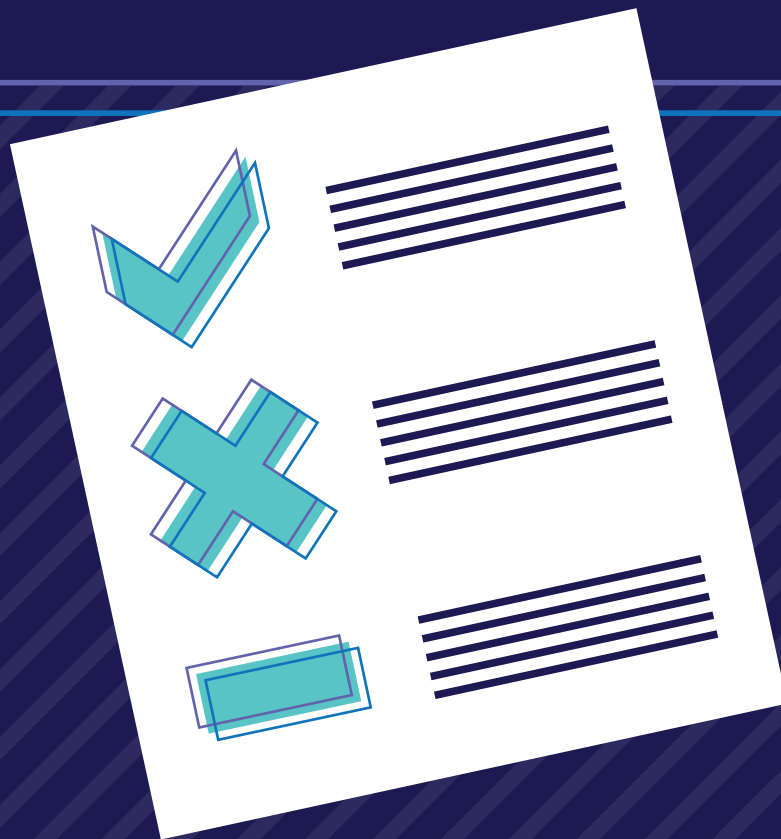


THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST 100 DAYS:

TOWARD A FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY?



SUMMARY

Since taking office on January 20, 2021, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have committed to “pursue an aggressive and comprehensive plan to further women’s economic and physical security and ensure that women can fully exercise their civil rights.”¹ The Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States appreciates and applauds the many actions taken by the Biden-Harris administration in its first 100 days to advance our core goals of gender equality, human rights, bodily autonomy, environmental integrity and peace.

Our review assigns the Biden-Harris administration an overall score of an A-

It has made considerable progress in the areas of *policy articulation* and *leadership and structures*, where it has taken the majority of the Coalition’s elucidated recommendations for the 100-day window, as well as a few more. However, in the areas of *funding* and *accountability* our review finds progress is incomplete, owing mostly to the narrow window of time available of the first 100 days. So far, the administration has not focused policy, personnel or resources on how the U.S. government will prioritize gender equality in the global arena, and that is critical for success. Due to the tight time constraints of the 100-day window, these two areas have been left unscored in the current scorecard; they will be revisited after the administration’s first year, when more developments in these areas can be expected. We close with a snapshot of recommendations for the administration’s next 265 days, and encourage a review of the comprehensive set of Coalition priorities and recommendations as articulated in our signature white paper, *Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States*.

¹The Biden Agenda for Women

BACKGROUND

The Biden-Harris administration took office in the wake of a number of reversals of women's rights, human rights and gender equality efforts by the U.S. government, promising to "build back better." 2021 is also a time of global reflection on the status of women and girls around the world. This year includes several delayed global events marking the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, where governments have the opportunity to define and announce ambitious investments and policies on women's leadership and gender equality.

The [Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States](#) is a collective effort to develop a vision for the highest standard of U.S. foreign policy that promotes overarching goals of gender equality, human rights, bodily autonomy, peace and environmental integrity, while prioritizing the articulation of concrete policy recommendations. The Coalition has over 80 organizational members to date.

This 100-day scorecard documents the progress made by the Biden-Harris administration in the advancement of a feminist foreign policy as measured against the executive actions called for in [A Feminist Foreign Policy for the United States: A Memo to the Next Administration](#) (the Memo) and the Coalition's signature policy paper, [Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States](#). It also includes an overview of what is left to be done, as well as additional, relevant actions taken by the administration that were not included in the Coalition's recommendations but nonetheless merit mention and credit in this context.

OVERVIEW

Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States defines feminist foreign policy as:

"...the policy of a state that defines its interactions with other states, as well as movements and other non-state actors, in a manner that prioritizes peace, gender equality and environmental integrity; enshrines, promotes, and protects the human rights of all; seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal and male-dominated power structures; and allocates significant resources, including research, to achieve that vision. Feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across all of its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and co-created with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad."²

²[Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States](#)

The U.S. brings a complicated legacy to global engagement as both a colony and colonizer, with a history of struggles for racial and gender equality and environmental integrity and justice, both at home and abroad. With that past in mind, as well as the associated tensions that continue to manifest in the present day, a number of key principles should underpin a U.S. feminist foreign policy:



First, women's rights are human rights. U.S. foreign policy must respect the rights recognized by international institutions and agreements, including ensuring human rights due diligence when acting jointly with other States.



Second, U.S. foreign policy should be representative, inclusive, responsive and accountable to stakeholders. A feminist approach demands gender parity in representation, as well as active commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), especially with regard to gender and race.



Third, a feminist foreign policy should take an intersectional approach to feminism. This approach that takes into account and seeks to address the multiple and often intersecting forms of discrimination, such as those based on gender, race, age, language, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, Indigenous identity, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, nationality or migrant status.

The process to craft the Coalition's vision for a feminist foreign policy in the U.S. also unveiled a few key thematic priorities that should be centered within a U.S. feminist foreign policy. These include **bodily autonomy**: sexual and reproductive health and rights, freedom from discrimination, violence, coercion, exploitation and abuse; **peace**: implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, advancing disarmament and related activities more broadly; and **environmental integrity**: maintaining the integrity of biophysical processes that support all living organisms and centering the leadership and experiences of those who are historically at the frontlines of degradation and who often face systemic barriers to accessing resources, exercising human rights, mobility and shaping decisions and influencing policy.

A country's foreign policy is a statement of its values and priorities. The implementation of foreign policy, across all its various levers, is one demonstration of how a nation lives its values. Now more than ever, the United States needs a feminist approach—one that fundamentally alters the way the nation conducts itself; prioritizing the importance of diplomatic solutions, cooperating with allies and international institutions; embracing a progressive, inclusive and rights-based agenda; valuing the voices of the most marginalized; and addressing racist, ableist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic and patriarchal and/or male-dominated systems of power.

OVERALL SCORE:

Our review finds that the Biden-Harris administration has overall **earned an A-** from the Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy.

This White House and those appointed by the President have taken many steps that align with the Coalition’s core principles of gender equality; diversity, intersectionality, equity, and representation; peace; diplomacy; bodily autonomy; environmental integrity; and human rights. However, when looking at the issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the first 100 days, the administration has heavily focused on domestic issues rather than global ones and has not yet demonstrated transformative action on U.S. foreign policy.

The scorecard follows the framework laid out in *A Feminist Foreign Policy for the United States: A Memo to the Next Administration*, which includes four core areas for U.S. leadership on gender equality, human rights, environmental integrity and peace:



Policy articulation,



Leadership and structures,



Funding,



Accountability.



In each of these areas, the Biden-Harris administration received credit for articulating policies and taking actions outlined in the Memo and/or recommended in its preceding white paper, [Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States](#). Points were deducted only where actions articulated in the Memo that would have been feasible in the first 100 days were not taken—recommendations that were not possible in this window of time, such as an annual report, have not been deducted. It is too early to score for transformative and structural changes that could not be accomplished within the narrow window of the administration’s first 100 days. Future scorecards evaluating annual progress will evaluate some of these longer-term and structural actions based on recommendations articulated in the above-referenced documents.

A more detailed explanation of the scoring can be found at the end of the document.

SCORECARD LEGEND:



Complete



Not complete



Incomplete



PART I: POLICY ARTICULATION

The Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy called for an overarching U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy to guide the work within executive branch departments and agencies. While a feminist foreign policy has yet to be explicitly announced, our review finds that, more than any other U.S. administration in history, the Biden-Harris administration has communicated through executive orders, statements and speeches that it is the policy of the United States to “establish and pursue a comprehensive approach to ensure that the Federal Government is working to advance equal rights and opportunities, regardless of gender or gender identity, in advancing domestic and foreign policy.”³ Moreover, the administration has taken actions to create and launch a national

gender strategy, akin in content, if not name, to the national feminist policy the Coalition called for in its recommendations.

This strategy includes four of our five recommended elements of foreign policy: diplomacy, development, trade, and defense (immigration was not specifically listed) and calls for effective integration within—and across—executive branch agencies. This commitment, combined with eleven executive actions and statements in line with our recommendations and an additional five actions in line with Coalition principles—if not explicitly recommended in one of our two policy papers—have earned the Biden-Harris administration an A- in the area of policy articulation.



THE FOLLOWING COALITION RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED:



- ✓ Re-engaged in the Paris Agreement [January 20](#)
- ✓ Rejoined the World Health Organization [January 21](#)
- ✓ Reversed harmful Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping [January 25](#)
- ✓ Repealed the expanded Mexico City Policy and resumed funding to the United Nations Population Fund [January 28](#)
- ✓ Issued a presidential memorandum stating, “It is the policy of my Administration to support women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States, as well as globally.” [January 28](#)
- ✓ Ended family separation and committed to expeditiously reuniting families [February 2](#)
- ✓ Reengaged with the UN Human Rights Council [February 8](#)
- ✓ Formed an independent review commission at the Department of Defense to address sexual assault in the military [February 26](#)
- ✓ Issued Executive Order 14020 that mandates a national gender strategy including one for foreign policy including diplomacy, development, trade, and defense (In addition, the Executive Order mentions implementation of U.S. Government commitments to women’s involvement in peace and security efforts and humanitarian assistance.) [March 8](#)
- ✓ Recognized the merits of feminist foreign policy’s “representation, rights and resources” framework for the White House Gender Policy Council work on foreign policy at a Council on Foreign Relations event [March 8](#)
- ✓ Announced the reinstatement of reporting on women, reproductive rights and access to healthcare into the annual State Department’s human rights reports. [March 30](#)

³Executive Order on the establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council

RECOMMENDATIONS YET TO BE COMPLETED:

The recommendations in the left column are missed opportunities for the first 100 days, but could still be accomplished. The recommendations in the right column marked with a dash for incomplete will take more than 100 days to complete and are not counted in the scoring.

-  Include immigration policy in the foreign policy mandate of the forthcoming national gender strategy alongside trade, development, defense and diplomacy
-  Task the co-chairs of White House Gender Policy Council to work with legislative counterparts to advance U.S. ratification of CEDAW

-  Develop U.S. Strategy for a Feminist Foreign Policy
-  Outline how gender will be integrated throughout foreign policy, including climate and environmental policy, and what actions will be undertaken to ensure structures are transformed to advance intersectional gender equality

Additional actions the Biden-Harris administration has taken in its first 100 days to advance the principles and spirit of feminist foreign policy (one collective bonus point):

- Hosted a virtual discussion on U.S. priorities for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65) with civil society representatives [March 11](#)
- Stated in Vice President Harris' speech at CSW: "The status of women is the status of democracy." [March 15](#)
- Promises made by the new U.S. trade representative to tackle a long list of challenges that include racial and gender trade inequities in U.S. trade issues. [March 21](#)
- Rebuked Turkey after it quit the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention; Biden is "deeply disappointed" [March 21](#)
- Released a statement on International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: "We must recognize the ways that racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of marginalization intersect with and compound one another. And, we must all strive to eliminate inequities in our policies, remove barriers to full participation in our societies, and push for open and inclusive processes that respect all people everywhere." [March 21](#)

SCORECARD LEGEND:

Complete



Not complete









Incomplete

B+ PART II: LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURES

The structure of the White House Gender Policy Council mirrors most of the Coalition's recommendations for a Feminist Policy Council. It has an explicit mandate to develop and submit to the President a government-wide strategy for advancing gender equity and equality in the United States and around the world. On March 8, President Biden, through Executive Order 14020, launched the White House Gender Policy Council to coordinate federal government efforts to advance gender equity and equality. In addition, he appointed two co-chairs, one of whom also serves as the Executive Director of the Council. The Biden-Harris administration has also nominated a cabinet that reflects gender parity, diversity and inclusive representation.






The creation and structure of the White House Gender Policy Council includes four out of five recommendations made by the Coalition, including a full-time director that answers to the President and Agency focal points. Yet, to date, appointments focused on gender and foreign policy have not been made at the White House Gender Policy Council nor the National Security Council. The commitment of the Biden-Harris Administration, combined with six additional actions and appointments in line with the Coalition's recommendations, however, have earned the administration a B+ in the area of leadership and structures.

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEMO HAVE BEEN COMPLETED:

-  Committed to, and made, Cabinet nominations that reflect gender parity, diversity, and inclusive representation [Campaign](#)
-  Launched the White House Gender Policy Council [March 8](#)
-  Appointed a Director of the White House Gender Policy Council and tasked that person with the development and oversight of a U.S. Strategy to advance gender equity and equality [March 8](#)
-  Directed Agencies to appoint specific focal points to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy and agency action plans [January 28](#)
-  Announced the creation of a new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at the State Department reporting directly to the Secretary and directing other efforts within each bureau and appointed Ambassador-level individual to fill the role [February 24](#) and [April 12](#), respectively
-  Sent a high-level and diverse delegation to the United Nations Commission on Status on Women that for the first time included representation from the White House with the Vice President leading the delegation [March 15](#)

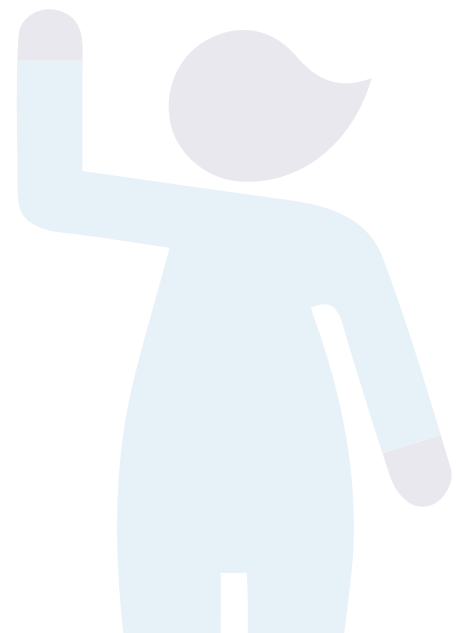
RECOMMENDATIONS YET TO BE COMPLETED:

The recommendations in the left column are missed opportunities for the first 100 days, but could still be accomplished. The recommendations in the right column will take more than 100 days to complete and are not counted in the scoring.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Appoint full-time, foreign policy personnel at the Gender Policy Council  Appoint full-time, senior director for gender on the National Security Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Launch a civil society advisory council for the White House Gender Policy Council and host the first joint meeting  Send a high-level delegation to the June Generation Equality Forum to announce a commitment on feminist foreign policy  Commit to structural change across all foreign policy levers including personnel systems; procurement policies; and program planning, implementation and evaluation |
|--|---|

Additional actions the Biden-Harris administration has taken in its first 100 days to advance the principles and spirit of feminist foreign policy (one collective bonus point):

- Nominated two women generals to elite, four-star commands [March 8](#)
- Appointed a Special Assistant to the President for Gender Policy and Senior Advisor for Gender-Based Violence to serve as staff to the White House Gender Policy Council [March 23](#)

**SCORECARD LEGEND:**

Complete



Not complete



Incomplete

PART III: FUNDING

INCOMPLETE

(not factored into scoring)

The Coalition called for dedicated foreign assistance funding to promote gender equality, the use of gender analysis in U.S. international programs, and long-term investment in women's rights organizations and feminist movements in its white paper, Transition Memo and in a subsequent one-pager, [All Foreign Policy Spending Should Take Gender Into Account](#). As of this writing, the Biden-Harris administration has not put forward its first budget request, although it did release a summary "skinny" budget indicating its priority focus areas: a global pandemic, an economic crisis, a national reckoning on racial inequity, and the growing threat of climate change.

This is only an outline of the discretionary funding request for FY 2022 and should not be evaluated as a complete reflection of the administration's budget priorities. *The outline*

proposes \$1 billion investment in gender-based violence prevention and response domestically and robust funding for diplomacy, development, and economic statecraft generally, but does not include details about resources requested to implement the work of White House Gender Policy Council or the Coalition's recommendations. Moreover, the Executive Order that established the White House Gender Policy Council states that each agency will bear its own expenses for participating in the Council.

In summary, while the budget details that have been released are inadequate to evaluate at this point, there are concerning indications that this agenda may not be as well-resourced as the Coalition has recommended. In the coming weeks and months, the administration should invest in the bold policy vision and personnel structures it has articulated to date.

RECOMMENDATIONS YET TO BE COMPLETED:

-  Commit resources to implement the work of White House Gender Policy Council
-  Request that 100 percent of U.S. international programs consider and incorporate intersectional gender analysis in program design, implementation and evaluation
-  Request that 20 percent of U.S. foreign assistance funding be dedicated to promoting gender equality as a primary goal
-  Request increased investment in women's rights organizations and feminist movements
-  Request Agency-specific, costed action plans to implement the Strategy, including necessary policy, staffing, training, budget (including additional programmatic funding needed), legislative affairs and communications needs



PART IV: ACCOUNTABILITY


INCOMPLETE

(not factored into scoring)





The Coalition called for government agencies to be transparent and held accountable for progress in implementing a feminist foreign policy. Executive Order 14020 outlines a process to create a government-wide strategy to advance gender equity and equality that responds to a number of Coalition recommendations. It

includes specific, time-bound objectives including the creation of the strategy (to be completed 200 days after March 8), an annual report on the implementation of the strategy (March 8, 2022), the designation of agency representatives to the Council (30 days after March 8), and semi-annual agency reporting on strategy implementation.

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION FROM THE MEMO HAS BEEN COMPLETED:

-  Committed to an annual report by the Gender Policy Council for submission to the President and the release of a public version [March 8](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS YET TO BE COMPLETED:

-  Designate agency representatives to the White House Gender Policy Council (30 days after March 8 per the Executive Order)
-  Develop government-wide strategy for advancing gender equality (due Fall 2021 per the Executive Order)
-  Develop agency-specific, costed action plans to implement the Strategy, including
 - necessary policy, staffing, training, budget (including additional programmatic funding needed), legislative affairs and communications needs
-  Develop agency-specific gender policies that are derived from the agency action plans and are both internally and externally facing, from personnel decisions to agency programs and interventions

Additional actions the Biden-Harris administration has taken in its first 100 days to advance the principles and spirit of feminist foreign policy:

- Committed to semi-annual agency reports to the Council [March 8](#)



CONCLUSION

The Coalition for a Feminist Foreign Policy appreciates and applauds the many actions taken by the administration in its first 100 days to advance the core goals of gender equality, human rights, bodily autonomy, environmental integrity and peace. These clear commitments are signposts that this Administration takes these issues seriously and is working to transform America's approach to advancing gender equity at home and abroad. Its engagement with civil society has been meaningful to date and we look forward to additional, structured consultations.

There have, however, been missed opportunities across the core areas. The Coalition would have liked to see the integration of gender issues into the administration's top four priorities as well as the foreign policy priorities laid out in Secretary of State Blinken's speech on March 3. Furthermore, the Biden-Harris administration did not send a high-level delegation to the kickoff of the Generation Equality Forum in Mexico City in March.

Further, the Biden-Harris administration has not yet focused policy, personnel or resources on how the U.S. government will interact with other state and non-state actors to prioritize peace and gender equality. While domestic issues that disproportionately impact women have been included in COVID-relief legislation and the proposed infrastructure act, it is unclear if gender analysis was used to shape the programs. Certainly the values expressed and actions outlined in domestic legislation have not been articulated to the same degree in the global arena.

Looking ahead, the Coalition recommends that the White House Gender Policy Council



Concentrate more attention to issues of U.S. foreign policy including defense, development, diplomacy, immigration and trade with the cross-cutting issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, climate change and peace;



Launch a civil society advisory council for the White House Gender Policy Council and host the first joint meeting;



Incorporate the Coalition's principles and recommendations for a U.S. feminist foreign policy in the forthcoming presidential budget request and government-wide strategy for advancing gender equality; and



Send a high-level delegation to the June Generation Equality Forum and announce a commitment on feminist foreign policy.

The Coalition looks forward to bold thinking and transformative action on U.S. foreign policy and stand by to support the administration as it moves toward a feminist foreign policy in the United States.

NOTES ON SCORING:

Scores were based on recommendations made in *A Feminist Foreign Policy for the United States: A Memo to the Next Administration* and the white paper, *Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States*. The number of completed recommendations was divided by the total number of recommendations. Recommendations that could not be completed within 100 days were not included in the score. These are specifically noted in their respective sections and represent 5 recommendations besides the two incomplete sections. Incomplete sections did not factor into the overall score but will be scored at the one-year mark. Where the Biden-Harris administration took additional actions that signal the implementation of policy and structural and leadership shifts that are necessary to achieve an inclusive and intersectional feminist foreign policy, these efforts were noted in the additional action sections and were awarded one collective bonus point for each section they were noted in (Policy and Leadership and Structures).

Overall score: A-

17 completed recommendations,
4 recommendations not accomplished,
2 bonus points (19/21 = 90%)

Policy articulation: A-

11 completed recommendations,
2 recommendations not accomplished,
1 bonus point (12/13 = 92%)

Leadership and structures: B+

6 completed recommendations,
2 recommendations not accomplished,
1 bonus point (7/8 = 87%)

Funding: Incomplete, did not factor into overall score

Accountability: Incomplete, did not factor into overall score

The grading scale follows a U.S. style grading system in which 93-100% is an A, 90-92% is an A-, 87-89% is a B+, 83-86% is a B, 80-82% is a B-, 77-79% is a C+, 73-76% is a C, 70-72% is a C-, and so on with an F being anything below 60%.

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