



Joining the dots and making sense of the key geopolitical developments in Europe, Eurasia and MENA

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Geopolitical Trends (Re-)Emerging from the return of Donald Trump at the White House:

Key points:

1. Is a negotiated end of Russia-Ukraine war still possible?
 2. Deciphering the new US National Security Strategy: are we heading towards a brand-new world order?
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On January 20th, 2025, Donald Trump has returned to the White House unravelling decades of US foreign and security policy in ways which have stunned the world. His policies centred on the “Make America Great Again- MAGA” mantra, toggled sharply between tough trade, hard military readiness, ideological realignments, business interests-driven peace negotiations, and assertive unilateralism.

On December 5, 2025, the White House released a new [National Security Strategy](#) (NSS) bringing together and officialising those tenets while portending a fundamental shift in US national strategy. This document seems to highlight three main points:

- The primary strategic interest of the US is the Western Hemisphere.
- The US aims for close economic ties with China, as well as for an end to military tensions.
- Europe is responsible for its own defence and is now capable of defending itself.

Against this backdrop and having in mind the ongoing structural changes of the world order, this issue will focus further on geopolitical trends (re)-emerging from D. Trump’s return to the White House.

1) **Is a negotiated end of Russia-Ukraine war still possible?**

In our [previous issue](#) we discussed why the US mediation to end the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, under the leadership of President D. Trump, didn’t work so far and suggested a few ways to shift the process towards an agreed endgame. At the core of our suggestions have been three imperatives: US to continue its mediation in more realistic terms (i.e. by taking into account the realities on the wider battlefield and the available resources of each belligerent); Ukraine to get ready for a meaningful peace process with strong European support for Kyiv to recover a more realistic geopolitical place in Eastern Europe; the wider European states to start thinking strategically about how to build a new European security system where NATO, EU, UK, Turkiye, US, Russia, and others should accept new roles, responsibilities, as well as new geopolitical and legal commitments. Half year on, the peace process seems to be still in limbo, whereas territorial and security issues are still barring a breakthrough to agreeing on a realistic long-term endgame/ peace plan for Ukraine.

In the wake of an alleged agreement between presidents D. Trump and V. Putin at their August 15 summit in Anchorage (Alaska), on November 20th, the full text of a 28-points peace plan was released by the White House. The plan seemed to have been secretly hatched by US Special Envoy to the Middle East S. Witkoff and Russia's special envoy and sovereign fund manager head K. Dmitriev. It contained most of president V. Putin's maximalist demands and few concessions to Ukraine: concede the Donbas territories that Russia has not occupied, which would become a demilitarized zone; freeze the frontlines in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson; cede Crimea to Russia and all territorial claims would be recognized by the US, while Ukraine would not be required to formally recognize them; reintegrate Russia into the global economy, including phased sanctions relief; Ukraine returns to neutrality that was part of its Constitution prior to 2014; Ukraine would be offered security guarantees by the US against compensation for its services; fast-track EU accession for Ukraine; an investment fund would be set up to pay for reconstruction with the US taking half of its returns while Europe raising a \$100bn fund to help with reconstruction; US would engage in extensive, but undetailed, business deals with Russia covering minerals, energy and technology; Russian would become a second official language in Ukraine and restrictions on operations of the Russian Orthodox Church would be lifted. (<https://intellinews.com>)

President V. Putin acknowledged that the US-backed 28-point peace plan for Ukraine could serve as a "foundation for future negotiations". He expressly said that any agreement must include international recognition of Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and the four annexed Ukrainian regions. He added that a legal agreement with Ukraine remained "practically impossible" because of Zelensky government's decision to postpone presidential elections, which would have rendered the Ukrainian president illegitimate. He re-iterated that Russia had no plans

to attack Europe, as many European leaders had publicly suggested: "We were never going to [attack Europe], but if they want to hear it from us — well, come on, we'll put it on the record. No questions asked." He threatened that if Ukrainian forces did not withdraw from the Donbas territory they still controlled, Russia would take them militarily, citing a positive momentum on the front lines for Russian forces. (<https://www.intellinews.com>)

Ukraine, the EU, and key European states (so-called E3: France, Germany, UK) have plainly rejected the 28-points peace plan and have come up with their own 20-points counterproposal. The latter was largely rejected by the Kremlin as it contained many points that were red lines for the Kremlin, including keeping the door to NATO membership open and European peacekeepers on Ukrainian soil. Following talks in Berlin on December 15, attended by most of the top EU leaders, EC President U. von der Leyen and NATO Secretary General M. Rutte, as well as the US lead-negotiators S. Witkoff and J. Kushner, a joint statement was issued that promised continued support for Ukraine: to build its armed forces, which should remain at a peacetime level of 800,000 military; a European-led 'multinational force Ukraine' made up in the framework of the "Coalition of the Willing" and supported by the US to assist in the regeneration of Ukraine's forces, in securing Ukraine's skies, and in supporting safer seas, including through operating inside Ukraine; a US-led ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism with international participation along with a deconfliction mechanism to work on mutual de-escalatory actions; a legally binding commitment, subject to national procedures, to take measures to restore peace and security in the case of a future armed attack; to invest in the future prosperity of Ukraine, including by making major resources available for recovery and reconstruction, mutually beneficial trade agreements, and taking into account the need for Russia to compensate Ukraine for the

damage caused; strong support for Ukraine's accession to the EU. (<https://www.intellinews.com>) Despite president D. Trump's apparent optimism on getting closer to an agreement, built upon his allegedly limited-time offer for a deal on US providing article 5-like security guarantees to Ukraine that would include a commitment to military aid should Russia re-invade again, at the time of writing (end December 2025), the Russia-Ukraine peace negotiations seemed to have got into a new deadlock: on the one hand, President V. Putin insists for Ukrainian forces to withdraw from the whole of the Donbas; on the other hand, President V. Zelensky, with strong European support, refused to agree on any territorial concessions, either *de jure* or *de facto*, without prior approval in a referendum that, just like fresh presidential elections, couldn't be organized under continued Russian fire which president V. Putin was not prepared to stop, even temporarily.

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Against this backdrop, **is a negotiated end of the Russia-Ukraine war still possible?**

1) A deal on giving up Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia is actually an already done deal, as no one could realistically assume that Ukraine might be able on the short and medium term to take them back. *"Any discussion on resolving the war in Ukraine must begin with two fundamental realities: Russia is unable to achieve its military objective to defeat and occupy Ukraine, and Ukraine cannot fully expel Russia from its borders. Since neither side can defeat the other, this war will end in a negotiated settlement that neither side will be happy with."* Obviously, for Ukraine giving up a significant part of its territory to Russia would be both unconstitutional and painful. However, maintaining an independent, sovereign Ukrainian state, re-assured by article 5-like security guarantees from the US and European allies, and maintaining the largest-sized armed forces in Europe would be substantial compensations for

losing territory. (G. Friedman- *"On the 28-points plan to Resolve Ukraine"*, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com>)

For Europe, preserving a pro-European Ukraine (i.e. prospective EU member) with a strong army, even as it would have formally declared neutrality, would create a most welcome buffer protecting against Russia its outmost Eastern borders from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. For Russia, acquiring new territory and establishing a neutral Ukraine as a buffer protecting it against feared attacks from NATO would offer a clear strategic advantage. International recognition from the US (and likely from many other countries) of its new borders and restoring business and strategic nuclear weapons cooperation with Washington would be a bonus for Moscow. The bottom line is that *"whenever the fighting does end, a de facto line of control is likely to harden, leaving a divided Ukraine that endures as a Western-aligned state anchoring the new equilibrium in Eastern Europe."* (K. Bokhari- *"A Divided Ukraine and European Security"*, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com>)

2) Four points of the US peace plan looked most painful to Ukraine: giving up NATO membership aspirations, *de facto* recognition of Russian control of all of Crimea and Donbas and parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia currently under Russian control, caps on the size of the Ukrainian armed forces, and cultural and linguistic reforms. However, as T. Snider argued *"all four of those concessions are, in reality, the formal recognition of long-time realities. [...] Removing them or delaying them until after a ceasefire will likely only kill the peace plan and the latest chances for peace. Killing this deal will only necessitate a future deal that will force Ukraine to recognize an even harsher reality."* (T. Snider- *"Ukraine Peace Talks- Concessions or Done Deals"*, <https://antiwar.com>) B. Jarabik, a political analyst with R.Politik, had reached a similar conclusion, although from a different angle. Ukraine would be approaching a *"negotiated-outcome phase"* in the war with Russia, driven less by strategic preference

than by mounting pressure on its military and political capacities: *“Russia currently holds a strategic upper hand, escalating “selectively: enough to grind Ukraine down, not enough to force Western rupture” [...] Ukraine is entering a negotiated-outcome phase defined by capacity, not desire. If guarantees are secured — a structured ceasefire above Istanbul 2022 might still be possible. If not, a future settlement may be imposed from a weaker position.”* (<https://www.intellinews.com>)

3) US negotiators S. Witkoff and J. Kushner are business tycoons. Their core planning assumption, apparently agreed with their Russian counterpart K. Dmitriev, is a thoughtful recognition that the best protection for Ukraine might be a combination of binding security guarantees and future economic prosperity which could be *“sold”* to the brave but largely exhausted Ukrainian people. Accordingly, the negotiating package would involve three documents: the peace plan, security guarantees and an economic recovery plan. President V. Putin doesn't believe he needs to make any concessions not only for his troops are slowly advancing the frontline, albeit at huge human costs, but also since attrition wars, affecting the key energy and transport infrastructure sectors, are won by the mathematical ability of each side to absorb casualties and remain effective, with the larger force simply outlasting the smaller one. President D. Trump doesn't only want to bring the war to an end, but he also wants to do business with Russia. His peace deal is full of business and payments to the US with both minerals and energy coming up prominently. On the other hand, over the long term, the US could not simply transfer the security burden to its European allies once a peace deal was achieved. In practice, the U.S. should stand down only as European partners could stand up. This approach assumed that Russia posed no threat that Europe couldn't manage on its own (or with minimal US support). (K. Bokhari- *“A Divided Ukraine and European Security”*, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com>) That is why, rather than trying to squeeze president

V. Zelensky into a deal, the US negotiators should work with European allies to create a package of security guarantees and economic incentives that's attractive enough so that Ukrainians would be willing to swallow the bitter pill of giving up the slice of Donetsk that Russia has failed to conquer so far. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com>)

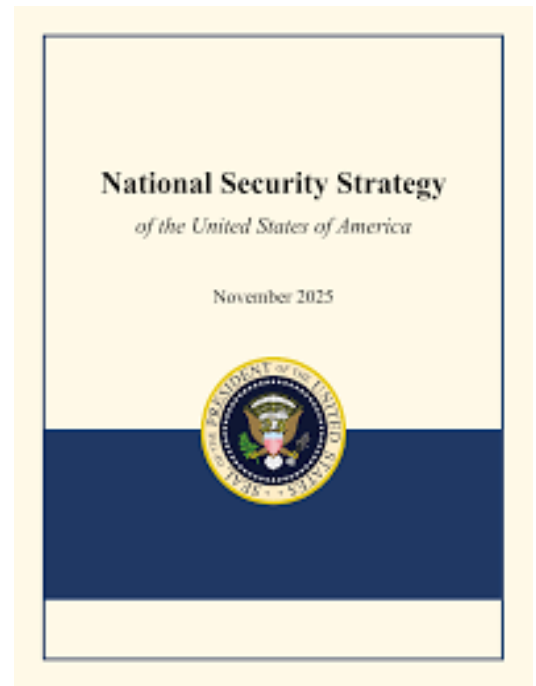
4) From a methodological perspective, a negotiated end of the Russia- Ukraine war is pending to resolving the current clash between principles and pragmatism. That is the original US 28-point peace plan has been a pragmatic attempt to end the war. Meanwhile, the EU/E3 versions were purely principled attempts to justify a certain willingness to negotiate with Moscow. Pragmatists think a deal should start from what Russia wants and then attempt to accommodate Ukraine's wishes as much as possible. In contrast, principle-driven solutions look at what Ukraine should have and then try to force Moscow to accommodate that. On the one hand, Europeans (and Americans under the Biden administration) have been unable to force Russians to accept Ukraine's red lines. On the other hand, Russians have made it crystal clear they would accept the pragmatic version but would reject any principled peace deals out of hand. To end the war through negotiations the US mediators must choose the pragmatic version checking upon what compromises president V. Zelenskiy might be willing to accept. *“Initially, Brussels was banking on its extreme sanctions regime that would force Moscow to capitulate. [...] Sanctions have done more damage to Europe in a boomerang effect than they have done to Russia. Which is not to say Russia is not hurt. It is for this reason that Europe should abandon its principled stand and cut some sort of pragmatic Finlandization deal with Moscow.”* (B. Aris- *“Principles vs. Pragmatism”*- <https://intellinews.com>)

In conclusion, a negotiated end of the Russia-Ukraine war looks conditional to both sides accepting a divided, neutral, but not a defeated Ukraine. Its post-

war independence and sovereignty should be guaranteed by a meaningful and realistic peace plan, by binding security guarantees from the US, and the European allies, and by a sound, financially realistic, EU membership-driven economic recovery plan. A pragmatic rather than a principled solution should be prioritized by all parties. Such a pragmatic solution should necessarily include building up a new European security system meant to overcome the structural geopolitical changes since the end of the Cold War, and, over the medium and longer terms, to re-assert legally binding commitments for the new European order.

However, for now, the prospects of a negotiated peace look still uncertain, as despite contrasting political and diplomatic statements, neither belligerent looked ready for comprehensive deals. The negotiations' dynamics might have started to change with the first US-Ukraine-Russia trilateral talks in Abu-Dhabi on January 25th, 2026.

In fact, this whole war has been such a waste for everyone: Ukrainians, Russians, Europeans. If political leaders would have been wiser, it was really avoidable. At least, they should understand that after almost four years of deaths, injuries, destructions, and hundreds of billions of Euros, USD, Rubles squandered, all Europeans have been *de facto* losers, and should strive to eventually get to a reasonable, fair way out of it. Paradoxically, against the backdrop of promoting so-called "*European Greatness*" -a key point on Europe of the new US NSS- if President Trump's ongoing mediation in this war failed, the whole of Europe, from Moscow to the Atlantic, might be heading towards an uncertain future. And that would be a huge shame for everyone who could have cut this war short but didn't do it for whatever political, ideological or other reasons.



5) Deciphering the new US National Security Strategy: are we heading towards a brand-new world order?

The new [US National Security Strategy](#) (NSS), issued end of fall 2025, is the main document aiming to conceptualize and explain President D. Trump's foreign and security policy over his second tenure at the White House. In essence, it is a complete breakup with US policy over the last 80 years, and even, to a large extent, with President Trump's own policy in his first term (2017-2020). It describes the **core national interests**, including: the main focus on the Western Hemisphere under a so-called "*Trump Corollary*" to the Monroe Doctrine that would basically ensure freedom from hostile foreign incursions or ownership of key assets, and continued access to key strategic locations; keeping the Indo-Pacific free and open by preserving freedom of navigation and maintaining secure and reliable supply chains and access to critical materials; preserving the freedom and security of Europe, while "*restoring Europe's civilizational self-confidence and Western identity*"; preventing an adversarial power from dominating the Middle East, its oil and gas supplies, and the chokepoints through which they pass while avoiding so-called "*forever wars*";

ensuring technological and normative supremacy, particularly in AI, biotech, and quantum computing.

From a geopolitical perspective, at least three **strategic principles** have emerged as most relevant: 1) protecting national sovereignty against its erosion by transnational and international organizations, as well as against attempts by foreign actors to censor free speech, influence policy or manipulate the immigration system; 2) maintaining global and regional balances of power; 3) increasing fairness from allies by rebalancing their security and defence spendings.

In terms of **strategic priorities**, the most geopolitically relevant seem to be: 1) burden sharing and burden shifting with a direct reference to NATO; 2) *“re-alignment through peace”* boiling down to presidential diplomacy mainly aimed at taking advantage of the socio-economic benefits of peace; 3) economic security encompassing balanced trade, access to critical supply chains and materials, reviving the defence industrial system, energy and financial sectors dominance.

At the **regional level**, the NSS builds upon: the *“Trump Corollary”* to the Monroe Doctrine in the **Western Hemisphere**; winning the economic future and preventing military confrontation in **Asia**; promoting *“European Greatness”*, implying a full-scale political, socio-economic, geopolitical and cultural recasting of **Europe** to meet current US interests; shifting burdens and peace building in the **Middle East**; building trade- and investment-focused relationships with capable and willing countries from **Africa**.

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Pundits have extensively commented on the new NSS while noting its dramatic shift from past similar documents. Most relevant features of the commentaries stemmed from comparisons with president Trump’s previous NSS, issued in 2017.

For example, a news analysis of the New York Times (NYT) highlighted that eight years ago the NSS heralded a return to superpower competition, describing China and Russia as *“revisionist powers”* seeking to upend American dominance around the world. Today, although that diagnosis seems still true, the terms in which Russia and China have been referred in the new NSS are hardly consistent with that enduring geopolitical reality. Russia was mentioned in only four paragraphs, and that didn’t include tones of condemnation for its invasion of neighbouring Ukraine. Instead, it portrayed the US *“as something of a neutral negotiator that can diminish tensions between Russia and Europe and reestablish strategic stability with Moscow”*. The new NSS argues for a quick end to the Ukraine war on terms that would preserve the Ukrainian state, as a way of achieving *“strategic stability”* between the US and Russia. And even though more pages of the document were focused on China than on any other nation, they dwelled far more on the commercial relations than on strategic competition. In that vein, the NYT quoted P. D. Feaver, a professor at Duke University: *“When discussing economic competition, China is mentioned explicitly and in granular detail. But when discussing military threats in the Indo-Pacific, the language becomes very vague. [...] Unlike Trump’s first security strategy, China is not identified by name as a country that poses a military threat, which may be the loudest omission in the entire document.”* (<https://nytimes.com>)

As reflected in the new NSS, the US shifting stance towards Russia and China could potentially be attributed to a recalibration of its global and regional policy objectives. Meanwhile, this shift might underscore a conscious effort to address emerging challenges and opportunities posed by both Russia and China given the shifting geopolitical realities and President Trump’s latest ambitions in foreign policy. Another news analysis of the NYT focused on President Trump’s long held disdain for the European elites. The new NSS officialised his

recurring calls for European nations to take “*primary responsibility*” for their own defence, as the US should no longer guarantee Europe’s security. It has farther accused the EU of stifling “*political liberty*,” warned that some NATO members risked becoming “*majority non-European*,” and said the US should align with “*patriotic European parties*”, meaning the European far-right movements. Most likely, this might have been what the 2025 NSS meant by restoring “*Europe’s civilizational self-confidence and Western identity*” and “*European Greatness*”. In that context, N. Tocci, a professor on international studies at John Hopkins University wondered: “*Is this going to be the moment of European awakening?*”. She further acknowledged that by supporting far-right parties antagonistic to the EU the NSS might have aimed at dividing and weakening the continent, leaving a “*fractured Europe which is easily colonizable by the globe’s great powers*”. In a recent article, Tocci contended that: “*Strategic autonomy does not require confrontation with Washington or the abandonment of the Atlantic alliance. It requires the capacity to say no, when necessary, to act independently when interests diverge, and to sustain a coherent project at home.*” (M. Matthijs, N. Tocci-“*How Europe Lost*”, <https://foreignaffairs.com>)

