CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY ADVOCACY
Advocating for a peaceful, just and sustainable world

NOVEMBER 2026

A Progressive Foreign Policy Agenda for the 120th Congress

Stopping endless wars, defeating corruption, and lowering costs for working Americans

Overview

The new majority in the coming Congress should build its foreign policy agenda around the three concerns voters made clear in the midterm election: **endless wars**, **unprecedented corruption**, and the **rising cost of living**. The three are deeply linked, with Americans viscerally aware that the most severe threats to their security and livelihoods now come from within: a president who launches unauthorized wars while enriching his family and cronies, and an economy increasingly dominated by a handful of oligarchs and corporations threatening to destroy their jobs and financial futures.

Many of the most urgent and consequential issues of our time – like the rise of China, climate change, and AI – can and should be ambitiously addressed through this framework of stopping war, corruption, and rising costs. Most of these proposals will not become law in the next two years, but **it is critical to propose and socialize them now** so they can form the backbone of a governing agenda for Congress and a baseline for a new administration in 2029.[1]

AT A GLANCE

1
Stopping endless wars

- Cut off all funding for the Iran war
- Repeal the 2001 AUMF and pass the National Security Powers Act
- Require congressional approval of major arms sales
- Pivot from zero-sum rivalry to a stable relationship with China
- End lawless US use of force in Latin America and the enabling of Israeli atrocity crimes

2
Defeating corruption at home and abroad

- Investigate Trump's foreign dealings, from the "Board of Peace" to DOGE's gutting of aid
- Restore anti-corruption enforcement and close dirty money loopholes
- Curb foreign money in lawmaking and policymaking

3
Reducing the cost of living

- Cut the trillion-dollar Pentagon budget
- Put Congress back in charge of tariffs and trade that raises wages
- Restore the global minimum tax
- Cooperate with China on clean energy that builds US jobs

1 Stopping endless wars

Opposition to the US-Israel war of choice on Iran drove anti-Trump voters to the polls and kept pro-Trump voters away from them. Congress should shut down the Iran war through the power of the purse, because votes to end it using War Powers Resolution vehicles are likely to fail as long as Trump can exercise his veto power. Beyond ending this current war, it is critical that Congress conduct oversight on presidential abuses of war powers, and overhaul the statutory architecture that has let presidents of both parties wage war essentially at will.

- **No funding for the Iran war.** Keep opposing any supplemental appropriations request for the war. Include a clear prohibition on funding unauthorized hostilities against Iran in all continuing resolutions, future appropriations bills, and the National Defense Authorization Act. To ensure enforceability, spell out triggers and consequences for the president's failure to comply with any such prohibition in the legislative text.
- **Repeal the 2001 AUMF.** Congress showed it can reclaim war powers when it repealed the 2002 Iraq Authorization for the Use of Military Force and the 1991 Gulf War authorization in the FY2026 NDAA.[2] The 2001 AUMF, used as the legal basis for US military action from Afghanistan to Somalia to Syria, should be next. Any continuing operation should need a new authorization with clear objectives, geographic limits, named targets, and a sunset (see next item on the National Security Powers Act).
- **Pass the National Security Powers Act.** Update and use the three components (broken into three separate vehicles if most practical) of the proposed National Security Powers Act as the basis for a comprehensive overhaul of: 1) the War Powers Resolution, 2) the National Emergencies Act, and 3) arms export laws, including "flipping the script" so major arms sales need affirmative congressional approval, rather than automatically going through unless Congress acts to stop them. Updates should be ambitious – Trump will veto it anyway, so build broad buy-in for a bold reform package among a congressional majority that pushes presidential hopefuls to commit to enacting it should they win.
- **Stop extrajudicial killings and deportations.** Require congressional approval for any designation of a Foreign Terrorist Organization that could be used to justify military force, and explicitly end the link between designation and military authority. Repeal the Alien Enemies Act, which Trump has abused to detain and deport citizens of nations he deems to be "invading" the US.
- **Seek a stable relationship with China.** Congress can take concrete steps to pivot away from zero-sum US-China rivalry that has failed on its own terms, leaving China stronger and less dependent on the US while driving up military spending and the risk of war.[3] Legislative action should reaffirm rather than undermine the One China Policy. Hearings, reports, and similar initiatives on demilitarizing the Taiwan Strait can signal a more peaceful path. Cooperation on urgent mutual challenges like setting AI safeguards, combating climate change, and responding to global health crises can build a foundation for further diplomacy. Introduction of legislation advancing such steps to lower tensions with China can be done at the same time Congress legislates to strengthen protections for people fleeing persecution by the Chinese government, to guard against anti-Chinese xenophobia and threats to civil liberties at home, and to support efforts to diversify US supply chains and protect US industries.

- **Reject US gunboat diplomacy in Latin America.** Trump has revived the Monroe Doctrine in its most lawless form, abducting Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro, killing more than 200 people in airstrikes on boats in the Caribbean, imposing a full oil blockade on Cuba, and threatening unilateral military action in Mexico.[4] Congress should bar funding for any use of force in the hemisphere without its explicit authorization. It should also hold hearings and conduct investigations on the boat strikes, which Secretary Rubio has acknowledged could have been interdictions.[5] Lawmakers should pass legislation to lift the Cuba embargo, overhaul the web of sanctions on Venezuela that have punished ordinary people, and pivot to pressing for Magnitsky Act measures to focus pressure on corrupt officials and human rights abusers regardless of country. Critically, Congress must also confront the United States' share of responsibility for the region's insecurity by passing legislation to stem the "iron river" of American guns flowing south.
- **End decades of enabling destabilizing actions and atrocity crimes by Israel.** In the wake of Israel's genocide in Gaza and its role in pressing Trump to launch the disastrous war on Iran, Americans across the political spectrum clearly want to end rather than expand decades of entanglement with Israel. Beyond just ending military aid to Israel, lawmakers should advance legislation like the Block the Bombs Act and the Stop the Settlements Act to end US enabling of Israeli crimes against Palestinians. Lawmakers should vote to ensure that US and international law are applied to Israel as it should be to any other country – and that means consistently voting to enforce US arms export and human rights law in cases involving Israel, and pushing back on Trump administration efforts to undermine and intimidate international courts and the United Nations on Israel's behalf.[6]
- **Keep humans in control of lethal force.** Use the NDAA to require meaningful human judgment and command accountability for any AI-enabled use of force, and to bar automated control of nuclear launch. Push for bilateral and multilateral agreements to the same effect.

2 Defeating corruption at home and abroad

Corruption is the node connecting the country's domestic and foreign policy crises, and voters are demanding action. In September, Gallup reported that 89% of Americans see government corruption as widespread, the highest level in 20 years.[7] Much of the work requires only that existing law be enforced, but durable change requires reform, especially of campaign finance.

- **Investigate the administration's foreign dealings alongside its domestic abuses.** Some of the most obvious corrupt acts by President Trump and those close to him – and ones that had a direct impact on costs to ordinary Americans – took place in the context of foreign relations. Committees investigating Trump-era corruption should therefore highlight these acts, not deprioritize them based on the conventional wisdom that Americans don't pay attention to foreign policy. Top items for investigation should include:
  - Foreign gifts to the president and the potential business conflicts of interest of his family members.
  - Contracts awarded to Trump's oligarch donors and new tech executives, including in connection with the Iran war.
  - The conflicts of interest of envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

- Trump's Gaza "Board of Peace," which incoming Judiciary Chairman Jamie Raskin has called a global slush fund.[8]
- Pardons that undo foreign corruption cases, such as the pardon of former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández, and the dropped prosecution of foreign funding for New York Mayor Eric Adams.[9]

- **Restore anti-corruption capacities Trump dismantled.** Work across committees to restore and adequately fund enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the Justice Department's public corruption unit. Reconstitute the DOJ's anti-kleptocracy task force and the State Department's Office of the Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption. Require the restoration of the Corporate Transparency Act's shell company registry, extend it to trusts, and make it public. Lengthen statutes of limitations so a future administration cannot simply wait out enforcement.
- **Close the dirty money loopholes.** Legislate anti-money laundering due diligence requirements for significant real estate, private equity, hedge funds, venture capital, art and auction houses, and crypto transactions. Condition access to US markets on anti-money laundering standards stricter than current international requirements. Give FinCEN more resources, and step up intelligence collection on corruption overseas. Direct and fund the IRS to pursue wealthy tax cheats.
- **Tackle the influence of foreign money in lawmaking and policymaking.** Amend the law and ethics rules regarding lobbying activity to ban former executive and legislative officials from lobbying for foreign governments. Bar relatives of serving and recent officials from new foreign deals, and require presidents to fully divest. Require think tanks to disclose their funders, including the defense contractors and new tech firms whose money helps drive the push for endless wars and confrontation with China. Expand lobbying disclosure requirements to consultancies, law firms, and PR shops.
- **Hold partners to the same standard as adversaries.** Global Magnitsky sanctions have targeted geopolitical rivals while ignoring documented corruption in partners like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Israel, and India. Hold hearings and conduct oversight that presses the administration to apply them evenhandedly to corrupt officials and their enablers. Legislate an anti-corruption "Leahy Law" barring security cooperation with forces credibly implicated in corruption or tied to regimes that support transnational corruption.
- **Put anti-corruption at the center of diplomacy and aid.** As foreign aid is restored, give a high priority to efforts that strengthen the rule of law and fight kleptocracy. Rejoin the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the Open Government Partnership, and reinforce the Dodd-Frank transparency rules for extractive industries. As State Department capacity is rebuilt, add overseas staff trained in fighting corruption, starting with ambassadors.
- **Legislate new tools to support anti-corruption coordination.** Pursue the creation of a new Anti-Corruption Bureau, which will act as a clearinghouse to coordinate all executive and legislative anti-corruption efforts. Create a special prosecutor's office to specifically target networks of elite corruption.
- **Include the dismantling of foreign aid in investigations of DOGE, and make sure it can't happen again.** Trump's assault on USAID, carried out through DOGE, was among the first acts of his open lawlessness: a baldly unconstitutional move that disregarded the law, Congress's power of the purse, and the human toll. After the Supreme Court let the administration withhold more than $4 billion in approved aid, only legislation can restore Congress's control.[5] Strengthen the Impoundment Control

Act with automatic enforcement and penalties for officials who refuse to spend appropriated funds, explicitly covering State Department and development programs. Bar foreign aid rescissions without specific congressional approval, and back congressional subpoenas with civil and criminal enforcement so officials can't stonewall.

- **Campaign finance reform as the root fix.** Legislate a response to Citizens United and the flood of corporate money in federal elections, with low limits on what campaigns can raise and spend. Give the Federal Election Commission the resources to investigate campaign finance crimes, and restore congressional appointments to the commission. Close the loopholes that let foreign actors bankroll US legislators through intermediaries.

3 Reducing the cost of living and creating a fair global economy for workers

The anti-war and anti-corruption agendas will most resonate with voters if they connect with their top concern: the surging cost of living. The task is to define what follows the failed policies of both neoliberal market fundamentalism and Trump's kleptocratic nationalism. An economic strategy built around "beating" China is costly and illusory: corporate concentration, tax avoidance, and attacks on organized labor have done at least as much damage to American workers as Chinese imports.[10] A truly transformative and broadly supported affordability agenda will have the following international-facing elements:

- **Count the Iran war's cost to American workers.** Hold hearings on how the US-Israel war on Iran raised gas, grocery, and housing finance costs. Put the war's cost in the context of possible domestic spending that could have relieved Americans of other financial burdens, like medical and education debt, and raised quality of life overall.
- **Reduce the trillion-dollar Pentagon budget as a cost-of-living imperative.** US military spending has surged while peer nations invested in health, housing, infrastructure, and education, and now outpace us in life expectancy and quality of life. Americans' futures are less secure, not despite what we spent on the military, but in large part because of it. Much of that spending is justified as the price of "beating China," an endless rivalry mindset pressed hardest by contractors who profit from it. Congress should instead use the National Defense Authorization Act and the appropriations process to end and reverse ever-increasing military spending, starting with steps to:
  - Enforce the Nunn-McCurdy Act on projects like the Sentinel ICBM, now projected at 81% over its original cost.[11]
  - Cancel Golden Dome and restructure the F-35, whose lifecycle cost is projected above $2 trillion.
  - Restore and strengthen requirements for contractors to provide certified cost and pricing data. Reverse the FY2026 NDAA's increase in the threshold from $2.5 million to $10 million, and its exemption for "nontraditional" defense contractors.[12] Close the commercial-item loopholes that let sole-source suppliers escape scrutiny.
  - Protect the Pentagon's independent testing office, and redirect savings to service members, families, and veterans.
  - Begin converting parts of the defense industrial base to civilian and climate-friendly production, reviving detailed conversion plans first drafted in the 1990s.

- **Put Congress back in charge of tariffs.** Require congressional approval for new tariffs, as the bipartisan Trade Review Act would within 60 days. Amend IEEPA to exclude routine trade disputes, and narrow the other delegations of tariff power.[5] The neoliberal taboo on tariffs is gone; the question now is who decides and who benefits.
- **Trade that raises wages everywhere.** Use congressional prerogatives on trade to make worker interests central to trade deals rather than side letters. The last generation of trade agreements left labor chapters rarely enforced and weaker than investor protections, and that hierarchy should be reversed. Keep fast-track trade promotion authority from being revived, so every trade agreement gets full congressional review and approval. Use market access as an incentive for partners to raise wages, expand collective bargaining, and improve workplace safety, building on enforceable tools like the USMCA Rapid Response Mechanism.[10] Use trade remedies against wage suppression and weak labor and environmental enforcement, and give any protective tariffs defined phaseouts. Restore the labor-rights funding this administration eliminated, including for the Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs and the Solidarity Center.
- **Restore the global minimum tax.** Legislatively reverse the early-2026 exemption of US corporations from the OECD global minimum tax, and direct US involvement in negotiations on a UN tax convention.[13] Pair this with domestic reform objectives like equalizing tax rates on labor and capital income, funding IRS enforcement, and closing loopholes that let the wealthy pay less than workers.
- **A US corporate accountability and due diligence law.** Improve on the EU's corporate sustainability due diligence directive by legislating that companies must identify, prevent, and remedy human rights and labor abuses in their global supply chains, and open them to lawsuits when they fail. The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act shows how such a mandate can work in practice. Start sectorally with critical minerals and tech, and expand the scope and enforcement of forced labor import bans.
- **Check corporate concentration across borders.** Direct and fund the executive to pursue an antimonopoly strategy coordinated with foreign partners, including joint merger review and investigations. Investigate how much US foreign policy now depends on infrastructure controlled by a few billionaires, as Elon Musk's restriction of Ukraine's Starlink access showed,[14] starting with an antitrust review of SpaceX.
- **Cooperate with China on clean energy, on terms that build US jobs.** Chinese firms lead in batteries, EVs, and solar, and walling them off raises costs for American families and cedes global markets. Move legislation that would amend the "foreign entity of concern" rules to allow pilot joint ventures in which Chinese investors take a US partner, transfer technology, accept union neutrality, and source components locally. Follow Canada in allowing a limited quota of Chinese EV imports, so families get cheaper clean cars while US automakers catch up.[15] Keep guardrails where security demands them: for example, building critical minerals and rare earth supply chains that do not depend on China, and sourcing grid inverters from allies. Combine this with economic "arms control" talks to wind down export controls, blacklists, and other economic weapons on both sides.
- **Cooperate on climate finance and debt relief with China, not against it.** The energy transition will be won or lost in the Global South, and joint US–China financing for grids and renewables there would do far more than rival programs. Direct Development Finance Corporation and Export-Import Bank support toward the cleantech where US firms lead, such as next-generation geothermal, so climate finance also creates US jobs. Urge the administration to work with Beijing through the G20 on fairer debt relief rather than simply blaming China for the debt crisis. Authorize IMF reforms that give the

Global South more voice, back ending IMF surcharges and new Special Drawing Rights issuances, and support debt-for-nature swaps and clauses that pause debt payments after climate disasters.

- **Ensure that AI serves workers, not oligarchs.** Codify the worker protections in the Biden AI executive order and build worker-based oversight with the NLRB. Restore the congressional Office of Technology Assessment. Require AI firms and data centers to publish their water, energy, and land use, and shift more of the cost of new power demand from households to the companies building data centers.

Notes

1 This memo draws on the framework proposed by CIP Executive Vice President Matthew Duss in his recent *Foreign Affairs* piece, "Democrats Shouldn't Squander Their Chance to Launch a Foreign Policy Revolution," expanded upon with specific legislative and policy proposals from issue experts in the new book, *A World for All: New Visions for US Foreign Policy*, edited by Duss, as well as consultations with dozens of individual and organizational movement partners.

2 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, signed December 18, 2025, repealing the 1991 and 2002 Iraq authorizations; see Roll Call, "Congress Inches Toward Reclaiming War Powers with AUMF Repeals," December 24, 2025.

3 Jake Werner and Sandy Shan, "China," in *A World for All*.

4 María José Espinosa and Michael Paarlberg, "Latin America," in *A World for All*.

5 Michael Schiffer, "Congress," in *A World for All*.

6 Thanassis Cambanis and Zaha Hassan, "The Middle East," in *A World for All*.

7 Gallup, "Record High Say Government Corruption Is Widespread," September 2026, news.gallup.com/poll/713933.

8 House Judiciary Committee Democrats, "Ranking Members Raskin, Meeks Demand Accounting of Trump's Shadowy Board of Peace 'Global Slush Fund.'"

9 Espinosa and Paarlberg, "Latin America"; Casey Michel, "Corruption," in *A World for All*.

10 Trevor Sutton, "The Global Economy," in *A World for All*.

11 Julia Gledhill and William D. Hartung, "Defense Budget," in *A World for All*.

12 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, Secs. 1804 and 1826.

13 Aude Darnal and Nancy Okail, "The Multilateral System," in *A World for All*.

14 BBC News, reporting on Elon Musk's restriction of Starlink access in Ukraine.

15 Werner and Shan, "China"; Noah Gordon, "Climate," in *A World for All*.

Center for International Policy Advocacy

Advocating for a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

Contact: Dylan Williams, dylan@cipadvocacy.org