



TRUMAN CENTER

**Day 1 and Day 100
National Security Policy
Recommendations
to the Biden-Harris
Transition Team**

**DECEMBER
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DAY 1 AND DAY 100 NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BIDEN-HARRIS TRANSITION TEAM

The first 100 days of the Biden-Harris administration will be a crucial determinant as to how the US will move forward after a chaotic four years.

The Transition Team will need bold, new ideas from policymakers, thought leaders, and emerging thinkers not just from across the political spectrum, but from throughout the country.

The Truman Center for National Policy has partnered with the Truman National Security Project's nationwide membership to address the most pressing issues that the incoming administration will face as they enter the Oval Office.

We outline some of the major issues where we believe early commitments are required in order to advance key objectives.

Presented below are our Day 1 and Day 100 recommendations on:

- US Climate and Energy Policy
- US-China Policy
- US Immigration Policy
- Nuclear Security and Non-Proliferation
- Rebuilding Institutions at Home by Centering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Strengthening US Alliances and Partnerships
- Technology & Innovation



US CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY

We are truly in a climate emergency. Energy and climate security are the dominant issue of the next decades.

Both sit at the crossroads of national security, economic, foreign and domestic policy. Climate change is a “threat multiplier,” that will exacerbate income inequality and other problems. If emissions continue to rise unabated, our planet will reach tipping points with catastrophic consequences.

President-elect Biden’s appointment of former Secretary of State John Kerry as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change signals that this administration will put climate at the top of its agenda.

Early action by the new administration will produce real, meaningful gains in slowing the crisis while creating good jobs, unlocking innovations, and building a stronger, safer economy.

But we cannot do it alone: making real progress will require deep and meaningful cooperation between a multitude of states and local actors across the globe.

CLIMATE AND ENERGY: ON DAY 1

Rejoin the Paris Agreement, then Reinforce It

Rejoining is just the start. The United States should use its diplomatic relationships to reinforce implementation of the three goals of the Paris Agreement: 1) safeguarding global temperature; 2) increasing climate resilience; and 3) aligning financial flows.

Currently the national determined contributions (NDCs) that have been submitted by countries will increase global temperatures by 3.6 degrees Celsius, well above the 2 degree or even 1.5 degree goals. The United States must lead by example by setting a more ambitious NDC, and by working with other major polluters, such as China and India, to encourage them to do the same.

Further, the United States can renew its commitment to addressing deforestation, ocean acidification, and the need for preserving biodiversity. The US should resume its contributions to the Green Climate Fund and become a party to the Kigali Amendment on refrigerants.





Declare a Climate Emergency

According to the World Meteorological Organization, average temperatures for the past five-year (2015–2019) and ten-year (2010–2019) periods are the highest on record and in 2020, Death Valley recorded the hottest temperature ever on earth — 129.9 degrees Fahrenheit. Rising seas could threaten the homes of 300 million people globally over the next three decades, spurring the largest ever mass population migration the planet has ever known.

To date, over 1,830 jurisdictions and local governments representing 820 million citizens around the world have declared a climate emergency, mobilizing all available resources to fight against it with the scale and urgency necessary to meet the problem.

Declaring a climate emergency would reinforce the grave status of the current situation and mobilize all forces needed to begin to tackle the challenge.


Issue an Executive Order establishing a National Climate Council

Climate change must permeate all parts of the President's domestic and international agenda and, by extension, the work of executive agencies. Akin to the National Security Council, Domestic Policy Council, and National Economic Council, the National Climate Council would coordinate the President's domestic and international climate change agenda, ensure its execution across all parts of the federal government, and elevate climate change to the highest levels of the administration.

A National Climate Council must have adequate staffing and be complemented by climate experts at all executive agencies like the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, not just the energy and environmental agencies.

