



Tackling Global Challenges

Climate change, unprecedented human migration, new technologies, and an ongoing pandemic are just some of the issues the next administration will face from its first day in office. Working with international partners to tackle these problems will be essential to achieving meaningful progress. The next administration will need to return to multilateralism—with renewed commitments to rebuild the trust that was lost over the past four years—to tackle this growing list of global challenges.



The Trump administration has shredded the idea that the United States is willing to work with others to address shared challenges. This abandonment of international collaboration could not have come at a worse time, with the world confronting a series of pressing, era-defining challenges that demand cooperative responses. The pandemic has starkly illustrated the need for multilateral cooperation and reminded the world of the importance of international institutions. Unfortunately, the global response has too often been hamstrung by U.S. intransigence—it is the first global crisis in a century in which the United States has failed to play a leadership role. Beyond the pandemic, the next administration must recognize that long-term, transnational trends will severely stress governments and societies in the decades to come and focus on addressing the root causes of these stressors. Rather than retreat to our respective national corners, the United States needs to humbly recommit to international cooperation.

Climate change represents the greatest threat to humanity, bringing sweeping changes to our world and our societies and threatening security and stability in a range of ways. The interaction of the damage wrought by the effects of climate change with demographic trends and resource scarcity poses direct threats to U.S. national security and will undermine countries' capacity to maintain stability. Countries will face shortages of food and water and struggle to protect the basic livelihoods of vulnerable citizens, with the crisis disproportionately affecting the poor, women, children, and Indigenous communities. Changing environmental conditions will continue to disrupt rural livelihoods, contributing to decisions to migrate and further stressing overcrowded urban areas that are themselves being affected by climate change. More frequent and severe natural disasters will spark acute crises and displacement, straining governments' ability to respond. The worse this disruption becomes, the greater the risk of state collapse or violent conflict within and between states.

Along with a changing climate, unprecedented human migration will define the global landscape for the next U.S. administration and in the decades to come. While most people move in search of better economic opportunities, the United Nations reported that more than 79 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide today.¹ Nationalist governments and xenophobic leaders around the world routinely flout the international system set up to support refugees and asylum-seekers. Whatever moral suasion the United States once wielded as a major receiver of refugees has been lost as the Trump administration has vilified refugees and migrants, dramatically reduced refugee resettlement, and enacted policies that systematically violate human rights.

The challenge is acute and close to home. For example, more than 5 million Venezuelans have fled their country since 2015, with some 2 million more expected to flee in 2020.² Endemic violence, corruption, and poverty—exacerbated by climate change—in the Northern Triangle of Central America continue to drive out-migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The next U.S. administration will have to address migration in the Americas, including any increase that may occur at the U.S.-Mexico border, with humane policies that allow people to exercise the right to seek asylum. These policies must also promote safe, legal, and orderly paths for those who wish to reunite with family abroad or seek out greater opportunity. Further afield, the Syrian refugee crisis continues to outstrip the international response, with some 6.7 million Syrians forced to flee the country and another 6 million internally displaced.³ This displacement has caused untold human suffering, placed severe strain on neighboring countries, and fed xenophobic right-wing populism across Europe. In South Asia, 900,000 Rohingya remain stateless and stranded in camps in southern Bangladesh.⁴ The United States has not mobilized sufficient resources to address these problems; it can and should do much more. Refugees comprise just one-tenth of 1 percent of the U.S. population; Germany, meanwhile, comfortably accommodates a refugee population more than 10 times greater as a share of population. As it addresses potential acute migration in the Americas, the next administration should also take early steps to begin rebuilding the international system in a way that protects the rights of the forcibly displaced.

Meanwhile, the United States has abandoned other long-term, bipartisan priorities such as arms control and nonproliferation. Under the Trump administration, the United States has plunged headlong into a new arms race with both Russia and China, directing billions to new strategic weapons, ending several arms control agreements, refusing to negotiate new controls, and contemplating resuming nuclear weapons testing. The Trump administration abandoned the Iran nuclear agreement with no plan for what followed. As a result, at the start of the next presidential term, Iran will be closer to a nuclear weapon than it was four years ago. In North Korea, too, the Trump administration has provided repeated propaganda victories to Kim Jong Un but has done nothing to slow or stop the North Korean nuclear and missile programs. The next administration—whether under former Vice President Joe Biden or a second-term Donald Trump—should cancel the most inflammatory of these new weapons programs and return to the path of negotiation to reduce the nuclear threat.

At a time when technological advances are outpacing legal regulation and social adaptation, the Trump administration has given up any pretense of coordinating international standards for emerging lethal and disruptive technologies. The proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicle technology in the past 20 years and the rapid spread of cyberwarfare offer two cautionary examples of what can happen when governments ignore

these emerging technological disruptors. Today, rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning offer authoritarian regimes the ability to synthesize massive stores of data to manipulate the truth and monitor dissent. These governments are aggressively pushing these tools of control to other would-be autocrats, while the United States has largely left the European Union alone in its effort to stand up for democratic regulation of these tools. The use of robotics and autonomous weapons will transform warfare, which could dramatically increase risks to civilian populations and fundamentally change the U.S. force structure. The militarization of space continues, threatening critical systems on which the entire world relies and, if left unchecked, threatening our very ability to explore the cosmos. The United States is doing too little to both secure its own technological security and establish humane, multilateral norms around the use of emerging technologies.

Far from taking up the mantle of American leadership to marshal international responses to these challenges—much less reform the international institutions designed to tackle them—the current administration has worked to undermine international institutions, reject multilateralism, and repeatedly attack long-standing norms of international behavior. The next administration must seek to outline collective responses, strengthen and renew international institutions, and reverse the retreat to nationalism that has characterized the Trump administration to date. At the heart of this rebirth must be an effort to define a new multilateralism, one that fulfills its obligations to established institutions but works with ad hoc groups of willing countries when older structures remain gridlocked. This effort will take time and require a difficult balance; U.S. officials will need to display humility to a world that has grown used to lies and bombast from the highest levels of the U.S. government while using power to advance collective solutions to the urgent problems confronting the country and the world. This return to multilateralism will require patience, accommodation, and cooperation to begin to earn back the trust of some of America's closest partners.

This new, collaborative U.S. approach to addressing global challenges should be built around five broad efforts to begin in the first 100 days of the next administration:

1. Put climate change at the center of U.S. foreign policy.
2. Implement a fair, humane, and workable approach to migration.
3. Make a new generational push on arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament.
4. Protect our values on technology.
5. Reinvigorate multilateralism.

The recommendations that follow provide a range of options for advancing these efforts.

Put climate change at the center of U.S. foreign policy

Accelerating climate change has the potential to catalyze a wide range of national security threats to the United States in the coming decades: plummeting U.S. and global prosperity; countries weakened by shortages of food and water; overturned livelihoods and accompanying displacement; increasing vulnerability to pandemic health risks; and governments destabilized by such crises. Immediate, aggressive global action will be needed to hold the global temperature increase to the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). CAP has outlined a strategy to limit U.S. CO₂ emissions to net zero by 2050 and return to international leadership on combating climate change.⁵ It is vital to the U.S. national interest that the next administration help coordinate global action to achieve urgently needed economic and social transformations at a massive scale in order not to surpass the IPCC's 1.5 C limit.

To do this, the next administration needs to put climate change and the effort to decarbonize the world by 2050 at the center of U.S. foreign policy.⁶ This reorientation will require a transformation in strategy, culture, and the budgets of the foreign policy and national security apparatus. Only the president can drive this transformation, and it will take years. As part of an initial push, in the first 100 days, the next administration should take the following steps.

- **Rejoin the Paris Agreement.** At the top of the list, of course, is the urgent need to rejoin the Paris Agreement. The Trump administration has promised to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement on November 4—the day after the 2020 election.⁷ While rejoining the agreement is not a panacea, it is an essential first step and an important signaling opportunity. The president should immediately declare his intent for the United States to rejoin. The formal return to the agreement could be achieved as soon as 30 days after inauguration but will require an updated climate commitment, or nationally determined contribution (NDC). Setting an appropriate NDC will require a complex policy, political, and technical process, but the president could commit to a science-based process to determine an NDC and promise its delivery by a date certain in 2021 such as Earth Day in April.



QUICK WIN: Issue a presidential policy directive declaring climate change a U.S. national security priority. This policy directive would outline a sweeping new U.S. diplomatic approach on climate change that treats it as a national security priority with the associated diplomatic focus and resourcing. This policy directive should include an explicit articulation of climate change as a leaders-level issue in all U.S. bilateral relationships and at all multilateral forums, including the UN, Group of Seven, Group of 20, NATO, East Asia Summit, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings.

- **Create a leaders-level climate forum, with a pledge to convene the first meeting at the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2021.** The United States should propose that the existing Major Economies Forum (MEF) process—encompassing ministers from countries responsible for 75 percent of global emissions—be elevated to the leader level and commit to chair the first meeting during UNGA. At that meeting, the president should declare a U.S. commitment to the goal of global net-zero emissions by 2050 and seek each MEF leader’s commitment to the target. The meeting should also set a concrete action agenda for the MEF to include a strategy to promote the development and dissemination of sustainable technology, setting the MEF out as a venue to share policy ideas and best practices on decarbonization and a partner to support the clean energy efforts of multinational businesses.
- **Use trade and finance policy tools to drive climate action.** This could include implementing border adjustment mechanisms for imports from countries with inadequate climate policy as well as enforcement to advance global climate action and protect U.S. economic competitiveness.



QUICK WIN: Declare that the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Export-Import Bank will immediately end U.S. financing for overseas fossil fuel projects and redirect their energy financing to fully clean energy-focused projects. The administration should then press other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development governments and other donors such as China to do the same.

- **Stand up a new review process to prohibit foreign investment in climate-damaging projects or acquisitions in the United States, using a mechanism similar to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.** The next administration should work with Congress to provide new authorities to condition U.S. approval of potential foreign direct investment transactions into a given country against the investing party’s climate performance in its broader business activities. In addition, these authorities should allow the United States to prohibit foreign investments in climate-damaging projects in the country. These limitations would be controversial but would send a powerful signal of the need for immediate emission reductions and likely prompt changes in investor behavior.⁸

- **Push for regional transparency platforms.** The State Department should work with international groups and institutions such as the ASEAN, the European Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank to set up regional infrastructure investment transparency platforms to gather and publicize information on projects with major climate and environmental impacts such as investments made under the Belt and Road Initiative.⁹
- **Task all foreign affairs departments and agencies with generating new domestic and overseas positions dedicated to tackling climate change and declare the intent to seek necessary appropriations to fulfill the objective.** As a first step, the president should call for the creation of 500 new full-time employee slots at the U.S. Agency for International Development and the departments of State, Commerce, and Agriculture to build a cadre of officials engaged on international climate both overseas and in Washington.
- **Create a National Climate Council in the White House to spearhead executive action and champion legislation.** Overseen by an assistant to the president, the climate council should have a specialized support staff capable of directing action across the federal government and coordinating between state and local actors. The council should be comprised of Cabinet-level leadership and should work in conjunction with the National Security Council (NSC), the Defense Pricing and Contracting organization, and the Council on Environmental Quality to develop a strategy to propel rapid clean energy deployment, build resilience against climate change-induced disasters, and pressure reluctant actors to achieve the net-zero goal. The climate council should work to ensure there are strong links between domestic and foreign policy on climate change and aim to coordinate and guide the work of the executive agencies, not supplant them. More information on the need for a National Climate Council can be found in CAP's report, "A 100 Percent Clean Future."¹⁰
- **Seek funding from Congress to honor the \$2 billion U.S. pledge to the Green Climate Fund.** President Trump reneged on this pledge. As CAP has written previously, a \$6 billion pledge over three years would fund 100 new projects and catalyze nearly \$15 billion in co-financing.¹¹ This step should be framed as a minimum first step and paired with a declaration of the United States' intent to dramatically increase climate-related bilateral foreign assistance programs on both the mitigation and adaptation fronts.

Implement a fair, humane, and workable approach to migration

The international system meant to deal with migration and forced displacement has been completely overwhelmed. Refugees and asylum-seekers face increasing state-sponsored refoulement, long-term detention and abuse, and xenophobic attacks. Extreme poverty and environmental degradation has sharply increased migration in the Americas and Africa, and the international community has done little to mitigate the root causes of these migration flows or adapt to their reality. Finally, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 bring significant new challenges, with intermittent border closures and other restrictions likely to persist well into the next presidential term.

As armed conflict, violent crime, and human rights abuses fuel forced displacement around the globe, intolerable economic conditions force people to flee their homes in search of better livelihoods and opportunities. Climate change is compounding these migratory pressures, contributing to more extreme and less predictable environmental conditions such as rainfall patterns and temperatures, more frequent natural disasters, and the wider spread of infectious diseases. These challenges will only get worse without serious global cooperation; some predict that as many as 320 million people could be forcibly displaced by 2030 without concerted global efforts.¹²

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has undertaken the worst possible response. It has adopted a punitive and counterproductive approach to deterring asylum-seekers and other vulnerable populations from seeking entry at the U.S. southern border and has sought to use coercion, rather than cooperation, to persuade regional partners to curb out-migration from their territories. Most recently, the Trump administration has used the coronavirus emergency as an opportunity to fully implement the kind of restrictive border policies it pursued long before the pandemic such as turning away all asylum-seekers and closing the southern border to nonessential travel.

Addressing the worst refugee crisis since World War II will require a comprehensive response that rethinks global protection for the forcibly displaced and combines traditional foreign policy tools such as humanitarian assistance, development aid, investment support, diplomacy, and climate change adaptation. While the United States is still the largest contributor to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),

its contribution remains less than \$2 billion, a paltry sum in view of the scope of the crisis and the agency's requirements.¹³ To have credibility and any hope of mobilizing collective action, these efforts will need to be matched with domestic policy changes such as ending the de facto asylum ban and reforming asylum and refugee policy. And, given the scope of the challenge, the next administration must also dedicate serious efforts to rally partners in the international community to increase their own financial support and commitments to support the forcibly displaced. This effort will, of course, extend beyond the first 100 days, but the next administration could immediately set into motion a new U.S. approach by taking the following steps.



