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**Donald Trump's National Security Process:
Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy and
International Relations**

Risa A. Brooks

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P.O. Box 110450, Abu Dhabi, UAE
www.trendsinstitution.org

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Introduction

In the United States, presidents vary significantly in the processes through which they evaluate and decide national security matters. Basic structures, such as the National Security Council, remain relatively constant across administrations. But presidents employ those institutions differently.

¹ More broadly, they choose with whom they will consult from their Cabinet and staff and what will be the norms of discussion in those deliberations. A president's character, worldview and management style, in turn, can have a profound impact on these national security processes.²

With Donald Trump now in office for six months, the nature of his national security processes is starting to come into view. The president's background and personality have heavily shaped how foreign policy and security issues are being analyzed and decided. Below I discuss several key characteristics and emerging patterns within the advisory process in the White House.

That emerging national security process has important implications for the character of U.S. foreign policy and international relations. Several trends are apparent. Combined these provide important insights in how Donald Trump will manage the country's foreign relations during his presidency and the impact his approach will have on the U.S. role in the international arena.

President Trump's National Security Team

Before discussing the national security process under President Trump, I begin by outlining some key officials on Trump's national security team. In particular, five figures have emerged as key to Trump's national security team.

The first is Secretary of Defense James Mattis. A former Marine general, Mattis is perceived as bringing sobriety, experience³ and deep knowledge of international affairs to the new administration. His world view and foreign policy perspective also are familiar in Washington. They appear to hew closely to the hawkish, internationalist wing of the Republican Party. Like many establishment Republicans, for example, Mattis exhibits deeply-held suspicions of Russia and favors a strong U.S. commitment to NATO.⁴

The president has delegated broad responsibility to Mattis in overseeing the country's political-military strategies—most notably in the armed conflicts in which the United States is engaged in the Middle East. As the former head of U.S. Central Command, Mattis has had deep experience in the region. He has advocated a more aggressive strategy to challenge ISIS/Daesh in Iraq and Syria and has overseen an increased U.S. military commitment to those conflicts.⁵ Mattis has also been influential in shaping the administration's emerging confrontational strategy toward Iran.⁶ Here and beyond, the Secretary so far remains a pivotal figure in the administration.⁷ Still, it is too early to tell how much influence Mattis might have on issues in which Trump has a major stake as president, such as those that might affect the support of his Republican base of voters, or when, and if, he might misstep and fall out of favor with the president.

A second key player on Trump's national security team is Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Before being tapped as secretary, Tillerson was chief executive of the global energy company ExxonMobil and, in that capacity had extensive contacts with leaders across the globe. Yet, he lacks experience as a diplomat. He is reported to have said that he neither sought nor wanted the job when asked to take it.⁸ Early in Tillerson's tenure there were reports of morale plummeting at the State Department.⁹ He also raised eyebrows for his decisions to exclude the diplomatic press corps on a major trip to Asia in March 2017 and to the Middle East in May 2017.¹⁰

Overall, there remains considerable uncertainty about whether Tillerson has the inclination or the appropriate experience to embrace the role of the country's chief diplomat.¹¹ It is also unclear whether he will provide essential leadership to the State Department. Tillerson has not pushed back publicly on the president's proposed 30% cut to the department's budget and is proceeding with a major reorganization while leaving many positions unfilled.¹² Those concerned about a rudderless State Department worry that Tillerson either does not grasp the essential role of political appointees in the department's business, or worse, is not especially concerned if the department's role and influence in American foreign policy diminishes.

Adding to the uncertainty, unlike most Secretaries of State, Tillerson also does not appear to bring a clear ideological worldview to his role.¹³ Rather, he generally describes his job as working to advance the president's security and economic interests consistent with Trump's "America First" vision.¹⁴ He is a regular visitor to the White House, but by his own admission must work to "win the president's confidence every day."¹⁵

A third major figure in the national security team is Trump's National Security Adviser, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster. As National Security Adviser McMaster is responsible for overseeing the National Security Council (NSC), which is the president's main body for managing foreign policy and national security issues. The NSC has a dedicated staff, and provides for coordination of the different executive departments (e.g., State, Defense, Energy, Homeland Security). Its "principals committee" brings together Cabinet level and other key officials to consult during crises and on major foreign policy or strategic initiatives.

