

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

DATE: 10/9/2020

SL: 3 Things You May Have Missed While Trump Was In the Hospital

### **The Takeaway:**

- While Trump gets the best medical care money can buy, people in the U.S. won't be getting another relief package until after the election, and those in countries suffocating under U.S. sanctions often can't get their hands on critical medical equipment.
- Trump's "America First" attitude puts everyone at risk – the U.S. is refusing to cooperate with other countries in a plan to produce and equitably distribute COVID-19 vaccines.
- Wednesday marked the 19th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. 19 years on, the war has achieved little success, at dire cost. It's time to end this endless war.

## **Three News Stories You Might Have Missed During Trump's Hospital Stay**

All eyes were on the president this week as news broke that he and many in his close circle had tested positive for COVID-19. But as Trump and his cronies received 24 hour news coverage and the best medical care money can buy, other stories – those affecting everyday people, including those suffering as a direct result of Trump's actions – fell by the wayside.

If you, like many of us, were glued to the news of the White House COVID outbreak all week, here are three newsworthy developments you might have missed:

### **Sanctions Kill**

This week, Iran [recorded](#) its highest daily death toll from the virus, the peak thus far of a growing third wave. At the same time, the Trump administration is reportedly soon to [impose](#) new financial sector sanctions. When Trump gets COVID-19, he receives world-class care: top doctors, experimental treatments, and round-the-clock monitoring on the federal dime. When people in Iran get COVID-19, they're lucky if they have access to a ventilator or a medical team with proper PPE, thanks in large part to the ongoing, devastating campaign of economic warfare waged on Iran by the United States, where broad-based sanctions have created a deadly obstacle to procuring critical medical equipment and humanitarian relief.

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The idea that broad, sectoral sanctions are a “humane” tool in the toolbox of diplomacy is a complete lie. In Iran, as elsewhere, sanctions not only undermine social movements fighting for systemic change, but also give the government the ability to deflect blame to a foreign country for its people’s suffering, rather than its own repression and corruption. From North Korea to Iran, Cuba to Venezuela, sanctions are simply war by another name, designed to inflict such pain on the general population as to provoke regime change. At all times, but especially during a horrific pandemic, we must say loud and clear: sanctions kill.

## **We Need Cooperation, *NOT* Competition**

The World Health Organization [announced](#) last month a global plan to ensure cooperation between nations to produce and equitably distribute a COVID-19 vaccine. The problem? While countries representing almost two-thirds of the world’s population have signed on, the United States, China, and Russia still refuse to cooperate. The United States’ failure to take part threatens to undermine the nascent project; so far only about one third of budgeted funds have been raised, and more than [half](#) of all vaccine doses have already been pre-purchased, primarily by wealthy countries representing less than 13% of the world population. This week, the collaboration [announced](#) that they would be increasing the share of the cost borne by poorer countries because of it.

If this pandemic should have taught us anything, it’s that our safety is tied across borders. Yet, driven by a Trumpian “America First” attitude, the United States has refused to work with the rest of the world, thereby putting their lives, and ours, at risk. We must break from this failed zero-sum mindset. In the face of global problems from pandemics, to inequality, to the climate crisis, our safety depends on our ability to choose cooperation, *not* competition.

## **19 Years in Afghanistan**

This Wednesday marked 19 years since the start of the U.S. war in Afghanistan – that’s 19 years of drone bombings, 19 years of civilian “casualties,” 19 years of death, destruction, and displacement. Since the invasion, over [\\$2 trillion](#) have been needlessly spent, 3.7 million people have been [displaced](#), and 2,000 U.S. servicemembers, 4,000 U.S. contractors, and over 43,000 civilians have been killed. What does the United States have to show for this? Warlords [profit](#) from ongoing instability, extremist groups [gain](#) new recruits with each drone attack, and the Taliban remains about as strong as it was when the invasion began. Now, U.S. servicemembers are watching as their [children](#) are deployed to the same war that they fought in.

Yet after 19 years, we clearly haven’t learned our lesson: while Pentagon contractors have profited handsomely from the COVID-19 crisis, receiving [billions](#) of dollars in emergency relief funds with little [accountability](#), Trump [announced](#) this week that there would be no new COVID-19 relief bill before the election, condemning the country to continue to suffer. Our priorities are absurdly [out of whack](#). The violence-first approach to U.S. foreign policy has resulted in little but devastation, here and abroad. We need a new approach. It’s time we end

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endless war, hold those responsible [accountable](#), reinvest in our communities, recommit to peacebuilding, diplomacy, and development, and build a [new foreign policy](#) rooted in progressive values of peace, justice, and equality.

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## **Indigenous Peoples' Day**

Monday is Indigenous Peoples' Day — a day to celebrate and honor the native peoples of the Americas, rather than the genocider whose name has marred the calendar for far too long. On this day, we remember in particular how the status quo of U.S. foreign policy affects, and most often has come at a dire cost to, Indigenous peoples. From expansionist, genocidal [wars](#) to steal land to the fallout of nuclear weapons [testing](#), from [coups](#) and [dirty wars](#) in Latin America to economic relations that continue to fuel [environmental destruction](#) and [displacement](#) today, U.S. foreign policy is an Indigenous justice issue. A new, progressive foreign policy must redress these wrongs and put the lives and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples first.

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## **BURIED LEDES**

Amidst all of this chaos, some bright news! **The Nobel Prize for chemistry was just [awarded to two women who developed a revolutionary gene-editing tool](#)**. This came just as N.K. Jemisin, a Black female author, [landed](#) a MacArthur Foundation genius grant!

**The IMF is using the COVID-19 crisis to do what it does best: [impose](#) devastating austerity on the Global South**. Win Without War [joined](#) over 500 organizations and scholars from around the world to tell the IMF: #EndAusterity.

The Trump administration somehow manages to outdo its own xenophobia: **the State Department [announced](#) its plans to let only 15,000 refugees into the U.S. next year**, an overall decrease of over 85% since he took office.

Need more proof that this administration doesn't value human life? A government watchdog [found](#) that, in 2018, **Jeff Sessions told prosecutors that "we need to take away children. If [immigrants] care about kids, don't bring them in."**

The new Cold War mindset in action: Despite rampant Hindu nationalism and institutionalized Islamophobia, **U.S. officials are [working](#) to forge stronger military ties with India, uniting against a common perceived foe: China**.

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The new Cold War mindset in action... again: As talks of the next COVID-19 relief package [come to a halt](#), Defense Secretary Mark Esper [revealed](#) that **the Pentagon plans to have more than 500 Navy ships in the fleet by 2045 to “protect” the U.S. against China.**

As if COVID-19 wasn't enough, **scientists are [reporting](#) new outbreaks of scarlet fever.** Unless we learn how to cooperate globally on global threats to our security, COVID-19 may not be a one-off event.

U.S. weapons sales continue to fuel conflict across the globe: **Turkey is now [using American-made F-16 jets](#) to bomb civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh.** But at least weapons industry execs get to live like [this](#).

Leaked documents [reveal](#) that **Exxon plans to drastically increase its carbon emissions.** **Meanwhile, neither Presidential ticket will commit to ending [fracking](#).** We're on a sinking ship and the most powerful people in the country are fighting over who can take on more water.

And finally, if you live in the Americas and you're not Indigenous, you live on stolen land. **Text the name of your city to (907) 312-5085 to find out whose.** (Then use that knowledge to fight for justice for Indigenous people today!)