

# **Pre-assessing the Biden Administration's Foreign Policy: Its Views, Challenges, and Strategies**

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## **Abstract**

Challenges and threats under the Biden Administration have seen little appreciable change in 2021-2022, compared to those in 2019-2020 under Trump. The new administration has encountered a number of difficulties in its interior and foreign affairs that do not respect borders or boundaries. Thus, American diplomacy elites in Washington D.C. are looking for a merger of foreign policy and domestic policy. In regards to domestic issues, President Biden has to concentrate on repairing American politics, economy, and society, along with effort towards re-establishing unity, racial justice, and good governance of the nation. Additionally, the cornerstone of the American political system, democracy at home and abroad, has been eroded seriously both by failures inside and authoritarianism outside. In response to the crisis, the President plans to restore American democracy and to seek democratic alliances against sharp power by autocracies. Regarding foreign matters, Washington gets to increase capabilities for its great power competition in all realms, from geopolitics, trade, technology, supply chains, social discourse, COVID-19, and nuclear proliferation, to climate change. Although each of them faces difficulty, it is good and encouraging to see the new government start to revitalize its ties with allies and partners, return to international organizations, and rebuild Washington's global leadership in terms of power, commitment, and reputation.

**Keywords:** Great Power Competition, Sharp Power, Democracy, Geopolitics, Alliance

## I. Introduction

Perhaps the best way to see a new American president's foreign policy is to view his or her *National Security Strategy (NSS)*, a periodical document of how the administration plans to deal with safety, interests, and the well-being of American people. Although we do not know when the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden will publish his national security strategy report,<sup>1</sup> it is great to see him release the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* at the beginning of this March.<sup>2</sup> Beside this report, it is fair for us to gain a big picture of Biden's foreign policy through reading what the top government officials have said and done on this issue in the past. These officers are President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III, and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.



**Figure 1. Joe Biden Sworn in as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States**

Source: "Inauguration recap: Joe Biden sworn in as 46th U.S. president," *Click Orlando*, January 20, 2021, <<https://www.clickorlando.com/news/politics/2021/01/20/the-latest-flags-signs-soldiers-ahead-of-biden-inaugural/>>.

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1. President Donald Trump issued his *National Security Strategy (NSS)* on December 18, 2017, and President Barack Obama published his on February 6, 2015 and May 26, 2010.

It is not an easy task to distinguish clearly the Biden Administration’s foreign policy from the Trump Administration’s, no matter the environments they meet, the goals they expect to accomplish, and the measures they take. Their slogans—Biden places “America is back” and Trump puts “America First”—are different, and their approaches—Biden emphasizes alliances and partners whereas Trump stresses American unilateralism—appear to be distinct. So, one can see the Biden Administration re-emphasizing that Washington needs to reengage with its allies and partners all over the world and return to international organizations and regimes to rebuild its global leadership, as well as see a merger of its foreign policy and domestic policy at this moment. In fact, the challenges and threats under both the Biden and Trump governments are almost the same because situations in 2021-2022 have not changed too much from those in 2019-2020. Clearly, during these periods of time, the two governments have been faced with a number of very similar threats, such as a more divided society, racial violence and justice, hidden populism and extremism, wounded economy, climate change, infrastructure disability, fake news and disinformation, cybersecurity, the pandemic, and sharp power and geopolitical challenges placed by authoritarian nations, primarily including China and Russia.



**Figure 2. U.S.-China Strategic Competition**

Source: “After Engagement: The Unfolding U.S.-China Strategic Competition and What it Means for Global Peace and Prosperity,” *Vail Valley Partnership*, June 28, 2018, <<https://www.vailvalleypartnership.com/event/after-engagement-the-unfolding-u-s-china-strategic-competition-and-what-it-means-for-global-peace-and-prosperity/>>.

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2. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, March 3, 2021, *White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>>.

The Biden Administration does encounter challenges at home and abroad, but many of those confronting the new administration do not comply with a traditional definition of border or boundary along sovereign states. For example, a more divided American society with conflicts and turmoil would undermine Washington's domestic governance and international leadership, also leaving room for authoritarian states to criticize American democracy. Furthermore, autocracies also exert so-called sharp power to infiltrate politics and society of America, "buying" agents to influence governmental decision-making processes and generating fake news and disinformation to manipulate public opinion toward U.S. foreign policy. Additionally, as China seeks to be the factory and market of the world on the one hand and steal high technology from the United States on the other hand, Beijing is taking advantage of its speedy economic development to surpass Washington in all realms of great power competition. In response to these dangers, many already argue that the Biden Administration needs to get the nation in order before dealing with the challenges around the world.<sup>3</sup> In this paper, I make a preliminary assessment of the Biden Administration's foreign policy concerning the following key issues. First, I focus on the internal perspective of American foreign policy and point out that democracy, not only American but also global, is challenged by authoritarian states. Second, I indicate geopolitical challenges to the United States and explain key difficulties for Washington to revitalize its ties with allies and partners. In each of these two sections, I also raise the new administration's strategies to conquer the challenges it faces.

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3. Jack Sullivan, "The World After Trump—How the System Can Endure," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2018, <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-03-05/world-after-trump>>; Jeff Seldin, "Biden's National Security Approach Sees Merger of Foreign, Domestic Policy," *Voice of America*, January 29, 2021, <<https://www.voanews.com/usa/bidens-national-security-approach-sees-merger-foreign-domestic-policy>>; Joseph J. Collins, "Biden's task is building a better national security policy," *The Hill*, February 1, 2021, <<https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/536177-bidens-task-is-building-a-better-national-security-policy>>; John Schaus, "Moving Beyond 'China, China, China' in the Indo-Pacific," February 12, 2021, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/moving-beyond-china-china-china-indo-pacific>>.

## II. “Foreign Policy Is Domestic Policy and Domestic Policy Is Foreign Policy”: A Merger of American Foreign and Domestic Policies

As I summarize in the figure, a vision of the Biden Administration's foreign policy covers two parts: domestic issues and foreign ones (see Figure 3). Each of them has a long list of challenges greatly confronting the new administration. In regards to the internal agenda, it consists of improving social unity, promoting racial justice, declining political populism and extremism, reviving the economy, controlling climate change, increasing infrastructure, preventing fake news and disinformation, preserving cybersecurity, defeating COVID-19, *etc.* With regard to the external matters, it includes restoring Washington's global leadership, revitalizing ties with U.S. alliances and partners, eliminating COVID-19, controlling climate change, preventing nuclear proliferation, and increasing American capabilities to conduct great power competition in all areas of geopolitics, trade and technology wars, and social discourse against rising powers.<sup>4</sup> In spite of facing so many similar challenges and threats, one of the significant distinctions of foreign policy between the Biden and Trump administrations is that, in contrast to his predecessor, President Biden re-emphasizes a combination of domestic policy and foreign policy. The new administration prioritizes what they need to do at home.

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4. Secretary Blinken proposes eight major tasks for the Biden Administration's foreign policy. They are 1) stop COVID-19 and strengthen global health security, 2) turn around economic crisis and build a more stable and inclusive economy, 3) renew American democracy, 4) create a humane and effective immigration system, 5) revitalize ties with American allies and partners, 6) handle climate change and promote green energy, 7) maintain U.S. leading in high technology, and 8) manage its geopolitical competition with China. Antony J. Blinken, “A Foreign Policy for the American People,” March 3, 2021, *U.S. Department of State*, <<https://www.state.gov/a-foreign-policy-for-the-american-people/>>.

**Present Challenges Washington Faces**

Domestic Issues	Foreign Issues
Disunity & divided society Racial violence & injustice Political populism & extremism Wounded economy Climate change & carbon dioxide emissions Infrastructure disability Fake news & disinformation Cyberattack & cybersecurity The COVID-19 pandemic	Eroded global leadership Weakened alliances & partnerships Great power competition Geopolitical challenges Sharp power by autocracies Trade war with China Technology war with China Supply chains Confucius Institutes The COVID-19 pandemic Climate change Nuclear proliferation

Problems at home weaken US leadership abroad  
 ← Challenges outside rock foundation inside



**Strategies Washington would Take**

America is back, rejoining the Paris Agreement & World Health Organization, revitalizing the network of alliances & partnerships, and modernizing military capabilities.



**Future Picture Washington Expects**

Domestic Issues	Foreign Issues
Unity & united society Less racial violence & more justice Less political populism & extremism Restoring economy Controlling climate change & carbon dioxide emissions Strong infrastructure Controlling fake news & disinformation Preserving cybersecurity Defeating the COVID-19 pandemic	Restoring global leadership Strengthening alliances & partnerships Winning great power competition Conquering geopolitical challenges Resisting sharp power by autocracies Winning trade war with China Winning technology war with China Restructuring supply chains Inhibiting Confucius Institutes Defeating the COVID-19 pandemic Controlling climate change Controlling nuclear proliferation

Good governance at home strengthens US leadership abroad  
 ← Strong diplomacy outside assists basis inside

**Figure 3. The Biden Administration’s Foreign Policy: Views, Challenges, and Strategies**

Source: Compiled by the author.



## 1. Foundation of American Foreign Policy Is Being Seriously Eroded

The Democratic government's departure from the traditional distinction between foreign policy and domestic policy reflects elites in Washington D.C. paying attention to a phenomenon where American domestic politics, a very important foundation of U.S. foreign policy, has been washed out over the past years. In this case, many politicians, diplomats, and political scientists seem not to consider seriously that America's poor governance at home would spill over on its diplomacy abroad, and *vice-versa*. Perhaps they understand the situation but are not determined or find no way to conquer the problems. Anyway, it is correct and good for the Biden Administration to start by looking at the domestic issues of its foreign policy at this moment.

Regarding the domestic issues of American foreign policy, some of them are just typical internal ones, such as disunity and a divided society, racial justice, and infrastructure disability. Some others, however, are not merely domestic but profoundly interconnected to external factors: unemployment and economy, climate change, fake news, cybersecurity, *etc.* Each of them is not easy to overcome.

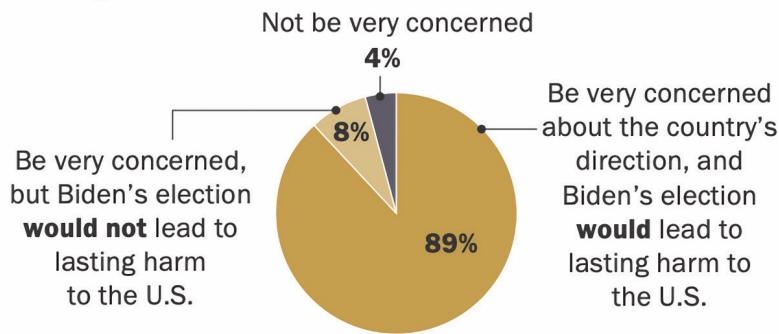
First of all, U.S. foreign policy is undermined by its domestic politics and society, primarily due to political polarization and separation of American society. Based on studies conducted by either the Pew Research Center or the *Associated Press* (AP), American people are more divided than ever following issues of politics, economy, racial justice, gender, climate change, *etc.*<sup>5</sup> A more divided society might push the government hard to deal with difficulties on domestic issues, and it is likely to generate disagreements on foreign policy as well. Moreover, in the past years, populist parties and extremists have spread across Europe and America. This phenomenon profoundly impacts their domestic politics and foreign relations because the populists and extremists not only disrupt traditional party politics, but also bring about societal turmoil. As these nontraditional politicians take power, they usually run the nation's foreign policy in a way counter to their traditional counterparts. President Trump is an example, and

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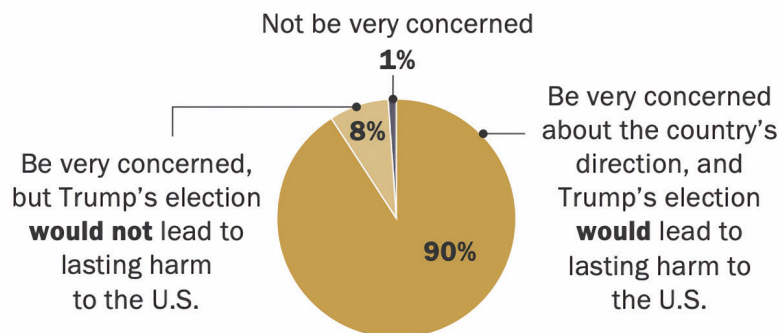
5. Michael Dimock & Richard Wike, "America is exceptional in the nature of its political divide," November 13, 2020, *Pew Research Center*, <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/11/13/america-is-exceptional-in-the-nature-of-its-political-divide/>>; "Divided America," *Associated Press*, March 14, 2021, <<https://www.ap.org/explore/divided-america/>>.

his decisions to withdraw from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the Paris Agreement, and the World Health Organization (WHO) are not merely nontraditional but also harmful to Washington’s global leadership. In order to overcome this matter, the Biden Administration needs to work on bridging the deep divisions in American politics and society, as well as efforts to counter domestic extremists. Recently, the cases of COVID-19 in 2020 and the Texas snowstorm in 2021 demonstrate that public health crises and severe natural disasters within the country also decrease the U.S. government’s governance and reputation at home and abroad, and those impact negatively on America’s image and its global leadership. They are another tough job for the new administration.

*% of **Trump supporters** who say they would \_\_\_\_ about the direction of the country if Joe Biden was elected president*



*% of **Biden supporters** who say they would \_\_\_\_ about the direction of the country if Donald Trump was reelected president*



**Figure 4. Both Trump and Biden Supporters Say If the Other Wins, It Would Result in Lasting Harm to the Country**

Source: Michael Dimock & Richard Wike, “America is exceptional in the nature of its political divide.”  
 Note: Based on register voters. No answer responses not shown.



In contrast, some domestic issues are not just internal but internally profoundly associated with externals because the United States and other countries are all in an intensively interconnected world. Traditionally, the United States is supportive of free trade, and it believes that America and the world would broadly share the economic advantages generated by international business and open markets. Based on President Trump's argument, however, it is a great paradox that the United States is the biggest victim of free trade and globalization because other nations do not behave in ways that America expects. As a result, American workers lose jobs to their foreign counterparts, unemployment at home is remaining high, and the American economy continues its downturn. This situation is not just for American manufacturing, but it also goes to high-technology, including AI, biotechnology, telecommunication, quantum computing, and space technology. Especially, as the developing country with the most potential and as Washington's strongest strategic competitor, China is catching up to the United States very quickly by so-called "reverse engineering" to steal and copy American technologies. Therefore, alongside the trade war between the United States and China, both have been involved in competition in high-tech, such as AI and 5G. That is also why the Trump Administration worked hard on trade and tech wars in the past and tried to restructure supply chains of international industries. In order to conquer this issue, the Biden Administration has to keep promoting economic development at home, investing in science and technology, along with supply chain restructuring.



**Figure 5. U.S. Department of Justice among Others Announced 23 Criminal Charges against Huawei & Its CFO Wanzhou Meng**

Source: Wikipedia, "Chinese espionage in the United States," January 28, 2019, *Wikipedia*, <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_espionage\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_espionage_in_the_United_States)>.

## **2. Democracy System Is Being Severely Challenged: Not only American but also Global**

Another difficulty to the Biden Administration's foreign policy, not only to the Democrats but also to the whole nation, is that, as the cornerstone of American political values and lifestyle, democracy is being challenged seriously at this moment. The problem originates from bad performance and governance of the government in domestic affairs on the one hand, and it is also influenced deeply by authoritarianism around the world. Ironically, Washington's adversaries and competitors, like China and Russia, are taking advantage of features of the democratic system, such as openness and freedom, and freedom of speech in particular, to infiltrate American society and manipulate politics and policy-making of the system.

On this matter, I conclude that great power competition between the United States, the dominant power, and China and Russia, rising powers, is not merely struggling for their geopolitical interest in terms of hard power and materials, but it is also contesting for belief in and value of their political system. Strategic competition between great powers covers nearly all aspects of life, from geopolitics, economy, military, culture, high-tech, and ideology, to lifestyle. Even worse is that the threats placed by authoritarian states are not just against the United States, but also toward other democracies in America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania. China, with its strong authoritarianism, nationalism, and ambition, is trying hard to project its influence into democracies and seeks to displace the United States' global leadership and the U.S.-led liberal international order—a system of norms, institutions, regimes, rules, and laws since the end of World War II. In response to this situation, the Biden Administration needs to repair American democracy at home, and has to call for a strong alliance of democracies to resist erosion and challenge from authoritarian rising powers.

The concept that democracy faces threats from authoritarianism is at a crossroads. As Secretary Blinken argues in his speech regarding the Biden Administration's foreign policy, when democracies are weak, governments are less likely to take good care of issues both from the inside and outside. Also, it is difficult for them to establish a tough alliance to fight with authoritarianism. In contrast, when democracies become strong, they are more stable and open, better in decision-making and governance, and better in promotion of economic development. Under this circumstance, democratic

states are more committed to each other and they raise greater capabilities together to cope with threats of autocracies.<sup>6</sup> As the new administration emphasizes rebuilding democracy and looking for a strong democratic alliance against authoritarian regimes, it does not imply that the United States will promote democracy in the region or over the world by risky and costly military actions. Instead, diplomacy will go prior to American military interventions; approaches other than the military will be employed first in confronting authoritarianism. This strategy is quite different from the democracy promotion policy that Washington has taken over the past two decades because the new administration does not consider that policy is assistant to its foreign policy today, and not helpful to a democratic alliance either.



**Figure 6. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken Delivers Remarks about Priorities for Administration of U.S. President Joe Biden**

Source: "China is World's 'Greatest Geopolitical Test', Blinken Says," *VOA News*, March 3, 2021, <<https://www.voanews.com/usa/china-worlds-greatest-geopolitical-test-blinken-says>>.

### **III. Geopolitical Challenges from Rising Powers**

Another harsh challenge confronting American foreign policy is geopolitical competition between the United States and rising powers, China in particular. Compared

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6. Antony J. Blinken, "A Foreign Policy for the American People."

to China, some states in the region, such as Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, and Burma, while not as powerful as China or Russia, still generate serious problems for Washington from time to time. The cases of Russia and North Korea also are difficult for the United States and have been issued on the U.S. foreign policy table. China, however, is different because it is currently the only power with political, diplomatic, economic, military, technological, and narrative capabilities to challenge American global leadership. Especially, China's military modernization and its development of a blue-water navy have become the greatest threat to U.S. troops overseas since the end of the Cold War.<sup>7</sup> Recently, Beijing also has used a new strategy in terms of sharp power to infiltrate American politics and policy, as well as other democracies. As Michael Pillsbury published his memorable book, entitled *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* in 2016, Beijing's vision of a whole new world order and its ambition of being a hegemon instead of Washington appear to be much clearer in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **1. China's Military Threat**

China's assertiveness is rooted in its political, economic, and military developments, which raise difficulties for the United States to counterbalance against expansion of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Essentially, the major difficulty for Washington to suppress growth of Beijing's military power is that China's emerging military power originates from its dynamics of internal balancing, which indicates military growth at home, instead of external balancing, implying military alliances with nations abroad. Even if the United States and the Western Hemisphere criticize its attention to military development and Washington continues repressing that by trade and technology war approaches, China still maintains a huge investment in its plan of military modernization. In reacting to the situation, the United States needs to do both internal balancing and external balancing to place a check-and-balance against China's growing military threat.

Additionally, looking at recent situations in the South China Sea (SCS) and the

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7. Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress*, May 21, 2020, Congressional Research Service, <<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33153>>.

Taiwan Strait demonstrates how strongly Washington and Beijing are struggling for geopolitical interest in the Western Pacific. First, in the SCS, China seems to have a very strong strategic advantage of *de facto* occupation and militarization of islands in the ocean. Compared to its counterpart, the United States cannot but execute the Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in disputed waters and conduct joint military drills with its allies in international waters. Currently, it seems that Washington does not have a better way to turn the table on Beijing in a short time. Second, in the Taiwan Strait, the PLA takes a gray zone strategy to keep invading in Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) and increasing its military pressure on the island. To Beijing, this strategy looks very tricky because the PLA just carries out its military actions in international space and waters, while not getting into Taiwan's territory, though the mainland does not recognize the island as a sovereign state. In reality, Beijing's practice in the Strait just pushes American warships to sail through waters nearby and Washington learns to show its military presence in response to the PLA. On February 4 and 24, 2021, two American destroyers, USS John S. McCain (DDG-56) and USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG-54) transited the Taiwan Strait.<sup>8</sup> Later on March 10, 2021, another American destroyer, USS John Finn (DDG-113) also conducted its routine transit in the Taiwan Strait.<sup>9</sup> These U.S. military actions demonstrate the Biden Administration's commitment to security in the region, as well as the Trump Administration's promise of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

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8. Sam LaGrone, "Destroyer USS John McCain Transits Taiwan Strait While Chinese Warships Watched," *USNI News*, February 4, 2021, <<https://news.usni.org/2021/02/04/destroyer-uss-john-mccain-transits-taiwan-strait-while-chinese-warships-watched>>; Mallory Shelbourne, "Destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur Transits Taiwan Strait," *USNI News*, February 25, 2021, <<https://news.usni.org/2021/02/25/destroyer-uss-curtis-wilbur-transits-taiwan-strait>>.

9. Megan Eckstein, "Theodore Roosevelt Strike Group Destroyer Conducts Taiwan Strait Transit," *USNI News*, March 10, 2021, <<https://news.usni.org/2021/03/10/theodore-roosevelt-strike-group-destroyer-conducts-taiwan-strait-transit>>.





**Figure 7. Seaman Scans the Horizon while Standing on the Bridge Wing Aboard the Guided-missile Destroyer USS John S. McCain in the Taiwan Strait**

Source: Sam LaGrone, “Destroyer USS John McCain Transits Taiwan Strait While Chinese Warships Watched.”

## **2. Revitalize with American Allies and Partners**

As President Biden and Secretary Blinken repeatedly emphasize that the United States cannot achieve its foreign policy alone, Washington has to revitalize American relations with its allies and partners and choose to return to key international institutions in fulfilling the “America is back” slogan. Although Washington is still the most powerful state around the world, many illustrate that it cannot get things done without assistance or cooperation of allies and friends. In other words, not only does the United States need alliances and partnerships, but it also has to act in concert with them.

The new administration’s argument is correct, but it does not imply the Trump Administration’s approach in terms of interacting with allies and partners is completely wrong. A couple of things need to be clarified as follows. First, in the past four years,



President Trump did not choose to cut off all American ties with its alliances and partners, but still work together with them on some issues. For example, in response to the Chinese military expansion in the SCS, Washington continued conducting military actions with its allies Japan, Australia, and the Philippines, and also with its Southern Asian partners, such as Vietnam and Singapore. Second, in the Taiwan Strait, Washington also re-emphasized that Taiwan is America's important partner in realms of economy, security, and human being value—democracy. U.S.-Taiwan relations have been greatly promoted since President Trump took office in 2017. Third, the case of Five Eyes (FVEY) is a good example of how Washington continues working on joint cooperation in intelligence sharing with its Anglo-Saxon brothers, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Fourth, President Trump's request for burden sharing of military expenditures with allies was indeed a non-traditional method of security cooperation; his speeches and decisions on this matter also negatively impacted bilateral and multilateral relationships between the American alliances. Eventually, though, the United States did not withdraw its troops from Japan, South Korea, and Germany (NATO). The Trump Administration might have pulled out of some important aspects of the international arena, but it did not lead to a comprehensive American strategic retrenchment policy.

The Biden Administration's re-engagement with American allies and partners is uneasy and is difficult to establish a democratic alliance in confronting against authoritarianism. The key is that these allies and partners have different perceptions of their security and wealth from Washington's understandings and they choose to hedge from either side of the United States or China. For example, compared to Washington, Tokyo might prefer less confrontation with China since it is much closer to China in geography. South Korea would be an even more significant case. Since its real security threat is from North Korea instead of China, however, Seoul desires to keep a warm relationship with Beijing. This preference results in its sense of China's threat theory distancing from Washington's. Europe is another case of the difficulty as well because Europe is geographically far from China on the one hand and China is an economic power to European development on the other hand.<sup>10</sup> In order to

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10. Kurt M. Campbell & Rush Doshi, "How America Can Shore Up Asian Order: A Strategy for Restoring Balance and Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs*, January 12, 2021, <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-01-12/how-america-can-shore-asian-order>>.

conquer this difficulty, Washington needs to bridge the gap of perception of Chinese challenges not only between the United States and Europe but also the United States and Asian states. Washington has to increase its economic weight in these areas.



**Figure 8. U.S. and Chinese Military Personnel in Nanjing, China, November 2018**

Source: Kurt M. Campbell & Rush Doshi, “How America Can Shore Up Asian Order: A Strategy for Restoring Balance and Legitimacy.”

#### **IV. Conclusion**

It is inspiring to see the Biden Administration outline American foreign policy very quickly after his inauguration on January 20, 2021. There are so many issues on President Biden’s diplomacy table, and none of them is easy. Situations during 2021-2022 should be very similar to those during 2019-2020. The security environment might be more challenging during these years, which is definitely tough for the new government.

It is good to see the new administration proposes a couple of new ideas in U.S. foreign policy and it raises some innovative approaches to achieve security, interests, and prosperity of the nation. The “America is back” theory is the theme of President Biden’s foreign policy and grand strategy, and currently the new administration seems to bring the nation back to a conventional picture of America: a democracy with unity, good governance, economic prosperity, and safety at home, and a global power strongly

committed to its allies and friends abroad and actively participating in international arena. "America is back" is still "America First" in some ways, which recalls American spirit, value, style, strength, commitment, and action, in fulfilling its security, interest, and development. The difference from "America First" is that the new administration would look at a merging policy of domestic and foreign issues, look for rebuilding trust and cooperation with its allies and partners, and look to returning to a position of global leadership.

It is correct for the new administration to take an active position in diplomacy. The argument of "where the United States pulls back, China will fill in," as Secretary Blinken stated in his foreign policy speech, is a strong reminder that wherever Washington chooses to concede to Beijing or some other authoritarians, they will take the room the United States leaves with no fear. Thus, Washington has to respond to all of these challenges in a positive way, even though there are still many difficulties and threats ahead. The United States is at the crossroads, and so are democracies and the world.

