

Trump Administration's National Security Strategy

Evaluating its Vision & Utility

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Introduction

- **Key players & policies of the past year**
- **National security threats** (*May 2017*)
- **National Security Strategy** (*December 2017*)
- **Russia, China, Iran and North Korea**
- **How useful is the new Strategy?**

Sources

- **DNI's – Annual World Wide Testimony on Threats** (May, 2017)
 - Intelligence Community updates Congress on threats
- **US National Security Strategy** (Dec, 2017)
 - Describes Administration's general policy priorities & direction
- **US National Defense Strategy** (Jan, 2018)
 - Pentagon's response to the National Security Strategy
- **Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House**, by Michael Wolff (2018)
 - Controversial; accurate?
- **Understanding Trump**, by Newt Gingrich (2018)

National Security Team

- **National Security Advisor** – H.R. McMaster, LTG USA
- **Secretary of State** – Rex Tillerson, fmr ExxonMobil CEO
- **Secretary of Defense** – James Mattis, ret Gen USMC
- **Secretary of Homeland Security** – Kirstjen Nielsen, fmr Dep WH Chief of Staff
- **Secretary of Energy** – Rick Perry, fmr Governor (TX)
- **Attorney General** – Jeff Sessions, fmr US Senator
- **Director of National Intelligence** – Dan Coats, fmr US Senator
- **Director of CIA** – Mike Pompeo, fmr US Congressman
- **Director of FBI** – Christopher Wray, fmr Justice Dept
- **US Amb to UN** – Nikki Haley, fmr Governor (SC)
- **Chief of Staff** -- John Kelly, ret Gen USMC

How is the team functioning?

Some apparent disagreements (*e.g. North Korea, China*)

Stable, except for Homeland Security; State Dept.?

- **Do the principal advisers speak their minds to Trump?**
- **Does Trump listen to intelligence & policy advisers?**
- **What influence do others have?**

Key Policy Actions of 2017

- **Obamacare repeal, immigration limits & tax reform** (*efforts mixed*)
- **Opposed NAFTA & Pacific trade agreements and climate treaty**
- **DOJ report on Russia & election meddling** (*pending*)
- **Defeat of ISIS militarily** (*terrorist threat remains*)
- **Saudi Arabia/Yemen** (*countering Iranian influence*)
- **Recognized Jerusalem as capital of Israel** (*counters previous US policy*)
- **China** (*trade issues & North Korean threat*)
- **Russia** (*support to Ukraine; Syrian civil war cooperation?*)
- **Iran** (*oppose nuclear accord, but it continues so far*)
- **North Korea** (*confronting nuclear & missile threats; risk of war?*)

DNI Testimony on National Security Threats *(May 2017)*

- **Cyber warfare**
- **Radical Islamic movements & terrorism**
- **Proliferation of nuclear weapons & material**
- **Counterintelligence**
- **Space & counter-space**
- **Disruptive technologies, economics, disease & natural resources**
- **Regional instabilities**
- **Russia, China, North Korea, Syria, & Iran**

What is a National Security Strategy?

- **Outlines threats, goals & priorities**
- **Gives general policy direction to departments/agencies**
- **Informs Congress, US public and foreign governments**
- **Tries to satisfy some expectations of political base**
- **Typically is dismissed by many as irrelevant (*read editorials*)**

Trump's "America First" Strategy

- **Revitalize our economic power**
- **Rebuild our military, intelligence & diplomatic capabilities**
- **Defend our borders**
- **Protect our sovereignty**
- **Advance our values**
- **Not isolationist!**

The International Vision

- **Rally the world against rogue states** (*e.g. North Korea and Iran*)
- **Renew friendships in Middle East** (*e.g. Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt*)
- **Crush radical Islamic terrorist organizations** (*e.g. ISIS & al-Qaeda*)
- **Fight economic aggression & unfair trading practices**
- **Seek more contribution from Allies for our common defense**

