

China in U.S. National Security Strategy Reports, 1987–2017

In 1947, at the start of the Cold War, the U.S. Congress began requiring presidents to submit an annual report outlining U.S. security challenges and aims. This requirement was reaffirmed by a Defense Department Reorganization Act in 1986. For more than a decade after that, it appears that administrations sought to comply with the requirement. Both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations produced just two such reports during their eight years in office.

Copies of public National Security Strategy reports are available at the [National Security Strategy archive](#). Below are China and Taiwan–related passages from the reports. The numbers refer to the page number(s) where the passages may be found. The selection below does not draw on all available reports, but chooses representative ones.

The strategic dimensions of China's economic rise are evident in these White House reports. In the early reports, the U.S. is eager to bring China into the global economic system, but by 2015 and 2017 the Barack Obama and Donald Trump administrations are complaining about Chinese cyber–theft of U.S. intellectual property and trade secrets. The Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama administrations highlighted U.S.–China cooperation on climate change and other issues, but by 2015, the Obama cover letter to the report warned China against using its military might to intimidate others. The Trump report highlights China's expanding reach by noting that it was now an important force in a number of regions including Africa and Latin America. Taiwan is first mentioned in this set of reports in 1991. Human rights concerns in China were a focus of the Clinton and George W. Bush administration reports. The Trump report is the first to highlight the strategic implications of Chinese work in artificial intelligence.

Ronald Reagan, 1987

George H.W. Bush, 1990, 1991, and 1993

Bill Clinton, 1994 and 1999

George W. Bush, 2002 and 2006

Barack Obama, 2010 and 2015

Donald J. Trump, 2017

Clayton Dube selected these passages.

1987

Ronald Reagan

Major Objectives

1. To maintain the security of our nation and our allies, the United States, in cooperation with its allies, must seek to deter any aggression that could threaten that security, and, should deterrence fail, must be prepared to repel or defeat any military attack and end the conflict on terms favorable to the United States, its interests, and its allies.

...

- To foster closer relations with the People's Republic of China

15

Regional Policies

China's importance speaks for itself. Its attainment of rapid economic growth, while simultaneously making basic economic, social and political changes, is another great achievement in its remarkable history. The United States seeks a close, friendly, and cooperative relationship with the People's Republic of China, outside any alliance, and without any illusions that one is a political or strategic "card" for the other. Simply put, both of us recognize the importance of each to the other in the many shared areas of agreement, even as we appreciate the diversity of our political systems.

1990

George H.W. Bush

East Asia and the Pacific

12

The relationship between the United States and China, restored in the early 1970s after so many years of estrangement, has also contributed crucially to regional stability and the global balance of power. The United States strongly deplored the repression in China last June and we have imposed sanctions to demonstrate our displeasure. At the same time, we have sought to avoid a total cutoff of China's ties to the outside world. Those ties not only have strategic importance, both globally and regionally; they are crucial to China's prospects for regaining the path of economic reform and political liberalization. China's angry isolation would harm all of these prospects.

1991

George H.W. Bush

9

On the Korean peninsula, we and the Republic of Korea seek to persuade North Korea of the benefit of confidence-building measures as a first step to lasting peace and reunification. We firmly believe that true stability can only be achieved through direct North-South talks. At the same time, the United States remains committed to the security of the Republic of Korea as it continues to open its economic and political systems. We are increasingly concerned about North Korea's failure to observe its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and consider this to be the most pressing security issue on the peninsula.

China, like the Soviet Union, poses a complex challenge as it proceeds inexorably toward major systemic change. China's inward focus and struggle to achieve stability will not preclude increasing interaction with its neighbors as trade and technology advance. Consultations and contact with China will be central features of our policy, lest we intensify the isolation that shields repression.

Change is inevitable in China, and our links with China must endure.

The United States maintains strong, unofficial, substantive relations with Taiwan where rapid economic and political change is underway. One of our goals is to foster an environment in which Taiwan and the Peoples Republic of China can pursue a constructive and peaceful interchange across the Taiwan Strait.

1993

George H.W. Bush

The Challenges

1

Together with our allies and friends, the United States must continue to foster the Middle East peace process and to encourage democratic reform in China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Cuba, where one quarter of the earth's population still lives under Communist rule.

How We Can Influence the Future

7

In Asia, our agenda is five-fold. First, the United States must maintain a strategic framework which reflects its status as a Pacific power and promotes its engagement in Asia. The key to the United States' strategic framework has been, and will continue to be, its alliance with Japan. Second, we must continue to expand markets through bilateral, regional, and multilateral arrangements. Third, we must carefully watch the emergence of China onto the world stage and support, contain, or balance this emergence as necessary to protect U.S. interests. Fourth, we must continue to play a critical role in the peaceful unification process on the Korean peninsula. Finally, we should encourage the normalization of Indochina and the expansion and development of the Association of East Asian Nations.

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- In Asia, we should strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship which remains key to regional stability. We must nurture existing defense relationships, work to expand access to facilities throughout the region, and encourage security dialogue and cooperation. We will support regional stability by maintaining military forces in the region and through such fora as the ASEAN post-ministerial conference; encourage appropriate confidence building measures; support North and South Korean bilateral treaties and normalization of relations; continue to advocate positive change in China; and, consistent with our top priority of the fullest possible accounting for our POWs and MIAs, improved relations with Vietnam.

1994

Bill Clinton

1

At the same time, troubling uncertainties and clear threats remain. The new, independent states that replaced the Soviet Union are experiencing wrenching economic and political transitions, as are many new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. While our relations with the other great powers are as constructive as at any point in this century, Russia's future is uncertain, and China maintains a repressive regime even as that country assumes a more important economic and political role in global affairs. The spread of weapons of mass destruction poses serious threats. Violent extremists threaten fragile peace processes, from the Mideast to South Africa. Worldwide, there is a resurgence of militant nationalism as well as ethnic and religious conflict. This has been demonstrated by upheavals in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia, where the United States has participated in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

11

We continue to push for the dismantlement of intercontinental ballistic missiles located in Ukraine and Kazakhstan and to press China to formalize its earlier MTCR [Missile Technology Control Regime] undertakings.

13

Measures to reduce over-sized defense industrial establishments, especially those parts involved with weapons of mass destruction, will also contribute to stability in the post-Cold War world. The Administration also will pursue defense conversion agreements with FSU states, and possibly China.

24

We are developing a broader engagement with the People's Republic of China that will encompass both our economic and strategic interests. That policy is best reflected in our decision to delink China's Most Favored Nation status from its record on human rights. We are also working to facilitate China's development of a more open, market economy that accepts international trade practices. Given its growing economic potential and already sizable military force, it is essential that China not become a security threat to the region. To that end, we are strongly promoting China's participation in regional security mechanisms to reassure its neighbors and assuage its own security concerns. And we are seeking to gain further cooperation from China in controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

...

The third pillar of our policy in building a new Pacific community is to support the wave of democratic reform sweeping the region. The new democratic states of Asia will have our strong support as they move forward to consolidate and expand democratic reforms.

Some have argued that democracy is somehow unsuited for Asia or at least for some Asian nations – that human rights are relative and that they simply mask Western culturalism and imperialism. These voices are wrong. It is not Western imperialism, but the aspirations of Asian peoples themselves that explain the growing number of democracies and the growing strength of democracy movements everywhere in Asia. It is an insult to the spirit, the hopes, and the dreams of the people who live and struggle in those countries to assert otherwise.

Each nation must find its own form of democracy. But there is no cultural justification for torture or tyranny. We refuse to let repression cloak itself in moral relativism, for democracy and human rights are not occidental yearnings; they are universal yearnings and universal norms. We will continue to press for respect for human rights in countries as diverse as China and Burma.

1999

Bill Clinton

8

The CTBT [Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty] will put in place a worldwide network for detecting nuclear explosions. With over 300 stations around the globe – including 31 in Russia, 11 in China, and 17 in the Middle East – this international monitoring system will improve our ability to monitor suspicious activity and catch cheaters.

