

WIN WITHOUT WAR



5 Key Demands: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Face of the Coronavirus

The world is in a crisis. The coronavirus pandemic itself, and the economic crash that it has sparked, have revealed deep weaknesses in the current economic and political order. There are two paths forward.

In one direction is the Trump administration and its racist, nativist agenda. This approach responds to global problems by cutting off international ties, closing borders, building walls, scapegoating foreign countries and migrants, reinforcing the hierarchical status quo, protecting the interests of elites and corporations, and increasing the power of the surveillance-military-security state.

In the other is the global grassroots progressive movement, rooted in solidarity and justice. This approach recognizes that human security transcends borders — that to build a world of peace, prosperity, and health for all people, we must work together transnationally, both to mitigate this current crisis and enact long-term structural change. This approach requires a fundamental shift in current U.S. foreign policy.

A progressive internationalist response to the crisis must meet, at the least, five key demands:

1. Not a dollar more for the Pentagon, weapons, and wars

- The greatest security challenges of the 21st century — global inequality, climate change, pandemics — cannot be solved militarily. Years of funneling trillions of dollars into the Pentagon instead of investing in critical human needs have left us woefully unprepared to meet them.
- There is no reason to waste another dollar on the Pentagon for weapons and wars when it has a \$740 billion annual budget. It [can't spend](#) the money it already has, can't pass an [audit](#), and almost [half](#) of its annual budget goes to major defense corporations.
- While there may be a limited role for military resources to be used for civilian ends during this crisis, such as to build hospitals and speed the supply of medical equipment, the Pentagon does not need additional resources to fund this.
- But this isn't just about budgets. The budget follows the militarization of our society and foreign policy, and is rooted in the false, profit-driven belief that every problem has a military solution.
- This crisis reveals that lives depend on reorienting our approach towards security – from how we budget for domestic and international priorities alike to how we engage with the world. Doing so will allow us to make the deep investments and structural changes required to mitigate, reverse, and prevent the worst effects of shared threats that we face in the 21st century.

2. Immediately suspend — and then end — deadly U.S. sanctions

- In Iran and elsewhere, the U.S.'s blanket, sectoral sanctions are [exacerbating](#) the impacts and contributing to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. To keep them in place – and even [levy](#) new sanctions – in this moment of crisis is monstrous.

- These sanctions are a part of the U.S.’s broader strategy of exerting “maximum pressure” on countries such as Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, and North Korea — an approach that is [counterproductive](#), [inhumane](#), and, as this crisis reveals, dangerous for the [entire world](#).
- Broad sectoral sanctions are economic warfare. We must immediately suspend existing sanctions, enact measures to prevent their knee-jerk overuse, and instead move toward long-term diplomatic engagement that puts the wellbeing of people first.

3. Defend the rights and dignity of migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees

- Even prior to the coronavirus, the world was in an [unprecedented](#) crisis of displacement and migration, fueled by wars, oppression, inequality, and climate change. The coronavirus pandemic puts migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons, immigrants, and other communities that were already oppressed under the status quo at further risk.
- The Trump administration has seized on the crisis to [announce](#) expanded bans on asylum-seekers; the [Muslim and African bans](#) remain in effect; the UNHCR is [suspending](#) refugee resettlement; ICE continues to [make arrests](#) while USCIS, the agency responsible for providing legal paths to residency, is closing offices; and fears of deportation are [leading](#) some to avoid seeking treatment.
- Particularly in this moment of global crisis, when it is clear that global wellbeing is shared, we must combat xenophobia and dehumanization, honor the right to migrate and seek asylum, and ensure that at-risk communities are granted safety and refuge. Providing justice for vulnerable populations also means addressing the ways in which U.S. foreign policy drives displacement.

4. Focus on international cooperation, not competition

- Decades of treating foreign countries first and foremost as threats to U.S. power has undermined our ability to work together to confront shared global challenges.
- Donald Trump and his allies have responded to a deadly global pandemic by pushing a xenophobic, [nationalist](#) agenda: [refusing](#) to cooperate with other countries, [blaming](#) foreigners for the outbreak, and even making aggressive [threats](#) against China. Their hope is to divide us into not noticing the horrific failures of their own policies.
- This crisis reveals that human security demands unprecedented levels of equitable global cooperation. To achieve this, we must end our competitive mindset and strengthen our tools of diplomacy, multilateralism, and cooperation.

5. Enact a Green New Deal — Now

- The evident failure to respond to this crisis makes clear how unprepared we are to meet the challenge of climate change. But this failure also presents an opportunity for a new approach.
- With equity prices crashing, economies slowing, and workers in desperate need, the time is ripe to enact comprehensive, uncompromising climate reforms, including public control of key industries, massive people-oriented public spending, and unprecedented universal social programs — a Green New Deal.
- This domestic Green New Deal must be met with a comparable [Global Green New Deal](#) that transforms the global economy to one that is just, equitable, and sustainable. Only such transnational, structural reform will prepare us for the security challenges of today and tomorrow.