OVERARCHING POLICY:

Take immediate action to bring U.S. immigration policy in line with international law and human rights.

Specifically, the next administration should:

- **Resume the processing of asylum claims with proper testing and precautions and rescind the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) coronavirus order at the U.S. northern and southern borders.** The CDC's COVID-19 order should be replaced with measures narrowly tailored to promote public health and preserve the legal right to fair and humane processing of requests for asylum.
- **Unwind the Migrant Protection Protocols with Mexico**, which has left some 50,000 asylum-seekers in often desperate circumstances on the Mexican side of the border, and begin transferring these cases to the United States for proper adjudication.
- **End the Humanitarian Asylum Review Process for Mexican nationals and the use of the Prompt Asylum Claim Review for non-Mexican nationals.** These programs deny asylum-seekers due process and restrict their ability to obtain necessary legal assistance before they undergo initial credible-fear screenings, resulting in faster deportation to potentially dangerous circumstances, in violation of U.S. and international law.
- **Tear up the asylum cooperative agreements with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras—and perhaps others in the Americas as the Trump administration continues to pursue such agreements.** These agreements violate international law and have allowed the U.S. authorities under the Trump administration to deport asylum-seekers to third countries regardless of ties to that country and absent any thorough assessment of the safety of the person upon arrival.

- **Work to reestablish U.S. moral leadership on refugees and asylum-seekers.** The next administration should take concrete steps in the first 100 days to demonstrate a renewed commitment to protecting the rights of the forcibly displaced. The next administration should expand the processing of asylum and refugee claims, double the annual U.S. contribution to the UNHCR, and coordinate internationally to drive increased global refugee resettlement and assistance. The next administration should also review and consider revoking Executive Order 13888, which devolved significant power to state and local authorities over refugee resettlement decisions.¹⁴



QUICK WIN: Immediately raise the annual U.S. refugee admission cap to 125,000.

The next administration should immediately raise the annual admission cap to the level it was in 1990—and ask Congress to mandate a minimum requirement to be phased in over the following four years as the pipeline for resettlement is replenished with fully vetted candidates.



QUICK WIN: Protect longtime U.S. residents from deportation. The Trump administration announced the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 7 of the 10 designated countries; those terminations are on hold due to court orders pending legal challenges. The hundreds of thousands of longtime residents protected by the TPS designations should be granted permission to remain in the country, either through the extension of their countries' TPS designations or through the president's authority to grant Deferred Enforced Departure.

- **Generate an action plan on the Northern Triangle in the first 100 days and work toward a leaders-level summit in Mexico in the first year.** The action plan should be built on the principle of addressing the root causes of out-migration and forced displacement from the Northern Triangle rather than further securitizing the border. It should combine humanitarian assistance, development aid, investment support, diplomacy, and climate change adaptation with traditional national security tools, while prioritizing executive action that can be taken immediately. In addition, the next administration should build toward co-convening a summit with the president of Mexico and the presidents of the Northern Triangle of Central America—El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras—as part of a Mexico visit to launch a robust, joint strategy to manage and protect the rights of the forcibly displaced and those who seek better economic opportunities. The strategy should include programs that have been proven effective toward increasing government accountability, reducing violence and corruption, decreasing femicide and other gender-based harms, protecting vulnerable populations, and promoting sustainable economic development and climate change adaptation throughout Mexico and Central America.

- **Build toward a high-level global migration meeting on the margins of UNGA in September 2021.** Given the scale and impact of the global migration crisis, the next administration should work to galvanize multilateral action and rally partners in the international community to increase their own financial support and commitments to resettle and host refugees and to support the forcibly displaced.
- **Lead on Syrian and Iraqi humanitarian assistance.** The president should press Congress to allow Syrians who assisted U.S. forces to apply for special immigrant visas (SIVs) and expedite the processing of Iraqi SIV applicants. The next administration should redouble humanitarian efforts in Syria and neighboring countries, particularly Iraq, by asking Congress for special supplemental funding to provide additional humanitarian assistance to those fleeing Syria, more funds for refugee resettlement agencies and officers, and more funds for U.N. agencies and nongovernmental organizations working on the issue.
- **Announce a new U.S. policy on Venezuela that prioritizes the welfare of the Venezuelan people and supports regional efforts.** The next administration should focus U.S. policy toward Venezuela on coming to the aid of the Venezuelan people by:
 - Immediately granting TPS to Venezuelans living in the United States.
 - Ramping up humanitarian assistance for Venezuela’s neighbors laboring to care for the nearly 5 million Venezuelan refugees who have fled since 2015.
 - Depoliticizing humanitarian assistance provided to the Venezuelan people in Venezuela through nongovernmental and multilateral actors.
 - Ensuring U.S. sanctions do not block humanitarian aid flows to the Venezuelan people.
 - Investing in regional and global diplomacy to support a restoration of democratic order in Venezuela and return sovereignty to the Venezuelan people.

Make a new generational push on arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament

The next administration must recommit to efforts to reduce the proliferation of nuclear and conventional arms, constrain the spread of other emerging lethal technologies, and reduce the militarization of space. The Trump administration has undercut an arms control regime built up over decades that helped reduce tensions and the risks of nuclear accidents while plowing billions of dollars into new weapons with questionable strategic or military value. While some nuclear modernization is necessary, the size and form of these programs are increasingly destabilizing and costly, funneling money away from other priorities that do more to keep the country safe. Finally, the Trump administration has also done nothing to slow the adoption of new lethal technologies or to work with allies to establish international norms around their use, from those that allow for autonomous weapons to those that could render space a battlefield. The next administration must meet this increasingly dangerous moment with a new generational push in its first 100 days on all fronts to make the world a safer place while still defending U.S. security interests.

- **Stop the U.S. nuclear spiral.** The Trump administration accelerated a nuclear arms race by unilaterally withdrawing from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and beginning the development of new weapons prohibited by the treaty.¹⁵ Russia had cheated on the treaty, and China was not party to it, but the United States' withdrawal was clumsily managed, ceding the moral high ground and weakening the potential for a broader strategy to manage intermediate-range nuclear missiles. The Trump administration has also failed to negotiate a five-year extension to New START, which expires in February 2021, despite Russia's apparent willingness to do so, putting at risk the critical inspections and verification opportunities the treaty provides.¹⁶ The management of nuclear-armed intermediate-range missiles in the wake of the INF's demise is a more difficult problem that will not be resolved in the first 100 days of a next administration. The spread of these systems is now far advanced, and the U.S., Russian, and Chinese militaries have each built conventional variants of these missiles into core warfighting plans. But an attempt to manage this proliferation should be made; the risks of nuclear misunderstanding is too high given how quickly the missiles can reach their targets.



QUICK WIN: Appoint a U.S. special representative tasked with negotiating an extension of New START and engaging in consultations with allies on the future of the INF.

The representative should immediately begin efforts to restore international agreements and cooperation on these issues.



QUICK WIN: Announce a sustained U.S. ban on nuclear testing in the first 100 days and consider pushing for ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the first term.

Doing so would demonstrate serious U.S. commitment to reducing nuclear tensions around the world.

- **Launch a new, comprehensive deterrence review.** To rationalize U.S. nuclear weapons plans, test Russian intentions, and lay the groundwork for a broad range of potential talks around arms control and nonproliferation, the administration should consider a range of steps that will cost little in strategic terms. First, the nuclear and strategic policy decisions taken under the current administration should be revisited in a new, comprehensive deterrence review. The deterrence review should replace the narrow Nuclear Posture Review and should involve the NSC and departments of State, Energy, and Defense, thereby examining the full range of concerns related to deterrence in their wider geopolitical context. The deterrence review should be presented to the president for final decisions. Pending the outcome of this review, the administration should take a series of steps to pause decisions that contribute to a spiraling arms race:
 - **Delay awarding the contract for the new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) (Ground Based Strategic Deterrent).** While the aging out of the current Minutemen III ICBMs requires attention, the contract should be paused pending the outcome of the deterrence review.
 - **Pause the contracts for the Long-Range Stand Off Weapon nuclear-armed cruise missile and the TLAM-N sea-launched version.** These new weapons add capabilities to the U.S. arsenal but are potentially destabilizing to global proliferation and could ultimately increase the risks of a nuclear exchange. Their contracts should be paused until the deterrence review is completed.
 - **Stop the deployment of the new low-yield tactical variant of the W-76 nuclear weapon.** This new weapon presents an extreme and unnecessary escalation risk because of the way it is deployed. The deployment of this system should be publicly paused pending the outcome of the deterrence review.

