

AMERICANS OPPOSE A HAWKISH FOREIGN POLICY AGAINST IRAN

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Data for Progress came out with its most recent polling on American views of U.S. foreign policy, showing support for de-escalation with Iran and disapproval of Trump's recent leadership in conflicts abroad.

Since the air strikes of Iranian-backed forces in Iraq, including the high-profile assassination of General Qassim Suleimani, America's relationship with Iran has been at the forefront of not only foreign policy discussions but also public debate. This presented an opportunity for newly attuned voters to share their views on U.S. intervention in the Middle East under Trump leadership. The results show that the public rejects further airstrikes against Iran, a future war with Iran, the president's unilateral war-making foreign policy authority, and interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries.

Of the 5,171 respondents, 45% oppose (vs 40% support) further U.S. airstrikes or other military action against Iran; 60% oppose (vs 26% support) the U.S. invading Iran; 47% believe Trump should have sought (vs 38% not sought) congressional approval before killing General Qassim Suleimani; and 51% think the U.S. should not interfere (vs 23% should interfere) in the internal affairs of other countries. Significantly, Independents align with Democrats on all four of these views, with Blacks voicing the most opposition to Trump's leadership than any other demographic.

Decades of misguided U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and Arabian Peninsula turned countries upside down, namely in Iraq and Afghanistan, and generated a power vacuum that was filled by Iran and Iranian-backed militia organizations. The answer to these conflicts is not unilateral military action executed by the president nor is it the start of a new endless war. The American people, whether or not they are aware of how these policies propagate the very problems we currently face, understand that our foreign policy based in pure military pressure and intimidation has done nothing but hurt our interests abroad.

These results indicate that there is a lot of room for Democrats to push back on Trump and Republican warmongering with force and with confidence of public support. The Democratic presidential nominee should have a track record of rejecting risky, high-stakes military interventions and rejecting meddling in the domestic affairs of other countries. A continued hawkish approach to foreign policy would be disastrous for the Democrats and the country. This and other recent polling show that Americans are looking for another option, another path in foreign policy. It is time for Democrats to be bold in opposing the U.S. imperialist interventions abroad, and work to reinvigorate the State Department and reduce the bloated and wasteful military budget.

Bernie Sanders is a candidate who has spoken boldly and decisively about the need to end our role in supporting the continued war and humanitarian crisis in Yemen, to cut arms sales to Saudi Arabia, end the endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and pursue diplomacy rather than war with Iran. Sanders has given far greater attention to foreign policy than in 2016. He has displayed an understanding of the sensitivity and monumental stakes of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis our allies and our enemies in the region, above and beyond other candidates in the field. In comparison, Mr. Buttigieg—Sanders' top competitor in the early states—recently refused to answer a broad range of foreign policy questions in an NYTimes interview and has refused to state if he would have assassinated General Suleimani in Trump's position.

It's time to push back against the decades long narrative that military intervention was and is our only option in the Middle East. This poll shows the consistent growing number of Americans who view our military interventions in the Middle East as failed, costly and bloody quagmire. We need a champion of the progressive vision on foreign policy that has never been seen in the White House. A vision that can and should be championed by a critic of the military-industrial complex, a critic of endless wars, and a supporter of reducing the U.S. destabilizing presence in the Middle East. I believe that Bernie Sanders can and should be that champion.