



ADVOCACY TEAMS

QUAKER VISION. COLLECTIVE ACTION.



ACTION SHEET: February 2020

We seek a world free of war and the threat of war.

After stepping back from the brink of war, tensions remain high between the U.S. and Iran, as both sides continue to threaten escalation into an all-out war. The good news is that Congress has mobilized quickly—members are now considering 10 separate pieces of legislation to create a steady drumbeat of opposition to unauthorized war with Iran.

Much of this legislation to prevent another endless war has drawn bipartisan support in both chambers, as well as [among a diverse array of organizations](#). In our lobbying on the Hill, we are told that the combination of advocacy in D.C. and the work of Advocacy Teams around the country is what put ending endless wars on the agenda of many more members of Congress. Our message remains strong: War is not the answer, and Congress must reassert its constitutional right to decide when our country goes to war.

In February, we are asking teams to arrange lobby visits with both of your senators. Tell them the story of your lobbying—of nearly getting the 2002 Iraq AUMF repealed only to see it be cited as authorization for an attack on Iranian officials. Urge them to support Sen. Tim Kaine’s (VA) War Powers Resolution ([S.J. Res 68](#)) and Sen. Bernie Sander’s (VT) No War Against Iran Act ([S. 3159](#)).

GET THE FACTS: ENDING THE ENDLESS WARS

Congressional Authority and the War Powers Resolution

As a Quaker organization, we oppose all war. As a matter of public policy, we believe Congress must debate and vote before the president commits our military to lethal action and should regularly evaluate and vote on whether to continue ongoing U.S. wars. In fact, that’s what is required by the constitution.

Article I of the Constitution states that only Congress has the power to declare war. Congress has not authorized military action against Iran.

Article II of the Constitution names the president commander-in-chief. The executive branch has interpreted this to give the president the ability to use military force to repel sudden attacks against the U.S., even without congressional authorization. The War Powers Act of 1973 provides the procedure that the president must follow when repelling imminent attacks and seeking congressional action on use of force.

The administration’s escalation of threats with Iran is destabilizing and dangerous. Diplomacy and international cooperation are the only paths to lasting security. Congress has the authority to explicitly reject war with Iran and insist on diplomacy.

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The U.S. and Iran

For the U.S., the conflict with Iran started with the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979. For Iran, it started with the CIA's overthrow of their elected government in the early 1950s. But the international nuclear deal with Iran in 2015 brought the two countries back into sustained diplomacy and blocked Iran's path to building nuclear weapons. Iran supported U.S. efforts to oust the Taliban in Afghanistan, but the U.S. invasion of Iraq was opposed by Iran. Ironically, the U.S. invasion strengthened Iran's hand in Iraq, according to author Barbara Slavin [writing in the New York Times](#).

In May 2018, President Trump withdrew from that international agreement at a moment when the Quds Force and its militias were focused on fighting the Islamic State in direct coordination with the U.S. military. That withdrawal, combined with the U.S. abandoning diplomacy, started a new downward spiral in U.S. relations. In 2019, the U.S. imposed an embargo on Iranian oil and Iran responded with military actions against oil tankers, drones, and Saudi oil facilities.

Congressional Action on Iran

In 2019, the House responded to this deteriorating situation by passing the bipartisan Khanna-Gaetz amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which denied funding for any U.S. military attack against Iran. However, that language was not included in the final NDAA signed by the president in late December.

In January the House passed a War Powers Resolution on Iran (H. Con. Res 83), and we await a similar vote in the Senate on Sen. Kaine's resolution (S.J. Res 68), which directs "the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress." Additional legislation is moving to prevent war with Iran and repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF, which [the administration has cited as authorizing action against Iran if it stems from Iraq](#).

TAKE ACTION

Arrange a lobby visit with your senators: The first few months of the year are the beginning of our efforts to help our members understand the importance of action to prevent a war with Iran. Many teams have called their senators and sent emails. Now is the time to tell your senators the story of your lobbying, of your long-term commitment to repealing the Authorizations for the Use of Military Force, and of your concern that the 2002 Iraq AUMF was used to justify military action against Iran in January.

Asks:

Short term: Vote for Sen. Kaine's Iran War Powers Resolution ([S.J. Res. 68](#))

Long term: Co-sponsor Sen. Sanders' No War Against Iran Act ([S. 3159](#)) to prohibit the use of funds for military force against Iran