

Prevent War With Iran

The Trump Administration is Increasing the Risk of War with Iran

The Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign is escalating tensions with Iran in ways [experts say](#)¹ could "set the scene for military confrontation."

- Designating the IRGC as a foreign terrorist organization over the [objection of top Pentagon and CIA officials](#)² has significantly increased tensions with Iran, as evidenced by Iran designating U.S. Central Command as a terrorist organization and the U.S. as a state sponsor of terrorism.
- Relying on a [speculative Israeli intelligence assessment](#)³ about unspecified Iranian threats to U.S. interests, national security advisor John Bolton used the routine deployment of an aircraft carrier group to the region as an opportunity to threaten Iran with "unrelenting force"⁴ should Iran or any of its proxies attack U.S. interests in the region. [Multiple U.S. officials](#)⁵ have said the administration is exaggerating the threat posed by Iran.
- Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), a member of the Armed Services Committee, has [called for restraint](#),⁶ stating that classified intel he has seen "doesn't show existential threats... to U.S. interests."
- The administration has [reviewed plans](#)⁷ from the Pentagon to send up to 120,000 U.S. soldiers to the Middle East to "counter Iran."
- President Trump continues to make military threats about [war with Iran on Twitter](#).⁸

Congress Must Assert Its Authority Over the Use of Military Force

- The Constitution grants Congress sole authority over the decision to go to war. As Congress has not authorized the use of force against Iran, any use of preemptive or preventive force against Iran would be illegal and unconstitutional.
- The Trump administration has been promoting [incredibly dubious claims](#)⁹ of collaboration between Iran and al Qaeda, claims disputed by [senior U.S. intelligence officials](#).¹⁰
- Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo if he would rule out using the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) to attack Iran. Pompeo said he'd "[prefer to just leave that to lawyers](#),"¹¹ leaving open the possibility of the administration relying on the 2001 AUMF to justify the use of force against Iran.

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3 i24NEWS and Israel Hayom Staff, *Israel warned US about possible Iranian attack in Gulf: report*, Israel Hayom, May 5, 2019

4 Sanger, E. David and Edward Wong, Eric Schmitt, Helene Cooper, *New Tensions With Iran Threaten Nuclear Deal and, White House Says, U.S. Troops*, The New York Times, May 6, 2019

5 Woodruff, Betsy and Adam, Rawnsley, *Trump Admin Inflated Iran Intel, U.S. Officials Say*, The Daily Beast, May 7, 2019

6 Horton, Alex, *'I get the same intel:' Iran threat exaggerated by GOP hawks, Rep. Gallego says*, The Washington Post, May 18, 2019

7 Schmitt, Eric and Julian, E. Barnes, *White House reviews Military Plans Against Iran, in Echoes of Iraq War*, The New York Times, May 13, 2019

8 Trump, Donald, Twitter, 19 May 2019, 1:25 PM

9 Lahoud, Nelly, *Al-Qa'ida's Contested Relationship with Iran: The View from Abbottabad*, New America International Security Report, September 7, 2018

10 Walcott, John, *Officials Dispute Mike Pompeo's Claim That Iran Is Collaborating With Al Qaeda*, TIME, May 22, 2019

11 Edmondson, Catie and Edward Wong, *Pompeo Is Warned Against Sidestepping Congress for Conflict With Iran*, The New York Times, April 10, 2019

War with Iran Would Be a Disaster

Experts have said U.S. military action against Iran would turn into a long war of attrition. Such a conflict risks further destabilizing the broader region.

- Iran's [military doctrine](#)¹² is designed specifically to counter enemies with greater technological superiority. Dr. Trita Parsi, President of the National Iranian American Council, warned that in the event of war, Iran would focus on inflicting [as many U.S. casualties as possible](#)¹³ early on in an effort to crush the U.S. will to fight.
- U.S. [wargames have found](#)¹⁴ that guerrilla attacks by speed boats could lay waste to a U.S. fleet in the Persian Gulf.
- Iran has the [largest stockpile of ballistic missiles](#)¹⁵ in the Middle East, which could devastate U.S. forces in the region.
- Cybersecurity experts fear Iran's increasingly [sophisticated cyber capabilities](#)¹⁶ could "exact a very real price on American companies and our people."
- Going to war with Iran could fuel anti-American sentiment and violent extremism in Iran and the region for generations to come. In a region with multiple actors already at war in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, escalation between the U.S. and Iran could spiral into a [wider regional war](#)¹⁷ with unimaginable consequences.

Only Diplomacy Can Reduce Tensions

Good-faith diplomatic efforts must be made to protect the important gains of the Iran Nuclear Agreement and to reduce dangerously high tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

- Iran's [potential reductions](#)¹⁸ in compliance with the Iran Nuclear Agreement are unfortunate, but not surprising as Iran has lost many of the benefits it was promised under the Iran agreement due to the Trump administration's unilateral withdrawal.
- Diplomatic channels established during negotiations can be crucial for peacefully de-escalating potentially tense situations, as evidenced by the [swift release of U.S. soldiers](#)¹⁹ captured at sea in January 2016.

Steps Members of Congress Can Take

- **Co-sponsor the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act of 2019, S. 1039 introduced by Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM), or H.R. 2355 introduced by Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA),** to prohibit funding for kinetic military operations against Iran without congressional approval.
- **Co-sponsor H.R. 2829 introduced by Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI)** to clarify that Congress has not provided authorization for the use of military force against Iran.
- **Sound the alarm over the administration's provocative posturing** toward Iran and make statements opposing war.
- **Oppose legislation or amendments that needlessly increase tensions** between the U.S. and Iran.

¹² Connell, Michael, *Iran's Military Doctrine*, The Iran Primer

¹³ Parsi, Trita, *War With Iran Won't Be Iraq All Over Again. It'll Be Much Worse*, Huffpost, March 30, 2018

¹⁴ Shanker, Thom, *Iran Encounter Grimly Echoes '02 War Game*, The New York Times, January 12, 2008

¹⁵ Taylor, Adam, *A conflict with Iran would not be like the Iraq War. It would be worse*, The Washington Post, May 14, 2019

¹⁶ Gen. Alexander, Keith B. and Jamil N. Jaffer, *Iran's coming response: Increased terrorism and cyber attacks?*, The Hill, May 15, 2019

¹⁷ Rafati, Nayson, *Regional Risks of Rising U.S.-Iran Rivalry*, International Crisis Group Commentary, November 1, 2018

¹⁸ Davenport, Kelsey and Daryl G. Kimball, *Iran Announces Countermoves on Nuclear Deal | P4+1 and Iran Nuclear Deal Alert*, Arms Control Now, May 10, 2019

¹⁹ Sharafedin, Bozorgmehr and Phil Stewart, *Iran frees U.S. sailors swiftly as diplomacy smoothes waters*, Reuters, January 12, 2016