

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

DATE: October 8, 2021

SL: Afghanistan, Guantanamo, Dubai, Pandora

### The Takeaway:

- On the 20th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, we must redouble our commitment to find justice for all of those harmed by our two decades of endless war.
- As the Supreme Court hears a case from one still indefinitely detained Guantanamo Bay prisoner that the CIA tortured, a reminder that the harms of our insidious post-9/11 policies live on.
- The Dubai Expo is the United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) latest attempt to whitewash its record of human rights abuses. But the #BoycottDubaiExpo movement is fighting back.
- The Pandora Papers reveal the horrific extent of global tax abuse — and the United States' key role in enabling it.

## Four Things You May Have Missed in U.S. Foreign Policy News This Week

The Build Back Better agenda in jeopardy, Facebook down for a day, the Zodiac Killer identified — with a week of news like this, you'd be forgiven for having missed some of the latest updates on the foreign policy front. Luckily, that's what we're here for. This week, we're rounding up four of this week's happenings in U.S. foreign policy — as always, from a peace-first, progressive perspective.

### The Invasion of Afghanistan, 20 Years On

Twenty years ago yesterday, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan began — and with it, the era of global, endless warfare. On this solemn anniversary, we recognize the millions of people who have suffered as a result of this disastrous decision, including the hundreds of thousands of people killed in Afghanistan. While newspapers move on, and Republicans try to use the tragic events surrounding the U.S. withdrawal to score bad faith, Benghazi-style political points, we know that we must redouble our commitments to safety and justice for the Afghan people — and to dismantling the war machine that has brought so much pain to Afghanistan and around the world. Read our full statement [here](#).

### Reminder: Guantanamo Bay Is Still Open

*CW: Descriptions of torture*

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Abu Zubaydah was captured in Pakistan in 2002. For four years, he was held in CIA [black sites](#) around the world, where he was waterboarded more than 60 times, and subject to [other tortures](#) such as sleep deprivation, confinement, and stress positions. Zubaydah was ultimately transferred to the Guantanamo Bay Detention Center, where he has been held for 15 years without charge. The U.S. government has since [admitted](#) that Zubaydah was not a senior leader in Al Qaeda and had no known connection to the 9/11 attacks.

This Wednesday, the Supreme Court heard arguments in a case brought by Zubaydah's legal team requesting that they be allowed to depose the two men who oversaw his torture. The Court has not yet made a ruling, but the facts of Zubaydah's case are noteworthy enough. Torture, black sites, and the continued existence of Guantanamo Bay prison 13 years after Barack Obama promised to close it, and over a year since Joe Biden [did the same](#) — it's been two decades since the September 11 attacks, but our militarized, illegal, and immoral response lives on. And it's not every day that you hear the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court [question](#) why this prison is even still open.

## #BoycottDubaiExpo

Cutting-edge technology, star-studded entertainment, A-list celebrities, glitz, glamor, and the whitewashing of an authoritarian government's bloody record of human rights abuses — all this and more at the Dubai Expo 2020! This past weekend, the UAE held the opening ceremony for a six-month world fair designed to raise the country's profile on the world stage. But this isn't just about national pride or attracting tourists — the Dubai Expo is a deliberate attempt to polish the UAE's reputation and divert attention from the fact that it is a dictatorship that systematically abuses its migrant workers, silences dissent, oppresses women and LGBTQ+ people, and is partially responsible for the brutal war and humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

That's why Win Without War has joined with organizations and political [leaders](#) from around the world in [calling on](#) all parties — politicians, celebrities, corporate sponsors, and [news outlets](#) — to [boycott](#) the Expo, and refuse to play a role in the whitewashing of the UAE's (and [Israel's](#)) crimes. And you can [help](#).

**P.S.** — It's worth remembering that the U.S. foreign policy establishment treats the UAE as a key ally (including by arming the UAE and violating our international [commitments](#) in doing so) despite a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights by the Emirati government. This is not just about the actions of some unrelated foreign country — it's our foreign policy too.

## The Global Impact of South Dakota

When it comes to taxes, there are two sets of rules: one for the rich and powerful, and one for everyday people like you and me. This is the lesson of this week's "[Pandora Papers](#)" — a trove of documentation of the use of global tax havens published this week. The third in a series of

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leaks exposing global corruption (coming after 2016's Panama Papers and 2017's Paradise Papers), the Pandora Papers have implicated world leaders and wealthy elite from King Abdullah II of Jordan, to President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, to Tony Blair and Elton John of the United Kingdom. While not all of those named in the papers acted *illegally*, all *did* use the broken global system of tax havens to their personal benefit.

So how is this U.S. foreign policy news? Criminal and elite corruption are often the fundamental drivers of human rights abuses, environmental and labor exploitation, state fragility, and authoritarianism. And despite President Biden's laudable commitment to centralizing anti-corruption in his approach to national security, the United States remains one of the world's [biggest enablers](#) of global tax abuse, and one of the central tax havens mentioned over and over again in the report was none other than [South Dakota](#). (And that's nothing to say of the way the United States' global export of weapons [drives](#) corrupt dealmaking and abuses). When we say we want a foreign policy that works for people everywhere, that also means making sure that our country isn't one of the driving forces behind global tax abuse, financial secrecy, and kleptocracy.

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## Indigenous Peoples' Day

Monday is Indigenous Peoples' Day — a day to celebrate and honor the native peoples of the Americas, rather than the genocider whose name has marred the calendar for far too long. On this day, we remember in particular how the status quo of U.S. foreign policy comes at a dire cost to Indigenous peoples. From expansionist, genocidal [wars](#) to the fallout of nuclear weapons [testing](#), from [coups](#) and [dirty wars](#) in Latin America to economic relations that continue to fuel [environmental destruction](#) and [displacement](#) today, Indigenous justice is a foreign policy issue too. A new, progressive foreign policy must redress these wrongs, uphold Indigenous nations' [rights](#) to sovereignty and self-determination, and center the lives and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples.

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## **BURIED LEDES**

“Ending our forever war” in Afghanistan means we're done bombing Afghanistan right, Joe?... Right?... **Drone warfare is just warfare with better branding, and learning the lesson of twenty years of failure in Afghanistan means ending drone strikes too. Read our explainer [here](#).**

Solar-powered drones? Sustainable airstrikes? Environmentally-friendly bombings? No matter how much they may pretend, **there's [no greening](#) the military-industrial complex.**

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From day one, the “war on terror” has been a war on Muslim communities (and, no, the anti-Muslim agenda didn’t end when Trump left office). **A [new report](#) looks at the ongoing anti-Muslim impact of the endless war era**, twenty years since it began.

Reproductive rights are under attack. But across the country, people are fighting back. **This week, thousands [took to the streets](#) in defense of the right to an abortion**: from DC, to Chicago, to Texas.

People in China and of Chinese descent are human beings. We know, it shouldn’t be “news,” but **politicians that see China as little more than a bogeyman or an excuse to push their own harmful domestic agendas need [reminding](#)**.

**A close look at Egypt’s new “[human rights strategy](#)” reveals it to be little more than window dressing**. But given the United States’ long history of overlooking (and abetting) human rights abuses in Egypt, that might be all the Biden administration’s looking for.

Encouraging news on the global health front?! **The World Health Organization has [approved the use of the world’s first malaria vaccine](#)**. It’s not rolled out yet, but this likely gives us a powerful new weapon in the war against one of the world’s deadliest diseases.

**A new study [finds](#) that U.S. trust in the media dropped by ten points between 2003 and 2004, and hasn’t recovered since**. Now... what exactly might have [happened](#) around 2003 that could have led to a decline in trust? 🙄

And finally, sometimes **when something’s bothering you, you have to take matters into your own hands [snout](#)**.