements and focused on reciprocity and tangible outcomes. In this framework, diplomacy is evaluated less by its normative commitments and more by its capacity to produce visible, short-term gains.

Empirical studies revealed that the presidency of Donald Trump (2017–2021, 2024-date) provide a distinctive case study in the integration of threats and transactional diplomacy. Scholars note that the administration operationalized coercive bargaining strategies through the use of tariffs, sanctions, and rhetorical escalation, particularly in trade relations with China (Bown, 2020). Such measures align with Schelling's (1966) logic of compellence, wherein economic pressure serves as leverage to induce concessions. However, critics question the coherence and long-term efficacy of this strategy. John Mearsheimer (2019) contends that inconsistent signaling and withdrawal from international agreements may undermine U.S. credibility, thereby

weakening the effectiveness of coercive threats. Hal Brands (2018) similarly argues that conditioning alliance commitments on financial contributions risks eroding institutional trust and weakening established partnerships. The administration's engagement with North Korea further illustrates the blending of high-intensity rhetoric and summit diplomacy. Analysts observe that oscillation between confrontation and negotiation exemplifies coercive diplomacy characterized by unpredictability and personalization (Sanger, 2019). While some interpret this as strategic maneuvering intended to increase bargaining leverage, others caution that it introduced volatility into alliance networks and global security expectations.

A substantial body of literature situates Trump's foreign policy within broader debates about the resilience of the liberal international order. Joseph Nye (2011) distinguishes between hard power and soft power, arguing that legitimacy and attraction enhance long-term influence. From this perspective, excessive reliance on threats may diminish soft power capital and undermine normative leadership. Amitav Acharya (2017) contends that the erosion of multilateral norms signals a broader transformation of global governance structures. Ikenberry (2018) similarly suggests that unilateral and transactional approaches challenge the institutional foundations established after 1945. Nevertheless, alternative interpretations view transactional diplomacy as pragmatic adaptation to multipolarity. Scholars argue that burden-sharing demands and renegotiated agreements may represent recalibration rather than decline, though empirical assessments remain contested. Despite extensive explanation on Trump's foreign policy by scholars and analysts, fewer studies systematically integrate coercive bargaining theory with analyses of transactional diplomacy across multiple policy domains. Much of the scholarship focuses on discrete cases, such as trade disputes or summit diplomacy, without synthesizing them within a unified analytical framework. Moreover, the interaction between populist leadership style, domestic political incentives, and threat credibility warrants deeper empirical investigation. Filling these gaps contributes to theoretical refinement and enhances understanding of how threats and transactional diplomacy operate within contemporary international politics.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on two complementary frameworks of analysis: Coercive Diplomacy and Deterrence theories. Coercive diplomacy refers to the use of threats or limited force to persuade an adversary to stop or reverse an action without escalating to full-scale war (George, 1991). Thomas Schelling's seminal work emphasized the bargaining power of threats in international politics, where coercion is a strategic tool to shape adversary expectations (Schelling, 1966). Coercive diplomacy presupposes clear communication, credible threats, and defined red lines (Pape, 1996). The intellectual foundations of coercive diplomacy are most strongly associated with Thomas Schelling (1966) and Alexander L. George (1991). Schelling's seminal work, *Arms and Influence* (1966), established the conceptual distinction between deterrence (preventing an action) and compellence (forcing an action). He argued that power in international politics is often the "power to hurt," and that coercion operates through the manipulation of risk and expectations rather than brute force (Schelling, 1966). Alexander George later systematized the concept in *Forceful Persuasion* (1991), defining coercive diplomacy as the use of threats, limited force, or economic sanctions to persuade an adversary to stop or reverse an action without escalating to full-scale war (George, 1991). George refined the theory by outlining specific strategies such as the "ultimatum," "try-and-see," and "gradual turning of the screw." Other contributors include Robert Pape, who examined the effectiveness of coercion through air power (Pape, 1996), and Lawrence Freedman, who explored strategic coercion in modern conflicts (Freedman, 2004).

Coercive diplomacy theory assumes that states are rational actors capable of calculating costs and benefits. Targets of coercion will alter behavior if the perceived costs outweigh the expected gains (George, 1991). The theory submits that effective coercion requires that threats be credible. The adversary must believe both in the coercer's capability and willingness to carry out the threat (Schelling, 1966). Coercive diplomacy also assumes that force can be used in a limited and calibrated way. The coercer signals resolve without provoking uncontrolled escalation (George & Simons, 1994). The theory further argues that success depends on explicit demands and clear signalling. Misperception can undermine coercive efforts (Jervis, 1976). Unlike brute force strategies, coercive diplomacy aims at behavioural change short of war. It is inherently a bargaining process embedded within conflict (Schelling, 1966).

On the other hand, Deterrence theory emerged prominently during the Cold War, particularly in the context of nuclear strategy. Major proponents include Bernard Brodie, Thomas Schelling, Kenneth Waltz, and Glenn Snyder. Bernard Brodie (1946) is often credited with articulating the foundational logic of nuclear deterrence, arguing that the chief purpose of military power in the nuclear age is to avert war rather than win it. Schelling (1966) expanded deterrence theory by explaining how credible threats and risk manipulation sustain strategic stability. Kenneth Waltz (1979; 2012) advanced structural realism, contending that nuclear deterrence produces systemic stability because mutually assured destruction discourages aggression. Glenn Snyder (1961) further differentiated between deterrence by punishment and deterrence by denial, enriching theoretical clarity. Like coercive diplomacy, deterrence theory assumes that state leaders are rational decision-makers. Aggression will be avoided if the costs threatened exceed anticipated benefits (Waltz, 2012). Deterrence depends on the capability

and demonstrated resolve to retaliate. Without credibility, deterrence collapses (Snyder, 1961). The theory posits that in nuclear deterrence, stability requires assured retaliation even after absorbing a first strike (Brodie, 1946). Deterrence requires clearly defined commitments and boundaries to prevent miscalculation (Jervis, 1976). The also theory assumes that mutual vulnerability can generate stability. Fear of unacceptable damage discourages escalation (Waltz, 1979).

### **Application of the Theories**

Coercive diplomacy and deterrence theories remain valuable for analyzing aspects of Trump's foreign policy, particularly his use of threats and sanctions to coerce or restrain adversaries. Coercive diplomacy provides a useful lens for understanding Trump's use of sanctions and military threats as strategic tools short of war (Schelling, 1966; Pape, 1996). It helps explain the logic behind maximum pressure campaigns like those against Iran and North Korea. Deterrence theory clarifies why punitive measures, whether economic or military, can signal intentions to dissuade adversary actions (Jervis, 1976; Waltz, 2012). Trump's tariffs on China, for example, aligned with deterrence logic of raising costs. Trump's policy toward North Korea illustrates coercive diplomacy's theoretical appeal. The regime issued sharp threats of "fire and fury" against Pyongyang, combining economic sanctions with sanctions threats, and subsequently pursued a series of summits with Kim Jong-un (Cha & Kang, 2018). On the surface, this aligns with classical coercive diplomacy: threats plus negotiation to extract concessions. Deterrence helps illuminate Trump's punitive stances, including trade threats and tariff impositions against China. Trump's maximum pressure on Beijing reflected an attempt to deter China from unfair trade practices and strategic assertiveness. By raising economic costs, the administration hoped to induce behavioral change without military confrontation (Aaron & Johnston, 2019).

### **Analysis of Donald Trump's Deployment of Threats to Achieve National Interest**

Donald Trump's foreign policy is marked by the strategic use of threats such as economic, military, and diplomatic as instruments of coercive diplomacy. His approach reflects a realist and transactional conception of national interest, emphasizing sovereignty, economic advantage, and burden-sharing. Rather than relying primarily on multilateral consensus, Trump frequently employed explicit, public threats to alter the behaviour of allies and adversaries alike. Donald Trump's foreign policy is anchored on his dictum of "Make American Great Again" (MAGA), which has resulted in actions such as change of Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America, crack and deportation of illegal immigrants in the US, tariff regimes against allies and foes, arrest of President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela, his wife and prosecution in the US for charges relating to drug trafficking, human rights abuses, including election rigging. Akin to this is the war against Iran in 2025 and 2026, vowing to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and possible regime change, threat to acquire Greenland from Denmark (a NATO member), and the reactions of EU member-nations and NATO, the bombing of Jabo, Sokoto state, in Nigeria on 25 December, 2025 as deterrent against terrorists targeting Christians, prompting the Federal government of Nigeria to state in a swift reactions that Nigeria has no policy on religious persecution, describing the development as an opportunity for deeper engagement and broader cooperation between Nigeria and the United States, and the Russian-Ukraine war and the US's desire to benefit from Ukrainian minerals-transactional diplomacy, making deals in the Trump;s way.

