

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: Ukraine is the tip of Trump's corruption iceberg

It's Not Just Ukraine: Trump's Foreign Policy Is Corrupt Through-and-Through

Two weeks ago, we [declared our support](#) for the impeachment of Donald Trump. As mountains of evidence on his abuse of power in Ukraine have now conclusively proven, Trump used the office of the president to pervert U.S. foreign policy for his personal gain.

But it's not just Ukraine.

While the impeachment inquiry may be limited in scope, Trump's corruption is not — **Trump has repeatedly manipulated U.S. foreign policy for his own, private interests.** In scandal after scandal after scandal, many of which don't live in the headlines long, it has become clear that the only consistent piece of Trump's otherwise erratic foreign policy is a drive for personal financial and political benefit.

It's difficult to predict exactly what the ripple effects of this corrupted approach to foreign relations will be, but one thing is certain: it won't be what's best for peace, justice, and human security.

TIME AFTER TIME

On Tuesday, George Nader, a lobbyist for the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and the private military firm Blackwater, was [charged with funneling \\$3.5 million in illegal campaign contributions](#), including \$1 million to Trump's inaugural fund. So it's no coincidence that Nader has strengthened his close ties with members of the Trump administration's inner-circle, including Steve Bannon and Jared Kushner, since 2016. It's easy to forget that Nader was *also* [part of a secret scheme](#), along with Elliot Broidy, to set up a backchannel with the crown princes of Saudi Arabia and the UAE and Trump in exchange for lucrative contracts from the Gulf monarchies.

Gulf governments and military contractors buying access in Washington is nothing new, but under Trump it's reached an extreme. Lobbying on behalf of the Emirati and Saudi governments has fueled decades of provocative posturing toward Iran, [disregard](#) for countless human rights abuses, and U.S. involvement in creating the [world's largest humanitarian catastrophe](#).

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But the corruption doesn't end there. On Monday, the Washington Post reported that North Dakota-based construction company Fisher Industries had curried the president's favor in a uniquely Trumpian way: CEO Tommy Fisher appeared and vocally supported Trump on multiple Fox News programs. **Trump then "personally and repeatedly" [intervened](#) in the government contracting process for construction of a section of his unnecessary and racist border wall**, lobbying the Army Corps of Engineers to award a \$400 million contract to the company. Fisher is also a major GOP donor.

Trump's militarization of the southern border was already politically motivated, meant to tap into xenophobic resentment and stir up support from his base. But now it seems that construction of his racist wall also serves another purpose: enriching donors and anyone willing to publicly praise him (especially on his favorite news channel).

And that's just what we learned about this week. A sampling of Trump's corruption over his full three years in office includes:

- **[Diverting U.S. military planes to an out-of-the-way airport](#)** in Scotland so that they would spend taxpayer dollars staying at his nearby resort;
- **[Postponing planned tariffs on Chinese imports](#)** on the very day that a major fireworks corporation, which had previously lobbied against those tariffs, donated \$750,000 worth of products to his Fourth of July celebration;
- **[Allowing his business to expand overseas](#)** and interact directly with foreign governments, including in the Dominican Republic, India, and Indonesia, despite promises to the contrary; and
- **[Directly benefiting from the business of foreign governments at his hotels](#)** — where the Embassy of Kuwait, the Embassy of the Philippines, the Prime Minister of Malaysia and the Prime Minister of Romania (to name a few) have all stayed or hosted events during his presidency. In 2017, the Saudi government spent \$270,000 at the DC hotel alone, while a five day stay at Trump's New York hotel in 2016 is said to have been the main factor behind a 13% boost in quarterly profits.

Finally, lest we forget, the Senior Advisor to the president, charged with brokering the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and [now](#) Chinese trade talks, is his **[wholly unqualified son-in-law](#)**. If "peace" [was ever really the goal](#), handing Kushner the reins would certainly not be the way to get there. And of course, there's no [question](#) of Kushner's own conflicts of interest when it comes to China.

Fortunately, while the nepotism runs deep, Trump didn't follow through with [plans](#) to nominate Ivanka to lead the World Bank.

A NEW LOW

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Did illegal UAE campaign contributions push Trump to [veto](#) a measure that would have ended U.S. involvement in Yemen? Did the Philippine government's room service fees influence Trump's [statement](#) that the murderous President Rodrigo Duterte is doing an "unbelievable job on the drug problem"? How much did The Trump Organization's need for building permits in India affect Trump's praise for authoritarian nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi?

It's impossible to pinpoint the exact impact of each of Trump's many abuses of power. And that's part of the problem. Trump's foreign policy is inconsistent, ill-considered, and divorced from the democratic demands of the people it affects. U.S. foreign policy has never been free from private interests. Under Trump, it's reached a new low.

BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE

Trump's actions in Ukraine were egregious. They deserve to be investigated and amount to high crimes that [are impeachable](#) under the Constitution. But we must not miss the forest for the trees; the impeachment inquiry is about only one moment in a much larger pattern of foreign policy corruption. Trump has consistently subordinated the wills and interests of everyday people, in the U.S. and abroad, to his own political and financial gain.

Trump should be held accountable for not only his conduct in Ukraine, but for the entirety of his subversion of U.S. foreign policy. Every one of his offenses abroad demands scrutiny. And without accountability, not only for Trump, but for his cronies in crime, his legacy of corruption will have lasting effects on our foreign policy. To move toward a U.S. foreign policy that is made by and for the people, accountability for those who misuse it for personal ends is a necessary first step.

Want to do more? [Take action with us](#) by calling on the House Oversight and Armed Services Committees to investigate Trump's role in rewarding a Republican party donor a \$400 million dollar border wall contract.

You can also join us and [add your name to our call](#) for the impeachment and conviction of Trump so he can be held accountable for his never-ending list of corrupt practices.

BURIED LEDES

This [isn't](#) what ending endless wars looks like.

20 years later, it's time to recognize that **the Seattle WTO protesters** [were right](#). But let's not conflate the progressive case against the WTO with Trump's populist, nationalist BS.

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Disturbing **sketches by the first victim of the CIA's post-9/11 torture program** [highlight](#) the lasting trauma and injustice of the Bush-approved program.

Maybe [it's time](#) to say "OK Boomer" to our foreign policy...

The Trump administration [failed to report](#) that **multiple Syrian civilians were killed in the attack on al-Baghdadi**. How many more civilians deaths don't we know about?

The lack of accountability continues: **A U.S. drone strike killed five Afghan civilians** — including a woman who had just given birth and her relatives who were on their way to a hospital.

Impeachment is a vital opportunity to rethink U.S. foreign policy strategy, and realign it with the American public's priorities.

[PSA](#): **The national security state is not a friend of the #Resistance.**

Has Trump broken the law (again)? [Calls for a review](#) of the appointments of **Ken Cuccinelli and Chad Wolf in the Department of Homeland Security** say Trump violated federal hiring laws.

U.S. foreign policy looks more like a Kindergarten classroom every day as **North Korea threatens to resume insulting Trump** in response to Trump's revival of the "rocket man" epithet. But as absurd as the diss battle is, the [collapse of denuclearization efforts](#) is no laughing matter.

The [50th anniversary](#) of the assassination of Fred Hampton by the FBI and Chicago PD highlights **law enforcement's long and ongoing history of violently repressing Black activism**.

To empower grassroots voices and tackle imposter syndrome, **the national security field must challenge its definition of an "expert."**

We already knew that cluster bombs [indiscriminately kill](#) innocent civilians. New reporting reveals that they're [behind the deaths](#) of scores of **U.S. service members** too.

How did an Iraq War-supporting "liberal Hawk" become a leading opponent of [U.S. militarism](#)?

And finally, are you a cat whisperer? A [new study](#) finds **cats do have facial expressions, but most humans just can't read them**.