

President Biden, on the eve of his 100th day in office, delivered a historic address to a joint session of Congress. The President also convened a climate summit with the world's leading economies. Divisions within the Republican Party demonstrate former President Trump's hold on the party. President Biden declared an end to the war in Afghanistan and pledged to withdraw all American troops by September 11, 2021. Relations with Russia are tense and the administration sanctioned Russian entities and individuals for a range of actions. A massive cyberattack forced one of the largest fuel pipelines in the United States to shut down. The results of the decennial census in the United States were released and will realign some state's power in the Congress.

Biden's address to Congress and the First 100 Days

On April 28, President Biden delivered an address to a joint session of Congress to mark his 100th day in office. For the first time in American history, the President addressed the House chamber standing in front of two women, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Vice President Kamala Harris. Biden acknowledged the unprecedented challenges facing America—the worst pandemic in a century, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and the worst attack on our democracy since the Civil War—and declared that [“America is on the move again, turning peril into possibility, crisis to opportunity, setbacks into strength.”](#) The President used the address to promote the [“American Families Plan,”](#) what the President called “human infrastructure” and he said that to win the competition for the future we need a “once-in-a-generation investment in our families and children.” This \$1.8 trillion plan builds on the administration's earlier efforts to rebuild and remake the American economy in what are (hopefully) the waning days of the pandemic—the first step was the \$1.9 trillion [“American Rescue Plan,”](#) which was signed into law in mid-March, followed by the \$2.3 trillion jobs and infrastructure plan, called the [“American Jobs Plan,”](#) which was unveiled in March. To pay for these multi-trillion dollar proposals, the President has called for increasing the corporate tax rate, increasing the rate paid by high-earning Americans, closing a number of tax loopholes and increased enforcement.

During the address, Biden also called on Congress to pass a number of measures, including a reauthorization of the [Violence Against Women Act](#), the [COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act](#), and sweeping election integrity and voter access legislation, the [For the People Act](#). President Biden also called for the passage of a variety of gun control measures and immigration reform. Delivering the [Republican response to the address](#), South Carolina Senator Tim Scott called it a “partisan wish-list” and said Democrats are trying to put Washington “even more in the middle of your life.”

During the campaign and the transition, President Biden made a number of promises on what he would accomplish during his first 100 days. On the pandemic, he pledged a “wartime” effort and promised 100 million vaccine shots administered by his 100th day—on this measure he exceeded expectations and over 220 million vaccine doses have been administered. Biden promised economic relief and that was met with the passage of the American Rescue Plan that included direct payments to most Americans. The President delivered on his promise to return to the Paris Climate Agreement and held a climate summit in April (more in the following section). Biden delivered on expanding health care access by reopening enrollment under the Affordable Care Act—800,000 additional

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people have signed up for health insurance. On racial equity and immigration, proposals have been submitted to Congress but nothing has passed yet. The President also promised a cabinet of unprecedented diversity—the Biden Administration has the first Black secretary of defense, the first openly gay cabinet secretary, the first woman to lead the Department of the Treasury, the first Latino and immigrant to serve as secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, the first Latino to serve as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary.

Biden Reasserts American Leadership on Climate

In late April, coinciding with Earth Day, President Biden convened 40 world leaders for a virtual climate summit. The President [set a target](#) for reducing American emissions 50-52% below 2005 levels by 2030. Other countries [made additional pledges](#) to cut emissions. The summit was the first in a series of meetings of world leaders, including the G7 and G20, ahead of annual UN climate talks in November in Glasgow. In advance of the summit, the United States and China [announced additional actions](#) to tackle climate change.

Turning Point for the Republican Party

There are sharp divisions within the Republican Party. On one side is Congresswoman Liz Cheney (R-WY), the House Republican Conference Chair, on the other is the Trump-wing of the party. Cheney's repeated comments criticizing Trump and saying his baseless claims that the election was stolen are "a threat to democracy" have pushed Republicans closer to ousting her from leadership. GOP lawmakers are reportedly considering Congresswoman Elise Stefanik of New York, a Trump loyalist, to replace her. Cheney survived one leadership challenge earlier this year, now her removal appears all but certain. In an [op-ed in the Washington Post](#), Cheney warned of "profound long-term damage" from Trump, saying that at this moment our democracy is in danger and that the GOP is at a turning point. This episode illustrates how thoroughly the Republican party has come to be defined by fealty to the twice impeached former president and tolerance of misinformation rather than policy principals.

