

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UDC 351(73)"1991/2025"  
DOI: 10.5937/spm96-64784  
Review article

Српска политичка мисао  
(Serbian Political Thought)  
No 2/2026.  
Vol. 96  
pp. 93-118

***Božidar Forca\****

*Faculty of Business Studies and Law,  
UNION-Nikola Tesla University, Belgrade*

***Srdan Milašinović\*\****

*Criminalistics and Police University, Belgrade*

***Sladjan Milosavljević\*\*\****

*Faculty of Engineering Management,  
University UNION - Nikola Tesla*

## **THE DISCOURSE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AFTER THE COLD WAR\*\*\*\***

### **Abstract**

The paper analyses the United States' approach to national security after the Cold War. The research is primarily conducted through an analysis of U.S. national security strategy documents from 1991 to 2025. The authors discuss the U.S. national security strategy document

\* E-mail: bozidar.forca@fbsp.edu.rs; ORCID: 0003-4894-3772

\*\* E-mail: srdjan.milasinovic@kpu.edu.rs; ORCID: 0000-0002-8251-339X

\*\*\* E-mail: sladjanmil@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-9125-430X.

\*\*\*\* The article was written as part of the implementation of the scientific project "Two Decades of Independence and Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2006-2026", at the Faculty of Business Studies and Law.

in the first part of the paper, as it originated in the United States. The second part of the paper analyses American strategies after the Cold War, from President George H. W. Bush in 1991 to President Joseph Biden in 2022. A special section is devoted to the analysis of the most recent U.S. National Security Strategy, published by the Trump administration in 2025. By applying the comparative method, content analysis, and the case study method, the authors reach the following conclusion: Politics is dominant, because interests rule the world, but strategy answers the question – how? All U.S. national security strategies after the Cold War are directed toward global leadership and/or U.S. hegemony; what differs is the discourse of presidential administrations within them and their conduct in practice.

**Keywords:** Cold War, National Security Strategy, USA

## INTRODUCTION

There are different views on the duration of the Cold War, but Charles Kegley's position, which spans 1945 to 1991 (Kegli i Vitkof 2006), is most commonly cited. The dominant processes, especially in Europe, at the end of the Cold War had both disintegration and integration characteristics. The most significant disintegration processes were the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the military bloc of the socialist countries of Europe, and the collapse of the USSR, the world's largest state. Significant integration processes at the end of the Cold War included the reunification of Germany, the formation of the European Union, and the survival of NATO as the world's most substantial military bloc, led by the United States.

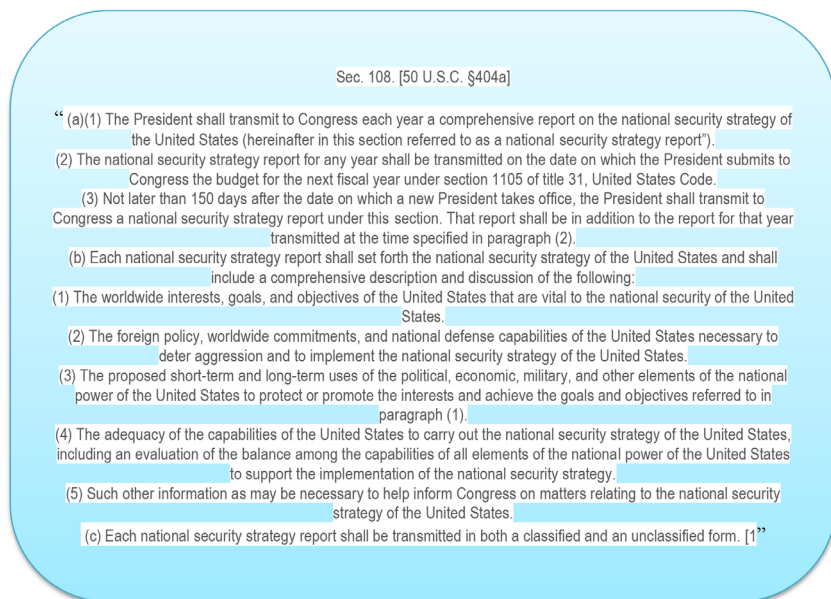
The United States viewed its position as the "winner" of the Cold War as an opportunity to establish a unipolar world order with its own dominance (leadership/hegemony). To that end, among other things, the United States succeeded in preserving NATO, primarily as a lever of its own military power.

The U.S. approach to national security is primarily expressed in the document known as the National Security Strategy, which first appeared in the United States. The analysis of national security strategies provides the most precise American position on issues of its own (national) security and global security.

## ON THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

In theory, there are different views on the emergence of the document titled “National Security Strategy” (Milojević, Milašinović, i Milojković 2025). Thus, Keković and Dimitrijević (Keković i Dimitrijević 2017) argue that this document appeared in the United States during the presidency of Ronald Reagan in 1987. However, the term “national security strategy” appeared in the United States as early as 1947 in the National Security Act (United States Congress 1947). Specifically, Article 108 of the said Act (Figure 1) established the obligation of the President of the United States, no later than 150 days after taking office, to submit to Congress an Annual National Security Strategy Report.

Figure 1: National Security Act of 1947



Source: United States Congress 1947

From Figure 1, it can be observed that Article 108 of the National Security Act also established the general structure of the strategy, as well as the obligation to submit it to Congress both with a classification marking (classified) and without such a marking (unclassified). This remains the case today: the U.S. national security strategies that we find

on the Internet are, in fact, of an unclassified character, that is, available to the broadest global public.

President Harry Truman submitted the first Annual National Security Strategy Report in 1950 (Forca 2021a). However, subsequent U.S. presidents discontinued the obligation under Article 108 of the National Security Act (United States Congress 1947). In this regard, the obligation of the President of the United States was renewed by the 1986 Act (United States Congress 1986), and President Ronald Reagan was the first to publish the National Security Strategy in 1987 (The White House 1987).

### **Truman's Strategy**

The subject of this research is U.S. national security strategies after the Cold War. In the literature, we encounter opposing views on the Truman Doctrine, also known as the Containment Strategy. The term "containment" primarily referred to restraining the USSR's influence and preventing the spread of communism (Gaddis 2005).

According to Thomas Maier, who refers to secret information from the FBI, Churchill visited Washington in 1947 and proposed to then Secretary of State Bridges (Styles Bridges) that he request President Harry Truman to carry out a nuclear strike on the Kremlin, because the USSR would soon do the same to the West once it produced an atomic bomb (Maier 2015). Maier claims that when Churchill returned to the office of Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1951, he no longer mentioned a nuclear attack on the USSR, because the Soviets had tested their atomic bomb in 1949 (Maier 2015). On the other hand, Barišić asserts that the intellectual author of this strategy was George F. Kennan, an American diplomat, political scientist, and historian, but the plan was never officially adopted as an official U.S. document (Barišić 2001). Also, in theory, there are views and claims that Kennan's original strategy differed from the practical implementation initiated by the administration of President Harry Truman (Forca 2025).

The uncertainties surrounding Truman's strategy disappeared in 1975, when the document NSC-68 (National Security Council 1950) was declassified. The document was prepared by the Department of Defence, the State Department, and the CIA and presented to President Truman by the National Security Council on April 14, 1950. It was a draft of the American strategy for the Cold War, which Truman

received with reservations, but the outbreak of the Korean War (1950) accelerated his acceptance of the document. Containment of the USSR and the spread of communism were formulated as U.S. national interests. The main objectives of this strategy were: containment of the USSR; strengthening conventional and nuclear forces; providing financial assistance to Western European countries; and a significant increase in defence expenditures. For example, the military budget increased from 13 to 50 billion dollars annually (National Security Council 1950). With this strategy, the arms race after the Second World War effectively began, and the United States became the world leader in the fight against communism.

## **U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES AFTER THE COLD WAR**

Since 1987, when President Ronald Reagan submitted the Annual National Security Strategy Report to Congress, U.S. presidents have generally complied with the Act's requirement to submit the report. This practice continued until President George W. Bush, when the principle was adopted that each administration should publish one document during its mandate. Thus, from Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump (1987–2025), 19 papers entitled National Security Strategy were adopted in the United States (United States Congress 1986).

The U.S. National Security Strategy in 1991 was adopted by the administration of President George Bush (senior) in August. Already in the first paragraph of his Introduction to the Strategy, President Bush conveyed to the American nation what Truman had envisioned before him and what all subsequent U.S. presidents would declare in their own way: America as a world leader. Thus, President Bush stated to the nation: "The new world order is not a fact; it is an aspiration – and an opportunity. We have within our reach an extraordinary possibility that several generations have dreamed of – to build a new international system in accordance with our own values. At the same time, old partners and certainties collapse around us" (The White House 1991).

It seems that President Bush was aware of what numerous geopolitical analysts had warned: "the world cannot be ruled from a single centre" (Mearsheimer 2001). Therefore, the United States preserved NATO as a lever of its own military power, which, together with economic strength, provides adequate political power. Namely,

the United States made use of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter (Regional Arrangements), according to which the Security Council may, for the purposes of establishing and maintaining peace and security, engage regional organisations in peace operations, since it has no army of its own (United Nations 1945, art. 52 and 53). Although many states resisted granting NATO the status of a regional arrangement by the UN Security Council, this nevertheless occurred. Specifically, in 1992, by Resolution No. 787, the UN Security Council granted the Alliance the status of a regional arrangement (UNSC, S/RES/787(1992)). Thus, from a defensive alliance, NATO became both a security forum and a “world policeman” (Forca *et al.* 2023). The first operations in accordance with the Resolution and the mandate of the UN Security Council were carried out by NATO in 1992, including the blockade of the former SFRY (Forca *et al.* 2023).

In 1993, the administration of President George Bush (senior), in accordance with the newly emerging U.S. and NATO positions, adopted a new National Security Strategy. “The essence of that strategy is best reflected in the national interests defined therein: 1) protection of the United States and its citizens from attack; 2) respect for, strengthening, and expansion of our historical, treaty, and collective defense arrangements; 3) ensuring that no hostile power can dominate or control a region critical to our interests; 4) working to avoid conflict by reducing sources of regional instability and violence, limiting the proliferation of advanced military technology and weapons of mass destruction, and strengthening civil-military institutions while simultaneously reducing the economic burden of military spending” (The White House 1993).

With George Bush (senior), the “three U.S. victories in the 20th century” came to an end: 1) Woodrow Wilson – the First World War, 2) Harry Truman – the Second World War, and 3) George Bush Sr. – the Cold War, as named by Smilja Avramov (Avramov 1997). After George Bush, Bill Clinton came to the helm of the United States, whose administration was very diligent and published seven National Security Strategies during its two terms (Forca 2022a). Clinton’s two terms as President of the United States, about the National Security Strategy, are characterized by at least three aspects: 1) Formal – change of the title of the strategies; 2) Substantive – the U.S. effort to create a unipolar world order using NATO for its own interests; and 3) Preventing the European Union from establishing a common defense.

Formal aspect. All U.S. National Security Strategies, before and after Clinton, bear the identical title: “National Security Strategy of the USA”. During Bill Clinton’s presidency, the strategies were titled as follows: 1) A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (The White House 1994, 1995, 1996); 2) A National Security Strategy for a New Century (The White House 1997, 1998, 1999; and 3) A National Security Strategy for a New Age (The White House 2000).

*Substance* – A unipolar world order through the use of NATO. The U.S. National Security Strategies during Bill Clinton’s presidency were adopted in the period following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR, when Russia was primarily preoccupied with internal issues of combating terrorism and disentangling itself from the former republics of the USSR. In this context, the United States was particularly engaged in strengthening its own position, using NATO as a lever of its military power. The buffer zone (Figure 2) between NATO and Russia, established after the Cold War, that is, following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the USSR, began to shrink in favour of the United States and NATO.

Figure 2. Buffer zone at the end of the Cold War



Source: Forca 2003, 243

There are very different accounts of NATO’s eastward enlargement that have emerged over time. Thus, as emphasised by the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, Western leaders assured the then President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, that with the reunification of Germany (1990) and its admission into NATO, the Alliance would move “not one

inch eastward” (Putin 2007). However, to strengthen its own capacity to create a unipolar order and to demonstrate to the world who is who, the United States upheld its “promise” to Gorbachev only until 1999. On the 50th anniversary of the Alliance’s founding (1999), the United States took drastic measures that would shape the world’s future. That year, the Alliance held a summit in Washington and adopted the 6th Strategic Concept, with two dangerous objectives that were already in the implementation phase: 1) NATO’s eastward expansion; and 2) engagement of the Alliance beyond Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, with or without a mandate from the UN Security Council (NATO 1999). Thus, at the beginning of 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were admitted into NATO. On the other hand, on March 24, 1999, without a mandate from the UN Security Council and contrary to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO carried out aggression against the FR Yugoslavia.

Preventing the EU from establishing a common defence. The European Union was formed under that name in 1992 in Maastricht (Netherlands). However, the integration of European states that would give rise to the EU began as early as 1951, with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community. From the very first integration of European states, aspirations have persisted for Europe to establish a common defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. However, all such intentions of European states failed due to the influence of the United States and NATO. In practice, there were two currents in Europe regarding defence. The first, advocated by Germany and France, was a common defence. The second current was led by Great Britain, which maintained that NATO was a sufficient guarantor of defence (Forca *et al.* 2023). After the Cold War, when the EU was formed, NATO also survived, and thus tensions over the Union’s common defence continued, which has never been established. In this regard, one should recall the reasons for NATO’s formation, as described by the Alliance’s first Secretary General, Lord Ismay: 1) to keep Germany under control, 2) to bring America into Europe, and 3) to keep Russia out of Europe (Keković i Dimitrijević 2017, 403).

A special characteristic of the U.S. National Security Strategies during President Bill Clinton’s tenure is the gradation of national interests into vital, meaningful, and humanitarian. We will cite only the position regarding crucial interests from the 2000 strategy: “We divide our national interests into three categories: vital, important, and

humanitarian. Vital interests are those directly related to the survival, security, and vitality of our nation. Among them are the physical security of our territory and that of our allies, the security of our citizens both at home and abroad, protection against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the economic well-being of our society, and the protection of our critical infrastructures – including energy, banking and finance, telecommunications, transportation, water systems, vital human services, and government services – from disruptions aimed at crippling their functioning. We will do whatever is necessary to defend these interests. This may include the use of military force, including unilateral action, where deemed necessary or appropriate” (The White House 2000, 9).

After Bill Clinton, two-term presidencies were held by George Bush Jr., 2000–2008, and Barack Obama, 2008–2016, who are referred to in the literature as “war presidents” (Gaddis 2006). This is because the 16-year period began with the collapse of the myth of U.S. omnipotence, marked by the terrorist attacks of Al-Qaeda against facilities in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, and continued with America’s and NATO’s increasing rush into wars around the world. After the aggression against the FRY in 1999, the following came next: Afghanistan from 2001 to 2021; the renewed attack on Iraq from 2003 to 2014; the attack on Libya in 2011; the war in Syria, particularly 2011–2014; as well as other interventions. It was an evident attempt by the United States to establish, “at any cost” (by persuasion or by force), a unipolar world order with its own hegemony, but also an indication that a multipolar order was emerging. On this, Joseph Nye writes: “Choosing between nationalism and globalisation is a false choice. The important political decisions of American presidents will come down to where and how the United States should engage. American leadership is not the same as hegemony, domination, or military interventionism. Even during the decades of American preponderance after 1945, there was always a degree of global leadership and influence, and U.S. foreign policy functioned most effectively when presidents understood the importance of multilayered partnership networks with other states. Hegemony (in the sense of control) and global unipolarity underlying American foreign policy after the end of the Cold War have always been illusions” (Naj 2020).

The attack by the United States and its NATO allies on Afghanistan in October 2001 was a swift and fierce response to the aforementioned

terrorist acts of Al-Qaeda. Regarding those attacks, President George Bush Jr., a few days after they occurred, stated: “Only three days after these events, Americans still lack the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil. War was waged against us by stealth, deception, and murder. This nation is peaceful, but fierce when stirred to anger. The conflict began over the timing and terms set by others. It will end in a way and at an hour of our choosing” (The White House 2002, 5).

As noted above, President Bush’s address to the nation was recorded in the 2002 National Security Strategy. However, Bush’s promise that the war would end “in a way and at an hour of our choosing” lasted 20 years, through the terms of four U.S. presidents, and did not unfold as he had promised. This only leads to the conclusion that the United States did not, in fact, have the goal of destroying Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, but instead sought to “anchor” itself in that part of Asia among three key adversaries: China to the east, Iran to the west, and Russia to the north. Confirmation of this is that during President Barack Obama’s tenure, the number of American troops in Afghanistan reached 130,000 (Forca 2022b).

The renewed attack on Iraq in 2003 is a blatant example of the use of force by the United States and NATO, without a mandate from the UN Security Council. The attack was carried out based on alleged information that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction. Of course, this later (“belated truths”) proved to be a false pretext of British Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. President George W. Bush Jr. On this, Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu stated: “Instead of African leaders lying in prisons, the number of victims in Iraq is quite sufficient for Tony Blair and George Bush to find themselves before the court in The Hague” (Forca 2023b).

