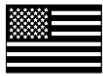# US national security strategy

History & overview

- The National Security Strategy Report (NSS) is a **congressionally mandated** report published by the executive branch

- The **Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986** requires the president to submit an annual report on the national security strategy of the United States to Congress

- The NSS is intended to be a **statement articulating the interests, goals and objectives** of the US relating to national security. The report is required to **name actions** needed to deter threats and implement the strategy

Trump's NSS

- Trump is the **first US president to publish the NSS in his inaugural year**

- Trump's NSS is the **longest** so far at 55 pages of text and 68 pages total

- The 2017 NSS was unveiled with a **speech from the president**, while in the past it has typically been rolled out by national security advisors

Sources: Anne Gearan, Steven Mufson, "Trump sets out national security strategy of 'principled realism' and global competition," Washington Post, December 18, 2017; Peter Feaver, "Five Takeaways From Trump's National Security Strategy," Foreign Policy, December 18, 2017; "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," The White House, December, 2017.

Overview of Trump's national security strategy

Four pillars of the strategy

Protecting the homeland	Promoting prosperity	Peace through strength	Advancing American influence

Three challenges identified by the strategy

Revisionist powers	Rogue regimes	Transnational actors

Sources: Scott Horsley, "Trump to outline his blueprint for military and foreign policy," NPR, December 18, 2017; David Sanger, Mark Landler, "Trump National Security Strategy Sees US Confronting China and Russia," New York Times, December 18, 2017; Michael Gordon, "Trump Plans Shift to US Security Strategy," Wall Street Journal, December 18, 2017.

Trump reiterates "America First" in national security strategy

Four pillars of the strategy

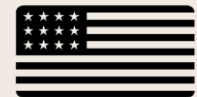| **Protect the American people, the homeland and the American way of life**	**Promote American prosperity**	**Preserve peace through strength**	**Advance American influence**
• Secure US borders and territory • Pursue threats to their source • Keep America safe in the cyber era • Promote American resilience	• Rejuvenate the domestic economy • Promote free, fair and reciprocal economic relationships • Lead in research, technology, invention and innovation • Promote and protect the US national security innovation base • Embrace energy dominance	• Renew America's competitive advantages • Renew capabilities • Diplomacy and statecraft	• Encourage aspiring partners • Achieve better outcomes in multilateral forums • Champion American values

Sources: Donald Trump, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," The White House, December 2017

Trump calls out specific countries, regimes and groups in his national security strategy

Three challenges identified by the strategy

Revisionist powers

- China and Russia are named in the strategy as challenges to American power, influence and interest

- Both countries are said to be "determined to make economies less free and less fair"

- Military growth and influence is a concern, as well as control of information and repression

Rogue regimes

- DPRK and Iran are named in this section as potential destabilizing influences to the region

- The NSS calls out the human rights abuses against citizens as well

Transnational actors

- Here, the only two groups enumerated are jihadist terrorist organization and transnational criminal organizations

Sources: Donald Trump, "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," The White House, December 2017

Trump to shift focus of national security strategy to economic & trade policies

Content of the 2017 "America First" national security strategy

Economic security:

- Confronting unfair trade practices
- Protecting American intellectual property from foreign intelligence agents
- Using tax reform and reducing government regulations to boost American economic power

China as a "strategic competitor":

- Pushing back on China's expansion in the South China Sea and harmful economic practices
- Working with Xi Jinping to put pressure on North Korea's nuclear missile program
- Russia is lumped with China for challenging "American power, influence and interests"

Energy dominance:

- Reducing regulations on energy production
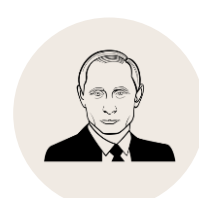- Eliminating climate change policies that are restrictive to business growth

Preserving peace:

- Modernizing America's nuclear weapons
- Strengthening missile defenses

What's not included?

- Despite the Pentagon's indication of security threats stemming from climate change, like the impact of droughts, intensified storms and rising sea waters, climate change is not recognized in the new security strategy

- Russia's influence on the 2016 elections and how the US will protect future elections from foreign influence is not addressed in the new security strategy

Sources: Scott Horsley, "Trump to outline his blueprint for military and foreign policy," NPR, December 18, 2017; David Sanger, Mark Landler, "Trump National Security Strategy Sees US Confronting China and Russia," New York Times, December 18, 2017; Michael Gordon, "Trump Plans Shift to US Security Strategy," Wall Street Journal, December 18, 2017.

