



US President-elect Donald J. Trump and his Foreign Policy Cabinet Choices Focus on Middle East Issues

By Roxanne Perugino

December 29, 2016

In the last few weeks, President-elect Donald Trump has been building his team of senior officials. The team selected as his foreign policy appointees presents a unique blend of private sector outsiders, career politicians, and military officers. Several of these individuals have had long careers in public service and therefore have made numerous statements pertaining to foreign policy issues which can be used to gauge their perspectives. By contrast, those with private sector and military experience have not had as many opportunities to make their views public and remain somewhat difficult to analyze.

What can be discerned from the statements and experiences of the Trump team is that they are some of the most conservative and right-wing foreign policy officials in recent history. So far, Trump has made right-wing, hawkish, and Islamophobic nominations for senior positions in his administration, from alt-right Steven Bannon, named as Chief White House Strategist, to his choice of Mike Flynn as National Security Advisor. Flynn has described Islam as a “malignant cancer” that has “metastasized.” Given that many of these potential appointees have made statements highly critical of the foreign policy of the Obama Administration, their positions and potential policies will likely show great contrast to those of the last eight years. This report includes the profiles of the president-elect and of each of his administration’s incoming foreign policy appointees and nominees, what is known or can be inferred about their views, and the implications that these views may have on US foreign policy in the Middle East.

I. Donald J. Trump: President-elect

Donald Trump, a Republican politician, businessman, and TV personality, was elected as the 45th President of the United States in a stunning upset over Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. At age 70, Trump will become the oldest and wealthiest person to become president. He is the only person in US history to be elected president without any prior public service experience.

Trump was born and raised in Queens, in New York City. He attended the Wharton School, the business school of the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a bachelor’s degree in 1968. He began his real estate career with a generous loan from his father. In 1971 he took control of the family’s real estate business. Trump has built, renovated, and managed numerous office towers,

hotels, casinos, and golf courses. Not all his endeavors have been successful, however. Trump declared bankruptcy four times, a fact he dismisses as a minor setback. In 2004 he became a celebrity by hosting the reality television show, *The Apprentice*, which ran until 2015. *Forbes* magazine has listed Trump as the 324th wealthiest person in the world with a net worth of \$4.5 billion, but Trump claims he is worth more.

Middle East Policy Positions

Generally, Trump advocates a mainly non-interventionist approach to foreign policy while increasing military spending, intensifying the vetting of Muslim immigrants as part of his policy to counteract Islamist extremism, and expanding aggressive military action against ISIS.

1. *Israel/Palestine*: In the early days of his campaign, Trump said he would be a neutral negotiator on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and claimed to support a two-state solution. However, following his March appearance at the annual AIPAC policy conference, his position seemed gradually to evolve into a decidedly hawkish pro-Israel stance, culminating in his choice of David Friedman as US Ambassador to Israel (see the section on Friedman below), and Jason D. Greenblatt as Special Representative for International Negotiation. He has promised to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a direct contradiction of long-standing US policy. Trump also is likely to support Israel's settlement expansion. On December 19, the *Middle East Monitor* [reported](#) that in 2003 Trump donated \$10,000 to a US nonprofit group that raises funds for the Beit El settlement in the West Bank, prompting questions about Trump's earlier statement avowing neutrality in the peace process. Trump continues to believe settlements are not an obstacle to peace. He also has described himself as a life-long supporter of Israel. As such, he will support Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and favors a strong alliance with Israel; however, he has been ambivalent on whether he supports increased military aid to Israel.

With respect to the Palestinians, Trump would not recognize a Palestinian state but has been ambivalent on support for the two-state solution. To date, he has not indicated whether he would restrict relations with or funding for the Palestinian Authority (PA). David Freidman, the US Ambassador-designate to Israel, supports restricting relations and funding to the PA, and his views are likely to heavily influence Trump's policy with respect to the Palestinians. Trump also would oppose and veto any UN Security Council resolutions that are anti-Israel or back Palestinian rights.

2. *Syria/ISIS*: Trump believes the United States should play a role in defeating ISIS, but wants to give Russia more flexibility to control outcomes in Syria. To date, he has not articulated a position on a no-fly zone and has been ambivalent about deploying US ground troops. He does, however, support safe zones for refugees as well as increased air strikes. Trump

does not support the moderate rebel groups in Syria, so these groups are not likely to get any further assistance from Washington. He will hold to his campaign promise to ban the entry of Syrian refugees into the United States. He is likely to continue to support and arm Kurdish fighters. Trump does not support regime change in Damascus, a goal of the opposition, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. He has said he would push the Gulf states to do more in the fight against ISIS.

3. *Iran and the Gulf States:* Trump has shown little endearment for the Iranian government and, as such, shares the sentiments of the Gulf states, if not their priorities. He believes the July 2015 Iran nuclear agreement is deeply flawed, and early in his campaign he said he would tear it up; later he indicated the agreement needed to be renegotiated and has been unclear whether the United States would abide by the deal. He is likely to re-impose sanctions on Iran if it fails to adhere to the agreement, but it is possible that he could allow the deal to continue with additional concessions from Iran. To counter Iran's proxies in the region, Trump likely will support Israeli actions against Iran and increase security cooperation with the GCC states, including protecting them from Iran. Human rights violations in the Gulf region are not a priority for the incoming Trump Administration.
4. *National Security:* Given the right-wing complexion of Trump's cabinet choices, national security will be a priority for his administration. He is likely to undo the current restrictions on NSA surveillance under the USA Freedom Act and reinstate the NSA's bulk surveillance program. Unlike President Obama, he opposes closing Guantanamo Bay; he will get strong Republican support in Congress for this position. He appears to support harsh interrogation techniques on terrorist suspects, but Secretary of Defense-designate Mattis's (see profile below) opposition to these techniques may have some influence on the president-elect.

In addition to banning the entry into the United States of Syrian and Muslim immigrants, Trump wants to tighten screening procedures for people who have traveled to countries where terrorism is a problem. This also includes tightening visa requirements. Cybersecurity will be an issue and the Trump Administration is likely to provide more funding for this purpose.

II. Michael R. "Mike" Pence: Vice President-elect

Indiana Governor Mike Pence was born on June 7, 1959, in Columbus, Indiana. His family was Irish Catholic and Democratic and embraced President John F. Kennedy as one of their political icons. As a student at Hanover College, however, Pence joined a campus evangelical group, thus setting his personal politics on a path starkly different from that of his upbringing. He was elected

to Congress in 2000 and represented Indiana's 6th congressional district for six consecutive terms, throughout which he **identified** as “a Christian, a conservative and a Republican—in that order.” His devout faith and staunch social and economic conservatism brought him to chair the Republican Study Committee—a congressional caucus home to the most conservative members—as well as the House Republican Conference. He also served as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee from 2003 to 2012, where he was selected as vice-chair of the Middle East and South Asia subcommittee in 2011-2012.

Pence left Congress and was elected Governor of the State of Indiana in 2012 after first pondering a presidential run. His conservative record as governor is consistent with that of his tenure in Congress. Indeed, he succeeded to pass some of the steepest tax cuts in Indiana's history. He also sought to advance his conservative social agenda, including last year's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)—legislation that was interpreted as blatant discrimination against the LGBTQ community. The resulting fallout from the RFRA has seen Pence's approval rating in Indiana plummet over 20 points into the 40-percent range. According to pundits, this explains his decision to forgo re-election later this year, opting instead for a spot on the Republican presidential ticket with the party's controversial nominee, Donald Trump.

Middle East Policy Positions

Pence is not known for his extensive foreign policy experience by any standard. Nevertheless, his modest record on foreign affairs reveals policy positions consistent with those of the conservative branch of the Republican establishment. His “America First” policy calls for a powerful military that enjoys a robust spending budget. Indeed, the former congressman only reserved his ardent criticism of congressional spending for non-military items. He has denounced Trump's proposal to ban all Muslims from entering the United States, describing the policy as “offensive and unconstitutional.” Yet, as governor he worked to prevent Syrian refugees from resettling in the state of Indiana. He has criticized Democrats for refusing to use the term “Islamic extremism” and holds a decidedly pro-Israel voting record on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

1. **Israel:** Throughout Pence's public service, he has been viewed by Republican Party insiders as a reliable and steadfast ally of Israel, and specifically of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. Pence has said that his strong support of Israel stems from his evangelical Christian beliefs as well as his ties with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). As governor of Indiana, he visited Israel on a state trade mission in 2014 where he met with Netanyahu; more notably, he declined to meet privately with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas after participating in a public dinner with him because “that was not the purpose of the trip.”

Stateside, however, Pence's support for Israel has not always been reciprocated from the American Jewish community, particularly in the governor's home state. Pence's district is home to two historic synagogues that have served as symbols to the local Jewish communities for over 50 years. But in 2009, not only was he yet to visit these synagogues—as is common practice among pro-Israel politicians—but he also told an AIPAC conference that “I know of no synagogues in my district.” Unsurprisingly, these comments generated significant backlash from some of his Jewish constituents.

It is likely that Pence's popularity among the Christian right factored into Trump's decision to tap the governor as his vice-presidential choice. Evangelicals and social conservatives have been wary of the presidential candidate due to his claims of neutrality over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as his more progressive stances on social issues like abortion and LGBTQ rights. Having Pence on the ticket served to allay some of these concerns by the radical right. But in a country where approximately 70 percent of the Jewish population votes Democratic, Pence's lack of strong ties with his own state's Jewish constituency must be weighed when examining Republican efforts to sway these religious voter blocs.

2. ***Palestine:*** In 2012, the Arab American Institute assigned to the Republican vice-presidential nominee a rating of “-6” on Arab-Israeli issues. The rating was based on his voting record while a member of the 112th Congress and indicated a stance that is anti-Arab/anti-Palestine. And in addition to the aforementioned snub of President Abbas, while governor Pence also signed into law a bill that would require the state of Indiana to divest from any organization that joined the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a global grassroots campaign that calls for increased pressure on Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian lands, grant equal rights to Palestinian citizens, and respect the right of return for Palestinian refugees.
3. ***Iran:*** Pence was a vocal opponent of the Obama Administration's nuclear deal with Iran. Last year, he joined 14 other state governors in penning a letter to the president that threatened to continue their enforcement of sanctions on Iran, despite the administration's historic deal.
4. ***Iraq:*** As a congressman in 2002, Pence voted in favor of the resolution authorizing President George W. Bush to invade Iraq; subsequently, he opposed any measures that would have set a date on the withdrawal of troops. Pence has always been a strong supporter of military spending increases and has made a number of trips to Iraq (as well as to Afghanistan) to spend time with US troops from Indiana. At times, however, he has been accused of being out of touch with the suffering and violence in the region. For instance, during a 2007 visit to Iraq—the country squarely in the midst of a bloody civil war—he spoke at a press conference in a central Baghdad market, commenting that the peacefulness

of the atmosphere reminded him of “a normal outdoor market in Indiana in the summertime.” In reality, Pence and the rest of the US delegation came escorted by over 100 soldiers, Humvees, and attack helicopters while the congressman was suited with a bullet proof vest and guarded by US snipers.

President-elect Trump has no foreign policy experience of any significance. It is too early to tell if he will make foreign policy part of Pence’s responsibilities based on his congressional service. Given Trump’s ego, he is likely to keep the foreign policy portfolio to himself. However, he is likely to seek Pence’s views and advice on some foreign policy and national security issues. With respect to the Middle East, Pence’s perspectives as a congressman do not justify the slightest optimism regarding a more enlightened or evenhanded US policy in the Middle East in a potential Trump Administration.

