

TED W. LIEU
33RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

415 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3976

5055 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 310
LOS ANGELES, CA 90036
(310) 662-3095

1600 ROSECRANS AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
MANHATTAN BEACH, CA 90266
(310) 321-7664

August 29, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

On August 8, your administration notified Congress of intent to sell \$1.15 billion of weapons to Saudi Arabia, including tanks which would replace tanks destroyed in Saudi Arabia's war against Houthi rebels in Yemen.

We respectfully urge you to postpone this plan and withdraw the notification for the following reasons.

Past Congressional concerns about Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen have not been addressed. In October, Members of Congress wrote to you urging greater efforts to avoid civilian casualties in Yemen and achieve a diplomatic solution to the conflict. In June, 204 Members of the House, including 40 Republicans and all but 16 Democrats, voted to block the transfer of cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia after reports of their use in civilian areas in Yemen. Yet, just in the last several days, a Saudi airstrike on a school in Yemen killed 10 children – some as young as 6-years-old – and a Saudi airstrike on an MSF hospital in Yemen killed 11 people.

Indeed, Amnesty International has documented at least 33 unlawful airstrikes by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition across Yemen that appear to have deliberately targeted civilians and civilian facilities, such as hospitals, schools, markets, and places of worship. These attacks may amount to war crimes.

This military campaign has had a deeply troubling impact on civilians. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 3,704 civilians, including 1,121 children have been killed during the conflict. 2.8 million Yemenis have been internally displaced by the fighting, with 83 percent of the population now dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival. Any decision to sell more arms to Saudi Arabia should be given adequate time for full deliberation by Congress.

We are concerned, however, that the timing of this notification during the August Congressional recess could be interpreted to mean that Congress has little time to consider the arms deal when it returns from recess within the 30 day window established by law. We are not aware of any compelling reason why Congressional approval of the sale could not be postponed to allow for meaningful Congressional debate on this issue that has major implications for both civilians in Yemen as well as our national security.

In announcing your decision to seek Congressional authorization for the use of force against the Syrian government in 2013, you stated that: "I've long believed that our power is rooted not just in our military might, but in our example as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people." We strongly agree. We urge you to delay this proposed arms deal so that the people's representatives in Congress can give these issues the full deliberation that they deserve.

Thank you kindly for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



TED W. LIEU
Member of Congress



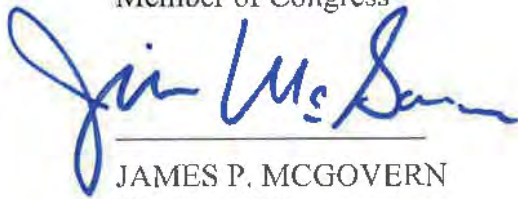
TED S. YOHIO
Member of Congress



JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress



MICK MULVANEY
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress



JIM MCDERMOTT
Member of Congress



DAVID CICILLINE
Member of Congress



JOHN LEWIS
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress



KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Member of Congress



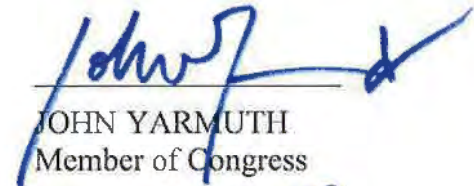
PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



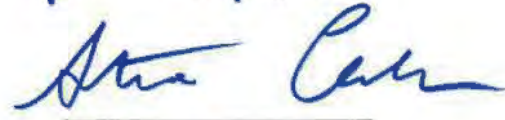
ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress



JOHN YARMUTH
Member of Congress



HANK JOHNSON
Member of Congress



STEVE COHEN
Member of Congress



ALCEE HASTINGS
Member of Congress



BOBBY RUSH
Member of Congress



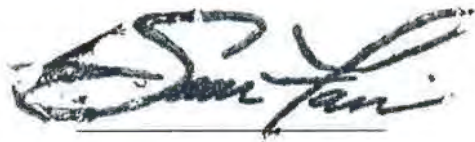
ALAN GRAYSON
Member of Congress



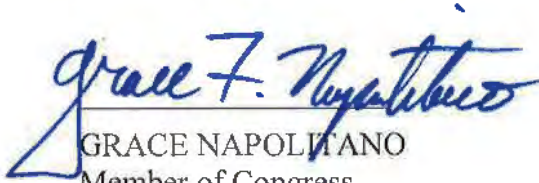
LLOYD DOGGETT
Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



