

The New US National Security Strategy

Yigit Engin, Alvaro Ortiz

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The White House revealed this week the new *National Security Strategy (NSS)* document, which traditionally highlights national security hot spots and the aim of Washington, DC in the geopolitical arena. The latest NSS document was published in 2015 during the Obama administration. The new NSS is longer than the previous one (68 pages versus 35 pages). There are also noteworthy differences between Trump's strategy and the Obama administration's vision. Besides, President Trump's speech while presenting the NSS document differs from the document on some points. Hence, uncertainties regarding how the White House would implement the US foreign policy remain alive.

Trump's Administration Different View on National Security Strategy

There are six takeaways from the new NSS document also well differentiated from the Obama's Administration:

- **The Trump administration ruled out "Climate Change" as a threat to US.** In the Obama era, the climate change had been defined as an urgent threat to US national security, **the new NSS underlines the anti-growth old energy agenda.** Although it indicates that there should be a balance between energy security and environmental protection **it rules out burdensome regulations.** Indeed, **Trump announced his intention to withdraw from Paris Agreement aiming to curb CO₂ emissions.**
- **The end of Free Trade as we knew it. President Trump's new strategy paper remarks the complaints about unfair international trade that distorts US economic interests.** Here the priority is enhance the opportunities for the US companies or a pure "business diplomacy". While the former administration highlighted that "All countries will benefit when we open markets further" the new one remarks the limits to expand free trade and remains conservative in "free trade" issues. In addition, the US promises to pursue enforcement actions against countries that acquire unfair advantage in trade.
- **Democracy promotion no longer prevails. Thus, the traditional "Soft Power" of the USA will be limited and extending business influence goes to the forefront.** "We are not going to impose our values on others", the new NSS points. The NSS demands a modernization of finance tools "so that U.S. companies have incentives to capitalize on opportunities in developing countries". Thus, "the U.S. will not left behind as other states use investment and project finance to extend their influence." This contrasts with the Obama's NSS where promoting democracies and liberty was highlighted. "We will continue to push reforms in authoritarian countries not currently undergoing wholesale transitions", 2015 document mentioned.
- **Sovereignty gains relevance rather than a transparent international order.** While the 2015 document depicted that the National Security Strategy should "affirms American leadership role within a rules-based international order ... empowered citizens, responsible states, and effective regional and international organizations", the Trump NSS document remarks "A world of strong, sovereign, and independent nations, each with its own culture and dreams, thriving side-by-side in prosperity, freedom and peace – throughout the upcoming year". **A more Realpolitik and pragmatic approach.**
- **The Jihadist terror organizations, Iran and North Korea are listed as the key sources of insecurity** in the new strategy. **Russia is defined as a country distorting European solidarity and using subversive measures to weaken the credibility of American commitment to Europe, while China uses "unfair trade practices" to gain strategic posture in Europe. Both Russia and China are considered "rival powers" rather than "opportunities for cooperation" as in the previous strategy.**
- **The US remains committed to Article V of NATO** (an attack to an ally shall be considered as an attack to all members), which is the cornerstone of the Alliance) **but at a cost: "countries that are immensely wealthy should reimburse the U.S. for the cost of defending them"**. Although already considered by the Obama Administration, President Trump reemphasized as "A major departure from the past, but a fair and necessary one".

In sum, a well differentiated strategy. A more assertive one, focusing on rivalry and defence rather than opportunities. Remarkable the "American First" but limiting the US soft power notably.

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