



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council

by Helen Sharpe and Jacob Jernigan  
ODU United Nations Society

### Introduction: The National Security Council



President Trump with Vice-President Mike Pence and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, with former National Security Advisor John Bolton in the background

The National Security Council (NSC) is the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters with his senior national security advisors and cabinet officials. Since its inception under President Truman, the Council's function has been to advise and assist the President on national security and foreign policies. The Council also serves as the President's principal arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies.<sup>1</sup>

The NSC is chaired by the President. Its regular attendees (both statutory and non-statutory) are the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of

Defense, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the statutory military advisor to the Council, and the Director of National Intelligence is the intelligence advisor. The Chief of Staff to the President, Counsel to the President, and the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy are invited to attend any NSC meetings. The Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget are invited to attend meetings pertaining to their responsibilities. The heads of other executive departments and agencies, as well as other senior officials, are invited to attend meetings of the NSC when appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> 'National Security Council', *The White House*, n.d., <https://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



The Trump Administration NSC retains little of the formal authority it developed in the 1960s and 70s, when National Security Advisors like Henry Kissinger used it bottom-up to help the President hear the best advice the US Government had to offer, and top-down to implement the President decisions throughout the government. Under President Trump there has been a succession of National Security Advisors, reflecting the President's personal uncertainty over its role, and his preference for personal decision-making. There are sharp differences among its members today, whether their job is to advise the President (tell him things he might not like to hear), or simply to implement his wishes, for better or worse. For the members, it is an internal battle for influence and professional survival. The interests of the United States are at stake, and anyone could be fired at a moment's notice. This crisis is based on the NSC as of 1 December 2019.

### Topics/Foreign Conflicts

#### China

For nearly 2000 years, China was the center of the world. European, African, and Arab powers always wanted the goods the Chinese had. But the Chinese had no desire to trade (unless you had the silver to pay them with). Why should they? Everything they needed is within China. This mentality created a cultural norm of stagnation and clinging to the status quo. This worldview started to show cracks when the New World was discovered, and finally fell apart

<sup>2</sup> "Trump's Biggest Failure." *Trump's Biggest Failure*, YouTube, 16 October 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhMat3BluAU&t=1932s>

<sup>4</sup> Yingqun, Chen. "Rebuilt Port Heralds Success," *The Telegraph*, 5 May 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/china-watch/business/china-rebuilds-port-in-pakistan/>

during the British Opium Wars of the 1830-40s. China would be repeatedly humiliated by Europe, Japan and America. This humiliation was continued during Mao's reign, 1949-76, when China looked like a larger version of North Korea. All of this changed with Mao's death and the rise of its current premier, Xi Jinping.<sup>2</sup>

China rose quickly, gaining regional influence. China carries support abroad through business and infrastructure construction, usually backed by loans from Beijing. Take Sri Lanka, for example; plagued by a civil war, human rights violations and ethnic cleansing, China helped build up the island nation. When it could not repay its debts, China asked for a simple price: a 99 year lease on the port they built. The same method has been used from Pakistan to Papua New Guinea, Greece to Tanzania, Cameroon to Ecuador.

The Chinese brand of colonialism comes largely in the Belt and Road Initiative, aka BRI. The 'Belt' part of the BRI is all about maritime trade. China would rebuild ancient ports (or just build brand new ones) and then get a 99-year lease on said ports. A prime example of this would be China's control over Sri Lankan and the Pakistani ports.<sup>34</sup> The 'Road' part is a series of massive infrastructure projects to connect Chinese markets to Africa, Asia and Europe, reviving the ancient Silk Road through Asia to the Middle East and Europe. China wants to use the BRI to take its place as the sole eastern superpower, but also to isolate its main rival within Asia; India.<sup>5</sup> China has used its BRI to

<sup>5</sup> Shrivastava, Sanskar, *Indian String of Pearls "Unstringing" Chinese String of Pearls Theory*, 1 June 2013, <https://www.theworldreporter.com/2013/06/unstringing-chinese-string-of-pearls.html> ; Savic, Bob. "Behind China and Russia's 'Special Relationship'," *The Diplomat*, 7 December 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/behind-china-and-russias-special-relationship/>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



turn Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh against India. But the USA has an opportunity to break the strategy by allying with India against China.

The 'strings of debt' that many countries are burdened with are the result of China's policy are numerous impossible to break. One solution might be installing a new, pro-Western governments in affected states. This is a fine line to walk, however, and risky.

China has worked to make sure it does not step on anyone's toes, or have the appearance at least.<sup>6</sup> But there is one area that has recently become a thorn in the dragon's paw, that area being Hong Kong. Taken from China by the British in the 1800s, Hong Kong remains autonomous until the year 2047. Fearing China will take complete control, public protests broke out in 2014, and again in 2019. The 2019 revolts are the biggest in the history of Hong Kong with millions flooding the streets to protest.<sup>7</sup> Hong Kong and China have deployed riot control forces, and the two sides are still clashing, with the Pro-China triads/crime syndicates also getting involved on the side of the police. President Trump has been hesitant to get involved, but Congress took sides with the protestors, unanimously passing the US *Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act*, which:

- A. Threatens Chinese officials responsible for human rights violations in Hong Kong with sanctions,
- B. Requires the US to annually check if HK is truly autonomous, and to adjust trade policies if it is not,
- C. Bans the sale of U.S. riot control gear to the Hong Kong Police.

China quickly responded to the act by kicking out US funded organizations operating in China. It is unclear whether the HK situation is going to continue, or if it will escalate as the US gets more involved.

