

Undermining Trump-Bolton War Narrative, British General Says No Evidence of ‘Increased Threat’ from Iran

By [Jake Johnson](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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A British general [threw a wrench](#) into the Trump administration’s [narrative](#) that Iran is plotting attacks on American troops in the Middle East by telling reporters gathered at the Pentagon Tuesday that “there’s been no increased threat from Iranian-backed forces” in the region.

“We monitor them along with a whole range of others because that’s the environment we’re in,” said Maj. Gen. Chris Ghika, speaking via video from Baghdad. “If the threat level seems to go up then we’ll raise our force protection measures accordingly.”

Apparently eager to squash the general’s remarks, the U.S. Central Command issued a [statement](#) just hours later disputing Ghika’s comments and repeating [national security adviser John Bolton’s unsubstantiated claim](#) that American intelligence has “identified credible threats” from “Iranian-backed forces” in Iraq and Syria.

UK vs US: Top British general says NO increased threat from Iranian-backed forces in Mideast; directly contradicts US claims used to justify regional military buildup.

US military spokesman slams the statement by top UK ally within hours. [#Iran](#)
<https://t.co/H16P6dRgJN>

— Sharmine Narwani (@snarwani) [May 15, 2019](#)

The public dispute came as anti-war voices and foreign policy analysts [warned](#) that the United States, led by Bolton, may be attempting to manufacture a false pretext to justify launching a war with Iran.

As *Common Dreams* [reported](#) on Tuesday, U.S. officials are—without any concrete evidence—attempting to blame Iran for attacks on oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz over the weekend.

The effort to pin the tanker attacks on Iran came just over a week after Bolton [used the planned deployment](#) of an American aircraft carrier and bomber task force to the Persian

Gulf to threaten Iran with military action and warn—again, without evidence—of “escalatory indications” from Iran.

According to the *New York Times*—which [reported](#) Monday that President Donald Trump has reviewed a Bolton-crafted plan to send 120,000 troops to the Middle East to threaten Iran—Trump administration officials are having a difficult time convincing America’s European allies to join them on their march to war.

As the *Times* [reported](#) Tuesday:

Intelligence and military officials in Europe as well as in the United States said that over the past year, most aggressive moves have originated not in Tehran, but in Washington—where John R. Bolton, the national security adviser, has prodded President Trump into backing Iran into a corner.

One American official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss confidential internal planning, said the new intelligence of an increased Iranian threat was “small stuff” and did not merit the military planning being driven by Mr. Bolton. The official also said the ultimate goal of the yearlong economic sanctions campaign by the Trump administration was to draw Iran into an armed conflict with the United States.

The anonymous American official’s assessment aligns with that of foreign policy observers, who have urgently warned in recent days that the Trump administration is escalating tensions with Iran in an effort to provoke an attack and spark an all-out war.

“John Bolton is methodically setting the stage for war with Iran—forcing Iran into a corner and then readying war plans for when Iran takes the bait,” Jamal Abdi, president of the National Iranian American Council, said in a [statement](#) on Monday.

Iran has thus far [acted with restraint](#) in the face of U.S. belligerence, urging diplomacy and attempting to restart negotiations with Europe over the terms of the Iran nuclear accord.

With tensions between the two nations reaching dangerous levels, U.S. Democratic presidential candidates have joined progressive anti-war groups in vowing to oppose the Trump administration’s efforts to start a military conflict with Iran.

In a [speech streamed online](#) Tuesday night, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) said “a war with Iran would be an absolute disaster.”

“The United States Congress must do everything it can,” said Sanders, “to prevent the Trump administration’s attempts to put us on the brink of a catastrophic and unconstitutional war with Iran that could lead to even more deaths than the Iraq War.”

The United States Congress must do everything it can to prevent the Trump Administration’s attempts to put us on the brink of a catastrophic and unconstitutional war with Iran. <https://t.co/n2Wbzcj2Pq>

— Bernie Sanders (@SenSanders) [May 14, 2019](#)

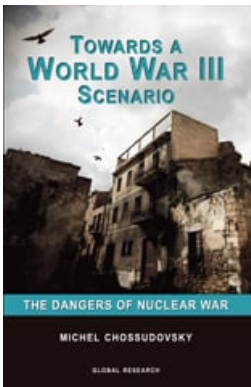
Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) [echoed](#) Sanders in a tweet Tuesday night, announcing her decision to co-sponsor [a bill](#) aimed at stopping a war with Iran.

“We cannot let the Trump admin drag us into yet another war in the Middle East,” Warren wrote. “This is exactly why the president doesn’t have the constitutional authority to declare war. That’s Congress’s job—and that’s why I’m supporting this legislation to prevent a war with Iran.”

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[“Towards a World War III Scenario: The Dangers of Nuclear War”](#)

by Michel Chossudovsky

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[Michel Chossudovsky](#) is Professor of Economics at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), which hosts the critically acclaimed website www.globalresearch.ca. He is a contributor to the Encyclopedia Britannica. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Reviews

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–John McMurtry, Professor of Philosophy, Guelph University

“In a world where engineered, pre-emptive, or more fashionably “humanitarian” wars of aggression have become the norm, this challenging book may be our final wake-up call.”

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Michel Chossudovsky exposes the insanity of our privatized war machine. Iran is being targeted with nuclear weapons as part of a war agenda built on distortions and lies for the purpose of private profit. The real aims are oil, financial hegemony and global control. The price could be nuclear holocaust. When weapons become the hottest export of the world’s only superpower, and diplomats work as salesmen for the defense industry, the whole world is recklessly endangered. If we must have a military, it belongs entirely in the public sector. No one should profit from mass death and destruction.

-Ellen Brown, author of ‘Web of Debt’ and president of the Public Banking Institute



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