
In September 2018, following several months of pressure from Congress, the White House released a new US Strategy for Cyberspace. The media described the document as the new administration’s shift towards a more aggressive and offensive cybersecurity policy.

Several clauses in the new Cyber Strategy genuinely appear to
suggest that Washington intends to step up preventive offensive operations against its adversaries in cyberspace. Oleg Demidov, PIR Center Consultant, and Margarita Angmar offer a more in-depth analysis of the document and reflect on how these plans could affect Russian-US relations on cybersecurity issues.

Key findings:

- "The National Cyber Strategy" published on September 20, 2018 was created by a Republican administration of Donald Trump. Despite the fact that he completely ignores the cyber strategies approved under Barack Obama, most areas of the new strategy demonstrate that the signs of the new administration’s and Donald Trump’s influence are few and far between. The new strategy does not formulate a coherent new vector for all the government actors involved – rather, it describes the already existing policies (including those drawn under Obama) and the working agenda already pursued by individual federal agencies.

- Internet governance – multi-stakeholder model. Surprisingly, the strategy still contains a clause declaring a US commitment to the Internet governance based on the multi-stakeholder model – even though during the presidential election campaign, the Trump HQ insisted that he would not “allow Obama to cede control of the Internet to foreign states” (referring to the proposed transfer of the coordinating role in the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority – IANA – from the US government to a global community of stakeholders).
• **Proactive defence.** Shortly before the Trump cyber strategy was unveiled, the Department of Defense released a summary of its own Cyber Strategy. Its provisions specify the ones set forth in the White House doctrine. The priorities of that paper are clear: the main activity of DoD is stated proactive defence, everyday competition with strategic rivals, prepare for war by gathering intelligence and bolster its offensive military capability. Russia, China, Iran and North Korea are named among strategic rivals.

• **Coalitions.** The Strategy proposes to launch the international Cyber Deterrence Initiative. Its goal is to build a coalition with all states that share America’s values and approaches to cybersecurity in order to ensure a decisive and effective response to hostile action and “unacceptable behavior” in cyberspace by third countries.

• **Rift in the once-united platform for multilateral efforts on cyberspace regulation.** At the end of 2018, Russia and the United States submitted two rival drafts of a UN General Assembly resolution on the future of the UN Group of Government Experts (UN GGE) on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. French President Emmanuel Macron announced "The Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace". Three different national initiatives that ostensibly aim to resolve the same issues, but are being positioned by their proponents as rival alternatives, show that genuine global dialogue on rules, codes of conduct, and regulation of cyberspace is falling apart.

• **Russia – US.** In the absence of multilateral and bilateral dialogue, in view of new American policies, the most realistic
format for any exchanges between Moscow and Washington boils down to working visits and secret meetings between armed forces and secret service representatives. It is as well necessary to indicate "red lines" which should not be crossed in order not to transform "strategic competition" in cyberspace to a full-fledged military conflict.

Opinion

"US Decision to Withdraw from the INF Treaty is more about China than Russia"

On October 20, 2018, President Donald Trump announced that the United States is going to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty). Many experts assumed that Trump’s decision was caused not by the accusations that Russia violated the treaty but by concerns about China’s growing military power. In the interview to Andrey Baklitsky, PIR Center Consultant, for Security Index analytical bulletin Tong Zhao, Fellow in Carnegie’s Nuclear Policy Program based at the Carnegie–Tsinghua, explains how Trump’s announcement was perceived in China and analyses the current state of strategic stability between the United States and China. Read

Analysis

Nikolai Sokov. Modernization of Nuclear Weapons: How it Influences Strategic Stability
"Evaluation of the impact of modernization of nuclear arsenals on strategic stability depends, first and foremost, on the definition of strategic stability. During the Cold War, strategic stability was synonymous to stability of mutual nuclear deterrence; the latter guaranteed the absence of any direct military confrontation because such confrontation, by default, involved a nuclear exchange." Read

About

"Security Index" newsletter presents reports, analytical articles, comments and interviews that reflect the positions of Russian and foreign experts on the current challenges of global security and Russian policy in this sphere. The newsletter aims at providing clear analysis of global security problems and suggesting practical solutions.

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