INTERIM NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

MARCH 2021

PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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In my inaugural address, I committed to engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's.

Our world is at an inflection point. Global dynamics have shifted. New crises demand our attention. And in this moment of accelerating global challenges — from the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation to the fourth industrial revolution — one thing is certain: we will only succeed in advancing American interests and upholding our universal values by working in common cause with our closest allies and partners, and by renewing our own enduring sources of national strength.

That begins with the revitalization of our most fundamental advantage: our democracy. I believe we are in the midst of an historic and fundamental debate about the future direction of our world. There are those who argue that, given all the challenges we face, autocracy is the best way forward. And there are those who understand that democracy is essential to meeting all the challenges of our changing world.

I firmly believe that democracy holds the key to freedom, prosperity, peace, and dignity. We must now demonstrate — with a clarity that dispels any doubt — that democracy can still deliver for our people and for people around the world. We must prove that our model isn't a relic of history; it's the single best way to realize the promise of our future. And, if we work together with our democratic partners, with strength and confidence, we will meet every challenge and outpace every challenger.

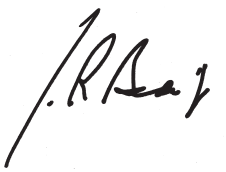
Achieving these goals rests on a core strategic proposition: The United States must renew its enduring advantages so that we can meet today's challenges from a position of strength. We will build back better our economic foundations; reclaim our place in international institutions; lift up our values at home and speak out to defend them around the world; modernize our military capabilities, while leading first with diplomacy; and revitalize America's unmatched network of alliances and partnerships.

And as we do this work, we must also demonstrate clearly to the American people that leading the world isn't an investment we make to feel good about ourselves. It's how we ensure the American people are able to live in peace, security, and prosperity. It's in our undeniable self-interest.

When we strengthen our alliances, we amplify our power and our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach our shores. When we invest in the economic development of countries, we create new markets for our products and reduce the likelihood of instability, violence, and mass migrations. When we strengthen health systems around the world, we reduce the risk of future pandemics that can threaten our people and our economy. When we defend equal rights of all people — of women and girls, LGBTQI individuals, indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and people of every ethnic background and religion — we help ensure that those rights are protected for our own children here in America.

Today, I am issuing this interim guidance to convey my vision for how America will engage with the world. I direct departments and agencies to align their actions with this guidance, even as we begin work on a National Security Strategy. We have no time to waste. The simple truth is, America cannot afford to be absent any longer on the world stage. And under the Biden-Harris Administration, America is back. Diplomacy is back. Alliances are back. But we are not looking back. We are looking irrevocably toward the future and all that we can achieve for the American people — together.

Let's get to work.



President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

RENEWING AMERICA'S ADVANTAGES

Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

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Today, more than ever, America's fate is inextricably linked to events beyond our shores. We confront a global pandemic, a crushing economic downturn, a crisis of racial justice, and a deepening climate emergency. We face a world of rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry with China, Russia, and other authoritarian states, and a technological revolution that is reshaping every aspect of our lives. Ours is a time of unprecedented challenges, but also unmatched opportunity.

This moment calls upon us to lean forward, not shrink back – to boldly engage the world to keep Americans safe, prosperous, and free. It requires a new and broader understanding of national security, one that recognizes that our role in the world depends upon our strength and vitality here at home. It demands creative approaches that draw on all the sources of our national power: our diversity, vibrant economy, dynamic civil society and innovative technological base, enduring democratic values, broad and deep network of partnerships and alliances, and the world's most powerful military. Our task is to ensure these advantages endure, by building back better at home and reinvigorating our leadership abroad. From a position of renewed strength, America can meet any challenge.

Together, we will demonstrate not only that democracies can still deliver for our people, but that democracy is essential to meeting the challenges of our time. We will strengthen and stand behind our allies, work with like-minded partners, and pool our collective strength to advance shared interests and deter common threats. We will lead with diplomacy. We will renew our commitment to global development and international cooperation, while also making smart, disciplined investments in our national defense. We will address the crises of today while promoting resilience, innovation, competitiveness, and truly shared prosperity for the future. We will recommit to realizing our ideals. We will modernize our national security institutions and processes, while ensuring we take advantage of the full diversity of talents required to address today's complex challenges. And in everything we do, we will aim to make life better, safer, and easier for working families in America.

The crises we face are daunting. But America is undaunted. Throughout our history, Americans have turned periods of crisis into times of renewal and opportunity. The same is true today. We have a chance not just to build back, but to build back better. By leaning into our strengths, we will shape a better future.

The Global Security Landscape

We cannot pretend the world can simply be restored to the way it was 75, 30, or even four years ago. We cannot just return to the way things were before. In foreign policy and national security, just as in domestic policy, we have to chart a new course.

Recent events show all too clearly that **many of the biggest threats we face respect no borders or walls, and must be met with collective action**. Pandemics and other biological risks, the escalating climate crisis, cyber and digital threats, international economic disruptions, protracted humanitarian crises, violent extremism and terrorism, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction all pose profound and, in some cases, existential dangers. None can be effectively addressed by one nation acting alone. And none can be effectively addressed with the United States on the sidelines.

At a time when the need for American engagement and international cooperation is greater than ever, however, **democracies across the globe, including our own, are increasingly under siege**. Free societies have been challenged from within by corruption, inequality, polarization, populism, and illiberal threats to the rule of law. Nationalist and nativist trends – accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis – produce an every-country-for-itself mentality that leaves us all more isolated, less prosperous, and less safe. Democratic nations are also increasingly challenged from outside by antagonistic authoritarian powers. Anti-democratic forces use misinformation, disinformation, and weaponized corruption to exploit perceived weaknesses and sow division within and among free nations, erode existing international rules, and promote alternative models of authoritarian governance. Reversing these trends is essential to our national security. The United States must lead by the power of our example, and that will require hard work at home – to fortify the founding pillars of our democracy, to truly address systemic racism, and to live up to our promise as a nation of immigrants. Our success will be a beacon to other democracies, whose freedom is intertwined with our own security, prosperity, and way of life.

IN FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY, JUST AS IN DOMESTIC POLICY, WE HAVE TO CHART A NEW COURSE.

We must also contend with the reality that **the distribution of power across the world is**

changing, creating new threats. China, in particular, has rapidly become more assertive. It is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system. Russia remains determined to enhance its global influence and play a disruptive role on the world stage. Both Beijing and Moscow have invested heavily in efforts meant to check U.S. strengths and prevent us from defending our interests and allies around the world. Regional actors like Iran and North Korea continue to pursue game-changing capabilities and technologies, while threatening U.S. allies and partners and challenging regional stability. We also face challenges within countries whose governance is fragile, and from influential non-state actors that have the ability to disrupt American interests. Terrorism and violent extremism, both domestic and international, remain significant threats. But, despite these steep challenges, the United States' enduring advantages—across all forms and dimensions of our power—enable us to shape the future of international politics to advance our interests and values, and create a freer, safer, and more prosperous world.

This work is urgent, because **the alliances, institutions, agreements, and norms underwriting the international order the United States helped to establish are being tested**. Amid rapid change and mounting crisis, the system's flaws and inequities have become apparent, and gridlock and inter-state rivalry have caused many around the world—including many Americans—to question its continued relevance. The United States cannot return to business as usual, and the past order cannot simply be restored. But this, too, presents an opportunity – to act, adapt, reform, and embrace bold initiatives that bring like-minded states and influential non-state actors together in new ways. Together with our allies and partners, we can modernize the architecture of international cooperation for the challenges of this century, from cyber threats to climate change, corruption, and digital authoritarianism.

Finally, **running beneath many of these broad trends is a revolution in technology that poses both peril and promise**. The world's leading powers are racing to develop and deploy emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing, that could shape everything from the economic and military balance among states to the future of work, wealth, and inequality within them. The future potential is enormous: advances in clean energy technologies are essential to slowing climate change; biotechnology could unlock cures for disease; next generation telecommunications (5G) infrastructure will set the stage for huge advances in commerce and access to information. Rapid changes in technology will shape every aspect of our lives and our national interests, but the direction and consequences of the technological revolution remain unsettled. Emerging technologies remain largely ungoverned

by laws or norms designed to center rights and democratic values, foster cooperation, establish guardrails against misuse or malign action, and reduce uncertainty and manage the risk that competition will lead to conflict. America must reinvest in retaining our scientific and technological edge and once again lead, working alongside our partners to establish the new rules and practices that will allow us to seize the opportunities that advances in technology present.

