A Critical Discourse Study of the Proximization of Threat in the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy

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Abstract

Using Cap's (2013a) *Proximization Theory*, the present study conducts a qualitative-quantitative analysis of the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS) to investigate how the closeness of threat is manifested in the document, as well as the functions of spatial proximization, temporal proximization and axiological proximization. Some results of the qualitative analysis indicate that the three types of proximization are employed in the 2018 NDS to highlight the proximity of the threats posed by U.S. competitors and adversaries, emphasize the readiness, strength and ability of the U.S. and its allies and partners to face threats, and arouse fears of the possible adverse future consequences of these threats so as to guarantee approval of the policies presented in the document to confront all possible threats. Some of the results of the quantitative analysis show that the most frequently occurring type of proximization is spatial proximization followed by temporal proximization then axiological proximization.

Keywrds: U.S. National Defense Strategy – spatial proximization – temporal proximization – axiological proximization – U.S. allies and partners – U.S. competitors and adversaries

<u>**الملخص**</u>
<u>**دراسة نقدية لخطاب تقريب التهديد في استراتيجية الدفاع الوطني الأمريكية لعام ٢٠١٨**</u>
باستخدام نظرية تقريب التهديد الخاصة بكاب (2013a) يقوم البحث بإجراء تحليل نوعي وكمي لاستراتيجية الدفاع الوطني الأمريكية لعام ٢٠١٨ لدراسة كيف يتم تقريب التهديد في الوثيقة، وكذلك الوظائف التي يؤديها كل من التقريب المكاني والزمني والقيمي. وتوضح بعض نتائج التحليل النوعي أنه تم استخدام الأنواع الثلاثة من التقريب في استراتيجية الدفاع الوطني الذي يشكله منافسو الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية ، والتأكيد علي استعداد وقوة وقدرة الولايات المتحدة وحلفاءها وشركاءها علي مواجهة التهديد، وكذلك إثارة الخوف من الاثار السلبية المستقبلية المحتملة للتهديدات وذلك لضمان الحصول علي الموافقة علي السياسات التي تم عرضها في الوثيقة للتصدي لكل التهديدات المحتملة. كما تظهر بعض نتائج التحليل الكمي أن التقريب المكاني هو أكثر أنواع التقريب استخداما في استراتيجية الدفاع الوطني الأمريكي يليها التقريب الزماني ثم التقريب القيمي.

1. Introduction

Language serves various functions in different contexts and genres depending on the communicative purposes it is required to fulfill in each context. It can be used to provide information, establish relationships, communicate desires and needs, express views, and influence behavior and attitudes. By using language to fulfill these different goals, speakers construct and communicate ideological representations of goings-on and other entities or groups in the world so as to shape the convictions of the audience. Political discourse is one genre in which language is employed to persuade the audiences of the ideologies of the speakers and the policies of institutions. One such institution is the U.S. military which seeks to establish and maintain America's power, credibility and influence in terms of its relation with other countries and gain public approval of its plans and policies by producing documents in which the world is represented in ways that serve the strategic interests of the U.S. A key official document produced by the U.S. Department of Defense is the National Defense Strategy (NDS) which deals with national and foreign security issues, and lays out the administration's strategic goals, worldviews, visions, and plans to establish the country's security policies (Carter, 2018;Degano, 2014; Selchow, 2017). It seeks to win people's support for the security and defense plans and coerce them to share a common view on what is deemed good, right and acceptable as opposed to what is evil, wrong and harmful (Cap, 2017b; Selchow, 2017). This is done by positioning America and its adversaries in a certain relationship and showing that they are distant but pose a threat to the country's national security. Thus, the NDS presupposes a spatial, temporal and ideological distance between the U.S. and its adversaries.

2. Aims of the Study

In the NDS, the Department of Defense emphasizes the power of the U.S. military to confront difficult challenges and threats. It criticizes the policies and visions of America's rivals and opponents to justify the security polices presented in the document, and persuade the public of these policies. Thus, the NDS belongs to the domain of defense discourse which refers to "forms of communication regarding such topics as national security and defense, sovereignty, territory, military strategies and tactics, military diplomacy and trade" (Shi-xu, 2015, p. 2047).

In this regard, language is the effective means used by powerful institutions such as the U.S. Department of Defense to discursively construct the world and represent reality and threats to U.S. national security. To secure public consensus on security issues and approval of the defensive measures taken against threats, the concept of *proximization*is employed. It places addressees in the centre of states of affairs, and presents distant external threats as approaching the speaker and the addressees. Since the external threats have spatial, temporal and axiological/ideological aspects, proximization is divided into three kinds: spatial proximization, temporal proximization and axiological proximization (Cap, 2012, 2017c). In this respect, the present study aims to examine how the proximization of

threat is realized in the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy. It also investigates the functions fulfilled by the three types of proximization employed in the document.

3. Data and Methodology

The data chosen for analysis in the present study is the unclassified version of the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy released by Jim Mattis, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, on January 19, 2018. The importance of this document is attributed to the fact that it is the first one issued by the Department of Defense under the presidency of Donald Trump. Therefore, it reflects the defense objectives and strategic plans to meet the challenges facing U.S. national security, prosperity and world influence. The transcript of the NDS was downloaded from the website of the U.S. Department of Defense.

The presentstudy draws upon Cap's (2013a) *Proximization Theory* and employs a qualitative-quantitative approach to the analysis of the 2018 NDS to examine the proximization of threat so as to create a dichotomy between the Us camp, which includes the U.S. and its allies and partners, and the Them camp, involving U.S. competitors that are referred to in the document as revisionist powersand rogue regimes. To conduct a qualitative analysis of the NDS, examples of the categories of the three types of proximization which have been found in the date are given and illustrated. Examples of categories of spatial and temporal proximization devised by the researcher are also presented and explained. In the analysed extracts, the noun phrase and verb phrases of the categories of spatial proximization, temporal proximization and axiological proximization are underlined. In the quantitative analysis of the data, a frequency count of the categories of spatial, temporal and axiological proximization is made, tabulated and interpreted.

4. Theoretical Background
4.1 Critical Discourse Studies

One of the most important and developing areas of research isCritical Discourse Studies (CDS). Because this field combines social sciences and contemporary linguistics, language is considered its key component asit reflects the ideologies which text producers hold and seek to convince receivers and society of. Therefore, in CDS,researchers explore the link between language, ideology and society (Cap, 2013b; Cap, 2014b; Sowinska, 2013).

One approach to CDS which highlights potentially ideological linguistic choices is the cognitive-linguistic approach which "affords a new and promising lens on persuasive, manipulative and coercive properties of discourse, worldview and conceptualization" (Cap, 2017a, p. 3). The importance of this approach lies in the fact that it shows how the use of language involves the construction and reconstruction of a mental space whichis a conceptual frame for representing different social realities. A recent cognitive-pragmatic model which links between CDS and cognitive pragmatics is the*Proximization Theory* proposed by Cap (2013a). It uncovers underlying ideologies embedded in discourse by relating mental patterns to their discursive and linguistic representations (Cap, 2014a, 2017c, 2018).

A central theme of CDS is the discursive representation of conflict between the in-group (Us) and the out-group (Them). The Us-Them dichotomy creates a distance between the Us party and the Them party by representing the "good", "right" and "just" as close to Us and distant from Them, and the "evil", "wrong" and "unacceptable" as remote to Us and close to Them (Cap, 2017a, 2017b). The opposition serves to construct threat by conceptually and discursively representing Them as distant and threatening to Us. Thus, the construction of threat has a crucial coercive function as it instills fear of the harmful Other (Them), thereby securing consensus on a common goal to face adversaries, and persuading the audience to accept the plans and policies proposed to realize this goal (Cap, 2017b).The Us-Them dichotomy is represented in political discourse via the *Proximization Theory* which is considered "the most viable model to capture the Usvs Them opposition and conflict" (Cap, 2018, p. 382).

4.2 Proximization Theory

Proximization is a cognitive-pragmatic strategy used by speakers to set up a discourse stage where actions and events that are distant and inconsequential are presented as close and having a direct, negative and threatening effect on the addressee (Cap, 2010, 2011). More specifically, *proximization*has been defined as:

> a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including 'distant', i.e. adversarial, ideological mind-sets) as directly, increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee. Projecting the distant entities as gradually encroaching upon the speaker – addressee territory (both physical and ideological), the speaker may attempt a variety of goals. (Cap, 2013a, p. 3)

Because the physical and ideological distance between Us and Them is presented as diminishing, immediate response and pre-emptive measures are required. Therefore, one crucial goal of presenting threat as being close to the speaker and the addressee is to provide justification for the actions and policies proposed to meet the negative impact of the threats (Cap, 2012, 2013c, 2017c; Sowinska, 2013) and win approval of these actions. Accordingly, in proximization, the Us-Them opposition is the basis for forcing particular worldviews concerning the presence of an out-group that constitutes and poses a growing and imminent threat, and thus immediate reaction and response are needed from the in-group (Cap, 2017b).

Since Them is the source of threat, in *Proximization Theory*, Us and Them are positioned at a distance from one another in the Discourse Space (DS) which is re-arranged according to the movement of Them towards Us. In other words, the threatcomes from the Them party, which is referred to as ODCs (outside-deictic-centre) as they are entities that are peripheral to DS. ODCs are presented as crossing the Space to intrude in and invade the Us party which is referred to as IDC (inside-deictic centre) entities (Cap, 2014a, 2015a, 2017b, 2017c). This is shown in figure (1).
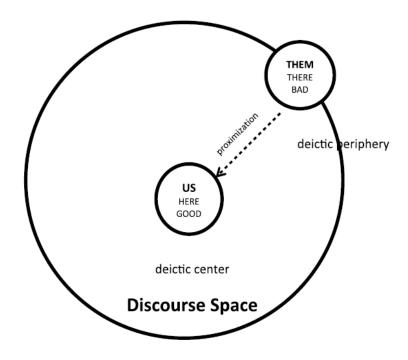
Figure (1): Proximization in Discourse Space (Cap, 2018, p. 385)

In *Proximization Theory*, the threats posed by the Them party comprises spatio-temporal and ideological aspects which define the relation between the IDCs, which are located in the deictic centre, and the ODCs which are peripheral. Accordingly, proximization is divided into three types: spatial proximization, temporal proximization and axiologicalproximization (Cap, 2011, 2015b, 2018).

In spatial proximization, ODC – Them – entities and events are construed as physically encroaching upon, and thus endangering, Us, i.e. the IDCs located in the centre of the DS. Spatial proximization highlights the physically devastating nature of the ODCs and presents their impact as inevitable, hence the need for an immediate response from the IDCs (Cap, 2013a; Sowinska, 2013). Temporal proximization involves presenting the goings-on and expected conflicts as historic, momentous and significant to the IDCs, thereby requiringpreventive action from the Us party (Cap, 2014b, 2017a; Sowinska, 2013). According to Cap (2018), "spatial and temporal proximization involve fear appeals and typically use various kinds of analogies…to conflate the growing threat with an actual disastrous event in the past, to endorse the current scenario" (p. 385). Axiological proximization involves an ideological clash between the beliefs and value systems of the IDCs (Self/Us) and those of the ODCs (Other/Them). The opposing and conflicting ideologies "will, or (at least) may, lead to a physical clash, that is the materialization of the ODC ideological threat within the IDC space" (Cap, 2013a, p. 94). This clash can result in the events and deeds defined in the spatial and temporal dimensions of proximization (Cap, 2012, 2015a, 2017b).

ProximizationTheory holds that its spatial, temporal and axiological aspects "contribute to the continual narrowing of the symbolic distance between the entities/values in the DS and their negative impact on the speaker and her addressee" (Cap, 2015b, p. 315). This is because the ODC entities threaten the IDC ones

physically and/or ideologically as the – the ODCs – enter the territory of the Us party, which is located in the deictic centre, spatially, temporally and/or axiologically.Because the threats posed by Themare shown to be consequential for Us, pre-emptive measures are required from the IDCs (Us) and so is approval of these measures and policies(Cap, 2011, 2012, 2017b).

Linguistically, *Proximization Theory* is concerned with the interplay between the lexical and grammatical choices drawn from the spatial, temporal and axiological domains, and used to highlight the presence of socio – political and ideological differences between the IDCs and ODCs, and the ability of the latter to erase the differences by intruding on the space of the latter. Accordingly, *Proximization Theory* employs three frameworks, namely spatial, temporal and axiological to categorise the lexical and grammatical choices conceptually so as to reflect the Us–Them arrangement and re-arrangement of the DS (Cap, 2017b, 2018).

4.2.1 The Spatial Proximization Framework

In spatial proximization, the negative and undesirable characterization of the impact of ODCs is presented, and the threat posed by Them is given in "'tangible' physical terms" (Cap, 2013a, p. 105). Therefore, the spatial proximization framework shows the mechanism and components of proximization as well as the spatial lexical and grammatical items and phrases (Cap, 2013a, 2014a, 2017c). The spatial proximization framework comprises the following six categories adopted from Cap (2013a, p. 108):
1- Noun phrases (NPs) constructed as elements of the deictic centre of the DS (IDCs).
2- Noun phrases (NPs) constructed as elements outside the deictic centre of the DS (ODCs).
3- Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality constructed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic centre.
4- Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs.
5- Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs
6- Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs

In this framework, whereas categories (1) and (2) define the arrangement of the DS, categories (3) and (4) denote the change that has occurred in this arrangement and which can lead to a clash between the IDC and ODC entities. Categories (5) and (6) represent the anticipated outcome of the clash (Cap, 2014a, 2017a, 2018). More specifically, the first two categories denote the central (IDC) and peripheral (ODC)entities which occupy the final points of the conceptual path that relates the centre of the DS to its periphery. Category (1) includes linguistic items which mark Us such as "America", "our people/nation/country", "free nations/countries" and "democratic people/societies/world". Category (2) comprises lexical items that mark Them like "extremists", "dictatorship", "terrorist organizations" and "foreign regimes". While the items in category (1) denote positive IDC values, those in category (2) represent negative ODC values. Accordingly, the "elements" in the

second category refer to "threatening" elements (cap, 2013a, 2017b, 2017c, 2018). The third category "sets the 'traditional' deictic expressions such as nouns and pronouns to work pragmatically together with the other elements of the superordinate VP" (Cap, 2017a, p. 7). Therefore, the VP reflects the symbolic and conceptual movement from the ODC entities towards the IDC entities (Cap, 2013a). Category (3) involves verbs that indicate movement towards Us like "come", "arrive", "get close", and "might, may, could, can use WMD against an IDC" (Cap, 2017a, 2017b). Categories (1) to (3) represent the "canonical" structure of this type of proximization – spatial proximization – since markers of the DS central (Us/Self/Home) and peripheral (Them/Other/foreign) entities are there and so are markers that indicate the negative and undesired impact of the peripheral entities (ODCs) upon the central ones (IDCs) (Cap, 2013a, p. 107).

Category (4) includes verb phrases of action such as "destroy", "hit", "set aflame" or "burn down" which indicate the actual impact of ODCs upon IDCs. Category (5) includes lexical items that reflect the expected impact of ODCs on IDCs such as "threat" and "danger". The sixth category comprises items such as "catastrophe" and "tragedy". These denote abstract concepts that represent the effect of the impact of Them on Us (Cap, 2013a, 2014a, 2017b, 2018).

4.2.2 The TemporalProximization Framework

In temporal proximization, the speaker's and addressees' present constitutes the centre of the time axis in which past and present events as well as anticipated future actions are deployed to justify the need for an immediate act to pre-empt a future action on the part of ODCs. Thus, the temporal proximization frameworkincludes linguistic markers that conflate actual past events with envisaged future ones (Cap, 2013a). In this regard, "real time" (RT) lexical – grammatical items, which refer to real past events and presuppose future actions, are combined with "construed time" (CT) lexical – grammatical markers which fit these events in a time frame by presenting them as happening anytime between the present (now) and the future. CT markers can be "indefinite descriptions, nominalizations, modal auxiliaries, and certain tense and aspectual patterns" (Cap, 2013a, p. 112). The temporal proximization framework includes the following six categories:

1- Noun phrases (NPs) involving indefinite descriptions construing ODC actual impact acts in alternative temporal frames.

2- Discourse forms involving contrastive use of the simple past and present perfect construing threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant.

3- Noun phrases (NPs) involving nominalizations construing presupposition of conditions for ODC impact to arise anytime in the future.

4- Verb phrases (VPs) involving modal auxiliaries construing conditions for ODC impact as existing continually between the now and the infinite future.

5- Discourse forms involving parallel contrastive construals of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the now (Cap, 2013a, p.114).

In category (1), indefiniteness markers show RT events as actions that happened before or as events that can happen again anytime in the future. Thus,

category (1) includes phrases that refer to real acts like the 9/11 attacks and the London 2005 bombings (Cap, 2013a, p. 112). Indefiniteness and recurrence of the RT acts and events are marked by CT markers as "another" and "a". Moreover, the ODC impact acts are indicated by temporal (e.g. September, day, work) and/or locative (e.g. New York, train, underground) expressions to refer to real events that occurred (Cap, 2013a, pp. 116-117).

In category (2), the simple past tense is used to represent the past as safe while the present perfect represents a threatening future which extends from a past event. For example, in "It used to be that we could think that oceans would protect us. September the 11thhas changedthe strategic thinking for how to protect our country", "September the 11th" is an RT marker that refers to an RT event which makes the past of the U.S. ("we could think … protect us") inappropriate to the needs of the status quo. Moreover, the contrast between the past ("It used to be") and the present perfect ("September the 11thhas changed) marks a separation between the safe past and a threatening future that extends from the RT event. Since the past RT event can reoccur at any moment in the future, and there is no indication of moments that can help prepare a response, immediate reaction is needed (Cap, 2013a, p. 92).

Category (3) reflects the role of nominalizations in highlighting the function of proximization and the linguistic context necessary for the realization of this function. In "America will identify and act against the emerging WMD threats before they are fully formed", threatening events in a future RT moment are denoted by the phrase "before they are fully formed" in which "they" refers to weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Unless preventive measures are taken, these threatening events will happen. The nominalization "threats" is a CT modifier for this phrase. It signals a foreboding and threatening future. Thus, it combines the present and the future, and makes the future RT moment that has the threatening events cover the future and the present (now) frames. Accordingly, "threats" indicates that threatening events can happen anytime from now on, hence the necessity of pre-emptive measures and actions (Cap, 2013a, p. 91). The above phrase is interpreted as "IDCs will act against emerging WMD threat/danger before it is fully formed/ materializes/ appears" and "IDCs will act against emerging WMD threat/danger to prevent/forestall its formation/appearance" (Cap, 2013a, p. 116).

In category (4), the modal auxiliaries "can" and "could" as well as time adverbials such as "today", "now", "at any time", "at the/this any moment" and "in no time" are used to mark the threat period and thus instil fear in the addressees (IDCs) as they are included in the threat circle (Cap, 2013a, p. 114). An example of this category is "Terrorists can/could now/at the moment impact IDCs" and "Terrorist organizations can/could impact IDCs at any moment…in no time" (Cap, 2013a, p.116).

In category (5), since ODCs threaten IDCs, the future is privileged because of the pre-emptive action taken by the IDCs. This active position is preferred over the passive one which, if taken, can lead to an oppositional future because it fails to recognize and prevent the threats posed by ODCs (Cap, 2013a, p. 114). This is seen in "Some IDCs ask why America /we must act pre-emptively. The US government

think/believe <u>pre-emptive action is necessary</u> given the evidence of the ODC threat" (Cap, 2013a, p. 116).

4.2.3 <u>The Axiological Proximization Framework</u>

Similar to spatial proximization, axiological proximization recognizes the arrangement of the DS in terms of Us and Them, and the negative impact of the latter on the former. In axiological proximization, ODCs (Them) threaten the values and ideologies of IDCs (Us), thereby creating a conflict of norms, ideologies and values between Us and Them. The axiological proximization framework reflects the proximization processes that are likely to lead to an ideological clash between the negative values of ODCs and the positive values of IDCs (Cap, 2013a, 2015b, 2017a). Thus, the task of the framework is "to account for ideological discourse choices and…the relation between the lexical items marking abstract entities versus those marking physical entities" (Cap, 2018, p. 387). The categories of the axiological proximization framework are as follows:

1- Noun phrases (NPs) construed as IDC positive values or value sets (ideologies).

2- Noun phrases (NPs) construed as ODC negative values or value sets (ideologies).

3- Discourse forms no longer than one sentence or two consecutive sentences involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies (Cap, 2013a, p. 121).

Category (1) includes noun phrases that represent the ideologies and positive values of IDCs such as "freedom", "equality", "justice" and "economic freedom". Category (2) involves items that reflect the antagonistic ideologies and negative values of ODCs such as "radicalism", "terrorism", "political regime" and "military regime" (Cap, 2011, 2013a).

According to Cap (2013a), category (3) consists of two parts described as "abstract – ideological" and "concrete – physical" (p.120). The ideological part reflects the conflict between the values and ideologies held by IDCs and ODCs. It is related to the physical part which changes the hostile ideologies of Them to a physical threat that is concrete. In other words, the IDC – ODC ideological clash renders the Them entities threatening in terms of precipitating the physical impact of ODCs. The change in the probability levels of the IDC – ODC conflict is key for the transformation of the ODC values into a physical threat. Whereas the ideological part represents a remote possibility of the clash between Us and Them, the physical part transforms this possibility to a strong probability. This transformation explains the use of the phrase "linear arrangement" in category (3). In addition, this phrase refers "to an arrangement at the level of specific lexico-grammatical forms forcing the progression scenario" (Cap, 2013a, p.120). Thus, this category involves lexical and grammatical items that describe the transformation of the threat posed by ODCs. The threat is initially construed as remote then imminent. The transition is represented in a sequence of nominal and verbal phrases as follows:

(1) NP denoting ODC value(s) followed by or combined with

(2) VP denoting a remote possibility of the ODC-IDC conflict followed by or combined with

(3) VP denoting a close probability of the ODC-IDC conflict followed by or combined with

(4) NP denoting physical consequences of the ODC-IDC conflict (Cap, 2013a, p. 122).

