American Strength:

Conservative Solutions Worth Fighting For

STAND FOR AMERICA

About Stand for America

Founded by Ambassador Nikki R. Haley in 2019, Stand for America is an advocacy group promoting public policies that strengthen America's economy, culture and national security. Well-informed and active citizens are essential to keeping our country safe and strong. Stand for America educates grassroots Americans to highlight the dangers and the opportunities we face here at home and overseas. Through policy proposals and engagement with lawmakers, Stand for America advocates for policies that strengthen our country at all levels of government and in the broader media and culture.

About Nikki R. Haley

Nikki R. Haley served as United States Ambassador to the United Nations from 2017 to 2019. She previously served as Governor of South Carolina from 2011 to 2017. She and her husband, Michael, an entrepreneur and combat veteran in the South Carolina Army National Guard, have two children. Throughout her career, Nikki has enacted important reforms, protected American interests & championed human rights. Her passion to maintain the American Dream for all Americans drives our efforts.

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By Nikki R. Haley

Back in 2004, before I ever thought of running for public office, a friend asked me which party I belonged to. I gave her my honest answer: “I don’t know.”

She asked a follow-up question: “Well, what do you believe?” I did know that.

As someone who ran our small family business, I wanted government to make it easier for job creators to grow and give back to their communities. As an accountant, I wanted government to live within its means instead of taking more from hard-working families. As a mom, I wanted a country where my children would be free to live up to their potential and live out their dreams. And as the daughter of Indian immigrants, I believed deeply in America’s promise — that this is a land of unlimited opportunity and optimism, where anyone can achieve anything.

I’ve spent the better part of the past two decades fighting for these beliefs, including as governor of South Carolina and ambassador to the United Nations. My greatest passion is lifting people up. So it’s frustrating to see that in America today, there are so many barriers blocking the way, with new ones arising at a worrying pace.

If there’s a phrase that defines our time, it’s “hurting in the name of helping.” You see it all over the place. An education system that keeps the next generation from learning. Government spending that spikes inflation and drives up the national debt, robbing families coming and going. One-size-fits-all mandates that cripple Main Street. There’s even discrimination in pursuit of racial equality and violence in the name of urban peace.

It's sad to see. So much of what you see is supposedly "progressive," but it's taking our country and people backward. It's not just unjust. It's un-American. We should all refuse to let it stand.

Lifting up our fellow citizens and future generations is a matter of policy, but even more so, it's a matter of principle. To secure a brighter future for every American, we need to remember and restore the foundation of America itself.

The place to start is the economy, which is sprinting toward socialism. There are growing demands to put Washington, D.C., in control of daily life. The left is the loudest, with its terrifying plans for welfare-for-all and a government powerful enough to kill any job and crush any dream. But these calls are also coming from too many on the right who should know better.

On both sides, the argument can be boiled down to this: We can solve any problem by putting our trust in government. My response is "no thank you." I put my trust in the American people instead.

There's no combination of elected or unelected experts, elites and do-gooders who are smarter than the American people. The more than 330 million women and men and children who call America home are infinitely creative and capable of creating opportunities for themselves and their communities. They simply need the chance to prove it by pursuing their passions, something socialism only stifles.

Instead of giving Washington control over people, we should be giving the people control over their own lives and futures, like I did as governor of South Carolina. The inner-city kid who wants a better life, the single mom who needs a job, the factory worker who wants a raise, the college student who wants to turn their brilliant idea into a booming small business — they and every American are counting on capitalism. Just as importantly, they

need corporations to stop playing politics and start improving lives.

Lifting up people demands a better education system too. The pandemic left the next generation of Americans falling behind, worsening deep-seated problems that have long existed in the classroom. There has never been a bigger need for reform. Children and families deserve the freedom to choose the school they want — no exceptions. What's best for them is best for our country's future.

The pandemic also highlighted long-standing problems with health care. It's wrong that millions of Americans can't afford or access the treatments that could save their lives. It's long past time to break the barriers that block patient choice and medical innovation while making health care more expensive. And there's never a time to build more barriers or give federal bureaucrats control over what kind of care we get or when, where, and how we get it. That failed approach will only cost more of Americans' time, money and lives.

Culture is equally critical. We can have the best economy, education and health care system in the world, but it won't matter if we don't have confidence in our deepest convictions and highest ideals.

How can our country claim to empower people if we don't protect the lives of the unborn? How can we ensure a better future for American citizens and legal immigrants if we can't control our borders? How can people hope to climb the ladder of opportunity if their cities aren't safe and the police are under siege? And how can we strive to give everyone the best shot at the best life if we're too busy dividing people by gender and race?

It's deeply worrying that anger and hatred toward America are growing. This problem runs deeper than so-called "wokeism," and it's bigger than critical race theory. The moment we reject the principles at America's heart and accept the lie that our

country is racist and rotten to the core, we throw away any chance of national progress. Instead, we'll go in the wrong direction, toward no freedom, no equality and no rule of law.

By all means, let's root out discrimination and injustice wherever they exist, and let's do it by applying America's principles more fully. Take it from me, the first female governor of South Carolina and the first *minority* female governor in the United States: America is not a racist country.

America's promise is just the opposite: a country of boundless optimism and limitless opportunity for all. We cannot let that promise slip away or stay out of reach for so much as one person. I've known that my whole life, and I'll keep fighting for *all* the American people as long as I live.

Biden's Border Crisis

By Tony Gonzales
Congressman Tony Gonzales is a freshman representative from San Antonio, Texas. His district encompasses 820 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, which is over 40% of the total border.

Over 1.5 million migrants crossed our southern border this year — the largest spike in more than two decades. Our immigration system is on fire, and bad policies are fanning the flames.

I know this because I represent more than 800 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border. I have visited multiple migrant facilities and heard directly from law enforcement agents on the ground. I have also taken several groups of my colleagues in Congress to our southern border. It's imperative that lawmakers see it for themselves in order to make responsible and effective policy.

There is no doubt that we experienced a severe crisis this year. Our agents, officers and sheriffs have desperately needed help. Border communities and their leaders have also needed relief. They are on the front lines every single day, working tirelessly to stretch their limited resources well beyond their means.

Del Rio, Texas, a small border city of 35,000 people, is one of the most trafficked regions along the border.

It made headlines in September when thousands of migrants — mainly Haitians — overwhelmed the area with unprecedented speed. In just four days, arrivals surged from 2,000 to 15,000, plunging the city into total chaos. With Border Patrol facilities at capacity, the International Bridge became a makeshift camp for migrants, creating serious public health and safety concerns.

Women went into labor, people got sick, and basic hygiene standards were completely unavailable. While local officials

scrambled to find food, water and basic goods, Border Patrol agents shifted their entire focus to help process the endless crowds. Security checkpoints were closed for several days, leaving our roads wide open for drug traffickers and criminals. For over a week, there was no border as crowds streamed across the river, going back and forth between the United States and Mexico as they pleased.

This event served as a wake-up call for how quickly we can lose control of our borders. But in places like Del Rio, border security is under threat every single day.

In this area alone, individuals from over 92 countries were arrested this year.[1] That is far from typical, and it presents new risks for our national security. Although most travel to escape poor economic conditions, it is not uncommon for convicted criminals to be discovered among large groups of migrant caravans. How long before our open floodgates lead to another 9/11?

I don't say this lightly. The numbers that are published reflect only what we know for certain. There is another statistic that we should be more cautious about. "Gotaway" rates are estimates of individuals that Border Patrol agents are *not* catching. Agents can piece this information together from clues on the field, such as sensors that are tripped or footprints that are found. These gotaway rates have been unusually high, and they emphasize that we have no means of knowing or tracking who else is slipping past our detection.[2]

There are some who say these migrant surges are seasonal and that flows slow down when temperatures start to rise. While that may have been true before, this past summer we saw the exact opposite, with July resulting in more than 212,000 encounters at the southern border. This is a record-breaking total, and it is representative of a man-made crisis.

Were it not for law enforcement's tireless efforts, our borders would be broken beyond repair — a complete safe haven for

cartels, terrorist organizations and illegal activity. That said, these brave men and women are faced with limited resources, stretched further by a crisis that has led them to make some serious trade-offs. Any time there is a surge in migration, Border Patrol agents are taken off the front lines to assist with intake and processing. This detracts from their ability to keep a physical presence in the field and creates gaps for drug and human smugglers to find a way in.

For that matter, stash houses have multiplied along the border. These are small "checkpoints" where smugglers hide migrants while they wait for their next leg of transportation on their journey to the interior. They are generally cramped, unsafe and operated by a criminal network. In Del Rio alone, over 2,000 smuggling cases were reported this year, many of which put the lives of those being trafficked in considerable danger. In the summer heat, agents have discovered crowds of people in the backs of U-Haul trucks or riding on freight trains. Some do not make it out alive, and migrant deaths have reached a new record this year.

Drugs have also proliferated, with a concerning spike in fentanyl seizures over the last three years. On the edge of an opioid crisis, these trends are deeply troubling. All it takes is two pounds of fentanyl to kill 500,000 people.[3] Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has seized thousands of pounds this year alone. With agents focused intensely on the processing of migrants, we can only wonder how much more is making its way in undetected.

Along the border, ranchers and farmers have also been hit hard. They are another casualty of this crisis; their properties are trespassed, often damaged, as migrants travel across the region. It seems like every morning they find new evidence of a destroyed fence, a broken gate or a vandalized barn shed. Break-ins are also common, forcing landowners to be on constant watch. In August, Border Patrol agents from Uvalde, Texas, came across five undocumented migrants wearing camouflage, attempting to evade arrest. They carried clothing, binoculars and

knives stolen from a nearby ranch house.[4] These are everyday occurrences, and border communities are fed up.

Many border cities and towns are already dealing with a pandemic that has been relentless on public health and local economies. Now, with the added weight of bad immigration policies, their limited resources have reached a new breaking point. In February of this year, President Joe Biden resumed the practice of "catch and release." As a result of this practice, thousands of migrants have been discharged from Border Patrol custody, allowed to travel across the country and remain in the United States while their asylum petitions wind through the courts. Many test positive for COVID-19.[5] Community transmission is a very real danger that has many residents concerned.

On the other side of the coin, this is also a humanitarian emergency. Never before have we experienced so many crossings by unaccompanied children — well over 100,000 since January of this year. These vulnerable minors travel for hundreds, if not thousands, of miles without their parents. They are guided by human smugglers who are paid thousands of dollars to lead them across our border. On their journeys, they are exposed to unimaginable dangers, crossing deserts, risking abuse, or being abandoned — all because they're incentivized by our broken immigration policies.

Their struggles are unbelievable. In May of this year, on Mother's Day weekend, five young girls were deserted on a ranch in my district. They ranged from 11 months to 7 years in age — practically babies — and had been left for dead by human traffickers after being separated from their parents in Mexico. Imagine you are 7 years old, and you find yourself in a foreign country, in the middle of nowhere, unable to speak the language. You don't have food or water, and it is suddenly your responsibility to make sure your sister and baby cousins survive. Had these helpless girls not been rescued by the property's owners, they could have died in that Texas heat.

These children have been put through hell and back. In early February, when thousands of these minors began streaming in, they were kept in Border Patrol detention centers, often far longer than is permitted by U.S. law, which mandates that children must be transferred to Health and Human Services shelters in less than 72 hours. In response, the administration rushed to activate emergency children's shelters across the country, converting military bases, convention centers and oil camp facilities into overnight care centers. At these sites, claims of abuse and neglect are common, mental health services are lacking, and COVID-19 outbreaks happen often. Many are in my district. I have seen them up close and know firsthand how bad they can be.

These children don't have a voice. These children aren't represented. They are nothing more than a statistic on a paper, and that is wrong on all accounts.

At our core, we are compassionate people. My life has been the American Dream, and I want others to have that same opportunity. We can go beyond political labels to reach solutions for our nation's most pressing problems and address our flawed border security policies.

For starters, asylum is a very unique protection. It is only granted to those who meet a certain standard of persecution. Yet, many who are crossing today are doing so for economic reasons, and that is not enough in the eyes of the law. If our immigration system worked properly, we could easily distinguish between these two migrant categories and quickly return those who do not meet the threshold to their home countries. However, inefficiencies in our immigration court system have led to a very different reality.

As it stands, our immigration courts are faced with a backlog that exceeds 1.3 million cases. This means that an asylum request takes an average of two to three years for an immigration judge to review. In the meantime, migrants are allowed to remain in the United States and free to move across the country until a

final decision is made. Even if their petitions are ultimately denied, which is the outcome in the majority of cases, some do not show up for their removal proceedings and simply disappear, never to be found again. These loopholes must be addressed. If our immigration court system was adequately staffed, we could reduce our historic backlogs and expedite the entire process. That way, individuals without valid claims would be deported in a timely manner, and future non-refugees would think twice about making the long and dangerous trek to our border.

President Donald Trump worked to address these incentives with the "Remain in Mexico" policy. Through an agreement with our neighbors to the south, migrants waited on the Mexican side of border cities for the duration of their asylum hearings, not in the United States. That program allowed us to regain control of our southern border and enabled law enforcement agents to return to their national security duties. It also prevented non-qualifying asylum claims from overwhelming our immigration system.

Moving forward, we must continue working with our international partners to stem the tide of migration before it reaches our southern border. If we combine that approach with an increase to our immigration courts' staffing levels, we can take a huge step forward in establishing an efficient system.

Any long-lasting solution must also include improvements to our border security. Many areas are still vulnerable to criminal activity, and we need to ensure that all our bases are covered. In some places, that means we could benefit from a physical structure like a wall. In others, border technology is a much more suitable option.

Take the Big Bend area in my congressional district, for instance. As one of the most remote locations in the country, this region is mostly rugged desert terrain. With 500 miles of river front, it is also the largest sector along the border. Its sheer size and harsh geography make it very difficult for agents to patrol on foot, especially in 100-degree weather. Here, an expansion of

surveillance technology goes a very long way. These tools allow agents to patrol several miles of land at once, informing them when a lone migrant sends a distress signal or when drug traffickers are on the move. In today's information age, we need to provide our agents with valuable intelligence so they can dispatch forces in the most strategic and effective manner. An expansion of this technology is something that should be agreed upon by Congress. The results speak for themselves.

That said, these tools are part of a larger system. It is only complete if we have enough agents to operate it. All along the southern border, we have seen a historic uptick in apprehensions and criminal activity, while Border Patrol continues to be severely understaffed. Thankfully, they have been assisted by local, state and national partners who have sacrificed their own missions to shore up our borders. Local law enforcement branches are able to augment Border Patrol's work thanks to Operation Stonegarden, a grant program that provides funding to local agencies that support border security efforts.

Unfortunately, CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) face an uphill battle with "progressive" groups that are fixated on defunding their missions. If anything, we should be significantly increasing funding toward these critical agencies. A decade ago, Congress provided for a mandatory staffing floor of 21,370 Border Patrol agents. In recent years, we have been operating with 2,000 below that number. With the challenges faced at our border this year, it is time to reconsider our position here and start taking our border security seriously.

Thankfully, we have seen leaders at every level work together to fill that void. Alongside Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and two of our Democratic counterparts, I introduced the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act, which hires additional ICE and CBP staff with the mission of getting Border Patrol agents out of the processing centers and back on the front lines. It also speeds up deportations of those without legitimate asylum claims. I have also introduced legislation, the Security First Act, to allocate more funding for

Operation Stonegarden in order to help local law enforcement continue to provide support to Border Patrol.

Let me be clear: I fully believe in *legal* immigration. The best part of the American Dream is that it doesn't always start in America. Our country has long relied on immigrants and their many contributions to our society. I want everyone to have an opportunity to achieve the American Dream, just like I had, and like my children will have. However, there are rules that must be followed. Ignoring them creates chaos for the system and risks for those who make the life-endangering trip to get here.

Today, our border policies are failing our communities and failing the individuals making the trip for a better life. I urge Republicans and Democrats alike to address the border crisis. It needs our full attention now, and we must address it with a sense of urgency.

Capitalism: America's Engine of Prosperity

By Ken Langone

Kenneth Langone is the chairman and chief executive officer of the Langone Family Office. He received a B.A. from Bucknell University and an MBA from New York University's Stern School of Business. In April 2008, the NYU medical center was renamed the NYU Langone Medical Center reflecting a major gift from Ken and his wife, Elaine. He is a co-founder of The Home Depot and was lead director and a member of the executive committee of its board from 1978 until 2008.

It can be easy to assume that all the sparkling qualities that make America unique are key to our prosperity. We have purple mountains majesty, the mighty Mississippi, spacious skies and amber waves of grain. But the true secret to why our nation has thrived isn't geography; it's our dedication to free market capitalism.

I'm talking about more than just an economic theory. This is about our determination to live as free people who have the fundamental right to engage in voluntary exchange with one another, following our own ingenuity, perseverance, and especially, our dreams.

There's an important reason why the Founders declared that these liberties are divinely bestowed. That's because no earthly government has the moral right to stand in the way of men and women who wish to work or trade together, creating value and harming no others.

And when that heavenly spark of freedom catches hold, the fireworks of prosperity soon follow.

It's inarguable that America has been responsible for more innovations, patents and paradigm-changing businesses than any

other country since the Industrial Revolution. That's because our free markets and the rule of law that safeguard them create a hothouse for entrepreneurialism that can create astounding — almost incredible — advances that could never be predicted.

But if I am describing the broad American spirit, Harvard Business School recently took a fine-grain look at the empirical reasons for our success.[1] "Our research finds that innovation flourished in densely populated areas where people could interact with one another, where capital markets to finance innovation were strong, and where inventors had access to well-connected markets," they concluded. They added: "Places that were economically and socially open to disruptive new ideas tended to be more innovative, and they subsequently grew faster."

In other words, it's not just that New York City has a splendid natural harbor. It's also that the people in that shining community can trade freely with one another, which leads to new ideas — ones that improve human lives and raise the standard of living for everyone.

Here's another crucial insight from that report: "If innovation permits new entrants or small business owners to catch up with incumbent leaders, then innovation should lead to lower income inequality." Now there's a concept that all Americans, no matter which party you root for, can get behind.

I am reminded of the 3,000 multimillionaires who are colleagues of mine at Home Depot, the company I co-founded in 1978. An initial $25,000 stake in the company is worth $150 million today. Each of the 3,000 multimillionaires began their careers wearing an orange apron at one of our stores, whether they were working the aisles during the day or stocking the shelves at night. Many on the political left regard people like them as "fat cats" who aren't "paying their fair share." But that's a form of intellectual laziness. I knew them when they were thin cats, helping customers pick out faucets or pushing shopping carts in from the parking lot.

My own working life began in the 1950s as a ditch digger for the Long Island Expressway. Another Home Depot co-founder, Bernie Marcus, was a pharmacist from New Jersey. Yet another, Arthur Blank, was an accountant from Long Island. When Bernie first called me in 1978, he told me he had three children, no health insurance, no money and no job. But he did have a breakthrough idea for a home improvement store, and so I said, "Let's make it happen together." This was during the depths of the Jimmy Carter recession, when interest rates were at about 20%. But we offered stock compensation, making workers part of the enterprise. And we listened to what our customers, not the government, wanted.

We worked hard, and we worked *together*. In fact, if the definition of a successful person is "self-made," then I'm a failure. There aren't enough seats in Yankee Stadium for all the people who helped me along the way: teachers, colleagues, friends and family members. I am anything but self-made.

But there is a big difference between the kind of economic dynamism created by voluntary cooperation and economic dependency, when constituencies and companies clamor for subsidies, erect barriers to competition, and expect the government to pick winners and losers. The former made America the greatest nation on earth; the latter threatens to ruin us.

Yet all too often we hear voices from Washington bad-mouthing the free market and arguing for new regulations that will only hamper the economy and tie the hands of entrepreneurs large and small. Rather than praising innovation, they demonize success.

When I get together with business owners, whether they are employers of thousands or only a half-dozen, we don't waste our time seeking scapegoats for the unemployment rate or devising ways to demagogue the nation's low morale. Our bottom line is made from solutions, not problems.

Remember, the government doesn't produce anything; it simply takes money from the earnings of its citizens, or worse, borrows against it and then spends it, often in ridiculously wasteful ways.

For some on the left, the only basis for economic growth is the helping hand of the government. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-M.A., displayed that narrow thinking when she once complained, "You moved your goods to market on the roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate."

Well, as someone who has actually helped run a trucking company, hired thousands of employees and built a school, I'm glad to explain. The roads that the government builds and maintains are crowded, crumbling and unsafe. Instead of helping move goods to market, they are in fact one of the biggest hinderances to transportation and logistics. The public schools that Warren touts actually shovel bushels of money into corrupt bureaucracies while routinely producing dismal results. The only reason Americans are forced to rely on these bloated, broken systems is because authoritarians like Warren fight tooth and nail to prevent free market alternatives — yes, capitalism — from offering solutions.

When I debated Warren recently on a CNBC show, I asked if she would support a measure allowing wealthy Americans like me to voluntarily opt out of receiving Social Security. No, she insisted, it's a government program, and I am forbidden to return the money, no matter my net worth. A revealing moment. For Warren, efficiency and common sense are dispensable; the most important value is that the government should be in charge.

Here's the good news: American capitalism can provide solutions with broad bipartisan appeal to voters. When new businesses flourish, income inequality goes down — pleasing investors and helping solve a problem Democrats claim is their top priority. When there is competition in education — enabling parents the freedom to choose the best option for their children — those future citizens and workers get a better chance at

success, and struggling communities have the best chance to break free from the cycle of poverty.

Our business world could use a fresh injection of capitalism, too. Surely, a wide majority of Americans can agree that we should end corporate welfare, sweetheart subsidies and other kinds of cronyism. No one would cheer louder than me if we did. Or how about eliminating all forms of occupational licensing so that ordinary, enterprising Americans can enter professions without being forced by the government to receive burdensome and redundant credentialing.

Ten or 20 years ago, the kinds of ideas and the basic commitments I've outlined here were commonplace, not just on Wall Street and in board rooms, but on Main Street and in dining rooms too. A commitment to competition and free exchange was the bedrock not just of the Republican Party, but the Democratic Party too.