III. Rex W. Tillerson: Secretary of State-designate (requires US Senate confirmation)

President-elect Trump named Rex Tillerson, ExxonMobil CEO, as his choice for Secretary of State on December 13. The appointment is controversial and has been met with both support and skepticism from the foreign policy establishment in Washington, DC, and among Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill. Tillerson’s official bio can be found [here](#).

Many have praised the selection of Tillerson. Former Defense Secretary Bob Gates and former Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Jim Baker voiced their support for Tillerson’s nomination. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky) also has expressed strong support for Tillerson.

Critics, on the other hand, view Tillerson as an odd choice for the country’s top diplomat. He has never held a diplomatic job nor a government position. He has no substantive foreign policy experience. While he has led negotiations involving oil deals in Yemen, Russia, Iraq, and Qatar, for example, critics say making oil deals and formulating foreign policy are two very different skill sets. His business dealings with Russia and close ties to President Vladimir Putin are particularly worrisome to several senators, who could potentially prevent Tillerson’s confirmation.

As a result, Tillerson will face intense scrutiny and questioning when his confirmation hearings begin before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC). SFRC Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tennessee), who was in the running for the job and who will oversee the confirmation hearings, congratulated Tillerson on his nomination but has not pledged to support his confirmation. Tillerson also will face tough questions from two Russia hawks: Senators Marco Rubio (R-Florida) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-New Hampshire). SFRC Republicans John Barrasso (R-Wyoming) and Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin) also have expressed concern about Tillerson. In addition, Senators

John McCain (R-Arizona) and Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina) have indicated that they are uneasy about Tillerson's dealings with Russia and Putin. SFRC ranking member Senator Ben Cardin (D-Maryland) said he is "deeply troubled" by Tillerson's opposition to US sanctions on Russia, imposed following Russia's invasion of Crimea.

Not only will Tillerson's relationship with Putin be examined but also intelligence reports of Russia's involvement in the presidential election. Trump and his transition team have dismissed the intelligence community's findings, but senators view these findings as troubling. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Connecticut) admonished Republican hawks on Russia, saying that they would never be taken seriously if they vote to confirm Tillerson.

Cardin and environmental groups also are concerned over ExxonMobil's position on climate change and the environment. Who can forget the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska in 1989, which poured 42 million liters of crude oil and contaminated over 1,200 miles of shoreline and killed tens of thousands of marine wildlife?

Congressional sources report that Democrats will present a united front against Tillerson to deny his confirmation. Tillerson will need 51 votes to approve his nomination. The makeup in the 115th Congress will be 52 Republicans and 48 Democrats; therefore, Tillerson could be confirmed if all 52 Republicans vote for his confirmation. If even two Republicans peel off, Tillerson will still need some Democratic support. There is no guarantee that Democrats will act in unison, as ten of 25 Democratic senators will be up for reelection in 2018 in states that Trump carried.

Despite the controversy surrounding Tillerson's nomination, the current opinion favors his confirmation. While the confirmation process is likely to be contentious, senators may not be willing to deny a new president his cabinet choices. Tillerson probably will be confirmed by a very narrow vote.

As Tillerson's experience is primarily in the private sector, his views and positions toward Middle East issues have not been made public.

IV. James N. Mattis: Secretary of Defense-designate (requires US Senate confirmation)

On December 1, during a victory rally in Ohio, Trump announced the nomination of retired Marine Corps General James "Mad Dog" Mattis to be his Secretary of Defense. Trump noted the official date of appointment would be December 5.

Mattis earned the nickname "Mad Dog" for his off-color language and obsessive dedication to the military. As the former head of CENTCOM (2010-13), he frequently clashed with President

Obama over Iran, whose regime Mattis views as the single most enduring threat to stability and peace in the Middle East region. In 2010 Mattis coauthored a counter-insurgency strategy manual credited with helping to halt some of worst sectarian violence in Iraq before the US withdrawal at the end of 2011.

Mattis is a nearly universally respected combat leader known for his deep study of the history of warfare. *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that Mattis “has often said that Washington lacks an overall strategy in the Middle East, opting to instead handle issues in an ineffective one-by-one-manner.”

Mattis’s views are more closely aligned with the president-elect and national security advisor-designate, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn. Mattis, however, does not share the same views about Russia and Russian President Vladimir Putin as Trump and Flynn. He has expressed deep concern over Russia’s intentions, which could include breaking NATO apart. Moreover, during the presidential campaign, Mattis was not reluctant to criticize Trump’s rhetoric that NATO was obsolete and that members do not pay their fair share.

1. ***Israel-Palestine:*** At an Aspen Security Forum shortly before his retirement, Mattis remarked that his job as CENTCOM commander was made more difficult because the United States is seen as “biased in support of Israel.” He also said that the current situation in Israel is “unsustainable” and that he supports a two-state solution. Because of these comments, the Zionist Organization of America opposes Mattis’s nomination.

However, a recent statement published by the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), hardly a liberal organization, said attempts to portray Mattis as anti-Israel were “ill-founded and unfair.” JINSA claims it recently consulted several notable Israelis and Americans in the civil and military communities who have interacted with him and they share JINSA’s confidence in Mattis’s support for a strong US-Israel relationship. JINSA CEO and President Michael Makovsky [said](#), “...General Mattis has noted this alignment of views with Israel, and correctly explained the synchronization of Israeli and Arab outlooks on these subjects. This should be heartening to the overwhelming majority of Americans who believe that a strong State of Israel is necessary for its own sake and important for a strong America.”

2. ***Iran:*** Like the president-elect and National Security Advisor-designate Michael Flynn (see profile below), Mattis has been critical of the Iran nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) and most likely would support any efforts by the incoming Trump Administration to modify or annul the JCPOA. He criticized Congress for being “pretty much absent” when the JCPOA was negotiated.

3. ***Middle East Allies:*** Mattis is on record as praising the friendship of regional allies like Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. He has been critical of President Obama’s Middle East policy, noting it gives the perception that Washington is pulling back from its allies. He has stressed the need to bolster ties with the intelligence agencies of Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. In 2012 he supported providing weapons to Syrian rebels.

Mattis is expected to be confirmed but his appointment will require a congressional waiver of a law, the National Security Act of 1947, which forbids a military general from becoming the Secretary of Defense until seven years have elapsed since retirement. The idea was to ensure that the US armed forces be controlled by a civilian. The law was waived in 1950 to allow Army General George Marshall to become Secretary of Defense. The law was changed in 2008, reducing from ten to seven the number of years that a nominee must be retired from the military.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York) opposes such a waiver while the chairmen of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, Senator John McCain (R-Arizona) and Representative Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), respectively, support the nomination. Most Democrats have yet to weigh in on the nomination or on the waiver legislation. As noted in earlier profiles, executive branch nominees require only a simple majority vote of 51 because of the rule change when Democrats controlled the Senate. However, under current Senate rules, the waiver legislation will require 60 votes, giving Democrats some leverage over Mattis’s nomination.

V. Retired Lt. General Michael T. “Mike” Flynn: National Security Advisor-designate

The choice of Flynn as National Security Advisor is not without controversy. His supporters describe him as the best intelligence officer of his generation, while his critics deride him as an erratic right-wing zealot. There probably is some truth to both sides.

Flynn is a harsh critic of Islamist extremism and of the religion itself, calling “radical Islam” an existential threat to the United States. In a speech at an Act for America event in August 2016, Flynn said that Islam is not a religion, [stating](#) “Islam is a political ideology. It definitely hides behind this notion of it being a religion.” Flynn also told the audience that Islam is “like a malignant cancer, though in this case it has metastasized.”

In addition, in strident public comments, including an address at the Republican National Convention, Flynn claimed that ISIS militants pose a threat on a “global scale” and demanded that the US military campaign against the group be more aggressive. He has condemned US leaders who describe Islam as a religion of peace. Like Trump, he believes that the United States should sharply curtail immigration from Muslim-majority countries.

It is noteworthy that the Obama Administration removed Flynn as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency in 2014.

The role of National Security Advisor varies by administration, but it usually centers on coordinating the policy positions of the secretaries of state, defense, and justice and other members of a president's national security team. Therefore, it is important that Flynn establish a good working relationship with the future Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State and avoid the "turf" battles of past administrations. Flynn will have direct access to President-elect Trump, therefore wielding significant influence on matters of war and peace as well as diplomacy and intelligence. For example, he has been successful in convincing Trump that the United States is in a "world war" with Islamist militants and must work with allies, including Russia, in the fight. Both Flynn and Trump firmly believe that Washington needs to start working with Moscow to defeat ISIS, despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's suppression of critics and his efforts to dismember Ukraine.

Flynn served for more than three decades in the US Army following his commissioning in 1981 as a Second Lieutenant in military intelligence. His career included a stint as Director of Intelligence for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Intelligence Chief for the US-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. In 2012 he became head of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) but was forced to resign in 2014 amid allegations that his management style was chaotic; fallout from the classified intelligence files leaked by former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden added to his troubles.

VI. Kathleen Troia "K.T." McFarland: Deputy National Security Advisor-designate

On November 25, 2016, President-elect Trump announced the second female appointment to his cabinet, Kathleen Troia "K.T." McFarland. McFarland, a *Fox News* national security analyst, was a former Pentagon spokesperson and veteran of the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan Administrations. With the election of Trump, McFarland [proclaimed](#) that the "adults are now back in charge."

In the 1970s, McFarland worked as an aide to then-National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. From 1982 to 1985, she served as the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs under President Ronald Reagan, and as senior speechwriter for Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. In 1984, she wrote Secretary Weinberger's groundbreaking speech that described US policy on the use of military force; this speech later became known as the Weinberger Doctrine. In 1985, she received the Defense Department's highest civilian award for her work in the Reagan Administration. In 2006 she unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination in New

York to challenge Hillary Clinton for her Senate seat. After her government service, McFarland has been working as a national security analyst.

McFarland is a distinguished advisor to the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a neo-conservative advocacy organization that was founded in the wake of the 9/11 attacks with the goal of pushing an aggressive “war on terror” in the Middle East as well as “pro-Israel” policies in Washington.

1. *Iran:* McFarland has been an outspoken critic of JCPOA (the Iran nuclear deal) stating that she, like Trump, believes it is a bad deal. She has said, “We gave them everything up front—the money, the sanctions, and the path to nuclear weapons—and we demanded nothing in return.”
2. *Syria:* In 2013, McFarland wrote that it was Russian President Vladimir Putin, and not President Obama, who deserved credit for using diplomacy to prevent an attack on the Syrian government’s chemical weapons stockpiles. Her views on Russia mirror those of President-elect Trump and National Security Advisor-designate Michael Flynn. McFarland believes that the Obama policy of leading from behind allowed Putin to advance Moscow’s goals in Syria.
3. *Saudi Arabia:* In a discussion about the Iran nuclear deal, McFarland suggested that Saudi Arabia is dishonest about supporting the agreement because “they’re Arabs” and “not going to say to your face something that they know is going to upset you.”
4. *Libya:* According to the media watchdog Media Matters for America, McFarland has made dubious claims such as saying that the Benghazi CIA compound under attack in 2012 did not receive additional security because Ambassador Christopher Stevens could not contact Secretary of State Clinton via a State Department e-mail address.
5. *Terrorism:* After the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015, McFarland called for stricter counterterrorism policies in the United States, including “terrorist profiling,” according to *Bloomberg*.