Our National Security Priorities

The vital national interests of the United States have endured since the founding of the Republic. Today, advancing these interests requires a new approach updated for the challenges of our time. It is our most solemn obligation **to protect the security of the American people**. This requires us to meet challenges not only from great powers and regional adversaries, but also from violent and criminal non-state actors and extremists, and from threats like climate change, infectious disease, cyberattacks, and disinformation that respect no national borders. We have an enduring **interest in expanding economic prosperity and opportunity**, but we must redefine America's economic interests in terms of working families' livelihoods, rather than corporate profits or aggregate national wealth. That places an imperative on an economic recovery grounded in equitable and inclusive growth, as well as investments to encourage innovation, strengthen national competitiveness, produce good-paying jobs, rebuild American supply chains for critical goods, and expand opportunities for all Americans. And we must remain committed to **realizing and defending the democratic values at the heart of the American way of life**. That means more than simply sustaining the status quo – it means reinvigorating our democracy, living up to our ideals and values for all Americans, and standing up for our values abroad, including by uniting the world's democracies to combat threats to free societies.

At its root, ensuring our national security requires us to:

- Defend and nurture the underlying sources of American strength, including our people, our economy, our national defense, and our democracy at home;
- Promote a favorable distribution of power to deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the United States and our allies, inhibiting access to the global commons, or dominating key regions; and
- Lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rules.

We can do none of this work alone. For that reason, **we will reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world**. For decades, our allies have stood by our side against common threats and adversaries, and worked hand-in-hand to advance our shared interests and values. They are a tremendous source of strength and a unique American advantage, helping to shoulder the responsibilities required to keep our nation safe and our people prosperous. Our democratic alliances enable us to present a common front, produce a unified vision, and pool our strength to promote high standards, establish effective international rules, and hold countries like China to account. That is why we will reaffirm, invest in, and modernize the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and our alliances with Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea – which, along with our other global alliances and partnerships, are America's greatest strategic asset. We will work with allies to share responsibilities equitably, while encouraging them to invest in their own comparative advantages against shared current and future threats.

Beyond our core alliances, we will also double down on building partnerships throughout the world, because our strength is multiplied when we combine efforts to address common challenges, share costs, and widen the circle of cooperation. As we do, we will recognize that our vital national interests compel the deepest connection to the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere. And we will be mindful of both our values and our interests as we engage partner nations. We will deepen our partnership with India and work alongside New Zealand, as well as Singapore, Vietnam, and other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, to advance shared objectives. Recognizing the ties of shared history and sacrifice, we will reinforce our partnership with Pacific Island states. We will recommit ourselves to our transatlantic partnerships, forging a strong, common agenda with the European Union and the United Kingdom on the defining issues of our time.

Because the vital national interests of the United States are inextricably bound to the fortunes of our closest neighbors in the Americas, we will expand our engagement and partnerships throughout the Western Hemisphere—and especially with Canada and Mexico—based on principles of mutual respect and equality and a commitment to economic prosperity, security, human rights, and dignity. This includes working with the Congress to provide Central America with $4 billion in assistance over four years, and taking other steps to address the root causes of human insecurity and irregular migration, including poverty, criminal violence, and corruption – problems made exponentially worse by COVID-19 and the deep recession and debt crisis it has wrought throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. And we will cooperate

to confront the regional effects of climate change, while helping our neighbors invest in good governance and democratic institutions.

In the Middle East, we will maintain our ironclad commitment to Israel's security, while seeking to further its integration with its neighbors and resuming our role as promoter of a viable two-state solution. We will work with our regional partners to deter Iranian aggression and threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity, disrupt al-Qaeda and related terrorist networks and prevent an ISIS resurgence, address humanitarian crises, and redouble our efforts to resolve the complex armed conflicts that threaten regional stability. But we do not believe that military force is the answer to the region's challenges, and we will not give our partners in the Middle East a blank check to pursue policies at odds with American interests and values. That's why we have withdrawn U.S. support for offensive military operations in Yemen and backed UN efforts to end the war. Our aim will be to de-escalate regional tensions and create space for people throughout the Middle East to realize their aspirations.

We will also continue to build partnerships in Africa, investing in civil society and strengthening long-standing political, economic, and cultural connections. We will partner with dynamic and fast-growing African economies, even as we provide assistance to countries suffering from poor governance, economic distress, health, and food insecurity exacerbated by the pandemic. We will work to bring an end to the continent's deadliest conflicts and prevent the onset of new ones, while strengthening our commitment to development, health security, environmental sustainability, democratic progress, and rule of law. We will help African nations combat the threats posed by climate change and violent extremism, and support their economic and political independence in the face of undue foreign influence.

In addition to recommitting to our alliances and partnerships, the United States will again embrace international cooperation toward a better, safer, more resilient, and more prosperous world. **We will move swiftly to earn back our position of leadership in international institutions, joining with the international community to tackle the climate crisis and other shared challenges**. We have already re-entered the Paris Climate Accord and appointed a Presidential Special Envoy for climate, the first steps toward restoring our leadership and working alongside others to combat the acute danger posed by rapidly rising temperatures. The climate crisis has been centuries in the making, and even with aggressive action, the United States and the world will experience increasing weather extremes and environmental stress in the years ahead. But, if we fail to act now, we will miss our last opportunity to avert

the most dire consequences of climate change for the health of our people, our economy, our security, and our planet. That is why we will make the clean energy transformation a central pillar of our economic recovery efforts at home, generating both domestic prosperity and international credibility as a leader of the global climate change agenda. And, in the coming months, we will convene the world's major economies and seek to raise the ambition of all nations, including our own, to rapidly lower global carbon emissions, while also enhancing resilience to climate change at home and in vulnerable countries. Alongside these efforts, we will help partners around the world mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, and we will stand prepared to provide humanitarian and development assistance to nations and communities affected by natural disasters.

We will also join with the international community to combat the continuing threat posed by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases with pandemic potential. We will lead at the World Health Organization, working to reform and strengthen the organization. As we do, we will push for reforms to improve the agency and the role of the United Nations in confronting this pandemic and preparing for the next. We have already begun to mobilize an international response to COVID-19 with an initial $2 billion contribution to COVAX along with a pledge to provide an additional $2 billion in the coming months and years. Working alongside the UN, the G-7, the G-20, the European Union, and other regional organizations, through the Global Health Security Agenda, and with international financial institutions, we will provide support for much-needed medical supplies and access to diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines. We will join with others to address the grave challenges stemming from or aggravated by the pandemic, including growing debt, rising poverty, deteriorating food security, and worsening gender-based violence. We will revitalize and expand global health and health security initiatives for all nations to reduce the risk of future biological catastrophes, whether naturally occurring, accidental, or deliberate.

America's interests at home are strengthened by improving lives globally. Our strength is multiplied when we combine efforts to address common challenges, share burdens, and broaden the circle of cooperation. Through our development agencies and financing tools, we will provide foreign assistance to promote global stability and offer an alternative to predatory development models. We will invest in climate-conscious food and water security and resilient agriculture, preventing disease and improving public health and nutrition. We will work to ensure high-quality and equitable education and opportunities for children and youth. We will advance gender equality, LBGTQI+ rights, and women's empowerment as part of our

broader commitment to inclusive economic growth and social cohesion. Global development is among our best means to articulate and embody our values, while simultaneously pursuing our national security interests. In short, our foreign assistance programs and partnerships are both the right and the smart thing to do.

Because the United Nations and other international organizations, however imperfect, remain essential for advancing our interests, we will re-engage as a full participant and work to meet our financial obligations, in full and on time. Across a range of crucial issues – from climate change to global health, peace and security, humanitarian response, revitalizing democracy and human rights, digital connectivity and technology governance, sustainable and inclusive development, and forced displacement and migration – effective global cooperation and institutional reform require America to resume a leadership role in multilateral organizations. It is also critical that these institutions continue to reflect the universal values, aspirations, and norms that have underpinned the UN system since its founding 75 years ago, rather than an authoritarian agenda. In a world of deepening rivalry, we will not cede this vital terrain.

WE WILL MAKE SMART AND DISCIPLINED CHOICES REGARDING OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE AND THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF OUR MILITARY, WHILE ELEVATING DIPLOMACY AS OUR TOOL OF FIRST RESORT.

As we re-engage the international system, we will address the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons. We will head off costly arms races and re-establish our credibility as a leader in arms control. That is why we moved quickly to extend the New START Treaty with Russia. Where possible, we will also pursue new arms control arrangements. We will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible. And we will engage in meaningful dialogue with Russia and China on a range of emerging military technological developments that implicate strategic stability.

Renewed American nonproliferation leadership will also be essential to reducing the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. Working with allies and partners, we will pursue principled diplomacy to address the Iranian nuclear program and its other destabilizing activities. We will

empower our diplomats to work to reduce the threat posed by North Korea's growing nuclear and missile programs, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Republic of Korea and Japan. We will also renew efforts to lock down fissile and radiological materials across the world.

In advancing America's interests globally, **we will make smart and disciplined choices regarding our national defense and the responsible use of our military, while elevating diplomacy as our tool of first resort**. A powerful military matched to the security environment is a decisive American advantage. The United States will never hesitate to use force when required to defend our vital national interests. We will ensure our armed forces are equipped to deter our adversaries, defend our people, interests, and allies, and defeat threats that emerge. But the use of military force should be a last resort, not the first; diplomacy, development, and economic statecraft should be the leading instruments of American foreign policy. Military force should only be used when the objectives and mission are clear and achievable, when force is matched with appropriate resources and as part of an integrated strategy, when it is consistent with our values and laws, and with the informed consent of the American people. Decisions will be grounded in our strong tradition of civilian control of the military and healthy civil-military relations. And, when force is required, we will employ it alongside international and local partners wherever possible to bolster effectiveness and legitimacy, share burdens, and invest others in success.

Defending America also means setting clear priorities within our defense budget. First and foremost, we will continue to invest in the people who serve in our all-volunteer force and their families. We will sustain readiness and ensure that the U.S. Armed Forces remain the best trained and equipped force in the world. In the face of strategic challenges from an increasingly assertive China and destabilizing Russia, we will assess the appropriate structure, capabilities, and sizing of the force, and, working with the Congress, shift our emphasis from unneeded legacy platforms and weapons systems to free up resources for investments in the cutting-edge technologies and capabilities that will determine our military and national security advantage in the future. We will streamline the processes for developing, testing, acquiring, deploying, and securing these technologies. We will ensure that we have the skilled workforce to acquire, integrate, and operate them. And we will shape ethical and normative frameworks to ensure these technologies are used responsibly. We will maintain the proficiency of special operations forces to focus on crisis response and priority counterterrorism and unconventional warfare missions. And we will develop capabilities to better compete and deter gray zone actions. We will prioritize defense investments in climate resiliency and clean energy. And we will work to ensure that the Department of Defense is a place of truly equal opportunity where our service

members do not face discrimination or the scourge of sexual harassment and assault.

The United States should not, and will not, engage in "forever wars" that have cost thousands of lives and trillions of dollars. We will work to responsibly end America's longest war in Afghanistan while ensuring that Afghanistan does not again become a safe haven for terrorist attacks against the United States. Elsewhere, as we position ourselves to deter our adversaries and defend our interests, working alongside our partners, our presence will be most robust in the Indo-Pacific and Europe. In the Middle East, we will right-size our military presence to the level required to disrupt international terrorist networks, deter Iranian aggression, and protect other vital U.S. interests. A Global Posture Review will guide these choices, ensuring they are in keeping with our strategic objectives, values, and resources. And we will make these adjustments consistent with the safety of our personnel and in close consultation with our allies and partners.

OUR TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICIES MUST SERVE ALL AMERICANS, NOT JUST THE PRIVILEGED FEW.

As we make good on our promise to place the American people – and especially working families – at the center of our national security strategy, our policies must reflect a basic truth: in today's world, economic security is national security. And the strength of the American middle class – the backbone of this nation – is a longstanding American advantage. For that reason, **our trade and international economic policies must serve all Americans, not just the privileged few**. Trade policy must grow the American middle class, create new and better jobs, raise wages, and strengthen communities. We will make sure that the rules of the international economy are not tilted against the United States. We will enforce existing trade rules and create new ones that promote fairness. We will ensure that the growth we promote through our international commercial, trade, and investment policies is durable and equitable. We will work with our allies to reform the World Trade Organization so that it functions to support both American jobs and the values that we share with millions around the globe – including labor rights, equal opportunity, and environmental stewardship. We will only pursue new trade deals after we have made investments in American workers and communities. And as we negotiate with other nations, we will stand up for American workers and small and medium-sized businesses, even as we continue to ensure that all American companies can compete successfully abroad. We will have labor and environmental groups

at the table and insist that all economic agreements have elevated labor and environmental protections. We will work with like-minded nations to advance an international trading system that promotes a global transition to clean energy. We will ensure our international economic policies reinforce our domestic policies to support workers, small businesses, and infrastructure, and we will integrate measures to address transitional and distributional challenges. We will renew our commitment to partnership with the private sector in our development investments, and seek to create investment opportunities for American firms in developing countries. And we will place a high priority on detecting, preventing, and managing global economic shocks that hit American families hard.

