

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: This is our chance to end endless war.

The Takeaway:

- The post-9/11 wars are now nearing their twentieth year. After a dangerous, militarist president who masqueraded as anti-war, and a decade since a missed opportunity to repeal the 2002 AUMF, we can't let this moment slip through our fingers.
- This week, a coalition of 25 organizations from across the ideological spectrum sent a [letter](#) to Congress calling to repeal the AUMFs. At the same time, another [letter](#) was sent by 20+ organizations to President Biden outlining concrete steps to end endless war.
- Ending our endless wars has wide public support, bipartisan momentum, and the promised backing of the president. Now is our chance to make it a reality.

The Time Is Now: End the Forever Wars

It has been almost twenty years since every member of Congress but one — Representative Barbara Lee — voted for the blank check for war that is the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and 19 years since Congress overwhelmingly voted for the 2002 AUMF, launching the disastrous and tragic invasion of Iraq. That's two decades of destruction abroad. Two decades of misplaced priorities at home. Two decades of war, devastation, and death. But right now, after all this time, we have a chance to finally make a change.

What are the AUMFs?

While the United States' propensity for war could hardly be blamed on any single law, there are two pieces of legislation that have done more than most any other to [enable](#) the endless, destructive, and often covert post-9/11 wars. The 2001 AUMF, passed shortly after 9/11, was meant to authorize the war in Afghanistan, but has since been used as justification for waging countless military actions in at least 19 countries without public debate. The 2002 AUMF authorized the Iraq war. While it had more legal limits than the previous, it has also been twisted to justify repeated interventions in Iraq and Syria, far beyond its original intent. Together, these laws form the legal justification for the forever wars, and represent an unjustifiable abdication of warmaking power from Congress to the President. It's time to end them once and for all.

Missed Opportunities

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For those who would bide their time rather than take immediate action, there's a tragic lesson to be learned from an untold story of our movement's past. As Matthew Petti explored in an [article](#) last week, the 2002 AUMF was on the verge of being repealed in 2011. At the time, with troops on their way out, it was considered uncontroversial — a no-brainer. But at the last second, President Obama's Pentagon intervened, calling on Congress to keep the AUMF in place... just in case. With that, the repeal was killed. 9 years later, the 2002 AUMF would still be in use as justification for warfare. It was even cited by the Trump administration in their reckless assassination of Qasem Soleimani. These are the costs of missed opportunities.

Tell Congress: Repeal the AUMFs

But the fight for AUMF repeal didn't end there. After nine more years of building power, the movement to repeal both AUMFs and end the forever wars is once again demanding change. Just this week, a bipartisan coalition of 25 organizations, led by Win Without War, sent a [joint letter](#) calling to sunset the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF, and publicly and carefully debate whether there is a need for replacement authorizations. This letter echoes legislation already [introduced](#) by Rep. Barbara Lee — the same champion of peace who, all those years ago, refused to write a blank check for endless war — that would finally repeal the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs.

Tell Biden: End the Forever Wars

At the same time, another [letter](#) was sent by over 20 organizations, also representing a range of political positions, to President Biden. This letter called on the president to make good on his [promise](#) of ending endless wars, outlining the concrete steps within his power to do so. These include:

- Ending operations under the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs;
- Ending war-based approaches to detention, trial, and lethal force;
- Adopting an appropriately tailored and rights-based approach to security;
- Using military force only as a last resort and with the authorization of Congress;
- Insisting on essential safeguards in any future AUMFs; and
- Supporting war powers reform efforts in Congress

Spanning the ideological spectrum, it would be difficult to find much that the signers of these letters could agree on. But regardless of political persuasion, it is obvious to all: the United States should not be able to wage endless war around the globe, largely hidden from the public eye, without democratic debate.

More To Be Done

Even if every last one of these steps were taken, there would still be much left to be done. We must ensure that direct U.S. military involvement is not replaced with an increased reliance on private contractors, or outsourced to other national partners. We must not merely end U.S. involvement, but replace military action with a surge in peacebuilding and diplomacy. We must ensure accountability, justice, and reparations for the damage the United States has already

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caused. And all of this must be in service of building a wholly [transformed](#) approach to U.S. foreign policy. But every journey starts with a step — to get to where we need to be, we must start by repealing the AUMFs and ending the forever wars.

Now Is Our Moment

The time for action is now. As our letters demonstrated, support for ending endless wars is [not a question of party](#). Countless [polls](#) have [shown](#) wide public [backing](#). And, after a President that drew initial support from claiming to be anti-war while [acting otherwise](#), Biden was elected with a mandate to finally enact change. With a new Congress, a President that has [pledged](#) action, legislation already introduced, and the backing of a movement, there is no excuse. No more missed opportunities. We must #EndEndlessWar for good.

The History of a Hashtag

How did #EndEndlessWar become the definitive mantra of a movement? The answer is in large part... you! Back in 2014, Congress had mostly managed to wipe the word “war” out of the public discourse while keeping the wars themselves alive. While working with Rep. Lee to support her bill to repeal the 2001 AUMF, we at Win Without War realized that we needed to remind the world what the United States was doing abroad. While the phrase “end endless war” had been used before, we called on our grassroots activists and supporters to turn it into a hashtag and make it viral. While the fight to end endless war didn’t end there, the phrase stuck. Read the [full story](#) from our Executive Director Stephen Miles.

BURIED LEDES

Biden’s choice on Iran is simple: keep up Trump's disastrous "maximum pressure" policy, or return to the proven path of peace and diplomacy. **Yesterday’s [offer](#) to restart nuclear talks is a good sign that he is choosing the latter.**

The United States doesn’t just bomb the people of other countries — it chokes them. **It’s time to end the United States’ [other endless war](#): deadly broad-based sanctions.**

The word “sanctions,” though, is used to mean many things. While broad-based sanctions target entire populations, it is also possible to impose targeted sanctions on specific individuals. **These targeted sanctions may be a tool to help restore democracy in Burma. [Here’s how.](#)**

If you want to keep the limitless money flowing to the arms industry, you need a good bogeyman... even if there isn’t one. **The China threat is being [inflated](#) to justify more Pentagon spending.**

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People are freezing to death in Texas as a direct result of climate change, and conservatives are [spinning](#) a total lie to blame it on clean energy. Your weekly reminder that the climate crisis is here, and facing it requires [radical action](#).

The climate crisis isn't the only way fossil fuels are killing us. **A new study suggests that burning fossils [contributed](#) to 1 in 5 deaths in 2021.**

A new report found that the border "security" industry [contributed](#) \$5 million to Biden's election campaign. Our take? People shouldn't profit from enacting violence on migrants — and they definitely shouldn't get to use that profit to influence policy.

How should Biden fulfill his promise of ending U.S. support for offensive operations in Yemen? **Cutting off arms sales to Saudi Arabia is a good start, but let's not forget about [the UAE](#).**

Siri, show me the state of global health politics in one statistic: **so far, just 10 countries have [administered](#) 75 percent of all vaccinations.**

Trump may be gone, but under Biden's [directive](#), **ICE continues to brutalize immigrant communities, including [deporting](#) Haitian migrants to a country in turmoil** after their president lost an election but refused to cede power.

And finally, tired of being stuck at home? **Take a [drive](#) through Istanbul, Moscow, or Tokyo** (complete with traffic and radio commercials).