

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: 316-113 For the Failed Status Quo

The Takeaway:

- The House of Representatives voted 316-113 this week to pass the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act — the massive annual Pentagon budget authorization and policy bill.
- Despite twenty years of failed militarism, and the end of the United States' longest ground war, this year's NDAA turned out much like those that came before: a massive corporate giveaway and a recommitment to the endless war doctrine.
- But while the bill was a major disappointment, there's reason for hope. From yet another successful vote to end U.S. complicity in Yemen, to growing Democratic support for reining in Pentagon spending, momentum is on our side. And we will win.

The NDAA Is A Threat to Genuine National Security

20 years of disastrous global warfare, the long-overdue end of the failed U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, two years of pandemic, economic crisis, and climate disaster that prove that our greatest security threats have no military solutions — one would think that Congress might be able to take a look at the state of U.S. foreign policy and recognize that it's time for change. One would think. Instead, this week, the House of Representatives voted to funnel hundreds of billions of dollars to war profiteers and double down on the failed endless war status quo. This is the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

What is the NDAA?

Every year for the past 61 years, Congress has passed a bill called the NDAA to authorize funding for the Pentagon and associated programs for the following year. In this age of Congressional dysfunction, being considered “must pass” legislation [note: it isn't] means it's one of the few legislative vehicles left that has bipartisan pressure to pass, and gives rank-and-file members a chance to influence policy. As a result, members of Congress try to attach their priorities to it — often, but not always, relevant to U.S. defense and national security policy. That creates a massive piece of legislation, and usually multiple days of debate and voting on subjects ranging from the funding of [lighthouse preservation](#), to vegetarian [meal options](#) for U.S. servicemembers, to critical foreign policy issues like the level of U.S. nuclear weapons funding. In short: it's a marathon — and we follow it [play by play](#), so you don't have to.

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A Pentagon Contractor Giveaway

Technically, the NDAA doesn't actually *fund* the Pentagon — that's left to the appropriations bill that comes next. But it does set the baseline of Congress's funding preferences. And this year's NDAA is a [three-quarters of a trillion dollar giveaway](#) for corrupting corporate contractors and a bloated Pentagon that has never successfully undergone [an audit](#) (let alone passed one). Not only did this NDAA set the Pentagon budget well above the absurd levels of the Trump years — it added \$25 billion to what President Biden even requested, for a total of \$37 billion above the previous year's enacted level. Let's be clear: excessive Pentagon spending doesn't keep us safe. Luckily, some in Congress are starting to get with the program. While they didn't succeed, the majority of House Democrats [did vote](#) for an [amendment](#) to rein in this runaway Pentagon spending. The weapons industry may have won this battle, but the momentum is on our side.

Doubling Down on the Status Quo

Funneling billions of dollars into the war machine isn't the only egregious thing about this bill. In vote after vote, House lawmakers proved themselves unable or unwilling to learn the unmistakable lesson of the last twenty years: endless war is not the answer. The following are just a few of the many ways the House chose to double down on the failed war-first status quo:

- Failing to pass Rep. [Bowman's amendment](#) to remove U.S. forces that are stationed in Syria without congressional authorization;
- Voting down Rep. Johnson's amendment to stop the transfer of major military equipment to domestic police forces via the [1033 program](#), which fuels the militarization of policing and the terrorization of Black and brown communities;
- Refusing to [pause](#), for even one single year, the development of the new, dangerous, and unnecessary Ground Based Strategic Deterrent nuclear weapons system, effectively throwing trillions of dollars down the drain of a global arms race to build weapons designed to wipe humanity off the face of the earth — cool!

End U.S. Complicity in Yemen. Now.

One key bright spot: The House *did* pass Reps. Khanna, Jayapal, Schiff, and Smith's [amendment](#) to end critical remaining aspects of U.S. military support to the Saudi-led coalition's war in and blockade of Yemen. As a refresher: the Saudi-led coalition is bombing civilians and helping the Yemeni government block the delivery of life-saving fuel and other assistance for civilians, exacerbating the largest humanitarian crisis in the world — and it's doing so with U.S. backing. Though President Biden [promised](#) to end U.S. support for offensive operations in Yemen, he has failed to live up to that promise. Just this week, he even announced a new \$500 million weapons maintenance sale for Saudi Arabia — [a slap in the face](#) of Congress, which has repeatedly voted to stop U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition, and the activists who have fought for the same. With this week's vote, the House reaffirmed its commitment to stopping the arming of human rights abusers and ending this shameful complicity, no matter who is president.

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What's Next?

The FY22 NDAA is, [on the whole](#), a gift to war profiteers, a doubling down on endless war, and a threat to genuine national security. But from Congress's reaffirmation of its opposition to U.S. involvement in Yemen, to growing recognition that the Pentagon budget has gone too far, there's reason to be hopeful. The Senate has yet to vote on its version of the bill. That and the appropriations process give us more chances to challenge this runaway Pentagon spending and the endless war doctrine it fuels. Whether it takes months, or years, we'll keep fighting until these authorizations for more spending on the military-nuclear-industrial-complex are a thing of the past.

BURIED LEDES

The images of the Biden administration's inhumane treatment of Haitian migrants in Texas are horrific. But they are not the exception — they are simply a more visible reminder of the daily violence, xenophobia, and white supremacy that lies behind U.S. immigration policy. [Our statement](#).

Drone warfare: it's "more precise, "more ethical" and "more effective"... or so the endless war lobby wants you to believe. **Here are [five](#) of the most enduring myths about drones, *busted*.**

A Texas doctor who performed an abortion in violation of the draconian new anti-choice law has been [sued](#). A reminder: abortions are a human right, [here and abroad](#).

Ever find yourself disoriented by the alphabet soup of acronyms that come out of the foreign policy world? **Check out our [new explainer](#) of two of Washington's most important (and easily confused) acronyms in U.S. foreign policy: the 2001 and 2002 AUMFS.**

Despite his promises, President Biden [has yet](#) to end U.S. complicity in the Saudi-led coalition's war and blockade in Yemen. A quick reminder: **it's time to [cut](#) military ties with the human rights-abusing regime.**

As the new Taliban government begins to take shape, **the women of Afghanistan are going to do what they've always done: [resist](#).**

The International Criminal Court [announced](#) that it will launch an investigation into extrajudicial killings carried out in Rodrigo Duterte's so-called "war on drugs" in the Philippines. It's a start... now let's get the U.S. to stop arming and aiding this brutal regime.

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A new audit has found that the Pentagon is [failing](#) to combat fraud in its contracting processes. You mean the Pentagon that receives hundreds of billions of dollars each year, funnels nearly half to one of the most powerful industries in Washington, and is never held accountable for its waste? That Pentagon? We're shocked.

The Israel lobby's stranglehold over U.S. policymaking is finally starting to weaken. We have the [Palestinian diaspora](#) to thank for it. Now let's follow their leadership and keep up the fight.

For veterans of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, the recognition that the war was a failure could feel like a betrayal. But as veteran Nathan Smith [writes](#): **the true betrayal was putting our troops in harm's way for a war that could never be won.**

Vaccine "donations" are fine and good. But **when rich countries donate with one hand, and block global vaccine access with the other, they're doing little more than [whitewashing](#) global vaccine apartheid.**

And finally, **we've all gotten in a little [over our heads](#) sometimes.**