# National Security Strategy

*of the United States of America*

DECEMBER 2017

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, DC

My fellow Americans:

The American people elected me to make America great again. I promised that my Administration would put the safety, interests, and well-being of our citizens first. I pledged that we would revitalize the American economy, rebuild our military, defend our borders, protect our sovereignty, and advance our values.

During my first year in office, you have witnessed my America First foreign policy in action. We are prioritizing the interests of our citizens and protecting our sovereign rights as a nation. America is leading again on the world stage. We are not hiding from the challenges we face. We are confronting them head-on and pursuing opportunities to promote the security and prosperity of all Americans.

The United States faces an extraordinarily dangerous world, filled with a wide range of threats that have intensified in recent years. When I came into office, rogue regimes were developing nuclear weapons and missiles to threaten the entire planet. Radical Islamist terror groups were flourishing. Terrorists had taken control of vast swaths of the Middle East. Rival powers were aggressively undermining American interests around the globe. At home, porous borders and unenforced immigration laws had created a host of vulnerabilities. Criminal cartels were bringing drugs and danger into our communities. Unfair trade practices had weakened our economy and exported our jobs overseas. Unfair burden-sharing with our allies and inadequate investment in our own defense had invited danger from those who wish us harm. Too many Americans had lost trust in our government, faith in our future, and confidence in our values.

Nearly one year later, although serious challenges remain, we are charting a new and very different course.

We are rallying the world against the rogue regime in North Korea and confronting the danger posed by the dictatorship in Iran, which those determined to pursue a flawed nuclear deal had neglected. We have renewed our friendships in the Middle East and partnered with regional leaders to help drive out terrorists and extremists, cut off their financing, and discredit their wicked ideology. We crushed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorists on the battlefields of Syria and Iraq, and will continue pursuing them until they are destroyed. America's allies are now contributing more to our common defense, strengthening even our strongest alliances. We have also continued to make clear that the United States will no longer tolerate economic aggression or unfair trading practices.

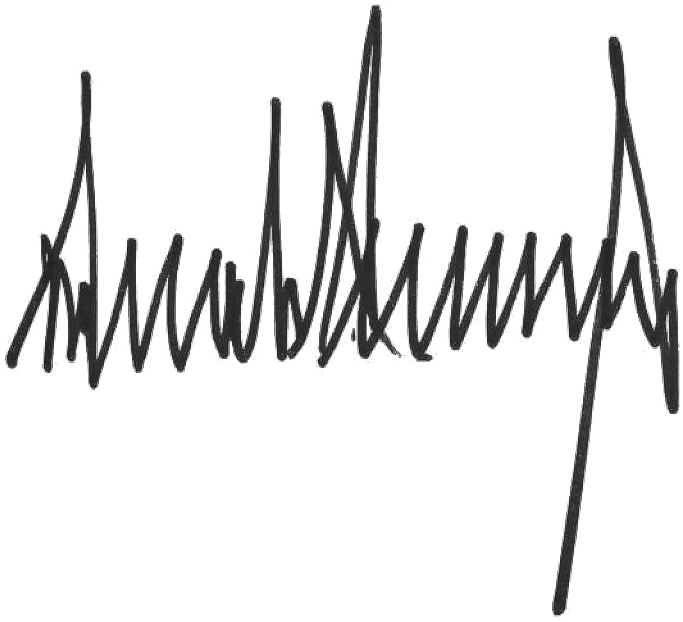
At home, we have restored confidence in America's purpose. We have recommitted ourselves to our founding principles and to the values that have made our families, communities, and society so successful. Jobs are coming back and our economy is growing. We are making historic investments in the United States military. We are enforcing our borders, building trade relationships based on fairness and reciprocity, and defending America's sovereignty without apology.

The whole world is lifted by America's renewal and the reemergence of American leadership. After one year, the world knows that America is prosperous, America is secure, and America is strong. We will bring about the better future we seek for our people and the world, by confronting the challenges and dangers posed by those who seek to destabilize the world and threaten America's people and interests.

My Administration's National Security Strategy lays out a strategic vision for protecting the American people and preserving our way of life, promoting our prosperity, preserving peace through strength, and advancing American influence in the world. We will pursue this beautiful vision—a world of strong, sovereign, and independent nations, each with its own cultures and dreams, thriving side-by-side in prosperity, freedom, and peace—throughout the upcoming year.

In pursuit of that future, we will look at the world with clear eyes and fresh thinking. We will promote a balance of power that favors the United States, our allies, and our partners. We will never lose sight of our values and their capacity to inspire, uplift, and renew.

Most of all, we will serve the American people and uphold their right to a government that prioritizes their security, their prosperity, and their interests. This National Security Strategy puts America First.



President Donald J. Trump

The White House
December 2017

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# Introduction

An America that is safe, prosperous, and free at home is an America with the strength, confidence, and will to lead abroad. It is an America that can preserve peace, uphold liberty, and create enduring advantages for the American people. Putting America first is the duty of our government and the foundation for U.S. leadership in the world.

A strong America is in the vital interests of not only the American people, but also those around the world who want to partner with the United States in pursuit of shared interests, values, and aspirations.

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 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. And it is grounded in the realization that American principles are a lasting force for good in the world.

"We the People" is America's source of strength.

The United States was born of a desire for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—and a conviction that unaccountable political power is tyranny. For these reasons, our Founders crafted and ratified the Constitution, establishing the republican form of government we enjoy today. The Constitution grants our national government not only specified powers necessary to protect our God-given rights and liberties but also safeguards them by limiting the government's size and scope, separating Federal powers, and protecting the rights of individuals through the rule of law. All political power is ultimately delegated from, and accountable to, the people.

We protect American sovereignty by defending these institutions, traditions, and principles that have allowed us to live in freedom, to build the nation that we love. And we prize our national heritage, for the rare and fragile institutions of republican government can only endure if they are sustained by a culture that cherishes those institutions.

Liberty and independence have given us the flourishing society Americans enjoy today—a vibrant and confident Nation, welcoming of disagreement and differences, but united by the bonds of history, culture, beliefs, and principles that define who we are.

We are proud of our roots and honor the wisdom of the past. We are committed to protecting the rights and dignity of every citizen. And we are a nation of laws, because the rule of law is the shield that protects the individual from government corruption

and abuse of power, allows families to live without fear, and permits markets to thrive.

Our founding principles have made the United States of America among the greatest forces for good in history. But we are also aware that we must protect and build upon our accomplishments, always conscious of the fact that the interests of the American people constitute our true North Star.

America's achievements and standing in the world were neither inevitable nor accidental. On many occasions, Americans have had to compete with adversarial forces to preserve and advance our security, prosperity, and the principles we hold dear. At home, we fought the Civil War to end slavery and preserve our Union in the long struggle to extend equal rights for all Americans. In the course of the bloodiest century in human history, millions of Americans fought, and hundreds of thousands lost their lives, to defend liberty in two World Wars and the Cold War. America, with our allies and partners, defeated fascism, imperialism, and Soviet communism and eliminated any doubts about the power and durability of republican democracy when it is sustained by a free, proud, and unified people.

The United States consolidated its military victories with political and economic triumphs built on market economies and fair trade, democratic principles, and shared security partnerships. American political, business, and military leaders worked together with their counterparts in Europe and Asia to shape the post-war order through the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other institutions designed to advance our shared interests of security, freedom, and peace. We recognize the invaluable advantages that our strong relationships with allies and partners deliver.

Following the remarkable victory of free nations in the Cold War, America emerged as the lone superpower with enormous advantages and momentum in the world. Success, however, bred complacency. A belief emerged, among many, that American power would be unchallenged and self-sustaining. The United States began to drift. We experienced a crisis of confidence and surrendered our advantages in key areas. As we took our political, economic, and military advantages for granted, other actors steadily implemented their long-term plans to challenge America and to advance agendas opposed to the United States, our allies, and our partners.

We stood by while countries exploited the international institutions we helped to build. They subsidized their industries, forced technology transfers, and distorted markets. These and other actions challenged America's economic security. At home, excessive regulations and high taxes stifled growth and weakened free enterprise—history's greatest antidote to poverty. Each time government encroached on the productive activities of private commerce, it threatened not only our prosperity but also the spirit of creation and innovation that has been key to our national greatness.

## A Competitive World

The United States will respond to the growing political, economic, and military competitions we face around the world.

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. At the same time, the dictatorships of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran are determined to destabilize regions, threaten Americans and our allies, and brutalize their own people. Transnational

threat groups, from jihadist terrorists to transnational criminal organizations, are actively trying to harm Americans. While these challenges differ in nature and magnitude, they are fundamentally contests between those who value human dignity and freedom and those who oppress individuals and enforce uniformity.

These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies 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. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false.

Rival actors use propaganda and other means to try to discredit democracy. They advance anti-Western views and spread false information to create divisions among ourselves, our allies, and our partners. In addition, jihadist terrorists such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida continue to spread a barbaric ideology that calls for the violent destruction of governments and innocents they consider to be apostates. These jihadist terrorists attempt to force those under their influence to submit to Sharia law.

America's military remains the strongest in the world. However, U.S. advantages are shrinking as rival states modernize and build up their conventional and nuclear forces. Many actors can now field a broad arsenal of advanced missiles, including variants that can reach the American homeland. Access to technology empowers and emboldens otherwise weak states. North Korea—a country that starves its own people—has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons that could threaten our homeland. In addition, many actors have become skilled at operating below the threshold of military conflict—challenging the United States, our allies, and our partners with hostile actions cloaked in deniability. Our task is to ensure that American military superiority endures, and in combination with other elements of national power, is ready to protect Americans against sophisticated challenges to national security.

The contest over information accelerates these political, economic, and military competitions. Data, like energy, will shape U.S. economic prosperity and our future strategic position in the world. The ability to harness the power of data is fundamental to the continuing growth of America's economy, prevailing against hostile ideologies, and building and deploying the most effective military in the world.

We learned the difficult lesson that when America does not lead, malign actors fill the void to the disadvantage of the United States. When America does lead, however, from a position of strength and confidence and in accordance with our interests and values, all benefit.

Competition does not always mean hostility, nor does it inevitably lead to conflict—although none should doubt our commitment to defend our interests. An America that successfully competes is the best way to prevent conflict. Just as American weakness invites challenge, American strength and confidence deters war and promotes peace.

## An America First National Security Strategy

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 possesses unmatched political, economic, military, and technological advantages. But to maintain these advantages, build upon our strengths, and unleash the talents of the American people, we must protect four vital national interests in this competitive world.

First, our fundamental responsibility is to **protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life**. We will strengthen control of our borders and reform our immigration system. We will protect our critical infrastructure and go after malicious cyber actors. A layered missile defense system will defend our homeland against missile attacks. And we will pursue threats to their source, so that jihadist terrorists are stopped before they ever reach our borders.

Second, we will **promote American prosperity**. We will rejuvenate the American economy for the benefit of American workers and companies. We will insist upon fair and reciprocal economic relationships to address trade imbalances. The United States must preserve our lead in research and technology and protect our economy from competitors who unfairly acquire our intellectual property. And we will embrace America's energy dominance because unleashing abundant energy resources stimulates our economy.

Third, we will **preserve peace through strength** by rebuilding our military so that it remains preeminent, deters our adversaries, and if necessary, is able to fight and win. We will compete with all tools of national power to ensure that regions of the world are not dominated by one power. We will strengthen America's capabilities—including in space and cyberspace—and revitalize others that have been neglected. Allies and partners magnify our power. We expect them to shoulder a fair share of the burden of responsibility to protect against common threats.

