Rahna Epting: Good evening everybody. I'm Rahna Epting, MoveOn's executive director. Thank you so much for joining us tonight in this critical moment for our country to say no war with Iran. No more wars ever. On tonight's call, we're going to hear from some incredible leaders who are leading the way in Congress and in our communities and we'll get to the program in just a few minutes, but first a couple of quick announcements. We have thousands of people continuing to dial into this call now.

Rahna Epting: I wanted to thank our partner organizations for helping to organize this important moment Win Without War, Indivisible, About Face, and the National Iranian American Council. Thank you so much for your leadership this evening and tomorrow and beyond. Second, if you're on the phone and you want to ask a question throughout this call, you can press *3 to connect with one of our operators. We'll have time for questions throughout the call and I'll take them as they come in.

Rahna Epting: Right now we have 7,000 people on this call and more are dialing in as we speak. Thousands of more are watching on the webcast and on Facebook Live. I am incredibly heartened to have you all here with us tonight because we're going to need every single one of us to take action in the coming days, coming weeks and months to stop Trump's dangerous and reckless march to war and that's why we're hosting with all the groups on this call and dozens of others, we are hosting no war with Iran events across the country tomorrow night. You can find an event near you at nowarwithiran.org. Please go to that website, sign up, join us out on the streets tomorrow night to show the palpable anti-war majority won't stand for this.

Rahna Epting: In a few minutes, we'll hear from my friends who I'm honored to be on this call with, Jamal Abdi from the National Iranian American Council. Representatives, Barbara Lee and Ro Khanna. Stephen Miles from Win Without War. Brittany DeBarros from About Face: Veterans Against the War and senators, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. It's a packed agenda so let's get started. Again, if you're just joining us, I'm Rahna Epting. I'm the executive director at MoveOn and I'm so grateful for all of you who have joined us here tonight.

Rahna Epting: I stepped into this role a little over three months ago and it's quite a time to take on the reins of this organization in this moment that we're in in this country. We are in a defining moment in our country and each and every one of us is doing all we can to resuscitate our democracy from the grips of a president who has abused his oath of office. He's ignored democratic norms. He cheats, lies and steals and continues to tear us apart from one another, feeding hate, and now throwing us into a dangerous escalation towards war and this is very personal to me. I'm an Iranian American. I have family here in the US. I grew up in the United States and I've family in Iran and when we're talking about a march to war with another country, whether it's Iran or Iraq or any country in this world, we're talking about threatening the livelihood of our families,
violating the soil that our family members live on, destroying the history of civilizations.

Rahna Epting: Even if we're talking about another country here tonight, it would still be personal to me because we are all bound together. We are all human. There is nowhere I'd rather be than with all of you through the phone line because this is what gives me hope, is what fuels my existence. What inspires me is when we all come together to fight for something better and we know another way is possible. We will not be fooled into another war and I just thank you for being here tonight and for everything that you have done and that you will do to stop this country from marching toward [inaudible 00:04:05]. We have a packed agenda and that's because war impacts so many of us in many different ways and so many of us still care so deeply to make sure that this country doesn't go into the situation again.

Rahna Epting: We're honored to be here with all of our guests. My job tonight is to make sure we have a smooth engaging call and that everybody gives each other enough time to talk because we have a lot of speakers. I'll do my best to make sure that we do that and I'll be moderating some questions from those of you on the call. Again, if you have a question, if you're on the phone, you can press *3 at any time and you'll be connected to one of our moderators to ask that question. All right.

Rahna Epting: Okay. We're going to start with my friend Jamal Abdi, president of the Iranian American... excuse me, the National Iranian American Council and thank you so much for being here, Jamal. Jamal is a leading advocate who monitors policies and legislation that impact Iranian Americans. He served as a congressional advisor, a liaison and expert on foreign affairs, immigration and defense and he'll speak to how their Iranian [gezbora 00:05:17] is responding and domestic civil rights implications as a result of Trump's recent actions. Jamal, we are so honored to have you here with us tonight and I'll turn it over to you.

Jamal Adbi: Thank you so much Rahna, and thanks everybody for being here. This has been maybe one of the toughest weeks that I've had under the Trump administration, which is saying a lot and for our community. It's traumatizing. It's challenging. Donald Trump's Iran policy has been an utter disaster. It's put us on the brink of war and it's really made life hell for the Iranian people and for Iranian Americans. Iranian Americans were a community who largely came to the United States in the late '70s and early '80s. My dad came here 1978 during the Islamic Revolution and during the Iran, Iraq war and many of our families came here to leave behind our oppressive government and to escape a disastrous war and so because we're a young community many of us still have really strong ties for our families back in Iran, and so I want to scream every time I hear Donald Trump or Mike Pompeo try to claim that they support the Iranian people or that the Iran policy is about freedom or democracy for Iranians, or that they respect the heritage and the culture of Iranians and Iranian Americans.
Jamal Adbi: The fact is one of Trump's first acts in office was to impose a Muslim ban, which to this day bounds my family members and Iran from visiting me here. I know many people, friends, people that are members of our organization who are separated from their fiance, separated from their spouses whose families have to attend their weddings on Skype because of the ban and so now with the rising tensions with Iran, many of us are fearful about further assaults on our rights. This past weekend there were dozens, at least 60 Iranian Americans detained at the US border with Canada for as many as 11 hours for questioning. Many of them had young children with them and had no idea what was going on and we can only imagine what is going to happen with this administration if a third world war breaks out.

Jamal Adbi: Meanwhile, this administration has tried to cultivate its own Iranian American version of Ahmed Chalabi, the Iraqi exile who helped spearhead the campaign for that disastrous invasion, and so Mike Pompeo has held meetings with Iranian Americans to try to cultivate them. The state department even got caught funding an organization that was attacking Iranian American analyst and human rights advocates and organizations like [My 00:07:53] who dare to disagree with Donald Trump's policy. We are united with all of you to try to stop this war and it goes even deeper than that. It's the things that have set up this war. It's the collective punishment of sanctions. It's the exiting the Iran deal that Iranians celebrated on the streets. It's the undermining of organic movements inside of Iran, pushing for democracy and greater rights and so I hope that together with all of you, we can work together to put an end to the endless sanctions and the escalations and hopefully together put Iran and the US back on a path of diplomacy rather than military conflict. Thanks everybody.

Rahna Epting: Thank you so much Jamal and I just want to say it's a longterm campaign and something that we need to do for a while in order to push this administration away from a march to war and aggressive foreign policy and back towards progressive diplomacy, but in this moment where we're escalations from this president and this administration, it is very important for us to come together and show the anti-war majority visibly. Tomorrow night we're doing no war with Iran events all across the country. In less than 24 hours hundreds of people have come forward to plan more than 250 events in 42 states and we must show the world and make it clear to Congress that we do not support Trump's war. I'm going take a poll before we go onto the next speaker, which I'm very excited to introduce, but here's a question for everybody on the phone.

Rahna Epting: Will you commit to attend a no war with Iran event in your community tomorrow? That's Thursday, January 9th and those are at 5:00 PM local time. Press one on your phone if you will commit to go to an event in your community. That's Thursday at 5:00 PM local time. Press two on your phone if you will host an event in your community on Thursday and press three if you can't attend or host an event, but you will call your member of Congress. There's something we all can do.
Rahna Epting: You can go to event, you can host it or you can call your member of Congress. Please do that now and let's see the live results. We have 1300 people that have committed tonight on this call to attend an event. Over 60 people so far to host an event so that's 60... 80 now. 80 more events that we can have on our list and over... close to 2000 are going to call their members of Congress, so we need to get those calls up. Those call numbers up, but that is incredible for this moment.

Rahna Epting: Go to nowarwithiran.org and you can find an event near you or sign up to host an event as well. All right, so next step. I am so honored to invite Senator Elizabeth Warren from Massachusetts onto the call. Senator Warren is a progressive champion. I don't need to tell any of you that, you know that. You might know her for her record on domestic policies to fight back against Wall Street and fight for all of us but she has also been a strong voice for foreign policies that are informed by fact and advance our national and global interests, from fighting climate change to supporting the Iran nuclear deal. Thank you for joining us, Senator Warren I know you've got a busy schedule. We're so honored to have you.

Sen. Warren: Thank you, Rahna. I so appreciate your having me here and I want to say a special thank you to Win Without War and NIAC and About Face for the work that all of you are doing to organize the no war national day of action events tomorrow. I think this is really inspiring. I just want to talk for a minute about what's happening with Iran. There seems to be a pause in the hostilities for now and I hope it endures, but let's be clear. This is a crisis of Donald Trump's making.

Sen. Warren: The first job of the president of the United States is to keep America safe, but this president's reckless actions have made us far less safe. He started this back in 2018 when he tore up the Iran nuclear deal. Iran had agreed not to advance its nuclear program and the international community had already certified that Iran was following the terms of the deal. Our allies wanted to stay in it, but not Donald Trump. Instead, he just decided to tear it up and then he has taken an increasing number of steps escalating the situation with Iran and ultimately of course killing Soleimani.

Sen. Warren: Right now we're in a place where we have stopped our actions with our allies to contain and defeat ISIS. We've had to pull American civilians out of the region for fear of their safety and we have a president who is tweeting threats of war crimes by attacking Iran's cultural sites. This is not making America safer and it is wrong. This is the moment that Americans need to speak up and say, we do not want another war in the Middle East. We do not want a war with Iran. War with Iran would be bad for us, bad for the region, and bad for the world.

Sen. Warren: All three of my brothers served in the military and our military will do anything we ask them to do, but the commander in chief has a responsibility to understand that we should not ask our military to try to solve problems that cannot be solved militarily. We do not want war. Thank you all for getting out
there and organizing, be strong out there tomorrow. Let’s make our voices heard.

Rahna Epting:

Thank you so much. Senator, thank you for joining us and for all the work you’ve done and continue to do and thank you for being with us tonight.

Sen. Warren:

Thank you.

Rahna Epting:

Thank you. Right now we have thousands of people on this call and live streaming with us close to over 7,000 folks right now, which is great. I want to remind you, if you have a question, you can press *3 and you’ll be routed to an operator and they’ll take your question and I’m going to ask the first question here right now and this question is for Jamal, Andrew in Rhode Island asks, in light of the deescalation rhetoric, what should the talking points be for anti-war individuals when speaking to family, friends and politicians?

Jamal Adbi:

Well, we need to not take our eye off of how we got to this point and the fact is that the policy has not changed. The United States is not in the nuclear deal and is imposing these horrible sanctions. Food and medicine being denied to ordinary people and that’s happening in our name. In the name of American citizens and voters and unless that changes, this is going to continue. There’s going to be another flare up. We have to get back to the negotiating table with Iran and we have to remember that Donald Trump inherited the best US Iran situation of any president since Jimmy Carter. We had talks with Iran, we had a deal with Iran. We were out of the woods, we thought and Donald Trump, it took him three years to take us right to the brink of war. There has to be a more fundamental change and this president has to be restrained from doing anything else like he did this past week that could trigger another total flare up.

Rahna Epting:

Thank you so much. We’re going to go to another speaker, but I want to remind folks to press *3, if you have questions. We’re happy to take them. I’m honored to introduce Brittany DeBarros, the organizing director for About Face: Veterans Against the War. Brittany deployed to Afghanistan for a year in 2012 and she’s worked on economic and racial liberation issues in various ways since she returned. Thank you for being here tonight, Brittany. Can you talk a bit about-

Brittany DeBarros:

Thanks Rahna.

Rahna Epting:

...the legacy of the US failed intervention in the region and what you’re hearing from troops?

Brittany DeBarros:

Absolutely. Thank you for having me. It’s an honor. I want to start by saying that this has been a very raw 48 hours for me. I was a captain in the army until only a few months ago. I left for that 2012 deployment that you mentioned believing what I was told by our leadership that I was going to save and protect Afghan people and fight for security that could lead to peace. When I came home though, after a year of violence and suffering up close, I was positive that I had
done nothing but contribute to further harming the Afghan people and came home with an overwhelming sense of grief and betrayal.

Brittany DeBarros: I needed to understand why we were there, why my commander in chief had used my willingness to sacrifice for what I believed in so recklessly. Why my Congress had abdicated responsibility for ensuring that I would be on the right side of justice in doing so. I need to understand why people barely paid attention to two entire wars still raging and why in the few moments that they did, there was no mention or concern at all for the thousands of Iraqi and Afghan civilians being killed each year.

Brittany DeBarros: Fast forward to the present, and these words have been unpopular amongst civilians and the military for a year but the Congress continues to fail to revoke the irresponsibly broad authorization for use of military force, sometimes called the AUMF that they passed 18 years ago to launch them. The same document that the White House cited to claim authority for Trump's reckless assassination. For the past 48 hours like I said, I've been wrapped with a familiar sense of grief and betrayal and I'm certain that hundreds of thousands of active military families and veterans have felt the same.

Brittany DeBarros: Meanwhile, defense corporations who contribute to campaign for over 500 members of Congress and receive almost half of the military budget instead of what we claim as opposed to support the troops in return have seen their stock sore. That is the reality of war for power and profit that we're in and we have been in and that is immoral and I think many of us who believe in justice have hesitated to speak out loudly and boldly against war and military issue for a long time because we feel ill-equipped or fearful of insulting troops or veterans and I'm here excited that you all are here to say that this crisis has showed us that we absolutely cannot afford that violence and hesitation anymore.

Brittany DeBarros: We must call our Congress members tomorrow morning and demand they pass legislation to block further aggression. We must get in the streets tomorrow and make our refusal to allow more of this, more of this betrayal to be seen and heard and we must commit to continuing to take action once this crisis has died down, to ensure that those AUMFs get revoked and that we reallocate those resources to things that can actually contribute to growth and peace and positive things for humanity and our communities.

Rahna Epting: Thank you, Brittany. We're going to take some more questions. Those were incredibly profound words and we are so grateful for your sacrifices for this country. For those of you that are on the call, if you're a member... are you a member of the military, a veteran, or a member of a military family? We would appreciate to know how many vets or military families we have on the call. You can press one if you're an active military member, you can press two if you are a veteran and if you can press three if you're a member of a military family and those polling results will come in. Thank you so much, Brittany.
Rahna Epting: We do have some questions. [Deanna 00:20:24] asks, is there any way Congress can hold Trump accountable or be charged for a war crime for assassination of a general of a sovereign country without declaration of war? I think I will ask Jamal to answer that question. Is there any way Congress can hold Trump accountable for the assassination of General Soleimani?

Jamal Adbi: Well, the best way to hold him accountable will be in November. We're going to do everything we can on the Hill and I think other folks will talk about passing measures to restrain the president's authority or authorization for the use of military force and put real barriers in place. It's obviously going to be tough with a Republican Senate and hopefully we kick them out of office in November and it'll be easier to potentially prosecute some of the crimes that he's committed.

Rahna Epting: All right. Thank you so much and I also think, although it's not... holding him accountable is important and at the ballot box is probably the best way but the other thing that we need to do is make sure that those in Congress prevent and do everything they can to prevent him from continuing to escalate this so to pull back from the brink of war and so we're seeing Speaker Pelosi and the House get ready to vote on a War Powers Resolution I think in the coming days. I'm going to do one more question and then we're going to introduce our next speaker. That question is, and I'll ask Brittany to answer this question. Michael asks, so after the protest tomorrow, what are folks next to?

Brittany DeBarros: Absolutely. There is a lot in the works and that's part of why we asked the poll in this moment in particular. Communities like veterans, military members and military families can be particularly powerful in lifting up their voices to speak and correct people about the fact that it's not supposedly unpatriotic or not supporting the troops to speak out and so it's important to respond to that poll so that we can follow up about possible ways to be involved and then create space for folks who are connected to Iraqi and Iranian communities in particular to also have a voice to be able to speak out about what's happening and speak the truth and ultimately I think we need to get really serious about never being willing to compromise on the matter of war.

Brittany DeBarros: I think we often prioritize other justice issues for understandable reasons, but war is the culmination of all violence. Gender violence, racial violence. It destroys our planet and we can't allow that to continue to happen so we need to make sure that we're incorporating that into all of the social justice work that we do and always holding that when we go to the polls.

Rahna Epting: Thank you so much Brittany. I'll also add, there is a large coaltional effort of about every progressive organization you can think of that is really focused on figuring out how we can come together in a much larger movement to continue to collaborate and stand in solidarity and be the consistent, sustained anti-war majority in this country. If you go to nowarwithiran.org and sign up for an action, you will be on that list. We will continue to be able to communicate with you and notify you when there are strategies and tactics that we'll be engaging
in that will be impactful to continue to put pressure on Congress and the administration to turn back to a diplomacy posture.

Rahna Epting: Before I introduce the next speaker, I wanted to remind folks, we have a packed agenda. We have incredible speaker lineup. We have Representative Barbara Lee, Representative Ro Khanna. We have Senator Bernie Sanders, Stephen Miles of Win Without War and more. Please stay on. This is going to be a very valuable discussion. Next step, we are going to hear from Representative Barbara Lee. Representative Lee, we are so honored to have you here tonight. For those who don't know, Representative Lee has built her career working for justice and peace in domestic and foreign policy. In 2001, the Congresswoman was the sole vote against the 2001 AUMF and she has been a longtime advocate for ending the United States prolonged military conflicts around the world today.

Rahna Epting: Today she is in house democratic leadership and we are all better for it. We’re so thankful to have you with us tonight representatively.

Rep. Lee: Thank you very much for that very warm and gracious introduction and I wanted to thank you for your tremendous leadership. Also, [Steve 00:25:27], from Win Without War. Thank you both for inviting me to join this call and I really want to thank you for your continued advocacy on these life or death issues. Let me take a moment to salute and thank our veterans and members of our military who are on the line. I consider myself, and you may want to put me in the poll as a member of military family.

Rep. Lee: My dad served 25 years in the army and he was a proud veteran and he served in two wars and he was the first one who called me after I voted against the blank check after the horrific events of 9/11 and told me that was the right vote to stand firm and that I dare not send our brave men and women into harm’s way unless we knew the cost and consequences and what the heck we’re doing, and so I just want to thank our veterans and our military families and members of the military for your service and I just know we’re going to do everything possible to make sure that we do not send you into harms way and that we provide what is necessary for you here at home.

Rep. Lee: MoveOn and Win Without War as so critical to the continued resistance to Trump’s march the war and so thank you again for your advocacy work. I’m really pleased to say that MoveOn just... I have to take a little credit for MoveOn being founded in Berkeley and that really speaks to not only my district, but the continued growth of the organization and their forward thinking approach. I remember when the petitions were brought to Capitol Hill to the Longworth building many years ago when MoveOn was just founded around, I believe it was around the Clinton impeachment. I just have to thank you for staying the course and very proud of the work that you did.

Rep. Lee: Also, I need to thank Congressmen Khanna for joining the call today and for his tremendous leadership of these resistance issues and continuing the drum beat
against Trump's divisive agenda on so many fronts. Ro is such a great leader and I'm really happy he's on this call and also you know that I'm outraged by Trump's reckless decision that has put us on the brink of an illegal unauthorized and catastrophic war with the Iran. Donald Trump should have come to Congress to seek an authorization and a vote before undertaking a unilateral act of war and that's what this was. We need all of you in the public to weigh in with Congress so we can put a check on this irrational and irresponsible president. We can't let him drag us into this war with no end in sight and no congressional authorization and no plan for diplomacy. It's really outrageous.

Rep. Lee: We need to demand that the White House provide the public with any evidence of Iran being an imminent threat, justification for the assassination and the malicious strike and the Trump administration's false claims that the 2002 AUMF could justify future military action against Iran. Some have already said on the phone, the public does not want war with Iran. Let me be clear, Trump's actions alone have put us into this mess. He's pulled out of the very successful Iran nuclear deal the JCPOA which many of you helped us, you were helping to negotiate this deal and thank you for your push to help make that deal become a reality.

Rep. Lee: He's increased US military presence in the region and he surrounded himself with warmonger cabinet secretaries like Secretary of State Pompeo. Mike Pompeo who should be working on diplomacy to deescalate and put us on the path to peace, seems to want war. Now, I serve as a state and foreign operations vice chair, which is the subcommittee of the appropriations committee that funds our diplomatic initiatives and the state department. Our subcommittee and the state department is there to prevent wars and to look at how we can provide for the two pillars of the three pillars of our foreign policy. That's development and diplomacy.

Rep. Lee: The Department of Defense provides that certainty and that's the defense leg but yeah, we see a Secretary Pompeo actually acting in many ways as the Secretary of Defense. Let us be reminded also that as President Trump plunges the US and to the brink of war with Iran, Congress has yet again failed in our constitutional duty to weigh in on matters of war and peace. That's why in addition to the War Powers Resolution that we're taking up, which I fully support we progressives we'll continue to push for a repeal of the 2002 authorization to use military force and I have that built and I hope that you will help us get co-sponsors of, that's H.R.2456 and the 2001 AUMF H.R.1274 both which I have introduced over and over and over again and also to support Congressman Khanna's fund... excuse me bill that says no funds with Iran unless the administration comes to Congress and we authorize the use of force.

Rep. Lee: I hope you will encourage your members of Congress to co-sponsor all of these bills and we need more support and let me just tell you as the only member to vote against the 2001 AUMF, I fear that this 60 word authorizations, that's what
the 2001 was, 60 words that it would open the door for any president to wage war anywhere in the world without congressional debate or vote and then the almost 19 years since this blank check has been used for war everywhere. It’s been used over, I believe it’s 41 times in 19 countries according to the Congressional Research Service and that’s in a declassified report and also the 2002 authorization to use military force was an authorization that was used then as the debates emerged around weapons of mass destruction. It was based on the lies that were told by the Bush administration that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Rep. Lee: That’s what that 2002 authorization was about and of course, many of us voted against that because we knew there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and it’s outrageous that this administration is continuing to somehow use this as one of the legal basis for their military actions and assassination, and so we have got to repeal the 2002 authorization to use military force immediately. We’re working on that and also the 2001 authorization. Our shared work to prevent another endless war is very clear.

Rep. Lee: We must stand up. We must march. We must sound the alarm and we must stop this reckless president. I hope that all of you will be empowered by tonight’s call to stop this march towards war tomorrow at the rally and we have to remember that peace is patriotic and so to our democracy is the right to petition our government to act in accordance to the requirements of our constitution.

Rep. Lee: Thank you again for giving me a chance to join this very critical call and I just want to thank you for being the resistance that this world needs at this point and to continue to hold this administration, especially Donald Trump accountable. Thank you again.

Rahna Epting: Thank you so much, Representative Lee. I mean, I can't imagine where we'd be without your leadership. We're incredibly grateful. For those on the call as a reminder, if you're on the phone, you can press *3 to ask a question and you'll be connected to one of our call screeners and there'll be time for questions later in the call. Next step, I want to introduce Stephen Miles. He's executive director of Win Without War. It's an organization founded in 2002 to oppose the US invasion of Iraq and since then, Win Without War has become a powerful organizational leader in the progressive anti-war community. Thank you so much for being here, Stephen.

Stephen Miles: Thank you Rahna. There's an old saying, I'm reminded of that Barbara Lee speaks for me and I think tonight we just had a reminder of why that is, so thank you Congresswoman. I'd also like to thank Senators Warren. Senator Sanders will be joining us, Representative Khanna later, all my fellow speakers, but most importantly, I want to thank everyone calling in tonight. It's been less than one week since Donald Trump took his largest step yet towards war with Iran but the truth is that since day one of his administration, he's been racing towards a
horrific war of choice. Trump chose to walk away from diplomacy and the successful Iran nuclear deal, he chose to fill his cabinet with warmongers like Mike Pompeo and he's chosen time and again, conflict and maximum pressure with the very goal of causing human suffering.

Stephen Miles: When Donald Trump took office, as my friend Jamel said earlier, we had the best chance in a generation for peace and decreasing more in the Middle East. Even more heartbreaking, over the last few weeks we've seen real people powered movements in Iraq and Iran fighting for change and true peace. Now war's threatening to stifle those dreams and undermine efforts for peace and justice in the Middle East as well as here at home. While we've avoided the worst case scenario over the past few hours, we're not out of the woods yet. We are only one tweet or change of Donald Trump's heart away from being right back on the brink of all out war. That is not okay.

Stephen Miles: Thankfully, we have the power to change that. With a massive showing of people power tomorrow, we can stiffen the spines of our leaders in Congress who are working to build roadblocks to war. If enough of us demand action when the House votes tomorrow, we can force them to... we can win that vote and after that, we can force the Senate to vote next and then we can beat warmongers like Mitch McConnell and Lindsey Graham, and if we make our chorus for peace loud enough, we can even show Donald Trump just how united we all are against his war and convince him to keep deescalating but again, we're not out of the woods.

Stephen Miles: Just today Donald Trump announced he's going to add even more sanctions. Sanctions which will cause even more harm to everyday people already reeling from maximum pressure. Donald Trump said today that he wants peace, but we know that at a moment's notice he may again choose to launch an attack that could escalate towards war and after years of flooding the Middle East with the United States made weapons, there's a real chance that at any moment one bomb or one missile can spark an inferno that causes yet another conflict and yet more war in a region already on fire. The truth is, if we want to end our nation's endless wars, now is the time to do that.

Stephen Miles: No one is going to do our work for us and no one's going to hear us if our voices are silent. I cannot wait to be out in the streets with all my friends on this call tomorrow saying no war with Iran and I hope you'll be out there with us.

Rahna Epting: Thank you Steven. We have a couple more speakers coming up everyone, but first I want to just give another shout out to the incredible folks that helped organize this call especially our allies, Indivisible. Indivisible has been incredible partners since they were founded in early 2017 and we're so grateful for their leadership and again, Stephen, Win Without War. Jamal, National Iranian American Council and Brittany at About Face: Veterans Against the War. Before we go to our next speaker, I want to ask a question and this question will be for Brittany.
Rahna Epting: Rachel who works in public health, she is concerned that we will see a resurgence of what we saw when things began in Iraq. She wants to know, what do we do to prepare, prevent, and help if we begin seeing more backlash towards Iranian Americans and I'm sorry, I correct myself. That's a question for Jamal. What do we do to repair, prevent, help if we begin seeing more backlash towards the Iranian American.

Jamal Adbi: It's been really helpful to have allies in Congress stepping up for us. With what happened at the border this past weekend, we had allies Pramila Jayapal, Ro Khanna and others who intervened with DHS and with border patrol to really hold their feet to the fire and as we saw with the Muslim ban, it was the same thing. It was members of Congress stepping up to help us out and then if things get bad we're also going to need legal action just like they did with the Muslim ban, and so supporting those efforts, the efforts of groups like Iranian American Bar Association and ACLU, but also just the support of our communities in helping to fundraise for those types of efforts is really important.

Jamal Adbi: The most important thing is just vigilance. I mean the minute we start taking for granted that these rights can be eroded and we don't have the solidarity and support of our community, that's when we really start to lose those rights forever and so just being with us, being with us in solidarity and having our backs is just really helpful and appreciated.

Rahna Epting: Thank you. In a few moments we're going to hear from Senator Bernie Sanders, but before we turn over the mic just wanted to share that close to 900 folks on this call are in the military or veterans or in military families. That was our last poll and then I wanted to ask who here is planning to attend an event tomorrow night to make visible the anti-war majority? You can find an event near you at nowarwithiran.org because we need to make sure Congress hears this loud and clear that we do not support a march to war. If you're on the phone, please let us know how you're planning need to take action this week.

Rahna Epting: All right. This question is for Brittany. I keep losing my questions. Give me one minute. What can a soldier who is completely opposed to the war but is currently deployed in the Middle East do in this moment?

Brittany DeBarros: That's a really good question and one that many, many members of About Face: Veterans Against the War were facing at one point or are facing as well. My recommendation would be to reach out to various communities of veterans that
align with your views and many of us are here to offer support. I know that you
don't have to be a member of About Face to reach out to us for us to just be
vets to talk to and then I most importantly would recommend the GI Rights
Hotline. It's a really great way. It's confidential. It's run by civilians who have
expertise in this and we'll help you talk through your various options for what
you can do. Conscientious objector status, all kinds of things and I was in... I
wasn't deployed but I was still under contract and I was in those shoes and
reached out to them myself and it was really helpful, so definitely recommend
that as a resource.

Rahna Epting:

Thank you so much and so far it looks like we have over 800 folks in this last poll
that just committed to attending an event tomorrow. Over 70 of you are
committing to host one and over 800 of you are committing to call your
Congress member and I'll just encourage every single person on this call tonight,
I really hope that you can commit to calling your member of Congress and
telling them to stop the escalation towards war and return back to diplomacy.
All right. Now I am honored to introduce our next speaker and that is Senator
Bernie Sanders from the great state of Vermont. He is on the line with us
tonight and while Senator Sanders needs no introduction, I ju
just want to say the
Senator has been incredibly steadfast in his anti-war record and we thank you
so much for being with us here tonight, Senator Sanders. Take it away.

Sen. Sanders:

Rahna, thank you so much for what you and MoveOn are doing in this very, very
dangerous moment in American history. When I think back in my lifetime to the
disastrous wars, the unnecessary wars that have taken place. I think back to
Vietnam where people I knew got killed. Where my generation suffered so
terribly. 59,000 dead, God knows how many wounded people. Still sleeping out
on the streets today from that war and you know what, that war was created by
a series of lies. Series of lies, we should never have gotten into that war, and as
a young man, I remember marching in Washington against the war and more
recently, back in 2002, 2003, I remember the war in Iraq and I was a member of
the Congress and I heard all the lies that came from Rumsfeld and the Vice
President Cheney and from Bush and everybody else about how Saddam
Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. All lies, and we went to war. 4,500
brave American soldiers never came back. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis died.

Sen. Sanders:

I'm the former chairman of the senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and I've
talked to so many veterans and mothers and wives who've lost their loved ones.
People today still suffering from PTSD. I think the lesson is that war should be
avoided in every way that we can. War is the last response, not the first
response and what I'm seeing today from Trump is the same old, same old same
lies and an [inaudible 00:44:26] for whatever reason and who can fathom what
goes on in his mind. He got us into another war.

Sen. Sanders:

I will do everything that I can to prevent this war. I will certainly be working as I
have in the past. As you may know I worked very hard with some conservative
Republicans for the first time in American history to use the War Powers act to
get the US out of the horrific, horrific war in Yemen, led by the dictatorship of Saudi Arabia and we actually passed the resolution on the House and the Senate.

Sen. Sanders: It was vetoed by Trump and we're going to take up that cause again, I'll be working to make sure that we pass a War Powers act, which makes it clear that the constitution says that it is the Congress not the president who determines whether this country goes to war and that I'm afraid Congress has forgot about that on the Republican and Democratic administrations and we're going to do everything we can to pass that resolution and also, I am a belief lead sponsor along with Ro Khanna from California in the House of a very important bill, which basically defunds any effort for Trump to take us into war in Iran. You can't go to war unless you have money and we're going to prevent them from having money.

Sen. Sanders: I want to thank MoveOn for their efforts in rallying the American people against this war. Aside from everything else, aside from the loss of life and the destabilization of the Mideast this country is all of has enormous needs. We've got an 87 million people without any health insurance or under insured. We've got to half a million people sleeping out on the streets tonight. We have to take on climate change and transform our energy system and invest in that. We've got to invest in affordable housing, invest in education. You know what we don't have to invest in? We don't have to invest in another endless war.

Sen. Sanders: I look forward to working with all of you and thank you very much for what you're doing. Let's go forward and let's stop this war. Thank you very much.

Rahna Epting: Thank you so much, Senator Sanders. We really appreciate your time with us here tonight. Up next I would like to introduce Representative Ro Khanna from the beautiful state of California. Representative Khanna will be talking to us about public support and how essential it is to getting Congress to stop Trump's war.

Rep. Khanna Well, thank you. It's an honor to follow Senator Sanders. As he mentioned, we have legislation that would be defund any ability of the Trump administration to make offensive war with Iran or Iranian officials, and I appreciate it so much MoveOn's advocacy not just against the war in Iran, but consistently against these endless wars over the past 18 years. It's important to note that we had actually passed this amendment to defund any action against Iran in the National Defense Authorization a couple of months ago. That passed with 27 Republican votes in the house including the Matt Gaetz, Mark Meadows, Jim Jordan, and some of the president's closest allies and it had a majority support in the Senate, yet the Pentagon fought tooth and nail to try to strip that bill and some of us like Senator Sanders and I argued that we cannot continue to give the Pentagon their massive budgets, $738 billion if they are not going to have an amendment to restrict them from having an offensive strike in Iran.
Rep. Khanna: We lost that battle and ultimately Congress voted overwhelmingly to pass the National Defense Authorization as a blank check. I believe if that amendment had been in there this would have been avoided. The pentagon would never have given the Soleimani option to the president if there was an explicit bipartisan prohibition against doing so or if they still hadn't gotten their funding which they so desperately wanted. The reason that history is important is it's time in my view for Congress to exercise the power of the purse and we have not been willing to do that. We did not do that to prevent the escalation in Iraq. We did not do that to prevent the escalation of troops in Afghanistan.

Rep. Khanna: At the end of the day, the one power Congress has is the power to defund offensive wars and our bill, Senator Sanders and my bill calls for the defunding of any offensive strategy but the point is, even if it doesn't pass and get the president's signature, it sets a marker during the appropriations process. Congress can still do this. Ultimately, the president needs funding and those funding bills start in the house of representatives and we need to fight in that process to defund anything. Let me make one final point.

Rep. Khanna: When historians look back at this effort, they will wonder not just about the morality, not just about the constitutionality, but they will wonder what in the world was America thinking in terms of our strategic interests. The reality is that the war in terror which has been going on for 18 years, has led to terrorism increasing and spreading around the world. It has cost this country trillions of dollars. China has not been in a war since 1979. We have been in over 40 conflicts since then. The entire economy of the Middle East is 3.5% of world GDP.

