



January 17, 2020

Constituent Services

Contact: 561-998-9045

Dear Friend,

My office has heard concerns from many constituents about escalating U.S.-Iran tensions, the threat of war, and the recent killing of Qassem Soleimani. As the mother of a U.S. Marine war veteran, I came to Congress with the promise of never voting to send someone else's child to a war that could have been avoided. That is a commitment that I take seriously.

Iran remains the leading state sponsor of terrorism and fuels instability throughout the Middle East by lending its support to groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, propping up the murderous Assad regime in Syria, and testing ballistic missiles in defiance of international law, some engraved with the horrific phrase, "death to Israel."

The Obama administration addressed the threat of a nuclear Iran with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known as the Iran nuclear deal. At the time, I shared the concern of some that the agreement left Tehran's malign actions unaddressed and contained risky sunset clauses. With that said, once it went into effect, [I urged President Trump to remain in the deal and work to build upon its shortcomings through a follow-on agreement](#). Disregarding the six other countries in the agreement, the Administration unilaterally withdrew from the deal and re-imposed harsh economic sanctions on Iran. Iran then responded with violation of its nuclear commitments and stepped up provocative regional activities, leading up to the latest frightening confrontation between Iran and the United States.

On January 3rd, 2020, Qassem Soleimani was killed by an American strike in Iraq. Soleimani was a major general in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and commanded its division responsible for extraterritorial military and clandestine operations, the Quds Force. He was considered the second most powerful person in Iran, known as the right-hand man of Ayatollah Khamenei. Soleimani was responsible for horrific violence and the deaths of hundreds of Americans and thousands of civilians in the region.

While we do not mourn Soleimani's death, the President's use of force without congressional authorization or a plan for the aftermath has raised concerns about a dangerous precedent and triggering an Iranian response that could spiral into military conflict.

The cycle of U.S.-Iran escalation, heightened by Soleimani's killing, has made many

Americans and our allies less safe. For example, the U.S. military temporarily suspended all operations against ISIS, the Iraqi Parliament voted to expel American troops, Israel fears retaliatory attacks from Iran's proxies, and Iran is no longer complying with limits on uranium enrichment, pushing it closer to having a nuclear weapon.

This brings us to January 9, 2020, when the House took up a [War Powers resolution](#) to prevent a war with Iran without congressional approval. Decisions of war require debate, deliberation, and collective judgement, unless there is imminent danger and no time to alert Congress. These processes are constitutionally and statutorily in place to prevent one president's whims from plunging into reckless and avoidable wars. I voted yes for this legislation that reaffirms Congress' constitutional authority to declare war. I expect in the near future the House will take up further debate and discussion of previous authorizations for war.

So, where do we go from here? The Administration must consult Congress in developing a comprehensive and coherent Iran strategy. This plan should focus on diplomacy and collaboration with our allies, with the goals of preventing an escalation to war, ending Iran's support for terrorism, keeping U.S. personnel and partners in the Middle East safe, and ensuring the regime never has access to a nuclear weapon.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with issues that concern you in the future. I welcome your input as I share ideas with my colleagues in the 116th Congress. I encourage you to visit my website at <https://frankel.house.gov/> to read my policy statements and learn how I voted on past legislation.

Sincerely,



Congresswoman Lois Frankel

**Washington, DC Office**

2305 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-9890

**Boca Raton District Office**

2500 N. Military Trail, Suite 490  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
Phone: 561-998-9045

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