

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

DATE: January 7, 2022

SL: 2022: Struggles on the Horizon

### The Takeaway:

- 2022 is shaping up to be a critical year in the movement for a more peaceful U.S. foreign policy. This week, we take a look at just a few of the major fights ahead.
- Finalizing a return to the Iran nuclear deal, reining in out-of-control executive war powers, finally righting our nation's broken budget priorities, and confronting head-on the growing reliance on hybrid warfare — this is just a sample of what's ahead of us.
- We know that we won't win the fight to end militarism in a year. But we also know that momentum is on our side — together, we can keep up the struggle, build power, and, ultimately, pave the way for a radically new, peace-first approach.

## New Year, Renewed Commitment to the Fight for Peace

It's the start of a new year. While 2021 had no shortage of challenges, it was also a year of profound [accomplishments](#) for the pro-peace movement. As 2022 begins, we're *fired up* to build on that momentum and accomplish something truly meaningful. It may not be the year we defeat the war machine altogether, but we have no doubt that, together, we can make it a turning point in the transformation of U.S. foreign policy.

In the world of U.S. foreign policy, you can never predict what's around the corner. But as we look ahead, here's a quick preview of some of the major fights on the horizon:

### Choosing the Path to Peace With Iran

As [negotiations](#) on the Iran nuclear deal enter their eighth round, the Biden administration has a chance to undo much of the harm of the Trump era and bring our countries back to the path of peace. But the clock is ticking, and both sides have already wasted all too many precious moments. It won't be easy — the new Iranian government certainly holds some blame in the failure to reach an understanding so far. But above all, we must remember that there is *no alternative to diplomacy*. If we fail to come back to this deal, or something like it, the only other route is to fall into the same old escalatory cycle of sanctions and military action that leads only one place: war. That is **not an option**. Diplomacy is our only hope. It's up to our movements to mobilize and push things over the finish line.

### A Decisive Year for Reining in War Powers

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This may be the year that we rein in executive warmaking. To start, with a little luck, and a lot of movement pressure, a repeal of [the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force \(AUMF\)](#) could be just around the corner. The 2002 AUMF opened the door to the disastrous invasion of Iraq and totally unrelated military operations afterwards. Our mobilization helped push the passage of Rep. Barbara Lee's repeal bill in the House, and garnered a pledge of [60 senators](#) to do the same in the Senate. The [National Security Powers Act](#) by Senators Murphy, Sanders, and Lee in the Senate, and the companion National Security Reforms and Accountability Act from Reps. McGovern and Meijer in the House, would go even further — bringing critical powers of war and peace, from war authorizations to weapons sales to emergency declarations, back into the hands of Congress and the people they represent. This year, we'll be fighting to make these policies a reality.

## Fixing Our Broken Budget Priorities

The \$778 BILLION Pentagon budget in this year's [National Defense Authorization Act](#) is disappointing, to say the least — especially when critical needs like climate action and pandemic response are going woefully underfunded. But it's important to remember how much our resistance has grown. In 2020, [nearly half](#) of Democrats in Congress voted for a 10% Pentagon budget cut — a number that would have been unthinkable years earlier. That same year, we [stopped](#) Congress from sneaking *billions* of dollars in Pentagon spending into the Covid-19 relief bills. Last year, we [did the same](#) for the Infrastructure Bill. This fight is not an easy one, but we're hopeful for the year ahead. This year, we'll build on our recent momentum and do our best to ensure that the days of the out-of-control, rubber-stamped Pentagon budget are numbered.

## The Post-War Era?

For the first time in 20 years, we awoke on New Year's day to a world with no U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. It's a sign of just how far we've come as a movement. But while policymakers are increasingly starting to recognize that all-out invasions and occupations are too politically costly, they haven't yet accepted the basic truth that war *of any kind* is not the answer. Instead, they've turned to more subtle, but often just as insidious, forms of hybrid warfare. Drone strikes that [rain terror](#) on everyday people, [covert operations](#) conducted behind the public's back, [weapons sales](#) to foreign governments who will do [the dirty work](#) for us, sanctions that force [poverty and misery](#) on millions of people — this is the endless war of the current era. Nowhere is this clearer than in Afghanistan, where the end of occupation has been replaced by both [economic](#) and [drone warfare](#). In the year ahead, *these* are our major fights. Our goal is not an end to U.S. occupations, but a foreign policy that rejects militarism *altogether*.

## Building A Movement

Returning to the Iran nuclear deal, reining in war powers, cutting the Pentagon budget, and combating the turn to alternative forms of warfare — each of these is a critical battle. But our work cannot be reduced to specific policy wins on particular fronts. Ultimately, each is one piece

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of a larger struggle to build a powerful, enduring peoples' movement, capable of radically transforming the U.S. approach to foreign policy from head to toe. This is a movement that's already well in the making. And as the year goes on, we will fight to keep up the momentum, turn the tides, and realize a foreign policy rooted in [equality, justice, and security for all](#).

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## **Here and Abroad, Democracy Must Be Defended**

One year ago this week, right-wing insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol, waving Confederate flags, threatening members of Congress, and attempting to overturn the presidential election — all with the support of sitting members of Congress and then-president Donald Trump. On this anniversary, we remember that the attack on democracy was not an event, but an ongoing process. In the face of a rising global tide of authoritarianism, we must fight for the defense of democracy — by transforming U.S. policy, [both domestic and foreign](#), and putting power into the hands of the people.

*Read our full statement on the anniversary of the January 6 Capitol insurrection [here](#).*

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## **BURIED LEDES**

No one receives special treatment like the Pentagon. Last month, **President Biden signed an [executive order](#) to reduce federal greenhouse emissions... but the military — the single largest institutional emitter of greenhouse gases in the world — was left [exempted](#).**

Speaking of the Pentagon's pollution, for years, **the Navy's Red Hill facility has [leaked](#) tens of thousands of gallons of petroleum and toxic fuels into the surrounding Hawaiian environment — now, pressure is growing to remove the facility altogether.**

**After announcing that they would stop funding Congressional members that resisted last year's Presidential election results, weapons contractors [continued](#) funding candidates anyway.** Apparently, political corruption and military money go hand-in-hand. Who knew!

After twenty years of occupation, and many more of war — **who won out in Afghanistan? Well there's at least one clear victor: [private contractors](#).**

Meanwhile, while the money keeps flowing for the arms industry, **the UN has been forced to [suspend](#) its Yemen relief projects over funding shortages.** Priorities!

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Leftist governments are [on the rise](#) in Latin America... and a [Cold War mentality](#) is on the rise at the New York Times. Let's discuss the lives of millions of people across the Global South as something more than a tug-of-war between "Great Powers," shall we?

Good grief, indeed! **Are progressives the Charlie Brown to the National Defense Authorization Act football? And importantly, who is [Lucy](#)?**

**It turns out that when the Pentagon is left to investigate its own airstrikes, civilian casualty claims are [regularly dismissed](#) with little reason.** What's that about a fox and a henhouse again?

And finally, we knew the tendrils of the Military-Industrial Complex reached far and wide... **but our [fortune cookies](#)?!**