

# Pompeo is “Setting the Stage for a War with Iran”

By [The Real News Network](#)

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*Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo suggested that the Trump administration would not rule out going to war with Iran even though there is no explicit authorization from Congress to do so. Pompeo said this in the context of being asked whether the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) could be used to attack Iran on the basis that Iran supported the 9/11 attacks and is connected to Al Qaeda, which carried out the 9/11 attack.*

“Do you believe that the 2001 authorization to go to war with those who attacked us on 9/11 applies to Iran or Iran’s Revolutionary Guard?” Senator Rand Paul asked Pompeo on April 11 during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

“I’d prefer to just leave that to lawyers,” Pompeo said, dodging the question.

“So you’re unwilling to state unequivocally that you, that the resolution in 2001 to have retribution and stop people who attacked us, that Iran had something to do with the attacks on 9/11?” Rand asked.

“The factual question with respect to Iran’s connections to Al Qaeda is very real,” Pompeo said. “They have hosted Al Qaeda, they permitted Al Qaeda to transit their country. There’s no doubt there is a connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Al Qaeda.”

Then on Monday, April 15, the Trump administration’s decision to designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization went into effect.

“Iran is not a sponsor of terrorism,” Colonel Larry Wilkerson told The Real News Network’s Greg Wilpert. “So to say that Iran sponsors terrorism of any sort, let alone Al Qaeda, is just preposterous. The greatest state sponsor of terrorism in the region and indeed in the world is Saudi Arabia—our ally.”

[In a previous interview with The Real News](#), Wilkerson criticized Pompeo’s initial declaration that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard was a “foreign terrorist organization” and called the Secretary of State “a fool.”

Wilkerson observed that the elements in this possible lead-up to war—from a president who does not seem to know the inner workings of his own administration’s military strategy to the involvement of hawkish National Security Advisor John Bolton—recall the invasion of Iraq in 2003 under President George W. Bush, where nonexistent Al Qaeda connections were used as justification for war.

“We’re operating in a way that’s inimical to, injurious to, U.S. national security interests,”

Wilkerson said. “To watch this as an academic and to watch it even more so, more profoundly, as a military professional is really jarring. This is truly stupid.”

Wilpert observed that “given that all of this groundwork ... being laid with the terrorism mission for Iran’s Revolutionary Guard and the claim of connections between Iran and Al Qaeda,” the U.S. was likely preparing for an attack on Iran, which would fall conveniently in the months leading up to the 2020 election.

“President Trump wants the tension, the pressure on Iran to bring Iran back to the negotiating table so he can claim—just prior to the 2020 elections—that he’s done the impossible: He’s brought Iran back to the table and we’re negotiating again, and that the deal he will produce will be much better than the deal President Obama produced,”

Wilkerson said. “I’m crossing my fingers and hoping that that’s the case and that at the end of the day none of this happens—that we won’t go to war.”

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