- **Resuscitate the Open Skies and Arms Trade treaties.** President Trump has likewise announced his intention to withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty, which was designed to reassure countries across Europe and the Atlantic about secret deployments through regular, approved surveillance flights.¹⁷ The next administration should recommit to the Open Skies Treaty because it is in U.S. interests. On conventional weapons policy, the next administration should also consider rejoining the Arms Trade Treaty and ask the Senate to give its advice and consent for the ratification of the agreement. The United States should support the regulation of the international conventional arms trade, particularly light weapons, which cause the overwhelming preponderance of combat and civilian deaths in the world's persistent conflicts. There is no competitive advantage placed at risk by taking this commonsense step.
- **Lead on demilitarizing space.** In a newer domain, the United States has also done little to stop the development of a space arms race or to protect the safety of critical systems in Earth's orbit. Along with GPS, communications and weather satellites play a crucial role in the global economy and contribute hundreds of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy. The U.S. military relies heavily on satellites for its communications, reconnaissance, and early-warning capabilities. The Pentagon's dependence on space-based capabilities creates real vulnerabilities. Without Defense Support Program satellites, for example, the United States would find itself blind against ballistic missile launches around the world. But peaceful access to space is also at risk. Chinese and Indian anti-satellite weapon tests have created orbital debris that will take decades to dissipate.¹⁸
 - **Launch a policy review of space-based capabilities and vulnerabilities.** This policy review should assess U.S. gains and setbacks in the space domain and consider policy options for offering constructive proposals to limit military competition in space, including an international arms control agreement to ban the testing of ground-, sea-, and air-launched anti-satellite weapons.
- **Lead international efforts to prevent the adoption of indiscriminate automated lethal weapons.** The next administration should conduct a policy review to develop options to limit the use of AI, particularly for lethal autonomy. The policy review should consider how best to engage with international bodies seeking effective ways to prevent indiscriminate automated weapons, including to clarify how the existing laws of war would apply to lethal autonomous weapons. The next administration should seek the international acceptance of theories of strict liability, command responsibility, and obligations to anyone fielding or employing autonomous lethal mechanisms.

Protect our values on technology

The United States also depends on a secure and open global network that extends beyond our shores and allows for fair and transparent e-commerce; supports freedom of expression and global information exchange; and protects users from cyber-threats abroad. The United States cannot simply pull up a drawbridge; we cannot defend ourselves without engaging with the world and building international norms. Coordinated international action is needed to keep the global internet open and secure as it migrates toward next-generation technology and to control the proliferation of dangerous or disruptive technologies.

The world's digital backbone is also its broadcast network. China's Huawei Technologies Co. reportedly has more than 50 commercial contracts to supply 5G equipment to other nations and a record of exercising control over network operations, including broadcast operations.¹⁹ Already, in Africa and Europe, fears are rising that China will use Huawei's influence on digital infrastructure to limit access to information or stifle dissent. The United States must therefore seek to compete for market share and assist other countries trying to ensure that rapid digitalization does not erode freedom of expression or access to reliable information. Digital-infrastructure financing should be made a priority focus for overseas aid to alleviate developing nations' dependence on China for affordable digital infrastructure. The United States provides more than one-third of global development aid and should seek to provide a digital alternative for developing nations, giving them access to secure technologies and advancing governance principles for a free and open internet.

Meanwhile, emerging technologies can allow totalitarian governments to control their populations. Several current, lightly regulated technologies already provide the tools to effectively control and manipulate people. Emerging technologies will increase the risks. The proliferation of smartphones, digital cameras, and other sensors tied to centralized cloud-based data centers provides the infrastructure for ubiquitous, near-constant surveillance. These sensor networks combined with massive advances in processing power and data analytics, facial recognition, and newer tools such as the automated determination of mood and emotion threaten the very concept of privacy. These capabilities can help deter and respond to nefarious activity but also provide

another way to control a population and suppress dissent. How these tools are used, including by law enforcement, and who has access to the data and under what circumstances, are all pressing questions. The next administration should follow the EU's lead and work to place citizens' privacy at the center of its norm-building at home and abroad and work to advance international standards to protect data privacy.

Likewise, authoritarian governments also now have potent new tools to influence the populations of other countries. Technologies for creating and disseminating false information, including fake full-motion video and audio that are effectively indistinguishable from genuine content are now widely available and rapidly improving. Social media provide a massive distribution system for fake information and allow for microtargeting of specific audiences. Massive bot networks can shape and control public debate with high degrees of deniability, while AI can allow for automatic adjustments to increase effectiveness at scale. The massive information attacks that characterized the 2016 election were crude compared with the threats the United States and its allies face as the relevant technologies mature.²⁰

The United States can no longer assume that values such as human dignity, universal rights, the rule of law, and democratic institutions will inevitably win out; the next administration must act to protect these values in the face of technological threats to their acceptance. But the United States should not act alone. Rather, the next administration should lead a global effort among democratic nations to adopt common governance principles for broadcast traffic in the digital era. Working with international partners who share our values, the democratic world should invest in capabilities to identify and respond to these threats and take strong action to deter and punish those who interfere in our democracies. That effort should also develop best practices for providing interoperability between free and open internet systems and those that utilize Chinese technology and governance principles. To help address concerns about American motives, the United States should enlist credible independent actors to pressure the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), and the International Telecommunication Union and 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) to challenge authoritarian efforts to erode the free and open global internet. Countering authoritarian influence at these standard-setting bodies will require the U.S. government to prioritize engagement in terms of staffing and resources, as the Chinese have already done.

