Foreign Policy is Possible

A SET OF LEFTY POLICY BRIEFS FROM

Fellow Travelers

foreign policy. from the left.

FOREIGN POLICY IS POSSIBLE FELLOWTRAVELERSBLOG.COM

Fellow Travelers is the project of several foreign policy and international relations-oriented writers and academics who want to see left foreign policy become more prominent in the discourse. Views expressed within the this briefing book are not representative of contributors' affiliate institutions.

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Introduction

Is a left-wing US foreign policy possible? More than any time since the end of the Cold War, the answer seems to be a qualified "yes."

In the past decade, a bevy of new voices—both institutional and individual—have challenged the logic of global US military commitments, documented the damage done by neoliberal trade policies at home and abroad, emphasized the protection of human rights as more than diplomatic window dressing, and advocated for aggressive action to mitigate the ruinous impacts of climate change. While far from a dominant faction within US foreign policy thinking, the idea of a progressive foreign policy—however interpreted—can garner column space in mainstream publications, be seriously entertained as an aspect of US "grand strategy," and prompt deliberation within relatively staid security studies journals.

This shift has been made possible by a wide range of developments. The disappointments of the Obama administration highlighted the limits of a technocratic, "don't do stupid shit" approach to foreign policy, even as successive presidential campaigns by Senator Bernie Sanders (as well as Senator Elizabeth Warren in the 2020 primary campaign) provided space for candidates, advisors, and supporters to articulate progressive alternatives. An entirely new think tank, the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, has emerged

alongside <u>new hires</u>, <u>new programs</u>, and <u>new perspectives</u> among existing research centers and Congressional staff.

Beyond new institutional opportunities, the Trump administration's haphazard and cruel foreign policy approaches galvanized progressive mobilization in response—and the conviction that the post-Trump era cannot simply revert to an unsustainable status quo ante. Acts such as the Trump administration's blank-check support for the Saudi-led coalition's intervention in Yemen—picking up where the Obama administration left off—helped cement a broad coalition of anti-war groups now at the forefront of foreign-policy lobbying within the United States. Likewise, Trump's clear chumminess with like-minded autocrats, as well as his attacks on US democracy itself, demonstrated the need for a US foreign policy that reinforces democracy at home while serving as a progressive counterweight to authoritarian retrenchment the world over.

With the Biden administration in the White House and (for now) a narrow Democratic majority in both houses of Congress, anti-war and internationalist groups such as **Win Without War**, **Beyond The Bomb**, **Justice Is Global**, **Vets For The People**, **Action Corps**, the **Center for Economic and Policy Research**, **Women Cross DMZ**, and others now have a window as never before to translate progressive foreign-policy ideas into reality.

While the Biden administration has proved more resistant to leftward lobbying on foreign than domestic policy, progressive still pushback matters—seen in the

administration's rapid recommitment to campaign pledges on raising US refugee intake, but also in its growing willingness to ensure worldwide access to vaccines while privileging human lives over pharmaceutical companies' profits. Flexing this kind of political muscle will only be more important in the months and years to come, particularly as some usual suspects are itching for a new Cold War with China.

Anticipating the need for concrete foreign policy proposals that progressive voices in Congress can champion, we at Fellow Travelers Blog have spent the last year soliciting, editing, and publishing a series of policy briefs outlining a new US foreign policy. While not an exhaustive agenda, the authors in this briefing booklet cover a number of big-ticket issues, from trade policy and nuclear posture to taking the Green New Deal global.

These proposals incorporate two overarching aims. First, the proposals within this briefing book seek to limit the harms and risks that the United States imposes on the wider world. A sprawling global military presence engaged in dozens of conflicts with limited oversight is a recipe for runaway harm, just as expansive sanctions programs have locked in siege warfare with little hope of relief.

Second, we emphasize that a progressive foreign policy cannot simply be an alternative elite project, advocated in the halls of power far from the public eye. For a progressive foreign policy to be sustainable in the long run, it must be democratic in terms of its benefits or risk the same kind of backlash that has hit past foreign policy paradigms. While these policy proposals entail global benefits, they also highlight the ways that they can be made to work for Americans at home.

Thanks to the efforts of grassroots activists, political leaders, and policy experts, the Overton window on US foreign policy has expanded significantly leftwards for the first time in decades. These policy briefs are an attempt to step through that window and to begin laying out in detail a world that could be. Where and when the left exercises its power in Washington, drawing on electoral strength and actionable ideas, a more just and more democratic foreign policy is possible.

1.

Rethinking Security

By Kate Kizer

TAKEAWAYS:

- With the expiration of budget restrictions under the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA), Congress will have the first opportunity in a decade to fundamentally reorient our spending priorities, including how we fund our collective security.
- » Congress should axe at least \$350 billion from the Pentagon's budget each year, over the next ten years, saving \$3.5 trillion.
- » Funds can be redirected to bolster a transition to a green economy, end the Pentagon's unique role in driving the climate crisis, and (re)invest in communities within our borders and beyond that have been negatively impacted by US policy decisions.



he unprecedented death and destruction we witnessed in the past few years has made it blatantly clear that the way the US government thinks about and provides security to its people is woefully inadequate, corrupt, and biased. With a new Congress deliberating spending priorities, there is a chance for the US government to fundamentally reassess and reprioritize how it funds security. Rather than ensuring the safety of multinational corporations' bottom lines, U.S. security spending—now clearing a trillion dollars each fiscal year—should seek to ensure the safety of people in the United States and help facilitate the safety of those around the world.

The principle that must drive this reorientation, if we are to address and prepare for future threats to human security this century, is abolition.

Overnight, the long-time calls to defund the police by the Movement for Black Lives became a mainstream position in the summer of 2020. Such rapid culture shifts are rare, but when they occur domestically, they inevitably impact our foreign policy. If we want to truly address the structural and generational impacts of white supremacy and racism on our society and government, we must defund institutions that create international insecurity as well as those that do so locally.

Just as more training or more funding won't end the epidemic of police violence, the failed F-35 and more nuclear weapons that could wipe out existence in the blink of an eye won't do anything to address the truly existential threats we face in this era: increasingly extreme climate and weather patterns, global pandemics, state violence, and runaway corruption and techno-authoritarianism. Increasing resources for tools that fail to keep us safe only reinforces the structural problems that drive human insecurity.

As we rethink the way the US government approaches security as a whole, we needn't bother engaging with the idea of a kinder, gentler version of militarism; we tried that during the Obama administration and it resulted in a doubling down of entrenched interests' control over policy priorities, a further worsening of the death and destruction of the status quo, and the foundation for the rise of Trump. Defunding tools of state violence as a whole—whether police departments or nuclear weapons labs—is the path to abolishing militarism as the United States' primary approach to security.

With budget restrictions under the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA) expiring in Fiscal Year 2022—the federal budget Congress will consider this calendar year—Congress will have the first opportunity in a decade to fundamentally

"Defunding tools of state violence as a whole

—whether police departments or nuclear weapons labs is the path to abolishing militarism as the United States' primary approach to security."

reorient our spending priorities. This administration is already sending worrying signs that it will be sucked in by the industry-peddled idea that continuous Pentagon spending increases are inevitable and necessary to keep us safe—or that more militarism can somehow address the rise of China's economic and diplomatic influence. Congress should reject this approach and instead seek to begin to defund and undo the institutional structures that have contributed to the militarization of security in our society. That should start with an across the board topline Pentagon and nuclear weapons budget reduction of at least \$350 billion annually to fund a just transition to a green economy, end the Pentagon's unique role in driving the climate crisis, and (re)invest in communities within our borders and beyond that have been negatively impacted by US policy decisions.

The Movement for Black Lives' seminal piece of legislation, The BREATHE Act, already provides a blueprint for how Congress can defund state violence at home and abroad. A just budget would redirect much-needed resources to address the cross-cutting challenges that everyday people face—whether economic, physical, social, or otherwise—in seeking safety for themselves, their families, and their communities. The question remains whether Congress will, as the people's representatives, seize this opportunity to fundamentally reimagine how the state provides security for its people this year.

Kate Kizer is the policy director at Win Without War. Follow her on Twitter @KateKizer.

Restoring Momentum Toward Nuclear Zero

By John Carl Baker

TAKEAWAYS:

- » The world faces a new nuclear arms race. US policy in the past decade has done little to keep the guard rails from falling off the international arms control regime, but the US has an opportunity to put the world back on the path to disarmament.
- » Congress should cancel the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent and pass the No First Use Act, establishing in law that the US will never start a nuclear war.
- » Building on the last-minute extension of New START, the US and Russia should begin negotiations toward a followon agreement that seeks major mutual reductions of their nuclear weapons.



he world faces a renewed nuclear arms race. All nine nuclear-armed states—China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the US—are modernizing their arsenals and adding new capabilities. Nuclear superpowers the US and Russia control 91% of the world's 13,000 nuclear warheads and together keep well over 3,000 deployed—more than enough to end human civilization.

The US nuclear posture needlessly inflames this volatile international situation. The president holds <u>unilateral launch</u> authority and the US still reserves the right to launch a <u>nuclear first strike</u>. The US possesses hundreds of ground-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) that are kept on alert in anticipation of a completely unrealistic surprise attack. These ICBMs drastically reduce presidential decision time (approximately ten minutes) and <u>increase the chance of a mistaken launch</u>. Close calls have happened in the past.

US policy has also done little to keep the guard rails from falling off the international arms control regime. The US left the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) in 2002, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in 2019, and the Open Skies Treaty in 2020. In January 2021, the Russian government followed suit by announcing it would leave the Open Skies Treaty, further endangering strategic stability.

At the same time, the United Nations review process created by the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains broken. Article 6 of the NPT <u>obligates the nuclear-armed signatories to pursue disarmament</u>, a provision they are not upholding. <u>Global frustration</u> with the lack of progress has led in part to the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which banned nuclear weapons under international law in January 2021.

"Congress can also develop legislation to distribute launch authority among more individuals than just the US president. Nearly any alternative is preferable to the current unilateral arrangement."

RENEWING US LEADERSHIP ON DISARMAMENT

The US can increase nuclear stability and lead the world back toward disarmament by taking the following bold actions:

Reform the Nuclear Posture: The US should declare that deterrence—not warfighting—is the sole purpose of the nuclear arsenal. Congress should establish that the US will never use nuclear weapons first by passing the No First Use Act introduced by Rep. Adam Smith and Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Congress can also develop legislation to distribute launch authority among more individuals than just the US president. Nearly any alternative is preferable to the current unilateral arrangement.

Retire Missiles: Congress should cancel the new ICBM, also called the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD), and begin phasing out land-based missiles for good. This will save substantial public dollars (an estimated \$264 billion over the lifetime of the GBSD) and dramatically lower the risk of nuclear war. A system without land-based ICBMs will be far more stable, with increased decision time if there are reports of an incoming attack. Submarines and bombers will still be available to launch retaliatory strikes if need be. Phasing out ICBMs is also popular: a University of Maryland study found that 61% of Americans, including 53% of Republicans, support the idea.

Negotiate Arsenal Reductions: Building on the last-minute extension of New START, the US and Russia should

immediately begin negotiations toward a follow-on agreement that seeks major mutual reductions. There is simply no reason for each country to have thousands of warheads when their nearest peer competitor (China) has only a few hundred. Addressing this disparity could bring China into the arms control regime and would demonstrate to the world that the US takes its disarmament obligations under the NPT seriously.

The US has a unique opportunity to put the world back on the path to nuclear zero. Through common sense policy changes, the US can lower nuclear risks, demonstrate a commitment to disarmament, and repair relations with the international community. The stakes could not be higher and the time for action is now.

John Carl Baker is a senior program officer at Ploughshares Fund. Baker's writing on nuclear weapons issues has appeared in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, New Republic, Defense One, and elsewhere. Follow him on Twitter at @johncarlbaker.

De-escalation on the Korean Peninsula

By Catherine Killough

TAKEAWAYS:

- The continuing state of conflict on the Korean Peninsula inflicts human suffering on people in the region through displacement, separation, and economic deprivation.
- The US government can begin peacemaking by abandoning its demand for the unilateral disarmament of North Korea, and instead pursue the formal conclusion of the Korean War.
- Halting the deployment of nuclearcapable assets, suspending military exercises, and adopting No First Use will further deescalate tensions on the Korean Peninsula.



he United States and North Korea are still at war, even if seven decades of ceasefire obfuscates this fact. Today, this long-delayed peace plays out in the nuclear crises that routinely aggravate US-North Korean relations, such as the 2017 "fire and fury" standoff.

This unfinished war also imposes more immediate and ongoing human costs. The wartime status quo, enforced by the world's most heavily militarized border and a strict travel ban, stands in the way of reuniting divided families. The outsized US military presence in South Korea and the region at large continues to profoundly disrupt and dispossess local communities. What's more, the international sanctions regime against North Korea has had a detrimental impact on civilians' livelihoods, contrary to assurances of its primary goal of advancing denuclearization.

Nuclear weapons are at the heart of this costly standoff. For decades, Washington has pursued a combination of diplomatic isolation, sanctions, and military brinkmanship to disarm North Korea, which is now estimated to possess between 30 and 60 nuclear weapons. In spite of repeated failure and a worsening crisis, both Republican and Democratic administrations have cohered around a pressure-based approach to change North Korean behavior while acknowledging that no military action—short of renewed war—could reliably eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Even as President Trump's personal engagement with Chairman Kim Jong Un broke with convention, his administration's "maximum pressure" strategy has, in practice, conformed to longstanding US policy. Within this existing framework, the options for advancing denuclearization and mitigating the risks of conflict are extremely limited.

"Only by prioritizing the resolution of the Korean War can US policy on North Korea progress past its impractical bid to disarm Pyongyang."

There is a viable path forward, however, should the next administration undertake a fundamental reorientation of US policy toward North Korea.

A PATH FORWARD: PEACE, ARMS CONTROL, AND DIPLOMACY

End the Korean War with a peace agreement: To crudely summarize the US-North Korean deadlock, the United States has conditioned peace and normalization on North Korea's unilateral nuclear disarmament. Meanwhile, North Korea has cited insecurities stemming from the ongoing war as grounds for nuclear armament. Only by prioritizing the resolution of the Korean War can US policy on North Korea progress past its impractical bid to disarm Pyongyang. The next administration should take a cue from the growing transnational peace movement to negotiate a peace agreement and forge new relations with North Korea.

Shift to an arms control approach: Peacemaking is not a refusal to work toward denuclearization, but a long-overdue process that would significantly improve the capacity and potential for both sides to address mutual security concerns. It bears emphasis that the security crisis is also shaped by the US nuclear posture, which has loomed over the Korean Peninsula since the outbreak of the Korean War and grown increasingly dangerous under President Trump. Shifting to an arms control approach would deescalate the risk of military conflict and enable a more stable footing to advance denuclearization. The next administration can

start by halting the deployment of nuclear-capable assets, suspending military exercises, and adopting a No First Use policy with respect to nuclear weapons.

Harmonize policy with South Korea: In contrast to the United States, the South Korean government has pursued peace and disarmament simultaneously rather than conditioning one on the other—a distinction that has come into sharp focus in recent years. This was painfully evident during the Trump administration's early loose talk of war, which prompted President Moon Jae-in to affirm that military action could only be decided by South Korea. At a minimum, coordinating North Korea policy in alignment with South Korea would correct for the unequal burden of risk. The next administration can go further to address outstanding alliance issues, such as the delayed transfer of wartime operational control to South Korea and rising US cost-sharing demands, that undermine South Korea's sovereignty. This will become increasingly urgent as Sino-American tensions grow and pit South Korea against its largest economic and military partners.

CONCRETE STEPS TO MINIMIZE SUFFERING

Taken together, these policy measures aim to go beyond reducing the risk of conflict and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive settlement that would minimize human suffering overall.

Specific benchmarks to meet these goals include:

- Jumpstarting negotiations with North Korea, using the commitments outlined in the US-North Korea Singapore Joint Statement (June 2018) as a springboard;
- Adopting military confidence-building measures, such as the suspension of large-scale joint military exercises, in exchange for a formalized return to North Korea's moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile testing;
- Facilitating the reunion of divided Korean Americans with their relatives in North Korea and easing travel restrictions that inhibit people-to-people exchanges;
- Lifting sanctions that adversely impact the humanitarian and human rights situation in North Korea;
- Replacing the Armistice with a peace agreement that formally ends the Korean War and begins the normalization of US-North Korean relations.

The incoming administration has a unique opportunity to not only build on the previous administration's engagement with Pyongyang but also work with a willing partner in South Korean President Moon, whose term will last until 2022. An early, proactive engagement strategy could significantly curb human suffering while taking the first step in the long path toward the disarmament of the Korean Peninsula.

Catherine Killough is an advocate for peace between the US and North Korea. She has previously served as the Advocacy and Leadership Coordinator at Women Cross DMZ and the Roger Hale Fellow at Ploughshares Fund. She is a member of the National Committee on North Korea.

Restoring Confidence in International Trade

By Yong Kwon

TAKEAWAYS:

- » The dislocation of traditional manufacturing employment in post-industrial societies and the persistence of trade barriers for many industrializing economies have led to declining popular support for international trade in many countries.
- » A political consensus around trade can be restored by promoting profit sharing in domestic industries; ending global tax avoidance through international cooperation; and rolling back austerity measures imposed on heavily indebted countries.
- » The principal goal of these measures will be to mobilize a political coalition for the advancement of a fairer global trade regime that will set the stage for collective action against shared challenges like climate change, poverty, and pandemics.



he period of growing international trade, punctuated by the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, coincided with the accelerated displacement of manufacturing jobs in the United States. Although U.S. export of goods and services grew during this period, many people began associating U.S. participation in trade agreements with rising economic insecurity at home. As a consequence, ratification of agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership became politically untenable.

THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM: UNEQUAL GAINS

The less-discussed effect of globalization that significantly contributes to this sense of dislocation is the shifting of corporate profits to offshore tax havens. As a consequence, corporate income tax revenue as a share of the national tax income has fallen by 30% between 1995 and 2017. This has

placed a greater burden on ordinary Americans who pay an increasingly larger share of the national tax income.

Simultaneously, many emerging economies distrust multilateral trade agreements because they face significant barriers to exporting goods despite their commitments to the WTO. In particular, negotiators from the Global South cited the <u>overprotection</u> of U.S. and European <u>intellectual property</u> and agricultural markets in their <u>rejection</u> of further multilateral trade liberalization at the 2001 Doha Development Round. Many nationals in these emerging economies see their country's growing debt burden as a consequence of an unequal international economic order.

In both the United States and emerging economies, the unequal gains to economic growth are at the root of the discontent.

THE WAY FORWARD: WORKER EMPOWERMENT, FAIR TAXATION, AND DEBT RELIEF

Given the challenges created by inequality, the aims of the new Biden administration should focus on restoring confidence in trade's capacity to deliver real and tangible gains to the economy. Three interlocking policies can help deliver this outcome. "The shifting of corporate profits to offshore tax havens has placed a greater burden on ordinary Americans who pay an increasingly larger share of the national tax income."

Strengthening Labor's Voice: A fairer trade policy begins at home. The federal government must prohibit states from enacting so-called "right to work" laws, which prevent unions from mobilizing resources to organize new workers and engage in collective bargaining. When unions ensure that firms maintain an explicit commitment to share trade gains with their employees, the country will not only be more conscious of the tangible benefits of trade, but also more accurately assess public sentiments towards new trade agreements as the interests of management and labor align.

International Tax Coordination: Profit-sharing at home may be undercut if gains from trade are accounted for in offshore tax shelters. Building on the 2010 Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, the U.S. government should advance a multilateral tax agreement that sets a minimum tax rate on multinational companies. This agreement would ensure that

a firm's global profits that are uncollected in tax shelters would be collected by governments where a share of those gains originated. This can be modeled on how most U.S. states collect their corporate tax revenue.

Debt Relief: Even when a fairer global corporate tax regime directs gains from trade to the public, onerous debt repayments may prevent emerging economies from utilizing these resources to improve socio-economic conditions. This dynamic amplifies domestic resentments and prevents indebted countries from deepening relations with nations that they perceive as predatory. The U.S. government is uniquely positioned to coordinate debt relief and should lead this effort because an emerging economy that invests more heavily in its own economy will invariably strengthen trade ties with suppliers of vital goods and services like the United States.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The aim of this policy recommendation is to find a pathway to rebuilding trust in multilateral trade negotiations and international financial institutions by delivering tangible benefits to the most important stakeholders in the global community: its people. The popular mandate for governments to collaborate on trade will facilitate the coordination of joint policies in response to more complex shared challenges. Climate change sits at the top of that list, but also includes the eradication of poverty and better preparation against future pandemics.

Yong Kwon studied economic history at the London School of Economics and moderates the subreddit r/EconomicHistory. He is currently the Director of Communications at the Korea Economic Institute of America. Views in this post are his own and do not represent the official position of the Korea Economic Institute of America.



Climate Justice, not "Energy Security"

By Sam Ratner

TAKEAWAYS:

- » No foreign government, no matter their level of antipathy toward the US, has ever been able to decisively threaten US energy supply.
- » Progressive members of Congress should strike the concept of "energy security" from the job descriptions of our bureaucrats and diplomats.
- » Instead, the US officials should be charged with defraying the costs of renewable energy and reversing environmental degradation here and abroad.



nergy security" has been a buzz-phrase of US foreign policy for decades. In the last Congress, House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Elliot Engel allowed a group of Republicans and centrist Democrats to add a provision to the 2019 State Department authorization bill requiring the president to appoint an Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources. The position already exists—it is held currently by the ironically-named Francis Fannon, a former oil lobbyist—but Engel's bill would have formalized the role for future administrations. In the text of the bill, the Assistant Secretary's job description doubles as a summary of how the bill's authors view the purpose of US energy policy: "protecting and advancing United States *energy security interests*."

Engel has since retired, having succumbed to a progressive primary challenge from Jamaal Bowman. Progressives should make sure to retire the concept of "energy security" along with him, making an urgent turn toward climate justice the basis of our current energy policy.

ENERGY SECURITY RHETORIC JUSTIFIES RELIANCE ON FOSSIL FUELS

"Energy security"—the idea that the US must protect itself from the threat of fossil fuel supply shocks caused by geopolitical shifts—is an appealing concept for a certain type of liberal politician. It offers a kind of triangulation in which they can say that the progressive energy policies favored by their constituents are desirable, but only insofar as those policies further the logic of steely-eyed realism that passes for seriousness in Washington.

The Obama White House, for example, <u>bragged</u> that it was "advancing cleaner forms of energy" as part of its goal of "reducing our dependence on foreign oil." The value in pursuing renewable energy, in other words, was that it limited the harm that some other government could cause by disrupting the US's ability to meet its prodigious energy needs.

Of course, if energy security is the real purpose of US energy policy, then renewable investment is hardly the only option for achieving it. If we remove the ellipses from the Obama administration quote, we can see the real wages of a policy approach rooted in energy security.

In full, the quote reads:

"We are safely and responsibly developing our energy resources while advancing cleaner forms of energy, such as natural gas and renewables. In November 2013, America hit a milestone of energy independence: For the first time in nearly two decades, the US produced more oil domestically than it imported from foreign sources. And the US is now the number-one natural gas producer in the world."

The same energy security logic that supported investment in renewables brought us fracking and all that goes with it. Any energy policy framework built around maximizing available supply directly undermines the only thing that can prevent climate disaster: keeping fossil fuels in the ground.

THE MYTH OF ENERGY INSECURITY

It would be one thing if the energy security framework, despite all the ills it justifies, accurately reflected the state of the world. If war around the Persian Gulf or civil unrest in Venezuela truly threatened to cut off US access to fossil fuels and significantly harm the US economy, politicians might be forgiven for wanting to guard against that threat.

However, as Robert Vitalis points out in his new book <u>Oilcraft</u>, there is simply no evidence that these scenarios will ever

come to pass. Oil and natural gas follow the same market rules as other commodities—even if a particular seller is cut off from a particular buyer, the market shifts to cover that buyer's need from another seller. No foreign government, no matter their level of antipathy toward the US, has ever been able to decisively threaten US energy supply.

Even the putatively mighty Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries largely failed in its attempts to institute an "oil embargo" against the US in late 1973, causing an <u>estimated</u> 4% supply disruption for a few months before backing off. It was then-president Richard Nixon's draconian rationing policy in response to the threatened embargo that <u>caused</u> the infamous lines at gas stations often attributed to the embargo. The concept of energy security under threat from "foreign oil" rests on a myth—one that has been used to justify imperial military spending more often than green energy investment.

FOCUS ON CLIMATE JUSTICE

It is time for progressive politicians to reject that myth and orient American energy policy explicitly against the real threat of climate change. We cannot rely on a policy framework that portrays "energy independence" as the highest good and treats transition to renewable energy as a nice supplement to domestic fossil fuel production. The only energy security that matters is securing a future in which people around the world can live their lives without heating the planet.

"Any energy policy framework built around maximizing available supply directly undermines the only thing that can prevent climate disaster: **keeping fossil fuels in the ground.**"

Rather than hoarding the benefits of fossil fuels for itself, the US should be defraying the costs of renewable energy and reversing environmental degradation around the world, but doing so requires a change in our government's basic approach to energy policy. To that end, progressive members of Congress should strike the concept of "energy security" from the job descriptions of our bureaucrats and diplomats, and instead charge them with pursuing climate justice.

Sam Ratner is a contributing editor at Zitamar News, where he covers southeast African security issues, and a founding editor of Fellow Travelers Blog. He also writes the weekly global security newsletter Critical State for PRX and Inkstick Media. He tweets at @samratner.



Forging an Internationalist Green New Deal

By Taylor Hynes

TAKEAWAYS:

- » Green New Deal-inspired legislation must be an internationalist endeavor if it is to have a meaningful impact on our global future.
- » Trade officials, such as US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, should prioritize labor and environmental standards and honor Indigenous rights in negotiating further trade agreements.
- » Congress should enforce the Alien Tort Claims Act to try US firms for violations committed by extractive industries against vulnerable communities beyond US borders.



Ithough President Biden himself has sent mixed signals on his support of the Green New Deal, the House resolution has shifted the broader conversation from characterizing disasters as apolitical forces to responding to this climate crisis as a starting point to build a just society. There have been valid critiques of the GND from both the left and right, but above all, GND-inspired legislation must be an internationalist endeavor if it is to have a meaningful impact for our global future.

Simply re-committing to the 2016 Paris Agreement won't be nearly enough when it comes to climate diplomacy, given the current emissions targets won't stave off climate collapse and most countries are not even meeting those bare minimum goals. Nor can we follow the lead of the neocolonial European Green New Deal that relies on exporting its production externalities to other countries to meet its sustainability goals. Immediate, wide-ranging action from the world's second-largest carbon emitter is essential to minimizing

the destructive effects of global warming, effects which disproportionately fall on poorer nations.

The only way toward a just, global transition is by embedding the GND within a restorative foreign policy—climate policy, after all, entails worldwide (and potentially world-ending) challenges. US industrial and trade policies that constitute this foreign policy can be shaped to respect the sovereignty of other nations while improving the likelihood of climate cooperation. To that end, Congress should utilize specific tools of foreign policy—foreign aid, oversight of US trade policy, regulation of human rights abuses in global supply chains, and scaling back US military spending—to advance a program of climate justice.

A RADICAL GREEN NEW DEAL: CLIMATE REPARATIONS, SUPPLY CHAIN JUSTICE, AND OPPOSING CLIMATE SECURITIZATION

Repaying climate debt: Climate reparations would compensate nations bearing the brunt of climate change at present, redistributing global wealth for local mitigation efforts and international migration. The bill's current text suggests "promoting the international exchange of...funding", which could specifically commit the US to support existing financing mechanisms such as the severely underfunded Green Climate Fund and compel other wealthy nations to do the same. At the same time, the US should increase refugee admissions and lower the barrier to entry

for refugee status. Any climate legislation should reject the depiction of migrants as a growing danger at our borders as these people are increasingly moving away from regions with worsening climate conditions.

Green Trade & Industrial Policies: Trade officials, such as US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, should prioritize labor and environmental standards and honor Indigenous rights in negotiating further trade agreements. The US should disincentivize competition for climate solutions like clean technology and public health research by transferring funds and technologies to other countries and loosening patents, as well as terminate all US bilateral investment treaties—which along with sanctions are economic manipulation that reduce a country's ability to address climate change and prepare for disasters—or make provisions so that investees can use funds to address public emergencies or decarbonize their economies. Additionally, the GND could reinstate the oil export ban lifted in 2015.

Ensuring justice in trade and mineral extraction: Above all else, the GND must avoid replicating the same harmful effects of previous trade agreements, as the labor regulations in one country in a trade agreement affect the entirety of that agreement. Transitioning to clean energy is an industrial process—one requiring the mining of rare—earth minerals for batteries and solar panels. Rather than reproduce the exploitation endemic to the extractive industry, GND policymakers should incorporate the demands of actors along lithium, copper, and other supply chains as they prepare for their push for more solar panels and

"Simply re-committing to the 2016 Paris Agreement won't be nearly enough when it comes to climate diplomacy."

sustainable <u>infrastructure</u> domestically. Congress can place constraints on multinational corporations and lawmakers should increasingly enforce the Alien Tort Claims Act to try US firms for rights violations beyond US borders. Given China's lead in carbon emissions, rare-earth mining, and clean technology production, US-China cooperation will be essential in drawing down emissions, necessitating a shift away from the increasing anti-China jingoism we have seen from politicians and the media.

Resisting a climate security narrative: Decision-makers from Climate Envoy appointee John Kerry to the <u>US Army</u> frame climate change as a <u>national security threat</u>, ensuring increased funding for the Pentagon and Department of Homeland Security to achieve "<u>energy security</u>." Legislators should resist efforts to securitize the GND in pursuit of support, emphasizing the need to enact climate justice rather than react to a "climate threat." While the present GND makes no mention of US military spending or practices, an effective response to climate change must tackle the role of

defense spending in directly and indirectly contributing to the massive US carbon footprint. One clear way of doing so is to significantly scale back (or defund outright) energy-intensive military operations, moving those funds toward social services and zero-carbon infrastructure projects that prioritize material human security over abstract national security. Lest any conservatives declare a tapped coffer, GND policies can be funded through a redistribution of wealth and a drawdown of US military spending, actions with further benefits for US society and global diplomacy.

The new administration has the opportunity to reorient their foreign policy, moving beyond militarism and extraction and toward an internationalist approach. There needs to be a just energy transition at home and abroad, a process that will forge new solidarities with social movements and governments around the world. The larger project of the GND framework should be for federal spending to engender communities of various scales to work on their own climate solutions. Less fossil fuel production currently necessitates more of other types of extraction for battery and panel materials, but we have the chance to avoid reproducing our current exploitative system of extraction and neocolonial patterns of dispossession in the name of preventing climate collapse.

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Immigration Policy for Decarceration and Global Justice

By Jacob Hamburger

TAKEAWAYS:

- The administration should allow asylum officers to make final grants of asylum, rather than deferring to backlogged immigration courts.
- » Current criteria for asylum should be extended to include those fleeing gang and gender-based violence, as well as extreme deprivation caused by climate change.
- » The administration should remove the threat of arrest, detention, and deportation which hangs over the head of every undocumented person in the United States.



he Trump administration used fear-mongering over "caravans" of asylum seekers, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic, to effectively halt US refugee and asylum systems, while also stranding tens of thousands of migrants in dangerous situations in Mexican border cities. In the meantime, it sought to make securing legal status as difficult as possible for many other groups of would-be immigrants.

The Biden Administration has begun rolling back Trump's immigration actions, restored Obama-era programs such as DACA, and declared a temporary moratorium on deportations. Despite some initial failures to live up to his promises—Biden has deported large numbers of immigrants, in particular from Haiti, and has left Trump's Covid-10 immigration order in place—Biden's announcements were a welcome initial signal that he understands the mandate he has been given on the immigration issue by a public that largely supports more liberal policies.

However, the Biden Administration cannot settle for a superficial return to the *status quo ante* of pre-Trump immigration policy, nor can it hide behind the banner of "bipartisanship" as an excuse for inaction. The new president will have substantial powers at his disposal to end the humanitarian crisis at the border, abolish the current carceral model, and bring US policy in line with the demands of global justice.

THE WAY FORWARD

Ending the Humanitarian Crisis

Joe Biden has officially ended the Trump-era "Migrant Protection Protocols" (MPP), which left tens of thousands awaiting court dates in precarious circumstances across the border. He also committed to raising refugee admissions from the 2020 cap of 18,000 to 62,500 (after briefly signaling that he would walk this promise back, in April 2021 he reconfirmed his commitment). But given the historic crisis facing the tens of thousands of asylum seekers currently in Mexico, simply ending the programs that have caused this crisis will not be enough. The new administration must commit resources to providing each asylum seeker a fair chance to secure protection.

Foremost, it should <u>enable asylum officers</u> to make final grants of asylum, rather than reserving this for backlogged immigration courts which Trump has stacked with <u>right-wing judges</u>. There must be an efficient and fair process to avoid scenes of "chaos at the border" which will feed

right-wing xenophobia and weaken the administration's resolve to protect vulnerable migrants.

The administration should also enact policies that afford humanitarian protection to those that fall outside the current criteria for asylum—most importantly Central Americans fleeing gang and gender-based violence as well as extreme deprivation caused by climate change. This will require the executive branch to make bold use of its power to interpret the asylum and other immigration statutes, "parole" migrants into the country, and declare those from affected countries eligible for Temporary Protected Status.

Abolishing the Carceral Immigration System

Even the most generous expansion of humanitarian protection will not reach the vast majority of the 10–12 million who are currently undocumented. If Congress will not grant full regularization, the Biden Administration can take bold measures on their behalf, such as by using agency action to ensure that many federal benefits are made available to them. But perhaps the most long-lasting change the administration can make will be to remove the threat of arrest, detention, and deportation which hangs over the head of every undocumented person in the United States.

Biden's team must learn from prosecutors who have used discretionary policies to reduce mass incarceration in cities like Philadelphia and San Francisco. Thankfully, Biden's Department of Homeland Security has placed greater restrictions on ICE than had been place under the Obama

Administration, which made virtually all immigrants with criminal records targets for deportation. If ICE cannot be abolished outright, its ability to make arrests must be as narrowly restrained as possible, and the agency should not be in charge of the decision to place immigrants in deportation proceedings.

The Biden Administration must be willing to place significant limits on who can be deported—for example, based on length of residence and family ties to the US—and to confront the federal judiciary in order to defend these policies. The Department of Justice must also immediately cease prosecuting immigrants criminally for illegal entry or reentry. Procedural reforms that aim to reduce the adversarial nature of immigration proceedings would also allow more immigrants to obtain legal status, as would funding immigration public defenders for all those facing deportation.

The administration should also not seek to rebuild working relationships between ICE and state and local police forces. So-called sanctuary policies, which bar collaboration with federal immigration enforcement, have been effective in preventing further deportations under Trump, and should become the norm nationwide. Nor should it seek further spending on "border security" technologies and policing strategies that do little other than push migrants into more dangerous areas along the border.

"Long before Donald Trump entered politics, the US immigration system has operated as a mechanism for excluding poor migrants and racial "others," and punishing them should they find themselves in the country without authorization."

Finally, Biden must abolish immigrant detention altogether. This will involve ending not just private detention contracts—as <u>Biden has considered doing</u>—but also the practice of using local jails as immigrant detention facilities. The government also has, and must use, discretion not to seek detention for most immigrants placed in deportation proceedings.

Above all, a progressive immigration policy must make absolutely clear that the immigration system should not be used as a substitute for—or worse, a supplement to—a criminal justice system, which itself does far more to punish and harm than to protect public safety.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The reforms described here have focused largely on what can be accomplished through executive action. In the long run, it is up to Congress to reform the underlying structure of the immigration statutes: for example, eliminating draconian consequences for immigrants with criminal records, creating new pathways to permanent status, and expanding the number of available family, employment, and diversity visas. While imperfect, Biden's proposed immigration bill would mark progress in this direction. But if the Biden Administration acts decisively to enact a progressive immigration agenda, this will make lasting reform much easier to accomplish in the future.

Long before Donald Trump entered politics, the US immigration system has operated as a mechanism for excluding poor migrants and racial "others," and punishing them should they find themselves in the country without authorization. The most effective repudiation of Trump's agenda will be to work to dismantle the structures that have enabled it.

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Scaling Back Sanctions

By Andrew Leber

TAKEAWAYS:

- » Wherever possible, sanctions stigmatizing clear human rights abuses should target individuals rather than impose sector-wide or country-wide costs.
- The United States can impose costs on "bad activity" by demanding greater transparency in the international financial system.
- » Policymakers should demand clear assessments of gains from existing sanctions.



sanctions regimes all too often focus on expressive cruelty rather than forming a part of purposeful policy. Decades after conventional foreign-policy thinking turned against comprehensive sanctions (such as those placed on Iraq in the 1990s), commentators and policymakers have begun to raise questions about the effectiveness and basic morality of supposedly "targeted" financial sanctions.

From the view of ethics and morality, even "smart" sanctions generally aim to deal <u>considerable damage</u> to the most profitable sectors of national economies, while inevitably imposing a form of collective punishment to try and change the behavior of a handful of select individuals. Academic work has long been skeptical of sanctions' effectiveness absent a number of <u>specific conditions</u>, while pointing out the potential for sanctions to backfire in <u>protecting human rights</u> or <u>promoting democratization</u>.

Even proponents who characterize sanctions as a kind of "Swiss Army knife of statecraft" are increasingly on the defensive. Now is the time for proponents of sanctions relief to press their advantage. A progressive foreign policy agenda should aim to weaken old structures of "economic statecraft" that amount to collective punishment while finding ways to garner political support at home by garnering international goodwill abroad—not by inflicting suffering on distant societies.

PUTTING SANCTIONS RELIEF ON THE AGENDA

The previous administration shone a spotlight on just how often US policies fall short of a "disciplined" ideal. The cruelty is often the point when it comes to sanctions. Moreover, politicians see a political benefit in inflicting costs (read: suffering) on distant enemies, while avoiding the risks associated with a more direct military confrontation.

A policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran, for example, cranked up economic misery within the country in the hopes of mass grievances mobilizing against the regime, but mostly served as a way for Trump and like officials to pursue political support at home. As sanctions continued even into the COVID-19 pandemic, no less than the man who first filed Iran within the "Axis of Evil" ventured that some sanctions relief amid the pandemic might be smart policy. Even scholars at the hawkish Foundation for the Defense of Democracies ventured that a policy of "maximum support"

for the Iranian people might be a useful counterpart to the devastation caused by sanctions. Instead, the Trump administration continued to <u>pile on penalties</u> right up to its <u>final days in power</u>.

There is clear momentum behind efforts to dial back US sanctions programs in Congress and foreign-policy commentary. In the House of Representatives, figures including Ro Khanna and Ilhan Omar have pointed to the existing sanctions regime as one of their core critiques of standing US foreign policy. In the pages of the *New York Times*, Peter Beinart recently pulled no punches in calling most US sanctions programs "ineffective and immoral," delusional, and equivalent to "besieging weaker nations."

Even good-faith efforts to defend such economic warfare have conceded that US approaches sanctions are often "counterproductive." In this environment, the Biden administration has pledged to at least review existing US sanctions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Even 'smart' sanctions generally aim to deal considerable damage to the most profitable sectors of national economies, while inevitably imposing a form of collective punishment to try and change the behavior of a handful of select individuals."

AVOIDING THE NEXT SANCTIONS REGIME

This matters particularly in thinking through US policy approaches to global challenges in the years ahead—most notably the open question of how the United States engages with China. With concerns about "countering China's rise" becoming a bipartisan priority, it will require Congressional leadership and broad-based advocacy to keep US foreign policy focused on broader strategic goals than the all-too-easy option of sanctions.

To be sure, China's leaders are increasingly willing to deploy their own forms of economic coercion to pursue a wide range of policy goals. This was seen most recently in the heavy tariffs it piled on Australian goods after the Australian government called for an independent investigation into the origins of the coronavirus. US politicians should resist any effort to respond in kind, however, working instead to develop a broader set of tools to avoid escalation and encourage closer cooperation between nations affected by such coercive measures.

One alternative to punitive measures would be to "compete" via <u>public investments</u> in US economic and scientific output, yet policymakers should be mindful of the tradeoffs they may face in securing legislation. Building industrial policy around a <u>foreign threat</u> contains its own risks—not the least stoking <u>violent xenophobia</u> at home. Furthermore, more hawkish voices will likely push for <u>punitive sanctions</u> as the price of signing on to bipartisan legislation, while others might settle for the same if the filibuster continues to throttle policymaking in the Senate.

To be sure, specific sanctions <u>can and should</u> stigmatize select clear human rights abuses—such as the ongoing ethnic cleansing in Xinjiang. Yet wherever possible these sanctions should serve to <u>target individuals</u> as an example of specific "bad behavior" rather than attempting major policy change by imposing sector-wide or country-wide costs. Broader sanctions stand no better chance of coercing China than a <u>years-long trade war</u> that damaged economies on both sides

of the Pacific while securing the Trump administration nothing but vague promises in return.

One alternative area to focus on might be to impose costs on "bad activity" by bringing greater transparency to the international financial system, rather than wielding US economic heft like a club. There is plenty that the United States can do within its own financial system to go after global financial crimes, break open shell companies, and force companies that want access to US markets to demonstrate greater transparency—including those from China.

This can form part of a broader effort to ensure that the rich pay their fair share of taxes, at home and abroad—one with clear potential to garner political support at home—with *positive* externalities for global commerce.

Furthermore, given the increasing recognition of states' and leaders' concern with international status, alternative proposals might center on policies that seek to motivate change through threats to states' or leaders' status rather than collective pressure on citizens who often have little say in their countries' foreign policy. Yet this will require the United States to invest in shoring up its own standing in the world—and one way to do so is to avoid punitive campaigns with little support even from close partners and neighbors.

At a minimum, progressive approaches to foreign policy should demand <u>a clear theory of change</u> for any new claims that economic pressure will work wonders for US policy aims—lest they become the kind of decades—long (and fruitless) economic siege that the US has inflicted on Cuba. Policymakers in Congress should demand clear assessments of existing sanctions, highlighting the human suffering imposed or exacerbated by these sanctions, and throwing all imaginable procedural hurdles in the way of punitive proposals with no clear objectives or theory of change.

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Breaking the Horrifying US Drone Habit

By Dan Mahanty and Allegra Harpootlian

TAKEAWAY:

» Have a real national conversation about remote targeted killing and end the unlawful, secret, and unaccountable use of lethal force.



ur lives are made up of habits and routines. Some are boring, but necessary, like unloading the dishwasher or flossing. Some keep us going, like that monthly book club or Taco Tuesday. Others hold us back. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US government developed a lot of bad habits, but few as damaging—and hard to break—as its addiction to the use of lethal force to solve problems. With a new administration in power and the twenty-year mark of our wars just around the corner, policymakers have another chance to break one of America's worst foreign policy habits.

Calls have been growing for an "end to our endless wars." But policy inertia is real, and it is still easier for those in power to preserve the existing policy of "kinetic" solutions to "terrorist" problems than to imagine a new way of thinking about security. As a result, lawmakers' plans for ending the wars <u>rarely include</u> ending the practice of using drone strikes to kill terrorism suspects.

Beginning under President George W. Bush, accelerated and widely expanded under President Obama, and then left unchecked with looser rules of engagement under President Trump, the use of so-called "targeted killing" against people the government suspects of association with terrorism has become policymakers' favorite tool. Politicians on both sides of the aisle repeatedly characterize the use of armed drones, and the civilians killed, maimed, and terrorized by them, as a "necessary evil," because as President Obama said, "to do nothing in the face of terrorist networks would invite far more civilian casualties—not just in our cities at home and facilities abroad, but also in the very places—like Sana'a and Kabul and Mogadishu—where terrorists seek a foothold." They see drone strikes as the low-risk, high-reward way for America to show resolve in the midst of threats real and imaginary, while calming public apprehensions about "boots on the ground."

As the habit of targeted killing has taken hold, policymakers have worked to conceal their dependence on it. They cloak the deadly policy in political language, obscuring its true character and garnishing it with legalistic euphemisms to evade scrutiny under international law. All to conceal the true depth of American involvement in wars that have been neither debated by the American public nor approved by Congress.

That America has clung to this bad habit makes sense from a psychological standpoint. According to *Psychology Today*, "one likely reason people are creatures of habit is that habits are efficient: People can perform useful behaviors without wasting time and energy deliberating about what to do."

Now that Congress has once again begun to expend energy deliberating about US security policy for the first time in a generation, however, it is vital that it addresses drone warfare. Now is the perfect time to break the destructive habit of keeping secrets, evading responsibility, and killing without accountability.

Bad habits are broken when they become difficult to get away with. To end our wars, Congress needs to stay informed and ask much harder questions, much more often. At core, three questions need to be answered: Who is the US fighting? Is "targeted killing" really necessary? And finally, what are the true costs and who pays them?

"It is still easier for those in power to preserve the existing policy of "kinetic" solutions to "terrorist" problems than to **imagine a new way of thinking about security.**" Who is the US fighting? Too few members of Congress have asked serious questions about the correlation between the groups or individuals targeted by US drones and a threat to American lives or even a significant relationship to American interests.

Think of America's wars like an octopus constantly growing more tentacles. What started as "limited" strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq now extend to Somalia, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, leaving a path of death and destruction in its wake. The US government defends killing people around the world by claiming an association between the local groups it targets and larger global "terrorist" syndicates, providing generic warnings about threats to the "homeland" and alluding to secret information that is unavailable to the public to support their claims. The source of the threat, and whether it derives from the American presence locally, its role globally, or some other reason, is never made clear. Nor is the nature or strength of the relationship between the targeted individual and any group against which the US government actually has Congressional authorization to use military force.

In the absence of a more critical public appraisal of the threat, the number of groups targeted by US strikes (described at times as "affiliates of associated forces of Al Qaeda") grows exponentially. In some places, local armed groups who claim association with global groups such as ISIS may, in fact, present a real and persistent threat to civilians or the local government, and may use abhorrent violence to achieve their aims. But the decision to use military

force against any group, and the purpose for doing so, is one that deserves a full and public debate in Congress. We can't continue with the current situation, in which the public has to take it on faith that there is any connection between the architects of 9/11 and an armed group in West Africa the US launched drone strikes against 20 years later.

Is targeted killing necessary? A <u>US Army War College</u> study from 2013 concluded that "Drones are a politically and militarily attractive way to counter insurgents and terrorists, but, paradoxically, this may lead to their use in situations where they are less likely to be effective and where it is difficult to predict consequences." And yet, the US military constantly and consistently tell Congress that drone strikes and other lethal force are needed to "defeat terrorism" and our leaders believe them.

Somalia provides a case in point. Recently, a <u>Defense</u> <u>Department watchdog</u> found that "Despite many years of sustained Somali, US and international counterterrorism pressure, the terrorist threat in East Africa is not degraded." But policymakers still hold that the drone program has been effective in Somalia and contends that stopping the program would be disastrous for America. Neither assertion has been properly substantiated and defended with evidence by the government nor has the purpose of America's war in Somalia been debated in Congress, even as <u>reports of civilian casualties mounted</u> without any accountability. As targeted killing has become more habitual, efforts to justify the policy on grounds of military necessity have fallen away. If Congress can challenge those claims of military

necessity today, it will discover what has been true from the start: targeted killing is not only unnecessary, but counterproductive to counterterrorism goals.

Which brings up the final question Congress should be asking of each and every remote targeted killing operation: What is the true human cost of drone warfare? As countless experts and whistleblowers have pointed out, these several hundred pound bombs are much less precise than represented and regularly kill innocent men, women and children, whose only crime is living in a village being bombed by the US. Study after study shows that Americans don't support airstrikes that kill civilians, even when the strike kills a so-called "terrorist."

To overcome such inconvenient moral qualms, targeted killing advocates have developed an elaborate language of obfuscation about the consequences of drone strikes. But "precision" missile strikes against "high value targets" that present a "continuing imminent threat" is just wrapping a destructive tactic in misleading and benign language to justify the bad habit, like describing cigarettes as "gluten-free." Thanks to human rights organizations and dogged journalists, we know many of their stories, but we also know those cases are just the tip of the iceberg. Even the US military admits that "no one will ever know" how many civilians the US killed in the fight against ISIS. Strikes are frequently conducted in secret or in partnership with other countries behind the veil of a "coalition" or "partnered" operation, making it impossible for civilians to know the source of their harm. The US doesn't acknowledge its covert strikes

conducted by the CIA at all, which <u>precludes any ability</u> to acknowledge harm.

Even in cases where the US takes "credit" for its operations, civilians and communities face insurmountable hurdles in reporting their experiences, and have had even less luck in receiving any formal apology or compensation. Just last year, after years of pushback from civil society, the US Africa Command created an online portal for Somalis to report instances of civilian harm. They did not, however, alert Somalis to the existence of such a website, nor did they consider that technology necessary to report is banned in al-Shabaab areas, making it impossible for civilians to make a report. Finally, no process exists for Somalis—or any other civilians—to actually file a claim requesting compensation or even non-monetary forms of acknowledgement or apology, even though Congress has authorized the military to spend \$3 million for this exact purpose.

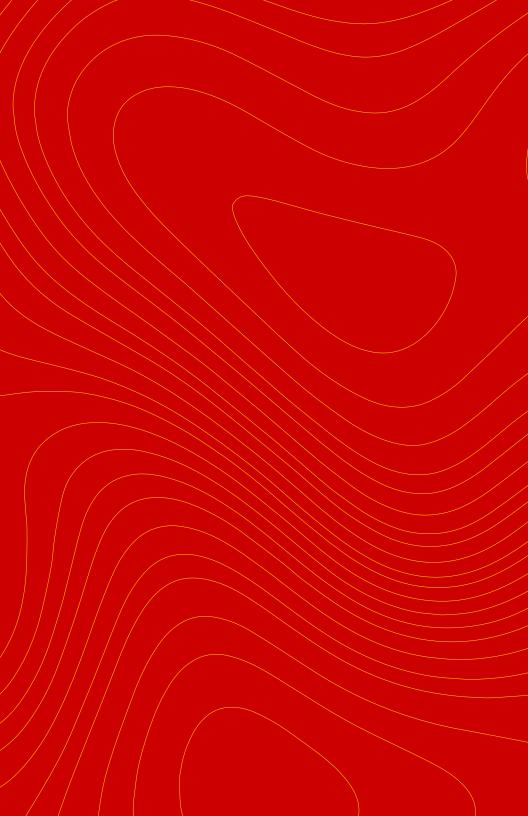
Bad habits are broken when they become difficult to get away with. To break America's habit of raining death and destruction down across the world, our leaders need to step up. Our congressional leaders have started to reclaim their war powers, but they need to make shining a light on the significant moral, ethical, and strategic questions that remain unanswered after twenty years of war a priority. That means reading about our wars even when they're not on the frontpage and listening to the voices of those who have been affected by them. That means releasing statements and holding hearings "seeking answers," "condemning," "criticizing," and "warning" whenever new

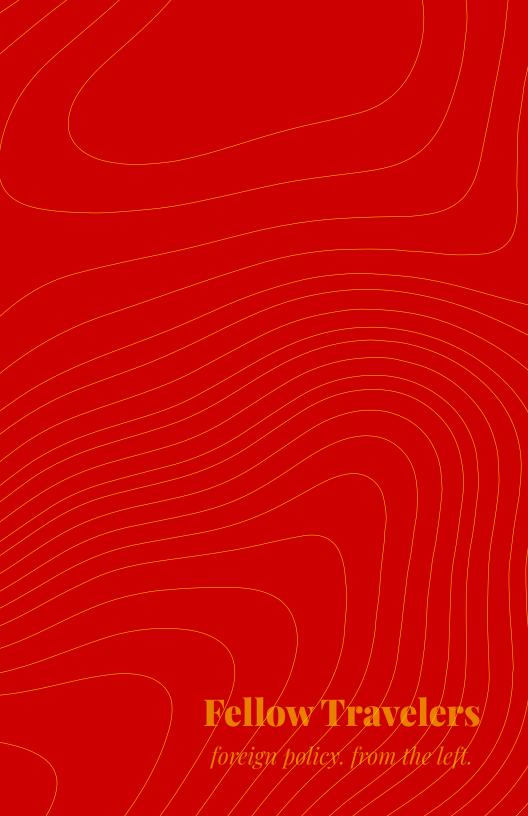
allegations do come to light—and they come to light with depressing regularity. And it means not always taking the US military and intelligence agencies at their word when they say a group should be a target; that lethal force is needed or effective; or that nobody will be harmed in the process.

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foreign policy. from the left.

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