U.S. National Security Strategy and the MENA Region

Anthony H. Cordesman

America's allies, and other states, can scarcely be blamed for being confused by the changes taking place in U.S. strategy. U.S. national security strategy has announced in three different unclassified documents at three different times, and in very different levels of detail:

- A National Security Strategy issued by the White House—with the authority of the President—on December 17, 2017, and focusing on U.S. domestic and civil programs as well as national security.
- A National Defense Security Strategy issued by the Department of Defense—with the authority of the Secretary of Defense—on January 18, 2018, and focusing on defense and national security.
- The U.S. defense budget request to Congress for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. This consists of a wide range of over 1,000 pages of data in a wide range of different documents summarized in a Budget Overview document issued by the Comptroller's Office of the Office of the Secretary of Defense but based on the budget and programs approved by the White House and approved by the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This summary is specifically described as presenting the budget in strategic terms.

All three documents call for serious increases in U.S. military efforts, new approaches to tactics and strategy, new weapons and technologies, and higher levels of readiness. All three focus on the need to deal with what is perceived as rising strategic challenges from Russia, increased strategic and regional competition from China, and the threat posed by non-state actors and "rogue" states like Iran and North Korea.

All three, however, make it clear that "American first" is not a retreat to some form of isolation, but an effort to restore the U.S. military position on a global level to the point where in can contain, deter, and/or defeat these threats. All three call for a strengthening—not a retreat—in the U.S. role in the MENA region and South Asia, Europe, and Asia.

All three documents also stress the need to improve the U.S. role in all its existing strategic partnerships, and force new ones if possible. The National Security Strategy highlights the need to avoid seeking to impose American values on other states, but stresses the fact the U.S. will continue to advocate those values and encourage other states to adopt them.

Words and Rhetoric are Interesting, but Money and Implementation Matter

In practice, there is a natural progression in these three documents from broad concepts at the White House level to real world implementation plans and specifics in the FY2019 budget request. The White House National Security Strategy provides conceptual goals that are explained more in terms of rhetoric than reality.

The National Defense Security Strategy provides little actual detail, in part because the Department of Defense has developed a series of individual strategies forgiven regions and key missions that are largely classified. It essentially fine tunes some portions of the concepts in the White House document.

The summary that the OSD Comptroller provides of key areas of U.S. strategy and force development like force levels and improvements, power projection, and strategic partnerships does not provide much regional detail, but sets very concrete goals each area. The Comptroller also provides supporting documents that make the specific requests for expenditures and for the approval of major programs that will define the actual reality of U.S. strategy—requests where the strategy by region is explained in far more detail during the course of the year in testimony to
Congress by senior policymakers and by senior commanders like the commander of the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) who plays a lead role in shaping U.S. strategy in the MENA region.

Each report is also different enough so it can be very difficult to track how the text differs from document to document, particularly readers that are more familiar with concepts than programs and budgets.

For those who have not served in government, and far too many that have, it is natural to focus more on the rhetoric coming out of the White House rather than the budget specifics coming out of the Comptroller's office. In practice, however, rhetoric is only meaningful to the point it leads to action, and action takes the form of actually funding and successfully implementing given programs.

Reading through the budget submission often tells far more about reality than reading the strategy—particularly in the United States. The U.S. Congress does far more to alter budgets and programs—and the real-world implementation of a strategy—than most of the world's legislatures. Moreover, it only approves actual spending on outlays for one fiscal year—a year that only runs from October to October in the next calendar year. Historically, efforts change significantly from administration to administration. Rises and falls in spending and given efforts are the rule and not the exception.

Most major force development and procurement programs that really change strategy take at least three to five years to implement in peacetime. Major procurement programs take 10-15 years to fund, fully implement, bring to full readiness, and implement. More change radically over time than not.

The working principle that one must always "follow the money" applies to strategy as much as every other aspect of U.S. government activity. It is also true that ever since the end of World War II, unless some major outside catalyst takes place like a radically change in the threat, U.S. strategy is far slower to change than U.S. rhetoric usually implies. There is tremendous momentum in the U.S. national security structure on a force by force, program by program, and command by command basis.

**Far More Continuity than Change**

The reassuring aspect of U.S. strategy in the MENA region is that the U.S. remains fully committed to its strategic partnerships, considers Iran and extremism as being as critical of threats as Russia and China, and continues to fund the forces of the U.S. Central Command in the MENA region at the same strength. The documents call for major improvements in weaponry and some aspects of revenue over time, apart from some cuts to reflect progress in the defeat of ISIS in Iraq.

All three documents also make it clear that "American first" actually means more emphasis on strategic partnerships, and a focus on Russia and China does not materially affect U.S. strategic partnership in the MENA region half as much as the actions of Iran, Russia, and Turkey; the ability to defeat violent extremism; the region's civil conflicts, and the instability, fracture lines, and problems of American's strategic partners.

Moreover, the only way to see the full level of continuity in the core structure of U.S. strategy is to actually read the key documents involved. Each such document has been introduced with far more political and/or partisan comments and debates than the actual content of the document.
merits, have often led to unrelated clashes over U.S. policy and has led to debates inside and outside the United States that are based far more on a given proponent's view of what U.S. strategy should or should not be than the actual content of the documents.

For many outside the United States, it can be difficult to find the original text, although an Internet search by title will quickly bring up to web site for the White House or Department of Defense version. Even with the original, it can be difficult for even an experienced reader to guess how the wording in each of the three affects a given American strategic partners—to the extent it does at all.

In practice, the only way is to fully understand the level of continuity in U.S. strategic partnerships is to actually read through all three. Three sets of excerpts are attached, however, in the appendices to this commentary, these three Appendices are entitled:

- **President Trump’s New National Security Strategy**, [Appendix 1]

**America's Real Strategic Challenges in the MENA Region: Relying on Half a Strategy**

The reassuring aspect of U.S. strategy is that it remains fully committed to U.S. strategic partnerships, focuses on Iran and extremism as being as critical to U.S. strategic interests as Russia and China, and continues to fund the forces of the U.S. Central Command in the MENA region at the same core strength. In fact, new U.S. programs will make major improvements in weaponry and some aspects of readiness over time, and the only currently programmed cuts in FY2019 reflect real world progress in the defeat of ISIS in Iraq.

The end result is that the past momentum of U.S. actions will preserve continuity in U.S. strategy in a wide range of areas. At least in the near term, there is "strategic momentum" in the U.S.:

- Deployment of USCENTCOM and U.S. forces in region -- whose strength, modernization, and readiness will benefit from their share of $65 billion in added FY2018 funding; and $80 billion added to the FY2019 request.
- Focus on Iran.
- Focus on Counterterrorism.
- Focus on stability of regional oil exports.
- Limits to aid and national building.
- Role in Iraq and Syria.
- Aid to Egypt and Israel.
- Ties to current Arab security partners.
- Limits on “nation building.”
- Effort to limit the role of U.S. forces to air plus train and assist efforts on ground.

At the same time, none of the three documents address the most serious problems in U.S. strategy — most of which are shaped as much by strategic partners as its own action. None of three address
the specific changes taking place in U.S. forces by major command and region, or have provided any specifics as to how they will affect America's strategic partnerships.

The U.S. can justly be accused of only having half a strategy for dealing with the region. Its programs and actions focus almost exclusively on security and the role of military and counterterrorism forces, and not on stability and the civil problems and conflicts that have torn much of the MENA region apart since 2011.

These failures are at least as serious, however, on the part of America's strategic partners in the MENA region. If one looks across the Middle East and North Africa, all of the forces that have led to regional instability have grown worse with time and not better. The so-called "Arab Spring" has done nothing to bring stability to the Arab world.

Far too many Arab states have suffered from major political upheavals or conflicts as a result of internal ethnic, sectarian, and tribal conflicts; violent extremist movements; poor economic development; corruption and crony capitalism; and the combined impact of social change, hyper urbanization, climate and water issues, a surge in population, and the number of young men and women entering the labor force. The 2016 edition of the Arab Development report estimates that average youth unemployment is 30%.

Coupled with major cuts in petroleum export revenues, these upheavals and conflicts have interacted with civil challenges to stability that are as critical as the military and internal security issues. Regional conflict states have not only had to consider external security challenges, but they’ve had to contend with the drastic impact of war or key internal security challenges. This is the case to varying degrees in Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, the Sudan, and Somalia.

It is also important to point out that many of these civil stability problems long preceded 2011. The current emphasis on dealing with wartime damage ignores the real nature and scale of the strategic challenges involved. So far, only Saudi Arabia has advanced even the outline of the kind of plan needed to make such changes, and it remains more conceptual than real. Only three Arab states—Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE—have enough petroleum or other wealth to largely ignore such challenges.

In the rest of the Arab world, the Algeria civil war, corruption in Tunisia, crony capitalism in Egypt, sporadic civil war in Lebanon, failed development and repression in Syria, failed leaders in Iraq and the Iran-Iraq War, sectarian divisions in Bahrain, and political crises, violence and chronic economic mismanagement in Yemen, the Sudan, and Somalia are cases in point. Reporting by the World Bank and IMF make it clear that than many key problems go back decades in a region where the population has increased by more than five times since 1950, and a "youth bulge" will create major job creation and stability problems for at least the next decade.

The U.S. can be held at fault for invading Iraq without properly planning to deal with its civil challenges, and possibly for failing to act more decisively in Syria when Assad was most vulnerable. It also has pulled away from serious efforts at "national building" after it learned the hard way in Iraq and Afghanistan that it could not transform strategic partners from the outside. As a result, it can be accused of over-reacting by cutting its economic and governance aid and nation building efforts to a minimum, and focusing almost exclusively on the military and internal security dimension of its strategy.
The fact remains, however, that the whole history of development and stability in the post-colonial era has made it clear that outside states cannot help states that are not unified enough, and do not have the leadership, to help themselves. The sheer scale of the problem in the MENA region—particularly in conflict states like Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen where the need to development and rebuild the entire economy—is massive.

**Partners in Strategic Challenges**

And, here we come to the broader issues in U.S. strategy in the MENA region. Many are areas where a successful U.S. strategy is dependent on a strategic partner or partners, and reducing the fault lines that Iran and outside power exploit within the Arab world:

- **Iran’s interrelated security challenges**: Its nuclear weapons efforts, precision guided and other ballistic and cruise missiles, asymmetric naval-missile-air forces in the Gulf, and expansion of regional security influence in Lebanon-Iraq-Iran and Yemen.

- **Creating effective levels of deterrence, containment, and defense**: This requires collective major efforts to reduce the fault lines and rifts Iran can exploit within the Arab world, far more effective cooperation in defense, and finding some alternative to an open-ended arms race -- none of which can occur without more inter-Arab and U.S.-Arab strategic cooperation.

- **Arab Divisions and Petty Feuding**: The U.S. cannot create an effective security structure in the Gulf as long as Qatar is so divided from key security partners like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain; as long as Oman and Saudi Arabia remain at odds; and long as each GCC state makes so little progress towards integrated force planning, interoperability, and common facilities and institutions.

- **Finding some integrated and interoperable approach to missile defense, and maritime security**: The Gulf, Red Sea, and Gulf of Oman are particularly high priorities.

- **Cooperation in power projection with outside allies**: Declining power projection resources in France, Italy, United Kingdom. Uncertain role of Turkey.

- **Stability in Yemen**: Similar unity is needed in finding some outcome to the war in Yemen that will produce some level of lasting stability in Yemen and tie it to the Arab world. This not only requires new levels of security cooperation, it requires cooperation in offering Yemen some form of serious hope for development and stability.

- **Encourage Egypt to put the same focus on civil development and unity it now places on internal security.** This is a critical step in restoring Egypt's broader role and influence in the MENA region.
• Choose an approach to “peace” between Israel and the Palestinians: Progress towards a real Israeli-Palestinian peace may impossible, but finding ways to cooperate in aiding the Palestinian economy is not.

• Stability in Libya: Libya is another case where cooperation is needed in finding incentives to move towards unity and development, and deal with a key security problem.

• Support of Jordan and Morocco: Both represent moderate Arab states that need added aid and support in achieving development and stability, and their security efforts.

• Deal with the outliers: Nations like Algeria, the Sudan, and Somalia all represent radically different cases where better cooperation between partners may be able to help.

None of these challenges have good or easy answers. None involve easy movement towards cooperation and a common approach. All, however, represent pressing security issues for both the United States and its regional partners, and cases where expanding that cooperation to include European states like France and the United Kingdom, and Israel might make a further difference.

This scarcely means the U.S. should be exempt from criticism. The U.S. has made many mistakes. It can do more in many areas, and it does need to listen far more carefully to its partners. But, the U.S. has no magic wands or ability to deal with most key strategic challenges on its own.

No miracles are going to come from over the horizon into the MENA region. Not from the U.S., a largely mythical international community, or any other source. They must come at least as much from within the MENA as from the United States, and U.S. strategy can only be as successful as its strategic partners help make it.
Appendix 1

President Trump's New National Security Strategy


Anthony H. Cordesman, Revised March 15, 2018

President Trump's new National Security Strategy (NSS) deserves careful attention, particularly by America's allies, strategic partners, and those who deal with everything the President says or issues in terms of knee jerk criticism. It is a document that President Trump reviewed, and altered in some depth, and that represents his views—rather than a bureaucratic compromise. It expands on the classic themes of U.S. strategy—rather than rejects them—and commits the U.S. to playing its traditional role in leading the free world.

"America First" Means International, Not Isolation

One of the most critical aspects of the document is its definition of "America First"—one which clearly rejects the isolationism of those who first used the term, and rejects the denial of America's overseas role that some around the President advocated for before he appointed his present national security team as of mid-March. It directly addresses both America's need to remain committed overseas and deal with competition from Russia and China:

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

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

This National Security Strategy puts America first only in the sense that highlights the need to maintain a lead in national security forces and capabilities, and work with strategic partners to achieve these goals:

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

America’s achievements and standing in the world were neither inevitable nor accidental. On many occasions, Americans have had to compete with adversarial forces to preserve and advance our security, prosperity, and the principles we hold dear.

The United States consolidated these military victories with political and economic triumphs built on market economies and fair trade, democratic principles, and shared security partnerships.

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

China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence...

These competitions require the United States to rethink the policies of the past two decades—policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global
commerce would turn them into benign actors and trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false.

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This wording is not the same as in the documents issued by past administrations, but it clearly addresses the need for the U.S. to maintain the key elements of its current role in the world, as do the relevant portions of the rest of the document. It also reflects the fact that President Trump may swing from position to position at times in his tweets and short statements, but so far has ended up closer to the center in shaping his national security positions than many of his critics take fully into account.

Redefining U.S. National Security in Terms of Both Domestic and International "Pillars"

At the same, this is an innovative strategy as well. The new National Security Strategy centers around four pillars. The first two pillars add new sets of domestic goals to the more traditional international and military goals, and the remaining two pick up new domestic priorities as well:

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

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

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

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

Fourth, we will advance American influence because a world that supports American interests and reflects our values makes America more secure and prosperous. We will compete and lead in multilateral organizations so that American interests and principles are protected. America’s commitment to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law serves as an inspiration for those living under tyranny. We can play a catalytic role in promoting private-sector-led economic growth, helping aspiring partners become future trading and security partners. And we will remain a generous nation, even as we expect others to share responsibility.
The first two pillars clearly tie domestic strength to military security and make it clear that making “America first” is critically dependent on allies and strategic partners. The next two pillars make these points even more clearly, and the fourth provides a new commitment to playing a key role in international organizations—both those that affect national security directly like NATO, and the wide range of civil organizations that some on the far right disregard or see as hostile.

The strategy presents a conservative view of America's role, but it is also a very international one, and one that clearly ties the President's domestic priorities to American action and leadership overseas.

**Pillar I: "Protect the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life" Means the U.S. Must "Pursue Threats to Their Source"**

The President's commitment to preserving American leadership and international action is particularly clear in the wording that the new National Security strategy uses in explaining the First Pillar, and explaining what it means to "protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life."

