



**Thoughts on:
COVID-19,
The Biden Administration's
Evolving Foreign Policy,
&
Foreign Policy Challenges**

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8 Nov 2021**

The views expressed are solely those of the author
and do not represent official US Government policy.

Wolff - NESAs

Agenda

- **Opening Big Ideas**
- **COVID-19 Impacts**
- **Biden Administration's Foreign Policy at 9 Months**
- **Foreign Policy Challenges**
- **Q & A**

Big Ideas – Biden Foreign Policy

- COVID-19 is a Security Issue and has created a “New Normal and a New Operating Environment” – We must Adapt to Live with the Virus.
- Societies often change when confronted with: 1) Wars; 2) Recessions; 3) Pandemics; 4) What About Climate Change?
- Nations Respond to Threats Based on Their National Security Interests
- Transition Periods Between U.S. Administrations are Inflection Points regarding the Evolution of U.S. Policy.
- The Biden Team has built on the Trump Administration’s Great Power Competition Framework (China & Russia), will have to deal with a number of Regional Power Challenges (Iran & nK), and Functional Issues (Cyber, Climate Change, WMD Proliferation, and the Pandemic).
- The Biden Foreign Policy Team are an experienced and trusted group of advisors who will refine the Biden Foreign Policy Approach.
- The Middle East and North Africa offers plenty of challenges for the Biden Administration.

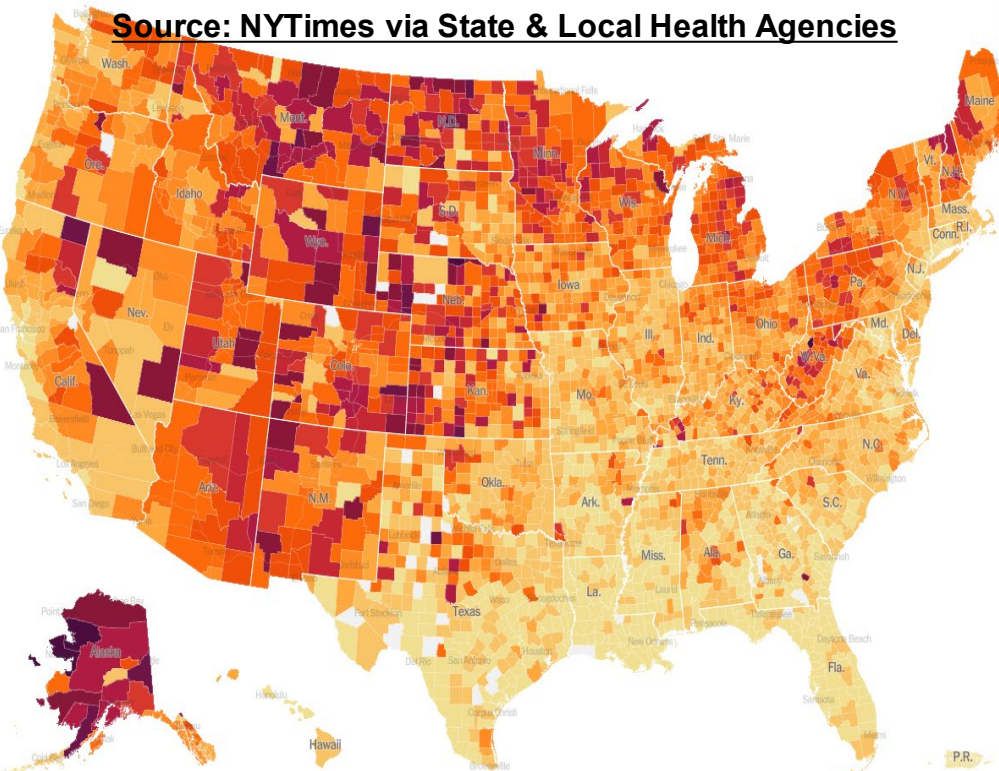


COVID Impacts

Source: NYTimes via State & Local Health Agencies

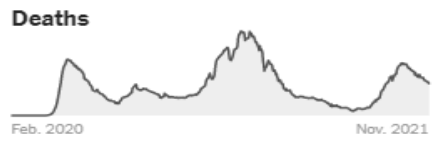
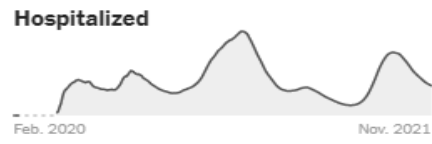
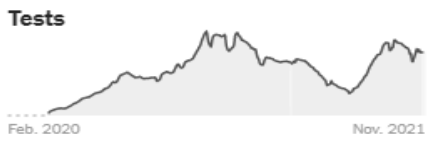
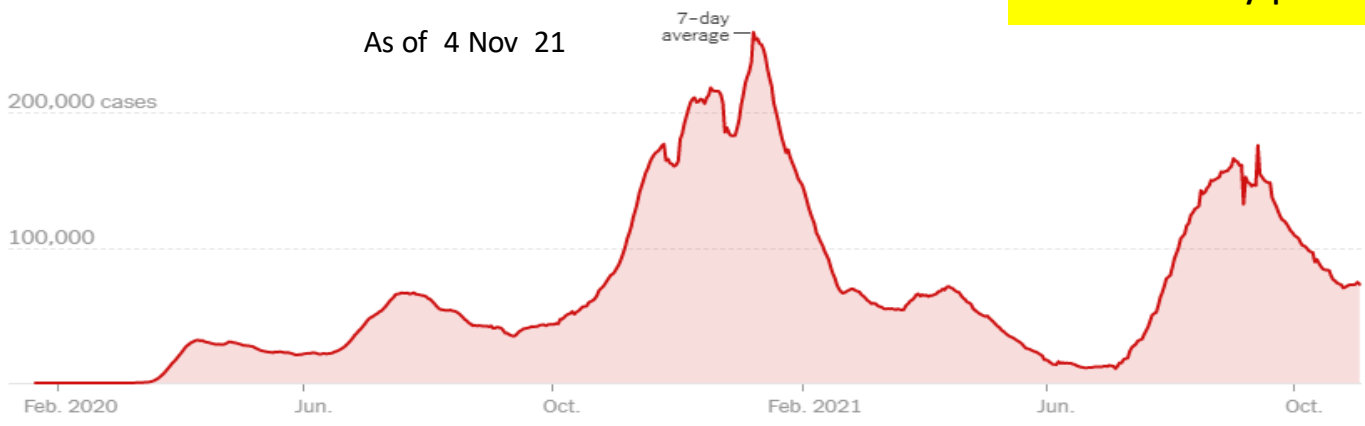
US & COVID-19

- Considerable improvements since Sep 21
- 46 M Cases w/ 73+K new per day
- COVID rate decreasing across the US.
- Daily death toll = 1.2K; 748K overall; w/ 446K more deaths than normal-preCOVID
- Avg COVID hospital inpatients = 50-100K
- Vaccinations: 1.2M per day /222M vac'd (#1) w/192M completed. 77% have received 1 shot. Tale of 2 nations
- Delta Variant & Others – worrisome
- US Nov Election was a referendum on the US COVID response.
- Biden Administration has responded well, but many public health issues to fix.



“Shifting Baseline over Time” Syndrome!

