

July 19, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write as former U.S. officials who have strongly supported your presidency and your initiatives to strengthen U.S. foreign and national security policy. We have welcomed the measures you have taken to promote U.S. alliances in Europe, Asia, and the Americas; to manage relations with great powers; and to address global issues such as climate change. These initiatives have been built on your decades-long record of support for responsible U.S. international engagement.

We also strongly endorse your urgent call for civility in the public debate, the critical importance of which was underscored by the recent assassination attempt on former President Trump and the tragic loss of life in Butler, Pennsylvania. Reasoned debate is essential to America's democracy and global leadership, which you have long championed.

With the deepest appreciation for your many decades of inspired leadership, we strongly believe that ongoing concerns surrounding your continued candidacy and the growing likelihood of an electoral college victory for Donald Trump put your national security accomplishments – and our country and your legacy – at an unacceptable level of risk. Donald Trump's vision, approach, and expressed intentions concerning our nation's security are in fundamental conflict with the values and principles for which you have stood. We also are keenly aware of the comments you made in March 2020, in which you indicated that you viewed yourself as “a bridge” to “an entire generation of leaders” who represent the country's future.

We strongly believe that now is the time to pass the mantle of leadership, and we respectfully urge you to do so.

With deepest appreciation,

Gordan Adams
Former Associate Director for National Security Programs, Office of Management and Budget,
1993-1998

J. Brian Atwood
Former Under Secretary of State, former Administrator, USAID

Rick Barton
Former Assistant Secretary of State

James Keough Bishop
U.S. Ambassador (Ret)

Robert Boorstin
Former NSC Senior Director

Ralph L. Boyce, Jr.
Former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia (2001-2004) and Thailand (2004-2008)

Peter Bradford
Former Commissioner, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Kenneth Brill
Former U.S. Ambassador

Rosa Brooks
Former Counselor to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy

Scott Busby
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and former Director, National Security Council staff

Piper Campbell
Former U.S. Ambassador

Wendy J. Chamberlin
U.S. Ambassador (Ret)

Richard Christenson
Former Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassies in South Korea and Japan

Richard A Clarke
Former National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism

Steven Coffey
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Democracy, and Labor

Geoffrey Cowan
Former Director, Voice of America

Chester A. Crocker
Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

Peter Eicher
Former Deputy U.S. Representative to the UN Human Rights Commission.

Mark Fitzpatrick,
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Non-Proliferation (Acting)

Bennett Freeman
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Peter W Galbraith
Former U.S. Ambassador to Croatia

Anthony W. Gambino
Former USAID Mission Director to the DR Congo

Larry Garber
Former Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID

Jonathan S. Gration
Former U.S. Ambassador to Kenya

Holly Hammonds
Former Senior Director for International Economic Affairs, National Security and National Economic Councils

William C Harrop
U.S. Ambassador (Ret)

Robert Herman
Former Member, U.S. State Department Policy Planning Staff

Paul Hughes
Former Deputy Director, Humanitarian Assistance and Anti-Landmine Policy, OASD (SOLIC), Office of Secretary of Defense, and retired US Army Colonel

Karl F. Inderfurth
former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs (1997-2001)

Thomas C. Krajeski
Former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen and to Bahrain

Anthony Lake
Former National Security Advisor

David Lambertson
U.S. Ambassador (Ret)

Claudio A. Lilienfeld
Former Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative

Frank Loy
Former Undersecretary of State

Jamie Metzl

Former National Security Council staff, 1997-1999, Senior Coordinator for International Public Information, U.S. State Department, 1999-2001

Diane Orentlicher

Former Deputy for War Crimes Issues, U.S. Department of State

Susan W. O'Sullivan

Former Asia Director, State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Maria Otero

Former Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights

Ted Piccone

Former Associate Director, Policy Planning, U.S. Department of State, and former Director, National Security Council staff

Charles L. Pritchard, Sr.

Former Ambassador and Special Envoy for Negotiations with North Korea;
Former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director,
Asian Affairs, NSC

Susan Reichle

Senior Foreign Service officer (Ret), Counselor USAID (Ret)

Peter F. Romero

Former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State

Barnett R. Rubin

Former Senior Advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (2009-2013)

David Sandalow

Former Under Secretary of Energy, former Assistant Secretary of State and former Senior Director, National Security Council

Teresita C. Schaffer

Former U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East and South Asia

Eric Schwartz

Former Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration and former NSC Senior Director

Tod Sedgwick

Former U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia

Daniel Serwer
Former Special Envoy, U.S. Department of State

John Shattuck
Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Rights, and Labor and former Ambassador to the Czech Republic

David B. Shear
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense

Derek Shearer
Former U.S. Ambassador to Finland

Tara Sonenshine
Former Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Daniel Spiegel
Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva

Richard W. Teare
Former Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu

Richard Wilcox
Former Director, Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs, National Security Council

E. Ashley Wills
Former Ambassador to Sri Lanka and The Maldives