



DOCUMENTATION

The Documentation Section brings excerpts from the U.S. Department of State's *Agency Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026-2030*. The document outlines the agency's priorities and heavily emphasizes the importance of the Western Hemisphere and the Indo-Pacific. The second excerpt is from the Department of Defense's *National Defense Strategy* published in January 2025. The document discusses DoD's priorities and focus, including reprioritizing the Western Hemisphere and building more equitable partnerships with allies. The third document, excerpts from the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on strategic competition in post-New START environment, discusses steps the United States can take to improve its geopolitical position vis-à-vis arming adversaries like Russia and China.

Document No. 1. U.S. Department of State, *Agency Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026-2030*, January 2026 (select excerpts)¹

Foreword by Secretary Rubio

[...] How do we practice America First foreign policy? To start, we must be clear, concrete, and limited in the delineation of our core national interests. The United States is blessed with tremendous assets—physical, financial, military, geographical, and otherwise—but our resources are hardly infinite and the problems we face are many. We cannot hope to solve every issue, or to prevent every global tragedy. Success requires clear-eyed prioritization of the key interests in our diplomatic agenda. [...]

Domestic renewal begins by reasserting American sovereignty—over our territory, our people and commercial enterprises, and our state. Under President Trump, illegal border crossings have reached historic lows. We will continue to control our borders, ensuring that only lawful and vetted people reach our shores, and expeditiously remigrate all those who do not belong. Just as importantly, the United States must reclaim our economic independence: rebuilding our industrial and manufacturing capacities, building durable supply chains, reestablishing American energy dominance, championing our businesses, and investing in homegrown innovation to ensure U.S. leadership in the technologies of tomorrow.

A robust foundation depends also upon a strong, safe and market-oriented Western Hemisphere. A focus on peace and security in our hemisphere ought not be confused with isolationism or a withdrawal from the rest of the world. Rather, it reflects the common-sense recognition that America cannot effectively project power around the world if it is not prosperous and safe at home.

¹ The full document can be found at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/ASP-for-Fiscal-Years-2026-2030-v4.pdf>.



After decades of failed U.S. policymakers prioritizing faraway conflicts, our region has become marred by a handful of weak states overtaken by narco-terrorist criminal organizations, disorder, and the malign influence of geopolitical adversaries. Cartels exploit these failed states to ship poison across our borders, while foreign powers leverage them to project military might mere

The projection of foreign power in the Western Hemisphere will once again be treated as a hostile act towards the United States. In its place, we will cultivate a network of strong, stable, and growth-oriented allies. Together, we will eradicate disorder, drug trafficking, and mass migration in our hemisphere. We will also promote shared prosperity with these friendly states—expanding fair trade, private sector investment, and targeted foreign assistance, and near-shoring key supply chains. [...]

Similar principles will guide American global engagement farther from our shores. Above all, the United States will pursue a posture of peace through strength—maintaining both the might to beat back any adversary, but also the restraint to only use force when necessary. Under President Trump, the United States has already used our strength to become the preeminent facilitator of global peace in the most intractable global conflicts, from Israel and Gaza to Armenia to Cambodia. Our peace and strength are self-reinforcing in a virtuous cycle: a peaceful world is one in which America can be strong and prosperous, while a strong and prosperous America will, in turn, promote more peace and global prosperity.

Nor will the United States shy away from competition with China or other geopolitical adversaries. While we do not seek unnecessary conflict, we will zealously guard our interests— political, security, economic, and otherwise— against encroachment by China, Russia, Iran and other geopolitical rivals. Doing this will require that we shrewdly allocate resources to the most pressing challenges. [...]

To this end, we will also empower strong and self-sufficient allies, ensuring that our friends are able to contribute their fair share towards collective security and welfare.[...] Our allies will also play key roles helping us push back against anti-Americanism in international organizations, protect free and open sea lanes and commercial corridors, and prevent foreign powers from dominating key regional resources and domains.

Once more, commerce will play a critical role in forging alliances and partnerships. American enterprise is the root of our global power and our domestic prosperity. President Trump has made clear that the United States will no longer tolerate being fleeced in the global trading system, the pilfering of our intellectual property, nor exploitation of our workers. Instead, we will embrace the President's dealmaking ethos and forge new ventures, compacts, and trade agreements that will bring about fair and mutually beneficial trade and economic partnerships with our friends and allies. Through a reinvigorated focus on commercial

diplomacy, we will protect American businesses, workers, and economic interests across the world. [...]

This is an ambitious mandate. To seize it, we must above all reclaim American pride. As President Trump has said, for all the challenges we face, the United States is still the indispensable nation. The United States has led nearly every economic, social, technological, and political evolution of the last century and we must never forget it. The original sin of globalism is that it denied American exceptionalism and deluded us into becoming ashamed of our history, strength, and prosperity. The United States must never be made to apologize for our power, our wealth, our victories, or our Western values. At our core, we are a proud people—proud of our country, our might, and our culture. A truly American foreign policy ought to reflect this indomitable spirit.

[...] Success in diplomacy means meeting countries on their own terms, and respecting differences in culture, history, and governance. It means rejecting the arrogant paternalism of thinking we can or should change the customs or politics of foreign nations where there is not a direct benefit to doing so. It means dealing in the art of the possible and not wishing away constraints—whether they be natural, geographical, geopolitical, economic, or social.

The Department of State's diplomatic engagement is at the center of this vision. America First is not a retreat from diplomacy—but rather a recommitment to its truest form. For centuries, diplomacy has been defined by sober, pragmatic dialogue and guided by the axiom that rational global actors will act for the benefit of their people and their states. Although forgotten for too long, the art and prudence of traditional interests-oriented diplomacy has been in the bones of the Department of State since 1789. By reclaiming its promise, together we can put America First and usher in the next era of American peace and prosperity.

Goal 1: U.S. National Sovereignty

The first job of the U.S. government, including the Department of State, is to ensure the continued survival of our nation as a self-governing republic that defends the safety and interests of Americans. For too long, U.S. policymakers assumed that open borders, global integration, and deference to multilateral institutions and agreements would produce outcomes that would be good for the globe and, therefore, good for America. This experiment failed. [...]

The Department will advance the sovereignty of our nation, at the core of which is control of our borders. Without this, there is no recognizable nation on whose behalf the U.S. government can act. We will advocate for the sovereignty of our citizens—their safety at home and abroad, and their freedom from foreign efforts to curb their rights—and of our businesses, which are regularly subject to unfair practices around the world. As the Department restores the sovereignty of the United States, it will reduce deference to

multilateralism and global bureaucratic consensus, which too often reflect destructive ideologies and strategic misalignment with U.S. interests.

Objective 1.1: Secure America's borders and the American people's right to decide who to admit and on what terms.

For decades, the United States allowed tens of millions of migrants—legal and illegal—to enter the country. We were told unfettered mass migration was a fact of nature and a positive good. The more Americans objected, the more migration increased. This was a damaging mistake and an affront to the people that the U.S. government serves. [...]

Previous administrations used the Department's powers—including visa issuance, refugee admission, and billions in humanitarian assistance—to facilitate this crisis. The Department will no longer be complicit in these abuses. Instead, we will protect our borders and defend the value of American citizenship. Ending the crisis brought on by open borders and reversing the damage it has done to the United States is one of the Department's essential tasks. [...]

This includes ensuring that applicants do not pose any risks to public safety or national security, do not bear hostile attitudes toward our citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles, or show other signs of anti-Americanism. In addition, we will reinvigorate and expand the application of the "public charge" ineligibility to ensure visa holders do not become burdens to American society.

Remigration and border security are central to our diplomatic engagements, especially to those in our hemisphere. That includes ensuring foreign countries facilitate the repatriation of their nationals who have no right to remain in the United States; negotiating arrangements with other countries to accept the transfer of asylum claimants and illegal aliens removed from American communities; and working with DHS [Department of Homeland Security] to support voluntary remigration. We also will use foreign assistance to support countries that help us achieve our immigration priorities. Mass migration and weak borders are not inevitabilities to manage, but problems that the Department's resources and U.S. bilateral relationships must help to solve.

Objective 1.2: Ensure all Americans can exercise their rights free from foreign interference.

The U.S. government exists to protect the God-given natural rights of Americans, including the rights of free speech, of religion and of conscience, and the right to choose and influence our common government. Nevertheless, foreign governments and international organizations are creating laws and regulations that impose restrictions on these rights.

These laws enacted across the globe affect American companies, but also can target Americans abroad and at home.

For their own domestic political purposes, foreign governments have imposed restrictions on speech that would be unacceptable in the United States, including by enforcing conditions to operate or levying fines on technology and media companies that operate in those countries. Meanwhile, globalist bureaucrats and activists direct campaigns in multilateral bodies and through NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations] which seek to restrict the right of free speech in the name of combatting “hate speech,” promoting “trust and safety,” or countering “disinformation.”

The Department will oppose efforts by foreign countries, international organizations and NGOs, and activist groups that seek to censor Americans in their own country. We will counter these efforts through all appropriate means including visa and financial sanctions.

