June 11, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry,

As the House continues its work on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), we urge you to include language prohibiting U.S. offensive military operations in the Republic of Iran and prohibiting direct action against Iran or its proxies without Congressional authorization.

We’re concerned about the recent escalation of tensions between the U.S. and Iran. The Trump Administration’s deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the Middle East, along with Iran’s recent threats to resume higher uranium enrichment have further increased the risk of a military confrontation.

Reports that the White House is considering military plans for war with Iran that include the deployment of 120,000 U.S. troops to the Middle East without notifying and briefing Congressional leaders is equally concerning.

Military action should only be used as a measure of last resort and any decision to do so must first be authorized by Congress which has the sole authority to declare war under Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. The Committee should make this clear to President Trump and his national security team.

We once again urge you to include language in the FY20 NDAA prohibiting U.S. offensive military operations in the Republic of Iran and prohibiting direct action against Iran or its proxies without Congressional authorization to ensure any decision to use military force against Iran is debated and considered by Congress in front of the American people.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Thomas Massie
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Katie Hill
Member of Congress

James A. Himes
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

Katie Porter  
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Matt Cartwright  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress
Carolyn Maloney  
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

Sean Casten  
Member of Congress

Josh Harder  
Member of Congress