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The Year of Trump: Redefining America's Global Purpose

by Hemant Krishan Singh

The Trump Impact on America

As the new year begins on an uncertain note, we need to take stock of the major transformations in the United States over the past year. Here is a realist assessment.

We are now in a brave new world of disruptive change. Predicting the future through the lens of conventional wisdom and punditry has gone out of fashion.

"Progressive" power elites in the US have been shaken by a nativist-populist rebellion which they didn't see coming. They remain unremittingly hostile to Trump. The cloak of liberal political correctness has been jettisoned and America's liberal media has contributed to the deepening of national divides. Meanwhile, under the Trumpian order, nationalism is no longer an alien concept in America. Should it be?

President Donald Trump speaks on his 'America First' National Security Strategy at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, December 18, 2017
Source: Jim Lo Scalzo/UPI/Newscom (The Daily Signal)

IN THIS ISSUE

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In keeping with the growing dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise as a leading power. To support that goal, the DPG undertakes research and organizes policy interactions across a wide canvas, including strategic and geo-political issues, geo-economic issues and defence and security issues. DPG does not take specific policy positions; accordingly, all views, positions, and conclusions expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the author(s).

Ambassador Hemant Krishan Singh
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"End of history" proponents, with their post-1991 projections that Pax Americana will prevail and global stability will be self-sustaining in an era of geo-economics, are staring at the failure of their strategic assumptions. So are champions of China's peaceful rise as a "responsible stakeholder." Great power collaboration has receded and geo-political rivalry has returned to the world. Rivals to American power are mounting a formidable challenge to the post-World War II international order.

With a polarised America in disarray, it would be tempting to give the pride of place in this new year briefing to the new globalist pretender, China. But while China has ascended to (nearly) the top of the global pecking order, it has also descended further into repressive, authoritarian rule. In 2017, all Belts and Roads (the "BRI") led to Beijing, where the CPC's XIXth Congress rubber-stamped the primacy of party over nation and people, and crowned one man indefinitely over all three, in the nationalist pursuit of the great "rejuvenation" of the Chinese people. The middle kingdom's understandable aspirations apart, it is open for the world to see that a China that is a closed and protectionist space at home and a mercantilist-expansionist power abroad is an unlikely champion of globalization. China's "sharp" power manipulation is exercised abroad using the freedoms of democratic societies denied to its own citizens. China has thrived on the existing order while setting up parallel institutions to replace or undermine it.

From this perspective, the United States, even though it is increasingly inward looking and rethinking its global purpose, is still the world's most consequential power across the economic, technological, military and soft power domains. It has lost ground globally after a decade of ideological retrenchment of US power. But America's potential strength, based on comprehensive national power parameters, is still unmatched.

2017 will be remembered as the year of President Donald Trump, a politically inexperienced, divisive and decidedly unusual figure but at the same time an authentic champion of his nativist constituency. Whatever descriptions are given to his personality – flamboyant, impulsive, unpredictable, narcissistic, indecorous, transactional, unconventional and the like – Trump was arguably the dominant global figure of the year, redefining American politics, repositioning the Republican Party beyond its traditional boundaries and shaking up the global scene with his "America First" discourse. It is evident that exaggerated liberal fears of a Trump "autocracy" have been belied. American democracy remains soundly intact, with Presidential authority constrained by the checks and balances of constitutional order. It was barely by the end of 2017 that President Trump could finally claim a significant success with his agenda of "liberating the American economy." The economy, in fact, is doing rather well and is looking up further with Trumpian deregulation and tax cuts.

Trump's National Security Strategy

However, for the world at large, what will matter most is the new US National Security Strategy (NSS), personally unveiled by President Trump on December 18, 2017.

President Donald J. Trump delivers remarks regarding the Administration's National Security Strategy

Source: Official White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian (Flickr)

At the heart of the NSS is a realist and long overdue reappraisal of the failures of post-1991 US foreign policy, the course correction required to meet the current challenges facing the US, and the strategies the US must pursue to regain its strength and standing both at home and abroad. The central tenet of the NSS is "principled realism" guided by outcomes, not ideology, a terminology the Trump administration has increasingly used in recent months.

During the course of 2017, major foreign policy pronouncements by the Trump administration have been few, but a certain consistency has been emerging: an unusual, tweeting President is surrounded by a traditional national security team which hews largely towards the Republican mainstream. The sound professionalism and growing influence of this team which is reflected in the NSS augurs well for US foreign policy and strategic posture under Trump.

The NSS sets aside globalist assumptions of the post-Cold War period; recognizes that great power competition has returned and the world is now an arena of continuous competition; and brands China and Russia as rival and revisionist powers which want to shape a world antithetical to US values and interests. To meet this challenge, the US must marshal "extraordinary" economic and military strength to compete with every instrument of national power. Resort to multilateral institutions and invocations of international law will no longer suffice.[1]

The NSS observes that China, which has "expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others", seeks to displace the US in the Indo-Pacific region where "geo-political competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place". The US must, therefore, forge a collective response that "upholds the regional order respectful of sovereignty and independence". Preventing unfavourable power shifts in the Indo-Pacific (as well as in Europe and the Middle East) is thus an important objective of the NSS.

