

**AWC Fellows
Strategy Research Project**

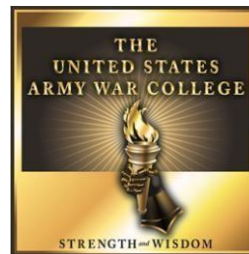
The Past, Present, and Future of the National Security Strategy

by

COL Gabriel Barton
US Army

Under the Direction of:
Dr. Simon Miles and Dr. Christopher Bolan

While a Fellow at:
Duke University



United States Army War College
Class of 2018

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release
Distribution is Unlimited

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-03-2018		2. REPORT TYPE FELLOWS STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Past, Present, and Future of the National Security Strategy			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) COL Gabriel Barton US Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Faculty Adviser: Dr. Simon Miles Host Institution: Duke University			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Faculty Mentor: Dr. Christopher Bolan U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. To the best of my knowledge this FSRP accurately depicts USG and/or DoD policy & contains no classified information or aggregation of information that poses an operations security risk. Author: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentor: <input type="checkbox"/>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5006					
<p>14. ABSTRACT</p> <p>There is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes American grand strategy. The National Security Strategy is often used as a basis to determine an administration's articulation of American grand strategy. As directed by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, a National Security Strategy will always fall short of a full articulation of American grand strategy due to the global connectedness of the US economy. Analysis of the Reagan, and Obama National Security Strategy show that a well-constructed National Security Strategy is remarkably difficult to adhere to. Policy actions by the Reagan and Obama administrations show incongruence between the National Security Strategy and overarching American grand strategy in practice. These inconsistencies indicate that a more formal articulation of American grand strategy should be required of the executive branch. The Trump National Security Strategy does a better job of incorporating the elements required to articulate American grand strategy, it is too early to tell if the administration will make the best use of that strategy. Making the President take ownership of American grand strategy, through the National Security Strategy, would enable a more useful strategy for day-to-day policy formulation and provide a guidepost during crisis response efforts.</p>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS American grand strategy, military overmatch, Iran-Iraq War					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 17	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			SAR

The Past, Present, and Future of the National Security Strategy

(5006 words)

Abstract

There is no universally accepted definition of what constitutes American grand strategy. The National Security Strategy is often used as a basis to determine an administration's articulation of American grand strategy. As directed by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, a National Security Strategy will always fall short of a full articulation of American grand strategy due to the global connectedness of the US economy. Analysis of the Reagan, and Obama National Security Strategy show that a well-constructed National Security Strategy is remarkably difficult to adhere to. Policy actions by the Reagan and Obama administrations show incongruence between the National Security Strategy and overarching American grand strategy in practice. These inconsistencies indicate that a more formal articulation of American grand strategy should be required of the executive branch. The Trump National Security Strategy does a better job of incorporating the elements required to articulate American grand strategy, it is too early to tell if the administration will make the best use of that strategy. Making the President take ownership of American grand strategy, through the National Security Strategy, would enable a more useful strategy for day-to-day policy formulation and provide a guidepost during crisis response efforts.

The Past, Present, and Future of the National Security Strategy

On December 18, 2017, the Trump Administration released its National Security Strategy (NSS). This key document will guide the administration, the national security enterprise, US allies, and US competitors.¹ Each administration has been required to publish an NSS annually since the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.² Since the Reagan administration issued the first NSS in 1987, administrations have used this report in several ways. Some have used the NSS as a messaging tool to allies and adversaries alike. Others have used it as intended by the legislation, to articulate the interests, goals, and priorities of their administration. The NSS is the executive branch document that enables the national security enterprise to develop subordinate strategies and guidance documents. The Department of Defense uses the NSS to develop its National Defense Strategy and the Joint Staff uses the NSS and the National Defense Strategy to develop the National Military Strategy. Together these three strategies inform geographic and functional combatant commanders as they make choices regarding the prioritization of scarce resources and which operations to put them towards.