As Trump's National Security Adviser, McMaster's job is to ensure that the NSC process runs smoothly and to provide his own advice on international issues to the president. Since taking over from Michael Flynn who was forced to resign in February, 2017, McMaster and other officials have reportedly done a great deal to address flagging morale in the staff and sought to make the NSC process more systematic. His efforts and influence were on display in the administration's deliberations prior to the decision to strike the Assad regime in April, 2017 after its most recent use of chemical weapons against Syrian civilians.¹⁶

Like Secretary Mattis, McMaster has had deep experience in the Middle East. He is known for his innovations in counterinsurgency doctrine during the Iraq war, experiences that appear to color his views of current U.S. military operations in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁷ Also like Mattis, McMaster could have a substantial impact on the U.S. role in those wars.¹⁸

McMaster's authority, however, is reportedly limited by some NSC staffers previously chosen by Michael Flynn, and by others; although this could change if some planned staffing changes materialize.¹⁹ More broadly, outsiders like McMaster may face obstacles in penetrating the president's inner circle of family members and close advisors. The general nonetheless remains a figure to watch, in part because his impact on policy could be a barometer of the relative influence of professionals and those of his worldview within the White House.²⁰

A fourth important figure on the national security team is Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary James F. Kelly, who (like Mattis) is a retired four-star Marine general who served in the Iraq war and more recently, headed U.S. Southern Command (the combatant command that oversees U.S. military operations in South America). As the head of DHS, Kelly oversees immigration and domestic counterterrorism in the United States. He is closely aligned with the president's hardline views on both issues.²¹ In July 2014, Kelly, for example, attracted

attention for calling the combination of failing states, drug cartels and drug use in the United States “an existential threat” to the country’s national security.²²

A final significant member of Trump’s national security establishment is U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley. Of the officials in the cabinet, Haley is perhaps the most strongly ideologically aligned with the hawkish internationalist wing of the Republican Party, in the spirit of John McCain or Marco Rubio (whom she endorsed in the 2016 presidential campaign). She has spoken regularly about the value of human rights and democratic values, at times expressing views on those issues at odds with the President’s stated positions.²³ Haley, however, has largely operated independently. How much influence she wields within the State Department and White House is unclear, although in April 2017 she was added to the National Security Council’s principals committee.²⁴

The President’s Inner Circle

In addition to these officials, Trump maintains an inner circle of family members and close advisers on whom he relies for regular advice. Within this inner circle, there are alternative centers of influence.²⁵ One is associated with his daughter, Ivanka Trump, and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who are commonly associated with the globalist, business oriented officials in the Cabinet.

Stephen Bannon, the president’s controversial chief strategist, represents an alternative viewpoint. Bannon, and those in his orbit, remain suspicious of unmitigated U.S. engagement in the world (evident in Trump’s “America First” agenda). According to insiders, for example, he has been a fierce opponent to proposals advanced by McMaster for sending additional troops to Afghanistan to aid the fight against the Taliban, calling it “McMaster’s war.”²⁶

Trump’s decision to grant Bannon a permanent position on the NSC’s principals committee drew headlines when it was announced in January, 2017. Bannon has since been removed from that position. Still, he is an astute competitor in the internecine politics of the administration. He has a deep strategic appreciation of how to neutralize Trump’s political opponents and mobilize the Republican base in support of Trump. The president would likely lose its support if he did attempt to sideline Bannon. For now, Bannon remains influential in the administration.²⁷

