

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Bipartisan Group of 16 Lawmakers Threaten to Block U.S. military Escalation in Yemen if not Briefed by Pentagon

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Washington, D.C. – U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan (D-WI), Justin Amash (R-MI), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), John Conyers (D-MI), Jim McGovern (D-MA) and 10 other members of Congress sent a bipartisan letter to Defense Secretary James Mattis urgently calling on him to brief Congress at his “earliest opportunity” before the U.S. approves or assists a potentially catastrophic military action by Saudi Arabia in Yemen.

Secretary Mattis was reported to have proposed U.S. military support for a Saudi-led assault on the Yemeni port of Hodeida, through which the vast majority of food shipments must pass before reaching millions of Yemenis on the brink of famine. Aid agencies, experts, and the United Nations have warned that a U.S.-backed Saudi operation could trigger mass starvation in a country ravaged by the two-year-old war and Saudi-imposed blockade.

“In the face of Yemen’s senseless humanitarian tragedy,” write the Members of Congress, “we are committed to using our Constitutional authority to assert greater oversight over U.S. involvement in the conflict and promote greater public debate regarding U.S. military participation in Yemen’s civil war, which has never been authorized by Congress.” They conclude: “Should the administration remain unresponsive to our repeated inquiries into the nature of U.S. engagement in a potentially catastrophic Saudi attack on Hodeida, we will pursue legislation to explicitly prohibit U.S. involvement in any such an assault.”

Last month, in a bipartisan request, Rep. Pocan and 54 of his colleagues asked President Trump a simple question: what legal justification is the White House claiming for escalating U.S. involvement in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen—a war that's never been authorized by Congress?

The letter to Secretary Mattis was signed by U.S. Reps. Mark Pocan (D-WI), Justin Amash (R-MI), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), John Conyers (D-MI), Jim McGovern (D-MA), Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ), Peter A. DeFazio (D-OR), Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Darren Soto (D-FL), Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Peter Welch (D-VT), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), and Karen Bass (D-CA). An electronic copy can be found [here](#).