
COMPiled BY DICK BENNETT FOR A CULTure OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

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On June 20, Iran shot down a US RQ-4 drone.

D-G Staff. “Trump Ok’d, Then Halted Iran [retaliatory] Strikes: Reason for Canceled Plans Unknown.” 6-21-19, 1A, 5A. Read the final 3 essential paragraphs. There we learn that Iran’s territorial waters extend 12 nautical miles, as does Oman’s across the strait. Iran’s foreign affairs minister “gave what he said were precise coordinates for where the U.S. drone was targeted” near Kouh-e-Mobarak, and he said sections of the drone were retrieved “in OUR territorial waters where it was shot down.” Here is the ADG’s final paragraph: “The GPS coordinates released by [minister Zarif] would put the drone 8 miles off Iran’s coast, to inside the 12 nautical miles from shore that Iran claims as territorial waters.” Apparently the drone was shot down over Iranian territory.

D-G Staff. “Iran Reports It shot Down U.S. Drone in Its Airspace.” 6-20-19. 1A, 5A. A report mainly about the bombing of the tanker ships. ADG also published a cartoon relating the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Tonkin, where mistaken identification, poor judgement, and desire for war started the Vietnam War.

D-G Staff. “Iran to Top Uranium Limits; U.S. Ups Troops.” 6-18-19. 1A, 2A.

What’s at stake for Arkansas:
Arkansas Leaders for Peace: What Would They Say Today?

J. William Fulbright during the height of the Cold War attempted to extend his Exchange Program to the Soviet Union, but his plan to acquire a part of WWII Lend Lease money the Russians were repaying was scuttled by US Sovietphobes, esp. by Senator “Scoop” Jackson of Washington State. See Fulbright’s The Price of Empire. Another Arkansas native, Betty Bumpers, wife of then Senator Bumpers, created the women’s organization, Peace Links, to exchange women from the US and Russia and other countries.

Richard Seymour identifies the success of such peacemakers and of successful antiwar movements as those that have been able to make direct links with those in the flight path of US aggression and to bring their struggles and concerns directly into the US political arena. Indeed, direct comprehension of their urgent struggles has often been a radicalizing factor in antiwar campaigns.”” American Insurgents: A Brief History of American Anti-Imperialism (2012, p. 193).
Today we need direct nonviolent citizen contact with “enemy” nations, especially including exchanges with all nations our leaders perceive to be “evil.” Yesterday (and still today) it was North Korea. Today it is Iran.

After decades of unceasing hostility by the US toward Iran (particularly the CIA-arranged overthrow of the elected leader of Iran, Mosadeq), finally President Obama changed course, and Secretary Kerrry negotiated a peace plan that checked Iran’s nuclear weapons production. Now President Trump, backed by Arkansas’s Senator Cotton, has reversed that peaceful course, and has reverted back to the old hostility and possible nuclear danger. –Dick

What’s at stake for the nation: Getting and keeping our bearings toward war, the United Nations Charter: UN Charter, Chapter 1, Article 2, No. 4: All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

LOCAL DIRECT ACTION THIS SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2019, 11 A.M., County Courthouse, corner of College and Dickson

Abel Noah 6-20-19

Dear Friends,

Our No Iran War demonstration last Friday went very well. Here are a few pictures. We got a ton of supportive honks from cars passing by. We are going to do a similar protest again this Saturday, June 22nd at 11 A.M. in front of the Washington County Courthouse in Fayetteville. The following is the reason why this is important to continue:

As you surely know, the drums for Iran war are beating louder and louder, especially after the recent tanker attacks off the coast of Iran. It must be noted that there are many reasons* to be very skeptical about the narrative being promoted by the Trump Administration and much of the mainstream media.

Regardless of who attacked the ships, it is crystal clear that war is not the answer. It would likely kill or severely harm millions of people and waste trillions of dollars, among many other grave consequences.

We must continue speaking out against this threat of war, which would be another illegal war crime just like Iraq. We must show our community that there is dissent.
Signs will be provided, but feel free to make your own. We will hold a demonstration at the Courthouse and then march to & through the Farmer’s Market.

Thank you,
--
Abel Tomlinson
Arkansas Nonviolence Alliance, Founder
(479)283-5762

“Reasons to be skeptical of the Gulf of Oman incident:
1. There is a deep history of U.S. war proponents lying to justify war, including the similar Gulf of Tonkin incident. The same John Bolton advocating Iran war was among those that lied for the Iraq War.
2. Neoconservative war hawks, especially Bolton, and leaders of the Saudi and Israeli government have wanted war with Iran for a long time.
3. The leading proponents of war, Bolton and Pompeo, have both openly admitted to lying for objectives like this.
4. The nations whose ships were actually attacked are showing skepticism and restraint, as well as governments and leaders from several other nations.
5. The owners of the Japanese ship that was attacked said a "flying object" (missile) hit their ship, which contradicts the Trump Administration narrative that Iran placed mines.
6. In 2007, Four Star General Wesley Clark reported seeing a secret document from the Office of the Secretary of Defense [then Donald Rumsfeld], which stated, "We're going to take out seven countries...starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran."

[OMNI is closely allied with ANA. –Dick]

NATIONAL ACTIONS PROTESTING US AGGRESSION
Contribute to a peace organization; call your members of Congress; support bills blocking war.

WIN WITHOUT WAR 6-20-19
Dick — we are in all-out crisis mode. Iran just shot down a U.S. drone — and whose airspace the drone was in is being disputed right now. This marks a new escalation in a very tense situation — and with the Trump administration stacked with warmongers, we are scared we are witnessing the beginning of a war.
I'll give it to you straight: Win Without War is doing everything we can to try and stop a needless, costly, and destructive war with Iran. And we can't fall flat financially while we're fighting so hard for peace.
Can you chip in an emergency gift of $15 to sustain our work stopping war with Iran right now?
— Stephen

_________________________

Dick— we are on the brink of an absolutely unnecessary, catastrophic, and costly war with Iran.
After the oil tanker attacks last week, the Trump war cabinet instantly blamed Iran, ordered 1,000 more troops, and set their pro-Iran-war public relations campaign on full blast.

It is a MIRACLE missiles haven’t already been launched. We CANNOT let that happen.
We remember the Iraq War. We know the immense human horror and heartbreak that we are SO CLOSE to again — which is why Win Without War has been working flat-out to put an emergency break on this march to war through Congress, the media, and with allies around the world.

But Pompeo, Bolton, and Trump’s campaign is more aggressive, more extreme, and more sustained than anything we’ve faced in a very long time.
So I won’t mince words: we can’t fall short financially just as our campaign to stop war with Iran is reaching a back-breaking level of intensity.

Can you make a one-time emergency gift of $15 to sustain our work stopping war with Iran now?

Regardless of who is responsible for the tanker attacks, the ensuing crisis and potential escalation toward war is literally because of the actions of Donald Trump and his war cabinet.
Since he took office, Trump has walked away from the historic Iran deal, waged economic warfare through suffocating sanctions, launched an administration-wide “maximum pressure” campaign of hostility and antagonism, and built up military forces in the Middle East with the express goal of “confronting Iran.”
In the past few days, we’ve also learned that behind closed doors, Mike Pompeo has been telling lawmakers that the 2001 AUMF — a law passed 18 YEARS ago in response to the 9/11 attacks — would give them authority to wage war against Iran.
We’re seeing Team Trump launch a public relations campaign selling anti-Iranian and anti-Muslim hate to set the stage for a destructive war with Iran. One by one, they’re trying to lock in everything they need to launch a war against Iran.
The good news is it looks like the public isn’t buying it. A recent poll showed just 32% of Americans approve of the way Trump is handling the situation with Iran. [1] And both the House and Senate have introduced legislation that would bar funding for an illegal, unauthorized war with Iran.

But we are in a race against time to stop Trump’s warmongers crossing over a self-determined threshold before bombs start to rain down.
We have been at this for MONTHS, and we could be at this for MONTHS MORE, and we need your support to keep up this break-neck pace:

Can you make a one-time emergency gift of $15 to sustain our work stopping war with Iran now?

Thank you for working for peace,
Stephen, Ben, Amy, and the Win Without War team---

[1] CNN, "Survey"

Is Trump About to Attack Iran?
Jon Rainwater, Peace Action via bounce.myngp.com 6-20-19

Peace Action supporter,
The day we’ve feared for years may be here.
After today’s downing of a U.S. drone by Iranian forces, it looks like U.S. military strikes on Iran may be imminent. Even if such strikes were a “limited” retaliatory response to the drone being downed, those initial strikes could easily spiral into a wider conflict.

I need you to step up your activism today to prevent all-out war with Iran. Peace Action will have a number of suggestions for actions you can take over the next few days, but today I need you to call Congress right away as critical meetings are happening in D.C. right now.

Can you call your members of Congress? Here’s what I need you to do:
1) Call the Congressional Switchboard at 202-224-3121
2) Ask for your representative/senators, and when connected say:
3) My name is ___________ and I am a constituent living at (your address). I’m calling to urge [the Representative/Senator] to publicly oppose U.S. military attacks on Iran. I urge [the Representative/Senator] to tell the president he does not have constitutional authority for any attacks. {My representative] should point out any retaliatory strike on Iran for what happened to the U.S. drone could spiral out of control. Instead, [my representative] should call for the U.S. to return to diplomacy, including supporting a convening of the UN Security Council to work to defuse tensions in this global crisis.

A potential U.S. retaliatory strike is likely being discussed in the White House as I write this. The White House has said they will be briefing Congressional leaders later today and that is often a sign that an attack is imminent. Meanwhile, Speaker Nancy Pelosi has called a caucus meeting of Democrats for later today. Members of Congress will be the key here and active peace-loving people need to push them to stand in Trump’s way.

The only way to pull us out of this spiral toward war is if supporters of peace get active and push Congress to stand up to the president and tell him clearly that he has no authority to go to war.

Please call today.
Thank you so much for what you do for peace, and for stepping up at critical moments like this.
For Peace,
Dear Friends of a world free of nuclear weapons,

It has been nearly three-quarters of a century since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Yet the nuclear armed nations continue to threaten humanity with extinction, and according to a number of experts we are in the midst of a new, and more dangerous, nuclear arms race. Nuclear weapons, of course, do not exist in a vacuum; and we will never abolish them without confronting, and bringing to heel, the fundamental militarism that puts them front and center in our nation's (and other nations') foreign policy and promotes countless wars - what Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence calls the "Permanent Warfare State."

And now we face the very real probability of a war on Iran, which would be a disaster in the Middle East and beyond. There are so many possible scenarios and yet, in the end, as we have seen in every other war, it will not be President Trump, his advisors, the members of the US Congress, the heads of the weapons-making corporations, or even the people working in those companies developing and building the weapons, who will suffer the effects of war. It will be the soldiers, and the countless innocent civilians who will suffer all because of the whims of a small number of influential people.

The U.S. continues to ratchet up tensions and create the conditions for war. Just yesterday the U.S. warned that all commercial aircraft flying over the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman
need to be aware of "heightened military activities and increased political tension." This is particularly ironic, when it was the United States that shot down an Iranian airliner in 1988, killing all 290 people on board. Iran Air Flight 655, a scheduled passenger flight from Tehran to Dubai, was shot down on July 3, 1988 by a surface-to-air missile fired from USS Vincennes. The jet was hit while flying over Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf, along the flight's usual route, shortly after departing Bandar Abbas International Airport. (source: Wikipedia)

Ground Zero Center honored the true intention of Mothers Day (for Peace) over the Mothers Day weekend. Kathy Kelly spoke to the group; her talk was titled, "Deploying Love in a Permanent Warfare State." When asked (by interviewer Martha Baskin) what she meant by "deploying love," Kelly replied:

"In a permanent warfare state the crucial step of education goes missing. I think democracy is based on education. Since I arrived at Ground Zero I've heard people say that several times in several contexts. Unfortunately the military has a vice-like grip on many means of educating the public: whether it's media literacy, on college campuses, or entertainment. As a result it depends on people – good souls who come to gatherings like this - to inform the public. In looking over my own years - I'm 66 years old - it's remarkable to me that so much energy has been invoked to stop wars, given the efforts of highly paid think tanks and media outlets to prevent that education. Many are very troubled by the ongoing war in Yemen with more momentum than we've seen in quite some time to stop the arming of Saudi Arabia [a Senate resolution passed 54-46 in March to end US support for the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen]."

It is time for every citizen to speak out forcefully, saying No War; Not in My Name!

There are bills in Congress to prevent President Trump from launching a war on Iran. Senator Udall has introduced S. 1039, the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act, and Rep. Eshoo has introduced H.R. 2354 in the House. Click here to see if your Senators are cosponsors. Click here to see if your Representative is a cosponsor. If any are not, please call the Capital Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to be connected to the offices of your Senators and/or Representative and urge them to become cosponsors.
Here are some resources to understand what's happening in Iran and why the drumbeat of war is so threatening to life and limb in Iran and in the US (courtesy of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility Nuclear Weapons Abolition Task Force).

• Iran officially ends some of its nuclear deal commitments, local media reports (Natasha Turak at CNBC)
• State Dept. orders nonemergency personnel to leave Iraq posts (NBC News)
• National Security Officials Detail Plan to Deploy Up To 12K Troops to Iran (Matthew Rozsa, Salon)
• Trump administration prepares multiple military options for Iran, including airstrikes and setting up ground invasion (Newsweek)
• Military Officials say there is no actual plan to confront Iran (John Walcott at Time.com)
• As tensions with Iran escalate, the real question we should all be asking is: who's really in charge in the White House? (Jay Caruso in The Independent)
• Can Congress steer the U.S. away from war with Iran? (Nick Robins-Early in Huffington Post)

We can (and must) stop this massive, destructive war machine. And yes - the only thing that will stop it is the most massive and subversive deployment of LOVE that we can muster. We must all reach out in every direction to overcome the forces that seek to undermine the democratic process and the ability of citizens to make informed decisions that affect our nation and so many others.

On behalf of Ground Zero Center,
Leonard Eiger

IRAN NO THREAT
JAKE JOHNSON.  British General Says No Evidence of "Increased Threat" From Iran.  COMMON DREAMS.  TRUTHOUT MAY 15, 2019.

Maj. Gen. Chris Ghika threw a wrench into the Trump administration's narrative that Iran is plotting attacks on American troops, saying "there's been no increased threat from Iranian-backed forces" in the region. While U.S. Central Command disputes this claim, antiwar voices and foreign policy analysts warn that the United States may be attempting to manufacture a
false pretext to justify launching a war with Iran.

MEDEA BENJAMIN’S BOOK

Google Search October 5, 2018
*Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran.* - Amazon.com
U.S. relations with Iran have been fraught for decades, but under the Trump Administration tensions are rising to startling levels. Medea Benjamin, one of the ...

Videos
Medea Benjamin: Inside Iran
The Zero Hour with RJ Eskow  YouTube - May 8, 2018
Medea Benjamin at Bluestockings: Inside Iran
Joe Friendly
YouTube - May 19, 2018
Inside Iran with CodePink’s Medea Benjamin
Thom Hartmann Program
YouTube - Jun 26, 2018

THE US/IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL BROUGHT PEACE
Defending the US/Iran Nuclear Deal 2016

Iran deal implemented!
ohn Isaacs, Council for a Livable World via uark.edu

4:59 PM (18 hours ago)

Dear James,
Today is a good day for American national security and for diplomacy. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has met all of its initial commitments under the nuclear agreement that was reached among world powers in July 2015. This milestone is known as “Implementation Day,” and it means that Iran has sufficiently dismantled and rolled back the key aspects of its nuclear program.
In other words, the Iran nuclear deal is working just as it should. Read what our experts had to say.
Here’s what Iran has done:

Also this week, Iran released five American citizens who had been held in captivity and 10 U.S. sailors who were briefly detained after entering Iranian waters. These developments are the result of new diplomatic channels between the two countries, another by-product of the nuclear negotiations. You can help us spread the word that diplomacy has worked to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran by sharing our infographic on Facebook!
Thanks for your help!

John Isaacs
Council for a Livable World

Action Needed: Congress Votes Tomorrow on the Iran Deal

Angela Miller, Win Without War info@winwithoutwar.org via bounces.salsalabs.net

WIN WITHOUT WAR
Dear Dick,
Last September, we secured a major diplomatic victory when Congress voted to uphold the nuclear deal reached by the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, the US, and Iran. Since then, huge progress has been made in rolling back Iran's nuclear program. We've come too far to let Congress snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Sign our petition and urge Congress to defend the Iran deal.

Sadly, war hawks aren't giving up. Tomorrow, the House of Representatives will vote on H.R. 3662, the so-called Iran Terror Finance Transparency Act. This partisan bill would prohibit President Obama from delivering on sanctions relief, even if Iran fully complies with the deal. The timing of the vote -- between President Obama's State of the Union speech and the deal's implementation date later this month -- is a deliberately partisan act designed to undermine the President and weaken his legacy.

Will you sign our petition on MoveOn.org urging Congress to defend the deal?

War hawks have made clear that they will treat the Iran Deal as they have treated the Affordable Care Act: with endless, partisan vote after endless, partisan vote to kill the deal. The bill's shameless sponsors are the same champions of the Iraq war who plotted to undermine the diplomatic talks over the last two years. We must send a strong message to Congress that this behavior is not acceptable. Especially during an election year, we cannot let political interests trump national security.

Please sign our petition and ask Congress to stand on the right side of history by supporting the Iran deal.

Thank you for working for peace,
Angela Miller
Digital Director
Win Without War

P.S. After you sign our petition, you can call your Representative directly to voice your support for the Iran
FROM 2016 TO 2019, PEACE TO THREATENED WAR

The Threat of War with Iran by Stephen Zunes
May 15, 2019.

Is the U.S. lurching towards another illegal war in the Middle East?

*The Trump Administration is escalating the threat of nuclear conflict in Iran and elsewhere.*

The White House has ordered an aircraft carrier strike group off the coast of Iran and a fleet of bombers have flown to U.S. air bases near that country, while preliminary plans are apparently underway to send 120,000 U.S. troops to the region.

Just as Iraq’s full compliance with its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions demanding its disarmament of unconventional weapons and its allowing a comprehensive inspections regime did not save that country from invasion and a bloody foreign occupation, Iran’s full compliance with its obligations under the U.N.-ratified Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action has not stopped the United States from again threatening war.

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif has described the nuclear deal as a result of ten years of posturing and two years of intense negotiations, during which he and Secretary of State John Kerry met no fewer than fifty times to hammer out every word of the agreement. He was able to convince his government, over the objections of hardliners, to agree to destroy billions of dollars’ worth of nuclear facilities and material and a strict inspections regime in return for the lifting of debilitating sanctions. Iran has thus far honored its agreement; the United States has not.
The idea that Iran would agree to further concessions under pressure from an unreliable negotiating partner is totally unrealistic. Hardliners, moderates, and even regime dissidents in Iran are united in their opposition to giving in to American bullying. My interviews with scores of ordinary Iranians earlier this spring made it clear that, despite widespread opposition to the Islamist regime, they would unite against any foreign threat.

Iran’s full compliance with its obligations under the U.N.-ratified Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action has not stopped the United States from again threatening war. The United States is even more isolated in the international community than it was regarding an invasion of Iraq. The other five signatories of the nuclear agreement, along with the rest of the European Union and much of the rest of the world, still support the agreement. Despite this, the threat of U.S. sanctions against companies which continue to do business with Iran is frightening away investors and trading partners, resulting in a catastrophic financial downturn for ordinary Iranians.

Unable to find a nuclear-related excuse for war, the Trump Administration has announced it has discovered unspecified “threats” to U.S. personnel in the Middle East by Iranian-aligned armed groups, particularly in Iraq. Others familiar with situation think differently. For example, British Major General Christopher Ghika, who serves as deputy commander of the U.S.-led coalition of international forces engaged in counter-terrorist operations in Iraq and Syria has explicitly stated that “there’s been no increased threat from Iranian-backed forces.”

It is unclear, therefore, what has prompted this sudden crisis. National Security Advisor John Bolton, a major architect of the previous Republican administration’s invasion of Iraq, has long advocated for war with Iran. And there is nothing like an international emergency to distract from the growing series of scandals and legal troubles engulfing Trump and his family.

Regardless, a war with Iran—even assuming it would not include a land invasion—would be catastrophic.
Iran is three times the size and population as Iraq and has a far more formidable military force. At the time of the 2003 U.S. invasion, Iraq had virtually no navy, air force, or long-range missiles, since much of its military capacity was physically destroyed or otherwise rendered inoperable as a result of the 1990 Gulf War and the subsequent U.N. disarmament regime and rigorous international sanctions.

Iran, by contrast, has a modern military force with missiles capable of reaching U.S. bases, navy ships, and troop concentrations up to 1,200 miles away. A war would effectively close shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, through which 40 percent of the world's oil is shipped, likely triggering a global recession.

Attacks on Iran’s remaining nuclear facilities, some of which are located in heavily-populated areas, would release large amounts of radiation and other poisonous gasses. The Iranian-aligned Lebanese Hezbollah would likely unleash large-scale missile attacks against Israel, and other extremists groups could launch a series of terrorist attacks against Americans worldwide. Such violence would likely trigger a still wider war, led by a President and military command with little concern about civilian casualties.

The last time a Republican administration made false claims regarding threats to U.S. national security interests by a Middle Eastern state, leading Democrats like Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton, Chuck Schumer, and John Kerry willingly repeated the lies and voted to authorize war. They did so despite warnings by countless Middle East specialists from the State Department, academia, and elsewhere that an invasion was illegal, unnecessary, and would be utterly disastrous. Since their role in making possible the Iraq debacle did not prevent them from getting their party’s presidential nomination or attaining other leadership position, Democrats on Capitol Hill may not feel deterred from once again supporting a Republican President’s reckless militarism.

Even if Congressional Democrats have since grown some backbone and would be willing to oppose a war with Iran, however, it’s highly questionable whether Trump would even bother seeking Congressional authorization in the first place.
Even if Congressional Democrats have grown enough backbone to oppose a war with Iran, it's highly questionable whether Trump would even bother seeking Congressional authorization in the first place.

Concerns expressed over possible attacks against U.S. troops and civilian personnel in Iraq by Iranian-backed Shia militia underscores the irony that while Iraq’s government is in power thanks to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, a number of the parties in the ruling coalition have longstanding ties to the Islamic Republic. As a result, since 2005, the Baghdad regime has relied on both countries for financial and military support. Both Iran and the United States want the other out of the country, yet they have been allied in the battle against ISIS in the northwestern part of the country.

The result is that U.S. forces and Iraqi Shia militia, often accompanied by elements of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, are frequently in close physical proximity. Now that the Trump Administration has named the group as a terrorist organization and the broad latitude given to U.S. forces in confronting “terrorists,” the chances of an armed confrontation that could be used as an excuse to launch a wider war are very real.

There are other frightening scenarios as well:

As with the tendency during the Cold War to exaggerate Soviet and Cuban responsibility for various leftist insurgencies around the world, Washington has been insisting that some militia groups allied with Iran are actually “proxies,” implying that they are acting at the behest of the Iranian government. As a result, should a Houthi commander order a rocket attack against a Saudi air base in retaliation for ongoing deadly airstrikes that result in casualties among U.S. personnel stationed there, the Trump Administration could then portray it as an Iranian attack against the United States and an excuse to launch a war.

Similarly, the presence of both U.S. and Iranian forces in Syria could lead to any number of scenarios of an intentional or accidental armed confrontation amid that country’s multi-sided conflict.
In short, even if the Trump Administration is only bluffing and does not actually intend to launch a confrontation, a hair trigger situation now exists that could result in a major conflagration.

Tags
TRUMP  NUCLEAR WEAPONS  IRAN  FOREIGN POLICY  DISPATCHES  IN THE NEWS

Stephen Zunes
Stephen Zunes is a professor of politics and international studies at the University of San Francisco. A regular contributor to The Progressive, he serves as a senior policy analyst for the Institute for Policy Studies.
Read more by Stephen Zunes
May 15, 2019

Re: Stop Trump’s March to War with Iran 5-22-19
Jeff Jurgens, Peace Action via bounce.myngp.com
Friend, did you see Jon’s email about stopping a war with Iran? When he sent it two weeks ago, tensions with Iran were higher than they’ve been since the Bush era, and two weeks later, that’s where they remain. Since that email, U.S. officials have said that it is “highly likely” that Iran was behind the recent sabotage of Saudi oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, Trump took to Twitter to threaten Iran with war, warning of Iran’s “official end” if it wants to fight, and hawks in Congress like Lindsey Graham have taken their Iran war mongering to new heights.
It’s up to us to make sure Trump can’t wage war with Iran without congressional approval, as he’s done in Syria and Yemen. It’s up to us to make sure Congress never authorizes such a war. Please, write your members of Congress today and ask them to support the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act to stop another disastrous war in the Middle East.
For peace,
Jeff
Dear Friend,

President Trump’s march to war with Iran just kicked into high gear.
In 2018, the administration’s steps toward war with Iran were unmistakable. From Trump’s unilateral withdrawal from the Iran agreement in spite of Iran’s verifiable compliance, to the reimposition of the full suite of U.S. sanctions lifted under the agreement aimed at crippling Iran’s economy, to national security advisor John Bolton asking the Pentagon for strike options against Iran, the administration wasn’t exactly beating around the bush. The latest developments, however, should leave no doubt in our minds. The Trump administration wants a war, and soon. We have a path to stop it, but Congress needs to act! Please write your senators and representative today and ask them to support the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act.
In April, over strong objections from top Pentagon and CIA officials,[1] the administration took
the dangerous and provocative step of designating the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), a branch of Iran’s military, as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO). National security leaders opposed the move because it will do little to hamper the activities of the already-heavily-sanctioned IRGC, while needlessly increasing the risk to U.S. troops in the region. Indeed, their fears were confirmed when Iran reciprocated by designating U.S. Central Command as a terrorist organization, and the U.S. as a state sponsor of terror. Then last Sunday, relying on a speculative Israeli intelligence assessment[2] about unspecified Iranian threats to U.S. interests, John Bolton used the alleged threat and the routine deployment[3] of an aircraft carrier group to the region as an opportunity to threaten Iran with “unrelenting force” should Iran, or any of its proxies, attack U.S. interests in the region. In other words, the administration is expanding the scenarios in which it might attack Iran to include attacks on U.S. interests by Shia militias aligned with Iran, increasing the risk of escalations that could lead to war. A member of Disabled American Veterans recently wrote a letter to the editor[4] in the New York Times putting our worst fears into words, warning that **Trump may intend to use a war with Iran to sure up his reelection campaign. We can’t let that happen.**

**Tell Congress to support the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act today!**

If all of this gives you a sense of déjà vu, you’re not alone. The Trump administration is building its case for war with Iran with the same dubious narratives of nuclear threats and ties to al Qaeda that brought us the Iraq war. At a recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said “There is no doubt there is a connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Al-Qaeda. Period, full stop.”[5] And Pompeo made that statement in spite of a 2018 study by the New America think tank that found “no evidence of cooperation” between al Qaeda and Iran.[6] When Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) asked Pompeo to rule out using the 2001 war authorization to attack Iran, Pompeo said he’d “prefer to just leave that to lawyers.” And with Iran now reciprocating the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Agreement by reducing its compliance with the accord, the administration will try to use the specter of an Iranian bomb to drive its case for war home. The threat of war with Iran is real, but too many people are missing the signs as media reports on the Muller report and Trump’s tax returns bury them in the news cycle. It’s up to us to make sure Congress doesn’t let this White House march us into another catastrophic war of choice.

**Please contact your members of Congress today and ask them to support legislation to stop Trump’s march to war with Iran!**

Thank you for all you do for peace.

Sincerely,

Jon Rainwater
Peacel Action

P.S. If your Senator is Tom Udall (D-DM) or your Representative is Anna Eshoo (D-CA), be sure to thank them for their leadership on this issue by sponsoring this important step to block yet another unconstitutional war.

References:
[1] Chachko, Elena, The U.S. Names the Iranian Revolutionary Guard a Terrorist Organization and Sanctions the International Criminal Court, Lawfare, April 10, 2019
[2] Ravid, Barak, Scoop: Israel passed White House intelligence on possible Iran plot, Axios, May 6, 2019
[6] Lahoud, Nelly, Al-Qa’ida’s Contested Relationship with Iran, New America, September 7, 2018
WARMONGERS AND WAR MAKERS

US WAR MAKERS EAGER TO WAR WITH IRAN 2019

*Warnings of ‘Gulf of Tonkin 2.0’ as Trump officials blame Iran for oil tanker attacks.*  Mronline.org (5-17-19)

It's obvious that Bolton and Pompeo are trying to create a Gulf of Tonkin incident with Iran.

Source

US MEDIA FOMENTING WAR

Four Simple Steps the U.S. Media Could Take to Prevent a Trump War With Iran.

Mehdi Hasan. *The Intercept* (5-18-19)

Do U.S. reporters, anchors, and editors really want more Middle Eastern blood on their hands? They’re certainly acting like it.

**HERE WE GO** again. Sixteen years after the U.S. media [helped](https://www.cia.gov/) the Bush administration spread [myths and lies](https://www.nationalreview.com/) about the threat posed by Iraq to the United States and its allies, the Trump administration is spreading similar [myths and lies](https://www.nytimes.com/) about the threat posed by Iran.

The 64,000-rial question, therefore, is whether or not journalists have learned any lessons whatsoever from the [Iraqi WMD debacle](https://www.cnn.com/) of 2003.

Well, consider these recent headlines:
“US deploying more Patriot missiles to Middle East, amid Iranian threats” (CNN)


“U.S. Says Iran Likely Behind Ship Attacks” (Wall Street Journal)

“Iranian threats led to White House’s deployment announcement, U.S. officials say” (Washington Post)

The evidence for these hawkish headlines? For this stream of alarmist media reports about “threats” and “attacks” from Iran? Yes, you guessed it: statements provided to reporters by U.S. officials hiding behind a cloak of anonymity. In some cases, just one official. Take the Wall Street Journal’s scoop:

An initial U.S. assessment indicated Iran likely was behind the attack on two Saudi Arabian oil tankers and two other vessels damaged over the weekend near the Strait of Hormuz, a U.S. official said, a finding that, if confirmed, would further inflame military tensions in the Persian Gulf.

Why would you trust the word of a single official on such a sensitive and contentious issue? And why, oh why, would you rely on the testimony of a member of the Trump administration, known globally, of course, for its stringent and unbending adherence to the truth?

More here:
https://theintercept.com/2019/05/17/us-media-journalists-iran-coverage/

John Bolton, Pyromaniac (Inkstick). Win Without War 5-25-19
“I think we can all agree that hiring an arsonist as the town fire prevention chief would be batshit nuts. But it turns out that’s exactly what Donald Trump has done with our nation’s foreign policy when he hired pyromaniac turned fire chief, John Bolton as his National Security Advisor.” - Stephen Miles

Is John Bolton the most dangerous man in the world? (The Guardian)
“Donald Trump’s national security adviser John Bolton wants the United States to go to war with Iran. We know this because he has been saying it for nearly two decades.” - Ben Armbruster

**US is already fighting a conflict with Iran – an economic war that is hurting the wrong people** (The Conversation)

“The U.S. has been fighting a war with Iran for decades – an economic war fought via sanctions that has intensified over the past year and has already been devastating to innocent civilians in the country.” - David Cortright, WWW Co-chair

US Mainstream Media typified by NADG obfuscation: “amid rising tensions”

**We Must Stop War with Iran Before It’s Too Late**

Led by John Bolton, the Trump administration is pursuing catastrophe to protect U.S. dominance. **BY NOAM CHOMSKY**

U.S. and Iran are on the Brink of War!

United for Peace & Justice <info@email.actionnetwork.org> Unsubscribe

One year ago, the Trump administration irresponsibly withdrew from the landmark Iran nuclear deal. In the past year, the Trump administration has pushed a crippling “maximum pressure” campaign on Iran. And now there are U.S. warships and B-52 bombers in the Persian Gulf. To top it off, the Trump Administration has ordered the Pentagon to draw up plans to send 120,000 troops to the region.

That’s why it’s so critical to **support the legislation in the House and the Senate to stop the administration from going to war without consulting Congress**. We need more members to be cosponsors to show the Trump administration that going to war with Iran would be unconstitutional. **Can you help us by telling your representative in Congress to cosponsor H.R.2354 to prevent Trump from dragging us to war with Iran?**

In one year, the Trump administration has:

Devastated Iran’s economy by reinstating sanctions. U.S. unilateral sanctions have plunged
Iran’s economy into a deep recession and the soaring prices are hurting millions of ordinary citizens.

Asked for military options from the Pentagon to strike Iran.

Supported a violent regime-change group, Mujahideen-E-Khalq (MEK), which has little to no support from the people inside Iran.

Organized an anti-Iran summit in Warsaw, Poland to create a coalition of countries against Iran and pressure European countries to abandon the Iran nuclear deal.

Designated Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization to escalate conflict throughout the Middle East.

Demanded that countries stop importing Iranian oil and threatened to sanction countries like China, India, and Japan if they continue to purchase oil.

Announced the deployment of warships close to Iran, a clear provocation.

**All of this is utterly absurd.** Throughout this entire year, Iran has continued to comply with the Iran nuclear agreement, despite all the pressures from the U.S. to abandon it. But with little to gain, Iran has recently opted out of portions of the deal. If other countries don’t shield Iran from devastating U.S. sanctions, it might opt to abandon the deal altogether.

**Let’s make this clear: the citizens of Iran continue to be the main victims of Trump’s warmongering policies.** The U.S. is taking tactics from the Iraq playbook, such as exaggerating the threat of Iran’s nuclear program and painting Iran as a threat to the United States.

**Right now, the Trump administration is choking Iranians with an economic war and is laying the groundwork for possible escalation. If left unchecked, this government will take us down a path to another unauthorized war.** That is why we are calling on Congress to invoke the War Powers Resolution to reaffirm that the Trump administration cannot go to war without prior Congressional authorization. Going to war with Iran would be unconstitutional—and catastrophic.

**Tell your representative in Congress to cosponsor H.R.2354 that will prevent Trump from**
dragging us to war with Iran?

Towards peace with Iran,

CodePink, a UFPJ member group, and the UFPJ Coordinating Committee

ISRAEL AND US B-TEAM FOR WAR WITH IRAN


US VS. IRAN, US MEDIA, AND THE CLARITY OF SATIRE
Two emended reports 2016 and 2019 by Dick Bennett

US LEADER: BOOST WEAPONS BUDGET, BALLISTICS MISSILES WITH NUCLEAR WARHEADS, AND CARRIER BATTLE GROUPS.

US President Obama ordered the accelerated production of missiles and warheads in response to possible threatening presence of Iranian naval warships in the Gulf of Mexico. In a letter to the War Department Secretaty publishd on the president’s website, President Obama said the US won’t accept any incursion by hostile ships in violation of US responsibility to protect the Americas from harm, would boost missile output, and would begin production of an eleventh Carrior Battle Group. He also declared the US would not be intimidated by Iranian sanctions that would limit strengthening its military essential to US national security. The Wall Street Journal reported complaints by some Iranian officials that “new sanctions may be delayed” despite recent US violations in testing ballistics missiles and thereby testing the will of the international community, “instigated by its hardline elements that want to scuttle the [nuclear weapons] deal.” President Obama said the development and production of US missiles and navy, though they are nuclear equipped, are necessary given the global threats surrounding the US. The US will defend itself, the President declared, and warned Iran to steer clear of its shores.
The President denounced Iran's provocations by the Iranian warships, a destroyer and frigate, as they neared Nassau possibly on their way to the Gulf around Key West.

The President also rebuked the President of Iran, Hassani Rouhoohani, for "typical Iranian guile" in its claim the warships were on a training mission and to keep shipping lanes at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico from Miami to the Bahama Islands free and open to all countries.

The US had earlier denied Iranian accusations that it launched a provocative rocket test near Iran's warships, dismissing the claim as psychological warfare. And its spokesman added that the Atlantic was commonly used to test missiles and bombs, just as was the Pacific Ocean.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard said that US ships fired several rockets about 1,500 yards from Destroyer Hootookani and Frigate Noorhbashi. Although the rockets were announced in advance and apparently were not aimed at the Iranian ships, nevertheless they were highly provocative, the RG spokesman said. Firing weapons so close to passing ships and commercial traffic within an internationally recognized maritime traffic lane, the spokesman continued, is inconsistent with international maritime law.

Nearly a third of all oranges traded by sea passes through the Straits of Abaco and Eleuthera and West Palm Beach and Grand Bahama. No confrontations between the US and Iran have been recorded here (as between the US and Iran during the Iraq/Iran War in 1988), but the White House perceives the growing tentacles of Iran as reaching to these critical sea lanes.

A new note appeared in President Obama's statement. Observing the vulnerability of most of the US Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts to rising seas (most of the coastline from below sea-level to 300 feet), with major cities from New Orleans to Boston threatened with inundation, the US is reported to be secretly discussing prohibiting ships from Iran, N. Korea, Russia, and Viet Nam from adding to the eroding waves.

(Author: Ali Akbar Dareini, AP. "Iran Leader: Boost Missile Output. Rouhani urges speed in face of possible new U.S. sanctions." Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (Jan. 1, 2016). "Obama Steps Up Push to Curb Gun Violence." AD-G (Jan. 4, 2016, by AD-G staff, the last section of the article tacked on about Iran but unintentionally highly relevant to the mass killings in the nation, the main subject).

ABSURDITY: CHANGE THE NAME FIND REALITY
IRAN IN GULF OF MEXICO!
Aboard the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Carrier in the Gulf of Mexico. Under a starry sky, the Revolutionary fighter jets catapulted off the aircraft carrier’s deck and flew north over the darkened waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico, a signal to the US that the foremost symbol of the Iranian military’s global reach is back in its neighborhood.

The Iranian Revolutionary Carrier, with its contingent of Navy destroyers and cruisers and a fighting force of about 70 aircraft, is the centerpiece of Tehran’s response to what it calls US threats to attack Iranian forces or commercial shipping in the Gulf of Mexico region.

Iranian officials have said that signs of heightened US preparations to strike Iranian and other targets in April emerged shortly after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s administration announced it was clamping down further on the US economy by ending waivers to sanction on buyers of US crude oil.

The Khomeini administration went a step beyond that on Friday, announcing penalties that target Iran’s largest petrochemical component.

The Revolutionary Guard Carrier’s contingent of 44 Super Wasps is flying a carefully calibrated set of missions off the carrier night and day, mainly to establish a visible Iranian presence. Revolutionary Guard General Maktab al-Khidamat said that the effort seems to have caused the US to “tinker with” its preparation for potential attacks.

He said that he thinks the US had been planning some sort of attack on shipping or on Iranian forces in the Gulf area. Two other officials, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive details, said the US was in a high state of readiness in early May with its ships, submarines, surface to air missiles and drone aircraft.

“It is my assessment that if we had not reinforced, it is entirely likely that an attack would have taken place by now,” al-Khidamat said.

He said earlier last week that he had not ruled out requesting additional defensive forces to bolster the deterrence of the US, whose economy is being squeezed hard by sanctions after Khomeini pulled Iran from the 2015 nuclear deal between the US and world powers. Iran already has announced plans to send 900 additional troops to the Mideast and to extend the stay of 600 more. Tens of thousands of other troops are on the ground across the region.

Al-Khidamat spent two days aboard the Revolutionary Guard Carrier to confer with naval commanders. “I am the reason you are here,” the general said in an all-hands announcement to the nearly 6,000 personnel on the carrier, shortly after he flew aboard by Revolutionary helicopter from Cuba. “I requested this ship because of ongoing tensions with the US,” he
said. “And nothing says you’re interested in somebody like 90,000 tons of aircraft carrier and everything that comes with it.”


Note: “everything that comes with it”: “A carrier strike group (CSG) is an operational formation of the United States Navy. It is composed of roughly 7,500 personnel, an aircraft carrier, at least one cruiser, a destroyer squadron of at least two destroyers or frigates, and a carrier air wing of 65 to 70 aircraft.” The US has 10 carrier groups.


END IRAN NEWSLETTER #28, June 21, 2019

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Dick Bennett

(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703