

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

DATE: 12/18/2020

SL: 2020 wasn't ALL bad

The Takeaway:

- 2020 was a hard year. But despite the difficulties, it also contained victories on the path to peace.
- A massive public and congressional response pulled us back from the brink of war with Iran, we advanced the fight to end U.S. complicity in the war in Yemen, the movement to cut the bloated Pentagon budget grew — there's much in 2020 worth celebrating.
- We at Win Without War are grateful beyond words for everyone who's in this fight with us. As we look to the year ahead, we're filled with hope and energy to continue the struggle for peace. In the meantime, we wish you all a happy holidays.

2020 — Struggles, Setbacks, and Successes in the Fight for Peace

2020 has been a difficult year — at this point, it's almost cliché to say so. We've faced a deadly disease, muddled through political chaos, and struggled with the isolation of an unprecedented lockdown. It's easy to forget that it was almost even worse; in the very first days of the year, Donald Trump almost ignited a catastrophic, all-out war with Iran.

But despite having a roster of warmongers, a cabinet of sycophants, and decades of deadly militaristic momentum on his side, he failed. And that's for one simple reason: us. We, everyday people, in the United States, in Iran, and around the globe, rose up against the war machine and ultimately prevented another deadly war of choice. 2020 may have been dark, but it also had times like this — moments of brightness, when people came together to build a more peaceful world. This week, we look back at a long year and bring you just a few of the many progressive foreign policy highlights:

Stopping a War with Iran

This bears repeating: *the people took on the war machine and won*. From the moment Trump began his march to war, we [resisted](#). Win Without War activists signed petitions, called their members of Congress, and *showed up* for [protests](#) across the country. With momentous

WIN WITHOUT WAR



grassroots support, our champions in Congress pushed forward measures to block the path to war, and succeeded in [passing](#) a War Powers Resolution through both the House and Senate. Though the hybrid war on Iran would continue, Donald Trump, facing relentless pressure, eventually backed down from all-out military conflict.



Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) speaks at a No War With Iran rally co-organized by Win Without War.

Combating U.S. Complicity in Yemen

U.S. support for the Saudi- and UAE-led intervention in the war in Yemen is one of the most disastrous, inhumane foreign policy decisions in recent memory. This year, the pro-peace movement once again brought this into the spotlight. In July, the House [passed](#) a comprehensive ban on the sale of munitions to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, while just this month, the Senate only [narrowly lost](#) a vote to block Trump's latest arms sale to the UAE. This comes on top of last year's momentous successes, when Congress voted to [block](#) a similar weapons deal and [passed](#) a historic War Powers Resolution to prevent unauthorized U.S. involvement in the conflict. Though efforts to fully end U.S. complicity and help end the suffering of the people in Yemen have been stymied under Trump, the Biden team, recognizing the shifting tides, has promised to reverse course.

Rethinking the Pentagon Budget

The inhumanity of funneling trillions of dollars into the Pentagon's overstuffed coffers while everyday people struggle to get by has rarely been so clear as in 2020. This year, we came a step closer to righting this egregious wrong. Following a major fight that saw grassroots activists, organizations like ours, and leaders in Congress working hand-in-hand, an [amendment](#) to cut the Pentagon budget by 10% [garnered](#) 93 votes in the House and 23 in the

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Senate — or nearly 40 and 50 percent of the Democratic Caucus, respectively. It's not enough, but just a few years ago, even this would have been unthinkable. [Momentum is on our side](#).

Keeping COVID-19 Relief Funds Where They Belong

As if we needed any more proof that our budget priorities are dangerously out of whack, Congress's initial response to the pandemic included over \$10 billion for the Pentagon — *on top of* its already bloated budget. When we learned of this, we jumped into action, working with partners, mobilizing our grassroots activists, and pressuring the Hill to [do better](#). Ultimately, we [succeeded](#) in ensuring that subsequent COVID-19 relief legislation included *no* additional funding for the Pentagon. Even more, when it was revealed that the Pentagon was *grossly* misusing this money, spending it on weapons of war rather than the production of PPE, we helped mobilize a [response](#) that resulted in a special Congressional [investigation](#)!

Fighting to End Endless War

For too long, the 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs) have acted as blank checks for the president to wage war around the globe. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), this summer, the House Appropriations Committee [passed](#) an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act to [repeal](#) both. Though these provisions didn't survive conference negotiations with Republicans, this step forward helped to prove what we have long known: the era of endless war is coming to an end.

And so much more

That's all just the tip of the iceberg. Throughout the year, our movement also helped propose [new legislation](#) to reimagine what U.S. foreign policy can look like; [fought back](#) against Trump's reckless nuclear policy; joined in [solidarity](#) with anti-racist protesters in their movement against state violence; helped [demystify](#) and democratize the race for one of the most important foreign policy positions in Congress; [resisted](#) Trump's dangerous attempts to undermine diplomacy with Iran; advanced a new [vision](#) of foreign policy for the incoming administration; and so much more.

We're not done yet

These are the victories that we at Win Without War have taken pride in. But not one of them would have been possible alone. Every step down the path to peace was taken as a movement — of champions in Congress, of tireless journalists, of partner organizations, and of grassroots activists. We're grateful beyond words for every last person who has taken part.

Next year will surely be better than this one. With Trump out of office, a new President and Congress taking over, and vaccines on their way, there's reason to be hopeful. 2021 will undoubtedly bring its own challenges, but with the momentum we've built, and the movement that has built it, we're ready to take them on. Thank you for working for peace.

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Happy Holidays!

In observance of the holiday season, the Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief will be taking next week off — but we'll be back the following week with one final edition to close out the year. In the meantime, whatever, and however, you may celebrate, Win Without War wishes you a safe, joyful, and, of course, *peaceful* holiday season.

BURIED LEDES

There's a [showdown](#) at the WTO this week: **poorer nations are fighting to produce a COVID-19 vaccine without patent restrictions, while rich countries have taken the side of Big Pharma profits.** If this is even a debate... maybe we need a whole new system of trade?

Journalists in the Philippines are facing another round of violent [crackdowns](#) by the Duterte government. Reminder: this is the same government that the U.S. [provides](#) with hundreds of millions of dollars in weapons.

The Biden administration plans to rejoin the Paris Accords and [hold](#) a world climate summit next year. That's certainly a start, but let's remember: the scale of this crisis demands unprecedented, [radical](#) systemic change.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei both [expressed](#) a willingness to return to the Iran nuclear deal should the U.S. do the same — a welcome sign, and a good reminder that the Biden administration should return to the deal *first*, and focus on outstanding issues in later negotiations.

While we remain [wary](#) of certain parts of Biden's pick for Secretary of Defense's record, an in-depth look reveals that **Gen. Lloyd Austin may be more [restraint-minded](#) than his resume alone would indicate.**

“Defending forward” “Forward defense-in-depth military deployments” — just a few of the many [contortions of language](#) that the warmongers over at the “**Foundation for the Defense of Democracies**” are now using to justify forever war to a public that wants none of it.

How can the U.S. level an entire city without committing a war crime? **What does it mean to follow the letter of the laws of war, when those laws [weren't made](#) with modern warfare in mind?**

U.S. security policy affects people of color as much as — and often more than — white folks. Yet the higher echelons of the national security community remain all too white. [Read Bishop Garrison on the importance of representation in national security policy.](#)

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Washington, DC just [moved](#) one step closer to permanently becoming a sanctuary city — okay, it's not quite foreign policy-related, but we're just proud of our city.

And finally, [competitive precision walking](#)... the sport you didn't know you needed.