Donald Trump frequently uses explicit threats as bargaining tools to pursue what he defines as U.S. national interests. His approach aligned with a coercive diplomacy strategy, signaling credible costs to force concessions without necessarily carrying out the threat. Below is an analytical breakdown with key examples.

#### **1) Trade Policy: Tariffs as Economic Threats: China – Trade War (2018–2020)**

Trump imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese goods, threatening escalation unless China changed practices on intellectual property, forced technology transfer, and trade imbalances. The mechanism of threat includes incremental tariff increases, public deadlines, and rhetoric about "decoupling." Consequently, the 2020 "Phase One" trade deal required China to increase U.S. purchases and address some Intellectual Property concerns, though many structural disputes remained unresolved. In simple term, the 2020 "Phase One" agreement included commitments by China to increase purchases of U.S. goods. Also, the threat imposed real economic costs on both sides. While its pressured China to negotiate, it also raised costs for U.S. consumers and firms, showing the double-edged nature of economic coercion. The credibility of the threat was reinforced by implementation. However, tariffs imposed domestic economic costs and did not fundamentally transform structural economic tensions. This illustrates both the power and limitations of economic coercion in an interdependent global economy.

Similarly, there was Mexico – Tariff Threat Over Migration (2019), where Trump threatened escalating tariffs on all Mexican imports unless Mexico curtailed migration flows to the U.S. border. This was achieved through the instrumentalism of public announcement of a 5% tariff rising monthly to 25% by Donald Trump. The outcome of this threat was that Mexico agreed to deployed its National Guard to curb migration and expand asylum cooperation. This is a classic case of coercive diplomacy succeeding quickly without tariffs being implemented. It demonstrated the effectiveness of credible short-term economic pressure tied to specific, measurable demands.

This case is often cited as a successful example of short-term coercive diplomacy. The threat alone, without full implementation, achieved measurable concessions. It demonstrated how economic interdependence enhances leverage.

## **2) Security Alliances: Burden-Sharing Pressure: NATO and Defense Spending**

Trump constantly threatened to reduce U.S. commitment to North Atlantic Treaty Organization unless member states increased defense spending to 2% of GDP. This was done through public criticism of allies, and hints of U.S. withdrawal. This resulted in increased defense budgets by several NATO members during Donald Trump's first term (2017-2021). Trump's rhetoric reframed alliance commitments as conditional and transactional. While spending increased, critics argued that such rhetoric risked undermining alliance cohesion and deterrence credibility against strategic competitors.

## **3) Military Threats as Deterrence Signaling: North Korea – “Fire and Fury” (2017)**

Trump warned Kim Jong Un that North Korea would face “fire and fury” if it threatened the U.S., while expanding sanctions. The objective was to deter missile testing and push toward denuclearization talks. The outcome of this threat was that after heightened tensions, Trump held historic summits with Kim between 2018 and 2019 though without lasting denuclearization agreements. The initial threats may have raised bargaining leverage, but substantive denuclearization did not materialize. This case illustrates how threats can open diplomatic channels but not guarantee strategic outcomes. Similarly, the absence of structural outcomes demonstrates the limits of threats when adversaries view nuclear capability as essential to regime survival. Similarly, there was the case of Iran – “Maximum Pressure”, where after withdrawing from the International Atomic Energy Agency-verified Iran nuclear deal framework (JCPOA), Trump imposed sanctions and warned of severe military retaliation for Iranian aggression. For example, following attacks attributed to Iran, Trump authorized the killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in 2020. The objective was to curb Iran's regional influence and renegotiate nuclear constraints. This significantly demonstrated willingness to act militarily, reinforcing credibility. The Soleimani strike demonstrated willingness to escalate beyond rhetoric, reinforcing credibility of U.S. threats. However, it heightened regional tensions and drew criticism for risking broader conflict. The strike strengthened short-term deterrence signaling but escalated regional tensions. It underscored the importance of credible follow-through in maintaining coercive power, while highlighting the risks of miscalculation.

## **4) Foreign Aid and Sanctions Leverage: Turkey – Sanctions Over Syria (2019)**

Trump threatened to “destroy” Turkey's economy if it acted against U.S.-aligned Kurdish forces in Syria. This threat was carried out through the mechanism of targeted sanctions and tariff increases. Consequently, there were temporary ceasefire agreements. In the final analysis, economic threats were used as rapid-response tools to shape battlefield outcomes without deploying U.S. troops.

