



Hillary Clinton's Foreign Policy Stances in the Election Campaign

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At the Democrats' national convention, Hillary Clinton formally became the party's nominee in the upcoming presidential election. Her potential victory would mean less radical change in U.S. foreign policy compared to those presented by Republican nominee Donald Trump. Clinton has stated the U.S. will be highly active in working to rebuild its strong leadership in the world. She also advocates the reinforcement of alliances in which NATO has a key role. As part of this political strategy is an increase in U.S. efforts towards ending the conflict in Syria, fighting ISIS and international terrorism, as well as the containment of Russia against attempts to change the international order by force and neo-imperial policies.

Hillary Clinton won the primary elections and with her party's convention in Philadelphia behind her, she is formally the Democrats' presidential candidate. As running mate and vice-president, she has selected Tim Kaine, a popular senator from Virginia, a swing state crucial to the outcome of the election. Kaine's role in the campaign is to ensure strong support from the Hispanic minority, undecided voters and first-time voters.

Each new U.S. president shapes foreign policy uniquely. It is very rare for an incoming president to fully continue the policy of the predecessor, even if from the same party. For the first time in U.S. history, a woman could be president and her approach to domestic and foreign policy will play an important role in shaping it. Clinton will not only strive to differentiate herself from her husband, the former U.S. President Bill Clinton (still a popular politician), but from all of her predecessors in the White House. On the other hand, she will try to deflect strong stereotypes of women's roles in the U.S. social and political systems. Along with other factors, this one will be a reason to expect an active and determined approach towards foreign policy during her tenure.

The beginning of her presidency will be strongly influenced by her time as Secretary of State during President Barack Obama's first term in office (2009–2013). She became known as a politician with strong views on U.S. foreign policy, although today some believe that the policies she stood for have failed in large part. This applies particularly to the attempted "reset" in relations with Russia, charges of indecision that led to the death of American diplomats in Libya, and fluctuations in U.S. policy on Syria.

Security Policy and NATO. In the past, Clinton has expressed support for American intervention, including in 2003 when as a U.S. Senator she voted in favour of carrying out the invasion of Iraq. As Secretary of State, she advocated the use of force where, in her opinion, it was necessary, such as airstrikes on the forces of Muammar Qaddafi in Libya in 2011. Clinton remains a supporter of U.S. policy of involvement in regional conflicts and maintaining its role in solving crises around the world. At the same time, she supports working closely with U.S. allies in the fight against terrorism in the Middle East and Europe. Clinton stresses that effectively stopping further attacks carried out or inspired by Islamic State (IS/ISIS/ISIL) and Al-Qaeda depends primarily on effective cooperation between the intelligence services of the United States and EU countries. Clinton supports strengthening the activities of the international coalition against IS. She believes that to overcome the terrorists in Syria and Iraq, it is necessary to better support local Kurdish forces and moderate Syrian opposition groups. However, she excludes the use of American ground forces on a large scale. The same principles apply to the conflict in Libya. Her administration will depend on the local forces to stabilise the situation in the that country.

In terms of NATO strategic activities in Europe, Clinton uses similar rhetoric as the Obama administration. She recognises the crucial role of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the structures of the Alliance. Based on her statements, containment of Putin's revisionist policies would be much more difficult if not for the enlargement of NATO by the countries of the former Soviet bloc. Clinton combines the idea of leaving an "open door" to NATO for potential new members of the Alliance by having a "well thought, but tough" policy towards Russia, which has consistently identified itself as a "rival" of the United States. This tone indicates a decisive break with the "reset" attempt and support for the more realistic approach of the Obama administration adopted after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. In addition, like Obama, Clinton supports furthering the nuclear non-proliferation process. By using diplomatic means, Clinton supports the agreement with Iran but believes U.S. efforts must go hand in hand with strong international pressure on the Iranian authorities to make them fulfil their obligations.

Economic Cooperation and Climate Policy. A certain inconsistency in Clinton's political message is her attitude to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), still in negotiations, and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is awaiting ratification. Despite her initial support for TPP, Clinton became an opponent of its ratification. She has avoided, however, taking a clear stance on TTIP. Although previously she showed strong support for the agreement, later on in the primary campaign she distanced herself from the ongoing negotiations. Although it can be assumed that ultimately Clinton will support TTIP if the negotiations or the ratification process make it through to her administration. Evidence of a positive attitude to the agreement would be her positive opinion of the European Commission's reform of the arbitration clause pertaining to investors and the state, which was a major point of contention in the negotiations between the U.S. and the EU.

Clinton, as a co-author of the U.S. "pivot to Asia" strategy, will continue efforts to increase access for the U.S. economy to Asian markets and political rapprochement with the countries of the South Pacific. Disputes about the South China Sea will remain a challenge for the future administration as will the growing assertiveness of China. It can be assumed that as president, Clinton will be more assertive than her predecessors in defending the U.S. in the region.

Based on her declarations on climate policy, Clinton supports the provisions of the agreement reached at last year's climate conference in Paris concerning the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). In this regard, she would continue Obama's policy. One must reckon with the fact that enforcement of this agreement will affect the level of competitiveness of goods and services from Europe relative to the U.S. A future Clinton administration will be able to join other signatories, including the EU, to bring joint pressure on China in negotiations on GHG emissions and other pollutants.

Consultants and Experts Back Clinton. The direction U.S. foreign policy would take under Clinton is reflected in her foreign policy team of experts. She has gathered a group of full-time consultants and researchers as well as hundreds of volunteers focused on this area to her campaign. Two of the most important—and among the few permanently employed staff—are Laura Rosenberg, who has experience with the U.S. State Department and diplomatic service, and Jake Sullivan, a former adviser to the White House National Security Advisor. Other experts, while not permanent staff but very important in building this part of the campaign, include former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former head of the CIA Leon Panetta. Clinton also benefits from the support of Strobe Talbott, the former deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton administration and now director of the Brookings Institution. This choice of advisors, deeply rooted in the concepts of foreign policy under Bill Clinton and Obama, attests to the fact if Hillary Clinton wins in November, American diplomacy will continue to be based on a doctrine of involvement in the Middle East and strengthening the position of NATO in Europe and the world.

Conclusions for Poland. The latest polls show Clinton and Trump running close together, but estimates of her chance of winning remain high. Her victory would mean a more predictable American policy towards Poland, the EU, Central and Eastern Europe and towards Russia. Clinton would seek to strengthen the presence of U.S. troops on the Eastern Flank of NATO. It cannot be ruled out that she will aim for a policy of greater U.S. involvement in the region than that announced by President Obama during the NATO Summit in Warsaw. At the same time, Clinton will strongly demand that U.S. allies increase their military and defence spending. However, unlike Donald Trump, she does not intend to base U.S. assistance for allies only on the financial contributions of countries hosting U.S. troops.