

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

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SL: Sanctions, the Pentagon, and Global South Debt

*Friend – If you haven't already, please take one minute to fill out our survey: tell us how we're doing, and what we can do better. As a thank you, we're giving away a free Win Without War t-shirt to three randomly selected survey respondents (to be sent when our offices reopen)!*

[Take the survey.](#)

*Now onto your regularly scheduled Debrief content...*

## COVID-19 and Foreign Policy: Movement Updates

The coronavirus pandemic has [exposed](#) the deep failures of the foreign policy status quo.

In the past weeks, we've taken the time to [discuss](#) a few of [these](#) in depth. This week, we've skipped the usual deep-dive, and instead bring you three brief updates on critical campaigns fighting to build a progressive and just foreign policy in the wake of the global pandemic.

### **#EndCOVIDSanctions**

Even in the best of times, broad-based sanctions are deadly, inhumane, and counterproductive. During a pandemic, they're nothing short of murderous. All around the world, a mass movement is calling on the U.S. to suspend its sectoral sanctions on Iran, Venezuela, North Korea, Cuba, and more, for (at least) the course of the crisis. Since we first [explored](#) the #EndCovidSanctions campaign two weeks ago, that movement has only grown.

Thirty-four members of Congress, led by Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders, signed [a letter](#) calling for a suspension of sanctions on Iran. Eleven Senators [joined a call](#) to loosen sanctions on Iran and Venezuela to better permit medical and humanitarian exceptions. Two dozen former U.S. and European diplomats, including former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, [called](#) for the same. The [UN Secretary General](#) and the [Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food](#) have now joined the High Commissioner for Human Rights in urging relief. Over [80 South Korean civil society organizations](#) demanded an easing of sanctions on North Korea. Grassroots activists have collectively [made](#) hundreds of calls to the U.S.

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Department of Treasury. And one artist even [projected](#) the demand onto the side of a New York City skyscraper.

So far, the Trump administration has refused to budge on its “maximum pressure” campaign. Although Secretary Pompeo [said](#) at a March 31 press conference that the administration has not ruled out the possibility of easing sanctions on Iran, Trump recently sent another [tweet](#) threatening war with Iran, and this week the State Department produced a seemingly defensive “fact sheet”, entitled “[Iran’s Sanctions Relief Scam](#).” The administration is also, horrifyingly, reportedly planning to block Iran’s request for a \$5 billion emergency loan from the International Monetary Fund, despite international pressure.



But as the movement continues to grow, so does the pressure on the Trump administration — and the hopes for direly-needed sanctions relief.

## **#PeopleOverPentagon**

Decades of funneling trillions of dollars into the Pentagon while gutting funding for public health and other human needs has left us *less* safe, not more. This was true before the novel coronavirus hit, but it’s especially undeniable now — even commentators who are far from progressive are beginning to [agree](#). But apparently, Congress and the Trump administration haven’t learned their lesson.

The landmark \$2.2 trillion emergency relief package passed late last month contained around [\\$9.5 billion](#) in additional funds for the Pentagon. While there’s little doubt that there is *some* role for the Pentagon to play in responding to the crisis — the Army Corps of Engineers constructing hospitals, for example — there is no need to add to the already-bloated budget to do so. When an out-of-control Pentagon budget is being used to [build](#) nuclear weapons, [terrorize](#) asylum-seekers at the border, and [line](#) the pockets of defense contractors, human security demands that we *redirect* money in the Pentagon’s existing coffers to fight the virus, not add fuel to the fire. That’s why we’re [calling](#) on Congress to put #PeopleOverPentagon and [draw](#) a red line for the next phase of coronavirus relief: *no new money for the Pentagon*.

## **#DropTheDebt**

The toll of the pandemic has been devastating, even in wealthy countries like the United States and Italy. So it’s difficult to contemplate the scale of suffering that it will unleash in countries across the Global South that (due to a global economic system that is rigged against them)

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have far fewer resources at their disposal. That means fewer hospitals, fewer ventilators, and far less funds available to counteract an economic crash or provide protection for those caught in the fallout. Yet as things stand, in the middle of this crisis, these very countries will be forced to prioritize paying debts to their sovereign creditors over spending money to support their people.

That's why there's a growing movement to enact a debt jubilee: to cancel all debt payments for at least the year, and provide additional emergency financing that will not add to the debt, and that doesn't come with any "pro-market" strings attached. This week, over 200 organizations around the world [signed](#) a letter to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund calling for just that.

In the face of global crises like the coronavirus and a worldwide economic crash, it's become increasingly clear that human security is shared across borders. To protect the people of the Global South — and therefore to protect people everywhere — dropping the debt is a practical, and moral, necessity.

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If a picture is worth a thousand words, why are you spending your time reading this when you can be following our brand new [Instagram account](#)?

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## **BURIED LEDES**

**First, some (cautiously) good news:** Saudi Arabia has announced a [two-week unilateral ceasefire in Yemen](#) so that both countries can focus on combating the spread of the coronavirus — one step forward for rising demands for a [global ceasefire](#).

But while much of the world has stopped due to COVID-19, **violence in Kashmir continues**. As the Pakistan army [claims](#) that it shot down an Indian surveillance drone, both sides continue to violate ceasefire agreements, while Kashmiris remain cut off from the internet.

Earlier this week, senior Navy officer Captain Brett Crozier was **dismissed for prioritizing the health of his crew** over a strict military hierarchy. This is [no way to treat a hero](#).

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In countries across the world, 2019 was the year of the protest. Now, the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace has a new [Global Protest Tracker](#), which **follows trends in anti-government protests around the globe since 2017.**

Speaking of trackers, the International Center For Not-For-Profit Law has a [COVID-19 Civic Freedom Tracker](#), which **monitors emergency responses by governments and the impacts they have on human rights.**

In the midst of a global crisis, **the United States' irresponsible and harmful immigration policies remain** — the U.S. [recently deported 61 Haitian migrants](#) back to a country that isn't prepared to respond to a nationwide outbreak.

The racial inequity in the United States' healthcare system has rarely been starker. Yes, the coronavirus can infect and kill anyone — but **Black Americans, especially in big cities, are dying from it in vastly larger numbers.**

In Afghanistan, **the U.S.-Taliban "peace plan" is struggling to meet expectations.** Negotiations have broken down over the past month and the Taliban is [reportedly walking away from talks](#), calling them "fruitless."

However, it seems that **some progress is being made:** a spokesman for Afghanistan's Office of the National Security Council announced that they are [releasing 100 Taliban prisoners](#) in light of criticism that the Afghan government is delaying the proposed prisoner swap.

More good news! Responding to pressure from the House, **the World Bank has announced a number of reforms**, including a freeze on support for-profit education, greater transparency, and an end to their anti-worker "Employing Workers Indicator." 🙌

This week marks **the 26-year anniversary of the Rwandan genocide.** Photojournalist Chrystal Ding [captured moments](#) of powerful emotion and reflection at a counseling session for those who survived the atrocities.

Holidays are one of the few constants we have during a *very* uncertain time. **Jewish people around the world are celebrating Passover virtually this year** as many countries remain on lockdown.

And finally, [a whale of a discovery](#) — scientists in Australia are now using the vertebrae of whale sharks to more accurately determine their age. It's been found that they may be living up to be **150 years old!**