Major themes of Trump's first national security strategy

Principled realism

*"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 **principled realism that is guided by outcomes, not ideology**. It is based upon the view that peace, security , and prosperity depend on strong, sovereign nations that respect their citizens at home and cooperate to advance peace abroad."*

— America First National Security Strategy, 2017

Competition

"The **competitions and rivalries** facing the United States are not passing trends or momentary problems. They are intertwined, long-term challenges that demand our sustained national attention and commitment.

— America First National Security Strategy, 2017

Sources: Scott Horsley, "Trump to outline his blueprint for military and foreign policy," NPR, December 18, 2017; David Sanger, Mark Landler, "Trump National Security Strategy Sees US Confronting China and Russia," New York Times, December 18, 2017; Michael Gordon, "Trump Plans Shift to US Security Strategy," Wall Street Journal, December 18, 2017.

The team that wrote Trump's NSS

There were three main authors contributing to the NSS

Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster

National Security Advisor to
the president

Dina Powell

Deputy National Security
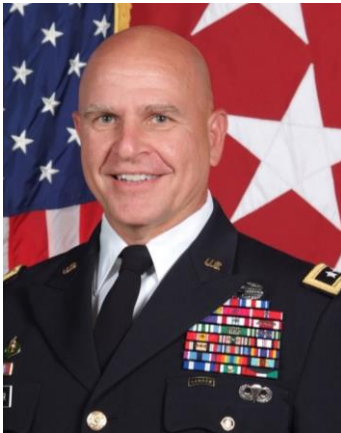Advisor for Strategy

Nadia Schadlow

Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Strategy

Sources: Scott Horsley, "Trump to outline his blueprint for military and foreign policy," NPR, December 18, 2017; David Sanger, Mark Landler, "Trump National Security Strategy Sees US Confronting China and Russia," New York Times, December 18, 2017; Michael Gordon, "Trump Plans Shift to US Security Strategy," Wall Street Journal, December 18, 2017.

H. R. McMaster, National Security Advisor

Extended Biography

Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster is a widely respected military leader who developed the US Army's strategy in Iraq. He famously critiqued the Joint Chiefs of Staff's performance in Vietnam and also criticized George W. Bush's initial strategy in Iraq. As the head of the Army Capabilities Integration Center, McMaster has worked to implement long-term Army strategy, and has focused specifically on how the US can respond to Russian cyberattacks and Russian activity in Ukraine. Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) encouraged Trump advisers Steve Bannon, Jared Kushner and Reince Priebus to consider the general for the role of National Security Adviser.

Education:

Bachelor's, US Military Academy at West Point

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Ph.D., military history, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,

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Previous positions:

Director, Army Capabilities Integration Center

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Leader, Third Armored Cavalry Regiment

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Dina Powell, Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy

Extended Biography

Powell is a longtime Republican aide. Born in Cairo, Egypt, she moved to Texas with her family at an early age, and eventually graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. She started her career on Capitol Hill, then moved to a senior position at the Republican National Committee. In the second Bush White House she became the youngest assistant to the president before assuming a leadership role at the State Department. Afterwards, she worked at Goldman Sachs and led their foundational giving. She was tapped for a senior position in the Trump White House after partnering with Ivanka Trump in multiple initiatives aimed at supporting women in leadership.

Education:

Bachelor's, University of Texas, Austin

Previous positions:

Assistant to President Trump and senior counselor for economic initiatives

Partner, Goldman Sachs

Assistant to President W. Bush for presidential personnel

Sources: Tara Palmeri and Ben White, "Dina Powell to be named Trump's deputy national security adviser," March 15, 2017. Dan Merica and Betsy Klein, "Dina Powell to be named deputy national security adviser for strategy," March 15, 2017.

Nadia Schadlow, Deputy Assistant for the NSS

Extended Biography

Dr. Nadia Schadlow, a respected member of the National Security Council and a trusted confidant to National Security Advisor H. R. McMaster, began her career with the Department of Defense. After serving as one of the first desk officers for Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union, she moved to the Smith Richardson Foundation where she examined policy approaches to national security threats. Dr. Schadlow served on the Defense Policy Board from 2006 to 2009. She authored a book called, "War and the Art of Governance," centered on the necessity of political dimensions of foreign conflicts. She has authored articles for many publications, including War on the Rocks and the Wall Street Journal. Her views, according to the Washington Post, place her among those in the administration who believe in soft power, like H.R. McMaster and Secretary James Mattis.

Education:

B.A., Cornell University

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M.A., Ph.D., Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies

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Previous positions:

Senior program officer, Smith Richardson Foundation

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Member, Defense Policy Board

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Sources: Josh Rogin, "Trump's foreign policy doctrine: Escalate to de-escalate," The Washington Post, March 19, 2017; Alyana Treene, "Meet Nadia Schadlow, Dina Powell's likely successor," Axios, December 8, 2017; "Nadia Schadlow Biography," War on the Rocks, 2016;