

**Pathway to Peace**  
*Sponsored by Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN-05)*

The United States has a proud history as a leader when it comes to democracy, human rights, international institutions, and the rule of law. Following World War II, our country led the world in establishing the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But as in our domestic policy, we have far too often not matched our ideals with our actions. And in Congress, we have been too reactive to crises, and treated what should be matters of fundamental principles on a case-by-case basis.

No matter who is President, Congress has a crucial Constitutional duty when it comes to matters of foreign affairs. We must begin to reclaim them, and we must move forward with the knowledge that being a better partner and a better advocate for our values abroad makes us more secure and prosperous at home.

**Introducing: A Pathway to Peace**

*The Pathway to Peace is a package of seven bills that rethink our approach to foreign policy. The package outlines a bold vision for a progressive foreign policy— one that centers on human rights, justice and peace as the pillars of America’s engagement in the world, and makes military action a last resort. It takes into account the experiences of the people directly affected by conflict and the long-term consequences of U.S. militarism, acknowledges the damage done when we fail to live up to international human rights standards and is sincere about our values regardless of short-term political convenience.*

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- ***Global Peacebuilding Act***

The GPA authorizes a one-time transfer of \$5 billion from the Pentagon’s Overseas Contingency Operations budget to the State Department to create a new, multi-lateral Global Peacebuilding Fund. Peacebuilding has proven to be an effective alternative to military intimidation and coercion. Peacebuilding is also low cost compared to military and security sector programs, and has demonstrated impact in many areas in which the Pentagon is not equipped to lead overseas.

- ***Stop Arming Human Rights Abusers Act***

The SAHRAA imposes universal human rights and humanitarian conditions on security cooperation with the United States. The bill establishes red lines based on internationally recognized gross violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law. Once a country crosses those lines, it automatically triggers a prohibition on security aid of any kind, arms sales including those controlled by the Commerce Dept. (tear gas, etc.), and exchanges with U.S. law enforcement. At the same time, it requires the State Dept. to actively work with the country in question to enact justice mechanisms to bring them back into compliance. Separately, it creates a bipartisan, independent commission

modeled after the US Commission on International Religious Freedom that will be responsible for making recommendations about countries to list and delist under this law.

- ***Congressional Oversight of Sanctions Act***

The COSA requires a joint resolution of Congress to approve sanctions issued under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) within 60 days of being back in session after the sanctions are announced. The bill also required Congressional approval to renew existing sanctions. Additionally, it carves out additional exceptions for humanitarian and peacebuilding organizations, and greatly expands the reports required along with sanctions designations. That reporting includes the anticipated and actual effects of sanctions on humanitarian and human rights situations and the US economy. It also requires an explanation for what foreign policy goal is supposed to be achieved with a given sanction, and what the process for delisting an individual, entity, or country would be.

The authors of IEEPA said in their committee report that “a real emergency should be declared...only with respect to a specific set of circumstances which constitute a real emergency, and for no other purpose” and that “the emergency should be terminated in a timely manner when the factual state of emergency is over and not continued in effect for use in other circumstances. A state of emergency should not be a normal state of affairs.”

There have been 56 declarations of national emergency under IEEPA, lasting an average of almost a decade. This has only gotten more severe – for emergencies declared in the 2000s, the average length is 12 years. There has been an unbroken national emergency regarding Iran since 1979. Just as we do with AUMFs and emergency powers domestically, we need to restore Congressional oversight.

- ***YouthBuild International Act***

In every region of the world, poverty, inequality and the lack of opportunity are all major drivers of conflict, violence and rising extremism. Economic insecurity and a worldwide job shortage creates a deadly cycle of fighting, intervention and recruitment by terrorist groups. Meanwhile, the world is getting younger. The global youth population is expected to boom by more than 60% in coming decades. And these young people need jobs, education and opportunity so they can make their way in this world. Which is why we need real investment – an investment in people, if we are to secure real, lasting peace. The YouthBuild International Act will replicate the highly successful domestic YouthBuild program – which helps disadvantaged youth obtain the education and employment skills they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Replicating this program internationally will put vulnerable young people on a path to prosperity and help them better engage in their communities. This is the kind of partnership the world needs. And it’s the kind of partner we should be.

- ***Global Migration Agreement Act***

The GMAA instructs the State Department and U.S. Ambassador to the UN to take the lead on creating a binding international agreement on global migration. The bill also establishes a clear framework for what that agreement should include and address. We

approach all of the migration crises in the world on a case-by-case basis – the Rohingya crisis, the Central American refugee crisis, the Syrian refugee crisis – and although each of them has distinct characteristics, there are common threads that connect them.

There are more people forcibly displaced now than at any time in human history – climate change has made the problem exponentially worse, and the severity is only going to increase. This is a global problem that needs a global solution. The bill makes clear that the United States can begin to regain its leadership on this issue by fixing its broken policies at home. Internationally, the Global Compact on Migration is an important statement of principles, and we should sign it, and then build on it.

- **Resolution on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United States is the *only* country in the world not to have ratified the UNCRC. This is a national embarrassment – there are countries that did not even exist when the Convention was signed that joined it before we did. Protecting the rights of children is fundamental, and we should be a world leader on this issue, which we can't be unless we're a state party to the Convention.

- **Resolution on the Rome Statute, and the International Criminal Court**

The United States has been a leader on international criminal justice since Nuremberg, and our hostility towards the ICC has always been at odds with our commitment to the rule of law, accountability, and to the principle that no one is above the law. The ICC is an imperfect institution, but it is made up of professionals who have dedicated their lives to the fight against impunity, and we should support them. We can also improve the Court by being members of it. The Trump Administration's decision earlier this year to place visa bans and threaten economic sanctions against ICC personnel, including Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, is an unacceptable escalation of U.S. hostility toward the ICC, and we need to send a strong message in support of international criminal justice.