Reconvene the InterAgency Working Group to update the Social Cost of Carbon

The social cost of carbon is a method of estimating the damages from emitting one ton of carbon dioxide at some point in time. It provides a valuable means of assessing the climate impacts of various policies, programs, and regulatory actions, and is a useful tool in cost-benefit analysis. In 2009, an Interagency Working Group (IWG) of experts from across 12 agencies developed a social cost of carbon, which was last updated in 2016. The Trump administration disbanded the IWG and its EPA-issued interim guidance to use a social cost of carbon estimate of \$1/ton.



The Biden administration should immediately reconvene the IWG and charge it with updating the social costs of carbon, methane, and nitrous oxide and estimate the social cost of other greenhouse gases.

CLIMATE AND ENERGY: ON DAY 100

Convene a Climate Migration Workshop


Either as part of a climate summit or in a follow-on workshop, the Administration should convene world leaders to fully understand both the domestic and international threats to lives and livelihoods from increasing extreme weather events and other climate impacts. From sea level rise to droughts, floods, hurricanes, wildfires, extreme heat events and depleted fresh water sources, the impacts from climate change have the biggest effect on the marginalized and vulnerable. In fact, 162 million Americans (almost 50%) will most likely experience a decline in the quality of their environment, most commonly in hotter temperatures with less access to fresh water. If left unchecked, these instabilities will force the largest ever human migration in history, with untold national security and humanitarian impacts.

Institute a Citizens Energy and Environment Corps

The Biden administration should establish a Citizens Energy and Environment Corps (CEEC). Drawing inspiration from the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps, the CEEC would put Americans to work climate-proofing our future by building solar, wind, and storage projects, smart grids, and resilient transportation and water infrastructure. It can harness the skills and expertise of service members transitioning to civilian life and fossil fuel workers looking to shift into the clean energy economy. It can also provide good opportunities for young people and the formerly incarcerated.

Launch a Low Carbon Transportation “Fuels-shot”

The US Department of Defense (DoD) accounts for 77 percent of energy consumption by the federal government, more than any other agency.



Two percent of the DoD's annual budget is spent on energy to power our military installations and operations, the latter of which accounts for 70 percent of DoD's energy consumption and is principally met by fossil fuels. In combat zones, fuel convoys are easy targets and result in far too many American casualties.

To expedite our transition away from fossil fuels, the Administration should create a targeted program, like the Department of Energy's Sunshot program, but supported by funding from across several agencies, focused on increasing the viability and availability of low-cost, low-carbon transportation fuels.

This program will benefit our service members while decreasing emissions in our transportation sector, which accounts for more emissions than any other sector of our economy. Cost competitive and widely available low-carbon fuels can also support decarbonizing America's industrial base.

Reinforce Energy Grid Security and Resilience

Our reliance on electricity cannot be overstated. As more clean and renewable resources power our grid, electrification of our buildings and transportation systems become a more appealing climate solution.

A time of such dramatic transformation in the architecture and topography of our grid must include a deliberate approach to incorporating enhanced security and resilience at every level of the system.

The need to ensure the grid is secured against natural and manmade threats must be met with robust funding for the federal government's cybersecurity programs.

This includes the Department of Energy's Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER); the US Cyber Command; and the and the Department of Homeland Security.

Robust funding for these agencies will help ensure support for the electricity industry, and for improved coordination with states, utilities, and other private sector partners to provide the policy tools and financial resources needed for the survivability of this essential infrastructure lifeline.

This will strengthen our electricity grid today and help ensure the security of our nation and our communities in the future.



US-CHINA POLICY

For the incoming Biden administration, the strategic rivalry between the US and China will remain, likely deepening along technological and military axes, while potentially receding in areas like climate, where the new President believes cooperation is necessary.

In this new era in US–China relations, the Secretaries of federal executive departments not traditionally included in the formulation and implementation of US-China strategic policy — such as DHS, Justice, and the Department of Energy — will be ever more important.

Balancing cooperation and competition will be key to advancing US interests.

US-CHINA POLICY: ON DAY 1

Increase the overall number of refugees admitted to the US and prioritize the admission of more refugees from Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, etc

Opening America’s doors to those suffering from Beijing’s anti-democratic policies offers a bipartisan way for the US to reassert inclusiveness as a strategic advantage.

Instruct the Department of the Treasury to review the US-based financial assets of senior Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party members

As mentioned in a prior Truman Project Members’ Statement on Hong Kong, the Biden administration should review such assets owned by Chinese officials engaged in corruption or human rights abuses.

Resume operation of the Fulbright Program and the Peace Corps in China

In both political and monetary terms, this is a low-cost way to signal to Beijing that the Biden administration will cooperate with China even as it competes, and will continue to value people-to-people exchanges. Programs like Fulbright and the Peace Corps generally favor American interests, as they expand US soft power in the country.





Have DHS clarify its interpretation of existing law to Chinese students in the US and those thinking of studying here

The Trump administration has weaponized DHS to create continued, debilitating uncertainty over legal status for Chinese students in the United States, leading to a precipitous fall in the number of education visas granted to Chinese students, and an ebbing of interest among Chinese students in study in the US.

The Biden administration should, through DHS, clarify the status of law-abiding Chinese nationals studying in the United States. Without such certainty, prospective students will continue to choose Canada and the UK, depriving the US of their talents and research.

US-CHINA POLICY: ON DAY 100

Work with Congress to pass the Taiwan Invasion Prevention Act


The Taiwan Invasion Prevention Act, co-sponsored by Representative Ted Yoho (R-FL) and Senator Rick Scott (R-FL), authorizes the “president to use military force for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Taiwan against armed attack.”

This would provide the Biden administration the legal authorization to defend Taiwan from unprovoked Chinese invasion with prior Congressional approval.

Have Vice President-elect Kamala Harris visit Indo-Pacific democratic allies and partners to coordinate a wider regional response to China’s rise

As the highest ranking Asian-American elected to the federal executive branch and a daughter of California, which is home to America’s largest Indo-Pacific diaspora communities, Vice President-elect Harris is uniquely positioned to engage with the region in a way her predecessors have not.

Thus, the Biden administration should send her to visit the capitals of our allies and partners in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, and India in one major trip.



Work with Congress to pass an updated International Broadcasting Act to counter Chinese disinformation efforts and support independent reporting on China

In recent congressional testimony, former President and CEO of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Jamie Fly urged Congress to increase funding to Radio Free Asia and the Open Technology Fund to counter authoritarian disinformation.

By updating the International Broadcasting Act and expanding the funding of the Chinese-language services of those aforementioned entities, the US Agency for Global Media can do its part to push back against China's crackdown on independent journalism.

Begin backchannel discussions about a Comprehensive Bilateral Information Agreement

China's expulsion of prominent US journalists means the public and US policymakers have less reliable information about what is happening in the country.

The Trump administration's pursuit of "reciprocity" here has allowed Beijing to do what it has long wanted to do in restricting reporting by Western outlets.

The US has few equivalent responses because, as an open society with independent media, expulsion of Chinese journalists accomplishes little.

With input from stakeholders in the US media, the Biden administration should negotiate an agreement with China that allows reporters from US outlets to return to China.

Announce a US-China Climate Dialogue

While the Strategic and Economic Dialogue has been mothballed, the Biden administration can signal the importance of the climate issue by creating a semi-annual dialogue on the subject. It would require buy-in and regular attendance from senior Chinese officials.

Such a dialogue would create a forcing mechanism for bilateral cooperation, offer greater visibility into whether Beijing is on track to meet its own stated climate goals, and give the US a way to confront Beijing and excessive state funding of coal projects outside its borders.



US IMMIGRATION POLICY

Immigration is a defining feature of the United States' history and its competitive edge. The choice to come and share ownership in the American project reaffirms core values and bolsters our model as a beacon to the world. Despite immigration's benefits, our immigration system has long been outdated and reactive. The Trump administration's xenophobia meant that all forms of immigration were suspect.

Emblematic of its approach was the cruel policy of separating children from their parents, with more than 650 children remaining separated to this day. ***To rebuild an immigration system befitting our nation's values and ambitions, we need a proactive immigration strategy.***

Our goal is simple: more regular and orderly immigration systems, and fewer people displaced by force.

A proactive immigration strategy would illuminate that choice migration can be streamlined through better management, and forced migration reduced by addressing upstream failures, like violence and armed conflict, poverty and economic insecurity, and climate change.

Our approach must reflect the ways we live and work in the 21st century, uphold core values and human dignity, and meet our goals and aspirations to welcome and include the immigrants who are critical to the United States' continued growth and dynamism.


This means crafting a modern system, with plentiful and flexible pathways to come to and stay in the US, secure and fair processes that promote justice and equity, targeted enforcement consistent with rule of law, and the resilience to adapt for acute and future needs.

At home, that includes longstanding residents having the chance to belong, too, because a tiered sense of citizenship runs counter to democracy. Abroad, that includes working with international partners to have clear and available pathways for people choosing to migrate.

In addition, we must marshal global efforts to address root causes of forced migration and, when displacement inevitably occurs, to protect human security.

We must ensure that those displaced can find long-term safety back at home, in the region, or through resettlement. Supporting partners abroad and welcoming refugees benefits our economy, enhances regional security, and pays diplomatic and military returns.





The US has the capacity to welcome immigrants and promote inclusion for all residents. Our strength comes from the ability to work together — people of different origin, color, and creed — to inspire as one nation.

US IMMIGRATION POLICY: ON DAY 1

Shift the tone on immigrants and establish a welcoming and inclusive posture that seeks to eliminate divisive, dehumanizing language that fuels hate, increases the risk for violence, and undermines national security.

To accomplish this, a series of actions must be taken. First, the incoming Biden administration must overturn the Trump administration's series of discriminatory bans and proclamations that are designed only to keep people out.

Words also matter — the incoming administration must restore a positive mission statement to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and emphasize "integration" and "inclusion."

Throughout the government, the administration must empower and encourage the use of people-first, non-dehumanizing language (e.g. reverse the Trump administration's use of "alien" and "illegal.")


Finally, the incoming Biden administration must announce a freeze on and rewrite regulations that target low-income immigrants and are the subject of litigation.

The regulations in question include the Public Charge rule, the USCIS Fee Schedule, and limitations on employment authorization eligibility for asylum seekers.

Refocus immigration enforcement on actual threats and depoliticize border security

The Biden administration must pause deportation to review practices, return to the prior practice of establishing targeted enforcement priorities, and review cases in immigration courts for possible administrative closure based on those priorities.

It must also end the national emergency declaration concerning the southern border and cease the pilfering of Department of Defense funds for unnecessary wall construction.



All construction on border wall expansion must be frozen, and the new Administration must instruct DoD to redeploy Army Corps of Engineers personnel currently tasked on the Southern border to other projects of interest to US national security.

Commit to principles of fairness and justice in immigration policy so that all can have faith in the system and government actions

In order to restore this commitment, first, the incoming Biden administration must acknowledge the egregious harm of the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy that separated children from their families, and immediately establish an interagency, public-private task force dedicated to reuniting all remaining separated families.

The DACA program must be reinstated, and the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program for those people who face threats in their homeland must be re-established and extended. The administration must also ensure that immigration judges can act independently and provide relief where warranted.

Finally, the administration must replace guidance and vacate Attorney General decisions meant to interfere with judicial independence.

Begin to rebuild the United States' commitment to refugees and other displaced persons

The Biden administration first must raise resettlement targets and restore asylum protections and infrastructure. These protections include reversing policies for asylum seekers to be summarily detained, remain in Mexico, or be expelled to third countries. Key to success will be navigating new relationships and partnerships with Mexico and Central American nations.

The administration must also restore asylum eligibility for survivors of gender-based violence, and end support for metering efforts which restrict the flow of asylum seekers at ports of entry.

Finally, the Biden administration can support America's commitment to refugees and displaced persons by vacating memoranda and agency guidance that require the detention and/or criminal prosecution of asylum seekers and reinstate case management programs as an alternative to detention.



US IMMIGRATION POLICY: ON DAY 100

Shift the tone on immigrants and establish a USG posture of welcome and inclusion

Divisive, dehumanizing language perpetuates hate, increases the risk for violence, and undermines national security. The new administration must launch a campaign to promote citizenship, make naturalization more affordable, and bring Americans together to celebrate citizenship.

The administration must also improve customer service tools to ensure that the immigration system is freely and fairly accessible to all. To improve the widespread accessibility of the immigration system, immigration processes must be simplified and digitized, and the administration should redouble efforts to focus on this digitization effort. Additionally, this initiative must also promote the use of technology to facilitate better immigration service delivery efficiently.

Finally, the administration should return discretion to adjudicating officers on approving applications for benefits.


Re-focus immigration enforcement on actual threats and de-politicize border security

The administration must unveil new border management and immigration enforcement strategies. These strategies should include interagency public-private partnerships to correct humanitarian practices at the border, re-evaluate enforcement priorities, and consider alternatives to detention. New detention standards must also be published, and guidance issued to ICE officers that, when possible, favors release on parole or bond.

A freeze on new or renewal contracts with private detention corporations should also be instituted, pending a thorough review of each contract and needs for additional bed space. Finally, the administration must refocus border enforcement around information acquired through intelligence and threat assessments.

Commit to principles of fairness and justice in immigration policy so that all can have faith in the system and government actions

By Day 100, the Biden administration should be prepared to announce the creation of a humanitarian program modeled on the Central American Minor Parole Program of 2014.



This new program shall allow deported parents who were separated from their children to reunite with them in the US and to apply for asylum.

The administration should also work with Congress to pass legislation that modernizes the immigration system, provides a path to citizenship, and secures the United States' commitment to refugees and asylum seekers.

This legislation should also establish an independent immigration court system. Previous decisions that limit asylum eligibility based on gender or family relationship should also be reviewed and vacated, and the Office of Legal Access Programs should be returned as an independent department within the Executive Office for Immigration Review. Finally, the Biden administration should invest in programs that provide access to counsel for immigrants and issue directives aimed at reducing humanitarian backlogs, including that for victims of gender-based violence and victims of crime and trafficking.

Return the US to leadership on global migration

This should be done through robust US engagement within UN frameworks on global migration and refugees. Work includes stepping up in our own hemisphere and forging new partnerships with Mexico and Central American countries to promote regional stability and safety, alongside pathways for resettlement and family unity, and working with partners in South America on Venezuela's displacement crisis.



NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

The Biden administration inherits a nuclear security situation characterized by the US withdrawal from treaties and increased tensions between the United States, Russia, and China.

The first priorities for the Biden administration should be to repair and enhance the arms control and nonproliferation treaties that have limited the production of nuclear weapons and reduced the threat of nuclear war (New START, the JCPOA, and the NPT).

Next, the Biden administration should address nuclear threats that are growing but are not covered under existing agreements (China and North Korea). Finally, the administration should develop a no-first-use policy as part of its first Nuclear Posture Review.

Together, these measures can restore US leadership in nuclear security and reduce the risk of nuclear war.

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION: ON DAY 1


Extend New START

New START — the cornerstone of US–Russia arms control — expires Jan 22, 2021, but Russia is open to extending it. Extending New START would keep the limits it has placed on the US and Russian nuclear arsenals.

It would also enable the United States to continue to gain valuable information regarding Russia’s nuclear arsenal that it obtains through the treaty. A successor treaty, placing further limits (which would take more time to negotiate), could then be negotiated during the Biden administration.

Rejoin the JCPOA

The JCPOA was highly successful in stopping Iran from building nuclear weapons. The US withdrawal from the JCPOA jeopardized this goal. Returning to the JCPOA is critical for stopping Iran’s nuclear weapons program. The window of opportunity for doing so may be short, as Iran holds elections in mid-2021.



This could bring a new set of negotiators and/or a new negotiating mandate. If Iran refuses to allow the US to rejoin the deal, the administration should seek to negotiate a new deal with the same goal of halting Iran's nuclear program.

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION: ON DAY 100

Initiate confidence building with China

China rejects formal arms control and has refused to participate in a successor treaty to New START, but China's increasing and modernized arsenal of missiles is concerning. Confidence-building measures (for example, a strategic dialogue) that work to build trust, predictability, and transparency in the US-China relationship are important precursors to arms control limits.

Develop a strategy to halt and reverse North Korea's nuclear program

North Korea has made tremendous strides in developing nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles that can threaten the United States.

Efforts by previous administrations to stop this program have been largely unsuccessful. The Biden administration should develop a new strategy to prevent North Korea from further advancing its nuclear program and to curtail the threat North Korea poses to the United States and its allies.

Repair the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Trump administration's hostility towards multilateralism in general, combined with the growing popularity of the nuclear ban treaty (which the US has opposed) among non-nuclear weapon states, have contributed to deep rifts in the NPT, the foundation of the nonproliferation regime. The NPT Review Conference, held once every five years, was supposed to take place in May 2020 but has already been postponed at least a year due to COVID-19 (it is tentatively scheduled to be held in August 2021).

This is an opportunity for the Biden administration to signal the US commitment to nonproliferation, multilateralism and our partners, and to repair the US reputation as a leader in nuclear security.



REBUILDING INSTITUTIONS AT HOME BY CENTERING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

The State Department must prioritize diversity as a top-line national security priority because it is both the right and the smart thing to do. A recent Government Accountability Office report released earlier this year illustrated a diversity deficit that goes back decades.

For example, the number of African-American women in the foreign service was at 2% in 2002 and only went up to 3% in 2018. In the last four years, workforce morale has further declined with attempts to target and politicize career State Department employees.

The State Department must focus on better representing the diversity and expertise of the nation through bold institutional reforms and transformative culture change.

This more inclusive national security workforce will be better equipped to meet global challenges, like managing COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery, international economic recessions, rising authoritarianism tied to the erosion of democratic principles, a global refugee crisis, and accelerating climate change.

CENTERING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION: ON DAY 1

The President should immediately reverse the Executive Order creating “Schedule F” positions that reclassify federal employees and remove civil service protections

The State Department should ensure career civil servants remain apolitical and protected from intimidation.

The President should immediately reverse the Executive Order barring federal training that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion

The State Department should continue developing an inclusive ecosystem that includes training to better protect underrepresented groups from unconscious bias, bullying, and targeted harassment.





CENTERING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION: ON DAY 100

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion must be a core focus of rebuilding our national security infrastructure, with key personnel policies enacted at the State Department:

New approaches to recruiting and retention at the State Department will ensure that our nation's diplomats are more representative of the US population and better poised to help solve a greater set of problems.

It will be important to restore a culture of fairness at an institution where diversity has gone backwards over the last four years.

Employee Protection, Sexual Harassment

The Office of Civil Rights should take a reinvigorated approach to investigating sexual and discriminatory harassment complaints within the State Department.


This includes ensuring that EEO complaints and other EEO issues are swiftly addressed and backlogs are eliminated. The Office of Civil Rights should hire and/or expand counsel as needed to execute this task.

This includes supporting the passage of the State Harassment and Assault Prevention and Eradication (SHAPE) Act, which requires stronger anti-harassment and discrimination policies and accountability mechanisms at the State Department.