In fact, the agenda that Bannon represents is unlikely to go away—regardless of his personal future within the administration. Although Trump has not yet articulated a formal foreign

policy doctrine in a major speech as president, the “America First” perspective has been a recurrent theme during his tenure in office.²⁸ Often when he adopts more internationalist, or conventional diplomatic or political views, it is usually because he has been effectively coaxed away from these positions (or the issue is not especially high on his priority list). He often gravitates back to them. For example, while it was anticipated that Trump would expressly endorse Article V of the NATO treaty at the May 2017 summit, the president pointedly declined to do so, instead reverting to his nationalist agenda. The decision to cut the phrase from his speech also underscores the limited influence of Tillerson, McMaster and Mattis,²⁹ who reportedly pressed for an explicit endorsement. Yet, perhaps they later persuaded Trump of the importance of the issue, because two weeks later the president appears to have gone off-script in a speech to endorse the mutual defense pledge.³⁰

The Administration’s National Security Process

Analyzing Trump’s team, and his management style, reveals several features of the national security process as it is evolving under the president.

A first notable feature is the Trump team’s susceptibility to what scholars call “polythink,” as a result of the divergent world views held by key administration officials. Polythink is the inverse of the better-known phenomenon of “groupthink,” in which pressures for conformity suppress rigorous analysis.³¹ When polythink occurs, conflicting opinions among advisors are so acute, and trust so limited, that it effectively paralyzes comprehensive review and deliberation within advisory processes. To be sure, there are areas of overlap and synergy within the president’s national security team, such as between officials like Mattis, McMaster and Haley. These convergences notwithstanding, many in the Cabinet and White House staff bring starkly different values and experience to the advisory process. As President Obama learned, it can be difficult to cultivate an effective “team of rivals” without creating dysfunction.³² The ingredients are in place for Trump to experience serious challenges in this regard.³³

Second, the processes in which Trump seeks out advice and makes decisions is likely to remain informal and idiosyncratic, with the president’s personal interactions and private discussions holding considerable sway. While McMaster has brought order to the NSC, there are

serious cross-pressures that mean that the process is likely to remain unsystematic and fluid within the White House.

One major factor is Trump's management style. Within the spectrum of presidential advisory approaches, Trump seems to fall on the extreme of the "competitive" managerial approach.³⁴ He encourages competing factions or viewpoints, and allows them to vie for his influence and attention. One manifestation of this dynamic is that which figure(s) seem to hold sway appears to shift periodically. Indeed, media and insider accounts are replete with stories about the shifting fortunes of administration officials whose influence seems to ebb and flow depending on the issue area, and the president's inclinations.

To be sure, there can be advantages to managing subordinates through competition of this kind. It forces information to the top, as actors compete to expose faults and weaknesses in competing viewpoints. Yet, it can be hard to generate cooperation and fully exploit the brain trust of advisors in a coordinated and systematic fashion. Individuals may also self-censor what they report to the president in the high stakes game of preserving influence with him.

Third, in Trump's White House, the national security advisory process may be vulnerable to capture by the views and interests of those holding sway in the administration at a particular point in time. President Trump's inexperience in government is important in this regard. Research shows that when presidents are inexperienced leaders, their advisers often exercise disproportionate influence over their foreign policies.³⁵ Given the competing factions in Trump's White House and incongruity in worldviews of some top administration officials, the president's positions may shift by issue area and with whose voice and arguments prevail within White House debates.

Finally, the president is likely to continue to upend the national security process by overruling its conclusions and consensus opinion when he chooses. Regardless of what his national security professionals advise, Trump professes to keep his own counsel and trust his own instincts. In the context of a national security process already marked by informalities in whom the president consults and how he deliberates, Trump's individual preferences may have an outsize impact on his policies.³⁶

Five Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy and International Relations

Examining Trump's national security team reveals several emerging trends in how the president manages U.S. foreign policy and international relations.

Unpredictability

The first is that U.S. national security strategy and foreign policy under the Trump administration will continue to be unpredictable. The parameters of Trump's policies will be hard to anticipate in part because of the possibilities that different advisers may have shifting roles and influence. This is magnified by Trump's own mutability and cycling preferences on issues.

To be sure, Trump's unpredictability and leadership style may have some benefits for U.S. national security.³⁷ He may be willing to try unorthodox solutions to international problems. As the president commonly claims, he may be able to make "deals" with allies or adversaries unleashed from concerns about their authoritarian practices or other issues, which might have stymied negotiations with other presidents.³⁸ His impulsiveness may also bolster his bargaining leverage with some opponents.³⁹ The latter may make concessions or otherwise tread lightly out of fear that he may follow through on threats, ignore risks, or react strongly to perceived slights or provocations. Indeed, Trump has stated that he purposely relies on ultimatums and unpredictability to bolster his bargaining positions, lessons learned from his years as a real estate executive.⁴⁰ There may, in short, be some benefits from Trump's iconoclastic approach to foreign affairs.

Potential benefits aside, there are also several risks inherent in Trump's approach. For one, administration policies can sometimes seem like a moving target.⁴¹ This complicates other states' efforts to formulate their own positions and can lead to miscalculations or missed opportunities. For example, even months into Trump's term in office, it remains unclear what is the United States' position on vital issues essential to resolving the Syrian civil war, such as whether Assad must leave office as part of any resolution to the war. U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley has been outspoken in opposing Assad's remaining in power in Syria.⁴² In discussions with UN ambassadors, however, Trump has reportedly said that Assad's staying in power was "not a deal breaker."⁴³ Forging policy on Syria and coordinating with regional allies may be complicated by the administration's shifting and unpredictable views on this vital issue.

A second risk is that United States may find it difficult to win cooperation on issue areas in which it has security interests, or to forge agreements with allies or adversaries to settle disputes. Uncertainty is the enemy of negotiated settlements in international relations—and Trump’s unpredictability generates considerable uncertainty. In particular, Trumps’ frequently shifting positions raise questions about whether he will abide by the terms of any deals he reaches. With the credibility of his commitments in doubt, he may not be able to secure the deals he pursues as president. During an international crisis, Trump’s unpredictability could also compromise his ability to signal credibly U.S. intentions, or to secure commitments from allies. Indeed, the loss of credibility of the President’s threats and promises is a serious—and potentially dangerous—downside to this approach to managing international relations.

Leaders, not Publics

A second trend is that foreign leaders, not their publics, will be the primary audience for Trump’s foreign policy initiatives. President Trump, for example, has evinced an unusual willingness to take calls from foreign leaders and to dispense with diplomatic protocols in the process. Part of this indubitably reflects his personal background and psychology (vital considerations in the analysis of any president).

Unlike Donald Trump, previous U.S. presidents have often been attentive to public audiences in other countries, or incorporated concerns about the impact of U.S. policy on those populations, into their strategic calculus.⁴⁴ The lack of attention to domestic politics in other countries, moreover, could end up posing a serious challenge to the administration as it seeks to achieve its political objectives. Even if leaders are willing to abide Trump’s inflammatory tactics and statements, their publics may not. Trump’s statements calling on South Korea to pay for the THAAD system, for example, appears to have contributed to the election of a liberal president, Moon Jae-in, who may oppose Trump’s approach to dealing with North Korea.⁴⁵

A related feature of the president’s approach to managing international relations is his inclination to emphasize forging *bilateral* deals with individual state leaders that provide manifest deliverables in the form of trade or security benefits. Overall, Trump maintains a highly instrumental view of politics in which means matter less than expeditiously delivering on goals.

Some Realpolitik Impulses

Under Trump, U.S. foreign policy may exhibit some realpolitik elements. A *realpolitik* or “realist” worldview encompasses several core principles: a belief that protecting material interests and safeguarding against threats to Americans’ physical security, or the territory and economy of the United States are the country’s priorities. Realists also believe that grand strategies organized around the pursuit of democratic values, regime change, or advancing global human rights will at best fail, and at worst prove counterproductive to U.S. national security. They emphasize restraint in overseas commitments and are reticent to employ military power unless core interests are under threat.⁴⁶

Elements of a realist worldview resonate with aspects of Trump’s “America First” platform.⁴⁷ The president, for example, has regularly and forcefully argued that the United States must avoid unnecessary military interventions overseas. This has been a strong and important message to his domestic political supporters. When, for example, Trump ordered the April, 2017 missile against Syria to punish the regime for using chemical weapons, the action was strongly criticized by his voting base.⁴⁸ Secretary Tillerson’s pragmatic assessment of the state of U.S.-Russian relations is also evocative of realist currents in the administration.⁴⁹ Tillerson, in addition, has stated that the United States will no longer condition its relations with other states on U.S. values, such as the protection of human rights and democracy abroad—a position Trump has reiterated.⁵⁰

Still, whether Trump will follow through on these *realpolitik* impulses—and develop national security strategies consistent with them, seems increasingly in question, for several reasons.