36–37

China: A stable, open, prosperous People's Republic of China (PRC) that respects international norms and assumes its responsibilities for building a more peaceful world is clearly and profoundly in our interests. The prospects for peace and prosperity in Asia depend heavily on China's role as a responsible member of the international community. Our policy toward China is both principled and pragmatic, expanding our areas of cooperation while dealing forthrightly with our differences. Despite strains in the relationship resulting from the tragic accidental bombing of the PRC embassy in Belgrade, we have continued to engage China on these issues.

The United States and China have taken a number of additional steps to strengthen cooperation in international affairs: presidential visits to each other's capitals; establishing the Vice President–Premier Forum on environment and development; regular exchanges of visits by cabinet and sub-cabinet officials to consult on political, military, security, arms control and human rights issues; establishing a consultation mechanism to strengthen military maritime safety; holding discussions on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and environmental security; and establishing working groups on law enforcement cooperation. China is also a major partner in science, technology and health research.

U.S. interests have been advanced in discussions with China on arms control and nonproliferation issues. In 1998, the United States and China announced that they will not target their strategic nuclear weapons at each other and confirmed their common goal of halting the spread of WMD. Both our nations have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We have consulted on the Missile Technology Control Regime and missile nonproliferation, and we continue to press China to avoid destabilizing missile technology sales to other countries. Both our nations have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we have agreed to further strengthen controls on the export of dual use chemicals and related production equipment and technology to assure they are not used for production of chemical weapons. China also has expanded the list of chemical precursors that it controls. Both nations have called for strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention and early conclusion of a protocol establishing a practical and effective mechanism to enhance compliance and improve transparency. We also reached agreement with China on practices for end-use visits on U.S. high technology exports to China and continue a dialogue on implementation of this agreement.

China is working with the United States on important regional security issues. In South Asia, China has condemned India and Pakistan for conducting nuclear tests and joined us in urging them to conduct no more tests, to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, to avoid deploying or testing missiles, and to work to resolve their differences through dialogue. On the Korean Peninsula, the United States and China share an interest in peace and stability. We have both worked to convince North Korea to freeze its dangerous nuclear program, and believe the fourparty peace talks are an important tool in working toward establishment of peace and stability in Northeast Asia. To help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote our broad foreign policy objectives we are implementing fully the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act by maintaining robust unofficial relations between the American people and the people of Taiwan.

Our key security objectives for the future include: sustaining the strategic dialogue begun by the recent summits and other high-level exchanges; enhancing stability in the Taiwan Strait through maintenance of our "one China" policy, peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues and encouraging dialogue between Beijing and Taipei; strengthening China's adherence to international nonproliferation norms, particularly in export controls on ballistic missile and dual-use technologies; restarting our bilateral discussions on arms control ; achieving greater openness and transparency in China's military; encouraging a constructive PRC role in international affairs through active cooperation in multilateral fora such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC); and improving law enforcement cooperation in such areas as counterterrorism and counternarcotics.

Promoting Prosperity

37-38

Our economic objectives in East Asia include: continued recovery from the recent financial crisis; further progress within APEC toward liberalizing trade and investment; increased U.S. exports to Asian countries through market-opening measures and leveling the playing field for U.S. business; and WTO accession for the PRC and Taiwan on satisfactory commercial terms....

China: Bringing the PRC more fully into the global trading system is manifestly in our national interest. China is a major potential market for our goods and services. As we look into the next century, our exports to China will support hundreds of thousands of jobs across our country. For this reason, we must continue our normal trade relationship with China, as every President has done since 1980, to strengthen our economic relationship.

37

An important part of integrating China into the marketbased world economic system is opening China's highly protected market through elimination of trade barriers and removal of distorting restraints on economic activity. We have negotiated and vigorously enforced landmark agreements to combat piracy of intellectual property and advance the interests of our creative industries. We have also negotiated – and vigorously enforced – agreements on textile trade. We will continue to press China to open its markets as it engages in sweeping economic reform and to respect and adhere to core labor standards as codified by the ILO. Most recently, we reached agreement to bring China into the World Trade Organization on fair commercial terms – a landmark accord that will create jobs and opportunities for Americans through opening of Chinese markets, promote economic reform in China, and help spread the message and the tools of freedom to the Chinese people.

Promoting Democracy

38–39

We will continue to support the democratic aspirations of Asians and to promote respect for human rights. Our strategy includes: a constructive approach toward achieving progress on human rights, religious freedom and rule of law issues with China; fostering meaningful political dialogue between the ruling authorities in Burma and the democratic opposition; promoting democracy and encouraging greater respect for human rights in Cambodia; and, in Vietnam, achieving the fullest possible accounting of missing U.S. service members and promoting greater respect for human rights.

2002

George W. Bush

3

When we see democratic processes take hold among our friends in Taiwan or in the Republic of Korea, and see elected leaders replace generals in Latin America and Africa, we see examples of how authoritarian systems can evolve, marrying local history and traditions with the principles we all cherish.

18

The United States has led the way in completing the accession of China and a democratic Taiwan to the World Trade Organization. We will assist Russia's preparations to join the WTO.

20

Our overall objective is to reduce America's greenhouse gas emissions relative to the size of our economy, cutting such emissions per unit of economic activity by 18 percent over the next 10 years, by the year 2012. Our strategies for attaining this goal will be to:

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- assist developing countries, especially the major greenhouse gas emitters such as China and India, so that they will have the tools and resources to join this effort and be able to grow along a cleaner and better path.

26

We are attentive to the possible renewal of old patterns of great power competition. Several potential great powers are now in the midst of internal transition—most importantly Russia, India, and China. In all three cases, recent developments have encouraged our hope that a truly global consensus about basic principles is slowly taking shape.

27–28

The United States relationship with China is an important part of our strategy to promote a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Asia-Pacific region. We welcome the emergence of a strong, peaceful, and prosperous China. The democratic development of China is crucial to that future. Yet, a quarter century after beginning the process of shedding the worst features of the Communist legacy, China's leaders have not yet made the next series of fundamental choices about the character of their state. In pursuing advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region, China is following an outdated path that, in the end, will hamper its own pursuit of national greatness. In time, China will find that social and political freedom is the only source of that greatness.

The United States seeks a constructive relationship with a changing China. We already cooperate well where our interests overlap, including the current war on terrorism and in promoting stability on the Korean peninsula. Likewise, we have coordinated on the future of

Afghanistan and have initiated a comprehensive dialogue on counterterrorism and similar transitional concerns. Shared health and environmental threats, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, challenge us to promote jointly the welfare of our citizens.

Addressing these transnational threats will challenge China to become more open with information, promote the development of civil society, and enhance individual human rights. China has begun to take the road to political openness, permitting many personal freedoms and conducting village-level elections, yet remains strongly committed to national one-party rule by the Communist Party. To make that nation truly accountable to its citizen's needs and aspirations, however, much work remains to be done. Only by allowing the Chinese people to think, assemble, and worship freely can China reach its full potential.

Our important trade relationship will benefit from China's entry into the World Trade Organization, which will create more export opportunities and ultimately more jobs for American farmers, workers, and companies. China is our fourth largest trading partner, with over \$100 billion in annual two-way trade. The power of market principles and the WTO's requirements for transparency and accountability will advance openness and the rule of law in China to help establish basic protections for commerce and for citizens. There are, however, other areas in which we have profound disagreements. Our commitment to the self-defense of Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act is one. Human rights is another. We expect China to adhere to its nonproliferation commitments. We will work to narrow differences where they exist, but not allow them to preclude cooperation where we agree.

The events of September 11, 2001, fundamentally changed the context for relations between the United States and other main centers of global power, and opened vast, new opportunities. With our long-standing allies in Europe and Asia, and with leaders in Russia, India, and China, we must develop active agendas of cooperation lest these relationships become routine and unproductive.

Every agency of the United States Government shares the challenge. We can build fruitful habits of consultation, quiet argument, sober analysis, and common action. In the long-term, these are the practices that will sustain the supremacy of our common principles and keep open the path of progress.

2006

George W. Bush

26

Pressing for open markets, financial stability, and deeper integration of the world economy. We

have partnered with Europe, Japan, and other major economies to promote structural reforms that encourage growth, stability, and opportunity across the globe. The United States has:

...

- Worked with other nations that serve as regional and global engines of growth – such as India, China, the ROK, Brazil, and Russia – on reforms to open markets and ensure financial stability;
- Urged China to move to a market-based, flexible exchange rate regime – a step that would help both China and the global economy

26–27

Enhancing energy security and clean development. The Administration has worked with trading partners and energy producers to expand the types and sources of energy, to open markets and strengthen the rule of law, and to foster private investment that can help develop the energy needed to meet global demand. In addition, we have:

...

- Joined with Australia, China, India, Japan, and the ROK in forming the Asia–Pacific Partnership for Clean Development and Climate to accelerate deployment of clean technologies to enhance energy security, reduce poverty, and reduce pollution.

28

We will continue to advance this agenda through the WTO and through bilateral and regional FTAs.

- In Asia, we are pursuing FTAs with Thailand, the ROK, and Malaysia. We will also continue to work closely with China to ensure it honors its WTO commitments and protects intellectual property.

29–30

- Encouraging Adoption of Flexible Exchange Rates and Open Markets for Financial Services. The United States will help emerging economies make the transition to the flexible exchange rates appropriate for major economies. In particular, we will continue to urge China to meet its own commitment to a market-based, flexible exchange rate regime. We will also promote more open financial service markets, which encourage stable and sound financial practices.

41–42

China encapsulates Asia's dramatic economic successes, but China's transition remains incomplete. In one generation, China has gone from poverty and isolation to growing integration into the international economic system. China once opposed global institutions; today it is a permanent member of the UNSC and the WTO. As China becomes a global player, it must act as a responsible stakeholder that fulfills its obligations and works with the United States and others to advance the international system that has enabled its success: enforcing the international rules that have helped China lift itself out of a century of economic

deprivation, embracing the economic and political standards that go along with that system of rules, and contributing to international stability and security by working with the United States and other major powers.

China's leaders proclaim that they have made a decision to walk the transformative path of peaceful development. If China keeps this commitment, the United States will welcome the emergence of a China that is peaceful and prosperous and that cooperates with us to address common challenges and mutual interests. China can make an important contribution to global prosperity and ensure its own prosperity for the longer term if it will rely more on domestic demand and less on global trade imbalances to drive its economic growth. China shares our exposure to the challenges of globalization and other transnational concerns. Mutual interests can guide our cooperation on issues such as terrorism, proliferation, and energy security. We will work to increase our cooperation to combat disease pandemics and reverse environmental degradation.

The United States encourages China to continue down the road of reform and openness, because in this way China's leaders can meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of the Chinese people for liberty, stability, and prosperity. As economic growth continues, China will face a growing demand from its own people to follow the path of East Asia's many modern democracies, adding political freedom to economic freedom. Continuing along this path will contribute to regional and international security.

China's leaders must realize, however, that they cannot stay on this peaceful path while holding on to old ways of thinking and acting that exacerbate concerns throughout the region and the world. These old ways include:

- Continuing China's military expansion in a non-transparent way;
- Expanding trade, but acting as if they can somehow "lock up" energy supplies around the world or seek to direct markets rather than opening them up – as if they can follow a mercantilism borrowed from a discredited era; and
- Supporting resource-rich countries without regard to the misrule at home or misbehavior abroad of those regimes.

China and Taiwan must also resolve their differences peacefully, without coercion and without unilateral action by either China or Taiwan.

Ultimately, China's leaders must see that they cannot let their population increasingly experience the freedoms to buy, sell, and produce, while denying them the rights to assemble, speak, and worship. Only by allowing the Chinese people to enjoy these basic freedoms and universal rights can China honor its own constitution and international commitments and reach its full potential. Our strategy seeks to encourage China to make the right strategic choices for its people, while we hedge against other possibilities.