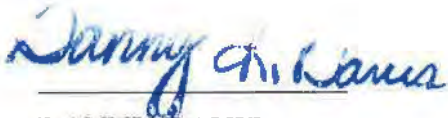
SAM FARR
Member of Congress



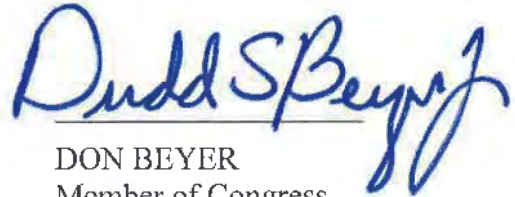
GRACE NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress



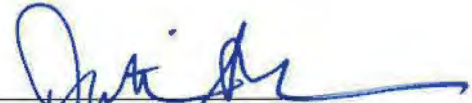
DANNY DAVIS
Member of Congress



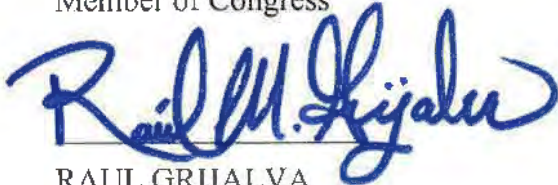
DON BEYER
Member of Congress



BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress



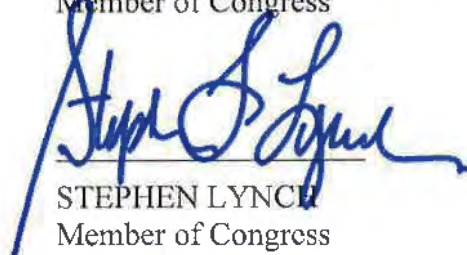
JUSTIN AMASH
Member of Congress



RAUL GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



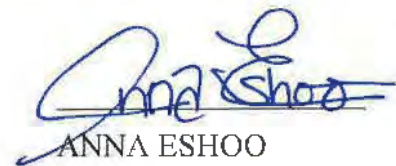
BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress



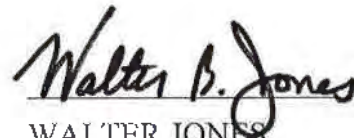
STEPHEN LYNCH
Member of Congress



MARK POCAN
Member of Congress



ANNA ESHOO
Member of Congress



WALTER JONES
Member of Congress



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress



DONALD PAYNE, JR.
Member of Congress



ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress



GWEN MOORE
Member of Congress



RICHARD NEAL
Member of Congress



EMANUEL CLEAVER II
Member of Congress



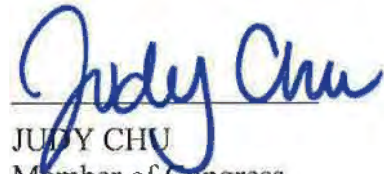
COLLIN PETERSON
Member of Congress



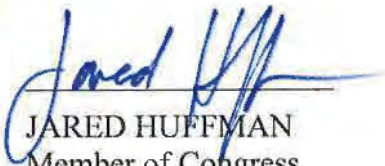
FREDERICA WILSON
Member of Congress



JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



JUDY CHU
Member of Congress



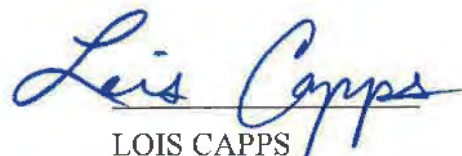
JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress



MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



DONNA EDWARDS
Member of Congress



BEN RAY LUJAN
Member of Congress



WILLIAM KEATING
Member of Congress



JARED POLIS
Member of Congress



DAVE LOEBSACK
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NIKI TSONGAS
Member of Congress



THOMAS MASSIE
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RICHARD NOLAN
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BILL PASCRELL, JR.
Member of Congress



DAVID E. PRICE
Member of Congress



JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress



KATHERINE CLARK
Member of Congress



KAREN BASS
Member of Congress



MICHAEL E. CAPUANO
Member of Congress