Some went as far as to believe that the new NSS might have been inspired from the Russian playbook: “*It’s striking because that is very similar to language which you’ll find in the analogous Russian national security document*,” said T. D. Snyder, a prominent scholar of totalitarianism and Russia. He added that by suggesting that good foreign policy was about balancing between great powers rather than upholding the rule of law “*the U.S. national security document is now tilting in the basic ideological direction of the Russian one.*” (<https://nytimes.com>) Others have disagreed with placing any ideological stamp on the new NSS. For example, G. Friedman thought that “*the most important element in the document is that, whereas after World War II there was a fundamental ideological component to US*

foreign policy, the ideological perspective is not present here.” He argued that “*the issue of communism is no longer present as a defining principle. This shift is most clearly visible in the treatment of China, where the presence of communism is not a basis for continued hostility.*” He further explained why the US interests in Europe have become a purely geopolitical issue. Unlike the former Soviet Union, Russia has been just a larger Eurasian nation, and Europe has long time ago recovered from the ravages of WWII. In this strategic context, where fundamental interests were no longer moral, the obligation of the US should be based on its own national interests. (G. Friedman-“*The National Security Strategy of the USA*”-<https://geopoliticalfutures.com>)

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What **global geopolitical trends** might be read **in-between the lines of the 2025 US NSS?**

1) The NSS has prioritized US geopolitical focus on the Western Hemisphere (i.e. the Americas). As G. Friedman explained in an interview on “*The new NSS is here to stay*”, it might be a potentially prosperous hemisphere that would allow the US to be the lead-power and prevent it from having to involve in wars that the Russians might sponsor in Europe or the Chinese might sponsor in the East or South China Seas. That is why the current American strategy would be aiming to reach geopolitical understandings with Russia and China that would let the Washington focus on the Western Hemisphere. (<https://geopoliticalfutures.com>)

2) Since, over the last 35+ years, China’s economy has been built on Western investments and markets, *de facto* economic interdependence has developed between China and the US. The latter is 25% of the world’s economy and is China’s greatest import-export partner. At the same time, the US would not want to have a conflict with China so that the new NSS suggested a close relationship with

China based upon reducing military confrontation and increased economic cohabitation. Those would be very attractive aims for China too. That was likely why the October 30th, 2025, meeting of presidents Trump and Xi in Busan (South Korea) resulted in a fragile truce in the US-China trade war while marking a return to the pre-September 2025 *status quo ante* on trade. That trade truce provided both parties with some breathing space, and it might temporarily stabilize the US-China relationship. However, fundamentally, the relationship remains locked in systemic competition across the economic, technological and security domains. Both countries will also continue to compete to prove the superiority of their political and economic systems, and to possess the power to shape and lead the international order. (B. Glaser on <https://gmfus.org>)

3) Neither China nor the US have an interest in engaging in a military confrontation with each other as long as they continued to remain economically interdependent. That might be why the NSS might be talking only vaguely about China as a military threat while both countries needed a kind of military accommodation. Such accommodation might also require a radical shift in military postures and strategies. For the US, China may pose a real military threat, but that threat would cover only one aspect of its global interests. Although Taiwan is a pivot of US-China military relations, that island is only one element of the first chain of islands, from Papua New Guinea to Japan, hosting US military bases which could potentially be used to deny China's access to the Pacific Ocean. That would be a major strategic problem for China and therefore the naval threat posed by the US has been the foundation of its military strategy. (G. Friedman- "Rethinking China"- <https://geopoliticalfutures.com>)

4) The Russia-China "*partnership without limits*" has been previously discussed in this publication (see [Issue No.25, March-June 2024](#)). At the time, we had concluded that "*China and Russia were apparently aiming to establish a new power-sharing*

arrangement in Central Asia as a pillar of a post-Western Eurasian order. This would position both of them to dominate Eurasia, while forcing the US to revisit its historical strategic dilemma: could America remain secure in its hemispheric homeland and free to pursue its economic and security interests worldwide if Russia and China controlled the Eurasian landmass?". The NSS response to that dilemma has apparently prioritized both the focus on the Western Hemisphere AND restoring relations with Russia and China.

However, some experts are taking the Chinese-Russian "*partnership without limits*" for good. For example, A. Gabuev thought that for Moscow there was no credible alternative to it: "*No other country can simultaneously provide Russia with a giant market for its commodities, modern technology, logistical proximity, and financial tools to circumvent Western sanctions.*" On the other hand, he thought that for Beijing too, Russia's "*growing vassalage — wrapped in diplomatic flattery between the leaders and shared animosity toward the US global leadership*" was very attractive. (A. Gabuev- "*With Putin in Charge, Russia's Vassalage to China Will Only Deepen*", <https://carnegieendowment.org>).

Others are more confident that a potential US-China *détente* on trade and military affairs might be concerning for Russia. Notably, G. Friedman thought that "*Russia would become very concerned if China and the US ended their military confrontation and engaged in a close economic relationship. As for the US, nothing could be nicer than China and Russia threatening each other and the US confining itself to the Western Hemisphere*" (<https://> "*George Answers Your Questions: On the New US National Security Strategy*", <https://geopoliticalfutures.com>). The 2025 NSS apparently plays on this latter argument, in spite of that looking like mere wishful thinking to Western liberal experts. Whether this strategic choice would eventually lead to shared US-China global dominance or Russia might be attached to it

as a potential balancer in some kind of tripolar world is still to be seen.

5) A *Defence One* story swirling in the international media suggested there would be a secret longer version of the 2025 NSS. According to the author, that version would propose a new grouping known as the Core-C5, which would bring together the US, China, Russia, India and Japan into a forum for major-powers dialogue outside the G7 framework. This group would meet for themed summits, with Middle East security, particularly the normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, set as its first agenda item. Europe would no longer be represented at the level of global powers. Furthermore, it would reaffirm the US withdrawal from Europe's defence, and realignment with culturally aligned allies. The NATO alliance would be downgraded, and US security relations would move towards more transactional bilateral partnerships with like-minded European countries. ("*Make Europe Great Again' and more from a longer version of the National Security Strategy*", <https://defenseone.com>). After this story was published, the White House firmly denied the existence of any other version of the NSS than the one published online. While it is unclear to what extent that allegedly secret version of the 2025 NSS existed or it had any relevance at all, it seemed to reinforce one of the key messages of the published NSS: American leadership of the international system was a misguided ambition. The US should now pursue a narrower focus on its core national interests and prevent China and Russia to become global hegemony by attempting to share global power with them.

In conclusion, the 2025 NSS is charting new waters in US policies while portending a brand-new world order with the US, China, Russia, and maybe a few others at its core. Its impact has already become visible in the very first days of 2026. Take the capturing of the Venezuelan president N. Maduro

and controlling oil exports policy of that Latin American state as samples of the "*Trump Corollary*" of the Monroe Doctrine. Or the crisis in Trans-Atlantic relations stirred by President Trump's ambition to acquire Greenland at the expense of potentially breaching the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a NATO ally. Those would have been unthinkable for any US president over the last 80 years, as breaches of the UN basic principles and norms that had guaranteed post-WWII world order. For President D. Trump that seems no longer being the case, whereas the international system is facing fresh geopolitical risks and dangers, but also new opportunities to reform peacefully the outdated post-WWII global governance system.

Last but not least, the 2025 US NSS implies that Europe may not be spared anymore from the prospects of being left out in the cold in the middle of a fierce global struggle for power. This new European geopolitical challenge would reinforce and potentially accelerate the ongoing crisis in European affairs triggered and sustained by the war in Ukraine. The Greenland crisis in Trans-Atlantic relations has underscored that European solidarity is crucial for preventing global powers like the US and China from exploiting divisions within Wider Europe (including the EU, UK, and Turkey) to curtail European influence on the world stage. Where global geopolitical Europe goes from here is still to be seen.



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