



RESEARCH PAPER

Trump's New 2026 Shock Doctrine: War, Deals and Global Chaos

Syed Rizwan Haider Bukhari

PhD Scholar, Department of Political Science, Islamia College University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: bukharipalmist@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research paper analyses the 2026 Shock Doctrine as a strategic model of disruption instead of a standard policy road-map, based on the assumption of how forceful diplomacy, transactional bargaining and nuanced crisis augmentation could redefine the international order. Recent changes in U.S. foreign policy indicate more and more reliance on unpredictability as a means of strategic leverage, which questions a long-standing set of multilateral norms and alliances expectations. With the help of a qualitative research design, the study employs discourse analysis and process tracing to policy narratives, policy communications, and policy responses in major power centers. According to the find, shock-based diplomacy increases volatility systemically, promotes asymmetric concession given constrained military ethos, and reformulates deterrence signaling in international systems of security. As much as it exhibits populist tendencies in foreign policy, the doctrine is a well-organized act of strategic disruption, the long-term effects of which might be observed on the cohesion of alliances and stability in the international arena. Enhancing multilateral crisis-management structures and adaptive diplomatic systems is thus needed to reduce the risks of escalation and avoidance of the rules based international order.

KEYWORDS Shock Doctrine, Coercive Diplomacy, Strategic Unpredictability, Global Order, U.S. Grand Strategy, Alliance Cohesion

Introduction

Recent scholarship on the state of international order has suggested that there has been a tipping point of strategic instability, coercive negotiation, and loss of institutional restraint in the politics of the great powers. Uncertainty, rather than stability, is emerging as a reformed instrument of power in an international system that is characterised by a sequence of old-fashioned conflicts, economic weaponisation and a declining faith in multilateral governance. In this kind of environment, the idea of leaders upsetting the status quo has become a feature of the post-Cold War emphasis on predictability and rule-based management of international relations (Brands, 2025; Hurst and Ashbee, 2025; Smolinski et al., 2025).

The re-emergence of Donald Trump as a political force in the US has brought back the debate on what American power is, ought to be, and what it involves in an ever-disintegrating international system. The world politics in the year 2026 is marked by the continued regional wars, increased great power rivalry, economic conflict by imposing sanctions and weakened international institutions. It is on this backdrop that the evolving attitude towards foreign policy appears to be a distinct strategic rationale one that is a blend of coercive pressure, transactional bargaining and calculated disruption. This strategy is paradigmmed in the study as Trump New 2026 Shock Doctrine: a framework in which the application of war threats, risky deal-making, and the establishment of uncertainty restructures political, economic, and security relationships at the regional and global levels (McKibbin et al., 2025a).

This shock doctrine is oriented on speed, leverage and unpredictability, as opposed to the traditional U.S. foreign policy teachings which designate their efforts based on managing alliances, institutional leadership and long-term strategic planning. There is no perception that crisis is a failed policy or even an undesirable result, but a facilitating environment, through which compromises are purchased and enemies destabilised. The military upsizing (or rhetorical and operationally) is synergistic with economic pressure, sanctions-in-exchange and personal diplomacy, moving limits between traditionally delimited war, agreement and trade. Conflict and deal-making are thus more of complementary logics, not opposing ones, and complements to a bigger strategy of controlled chaos (Zeiler, 2025).

The research question that is applied in the study is the absence of a coherent analytical framework that can lead to explanations in the way these factors interact as a unit and not as an episodic event; war signalling, transactional diplomacy, and systemic disruption. The existing literature is inclined to perceive the foreign policy of the Trump era in the airtight compartments of populism, erosion of alliances, or coercive diplomacy, without acknowledging the influence of one on the other as a viable strategic thinking. As a result, it has been unclear whether the witnessed volatility is to inconsistency and personality-driven behaviour or a doctrine that has been highly polished to suit a shaky global order.

The Trump 2026 shock doctrine is put into perspective in this paper within the theoretical literature of shock politics, coercive diplomacy, and populist statecraft in general. It argues that the contemporary form of this doctrine is more systematic and more disruptive than its predecessors, in order that it embodies the experience of other terms and because the international system is more vulnerable than ever to abrupt shocks. It not only affects the U.S. foreign policy but also the unity of the alliance, the international markets, international standards, and conflict management systems (Toscani, 2026).