Now, too many people on both sides think that America's great economic dynamism is just tax revenue waiting to be collected and spent on ideological pet projects. Some want to bend our engine of prosperity into a wheelbarrow for socialism while other radicals are pushing a resentful economic insularity and tribalism that our ancestors came to this country to escape.

Those pathways lead into a dark forest filled with the dangers these warped systems have unleashed on mankind so often throughout history. Even the most radical of the zealots knows deep down that these authoritarian systems will collapse without at least some free market activity.

The way forward for us has been lit already. Americans need only be convinced of something they already believe. The pathfinders are not just luminary leaders like Jefferson, Coolidge and Friedman. They are the small business owners in your town: the grocer or barber or florist or farmer. Here's the secret: When you buy a product or service from them, both of you benefit, and the community around you improves that slight bit too.

Those are the actual things we can achieve together, not some government slogan. That's real capitalism, not some dusty textbook. When Americans are truly free to follow their own passions, there's nothing we can't achieve together. Let's prove it to the world, and ourselves, once again.

Overcoming Poverty and Building Long-Term Wealth

By Star Parker

Star Parker is the founder and president of the Center for Urban Renewal and Education (CURE Policy), a nonprofit policy institute based in Washington, D.C., that fights poverty to restore dignity through messages of faith, freedom and personal responsibility. Star is a nationally syndicated columnist and hosts a weekly television news show, "CURE America with Star Parker" and a podcast called "Power, Poverty & Politics."

Introducing the 'Success Sequence'

As despair gripped our nation following the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and the killing of George Floyd, I decided to go into our nation's most distressed communities with a message of hope and truth.

The organization that I founded, the Center for Urban Renewal and Education (CURE), has been working on policy issues dealing with race and poverty for 25 years. In 2020, we purchased billboard space in hard-hit cities across the nation and posted a short, time-tested message that strikes at the heart of what drives poverty.

The billboards showed a picture of a young black man or young black woman and said: "Tired of Poverty? Finish school. Take any job. Get married. Save and invest. Give back to your neighborhood."

The billboard then refers to Proverbs 10:4, which says, "A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich."

This is a message delivered with care and love. It's a message I know is true. In my youth, I lost sight of these truths and thus

believed much of the narrative we hear today: that our country is racist and stacked against the poor.

As a result, my life spiraled. I got involved in criminal and drug activity, had abortions, and became dependent on welfare. A Christian conversion changed my life and put me on the path to personal responsibility.

I obtained a college degree in marketing and international business and started a business. The Los Angeles riots of 1992 destroyed that business, yet they also served as a springboard for the work I do in Washington, D.C., today through CURE.

The billboard produced an immediate reaction from Black Lives Matter (BLM), which contacted the billboard company and demanded that they remove the message. Sadly, the billboard company capitulated to BLM's intimidation, breached our contract, and took the billboards down.

This kind of intimidation and censorship has become all too common in our culture. But we must continue to speak the truth. The impact of the "success sequence" on poverty is well documented.

In their book "Creating an Opportunity Society," Brookings Institution scholars Ron Haskins and Isabell Sawhill published their findings that those who follow three steps — finish high school, get a full-time job, and get married before having children — face only a two percent chance of being poor.

Brad Wilcox and Wendy Wang of the Institute for Family Studies followed on this work in their book "The Millennial Success Sequence," published by the American Enterprise Institute. They observed that among millennials ages 28-35, there was a 53% incidence of poverty among those who did not follow these steps and a three percent incidence among those who did.

A Failed Legacy of Welfare-State Socialism

The roots of the welfare dependency we see today go back decades. When then-President Lyndon Johnson affixed his signature to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the given assumption was that, although there was a new law protecting freedom — civil rights — for all, low-income black Americans were neither prepared to be free nor capable of being free.

A new era of big government ushered welfare-state socialism into communities, creating major new problems — mainly the decimation of families. Since the introduction of these programs, single-parent homes and out-of-wedlock births have tripled.

Today's “progressives” want to blame racism for the persistence of problems in low-income communities. In some respect, they are right; it is their own misguided bigotry that refuses to accept that low-income Americans can and must be free.

In seeking to bring the failed welfare-state socialism of the broken parts of the country to the healthy parts of America, rather than the capitalism of those parts to the broken areas, progressives threaten to exacerbate this dependency, and therefore, inequality.

Providing Real Housing Choices

Some federal laws have justly addressed inequality, particularly in housing. The Civil Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act have been critical in greatly reducing racial discrimination in America and providing more opportunities for blacks and other minority populations. The Fair Housing Act prevents discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing.

However, trillions of dollars in spending for the “Great Society” and other government policies since the 1960s have produced much more questionable results. Manhattan Institute scholar Michael Hendrix, among others, has demonstrated that government housing programs for the poor have largely failed to

produce their intended outcomes.

If the federal government wants to help those with inadequate resources cover the cost of decent housing, giving them an unconditional voucher to use for private housing *wherever they choose to live* would be a much more effective and equitable policy. Such a policy would also give parents much better options in choosing where to send their children to school.

Education Freedom — A Moral and National Imperative

We can also make inroads in education. We know that the key to the success of our great American economy is freedom and competition. Competition is what produces excellence.

So how can it be that in a sphere where excellence is possibly more important than anywhere else — the education of our children — we don't have freedom and competition?

Although the gap between high school graduation rates for blacks and whites has almost completely closed, it is still the case that too many blacks are graduating high school with deficient skills in reading and math and that far fewer blacks than whites are moving on to higher education.

This has meaningful implications for earning power.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the median black household income for 2019 was $45,438, compared to the national average of $68,703. According to that same report, the black poverty rate was 18.8%, compared to the national average of 10.5%.

In order to address gaps in educational achievement and earning power, low-income families need the resources to make the best education choices for their children.

Members of Congress have proposed some creative ideas to empower parental choice in education. Ideally, all federal

education funds should be block granted to the states with instructions that they be provided on an equal basis for public, private or homeschool education.

At a minimum, Title I funds for low-income students should flow to local communities through the states and be distributed equally to students — regardless of the type of school they attend. Congress should also permit dollar-for-dollar federal tax credits for contributions that provide scholarships to low-income children to attend any school of their parents' choosing.

More than 90% of funding for K-12 education is provided at the state and local levels. Therefore, it is imperative that state and local officials embrace the principle that money should follow each child to a school of his or her parents' choice. Parents should get to pick the schooling that reflects their values, including private and religious schools, or homeschooling.

Education is about more than teaching children to read and write. It is about transmitting a worldview and a set of values that will define how our youth think and how they will live.

The Third Street Academy in Greenville, North Carolina, is a private Christian school for young men, almost all of them black. Emblazoned on the wall above the school's entrance is a message that the young men take to heart:

"I am a Third Street Academy Gentleman.

God, my Father in Heaven, made me.

I am a child of the King, made in His image, and destined for greatness.

Therefore, I am grateful, kind, compassionate, honest, obedient, strong and brave.

I am a Third Street Academy Gentleman."

The people of Greenville proudly support the Third Street Academy, and the gentlemen who graduate from the academy continue to make them proud. Federal, state and local resources should be able to follow children to such a school if parents decide that is the best place for their children to learn and receive the character formation that will guide them through a responsible and prosperous life.

Economic Opportunity Through Ownership

A January 26, 2021, Reuters headline read: "Yellen, Rice tout economics as key to fixing American inequality."

According to Susan Rice, President Joe Biden's domestic policy advisor, "The evidence is clear, investing in equity is good for economic growth."

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen says, "I believe economic policy can be a potent tool to improve society. We can — and should — use it to address inequality, racism..."

While I'm loathe to accuse people of racism, economic inequality is real and should be addressed with serious solutions.

The Federal Reserve's 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances found that the median wealth of white families was $188,200, compared with $36,100 for Hispanic families and $24,100 for black families.

In part, these wealth disparities can be addressed by reforming Social Security and providing an option for ownership through personal retirement accounts. This would help empower low-income Americans and provide them an alternative to the current pay-as-you-go government tax and spend system.

A starting point — or pilot program — might be allowing working Americans up to age 30, earning up to $30,000 annually, to cease paying payroll taxes and instead invest up to

10% of their taxable income in a personally-owned retirement account.

This proposal would allow low-income individuals to invest and accumulate wealth throughout their working careers. Ownership changes personal reality. Resources that individuals own are allocated according to their personal values, not those of government bureaucrats. When one owns their property, they do not submit their property to political whims.

Countries that have the most economic freedom create the most wealth and grow the fastest. Individual ownership gives every American skin in the game of keeping America a free and growing country.

Ownership of one's retirement account also means that this wealth can be bequeathed to one's heirs. This would go a long way toward bridging the current racial gap in intergenerational wealth and providing better opportunities for one's children and grandchildren.

Economic Growth Trumps Government Interference

From 2017 to 2019, our country was pursuing policies of lower taxes, lower government regulation, American energy independence and greater personal responsibility. These policies coincided with a substantial increase in net worth and median income, especially for blacks.

In September 2020, the Fed published its Survey of Consumer Finances. The survey covers the three-year period from 2016 to 2019, just prior to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Over this period, black net worth increased 32.1%, Hispanic net worth increased 63.6%, and white net worth increased four percent. Business equity among blacks increased 138%.

The Census Bureau's Income and Poverty report for 2019 found that annual real median household income in the United States

increased 6.8% in 2019, the largest annual increase recorded by the Census Bureau going back to 1967.

Black median household income in 2019 increased 7.9%, the largest on record and, per American Enterprise Institute economist Mark Perry, "almost nine times the average annual increase of 0.90% over the last half-century."

Moreover, in 2019, 29.4% of black households had an income of $75,000 or more, compared with 28.7% of black households that had an income of $25,000 or less. This was the first time ever that the percentage of high-income black households exceeded the percentage of low-income black households.

In 1967, 44.5% of black households were low-income, compared with 9.1% which were high income.

Am I trying to divert attention from the many real economic and social problems in black communities? Certainly not. It's true — again according to the Census Bureau — that in 2019, blacks, despite representing just 13.2% of the population, represented 23.8% of those living below the poverty line.

But is this due to racism? On the contrary, the data tells us this is substantially affected by family breakdown, not racism.

And the problem of family breakdown is afflicting the whole nation. It just happens to be hitting many black communities particularly hard. Poverty is excessive in households of all races that are headed by single women. Blacks just happen to have the highest percentage of households headed by single women.

The Census Bureau reports that in 2019, 29.5% of black households headed by single women lived in poverty. However, only 6.4% of black households headed by a married couple lived in poverty that year.

Where problems exist and where progress is disappointing, government has invariably been the problem, not the solution.

Overcoming poverty requires deregulation rather than more cumbersome government programs. It requires every individual adopting an ethos of personal responsibility rather than looking for a handout. Government giveaways and top-down programs only further dependency and inequality.

Given the right set of policies and incentives, minimal interference by government, and a culture that embraces personal responsibility, Americans of all races can make substantial progress. Our nation's founding Declaration of Independence recognizes the "pursuit of Happiness" as an unalienable right endowed by our Creator, and says that we are all created equal. While governments are instituted to secure these rights, it is not their role to guarantee equal outcomes; but it is their duty to ensure equal opportunity.

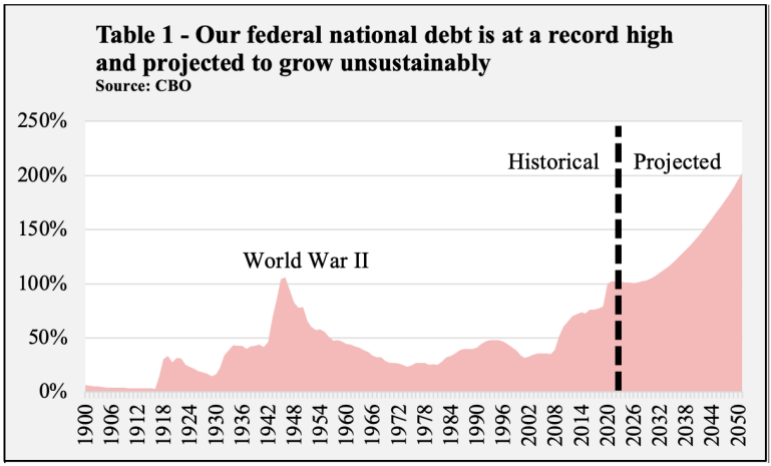
Our National Debt: Why Should We Care and What Can We Do About It?

By Pat Toomey
Pat Toomey joined the U.S. Senate in 2011 on a platform of making our country a safer, more prosperous place to live, work and raise a family. He helped author the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act — the first comprehensive overhaul of the tax code since the 1980s. Senator Toomey is the ranking member of the Senate Banking Committee and a member of the Senate Finance and Budget Committees.

A Predictable Crisis

Watching policymakers in Washington for the past decade, some may question whether federal budget deficits even matter. From 2010 to 2019, the federal government ran deficits that totaled more than the previous 220 years combined.[1] The response to the coronavirus pandemic added a single-year record of over $3 trillion in debt in 2020, and the Biden administration has proposed adding another $8 trillion-plus in just one term.[2]

Unfortunately, this has just been the rapid acceleration of an already unsustainable trend. In 2020, the ratio of debt held by the public to gross domestic product (GDP) reached 100% — its highest level since World War II.[3] Unlike then, when unwinding the extraordinary war effort and our rapidly expanding economy brought debt back down to a manageable level, current laws have us facing ever-increasing deficits for as long as we have new numbers to count.

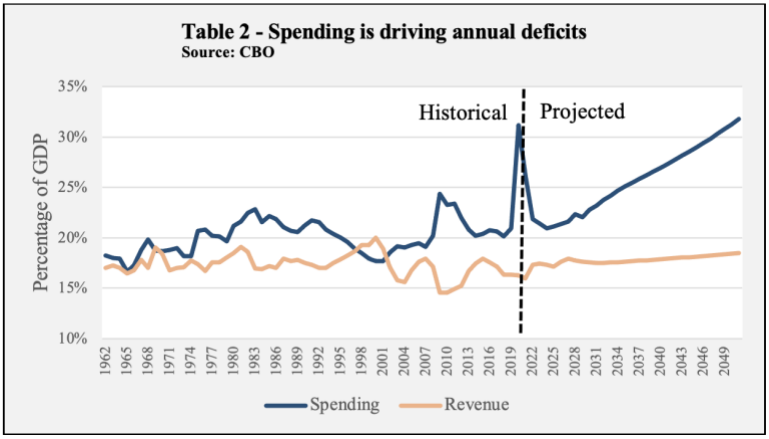


But to quote the late economist Herb Stein, "If something cannot go on forever, it will stop." The main question for policymakers is not if our current rate of debt expansion will stop; it is when and how. At the current trajectory, government spending on interest on our debt will consume a larger and larger part of our collective output until the economy can no longer bear the cost. Today, we still have the opportunity to act proactively and implement gradual reforms of our choosing. But that window grows smaller every day. Alternatively, we can simply wait until the current trend results in an economic calamity, forcing those who follow us to choose from an even more limited — and unappealing — range of options.

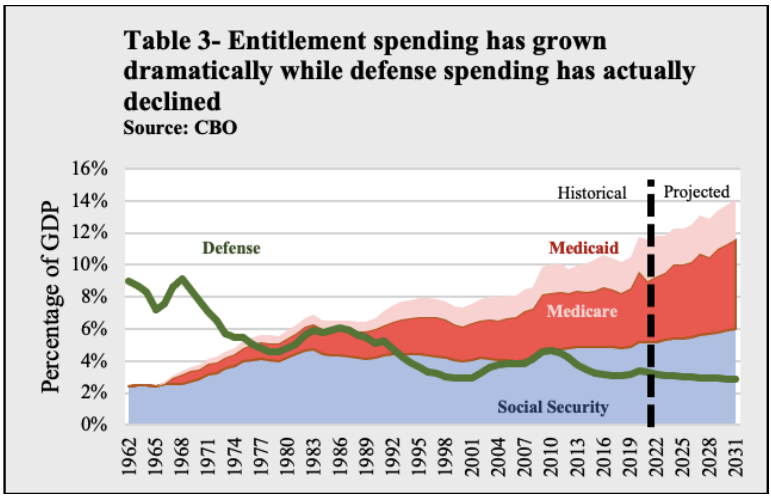
Our Seemingly Insatiable Entitlement Programs

Our annual federal budget deficit is the amount by which money going out of federal coffers (spending) exceeds money coming in (revenue) for a given year. Since our annual deficits are generally financed by issuing debt, the total national debt is roughly the sum of all previous years' deficits. A quick look at historical and projected spending versus revenue shows our growing deficits are driven by a dramatic increase in spending relative to historical norms. As Table 2 shows, federal tax revenue has historically been relatively steady as a percentage of

GDP over the past 60 years and is expected to remain so. Inadequate tax revenue is not the problem. This is a spending problem.



Surprisingly, some categories of federal spending, particularly defense spending, have actually declined over the past 60 years relative to the size of the economy. Spending on entitlements is a different story. Government spending on entitlement programs occurs automatically as a result of eligibility instead of through the appropriations process at the annual discretion of Congress. The largest three entitlement programs in particular — Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid — have grown steadily and significantly, crowding out other priorities. They will continue to do so unless changes are made (Table 3).



Another Administration Sticks its Head in the Ground

The U.S.'s decadeslong structural overspending problem, driven primarily by our entitlement programs, has been an issue that both parties have refused to address. It now leaves us with a dire fiscal outlook. Unfortunately, the Biden administration seems intent not just on ignoring the problem, but significantly exacerbating it.

In 2020, Congress passed five bills — each in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner — in response to the public health and economic crises brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. While widely regarded as necessary, these bills cumulatively added approximately $4 trillion to the national debt at a time when it was already at a record high in absolute and inflation adjusted levels and rapidly approaching a record relative to GDP.

Our rapidly growing mountain of debt did not deter the new administration's spending ambitions. As their first major initiative, Democrats enacted a $2 trillion partisan wish list that was entirely deficit-financed, claiming it would rescue an economy that was already 10 months into an economic expansion and did not need rescuing. Despite having their

narrowest House majority in more than 100 years, a 50-50 Senate, and a president who campaigned as a centrist unifier, Democrats followed this by proposing the largest expansion of the federal government since the New Deal. They have proposed creating massive new entitlement programs when we already know we cannot come close to paying the obligations of the existing programs – Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Why We Should Care

Unfortunately, it can often seem good politics to put off the hard choices. Explaining to voters why spending cuts are necessary is hard, and the exact timing of our debt reckoning is impossible to predict. But there is more urgency to this matter than most politicians are willing to acknowledge. If Herb Stein is right, then either the political class will have to rein in the excessive spending, or some outside force eventually will. While the former would inevitably be full of hard choices, it is the latter that we should really worry about.

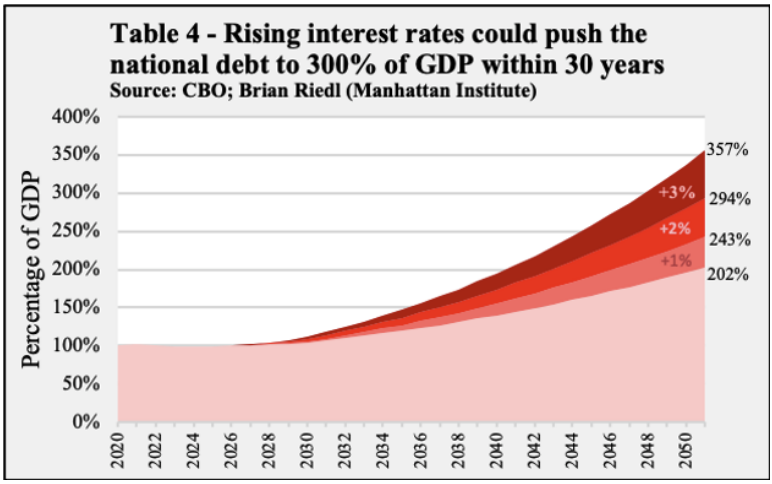
Interest Rates Will Not be This Low Forever

It is easy to look at current Treasury yields — the interest rate the federal government pays to borrow money — and assume that the U.S. government can borrow at very low costs indefinitely. This is incorrect for two reasons. First, the United States currently has approximately $30 trillion of federal debt.[4] This massive amount of debt is expected to cost U.S. taxpayers $331 billion in interest payments in 2021 alone[5] — almost $2,700 per household at current record low interest rates.[6] In 2021, interest payments alone will consume nearly 10% of all federal revenue collections.[7] That is the good news. The bad news is that at some point interest rates will rise.

U.S. government interest rates can only stay low for long periods of time when the supply of debt is in line with demand **and** inflation is muted. Appetite for purchasing U.S. Treasury debt by investors will eventually be sated, and it will take ever higher interest rates to entice them to buy ever more bonds.

Additionally, investors require a return that enables them to preserve the value of their investment. If inflation increases, interest rates will go up to offset the resulting debasement.

Higher interest rates directly increase the federal government's cost of servicing its debt. For every half a percent increase in Treasury yields, the federal government's interest expenses will rise by roughly $100 billion per year.[8] The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that the interest rate of 10-year Treasury notes will rise to 2.7% by the end of 2025, up from a rate of 1.6% in the middle of 2021.[9] This alone accounts for $480 billion in projected future obligations over the next five years. However, as Brian Riedl of the Manhattan Institute has shown, a scenario as realistic as returning to the average interest rates of the 1990s would push our national debt to 300% of GDP (as even more debt is needed to cover the higher interest payments) before the college graduates of today collect a single check from Social Security.



Unfortunately, there is more bad news: All other interest rates are even higher than the federal government's. Interest rates on everything from business loans to household mortgages have higher yields than Treasuries. This is the price investors demand for taking on the credit risk of other borrowers. If making

mortgage payments is difficult now, imagine payments at rates where they were the last time the 30-year fixed mortgage rate soared with the rest of the rate complex in 1981 — at 18.45%.[10]

Monetizing the Debt Would Hurt the Most Vulnerable

There is one thing that the government can do that is even worse than borrowing too much money, and that is printing it. This is known as debt monetization and, as history has shown, it is a shortsighted approach that rarely ends well.