At the same time, the Department will scrutinize attempts by foreign powers to exercise influence within the United States. These efforts are not new, but now seek to manipulate American public life through a widening spectrum of influence operations. This includes lobbying and lawfare; NGO activities, including through think-tanks, cultural centers, and educational institutions; and media manipulation, including paid media and social media campaigns. In some cases, these activities have fomented or contributed to civil unrest in U.S. cities. Moreover, foreign powers seek to acquire or control assets important to our national security and public safety, including real estate and infrastructure.

Such activities threaten our sovereignty and limit Americans’ exercise of their rights by displacing their legitimate participation in the public life of their own country. In cooperation with other U.S. government agencies, the Department will uncover and investigate such activities and counter them by all available means.

Objective 1.3: Engage in international organizations only when it advances America’s national interests.

International organizations exist to advance the interests of sovereign nations. They are not global legislatures or independent sources of moral, political, or legal authority. They stray from their proper purpose when they develop their own constituencies and seek to advance agendas that no citizen can approve or reject.

Generations of American leadership were convinced that global engagement was a good in itself, and that connectivity therein would bring about global peace and make great power rivalry obsolete. This dream has not and will not come to pass. While the United States was squandering our influence advancing these flawed ideas, we were being outplayed in the real competition among great powers.

The Department will no longer fund or support international organizations or conventions that act contrary to America's interests or that erode our sovereignty. We will no longer defer to unelected international bureaucrats who run them. We will not permit international organizations to become weapons in the hands of our adversaries, deployed to target Americans and citizens of partner nations such as Israel. Instead, we will focus on increasing American influence and driving reform in organizations whose work affects our concrete national interests, particularly the standard-setting bodies, while imposing real accountability on those who threaten Americans, our national interests, or those of our allies. America's adversaries use international organizations to undermine and reshape the global order or to extract funding that is used against our interests. We, in turn, will use American leadership to return useful bodies to their original purposes, i.e., to build coalitions which clearly and concretely serve to advance our national interests.

Specifically, there is need for renewed focus at the United Nations, which has strayed far from its purpose of solving international disputes peacefully. We will push back on the UN's 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which advance a program of soft global governance inconsistent with U.S. sovereignty and adverse to the rights and interests of Americans.

We will seek to block resolutions that undermine U.S. interests or those of our allies, withhold or condition funding to promote reforms, and promote U.S.-led peace processes. Additionally, the Department will lead efforts to wind down costly and ineffective peacekeeping and special political missions around the world.

Declarations of international bodies inconsistent with U.S. sovereign law cannot and will not constrain our decision making. We will respond sternly, using the full array of diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal, to such attempts to limit us.

Goal 2: The Western Hemisphere and Establishment of the Donroe Doctrine

Geography has long blessed the United States with distance from other great powers as well as a prosperous and resource-rich hemisphere relatively free of strife and instability. Our status as a global superpower was built on this foundation: without serious enemies or conflicts at our borders, we have been able to project power abroad unhindered.

Over recent decades, however, we have let these pillars of our strength erode: geopolitical adversaries and transnational criminal groups have made major inroads into the region; our local allies have been forgotten in our rush to remake far-distant foreign nations; and our neighborhood has been swamped by unchecked migration, illegal drugs, and the terrorist gangs and cartels that push them. [...]

Under the new “Donroe Doctrine,” the United States has re-established absolute primacy in our hemisphere—both by bringing anti-American and rogue states to heel, and by forging powerful new security and economic partnerships with likeminded states.

Objective 2.1: Counter and reverse our competitors’ influence in the Western Hemisphere.

Originally declared in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine was the north star of American foreign policy during the U.S.’ long rise to superpower status. Decade after decade, the Doctrine evolved in tandem with the threats of the moment, but at its heart, it always reflected the same core truth: that the United States is safest, strongest, and most prosperous when outside adversaries cannot establish themselves in the Western Hemisphere.

Over the last few decades, our country has lost sight of that truth. No longer. The United States will work to ensure our neighbors never feel that they owe political fealty to any extra-hemispheric power, or that any extra-hemispheric power controls the fates and destinies of their people. Furthermore, we will not allow any foreign adversary to use force or establish a military base anywhere in the region, and will seek to reverse the expansion of all other forms of foreign military influence, including the spread of foreign security assistance, intelligence facilities, and facilities with dual-use possibilities.

Historically, the Monroe Doctrine focused primarily on the expulsion of extra-hemispheric military and political influence. The Donroe Doctrine expands this principle to purge unchecked economic, migration, and drug interference and to stamp out malign influence from extra-hemispheric powers, trans-national criminal organizations and rogue regional actors alike. by those outside the hemisphere. The United States does not—and has never—sought a closed economic system in the Western Hemisphere, but we will no longer permit foreign adversaries to use commerce and investment as a stalking horse for control of the region’s critical infrastructure and strategic territory, including vital chokepoints like the Panama Canal.

For that reason, we will prevent such control and roll it back where it has already occurred, and we will do so regardless of whether that control is exercised directly by competing powers or instead through purportedly private entities that operate under those states’ thumbs. We will also oppose predatory loans and other instruments of debt that threaten to ensnare our neighbors and subject them to the control of foreign adversaries. For neighbors already caught up in such schemes, we will sever these financial leashes by using the full array of our country’s economic instruments, including foreign assistance, loans, and private-sector partnerships.

Objective 2.2: Strengthen strategic partnerships in the Western Hemisphere.

Central to our efforts in the Western Hemisphere will be providing alternatives—either commercial, security, or otherwise—to our neighbors in the region. The Department will accordingly work with our regional partners to stand firmly against foreign interference and to uproot it where necessary. Our allies will no longer feel isolated against China or any other extra-hemispheric power, and the United States will remain the region’s partner of choice on the issues that matter most. Even amid any intra-regional disagreement, it should always remain common ground that no one’s interest would be served were the Western Hemisphere to become a theater of serious great-power competition. On the contrary, the United States, by keeping outside great powers at ocean’s length, lays the groundwork for the entire region’s security and prosperity.

The Department must not just reinforce bonds with existing allies, but expand to new partners throughout the region. For too long, our neighbors have been neglected as the United States has been distracted by a never-ending series of crises elsewhere. We will reverse that neglect and restore regional allies to their rightful role as our strategic partners. In that capacity, we will cooperate on issues of mutual concern, including combatting intra-regional challenges like narcotics trafficking. We will also prioritize trade deals in the Western Hemisphere and near-shore key industries in neighboring countries with comparative advantages—not as charity, but because doing so improves the security of our own supply chains. Our policies will pay dividends for the region as well as for the American people and thereby secure lasting advantages to both.

Objective 2.3: Suppress narco-terrorist gangs and cartels.

Prior to this Administration, our country was under siege by narco-terrorist gangs and cartels that killed over 87,000 Americans every year through the deadly drugs they trafficked. In addition to directly harming our people, these organizations fueled destabilizing crime, addiction, and corruption across the region. We will no longer tolerate this scourge or the extra-hemispheric entities and states that often enable and profit from it. [...]

Goal 3: Peace and Stability in the Indo-Pacific Region

How the United States responds to the rise of China will be the defining story of the 21st century. [...] Asia is already the source of nearly half of the world’s gross domestic product by some estimates, and crucial sea lanes and supply chains crisscross the region. Further, we count other Indo-Pacific nations as some of our closest allies. We are unambiguous that regional peace and stability benefit the United States irrespective of competition with countries such as China. We seek closer economic and military ties with Indo-Pacific allies and partners that benefit U.S. strength, not which come at our expense. [...]

Objective 3.1: Strengthen the Indo-Pacific economic system to support U.S. reindustrialization and reinforce ties with allies.

The United States will advance an economic system in the Indo-Pacific that is both free from external coercion and open to the American people. We will advance policies in the region that support U.S. reindustrialization through broad commercial advocacy efforts, the development of secure and resilient supply chains, and the spread of American and trusted alternatives to Chinese-created dependencies. As President Trump has stated publicly, we will combat Chinese intellectual property theft, and counter predatory state-directed economic strategies.

The United States will also seek to build and reinforce our allies and partners in the region through fair, high-impact bilateral trade deals to advance shared prosperity. [...]

We will promote our role as the energy and technology partner of choice in the Indo-Pacific. [...]

Objective 3.2: Deter aggression and establish favorable military balance across the region.

The United States must establish a favorable military balance in the Indo-Pacific to keep the trade routes free and open and to deter aggression. Over the past decade, China has undertaken an unprecedented military buildup which the United States must highlight publicly and remain prepared to counter. [...]

The Department will work to deepen relationships with allies and encourage them to increase their own spending, to invest in deterrence measures, and to allow U.S. military greater access to critical infrastructure and resources. In turn, we will provide allies increased access to our revitalized Defense Industrial Base. We will promulgate with allies, partners, and adversaries alike that the United States maintains a strong interest in a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific and desires neither war nor regime change. We will consistently seek open lines of communication with China and means to reduce misunderstandings and risks. We will champion reliable U.S. defense companies and support defense industry interoperability and collaboration between not just the United States and Indo-Pacific allies, but also with reliable European partners. An integrated Defense Industrial Base will provide the United States and our allies with strategic productive depth in the event of conflict.

Goal 4: Rebuild the Civilizational Alliance with European States

[...] For the bulk of the twentieth century, Europe was the primary theater for great power competition, with the United States standing with allied nations against imperialistic and anti-democratic powers like the Axis and the Soviet Union. America built the post-war global

architecture in service of this transatlantic partnership, leveraging it to become Western Europe's primary security guarantor, financial backstop, and geopolit[i]cal pole in the fight against communism. Together with the free nations of Europe, America defeated the USSR and freed the continent from the yoke of communist tyranny.

Over time, however, the resulting unification of Europe—infected with the dogma of the post-Cold War neoliberal moment—led to a weaker and poorer continent less capable of defending itself, much less joining to support American interests. Content to free-ride on U.S. security guarantees, European nations slashed their defense spending and let their militaries atrophy. Submitting to the unaccountable supranational regulatory bureaucracy of the European Union, the continent deindustrialized, failed to innovate, and slipped into economic malaise. European nations became increasingly reliant upon energy and imports from adversarial powers. EU principles regarding the free movement of people were weaponized to flood Europe with waves of non-assimilated foreign migrants, diluting the bonds of culture, community, and history that sustained historic polities. Meanwhile, the elite came to espouse increasingly radical conceptions of globalism and pan-humanism that led them to reject and undermine the core tenets of Western civilization: Western faith and values, national sovereignty, free expression, free markets, and belief in the polity.

It is time for European nations to wake up. Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrated that Europe continues to face grave security threats and must re-militarize to ensure its security. Likewise, Chinese economic coercion has shown that European countries must also reindustrialize and deregulate to secure their economic future. Finally, a breakdown in public safety and social welfare has revealed that they must abandon the disastrous experiment of mass migration.

European nations must regain their strength to remain a useful partner for the United States. Critically, while the United States stands ready to help reverse the corrosive trends of the past three decades, we do not desire a return to either the European dependency of the Cold War or the instability of competing imperialisms that culminated in two world wars. Instead, we aim to empower European nations that are militarily capable, economically fair, and culturally aligned. This new slate of self-reliant and self-assured states will guard against both estrangement and decline, rebuilding a renewed transatlantic civilizational alliance fit for today's challenges.

Objective 4.1: Transfer primary responsibility for conventional European defense to allies and expand our joint Defense Industrial Base.

The United States benefits from a free and secure European continent but, as outlined in previous sections, we must prioritize our resources to support stability in regions such as the Western Hemisphere or Indo-Pacific. Nonetheless, our commitment to European security and prosperity is evidenced by our push for NATO allies to spend five percent of GDP on

defense. This is something European nations must address urgently. [...] The Department will advocate for the creation of tangible national capabilities as European states assume responsibility for their conventional defense and become net contributors to security in Africa and the Middle East. In the pursuit of these capabilities, we will champion reliable U.S. defense companies, resist efforts to divide the transatlantic Defense Industrial Base, and support defense industry interoperability and collaboration between not just the United States and European allies, but also those in the Indo-Pacific. An integrated defense industrial base will provide the United States and its allies with strategic productive depth in the event of conflict.

While strengthening NATO's deterrence in Europe, we will maintain dialogue with Russia, seek the normalization of diplomatic operations, and pursue strategic stability. We will seek the end of the Russia-Ukraine war and will commit diplomatic resources to avoid new conflicts in Europe. We will cooperate closely with European allies on security in the Arctic. As conditions allow, we will negotiate arms control for nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Objective 4.2: Rebalance U.S. trade with European allies and decrease their economic dependencies on adversarial powers.

The United States will unapologetically pursue balanced, reciprocal trade with European nations. We will resist the EU's attempt to cast itself as a "regulatory superpower" and push back on rules which discriminate against U.S. businesses or have extraterritorial effects on U.S. consumers. The Department will encourage and support European investment in the United States and collaboration between U.S. and businesses in Europe, provided they do not result in further the deindustrialization of the United States. We will vigorously advocate for export opportunities on behalf of sound U.S. businesses.

The export of U.S. energy will be a central pillar in our economic collaboration with European nations. The United States has the resources to end energy dependency on Russia and spur economic growth. We will strongly support U.S. exports of natural gas, nuclear technology, and nuclear fuel, particularly in former Soviet-aligned states. China's support for Russia and its invasion of Ukraine directly undermines security in Europe. The United States will support efforts to reduce dependence on China for critical supply chains and overreliance on China for economic growth. Chinese economic leverage over European states erodes their reliability as U.S. allies. We will support the removal of Chinese hardware and software from critical infrastructure and collaborate closely with European partners to safeguard our joint technological advantages.

Objective 4.3: Defend civilizational values and reassert national sovereignty.

The United States and European nations must be civilizational allies, first and foremost. As

such, the United States will condemn anti-democratic actions which restrict free speech or the free exercise of religion and will oppose the use of lawfare to ban political opponents. [...] Mass migration is a threat to national cohesion, social stability, and civilizational values and we will support European nations' increasing recognition of this. [...]

Goal 5: U.S. Economic and Technological Dominance

The United States' unparalleled economic wealth and technological dominance are foundational to our geopolitical strength and a tremendous source of strategic leverage. In the 20th century, American manufacturing dominance powered our victories in war and our prosperity in peace. But as a result of short-sighted decisions at home and unfair competition abroad, the United States has lost much of our manufacturing base and is too often dependent on foreign countries for critically important inputs. The United States will rescue our industries from unfair trade practices and illegitimate competition, promote American businesses through commercial diplomacy, and firmly reestablish America as the economic and technological juggernaut of the 21st century. [...]

Objective 5.1: Reindustrialize the United States.

U.S. power lies in both our military dominance and our leadership of the global economy. In a geopolitical context driven increasingly by economic statecraft, the future of U.S. supremacy lies in our future productive power. On this front, our position as the country with the highest gross domestic product and leadership in financial markets obscures underlying fractures in the national health of our productive economy, especially in advanced manufacturing products and critical technologies that have implications for national security.

[...] We will identify productivity-enhancing sectors and industries necessary for a vibrant economy, including energy, critical minerals, advanced manufacturing, robotics, machine tools, shipbuilding, material sciences, critical and advanced infrastructure, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, space and aerospace, semiconductors, compute, artificial intelligence (AI), data storage, transportation logistics, unmanned and autonomous systems, biotechnology, and quantum science. [...]

The Department will mobilize U.S. businesses and solutions as the preferred choice for allies and partners by pursuing commercial deals in all bilateral relationships and negotiations, thereby creating a strong economic bloc of pro-American countries that leverage American businesses and exports. We will enshrine a new economic security consensus across this bloc of partners and will unlock new commercial industries and opportunities through flagship infrastructure projects. Through the purchase American technology stacks and defense systems, this bloc will finance U.S. reindustrialization and ensure American economic and technological leadership continues throughout the 21st century.

Objective 5.2: Stop foreign actors' abuse of the global trading system.

The conventional consensus on trade policy is that free trade is mutually beneficial and that countries should pursue free trade wherever and whenever possible with few if any exceptions. However, the U.S. position in the global trade regime is lopsided with long-standing, historically large, persistent trade deficits with most countries. [...]

The Administration will rectify our trade deficits through our reciprocal tariff regime and new trade deals that put American businesses first. Working with other agencies, we will work with U.S. businesses to investigate and respond to unfair trade practices that limit market access to other countries. To ensure these measures are effective, we will especially focus on transshipment, whereby countries evade tariff duties by routing their exports through third countries not subject to tariff regulations. As the Administration has already shown, we will impose punitive tariffs of 40% against countries that facilitate tariff evasion through transshipment and other regulations, such as goods made using forced labor. [...]

Specifically, posts will encourage countries to reduce their dependence on Chinese investment offerings. The Department's commercial diplomacy strategy will involve identifying American alternatives to Chinese investment, develop new alternatives where they do not exist, and work with other agencies and other countries to encourage reliance on superior American offerings, especially in critical sectors such as AI. Diplomatic missions will also continually monitor and coordinate responses to ongoing Chinese economic coercion abroad.

Objective 5.3: Drive the United States's strategic leverage by increasing U.S. exports and investment.

Our efforts to increase U.S. leverage with strategic partners complements our efforts to reindustrialize, secure supply chains, and end abuses in the global trade system. To deepen countries' economic connection to the United States and reduce their dependence on China, we will reindustrialize and become the world's factory in the most critical sectors that determine the shape of the global economy. Reindustrialization will be driven through incentives and benefits that only accrue to U.S.-based businesses which hire American workers and develop the dynamism and resilience of the American economy. [...] The Department's economic strategy will promote American exports and opening foreign markets to U.S. businesses. [...]

