



DOCUMENTATION

This section brings excerpts from three documents highly relevant for U.S. security and transatlantic relations. The first is testimony of James E. Fanell, CAPT USN (Retired) before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Accountability, in which he provides a cleared-eyed assessment of China's threat, highlights its political warfare against the United States, and discusses the sinister effect of continuous U.S. threat deflation, particularly in the intelligence community. The second document is excerpts from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) 75th anniversary summit declaration. The document affirms the Alliance's commitment to transatlantic relations and Ukraine's security. It discusses Russia's threat to NATO's interests, and China, North Korea, and Iran's complicity given their support for Russia. Third, Sweden's *National Security Strategy*, the first since the country joined NATO, elucidates the Swedish government's national security perceptions and prioritization of resources given these perceptions. Last is the summary of the *2024 Report of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy*. The bipartisan report concludes that the United States must strengthen its capabilities across the spectrum of instruments of national power and warns that the U.S. homeland would be a target in a potential engagement with adversaries, particularly Russia and China.

Document No. 1. Congressional Testimony of James E. Fanell, CAPT USN (Retired) before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Accountability Hearing on "Defending America from the Chinese Communist Party's Political Warfare, Part II" June 26, 2024, Select Excerpts

[...] Over the course of decades the CCP effectively misled our Executive Branch to ignore the PRC as a rising existential threat. In particular, the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community were deceived by the CCP's skillful use of elite capture, deception, disinformation and propaganda programs. As a result, senior U.S. leaders unilaterally disarmed psychologically, intellectually, and militarily despite clear evidence that PRC had no intent to rise peacefully, and viewed America as its main enemy to be defeated through protracted war. Even worse, our leaders help fund and otherwise enable China's military, economic, and technological advances needed to destroy our military forces in the field and destroy our society and economy. [...]

We are not prepared intellectually, ideologically, organizationally, nor militarily. The extend of the PRC's Political Warfare is so deeply rooted with our government, that it is not clear at this point whether or not we can succeed in saving our nation. [...]



A CAPTURED ELITE'S STRATEGIC MISTAKES

The U.S. finds itself in this situation because of two fundamentally and related grand strategic mistakes.¹ First, we did not identify this threat from the PRC for decades. Second, we neglected to act to defeat it. [...]

The U.S. is now in a new Cold War. The Sino-American security competition is the great struggle of the 21st Century and promises to resolve the dispositive question of the age—whether the world will be free and protected by the U.S. or fall into a totalitarian abyss as sought by the PRC. The answer to this question will impact the lives of every American for generations. Specifically, the question will impact U.S. national security, those of its allies, the continuation of U.S.-led liberal order, and of the definitive political principles in international politics.

This perilous situation need not have happened. Over three decades, the U.S. had ample time to prevent the PRC's rise and to retard its growth, even to support the overthrow of the CCP, but it did not. Those strategic choices must be explained—why did the U.S. assist, not prevent, the rise of its peer challenger? Was it entirely the result of a masterful, protracted Political Warfare campaign by the masters of deception, the CCP?²

THREAT DEFLATION

At its base, this situation was a historically unique case of *threat deflation*—underestimating the threat, year after year.³ This persistent, deliberate *threat deflation* blinded elected officials, policy makers, and much of the American public to the CCP's insidious intent and of China's so-called "peaceful rise". Consequently, our leaders failed to balance against it. In fact, this wishful thinking and willful blindness led the U.S. to become the greatest enabler of China's malignant rise. The failure to honestly address the threat of PRC's malignant rise is the gravest strategic mistake ever made by the U.S., one which today imperils the U.S. homeland, economic prosperity, and national security.

The proclivity of states is to occasionally identify threats accurately, but more frequently states are prone to overestimate them. Thus, *threat deflation* is rare and is understudied. The result is that too few strategists questioned the true nature and intent of the PRC's rise and the consequences for the U.S. Further, threat deflation inhibited the creation of a *defined school of thought* regarding the PRC's rise as there are on other major strategic issues such as, for example, U.S. grand strategy or nuclear deterrence. Faced with the PRC threat, too few

¹ These issues are explored in James E. Fanell and Bradley A. Thayer, *Embracing Communist China: America's Greatest Strategic Failure* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2024).

² Each of these critical questions is addressed in Fanell and Thayer, *Embracing Communist China*.

³ See Fanell and Thayer, *Embracing Communist China*, pp. 2, 58-66.

national security strategists were willing or able to explain how the U.S. arrived at this position and why, decade after decade, America continued to support and fund the PRC's growth or to even to acknowledge that America was even at risk from the PRC which today threatens U.S. national security interests across the globe. Threat deflation also blinded the national security community to the greatest challenge to the U.S. military's ability to defend the country's national interests in a highly competitive security competition since the Soviet Union.

This multi-decade failing implicates the entire U.S. national security community. It reflects the woeful neglect of the PRC threat by presidential administrations, the U.S. intelligence community, centers of professional military education, national security think tanks, and Sinologists. It is also the result of external events like 9/11 and then the Iraq War which resulted in a decades-long involvement in southwest Asia. The military services adapted as ordered to the global war on terror, as did the focus of U.S. strategic thought. But in the process they were derelict in their duties by ignoring, and often abetting, the PRC's rise.

Now the U.S. faces a situation where the PRC is no longer "rising." It has risen—to the point where Beijing's expansionist aggression against Taiwan and other U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific will likely occur soon--within this decade. The period 2020 to 2030 is what I have long called "The Decade of Concern."⁴ In this decade, we will see the most catastrophic results of China's successful Political Warfare campaign and its military trajectory over the past 30 years.⁵

As example, the U.S. now faces new PRC kinetic military capabilities, like supersonic and hypersonic weapons, are now targeting U.S. carrier strike groups, which have insufficient hypersonic defensive capabilities. The strategic terrain has been altered dramatically since the days of unrivaled U.S. military power, where U.S. capabilities provided overwhelming deterrence and warfighting capabilities against its foes. China's massive military buildup combined with its Political Warfare successes across the Pacific Islands nations, Southeast Asia, Africa, and North and South America means that the U.S. now operates in an environment where the relative distribution of power has shifted against the United States.

America is going to be in this environment—a new Cold War—until it either defeats the PRC's totalitarian expansionism or the PRC destroys our country as we know.

⁴ James Fanell, "Now Hear This—The Clock is Ticking in China: The Decade of Concern Has Begun", USNI Proceedings, Vol. 143/10/1,376, October 2017, <<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/october/now-hear-clock-tickingchina-decade-concern-has-begun>>

⁵ James Fanell, "Asia Rising: China's Global Naval Strategy and Expanding Force Structure," Naval War College Review, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Winter 2019), pp. 33-36. Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7871&context=nwc-review>. Accessed July 14, 2023.

THE THREE REASONS WHY THE U.S. FAILED TO STOP THE PRC'S RISE

The United States underestimated the threat from the PRC for decades. There are three reasons why this occurred.⁶

First, the U.S. national security community failed on a massive level, a failure that deserves the closest investigation by the House Oversight Committee. It was at best derelict in its duties, seemingly oblivious to PRC deception but in some cases clearly co-opted by PRC Intelligence Operatives and Charm Offensives by United Front players. It is useful to recall the context of that era: the end of the Cold War yielded the triumphalism of the “End of History,” and thus caused the ideological and strategic disarmament of the U.S. where democracy and free market economics was triumphant. The U.S. did not perceive the PRC threat due to the dramatic change in the relative distribution of power in the U.S.’s favor due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Thus the U.S. was perceived to be without a peer threat as the PRC was a minor power economically, militarily and diplomatically. As a result, U.S. national security mindset entered a period of structural threat deflation, where U.S. dominance and minor wars prevented the U.S. national security community from meeting the peer competitive threat of China and the requirements of high intensity warfare.

The firm belief was that modernizing states, including the PRC, were on the path to democratization and free market economics. The elite consensus was that the future would be globalization, while power politics in great power relations was an artefact of the past—a dangerous and unhealthy aspect of great power behavior that they needed at one time but now could be discarded. It was Utopian thinking, of course—fatally flawed now in hindsight but quite fashionable in the 1990s and well beyond.

For more than 30 years there was a lack of leadership from successive administrations as they failed to sustain a focus on peer competitive threats. [...]

The Scarborough Shoal incident in 2012 was a watershed event in PRC’s expansionist strategy, and the Obama administration’s failure of this test of strategic leadership has resulted in the PRC’s current violent attacks against our treaty ally the Republic of the Philippines’ Navy, Coast Guard, and civilian vessels in the West Philippine Sea. When the PRC attempted to seize the shoal in 2012, the U.S. brokered an agreement for both PRC and Philippines to withdraw. As soon as the Philippine vessels withdrew, the PRC reneged on the agreement and swept in to take the shoal. The U.S., in fear as a result of masterful PRC Political Warfare, failed to back the Philippines and hold Beijing accountable. The PRC had established itself as the sole naval power at the shoal, formerly the sovereign territory of the Republic of the Philippines. The PRC’s maritime forces seized the sovereign rights from a U.S. treaty ally—something never done before—without firing a shot.

⁶ The causes are examined in detail in Fanell and Thayer, *Embracing Communist China*.

Even worse, after the Arbitral Decision in 2016 which declared most of the PRC's claims to the South China Sea to be illegal, the Obama Administration pointedly refused to publicly support the Philippines on that decision. [...]

Beijing soon realized that there would be no serious pushback from the Obama administration and that the PRC could continue its expansion in South China Sea. Soon thereafter in early 2013, the world began to witness the PRC's building of seven artificial islands in the Spratly Islands.⁷ Three of the islands each contained a 10,000-foot runway capable of supporting PLA air force bomber, reconnaissance and fighter aircraft and enough pier space for any of the PLAN's aircraft carriers or large-deck amphibious ships. Despite assurances from Xi to Obama in 2014 that the PRC would not militarize the islands, today these are fully militarized bases, three of which are the size and capacity of Pearl Harbor.

Second, avarice and finance trumped strategy and set the perfect environment in which PRC Political Warfare could subvert U.S. national security interests from within.

U.S. business interests and financiers consistently and indefatigably sought economic cooperation with the PRC, treating the Chinese people as the source of cheap physical labor for manufacturing, investment, as well as inexpensive intellectual labor, including for research and development. This facilitated the PRC's rise through the sustainment of Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status and its admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO). By engaging the PRC, the *Engagement School*, hereafter referred to as the *Pro-CCP school*, asserted, it would become wealthy and in time democratic. In addition, the U.S. welcomed hundreds of thousands of intelligent, serious, and diligent Chinese students to run U.S. and Western scientific labs and numerous academic departments in computer science and engineering, and in the life and natural sciences, especially chemistry, computer science, genetics, mathematics, and physics. By PRC law, each one of these Chinese citizens at U.S. institutions of higher learning must assist in PRC intelligence and Political Warfare operations. In essence, the U.S. willingly and enthusiastically taught and trained its enemy. Business interests and financiers also funded think tanks, including major national security think tanks, media, and universities which, in turn, contributed to a strong bias towards pro-CCP school, and thus the consistent underestimation of the PRC threat. [...]

The consequence was as the PRC became richer it siphoned off a substantial and consistent percentage of this new wealth to increase its military might, technological prowess, diplomatic influence, and Political Warfare capabilities. In addition, this new paradigm yielded a U.S. economy that was dependent upon the PRC for critical manufacturing and goods, including pharmaceuticals, personal protective equipment, and antibiotics. Today the

⁷ For specific details on what the PRC built in the Spratly Islands starting in 2013, see the CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative "China Island Tracker." Available at: <<https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/china/>>. Accessed August 13, 2023.

PRC is more prosperous, more bellicose, and more determined to supplant the liberal order and the U.S. position in the world.

From a strategic perspective, there is no “Goldilocks” amount of safe trade in high tech with China. Indeed, the right amount is zero.

Third, the enemy of the U.S. was an exceptional strategist, particularly regarding Political Warfare and deception. Political Warfare is not new: it has been the key to winning wars and building empires in what is now the PRC for thousands of years. Notably, though, the PRC advanced a political warfare strategy to promote threat deflation under Deng Xiaoping. Deng profited from studying and improving upon Soviet efforts to penetrate U.S. society as well as learning key lessons from the Soviet Union’s mistakes in the Cold War. [...] For a generation, the PRC masked their intentions and framed their expansion as economic rather than strategic, and an unalloyed good that would benefit the world. It was a masterful political warfare campaign.⁸

WHY THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY COMMUNITY FAILED: FOCUS ON THE IC

[...] As such, the failures of the IC were first to identify the PRC as an existential threat—this would have included identifying Deng’s political warfare strategy of threat deflation precisely as a political warfare strategy to obfuscate and conceal the PRC’s vulnerability. Second, the IC did not compel senior national security decision-makers to address the PRC threat by illuminating the pernicious damage engagement policies were causing. At root, the IC aided Deng’s political warfare strategy of threat deflation because the IC had for decades consistently promoted threat deflation via the policy of engagement. The IC never perceived the PRC through the lens of the distribution of power; for many the notion that the PRC would ever become a great power was always viewed through the lens of “decades away.” Then when the PRC’s comprehensive national power had become undeniable even to the most ardent supporter of engagement, the IC chose to promote the CCP-supplied assertion that one must not “provoke” the PRC or else one risks thermonuclear war. [...]

Indeed, the PRC’s military has grown in every respect. The PRC’s nuclear capabilities have grown from a modest force to one that in the past three years, as noted by Admiral Charles Richard, former Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, has had a “strategic breakout.”⁹ The rapid, yet still opaque growth of the PRC’s nuclear arsenal may very well exceed the U.S.’s by

⁸ For a detailed overview of PRC Political Warfare, to include its history, goals, strategies, and organizations, see Kerry K. Gershaneck, *Political Warfare: Strategies for Combating China’s Plan to “Win without Fighting,”* First (2044 Broadway Drive, Quantico, VA 22134: Marine Corps University Press, 2020), [https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/Political Warfare_web.pdf](https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/Political_Warfare_web.pdf), pp. 3-58.

⁹ Charles Richard, former Commander, U.S. Strategic Command, “Virtual Event: A Conversation with Admiral Richard,” Hudson Institute, August 26, 2021. Available at: <<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.hudson.org/Transcript-%20A%20Conversation%20with%20Admiral%20Richard.pdf>>. Accessed July 10, 2023.

2030, if not sooner. Beijing already possesses more tactical nuclear weapons and theater forces than does the U.S. Its conventional capabilities challenge, if not dominate, the U.S. military today in the Indo-Pacific, at sea, in the air, in the cyber domain, and in space. It utilizes this power to coerce Taiwan and Vietnam, as well as U.S. allies, including Japan, Australia, and the Philippines. Further, Beijing's diplomacy influences nations on every continent and from the Arctic to Antarctic. Its economic influence is ubiquitous, and is prevalent in the U.S. as well, where Silicon Valley keeps close ties to Chinese entities and where Wall Street continues to permit Chinese firms raise capital on U.S. markets and U.S. firms, such as Apple and General Motors, continue to invest in China. Where it is fair to say that today, the PRC's capabilities now match its Olympian ambitions.

As such, the Congress should investigate and demand an explanation of how senior national security officials and the U.S. IC permitted the rise of a peer competitor without forcefully alerting decision-makers and the American people that this was occurring and framing options for the response. [...]

The greatest intelligence failure in U.S. history occurred overtly, year after year, for roughly three decades because the IC failed to understand the malign intentions of the CCP—it simply did not take Communist ideology seriously—and made gross errors based upon benign assumptions of the CCP's strategic goals and objectives.

This is significant today because there are revisionists within the IC and academia who subtly assert that "nobody knew this" or "the Chinese only changed when Xi took over." These assertions are false [...]. In it Triplett gave a clear warning that "the West is about to be unpleasantly surprised by the emergence of a non-democratic military superpower in the world arena, armed with the most advanced nuclear and conventional arms."¹⁰ [...]

Secondly, the IC failed to follow the prime directive for intelligence professionals—knowing where the enemy is today and predicting where they will be tomorrow—out of fear of making a wrong predictive assessment. [...]

Third, and most worrisome, is the IC's adoption of a defensive attitude whenever their analysis and assessments are challenged in the public domain. This very same defensive attitude was prevalent among DC-based intelligence leadership, and their representatives in Hawaii, who spent more time trying to debunk and discredit challenges to IC assessment about the PRC, rather than in objectively assessing whether such challenges may in fact be valid.

¹⁰ William C. Triplett II, "'Inside China's Scary New Military-Industrial Complex,'" Washington Post, May 8, 1994. Available at: <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/1994/05/08/inside-chinas-scary-new-military-industrialcomplex/24d132d0-a7aa-453f-bd11-cd87c938ced3/>>. Accessed August 18, 2023.

There are many examples of the suppression of dissenting opinions in the IC as it relates to the PRC, but the most memorable is the issue of whether the PRC would pursue and build an aircraft carrier program. As early as 1992 the IC should have been cognizant of the PRC's stated intent to have an aircraft carrier program, but even as late as 2006, senior members of the intelligence community had made it clear that the PRC would not pursue an aircraft carrier program for decades, if at all. The effect of such messaging was to degrade, dilute and diminish IC collections, research, analysis and ultimately reporting on this critical issue. Now less than 20 years later we know the results of this threat deflation, the PRC has put three aircraft carriers to sea in just over a decade. [...]

The threat from the PRC's political warfare program didn't just affect intelligence assessments about aircraft carriers, but was found to be rooted much deeper. For instance, former Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Mr. Ron Monaperto who plead guilty in 2006 to illegally holding classified documents and to passing "top secret" information to Chinese intelligence officials.¹¹ [...] The revelation of Mr. Montaperto's espionage and influence activities in support of the PRC 18 years ago should have been a wake-up call and ushered in substantive reforms restricting the direct contact between IC analysts and the PRC's Ministry of State Security (MSS), the intelligence arm of the PRC. [...]

Today, as U.S. policy makers assess the speed and sustainability of the PRC's expansion it is therefore useful to look back on previous assessments the IC has made about the PRC's military power. Reasonably, we should expect to find errors and misjudgments when we look back— assessments of the future are hard—but the most notable feature of the IC's China assessments is that their misjudgments have been in the same direction, that is underestimating the PRC, perfectly fitting the definition of systematic error. [...]

WHY THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY COMMUNITY FAILED: FOCUS ON THE DOD

[...] Today, the PLA Navy is the largest in the world, as has been concurrently documented, for the first time, in the 2021 annual Defense Department report to Congress on military and security developments involving the PRC.

This advantage is not just in numbers of warships and submarines, but it also includes raw tonnage, where the PLA Navy has commissioned more tonnage than the U.S. Navy for most of the past decade. Add in platforms like the PLA Navy's 12,000-ton Renhai-class cruisers with its 112 vertical launch tubes for over-the-horizon weapons like the 300-kilometer ranged YJ-18 supersonic, anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM), and it is not a stretch to say that the PLA Navy now has achieved qualitative parity, if not superiority in the ASCM arena, with the U.S. Navy.

¹¹ Bill Gertz, "Ex-DIA analyst admits passing secrets to China", *Washington Times*, 23 June 2006, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2006/jun/23/20060623-120347-7268r/>

This compels the question of how it could be that for nearly 30 years that senior uniformed members of the Department of Defense allowed this to happen. While there was a small cadre of Flag and General Officers who were cognizant of the rise of the PRC and the threat from the PLA, they were, as one retired officer noted, “swimming against the tide.” [...]

In September 1994, the New York Times ran an article, again by William Triplett, that effectively expressed concerns members of the U.S. Senate were having regarding continued highlevel PLA visits and engagement with the Pentagon and various elements of the U.S. military. For instance, the report noted that “a group of high-ranking Chinese Army officers have toured American war colleges. As guests of the Pentagon, they are being briefed on the state of the art of U.S. military technology and strategy.” Triplett went on to warn that the “visit is the forerunner of a potentially dangerous program of military cooperation with China that the Clinton Administration has undertaken without informing Congress.”¹² [...]

Another instance was in 2007, when the PLA Fleet Commander Admiral Wu Shengli was given tours of the U.S. Navy’s largest and most important, East Coast base in Norfolk, Virginia, where the then Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Mullen, ensured that Admiral Wu was allowed to visit a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier and even a U.S. nuclear submarine.¹³ Feedback from firsthand observers indicated that for every 100 questions Admiral Wu and his delegation asked during these visits, they received 99 transparent answers from their American hosts. But such transparency was not reciprocated. Whenever a U.S. officer would ask a question of their PLA Navy counterparts, they would be met with obfuscation or just no response.

In terms of why U.S. Navy flag officers would adopt such a profoundly dangerous attitude towards unconstrained and unaccountable engagement with their PLA Navy counterparts or their failure to understand evidence and thus fight for building a Navy that could deter China’s naval expansion and aggression, there are three main reasons.

First is the culture of the flag officer corps, which can be best described as “going along to get along.” [...]

Second is the impact of the pro-CCP school of thought, which argued that engagement with the PRC would normalize their behavior within the existing system of international norms that was created out of the aftermath of World War II and the Cold War. Not only were civilian analysts in the national security system susceptible to this

¹² William C. Triplett II, “Dangerous Embrace,” *New York Times*, September 10, 1994, Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/1994/09/10/opinion/dangerous-embrace.html?searchResultPosition=167>>. Accessed July 10, 2023.

¹³ See Fanell and Thayer, *Embracing Communist China*, pp. 102-104.

philosophy of engagement, but stunningly so too has been a generation or more of U.S. Navy admirals.

For example, just six days after the July 12, 2016, ruling by the PCA in the Hague that the PRC had “no possible entitlement” that would have justified China’s environmental destruction, seizure of resources, and military construction within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, the then U.S. Navy Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral John Richardson was photographed in Beijing shaking the hand of PLA Navy Chief, Admiral Wu Shengli, the same Admiral that had masterminded the PRC’s maritime revanchism against America’s ally, the Republic of the Philippines in the South China Sea.¹⁴ [...]

Third, and finally, there is the “frog in the pot” syndrome. In addition to the pernicious impact of going along to get along, the CCP has been very skillful in the timing and tempo of their military expansionism. [...]

