

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: A Special Thanksgiving Edition Debrief

For some, this week is a welcome break from work. For others, a difficult reminder of our inability to gather with our loved ones, or the dread of working a Black Friday shift.

For still others, though, the Thanksgiving holiday means something much more. This week, in lieu of the usual deep dive, we've brought you a special edition of the Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief to share these words of reflection from our Deputy Director Sara Haghdoosti.

Among all of its challenges, 2020 has been a year of reckoning with our past. A key lesson from this year's racial justice uprisings is that *history* matters — and those leaders from those movements are calling us to examine how the decisions of the past shape the world we live in today.

That includes Thanksgiving. It's often hardest to look at our traditions and the things we may love with fresh eyes. But reflection allows us to fully examine and understand the history behind the day, and begin new traditions that are rooted in justice, not pain.

Genocide, land theft and forced migration, criminalization, and cultural erasure are themes woven throughout U.S. history. **And the consequences of four centuries of violence are visible right now: COVID-19 is devastating Native American and First Nations communities nationwide.**

For many in the United States, tomorrow is a treasured holiday, one of many we are sad to not spend with family and friends this year. That said, for millions of others across the country, Thanksgiving isn't about pie or football — it's a day of mourning colonization's devastating impact on Indigenous peoples.

This year, we're asking all our activists — particularly those who aren't from Indigenous communities — to recognize that trauma and pay homage to the Indigenous peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land you reside on.

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This isn't a transformational answer, it's a first step — but an important one. And here's how you can do it with us:

1. Look up which [Native lands you live on using this tool](#).
2. Take a moment to learn about the history of those tribes. What languages do and did they speak? Who are their heroes? Where do their people live now?
3. Draft a simple acknowledgment about what you've learned to share when you gather together with friends and family in the coming weeks. Not sure where to start? Here's a simple version you can use (remember this is only one template, here are [others you can draw inspiration](#) from!):

“We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are on today, the <insert name>, and pay our respect to their elders past and present.”

4. Encourage your family and friends to do the same at their tables, Zooms, classrooms, and in office meetings.

There is so much more we can and need to do — first and foremost, we should *listen* to Native peoples who have already shared their experiences and told their stories. Here are some resources to help you along the way:

- [9 Ways to Decolonize and Honor Native Peoples on Thanksgiving](#) from Cultural Survival.
-  [Nativemovement.org](#) has an incredible list of books, memoirs, and films that center Native experiences and history. Want to talk to children about these issues? The [Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition](#) (GCNAC) has book recommendations for children 3 and up.
-  Love podcasts? [All My Relations](#), [On the Land](#), and [Coffee & Quaq](#) are a few picks from Nativemovement.org.
-  GCNAC also has a [toolkit on Indigenous allyship](#) from the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK.

If you're reading this email, it's because you care about peace. You support cooperation and diplomacy, want to see divestment from the Pentagon and investment in people, and an end to endless war.

But winning without war isn't only about a national security strategy; it's also about how we show up in our own communities. That has to include acknowledging and taking a stand against the violence and war that has devastated — and continues to damage — Native communities.

Thank you for working for peace.

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Sent from the Nacotchtank (Anacostan) and Piscataway lands, also known as Washington, D.C.