Five Pillars of the Security Strategy

- **Protect American people, homeland & way of life**
- **Promote American prosperity**
- **Preserve peace through strength**
- **Advance American influence**
- **Deal with regional threats & opportunities**

Protect American People

- **Secure US borders & territory**
 - Defend against WMD threats
 - Strengthen border control & immigration policy
- **Pursue threats to their source**
 - Defeat Jihadist terrorists & international criminal organizations
- **Keep America safe in the cyber arena**
 - Build stronger networks & deter/disrupt malicious actors
- **Promote American resilience**
 - Improve risk management & preparedness

Promote American Prosperity

- **Rejuvenate domestic economy**
 - Reduce regulations & debt; improve infrastructure
- **Promote fair reciprocal economic relationships**
 - New trade/investment agreements; counter unfair & corrupt practices
- **Lead in research, development & innovation**
 - Attract/retain innovators, leverage private capital & rapidly field inventions
- **Protect US innovation base**
 - Tighten visa procedures; protect data & infrastructure
- **Embrace energy dominance**
 - Reduce barriers, promote exports, ensure security & technological edge

Preserve Peace through Strength

- **Renew our competitive advantages**
 - Prepare for continuous, unconventional competition
 - Use our national talent, creativity & dedication
- **Overmatch our intelligence, military & industrial capabilities**
 - Modernize existing and seek new capabilities to defend & fight
 - Encourage investment, protect & grow skills
- **Strengthen diplomatic efforts & statecraft**
 - Upgrade our forward diplomatic presence & alliances
 - Identify and capitalize on opportunities for commerce & cooperation

Advance American Influence

- **Encourage aspiring partners**
 - Promote US aid/investment & assist fragile states to prevent threats to US
- **Achieve better outcomes in multilateral international bodies**
 - Lead and engage, but prioritize involvement
 - Reform international organizations (*e.g. UN, IMF, WB & WTO*)
 - Seek better cost sharing (*i.e. NATO*)
- **Champion American values**
 - Support dignity of individuals, especially women & youth
 - Protect minorities & reduce human suffering

Regional Priorities

- **Indo-Pacific**

- Meet the challenges from China & North Korea
- Promote ties with S. Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, & SE Asia

- **Europe**

- Promote Allies' strength and blunt Russian, Chinese & radical Islamic influence
- Strengthen NATO through balanced cost sharing

- **Middle East**

- Solve Syrian crisis, deny Iran nuclear weapons, promote Israel/Palestinian accord
- Encourage Egypt & Saudi Arabia to modernize their economies

- **South & Central Asia**

- Seek a Pakistan not engaged in destabilizing behavior; promote ties with India
- Seek and support a stable & self-reliant Afghanistan

Regional Priorities (*con't*)

- **Western Hemisphere**

- Build security & prosperity through diplomacy and economic arrangements
- Blunt Russian and Chinese influence in Cuba & Venezuela
- Reduce crime & corruption

- **Africa**

- Help fight corruption & weak governance
- Blunt countries from becoming battlegrounds for extremists & Jihadists
- Offer alternatives to Chinese influence

Threats vs. Strategy Comparison

Threats

- **Cyber warfare**
- **Radical Islamic movements & terrorism**
- **Proliferation of nuclear weapons & material**
- **Counterintelligence**
- **Space & counter-space**
- **Disruptive technologies, economics, disease & natural resources**
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- **Russia, China, North Korea, Syria, & Iran**

Strategy

- **Peace through strength**
 - WMD proliferation, cyber defense, intelligence, military modernization & diplomacy
- **Secure US borders & territory**
- **Promote American prosperity**
 - Rejuvenate economy & fight unfair trade practices
- **Advance American influence**
 - Encourage partners & support fragile states
- **Regional challenges**
 - Russia, China, North Korea, & Iran

Is the Strategy useful?

- **General guidelines & priorities, no specifics**
- **Will be constrained by domestic economic & political realities**
- **Will be constrained by international players & actions**
- **Will be affected by unanticipated events!**

What happens next?