Hence, if there is conflict with the PRC, it will be on, over, and below the high seas, from Okinawa to Guam to Honolulu, all the way to the West Coast and into the U.S. homeland. This will be a conflict the likes of which the U.S. has not experienced since World War II. [...]

Fundamentally, what is needed is a change of the culture of U.S. flag and general officer corps so that the enemy may be confronted and defeated, not engaged.

The Department of Defense also did not examine its assumptions regarding the PRC threat. There were three major assumptions that hindered the ability to define and respond to the PRC threat. Each had a significant effect and retarded the ability of the U.S. to see the existential threat developing in clear sight.

First, there was an overarching assumption that history was at its end, and great power threats were an artifact of the past. The influence of the “End of History” mindset was considerable and gave rise to the conceit that the U.S. was the acme of political and economic development and thus possessed the right structure to lead the world and cooperate with other states to assist them on the path to history’s end. [...]

Second, there was a bias that the U.S. had the luxury of time to address future problems and existential threats to the U.S. There existed through this time a corrosive assumption that the PRC remains “decades away” from being a threat to our national security community—that mindset exists today. And for decades, there was always a more demanding task or issue to confront than the PRC threat. The PRC threat advanced relentlessly but relatively slowly in relation to the minor war of the day, or the actions taken by Iran or North

¹⁴ “Freedom of Navigation Patrols May End ‘In Disaster’: Chinese Admiral,” *Reuters*, July 18, 2016. Available at: . Accessed August 11, 2023.

Korea, or the humanitarian or other cri[si]ses which invariable demanded immediate attention.

The third assumption was that no one took Communism seriously anymore and that the PRC will be positively transformed through the coterie of engagement policies. [...]

Another set of problems is that analysts became defensive around a certain narrative, such as the PRC's intentions are benign, or U.S. actions are responsible for compelling the PRC's expansion and belligerence. [...]

Presently, there is a constant focus on the daily briefing within the 24-hour cycle of the Department of Defense. As such, there is little time for senior defense officials to think about long-term, strategic issues, no matter how significant. In essence, analysts are on an endless treadmill.

Accordingly, there is value for a strategic team to be appropriately allocated to study national security threats within a longer-term period. For example, stronger connecting tissue between Intelligence and Plans is in order for our OPLANS to be informed by major threats without self-limiting thinking due to budget constraints or the preconceived assumptions already mentioned. [...]

SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS

[...] The first recommendation to recovery is for the U.S. national security community to admit they failed. [...]

Second, American's must understand the existing distribution of power within the U.S. national security community is resistant to withdrawing from the pro-CCP school—their predilection will be to return the rudder of the ship of state to amidships and the course towards engagement with the PRC. [...]

Third, it should also be expected that executing this rudder change within the foreign policy community will take years of consistent effort to reverse—as can already be clearly seen from the sudden resumption of visits to the PRC by senior cabinet level officials from the current administration. Unfortunately, America does not have years to correct course. This Cold War with the PRC is not like the first Cold War because the strategists who built America's power during this fight with the Soviet Union experienced less resistance from the national security community compared to the present. Today, many American national security elites in and outside of the government are more interested in sustaining their involvement with the PRC—and because if this they will more actively fight against measures to confront and challenge Beijing's agenda of global expansionism.

Fourth, yet America's victory over these internal and external forces is only possible if action is taken now. [...]

Fifth, the Intelligence Community needs to create a dynamic "Team B" to address the threat. [...]

Sixth, the U.S. needs to have the same familiarity with the PLA's doctrine and ideology as with Soviet Communism during the Cold War. [...]

Seventh, the U.S. needs to take bold action to target the CCP directly.¹⁵ This requires a multifaceted approach, that will include the rollback the PRC's gains in the South China Sea, and the defeat of the PRC in its attempts at future territorial seizure like the PRC is currently conducting against the Philippines at Second Thomas Shoal. The U.S. and its allies should even be prepared to evict the PLA from facilities they have created in other countries like Djibouti, or are in the process of creating in Ream, Cambodia. Those are important and necessary measures to place Beijing on the strategic backfoot. But the center of gravity that the U.S. must attack is the CCP itself to ensure that the CCP, the Chinese people, and all global audiences know that it is illegitimate and that the U.S., working with the Chinese people and allies, is working to expel it from power. This requires employing all the arrows in the U.S. quiver, including a focus on political warfare that the U.S. did well during much of the Cold War, like the Active Measures Working Group, but has allowed to fall into disrepair in the post-Cold War years.¹⁶

These various tasks must be authorized and synchronized by competent authority in the form of, perhaps, a resurrected U.S. Information Agency. The key is to do it quickly across all levers of national power. The Engager's "it will take years" to fix mindset, while true to a degree, cannot overshadow or retard the impetus to act today. In essence, Americans must recognize that we are truly, for the first time since the Cold War, in an existential fight for our national survival. [...]

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¹⁵ Lianchao Han and Bradley A. Thayer, *Understanding the China Threat* (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 163-186.

¹⁶ Fletcher Schoen and Christopher J. Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference", Institute for National Strategic Studies Strategic Perspectives, No. 11, National Defense University Press Washington, D.C. June 2012, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-11.pdf>.

Document No. 2. Washington Summit Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C., July 10, 2024, Select Excerpts

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Alliance, have gathered in Washington to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our Alliance. Forged to preserve peace, NATO remains the strongest Alliance in history. We stand in unity and solidarity in the face of a brutal war of aggression on the European continent and at a critical time for our security. We reaffirm the enduring transatlantic bond between our nations. NATO remains the unique, essential, and indispensable transatlantic forum to consult, coordinate, and act on all matters related to our individual and collective security. NATO is a defensive Alliance. Our commitment to defend one another and every inch of Allied territory at all times, as enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, is iron-clad. We will continue to ensure our collective defence against all threats and from all directions, based on a 360-degree approach, to fulfil NATO's three core tasks of deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. We are bound together by shared values: individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. We adhere to international law and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and are committed to upholding the rules-based international order.
2. [...] Every nation has the right to choose its own security arrangements. We reaffirm our commitment to NATO's Open Door Policy, in line with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty.
3. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has shattered peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and gravely undermined global security. Russia remains the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security. Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity. The threats we face are global and interconnected.
4. Strategic competition, pervasive instability, and recurrent shocks define our broader security environment. Conflict, fragility and instability in Africa and the Middle East directly affect our security and the security of our partners. [...] Iran's destabilising actions are affecting Euro-Atlantic security. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) stated ambitions and coercive policies continue to challenge our interests, security and values. The deepening strategic partnership between Russia and the PRC and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut and reshape the rules-based international order, are a cause for profound concern. We are confronted by hybrid, cyber, space, and other threats and malicious activities from state and non-state actors. [...]

6. We welcome that more than two-thirds of Allies have fulfilled their commitment of at least 2% of GDP annual defence spending and commend those Allies who have exceeded it. Allies are stepping up: defence expenditure by European Allies and Canada has grown by 18% in 2024, the biggest increase in decades. [...] We reaffirm that, in many cases, expenditure beyond 2% of GDP will be needed in order to remedy existing shortfalls and meet the requirements across all domains arising from a more contested security order.
7. We have undertaken the biggest reinforcement of our collective defence in a generation. [...] We cannot discount the possibility of an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity. [...] We are further accelerating the modernisation of our collective defence and are:
 - a. Providing the necessary forces, capabilities, resources, and infrastructure for our new defence plans, to be prepared for high-intensity and multi-domain collective defence. [...]
 - b. Conducting more frequent and large-scale training and exercises of our plans to demonstrate our ability to defend and rapidly reinforce any Ally that comes under threat. [...]
 - c. Taking urgent action to increase capabilities in accordance with the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), including in the short-term, with our initial focus to include battle decisive munitions and air and missile defence. [...]
 - d. Strengthening our NATO command and control and assigning key leadership roles to nationally provided headquarters.
 - e. Strengthening our ability to move, reinforce, supply, and sustain our forces to respond to threats across the Alliance, including through effective and resilient logistics and the development of mobility corridors.
 - f. Training, exercising, and integrating NATO's Forward Land Forces into the new plans, including by continuing to strengthen our forward defences on NATO's Eastern Flank.
 - g. Taking full advantage of the accession of Finland and Sweden [...].
 - h. Accelerating the integration of space into our planning, exercises, and multi-domain operations [...].
 - i. Establishing the NATO Integrated Cyber Defence Centre to enhance network protection, situational awareness, and the implementation of cyberspace as an operational domain throughout peacetime, crisis and conflict; and developing a policy to augment the security of NATO's networks.

- j. Strengthening the protection of critical undersea infrastructure (CUI), and enhancing our ability to deter, detect and respond to threats, including through continued development of NATO's Centre for Security of CUI.
 - k. Investing in our Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear defence capabilities required to effectively operate in all environments.
 - l. Accelerating implementation of NATO standards and agreeing the necessary measures to increase and strengthen our interoperability.
8. We are resolved to deter and defend against all air and missile threats by enhancing our Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD), based on a 360-degree approach. We have updated NATO's IAMD Policy and will continue to increase our readiness, responsiveness, and integration through various initiatives [...]. We are pleased to declare NATO Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Enhanced Operational Capability. [...] Missile defence can complement the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence; it cannot substitute them.
9. Nuclear deterrence is the cornerstone of Alliance security. The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO reaffirms its commitment to all the decisions, principles, and commitments with regard to NATO's nuclear deterrence, arms control policy and non-proliferation and disarmament objectives as stated in the 2022 Strategic Concept and 2023 Vilnius Communiqué. Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation have made and should continue to make an essential contribution to achieving the Alliance's security objectives and to ensuring strategic stability and our collective security. NATO remains committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure the credibility, effectiveness, safety, and security of the Alliance's nuclear deterrence mission, including by modernising its nuclear capabilities, strengthening its nuclear planning capability, and adapting as necessary.
10. NATO's deterrence and defence posture is based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities. We will employ military and non-military tools in a proportionate, coherent and integrated way to deter all threats to our security and respond in the manner, timing, and in the domain of our choosing.
11. Transatlantic defence industrial cooperation is a critical part of NATO's deterrence and defence. Strengthened defence industry across Europe and North America and enhanced defence industrial cooperation among Allies makes us more capable and better able to deliver against the requirements of NATO's defence plans in a timely manner. It underpins Allies' immediate and enduring support to Ukraine. We will continue to reduce and eliminate, as appropriate, obstacles to defence trade and investment among Allies. Building on the Defence

Production Action Plan agreed at the Vilnius Summit in 2023, we commit to doing more together as Allies, including to strengthen defence industry across the Alliance, act urgently to deliver the most critical capabilities, and reinforce our commitment to NATO standards. To that end, we have today agreed the NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge.

12. National and collective resilience are an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and the effective fulfillment of the Alliance's core tasks in a 360-degree approach. Resilience is a national responsibility and a collective commitment, rooted in Article 3 of the Washington Treaty. Strengthening national and Alliance-wide preparedness for deterrence and defence requires a whole of government approach, public-private cooperation, and societal resilience considerations. [...]
13. State and non-state actors are using increasingly aggressive hybrid actions against Allies. We will continue to prepare for, deter, defend against, and counter hybrid threats and challenges. We reiterate that hybrid operations against Allies could reach the level of an armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.
14. We will continue to develop our individual and collective capacity to analyse and counter hostile disinformation and misinformation operations. [...]
15. [...] We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the people of Ukraine in the heroic defence of their nation, their land, and our shared values. A strong, independent, and democratic Ukraine is vital for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. Ukraine's fight for its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders directly contributes to Euro-Atlantic security. [...]. To help Ukraine defend itself today, and deter Russian aggression in the future, we have:
 - a. Decided to establish the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) to coordinate the provision of military equipment and training for Ukraine by Allies and partners. [...]. NSATU will not, under international law, make NATO a party to the conflict. [...]
 - b. Announced a Pledge of Long-Term Security Assistance for Ukraine for the provision of military equipment, assistance, and training to support Ukraine in building a force capable of defeating Russian aggression. [...]
 - c. Taken forward the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Centre (JATEC), an important pillar of practical cooperation, to identify and apply lessons from Russia's war against Ukraine and increase Ukraine's interoperability with NATO.

- d. Welcomed the Secretary General's decision to appoint a NATO Senior Representative in Ukraine.
16. We fully support Ukraine's right to choose its own security arrangements and decide its own future, free from outside interference. Ukraine's future is in NATO. [...] As Ukraine continues this vital work, we will continue to support it on its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership. We reaffirm that we will be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance when Allies agree and conditions are met. The Summit decisions by NATO and the NATO-Ukraine Council, combined with Allies' ongoing work, constitute a bridge to Ukraine's membership in NATO. [...]
17. Russia bears sole responsibility for its war of aggression against Ukraine, a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter. There can be no impunity for Russian forces' and officials' abuses and violations of human rights, war crimes, and other violations of international law. Russia is responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians and has caused extensive damage to civilian infrastructure. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's horrific attacks on the Ukrainian people, including on hospitals, on 8 July. Russia must immediately stop this war and completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces from Ukraine in line with UN General Assembly resolutions. We will never recognise Russia's illegal annexations of Ukrainian territory, including Crimea. We also call on Russia to withdraw all of its forces from the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, stationed there without their consent.
18. Russia seeks to fundamentally reconfigure the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. The all-domain threat Russia poses to NATO will persist into the long term. Russia is rebuilding and expanding its military capabilities, and continues its airspace violations and provocative activities. We stand in solidarity with all Allies affected by these actions. NATO does not seek confrontation, and poses no threat to Russia. We remain willing to maintain channels of communication with Moscow to mitigate risk and prevent escalation.
19. We condemn Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and coercive nuclear signalling, including its announced stationing of nuclear weapons in Belarus, which demonstrate a posture of strategic intimidation. Russia has increased its reliance on nuclear weapon systems and continued to diversify its nuclear forces, including by developing novel nuclear systems and deploying short and intermediate range dual-capable strike capabilities, all of which poses a growing threat to the Alliance. Russia has violated, selectively implemented, and walked away from longstanding arms control obligations and commitments, thereby undermining the global arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation architecture. We oppose any placement of nuclear weapons in orbit around Earth, which would violate Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, and would gravely

- threaten global security. We are profoundly concerned by the reported use of chemical weapons by Russia against Ukrainian forces.
20. Russia has also intensified its aggressive hybrid actions against Allies, including through proxies, in a campaign across the Euro-Atlantic area. These include sabotage, acts of violence, provocations at Allied borders, instrumentalisation of irregular migration, malicious cyber activities, electronic interference, disinformation campaigns and malign political influence, as well as economic coercion. These actions constitute a threat to Allied security. We have decided on further measures to counter Russian hybrid threats or actions individually and collectively, and will continue to coordinate closely. Russia's behaviour will not deter Allies' resolve and support to Ukraine. We will also continue to support our partners most exposed to Russian destabilisation, as they strengthen their resilience in the face of hybrid challenges that are also present in our neighbourhood.
 21. We are determined to constrain and contest Russia's aggressive actions and to counter its ability to conduct destabilising activities towards NATO and Allies. For our next Summit, we will develop recommendations on NATO's strategic approach to Russia, taking into account the changing security environment.
 22. Countering terrorism remains essential to our collective defence. [...]
 23. We urge all countries not to provide any kind of assistance to Russia's aggression. We condemn all those who are facilitating and thereby prolonging Russia's war in Ukraine.
 24. Belarus continues to enable this war by making available its territory and infrastructure. Russia's deepening political and military integration of Belarus, including the deployment of advanced Russian military capabilities and personnel, has negative implications for regional stability and the defence of the Alliance.
 25. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran are fuelling Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine by providing direct military support to Russia, such as munitions and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) [...]. We strongly condemn the DPRK's exports of artillery shells and ballistic missiles, which are in violation of numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions, and note with great concern the deepening ties between the DPRK and Russia. Any transfer of ballistic missiles and related technology by Iran to Russia would represent a substantial escalation.
 26. The PRC has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine through its so-called "no limits" partnership and its large-scale support for Russia's defence industrial base. This increases the threat Russia poses to its neighbours and to Euro-Atlantic security. We call on the PRC, as a permanent member of the

- United Nations Security Council with a particular responsibility to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, to cease all material and political support to Russia's war effort. This includes the transfer of dual-use materials, such as weapons components, equipment, and raw materials that serve as inputs for Russia's defence sector. The PRC cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation.
27. The PRC continues to pose systemic challenges to Euro-Atlantic security. We have seen sustained malicious cyber and hybrid activities, including disinformation, stemming from the PRC. We call on the PRC to uphold its commitment to act responsibly in cyberspace. We are concerned by developments in the PRC's space capabilities and activities. [...] The PRC continues to rapidly expand and diversify its nuclear arsenal with more warheads and a larger number of sophisticated delivery systems. [...] We remain open to constructive engagement with the PRC, including to build reciprocal transparency with the view of safeguarding the Alliance's security interests. At the same time, we are boosting our shared awareness, enhancing our resilience and preparedness, and protecting against the PRC's coercive tactics and efforts to divide the Alliance.
 28. NATO's partnerships remain key to enhancing stability, positively influencing the global security environment, and upholding international law. [...]
 29. The European Union remains a unique and essential partner for NATO. [...] In the context of Ukraine, NATO-EU cooperation has become more significant. [...] The development of coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities, avoiding unnecessary duplication, is key in our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer. For the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in EU defence efforts is essential. [...]
 30. We will meet with the leadership of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea, and the European Union to discuss common security challenges and areas of cooperation. The Indo-Pacific is important for NATO, given that developments in that region directly affect Euro-Atlantic security. [...]
 31. The Western Balkans and the Black Sea regions are of strategic importance for the Alliance. [...] We remain committed to NATO's continued engagement in the Western Balkans, including through the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR). We reaffirm our continued support to Allied regional efforts aimed at upholding security, safety, stability and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea region including, as appropriate, through the 1936 Montreux Convention. We welcome the activation by the three littoral Allies of the Black Sea Mine Countermeasures Task Group. [...] NATO supports the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of interested countries in this region.

32. NATO's southern neighbourhood provides opportunities for cooperation on issues of mutual interest. Through our partnerships we aim to foster greater security and stability in the Middle East and Africa, contributing to peace and prosperity in the region. [...]
33. We have accelerated NATO's transformation to meet current and future threats and to maintain our technological edge, including through experimentation and more rapid adoption of emerging technologies, and through digital transformation. [...] We are closely monitoring technological advancements on the battlefield in Ukraine, and are launching new innovation initiatives with our Ukrainian partners.
34. We will continue integrating climate change considerations into all core tasks and will enhance our energy security efforts. [...]
35. We are committed to integrating NATO's ambitious Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Human Security agendas across all core tasks. [...]

PLEDGE OF LONG-TERM SECURITY ASSISTANCE FOR UKRAINE

1. Today, we affirm our unwavering commitment to Ukraine as a sovereign, democratic, independent state. To deliver that, Ukraine requires our long-term support. Since the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Allies have provided unprecedented political, economic, military, financial, and humanitarian support, including military assistance amounting to roughly €40 billion annually. Allies have also made their defence industrial capacity available to support Ukraine's needs. All of this is having a substantial effect, enabling the Ukrainians to defend effectively and inflict real and severe costs on Russia.
2. We affirm our determination to support Ukraine in building a force capable of defeating Russian aggression today and deterring it in the future. To that end, we intend to provide a minimum baseline funding of €40 billion within the next year, and to provide sustainable levels of security assistance for Ukraine to prevail, taking into account Ukraine's needs, our respective national budget procedures, and the bilateral security agreements which Allies have concluded with Ukraine. Heads of State and Government will re-evaluate Allied contributions at future NATO Summits, starting at the 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague.
3. Our commitment extends to costs related to the provision of military equipment, assistance, and training for Ukraine [...]
4. [...] To support fair burden-sharing, Allies will aim to meet this pledge through proportional contributions, including by taking into account their share of Alliance GDP.

5. Allies will report to NATO on support delivered in relation to this pledge twice per year, with the first report to include contributions delivered after 1 January 2024. [...]
6. In addition to military support covered by this pledge, Allies intend to continue providing political, economic, financial, and humanitarian support to Ukraine.

* * * * *

Document No. 3. Sweden's National Security Strategy 2024, Select Excerpts

[...]

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S MOST IMPORTANT TASK IS TO PROTECT SWEDEN'S FREEDOM, PEACE AND SECURITY

No task is more important for central government than protecting Sweden's freedom, peace and security. The ultimate responsibility for this task lies with the Riksdag and the Government. [...] Our vital interests are those that are worth the greatest sacrifices. We are prepared to allocate substantial resources to ensure our strategic interests.

The strategy then describes the global situation that forms the backdrop for [which] the work on national security is based. Compared to 2017, when the previous national security strategy was adopted, the international situation has changed drastically – and worsened in most essential respects. The security situation in our neighbourhood and in Europe is the most precarious it has been since the Second World War. Russia is waging a brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and constitutes a serious threat to Sweden and its allies. The assessment of the Government is that the deteriorated security situation will persist in the foreseeable future, and there is a risk that it will further deteriorate.

OUR NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

Sweden's vital national security interests are to safeguard Sweden's security, democratic form of governance, freedom, independence, sovereignty and freedom of action; to protect the lives and health of the population; to defend Sweden and its Allies against armed attacks and uphold its territorial integrity; to maintain critical supplies and the functioning of society; and to uphold its fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights and freedoms. [...]

OUR SECURITY SITUATION

[...] Russia poses the most serious threat to our national security in the period up to 2030. An armed attack against Sweden or its Allies cannot be ruled out. Nor can the use or threat of military measures against Sweden or its Allies. Our democracy, the integrity of our public institutions and the cohesion of our society are also jeopardised by organised crime that poses a systemic threat, violent extremism, terrorism and anti-democratic values. [...]

Unforeseen events are inevitable, no matter how carefully analyses are made. Developments in recent years have also shown how difficult it can be to assess threats, how quickly they can change and how they can evolve faster than expected and in unexpected directions. It is therefore important to also have knowledge of and preparedness for threats that have previously been considered less likely.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS

Global developments are characterised by authoritarian states seeking to redefine international norms and undermine or reshape the rules-based world order, based on the UN Charter, to meet their goals and interests. [...] This democratic backsliding thus undermines support for the rules-based world order. This also affects Sweden, as its security is ultimately based on states respecting international law, including the rules of the UN Charter.

These developments also mean that the global security environment is increasingly characterized by the dynamic between China on the one hand and the United States and like-minded actors on the other. One consequence of this is that the security of our Euro-Atlantic region is becoming ever more closely linked with that of the Indo-Pacific regions. [...]

Sweden's national security is significantly affected by events in Europe's immediate neighbourhood, including in the Middle East and North Africa. [...] Instability in the Middle East and Africa can also affect Europe through crossborder crime, violent extremism and terrorism.

One of the factors defining our time is rapid technological development, especially in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology and biotechnology. This drives economic development, but it also has increasingly tangible security policy implications. Many states increasingly see access to, and the ability to apply, emerging technologies as crucial to the balance of military and economic power. [...]

For a country like Sweden, with highly internationalised business and higher education institutions, the increased control of technology, innovations and supply chains poses

problems, as it risks limiting the possibilities for international cooperation on cutting-edge technology. [...]

Technological development, coupled with the deteriorating global security situation, also contributes to the growing importance of space and infrastructure there. The risk of confrontation is increasing. Sweden is affected by this development because it has significant potential as a space nation, including through its satellite launch capability.

Digital development brings major benefits to society, but also increases existing threats and creates new ones. [...]

Social media and other internet platforms are being exploited to spread false rumours, disinformation, conspiracy theories and racist and antisemitic messages. These affect opinion formation, interpersonal trust, democratic discourse, community and, thus, national security. The risk of AI being used for such purposes is assessed to be particularly high, but it also has potential to respond to this use. With the help of digital technology, crime in Sweden can be led and organised outside Sweden's borders, which further exacerbates the fight against it. Good international and bilateral cooperation is necessary. At the same time, technological development can also provide law enforcement with new opportunities to more effectively prevent and combat crime, such as through camera surveillance and the use of AI in various contexts.

ACTOR-DRIVEN THREATS

The external factor that has had the greatest impact on our security situation for more than a decade is Russia's gradual development into a militarily armed, externally aggressive and internally repressive autocracy. Russia considers itself to be in permanent conflict with a Western world perceived to be led by the United States. The Russian regime does not hide its attempts to establish a new European security order based on spheres of interest instead of the right of each state to choose its own security policy path. It also seeks, systematically and forcibly, to expand its own power and influence, not only in neighbouring countries but throughout Europe. One instrument for achieving this is to create and exploit divisions both within and between countries in the EU and NATO. In other parts of the world too, Russia tries to undermine the EU and the United States. Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons are also a means used for this purpose.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is the most serious expression of the Russian regime's ambitions to date. It shows how far Russia's leadership is prepared to go to achieve its goals and the level of risk it is prepared to take. Although Russia has suffered heavy losses and the Russian economy is small compared to the combined economies of the EU and NATO, Russia's military strength remains significant. Russia's leadership is also redirecting its

economy to support long-term aggression and prioritizing military rearmament over other needs, while showing that it is prepared to use all available instruments to achieve its goals.

An armed attack by Russia on Sweden or one of our Allies is the pacing threat for the total defence that is now being built up within the framework of NATO's collective defence.

China is the world's second-largest economy and a key international actor. China's totalitarian development, geopolitical ambitions and efforts to reshape the rules-based world order pose a threat to Sweden's national security. China's military rearmament and modernisation affect security in Asia and throughout the world. China's modernisation and expansion of its nuclear capabilities, coupled with a lack of transparency or commitment to arms control and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons issues, can affect strategic stability and, in the long term, also have consequences for strategic deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic region. China's deepening partnership with Russia and indirect support for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine contribute to the serious security situation in Europe. China has been moving in an increasingly totalitarian direction. The central role of the party is emphasised and the repression of dissidents and certain ethnic groups, such as the Uighurs, has worsened.

China's ambition to become a world leader in new technology and its use of cyber capabilities also have consequences for our security and competitiveness. Furthermore, China's 'military-civil fusion' requires private Chinese companies to share their technology with the Chinese military. Chinese actors also conduct systematic intelligence activities and security-threatening activities against Sweden and Swedish interests.

The broad range of methods that mainly Russia but also China, Iran and other actors use to influence Sweden can be grouped together under the heading of 'hybrid threats'. These actors strive to exploit all vulnerabilities in our society to achieve their political or other objectives. The threats are aimed at actors at all levels of the Swedish public sector, but also at civil society, the private sector and individuals. The methods include cyber attacks, undue influence, economic pressure, sabotage, impact on critical flows, migration as an instrument of pressure, unlawful intelligence activities and the execution of attacks and other acts of violence. Critical infrastructure has been a key target of Russia's attacks in Ukraine. Through repeated attacks on, for example, energy-related infrastructure, Russia has put the Ukrainian energy system under extreme stress and subjected the civilian population to difficult living conditions.

Internet-connected systems in all sectors of society in Sweden are exposed to cyber threats, not just those that are directly relevant to national security. These threats come from foreign intelligence agencies, criminal groups and individuals. It is often difficult to definitively attribute cyber threats to a specific actor. [...]

Our economic security is also threatened by attempts to use both legal and illegal methods to gain access to sensitive information, Swedish cutting-edge technology and knowledge, and control of essential public services and infrastructure such as transport and digital infrastructure. [...]

Sweden is vulnerable to unilateral dependencies in terms of supply of goods such as important components, pharmaceuticals and certain raw materials. [...]

The threat of violent extremism and terrorism has become more complex and difficult to combat, partly because violent extremism environments are constantly changing, and digital platforms offer new opportunities to disseminate information and plan violent acts. [...]

Infiltration, corruption, threats and undue influence are growing and, in the long term, pose serious threats to the integrity of our public institutions, but also to the business community. The same applies to criminal networks' attempts to establish parallel social structures and to challenge the State's monopoly on power and violence in some parts of Sweden.

Substantial migration flows to Sweden over time, combined with an undemanding integration policy, have led to widespread exclusion in parts of society, with an increased risk of the emergence of parallel social structures and separatism. [...]

Large migration flows also pose a risk, as people with antagonistic intentions can join large migration movements. Furthermore, the risk is that migrants are exploited as pawns to create instability ('instrumentalisation') and that they can be used as a means of pressure against Sweden. [...] This development thus poses a threat to the rule of law, trust in public institutions and, ultimately, democracy. Such a development is exploited by hostile state actors and other groups.

NON-ACTOR-DRIVEN THREATS

[...] The most serious threat, especially in the longer term, is the existential threat to humanity posed by climate change. [...] If no adaptation of society to the changing climate is undertaken, the costs of loss and damage are expected to increase. Climate change will thus have consequences for our ability to deal with other types of threats to our national security. Throughout the world, climate change deepens existing conflicts, partly because they affect access to resources such as fresh water, food and arable land. This leads to a higher risk of migration flows. [...]

Sweden will most likely be affected by new epidemics and pandemics. On a global scale, increased urbanisation, population growth, the spread of chemicals, loss of eco-systems and climate change entail increased risks. [...] International cooperation is a prerequisite for effectively managing major epidemics and pandemics.

Antimicrobial resistance is a significant and growing threat to human and animal health and our food production. [...]

Public health is of great importance for Sweden's resilience and thus ultimately for our national security. [...] Experience from other countries shows a risk of opioids, in particular, becoming a threat to internal security and public health unless preventive measures are effective and inflow and drug trafficking are stopped.

The increasing digitalisation of society has meant that many essential public services are currently entirely or partly dependent on digital tools and systems. [...] Swedish society is also becoming increasingly dependent on electricity. Disruptions can have extensive implications for large parts of society and risk affecting our national security.

PRIORITIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

[...] Sweden needs to urgently strengthen its capacity to prevent and respond to the various threats and risks described in this strategy. This means that the strengthening of national security should be accorded great importance when balancing and prioritising different societal interests. Of particular importance are building up the total defence, Sweden's integration into NATO and the fight against organised crime that poses a systemic threat. [...] Against this background, the Government's work is based on five guiding principles:

- Urgency and pragmatism. [...]
- Capacity to act and make decisions under uncertainty. [...]
- Robustness and adaptability. [...]
- Involvement of the whole of society. [...]
- International cooperation. [...]

Focus areas [...]

Area 1: A safe and secure Sweden

Objectives 2030

- The democratic world's unity and global security policy footprint have been strengthened. Sweden has reinforced its relations with neighbouring countries, strategic allies and partners.
- NATO maintains an effective deterrence and defence through Sweden's and other Allies' efforts and is well prepared, within the framework of collective defence, to respond to an armed attack. Our total defence is strong, adequately sized and fully integrated into NATO.

- Sweden has a well-developed capacity to respond to hybrid threats from state actors threatening the country's security and its economic or security policy interests, across the entire conflict spectrum.
- The EU is strong, and cooperation within the Union in the field of defence reinforces European defence capabilities and contributes to Europe's security and resilience.
- Ukraine has received the support it needs to be able to achieve its objectives in the war of defence against Russia, for reconstruction, and for establishing the capacity to resist future attacks.
- Russia's capability to carry out military aggression against Ukraine or other states has been reduced.
- The security threat from authoritarian states such as China, Russia and Iran is prioritised and managed in cooperation with democratic countries.

Sweden's foreign and security policy is the first-line instrument to strengthen cooperation, prevent conflict and counter external antagonistic threats to Sweden's security. [...] The core of Sweden's security policy is the solidarity-based alliance policy pursued as a member of the EU and NATO [...]. The EU is Sweden's most important foreign policy arena and NATO is Sweden's most important defence policy arena. Swedish security policy requires active, broad and responsible international action, which includes strengthening democratic development globally, safeguarding the rule of law and promoting respect for human rights and freedoms. Membership of the UN remains central to safeguarding international law and addressing global issues such as climate change, humanitarian crises and widespread migration flows. [...]

Furthermore, an effective security policy requires the coordination of a range of mechanisms, including diplomacy, strategic communications, development assistance, economic, legal and military instruments, as well as a resilient society. [...] A good understanding of geopolitical developments, based on the work of diplomatic missions, defence intelligence agencies and security services, is of central importance. Equally important is our capacity to protect ourselves against foreign powers' intelligence gathering and attempts to influence.

Nato

Sweden will be a loyal Ally

NATO is the ultimate guarantor for European and transatlantic security. Full integration into NATO – political, civil and military – is the single most important and urgent measure to strengthen Sweden's security, and of great importance to our Allies. [...]

Sweden's geographic location and ability to support other Allies is crucial to NATO's ability to operate effectively in our region. Sweden shoulders this responsibility and fully embraces the opportunity to facilitate the collective defence not only of Sweden but also of our neighbours. Military defence will be adapted to the requirements attributed to Sweden as an

Ally. The credibility of NATO's deterrence is crucial to Sweden's security. Sweden supports NATO's strategic deterrence and will remain a strong voice for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The credibility of NATO's deterrence and defence is based upon cohesion within the Alliance and the development and maintenance of strong military capabilities by Allies. [...] Sweden's membership in a defence Alliance with binding mutual defence commitments constitutes a paradigm shift in Swedish security and defence policy, concerning all parts of the Swedish total defence. [...]