Fourth, we will **advance American influence** because a world that supports American interests and reflects our values makes America more secure and prosperous. We will compete and lead in multilateral organizations so that American interests and principles are protected. America's commitment to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law serves as an inspiration for those living under tyranny. We can play a catalytic role in promoting private-sector-led economic growth, helping aspiring partners become future trading and security partners. And we will remain a generous nation, even as we expect others to share responsibility.

Strengthening our sovereignty—the first duty of a government is to serve the interests of its own people—is a necessary condition for protecting these four national interests. And as we strengthen our sovereignty we will renew confidence in ourselves as a nation. We are proud of our history, optimistic about America's future, and confident of the positive example the United States offers to the world. We are also realistic and understand that the American way of life cannot be imposed upon others, nor is it the inevitable culmination of progress. Together with our allies, partners, and aspiring partners, the United States will pursue cooperation with reciprocity. Cooperation means sharing responsibilities and burdens. In trade, fair and reciprocal relationships benefit all with equal levels of market access and opportunities for economic growth. An America First National Security Strategy appreciates that America will catalyze conditions to unleash economic success for America and the world.

In the United States, free men and women have created the most just and prosperous nation in history. Our generation of Americans is now charged with preserving and defending that precious inheritance. This National Security Strategy shows the way.

PILLAR I

# Protect the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life

*"We will defend our country, protect our communities, and put the safety of the American people first."*

PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP | JULY 2017

This National Security Strategy begins with the determination to protect the American people, the American way of life, and American interests. Americans have long recognized the benefits of an interconnected world, where information and commerce flow freely. Engaging with the world, however, does not mean the United States should abandon its rights and duties as a sovereign state or compromise its security. Openness also imposes costs, since adversaries exploit our free and democratic system to harm the United States.

North Korea seeks the capability to kill millions of Americans with nuclear weapons. Iran supports terrorist groups and openly calls for our destruction. Jihadist terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida are determined to attack the United States and radicalize Americans with their hateful ideology. Non-state actors undermine social order through drug and human trafficking networks, which they use to commit violent crimes and kill thousands of American each year.

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. All of these actions threaten the foundations of the American way of life. Reestablishing lawful control of our borders is a first step toward protecting the American homeland and strengthening American sovereignty.

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 must also deter, disrupt, and defeat potential threats before they reach the United States. We will target jihadist terrorists and transnational criminal organizations at their source and dismantle their networks of support.

We must also take steps to respond quickly to meet the needs of the American people in the event of natural disaster or attack on our homeland. We must build a culture of preparedness and resilience across our governmental functions, critical infrastructure, and economic and political systems.

# Secure U.S. Borders and Territory

State and non-state actors place the safety of the American people and the Nation's economic vitality at risk by exploiting vulnerabilities across the land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains. Adversaries constantly evolve their methods to threaten the United States and our citizens. We must be agile and adaptable.

## *Defend Against Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)*

The danger from hostile state and non-state actors who are trying to acquire nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological weapons is increasing. The Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons against its own citizens undermines international norms against these heinous weapons, which may encourage more actors to pursue and use them. ISIS has used chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria. Terrorist groups continue to pursue WMD-related materials. We would face grave danger if terrorists obtained inadequately secured nuclear, radiological, or biological material.

*Strengthening control over our borders and immigration system is central to national security, economic prosperity, and the rule of law.*

As missiles grow in numbers, types, and effectiveness, to include those with greater ranges, they are the most likely means for states like North Korea to use a nuclear weapon against the United States. North Korea is also pursuing chemical and biological weapons which could also be delivered by missile. China and Russia are developing advanced weapons and capabilities that could threaten our critical infrastructure and our command and control architecture.

## *Priority Actions*

**ENHANCE MISSILE DEFENSE:** The United States is deploying a layered missile defense system focused on North Korea and Iran to defend our homeland against missile attacks. This system will include the ability to defeat missile threats prior to launch. Enhanced missile defense is not intended to undermine strategic stability or disrupt longstanding strategic relationships with Russia or China.

**DETECT AND DISRUPT WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION:** At our borders and within our territory, we will bolster efforts to detect nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological agents and keep them from being used against us. We will also better integrate intelligence, law enforcement, and emergency management operations to ensure that frontline defenders have the right information and capabilities to respond to WMD threats from state and non-state actors.

**ENHANCE COUNTERPROLIFERATION MEASURES:** Building on decades of initiatives, we will augment measures to secure, eliminate, and prevent the spread of WMD and related materials, their delivery systems, technologies, and knowledge to reduce the chance that they might fall into the hands of hostile actors. We will hold state and non-state actors accountable for the use of WMD.

**TARGET WMD TERRORISTS:** We will direct counterterrorism operations against terrorist WMD specialists, financiers, administrators, and facilitators. We will work with allies and partners to detect and disrupt plots.

## *Combat Biothreats and Pandemics*

Biological incidents have the potential to cause catastrophic loss of life. Biological threats to the U.S. homeland—whether as the result of deliberate attack, accident, or a natural outbreak—are growing and require actions to address them at their source.

Naturally emerging outbreaks of viruses such as Ebola and SARS, as well as the deliberate 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States, demonstrated the impact of biological threats on national security by taking lives, generating economic losses, and contributing to a loss of confidence in government institutions.

Advancements in life sciences that benefit our health, economy, and society also open up new avenues to actors who want to cause harm. Dedicated state actors are likely to develop more advanced bioweapons, and these capabilities may become available to malicious non-state actors as well.

## *Priority Actions*

**DETECT AND CONTAIN BIOTHREATS AT THEIR SOURCE:** We will work with other countries to detect and mitigate outbreaks early to prevent the spread of disease. We will encourage other countries to invest in basic health care systems and to strengthen global health security across the intersection of human and animal health to prevent infectious disease outbreaks. And we will work with partners to ensure that laboratories that handle dangerous pathogens have in place safety and security measures.

**SUPPORT BIOMEDICAL INNOVATION:** We will protect and support advancements in biomedical innovation by strengthening the intellectual property system that is the foundation of the biomedical industry.

**IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE:** At home, we will strengthen our emergency response and unified coordination systems to rapidly characterize outbreaks, implement public health containment measures to limit the spread of disease, and provide surge medical care—including life-saving treatments.

## *Strengthen 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. Terrorists, drug traffickers, and criminal cartels exploit porous borders and threaten U.S. security and public safety. These actors adapt quickly to outpace our defenses.

The United States affirms our sovereign right to determine who should enter our country and under what circumstances. 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 recognizes that decisions about who to legally admit for residency, citizenship, or otherwise are among the most important a country has to make. The United States will continue to welcome lawful immigrants who do not pose a security threat and whose entry is consistent with the national interest, while at the same time enhancing the screening and vetting of travelers, closing dangerous loopholes, revising outdated laws, and eliminating easily exploited vulnerabilities. We will also reform our current immigration system, which, contrary to our national interest and national security, allows for randomized entry and extended-family chain migration. Residency and citizenship determinations should be based on individuals' merits and their ability to positively contribute to U.S. society, rather than chance or extended family connections.

### *Priority Actions*

**ENHANCE BORDER SECURITY:** We will secure our borders through the construction of a border wall, the use of multilayered defenses and advanced technology, the employment of additional personnel, and other measures. The U.S. Government will work with foreign partners to deter, detect, and disrupt suspicious individuals well before they enter the United States.

**ENHANCE VETTING:** The U.S. Government will enhance vetting of prospective immigrants, refugees, and other foreign visitors to identify individuals who might pose a risk to national security or public safety. We will set higher security standards to ensure that we keep dangerous people out of the United States and enhance our information collection and analysis to identify those who may already be within our borders.

**ENFORCE IMMIGRATION LAWS:** We will enforce immigration laws, both at the border and in the interior, to provide an effective deterrent to illegal immigration. The apprehension and swift removal of illegal aliens at the border is critical to an effective border security strategy. We must also increase efforts to identify and counter fraud in the immigration process, which undermines the integrity of our immigration system, exploits vulnerable individuals, and creates national security risks.

**BOLSTER TRANSPORTATION SECURITY:** We will improve information sharing across our government and with foreign partners to enhance the security of the pathways through which people and goods enter the country. We will invest in technology to counter emerging threats to our aviation, surface, and maritime transportation sectors. We will also work with international and industry partners to raise security standards.

## Pursue Threats to Their Source

There is no perfect defense against the range of threats facing our homeland. That is why America must, alongside allies and partners, stay on the offensive against those violent non-state groups that target the United States and our allies.

The primary transnational threats Americans face are from jihadist terrorists and transnational criminal organizations. Although their objectives differ, these actors pose some common challenges. First, they exploit our open society. Second, they often operate in loose confederations and adapt rapidly. Third, they rely on encrypted communication and the dark web to evade detection as they plot, recruit, finance, and execute their operations. Fourth, they thrive under conditions of state weakness and prey on the vulnerable as they accelerate the breakdown of rules to create havens from which to plan and launch attacks on the United States, our allies, and our partners. Fifth, some are sheltered and supported by states and do their bidding.

### *Defeat Jihadist Terrorists*

Jihadist terrorist organizations present the most dangerous terrorist threat to the Nation. America, alongside our allies and partners, is fighting a long war against these fanatics who advance a totalitarian vision for a global Islamist caliphate that justifies murder and slavery, promotes repression, and seeks to undermine the American way of life. Jihadist terrorists use virtual and physical networks around the world to radicalize isolated individuals, exploit vulnerable populations, and inspire and direct plots.

Even after the territorial defeat of ISIS and al-Qa'ida in Syria and Iraq, the threat from jihadist terrorists will persist. They have used battlefields as test beds of terror and have exported tools and tactics to their followers. Many of these jihadist terror-

ists are likely to return to their home countries, from which they can continue to plot and launch attacks on the United States and our allies.

The United States also works with allies and partners to deter and disrupt other foreign terrorist groups that threaten the homeland—including Iranian-backed groups such as Lebanese Hizballah.

*We will give our frontline defenders—including homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence professionals—the tools, authorities, and resources to stop terrorist acts before they take place.*

## *Priority Actions*

**DISRUPT TERROR PLOTS:** We will enhance intelligence sharing domestically and with foreign partners. We will give our frontline defenders—including homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence professionals—the tools, authorities, and resources to stop terrorist acts before they take place.

**TAKE DIRECT ACTION:** 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. The campaigns against ISIS and al-Qa'ida and their affiliates demonstrate that the United States will enable partners and sustain direct action campaigns to destroy terrorists and their sources of support, making it harder for them to plot against us.

**ELIMINATE TERRORIST SAFE HAVENS:** Time and territory allow jihadist terrorists to plot, so we will act against sanctuaries and prevent their reemergence, before they can threaten the U.S. homeland. We will go after their digital networks and work with private industry to confront the challenge of terrorists and criminals "going dark" and using secure platforms to evade detection.

**SEVER SOURCES OF STRENGTH:** We will disrupt the financial, materiel, and personnel supply chains of terrorist organizations. We will sever their financing and protect the U.S. and international financial systems from abuse. We will degrade their ability to message and attract potential recruits. This includes combating the evil ideology of jihadists by exposing its falsehoods, promoting counter-narratives, and amplifying credible voices.

**SHARE RESPONSIBILITY:** Our allies and partners, who are also targets of terrorism, will continue to share responsibility in fighting these barbaric groups. We will help our partners develop and responsibly employ the capacity to degrade and maintain persistent pressure against terrorists and will encourage partners to work independently of U.S. assistance.

**COMBAT RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT IN COMMUNITIES:** The United States rejects bigotry and oppression and seeks a future built on our values as one American people. We will deny violent ideologies the space to take root by improving trust among law enforcement, the private sector, and American citizens. U.S. intelligence and homeland security experts will work with law enforcement and civic leaders on terrorism prevention and provide accurate and actionable information about radicalization in their communities.

## *Dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations*

The United States must devote greater resources to dismantle transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and their subsidiary networks. Some have established global supply chains that are

comparable to Fortune 500 corporations. Every day they deliver drugs to American communities, fuel gang violence, and engage in cybercrime. 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. TCOs are motivated by profit, power, and political influence. They exploit weak governance and enable other national security threats, including terrorist organizations. In addition, some state adversaries use TCOs as instruments of national power, offering them territorial sanctuary where they are free to conduct unattributable cyber intrusions, sabotage, theft, and political subversion.

### *Priority Actions*

**IMPROVE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INTELLIGENCE:** We will establish national-level strategic intelligence and planning capabilities to improve the ability of agencies to work together to combat TCOs at home and abroad.

**DEFEND COMMUNITIES:** We will deny TCOs the ability to harm Americans. We will support public health efforts to halt the growth of illicit drug use in the United States, expand national and community-based prevention efforts, increase access to evidenced-based treatment for addiction, improve prescription drug monitoring, and provide training on substance use disorders for medical personnel.

**DEFEND IN DEPTH:** U.S. agencies and foreign partners will target TCO leaders and their support infrastructure. We will assist countries, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, to break the power of these organizations and networks.

**COUNTER CYBER CRIMINALS:** We will use sophisticated investigative tools to disrupt the ability of criminals to use online marketplaces, cryptocurrencies, and other tools for illicit activities. The United States will hold countries accountable for harboring these criminals.

## Keep America Safe in the Cyber Era

America's response to the challenges and opportunities of the cyber era will determine our future prosperity and security. For most of our history, the United States has been able to protect the homeland by controlling its land, air, space, and maritime domains. 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. Cyberattacks offer adversaries low-cost and deniable opportunities to seriously damage or disrupt critical infrastructure, cripple American businesses, weaken our Federal networks, and attack the tools and devices that Americans use every day to communicate and conduct business.

*America's response to the challenges and opportunities of the cyber era will determine our future prosperity and security.*

Critical infrastructure keeps our food fresh, our houses warm, our trade flowing, and our citizens productive and safe. The vulnerability of U.S. critical infrastructure to cyber, physical, and electromagnetic attacks means that adversaries could disrupt military command and control, banking and financial operations, the electrical grid, and means of communication.

Federal networks also face threats. These networks allow government agencies to carry out vital functions and provide services to the American peo-

ple. The government must do a better job of protecting data to safeguard information and the privacy of the American people. Our Federal networks must be modernized and updated.

In addition, the daily lives of most Americans rely on computer-driven and interconnected technologies. As our reliance on computers and connectivity increases, we become increasingly vulnerable to cyberattacks. Businesses and individuals must be able to operate securely in cyberspace.

Security was not a major consideration when the Internet was designed and launched. As it evolves, the government and private sector must design systems that incorporate prevention, protection, and resiliency from the start, not as an afterthought. We must do so in a way that respects free markets, private competition, and the limited but important role of government in enforcing the rule of law. As we build the next generation of digital infrastructure, we have an opportunity to put our experience into practice.

The Internet is an American invention, and it should reflect our values as it continues to transform the future for all nations and all generations. A strong, defensible cyber infrastructure fosters economic growth, protects our liberties, and advances our national security.

## *Priority Actions*

**IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE RISK:** To improve the security and resilience of our critical infrastructure, we will assess risk across six key areas: national security, energy and power, banking and finance, health and safety, communications, and transportation. We will assess where cyberattacks could have catastrophic or cascading consequences and prioritize our protective efforts, capabilities, and defenses accordingly.

**BUILD DEFENSIBLE GOVERNMENT NETWORKS:** We will use the latest commercial capabilities, shared services, and best practices to modernize our Federal information technology. We will improve our ability to provide uninterrupted and secure communications and services under all conditions.

**DETER AND DISRUPT MALICIOUS CYBER ACTORS:** The Federal Government will ensure that those charged with securing critical infrastructure have the necessary authorities, information, and capabilities to prevent attacks before they affect or hold at risk U.S. critical infrastructure. The United States will impose swift and costly consequences on foreign governments, criminals, and other actors who undertake significant malicious cyber activities. We will work with allies and friends to expand our awareness of malicious activities. A stronger and more resilient critical infrastructure will strengthen deterrence by creating doubt in our adversaries that they can achieve their objectives.

**IMPROVE INFORMATION SHARING AND SENSING:** The U.S. Government will work with our critical infrastructure partners to assess their informational needs and to reduce the barriers to information sharing, such as speed and classification levels. We will also invest in capabilities that improve the ability of the United States to attribute cyberattacks. In accordance with the protection of civil liberties and privacy, the U.S. Government will expand collaboration with the private sector so that we can better detect and attribute attacks.

**DEPLOY LAYERED DEFENSES:** Since threats transit globally, passing through communications backbones without challenge, the U.S. Government will work with the private sector to remediate known bad activities at the network level to improve the security of all customers. Malicious activity must be defeated within a network and not be passed on to its destination whenever possible.

## Promote American Resilience

Despite our best efforts, our government cannot prevent all dangers to the American people. We can, however, help Americans remain resilient in the face of adversity. Resilience includes the ability to withstand and recover rapidly from deliberate attacks, accidents, natural disasters, as well as unconventional stresses, shocks, and threats to our economy and democratic system. In the event of a disaster, Federal, state, and local agencies must perform essential functions and have plans in place to ensure the continuation of our constitutional form of government.

Reducing risk and building more resilient communities are the best ways to protect people, property, and taxpayer dollars from loss and disruption. Through risk-informed investments, we will build resilient communities and infrastructure to protect and benefit future generations.

Should tragedy strike, the U.S. Government will help communities recover and rebuild. Citizens must be confident in our government, but also recognize that response and recovery begins with individuals and local communities. In difficult times, the true character of the American people emerges: their strength, their love, and their resolve. Our first responders selflessly run toward danger, and volunteers rally to the aid of neighbors when disaster strikes.

A democracy is only as resilient as its people. An informed and engaged citizenry is the fundamental requirement for a free and resilient nation. 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. The American public and private sectors must recognize this and work together to defend our way of life. No external threat can be allowed to shake our shared commitment to our values, undermine our system of government, or divide our Nation.

### *Priority Actions*

**IMPROVE RISK MANAGEMENT:** The United States will improve its ability to assess the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risks to Americans and will prioritize resources based on the highest risks.

**BUILD A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS:** This Administration will take steps to build a culture of preparedness, informing and empowering communities and individuals to obtain the skills and take the preparatory actions necessary to become more resilient against the threats and hazards that Americans face.

**IMPROVE PLANNING:** State and local governments must conduct realistic exercises that test existing plans to make sure that they are sound and can be executed. Agencies from all levels of government must coordinate better and apply lessons learned from exercises to pinpoint the areas and capabilities that require improvement.

**INCENTIVIZE INFORMATION SHARING:** To improve the coordination among the private sector and all levels of government that is needed to improve resilience, we must make a stronger commitment to protecting sensitive information so that all partners actively identify and share vulnerabilities and work collaboratively to reduce them.

PILLAR II

# Promote American Prosperity

*"Economic security is national security."*

PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP | NOVEMBER 2017

A strong economy protects the American people, supports our way of life, and sustains American power. American workers thrive when they are free to innovate, develop and access our abundant natural resources, and operate in markets free from excessive regulations and unfair foreign trade practices. A growing and innovative economy allows the United States to maintain the world's most powerful military and protect our homeland.

We must rebuild our economic strength and restore confidence in the American economic model. Over decades, American factories, companies, and jobs moved overseas. After the 2008 global financial crisis, doubt replaced confidence. Risk-aversion and regulations replaced investment and entrepreneurship. The recovery produced anemic growth in real earnings for American workers. The U.S. trade deficit grew as a result of several factors, including unfair trading practices.

For 70 years, the United States has embraced a strategy premised on the belief that leadership of a stable international economic system rooted in American principles of reciprocity, free markets, and free trade served our economic and security interests. Working with our allies and partners, the United States led the creation of a group of financial institutions and other economic forums that established equitable rules and built instruments to stabilize the international economy and remove the points of friction that had contributed to two world wars.

That economic system continues to serve our interests, but it must be reformed to help American workers prosper, protect our innovation, and reflect the principles upon which that system was founded. Trading partners and international institutions can do more to address trade imbalances and adhere to and enforce the rules of the order.

Today, American prosperity and security are challenged by an economic competition playing out in a broader strategic context. The United States helped expand the liberal economic trading system to countries that did not share our values, in the hopes that these states would liberalize their economic and political practices and provide commensurate benefits to the United States. Experience shows that these countries distorted and undermined key economic institutions without undertaking significant reform of their economies or politics. They espouse free trade rhetoric and exploit its benefits, but only adhere selectively to the rules and agreements.

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 a blind eye to violations, cheating, or economic aggression. We must work with like-

minded allies and partners to ensure our principles prevail and the rules are enforced so that our economies prosper.

The United States will pursue an economic strategy that rejuvenates the domestic economy, benefits the American worker, revitalizes the U.S. manufacturing base, creates middle-class jobs, encourages innovation, preserves technological advantage, safeguards the environment, and achieves energy dominance. Rebuilding economic strength at home and preserving a fair and reciprocal international economic system will enhance our security and advance prosperity and peace in the world.

*Rebuilding economic strength at home and preserving a fair and reciprocal international economic system will enhance our security and advance prosperity and peace in the world.*

## Rejuvenate the Domestic Economy

Economic challenges at home demand that we understand economic prosperity as a pillar of national security. Despite low unemployment rates and stock market gains, overall economic growth has, until recently, been anemic since the 2008 recession. In the past five years, gross domestic product (GDP) growth hovered barely above two percent, and wages stagnated. Taxes increased, and health insurance and prescription drug costs continued to rise, albeit at a slower pace. Education costs climbed at rates far above inflation, increasing student debt. Productivity growth fell to levels not seen in decades.

Significant government intrusion in the economy slowed growth and job creation. Regulatory and corporate tax policies incentivized businesses to invest overseas and disadvantaged American companies against foreign competitors. Excessive regulation burdened small businesses. Banking regulations squelched new bank formation and caused hundreds of small banks to close. Regulation decreased credit availability to consumers and decreased product choice. Excessive environmental and infrastructure regulations impeded American energy trade and the development of new infrastructure projects.

Moreover, the poor state of our physical infrastructure stultified the economy, reduced the profitability of American small businesses, and slowed the productivity of American workers. America's digital infrastructure also fell behind. Improvements in bandwidth, better broadband connectivity, and protection from persistent cyberattacks are needed to support America's future growth. Economic and personal transactions are dependent upon the ".com world," and wealth creation depends on a reliable, secure Internet.

The Administration is dedicated to rejuvenating the U.S. economy, unleashing the potential of all Americans, and restoring confidence in our free market system. Promoting American prosperity makes America more secure and advances American influence in the world.

