

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

DATE: 03/20/2020

SL: Some good news

In a Dark Moment, Reasons For Hope

These are difficult times.

If you're like us, you've had more than your fill of news that is discouraging, depressing, and outright dystopic. While we've used the last few editions of the Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief to explore the foreign policy implications of the current moment ([here](#) and [here](#)), we thought this week, we would bring some light to the dark times.

Here is some positive news about the current crisis — news that's not just a pleasant distraction, but evidence for hope:

With Business-as-Usual Disrupted, Nature Rebounds

The canals of Venice are [cleaner](#) than they've been in decades. Swans and dolphins have [returned](#). China's air quality has improved so drastically that thousands of lives [may be saved](#).

While some have taken to Twitter to use this as evidence that "[humanity is the virus](#)" and a global pandemic is "the cure," we refuse to buy into nihilism. This type of rhetoric feeds into fascistic myths of Malthusian overpopulation in which the blame for environmental degradation falls on the masses, inevitably from the Global South, rather than the systemic drive for profits and overconsumption, disproportionately in the Global North.

Instead of evidence of the failures of humanity, the news of glistening waters and cleaner air should be reason for optimism — proof that another system is possible. A world with less unnecessary air travel, with more time spent partaking in low-carbon hobbies than in overconsumption, with an economy that puts essential human needs before the drive for profit, is a world within the bounds of sustainability. We *can* radically transform society to allow humans to thrive without hopelessly degrading our ecosystems. This moment of [crisis](#) is an [opportunity](#) to [do so](#).

WIN WITHOUT WAR



In Times of Hardship, People Come Together

All across the [U.S.](#), and beyond, the overwhelming response to the coronavirus pandemic has not been one of fighting over scarce resources, but of coming together to help one another in [mutual aid](#). Rooted in values of community and solidarity, the practice of mutual aid arises from an understanding that, until or unless society is structured in a way that provides for everyone, we must rely on each other to do so.

Mutual aid in the face of the coronavirus has taken many forms: voluntary contribution to funds for the unemployed; offers to buy groceries for those for whom leaving the house presents too much of a health risk; housing and transportation for students who find themselves with nowhere to go following sudden school closings; provision of food, water, and toiletries to all who need it; and many more. The immediate, spontaneous proliferation of these projects is not just good in itself — it's a clear sign that, in times of crisis, solidarity can overcome individualism.

[Find out](#) how to get involved in a mutual aid network near you.

Arts, Culture, and Education for All

As social distancing and isolation begin to take their toll, a number of arts, culture, and education institutions have stepped in to ensure that their critical services remain open and accessible:

- Museums like the American Museum of Natural History in New York and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC are providing free [virtual tours](#).
- From the [Royal Opera House](#) of London to punk icon [Jeff Rosenstock](#), music venues and artists of all stripes are offering free concerts online.
- The Cincinnati Zoo (home of the beloved Fiona the Hippo) and other zoos and aquariums are [livestreaming](#) some of their animal antics.
- Fitness and yoga studios are offering [free online classes](#) to stay fit and healthy while stuck at home.
- Digital academic library [JSTOR](#), ebook retailer [Scribd](#), and [film streaming services](#) like the Criterion Collection and Shudder are offering free and reduced rate access.
- And let's not forget your local library — many of which offer online ebook borrowing and access to streaming services like Kanopy.

We'll take some of the corporate offers with skepticism, but the rapid response of many of these institutions to provide free resources is a victory for equitable public access to arts, culture, and education, and another sign that solidarity is alive and well.

This Won't Last Forever

WIN WITHOUT WAR



For the second day in a row, China has reported [no new cases](#) of coronavirus, in South Korea, recoveries have now [outnumbered](#) numbers of new cases, and in Wuhan, a video [shows](#) medical workers removing their face masks in celebration of getting the outbreak under control. We have a long way to go before the crisis is over, but these moments are a necessary reminder: at the end of the day, this too shall pass.

In the meantime, we'll use these moments of hope to fuel our fight — to do all that we can to mitigate the impact of the crisis, and to seize the moment to ensure that the society that we have on the other side is one that is more just, peaceful, and safer for all.

BURIED LEDES — GOOD NEWS EDITION

In the face of the current crisis, we're fighting to **reorient U.S. foreign policy from one focused on militarism and xenophobia to one rooted in solidarity and justice**. [Read our five key demands](#).

Happy spring! Or as many in Iran, Afghanistan, and the Kurdish parts of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq would say: [Nowruz Mobarak](#)! This New Year festival is celebrated every year on the spring equinox with food, games, dancing, family, and ritual. Our love to all those striving to celebrate in these times

 Women's Rights Alert!  [Women in Somaliland](#) are running and playing sports even **when faced with public criticism**, showing that attitudes toward what women should and should not do are evolving...

...while in Afghanistan, as women rightfully worry about what their future holds given continued Taliban-control of large swaths of territory, **an art [exhibit](#) showcasing how women have fearlessly worked to make their country a better place brings hope**...

...and in **New Zealand, women now (finally) have the legal [right to choose](#)**, as an antiquated abortion law was officially written out of the books.

Zimbabwe is saying f*** you to colonialism, as **several spiritually-valuable bird statues that were [returned](#) to the country after having been stolen by European colonists are now on display where they belong**.

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Years of hard work to save the African Black Rhino seem to be [paying off](#), with their numbers increasing 2.5 percent between 2015 and 2018. While poaching is still a concern, conservationists are cautiously optimistic this species will recover.

There are over 2 million Afro-Mexicans, but this is the first ever year that they will be reflected in Mexico's census — the historic step is [helping bring](#) a sense of belonging to many who have been ostracized.

One city in India has [opened](#) a cafe to feed individuals who collect plastic waste — both to provide meals for those in need as well as to tackle the country's overwhelming plastic crisis. (The plastic collected at the cafe in 2015 became the world's first-ever plastic road.)

And finally, here are some adorable [duck friends](#), a dog that doesn't quite understand his [job](#), and [one dog](#) who is on a mission to help his fellow animal friends live their best lives.