A well-written NSS provides the framework for how an administration wants to pursue its goals during its tenure, but how well does an NSS serve as an articulation of American grand strategy for an administration? Recent NSSs have in fact fallen short of being a complete articulation of American grand strategy. Using the NSS to articulate an administration's view of American grand strategy provides the benefit of one document to guide not only the national security enterprise, but the whole of government approach that is now required to achieve the national security objectives of the United States. What follows is a discussion of what American grand strategy is, and how the NSS

should change to better articulate American grand strategy. I illustrate this through two case studies, the Obama administration and the Reagan administration, which analyze how closely each administration actually followed its own NSS. Each used very different methods to develop their NSSs; by examining these methods I illustrate the challenges each administration faced when attempting to implement its stated policy. A concluding evaluation of the Trump 2017 NSS shows that the concept of using the NSS as an articulation of American grand strategy is accepted by the current administration.

American grand strategy describes the framework under which US policy is developed.³ It has rarely been defined by one document: the NSS outlines national interests, but American grand strategy is more than just the pursuit of identified national interests. The concept of American grand strategy is not clearly defined, rather it is derived from several national-level documents that have historically had a military-heavy focus. They include, but are not limited to, the NSS, National Military Strategy, the Quadrennial Defense Review, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and the Quadrennial Diplomacy Review, State of the Union Addresses, other documents from the executive branch, and the thoughts and ideas of the authors of those documents and speeches. Hal Brands summarizes American grand strategy as “an integrated scheme of interests, threats, resources and policies.”⁴ It is not just day-to-day policy development, but the framework that guides that process, tying short term actions to long term changes and goals.

American grand strategy is used by policy makers and the academic world alike to illustrate the country’s long-term goals and objectives. It is the framework under which routine policy actions are developed to move towards the goals stated in the

strategy. Depending on the administration, American grand strategy can either be a deliberate process or largely ignored as too complicated an endeavor to approach. These are two extremes; most administrations fall somewhere in the middle.⁵ Some argue that administrations follow, and even reshape, American grand strategy whether they know it or not.⁶ When American grand strategy is well articulated, the practicing policy maker should use it as a guide. Furthermore, American grand strategy should be continuously tested for relevance, and if the strategy no longer proves useful or valid, it should be adjusted to make it more useful. Failure to do this results in misalignment of resources and missed opportunities to further American interests. The complexities of the world, twenty-four-hour news cycle, and obsession with poll numbers push policymakers to move from crisis to crisis, rather than making calculated decisions against an intellectual framework. Alternatively, historians use American grand strategy to evaluate if a series of national policy efforts, and decisions occurred as part of a larger framework. They must use caution, as there is a danger of imposing a logic on the past where there was none. Establishing a framework after the fact is, of course, less useful to policy than having a framework to guide actions as they occur. Historical analysis can assist policymakers when developing and executing current policy, American grand strategy is a dynamic and living process. If it is not embraced by the incumbent administration, the president will spend his or her tenure bouncing from issue to issue and will fail to further American interests through deliberate strategic policy actions and crisis response.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 established the requirement for the annual submission of the NSS to Congress on the

date that the executive branch submits its budget for their consideration.⁷ However, in practice the NSS has not been submitted annually. In fact, prior to the current NSS, published in December of 2017, the last version was released in February of 2015 by the Obama administration. The Goldwater-Nichols Act specifies what should be included in the NSS and accounts for the potential inclusion of classified material. Further, the document must articulate “the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.”⁸ The intent for the NSS is to drive a process that generates subordinate military strategies, implementation guidance, and force-employment instructions. All of these documents help the Secretary of Defense through the Joint Staff to direct military activities globally and assist Congress with its oversight role over the Department of Defense.

Ronald Reagan’s was the only administration that managed to produce a NSS annually, as the Goldwater-Nichols Act mandates; every administration since then has failed to do so. Both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations each only produced two over the course of their eight-year terms.⁹ Despite the failure to produce an annual NSS, both administrations placed special emphasis on their strategies and attempted to use them as their articulation of American grand strategy. While their NSSs were used to drive the strategy formulation process for the Department of Defense and the larger national security enterprise, the use of the NSS for this purpose tends to fall short of a full articulation of American grand strategy as the required elements from The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 fail to address the domestic agenda. When the law was published in 1986, this was appropriate for the national security

community as globalization of the economy had not reached the level of integration that it has today.