### *Priority Actions*

**REDUCE REGULATORY BURDENS:** Departments and agencies will eliminate unnecessary regulations that stifle growth, drive up costs for American businesses, impede research and development, discourage hiring, and incentivize domestic businesses to move overseas. We will balance our reduction in regulations with adequate protections and oversight.

**PROMOTE TAX REFORM:** This Administration will work with the Congress to create a simpler, fairer, and pro-growth tax code that encourages the creation of higher wage jobs and gives middle-income families tax relief. Reduced business tax rates and a territorial system for foreign subsidiary earnings will improve the competitiveness of American companies and encourage their return to the United States.

**IMPROVE AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE:** Federal, state, and local governments will work together with private industry to improve our airports, seaports and waterways, roads and railways, transit systems, and telecommunications. The United States will use our strategic advantage as a leading natural gas producer to transform transportation and manufacturing. We will improve America's digital infrastructure by deploying a secure 5G Internet capability nationwide. These improvements will increase national competitiveness, benefit the environment, and improve our quality of life.

**REDUCE THE DEBT THROUGH FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY:** The national debt, now over $20 trillion, presents a grave threat to America's long-term prosperity and, by extension, our national security. By restraining Federal spending, making government more efficient, and by modernizing our tax system and making our businesses globally competitive, our economy will grow and make the existing debt more serviceable.

**SUPPORT EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS:** We will support apprenticeships and workforce development programs that prepare American workers for high-wage manufacturing and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) jobs of the 21st century.

## Promote Free, Fair, and Reciprocal Economic Relationships

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.

Today we must meet the challenge. We will address persistent trade imbalances, break down trade barriers, and provide Americans new opportunities to increase their exports. The United States will expand trade that is fairer so that U.S. workers and industries have more opportunities to compete for business. We oppose closed mercantilist trading blocks. By strengthening the international trading system and incentivizing other countries to embrace market-friendly policies, we can enhance our prosperity.

*The Administration is dedicated to rejuvenating the U.S. economy, unleashing the potential of all Americans, and restoring confidence in our free market system.*

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. We will compete with like-minded states in the economic domain—particularly where trade imbalances exist—while recognizing that competition is healthy when nations share values and build fair and reciprocal relationships. 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 like-minded states to defend against economic aggres-

sion, in all its forms, that threatens our common prosperity and security.

### *Priority Actions*

**ADOPT NEW TRADE AND INVESTMENT AGREEMENTS AND MODERNIZE EXISTING ONES:** The United States will pursue bilateral trade and investment agreements with countries that commit to fair and reciprocal trade and will modernize existing agreements to ensure they are consistent with those principles. Agreements must adhere to high standards in intellectual property, digital trade, agriculture, labor, and the environment.

**COUNTER UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES:** The United States will counter all unfair trade practices that distort markets using all appropriate means, from dialogue to enforcement tools.

**COUNTER FOREIGN CORRUPTION:** Using our economic and diplomatic tools, the United States will continue to target corrupt foreign officials and work with countries to improve their ability to fight corruption so U.S. companies can compete fairly in transparent business climates.

**WORK WITH LIKE-MINDED PARTNERS:** The United States will work with like-minded partners to preserve and modernize the rules of a fair and reciprocal economic order. Together we will emphasize fair trade enforcement actions when necessary, as well as multinational efforts to ensure transparency and adherence to international standards within trade and investment projects.

**FACILITATE NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES:** The United States will partner with countries as they build their export markets, promote free market competition, and incentivize private sector growth. We will expand U.S. trade and investment opportunities and increase the market base for U.S. goods and services.

## Lead in Research, Technology, Invention, and Innovation

The United States will build on the ingenuity that has launched industries, created jobs, and improved the quality of life at home and abroad. To maintain our competitive advantage, the United States will prioritize emerging technologies critical to economic growth and security, such as data science, encryption, autonomous technologies, gene editing, new materials, nanotechnology, advanced computing technologies, and artificial intelligence. From self-driving cars to autonomous weapons, the field of artificial intelligence, in particular, is progressing rapidly.

The United States must continue to attract the innovative and the inventive, the brilliant and the bold. We will encourage scientists in government, academia, and the private sector to achieve advancements across the full spectrum of discovery, from incremental improvements to game-changing breakthroughs. We will nurture a healthy innovation economy that collaborates with allies and partners, improves STEM education, draws on an advanced technical workforce, and invests in early-stage research and development (R&D).

### *Priority Actions*

**UNDERSTAND WORLDWIDE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (S&T) TRENDS:** To retain U.S. advantages over our competitors, U.S. Government agencies must improve their understanding of worldwide S&T trends and how they are likely to influence—or undermine—American strategies and programs.

**ATTRACT AND RETAIN INVENTORS AND INNOVATORS:** The U.S. Government must improve our collaboration with industry and academia and our recruitment of technical talent. We will remove barriers to the full use of talent across Federal agencies, and increase incentives for hiring and retaining Federal STEM employees. Initiatives

will include rapid hiring, swift adjudication of national security clearances, and offers of competitive salaries. We must create easier paths for the flow of scientists, engineers, and technologists into and out of public service.

**LEVERAGE PRIVATE CAPITAL AND EXPERTISE TO BUILD AND INNOVATE:** The U.S. Government will use private sector technical expertise and R&D capabilities more effectively. Private industry owns many of the technologies that the government relies upon for critical national security missions. The Department of Defense and other agencies will establish strategic partnerships with U.S. companies to help align private sector R&D resources to priority national security applications.

**RAPIDLY FIELD INVENTIONS AND INNOVATIONS:** The United States must regain the element of surprise and field new technologies at the pace of modern industry. Government agencies must shift from an archaic R&D process to an approach that rewards rapid fielding and risk taking.

## Promote and Protect the U.S. National Security Innovation Base

America's business climate and legal and regulatory systems encourage risk taking. We are a nation of people who work hard, dream big, and never give up. Not every country shares these characteristics. Some instead steal or illicitly acquire America's hard-earned intellectual property and proprietary information to compensate for their own systemic weaknesses.

Every year, competitors such as China steal U.S. intellectual property valued at hundreds of billions of dollars. Stealing proprietary 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 our economy as facets of cyber-enabled economic warfare and other malicious activities. In addition to these illegal means, some actors use largely legitimate, legal transfers and relationships to gain access to fields, experts, and trusted foundries that fill their capability gaps and erode America's long-term competitive advantages.

We must defend our National Security Innovation Base (NSIB) against competitors. The NSIB is the American network of knowledge, capabilities, and people—including academia, National Laboratories, and the private sector—that turns ideas into innovations, transforms discoveries into successful commercial products and companies, and protects and enhances the American way of life. The genius of creative Americans, and the free system that enables them, is critical to American security and prosperity.

Protecting the NSIB requires a domestic and international response beyond the scope of any individual company, industry, university, or government agency. The landscape of innovation does not divide neatly into sectors. Technologies that are part of most weapon systems often originate in diverse businesses as well as in universities and colleges. Losing our innovation and technological edge would have far-reaching negative implications for American prosperity and power.

### *Priority Actions*

**UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES:** The U.S. Government will develop a capability to integrate, monitor, and better understand the national security implications of unfair industry trends and the actions of our rivals. We will explore new ways to share this information with the private sector and academia so they better understand their responsibilities in curtailing activities that undercut America's NSIB.

**PROTECT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** The United States will reduce the illicit appropriation of U.S. pub-

lic and private sector technology and technical knowledge by hostile foreign competitors. While maintaining an investor-friendly climate, this Administration will work with the Congress to strengthen the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to ensure it addresses current and future national security risks. The United States will prioritize counterintelligence and law enforcement activities to curtail intellectual property theft by all sources and will explore new legal and regulatory mechanisms to prevent and prosecute violations.

**TIGHTEN VISA PROCEDURES:** The United States will review visa procedures to reduce economic theft by non-traditional intelligence collectors. We will consider restrictions on foreign STEM students from designated countries to ensure that intellectual property is not transferred to our competitors, while acknowledging the importance of recruiting the most advanced technical workforce to the United States.

**PROTECT DATA AND UNDERLYING INFRASTRUCTURE:** The United States will expand our focus beyond protecting networks to protecting the data on those networks so that it remains secure—both at rest and in transit. To do this, the U.S. Government will encourage practices across companies and universities to defeat espionage and theft.

## Embrace Energy Dominance

For the first time in generations, the United States will be an energy-dominant nation. Energy dominance—America's central position in the global energy system as a leading producer, consumer, and innovator—ensures that markets are free and U.S. infrastructure is resilient and secure. It ensures that access to energy is diversified, and recognizes the importance of environmental stewardship.

Access to domestic sources of clean, affordable, and reliable energy underpins a prosperous, secure, and powerful America for decades to come. Unleashing these abundant energy resources—coal, natural gas, petroleum, renewables, and nuclear—stimulates the economy and builds a foundation for future growth. Our Nation must take advantage of our wealth in domestic resources and energy efficiency to promote competitiveness across our industries.

*For the first time in generations, the United States will be an energy-dominant nation.*

The United States also anchors the North American energy system, which is one of the most highly integrated in the world. Our vibrant cross-border energy trade and investment are vital for a robust and resilient U.S. economy and energy market. We are committed to supporting energy initiatives that will attract investments, safeguard the environment, strengthen our energy security, and unlock the enormous potential of our shared region.

Climate policies will continue to shape the global energy system. U.S. leadership is indispensable to countering an anti-growth energy agenda that is detrimental to U.S. economic and energy security interests. Given future global energy demand, much of the developing world will require fossil fuels, as well as other forms of energy, to power their economies and lift their people out of poverty. 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. This achievement, which can serve as a model to other countries, flows from innovation, technology breakthroughs, and energy efficiency gains, not from onerous regulation.

As a growing supplier of energy resources, technologies, and services around the world, the United States will help our allies and partners become more resilient against those that use energy to coerce. America's role as an energy exporter will also require an assessment of our vulnerabilities and a resilient American infrastructure.

Finally, the Nation's long-term energy security future rests with our people. We must invest in our future by supporting innovation and R&D, including through the National Laboratories.

## *Priority Actions*

**REDUCE BARRIERS:** The United States will promote clean and safe development of our energy resources, while limiting regulatory burdens that encumber energy production and constrain economic growth. We will streamline the Federal regulatory approval processes for energy infrastructure, from pipeline and export terminals to container shipments and gathering lines, while also ensuring responsible environmental stewardship.

**PROMOTE EXPORTS:** 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. We will expand our export capacity through the continued support of private sector development of coastal terminals, allowing increased market access and a greater competitive edge for U.S. industries.

**ENSURE ENERGY SECURITY:** The United States will work with allies and partners to protect global energy infrastructure from cyber and physical threats. The United States will support the diversification of energy sources, supplies, and routes at home and abroad. We will modernize our strategic petroleum stocks and encourage other countries to develop their own—consistent with their national energy security needs.

**ATTAIN UNIVERSAL ENERGY ACCESS:** The United States will seek to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable energy, including highly efficient fossil fuels, nuclear, and renewables, to help reduce poverty, foster economic growth, and promote prosperity.

**FURTHER AMERICA'S TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE:** We will improve America's technological edge in energy, including nuclear technology, next-generation nuclear reactors, better batteries, advanced computing, carbon-capture technologies, and opportunities at the energy-water nexus. The United States will continue to lead in innovative and efficient energy technologies, recognizing the economic and environmental benefits to end users.

