

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Statement on the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

March 3, 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

back. We are looking irrevocably toward the future and all that we can achieve for the American people—together.

Let's get to work.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as part of the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.

Categories: Statements by the President : Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.

Names: Harris, Kamala D.

Subjects: Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and material :: Nonproliferation efforts; Civil rights : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Defense and national security : Defense readiness, improvement efforts; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Environment : Climate change; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Foreign policy, U.S. : Foreign aid policies and funding; Foreign policy, U.S. : Pandemics and public health threats, preparedness efforts; White House Office : Vice President.

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