

# Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

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SL: Fascist insurrection is a foreign policy issue too

## **The Takeaway:**

- While it hasn't been treated as such, this week's attack on the U.S. Capitol is a foreign policy issue too, driven by the same dynamics of rising fascism and white supremacy.
- This should wake us up to the failures of existing policy: from a bottomless Pentagon budget that couldn't protect the U.S. Capitol from an insurrection, to Trump's control of the nuclear codes.
- There *must* be accountability. That includes the punishment of those who acted *and* those complicit, but also much more. It's time to transform U.S. foreign policy from top to bottom.

## **Accountability For The Capitol Attack Must Include Transforming U.S. Foreign Policy**

This week, a mob of Trump supporters smashed windows, scaled walls, and broke into the U.S. Capitol building to halt what should have been a routine certification of Joe Biden's electoral victory. This attack on democracy was appalling, a national tragedy that the country will be reckoning with for years to come. But to treat it as a purely domestic phenomenon would be to miss the full picture: the Capitol insurrection was inextricably linked with the long, violent history of U.S. policy abroad. There cannot be accountability, justice, or healing without transforming our foreign policy for good.

### **The rising tide of fascism**

Trump is a symptom, not a disease. Right-wing nationalism does not appear fully-formed from the ether when it's time for a coup attempt. It is the product of certain conditions — specifically, an economic system that enriches the few while exploiting and oppressing the many. Such an unequal system is unsustainable by itself, but the powerful few have tools that they can turn to to undermine the aspirations of the many and protect their place at the top of the order:

- Jingoism and white supremacy, to divide the many into an in-group and an out-group;
- Imperialism, to outsource the suffering of the many;
- State violence, to crush those who would threaten their power.

These are the foundations of fascism, and the natural outcome of a [neoliberal](#) world order that the United States *itself created*. From this order grew not only Trump, but Modi in India, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Duterte in the Philippines, and many more. By forcibly [imposing](#) the inequitable world order, [backing](#) right-wing dictatorships, and violently [removing](#) any person or movement on the left that stood in its way, the United States sowed the seeds of global fascism. Trump's supporters marching through the Capitol building are chickens home to roost.

### **White supremacy abroad, white supremacy at home**

The attack on the Capitol, like the entire Trump movement, was fueled by white supremacy. This was evident in their [flags](#), their [clothing](#), and their [statements](#). Even more, it was manifest in the way the police and security forces allowed the rioters to walk in with only moderate resistance, in sharp contrast to their treatment of racial justice protesters and Black, Indigenous, and people of color. That white supremacy is an inexorable part of the United States' domestic history is obvious. Too often forgotten, however, is the way that it also drives, and is driven by, U.S. foreign policy. From the genocide of Indigenous peoples, to the institution of slavery, to the brutal imperial occupation of the Philippines, to the Islamophobia-fueled endless wars of today, white supremacy has been at the heart of U.S. foreign policy since the very beginning. Those who justify [bombing](#) brown children in the name of corporate profits, or [imposing](#) poverty on Africans in the name of good governance should not be shocked when white supremacists attack their country too.

### **We've tried to tell you: Pentagon spending doesn't keep us safe**

Year after year, we're told that our national security depends on maintaining a vast global military empire, working in tandem with a repressive domestic police state. Weapons manufacturers, warmongers in Congress, "national security experts," and even [Disney](#) work hand-in-hand to convince us that the nation's safety is contingent on our willingness to funnel trillions of dollars into the global military machine and militarized domestic police forces. But this week, when a handful of fascists cosplaying as a militia were able to waltz into the Capitol building unimpeded, the farce of the security state was laid bare. No amount of Pentagon funding will keep us safe — our *real* security depends on our ability to confront entrenched hierarchies of power and systems of oppression.

### **"We are not a banana republic."**

In the shock that followed this week's attack, a common refrain found its way into the discourse: "This is [not us](#). We are not a [Third World](#) country. The United States is not a [banana republic](#)." That, in a moment of turmoil, so many commentators would cling to American exceptionalism like a rock is not surprising — predictable, but also ignorant, ahistorical, and dangerous. The fact that coup attempts are relatively rare in the United States is less a unique feature of our democracy and more a reflection of how many coups in the "Third World" are instigated by the United States. Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Chile (1973), Bolivia (1971 & 2019) — the coups, assassinations, and wars backed either explicitly or implicitly by the United States are countless.

It is the United States itself that, through military and hybrid warfare, as well as the imposition of capital-friendly economic policies, has *caused* the very instability it now derides in the so-called Third World. Even the very term “banana republic” refers to a [creation of U.S. empire](#). So while it may be shocking that it happened here, the idea that this week’s attack was “not us” couldn’t be further from the truth.

### **Who are we to “promote democracy?”**

Many of these countless destabilizing interventions were conducted under the guise of “democracy promotion.” The United States is uniquely democratic, we are told, and can therefore bomb and starve other countries at will, in the interest of democracy. This week’s events should put an end to such falsehoods. While we’re fortunate that the assault did not go further than it did, it’s now all too clear how fragile and incomplete our democracy truly is. The United States may be one Trump-but-competent away from a fascist takeover. Though the idea of “promoting democracy” was largely a trojan horse to begin with, an excuse to make war or impose [suffocating sanctions](#) on any country that dare threaten U.S. hegemony, the fact that we cannot even promote democracy at home should render even the flimsy excuse moot.

### **The Nuclear Codes Are In Trump’s Hands**

Donald Trump spent four years stoking white supremacist violence, denied the validity of the presidential elections, and incited fascists to storm the halls of Congress. Maybe he shouldn’t have the power to start a nuclear war on a whim. Under “sole authority,” the president of the United States does not need the support of Congress, or even the assent of their advisors, to launch a nuclear weapon and risk the destruction of the world as we know it. That this godlike power is in the hands of someone who told the Capitol rioters “we love you” should be terrifying. It’s time to [end sole authority](#), enact a policy of “no first use,” and scale back our nuclear weapons on the path to total nuclear abolition.

### **We need accountability — AND change**

The history of U.S. foreign policy also has a lesson to teach us: if those who do egregious, catastrophic things (like supporting the invasion of Iraq) are allowed to continue to hold positions of power unpunished, they will [continue](#) to do those things (like invading Libya). If this week’s assault on democracy is allowed to go unpunished, we fear this will not be the last time that fascists walk the halls of Congress. That’s why Win Without War has [joined](#) the growing, nationwide call to immediately impeach Donald Trump, remove him from office, and bar him from ever holding public office again. We also demand accountability for all who were complicit, including the expulsion of members of Congress who paved the way for this violence by repeating Trump’s lies about the outcome of the 2020 election.

But punishment of those immediately responsible, while necessary, is not enough.

Wednesday’s attack cannot be fully explained by the actions of a few people — it emerged from a long history of U.S. policy, both at home *and* abroad. There can be no justice, no peace, and

no true healing until that policy is completely transformed, from top to bottom. This moment can be the beginning of a radically new U.S. foreign policy. Let's fight to make it so.

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### **BURIED LEDES**

Washington, DC is not just what you see on C-SPAN. It's a vibrant, majority-BIPOC city of 700,000 people — many of whom were affected by Wednesday's attack. **Support the recovery of the DC community by donating to local organizations** like:

- [Serve Your City DC](#)
- [Feed the People Mutual Aid](#)
- [Free Community Pantry DC](#)

**2020 has officially [tied](#) 2016 as the warmest year on record.** Your regular reminder that the climate crisis is here, it's getting worse, and only radical systems change can confront it.

Want to **actually end endless war**? Then it's time to **repeal and reassess** the 2001 AUMF [argues](#) our Stephen Miles.

With Georgia's election results in, **the Biden administration will now have a friendly Congress and a unique opportunity to boldly transform how the US conducts foreign policy.** Let's hope they seize it. [Here](#) are our top 10 priorities for the new administration...

... **one of which — ending U.S. complicity in the war in Yemen — President-elect Biden [recommitted](#) to this week.** The fight's not over yet, but this is a monumental step forward, and a victory for the entire progressive foreign policy movement.

**Over fifty foreign policy experts, including Win Without War Executive Director Stephen Miles, called on the Biden administration to promptly [rejoin](#) the Iran deal** upon taking office — yet another of our top priorities that appears within reach.

The bad news: **the United States has once again put corporate profits over the lives of people in the Global South, [blocking](#) a patent waiver for the COVID-19 vaccine at the WTO.** The good news: Joe Biden has the power to reverse course on day one.

With a jump in Tesla stocks this week, **Elon Musk [surpassed](#) Jeff Bezos for two titles: (1) richest person in the world, and (2) greatest living embodiment of the need for radical global wealth redistribution.**

Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) is [right](#). **Now is the time for Congress to deliver transformative progressive change**, including “[ending] our endless wars and [investing] in diplomacy.”

It’s not exactly foreign policy, but as a part of the DC community, we’d be remiss not to say: this attack is yet another [reminder](#) that **it’s time for DC statehood. Now.**

And finally, **a dog [dancing](#) to Evanescence.** Enough said.