Today's level of global integration of the world economy, and the international structures that the United States has put into place, dictates that the domestic agenda of the United States is now inextricably linked to the national security objectives of the country. The state of the US domestic economy, infrastructure, and deficit spending are all so intertwined with the global economy that competitors are using the very economic systems that the United States established to gain a strategic advantage over it. As such, the NSS, as directed by The Goldwater-Nichols Act, will never be a complete expression of American grand strategy: administrations need to change their NSSs to reflect a more complete American grand strategy.

History shows us that administrations often do not follow their own NSSs. Analyses of how well the Obama and then Reagan administrations did following their own strategies demonstrate why it is necessary for administrations to adapt their NSSs when a dynamic global environment no longer aligns with the priorities they outlined. Since the NSS drives decisions and resource allocation within the national security enterprise, it is imperative that the NSS aligns with broader US interests. Periodic changes to this document are necessary to achieve the goals and objectives within the larger American grand strategy. An easy counterargument to this is that conditions change faster than a NSS can keep pace; but if this is indeed the case, then the strategy needs to be better constructed to account for an ever changing and adapting environment.

The Obama administration produced two NSSs over its eight years. The 2015 NSS is the second and last report that the Obama administration published. As expected, the document lays out many of the administration's policy objectives. However, it falls short of conceiving of an American grand strategy as it does not adequately address the domestic agenda. The document discusses living American values as an example to the world, and talks about inclusivity, but it does not address the need to reinforce and rebuild the United States' domestic economy and infrastructure, reform for veterans' care, or the need to bridge the partisan and racial divides which are critical problems in the United States.¹⁰ At first glance it would seem odd to look for these issues in a NSS, but the reality today is that our domestic economy is so globally interconnected that domestic issues must be considered in matters of national security. Furthermore, critical divides along racial or party lines provide opportunities for radicalization and create opportunities for nation states and radical religious groups to foment individual acts of terror — or even sway how the population might vote in an election.

The 2015 NSS claims that America's military advantage is greater than it has ever been.¹¹ This claim is difficult to substantiate, as are the statements in the strategy that America has moved past the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. First of all, it makes no mention of sequestration: the impact of having no budget, but rather living from continuing resolution to continuing resolution directly contributed to a shrinking military and degraded the way the Department of Defense operates. The end result has been the declining readiness of the US military coupled with an open admission that it can no longer fight and win two major conflicts simultaneously.¹² Second, the strategy claims

that America has moved beyond the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is hard to reconcile when the numbers of American soldiers in Iraq and Syria helping the Iraqi Government and Syrian Defense Forces fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is at its highest point since forces were reintroduced into Iraq in 2014. Some might argue that this is not the same Iraq conflict that Obama inherited at the beginning of his presidency, but this new conflict against ISIS is a direct result of Obama's resistance to leave any forces in Iraq to ensure a lasting peace or maintain a counter-terrorism footprint in that country.¹³ The number of soldiers continuing the fight in Afghanistan has remained the same and in fact increased under the Trump administration. Instead of moving beyond the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it seems that the United States will stay in Iraq as long as the Iraqi government supports our efforts there and cannot or will not fight ISIS on its own. In Afghanistan, America now has a more open-ended commitment that is dependent on conditions, namely that the Afghan government can secure its own borders internally and externally, and violent extremist organizations cannot function from within Afghanistan, before a withdrawal or draw down is considered. Neither of these events are likely to transpire in the immediate future.

Military readiness is patently inadequate across the services. The events befalling the US Navy's Seventh Fleet in the Pacific are illustrative of readiness challenges across the military, with four incidents in 2017 that were direct results of atrophied seamanship skills: the USS Antietam ran aground near Yokusuka, the USS Lake Champlain ran into a South Korean fishing vessel off the Korean peninsula, the USS Fitzgerald collided with a merchant vessel off the coast of Japan, and the USS

John McCain collided with an oil tanker off the coast of Singapore.¹⁴ These incidents are a result of an overextended and underfunded military. Thus far, blame for the events has fallen on bad leadership on each individual vessel; but while one incident may have been poor leadership aboard, four indicates a fleet-wide trend. In all incidents there are indicators that the time and money required to train crews prior to each ship's deployment was insufficient. The four incidents are of course tragic, in that sailors were needlessly killed, but they also show a systemic shortfall in training and readiness. The damage done to the vessels involved in those incidents will take time to fix, and the Navy will go without that capability until the repairs are made. There are no extra ships to send to the Pacific without drawing on already committed assets somewhere else in the world. China, North Korea, and even incidents of Islamic extremism popping up in the South Pacific limit our ability to react to emerging incidents. Failure to connect our military readiness with economic security degraded American interests, a direct result of a poorly implemented American grand strategy.

The Secretary of Defense has gone on record saying that operating on continuing resolutions has hurt the way the Department of Defense operates.¹⁵ The only budget that the Obama administration operated on was the one inherited from the Bush administration. For the next seven years, the president did not provide the leadership required to convince Congress to approve a budget. Surviving from continuing resolution to continuing resolution became the norm for the Department of Defense and the rest of the federal government. The effect on training, readiness and defense acquisition has been predictable. Long term acquisitions and force management had to be sacrificed to pay the current bills required to continue the efforts in Iraq and

Afghanistan as well as global counter-terrorism commitments. While the Department of Defense and the rest of the federal government have adapted to this new fiscal reality, ultimately it makes both operating and long-term acquisition strategies more expensive and less efficient.

The Secretary of Defense in his 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance refocused the military away from being able to fight two major conflicts simultaneously.¹⁶ While publically this was advertised as supported by military leaders, the reality is that operating off of continuing resolutions, coupled with the impending impacts of sequestration, the military had no choice but to support this narrower commitment. It is difficult to give any credence to the statement that the military overmatch America possesses is as large or as realistic as the 2015 NSS would lead the American public to believe.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is celebrated as one of the greatest achievements of the Obama administration. Taken singularly it certainly advances efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, while the JCPOA advances one national interest from the 2015 NSS it undermines others. The spread and use of nuclear weapons has a high probability of causing damage, but in reality, nuclear weapons have a low probability of employment, especially by states with smaller arsenals. The United States is the only country that has ever employed a nuclear weapon. While the JCPOA puts a temporary pause on Iran's efforts to build a nuclear weapons program, the agreement does nothing to prevent Iran from working on its missile programs to deliver a nuclear weapon, including inter-continental ballistic missiles. Further, the JCPOA removes

sanctions against Iran, giving the latter more access to the global economy which will increase the state's revenues.¹⁷ This increase in Iran's revenue undoubtedly will be used to pursue interests in solidifying its position of power in the Middle East and not to improve the domestic standard of living. Iran will in particular use these increased revenues to continue funding Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) operations in the region. The IRGC is known to back, and in some cases lead, Shia militia groups fighting ISIS in Iraq and give direction and funding to Hezbollah in Lebanon. All of this leads to potentially greater instability in the Middle East for a promise of pausing the Iranian pursuit of a nuclear weapon. This illustrates how pursuing a singular national interest can have a very real and negative effect on other national interests. The high risk, low probability nuclear threat was offset in favor of the highly probable disruption to Middle East stability by increasing Iran's operating budget.

The terms of the JCPOA require a periodic certification of all signatories to indicate that all are adhering to the terms of the agreement. The Trump administration has opted to not certify the agreement but is still adhering to its terms. This has caused the expected reaction in rhetoric from Iran and US European partners. If economic sanctions can be reinstated against Iran, limiting the resources available to move Iranian interests forward in the region, the decision to not certify the JCPOA will limit the resources Iran requires to continue development of nuclear weapons. It will also show US allies in the Middle East that the United States is not willing to allow Iran to continue its move toward hegemony in the region.

The 2015 National Security Strategy claimed that the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) will build strength for America's economy.¹⁸ This claim falls short when the terms

of the agreement and its domestic impact are evaluated. Any regional trade agreement built in the Pacific without China involved is really more rhetoric with no substance to strengthen the American or allies position in the Pacific.¹⁹ While a slight oversimplification, there is little to the TPP that changes the status quo and much that puts American companies at a disadvantage to their Pacific competitors.