Many political observers assume that National Security Advisor-designate Michael Flynn will call the shots on foreign policy with McFarland in total agreement. It will be important for Flynn and McFarland to be in basic agreement with the Secretary of State-designate and UN Ambassador-designate on the crucial foreign policy decisions that President-elect Trump and his national security team will confront.

VII. Michael R. “Mike” Pompeo (R-Kansas): CIA Director-designate (requires US Senate confirmation)

A member of the Tea Party, US Representative Mike Pompeo (R-Kansas) has been a harsh critic of President Obama’s foreign policy, including the nuclear deal with Iran (JCPOA) and would favor dismantling the agreement. Pompeo also supports keeping Guantanamo open, using torture against detainees, and expanding the government’s electronic surveillance power.

Pompeo is not well known to the American public but is well-respected by his House colleagues and intelligence professionals. Representative Adam Schiff (D-California), the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, has praised Pompeo as “bright and hard working.”

However, Pompeo’s hawkish views on national security matters, including his laser focus on the threat of “radical Islamic terrorism,” reflect those of President-elect Trump and National Security Advisor-designate Flynn. He likely will not be a restraining influence on Trump, particularly with respect to controversial policies like torture and drone strikes. On the other hand, Pompeo’s hawkish views toward Russia could potentially be a source of tension as both Trump and Flynn support developing closer ties with Russia.

Pompeo is likely to be confirmed for the position of CIA Director. The intelligence community views Pompeo’s nomination as improving the relationship between the CIA and Congress, one that has deteriorated in recent years over the Agency’s detainee program and battles with the members of Congress who oversee the Agency.

Pompeo graduated first in his class from the US Military Academy and served as a tank commander in Germany at the end of the Cold War. He left the military with the rank of Captain in 1991. He earned a law degree from Harvard, worked as a lawyer, and then moved into the business world, where he founded a company called Thayer Aerospace. He won a seat in Congress in 2011. Pompeo has been a member of the House Intelligence Committee since the 113th Congress.

VIII. James R. “Rick” Perry: Secretary of Energy-designate (requires US Senate confirmation)

In an ironic twist, President-elect Donald Trump has chosen former Texas Governor Rick Perry as his Secretary of Energy. The Energy Department is the same agency Perry wanted to eliminate—and the one he initially forgot to name—when asked, during the Republican presidential primary debate in 2011, which departments he would shut down.

Perry beat out two other candidates for the job: Senator Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia) and Ray Washburn, a Texas investor working in oil and gas operations. Given national security components of the energy sector, some observers have criticized the selection of Perry, whose expertise is limited to fossil fuel extraction. Under the Obama Administration, the Energy Department has focused on promoting clean energy and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Perry's selection would appear to be a nod to the Republican emphasis on energy sources like coal and oil.

Former Senator Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota), [finds](#) the Perry nomination “so perplexing.” Dorgan chaired the Senate committee with jurisdiction over energy during his time in the Senate. He believes Perry does not understand the role of the Energy Department in dealing with nuclear weapons; the department is responsible for overseeing the nation's nuclear weapons complex. However, former Energy Secretaries Spencer Abraham (R) and Bill Richardson (D) suggest Perry will adapt to his role at Energy. According to a December 13, 2016, *New York Times* [article](#), about 60 percent of the department's budget is devoted to the National Nuclear Security Administration, which defines its mission as enhancing national security through military application of nuclear science. Perry's critics wonder whether he comprehends the importance of the nuclear component of the department.

Further, the *Times* article also noted that the last two Department of Energy secretaries, Ernest J. Moniz of MIT and Steven Chu of Stanford, held doctorates in physics and had impressive academic credentials; Dr. Chu, in addition, had been awarded a Nobel Prize. By contrast, Perry holds a bachelor's degree in animal science from Texas A&M, which many feel does not prepare him for the job, citing his lack of experience and qualifications to manage the nuclear components of the Energy Department.

Like President-elect Trump, Perry is skeptical of climate change. In 2010 he [wrote the book](#), *Fed Up! Our Fight to Save America from Washington*, in which he called the established science of human-caused climate change a “contrived phony mess.” Perry's views also align with those of Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, tapped to run the Environmental Protection Agency, who is also skeptical of climate change. The views of Trump, Perry, and Pruitt do not bode well for those in the environmental and scientific community who believe that climate change is real and presents a serious cause for concern.

While it seems almost a guarantee that Perry will target the Energy Department's climate change programs, the larger question of doing away with the department altogether remains unknown. If it were eliminated, the administration of its nuclear programs likely would be scattered among several US government agencies, running the risk of little inter-agency cooperation on such a vital national security issue.

IX. Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of the Treasury-designate (requires US Senate confirmation)

President-elect Trump has nominated his campaign finance chairman, Steven Mnuchin, to be Secretary of the Treasury. In announcing his appointment, Trump claimed that “Steve Mnuchin is a world-class financier, banker and businessman, and has played a key role in developing our plan to build a dynamic, booming economy that will create millions of jobs.”

Mnuchin, a Wall Street banker, spent 17 years at Goldman Sachs, where he was a partner. He currently serves as the co-chief executive and chairman of Dune Capital Management, a privately owned hedge fund.

Following the news that Mnuchin was picked as US treasury secretary, Wall Street analysts offered mixed predictions on which policies he may pursue, as there is little information available other than his background with Goldman Sachs and buying/selling the former IndyMac, which became the controversial OneWest Bank.

Mnuchin, 53, joined the Trump campaign in April 2016 when the organization’s fundraising barely existed. He also was involved deeply in developing the president-elect’s tax proposals, which some analysts claim could deliver as much as \$6 trillion in tax reductions over ten years, but might also contribute to much larger budget deficits. As Treasury Secretary, Mnuchin will play a crucial role in implementing President-elect Trump’s campaign pledges to deal with the country’s economic issues. Those include overhauling the tax code, reconsidering the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), renegotiating trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and possibly the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to help American manufacturers, and designating China a currency manipulator.

