

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 6, 2017

Dear President Trump:

We write to share our grave concerns with what we see to be the rapid and unnecessary militarization of foreign policy and the seemingly dramatically reduced role for diplomacy in achieving key U.S. national security and international policy strategies and goals. We believe the path you appear to be charting is leading to the potential both for expanding U.S. military engagement in conflicts started before your Presidency as well as in destabilizing situations in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa that could lead to major conflicts, including the potential for escalation to nuclear war.

Since Congress has a vital role in achieving the Nation's diplomatic, military, and foreign policy objectives, we urge you to immediately lay out for Congress your long-term national security and military strategies, especially in regard to unfolding events in the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia. We believe that it would be irresponsible to lurch from crisis to crisis; making ad hoc decisions, especially involving securing Congressional approval, in advance, for decisions that will adversely affect our nation's fiscal matters, our international partners, and our brave service members.

Recent events are only symptoms of this problem: missile strikes against Syria, and the introduction of additional troops to the region to fight ISIS; a first time use of the "Mother of all Bombs" against ISIS in Afghanistan; reports of rapidly increasing U.S. military presence in Yemen and Afghanistan; the spike in civilian deaths as a result of U.S. operations, a critical problem in successful counter-insurgency efforts across the Middle East; and, threats of military action against North Korea.

We are also deeply concerned that the Department of Defense recently announced that "in order to maintain tactical surprise, ensure operational security and force protection, the coalition will not routinely announce or confirm information about the capabilities, force numbers, locations, or movement of forces in or out of Iraq and Syria," which is a drastic policy change from the former administration¹. Our Nation has a long tradition of appropriately balancing the protection of legitimately classified information and operational security, on the one hand, and the provision of appropriate information to Congress and the public on the other, which is the hallmark of our Nation's constitutional balance of powers among the Branches, and the

¹ Hennigan, W.J., "[Trump administration stops disclosing troop deployments in Iraq and Syria](#)", *LA Times*, March 30, 2017

preservation of the rights of our citizens to effectively govern their own affairs. We see this as a dangerous new precedent that seeks to dismantle our Nation's tradition of this transparency and accountability.

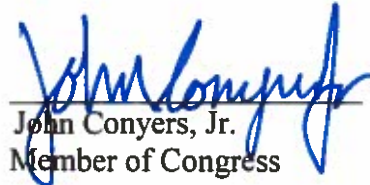
In conclusion, we request that your administration brief Congress and inform the American public on your military plans and long-term national security strategy and how they relate to both the prosecution of the several ongoing, unchecked wars in which we are engaged and the potential for new conflicts, especially on the Korean peninsula. The American people deserve to know the truth and the Constitution demands it be shared with Congress. We owe it to all Americans, especially our brave service members who are asked to fight these wars, to see the long-term strategy without delay.

CC: Secretary Tillerson, Secretary Mattis

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress




Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



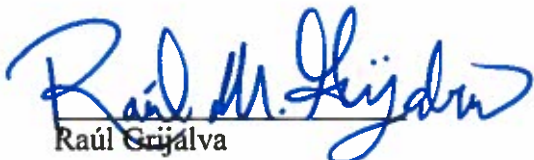
Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



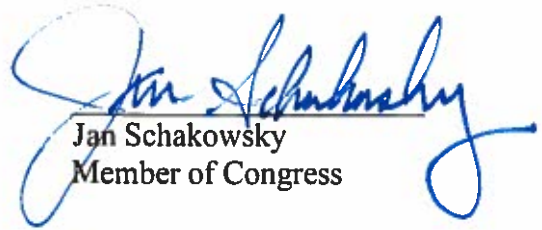
Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



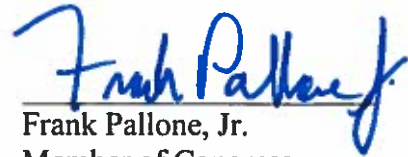
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



David Cicilline
Member of Congress



Mike Capuano
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress