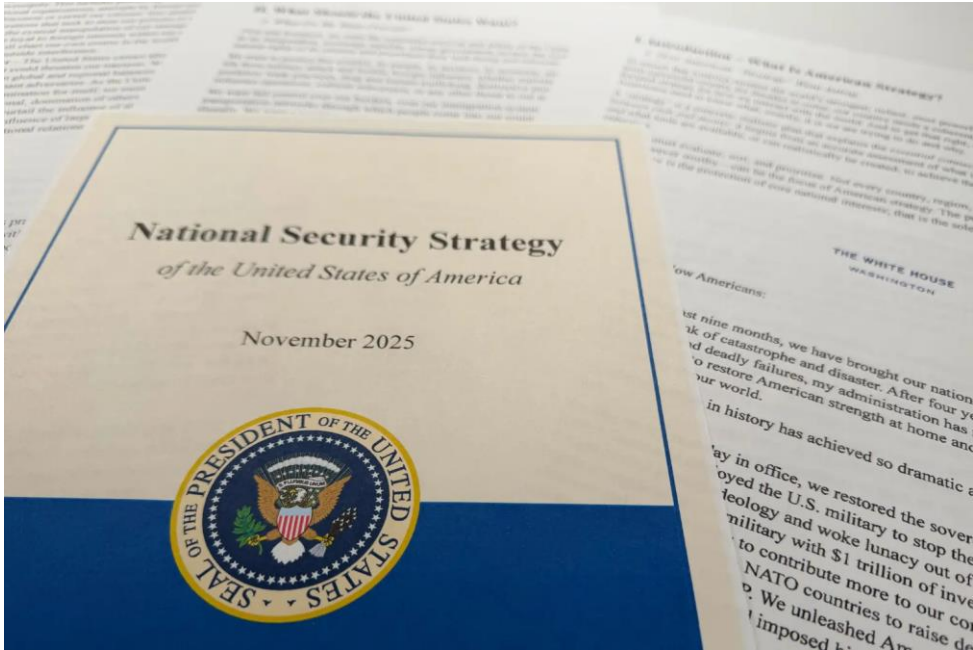


AMERICA





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America First, Again

Rae Huffstutler and Keith Hansen

Feb 26th

Pivoting to Latin America, Again

Prof. Linda Curcio (UNR, History)

(T) Mar 25th

US-Europe Alliance in Transition

Q&A Forum House Rules

On cards in
the room

In Q&A box
on Zoom

America First, Again

Rae Huffstutler and Keith Hansen

NSF Expert Contributors

National Security Forum

21 January 2026



A new world order

- Aspirational document reflects the mood and philosophy of the 2nd Trump Administration
- Shift in world view from **rules-based global organizations to sovereign nations rule** (for the big ones)
- Return to “**spheres of influence**” and the right to control the near abroad
- Reflects 30 years of changing worldview...first time in print!

National Security Strategy

of the United States of America

November 2025



What is consistent with previous NSS?

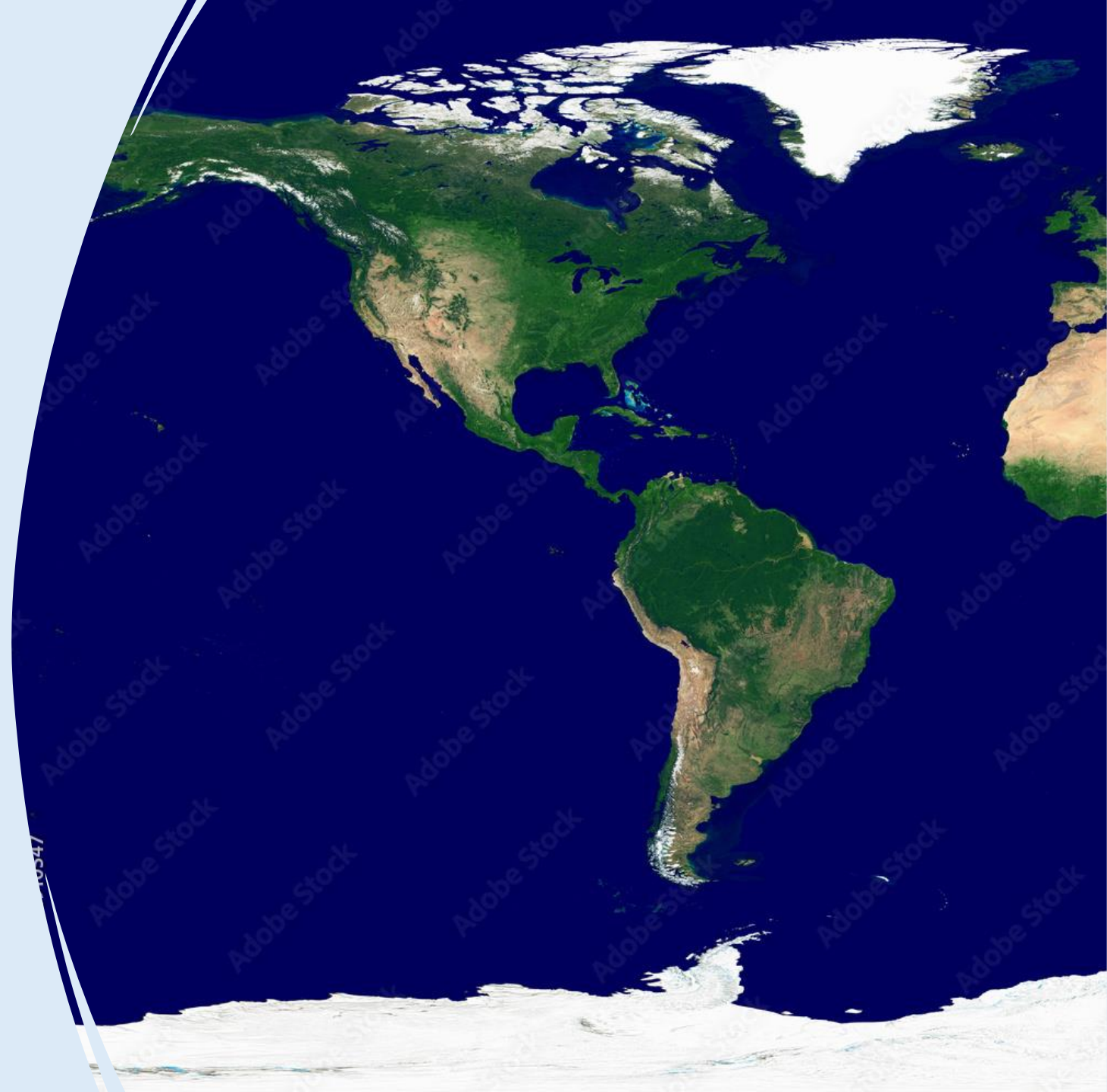
- Ensuring US sovereignty, safety and prosperity
- Strengthening US military capabilities and modernization of conventional and nuclear forces



What is different?

Big shift in priorities

- Prioritize defense of US homeland through preeminence in the **Western Hemisphere**
 - Counter mass migration, drug trafficking, and foreign incursions
- Prevent regional conflicts from becoming major wars
- Emphasize **economic vs. military competition** globally



What's different for China and Asia?

- **Compete with China in the Indo-Pac region**, protect free passage in South China Sea, but deter conflict over Taiwan
 - Deemphasize competition with China and Russia in Middle East and Africa
- No mention of **North Korean** threat



What's different for Europe and NATO?

- Downplay Russian threats to European security and enable NATO Europe to take primary responsibility for its defense
- Silent on US honoring its Article V commitment to NATO



Roadmap to the National Security Strategy

National Security Strategy ratifies changing views of American voter over time

Trumps views of 'America First' are overlaid on new directions demanded by American voters

Historic Background

- Post World War II: American homeland survives intact and undamaged
- Two fundamental US Cold War policies
 - **Contain Communist Expansionism** using military force if necessary but avoid nuclear war
 - **Create international interdependencies** to insure against future global conflicts by promoting “rules-based world order”



Both Strategies are Successful

- Arms control instead of nuclear war
- Cross border conquests gave way to economic sanctions
- Battlefield deaths across borders fell; 160,000 in 2004-2014
- Nations prospered, poverty fell, health improved
- **US the big winner**

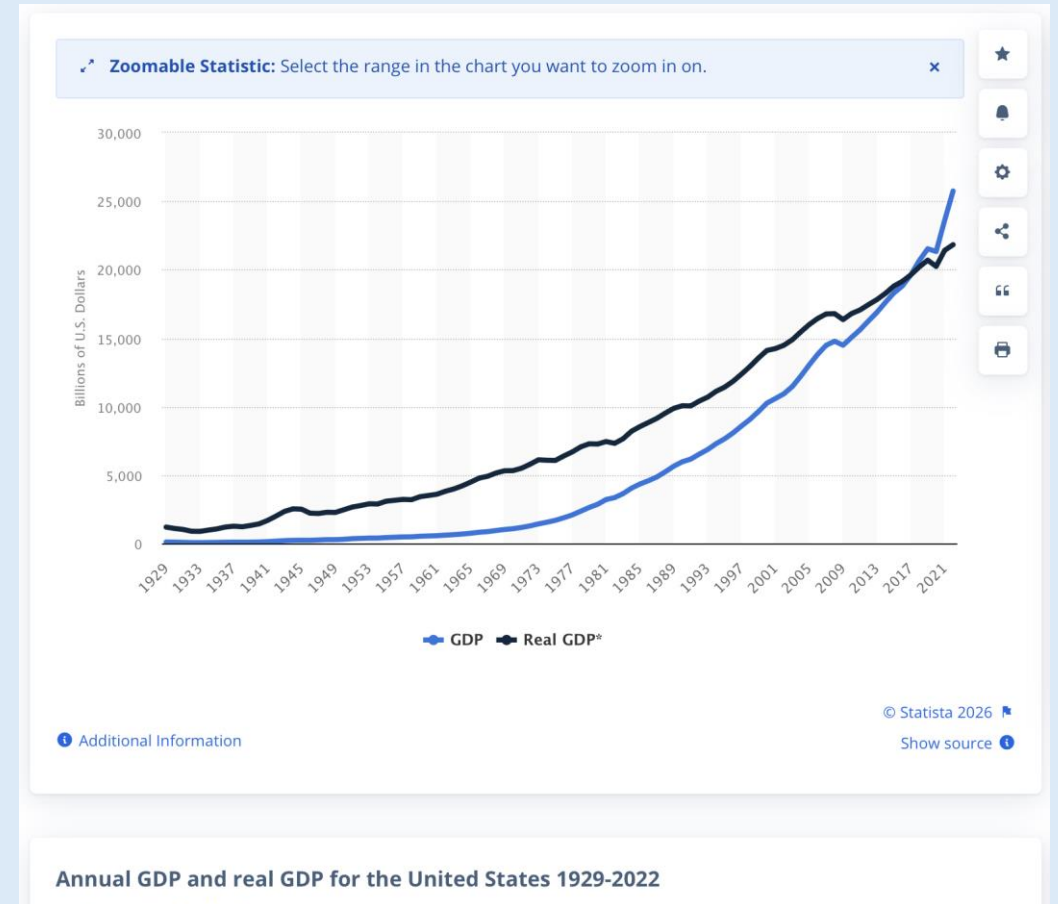


American Gains

GDP grows to \$27 Trillion by 2024

Consumers pay less for imported goods

Big Box stores and online purchases



Costs of Globalization

- US Military in almost constant combat
- New wealth not shared equitably with middle class
- Jobs exported
- Income disparities grow



Reshaping of the Economy

Manufacturing 30% of GDP in 1950's

Provided 3 of 10 jobs

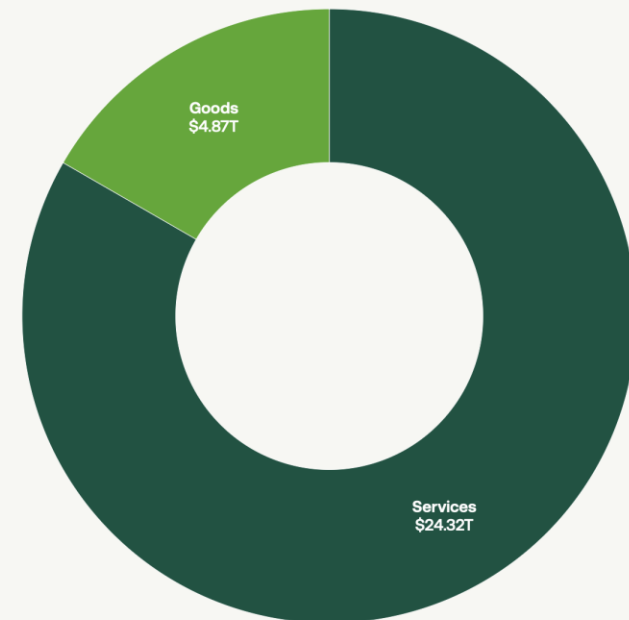
Manufacturing 8-9% of GDP today

Provides 1 of 12 jobs

American Economy 80% services

Services produced in the US contribute over four times more to GDP than goods.

Value added to gross domestic product (GDP) by goods and services, 2024



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • [Download image](#) • [Download SVG](#)

Globalization + Other Forces Shape Economy

- **Technology:** Computer based developments led to productivity gains and less labor demand
- **Container shipping** created efficiencies in supply chains
- **Anti-union sentiment** weakened job protections



Rise of Voter Resentment

- Job losses and income disparities
- Paying Security costs for nations that are now healthy and compete with us
- No more world's policeman
- No more offshoring which ignores worker welfare
- More social support from government especially healthcare



As The World Turns

- Cold War spheres of influence gone, new spheres of influence forming
- China centered with a weak but aggressive Russia and volatile North Korea
- US centered with a rearming Europe plus Eastern Europe and Japan



Levers of Power: Military

- US has strongest, most advanced, most experienced military in the world
- US power projection capabilities are unique in the world
- Loss of forward bases since end of Cold War has eroded flexibility which varies by area and depends on willingness and location of allies
- Technology has altered the threat: new anti-ship missiles threaten power projection and drones have devalued armored and naval forces





Levers of Power: Financial

- Dollar based financial system dominates world commerce
- US has world's largest economy
- Dollar investments a safe haven for private and state investors
- SWIFT system expedites international transactions
- Non-political Federal Reserve Bank running monetary policy inspires investor confidence

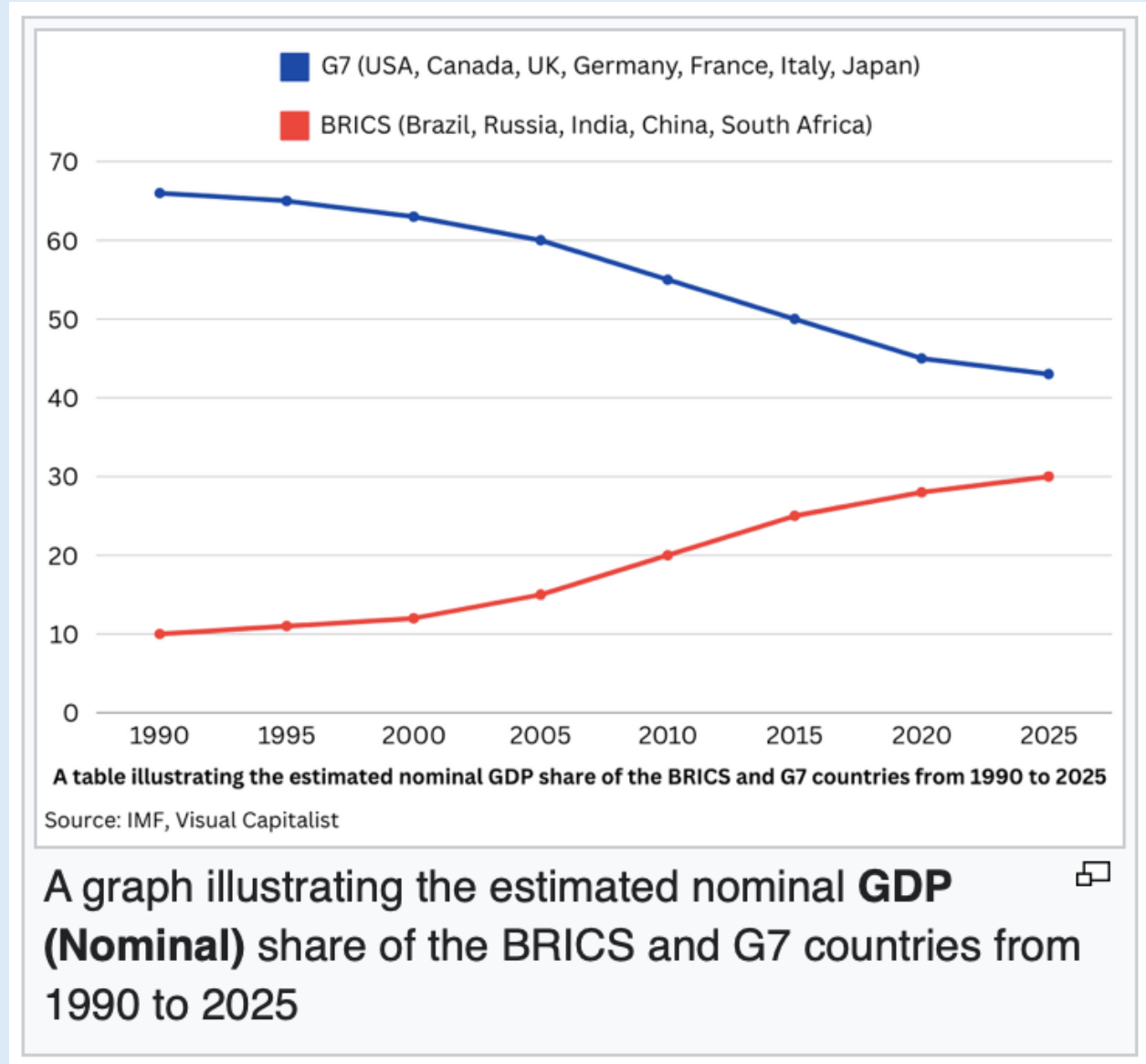
Pressures Against the Dollar System

- Dollar has been weaponized to apply sanctions to unfavored nations
- Federal Reserve Bank may lose its independence
- World is moving toward trading blocs, which tend to be “exclusive,” due to Sino-US tensions, protectionism and industrial policies



Counterweight to the Dollar System

- Many countries chafe under dollar system
- BRICS most prominent anti-dollar effort
- Comprises quarter of global economy
- Comprises half of global population
- Dollar remains dominant but threat growing



FINAL THOUGHTS

