

(U) U.S. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC

(U) **National Security Challenges**

- (~~S//NF~~) How to maintain U.S. strategic primacy in the Indo-Pacific region and promote a liberal economic order while preventing China from establishing new, illiberal spheres of influence, and cultivating areas of cooperation to promote regional peace and prosperity?
- (~~S//NF~~) How to ensure North Korea does not threaten the United States and its allies, accounting for both the acute present danger and the potential for future changes in the level and type of the threat posed by North Korea?
- (~~S//NF~~) How to advance U.S. global economic leadership while promoting fair and reciprocal trade?

(U) **Enduring Vital Interests of the United States:**

- (U) Protect the homeland;
- (U) Advance American prosperity;
- (U) Preserve peace through strength; and
- (U) Advance American influence.

(U) **Top Interests of the United States in the Indo-Pacific:**

- (~~S//NF~~) Defend the homeland and American citizens abroad; prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them;
- (~~S//NF~~) Preserve U.S. economic, diplomatic, and military access to the most populous region of the world and more than one-third of the global economy;
- (~~S//NF~~) Enhance the credibility and effectiveness of our alliances; and
- (~~S//NF~~) Maintain U.S. primacy in the region while protecting American core values and liberties at home.

(U) **Assumptions:**

- (U//~~FOUO~~) U.S. security and prosperity depend on free and open access to the Indo-Pacific region, which will remain an engine of U.S., regional, and global economic growth.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) North Korea's nuclear missiles and its stated intention of subjugating South Korea pose a grave threat to the U.S. homeland and our allies.

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~~SECRET~~ Robert C. O'Brien 1/5/2021

- (U//~~FOUO~~) Shifting regional power balances will continue to drive security competition across the Indo-Pacific, leading to increased defense investment by many countries in the region, including India and Japan.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Proliferation, maritime security, terrorism, and unresolved territorial disputes will remain the primary security concerns and sources of conflict.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Loss of U.S. preeminence in the Indo-Pacific would weaken our ability to achieve U.S. interests globally.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Strong U.S. alliances are key to deterring conflict and advancing our vital interests.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Strategic competition between the United States and China will persist, owing to the divergent nature and goals of our political and economic systems. China will circumvent international rules and norms to gain an advantage.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) China aims to dissolve U.S. alliances and partnerships in the region. China will exploit vacuums and opportunities created by these diminished bonds.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) A strong India, in cooperation with like-minded countries, would act as a counterbalance to China.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Chinese economic, diplomatic, and military influence will continue to increase in the near-term and challenge the U.S. ability to achieve its national interests in the Indo-Pacific region.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) China seeks to dominate cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence and bio-genetics, and harness them in the service of authoritarianism. Chinese dominance in these technologies would pose profound challenges to free societies.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) China's proliferation of its digital surveillance, information controls, and influence operations will damage U.S. efforts to promote our values and national interests in the Indo-Pacific region and, increasingly, in the Western hemisphere and at home.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) China will take increasingly assertive steps to compel unification with Taiwan.
- (U//~~FOUO~~) Russia will remain a marginal player in the Indo-Pacific region relative to the United States, China, and India.

(U) **Desired End States:**

- (~~S//NF~~) North Korea no longer poses a threat to the U.S. homeland or our allies; the Korean Peninsula is free of nuclear, chemical, cyber, and biological weapons.
- (~~S//NF~~) The United States maintains diplomatic, economic, and military preeminence in the fastest-growing region of the world; most nations in the Indo-Pacific view the United States as their preferred partner; U.S. economic strength and influence increase throughout the region.
- (~~S//NF~~) Regional countries uphold the principles that have enabled U.S. and regional prosperity and stability, including sovereignty, freedom of navigation and overflight, standards of trade and investment, respect for individual rights and rule of law, and transparency in military activities.
- (~~S//NF~~) Free markets are the mainstream of Asia, and the U.S. economy generates jobs and growth as a consequence of its interaction with the Indo-Pacific region.
- (~~S//NF~~) Regional disputes are resolved lawfully and without coercion.
- (~~S//NF~~) Southeast Asia is bound more tightly together in business, security, and civil society - including through a strengthened Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - and works closely with the United States and our allies and key partners to uphold the principles identified above.
- (~~S//NF~~) Southeast Asia is capable of managing terrorist threats with minimal assistance from non-ASEAN states.
- (~~S//NF~~) India's preferred partner on security issues is the United States. The two cooperate to preserve maritime security and counter Chinese influence in South and Southeast Asia and other regions of mutual concern. India maintains the capacity to counter border provocations by China.
- (~~S//NF~~) India remains preeminent in South Asia and takes the leading role in maintaining Indian Ocean security, increases engagement with Southeast Asia, and expands its economic, defense, and diplomatic cooperation with other U.S. allies and partners in the region.
- (~~S//NF~~) The United States and its partners on every continent are resistant to Chinese activities aimed at undermining their sovereignty, including through covert or coercive influence.

(U) **Lines of Effort:**

(U) *Alliances & Partnerships*


- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Emphasize our commitment to the region, highlighting a shared vision for a "free and open Indo-Pacific."

- Actions: Invigorate U.S. technical assistance to friendly governments to promote rule of law and civil institutions while communicating the strings attached to China's "Belt and Road Initiative." (See: "U.S. Strategic Framework for Countering China's Economic Aggression.") Develop a robust public diplomacy capability, which can compete with China's information campaigns; puncture the narrative that Chinese regional domination is inevitable.
- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Strengthen the capabilities and will of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia to contribute to the end states of this strategy.
- [REDACTED]
- Align our Indo-Pacific strategy with those of Australia, India, and Japan.
- Aim to create a quadrilateral security framework with India, Japan, Australia, and the United States as the principal hubs.
- Deepen trilateral cooperation with Japan and Australia.
- Encourage South Korea to play a larger role in regional security issues beyond the Korean peninsula.
- Empower Japan to become a regionally integrated, technologically advanced pillar of the Indo-Pacific security architecture.
- Assist in the modernization of Japan's Self Defense Forces.
- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Reinvigorate alliances with the Philippines and Thailand, to strengthen their role in upholding a rules-based regional order.
- Actions: Preserve and where possible expand foreign development assistance and defense engagement, including access, exercises and training, and interoperability.
- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Advance U.S. security leadership in the region through expanded engagement with Indo-Pacific countries on non-traditional security challenges.
- Actions: Expand collaboration with Indo-Pacific countries on peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance/disaster response, and global health.
- Share the burdens and fruits of research and development with allies and like-minded partners to retain our military edge.
- Encourage like-minded countries to play a greater role in addressing these challenges and in increasing burden-sharing. Share the benefits of our research and development with allies and like-minded partners to retain our collective military edge.

- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Enable Taiwan to develop an effective asymmetric defense strategy and capabilities that will help ensure its security, freedom from coercion, resilience, and ability to engage China on its own terms.

(U) *India and South Asia*

- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Accelerate India's rise and capacity to serve as a net provider of security and Major Defense Partner; solidify an enduring strategic partnership with India underpinned by a strong Indian military able to effectively collaborate with the United States and our partners in the region to address shared interests.
- Actions: Build a stronger foundation for defense cooperation and interoperability; expand our defense trade and ability to transfer defense technology to enhance India's status as a Major Defense Partner; increase our cooperation on shared regional security concerns and encourage India's engagement beyond the Indian Ocean Region; support India's membership in the Nuclear Supplier's Group; and work with India toward domestic economic reform and an increased leadership role in the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ADMM+. Offer support to India - through diplomatic, military, and intelligence channels - to help address continental challenges such as the border dispute with China and access to water, including the Brahmaputra and other rivers facing diversion by China.
- [REDACTED] support India's "Act East" policy and its aspiration to be a leading global power, highlighting its compatibility with the U.S., Japanese, and Australian vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- Build regional support for U.S.-India Common Principles in the Indian Ocean, including unimpeded commerce, transparent infrastructure-debt practices, and peaceful resolution of territorial disputes.
- Promote U.S.-India energy cooperation across all sources and technologies to diversify India's energy sources and supplies.
- Partner with India on cyber and space security and maritime domain awareness. Expand U.S.-India intelligence sharing and analytic exchanges [REDACTED] creating a more robust intelligence partnership.

- Work with India and Japan to help finance projects that enhance regional connectivity between India and countries of the region.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Objective: Strengthen the capacity of emerging partners in South Asia, including the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, to contribute to a free and open order.
- Actions: Establish a new initiative with South Asian partners modeled on the Maritime Security Initiative in Southeast Asia to improve maritime domain awareness, interoperability, and data-sharing with the United States.  

- Support creation of a maritime information "fusion center" in the Indian Ocean.
- Establish a regional forum to promote common principles and standards.
- Establish and gain broad consensus on a statement of principles on acceptable maritime behavior, to include a commitment to regional cooperation in line with shared security objectives.

(U) *China*

- ~~(S//NF)~~ Objective: Prevent China's industrial policies and unfair trading practices from distorting global markets and harming U.S. competitiveness.
- Actions: Counter Chinese predatory economic practices that freeze out foreign competition, undermine U.S. economic competitiveness, and abet the Chinese Communist Party's aspiration to dominate the 21st century economy. (See: **"U.S. Strategic Framework for Countering China's Economic Aggression."**)
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Build an international consensus that China's industrial policies and unfair trading practices are damaging the global trading system.
- Actions: (See: **"U.S. Strategic Framework for Countering China's Economic Aggression."**)
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Objective: Maintain American industry's innovation edge vis-à-vis China.
- Actions: Work closely with allies and like-minded countries to prevent Chinese acquisition of military and strategic capabilities; broaden the scope of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to cover venture capital and other forms of investment by China; and adopt domestic policies that promote growth in key technologies.

(See: "U.S. Strategic Framework for Countering China's Economic Aggression.")

- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Promote U.S. values throughout the region to maintain influence and counterbalance Chinese models of government.
  - Actions: Develop public and private messaging and promote initiatives that show the benefits of democracy and liberty to all countries, including economic, technologic, and societal benefits.
  - Coordinate efforts to protect and promote internationally recognized rights and freedoms with likeminded partners.
  - Engage South Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia, Japan, and other regional democratic partners to demonstrate their own successes and the benefits they have accrued.
  - Support activists and reformers throughout the region.
  - Offer development, technical, and legal assistance to those countries who seek to reform.
- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Deter China from using military force against the United States and U.S. allies or partners, and develop the capabilities and concepts to defeat Chinese actions across the spectrum of conflict.
  - Actions: Enhance combat-credible U.S. military presence and posture in the Indo-Pacific region to uphold U.S. interests and security commitments.
  - Devise and implement a defense strategy capable of, but not limited to: (1) *denying* China sustained air and sea dominance inside the "first island chain" in a conflict; (2) *defending* the first-island-chain nations, including Taiwan; and (3) *dominating* all domains outside the first island-chain. [REDACTED]
- Help our allies and partners improve their security posture, including military capabilities and interoperability, to ensure strategic independence and freedom from Chinese coercion. Expand partnerships and capabilities that limit China's ability to coerce allies and partners.
- (~~S//NF~~) Objective: Enhance U.S. engagement in the region while also educating governments, businesses, universities, Chinese overseas students, news media, and general citizenries about China's coercive behavior and influence operations around the globe.
  - Actions: Establish a mechanism that provides publicly available information that explains Chinese activities and

the problems they pose to the interests, liberty and sovereignty of nations. [REDACTED]

- Invest in capabilities [REDACTED] that promote uncensored communication between Chinese people.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Objective: Cooperate with China when beneficial to U.S. interests.
  - Actions: In our diplomacy with China, emphasize high-level, substantive interaction to realize the President's vision for a constructive, results-oriented relationship. Past diplomacy has often been broad and shallow, which suits China's interests.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Objective: Maintain an intelligence advantage over China, and inoculate the United States, its allies, and partners against Chinese intelligence activities.
  - Actions: Equip U.S. allies and partners to cooperate with the United States in operating against China and countering China's clandestine activities in their countries.
  - Expand and prioritize U.S. intelligence and law enforcement activities that counter Chinese influence operations. Get like-minded countries to do the same.
  - Strengthen defensive and offensive counter-intelligence functions across the public and private sectors to neutralize China's growing intelligence advantages; expand intelligence diplomacy and law enforcement cooperation with other governments to bolster understanding of Chinese intentions and capabilities.
  - Help allies and partners develop high standards in counterintelligence, counter proliferation, cyber security, industrial security, and management of classified information.

(U) *Korean Peninsula*

- ~~(S//NF)~~ Objective: Convince the Kim regime that the only path to its survival is to relinquish its nuclear weapons.
- Actions: Maximize pressure on Pyongyang using economic, diplomatic, military, law enforcement, intelligence, and information tools to cripple North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programs, choke off currency flows, weaken the regime, and set the conditions for negotiations aimed at reversing its nuclear and missile programs, ultimately achieving the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Peninsula. Consider negotiations if North Korea takes steps to reverse its nuclear and missile programs. (See: **"The President's North Korea Strategy," Cabinet Memo, 28 March 2017.**)



- [REDACTED]  
Do this by: (1) helping South Korea and Japan acquire advanced, conventional military capabilities; (2) drawing South Korea and Japan closer to one another; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

(U) *Southeast Asia & the Pacific Islands*

- (S//NF) Objective: Promote and reinforce Southeast Asia and ASEAN's central role in the region's security architecture, and encourage it to speak with one voice on key issues.
  - (S//NF) Actions: Deepen our relationships with Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia [REDACTED]
  - (S//NF) Highlight ASEAN centrality as a core component of the free and open Indo-Pacific strategy.
  - (S//NF) Reinforce Japan's proactive leadership to amplify U.S. strategic goals in Southeast Asia.  
[REDACTED]
- (S//NF) Objective: Prevent the spread of terrorism in Southeast Asia.
  - (S//NF) Actions: Expand the involvement of Southeast Asian nations in the Defeat-ISIS coalition; foster better law-enforcement, military, and intelligence cooperation among Indo-Pacific states; and provide direct U.S. assistance to counter-terror efforts.  
[REDACTED]
- (S//NF) Objective: Promote and support Burma's transition to democracy.
  - [REDACTED]
- (S//NF) Objective: Ensure the Pacific Islands (e.g., the U.S. territories, the Freely Associated States, the Melanesian and the Polynesian states,) remain aligned with the United States.
  - Actions: Solidify our diplomatic, military, intelligence, economic, development assistance, and informational advantages across the Pacific Islands.  
[REDACTED]
- (S//NF) Objective: Pursue economic ties and increase connectivity with countries willing to adopt market-based reforms. Pursue trade agreements that contain trade and

investment standards set by the United States and that reduce the region's economic reliance on China.

- (U) Assign strategic purpose to the combined financial resources and economic power of the United States; promote an integrated economic development model in the Indo-Pacific that provides a credible alternative to One Belt One Road; create a task force on how best to use public-private partnerships.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Promote the U.S., ally, and partner-led development of energy, telecommunications, and logistics standards and infrastructure.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Expand the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's work in promoting regional economic integration and support the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community through trade facilitation, customs modernization, and standards harmonization.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Incentivize the U.S. private sector to reignite an expeditionary spirit so that it expands two-way trade and investment in the Indo-Pacific.