

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- *An opponent of diplomacy and promoter of war and bigotry has no business being our nation's top diplomat.*
- *Doing more for Syria doesn't have to mean blowing things up and killing more people.*
- *Why is America's elite rolling out the red carpet for an autocrat responsible for death and famine in Yemen?*

POMPEO'S CHANCES OF CONFIRMATION 'ARE NOT LOOKING GOOD'

Foreign Policy this week [confirmed](#) what we already knew: CIA Director Mike Pompeo is bracing for a brutal confirmation fight. FP reports that Republicans are getting nervous, Democrats are energized, and activists are pushing to make history:

Republicans are banking on eking out a win on Pompeo's confirmation, but Democrats on the committee are still gearing up for a fight. "It's definitely not a done deal," says one Democratic senate aide. "His chances in the committee are not looking good." ...

If all committee Democrats and [Sen Rand] Paul vote against Pompeo, **it will be the first time in modern history** a secretary of state nominee moves to a Senate-wide vote without the approval of the foreign relations committee. ...

[T]he White House will be lobbying hard to peel away a few Democrats. **But left-leaning activists are also pressing hard for Democrats to oppose Pompeo's nomination**, portraying it as a crucial test of unity in an increasingly divided party.

Read our latest [blog post](#) for more on the Pompeo's nomination battle.

Click [here](#) for our latest talking points on opposing the Pompeo nomination, and [here](#) and [here](#) for the worst of what Pompeo has said and written.

Meanwhile, Sunrise Movement and Climate Hawks Vote this week [delivered](#) more than 20,000 signatures asking the Senate to block Pompeo's nomination.

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THE U.S. CAN'T WALK AWAY FROM SYRIA

The Trump administration announced this week that, well, the U.S. military will continue what it has been doing in Syria. Trump said he wants U.S. troops out (including [freezing funds](#) for recovery efforts), but was [seemingly overruled](#) by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Pentagon, the State Department, and the intelligence community. We're not exactly sure that's how the chain of command is supposed to work but nevertheless, it appears that around 2,000 or so American servicemembers will stay in Syria indefinitely or until ISIS is deemed it has been defeated.

OUR TAKE:

- While likely for all the wrong reasons, Trump is right to want to withdraw U.S. military forces from Syria.
- There is no military solution to the Syrian conflict.
- While previous war authorizations have been cited to justify fighting ISIS in Syria, there is clearly no authorization for U.S. troops to stay to combat Assad, Russia, or Iran.
- But the U.S. cannot simply walk away: we have a responsibility, via diplomacy, to help end the conflict and alleviate the human suffering there.

See our full statement [here](#) and talking points [here](#).

WHY IS THE U.S. MEDIA FAWNING OVER SAUDI CROWN PRINCE MOHAMMED BIN SALMAN?

From a [softball interview](#) on 60 Minutes and [cushy sit-downs](#) with some of Washington's [elite](#), to Hollywood [rolling out the red carpet](#), Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman's ongoing [tour](#) of the United States seems to be going pretty well for him.

MBS, as he is known, has been selling (albeit fairly mild) reforms in the Gulf kingdom, such as finally allowing women to drive a car, in order to entice more American investment in Saudi Arabia. But of course, while allowing women to get behind the wheel is probably the absolute least one could do to reform a society where women are severely oppressed and largely have no role in public life, the problems inside and stemming from Saudi Arabia are far deeper than a casual observer of MBS's time in the States may realize.

Even Politico's widely-read generalist morning tip sheet [noticed the disparity](#) between the coverage of MBS's trip to the realities of his rule:

-- **IT'S FASCINATING** how the U.S. media is covering MBS's visit to the United States. He's the autocratic head of a petrostate that has been scolded for human rights abuses.

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Yet, he's being covered as if he's a harmless yet visionary British royal. This is a guy who locked up much of the country's upper class in a Ritz Carlton not too long ago.

"[W]e've been struck by how MBS has been treated in the US," Politico's Jake Sherman [tweeted](#). "He imprisoned a large swath of Saudi society. His country is constantly criticized for human rights abuses. Women are akin to second-class citizens. He's an autocrat. And he gets big groups in LA, NY."

And let's not forget the crown prince's role in perpetuating a needless devastating war in Yemen (with American assistance) that has caused so much suffering to millions of Yemenis, including death, disease, displacement, and famine.

On that last point, check out Win Without War's parody MBS Twitter account "[Prince of Famine](#)" and our [petition](#) urging Hollywood and Silicon Valley not to do business with MBS.

BURIED LEDES

Israeli NGO B'Tselem [launched](#) a [highly publicized](#) campaign this week **urging Israeli soldiers to defy illegal orders** to shoot unarmed Palestinian protesters with live ammunition.

(In a rarity for American mainstream media, MSNBC's Chris Hayes ran a [must watch segment](#) on the Israeli attacks this week. And for more on this issue, check out Israeli English language news website [+972 Magazine](#).)

Here in the U.S., American lawmakers -- [with a few notable exceptions](#) -- [have been quiet](#) about the fact that **Israeli troops fired upon and killed unarmed Palestinian protesters** in Gaza last weekend.

Meanwhile, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu [is facing fierce backlash for reneging on a deal to resettle African asylum seekers](#). U.S Jewish groups are [urging him](#) to reconsider.

Donald Trump [doesn't care](#) if **American drone strikes kill innocent bystanders**. After all, he [did say](#) during the campaign that we should kill terrorists' families (which of course is a war crime). And don't forget that Trump is [just repeating](#) what some of the neocons have been saying for years.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is [sending](#) an envoy to the Gulf region **in an effort to resolve the conflict in Yemen**.

Google and Facebook [worked](#) with **a dark money group to run anti-Muslim ads** during the 2016 elections (but hey, at least it looks like some folks at Google [have a conscience](#)).

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The New York Times went a bit too far in [suggesting](#) that a nuclear reactor in North Korea is beginning operations.

If everything else about John Bolton wasn't [bad enough](#), **he's probably also responsible for a renewed arms race with Russia.**

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright [warns](#) that "fascism — and the tendencies that lead toward fascism — **pose a more serious threat now than at any time since the end of World War II.**"

And, finally, THIS IS WHERE WE ARE APPARENTLY: Another [website](#) **dedicated to showing you how many people a nuclear blast would kill or maim in your city.**