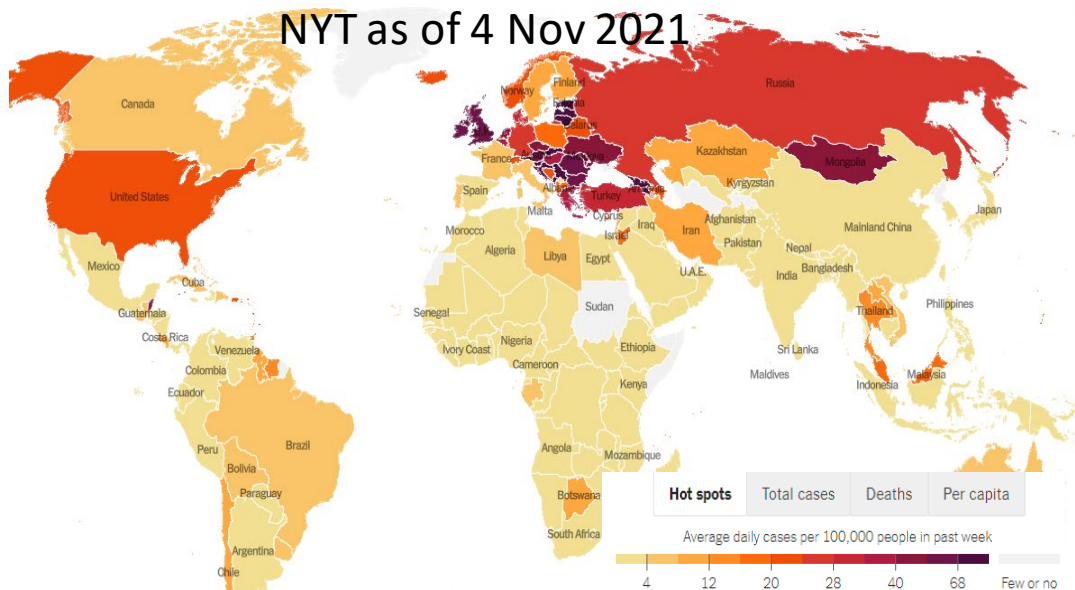
As of 4 Nov 21



Daily Avg Total Rep

Cases	73K	46M
Tests	1.4M	48K
Hosp	49K	
Deaths	1.2K	750K

NYT as of 4 Nov 2021



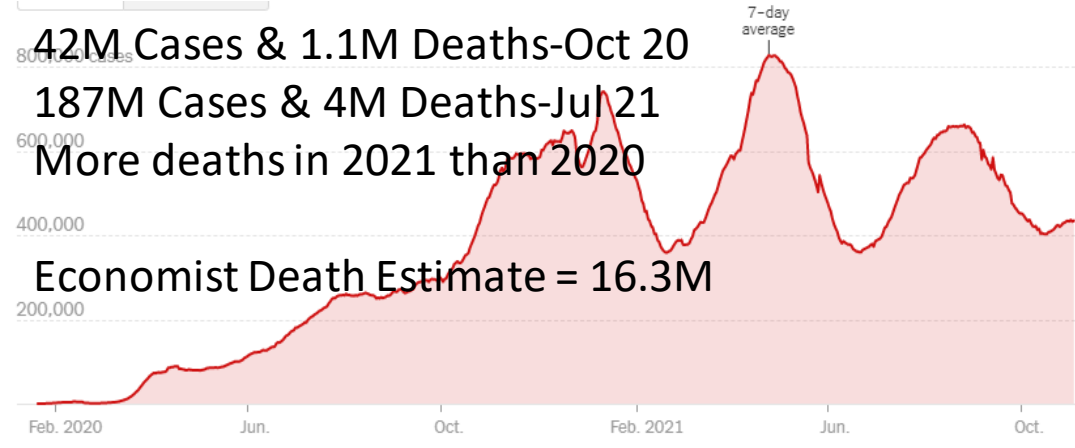
COVID-19 Thoughts

- Pandemic is far from over
- This will be a 36+ month event
- Delta Variant & Case Load Impacts
- Reporting is uneven # of: cases, infected, tested & deaths
- No cure for the coronavirus - yet
- Remarkable vaccine dev process - must get the world vaccinated

COVID-19 Impacts

- WWide recess(-3% 2020 to +6% 2021)
- Job loss has been large (scarring?)
- Those in extreme poverty rising
- Travel & tourism impacted
- Energy demand & price fluctuates
- Food Insecurity growing
- Globalization challenged?
- Protest movements – unmet expect.
- Disinformation efforts ongoing
- Bad actors exploiting opportunity
- Pandemics have lasting impact & often drive change!
- Possible Wildcards?

1918 Flu Pandemic Worldwide Deaths = 50M (675K in US)
 Asian Flu 1957 Worldwide Deaths = 1-2M (116K in US)
 1968 Flu Pand. H3N2 Worldwide Deaths = 1-4M (100K in US)
 2009 H1N1 Worldwide Deaths = 150-575K (12K in US)



