



USA NSS: Europe Take Charge of Your Destiny

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The message from Washington's [National Security Strategy](#) is brutal: the era when the United States almost single-handedly upheld the global order is over. **The priority today is to defend American territory, borders, supply chains** and prevent hostile hegemonic powers from emerging in Europe or Asia, without automatically intervening in every crisis. “Peace through strength” remains the guiding principle, but paired with a strong instinct for non-intervention: more deterrence, fewer wars of choice.

The relationship with the international system is also changing. The USA no longer wants to be constrained by norms and institutions considered hostile or overly limiting. **National sovereignty returns to the forefront, along with a very tough stance on mass migration**, described not as a resource but as a strategic vulnerability. In parallel comes the message to allies: from now on, you will also pay the bill. The underlying idea is *burden-shifting*: shifting burdens and risks to Europe and Asia. For NATO, the old goal of 2% of GDP for defense

seems outdated; there is a push for a real arms race. Those who do not comply will weigh less.



Europe: an ally, but fragile and in identity crisis

For the United States, Europe remains fundamental, but no longer as a model of governance or “cradle of law”. **It is a strategic front that risks becoming a problem.** In the American view, the continent appears **economically stagnant, over-regulated and suspicious of innovation, demographically declining** and politically marked by fragile governments, often inclined to suppress dissent in the name of stability. Behind the rhetoric on democracy, Washington sees an insecure, introverted, and dependent Europe, asking for protection but questioning every American decision.

The Russian issue is emblematic. The USA invites Europeans to return to the reality of power relations: **overall, the Union is richer and stronger than Russia**, excluding the nuclear arsenal. Continuing to describe Moscow only as an existential threat is considered excessive and politically toxic. Hence the declared goal of ending the war in Ukraine with an agreement, as soon as possible, to prevent Europe from completely wearing out economically and socially. Fewer dreams of “decisive victories”, more realpolitik.

The list of American demands on the Old Continent is demanding: **invest much more in defense and take military leadership of the European theater**; rebuild, when conditions allow, a form of stability with Russia without rewarding it; stop stifling growth with suffocating regulations; remain firmly in the Western camp in the technological and economic competition

with China. In other words, Washington does not abandon Europe, but will no longer be its total insurer.



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China: the real confrontation of the century

If Russia is a problem to manage, **China is the long-term strategic rival**. In the American narrative, it is not just an economic competitor, but an alternative system that aims to rewrite the rules of trade, technology, and global political influence. According to Washington, Beijing has exploited access to Western markets to enrich and arm itself, **practices dumping and state subsidies, steals technologies, controls crucial segments of global value chains, from raw materials to high-tech components, and uses infrastructure, loans, and large projects as levers of power in the so-called Global South.**

Faced with this scenario, **the United States is shelving the illusions of happy globalization** and setting up a new economic doctrine. **The core is internal reindustrialization, supported by tariffs and incentives, reducing critical dependencies on China**, controlling Chinese investments in sensitive sectors, and building a Western economic bloc, made up of the USA and allies, based on tougher rules for trade, technology, data, and infrastructure.

On the military level, the priority is the Indo-Pacific. Washington wants to avoid a war over Taiwan, but at the same time maintain credible deterrence, preventing China from gaining control of the First Island Chain and the South China Sea. To achieve this, it focuses on

strengthening its naval, air, space, and nuclear forces, and urges regional allies – Japan, Australia, South Korea, India, Philippines – to rearm, coordinate, and grant greater access to bases. **The goal is clear: prevent Chinese hegemony in Asia without reaching direct confrontation, but still preparing for the worst-case scenario.**

And where does Europe stand?

In the **USA-China-Europe triangle**, our continent risks becoming the **weak link**. The United States demands more money for defense and fewer regulatory sermons; China presents itself as an indispensable commercial and technological partner; Russia remains an unstable neighbor to be neutralized as a factor of chaos, without turning it into a permanent obsession.

For Italy and other European countries, this translates into three difficult choices:

- accept that **security is no longer free** and equip themselves with credible armed forces;
- **redefine the relationship with Moscow** in terms of stability when possible, without breaking the Western front;
- **take a stand in the competition with China**, especially on technology, infrastructure, energy, and networks.

The new American strategy is not a withdrawal, but a sharp rebalancing. The USA remains the pivot of the West, but envisions a world where Europeans ensure the security of their continent on their own, Asians do their part to contain China, and America can focus on what truly matters: the systemic challenge with Beijing and the well-being of its middle class. The final message to Europe is implicit but very clear: choosing sides is no longer enough. Now you must also prove you are up to it.

News link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf>