

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: No More School Bus Bombings

The Takeaway:

- The firing of State Department Inspector General Steve Linick reveals just how warped the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia and the UAE has become.
- Nowhere is this clearer than in U.S. arms sales to the Saudi-led coalition for use in the war in Yemen. For too long, we have subordinated human security — both at home and abroad — to the interests of weapons manufacturers and oil-rich Gulf countries.
- There must be repercussions for the corruption of our foreign policy. It's time for Congress to enact an immediate and unconditional ban on arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Firing Linick Won't Hide The Truth: The U.S. Relationship with Saudi Arabia and the UAE Is Broken

In May 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo bypassed Congress and potentially broke the law by declaring an “emergency” to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for use in the deadly war in Yemen. Now, we've learned that Trump may have fired State Department Inspector General Linick at Pompeo's suggestion for investigating this decision. Beyond further evidence of Trump's proclivity to break the law when it suits him and his cronies, this incident should be a wake-up call: the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia and the UAE is badly broken.

It's time for a new approach.

A Poisonous Partnership

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are brutal authoritarian regimes. Yet successive U.S. administrations and members of Congress from both parties have overlooked countless human rights abuses and damage to global security in dogmatic loyalty to the two countries. Trump and Pompeo have taken this even further: turning the other way from the torture and assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, failing to address the plight of the countries' political prisoners, and repeatedly bringing the United States to the brink of war with Iran. They have even refused to hold anyone accountable when a Saudi Air Force cadet [with ties to al Qaeda](#) carried out a shooting at the Naval base in Pensacola, or when the UAE and Saudi Arabia were [documented](#) as arming, diverting, or losing U.S.-sold weapons to militants affiliated with al Qaeda in Yemen.

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The World's Largest Humanitarian Crisis

Perhaps nowhere is this deadly relationship more apparent than in war-torn Yemen. The Saudi and Emirati-led coalition's war in Yemen has helped create the world's largest humanitarian crisis — with the United States' backing. Every 10 minutes, a Yemeni child under five [dies](#) from starvation or disease. More than two in three Yemenis [do not know](#) where their next meal will come from. And now, [COVID-19](#) is set to add to the devastation. Despite this, the Trump administration recently [cut off](#) vital, congressionally-appropriated USAID humanitarian aid.

U.S. involvement has only made this crisis worse: years of fueling Saudi and UAE jets in midair, providing political backing despite apparent [war crimes](#), and selling arms with no accountability for how they're used. When the Saudi-led coalition bombed a school bus filled with children in 2018, killing fifty, [they used](#) U.S.-made bombs.

Follow The Profits

These arms sales are not about human security. There's no evidence that their provision to Saudi Arabia and the UAE has done anything but fuel the conflict. Rather, arms sales are about [lining the pockets](#) of weapons manufacturer CEOs and kowtowing to oil-rich monarchies. Weapons manufacturing is a multi-billion dollar industry with inordinate influence in the halls of Congress. We now know that the Trump administration's decision to continue arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE was spurred by trade advisor Peter Navarro [acting at the behest of](#) that industry. Despite the patently ridiculous claims that the Trump administration is merely trying to create jobs (for every job created by federal spending on defense contracting, [multiple](#) could be created in education, clean energy, or healthcare) the truth is more sinister: the U.S. sells bombs that are used to massacre Yemeni children because it means profits.

Repercussions

Bipartisan majorities in Congress have repeatedly attempted to end U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and other military assistance for the intervention in Yemen. In fact, [four of the seven](#) times that Trump has used his veto, it has been to protect these authoritarian regimes and continue the flow of military support.

This week's events should be the final straw. The Trump administration has shown it's willing to bypass Congress, going so far as to baselessly fire an Inspector General to protect the interests of arms dealers and the Gulf monarchies. The proper response — both for the good of Yemen, and for U.S. democracy — is for Congress to enact an immediate and unconditional ban on arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It's beyond time to end the U.S. role in propping up human rights abusers and an overpowered arms industry. There must be repercussions for the corruption of our foreign policy.

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A Day of Remembrance

This Monday is Memorial Day in the United States. While the holiday is often used as an excuse for expressions of jingoism, we prefer to see it as a moment to reflect on the true costs of war — on the lives lost and the pain felt by those touched by violent conflict.

Last year, Win Without War team member Amy Frame shared a personal story about what Memorial Day means to her. On your long weekend, we invite you to [read that story once again](#).

BURIED LEDES

We're on the search for an [Advocacy Program Associate](#) to join the Win Without War team! If someone you know is passionate about building a more progressive U.S. foreign policy, please pass this opportunity on

A step in the right direction: 29 congressional Democrats, led by Representatives Barbara Lee and Mark Pocan, **have signed a [letter](#) calling for cuts to the bloated Pentagon budget** and the redirecting of funds to address the global health crisis.

When the Trump administration isn't conducting reprehensible arms sales, it's making more [unwarranted accusations](#) against the World Health Organization. EU officials are throwing support behind the WHO after **Trump threatened to permanently withdraw funding**.

But Trump didn't stop his attacks on global health there. **The United States also [objected](#) to a WHO resolution that called for waiving patents on an eventual COVID-19 vaccine for poorer countries**. (China, for its part, [announced](#) that any vaccine invented there would be free to all.) Nearly 20,000 WWW activists recently called on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Patent and Trade Office to demand that any vaccines created by U.S. companies be free and accessible.

Here's an important [reminder](#) that justice and accountability are still attainable: this week, **French police forces arrested Félicien Kabuga** — a financier and instigator of the Rwandan genocide.

[In Israel](#), the **Netanyahu-Gantz unity government officially took office** — concerns still abound about likely (abhorrent) plans to annex more of the West Bank.

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The UN special envoy to Syria [told](#) journalists that **opposing sides of the conflict are willing to resume negotiations** “as soon as the pandemic situation allows.” A positive sign, but it raises the question: when will that be? The pandemic [is the time](#) to work for peace.

While the global health crisis is continuing to reshape our world, so is climate change. Researchers have [found](#) that **global warming is encouraging algae growth in colder regions, turning parts of the Antarctica green.**

And the effects of climate change are already deadly: India and Bangladesh, countries already severely impacted by COVID-19, [are facing](#) **a historically intense and potentially devastating cyclone.**

And finally, [meet Bear](#) — **a pawsome Australian Koolie dog that’s rescued over 100 koalas** that have become sick or injured from wildfires.