In collaboration with the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Commerce, we will promote American energy production and export to the rest of the world, thereby achieving the Administration priority of energy dominance while driving down energy prices worldwide.

As part of the Department's participation in the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, we will also encourage continued foreign investment into the United States. However, such foreign investment must focus on development of domestic capacities and industry rather than acquiring American assets. We will promote targeted U.S. investments in strategic countries to expand market access for U.S. exports and enhance U.S. control and influence over key nodes and chokepoints in the global trading system. We will also take steps to ensure that the U.S. Dollar remains the global reserve currency and the trade medium of the global economy, thereby avoiding the security and economic implications of de-dollarization.

The Department will take leadership of efforts to promote the export and control of the American AI tech stack to trusted partners, such as Israel or others across the globe. [...]

Objective 5.4: Strengthen U.S. technological edge and industry dominance.

[...] We must therefore outcompete our rivals in technological development and dominance to win in the economic and military spheres as well. We will accomplish this by protecting our advantages and leadership in the science and tech ecosystem while also promoting U.S. technology exports to lead global market share.

We will prevent our adversaries from gaining access to U.S.-developed and produced technologies, whereby they steal our trade secrets and use our technologies to beat us, including through dual-use applications that enable foreign militaries to threaten our national security. [...] Protecting U.S. technology will not guarantee industry dominance if we do not also export our technologies abroad in place of adversaries. [...] Specifically, we will work with U.S. companies to identify use cases and applications, coordinate synergies between different parts of the AI architecture (e.g. semiconductors, compute, data centers, software, etc.) and negotiate deals abroad.

To promote the adoption of U.S.-preferred technology standards, we will exercise strong leadership in international fora by working with partners to advance our preferences and see them adopted. [...]

There is an ongoing need for research at the frontiers of scientific study and the cutting edge of technology products that will shape the future of the American economy, such as in biotechnology, semiconductors, quantum, and terrestrial and space-based telecommunications architecture. [...]

Goal 6: Targeted Foreign Assistance that Puts American Interests First

[...] Sadly, our wayward foreign aid architecture long ago abandoned strategic discipline and the national interests of the United States. This drift was best exemplified by the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID). Established to respond to urgent humanitarian crises and help poorer allies find durable growth, USAID came to view its core constituency as the global humanitarian community rather than the American nation or people. USAID has been eliminated, and its foreign assistance programs have been realigned under the State Department. [...]

The Department's ongoing assistance programs fit into two basic categories: (1) lifesaving programs and (2) strategic investments. Lifesaving assistance includes time-limited health and humanitarian programs, such as disaster response, food security initiatives, and efforts to combat deadly diseases. Strategic assistance advances longer-term U.S. interests by providing allies with security assistance, foreign military financing and economic support and by promoting commercial and trade ties through programs that facilitate market access and U.S.-led infrastructure development. [...]

Objective 6.1: Leverage assistance as a tool of statecraft.

[...] Foreign assistance is a tool of American diplomacy and statecraft—and every dollar we spend on it must be directly justified on those terms. [...] For too long, assistance justified on globalist or humanitarian bases benefitted groups unfriendly to the United States. No longer. When evaluating assistance programs, we will start by ensuring it is going to groups or countries that actively advance our interests. Relevant factors will include military and security ties, cooperation on national security and migration / remigration priorities, voting in international organizations, and fair economic or trade interconnections.

We will also deploy assistance to advance discrete and time-bound objectives and will quickly and effectively leverage assistance as a tool to advance discrete U.S. economic, security, and diplomatic objectives. Our assistance dollars will be more flexibly deployed in connection with emerging diplomatic negotiations, to meet urgent national security needs, to help U.S. businesses contest global deals, to identify and secure vital supplies of critical minerals, to secure bilateral cooperation on migration and remigration agreements, and to deny our adversaries key geopolitical goals or priorities.

Finally, refocusing on strategic objections will require realigning resources to priority regions and areas. In 2024, USAID spent just 10-15% of its assistance budget in the Western Hemisphere and Asia-Pacific combined. That is an unacceptable allocation of scarce resources given U.S. strategic priorities. Accordingly, the Department will aim in 2026 to spend at least 40% of our overall assistance budget in the Western Hemisphere and East Asia regions. [...]

Objective 6.2: Promote and provide trade, not aid.

Private sector economic cooperation is at the center of the America First foreign policy agenda—as is the proven belief that real development and prosperity is driven by trade, private sector growth, investments in innovation, and by efficient markets. Developing nations want help fostering self-reliant growth, not assistance programs designed to create reliance on multilateral institutions and global non-profits. [...]

Our America First foreign assistance strategy will leverage assistance resources to champion American enterprise and infrastructure. We will make investments in exporting cutting-edge American technology—especially in healthcare, communications, software, energy, and transportation—that will bring developing nations into the 21st century economy and solve local humanitarian, governance, and economic problems all around the world. And we will secure local buy-in, catalyze private capital, and ensure that development projects benefit from the discipline of market principles.

These new forms of assistance will help us better compete with our adversaries who seek to leverage investment to assert control over various developing economies. If done correctly, U.S. investments built on private sector principles of fair exchange, local control and mutual benefit will offer a clear contrast—and more appealing alternative to—exploitative models such as Chinese debt-trap diplomacy.

Leveraging assistance for commercial diplomacy will require significant shifts in the way we program and plan assistance. We will diversify our implementing partner set away from the non-profit and international organization sectors and towards the American business community. To effectively work with the private sector, we will also update our procurement to market standards. We will need to work closely with partner governments to ensure local buy-in, regulatory harmonization and co-investment. And we will be more agile in our assistance programming so as to more quickly and opportunistically take advantage of competitive dynamics, market conditions, and unfolding geopolitical events.

Document No. 2. U.S. Department of Defense, *2026 National Defense Strategy: Restoring Peace Through Strength for a New Golden Age in America*, January 2026 (select excerpts)²

[...] Under President Trump's leadership, consistent with his vision and direction as laid out in the National Security Strategy (NSS), the Department of War (DoW) is laser-focused on

² The full document can be found at <https://media.defense.gov/2026/Jan/23/2003864773/-1/-1/0/2026-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY.PDF>.

restoring peace through strength. As detailed in the NSS, the President's approach is one of a flexible, practical realism that looks at the world in a clear-eyed way, which is essential for serving Americans' interests. [...]

Above all, it means prioritizing the missions that matter most for Americans' security, freedom, and prosperity. This means concentrating the Department's efforts to:

- **Defend the U.S. Homeland.** We will secure America's borders and maritime approaches, and we will defend our nation's skies through Golden Dome for America and a renewed focus on countering unmanned aerial threats. We will maintain a robust and modern nuclear deterrent capable of addressing the strategic threats to our country, raise and sustain formidable cyber defenses, and hunt and neutralize Islamic terrorists who have the ability and intent to strike our Homeland. [...] We will guarantee U.S. military and commercial access to key terrain, especially the Panama Canal, Gulf of America, and Greenland. We will provide President Trump with credible military options to use against narco-terrorists wherever they may be. We will engage in good faith with our neighbors, from Canada to our partners in Central and South America, but we will ensure that they respect and do their part to defend our shared interests. [...]
- **Deter China in the Indo-Pacific Through Strength, Not Confrontation.** President Trump seeks a stable peace, fair trade, and respectful relations with China, and he has shown that he is willing to engage President Xi Jinping directly to achieve those goals. But President Trump has also shown how important it is to negotiate from a position of strength—and he has tasked DoW accordingly. Consistent with the President's approach, DoW will therefore seek and open a wider range of military-to-military communications with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with a focus on supporting strategic stability with Beijing as well as deconfliction and de-escalation, more generally. But we will also be clear-eyed and realistic about the speed, scale, and quality of China's historic military buildup. Our goal in doing so is not to dominate China; nor is it to strangle or humiliate them. Rather, our goal is simple: To prevent anyone, including China, from being able to dominate us or our allies—in essence, to set the military conditions required to achieve the NSS goal of a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific that allows all of us to enjoy a decent peace. To that end, as the NSS directs, we will erect a strong denial defense along the First Island Chain (FIC). We will also urge and enable key regional allies and partners to do more for our collective defense. In doing so, we will reinforce deterrence by denial so that all nations recognize that their interests are best served through peace and restraint. [...]
- **Increase Burden-Sharing with U.S. Allies and Partners.** Ours is not a strategy of isolation. As the NSS directs, it is one of focused engagement abroad with a clear eye toward advancing the concrete, practical interests of Americans. Through this America First, commonsense lens, America's alliances and partners have an essential role to play—but not as the dependencies of the last generation. Rather, as the

Department rightly prioritizes Homeland defense and deterring China, other threats will persist, and our allies will be essential to dealing with all of them. Our allies will do so not as a favor to us, but out of their own interests. In the Indo-Pacific, where our allies share our desire for a free and open regional order, allies and partners' contributions will be vital to deterring and balancing China. In Europe and other theaters, allies will take the lead against threats that are less severe for us but more so for them, with critical but more limited support from the United States. [...]

