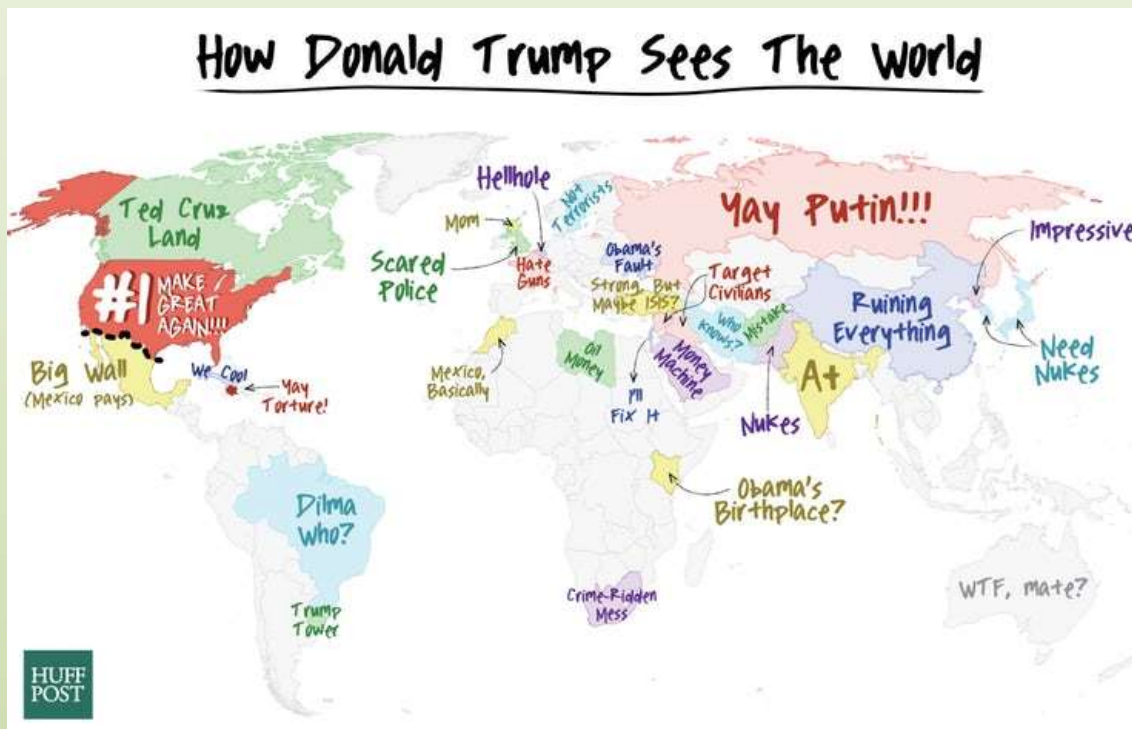


The Trump Administration's Transactional Approach to Security in the Indo-Pacific Region

Carlyle A. Thayer



Paper presented to Panel on
The Balance of Power and Security in the Asia-Pacific Region
25th World Congress of Political Science
Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre
Brisbane, Queensland,
July 21-25, 2018

The Trump Administration's Transactional Approach to Security in the Indo-Pacific Region

Carlyle A. Thayer¹

Introduction

This paper is divided into parts. Part one summarizes Donald Trump's long-standing world view. Part two analyses Trump's transactional foreign policy. Part 3 reviews President Trump's relations with four Southeast Asian government leaders and ASEAN-centric multilateral institutions. Part four assesses the Trump Administration's official national security and defence policies. The paper ends with a conclusion.

Part 1 Trump's World View

For the past three decades Donald J. Trump has advocated the same nationalist, nativist, populist, isolationist, protectionist, militarist, and racist policies.² In 1987, in an Open Letter of the American People, Trump declared, "the world is laughing at America's politicians." In an interview with CNN that year Trump affirmed other countries "laugh at us behind our backs, they laugh at us because of our stupidity and [that of our] leaders."³

The key themes of Trump's worldview have been summarized as follows:

The American elite establishment is cosmopolitan and insufficiently patriotic and therefore does not give enough priority to U.S. citizens. Trump advocates protection of American jobs at home and restrictive trade policy abroad.

Elected and non-elected U.S. officials have been duped by the rest of the world because of their stupidity. In 2015, when Trump announced his presidential campaign, he said, "Free trade can be wonderful if you have smart people, but we have people that are stupid. We have people that aren't smart."

U.S. allies continually take advantage of the United States. In an interview with Playboy Magazine in 1990 Trump asserted that the United States is "defending wealthy nations for nothing, nations that would be wiped off the face of the earth in about fifteen minutes if it weren't for us... [while they] laugh at our stupidity."

The United States is a perpetual loser. According to Trump speaking in 2015, "we don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories but [now] we don't have them."

¹Emeritus Professor, The University of New South Wales Canberra (UNSW Canberra) at the Australian Defence Force Academy. The paper is a work-in-progress.

² Charlie Laderman and Brendan Simms, *Donald Trump: The Making of a World View* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2017), 3-8.

³ Laderman and Brendan Simms, *Donald Trump: The Making of a World View*, 3-4

Donald Trump is a believer in the power of human agency to bring about fundamental change. In his view, in order for the United States to become a winner again and assert its greatness all that is required is effective leadership. As Trump said in his Playboy Magazine interview, "I think our country needs more ego, because it is being ripped off so badly by our so-called allies." At the 2016 Republican Convention he repeated this theme and ended with the statement: "I alone can fix it."

Rejection of Liberal International Order. Economics (trade) lies at the heart of Trump's repudiation of the liberal international order. Trump's fundamental belief is that reviving the American economy is essential to Making America Great Again. The key to this revival is to revise the terms of trade relations. Trump seeks to dismantle the present international order because it is not profitable for the U.S. He also opposes foreign intervention because it does not materially benefit the United States.

In 2016, Trump adopted the America First slogan. In order to Make America Great Again Trump opposed the World War Two legacy of international political commitments and foreign alliances. He advocated a narrow nationalistic approach to foreign policy. The United States should increase military spending in order to face existential threats such as international terrorism.

Trump consistently deprecates the U.S. role in maintaining the so-called liberal international order and argues that the U.S. should dispense with nation-building abroad. This would save money to invest in security and domestic infrastructure.

According to Laderman and Simms, Trump's grand strategy might begin with economics and trade but it does not end there. Trump has repeatedly questioned why the U.S. should continue to protect its allies unless they contribute more to compensate the United States spending money on their defence. Allies should pay a kind of "tribute" for the stationing of U.S. forces on their territory.

In 1987 Trump wrote that U.S. "world protection is worth hundreds of billions of dollars to these countries" The United States could "end our huge deficits" if it forced allies to "pay for the protection we extend." According to Laderman and Simms, "Trump's conception of NATO appears to be more nakedly transactional, whereby the US extracts financial compensation from its associates in exchange for protection." In June 2016, Trump, then presumptive Republican presidential nominee, argued that Japan should pay more to maintain U.S. military forces on its territory.

Trump On China – Trade as Leverage. In November 2015, when he was a leading contender for nomination by the Republican Party, Trump wrote the following in an opinion editorial, "The worst of China's sins is not its theft of intellectual property. It is the wanton manipulation of China's currency, robbing Americans of billions of dollars of capital and millions of jobs ...⁴ Trump pledged to declare China a current manipulator as soon as he took office.

⁴ Donald J. Trump, "Ending China's Currency Manipulation," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 9, 2015.

After his nomination, Trump repeatedly called Beijing a “cheater” and “currency manipulator” and threatened to slap higher tariffs on goods imported from China as soon as he took office. For example, at a campaign rally in Columbus, Ohio Trump said “China makes a fortune with currency manipulation. It's cheating. It's cheating,”⁵

In March 2016, Trump stated in a major interview with David Sanger and Maggie Haberman of the *New York Times* with respect to the South China Sea:

I mean look at what China's doing in the South China Sea. I mean they are totally disregarding our country and yet we have made China a rich country because of our bad trade deals. Our trade deals are so bad. And we have made them – we have rebuilt China and yet they will go in the South China Sea and build a military fortress the likes of which perhaps the world has not seen. Amazing, actually. They do that, and they do that at will because they have no respect for our president and they have no respect for our country.⁶

When asked, “How would you counter that assertiveness over those islands? Among other things, it's increasingly valuable real estate strategically. Would you be willing to build our own islands there?” Trump replied that he would consult “Japan and other countries, because they're affected far greater than we are... I just think the act is so brazen, and it's so terrible that they would do that without any consultation, without anything, and yet they'll sell their products to the United States and rebuild China, and frankly, even the islands...”⁷

As Trump continued to digress on the theme that China was responsible for America's run-down state he was interrupted and asked specifically “how would you deter their activity. Right now... But would you claim some of those reef scenarios to try to build our own military ...” Trump replied:

Perhaps, but we have great economic – and people don't understand this – but we have tremendous economic power over China. We have tremendous power. And that's the power of trade. Because they use us as their bank, as their piggy bank, they take – but they don't have to pay us back. It's better than a bank because they take money out but then they don't have to pay us back.

Sanger: So you would cut into trade in return –

Trump: No, I would use trade to negotiate.⁸

In the same interview Trump stated that if he were elected president he would:

⁵ Press Trust of India, “China cheating US with currency manipulation: Trump,” *Business Standard*, August 2, 2016.

⁶ “Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views,” *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016.

⁷ “Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views,” *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016.

⁸ “Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views,” *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016.

- be open to allowing Japan and South Korea to build their own nuclear arsenals rather than depend on the American nuclear umbrella for their protection against North Korea and China...
- be willing to withdraw United States forces from both Japan and South Korea if they did not substantially increase their contributions to the costs of housing and feeding those troops.
- renegotiate many fundamental treaties with American allies, possibly including a 56-year-old security pact with Japan...
- [and] he could withdraw the U.S. military from Japan as well as South Korea unless they increase financial contributions to U.S. military forces for their own self-defense.⁹

Sanger and Haberman summed up Trump's conceptualization and approach to international politics as follows:

In Mr. Trump's worldview, the United States has become a diluted power, and the main mechanism by which he would re-establish its central role in the world is economic bargaining. He approached almost every current international conflict through the prism of a negotiation, even when he was imprecise about the strategic goals he sought...¹⁰

Part 2 Trump's Transactional Foreign Policy

When President Trump took office in January 2017, he lacked any experience in elected government service and foreign affairs. His foreign policy agenda was characterized by a series of slogans such as "America First," "Make America Great Again" and "peace through strength." But as noted above, Trump's worldview was fashioned over thirty years ago and has been remarkably consistent.

Trump's decision making-style as president has been shaped by his experience as a real estate dealmaker, promoter of his brand name, head of the Trump Organization and host of the reality television show *The Apprentice*. Trump consults widely and revels in conflicting policy recommendations from his advisers. Trump claims he is a quick learner and grasps facts quickly.

Trump demands deference, respect and loyalty from his advisers. During his time in The White House Trump has not shirked from firing his National Security Adviser, the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secretary of State and a host of other officials.

But Trump is always in charge. In March 2018, South Korean envoy Chung Eui-yong came to The White House and told Trump that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was "frank and sincere" in wanting meet and discuss giving up his nuclear program. Trump accepted

⁹ David E. Sanger and Maggie Haberman "In Donald Trump's Worldview, America Comes First, and Everybody Else Pays," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016 and "Transcript: Donald Trump Expounds on His Foreign Policy Views," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016.

¹⁰ David E. Sanger and Maggie Haberman "In Donald Trump's Worldview, America Comes First, and Everybody Else Pays," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2016.

immediately. When his advisers urged caution, Trump brushed them aside and retorted, “I get it, I get it.”¹¹

As Laderman and Simms note, Trump has supreme confidence in his own judgment “even in areas in which he has no technical expertise.” In 1984, with reference to the threat of nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States, Trump stated, “it would take an hour and a half to learn everything there is to learn about missiles. I think I know most of it anyway.”

President Trump’s foreign policy style has been widely described by observers as transactional. According to Paul Waldman, President Trump’s decision to withdraw the United States from The Paris Agreement on climate change reveals that

the Trump Doctrine in foreign affairs is taking shape... It says there is only one question that needs to be asked: What’s in it for me?

That Trump would bring his transactional mindset to foreign affairs is no surprise. He had made it plain that he thinks about every interaction with a friend or foe as a “deal,” something to be negotiated to get the best possible terms. Alliances from which everyone benefits or actions that have a short-term cost but long-term, widely shared gains just make no sense to him.¹²

Fay argues that Trump’s understanding of foreign policy comprises three core elements:

The first element is obsession with power and being perceived as powerful, often demonstrated in his admiration for various authoritarian world leaders. Second, every policy issue is a transaction with clear winners and losers. And third, America is on the losing end of nearly all of its international arrangements because it is weak and foolish.¹³

Robert Zoelick identifies five distinctive features of Trump’s transactional policy:

First, Mr Trump is transactional, not institutional. He views foreign policy like a dealmaker and does not care whether the outcomes fit America’s traditional practice of building systems that advance its interests and values...

Second, Mr Trump’s domestic political interests will dominate his foreign policy... I believe Mr Trump’s aim is a political realignment, which he thinks he can achieve by embracing and voicing the grievances of his voters...

Third, trade policy will reflect most explicitly Mr Trump’s dissonant outlook. He proudly embraced protectionism in his inaugural address... In order to signal a belligerent break with the past, he abandoned the Trans-Pacific Partnership...

Fourth, Mr Trump is ambivalent about alliances. He believes the US has been too generous and can no longer afford the 70-year old security system that America led in creating after the second world war...