It is likely that the TPP will lead to the continuing exodus of manufacturing jobs from the United States. Since the labor in foreign countries is cheaper, American companies will move production to where the labor is cheaper so they can increase their profit margins. The same transpired after the United States entered into the North American Free Trade Agreement, and similarly the Korean Free Trade Agreement.²⁰ Historically, these trade agreements result in large corporations moving jobs to where the labor market is cheaper. The impact of this is not limited to those that lose jobs, it extends to the rest of the workforce and to the US economy overall. Data from the last ten years show an increase in state budget deficits as manufacturing jobs decrease.²¹

The TPP is another example of advancing one of the national interests outlined in the 2015 NSS impacting other parts of American grand strategy. While outwardly, and even if only rhetorically, the TPP shows America's resolve and commitment to its allies in the Pacific, it does little to strengthen the American economy and will likely increase trade deficits with member countries not in favor of the United States.²² If the American economy and industrial base is weakened, it is difficult to sustain and grow our military advantage or even reduce the levels of poverty and unemployment domestically. The TPP is another example of a policy that should not be considered

singularly but across the entirety of the national interests and the intellectual framework that makes up American grand strategy.

The Obama administration is of course not the only administration to struggle with keeping its policy actions in line with its NSS. The Reagan administration was the first required to submit a NSS, and it produced two after the implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986. Both reports were very focused on the Soviet Union as the major threat to the United States and were surprisingly candid on what the United States thought about the Soviet Union, Soviet national interests, and how the United States thought that the Soviet Union would pursue those interests. These strategies were also very transparent with respect to the United States' intentions and goals.

One of the key strengths of the 1988 NSS is that its aperture is broader than just the national security enterprise. The 1988 NSS clearly defines not only US national interests, but further defines specific objectives in support of those efforts. It defines all of the elements of national power and accounts for the domestic agenda all too often left out of contemporary NSSs.²³ The Reagan administration approached NSS development very differently than the Obama administration. The Reagan administration was very reliant on the National Security Council Staff to write policy documents like the NSS.²⁴ Key cabinet members were consulted on the contents of the NSS, but what made it into the document was kept under tight control by the White House. The Obama administration chose a different method to develop its NSSs and much of its policy, choosing to circulate multiple drafts of the NSS to all of the executive branch departments and agencies and work through comment and review cycles. Only once all of the executive branch came to consensus on the language contained in the

NSS would the document be released. This method results in a NSS that is agreed upon by all, but results in language that is less direct and more open to interpretation. There are pros and cons to both methods, but when comparing the methods used by the Reagan Administration against those used by the Obama Administration to develop its own NSSs, it becomes clear that the more complete strategy came from the top-down, White House–controlled method as opposed to the consensus approach. The approach taken notwithstanding, the Reagan administration also faced challenges keeping its policy actions in line with its NSS.

The Reagan administration focused policy towards the Soviet Union. Where the Reagan administration faced challenges in implementation was in areas that did not involve the Soviet Union and therefore did not attract the complete attention of the president.²⁵ Like any large organization, the US Government under Reagan prioritized what was important to its leadership (especially the president) and did not focus as much attention on other matters. People in such an organization will take advantage of opportunities to try and keep certain problems away from their leadership if they know they want to focus on other issues, which even with the best of intentions can lead them to make decisions that are not within their authority to make. The most famous, and arguably most egregious, example of this is the Iran Contra scandal, which grew out of the US involvement in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. Since it simply was not a priority issue for the president, staff members were free to make a host of questionable, highly consequential decisions. The Reagan administration supported both sides of the conflict at different times during the war.²⁶ Washington openly backed Saddam Hussein's regime to the extent of embedding military advisors and providing intelligence on Iranian

troop dispositions. Elements within the National Security Council were meanwhile working with the Iranians in an attempt to negotiate arms for hostages held by the Iranian-influenced group Hezbollah. In a classic case of one part of the administration not talking to the other, the administration was negotiating with and providing arms to the Iranians while the military was supporting the Iraqi regime in its conduct of the war.²⁷

The Reagan administration also struggled to keep its policy actions in line with its NSS in Latin America. While the administration's NSS addressed pursuing US national interests in Latin America, it was often at odds with that strategy in execution. The Reagan administration held onto the ideal that the United States needed to spread liberal democracies to Latin America.²⁸ The administration was at odds with this principle when it came to containing the communist-backed Sandanista government in Nicaragua, backing the Contras, a brutal insurgent organization that was fighting against the communist Nicaraguan government. The Contras had no intentions of ever becoming a liberal democracy, even if they were able to overthrow the Nicaraguan regime. The Contras had a horrible human rights record from their violent tactics against the Nicaraguan regime. While the administration was successful in limiting the spread of communism in Latin America, it did so at a cost by associating the United States with the Contras.²⁹ Nicaragua is a more stable country today, no thanks to American involvement.