There is a saying in economics that inflation occurs when there is "too much money chasing too few goods." By printing dollars to pay for fiscal spending, the government increases the supply of money by more than the supply of goods, thereby causing inflation.

From Germany's Weimar Republic to modern-day Venezuela, when central banks turn on the printing press to finance fiscal deficits, disaster usually follows. When runaway inflation takes place, the effects are widespread and dire; prices rise for most consumer goods and services, from groceries and clothing to haircuts and tuition. As the prices of everyday needs go up, it is those with the least disposable income that have the least ability to cushion the impact and end up suffering the most. In contrast, the most well-off are typically shielded, as the assets that comprise most of their wealth (such as real estate and stocks) tend to keep up with inflation.

What Can We Do About It?

In order to start getting our debt problem under control, the first step is very simple: When you are in a hole, stop digging. New middle-class entitlements, periodic cash payments to people regardless of need, and other spending proposals that would increase our unpaid obligations should be dead on arrival in any Congress that cares about the burden they are leaving for future generations.

Next, our major entitlement programs must be reformed in a way that makes them sustainable in the long run. If we act soon, this will not require an actual reduction in the payments received by American beneficiaries. Even in the aggregate, the programs can continue to grow. However, we need to ensure that at some point in the near future, these programs no longer grow faster than the rate of the economy as a whole.

For an example, take a look at how our neighbor to the north slowed one of their largest expenditures — federal expenditures on health care. In 2011, Canada announced that starting in 2017, it would tie federal health care spending to nominal GDP growth with a floor of three percent. Though the reduction in the rate of growth was originally proposed by Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, his successor, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has kept it largely intact. The results speak for themselves. Today, the parliamentary budget officer has stated that "fiscal policy at the federal level is sustainable over the long term,"[11] largely due to these reforms.[12]

A Final Word

The crisis our country will face if we continue to ignore our rapidly accumulating debt is entirely predictable. Our current trajectory will lead to a future of self-inflicted damage, including rising interest rates and inflation, which is guaranteed to hurt most those who can afford it the least. Importantly, curbing the rate of growth of our spending now means we can avoid far more draconian measures later.

Restoring Life in Post-Roe America: A Policy Vision

By Marjorie Dannenfelser
Marjorie Dannenfelser is president of the national pro-life group Susan B. Anthony (SBA) List, a network of more than 900,000 Americans. She is the author of "Life is Winning: Inside the Fight for Unborn Children and Their Mothers."

From America's inception, a tenacious defense of human rights and freedom has been integral to our national character. It is no accident that life comes first among the unalienable rights mentioned in our Declaration of Independence. Without it, all others are impossible.

Roe v. Wade was a shocking betrayal of those foundational principles. In a single day, the Supreme Court struck down every state law protecting unborn children and their mothers, imposing abortion on demand nationwide. This ensured deep division for decades to come and sparked a human rights movement both universal and quintessentially American.

Today, the pro-life movement has reached a culmination.

A strategy to elect leaders who would prioritize the unborn resulted in the election of the most pro-life president in history — Donald J. Trump — who, together with a pro-life Senate, transformed the federal judiciary and set the standard for future pro-life administrations.

Building on that success, American voters in 2020 elected the largest incoming class of pro-life congresswomen in history. In the states, pro-life lawmakers now introduce hundreds of pro-life bills a year, enacting a significant percentage into law.

The efforts of pro-life Americans, especially the heroic pregnancy center movement, have brought the abortion rate to its lowest point since Roe.

As of this writing, the Supreme Court is poised to consider whether any pre-viability limits on abortion are constitutional.[1] Roe could be overturned, re-enfranchising the people. But even in the event of an unequivocal win, much more is necessary to build a thoroughgoing culture of life.

In a post-Roe America, each state will have a debate that has been stifled for two generations. We will see American democracy working as it was designed. This is long overdue.

We look with great hope to the opportunity not merely to legislate around the margins, but to save millions of little boys and girls intended for this world. Victory is not inevitable, but it is within reach. I hope this essay serves as a road map.

* * *

The Trump administration proved that having a pro-life president matters a great deal for saving unborn lives. Having seen what is possible, there is no going back.

The Supreme Court was only the most significant of many historic executive branch wins. One of the first was a resolution allowing states to defund Planned Parenthood — America's largest abortion business — of Title X family planning funds. This action was followed by the federal Protect Life Rule, which resulted in Planned Parenthood forfeiting approximately $60 million in fungible taxpayer dollars.

Planned Parenthood is anything but the trusted provider of legitimate health care its carefully cultivated image portrays. In 2019-2020, it committed more than 354,000 abortions — a record high. Further, during the rise of Black Lives Matter, Planned Parenthood attempted to distance itself from the eugenic

agenda of its founder, Margaret Sanger, as its own employees accused the organization of systemic racism.

Sanger's mission continues today; nearly 80% of Planned Parenthood facilities are located within walking distance of minority neighborhoods.[2] Among the black community, the abortion rate is almost four times higher than among whites.[3] In New York City, more black children are aborted than are born alive.

As if that wasn't bad enough, Planned Parenthood has been caught engaging in the harvest and sale of aborted babies' body parts for profit. Members of Congress investigated these practices and made criminal referrals to the Department of Justice, which confirmed in 2017 that it had launched an investigation in 2017 — but then went quiet.

Just months later, it was reported that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had entered into a contract to purchase baby body parts for research. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) canceled the contract, stopped funding unethical experiments at government labs, and made a $20 million down payment to develop modern, uncontroversial alternatives such as adult stem cells.[4] HHS Secretary Alex Azar then activated an Ethics Advisory Board (EAB) to review grants for extramural research at, for example, university campuses.

Additionally, Trump took action to protect babies harmed by failed abortions. He repeatedly called on Congress to send the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act to his desk, doing everything in his power to make good on a campaign promise to end late-term abortion. And, after the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act was introduced, he similarly urged Congress to send that legislation to his desk. Supported by 77% of Americans, this legislation would simply ensure that babies who survive failed abortions receive the medical care afforded to other premature babies. (Pro-abortion Democrats in Congress have repeatedly blocked both bills since their introduction.)

Another win came through pushing back on extreme state-level actions. In 2019, then-New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, signed the nation's most radical expansion of late-term abortion into law. In Virginia, Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam, a physician, described in a live interview how babies who survive abortions can be denied care. President Trump personally challenged Cuomo, and his State of the Union address explicitly called out Democratic Party leaders' extremism.[5]

The Trump administration also preserved the Hyde Amendment, which prevents taxpayer-funded abortion on demand, saving an estimated 60,000 lives each year.[6]

Lastly, the Trump administration worked to build a culture of life that protects babies not only while they are in the womb, but after they are born as well. In 2020, President Trump signed an executive order to ensure that newborns receive the care they deserve — including through an increase in funding for neonatal research.

* * *

Under a pro-life administration, we also secured wins in fighting abortion abroad.

America's stance on abortion has profound consequences for human rights globally. President Ronald Reagan spoke of America as a shining city on a hill — a beacon of freedom and hope to the world. Yet under Roe, the United States is one of only a small handful of countries — including China and North Korea — that allow abortion on demand after five months of pregnancy.[7] American progressives frequently cite Europe as a model for social policy, but on abortion, Europe is less permissive than the United States; as of July 2021, 47 out of 50 European countries limit elective abortion to 15 weeks or earlier.[8]

Under pro-abortion Democratic administrations, the United States has bankrolled Planned Parenthood, Marie Stopes

International, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Groups like these lobby against other nations' pro-life laws, or even facilitate illegal abortions.

This funding is a deeply offensive form of cultural imperialism. It is also contributing to genocide under China's communist regime.

As Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, and I explained: "In China, the UNFPA is listed on official documents as a partner with the National Health Commission, the agency responsible for implementing the government's infamous population control policies. As recently as 2019, the UNFPA bragged about its work to enhance 'reproductive health' in the Xinjiang region…Coerced abortion and sterilization have reduced the birth rate in that region by almost half, according to a 2021 report."[9]

Moreover, sex-selection abortions — wherever in the world they occur — victimize women and girls. Women, Mother Teresa observed, are "three-quarters" of abortion victims — half of the babies and all of the mothers. One disturbing report found that sex-selection abortion due to cultural preferences for boys over girls may have caused as many as 8,400 girls in the United States to be missing for the years 2014-2018 alone.[10] Imbalances in gender ratios then fuel human trafficking.[11]

The Trump administration took steps to rectify these injustices. The administration reinstated and expanded the "Mexico City" rule, which stops U.S. taxpayer funding of the abortion industry overseas, applying it to all U.S. foreign health assistance — nearly $9 billion — and swiftly defunded the UNFPA.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and HHS Secretary Alex Azar then invited world leaders to stand with the United States against efforts within the United Nations to create an international "right" to abortion on demand.[12] They spearheaded the landmark Geneva Consensus Declaration, which states that there is no international right to abortion; it was signed by 34 nations.

* * *

Tragically for the unborn and their mothers, the Biden administration has made it a priority to reverse the Trump administration's pro-life actions, both at home and abroad.

Almost immediately, President Joe Biden unilaterally withdrew from the Geneva Consensus Declaration. House Democrats passed a spending bill that more than doubled UNFPA's funding and gutted the Helms and "Kemp-Kasten" amendments, which prevent U.S. tax dollars from funding abortion on demand as a method of "family planning" and from funding organizations that abet coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization, respectively.[13]

President Biden also disbanded the EAB and resumed funding for barbaric experiments using aborted babies' body parts. And under the Biden administration and a Democratic Congress, the Hyde Amendment, which ensures that taxpayer dollars are never used to pay for abortion, is continually under threat.

* * *

Despite these setbacks, there is still tremendous pro-life progress being made. Some of the greatest successes have been at the state level.

In April 2021, the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute (which was, until 2007, an arm of Planned Parenthood) opined about "the most devastating anti-abortion state legislative session in decades." By October, more than 100 pro-life provisions were enacted across 19 states, including some of the most ambitious protections yet.[14]

Numerous states have passed laws protecting unborn children with a detectable heartbeat and stopping late-term abortions when unborn children can feel pain.

Science shows that by six weeks, unborn children have a heartbeat and a developing brain and spinal cord. By 10 weeks, they have arms, legs, fingers and toes, and they can kick and jump. By 15 weeks, they have fully formed noses, lips, eyelids and eyebrows; and by that point, if not earlier, they can feel pain.

North Dakota passed the first heartbeat law in 2013. A dozen other states followed. Their laws were immediately enjoined by courts, until Texas enacted the Heartbeat Act. Although the Texas law's mechanism allowing it to be enforced by private citizens ignited controversy, a majority of Texans[15] and 46% of all voters support it.[16]

Nearly half of U.S. states have passed the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.[17] These laws went largely unchallenged until recent years. More than 10,000 late-term abortions take place nationwide each year, mostly for socioeconomic reasons.[18]

States have also enacted laws protecting unborn children from discriminatory abortions based on their race, sex or a prenatal diagnosis such as Down syndrome. In the United States, an estimated 61-93% of babies with Down syndrome are killed before birth. This contrasts with research showing that 99% of people with Down syndrome are happy with their lives; they like themselves and are loved by their families.[19]

A growing number of states are passing laws to end these discriminatory abortions. Indiana's law — signed by then-Governor Mike Pence — reached the U.S. Supreme Court. While the court declined review without expressing any opinion about the law itself, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the issue of whether Roe protects abortions for eugenic reasons remains an "open question." More recently, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a similar Ohio law, causing a "circuit split," or a disagreement that greatly increases the possibility of a Supreme Court review.

Moreover, numerous state legislatures have continued to put forth legislation to protect babies, including protections for

babies born alive in failed abortions and limits on the expansion of chemical abortion drugs.

With legislation stymied in Congress, several states have passed their own born-alive acts.[20] Some, like Kentucky, defied a pro-abortion governor's veto threat.[21]

Abortion advocates claim abortion pills (RU-486 or Mifeprex) are "safer than Tylenol," but large-scale, peer-reviewed studies have found chemical abortion is four times as dangerous as surgical abortion. More than 20 women have died as a result of taking these drugs. Other serious complications are likely underreported.[22]

Using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse, the Biden FDA dropped the longstanding safety requirement that abortion drugs not be dispensed without an in-person doctor visit, allowing them to be sent through the mail. Half a dozen states stepped up to safeguard women and unborn children, and more are likely to follow.

The battle after Roe will shift to the 50 states, which will reach different conclusions depending on where consensus is found. The majority of Americans support far greater limits on abortion than are currently possible.

* * *

In a post-Roe America, elected leaders will have to navigate a volatile time. This responsibility will rest acutely with the president, who must show the way forward for America and the watching world.

A future pro-life administration should build on the Trump administration's pro-life progress while undoing the Biden administration's damage.

Together with Congress, a top priority should be making the Hyde Amendment permanent and government-wide to ensure

that taxpayer dollars are never used to pay for abortion. Additional pro-life bills could finally be signed into law, including the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act.

A future pro-life president should also reinstate the Protect Life Rule and let all states exclude abortion businesses from their Medicaid programs. He or she should instruct the Justice Department to finish their investigation of Planned Parenthood and should work to end experimentation on the bodies of aborted children. Further, a pro-life White House and Congress should work together to permanently end U.S. taxpayer funding for abortion overseas, which 77% of Americans oppose.[23]

Pro-life advocates can also take steps to ensure our elected leaders can capitalize on a post-Roe United States.

Pro-abortion Democrats will undoubtedly attempt to push court packing and other schemes should Roe be overturned by the Supreme Court. Preparation is crucial to ensure we stop their attempts to enshrine the "right" to abortion on demand nationally.

To preemptively combat these plans, pro-life advocates must expose the lie that we only care about babies and their mothers before children are born. Now more than ever, the pro-life movement is earnestly coming alongside mothers and families to help them embrace life during every step of the process.

More than 2,700 pro-life pregnancy centers across America served almost two million people in 2019. Staffed largely by volunteers, these centers and networks provide a variety of vital services, typically at no cost.

In order to strengthen the existing pro-life safety net and help communities identify and fill gaps, Susan B. Anthony List launched *Her* PLAN (Pregnancy and Life Assistance Network). With initial pilot programs in Georgia and Virginia, the goal is to expand *Her* PLAN to 30 key states by the end of 2024.

Texas offers a model for how public and private sector efforts can complement each other. Approximately 200 pregnancy centers operate in Texas. Meanwhile, the state's $100 million per year Alternatives to Abortion program provides counseling, material assistance, care coordination and housing support. The Healthy Texas Women program also helps low-income women with family planning and health care.

Additionally, all those who care about protecting life can work to further reduce the costs of adopting and fostering to help place children in stable, nurturing homes. This is both morally right and fiscally prudent,[24] producing immediate and long-term savings for taxpayers.[25]

* * *

At half a century, Roe is on life support, and life is winning.

Now is the time to employ all our creativity and fortitude to right this injustice and restore the right to life to its central place in American law. Each of us has a role to play. With stakes this high, sitting on the sidelines has, for millions of Americans, ceased to be an option. By having this debate, we will have the chance to change hearts and minds and to save countless lives — to honor and live up to the promise of America. No fight is more worthy of a great nation, and we and our homeland will be so much better for it.

Putting Patients in Charge Instead of Insurance Companies and Government Bureaucrats

By Newt Gingrich & Joe DeSantis
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For the past two decades, China and India have become greater economic powerhouses. New technologies and forms of communication have changed the nature of the economy. And world events such as the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the coronavirus pandemic have upended our lives. All the while, Americans have been swept up in tides and waves that are much bigger than we are.

While trying to navigate these difficult waters, Americans have also had to contend with a government that has grown larger and more invasive and massive corporate entities run by oligarchs that collude with government to gain more power and wealth. Because of these trends, it can seem that we have less control over what happens in our own lives and communities than ever before.

Tragically, this is true of one of the most personal aspects of our lives: our health and that of our families.

For those of us who get health insurance in the individual marketplace, the Affordable Care Act has limited our choices of coverage to a small number of nearly identical plans that often have high out-of-pocket costs and narrow provider networks.

This means that sick patients don't get access to the best doctors and are still at high risk of medical bankruptcy despite having so-called insurance from Obamacare. Perhaps even worse, these plans can still cost more than $1,000 a month for family coverage if you make too much to get subsidies.

For those of us who are covered under an employer group plan, we have even fewer choices — just the plan that our employer chooses. Meanwhile, hospital consolidation and a broken marketplace for medical services and products, including drugs, has stolen our wage gains to pay for insurance premiums that grow two to three times the rate of inflation on average.

The combined effect of skyrocketing premiums and out-of-pocket costs in the individual and group marketplaces is that U.S. families must shell out roughly $25,000 of their own money before seeing any benefit from having insurance at all.

Furthermore, there is strong evidence to support that the more we spend on health care and coverage, the worse our collective health becomes. This is because only 20% of health outcomes are driven by what happens in the clinic. The rest are determined by what are called "social determinants of health." Factors such as good education, access to transportation, good-paying jobs, involvement in civic life, and strong familial and social connections contribute more to a person's overall health than the quality of care they receive.

This means that the more we spend on health care, the fewer public and private resources we have to fund the things that actually improve our health as a people.

Americans have been powerless to push back against these trends for a simple reason: We do not control our health dollars.

Three-quarters of the private health insurance marketplace is group insurance. This means that human resource managers and union representatives control most employee health care benefit dollars. So, employers have ultimate control of employee health

care coverage, not individual patients. Similarly, it is health plans that remit most of the payments to health care providers, not patients. This puts health plans — not you — in control of your care. It is health plans that ultimately get to decide what doctors you can see and what care they can provide.

Since the day that Republicans announced their intention to repeal and replace Obamacare, they have been stuck in a box defined by the left. They have been seeking an alternative to Obamacare when what they should be developing is an alternative to our fundamentally broken health care system. And the fundamental problem with our system is that patients are not in control, because they do not control their health care dollars. Who does? Health insurance providers and government bureaucrats.

Until patients control their health care dollars, they will never be in control of the care and coverage they receive. Until patients control their health care dollars, health plans and providers will be more responsive to the needs of employers and insurance companies than those of employees and patients. Until patients control their health care dollars, they will continue to lose while the massive health care provider-insurance company-middlemen systems win.

Here is an agenda to finally give patients the power they need to wrest control of their health care away from the bureaucrats and plutocrats currently getting rich and powerful on the backs of U.S. patients.

1. **Let employees have access to personal and portable health insurance.** Employees should have the right to have the money an employer would otherwise spend on a group health premium put into their tax-free health savings accounts (HSA) and be given the right to purchase plans of their choice with those funds. Plans could follow patients from job to job, in and out of the labor market, because they would not be tied to employers. This will require lifting the annual cap on

HSA donations, as well as tying the accounts to a high-deductible health plan and allowing that money to be used to pay premiums.

States should also develop pilot programs that allow patients to use the per-person average value of their Medicaid dollars to purchase private plans that they own. This would allow employers and state governments to contribute funds to a patient's account, and the combined amount would allow for much better care and coverage than the patient would get on Medicaid alone.

2. **Give more families access to doctors that work directly for them, not insurance companies or hospital conglomerates.** Direct medical care cuts the middleman out of the health care system by allowing patients to pay a flat monthly fee directly to their doctor instead of going through an insurance company. This cuts administrative costs and gives doctors more time to spend with their patients instead of filling out insurance company paperwork. To give more families access to a doctor who works for them, HSA dollars should be allowed to be used for direct care memberships.

3. **Let families have access to insurance that meets their medical and financial needs and grants them access to the best doctors instead of saddling them with unaffordable deductibles, sky-high premiums and narrow provider networks.** Once we have given patients control over their health care dollars, we must allow for a greater variety of health plans in the individual marketplace — so they have real choices that work for them — including:

    a. Specialty plans operated by centers for excellence for people with chronic illnesses, so we are making Americans healthier, not just "covered."

b. Plans that "wrap around" direct primary care relationships, so patients don't have to pay twice for coverage of most of their health care needs.

c. Plans only designed to cover routine care and emergency room visits, so younger individuals and families can choose low, predictable monthly expenses without getting hit with unexpected medical bills for typical, but nonchronic, health care needs.

d. Indemnity-style health insurance plans that have no provider networks or prior approvals, instead using a price-transparent, cash-based system requiring far less bureaucracy.

4. **Let families know the price of care ahead of time so that they can benefit financially from smart choices.** We should strengthen price transparency rules and incorporate publicly available and understandable quality ratings. Insurers should also be allowed more ways to share savings with their customers, such as by lowering the next month's premium if a patient chooses a provider that costs less than what the insurer normally pays.

5. **Give patients access to the drug discounts their health plan is receiving.** Patients are often made to pay full price for their drugs during the deductible phase of their coverage even though the health plan is receiving significant discounts — or "rebates" — from drug manufacturers. This must be fixed so that patients are paying the negotiated rate for drugs, just like they would for health care services. The Trump administration issued a rule that would have applied this reform to Medicare. It should be codified into law by Congress to strengthen the provision and make it harder for a future administration to undo.

6. **Allow patient demand to establish provider supply.** Currently, the number of doctors available in a market is dictated by the government through certificate of need laws. Unelected bureaucrats and boards decide whether certain health care facilities can be built in a marketplace. Amazingly, established health providers often sit on these boards, so they can effectively shut out potential competition. This is a guild protection system that prevents competition in health care. It drives up prices and creates long waiting lists to see doctors. States should reform these laws to allow doctors greater freedom to open up practices.

7. **Give patients access to 24/7 care in their home.** We need a package of reforms to usher in the age of virtual health care. This is of particular importance to Americans living in rural areas where many people live hours away from health care facilities. Many of the waivers issued during the pandemic should be made permanent, and further reforms should be made to allow people to take advantage of what virtual health care can accomplish. For instance, patients using virtual health care should not be limited to doctors who are in the state in which they live. This is an anachronism of non-virtual health care.

