

# WIN WITHOUT WAR



## Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

*Intel for Advocacy*

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SL: We must stop Trump from starting a war with Iran

### We Must Pull Back From the Brink of War

Last night, Donald Trump drove us to the brink of war with Iran — and possibly further.

In a blatant and wholly unnecessary act of aggression, Trump chose to assassinate the leader of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds force Qasem Soleimani, one of the most powerful leaders in Iran. Trump has potentially plunged the United States, Iran, and the entire region into a catastrophic war.

Make no mistake: Donald Trump is responsible for this crisis. He entered office with some of the most promising inroads to peaceful relations with Iran in decades. Instead, he proceeded to fill his cabinet with warmongers, abandon the successful nuclear agreement with Iran known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and launch a systematic campaign of “maximum pressure,” placing the US and Iran on a collision course to conflict. Now, he has chosen to assassinate, without congressional authorization, one of Iran's most powerful leaders.

Yesterday, [we condemned](#) Trump's escalatory tit-for-tat military actions, incendiary rhetoric, military brinkmanship, and recklessness that have brought us to the edge of a war with unthinkable human consequences. Now is the time for a massive, immediate diplomatic intervention, backed by overwhelming people-power to help prevent the worst possible outcome: war and more lives lost to an unnecessary conflict.

#### **How We Got Here**

The final days of 2019 set up the current climate of impending war. On December 27, a rocket attack on a U.S. military base in northern Iraq [killed](#) one U.S. contractor and injured six others. Blaming the Iran-allied militia group Kataib Hezbollah with little public evidence, the U.S. responded with extensive bombings in [open defiance](#) of the wishes of the Iraqi government, killing 25. Demonstrators stormed the U.S. embassy compound in Baghdad, damaging several reception areas.

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The Trump administration placed the blame for the embassy attack on Iran. Defense Secretary Mark Esper [announced](#) the deployment of 750 additional U.S. troops to Iraq. Pentagon officials put preemptive strikes [on the table](#). And, in a characteristically bellicose [tweet](#), Trump threatened reprisal: “[Iran] will pay a very BIG PRICE! This is not a Warning, it is a Threat.” Two days later Trump unilaterally assassinated Soleimani.

Now we are seeing the consequences of his actions: the possibility of imminent war.

The cycle of escalation with Iran was entirely predictable; Trump’s foreign policy has for years focused on escalating tensions with Iran:

- **Withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Deal** — The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a diplomatic breakthrough that laid the foundation for future engagement, denuclearization, and peace. Trump’s unilateral withdrawal was an unprovoked attack on the hopes of productive relations, and a turning point in U.S.-Iran relations.
- **“Maximum Pressure”** — The Trump administration’s policy of “maximum pressure” on Iran is not only unduly aggressive — it is wholly ineffective. Gratuitous economic sanctions and violent threats are responsible for immeasurable suffering among the Iranian people, while serving only to heighten tensions with the Iranian government.
- **Unconditional Support for Iran’s Rivals** — Trump has continued the trend of U.S. foreign policy unconditionally supporting Iran’s regional rivals, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. From pulling out of the JCPOA to supporting the disastrous proxy war in Yemen, the U.S., undoubtedly influenced by oil interests, think tank funders, and foreign lobbyists, has proven unequivocal in its opposition to Iran.
- **The Invasion of Iraq** — The very existence of Kataib Hezbollah, the presence of U.S. forces, and the widespread, to some extent justified hostility to the United States are all directly attributable to the disastrous U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.
- **The Roots of the Animosity** — Though it often goes neglected in discussions of current U.S.-Iran relations, we must not forget: the current Iranian regime came to power in an uprising against a corrupt authoritarian monarch that was installed in a U.S.-backed coup against a democratically-elected liberal regime.

Iran [announced](#) three days of mourning in response to the U.S. assassination and promised revenge. Time will only tell what this means, but we can expect [major consequences](#), including more lives, those of American service members and of Iraqi and Iranian civilians, to be lost thanks to the reckless and escalatory actions of Trump.

## How We Get Out

The U.S. must change its course. That means immediately ending the use of incendiary rhetoric, escalatory tit-for-tat military actions, and the renewed U.S. military build-up in Iraq. That

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means reopening diplomatic channels, reducing sanctions that unduly harm Iranian citizens, and returning to the JCPOA. That means pulling the U.S. military and its contractors, who should not have been there in the first place, out of Iraq. And, ultimately, it means coming to terms with the futility of endless war, addressing the root causes of knee-jerk militarism, and rebuilding our capacity for diplomacy, peacebuilding, and development.

Trump has, at every turn, escalated tensions with Iran. And if we enter a war with Iran it will be clear who is at fault.

[Take action with us](#) and tell your representatives to act now to stop Trump from starting a war with Iran.

## **BURIED LEDES**

**Chase Bank executives were integral in getting the government to admit the Shah of Iran, one of its most important clients, into the U.S. in 1979 and undermined President Carter's efforts to end the Iran hostage crisis in a stunning [display](#) of how money has influenced politics for decades.**

**Today is the legally-required [deadline](#) for the Trump administration to announce whether it will extend life-saving immigration status for Yemenis seeking safety in the U.S.**

The already catastrophic [bushfires](#) in Australia are expected to worsen over the next few days, showing the very real and deadly consequences of climate change.

[Flooding](#) in Indonesia has left 21 dead and 30,000 without homes — did we mention that climate change is real and deadly?

With the U.S. refusing to make even the most practicable concessions, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [announced](#) the end of a self-declared moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests.

Despite 2019 being one of the most deadly years for U.S. [service members](#) and civilians in Afghanistan the U.S. continues to [favor](#) futile militarism over diplomacy and peacebuilding.

**Endless war has destroyed a generation.** Millions of children [are unable](#) to access education, traumatized by violence, and lack a safe, clear future, thanks to U.S. military interventions.

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In what seems a bit on-the-nose for even the dystopian novel that we are all living through, serial-killer and **pardoned war criminal Edward Gallagher** [launched](#) a **military-themed clothing line this week** ([see how easy that was, New York Times](#)).

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, facing mounting electoral pressure, [dispatched](#) **troops to Libya to assert Turkish influence and rally support from his nationalist base**.

Someone is *a/ways* watching. No one knows why **drones are** [flying](#) **over rural Colorado and Nebraska at night, prompting a federal investigation** and serious concerns over privacy.

Finishing up your 2019 reading? **Articles by three members of our team —** [Stephen Miles](#), [Mariam Iskajyan](#), and [Kate Kizer](#) **— were highlighted in end-of-year roundups** by Inkstick and The American Prospect.

And finally, one man claims he was fired for being vegan. Now, **a tribunal will** [rule](#) **if veganism is a “philosophical belief,” and therefore legally protected from discrimination**.