**One year in office: How Donald Trump has shaped US foreign policy**

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**By Sam Meredith**

It’s been one year since President Donald Trump was inaugurated following an election campaign to “Make America Great Again.”

On January 20, 2017, the New York businessman and former reality television star was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States. Within moments of taking the oath of office under overcast skies, Trump declared: “From this day forward, it’s going to be America first.”

CNBC takes a look at some of the Trump administration’s key foreign policy decisions over the past 12 months.

**North Korea**

Trump’s first year in the Oval Office has been dominated by several months of apocalyptic rhetoric with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

During his first address to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September, the U.S. president threatened to “totally destroy ” the isolated regime. Trump made several derisory remarks towards Kim throughout the year — labeling him “Little Rocket Man ” — and publicly discouraged his own administration from making attempts to engage in dialogue with Pyongyang’s leader.

“The way that (Trump) has handled North Korea stands out above all else. He has ratcheted up tensions and pressure seemingly without an end game in mind,” Jeffrey Wright, U.S. researcher at Eurasia Group’s North America practice, told CNBC in a phone interview.

Since the start of 2017, Pyongyang has fired 23 missiles during 16 tests and consistently ignored international calls to halt its nuclear and missile programs. In July, North Korea also launched its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).  
  
More recently, tensions on the Korean peninsula appear to have cooled ahead of the Winter Olympic Games in South Korea next month. At the start of 2018, Pyongyang and Seoul renewed official communications for the first time in almost two years.

Trump sought to take credit for the talks, tweeting that it was his “firm” and “strong” foreign policy stance that had brought about a major diplomatic breakthrough.

**Israel**

Late last year, Trump dismissed warnings from American allies throughout the Middle East and announced Washington would officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

“When I came into office, I promised to look at the world’s challenges with open eyes and very fresh thinking,” Trump said as he delivered his speech on December 6, before adding: “This is nothing more, or less, than recognition of reality. It is also the right thing to do. It is something that has to be done.”

Trump also announced the U.S. would move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a decision that upends decades of Washington policy.

Jerusalem has special religious and cultural significance for Jews, Muslims and Christians and its territorial status is a key factor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Trump’s announcement was widely seen as the U.S. siding with Israel and breaking with its former role as an honest broker in a fragile regional peace process.

The move immediately attracted international condemnation, with critics concerned it could ignite further conflict in the region. As expected, there have been protests by Palestinians since the move and Middle Eastern leaders have demanded that Trump rescind the recognition.

**Iran**

Last week, Trump agreed to uphold sanctions relief for Iran as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed in 2015 by all UN Security Council members and Germany. That pact allowed the lifting of sanctions in exchange for sharp restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program.

However, the U.S. president’s disapproval of the deal is well known. He has previously said this would be the “last time” he would waive sanctions and vowed to fix what he described as the “worst deal ever. ”

In October, Trump refused to recertify the agreement and accused Iran of stoking terrorism across the Middle East. Several European leaders, along with Russia, have urged the Trump administration to respect the integrity of the original arrangement.

When asked how Trump’s foreign policy decisions had impacted America’s status in the world, Eurasia Group’s Wright replied: “Quite negatively.”

“There will be ramifications to his actions so far for decades to come and of course, by not having an end game with his foreign policy decisions, it makes it very difficult to scale back… that’s pretty scary,” he said.

**Pakistan**

In his first tweet of 2018, Trump said the U.S. had “foolishly ” handed Pakistan more than $33 billion in aid over the last 15 years, while gaining nothing in return but “lies and deceit.”

Just a day later, the South Asian nation’s central bank announced it would replace the dollar with the yuan for bilateral trade and investment with Beijing.

While it was not immediately clear what prompted Trump’s criticism of Islamabad, he has long complained that Pakistan is not doing enough to tackle Islamist militants.

In response, Pakistan said it had launched military operations to push out militants from the country and, since 2001, more than 17,000 Pakistanis had died fighting militants or in bombings.

Meanwhile, China has been watching closely as U.S.-Pakistan relations become increasingly strained. Trump has long demanded the frontier economy to do more on counter-terrorism while he simultaneously grew closer to its arch-rival, India.

**Syria**

In April, the U.S. military attacked a Syria-government airfield with 59 Tomahawk missiles. It was the first direct military action the U.S. had taken against the regime of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad.

As Trump officially announced the strike, he said the targeted airfield had launched the chemical attack on a rebel-held area and called upon other nations to oppose Syria’s embattled leader.

In response, Russia said the strikes violated international law. Moscow also warned the move would cause significant damage to relations between Russia and the U.S.

Russia has been unwavering in its support of Syrian President Bashar Assad, who has been accused of war crimes and the use of chemical weapons against his own people. The U.S., meanwhile, has provided arms and training to anti-government rebel groups.

Human rights activists have urged the UN to charge Russia and Iran, allies of the Syrian regime, with war crimes after thousands of Russian airstrikes were reported to have killed more than 4,000 Syrian civilians. U.S.-led international coalition airstrikes targeting the Islamic State are also reported by rights groups to have killed more than 1,000 civilians.

— CNBC’s Nyshka Chandran and Natasha Turak contributed to this report.

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