



## The United States National Security Strategy Document: Obama to Trump

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President Donald Trump published his first National Security Strategy (NSS)<sup>1</sup> document on 18 December 2017. The document has been used by the Administrations over the years to explain not just to the American people but also to the international community the security priorities for the United States, issues that would be of importance and affect national security and the means through which they will be realised. Close to a year into his inaugural, President Trump has made public his administration's views on how it will achieve United States' national security goals.

Four vital, national interests—organized as the strategy's four pillars—form the backbone of the NSS commitment. They are:

- i) Protect the homeland, the American people, and the American way of life;
- ii) Promote American prosperity;
- iii) Preserve peace through strength and
- iv) Advance American influence

This NSS and its four themes are guided by a return to *principled realism*.<sup>2</sup> These four pillars of the new document are not vastly different from the two documents that were produced during the presidency of Barack Obama. The 2010 NSS document<sup>3</sup> outlined the following interests for the United States:

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<sup>1</sup> The National Security Strategy Document 2017 is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The White House, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era," <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/new-national-security-strategy-new-era/>, Accessed on 19 December 2017.

<sup>3</sup> The National Security Strategy Document 2010 is available at <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2010.pdf>

- i) The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners;
- ii) A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity;
- iii) Respect for universal values at home and around the world; and
- iv) An international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.

The 2015 NSS document<sup>4</sup>, the second document released by President Obama, carried forward these goals. The document stated that, “Especially in a changing global environment, these national interests will continue to guide all we do in the world. To advance these interests most effectively, we must pursue a comprehensive national security agenda, allocate resources accordingly, and work with the Congress to end sequestration. Even so, our resources will never be limitless. Policy tradeoffs and hard choices will need to be made. In such instances, we will prioritize efforts that address the top strategic risks to our interests:

- Catastrophic attack on the U.S. homeland or critical infrastructure;
- Threats or attacks against U.S. citizens abroad and our allies;
- Global economic crisis or widespread economic slowdown;
- Proliferation and/or use of weapons of mass destruction;
- Severe global infectious disease outbreaks;
- Climate change;
- Major energy market disruptions; and
- Significant security consequences associated with weak or failing states (including mass atrocities, regional spillover, and transnational organized crime).”

All three documents are a comprehensive statement of the United States interests in the international arena and the objectives within the realm of security that is important. It is an important document that presents the administration’s worldwide view on various issues and the possible actions that it will take over the course of its term to address the said issues.

This paper is an attempt to understand the NSS of President Trump and compare it to the NSS presented by President Obama in 2015 and 2010 to find continuations and additions to the current strategy document.

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<sup>4</sup> The National Security Strategy Document 2015 is available at <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2015.pdf>

### The National Security Strategy Document: President Trump and President Obama

President/Issues	President Trump (2017)	President Obama (2015)	President Obama (2010)
How to lead	The document states, “(this)... National Security Strategy puts America first. An America First National Security Strategy is based on American principles, a clear-eyed assessment of U.S. interests, and a determination to tackle the challenges that we face. It is a strategy of <u>principled realism that is guided by outcomes, not ideology.</u> ” <sup>5</sup>	The NSS stated, “This new National Security Strategy positions the United States to safeguard our national interests through strong and sustainable leadership.... A strong consensus endures across our political spectrum that the question is not whether America will lead, but how we will lead into the future. First and foremost, we will <u>lead with purpose, strength, example, with capable partners, with all the instruments of US power and with a long term perspective.</u> ” <sup>6</sup>	The first NSS of President Obama stated, “Our approach begins with a commitment to <u>build a stronger foundation for American leadership,</u> because what takes place within our borders will determine our strength and influence beyond them....” <sup>7</sup>
Border Control and Immigration Policy	“Strengthening control over our borders and immigration system is central to national security, economic prosperity, and the rule of law. The United States understands the contributions immigrants have made to our nation throughout its history. Illegal immigration, however, burdens the economy, hurts American workers, presents public safety risks, and enriches smugglers and other criminals. The United States will enhance border security through the construction of the wall,	No Reference (N.R.)	“The United States is a nation of immigrants. Our ability to innovate, our ties to the world, and our economic prosperity depend on our nation’s capacity to welcome and assimilate immigrants, and a visa system which welcomes skilled professionals from around the world. At the same time, effective border security and immigration enforcement must keep the country safe and deter unlawful entry. Indeed, persistent problems in immigration policy consume valuable resources needed to advance other security objectives

