

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: (Listen all y'all) It's Sabotage

Trump Wants to Sabotage Biden's Shot at Diplomacy with Iran — We Can't Let Him

One week ago today, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, one of Iran's leading nuclear scientists, was assassinated. Not only was this blatantly illegal — it was a direct attack on the prospect of peace. This week, we take a deep dive into this criminal act: what it was, how the Trump administration's failed "maximum pressure" policy enabled it, and why it is just the latest in an ongoing campaign to sabotage the Biden administration's shot at diplomacy with Iran.

Trump and Pompeo Pave the Way

On November 27, Fakhrizadeh was driving on a rural road outside of Tehran when his car was attacked, with conflicting reports suggesting the attack was carried out by either armed gunmen or remote-controlled weapons. Though observers widely believe the attack was carried out by Israel, the assassination was clearly at least enabled by the Trump administration's long, egregious record of disregard for international law and four years of failed, dangerous, and cruel "maximum pressure" policies. From the similar illegal assassination of Iranian major general Qasem Soleimani, to broad-based sanctions that have contributed to the deaths of countless civilians, Trump and Pompeo's aggressive approach to Iran paved the way for this crime, whether or not they gave it their explicit approval.

Maximum Failure

This murder is just the latest consequence of Trump's "maximum pressure" policy — the entire approach has been a failure, through and through. Years of reneged diplomatic agreements, deadly sanctions, and military brinkmanship have only served to ratchet up tensions and bring our countries repeatedly to the brink of war while causing immense suffering for people in Iran. Let's be clear: this strategy isn't about leverage — it's about regime change, and the asinine belief that the United States can violently repress the people of Iran into overthrowing their government. Unsurprisingly to those who recognize Iranian citizens as human beings, this doesn't work. Trump's term in office has only strengthened the hand of hardliners and

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heightened distrust of the U.S. government, while undermining those in Iran who are actually struggling for change in their own country. “Maximum pressure” has been a maximum failure.

Sabotage

That’s why, in its last days in office, the Trump administration appears to be trying to burn it all down before Biden takes office. From the moment it became clear that Biden would be the next president, the Trump team, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at the helm, have launched a concerted campaign to torpedo his chances of reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and sabotage all efforts at fostering peace and security through diplomacy. During the lame duck period alone, the Trump administration has [imposed](#) new sanctions, refused to condemn Fakhrizadeh’s assassination, and taken steps to inflame regional tensions, such as by attempting to [ram through](#) \$23 billion in arms sales to the United Arab Emirates. And that’s just in the past few weeks — with six more until Biden takes office, there’s a wide, dangerous window for Trump to do even more harm than he already has.

Putting Things Right

The Biden administration has made unabashedly clear that it plans to put diplomacy first and clean up the mess that Trump’s warmongering has left behind — including by fulfilling their campaign promise to swiftly rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). But for those aspirations to become a reality, we must not allow Trump’s sabotage campaign to succeed. Whether calling out the ulterior motive of Trump’s actions, condemning instigations like the Fakhrizadeh murder, or putting a stop to them altogether — such as in Senators Mendendez, Murphy, and Paul’s move to [block](#) the UAE arms sale — Trump’s attempt to burn all bridges on the way out of the door must be resisted.

These six weeks will be critical in determining the scope of what is diplomatically possible under a Biden administration — not least because once Biden takes office, he has a mere five months to repair the damage before the Iranian elections potentially shake up the political landscape and make diplomacy more difficult. The struggle for a new approach to relations with Iran — one rooted in diplomacy and understanding, not hostility and violence — has already begun.

BURIED LEDES

From hiding tax records to refusing to transfer holdings to an independent trust, Trump always places personal profits over public service. Now **he’s planning to cut [multimillion dollar deals with foreign governments once he’s out of the White House.](#)**

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But there's plenty of time before then for the administration to wreak havoc. In addition to the Iran sabotage, **Trump is now trying to box President-elect Biden into exorbitant Pentagon spending, [proposing a \\$722,000,000,000 FY 2022 budget](#).**

More havoc on his way out the door: **Trump plans to [transfer land](#) in Arizona known as "Oak Flat" — a sacred area where Indigenous groups have performed ceremonies for centuries — to a mining company that destroyed Aboriginal sites in Australia.**

The people of Nicaragua and Honduras have received [little support](#) from the administration, despite being hit by devastating natural disasters...

...and although President Trump refuses to express solidarity or garner international support for the victims, there is hope. **Biden has suggested he plans to make climate change a centerpiece of his foreign policy with [Latin America](#).**

The United States helped [arm and train](#) the Nigerian police forces that shot and killed peaceful protestors in November. U.S. funding for foreign police has increased to over \$146 million dollars in the past two decades.

Just pardoned by Trump, **former U.S. National Security Advisor Michael Flynn [called on Trump](#) to suspend the constitution and declare martial law so the military can re-run the election. You read that right.**

Yesterday was [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#). COVID-19 has [exacerbated](#) the ableism and discrimination people with disabilities face every day — read [more](#) about building access-centered online movement education during a time where everything is online.

And finally, at least [someone](#) gets to see live music these days.