PILLAR III

# Preserve Peace Through Strength

*"As long as I am President, the servicemen and women who defend our Nation will have the equipment, the resources, and the funding they need to secure our homeland, to respond to our enemies quickly and decisively, and, when necessary, to fight, to overpower, and to always, always, always win."*

PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP | DECEMBER 2017

A central continuity in history is the contest for power. The present time period is no different. 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.

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.

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.

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.

The scourge of the world today is a small group of rogue regimes that violate all principles of free and civilized states. The Iranian regime sponsors terrorism around the world. It is developing more capable ballistic missiles and has the potential to resume its work on nuclear weapons that could threaten the United States and our partners. North Korea is ruled as a ruthless dictatorship without regard for human dignity. For more than 25 years, it has pursued nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in defiance of every commitment it has made. Today, these missiles and weapons threaten the United States and our allies. The longer we ignore threats from countries determined to proliferate and develop weapons of mass destruction, the worse such threats become, and the fewer defensive options we have.

The United States continues to wage a long war against jihadist terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida. These groups are linked by a common radical Islamist ideology that encourages violence against the United States and our partners and produces misery for those under their control. Although the United States and our partners have inflicted defeats on ISIS and al-Qa'ida in Syria and Iraq, these organizations maintain global reach with established branches in strategic locations. The threat from jihadist terrorists will persist, even as we intensify efforts to prevent attacks on Americans, our allies, and our partners.

Protecting American interests requires that we compete continuously within and across these contests, which are being played out in regions around the world. The outcome of these contests will influence the political, economic, and military strength of the United States and our allies and partners.

To prevail, we must integrate all elements of America's national power—political, economic, and military. 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 alliances.

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. A strong military ensures that our diplomats are able to operate from a position of strength. In this way we can, together with our allies and partners, deter and if necessary, defeat aggression against U.S. interests and increase the likelihood of managing competitions without violent conflict and preserving peace.

## Renew America's Competitive Advantages

The United States must consider what is enduring about the problems we face, and what is new. The contests over influence are timeless. They have existed in varying degrees and levels of intensity, for millennia. Geopolitics is the interplay of these contests across the globe. But some conditions are new, and have changed how these competitions are unfolding. We face simultaneous threats from different actors across multiple arenas—all accelerated by technology. The United States must develop new concepts and capabilities to protect our homeland, advance our prosperity, and preserve peace.

Since the 1990s, the United States displayed a great degree of strategic complacency. We assumed that our military superiority was guaranteed and that a democratic peace was inevitable. We believed that liberal-democratic enlargement and inclusion would fundamentally alter the nature of international relations and that competition would give way to peaceful cooperation.

Instead of building military capacity, as threats to our national security increased, the United States dramatically cut the size of our military to the lowest levels since 1940. Instead of developing important capabilities, the Joint Force entered a nearly decade long "procurement holiday" during which the acquisition of new weapon systems was severely limited. The breakdown of the Nation's annual Federal budgeting process, exemplified by sequestration and repeated continuing resolutions, further contributed to the erosion of America's military dominance during a time of increasing threats.

*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.*

Despite decades of efforts to reform the way that the United States develops and procures new weapons, our acquisition system remained sclerotic. The Joint Force did not keep pace with emerging threats or technologies. We got less for our defense dollars, shortchanging American taxpayers and warfighters.

We also incorrectly believed that technology could compensate for our reduced capacity—for the ability to field enough forces to prevail militarily, consolidate our gains, and achieve our desired political ends. We convinced ourselves that all wars would be fought and won quickly, from stand-off distances and with minimal casualties.

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 America 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.

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 weaknesses. The spread of accurate and inexpensive weapons and the use of cyber tools have allowed state and non-state competitors to harm the United States across various domains. Such capabilities contest what was until recently U.S. dominance across the land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains. They also enable adversaries to attempt strategic attacks against the United States—without resorting to nuclear weapons—in ways that could cripple our economy and our ability to deploy our military forces. Deterrence must be extended across all of these domains and must address all possible strategic attacks.

In addition, adversaries and competitors became adept at operating below the threshold of open military conflict and at the edges of international law. Repressive, closed states and organizations, although brittle in many ways, are often more agile and faster at integrating economic, military, and especially informational

means to achieve their goals. They are unencumbered by truth, by the rules and protections of privacy inherent in democracies, and by the law of armed conflict. They employ sophisticated political, economic, and military campaigns that combine discrete actions. They are patient and content to accrue strategic gains over time—making it harder for the United States and our allies to respond. Such actions are calculated to achieve maximum effect without provoking a direct military response from the United States. And as these incremental gains are realized, over time, a new status quo emerges.

The United States must prepare for this type of competition. China, Russia, and other state and nonstate 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.

Our diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic agencies have not kept pace with the changes in the character of competition. America's military must be prepared to operate across a full spectrum of conflict, across multiple domains at once. To meet these challenges we must also upgrade our political and economic instruments to operate across these environments.

Bureaucratic inertia is powerful. But so is the talent, creativity, and dedication of Americans. By aligning our public and private sector efforts we can field a Joint Force that is unmatched. New advances in computing, autonomy, and manufacturing are already transforming the way we fight. When coupled with the strength of our allies and partners, this advantage grows. The future that we face is ours to win or lose. History suggests that Americans will rise to the occasion and that we can shift trends back in favor of the United States, our allies, and our partners.

## Renew Capabilities

Given the new features of the geopolitical environment, the United States must renew key capabilities to address the challenges we face.

### *Military*

U.S. military strength remains a vital component of the competition for influence. The Joint Force demonstrates U.S. resolve and commitment and provides us with the ability to fight and win across any plausible conflict that threatens U.S. vital interests.

The United States must retain overmatch—the combination of capabilities in sufficient scale to prevent enemy success and to ensure that America's sons and daughters will never be in a fair fight. Overmatch strengthens our diplomacy and permits us to shape the international environment to protect our interests. To retain military overmatch the United States must restore our ability to produce innovative capabilities, restore the readiness of our forces for major war, and grow the size of the force so that it is capable of operating at sufficient scale and for ample duration to win across a range of scenarios.

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. We need our allies to do the same—to modernize, acquire necessary capabilities, improve readiness, expand the size of their forces, and affirm the political will to win.

## *Priority Actions*

**MODERNIZATION:** Ensuring that the U.S. military can defeat our adversaries requires weapon systems that clearly overmatch theirs in lethality. Where possible, we must improve existing systems to maximize returns on prior investments. In other areas we should seek new capabilities that create clear advantages for our military while posing costly dilemmas for our adversaries. We must eliminate bureaucratic impediments to innovation and embrace less expensive and time-intensive commercial off-the-shelf solutions. Departments and agencies must work with industry to experiment, prototype, and rapidly field new capabilities that can be easily upgraded as new technologies come online.

*Support for a vibrant domestic manufacturing sector, a solid defense industrial base, and resilient supply chains is a national priority.*

**ACQUISITION:** The United States will pursue new approaches to acquisition to make better deals on behalf of the American people that avoid cost overruns, eliminate bloated bureaucracies, and stop unnecessary delays so that we can put the right equipment into the hands of our forces. We must harness innovative technologies that are being developed outside of the traditional defense industrial base.

**CAPACITY:** The size of our force matters. To deter conflict and, if deterrence fails, to win in war, the Nation must be able to field 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. The United States must reverse recent decisions to reduce the size of the Joint Force and grow the force while modernizing and ensuring readiness.

**IMPROVE READINESS:** The United States must retain a ready force that is capable of protecting the homeland while defending U.S. interests. Readiness requires a renewed focus on training, logistics, and maintenance. We must be able to get to a theater in time to shape events quickly. This will require a resilient forward posture and agile global mobility forces.

**RETAIN A FULL-SPECTRUM FORCE:** The Joint Force must remain capable of deterring and defeating the full range of threats to the United States. 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. We must sustain our competence in irregular warfare, which requires planning for a long-term, rather than ad hoc, fight against terrorist networks and other irregular threats.

## *Defense Industrial Base*

A healthy defense industrial base is a critical element of U.S. power and the National Security Innovation Base. The ability of the military to surge in response to an emergency depends on our Nation's ability to produce needed parts and systems, healthy and secure supply chains, and a skilled U.S. workforce. The erosion of American manufacturing over the last two decades, however, has had a negative impact on these capabilities and threatens to undermine the ability of U.S. manufacturers to meet national security requirements. Today, we rely on single domestic sources for some products and foreign supply chains for others, and we face the possibility of not being able to produce specialized components for

the military at home. As America's manufacturing base has weakened, so too have critical workforce skills ranging from industrial welding, to high-technology skills for cybersecurity and aerospace. Support for a vibrant domestic manufacturing sector, a solid defense industrial base, and resilient supply chains is a national priority.

## *Priority Actions*

**UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM:** We will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our defense industrial base, including the identification of materials essential to national security, contingencies that could affect supply chains, and technologies that are likely to be critical for the future.

**ENCOURAGE HOMELAND INVESTMENT:** The United States will promote policies and incentives that return key national security industries to American shores. Where possible, the U.S. Government will work with industry partners to strengthen U.S. competitiveness in key technologies and manufacturing capabilities. In addition, we will reform regulations and processes to facilitate the export of U.S. military equipment.

**PROTECT AND GROW CRITICAL SKILLS:** The United States must maintain and develop skilled trades and high-technology skills through increased support for technical college and apprenticeship programs. We will support STEM efforts, at the Federal and state levels, and target national security technology areas.

## *Nuclear Forces*

Nuclear weapons have served a vital purpose in America's National Security Strategy for the past 70 years. They are the foundation of our 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.

Following the Cold War, the United States reduced investments in our nuclear enterprise and reduced the role of nuclear weapons in our strategy. Some parts of America's strategic nuclear Triad of bombers, sea-based missiles, and land-based missiles are over 30 years old, and much of our nuclear infrastructure dates to the World War II era. At the same time, however, nuclear-armed adversaries have expanded their arsenals and range of delivery systems. The United States must maintain the credible deterrence and assurance capabilities provided by our nuclear Triad and by U.S. theater nuclear capabilities deployed abroad. Significant investment is needed to maintain a U.S. nuclear arsenal and infrastructure that is able to meet national security threats over the coming decades.

## *Priority Actions*

**SUSTAIN U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS:** The United States will sustain a nuclear force structure that meets our current needs and addresses unanticipated risks. The United States does not need to match the nuclear arsenals 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.

**MODERNIZE U.S. NUCLEAR FORCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** We will modernize our nuclear enterprise to ensure that we have the scientific, engineering, and manufacturing capabilities necessary to retain an effective and safe nuclear Triad and respond to future national security threats. Modernization and sustainment require investing in our aging command and control system and maintaining and growing

the highly skilled workforce needed to develop, manufacture, and deploy nuclear weapons.

**MAINTAIN STABLE DETERRENCE:** To avoid miscalculation, the United 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.

## *Space*

The United States must maintain our leadership and freedom of action in space. Communications and financial networks, military and intelligence systems, weather monitoring, navigation, and more have components in the space domain. As U.S. dependence on space has increased, other actors have gained access to space-based systems and information. Governments and private sector firms have the ability to launch satellites into space at increasingly lower costs. The fusion of data from imagery, communications, and geolocation services allows motivated actors to access previously unavailable information. This "democratization of space" has an impact on military operations and on America's ability to prevail in conflict.

Many countries are purchasing satellites to support their own strategic military activities. Others believe that the ability to attack space assets offers an asymmetric advantage and as a result, are pursuing a range of anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. 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.

## *Priority Actions*

**ADVANCE SPACE AS A PRIORITY DOMAIN:** America's newly re-established National Space Council, chaired by the Vice President, will review America's long-range space goals and develop a strategy that integrates all space sectors to support innovation and American leadership in space.

**PROMOTE SPACE COMMERCE:** The United States will simplify and update regulations for commercial space activity to strengthen competitiveness. As the U.S. Government partners with U.S. commercial space capabilities to improve the resiliency of our space architecture, we will also consider extending national security protections to our private sector partners as needed.

**MAINTAIN LEAD IN EXPLORATION:** To enable human exploration across the solar system and to bring back to Earth new knowledge and opportunities, we will increase public-private partnerships and promote ventures beyond low Earth orbit with allies and friends.

## *Cyberspace*

Malicious state and non-state actors use cyberattacks for extortion, information warfare, disinformation, and more. Such attacks have the capability to harm large numbers of people and institutions with comparatively minimal investment and a troubling degree of deniability. These attacks can undermine faith and confidence in democratic institutions and the global economic system.

Many countries now view cyber capabilities as tools for projecting influence, and some use cyber tools to protect and extend their autocratic regimes. Cyberattacks 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. When faced with the opportunity to take action against malicious actors in cyberspace, the United States will be risk informed, but not risk averse, in considering our options.

## *Priority Actions*

**IMPROVE ATTRIBUTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND RESPONSE:** We will invest in capabilities to support and improve our ability to attribute cyberattacks, to allow for rapid response.

**ENHANCE CYBER TOOLS AND EXPERTISE:** We will improve our cyber tools across the spectrum of conflict to protect U.S. Government assets and U.S. critical infrastructure, and to protect the integrity of data and information. U.S. departments and agencies will recruit, train, and retain a workforce capable of operating across this spectrum of activity.

**IMPROVE INTEGRATION AND AGILITY:** We will improve the integration of authorities and procedures across the U.S. Government so that cyber operations against adversaries can be conducted as required. We will work with the Congress to address the challenges that continue to hinder timely intelligence and information sharing, planning and operations, and the development of necessary cyber tools.

## *Intelligence*

America's ability to identify and respond to geostrategic and regional shifts and their political, economic, military, and security implications requires that the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) gather, analyze, discern, and operationalize information. In this information-dominant era, the IC must continuously pursue strategic intelligence to anticipate geostrategic shifts, as well as shorter-term intelligence so that the United States can respond to the actions and provocations of rivals.

The ability of the United States to modernize our military forces to overmatch our adversaries requires intelligence support. Intelligence is needed to understand and anticipate foreign doctrine and the intent of foreign leaders, prevent tactical and operational surprise, and ensure that U.S. capabilities are not compromised before they are fielded. In addition, virtually all modern weapon systems depend upon data derived from scientific and technical intelligence.

The 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.

## *Priority Actions*

**IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING:** To prevent the theft of sensitive and proprietary information and maintain supply chain integrity, the United States must increase our understanding of the economic policy priorities of our adversaries and improve our ability to detect and defeat their attempts to commit economic espionage.

**HARNESS ALL INFORMATION AT OUR DISPOSAL:** The United States will, in concert with allies and partners, use the information-rich open-source environment to deny the ability of state and non-state actors to attack our citizens, conduct offensive intelligence activities, and degrade America's democratic institutions.

**FUSE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS:** The United States will fuse our analysis of information derived from the diplomatic, information, military, and economic domains to compete more effectively on the geopolitical stage.

# Diplomacy and Statecraft

## *Competitive Diplomacy*

Across the competitive landscape, America's diplomats are our forward-deployed political capability, advancing and defending America's interests abroad. Diplomacy catalyzes the political, economic, and societal connections that create America's enduring alignments and that build positive networks of relationships with partners. Diplomacy sustains dialogue and fosters areas of cooperation with competitors. It reduces the risk of costly miscommunication.

Diplomacy is indispensable to identify and implement solutions to conflicts in unstable regions of the world short of military involvement. It helps to galvanize allies for action and marshal the collective resources of like-minded nations and organizations to address shared problems. Authoritarian states are eager to replace the United States where the United States withdraws our diplomats and closes our outposts.

We must upgrade our diplomatic capabilities to compete in the current environment and to embrace a competitive mindset. Effective diplomacy requires the efficient use of limited resources, a professional diplomatic corps, modern and safe facilities, and secure methods to communicate and engage with local populations.

*Diplomacy is indispensable to identify and implement solutions to conflicts in unstable regions of the world short of military involvement. It helps to galvanize allies for action and marshal the collective resources of like-minded nations and organizations to address shared problems.*

## *Priority Actions*

**PRESERVE A FORWARD DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE:** Our diplomats must be able to build and sustain relationships where U.S. interests are at stake. Face-to-face diplomacy cannot be replaced by technology. Relationships, developed over time, create trust and shared understanding that the United States calls upon when confronting security threats, responding to crises, and encouraging others to share the burden for tackling the world's challenges. We must enable forward-deployed field work beyond the confines of diplomatic facilities, including partnering with military colleagues in conflict-affected states.

**ADVANCE AMERICAN INTERESTS:** In the ongoing contests for power, our diplomats must build and lead coalitions that advance shared interests and articulate America's vision in international forums, in bilateral relationships, and at local levels within states. Our diplomats need additional flexibility to operate in complex conflict-affected areas.

**CATALYZE OPPORTUNITIES:** Diplomats must identify opportunities for commerce and cooperation, and facilitate the cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges that create the networks of current and future political, civil society, and educational leaders who will extend a free and prosperous world.

## *Tools of Economic Diplomacy*

Retaining our position as the world's preeminent economic actor strengthens our ability to use the tools of economic diplomacy for the good of Americans and others. Maintaining America's central role in international financial forums enhances our security and prosperity by expanding a community of free market economies, defending against threats from state-led economies, and protecting the U.S. and international economy from abuse by illicit actors.

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. Trade, export promotion, targeted use of foreign assistance, and modernized development finance tools can promote stability, prosperity, and political reform, and build new partnerships based on the principle of reciprocity.

*America's competitors weaponize information to attack the values and institutions that underpin free societies, while shielding themselves from outside information.*

Economic tools—including sanctions, anti-money-laundering and anti-corruption measures, and enforcement actions—can be important parts of broader strategies to deter, coerce, and constrain adversaries. We will work with like-minded partners to build support for tools of economic diplomacy against shared threats. Multilateral economic pressure is often more effective because it limits the ability of targeted states to circumvent measures and conveys united resolve.

## *Priority Actions*

**REINFORCE ECONOMIC TIES WITH ALLIES AND PARTNERS:** 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.

**DEPLOY ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON SECURITY THREATS:** We will use existing and pursue new economic authorities and mobilize international actors to increase pressure on threats to peace and security in order to resolve confrontations short of military action.

**SEVER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** We will deny revenue to terrorists, WMD proliferators, and other illicit actors in order to constrain their ability to use and move funds to support hostile acts and operations.

## *Information Statecraft*

America's competitors weaponize information to attack the values and institutions that underpin free societies, while shielding themselves from outside information. They exploit marketing techniques to target individuals based upon their activities, interests, opinions, and values. They disseminate misinformation and propaganda.

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 audiences.

China, for example, combines data and the use of AI to rate the loyalty of its citizens to the state and uses these ratings to determine jobs and more. Jihadist terrorist groups continue to wage ideological information campaigns to establish and legitimize their narrative of hate, using sophisticated communications tools to attract recruits and encourage attacks against Americans and our partners.

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."

U.S. efforts to counter the exploitation of information by rivals have been tepid and fragmented. U.S. efforts have lacked a sustained focus and have been hampered by the lack of properly trained professionals. The American private sector has a direct interest in supporting and amplifying voices that stand for tolerance, openness, and freedom.

## *Priority Actions*

**PRIORITIZE THE COMPETITION:** We will improve our understanding of how adversaries gain informational and psychological advantages across all policies. The United States must empower a true public diplomacy capability to compete effectively in this arena.

**DRIVE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS:** We will craft and direct coherent communications campaigns to advance American influence and counter challenges from the ideological threats that emanate from radical Islamist groups and competitor nations. These campaigns will adhere to American values and expose adversary propaganda and disinformation.

**ACTIVATE LOCAL NETWORKS:** Local voices are most compelling and effective in ideological competitions. We must amplify credible voices and partner with them to advance alternatives to violent and hateful messages. Since media and Internet companies are the platforms through which messages are transported, the private sector should lend its creativity and resources to promoting the values that inspire and grow a community of civilized groups and individuals.

**SHARE RESPONSIBILITY:** The United States will urge states where radicalism thrives to take greater responsibility for countering violent messaging and promoting tolerant and pluralistic worldviews.

**UPGRADE, TAILOR, AND INNOVATE:** We will reexamine legacy delivery platforms for communicating U.S. messages overseas. We must consider more cost-effective and efficient ways to deliver and evaluate content consistent with U.S. national security interests.

PILLAR IV

# Advance American Influence

*"Above all, we value the dignity of every human life, protect the rights of every person, and share the hope of every soul to live in freedom. That is who we are."*

PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP | JULY 2017

Our America First foreign policy celebrates America's influence in the world as a positive force that can help set the conditions for peace and prosperity and for developing successful societies.

There is no arc of history that ensures that America's free political and economic system will automatically prevail. Success or failure depends upon our actions. This Administration has the confidence to compete to protect our values and interests and the fundamental principles that underpin them.

During the Cold War, a totalitarian threat from the Soviet Union motivated the free world to create coalitions 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.

Around the world, nations and individuals admire what America stands for. We treat people equally and value and uphold the rule of law. We have a democratic system that allows the best ideas to flourish. We know how to grow economies so that individuals can achieve prosperity. These qualities have made America the richest country on earth—rich in culture, talent, opportunities, and material wealth.

The United States offers partnership to those who share our aspirations for freedom and prosperity. We lead by example. "The world has its eye upon America," Alexander Hamilton once observed. "The noble struggle we have made in the cause of liberty, has occasioned a kind of revolution in human sentiment. The influence of our example has penetrated the gloomy regions of despotism."

We are not going to impose our values on others. Our alliances, partnerships, and coalitions are built on free will and shared interests. When the United States partners with other states, we develop policies that enable us to achieve our goals while our partners achieve theirs.

Allies and partners are a great strength of the United States. They add directly to U.S. political, economic, military, intelligence, and other capabilities. Together, the United States and our allies and partners represent well over half of the global GDP. None of our adversaries have comparable coalitions.

We encourage those who want to join our community of like-minded democratic states and

improve the condition of their peoples. By modernizing U.S. instruments of diplomacy and development, we will catalyze conditions to help them achieve that goal. These aspiring partners include states that are fragile, recovering from conflict, and seeking a path forward to sustainable security and economic growth. Stable, prosperous, and friendly states enhance American security and boost U.S. economic opportunities.

We will continue to champion American values and offer encouragement to those struggling for human dignity in their societies. There can be no moral equivalency between nations that uphold the rule of law, empower women, and respect individual rights and those that brutalize and suppress their people. Through our words and deeds, America demonstrates a positive alternative to political and religious despotism.

*There is no arc of history that ensures that America's free political and economic system will automatically prevail. Success or failure depends upon our actions.*

## Encourage Aspiring Partners

Some of the greatest triumphs of American statecraft resulted from helping fragile and developing countries become successful societies. These successes, in turn, created profitable markets for American businesses, allies to help achieve favorable regional balances of power, and coalition partners to share burdens and address a variety of problems around the world. Over time, the United States has helped create a network of states that advance our common interests and values.

This historical record is unprecedented and exceptional. American support to aspiring partners enabled the recovery of the countries of Western Europe under the Marshall Plan, as well as the ongoing integration of Central and Eastern Europe into Western institutions after the Cold War. 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. Working with these countries made the United States wealthier and more competitive. This progress illustrates how effective foreign assistance programs should reach their natural endpoint.

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, projects its influence economically, through the control of key energy and other infrastructure throughout parts of Europe and Central Asia. The United States provides an alternative to state-directed investments, which often leave developing countries worse off. The United States pursues economic ties not only for market access but also to create enduring relationships to advance common political and security interests.

The United States will promote a development model that partners with countries that want progress, consistent with their culture, based on free market principles, fair and reciprocal trade, private

sector activity, and rule of law. The United States will shift away from a reliance on assistance based on grants to approaches that attract private capital and catalyze private sector activity. We will emphasize reforms that unlock the economic potential of citizens, such as the promotion of formal property rights, entrepreneurial reforms, and infrastructure improvements—projects that help people earn their livelihood and have the added benefit of helping U.S. businesses. By mobilizing both public and private resources, the United States can help maximize returns and outcomes and reduce the burden on U.S. Government resources. 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.

U.S. development assistance must support America's national interests. 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 reformers are committed to tackling their economic and political challenges.

Within this framework, the United States will also assist fragile states to prevent threats to the U.S. homeland. Transnational threat organizations, such as jihadist terrorists and organized crime, often operate freely from fragile states and undermine sovereign governments. Failing states can destabilize entire regions.

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 represent 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.

## *Priority Actions: Developing Countries*

**MOBILIZE RESOURCES:** The United States will modernize its development finance tools so that U.S. companies have incentives to capitalize on opportunities in developing countries. With these changes, the United States will not be left behind as other states use investment and project finance to extend their influence. In addition, the U.S. Government must not be an obstacle to U.S. companies that want to conduct business in the developing world.

**CAPITALIZE ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES:** We will incorporate innovative technologies in our diplomatic and development programs. For example, digital technologies enable millions to access financial services through their cell phones and can connect farmers to markets. Such technologies can reduce corruption, increase transparency, and help ensure that money reaches its intended destination.

**INCENTIVIZE REFORMS:** The United States will use diplomacy and assistance to encourage states to make choices that improve governance, rule of law, and sustainable development. We already do this through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which selects countries that are committed to reform and then monitors and evaluates their projects.

## *Priority Actions: Fragile States*

**COMMIT SELECTIVELY:** 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.

**WORK WITH REFORMERS:** Political problems are at the root of most state fragility. The United States will prioritize programs that empower reform-minded governments, people, and civil society. As the United States designs its efforts, inputs from local actors improve the likelihood of enduring solutions, reduce costs, and increase accountability to the American taxpayer.

**SYNCHRONIZE ACTIONS:** The United States must use its diplomatic, economic, and military tools simultaneously when assisting aspiring partners. We will place a priority on economic support that achieves local and macroeconomic stability, helps build capable security forces, and strengthens the rule of law.

## Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums

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 interests and values.

A range of international institutions establishes the rules for how states, businesses, and individuals interact with each other, across land and sea, the Arctic, outer space, and the digital realm. It is vital to U.S. prosperity and security that these institutions uphold the rules that help keep these common domains open and free. 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 breakthroughs. The flow of data and an open, interoperable Internet are inseparable from the success of the U.S. economy.

Authoritarian actors have long recognized the 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. At the same time, it should be clear that the United States will not cede sovereignty to those that claim authority over American citizens and are in conflict with our constitutional framework.

### *Priority Actions*

**EXERCISE LEADERSHIP IN POLITICAL AND SECURITY BODIES:** The United States will strive for outcomes in political and security forums that are consistent with U.S. interests and values—values which are shared by our allies and partners. The United Nations can help contribute to solving many of the complex problems in the world, but it must be reformed and recommit to its founding principles. We will require accountability and emphasize shared responsibility among members. If the United States is asked to provide a disproportionate level of support for an institution, we will expect a commensurate degree of influence over the direction and efforts of that institution.

**SHAPE AND REFORM INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AND TRADE INSTITUTIONS:** The United States will continue to play a leading role in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO), but will

improve their performance through reforms. These reforms include encouraging multilateral development banks to invest in high-quality infrastructure projects that promote economic growth. We will press to make the WTO a more effective forum to adjudicate unfair trade practices.

**ENSURE COMMON DOMAINS REMAIN FREE:** The United States will provide leadership and technology to shape and govern common domains—space, cyberspace, air, and maritime—within the framework of international law. 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.

**PROTECT A FREE AND OPEN INTERNET:** The United States will advocate for open, interoperable communications, with minimal barriers to the global exchange of information and services. The United States will promote the free flow of data and protect its interests through active engagement in key organizations, such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the UN, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

## Champion American Values

The extraordinary trajectory of the United States from a group of colonies to a thriving, industrialized, sovereign republic—the world's lone superpower—is a testimony to the strength of the idea on which our Nation is founded, namely that each of our citizens is born free and equal under the law. America's core principles, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, are secured by the Bill of Rights, which proclaims our respect for fundamental individual liberties beginning with the freedoms of religion, speech, the press, and assembly. Liberty, free enterprise, equal justice under the law, and the dignity of every human life are central to who we are as a people.

*For much of the world, America's liberties are inspirational, and the United States will always stand with those who seek freedom. We will remain a beacon of liberty and opportunity around the world.*

These principles form the foundation of our most enduring alliances, and the United States will continue to champion them. Governments that respect the rights of their citizens remain the best vehicle for prosperity, human happiness, and peace. In contrast, governments that routinely abuse the rights of their citizens do not play constructive roles in the world. For example, governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their potential.

No nation can unilaterally alleviate all human suffering, but just because we cannot help everyone does not mean that we should stop trying to help anyone. For much of the world, America's liberties are inspirational, and the United States will always stand with those who seek freedom. We will remain a beacon of liberty and opportunity around the world.

The United States also remains committed to supporting and advancing religious freedom—America's first freedom. Our Founders understood religious freedom not as the state's creation, but as the gift of God to every person and a fundamental right for our flourishing society.

And it is part of our culture, as well as in America's interest, to help those in need and those trying to

build a better future for their families. We aid others judiciously, aligning our means to our objectives, but with a firm belief that we can improve the lives of others while establishing conditions for a more secure and prosperous world.

## *Priority Actions*

**SUPPORT THE DIGNITY OF INDIVIDUALS:** We support, with our words and actions, those who live under oppressive regimes and who seek freedom, individual dignity, and the rule of law. We are under no obligation to offer the benefits of our free and prosperous community to repressive regimes and human rights abusers. 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. We will not remain silent in the face of evil. We will hold perpetrators of genocide and mass atrocities accountable.

**DEFEAT TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS:** There can be no greater action to advance the rights of individuals than to defeat jihadist terrorists and other groups that foment hatred and use violence to advance their supremacist Islamist ideologies. We will continue to join with other states to defeat this scourge of all civilized peoples.

**EMPOWER WOMEN AND YOUTH:** Societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful. We will support efforts to advance women's equality, protect the rights of women and girls, and promote women and youth empowerment programs.

**PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES:** We will advocate on behalf of religious freedom and threatened minorities. Religious minorities continue to be victims of violence. We will place a priority on protecting these groups and will continue working with regional partners to protect minority communities from attacks and to preserve their cultural heritage.

**REDUCE HUMAN SUFFERING:** The United States will continue to lead the world in humanitarian assistance. Even as we expect others to share responsibility, the United States will continue to catalyze international responses to man-made and natural disasters and provide our expertise and capabilities to those in need. We will support food security and health programs that save lives and address the root cause of hunger and disease. We will support displaced people close to their homes to help meet their needs until they can safely and voluntarily return home.

# The Strategy in a Regional Context

The United States must tailor our approaches to different regions of the world to protect U.S. national interests. We require integrated regional strategies that appreciate the nature and magnitude of threats, the intensity of competitions, and the promise of available opportunities, all in the context of local political, economic, social, and historical realities.

Changes in a regional balance of power can have global consequences and threaten U.S. interests. Markets, raw materials, lines of communication, and human capital are located within, or move among, key regions of the world. China and Russia aspire to project power worldwide, but they interact most with their neighbors. North Korea and Iran also pose the greatest menace to those closest to them. But, as destructive weapons proliferate and regions become more interconnected, threats become more difficult to contain. And regional balances that shift against the United States could combine to threaten our security.

The United States must marshal the will and capabilities to compete and prevent unfavorable shifts in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. Sustaining favorable 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.

In other regions of the world, instability and weak governance threaten U.S. interests. Some governments are unable to maintain security and meet the basic needs of their people, making their country and citizens vulnerable to predators. Terrorists and criminals thrive where governments are weak, corruption is rampant, and faith in government institutions is low. Strategic competitors often exploit rather than discourage corruption and state weakness to extract resources and exploit their populations.

Regions afflicted by instability and weak governments also offer opportunities to improve security, promote prosperity, and restore hope. Aspiring partner states across the developing world want to improve their societies, build transparent and effective governments, confront non-state threats, and strengthen their sovereignty. Many recognize the opportunities offered by market economies and political liberties and are eager for partnership with the United States and our allies. The United States will encourage aspiring partners as they undertake reforms and pursue their aspirations. States that prosper and nations that transition from recipients of development assistance to trading partners offer economic opportunities for American businesses. And stability reduces threats that target Americans at home.

## Indo-Pacific

A geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region. The region, which stretches

from the west coast of India to the western shores of the United States, represents the most populous and economically dynamic part of the world. The U.S. interest in a free and open Indo-Pacific extends back to the earliest days of our republic.

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. China's infrastructure investments and trade strategies reinforce its 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. 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. States throughout the region are calling for sustained U.S. leadership in a collective response that upholds a regional order respectful of sovereignty and independence.

*Sustaining favorable 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.*

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. 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.

U.S. allies are critical to responding to mutual threats, such as North Korea, and preserving our mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific region. 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 fought alongside us in every significant conflict since World War I, 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. We will seek to increase quadrilateral cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India.

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 centerpieces of the Indo-Pacific's regional architecture and platforms for promoting an order based on freedom.

## *Priority Actions*

**POLITICAL:** Our vision for the Indo-Pacific excludes no nation. 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.

**ECONOMIC:** 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. We will pursue bilateral trade agreements on a fair and reciprocal basis. We will seek equal and reliable access for American exports. We will work with partners to build a network of states dedicated to free markets and protected from forces that would subvert their sovereignty. We will strengthen cooperation with allies on high-quality infrastructure. Working with Australia and New Zealand, we will shore up fragile partner states in the Pacific Islands region to reduce their vulnerability to economic fluctuations and natural disasters.

**MILITARY AND SECURITY:** 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. We remain ready to respond with overwhelming force to North Korean aggression and will improve options to compel denuclearization of the peninsula. We will improve law enforcement, defense, and intelligence cooperation with Southeast Asian partners to address the growing terrorist threat. 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. 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. We will re-energize our alliances with the Philippines and Thailand and strengthen our partnerships with Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and others to help them become cooperative maritime partners.

## Europe

A strong and free Europe is of vital importance to the United States. We are bound together by our shared commitment to the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Together, we rebuilt Western Europe after World War II and created institutions that produced stability and wealth on both sides of the Atlantic. Today, Europe is one of the most prosperous regions in the world and our most significant trading partner.

Although the menace of Soviet communism is gone, new threats test our will. 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.

China 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. 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.

The United States is safer when Europe is prosperous and stable, and can help defend our shared interests and ideals. The United States remains firmly committed to our European allies and partners. The NATO alliance of free and sovereign states is one of our great advantages over our competitors, and the United States remains committed to Article V of the Washington Treaty.

European allies and partners increase our strategic reach and provide access to forward basing and overflight rights for global operations. Together we confront shared threats. 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.

The NATO alliance will become stronger when all members assume greater responsibility for and pay their fair share to protect our mutual interests, sovereignty, and values.

### *Priority Actions*

**POLITICAL:** The United States will deepen collaboration with our European allies and partners to confront forces threatening to undermine our common values, security interests, and shared vision. The United States and Europe will work together to counter Russian subversion and aggression, and the threats posed by North Korea and Iran. We will continue to advance our shared principles and interests in international forums.

**ECONOMIC:** The United States will work with the European Union, and bilaterally with the United Kingdom and other states, to ensure fair and reciprocal trade practices and eliminate barriers to growth. We will encourage European foreign direct investment in the United States to create jobs. We will work with our allies and partners to diversify European energy sources to ensure the energy security of European countries. We will work with our partners to contest China's unfair trade and economic practices and restrict its acquisition of sensitive technologies.

**MILITARY AND SECURITY:** The United States fulfills our defense responsibilities and expects others to do the same. We expect our European allies to increase defense spending to 2 percent of gross domestic product by 2024, with 20 percent of this spending devoted to increasing military capabilities. On NATO's eastern flank we will continue to strengthen deterrence and defense, and catalyze frontline allies and partners' efforts to better defend themselves. We will work with NATO to improve its integrated air and missile defense capabilities to counter existing and projected ballistic and cruise missile threats, particularly from Iran. We will increase counterterrorism and cybersecurity cooperation.

## Middle East

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.

For years, the interconnected problems of Iranian expansion, state collapse, jihadist ideology, socio-economic stagnation, and regional rivalries have convulsed the Middle East. The United States has learned that neither aspirations for democratic transformation nor disengagement can insulate us from the region's problems. We must be realistic about our expectations for the region without allowing pessimism to obscure our interests or vision for a modern Middle East.

The region remains home to the world's most dangerous terrorist organizations. ISIS and al-Qa'ida thrive on instability and export violent jihad. 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. These activities have continued unabated since the 2015 nuclear deal. 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.

Despite these challenges, there are emerging opportunities to advance American interests in the Middle East. Some of our partners are working together to reject radical ideologies, and key leaders are calling for a rejection of Islamist extremism and violence. Encouraging political stability and sustainable prosperity would contribute to dampening the conditions that fuel sectarian grievances.

*Terrorists and criminals thrive where governments are weak, corruption is rampant, and faith in government institutions is low.*

For generations the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians 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. States have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats.

Today, the United States has the opportunity to catalyze greater economic and political cooperation that will expand prosperity for those who want to partner with us. By revitalizing partnerships with reform-minded nations and encouraging cooperation among partners in the region, the United States can promote stability and a balance of power that favors U.S. interests.

## *Priority Actions*

**POLITICAL:** We will strengthen partnerships, and form new ones, to help advance security through stability. Whenever possible, we will encourage gradual reforms. We will support efforts to counter violent ideologies and increase respect for the dignity of individuals. We remain committed to helping our partners achieve a stable and prosperous region, including through a strong and integrated Gulf Cooperation Council. We will strengthen our long-term strategic partnership with Iraq as an independent state. We will seek a settlement to the Syrian civil war that sets the conditions for refugees to return home and rebuild their lives in safety. We will work with partners to deny the Iranian regime all paths to a nuclear weapon and neutralize Iranian malign influence. We remain committed to helping facilitate a comprehensive peace agreement that is acceptable to both Israelis and Palestinians.

**ECONOMIC:** The United States will support the reforms underway that begin to address core inequities that jihadist terrorists exploit. We will encourage states in the region, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to continue modernizing their economies. We will play a role in catalyzing positive developments by engaging economically, supporting reformers, and championing the benefits of open markets and societies.

**MILITARY AND SECURITY:** 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. We will assist regional partners in strengthening their institutions and capabilities, including in law enforcement, to conduct counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. We will help partners procure interoperable missile defense and other capabilities to better defend against active missile threats. We will work with partners to neutralize Iran's malign activities in the region.

## South and Central Asia

With over a quarter of the world's population, a fifth of all U.S.-designated terrorist groups, several fast-growing economies, and two nuclear-armed states, South and Central Asia present some of the most complicated national security challenges and opportunities. The region spans the terrorist threats emanating from the Middle East and the competition for power unfolding in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. 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.

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. We seek a Pakistan that is not engaged in destabilizing behavior and a stable and self-reliant Afghanistan. And we seek Central Asian states that are resilient against domination by rival powers, are resistant to becoming jihadist safe havens, and prioritize reforms.

### *Priority Actions*

**POLITICAL:** We will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region. 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. We will continue to partner with Afghanistan to promote peace and security in the region. We will continue to promote anti-corruption reform in Afghanistan to increase the legitimacy of its government and reduce the appeal of violent extremist organizations. We will help South Asian nations maintain their sovereignty as China increases its influence in the region.

**ECONOMIC:** We will encourage the economic integration of Central and South Asia to promote prosperity and economic linkages that will bolster connectivity and trade. And we will encourage India to increase its economic assistance in the region. 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.

**MILITARY AND SECURITY:** 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. We will insist that Pakistan take decisive action against militant and terrorist groups operating from its soil. We will work with the Central Asian states to guarantee access to the region to support our counterterrorism efforts.

## Western Hemisphere

Stable, friendly, and prosperous states in the Western Hemisphere enhance our security and benefit our economy. Democratic states connected by shared values and economic interests will reduce the violence, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration that threaten our common security, and will limit opportunities for adversaries to operate from areas of close proximity to us.

In the last half century, parts of this hemisphere were marred by dictatorships and insurgencies that killed tens of thousands of people. Today, this region stands on the cusp of prosperity and peace, built upon democracy and the rule of law. U.S. trade in the region is thriving and market opportunities for American goods and services, energy and infrastructure projects, and foreign direct investment continue to expand.

Challenges remain, however. Transnational criminal organizations—including gangs and cartels—perpetuate violence and corruption, and threaten the stability of Central American states including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. In Venezuela and Cuba, governments cling to anachronistic leftist authoritarian models that continue to fail their people. Competitors have found operating space in the hemisphere.

China seeks to pull the region into its orbit through 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.

Canada and the United States share a unique strategic and defense partnership. The United States also has important and deepening relations with key countries in the region. Together, we will build a stable and peaceful hemisphere that increases economic opportunities for all, improves governance, reduces the power of criminal organizations, and limits the malign influence of non-hemispheric forces.

### *Priority Actions*

**POLITICAL:** We will catalyze regional efforts to build security and prosperity through strong diplomatic engagement. We will isolate governments that refuse to act as responsible partners in advancing hemispheric peace and prosperity. We look forward to the day when the people of Cuba and Venezuela can enjoy freedom and the benefits of shared prosperity, and we encourage other free states in the hemisphere to support this shared endeavor.

**ECONOMIC:** We will modernize our trade agreements and deepen our economic ties with the region and ensure that trade is fair and reciprocal. We will encourage further market-based economic reforms and encourage transparency to create conditions for sustained prosperity. We will ensure the U.S. financial system does not serve as a haven or transit point for criminal proceeds.

**MILITARY AND SECURITY:** We will build upon local efforts and encourage cultures of lawfulness to reduce crime and corruption, including by supporting local efforts to professionalize police and other security forces; strengthen the rule of law and undertake judicial reform; and improve information sharing to target criminals and corrupt leaders and disrupt illicit trafficking.

# Africa

Africa remains a continent of promise and enduring challenges. Africa contains many of the world's fastest growing economies, which represent potential new markets for U.S. goods and services. Aspiring partners across the continent are eager to build market-based economies and enhance stability. The demand for quality American exports is high and will likely grow as Africa's population and prosperity increase. People across the continent are demanding government accountability and less corruption, and are opposing autocratic trends. The number of stable African nations has grown since the independence era as numerous countries have emerged from devastating conflicts and undergone democratic transitions.

Despite this progress, many states face political turbulence and instability that spills into other regions. Corruption and weak governance threaten to undermine the political benefits that should emerge from new economic opportunities. 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.

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.

The United States seeks sovereign African states that are integrated into the world economy, able to provide for their citizens' needs, and capable of managing threats to peace and security. Improved governance in these states supports economic development and opportunities, diminishes the attraction of illegal migration, and reduces vulnerability to extremists, thereby reducing instability.

## *Priority Actions*

**POLITICAL:** The United States will partner with governments, civil society, and regional organizations to end long-running, violent conflicts. We will encourage reform, working with promising nations to promote effective governance, improve the rule of law, and develop institutions accountable and responsive to citizens. We will continue to respond to humanitarian needs while also working with committed governments and regional organizations to address the root causes of human suffering. If necessary, we are prepared to sanction government officials and institutions that prey on their citizens and commit atrocities. When there is no alternative, we will suspend aid rather than see it exploited by corrupt elites.

*We will encourage reform, working with promising nations to promote effective governance, improve the rule of law, and develop institutions accountable and responsive to citizens.*

**ECONOMIC:** We will expand trade and commercial ties to create jobs and build wealth for Americans and Africans. We will work with reform-oriented governments to help establish conditions that can transform them into trading partners and improve

their business environment. 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.

**MILITARY AND SECURITY:** We will continue to work with partners to improve the ability of their security services to counter terrorism, human trafficking, and the illegal trade in arms and natural resources. We will work with partners to defeat terrorist organizations and others who threaten U.S. citizens and the homeland.

# Conclusion

This National Security Strategy sets a positive strategic direction for the United States that is meant to reassert America's advantages on the world stage and to build upon our country's great strengths. During the Trump Administration, the American people can be confident that their security and prosperity will always come first. A secure, prosperous, and free America will be strong and ready to lead abroad to protect our interests and our way of life.

America's renewed strategic confidence is anchored in our recommitment to the principles inscribed in our founding documents. The National Security Strategy celebrates and protects what we hold dear—individual liberty, the rule of law, a democratic system of government, tolerance, and opportunity for all. By knowing ourselves and what we stand for, we clarify what we must defend and we establish guiding principles for our actions.

This strategy is guided by principled realism. It is realist because it acknowledges the central role of power in international politics, affirms that sovereign states are the best hope for a peaceful world, and clearly defines our national interests. It is principled because it is grounded in the knowledge that advancing American principles spreads peace and prosperity around the globe. We are guided by our values and disciplined by our interests.

This Administration has a bright vision of America's future. America's values and influence, underwritten by American power, make the world more free, secure, and prosperous.

Our Nation derives its strength from the American people. Every American has a role to play in this grand, national effort to implement this America First National Security Strategy. Together, our task is to strengthen our families, to build up our communities, to serve our citizens, and to celebrate American greatness as a shining example to the world. We will leave our children and grandchildren a Nation that is stronger, better, freer, prouder, and greater than ever before.

# *Notes*