- **National security departments & agencies must now operationalize general guidelines**
- **National Security Council must refine major US policy initiatives**
- **White House must obtain congressional & public support**
- **White House must convince foreign allies to support**

Good policymaking requires ...

- **Courageous, honest & effective leadership** (*strong Nat Sec team*)
- **Clear, consistent priorities & policies**
- **Effective intelligence, strong military, and effective soft power**
- **Strong alliances & international cooperation**
- **Congressional & public support**

Three Biggest Challenges (*thus far...*)

- **Russian influence in Europe & Syria**
- **Iranian nuclear weapon ambitions & future of nuclear accord**
- **North Korean nuclear missile threat**

Russian Challenges

- **Cyber threats**
- **Dealing with Putin's anti-US nationalistic ambitions**
- **Blunting influence in Europe** (*e.g. Ukraine & natural resources*)
- **Solving Syrian civil war and future of Assad regime**

Iranian Challenge

- **Declared enemy of US & Israel**
- **Desires regional power/influence & ability to deter US**
- **Receives support from Russia & China**
- **Seeks nuclear weapons (*status & deterrence*)**

Future of Nuclear Accord with Iran

- **Trump continues to call the nuclear accord (JCPOA) flawed**
 - Yet, he has hesitated to pull the plug
- **Trump recently recertified Iranian compliance, but with conditions**
 - Allowing immediate inspections & making the agreement indefinite
 - A follow-on agreement related to missiles
- **Potential reaction of others if US tries to change or kill accord**
 - Russia, China & EU countries

National Security Strategy and Iran

- **No specific policy direction provided**
- **Seems to reflect hesitancy on the part of the White House**
 - May reflect disagreements within Administration
- **However, a red line now has been laid down (*i.e. conditions*)**
 - Congress & Europeans must come up with recommended changes within 120 days to strengthen the Iran's commitment

North Korean Nuclear Missile Threat

- **Kim is unpredictable & potentially dangerous**
- **Has nuclear weapon arsenal**
- **Is source of nuclear proliferation**
- **Developing intercontinental-range missiles vs. US**

North Korean Goals

- **Maintain regime's control**
- **Deter the US militarily & eliminate US influence**
- **Achieve international legitimacy**
- **Unify the peninsula**

Why North Korea wants nuclear weapons

Deterrence vs. US

Leverage to undercut US influence & alliances in region

So, is a nuclear attack on US territory or Asian allies likely?

What can the US do?

- **Denuclearize North Korea?**
 - Preemptive military strike or regime change (*unrealistic options*)
- **Stronger ballistic missile defenses?**
 - Reinforce regional alliances (*i.e. South Korea & Japan*)
- **Covert action?**
 - Slow nuclear weapon program & influence North Korean people

What can the US do? (*con't*)

- **Strengthen international sanctions?**
 - Requires Russian & Chinese cooperation to be effective
- **Get the Chinese to turn the screws?**
 - China has the most influence & leverage
- **Negotiate a non-aggression pact & peace treaty thru UN?**
 - Guaranty legitimacy & security, but insist on intrusive inspections
 - Would require Chinese, Russian & South Korean support
- **CONTAINMENT IS ESSENTIAL!**

Risks of not containing North Korea

- **US credibility as a reliable partner in East Asia suffers**
- **South Korea may go for nuclear weapon option**
 - Previous program was stopped by US security guarantee
 - Has technology & nuclear material
- **Japan may go for nuclear weapon option**
 - Allergic, but what if desperate & others proliferate?
 - Has technology & nuclear material

My Conclusions

Strategy is generally consistent with IC's description of threats

“America First” is not isolationist = pragmatic realism?

Lacks specific policies to deal with issues, but ...

Some specifics should come from the new National Defense Strategy

Inconsistencies probably reflect tension within the Administration

Reads like a campaign or “State of the Union/World” speech

Does not mention things Trump opposes (*e.g. climate change*)

**Bottom-line: specific policies will result from domestic requirements
& in reaction to international events!**

Your thoughts & questions?