

Thorny Global Issues Abound a Year Into Trump Presidency

AP correspondents take stock of volatile, unprecedented year in global politics

By *The Associated Press*

With a sharp departure from years and sometimes decades of U.S. foreign policy, President Donald Trump has made a seismic global impact during his first year in office.

It has been delivered with his own brand of bombast and occasional threats.

Contentious issues have always existed, especially in conflict-ridden or volatile countries, but has he improved or worsened matters? Twelve months into his presidency, Associated Press correspondents take stock:

RUSSIA

Trump repeatedly declared in his campaign that he would improve relations with Russia but was never specific. A year into his presidency, it's no clearer. Moscow and Washington are at odds over issues ranging from North Korea to Ukraine, despite Trump's open admiration of President Vladimir Putin.

Russian officials had high hopes that Trump would move to abandon or reduce the sanctions that the United States imposed over Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Instead, Trump approved selling lethal weapons to Ukraine for the fight against the rebels, he appointed a Russia hawk as Washington's envoy for Ukraine's peace process, and his U.N. ambassador, Nikki Haley, declared that the Crimea sanctions wouldn't be lifted unless the peninsula is returned to Ukraine.

Trump even signed legislation imposing new sanctions on Russia — unwillingly, but effectively forced to by the measure's near-unanimous Senate approval. Publicly, the Kremlin contends Trump is hogtied by suspicions of Russia held over from the Barack Obama era and by hysteria over allegations that Moscow meddled in the 2016 election and that Trump and Russia had colluded.

Trump himself has criticized Russia, saying Moscow “seeks to chal-

lenge American values, influence and wealth,” and complaining he is not satisfied with Russia's role in easing tensions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

Russia contends the U.S. wants to undermine the deal limiting Iran's nuclear program and that Washington clandestinely supports Islamic fighters in Syria.

Although Trump has a taste for defying conventional political wisdom, his potential moves toward Russia appear constricted until the investigation into his campaign's dealings with Russia concludes and leaves him untarnished. While the probe continues, the Kremlin is edging from quiet disappointment into needling suggestions of U.S. weakness.

“Will they show good will? Will they gather courage, exercise common sense?” Putin said.

ASIA

Asia was one of Trump's punching bags during his election campaign. Chinese and Japanese exports were destroying U.S. jobs. South Korea and Japan weren't paying enough for U.S. troops defending their countries.

Then came Kim Jong Un.

Two weeks before Trump took office, the leader of North Korea declared in a New Year's address that preparations for an intercontinental ballistic missile were in “the final stage.” Trump tweeted in response: “North Korea just stated that it is in the final stages of developing a nuclear weapon capable of reaching parts of the U.S. It won't happen!”

Both sides traded threats and insults, and North Korea conducted an underground nuclear test and three ICBM launches that demonstrated at least a theoretical ability to reach the U.S.

Seeking China's help on isolating North Korea through economic sanctions, Trump backed off a threat to label China a currency manipulator. He was off-and-on conciliatory on trade during an extended visit to Asia in November, and China said it would lift restric-



In this Dec. 14, 2017 file photo, Palestinian protesters burn a poster with a picture of U.S. President Donald Trump during clashes with Israeli troops following protests against Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Trump promised to pursue “the ultimate deal” — an agreement to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A year later, he has made little headway and his hoped-for peace push appears to be in tatters. In December, he upended decades of policy by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The move, seen as siding with Israel, set off weeks of unrest and prompted the Palestinians to declare Trump unfit to mediate peace.

tions on foreign investment in its banks and other financial institutions.

As his second year in office dawns, however, Trump appears to be moving steadily toward raising tariffs or restricting imports to try to force China to take steps to narrow its trade surplus with the United States.

Kim began the year with his own conciliatory note: sending a delegation to next month's Winter Olympics in South Korea. But he also said in

a Jan. 1 speech that North Korea's nuclear and missile tests have achieved a powerful deterrent that “nothing can reverse.”

SYRIA, IRAQ AND THE ISLAMIC STATE

Trump can claim credit for the virtual defeat of the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria on his watch. He largely continued Obama's anti-IS strategy and intensified it. U.S. troop levels were increased in both countries, coalition commanders got more au-

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Anti-Smoking Plan May Kill Cigarettes — and Save Big Tobacco

By *Matthew Perrone*
AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Imagine if cigarettes were no longer addictive and smoking itself became almost obsolete; only a tiny segment of Americans still lit up. That's the goal of an unprecedented anti-smoking plan being carefully fashioned by U.S. health officials.

But the proposal from the Food and Drug Administration could have another unexpected effect: opening the door for companies to sell a new generation of alternative tobacco products, allowing the industry to survive — even thrive — for generations to come.

The plan puts the FDA at the center of a long-standing debate over so-called “reduced-risk” products, such as e-cigarettes, and whether they should have a role in anti-smoking efforts, which have long focused exclusively on getting smokers to quit.

“This is the single most controversial — and frankly, divisive — issue I've seen in my 40 years studying tobac-

co control policy,” said Kenneth Warner, professor emeritus at University of Michigan's school of public health.

The FDA plan is twofold: drastically cut nicotine levels in cigarettes so that they are essentially non-addictive. For those who can't or won't quit, allow lower-risk products that deliver nicotine without the deadly effects of traditional cigarettes.

This month the government effort is poised to take off. The FDA is expected to soon begin what will likely be a years-long process to control nicotine in cigarettes. And next week, the agency will hold a public meeting on a closely watched cigarette alternative from Philip Morris International, which, if granted FDA clearance, could launch as early as February.

The product, called iQOS (pronounced EYE-kose), is a penlike device that heats Marlboro-branded tobacco but stops short of burning it, an approach that Philip Morris says reduces exposure to tar and other toxic by-

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