<sup>5</sup> The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2017,” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>, Accessed on 19 Dec. 17.

<sup>6</sup> The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2015,” <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2015.pdf>, Accessed on 19 Dec. 17.

<sup>7</sup> The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2010,” <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2010.pdf>, Accessed on 19 Dec. 17

	<p>enhanced vetting, multilayered defence of the borders, enforce immigration laws and enhance security over pathways of illegal movement.”</p>		<p>and make it harder to focus on the most dangerous threats facing our country. Ultimately, our national security depends on striking a balance between security and openness. To advance this goal, we must pursue comprehensive immigration reform that effectively secures our borders, while repairing a broken system that fails to serve the needs of our nation.”</p>
<p>Economic prosperity</p>	<p>“We (The United States) 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 a blind eye to violations, cheating, or economic aggression.”</p> <p>The NSS states that, “the United States will, pursue bilateral trade and investment agreements with countries....”</p> <p>The document highlights the means to, “...rejuvenate the economy by reducing regulatory burden, improve American infrastructure and reduce fiscal responsibility. The administration has also proposed tax reforms to stimulate the</p>	<p>“Despite its success, our rules-based system is now competing against alternative, less-open models....Through our trade and investment policies, we will shape globalization so that it is working for American workers. By leveraging our improved economic and energy position, we will strengthen the global financial system and advance high-standard trade deals.”</p>	<p>“To allow each American to pursue the opportunity upon which our prosperity depends, we must build a stronger foundation for economic growth. That foundation must include access to a complete and competitive education for every American; a transformation of the way that we produce and use energy, so that we reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and lead the world in creating new jobs and industry; access to quality, affordable health care so our people, businesses, and government are not constrained by rising costs; and the responsible management of our Federal budget so that we balance our priorities and are not burdened by debt. To succeed, we must also ensure that America stays on the cutting edge of the science and innovation that supports our prosperity, defense, and international technological</p>

	economy along with supporting innovation and entrepreneurial programmes.” It also talks about protecting intellectual property rights and tighten visa process to consider restricting foreign STEM students.		leadership.”  The NSS laid stress on “...sustainable development and deterring threats to international financial institutions and building cooperation with international partners.”
Energy security	The documents states that, “Unleashing abundant energy resources—coal, natural gas, petroleum, renewables, and nuclear—stimulates the economy and builds a foundation for future growth. And the nation will take advantage of all these resources.”	“America’s energy revival is not only good for growth, it offers new buffers against the coercive use of energy by some and new opportunities for helping others transition to low-carbon economies.  “Our energy security will be further enhanced by living up to commitments made in the Rome Declaration and through our ... energy strategy for a low-carbon world. We will continue to develop American fossil resources while becoming a more efficient country that develops cleaner, alternative fuels and vehicles. We are demonstrating that America can and will lead the global economy while reducing our emissions...”	“We must transform the way that we use energy—diversifying supplies, investing in innovation, and deploying clean energy technologies. By doing so, we will enhance energy security, create jobs, and fight climate change.”
Climate Change	On climate change the document clarifies that, “the United States will continue to advance an approach that balances energy security, economic development, and environmental protection. The United States will remain a global leader in reducing traditional pollution, as well as greenhouse gases, while expanding our economy.”	On the issue of climate change, the NSS stated, “America is leading efforts at home and with the international community to confront this challenge. It further stated that the United States and China had made substantial contribution to Green Climate Fund to help efforts by nations to reduce their carbon emissions. The United States was also driving collective action to reduce methane emissions from pipelines and to launch a free trade agreement for	Addressing climate change as a key global challenge, the document stated, “The danger from climate change is real, urgent, and severe.... The United States will therefore confront climate change based upon clear guidance from the science, and in cooperation with all nations....”  In a two pronged strategy it stated

		environmental goods.”	that, “ at home the United States, will stimulate our energy economy at home, reinvigorate the U.S. domestic nuclear industry, increase our efficiency standards, invest in renewable energy, and provide the incentives that make clean energy the profitable kind of energy. Abroad the United States, will seek to implement and build on the Copenhagen Accord, and ensure a response to climate change that draws upon decisive action by all nations.”
Security	<p>The NSS document identified, <u>“Three main sets of challengers—the revisionist powers of China and Russia, the rogue states of Iran and North Korea, and transnational threat organizations....</u> The United States will seek areas of cooperation with competitors from a position of strength, foremost by ensuring our military power is second to none and fully integrated with our allies and all of our instruments of power.”</p> <p>The document has stressed on the need to develop a defence industrial base as critical for its national security.</p>	<p>“The United States government has no greater responsibility than protecting the American people. Yet, our obligations do not end at our borders. We embrace our responsibilities for underwriting international security because it serves our interests, upholds our commitments to allies and partners, and addresses threats that are truly global.”</p> <p>The document also prioritised collective action against terrorism and the pre-eminence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The document stated that the United States would strengthen its national defence forces, reinforce homeland security, combat the persistent threat of terrorism while building the capacity to prevent conflicts, prevent the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction, confront climate change, and assure access to shared spaces. It also addressed the increasing need</p>	<p>“This Administration has no greater responsibility than protecting the American people. Furthermore, we embrace America’s unique responsibility to promote international security—a responsibility that flows from our commitments to allies, our leading role in supporting a just and sustainable international order, and our unmatched military capabilities.”</p>

		for global health security as part of the United States national security.	
Nuclear forces	<p>“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.”</p> <p>“The United States will sustain a nuclear force and while not indulging in a nuclear arms race it will make investments to maintain a U.S. nuclear arsenal and infrastructure that is able to meet national security threats over the coming decades.”</p>	N.R.	<p>“We are reducing our nuclear arsenal and reliance on nuclear weapons, while ensuring the reliability and effectiveness of our deterrent.”</p> <p>“As long as any nuclear weapons exist, the United States will sustain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal, both to deter potential adversaries and to assure U.S. allies and other security partners that they can count on America’s security commitments.”</p>
Space	<p>“The United States considers unfettered access to and freedom to operate in space to be a vital interest. Any harmful interference with or an attack upon critical components of our space architecture that directly affects this vital U.S. interest will be met with a deliberate response at a time, place, manner, and domain of our choosing.”</p>	<p>“As countries increasingly derive benefits from space, we must join together to deal with threats posed by those who may wish to deny the peaceful use of outer space.... We will also develop technologies and tactics to deter and defeat efforts to attack our space systems; enable indications, warning, and attributions of such attacks; and enhance the resiliency of critical U.S. space capabilities.”</p>	<p>“To promote security and stability in space, we will pursue activities consistent with the inherent right of self-defense, deepen cooperation with allies and friends, and work with all nations toward the responsible and peaceful use of space.”</p>
Weapons of Mass Destruction	<p>“We must prevent nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological attacks, block terrorists from reaching our homeland, reduce drug and human trafficking, and protect our critical infrastructure. .... We will target jihadist terrorists and</p>	<p>“The potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, poses a grave risk.”</p> <p>“Vigilance is required to stop countries and non-state actors from developing or acquiring nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, or the materials to build them.</p>	<p>“To prevent acts of terrorism with the world’s most dangerous weapons, we are dramatically accelerating and intensifying efforts to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials by the end of 2013, and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. We will also take actions</p>