Recruitment and Retention

A focus from senior leadership on recruitment and retention across the enterprise would reinvigorate the beleaguered agency and yield innovation:

1) Transparency: The State Department should make statistics (including race and sex-disaggregated data, as well as exit interview analysis) publicly available and release them at regular intervals to measure progress on efforts to promote gender parity and racial equity in recruitment and retention.



2) Training: State Department officers — Civil Servants and Foreign Service Officers — should spend 15% of their careers in training in both the foreign service and civil service — similar to their military counterparts.

This training continuum includes mandatory threshold courses in budgeting and planning, which have helped foster deeper linkages between planning and policy functions, especially in early stage development.

3) Flexibility: The State Department should explore workforce set-asides of both part-time and fully remote work to boost retention numbers for young parents and allow for government workers to access more affordable housing options. The ability to cycle between government agencies, with additional private sector sabbatical options for tenured staff, allows for new perspectives to the enterprise, enabling career growth, professional.

4) Culture of Learning – The State Department should implement program evaluation and best practices to promote a culture of learning within its personnel practices. Strong incentive structures increase information-sharing. Reduced silos improve personnel effectiveness, and promote the widest range of talents available among the civil, foreign service, and political staff.

Elevate closing the diversity gap as a top-line priority

Ensure the Secretary of State calls for a concrete action plan with measurable benchmarks from the Director General (DG) and the Undersecretary for Management (UM) so that policies are bureau-wide, comprehensive, and implemented across all layers of the State Department.



STRENGTHENING US ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Over the last four years, the Trump administration has severely damaged America's relationships with our long-standing allies and partners through both incendiary rhetoric and misguided policies.

From disparaging NATO to imposing tariffs on Canada, the European Union, and Mexico under the pretext of "national security" to declaring repeatedly that our allies treat us worse than our adversaries, the Trump administration has raised serious doubts about the reliability of our foreign policy, the resilience of the postwar order, and the extent to which we remain committed to mobilizing collective action on pressing transnational challenges.

The Biden administration must demonstrate to our friends and allies that the transactional, coercive US foreign policy of the past four years was an aberration, not a harbinger.

The new administration must also look to the future and establish stronger relationships with countries across the developing world, especially in Africa, which will be home to one in four people by 2050.

STRENGTHENING US ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS: ON DAY 1

Recommit to Multilateralism

President-elect Biden should announce that the US is rejoining the Paris Climate Accords and the JCPOA. He should also announce the Administration's intention to agree to an extension of New START (rather than allowing it to expire).

Reassure US-European Allies

In his first foreign policy address, President-elect Biden should affirm that the United States' commitment to NATO's Article V is unconditional.

The speech should also recommit the United States to a partnership with European allies based on a shared commitment to democratic values, tolerance, and equal opportunity, and pledge to work with our European partners to strengthen democracy at home and abroad.



Begin a conversation on structural racism on both sides of the Atlantic

In his first conversations with European leaders, President-elect Biden should avow his administration's commitment to addressing structural racism in the United States and across the Atlantic. America and Europe share a long history of enslavement and colonialism, but anti-Black racism in particular is a global issue — not just an American or European one.

In many European countries, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant discrimination is also a politically salient challenge and must be addressed as well.

As COVID-19 will certainly still be a top priority in President-elect Biden's first year, he should also send a clear message that Black and brown communities have borne the disproportionate share of deaths from the virus in both the United States and Europe.

Reassure allies and partners in Asia

President-elect Biden should assure the United States' allies in Asia and the Pacific that the US will coordinate closely with them to address China's territorial ambitions and increasingly aggressive foreign policy and the threat of a nuclear North Korea. He must also assure them that the US will deepen both its security presence and its economic footprint in the Indo-Pacific.

President-elect Biden should resume the tradition of US leaders attending the annual ASEAN Summit and East Asia Summit.

STRENGTHENING US ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS: ON DAY 100

Take his first trip to Europe

President-elect Biden will likely meet with dozens of foreign leaders during his first 100 days. His first international trip should be a three-city stop to meet with leaders in Brussels, Berlin, and Paris.