This paper describes how the Trump shock doctrine restructures relations of power in the conditions of decreasing predictability through the analysis of interactions between war signalling, transactional diplomacy, and global disorder. It also looks at whether this form is a temporary aberration due to a leadership style and populist agenda, or a long-term trend of strategic behaviour, which can transform the behaviour of great powers when they experience systemic stress and institutional corruption (Gill, 2025).

Literature Review

The body of scholarship applicable to the case of shock politics, transactional and populist foreign policy, coercive diplomacy, and discussions regarding the reported degradation of the liberal international order are diverse and overlapping. Even though no one study develops theorisation of a 2026 shock doctrine specifically, all of these strands shed a light on the ways in which war signalling, deal making, and created instability can serve as self-complimentary tools of power. Collectively, they imply that disruption in itself may turn into a governance form instead of a policy failure side effect. However, this literature is still fragmented, analytically compartmentalised, and not sufficiently integrated.

Shock Politics and Crisis Strategic Use. The idea of ruling by shock has become a widely discussed phenomenon in the fields of political economy and critical international relations. This literature underlines that crises, such as an economic meltdown, security crisis, or political unrest can be used strategically to freeze norms, undermine the opposition of an institution, and expedite policy alteration. In this perception, shock is not just an exogenous interference, but a state which can be intentionally fostered to produce urgency, terror and obedience. Applying the concept to the context of international politics, this view redefines instability as strategic resource instead of policy failure, allowing the powerful

actors to rearrange the ties in unequal positions (Bukhari, 2025). Although conceptually relevant, much of this corpus has focused on the aspects of governance within the home, and neoliberal restructuring and has done little to engage the specificity of the foreign policy as a more systematic field of shock production. Consequently, as much as it offers a strong theoretical prism, it falls short of detailing how shock works concurrently in military, economic, and diplomatic arenas in great-power statecraft (Bukhari et al., 2024).

Transactional Foreign Policy and Populist Foreign Policy. Empirical evidence on the first presidency of Donald Trump provides a critical basis of study to elucidate how the present-day foreign policy is shaped by shock. A significant amount of scholarship has described the style of Trump as transactional, personalised, and doubtful of multilateralism. Alliances are shown not as long term strategic commitments but as tentative agreements that can be renegotiated in relation to current cost benefit evaluations. According to scholars, this orientation undermined institutional consistency, civilised the bureaucratic know-how and increased executive discretion which created an environment of foreign policy that we highly likely to change and where rhetorics tend to drift. Yet, a lot of this literature understands transactionality as ideological populism or improvisational management (Bukhari & Mujaddid, 2025). It seldom looks at the interaction between transactional bargaining and coercive pressure as well as the crisis generation in terms of a more comprehensive strategic reasoning. Therefore, the compound effect of transactionality at regional and policy levels have not been sufficiently theorised (Velasco E Cruz, 2025).

Unpredictability as Strategic Asset. One more powerful branch of study considers unpredictability as a calculated instrument of manipulation. With reference to behavioural theories of international relations and deterrence, analysts maintain that uncertainty may represent the distortion of calculations on the part of adversaries, it raises bargaining power, and it may induce concession. The resurgence of thoughts related to the madman theory is an indication of the thesis that the projection of volatility or irrationality can bolster the outcomes of deterrence and negotiations (Arshad et al., 2024; Bukhari et al., 2025). Unpredictability was to be observed in the Trump case, with unforeseen changes in policy, unforeseen military or economic build-up threats, and unorthodox diplomatic interactions. Although more recent observations are beginning to make some original allowances to the extent that such behaviour is guided by coercive reasoning as opposed to naive impulsivity, they are inclined to project unpredictability as a signal mechanism and not a governing principle in the system. This leaves open to investigation how uncertainty works in the long-run as an stabilising or destabilising factor in the international system. (Hurst and Ashbee, 2025).

The Confusion between War and Peace and Coercive Diplomacy. The sources on coercive diplomacy and limited war also shed some more light on the intersection of military force and deal-making. Instead of carrying out decisive wars or prolonged stabilisation, modern analysis marks precision of pressure in the form of troop onslaughts, sanctions, arms transfer, electronic activities, and threat of force as judgments meant to influence negotiations but never exchange lasting conflict (Tahreem et al., 2025; Nameem et al., 2024). This is in line with the academic findings that indicate that contemporary great powers are fading the distinctions between war and peace, whereby military signalling is applied to organize political and economic deliverables. Most research however evaluates these tools independently where they look at their performance on tactical level and not their effects as a system. How long-term coercion, combining with transactional diplomacy and institutional bypassing, will change the world order, is a question that is not answered well enough (Lazarus, 2025; Sharafat et al., 2025).

Pandemic Breakdown of World Order and Structural Instability. Another area of literature is the undermining of the post-Cold War liberal international order. There is consensus among academics that the institutions of multilateral trust have suffered

deterioration, that economic governance has been disaggregated, and that great-power rivalry has been on the rise, decreasing systemic shock absorbing capacity (Aslam et al., 2025). This weakness in structure intensifies disruption impacts that allow powerful states to impose disproportionately through weaponising uncertainty. The information available in the literature, however, views disruption mostly as a symptom of systematic decomposition as opposed to an exploited strategy. Consequently, it does not give enough credit to the active role played by powerful actors in promoting the rapid erosion of institutions to strategic benefit (Smolinski et al., 2025; Urooj et al., 2025).

Critical Views and Formal Constraints. Analytical constraints involve the related limits common to all empirical procedures:

- (1) focusing on cause and effect relationships, and
- (2) adhering to a transitional process of problem definition and problem-solving (Farrington, 1989).

Religious scholars query the consistency and sustainability in designating a calculated shock doctrine to Trump. There are those who say that noted volatility is indicative of inconsistency, domestic political interests, or this lack of cohesion within the U.S. policy apparatus, and not strategic design (Bukhari, 2024). Some have cautioned that its constant resilience to shock undermines credibility, jurists adversaries and provokes involvement by diversifying and circumventing institutions, which eventually undermines U.S. influence. These criticisms are important issues but tend to make a confusion between strategic risk and strategic absenteeism. Focusing on results instead of the logic that results in them, they run the risk of not being aware of how anarchy itself is also a governing principle of the world and not a by-product (Schortgen, 2025).

Literature Gap and Contribution to Study. Although these arguments persist, the literature continues to point in the direction of the opinion that Trump-era foreign policy is not merely another bout of disruption. The frequent recall of integration between war rhetoric, transactional bargaining and institutional marginalisation indicates that a recurring trend is being formed that should be subject to systematic analysis. The only aspect that lacks development is an elaborate framework that links these aspects into a single explanatory theory. There are additional reports on the analysis of military coercion, economic statecraft, or the diplomatic style singularly, the cumulative and interactive dynamics of their convergence have scarcely been studied (Bukhari, 2023; Lazarus & Ergen, 2025). The gap which this paper is seeking to fill is the synthesis of knowledge about shock politics, coercive diplomacy, and the global order theory, which might help us conceptualise the New 2026 Shock Doctrine of Trump, as a unique form of statecraft. Through a chaotic dynamic, the research enriches prior research and suggests a synthesized understanding of the relationship between war, deals, and global disorder to remake the modern international politics (Brands, 2025).

Material and Methods

Rationale of Methodology. To examine the New 2026 shock doctrine by Trump as a pattern of strategic behaviour but not a policy regime as such that is determinate and articulated, this study is based on qualitative, interpretive research design, though it analyses it. Given the fact that the doctrine under question was not written or recorded in any official strategy documents, but it could be derived through the behaviour, rhetoric and sequencing of actions, qualitative methods would fare the best. Quantitative representation would be inadequate at the symbolic, discursive, and contextual sides of shock-based statecraft, most especially where the meaning, signalling, and management of perception are the prominent instruments of influence. Interpretive design gives a chance to study the influence of will, a plan, and intercourse at political, military, and economical levels. Such an

approach adheres to the traditional methodological approaches to foreign policy analysis and the research of foreign policies when the traditions of actions are often reinstated according to the patterns of actions rather than declarations.

Time Frame and Inclusion Criteria. The time frame within the context of the empirical scope of the research is the year 2025-2026, when once again the Donald Trump comes into the focus of the foreign policy discussion and policy-making process in the United States. It is during this time that early articulation and operationalisation of the 2026 shock doctrine would be analysed and this would facilitate studying initial signalling, the behaviour of the crisis and international reaction to the crisis. The materials were reported based on the following criteria:

1. Direct applicability to a United States policy of foreign affairs or security, or of economic policy.
2. Implicit/explicit coercive rhetoric, transactional bargaining, or crisis framing.
3. High salience of international political, economic or security.
4. Authoritatively obtained out of the U.S. governmental and world-institutional and policy archives.