¹¹ Peter Baker and Choe Sang-Hun, “With Snap ‘Yes’ in Oval Office, Trump Gambles on North Korea,” *The New York Times*, March 10, 2018; <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/world/asia/trump-north-korea.html>.

¹² Paul Waldman, “The Trump Doctrine Emerges, and It’s as Bad as We Thought,” *The American Prospect*, June 5, 2017.

¹³ Matthew Fay, “Trump’s Transactional Foreign Policy,” Niskanen Center, November 4, 2016.

Finally, Mr Trump's tenure is underscoring a vital point about America: it is far bigger than the president.¹⁴

Leon Hadar, a Senior Analyst with Wikistrat, argues that Donald Trump is "a pragmatic technocrat who approaches policy issues on a case-by-case basis very much like a business transaction" and that Trump would pursue "transactional diplomacy" once he assumed office.¹⁵

According to Major General Bert Mizusawa (U.S. Army retired), a former foreign policy and national security adviser to candidate Trump, "[President Trump] would consider each foreign policy engagement or 'entanglement' on its merits: the costs vs. the expected benefits, with the option to disengage if it became apparent that the actual benefits do not justify the costs."¹⁶ Trump holds this view with respect to America's NATO allies as well as Japan and South Korea because they get U.S. protection without paying their fair share.

As Maring Henke observes, "many pundits have suggested that President Trump thinks of diplomacy in transactional terms." Henke then sums up what transactional diplomacy entails:

At its core, transactional diplomacy is based on a *quid pro quo* logic: I don't do anything for you if I don't get something in return. Moreover, transactional diplomats perceive a zero-sum world. What benefits you does not benefit me. That's why if I help you, you need to pay me for it. In a transactional world, the *quid pro quo* – or 'deals' – that states can engage in are almost infinite. In essence, if transactional diplomacy is practiced in full force, every cooperative move – whether in the economic, institutional, or security spheres – becomes fungible and potentially tradeable assets.¹⁷

Part 3 The Trump Administration and Southeast Asia

During his eighteen months in office, Trump's foreign policy was mainly reactive to events outside America such as Syria's use of Sarin gas, and North Korea's repeated launching of ballistic missiles, verbal threats against the United States, and a hydrogen bomb test.

Nevertheless, President Trump was true to one campaign pledge. On January 23, 2017, he signed an Executive Order withdrawing the U.S. from the Trans Pacific Partnership

¹⁴ Robert B. Zoelick, "The Conflict at the Heart of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy," *Financial Times*, August 22, 2017.

¹⁵ Leon Hadar, "The Limits of Trump's Transactional Foreign Policy," *The National Interest*, January 2, 2017.

¹⁶ Fay, "Trump's Transactional Foreign Policy."

¹⁷ Maring Henke, "Trump's Transactional Diplomacy: A Primer," *Political Violence at a Glance*, February 8, 2017. Fungible means mutually interchangeable. Something fungible can be exchanged for something else of the same kind.

(TPP).¹⁸ The Executive Order was a Memorandum to the United States Trade Representative that read in part:

it is the intention of my Administration to deal directly with individual countries on a one-on-one (or bilateral) basis in negotiating future trade deals. Trade with other nations is, and always will be, of paramount importance to my Administration and to me, as President of the United States.

Based on these principles, and by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby direct you to withdraw the United States as a signatory to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), to permanently withdraw the United States from TPP negotiations, and to begin pursuing, wherever possible, bilateral trade negotiations to promote American industry, protect American workers, and raise American wages.¹⁹

Trump followed up on 30 April 2017, by making separate telephone calls to Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. All three leaders were invited to the White House.²⁰ On 23 August, it was announced that President Trump had invited Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak to visit Washington as well.²¹

United States – ASEAN

On 3 May 2017, senior officials from the United States and ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat held the ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue in Washington to discuss cooperation on political, security, and economic issues. On 4 May, Secretary Tillerson hosted foreign ministers of the ASEAN member states for a special meeting to reinforce the Strategic Partnership between the United States and ASEAN and to commemorate the 40th anniversary of U.S.-ASEAN relations.

Four sets of issues were discussed: U.S. commitment to ASEAN, tensions on the Korean peninsula, the South China Sea, and the structure of U.S.-ASEAN economic relations. According to a readout of the meeting by a State Department spokesperson:

Secretary Tillerson underscored that the Asia-Pacific region is a top priority for the Trump Administration and that ASEAN is an essential partner...

Secretary Tillerson and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers discussed the tensions on the Korean Peninsula caused by the DPRK's nuclear tests and missile launches, and the grave threat

¹⁸ Signatories included: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States (until January 23, 2017) and Vietnam.

¹⁹ Presidential Memorandum Regarding Withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations and Agreement, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, January 23, 2017.

²⁰ Reuters, "Trump invites leaders of Thailand, Singapore to the White House," May 1, 2017; "Donald Trump invites Rodrigo Duterte to White House in 'warm' phone call as Chinese ships arrive in the Philippines," ABC News, April 30, 2017 and Carlyle A. Thayer, "South China Sea: Can Trump Chew Gum and Walk at the Same Time?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 4, 2017.

²¹ Gardiner Harris, "Malaysian Leader in Billion-Dollar Scandal Is Invited to White House," *The New York Times*, August 23, 2017.

posed to regional stability. They recognized the need for full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Secretary Tillerson and the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their adherence to a rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific and to the common principles articulated in the 2016 Joint Statement of the U.S.-ASEAN Special Leaders' Summit, including the peaceful resolution of disputes, with full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, and in accordance with international law. The Secretary noted shared concerns by many in the region regarding militarization and land reclamation in the South China Sea. The Secretary and the Ministers stressed the need for ASEAN Member States and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety and took note of efforts towards the early conclusion of a meaningful Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Secretary Tillerson and his counterparts discussed economic partnership through U.S.-ASEAN Connect, the Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement, and the ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment program.²²

Following the special U.S.-ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting, President Trump held bilateral meetings later in the year with government leaders from Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. The Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte declined to accept.

United-States-Vietnam Relations

Trade Issues. There are four major trade issues affecting relations between Vietnam and the United States: (1) dispute over the export of Vietnamese catfish and shrimp (2) Vietnam's designation as a non-market economy, (3) Vietnam's growing trade surplus and (4) the Trump Administration's imposition of tariffs on the export of steel and aluminum from Vietnam.²³ These issues were raised in two meetings of the bilateral U.S.-Vietnam Trade and Investment Council.

The first meeting of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade and Investment Council was held in Hanoi in late March. According to a statement issued by the U.S. Trade Representative:

The United States urged Vietnam to promptly address bilateral issues, including related to *agriculture and food safety*, intellectual property, digital trade, financial services, customs, industrial goods, transparency and good governance, and illegal wildlife tracking. Vietnam also updated the U.S. team on its plans to implement labor reforms. The two sides agreed to continue their dialogue on these issues and to launch working groups focused on resolving bilateral issues, starting with *groups on agricultural and food safety issues*, industrial goods, intellectual property matters, and digital trade.