During this visit he should articulate a new vision for trans-Atlantic cooperation, one that upholds a shared commitment to democracy, transparency, and economic and racial justice. He should talk about new ways the US and Europe can work collectively on trans-national challenges.



Take his first trip to Asia/Oceania

President-elect Biden should also visit Canberra, Delhi, Seoul, and Tokyo, reassuring US allies and partners that his administration remains committed to a free and open economic order and that, while it will be firm in its efforts to check malign Chinese activities, it seeks neither conflict nor open-ended confrontation with Beijing.

Commit to taking a trip to the African continent

President-elect Biden should commit to a trip to the African continent within his first year, focusing on stops in Lagos, Accra, and Addis Ababa. It is imperative that the US engage in a foreign policy on the continent that is mutually respectful, not neocolonial or solely influenced by the fear of China's increased presence on the continent.



TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

America's potential for innovation is unparalleled. However, for years, we have limited our ability to build, use, and acquire the latest technologies due to poor design and outdated procurement policies.

Therefore, the Biden administration should embrace a human-centered design approach to government services, both in serving the public's needs and in working with industry. Good design will accelerate tool adoption, decrease training time, increase the speed of development, improve workforce readiness, and facilitate future updates.

In other words, a design-focused approach allows the government to solve its problems faster, have more impact, and save taxpayer money. Some federal agencies have already made progress on this front, such as the Veterans Administration and Central Intelligence Agency.

We recommend scaling this approach across the government, led by a Chief Design Officer and counterparts at High Impact Service Provider agencies.


This team will fully implement the bipartisan 21st Century Integrated Digital Services Act, signed in 2018. Additionally, we recommend reforming federal acquisition policy with an eye toward lowering the barriers to entry for successful startups and design experts to do business with the government.

This will ensure that our military, intelligence officers, and diplomats are able to access the most sophisticated and user-friendly technologies available.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION: ON DAY 1

Appoint a Chief Design Officer of the United States

The CDO will report directly to the president and will create a council of Chief Design Officers from each federal agency, selected by the CDO.



Council members will build the design capacity at their respective agencies, ensure compliance with the US Web Design Standards, and lead at least one high profile project per year, with priorities set by agency leadership.

Launch a Design Lab, whose Director will report to the Chief Design Officer

The Design Lab will support and train federal agencies (and their CDOs) as they adopt user-centered design approaches to digital services. User researchers, UX designers, developers, data scientists, and AI specialists from across the government will serve on multi-year rotations to the Design Lab, ensuring diverse, whole of government expertise.

Create an agile acquisitions tiger team

This team will comprise representatives of startups, venture capital firms, established small businesses, accelerators, and federal procurement officers to provide concrete recommendations for dramatically lowering the barriers to entry for small companies looking to do business with the federal government.

The Biden administration should commit to implementing the tiger team's recommendations.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION: ON DAY 100

Sign executive orders or direct White House staff to work with Congress to implement the recommended changes from the agile acquisitions tiger team

The federal contracting process should also be reformed to align labor categories and rates to common roles in innovative companies, such as user experience design.

It should also reflect the reality that expertise in many creative fields does not require a college degree, and therefore should not carry lower rate limits.

A vertical strip on the left side of the page shows a close-up of the stars and stripes of the United States flag.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION: ON DAY 100

Inaugurate the Design Lab's physical space inside/adjacent to the White House

In addition to serving as the hub for innovative digital services for the federal government, the space will be accessible for public tours and interactions, to emphasize that federal services are designed with and for their users. While some Lab staff will be based in this space, others will continue to work remotely throughout the country, to better collaborate with federal employees and the public nationwide.

Share the Design Lab's first completed project, a major rework of a digital service for a High Impact Service Provider

This would be an opportunity to publicly launch an improved digital service that aligns with the administration's policy priorities, such as student loan forgiveness.



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