For too long, allies and partners have been content to let us subsidize their defense. Our political establishment reaped the credit while regular Americans paid the bill. [...] President Trump has set a new global standard for defense spending at NATO's Hague Summit—3.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) on core military spending and an additional 1.5% on security-related spending, for a total of 5% of GDP. We will advocate that our allies and partners meet this standard around the world, not just in Europe. As our allies do so, together with the United States, they will be able to field the forces required to deter or defeat potential adversaries in every key region of the world, even in the face of simultaneous aggression. [...]

- Supercharge the U.S. Defense Industrial Base. [...] We must return to being the world's premier arsenal, one that can produce not only for ourselves but also for our allies and partners at scale, rapidly, and at the highest levels of quality. To achieve this, we will reinvest in U.S. defense production, building out capacity; empowering innovators; adopting new advances in technology, like artificial intelligence (AI); and clearing away outdated policies, practices, regulations, and other obstacles to the type and scale of production that the Joint Force requires for the priorities before us. We will simultaneously leverage allied and partner production not just to meet our own requirements but also to incentivize them to increase defense spending and help them field additional forces as quickly as possible. In the process, we will not only ensure our own defense industrial advantage but also put our alliances on stronger footing so that they can do their part to maintain peace through strength on a strong, equitable, and enduring basis. [...]

At the same time, this Strategy will enable the Joint Force to provide President Trump with the operational flexibility and agility required for other objectives, especially the ability to launch decisive operations against targets anywhere [...].

This requires being clear-eyed about the threats that we face, as well as the resources available to both us and our allies to confront them. It requires prioritizing what matters most for Americans and where the gravest and most consequential threats to their interests lie. It requires being honest and clear with our allies and partners that they simply must do more rapidly, not as a favor to Americans but for their own interests. [...] Out with utopian

idealism; in with hardnosed realism. That is the mission we at DoW must embrace—boldly, actively, and without hesitation.

The Security Environment

[...] This Strategy is fundamentally different from the grandiose strategies of the past post-Cold War administrations, untethered as they were from a concrete focus on Americans' practical interests. It does not conflate Americans' interests with those of the rest of the world—that a threat to a person halfway around the world is the same as to an American. Nor does it see implanting our way of life by force as necessary. It does not seek to solve all the world's problems. Rather, it focuses in practical ways on real, credible threats to Americans' security, freedom, and prosperity. As it does so, it recognizes that some threats—like to our Homeland—are more direct and visceral than others. Yet it also acknowledges that even those that may feel distant—like the importance of maintaining U.S. access to the Indo-Pacific, the world's largest market area—still have exceptionally real—indeed, fundamental—implications for our nation's vital interests. [...]

Homeland and Hemisphere

For decades, America's foreign policy establishment neglected our nation's Homeland defenses. This was partly due to the view that such defenses were no longer necessary. But it was also informed by an increasing desire on the part of Washington decisionmakers to ease border controls and facilitate the illegal migration of people and the unchecked, unfair flow of goods. The sorry results speak for themselves. [...]

More direct military threats to the American Homeland have also grown in recent years, including nuclear threats as well as a variety of conventional strike and space, cyber, electromagnetic warfare capabilities. At the same time, although the United States has severely degraded Islamic terrorist organizations like al Qaeda and ISIS in recent decades, these actors continue to adapt and pose a credible threat. American interests are also under threat throughout the Western Hemisphere. [...]

People's Republic of China (PRC)

By any measure, China is already the second most powerful country in the world—behind only the United States—and the most powerful state relative to us since the 19th century. [...] Beijing has already spent vast amounts on the PLA in recent years, often at the expense of domestic priorities. Yet China can still afford to spend even more on its military, should it choose to do so—and it has shown that it is able to do so effectively. Indeed, the speed, scale, and quality of China's historic military buildup speak for themselves, including forces designed for operations in the Western Pacific as well as those capable of reaching targets much farther away.

This matters for America's interests because, as the NSS recognizes, the Indo-Pacific will soon make up more than half of the global economy. The American people's security, freedom, and prosperity are therefore directly linked to our ability to trade and engage from a position of strength in the Indo-Pacific. [...]

That is why the NSS directs DoW to maintain a favorable balance of military power in the Indo-Pacific. Not for purposes of dominating, humiliating, or strangling China. To the contrary, our goal is far more scoped and reasonable than that: It is simply to ensure that neither China nor anyone else can dominate us or our allies. [...] Rather, a decent peace, on terms favorable to Americans but that China can also accept and live under, is possible. [...]

Russia

Russia will remain a persistent but manageable threat to NATO's eastern members for the foreseeable future. Indeed, although Russia suffers from a variety of demographic and economic difficulties, its ongoing war in Ukraine shows that it still retains deep reservoirs of military and industrial power. [...] In addition, although the Russian military threat is primarily focused on Eastern Europe, Russia also possesses the world's largest nuclear arsenal, which it continues to modernize and diversify, as well as undersea, space, and cyber capabilities that it could employ against the U.S. Homeland.

In light of this, the Department will ensure that U.S. forces are prepared to defend against Russian threats to the U.S. Homeland. The Department will also continue to play a vital role in NATO itself, even as we calibrate U.S. force posture and activities in the European theater to better account for the Russian threat to American interests as well as our allies' own capabilities. Moscow is in no position to make a bid for European hegemony. European NATO dwarfs Russia in economic scale, population, and, thus, latent military power. At the same time, although Europe remains important, it has a smaller and decreasing share of global economic power. It follows that, although we are and will remain engaged in Europe, we must—and will—prioritize defending the U.S. Homeland and deterring China.

Fortunately, our NATO allies are substantially more powerful than Russia—it is not even close. [...] Our NATO allies are therefore strongly positioned to take primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense, with critical but more limited U.S. support. This includes taking the lead in supporting Ukraine's defense. As President Trump has said, the war in Ukraine must end. As he has also emphasized, however, this is Europe's responsibility first and foremost. [...]

Iran

President Trump has consistently made clear that Iran will not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. [...] U.S. forces also provided critical support to Israel’s defense throughout the 12-Day War, enabling Israel’s historic operational and strategic successes. [...]

Iran’s “Axis of Resistance” is similarly devastated. Israeli operations have left Hezbollah and Hamas severely degraded. At President Trump’s direction, the United States also launched Operation ROUGH RIDER, which degraded the Houthis’ strike capabilities and ultimately compelled the Houthis to sue for peace—and stop shooting at U.S. ships. [...]

Israel has long demonstrated that it is both willing and able to defend itself with critical but limited support from the United States. Israel is a model ally, and we have an opportunity now to further empower it to defend itself and promote our shared interests, building on President Trump’s historic efforts to secure peace in the Middle East. Likewise, in the Gulf, U.S. partners are increasingly willing and able to do more to defend themselves against Iran and its proxies, including by acquiring and fielding a variety of U.S. military systems. This creates even more opportunities for us to enable individual partners to do more for their defense. It will also enable us to foster integration between regional partners, so that they can do even more together.

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)

The DPRK poses a direct military threat to the Republic of Korea (ROK) as well as to Japan, both of which are U.S. treaty allies. Although many of North Korea’s large conventional forces are aged or poorly maintained, South Korea must stay vigilant against the threat of a North Korean invasion. North Korea’s missile forces are also capable of striking targets in the ROK and Japan with conventional and nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, the DPRK’s nuclear forces are increasingly capable of threatening the U.S. Homeland. These forces are growing in size and sophistication, and they present a clear and present danger of nuclear attack on the American Homeland.

The Simultaneity Problem and Implications for Allied Burden-Sharing

It is only prudent for the United States and its allies to be prepared for the possibility that one or more potential opponents might act together in a coordinated or opportunistic fashion across multiple theaters. Such a scenario would be less of a concern if our allies and partners had spent recent decades investing adequately in their defenses. But they did not. Instead, with rare exceptions, they were too often content to allow the United States to defend them, while they cut defense spending and invested instead in things like public welfare and other domestic programs. [...]

This is why burden-sharing is such an essential ingredient of this Strategy, even as DoW prioritizes growing the Joint Force and advocating defense spending topline to support such growth. America's alliances and partnerships form a defensive perimeter around Eurasia. Not only do these relationships offer favorable geography, but they also include many of the world's wealthiest nations. Taken together, our alliance network is far wealthier than all our potential adversaries combined. As a result, if our allies and partners invest properly in their defenses, consistent with the new global standard set at the Hague Summit, together we can generate more than enough forces to deter potential opponents, including if they act concurrently. [...]

Strategic Approach [...]

