# U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

REPORT ON REPORTS
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded Americans that the world is interconnected and what happens overseas can land on kitchen tables at home in a matter of hours. Upending an already turbulent political and global landscape, American's health and economic security have been impacted like never before while the deadly virus has killed nearly 2.5 million people and pushed record numbers of people into poverty and famine around the world.

The Biden Administration and 117<sup>th</sup> Congress took office with a host of global challenges in their foreign policy "inbox," many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 global pandemic, with consequences for Americans' health, economic, and national security. Even with the development of promising vaccines, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme David Beasley warned that "our hardest work is yet to come."

As it has done every four years dating back to the 2008 presidential election, the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC) reviewed more than 100 reports from leading think tanks and policy institutes across the political spectrum with recommendations for the Administration and Congress on foreign policy and national security. USGLC's "Report on Reports" synthesizes these reports, looking for areas of consensus in the hopes American policymakers can find common ground.

This year's report – USGLC's largest analysis of policy recommendations – found a wide range of views on America's role in the world. And we found common ground – a clear consensus for using diplomacy and development to tackle six global challenges that are critical to America's health, security and economic interests.

#### The six challenges are:

- Fighting the global COVID-19 pandemic
- Addressing growing global economic competition
- Mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Defending against rising authoritarianism
- Responding to global humanitarian crises
- Influencing global alliances and partnerships

#### A ROADMAP FORWARD

President Biden entered office with a commitment to meet "today's and tomorrow's challenges" and make America "the leading force of good in the world," promising to ensure "the needs of working Americans are front and center in our national security policymaking." To do so, he will need to work with a narrowly-divided Congress and a polarized nation.

In the last decade, over 50 bills have been passed by Congress with strong bipartisan support across a range of issues – strengthening global health security, empowering women and girls, fighting human trafficking, promoting clean water and food security, elevating development finance, building resilience in fragile states, and enhancing transparency and accountability in foreign assistance.

Despite this bipartisan legacy, finding enduring solutions may not be simple. For example, efforts to strengthen pandemic preparedness have often failed once the spread of a disease is controlled. And resolving the long-standing political conflicts driving humanitarian crises will not be easy when these conflicts are driven by powerful countries outside their borders.

The urgency of the moment to ensure America's health and economic COVID-19 recovery, as well as the imperative to never let this happen again, calls policymakers to action. This roadmap provides policymakers with a starting point on how to protect and to promote American interests – and it begins with elevating the nation's development and diplomacy tools.

# FIGHTING THE **COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Even with the development of promising vaccines, new variants of COVID-19 are continuing to spread, and Americans will not be safe, and our economy will not fully recover, until the virus is under control around the world. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres observed in late February 2021 that 10 countries had administered 75% of all vaccines while 130 countries had not administered a single dose. According to the International Chamber of Commerce, failing to ensure an equitable global distribution of a vaccine could cost the global economy \$9 trillion as secondary effects to routine health treatments and immunizations will devastate vulnerable populations.

Reports from think tanks including the Atlantic Council, Bipartisan Policy Center, Brookings, Center for American Progress (CAP), Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), Global Health Council, Heritage, Rand, and Wilson Center reflected different approaches to the challenge. Some reports focused on investigating China's role in the COVID-19 outbreak, while others called for reforming America's global health programs by moving PEPFAR into USAID with other global health programs. Yet our analysis also found widespread consensus in reports from across the political spectrum on the need to ensure stronger pandemic preparedness, review multilateral efforts to fight the pandemic—including reforming institutions like the WHO—and improve coordination across the U.S. global health policymaking process. There was also broad consensus in many reports on the need to strengthen local health systems in the developing world and ensure equitable distribution of a vaccine.



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STRENGTHEN U.S. PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS. Many reports across the political spectrum called on the United States to restore and strengthen U.S. pandemic preparedness and global health security ahead of the next pandemic. Recommendations included:

- Restore leadership at the White House by reestablishing NSC Global Health Security and Biodefense Directorate.
- Revamp assessments of national preparedness and pair them with strategies to promote readiness and implementation.
- Commit to full and sustained multi-year funding for the Global Health Security Agenda to build capacity of partners around the world.

REFORM MULTILATERAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT GLOBAL PANDEMICS. There was widespread consensus in reports across the political spectrum on the need for the United States to review and reform multilateral efforts to prevent global pandemics, although there were differences in whether the United States should make its decision on rejoining conditional on prior reforms. Recommendations included:

- Encourage norms of transparency, cooperation, and accountability to make the World Health Organization (WHO) better able to address current and future health crises.
- Restructure WHO financing to concentrate on communicable diseases and responding to international health emergencies.
- Work with WHO and with other nations to assess pandemic preparedness capacity and ensure full implementation of mitigation guidelines and preparation for pandemic response.
- Create a new Global Health Security Challenge Fund to incentivize other countries to prioritize preparedness in their national budgets and marshal resources from public and private sectors to tackle challenges.

ENSURE GLOBAL EQUITABLE VACCINE DISTRIBUTION. Many reports called for the United States to participate in efforts to ensure the equitable distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine globally. Recommendations included:

- Participate in COVAX, the multilateral coalition committed to ensuring equitable global distribution by creating market incentives to rapidly mass produce vaccines and avoid a significant lag between vaccine development and global distribution.
- Develop enforceable frameworks for vaccine development and distribution, managed by established international forums, to encourage equitable sharing of vaccines.
- Support multilateral mechanisms to manufacture, allocate, and deliver COVID-19 vaccines in a globally fair manner consistent with public health needs.

IMPROVE COORDINATION ACROSS U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH PROCESS. Many reports called for more effective coordination across U.S. agencies and departments involved in global health. Recommendations included:

- Create a comprehensive U.S. government development strategy across all relevant agencies that encompasses physical and mental health and well-being of populations, protection of vulnerable groups, and economic advancement, as well as joint measurement indicators and outcomes that cut across health and development sectors.
- Place responsibility for all global health programs and funding at USAID, acknowledging its broad development and health planning and implementation, and clearly define the health diplomacy role of the State Department.

 Prioritize coordination with local public health officials within relevant embassies to develop an early warning system in the event of an outbreak of infectious disease.

## INCREASE INVESTMENTS IN STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. Many reports put

forth recommendations to invest in strengthening health systems in lowand lower-middle income countries, prioritizing innovative partnerships with national governments, the private sector, and civil society groups. Recommendations included:

- Strengthen the delivery of critical health services for women and girls in pandemic-affected settings with a focus on immunizations, genderbased violence, and maternal health.
- Provide additional funding to USAID to support programs affected by COVID-19 including the President's Malaria Initiative, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) programs, and programs that work to improve detection, prevention, and response to zoonotic disease threats.
- Support Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and collaborations with other nations on domestic immunization programs, health ministry cooperation, expanded civil society involvement in immunizations, and improved binational and transnational communication.
- Leverage the U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to unlock additional sources of capital for joint investments in health and development across sectors that improve physical and social health outcomes and stimulate economic growth.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

While there is agreement on the urgency for the United States to combat COVID-19 globally, ensuring equitable distribution of a vaccine has proven challenging when countries are focused on vaccinating their own citizens first. Longer-term solutions in global health security have also proven difficult in the past because of competing challenges once the health crisis has abated. Once the immediate crisis passes, the focus on pandemic preparedness will need to remain a priority, as there is broad agreement that COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic the world faces.



# **ADDRESSING GROWING GLOBAL ECONOMIC** COMPETITION

Even prior to the economic downturn from the COVID-19 pandemic, there was widespread agreement on the challenge of growing global economic competition from countries like China, which launched its global Belt Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 and new trade agreements with the European Union and with 15 countries in the Asia Pacific in 2020. Past Democratic and Republican Administrations have called for strengthening America's economic statecraft to advance U.S. economic interests around the world, catalyzing investments in overseas markets that support jobs at home and partnering with businesses to tackle global challenges at scale. With 95% of the world's consumers living outside the United States, international markets are critical opportunities for America's businesses and workers.

Reports from think tanks including the Atlantic Council, Brookings, CAP, CSIS, Heritage, and Stimson reflected different approaches to the challenge of global economic competition. Some reports focused on encouraging allies to challenge China at the World Trade Organization (WTO), while others called for creating a new Entrepreneurial and Commercial Service Corps. Yet our analysis also found widespread consensus in reports from across the political spectrum on maximizing the impact of the Development Finance Corporation (DFC), bolstering diplomatic capacity to promote U.S. trade and investment, renewing international efforts to counter China's global economic influence, and doubling down on Africa as a key economic opportunity.



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MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF THE U.S. DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION. There was widespread consensus in reports from across the political spectrum that the U.S. must do more to leverage the DFC as part of a whole-of-government approach to promoting economic competition by strengthening the financing tools that can facilitate investment in low-income, lower-middle income, and fragile states grappling with the economic impact of COVID-19. Recommendations included:

- Mandate that development priorities take precedence over foreign policy priorities in DFC decision making.
- Focus on a narrower set of sectors where investments can have the greatest impact, including infrastructure development, climate and energy, agribusiness, telecommunications, and financial sector development.
- Generate greater interest among businesses in target sectors by developing a series of roadshows in U.S. cities for the DFC and other government agencies.
- Strengthen the DFC's ability to source opportunities for deals by working with USAID, the State Department, and overseas missions to access established relationships and achieve a greater developmental impact in low and lower-middle income countries.
- Make the countering of China's BRI projects an explicit part of the mandate of DFC.

BOLSTER DIPLOMATIC CAPACITY TO PROMOTE U.S. TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND INCLUSIVE **GROWTH.** Many reports agreed on the need to build greater diplomatic capacity by deploying more economic officers to U.S. embassies around the world focused on facilitating opportunities for investment and trade, promoting American economic competitiveness for workers and businesses, and fighting corruption that constrains investment. Recommendations included:

- Increase the number of diplomats from the Departments of State and Commerce, U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA, and USAID at U.S. embassies abroad to work on trade and investment and to fight corruption.
- Require every U.S. ambassador, in conjunction with the country team and other U.S. government stakeholders, to draft a business plan for advancing American economic interests to submit to the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.
- Coordinate international and domestic policy in the White House and other agencies to ensure alignment on economic priorities.
- Launch diplomatic efforts to reform the WTO to make it more transparent and effective and push for WTO agreements on trade in digital commerce, climate, and investment.

#### RENEW INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO COUNTER CHINESE GLOBAL ECONOMIC INFLUENCE.

Most reports recommended the United States should work more assertively to set global and regional standards for trade and investment in multilateral institutions; coordinate diplomatic efforts to counter China at the WTO and other international bodies; and develop new multilateral trade and development mechanisms to compete with China's BRI investments. Recommendations included:

- Partner with allies in the Indo-Pacific region to set standards for trade and economic cooperation, provide more infrastructure development options, and increase economic connectivity.
- Launch a multilateral digital trade initiative to find common ground with like-minded countries that have strong commitment to data security and counter China's plans for a "digital silk road."

- Bring a comprehensive case against China at the WTO.
- Develop and implement a multilateral infrastructure development mechanism that can effectively compete with BRI to counter China's geopolitical gains.

#### DOUBLE DOWN ON ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT WITH

**AFRICA.** There was widespread consensus in reports that U.S. economic engagement with Africa is a key economic opportunity, emphasizing the need to accelerate trade and private sector investment on the continent. Recommendations included:

- Strengthen whole-of-government coordination on promoting two-way and regional trade with Africa among the Departments of State and Commerce, USAID, DFC, and Millennium Challenge Corporation.
- Increase the number of foreign service officers serving in Africa at the Department of State, Department of Commerce, U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service, and USAID.
- Expand outreach efforts to connect U.S. businesses with commercial opportunities in Africa.
- Lead a U.S.-Africa leaders forum focused on promoting U.S. and African private sector contributions to economic recovery from the pandemic.
- Deepen cooperation with America's allies whose interests align with ours and are increasingly active in Africa, such as South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

At a time when millions of Americans are struggling with unemployment and even food insecurity due to the economic downturn from COVID-19, progress will require the Administration to make the case that America's economic recovery depends on global economic engagement that supports jobs and businesses at home. Many observed that the failure of past trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership is likely to constrain efforts to launch new agreements to set standards even where there may be consensus over the challenge posed by trade deals launched by China, whose economy has recovered faster from the global pandemic.



# MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

2020 tied as the hottest year ever recorded, with record-breaking extreme weather and climate-driven disasters from fires to floods to hurricanes. While greenhouse gas emissions declined slightly in 2020 because of travel and economic restrictions due to COVID-19, overall levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are likely to increase compared to 2019. Climate shocks are also exacerbating challenges from food insecurity to refugee crises and conflict, especially in the developing world. More than 143 million people could be driven from their homes by climate-driven conflict and disasters by 2050, according to the World Bank.

Reports by think tanks including the Atlantic Council, Brookings, CAP, Center for a New American Security (CNAS), CFR, CSIS, Heritage Foundation, and Wilson Center reflected different approaches to the challenge of climate change, including widely recognized differences over proposals to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement. Yet our analysis also found widespread consensus in reports from across the political spectrum for investing in building resilience in the developing world hit hardest by its effects and focusing on climate-driven conflict, migration, and food insecurity—building on longstanding across Democratic and Republican Administrations. There was also broad consensus in many reports on the need to engage with China on climate change.



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INVEST IN BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE AROUND THE WORLD. Reports from across the political spectrum agreed on the need to invest in climate resilience to help countries prepare for and limit the impacts of climate shocks that disproportionately affect the developing world, particularly among the poor and most vulnerable including women and children. Recommendations included:

- Release a presidential policy directive on U.S. policy toward Africa that includes a focus on clean energy development and support for countries to adapt to climate change impacts.
- Create new positions to build climate expertise at USAID and the Departments of State, Commerce, and Agriculture.
- Mandate that infrastructure projects are climate-resilient to mitigate risk from natural disasters and save money in the long term.
- Revise strategies for the Indo-Pacific to incorporate a renewed focus on climate adaptation and resilience as well as to counter Chinese influence.

FOCUS ON CLIMATE-DRIVEN CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. Many reports highlighted the importance of addressing climate-driven conflict, food insecurity, and migration in the developing world. Recommendations included:

- Create new programs to address climate migration, such as resettlement programs to support those displaced by climate-driven disasters and rising sea levels.
- Prioritize and mainstream climate resilience into U.S. global food security programs at USAID.
- Coordinate with partners to collect better data on global climate migration and develop new international frameworks, such as a regional compact for the Western Hemisphere, to support cross-border climate migrants.

ENGAGE WITH CHINA ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS. While the U.S.-China relationship has become even more challenging in recent years, many reports noted that both countries must work together on climate change as the world's two largest emitters and economies. Recommendations included:

- Launch a comprehensive bilateral dialogue with China on the issue of climate change.
- Leave the door open for regional cooperation with China on climate change and energy, even as the United States mounts a more competitive strategy in the Indo-Pacific.
- Adopt a carbon border adjustment tax, which would increase the import price of Chinese goods produced using high-emission processes.

MULTILATERAL CLIMATE DIPLOMACY. While there is not bipartisan consensus on multilateral diplomacy on climate change as noted in the introduction to this chapter, many reports suggested a narrower but notable consensus around the issue. Recommendations included:

- Convene a leaders-level climate forum, with a pledge to convene the forum at the U.N. General Assembly in September 2021.
- End U.S. financing for overseas fossil fuel projects by the U.S. DFC and Export-Import Bank, then encourage other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development governments and donors to do the same.
- Restore U.S. commitments to the Green Climate Fund to provide economic support and relief to developing countries.
- Coordinate with the European Union to set emissions targets and shape energy standards.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

Even where there is consensus, progress may remain challenging because the resources needed for new and higher commitments to fight climate change are likely to be constrained by additional resources needed for countries to address the impacts of the global pandemic. Agreement on climate change in Congress will likely remain challenging due to partisan differences, although the Senate Climate Solutions Caucus, co-chaired by Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Mike Braun (R-IN), and the House Climate Solutions Caucus, co-founded by Representative Ted Deutch (D-FL-22) and former-Representative Francis Rooney (R-FL-19), demonstrates the potential for bipartisan engagement on the issue.



# **DEFENDING AGAINST** RISING AUTHORITARIANISM

2020 marked the 15th consecutive year that Freedom House reported a decline in global freedom, with growing election interference, human rights violations, proxy conflicts, and censorship. Authoritarian regimes pose a threat to democracies all over the world: waging disinformation campaigns, utilizing new technologies to increase surveillance, repressing dissent, and violating human rights. Backsliding has taken place in established democracies as well, including assaults on the rule of law and democratic norms and institutions in the United States. COVID-19 has only exacerbated threats to democracy around the world, postponing elections and giving authoritarian regimes opportunities to push through new authorities that limit protest and press freedom.

Reports from think tanks including AEI, Atlantic Council, Brookings, Carnegie, CFR, CNAS, CSIS, CAP, and Heritage Foundation broadly agreed on the importance of combating rising authoritarianism but reflected different approaches to the challenge. While some reports recommended launching a new "Cold War" against authoritarianism as an existential threat to America's security, others called for returning to a traditional two-track strategy balancing competition and cooperation. Our analysis identified several areas of widespread consensus in reports across the political spectrum including strengthening the tools to combat election interference and disinformation, coordinating with allies on China and Russia, bolstering digital technology standards, and elevating human rights.



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STRENGTHEN TOOLS TO COMBAT DISINFORMATION BY AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES. Many reports agreed that the U.S. should take proactive steps to protect against disinformation campaigns and respond to them rapidly and with credible information. Recommendations included:

- Utilize the State Department's Global Engagement Center and NATO's Centers of Global Excellence to proactively address and combat disinformation.
- Elevate the State Department Coordinator for Cyber Issues to the level of ambassador-at-large and appoint a Chief Technology Officer to build a corps of experts who could advise on issues of technology and cybersecurity.
- Build resilience to disinformation campaigns around the world by promoting media literacy and working with civil society organizations and governments.
- Increase efforts to promote quality independent media and protect journalists, working with civil society, private philanthropists, and allied governments globally.
- Invest in rising leaders and youth and in civics education to promote awareness of democratic norms and build skills and networks that advance democratic governance, recognizing the growth of youth populations in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

COORDINATE WITH ALLIES ON AUTHORITARIAN CHALLENGES. While there were a wide range of views of how the United States should respond to China and Russia, nearly all reports agreed that the United States should coordinate its response to authoritarianism with traditional allies like the European Union and strengthen new alliances, especially in the Indo-Pacific. Recommendations included:

- Formalize the "D-10," an alliance of democratic countries dedicated to supporting free and open societies and ensuring citizens in their countries and around the world have these same freedoms.
- Send a U.S. national security team to meet with our allies and align on new strategies to respond to authoritarian challenges such as the U.S.-China strategy, and include representatives from the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Department of Defense.
- Reinforce the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with Japan, India, and Australia to better coordinate on crisis responses, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief in the Indo-Pacific as a means of further expanding soft power.
- Counter authoritarian influence in multilateral organizations by vetting highly qualified U.S. candidates for multilateral leadership positions and establishing an Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs at the State Department to oversee these effort.

**BOLSTER DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS.** There was widespread consensus among reports that the U.S. must invest in digital technological capacities to promote digital freedom and confront increasingly aggressive surveillance and interference by authoritarian regimes. Recommendations included:

- Challenge China's global digital dominance in 5G technology and surveillance practices by investing in capacities to compete in 5G technology and coordinating with allies to develop 5G risk assessments.
- Develop a global strategy to respond to challenges to internet access and digital freedom, working with likeminded governments, private sector organizations, and civil society.
- Create a regulatory framework for technology acceleration to compete against foreign interference and engage with China to develop norms and principles on the use of emerging technologies.

• Hire additional diplomats at the State Department with expertise in cybersecurity to strengthen capacity in the Foreign Service.

#### **ELEVATE HUMAN RIGHTS IN RELATIONS WITH AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES.** Most reports agreed that the United States should elevate human rights as a foreign policy priority and actively use tools like the Global Magnitsky Act, sanctions, and State Department capacities to hold authoritarian regimes accountable for well-documented human rights abuses. Recommendations included:

- Create a Special Coordinator for Xinjiang at the State Department, making a public atrocity determination and granting Priority-2 refugee status to Uighur refugees.
- Grow capacity at the Departments of State and Treasury to better collaborate and coordinate with our allies on human rights by exploring opportunities to make sanctions multilateral through information sharing.
- Increase funding for the Office of Foreign Assets Control and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the State Department.

#### THE ROAD AHEAD

While there is consensus on the challenge of rising authoritarianism, developing a shared agenda with allies has proven difficult because of differing views on privacy and regulation of digital technologies, as well as the economic consequences of technological de-coupling from China and ending energy dependence on Russia. Most agree on China's human rights abuses of the Uighurs, but there is disagreement on how to address them and whether the U.N. Human Rights Council is the appropriate forum in the absence of reforms.



# RESPONDING TO GLOBAL **HUMANITARIAN CRISES**

The world is facing dramatic and growing humanitarian crises driven by protracted political conflicts, armed conflict, extreme weather caused by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic – from longstanding crises in Yemen, Syria, Venezuela, and South Sudan to burgeoning crises in the Central Sahel and Ethiopia. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 80 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes worldwide – a number that has doubled over the past decade and is especially concerning during a pandemic given the crowded living conditions of refugees. The United Nations predicts a record 235 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2021 – a 40% increase over 2020 almost entirely attributable to the impact of COVID-19.

Reports from think tanks focusing on global humanitarian crises included AEI, Brookings, CAP, Center for Global Development (CGD), CFR, CSIS and Heritage Foundation and bipartisan taskforces by CSIS, co-chaired by Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Todd Young (R-IN) and by U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), co-chaired by former-Governor Tom Kean and former-Representative Lee Hamilton. These reports reflected different approaches to the challenge: some focused on strengthening security sector assistance in fragile states, while others called for elevating competition with China, Russia, and Iran in a global fragility strategy. Yet our analysis also found widespread consensus in reports from across the political spectrum on several issues, such as addressing the root causes of conflict and instability, fostering greater local stakeholder engagement, strengthening interagency coordination on crisis response, and investing in better data on humanitarian and conflict prevention efforts.



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ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF CRISES AND FRAGILITY. Reports from across the political spectrum showed a broad consensus on the need for U.S. foreign assistance to target the root causes of humanitarian crises and state fragility including dangerous levels of violence and instability, hunger and lack of nutrition, poverty, and injustice. Many recommendations suggested implementing the Global Fragility Act, passed with strong bipartisan support in the 116th Congress, as a starting point for reform. Recommendations included:

- Invest more resources in gang prevention, community safety, transnational crime, and drug and human trafficking that drive humanitarian crises and disproportionately affect vulnerable populations including women, children, and refugees.
- Support programs that provide economic opportunities for youth and women such as skills development. entrepreneurship, and small business support to undercut recruitment for extremist groups in fragile states.
- Prioritize governance and anti-corruption assistance to fragile states, including the Northern Triangle and the Sahel, to ensure that lasting progress on security and economic growth is also possible.
- Create a new multilateral fund with countries and partners to tackle the drivers of forced migration that supports plans by countries modelled on Plan Colombia.

**DEEPEN LOCAL ENGAGEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES.** Many reports agreed on the need to foster and deepen greater engagement with local stakeholders in humanitarian crises and fragile states to build their capacity and encourage sustainable progress. Recommendations included:

- Elevate the role of women and civil society groups in peacebuilding processes to improve the chances for sustainable peace.
- Partner with host governments and humanitarian organizations to increase access to health-care services and integrate refugee populations into national and local health systems.
- Identify and support local community partners capable of preventing terrorism and addressing governance challenges to ensure they can take ownership of programs in the long term.

#### INCREASE INTERAGENCY COORDINATION TO MANAGE CONFLICTING PRIORITIES. Nearly

all reports agreed on the need to increase interagency coordination on humanitarian crises where there may be conflicting priorities between the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense. Many of these recommendations highlight the Stabilization Assistance Review as a starting point for interagency reform. Recommendations included:

- Create a Senior Director for Stabilization and Fragility position on the National Security Council.
- Develop new strategies to increase and improve co-deployment of civilian and military employees in conflict zones.
- The Departments of State and Defense and USAID should develop annual, joint reports on issues like fragility, terrorism, and gender to inform collaborative policies.
- · Reform security assistance and stabilization programs to fall under the joint responsibility of the Departments of State and Defense.

#### INVEST IN BETTER DATA ON HUMANITARIAN AND **CONFLICT PREVENTION EFFORTS.** Many reports found that the U.S. often lacks data-driven evidence on the impacts of humanitarian assistance and conflict prevention programming. There was broad consensus on the importance of strengthening monitoring and evaluation and using data and technology to make programs as effective as possible. Recommendations included:

- USAID and the Departments of State and Defense should empower the United Nations and other multilateral organizations to document and share better data on fragility-related challenges to improve international coordination.
- Bolster technology and training for conflict prevention along with the United Nations and donor governments by increasing resources for innovative technologies and practices.
- Incorporate conflict analysis modules into trainings across the interagency to ensure that all bureaus have a stronger understanding of these issues.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

Even where there is consensus on the imperative to respond to humanitarian suffering, it will remain challenging to resolve the political conflicts driving many of these crises, many of which are driven by America's geopolitical rivals and even allies in Yemen, Syria, and Venezuela. While Congress has passed bipartisan legislation to strengthen U.S. humanitarian response – including the Global Fragility Act in 2019 and a bipartisan vote to end U.S. involvement in Yemen that was ultimately vetoed in 2019 – global appeals for additional resources to address humanitarian crises frequently go unmet, a situation likely to continue if not worsen given the economic downturn from the pandemic.



## **INFLUENCING GLOBAL ALLIANCES & PARTNERSHIPS**

The challenge of using American diplomacy to influence alliances and partnerships around shared interests and values has been at the center of the debate over America's role in the world in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic has also witnessed the rise of "vaccine diplomacy" by competing powers seeking to extend their influence by producing and offering a vaccine to countries in need around the world. The State Department— America's lead agency for diplomacy—has suffered from repeated proposed dramatic budget cuts in recent years, as well as a hiring freeze that left the department under-staffed and an unusually high number of senior positions and ambassadorships filled by political appointees rather than Foreign Service Officers.

Reports from think tanks and policy institutes including the Atlantic Council, AEI, Brookings, Carnegie, CATO, CFR, CNAS, CSIS, CAP, Heritage, Human Rights First, Quincy Institute, and Stimson reflected different approaches to the challenge of influencing global alliances and partnerships. Some reports called for using diplomacy to end "endless wars," while others called for re-writing the Foreign Assistance Act and Foreign Affairs Act that organize U.S. foreign assistance and the Foreign Service. Yet our analysis found widespread consensus in reports across the political spectrum on the need to renew alliances and partnerships, lead with diplomacy in global crises, and bolster diplomatic capacity and modernize the Foreign Service.



The COVID-19 pandemic has also witnessed the rise of "vaccine diplomacy" by competing powers seeking to extend their influence by producing and offering a vaccine to countries in need around the world.

RENEW GLOBAL ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS. Nearly all reports advocated for strengthening global alliances and partnerships that advance the health, security, and economic prosperity of the American people, as well as signal that the United States stands for and with democracy. Recommendations included:

- Launch efforts to rebuild trust in the transatlantic alliance and repair the relationship with the European Union to enhance cooperation on global challenges.
- Work with allies on new agreements like a potential Free-World Trade Agreement and Alliance of Free Nations to coordinate on the world's most pressing challenges like rising authoritarian regimes, worsening humanitarian crises, and global health threats.
- Direct senior diplomats to forge partnerships in Africa and coordinate on strategic issues like security, development, and economic measures.

LEAD WITH DIPLOMACY IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHALLENGES. Many reports recommended that the United States should lead with diplomacy to address a range of global challenges rather than military force. Recommendations included:

- Send a U.S. special envoy for Yemen to strengthen diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East and support communications between Iran and the Gulf states.
- Prioritize diplomacy and promote arms control agreements to combat strategic imperatives and potential threats identified by the U.S. military doctrine including those with Iran, China, and Russia.
- Elevate diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean where conflict is on the rise and create a regular dialogue with Russia on regional dynamics.

BOLSTER DIPLOMATIC CAPACITY. Most of the reports observed that influencing and renewing alliances will require the next Administration to bolster its diplomatic capacity and strengthen the State Department by increasing personnel, shifting its overseas posture to better address current international challenges, and streamlining internal processes. Recommendations included:

- Create 1,000 new full-time equivalent positions to grow America's diplomatic presence overseas and begin rebuilding a more diverse State Department workforce, aligned to emerging or under-resourced threats.
- Decentralize decision making by reducing the number of undersecretaries and delegating more authority to assistant secretaries and ambassadors in the field.
- Streamline clearance processes to increase efficiency with limits on the number of Deputy Assistant Secretaries.
- Establish a presumption that the State Department chairs working group-level interagency meetings and task the State Department to lead the development of policy options papers and implementation plans.

MODERNIZE THE FOREIGN SERVICE. Several reports called for the State Department to review and reform the Foreign Service by elevating diversity, creating more flexible paths for advancement, and providing additional training opportunities. Recommendations included:

- Elevate diversity by prioritizing diverse candidates and gender parity in senior appointments, including key ambassadorships; improving diversity in the national security workforce; and making it easier for traditionally underrepresented groups to advance within USAID.
- Limit political ambassadorships to 10-20% of embassies and require all incoming noncareer appointees to undergo training in leadership, management, and Washington tradecraft.
- Create more flexible paths for advancement in the Civil Service by opening career entry pipelines at every level, increasing limited noncareer appointments, and improving the ability of mid-career professionals to enter the State Department at the appropriate rank.
- Launch a review of personnel, structure, and processes by the Deputy Secretary for Management to address the department's underperformance and cultural problems, enhance coordination, and ensure new priorities are being met.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

Even where there is consensus, progress may remain challenging. America's allies have grown wary of the United States' ability to make credible commitments given political polarization at home and show little appetite for resolving enduring differences on policy issues. Past efforts to reform the State Department have also been blocked by bureaucratic resistance and the inability to design comprehensive solutions without engaging Congress.



## CONCLUSION

## THE ROAD AHEAD FOR DIPLOMACY, DEVELOPMENT, AND **AMERICA'S INTERESTS**

USGLC's Report on Reports identifies numerous areas where elevating and strengthening development alongside diplomacy can make meaningful progress on six critical global challenges facing our nation - tackling the global COVID-19 pandemic; improving economic competitiveness; combatting rising authoritarianism; mitigating the impacts of climate change; responding to global humanitarian crises; and influencing global alliances and partnerships. It also found consensus that solutions will depend on the willingness of the Administration and Democrats and Republicans in Congress to identify opportunities where they can work together.

Many reports urged the Administration to work closely with Congress to increase resources for the International Affairs Budget. Reports offered a range of recommendations including reversing the trend of deep cuts to international affairs, creating a joint national security budget with congressional oversight across committees, and engaging Congress on a range of issues including global health, development finance, women's global empowerment, and peacebuilding, among other issues.

At a time of heightened political polarization, calling for bipartisan coordination between the Administration and Congress may seem like a truism and a tall order. This report does not suggest that solutions will be easy, but progress is possible when focused on concrete challenges that improve the health, security, and economic prosperity of American families and reflect our values as a nation. Democratic and Republican Administrations have worked closely with Congress to develop PEPFAR - the U.S. global HIV/AIDS initiative, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Power Africa, and Feed the Future, among other initiatives. Congress has also passed over 50 pieces of legislation with bipartisan support that strengthen U.S. diplomacy and development to tackle global challenges.

As the United States looks ahead in a challenging global landscape, USGLC's Report on Reports offers a roadmap for pathways toward consensus on a shared vision of principled U.S. global leadership that shows that leading globally matters locally at home and for citizens around the world.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The USGLC reviewed 121 reports by U.S.-based think tanks and policy institutes that were publicly released ahead of the November 2020 presidential election and included recommendations for the next Administration and Congress:

- American Academy of Diplomacy Strengthening the Department of State, May 2019
- American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Fragility and Failure: A Better Foreign Policy to Counter New Threats, October
- AEI Governing Priorities Take on America's Five Key National Security Challenges, October 2020
- AEI Development Assistance and Counterterrorism, September 2019
- American Security Project A Grand Strategy for the Climate, October 2020
- American Security Project <u>U.S. Strategy in the South China Sea</u>, October 2020
- Atlantic Council Capitalizing on Transatlantic Concerns about China, August 2020
- Atlantic Council A global strategy for shaping the post COVID-19 world, July 2020
- Atlantic Council Economic might, national security, and the future of American statecraft, July 2020
- Atlantic Council Taking Stock: Where Are Geopolitics Headed in the COVID-19 Era?, June 2020
- Atlantic Council Making the most of Prosper Africa: Leveraging US competitiveness in African markets, March 2020
- Atlantic Council Present at the Re-Creation: A Global Strategy for Revitalizing, Adapting, and Defending a Rules-Based International System, October 2019
- Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs American Diplomacy Project: A U.S. Diplomatic Service for the 21st Century, November 2020
- Bipartisan Policy Center U.S. Leadership in the COVID-19 Pandemic Response: Global Health is U.S. Health, April 2020
- Brookings Institution The Future of U.S. Policy Toward China: Recommendations for the Biden Administration, November 2020
- Brookings Institution A list of specific, actionable foreign policy ideas for the next president, October 2020
- Brookings Institution Making U.S. Global Development Structures and Functions Fit for Purpose, October 2020
- Brookings Institution China's Expanding Influence at the United Nations and How the United States Should React, September 2020
- Brookings Institution Democracy First: How the US can Prevail in the Political Systems Competition with the CCP, September 2020
- Brookings Institution Youth or consequences: Put youth at the center of COVID-19 recovery, June 2020
- Brookings Institution The global fragility strategy: Posturing the United States for a reshaping world order, May 2020
- Brookings Institution Responding to Global Systemic Shocks: Applying Lessons from Previous Crises to Covid-19, March 2020
- Brookings Institution 2020 And Beyond: Maintaining the Bipartisan Narrative on US Global Development, December 2019
- Brookings Institution Implementing A Fragility Strategy, July 2019
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) Reinventing Transatlantic Relations on Climate, Democracy, and Technology, December 2020
- CEIP Making U.S. Foreign Policy Work Better for the Middle Class, September 2020
- CEIP Revitalizing Democracy Internationally, September 2020
- Cato Institute Building a Modern Military: The Force Meets Geopolitical Realities, May 2020
- Center for American Progress (CAP) How U.S. Diplomacy and Diplomats Can Help Get International Climate Action Back on Track, December 2020
- CAP The First 100 Days: Toward a More Sustainable and Values-Based National Security Approach, October 2020
- CAP The Pentagon's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget More Than Meets U.S. National Security Needs, May 2020
- CAP Putting Diplomacy First: A Strategic Alternative to President Donald Trump's 'Maximum Pressure' Approach on

#### Iran, March 2020

- CAP Embrace the Union: A New Progressive Approach for Reviving the Trans-Atlantic Alliance, October 2019
- CAP America Adrift: How the U.S. Foreign Policy Debate Misses What Voters Really Want, May 2019
- CAP Limit, Leverage, and Compete: A New Strategy on China, April 2019
- CAP Securing a Democratic World: The Case for a Democratic Values-Based U.S. Foreign Policy, September 2018
- Center for Global Development (CGD) Expert Recommendations for US and Global Preparedness for COVID-19, February 2020
- CGD Focusing on Fragility: The Future of U.S. Assistance to Fragile States, October 2019
- Center for a New American Security (CNAS) Charting a Transatlantic Course to Address China, October 2020
- CNAS Rising to the China Challenge: Renewing American Competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific, January 2020
- CNAS Strengthening the Economic Arsenal: Bolstering the Deterrent and Signaling Effects of Sanctions, December 2019
- CNAS The New War of Ideas: Counterterrorism Lessons for the Digital Disinformation Fight, June 2019
- Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Africa Matters to US Cities, December 2020
- CSIS Managing Climate Change Information in the Next Administration, December 2020
- CSIS Rethinking Crisis Responses in the Sahel, December 2020
- CSIS A New Framework for U.S. Leadership on Climate Migration, October 2020
- CSIS How Can the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation Effectively Source Deals?, October 2020
- CSIS Toward a Stronger U.S.-Taiwan Relationship, October 2020
- CSIS U.S.-Russia Relations at a Crossroads, October 2020
- CSIS Affirming American Leadership: A Call to Action, September 2020
- CSIS Post-pandemic Governance in the Indo-Pacific: Adapting USAID's Strategy in the Face of Covid-19, September 2020
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- CSIS Challenges to Continued U.S. Leadership Ahead of Global HIV's Next Phase, May 2020
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- CSIS Getting to Less? The Progressive Values Strategy, January 2020
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- CSIS Denial, Delay, Diversion: Tackling Access Challenges in an Evolving Humanitarian Landscape, September 2019
- CSIS Enhancing U.S. Leadership in a New Era of Global Immunization, September 2019
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- CSIS A New Social Contract for the Northern Triangle, May 2019
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- CFR Reevaluating Global Trade Governance Structure to Address Climate Change, July 2019
- CFR Women and Terrorism, May 2019
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- Quincy Institute Enough Toxic Militarism, December 2019
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1129 20th St NW, Suite 600 Washington, D.C. 20036

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