This national security strategy begins with the determination to protect the American people, the American way of life, and American interests... Americans have long recognized the benefits of an interconnected world... Openness also imposes costs, since adversaries exploit our free and democratic system.

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

Adversaries target sources of American strength, including our democratic system and our economy. They steal and exploit our intellectual property and personal data, interfere in our political processes, target our aviation and maritime sectors, and hold our critical infrastructure at risk. All of these actions threaten the foundations of the American way of life...

We must prevent nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological attacks, block terrorists from reaching our homeland, reduce drug and human trafficking, and protect our critical infrastructure. We must also deter, disrupt, and defeat potential threats before they reach the United States...

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

The strategy goes on to address more controversial themes like protecting America's borders. It makes passing mention of a "wall." But, it does not define this in terms of specific strategies to deal with immigrants and illegals, or give priority to fighting terrorists and extremists. It stresses the need to "pursue threats to their source," and focuses on far more serious threats, and ones that are truly international:

The danger from hostile state and non-state actors who are trying to acquire nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological WMD is increasing...

As missiles grow in numbers, types, and effectiveness, to include those with greater ranges, they are the most likely means for states like North Korea to use a nuclear weapon against the United States. North Korea is also pursuing chemical and biological weapons which could also be delivered by missile.

...Biological incidents have the potential to cause catastrophic loss of life. Biological threats to the U.S. homeland—whether as the result of deliberate attack, accident, or a natural outbreak—are growing and require actions to address this problem at its source... There is no perfect defense against the range of threats facing our homeland. That is why America must, alongside allies and partners, stay on the offensive against those violent non-state groups that target the United States and its allies.

The primary transnational threats Americans face are from jihadist terrorists and transnational criminal organizations. Although their objectives differ, these actors pose some common challenges...
The United States must devote greater resources to dismantle transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and their subsidiary networks... Today, cyberspace offers state and non-state actors the ability to wage campaigns against American political, economic, and security interests without ever physically crossing our borders.

**Pillar II: Promote American Prosperity: Recasting the Campaign Language in More Pragmatic Terms**

The section on promoting American prosperity picks up on the President's domestic campaign priorities and ties them to national security. It is far more moderate and pragmatic than the campaign language, however, and some of the language that the President has used since.

It also gives high priority to a new theme that few can argue with: Maintaining America's "lead in research, technology, invention, and innovation." These are critical national priorities, and the only question citing them raises is how they are going to be funded, given some of the budget cuts and constraints that reduce or limit federal support of such activities.

At the same time, there is an odd subsection calling for the U.S. to "embrace energy dominance." The wording is both awkward and silly. The U.S. is not going to dominate world energy, nor should a future U.S. with some 400 million people try to dominate energy in a world that will have some 8.6 billion other people who have their own rights and needs. There is a clear need to debate the way the U.S. develops its energy resources and to take the lead in clean energy technology and conservation, but this subsection badly needed a midnight rewrite.

**Pillar III: Preserve Peace through Strength**

The "peace through strength" pillar makes it clear that the President clearly understands America's key security priorities, and understands them in terms of "competition" rather than "war." It reasserts one of the most fundamental lessons and themes of U.S. national security that has shaped U.S. security policy since the beginning of World War II and throughout the Cold War:

A central continuity in history is the contest for power. The present time period is no different. Three main sets of challengers – the revisionist powers of China and Russia; the rogue states of Iran and North Korea; and transnational threat organizations, particularly jihadist terrorist groups – are actively competing against the United States and its allies and partners.

Although differing in nature and magnitude, these rivals compete across political, economic, and military arenas, and use technology and information to accelerate these contests, in order to shift regional balances of power in their favor... These are fundamentally political contests between those who favor repressive systems and those who favor free societies.

...Protecting American interests requires that we compete continuously within and across these contests, which are being played out in regions around the world. The outcome of these contests will influence the political, economic, and military strength of the United States and our allies and partners... The United States will seek areas of cooperation with competitors from a position of strength, foremost by ensuring our military power is second to none and fully integrated with our allies and all of our instruments of power.

The new National Security Strategy again breaks new ground in tying domestic progress to military security, and in calling for efforts to renew America's competitive advantage. It also makes some points about the post-Cold War world that clearly do need to be addressed in a National Security Strategy:

...Some conditions are new, and have changed how these competitions are unfolding. We face simultaneous threats from different actors across multiple arenas – all accelerated by technology. The United States must
develop new concepts and capabilities to protect our homeland, advance our prosperity, and preserve peace... deterrence today is significantly more complex to achieve than during the Cold War...

The spread of accurate and inexpensive weapons and the use of cyber tools have allowed state and non-state competitors to harm the United States across various domains. Such capabilities contest what was until recently U.S. dominance across the land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains.

In addition, adversaries and competitors became adept at operating below the threshold of open military conflict and at the edges of international law...They are patient and content to accrue strategic gains over time – making it harder for the United States and our allies to respond...

China, Russia, and other state and non-state actors recognize that the United States often views the world in binary terms, with states being either “at peace” or “at war,” when it is actually an arena of continuous competition...

The new National Security Strategy does, however, mirror past National Security Strategy documents, and America's vacuous Quadrennial Defense Reviews, in one key respect. The sections on the "Military and Intelligence,” "Strengthening the Defense Industrial Base," "Nuclear Forces," "Space," "Cyberspace," "Intelligence," "preserve peace through strength," and “advance American influence," all set good goals, but they do not even begin to hint at a strategy. There are no specifics, no broad plans, no summary indications of costs and resources, and no timeframes for action. About the only specific—early in the new strategy document—is an unexplained call: "layered missile defense system will defend our homeland from missile attack."

To quote Gertrude Stein, America's primary critical thinker about military strategy, "there is no there there." Like the President's campaign goals for increasing U.S. military forces, and calls for further increases in defense spending, it is not enough to set broad goals when they are not tied to specific missions and specific plans.

This is especially true when the U.S. is still bound by the Budget Control Act, passed a tax bill that will put more strain on the federal budget, ], and a President that has only a guarantee of three more years in office. A meaningful National Security Strategy must be far more specific, and give a far clearer lead to the executive branch and the military, the Congress, the American people and our allies. Having the right goals and good intentions is meaningless unless they produce results.

The subsection on "Diplomacy and Statecraft" also presents key problems. Calling for "competitive diplomacy" and the best use of "Tools of Economic Diplomacy" rings hollow when there is still no clear picture of how the State Department and diplomatic service are being reorganized, or even when the current studies and reorganization efforts are schedule to be completed and implemented.

The section on "Information Statecraft" recognizes that, "America’s competitors weaponize information to attack the values and institutions that underpin free societies, while shielding themselves from outside information. They exploit marketing techniques to target individuals based upon their activities, interests, opinions, and values. They disseminate misinformation and propaganda,” but it again gives no specifics on how the U.S. will actually meet this challenge.

**Pillar IV: Advance American Influence**

The section on the final pillar again makes it clear that "America First" is a call for joint international action with America's allies and strategic partners throughout the world—not a retreat from the world or form of isolationism:

Our America First foreign policy celebrates America’s influence in the world as a positive force that can help set the conditions for peace and prosperity and for developing successful societies.
There is no arc of history that ensures that America’s free political and economic system will automatically prevail. Around the world, nations and individuals admire what America stands for. We treat people equally and value and uphold the rule of law.

The United States offers partnership to those who share our aspirations for freedom and prosperity. We are not going to impose our values on others. Our alliances, partnerships, and coalitions are built on free will and shared interests. Allies and partners are a great strength of the United States. They add directly to U.S. political, economic, military, intelligence, and other capabilities.

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

Some of the greatest triumphs of American statecraft resulted from helping fragile and developing countries become successful societies. These successes, in turn, created profitable markets for American businesses, allies to help achieve favorable regional balances of power, and coalition partners to share burdens and address a variety of problems around the world.

Today, the United States must compete for positive relationships around the world. China and Russia target their investments in the developing world to expand influence and gain competitive advantages against the United States.

The strategy raises an interesting challenge to the issue of nation building, and dealing with the impact of war in states like Afghanistan and Iraq in saying that, "the United States will promote a development model that partners with countries that want progress, consistent with their culture, based on free market principles, fair and reciprocal trade, private sector activity, and rule of law.” The United States will shift away from a reliance on assistance based on grants to approaches that attract private capital and catalyze private sector activity.