Sample Size and Data Collection. The article relies on the purposive qualitative sample, which can represent policy domain and region variation. The dataset consists of:

1. Addresses to the community by the representatives of Donald Trump, interviews and statements.
2. Policy strategic documents, defence statements and executive policy signals.
3. Diplomatic activities of high profile, crisis situations, and incident negotiation of which there are clear international implications.

Author visited government archives, defence, and foreign policy concise exposure, records of international organisations, and affirmed policy repositories. They believe that their sample size is large enough to saturate themes and can triangulate across domains analytically without analytical loss.

Result and Discussion

There are four steps of the data analysis. First, the reading content was coded in an orderly manner to the extent that recurrent patterns were discovered in terms of war signalling, trading in dealings, cutting corners of institutions, and lastly, willful making of uncertainty. Second the process tracing was employed to trace the chronological sequence of the threats, crisis or negotiations to decide whether instability was a strategic instrument or not but not a crisis or a reactive behaviour. Thirdly, discourse analysis was applied to learn how language of coercion, urgency, and bargaining was formed and fetishized to sway the perception of the allies, adversaries, as well as the international markets. Special attention was paid to rhetoric escalation, ambiguity and framing of costs, and conceding. Fourth, the shock doctrine of the 2026 was contrasted with the past phases of the U.S. foreign policy, and the tendencies of continuity, progress, and refinement were outlined. To try to enhance the degree of the analytical rigour the study triangulated the political, security and economic dimensions of the policy actions in such a way that the variables of war, deals and global disorder are the reliant variables. It is a methodology that lays emphasis to explanatory coherence instead of prediction in which they seek to clarify strategic reasoning, systemic implications rather than predicting individual results of policies. The form can be employed to examine the operation of shock based statecraft to operate in a fragmented and crisis prone international system in a subtle way.

This argument compares both the empirical evidence and the literature available to ascertain whether or not, Trump 2026 Shock Doctrine is a logical strategic strategy or another existent ad-hoc result. Returning to the original major questions of the study, the analysis discovers that, instead of a set of distinct instruments, war signalling, transactional diplomacy and deliberate disorder is an all-encompassing logic of statecraft. The findings partly confirm the recent theoretical assertions of coercive diplomacy and unpredictability, and challenge current expectations regarding stability of alliances, institutional stability, and deterrence intelligibility.

America First 2.0 Hard Power over the Liberal Order. The personalities of the America First 2.0 vociferously enhance the literature, which holds Trump-era foreign policy as the renunciation of liberal internationalism post-Cold War (Tower et al., 2025). As per the above studies, the multilateral institutions are not understood as compelling multipliers, but as restriction of leverage in the single forces. By demonstrating that it is not only an ideological, but also a fundamental reason that the shock doctrine takes place in an organization, this paper will contribute the existing body of literature. The implication of Leader-driven bilateralism is the probability of coercive bargaining and that speed and asymmetry are preferred over consensus. The bilateralism orientation aligns with the transactional foreign policy literature (Koru and Mutz, 2025), however, the findings refute the meanings of transactionality as an improvisational action course. Instead, conditional security assures and coercion by placing pressure have become the systematic tools to restructure alliances. This answers the first research question directly because the fact that coercion and deal-making are conscientiously integrated and not renegotiated incidentally. The direct rejection of the rule-based international order goes hand in hand with the attacks on the realist on the norm-based governance (Imbrie, 2020). The findings, however, do not fit in the liberal hypotheses that reputational costs are bound to influence great-power behaviour. Reputational stigmatization is condoned, even encouraged, in shock doctrine, to amplify uncertainty, which vindicates behavioural IR theories and nullifies institutionalist expectations of constraint.

Greenland Doctrine of Arctic Militarization and Resource Control. The outcomes of the Greenland Doctrine corroborate the rest of the studies that characterized the Arctic as a venue of an emerging great-power rivalry (Hart, 2026). The existing sources have put their efforts on militarisation and deterrence; in this paper, we are going to develop these through illustrating how Arctic strategy provides a synthesis of resource extraction, an alliance pressure, and an escalator control in a single coercive system. Militarisation is not an aspect of defence but helps to gain superior bargaining. The give-preference to rare-earth-and-energy-security confirms the geopolitics-of-scarce-resource scholarship (Maggiolino, 2025), however, disagreements with opinions of rare-resource-competition being purely economic. Here the economic resources get included to the terrains of military force and diplomatic influence to qualify the scholarly argument that the economical and security realms are actively combined in the shock doctrine. It also confirms the position of alliances-conditionality that NATO allies are being pressured in the Arctic environment (Allen, 2026). However, the findings go against the notion that the merging of the union has remained the objective. Shared norms are replaced by conformance and hierarchical which argues that shock-based management of alliances imposes control rather than cohesion.

