



Possibilities Architects:
Inspiring Ascending Beyond

**The Primary Priority of U.S. Diplomacy after the
Reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine: Asia-Pacific, China,
and the Feasibility of Iran's Situation**

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The publication of the United States' 2025 National Security Strategy may appear, at first glance, to be merely words on paper. Yet disregarding the significance of its content—particularly when divorced from the text's origins and its broader contextual setting—can introduce a form of analytical bias that ultimately obscures a proper understanding of its meaning. From the perspective of cultural studies, such a problem may stem from an imprecise reading of the issue. This dynamic is also reflected in the distinction between high-context and low-context cultures. The text reflects a relative return by the United States to a form of the Monroe Doctrine. This time, however, it appears not in its classical nineteenth-century formulation, but in a revised form adapted to the geopolitical priorities of the United States today. In this revised form, the United States, despite placing greater emphasis on cost-benefit considerations, seems to be revisiting an outlook that predates the early twentieth century, before the doctrine underwent major transformation during the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson—Roosevelt sought to adapt U.S. foreign policy toward the establishment of a firm yet delicate balance in world affairs, grounded in geopolitical considerations, whereas Wilson championed the spirit that had animated America's founders, portraying the United States as the moral custodian of an international order.

In the text, this new approach—reflected in the National Security Strategy released in November 2025—while adopting a more restrained posture regarding the United States' direct and hegemonic global role across different regions of the international system, clearly shifts its strategic focus more than ever away from the Middle East and even Eastern Europe, redirecting it toward the Asia-Pacific region in particular.

What is particularly noteworthy in the document is that it begins by addressing the position of the Western Hemisphere—the American continent—and the Monroe Doctrine, a choice of sequencing that likely reflects a particular ordering of priorities underlying the perspective governing the document's composition. However, the focus of the authors in this analysis lies in the second segment of the discussion on world regions, which follows immediately after the Western Hemisphere and is presented

under the heading of “Asia.” It should not be overlooked that, in political discourse since the twentieth century, references to Asia have generally denoted a region other than the Middle East—that is, Southwest Asia.

At the outset of the section in question, the document openly criticizes the approach and underlying assumptions that guided successive U.S. administrations over the preceding three decades toward China, calling into question the cognitive premises of the policy adopted since the implementation of the “open-door” approach and pointing to the failure to realize the objectives expected from that policy. In doing so, the document underscores the need to preserve U.S. economic and military primacy—consistent with another recurring theme throughout the text, namely the pursuit of ‘peace through strength.’ It also highlights the economic and strategic importance of China and the Indo-Pacific region, while delineating the contours of U.S. engagement with its regional allies. The importance of Taiwan’s position as a forward strategic outpost vis-à-vis China is prominently underscored, along with that of regional allies such as South Korea and Japan.

The document’s central thrust and focus align with Donald Trump’s familiar discourse. Thus, when it raises the issue of China’s unfair trade practices and the need to restore balance, the underlying concern is in fact the preservation of U.S. primacy in the balance of power—an objective framed as essential to the pursuit of peace through strength. This section of the text is, of course, in full alignment with other components of the declared strategy. These items fall under the heading of economic security. In general, one can point to balanced trade and ensuring the security of supply chains, which are also fully aligned with the United States’ overarching approach toward China, Oceania, and the subcontinent; support for American productive capacity (U.S. workers employed in the manufacturing sector); and, finally, a component that bears little relation to the animating spirit of the Monroe Doctrine—namely, the balance of power.

Implications for Iran

Contrary to common perception, the broader substance of the contemporary U.S. strategic approach is not necessarily a threat to Iran; rather, it may offer a limited opportunity to ease tensions between Tehran and Washington—an opportunity that, if managed prudently, could potentially bring about a degree of transformation in Iran’s foreign policy trajectory. In this regard, particular attention may be directed toward the more prominent elements related to Asia and the Pacific, especially in connection with China. In this document, the United States no longer sees itself as committed to maintaining a heavy and costly presence in the Middle East. This shift in approach represents the logical continuation of what Donald Trump repeatedly emphasized throughout his three electoral campaigns: that the United States should distance itself from endless wars, failed nation-building efforts, and the heavy security costs associated with the Middle East, and instead concentrate its attention and resources at the international level on the larger and more decisive competition—namely, the rivalry with China, which is expected to shape the future of the global order. Within this framework, the Middle East is no longer viewed as the principal arena of competition, but rather as a secondary theater in which the United States prefers to maintain a presence only to the extent necessary. It is precisely at this juncture, however, that the roles of Europe and Israel become more salient. Unlike the United States, Europe does not regard the Middle East as a secondary theater, but as part of its own immediate security environment.

The new U.S. National Security Strategy implicitly suggests that the United States no longer has an appetite for entering new crises in the Middle East. Indeed, even during a session of the United Nations Security Council, the U.S. representative—unlike their European counterparts—emphasized the necessity of dialogue and de-escalation. This divergence in approach indicates that Washington, at the present juncture, is not only unwilling to intensify pressure on Iran, but also prefers to avoid any new confrontation, so that it can concentrate its resources and attention at the international level on the ongoing strategic competition with China. Under such circumstances, Iran is presented with a strategic opportunity. For the first time in two decades, the United States has a genuine incentive to de-escalate tensions

with Tehran—not out of goodwill or a shift in perspective, but as a result of pressing strategic imperatives. As Washington has openly shifted its strategic focus beyond the Western Hemisphere toward China and the Asia-Pacific, the resulting structural pressure on countries such as Iran has diminished. This shift creates an opportunity for Tehran to pursue de-escalation—particularly if it can prevent Europe and Israel from filling the resulting vacuum by further securitizing the issue.

An essential point that Iran’s foreign-policy decision-makers must not overlook is the country’s position—given its prevailing domestic conditions, including internal dynamics and the volatile factors shaping state-society relations in the economic and political spheres, as well as its regional standing—within the broader political landscape of both the United States and China. Equally important is how Iran figures within the evolving dynamics of relations between these two global powers. This issue becomes even more salient when a careful analysis asks whether these two powers—each possessing a relative understanding of the logic of the balance of power vis-à-vis the other—are in fact willing to engage in a strategic confrontation over present-day Iran.

In these circumstances, Iran must be able to communicate clearly and without ambiguity—through concrete steps, active diplomacy, and responsible regional behavior—that it is not seeking to heighten tensions and that it can act as a more conventional player within the international order. Such a message could help the United States withstand pressures from other actors whose interests run counter to de-escalation and keep the path toward reducing tensions open. In this context, the role of regional countries is particularly important. Greater convergence between Iran and the Arab states could send an important signal to the United States. If Iran succeeds in improving its relations with regional countries and demonstrates that it is seeking cooperation and stability, Washington will be better positioned to resist pressures from Europe and Israel. Regional countries can also play a mediating role between Iran and the United States and contribute to de-escalation. This role is particularly important when undertaken by countries that maintain more balanced relations with Washington.

Nevertheless, this path is not without challenges. Under current circumstances, the activities of Europe and Israel remain among the principal obstacles ahead. In this regard, the continued projection of Iran's role as a threatening actor reinforces the position of those engaged in the securitization of Iran, thereby contributing to the construction of an insecurity-producing identity for the United States and its economic and military allies. Iran must properly recognize these efforts and prevent their success through active diplomacy and responsible conduct in the region. In this regard, one of Iran's most important instruments for reducing tensions lies in regional diplomacy. Such a message can help the United States withstand pressures from Europe and Israel and keep the pathway to de-escalation open. Enhanced regional cooperation may take the form of security dialogues, economic partnerships, and efforts aimed at resolving regional crises. At the same time, diversifying foreign and security policy can expand Iran's strategic environment and enhance its room for maneuver in the region. This includes leveraging capacities such as the strategic position of the Chabahar port in economic processes and making flexible use of the advantages created by competition between India and Pakistan, in a manner that implicitly prevents the explicit consolidation of recent military arrangements in the region against Iran—such as the recent joint military agreements between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and between the United Arab Emirates and India. In such a configuration, refraining from a definitive tilt toward any particular actor becomes essential—an approach that, in turn, requires greater coherence in the signals and messages emanating from Tehran. It should not be overlooked that India's persistent concerns regarding Pakistan—and vice versa—offer Iran a potential leverage point through a form of balance of power mechanism, especially given the significant role both countries play in shaping China's peripheral strategies. At this juncture, systematizing Iran's official and unofficial approaches becomes paramount; particularly to ensure that the military and non-military branches do not send contradictory signals that undermine each other's effectiveness. Achieving this requires unified decision-making within Iran's internal structures—a capacity that legally resides within the Supreme National Security Council.

Ultimately, Iran must recognize that failure to capitalize on this opportunity may enable Europe and Israel—given the current tense regional conditions and various considerations—to successfully reposition Iran as a security threat, thereby blocking the pathway to de-escalation. Therefore, Iran must actively and intelligently seize this opportunity and pursue the path of de-escalation. Although this path presents challenges, it holds significant implications for the future trajectory of Iran’s foreign policy.

Drawing on a renewed U.S. approach inspired by the Monroe Doctrine, reflecting a strategic pivot away from extensive and costly presence across its broad spheres of influence since World War II toward greater focus on transnational issues related to China and the Asia-Pacific region, Iran should seize this opportunity and directly pursue the path of de-escalation with the United States. While this path is far from smooth, its initiation and successful navigation could carry significant implications for the future of Iran’s foreign policy.