The protests in Hong Kong have drawn attention to the original target of Chinese, the independence of Taiwan. Taiwan is the last remnant of what was once the pre-revolution government of China, which fled to Taiwan, after the Communist Revolution in 1949. To this day, Taiwan claims to be the sole official government of China. But the PRC wants to be the only China, and has wanted to take back Taiwan for decades. In recent years, China has been flying various military aircraft over Taiwan, trying to push boundaries without receiving a military response from Taiwan.<sup>8</sup> In essence, China is preparing for a potential invasion and occupation of Taiwan, to forcefully integrate into the rest of the PRC.

China is currently cut off from its "String of Pearls" in the Indian ocean, a series of bases and rented ports, establishing its hegemony.<sup>9</sup> In the China Sea, the area between mainland East Asia and the highly strategic Strait of Malacca, it already has a major presence. By establishing and maintaining dominance over this body of water, China can effectively control any maritime trade going into or out of the Strait of Malacca, and thus put much of Southeast Asia in a chokehold. But, this plan has somewhat unified the nations of Southeast Asia against China, and making the region lean towards the West. Chinese domination of the South China sea also catches the attention of more outside powers, such as India, Australia, and Japan.

<sup>6</sup> *The US Stands up to China/Hong Kong Bill Passed!*, YouTube, 22 November 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wMipdJGigM>

<sup>7</sup> *Hong Kong Protests Explained in 5 Minutes (Geography Now!)*, YouTube, 24 August 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv064hmXx1Y>

<sup>8</sup> "Did Hong Kong Save Taiwan?" *YouTube*, 16 Dec. 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iHxYo-eixg>

<sup>9</sup> Caspian Report, *Geopolitics of the South China Sea*, YouTube, 25 December 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcFiJwpmq0>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



The US wants to help the countries of Southeast Asia, India, and Japan counter China, but does not want to involve itself too much, as to avoid being blindsided. The US refuses to recognize the ownership of the many islands China has exerted its influence over, and sees the unofficial EEZ's as international waters. But China continues to challenge the incumbent power of the US, and if things continue as they currently are, China will quickly surpass the US as a superpower.

China's rapid growth was fueled by its low wages, high demand for raw materials, and the relocation of multinational companies.<sup>10</sup> But this is being threatened by the Trade War between Beijing and Washington. The US wants to force open Chinese markets, and make them take in American goods and services in exchange for continued access to the markets of the USA. This places China in an uncomfortable situation: China cannot say yes to this proposal, as it would greatly weaken China and undermine Xi Jinping's government, but they cannot say no, as that would mean more tariffs and restrictions against their exports. China is unable to compromise by importing more American goods and balance out the massive amount of Chinese goods the United States imports, as the process of widening the Chinese market would take too long in the eyes of the Trump Administration. As time goes forward, the US will try to detach its economy from China's, and seek new, friendlier markets, such as India, Vietnam or Nigeria. China and the US are also competing in the field of emerging technologies, especially with so called 'dual technologies' which can be

used both by civilians and the military. The US wants to keep Chinese investment out of these sectors, to prevent the stealing of the technology. In conclusion, China has placed the USA in a position where it must become more tyrannical on the World Stage if it wants to maintain its supremacy.

### Democratic People's Republic of Korea

If you looked up a definition for 'loose cannon' in a dictionary, you very well might find a picture of the flag of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, along with an 1100 word speech explaining how the DPRK is the best nation, and in fine print underneath... "*This message was sponsored by Glorious Kim Jong Un, and his government.*" The DPRK is an absolute monarchy in all but name. Kim Jong Un does what he wants, when he wants, where he wants. The main thing North Korea wants is the survival of its state, and the survival of Kim Jong Un.<sup>11</sup>

Currently the country is tied down due to technically being at war, and thus Kim wants to renegotiate the treaty of peace with South Korea. These negotiations have already happened, and clearly failed. When the diplomats returned to the North, Kim immediately executed them, putting everything back at square one. The main threat North Korea has is its nuclear arsenal, which is not very large, but can still easily put giant holes in the nation's southern neighbor. North Korea needs nukes to survive, because its large conventional military is steadily growing more obsolete.

<sup>10</sup> *Geopolitical Analysis for 2019: Asia-Pacific*, YouTube, 30 January 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDuQRY2WkCQ&list=PLv-SNV2XmnZmReaYhSxJa8RMFQsJ1HIlz&index=4>

<sup>11</sup> *Caspian Report, Why North Korea Wants Nukes*, YouTube, 24 April 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykYRsmIQkyw>; Caspian Report, *What Does North Korea Want?*

YouTube, 19 April 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8b-sgsfoxU>; *Geopolitical Analysis for 2019: Asia-Pacific*, YouTube, 30 January 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDuQRY2WkCQ&list=PLv-SNV2XmnZmReaYhSxJa8RMFQsJ1HIlz&index=4>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



DPRK's nuclear weapons appear to be meant as a retaliatory force, to be used as a reaction to the long-feared American invasion. This fear has been heightened by the American involvement in the Middle East, where it took down governments such as Saddam's Iraq, Gaddafi's Libya, and the attempted removal of Assad's Syria. Pyongyang fears it is next. To prevent this, the DPRK wants something those other nations did not have; a way to directly strike back at the US. By developing long-range missiles that can hit the continental US, North Korea poses a direct threat to the United States.

