

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## **Messaging Guidance: Preventing War with Iran and Deescalating Tensions in the Gulf**

The attacks on an oil installation in Saudi Arabia over the weekend, and Team Trump's predictable response to argue for war, once again put the U.S. on the brink of an unnecessary and disastrous conflict with Iran. Members of Congress must speak out against military action and advocate for restraint to prevent a war that would further destabilize the region and the world.

### **Donald Trump is fanning the flames of conflict in the Middle East.**

- By withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and refusing to abide by Congress's mandate to end U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, Trump has sown more chaos in the region and dramatically increased the possibility of another costly U.S. war.
- The CIA [told Trump](#) before he withdrew from the Iran deal that doing so would empower radicals, marginalize moderates, and destabilize the region.

### **There is no legal authorization for a U.S. military response to the recent attack on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure.**

- Regardless of who is responsible for the attack, the United States is under no legal obligation, and there exists no legal authorization, to militarily respond to an attack on Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, a military response has not been authorized by the United Nations.
- Even if credible evidence shows that Iran is responsible for the attacks on Saudi Arabia, no existing authorization exists for the United States to use military force against Iran. The president must come to Congress for any proposed military action against Iran.
- The U.S. Constitution vests Congress alone with the authority to declare war or authorize military force. While the President may act in cases of self defense or to deter an imminent attack on the United States, the recent attack on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure in no way qualifies as an attack on the United States.

### **The attack on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure could be a direct result of its continued military intervention against Houthi rebels in Yemen.**

- It's possible this attack is a retaliation for the Saudi-led coalition's airstrike on Dhamar prison two weeks ago that killed at least 100 people.
- There is a pattern of escalation in the war in Yemen that this weekend's attacks mirror: Major Houthi attacks often occur after major coalition attacks that killed scores of Yemeni civilians.
  - See, [for example](#), the Houthi attack on a U.S. frigate shortly after the Saudi-led coalition's funeral strike in 2016 that killed 140 & injured 500.
- The only way to mitigate against further cross-border attacks and undermine Iranian influence in Yemen is to de-escalate the conflict in Yemen and negotiate an end to the war, which currently only serves to fuel Yemenis' suffering and puts civilians in neighboring countries at risk.

**We have not yet seen any proof as to who is responsible for the attack on Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure.**

- The Trump administration, however, has a history of inflating and manipulating intelligence on Iran.
- Meanwhile, claims that the weapons used are of Iranian origin do little to undermine the fact that the Houthis have claimed responsibility, considering the Houthis have carried out such attacks in the past, and Iran has provided the Houthis with arms.
- Any results of a Saudi investigation are also not entirely credible given their history of insufficient investigations into civilian deaths in Yemen and the murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi.
- A U.S. attack against Iran in response could easily spiral out of control and result in incredibly dangerous consequences worse than both the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.