- **Develop a U.S. strategy on digital technology.** In the first six months of the next administration, the White House should develop a new international strategy highlighting U.S. global objectives, values, and principles in digital technologies. This global strategy should be developed in conjunction with an expedited domestic strategy for digital technology. Priority should be given to coordinating with allies to promote democratic values in technology, pushing back against increasing disinformation and digital authoritarianism, and integrating with the next administration's cyberstrategy. This strategy should also prioritize digital-infrastructure financing in overseas aid to allow developing nations to develop affordable digital infrastructure free of authoritarian controls. The strategy should enlist credible independent actors such as the ICANN and IETF to challenge authoritarian efforts to erode the free and open global internet. This new approach could also provide research grants to encourage U.S. firms to participate in standard-setting meetings at bodies such as the 3GPP.
- **Task a national intelligence assessment on critical technology.** The director of national intelligence, in coordination with the secretaries of state, treasury, defense, and commerce, should produce a national intelligence assessment of which international technology standards are critical to national security—including 5G and hardware standards related to AI—and coordinate with democratic allies to ensure standards are protected at relevant international standards-setting meetings.
- **Stand up an international technology forum for like-minded democracies to develop common approaches and strategies.** This forum would provide allies who share concerns about emerging technology and its implications for free and open societies with a way to coordinate national strategies and develop multilateral approaches. This group could mobilize to counter abuse by authoritarian and nonstate actors and, eventually, become a vehicle to counter disinformation and develop shared principles governing the use of emerging technologies such as AI or microelectronics. This forum should complement existing international efforts such as the International Grand Committee on Disinformation.

Reinvigorate multilateralism

The next administration must embrace multilateralism, pursue collective responses to problems that transcend national borders, and strengthen and renew international institutions. Working with international partners is critical to addressing the most urgent challenges the United States will face, but the next administration must approach alienated partners with humility and with pledges to commit to transparent, honest, and cooperative relationships. This is fundamental to advancing U.S. interests, which rely on an open, democratic, and stable international system. Cooperative multilateralism also plays to the United States' strengths—primarily its robust alliance structures—and is the best way to reduce the demand on American resources for conflict resolution, disaster response, and economic rescue packages.

Currently, multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and its many component bodies as well as the World Trade Organization are under great pressure and are subject to persistent populist attacks. Yet the response to the 2008 economic crisis, the management of the eurozone debt crisis, the Paris Agreement, and the collaborative international response to the 2014 Ebola pandemic demonstrate how indispensable and effective these organizations and networks can be. The fractured, halting response to the COVID-19 pandemic—crippled by national rivalries, willfully ignorant populist leaders, and President Trump's attacks on the World Health Organization—only underlines the importance of good-faith multilateral cooperation. Indeed, the international success stories of the post-2008 period have often been the product of a new form of pragmatic multilateralism, one in which sometimes ad hoc groups of countries cooperated on issues of agreement when international bodies remained deadlocked and in which national governments worked more closely with nongovernmental actors to address pressing problems.

This new, pragmatic multilateralism devised flexible approaches to crafting a new set of sustainable development goals and helped conclude the Iran nuclear agreement and the Paris climate accord. This multilateralism—based on a diverse set of actors and coalitions of the willing—will need to be deepened and broadened by the next U.S. administration. Above all, the United States will have to show tangible commitment—

in money, material, and political concessions—to rejuvenate these efforts after years of attacks by the current administration. To begin this process, the next administration should engage in the areas outlined below—taken collectively, these steps will begin to restore trust in the United States as a good-faith actor interested in cooperative approaches. Presidential time in the first 100 days will be extremely limited, meaning the next administration has a short window to frame and affirm U.S. commitment to this new, pragmatic multilateralism.

- **Roll out a new multilateralism in a presidential speech at the Organization of American States (OAS).** The headquarters of the world’s oldest regional multilateral institution is less than a mile from the White House. In the first 100 days, the president should visit the OAS to deliver a speech outlining a new multilateralism focused on the following core principles:
 - That the most pressing challenges facing the United States and the world require cooperative, multilateral responses.
 - That the United States will recommit to these cooperative efforts, leading where possible and supporting when needed.
 - That the United States believes in the value of the U.N. system and existing multilateral institutions and will engage fully with those systems, but that the urgency of today’s global challenges sometimes requires pragmatic, ad hoc coalitions.
 - That cooperation will at times require either U.S. restraint or be marked by competitive multilateralism, but that a stable, peaceful international system is good for the United States and good for the world.



OVERARCHING POLICY:

Make an early global anti-corruption push

Rampant corruption is undermining international systems and good government around the world, hollowing out the social compact that is the foundation of democratic governance. The next administration should make rooting out corruption and strengthening the rule of law a top priority, conceiving of it as a threat to international peace and security alongside climate change or terrorism. A major domestic and multilateral push on anti-corruption would also send a strong signal to competitors such as Russia and China that the United States views the rule of law as a comparative advantage to our system. This will require early steps at home and abroad, including:

- **Press Congress to pass legislation such as the ILLICIT CASH Act.** This will close loopholes in U.S. anti-money laundering regulations, levy meaningful fines on financial institutions which enable large-scale financial crimes, and require the collection of identifying information on the beneficial ownership of all financial entities created in the United States and all foreign entities involved in large transactions in the United States or with U.S. entities.²¹
- **Adopt the wide-scale use of geographic targeting orders.** These orders offer a powerful tool to crack down on high-risk locales—particularly in real estate transactions, one of the main ways in which oligarchs, warlords, and criminals launder their ill-gotten gains.
- **Propose a global corruption initiative.** This would harmonize standards, close regulatory and legal gaps, limit opportunities for arbitrage, and facilitate information exchange among the United States, United Kingdom, and EU—three entities that control the majority of cross-border financial transactions.
- **Reinvigorate U.S. participation in the Open Government Partnership.** In addition, the next administration should arrange a global anti-corruption conference modeled on a 2015 summit organized in the U.K.
- **Bolster multilateral judicial support missions in El Salvador and reestablish the missions in Guatemala and Honduras.** These efforts to support prosecutors and judges pursuing large-scale anti-corruption cases in Central America have led to hundreds of corruption convictions, helping boost transparent governance and faith in the rule of law.
- **Promote the establishment of an independent Inter-American Anti-Corruption Commission (IAACC) akin to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.** As a vehicle for this effort, the administration should push to add a protocol to the IAACC, the first anti-corruption convention of its kind.²² The starting blocks for the infrastructure of a new IAACC would be the Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption housed at the OAS. Work toward such a protocol could begin in the lead-up to the 2021 Summit of the Americas, which the United States is slated to host.
- **Increase funding for the Office of Foreign Assets Control and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the State Department.** Additional funding would allow these offices to vet and bring more cases under the Global Magnitsky Act, which provides for visa bans and sanctions on officials responsible for gross corruption or flagrant human rights abuses.

- **Instruct the interagency to formulate a plan to respond to the strategic use of corruption by authoritarian regimes.** The president should instruct the NSC to formulate a plan to respond to authoritarian efforts to use bribes, rigged contracts, and other illicit inducements to secure political influence, access to resources, or other advantages. The president should also instruct the departments of State and Defense to mainstream anti-corruption into their regional strategies.
- **Urge Congress to reinstate the Cardin-Lugar rule requiring Securities and Exchange Commission disclosure of payments for natural resources.** The president should push Congress to require the disclosure of payments to national governments. Disclosure provides transparency and discourages U.S. companies from making illicit payments for access to foreign natural resources, a significant portion of which often flow to corrupt or illegal parties.

Conclusion

The idea that the United States can protect itself and advance its interests by going it alone is deeply flawed. American success over the past century has been built upon alliances, prudent diplomacy, and cooperative approaches to shared problems. The country's greatest failures abroad have come when these principles—and our allies—have been ignored. As the coronavirus pandemic has starkly underlined, the profound challenges of climate change, migration, nuclear proliferation, and the abuse of emerging technologies can only be tackled with cooperative, multilateral approaches. By adopting the policies outlined above and pursuing a new spirit of cooperation, the next administration can begin to rebuild American influence and reconstitute a more effective and humane international system.



New executive orders or policies recommended in the first 100 days:

- Rejoin the Paris Agreement with an updated nationally determined contribution.
- Issue a presidential policy directive declaring climate change a U.S. national security priority.
- Make an early global anti-corruption push with new legislation and new tools.
- Announce a sustained U.S. ban on nuclear testing and launch a new, comprehensive Deterrence Review.
- Launch a policy review of space-based capabilities and vulnerabilities.
- Develop a U.S. strategy on digital technology.
- Extend TPS designations for the seven countries the Trump administration revoked, or grant Deferred Enforced Departure to affected individuals, in order to protect hundreds of thousands of longtime U.S. residents.



Executive orders or policies recommended for rescission or removal:

- **Migrant Protection Protocols with Mexico:** Violates the rights of asylum-seekers and expels them to possibly dangerous conditions in Mexico
- **Humanitarian Asylum Review Process for Mexican nationals and the Prompt Asylum Claim Review for non-Mexican nationals:** Programs that deny asylum-seekers due process
- **Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras:** Violates the rights of asylum-seekers and effectively forces them to abandon their claims
- **Executive Order 13888:** Devolves power on refugee resettlement decisions to state and local authorities

Endnotes

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