

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 9, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20500

Mr. President,

We write to express concern that a trade of military strikes by the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Iraq may put the two countries on the path to a full-blown military conflict.

Your unilateral decision to kill Qassem Soleimani appears to have neither advanced U.S. and international security nor lessened the threats the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps poses to the region and beyond. While General Soleimani was implicated in the killing of hundreds of brave U.S. soldiers and personnel, this disproportionate response to recent Iranian provocations spurred a retaliatory ballistic missile strike by Iran against two Iraqi military bases that house U.S. military and coalition force members. Any future escalatory action by the United States could perpetrate a cycle of tit-for-tat military actions that would put our allies, partners, and civilians in the region at grave risk.

The apparent lack of rigorous planning for this important decision or a plan for de-escalation, as well as your defiance of the Congress — and its constitutionally defined role to declare war — heightens the security risk to all Americans. We urge the Administration to heed the below requests to avert a war that could lead to untold loss of life and trillions of dollars:

1. Cease any further military action against Iran without obtaining Congress's express statutory authorization for the use of military force, consistent with the authority that Article I of the United States Constitution vests in Congress, and further clarified by the War Powers Resolution of 1973.
2. Share with Congress and the American people specifics of what Secretary of State Pompeo referenced as the "imminent threats to American lives" that preceded the targeted assassination of General Soleimani and Mahdi al-Mohandes of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), and why you selected the most extreme military option presented to you.
3. Engage in talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and/or senior Iranian leaders, as you have stated a willingness to do in the past, with the goal of agreeing to risk-reduction measures to defuse the current crisis and prevent an all-out war.
4. Make it clear that, while the United States shares the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people, it is not the intention of the United States to externally impose regime change on the Government of Iran. The future of Iran must be determined by the will of the Iranian

people, and the Iranian people alone.

5. Cease all threats against Iranian civilians and cultural sites and clarify that the United States is committed to following the laws of armed conflict. Targeting cultural sites with military action is a war crime under international law, as referenced by a U.N. Security Council resolution supported by your administration in 2017 and by the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property.

Mr. President, there is still time to avoid a catastrophic war with Iran. But that requires a sharp departure from your Administration's lack of rigorous planning that have helped lead us to this perilous moment.

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

  
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

  
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

  
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator


  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress




Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress




Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



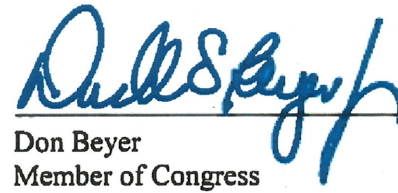
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Donald Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



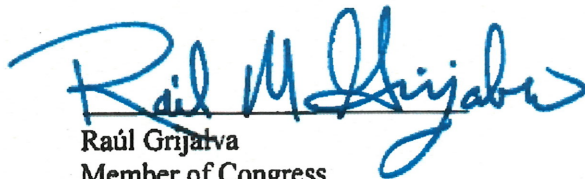
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Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



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Don Beyer  
Member of Congress




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Raúl Grijalva  
Member of Congress



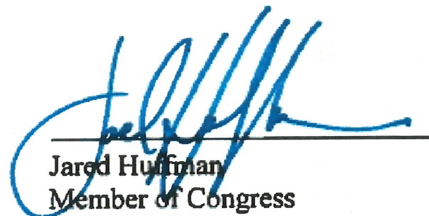
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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress