

Region	Vice President Biden	President Trump
Europe	<p>Rapprochement with individual allies and the EU holds a central role in a Biden foreign policy. As the EU is seen as the United States' most willing allies on combating climate change and Russian aggression, the revival of this transatlantic partnership is not only a regional reset but a linchpin for accomplishing broader national security priorities. The Vice President also envisions the Europeans as natural partners in exerting economic pressure on China.</p> <p>Re-entering the Paris agreement, backing of some trade disputes, reversing troop withdrawals and bringing back pro-democratic rhetoric would all bring favor with Brussels and regional capitals. A President Biden could also extend cooperation on technology development in multiple areas, to boost a democratic conception of future digital and technical innovations. He would likely restore some confidence amongst NATO allies but is unlikely to relieve pressure on them to increase defense spending.</p>	<p>The President's election was seen in Europe as an American rebuke of the post-WWII order. True to promise, in office Trump withdrew from several key partnerships while rebranding the EU as a competitor on trade. The administration's unclear position on Russia has also been cause for concern, especially on the back of troop withdrawals from Germany and a weakened rhetorical commitment to NATO.</p> <p>Tensions would continue under a second Trump presidency. Cooperation on isolated matters is possible, such as the Middle East. Conversely, the administration would likely continue to exert pressure through economic and security policy to force European countries to adopt U.S. positions on China, technology and trade. European unity will be determinant to how effective a continuation of this strategy will be.</p>
Iran	<p>Vice President Biden continues to support the strategy established under the Obama administration, especially the JCPOA. He has committed to rejoining the agreement if Iran returns to compliance with the terms, viewing it as the best chance to stifle Teheran's nuclear ambitions and return to a more unified international position on the issue. It could be an easy early win for the administration and signal the return of U.S. leadership the former Vice President is anxious to display. But if Iran stands by its demand that America move first on improving relations or reject extending negotiations to address provisions in the JCPOA that are set to expire during a first Biden term, the situation could become much more complex.</p> <p>More broadly, a Biden administration could seek incremental deals on ballistic missile</p>	<p>Lamenting the JCPOA as "the worst deal in history," President Trump unilaterally exited the agreement in 2018, reimposing sanctions as part of a maximum pressure strategy. At times officials have entertained the idea of regime change in Teheran and increased U.S. military posturing, most notably by ordering a strike on the Quds Force general Quasem Soleimani earlier this year. The administration has also exerted pressure on the remaining P5+1 signatories of the JCPOA to abandon the deal, so far to little effect.</p> <p>The stated goal of this unilateral approach is to bring Teheran to the table on a deal eclipsing the JCPOA in scope and depth. The President has also made increased efforts to unite Sunni-Arab countries and Israel against Iran to check the regime's influence across the region. The President would likely continue to</p>

	<p>development or financing of international armed groups. Dividing actions between military pressure and diplomacy to check Iranian activity is likely the main goal, not regime change or armed escalation in the region. Inherently more skeptical of cooperation with non-democratic regional powers, Vice President Biden has pledged to end support for the Saudi coalition in Yemen, signaling apprehension for backing major military operations countering Iranian influence.</p>	<p>go at it alone if reelected, having promised a comprehensive deal soon after election.</p>
<p>Korean peninsula</p>	<p>Vice President Biden has criticized the Trump administration’s approach, both for the personal affection espoused by the President towards Kim Jong-Un and actions that Democrats view as exchanging leverage over the regime for little in return. He has also expressed concern over the less cooperative U.S. military strategy in the region playing into North Korea’s and China’s hands. He has not presented a comprehensive approach to dealing with the nuclear issue.</p> <p>Some changes are likely to take place affecting the dynamics on the peninsula, however. Vice President Biden has pledged to step up nonproliferation efforts in general through renewed NPT talks. He also envisions stronger cooperation with South Korea, Japan and India on regional security while trying to bring China to rescind support for Pyongyang. This strategy echoes a more traditional U.S. approach to the issue, which has failed to deliver comprehensive results over several previous administrations.</p>	<p>In the wake of several nuclear and missile tests conducted by the North Korean regime in the early Trump presidency, tensions between Pyongyang and U.S. were high only to give way to direct talks between the President and Kim Jong-Un. After two summits, the efforts to bring an end to the nuclear program was halted ostensibly over divergent understandings of what a nuclear-free peninsula would be. Even so, the Trump administration threatened withdrawal of troops from the DMZ over economic disputes with South Korea and ended joint exercises in as a concession to the North.</p> <p>It is unclear what a future Trump policy towards the region is. Tensions with China will likely continue to make a comprehensive deal difficult. The administration has not presented any concrete plan to reinvigorate the talks with North Korea.</p>
<p>Africa</p>	<p>The former Vice President has made few direct policy statements about what his White House would do, beyond calling for a reset of relations perceived as having been damaged by President Trump’s statements and lifting the travel ban.</p> <p>Vice President Biden has vowed to support increased economic integration on the continent through the African Union’s African Continental Free Trade Agreement. A general</p>	<p>The administration has so far showed cool interest in the region, while continuing some important policies to lift its people out of poverty—largely at the behest of Congress. The signature policy, Prosper Africa, has sought to boost American business activity in the region. He also doubled the DFC’s investment cap in the region to \$60 billion. Policy initiatives seem to largely be driven by competition with China, promoting U.S. private sector involvement on the continent to balance</p>

	<p>pivot towards diplomacy and foreign aid as the tools of choice could bring increased efforts to counter Chinese influence by promoting democratic and anti-corruption reform. The Trump Administration’s counterterrorism focus could continue largely unchanged.</p>	<p>increased levels of Chinese infrastructure investment. Part of a larger counterterrorism focus, the Pentagon has offered support for Sub-Saharan African countries fighting jihadi insurgencies.</p> <p>China, Russia and other non-African countries will continue to assert influence in the region, making incursions on the historical relationship shared between the U.S. and many countries in the region. The Trump campaign has not presented a strategy to renew partnerships and is unlikely to invest significant resources to increase efforts on development, health or democracy in the near term.</p>
<p>Latin America</p>	<p>Vice President Biden has fiercely criticized the Trump administration’s immigration policy, which is a key point of contention in the region. The former Vice President has vowed to repeal the harsh enforcement policies put in place on the Southern border. Instead of increased enforcement, he has proposed increased efforts to combat the drivers of migration and hardship on the continent, pledging to invest \$4 billion over a first term bolstered by local matching requirements in Central America. A President Biden would likely pivot towards development programs and support. The platform also promises help to communities threatened by climate change.</p> <p>The more generous immigration policy also plays a part in revamping the U.S. approach to Venezuela and Nicaragua. While in agreement about the Maduro regime’s illegitimacy and sharing Republican concern over democratic deficit, the former Vice President has criticized President Trump’s using of military action as ineffective, instead preferring a regional strategy employing diplomatic pressure, targeted sanctions and enabling neighboring countries to take in more political refugees. On Cuba, a Biden administration would act to reverse the current policy in a return to Obama era rapprochement and sanctions relief.</p>	<p>The USMCA was a priority of the administration, and regional powers like Brazil have aligned its foreign policy more closely with the U.S. than ever before. Other countries have acquiesced to renegotiating trade deals, another of the President’s key policy moves. Tensions with Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua have risen significantly. The administration reversed the normalization with Cuba that took place under the Obama administration, responded to political upheaval in Venezuela by openly supporting Juan Guido over the incumbent and imposing sweeping sanctions in the process. Recently, the U.S. appointed its first president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in line with a more assertive U.S. in the Americas under President Trump.</p> <p>President Trump’s hardline policies on immigration and regional adversaries is likely to continue. The region will grapple with several crises in the coming term, including democratic back-sliding and COVID-19 recovery, for which the administration has yet to publish significant policy responses. Support for current projects, including combating drug trafficking, corruption and some health initiatives, have been pledged by officials. Competition with China may also shape future policy.</p>

<p>China</p>	<p>The nationalist and increasingly assertive posture of China under President Xi has prompted Vice President Biden to call him a “thug” and adopt a much more hawkish position. He has criticized President Trump’s tariff strategy as erratic, the Phase One trade deal as ineffective and condemned perceived weakness on condemning human rights abuses.</p> <p>If elected in November, the strategic confrontation between the U.S. and China would not dissipate but shift in strategy. The former Vice President has entertained the possibility to re-enter a version of the TTP which he was part of conceiving under the Obama administration and would seek to build a coalition of countries to exert magnified pressure on Beijing, both for regional security and global economic unity. The former Vice President has taken a much firmer line on sanctioning human rights abuses and pushing back on Chinese influence in regions such as Africa and the Americas. His strategy is to make the U.S. economy more competitive in key technologies and industries in favor of the punishing approach favored by the Trump administration.</p> <p>Vice President Biden has not committed to lifting the \$370 billion in tariffs imposed by President Trump, explicitly branding Chinese trade practices and IP theft as major economic threats to American prosperity. The major distinction between a Biden and Trump administration in 2020 would mostly lie in the tools, not the goals, used to address the rise of China.</p>	<p>China has been the focus of Donald Trump’s foreign policy, upending previous administrations’ attempts to manage its rise and reforming the CCP’s mode of governance. Initiating a trade war, increasing restrictions on Chinese companies over security concerns, increasing freedom of navigation operations in the Taiwan Strait and rejecting all Chinese claims in the South China Sea are among the actions taken in a comprehensive escalation of hostilities. What little common ground the Trump administration could find with the Chinese, mainly through the President’s personal relationship with President Xi, seems to have dissipated over the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>Increasing tensions over closer U.S.-Taiwanese ties, accusations of cyber espionage and diplomatic rows could drive further conflict or American efforts to “decouple,” which Trump has publicly entertained. There are parts of the relationship which could ease the strategic contest, such as the Phase One trade deal. The President has based the relationship on economic fairness, so concessions on trade could ease tensions. However, a united Congress could push for expanded sanctions over repression of minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet or crackdown in Hong Kong, over the tendency of the President to look past such violations. While the extent of continued confrontation in a second Trump administration is unsure, his inclination will likely be to retain an aggressive posture and unilaterally impose costs on the Chinese.</p>
<p>Russia</p>	<p>For Democrats, Russia has emerged as perhaps the most salient litmus test on foreign policy after the 2016 election. Donald Trump’s apparent deference to President Putin and the allegations of election interference has placed the country in the center of Biden’s foreign policy rhetoric. Standing up against the perceived threat of Russian anti-democratic activities and posturing in Europe and Middle East is a main argument backing up the former</p>	<p>The U.S.-Russia relationship has become a partisan issue under President Trump in part because it has become intimately connected with his domestic standing. The Special Council Investigation into potential connections between his campaign and Russian election interference, together with the appearance of a deferential relationship between the President and Vladimir Putin has made the issue one of presidential legitimacy.</p>

	<p>Vice President’s eagerness to recommit to NATO. The former Vice President has been a long-time proponent of NATO and its expansion eastward. Likewise, Ukraine and Arctic security are areas where he could find renewed agreement with Europe on security policy. If elected, Vice President Biden is likely to push for continued sanctions on Russian activity, including intervention in the Middle East, Ukraine, cyber-espionage, money laundering and human rights abuses.</p> <p>In practice, there would be little new in way of action from a Biden administration toward Russia, seeing as his views are generally shared across party lines in Congress. But renewed American commitment to countering Russia would be appreciated by the EU. It will likely be a balancing act considering that Russia is a potential partner in two important foreign policy goals, arms control and Iran. To be sure, there will be no love lost between a Biden White House and Moscow.</p>	<p>Policy wise, the administration has simultaneously acquiesced to Congressional pressure for more sanctions and help to Ukraine, while also taking at times an ambivalent stance on Russian hybrid warfare and foreign interventions. The administration has taken general steps on national security which effectively serve to counter Russian activities, such as authorizing offensive cyber operations and opposing EU reliance on Russian energy including the building of NordStream II.</p> <p>The administration’s Russia strategy has been one of rapprochement tempered by a bipartisan, hawkish Congress and foreign policy establishment. A resounding win for a second Trump administration could ease Republican opposition to dealing with Putin, allowing the President to push for the re-inclusion of Russia in the G8 more openly and a reset of the relationship. Energy competition is a potential barrier to a normalization of relations, as exports to the European markets could become a growing point of contention.</p>
Middle East	<p>After receiving considerable criticism during the Democratic primary for voting in favor of the Iraq war as a senator, Vice President Biden has remade his Middle East policy to revolve around ending “forever wars.” This is a central pledge he shares with President Trump, openly criticizing the cost of military involvement in lives and treasure. If elected, he is also likely to want to avoid the missteps of the Obama administration in Syria and Libya. Even so, he has criticized U.S. withdrawal from Northern Syria as a “betrayal” and still believes that American presence is necessary to ensure stability, but that such should be limited and targeted to fighting terrorism and radical insurgencies. If elected, he has pledged to stop U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen and is likely to allow arms sales to Gulf states involved in the conflict.</p> <p>Beyond the P5+1 which he would rejoin to deal with Iran, there are few regional partners palatable to Vice President Biden, who has</p>	<p>After China, the U.S. military involvement in the Middle East and the rise of ISIS became Trump’s most important rebuttals of the foreign policy establishment in 2016. He pledged to withdraw American soldiers from the region, something he has in part done, including in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, initiatives of varying success. Aggressive employment of counter-insurgency strategies, drone strikes, and a travel ban on some Muslim-majority countries has signified the President’s counter-terrorism strategy. He has closed ranks with regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE to counter Iran, which is his main policy focus in the region. The Trump administration has sought to expand U.S. arms exports to the region, while supporting operations in Yemen to this effect. The Israel-Palestinian peace plan, much to the former’s advantage along with recent normalization of Arab-Israeli relations has become the one of the administration’s foreign policy successes.</p>

	<p>openly worried about the intentions of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and probably would have a less friendly relationship with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel. While Vice President Biden is opposed to new Israeli settlements and annexations, he has a pro-Israel legislative record. He has not presented a rival plan for resolving the Palestinian conflict but has been sharply critical of the current administration's plan. The former Vice President would lift the travel ban imposed by President Trump and significantly increase the number of refugees admitted from the region.</p>	<p>In a second term, Iran will continue to be the regional focus of President Trump. As will be the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from the region, which will be dependent in part on how the negotiations with the Taliban in Afghanistan play out, but U.S. commitment to re-engage should the deal fall through is uncertain. Warmer relations with the Gulf states and Egypt could continue, but oil and OPEC actions as COVID-19 threaten demand could put a dent in the newfound friendship.</p> <p>What the road ahead on Israel looks like is also one of the larger issues, as American support for Israeli annexation would run up against efforts to improve relations with Arab nations. The recently introduced Abraham Accords have normalized relations between Israel and the Arab nations of the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan. The extent of the normalization and prospect for other countries to join, most importantly Saudi Arabia, is the big question facing the President should he be reelected.</p>
<p>Asia</p>	<p>The Obama administration's "pivot to Asia" was partially undone by President Trump's abandonment of the TTP. Vice President Biden has tentatively committed to reentering the agreement, but only after renegotiating some parts and meeting his goal of making U.S. domestic industry competitive again. Likely searching for a more value-driven approach to American engagement in the region, Democrats have emphasized ASEAN as a forum through which the U.S. should promote human rights and democracy. This will likely also drive a Biden administration to rely more on traditional partners such as South Korea and Japan, toning down trade tensions while confronting leaders in more authoritarian Asian countries over their records.</p> <p>President Trump and Vice President Biden are largely in agreement over the importance of increased U.S. military presence in the South China Sea, as well as support for Taiwan. India could be a challenge for a Democratic President, as growing nationalistic tendencies</p>	<p>In a policy environment largely driven by U.S.-China competition, the Trump administration has doubled down on a "principled realism" approach to the region. Exiting the TTP negotiations early in his presidency and renegotiating numerous trade and military agreements with Asian allies, the President has sought to build an ad-hoc alliance against Chinese military presence. Relations with more recent partners such as India and Vietnam have continued to grow closer, with less emphasis on human rights and democratic values opening the door to economic and military cooperation. The Trump administration has emphasized shared interests in the South China Sea and Pacific to entice regional cooperation.</p> <p>The future under a second Trump presidency looks to continue down this path. China remains the administration's core concern, and it is willing to exert pressure on regional powers to take a stand against its ambitions. But the administration has yet to formulate a</p>

	make cooperation with the region's largest democracy less savory. The Biden campaign has not published any concrete plan for competing with the economic power of the BRI beyond potentially rejoining the TTP.	strategy to credibly counter Chinese economic investment through the BRI. The growing cooperation with India could be a way forward, assembling a loose group of countries such as Japan and Australia to work cooperatively.
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*(Special thanks to Oscar Theblin for his work in preparing this alert.)*