On South Asia, the NSS commits the US to help regional nations to "maintain their sovereignty as China increases its influence in the region". The US will also "insist that Pakistan take decisive action against militant and terrorist groups operating from its soil" and desist from "destabilising behaviour".

The NSS sets out an entirely new US agenda on global geo-economics, prioritizing defence against "economic aggression" and "state-controlled mercantilism", and promising enforcement actions against those who violate WTO rules to derive unfair advantage.

Among the four pillars of the NSS are a new determination to protect the American homeland; rebuild economic strength ("economic security is national security"); preserve peace through strength ("unrivalled power is the most certain means of defence"); and advance US influence in the world through strong alliances and partnerships based on cooperation and reciprocity.

Finally, in what can be seen as a direct riposte to Xi Jinping's drive for China's "revitalisation", Trump has positioned the NSS as an instrument "for a great reawakening of America, a resurgence of confidence, and a rebirth of patriotism, prosperity and pride".

Such realist candour, which is the hallmark of the Trump NSS, breaks decisively from the past. The NSS document is remarkable both for its measured tone and the national determination it reflects.

That said, we need to bear in mind that the NSS is an annually mandated report to Congress on the "worldwide interests, goals and objectives" of the United States[2]. It thus requires to be complemented by concrete policies and the means needed to achieve the desired goals. To that extent, the Trump NSS is merely the intent which defines the purpose of US power. It remains to be seen what policies are actually framed pursuant to the NSS, whether these will be adequately resourced by the US Congress and the manner in which they will be implemented.

The seemingly implacable political hostility towards Trump from the Democratic party and liberal opponents can well circumscribe the prospects of the NSS, especially if the Republicans fare badly in this year's mid-term elections.

NSS: Redefining America's Security Challenges

The NSS holds post-Cold War American triumphalism and the complacency that this induced responsible for the attenuation of American power. It explicitly acknowledges that the policies of the past two decades "based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners" have backfired. Both Russia and China have emerged as the principal challengers to American power and influence: China in the Indo-Pacific and Russia in Europe as well as the Middle East. The NSS thus underscores the existence of two countervailing power centres, the US on the one hand and China-Russia on the other.

Among these two rivals of America, the NSS projects China as the principal challenger, both globally and in the Indo-Pacific. (This robustly realist view has drawn criticism from Obama era officials, who hold that Russia is the only adversary while China is an occasional competitor.) The NSS highlights China's economic inducements, infrastructural investments, implied military threats and political coercion as instruments to force regional actors, principally in ASEAN and South Asia, to bandwagon with Beijing's political and security agenda. China's military modernisation and the militarisation of the South China Sea are also seen as primarily aimed at limiting US military power.

Growing strategic convergence between Russia and China is seen as aligning continental Eurasia as well as the Asian maritime littoral to America's strategic disadvantage.

The NSS, for the first time, refers to the challenge posed by adversaries and competitors who have become "adept at operating below the threshold of open military conflict and at the edge of international law."

Finally, the NSS also lists other challenges to American power posed by North Korea and Iran and by transnational terrorist groups and "jihadist terrorism" (ISIS, Al Qaida and similar groups espousing radical ideology). Further details can be seen in the Annexure to this brief.

NSS: Regaining US Power and Influence

In dealing with these challenges, the NSS spells out its primary objective as sustaining "a balance of power that favours the United States."

To deal with a competitive environment, the NSS focuses on two distinct aspects of capability enhancement: building military capacity and strengthening alliances, partnerships and coalitions for greater burden sharing to achieve favourable regional balances of power.

Three regions identified in the NSS are of interest to India: the Indo-Pacific, South and Central Asia and the Middle East. The NSS recognises India's role in the first two of these regions, welcoming India's emergence as a leading global power and supporting its "leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region". The "Indo-Pacific" is defined as extending from the west coast of India to the western shores of the US, largely coinciding with the PACOM area of responsibility.

NSS: Implications for India and the Indo-Pacific

How the competitive US-China dynamics will pay out in the Indo-Pacific is of major consequence to all regional powers. President Trump will have to show much greater purpose in following through with the NSS if the US wishes to retain credibility and support among countries of the region, particularly after his November 2017 visit to Asia failed to project a credible Indo-Pacific policy. Regional actors will look for more concrete actions by the US, failing which the NSS will end up being seen as a mere statement of intent, intended primarily for Trump's domestic constituency.

At the level of regional geo-economics, China will continue to enhance its influence through financing and infrastructure initiatives like the BRI. It is uncertain whether elements of the economic strategy outlined by the NSS, that is, promoting regional connectivity initiatives based on transparency and international norms, will make progress. Having pulled out of the TPP, the US will face an uphill struggle to regain economic heft. It also remains to be seen whether, and how far, the US (and advanced western economies) will be able to use the WTO to hold a mercantilist China accountable.

