

Shoshana Abrams: All right. Hello friends. Thank you, Teresa. Welcome to our very last call of 2019, or at least our last national call. We have one communicator call left. Today is the December, 2019 FCNL National Advocacy teams call. Tonight we are gathered with 123 teams across 41 states. And as you know, we've been lobbying for peace and justice as we always do. And especially in 2019 we've been campaigning to end endless war by seeking the repeal of the 2001, and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force.

Shoshana Abrams: My name is Shoshana Abrams. We have some new teams on the line, so I'm excited to be with you all. I am FCNL's advocacy teams manager. [inaudible 00:00:53] give a special welcome to all of those new teams who I heard some of you chime in on the line tonight. Congratulations on completing your trading with Teresa. We're really happy to have you.

Shoshana Abrams: I think that the people who are new to this call are Albuquerque, New Mexico, Spokane, Washington, Phoenix, Arizona, and our team in West Michigan. So a special welcome to all of you and really happy to have you with us.

Shoshana Abrams: I'll quickly go through tonight's agenda and then we'll set the tone for the call. Tonight we'll hear from Diana Ohlbaum, FCNL's, senior strategist and legislative director for foreign policy. Then we will get a update on our policy from Jim Cason who's FCNL's director of strategic advocacy. We have a great story lined up for you from our Tucson, Arizona team who recently had some success with breaking through within op-ed publishing.

Shoshana Abrams: And then Jim Cason at the end of the call will tell us about what we're working on in 2020, and we'll have time built in for questions throughout. We have a full agenda and I'm really excited for the content we have for you tonight.

Shoshana Abrams: As you heard tonight, we have Teresa providing tech support. Everyone's lines have been muted. If we hear feedback, Teresa will re mute the lines, so that's important to know throughout the process.

Shoshana Abrams: As we enter Question and Answer parts of the call, you can unmute and re mute yourself using the button *6. If you ask the question, after you're done, re mute yourself by pressing *6.

Shoshana Abrams: All right. With all of that taken care of, this morning we had our advocacy teams staff call, that's Teresa, Theo, Sarah Freeman-Woolpert, and myself. And we shared some of our favorite team's stories from the year. I just have to say, we are so proud of all of you and all that you've accomplished. And we're also really proud to be in this work with you.

Shoshana Abrams: When I was thinking about how to start the call, I thought that I would actually read some responses from an activity that we did at the Advocacy Teams Summit here in D.C. on November, 13th. Participants were asked to answer a question, and one of the questions was, what is the moment when you are

proud of your team? I thought I would just share some of these, and then we'll hold for a moment of silence before we let Diana speak to us.

Shoshana Abrams: These are moments where people were proud of their teams. "In a town hall, in a rural community, I asked our Senator to support the repeal of the 2001 AUMF. When I finished saying that Congress needs to take back their responsibility to declare war, I was drowned out by a five."

Shoshana Abrams: Another team shared, "We were proud when we had several letters published by the Washington post." Another shared that they were proud when their representatives set up on the house floor and spoke out against war shortly after we visited his office and encouraged him to do so.

Shoshana Abrams: Another said, "We were proud when we did our very first public event." And another shared, "When our senators regional director told us he looked forward to meeting with our group." There are so many more and I wrote so many down, but I'll let it stand there. You all have just done such incredible work this year and there's a lot to be proud of. So I'm really excited to celebrate and I hope you're able to take some time with your teams either tonight or when you meet this month to celebrate as well.

Shoshana Abrams: Okay. With all of that in mind, I'm really excited to get started with our call. I would like to welcome and thank Diana Ohlbaum, our Senior Strategist and Legislative Director for Foreign Policy. Diana, are you on the line?

Diana Ohlbaum: Hello?

Shoshana Abrams: Yes, we can hear you.

Diana Ohlbaum: Okay. Oh great. Sorry I phrased it wrong. You ready for me?

Shoshana Abrams: Well, yes. In just one moment. Diana, you know our network quite well at this point. You've joined our team for a national call before and last year at the Advocacy Teams Summit. You spoke to us and gave us a great resource to use and it's really good to have you back on the national call with us again.

Shoshana Abrams: To all those advocacy teams on the line who may or may not know Diana, Diana Ohlbaum directs FCNL's foreign policy lobbying team and leads an effort to replace the current U.S. foreign policy paradigm of military domination and national superiority with a more ethical and effective one based on cooperation and mutual respect.

Shoshana Abrams: She brings nearly two decades of experience on Capitol Hill where she served as a senior professional staff member on both the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

- Shoshana Abrams: Immediately prior to joining FCNL in August 2018, Diana worked as an independent consultant specializing in advocacy, political strategy, and legislative impact. Most of her clients were NGOs and foundations working in the area of sustainable development and security.
- Shoshana Abrams: Diana is currently a member of the Executive Committee for Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network and the Center for International Policy. She holds a PhD in political science from Johns Hopkins, and a B.A. in Russian Studies from Amherst college.
- Shoshana Abrams: Diana, I'm hoping tonight you can tell us what we've accomplished [inaudible 00:06:29], and where we have been successful, and where exactly we have more work to do. We're looking forward to hearing from you, and thanks again for being on the call with us.
- Diana Ohlbaum: Thank you so much, Shoshana. You can hear me okay, I hope?
- Shoshana Abrams: Yes, loud and clear.
- Diana Ohlbaum: Excellent. I just want to start out by saying what an incredible year this has been, thanks to all the hard work and persistence of our amazing advocacy team. That means all of you out there listening. I think you should all give yourself a big hand because we appreciate you in Washington every single day.
- Diana Ohlbaum: We had so many successes. I'm not even sure you remember them all. I'm just going to recount just a few of the biggest ones. And let me say, Shoshana will be sending you a document with all the details, but I'm just going to give you the big headlines.
- Diana Ohlbaum: The House voted to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF. The House voted to state that the 2001 AUMF has been stretched far beyond its intended use, that it has served as a blank check for war, and that any replacement should have an end date, a clearly defined scope, and reporting requirements.
- Diana Ohlbaum: The House voted to prevent unauthorized war with Iran and to clarify that nothing in either the 2001, or 2002 AUMF authorizes the use of military force against Iran. The House voted to repeal the 2001 AUMF in eight months.
- Diana Ohlbaum: Both the House and the Senate passed and sent to the president's desk a resolution invoking the War Powers Act to withdraw U.S. support from the Saudi led war in Yemen. There are now 80 co-sponsors in the House of H.R. 1274, the 2001 AUMF repeal bill as opposed to only 35 co-sponsors of that bill last Congress.
- Diana Ohlbaum: In the Senate, we not only have a fully bi-partisan Kaine, Young bill to repeal to AUMF 1991, and 2002, but also now a new Gillibrand bill to reform the War Powers Act, and repeal both the 2001 and 2002 AUMF.

Diana Ohlbaum: All of those victories that we've been from our incredible network led by our advocacy teams, and I just want you to know how important that's been. I have to be clear with you, there was no one on Capitol Hill who was even talking about repealing AUMF in any serious way until you got involved.

Diana Ohlbaum: Yes, there were repeal bills introduced in 2018 and previously, but until this year, most of our lobbying work had been on preventing bad things from happening. In other words, preventing Congress from replacing the 2001 AUMF with something even worse.

Diana Ohlbaum: Now, of course we're not the only ones lobbying for Congress to take back its authority over decisions to go to war, but we are the only ones who have people all around the country who have been having repeated substantive meetings with their members on this, rather than just sending an email or signing a petition.

Diana Ohlbaum: On the 2002 Iraq AUMF in particular, all the progress that has been made is entirely due to our work together. There are no other groups that are working actively on this. They've cross-signed our letters, they've joined us in meetings, but no one else has made it a top priority like we have. So if we win on repealing the 2002 Iraq AUMF, there's no question at all, but it's due to FCNL's work in Washington and around the country. You have been the true leaders on that.

Diana Ohlbaum: Now, let me say this would be an impressive set of accomplishments no matter what. But when you look at what we're up against, it is really nothing store of astounding. A few weeks ago, a friend of mine came to speak to the lobbyists here at FCNL. He's a Republican and a long time lobbyist for the defense industry, for Lockheed Martin, and for other arms makers, and he's also a lovely kind person.

Diana Ohlbaum: He volunteered to come in and talk to us about how the other side lobbies. He told us about how they get invited to hobnob with members and they give away \$15,000 contributions like their candies. He told us about how arms companies hire whole teams of high powered lobbyists for each and every member of the Armed Services Committee.

Diana Ohlbaum: They go to every fundraiser. They invite members to ballgames, hunting trips, and fancy golf resorts. Now to be fair, the money doesn't necessarily buy them votes, but it does buy them access. They can get in to see the member and make their case whenever they want. And if we are winning against that purely on the power of our moral suasion, that is really saying something.

Diana Ohlbaum: And here's why we're winning. This year alone you made about 350 lobby visits, not even counting all the ones at annual meeting. So many of you know your member of Congress, your senators, and their staff personally and they know you. You wrote about 155 letters to the editor and opinion pieces. You screened films and reached out to other like-minded groups in your areas.

Diana Ohlbaum: And we know that at least 11 offices agreed to co-sponsor H.R. 1274 right after a visit from one of our advocacy teams. Garamendi from California, Perlmutter, and Neguse from Colorado, Lewis of Georgia, Pingree of Maine, Trone of Maryland, Price of North Carolina, Scanlon from Pennsylvania, Beyer from Virginia, Jayapal from Washington, Mooney from West Virginia. All of those happened really because of you.

Diana Ohlbaum: But we are not going to rest on our laurels. We still have a lot of work to do if we're really going to change our country's approach to the world. Now, as I said in my speech to the annual meeting, which I hope a lot of you were there for, this isn't just about Donald Trump. It's not just about what has happened since 9/11. It goes all the way back to the origins of our nation, from genocide and slavery, to Manifest Destiny. We're dealing with a set of assumptions that are very dangerous and very deep seated.

Diana Ohlbaum: So first, remember what's paramount in the minds of members. They are petrified that there will be another terrorist attack in the United States, and if they voted to remove or reduce U.S. forces anywhere in the world, they're worried they're going to be blamed for that terrorist attack. And as long as they don't vote at all, they feel free to criticize any decisions and take no responsibility for anything.

Diana Ohlbaum: A second problem is they really believe in this idea of not tying the president's hands. They somehow think that our country is safer if our missiles and bombers are on a hair trigger alert where the president can act on his own without consultation or approval. Now, of course this is crazy because Congress can act very quickly when it needs to.

Diana Ohlbaum: Congress passed the 2001 AUMF just days after the September, 11th attacks. But it often takes much longer to figure out, who attacked us, and why, and what the best response might be? There's plenty of time to get Congressional approval. We don't need to give these blank checks.

Diana Ohlbaum: Finally, most members of Congress assume or believe that the best way to stop terrorism is to kill all the terrorists. It's really that simple. They believe at an instinctual level that either we kill them, or they kill us. So honestly, a lot of them don't even see an alternative to endless war.

Diana Ohlbaum: When I talk about paradigm change, this is the level I'm talking about it. We're going to have to change this whole way of thinking if we really want to make lasting significant change. And that kind of change is going to take years, if not decades. But, don't lose heart because that does not mean we can't make progress right now in the meantime. We're going to have to unwind these wars one by one and start holding our members of Congress accountable if we expect them to hold the administration accountable.

Diana Ohlbaum: So, we move forward by, we end the Iraq war, and we prevent a war with Iran by repealing the 2002 AUMF, which is very close at hand. We end the war in Yemen by invoking the War Powers Act. We start pushing for a peace deal in Afghanistan and we get Congress to admit that endless war is not making us safer.

Diana Ohlbaum: But we're not going to succeed just because of brilliant lobbying here in Washington. It's only going to happen if members are feeling pressure back at home. I just want to thank you for all you have done, all you are continuing to do to get your representatives and senators out of the old and destructive habits of thinking.

Diana Ohlbaum: Thank you so much for making sure our tax dollars are being spent in a way we can feel proud of, and that our elected officials are doing what we elected them to do. I am really excited about continuing to work with you in the year to come.

Shoshana Abrams: Thank you so much Diana, and thank you for taking the time to be with us tonight. I know you had some other commitments. We're going to go ahead and let you go, but we're going to hear an update from Jim Cason who's going to tell us what's happening right now with our efforts to repeal the 2002 AUMF, and then we'll take time for questions. Thank you again so much Diana, and I'll pass things off to Jim.

Jim Cason: Thanks so much Shoshana. I think Diana has really given us a great frame for what has happened this year. And now I want to talk a little bit about what's happening this week, and what might happen in the next couple of weeks.

Jim Cason: We believe that as Diana noted, you have been successful in attaching language that would repeal the 2002 Iraq Authorization for the Use of Military Force to the final NDAA, the military policy bill called the National Defense Authorization Act.

Jim Cason: As you remember, the House passed an NDAA that included repeal of the 2002 Iraq AUMF. The Senate passed an NDAA that didn't include that language, and so over the last three months House and Senate negotiators have been meeting to reconcile the two versions of this legislation, so they can have a single bill that they can send to the president.

Jim Cason: Our best understanding is that they've resolved the differences between their two bills and come up with a final consolidated bill. Some reports we heard earlier this week suggested that the revised NDAA would be sent back to the House and Senate for a final vote, and then onto the president even by Friday or by early next week.

Jim Cason: In fact, the Republican ranking member on the House Armed Services Committee, Mac Thornberry, said they have reached agreement on all the final main details of the bill. But, the legislation is still being held up by Congressional

leaders reportedly because of disputes about issues such as money for a bigger wall on the Southern border and chemical waste cleanup issues there.

Jim Cason: Right now, Congress is in session probably until about the 20th, of December. We believe that the House and Senate Armed Services Committee have got a final bill, but the leadership is holding up that final bill. And honestly, we don't know whether or not it will come up early next week on Monday or Tuesday, or whether it'll be delayed for another week.

Jim Cason: There's also always a possibility that the legislation won't be passed at the end of this year. My best guess is that we will have a final NDAA before December 20th. But I can't say exactly when.

Jim Cason: As all of you know, we had, and as Diana talked about, we had approximately 400 people here in Washington earlier in November lobbying for repeal of the 2002 Iraq AUMF. That lobbying in Washington combined with your lobbying around the country, provides what we would argue is a powerful story that you could tell members of Congress about the passionate belief of people in their districts and states that Congress must reassert its authority over when our country goes to war.

Jim Cason: And so as you read in the action sheet for this month, we're hoping that many of you who have already contacted your members of Congress will now work to write letters to the editor in the next couple of weeks to tell the story of your passionate advocacy over the last year to urge Congress to reassert its authority over when our country goes to war. Your letters can describe what your team has done, and then explain why you have advocated to your three legislators to repeal this law. And don't forget of course to name your legislators.

Jim Cason: As we get to this final moment, we know that decisions are going to be consolidated in just a couple of members of Congress's office, but we also know that members of Congress are still going to be paying attention to those letters to the editor. So we really see this both as a way to end out the year and to remind members of the passion in their districts and states.

Jim Cason: I'm going to stop there Shoshana, and let's see if there are questions that folks have around the country that we might be able to answer, if that makes sense to you.

Shoshana Abrams: Absolutely. If you have a question for Jim, you can go ahead and press *6.

Roy: Hi, this is Roy from Alaska. Is it the House leadership or the Senate leadership that's holding up the bill right now?

Jim Cason: That's a good question, Roy. My sense is that it is the leadership in both chambers. We're getting a little bit of an echo so it might be good Roy, for you to mute your line again. What's happened is the armed services say they've

done their work. So now what it's up to is really Mitch McConnell, Senator Schumer, and the House leadership. And those are the folks that are doing the final negotiations on things like the money for the wall. And that's obviously as you've read in the press, a bigger level of negotiations.

Dave: Hi, this is Dave from Madison.

Jim Cason: Hi Dave.

Dave: Yeah, Jim. I couldn't tell, are you saying that these big issues that you've described are on the table but that there's some good chance that the AUMF repeal will stay in the bill then?

Jim Cason: Well, Dave, it's a good question. What we understand is that, and that's in a sense the Armed Services Committees in the House and the Senate, and I haven't read the bill and none of us on the outside have read the bill, so we don't actually know.

Jim Cason: But they finished a revised single draft of the bill, and that in that revised single draft, we've been told the repeal of the 2002 AUMF is in the final bill. And we don't believe they're going to reopen the bill in those sections.

Jim Cason: What we think they are negotiating over is whether it's so yes, I think that 2002 AUMF will remain in the final bill, assuming they passed that big bill. But there are still these big fights as you read in the newspapers I'm sure, about the wall and about a couple of other issues that leadership are trying to resolve, and there's always a chance that they'll decide like one of the threats has been, "We're just going to abandon this whole bill and either not pass anything." Which I don't think will happen.

Jim Cason: Our path in effect, the build is very similar to last year that takes out much of the detail. There's always that threat until we actually see the final bill on the floor of the House, and the Senate.

Jim Cason: But I certainly am pretty optimistic right now that we've made great progress and that language is in there.

Shoshana Abrams: Great. Thank you. Other questions go ahead and press *6.

Doug: Hello? Can you hear me? This is Doug in Port Townsend, Washington.

Jim Cason: Hello Doug, in Port Townsend.

Doug: Great, great. I'm calling on behalf of our representatives.

Shoshana Abrams: Teresa, can you go ahead and re mute the lines?

Teresa: All guests have been muted. You can unmute your line by pressing *6.

Shoshana Abrams: Thank you, Teresa. Sorry about that friends. Doug, can you press *6 and unmute yourself?

Doug: Okay. Can you hear me now?

Shoshana Abrams: Yes, thank you. Go ahead.

Jim Cason: We can.

Doug: Great. Great. Representative Kilmer from our district in Washington State really got excited about the idea that there were other advocacy teams in our state, and he encouraged us to reach out to other portions of the state where there are Republicans that are not in support of eliminating this power the president has, perhaps. That's one of the things I wanted to mention. Cross linking each other in the states may really help much more so than sending letters outside of our district to newspapers.

Doug: The other thing I wanted to bringing up was as you may have noticed, the government sometimes uses ruses to create causes for war. I wonder if you have any thoughts about what we can think about trying to help avoid stumbling into a war on purpose, so to speak? Thank you.

Jim Cason: Thanks Doug, for that question. And I guess I would make a couple of answers, and then maybe Shoshana wants to answer something as well there. But I would say first, I think that if you publish something in a newspaper, even in the Seattle Paper and you name your representative that he will read that and that will make a difference for what he's saying.

Jim Cason: I know that there are other advocacy team in the state of Washington that are going on lobby visits with their representatives, including Republican representatives to raise these issues. In fact, we have several at annual meetings. So it would be easily possible to go back to your rep and say that we're actually doing that work. And that would be good feedback. So, you can keep going in that area.

Jim Cason: I do think this question of whether or not the U S could either stumble into a war, or get into an accidental war, or if there is a provoked war, is a real issue that I've heard about not only from people in the FCNL network, but from some military people, particularly in the context of Iran. We don't have a lot of time to talk about that on the call tonight, but I think I'm sure we'll get into some of that next year.

Shoshana Abrams: Great. Thank you. And I'll just add, this is Shoshana. I just want to add that places where there are more than one team, we have a lifter set up for those teams to communicate for their communicators to let each other know what

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[inaudible 00:29:29] they're learning from different offices, so that you can start to work together.

Shoshana Abrams: And that is one of the things that we're going to be focused on working on next year is helping teams to collaborate better within states. That's a really good point, and I'm glad that some of that work is already happening. Other questions for Jim? You can go ahead and press star six to unmute your line.

Steve Evans: Hi, this is Steve Evans in Port Townsend. Can you hear me?

Jim Cason: Yes, we can hear you.

Steve Evans: Okay, great. I just wanted to report that just something that came up in our meeting with Derek Kilmer that I think it's a really good note for everybody to take, which is one of our members, Craig [Craig Renomob 00:30:12] has done years of work with homeless veterans in the streets of Seattle. And one of the things that he reported was the terrible sort of a mental health injury. It is something that he termed a moral injury that these people have experienced, what he called a moral injury that will be with them for life.

Steve Evans: I had never heard those words put together like that before, but it had a visible effect on Kilmer and he took a note on it. I would advocate that people adopt that term. I just think, so I just wanted to throw that in here.

Jim Cason: Yeah, I really appreciate that. I think that too often we get caught up in the policy and the bills and the numbers and bringing this issue back to what is happening, both to the people who are in these Wars and the people who come home from these wars is terribly, terribly important.

Jim Cason: I agree with you that the moral injury done to people who become homeless veterans, is really something that we all need to sit with. Thank you for that.

Mary Francis O': This is Mary Francis O'Connor from Tucson, Arizona.

Jim Cason: Hi, Mary Francis.

Mary Francis O': Hi. I just thought I would mention that moral injury is a term used in the psychological community in dealing with veterans. It's actually been researched quite a bit, and if that's something people would like to bring up, we could get more information out there about it.

Jim Cason: Oh, that's excellent. I'm sure that Shoshana would love to see that.

Shoshana Abrams: Yeah. Mary Francis, if you want to send a link to some information on the communicator call line, that would be wonderful. A wonderful resource for people.

Ian: Hello. This is Ian from Massachusetts. Hello?

Jim Cason: Hi, Ian.

Ian: [inaudible 00:32:40] that the AUMF rejection is in the bill, but there's also possibility it isn't or won't be. In that case, is there any point in mounting an effort to try to get our representatives not to vote for the bill when it gets brought back to the house?

Jim Cason: Well, Ian, I think that would be a good idea if you haven't been in touch with your representative in the last month to let them know that you don't think that a bill should be supported that doesn't have repeal of the AUMF in the bill.

Jim Cason: I think one of the challenges for us as a Quaker Lobby is while we support all of these amendments, as you might imagine, we've never really been supporters of a final AUMF bill because it's authorizing military policy.

Jim Cason: I do think that the NDAA, National Defense Authorization Act, if the bill that's been drafted by the committees comes back, we have heard fairly consistently that it will include this repeal. I just think it depends on some of these higher politics now whether or not it'll actually come to the floor.

Jim Cason: But for folks on the call who haven't yet been in touch with their representative over and let's say in the last 30 days, I think making one final call to that office and say, "Hi, we're concerned about the NDAA, and particularly to make sure that it finally repeals this 2002 Iraq AUMF." Would be a great thing to do.

Ian: Thank you.

Shoshana Abrams: Great. We have time for one or two more questions. You can press *6 to unmute your line.

Judy Gary: Hello. This is Judy Gary calling from Huntsville, Alabama with the Huntsville Area Advocacy Gene. I wanted to suggest a resource that we took with us to meet with one of our senator's teams, one of his office staff, and left it for him. It's called Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War, by Rita Nakashima Brock, and Gabriella Lettini. It's stories in there from different wars since the Second World War on through more current wars, talking about moral injuries.

Jim Cason: Thank you Judy. That's great to hear.

Sarah Avery: Hi, this is Sarah in Colorado. Sarah Avery in Colorado. It's taken me a long time to wrap my mind around this. Jim, can you clarify for me that what we've really been doing is advocating for adding a provision to the NDAA to repeal the 2002 AUMF? Because we know that the most likely pathway is for the NDAA to pass

and if we can get it included in this big bill that FCNL and many of us wouldn't normally support the entire NDAA.

Sarah Avery: But knowing that it's going to pass almost certainly, at least if we can get this provision to repeal the 2002 AUMF in there, at least in this bill that's going to pass anyway, we will to have gotten this good little thing in it or big thing. Is that a good way to understand it?

Jim Cason: Sarah, I think you said that perfectly, and I'm sorry if I confused the issue. Yes. I think that Congress has passed an NDAA for every year since at least the last 60 years, I think it is. They've been passing this bill for a very long time, and it is one of the few bills beyond the spending bills that they have passed every year.

Jim Cason: And so it becomes then a bill that people have different policy things to. And of course it's entirely appropriate for a military policy bill to include language that would repeal an authorization for war.

Jim Cason: And so the provision was attached as you know, in the house, thanks to the support for folks around the country and lobbying here in Washington. We think we're pretty confident now, or at least I'm pretty confident, Heather is always a little bit more cautious, that it's in the final bill that the two committees have reconciled. And we do think that it will pass.

Jim Cason: It's not that we think it'll pass, but if it comes to a vote, it will be approved because there's overwhelming support from Democrats and Republicans. And that's why we attach these kinds of policy riders to pieces of legislation that normally wouldn't be things that a Quaker Lobby would support. But it's a vehicle to get a good policy change happening.

Sarah Avery: Can I ask a follow up question? I'm curious if we should be really. When we're meeting with offices, should we be making that distinction for them? Should we be really pointing out? I mean I've been in lobby visits where we have said that. But should we really be making a very clear point, "Listen, we don't support the whole NDAA, but we really want to see this provision in it because we know it's going to pass."

Jim Cason: I think you have to do as you are led. As a Quaker Lobby, and as a Quaker doing this work, I would say, "Look, I don't support war and I don't support the military engaging around the world. But as a matter of faith, as a matter of public policy, I understand that the NDAA, is going to pass. And if you're going to pass a bill like this, then I hope you can at least take some policy steps to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF."

