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Donald Trump: Orientations of foreign policy

Yomna Suleiman

Donald Trump won the key swing states of Florida, North Carolina and Ohio early this morning, as he marched towards the White House. The Republican surpassed expectations and confounded pollsters in Florida, where Hillary Clinton had been expected to win following a surge in the Hispanic vote. Mrs Clinton's hopes of a swift victory faded as the Republican picked up a series of states early on and maintained his momentum, reported The Guardian. Mr Trump's unexpected success in Florida was backed up by wins in the key states of Ohio, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

*How will Trump's access to the White House affect the Middle East?

1- Trump and managing the relationship with allies in the Middle East region:

The access of Trump to the White House will probably make a change in the scene of the Middle East, in terms of the re-arrangement of cards and alliances in the region. We could see a shift in the US relations from its alliance with Iran to a coordination with the Arab regimes, particularly the Gulf countries and Egypt. These relations will be built on the priority of protecting Israel's security, possibly resulting in a tripartite alliance, "American-Israeli-Saudi" consistent with the recent developments in the Saudi-Israeli relations, and it may be a quadrant alliance, "American-Israeli-Saudi-Egyptian."

2- The Syrian Crisis:

According to what Trump has announced, this crisis will be ignored by Trump at least temporarily. Trump is not directly interested in the Syrian crisis, as he is only preoccupied with the terrorist organizations on the Syrian territory, particularly ISIS. In the event that Russia and Saudi Arabia are fighting Daesh, Trump's greatest support will go to the most effective of them. This support will not be a military one, but will serve as a green light to move. The maximum support Trump refers to is the economic support for the safe areas that he proposed to be established within Syria.



3- The Islamic State “Daesh”

The Islamic State (ISIS) is the only issue where Trump pointed to the possibility of a direct military intervention by the United States. He always has declared that he will fight and eliminate them; and this may be a pretext for American military intervention in a number of countries under the pretext of fighting terrorism and Daesh, particularly in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Egypt, where ISIS is existing.

4- The political Islam in the region:

In most of Trump’s statements and words, he is so exaggerating that he almost says that “all” political Islam groups are extremist. The Muslim Brotherhood was mentioned by Trump in the context of attacking the Obama administration, where he said that he helped the access of the Muslim Brotherhood to power in Egypt, and he apparently shows severe hostility to the Brotherhood. In addition, Trump only mentioned Daesh, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood (in Egypt) in the context of talking about the groups of political Islam, and this probably indicates that the Trump puts the Brotherhood in the same level of animosity. Based on this, Trump may classify the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization in an escalation against the biggest Egyptian political group in the event of his access to power.

5- The attempts of change in the region and the Arab Spring:

Trump opposed the attempts of change in the region; as he tends to support stability and hindering any radical changes. He also prefers to keep powerful rulers rather than what he described as “chaos”. This will perhaps turn to supporting several regimes in the Middle East, such as al-Sisi in Egypt, Essebsi in Tunisia, and Haftar in Libya (or at least the UN-backed Government of National Accord). Trump will also support the stability of the situation in Yemen, and the Saudi orientation in resolving the Yemeni crisis, as the alternative from his point of view would be “terrorist”.

Accordingly, we can say that the biggest beneficiaries in the Middle East from the access of Trump to power are Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the al-Sisi regime in Egypt, and the Tunisian regime. In contrast, the most affected by Trump’s access to the White House will be Iran and then the revolutionary change groups and political Islam in the region.



The Main Features of US President-Elect Donald Trump's

First: The General Features of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy:

Through Trump's most important speeches, on which we have relied in this analysis, we can stand on a number of principles or basic premises of the foreign policy of the US President-elect Donald Trump:

1- Trump adopts in his foreign policy the principle of "America First" as the general goal of his foreign policy in the sense that the United States should not secure the interests of others, or even to put them in mind as much as they are regarded currently; with a need to adhere to the American interests and handle them on the basis that they are the primary motivation for any movement on the level of the US foreign policy. According to Trump, the United States does not have to undertake the burden of protecting or defending others free of charge.

2- Trump adopts the principle of 'isolation' in the foreign policy (isolationist), as he argues that the United States does not have to interfere in organizing the affairs of the world around it and solving its problems. In his speeches, Trump's policy is to avoid talking about globalism. Therefore, there is a spirit of nationalism in his speeches, and he even magnifies the importance of the national state, as he explicitly pointed out in his speech on his foreign policy.

3- Trump does not believe in the idea of humanitarian intervention as a basis or motivation for interfering in the internal affairs of States. As long as it does not affect the US interests, there is no need for the involvement of US forces and US policy in the affairs of others, but when it comes to the interests of the United States, America must interfere militarily on a unilateral basis, without relying on other parties (militaristic and unilateral interventionist).

4- Trump stands against immigration, as he tends to emphasize that the United States is limited to its citizens (anti-immigrant and nativist). He seeks to reduce the rate of



immigration to the United States and sometimes this tendency even reaches the extent of preventing certain categories from moving to the United States.

In this context, Trump rejects immigration to the United States, especially from Mexico. Trump also announced that he would seek to reduce immigration significantly. In one of his speeches, Trump called for building a separating wall between the United States and Mexico to curb immigration and even called Mexico to assume its share of the building costs. He pointed out that the law that gives American citizenship to children born on US territory should be changed, as it is one of the most important motives for immigration. As for the entry of Muslims to the United States, Trump announced that he will prevent Muslims from entering the United States as he considers them a major threat to the American security.

5- Trump adopts the principle of 'trade protectionism' to the US market (protectionist). Besides, he is sceptical about the effectiveness and impact of international commercial conventions and treaties, as well as international trade alliances. He considers all of them as often being in the interest of the other party at the expense of the United States; or at least, that they have negative results which hurt the American economy and market. In this context, Trump strongly criticizes the North American Free Trade (NAFTA), the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreements."

Second: Donald Trump's View of International Issues:

In this context, several key indicators can be monitored as follows:

1- The American-European Relations:

Trump believes that the European countries should bear the burden and costs of defending themselves and that the United States does not have to spend such enormous sums to secure Europe through the establishment of military bases on European territory. The countries of the European Union, in Trump's opinion, is to bear the burden of the security that they want. So, he is against the United States' undertaking the largest share of NATO's budget. From this point, Trump explicitly



refers to the need for the US to move away from its alliances with European countries if they do not commit to shouldering their shares of military spending. He even threatens to pull out of the NATO if its members did not abide by the agreed limit of military expenditure.

However, this does not contradict, in Trump's point of view, the need to maintain the US military superiority, and also to maintain a military spending rate that puts the United States in first place globally, exceeding, as he says, the total spending of the six countries following it.

2- The American-Russian Relations:

Trump calls for the strengthening of the American-Russian rapprochement, but from a position of strength, not of weakness. He believes in the need to restore relations with Russia once again and to deal with it from the premise that there are differences between them, not out of hostility. He also believes that in coordination with Russia, significant gains for the United States can be achieved. Trump believes that he is able to reach agreements that achieve the American interests. With regard to the recent Russian policy, whether in Ukraine or in Syria, he believes that Europe, pointing to Germany in particular, should take over the issue of Ukraine.

3 The American-Chinese Relations:

Trump wants to achieve rapprochement with China and believes that relations with China need to be modified, and that the US should adopt a relationship of respect between the two countries – in the form of a trade-off between the deficit in the US balance of trade with China and the United States' making way for China's influence in East Asia in return. Trump confirms that he will make use of China, as one of the actors that can affect the North Korean policies, to use its influence on North Korea for limiting its nuclear activity, as the United States wants, according to his words.



Third: Trump's Foreign Policy in the Middle East:

Among the most important principles that govern Trump's approaches in the US foreign policy toward the Middle East are: securing Israel's security and achieving its interests in the region, fighting terrorism and containing political Islam – as he considers it one of the main threats to the United States – and achieving stability in the region through preventing any drastic changes. On the basis of these principles, Trump announced a number of policies that he will adopt after his access to the White House, including:

1- The American policy toward Iran:

Trump points to three points in dealing with the Iranian issue, namely:

(A) The US must face the Iranian attempts to push the region to instability in order to control it. Trump believes that Iran represents a threat to the region as it threatens the stability of many regional countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and that Iran supports terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

(B) The US must reconsider its nuclear deal with Iran because it is a catastrophic agreement, as he described it. Trump believes that the nuclear deal with Iran must be cancelled or reconsidered – for modification – because it does not represent the US interests and directly harms Israel's security and interests. At the very least, he sees that there must be some determinants included in the agreement to put Iran under complete accountability and guarantee that it will not to try to test its weapons in the future.

(C) The dismantling of Iran's global terrorist networks. Trump believes that the United States can control Iran and put an end to its strong network by force.



2- The American policy toward Israel:

Trump believes that Israel is the first US ally in the Middle East and that it must work to secure its interests and strengthen its national security as he indicated in his speech before the AIPAC conference when he declared three things that he will provide to Israel:

- 1- The previous procedures on dealing with Iran to support Israel's national security.
- 2- Opposing any attempt of reaching a settlement between Israel and Palestine, because this makes Israel lose its legitimacy and rewards the Palestinian terrorism rather than confronting it.
- 3- Moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem 'the eternal capital of the Jews' and announcing that Israel is the Jewish State – which was rejected by the Palestinians.