At a time of multiple, intersecting crises, we must recognize that **our strength abroad requires the United States to build back better at home**. A dynamic, inclusive, innovative national economy with a flourishing population is a critical American advantage that must be renewed. That starts by **decisively responding to the public health and economic crises unleashed by COVID-19**. Our national strategy—reinforced by the 12 initial executive actions issued by President Biden in his first two days in office—centers on restoring trust with the American people; mounting a safe, effective, and comprehensive vaccination campaign; and mitigating disease spread through masking, testing, an expanded public health workforce, and better data. We will increase emergency relief, exercise the Defense Production Act, safely reopen schools and businesses, and promote safe travel. Our efforts to tackle COVID-19 will focus on protecting those most at risk, advancing equity, and communicating credible public health guidance led by science. To address the economic crisis, we will work with the Congress to provide sustained relief to workers, families, small businesses, and communities and begin to make far-reaching investments to create millions of good-paying new jobs in infrastructure, manufacturing, technology, and caregiving.

As we take the urgent steps required for near-term recovery, we must also seize the historic opportunity in front of us to build back in ways that make America more resilient and secure over the long run. That is why we will rebuild and strengthen federal, state, and local preparedness to handle not just this pandemic, but also the next one. We will work to restore U.S. leadership on global health and health security, and build the world's collective preparedness and capacity to detect and rapidly contain infectious diseases and biological threats. We will invest in critical stockpiles and ensure that supply chains for pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, and other critical materials required during a crisis are not overly reliant on overseas networks prone to disruption. And we will make our economy more resilient to global shocks, like COVID-19 and those emanating from climate change.

Building back better also requires an updated social contract that treats American workers and working families as essential at all times, not just times of crisis – with higher wages, stronger benefits, collective bargaining, and equitable and safe workplaces. We will mobilize U.S. manufacturing and innovation to ensure that the future is made in America, and in all of America. We will leverage American ingenuity to build modern infrastructure and ensure our investments create good, union jobs that expand the middle class.

Central to this agenda is building an equitable, clean, and resilient energy future, which is urgently required to head off the existential risk posed by the climate crisis. Doing so is essential to spark innovation, grow high-paying jobs, and ensure U.S. competitiveness in the decades to come. We will dramatically increase investments in technology research, development, and deployment that will power the low-to-no carbon future that we seek – where global leadership is up for grabs and where American innovation can generate jobs and growth in filling global market needs. We will use federal procurement to jumpstart demand for critical clean technologies like electric vehicles. And we will support the accelerated growth in renewable energy deployment, invest in climate-friendly infrastructure, build resilience to climate change, modernize our energy grid, and provide the international leadership required to encourage countries around the world to do the same.

OUR STRENGTH ABROAD REQUIRES US TO BUILD BACK BETTER AT HOME.

More broadly, we will sustain America's innovation edge to improve the lives of all Americans. We will double down on science and technology investments, including in research and development, foundational computing technologies, and domestic leading-edge manufacturing, to enable the pursuit of numerous national strategic objectives, including in the economic, health, biotech, energy, climate, and national security domains. We will protect our investments with vigilance and foresight, to forge and extend enduring strategic advantages. We will expand our science and technology workforce by investing in STEM education, where America is currently losing ground, and restoring our nation's historic strengths by ensuring our immigration policy incentivizes the world's best and brightest to study, work, and stay in America. We will build 21st century digital infrastructure, including universal and affordable high-speed internet access and secure 5G networks. We will explore and use outer space to the benefit of humanity, and ensure the safety, stability, and security of outer space activities. We

will shape emerging technology standards to boost our security, economic competitiveness, and values. And, across these initiatives, we will partner with democratic friends and allies to amplify our collective competitive advantages.

As we bolster our scientific and technological base, we will make cybersecurity a top priority, strengthening our capability, readiness, and resilience in cyberspace. We will elevate cybersecurity as an imperative across the government. We will work together to manage and share risk, and we will encourage collaboration between the private sector and the government at all levels in order to build a safe and secure online environment for all Americans. We will expand our investments in the infrastructure and people we need to effectively defend the nation against malicious cyber activity, providing opportunities to Americans of diverse backgrounds as we build an unmatched talent base. We will renew our commitment to international engagement on cyber issues, working alongside our allies and partners to uphold existing and shape new global norms in cyberspace. And we will hold actors accountable for destructive, disruptive, or otherwise destabilizing malicious cyber activity, and respond swiftly and proportionately to cyberattacks by imposing substantial costs through cyber and non-cyber means.

Building back better requires us to **commit ourselves to revitalizing our own democracy**. America's ideals of democracy, equality, and diversity are a fundamental and enduring source of advantage – but they are not a given. Embracing that advantage means living up to the founding promises of our nation, strengthening and renewing our democratic processes and ideals, and demonstrating by our actions that democracy is essential to meeting the challenges of our time. We will combat voter suppression and institutional disenfranchisement. We will require transparency and accountability in our government, root out corruption, and confront the distorting role of money in our politics. We will recommit to the rule of law, restore respect for the constitutional separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, renew faith in the apolitical nature of federal law enforcement agencies, the intelligence community, our diplomats, civil servants, and military, and reaffirm the importance of free speech, freedom of the press, the right to peacefully demonstrate, and other core civil rights and liberties.

At a time when millions of Americans have braved COVID-19 to demand racial justice, and when the pandemic and the economic crisis have fallen particularly hard on Black and Brown Americans, truly building back better is impossible without advancing racial equity. This necessitates deep reforms to policing and our criminal justice system, and urgent steps to ensure voting rights for all. But that is not enough. Combating systemic racism requires

aggressive action to address structures, policies, and practices that contribute to the wealth gap, to health disparities, and to inequalities in educational access, outcomes, and beyond.

We must also remember and celebrate that we are a nation of immigrants, strengthened at home and abroad by our diversity. We must renew our promise as a place of refuge, and our obligation to protect those who seek shelter on our shores. That is why we ended the previous administration's family separations policy and discriminatory travel ban. We will not be able to solve all of the challenges we face at the southern border overnight. But we will ensure that we create a process that is safe, fair, and conducted in accordance with our values.

THIS AGENDA WILL STRENGTHEN OUR ENDURING ADVANTAGES, AND ALLOW US TO PREVAIL IN STRATEGIC COMPETITION WITH CHINA OR ANY OTHER NATION.

A vibrant democracy rejects politically motivated violence in all of its forms. Despite significant successes against international terrorism, a diffuse and dispersed threat to Americans remains. Domestic violent extremism challenges core principles of our democracy and demands policies that protect public safety while promoting our values and respecting our laws. We must adapt our approach to counterterrorism, including by aligning our resources to evolving threats. We will work as a coordinated, unified federal government to use the full array of tools at our disposal in concert with state, local, tribal, private sector, and foreign counterparts. Robust law enforcement and intelligence capabilities, as well as strong cooperation and appropriate information sharing, will be critical to understanding and addressing the broad spectrum of violent extremism America confronts today.

Our work defending democracy does not end at our shores. Authoritarianism is on the global march, and **we must join with likeminded allies and partners to revitalize democracy the world over**. We will work alongside fellow democracies across the globe to deter and defend against aggression from hostile adversaries. We will stand with our allies and partners to combat new threats aimed at our democracies, ranging from cross-border aggression, cyberattacks, disinformation, and digital authoritarianism to infrastructure and energy coercion. We will take special aim at confronting corruption, which rots democracy from the inside and is increasingly weaponized by authoritarian states to undermine democratic

institutions. We will defend and protect human rights and address discrimination, inequity, and marginalization in all its forms. We will crack down on tax havens and illicit financing that contribute to income inequality, fund terrorism, and generate pernicious foreign influence. We will coordinate the use of economic tools, leveraging our collective strength to advance our common interests. We will work together to impose real costs on anyone who interferes in our democratic processes. We will join with like-minded democracies to develop and defend trusted critical supply chains and technology infrastructure, and to promote pandemic preparedness and clean energy. We will lead in promoting shared norms and forge new agreements on emerging technologies, space, cyber space, health and biological threats, climate and the environment, and human rights. And we will convene a global Summit for Democracy to ensure broad cooperation among allies and partners on the interests and values we hold most dear.

Taken together, **this agenda will strengthen our enduring advantages, and allow us to prevail in strategic competition with China or any other nation**. The most effective way for America to out-compete a more assertive and authoritarian China over the long-term is to invest in our people, our economy, and our democracy. By restoring U.S. credibility and reasserting forward-looking global leadership, we will ensure that America, not China, sets the international agenda, working alongside others to shape new global norms and agreements that advance our interests and reflect our values. By bolstering and defending our unparalleled network of allies and partners, and making smart defense investments, we will also deter Chinese aggression and counter threats to our collective security, prosperity, and democratic way of life.