Jim Cason: That's how I typically say it, because I think we're not telling Congress that they should become Quaker, but we are saving our own views. I don't know that you need to go into great detail about that right now because of most of the

Congressional staff you're meeting with are not going to follow all of these details.

Sarah Avery: Thank you so much. That's really helpful.

Shoshana Abrams: Thank you. And thank you so much for that question. That's something I've been thinking about a lot, and something I know a lot of our teams grapple with, is how to kind of put all of this together. How to hold both that we don't support war in any circumstance but also that we want to get these things across in a way that, that will be accepted. Thank you Sarah for talking us through that, and thank you Jim for your follow up.

Shoshana Abrams: I want to get in and give you the numbers breakdown. Diana gave us the numbers in broader strokes but I'll say them again. We have had 356 lobby visits this year. That is incredible amount of not including annual meeting. We've had 67 member level meetings out of those meetings. We've had 157 letters to the editor and op-eds published and you've done 34 outreach events since we started promoting the option for you all to do and collecting the data in June. And that's just incredible effort.

Shoshana Abrams: If you have not sent me a report for something or you realize you've had an LTV published but you actually haven't been up the link, please go ahead and do that. We're still going to be tabulating that through to the end of the year. So you can find all of those report back forms at fcnl.org/team toolkit. That's where you go for all things advocacy teams.

Shoshana Abrams: In the spirit of kind of media engagement, which is our action for the month that we are requesting teams to do, we have a wonderful story from Tucson. Heather Mace is supposedly on the line to tell us that story. Heather, are you on? You can press *6.

Heather Mace: Yes. Can you hear me?

Shoshana Abrams: Yes. Loud and clear. Great.

Heather Mace: All right, great. Thank you for including me on tonight's call. I am going to talk a little bit about how I came to write an op-ed that was recently published in our local newspaper, which is the Arizona Daily Star.

Heather Mace: I've been hesitant to try writing an op-ed because despite FCNL's excellent trainings, I still don't feel like an expert on the issue of AUMF. However, recently I was accepted as part of a writing fellowship called Tucson Public Voices, which is sponsored by the national op-ed project.

Heather Mace: The program's goal is to increase the voices of women and minority thought leaders to ensure that our ideas help shape the important conversations of our

age. The advice that I've received through that fellowship has enhanced my FCNL training and it gave me the push I needed to submit my first op-ed.

Heather Mace: I thought I'd share a few of the Public Voices tips that may be useful when trying to influence public opinion. First, use a timely news hook to catch reader's attention. An editor at the New York Times said that the easiest decision a reader can make is to stop reading. So it's important to grab readers' attention and get them to see why your topic matters within the first couple of sentences.

Heather Mace: Second, figure out your opposition strongest point and instead of trying to avoid it, come right out and address it. The op-ed mentors call this the to-be-sure, meaning that to be sure, there are valid counterpoints to any argument. For example, in my piece I wrote to-be-sure repealing any AUMF may leave Americans wondering whether the president still has power to respond to surprise attacks. By addressing and then providing solutions to these valid concerns, it makes your arguments even stronger.

Heather Mace: Third, whenever possible use exact statistics to make your case. Numbers and statistics build credibility, and the more specific you can be, the better. And finally, use your expertise to your advantage. The first day of our fellowship, the training focused on how to use our experience, knowledge, and even our titles to our advantage to gain credibility.

Heather Mace: Sometimes humility can actually be a detriment when you want to establish authority, so don't be afraid to highlight any relevant affiliation if they can help you earn a seat at the table. I included in my bio that I was part of an FCNL advocacy team and a member of the op-ed project. I may have felt like a fraud, but I'm sure that those titles are a big reason my piece was published.

Heather Mace: For anyone who's considering writing an op-ed, I want to encourage you to give it a shot. Use your FCNL fact sheets, a timely news hook, and your credibility to increase your chances of being published. Good luck to everyone and thank you.

Shoshana Abrams: Thank you so much Heather. Wow. So great. Really good tips, and I love there's so much knowledge out there and places who are telling people how to do these things. And I really love that you are able to connect with this group and also share that knowledge back with FCNL. I hope you've encouraged a few people to try this as well. I will link to Heather's op-ed in our followup email so you can all see what the result was.

Shoshana Abrams: Now, I'm going to turn things over to Jim again, to talk about our 2020 issue. I think this is probably what all of you are waiting for. I want to get in depth, and he'll tell us our campaign, what it's about. And also we'll specifically leave time for your questions.

Shoshana Abrams: Do you know that in the coming month and on the January national call, we will give you all the data and statistics and leave behind any information you need to

start your lobbying? This is just the beginning of the conversation, and a way for you to kind of start paying attention to the issue that we'll be working on next year.

Shoshana Abrams: Jim, take it away.

Jim Cason: Thanks Shoshana, and we've spent most of this call talking about the power of all of you around the country. And as we on staff have looked at how we can help you use this power in the next year, we really have come to the conclusion that continuing to press Congress to reassert its authority over when our country goes to war is very, very important.

Jim Cason: As we look at next year 2020, it's also an election year. And we feel like the ways in which we can advise you to have the most leverage over Congress, is probably by focusing on the authority for specific wars.

Jim Cason: In 2020, we will begin the year by urging Congress to end U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. As many of you will remember from the beginning of this year, the devastating war in Yemen has created one of the worst refugee crisis in the world, and led to a resurgence of cholera at levels not seen in many, many years.

Jim Cason: The U.S. has literally been providing the bombs in the past, the aerial refueling, and in some cases even the intelligence support for Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen. Tragically, as so often happens in war, U.S. bombs have killed civilians including in at least a couple of reported cases, children in school buses and prisoners in jail. Now, the people on both sides of the war have been killing people. We have been focused, of course, on the U.S. role in supporting the Saudi war in Yemen.

Jim Cason: The other part of this, and Diana mentioned this is, already both chambers of Congress have passed legislation invoking the War Powers Act to stop U.S. support for the Saudi war. But this year, president Trump vetoed that legislation, and Congress did not have the votes to override his veto.

Jim Cason: But because of this history, we believe there's an opportunity even in an election year to persuade Congress to end U.S. support for the Saudi war. And I would say just in the parentheses here, in a one optimistic note, international pressure, including the pressure from Congress, has recently revived the peace talks. There's a chance that the Yemen war could end this year, even before we pass new legislation.

Jim Cason: That's why as we're looking at next year, we're thinking we're going to start by trying to end U.S. support for the Saudi war in Yemen. But we also are very concerned about the potential, and I mentioned this earlier, for the president to engage in an unauthorized attack on Iran.

Jim Cason: I know that some of you may have read in the Wall Street Journal today, that the Pentagon is considering sending an additional 14,000 troops to the middle East to "counter the threat from Iran". As we enter 2020, we're going to be urging Congress to stop U.S. support from the Saudi war in Yemen.

Jim Cason: We may also later in the year try to build up support for legislation that would prevent an attack on Iran without Congressional authorization. We believe this kind of legislation in 2020, will set up Congress so that in 2021, we have a possibility of repealing the other AUMF, the 2001 AUMF.

Jim Cason: As Shoshana said, you'll hear more about this in January, but we wanted to let you know how we think you can be most effective next year. Shoshana, back to you and maybe we can take a couple of questions if we have time.

Shoshana Abrams: Absolutely. We have about five minutes for questions. If you have a question, go ahead and press *6.

Tim: Hello?

Jim Cason: Hello.

Tim: Hello there? Hi, this is Tim from Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Jim Cason: Hello, Tim.

Tim: I have several questions. One is, difficult and unbelief to try to find out [inaudible 00:50:12] NDAA happens to be at the moment, and what is in it. I tried to researching but had no luck at all, and apparently it's in your experience too. How are we going to know where it is when something significant is going on?

Jim Cason: Tim, if I understand your question, you're asking both in terms of the NDAA and in terms of other legislation, how do we know what's happening with that legislation and what significantly is going on?

Tim: Exactly.

Jim Cason: I would say, and I might not have been super clear at the beginning, we do believe we know what is in the NDAA right now and we've been following it quite closely. Heather Brandon-Smith has been in Congressional offices and many of you have, and gotten valuable data. And at annual meeting, we actually heard from the chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the House Armed Services Committee that they were reasonably confident that the repeal of the 2002 Iraq AUMF was in the NDAA.

Jim Cason: I think what is less clear to us right now, just in these three weeks as Congress approaches the end of the year is, what's going to finally happen with this bill? And that's because it's caught up in these broader negotiation.

Jim Cason: But as we go into next year, I'm fairly confident that on a sort of month to month basis, we will be able with our really good heel lobbyists, and with the intelligence you are collecting to figure out what's in different legislation.

Jim Cason: We will certainly, as soon as we know the NDAA is heading back to the House floor and we know that what's in that final bill, we will certainly let everybody in the advocacy teams know right away that information.

Jim Cason: We're going to keep on this and we will be back in touch with you by email as soon as we've got that information.

Tim: Fantastic. A couple of more points. It was mentioned earlier that veterans are suffering moral injury as opposed to PTSD, and there is a [inaudible 00:52:39] that they're homeless, which is not true in all cases.

Tim: The other point was, we have some bleeding wounds. We're in the border, we're in the border area, and we got some bleeding wounds here that we have to address it. To tell you the truth, I feel isolated in this part of the country because how do I get attention brought to the issues of arresting people attention if anybody steps across an imaginary line?

Jim Cason: Tim, I think that's a really important point, and I think that part of what advocacy teams do when they come together, and you might want to reach out to the new Albuquerque team, is they provide a community of people to talk about these issues and the intersectionality of these issues across different areas. I've certainly heard from other advocacy teams, how valuable that mutual support is.

Jim Cason: I'm going to ask you to bear with me, and see if we can let someone else ask a question as well here because we've only got a couple more minutes on Shoshana's clock, and so I hope that you can maybe hold your question and we can do it by email. We can see if someone else on the call wants to press *6 and ask a question just so that we can be fair to people around the country. But thank you for what you've said.

Christine Dunba: Jim.

Jim Cason: Yes, go ahead.

Christine Dunba: This is Christine Dunbar from Florida, New Jersey. And-

Jim Cason: Go ahead.