The Reagan administration advocated for a strong US economy. The strength of the economy and the industrial base is what gave the United States its advantage during and after World War II. America's ability to out-produce and out-manufacture the rest of the world is a large part of why the Allies won World War II, more so than their

military acumen. The Reagan administration acknowledged that the global economy was starting to become interconnected. Still this awareness did not prevent the Reagan administration from becoming one of the biggest offenders in deficit spending and doing so to an unparalleled degree (until the Obama administration).³⁰ The Reagan administration knew that deficit spending was a contributor to global economic interdependency, and not necessarily for the good, but also knew that if the industrial base and advantage could be maintained, the United States would still be strong.³¹

The Reagan and the Obama administrations took different approaches to developing their NSSs. Both faced challenges in implementing policy in line with their NSSs. While the Reagan administration was able to generate an articulation of American grand strategy, the Obama administration did not, largely due to the omission of the domestic agenda. Evaluation of the two administrations' ability to follow their NSSs shows that there is a need to adapt the way that administrations articulate strategy. Remembering that the NSS as mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 was to drive a national security enterprise system of hierarchical strategy development, it is time to revise what is expected from an administration when developing their NSS.³² Administrations need to better articulate their vision of American grand strategy. If the executive branch recognizes the need to better communicate the American grand strategy for the US Government writ large, and not just the national security enterprise, the executive branch will have greater freedom of how to articulate that strategy. In the absence of such action, Congress should require it from the executive branch. Whether this comes in the form of new legislation or a revision to the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, Congress should require an articulation of American

grand strategy from the executive branch which is broad enough to drive long term goals, narrow enough to enable routine policy making, and flexible enough (and not too proscribed by the hypothetical legislation) to adapt to opportunities and challenges as they arise.

The 2017 NSS issued by the Trump administration is a more complete articulation of American grand strategy when compared to previous administrations. The Trump administration's NSS is built around four pillars: protecting Americans at home and abroad, promoting prosperity at home, peace through strength, and boosting American influence worldwide. Critical to the pillar construct is the idea that they are all interconnected: one pillar is not independent of the others, and pursuit of objectives regarding one pillar can and will have implications across all of the others. Focusing in particular on the second of the pillars identified in the Trump NSS, it adequately addresses the domestic agenda often missing from other NSSs. While some criticize the omission of climate change as a national security threat, the 2017 NSS does emphasize that the United States must be a good steward of all of the resources entrusted to the US Government. Specifically, the Trump administration addresses infrastructure improvement, tax reform, immigration reform, health care reform, and re-negotiating trade agreements to bring jobs back to the United States.³³ While there is a clear risk in defining everything as a national security risk, this NSS strikes a balance, including the appropriate elements of the domestic agenda to account for the global interconnectedness of the United States today. The inclusion of the domestic agenda, with enough substance to articulate a way forward to achieving objectives and establishing priorities stated in the strategy makes this NSS a more complete

articulation of American grand strategy. Time will tell if the administration, the national security enterprise, Congress, the American people, and our allies can follow the trajectory set by the president, but his team has charted a clear course with the 2017 National Security Strategy.

The preceding discussion of American grand strategy, the origin and intent of the NSS from the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 and analysis of how two administrations fared in developing and following their NSSs indicates that a better-articulated American grand strategy through an adapted NSS could lead to less of a crisis mindset in the day-to-day running of the government. If executive branch officials better understand not just the pillars established in the NSS, but how those pillars interconnect and change dynamically, it will be easier to identify what incidents are truly crises. The global connectivity that now exists requires a reexamination of how the United States looks at national security. US national security and foreign policy is now more dependent on its domestic affairs than ever before as a result of globalization and will only become more so. As such, it is more important now than ever before for the United States to clearly articulate its grand strategy by adapting the current NSS to better develop American grand strategy largely through the appropriate inclusion of the domestic agenda. Providing a better articulation of American grand strategy through the NSS, as was done in the 2017 iteration, lays a framework for the full range of day-to-day activities and policies under development to achieve the goals laid out in that strategy. This is important during this period of partisan divide: a unifying well-articulated way ahead from an administration can give everyone a sense of purpose to work toward a common vision to further US interests.

