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Foreign Policy Paper

EXAMINING THE FOREIGN POLICY INHERENT IN THE PLATFORMS OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PARTIES

Foreign policy remains an integral part of the U.S. political system. In every presidential election, political parties must assure the American people that the country's foreign policy will be in safe hands if entrusted with authority.¹ Abroad, many leaders watch presidential debates and follow the campaign with a keen interest in what each candidate has in their foreign policy because the U.S. foreign policy has a ripple effect on every affair of the global system.²

The Democratic Party Platform

The 2020 Democratic Party Platform was approved by the Democratic National Convention on August 18, 2020.³ Set to challenge Trump for the second time, the platform's foreign policy took advantage of what the democrats considered Trump's inadequacies in his approach to foreign policy (Ibid). Democrats highlighted the reinvention of alliances as the main foreign policy issue. The Trump administration pulled the U.S. out of vital international partnerships, including the Paris Climate Agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran nuclear deal), and the World Health Organization. Trump's insistence that it is "common sense" for Russia to rejoin the G7 was also a significant point of departure in the democrats' platform.⁴ The U.S. Armed Forces and their activities across the globe are also a substantial area of concern. Democrats seek to end prolonged military engagements, focusing on the Afghanistan

¹ Shinkman, Paul. "Why Foreign Policy Has Been Missing from the 2020 Campaign ..." *U.S News*, 13 Oct. 2020, <https://www.usnews.com/news/elections/articles/2020-10-13/why-foreign-policy-has-been-missing-from-the-2020-campaign>.

² Usher, Barbara Plett. "US Election 2020: How Will Biden Change Foreign Policy?" *BBC News*, BBC, 7 Nov. 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2020-54472696>.

³ "Party Platform." *Democrats*, 29 Aug. 2020, <https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/>.

⁴ "Trump Says It's 'Common Sense' to Include Russia in G7." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 3 June 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g7-summit-trump/trump-says-its-common-sense-to-include-russia-in-g7-idUSKBN23A285>.

war, the longest in America's history (Ibid). The democrats do not categorically indicate an increase in military spending but go further to question the way resources are spent and on which areas of the defense budget. In the advancement of America's interests, the Asia-Pacific region remains a contentious issue in the platform with a clear emphasis on China and its activities in the region.

The Republican Party Platform

After eight years of the Obama presidency, Republicans were disappointed with how democrats handled the U.S. foreign policy. It was evident by the tone used in the platform and the constant criticism of the Barack Obama administration in nearly every platform paragraph.⁵ The GOP platform focused on America's role and gains from international organizations to which the US is a signatory and, most importantly, a founding member. The GOP showed displeasure at the lack of accountability to Americans and the dwindling American leadership at these organizations (Ibid). The GOP disagreed with the Iran nuclear deal and preferred an unmentioned alternative approach to Iran. Putting U.S. interests in Israel first, the platform promises continued protection to Israel and intensify the fight against ISIS in the Middle East (Ibid). The U.S. leadership in the Asia-Pacific remains top on the agenda with a clerical call to allies like Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand to stand against China (Ibid). China is mentioned several times in the GOP platform, indicating it was soon becoming the U.S. main adversary, something that has now formally been acknowledged.

Differences in the Platforms and Implications to National Security

The differences in the approach to the Iran nuclear deal are profound, and these have caused a significant setback in achieving the required objectives of the Iran nuclear talks. Republicans advocate for an aggressive approach, whereas democrats prioritize nuclear diplomacy, de-escalation, and regional dialogue. As long as the Iran question remains unanswered, U.S. allies in the region, especially Israel, remain threatened by a nuclear-armed Iran. Democrats argue that Trump Administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA isolated the United States and its allies and opened doors for Iran to resume its nuclear enrichment. The republicans indicate that Iran is the biggest sponsor of terrorists globally, which is fundamentally true because research implicates the Iranian regime in sponsoring Hezbollah, Hamas, and other proxy terror groups.

⁵ "Rules and Resolutions." *GOP*, The Republican Party, 2016, <https://www.gop.com/rules-and-resolutions/>.

If Iran is left to acquire a nuclear weapon, they could easily equip and embolden these terror groups, which have occasionally attacked the U.S. both at home and abroad.

I have put this paper through a grammar and spell check program.