### Iran

The Middle East is a massive trade funnel. So much trade passed through the region because it was located between the two major hubs of ancient civilization, those being Asia (China, Persia, and the Indian subcontinent), and the Mediterranean. Throughout its history, it was ruled over by either Anatolia (modern day Turkey), Arabia, or Persia/Iran. The vast amount of trade and fertile soil in the Middle East made it a target. Everyone wanted a slice of the Mesopotamian pie. The value of the lands of the Middle East skyrocketed around the late 1800s, when the European powers realized how valuable oil was. This sudden increase in value coincided with the collapse of the incumbent ruler of the area, the Ottoman Empire. Then, what was left of the Ottomans would transform into Turkey. Turkey did not want to go south again, because it thought of the Middle East as being more trouble than it was worth. Thus, Anatolia removed its hat from the ring. So now the Middle East was "Free Real Estate", and the two big colonial empires of Britain and France rolled in. They carved up the region, and created new, artificial states. These states were designed to be weak, as to make them easily controlled.

This plan would backfire after World War Two, when these weak Middle Eastern Nations would gain independence. The franken-nations of the Middle East would attempt to unify, but found little success. So, these nations are still the same as they were when they got independence; weak, and easily manipulated. But there was one major change in the region; there were only two powers that attempted to project power into the Middle East. Those two are Saudi Arabia, and Iran.<sup>12</sup>

Iran's modern history begins with the British-American sponsored coup in 1953, that overthrew the country's first democratically-elected government and put an autocratic dictator back in power, the Shah of Iran. This new Shah would try to modernize, with generous help from the United States. His policies—especially secularization (suppression of religion) and reliance on the secret police (SAVAK) to stay in control—brought great public resentment. This secularization and terrorization of the public acted as the birth of Iranian hatred of the West; to be Western was to return to the oppressive years of the Shah. This oppression (and the backlash to said oppression) eventually culminated in the 1979 Revolution, which was led by two polar opposite groups; the Religious Conservatives, and the Socialists. The Socialists were eventually slaughtered by the Religious Conservatives, who quickly turned the Nation into an Islamic, autocratic, and theocratic dictatorship. As soon as Iran was secure in its domestic position, it sought to export its revolution to the places in the Middle East. This put it at odds with the other major powers in the region, Saudi Arabia, and the hated supporter of the Shah, the United States.

**Saudi Arabia** has filled the power vacuum in much of the region. It became the dominant power in the Arabian peninsula, and had pledged

<sup>12</sup> CaspianReport, *Iran's Internal Power Struggle*. *Iran's Internal Power Struggle*, YouTube, 22 June

2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXnYi\\_kOoE4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXnYi_kOoE4)



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



their alliance to the followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahab, who practiced an extremely conservative form of Sunni Islam. This form of Islam could have been dismissed if the Saudis did not have control of Mecca and Medina, which gave them enormous legitimacy. In exchange for oil, the US sells the Saudis weapons. The Shia minorities near Yemen and the Persian Gulf immediately rebelled, and were bloodily put down. Saudi Arabia halted any and all attempts at westernization, and bolstered the fundamentalist aspect of their religion. So far, this has managed to keep the country together.

Ever since 1979, a storm has been brewing in the Gulf. Both Iran and the Saudis want to unite the Islamic World under their version of Islam. They use the various Islamic countries surrounding them as pawns, just as the USSR and US had used them decades ago. There are two outcomes; either one sets up a regime that is friendly to them, or they keep the civil war going for long enough that neither side can. Keeping the wars going comes with the risk of the war spreading into Iran or Saudi Arabia, and so both must keep themselves as stable as possible. The main way of ensuring this stability is through oil money. The Saudis can purposely crash the market to force out competitors. Iran, on the other hand, has 3 times the population and  $\frac{1}{3}$  the daily oil output.

This, plus Western sanctions, have kept Iran on the backfoot throughout their Middle Eastern Cold War. The Saudis have the upper hand in terms of power projection, but Iran has an ace up their sleeve; geography. At any point, Iran could blockade the highly prized Strait of Hormuz, through which  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the world's oil supply passes through. Thus, Iran is the only country in the Middle East that can directly challenge the US through military action. Thus, it is of utmost importance that the US finds a way to make sure

Iran does not blockade the strait. That could be through appeasement, or a manipulation of Iranian politics, or by urging another country to fight the Beast of the Middle East.

The National Security Council is divided on whether to invade Iran directly, yet. If the proxy conflicts continue to multiply and escalate, invasion may be necessary. The key to driving Iran out for good could be by further involving the other US ally in the Middle East; Israel. Iran is deathly afraid of Israel, because their nuclear weapons pose zero threat to them. Israel is a fortress, even more than Iran is.<sup>13</sup> The Saudis and Israel are already working together in relative secret, but if Iran wants to flex its muscles, the two are ready to reply with force. Israel can only attack in short bursts, as its military is too small to combat Iran for extended periods of time. Even if Israel had the military size, Palestine would rebel as soon as the nation turned its back.

### Russia

Russia is most well-known for its size. Russia is enormous, but this size does not mean much because of its geography. Moscow, the core of the country, sits on a large, flat plain, and is thus nearly impossible to defend. In the event of invasion, all Russia can do is turn the war into one of attrition. But there is an alternative, that being to expand Russian borders until there is a geographic boundary between Russia and its enemies. This what has Russia done for centuries, expanding until it hit a boundary that would protect it. From the Siberian tundra to the Caucasus mountains, the Carpathian Mountains to the deserts of Central Asia. Russia had expanded its borders for over 500 years, culminating in the aftermath of WW2 and the creation of the Eastern Bloc. Russia had done it, they found the protection they so desperately

---

<sup>13</sup> CaspianReportIsraeli-Iranian Proxy War, YouTube, 11 December 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5asWYmGOa8>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



wanted, and had all of Eastern Europe under its thumb.

Fast forward to the end of the Cold War, and Russia could feel its decline. So, it made a deal with its rival, the United States. Russia would withdraw from the Eastern Bloc/Warsaw Pact states, and the United States would not let them into NATO. This was proposed because Russia was afraid of the multi-front composition of NATO. Luckily for Russia, the US agreed to their terms. As soon as Russia withdrew, it promptly collapsed. Then, NATO seeped in over the course of 20 years, and let both Warsaw Pact members and former USSR states (the Baltics) into NATO. To Russia, this was the last straw. 300 years of work undone in an instant, and their worst fears played out right in front of them. In the early 2000s, Russian leadership saw it was at a tipping point. NATO encirclement was back, and the existence of Russia was threatened. So the Kremlin made the only choice it could; it chose to reassert Russian dominance to avoid being lost forever. Having NATO so close made Russia feel insecure. Direct control of the lands of the former USSR was too much of a burden for Russia, so Russia has gone instead for a sphere of influence strategy, where the Kremlin leverages its influence over certain countries to bring them under the Russian thumb. In essence, Russia has chosen to completely restart in its expansion, and is looking to increase its sphere of influence in a westward direction.

Russia has 5 major fronts where it looks to increase its influence:

- The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
- Belarus and Ukraine
- Moldova
- The Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia,
- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

### *The Baltic states*

The Baltic countries have the most to fear from Russian aggression. In the past, the three countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were Russia's best way of accessing the Atlantic and the West generally. The countries had milder climates than St. Petersburg and Moscow, and helped to anchor Russia's northwestern border against the Baltic Sea. Russia wants to influence the Baltics so it is better connected to the Kaliningrad Oblast, which is geographically separated from the rest of the country. All three of the Baltic countries are members of both NATO and the EU, and are very friendly with the USA and other Western Powers. Russia has very few ways of inciting conflict in this region, with the main two being manipulation of energy sources (such as oil or natural gas), and the significant Russian minorities within the Baltic Countries. Intervention by the USA may not be needed, as the threat of a Ukraine-like situation arising in Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania is unlikely.

### *Belarus and Ukraine*

Belarus and Ukraine are the only Nations separating NATO from having a direct path to Moscow, and are thus extremely important to Russia. Russia has control of nearly every industry within Belarus, and thus it acts as a Russian colony/puppet/buffer state. Ukraine, on the other hand, is a growing source of concern for Russia. Ukraine seeks to join NATO, and make Russia's position even worse. In Southern Russia, only 700 miles of Russian land separate Ukraine from Kazakhstan. If Ukraine were to join NATO, then a possible NATO invasion could cut Russia off from both the Black and Caspian seas, and thus encircle the entirety of Southern Russia. The Western Ukrainian border also sits on the Carpathian Mountains, which act as the final shield in case of a land invasion. Once an army passes the Carpathians, no geographical boundary lies between that army and Moscow. Russia wants to curb Western



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



influence in Ukraine, and keep it as a buffer state. Russia can do this through manipulating the supply of energy going to Ukraine, by politically supporting far-right groups within Ukraine, supporting far-left separatists in Eastern Ukraine, or through Russia's own military presence within Crimea.

### *Moldova*

Moldova has always been strategically important for Russia. If Russia controls Moldova, it can block any possible invasion from NATO allied Romania and strengthen its hold on the Carpathians. Russia needs Moldova, and it is going to attempt to assert its influence over the Nation. Russia can do this through the separatists in Eastern Moldova, whom have created an unrecognized state known as Transnistria. Transnistria is majority Russian, and is essentially a section of Moldova occupied by Russians on behalf of Russia. The Kremlin can use this state as leverage against Moldova.

### *The Caucasus*

The Caucasus could be the key to Russia's future as a threat.<sup>14</sup> In the late 90s and the early 2000s, Russia had a problem with separatists. Most of these separatists were European Islamic terrorists located within Chechnya, Dagestan, and many more states within the North Caucasus. The area is a powder keg, and any form of Russian rule is greatly opposed by the native population. But Russia must keep them under its control. If even one of these states break away, it is likely to cause a domino effect. First the rest of the North Caucasus, then the Volga area, and finally Siberia. It could even spread to areas that areas wholly Russian, but had a history of not being that away, take Kaliningrad for example. Russia must have a firm hand on the North Caucasus, and a watchful

eye on its southern neighbors who may help the separatists. These neighbors are Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Armenia is essentially a Russian puppet/colony, Georgia has grown tired of Russia's games and is looking to NATO for help/protection, and Azerbaijan has enough oil money to stand on its own. But Russia has the leverage to potentially bring all three states under its influence by the supporting of separatist states with Georgia and Azerbaijan.

### *Central Asia*

For the few previous centuries, Central Asia has acted as a Russian buffer against any possible power in Asia. With multiple mountain ranges and deserts making a line of protection stretching from Iran to China, and zero geographical boundaries on the Russian border, Central Asia seems like it was made to be under Russian control. But as the USSR broke up, the new, weaker Central Asian states have provided China a chance to expand its influence in the region, and rebuild the ancient Silk Road. Russia does not want China to do this because it would make Russia irrelevant. Why direct trade through Russia and the Trans-Siberian Railway when it is so much easier to go along the Silk Road? In essence, Russia has an interest in Central Asia because they do not anyone else to have influence in the region.

Russia had worked hard to keep its core safe. But, with the collapse of the USSR all of that hard work was swept away, and the Russian heartland was exposed to potential invasion. Russia, therefore, wants to push outward and push NATO as far away from Moscow as humanly possible. Russia will accomplish this in anyway it can, from setting up puppet governments to straight up invading and annexing certain areas. NATO is faced with a choice when concerning Russia; to appease the

<sup>14</sup> *Will Russia Become a Superpower? Part 2/2*, YouTube, 11 April 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMv9EvthOrQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMv9EvthOrQ&list=PLv-SNV2XmnZmbpJt0kGD1-strASK7rVXO&index=2>





## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



massive nation, or to combat Russia in its attempts to expand. But the real key to Russia is pulling back the curtain of Russian politics, and influencing them. Russia has become as sick man, and Putin is trapped by his expansion-heavy doctrine. If the West can make Russia retreat, even by an inch, the people will abandon their strongman.<sup>15</sup>

### Venezuela

Much of South America is in a delicate state. Conflict within South America has switched from fighting external wars to internal crises and decay.<sup>16</sup> The stagnating countries of South America are contrasted by Venezuela, which is currently on fire in both the literal and metaphorical sense. In 1999, President Hugo Chavez was elected in Venezuela. His campaign platform was all about equality and bringing people out of poverty, and he called this policy "21st Century Socialism." Chavez' policies increased the country's debt. Public spending tripled during his tenure. His programs cut poverty, and were supposed to be paid off from exporting oil. This combined with mass nationalization of private businesses made Venezuela more and more dependent on its oil exports.

This 'Oil economy' strategy worked until 2014, when oil prices fell significantly, and this came as the first blow to the Bolivarian Republic. The second blow would be the election of Nicolas Maduro. Maduro found himself running a country that was not making enough money from its only export, and had no private sector to tax so that debts and wages could be paid. Maduro made the worst decision, one that basically doomed the country. That decision was

to print money. The massive inflation that ensued threw all of Hugo's poverty reduction efforts into the trashcan. Then Maduro put in price regulations and a "maximum sales price." These regulations threw small businesses (that did not get nationalized) into turmoil. Then all of the angry, poverty-stricken, and unemployed people of Venezuela set that metaphorical trashcan on fire as they rioted and left. This chain of terrible decisions has created a refugee crisis for surrounding nations, while also putting a ticking timebomb on their front doorstep. But Venezuela made allies before it descended into its current state, those allies being Russia and China. Russia and China keep Venezuela afloat in exchange for oil. This in addition to Venezuela's very illegal ways of gaining revenue (such as illegal mining and drug trafficking) that have expanded into northern Brazil and eastern Colombia have caused these countries to look to the US for help in dealing with Venezuela.

But the US cannot do much, as a military intervention or coup would lead to a civil war that would likely destabilize the entire region, or elicit a response from Russia and/or China. This means the US must find a creative solution as the normal one-two punch of sanctions and a coup will just result in the US shooting itself in the foot. Sanctions would hurt US oil companies (the US is currently the largest importer of Venezuelan Crude oil, but US oil refineries are quickly switching to domestic oil), and a coup would create a power vacuum, and create a 'Syria-esque' situation in the backyard of the United States. The key to shedding as little blood as possible while still influencing Venezuela is by bribing/influencing the military of Venezuela, making them ally with Guaido, and then letting them do all the work. Russia,

<sup>15</sup> CaspianReport, *Decline of Putin's Russia. Decline of Putin's Russia*, YouTube, 17 August 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BT4sK36cU3Y>

<sup>16</sup> *Geopolitical Analysis for 2019: Americas*, YouTube, 9 February 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZq\\_DZ2dHuE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZq_DZ2dHuE)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SP2cXoeOxY>  
&list=PLv-SNV2XmnZmReaYhSxJa8RMFQsJIHIlz&index=5 ;  
*Why is Venezuela a catastrophe?* YouTube, 26 January 2017,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SP2cXoeOxY>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



China, and Maduro are all well aware of this strategy, and are prepared to take action if Guaido makes a move. Venezuela is on a tipping point, and the actions of the army, Guaido, and Maduro shall determine the fate of Venezuela and South America.

### Characters

#### 1. Vice-President: **Michael Pence**

The Vice-President is a statutory member of the National Security Council. The Office of the Vice-President assists and organizes the Vice-President's official functions. The role of the vice presidency has changed dramatically since the office was created during the 1787

Constitutional Convention. Especially over the past 100 years, the vice presidency has evolved into a position of domestic and foreign policy political power, and is now widely seen as an integral part of a president's administration. As the Vice-President's role within the executive branch has expanded, his role within the legislative branch has contracted; for example, he presides over the Senate only infrequently.<sup>17</sup>

#### 2. National Security Advisor: **Robert C. O'Brien**

The National Security Advisor, officially known as the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, serves as a chief advisor to the President of the United States on national security issues. The National Security Advisor serves on the National Security Council and is assisted by staff that produces research, briefings, and intelligence reports. The National Security Advisor's office is in the White House, near the office of the President, and during a crisis operates from the White House Situation

Room updating the President on the latest events. The National Security Advisor holds a senior position in the Executive Office of the President and advises the President on national security matters. The NSA is one of the President's most important officials, sometimes outranking the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense in his/her influence on national security and foreign policy. Though the President chairs the National Security Council, the NSA oversees the Council's staff and is responsible for "coordinating the Administration's foreign policy, intelligence and military efforts," according to the White House.<sup>18</sup>

#### 3. Acting White House Chief of Staff: **Mick Mulvaney**

The responsibilities of the Chief of Staff are both managerial and advisory and can include the following: selecting key White House staff and supervising them, structuring the White House staff system, controlling the flow of people into the Oval Office, managing the flow of information, protecting the interests of the president, negotiating with Congress, other members of the executive branch, and extra-governmental political groups to implement the president's agenda, and advising the president on various issues, including telling the president what they do not want to hear. These responsibilities extend to firing of staff members, as well as a rigid gatekeeper who would frequently meets with administration officials in place of the president. Mick Mulvaney is Acting Chief of Staff. His position does not require Senate confirmation, rather, he

<sup>17</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice\\_President\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_United_States)

<sup>18</sup> <https://careertrend.com/facts-6810329-national-security-advisor-job-description.html>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



remains 'Acting' at the discretion of President Trump<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. Secretary of State: **Mike Pompeo**

The Secretary carries out U.S. foreign policies through the State Department, which includes the Foreign Service, Civil Service, and U.S. Agency for International Development. The Secretary of State also advises the President on matters relating to U.S. foreign policy, including the appointment of diplomatic representatives to other nations and on the acceptance, recall, or dismissal of representatives from other nations. The most important duty of the Secretary of State is the ability to negotiate, interpret or terminate treaties and agreements as well as conducting negotiations relating to U.S. foreign affairs. They must also advise the president on U.S. foreign matters such as the appointment of diplomats and ambassadors. They also advise the president of the dismissal and recall of these individuals. The Secretary of State can conduct negotiations, interpret, and terminate treaties relating to foreign policy. They also can participate in international conferences, organizations and agencies as a representative of the United States. The Secretary of State communicates issues relating to the U.S. foreign policy to Congress and U.S. citizens. They also provide services to U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad such as providing credentials in the form of passports. Doing this, they also ensure the protection of U.S. citizens themselves, their property, and interests in foreign countries.<sup>20</sup>

19

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White\\_House\\_Chief\\_of\\_Staff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Chief_of_Staff)

20

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Secretary\\_of\\_State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_State)

#### 5. Secretary of Defense: **Mark Esper**

The secretary of defense is a statutory member of the National Security Council.<sup>1</sup> As one of the principals, the secretary along with the vice president, secretary of state and the assistant to the president for national security affairs participates in biweekly Principals Committee (PC) meetings, preparing and coordinating issues before they are brought before full NSC sessions chaired by the president. The head of the Department of Defense, "the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense", and has "authority, direction and control over the Department of Defense". Because the Constitution vests all military authority in Congress and the president, the statutory authority of the secretary of defense is derived from their constitutional authorities. Since it is impractical for either Congress or the president to participate in every piece of Department of Defense affairs, the secretary of defense, and the secretary's subordinate officials generally exercise military authority.<sup>21</sup>

#### 6. Secretary of Energy: **James Richard 'Rick' Perry**

The department's list of responsibilities includes the nation's nuclear weapons programs, the Navy's nuclear energy program, energy research and conservation, clean energy technologies, and domestic energy policy. The Energy Department spends more on physical science research than any other federal agency through the National Laboratories. The secretary of energy, along with his or her assistants and undersecretaries, oversees the entire Energy apparatus and

21

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Secretary\\_of\\_Defense](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_Defense)



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



portfolio. In addition, the department's mission statement includes "advancing the national, economic and energy security of the United States," as well as supporting innovative technology to further those goals. Perhaps most importantly, the secretary advises the president on matters of energy and nuclear security and advances the president's agenda and policy objectives.

### 7. Secretary of the Treasury: **Steven Mnuchin**

The United States Department of the Treasury is a Cabinet-level agency of the federal government. It is responsible for crucial functions that help keep the government running, including paying all U.S. bills, collecting taxes, and managing federal finances. Another important role the Department of the Treasury performs is overseeing national banks, and printing and minting all paper currency and coins in circulation through the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the United States Mint. Mostly under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the same agency that collects taxes, the Treasury also enforces tax and financial laws, prosecuting alleged tax evaders and financial criminals. In addition to those administrative duties, the department makes recommendations regarding domestic and international financial, monetary, economic, trade and tax policy, and publishes statistical reports.

### 8. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: **Mark A. Milley**

Joint Chiefs of Staff is a panel of high-ranking U.S. military officers who advise the president of the United States and other civilian leaders on military issues. As an advisory body, the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not lead combat forces and have no executive or command authority over troops in their services. The Joint Chiefs of Staff comprise the heads of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air

Force, and Marine Corps. That body of four-star generals is led by another four-star general, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who serves as the chief military adviser to the president, secretary of defense and National Security Council. A vice chairman, who is also a four-star general, assists the chairman and performs the chairman's duties in his absence. The chairman has three assistants: one who focuses on international relations and political-military affairs, one for National Guard matters, and another for reserve forces. A group of staff officers, called the Joint Staff, also assist the chairman and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with their primary duties. The Joint Staff is composed of approximately equal numbers of officers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.<sup>22</sup>

### 9. Acting Director of National Intelligence: **Joseph Maguire**

The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) serves as the head of the Intelligence Community (IC). The DNI also acts as the principal advisor to the President and the National Security Council for intelligence matters related to the national security; and oversees and directs the implementation of the National Intelligence Program. The President appoints the DNI with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Director is assisted by a Senate-confirmed Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence (PDDNI), recommended by the DNI and appointed by the President. Acting Director Maguire has not been submitted to the US Senate for confirmation.<sup>23</sup>

### 10. Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy: **Jim Carroll**

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) works to reduce drug use and its

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff>

<sup>23</sup> <https://fas.org/irp/dni/index.html>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



consequences by leading and coordinating the development, implementation, and assessment of U.S. drug policy. In addition to its vital ongoing work, ONDCP also provides administrative and financial support to the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, established by Executive Order on March 29, 2017 by President Donald J. Trump.<sup>24</sup> The Director advises the President regarding changes in the organization, management, budgeting, and personnel of federal agencies that affect U.S. anti-drug efforts; and regarding Federal agency compliance with their obligations under the National Drug Control Strategy, an annual report required by law.

### 11. Homeland Security Advisor: **Peter Brown**

The Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, commonly referred to as the Homeland Security Advisor and formerly holding the title of Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, is a senior aide in the Executive Office of the President, based in the West Wing of the White House, who serves as the chief in-house advisor to the President of the United States on homeland security and counterterrorism issues. The Homeland Security Advisor is a statutory member of the Homeland Security Council. Serving at the pleasure of the President, the Homeland Security Advisor does not require Senate confirmation for appointment to the office.

### 12. Acting Attorney General: **Matthew Whitaker**

The primary duty of the United States Attorney General is to uphold and serve the best interest of the public within the United States' jurisdiction. The United States Attorney General

is responsible for enforcing civil rights, blocking or preventing unfair consumer practices and improving the lives of each citizen by proposing various policy changes, such as environmental protection laws and alterations to criminal procedures. The United States Attorney General is a prominent executive position within the federal government; the individual is appointed by the President and subsequently confirmed by the Senate to serve as the chief legal advisor for the federal government. As the primary legal advocate to the President and the leaders of the executive departments, the United States Attorney General, in the event that charges are filed against the government, will serve as legal representation for the country. As the legal representative for the Federal Government, the United States Attorney General will appear in all hearings and trials for those prominent or critical suits filed against the United States.<sup>25</sup>

Whitaker's status remains 'Acting' because President Trump has not submitted his name to the U.S. Senate for confirmation.

### 13. Director of the Central Intelligence Agency: **Gina Haspel**

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is an independent federal agency responsible for providing national security intelligence to our nation's policymakers. The foreign intelligence the CIA gathers is used to provide tactical and strategic advantages so as to preempt threats and further U.S. national security objectives. The covert activities and the objective analyses that result are used to keep the nation safe. The CIA works as an advisory agency on matters related to foreign intelligence, and it conducts missions and other covert activities under the direction of the President. The Director of the CIA, who is nominated by the President and confirmed by

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://attorney-general.laws.com/united-states-attorney-general>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



the Senate, is responsible for managing the agency's budget, operations, and personnel.<sup>26</sup>

### 14. Director of the National Security Agency: **General Paul M. Nakasone**

The NSA is responsible for gathering signals intelligence and decoding and coding information. It is the world's most comprehensive and intrusive spy agency. It stores and analyses the information it collects at the Intelligence Community Comprehensive National Cybersecurity Initiative Data Center in Utah. This is a *partial* list of the information the NSA collects about Americans and others, according to the agency's own web site: internet searches, websites visited, emails sent and received, social media activity (Facebook, Twitter, etc), blogging activity including posts read, written, and commented on, videos watched and/or uploaded online, photos viewed and/or uploaded online, mobile phone GPS-location data, mobile phone apps downloaded, phone call records, text messages sent and received, Skype video calls, online purchases and auction transactions, credit card/ debit card transactions, financial information, legal documents, travel documents, health records, cable television shows watched and recorded, commuter toll records, electronic bus and subway passes/Smartpasses, facial recognition data from surveillance cameras, educational records, arrest records, and driver license information.<sup>27</sup>

### 15. United States Ambassador to the United Nations: **Kelly Kraft-Knight**

The United States ambassador to the United Nations is the leader of the U.S. delegation, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. The position is more formally known as the "Permanent

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations"; it is also known as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. There is also a deputy ambassador who assumes the duties of the ambassador in his or her absence. Like all United States ambassadors, the ambassador to the UN and the deputy ambassador are nominated by the U.S. President and confirmed by the Senate. The ambassador serves at the pleasure of the president. The U.S. permanent representative is charged with representing the United States on the U.N. Security Council and during almost all plenary meetings of the General Assembly, except in the rare situation in which a more senior officer of the United States (such as the U.S. secretary of state or the president of the United States) is present.

### 16. Senior Advisor to the President: **Jared Kushner**

As the husband of the President's daughter, Jared Kushner was made a White House official, responsible for advising the President on diverse issues. He takes special interest on the Middle East. Senior Advisor to the President is a title used by high-ranking assistants to the President of the United States. White House senior advisors are senior members of the White House Office. Over time, the senior advisor role has had responsibility for the following: groups: White House Office of Strategic Initiatives, Intergovernmental Affairs, Political Affairs, Public Liaison, and Communications. The Senior Advisor is in charge of the White House Office of Strategic Initiatives. The Office's function was to focus on ideas and possible

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ciaagentedu.org/what-is-the-cia/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.allgov.com/news/top-stories/director-of-the-national-security-agency-who-is-paul-nakasone-180516?news=860468>



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



presidential actions to address issues which would contribute directly to the President's political standing. Although given no official authority over other Executive functions, the OSI could review and make recommendations on classified national security issues, judicial nominations, and other subjects of potential political significance.

### 17. United States Ambassador to the Russian Federation: **Julie Fisher**

An Ambassador represents the interest of the United States abroad. They can be professional US Foreign Service Officers, or individuals chosen by the President for personal reasons, such as prominent campaign donors or friends of the President. U.S. Ambassadors hold a Constitutionally mandated position, and are individually confirmed by vote of the U.S. Senate. They are responsible for all American official activity in the country to which they are assigned. The only exception is personnel of the U.S. military, who follow order from their regional Combatant Command, not the U.S. Embassy. Ambassadors have no authority over private citizens.<sup>28</sup>

### 18. United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China: **Terry Branstad**

An Ambassador represents the interest of the United States abroad. They can be professional US Foreign Service Officers, or individuals chosen by the President for personal reasons, such as prominent campaign donors or friends of the President. U.S. Ambassadors hold a Constitutionally mandated position, and are individually confirmed by vote of the U.S. Senate. They are responsible for all American official activity in the country to which they are assigned. The only exception is personnel of the U.S. military, who follow order from their regional Combatant Command, not the U.S.

Embassy. Ambassadors have no authority over private citizens.<sup>29</sup>

### 19. United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: **John P. Abizaid**

An Ambassador represents the interest of the United States abroad. They can be professional US Foreign Service Officers, or individuals chosen by the President for personal reasons, such as prominent campaign donors or friends of the President. U.S. Ambassadors hold a Constitutionally mandated position, and are individually confirmed by vote of the U.S. Senate. They are responsible for all American official activity in the country to which they are assigned. The only exception is personnel of the U.S. military, who follow order from their regional Combatant Command, not the U.S. Embassy. Ambassadors have no authority over private citizens.<sup>30</sup>

### 20. Director of the National Economic Council: **Larry Kudlow**

The National Economic Council was created in 1993, by Executive Order to coordinate the economic policy making process and provide economic policy advice to the President. The Council tries to ensure that economic policy decisions and programs are consistent with the President's goals, that the economic aspect of other elements in American policy always are considered, and monitors the implementation of the President's economic goals. Its creation fulfilled a major campaign pledge of President Bill Clinton to put the then current economic situation of the United States at the forefront of federal policy making. The Council coordinates economic policy-making and implementation among all government agencies involved in economic policy, including the departments of Commerce, State, Treasury, the U.S. Trade Representative and Homeland Security.

<sup>28</sup>

<https://www.careerexplorer.com/careers/ambassador/>

<sup>29</sup> [Ibid.](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Ibid.](#)



## Trump's America: The United States National Security Council



### 21. Advisor to the President of the United States: **Ivanka Trump**

The President's daughter, Ivanka Trump, is Advisor to the President. In her role, she focuses on the education and economic empowerment of women and their families as well as job creation and economic growth through workforce development, skills training and entrepreneurship. Prior to her father's election as forty-fifth President of the United States, Ivanka oversaw development and acquisitions at the Trump Organization alongside her brothers Donald Jr. and Eric. Ivanka led some of the company's largest and most complex transactions. Also an entrepreneur, Ivanka founded an eponymous lifestyle brand.<sup>31</sup>

### 22. United States Press Secretary: **Stephanie Grisham**

Stephanie Grisham is the most powerful communications aide in Washington, and perhaps the world. In late June 2019, President Trump handed her an unprecedented portfolio, appointing her White House press secretary and his communications director. She remains first lady Melania Trump's communications director, meaning her domain spans the East and West Wings.

Yet Grisham has not done much communicating, at least in public. She has not given a press briefing, continuing the five-month drought that began under her predecessor, Sarah Sanders. She has done just two informal gaggles with reporters and given only one TV interview.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> 'Ivanka Trump: Advisor to the President', *The White House*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/people/ivanka-trump/>

<sup>32</sup> 'Stephanie Grisham is Trump's communications czar. Only most people wouldn't know it', *The Washington Post*, 28 August 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/stephanie-grisham-is-trumps-communications-czar-only-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/stephanie-grisham-is-trumps-communications-czar-only-most-people-wouldnt-know-it/2019/08/27/b79656ba-c44b-11e9-b5e4-54aa56d5b7ce_story.html)

### 23. U.S. Trade Representative: **Robert Lighthizer**

An experienced trade negotiator and litigator, Ambassador Lighthizer brings a history of tough U.S. trade enforcement and a record of standing up for American workers, farmers, manufacturers, and businesses. At the time he was chosen by President Trump to serve as USTR, Ambassador Lighthizer was a partner at the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP (Skadden), where he practiced international trade law for over 30 years. His work there on behalf of American workers and businesses in the heavy manufacturing, agricultural, high-tech, and financial services industries opened markets to U.S. exports and defended U.S. industries from unfair trade practices. He was lead counsel for scores of trade enforcement cases and was a well-known advocate for the type of "America First" trade policies supported by President Trump.<sup>33</sup>

[most-people-wouldnt-know-it/2019/08/27/b79656ba-c44b-11e9-b5e4-54aa56d5b7ce\\_story.html](https://ustr.gov/about-us/biographies-key-officials/united-states-trade-representative-robert-e-lighthizer)

<sup>33</sup> 'United States Trade Representative Robert E. Lighthizer', *Office of the United States Trade Representative*, n.d., <https://ustr.gov/about-us/biographies-key-officials/united-states-trade-representative-robert-e-lighthizer>