## **5) threats and Coercive Actions. Venezuela: Economic Leverage, Regime Change, and Resource Security**

Under Trump's leadership, the United States undertook a broad campaign of pressure on Venezuela that included naval blockade and seizures of oil tankers carrying Venezuelan crude under U.S. sanction rules. This aimed to choke off Venezuela's oil exports the backbone of its economy by interdiction in international waters, seizure of at least one major oil tanker, which heightened tensions with Caracas and drew accusations of “piracy” from Venezuelan authorities and condemnation from countries like Cuba, naval and military buildup in the Caribbean framed as part of a campaign against drug trafficking and narco-terrorism, military intervention culminating in a 2026 operation in Caracas that resulted in the capture of Nicolas Maduro and installation of an interim government favoured by Washington, including, sanctions and tariffs targeting countries that import Venezuelan oil and pressure on foreign energy markets.

### **National Interest Goals (Venezuela)**

Trump's deployment of threats and force in Venezuela can be interpreted through several strategic aims including, oil and energy security because Venezuela holds some of the world's largest oil reserves. Therefore, pressuring or controlling those resources could enhance U.S. energy leverage and reduce dependence on hostile actors. Trump's deployment of threats and force in Venezuela also aimed at weakening opposing regimes by removing long-time leader Nicolas Maduro and installing a more U.S.-aligned interim government, the administration arguably sought to reshape the regional balance in favor of Washington. Similarly, counter-narcotics rhetoric by labeling elements of the regime and associated criminal networks as “narco-terrorists,” Trump's policy used counter-drug framing to justify aggressive actions both domestically political and internationally strategic. Tough action on foreign leaders and “protecting U.S. interests abroad” played well with Trump's base and reinforced a broader narrative of strength and unilateral decision-making. However, many international lawyers and analysts argue that such actions, especially, blockades and forced regime change push the limits of international law and could set dangerous precedents. Others argued that targeting oil infrastructure and exports risks regional destabilization and could raise global market prices. Lastly, actions perceived as resource-driven could erode U.S. moral authority and strengthen opposition blocs aligned with Russia, China, or other regional powers.

## **6) Nigeria: Threats of Military Action and Diplomatic Leverage**

In 2025 and 2026, Trump deployed strong rhetoric and potential military threats toward Nigeria, including, designation of Nigeria as a “Country of Particular Concern” (CPC) based on alleged religious freedom violations

over attacks on Christians, a controversial move rejected by many analysts and Nigerian officials as overly simplistic, public threats of military intervention if Nigeria did not protect Christians, including social-media posts indicating that the U.S. might act “fast, vicious, and sweet.”, talks between Nigerian and U.S. officials on security cooperation to address jihadist violence, partly spurred by Trump’s statements, joint U.S.–Nigeria military actions, such as airstrikes targeting extremists like Boko Haram and Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) or ISIL affiliates coordinated with Abuja, after initial tensions over Trump’s rhetoric, and the recent deployment of U.S. troops for training and intelligence assistance, an outcome of evolved cooperation between the two governments.

### **National Interest Goals (Nigeria)**

Trump’s approach toward Nigeria, though framed in humanitarian terms (protecting Christian communities), reflects other underlying interests including, the Nigeria strategic influence in Africa. Nigeria is Africa’s largest economy and a critical partner in West African security. Strong U.S. leverage therein helps counter rival influence (for example, Russia and China) in the region. Another interest is counter-terrorism goal. Nigeria faces entrenched violent extremist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP. U.S. pressure and cooperation spotlight U.S. role in global counterterrorism, potentially boosting U.S. stature and diplomatic ties. However, many analysts and critics argue that the religious narrative oversimplifies Nigeria’s complex conflicts and can mislead both domestic and global audiences. Others argued that threats of intervention strained diplomatic relations initially and sparked public concern in Nigeria over sovereignty and foreign interference. Also, there are risks that militant groups could exploit foreign military involvement for recruitment or propaganda.

In the final analysis, Trump’s deployment of threats in Venezuela and Nigeria illustrates a foreign policy trend combining, hard coercive measures such as blockades, potential or actual force, geopolitical leverage, including, access to energy and strategic influence, and security framing such as terrorism and religious freedom. In both cases, while some tactical outcomes (like enhanced cooperation or disruption of extremist groups) can be seen as aligned with certain U.S. *national interests*, the overarching narrative and tools, especially, coercion and unilateral action have drawn significant legal, ethical, and diplomatic controversy. They underscore ongoing debates about the legitimacy and consequences of using threats and force in pursuit of policy goals.

The ongoing U.S.–Israel war with Iran (2026) has rapidly evolved from a regional conflict into a crisis with global economic, geopolitical, and security consequences. Key three reasons for the war with Iran include, Iran must never be allowed to develop nuclear weapons as Donald Trump vows to destroy and raze Iranian missile industry to the ground, stating that the US has repeatedly sought to make a deal but Iran rejected every opportunity to renounce its nuclear ambitions. Secondly, assuring Iranians of America’s backing for regime change, Trump said “bombs will be dropping everywhere, when we are finished, take over your government, it will be yours to take; this will be probably your only chance for generations; America is backing you with overwhelming strength and devastating force, now is the time to seize control of your destiny”. Lastly, the US, Israel longstanding commitments to the security of their allies in the Middle East. Below is a structured analysis of major global effects of the US, Israel war with Iran:

**1. Energy Crisis and Oil Market Shock:** The largest global effect is on the energy market because the conflict disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a route carrying about 20% of the world’s oil supply. Similarly, Tanker traffic dropped dramatically, with many ships avoiding the region due to attacks and security risks. Also, Oil prices surged above \$100 per barrel, briefly approaching \$119–\$126, creating fears of another global energy crisis. Consequently, this has led to higher fuel prices worldwide, increased electricity costs, and rising transport and shipping expenses. These shocks is similar to the global energy disruption caused by the Russia–Ukraine war in 2022.

**2. Rising Global Inflation and Food Prices:** Energy price spikes ripple into food production. As energy costs rise, food prices increase globally, especially in import-dependent countries, such as low-income nations in Africa, and food-importing states in Asia and the Middle East.

**3. Disruption of Global Trade and Shipping:** The Middle East is one of the world’s most important energy and shipping hubs. Key disruptions include, closure or reduced traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, increased shipping insurance costs, delays in oil, gas, and commodity deliveries, and rerouting of tankers and cargo ships. This is because major shipping companies temporarily suspended operations in the Gulf region, affecting supply chains globally.

**4. Financial Market Instability:** Global financial markets reacted immediately with the following effects: stock market volatility, rising commodity prices, flight to “safe-haven” assets like gold, increased risk of global recession if the war escalates. The conflict also triggered sharp fluctuations in global stock markets and currencies.

**5. Expansion of Regional Wars:** The war has already triggered secondary conflicts across the Middle East such as Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iranian retaliatory attacks on U.S.-allied Gulf states, missile and drone strikes across the region. The conflict therefore risks evolving into a broader Middle East war involving multiple actors.

**6. Humanitarian and Civilian Impact:** The war has caused significant human suffering. For instance, Iran reports over 1,300 civilians killed and thousands of civilian sites damaged in the strikes, millions face displacement or economic hardship, and travel disruption has also been severe, for example, 20,000+ flights cancelled, major airports in the Gulf affected.

**7. Diplomatic and Geopolitical Realignment:** The war is reshaping global alliances, and possible geopolitical shifts include, Russia and China increasing diplomatic support for Iran, Gulf states balancing between the U.S. and regional stability, western countries coordinating emergency energy strategies, and some governments are already preparing strategic oil reserve releases to stabilize markets. In summary, the war is affecting the world in five major ways, including energy crisis and oil price spikes, global inflation and rising food costs, disruption of trade and shipping, financial market instability, and risk of wider regional war and humanitarian crises

## Conclusion

Trump's deployment of threats as instruments of national strategy reflects a coercive, bargaining-based model of foreign policy, grounded in deterrence theory and economic nationalism. By emphasizing credibility and escalation, Trump sought to maximize leverage in pursuit of economic and security objectives. While it sometimes yielded immediate tactical gains, its long-term effectiveness in reshaping structural international relationships remains debated, highlighting the inherent trade-off between short-term gains and long-term stability in the use of threats as tools of statecraft. The strategy illustrates both the utility and limits of threats as instruments of national power in contemporary geopolitics. In all, President Donald Trump's deal, making transactional diplomacy ultimately to advance US's national interests no matter what other countries think. The paper recommends that the impact of transactional diplomacy in trade, security and climate negotiations should be studied separately to understand sector-specific diplomatic effects.

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