Ending the "Forever War"

Declaring that it is time to end America's longest war, President Biden announced that all U.S. troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021—the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks that prompted American involvement in Afghanistan. Stating that he is the fourth U.S. president to preside over American troops in Afghanistan, Biden declared that he would "not pass this responsibility on to a fifth." Reactions to the announcement have been mixed. [Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell](#) warned the decision was a "grave mistake" and that Biden "needs to explain to the American people how abandoning our partners and retreating in the face of the Taliban will make America safer." [House Speaker Nancy Pelosi](#) issued a statement supporting the president's decision. The President consulted with his cabinet, NATO allies, members of Congress,

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and the Afghan government prior to making his decision and discussed the matter with former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama before the announcement.

Relations with Russia

President Biden has promised to be tougher on Russia than President Trump and early moves have born this out. The administration recently imposed [sanctions](#) on Russia for interfering in the U.S. election and for their involvement in the SolarWinds cyberattack. The President signed an executive order blocking the transfer and exporting of property of certain individuals, 10 Russian embassy officials were expelled, and the administration said the Russian foreign intelligence service, the SVR, was behind the cyberattack. Russia retaliated by expelling 10 American diplomats and banning eight current and former U.S. officials from entering Russia. In remarks following the sanctions announcement, President Biden spoke of his [recent conversation](#) with Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying they had a “candid and respectful” discussion and that the United States wants a “stable and predictable relationship.” The President also invited Putin to meet in a third country later this year—that meeting is likely to occur after the G7 summit in June.

Cyberattack Closes Major U.S. Pipeline

One of America’s largest pipelines was forced to shut down after being hit by a [ransomware attack](#) in early May. The operator of the system, Colonial Pipeline, preemptively shut off all operations following the attack. Colonial operates 5,500 miles of pipelines and carries 45 percent of the East Coast’s fuel supplies. The attack is believed to have been carried out by DarkSide, an Eastern Europe-based criminal gang. This is one of the most significant and successful attacks on U.S. energy infrastructure we know and it exposed its vulnerability. The Biden administration issued an [emergency declaration](#), covering 17 states and the District of Columbia, to address this disruption.

Census Reveals Shift in Political Power

In accordance with the [U.S. Constitution](#), every ten years the United States conducts a census. The [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the body charged with overseeing the count, recently announced the 2020 results and the official population of the United States is 331,449,281. This was one of the most challenging population counts in American history due to the disruption caused by the ongoing pandemic and [efforts during the Trump administration](#) to add a citizenship question and exclude undocumented immigrants. The census affects how many seats each state has in the House of Representatives, as well as the number of votes they have in the Electoral College. Texas, Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina and Oregon all gained seats in Congress, while California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia each lost one. This [electoral shift](#) reflects the decade’s broad population shifts: slow growth in the Northeast and Midwest, and gains in the South and Western states. The changes are expected to favor Republicans because red-leaning states are gaining more seats on net, and because the GOP controls more state legislatures that redraw the congressional maps.

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Personnel Updates

Department of Commerce – **Rick Spinrad** is the nominee for undersecretary for oceans and atmosphere. **Robert Santos** is the nominee for director of the Census Bureau. **Alejandra Castillo** is the assistant secretary for economic development.

Department of Defense - Former California Congressman **Gil Cisneros** is the nominee for undersecretary for personnel and readiness. **Frank Kendall** is the nominee for secretary of the Air Force, **Gina Ortiz Jones** is the nominee for undersecretary. **Christine Wormuth** is the nominee for secretary of the Army.

Department of Energy – **Jill Hruby** is the nominee for undersecretary and head of the National Nuclear Security Administration. **Andrew Light** is the nominee for assistant secretary for international affairs.

Department of Homeland Security – **John Tien** is the nominee for deputy secretary. **Robert Silvers** is the nominee for undersecretary for strategy, policy and plans. **Chris Magnus** is the nominee for commissioner of Customs and Border Protection.

Department of the Interior – **Tommy Beaudreau** is the nominee for deputy secretary.

Department of State – **Wendy Sherman** was confirmed as deputy secretary. **Victoria Nuland** was confirmed as undersecretary for policy. **Marcia Bernicat** is the nominee for director general of the foreign service. **Gayle Smith** is the coordinator for global COVID-19 response and health security. **Anne Witkowski** is the nominee for assistant secretary for conflict stabilization. **Sarah Margon** is the nominee for assistant secretary for democracy, human rights and labor. **Karen Donfried** is the nominee for assistant secretary for European and Eurasian affairs. **Lee Satterfield** has been nominated for assistant secretary for education and cultural affairs. **Michele Jeanne Sison** is the nominee for assistant secretary for international organization affairs. **C.S.Eliot Kang** has been nominated for assistant secretary for international security and non-proliferation. **Jessica Lewis** is the nominee for assistant secretary for political and military affairs. The chief diversity and inclusion officer is **Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley**.

White House – **Chris Inglis** has been named national cyber director. **Robert Berschinski** is the senior director for democracy and human rights on the NSC staff.

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