

## Progressive International Policy Priorities

### 1. More democratic and accountable international financial institutions

- Voting shares within these institutions should be reformed so as to better reflect countries' global weight in terms of their populations and economies. No single member country should be able to veto majority decisions, nor should the advanced economy countries as a group have the 60 percent majority that they now have. This is disproportionate to their 14 percent share of world population, and since most IMF decisions are about the economic policies of developing countries, this arrangement is a vestige of the colonial era.
- Pass legislation requiring the US executive directors to use their voice and vote to oppose any agreement within an international financial institution (IFI) that imposes user fees on primary education and basic health services should be expanded to all IFIs (including the International Finance Corporation) and better enforcement mechanisms surrounding this prohibition should be established.
- IFIs should be barred from imposing procyclical fiscal and monetary policies when countries are experiencing economic downturns.
- Greater transparency is needed around the World Bank Group, Inter-American Development Bank, and Asian Development Bank loan programs that channel funding to private sector projects in countries with poor human rights records and a history of land-related social conflicts. IFIs should be required to identify end use of funds when private sector actors are involved.
- Legislation should be developed prohibiting US support for IFI-funded projects on indigenous lands that are carried out without prior consultation of local communities (with regard to countries that are signatories to ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal).

## **2. An end to economic sanctions that harm innocent people**

US unilateral economic sanctions targeting other countries violate the UN and OAS Charters, as well as international human right law, and kill innocent people, as UN experts have often pointed out. US administrations have frequently initiated economic sanctions against other countries, without seeking Congressional approval, by declaring that a country has created a “national emergency” for the United States; and also that the country poses “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security” of the United States. Both of these claims are required by US law in order for the executive to impose such sanctions. But these claims are usually false; and therefore violate US law, in addition to international law.

- Congress should revise the 1976 International Economic Emergency Powers Act so as to incorporate precise definitions and guidelines around what can constitute a “national emergency” and an “unusual and extraordinary threat” to the security of the US. Congress should expressly prohibit the President from declaring a national emergency on the basis of a situation in a foreign country that does not meet the criteria for a national emergency.
- Thorough, independent assessments of the impact of US economic sanctions on human populations should be carried out and Congress should convene hearings to discuss the legality and human impact of economic sanctions that are currently being implemented by the US government.
- Congress should pass legislation prohibiting the executive branch from imposing unilateral economic sanctions that are illegal under treaties that the US has signed (e.g. the OAS and UN Charter) or that lead to collective punishment as defined by the Geneva or Hague conventions.

## **3. Respect for national sovereignty and international law in Latin America**

Under the Trump Administration, the “Monroe Doctrine” — long seen as a pretext for rampant US military and political intervention in the region — is officially back, hailed by NSC Advisor John Bolton and others as a guiding principle of US policy in Latin America.

- Congress should be on the side of international law and promote respect for national sovereignty — both economic and political — throughout Latin America and the world.
- US Foreign Assistance, including humanitarian assistance, and the threat of a US veto on loans from international financial organizations should not be employed as a form of pressure to impose a US political or economic agenda on national governments.
- In no instance should the US government support military coups or any other extra-legal regime change efforts.
- Whether in Latin America or any other part of the world, US military action remains illegal without UN backing and unconstitutional without prior authorization by Congress; threats of use of military action also violate the UN Charter. Congress should oppose all of these illegal actions and threats.
- Congress should oppose any US government interference in the elections of other countries, as well as in their internal politics generally.

#### **4. Abide by international law**

US foreign policy should adhere to the principles of international law and be fully compliant with the provisions of the UN Charter, OAS Charter, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and all the UN conventions and other treaties to which the US is a signatory. In addition, the US should sign and ratify the many international treaties that most governments of the world have signed on to including the International Labor Organization conventions, the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### **5. Transparent, accountable foreign assistance programs that support human rights and sovereign development plans**

US Foreign Assistance programs, a significant proportion of which involve support to security forces, have frequently had adverse effects on countries' economies, institutions, and the human rights of

their people. Significant adjustments should be made to ensure that US aid supports recipient countries' long-term plans for equitable development and doesn't worsen human rights situations.

- The US should not channel any form of assistance to foreign security forces involved in egregious human rights abuses and/or organized crime, as is the case of a significant proportion of foreign security forces receiving US assistance (e.g., Honduras, Colombia, or Egypt).
- US foreign assistance programs should be developed and implemented in close coordination with local authorities and local civil society so that programs are consistent with the objectives of recipient countries' own national development programs, and with the aspirations of its citizens. In order to better support recipient countries' economies, USAID should work with local implementing partners whenever possible. Congress should remove legislative barriers that limit the ability of USAID to work directly with local organizations and governments.
- USAID and the State Department should improve transparency and accountability mechanisms around US foreign assistance programs — including security programs — with detailed information on implementing partners, subcontractors, impact assessments and end use of appropriated funding.
- The increased militarization of US assistance, as exemplified by the swelling budget of the Department of Defense's international security cooperation programs, is of great concern, particularly given the opacity around these programs. Congress should exercise much greater scrutiny over these programs and seek to reduce them, in particular in those countries where security forces are implicated in serious human rights violations.

## **6. Trade agreements that put workers, not corporations, first**

The dominant framework of rules governing international trade, shaped by the WTO and many regional and bilateral trade agreements, has largely benefited major transnational corporations while greatly limiting policy options for advancing the economic development of low- and middle-income countries. Recent trade agreements as well as the current round of negotiations within the WTO are becoming less about trade and more focused on lengthening and strengthening patent protections, as

well as ISDS (Investor-State Dispute Settlement) mechanisms. These systematically put corporate profits ahead of the public interest, including public health and safety, workers' rights and the interest of the majority generally.

- Congress should oppose trade agreements that promote the deregulation of labor markets and a “race to the bottom” in terms of wages and workers’ rights. Congress should only support agreements that maintain or strengthen organized labor provisions and focus on creating more decent jobs in member countries.
- Members of Congress should oppose the current WTO negotiations focused on establishing digital trade rules at a global level. These rules, which make it exceedingly difficult for low- and middle-income countries to develop homegrown digital economies, are being promoted by Big Tech transnational companies that seek to expand their power and profits and engage in the unfettered exploitation of data throughout the world.

## **7. Fed policy that supports both the US economy and the global economy**

Interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve can generate major financial outflows from developing economies that can have a negative and destabilizing effect on these countries and on the global economy generally. In its decision-making process, the Fed should systematically consider the impact of its interest rate hikes on low- and middle-income countries and on the global economy.