In addition to giving patients more control over their health care dollars, we should also encourage employers to take a much more active role in bringing health care costs under control. As health entrepreneur Dave Chase and others have pointed out, Starbucks spends more on health care than coffee beans. General Motors Co. spends more on health care than steel. But you better believe that the CEOs of these U.S. companies would refuse to accept the year-over-year cost increases in those parts of their supply chains that they routinely accept in health care.

Most large and midsize employers in America self-fund. That means they pay the health care bills of their employees directly rather than paying premiums to an insurance company. About

half of U.S. workers are on a self-funded plan; they're just not aware of it because their insurance cards say United, Blue Cross or some other insurance company's name. This is because their employer is renting the insurer's provider network. But the insurer is not paying the bills, the company is.

There are many examples of U.S. companies and municipalities that self-fund that have taken advantage of the flexibility self-funding provides. Self-funding has kept their health care expenses flat for years while offering extremely generous benefits for their employees, with low deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses.

One example is Rosen Hotels in Orlando, Florida. It pays about 55% less per employee than the national average and does so with a plan that covers 90% of medications for free, has a low deductible, and offers on-site medical care for employees. Rosen Hotels estimates that over the past 30 years, it has saved more than $300 million on health care expenses. The employees love their health care plan as well. Turnover at Rosen Hotels is about one-third the industry average.

There are many other examples, including the Pittsburg area school system, which designed a health plan that covers its teachers at about half the cost of those in Philadelphia. This is despite Pittsburg having an expensive medical marketplace. The county has taken these savings and invested them in smaller class sizes and higher teacher salaries.

Finally, we must reorient the U.S. health care system to focus much more on preventing disease. Less than three percent of U.S. health care spending goes toward preventative care. This underinvestment in prevention leads doctors and hospitals to "follow the money" to acute care. While this does have some advantages — the United States has by far the best specialists and access to new treatments in the world — it comes at a huge expense in terms of dollars and years lost to poor health. More than 25% of all U.S. health care spending — over $730 billion per year — is spent treating preventable illness. This is a

conservative estimate. Studies also suggest that between 25 and 50% of all deaths are due to preventable illness.

This is a very complicated problem with many contributing factors, many of which are lifestyle-related. As conservatives, we should be wary of government solutions that seek to micromanage people's lives or limit their choices. Still, we should be encouraging payment models in health care that financially reward doctors and hospitals for keeping patients healthy instead of just treating them when they are sick. In this way, lifestyle advice and interventions will be coming from patients' doctors rather than from the government.

We should also take steps to increase the number of independent primary care physicians available to patients. Over the past several decades, many primary care practices have been absorbed into large hospital systems. Primary care doctors are extremely valuable to hospitals because they are the ones that refer patients to specialists, which is where the money is. This creates a conflict of interest because primary care doctors are the ones best situated to help their patients prevent chronic diseases that require the services of specialists. (There are some exceptions to this general principle, such as in fully integrated health systems that also provide their patients with health insurance.)

There is also promising new science emerging that could help focus our health care system on prevention. As a person ages, their risk for chronic diseases greatly increases. While this risk is exacerbated by lifestyle choices, it is aging that is the number one risk factor for disease. Geroscience is a promising new field of study that seeks to understand the aging process and its connection to the development of many chronic diseases. Research has shown the potential for a new generation of therapies that would help prevent disease before it occurs instead of just treating it afterward.

The potential returns on such a development are enormous. A recent study showed that adding an additional year of healthy life

to the American population at large would produce $367 trillion in economic returns for the United States over 10 years. This doesn't even incorporate intangible returns, like increased happiness and quality time spent with loved ones. Given this potential, the United States should dramatically increase research funding in this field. We also need regulatory changes at the Food and Drug Administration. Right now, the clinical trials process for new drugs is focused on treating disease rather than preventing it, reflecting the overall acute care-focused model of health care in the United States.

Health care is life and death. It is also one-fifth of the U.S. economy and extraordinarily complicated. A lot more needs to be done. We can start now by implementing the steps outlined above to create the foundation for a much different, better health system that puts patients in control instead of bureaucracies. It should be the framework for a Republican health care agenda in 2022 and 2024.

A Plan for Safety and Healing in America

By Tim Scott
Senator Tim Scott was born and raised in North Charleston, South Carolina. He is the first Black man to be elected to both the U.S. House and Senate. Since joining the Senate in 2013, Senator Scott has been a national leader on education, justice and fairness, workforce development, and opportunity for all Americans.

In 2015, then-North Charleston police officer Michael Slager pulled over Walter Scott for a faulty brake light. Scott, a 50-year-old forklift operator, fled his car. After a chase on foot and brief scuffle, Slager fired eight rounds into Scott's back as he was running away. Following the incident, Slager filed a police report saying he felt threatened because Scott had taken his taser.

Up until that point, most people in our community were inclined to take the word of police officers based on a police report — to assume that it was an accurate depiction of what happened. In the case of Walter Scott and Michael Slager, as well as other well-known incidents in the years since, bystander video of the incident that conflicted with the reported account shattered that preconception in an instant.

The fallout from Walter Scott's murder shook South Carolina and our entire nation. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a thousand pictures. That video led me to conclude that we need body-worn cameras on every officer and better reporting on officer-related shootings.

To that end, I introduced the Safer Officers and Safer Citizens Act, bipartisan legislation that would have helped provide body-worn cameras to state, local, and tribal police departments across the country. I also introduced the Walter Scott Notification Act, which simply said states needed to improve reporting on the

circumstances of officer-involved shootings. Unfortunately, it proved difficult to convince some of my fellow senators of the urgency to take action.

In 2018, I thought we may be able to finally find common ground on a piece of criminal justice legislation when the Senate unanimously passed my bipartisan anti-lynching legislation. But rather than pass my bipartisan bill, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi kept it in purgatory for more than a year only to introduce identical legislation under a different name in order to claim ownership of the issue. Democrats prioritized a political win over getting meaningful reform across the finish line.

I've long known we needed to eat this elephant one bite at a time. I didn't think there was political will in Congress for comprehensive reform. What I didn't anticipate was the lack of political will in Washington to get *anything* done.

Over the years, I've warned Democrats on Capitol Hill about the danger of failing to act. I repeated the same warnings last year on the Senate floor. We hadn't learned our lessons about the danger of preserving the status quo, and the nation was again reeling from another tragedy.

For more than nine minutes, the world watched the horrifying video of then-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd's neck until he no longer had a pulse.

Though this wasn't the first time many of us had seen or heard of such a tragedy, the video caused an awakening across our country. It's one thing to know about the inconsistencies in our justice system, but it's another thing entirely to witness a man take his last breath on the screen of your phone.

If the deaths of Eric Garner, Walter Scott, Breonna Taylor, and countless others chipped away at our collective consciousness, George Floyd's murder caused the dam to burst. Our newfound national self-awareness resulting from this tragedy sparked conversations about race, justice, and policing around the world.

I knew we had to harness this wave of opportunity to make an impact with meaningful reform.

My team and I responded by putting together the JUSTICE Act. My bill was aimed at bringing Americans together to solve the serious shortcomings in our system of policing. We sought input from both Republicans and Democrats, activists, and members of the law enforcement community. Many of the provisions we included enjoyed bipartisan support. JUSTICE would have incentivized law enforcement agencies to ban chokeholds, improved data collection and record keeping on use of force that results in death or serious harm, increased funding for de-escalation training, strengthened penalties for falsifying police reports, and more.

But rather than debate these ideas on the Senate floor, Democrats blocked my bill. I gave them the opportunity to offer at least 20 amendments, but they still refused.

Reasonable people should be able to agree that more training for officers will result in better outcomes for the communities they serve. By extension, it seems obvious that staffing better-trained departments with character-driven officers requires more resources. Democrats went in the exact opposite direction.

A far-left campaign to demonize police officers and defund police departments swept the nation. New York City cut their police budget by $1 billion. The Baltimore City Council defunded their police department by $22 million. Los Angeles' police department lost $150 million in funding. Minneapolis took $8 million from police and allocated it elsewhere. Many more liberal, elite leaders across the nation followed suit.

In the absence of adequate resources to do a dangerous job, many officers resigned and response times went through the floor. With a diminished police presence on the streets, violent crime skyrocketed in major cities.

In 2020, homicide rates in our country's largest cities increased by more than 30% — the largest one-year increase ever recorded in our nation's history. Murder rates shot up by 82% in Portland, 72% in Minneapolis, 36% in Los Angeles, 44% in Phoenix, 40% in Philadelphia, and 45% in New York City. This year, the homicide rate has continued to rise, to say nothing of the increase in violent crime more broadly.

The sad reality is that the communities the Democrats claimed to be helping are the very folks most harmed by under-resourced police departments. Having grown up in some of the poorest parts of South Carolina, I've witnessed this firsthand. Safety is a foundational element in our hierarchy of needs. Taking away security from poor people is both immoral and illogical. We know that.

Case in point: Minneapolis. The City Council's decision to cut millions of dollars from their police budget was a knee-jerk, political reaction to the tragic death of George Floyd. At a time when the community needed stability and order, police did not have the resources to do their jobs. Without support, many officers resigned, and crime spiked. Unsurprisingly, the poorest corners of Minneapolis were hit hardest. The Fifth Ward, which has the city's highest concentration of poverty, saw an increase in homicides, robberies, shootings, and stabbings. The disastrous impact on this neighborhood — just down the street from where Mr. Floyd was murdered — proves that the liberal "defund the police" movement was a reaction based on political pressure, rather than a well-reasoned solution to a very real problem.

Though I was discouraged by the Democrats' refusal to act last summer, I came back to the table and have spent the better part of this year working to implement the reforms I've been pushing for years. The biggest misnomer in this debate is that there is no common ground. Better recruitment, more training, a culture of accountability —these are all things both sides want. A Gallup poll conducted this summer found that 80% of Black people wanted the same level of policing in their neighborhoods or a higher one. And the largest law enforcement groups in the

country supported my good faith efforts with Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., to create compromise legislation. With a shocking 51% increase in officers killed in the line of duty so far this year, it's no surprise that all sides are desperate for solutions that create a safer environment for both officers and the communities they serve.

Despite months of negotiating, Democrats once again squandered an opportunity to create meaningful change that would make communities across our country safer. I've heard from and spoken to the families of the victims who have lost their lives at the hands of police. Acting on the areas where we agree — banning chokeholds, limiting the transfer of military equipment, increasing mental health resources, and more — would have brought justice to these families. Instead, the left once again let their idea of perfect be the enemy of good, impactful legislation.

Not only does this failure to act risk more lives, but it also misses a crucial opportunity to mend the tenuous relationship between the law enforcement community and communities of color. The responsibility to turn this tide rests on the shoulders of leaders and lawmakers at all levels.

Throughout my years of public service, I've met with dozens of family members of those who have lost their lives. Many of those loved ones are seeking justice through reform. When I looked them in the eyes and promised never to walk away from the table, I meant it. For the second time in as many years, my negotiating partners on the other side of the aisle left me at the altar. But I'm still at the table because I know that millions of Americans are counting on us to make our communities safer and heal the divides that others wish to exploit. I remain optimistic we will get there.

The Tragedy of American Education

By Dennis Prager

Dennis Prager is a nationally syndicated radio talk show host, founder of PragerU, the largest conservative internet site in the world with over a billion views a year, and author of ten books. A biblical scholar, he has completed three volumes of "The Rational Bible," his projected five-volume commentary of the first five books of the Bible.

Raised an Orthodox Jew who attended yeshivas until college, I was brought up to regard schools as sacred institutions and to hold teachers in the same esteem I was to hold my parents. Such is the traditional Jewish view of education and teachers: They are engaged in God's work.

My view of education has not changed; I still revere it. But my view of the American educational establishment has; I now hold it in disdain.

Such is the state of American education at this time that, for those who recall what true education consists of, no other view is possible.

American schools not only do not teach; they pervert the minds and souls of far too many American students. For decades, I have said that sending one's child to an American college or university is equivalent to playing Russian roulette with his or her values. Today, this is equally true with regard to sending one's child to many American elementary schools and high schools — private as well as public.

Here is an incomplete list of what most young Americans will be taught if they attend most American schools:

- The United States is no better — and has never been better — than other countries, and in many areas, it has been and remains morally inferior.
- America is an imperialist country. Domestically, it mistreats its minorities and neglects its poor.
- In literature and the arts, no work is better or worse than any other. Whether Batman comics are as good as, superior to, or inferior to Dostoevsky is entirely a subjective call.
- The reason universities in the past taught Shakespeare, Michelangelo and Bach rather than Guatemalan poets, Sri Lankan musicians or Native American storytellers is not because the Western works are superior, but because of "Eurocentric" racism.
- God is at best a nonissue and at worst a foolish and dangerous belief.
- Christianity is largely a history of inquisitions, crusades, oppression and anti-intellectualism. Islam, on the other hand, is a religion of peace. Therefore, criticism of Christianity is enlightened, while criticism of Islam is Islamophobic.
- Israel is a racist state, morally indistinguishable from apartheid South Africa.
- Big government is the most humane way to govern a country.
- The South votes Republican because it is racist and because the Republican Party caters to racists.
- Mothers and fathers are interchangeable. Neither is necessary — fathers less so than mothers.
- Any assertion that a married mother and father is the parental ideal is heterosexist and homophobic.
- All whites are racist. Non-whites cannot be racist.
- The great world and societal battles are not between good and evil, but between rich and poor, between the powerful and the powerless, and between whites and non-whites.
- Patriotism is a euphemism for chauvinism.
- The American flag represents racism and oppression.

- Human beings are animals. They differ from “other animals” only in having better brains.
- We live in a patriarchal society which, by definition, is injurious to women.
- Everyone except white Christian heterosexual males is a victim: Women are victims of men, blacks are victims of whites, Latinos are victims of Anglos, Muslims are victims of Christians, and gays are victims of straights.
- The American Founders were racist slaveholders whose primary concerns were preserving both their wealth and slavery.
- The Constitution does not have an objective meaning. It says what progressives think it should say.
- America’s dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was animated by racism.
- Capitalism is evil.
- Wealthy Western nations became wealthy by exploiting Third World nations through colonialism and imperialism.
- America was founded, and the Revolutionary War was fought, to preserve slavery.
- Defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman is as immoral as defining marriage as the union of a white and a white.
- Sexual identity is not fixed but subjectively determined by each individual.
- Men give birth. Therefore, people who give birth should no longer be referred to as “women” but as “birthing persons.”

Despite this list of immoral doctrines and outright lies, most American parents and many students go into debt in order to support institutions that, for four years — during the most impressionable years of a person's life — instill values that are the opposite of those of most parents.

This is intentional. As Woodrow Wilson, progressive president of Princeton University before becoming president of the United States, said in a speech in 1914: “I have often said that the use of

a university is to make young gentlemen as unlike their fathers as possible."

In 1996, in his commencement address to the graduating seniors of Dartmouth College, then-president of the college, James O. Freedman, cited the Wilson quote favorably. And in 2002, in another commencement address, Freedman said that "the purpose of a college education is to question your father's values."

For Wilson, Freedman and countless other university presidents, the purpose of a college education is to question — actually, reject — the values by which you were raised, not to seek truth. Parents represent traditional American values. The university is there to undermine them.

As one of America's leading intellectuals, Professor Victor Davis Hansen, recently wrote:

> "The humanities have become too often anti-humanistic. And the social sciences are deductively anti-scientific. Both quasi-religious woke disciplines have eroded confidence in colleges and universities, infected even the STEM disciplines and professional schools, and torn apart the civic unity of the United States. Indeed, much of the current Jacobin revolution was birthed and fueled by American universities, despite their manifest hypocrisies and derelictions."

The destructive nature of American schools is not only a function of the moral and intellectual chaos transmitted to young people. Equally destructive is the suppression of all intellectual dissent.

One does not understand the left if one does not understand that wherever the left wields power — whether in a school or in a country — it prohibits dissent. Since Lenin's Communist Revolution in Russia, there has never been an example of the left allowing dissent. Liberals and conservatives allow dissent, but

the left never has. (Why liberals support the left — and indeed, make left-wing political victories possible — is a question for another essay.)

That is why dissent is stifled at nearly all American schools. Consequently, for the first time in American history, young Americans do not believe in free speech. According to the Pew Research Center, nearly half of all young Americans do not believe "hate speech" should be permitted. And given that the left labels every idea with which it differs as "hate speech," what this poll reveals is that about half of young Americans do not believe that non-left ideas should be allowed to be expressed.

But even if "hate speech" actually meant hate speech and not "speech that offends the left," this would be a first in American history. By definition, supporting free speech means allowing hate speech. That half of America's young people do not understand this is a direct result of their education — which taught them it is OK to stifle any speech they consider offensive and which failed to teach them that free speech includes hate speech. The moment society stifles speech that the powerful deem "hate," free speech has ended.

In 1976, members of the American Nazi Party — i.e., real Nazis — planned to march in a Chicago suburb with a large Jewish community that included many Holocaust survivors. Nevertheless, so important to democracy did it deem the principle of free speech, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois, *whose lead lawyers were all Jews*, went to court to fight for the Nazis' right to march. (For the record, the ACLU is no longer a free speech organization.)

Given the state of American education, what is a parent to do if the parent believes in America, knows that capitalism is the only economic system that has lifted billions of people out of poverty, believes there are only two sexes, does not want their five-year-old to participate in "Drag Queen Story Hour," and wants their child to cherish liberty?

Such parents have four options:

1. Do nothing and hope that neither the elementary school, the high school nor the college their child attends will poison him or her.
2. Fight against local school boards to make sure the school their child attends is not teaching poisonous, anti-American ideas.
3. Move their child to a school that values education and truth.
4. Home-school their child.

Let's deal with each option.

Option one is by far the most popular. Most parents who choose to do nothing about their child's school are simply unaware of the damage American schools do. They are happily oblivious to the left-wing indoctrination that masquerades as education.

But even most parents who are aware of the anti-American, anti-truth, innocence-destroying curricula of their children's schools do nothing about it. For whatever reason, they believe the school won't change their wonderful son or daughter. These parents should talk to the millions — yes, millions — of American parents whose children were malevolently transformed at university or earlier. Whenever I meet parents who hold traditional American values, I ask them how many children they have and how many of them share their parents' values. About one-third of the time, the response is: "They all do." And about one-third of the time, the response is: "None of them do."

The second option has begun to be exercised. However, as important as it is for parents to speak up at local school board meetings, it is largely a cathartic exercise. Unless the parents run for those school board seats and succeed in unseating the ideologues that have taken over their school boards — and, more importantly, replace the left-wing teachers (who make up the majority of teachers) with teachers committed to education — parents speaking up at school board meetings are likely to accomplish little.

When a fine local school exists, the third option is obviously a viable one. But this is rarely a viable option because there are few fine local schools — if by fine, we mean: schools dedicated to truth, excellence and beauty; schools in which race has no importance; schools that teach music and art; schools which refer to students as "boys and girls," not merely as genderless "students"; and, most importantly, schools in which the American mottos, "Liberty," "In God We Trust," and *e pluribus unum* ("from many, one") are taught.

This leaves the fourth option: home schooling.

More American parents than ever are choosing home schooling. It is almost always the best choice because there are few arguments against home schooling.

So why do parents who are not committed to their children being indoctrinated into left-wing beliefs not home-school their children? There are two primary reasons. One is, as noted in option one, obliviousness to what is happening in their child's school. The other is fear that the burden of home schooling will prove overwhelming. Parents assume that if both parents are wage earners, one of them will have to stay home and therefore give up most, or all, of his or her income. Parents also find home schooling intimidating; even if a parent is prepared to stay at home, how many parents are capable of teaching writing or math or science?

As regards losing income, parents should weigh some loss of income against the benefits of a happy, innocent well-educated child who honors them and their values. To my mind, there is no contest. I also suggest that grandparents, who often have more money than their children, offer to contribute to their grandchildren's home schooling. If grandparents have any money to invest, this is the best thing they can do with that money.

As to the intimidation factor — the fear that the job is beyond their abilities — there are many quality home-school curricula available today and many home-school organizations that parents can tap into for guidance, help and task sharing. There are home-school consortiums that divide the teaching responsibilities and provide a community for parents and students alike.

I have met hundreds of home-schooled young people. I am always impressed by their maturity, breadth and depth of knowledge, and the respectful way they address adults. Perhaps the greatest difference between them and most of their peers who attend regular schools is that they are not jaded. While, of course, not every student who attends a regular school is jaded, vast numbers of them are. Among the many awful consequences of what has happened to our schools is that they produce young people who have lost the *joie de vivre* and wide-eyed innocence natural to young people. How could they not? They are taught they live in a despicable country founded by despicable men, that their future is existentially threatened by global warming, and that something as basic as the human species being divided between male and female is just a lie.

American parents can gamble with their children's happiness, or they can find a better way to educate their children — through home schooling, an existing school that teaches their values, or even starting a new school. The current American educational establishment is not parents' friend; it's their adversary. The sooner parents wake up to this stark reality, the sooner positive change will happen.

Education got us into this mess. Education is the way out.

An Energy, Jobs and Climate Plan That Strengthens America

By Dan Sullivan
Dan Sullivan represents the state of Alaska in the U.S. Senate. Prior to being elected to the Senate in 2014, he was Alaska's Commissioner of Natural Resources and also served as the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Economic, Energy, and Business under Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He is currently a colonel in the Marine Corps Reserves.

Introduction

The state that I represent, Alaska, is an energy and natural resources superpower. Since oil began to flow down the trans-Alaska pipeline in 1977, we have been able to provide the country with more than 18 billion barrels of energy. We are proud that we've been able to contribute to the country's economy and national security and our energy has advanced and improved the lives of the people in our state, particularly the people who — before the big oil discovery at Prudhoe Bay and the development of other resources — were among the most impoverished Americans in the country: our strong and resilient indigenous people. There's still work to be done. But because of energy production, communities have schools, many live near cutting-edge medical clinics, have access to clean water, and life expectancy has risen dramatically. Because of energy production, as one prominent Alaska Native leader puts it: "We are no longer one whaling hunt from starvation."

There is no doubt that America can work to increase renewables and we can take greater steps to make traditional energy cleaner through technological innovation. But, as we look to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, we can't forget how energy production continues to benefit hundreds of millions of Americans across the country — as well as billions across the

globe. And we can't forget how much damage will be done to working families and the environment if President Joe Biden and his climate envoy John Kerry continue to wage war on our energy sector.

Since President Biden has been in office, his administration has been restricting American energy production, purposefully curtailing the building of American energy infrastructure like pipelines, laying off thousands of hard-working Americans in these sectors, and pressuring American financial institutions not to invest in American energy, especially in places like Alaska. At the same time, President Biden is begging OPEC and America's adversaries like Russia and Iran — countries whose energy production emits far more carbon than our own — to produce more energy.

In a remarkably short period of time, President Biden and John Kerry's Green New Deal has had dramatic, negative consequences for working families, particularly in terms of energy prices at the pump, home heating, fuel, and natural gas, all of which are spiking as a direct result of these policies.

There is a strong indication, particularly from statements by climate czar Gina McCarthy, that high energy prices for Americans are actually part of the administration's Green New Deal policies. Higher prices, she has said, "help accelerate the move to renewables around the world."

My colleagues and I have a competing vision set forward in our Energy, Jobs and Climate Plan that is based on American abundance and leveraging America's many unique strengths — especially our world-class natural resources, the production of which has actually brought down emissions and has resulted in the lowest carbon-intensive manufacturing in the world.

The Biden-Kerry vision is one of planned scarcity, where Americans have to suffer from higher energy prices to bring down emissions. Our vision emphasizes leadership, clean energy innovation, and expanding at home and exporting abroad

resources like natural gas as a central way to lower global emissions — up to 40% by 2050, compared to today.

The Biden-Kerry Green New Deal vision involves telling our allies *not* to buy American natural gas and instead relies on Russia and OPEC and empty promises from authoritarian regimes about their greenhouse gas reductions.

Our vision recognizes that American natural resources can be leveraged to produce millions of jobs in related U.S. manufacturing sectors, including clean technology. The Biden-Kerry Green New Deal will import more technology from China and relies on critical minerals from that country as well.

Our plan will empower American ingenuity and workers to unleash our nation's abundant energy resources and innovative technology, expand good-paying jobs for hard-working Americans, maintain reliable and affordable energy for consumers, and boost our economic and national security.

The American Energy, Jobs and Climate Plan

Let me start off with some facts that informed our solutions:

- Globally, China is the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases — by far. It is responsible for 28% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions — more than the emissions of the entire developed world combined.

- Nearly 100% of future emissions growth will come from non-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations, with China leading the way.

- Exporting U.S. liquified natural gas (LNG) to China, India and Japan would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,934 million metric tons per year — equivalent to roughly 9% of total global emissions, or roughly 100%

of the total energy-related greenhouse gas emissions from the entire EU.

- Russian natural gas exported to Europe has an emissions profile 41% greater than U.S. LNG.

- If the EU replaced its Russian natural gas for electricity production with U.S. natural gas, the associated global emissions would fall approximately 72 million metric tons annually. This is roughly equivalent to taking 15 million cars off the road.

- Between 2005 and 2019, largely because of the expansion of U.S. natural gas and the dramatic increase in its use in our electric grid, U.S. carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector declined by 33%.

- Further, during this same period, our economy grew by 25%, energy consumption fell by two percent, and per capita emissions dropped to their lowest level since 1950.

A. Natural Gas

In 2013, President Barack Obama touted the benefits of natural gas: "We produce more natural gas than ever before, and nearly everyone's energy bill is lower because of it," he said. "The natural gas boom has led to cleaner power and greater energy independence. We need to encourage that."

He's right. Natural gas is an ideal "bridge fuel." Even President Biden this year said he's "all for natural gas."

Unfortunately, John Kerry and the president's other climate advisors want to restrict natural gas production and its use at a time when we have no substitute. This makes no strategic sense.

Instead, not only should we be increasing the use of natural gas here at home with breakthrough carbon capture utilization and

storage technology; we should also be exporting it — in the form of liquefied natural gas — to countries that lack our reserves of this clean-burning fuel source.

The world is craving gas. According to the International Energy Agency, the number of countries that can accept LNG via ship has grown nearly 400% in the past 20 years. The market in the Asia-Pacific is particularly strong, and exporting to some of these countries — Japan, Korea and even to China — is a win-win-win.

Increasing natural gas production will create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs for American workers, deepen our country's security ties with Japan and Korea, increase our advantage over China, and dramatically and positively impact our trade imbalances in this part of the world.

Importantly, it will also dramatically decrease global emissions.

Let me repeat: Exporting U.S. LNG to China, India and some EU countries would produce 50% fewer greenhouse gas emissions for each unit of U.S. LNG used.

Exporting U.S. LNG to China, India and Japan would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,934 million metric tons per year — equivalent to roughly 9% of total global emissions, or roughly 100% of the total energy-related greenhouse gas emissions of the entire European Union.

B. Critical Minerals

Second, in order to support the renewable energy industry, we need to produce, process and manufacture critical minerals here at home.

Together with our allies, we can grow this sector using environmental and labor standards that are second to none.

Critical minerals are absolutely vital to many important energy and transportation technologies, like solar panels, as well as lithium-ion batteries that power our computers, phones and electric cars.

As it stands, every battery that will be produced for our electric cars and every house that we equip with solar panels will strengthen China and increase global CO_2 emissions.

We have many of these minerals, but we lack the industry to produce and refine them.

Our critical minerals are also held back by a protracted and inefficient permitting process.

Domestic development of a mine often takes up to 10 years! That's simply unacceptable if we want to lead the world with renewable energy technology and our own abundant resources.

C. Innovations

Additionally, we need to support U.S. innovation for battery storage technology, bolster microgrids for rural electrification, develop advanced and small nuclear reactors, and support carbon capture technology efforts, among other innovations. This, plus greatly expanding our natural gas production, will lead to a significant increase in domestic manufacturing.

We don't talk about this nearly enough, but goods manufactured in the United States are 80% cleaner than the world average.

Currently, the United States imports 75% of its goods from less carbon-efficient countries. This runs completely counter to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

D. Empowering the American Worker

Our policies to increase natural gas production, build out our nuclear capability, develop our lower-emissions technology, and

increase mining manufacturing will also lead to millions of good-paying jobs for hard-working Americans.

Further, they would enact prevailing wage policies for renewable energy companies receiving federal incentives and subsidies.

Our energy resources provide us with an incredible strategic advantage in the world. We can and we should take advantage of these resource gifts while we work on technologies that create a clean energy future.

We can begin that work now by continuing to be a global leader in energy production, lowering emissions, strengthening our economy and our national security, and ensuring that hard-working Americans are not being forced to sacrifice their livelihoods.

The answers are in our natural gas and in American manufacturing, innovation and smart investments. If we use all of the tools at our disposal, we can not only lower emissions in America, but across the globe.

Foreign Policy

Introduction

By Nikki R. Haley

I will always remember standing on the Simón Bolívar International Bridge.

The year was 2018. Hundreds of people passed me, in a continuous line that stretched as far as I could see. Their faces were hard and sad. Most had walked many miles in the blazing sun to get the only meal they would eat that day. Entire families trudged by, carrying what few possessions they had. A teddy bear. A few pieces of clothing. Many had nothing at all.

They were Venezuelans, and they were all headed the same direction — out of Venezuela. They were fleeing socialist tyranny in search of freedom.

When I left the bridge, I went to a nearby shelter run by the Catholic Church, where the refugees were gathering. I met a few and hugged them tight. After a few minutes, more and more families started to gather. I didn't understand why they flocked to someone they'd never met.

Then it hit me. They didn't care who I was. They cared where I was from. In me, they saw America. In America, they saw hope.

They aren't the only ones. From Latin America to Africa to Asia and beyond, billions of people look to the United States for inspiration. Our leadership matters. It is essential for the safety and security of our own citizens. It is equally essential for the continued existence of freedom in our world.

Representing the United States at the United Nations was the privilege of a lifetime. It gave me an added appreciation for our country and the principles we cherish. It also gave me a deeper

understanding of our dangerous world — and what we must do to protect ourselves.

We're in the middle of a clash of civilizations. On the one side is freedom, embodied in America. On the other side is tyranny — brutal, barbaric tyranny. We face enemies who don't just want to defeat us. They want to destroy our way of life and bring the world back to the Dark Ages. Our people are counting on us to win this fight.

I saw this struggle at the United Nations. The United Nations is a place where dictators, murderers and thieves denounce America, then put their hands out and demand that we pay their bills. It's also a place where process is more important than progress. Simply talking about problems is somehow seen as solving them. It's backward and embarrassing.

I took a different approach. Whether it's China, Russia, Iran or North Korea, we can't go along when the United Nations goes against our interests. We should make progress when we can, walk away when we can't and hold the line when we must. This approach should guide everything America does on the world stage. The threats we face demand nothing less.

No threat looms larger than Communist China — the evil empire of the 21st century. With one hand, it is striving to control and conquer the world, using a combination of military force, economic pressure and diplomatic manipulation. With the other hand, it is brutally oppressing its own people, to the point of genocide against Muslims. Standing up to China is a moral and security necessity.

Like the Soviet Union before it, Communist China can only be stopped by the United States. The time has come to evaluate every connection between our two countries — economic, cultural, educational, you name it — to ensure we aren't strengthening our enemy while weakening ourselves. Equally important is calling out and confronting Beijing's influence,

wherever it rears its head. Communist China cannot keep up with a strong, courageous and focused United States.

Many other threats exist. Vladimir Putin's Russia is getting more aggressive. We see the proof in cyberattacks on our companies and pitiful attempts to undermine our democracy. Further proof can be found in Russia's ongoing efforts to swallow its neighbors and turn Europe against itself and the United States. Putin thinks he can get away with it, and for the most part, he has. Russia won't stop until it starts paying a steep price.

Iran is no different. When the ayatollahs chant "Death to America," they mean it. They act on it by sending money and missiles to terrorists who want to kill us and our allies. Iran has already murdered our troops. It's plotting much worse. Gestures of goodwill only encourage more bad actions. The fear of consequences will discourage them.

The menace of Islamic terrorism is rising too. Joe Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, and its immediate fall to the Taliban, means Al Qaeda and other terrorists will once again have a safe place from which to operate. You can bet they're preparing a new round of attacks on our homeland.

Protecting America from so many threats requires military strength. The best way to keep the peace is having the might to win any fight, hands down. Few things are more important than giving our nation's heroes the resources and support they need to come out on top, anytime and anywhere.

Another kind of strength is needed even more: moral strength. It's the only way to win the clash of civilizations. If we don't think our way of life is worth defending, we'll lose. But if we have confidence in our national creed, there's no challenge we can't meet. We don't need to force our principles on anyone. Instead, we need the force of will that comes from patriotism. After all, America deserves our love.

I saw it every day at the United Nations. The rest of the world looks to our example. When we speak, they listen. When we lead, they follow. When we stand for what's right, we not only make our people safer and more secure, we make the world a better place too. My parents taught me that even on our worst day, we are blessed to live in America. Now it falls to us to keep that blessing alive.

American Ideals and the Future of U.S. Foreign Policy

By Ayaan Hirsi Ali
Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and founder of the AHA Foundation. She served as a member of the Dutch Parliament from 2003 to 2006. While in Parliament, she focused on furthering the integration of non-Western immigrants into Dutch society and on defending the rights of Muslim women. Her latest book is called "Prey: Immigration, Islam, and the Erosion of Women's Rights."

The Open Versus the Closed Society

Unlike most Americans, I was not born in the United States. My bond to this exceptional nation came through the opportunity of naturalization.

I was born into a tribal society and culture in Somalia. In my youth, my mother and grandmother dispensed advice based on the harshness of the life they knew and which their ancestors had similarly known for hundreds of years.[1] Growing up, I was subjected not only to tribal norms and practices, but also to Islamist ideology. We moved a lot. My family lived in Saudi Arabia and Kenya. During my teenage years, I lived in Nairobi, Kenya. At school, I fell under the sway of charismatic Islamist teachers.

My whole life, from childhood on, has revolved around the distinction between the *open* society and the *closed* society. Deep down, I craved living in an open society from the time I was little. But I was not able to articulate this because I had not been exposed to the ideas that lie at the foundation of an open society.

Broadly speaking, open societies are based on the dignity of humans, including women. They are based on respect for human rights — including freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and the press — as well as a non-arbitrary, predictable rule of law and the right to a fair trial. Open societies are not perfect because man is not perfect. Nonetheless, open societies seek steady progress. Problems can be articulated publicly and solutions found.

In contrast, closed societies are based on control from the top down. They rely on violence — especially toward women and the religious — to ensure outward compliance. The individual is relegated to insignificance.

Tribal societies are one type of closed society. They tend to be risk-averse, insular, defensive, vigilant, cautious and sometimes aggressive, with long historical memories of past grievances and enmity toward other tribes. Islamist societies — whether present-day Iran, Afghanistan or territories controlled by Boko Haram in Africa — are another type. They are based on the implementation of unreformed Shariah law, including its harsh punishments, absence of religious freedom, and lack of clear boundaries between civil and holy law.

The pivotal event in my life was when I left the closed society I had known. On my way to an arranged marriage with a distant relative in Canada, I made the decision to seek asylum in the Netherlands. There, I was amazed by the Dutch open society. Living in small Dutch towns, I found women — young and old — riding on bicycles in jeans, their hair uncovered, going about their business and their daily lives. This mixing of men and women in public went against everything I had been taught. Yet, instead of social chaos, I found Dutch society to be orderly and tidy.

Members of my clan eventually tracked me down and demanded that I go through with the arranged marriage. It is with enormous gratitude that I look back on that moment — now 28 years ago — when I experienced another benefit of an open society: a just

rule of law. A policeman politely explained to my Canadian-Somali fiancé that any person over the age of 18 has the right to choose their significant other. Thus, with the backing of the Dutch local police, I was able to extricate myself from an arranged marriage.

In the Netherlands, I subsequently worked a series of low-level jobs, took Dutch language classes whenever I could, and was able to enroll at Leiden University. My early appreciation for an open society matured into a more rational understanding of Enlightenment ideals, including an aversion to unquestioning adherence to any religion or ideology.

After the 9/11 attacks, I left Islam because I found the doctrine of violent jihad such as it existed in unreformed Shariah law unacceptable.[2] I took a job researching the challenges of social integration that Muslim women faced in the Netherlands and eventually ran for Parliament, hoping to draw attention to these sensitive issues. I won a seat in 2003.

Because of my public stances on Islam, I faced threats on my life — mostly from radical Islamist activists. For nearly two decades, I have lived with round-the-clock security. It is an apparent paradox: a closed security shield that's necessary in an otherwise open society. One might call it the paradox of freedom.

You may ask, with good reason: "What does any of this have to do with foreign policy or with American ideals?" The answer is that the contrast between the open and the closed society has affected how I view the United States and how the United States carries itself in world affairs.

American Principles

In 2006, I left the Dutch Parliament and moved to another open society: the United States. Here, I have seen how Americans emphasize the sovereignty of "the people" and find their historical roots in a revolt against British rule in the name of unalienable rights.[3] Americans have rightly understood their

country's history as an unprecedented experiment in self-governance, based on a rejection of arbitrary authority and a demand for democratic accountability.

The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution are shining exemplars of a commitment to an open society. From the earliest stages, as historian Bernard Bailyn reminds us, ideals related to the freedom and dignity of man played a critical role in American colonists' drive for independence from Great Britain.[4] "It is no stretch," as several observers wrote recently, "to suggest that 'unalienable rights' were the form in which the American Founders gave expression to the idea of an inherent human dignity."[5]

The U.S. Bill of Rights in particular enshrined a young America's commitment to individual rights. It established that the federal government would not infringe on certain rights — including freedom of the press, assembly and speech — and would in fact actively protect these rights from overreach, even by the government itself. It also gave Americans the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Aristocratic governments in Europe viewed the American experiment with disdain and dismay. They saw it as far too democratic and not deferential enough.

Slavery proved a much more difficult issue for Americans to resolve. While the moral problem of slavery had become painfully apparent to Americans by the 1770s, if not earlier, abolishing slavery was only achieved through a bloody conflict. Even after the Civil War, it took another century until full voting rights were extended to all Americans.

Yet, despite sometimes failing to ensure full dignity and rights for all, Americans constantly strived to improve, to make progress.

U.S. Foreign Policy Challenges

Today, the United States faces a number of daunting challenges in the world, primarily emanating from the rise of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)[6] and the continuing specter of Islamism.[7] Both of these challenges come from closed societies. In China's case, at issue is the Communist Party's increasingly dystopian surveillance of its citizens and use of the "social credit" system to restrict rights and dissent. In September 2021, the CCP made it clear it is willing to sacrifice economic growth to concentrate more power in the hands of the party.[8] In the Islamist case, the challenge emanates from a worldview that does not accept the open society.[9]

Given these challenges, how *should* — and how *can* — this exceptional nation, America, conduct its foreign policy going forward?

Part of the trouble is deciding to what extent spreading our values (the values of the open society) is in our own interests and at what point it becomes foolish. During President Woodrow Wilson's time in office and, more recently, in the post-World War II era, *values,* and not just national *interests,* played an overarching role in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo assembled a Commission on Unalienable Rights, led by Professor Mary Ann Glendon, in order to help steer the U.S. approach to human rights in a sensible direction in the future. The Commission's report succinctly captures the American role:

> "Although a concern with freedom was a central feature of America's thinking about itself and the world from the beginning, it was only in the post–World War II era that promotion of human rights came to occupy a prominent place in American foreign policy, and, under U.S. leadership, in world affairs...the world's oldest democracy became the world's foremost champion of freedom in the 20th century, providing hope and

encouragement to countless men and women living under brutal dictatorships."[10]

The Way Forward

In recent months, confidence in America and our values has been badly shaken from within and from without. The ignominious withdrawal from Afghanistan that left many Afghan allies to an uncertain — and possibly deadly — fate will leave permanent scars. America's strategic reputation has been badly wounded; the same goes for our reputation as a dependable, predictable partner to our allies.

Yet the problems are deeper and more structural than just the catastrophic way in which the withdrawal was carried out. Since 9/11, the United States has taken inconsistent, contradictory and unclear positions with regard to Islamism.[11] In Egypt, Libya and elsewhere, U.S. officials have at times empowered Islamist movements — including the Muslim Brotherhood — without, apparently, understanding the risks.[12]

With regard to China, American businessmen and associations such as the NBA have been eager to access China's market, turning a blind eye to geopolitical and human rights considerations. Chinese officials have begun speaking contemptuously of the United States.[13]

At the same time, America faces a domestic challenge that grows more serious by the day. That challenge is "wokeism."

Closely associated with critical race theory, woke intellectuals and activists reject notions of meritocracy, individualism and colorblindness. According to the woke, these three concepts — which are at the basis of the modern American social contract — are all steeped in racist bias and are therefore illegitimate.[14] The woke allege that the United States was morally flawed from the beginning, and, in many ways, beyond redemption. All American institutions are said to be racist. White Americans are said to be subconsciously racist and, if they dispute this, are said

to suffer from “fragility.” The woke have increasingly targeted merit programs and programs for gifted students, accusing them of racist bias or of perpetuating racial inequities.[15]

All of these allegations contribute to the dissolution of what binds Americans together. They undermine American ideals and our civic unity. Wokeism is not just obscurantist and based on false premises, but at odds with the principles of an open society; it is a world of speech codes, language police, cancellations, social media mobs seeking layoffs and revenge, the devaluation of the individual, and the grouping of individuals into rigid tribal blocs on the basis of immutable characteristics such as race. In many ways, wokeism is precisely the opposite of the free individualism so characteristic of the open society, of a hopeful vision for a pluralist society.

The United States may be imperfect, but it has offered meaningful hope to millions of immigrants — of all backgrounds — for centuries. These migrants do not just seek out a better life, but also refuge in the American commitment to freedom and the rule of law. Deep down, there is something good about America. Historically, it has been a benevolent superpower — almost to a fault — though it is not without flaws.

Without appreciating what makes America exceptional, the United States has little hope of carrying out an effective foreign policy. This is true regardless of how far the United States wishes to project the values of freedom or the open society abroad, or of how much the United States wishes to focus more purely on its rational self-interests.

The United States cannot carry out an effective foreign policy without an understanding of its exceptional commitment to unalienable rights, its moral worth, and the value of its founding principles — to say nothing of the extraordinarily selfless sacrifice made by so many veterans in past wars against hostile regimes.[16]

In these fraught times, the report by the U.S. Commission on Unalienable Rights offers a potential path forward. Besides offering an eloquent overview of America's highest founding ideals, the report's authors emphasize the complementarity of American values with the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

> "This convergence of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights] and the core of the American constitutional and political tradition has implications for U.S. foreign policy. It invites a commitment to the promotion of democratic processes and free institutions as central to the U.S. human rights agenda."

This commitment to human rights should not be misunderstood. A commitment to human rights does not imply self-abasement or humiliation by the United States with regard to foreign powers. In November 1979, Jeane Kirkpatrick, who would later serve as President Ronald Reagan's ambassador to the United Nations, warned that "a posture of continuous self-abasement and apology *vis-à-vis* the Third World is neither morally necessary nor politically appropriate."

For instance, Kirkpatrick observed that the United States should not judge American allies *more* harshly on human rights grounds than America's enemies, something the Carter administration was wont to do.[17] America's commitment to human rights could cynically be used against it by hostile regimes with poor human rights records.

The defeat of Soviet communism was a momentous achievement by the West. But paradoxically, it appears to have lulled some observers into a kind of complacency — a notion that liberal democracy was in some sense the end point of history, and that this goal had been reached.[18]

The foreign challenges confronting the United States today are serious. The values of the United States are superior to those

offered by the Chinese Communist Party and by Islamist regimes and movements around the world.

Any credible foreign policy will seek to combine a commitment to America's highest ideals with a rational pursuit of American interests. There need not be irreconcilable conflict between these two ideas, and an effective U.S. foreign policy cannot be carried out if the United States is internally so divided that Americans lose sight of the inherent goodness of American values.[19] A reacquaintance with American ideals is therefore imperative. A strong U.S. foreign policy requires a firm domestic foundation — one that we are currently lacking.

The Competition of the Century: Overcoming the Chinese Communist Party's Campaign of Co-option, Coercion and Concealment

By H.R. McMaster
H.R. McMaster, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, served as White House national security adviser from 2017 to 2018. He is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and is the author of "Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World" (2020).

"…the East is rising and the West is declining."
— Chairman Xi Jinping, March 2021

"Many people within the United States actually have little confidence in the democracy of the United States."
— Yang Jiechi at the Anchorage Summit, March 18, 2021

In the 1970s, our nation was deeply divided over race and an unpopular war. The Watergate scandal and the coverup of that scandal led to President Richard Nixon's resignation. Other events shook America's confidence further. Those included the Vietnamese Communists' brutal assault on Saigon and the desperate evacuation of the American embassy in April 1975. Less than a month later, the Khmer Rouge seized the U.S. merchant vessel Mayaguez. Three U.S. Air Force helicopters were destroyed during the initial assault, and the Marines fought a desperate daylong battle with the Khmer Rouge before being evacuated. Three Marines left behind on the island of Koh Tang after the battle were executed by the Khmer Rouge; their names are the last names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Stagflation and oil crises added economic trauma to foreign policy and national security failures. The decade ended with an Iranian revolution, a failed hostage rescue attempt, and a 444-day-long hostage crisis.

Pessimism pervaded. The United States appeared weak. In contrast, the Soviet Union appeared strong. Soviet leaders saw America's tolerance for civil and political liberties as a vulnerability. Their communist totalitarian state could crush dissent or preempt it with jingoistic propaganda and tight control of information. But the struggles of the 1970s belied American strength. Democracy affords citizens authorship over the future.

A half-century later, America is again emerging from crises in the midst of a consequential geostrategic competition with a Eurasian power. Americans have a lot of work to do after the recent traumas of a pandemic, a recession, social divisions laid bare by George Floyd's murder and the violent aftermath, and vitriolic partisan political divisions that have reduced confidence in our democratic institutions and processes. The self-inflicted defeat, humanitarian catastrophe, and incompetent evacuation effort in Afghanistan — brought on by a precipitous retreat following surrender to the Taliban, a terrorist organization — are shameful. It seemed — like the Iranian hostage crisis from 1979 to 1980 — to add an exclamation point to the narrative of American decline. This narrative gained strength across more than a decade from the 2008-2009 financial crisis, the opioid epidemic, and the unanticipated length, cost and difficulty of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But Americans and like-minded partners across the free world can resolve to strengthen their democracies as the first step in competing effectively internationally. The stakes are high as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) races to perfect its technologically-enabled police state and export its authoritarian, mercantilist model. If the United States and the free world do not rise to the occasion, the world will be less free, less prosperous and less safe.

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The Chinese Communist Party became more aggressive during the global pandemic. Chairman Xi Jinping and CCP leaders

believe that they have a narrow window of opportunity to strengthen their rule and revise the international order in their favor — before China's economy sours, before the population grows old, before other countries realize that the party is pursuing "national rejuvenation" at their expense, and before unanticipated events like the pandemic expose the party's vulnerabilities. The CCP is obsessed with control because it is afraid of losing its exclusive grip on power. The narrative of regaining honor lost during the "century of humiliation" and "taking center stage" in the world is meant to promote the "China model" of one-party authoritarian rule and portray that model as superior. Another reason that China has accelerated the tempo of competition is because, like the Soviets in the 1970s, the CCP senses weakness in the America of the 2020s.

CCP fear and ambition drive strategies designed to maintain control and gain an economic and strategic advantage. They have names like "military-civil fusion," "Made in China 2025," and "One Belt, One Road." The goals are to establish Chinese hegemony, create exclusionary areas of primacy across the Indo-Pacific region, challenge the United States globally, achieve a preponderant advantage in advanced manufacturing and the emerging data-driven global economy, dominate global logistics and communications infrastructure, and rewrite the rules of international trade and political discourse.

Across all those strategies, the CCP employs a combination of co-option, coercion and concealment. China co-opts countries, international corporations and elites through false promises of impending liberalization, insincere pledges to work on global issues, debt traps for corrupt or weak governments, and, especially, the lure of short-term profits and access to the Chinese market, investments and loans. Co-opted entities are vulnerable to coercion. The party coerces others to turn a blind eye to its most egregious human rights abuses, support its foreign policy, and accept its violent self-conception as a one-party nation with no room for plurality except on its own rigid terms.

The party's success depends on concealing its intentions and portraying its most egregious actions as normal practice. Free trade Xi Jinping signs a draft Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with Europe while punishing Australia economically and shutting down market share for retailers who object to slave labor. Environmentalist Xi Jinping promises carbon neutrality by 2060 while China finances and builds scores of coal-fired power plants internationally every year. Human rights Xi Jinping speaks on rule of law while he interns millions in concentration camps, extends the party's repressive arm into Hong Kong, imprisons journalists and freedom activists, and holds hostages. Compassionate Xi Jinping asserts that the "Chinese nation does not carry aggressive or hegemonic traits in its genes" while: his army bludgeons Indian soldiers to death on the Himalayan frontier; his cyber forces continue a massive campaign of espionage; his air force menaces Taiwan, South Korea and Japan; and his maritime forces try to exert ownership over the ocean in the South China Sea.

Chairman Xi has internalized George Orwell's observations in 1984 that "he who controls the past controls the future," and "he who controls the present controls the past." In this 100th anniversary year of the party's founding, he highlights China's century of humiliation at the hands of foreign powers while obscuring the century of misery that the CCP inflicted on the Chinese people. There will be no commemoration of the victims of the Red Army during the civil war, the tens of millions who died during the Great Leap Forward and were killed, beaten, interned and humiliated during the Cultural Revolution, or the thousands gunned down during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. And there will be no mention of the suffering of Uyghurs, Tibetans, Christians and other oppressed minorities.

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So, the first step in competing effectively with the CCP is to counter Xi's Orwellian reversal of the truth. Doing so requires correcting two misunderstandings that provide cover for the party and conceal what is at stake in its campaign of co-option

and coercion. Both misunderstandings are rooted in the conceit that the CCP mainly responds to external actions rather than pursuing its own ambitions.

The first misunderstanding is that Chinese aggression is the result of U.S.-China tensions. A survey of the CCP's actions during the pandemic reveals that the United States did not cause CCP aggression and that China's promotion of its model poses the real threat to security and prosperity. The CCP suppressed information about the COVID-19 outbreak, persecuted doctors and journalists who tried to warn the world, and subverted the World Health Organization. To "kill one to warn one hundred," China inflicted economic punishment on Australia for proposing an inquiry into the origins of the virus. Meanwhile, Chinese hackers conducted massive cyberattacks on medical research facilities around the world while using the cover of the pandemic to advance China's surveillance police state, extend repression in Hong Kong, and continue genocide in Xinjiang.

Some continue to apologize for the CCP, blame the United States, and call for more engagement with China as an end in itself. For example, in a July 2021 Foreign Affairs essay, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., accused the "Washington establishment of beating the drum for a new Cold War" and "casting China as an adversary."

The Sanders essay stems from strategic narcissism — the self-referential tendency to attribute causality to us alone. Strategic narcissism leads to a moral equivalency that helps China conceal its objectives. Some of America's closest friends in the Indo-Pacific region and in Europe proclaim that they do not want to choose between Washington and Beijing. The actual choice that those nations face is not one between Washington and Beijing. It is a choice between sovereignty and servitude.

The second misunderstanding that provides cover for CCP aggression gained wide acceptance in early 2017. Some policy experts argued that competition with China is dangerous or even irresponsible because of a Thucydides Trap — a term coined to

express the likelihood of conflict between a rising power (China) and a status quo power (the United States). CCP leaders love the Thucydides Trap trope because it allows the party to escape responsibility for its actions and promotes a false dilemma between passive accommodation and war. But the party promotes the false dilemma to portray itself as a victim and accuse the United States of trying to keep the rising power and its people down.

It is important to correct these misunderstandings because they provide cover for the party's aggression and a rationalization for those who are eager to shrink from competition. And correcting both misunderstandings is essential to turning what the CCP views as weaknesses of our liberal democratic societies into competitive advantages.

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Wall Street and other international investors continue to pour money into Chinese stocks and bonds, undaunted by the CCP's increasing intervention in the private sector. When China surpassed the United States as the top destination for new foreign direct investment earlier this year, one could imagine CCP leaders evoking the quotation erroneously attributed to Vladimir Lenin: "The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them." Except it is worse; we are financing the CCP's purchase of the rope.

Nations and corporations should take something like a Hippocratic Oath for doing business or investing in China. Free world political, corporate and financial leaders should vow to cause no harm or hurt in three ways:

- Do not transfer sensitive technology that gives the CCP a military advantage or unfair economic advantage.
- Do not help the CCP stifle human freedom and perfect its police state.

- Do not compromise the long-term viability of companies in exchange for short-term profits.

In general, companies and academic and research institutions should make decisions consistent with long-term ethical and fiduciary considerations. Shareholders and directors should demand it. Boardroom conversations often focus on Environment, Sustainability and Governance (ESG) issues. The CCP should be the main ESG topic for international corporations and academic institutions.

The United States must also strengthen military capabilities to deter confrontation with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It is not enough to decry the CCP's aggression from the Himalayas to the South China Sea to Taiwan and the Senkaku Islands. Ensuring our ability to deter conflict requires greater investments in defense modernization, readiness and force structure. The Biden administration's failure to propose real growth in the defense budget was a sign of weakness as China continues its massive military buildup. Deterring CCP aggression requires strong defense partnerships and alliances as well as capable, forward-positioned American forces. Fostering improvements in Japan and Taiwan's defensive capabilities are particularly important. But the greatest opportunity to compete more effectively with China may lie in strengthening democratic governance, rule of law, and freedom of expression at home and abroad.

Rebuilding confidence in America's democratic institutions and processes requires empathy. Lack of empathy is rooted in ignorance. Those who are strangers to their fellow Americans seek affirmation of their biases rather than knowledge. Ignorance is driving a destructive interaction between identity politics, vitriolic partisan rhetoric, bigotry and racism. The manipulation of history remains an important tool not only for Xi Jinping, but also for some of our fellow Americans. Ignorance of history compounded by the abuse of history undermines our ability to improve our nation because it saps our pride. As the late philosopher Richard Rorty observed, "National pride is to

countries what self-respect is to individuals, a necessary condition for self-improvement."

Pride in our nation should not derive from a contrived, happy view of history, but rather from a recognition that our experiment in freedom and democracy was always — and remains — a work in progress. For example, the emancipation of four million Americans after the most destructive war in our history was only the beginning of a long journey toward equal rights. Milestones along that journey included the failure of Reconstruction, Jim Crow segregation and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and the "separate but equal" ideology. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement dismantled the legal basis for Jim Crow segregation, but cultural, economic, educational and other forms of disenfranchisement continued. The manipulation of history was foundational to the obstruction of equal rights for black Americans as the Myth of the Lost Cause portrayed slavery as benign instead of cruel and the Civil War as a noble effort to preserve states' rights rather than slavery.

It is an abuse of history to cast the American Revolution as an effort to preserve slavery rather than a righteous struggle to found a nation on principles that ultimately rendered that horrible institution unsustainable. Knowledge of history should encourage Americans to celebrate the principles enshrined in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution while recognizing that much of our history has cut against those principles and that work remains to realize them. Americans can make progress because our republic was founded on the radical idea that sovereignty lies neither with king nor parliament, but with the people.

Americans can demand better from elected officials but need not wait for the political class to restore confidence. Citizens can reach out to their fellow Americans and engage in respectful debate. Americans can empathize with one another and strengthen their common commitment to the principles on which our nation was founded.

Despite our challenges and shortcomings, our American democracy is resilient while communist totalitarianism is brittle. Xi Jinping's July 2021 speech to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CCP contained a combination of admonishments, warnings, threats and praise for the 95-million-member CCP. But Xi is very much aware of another anniversary this year: the 30th anniversary of Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation and the end of the Soviet Union.

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To compete effectively with today's most powerful authoritarian regime, leaders across the free world might look back to the speech that President Ronald Reagan delivered at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on June 12, 1987. Reagan's speech clarified the nature of the competition with the Soviet Union, drew a strong contrast between democracy and autocracy, provided a positive vision for the future, and spoke directly to the people on the other side of the wall. Reagan's speech made clear what was at stake, not only for those living under communist oppression, but for all peoples. The Berlin Wall is an apt, albeit inexact, analogy for the Great Firewall of China — the combination of laws and technologies designed to isolate the realm of the Chinese Communist Party from outside influences.

The Berlin speech is remembered because it exposed, with a direct challenge, the nature of the free world's competition with the Soviet Union. Today, leaders across the free world have an opportunity to clarify, with a similar exhortation to Chairman Xi Jinping, what is at stake in the competition with the CCP: Tear down the Great Firewall and the many walls behind which the CCP interns its political prisoners, forced laborers and oppressed minorities. If Chairman Xi and his party are confident in their system, then they should welcome open competition and allow their citizens to judge for themselves.

The perception of American weakness, division and corruption emboldens the Chinese Communist Party as it promotes a narrative of American decline. The recognition that we have to

prevail in the competition with China might help Americans overcome our differences, reinforce the worn fabric of our society, and work together to strengthen our nation and the free world — to realize the vision of the motto that appears on the Great Seal of the republic: *e pluribus unum* — out of many, one. And it will be important for American leaders to, as Reagan did, explain clearly what is at stake to their own citizens and the rest of the free world.

Why Every American Should Stand With Israel

By John Hagee
Pastor John Hagee is the founder and chairman of Christians United for Israel — the nation's largest pro-Israel organization — and the founding pastor of the 22,000-member Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas.

I've devoted my life to expressing why Christians have a moral and biblical imperative to support Israel, but it's been pointed out to me on several occasions that many of the arguments made in support of the Jewish state apply whether or not one is a Believer. Christian support for Israel begins with the Bible. We are mandated by God to stand with His Chosen People and to stand up to antisemitism wherever and whenever it is found.

For the Believer, Israel is the only nation on earth created by a sovereign act of God. As chronicled in Genesis, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1) and deeded the land of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 15:18, 17:2-8, 26:3). God says that those who bless Israel will be blessed (Genesis 12:3) and He commands that we pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6).

Moreover, as Christians, our faith would not exist were it not for the Jewish people. Our Savior and his family are Jewish. The prophets, the patriarchs, the disciples, and the Apostles were all Jewish. There isn't a Baptist in the bunch. Jesus never denied his Jewish roots, and neither should Christianity.

While Bible-believing Christians are theologically predisposed to supporting Israel, our Zionism does not end there. As Americans, as people who value life and liberty, both morality and patriotism point toward standing with Jerusalem.

Shared Values

The U.S.-Israel relationship is not an alliance of convenience. As the world's sole remaining superpower, we are at times compelled to engage with countries whose domestic and foreign policies make us a bit uneasy. This is the unfortunate reality for the one nation that sits at the head of the international table. But it is decidedly not the case when it comes to Israel.

The U.S.-Israel relationship is something to be celebrated. It speaks well of our country that President Harry Truman recognized the Jewish state just 11 minutes after its independence. It likewise is a point of pride that the United States has stood with Israel since her modern rebirth. We have stood with Israel through wars against adversaries that have sought — and continue to seek — Israel's wholesale destruction, and when she is victimized by an international community often led by corrupt, antisemitic, and totalitarian regimes.

It speaks well of us because Israel is a diamond in the rough. She is an oasis of liberty in one of the most illiberal regions in the world. Israelis value human and civil rights. They have a vibrant democracy and civil society. They embrace the melting pot of cultures and experiences that make the Jewish state unique. Put simply, Israelis and Americans speak two different languages but share one set of values.

For Christians, our values are rooted in the Bible. But even for those who do not believe but still have the moral clarity to see the world through the American or Western lens, Israel is a nation to be cherished.

Strategic Interests

Historically, many of America's closest allies have needed American soldiers to make the greatest sacrifice in defense of those nations, lest they be overrun by the world's most evil regimes. Europe would be nothing of what we know it to be today were it not for the brave Allied effort to defeat the Nazi

regime. South Koreans would know nothing but hardship were it not for the sacrifices of American men and women.

Israel, however, has never and will never ask America to fight her battles for her. No American soldier has ever taken up arms in defense of the Jewish state. The Israelis do it themselves. They do so even against overwhelming odds. Because of God's enduring blessing, they have survived and thrived.

As Americans, we do invest in Israel's defense through military assistance. And we receive a great return on this annual financial investment in Israel's defense. Israeli technological innovations, forged only as a result of the existential fires surrounding it, have improved American armed forces' capabilities to fight and to deter our own adversaries. Israeli military technological advances have also saved American lives — for example, through the aptly nicknamed Israeli battlefield bandage, or the Israeli-developed armor that has been placed on various American military vehicles and borne the brunt of Iranian IEDs. Likewise, the Israeli-developed and jointly-produced Iron Dome missile defense system is currently being readied for deployment to protect American soldiers.

It is also worth noting that the vast majority of U.S. aid to Israel is spent right here at home, thereby aiding U.S. industry, ensuring good-paying American jobs, and helping to prepare our U.S. military if, God forbid, a larger fight ever comes.

America's investment in Israel doesn't just start and end with technology. Israeli intelligence sharing is second to none and maximizes the likelihood that the American people are kept safe from freedom's bloodthirsty adversaries. And perhaps most importantly, when Israeli soldiers fight terrorists like Hamas and Hezbollah, they are contributing to the safety and wellbeing of every American, because these are not just our shared enemies in theory, they are terrorists who have taken American lives and would do so again if they have the opportunity.

From a purely national security perspective, the return on our investment in Israel stretches from technology to intelligence, and from fighting shared enemies to deterring tomorrow's foes. In short, maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge in the Middle East is in the vital and direct national security interests of the United States of America.

A Light Unto the Nations

Israel's technological know-how is not just limited to the battlefield. In fact, many of the products you use every day incorporate or rely on Israeli innovations. On the IT front, USB drives, instant messenger technology, and the original protection against computer viruses and malware were all developed in Israel. Medically, Israel is responsible for a host of innovations, including a camera pill that helps with gastroenterological diagnoses, a battery pack "exoskeleton" called ReWalk which enables those who suffered spinal injuries to walk again, and a flexible stent which is used to treat coronary artery disease.

Israeli technology is everywhere. We use it in our cars if we use the Waze GPS app and on our farms through micro or drip irrigation. It's no wonder the Jewish state has earned the nickname "the Startup Nation."

In addition, Israel's innovations will go well beyond helping build a better life in industrialized nations. Israel's Watergen, for example, which pulls drinking water out of humidity in the air, along with Israel's highly efficient desalination plants, have the potential to ensure that no person should suffer from a lack of the most important resource on earth: water.

The approach to the world that leads Israelis to often focus on lifesaving technologies and help developing nations is rooted in the ancient Jewish concept of *Tikkun Olam*, which translates to "repairing the world." In Isaiah 49:6 God declares that the children of Israel shall be "a light unto the nations." Israel does this by embodying the spirit of *Tikkun Olam.* And they do so not

just through technology and innovation but also by effectively serving as the world's first responders.

Think of a tragedy in recent memory that grabbed world headlines. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 may come to mind. The 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The 2011 Fukushima disaster. Or perhaps the 2021 Miami-area condo collapse. At every one of these horrible moments, and many more, Israel was among the first to offer and deliver help. When tragedy strikes, the experience of the Israeli Defense Forces in traumatic situations, the tenacity of the nation of Israel, and the heart and soul of the Jewish people are seen clearly by all who are paying attention. Israel is always there — saving lives, providing comfort, and repairing the world.

International Threats Against Israel

Sadly, Israel's contributions to the world mean nothing to her enemies. There are many in this world who hate the Jewish people more than they love life. They do not share our values; in fact, the concepts of life and liberty are anathema to Israel's — and America's — enemies.

Elsewhere in this monograph, you'll be able to read in depth about Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terror, but the antisemitic rage that fuels anti-Israel hatred must be addressed.

Radical Islamic terrorist organizations, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, seek Israel's destruction. At times, they hide behind buzzwords like "resistance" and blame Israel for forcing terrorists to murder innocents. Likewise, the Palestinian Authority (PA) continues to pay stipends and pensions to terrorists and their families in order to incentivize violence against innocent people. The PA, like its brethren at Hamas and elsewhere, seek to justify this "pay-to-slay" program by blaming the victim: Israel.

As Americans, we all have an important responsibility not to be fooled or taken in by the silver-tongues of terrorists or their

apologists. They want to wipe Israel off the face of the earth, and when the Western cameras aren't rolling, they say so, time and again.

Some conscientious and decent people like to believe that virulent antisemitism is limited to the Middle East. It isn't. In recent years we've seen a tide of antisemitism sweep not just across Europe but also here in the United States. Universities have become hotbeds of antisemitic activity. Pro-Israel students associated with Christians United for Israel's campus division, who dare stand alongside their Jewish brothers and sisters in support of Israel have been harassed, bullied, and even attacked on American college campuses.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, acts of antisemitism have reached record highs year after year in the United States. And the consequences, from the Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh to the attack on the synagogue in Poway, California, have at times been deadly. In our own country, our Jewish neighbors are often afraid to walk down the street. This is an abomination.

Modern American antisemitism is the ideological kin of the same hatred that fuels the radicalism and violence of terrorists like Hamas and Hezbollah, and the same repugnance that gave rise to Adolph Hitler's Third Reich.

Sometimes antisemitic attackers wave Palestinian flags, sometimes they dress in khakis and a polo shirt, but no matter under what banner they choose to cloak themselves, they are bigots, they are sinners, and they represent an evil that must be stopped.

Perhaps the most organized antisemitic effort in the United States is the movement to Boycott, Divest from, and Sanction (BDS) Israel. This movement aims to achieve with boycotts what Hamas, Hezbollah and their ilk have failed to achieve with bombs: to destroy the state of Israel.

BDS activists claim they are simply anti-Zionist, not antisemitic. But Zionism is the word that encapsulates the idea that the Jewish people have a right to self-determination. Therefore, anti-Zionism is antisemitism, no matter the fig leaves or polite lexicon the BDS movement employs. BDS must be stopped. That is why, with South Carolina leading the way while Ambassador Nikki Haley served as governor there, more than 30 states have advanced measures that ensure our taxpayer dollars do not subsidize the antisemitic BDS movement.

Finally, we must acknowledge that not even the church is immune to being seduced by the world's oldest hatred. In fact, the threat to the children of Israel that has fueled many of the most abhorrent acts of antisemitism for over a thousand years is the doctrine of Replacement Theology. This is the idea that the church has replaced Israel in the eyes of God. And it is flat out wrong.

God is a promise keeper, not a promise breaker. The promises that He made to Abraham and his descendants remain as true today as they were on the day they were uttered. God has not and never will abandon His people. Anyone who argues otherwise has failed to understand the most basic concept of the Bible: God's word endures forever.

Thus, we end this chapter where we began. As Believers, we acknowledge God's everlasting promise to His Chosen People. We accept the truth of His word. But even for those who don't, even for the secular humanist, or the purely self-interested national security hawk, standing with Israel is right for our country.

As a Believer, I know that should we ever turn our back on Israel, God will turn His back on us. I know that we are blessed through His Chosen People. And as an American, I have witnessed the blessing of blessing Israel and am grateful for it.

Let us resolve, therefore, to support the U.S.-Israel relationship, to stand with our ally in her time of need, and to combat

antisemitism whether it is found in the hallowed halls of Congress or in our own churches. And let us never forget these two simple truths: All who have stood against Israel find themselves on the ash heap of history, and all who have blessed Israel are remembered for their good deeds, on earth and in Heaven.

America’s Afghanistan Catastrophe

By Mike Waltz
Michael Waltz represents Florida's 6th District in the U.S. House of Representatives. He is a member of the Armed Services Committee, a Green Beret veteran of the “war on terror” in Afghanistan, a former White House counterterrorism policy adviser, and the author of the book “Warrior Diplomat: A Green Beret's Battles from Washington to Afghanistan.”

The fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August left an ugly mark on our nation’s history. Some proponents of our withdrawal point to Al Qaeda’s diminished presence in the region and argue that it was time for us to exit America’s longest war. The reality is that America unconditionally surrendered to the terrorists who provided a safe haven to the perpetrators of Sept. 11.

Over the past 20 years, the United States had helped to build a constitutional allied government and developed a counterterrorism strategy that pigeonholed the Taliban and Al Qaeda for at least the last five years. Then, the world watched in real time as America gave it all away.

By breaking our promise to ensure safe passage to the United States for tens of thousands of Afghan allies who served alongside us, we lost enormous credibility with the international community. Our withdrawal also emboldened our regional adversaries and set a human rights catastrophe in motion.

The implications for America’s national security are immediate and serious. Over the course of just a few weeks, a new Taliban caliphate has emerged that has made the world a far more dangerous place. Hopeful terrorists will no doubt find refuge in the militant-controlled country. Current terrorists already have.

The Taliban has formed a unified cabinet that includes major terrorist figures who we sought to target over the last 20 years. Notably, Sirajuddin Haqqani of the Haqqani network is serving as the interior minister of the new Taliban caliphate. According to the Department of National Intelligence, the Haqqani network is "considered the most lethal and sophisticated insurgent group targeting U.S., Coalition and Afghan forces in Afghanistan."[1]

Included in his duties as interior minister will be oversight of who can enter and leave Afghanistan. In addition to carrying out numerous lethal bombings against the United States and our allies over the years, the Haqqani network has also carried out extortion, kidnapping and smuggling operations to finance their operations.

With figures like Sirajuddin Haqqani filling top regime ministerial roles, we can expect terrorist groups like Al Qaeda to resume pre-Sept. 11 operations. In fact, appearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee in September, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Mark Milley testified that there is "a very real possibility" that Al Qaeda and the Islamic State can rebuild under the current conditions in Afghanistan.[2]

The Taliban have yet to disavow Al Qaeda and will have little incentive to do so now that we have withdrawn all U.S. forces.

In the wake of our withdrawal, we've already seen Al Qaeda begin to resurface.

In September, Ayman al-Zawahri, the current leader of Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's former second-in-command, released a video commemorating the 20th anniversary of the group's attacks on the United States. He has sworn allegiance to the current head of the Taliban.[3]

Further, a U.N. report released in June highlighted that a "significant part of Al Qaeda leadership remains based in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan," and "Ayman

Muhammed Rabi al-Zawahiri is believed to be located somewhere in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan."[4]

It should alarm all Americans that those who helped orchestrate the terrorist attacks on 9/11 still linger today. They face little resistance as they look to plan new attacks against the West.

The Biden administration has repeatedly stressed that the United States can maintain "over the horizon" counterterrorism operations that will allow us to carry out airstrikes against resurgent terror groups. But, as we saw in the botched strike in response to ISIS-K's airport attack, that argument is fiction.

There are two factors that undercut the Biden administration's claims: remaining intelligence capabilities and basing options.

In Afghanistan today, we no longer have the robust, on-the-ground intelligence operations that would allow us to coordinate strikes and verify intended targets. In my experience deploying to Afghanistan as a Green Beret, we relied heavily on our Afghan allies to feed us intelligence to confirm targets.

In August, U.S. officials acknowledged that we had lost 90% of the intelligence collection capabilities we used for drone strikes prior to the withdrawal.[5]

When it became apparent that Kabul would fall to the Taliban, Afghan Vice President Amrullah Saleh fled to the Panjshir Valley alongside Taliban resistance leader Ahmad Massoud. However, in the following weeks, the once impregnable valley fell to a crushing combination of Taliban and foreign terrorist forces.

Now, the West is left with few political allies on the ground after abandoning those who remain behind terrorist lines. As the Taliban carries out brutal executions across the country, it should come as no surprise that Afghans are unlikely to risk being killed just to feed us intelligence.

Our ability to project air power has also been severely diminished, leaving America with few options to effectively deter Afghanistan's growing terrorist threat.

Following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011, we watched as terrorist groups like ISIS filled the power vacuum in the region, establishing a caliphate the size of Indiana to inspire attacks across the West and in the United States.

In response, the United States began conducting over the horizon counterterrorism missions and utilizing a small contingent of American troops to cripple ISIS's control over the region.

The success of these missions was dependent on the support of nearby U.S. bases in Turkey, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. However, when it comes to conducting drone strikes in Afghanistan, we do not have the luxury of having this same type of access.

Prior to our Afghanistan withdrawal, the United States failed to secure any basing agreements to carry out drone strikes from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan or any other neighboring country.

According to retired general and former CIA Director David Petraeus, a U.S. drone will likely burn 60% of its fuel just flying to and from Afghanistan, which will severely limit the time available to carry out strikes over the country.[6] To carry out such strikes, we will be forced to fly over hostile nations like Iran and Pakistan or Russian-influenced countries to the north of Afghanistan.

The absence of a U.S. presence in Afghanistan may also contribute to an enormous geopolitical fallout that could spill across the region.

One of the consequences of our withdrawal was the U.S. military's failure to destroy or extract remaining arms, equipment and transportation. These resources have now fallen into the hands of the Taliban.

I fear the provision of these sophisticated arms — night vision goggles, armor and heavy weapons — to terrorist groups will create new fronts of war in the region.

Notably, these weapons will also help Pakistan's standing in the region.

For years, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate has quietly helped the Taliban, even while its national government publicly aligned itself with the United States in hopes of maintaining hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. aid annually.[7]

But, just as the Taliban was beginning its assault on our allies in the Panjshir Valley, Pakistan's intelligence chief Faiz Hameed was spotted in Afghanistan.[8] It's significant that such a high-ranking Pakistani official would travel to Taliban-led Afghanistan so soon after our withdrawal. I'm concerned that the military equipment we left behind will find its way to the contested region of Kashmir, replenishing Pakistani militants waging attacks against Indian forces.

China will also look to capitalize on our withdrawal from Afghanistan and strengthen its ties with the Taliban caliphate.

The Chinese Communist Party no longer fears a threat from the West now that we've left Bagram Air Base, which was just several hundred miles from China's border and their new intercontinental ballistic missile fields.

With nearly $1 trillion in rare earth metals sitting below the ground in Afghanistan, the Chinese will look to the Taliban to increase their leverage over the rare earth market, while turning a blind eye to the Taliban's human rights atrocities.[9] This will have devastating implications for our already damaged supply chains.

Iran and Russia are downright gleeful that the United States has left the region. Iran no longer fears a U.S. attack on its eastern flank, and Russia can solidify its leverage over Uzbekistan and

Tajikistan without U.S. troops along their borders.

The human rights fallout in Afghanistan will also be detrimental for the next generation of women. It represents the worst crisis for women's rights in a generation.

Following Afghanistan's liberation from Taliban rule in 2001, women — who had been repressed for nearly a decade — were given new rights to education, employment and government representation.

The Afghan constitution required a quota for women's representation in Parliament, and, as of this summer, 27% of seats were represented by women — a significant achievement for women's rights in a developing country.

Girls in Afghanistan will now be robbed of the educational opportunities their relatives enjoyed for nearly 20 years.

Under Taliban rule, only boys are allowed to attend school after the sixth grade. As of October, the Taliban remained firm in not allowing Afghan girls to attend high school — a decision which will have enormous ramifications for future economic opportunities and equal rights in the country.[10]

Despite the horrid conditions that will undoubtedly continue to unfold, there are steps the United States can take to alleviate this growing catastrophe.

First, the United States needs to identify basing options to establish sound over the horizon counterterrorism capabilities.

One option to do this is to strengthen our ties with the Indian government.

India currently operates Farkhor Air Base in Tajikistan, which gives us the only reasonable base to conduct effective strikes against terrorist groups. But, Russian pressure on the Tajik government to refuse cooperation is tremendous.

Should the U.S. military need to get to Afghanistan quickly — say, following a terrorist attack orchestrated from within Afghanistan — we will need nearby bases such as India's to help in moving American troops back in.

India is clear-eyed about the threat that looms over their homeland should the billions of dollars of U.S. equipment we left behind flow to Islamist militants in the Kashmir region. One piece of leverage we can deploy is cutting all aid to their adversary Pakistan. We could even consider imposing crippling sanctions on Pakistan.

The United States needs to make clear: Any country that assists a terrorist coup over a constitutionally elected government will face economic ramifications. We badly need to establish deterrence in the region, and we still hold economic leverage over Pakistan.

We also need to assist our allies left on the ground in Afghanistan.

According to the Afghan constitution, the vice president from the legitimate government is the acting president. He chose to fight along with Ahmad Massoud, son of the famed resistance leader. Together they represent formidable allies still on the ground in Afghanistan who are capable of uniting pockets of resistance fighters who want freedom from Taliban rule.

My hope is that Congress will fill the leadership gap left by the Biden administration and force President Joe Biden's hand in confronting the terrorist regime in Afghanistan. Doing so would require Congress to pass funding measures to help provide resources and arms to the pockets of resistance still remaining.

We will also need to provide incentives to Tajikistan — which borders Afghanistan's northeast provinces — to help assist in these efforts. By increasing economic and military aid, the United States could sway the Tajik government into helping the

hundreds of thousands of ethnic Tajiks remaining in Afghanistan escape being brutalized by the Taliban.

Lastly, we cannot turn our backs on the Afghans we abandoned to terrorist rule. To reestablish American credibility, we should refuse to normalize the Taliban's standing within the international community and find ways to assist the civilians who will suffer in the coming months.

This will require Congress to pass legislation that designates the Taliban as a foreign terrorist organization, so that the Biden administration cannot legally release frozen financial assets or provide any aid to the Taliban regime.

All aid should be strictly vetted and given directly to nongovernmental organizations on the ground to prevent any of it from falling into the hands of the Taliban. In corrupt governments and illegitimate regimes, aid is often skimmed by leaders, leaving much less of the aid to be given directly to intended recipients in need.

The situation in Afghanistan is quite dire. The Biden administration's withdrawal set back years of investment in the region — investment that made the world a more stable place.

While the best hope to change the tide in Afghanistan will come from new leadership in our executive branch, for now, the burden will fall on Congress and our global allies to change the course of our self-inflicted catastrophe.

Russia's Challenge Needs a Strong U.S. Response

By Paula J. Dobriansky
Paula Dobriansky is a senior fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs. From 2001 to 2009, she served as the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs.

We are living in a geopolitical environment of expanding competition among great powers. America's principal rivals — China and Russia — pose significant challenges to the United States abroad and, due to today's digital technologies, at home. While many policymakers appropriately see China and the Chinese Communist Party as a considerable long-term threat to our country and to U.S. global leadership, we cannot afford to ignore or underestimate Russia's challenge to American interests and values.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is at the heart of this challenge. Putin is now in his fourth non-consecutive term, having been in power for over two decades. In July 2020, he engineered approval of a constitutional amendment — purportedly with 78% of the vote — that could allow him to serve two additional terms, until 2036. Mr. Putin now looks to remain at Russia's helm indefinitely.

Like many authoritarian leaders in systems with weak rule of law, Putin knows that stepping down could place his future, his fortune and his family (he is divorced, with two adult daughters) at risk. Accordingly, he faces strong pressure to consolidate power and prevent the emergence of political leaders or movements that could threaten his position. These political needs in turn undermine relations with the United States and the West, diplomatically and in other areas. And they encourage reliance

on China's authoritarian leaders for trade, investment and technology to support domestic growth and modernization.

We must closely watch Russia's increasing alignment with China. Politically, economically and militarily, Moscow and Beijing have drawn closer. Russian and Chinese leaders see our efforts to support democratic values as a threat and share a common goal to undermine American influence worldwide. However, Russia is loath to accept status as a junior partner to China. In the long term, this constrains their ties.

Both individually and in its alignment with China, Russia is likely to remain a geopolitical competitor of the United States for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, great power competition with Russia and China is set to become an organizing principle of U.S. foreign and national security policy over the next decade or more.

Despite Russia and China's sharing some common interests, the basis of their geopolitical influence differs. Unlike China, Russia's power is not derived from its economy (the Russian economy is weak and slowing). The foundation for its global role — and its ability to deter the United States — is built on its massive nuclear arsenal. Russia has 1,444 strategic nuclear warheads on 527 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, on submarine-launched ballistic missiles, or available for long-range bombers. Overall, Russia has about 6,400 nuclear warheads, including its strategic warheads, tactical nuclear weapons, and warheads slated for disassembly.[1] By comparison, the United States has an estimated 6,185 warheads, of which 3,800 are in service or stockpiled and 2,385 await dismantlement.[2]

Russia could present an even greater threat in the future. Its military has been developing new weapons systems to defeat or evade U.S. missile defenses and thwart U.S. power projection. These include the Poseidon nuclear torpedo, which Russian sources claim can deliver a massive nuclear warhead underwater to the U.S. East Coast too swiftly for American submarines to

prevent it, as well as the Zircon (sea-launched) and Kinzhal (air-launched) missiles. The fast and highly maneuverable nuclear-capable Kinzhal may have anti-ship capabilities that could endanger U.S. aircraft carriers. It is already operational.

Russia's nuclear deterrence of the United States facilitates Moscow's disruptive and aggressive international behavior, most notably its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, its invasion and occupation of portions of eastern Ukraine, and its ongoing military operations in Syria, which have restored Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's control over most of the country. Putin bragged that Russia's armed forces could have sunk the British destroyer HMS Defender when it transited Crimean waters in June 2021 without putting "the world on the brink of a third world war because those who did this know that they could not win a war like that."[3]

Russian experts support this view. Commenting on the July 2021 released Russia National Security Strategy, Dmitri Trenin, Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, asserted that "There are no illusions in Moscow: adversarial relations with Washington are here to stay." Moreover, he maintained that "Russia's international status does not rest on the fact of holding periodic one-on-one meetings with an American president, but rather on the ability to reliably deter U.S. military power and on being resilient to mounting U.S. economic, financial and political pressure in the form of various restrictions."

Importantly, Russia's seizure of Crimea reinforces its ability to operate in Syria and to exercise influence throughout the Middle East. Stationed in Crimea, Russia's Bastion anti-ship missile system and its Oniks missiles — with a 300-mile range — can reach most of the Black Sea, helping to secure Russian naval access to the Mediterranean region. Russia is expanding its navy base at the Syrian port of Tartus and planning to construct a floating dock to bolster the port's ship repair facilities that can support an ongoing Russian naval presence in the Mediterranean, something absent since the Soviet era. Moscow is negotiating an agreement with Sudan allowing access to port facilities in the

Red Sea that could provide a launching pad to the Indian Ocean. Its presence in the Middle East has benefited Iran, especially in Syria, where it shields Iranian forces operating there.

Moscow holds that it is entitled to pursue "legitimate interests" in what it calls its "near abroad" — neighboring countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union or the pre-revolutionary Czarist empire — and to thwart their integration into Western institutions like NATO and the European Union. Toward this end, Russia's government has used a variety of legal and illegal means to assert control, ranging from diplomatic and economic pressure to subversion to outright use of military force. In a July 12, 2021, article, Putin openly questioned the legitimacy of Ukraine's borders, stating that "modern Ukraine is entirely the product of the Soviet era…on the lands of historical Russia." Continuing, he claimed that "Russia was robbed" and declared, "I am becoming more and more convinced: Kyiv simply does not need Donbas." In the *Kyiv Post,* Anders Aslund, a Senior Fellow at the Stockholm Free World Forum, appropriately cast the article as "a masterclass in disinformation" and "one step short of a declaration of war."

Regardless of what Putin thinks about Ukraine's history, today neither Ukraine's government nor its people want their country somehow to reintegrate into Russia or to become the latter's client state. On the contrary, most in Ukraine see its future in integration into Western society and Western political and economic institutions. In a Foreign Affairs article entitled "Ukraine is Part of the West," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba argued that "Ukraine's membership in NATO and the EU will not just reinforce progress in Ukraine, it will also help unify the West."

Looking beyond Russia's continuing efforts to exert influence in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East, Moscow is also likely to continue undermining U.S. national security interests and working to weaken allied and friendly democratic political systems in other key regions. In Europe, Latin America and Africa, Russia has used proxies, economic instruments,

disinformation campaigns, election interference, corrupt relationships, energy resources and soft power to subvert both fragile and well-established democratic governments and to foster instability and policy paralysis.

In Europe, Russia's leaders have worked to fragment our alliances through economic ties and political interference, as well as through other means. Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline — to carry natural gas under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany — has already provoked considerable tension in U.S.-German relations and will strengthen connections between Russia's state-dominated gas producer Gazprom and its European partners in the project. Russia sought unsuccessfully to interfere in France's presidential election in 2017 and has used various means, including disinformation campaigns, to build its influence in the Balkans.

In Latin America, Russia has dispatched military specialists to Venezuela, to which it has also shipped over $4 billion worth of weapons over the last 10 years. It helped Venezuela's discredited President Nicolas Maduro to remain in power amid repression and protests. Russia's government continues to serve as a patron and protector of Cuba's dictatorial regime as well.

Moscow's use of online disinformation is especially visible in Latin America, where it has used social media to trigger massive anti-government demonstrations in Chile, Ecuador and Colombia. This digital assault on democracy is most concerning, and the United States must focus on how to successfully counter these attacks in our backyard — and, of course, in America itself, where Moscow is also seeking to foment discord and to exacerbate social and political tension.

The Arctic is increasingly becoming an arena for competition too. Russia asserts territorial claims there and has significantly militarized the region, reanimating old Soviet bases and building new ones, including Arctic Trefoil on Franz Josef Land, a remote island. Moscow is protecting these and other bases with advanced air defense systems and anti-ship missile batteries.

And it operates the world's largest icebreaker fleet, providing Russia's navy with unrivaled access to the Arctic Ocean. Most noteworthy, Russia's formal Arctic policy has moved from embracing "mutually beneficial international cooperation" to "ensuring the interests of the Russian Federation." Indeed, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has asserted, "We hear whining about Russia expanding its military activities in the Arctic....But everyone knows that it's our territory, our land." In view of this Russian perspective, establishing a full-fledged NATO Arctic Command deserves serious consideration.

If the United States fails to address the threats and challenges that Russia presents, our security and prosperity — and even our society and our democracy — will suffer, as will those of our allies. Confronting these dangers requires preserving and strengthening not only our global leadership role and our strong alliances, but also building a society that others will want to emulate and thereby demonstrating the superiority of America's fundamental idea and its core values.

Prevailing in an extended competition with Russia and China will require articulating a strong moral narrative, maintaining a robust and credible defense posture, using our alliances and partnerships more effectively in support of common positions, aligning ourselves with like-minded countries, ensuring a strong U.S. economy, shoring up our cyber capability and resilience, and investing in both a civic culture and technologies that can resist and counter Russian disinformation.

Cutting Through the Iranian Fog

By David Friedman
David Friedman served as the U.S. ambassador to Israel from 2017 to 2021.

When I practiced law, I tried to protect my clients as best I could when embarking on a new case. At times, the other party was highly reputable and unlikely to violate any agreement. In those circumstances, I carefully worked through the issues but was comfortable not addressing every eventuality based on an underlying assumption of good faith by the parties. In other circumstances, the counterparty was plainly dishonest and not entitled to the benefit of any doubt. In those cases, I worked overtime to anticipate — and resolve up front with iron-clad and verifiable assurances — every issue that might arise, making sure that my client would never be required to rely solely on trust.

Iran most definitely falls into the latter category — that of a dishonest counterparty. It is a brutal autocratic regime and the world's most lethal state sponsor of radical Islamic terrorism. From Yemen to Iraq, from Syria to Lebanon and beyond, Iran's fingerprints are present in almost every instance of human suffering and conflict. Iran makes no serious effort to conceal its malign activity, and its rhetoric is replete with threats to attack the United States and to annihilate the Jewish state of Israel.

Any deal with Iran designed to end these abhorrent practices must be structured to accommodate the reality that Iran lies, cheats and misleads. Such a deal can leave nothing to trust or aspirations of good will. And it must not concede the benefit of the doubt. While a deal that clears these bars might be possible one day, its prospects have been significantly reduced in the short term owing to the approach of President Joe Biden and the Obama administration before him.

The roots of distrust between America and Iran go back many decades — most significantly to the Iranian Revolution. In 1979, a radical cleric took power as Iran's supreme leader and began his tyrannical reign. That same year, a group of Islamic militants seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took 52 of our American citizens hostage. The United States cut ties with Tehran in response. We stopped importing Iranian goods and froze national assets — the first steps in a decadeslong campaign to inflict economic pain on the mullahs.

U.S. sanctions increased over time as the regime's deadly influence spread through the Middle East and beyond. In 1983, Iranian-backed terrorists killed 243 American service members in a horrific bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. It was the deadliest day for our military since the Vietnam War, and it remained so until the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Several months later, the Reagan administration took the critical step of officially declaring the Islamic Republic of Iran a terrorist state.

Successive U.S. presidents further tightened the screws on Iran. Yet, despite incurring penalties, the regime remained undeterred. Iran continued to enrich uranium in aid of developing a nuclear weapon, increase its arsenal of ballistic weapons, foment terrorism across the Middle East, and amplify its hateful rhetoric. All were in service of its ultimate aims: to dominate the region with its brand of Islamic fundamentalism, destroy the Jewish state of Israel, and harm America.

By the time President Barack Obama entered office in 2009, Iran had been weakened significantly. Its economy was on its heels, and its leaders were prepared to come to the negotiating table. In short, the U.S. strategy worked.

But during his second term, Obama squandered America's leverage, signing a deal doomed to failure from the very start. While the Obama administration accurately and appropriately recognized the Iranian threat, its resolution for addressing it was deeply flawed. They incorrectly assumed the deal was the only

alternative to war with Iran and falsely presented it as the key to ending Iran's nuclear program — a goal Republicans and Democrats alike shared.

The deal with Iran, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was the brainchild of the "P5+1" nations made up of the United States, France, Germany, Russia, England and China. In short, the deal was intended to slow down the Iranian nuclear weapons program in exchange for international sanctions relief.

Almost immediately after the group announced the JCPOA, Iran received massive relief from crippling economic sanctions and even welcomed a large airlift of U.S. currency. While the value to Iran was front-loaded, the benefits to the other participants were dubious at best: weak restrictions on Iran's nuclear capabilities and insufficient monitoring reliant on the comical premise that Iran would make good on its promises.

Unsurprisingly, Congress didn't like the JCPOA. The House voted to block the deal, although it lacked the power to do so. In the Senate, only 41 members voted to approve it. But pursuant to a misguided agreement reached between the Obama administration and then-chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Robert Corker, R-T.N., only 34 senators were required to support the JCPOA for it to pass.[1]

While Republicans in Congress near universally opposed the JCPOA, numerous congressional Democrats were also openly against it. They included now-Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., now the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Criticizing the pending agreement, Menendez said: "We have now abandoned our long-held policy of preventing nuclear proliferation and we are now embarked — not on preventing nuclear proliferation — but on managing or containing it, which leaves us with a far less desirable, less secure and less certain world order."

In attempting to rally support for an unpopular agreement, the Obama administration's arguments in favor of the JCPOA were two-fold. The first was based on the terms of the deal itself. JCPOA proponents argued that the agreement prohibited Iran from developing a nuclear weapon for at least 15 years, a meaningful concession. The second argument was aspirational: that once Iran was welcomed into the community of nations and its isolation ended, the regime would self-modulate its malign behavior.

Both arguments were without merit. On the deal itself, the JCPOA gave Iran ample opportunities to cheat. It closed an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigation into Iran's nuclear weaponization efforts, accepting instead a naked — and false — representation that Iran had never intended to develop a nuclear weapon. Unsurprisingly, Israel later penetrated Iran's secret nuclear archive and proved conclusively that Iran intentionally misled the IAEA on this front.

Additionally, the deal permitted Iran to declare certain sites off-limits from inspections as well as the right to delay certain inspections for up to 24 days. And the 10-15 year "sunset provisions" on Iran's nuclearization meant that Iran's breakout period to a bomb once that time lapsed was down to almost zero.

The JCPOA aided, rather than deterred, Iran's accumulation of ballistic missiles and its sponsorship of terrorism. The agreement lifted an embargo limiting Iran's ability to import and export arms and ballistic missiles and included weak language that enabled Iran to skirt other restrictions. In the short term, this oversight was one of the JCPOA's biggest and most dangerous flaws.

On the aspirational front — the wishful thinking that Iran would self-modulate — the deal was an even bigger failure. Flush with newly acquired cash from the sanctions relief, Iran didn't build hospitals and schools for its people. Instead, it invested even more heavily in arming terrorist militias across the region. And

the mantras of “Death to America” and “Death to Israel” were heard as loudly as ever.

The Trump administration was clear-eyed about the failings of the JCPOA. In May 2018, it withdrew the United States from the deal and reimposed sanctions, launching a “maximum pressure campaign” to deprive Iran’s leaders of funding.

Together with our allies, the United States also engaged in both covert and overt activities to slow Iran’s march to a nuclear weapon, including the killing of Qasem Suleimani. As the commander of the Quds Force — a secretive and deadly branch of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard — Suleimani was responsible for supporting terrorism and killing American soldiers across the Middle East. The result was a massively weakened, but still extremely dangerous, Islamic Republic of Iran.

In response to President Donald Trump’s campaign of strength, Iran had a single strategy: sit, wait and pray that Biden would defeat Trump. It gambled and won. Instead of maximum pressure, Iran now faced a leader of the free world desperate to overturn the Trump administration’s Iran policy and revitalize the JCPOA.

In his short time in office, Biden has played directly into Iran’s hands. Already, his administration has reportedly agreed to lift sanctions in exchange for Iran’s return to the nuclear deal. And they have made an embarrassing display of offering for the United States to return to full compliance. This concession comes despite recent transgressions by Iran, including harassment of IAEA inspectors and frequent refusals of the IAEA’s requests to monitor Iranian nuclear sites.

The Iranian regime is evil but not stupid. Faced with this fortuitous turn of events, it’s further strengthened its hand by recently orchestrating the election of extreme hard-liner Ebrahim Raisi — the perpetrator of an extrajudicial massacre of thousands of political prisoners — to the Iranian presidency.

The ayatollahs are unsurprisingly thumbing their noses at the Biden administration and rejecting Biden's outstretched hand. Iran has made it clear that it is unwilling to return to the provisions of the already overly generous 2015 deal, much less the "longer and stronger" agreement that the Biden administration is futilely pursuing. Instead, Iran has used the stalled negotiations to aggressively enrich uranium, bringing it perilously close to acquiring sufficient nuclear material for a bomb.

While the situation may be perilous, there is still time to regain our sanity and international standing. The inflection point is upon us, and the appropriate response is exceedingly straightforward; Iran is an evil empire that respects only strength.

While Biden's greatest fear is adopting any policy endorsed by Trump (look no further than his border strategy), here he will only gain a viable negotiating position by returning to Trump's maximum pressure campaign. Biden should further sanction the nefarious regime and draw clear red lines to discourage further provocations. His continuation of the failed Obama administration policy of capitulation will only lead to greater danger and instability in the Middle East and around the world.

The Persian people have an amazing history. Until 1979, the modern country of Iran was a mostly constructive actor in regional affairs. It can be again. Sadly, for 42 years, the Iranian people have been held hostage by religious fanatics. This criminal regime has betrayed its own people by failing to observe even the most basic of their human rights and fomented anti-Muslim, anti-Jewish, anti-Christian and anti-American terrorism throughout the Middle East and beyond. It is, quite simply, not a partner in whom we can place any trust. We must deal with it from a position of strength.

American Leadership is Required in International Organizations

By Brett D. Schaefer
Brett D. Schaefer has researched and written on the United Nations and other international organizations for over 20 years. He currently serves as the Jay Kingham Senior Fellow in International Regulatory Affairs at the Heritage Foundation and was appointed by the U.N. General Assembly in 2018 to serve on the U.N. Committee on Contributions, which advises the General Assembly.

America has had an evolving relationship with the United Nations and the organizations that mushroomed up around it in the decades since World War II. After the war, the United States found itself the preeminent military and economic power and decided to support the creation of the United Nations to facilitate America's efforts to prevent another world war, promote human rights and freedoms, and foster deeper economic relationships to bolster the post-war recovery.

As both the main financier of the U.N. system and its most influential member, the United States was able to focus the organization on its founding principles and garner support for policies and positions it favored. But as membership grew to include less democratic countries and newly formed nations with different priorities, America increasingly found itself in the minority. Odious actions like the adoption of Resolution 3379 determining that "Zionism is a form of racism," mismanagement, and growing budgets soon made clear that the United Nations had veered off its original course: to develop friendly relations among nations; to suppress acts of aggression; to settle international disputes; and to encourage respect for human rights, self-determination, and fundamental freedoms.[1]

Today, too few nations and groups value the original purposes and principles of the United Nations. Instead, powerful countries like China and others wish to reshape international organizations and the international system to better fit their vision.

Pushing back against these attempts and ensuring that the United Nations and other international organizations do more good than harm requires strong American leadership. That doesn't mean avoiding hurt feelings and subordinating U.S. interests to those of other nations or the "international community." Nor does it mean causing needless discord or disregarding the concerns of other governments, particularly those that share our goals and values.

Leadership requires understanding America's interests, rallying support from other governments who share them, focusing scarce resources on the international organizations essential to protecting those interests, and using the tools available to promote them.

How Did the United Nations Get Off Track?

Former U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles observed, "The United Nations was not set up to be a reformatory. It was assumed that you would be good before you got in and not that being in would make you good." The organization's founding document, the U.N. Charter, makes clear that members must pledge to uphold the U.N.'s purposes and principles. Those that violate them can be expelled.[2]

However, from the start, the United Nations abandoned any pretense that prospective members should demonstrate a commitment to its founding principles, instead admitting members such as the Soviet Union and South Africa that embraced polices diametrically opposed to them. Standards after admission were not much higher. Rhetorical condemnations and sanctions were not unusual, but the ultimate punitive action — expelling a member state — was never taken.

In the early years, when most member states were democratic, America faced less opposition to its efforts to advance the principles in the Charter. That changed in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, when membership nearly tripled to 152 nations. Newer members, particularly newly independent former colonies, cared less about civil and political rights and were often suspicious of Western governments. They also tended to vote in ideological or regional blocs heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. As a result, over time, America was increasingly in the minority. From 1946 to 1979, voting coincidence with the United States in the U.N. General Assembly averaged 68.2%. Since 1980, it has averaged 34.4%.[3]

A similar dynamic has played out in the U.N. Security Council, the most powerful body in the United Nations. Each of the five permanent members can cast a veto to block resolutions even if every other member of the Security Council supports the action.[4] In the first couple of decades of the United Nations, the United States was able to drive the agenda in the Security Council, forcing the Soviet Union into the role of spoiler. Specifically, the Soviet Union cast 107 vetoes from 1946 to 1969.[5] During that same time span, other countries used the veto only eight times.[6] The United States did not cast a veto in the Security Council until 1970. Since then, however, we have cast 83 vetoes — far more than any other permanent member.[7]

The U.S.'s growing dissimilarities and disagreements with its fellow U.N. members have manifested in harmful policies. These include sharp increases in the U.N. budget for activities of dubious merit or to support hostile political agendas, held in check only when the United States has threatened to withhold funding and, later, through an agreement to adopt the budget only by consensus (an agreement subsequently violated).[8] Another consequence has been resistance to U.S.-proposed reforms to increase transparency and effectiveness, reduce waste, and punish misconduct and corruption.

This split has also led to the deliberate abuse and undercutting of the U.N.'s. human rights mechanisms, which manifests most

acutely through the U.N. Human Rights Council's resolutions that focus disproportionately on Israel while failing to confront human rights atrocities like China's treatment of the Uyghurs.[9] Our friend and ally Israel has also suffered from efforts to condemn and attack it in both the General Assembly and the Security Council.

In contrast to John Foster Dulles' quote above, today's U.N. proponents *do* view the organization as a reformatory. They downplay the obvious flaw of counting repressive governments as U.N. members by arguing that participating and interacting with those members will cajole improvements.

It is through this lens that the Human Rights Council, a body mandated to promote human rights, sees no problem in welcoming the world's worst human rights violators into its ranks. Astonishingly, some claim it gives "the council legitimacy when speaking out on human rights violations in all countries."[10] The council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which routinely involves governments making claims and promises belied by reality, is defended as a "process" for improving human rights through reports, dialogue and procedure. Never mind the fact that the United States has received more "recommendations" under the UPR than any other nation, surpassing China, Cuba, Iran and Russia.

With a majority of members neither politically nor economically free, it should come as no surprise that even the U.N.'s positive actions are tainted by politics and bureaucratic corruption, whether that be yielding to Chinese pressure on the World Health Organization (WHO) during the COVID-19 pandemic, heaping disproportionate condemnation on Israel, or failing to take responsibility for the cholera outbreak introduced into Haiti by U.N. peacekeepers. Conflicting interests and values among nations frequently undermine collective action to address international peace and security, advance human rights and alleviate poverty.

Inconsistent Approaches

Attempts to shape the United Nations to better fulfill its mandates and U.S. expectations have swung between two opposing approaches.

One approach regards multilateral action as only one of several viable options and sees U.S. pressure and financial leverage as a legitimate tool to force change. The goal is not to undermine the United Nations or to undercut its useful work. Instead, it is to oppose policies and positions adverse to U.S. interests and to ensure U.S. taxpayer dollars are not squandered.

Although this approach was broadly used historically, in recent decades it has been increasingly used by the right. No U.S. administration embraced this strategy more than President Donald Trump. Under the Trump administration, the United States formally withdrew from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2019 (after accruing over $500 million in arrears) because U.S. law prohibited funding after the organization granted full membership to the Palestinians in 2011.[11] President Trump also withdrew the United States from several international agreements, including the Paris climate accord. While these decisions did not change UNESCO behavior or the treaties, they did extricate the United States from circumstances deemed harmful to American interests. In other cases, Trump's pressure tactics resulted in useful reforms, such as the threat of withdrawal from the Universal Postal Union, which led to renegotiation of reimbursement rates for high-volume developing countries like China that were exploiting subsidized shipping rules. [12]

The second approach, the one currently embraced by today's left, is accommodation. Owing to concerns that pressure tactics might impede the work of these organizations or alienate potential allies, this approach seeks to advance U.S. priorities in international organizations solely through diplomatic engagement — or more often, capitulation. An idealistic yet

naïve view, this "all carrot, no stick" strategy is better suited to the Model United Nations than the real world.

Yet President Joe Biden has fully embraced it. Among his administration's first actions were to restore U.S. funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), reverse Trump's decisions to withdraw from the World Health Organization and disengage from the Human Rights Council, recommit to the Paris agreement on climate change, and pledge to pay U.S. arrears to the United Nations accrued under his predecessor. The Biden administration deliberately chose not to link reengagement or restoration of funds to any specific organizational improvements.[13] The theory is that such actions will generate goodwill that, aided by diplomacy, will translate into support for reforms.

Biden's approach ignores that other governments have their own priorities at the United Nations. Sometimes they coincide with U.S. priorities, but often they do not. They are not moved by aspirational appeals to their better natures or abstract benefits of the "rules-based international order." They make decisions based off their perceived interests.

Unsurprisingly, Biden's reengagement and financial support garnered statements of appreciation from other governments but little tangible progress. Reforms to eliminate anti-Israel bias and establish stronger membership standards in the Human Rights Council, force China to cooperate with an investigation into the origins of COVID-19, and require independent oversight of UNRWA were left by the wayside.[14] An American administration that shies away from confrontation and instead relies solely on diplomacy may achieve small changes, but it rarely succeeds in reshaping international organizations.[15]

Leveraging Multilateral Engagement

As disappointing and frustrating as it can be to work through the United Nations and other international organizations, America

has too many interests abroad to pull back. It must strongly defend its political, strategic and economic concerns.

Our position as one of five veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council gives the United States considerable influence that we must use to our advantage. With our veto, the United States can single-handedly block Security Council actions deemed detrimental to U.S. interests as well as positively influence its resolutions. The veto also allows the United States to shape U.N. peacekeeping operations to better meet their mandates and improve discipline and accountability or else risk dissolution.

Similarly, the United States wields considerable influence as the largest financial contributor to the United Nations and its subsidiaries. In 2019, the United States contributed nearly 27% of all U.N. system revenues from governments.[16] The runner-up — Germany at 9.65% — was not even close. China, which increasingly shapes the agenda in the United Nations, contributed only 4.14% — one-sixth the level of U.S. funding. In fact, the United States in 2019 contributed more than the combined contributions of 182 of the 193 U.N. member states.

These huge financial contributions give the United States important leverage to force reform, as we have done for decades.[17] When we do withhold funds, however, we should do so in good faith and clearly link our actions to specific goals. Otherwise, other governments do not know what needs to be done to satisfy U.S. discontent.

Moreover, the United States cannot be everywhere and do everything with equal vigor — at least not if it wants to assert influence effectively. Not every international organization is critical, or even important, to our interests. The United States should conduct a regular evaluation of the costs and benefits of membership in international organizations and use this analysis to increase support where our interests are served while reducing funding where they are not. Critically flawed organizations that cannot be reformed should not benefit from the legitimacy of

U.S. membership and U.S. taxpayer dollars. We should also exit organizations with little relevance to American interests.[18]

At times, the United States may also need to engage bilaterally to make progress multilaterally. China has made inroads in international organizations through its bilateral engagement and economic incentives through its "Belt and Road Initiative." If it is to counter Chinese influence, the United States needs to make sure that other governments know that their U.N. votes can affect our bilateral relationship.

Additionally, the United States should court unlikely allies and partner with them on single interests if it wants to succeed in the majoritarian environment of international organizations. Within the U.N. system, there is a strong tendency to vote in blocs. On issues that are important to it, the United States needs to consciously fracture these groups through diplomatic engagement, financial enticement and appeals to self-interest. The United States will lack allies unless governments begin to act more individually.

Finally, the United States must be more consistent. Changes in Congress and the White House often bring wholesale reversals in policy. When organizations and other governments know they can wait out our policies, it dramatically undermines America's leverage.

Conclusion

The United States was instrumental in establishing the United Nations and shares its founding values of peace and security, human rights, and freedom for all people. Although these principles are too often ignored or willfully violated by U.N. bodies and members, they remain admirable and worthy of pursuit.

But America cannot be wedded to multilateral approaches. The United States should not undermine its interests and must not adopt a default position of supporting and engaging with

international organizations and agreements regardless of their performance or contribution to the country's interests.

International organizations and treaties are tools, not ends in themselves. If the tool works, then we should utilize it. If the tool can work but is flawed or damaged, then we should seek to repair it using pressure, diplomacy or incentives. If the tool is broken or unsuited to the task, then the United States should not be shy about abandoning or replacing it. Such a decision is not yielding the field to other nations; it's choosing not to lend U.S. legitimacy and support to a counterproductive or harmful institution.

American leadership can be decisive in improving the performance of international organizations and advancing U.S. goals through them. If the United States is to succeed, it must be willing to work through international organizations to address genuinely shared concerns. But it must not hesitate to use the tools available to it, including withholding its financial support, to bolster its efforts to reform these organizations and advance U.S. interests.

Notes

Biden's Border Crisis

1. US Border Patrol Del Rio Sector, "Since Oct 1, DRT agenda have arrested undocumented migrants from 92 countries, far more than past years. We remain in regular communication with community leaders and law enforcement," Facebook, August 31, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=372223214504081&id=107305694329169.

2. Todd Bensman, "'Got-Aways' at the Border: Why the Mass Migration Crisis is More Severe than Official Reporting Suggests," May 3, 2021, https://cis.org/Bensman/GotAways-Border.

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For instance, when informing the HRC of the decision to reengage with and seek election to the Council, Secretary Blinken noted, "As the United States reengages, we urge the Human Rights Council to look at how it conducts its business. That includes its disproportionate focus on Israel. We need to eliminate Agenda Item 7 and treat the human rights situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories the same way as this body handles any other country. In addition, we will focus on ensuring that the Council membership reflects high standards for upholding human rights. Those with the worst human rights records should not be members of this Council. We must work together to improve the work and membership of the Council so it can do even more to advance the rights of people around the world." No progress on this reform agenda has been reported.

15. An exception is when scandals, such as the corrupt Iraqi Oil-for-Food program, come to light and expose failings to public scrutiny. In such situations, the pressure to adopt reforms can lead to significant changes.

16. "Revenue by Government Donor and by Financing Instrument," UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, accessed September 3, 2021, https://unsceb.org/fs-revenue-government-donor.

17. Brett D. Schaefer, *Challenges and Opportunities for Advancing U.S. Interests in the United Nations System* (Washington, D.C.: Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy, Committee on Foreign Relations in the U.S. Senate, 2019) accessed September 3, 2021, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/112019_Schaefer_Testimony.pdf.

18. For instance, the Clinton Administration decided to withdraw from the World Tourism Organization and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization on the basis that they, respectively, provided poor value for money and were unable to "define its purpose and function very well." More recently, the Trump Administration withdrew from the International Coffee Organization in 2018 after concluding that U.S. stakeholders can represent their interests without the U.S. government. See Schaefer, "Challenges and Opportunities for Advancing U.S. Interests in the United Nations System."