They reviewed Vietnam's implementation of the WTO trade facilitation agreement, as well as Vietnam's participation in the WTO Information Technology Agreement expansion. In addition, the

²² Secretary Tillerson Meets With the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Readout, Office of the Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, May 4, 2017; <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/05/270657.htm>. U.S.-ASEAN Connect was launched in February 2016 as the U.S. Government's new, unifying framework to deepen the United States' growing economic engagement with ASEAN and the ten ASEAN Member States.

²³ For a concise overview consult, Harish Mehta, "What ails US-Vietnam trade relationship," *Business Times*, March 29, 2018. See: <https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/opinion/what-ails-us-vietnam-trade-relationship>.

U.S. and Vietnamese teams discussed how they could work together to advance their common interests in building U.S.-ASEAN ties (emphasis added).

The second meeting of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade and Investment Council was held in Washington in May. Vietnam requested the U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to change Vietnam's designation as a non-market economy to a market economy and lift U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection (USDA) regulations on Vietnamese catfish imposed by the Obama Administration.²⁴

Vietnam's trade relations with the United States also featured in two meetings between President Donald Trump and Vietnamese leaders in 2017. The first meeting took place at the White House on 31 May between President Trump and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc. At the conclusion of their half hour meeting the two leaders issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to the U.S.-Vietnam comprehensive partnership adopted by the Obama Administration. The joint statement blended the views of both parties.²⁵

Trump and Phuc welcomed the announcement of \$8 billion in new commercial deals and "pledged to continue to work together constructively to seek resolution of other priority issues of each country, including... white offal, distiller's dried grains, siluriformes, shrimp, mangos, and other issues."²⁶ President Trump "noted Vietnam's interest in achieving a market economy status, and the two sides pledged to continue to consult in a cooperative and comprehensive manner via the bilateral working group."

The second high-level meeting was held between Vietnam's President Tran Dai Quang and President Trump in Hanoi on 12 November. On the eve of the visit Vietnam announced \$12 billion in new commercial agreements.

Trump and Quang "pledged to deepen and expand the bilateral trade and investment relationship between the United States and Vietnam through formal mechanisms, including the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). They welcomed the return of market access for United States distillers dried grains into the Vietnamese market and new access for Vietnamese star apples into the United States market. The

²⁴ Under the terms of the U.S.-Vietnam WTO accession agreement Vietnam will remain a non-market economy for twelve years – until 2019 – or until the United States determines Vietnam has met its criteria as a market economy. Under U.S. law a non-market economy is defined as "any foreign country that the administering authority determines does not operate on market principles of cost or pricing structures, so that sales of merchandise in such country do not reflect the fair value of the merchandise." Initially, the Food and Agriculture Organization had responsibility for inspecting Vietnamese catfish, this responsibility was transferred to the USDA that imposes more difficult inspection standards. Both the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Government Accounting Office have concluded that Vietnamese catfish do not pose health problems.

²⁵ Joint Statement for Enhancing the Comprehensive Partnership between the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, May 31, 2017, <https://vn.usembassy.gov/20170601-united-states-vietnam-joint-statement-2017/>.

²⁶ Siluriformes (subclass Actinopterygii, superorder Ostariophysii), an order of bony fish that includes all the catfish. This very large order comprises some 2000 species of marine and freshwater fish, belonging to about thirty-one families. The order was known formerly as Nematognathi.

leaders committed to seek resolution of remaining agricultural trade issues, including those regarding siluriformes, shrimp, and mangoes, and to promote free and fair trade and investment in priority areas, including electronic payment services, automobiles, and intellectual property rights enforcement.”

Despite the common ground reached the following year Vietnam became caught up in Trump’s imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum exports to the United States while the issue of exports of catfish and shrimp remained unresolved.

Steel Exports. In September 2017, four U.S. steel producers filed a petition alleging that immediately after the imposition of U.S. tariffs on Chinese steel, Chinese producers began diverting hot-rolled steel to Vietnam. Three months later, the U.S. Department of Commerce concluded that ninety percent of the value of Vietnam’s steel exports originated as hot-rolled steel from China. The Department of Commerce argued these steel products evaded U.S. anti-dumping and anti-subsidy orders with as much as ninety percent of the steel products’ value. It therefore imposed steep import duties on corrosion-resistant (238%) and cold-rolled steel (531%) products from Vietnam.

On February 16, 2018, the Department of Commerce recommended to President Trump that the U.S. impose tariffs of at least 53 percent and quotas on steel and aluminum imports from Vietnam and other countries (including China, Russia, Japan, India). The quota on steel products was set at 63 percent of a country’s 2017 exports to the United States. The Department of Commerce recommendation was made under Article 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 that the import of these products in such quantities was a threat to national security. President Trump imposed 25 percent tariffs on Vietnamese steel and ten percent of aluminum.

Also, on March 8, President Trump imposed a 25 percent tariff on steel and 10 percent tariff on aluminum imports from Vietnam (and other countries) under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 citing national security concerns.

On May 21, 2018, the Department of Commerce raised tariffs on the import of corrosion-resistant and cold-rolled steel from Vietnam on the grounds they violated anti-dumping and anti-subsidy orders. According to the Department of Commerce, U.S. Customs will collect anti-dumping duties of 199.76 percent and countervailing duties of 256.44 percent on imports of cold-rolled steel products from Vietnam using Chinese-origin substrate. U.S. Customs will also collect anti-dumping duties of 199.43 percent and anti-subsidy duties of 39.05 percent on corrosion-resistant steel from Vietnam using Chinese-origin substrate. These duties are additional to the 25 percent tariff imposed previously by the U.S. on national security grounds.

Vietnam sought an exemption from this ruling. The Department of Commerce responded that the exemption could be granted if Vietnamese enterprises can prove that their products do not use steel exported from China.

Catfish and Shrimp Exports. On January 12, 2018, having achieve no progress on the issue of siluriformes exports to the United States, Vietnam requested bilateral consultations

with the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body relating to the USDA's anti-dumping duties and cash deposit requirements on "certain frozen fish fillets" (catfish) from Vietnam.

Vietnam's request for consultations is the first step in the WTO litigation process. Vietnam argues that the U.S. violated WTO rules by the manner in which it imposed punitive tariffs on Vietnam by claiming that catfish were dumped and sold at an unfair cheap price on the U.S. market. Under WTO rules, the United States has sixty days to settle the complaint; failing that Vietnam could request adjudication by a WTO dispute panel. This matter remains pending.

On March 8, 2018, the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration (ITA) released the preliminary results of its review of anti-dumping order on frozen warm water shrimp from Vietnam. The ITA tentatively set the rate at 25.39%. This rate was applied to the Sao Ta Seafoods Joint Stock Company (FIMEX VN) as the mandatory respondent. The final determination of the anti-dumping rate is scheduled for September 2018.

As of this writing, Vietnam has dispatched Vice Prime Minister Vuong Dinh Hue to Washington to seek resolution of outstanding trade issues. Hue's visit comes at a sensitive time when the Trump Administration is embroiled in trade disputes with China, the European Union, India, Canada and Mexico.

Shopping Diplomacy

In addition to President Trump's meetings with Vietnamese leaders, he also hosted visits the prime ministers from Malaysia (13 September), Thailand (2 October) and Singapore (24 October) in 2017. As noted by Alan Chong, Trump's America First policy "triggered a peculiar foreign policy overture manifested in the visits by the Malaysian, Thai and Singaporean prime ministers to the White House – shopping diplomacy."²⁷

Prime Minister Najib Razak announced that Malaysia's sovereign wealth and national pension funds, Khazanah Nasional and Employees Provident Fund respectively, would invest several billion dollars in equity and infrastructure projects in the United States. Additionally, Malaysian Airlines Berhad and The Boeing Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the sale of eight new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners, purchase rights for eight 737 MAX airplanes and the maintenance for the national carrier's fleet, with the potential total value of \$4 billion (USD).²⁸ Malaysian Airlines also agreed to actively explore options for acquiring General Electric engines.²⁸ The total of Malaysian investment and procurements totalled \$10 billion.

Prime Minister Prayut-o-cha revealed that the Thai military would acquire Blackhawk and Lakota helicopters, a Cobra gunship, Harpoon missiles, F-16 jet fighter upgrades and twenty Boeing jetliners for Thai Airways. The Siam Cement Group announced it would

²⁷ Alan Chong, "Portents of transactional diplomacy in US-Southeast Asia Relations," *East Asia Forum*, November 10, 2017.

²⁸The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Joint Statement for Enhancing the Comprehensive Partnership between the United States of America and Malaysia, September 13, 2017.

purchase 155,000 tons of coal. PTT, the Thai Petroleum Company, declared it would invest in shale gas factories in Ohio. President Trump and Prime Minister Prayut signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate Thai investments to the value of \$6 billion creating 8,000 jobs in the United States.

However, the Joint Statement issued after Trump met with Prayut recorded that the two leaders “noted their interest in continuing discussions under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement to further reenergize their trade relations and ensure balanced trade... They also noted recent progress to further expand bilateral trade and tasked their teams to resolve expeditiously concerns related to agricultural trade, customs, and workers’ rights.”²⁹

Singapore’s relations with the United States were of a different order than U.S. relations with Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. As the Joint Statement issued after talks between President Trump and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong noted, “Bilateral trade has almost doubled from the pre-FTA [Free Trade Agreement] levels to reach more than \$68 billion in 2016, with a consistent trade surplus for the United States. The United States is the largest foreign investor in Singapore, and American companies use Singapore as a regional hub for their activities. Conversely, Singapore is among the largest investors from the Asia in the United States.”³⁰

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong basked at the signing ceremony in which Singapore Airlines contracted to purchase thirty-nine Boeing aircraft that would produce 70,000 jobs in the U.S.³¹

Of the three countries, the United States had a trade surplus of nearly \$9 billion with Singapore in 2016 and a trade deficit of \$19 billion with Thailand and \$nearly \$25 billion with Malaysia.³²

Chong concluded:

Yet one hopes that Trump and his cabinet appreciate that shopping transactions do not define a whole bilateral relationship. Each of the prime ministers had also sought Trump’s friendship for multiple ancillary issues such as keeping US markets open to their business or getting a life for domestic politics.

All three countries too wished to keep the US military engaged in the region as a stabilizing factor vis-à-vis the emergence of Chinese power. In the Malaysian and Singaporean cases, both

²⁹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Joint Statement between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand, October 2, 2017.

³⁰ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Singapore, October 24, 2017.

³¹ Chong, “Portents of transactional diplomacy in US-Southeast Asia Relations.”

³² Ian Storey and Malcolm Cook. “The Trump Administration and Southeast Asia: Enhanced Engagement,” *ISEAS Perspective*, No. 87, November 23, 2017, 4.

countries share with the United States a clear stake in the defeat of Islamic State-inspired terrorism worldwide.³³

ASEAN-U.S. Summit, APEC and East Asian Summit

In November 2017, President Trump attended the 5th ASEAN-U.S. Summit in Manila, the APEC summit in Da Nang and the East Asia Summit in Manila. Trump gave lip service to the region's multilateral architecture and unabashedly pushed his America First protectionist policy and a new theme in American foreign policy - a free and open Indo-Pacific Region.

5th ASEAN-U.S. Summit. The 5th ASEAN-U.S. Summit was held in Manila on 13 November. President Trump spoke briefly:

The United States remains committed to ASEAN's central role as a regional forum for total cooperation. This diplomatic partnership advances the security and prosperity of the American people and the people of all Indo-Pacific nations...

Today, we celebrate your incredible success, and we also seek economic partnerships on the basis of fairness and reciprocity. As the world knows, the United States, since our election on November 8th, has been moving ahead really brilliantly on an economic basis. We have the highest stock market we've ever had. We have the lowest unemployment in 17 years. The value of stocks has risen \$5.5 trillion.

And companies are moving into the United States. A lot of companies are moving. They're moving back. They want to be there. The enthusiasm levels are the highest ever recorded on the charts. So we're very happy about that, and we think that bodes very well for your region because of the relationship that we have.

So we want our partners in the region to be strong, independent, and prosperous, in control of their own destinies, and satellites to no one. These are the principles behind our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. President Trump's speech to the APEC CEO Forum laid out starkly his America First approach - "my way or no way." Trump, like the real estate salesman he is, wrapped up his deal with reassurance of respect for fairness, reciprocity and sovereignty of prospective trade partners. The United States would no longer support or become involved in multilateral trade agreements. Trump unequivocally argued that all trade agreements must be fair and reciprocal and on a bilateral basis.

Trump's disdain for multilateral approaches undermined APEC's objective of achieving trade and investment liberalisation on a multilateral basis. Trump viewed international trade as a zero sum and all trade must be balanced. In Trump's view, regional states cannot walk away because they need access to the American market.

Trump Administration officials stated publicly that the United States will only support trade and investment liberalization under APEC if each nation agrees to high-standards in services, protection of intellectual property and e-commerce and digital commerce. These officials also stressed that these standards must be met if any APEC member wants

³³ Chong, "Portents of transactional diplomacy in US-Southeast Asia Relations."

a free trade agreement with the U.S. These commitments must be included in national work plans with clear benchmarks and deadlines. In sum, a Free Trade Agreement in Asia and the Pacific will only come to fruition when all APEC members are committed to Trump's standards.

Trump's message was discordant. Regional states already gave priority to multilateral arrangements. For example, Southeast Asian states were in the process of developing an ASEAN Economic Community. ASEAN and China were engaged in negotiations on raising the level of their free trade agreement. ASEAN and free trade agreement partners were simultaneously discussing how to harmonize their bilateral trade arrangements into a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. And eleven key economies, who are APEC members, continued to negotiate on a TPP 11, without the United States. Trump's withdrawal from the TPP and his push for bilateral FTAs serve to marginalize the United States in regional economic development.

