

# China, Russia bigger threats than terrorism: US



Mattis unveils new strategy focused on Russia and China, takes Congress to task over impasse

## Washington

**C**hina's fast-growing technological and military capabilities make it a greater threat to America than terrorism, the US Department of Defense has claimed in a new strategy report.

The document also says Russia is an equally prominent threat for the same reasons, and says that both countries seek "to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model".

Confronting China and Russia and staying ahead of their quickly expanding military capabilities are the Pentagon's "principal priorities" and will require "increased and sustained investment," according to an 11-page unclassified summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, released Friday.

The two US rivals are actively seeking to "co-opt or replace the free and open order that has enabled global security and prosperity since World War II," according to the report.

To counter that effort, America will "thwart their use of coercion and

intimidation to advance their goals and harm US interests."

The report, a summary of a more detailed classified document mandated by Congress, outlines Defense Secretary Jim Mattis's views on geopolitics and threats facing the US one year into President Donald Trump's term.

On Russia, it reflects a US foreign policy team that never bought into their leader's early enthusiasm for President Vladimir Putin.

"Great-power competition – not terrorism – is now the primary focus of US national security," Mattis said in a speech outlining the plan Friday at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington.

He said "everything we do in the department must contribute to the lethality of our military" because "our competitive edge has eroded in every domain of warfare – air, land, sea, space and cyberspace – and it is continuing to erode."

But the unclassified summary of the strategy offers few specifics of how US

forces should be structured to combat that threat, how many conflicts those forces must be ready to contest – possibly simultaneously – or the budget assumptions driving the document.

The report singles out China's military modernisation and expansion in the South China Sea as key threats to US power. It also highlights Russian actions to undermine democratic processes in Georgia, Crimea and eastern Ukraine, as well as Moscow's efforts to "shatter" the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"China and Russia are now undermining the international order from within the system by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously undercutting its principles and 'rules of the road,'" according to the report.

Senator John McCain of Arizona, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement that he was pleased with the strategy because "it gets the big decisions right, prioritises the threats we face, and offers clear guidance for making tough choices." (Bloomberg)

## Eleven killed and 46 injured in bus crash in north-western Turkey



The bus, whose passengers were mainly families on their way to a nearby ski resort, crashed in the region of Eskişehir.

### Ankara

**E**leven people were killed and 46 injured when a bus taking families on a skiing trip crashed in north-western Turkey, local officials said.

The bus, which was making an overnight journey from the capital, Ankara, to the western city of Bursa, crashed into trees on a motorway in the region of Eskişehir, its governor Ozdemir Çakacak told the Dogan news agency.

Roads were empty, and neither wet nor frozen, Çakacak said.

The two drivers, who sustained slight injuries, have been arrested and the cause of the crash is being

investigated.

Passengers were mainly families with children who were going to Bursa to spend upcoming half-term holidays at the nearby Uludağ ski resort.

It is not yet known if any children were killed.

The state-run Anadolu Agency quoted the bus driver as telling police that he veered toward the side of the road to avoid what he thought was a stray dog.

Turkey has a poor road safety record with more than a million accidents and 7,300 deaths in 2016, according to official statistics. (theguardian)

## Fire at a warehouse near Delhi kills 17 people

### New Delhi

**A**t least 17 workers have died after a massive fire broke out at a firecracker factory on the northern outskirts of the Indian capital.

A dozen fire engines took three hours to extinguish the blaze in the Bawana industrial area of New Delhi.

Fire chiefs said 17 bodies have been recovered so far and one injured worker has been taken to hospital. A search operation is continuing for any more workers trapped in the two-storey structure gutted by the blaze.

The cause of the fire is not yet known.

There are fatal accidents nearly every year in India as people work in makeshift factories in the absence of proper safety standards.

In June of last year, 23 workers were killed when a blast occurred while they were producing firecrackers in Kheri village in the state



People watch fire at a factory in Bawana industrial area in north-west Delhi on Saturday evening.

of Madhya Pradesh in central India. The explosion triggered a blaze that engulfed the factory before firefighters put it out.

India has a huge demand for firecrackers, which are used in religious festivals and weddings.

Factories start producing firecrackers months before the nation's biggest Hindu festivals when people set them off in celebration. (PA)