	<p>transnational-criminal organizations at their source and dismantle their networks of support.”</p>	<p>Our efforts to remove and destroy chemical weapons in Libya and Syria reflect our leadership in implementation and progress toward universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention.”</p> <p>“No threat poses as grave a danger to our security and well-being as the potential use of nuclear weapons and materials by irresponsible states or terrorists. We therefore seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States must invest the resources necessary to maintain—without testing—a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent that preserves strategic stability.”</p>	<p>to safeguard knowledge and capabilities in the life and chemical sciences that could be vulnerable to misuse.”</p> <p>The United States is also committed to “...securing the supply chain; detecting weapons of mass destruction before they reach our borders; ...”</p>
<p>Terrorism</p>	<p><i>“Even after the territorial defeat of ISIS and al-Qa’ida in Syria and Iraq, the threat from jihadist terrorists will persist.... The United States also works with allies and partners to deter and disrupt other foreign terrorist groups that threaten the homeland.... The U.S. military and other operating agencies will take direct action against terrorist networks and pursue terrorists who threaten the homeland and U.S. citizens regardless of where they are.... Our allies and partners, who are also targets of terrorism, will continue to share responsibility in fighting these barbaric</i></p>	<p><i>“The threat of catastrophic attacks against our homeland by terrorists has diminished but still persists. An array of terrorist threats has gained traction in areas of instability, limited opportunity, and broken governance. Our adversaries are not confined to a distinct country or region. Instead, they range from South Asia through the Middle East and into Africa.... Our counterterrorism approach is at work with several states, including Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq.”</i></p>	<p>“We will continue to rebalance our military capabilities to excel at counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, stability operations, and meeting increasingly sophisticated security threats, while ensuring our force is ready to address the full range of military operations. To prevent acts of terrorism on American soil, we must enlist all of our intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security capabilities.”</p> <p>“To prevent acts of terrorism with the world’s most dangerous weapons, we are dramatically accelerating and intensifying efforts to secure all vulnerable nuclear</p>



	groups.”		materials by the end of 2013, and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.”
Cyber security	<p>“Today, cyberspace offers state and non-state actors the ability to wage campaigns against American political, economic, and security interests without ever physically crossing our borders.”</p> <p>“Cyber-attacks have become a key feature of modern conflict. The United States will deter, defend, and when necessary defeat malicious actors who use cyberspace capabilities against the United States.”</p>	<p>“We are shaping global standards for cyber-security and building international capacity to disrupt and investigate cyber threats.”</p> <p>“Drawing on the voluntary cyber-security framework, we are securing Federal networks and working with the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders to strengthen the security and resilience of U.S. critical infrastructure.... We will defend ourselves, consistent with U.S. and international law, against cyber attacks and impose costs on malicious cyber actors, including through prosecution of illegal cyber activity. We will assist other countries to develop laws that enable strong action against threats that originate from their infrastructure. Globally, cyber-security requires that long-standing norms of international behavior—to include protection of intellectual property, online freedom, and respect for civilian infrastructure—be upheld, and the Internet be managed as a shared responsibility between states and the private sector with civil society and Internet users as key stakeholders.”</p>	<p>“Cyber-security threats represent one of the most serious national security, public safety, and economic challenges we face as a nation. The threats we face range from individual criminal hackers to organized criminal groups, from terrorist networks to advanced nation states. To advance that goal, we are working across the government and with the private sector to design more secure technology that gives us the ability to better protect and to improve the resilience of critical government and industry systems and networks. Neither government nor the private sector nor individual citizens can meet this challenge alone—we will expand the ways we work together. We will also strengthen our international partnerships on a range of issues, including the development of norms for acceptable conduct in cyberspace....”</p>
The Indo-Pacific	<p><u>“The region which stretches from the west coast of India to the western shores of the United States</u> represents the most populous and economically dynamic part of the world. <u>The</u></p>	<p>(The region was mentioned as Asia Pacific in the NSS document.)</p> <p><u>“The United States has been and will remain a Pacific power.</u> That said, the security dynamics of the region—including contested</p>	<p>(There is no mention of the term Indo-Pacific in the document. It does mention the United States’ Asian allies in the Asia Pacific.)</p> <p>“Our alliances with <b>Japan, South</b></p>

U.S. interest in a free and open Indo-Pacific extends back to the earliest days of our republic.

“**China** has mounted a rapid military modernization campaign designed to limit U.S. access to the region and provide China a freer hand there. China presents its ambitions as mutually beneficial, but Chinese dominance risks diminishing the sovereignty of many states in the Indo-Pacific.”

“In Northeast Asia, the **North Korean regime** is rapidly accelerating its cyber, nuclear, and ballistic missile programs. North Korea’s pursuit of these weapons poses a global threat that requires a global response. 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.”

“Our alliance and friendship with **South Korea**, forged by the trials of history, is stronger than ever. We welcome and support the strong leadership role of our critical ally, **Japan**. **Australia** has

maritime territorial claims and a provocative North Korea—risk escalation and conflict. American leadership will remain essential to shaping the region’s long-term trajectory to enhance stability and security, facilitate trade and commerce through an open and transparent system, and ensure respect for universal rights and freedoms.”

“We are modernizing our alliances with **Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the Philippines**

and enhancing the interactions among them to ensure they are fully capable of responding to regional and global challenges. We are committed to strengthening regional institutions such as **ASEAN, the East Asia Summit, and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation** to reinforce shared rules and norms, forge collective responses to shared challenges, and help ensure peaceful resolution of disputes. The TPP is essential to these efforts.”

“This is an important focus of the deepening partnerships we are building in Southeast Asia including with **Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia**. We will uphold our treaty obligations to South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Thailand, while encouraging the latter to return quickly to democracy. We will support the people of **Burma** to deepen and sustain reforms, including democratic consolidation and national reconciliation.”

**Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand** are the bedrock of security in Asia and a foundation of prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.... These alliances have preserved a hard-earned peace and strengthened the bridges of understanding across the Pacific Ocean in the second half of the 20th century, and it is essential to U.S., Asian, and global security that they are as dynamic and effective in the 21st century.”

fought alongside us in every significant conflict... and continues to reinforce economic and security arrangements that support our shared interests and safeguard democratic values across the region. **New Zealand** is a key U.S. partner contributing to peace and security across the region. *We welcome India's emergence as a leading global power and stronger strategic and defense partner.*

“In Southeast Asia, the **Philippines and Thailand** remain important allies and markets for Americans. **Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore** are growing security and economic partners of the United States. **The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** remain center pieces of the Indo-Pacific's regional architecture and platforms for promoting an order based on freedom.”

“We will maintain our strong ties with **Taiwan** in accordance with our “One China” policy, including our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act

“The United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous **China**. We seek to develop a constructive relationship with China that delivers benefits for our two peoples and promotes security and prosperity in Asia and around the world. We seek cooperation on shared regional and global challenges such as climate change, public health, economic growth, and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

*“In South Asia, we continue to strengthen our strategic and economic partnership with India. We support India's role as a regional provider of security and its expanded participation in critical regional institutions.”*

	<p>to provide for Taiwan’s legitimate defense needs and deter coercion.... <u><i>We will expand our defence and security cooperation with India, a major defence partner of the United States and support India’s growing relations throughout the region.</i></u></p>		
Europe	<p>“Although the menace of Soviet communism is gone, new threats test our will. <b>Russia</b> is using subversive measures to weaken the credibility of America’s commitment to Europe, undermine transatlantic unity, and weaken European institutions and governments. ... <b>China</b> is gaining a strategic foothold in Europe by expanding its unfair trade practices and investing in key industries, sensitive technologies, and infrastructure. Europe also faces immediate threats from violent Islamist extremists.”</p> <p>“The United States remains firmly committed to our European allies and partners. <b>The NATO alliance</b> of free and sovereign states is one of our great advantages over our competitors, and <u><i>the United States remains committed to Article V of the Washington</i></u></p>	<p>“<b>NATO</b> is the strongest alliance the world has ever known and is the hub of an expanding global security network. Our Article 5 commitment to the collective defense of all NATO Members is ironclad, as is our commitment to ensuring the Alliance remains ready and capable for crisis response and cooperative security. We will continue to deepen our relationship with the European Union (EU), which has helped to promote peace and prosperity across the region, and deepen NATO-EU ties to enhance transatlantic Security.”</p> <p>“<b>Russia’s</b> aggression in Ukraine makes clear that European security and the international rules and norms against territorial aggression cannot be taken for granted.... And we will continue to impose significant costs on Russia through sanctions and other means while countering Moscow’s deceptive propaganda with the unvarnished truth.”</p>	<p>“We are committed to ensuring that <b>NATO</b> is able to address the full range of 21st century challenges, while serving as a foundation of European security. And we will continue to anchor our commitment in Article V, which is fundamental to our collective security. Building on European aspirations for greater integration, we are committed to partnering with a stronger European Union to advance our shared goals, especially in promoting democracy and prosperity in Eastern European countries....”</p> <p>With <b>Russia</b>, “The United States has an interest in a strong, peaceful, and prosperous Russia that respects international norms. While actively seeking Russia’s cooperation to act as a responsible partner in Europe and Asia, we will support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia’s neighbors.”</p>

The Middle East	<p><u>Treaty.</u></p> <p>“For years, the interconnected problems of Iranian expansion, state collapse, jihadist ideology, socio-economic stagnation, and regional rivalries have convulsed the Middle East.... <b>Iran</b>, 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....”</p> <p>“For generations the conflict between <b>Israel and the Palestinians</b> has been understood as the prime irritant preventing peace and prosperity in the region. Today, the threats from jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the region’s problems....The United States, remains committed to helping facilitate a comprehensive peace agreement that is acceptable to both Israelis and Palestinians.”</p>	<p>“...we remain committed to a vision of the Middle East that is peaceful and prosperous, where democracy takes root and human rights are upheld.... We are therefore investing in the ability of <b>Israel, Jordan, and our Gulf partners</b> to deter aggression while maintaining our unwavering commitment to Israel’s security, including its qualitative military edge. We are working with the <b>Iraqi government</b> to resolve Sunni grievances through more inclusive and responsive governance. With our partners in the region and around the world, we are leading a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL. At the same time, we will continue to pursue a lasting political solution to the devastating conflict in <b>Syria.</b>”</p> <p>“America will therefore continue to work with allies and partners toward a comprehensive agreement with <b>Iran</b> that resolves the world’s concerns with the Iranian nuclear program. We remain committed to ending the <b>Israeli-Palestinian conflict</b> through a two-state solution that ensures Israel’s security and Palestine’s viability. ...we seek a stable <b>Yemen</b> that undertakes difficult structural reforms and confronts an active threat from al-Qa’ida and other rebels.”</p>	<p>“The United States has important interests in the greater Middle East. They include broad cooperation on a wide range of issues with our close friend, <b>Israel</b>, and an unshakable commitment to its security; the achievement of the <b>Palestinian people’s legitimate aspirations for statehood</b>, opportunity, and the realization of their extraordinary potential; the unity and security of <b>Iraq</b> and the fostering of its democracy and reintegration into the region; the transformation of <b>Iranian policy away from its pursuit of nuclear weapons</b>, support for terrorism, and threats against its neighbors; non-proliferation; and counterterrorism cooperation, access to energy, and integration of the region into global markets.”</p>
South and Central Asia	<p>“The region spans the terrorist threats emanating from the Middle East and the competition</p>	<p>The document mentions South and Central Asia in context of regional stability but not as separate sections.</p>	<p>N.R.</p>