Finally, Trump's fired a shot across the bow of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by advocating a greater role for the World Bank and Asian Development Bank in funding infrastructure development in the region. However, regional demands for infrastructure funding are so great that Trump's new initiative will have to proceed in tandem with China's BRI.

East Asia Summit. Trump disdain for regional multilateral institutions was evident in is off again on again decision to attend the East Asia Summit in Manila. Even then, Trump left the meeting early telling reporters on Air Force One that he had already delivered his "final remarks" during a lunch with other leaders. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson deputised for the president.

Trump's trip to Southeast Asia was the longest presidential trip he had undertaken to date. How did Trump assess the results? Typically, he focused on the trade dimension. Trump told reporters his trip had resulted in sales of \$300 billion "worth of equipment and other things... And I think that number is going to be quadrupled very quickly. So that's over a trillion dollars' worth of stuff." Trump provided no details.

Part 4 U.S. National Security Policy

In December 2017 the Trump Administrations released its United States National Security Strategy (NSS).³⁴ In January of the next year, the Department of Defense released the U.S. National Defense Strategy.³⁵ Both documents adopted the Indo-Pacific framework in place of the Asia-Pacific region used previously. Southeast Asia was included under the Indo-Pacific framework.

³⁴ United States, The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, December 2017.

³⁵ United States, Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*, 2018.

The new U.S. National Security Strategy represents the considered views of Trump's "beautiful generals" as he calls James Mattis, John Kelly and HR McMaster. Russia and China are clearly identified as revisionist powers and rivals of the U.S. who seek to undermine American power globally. China has been explicitly identified as a strategic competitor of the U.S. along with Russia, and the security challenge these two countries pose to the U.S. has been elevated to the highest priority eclipsing international terrorism.

Trump's campaign slogan of "peace through strength" was incorporated into the new U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) in a section that gave prominence to the military dimension of national power. This was juxtaposed to the following smaller section on diplomacy. What this term means is more funding for the Pentagon. Priority will be given to modernizing the U.S. nuclear weapons and their means of delivery and developing new defense technologies to meet the threats posed by North Korea as well as Russia and China.

"Peace through strength" will also mean the gradual expansion and modernization of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific region primarily to deal with contingencies on the Korean peninsula, to reassure U.S. allies Japan, South Korea and Australia, and to counter-balance China in the South China Sea. The NSS commits the United States, as a priority action, to "maintain a forward military presence capable of deterring and, if necessary, defeating any adversary."

The NSS explicitly singled out China's policies in the Indo-Pacific region: "China is using economic inducements and penalties, influence operations, and implied military threats to persuade other states to heed its political and security agenda. China's infrastructure investments and trade strategies reinforce its geopolitical aspirations."

Most of the NSS references to multinational international organizations are designed to push narrow U.S. interests. The NSS advocates reforming the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, for example, on the assumption that it will lead to fairer trade in U.S. eyes. The NSS gives priority to "bilateral trade agreements on a fair and reciprocal basis... [and] equal and reliable access for American exports."

The NSS also declared that the U.S. will adopt a policy "encouraging multilateral development banks [read the World Bank] to invest in high-quality infrastructure projects that promote economic growth." In sum, the wording of the NSS implied that the U.S. will push back and compete against China in the region.

With regard to Southeast Asia, the NSS focused entirely on the maritime domain and freedom of navigation, free and reciprocal trade and defence issues. The NSS explicitly mentioned that the U.S. will redouble its commitment to allies (Thailand and the Philippines) and established partnerships as its first priority. The NSS also mentioned Vietnam along with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (in that order) as "growing security and economic partners of the United States."

The NSS notes that China's military outposts in the South China Sea "threaten the sovereignty of other nations and undermine regional stability." The NSS gives priority to reinforcing the U.S. commitment "to freedom of the seas and the peaceful resolution of

territorial and maritime disputes in accordance with international law.” Nevertheless, it can be inferred from the NSS that the South China Sea is considered a potential arena for competition but is low on the list of priorities headed by nuclear proliferation on the Korean peninsula and international terrorism.

The NSS explicitly declared that the United States will provide leadership for a collective response that upholds “a regional order respectful of sovereignty and independence.” In other words, the U.S. will create a networked regional architecture to push back against China’s militarization, predatory economic policies and political intimidation by upgrading cooperation with allies and partners. The South China Sea is singled out for particular attention. U.S. policy is to keep its sea-lanes free and open and guarantee access to the maritime commons or South China Sea. But the U.S. holds out its hand to build trust and transparency with China.

The NSS also contains inconsistencies. To take one example, the NSS advocates U.S. values while offering support to President Duterte in the Philippines. The NSS supports a global order based on sovereign states pursuing their own national interests under international law while at the same time preserving the greater power of the United States to act unilaterally whenever President Trump so decides. President Trump’s verbal comments when he delivered the NSS were markedly different in tone from the text, especially on Russia. Trump’s asserted that eventually U.S. rivals could be brought around to cooperate with the United States along with allies and other partners.

National Defense Strategy. According to a summary of the U.S. NDS:

We are facing increased global disorder, characterized by decline in the long-standing rules-based international order – creating a security environment more complex and volatile than any we have experienced in recent memory. Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security...

China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea...

The central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by what the National Security strategy classifies as revisionist powers. It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model – gaining veto authority over other nations’ economic, diplomatic, and security decisions.

China is leveraging military modernization, influence operations, and predatory economics to coerce neighboring countries to reorder the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China continues its economic and military ascendance, asserting power through an all-of-nation long-term strategy, it will continue to pursue a military modernization program that seeks Indo-Pacific regional hegemony in the near-term and displacement of the United States to achieve global preeminence in the future.³⁶

The NDS summary, which provided a broad brush strategic defence overview, only dealt briefly with the Indo-Pacific region in a single bullet point:

Expand Indo-Pacific alliances and partnerships. A free and open Indo-Pacific region provides prosperity and security for all. We will strengthen our alliances and partnerships in the Indo-

³⁶ United States Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge*, 1-2.

Pacific to a networked security architecture capable of deterring aggression, maintaining stability, and ensuring free access to common domains. With key countries in the region, we will bring together bilateral and multilateral security relationships to preserve the free and open international system.³⁷

Conclusion

President Donald Trump's transactional approach to foreign policy is a work in progress. Trump and his supporters argue that advancing American influence is not incompatible with America First because Trump holds that U.S. economic and military power is sufficient to bend other countries to do what the U.S. wants. Trump will always apply the test "what does America get out of any arrangement or deal with another country?" This is a transactional view of influence.

According to Roberto Menotti transactional foreign policy has one major flaw:

A transactional foreign policy is systematically advantageous to American interests only under one set of circumstances: if both negotiators assume that the US has superior hard and soft power, as well as more willpower and stamina. If these conditions are not met (and in several instances they will not, as Washington is often an outside or distant player in areas that are of vital importance to countries like China or Russia – think of the South China Sea or Central Asia), then there is a serious problem. A set of open-ended "clean slate" negotiations actually gives away one important (possibly irreplaceable) American card from the start, i.e. the unique position the US occupies in global relations as the hub of an overlapping network of alliances, bilateral arrangements (such as the detailed protocols that formally govern bilateral relations with China) and multilateral commitments. In other words, the weight of history helps make the US the stronger player, thanks to a variety of tangible and intangible resources. Negotiating without those resources in the background – a sort of firepower stored over the horizon that can be called upon in case of need – is a big gamble

President Trump's pursuit of transactional foreign policy has resulted in the bifurcation of its implementation. On the one hand, the Secretaries of Defense and State pursue their departments' goals within the framework of the U.S. National Security Strategy. This includes multilateral and bilateral engagement with the institutions and states in the Indo-Pacific region.

On the other hand, President Trump conducts his own transactional foreign policy on matters that attract his personal interest and attention, such as nuclear proliferation in North Korea. Trump's decision to meet with Chairman Kim Jong-un was impulsive and resulted in a joint statement that was notable for its lack of details. Trump seems to be promising North Korea a bright economic future (funded by Japan and South Korea) in exchange for complete verifiable irreversible denuclearization.

Trump's transactional policy is not moored to the strategies outlined in his Administration's whole-of-government NSS and NDS. Trump's intervention can take the form of tweets advocating a policy change or attacking a foreign leader, such as the Prime

³⁷ United States Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*, 9.

Minister of Canada. The U.S. NSS endorses a rules-based international order while Trump withdraws U.S. support from a G-7 joint statement because of a reference to ‘rules-based order.’”

To take another example, the U.S. Congress has imposed sanctions on Russia for its interference in the U.S. electoral process. The European Union has condemned Russian seizure of Crimea and interference in the Ukraine. Yet President Trump regularly downplays these concerns tweeting approvingly that Vladimir Putin has denied interfering in U.S. elections. In parallel with the North Korean issue, Trump has reached out to Putin for a one-on-one summit meeting in the shadow of a NATO summit.

This paper concludes that there are four main consequences arising from Trump’s transactional approach to security challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region: (1) a decline in U.S. credibility as a security provider, (2) increased space for China to exercise leadership in the region, (3) growing security engagement by Japan, Australia and India to pick up the strategic slack to counter China’s rise and (4) increased strain on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its self-proclaimed centrality in regional affairs.

Bibliography

Chong, Alan. "Portents of transactional diplomacy in US-Southeast Asia Relations," *East Asia Forum*, November 10, 2017. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2017/11/10/portents-of-transactional-diplomacy-in-us-southeast-asia-relations/>.

Drezner, Daniel W. "The Doom Loop- of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy Musings," Opinion Editorial, *The Washington Post*, August 2, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/08/02/the-doom-loop-of-donald-trumps-foreign-policy-musings/?utm_term=.c5fd637dc52f.

Fay, Matthew. "Trump's Transactional Foreign Policy," Niskanen Center, November 4, 2016.

Hadar, Leon, "The Limits of Trump's Transactional Foreign Policy," *The National Interest*, January 2, 2017.

_____. "The Problem with 'Transactional Diplomacy'," *Business Times* (Singapore), May 3, 2017.

Heilbrunn, Jacob. "Realism is Back," *Politico Magazine*, September/October 2017. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/trump-foreign-policy-realism-realpolitik-215536>.

Henke, Maring, "Trump's Transactional Diplomacy: A Primer," *Political Violence at a Glance*, February 8, 2017. <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2017/02/08/trumps-transactional-diplomacy-a-primer/>.

Laderman, Charlie and Brendan Simms, *Donald Trump: The Making of a World View*. New York: I. B. Tarus, 2017.

Leffler, Melvyn P. "The Worst 1st Year of Foreign Policy Ever," *Foreign Policy*, September 19, 2017. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/09/19/the-worst-first-year-of-foreign-policy-ever/>.

Menotti, Roberts. "Trump's transactional problems," *Aspenia Online*, January 17, 2017. <http://www.aspeninstitute.it/aspenia-online/article/trump-s-transactional-problem>.

Panda, Ankit, "China Probes the Limits of Trump's Transactional Deal-Making Approach to Foreign Affairs," *The Diplomat*, May 8, 2017.

Saunders, Debra, "Transactional President," *Real Clear Politics*, April 16, 2017.

Storey, Ian and Malcolm Cook. "The Trump Administration and Southeast Asia: Enhanced Engagement," *ISEAS Perspective*, No. 87, November 23, 2017.

Thayer, Carlyle A., "South China Sea: Tillerson's Call to Arms," Thayer Consultancy Background Brief, January 12, 2017

_____. "United States Policy Towards South East Asia Under Trump," Thayer Consultancy Background Brief, January 12, 2017.

_____. "US Defense Secretary James Mattis Tones Down Rhetoric on South China Sea Dispute," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, February 7, 2017.

_____. "United States: Trump Administration and Asia-Pacific," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, February 19, 2017.

_____. "U.S. Secretary of State Visits Japan, South Korea and China," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 16, 2017.

_____. "South China Sea Issues and Secretary Tillerson's Visit to China," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 16, 2017.

_____. "United States: Tillerson's Asia Trip and the South China Sea," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 21, 2017.

_____. "United States: Tillerson's Asia Trip, End of Pivot, What Next?" *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 22, 2017.

_____. "Trump-Xi Informal Summit," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 9, 2017.

_____. "U.S. Vice President Mike Pence to Visit Australia," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 15, 2017.

_____. "North Korea: U.S. Military Actions," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 16, 2017.

_____. "United States: Trump's Foreign Policy After 100 Days," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 26, 2017.

_____. "ASEAN Summit: Duterte as ASEAN Chair," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 26, 2017.

_____. "North Korean Crisis: Give Chinese Diplomacy a Chance?" *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 27, 2017.

_____. "Assessing US-Vietnam Relations Under President Trump," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 28, 2017.

_____. "South China Sea: Can Trump Chew Gum and Walk at the Same Time?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, April 4, 2017.

_____. "South China Sea: US Freedom of Navigation Patrols," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, May 26, 2017.

_____. "US-Vietnam: Outcome of President Trump-Prime Minister Phuc White House Meeting -1," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 1, 2017.

_____. "US-Vietnam: Outcome of President Trump-Prime Minister Phuc White House Meeting - 2," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 1, 2017.

_____. "US-Vietnam: Outcome of President Trump-Prime Minister Phuc White House Meeting - 3," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 2, 2017.

_____. "US-Vietnam: Outcome of President Trump-Prime Minister Phuc White House Meeting - 4," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 2, 2017.

_____. "Shangri-La Dialogue: Prime Minister Turnbull & Defense Secretary Mattis," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 3, 2017.