The above-mentioned lexico-grammatical patterns are a representation of how the potential threat posed by the negative values and antagonistic ideologies of ODCs materializes in the form of physical impact on IDCs. The transition is from the "remote possibility" scenario, which is represented by a verb phrase that includes a noun or a noun phrase that refers to Them values, to the "actual occurrence" scenario which is represented by a verb phrase that contains a noun or a noun phrase that marks the impact of Them on Us (Cap, 2017a). The transition is seen in the following extract from G. B. Bush's 2003 speech adopted from Cap (2013a, p. 95):

> It is the growing <u>radicalism</u> and <u>extremism</u> of these dictatorships. <u>This evilmight</u> not have reached us yet but it is in plain sight, as plain as the terror sight of the <u>collapsing towers</u>

In this example, there is a connection between the negative values of Them, their capability to lead to physical acts, and the likelihood that these acts can take place in the territory of IDCs. The nouns "radicalism" and "extremism" represent the negative values of Them. The "remote possibility" script links these values, which are referred to using "this evil", to the possibility for their materialization. The phrase "might not have reached us yet" indicates that this materialization is a remote possibility as it is not yet seen as an imminent danger or threat. This remote possibility turns into a close one in the "actual occurrence" scenario which involves the change in epistemic modality from "<u>might</u> not" to "<u>is</u> in plain sight" as well as indicators of the results of the impact of this threat ("collapsing towers"). Thus, the two scenarios include four lexical – grammatical items that mark the transition from reference to threatening but distant values to the disastrous materialization of the physical impact of these values on IDCs. These markers are: "This evil", a noun phrase which reflects the values of Them, "might not have reached…", a verb phrase that expresses remote possibility of the impact of these values, "but it is in plain sight", a verb phrase that turns the remote possibility to a close possibility, and "collapsing towers", a noun phrase which represents the actual impact (Cap, 2013a, pp. 95-96).

4.3 <u>The National Defense Strategy</u>

The NDS belongs to the genre of defense discourse which refers to forms of communication as well as information, attitudes and understandings with respect to topics such as military tactics, national security, territory and sovereignty (Shi-xu, 2015). It is a report that is prepared by the National Defense Strategy Commission (NDSC) which is responsible for scrutinizing and making recommendations regarding the national defense and security of the U.S. (Carter, 2018). By law, the NDS report must include the following points:

1- The missions of the Department of Defense.

2- The most critical threats to the security of the U.S. and the plans implemented by the Department of Defense to face these threats.

3- A strategic framework for how the Department of Defense will prioritize the threats, allocate and minimize the ensuing risks, and make resource investments.

4- The role of the armed forces to conduct the missions of the Department of Defense, the roles of other agencies of the U.S. government as well as the capabilities and roles of partners and allies.

5- The different components of the defense program that are needed to support and implement the national defense strategy. The components include the defense capabilities, infrastructure, technological innovation, personnel, and force shape, size, posture and readiness.

6- The investments that the Department of Defense will make in these components over the following five years depending on its strategic framework (point three) (Carter, 2018).

The NDS is issued by the Department of Defense every four years in classified and unclassified versions. It outlines the strategic goals of the Department and its plans for force development, modernization and structure. It flows from the National Security Strategy (NSS), which outlines the principles and objectives for the national security of the U.S. including the necessity for building new alliances to defeat terrorism and prevent threats against the U.S. and its allies, and working with partners to resolve conflicts. The NDS also guides the NationalMilitary Strategy (NMS), which defines the strategic goals of the armed services, and reflects the results of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) in which the challenges and threats facing the nation are assessed and the strategies employed by the Department of Defense to counter the threats are determined (Carter, 2018; "National Defense Strategy", 2018; "Quadrennial Defense Review", 2018).

The 2018 NDS, released on January 19 by former Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, builds on the NSS that President Trump announced on December 18, 2017 and implements its key pillars, namely protecting the American people and the homeland, promoting American prosperity, preserving peace through strength, and advancingAmerican influence. It outlines future defense strategies and policies, and stresses the international role of the U.S. and the need to build military advantage to preserve balances of power. The strategy propounds the roles played by the military force to protect the country, the framework for training, organizing and equipping the armed forces, and the challenges and threats to U.S. security. It lists three categories of these threats, the first of which includes China and Russia which are characterized both as adversaries that pose growing threats to U.S. and international prosperity and security, and revisionist powers that threaten the power, influence and interests of the U.S.The second category involves North Korea and Iran, which are deemed "rogue regimes" and destabilizing states for possessing weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorism. Terrorism and other transnational threats constitute the third category. Accordingly, the strategy focuses on three main theatres: Europe, the Indo – pacific region and the Middle East, and aims at safeguarding U.S. security, deterring

adversaries from challenging the country or its allies, increasing military capabilities, building a more lethal force, keeping balances of power in favour of the U.S., combating terrorism, and defending partners and allies against aggression, intimidation and other threats posed by competitors and non-state actors (Encina, 2018; Garamone, 2018; Grieco, 2018, "National Defense Strategy", 2018; O'Hanlon, 2018; Schake, 2018).

Proximization Theory has been used in a number of studies on the war on terror following September 11 attacks and the war in Iraq (Cap, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2017c), crisis construction (Chovanec, 2010; Kopytowska, 2010; Okulska& Cap, 2010), (anti-)immigration discourse (Cap, 2017a, 2018; Hart, 2010, 2011), construction of national memory (Filardo Llamas, 2010, 2013), political party representation (Cienki, Kaal, &Maks, 2010; Kaal, 2012), and foreign policy documents (Dunmire, 2011). Although a few linguistic studies have been conducted on the U.S. National Security Strategy (Degano, 2014; Dunmire, 2011; Selchow, 2017), to the researcher's knowledge, no studies have been carried out on the National Defense Strategy. The present study attempts to fill in this gap by employing *Proximization Theory* to examine the proximization of threat in the 2018 U.S.National Defense Strategy.

5. <u>Analysis</u>

In this section, the three types of proximization, namely spatial proximization, temporal proximization and axiological proximization, employed in the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy are presented and explained through illustrative examples.

5.1 <u>Spatial Proximization</u>

Spatial proximization, in the analyzed data, aims to highlight the imminence of threat and thus instill fear in the addressees by shrinking the distance between the home entities, i.e. IDCs and the foreign entities, i.e. ODCs. This is achieved via the use of different lexical – grammatical markers of the IDC entities of the DS, markers of the ODC or antagonistic entities, and markers of the movement of the ODCs towards the IDCs. Although the threat may be distant, its impact is inevitable as the ODCs cross the DS and move in the direction of the IDCs located in the deictic center. The materialization of the threat of ODCs in the territory of the IDCs serves to establish a dichotomous representation of the good Us(the IDCs) against the evil or bad Them (the ODCs), and necessitates a reaction on the part of the IDCs.

Cap's (2013a) six categories of the spatial proximization framework maximize the threat by reflecting the negative characterization of the ODCs, the fastness of their impact, the dangerous consequences of this impact, and the submissive attitude and negative stance of the IDCs (Cap, 2013a, p. 77). The data reveals that two more categories can be added to the spatial proximization framework as they show that the IDCs are not always passive. Rather, they have a positive reaction to the threats posed by the ODCs. These categories are "verb phrases marking acts of resistance of ODCs" and "noun phrases denoting goals of IDCs and the strategies of confronting ODCs". The categories of spatial proximization are shown in the following extracts:

Extract (1)

…the United States and its allies and partners constructed a free and openinternational order to better safeguard their liberty and people from aggression and coercion…China and Russia are now undermining the international order…by exploiting its benefits while simultaneously undercutting its principles…Both revisionist powers and rogue regimes are…expanding coercion to new fronts, violating principles of sovereignty…and deliberately blurring the lines between civil and military goals…Some competitors and adversariesseek to optimize their targeting of our battle networks.

Extract (1) manifests categories (1), (2), (3), and (4) of the spatial proximization framework. Category (1), which includes nouns and noun phrases that refer to elements inside the deictic centre, i.e. IDCs, is shown in "the United States", "allies and partners", "a free and open international order", and "their liberty and people". The indefinite entities "allies and partners" and "a free and open international order" are construed as IDCs and elements of the deictic centre by virtue of the conjunction "and" in "the United States and its allies and partners" and the adjectives "free" and "open" which, by implicature, are the principles of the U.S. and its allies. Elements outside the deictic centre, i.e. ODCs, which pose grave danger to the IDCs, form category (2). These are: "China", "Russia", "revisionist powers", "rogue regimes", and "competitors and adversaries". A relation of sameness is established and indicated by the use of the additive conjunction "and" between these elements to reflect the increasing and direct threat they pose to the IDCs. Category (3) lexical items are: "expanding", "violating", "blurring", and "seek to optimize". They show that the ODC entities are moving towards the IDCs, thereby minimizing the distance between them, maximizing the threats posed by the ODCs, and asserting the pressing need for taking preventive measures to confront the ODCs. The verbs "undermining", "exploiting", and "undercutting" belong to category (4) as they show the impact of the ODC entities upon the IDCs. The implication is that the ODCs are harming the IDCs and if no action is taken, the consequences will be disastrous.

Extract (2)

…non-state actors also threaten the security environment of increasingly sophisticated capabilities. Terrorists, trans-national criminal organizations, cyber hackersand other malicious non-state actors have transformed global affairs with increased capabilities of mass disruption…the homelandis no longer a sanctuary. America is a target whether from terrorists seeking to attack our citizens…or political and information subversion. During conflict, attacks against our critical defense, government, and economic infrastructure must be anticipated. Rogue regimes, such as North Korea, continue to seek out or develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD)…and proliferate these capabilities to malign actors…Terrorists likewise continue to pursue WMD.

Categories (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5) are shown in this extract. Nouns and noun phrases which belong to category (1) are "the security environment", "the homeland", "America", "our citizens", and "our critical defense, government, and economic infrastructure". The phrase "the security environment" is shown to be a member of the deictic centre because of the use of the definite article "the" which indicates that the U.S. as well as all secure stateson the world stage are threatened by foreign antagonistic entities. Therefore, the addressees are indirectly urged to accept the policies given in the 2018 NDS because they are in favour of the U.S. and other countries worldwide. Category (2) items, i.e. ODCs, include "non-state actors", "terrorists", "trans-national criminal organizations", "cyber hackers", "rogue regimes", "North Korea", and "malign actors". The close relation between these entities is indicated by the proximity of their presence. The phrases "seek out or develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD)" and "continue to purse WMD" belong to category (3) while the lexical items "subversion" and "attacks" belong to category (5). These phrases and lexemes, along with the category (4) verb "transformed", help intensify the sense of danger posed by these ODCs by highlighting the proximity of the ODCs and the potential tremendous impact they might have upon the U.S. and its allies and partners.

Extract (3)

…the Department of Defense will be prepared to <u>defendthe homeland</u>…the Department will sustain its efforts to <u>deter</u> and <u>counterrogue regimes</u> such as <u>North Korea and Iran</u>, <u>defeatterrorist threats</u> to <u>the United States</u>, and <u>consolidate</u> our gains in Iraq and Afghanistan…Defense objectives include: <u>defendingthe homeland</u> from attack, <u>sustaining</u> Joint Force military advantages…<u>deterringadversaries</u> from aggression against our vital interests, enabling U.S. interagency counterparts to advance U.S. influence and interest…defending <u>allies</u> from military aggression and <u>bolsteringpartners</u> against coercion…<u>dissuading</u>, <u>preventing</u>, or <u>deterringstate adversaries and non-state actors</u> from acquiring, proliferating, or using <u>weapons of mass destruction</u>, preventing <u>terrorists</u> from directing or supporting external operations against <u>the United States homeland and our citizens, allies and partners</u> overseas…

In this extract, categories (1), (2), (7), and (8) are manifested. Category (1) elements (IDCs) are: "the homeland", "the United States", "allies", "partners", and "the United States homeland and our citizens, allies and partners…" The juxtaposition between "the United States", "homeland" and "our citizens" on one hand and "allies" and "partners" on the other reflects the importance of partnership for the U.S. and its concern for the benefits of its allies and partners. The aim is to justify the policies adopted towards the allies of the U.S. in the NDS and convince addressees that these policies are in favour of U.S. citizens. The ODCs, i.e. category (2) elements, in this extract are: "rogue regimes", "North Korea and Iran", "terrorist threats", "adversaries", "state adversaries and non-state actors", "weapons of mass destruction", and

"terrorists". Rather than being passive and inert, the IDC entities are preparing for a head-on clash with the ODCs to defend the United States and its allies and partners. This is seen in the use of category (7) verb phrases which mark acts of resisting the ODCs such as "defend", "deter", "counter", "defeat", and "consolidate", and category (8) noun phrases that shed light on the goals of IDCs and the strategies designed to confront ODCs. These are: "defending", "sustaining", "deterring","bolstering", "dissuading", and "preventing".

5.2 <u>Temporal Proximization</u>

Temporal proximization involves construing and centralizing the momentousness of the speaker's and addressees' (i.e. IDCs) present which is defined by past and envisaged future events. Therefore, this type of proximization includes two shifts: past – to – present and future – to – present. While the former involves accommodating past deeds and events conducted by the ODCs and which inform the present context of the IDCs, the latter includes construing actions performed by the ODCsin the near future and which stem from the present context (Cap, 2013a, pp. 85-86). Temporal proximization, in the analysed data, includes the future – to – present shift. No references are made to past events performed by the ODCs. Rather, references are made to current actions so as to create fear appeals of the possible future repercussions of such actions. This is manifested in a new category that is not included in Cap's (2013a) temporal proximization framework, namely "Discourse forms including the use of the infinitive and a number of tense patterns to form a threatening future based on present actions". The tense patterns found in the data are: the present simple, present perfect, present progressive, and the future.

Of the five categories of Cap's (2013a) temporal proximization framework, only category (3) has been found in the data. This category is shown in extract (4).

Extract (4)

New technologies include advanced computing, "big data" analytics, artificial intelligence…the very technologies that ensure we <u>will</u> be able to fight and win the <u>wars</u> of the <u>future</u>. Long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department…because of the magnitude of the <u>threats</u> they pose to U.S. security and prosperity <u>today</u>, and the potential for those <u>threats</u> to increase in the <u>future</u>…Achieving peace through strength requires the Joint Force to deter <u>conflict</u> through preparedness for <u>war</u>…We must anticipate the implications of new technologies on the <u>battlefield</u>, rigorously define the military problems anticipated in <u>futureconflict</u>…We have shared responsibilities for resisting authoritarian trends, contesting radical ideologies, and serving as bulwarks against <u>instability</u>.

In this extract, the future – to – present shift is employed to show that the present is the most suitable time to decide on and prepare pre-emptive plans. Thus, this shift centralizes the "now" and establishes a link between the present, which

represents the RT as indicated by the word "today", the future, which is the CT indicated by the word "future", and the modal auxiliaries "will" and "must". The present is the central time frame in which the deeds of the ODCs must be evaluated so as to take preventive measures to weaken the impact of the dangers posed by the ODCs. A number of lexical items highlight the proximity of the impact of the threats posed by the ODCs on the time axis. These are: "war(s)", "threats", "battlefield", "conflict", and "instability". These nominalizations combine the present and the future realities as they indicate the undesirable actions taken by the ODCs at present and thus presuppose a bleak and threatening future resulting from the impact of these actions. The interaction between these lexical choices and the presupposition show that the threatening future events can take place anytime between "now" and the future, hence the necessity of taking preventive actions now, i.e. at present to be able to deal with the potential future impact of the deeds of the ODCs. Thus, current RT events are turned into durative CT span because of the interplay between the above-mentioned nominalizations and their presupposition.

Extracts (5) and (6) demonstrate the new category introduced by the researcher.

Extract (5)

China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea. Russiahas violated the borders of nearby nations and pursues veto power over…its neighbors…North Korea outlaw actions and reckless rhetoric continue despite United Nation's censure and sanctions. Irancontinues to sow violence and remains the most significant challenge to Middle East stability…threats to stability remain as terrorist groups with long reach continueto murder the innocent and threaten peace more broadly.

In this extract, a number of ODCs which are considered competitors and adversaries to the U.S. are presented. These are: "China", "Russia", "North Korea", "Iran", and "terrorist groups".As these adversaries threaten the interests of the U.S. and its allies and partners, their current actions are given so as to instil fear of a threatening future extending from these deeds. Thus, the temporal shift employed here is future – to – present and it reflects the interplay between RT and CT events. The interface is seen in the combination of the present simple, present perfect, present progressive and the infinitive. The present RT acts carried out by these adversaries are shown in the use of the present simple in "pursues", "continue(s)", and "remain(s)" and the present progressive in "using" and "militarizing". These patterns show the persistence of the ODCs in harming the ODCs, i.e. the U.S. and its allies. The CT instants, which define the future frame in which threatening events resulting from the competitors' present actions can occur and re-occur, are indicated by the use of the present perfect, which marks the beginning of the future deeds, in "has violated" and the infinitive in "to intimidate", and "to murder…and threaten".

Extract (6)

China and Russia <u>want</u> to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model…China <u>is leveraging</u> military modernization…<u>to coerce</u>neighboring countries <u>to reorder</u> the Indo-Pacific region to their advantage. As China <u>continues</u> its economic and military ascendance…it <u>will continue</u> to pursue a military modernization program that seeks…displacement of the United States <u>to achieve</u>global preeminence in the future…Russia <u>seeks</u> veto authority over nations on its periphery…<u>to shatter</u> the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and <u>change</u> European and Middle East security and economic structures to its favour.

In extract (6), the focus is on two major competitors to the U.S., namely China and Russia. The RT-CT interface is shown in the future – to – present temporal shift seen in using a number of tense patterns. These are: the present simple, present progressive, future, and the infinitive. The present time is the RT in which these two countries indulge in deeds that can harm neighboring countries as well as the U.S. to achieve regional and global hegemony. The RT actions carried out by China and Russia are indicated by the use of the present simple in "want", "continues", and "seeks" and the present progressive in "is leveraging". The present progressive is the starting point of the future time frame which constitutes the CT in which the consequences of the acts performed by these two countries in the present can materialize. The CT is indicated by using the future in "it will continue to pursue" and the infinitive in "to coerce", "to reorder", "to achieve", and "to shatter…and change". The aim of conflating RT and CT by combining different tense patterns is to centralize the current and future threats posed by China and Russia so as to legitimize the policies framed by the U.S. Department of Defense to counter these threats and thus defend the homeland, allies and partners.

5.3 <u>Axiological Proximization</u>

Axiological proximization consists in narrowing the distance between the positive home values of the IDCs, i.e. Us and the negative alien ones of the ODCs, i.e. Them leading to a growing ideological conflict which results from the opposing values and ideologies adopted by the IDCs and the ODCs. This ideological clash can lead to a physical conflict between the two camps because of the materialization of the antagonistic ideologies and values of the ODCs in the home territory of the IDCs. This is reflected in the three categories of the axiological proximization framework found in the data. Extract (7) demonstrates the first category which involves positive values and ideologies of the U.S.

Extract (7)

Failure to meet our defense objectives will result in decreasing <u>U.S. global influence</u>, eroding <u>cohesion</u> among allies and partners, and reduced access to markets that will contribute to a decline in our <u>prosperity</u>…The central challenge to U.S. <u>prosperity</u>and <u>security</u> is the re-emergence of long-term,

strategic competition by…revisionist powers…our allies and partners join us in defending <u>freedom</u>…By working together with allies and partners we amass the greatest possible <u>strength</u> for the long-term advancement of our interests, maintaining favourable balance of power that…support the <u>stability</u> that generates <u>economic growth</u>.

In extract (7), axiological proximization of threat is realized by using a number of nouns, such as "cohesion", "prosperity", "security", "freedom", "strength", and "stability", and noun phrases such as "U.S. global influence" and "economic growth". These triggers of axiological proximization denote favourable positive values of the U.S. and its allies which are threatened by the undesired values of the ODCs, i.e. revisionist powers and rogue regimes such as China and Russia. To develop understanding and gain acceptance of the policies presented in the 2018 NDS to face the challenges and ideological threats posed by China, Russia and other competitors to the U.S., fear of losing these positive values is instilled in the addressees by showing the dire consequences of not implementing the strategy in "failure to meet…revisionist powers". In "our allies and partners…economic growth", the key role played by U.S. allies and partners in fostering and defending values is highlighted by using the lexemes "freedom", "strength", and "stability". Moreover, the use of the noun phrase "economic growth" indicates the positive outcome of pursuing the policies of the Department of Defense to preserve and defend the home values and ideologies against potential ideological, and possibly physical, conflicts with adversaries.

The second category of the axiological proximization framework is shown in extract (8).

Extract (8)
…the United States and its allies and partners constructed a free and open international order to better safeguard their liberty and people from <u>aggression</u> and <u>coercion</u>…Terrorists, trans-national criminal organizations, cyber hackers and other malicious non-state actors have transformed global affairs with increased capabilities of <u>mass disruption</u>…revisionist powers and rogue regimes are using <u>corruption</u>, <u>predatory economic practices</u>, propaganda, <u>political subversion</u>, proxies, and the threat or use of <u>military force</u> to change facts on the ground.

This extract demonstrates some of the hostile ideologies and values held by competitors and adversaries of the U.S. and its allies, i.e. ODCs. The noun phrases "aggression", "coercion", "mass disruption", "corruption", "predatory economic practices", "political subversion", and "military force" represent negative values of the ODCs, and contradict the positive ones held by the IDCs, i.e. the U.S. and its allies and partners. Because the peripheral antagonistic values of the ODCs can materialize in the centre of the DS where the IDCs and their positive values exist, immediate plans are made to avert the ideological dangers that threaten the positive, core values

of the U.S. and its allies and partners. Accordingly, the axiological proximization of threat is realized by appealing to fear and showing that the opposing value sets can result in an ideological, and possibly physical, clash.

Extract (9) shows category (3) of the axiological framework which describes, lexically and grammatically, the materialization of the negative values and ideologies of the ODCs in the territory of the IDCs.

Extract (9)
The National Defense Strategy acknowledges an increasingly complex global <u>security environment</u>, characterized by overt challenges to the <u>free and open international order</u>…Rogue regimes…are destabilizing regions through their <u>pursuit of nuclear weapons</u> or <u>sponsorship of terrorism</u>…we face an ever more lethal and disruptive battlefield, combined across domains, and <u>conducted at increasing speed and reach</u> – from close combat, <u>throughout overseas theatres</u>, and <u>reaching to our homeland</u>. Some competitors and adversaries seek to optimize their targeting of our battle networks…while also using other areas of competition…to achieve their ends (e.g. <u>information warfare</u>, <u>ambiguous or denied proxy operations, andsubversion</u>).

In extract (9), a discursive link is set up between the presence of external opposing ideologies and negative values, the threatening deeds resulting from these values, and the possible impact of these values and deeds on the IDCs due to their materialization in their territory. The connection is established in a linear manner via the transition from the remote possibility scenario to the actual occurrence one. The ideological opposition between the IDCs (the U.S. and its allies and partners) and the ODCs (rogue regimes, competitors and adversaries to the U.S) is marked by the noun phrases "security environment" and "free and open international order" vs. "their pursuit of nuclear weapons" and "sponsorship of terrorism". In the remote possibility scenario, the materialization and threatening impact of the negative values of the ODCsare presented as distant using the verb phrase "conducted at increasing speed and reach…throughout overseas theatres". The imminence of the threat is indicated by the shift to the actual occurrence scenario via the verb phrase "reaching to our homeland" and the nominal phrase "information warfare, ambiguous or denied proxy operations, and subversion" which marks the possible actual impact of the ODCs.

6. Results and Discussion
The data reveals that the total number of lexical and grammatical discourse forms denoting spatial, temporal and axiological proximization is 673, 495 (74%) of which mark spatial proximization, 95 (14%) mark temporal proximization, and 83 (12%) denote axiological proximization. This reflects a high tendency to maximize the threats posed by competitors and adversaries (i.e. ODCs) of the U.S. and its allies and partners (IDCs) by prioritizing the focus on the closeness of the physical distance between IDCs and ODCs (spatial proximization) over the momentousness of the

speaker's present (temporal proximization) and the existence of an ideological conflict between the two camps (axiological proximization).

Table (1) presents the frequency count of the different categories of the spatial proximization framework.

Table (1): Frequency of occurrence of the categories of spatial proximization

Category	Frequency of occurrence
(1) NPs constructed as elements of the deictic centre of the DS (IDCs)	172 (35%)
(2) NPs constructed as elements outside the deictic centre of the DS (ODCs)	94 (19%)
(3) VPs of motion and directionality constructed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic centre	21 (4%)
(4) VPs of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs	14 (3%)
(5) NPs denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs	27 (5%)
(6) NPs denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs	---
(7) VPs marking acts of resistance of ODCs	122 (25%)
(8) NPs denoting goals of IDCs and the strategies of confronting ODCs	45 (9%)
Total	495 (100%)

Table (1) shows that category (1) has the highest frequency of occurrence (172 occurrences, 35% of the total number of occurrences of the categories of spatial proximization which is 495) followed by category (7) (122 occurrences, 25%) which is not included in Cap's (2013a) spatial proximization framework but found to be of major significance in the data. This indicates that the focus of the NDS is on the overwhelming proportion of IDC entities which include the U.S. and its allies and partners which belong to this camp on ideological, rather than geographical, basis. Because IDCs are targeted and threatened by ODCs, the NDS also underscores the actions carried out to resist ODCs. Category (2) is the third most frequently occurring category (94 occurrences, 19%). The aim is to shed light on the entities or parties that constitute a major and direct threat to the U.S. and its allies via the symbolic movement towards IDCs. The fourth most frequently occurring category is category (8) (45 occurrences, 9%). This showsthat the U.S. and its allies, i.e. IDC entities, have established policies and goals, and formulated strategies that will enable them to meet the threats posed by ODCs. The aim is to legitimize the policies introduced in the NDS to confront competitors of the U.S.

Table (1) also shows that the three least frequently occurring categories are categories (5) (27 occurrences, 5%), (3) (21 occurrences, 4%), and (4) (14 occurrences, 3%), respectively. This may be attributed to a desire to show that despite the deeds perpetrated by competitors of the U.S. and its allies to threaten their interests and the possible adverse consequences of these deeds and the speed of their

impact, ODCs will fail to harm IDCs because they are capable of diminishing the impact of the acts performed by ODCs. This serves to highlight the power and capabilities of the U.S. and its allies and partners. This is further indicated by the fact that the total number and frequency counts of the categories denoting the characterization of IDCs, their acts, goals and strategies (categories (1), (7), and (8)) outnumber the counts of the categories that characterize ODCs, their movement towards IDCs, and their impact upon IDCs (categories (2), (3), (4), and (5)). While the total count of the three categories of spatial proximization denoting IDCs is 339 (68.5% of the total number of occurrences of the categories of spatial proximization which is 495), the total frequency count of the four categories marking ODCs is 156 (31.5%). This shows that although the symbolic movement of ODCs, which reflects their power, is the core of spatial proximization, the 2018 NDS seeks to assert the strength of the U.S. and its allies and their ability to deter aggression and avert the dangers of their competitors. This is also indicated by the absence of category (6) from the data to show that the deeds of the competitors and adversariesof the U.S. and its allies have no impact on them, and thus stress the inability of ODCs to threaten or defeat IDCs.

Table (2) presents the frequency count of the temporal proximization framework.

Table (2): Frequency of occurrence of the categories of temporal proximization

Category	Frequency of occurrence
(1) NPs involving indefinite descriptions construing ODC actual impact acts in alternative temporal frames	---
(2) Discourse forms involving contrastive use of the simple past and present perfect construing threatening future extending infinitely from a past instant	---
(3) NPs involving nominalizations construing presupposition of conditions for ODC impact to arise anytime in the future	45 (47%)
(4) VPs involving modal auxiliaries construing conditions for ODC impact as existing continually between the now and the infinite future	---
(5) Discourse forms involving parallel contrastive construals of oppositional and privileged futures extending from the now	---
(6) Discourse forms including the use of the infinitive and a number of tense patterns to form a threatening future based on present actions	50 (53%)
Total	95 (100%)

As shown in table (2), of the five categories of the temporal proximization framework proposed by Cap (2013a), only category (3) has been found in the data and it occurs 45 times (47% of the total number of occurrences of the categories of temporal proximization which is 95). This shows that the NDS seeks approval of the policies formulated to confront what has been termed revisionist powers and rogue regimes as well as competitors and adversaries of the U.S. and its allies via fear

appeals by showing that it is not possible to know when the impact of the acts performed by ODCs will occur. Since the impact can take place anytime from now on, prompt action is a must on the part of IDCs. Table (2) also shows that category (6), developed by the researcher, occurs 50 times (53%). This indicates that the U.S. and its allies and partners make use of the deeds performed by ODCs in the present to threaten IDCs to legitimize the policies and measures introduced in the NDS to face the dangers posed by ODCs and the undesired repercussions of their current deeds.

The frequency count of the three categories of the axiological proximization framework is presented in table (3).

Table (3): Frequency of occurrence of the categories of axiological proximization

Category	Frequency of occurrence
(1) NPs construed as IDC positive values or value sets (ideologies)	47 (52%)
(2) NPs construed as ODC negative values or value sets (ideologies)	33 (37%)
(3) Discourse forms no longer than one sentence or two consecutive sentences involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies	10 (11%)
Total	90 (100%)

Table (3) shows that category (1), pertaining to the positive values of IDCs, has the highest frequency of occurrence (47 occurrences, 52% of the total number of occurrences of the categories of axiological proximization which is 90) followed by category (2), which involves noun phrases denoting negative values of ODCs (33 occurrences, 37%) then category (3), which accounts for narrowing the distance between the conflicting ideologies between IDCs and ODCs, (10 occurrences, 11%). The aim of focusing on IDC positive values more than on ODC negative ones is to convey the message that the home values, unlike foreign ones, are positive and plentiful. Thus, IDC values must be preserved and protected since they are at stake due to the threats posed by ODC antagonistic values. Unless the negative values are rejected and confronted, they will result in chaos as well as social, economic and political unrest. Because the distance between the Us – Them values and ideologies is diminishing, immediate response and reaction are a must.

٧. **Conclusion**

Drawing on Critical Discourse Studies, the present study has employed Cap's (2013a) *Proximization Theory* to examine the communication and proximization of threat in the 2018 U.S. National DefenseStrategy. By carrying out a qualitative-quantitative analysis of spatial proximization, temporal proximization and axiological proximization, the study has investigated how the proximity of threat is achieved in the document and the functions of the three aspects of proximization.

The data reveals that the proximization of threat relies on the use of the three aspects of proximization, namely spatial proximization, temporal proximization and

axiological proximization. They are employed in the document to create anUs-Them dichotomy between good, i.e. IDCs (U.S. and its allies and partners) and evil, i.e. ODCs (U.S. competitors and adversaries). The closeness of the threat is realized by narrowing the physical and ideological distance between IDCs and ODCs via linking the despicable acts and negative characteristics of ODCs to their unsatisfactory outcomes for IDCs. In terms of the categories of the three aspects of proximization, the data shows that of Cap's (2013a) six categories of spatial proximization, only categories 1-5 are found in the 2018 NDS. Two additional categories of spatial proximization, which are not included in Cap's categories, have been introduced due to the vital role they play in showing that IDCs are not passive with respect to the threats posed by ODCs. These two categories are "verb phrases marking acts of resistance of ODCs" and "noun phrases denoting goals of IDCs and the strategies of confronting ODCs". Of Cap's five categories of temporal proximization, category (3) only has been found in the data in addition to another category devised by the researcher as it raises fear of the consequences of the current actions of ODCs. The category is "discourse forms including the use of the infinitive and a number of tense patterns to form a threatening future based on present actions". The three categories of axiological proximization have been found in the data.

The qualitative analysis of the 2018 NDS shows that spatial proximization is employed to raise fears of the impact of the external, and seemingly distant, threat posed by ODCs which are shown to be moving towards IDCs in the deictic centre of the DS. By showing that the distance between the Us and Them camps is shrinking, the danger coming from U.S. competitors and adversaries is maximized and so is the impact of the threat.

Temporal proximization in the data underscores the momentousness of the present because this is the best time to prepare pre-emptive plans to face the future threat of ODCs. The interplay between the present (RT) and the future (CT) is shown in the use of the future-to-present shift which centralizes the "now" and relates the present, in which U.S. competitors and adversaries (ODCs) carry out actions that are not in the best interest of the U.S. and its allies and partners (IDCs), to the future in which the dire consequences of the present actions of ODCs will arise. The RT-CT interface shown in the future-to-present temporal shift also involves the use of the infinitive and a number of tense patterns such as the present simple, present progressive, present perfectand the future. These patterns establish a link between the present deeds of ODCs and the future which is deemed threatening because this is the time at which the impact of the deeds will materialize.

As for axiological proximization, the qualitative analysis of the data reveals that it is employed to show that the distance between the external negative values of ODCs and positive values of IDCs is narrowing, thereby resulting in an ideological clash that can turn into a physical conflict. This is indicated by the shift from the remote possibility scenario, in which the seemingly remote ideological conflict between IDCs and ODCs is presented, to the actual occurrence scenario which depicts the actual occurrence of the physical conflict and threats construed in spatial and temporal proximization.

The quantitative analysis of the data reveals the predominance of spatial proximization as it is the most frequently occurring type of proximization followed by temporal proximization then axiological proximization. In terms of the categories of the three types of proximization, it has been shown that in spatial proximization, category (1), which denotes IDC entities, occurs most frequently followed by category (7), which includes verb phrases that show acts of resisting ODCs. The third and fourth most frequently occurring categories are category (2), which includes ODc entities that threaten IDCs, and category (8), in which the goals of IDCs and strategies of confronting ODCs are indicated, respectively. The three least frequently occurring categories are category (5), denoting anticipations of the impact of ODCs, followed by category (3), which marks the movement of ODCs towards IDCs, then category (4), in which the impact of ODCs upon IDCs is marked.

The quantitative analysis of temporal proximization shows that category (6), which has been devised by the researcher and in which the infinitive and different tense patterns are employed to mark a threatening future, occurs most frequently followed by category (3), which includes nominalizations marking the possible occurrence of the impact of ODCs anytime in the future.

As for axiological proximization, the quantitative analysis of the data shows that category (1), which represents the positive values of IDCs, occurs most frequently followed by category (2), denoting ODC negative values, then category (3), in which discourse forms marking the materialization of the negative values of ODCs in the IDC territory are used.

The qualitative-quantitative analysis of the 2018 NDS shows that the document presents a clear picture of the challenges and threats posed by revisionist powers (China and Russia), rogue regimes (Iran and North Korea) and terrorism to national and international stability and U.S. security and territory. Unless best-laid, preventive plans are formulated and countermeasures taken, these threats will destabilize the balance of power and turn it in their favour rather than in favour of the U.S. and its allies and partners whose interests will also be undermined. To achieve consensus and legitimize the goals and policies of the Department of Defense, the NDS generates a dichotomous Us against Them representation, highlights the proximity of threat and relies on fear appeal to arouse fear of the devastating consequences of the threats posed by revisionist powers, rogue regimes and terrorism. The portrayal of these outcomes includes the construal of a possible IDC-ODC physical clash as well as an ideological one. Because the U.S. aims to maintain its security, protect its interests, and ensure that the balance of power remains in its favour, the 2018 NDS asserts that the U.S. and its allies and partners will face all threats and handle the envisaged physical and ideological conflicts "from a position of strength".

As doing CDS involves exploring the representations of different and opposing ideologies in discourse, the distinction between Us and Them, and thus the cognitive arrangement and re-arrangement of the Discourse Space, *ProximizationTheory* can be further applied in future critical studies. For instance, it can be employed to examine the different ideological stances adopted on controversial

heated topics such as the Brexit issue. Since conflicts and wars are increasing around the world, future studies can employ *ProximizationTheory* to investigate war reporting in international print and broadcast media to study the different positions taken on the various wars taking place in many parts of the world. *Proximization Theory* can also be applied in future research on various types of legal discourse. For example, the bipolar Us-Them representation can be examined in the language employed in courtrooms to study how prosecutors use language to prove that suspect is guilty, and the linguistic strategies defense attorneys use to show that the defendant is innocent.

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