Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 14, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1100 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Daniel Coats
Director
Office of the Director of the National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Secretary Mattis, Secretary Pompeo and Director Coats:

We write to express our deepening concern regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and to request a briefing for all House Members during the first week of September on the policy objectives of the United States with respect to Yemen. The briefing should include an update on Department of Defense (DOD) assistance to the Saudi-led coalition, counterterrorism activities against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS, and any other related activities or missions in the region.

Specifically, we would like an update on the situation in Hudaydah as a recent military escalation in the port city threatens to worsen the humanitarian crisis and undermine a negotiated political settlement. It is imperative for Members of Congress to fully understand the impact that hostilities, including airstrikes that have reportedly killed Hudaydah residents and damaged a sanitation facility and water treatment station, and the potential for further military escalations such as a siege on the port of Hudaydah, would have on the humanitarian crisis and prospects for a peace agreement. This is especially important considering UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths' efforts to secure a peace agreement among the conflict's parties.

Three years into the conflict, 22 million people require humanitarian assistance and almost 18 million people lack access to food. According to the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, grave dangers await more than 350,000 civilians in Hudaydah if hostilities around the city continue, or if Hudaydah were to become besieged. An escalation of violence could also limit access to shipments into the Port of Hudaydah at a time when 8.4 million people are threatened by famine. Additionally, those fleeing the fighting are arriving in districts highly prone to cholera, exacerbating concerns about access to safe water. Humanitarian assistance providers also remain concerned that they do not receive timely confirmation of their deconfliction

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requests, thereby increasing the risks to their personnel and to the very assistance that the international community is providing.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 includes section 1274, a review to determine whether the Armed Forces or coalition partners of the United States violated Federal law or Department of Defense policy while conducting operations in Yemen, and section 1290, certifications regarding actions by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen. As we consider legislative action going forward, we want to make sure that we have a full accounting of the United States' activities in Yemen, including the State Department's efforts to achieve a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, the Intelligence Community's assessment of the current situation, and Department of Defense activities in the region. Thus, please be prepared to address the following topics and questions:

1. What support, including direct and indirect, is the United States providing to Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the internationally recognized government of Yemen in the conflict with the Houthis? Under what authorities are these activities taking place? To what extent are these activities taking place in Yemen? Does the United States continue to refuel Coalition aircraft, and to what extent can the Pentagon distinguish between sorties flown by partners as part of the AQAP mission and as part of the anti-Houthi campaign? To the extent the United States cannot distinguish between those sorties, what are the difficulties and what would be required for the Department of Defense to distinguish appropriately?

2. What activities, if any, is the United States undertaking to counter-Iranian influence in Yemen? Under what authorities are these activities taking place?

3. Has the United States deemed the Houthis a threat to national security? What activities, if any, is the United States undertaking or planning, directly or indirectly, against the Houthis? Under what authorities are such activities conducted?

4. What activities and operations, if any, is the United States undertaking against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS in Yemen? What transnational threats do these organizations pose? How are these activities de-conflicted from the Saudi-led coalition activities against the Houthis? Under what authorities are such activities and operations conducted? How and to what extent has the conflict with the Houthis impacted al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula?

5. What is the J2 Intelligence Directorate's assessment regarding Hudaydah and its port? Is this view shared by the Intelligence Community broadly? What is the assessment of the Intelligence Community regarding recent media allegations that individuals associated with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula may be involved in efforts against the Houthis?

We are grateful for your attentiveness to this request and look forward to working with you to set up a briefing.

Sincerely,

Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
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Barbara Lee
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Gregory W. Meeks
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Anthony G. Brown
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