_____. "Vietnam-US Relations: Opportunities & Challenges," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 18, 2017.

_____. "Vietnam-U.S. Military Relations," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, July 25, 2017.

_____. "North Korean Nuclear Crisis: Canvassing the Contingencies," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, August 13, 2017.

_____. "North Korea Fires Ballistic Missile Over Japan," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, August 30, 2017.

_____. "North Korea Tests Hydrogen Bomb," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, September 3, 2017.

_____. "North Korea's Hydrogen Bomb: Make or Break for Trump," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, September 3, 2017.

_____. "North Korea: Getting Trump to Act Out of Character," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, September 5, 2017.

_____. "North Korea: Test Fires Another Ballistic Missile," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, September 15, 2017.

_____. "United States: Will Trump Go to Southeast Asia or Won't He?" *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, September 17, 2017.

_____. "The Trump Administration's Policy Towards the South China Sea: Rhetoric and Reality," Presentation to the Third International Conference on Security and Cooperation in the South China Sea, sponsored by the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Radisson SAS Slavyanskaya Hotel, Moscow, September 18, 2017.

_____. "APEC: Its Purpose, Agenda and Trump's Presence," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 18, 2017.

_____. "United States: What Trump's Visit to East Asia Portends," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 19, 2017.

_____. "Vietnam: What is the Purpose of Trump's Official Visit to Hanoi?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 19, 2017.

_____. "APEC Summit: Agenda, Issues, Role of Vietnam as Chair," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 20, 2017.

_____. "United States: Trump to Attend APEC Summit, Make Official to Viet Nam," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 22, 2017.

- _____. "Trump's Foreign Policy on the First Anniversary of his Election -1," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 24, 2017.
- _____. "Trump's Foreign Policy on the First Anniversary of his Election - 2," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 25, 2017.
- _____. "China's Xi Jin-ping: Implications for the Region," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 25, 2017.
- _____. "Vietnam: Trump Visit Scene Setter," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 29, 2017.
- _____. "Trump's Foreign Policy: 2/3rds Reactive, 1/3rd Proactive," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 29, 2017.
- _____. "Trump's Visit to Asia: What are the Gives and Takes?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October 31, 2017.
- _____. "Vietnam: APEC Summit - Strategic Context, Agenda, Priorities and Official Visits," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, October, 31 2017.
- _____. "APEC and TPP II, RCEP and FTAAP," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 5, 2017.
- _____. "Vietnam: Trump's Visit and Arms Sales," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 5, 2017.
- _____. "Trump's 'Free and Open' Indo-Pacific Region," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 9, 2017.
- _____. "APEC: China and the US – Their Game Plans," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 9, 2017.
- _____. "APEC Summit – The TPP 11 and Donald Trump," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 10, 2017.
- _____. "APEC: Trump's Address to APEC CEO Forum," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 10, 2017.
- _____. "Presidents Quang and Trump to Meet: Let's Make a Deal?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 11, 2017.
- _____. "Vietnam: Significance of Trump's Official Visit," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 11, 2017.
- _____. "Duterte and Trump: Will the Alliance Hold?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 11, 2017.
- _____. "United States: Trump in Hanoi and The Art of the Deal," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 11, 2017.
- _____. "Vietnam Hosts Trump and Xi: Challenges & Opportunities," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 12, 2017.

_____. "Vietnam: Assessing the Significance of Trump's Visit." *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 13, 2017.

_____. "North Korea: Give Sanctions a Chance," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, November 30, 2017.

_____. "United States: Trump's National Security Strategy: More Competition or Conflict?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, December 22, 2017.

_____. "Vietnam and the U.S. National Security Strategy," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, December 22, 2017.

_____. "United States: Free and Open Indo-Pacific a Work in Progress," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 11, 2018.

_____. "United States National Security Strategy and Southeast Asia," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 12, 2018.

_____. "United States: Evaluating 1st Anniversary of Trump Presidency," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 18, 2018.

_____. "U.S. Defense Secretary to Visit Vietnam - 1," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 22, 2018.

_____. "U.S. Defense Secretary to Visit Vietnam - 2," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 22, 2018.

_____. "U.S. Defense Secretary to Visit Vietnam - 3," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 22, 2018.

_____. "U.S. Defense Secretary to Visit Vietnam - 4," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 23, 2018.

_____. "U.S. Defense Secretary to Visit Vietnam - 5," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 24, 2018.

_____. "Asia-Pacific Region – Defence Spending and Arms Acquisitions," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 24, 2018.

_____. "U.S.S. Carl Vinson (CVN-70) to Visit Da Nang in March," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 27, 2018.

_____. "United States: Trump Administration and the Indo-Pacific – What Lies Ahead?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, January 28, 2018.

_____. "Realignments in the Indo-Pacific Region," *Thayer Consultancy Background Report*, February 5, 2018.

_____. "U.S. Defence Budget: Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, February 10, 2018.

_____. "Vietnam to Host Visit by USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70)," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, February 18, 2018.

_____. "USS Carl Vinson to Visit Da Nang: Scene Setter," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, February 22, 2018.

_____. "USS Carl Vinson to Visit Vietnam: What is the Message?" *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, February 27, 2018.

_____. "USS Carl Vinson Visit to Da Nang: Implications, Future Defence Relations and China's Reactions," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 1, 2018.

_____. "USS Carl Vinson Visits Vietnam – What Next?," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 6, 2018.

_____. "USS Carl Vinson, Third Fleet, Operating in Western Pacific," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, March 6, 2018.

_____. "Vietnam: Relations with the United States and China," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, May 3, 2018.

_____. "South China Sea: Chinese Nuclear Capable Bombers Land on Woody Island," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, May 20, 2018.

_____. "Australia-United States Relations and the Indo-Pacific Region," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 11, 2018.

_____. "Trump-Kim Singapore Summit: First Step in Protracted Process," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 14, 2018.

_____. "United States: Is Trump Inadvertently Rearranging the Regional Security Architecture?" *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 14, 2018.

_____. "Vietnam-U.S. Trade Relations: Free Market v Protectionism," *Thayer Consultancy Background Brief*, June 16, 2018.

United States Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*.

United States, The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, December 2017.

Waldman, Paul. "The Trump Doctrine Emerges, and It's as Bad as We Thought," *The American Prospect*, June 5, 2017. <http://prospect.org/article/trump-doctrine-emerges-and-its-bad-we-thought>.

Wright, George. "Trump's 19th Century Foreign Policy," *Politico Magazine*, January 20, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/01/donald-trump-foreign-policy-213546>.

Zoelick, Robert B. "The Conflict at the Heart of Donald Trump's Foreign Policy," *Financial Times*, August 22, 2017. <https://www.ft.com/content/896ff946-868e-11e7-8bb1-5ba57d47eff7>.