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## The world according to Trump

It's 18 months now since Donald Trump became president of the United States, the world's leading military and economic power. His many impulses are punctuating a dangerous set of international circumstances, in which multiple conflicts threaten peace. In practice, they pursue a single aim: to impose by force the choices of a hegemonic America.

For Trump, everything comes down to power relationships. From the aggressive handshakes to the overbearing tweets, he puts the screws on. And it's working.

The first attack was on the US itself. America has a strong system of checks and balances, and he has destabilised them all. Ousting the Director of the FBI, and then the Deputy Director; taking control of the CIA, and then of the State Department, deprived of leadership and now run by the former CIA director; the systematic shuffling of White House advisers to end up with the ones embodying the "hard line" to the point of caricature: Trump has succeeded in imposing his authority in just 18 months, despite the fact that he failed to win the popular vote and that the establishment - even the GOP - openly opposes his views. But his dominance now seems firmly in place, at least until the mid-term elections in November 2018, which could turn the tables. However, nothing is certain, since the social classes that elected him continue to be entranced by the "America first" policy that he seeks to impose on the world.

Because, make no mistake, it's an American imperium that Trump is systematically establishing over the world. Of course, US influence existed well before him, but he imposes his choices without restraint, whereas Obama applied a much less aggressive diplomacy.

In the Middle East, now that the war against Daesh is over, the main focus is on the moves against Iran, supported by Israel and Saudi Arabia. US diplomacy has always been pro-Israel, but Trump, by moving the embassy to Jerusalem, has shown that he intends to go much further. Camp David as the site of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue between Rabin and Arafat belongs to a distant past as far as Trump is concerned. The crisis in Palestine is no longer on the agenda. All that matters is the Israeli ally as an auxiliary of the US army in the Middle Eastern conflict. Trump is prepared to wage the most severe conflict against Iran, which has gained a foothold in Syria behind Bashar El Assad under a Russian umbrella, which with Hezbollah in the Lebanon has powerful support at the very border with Israel, and which supports the rebellion in Yemen against the Saudi army. His withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal marks a new stage in this planned escalation, and the Israeli air force operation against Iranian troops in Syria owes nothing to any supposed "first strikes" by Iran. All this is a meticulously planned strategy of tension on the part of Trump and his unwavering ally Netanyahu.

Behind this military power struggle, which remains limited to air duels dominated virtually unchallenged by the US-Israeli coalition - since only the Russian shield can stand in its way - there lies a strategy aimed squarely at Europe. Because Europe wants to uphold the nuclear deal with Iran against Trump, who hopes to strangle the economy of the country that prevents his control of the Middle East. This is his strategic priority, and he wants to prevent Europe from maintaining its economic cooperation with Iran.

The economic power of the US is being brought to bear against Europe through the sanctions that threaten the economies that continue to cooperate with Tehran under the nuclear deal. What this means in practice is that America will impose exorbitant fines on businesses accused of trading with Iran in defiance of the US embargo. Of course, these businesses can refuse to pay, but they will then be prohibited from trading in the US market. Clearly European businesses have much more to lose if they are denied access to the US market than they can hope to gain in Iran or elsewhere.

Because of this balance of economic power, Trump will be able to draw Europe against its will into sanctions against Iran, even as its governments refuse to tear up the nuclear agreement.

This is an unprecedented challenge for Europe. If it fails to rise to it, it will decline as a world power. Macron's media theatrics in Washington will have no effect, for any solo attempts are doomed to fail. All they can achieve is to delay the emergence of the only thing that will count in future: the combined and politically coordinated action of the European Union.