

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: This Saturday: Defund the War Machine

Join Us at the Mass Poor People's Assembly as We Demand: Cut the Pentagon Budget *In Half*

After weeks of Black-led protests, following centuries of Black-led struggle, people across the United States are waking up to the fact that pouring money into policing doesn't actually make us safer. As the call grows to boldly reimagine our approach to violence, justice, and safety within the United States — to defund the police and reinvest our resources in programs of social uplift — we call for the same bold reimagining of U.S. foreign policy.

It's time to [defund the Pentagon](#).

This Saturday, June 20, the [Poor People's Campaign](#) (PPC) will host the nation's largest digital gathering of poor and dispossessed people, along with all those of conscience, to demand an end to poverty, racism, militarism, and environmental injustice. Among many demands, PPC is urging lawmakers to slash the Pentagon budget by \$350 billion each year, and to reinvest those resources into meeting human needs — a demand recently echoed by anti-militarism leaders in Congress. We at Win Without War are proud to join their call.

Policing and the Pentagon: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Demands to defund the police stem from the recognition of a simple fact: more policing does not make us safer. The police are a highly militarized, violence-first institution designed to quell unrest, instill fear in oppressed — particularly Black — communities, and suppress the symptoms of, rather than cure, our social ills. The U.S. military operates on the same backward logic. Instead of focusing on diplomacy, peacebuilding, or cooperation to address the roots of conflict — and rather than supporting social movements for progressive, grassroots, democratic change, or building a global economic order that would create sustainable, equitable prosperity for all — the U.S. government uses the Pentagon to impose its will through violent force, with a specific disregard for the lives of Black and brown people, and other people of color.

Trillions of Dollars and Countless Lives Lost. For What?

The Senate Arms Services Committee just [greenlit](#) the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which funds the Pentagon budget at nearly a quarter of a *trillion* dollars. That's more than the next 10 countries [combined](#) — [over 50 cents](#) of every dollar in the federal

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discretionary budget. For comparison, the 2020 Centers for Disease Control budget was originally [1/90th](#) of that. Funneling these unimaginable sums into the Pentagon has done nothing to create peace and security, for the United States or the world. It has engendered wasteful, reckless, and unaccountable spending. It has inflated the profits of a corrupting multi-billion dollar warmaking industry. It has spawned a sprawling empire of over 800 U.S. military bases abroad. It has fueled endless wars, disease, environmental devastation, and unthinkable human suffering.

The Pentagon Budget is a Security Threat

Not only does this insatiable war machine wreak destruction around the world — it feeds on resources that could otherwise be used to address the *real* threats to global security. Each dollar spent on endless, counterproductive wars or outdated, unnecessary weapons systems is a dollar not spent investing in sustainable and equitable economic development, funding public health measures to address pandemics like COVID-19, providing for those impacted by the global displacement crisis, promoting in diplomacy and multilateralism, or addressing and preventing climate catastrophe.

Defund the Pentagon. Dismantle the War Machine.

Last year, the PPC announced their vision of a new “[Moral Budget](#),” including a \$350 *billion* reduction in Pentagon spending. At the time, defenders of the foreign policy status quo reacted to the figure with shock. There had been demands for cuts to the Pentagon budget before, and there have been many since. This year alone, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) [proposed](#) legislation to deflate its coffers by 10%, Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Mark Pocan (D-WI) led a letter signed by 29 other Democrats [calling for](#) cuts, and Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) [introduced](#) a bill to redirect \$5 billion from the Pentagon toward global peacebuilding. But even in comparison to these welcome steps forward, the PPC’s demand to slash the Pentagon budget nearly in half was remarkable, visionary, and fully warranted.

The Tides are Turning

This week, Congresswoman Barbara Lee introduced [legislation](#) with [15](#) of her House colleagues echoing exactly that demand— a \$350 billion cut to the Pentagon budget. From the aspirational dreams of a grassroots movement to an official resolution in Congress, it’s clear: the tides are turning. Thanks to the tireless efforts of organizers and activists, particularly Black people and other people of color, the public is beginning to [rethink](#) our reliance on violence-first institutions and reimagine what real human security could look like. In this moment of radical promise, we must find hope, but not complacency. Now is the time to keep pushing. At this Saturday’s [Mass Poor People’s Assembly](#), the PPC and Win Without War will keep up the fight. We hope you’ll [join us](#).

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On June 19, 1865, — two years after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation — enslaved persons in Galveston, Texas received news of their legal emancipation. Their celebrations would become the basis of holiday known as [Juneteenth](#) — memorializing the end of chattel slavery as a legal institution in the United States (though slavery in other forms continues to [exist](#) in the United States and across the globe to this day).

This Juneteenth weekend, the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) has called for a nationwide mobilization for justice, accountability, defunding the police, and investment in healthy, sustainable communities. Win Without War has chosen to honor their call, and the long history of this too-often ignored holiday, by closing for the day this year and every year moving forward, and empowering staff to spend their time mobilizing in support of M4BL, in addition to the PPC assembly. We encourage you, to the extent that you’re able, to do the same. Click [here to get involved with Juneteenth mobilizations](#) and [here to join the Mass Poor People’s Assembly](#).



BURIED LEDES

⚖️ As we wrapped up this week’s debrief, we were thrilled to learn that the **Supreme Court ruled [against the Trump administration’s rescission of DACA](#)**. We celebrate the leadership of the undocumented community and recommit ourselves to building a world where all people can live — and thrive — without the threat of deportation.

“There is no technical or military need to conduct a nuclear explosive test.” In a recent [letter](#), **top nuclear scientists declared their opposition to Trump’s dangerous plans to resume nuclear weapons testing**.

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We won! 🤗💪🎉 Congress listened to Win Without War, POGO, movement partners, and close to 7,000 grassroots activists when we [warned against](#) **weakening lobbying laws that would have made the revolving door between the Pentagon and contractors into a giant hole of corruption.**

Black Lives Matter includes Black lives everywhere. **U.S. foreign policy toward the continent of Africa has long been [fueled](#) by racism**, orientalism, and anti-Blackness.

UN human rights experts [condemned](#) the Israeli government's abhorrent and criminal plans to annex significant parts of the West Bank.

Never ones to worry about things like human rights or international law, though, **the Israeli government [greenlit](#) plans to build an (illegal) settlement in the (occupied) Golan Heights...** and name it after Donald Trump.

Chinese police are [collecting](#) blood samples of nearly 700 million men and boys across the country to build a genetic map that will allow tracking of individuals and relatives using ... wait for it ... U.S. technology. Many warn that the database will facilitate tracking of ethnic minorities and punishment of dissidents' families.

As countries around the world gradually ease COVID-19 lockdowns, global greenhouse gas emissions have [rebounded](#) sharply. While the dip in carbon emissions that came with lockdown inspired some EU countries to enact green policies, the Trump administration continued to roll back environmental legislation during the height of the pandemic.

And finally, **celebrate Pride month by reading [these books](#) written by trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming authors!** (While you're at, if you don't identify as LGBTQ+, here's a guide on how to be [a good ally](#)). And we'll bookend our buried ledes with another happy announcement from SCOTUS, which this week ruled that Civil Rights Act of 1964 [protects gay and transgender](#) workers from workplace discrimination in another [landmark ruling](#)! 🇺🇸🌈