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Trump administration plans to revamp immigration system

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A Trump administration will execute a 10-point plan to "restore the integrity" of the US immigration system, including building a wall along the border with Mexico, suspension of visas from certain countries and reforming the legal immigration system, the president-elect's transition team said on Friday.

The new administration under Donald Trump will focus on radical ideologies, nuclear weapons and cyber-attacks as three areas of threat in the national defense and security domain, the transition team said.

The team listed out what it called the 10-point plan for immigration reform though not much details of such a policy framework were immediately available. It broadly indicates the policies articulated by Trump during his election campaigning, but the list gives a maturity in the policy formation and not simply a rhetoric.

As per the Trump Transition, the list includes build a wall on the southern border, end catch-and-release, zero tolerance for criminal aliens, block funding for sanctuary cities, and cancel unconstitutional executive orders and enforce all immigration laws.

It also includes suspending the issuance of visas to any place where adequate screening cannot occur. This policy appears to have evolved from Trump's election time statements related to banning entry of Muslims from entering the country.

The policy, among other things, also calls to ensure that other countries take their people back when US deports them.

Interestingly, this year India has taken back at least three charter planes full of people who came to the US illegally or were asked to be deported.

Among other policies include completing the biometric entry-exit visa tracking system and turning off the jobs and benefits magnet.

The Trump Transition has also talked about reforming the legal immigration system, which

among other things includes the much sought after H-1B visas.

"Reform legal immigration to serve the best interests of America and its workers," it said, without giving any further details.

While there is no mention of H-1B visas, a position paper issued by the Trump Campaign during the primaries was critical of this system and had called for increasing the minimum wage of H-1B visas to \$100,000.

This was described as a deal killer by immigration experts and Indian companies.

"We graduate two times more Americans with STEM degrees each year than find STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) jobs, yet as much as two-thirds of entry-level hiring for IT jobs is accomplished through the H-1B programme," said the position paper.

More than half of H-1B visas are issued for the programme's lowest allowable wage level, and more than 80 per cent for its bottom two, the position paper had rued.

"Raising the prevailing wage paid to H-1Bs will force companies to give these coveted entry level jobs to the existing domestic pool of unemployed native and immigrant workers in the US, instead of flying in cheaper workers from overseas," it said.

This will improve the number of black, Hispanic and female workers in Silicon Valley who have been passed over in favor of the H-1B programme, the Trump Campaign said then.

However, Cato Institute in a policy paper \$ said that Trump's H-1B visa policy proposal will reduce the number of legal skilled temporary migrant workers.

Just over 124,000 H-1Bs were approved in 2014 for initial employment in the US, with 85,000 of them for employment in firms and the rest in non-profit research institutions.

These workers have an average salary of \$75,000 so they do not compete with low-skilled America workers, it said.

"If the minimum salary for H-1B visas was bumped up to \$100,000 then the number of H-1Bs hired by private firms would decrease while they'd also shrink for research institutions. The 75th percentile for wage compensation for H-1B workers is \$81,000," wrote Alex Nowrasteh, in his policy paper for the Cato Institute.

"Even including all of the petitions for high wage workers that are rejected each year, this reform would significantly shrink the number of H-1B visas issued at an enormous economic cost. The H-1B system is also the feeder to the employment-based green card so any change here could disrupt future flows there even if no other changes are made," Nowrasteh said.

The Cato Institute said the policy would increase the regulatory cost for American firms hiring skilled foreign workers in specialty occupations.

"Congress considered this policy for the H-1B visa in 1990 and rejected it because the regulatory costs would be so high," Nowrasteh said.

Trump's transition team in its brief position paper also listed radical ideologies, nuclear weapons and cyber-attacks as three areas of threat in the national defense and security domain.

"Mr. Trump recognizes that we cannot tackle challenges, especially threats to our security, unless we define the problem in a way that American resources and instruments of power can be applied against them," the Trump Transition said, setting in motion to evolve policies and plan of action so that Trump is ready to take actions immediately after he is sworn in on January 20 next year.

"To this end, Mr. Trump recognizes the long-term threat posed to our nation and our allies by radical ideologies that direct and inspire terrorism. A Trump Administration will be committed to both immediate and sustainable actions to counter the threats posed by these radical ideologies," the position paper said.

Noting that a Trump Administration also recognizes the uniquely catastrophic threats posed by nuclear weapons and cyber attacks, it said the president-elect will ensure the strategic nuclear triad is modernized to ensure it continues to be an effective deterrent.

"His Administration will review and minimize our nation's infrastructure vulnerabilities to cyber threats," it said.

"Mr. Trump will be a strong Commander-in-Chief befitting our American men and women in uniform, and ensure their sacrifices will only be made in operations that safeguard the interests of the American people and our allies, and that their service will be honored as they enter the ranks of veterans," the transition team said.

Noting that America's stature in the world is determined by its values, prosperity and might, the transition team said the president-elect understands how a strong, prosperous economy underwrites military might, and how a strong, robust military secures America's way of life and the fruits of economy.

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Asserting that the Trump Administration will make America energy independent, the transition team said its energy policies will make full use of domestic energy sources, including traditional and renewable energy sources.

"America will unleash an energy revolution that will transform us into a net energy exporter, leading to the creation of millions of new jobs, while protecting the country's most valuable resources - our clean air, clean water, and natural habitats," it added.

Observing that America is sitting on a treasure trove of untapped energy, it said the country America possesses more combined coal, oil, and natural gas resources than any other nation on Earth.

These resources represent trillions of dollars in economic output and countless American jobs, particularly for the poorest Americans, it noted.

"We will streamline the permitting process for all energy projects, including the billions of dollars in projects held up by President (Barack) Obama, and rescind the job-destroying executive actions under his Administration," it said.

"We will end the war on coal, and rescind the coal mining lease moratorium, the excessive Interior Department stream rule, and conduct a top-down review of all anti-coal regulations issued by the Obama Administration," it added.

The Trump Administration will eliminate the highly invasive "Waters of the US" rule, and scrap the \$5 trillion dollar Obama-Clinton Climate Action Plan and the Clean Power Plan and prevent these unilateral plans from increasing monthly electric bills by double-digits without any measurable effect on Earth's climate.

"Energy is the lifeblood of modern society. It is the industry that fuels all other industries. We will lift the restrictions on American energy, and allow this wealth to pour into our communities. It's all upside: more jobs, more revenues, more wealth, higher wages, and lower energy prices.

"The Trump Administration is firmly committed to conserving our wonderful natural resources and beautiful natural habitats. America's environmental agenda will be guided by true specialists in conservation, not those with radical political agendas," the Transition Team said.