Mnuchin’s involvement in OneWest Bank following the 2008 housing market crash could complicate his confirmation. In 2009, Mnuchin put together a group of billionaire investors, including George Soros and hedge fund titan John Paulson, which bought failed California-based bank IndyMac, a big mortgage lender. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) agreed to absorb the losses of the bank above a certain threshold. The bank was renamed OneWest Bank and Mnuchin became its chairman and CEO. OneWest developed a reputation during the recession for its quick foreclosure on delinquent homeowners, involving up to 36,000 households, according to the housing advocacy group California Reinvestment Coalition.

X. Nikki R. Haley: Ambassador-designate to the United Nations (requires US Senate confirmation)

On November 22, 2016, President-elect Donald Trump nominated South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley as his Ambassador-designate to the United Nations. Haley has few foreign policy credentials or experience, but she received high marks for her deft handling of the 2015 shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina, which prevented a potentially ugly racial confrontation. She also handled the removal of the confederate flag from the statehouse, a contentious issue in the south, with admirable political skill.

During the presidential campaign Haley was a frequent critic of Trump and challenged many of his positions. She later said she was glad he won and had in fact voted for him. Her foreign policy views are unknown, but she is supportive of free markets and global trade. Although she has been a successful and popular governor, she will find the United Nations a very different place from the state capitol of Charleston, South Carolina. She will need to hone her nascent diplomatic skills.

Haley, the daughter of Indian immigrant parents, was the first woman and Indian-American, and the youngest at age 44, to serve as South Carolina's governor. She was the first woman and first minority nominee chosen to serve in the Trump administration.

In 2004, Haley ran for a seat in the South Carolina House of Representatives and faced a challenge in the primary from incumbent Republican Larry Koon, the longest-serving member of the House at that time. She won the primary and then the general election, in which she ran unopposed, and became the first Indian-American to hold office in South Carolina. She ran unopposed for reelection in 2006, and defeated her Democrat challenger in 2008. As a Republican, Haley's platform was anti-tax and fiscally conservative. She voted for bills that restrict abortion and those that protect fetuses. As the child of legal immigrants, Haley has expressed support for greater enforcement of immigration laws.

Haley, who is also a member of the Tea Party movement, announced in May 2009 that she would run for governor in 2010. She was endorsed by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. She won the election on November 2, 2010. In 2012 she was on the short list of Republican presidential candidate Romney's choice for Vice President. Her official biography can be found [here](#).

1. *Israel-Palestine*: In 2015 Haley signed state legislation to prevent Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. As a result, Israel was one of the first countries to welcome her. Haley will most likely take a pro-Israel stance at the United Nations. The South Carolina BDS law prohibits any public entity from doing business with companies engaged in "discriminatory" boycotts—based on race, religion, gender, or national

origin. While this may have been intended as an anti-BDS law, it makes no mention of Israel, Palestine, or the BDS movement.

2. *Refugees*: Haley has said that all who are willing to work hard and abide by US laws should be welcomed in the United States. However, she has expressed concern about the adequacy of vetting procedures in place for Syrian refugees who have resettled in South Carolina and has said she opposes the admission of refugees whose intentions cannot be fully determined. Unlike some other governors, however, she has not sued the Obama administration to block resettlement.

XI. David M. Friedman: US Ambassador-designate to Israel (requires US Senate confirmation)

On December 15, 2016, President-elect Trump nominated David Friedman to the post of US Ambassador to Israel. Friedman, a bankruptcy lawyer, has no diplomatic or foreign policy experience other than being a zealous supporter of Israel. If there had been any question that the peace process would go nowhere in a Trump administration, the appointment of Friedman removes all doubt.

Friedman is indeed a controversial appointment. By all reports, he is a hawk on Israeli policy and opposes the two-state solution. He has supported and contributed to West Bank settlements. He serves as president, albeit on a volunteer basis, for the American Friends of Bet El Institutions, a major funding group of Israeli settlements. He has been vocal in his support of moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move the president-elect also supports. Relocating the embassy would be in direct conflict with long-standing US policy, which does not officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Friedman also has accused President Obama of anti-Semitism and excoriated American Jewish leaders who supported the Iran nuclear deal, thereby, in his opinion, failing Israel.

In His Own Words: Friedman's Views

The following are a few quotes by Friedman that elucidate his views on various issues regarding Israel and Palestine:

1. *Opposing the two-state solution*: “There has never been a ‘two-state solution’—only a two-state narrative.” ([February 2016](#))
2. *Expanding settlements on Palestinian territory*: “As a general rule, we should expand a community in Judea and Samaria where the land is legally available and a residential or

commercial need is present—just like in any other neighborhood anywhere in the world . . . Peace will come if and when Palestinians learn to stop hating us and to embrace life rather than worship death. We should try to help them in that effort, but in all cases let's continue to build!" (October 2015)

3. *Opposing the removal of settlers*: "It is inconceivable there could be a mass evacuation on that magnitude [speaking of the removal of settlers], in the unlikely event that there was an otherwise comprehensive peace agreement . . . It makes no sense for Judea and Samaria to be 'Judenrein [void of Jews],' any more than it makes sense for Israel to be 'Arabrein [void of Arabs].' It's not fair." (November 2016)
4. *Moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem*: Friedman reportedly said that the US-Israel relationship will be "better than ever" and that Trump will keep his promise of moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem. (November 2016)
5. *Supporting Netanyahu's position on Palestinian statehood*: "The critical thing is to recognize that there is not going to be any progress on a Palestinian state until the Palestinians renounce violence and accept Israel as a Jewish state. Until that happens there is really nothing to talk about in terms of a political process." (November 2016)
6. *Accusing President Obama (and Secretary of State John Kerry) of anti-Semitism*: "Obama and Kerry do little more than condemn the proverbial 'cycle of violence' . . . I'm sorry, but this is pure and outright murder and any public figure who finds it difficult to condemn it as such without diluting the message with geo-political drivel is engaging in 'blatant anti-Semitism.'" (June 2016)
7. *Attacking liberal American Jews*: "Unfortunately, hearkening back to the days of the Kapos [Nazi concentration camp prisoners who worked with the SS guard] during the Nazi regime and well before that, there is a history of a minority of Jews betraying their own. I don't think all liberal Jews are 'self-hating,' as some of my colleagues like to describe them. But I do think that, like most liberals, they suffer a cognitive disconnect in identifying good and evil." And: "People like Jeremy Ben-ami of 'J Street' who cut his teeth on the virulently anti-Israel (notwithstanding its name) New Israel Fund, and who today leads an organization—a proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing—that purports to be pro-Israel but advocates just the opposite." (July 2015)
8. *Attacking Senator Chuck Schumer for his support of the Iran nuclear deal*: "No matter how he ultimately votes, by making his decision such a close call—which it plainly should not be—Schumer is validating the worst appeasement of terrorism since Munich." (August 2015)

The New York Times [reported](#) that the ambassadorship had been negotiated between Trump and Friedman over the past several months and that Friedman, a large contributor to Trump's campaign, has been saying that the job of US Ambassador to Israel would be given to him. Friedman would not be the first campaign contributor to be given an ambassadorship; many supporters of various presidents over the years have been rewarded in this way. However, Friedman's political appointment to such a sensitive post is surprising and of concern to many in the Washington foreign policy establishment.

Reactions to Friedman's Nomination

Friedman's nomination has been met with mixed reviews. In Israel, Friedman's nomination was welcomed by right-wing leaders including Education Minister Natfali Bennett, Yesh Atid party leader Yair Lapid, and Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely. Prime Minister Netanyahu, despite his problems with Israel's right-wing, understands the close relationship between Trump and Friedman and has welcomed the nomination. Right-wing pro-Israel supporters in the United States applauded the selection, as has the Zionist Organization of America, which backs settlements and opposes a two-state solution. To date, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has not weighed in on Friedman's nomination. The well-respected left-liberal Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* has questioned the choice of Friedman.

The more liberal Jewish groups in the United States like J Street and Americans for Peace Now have publicly announced their opposition to Friedman's appointment. Although the House of Representatives has no role in the confirmation process, three Jewish members of the House, Representatives Jerrold Nadler (D-New York), Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois), and John Yarmuth (D-Kentucky) oppose the nomination. Senate Democratic Leader Senator Charles "Chuck" Schumer (D-New York), who also is Jewish, is not taking sides on the nomination. Former Ambassador Dan Kurtzer, who served as US ambassador to Israel from 2001 to 2005, said he was "alarmed" at the appointment. The venerable *New York Times* has been extremely critical of the choice of Friedman and has called on the US Senate not to confirm him.

A New Policy for Israel and Palestine

Who will determine US policy toward Israel and the Palestinians? The US Constitution gives the president the authority to make foreign policy. However, President-elect Trump has, at best, a minimal interest in foreign policy and clearly does not comprehend the complexities of the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For decades, US ambassadors have been tasked with implementing and carrying out the president's policies, but Trump recently [said](#) that Friedman's ". . . strong relationships in Israel will form the foundation of his diplomatic mission and be a tremendous asset to our country as we strengthen the ties with our allies and strive for peace in the Middle East." Trump's comments, and his apparent reliance on Friedman (and

Greenblatt) for policy guidance, beg the question of who will determine US policy toward Israel and Palestine—Trump or Friedman?

XII. Jason Greenblatt - Special Representative-designate for International Negotiations

President-elect Donald Trump has named his longtime attorney Jason Greenblatt to the position of “special representative for international negotiations,” a position that is likely to include Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Greenblatt co-chaired Trump’s Israel Advisory Committee with David Friedman (Trump’s pick for US Ambassador to Israel) during the presidential campaign.

The son of Hungarian Jewish refugees, Greenblatt grew up in Queens, New York City, and attended school at a Talmudical academy. He also attended Yeshiva University after a year of study at Har Etzion Yeshiva in the Gush Etzion settlement of Alon Shvut, near Jerusalem. He received his JD degree from New York University School of Law in 1991 and began his career as a real estate lawyer. Greenblatt has worked for Trump since 1997, more recently as executive vice president and chief legal officer to the Trump Organization, and as Trump’s advisor on Israel.

Greenblatt, like Trump, has limited knowledge of foreign policy. His Middle East experience is limited to a travel guide book of Israel which he co-wrote with his wife. In an hour-long interview with *Politico*, he acknowledged that he lacks the qualifications needed to advise on the politically complex issue of Israeli-Palestinian peace. He added that there are many people working in the world of diplomacy “...but are we any closer to achieving the peace process? Are we any closer to peace?”

The interview with *Politico* also noted that, “Trump has made it clear that he will defer to Greenblatt” on the complicated issues related to Israel, a fact that alarms many, including both pro-Israel supporters as well as pro-peace process supporters, who worry about Trump’s lack of knowledge of these issues. During the presidential campaign Greenblatt assembled the Israel Advisory Committee, which also included US Ambassador-designate to Israel, David Friedman. Greenblatt is not the only strongly pro-Israel supporter in Trump’s coterie. He is part of a pro-Israel group of advisors that includes Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner.

1. *Israel-Palestine*: The appointments of Greenblatt and Friedman, along with the unofficial role of Kushner, practically guarantee that President-elect Trump could be the most pro-Israel US president in modern history. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu can hardly wait for his good friend to be sworn into office and to welcome a new chapter in US-Israeli relations. Israel’s hardliners are looking forward to a Trump presidency and its support for

settlements, which have been declared illegal by the United Nations Security Council in the recent vote on December 23, 2016.

