Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Esper:

We write to express serious concern about reports that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) provided U.S.-origin military equipment to secessionist forces in Yemen and that the so-called Islamic State is exploiting unrest in southern Yemen. We request an urgent briefing on all details surrounding these allegations.

According to a CNN investigation, which aired on October 18, 2019, the UAE provided U.S.-produced Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs) to the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a collection of secessionist forces, in their recent conflict against the internationally recognized government of Yemen.

The STC campaign in southern Yemen greatly destabilized the region, a situation that has benefited the local Islamic State affiliate, which recently launched its first successful attack in Aden in more than a year. This development is worrying given the significant U.S. counterterrorism effort in Yemen and concerns about the group's resurgence in Syria and Iraq.

On February 26, Chairman Engel led a letter to Secretary Pompeo and former Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan to express deep concern over reports that the UAE and Saudi Arabia transferred U.S.-origin military equipment and weapons to al-Qaeda-linked terrorist groups in Yemen in direct violation of existing arms agreements with the United States.

The MRAPs reportedly provided to the STC and the equipment previously provided to al-Qaeda linked groups are allegedly part of the same weapons deal with the UAE. This arms sale included an end user agreement that certified the UAE as the final user of the weaponry. New reports of unauthorized Emirati transfers of U.S.-made equipment raise major concerns about the efficacy of current end-use monitoring agreements with the UAE.

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We request an urgent briefing from you on the reported unauthorized transfer of U.S.-origin weapons and equipment, including an update on any current investigations by the Department of Defense and/or the Department of State, the status of the Islamic State in Yemen, any steps the United States is taking in response to these allegations, and how bilateral agreements and end-use monitoring will improve in the future.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee

TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress

TED W. LIEU
Member of Congress

DAVID N. CICILLINE
Member of Congress

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