# Trump 2.0 and the China Containment Strategy: Continuity or Change? – Samim Aktar



## Abstract

This research paper critically examines the prospective trajectory of U.S.-China relations under the second term of Donald Trump's presidency, with a specific focus on the "China Containment Strategy." During his first term, Trump's administration reoriented U.S. foreign policy toward a confrontational stance against China, characterized by economic decoupling, technological restrictions, military posturing in the Indo-Pacific, and an ideological contest between democratic and authoritarian governance models. This paper analyses the continuity and potential evolution of these policies in light of shifting geopolitical

realities, domestic political priorities, and emergent global challenges.

The study systematically evaluates the multifaceted dimensions of the China Containment Strategy—economic, technological, military, and ideological—while exploring its implications for the Indo-Pacific region and the broader global order. Key findings indicate that while foundational aspects of Trump's first-term policies, such as tariffs, supply chain diversification, and Indo-Pacific defense initiatives, are likely to persist, strategic recalibrations may emerge. These include targeted decoupling in critical industries, redefined alliance management to bolster multilateral coalitions, expanded soft power campaigns to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative, and a more assertive approach toward Taiwan.

The research further underscores the profound ramifications of these strategies. In the Indo-Pacific, heightened military cooperation and strategic partnerships are expected to counterbalance China's regional assertiveness, but these efforts may simultaneously exacerbate tensions, particularly over Taiwan and the South China Sea. Globally, the continuation of this strategy is poised to accelerate economic and technological bifurcation, deepen ideological divides, and challenge the coherence of international governance structures. By providing a comprehensive analysis of the continuities and potential adaptations in Trump's China policy, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of U.S.-China strategic competition and its far-reaching implications for global geopolitics in the 21st century.

**Keywords**

U.S.-China relations, China Containment Strategy, Donald Trump, Indo-Pacific strategy, global geopolitics, Taiwan policy.

**Introduction**

The evolving relationship between the United States and China has emerged as one of the most defining and consequential aspects of global geopolitics in the 21st century. As the two largest economies in the world, the U.S. and China exert significant influence over international trade, technological innovation, and security dynamics. The intensifying rivalry between these two powers is reshaping global power structures and will likely define the future course of international relations for decades. Under the leadership of Donald Trump during his first term (2017–2021), U.S.-China relations witnessed a dramatic shift from diplomatic engagement to a more confrontational and strategic competition. Trump's presidency was characterized by aggressive economic policies, military posturing, and the promotion of a more self-interested, America-first foreign policy. The hallmark of this approach was the "China Containment Strategy," which included measures such as the imposition of tariffs, technological decoupling, and strategic military realignments to counter China's growing influence on the world stage. Key initiatives, such as the trade war, technological restrictions on Chinese companies like Huawei, and the bolstering of defense alliances in the Indo-Pacific, exemplified Trump's desire to curtail China's rise and ensure that the U.S. maintained its global primacy.

As Trump's first term drew to a close, discussions around his political future intensified, with many speculating on the potential direction of U.S.-China relations in a second term, often referred to as "Trump 2.0." In the hypothetical scenario of Trump's return to office for a second term as the 47th president, significant questions arise regarding the continuity or alteration of his policies toward China. Would a victorious Trump in a second term continue to aggressively confront China in the same manner as his first term, or would he adapt his strategy to reflect new geopolitical realities, domestic political concerns, and shifting global challenges? The potential continuation of Trump's approach to China would have significant implications for the future of U.S.-China relations, not only in terms of economic policies and technological competition but also in terms of military dynamics and broader international cooperation. Given the rapidly changing nature of the global political landscape, understanding the potential trajectory of Trump's foreign policy in a second term is of paramount importance.

This research article aims to explore the evolving nature of U.S.-China relations under a second Trump administration, with a specific focus on the continuation or modification of the "China Containment Strategy." This strategy, which dominated much of Trump's first term, includes several core elements, such as the aggressive pursuit of economic decoupling through tariffs and trade restrictions, efforts to limit Chinese access to critical technologies, and the reinforcement of U.S. military presence and alliances in the Indo-Pacific to counter China's strategic ambitions. The paper will assess the degree to which these policies may continue or shift in response to various factors, such as changes in global power dynamics, the emergence of new economic and technological trends, and the political context within the United States. More specifically, the research will analyze the key dimensions of the China Containment Strategy—economic, technological, and military—and evaluate whether Trump's second term would represent a continuation of the confrontational policies of his first term or if new approaches would emerge.

By examining the continuity and potential changes in Trump's policies, this paper also seeks to understand whether the "China Containment Strategy" is a personal approach rooted in Trump's leadership style or part of a larger, bipartisan shift in U.S. foreign policy that reflects a more long-term, structural competition between the U.S. and China. While the Trump administration's policies were often seen as distinct from those of previous administrations, they also reflected broader trends in U.S. politics, particularly a rising concern over China's growing global influence and its challenge to American hegemony. The paper will also explore how these shifts in U.S. foreign policy under Trump might reflect changing attitudes toward China within the U.S. political landscape, especially in light of bipartisan concerns about China's economic practices, human rights record, and growing military capabilities.

The paper will also explore the strategic implications of U.S.-China competition in the Indo-Pacific region, where the two powers are engaged in a contest for regional influence. Trump's first-term policies saw an increase in U.S. military presence in the region, the strengthening of defense partnerships with key regional allies such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia, and the revival of the Quad as a mechanism for counterbalancing China's assertiveness. With China's

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) expanding across Asia and beyond, the region's security landscape is increasingly dominated by the U.S.-China rivalry. The Indo-Pacific has become a flashpoint for military tensions, particularly in areas like the South China Sea, Taiwan, and the Korean Peninsula. As such, Trump's second term, if it occurs, will likely continue to focus on securing U.S. interests in the region, maintaining the military balance, and managing strategic partnerships to prevent Chinese dominance.

The article will also assess the broader geopolitical implications of a continued U.S. effort to contain China, particularly in terms of global governance, trade, and international institutions. The competition between the two nations is not limited to bilateral relations; it extends to multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and the World Health Organization, where both powers vie for influence and control. Trump's second term would likely seek to reshape these institutions to better align with American interests and counter China's growing global footprint.

**The Concept of "China Containment Strategy" and Its Relevance to U.S. Foreign Policy**

The "China Containment Strategy" refers to a comprehensive set of policies and actions aimed at countering the rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and limiting its influence across economic, technological, military, and diplomatic spheres. Rooted in concerns over China's challenge to the U.S.-led global order, this strategy seeks to curtail Beijing's growing power and influence while safeguarding U.S. strategic, economic, and ideological interests. Although the term "containment" harks back to the Cold War era, its contemporary application reflects the evolving nature of competition between two global powers. The strategy encompasses economic decoupling, technological rivalry, military posturing, and the strengthening of diplomatic alliances, all of which serve to mitigate China's capacity to challenge U.S. dominance (Allison, 2017; Mearsheimer, 2021).

A critical element of the China Containment Strategy involves economic measures designed to reduce reliance on China while restricting its access to global markets and resources. During Donald Trump's presidency (2017–2021), these efforts materialized through a trade war that imposed significant tariffs on Chinese goods, targeting practices such as intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and state subsidies (Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, 2018). These measures were complemented by a broader push to diversify supply chains and encourage domestic manufacturing within the United States, reducing economic interdependence with China (Blustein, 2019). This decoupling effort sought not only to protect U.S. industries but also to limit China's ability to leverage its economic power for political and strategic gains (Lighthizer, 2020).

Technological rivalry forms another critical pillar of the containment strategy, reflecting the strategic importance of emerging technologies in defining global power dynamics. The United States has taken significant steps to prevent China from accessing advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, and 5G infrastructure. High-profile actions, including the blacklisting of Huawei and export restrictions on semiconductor technologies, underscore the U.S. determination to curtail China's technological ascent (Congressional Research Service 2020). Moreover, Washington has actively sought to build coalitions with like-minded nations to develop secure and resilient supply chains, ensuring that China remains excluded from critical technology ecosystems (Segal, 2021). This push is primarily driven by concerns over national security, economic competition, and technological dominance. Washington's primary focus has been on sectors such as 5G telecommunications, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and quantum computing. One of the most prominent examples of this pressure is the U.S. campaign against Huawei. Trump's first administration led efforts to persuade European countries to exclude Huawei from their 5G networks, citing risks of espionage and data breaches. The U.S. has leveraged diplomatic channels, economic incentives, and even threats of reduced intelligence sharing to sway its allies. Additionally, the USA has adopted a strict policy towards the UK, warning that if Huawei is allowed to participate in its infrastructure, it may lead to the UK's removal from the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance. The technological competition between the two nations not only has economic implications but also poses significant national security concerns, as these technologies have dual-use applications in military and intelligence

operations (Kania, 2020).

In the Indo-Pacific, China's involvement has significantly expanded in recent years as Beijing seeks to influence regional powers and assert its strategic and economic presence. This growing influence is marked by a combination of economic investments, military modernization, and diplomatic engagements. One of the key instruments of China's strategy is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has financed infrastructure projects across the Indo-Pacific, including ports, railways, and energy facilities. Countries such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Myanmar have become focal points of Chinese investments, often leading to increased economic dependency on Beijing. China's naval expansion in the South China Sea has also raised concerns among regional powers like India, Japan, and Australia. The militarization of disputed islands and the establishment of artificial islands serve as strategic outposts to project Chinese power and control vital maritime routes. Beijing has also engaged in diplomatic efforts to build alliances and partnerships through regional organizations like the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. These platforms provide China with opportunities to shape regional economic policies and security frameworks. Moreover, China has leveraged soft power through cultural exchanges, educational programs, and technological exports to enhance its influence. This Chinese active involvement in the region has seriously concerned the U.S. administration. The U.S.'s China Containment Strategy manifests through enhanced military posturing and strategic partnerships aimed at countering China's assertiveness in the region. The United States has increased its military presence in key areas, conducted Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) to challenge China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, and strengthened defense alliances with regional partners such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia (O'Rourke, 2021). The revival of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) involving the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia reflects a broader effort to coordinate a collective response to China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific (Green, 2020). The region has emerged as a key theatre of strategic competition, with flashpoints such as Taiwan, the South China Sea, and the Korean Peninsula underscoring the stakes involved. By bolstering its alliances and military readiness in the Indo-Pacific, the U.S. aims to preserve regional stability while countering China's efforts to establish dominance (Shambaugh, 2020).

Diplomatic efforts also play a central role in the China Containment Strategy, as the United States seeks to rally international support for a values-based approach to global governance. By emphasizing principles such as transparency, the rule of law, and human rights, the U.S. aims to counter China's growing influence in multilateral institutions and promote an authoritarian governance model (Friedberg, 2020). Washington has worked to strengthen traditional alliances, such as NATO, while engaging with emerging powers like India to build coalitions that can counterbalance China's global ambitions (Campbell & Sullivan, 2019). Additionally, the U.S. has sought to provide alternatives to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through initiatives like the G7's Build Back Better World (B3W), which promotes sustainable and transparent infrastructure development in the Global South (G7 2021).

The ideological component of the strategy underscores the broader competition between democratic and authoritarian governance models. The United States has consistently highlighted China's human rights abuses, particularly in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, as a means of delegitimizing Beijing's global influence (Human Rights Watch 2020). Sanctions on Chinese officials and entities involved in these abuses serve to signal U.S. commitment to human rights while framing the U.S.-China rivalry as a contest between freedom and oppression (U.S. Department of State 2021). This ideological framing has become an essential tool for the U.S. in building coalitions with like-minded nations and strengthening its global leadership position (Diamond & Schell, 2019).

The relevance of the China Containment Strategy to U.S. foreign policy cannot be overstated. It aligns with Washington's broader goal of maintaining its global leadership and countering challenges to the liberal international order (Ikenberry, 2020). China's rise represents a systemic challenge to the post-World War II order, where the United States has been the dominant economic, military, and ideological power. The strategy seeks to ensure that the U.S. remains competitive in key domains, from technology to military power, while addressing the economic and security concerns posed by China's rapid ascent (Mearsheimer, 2021).

Ultimately, the China Containment Strategy reflects the recognition that U.S.-

China competition is not merely a bilateral issue but a defining feature of the 21st-century global order. The strategy's multidimensional nature underscores the complexity of the challenge posed by China's rise and the importance of a coordinated and sustained response. As the U.S. continues to adapt its foreign policy to address this challenge, the China Containment Strategy will remain central to shaping the trajectory of global geopolitics. By addressing economic, technological, military, and ideological dimensions, the strategy provides a framework for understanding the broader competition between the two powers and its implications for the future world order (Friedberg, 2020).

**US-China relations under Trump 1.0**

U.S.-China relations during Donald Trump's first presidency (2017–2021) were characterized by a significant shift from engagement to a more confrontational approach driven by geopolitical, economic, technological, and military tensions. This shift was largely due to the growing influence of China in the Indo-Pacific. At the strategic level, the Trump administration's policies were driven by a fundamental shift in U.S. perceptions of China as a strategic competitor. In its 2017 National Security Strategy and 2018 National Defense Strategy, the U.S. formally recognized China as a "revisionist power" that was seeking to challenge the U.S.-led international order and reshape global institutions to suit its interests. This marked a dramatic shift away from the prior engagement strategy, which had sought to integrate China into the global system in the hope that it would eventually adopt more democratic practices and respect international norms (Swaine, 2018). Under Trump, this approach was replaced by a more adversarial stance, with an emphasis on containing China's growing influence, particularly in critical areas such as trade, technology, and security. Trump's policies were also shaped by the broader geopolitical context, which included China's increasingly assertive role in global affairs. This included its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive infrastructure project aimed at expanding China's economic and political influence across Asia, Africa, and Europe, and its growing role in international organizations, where it sought to promote its own vision of governance and multilateralism. At the same time, China's human rights record, particularly in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong, came under heightened scrutiny. The Trump administration, along with several Western countries, criticized China

for its repression of the Uyghur Muslim minority in Xinjiang and its crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong (Klein & Pettis, 2020).

At the economic level, the Trump administration believed that China was undermining the U.S. interests on the global stage. One of the most significant aspects of this period was the trade war, which began in 2018 when President Trump sought to address the massive U.S. trade deficit with China. The Trump administration accused China of engaging in unfair trade practices, including intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and state subsidies that distorted the global market (Bown, 2021). In retaliation, the U.S. imposed tariffs on over $360 billion worth of Chinese goods, targeting a wide range of products, including electronics, steel, and aluminum. China, in turn, imposed tariffs on American exports, including agricultural products, which affected U.S. farmers and created significant disruptions in the global supply chain. The trade war culminated in the signing of the Phase One Trade Deal in January 2020, where China agreed to purchase an additional $200 billion in U.S. goods, particularly agricultural products over two years, while also agreeing to improve intellectual property protections (Bown, 2021). However, the deal left many structural issues unresolved, including China's state-led industrial policies and its "Made in China 2025" strategy, which focuses on advancing China's technological capabilities through state support (Klein & Pettis, 2020). While the deal provided temporary relief, the underlying issues remained contentious, and the trade war revealed the deepening economic rivalry between the two countries.

Alongside the trade war, the Trump administration initiated a series of measures aimed at decoupling the U.S. technology sector from China's growing influence. This was particularly evident in the case of Huawei, China's largest telecommunications company, which was accused of spying for the Chinese government and undermining global cybersecurity. The U.S. imposed strict restrictions on Huawei, barring the company from purchasing key technologies from American firms, such as semiconductors and software critical for 5G networks. Washington also pressured U.S. allies to exclude Huawei from their 5G networks on national security grounds, resulting in a global campaign against the company's presence in critical infrastructure (Segal, 2020). This effort was part of a broader strategy to prevent China from achieving technological supremacy in

emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and telecommunications. The U.S. also imposed export controls on Chinese tech companies, particularly those involved in AI and surveillance technologies, while the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) became increasingly active in blocking Chinese investments in sensitive sectors, including semiconductors and critical infrastructure (Klein & Pettis, 2020). These actions reflected Washington's concern that China's technological advancements, aided by state-driven policies, could undermine the U.S. economic and security interests and potentially lead to an erosion of U.S. global leadership in technology.

The military dimension of U.S.-China relations also became a point of contention, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, where the two powers were increasingly on a collision course over territorial disputes and strategic influence. In the South China Sea, China's aggressive expansion of artificial islands and military outposts on disputed reefs and islands had been a source of growing concern for the U.S. and its allies. The Trump administration responded by intensifying Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs), a series of military exercises aimed at challenging China's claims to virtually all of the South China Sea. These operations, conducted by U.S. naval vessels and aircraft, were designed to assert the principle of freedom of navigation under international law and to challenge China's territorial assertions, which the U.S. viewed as illegal under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Grossman, 2020). Beyond the South China Sea, tensions also flared over Taiwan, which Beijing considers a breakaway province. Under Trump, the U.S. significantly increased its military support for Taiwan, including arms sales worth billions of dollars, to enhance Taiwan's defense capabilities in the face of growing Chinese military pressure. These sales included advanced weaponry such as F-16 fighter jets, anti-aircraft missile systems, and sophisticated radars, as well as naval assets like submarines (Bush, 2020). High-profile U.S. visits to Taiwan, including by senior officials such as Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar in 2020, further exacerbated tensions with Beijing, which viewed these gestures as tacit support for Taiwan's independence.

Trump's approach to the Indo-Pacific was also marked by a broader strategic shift. His administration sought to counter China's growing regional influence by

strengthening alliances and partnerships with countries such as Japan, India, South Korea, and Australia. One of the key initiatives was the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), a loose security arrangement between the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia. The Quad was intended to counter China's assertiveness in the region by promoting a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," and it was reinvigorated during Trump's presidency as a direct response to China's growing influence, both militarily and economically. Admiral John Aquilino of the Indo-Pacific Command of the US Navy highlighted that "a united and technologically advanced Quad is the most effective counterbalance to Beijing's maritime ambitions" (Aquilino, 2024). The U.S. also sought to strengthen bilateral defense partnerships with countries in the region, including signing agreements such as the U.S.-India defense cooperation deal, which expanded military exchanges, joint exercises, and access to military facilities (Swaine, 2018). It has also expanded its strategic partnerships in Southeast Asia, with nations such as Vietnam and the Philippines emerging as pivotal allies in countering Chinese influence. Analysts such as Derek Grossman of RAND Corporation view these partnerships as a linchpin for enabling a forward-deployed posture capable of rapid response to regional crises (Grossman, 2023). These efforts were designed to bolster a counterweight to China's rising influence and to reassure U.S. allies in the region of Washington's commitment to their security in the face of Chinese expansionism.

The strategic rivalry between the U.S. and China during Trump's presidency was not without its consequences for global stability. The trade war disrupted international markets and strained global supply chains, particularly in sectors such as electronics and agriculture. The decoupling of technology sectors raised concerns about the fragmentation of the global digital economy and the emergence of competing technological spheres of influence. The growing military tensions in the Indo-Pacific, particularly over Taiwan, also raised the prospect of a direct military confrontation between the two powers, especially given China's increasing military capabilities and its assertive stance on territorial disputes. Despite these challenges, Trump's administration succeeded in rallying like-minded countries to address China's rise and to bolster U.S. influence in the region. However, critics argued that Trump's approach was often erratic and inconsistent, undermining long-term U.S. credibility and the strength of its alliances. In particular, Trump's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership

(TPP) in 2017 was seen as a missed opportunity to shape the regional economic order and counter China's growing economic influence in Asia (Bown, 2021).

**Trum 2.0 and China Containment Strategy**

In the wake of Donald Trump's re-election, his administration's China containment strategy would likely exhibit both continuity and change, reflecting evolving geopolitical dynamics and lessons learned from his first term. Key areas of continuity would include economic decoupling, military posturing in the Indo-Pacific, technological restrictions, and rhetorical confrontation. At the same time, significant changes could involve a pragmatic shift in alliance management, more targeted economic decoupling, expanded information campaigns, and a recalibrated approach to Taiwan policy. Together, these strategies would aim to maintain and refine the broader framework of strategic competition with China while addressing new challenges and opportunities.

Economic decoupling, a hallmark of Trump's first term, is expected to remain a central pillar of his China strategy. During his initial presidency, the U.S. imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese goods, aiming to reduce the trade deficit and pressure Beijing to adopt fairer trade practices (Bown, 2020). A second term would likely continue this emphasis, with a focus on reshoring manufacturing and reducing reliance on Chinese supply chains. This approach reflects a broader consensus in Washington that economic interdependence with China poses risks to U.S. national security. Beyond tariffs, restrictions on Chinese technology firms such as Huawei and ZTE would persist, further limiting China's access to critical technologies and safeguarding U.S. technological leadership (Segal, 2021). These measures align with bipartisan concerns about China's use of economic leverage and intellectual property theft to advance its global ambitions.

The military dimension of Trump's China containment strategy would also exhibit continuity, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Trump's emphasis on a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" framework, which seeks to counter China's militarization

of the South China Sea and its broader regional assertiveness, is likely to persist (Rehman, 2021). During his first term, the U.S. strengthened its military presence in the region, conducted freedom of navigation operations, and deepened defense cooperation with allies such as Japan, Australia, and India. These efforts are expected to continue, with an emphasis on enhancing the capabilities of the Quad—an informal strategic forum comprising the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia. By fostering greater interoperability among these nations' armed forces and increasing joint military exercises, a second Trump term would seek to deter Chinese aggression and ensure the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

Another area of continuity would be the restriction of Chinese access to critical technologies, including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. During his first term, Trump implemented export controls and sanctions to curb China's technological advances, citing national security concerns (Segal, 2021). These efforts would likely intensify in a second term, reflecting a bipartisan consensus on the importance of maintaining U.S. technological superiority. By limiting China's ability to acquire cutting-edge technologies, the U.S. aims to slow Beijing's progress in fields that could enhance its military and economic power. Additionally, efforts to strengthen domestic research and development, as well as collaboration with like-minded nations to secure supply chains for critical technologies, would remain a priority.

Rhetorically, Trump's confrontational stance toward China is unlikely to change. During his first term, he consistently referred to China as a "strategic adversary" and criticized its trade practices, stating, "China is taking advantage of the United States like no one in history." Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also echoed this sentiment, labeling China's Communist Party as "the central threat of our times." Such rhetoric galvanized both domestic and international support for strict policies, a trend that would likely continue in a second term. During his first term, he consistently framed China as a geopolitical rival and economic threat, using strong language to galvanize domestic and international support for tough policies. This approach resonated with his base and aligned with broader U.S. public sentiment, which has grown increasingly wary of China's rise (Allison, 2020). A second term would likely see a continuation of this rhetoric, with Trump emphasizing the need to protect American jobs, sovereignty, and security from

perceived Chinese threats.

While these elements of continuity would form the backbone of Trump's China strategy, significant changes could emerge in response to shifting geopolitical dynamics and lessons learned from his first term. One notable change might be a more pragmatic approach to alliances. Trump's initial presidency was marked by ambivalence toward traditional allies, often criticizing them for not contributing enough to collective defense. However, in the second term, the increasing strategic competition with China could prompt Trump to adopt a more cooperative stance. Strengthening alliances such as NATO, as well as bolstering multilateral mechanisms like the Quad and AUKUS, would enhance the U.S.'s ability to counterbalance China's influence (Green, 2023). U.S. diplomats, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have consistently emphasized the importance of such alliances in fostering a collective security framework. Military leaders, like former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, have also highlighted the role of the Quad in promoting regional stability and deterring aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific. By leveraging the capabilities and resources of its allies, the U.S. could project greater strength and resilience in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Another potential shift could involve a move toward more targeted economic decoupling. This would likely prioritize critical sectors such as green energy, rare earth minerals, and pharmaceuticals, which are particularly crucial for national security. For example, rare earth minerals are indispensable for advanced technologies like defense systems and renewable energy, while pharmaceuticals are vital for healthcare resilience. Targeting these sectors would aim to reduce strategic vulnerabilities and counter China's dominance in these areas, ensuring a more secure and self-reliant U.S. supply chain. While broad-based tariffs were a key feature of Trump's first term, they also caused significant disruptions to global supply chains and imposed costs on American consumers and businesses (Scissors, 2022). In a second term, the administration might adopt a more nuanced approach, focusing on decoupling in critical sectors such as green energy, rare earth minerals, and pharmaceuticals. This targeted strategy would aim to reduce dependence on China in areas vital to U.S. national security and economic resilience while minimizing collateral damage to other sectors of the

economy. By prioritizing strategic industries, the U.S. could mitigate the risks of economic coercion and enhance its ability to compete with China in key domains.

The expansion of information campaigns to counter China's global narrative could also become a more prominent feature of Trump's second-term strategy. U.S. State Department officials have highlighted the importance of public diplomacy in addressing China's growing influence, emphasizing efforts to promote transparency and democratic values through initiatives like the Global Engagement Centre. These campaigns would likely aim to amplify narratives that challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative and expose the risks of authoritarian governance models. During his first term, efforts to challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and promote alternative development models were relatively limited. A second term could see increased investments in soft power initiatives, such as the Blue Dot Network, which seeks to provide a transparent and sustainable alternative to the BRI (Rolland, 2020). By partnering with like-minded nations to support high-quality infrastructure projects in developing countries, the U.S. could counter China's influence and strengthen its leadership on the global stage. Additionally, enhanced public diplomacy efforts and strategic communications would aim to highlight the benefits of U.S.-led initiatives and expose the risks associated with China's approach.

Taiwan's policy could represent another area of significant change in Trump's second term. During his first presidency, Trump took steps to strengthen ties with Taiwan, including approving arms sales and sending high-level officials to visit the island. However, these actions were relatively cautious, reflecting the U.S.'s longstanding "One-China" policy. A second term might see a more assertive stance, with increased military cooperation, larger arms sales, and more explicit diplomatic support for Taiwan's sovereignty (Mastro, 2022). Such actions would aim to deter Chinese aggression and signal U.S. commitment to the island's defense. However, they could also heighten tensions with Beijing and increase the risk of conflict in the region. Balancing deterrence with diplomacy would, therefore, be a critical challenge for the Trump administration.

**Conclusion**

The potential continuation of Donald Trump's China Containment Strategy in a second presidential term represents a complex blend of continuity and change, reflecting both the evolving geopolitical landscape and the lessons derived from his first presidency. Trump's policies during his first term shifted U.S.-China relations from strategic engagement to a more confrontational posture characterized by economic decoupling, technological restrictions, military posturing in the Indo-Pacific, and an overarching competition narrative. These policies were deeply embedded in a broader bipartisan recognition of China as a strategic competitor, ensuring their persistence across future administrations.

In a second term, Trump's strategy would likely maintain core elements of his first-term policies, such as economic tariffs, supply chain diversification, military strengthening, and restrictions on critical technologies. Simultaneously, adjustments would emerge to address lessons learned and new realities, including more targeted decoupling in strategic industries, recalibrated alliance management to strengthen multilateral coalitions, and expanded efforts in soft power diplomacy to counter China's global influence. Taiwan policy, a significant flashpoint in U.S.-China relations, may see an increasingly assertive U.S. stance, heightening tensions but underscoring America's commitment to regional stability.

The impact of this approach on the Indo-Pacific region would be profound. Enhanced U.S. military cooperation with regional allies through frameworks like the Quad and AUKUS would aim to counterbalance China's growing influence and secure a stable balance of power. Experts, such as Green (2023), have highlighted the role of the Quad in ensuring regional stability, describing it as "a linchpin for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific amidst rising tensions." Similarly, Rehman (2021) underscores the significance of U.S. military presence in the region, stating that "the deterrence provided by a robust U.S.-led security network is essential to counter Chinese assertiveness and to preserve the strategic autonomy of smaller states."

Globally, the continuation of the China Containment Strategy could reshape the international order. Decoupling trends would accelerate, fostering the

development of parallel economic and technological ecosystems. Mearsheimer (2021) argues that such fragmentation is a natural consequence of great-power competition, asserting that "the emergence of competing spheres of influence is inevitable as the U.S. and China vie for dominance in the global arena." Moreover, Campbell and Sullivan (2019) emphasize that "targeted economic decoupling in critical sectors like technology and rare earth minerals could mitigate vulnerabilities and ensure strategic resilience for the U.S."

Simultaneously, the ideological dimensions of the U.S.-China rivalry could deepen, with both powers vying for influence over developing nations. Rolland (2020) notes that the U.S. must offer credible alternatives to China's Belt and Road Initiative to "provide nations with choices that align with democratic governance and economic transparency." Increased soft power campaigns, as highlighted by Friedberg (2020), would not only challenge China's global narrative but also "reinforce U.S. leadership in promoting liberal values on the world stage."

However, experts caution that an overly confrontational approach carries risks. Mastro (2022) warns that an assertive U.S. policy toward Taiwan could escalate tensions and lead to "unintended conflict with China, particularly as Beijing perceives its core interests to be threatened." Managing this rivalry responsibly will be critical to ensuring regional and global stability.

Ultimately, Trump 2.0 would aim to refine the China Containment Strategy into a more sustainable and pragmatic framework. By balancing continuity with strategic shifts, the U.S. could address emerging challenges while advancing its interests in a competitive and rapidly changing international environment. As Allison (2020) observes, "The future of U.S.-China relations will not only define the trajectory of global geopolitics but also determine whether the 21st century will be marked by cooperation or confrontation."

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