SECTION 6.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY 2017:
APPROACH FROM THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS METHODOLOGICAL POINT

The national security strategy is a mandatory document to be created by the presidential administration. According to the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 to reorganize the US Department of Defense, the presidential administration is required to submit its own vision for the development of the defense sector and its strategic objectives to Congress [1].

The President of the United States is one of the key positions in the field of foreign policy formation and determination of the general strategic course of the state for a period that can often go beyond his term in office. Already classic for the historiography of international relations is the situation when the US foreign policy of the 20th century is literally studied by episodes, which are named according to one or another individual strategy and or doctrine of the president. Of course, it would be a mistake to consider the president's administration as the only point of reference responsible for the formation of the agenda in the state's foreign policy. However, at the same time, given the publicity and informational influence of this position - like what Theodore Roosevelt once called the "bully pulpit" - the strategies presented by the White House administration carry perhaps the most illustrative and narrative load.

In this article, we will try to highlight the key positions of the security doctrine of the forty-fifth US President Donald Trump and characterize its foreign policy components and factors. At the same time, we will try to approach its more hard-security aspects with a political theory’s instruments.

It is obvious that most of this strategy is devoted to external factors, external threats and generally the international response of the United States to the emergence of certain security issues. However, for the purposes of this article, we focus on the international dimension as an aspect of cooperation and the formation of this strategy, and not on the instrumental component. Thus, in the future, we will consider the geographical dimension of this strategy, the main narratives of the United States regarding partner countries, opponent countries, and the main international external threats.

The strategy identifies China and Russia as the main international threats to the United States. According to the authors of the strategy, “China and Russia challenge American power, influence and interests, which impairs the security and prosperity of the United States. They chose to make economies less free and less fair, build up their military and control information and data in order to repress their societies and expand their influence. At the same time, the dictatorships
of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran are determined to destabilize the regions, to pose a threat to the Americans and our allies, and to brutalize their own people." [2, p. 2].

In addition, the authors distinguish two types of non-state threats in the international arena. In the section describing the first "pillar" of American security - namely, "Chasing threats to their roots" - two goals are identified for neutralizing international threats to the United States. The first of them is the victory over jihadist terrorists [2, p. 10-11], the second is the destruction of the system of transnational criminal groups [2, p. 11-12].

Regionally, the strategy represents the interests of the United States in the following regions: the Indo-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, South and Central Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and Africa. In the regional aspect, the allocation of the Indo-Pacific region is extremely interesting. Such zoning was unusual for several previous strategies of American administrations and, most likely, tells us about the frontal approach of the Trump administration to the settlement of the situation in the region, given the change in Chinese policy during the first term of his presidency.

One of the defining features of the strategy is a new approach to the classification of security issues in the Middle East. Since the end of the Cold War, within each presidential administration, we have seen the Arab-Israeli conflict centreing all security and political issues in the region. Departing from this approach, the Trump administration's strategy, in turn, asserts that the key issue for the security of the region is not Israel's policy, but the threats posed by the already mentioned terrorist organizations and the threat of strengthening Iran and its influence on neighbouring countries and terrorist organizations.

It is worth noting that although most analysts declared the first term of President Trump a complete departure from the so-called "grand strategy" of the United States, at the same time, the security strategy of his administration generally adheres to the course of this geopolitical maxim. Of course, certain changes can be observed both in the regional zoning of the strategy and in the change of certain regulations regarding key players in these regions. At the same time, the list of threats - both state and non-state - as well as the general view of allies and enemies remained continuously stable.

We also have to admit that, in contrast to previous strategies, the Trump administration has begun to shift emphasis to threats that are more non-classical for the American strategy. On the one hand, this indicates the formation of new threats and the strengthening of non-standard types of threats that the United States is currently dealing with. On the other hand, the unpredictability of Donald Trump's steps and decisions has already been seen as his signature political move, so such a departure from the classic positions of American politics may be a manifestation of his personal approach to conducting affairs. It is worth noting that in the external political establishment there was indeed a request for a frank and professional review of priorities and an adequate assessment, but in reality Trump's approach to national security very quickly moved away from attempts at modernization and concentrated on solving domestic political issues at the expense of foreign policy [3, p. 22-25].

References: