

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

TOPLINE TAKEAWAY

- *There's a whole big world out there of stories you shouldn't have missed but probably did while you were (understandably) focused on the multiple criminal conspiracies surrounding Donald Trump. Here's what you need to know.*

SEVEN WAYS TRUMP UNDERMINED OUR NATIONAL SECURITY THIS WEEK

Generally speaking, there are two parallel tracks ongoing at any given time during the Trump administration: 1. The outlandish things Donald Trump says and does, and 2. All the [terrible policies](#) being carried out by his administration that largely fly under the radar.

So with the media's, albeit justified, intense focus on Trump's legal troubles and the future of American democracy, we thought it might be important to shine some light on what isn't -- but should be -- getting much coverage from a national security and foreign policy perspective ... *from just this week.*

1. INCREASING TENSIONS WITH IRAN (AND EUROPE)

Trump's National Security Advisor John Bolton was in Israel this week [taunting](#) Iran, [touting](#) Trump's reimposition of sanctions, and promising to ramp up pressure on Tehran.

Part of that "maximum pressure" campaign requires the U.S. to bully our European friends into disregarding the truth that the Iran Deal continues to be working (even without the U.S.) and cease doing business in Iran. The push for renewed sanctions, [coupled](#) with Trump's trade war, is [driving a wedge](#) deeper into the Atlantic alliance. "We expect that Europeans will see, as businesses all over Europe are seeing, that the choice between doing business with Iran or doing business with the United States is very clear to them," Bolton [said](#).

Meanwhile, in moves that could widen the rift between the U.S. and Europe, the European Commission [announced](#) an aid package to Iran this week. And the Trump administration's Iran actions could also weaken the American economy in the long run. Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas [said](#) that Europe needs to "strengthen European autonomy by creating payment channels that are independent of the United States" so that Europe can still do business with Iran, despite U.S. sanctions.

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And don't be fooled by Bolton's [claim](#) this week that Trump's Iran policy isn't one of regime change. The reality is that it [can't be anything but](#).

2. BOLTON'S CAMPAIGN TO SABOTAGE NORTH KOREA TALKS ROLLS ON

Bolton also this week [claimed](#) that both South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un agreed that full denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will happen within one year.

Yet both leaders have made no such pledge, sparking [speculation](#) that Bolton's claim is part of his wider [efforts](#) to establish unreasonable expectations that set up the negotiations with North Korea to fail (and thus move on to Bolton's [preferred policy choice of war](#)).

3. WE'RE STILL ENABLING WAR CRIMES IN YEMEN

A recent Saudi-led coalition airstrike that hit a school bus in Yemen killing dozens of children sparked calls for a reexamination of U.S. assistance to the Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels there. But despite that, the war carries on with little to no change in U.S. policy.

But Sen. Chris Murphy took to the Senate floor this week to promote an [amendment](#) that would have barred funding U.S. support for the Saudi-coalition unless the Pentagon can certify that aid isn't enabling war crimes. Senate Republican leadership denied a vote on the measure.

"It shouldn't be on our conscience as a nation to be part of this humanitarian catastrophe," he [said](#). (Watch his full floor speech [here](#).)

Meanwhile, while the Pentagon couldn't be bothered to find out whether American-made munitions were used in the Saudi strike that hit the school bus, CNN launched an investigation and discovered that "the bomb used in the attack did, [in fact](#), come from the United States."

And in a sign of the consequences of America's continued silence to the Saudi-led coalition's war crimes in Yemen, CNN [reports](#) yet another 22 children were killed this week in yet another airstrike. One survivor asks, "Is nowhere safe for us?"

4. CORRUPT AND WASTEFUL PENTAGON SPENDING, DRONE BASE-SPACE FORCE EDITION

The Senate this week passed a bill appropriating nearly \$700 billion for the Pentagon, despite mounting evidence of unaccountable spending, including an uncompleted audit, waste, fraud, and abuse. We also learned this week that a drone base in Niger that raised eyebrows for its \$100 million price tag is [now projected to cost nearly \\$300 million](#). The Air Force originally

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claimed the base would cost \$50 million. It's worth noting, Congress has never even bothered to debate, let alone authorize, such a military mission in the heart of Africa.

Meanwhile, it turns out Trump's "Space Force" largely came about because of a [lobbying campaign](#) by the aerospace industry. As the Center for International Policy's Bill Hartung [observes](#), "The fact that the move towards what Trump has called the sixth armed force is a political maneuver rather than a carefully thought out strategic decision is underscored by the fact that the Trump 2020 campaign has started a farcical — but potentially lucrative — [contest](#) to pick the Space Force's logo. The most fitting [suggestion](#) so far has come from the comedian Jimmy Kimmel: 'a picture of money being shredded and thrown at the moon.'"

5. MORE POLLUTION, MORE CLIMATE CHANGE, MORE DEATH

The Trump administration also this week rolled back an Obama-era rule meant to regulate emissions from coal fired power plants. By the administration's own analysis, "the new rules could also lead to as many as [1,400 premature deaths](#) annually by 2030 from an increase in the extremely fine particulate matter that is linked to heart and lung disease, up to 15,000 new cases of upper respiratory problems, a rise in bronchitis, and tens of thousands of missed school days." The move, from a [climate change perspective](#) -- when coupled with Trump's recent relaxation of fuel economy standards -- is the "equivalent of putting an extra 31 million cars on the road. It's more carbon dioxide than many midsize nations like Belgium or Greece [put out in an entire year](#)."

6. ONE YEAR SINCE ATROCITY AGAINST ROHINGYA

Saturday August 25 will mark the one year [anniversary](#) of the Burmese military's most recent brutal crack-down on the Rohingya, which [experts are calling](#) either "genocide" or "[a textbook example of ethnic cleansing](#)." Thousands have been [killed](#) and nearly [one million](#) Rohingya have fled the country into neighboring Bangladesh, where they live life on the [margins](#).

While the Trump administration last week [sanctioned](#) a handful of Burmese military commanders and army units, a bipartisan group of 17 senators [wrote](#) to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo this week urging him to do more, including increasing humanitarian aid, forcefully and publicly speaking out against the atrocities, and making clear that the perpetrators will be held accountable.

7. MAKING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN WORSE

Erik Prince, founder of the mercenary company formerly known as Blackwater, is [making the rounds on TV](#) trying to sell his idea of privatizing the American war in Afghanistan.

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Meanwhile, Russia has now inserted itself into the peace talks, which “has [threatened to disrupt diplomacy](#) undertaken by Afghan and American officials.” And Win Without War Director Stephen Miles [writes this week](#) that Democrats, should they take control of Congress this fall, “have the opportunity to break a legislative logjam which has seen House Republican leadership refuse even the most basic of votes on Afghanistan-related legislation for several years.”

BURIED LEDES

John Bolton has ties to alleged Russian spy Maria Butina and Democrats [want to know](#) what that’s all about.

House Democrats also want to know why Pompeo elevated a partisan hack to [lead](#) the State Department’s new “Iran Action Group,” which is essentially a [front](#) to foment regime change and/or war with Iran.

The Democratic nominee for a House seat in Michigan supports a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, [raising the question](#) of whether this is where the party is headed on the issue.

Saudi Arabia is seeking the death penalty for five human rights activists, [including one woman](#) “who is thought to be the first female campaigner in the country.” Sen. Jeff Merkley and a handful of other Democrats this week [introduced a resolution](#) “standing with Saudi women and pushing for human rights progress in Saudi Arabia.”

The Pentagon is concerned about the sharp drop in Iraqi translators who assisted U.S. forces there being [admitted](#) to the U.S. as refugees.

Meanwhile, **the Trump administration is purposely slowing FBI vetting of refugees** as part of its [wider effort](#) to limit the number of refugees in the U.S.

The Project on Government Oversight [notes](#) that the State Department’s “report on human trafficking omitted the names of companies accused of abusive labor practices.” POGO identified “**two of these companies and found they were U.S. defense contractors.**”

America’s prisoners are [going on strike, highlighting](#) the fact that many **wealthy defense industry corporations depend on prison labor.**

And finally, here’s how one journalist [described](#) allegedly being part of a White House created Deep State conspiracy theory that’s supposedly meant to take down Trump: “**This is one of the stupider conspiracy theories** circulating through a city currently drowning in stupid conspiracy theories.”