First, adopting a realist centric grand strategy requires pushing against the long-standing consensus in Washington D.C. There are powerful forces in both the Republican and Democratic parties that support a grand strategy some refer to as “primacy,” or “liberal hegemony.”⁵¹ While the political parties may disagree on how best to pursue and implement this grand strategy, there is broad agreement on its guiding principles. These include that U.S. leadership is essential to maintaining global order, and that American leadership requires substantial military commitments in the form of overseas bases, alliances and military interventions. In this view of the world, U.S. security is best achieved through a global military presence and internationalist foreign policy.

American values and security interests are intertwined and inseparable—advancing democracy and human rights are essential to securing the United States.

Pushing back against this consensus might be hard for any administration, but especially one with an inexperienced president at the helm. Indeed, there has already been pronounced resistance from across the political spectrum to Trump's positions on human rights and his discounting of the role of American values in shaping foreign policy.⁵² Such positions put Trump sharply at odds not only with many Democrats, but with many in the Republican establishment—including many in his own Cabinet.⁵³

Second, while Trump may profess to adhere to realist principles, the administration's actions so far reveal a misunderstanding of what pursuing a realist grand strategy entails.⁵⁴ With the decision to downsize the State Department, Trump seems to equate *realpolitik* with brute expressions of force, neglecting the vital role of diplomacy.⁵⁵ The president also seems to misapprehend the basic rules of international relations, according to realists, such as the tendency for states to balance against threatening hegemonic powers. Consider, once again, Trump's actions during the May 2017 NATO summit and his decision not to endorse NATO's Article V mutual defense pledge and to criticize Germany's trade practices.⁵⁶ While realist thinkers might agree that Europe should provide for its own security, they see Trump's unsystematic and often intemperate approach to achieving that goal as counterproductive.⁵⁷

Finally, regardless of his stated principles, Trump's policies could also unintentionally result in greater military commitments at odds with *realpolitik* currents. His stated policy positions contain several difficult to resolve contradictions.⁵⁸ For example, his views on combating international terrorism could generate support for military escalation overseas, as we have already seen in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.⁵⁹ Hence, the internal inconsistencies could easily be resolved in policies and actions at fundamental odds with a realist grand strategy.

Hard Power, not Soft Power

Under Trump, the United States is likely to favor instruments of statecraft that draw on material power—economic and military—versus those that depend on normative pressures, or persuasion and leadership. There are, once again, several forces pushing the administration in this direction. First is the president's own preference for pressure tactics and hard bargaining. Both

President Trump and Secretary Tillerson do not appear to put much stock in maximizing soft power and eliciting cooperation through leadership and principled action.⁶⁰

The combination of a weak State Department and an empowered Defense Department is a second factor pushing forward the hard power trend. As noted above, while supporting drastic budget cuts, Secretary Tillerson has also yet to publicly articulate a strong case for the importance of diplomacy as a component of U.S. foreign policy.⁶¹ Tillerson's positive individual relationship with Trump aside, he does not seem to embrace the role and mindset of the country's diplomat-in-chief. So far it looks as though the State Department will play a lesser role in the new administration.

The opposite is true of the Department of Defense. Secretary Mattis has a clear commitment to his department's mission and its already vast budget is likely to grow significantly under the Trump administration. Trump himself has an affinity for the trappings of military life and is clearly enamored with what he calls "his respected generals." This includes Secretary Mattis to whom he often refers as General Mattis (despite the fact that Secretaries of Defense are, for many important legal, bureaucratic and normative reasons, always civilians).

In addition, several other factors suggest that the Defense Department will play an outsize role in shaping U.S. foreign policy and national security in coming years. One is the number of officials with recent military experience in top positions. This includes Mattis, Kelly, and McMaster, as well as Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., who as the current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is by law the president's top military advisor. Three of four of these men are also four-star Marine generals (McMaster is an active duty three-star Army general) and all played important roles during the Iraq war. There is also an exceptional number of NSC staff positions now held by military personnel, which further shifts foreign policy analysis in the White House to those with principally military expertise.⁶²

To be sure, Mattis and McMaster are among the military's most educated and intellectually inclined officers. In addition, their experiences with counterinsurgency operations mean they are more likely than other military leaders to have an appreciation of the diplomatic and political aspects of warfighting and military strategy. Yet, this is not the same as having actual experience as a diplomat, or as a civilian serving in the State Department or other foreign policy related capacity in the government. These men are inevitably creatures of their experience and the

institution with which they are familiar—something that could affect how they frame problems and order priorities.

A final factor that may magnify the role of hard power in U.S. national security is Trump's decision to delegate substantial operational control to military commanders on the ground in war zones and armed conflicts.⁶³ Presidents vary in the degree to which they delegate operational and tactical decisions to military commanders. In recent administrations, that latitude has been limited. Obama, for example, maintained extensive oversight over operations in Iraq and Syria—even approving tactical details on some occasions. This reflected the complicated nature of the armed conflicts, and the political and strategic implications of harming civilians in operations aimed at insurgents. George Bush's Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, was similarly heavily involved in the war plans for the Iraq 2003 war.⁶⁴ In both cases, some military officers bristled at what they perceived as civilian “micromanagement” and there has been some relief in the military that control from the White House has been lifted under President Trump.⁶⁵

Yet, the degree to which Trump is ceding control and oversight of U.S. strategy and military operations to Secretary Mattis and military leaders is truly exceptional. As commander in chief, presidents usually retain oversight over sensitive missions and control of key strategic decisions. Trump seems disinclined to play this role, and in this sense, has abrogated some of the roles and responsibilities of the president as commander in chief. These shifts, in turn, could contribute to a disconnect between military operations and political goals and strategies. Decisions that might merit comprehensive strategic and political consideration in the NSC with officials from across the executive departments may not receive due consideration. The administration's approach toward international conflicts and disputes consequently may emphasize the military component of the strategy, with a less fully realized or emphasized political or diplomatic dimension.

Skepticism about Multilateralism and the U.S.-led World Order

A final trend is Trump's disinclination to prioritize supporting the U.S. led world order in his foreign policies. One reason for this trend is the president's apparent skepticism of the concept of making long term investments in shaping the international arena in conformity with United States interests and values.⁶⁶ Trump seems unmoved by arguments that stress the long-term value

and importance of multilateralism, or of the constraining effect of global norms and necessity of adhering to them.

This skepticism, in turn, could have important implications for U.S. alliances and international relations under Trump, especially when considered in combination with his leadership style and the credibility issues and uncertainty it generates. These factors create risks and potential costs to other states of orienting their security and economic strategies around the United States and the network of institutions integral to the global order it supports.

Of course, U.S. allies may simply muddle through the Trump presidency. The U.S. led global order may fray, but persist. Indeed, some changes catalyzed by Trump might even rejuvenate it—such as European states, and their publics, having a more developed and explicit appreciation of their role in supporting the liberal world order and increasing their capacity as partners within it. It is also essential to bear in mind that, Trump aside, there are strong forces within U.S. domestic politics that favor stability and continuity with the existing order. As noted above, much of both the Republican and Democratic parties remain deeply committed to sustaining the global world order. In addition, there remain large segments of the population, state leaders and influential corporations who remain vested in it. Already we see cooperative efforts by state governors and corporations and foreign states taking place on the issue of climate change.⁶⁷

Conclusion

What we cannot yet tell is whether Trump's first term will prove an aberration in U.S. politics, or whether it as an indication of a serious shift domestically in the country, and consequently in its international goals and strategies. It may well be the case that after a period of disruption under the Trump presidency, the United States will settle into a more conventional grand strategy and approach to managing international relations—as Secretary Mattis implied in a major speech at June 2017 security forum in Singapore.⁶⁸

Yet, if that does not happen, or U.S. allies fear they cannot risk a wait and see approach, the Trump presidency could have far-reaching effects. If the United States no longer pursues its interests through the liberal world order, it may force other states to reconsider their grand strategies. The cumulative effect of shifts in national interests and reconfigurations of alignments could over time reshape the landscape of international relations across the globe.

These dynamics may result in the emergence of a new center of leadership for the global world order, or a transformation in the liberal basis of that world order. China has sought to step into the void in Asia, seeming to ramp-up its efforts to magnify its soft power and legitimize its leadership in the world order. Similarly, Europe is already engaged in a recalibration and reorientation away from the American-European axis.⁶⁹ Even long time U.S. allies like Australia may be re-thinking their security alignments.⁷⁰ In the course of four years, we may see subtle, but perhaps irreversible, changes of this kind as leaders consider their fates in a newly unpredictable global environment.

Notes

¹ For an overview of the president's impact on these processes see, "The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System" Alan G. Whittaker, Shannon A. Brown, Frederick C. Smith, and Ambassador Elizabeth McKune, August 2011, p. 24 <http://www.virginia.edu/cnsl/pdf/national-security-policy-process-2011.pdf>

² A recent analysis of U.S. national security policymaking appears in Kori Schake and William F. Wechsler, "Process Makes Perfect: Best Practices in the Art of National Security Policymaking," Center for American Progress, 5 January 2017. Available at: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/01/05/295673/process-makes-perfect/>

Other useful academic works include: Patrick J. Haney, *Organizing for Foreign Policy Crises* (University Of Michigan Press, 2002); Alexander George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy-making* (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1980); William W. Newmann, *Managing National Security Policy*, (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2003), 19-37; Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr., *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³ Lamothe, Dan, "James Mattis is sworn in as defense secretary, pledges to build alliances", *The Washington Post*, 20 January, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2017/01/20/senate-confirms-retired-gen-james-mattis-as-defense-secretary-breaking-with-decades-of-precedent/?utm_term=.24729112cbc1.

⁴ Gardiner, Harris, "Jim Mattis, in Lithuania, Reaffirms U.S. Commitment to NATO", *The New York Times*, 10 May, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/10/world/europe/jim-mattis-nato-us-lithuania.html>.

⁵ A news transcript from the Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Mattis, General Dunford and Special Envoy McGurk on the Campaign to Defeat ISIS in the Pentagon Press Briefing Room, 19 May, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1188225/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-secretary-mattis-general-dunford-and-sp/>.

⁶ Mattis, in fact, has long been a critic of Iran's role in the region. As he recently framed his views: "Everywhere you look, if there is trouble in the region, you find Iran Babb, Carla, "US, Saudi Arabia Affirm Cooperation in Countering 'Iran's Mischief'", *VOA News*, 19 April, 2017, <http://www.voanews.com/a/us-saudi-arabia-affirm-cooperation-in-countering-iran-mischief/3816816.html>.

⁷ Missy Ryan, Philip Rucker and Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Among Trump Aides, Mattis Emerges as a Key Voice on National Security Issues," *Washington Post*, 28 April 2017.

⁸ Borger, Julian, "Rex Tillerson: 'I didn't want this job...my wife told me I'm supposed to do this'", *The guardian*, 22 March, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/mar/22/rex-tillerson-i-didnt-want-this-job>.

⁹ Ioffe, Julia, "The State of Trump's State Department", *The Atlantic*, 1 March, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/03/state-department-trump/517965/>.

¹⁰ Turner, Karen, "Why Rex Tillerson's Choice not to bring a press corps to Asia is unusual- and troubling", *VOX*, 16 March, 2017, <https://www.vox.com/conversations/2017/3/16/14944494/rex-tillerson-trump-asia-japan-state-department>. As he describes his views, "I'm not a big media press access person. I personally don't need it." <http://ijr.com/2017/03/827413-transcript-independent-journal-reviews-sit-interview-secretary-state-rex-tillerson/>

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