2010

Barack Obama

3

Instead, we must focus American engagement on strengthening international institutions and galvanizing the collective action that can serve common interests such as combating violent extremism; stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and securing nuclear materials; achieving balanced and sustainable economic growth; and forging cooperative solutions to the threat of climate change, armed conflict, and pandemic disease.

The starting point for that collective action will be our engagement with other countries. The cornerstone of this engagement is the relationship between the United States and our close friends and allies in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East—ties which are rooted in shared interests and shared values, and which serve our mutual security and the broader security and prosperity of the world. We are working to build deeper and more effective partnerships with other key centers of influence—including China, India, and Russia, as well as increasingly influential nations such as Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia—so that we can cooperate on issues of bilateral and global concern, with the recognition that power, in an interconnected world, is no longer a zero sum game.

8

More actors exert power and influence... China and India—the world’s two most populous nations—are becoming more engaged globally....

11

We will continue to deepen our cooperation with other 21st century centers of influence—including China, India, and Russia—on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect.

43

The United States is part of a dynamic international environment, in which different nations are exerting greater influence, and advancing our interests will require expanding spheres of cooperation around the world. Certain bilateral relationships—such as U.S. relations with China, India, and Russia—will be critical to building broader cooperation on areas of mutual interest.

Asia: Asia’s dramatic economic growth has increased its connection to America’s future prosperity, and its emerging centers of influence make it increasingly important. We have taken substantial steps to deepen our engagement in the region, through regional organizations, new dialogues, and high-level diplomacy. The United States has deep and enduring ties with the countries of the region, including trade and investment that drive growth and prosperity on both sides of the Pacific, and enhancing these ties is critical to our efforts to advance balanced and sustainable growth and to doubling U.S. exports. We have increasing security cooperation

on issues such as violent extremism and nuclear proliferation. We will work to advance these mutual interests through our alliances, deepen our relationships with emerging powers, and pursue a stronger role in the region's multilateral architecture, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the East Asia Summit.

We will continue to pursue a positive, constructive, and comprehensive relationship with China. We welcome a China that takes on a responsible leadership role in working with the United States and the international community to advance priorities like economic recovery, confronting climate change, and nonproliferation. We will monitor China's military modernization program and prepare accordingly to ensure that U.S. interests and allies, regionally and globally, are not negatively affected. More broadly, we will encourage China to make choices that contribute to peace, security, and prosperity as its influence rises. We are using our newly established Strategic and Economic Dialogue to address a broader range of issues, and improve communication between our militaries in order to reduce mistrust. We will encourage continued reduction in tension between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. We will not agree on every issue, and we will be candid on our human rights concerns and areas where we differ. But disagreements should not prevent cooperation on issues of mutual interest, because a pragmatic and effective relationship between the United States and China is essential to address the major challenges of the 21st century.

2015

Barack Obama

Cover letter

Even as we meet these pressing challenges, we are pursuing historic opportunities. Our rebalance to Asia and the Pacific is yielding deeper ties with a more diverse set of allies and partners. When complete, the Trans-Pacific Partnership will generate trade and investment opportunities—and create high-quality jobs at home—across a region that represents more than 40 percent of global trade. We are primed to unlock the potential of our relationship with India. The scope of our cooperation with China is unprecedented, even as we remain alert to China's military modernization and reject any role for intimidation in resolving territorial disputes....

We are building on our own energy security—and the ground-breaking commitment we made with China to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—to cement an international consensus on arresting climate change.

4

We will lead with a long-term perspective. Around the world, there are historic transitions

underway that will unfold over decades. This strategy positions America to influence their trajectories, seize the opportunities they create, and manage the risks they present. Five recent transitions, in particular, have significantly changed the security landscape, including since our last strategy in 2010.