At the same time, revitalizing our core strengths is necessary but not sufficient. In many areas, China's leaders seek unfair advantages, behave aggressively and coercively, and undermine the rules and values at the heart of an open and stable international system. When the Chinese government's behavior directly threatens our interests and values, we will answer Beijing's challenge. We will confront unfair and illegal trade practices, cyber theft, and coercive economic practices that hurt American workers, undercut our advanced and emerging technologies, and seek to erode our strategic advantage and national competitiveness. We will ensure that our supply chains for critical national security technologies and medical supplies are secure. We will continue to defend access to the global commons, including freedom of navigation and overflight rights, under international law. We will position ourselves, diplomatically and militarily, to defend our allies. We will support China's neighbors and commercial partners in defending their rights to make independent political choices free of

coercion or undue foreign influence. We will promote locally-led development to combat the manipulation of local priorities. We will support Taiwan, a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner, in line with longstanding American commitments. We will ensure that U.S. companies do not sacrifice American values in doing business in China. And we will stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity, including in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. On all these issues, we will work to forge a common approach with like-minded countries.

We also recognize that strategic competition does not, and should not, preclude working with China when it is in our national interest to do so. Indeed, renewing America's advantages ensures that we will engage China from a position of confidence and strength. We will conduct practical, results-oriented diplomacy with Beijing and work to reduce the risk of misperception and miscalculation. We will welcome the Chinese government's cooperation on issues such as climate change, global health security, arms control, and nonproliferation where our national fates are intertwined. As we do, we will rally our allies and partners to join us, pooling our negotiating leverage and showing our collective power and resolve.

Finally, for our national security strategy to be effective, it is essential to **invest in our national security workforce, institutions, and partnerships, inspire a new generation to public service, ensure our workforce represents the diversity of our country, and modernize our decision-making processes**. Executing an effective national security strategy requires expertise and informed judgment. Yet, in recent years, the experience, integrity, and professionalism of our national security institutions and workforce, though resilient, has been severely tested. We must acknowledge this for the national security challenge it is and act quickly to address it.

As we get the COVID-19 pandemic under control, we will ensure our national security workforce can continue to operate safely and effectively. We will protect public servants; rebuild our human capital to ensure a strong corps of diplomats, development professionals, intelligence officers, service members, and civil servants; and recruit and retain the next generation of national security specialists. We will enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, and prioritize flexibility and improve training across our national security workforce. We will create new opportunities for non-career experts to serve our government for a finite period of time, and we will attract critical talent from the private sector on issues as diverse as climate change, global public health, emerging technologies, and China, and incentivize them to work in the federal government. We will provide our workforce with the cutting-edge technology

they need, while encouraging new organizational structures and the culture of innovation required to address today's complex challenges. And we will take urgent action to ensure that our national security workforce reflects the full diversity of America and all the strengths it brings. As we take these steps, we will emphasize professional integrity, accountability, and transparency.

America accomplishes more when we lead with our full diplomatic, economic, health, and developmental toolkit. For that reason, and to avoid overreliance on the U.S. military to carry out tasks and missions better suited to others, our national security budget will prioritize new resources for diplomacy and development. We will also invest in our Intelligence Community, reinforcing its capacity to deliver the timely analysis and warning required to inform policy making, identify opportunities, and head off threats before they turn into crises.

Because traditional distinctions between foreign and domestic policy – and among national security, economic security, health security, and environmental security – are less meaningful than ever before, we will reform and rethink our agencies, departments, interagency processes, and White House organization to reflect this new reality. We will ensure that individuals with expertise in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, economics and finance, and critical languages and regions are fully integrated into our decision-making. Because the federal government does not, and never will, have a monopoly on expertise, we will develop new processes and partnerships to ensure that state, municipal, tribal, civil society, non-profit, diaspora, faith-based, and private sector actors are better integrated into policy deliberations. And we will develop new mechanisms to coordinate policy and implementation across this diverse set of stakeholders.

Conclusion

This moment is an inflection point. We are in the midst of a fundamental debate about the future direction of our world. To prevail, we must demonstrate that democracies can still deliver for our people. It will not happen by accident – we have to defend our democracy, strengthen it and renew it. That means building back better our economic foundations. Reclaiming our place in international institutions. Lifting up our values at home and speaking out to defend them around the world. Modernizing our military capabilities while leading with diplomacy. Revitalizing America's network of alliances, and the partnerships that have made the world safer for all of our peoples.

No nation is better positioned to navigate this future than America. Doing so requires us to embrace and reclaim our enduring advantages, and to approach the world from a position of confidence and strength. If we do this, working with our democratic partners, we will meet every challenge and outpace every challenger. Together, we can and will build back better.

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