The European Union

Sweden will contribute to strengthening the EU

[...] Swedish action in the EU is guided by the insight that Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security. A better equipped EU contributes to a stronger NATO. The EU's role in security and defence needs to be strengthened in a way that favours the transatlantic link without compromising the competence of Member States. Defence industry and technology-related cooperation, which is also open to strategic partnerships, is important in this regard. The security situation and the experiences gained from Ukraine show that the EU's common crisis management capabilities, resilience and preparedness need to be strengthened. [...] EU enlargement is an investment in peace, democracy, security, stability and prosperity. One of the EU's most important tasks is therefore to complete the integration of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, as well as the countries of the Western Balkans, into the Union, once these countries meet the requirements. [...]

Total defence

Modernisation will be carried out swiftly and efficiently

Sweden is carrying out a comprehensive reinforcement of its total defence. [...] The modernisation of total defence is a complex task, involving major efforts by the whole of Swedish society, which necessitates trade-offs in relation to other societal interests. In view of the perilous global situation that has made this reinforcement necessary, activities of significance for total defence must be prioritised in such trade-offs. [...]

Hybrid threats

Capability to respond to state actors' hybrid threats will be strengthened

[...] These attacks are conducted by both civilian and military means and through cyberattacks and disinformation; influence operations, disinformation, attempts to affect critical information flows and critical infrastructure; strategic investments; infiltration of, for example, higher education institutions, and theft of technology and innovation. Countering these threats requires capabilities that are partly outside the structure and mandate of total defence. [...]

Ukraine

Sweden will contribute to the defence of Ukraine for as long as it takes

Together with the modernization of our total defence, the most important measure for security in our neighbourhood is to ensure that Russia does not achieve its objectives in its war of aggression against Ukraine. [...] Support to Ukraine is therefore the Government's top foreign policy priority. [...] Provided that democratic countries continue giving Ukraine the support it needs, the fundamental balance of forces, both economic and military, are not in Russia's favour in the longer term. However, this would require urgent reinforcements of, among other things, defence production capability. [...]

Russia

Sweden will counteract Russia's aggression and power expansion

It is of great importance to Sweden's national security to counteract Russia's influence, freedom of action and ability to target military and non-military threats against countries in the EU, NATO and Russia's neighbourhood. This requires Sweden, domestically and within the EU and NATO, to pursue a comprehensive, long-term and strategic policy to prevent Russia from expanding its power. Strong support to Ukraine is our best way to influence Russia's actions. EU sanctions against Russia and accountability for violations of international law committed during and through Russia's aggression against Ukraine are other key components of this policy. [...]

Key bilateral relations

Sweden will safeguard and develop its bilateral relations with key allies and partners

Bilateral cooperation with the United States, the Nordic and Baltic countries, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Poland is of particular importance to Sweden's security. The transatlantic link between Europe and the United States is crucial to Sweden's security. NATO is the principal expression of this link, but it is also manifested in our close bilateral military cooperation and other long-standing close ties between the United States and Sweden.

[...] At the same time, Sweden's security policy needs to take into account the shift in the focus of US security policy towards the threat from China and the fact that the United States' willingness to contribute to Europe's security could be affected by domestic political conditions. [...] Thus, we can also help reduce direct and indirect threats to Sweden through strategic bilateral and multilateral development assistance. [...]

Sweden will strengthen its cooperation with countries that are particularly important to us in Asia and Oceania. This is essential, not least because Europe's and Asia's security have become increasingly interconnected. Cooperation of this kind helps reduce vulnerability in Swedish businesses' value chains and strengthen Sweden's long-term competitiveness. For similar reasons, it is important for Sweden to strengthen its cooperation with democratic states in Latin America.

Sweden needs to maintain a dialogue and trade with China as well as cooperation in areas where it is appropriate and compatible with our national security. In order to strengthen our

economic security and resilience, we also need to reduce risks and vulnerable dependencies in relation to China. It is also important to enhance our knowledge of China. Sweden's relations with China must be anchored in a European strategy with close transatlantic cooperation.

Area 2: A safe, open and cohesive Sweden

Objectives 2030

- Sweden remains a cohesive, open and democratic society, characterised by respect for human rights and freedoms.
- There is strong mutual trust between the people and central government, regions and municipalities.
- The threat to the integrity of public institutions from organised crime, corruption, infiltration and undue influence is at a level that does not compromise the full functionality of our social structures.
- The terrorist threat has been reduced.
- Long-term preventive measures to ensure the cohesion of Swedish society are implemented in broad, cross-sectoral cooperation. [...]

The numerous and serious threats from different quarters that are directed against the cohesion of Swedish society require that strong continued measures are taken. [...] Movements that oppose our democracy and the values on which Swedish society is based also have the right, within the framework of the law, to exercise their freedom of expression to express their views. However, there is no reason why they should receive financial support and encouragement from the Swedish public sector. [...]

Area 3: A resilient and competitive Sweden

Objectives 2030

- Swedish society has resilience to all types of disruptions in society, in crisis and war.
- Effective management structures with clear mandates and developed cross-sectoral cooperation provide Sweden with sound capability to manage threats to its national security interests.
- Sweden can effectively provide and receive support to and from other EU and NATO members in order to manage disruptions in society and fulfil other tasks in civil defence.
- Collective situational awareness at national level allows for large-scale threats and risks to be identified and managed early and rapidly.
- Essential public services are adequately protected and robust.

- Through climate adaptation, Sweden is resilient to climate change.
- The Swedish economy and the Swedish business sector's production capacity continue to deliver prosperity, and Sweden's economic security is strong.
- The business sector, supported by high-quality compulsory and upper secondary school, higher education and research, continues to be dynamic, innovative and internationally competitive. [...]

Increased civil defence capability greatly helps strengthen crisis preparedness and the Alliance's collective deterrence. According to NATO's definition of civil preparedness, the critical functions that Allies have committed to being able to maintain are continuity of government, continuity of essential services to the population and civil support to military operations. The population's resilience to undue influence is an important component of a strong total defence. [...]

Leadership capability

National leadership capability in crisis situations will be strengthened [...]

In order to strengthen operational leadership capability at war or at risk of war, as well as during peacetime crises, the Government has carried out a reform of the civil defence and crisis preparedness structure, including the introduction of 10 preparedness sectors with government agencies responsible for sectors. [...]

Essential public services

Protection of essential public services will be strengthened [...]

[...] Our society's resilience is dependent on the ability to also maintain these essentials under very difficult conditions. [...] Climate adaptation is key to protecting people's lives and property, infrastructure and economic interests. A transition to becoming fossil-free in Sweden and globally, including to reduce dependence on exports of fossil fuels, is in Sweden's interest. [...]

Ensuring critical supplies

Supply of essential goods and services must be ensured [...]

Industrial policy is of fundamental importance for civil defence and to strengthen the robustness of key value chains, as well as to reduce unwanted risk exposure and undesirable strategic dependencies, particularly in relation to authoritarian states. The conditions to enable rapid reconfiguration of the supply structure for critical input goods will be strengthened. The sources of supply needs to encompass domestic production capacity, stockpiling, well-diversified imports that spread risk across countries and continents, and a deepened single market. [...]

Economic security

Sweden's economic security will be strengthened [...]

However, global developments in which financial resources are being used for political purposes, with states increasingly viewing technical know-how as a strategic asset, and where access to innovations, value chains and market access is being restricted, also require Sweden to take measures to safeguard its economic security. Without them, we cannot secure our future prosperity and create the resources required to develop our society and strengthen our national security. [...]

Competitiveness

Sweden's competitiveness will be strengthened [...]

The foundation of our future competitiveness is a school system that equips children and young people with necessary knowledge and abilities. Strong competitiveness requires high-quality education, training, research and innovation, particularly in cutting-edge technologies. [...]

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This national security strategy sets out a direction for the Government's work on issues that are of importance to Sweden's national security. The strategy will be put into practice through concrete actions within the framework of the Government's regular work, such as in proposals to the Riksdag, and through the issuing of directives to government agencies and other government decisions. More detailed instructions for the implementation of this national security strategy are also provided in the Government's strategies for specific areas. On behalf of the Government, the National Security Adviser is responsible for follow-up of the national security strategy. Continuous follow-up will take place in the National Security Council. [...]

* * * * *

Document No. 4. 2024 Report of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy, Select Excerpts¹⁷

The threats the United States faces are the most serious and most challenging the nation has encountered since 1945 and include the potential for near-term major war. The United States last fought a global conflict during World War II, which ended nearly 80 years ago. The nation was last prepared for such a fight during the Cold War, which ended 35 years ago. It is not prepared today.

¹⁷ Jane Harman and Eric Edelman, et al., *Commission on the National Defense Strategy*, RAND, July 2024, available at <https://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/NDS-commission.html>.

China and Russia are major powers that seek to undermine U.S. influence. The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) recognizes these nations as the top threats to the United States and declares China to be the “pacing challenge,” based on the strength of its military and economy and its intent to exert dominance regionally and globally.¹⁸

The Commission finds that, in many ways, China is outpacing the United States and has largely negated the U.S. military advantage in the Western Pacific through two decades of focused military investment. Without significant change by the United States, the balance of power will continue to shift in China’s favor. China’s overall annual spending on defense is estimated at as much as \$711 billion,¹⁹ and the Chinese government in March 2024 announced an increase in annual defense spending of 7.2 percent.²⁰

Russia will devote 29 percent of its federal budget this year on national defense as it continues to reconstitute its military and economy after its failed initial invasion of Ukraine in 2022.²¹ Russia possesses considerable strategic, space, and cyber capabilities and under Vladimir Putin seeks a return to its global leadership role of the Cold War.²²

China and Russia’s “no-limits” partnership, formed in February 2022 just days before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,²³ has only deepened and broadened to include a military and economic partnership with Iran and North Korea, each of which presents its own significant threat to U.S. interests. This new alignment of nations opposed to U.S. interests creates a real risk, if not likelihood, that conflict anywhere could become a multitheater or global war.²⁴

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States*. The 2022 *National Security Strategy* notes, “The PRC [People’s Republic of China] is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it” (White House, *National Security Strategy*, p. 23). The NDS refers to Russia as an “acute” threat. We believe this term inappropriately suggests a limited duration and prefer to label Russia a “chronic threat.”

¹⁹ Eaglen, “America’s Incredible Shrinking Navy.” This estimate was reinforced by Adm. Samuel Paparo, Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command: “According to Paparo, China’s military budget is likely three times what Beijing publicly claims, which would put it at about \$700 billion annually” (Rogin, “The U.S. Military Plans a ‘Hellscape’ to Deter China from Attacking Taiwan”). Other estimates of China’s defense spending are lower; see Fravel, Gilboy, and Heginbotham, “Estimating China’s Defense Spending.”

²⁰ Wu and Bodeen, “China Raises Defense Budget by 7.2% as It Pushes for Global Heft and Regional Tensions Continue.” The 7.2 percent increase was in relation to China’s official figures for defense spending, not the more accurate “all-in” estimates.

²¹ Cooper, “Another Budget for a Country at War,” pp. 8, 19; Dixon, “In Putin’s Wartime Russia, Military Corruption Is Suddenly Taboo.”

²² Cavoli, “Statement of General Christopher G. Cavoli, United States Army, United States European Command.”

²³ Kremlin, “Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development.”

²⁴ In addition to the military and economic support that Iran, North Korea, and China are providing to Russia’s war in Ukraine, the Director of National Intelligence testified in May 2024 that “we see China and Russia, maybe for the first time, exercising together in relation to Taiwan and recognizing that this is a place where China definitely wants Russia to be working with them, and we see no reason why they would not” (Senate Committee on Armed Services, “Hearing to Receive Testimony on Worldwide Threats,” p. 39). This partnership also complicates economic and financial sanctions and restrictions on proliferating technology to any of the four nations.

China (and, to a lesser extent, Russia) is fusing military, diplomatic, and industrial strength to expand power worldwide and coerce its neighbors. The United States needs a similarly integrated approach to match, deter, and overcome theirs, which we describe as all elements of national power. The NDS and the 2022 National Security Strategy promote the concept of “integrated deterrence,” but neither one presents a plan for implementing this approach, and there are few indications that the U.S. government is consistently integrating tools of national security power. The U.S. military is the largest, but not the only, component of U.S. deterrence and power. An effective approach to an all elements of national power strategy also relies on a coordinated effort to bring together diplomacy, economic investment, cybersecurity, trade, education, industrial capacity, technical innovation, civic engagement, and international cooperation.

Recognizing the indispensable role that allies play in promoting international security, the United States has successfully bolstered bilateral and multilateral alliances in the Pacific, strengthened the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and created new arrangements, such as AUKUS. The United States cannot compete with China, Russia, and their partners alone—and certainly cannot win a war that way. Given the growing alignment of authoritarian states, the United States must continue to invest in strengthening its allies and integrating its military (and economic, diplomatic, and industrial) efforts with theirs. Alliances are not a panacea, but the U.S. force structure should account for the forces and commitments from U.S. allies.

The Commission finds that DoD’s business practices, byzantine research and development (R&D) and procurement systems, reliance on decades-old military hardware, and culture of risk avoidance reflect an era of uncontested military dominance.²⁵ Such methods are not suited to today’s strategic environment. There are recent examples that demonstrate that DoD can move quickly, break with tradition, and engage industry, including the rapid stand-up of the Space Force, the Defense Innovation Unit, the Office of Strategic Capital, and the Replicator Initiative, but these examples remain the exception rather than the rule. The larger elements of DoD must follow suit. DoD leaders and Congress must replace an ossified, risk-averse organization with one that is able to build and field the force the United States needs.

The Commission finds that the U.S. military lacks both the capabilities and the capacity required to be confident it can deter and prevail in combat. It needs to do a better job of incorporating new technology at scale; field more and higher-capability platforms, software, and munitions; and deploy innovative operational concepts to employ them together better. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated the need to prepare for new forms of conflict and to

²⁵ See, e.g., Mazarr, *Defending Without Dominance*, p. 37: “The biggest barrier to effectiveness is arguably not defense spending It is a crushing bureaucratic managerialism that, in so many overlapping ways, drains the lifeblood from U.S. defense endeavors.”

integrate technology and new capabilities rapidly with older systems. Such technologies include swarms of attritable systems, artificial intelligence-enabled capabilities, hypersonics and electronic warfare, fully integrated cyber and space capabilities, and vigorous competition in the information domain. Programs that are not needed for future combat should be divested to invest in others.

The Commission finds that the U.S. defense industrial base (DIB) is unable to meet the equipment, technology, and munitions needs of the United States and its allies and partners. A protracted conflict, especially in multiple theaters, would require much greater capacity to produce, maintain, and replenish weapons and munitions. Addressing the shortfall will require increased investment, additional manufacturing and development capacity, joint and coproduction with allies, and additional flexibility in acquisition systems. It requires partnership with an industrial base that includes not just large, traditional defense manufacturers but also new entrants and a wide array of companies involved in sub-tier production, cybersecurity, and enabling services. The United States should coordinate and partner with its allies in mutually beneficial ways to increase industrial capacity, especially since the U.S. industrial base is unable to produce everything needed.

The Commission also believes that it is critical to develop innovative joint operational concepts to employ new capabilities and technologies. DoD's Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC), now in its third iteration, was intended to position the Joint Force for modern warfare against peer competitors. The JWC deserves credit for attempting to break down service stovepipes, but more work is needed to develop ways to overcome strategic challenges, impose costs and challenges on U.S. adversaries, and increasingly integrate U.S. allies.

Congress, DoD, and other agencies will need to rewrite laws and regulations to remove unnecessary barriers to adopting innovation, budgeting, and procurement. New authorities may be needed to promote jointness, strengthen the DoD workforce, and supplement the national security authorities of other agencies. Integration with allies requires dismantling barriers to information-sharing, coproduction, and exports.

The consequences of an all-out war with a peer or near peer would be devastating. Such a war would not only yield massive personnel and military costs but would also likely feature cyberattacks on U.S. critical infrastructure and a global economic recession from disruptions to supply chains, manufacturing, and trade.²⁶ Adversaries could seek to deny the United States access to critical minerals and goods needed to run the U.S. economy and build weapon

²⁶ According to U.S. government agencies, "PRC state-sponsored cyber actors are seeking to pre-position themselves on IT networks for disruptive or destructive cyberattacks against U.S. critical infrastructure in the event of a major crisis or conflict with the United States," and they have "compromised the IT environments of multiple critical infrastructure organizations" (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, "PRC State-Sponsored Actors Compromise and Maintain Persistent Access to U.S. Critical Infrastructure"). See also DoD, "DOD Support to National Security Memorandum 22."

systems. They could also hold at risk U.S. space assets, which underpin much of our daily lives and are essential for military capabilities. Even short of all-out war, the global economic damage from a Chinese blockade of Taiwan has been estimated to cost \$5 trillion, or 5 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP).²⁷ War with a major power would affect the life of every American in ways we can only begin to imagine. Deterring war by projecting strength and ensuring economic and domestic resilience is far preferable to and less costly than war.

The U.S. public are largely unaware of the dangers the United States faces or the costs (financial and otherwise) required to adequately prepare. They do not appreciate the strength of China and its partnerships or the ramifications to daily life if a conflict were to erupt. They are not anticipating disruptions to their power, water, or access to all the goods on which they rely. They have not internalized the costs of the United States losing its position as a world superpower. A bipartisan “call to arms” is urgently needed so that the United States can make the major changes and significant investments now rather than wait for the next Pearl Harbor or 9/11. The support and resolve of the American public are indispensable.

The 2022 NDS force construct does not sufficiently account for global competition or the very real threat of simultaneous conflict in more than one theater.²⁸ We propose a *Multiple Theater Force Construct*. This is distinct from the bipolar Cold War construct and the two-war construct designed afterward for separate wars against less capable rogue states—essentially, one in northeast Asia and one in the Middle East. Neither model meets the dimensions of today’s threat or the wide variety of ways in which and places where conflict could erupt, grow, and evolve.

Our proposed force construct is the military backbone of our comprehensive approach. It reflects the likelihood of simultaneous conflicts in multiple theaters because of the partnership of U.S. peer or near-peer adversaries and incorporates the U.S. system of alliances and partnerships.

The United States must engage globally with a presence—military, diplomatic, and economic—to maintain stability and preserve influence worldwide, including across the Global South, where China and Russia are extending their reach.²⁹

²⁷ The cost of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan is estimated at \$10 trillion, or 10.2 percent of global GDP (Welch et al., “Xi, Biden and the \$10 Trillion Cost of War over Taiwan”).

²⁸ The NDS “sizes and shapes the Joint force to simultaneously defend the homeland; maintain strategic deterrence; and deter, and if necessary prevail in conflict” while still “deter[ring] opportunistic aggression elsewhere” (DoD, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States*, p. 17).

²⁹ See, for example, Richardson, “Statement of General Laura J. Richardson, Commander, United States Southern Command”; and Langley, “Statement of General Michael E. Langley, United States Marine Corps, Commander, United States Africa Command.” See also Stavridis, “China and Russia Are Beating the US in Africa.”

Specifically, the Commission finds that the Joint Force must leverage technology, expertise, and allies across domains to maintain existing and develop new asymmetric advantages against U.S. adversaries rather than seeking to match them platform-to-platform. We recommend that the Joint Force be sized and structured to simultaneously

1. defend the homeland, maintain strategic deterrence, prevent mass casualty terrorist attacks, maintain global posture, and respond to small-scale, short-duration crises
2. lead the effort, with meaningful allied contribution, to deter China from territorial aggression in the Western Pacific—and fight and win if needed
3. lead NATO planning and force structure to deter and, if necessary, defeat Russian aggression
4. sustain capabilities, along with U.S. partners in the Middle East, to defend against Iranian malign activities.

This force construct, even with more-capable allies, new operational concepts, and better technology, will require a stronger and integrated innovation ecosystem and DIB, as well as a larger Joint and Total Force. Although the DoD workforce and all-volunteer force provide an unmatched U.S. advantage, today's is the smallest force in generations. It is stressed to maintain readiness today and is not sufficient to meet the needs of strategic global competition and multitheater war.

Recent recruitment shortfalls have decreased the size of the Army, Air Force, and Navy.³⁰ Redoubled recruiting efforts, new incentives for service, and more flexible personnel systems are needed to offset a lack of propensity for and interest in military service among the eligible population. Military retention remains high, demonstrating that personnel in service largely choose to remain in uniform. The nation must also consider the possibility that future conflict could overwhelm the capacity of the active-duty force and should plan now to better prepare the reserve components and, potentially, a broader mobilization.³¹ More broadly, we support calls for increased levels of public and civil service to help provide a renewed sense of engagement and patriotism among the American people.

This proposal for strengthened national power is needed as the United States faces the most challenging and most dangerous international security environment since World War II. It faces peer and near-peer competitors for the first time since the end of the Cold War.

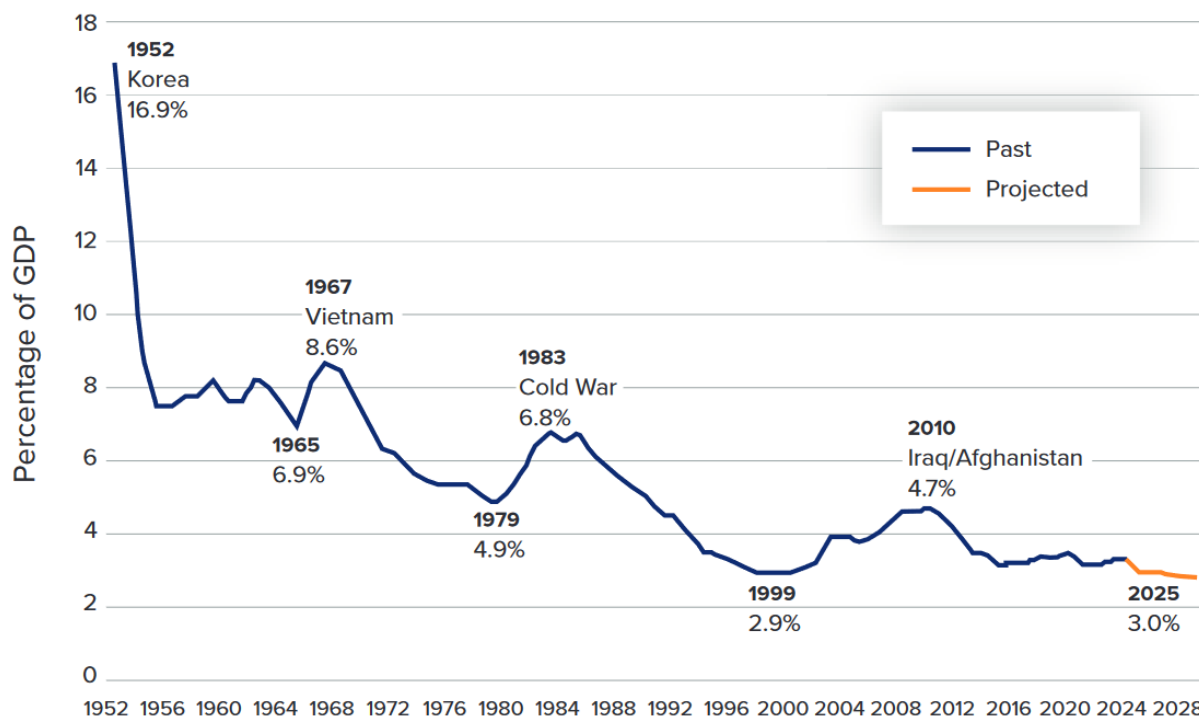
During the Cold War, including the Korean War and Vietnam War, DoD spending ranged from 4.9 percent to 16.9 percent of GDP (Figure S.1). The comparison to that period is apt in terms of the magnitude of the threat, risks of strategic instability and escalation, and need for U.S.

³⁰ Only the Marine Corps and Space Force met their fiscal year (FY) 2023 active duty recruiting goals, and only the Marine Corps met its reserve component goals (DoD, "Department of Defense Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for Fiscal Year 2023").

³¹ National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, *Inspired to Serve*, pp. 93–123. See also Kuzminski and Sylvester, *Back to the Drafting Board*.

global presence. It does not reflect many significant differences between that period and today. Among these are advances in technology that fundamentally change the character of war and the shift from the government to the private sector as drivers of investment, R&D, and procurement and commercial production of hardware and software.³² When paired with improved operational concepts, these changes in the technological landscape have enormous national security potential that place the United States (and others) on the cusp of a revolution in military affairs. Another difference from the Cold War is how the network of U.S. alliances in NATO and Asia reshapes how the United States prepares for, deters, and wins conflicts.

Figure S.1
Defense Department Budget Authority as Percentage of Gross Domestic Product, FY 1952 to FY 2029



Sources: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2025*, Tables 1-1 and 6-8, pp. 6 and 138–145; U.S. House of Representatives, “Division: Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024,” pp. 94–98; U.S. House of Representatives, “Division: Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2024,” pp. 299–313; Keys and Nicastro, “FY2024 National Security Supplemental

³² In 1960, U.S. defense spending accounted for 36 percent of global R&D, but that figure was down to 3.1 percent by 2019 (Fontaine, “Foreword”). Eleven of the 14 critical technologies identified by DoD as “vital to maintaining the United States’ national security” are primarily non-defense specific (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, “USD(R&E) Technology Vision for an Era of Competition,” p. 3). See also DoD, *National Defense Science and Technology Strategy* 2023.

Funding,” p. 4; Office of Management and Budget, Fiscal Year 2025 Historical Tables, Table 10.1. Note: Includes DoD discretionary, mandatory, and supplemental funding.

The biggest difference between today and the Cold War is in the homeland. The Cold War demanded a national mobilization for military service, an economy geared more toward production for national security, and a unity of effort across government (including Congress) behind shared security missions that are missing today. Defense spending in the Cold War relied on top marginal income tax rates above 70 percent and corporate tax rates averaging 50 percent.³³ Using the Cold War as a benchmark for spending should be accompanied by acknowledging the other fundamental changes that could supplement America’s efforts to deter threats and prepare for the future.

U.S. spending on defense far outweighs other elements of national power and will continue to do so. However, all these accounts (i.e., national security missions at the departments of State, Treasury, Homeland Security, Commerce, Education, and others) must be considered as part of a notional, overall national security budget.

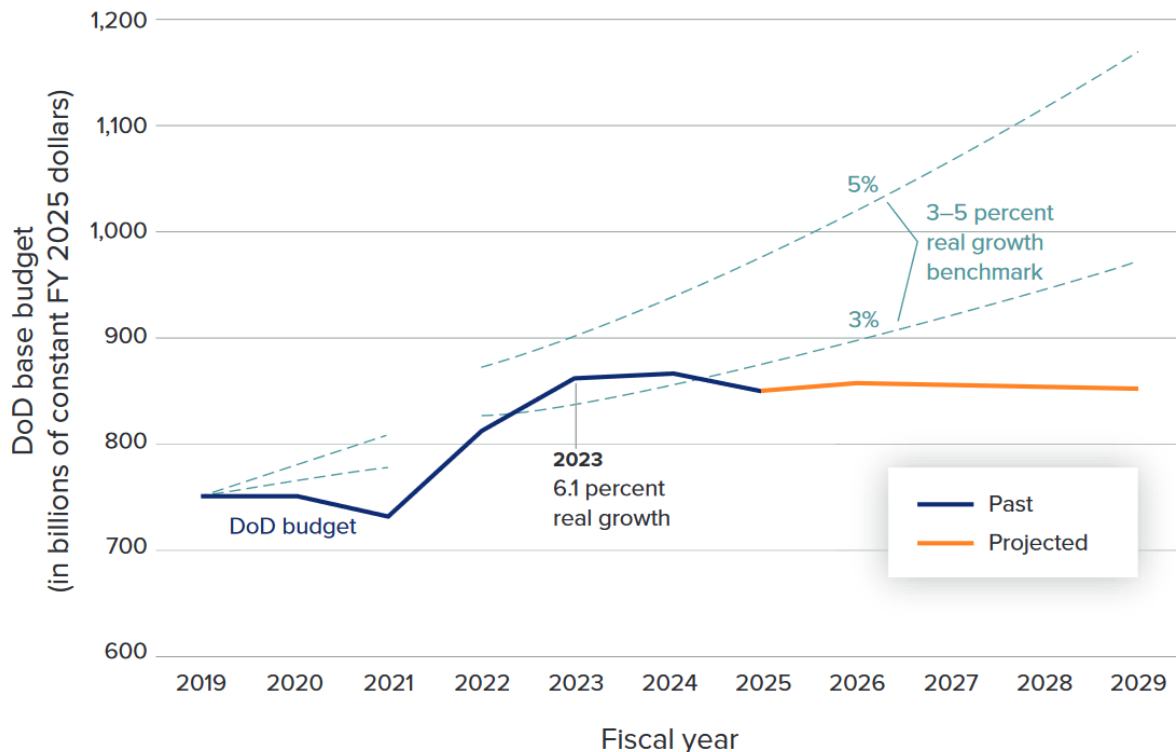
The 2018 NDS Commission recommended increasing the base defense budget at an average rate of 3–5 percent annually above inflation. That has not been consistently achieved, and the world has grown more dangerous since that recommendation was made (Figure S.2).³⁴

³³ Ingraham, “The Tax Code Treats All 1 Percenters the Same. It Wasn’t Always This Way”; Peter G. Peterson Foundation, “Six Charts That Show How Low Corporate Tax Revenues Are in the United States Right Now.”

³⁴ The combination of merging Overseas Contingency Operations funds into the base budget and Congress increasing the FY 2022 and FY 2023 base budgets brought spending above the 3 percent benchmark in total, but budget projections are flat. Funding for allies, munitions, and submarines in the April 2024 supplemental appropriations law is also significant.

Figure S.2

Defense Department Base Budget Has Not Kept Pace with the Recommendations of the 2018 NDS Commission



Sources: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2025*, Tables 1-1 and 5-6, pp. 6 and 63; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, "Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request: Defense Budget Overview," p. 24; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, "Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request: Defense Budget Overview," p. 7-1; U.S. House of Representatives, "Division: Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2024," pp. 94-98; U.S. House of Representatives, "Division: Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2024," pp. 299-313. Note: Discretionary base budget authority in constant FY 2025 dollars. FY 2022 benchmark values adjusted upward by \$42.1 billion to reflect merging \$14.3 billion for direct war requirements and \$27.8 billion for enduring requirements into the FY 2022 base budget.

The Commission makes the following resource recommendations for DoD and Congress:

- DoD should immediately review all major systems against likely future needs, emphasizing battlefield utility and prioritizing agility, interoperability, and survivability. The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff should be more empowered to cancel programs, determine needs for the future, and invest accordingly. DoD should invest more in cyber, space, and software, which have enabled warfighting for decades but are now central to conflict and have global reach.
- Congress should pass a supplemental appropriation immediately to begin a multiyear investment in the national security innovation and industrial base. Funding should

support U.S. allies at war; expand industrial capacity, including infrastructure for shipbuilding and the ability to surge munitions production; increase and accelerate military construction to expand and harden facilities in Asia; secure access to critical minerals; and invest in a digital and industrial workforce.

- DoD should immediately begin making structural changes and prioritization adjustments to spend national security funds more effectively and more efficiently. DoD should address its recruitment challenges, rewrite regulations to speed defense procurement (and address cultural impediments and risk aversion), and shift the R&D paradigm to adopt technological innovation from outside the department for warfighting purposes. The U.S. government should review national security authorities for agencies other than DoD and look for ways to enable and facilitate information-sharing, coproduction, and export controls to better work with allies.
- Congress should revoke or override the caps in the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act that serve as the basis for the FY 2025 budget request.
 - For FY 2025, real growth in defense and nondefense national security spending is needed and, at a bare minimum, should fall within the range recommended by the 2018 NDS Commission. While the reforms recommended above are being made and investments in capacity from the supplemental appropriation are underway, increased spending should be allocated to emphasize near-term readiness demands to restore and reinforce deterrence.
 - Given the severity of the threats, the FY 2027 and later budgets for all elements of national power will require spending that puts defense and other components of national security on a glide path to support efforts commensurate with the U.S. national effort seen during the Cold War.
 - Larger amounts of defense spending should be accompanied by sufficient resources to build capacity at the departments of State, Commerce, and Treasury; intelligence, trade, and investment agencies; the U.S. Agency for International Development; and the Department of Homeland Security and focus these organizations on national security missions. The United States should continue to provide support to its allies, which it relies on to fight with (or for) it.
 - The ballooning U.S. deficit also poses national security risks. Therefore, increased security spending should be accompanied by additional taxes and reforms to entitlement spending.

The lack of preparedness to meet the challenges to U.S. national security is the result of many years of failure to recognize the changing threats and to transform the U.S. national security structure and has been exacerbated by the 2011 Budget Control Act, repeated continuing resolutions, and inflexible government systems. The United States is still failing to act with the urgency required, across administrations and without regard to governing party.

This report proposes a new approach to spur the speed and scale of change. Implementing these recommendations to boost all elements of national power will require sustained presidential leadership and a fundamental change in mindset at the Pentagon, at the National Security Council and across executive branch departments and agencies, in Congress, and among the American public writ large.