In addition to numerous military interventions, with and without (the attack on Iraq, 2003) a UN Security Council mandate, the United States and NATO began to intensify tensions with Russia, primarily through the Alliance’s eastward expansion. The most significant enlargement of NATO occurred in 2004, when the following joined: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Practically, in 2004, by admitting the Baltic states, NATO reached the border with Russia. However, NATO did not stop there; in 2008, it invited Georgia and Ukraine to join the Alliance. This was a turning point in Russia’s attitude toward the Alliance’s expansion. That same

year, 2008, using the already strained interethnic relations in Georgia, Russia militarily attacked the country and recognised its two regions (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) as independent states. The “Kosovo<sup>1</sup> syndrome” began to spread. Regarding Russia’s moves in Georgia, the then Prime Minister of Russia, Vladimir Putin, stated: “From a moral and ethical standpoint, the comparison of the Kosovo precedent with Abkhazia and South Ossetia is fully justified. There is essentially no difference. However, for Russia, it is sufficient that the independence of Abkhazia be recognised by at least one subject of international law” (RTS 2009).

Some analysts, in connection with Russia’s attack on Georgia, expressed the view that the Cold War ended not in 1991 but in 2008 (Forca 2022b). For the geopolitician Alexander Dugin, however, it was a “new Cold War,” that is, a “new bipolarism” (Dugin 2020).

An even more substantial escalation of tensions between the United States and Western countries, including NATO, arose due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which became particularly manifest in 2014. After the violent removal of President Yanukovich and the protests in Kyiv, referred to as the “colour revolution – Maidan” (square), Russia in 2014 secured a referendum in Crimea, where an overwhelming majority of the population voted for the reunification of Crimea with Russia (Wilson 2014). Russia declared Crimea its territory through official documents. This led to even stronger tensions between the West and Russia, under pressure from the United States. However, Putin once again “drew a parallel with Kosovo” and at a press conference in Vienna (2018) emphasised: “Crimea did not declare independence as a result of an attack by the Russian army, but based on the will of the citizens of Crimea expressed in a referendum. If you speak of annexation despite the referendum and the expressed will of the people, then the self-determination of Kosovo should also be called annexation. Why do you not call the self-determination of Kosovo annexation after the NATO attack? You speak of Kosovo’s right to self-determination, and they did so merely by a parliamentary decision. In contrast, the people of Crimea did so in a referendum in which 90% of those living in Crimea participated and voted for reunification with Russia” (Intermagazin 2018).

---

<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo in this document should be understood to be in the context of United Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

After the reunification of Crimea with Russia, clashes continued in Ukraine between the pro-Russian population of the country's southeast (Donbas) and the authorities in Kyiv. Open armed conflicts ensued, with casualties on both sides and the mass displacement of the Donbas population to Russia. Russia supported the population of Donbas, and when the situation threatened to spiral out of control, the European Union became involved in the conflict, primarily German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Angela Dorothea Merkel) and French President François Hollande (François Gérard Georges Nicolas Hollande) (Wilson 2014). Thus, ceasefire agreements known as "Minsk 1" and "Minsk 2" were concluded. Given that we otherwise live in a time of belated truths (Forca 2023b), Angela Merkel would only state, after Russia attacked Ukraine in 2022, regarding these agreements: "It was a way of buying time for Ukraine to prepare for war with Russia" (Malić 2022). This statement by Angela Merkel was also confirmed by former French President François Hollande (Orland 2022).

Strong U.S.-NATO interventionism worldwide, as well as conflicts with Russia up to 2016, undermined the European Union's intention to become a "global player," as Javier Solana, High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, had claimed (Solana 2006). Thus, the Western European Union, which had begun to form before NATO (1948), completely "merged" into the EU (2011); initiatives to form European armed forces failed; and the EU's engagement in peace operations was reduced to sporadic operations of so-called soft power. The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, as part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy established in the Lisbon Treaty, became a "dead letter on paper" (Forca 2023a). A particular blow to the European Union was delivered by the United Kingdom, which, in a 2016 referendum, voted to leave the Union, in accordance with Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. The departure of the United Kingdom from the EU was especially welcomed by the incoming U.S. President, Donald Trump, who, the day before the referendum, stated: "I support a vote for the United Kingdom to leave the EU" (IN4S 2026). On the other hand, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg warned EU leaders that "by the United Kingdom leaving the Union, 85 per cent of NATO's forces remain outside the EU. Who will defend you from Russia?" (Forca 2022b). Finally, the migration crisis in the EU, particularly since 2014, undermined its foundations and called into question the Union's survival (Mogerini 2016).

A particular manifestation of the emergence of a multipolar world order is the rapid economic rise of China and the development of its “Belt and Road” initiative, especially after 2013. America found itself in severe difficulties due to military engagements around the world, conflicts with Russia, disagreements with the European Union, and the arrival of a new global rival – China.

Under these circumstances, in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, businessman Donald Trump won. Even well-versed experts in international relations, particularly in security studies, were uncertain how to interpret the statements and announcements of the new American President during the election campaign and after assuming office, particularly his actions in practice.

In his first term (2016–2020), President Trump announced his first National Security Strategy in November 2017. The motto of Trump’s Foreword and of the entire document was – *America First* (The White House 2017). Trump’s strategy, as he himself emphasises in the document, is a strategy of realism. In this sense, Trump underscores: “It is a strategy of dominance that explicitly emphasises realism (the priority of power) in international relations and a ‘world shaped by the United States’” (The White House 2017). Quite directly, unlike his predecessors, Trump identifies two key adversaries (threats): Russia and China. Other security threats Trump merely lists, such as: “1) dictatorial regimes in North Korea and Iran seeking to destabilize the region and threaten U.S. interests and its allies; 2) jihadist terrorists and transnational criminal organizations, particularly ISIS and Al-Qaeda, seeking to harm the United States; 3) although the U.S. military is the strongest in the world, some ‘players’ seek to undermine that power through the development of nuclear weapons (North Korea), as well as actions ‘below the threshold’ of permitted means; 4) the ability to exploit the information space is a particular aspect of the competitive world, especially exploited in the fields of the economy and armed forces” (The White House 2017).

Otherwise, Trump’s 2017 strategy has five main parts, in addition to the Foreword, Introduction, and Conclusion. The first four main parts describe four vital U.S. national interests: “1) Protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life; 2) Promote American prosperity; 3) Preserve peace through strength; and 4) Advance American influence in the world. The fifth section of the strategy concerns its regional application. Namely, the document

describes the situation and the influence of Russia and China, then highlights the political, economic, and military activities the United States will undertake” (Forca 2021a).

Formally, Trump withdrew the United States from wars around the world (he also initiated negotiations with the Taliban in Afghanistan, author’s note). Still, he also undertakes very significant steps in line with his slogan – America First:

- “Trump introduces high tariffs on imports of goods from the EU;
- The United States withdraws from the Iran nuclear deal;
- The United States withdraws from the U.S.–Russia INF Treaty (1987), concluded by Reagan and Gorbachev on limiting intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear missiles;
- The United States leaves the UN Human Rights Council;
- Relations toward immigrants, particularly from certain African countries and Mexico, are tightened, and construction of a “wall” toward that neighbouring state begins;
- The United States tightens sanctions against Russia;
- The United States begins a genuine trade war with China;
- The United States demands that all NATO member states increase their defence spending to 2% of GDP, with Trump threatening that otherwise America would leave the Alliance; and
- The United States withdraws from the World Health Organisation” (Forca 2021a).

Despite specific practical successes, Trump lost the 2020 U.S. presidential election to Joseph Biden (Jevtović, Marić, i Milašinović 2025). President Biden’s administration, at the very outset, faces three significant security challenges: 1) the situation in Afghanistan, 2) the expansion of Russian influence, and 3) China’s economic penetration of the world. These problems were attempted to be resolved in the order listed.

Biden continued negotiations with the Taliban regarding the withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops from Afghanistan, which the administration of Donald Trump had initiated. In this regard, it is a fact that American forces, above all, and especially their allies, withdrew disgracefully from Afghanistan after 20 years of conflict in that country. This fact shook relations within the nations of the collective West in 2021. Under such conditions, Biden repeated the slogan from his victorious 2020 election speech – “America is back” (Forca 2023b). Numerous analysts asked – Where has America returned? The answer came very

quickly. Biden's move dispelled Russian assumptions about discord within the West and, quite the contrary, led to its homogenization in support of Ukraine. Since then, the term "collective West" has been used to refer to the United States and its allies. On this, Mearsheimer writes: "When we say the West, we mean the United States, because directives on how Europe will march come from Washington" (Mearsheimer 2023).

Because of the manner of the withdrawal from Afghanistan and problems with allies, the Biden administration delayed adopting a new National Security Strategy in accordance with the law. Therefore, on "March 3, 2021, the White House issued the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance" (Forca 2021b). From that document, we single out the description of the global security environment and the three defined vital national interests of the United States.

The global security environment is described as follows: "1) Many security threats transcend state borders and the only response to them is collective action; 2) Democracies, both in the United States and worldwide, are in crisis; 3) A shift in the distribution of power in the world is underway and a renewal of global competition with China and Russia, as well as with regional threats such as Iran and North Korea; 4) The international order whose creation the United States helped shape – with all its principal institutions, alliances, and agreements – is being tested and placed under great strain; and 5) At the foundation of all these trends lies a technological revolution that has both positive and negative aspects" (Forca 2021b).

Three vital national interests of the United States were identified: "1) protection of the security of the American people; 2) expansion of economic prosperity and opportunity; and 3) realisation and defence of democratic values that lie at the very heart of the American way of life" (Forca 2021b).

At the end of 2021, Russia submitted a new proposal for a security architecture in Europe to the leaders of the United States and NATO. The United States and NATO did not respond to the Russian proposal (Sekulović i Forca 2024). In this context, after extensive preparations and the recognition of the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic as independent states, for the purpose of invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter, Russia launched a military attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Russia termed the attack a "special

military operation,” while the UN General Assembly qualified it as aggression (Forca 2025).

The collective West, under strong U.S. influence, sided with Ukraine, leading to an indirect conflict between the West and Russia through Ukraine (a proxy war). Under such conditions, the collective West adopted three strategic documents in 2022, in the following order: 1) the EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (Council of the European Union 2022); 2) the NATO Strategic Concept (NATO 2022), June 2022; and 3) the U.S. National Security Strategy (The White House 2022), October 2022. Although adopted in different places and at other times, the three acts are almost identical in identifying the key adversaries – Russia – and, somewhat more moderately, China. Undoubtedly, the documents were dictated by Washington. President Biden stated the guiding principle of these strategic documents in the Foreword to the U.S. Strategy: “Constrain Russia and outcompete China” (The White House 2022). In accordance with this, we present only the key positions on China and Russia from the American strategy:

- “The People’s Republic of China is the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do so. Beijing aspires to establish a key sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and to become the world’s leading power.

- Our strategy toward the PRC is threefold: (1) invest in the foundations of our strength at home – our competitiveness, innovation, resilience, and democracy; (2) align our efforts with our networks of allies and partners acting toward common goals; and (3) compete responsibly with the PRC to defend our interests and build our vision for the future;

- We will hold Beijing accountable for abuses – genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, human rights violations in Tibet, and the dismantling of Hong Kong’s autonomy and freedoms” (The White House 2022).

Over the past decade, the Russian government has pursued an imperialist foreign policy aimed at overturning key elements of the international order. This culminated in the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. However, “this attack did not come out of nowhere; Russia’s 2014 invasion of Ukraine preceded it, its military intervention in Syria, its long-standing efforts to destabilise its neighbours using intelligence and cyber capabilities, and its apparent attempts to undermine internal

democratic processes in countries across Europe, Central Asia, and the wider world. Russia also brazenly interfered in American politics and worked to sow divisions among the American people. Nor have Russia's destabilising actions been limited solely to the international arena" (Mearsheimer 2023).

About containing Russia, first, "the United States will continue to support Ukraine in its fight for freedom; it will assist Ukraine's economic recovery and encourage its regional integration with the European Union. Second, the United States will defend every inch of NATO territory and continue to build and deepen coalitions with allies and partners to prevent Russia from further harming European security, democracy, and institutions. Third, the United States will deter and, if necessary, respond to Russian actions that threaten core U.S. interests, including attacks on American infrastructure and democracy. Fourth, Russia's conventional military will be weakened, likely increasing Moscow's reliance on nuclear weapons in its military planning. The United States will not allow Russia, or any other power, to achieve its objectives through the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" (The White House 2022).

The administration of Joe Biden embraced the message of Joseph Nye that leadership – not hegemony – is essential, and in its strategy announced strong clusters of its own power through association in various alliances, such as: 1) NATO (including the EU); 2) the Group of Seven – G7 (the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, and Japan); 3) the Five Eyes (the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand); 4) the Quad (the United States, Japan, India, and Australia); 5) AUKUS (Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States); 6) I2U2 (India and Israel + the United States and the United Arab Emirates); and 7) C5+1 (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan + the United States) (The White House 2022).

Evidently, the United States is concentrating on what it sees as its greatest real opponent – China – in the Indo-Pacific region. In this sense, the war between Russia and Ukraine will most likely be "left" to the European Union.

## THE LATEST STRATEGY OF DONALD TRUMP

In the 2024 U.S. presidential elections, Donald Trump once again won. As in the 2016 campaign and after he first assumed office, Trump has remained faithful to his direct style, making statements that – even to experts in international relations – often seem almost impossible.

Upon taking office, Trump began implementing his intentions immediately. In November 2025, the Trump administration announced the latest U.S. National Security Strategy (The White House 2025). Structurally, the new strategy resembles that of 2017, but with a different priority order. In the 2017 strategy, the key section focused on national interests, while a separate section addressed regional application. In the 2025 strategy, the central part of the document concerns relations toward specific regions (the Western Hemisphere, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa), to which five vital U.S. national interests are adapted and defined in a described and somewhat unusual manner:

- “We seek to ensure that the Western Hemisphere remains reasonably stable and sufficiently well governed to prevent and discourage mass migration into the United States; we seek a hemisphere whose governments cooperate with us against narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal organizations; we seek a hemisphere that remains free from hostile foreign intrusion or ownership of key assets and that supports critical supply chains; and we seek to secure our continued access to key strategic locations. In other words, we will affirm and implement the ‘Trump Corollary’ to the Monroe Doctrine;

- We seek to halt and reverse the ongoing damage that foreign actors inflict upon the American economy, while maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, preserving freedom of navigation along all key maritime routes, and sustaining secure and reliable supply chains and access to critical materials;

- We seek to support our allies in preserving the freedom and security of Europe, while at the same time restoring European civilizational self-confidence and Western identity;

- We seek to prevent an adversarial power from dominating the Middle East, its oil and gas reserves, and the chokepoints through which they pass, while avoiding the ‘forever wars’ that have trapped us in that region at high cost; and

- We seek to ensure that American technology and American standards – particularly in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and

quantum computing – drive the world forward” (The White House 2025).

The openness and directness of Trump’s strategy are also reflected in an admission that the vital interest of American presidents after the Cold War was to rule the world (hegemony). However, they neither knew nor understood that leadership, not hegemony, was essential. Trump states explicitly: “After the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy elites convinced themselves that permanent American dominance over the entire world was in the best interest of our country. Our elites seriously misjudged America’s willingness to carry global burdens indefinitely, which the American people saw as unrelated to the national interest” (The White House 2025, 1).

A personal trait of President Trump is boastfulness. In this regard, in the Foreword to the Strategy, he declares that he stopped eight regional wars: Cambodia–Thailand; Kosovo–Serbia; DR Congo–Rwanda; Pakistan–India; Israel–Iran; Egypt–Ethiopia; and Azerbaijan–Armenia, and that the war in Gaza was halted (The White House 2025).

The moves Trump made immediately before and after the publication of the Strategy indicate that he adheres to what he has said and what is written in the document. Particularly concerning steps he has taken or announced – causing anxiety among both allies and adversaries – include:

The introduction of high tariff rates for all countries in the world, with frequent adjustments in line with practical developments;

- Assuming dominance over the Panama Canal;
- Significant restriction of immigration from Mexico into the United States;
- Securing the release of American detainees in Venezuela;
- Support for Israel in its conflict with Hamas and Iran, and a military strike against Iran;
- Claims regarding Canada and, in particular, Greenland;
- A meeting with President Putin in Alaska and influence over the course of the conflict in Ukraine;
- Talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping concerning the economy and trade with China;
- Persuading European NATO member states to accept his demand to allocate 5% of GDP to defence over the next decade, even though not all states have yet reached the 2% of GDP target that Trump also demanded during his first term;

- An attack on Venezuela and the abduction of President Maduro.

It is challenging and ungrateful to assess the reach of Trump's strategy, especially given his practical conduct, which seems to cause more concern among allies than among adversaries. One gains the impression that everyone is waiting for "Trump's time," that is, his mandate, to expire.

## CONCLUSION

The American departure from isolationism, if not beginning with Woodrow Wilson, indeed begins with Harry S. Truman after the Second World War. For four decades, the United States competed with the USSR in the so-called Cold War, which it emerged victorious from.

The United States is the country in which, in 1947, the document known as the National Security Strategy first appeared. Owing to its overall influence on international relations, most states worldwide, following the U.S. example, adopted their own national security strategies. The National Security Strategy primarily answers the question: how should the United States ensure its national security? However, the U.S. National Security Strategy, above all, provides a vision of world order in which America is the leader and/or hegemon. All U.S. strategies after the Cold War have had this character.

Pragmatism and directness were introduced into American National Security Strategies by President Donald Trump, with his first (2017) and especially his second (2025) strategy. Both of Trump's strategies fall within the domain of realist theory, that is, the dominance of power. The difference is that, unlike the first (2017), in which Trump saw America as a hegemon, in the most recent strategy (2025), he shifts and conceives of the United States as a leader to be followed.

While a divided and confused European Union has no response to Trump's strategy, and while China and Russia seek to usher the world into multipolarity, the wolf may change its coat, but not its nature.

## REFERENCES

- Avramov, Smilja. 1997. *Postherojski rat zapada protiv Jugoslavije*. Vetrnik: IDI.
- Barišić, Ante. 2001. „Vanjska politika SAD u vrijeme Trumanove administracije.” *Politička misao* 38 (2): 157–175.
- Council of the European Union. 2022. *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Brussels: Council of the European Union.
- Dugin, Aleksandar. 2020. „Rusija se oporavila, ovo je svetski rat.” *Webtribune*. Last accessed on January 25, 2026. <https://webtribune.rs/dugin-rusija-se-oporavila-u-toku-je-svetski-rat-ovo-se-desava/>
- Forca, Božidar. 2003. „Vojni faktor međunarodnih odnosa i njegov uticaj na razvoj Vojske Jugoslavije.” Doktorska disertacija. Vojna akademija.
- Forca, Božidar. 2021a. *Sistemi bezbednosti, udžbenik*. Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.
- Forca, Božidar. 2021b. „Uvod u strategiju demokratije – „opasne igre”.” *Obrana i bezbednost*. Last accessed on January 25, 2026. <https://odbranaibezbednost.rs/2021/12/17/uvod-u-strategiju-demokratije-opasne-igre/>
- Forca, Božidar. 2022a. *Teorijski i uporedni aspekt analize strategije nacionalne bezbednosti Republike Srbije*. Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.
- Forca, Božidar. 2022b. „Smisao i ciljevi širenja NATO na istok.” *Bezbednosni forum VII* (2): 7–34.
- Forca, Božidar. 2023a. *Nacionalna bezbednost i odbrana*. Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.
- Forca, Božidar. 2023b. „Presedan i izuzetak u međunarodnim odnosima.” U *Zbornik sa međunarodnog naučnog skupa „Agresija NATO na SRJ (Republiku Srbiju) – Da se večno pamti.”* Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.
- Forca, Božidar. 2025. „Osam decenija strategije zadržavanja.” U *Tematski zbornik radova sa međunarodnog naučnog supa „Evropa na raskrsnici – da rata ne bude”*, 35–51. Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.
- Forca, Božidar, Slaviša Krstić, i Vladan Stanković [Forca et al.]. 2023. *Spoljna i bezbednosna politika Evropske unije i Republika Srbija*. Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.

- Gaddis, John Lewis. 2005. *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gaddis, John Lewis. 2006. *The Cold War and after: History, theory, and the new international order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Intermagazin. 2018. „Putin objasnio: Krim nije naš zato što smo došli i nešto oteli.” *Intermagazin*. October 19, 2018. <https://www.intermagazin.rs/putin-objasnio-krim-nije-nas-zato-sto-smo-dosli-i-nesto-oteli/>
- IN4S. 2026. „Tramp: Podržavam glas za izlazak Velike Britanije iz EU.” *IN4S*. January 24, 2026. <https://www.in4s.net/tramp-podrzavam-glas-za-izlazak-velike-britanije-iz-eu/>
- Jevtović, Ana, Katarina Marić, i Miraš Milašinović. 2025. „Propaganda i cenzura na društvenim mrežama u doba političke komunikacije i digitalne diplomatije.” *Diplomatija i bezbednost* 8 (1): 259–293. DOI 10.5937/DB2501259J
- Kegli, Čarls V., i Judžin R. Vitkof. 2006. *Svetska politika, trend i transformacija*. Beograd: IGP Prometej.
- Keković, Zoran, i Ivan Dimitrijević. 2017. *Sistemi bezbednosti sa sistemom bezbednosti Republike Srbije*. Beograd: Fakultet bezbednosti.
- Maier, Thomas. 2015. “When Lions Roar: The Churchills and the Kennedys.” Danvers: Crown.
- Malić, Nebojša. 2022. „Merkel, Minsk i kupovina vremena.” *Novi standard*. December 11, 2022. <https://standard.rs/2022/12/11/merkel-minsk-i-kupovina-vremena/>
- Mearsheimer, John. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Mearsheimer, John. 2023. “The Darkness Ahead: Where The Ukraine War Is Headed.” *Mearsheimer*. Jun 23, 2023. [https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/the-darkness-ahead-where-the-ukraine?r=6o004&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web](https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/the-darkness-ahead-where-the-ukraine?r=6o004&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web)
- Milojević, Saša, Srđan Milašinović, i Boban Milojković. 2025. „Policija i nauka: ka razvoju akademske discipline u službi javne bezbednosti.” *Diplomatija i bezbednost* 8 (1): 7–40. DOI: 10.5937/DB2501007M
- Mogerini, Federika. 2016. „Uvodna reč.” U *Zajednička vizija, udruženo delovanje: Jača Evropa, Globalna strategija za spoljnu i*

- bezbednosnu politiku Evropske unije*. Beograd: Ministarstvo spoljnih poslova, IES, ISAC.
- Naj, Dzožef. 2020. „Amerika se ne sme odreći globalnog liderstva.” *Novi Standard*. February 5, 2020. <https://standard.rs/2020/02/05/amerika-se-ne-sme-odreci-globalnog-liderstva/>
- National Security Council. 1950. *NSC-68*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, Policy Planning Staff.
- NATO. 1999. “The Alliance’s Concept (1999).” *NATO*. Last accessed on January 25, 2026. <https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/official-texts-and-resources/official-texts/1999/04/24/the-alliances-strategic-concept-1999>
- Orland, Fransoa. 2022. „Angela Merkel je rekla istinu, Minske je bio kupovina vremena.” Last accessed on January 25, 2026. *RT Balkans*. <https://lat.rt.rs/svet/13573-oland-minsk-kupovina-vremena/>
- Putin, Vladimir. 2007. „Govor na Konferenciji u Minhenu 2007.” *Youtube*. Last accessed on January 25, 2026. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQ58Yv6kP44>
- RTS. 2009. „Putin o Kosovu i Abhaziji.” *RTS*. August 26, 2009. <https://www.rts.rs/lat/vesti/politika/116711/putin-o-kosovu-i-abhaziji.html>
- Sekulović, Dragoljub, i Božidar Forca. 2024. *Osnovi geopolitike*. Beograd: Fakultet za poslovne studije i pravo.
- Solana, Javier. 2006. “Speech by Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy.” *The Sound of Europe Conference*. January 27, 2006. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/discours/88179.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/discours/88179.pdf)
- The White House. 1987. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1991. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1993. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1994. *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1995. *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1996. *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1997. *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*. Washington, D.C: White House.

- The White House. 1998. *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 1999. *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 2000. *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 2002. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 2017. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 2022. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- The White House. 2025. *National Security Strategy of the United States*. Washington, D.C: White House.
- United Nations. 1945. "Charter of the United Nations." *Pravni fakultet*. Last accessed on January 25, 2026. [https://ius.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/povelja\\_un.pdf](https://ius.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/povelja_un.pdf)
- United Nations Security Council [UNSC], S/RES/787(1992), Resolution 787 (1992) on 16 November 1992.
- United States Congress. 1947. "National Security Act of 1947." *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*. Last accessed on January 25, 2026. <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/ic-legal-reference-book/national-security-act-of-1947>
- United States Congress. 1986. *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Public Law 99-433*. Washington, D.C: United States Congress.
- Wilson, Andrew. 2014. *Ukraine crisis: What it means for the West*. Yale: Yale University Press.

**Божидар Форца\***

*Факултет за пословне и правне студије, Универзитет  
Унион-Никола Тесла, Београд*

**Срђан Милашиновић\*\***

*Криминалистичко-полицијска академија, Београд*

**Слађан Милосављевић\*\*\***

*Факултет за инжењерски менаџмент,  
Универзитет Унион-Никола Тесла, Београд*

## **ДИСКУРС НАЦИОНАЛНЕ СТРАТЕГИЈЕ БЕЗБЕДНОСТИ СЈЕДИЊЕНИХ АМЕРИЧКИХ ДРЖАВА НАКОН ХЛАДНОГ РАТА\*\*\*\***

### **Резиме**

Држава је била, и остаје, кључни, иако не и једини, субјект међународних односа. Безбедност државе је питање од највећег значаја. Историјски гледано, светске силе имале су најзначајнији утицај на међународне односе и, самим тим, на безбедност. Нема сумње да су Сједињене Америчке Државе биле светска сила број један у 20. веку. У САД је 1947. године створен документ о националној стратегији безбедности, који је крајем 20. века усвојила већина земаља широм света. Након Другог светског рата дошло је до идеолошког сукоба између светских сила, САД и СССР-а, који је прерастао у Хладни рат. Тај период у новијој историји назива се биполаризам. Сједињене Америчке Државе и западни савезници сматрају се победницима Хладног рата. Са распадом Варшавског пакта и дезинтеграцијом СССР-а, САД су увиделе прилику да успоставе униполарни светски поредак под сопственом хегемонијом. САД су успоставиле лидерство/хегемонију у свету

---

\* Имејл: bozidar.forca@fpp.edu.rs; ORCID: 0003-4894-3772

\*\* Имејл: srdjan.milasinovic@kpu.edu.rs; ORCID: 0000-0002-8251-339X

\*\*\* И-мејл: sladjanmil@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-9125-430X

\*\*\*\* Чланак је написан у оквиру реализације научног пројекта „Две деценије независности и самоуправе Републике Србије, 2006–2026”, на Факултету за пословне студије и право.

милом или силом. У примени силе, САД су користиле НАТО, који је преживео Хладни рат иако је Варшавски пакт био распуштен. У свим националним стратегијама безбедности САД након Хладног рата недвосмислено је присутан национални интерес за владање светом. Тај интерес се артикулише као хегемонија или као лидерство. Председник САД Доналд Трамп је у свом другом мандату, који почиње 2024. године, најавио националну стратегију безбедности за 2025. годину. У тој стратегији Трамп недвосмислено тврди да су сви амерички председници од краја Хладног рата настојали да успоставе америчку хегемонију у свету. Међутим, према Трампу, није реч о америчкој хегемонији већ о лидерству које треба следити. Карактеристика Трампове стратегије, како 2017. тако и 2025. године, јесте њена директност и практична примена. У том смислу, најновија стратегија Доналда Трампа је погрешно схваћена и од стране савезника и од стране противника. Док нејединствена Европска унија не проналази начин да одговори на Трампову стратегију, догле директни противници, Русија и Кина, настоје да уведу свет у мултиполаризам. Политика доминира јер интереси управљају светом, али стратегија одговара на питање како. Све националне стратегије безбедности САД након Хладног рата биле су усмерене ка глобалном лидерству и/или америчкој хегемонији; разликују се само дискурс председничких администрација у њима и њихово деловање у пракси.

**Кључне речи:** Хладни рат, национална стратегија безбедности, САД

---

\* This manuscript was submitted on February 8, 2026, and accepted by the Editorial Board for publishing on April 1, 2026.