Rep. Khanna: Iran is at 0.44% of world GDP. We are at 21%. China is at 15%. What in the world are we doing? We're in trillions of dollars into these wars in the Middle East, starting potentially another confrontation with Iran, which is 0.44% of world GDP and at the same time neglecting investment in the infrastructure, in the education, in the healthcare, in the research and development of our own nation. We need to be confident in our view, it's a prolonged war in terror, has hurt America's national interest. That our foreign policy vision of restraint and investment in our people, in our nation is not just morally right but it's what will allow America to be stronger and succeed in the 21st century and I appreciate so much MoveOn's efforts not just to stop this war, but to help articulate a new foreign policy vision for our party and our country.

Rahna Epting: Thank you so much, Representative Khanna. We appreciate your leadership and everything you're doing on this issue and many others.


Rahna Epting: Yeah. Have a wonderful evening. We have a couple more speakers and we're in... excuse me, have one more speaker and then we're going to take a set of questions. We are seeing a lot of questions online right now from people who
want to take action and aren't sure where to start. I'm going to introduce a very committed and wonderful MoveOn member, [Fallon El 00:51:59], is a grassroots activist in Port St. Lucie, Florida and Fallon, I'm hoping you can answer the question. I want to take action, but where do I start and how can I be the most helpful?

Fallon L.: Sure. Thank you. My name is Fallon. I'm speaking to you all from my home in Port St. Lucie, Florida, which is part of the Treasure Coast in Southeast Florida and the 18th congressional district. In 2018 I was a busy stay at home mom to two little girls and like I think so many of us, I had spent the previous two years yelling at my TV and feeling like I needed to do something, but not sure exactly what. I was actually compelled to get involved when Donald Trump announced in May, 2018 that he was pulling the United States out of the Iran nuclear deal. That's when I knew that yelling at the TV was not enough. I had to do something. I started by volunteering on a local campaign and I joined MoveOn. Through these efforts I was able to find my community. I began organizing with the support of my community and the support of this amazing MoveOn community that has embraced me and provided me with all the tools that I needed to organize successfully. Since 2018, I've organized dozens of actions and have helped to build and maintain a strong activist community here on the Treasure Coast, and tomorrow I'll be joining our Treasure Coast community in solidarity with activists nationwide to oppose war with Iran and ensure that the anti-war majority is visible during these critical moments of escalating tensions.

Fallon L.: In the wake of Iran's retaliatory missile attacks last night, it's more important than ever that we, the anti-war majority, make ourselves visible and send a message to this administration and our members of Congress that we will not be forced into another war and that we are watching them closely as they make their next moves. I need everyone on this call to join me in this effort. Will you join me tomorrow, January 9th to make the anti-war majority in this country visible and join or host a no war was around event in your community.

Rahna Epting: Thank you so much Fallon. We are so grateful for you and I just think your story is so similar to so many MoveOn members, Indivisible members, folks that are members of various progressive organizations out there that really want to make an impact and make this world a better place and we're so happy you decided to, as you say, get off the couch one day and get active, so thank you so much. I want to say a few things before we close that are very important. We have two questions, actually several questions that often [Austin 00:55:00] and [Maryland 00:55:00] ask, are Trump's action against Iran further grounds for impeachment and then [Sharon 00:55:05]... Oh to Maryland folks. Sharon and Maryland also ask, I marched in the run up to the war with Iraq. What can we learn from the resistance that was put up for that so that we can have a better chance at stopping this war.
Rahna Epting: A couple of things on those points before we close out. Trump actions against Iran are just an additional reason for this Congress to take up a fair Senate trial on impeachment. They won't be changing the articles based on his violations here, but it is just another proof point of the fact that he has been abusing his oath of office and he's a danger and a threat to the safety of our national security and our democracy, and then in terms of what we learned from the run up with the Iraq war and all the work we did as a community to put an end to war, I'll say this is slightly a different moment. The memories of the Iraq war are living in all of us here in this country. There are families that still live with the impacts of the Iraq war. There are people that are still stationed there.

Rahna Epting: I would say the people of this country know and they have recent memory of how dangerous and harmful war is and so we have clearly an already established anti-war majority in this country. The vast majority of people in this country are against war and they're for diplomacy. The challenge we have in this moment is that we have to make that visible and that's why tomorrow is so important and other efforts that will be led along the way. It's important that you show up physically, visibly to show your opposition to a march to war.

Rahna Epting: I want to thank all of our speakers for joining tonight and thank everyone here. Please go to nowarwithiran.org and find an event near you to attend tomorrow and if you are not able to, and even if you are everyone on this call, please call your member of Congress and tell them no war with Iran, pull back from the brink of war. We must deescalate now.

Rahna Epting: Later this week, we'll post the audio recording, live stream link, the transcript of the call and a PDF of the slideshow to moveon.org/nowarcall and you're welcome to go get notes from there. Thank you all. Thank you for everything you do and I'm so honored that you all joined us this evening and everything that you do to make this world a better place, have a wonderful evening.