It also firmly commits the United States to active participation in a wide range of international forums like the United Nations.

The United States must lead and engage in the multinational arrangements that shape many of the rules that affect U.S. interests and values. A competition for influence exists in these institutions. As we participate in them, we must protect American sovereignty and advance American interests and values.

Authoritarian actors have long recognized the power of multilateral bodies and have used them to advance their interests and limit the freedom of their own citizens. If the United States cedes leadership of these bodies to adversaries, opportunities to shape developments that are positive for the United States will be lost. Where existing institutions and rules need modernizing, the United States will lead to update them.

And, it sets the following broad goals for shaping U.S. regional strategy,

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

Changes in a regional balance of power can have global consequences and threaten U.S. interests. Markets, raw materials, lines of communication, and human capital are located within, or move among, key regions of the world.

The United States must marshal the will and capabilities to compete and prevent unfavorable shifts in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. Sustaining favorable balances of power will require a strong commitment and close cooperation with allies and partners because allies and partners magnify U.S. power and extend U.S. influence.
But once again, when it comes to each region, there are virtually no specifics even in terms of goals—much less plans for action. The sections on the "Indo-Pacific," "Europe," "The Middle East," “South and Central Asia," "Western Hemisphere," and "Africa" say almost nothing about strategy and sometimes seem so anodyne as to be nearly meaningless. For example, what kind of strategy is it to say that,

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

**National Security, But Where Is the Strategy?**

In many ways, this is a reassuring and innovative effort, and it is striking that President Trump has issued one during his first year in office. President Obama did not, and only issued two in eight years in office. President George W. Bush did not, and only issued a total of one. The new strategy also is no vaguer or lacking in specifics than almost all of its predecessors since the current legislation calling for an annual National Security Strategy was passed as part of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986.

In fairness, the President has tasked a whole range of more specific strategy studies, and these may address such specifics in the future. But surely, we could have done more to reassure our strategic partners and explain our intentions, talked about continued U.S. military and national security commitments, and highlighted key areas where deterrence and containment are being strengthened or need to be.

It is not enough to set national security goals. In an unstable and threatening world, at a time we cannot seem to manage our national budgets, and at a time when we face a growing deficit crisis driven by rising entitlement costs, we really need an actual strategy.

*Note: The original legislative requirement passed in 1947. (50 U.S. Code § 3043 - Annual national security strategy report.)*
Appendix 2

U.S. Strategy and the MENA Region: Excerpts from the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge

January 17, 2018


Anthony H. Cordesman, Revised March 15, 2018

Changes in the Strategic Environment

The National Defense Strategy acknowledges an increasingly complex global security environment, characterized by overt challenges to the free and open international order and the re-emergence of long-term, strategic competition between nations. These changes require a clear-eyed appraisal of the threats we face, acknowledgement of the changing character of warfare, and a transformation of how the Department conducts business.

The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by what the National Security Strategy classifies as revisionist powers. It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model—gaining veto authority over other nations’ economic, diplomatic, and security decisions.

China is leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China continues its economic and military ascendance, asserting power through an all-of-nation long-term strategy, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future. The most far-reaching objective of this defense strategy is to set the military relationship between our two countries on a path of transparency and non-aggression.

Concurrently, Russia seeks veto authority over nations on its periphery in terms of their governmental, economic, and diplomatic decisions, to shatter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and change European and Middle East security and economic structures to its favor. The use of emerging technologies to discredit and subvert democratic processes in Georgia, Crimea, and eastern Ukraine is concern enough, but when coupled with its expanding and modernizing nuclear arsenal the challenge is clear.

Another change to the strategic environment is a resilient, but weakening, post-WWII international order. In the decades after fascism’s defeat in World War II, the United States, its allies and partners constructed a free and open international order to better safeguard their liberty and people from aggression and coercion. Although this system has evolved since the end of the Cold War, our network of alliances and partnerships remain the backbone of global security. China and Russia are now undermining the international order from within the system by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously undercutting its principles and “rules of the road.”
Rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran are destabilizing regions through their pursuit of nuclear weapons or sponsorship of terrorism. North Korea seeks to guarantee regime survival and increased leverage by seeking a mixture of nuclear, biological, chemical, conventional, and unconventional weapons and a growing ballistic missile capability to gain coercive influence over South Korea, Japan, and the United States.

In the Middle East, Iran is competing with its neighbors, asserting an arc of influence and instability while vying for regional hegemony, using state-sponsored terrorist activities, a growing network of proxies, and its missile program to achieve its objectives.

Both revisionist powers and rogue regimes are competing across all dimensions of power. They have increased efforts short of armed conflict by expanding coercion to new fronts, violating principles of sovereignty, exploiting ambiguity, and deliberately blurring the lines between civil and military goals.

**Key Defense Objectives**

Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department, and require both increased and sustained investment, because of the magnitude of the threats they pose to U.S. security and prosperity today, and the potential for those threats to increase in the future. Concurrently, the Department will sustain its efforts to deter and counter rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran, defeat terrorist threats to the United States, and consolidate our gains in Iraq and Afghanistan while moving to a more resource-sustainable approach.

Defense objectives include:

- Defending the homeland from attack;
- Sustaining Joint Force military advantages, both globally and in key regions;
- Deterring adversaries from aggression against our vital interests;
- Enabling U.S. interagency counterparts to advance U.S. influence and interests;
- Maintaining favorable regional balances of power in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere;
- Defending allies from military aggression and bolstering partners against coercion, and fairly sharing responsibilities for common defense;
- Dissuading, preventing, or deterring state adversaries and non-state actors from acquiring, proliferating, or using weapons of mass destruction;
- Preventing terrorists from directing or supporting external operations against the United States homeland and our citizens, allies, and partners overseas;
- Ensuring common domains remain open and free;
- Continuously delivering performance with affordability and speed as we change Departmental mindset, culture, and management systems; and
- Establishing an unmatched twenty-first century National Security Innovation Base that effectively supports Department operations and sustains security and solvency.
Strategic Approach

A long-term strategic competition requires the seamless integration of multiple elements of national power—diplomacy, information, economics, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and military. More than any other nation, America can expand the competitive space, seizing the initiative to challenge our competitors where we possess advantages and they lack strength. A more lethal force, strong alliances and partnerships, American technological innovation, and a culture of performance will generate decisive and sustained U.S. military advantages.

As we expand the competitive space, we continue to offer competitors and adversaries an outstretched hand, open to opportunities for cooperation but from a position of strength and based on our national interests. Should cooperation fail, we will be ready to defend the American people, our values, and interests. The willingness of rivals to abandon aggression will depend on their perception of U.S. strength and the vitality of our alliances and partnerships.

Be strategically predictable, but operationally unpredictable. Deterring or defeating long-term strategic competitors is a fundamentally different challenge than the regional adversaries that were the focus of previous strategies. Our strength and integrated actions with allies will demonstrate our commitment to deterring aggression, but our dynamic force employment, military posture, and operations must introduce unpredictability to adversary decision-makers. With our allies and partners, we will challenge competitors by maneuvering them into unfavorable positions, frustrating their efforts, precluding their options while expanding our own, and forcing them to confront conflict under adverse conditions.

Integrate with U.S. interagency. Effectively expanding the competitive space requires combined actions with the U.S. interagency to employ all dimensions of national power. We will assist the efforts of the Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, Energy, Homeland Security, Commerce, USAID, as well as the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, and others to identify and build partnerships to address areas of economic, technological, and informational vulnerabilities.

Counter coercion and subversion. In competition short of armed conflict, revisionist powers and rogue regimes are using corruption, predatory economic practices, propaganda, political subversion, proxies, and the threat or use of military force to change facts on the ground. Some are particularly adept at exploiting their economic relationships with many of our security partners. We will support U.S. interagency approaches and work by, with, and through our allies and partners to secure our interests and counteract this coercion.

Foster a competitive mindset. To succeed in the emerging security environment, our Department and Joint Force will have to out-think, out-maneuver, out-partner, and out-innovate revisionist powers, rogue regimes, terrorists, and other threat actors. We will expand the competitive space while pursuing three distinct lines of effort:

- First, rebuilding military readiness as we build a more lethal Joint Force;
- Second, strengthening alliances as we attract new partners; and
- Third, reforming the Department’s business practices for greater performance and affordability.

Prioritize preparedness for war. Achieving peace through strength requires the Joint Force to deter conflict through preparedness for war. During normal day-to-day operations, the Joint Force will sustainably compete to: deter aggression in three key regions—the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and
Middle East; degrade terrorist and WMD threats; and defend U.S. interests from challenges below the level of armed conflict.

...Develop a lethal, agile, and resilient force posture and employment. Force posture and employment must be adaptable to account for the uncertainty that exists in the changing global strategic environment. Much of our force employment models and posture date to the immediate post-Cold War era, when our military advantage was unchallenged and the primary threats were rogue regimes.

- **Dynamic Force Employment.** Dynamic Force Employment will prioritize maintaining the capacity and capabilities for major combat, while providing options for proactive and scalable employment of the Joint Force. A modernized Global Operating Model of combat-credible, flexible theater postures will enhance our ability to compete and provide freedom of maneuver during conflict, providing national decision-makers with better military options.

  The global strategic environment demands increased strategic flexibility and freedom of action. The Dynamic Force Employment concept will change the way the Department uses the Joint Force to provide proactive and scalable options for priority missions. Dynamic Force Employment will more flexibly use ready forces to shape proactively the strategic environment while maintaining readiness to respond to contingencies and ensure long-term warfighting readiness.

- **Global Operating Model.** The Global Operating Model describes how the Joint Force will be postured and employed to achieve its competition and wartime missions. Foundational capabilities include: nuclear; cyber; space; C4ISR; strategic mobility, and counter WMD proliferation. It comprises four layers: contact, blunt, surge, and homeland. These are, respectively, designed to help us compete more effectively below the level of armed conflict; delay, degrade, or deny adversary aggression; surge war-winning forces and manage conflict escalation; and defend the U.S. homeland.

The Key Role of Strategic Partners and Alliances

...Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can match. This approach has served the United States well, in peace and war, for the past 75 years. Our allies and partners came to our aid after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and have contributed to every major U.S.-led military engagement since. Every day, our allies and partners join us in defending freedom, deterring war, and maintaining the rules which underwrite a free and open international order.

By working together with allies and partners we amass the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of our interests, maintaining favorable balances of power that deter aggression and support the stability that generates economic growth. When we pool resources and share responsibility for our common defense, our security burden becomes lighter.

...Our allies and partners provide complementary capabilities and forces along with unique perspectives, regional relationships, and information that improve our understanding of the environment and expand our options. Allies and partners also provide access to critical regions, supporting a widespread basing and logistics system that underpins the Department’s global reach. We will strengthen and evolve our alliances and partnerships into an extended network capable of deterring or decisively acting to meet the shared challenges of our time. We will focus on three
elements for achieving a capable alliance and partnership network:

...Uphold a foundation of mutual respect, responsibility, priorities, and accountability. Our alliances and coalitions are built on free will and shared responsibilities. While we will unapologetically represent America’s values and belief in democracy, we will not seek to impose our way of life by force. We will uphold our commitments and we expect allies and partners to contribute an equitable share to our mutually beneficial collective security, including effective investment in modernizing their defense capabilities. We have shared responsibilities for resisting authoritarian trends, contesting radical ideologies, and serving as bulwarks against instability.

- **Expand regional consultative mechanisms and collaborative planning.** We will develop new partnerships around shared interests to reinforce regional coalitions and security cooperation. We will provide allies and partners with a clear and consistent message to encourage alliance and coalition commitment, greater defense cooperation, and military investment.

- **Deepen interoperability.** Each ally and partner is unique. Combined forces able to act together coherently and effectively to achieve military objectives requires interoperability. Interoperability is a priority for operational concepts, modular force elements, communications, information sharing, and equipment. In consultation with Congress and the Department of State, the Department of Defense will prioritize requests for U.S. military equipment sales, accelerating foreign partner modernization and ability to integrate with U.S. forces. We will train to high-end combat missions in our alliance, bilateral, and multinational exercises.

...Enduring coalitions and long-term security partnerships, underpinned by our bedrock alliances and reinforced by our allies’ own webs of security relationships, remain a priority:

- **Form enduring coalitions in the Middle East.** We will foster a stable and secure Middle East that denies safe havens for terrorists, is not dominated by any power hostile to the United States, and that contributes to stable global energy markets and secure trade routes. We will develop enduring coalitions to consolidate gains we have made in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, to support the lasting defeat of terrorists as we sever their sources of strength and counterbalance Iran.
NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by what the National Security Strategy classifies as revisionist powers. It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model—gaining veto authority over other nations’ economic, diplomatic, and security decisions.

Today, the United States is emerging from a period of strategic atrophy in which the Department’s competitive military advantage has been eroding. The United States is facing increased global disorder, characterized by decline in the long-standing rules-based international order—creating a security environment more complex and volatile than any the United States has experienced in recent memory. Major power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.

A more lethal, resilient, and rapidly innovating Joint Force, combined with a robust constellation of allies and partners, will sustain American influence and ensure favorable balances of power that safeguard the free and open international order. Collectively, a modernized Joint Force, the new Global Operating Model and Dynamic Force Employment concept, DoD’s alliance and partnership architecture, and Department reform will deliver relevant capabilities and the force agility required to prevail in conflict and preserve peace through strength.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The National Defense Strategy acknowledges an increasingly complex global security environment, characterized by overt challenges to the free and open international order and the re-emergence of long-term, strategic competition between nations. These changes require a clear-eyed appraisal of the threats the United States faces, acknowledgement of the changing character of warfare, and a transformation of how the Department conducts business.

The central challenge to the United States prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by what the National Security Strategy classifies as revisionist powers. It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model—gaining veto authority over other nations’ economic, diplomatic, and security decisions.

China is leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China continues its economic and military ascendance, asserting power through an all-of-nation long-
term strategy, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future. The most far-reaching objective of this defense strategy is to set the military relationship between the United States and China on a path of transparency and non-aggression.

Russia seeks veto authority over nations on its periphery in terms of its governmental, economic, and diplomatic decisions, to shatter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to change European and Middle East security and economic structures to its favor. The use of emerging technologies to discredit and subvert democratic processes in Georgia, Crimea, and eastern Ukraine is concern enough, but when coupled with its expanding and modernizing nuclear arsenal the challenge is clear.

Rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran are destabilizing their regions by pursuing nuclear weapons or sponsoring terrorism. North Korea seeks to guarantee regime survival and increased leverage through a mixture of nuclear, biological, chemical, conventional, and unconventional weapons and a growing ballistic missile capability to gain coercive influence over South Korea, Japan, and the United States. In the Middle East, Iran is competing with its neighbors, asserting an arc of influence and instability while vying for regional hegemony, using state-sponsored terrorist activities, a growing network of proxies, and its missile program to achieve its objectives.

OBJECTIVES

...Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department, and require both increased and sustained investment—not only to deter and if necessary confront aggression, but also to actively compete – because of the magnitude of the threats each pose to U.S. security and prosperity today. Concurrently, the Department will sustain its efforts to deter and counter rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran, defeat terrorist threats to the United States, and consolidate the DoD’s gains in Iraq and Afghanistan while moving to a more resource-sustainable approach.

Defense objectives include:

- Defending the U.S. homeland from attack;
- Sustaining Joint Force military advantages, both globally and in key regions;
- Deterring adversaries from aggression against U.S. vital interests;
- Enabling U.S. interagency counterparts to advance U.S. influence and interests;
- Maintaining favorable regional balances of power in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere;
- Defending allies from military aggression and bolstering partners against coercion, and fairly sharing responsibilities for common defense;
- Dissuading, preventing, or deterring state adversaries and non-state actors from acquiring, proliferating, or using weapons of mass destruction;
- Preventing terrorists from directing or supporting external operations against the United States homeland and its citizens, allies, and partners overseas;
- Ensuring common domains remain open and free;
• Continuously delivering performance affordably and with speed; and
• Establishing an unmatched twenty-first century National Security Innovation Base that effectively supports the Departments operations and sustains security and solvency.

...Achieving peace through strength requires the Joint Force to deter conflict through preparedness for war. During normal day-to-day operations, the Joint Force will compete to: deter aggression in three key regions—the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and Middle East; degrade terrorist and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threats; and defend U.S. interests from challenges below the level of armed conflict. In wartime, the fully mobilized Joint Force will be capable of: defeating aggression by a major power; deterring opportunistic aggression elsewhere; and disrupting imminent terrorist and WMD threats. During peace or in war, the Joint Force will deter nuclear and non-nuclear strategic attacks and defend the homeland. To support these missions, the Joint Force must gain and maintain information superiority; and develop, strengthen, and sustain U.S. security relationships.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

...A long-term strategic competition requires the seamless integration of multiple elements of national power—diplomacy, information, economics, finance, intelligence, law enforcement, and military. More than any other nation, America can expand the competitive space, seizing the initiative to challenge its competitors where the United States possesses advantages and competitors lack strength. A more lethal force, strong alliances and partnerships, American technological innovation, and a culture of performance will generate decisive and sustained U.S. military advantages.

The United States is expanding the competitive space, but it also offers competitors and adversaries an outstretched hand, open to opportunities for cooperation, but from a position of strength and based on U.S. national interests. Should cooperation fail, the DoD will be ready to defend the American people, its values, and interests. The willingness of rivals to abandon aggression will depend on the adversary’s perception of U.S. strength and the vitality of its alliances and partnerships.

The DoD will be strategically predictable, but operationally unpredictable. Deterring or defeating long-term strategic competitors is a fundamentally different challenge than the regional adversaries that were the focus of previous strategies. The strength and integrated actions of the U.S. and its allies will demonstrate the commitment to deterring aggression, but dynamic force employment, military posture, and operations must introduce unpredictability to adversary decision-makers. With United States allies and partners, the DoD will challenge competitors. To succeed in the emerging security environment, the Department and Joint Force will have to out-think, out-maneuver, out-partner, and out-innovate revisionist powers, rogue regimes, terrorists, and other threat actors.

STRENGTHEN ALLIANCES AND ATTRACT NEW PARTNERS

...Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to the DoD strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can match. This approach has served the United States well, in peace and war, for the past 75 years. Allies and partners aided the United States after the terrorist attacks on 9/11—the only time NATO has invoked the mutual defense clause, Article 5—and have contributed to every major U.S.-led military engagement since.
The United States amasses the greatest possible strength for the long-term advancement of U.S. interests by working together with allies and partners to maintain favorable balances of power that deter aggression and support stability. When the United States pools resources and shares responsibility for common defenses, the DoD security burden becomes lighter. The United States allies and partners provide complementary capabilities and forces along with unique perspectives, regional relationships, and information that improve the DoD’s understanding of the environment. Allies and partners also provide access to critical regions, supporting a widespread basing and logistics system that underpins the Department’s global reach.

The United States will strengthen and evolve its alliances and partnerships into an extended network capable of deterring or decisively acting to meet shared challenges with shared responsibility. Recognizing each ally and partner is different, interoperability requires combined forces be able to act together coherently and effectively to achieve military objectives. Interoperability is an investment priority for operational concepts, modular force elements, communications, information sharing, and equipment.

In consultation with Congress and the Department of State, the Department of Defense will prioritize requests for U.S. military equipment sales, accelerating foreign partner modernization and ability to integrate with U.S. forces. Enduring coalitions and long-term security partnerships, enabled by capable U.S. alliances and partnerships and reinforced by U.S. allies’ own webs of security relationships, will underpin the Department’s efforts to build a more lethal force.

POWER PROJECTION

The FY 2019 President’s Budget prioritizes the Department’s power projection capabilities to include enhancements to offensive air and sea power through the development and procurement of long range strike weapons, combatant ships, and strike aircraft and the modernization of existing weapons, ships, aircraft, and electronic warfare capabilities.

The FY 2019 budget request continues procurement of the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft and modernization programs for existing Navy and Air Force strike fighter aircraft and bombers. Development of the B-21 Raider long range strike bomber is also funded with initial capabilities projected to be fielded in the mid-2020s. Technology Maturation and Risk Reduction for the next generation of air dominance systems is also included.

The major tactical air power investment is the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter (pictured here), which will form the backbone of the U.S. inventory. The F-35 program is developing, producing, and fielding three variants of a 5th Generation strike fighter: 1) Air Force F-35A Conventional Take-Off and Landing variant; 2) Marine Corps F-35B Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing variant; and 3) Navy F-35C Carrier variant.

The FY 2019 budget also procures additional F/A-18E/F Super Hornets to increase readiness of the Navy fighter fleet and relieve pressure on the aging legacy F/A-18A-D inventory. The budget continues to fund the Navy’s MQ-25 unmanned aircraft system, which will provide the Department with a critical unmanned tanker capability that will extend the striking power of the carrier air wing while providing maritime surveillance for the carrier strike group.

The FY 2019 budget funds the continued Air Force and Navy procurement of both the AIM-120D Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) and the AIM-9X Block II Sidewinder short-range air-to-air missile. Both programs are in Full-Rate Production and are integral to the preservation of air superiority for U.S. Armed Forces in future combat operations.
The Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force are investing in modernization programs that improve the capability and extend the utility of existing aircraft. Adding advanced Infra-Red Search and Track (IRST) sensors will significantly improve detection and targeting of threat aircraft despite complex enemy Electronic Attack, while the development and fielding of an Active Electronically Scanned Array radar will enable the F-16 aircraft to maintain relevance throughout their service life.

The FY 2019 budget funds the development of the B-21 Raider, the next generation long range strike bomber, and modernization of the existing bomber fleet of B-52s, B-1s and the B-2s. Major modification efforts on the B-2 aircraft include an updated defensive management system. The budget funds B-52 avionics and weapons upgrades as well as replacement for the B-52's inefficient and aging engines.

The FY 2019 budget funds multiple electronic warfare capabilities to improve platform survivability and enable power projection. Additional manning to Navy EA-18G aircraft squadron size is budgeted as well as EA-18G aircraft survivability improvements with the Next Generation Jammer (NGJ). The NGJ will provide significantly improved Airborne Electronic Attack (AEA) capabilities against advanced integrated air defense radars, communications, and data links. The FY 2019 budget also funds survivability improvements in the F-15 Eagle Passive Active Warning and Survivability System and the Integrated Defensive Electronic Countermeasures System. These will autonomously detect, identify, and locate radio frequency (RF) threats as well as deny, degrade, disrupt, and defeat RF threat systems.

...Nuclear aircraft carriers (CVNs) provide forward presence for air power projection. The FY 2019 budget continues incremental funding for the Ford Class nuclear aircraft carriers, the JOHN F. KENNEDY (CVN 79), and the ENTERPRISE (CVN 80). Amphibious warships, along with their connector craft, are versatile, interoperable warfighting platforms and are critical enablers to projection of power by sea-based forces in theater.

The FY 2019 budget includes continued recapitalization of the Ship-to-Shore Connector to replace the Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) as it reaches the end of its service life and the Landing Craft, Utility (LCU) 1700 to support amphibious assault capability. Surface Combatant Ships are multi-mission warships designed and built to execute Sea Control and Power Projection missions.

The FY 2019 budget continues procurement of the DDG 51 Flight III variant, which, with the addition of the AN/SPY-6(V) Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR), provides improved sensitivity for long range detection and engagement of advanced Air, Surface, and Ballistic Missile threats. The FY 2019 budget supports the final year to procure the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) before the transition to the procurement of a more lethal and capable Frigate to address the Navy’s Small Surface Combatant requirements. The FY 2019 budget also includes funding for two additional T-AO 205 Fleet Oilers, which provides fuel and logistical support to deployed ships, ensuring continued presence and power projection.

Submarines provide the Navy with unprecedented strike and special operation mission capabilities from a stealthy, clandestine platform. Armed with tactical missiles, the Navy's four OHIO-class guided-missile submarines carry up to 154 Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles (TLAMs) and have the capacity to host up to 66 Special Operation Forces (SOF) personnel; however, they begin to decommission in the early 2020's. The FY 2019 budget continues the development of the VIRGINIA Payload Module (VPM) in Block V VIRGINIA Class submarines (VCS), which will replace much of this critical capability by adding 28 additional TLAMs and space for SOF operations over Block I-IV VCS.
The FY 2019 budget also funds programs that implement survivability improvements to the U.S. maritime defensive capabilities, which consist of the Surface Electronic Warfare Improvement Program Block 3 electronic attack capability (pacing the advanced threats) and the Advanced Off-board Electronic Warfare Program, consisting of long duration, off-board decoys to address identified electronic warfare gaps.

The FY 2019 budget continues funding for 125 Standard Missile-6 (SM-6) missiles per year, providing the most capable long range anti-air missiles for Fleet defense. The budget also funds procurement of the Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) for the Navy and Air Force as a near-term solution for the Offensive Anti-Surface Warfare air-launch capability gap.

The Department has continuously engaged in multiple small conflicts over the past 15 years. The DoD continues to operate in hostile environments, which require quality planning to reduce risk and ensure munitions inventories are adequate and expenditures are replenished. Accurately calculating the number of munitions is challenging since identifying the munition required depends on whether the Department is fighting from the ground, sea, or air as well as how long a conflict will last. Each variable will send a different demand signal.

Many preferred munitions are precision guided, low collateral damage munitions, and are used by more than one Service and by U.S. allies. The increased requirement from all Services is driving demand at all levels of this industry. Unfortunately, prior decreases in munitions purchases forced the consolidation of many suppliers at the sub-tier level that now struggle to maintain capacity and capability as production increases. Since munitions are unique military items, sub-tier suppliers do not have the commercial base to sustain business during funding downturns.

The DoD has expended more munitions than planned over the last few years, primarily to defeat Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), leading to higher demand to replenish munition inventories. Addressing the Department’s need to maintain critical munition inventories, the FY 2017 and FY 2018 budget requests strengthened the Department’s lethal posture by increasing production capacities and procurement of its preferred munitions. The FY 2019 budget continues to procure critical munitions at maximum production capacity. Some of these production lines have been increased to unprecedented output rates to ensure the maximum delivery of high demand munitions to the warfighter. As a result, unit pricing economies are being realized and are increasing buying power for those munitions.

The Department is also investing in the munitions industrial base to ensure production capacity is maximized. The FY 2019 request continues to invest in organic and commercial industrial base capabilities; for example, explosives for warheads, propellants for solid rocket motors and ammunition, inertial navigation units, and many other components. The table below reflects quantities and funding for several critical munitions.

**MISSILE DEFENSE**

The FY 2019 budget funds enhancements to U.S. missile defense capabilities to defend the homeland, deployed forces, allies, and partners against an increasingly complex ballistic missile threat. In accordance with direction from the 2018 Missile Defense Review, this budget request increases missile defense capacity and capability to keep pace with advancing threats. The budget includes $12.9 billion for missile defense, including $9.9 billion for the Missile Defense Agency (MDA).

The Department will develop an additional missile field in Alaska and increase the number of
operational, deployed Ground-Based Interceptors (GBI) to 64 missiles as early as FY 2023. The Department is also investing in the infrastructure required to maintain an operational fleet of 64 GBIs into the future. The FY 2019 request would continue development of the Redesigned Kill Vehicle (RKV) to address the evolving threat and improve kill vehicle reliability, continue development of a 2-/3-stage booster selectable capability to expand battlespace for GBI engagements for homeland defense. The budget also uses available technology to improve existing sensors, battle management, fire control, and kill vehicle capabilities. The budget also supports development and deployment of new sensors to improve Missile Defense System (MDS) discrimination capability and allow for more efficient use of the GBI inventory, to include a Long-Range Discrimination Radar in Alaska, a Homeland Defense Radar in Hawaii, and an additional Medium Range Discrimination Radar in the Pacific. The MDA will also deliver an experimental space-based kill assessment capability for defense of the homeland as part of an integrated post intercept assessment solution.

The budget reflects the Department’s commitment to building integrated regional missile defenses that are interoperable with systems deployed by international partners to protect deployed forces, allies and international partners against Short Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBM), Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM), and Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM).

For U.S. missile defense capabilities, the FY 2019 budget request:

- Supports the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) to improve missile defense capability on the Korean peninsula
- Provides the funding for the development of advanced missile defense technologies to counter future threats, including discrimination improvements, multi-object kill vehicle technology, hypersonic threat missile defeat, and high-powered lasers
- Continues, in alignment with the United States Navy, to support and operate the Aegis Ashore site in Romania and deployment of a second site in Poland, as an integral part of NATO’s Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) architecture
- Continues increasing BMD capability and capacity of the Aegis Fleet and procures 37 Standard Missile (SM-3) Block IB missiles to be deployed on Aegis BMD ships and at Aegis Ashore Sites as part of a Multiyear Procurement; continues the integration of the SM-3 Block IIA into the Aegis BMD Weapon Systems; procures 6 SM-3 Block IIA missiles to contribute to defense against longer-range and more complex threats; ensures the maturation of the manufacturing process; and continues development of the Sea Based Terminal capability to protect the Fleet and forces ashore
- Provides funding for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) development efforts and software upgrades such as implementation of flexible threat packages and defense planning, improved capability to engage SRBM, MRBM and limited IRBM threats and integration of the THAAD Battery capability into the Army’s Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System (IBCS) planning process. The THAAD budget request also includes funding for the procurement of 82 THAAD Interceptors in FY 2019 as well as for operating support to maintain and upkeep BMD System-unique items of fielded THAAD Batteries and for training devices.
- Provides funding to perform the systems engineering required to design, build, test, assess and field the integrated MDS
• Provides funding to execute a comprehensive, highly integrated, complex, cost-effective series of flight tests, ground tests, wargames and exercises to ensure that MDS capabilities are credibly demonstrated and validated prior to delivery to the Warfighter

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS (OCO)

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Budget The request supports the following activities:

• Maintaining increased U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan to support the President’s South Asia strategy
• Sustaining personnel forward deployed to the Middle East to continue operations to defeat and prevent the reemergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)
• Building the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces and Syrian opposition forces to counter ISIS in support of the United States’ comprehensive regional strategy
• Conducting U.S. Central Command in-country and in-theater support activities, including intelligence support to military operations
• Supporting U.S. partner nations through a sustainable approach
to security cooperation
• Enhancing U.S. deterrence activities in Eastern Europe to assure North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and partners and deter aggressive actors
• Replenishing and replacing munitions used in combat and equipment destroyed, damaged, or worn out due to use in contingency operations

In Afghanistan, the Department continues to execute its dual counterterrorism (CT) and Train, Advise, Assist (TAA) missions supporting the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). The President’s new South Asia strategy and related troop increase provide critical flexibility and capability to U.S. forces to better support the ANDSF by allowing TAA efforts at the tactical level and providing more key enabling capabilities. This increased support will enable the ANDSF to increase their offensive operations and secure more of the population from Taliban influence and control.

In Iraq and Syria, the United States has made significant progress in the campaign to defeat ISIS, liberating nearly 100 percent of the former physical caliphate since the inception of OIR in the fall of 2014. As ISIS loses territory, the Department is focused on ensuring its defeat by consolidating gains and setting the conditions for a more stable region. Working by, with, and through Iraqi and Syrian partners, the Department is helping to provide security in liberated areas, prevent the reemergence of the ISIS threat, and set conditions for long-term stability.

The FY 2019 OCO budget request funds military presence in Afghanistan in support of OFS and in Iraq and Syria in support of OIR. The OCO budget also funds in-theater presence supporting both operations and additional support in the Continental United States (CONUS). Figure 4.2 displays the force levels assumed in the Department’s FY 2019 OCO budget, expressed as annual average troop strength.

In August 2017, following a comprehensive review of the Department's South Asia strategy, the Department announced an increase in forces in Afghanistan of approximately 3,500 troops. Also announced was a change from the previous accounting methodology to capture additional forces in various stages of deployment and supporting roles. These changes account for the current force
level of approximately 14,000 troops in Afghanistan. Consistent with previous budgets, temporary enabling forces remain included in "in-theater support". The Department identifies 11,958 troops in Afghanistan for budgeting purposes, consistent with the FY 2018 amended request.

In Iraq and Syria, the FY 2019 OCO request maintains the current force posture of 5,765 troops. The budgeted force levels represent the forces associated with enabling ongoing counter-ISIS operations and conducting Iraq and Syria train and equip efforts.

In-theater and in-CONUS, forces provide support for OFS and OIR, and also include Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), counterterrorism (CT) operations in northwest Africa, and the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI).
Department of Defense Summary of Key Budget Changes in FY2019


Today President Donald J. Trump sent Congress a proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 budget request of $716 billion for national security, $686 billion of which is for the Department of Defense. The National Defense Strategy, which aligns with the National Security Strategy, connects strategy to the FY 2019 budget priorities, enabling the Department to compete, deter, and win. This establishes a foundation for rebuilding the U.S. military into a more capable, lethal, and ready Joint Force. The objectives of the Department are “to be prepared to defend the homeland, remain the preeminent military power in the world, ensure the balances of power remain in our favor, and advance an international order that is most conducive to our security and prosperity.” The FY 2019 budget has been developed to meet these specific objectives.

Secretary Mattis recently said, “In a world awash in change, with increasing threats, there is no room for complacency. Failure to implement or fund the 2018 National Defense Strategy will leave us with a force that could dominate the last war, yet be irrelevant to tomorrow's security. For too long we have asked our military to carry on stoically with a success-at-any-cost attitude.” We are grateful to Congress and the American people for the recently-enacted Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which lifts the caps so our military can be resourced at a funding level commensurate with our mission.

The National Security Strategy states that the United States “must reverse recent decisions to reduce the size of the Joint Force and grow the force while modernizing and ensuring readiness.” The FY 2019 budget increases end strength by 25,900 (24,100 in the active components and 1,800 in the reserve components) over the FY 2018 budget. Each military service has a distinctive readiness recovery plan and the increases are targeted to advance these plans to improve readiness and increase lethality.

As the National Defense Strategy notes, “investments will prioritize ground, air, sea and space forces that can deploy, survive, operate, maneuver, and regenerate in all domains while under attack.”

This budget’s major warfighting investments include:

**Aircraft**
- 77 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters - $10.7 billion
- 15 KC-46 Tanker Replacements - $3.0 billion
- 24 F/A-18s - $2.0 billion
- 60 AH-64E Attack Helicopters - $1.3 billion
- 6 VH-92 Presidential Helicopters - $0.9 billion
- 10 P-8A Aircraft - $2.2 billion
- 8 CH-53K King Stallion - $1.6 billion

**Shipbuilding**
- 2 Virginia Class Submarines - $7.4 billion
• 3 DDG-51 Arleigh Burke Destroyers - $6.0 billion
• 1 Littoral Combat Ship - $1.3 billion
• CVN-78 Class Aircraft Carrier - $1.8 billion
• 2 Fleet Replenishment Oilers (T-AO) - $1.1 billion
• 1 Expeditionary Sea Base - $0.7 billion

**Ground Systems**

• 5,113 Joint Light Tactical Vehicles - $2.0 billion
• 135 M-1 Abrams Tank Modifications - $2.7 billion
• 30 Amphibious Combat Vehicles - $0.3 billion
• 197 Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicles - $0.8 billion

The National Defense Strategy also notes the importance of prioritizing “investments in resilience, reconstitution, and operations to assure our space capabilities.” Our **space investments** include:

• 5 Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicles - $2.0 billion
• Global Positioning System - $1.5 billion
• Space Based Infrared System - $0.8 billion

Highlighting the importance of **missile defense programs**, the National Defense Strategy calls for investments that will “focus on layered missile defenses and disruptive capabilities for both theater missile threats and North Korean ballistic missile threats.” Those investments for FY 2019 include:

• 43 AEGIS Ballistic Missile Defense (SM-3) - $1.7 billion
• Ground Based Midcourse Defense - $2.1 billion
• 82 THAAD Ballistic Missile Defense - $1.1 billion
• 240 Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) Missile Segment Enhancements - $1.1 billion

In addition, the National Defense Strategy calls for a Joint Force that “must be able to strike diverse targets inside adversary air and missile defense networks to destroy mobile power-projection platforms.” To help accomplish that goal, the FY 2019 budget includes the following **preferred munitions**:

• 43,594 Joint Direct Attack Munitions - $1.2 billion
• 9,733 Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) - $1.2 billion
• 6,826 Small Diameter Bomb I - $0.3 billion
• 1,260 Small Diameter Bomb II - $0.4 billion
• 7,045 Hellfire Missiles - $0.6 billion
• 360 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile-Extended Range - $0.6 billion
• 1,121 Joint Air-to-Ground Missiles - $0.3 billion

The budget implements the commitment in the National Defense Strategy to “modernize the nuclear triad – including nuclear command, control, and communications, and supporting infrastructure.” FY 2019 investments in **nuclear deterrence** include:

• B-21 Long Range Strike Bomber - $2.3 billion
• Columbia Class Submarine - $3.7 billion
• Long-Range Stand-Off Missile - $0.6 billion
• Ground Based Strategic Deterrent - $0.3 billion

President Trump’s National Security Strategy articulates that “a growing and innovative economy allows the United States to maintain the world’s most powerful military and protect our homeland.” This budget request **invests $13.7 billion in science and technology to further innovation** and new and advanced capabilities including hypersonic technology, cyber space, space, directed energy, electronic warfare, unmanned systems and artificial intelligence.

The FY 2019 budget **supports our service members and their families**, providing a competitive compensation package that reflects the unique demands and sacrifices of military service. As the National Defense Strategy highlights, “The creativity and talent of the American warfighter is our greatest enduring strength, and one we do not take for granted.” The budget:

- Provides a 2.6% military pay raise – the largest increase in 9 years
- Includes NO compensation cost share reforms in FY 2019. Instead, the Department is focusing on internal business process improvements and structural changes to find greater efficiencies, such as modernizing our military health care systems into an integrated system
- Sustains family support initiatives by investing more than $8 billion in:
  - Spousal/community support
  - Child care for approximately 1 million military children
  - DoD Dependent Schools, which are educating over 78,000 students
  - Commissary operations at 237 stores
  - Counseling support for service members and their families

This budget **increases facilities investment** to $10.5 billion, which is 7% above the FY 2018 base budget request. It concentrates on ensuring the basing infrastructure is sized to increase force lethality and minimizing the cost of maintaining unneeded capacity. The budget balances investment in infrastructure across DoD priorities and includes:

- Operational and training facilities (including airfield improvements, training ranges,) to increase readiness
- Maintenance and production facilities (maintenance hangars, missile assembly building, and high explosives magazine) to improve readiness
- Recapitalization of facilities in poor and failing condition
- Improved Quality-of-Life for service members and their families (including schools, barracks, and medical facilities)

The FY 2019 budget continues to implement the Administration’s commitment to **reform DoD business practices for greater performance and affordability**. Highlighting this commitment, the National Defense Strategy cautions that “we must transition to a culture of performance where results and accountability matter.” Secretary Mattis has directed Deputy Secretary Shanahan to reform DoD’s business operations and reapply those savings to improve readiness and to increase the lethality and capacity of the military. The DoD is focused on spending wisely by using shared, centralized services with the goal of using best practices to maximize effectiveness in areas including:
The FY 2019 Budget also reflects continued savings from ongoing reforms such as defense travel modernization and the 25% management headquarters reduction. Recent DoD reforms include:

- Reorganizing the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics into two new Under Secretaries of Defense: one focused on Research and Engineering to advance technology and innovation, and one focused on Acquisition and Sustainment to deliver and sustain timely, cost-effective capabilities for the armed forces and DoD
- Appointing a Chief Management Officer to manage business operations
- Elevating Cyber Command

The **OCO budget** for FY 2019 supports Operation FREEDOM’S SENTINEL in Afghanistan, and Operation INHERENT RESOLVE in Iraq and Syria.