Prospects for the Palestinians would seem dire. Before the US presidential election in November, Greenblatt and Friedman [issued](#) a memo outlining Trump's positions. According to Trump's two Israel advisors, a Trump Administration would not automatically support the creation of a Palestinian state, a statement directly contradicting long-standing US policy. Not only would Trump not support independent Palestinian statehood, but his position potentially could embolden pro-Israel members of Congress to enact legislation harmful to the Palestinians.

Greenblatt claims he supports a two-state solution, one reached by Israelis and Palestinians and not imposed by the United Nations. Like his boss Trump, Greenblatt was opposed to the US abstention on the Israeli settlements resolution at the United Nations on December 23. Greenblatt supports the expansion of Israeli settlements, claiming they are not an obstacle to peace. In a CNN op-ed earlier in 2016, Greenblatt [promised](#) that, "A Trump administration will be a true friend to Israel. Jerusalem is Israel's capital, and the undivided city is essential to the security of all its citizens regardless of their religious faith." Greenblatt has advocated withholding assistance to the Palestinian Authority to get them to the negotiating table.

On the thorny issue of moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem, Greenblatt believes that Trump will fulfill that campaign promise and seemingly supports the move.

2. *Syrian/Muslim Immigrants*: It seems that Greenblatt does not share Trump's hardline view toward Syrian refugees. After all, the United States gave refuge to Greenblatt's family members, who fled Hungary as refugees, and Greenblatt has thanked America for this. He has tried to soften Trump's position on refugees and undocumented immigrants and claims that Trump wants a temporary pause to better understand the vetting process for immigrants coming to the United States. Greenblatt supports the creation of safe havens in Jordan and Turkey for civilians fleeing the war.
3. *Iran Nuclear Agreement*: Greenblatt has issued no definitive statement on the Iran nuclear agreement and most likely will support whatever Trump wants to do. It also does not appear that Iran will be part of his agenda.

I. SYRIA AND FIGHTING ISIS

	No-fly zone	Safe zones for refugees	More air strikes	More US ground troops	Support & arm Kurdish fighters	Support & arm some "moderate" rebel groups	Take in Syrian refugees	Push Gulf states to do more/fight ISIS	Advocate removing Assad
Donald Trump President		👍	👍	👍👎	👍	👎	👎	👍	👎
Mike Pence Vice President	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍
Rex Tillerson Secretary of State									
James Mattis Defense Secretary		👎	👍		👍	👍		👍	👍
Mike Flynn National Security Advisor		👍				👍	👎	👍	
KT McFarland Deputy National Security Advisor			👍		👍	👎	👎		👎
Mike Pompeo CIA Director		👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍
Rick Perry Energy Secretary			👍		👍		👎		
Nikki Haley UN Ambassador							👎		

II. IRAN DEAL AND ARAB GULF STATES

	Undo the Iran deal	Re-impose sanctions on Iran	Abide by the Iran deal	Re-impose sanctions if Iran fails to comply	Allow deal with more concessions from Iran	Support Israel's military edge/ actions against Iran	Increase security cooperation with GCC & defense in MENA	Commit to protect GCC states against Iran	Counter Iranian proxies in Middle Eastern countries	Stand against Iran's human rights violations
Donald Trump President	👍👎	👍	👍👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	
Mike Pence Vice President	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍		👍	👍
Rex Tillerson Secretary of State		👎 business with Iran ok								
James Mattis Defense Secretary	👎		👍		👍		👍	👍	👍	
Mike Flynn National Security Advisor	👎		👍		👍		👍		👍	
KT McFarland Deputy National Security Advisor			👎					👍		
Mike Pompeo CIA Director	👍	👍	👎	👍	👎		👍	👍	👍	
Rick Perry Energy Secretary	👍	👍	👎	👍		👍			👍	👍
Nikki Haley UN Ambassador	👍								👍	
Steve Mnuchin Treasury Secretary										

III. NATIONAL SECURITY							
	Keep current restrictions on NSA surveillance (USA Freedom Act)	Reinstate NSA's bulk surveillance program	Close Guantanamo Bay detention center	Prohibit harsh interrogation techniques on terrorism suspects (e.g., waterboarding)	Tighten screening of people who traveled to countries with terrorism problems	Tighten screening of visa applicants	Allocate more funding and resources to cybersecurity
Donald Trump President							
Mike Pence Vice President							
Rex Tillerson Secretary of State							
James Mattis Defense Secretary							
Mike Flynn National Security Advisor							
KT McFarland Deputy National Security Advisor							
Mike Pompeo CIA Director							
Rick Perry Energy Secretary							
Nikki Haley UN Ambassador							
John Kelly Homeland Security Secretary							

Arab Center Washington DC
المركز العربي واشنطن دي سي

IV. PALESTINE/ISRAEL									
	Support strong alliance with Israel/Israeli security	Increase military aid/defense support to Israel	Restrict relations/funding to Palestinian Authority	Double standards regarding Palestinian and Israeli violence	Recognize Palestinian statehood	Support Benjamin Netanyahu	Move US embassy to Jerusalem	Support two-state solution	Support illegal Israeli settlements
Donald Trump President									
Mike Pence Vice President									
Rex Tillerson Secretary of State									
James Mattis Defense Secretary									
Mike Flynn National Security Advisor									
KT McFarland Deputy National Security Advisor									
Mike Pompeo CIA Director									
Rick Perry Energy Secretary									
Nikki Haley UN Ambassador									
David Friedman Ambassador to Israel									

Arab Center Washington DC
المركز العربي واشنطن دي سي

Sources: This information was collected and inferred by ACW based on statements, voting records, and other publicly available information.

*The infographics were prepared with contributions from Congressional Intern Timothy Cook.