On the broader level of regional security partnerships beyond the US alliance system, it is also far from certain that trilateral or quadrilateral frameworks among the US and maritime democracies of Asia can create a favourable balance of power by pushing China to moderate its regional assertions and channel its rise within a rules-based order.

On Af-Pak issues, the NSS essentially reaffirms aspects of Trump's South Asia regional strategy outlined in August, 2017. The Trump administration's commitment to hold Pakistan responsible for cross-border terrorists like the Haqqani network and the Afghan Taliban is clear. However, with the China-Pak nexus now seeking to weave an alternative reconciliation-cum-economic inducement narrative, progress is uncertain. The US also remains strategically dependent on a Pakistan-based logistic supply chain for its military in Afghanistan.

It is even less clear how the US can help countries in South Asia to maintain their sovereignty in the face of growing Chinese influence. If any progress can be made on this, it will likely require the US, India and possibly also Japan to enhance policy coordination to deal with emerging challenges.

For India, the permanence of adversarial hostility towards Russia favoured by the US establishment and reaffirmed in the NSS is a matter of considerable concern. This could deepen the Russia-China entente and expand its spread from Eurasia to the Indo-Pacific. Indian interests could be impacted adversely as a result, from Afghanistan to Central Asia, the Middle East to East and South East Asia.

Similarly, deepening US antipathy towards Iran highlighted by the NSS is a major concern for India. Iran carries great strategic relevance for India as the only conduit for its access to Eurasia through the INSTC

corridor, as well as vital link to Afghanistan and Central Asia through Chabahar. Further US sanctions on Iran will have a destabilising impact on regional security and stability, besides undermining India's energy security.

Conclusions

Trump's NSS is a bold statement of US intent to reconsolidate its national economic and military power as the primary instrument of regaining its global standing, meeting challenges from rivals and shaping favourable regional and global power balances in conjunction with allies and partners. In placing American prosperity and security before internationalist pursuits, recognizing the failures of post-1991 US foreign policy, and presenting a starkly realist vision of great power rivalry, the Trump administration has redefined America's global purpose in terms reminiscent of the Reagan era.

President Donald Trump applauds after a speech laying out a National Security Strategy in Washington. December 18, 2017
Source: Richmond Times Dispatch, The Associated Press

As an emerging leading power, India must continue to progress its pragmatic, interest-based engagement with all major powers. Strategic independence to pursue cooperation on regional stability and prosperity based on convergences and mutual interests serves India well, while its strategic partnerships can accelerate India's rise and help shape favourable balances of power.

The US NSS indicates that areas of strategic convergence between India and the US have grown, but significant challenges remain. Trump's "America First" example makes it clear that the India-US partnership can progress only in conformity with each other's core interests. Crafting a sustainable balance of interests will remain a key challenge for the leadership and diplomacy of both India and the US in the coming year.

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Endnotes:

[1] Walter Russell Mead, "Trump's 'Blue Water' Foreign Policy", The Wall Street Journal, December 25, 2017, https://www.wsj.com/articles/trumps-blue-water-foreign-policy-1514233158

[2] Rebecca Friedman Lissner, "The National Security Strategy is Not a Strategy", Foreign Affairs, December 19, 2017 https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-12-19/national-security-strategy-not-strategy

Annexure to DPG Policy Brief, Volume III, Issue I

Relevant Excerpts From

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

of the United States of America

December 2017

I. References to India

- *We welcome India's emergence as a leading global power and stronger strategic and defense partner.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *We will expand our defense and security cooperation with India, a Major Defense Partner of the United States, and support India's growing relationships throughout the region.* (Ch-5,St- Indo-Pacific Sub st- Priority Actions for Indo-Pacific, pp 47)*
- *We will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)
- *We will encourage India to increase its economic assistance in the region.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)

* [Ch: Chapter; St: Sub Topic; Sub St: Sub Sub-topic; pp: Page/pages]

II. References to the Indo-Pacific

- *The United States must marshal the will and capabilities to compete and prevent unfavorable shifts in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. Sustainable favourable balances of power will require a strong commitment and close cooperation with allies and partners because allies and partners magnify U.S. power and extend U.S. influence. They share our interests and responsibility for resisting authoritarian trends, contesting radical ideologies and deterring aggression.* (Ch-5, pp 45)
- *Geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 45)
- *China's infrastructure investments and trade strategies reinforce the geopolitical aspirations. Its efforts to build and militarize outposts in the South China Sea endanger the free flow of trade, threaten the sovereignty of other nations, and undermine regional stability.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *The U.S. interest in a free and open Indo-Pacific extends back to the earliest days of our Republic.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *China presents its ambitions as mutually beneficial, but Chinese dominance risks diminishing the sovereignty of many states in the Indo-Pacific. States throughout the region are calling for sustained U.S. leadership in a collective response that upholds the regional order respectful of sovereignty and independence.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *China has mounted rapid military modernization campaign designed to limit U.S. access to the region and provide China a freer hand there.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *Continued provocations by North Korea will prompt neighboring countries and the United States to further strengthen security bonds and take additional measures to protect themselves. And a nuclear armed North Korea could lead to the proliferation of the world's most destructive weapons across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *We will seek to increase quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia- Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) remain centerpieces of the Indo-Pacific's regional architecture and platforms for promoting an order based on freedom.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)
- *The United States will encourage regional cooperation to maintain free and open seaways, transparent infrastructure financing practices, unimpeded commerce, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific Sub st- Priority Actions for Indo-Pacific, pp 47)

III. References to South Asia

- *We will give priority to strengthening states where state weaknesses or failure would magnify threats to the American homeland. For instance, engagement in Afghanistan seeks to prevent the reemergence of terrorist safe havens.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Priority Actions for Fragile States, pp 39-40)
- *We will place a priority on economic support that achieves local and macroeconomic stability, helps build capable security forces, and strengthen the rule of law (In Afghanistan).* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Priority Actions for Fragile States, pp -40)

- *The United States continues to face threats from transnational terrorists and militants operating from within Pakistan. The prospect for an Indo-Pakistani military conflict that could lead to a nuclear exchange remains a key concern requiring consistent diplomatic attention.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *U.S. interests in the region include countering terrorist threats that impact the security of the U.S. homeland and our allies, preventing cross-border terrorism that raises the prospect of military and nuclear tensions, and preventing nuclear weapons, technology, and materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. We seek an American presence in the region proportionate to threats to the homeland and our allies.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *We seek a Pakistan that is not engaged in destabilizing behavior and a stable and self-reliant Afghanistan.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *We will press Pakistan to intensify its counterterrorism efforts, since no partnership can survive a country's support for militants and terrorists who target a partner's own service members and officials. The United States will also encourage Pakistan to continue demonstrating that it is a responsible steward of its nuclear assets.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *We will help South Asian nations maintain their sovereignty as China increases its influence in the region.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *In Pakistan, we will build trade and investment ties as security improves and as Pakistan demonstrates that it will assist the United States in our counterterrorism goals.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *We are committed to supporting the Afghan government and security forces in their fight against the Taliban, al- Qa'ida, ISIS, and other terrorists. We will bolster the fighting strength of the Afghan security forces to convince the Taliban that they cannot win on the battlefield and to set the conditions for diplomatic efforts to achieve enduring peace.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)

- *We will insist that Pakistan take decisive action against militant and terrorist groups operating from its soil.* (Ch-5, St- South and Central Asia, Sub st- Priority Actions for South and Central Asia, pp 50)

IV. References to South Korea and Japan

- *In Asia, the United States worked with South Korea and Japan, countries ravaged by war, to help them become successful democracies and among the most prosperous economies in the world. These achievements were products of patient partnerships with those who aspired to build prosperous societies and join the community of democratic states. They resulted in mutually beneficial relationships in which the United States helped states mobilize their own resources to achieve transitions to growth and stability.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Encourage Aspiring Partners, pp 38)

- *Our alliance and friendship with South Korea, forged by the trials of history is stronger than ever.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *We welcome and support the strong leadership role of our critical ally, Japan.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *We will maintain a forward military presence capable of deterring and, if necessary, defeating any adversary. We will strengthen our long-standing military relationships and encourage the development of a strong defense network with our allies and partners. For example, we will cooperate on missile defense with Japan and South Korea to move toward an area defense capability.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, Sub st- Priority Actions for Indo-Pacific, pp 47)

V. References to Allies and Partners

- *The United States will pursue enforcement actions when countries violate the rules to gain unfair advantage. The United States will engage industrialized democracies and other likeminded states to defend against economic aggression, in all its forms, that threatens our common prosperity and security.* (Ch-2, St- Promote Free, Fair, and Reciprocal Economic Relationships, pp 19-20)

- *The United States will promote exports of our energy resources, technologies, and services, which helps our allies and partners diversify their energy sources and brings economic gains back home.* (Ch-2, St-Embrace Energy Dominance, Sub- St –Priority Actions, pp 23)

- *Our allies and partners must also contribute the capabilities, and demonstrate the will, to confront shared threats. Experience suggests that the willingness of rivals to abandon or forgo aggression depends on their perception of U.S. strength and the vitality of our alliance*. (Ch-3, pp 26)

- *History suggests that Americans will rise to the occasion and that we can shift trends back in favour of the United States, our allies, and our partners.* (Ch-3, St- Renew America's Competitive Advantages, pp 28)

- *Nuclear weapons have served a vital purpose in America's National Security Strategy for the past 70 years. They are the foundation of a strategy to preserve peace and stability by deterring aggression against the United States, our allies, and our partners. While nuclear deterrence strategies cannot prevent all conflict, they are essential to prevent nuclear attack, non-nuclear strategic attacks, and large scale conventional aggression. In addition, the extension of the U.S. nuclear deterrent to more than 30 allies and partners helps to assure their security, and reduces their need to possess their own nuclear capabilities.* (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Nuclear Forces, pp 30)

- *To avoid miscalculation, the Unites States will conduct discussions with other states to build predictable relationships and reduce nuclear risks. We will consider new arms control arrangements if they contribute to strategic stability and if they are verifiable. We will not allow adversaries to use threats of nuclear escalation or other irresponsible nuclear behaviors to coerce the United States, our allies, and our partners. Fear of escalation will not prevent the United States from defending our vital interests and those of our allies and partners.* (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Priority Actions for Nuclear Forces, pp 31)

- *We want to create wealth for Americans and our allies and partners prosperous states are stronger security partners who are able to share the burden of confronting common threats. Fair and reciprocal trade, investments, and exchanges of knowledge deepen our alliances and partnerships, which are necessary to succeed in today's competitive geopolitical environment.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Tools of Economic Diplomacy, pp 34)

- *We will strengthen economic ties as a core aspect of our relationships with like-minded states and use our economic expertise, markets, and resources to bolster states threatened by our competitors.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Priority Actions for Tools of Economic Diplomacy, pp 34)

- *Together, the United States and our allies and partners represent well over half of the global GDP. None of our adversaries have comparable coalitions.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, pp 37)

- *Unlike the state-directed mercantilism of some competitors that can disadvantage recipient nations and promote dependency, the purpose of U.S. foreign assistance should be to end the need for it. The United States seeks strong partners, not weak ones*. (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Encourage Aspiring Partners, pp 39)

- *We will prioritize collaboration with aspiring partners that are aligned with U.S. interests. We will focus on development investments where we can have the most impact – where local reforms are committed to tackling their economic and political challenges.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Encourage Aspiring Partners, pp 39)

- *Across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, states are eager for investments and financing to develop their infrastructure and propel growth. The United States and its partners have opportunities to work with countries to help them realize their potential as prosperous and sovereign states that are accountable to their people. Such states can become trading partners that buy more American- made goods and create more predictable business environments that benefit American companies. American-led investments represents the most sustainable and responsible approach to development and offer a stark contrast to the corrupt, opaque, exploitive, and low- quality deals offered by authoritarian states.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Encourage Aspiring Partners, pp 39)

- *We will press to make the WTO a more effective forum to adjudicate unfair trade practices.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Priority Actions for Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums, pp 41)

- *States that prosper and nations that transition from recipients of development assistants to trading partners offer economic opportunities for American businesses. And stability reduces threats that target Americans at home.* (Ch-5, pp 45)

- *Australia has fought alongside us in every significant conflict since World War I, and continues to reinforce economic and security arrangements that supports our shared interests and safeguard democratic values across the region.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *We will redouble our commitment to established alliances and partnerships, while expanding and deepening relationships with new partners that share respect for sovereignty, fair and reciprocal trade, and the rule of law. We will reinforce our commitment to freedom of the seas and the peaceful resolution of territorial and maritime disputes in accordance with international law. We will work with allies and partners to achieve complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and preserve the non-proliferation regime in Northeast Asia.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, Sub st- Priority Actions for Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *On NATO's eastern flank we will continue to strengthen deterrence and defense, and catalyze frontline allies and partners' efforts to better defend themselves.* (Ch-5, St- Europe, Sub st- Priority Actions for Europe, pp 48)

VI. References to China and Russia

- *China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence.* (Ch- Introduction, St- A Competitive World, pp 2)

- *China and Russia are developing advanced weapons and capabilities that could threaten our critical infrastructure and our command and control architecture.* (Ch-1, St-Secure US Borders and Territory, Sub st- Defense against WMD, pp 8)

- *Enhanced (US) missile defense is not intended to undermine strategic stability or disrupt long standing strategic relationships with Russia or China.* (Ch-1, St-Secure US Borders and Territory, Sub-st- Priority Actions, pp 8)

- *The illicit opioid epidemic, fed by drug cartels as well as Chinese fentanyl traffickers, kills tens of thousands of Americans each year. These organizations weaken our allies and partners too, by corrupting and undermining democratic institutions.* (Ch-1, St-Pursue Threats to their Sources, Sub-st- Dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations, pp 12)

- *For generations, our society has protected free press, free speech, and free thought. Today, actors such as Russia are using information tools in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of democracies. Adversaries target media, political processes, financial networks, and personal data.* (Ch-1, St-Promote American Resilience, pp 14)

- *Every year, competitors such as China steal U.S. intellectual property valued at hundreds of billions of dollars. Stealing property technology and early-stage ideas allows competitors to unfairly tap into the innovation of free societies. Over the years, rivals have used sophisticated means to weaken our businesses and economies as facets of cyber enabled economic warfare and other malicious activities.* (Ch-2, St- Promote and Protect the U.S. National Security Innovation Base, pp 21)

- *Three main sets of challengers—the revisionist powers of China and Russia, the rogue states of Iran and North Korea, and transnational threat organizations, particularly jihadist terrorist groups—are actively competing against the United States and our allies and partners. Although differing in nature and magnitude, these rivals compete across political, economic, and military arenas, and use technology and information to accelerate these contests in order to shift regional balances of power in their favor. These are fundamentally political contests between those who favor repressive systems and those who favor free societies*. (Ch-3, pp 25)

- *China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests. China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favor. Russia seeks to restore its great power status and establish spheres of influence near its borders. The intentions of both nations are not necessarily fixed. The United States stands ready to cooperate across areas of mutual interest with both countries.* (Ch-3, pp 25)

- *For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China's rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others. China gathers and exploits data on an unrivaled scale and spreads features of its authoritarian system, including corruption and the use of surveillance. It is building the most capable and well-funded military in the world, after our own. Its nuclear arsenal is growing and diversifying. Part of China's military modernization and economic expansion is due to its access to the U.S. innovation economy, including America's world-class universities.* (Ch-3, pp 25)

- *Russia aims to weaken U.S. influence in the world and divide us from our allies and partners. Russia views the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) as threats. Russia is investing in new military capabilities, including nuclear systems that remain the most significant existential threat to the United States, and in destabilizing cyber capabilities. Through modernized forms of subversive tactics, Russia interferes in the domestic political affairs of countries around the world. The combination of Russian ambition and growing military capabilities creates an unstable frontier in Eurasia, where the risk of conflict due to Russian miscalculation is growing.* (Ch-3, pp 25-26)

- *In addition, after being dismissed as a phenomenon of an earlier century, great power competition returned. China and Russia began to reassert their influence regionally and globally. Today, they are fielding military capabilities designed to deny American access in times of crisis and to contest our ability to operate freely in critical commercial zones during peacetime. In short, they are contesting our geopolitical advantages and trying to change the international order in their favor.* (Ch-3, St- Renew America's Competitive Advantages, pp 27)

- *The Intelligence Community (IC), as well as the law enforcement community, offer unique abilities to defend against and mitigate threat actors operating below the threshold of open conflict. Both communities have exceptionally strong liaison relationships throughout the world, allowing the United States to cooperate with allies and partners to protect against adversaries.* (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Intelligence, pp 32)

- *China, Russia, and other state and non state actors recognize that the United States often views the world in binary terms, with states being either "at peace " or "at war," when it is actually an arena of continuous competition. Our adversaries will not fight us on our terms. We will raise our competitive game to meet that challenge, to protect American interests, and to advance our values.* (Ch-3, St- Renew America's Competitive Advantages, pp 28)

- *Russia uses information operations as part of its offensive cyber efforts to influence public opinion across the globe. Its influence campaigns blend covert intelligence operations and false online personas with state-funded media, third-party intermediaries and paid social media users or "trolls".* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Information Statecraft, pp 35)

- *Today, the United States must compete for positive relationships around the world, China and Russia target their investments in the developing world to expand influence and gain competitive advantages against the United States. China is investing billions of dollars in infrastructure across the globe. Russia, too, project its influence economically through the control of key energy and other infrastructure throughout parts of Europe and Central Asia. The United States provides and alternative to state-directed investments, which often leave developing countries worse off. The United States perceives economic ties not only for market access but also to create enduring relationships to advance common political and security interests.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Encourage Aspiring Partners, pp 38)

- *China and Russia aspire to project power worldwide, but they interact most with their neighbors.* (Ch-5, pp 45)

- *Although the United States seeks to continue to cooperate with China, China is using economic inducements and penalties, influence operations, and implied military threats to persuade other states to heed its political and security agenda.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *We will maintain our strong ties with Taiwan in accordance with our "One China" policy, including our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide for Taiwan's legitimate defense needs and deter coercion.* (Ch-5, St- Indo-Pacific, Sub st- Priority Actions for Indo-Pacific, pp 47)

- *Russia is using subversive measures to weaken the credibility of America's commitment to Europe, undermine transatlantic unity, and weaken European institutions and governments. With its invasions of Georgia and Ukraine, Russia demonstrated its willingness to violate the sovereignty of states in the region. Russia continues to intimidate its neighbors with threatening behavior, such as nuclear posturing and the forward deployment of offensive capabilities.* (Ch-5, St- Europe, pp 47)

- *China is gaining a strategic foothold in Europe by expanding its unfair trade practices and investing in key industries, sensitive technologies, and infrastructure.* (Ch-5, St- Europe, pp 47)

- *The United States and Europe will work together to counter Russian subversion and aggression, and the threats posed by North Korea and Iran.* (Ch-5,St- Europe, Sub st- Priority Actions for Europe, pp 48)

- *We will work with our partners to contest China's unfair trade and economic practices and restrict its acquisition of sensitive technologies.* (Ch-5, St- Europe, Sub st- Priority Actions for Europe, pp 48)

- *China seeks to pull the region into its orbit state-led investments and loans. Russia continues its failed politics of the Cold War by bolstering its radical Cuban allies as Cuba continues to repress its citizens. Both China and Russia support the dictatorship in Venezuela and are seeking to expand military linkages and arms sales across the region. The hemisphere's democratic states have a shared interest in confronting threats to their sovereignty.* (Ch-5, St- Western Hemisphere, pp 51)

- *China is expanding its economic and military presence in Africa, growing from a small investor in the continent two decades ago into Africa's largest trading partner today. Some Chinese practices undermine Africa's long-term development by corrupting elites, dominating extractive industries, and locking countries into unsustainable and opaque debts and commitments.* (Ch-5, St- Africa, pp 52)

- *We will support economic integration among African states. We will work with nations that seek to move beyond assistance to partnerships that promote prosperity. We will offer American goods and services, both because it is profitable for us and because it serves as an alternative to China's often extractive economic footprint on the continent.* (Ch-5,St- Africa , Sub st- Priority Actions for Africa, pp 53)

VII. References to Adversaries and Competitors

- *America's military remains the strongest in the world. However, US advantages are shrinking as rival states modernize and build up their conventional and nuclear forces.* (Ch-Introduction, St- A Competitive World, pp 3)

- *Adversaries target sources of American strength, including our democratic system and our economy. They steal and exploit our intellectual property and personal data, interfere in our political processes, target our aviation and maritime sectors, and hold our critical infrastructure at risk.* (Ch-1, pp 7)

- *We welcome all economic relationships rooted in fairness, reciprocity and faithful adherence to the rules.Those who join this pursuit will be our closest economic partners. But the United States will no longer turn blind eye to violations, cheating, or economic aggression.* (Ch-2, pp 17)

- *For decades, the United States has allowed unfair trading practices to grow. Other countries have used dumping, discriminatory non- tariff barriers, forced technology transfers, non economic capacity, industrial subsidies, and other support from governments and state owned enterprises to gain economic advantages.* (Ch-2, St- Promote Free, Fair, and Reciprocal Economic Relationships, pp 19)

- *The United States distinguishes between economic competition with countries that follow fair and free market principles and competition with those that act with little regard for those principles.* (Ch-2, St- Promote Free, Fair, and Reciprocal Economic Relationships, pp 19)

- *Moreover, deterrence today is significantly more complex to achieve than during the cold war. Adversaries studied the American way of war and began investing in capabilities that targeted our strengths and sought to exploit perceived weakness.* (Ch-3, St- Renew America's Competitive Advantages, pp 27)

- *In addition, adversaries and competitors became adept at operating below the threshold of open military conflict and at the edges of international law.* (Ch-3, St- Renew America's Competitive Advantages, pp 27)

- *We must convince adversaries that we can and will defeat them – not just punish them if they attack the United States. We must ensure the ability to deter potential enemies by denial, convincing them that they cannot accomplish objectives through the use of force or other forms of aggression.* (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st-Military, pp 28)

- *The size of our force matters. To deter conflict and,if deterrence fails, to win in war, the Nation must be able to feel forces capable of operating in sufficient scale and for ample duration to defeat enemies, consolidate military gains, and achieve sustainable outcomes that protect the American people and our vital interests*. (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Priority Actions for Military, pp 29)

- *The Department of Defense must develop new operational concepts and capabilities to win without assured dominance in air, maritime, land, space, and cyberspace domains, including against those operating below the level of conventional military conflict*. (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Priority Actions for Military, pp 29)

- *The United States must maintain the credible deterrence and assurance capabilities provided by our nuclear Triad and by U.S. theatre nuclear capabilities deployed abroad.* (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Nuclear forces, pp 30)

- *The United States does not need to match the nuclear arsenal of other powers, but we must sustain a stockpile that can deter adversaries, assure allies and partners, and achieve U.S. objectives if deterrence fails*. (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Priority Actions for Nuclear Forces, pp 30)

- *Many countries are purchasing satellites to support their own strategic military activities.Others believe that the ability to attack space assets offers and asymmetric advantage and as a result, our pursuing range of anti- satellite (ASAT) weapons*. (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Space, pp 31)

- *Many countries now view cyber capabilities as tools for projecting influence, and some use cyber tools to protect and extend their autocratic regimes. Cyber-attacks have become a key feature of modern conflict.* (Ch-3, St- Renew Capabilities, Sub st- Cyber Space, pp 31)

- *Authoritarian states are eager to replace the United States where the United States withdraws our diplomats and close our outposts.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Competitive Diplomacy, pp 33)

- *Multilateral economic pressure is often more effective because it limits the ability of targeted states to circumvent measures and conveys united resolve.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Tools of Economic Diplomacy, pp 34)

- *Risks to U.S. national security will grow as competitors integrate information derived from personal and commercial sources with intelligence collection and data analytic capabilities based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning. Breaches of U.S. commercial and government organizations also provide adversaries with data and insights into their target and audiences. China for example, combines data and they use of AI to rate the loyalty of its citizens to the states and uses these ratings to determine jobs and more. (AI) and machine learning.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Information Statecraft, pp 34-35)

- *During the Cold War, a totalitarian threat from the Soviet Union motivated the free world to create coalition in defense of liberty. Today's challenges to free societies are just as serious, but more diverse. State and non-state actors project influence and advance their objectives by exploiting information, democratic media freedoms, and international institutions. Repressive leaders often collaborate to subvert free societies and corrupt multilateral organizations.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, pp 37)

- *The United States must lead and engage in the multinational arrangements that shape many of the rules that affect U.S. interests and values. A competition for influence exists in these institutions. As we participate in them, we must protect American sovereignty and advance American interest and values.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st-

Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums, pp 40)

- *Free access to the seas remains a central principle of national security and economic prosperity, and exploration of sea and space provides opportunities for commercial gain and scientific breakthrough.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums, pp 40)

- *Authoritarian actors have long recognized power of multilateral bodies and have used them to advance their interests and limit the freedom of their own citizens. If the United States cedes leadership of these bodies to adversaries, opportunities to shape developments that are positive for the United States will be lost. All institutions are not equal, however. The United States will prioritize its efforts in those organizations that serve American interests, to ensure that they are strengthened and supportive of the United States, our allies and our partners. Where existing institutions and rules need modernizing, the United States will lead to update them*. (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums, pp 40)

- *The United States supports the peaceful resolution of disputes under International Law but will use all of its instruments of power to defend U.S. interests and to ensure common domains remain free.* (Ch-4, St- Advance American Influence, Sub st- Priority Actions for Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums, pp 41)

- *We may use diplomacy, sanctions, and other tools to isolate states and leaders who threaten our interests and whose actions run contrary to our values.* (Ch-4, St- Champion American Values Sub st- Priority Actions for Champion American Values, pp 42)

VIII. References to North Korea and Iran

- *In Northeast Asia, the North Korean regime is rapidly accelerating its cyber, nuclear, and ballistic missile programs.* (Ch- 5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *North Korea's pursuit of these weapons poses a global threat that requires a global response.* (Ch- 5, St- Indo-Pacific, pp 46)

- *For years, the interconnected problems of Iranian expansion, state collapse, jihadist ideology, socio-economic stagnation, and regional rivalries have convulsed the Middle East.* (Ch-5, St – Middle East, pp 48)

- *Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, has taken advantage of instability to expand its influence through partners and proxies, weapon proliferation, and funding. It continues to develop more capable ballistic missiles and intelligence capabilities, and it undertakes malicious cyber activities.* (Ch- 5, St- Middle East, pp 48)

- *Iran continues to perpetuate the cycle of violence in the region, causing grievous harm to civilian populations. Rival states are filling vacuums created by state collapse and prolonged regional conflict.* (Ch- 5, St- Middle East, pp 49)

- *Today, the threats from Jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the regions problem.* (Ch-5, St- Middle East, pp 49)

- *We will work with partners to deny the Iranian region all paths to a nuclear weapon and neutralize Iranian malign influence.* (Ch-5, St- Middle East, Sub St – Priority Actions for Middle East, pp 48)

IX. References to Radicalism and Terrorist Threats

- *The United States will urge states where radicalism thrives to take greater responsibility for countering violent messaging and promoting tolerant and pluralistic worldviews.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Priority Actions for Information Statecraft, pp 35)

- *We will deny revenue to terrorist, WMD proliferators, and other illicit actors in order to constrain their ability to use and move funds to support hostile acts and operations.* (Ch-3, St- Diplomacy and Statecraft, Sub st- Priority Actions for Tools of Economic Diplomacy, pp 34)

- *Europe also faces immediate threats from violent Islamist extremists. Attacks by ISIS and other jihadist groups in Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and other countries show that our European partners continue to face serious threats. Instability in the Middle East and Africa has triggered the movement of millions of migrants and refugees into Europe, exacerbating instability and tensions in the region.* (Ch-5, St-Europe, pp 47-48)

- *European nations are contributing thousands of troops to help fight jihadist terrorists in Afghanistan, stabilize Iraq, and fight terrorist organizations across Africa and the greater Middle East.* (Ch-5, St-Europe, pp 48)

- *The United States seeks a Middle East that is not a safe haven or breeding ground for jihadist terrorists, not dominated by any power hostile to the United States, and that contributes to a stable global energy market.* (Ch-5, St-Middle East, pp 48)

- *ISIS and al-Qa'ida thrive on instability and export violent jihad.* (Ch-5, St-Middle East, pp 49)

- *Some of our partners are working together to reject radical ideologies, and key leaders are calling for a rejection of Islamist extremism and violence.* (Ch-5, St-Middle East, pp 49)

- *We will retain the necessary American military presence in the region to protect the United States and our allies from terrorist attacks and preserve a favorable regional balance of power.* (Ch-5, St-Middle East, Sub st- Priority Actions for Middle East, pp 50)

- *Many African states are battlegrounds for violent extremism and jihadist terrorists. ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates operate on the continent and have increased the lethality of their attacks, expanded into new areas, and targeted U.S. citizens and interests. African nations and regional organizations have demonstrated a commitment to confront the threat from jihadist terrorist organizations, but their security capabilities remain weak.* (Ch-5, St- Africa, pp 52)

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