

September 3, 2019

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Engel and Ranking Member Menendez:

We thank you for your efforts to bring about an end to the world's [largest humanitarian crisis](#) in Yemen. Your leadership has helped produce bicameral, bipartisan majorities of Congress repeatedly acting on the moral and constitutional imperative to end unauthorized U.S. participation in the Saudi and Emirati-led military intervention in Yemen. We ask that you make every effort to ensure this position becomes law through the National Defense Authorization Act of FY2020.

Repeated Congressional votes to end U.S. involvement in the Saudi- and Emirati-led war are largely [responsible](#) for the Trump administration's suspension of midair refueling for Saudi airstrikes last November. Congressional opposition also contributed to the reported [drawdown](#) of Emirati forces from the conflict. Nevertheless, "conditions for most people in Yemen are getting worse, not better," [noted](#) UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock in July. "The fighting rages on," he stated, with coalition aerial bombings continuing in cities across Yemen. "Since June, 120,000 more people have fled their homes, bringing total displacement this year to more than 300,000," while 500,000 cases of cholera were reported this year. [Eighty percent](#) of the population—more than 24 million people—needs assistance and protection, while 10 million rely on food aid to survive. "The death toll will surely grow," Lowcock concluded.

Ending hostilities is the essential first step toward easing the humanitarian emergency and negotiating a political solution to the conflict. Three House-passed NDAA amendments support this goal:

The Smith-Khanna-Schiff-Jayapal Amendment 26 terminates all unauthorized U.S. participation in Saudi- and Emirati-led hostilities against Yemen's Houthis, including U.S. logistical support and intelligence sharing considered indispensable for coalition airstrikes. CIA veteran Bruce Riedel, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, has [argued](#) that the coalition's aerial bombing campaign in Yemen "will be grounded" if the United States "halts the flow of logistics." Passed by a bipartisan 240-vote margin in the House, the amendment ratifies the intent of both chambers of Congress that passed a similar directive S.J.Res.7 by a 54-vote majority, directing the president to end U.S. participation in the war earlier this year.

Amendment 438, introduced by Representatives Malinowski, Cicilline, Lieu, Khanna,

Omar, Trone, Engel, and Smith, imposes a one-year ban on air-to-ground munitions sales, transfers, and licenses to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, for which 236 House members voted in support. In addition to preventing additional U.S.-sold weapons from being used to cause civilian harm in Yemen, it could also block the "emergency" sale of new air-to-ground munitions from being delivered to coalition countries that bipartisan majorities voted to block during consideration of S.J.Res. 36, 37, and 38 this summer.

The Lieu-Gabbard Amendment 23 prohibits the U.S. Special Defense Acquisition Fund from providing assistance—such as spare parts and munitions transfers—to Saudi Arabia if this assistance could be used in the ongoing war in Yemen, and passed the House with 239 votes in support. This amendment both complements and strengthens the enforcement of both the prohibition on U.S. participation in Saudi- and Emirati-led hostilities in Yemen and a one-year suspension of bombs transfers.

We urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that these amendments, reflecting the will of bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate, are included in the final FY2020 NDAA. Together these provisions effectively override President Trump's vetoes to S.J.Res. 7 and S.J.Res. 36,37, and 38. This would reaffirm Congress's power of the purse, oversight authority, and the right to make all necessary and proper laws to exercise its will, particularly with regard to what James Madison [considered](#) the "fundamental doctrine of the Constitution, that the power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature."

In the Senate report that accompanied the War Powers Act of 1973, lawmakers [noted](#) that Congress "can take no more useful and needed step toward the restoration of constitutional balance than to enact legislation to confirm and codify the intent of the framers of the Constitution with respect to the war power," which an NDAA with the aforementioned provisions would accomplish.

Thanks to your efforts to support the end of U.S. involvement in the Saudi and Emirati-led intervention in the civil war in Yemen, Congress has begun to exercise its constitutional war powers to a degree not seen in over 45 years. We therefore ask that you continue these efforts by ensuring the final FY2020 NDAA include House amendments 26, 438, and 23 as a culmination of this historic endeavor.

Sincerely,

About Face: Veterans Against the War
Action Corps
American Muslim Empowerment
Network
Antiwar.com
Arabian Rights Watch Association
Arms Control Association
Avaaz
Beyond the Bomb
Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and
Common Security
Center for Civilians in Conflict
Center for Economic and Policy
Research
Center for Interfaith Engagement
Center for International Policy
Center on Conscience & War
Church of the Brethren
Churches for Middle East Peace
CODEPINK
Common Defense
Conference of Superiors of Men
(Catholic)
CREDO
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress
Democracy for America
Engage Action
Environmentalists Against War
Friends Committee on National
Legislation (FCNL – Quakers)
Foreign Policy for America
In Defense of Christians
Indivisible
Interfaith Peace Network

Institute for Policy Studies, New
Internationalism Project
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Voice for Peace
Just Foreign Policy
Knowdrones.com
Libertarian Institute
Million Hoodies Movement for Justice
MoveOn
National Council of Churches
Neighbors for Peace
Our Developing World
Our Revolution
Peace Action
Peace Direct
People Demanding Action
Popular Resistance
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Public Citizen
RootsAction.org
Saferworld USA
STAND: The Student-Led Movement to
End Mass Atrocities
The United Methodist Church - General
Board of Church and Society
United for Peace and Justice
War Resisters League
Win Without War
Women Against Military Madness
Women Against War
Women Refugee Care
World BEYOND War
Yemen Freedom Council
Yemen Relief and Reconstruction
Foundation
Yemeni Alliance Committee