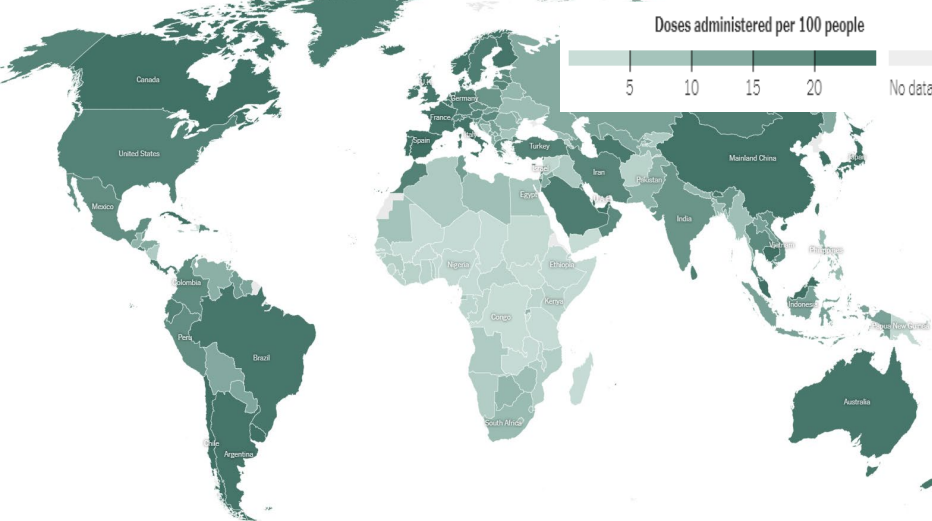
42M Cases & 1.1M Deaths-Oct 20

187M Cases & 4M Deaths-Jul 21

More deaths in 2021 than 2020

Economist Death Estimate = 16.3M

	DAILY AVG. ON NOV. 3	14-DAY CHANGE	TOTAL REPORTED
Cases	434,083	+6%	248,099,100
Deaths	7,029	+3%	5,021,799

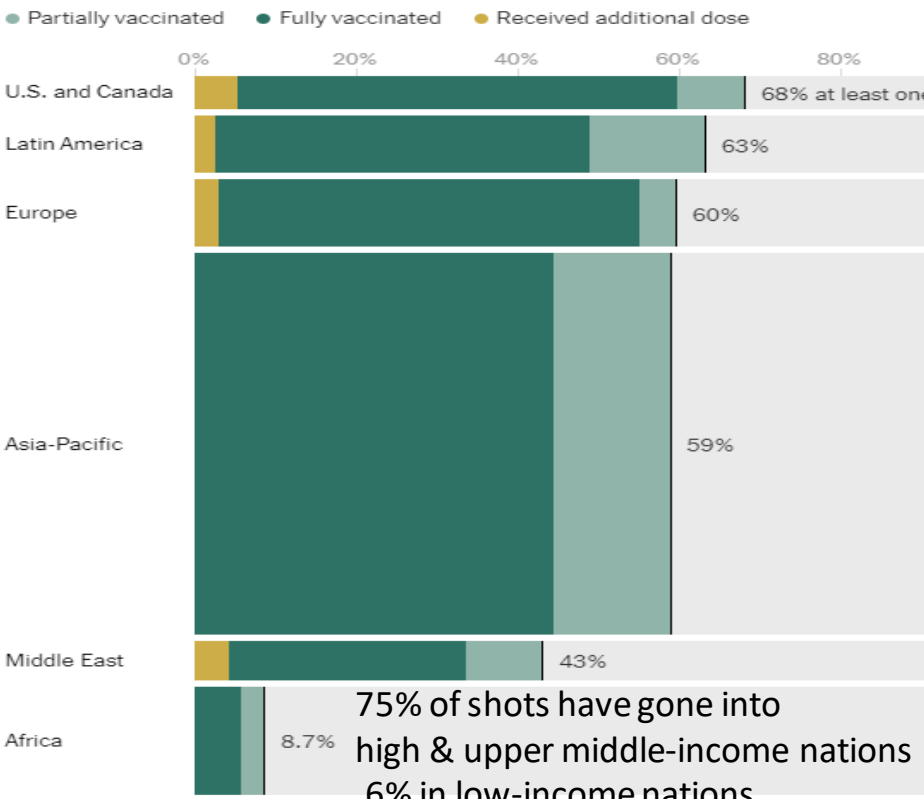


Vaccination Data Points (Need to up gun):

- **3.9B+ Doses Admin / 51% of world's pop= #1**
- **10 vaccines being used Wwide-> AZ-181 C; Pfizer-146 C; Moderna-79 C; Sinopharm-80C Sputnik-52 C; Sinovac-49 C; J&J-66 C.**
- **WHO COVAX Goal 1+B vaccinations in 2021 to low-income nations (40%) & 70% by end 2022**
- **US Contribution 200M -> 1.2B -> 70% world**
- **Vaccine Distribution of 1.3B US/G7 excess doses is key in near-term**
- **US knows what needs to be done.** But this isn't the great British "bakeoff" & depends on supply chain resilience.
- **US will chair FM Vaccine Mtg in Dec & HoS in 1st Quarter, FY22**
- **Big pharma 2021 output=11B vac (1B/mon)**
- **\$50-70B to vaccinate the rest of the world**
- **Who is in charge and owns this effort?**

Vaccination rates by region

As a share of total population. The height of each bar is proportional to the region population.



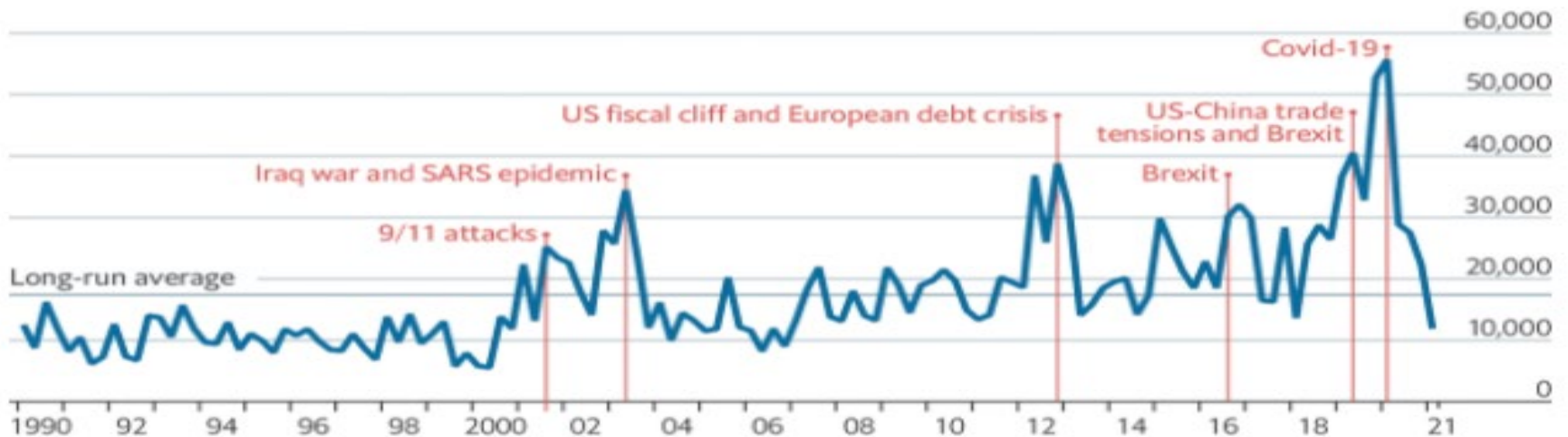
75% of shots have gone into high & upper middle-income nations
.6% in low-income nations

Top 10+ Nations: UAE; Portugal; Cuba; Chile; Malta; Cambodia; Singapore; Qatar; Brunei; Spain; S.Korea; Malaysia; Uruguay; Canada

US-425M; PRC-2.3B; India-1B; Brazil-275M; Ger-112M; RF-105M; Egypt-29M; Turkey-116M; Syria-1.1M; Jor-7.5M; Iraq -9.3M; Iran-89M

The calm after the storm

Global Uncertainty Index*, GDP-weighted average



*Relative number of mentions of "uncertain", "uncertainty" and "uncertainties" in country reports published by The Economist Intelligence Unit

Source: Hites Ahir, Nick Bloom and Davide Furceri

The Economist

The shopping list

IMF proposal to end the pandemic

Funding gap, \$bn

20 Extra testing, treatments and protective equipment

8 Adding vaccine capacity in 2022

6 Preparing for vaccine roll-out

4 Extra money for COVAX to buy vaccines

4 Strengthening public-health systems

3 Checks for new variants and supply-chain shocks

3 Other measures

2 Evaluating dose-stretching strategies

nil Ensuring free trade in vaccines and materials

nil Donating surplus vaccines

Source: "A proposal to end the covid-19 pandemic", by Ruchir Agarwal and Gita Gopinath, IMF, May 2021

The Economist

Final COVID-19 Thoughts

- Pandemic cost the US \$16T (lost GDP, premature deaths, LT & mental health)
- US Federal Preparedness Funding \$89B (2020-2019 – only \$12B for pandemics)
- Global uncertainty calming . . .

"Are We Willing to Finish the Job with the COVID-19 & Prepare for the Next Pandemic?"

- \$50-70B to vaccinate the rest of the world-- nations have to help big pharma



Thinking About U.S. National Security

Thoughts About the USA – A Republic

- **USG & the Separation of Power (Balance of Power) between the President (Executive) and Congress (Legislative) results in dynamic tension & friction**
- **Civilian Control of the Military**
- **Executive Branch's InterAgency Process is designed to offer choices to the President – Definition of Goals / Objectives (ENDS)**
- **Tools of Statecraft – D/I/M/E/P/I/Fin/t (WAYS)**
- **Congress controls the MEANS via Appropriations (\$\$), Authorization & Oversight**
- **Lots of Players involved in the crafting of US Policy which impacts clear communications & understanding – so Read Directly what leaders (POTUS/SecState/SecDef/Congress Big 8) say**
- **“Say-Do” Syndrome – Policy Pronouncement to Action to Program**
- **Impact of Social Media & Technology and Time on Decision Makers**
- **Transition Periods**

National Security Council (NSC) and Homeland Security Council (HSC)

Principal forum for consideration & integration of national security and homeland security and policy issues requiring Presidential determination.



Statutory Advisors

CJCS DNI & CIA



Invited to every NSC mtg:

- Counsel to President
- NSC Legal Advisor
- Deputy NSA (secretary)
- Others as required

Types of Meetings:

- NSC
- Principals (PC)
- Deputies (DC)
- Interagency Policy Committees (IPC)

President



Vice President



Secretary of State



Secretary of Defense



Treasury



Attorney General



Homeland Security



US Rep to UN



Secretary of Energy



WHCoS, OSTP Dir & NSA



Admin USAID



Other executive depts/agencies/senior officials as appropriate

Based on National Security Act of 1947
Supplemented by NSM – 2, dated Feb 4, 2021

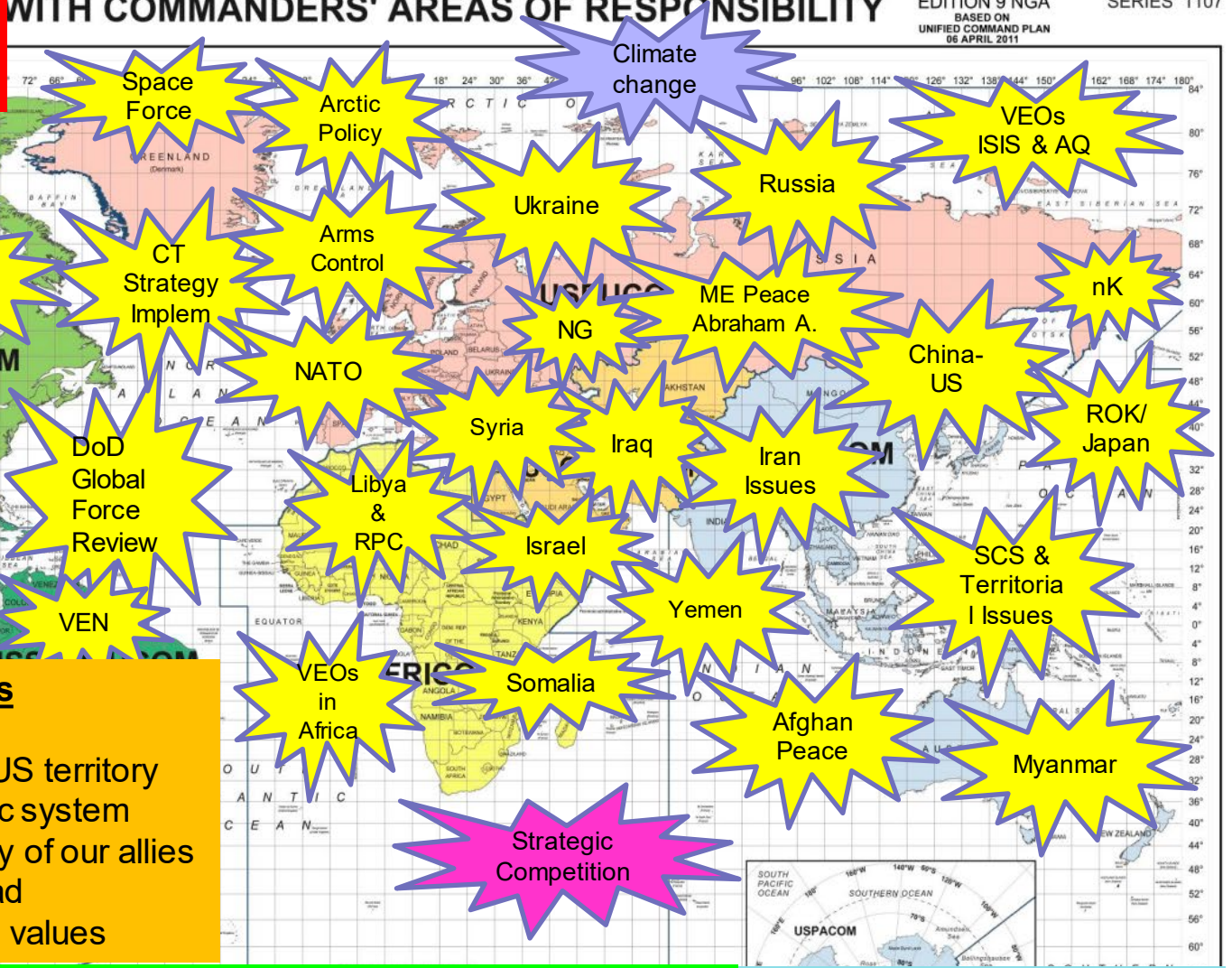
National Security Advisor O'Brien -- Trump Administration Successes

"Putting the American People First; Peace Thru Strength & Dealing with the World as It Is"

- **ISIS Defeated**
- **50 US hostages released**
- **USMCA trade agreement replaced NAFTA**
- **Illegal immigration reduced 85%**
- **NATO contributions up \$400B over 10 yrs**
- **End of Sequestration – US Budget Control Act**
- **Space Force brought into being**
- **Expanded relations with 2 democracies -- India & Brazil**
- **Focused on the Asia Pacific**
- **Maximum Pressure Campaign on Iran**
- **Abraham Accords – a warm peace**
- **Balkans (Serbia-Kosovo) Agreement**
- **Protected U.S. Sovereignty**
- **China – “we see them for who they are”**



On US Senior Leader's Minds Now . . .



U.S. National Security Interests

- The survival of the Nation
- Prevent catastrophe attack of US territory
- Security of the global economic system
- Security, confidence & reliability of our allies
- Protection of US citizens abroad
- Preserve & extend of universal values

U.S. Security Concerns

1. China
2. Russia
3. Iran
4. nK
5. VEOs
6. Cyber Threats

Biden National Security Priorities

1. Protect the security of the American people
2. Expand economic prosperity & opportunity
3. Defend democratic values
4. Revitalize & modernize our alliances & partnerships

Sec Def's Priorities

1. Defend the Nation & Protect Our Interests
2. Take Care of People
3. Succeed Thru Teamwork



The Evolving Biden Foreign Policy

Jake Sullivan's Foreign Policy Comments

Dec & Jan NPR & CNN GPS Interviews



“Under President Biden, we will measure our foreign policy against a simple metric: *Will it make the lives of working people better, safer, easier?* The United States will again be engaged with the world, animated by a foreign policy for the middle class”.

“The Obama administration didn't do enough to tie foreign initiatives to domestic concerns — particularly when it came to economic policies”

The focus "a more decisive and sustained rebuttal to Trumpism, by showing that engagement in the world ... can deliver the kinds of tangible results — by protecting people from pandemics, reducing the worst effects of climate change, increasing the protection against the kinds of abuses we see from China and other economic actors. We can do these things."

President Biden's Foreign Policy

Three (3) Tenets of the Biden Foreign Policy

- ❑ Repair US credibility and influence in the world
- ❑ Deal with global challenges “from climate change and mass migration to technological disruption and infectious diseases”
- ❑ Re-empower trust in democratic institutions & international system.

“The next U.S. president will have to address the world as it is in Jan 21, and picking up the pieces will be an enormous task. He or she will have to salvage our reputation, rebuild confidence in our leadership, and mobilize our country and our allies to rapidly meet new challenges. There will be no time to lose.”

Four (4) Principles of the Biden Foreign Policy

- (1) Renew Democracy at Home
- (2) A Foreign Policy for the Middle Class to succeed in the global economy.
- (3) Back At the Head of the Table in terms of working with allies and partners to mobilize collective action on global threats via a balanced & coherent approach with diplomacy in the lead.
- (4) Prepared to Lead

The Biden's National Security Team – A Trusted Group



NSA Jake Sullivan



DNSA Finer



SecState Blinken



DepSState Sherman



USS-PA Nuland



USUN AMB Linda Thomas-Greenfield



USAID AMB Power



DNI Haines



CIA AMB Burns



DHS Mayorkas



Treasury Sec Yellen



SecDef Austin



DepSecDef Hicks



USD-P Kahl



SE Climate Kerry

President Biden's Security Team – Other Key Players



VP NSA Gordan



Homeland Sec Adv
L. Sherwood-Randall



SrDir Europe Sloat



SrDir GI.Eng Bradsher



SrDir S.Asia S. Guha



SrDir Strat Planning
Baker

Biden Health Team



XAVIER
BECERRA

HHS SECRETARY



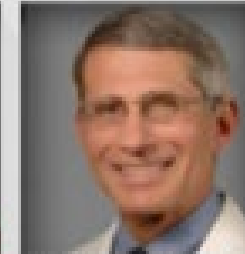
DR. VIVEK
MURTHY

U.S. SURGEON GENERAL



DR. ROCHELLE
WALENSKY

CDC DIRECTOR



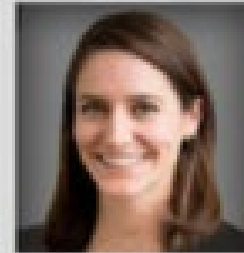
DR. ANTHONY
FAUCI

CHIEF MEDICAL ADVISOR



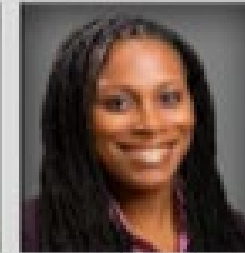
JEFF
ZIENTS

COORDINATOR OF THE
COVID-19 RESPONSE



NATALIE
QUILLIAN

DEPT. COORDINATOR FOR
COVID-19 RESPONSE



DR. MARCELLA
NUNEZ-SMITH

COVID-19 EQUITY
TASK FORCE CHAIR

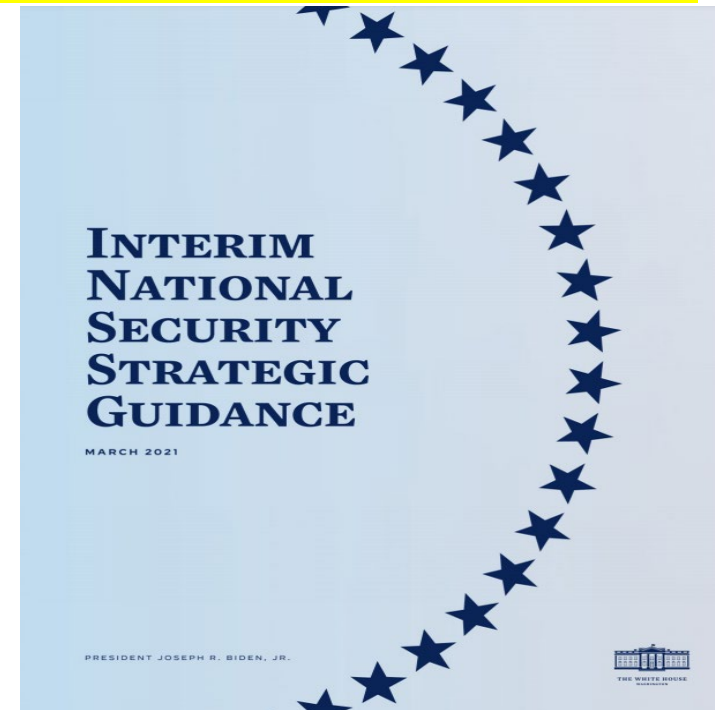
Biden Administration – Interim NSS Guidance Document

National Security Priorities (4)

- **Protect the security of the American people**
- **Enduring interest in expanding economic prosperity and opportunity**
- **Committed to realizing and defending the democratic values at the heart of the American way of life**
- **Reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world**

Ensuring our national security requires us to:

- **Defend and nurture the underlying sources of American strength, including our people, our economy, our national defense, and our democracy at home;**
- **Promote a favorable distribution of power to deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the United States and our allies, inhibiting access to the global commons, or dominating key regions; and**
- **Lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rules.**



RENEWING AMERICA'S ADVANTAGES
Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

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Secretary Blinken's Rollout Speech -- Interim NSS Guidance Document

Enduring Principles

- **American leadership and engagement matters** - *the world does not organize itself;*
- **We need countries to cooperate, now more than ever** as *there is no wall high enough or strong enough to hold back the changes transforming our world;*
- **Diplomacy in the Lead (for the U.S.)- engage and build that cooperation for today's challenges** - *we'll look not only to make progress on short-term problems, but also to address their root causes and lay the groundwork for our long-term strength. The goal is not to just build back, but build back better.*

The US Plan - 8 Tenets

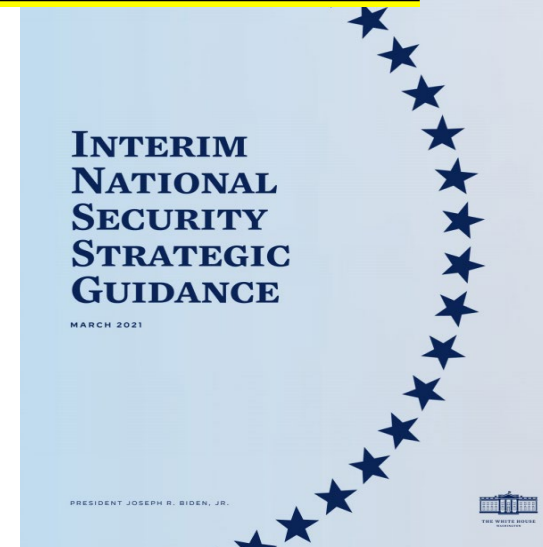
1. **Stop COVID-19 and strengthen global health security.**
2. **Turn around the economic crisis and build a more stable, inclusive global economy.**
3. **Renew democracy, because it's under threat.**
4. **Work to create a humane and effective immigration system.**
5. **Revitalize our ties with our allies and partners.**
6. **Tackle the climate crisis and drive a green energy revolution.**
7. **Secure our leadership in technology.**
8. **Manage the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century: our relationship with China.**

Biden Administration – Interim NSS Guidance Document

“In the Middle East”

- **Israel** - maintain our ironclad commitment to Israel’s security, further its integration with its neighbors and resuming our role as promoter of a viable two-state solution.
- **Iran** - work with regional partners to deter Iranian aggression & threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity
- **VEOs**. Disrupt al-Qaeda & related terrorist networks; prevent an ISIS resurgence & address humanitarian crises
- **Redouble our efforts to resolve the complex armed conflicts** that threaten regional stability
- **Yemen. Back UN efforts to end the war.**
- **Aim to de-escalate regional tensions & create space for people throughout the Middle East to realize their aspirations.**

“We do not believe that military force is the answer to the region’s challenges, and we will not give our partners in the ME a blank check to pursue policies at odds with American interests and values i.e. Yemen”



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Early Decisions & Actions

The 1st 9 Months



- **Domestic Issues and the Pandemic Response** are getting **80%** of the attention.
- **Diplomacy - back at the center of our foreign policy.** Rooted in our democratic values. Rejoined WHO and UN Human Rights Council. **Meetings with:** G7 & EU; Quad; Japan; South Korea; India; Israel; China; NATO; EU; GC D-ISIS; G20; COP26
- **Diplomacy & Foreign Assistance.** Summit of Democracy. Strengthen Alliances. Fix DoS and invest in diplomacy and economic development.
- **Defense.** Will defend US Vital Interests. Global Posture Review ongoing. Must reform & focus on emerging technologies, cyber space, deep sea to outer space.
- **China – Compete & Cooperate.** Review ongoing, augmented by a DoD Task Force that will look at strategy and operational concepts, technology, and force posture. Meet the growing challenge of China in the Indo-Pacific and globally.
- **End Forever Wars.** Afghanistan Withdrawal & Taliban Rule. Continue to support fight against Da'esh & VEOs.
- **Arms Control.** U.S. and Russia agreed to extend New START for five(5) years.

Biden Administration – Early Decisions & Actions at 9 Months

- **Cybersecurity.** “SolarWinds hack”, Microsoft Exchange & Ransomware attacks. NSC DPNSA for Cyber has generated cyberspace initiatives and partnering req.
- **Russia.** Tough Biden rhetoric on Russia’s activities. Biden-Putin Meeting.
- **China.** SecState/NSA Alaska & upcoming Biden-Xi Summit.
- **Iraq.** Strategic Dialogue Discussions continue. Meetings & Calls.
- **Iran.** “JCPOA Future” Discussions #7 in Vienna -- Special Envoy Malley.
- **Afghanistan.** US Withdrawal completed on 31 August – Impacts?
- **Libya.** US stands behind UN–facilitated LPDF agreement. PM-Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibah forming his govt, presenting the work plan, Dec elections.
- **KSA.** No offensive support for Yemen fight. Will continue to help KSA defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and people. Strong statements on human rights.
- **Yemen.** Negotiations with the Houthis? Special Envoy Lenderking working.
- **Climate Change.** Rejoined Paris Climate Agreement. Hosted Earth Day Summit. Glasgow COP26 just completed details emerging.
- **Economic & Trade Efforts.** “American Rescue” & Infrastructure Plans
- **Immigration.** Restored Refugee Admissions Program - will grow #s to 125,000+ per year. Overturned Muslim ban. U.S. southern border challenges.
- **Human Rights Approach** focused on equal rights -> Women & girls, LGBTQ individuals, indigenous communities, people with disabilities.

The US is NOT Leaving the Middle East



The Facts:

- * USG/DoD will rebalance the CENTCOM Force Presence as part of Global Posture Review
- * #s 2003-2012 are a historical abnormality
- * Expect a more balanced USG approach.

The Numbers

- * Afghanistan -> 0
 - * Iraq OIR -> 2.5K + NATO (NTM-I)
 - * Syria -> 900
 - * Kuwait -> 10K
 - * Bahrain -> NAVCENT(5K) + 3xMTF
 - * UAE -> Air Base & Avn assets (5K)
 - * Qatar -> Air Base (10K) + Coalition
 - * KSA -> 2K Air Base
 - * Jordan -> 2K
 - * Egypt MFO -> Bn (-)
 - * Turkey -> 1.5+K (EUCOM)
 - * Djibouti -> 4K (AFRICOM)
- What Are Nations Willing To Do?
 Coalitions When & Where?

