

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: A wedge between Bolton and Trump?

[TRUMP IGNORED HIS WAR CABINET ON IRAN, THIS TIME](#)

The Atlantic's Peter Beinart this week neatly [summarized](#) the Trump administration's self-inflicted crisis with Iran in four sentences:

The conventions of mainstream journalism make it difficult to challenge America's self-conception as a peace-loving nation. But the unlovely truth is this: Throughout its history, America has attacked countries that did not threaten it. **To carry out such wars, American leaders have contrived pretexts to justify American aggression.** That's what Donald Trump's administration—and especially its national security adviser, John Bolton—is doing now with Iran.

And it appears that there's a glimmer of hope that Trump himself has begun to realize this. It's unclear whether his decision to call off his own order to respond militarily against Iran's decision to shoot down a U.S. drone (itself, a retaliation to the Trump administration's escalatory and aggressive posture toward Iran) was because Tucker Carlson told him to, or because he realizes starting a war won't do him any favors politically at home. Regardless, one thing is now clear: a wedge between the president and his top national security aides, Mike Pompeo and John Bolton — both of whom have been clamoring for regime change and war with Iran — has started to emerge.

What's perhaps even more encouraging, is that voices on Trump's own propaganda network are surfacing to drive that wedge even further ([recognizing](#), of course, that sometimes these anti-war voices on the right aren't always working for a just and more peaceful world). For example, after opening his Fox News program [monologue](#) on Thursday evening by attacking the Washington foreign policy establishment for egging Trump on to start a war with Iran, Carlson brought on retired Army Col. Douglas MacGregor to [hammer the point home](#).

"He is surrounded by people ... who are absolutely committed to finding ways to attack Iran," MacGregor said, adding, "The limited strike idea is sheer insanity. It will provoke a war. ... [Trump] needs to get rid of the warmongers. He needs to throw these geniuses that want limited strikes out of the Oval Office. The last thing an America First agenda needs is a stupid, pointless, unnecessary war with Iran."

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But Trump calling off one strike doesn't mean we're out of the woods yet. There's still a potential big event on the horizon: Iran's leadership has [vowed](#) to abandon certain limits on its nuclear program as soon as late next week unless the other signatories to the Iran nuclear deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) — Britain, France, Germany, China, and Russia — come up with a plan to restore some of the economic benefits that were promised as part of the agreement.

We can be sure that — just as we've seen with the oil tanker attacks and Iran's shooting down an American drone this week — media coverage of any potential Iranian breach of the JCPOA will largely focus on the act itself, and what the United States is going to do in response, instead of talking about the [series of events](#) brought on by the Trump administration that got us to this point. And we can be sure that other voices on Fox News will be [encouraging Trump to attack Iran](#). As such we recommend the following topline messaging points:

1. Despite having campaigned on ending Middle East wars, Donald Trump, Mike Pompeo, and John Bolton are responsible for the current crisis with Iran, which has put us on the brink of war.
2. War with Iran would be catastrophic, worse than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.
3. Congress can constrain Trump's ability to wage war with Iran.
4. The Trump administration has no credibility to tell us the truth about Iran.
5. The international community, including our European allies, do not support the Trump administration's Iran policy.
6. The Iran nuclear deal is thus far working as advertised: blocking Iran from building a nuclear weapon.
7. The American people do not support Trump's Iran policy; they don't want to go to war with Iran and oppose pulling the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal.

Click [here](#) for more details on these messaging points and [here](#) for more background on the issue and our toolkit for grassroots activists.

CONGRESS IS MOBILIZING

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Sens. Tom Udall, Tim Kaine and others, including Sen. Rand Paul, last week filed an amendment to the Senate's version of the National Defense Authorization Act "to [prohibit funds](#) from being used for military operations against Iran without explicit authorization from Congress."

Sponsors of the amendment gave impassioned speeches on the floor, including [Kaine](#), [Udall](#), and Sen. Jeff [Merkley](#), calling for an immediate vote.

"The events of the last twenty-four hours have put us in a truly dangerous and precarious moment. War with Iran would be a reckless, disastrous mistake," Merkley said. "Congress needs to act immediately to prevent this administration from starting a war in Iran without congressional authorization."

Even Minority Leader Chuck Schumer is pushing for a vote on the amendment. "[T]he Democratic position is that congressional approval must be required before funding any conflict in Iran," Schumer [said](#). "One of the best ways to avoid stumbling into war, a war that nobody wants, is to have a robust, open debate, and for Congress to have a real say."

You can sign our petition calling on Congress to act [here](#). There's also a joint petition you can sign over at Daily Kos [here](#).

BURIED LEDES

After 18 years of endless war, trillions of dollars spent, and hundreds of thousands of lives lost, the House [passed a bill this week](#) that includes a provision **that would repeal the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force**.

While the appropriations bill that passed still authorizes an unnecessarily gargantuan amount of money for defense spending, besides the AUMF repeal, **the bill does contain some other progressive victories**. See our statement on that [here](#).

The Senate voted to block Trump's arms sale to Saudi Arabia and the UAE [this week](#) in an attempt to push back against Trump's maneuver to bypass the Congressional approval process. **Now it's time for the House to take action**. See our statement on the vote [here](#).

"Permafrost at outposts in the Canadian Arctic is thawing 70 years earlier than predicted, an expedition has [discovered](#), in the latest sign that the global climate crisis is accelerating even faster than scientists had feared."

A new independent UN [report](#) on the murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi not

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only found that **“Saudi officials at the highest level plan and carry out the killing**, but that they carefully planned how best to hide the murder from the international community.”

One day before World Refugee Day on June 20, the UN refugee agency [said](#) that **a record 71 million people have been displaced by war, persecution or other violence**, an increase of more than 2 million from last year.

And finally, we know you like our regular updates on Seb Gorka news. This week, the former White House official without an official portfolio — slash — one time member of a group allied with Nazis, [took to Twitter](#) **to tell us whom he does and does not deem to be a Rabbi.**