Line of Effort 1: Defend the U.S. Homeland

As President Trump has said, the U.S. military's foremost priority is to defend the U.S. Homeland. The Department will therefore prioritize doing just that, including by defending America's interests throughout the Western Hemisphere. We will do so as follows:

- Secure Our Borders. Border security is national security. [...]
- Counter Narco-Terrorists in the Hemisphere. [...] We will therefore help to develop partners' ability to degrade narcoterrorist organizations across the Americas and support them as they do, while also maintaining our ability to take decisive action unilaterally. [...]
- Secure Key Terrain in the Western Hemisphere. [...] DoW will therefore provide the President with credible options to guarantee U.S. military and commercial access to key terrain from the Arctic to South America, especially Greenland, the Gulf of America, and the Panama Canal. [...]
- Defend America's Skies with President Trump's Golden Dome for America and Other, Drone-Specific Measures. The Department will prioritize efforts to develop President Trump's Golden Dome for America, with a specific focus on options to cost-effectively defeat large missile barrages and other advanced aerial attacks. [...] We will also ensure that U.S. forces have access to the electromagnetic spectrum required to defend the Homeland.
- Modernize and Adapt U.S. Nuclear Forces. The United States requires a strong, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal adapted to the nation's overall and defense strategies. We will modernize and adapt our nuclear forces accordingly with focused attention on deterrence and escalation management amidst the changing global nuclear landscape. The United States should never—will never—be left vulnerable to nuclear blackmail.
- Deter and Defend Against Cyber Threats. [...]
- Counter Islamic Terrorists. [...]

Line of Effort 2: Deter China in the Indo-Pacific Through Strength, Not Confrontation

[...] our focus will be on supporting strategic stability and on deconfliction and de-escalation more broadly. At the same time, President Trump has made clear his desire for a decent peace in the Indo-Pacific, where trade flows openly and fairly, we can all prosper, and our interests are respected. DoW will use these engagements to help communicate that vision and intent to Chinese authorities, while also demonstrating through our behavior our own sincere desire to achieve and sustain such a peaceful and prosperous future.

We will not lose sight, however, of President Trump's most important direction for the Department—peace through strength. Recognizing this, it is our essential responsibility at DoW to ensure that President Trump is always able to negotiate from a position of strength in order to sustain peace in the Indo-Pacific. To that end, as the NSS directs, we will build, posture, and sustain a strong denial defense along the FIC. We will also work closely with our allies and partners in the region to incentivize and enable them to do more for our collective defense, especially in ways that are relevant to an effective denial defense. Through these efforts, we will make clear that any attempt at aggression against U.S. interests will fail and is therefore not worth attempting in the first place. That is the essence of deterrence by denial. [...]

Line of Effort 3: Increase Burden-Sharing with U.S. Allies and Partners

[...] the Department will prioritize strengthening incentives for allies and partners to take primary responsibility for their own defense in Europe, the Middle East, and on the Korean Peninsula, with critical but limited support from U.S. forces. At the same time, we will seek to make it as easy as possible for allies and partners to take on a greater share of the burden of our collective defense, including through close collaboration on force and operational planning and working closely to bolster their forces' readiness for key missions. [...]

Incentives work and will be a critical part of our alliance policy. We will therefore prioritize cooperation and engagements with model allies—those who are spending as they need to and visibly doing more against threats in their regions, with critical but limited U.S. support—including through arms sales, defense industrial collaboration, intelligence-sharing, and other activities that leave our nations better off.

In practical terms, DoW will proceed as follows:

- Western Hemisphere. Canada and Mexico have strong roles in hemispheric defense, including by working with DoW and other U.S. agencies to prevent illegal aliens and narcoterrorists from reaching America's borders. Canada also has a vital role to play in helping to defend North America against other threats, including by strengthening defenses against air, missile, and undersea threats. In addition, U.S. partners throughout the Western Hemisphere can do far more to help combat illegal migration

as well as to degrade narco-terrorists and prevent U.S. adversaries from controlling or otherwise exercising undue influence over key terrain, especially Greenland, the Gulf of America, and the Panama Canal. [...]

- Europe. As the NSS makes clear, Europe taking primary responsibility for its own conventional defense is the answer to the security threats it faces. The Department will therefore incentivize and enable NATO allies to take primary responsibility for Europe's conventional defense with critical but more limited U.S. support. Central to this effort, DoW will work closely with our allies to ensure that they deliver on the defense spending pledge that they made at the Hague Summit. We will also seek to leverage NATO processes in support of these goals, while also working to expand transatlantic defense industrial cooperation and reduce defense trade barriers in order to maximize our collective ability to produce forces required to achieve U.S. and allied defense objectives. Finally, we will be clear with our European allies that their efforts and resources are best focused on Europe. This is for the simple reason that it is in Europe where they can—and must—make the greatest difference for our collective defense.
- Middle East. As President Trump laid out in his historic Riyadh speech, the United States seeks a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East. As the President also made clear, however, this transformation can only come at the hands of those with the greatest stake in the region's future—our allies and partners in the region itself. Our task is to support them in that effort, building on the strong foundation that President Trump has laid through his clear-eyed, tireless diplomacy. To that end, DoW will empower regional allies and partners to take primary responsibility for deterring and defending against Iran and its proxies, including by strongly backing Israel's efforts to defend itself; deepening cooperation with our Arabian Gulf partners; and enabling integration between Israel and our Arabian Gulf partners, building on President Trump's historic initiative, the Abraham Accords. [...]
- Africa. The Department's priority in Africa is to prevent Islamic terrorists from using regional safe havens to strike the U.S. Homeland. [...]
- Korean Peninsula. With its powerful military, supported by high defense spending, a robust defense industry, and mandatory conscription, South Korea is capable of taking primary responsibility for deterring North Korea with critical but more limited U.S. support. South Korea also has the will to do so, given that it faces a direct and clear threat from North Korea. This shift in the balance of responsibility is consistent with America's interest in updating U.S. force posture on the Korean Peninsula. In this way, we can ensure a stronger and more mutually beneficial alliance relationship that is better aligned with America's defense priorities, thereby setting conditions for lasting peace.

Line of Effort 4: Supercharge the U.S. Defense Industrial Base

The U.S. DIB is the foundation to rebuilding and adapting our military so that it remains the strongest in the world. [...]

Our fighting force depends on the DIB to produce, deliver, and sustain critical munitions, systems, and platforms. Our readiness, lethality, range, and survivability—and, ultimately, the military options we provide—are directly linked to the DIB’s ability to securely develop, field, sustain, resupply, and transport the equipment and materiel that affords us our warfighting advantage. We will therefore bolster our organic sustainment capabilities, grow nontraditional vendors, and partner with traditional DIB vendors, Congress, our allies and partners, and other federal departments and agencies to reinvigorate and mobilize our great nation’s unrivaled creativity and ingenuity, re-spark our innovative spirit, and restore our industrial capacity. Making the DIB great again requires clear vision, strong relationships, and a solid commitment to rebuild the ultimate foundation of our military strength. As the NSS makes clear, this effort will require nothing short of a national mobilization—a call to industrial arms on par with similar revivals of the last century that ultimately powered our nation to victory in the world wars and the Cold War that followed. [...]

Document No. 3. U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Hearing to Receive Testimony on Strategic Competition in an Unconstrained, Post-New START Treaty Environment*, February 3, 2026 (select excerpts)³

Senator Wicker: [...] The New START Treaty [New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty] was negotiated in the bygone era, years ago. In 2010, the idea of abolishing nuclear weapons seemed an attainable goal to some. For a while, the treaty did provide a degree of transparency and predictability between the United States and Russia on the nuclear forces of those two countries. That is until Vladimir Putin decided that compliance with Russia’s obligations were no longer in his interest. That should be instructive, I would add, regarding any promises that he might be trying to make during this year.

Now, as I say, 15 years after the treaty was signed, we face an assortment of threats far more complicated and dangerous than anyone foresaw in 2010. Today, the Putin dictatorship commands the world’s largest nuclear arsenal, and he’s developing new weapons designed to exploit our most vulnerable points.

³ The full transcript can be found at https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/transcript_02-03-2026.pdf.

Despite its conventional losses in Ukraine, which are substantial, Russia's nuclear weapons production capacity is far greater than our own. His capacity to produce nuclear weapons is far greater than that of the United States. It will likely remain so for the foreseeable future.

China is poised to become an even greater threat. Over the past several years, Xi Jinping has nearly quadrupled the size of his nuclear arsenal. Meanwhile, he's expanded China's shipbuilding capacity to more than 230 times that of the United States, and he's built thousands of long-range missiles, including Fractional Orbital Bombardment weapons.

The full list of China's military advances is too extensive to cover here. But China's goal is clear; she is committed to replacing the U.S., and is rapidly building to displacing the U.S. as the leader, and is rapidly building the capability to do so.

The emergence of two peer competitors alone represents an unprecedented challenge to the United States. However, these concerns have compounded by an extensive set of new threats to our national security. These threats include North Korea's growing nuclear missile capabilities, the weaponization of space, the accessibility of dangerous narcotics, the increased use of unmanned systems, and the emergence of artificial intelligence. [...] In this complicated environment, deterrence depends on tangible military capability. Some American defense planners express hope for a "decent peace" with our adversaries, but to endure that peace, it must be founded first and foremost on a credible deterrent. To be sure, improved defenses such as Golden Dome initiative play a vital supporting role. But at its core that credible deterrence will always be based on our nuclear forces.