Christine Dunba: Are there any particular bills that we should perhaps [crosstalk 00:54:27] familiar with.

Jim Cason: Christine, we can't hear you. Christine?

Christine Dunba: Yes. Regarding-

Jim Cason: I think we maybe have lost you, so if somebody else has a question then go ahead and press *6.

Christine Dunba: Jim.

Jim Cason: Yes.

Christine Dunba: Can you hear me now? This is Christine.

Jim Cason: I can, Christine. Go ahead. If you have a short question, go ahead and tell us what your question is.

Christine Dunba: Sure. Okay. I'm very happy that we're working on the Yemen, and Iran problems. Are there any specific bill numbers that we should become familiar with so that we can get started with our research for next year?

Jim Cason: Christine, that's a great question. I think what we're going to do is we're going to get our chief lobbyist on this, Hassan. He's been evaluating the bills, and we're going to send some material out in the newsletter in the middle of the month. But he wanted to see what comes out in the final NDAA, and then we're going to send out the bill numbers so that you can get a head start before we get into next year.

Christine Dunba: Okay. Thank you, Jim.

Jim Cason: Sure.

Joe Brunswick: Jim, this is Joe Brunswick.

Shoshana Abrams: Go ahead.

Jim Cason: Hi, go ahead.

Joe Brunswick: I don't understand how Trump can veto the War Powers Act. Can you explain? I thought the way it was written, the Congress decided, not the president about the War Powers Act. And if that isn't true, why can't they just cut funding? Thanks.

Jim Cason: Sure, Joe. Good question. There are many lawyers who've debated what the War Powers Act allows. So far, the president's veto of that legislation has stood. In effect, he's been allowed to veto that legislation, and then there was an effort to try and override the veto, but of course that wasn't successful.

Jim Cason: I think there is another opportunity and we've been discussing that. There is another opportunity to cut off funding but Congress hasn't chosen to do that. And that's partly I think because of some of the issues that Diana talked about earlier on.

Jim Cason: But I think those are exactly the kind of things that we're going to learn more about next year Joe, so thanks for teeing this up.

Shoshana Abrams: Great. Thank you for those questions and I'm so sorry that we've run out of time. I'm going to ask Teresa to re mute the lines before we close.

Teresa: All guests have been muted. You can unmute your line by pressing *6.

Shoshana Abrams: All right. Thank you again for those questions, and thank you Jim, for walking us through that. I'll have a short synopsis of the new issue in the followup email to this, so you can have some language. I'll send you a link to what we've done this year on Yemen so you can follow some of those pieces.

Shoshana Abrams: But do you know that we'll pick our new direction based on the legislation that is likely to move in the coming year? So we won't be exactly working on what has been worked on this past year. I'm really excited to be working on this issue and we're really in for a treat with Hassan, our lobbyists on Middle East who works on Yemen and Iran as well. So really excited for that.

Shoshana Abrams: I wanted to just quickly say again what the December action sheet suggests that you do. It's kind of a two-step thing. The first is to celebrate your success as a team. That's a huge moment. What we've done this year, all of that Diana shared. I don't want to lose that feeling. We've really accomplished a lot.

Shoshana Abrams: And then the second part of that first one is to start planning some goals for your next year. On the last communicator call we've talked about how to make stretch goals that are also reasonable and ambitious. You can listen to that communicator call, and there's also a new resource on our website that you can look at fcnl.org/team toolkit, that will help you plan your goals for next year. It's linked to in the action sheet.

Shoshana Abrams: And then there's this piece about contacting the media. Setting the table for your win and telling the story of your team's work, not just in this moment but throughout the year. Tell that story. That's a really important and interesting story for many newspapers. You can think about how best to do that as a team.

Shoshana Abrams: I want to let you know the dates that are coming up. The next national call is on January, 8th. The December communicator call is on December, 12th, and that'll be with Theo, and Jim. And then the January communicator calls are going to be on the 16th, and the 30th. All of those calls are you pushed back a week because of the new year.

Shoshana Abrams: I know we're running out of time, but I hope you bear with me for just a moment. I thought that I would read some answers from participants at the Advocacy Team Summit on one other question that they responded to. They said, what is one lesson you have learned from your team this year? Teams said, "To keep at it. To remain optimistic. Make sure everyone has a role to play and to seek it out."

Shoshana Abrams: There was a team that said, "Relax. You're in it for the long haul." Then another who said, "That we are accountable to each other to continue to show up even when we're busy or discouraged with the work." And the last, "Be persistent and be helpful."

Shoshana Abrams: I wanted to take a moment to say thank you for all of your incredible advocacy. As Diana said at the beginning of the call, we have accomplished so much together, and I'm really excited to build on the momentum, the relationships, and the knowledge that we have built, and to the experience that in 2020. I hope after you hang up with your teams, you can celebrate, and acknowledge all the good that you've put out in the world through your steadfast advocacy.

Shoshana Abrams: Thank you all so much and have a wonderful evening. I will ask Teresa to open up the lines so you can all say good evening to each other. All right. Good night everyone.

Jim Cason: Good night everyone.

Teresa: Good night. All guests have been muted.