	<p>for power unfolding in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. ...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.”</p> <p>“We seek a <b>Pakistan</b> that is not engaged in destabilizing behavior and a stable and self-reliant <b>Afghanistan</b>. And we seek <b>Central Asian states</b> that are resilient against domination by rival powers, are resistant to becoming jihadist safe havens, and prioritize reforms.”</p>		
Western Hemisphere	<p>The document listed the challenges for the United States in the region as, “Transnational criminal organizations—including gangs and cartels—perpetuate violence and corruption, the stability of <b>Central American states</b> including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. In Venezuela and Cuba, governments cling to anachronistic leftist authoritarian models that continue to fail their</p>	<p>“the hemisphere is increasingly important to global energy supplies. These gains, however, are put at risk by weak institutions, high crime rates, powerful organized crime groups, an illicit drug trade, lingering economic disparity, and inadequate education and health systems. To meet these challenges, we are working with <b>Canada and Mexico</b> to enhance our collective economic competitiveness while advancing prosperity in our hemisphere. With <b>Chile, Peru</b>, Mexico, and Canada, we are setting new global trade standards as we grow a</p>	<p>(The document didn’t have a separate sub-heading on the region. Under the heading of emerging centres of influence, the Americas was mentioned.)</p> <p>“In the Americas, we are bound by proximity, integrated markets, energy interdependence, a broadly shared commitment to democracy, and the rule of law.”</p>

	<p>people.” It also spoke about the role of China and Russia in supporting the regimes in Venezuela and Cuba.</p> <p>“<b>Canada</b> and the United States share a unique strategic and defense partnership.”</p>	<p>strong contingent of countries in the Americas that favor open trading systems to include TPP. We seek to advance our economic partnership with <b>Brazil....</b>”</p> <p>The document also stated that the United States supported the <b>Colombian peace accord</b> with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia while condemning the situation in <b>Venezuela.</b></p>	
Africa	<p>“Africa contains many of the world’s fastest growing economies, which represent potential new markets for U.S. goods and services. The demand for quality American exports is high and will likely grow as Africa’s population and prosperity increase.”</p> <p>“The United States will partner with governments, civil society, and regional organizations to end long-running, violent conflicts. We will work with partners to defeat terrorist organizations and others who threaten U.S. citizens and the homeland.”</p>	<p>“For decades, American engagement with Africa was defined by aid to help Africans reduce insecurity, famine, and disease. In contrast, the partnerships we are forging today, and will expand in the coming years, aim to build upon the aspirations of Africans.... We are deepening our security partnerships with African countries and institutions, exemplified by our partnerships with the U.N. and AU in Mali and Somalia.”</p> <p>The document also stressed on the need to work with partner nations to stabilise Libya and promote democratic process in Tunisia. It also spoke about the need to maintain strategic cooperation with Egypt.</p>	<p>(The document didn’t have a separate sub-heading on the region. Under the heading of emerging centres of influence, Africa was mentioned.)</p> <p>“The United States will work to remain an attractive and influential partner by ensuring that African priorities such as infrastructure development, improving reliable access to power, and increased trade and investment remain high on our agenda.”</p>
Values	<p>“Liberty, free enterprise, equal justice under the law, and the dignity of every human life are central to who we are as a people. These principles form the foundation of our most enduring alliances, and the United States will continue to champion them.”</p>	<p>“To lead effectively in a world experiencing significant political change, the United States must live our values at home while promoting universal values abroad.... Our values are a source of strength and security, and our ability to promote our values abroad is directly tied to our willingness to abide by them at home.”</p>	<p>“America will not impose any system of government on another country, but our long-term security and prosperity depends on our steady support for universal values, which sets us apart from our enemies, adversarial governments, and many potential competitors for</p>

	<p>The document further states that the priority areas for the United States would be those who live under suppressive regimes, empower women and youth, defeat terrorism, protect religious freedom and minorities and lead in providing humanitarian assistance.</p>	<p>It mentioned the fact that the United States would not use torture to gather intelligence, would support democracy and civil society leaders, support emerging democracies, advance equality to all people regardless of gender, religion, sexual orientation etc and lead an international response against mass atrocities.</p>	<p>influence. We will do so through a variety of means—by speaking out for universal rights, supporting fragile democracies and civil society, and supporting the dignity that comes with development.”</p> <p>The document stated that the United States will promote its values by prohibiting torture, maintaining a balance between transparency and the need for secrecy of intelligence to protect human rights and promote democracies. It also gave importance to gender rights, health and food security and the commitment to lead efforts to resolve humanitarian crisis.</p>
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## Conclusion

The national security strategy document as presented by President Trump is an indication of the United States' foreign policy for the next three years of this administration. If one reads the document it is evident that it is consistent with the views that the president has presented on numerous occasions during his campaign, such as building a wall and the unfair trade practices, and later on in speeches within America and outside, such as fair burden sharing in the NATO, exploring all sources of energy to help boost American economy etc. It is also evident that the new NSS document does cover a lot of the topics that were discussed under President Obama such as the need to focus on the American economy, work with its international partners in the security arena, the need to work with ASEAN etc as well as the view that China and Russia are competitors in the international arena, the need to build an international consensus to tackle international terrorism etc. However, the method of working has changed. In keeping with his stress on America first, the NSS document also carries this theme. The stress is on working with countries for fair and reciprocal trade deals, working towards building the American industrial base, a security system in which the United States would come to the aid of its allies but they also need to share the financial burden. There is an emphasis on the need to strengthen the American military. President Trump, like his predecessor has laid stress on the need for energy security. Nonetheless, unlike President Obama who had viewed climate change as a threat to security and thus had focussed on the need to build sustainable economies with climate change solutions propelling new growth and innovation in the American industries, President Trump has stated that while the United States would work towards environmental protection it will also explore fossil fuel. There is no mention of sustainable development or growth in renewables under the need to push for more innovation in technology.

Within the regional context the document has made mention of the Indo-Pacific and carries forward the views that have already been expressed by President Trump during his recently concluded tour of Asia. **For India, the document calls for close relations with the emerging power and also close cooperation with its other partners in the quadrilateral. It also states that the United States will continue to expand its defence and security relations with India, while supporting India's efforts to strengthen its relations within the region. The 2018 NSS states that the United State's welcomes India's emergence as a 'global power', where as the 2015 NSS talks of the United States support to India's role as a 'regional' provider of security and expanded role in regional institution. One can say with certainty that India has been mentioned in the context of a defined role within the administration's foreign policy, unlike in the past.** The document has made mention of China in the context of its economic powers, its security and military reach in the Indo-pacific and its growing influence in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. It also talks of China growing 'foothold' in Europe by expanding its 'unfair' trade practises and investing in key industries. Russia also finds mention as a country that is enhancing its missile defence and in relations to the strategic relations with China. It also states that Russia is using its information operations in its efforts to influence public opinion across the globe. The NSS document states that the United States will counter the growing economic, military and political competition it faces across the globe.

Another difference that one finds in the documents is that, unlike his predecessor, President Trump has not stated that torture would not be used to gather intelligence nor does he state that the United States would promote democracies.

Under the heading titled values, there is a difference between the two administrations as well. President Trump has defined the values that he feels are central to the American people. More importantly it is these values, liberty, free enterprise, equal justice under the law and the dignity of

human life that his administration would champion. The Obama administration on the other hand, had also stress on the need to promote American values at home and abroad, nonetheless, it had not defined them or stated what values it was promoting.

The NSS 2017 document is not a surprise in the views that have been expressed in it. The emphasis is on the American people and the need to protect the American interests and American way of life. As a strategy document it provides clear indications of how the Trump Administration is likely to define American interests and the means to achieve them.

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*Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the Researcher and not of the Council.*