Secondly, strategic competition can no longer be divided into discreet domains. Our adversaries view all types of military capabilities as tools to shape geopolitical outcomes. Our nuclear posture, missile defenses, conventional forces, cyber capabilities, and space assets must be fully integrated and responsive to threats against the U.S. national security, regardless of where those threats arise.

Thirdly, we cannot field the capabilities we need without a strong industrial base. Decades of so-called streamlining have left our domestic manufacturers with almost no capacity to surge munitions production. Our critical mineral supply chains have become brittle, poorly designed workforce development plans have left us with critical labor shortages in manufacturing and skilled trades.

This moment tests American resolve and our commitment to the alliances that have helped preserve our security for decades. Our allies are waiting to see whether we will respond to this new era with seriousness, strength, and leadership, or with hesitation, weakness, and complacency. We must compete with the adversaries I've mentioned, and we must do so responsibly.

This does not mean recklessly seeking conflict, nor does it mean retreating into isolationism. Instead, we recognize that peace is preserved through strength, preparedness, and a willingness to act when appropriate to achieve our national interest. [...]

Ambassador Gottemoeller: [...] Too often, deterrence in arms control are set up in opposition to each other. If nuclear deterrence is the top necessity, then nuclear arms control has to be dead. If nuclear arms control is thriving, then nuclear deterrence must be suffering. I would like to stress that instead, the two enjoy a symbiotic relationship. The strength of one feeds the strength of the other and vice versa.

The symbiosis comes about because stable deterrence is driven by predictability, and nuclear negotiations done right, deliver predictability. The effect comes about because restraints on our opponents reach through agreement, bolster predictability, which in turn supports our nuclear forces in their drive for reliable, stable, and effective deterrence.

Lack of predictability by contrast, feeds uncertainty about the status of the nuclear forces among our adversaries, which means we may end up spending more than we have to on nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. [...]

It goes without saying that we have to be alert to any cheating going on, and the Russians have violated treaties in an egregious way, including the short and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, INF, which President Trump withdrew from in response in 2019 during his first term in office. That action conveyed an important message; we are alert to treating non-compliance by the Russians or any other country, and we will respond with every legal tool available to us and take military action, nuclear or conventional, as warranted.

President Putin's decision to pull the plug [...] on the implementation of New START in February, 2023 was not permitted by the treaty, and we determined quickly that Russia was therefore in violation of it. That was the right decision, but it does not belie the fact that New START has kept the Russian nuclear force posture to the limits of the treaty despite this violation; 1,550 deployed warheads, 700 deployed delivery vehicles, and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers.

We have been able to confirm the deployments through our national technical means of verification. As a result, essential predictability has remained despite the violation [...]

I testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in December that I support a one-year extension of the limits of New START. My bottom line is that it does not serve U.S. National Security and trust to have to address the Chinese nuclear buildup, while simultaneously facing a rapid Russian upload campaign.

The Russians have the capacity and experience to succeed in such a campaign. It will be much better for us to keep them limited for at least another year while we continue to plan and prepare for the Chinese threat. Remaining under New START limits for a year does not prejudice our plannings and preparation to upload. The concern about a rapid Russian upload campaign was a finding of the Strategic Posture Commission, of which I was a member. [...]

Refusing the one-year extension on New START limits gives Putin an easy diplomatic win that should have been the President's. But I do not insist that New START is the be-all and end-all of nuclear treaties. President Trump told the New York Times in January that he wants to negotiate a better treaty. That is good. [...]

Mr. Morrison: [...] It's worth recalling that the Cold War officially ended on December 26th, 1991, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. With the expiration of the New START Treaty this week, we can finally put to rest the last Cold War-style arms control treaty as well. History doesn't afford many blank slate opportunities, but this Thursday will be an opportunity to start over in the domain of arms control.

Let's be clear, arms control can and should be an important tool of competition between nuclear arms states, but it is only a tool of competition, and it is only one tool and is not an end to itself. The Cold War did witness arms control that served us interests in that competition.

For example, the INF agreement was perhaps the most successful arms control treaty ever signed by the United States. Not only did it actually destroy nuclear weapons and prohibit an entire class of them, but the Soviet Union had to destroy more than twice as many nuclear weapons as the United States.

But these criteria are only one piece of the puzzle. There's another piece as Dr. Fred Iklé's said, "After detection - What?" How do we enforce compliance in a future arms control treaty? INF was after all a Cold War agreement, and it was one that Russia ultimately saw fit to end realizing perhaps before we did that, the Cold War was over.

And so, when considering what arms control the United States might want to pursue going forward, we should be thinking today after detection. What I fear, our options are limited. [...]

China is adding at least 100 warheads a year to its nuclear force. General Cotton, the prior Commander of USSTRATCOM, testified before the House Armed Services Committee that, "Russia continues to update its warhead production complex and is producing hundreds of warheads each year."

By 2035, 100 percent of U.S. nuclear weapons, the warheads, and the bombs themselves, will have exceeded their design lives by an average of 30 years. [...] This asymmetry undermines not only arm control but deterrence itself.

Now, history has shown that the only means to reliably enforce compliance with arm control treaties is to be able to threaten that failure to comply will be met with a compelling response. And for the next arm control treaty, if the U.S. doesn't have the means to respond quickly to a violation, what will we have accomplished by agreeing to it? Indeed, relying on ineffective arms control may actually undermine our security by denying us the motivation to make needed investments in our security.

The continued commitment to rebuild the U.S. nuclear deterrence, and to have a system capable of building and maintaining that deterrence is essential not only for U.S. and allied security, but if we are going to be able to get to a point where arms control can again serve our national security [.] [...]

Mr. Morrison: Senator, when the Trump administration had an opportunity to consider this question, we stepped back and we looked at not just what the Russian Force was doing, but also the Chinese force. [...] One of the things that former Secretary of State Pompeo stated was that under New START, "Only 45 percent of Russia's nuclear arsenal was subject to numerical limits. Meanwhile, that agreement restricts 92 percent of America's arsenal."

Where we approached this question in the prior Trump administration was; let's look at an agreement that captures the total force, not just strategic weapons.

Chairman Wicker: Was it a bad deal?

Mr. Morrison: Senator, I believe that the New START Treaty was a bad deal. [...]

Admiral Richard: Senator, first, to be very direct on the answer to your question, I would not recommend a one-year extension to the New START Treaty, absent verification procedures being reinstated.

I am on record testifying in front of this committee that arms [c]ontrol as [A]mbassador [Gottemoeller] mentioned, if done correctly, enhances strategic deterrence, enhances certainty, enhances confidence. But it has to include all parties, it has to include all weapons, and it has to have verification mechanisms built in with consequences for non-compliance. [...]

[A]t a minimum, I would include Russia, China, and the United States in any arms control agreement. Absent that, simply extending the New START Treaty for one year does not constrain Russia to the same way that it constrains us.

It prevents us from answering the challenge that China has added to this, and it increases the uncertainty because it doesn't have the verification mechanisms built in that were so successful in the past. [...]

I would strongly endorse the drive to protect the continental United States with a [G]olden [D]ome. I think we have real-world experience from the Middle East in terms of how that enhances defense. Deterrence provides more options to our leadership, and I would like those same benefits to be applied to the United States.

That said, I think a lesson out of the events in Israel is that deterrence by denial, which is what a defensive system like Golden Dome does, has to always be backed up by the threat of deterrence by cost imposition, otherwise, your opponent has no incentive to stop shooting. [...]

Our entire nuclear deterrence posture is designed to, by threat of escalation, convince your opponent, have a perception in your opponent's mind, that restraint, inaction is their least bad course of action.

And that has been successful for over 60 years in deterring not only nuclear attack on the United States and our allies, but has made a great contribution to the deterrence of Great Power War. [...]

I would offer that we're already in an environment where we need additional forces. That independent of the treaty, Russia has been very successful at adding capability that is not covered by the treaty. [...] China is completely unconstrained.

So, yes. Is there a value to the verification mechanisms in terms of reducing what you might consider error bars around your intelligence community's assessment of your opponent's capability? Yes, but that is very minor in comparison to where they are unconstrained, and have no limits on their ability to improve or increase their forces. [...]

[O]n China, I had a rule with my intelligence folks back at STRATCOM that whatever the intelligence community tells you about China in terms of numbers, double it or triple it, and you will probably be closer to where we're actually going to wind up.

In terms of time, divide by two, maybe by three, and you'll actually wind up being closer. And in my four years since retiring, that rule of thumb seems to have held. So, yes, I think that's the way to approach that. [...]

But from an operational standpoint, in my conversations with the allies, the issue was less about treaties, and it was more about capability and will.

And we have recently demonstrated will. I think we've made positive movement in that direction, but it's the capabilities we have or don't have that is of a much bigger concern to our allies in terms of our ability to honor our extended deterrence commitments. [...]