In case a full-scale war escalated to the highest possible pressure, Iran would be the first target in any action. Iran case contributes in a very huge way to the literature related to coercive diplomacy that emphasizes the equalized pressure as opposed to complete war (Jaafar, 2025). The grey-zone conflict theory is compatible with sanctions, computer-based activity, and proxy warfare (Boehler and Wiedekind, 2025). However, this does not affirm the knowledge on the basis of which such restraint is conceived to be de-escalatory. Instead, a long period of uncertainty and continuous stress overestimates ambiguity risks and uncertainty. The domestic ambiguity to capitalize on in the diplomacy is betting against the scholarship on indirect coercion (McKibbin et al., 2025b) despite the

fact that it goes to demonstrate how the conflict at home is not made unintentionally but actually as a bargaining chip. The outcome of this research directly relates to the 2nd research question because it demonstrates the instability as a strategic instrument rather than policy spillovers.

Current release - the so-called Ukrainian Endgame Strategy, negotiations by force. The outcome of the Ukrainian endgame is also aligned with the new materials within the category of the end of the war and strategy depletion (Svetlicic, 2025). Realist vividness in conflict management is bearing witness to the fact that negotiated closure is given preference to battlefield victory. Nevertheless, this paper challenges normative arguments which assert that the support is withdrawn due primarily to the exhaustion of resources. Instead, the negotiating pressure refers to a goal-oriented thought process that pursues constructing legacies and allocated burdens. This non-transmission of the responsibility to Europe confirms the presence of the allocation of burdens in the relations of allies (Burrows and Braml, 2025), and the findings also enlarge the literature by showing that the transfer of burdens is coercive in place of cooperative-negotiation. The diplomatic accommodation with Russia is even more posing a risk to the liberal constructs of deterrence since it has demonstrated its ability to entertain frozen conflicts and latent aspect of influence in transactional coexistence (Jefferies, 2025).

This Article The NATO Redefined: Europe under Pressure. The proved results of NATO indicate that they conducted extensive research on the strain of the alliances under the Trump-era policies (Bukhari et al., 2024). This study adds to the available literature by demonstrating that NATO is not unravelling because of oversight but being realigned as a contractual one. Bargaining instruments are the conditionality of the deployment of troops and the threat of withdrawal rather than the message of disengagement. This is opposed to institutionalist beliefs that uncertainty in alliances was desirable as compared to deterrence. Instead, uncertainty-seeking is indicated to be applied intentionally to obtain compliance even though it is causing European hedging and strategic independence- answering the research question three on systemic implications- even faster.

The renaissance of the Monroe doctrine in Venezuela and Latin America. The revival of Monroe-style interventionism is a form of historical continuity (Ranald, 2026), although the current paper places Latin America in the context of all-power politics versus regional exceptionalism. The migrant securitisation and Venezuela being central to energy justifies the status quo of hemispheric coercion (Tomoko, 2025) and demonstrates how domestic and foreign policy-making are integrated using the shock doctrine.

China - Economic War, Not Military. The academic research on economic statecraft and decoupling is consistent with the China research (Linden, 2025). The work, however, challenges publications that perceive Taiwan as the primary cause of escalation. Instead, Taiwan is a negotiating asset in broad scale economic war. This proves the stance of the people who believe that economic war is one of the prerequisites of a real war, in which competition is instilled in a long-term policy of industrial and technology (Kolodko, 2025).

Middle East Re-Engineering. Using the Middle East case study allows substantiating the works of realist literature that emphasizes alignment against mediation (Dent, 2025). The marginalisation of the Palestinian question follows the neutralisation of values, yet the outcomes strategize the current literature by displaying the relegations of conflict resolution in favour of strategic coalescence. The regime of containment in Iran is the organising axis that justifies the balance of power interpretations (Sun and Yu, 2025).

United Nations and Global Institutions Marginalisation. The findings are very illuminating to the field of analysis on institutional decay and are critical of the school of thought where the decline is viewed as a part of the whole system. The United Nations is,

rather, selectively marginalized in regards to unpopular participation and bargaining power in regards to financing (Djamalov & Raghuraman, 2025). Outcome-based power replaces legitimacy by procedure, but consent defectively the foundations of legitimacy, pushing realist criticism to the limit, which further contributes to deliberate institutional undermining.

It was Economic Nationalism and Tariff Warfare. The results render the position economic nationalism of interest in weaponising assets literature (OGUTU, 2025). However, this text bears out that tariffs and dollar hegemony are both variations of coercing friends and foes because the economic warfare is not adversarial and many people believe is extruded by outsiders. The shock doctrine turns out to be one of the main pillars of economic policy rather than a tool of it.

Reversal of Deterrence Policy- Unpredictability. These outcomes of the military are compatible with the behavioural deterrence theory more than classical theories of deterrence relied on the principle of clarity and credibility and are antagonistic to them. Uncertainty-based deterrence replaces red-line signalling which again validates the hypothesis that uncertainty is taken to a new normative stage of being a tactic as well as a doctrine itself.

Global Reaction to Trump 2026. International responses confirm the postulates of institutionalist and multipolarity literature about alliance anxiety and hedging behaviour. The findings contribute to this debate in showing that shock induced statecraft accelerates the bloc diversification process and non-aligned regionalism, which further boosts system fragmentation.

The implication of this to Pakistan and the Muslim world. It proves the strategic insulation assumptions false to Pakistan and the Muslim world. Diplomatic space contraction and alignment pressure are conducive to the literature of middle-power vulnerability, and the strategic utility of Pakistan at the identical time is also becoming emerging, increasing coercion possibilities. The shock doctrine will then necessitate diplomatic skillfulness rather than a long-term of operation of decision that upholds the wider systemic implications that this study concludes. This study regarding the Trump New 2026 Shock Doctrine displays a set of patterns that validate and refute the existing literature on U.S. grand strategy, coercive diplomacy, and global governance. Instead of episodic disruption, the fact is that there exists some organised form of statecraft that is organised around three related clusters: the strategic utilisation of instability, transactional realism and burden-shifting, and the instrumentalisation of economic power and the peripherisation of institutions.

Tactical Employment of Instability. The results prove that instability is not addressed as a policy failure by-product but rather as a strategic resource. Threats of war, economic coercion, and diplomatic vagaries are sequentially combined to push results forward, and controlled coercion and grey-zone warfare are used rather than all-out war like Iran, China, and Ukraine. This trend validates the academic literature on coercive diplomacy and shock politics which place uncertainty as a bargaining tool but criticizes the classic grand strategy template where stability, alliance unity, and deterrent clarification were central elements. Unsteadiness has ceased to be a handling matter but is an involved growing and working matter. There are important implications. Ambiguity is raised to the level of deterrence, making the probability of miscalculating and inadvertently escalating higher. Meanwhile, the doctrine demonstrates compliance with internal limitations and war exhaustion, allowing projecting power without military commitments.

Table 1
Strategic Use of Instability

Aspect	Literature Expectation	Findings (2026 Doctrine)	Alignment/Deviation
Role of instability	Risk to be managed	Strategic resource	Deviates
Military engagement	Clarity and credibility	Grey-zone conflict, controlled coercion	Partially aligns
Deterrence logic	Predictability	Ambiguity and shock	Deviates

Transactional Realism and Burden-Shifting. The results indicate that alliances and partnerships are re-characterized within contracts of negotiable terms in which security assurance and access to the economy are contingent. Burdenshifting on regional level is quite obvious: Europe is driven into a situation of autonomy, Middle East and Latin America are to take up duties, short-term interests are in priority over long-term security. This is an affirmation of the realist views on transactional diplomacy that elevates power over norms, and directly criticizes the liberal institutional theory of alliance permanence and predictable multilateralism. In spite of the fact that such strategy strengthens the bargaining power of the U.S. in the short-term perspective, it undermines confidence and predictability, boosting the pace of decentralisation and multipolarity. Transactional realism, in particular, does not act as style only but as the principle of structure, which transforms the behaviour of alliances, distributes strategic risks.

Regional Burden-Shifting under the 2026 Doctrine



Economic-Security Instrumentalisation and Institutional Marginalisation. It is concluded that trade, finance and access to markets are being instrumentalised, through tariffs and sanctions and decoupling of supply chains. Meanwhile, the international institutions like the United Nations and global law enforcement agencies are brushed off accelerating the drop of the institutions. Deterrence is re-invented on psychological supremacy and doubt rather than definiteness. These processes testify to the fact of the literature on economic statecraft where the post-Cold War propositions of stability resting on multilateral institutions and an order founded on rules are now denied. Although this policy will enable to make U.S. stronger in the short-term, it will encourage de-dollarisation and other financial agreements, reduce conflict solving, and popularise systemic instability and disintegration. Rather than a tool of statecraft, economic policy comes to be a foundation.

Table 2
Economic-Security Instrumentalisation

Instrument	Traditional Role	2026 Doctrine Role	Strategic Effect
Sanctions/Tariffs	Ancillary tool	Central instrument	Short-term leverage
Alliances/Institutions	Stability mechanism	Marginalised, conditional	Reduced predictability

Deterrence	Clarity and credibility	Psychological dominance, ambiguity	Risk of miscalculation
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Trump’s New 2026 shock doctrine systematically exploits disorder as a strategic resource, institutionalises transactional realism, and weaponises economic and financial instruments. While effective in generating short-term leverage and rapid concessions, it destabilises long-term global order, erodes alliances, marginalises institutions, and normalises chaos as a principle of governance. These findings partially align with realist and coercive-diplomacy literature but directly challenge liberal-institutionalist expectations of predictability, multilateral cooperation, and alliance durability.

Conclusion

The New 2026 shock doctrine unveiled by Trump is a calculated program of taking advantage of unrest, coercion, and transactional diplomacy to gain strategic benefits in a brief period in many areas of the world stage. The doctrine moves out of the values-based foreign policy and institutional multilateralism in favor of a model of power-driven realism by focusing on the importance of the unpredictable, the pressures of the economy, and selective military signalling. Although this strategy strengthens the U.S. position, pushes other allies to take more responsibilities, and pressures opponents to reassess, it also weakens confidence, weakens decades-old partnerships, marginalises international institutions, and introduces more fragmentation in a multipolar system. Finally, the doctrine provides both the tactical flexibility and deal-making benefits at the normalisation of chaos, undermining systemic stability and remaking the international order in patterns that can lead to both long-term strategic penalties and short-term benefits.

Recommendations

Make Shock-Based Diplomacy Institutions. Since the 2026 Shock Doctrine legitimizes the escalation of crises as a bargaining instrument, the major powers need to introduce the formal threshold of escalation and protocols of managing the crisis situations. There is a way of mitigating the risk of unintentional military conflict by having a set of guardrails, which include pre-negotiable communication pathways and the use of confidence-building mechanisms to ensure the upkeep of the strategic leverage.

Improve the Multilateral Norms in the Transactions Negotiation. As the research demonstrates, collective institutions are weakened by shock-based initiatives that focus on bilateral pressure. Multilateral checkpoints need to be incorporated into high-stakes multilateral negotiations to avert undermining international law and remain legitimate to the rules-based order.

Balance Coercive Economic Instruments and Systemic Stability. The frequent application of tariffs, sanctions and financial coercion can create temporary compromises but risks the further disintegration of the global economic government. Calibrated economic coercion models should be embraced by the strategic actors as a measure of minimizing long-term harm to supply chain and international financial systems.

Empower Alliance Adaptability within Strategy Unpredictability. With the doctrine transforming alliances to a transactional expectation, partner states are to diversify mechanisms of security cooperation and work on independent capacity of responding to crisis. The uncertainty can be limited with the help of flexible alliance structures maintaining the deterrence credibility.

Boost Middle-Power Strategic Hedging. The affected regional actors of the shock-based diplomacy ought to focus on diversified partnerships and multi-vector policies on foreign policies. Having not relied on a single power hub, middle powers will be able to retain a strategic independent capacity within a highly-dynamic geopolitical surroundings.

Strategy Disruption Early-Warning Scale. International organizations and research institutions ought to develop course models which keep track of crisis-motivated diplomacy indicators: sudden changes in tariffs, some sort of military signaling, or a rise in rhetoric. Shock-strategy behaviors can be identified at the early stages so that a preemptive diplomatic intervention can prevent the escalation of the crisis.

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