Endnotes

¹ Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 18, 2017), i-ii, <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2017.pdf> (accessed January 25, 2018).

² *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, Public Law 99-433, 99th Congress (October 1, 1986), 100 STAT. 992, Section 603, http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/dod_reforms/Goldwater-NicholsDoDReordAct1986.pdf (accessed December 20, 2017).

³ Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?: Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 1-16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ David Jochanan Rothkopf, *Running the World: The inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2006), 26-32.

⁶ Paul D. Miller, "Five Pillars of American Grand Strategy," *Survival Online* 54, no. 5 (October - November 2012): 39-41, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2012.728343> (accessed December 20, 2017).

⁷ *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, Public Law 99-433, 99th Congress (October 1, 1986), 100 STAT. 992, Section 603.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ "National Security Strategy Archive," <http://nssarchive.us/> (accessed January 25, 2018).

¹⁰ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 6, 2015), 1-29, <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/2015.pdf> (accessed December 20, 2017).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, i.

¹² Leon Panetta, "Sustaining Us Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," *Washington, DC: US Department of Defense* (2012), 1, http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf (accessed December 20, 2017).

¹³ Hal Brands and Peter Feaver, "Was the Rise of ISIS Inevitable?," *Survival Online* 59, no. 3 (June - July 2017): 7-54, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2017.1325595> (accessed February 16, 2018).

¹⁴ The Associated Press, "USS McCain Crash Is 4th Navy Accident in Pacific This Year," August 22, 2017, <https://apnews.com/4959fea69cd94a66b6d9a8cd9b594e2f/USS-McCain-crash-is-4th-Navy-accident-in-Pacific-this-year> (accessed December 20, 2017).

¹⁵ James N. Mattis, U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee for Defense, *Hearing on the Department of Defense F. Y. 2018 Budget*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., June 15, 2017, 1-13, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP02/20170615/106086/HHRG-115-AP02-Wstate-MattisJ-20170615.pdf> (accessed December 20, 2017).

¹⁶ Panetta, "Sustaining Us Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," 1.

¹⁷ Zachary Laub, "The Impact of the Iran Nuclear Agreement," *Council on Foreign Relations Online*, (October 13, 2017): 1-8, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/impact-iran-nuclear-agreement> (accessed December 20, 2017).

¹⁸ Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 17.

¹⁹ James McBride, "The Trans-Pacific Partnership and U.S. Trade Policy," *Council on Foreign Relations Online*, (October 2017): 1-11, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/trans-pacific-partnership-and-us-trade-policy> (accessed January 25, 2018).

²⁰ Arthur Stamoulis, "Trading Away the Future: An Analysis of the Trans-Pacific Partnership," *New Labor Forum Online* 22, no. 3 (2013):30-37, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1095796013498856> (accessed February 8, 2018).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²² Clyde Prestowitz, "Our Incoherent China Policy: The Proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Is Bad Economics--and Even Worse Geopolitics as Containment of China," *The American Prospect Online* 26 (Fall 2015): 16-21, <http://prospect.org/article/our-incoherent-china-policy-fall-preview> (accessed February 8, 2018).

²³ Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, January 1, 1988), 1-41, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1988.pdf> (accessed December 20, 2017).

²⁴ Peter W. Rodman, *Presidential Command: Power, Leadership, and the Making of Foreign Policy from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 140-78.

²⁵ Rothkopf, *Running the World: The inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*, 210-59.

²⁶ Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: US Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 240-42.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 260-72.

²⁸ Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 25-26.

²⁹ Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: Us Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order*, 137-41.

³⁰ "The U.S. Federal Budget," <http://federal-budget.insidegov.com/> (accessed January 25, 2018).

³¹ Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy, American Politics and Political Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 8-11.

³² *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, Public Law 99-433, 99th Congress (October 1, 1986), 100 STAT. 992, Section 603.

³³ Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 17-25.