

WIN WITHOUT WAR



5 Foreign Policy Issues to Look Out For in Tonight's Debate Town Halls

In lieu of the canceled presidential debate, Donald Trump and Joe Biden will take part in competing town halls at 8pm ET tonight. While presidential debates aren't known for the depth of their foreign policy discourse to begin with, town halls typically avoid the topic altogether. So though we're unlikely to get much insight tonight, here are five key foreign policy issues that we wish we would find in the town halls — and how we *should* be talking about them.

1. Iran

- The Trump administration's relations with Iran have been defined by violent threats, reckless brinkmanship, and an utter indifference to the lives of people in Iran — almost leading us to war.
- In four years, Trump has hired leading Iran hawks as advisors, withdrawn from the successful nuclear deal, imposed additional crushing sanctions in the midst of a pandemic, and illegally assassinated a top Iranian military official. On top of that, he banned immigration of, and stoked xenophobia against, the people of Iran.
- Ending the aggression, stopping deadly sanctions, returning to the nuclear deal, and recommitting to multilateral diplomacy is the best way to safeguard our own security and support people in Iran who are trying to create change on their own terms.

2. China

- As China has grown in wealth and power, hawks on both sides of the aisle have targeted it as a monolithic, existential threat, to be met with hostility. This new Cold War is reckless, ill-founded, and potentially disastrous.
- Fearmongering about China fuels militarism and excessive Pentagon spending, distracts from domestic problems, and incites racism, while doing nothing to redress China's human rights abuses. This Cold War benefits Trump, arms dealers, and the corporate class at the expense of the rest of us.
- The next administration must reject trade wars, militarism, and aggression, while seeking to address any challenges with China through robust multilateral engagement. Confronting the true threats to our security — the pandemic, the climate crisis, global inequality — requires *cooperation* with China, *not* competition.

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3. North Korea

- The Trump administration's initial steps toward diplomacy with North Korea were commendable, but were quickly undermined by backtracking, capriciousness, and ego-driven foreign policymaking.
- "Maximum pressure" has failed. U.S. aggression only serves to justify the North Korean government's authoritarianism and drive for nuclear capabilities.
- We must stop the cycle of aggression, formally end the Korean war, roll back broad-based sanctions, and recommit to diplomacy, following the lead of the people of South Korea.

4. Endless Wars

- Trump's claims to be "ending endless wars" are just talk. In four years in office he has blocked multiple bills designed to prevent wars, brought us to the brink of war multiple times, and expanded secret, unaccountable drone strikes around the world.
- But Joe Biden's record is far from spotless — Biden supported the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), championed the invasion of Iraq, and promoted the expansion of U.S. drone warfare.
- We must work to end the United States' role in existing conflicts, repeal the AUMFs, return the powers of warmaking to Congress, and slash the Pentagon budget.
- But the absence of war is not enough; we need to build a positive peace by supporting gender-equitable and locally-led peacebuilding, committing to multilateralism and international law, promoting green, justice-based development, and more.

5. Trade & the Global Economy

- Trump's promises to help workers by wielding U.S. power in support of U.S. corporations have utterly failed. Trade wars harm workers across borders in order for a small segment of the corporate class to profit.
- We must recognize that corporate globalization is failing working people. But replacing it with economic nationalism only makes matters worse. We must rewrite the rules of the global economy to put people and planet before profits, everywhere.
- That means renegotiating trade deals, canceling Global South debt, holding multinational corporations responsible for their abuses, and ensuring that the World Bank and IMF promote a just, green recovery from the crisis.