Ambassador Gottemoeller: [...] President Trump [...] said publicly, and as I've understood, he's discussed with President Xi Jinping, at least according to media reports, that he would like to get into a new nuclear negotiation with China as well. [...] The best information I have is that by 2035, they will have right around 1,500 warheads according to our Department of Defense, now Department of War. [...] I say we have to be self-confident in our ability to work this problem over the next decade, including through responses that we make in the development and modernization of our nuclear triad, but also in terms of how we engage and interact with them at the negotiating table. I do think those two things work together and that we can gain success by having a very firm and strong approach to the modernization of our nuclear triad. [...]

Admiral Richard: [...] I didn't have the luxury when I was at STRATCOM of deterring our opponents one at a time. I had to look at the collective. I am very concerned about the possibility of opportunistic or coordinated aggression, either between major powers such as Russia, and China, and or the regional ones. Again, I had to deter them all.

And so, the simple numerical comparisons don't completely capture the complexity, what the U.S. has to have in order to deter two peers at the same time that have to be deterred differently. And I think there's a lot of work left to be done in terms of even updating how you apply deterrence theory in a three-party world with possibility of coordinated opportunistic and ambiguous aggression.

In a way, all of that needs to be worked out, but I would strongly support what the Strategic Posture Commission said; our current modernization program is necessary, but not sufficient, and there are a number of obvious steps we need to take in terms of additional capabilities to address the threat I just described. [...]

Mr. Morrison: Senator, I think it comes back to deterrence works. And part of our ability to deter is to demonstrate that whoever may choose to challenge us, including if they challenge us in a conspiracy or confederation, can't possibly win.

And that's where I worry about the asymmetry between our nuclear weapons production complex and those of our potential adversaries. I don't believe that right now our complex deters aggression, including aggression by more than one power at a time. [...]

Ambassador Gottemoeller: [...] I absolutely agree, as the Strategic Posture Commission said, that the triad modernization under the program of record is necessary but not sufficient.

So, I think we have to continue to press to get that program of record implemented on time to the degree that is possible. I know delays are already happening, but we just have to keep intense pressure on that process in order to get the program of record completed.

I would like to point out, however, that the Posture Commission also recommended that new requirements not be piled on at this moment, but that we continue on the program of record [...], and then think what else will need to be accomplished.

Mr. Morrison: [...] We skipped an entire generation of modernization of our nuclear force, and we waited until the last minute to modernize everything all at once.

Every year you hear posture hearings. Admiral Richard gave them, his successors have given them. And they talk about the risks of further delays, and those risks accumulate. They undermine deterrence, they undermine assurance of our allies.

And at some point, those risks reach a breaking point that I'm sure Admiral Richard always had to calculate how much uncertainty does he want to give our allies, and how much uncertainty does he want to show to our adversaries? But the risks are real. So, yes, delays undermine deterrence and assurance. [...]

Admiral Richard: Senator, I'd like to offer two points in response to your question. First, you ended it with a discussion of something potentially being, not your exact words, destabilizing. I get that question a lot along with whether or not something is escalatory. [...] I think that is not the first question that should be asked. The first question that we should ask is, are we defended? The second question is, are they deterred? And then, only then, do we start to ask ourselves; is it stabilizing or destabilizing, escalatory or not? Deterrence, fundamentally is the withheld threat of escalation. So, it is not possible to deter without threatening escalation.

Back to your specific question, I think that the United States needs to immediately start taking steps, steps that are currently precluded by the New START Treaty to enhance its posture with the forces that it has today in order to answer the challenge that is presented to us by both Russia's non-compliance, and their efforts around the New START Treaty, as well as China being unconstrained[,] to include uploading warheads to our intercontinental ballistic missiles, removing covers off the four tubes on our trident submarines that are currently empty, and several other posture steps that should be taken, now not a year from now. [...]

Mr. Morrison: Senator, I would urge that we not continue to look through the soda straw of New START and strategic arms control. It's not an accident that the first place the United States deployed an INF range conventional system at the expiration of that agreement was in the Philippines.

We have an opportunity to look at all of the tools in our toolkit to create leverage to drive all parties to the negotiating table. [...] Having the security blanket of continuing the New START Treaty gives both Russia and China an excuse to move this conversation off the table, and look for other areas where they might want to engage. [...]

Admiral Richard: Senator, I'll just offer that I don't know how China could be moving much faster, independent of treaties, that we do or don't have on ourselves. Russia seems to be very capable of going around the New START Treaty to add capabilities and capacity that are not constrained by the treaty. [...]

Senator, first, I remain in strong support of the Sea[-]Launch[ed] Nuclear Cruise Missile, and I think events in the time since I retired have borne out why I made that recommendation. It would've been a great utility to us already, and I think it'll be the same in the future.

But to answer your question, yes, I do think we need to be considering additional capabilities beyond simply supplemental capability of a Sea Launch Cruise Missile. To deter, the threat has to be credible, which means you have to pace the defenses of the states that you are in competition with.

So, I don't think it's too early to start looking at a nuclear capable hypersonic weapon for the U.S., an extension of our conventional capabilities in that area. I think in the future—and there's several others we could discuss—that will be an important addition to maintain our deterrence against Russia and China.

Senator Fischer: As we look at the number of bombers, the number of submarines that are under production right now, do you think that our sizing of our force is based on deterring the current threat environment? Is that the best strategy we can have on this?

Admiral Richard: Senator, those numbers were developed back in 2010 timeframe under a very different strategic environment and strategic threat environment specifically. So, no, I think the numbers are insufficient on all portions of the triad, particularly on the bomber and the ballistic missile submarine leg.

There are additional capabilities that we should consider in addition to the recapitalization of the triad and increasing the capacity inside the triad. One challenge that we face, particularly on the ballistic missile submarine side is the time it would take to get additional ballistic missile submarines given the timelines involved in those productions.

But the answer to your question is, yes, we're going to need more capacity, particularly in the bomber and sea launch legs. [...]

My experience in terms of what causes allies apprehension, particularly in the Asia Pacific, has to do more with our capabilities and in particular, our lack of theater systems available in the Indo-Pacific, and our modest contribution to NATO with the dual-capable aircraft. [...]

I think, fundamentally, agreeing to an additional year [of adhering to New START] constrains us relative to China and the actions that we need to be taking in the very near-term to address that threat while providing us little benefit with Russia. [...]

Mr. Morrison: Senator, as you know, there is already a serial pattern of non-compliance, so I would not be surprised if Russia was doing that. And I already believe it's a bad idea without that information to extend the treaty for one year. [...]

Senator, there's two issues at the heart of the debate over nuclear testing. One, does the current U.S. nuclear stockpile require it for credibility? And two, why are Russia and China doing it if they are doing it? It's that second question, and what we may not know, and if we do know, likely can't talk about in this environment, that causes me the most concern. Not because of the credibility of our deterrent, but the risk of strategic surprise. [...]

Admiral Richard: [...] I would put the highest priority actually on removing the four-missile tube covers on our Trident submarines and returning them to 24 tubes, vice 20 [,] uploading intercontinental ballistic missiles, rem[i]rving up to the appropriate point.

Senator Banks: [...] Mr. Morrison, China's in the middle of a massive nuclear buildup, as you've said. Yet, the department has consistently underestimated the speed and scale of that buildup. [...] Why do we keep underestimating them?

Mr. Morrison: Senator, they are an incredibly complicated intelligence collection target. [...] I think we have never seen a buildup that is proceeding as comprehensively and at the speed that we're currently seeing. So, I think maybe it breaks some of our models. [...]

Senator Kelly: [...] In a world without arms control limits, and with two major adversaries potentially expanding their nuclear arsenals, what are the strategic implications for pursuing this kind of defense?

Admiral Richard: Senator, first, I would support additional defenses, air and missile defenses, for the United States in terms of the way it enhances our security. I think the success of the Israeli system is an example of – the technical challenges that you just described can be addressed.

Senator Kelly: Do you feel they can be addressed at scale –

Admiral Richard: I do think they can –

Senator Kelly: – with the full salvos of ICBM?

Admiral Richard: Absolutely. Because the goal is not to – you’re not going to intercept every single weapon going in, but you will intercept enough of them. That one will drive your opponent to have to consider a much larger attack than they might otherwise have.

There’s a deterrent value in that alone, and then introducing a lack of confidence on the part of your opponent. Their attack is going to be successful, yet, they will carry all the consequences of having started it, I think enhances our security. [...]

I would agree decoys are pretty cheap. I would agree that there are ways to discriminate through that. I also think directed energy is pretty cheap. And so, I think there is a technological competition, not unlike other ones we’ve had in our history that we can win. [...]

The actual capacity of Golden Dome hasn’t been specified. But your answer is, no, it’s not designed to stop an entire salvo to 100 percent effectiveness. But we don’t need 99.99. Right? 99 would go a long way in terms of giving us more options, more decision space. We still retain and will need to retain our strategic deterrent in our conventional forces –[.] [...]