

## Cluster Bombs Are Never Worth A Consideration

### The Headline

Two days ago, the U.S. Cluster Munition Coalition sent a [letter](#) to President Biden expressing “grave concern over the potential transfer” of cluster munitions from U.S. stockpiles to Ukraine (for transparency, Win Without War signed on). Cluster munitions are [infamously](#) indiscriminate weapons that “pose an immediate threat to civilians,” scattering submunitions and bomblets over large areas. These weapons are so destructive that 123 countries – though not the U.S., Ukraine, or Russia – have come together to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions to prevent the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of cluster munitions.

The Coalition’s letter is in part a response to another letter, from leading Republicans on the House and Senate Foreign and Armed Services Committees to President Biden, [encouraging](#) him to send the cluster munitions to Ukraine. If the president were to agree, the move could have far-reaching consequences. Not only would people in Ukraine be endangered by unexploded U.S. bomblets for years to come, but the move could also open up a broader market for cluster munition proliferation. The U.S. hasn’t produced new cluster munitions for export since the last production line [closed](#) in 2016, but the pace of the conflict in Ukraine could lead weapons manufacturers to restart it. And once bombs are being produced, companies have every incentive to find buyers around the world for them.

Thankfully, cluster munition transfer to Ukraine is unlikely to happen anytime soon. President Biden has so far [demurred](#) in the face of Ukrainian requests for the weapons and expressed concerns, but it is time for a downright no before GOP pressure builds.

What’s next: Cluster munitions transfer may come up for a vote during the amendment process of this year’s NDAA. Unfortunately, some Democrats have been [silent](#) on the issue, but it is time for everyone who cares about ending the use of these destructive weapons to speak up. Cluster munitions should be out of bounds in any conflict.

### The Happenings

June 21st, 3:00-4:00pm EDT: “The Future of U.S. Counter-Narcotics Strategy: A Conversation with Dr. Rahul Gupta,” [CSIS](#)

June 26th, 10:00-11:00am EDT: “Asylum in Europe: Can the Ukraine response shape a better policy approach?,” [Brookings Institution](#)

### The Spotlight

*In today’s spotlight, we interview [Kristina Biyad](#), Outreach Director at Foreign Policy for America and a 2021 awardee of Arab America Foundation’s [30 under 30](#). You can follow her on Twitter [here](#).*

**1): What was the first moment you realized you were interested in working on U.S. foreign policy? What is one thing you wish was better understood about a diplomacy-first approach, a key point of advocacy for FP4A?**

Pinpointing a specific moment when I realized my interest in U.S. foreign policy is challenging. However, growing up as a child of immigrants with family members living overseas naturally sparked my curiosity about global affairs and America's role in the world. While I initially envisioned working abroad, and am grateful to have had some opportunities to do so, it was during a road trip from DC to Oklahoma that I had a revelation about my true passion.

While traveling across the United States, I witnessed firsthand the disconnect between foreign policy decisions and their impact on everyday Americans. It became clear that foreign policy decision-makers often overlook the perspectives and concerns of local communities. This realization fueled my determination to explore how foreign policy directly affects the lives of Americans and work to bridge the gap between local communities and decision-makers in Washington.

I strive to encourage others, particularly emerging leaders in this space, to consider the significance of connecting local perspectives with foreign policy discussions. Effectively advocating for principled American engagement in the world or diplomacy-first foreign policy is not possible unless you build a foreign policy community that is diverse and inclusive of local perspectives. Foreign policy cannot be an abstract exercise led solely by people in Washington, it must be a collaborative endeavor that acknowledges the interdependencies between local communities, regions, and the broader global landscape.

**2): Earlier this week, FP4A hosted an impressive conference, including a [panel](#) you led on the crossover of domestic policy and foreign policy. The panel, which included Mayor Danene Sorace of Lancaster, PA, was perfect for the FP4A tagline of "foreign policy begins at home." What did you learn from Mayor Sorace and why do you believe it's important to platform mayors in discussions around U.S. foreign policy?**

That was an impressive panel that truly embodied FP4A's motto: "American foreign policy starts at home." And having Mayor Sorace join for that discussion was one of the highlights of our entire Summit. I have appreciated the opportunity to get to know her recently and am grateful for her willingness to share her perspective with our community.

Lancaster, PA boasts one of the highest refugee resettlement rates in the U.S. Refugee policy is one of those issues that transcends the traditional boundaries of foreign and domestic policy, directly impacting the lives of Americans on a local level. Mayor Sorace's remarks shed light on the significance of refugee policy as a local issue, highlighting the role her community plays in driving and leading resettlement efforts with limited coordination from federal and national leaders.

Engaging mayors in discussions around U.S. foreign policy is incredibly important. Mayors, like Mayor Sorace, are at the forefront of implementing national policies at the local level. They possess invaluable knowledge and firsthand experience navigating the challenges and opportunities that arise from these policies. By providing mayors with a platform, we have the opportunity to tap into their wealth of insights and expertise and gain a deeper understanding of the impact of foreign policy decisions on local communities.

Our Leadership Summit, and this panel in particular, served as a reminder of the crucial role mayors and the communities they lead play in shaping and implementing foreign policy at the local level. The conversation also reinforced the importance of engaging local stakeholders in foreign policy decision-making, including stakeholders beyond mayors. A recent project carried out by FP4A, our Intermestic Initiative, highlights how important it is to actively listen to other local stakeholders such as small business owners, faith leaders, and diaspora leaders. These individuals tend to have a finger on the pulse of their communities. Having earned the trust of their neighbors and fellow community leaders, their voices and perspectives can play a powerful role in shaping foreign policy.

## **Buried Ledes**

**The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that the number of people displaced has [reached a record 110 million](#), with 19 million people forced to flee from their homes last year.** This figure consists of people seeking safety within their home countries as well as people who crossed international borders. In its report, UNHCR also reports that 339,330 refugees returned to their countries of origin last year, and 114,300 resettled in a third country. This comes as countries around the world have introduced tougher regulations on admitting refugees and asylum seekers. This includes the United States, which has begun to [deny asylum](#) to people at the southern border if they did not first seek protection in a country they passed through.

**China has been receiving various new world leaders in recent weeks.** Just a few days ago, Honduran President Xiomara Castro met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, during which they [signed 17 bilateral agreements](#) about issues like Belt and Road construction, trade, and technology. Likewise, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas also [visited China](#), with Xi saying that China is [willing to play a role](#) in promoting peace talks between Palestine and Israel. Chinese state media has “fiercely criticized” the U.S. for failing to broker a deal between the two. This comes in the background of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s upcoming [visit to China](#), during which he hopes to establish direct communication channels between the two leading economies.

**After surviving the May 1st plane crash in Colombia, four children [missing for 40 days in the Amazon](#) were rescued and airlifted to Bogotá.** During their time in the jungle, the children were able to identify edible seeds, fruits, roots, and plants because of their upbringing in the Amazon region. Their survival in [conditions](#) “that would be a huge challenge for most adults” has drawn international attention. Luis Acosta of the National Indigenous Organization of

Colombia said, “The survival of the children is a sign of the knowledge and relationship with the natural environment that is taught starting in the mother’s womb.” Likewise, General Pedro Sanchez, the leader of the rescue effort, credited the Indigenous people involved in the successful operation.

**[A new study](#) published in Nature reveals that people in at least 60 countries believe that morality is declining — but the study’s researchers argue this perception is “pervasive, perdurable, unfounded and easily produced.”** The researchers describe how two well-established psychological phenomena, including one’s biased exposure to information and biased memory for information, can produce the illusion of moral decline.

**Environmental officials in Italy say they [now know why the waterways](#) in the historic Venice Canal turned green, after days of confusion and reports from residents of Venice.** Chemical and biological tests revealed that the bright green color was [caused by fluorescein](#), a chemical used to find leaks during underwater construction. Now, officials are investigating how fluorescein got into the canal, and some are worried about the [possibility of copycats](#). Thankfully, the canal did not indicate any levels of toxicity.

**[Trivia](#)**