First, power among states is more dynamic. The increasing use of the G-20 on global economic matters reflects an evolution in economic power, as does the rise of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. As the balance of economic power changes, so do expectations about influence over international affairs. Shifting power dynamics create both opportunities and risks for cooperation, as some states have been more willing than others to assume responsibilities commensurate with their greater economic capacity. In particular, India's potential, China's rise, and Russia's aggression all significantly impact the future of major power relations.

10

Build Capacity to Prevent Conflict

We will strengthen U.S. and international capacity to prevent conflict among and within states. In the realm of inter-state conflict, Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity—as well as its belligerent stance toward other neighboring countries—endangers international norms that have largely been taken for granted since the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, North Korean provocation and tensions in the East and South China Seas are reminders of the risks of escalation. American diplomacy and leadership, backed by a strong military, remain essential to deterring future acts of inter-state aggression and provocation by reaffirming our security commitments to allies and partners, investing in their capabilities to withstand coercion, imposing costs on those who threaten their neighbors or violate fundamental international norms, and embedding our actions within wider regional strategies.

12

Confront Climate Change

These domestic efforts contribute to our international leadership. Building on the progress made in Copenhagen and in ensuing negotiations, we are working toward an ambitious new global climate change agreement to shape standards for prevention, preparedness, and response over the next decade. As the world's two largest emitters, the United States and China reached a landmark agreement to take significant action to reduce carbon pollution. The substantial contribution we have pledged to the Green Climate Fund will help the most vulnerable developing nations deal with climate change, reduce their carbon pollution, and invest in clean energy.

13

Air and Maritime Security

The United States has an enduring interest in freedom of navigation and overflight as well as the safety and sustainability of the air and maritime environments. We will therefore maintain

the capability to ensure the free flow of commerce, to respond quickly to those in need, and to deter those who might contemplate aggression. We insist on safe and responsible behaviors in the sky and at sea. We reject illegal and aggressive claims to airspace and in the maritime domain and condemn deliberate attacks on commercial passenger traffic. On territorial disputes, particularly in Asia, we denounce coercion and assertive behaviors that threaten escalation. We encourage open channels of dialogue to resolve disputes peacefully in accordance with international law. We also support the early conclusion of an effective code of conduct for the South China Sea between China and the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN). America's ability to press for the observance of established customary international law reflected in the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea will be enhanced if the Senate provides its advice and consent—the ongoing failure to ratify this Treaty undermines our national interest in a rules-based international order. Finally, we seek to build on the unprecedented international cooperation of the last few years, especially in the Arctic as well as in combatting piracy off the Horn of Africa and drug-smuggling in the Caribbean Sea and across Southeast Asia.

24

The United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China. We seek to develop a constructive relationship with China that delivers benefits for our two peoples and promotes security and prosperity in Asia and around the world. We seek cooperation on shared regional and global challenges such as climate change, public health, economic growth, and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. While there will be competition, we reject the inevitability of confrontation. At the same time, we will manage competition from a position of strength while insisting that China uphold international rules and norms on issues ranging from maritime security to trade and human rights. We will closely monitor China's military modernization and expanding presence in Asia, while seeking ways to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. On cybersecurity, we will take necessary actions to protect our businesses and defend our networks against cyber-theft of trade secrets for commercial gain whether by private actors or the Chinese government.

2017

Donald J. Trump

8

...Adversaries constantly evolve their methods to threaten the United States and our citizens. We must be agile and adaptable.

...China and Russia are developing advanced weapons and capabilities that could threaten our critical infrastructure and our command and control architecture.

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.

21

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.

25

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

27-28

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.

... 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 non-state actors recognize that the United States often views the world in binary terms, with states being either “at peace” or “at war,” when it is actually an arena of continuous competition. Our adversaries will not fight us on our terms. We will raise our competitive game to meet that challenge, to protect American interests, and to advance our values.

34–35

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....

38

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.

46

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 IndoPacific. 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.

47

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.

...China is gaining a strategic foothold in Europe by expanding its unfair trade practices and investing in key industries, sensitive technologies, and infrastructure.

50

We will help South Asian nations maintain their sovereignty as China increases its influence in the region.

51

China seeks to pull the [Latin American] 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.

52

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.