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Dear Democratic Colleagues:

As we begin to organize for the 120th Congress, I would like to ask for your support to continue serving our caucus as the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

During my time as both the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, it has been my priority to ensure that every Member of our caucus has an opportunity for their voices to be heard and that the committee is inclusive in our work. This approach has ensured that the annual National Defense Authorization Act addresses a diverse range of Member priorities and strengthens our national security. I believe this approach and legislative process is even more critical now, at a time when we have a runaway Executive Branch, when we need to work together to craft legislation that reasserts Congress' role and the voice of the American people in setting our defense policy.

As Chairman, the Armed Services Committee's top priority in the 120th Congress will be to conduct vigorous oversight of the Department of Defense and the Trump Administration. As a start, we must demand a level of public transparency and accountability by requiring more public testimony from senior Pentagon officials. I also believe it is important to reestablish an Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee to help support the committee's work. The list of potential oversight topics is long, but the illegal war against Iran, unauthorized military strikes in the Caribbean and Latin America, and the deployment of the military to U.S. cities are high on the list. We must also carefully examine contracts and other financial support awarded to private companies to ensure they are in the best interest of the taxpayers, are free from conflicts of interest or favoritism, and were awarded consistent with legal authorities and procedures.

I also believe we must thoroughly review our national defense strategy and develop a more realistic and sustainable approach that does not require a defense budget in excess of $1 trillion or paid for through draconian cuts to critical domestic programs. The Trump Administration's view that "might makes right" and a unilateral approach that overly relies on military solutions is not a prudent, realistic, or sustainable approach. It has alienated us and done more to destabilize the world than protect our interests. We need a strategy that provides a credible military deterrent, works to strengthen our international partnerships, and seeks to avoid costly wars of choice.

The Armed Services Committee has spent a significant amount of time reforming the way the Pentagon buys things: reducing barriers, streamlining the requirements process, and delivering capabilities at the speed of relevance. While reforming the way the Pentagon buy things is important, we also need to reform the way resources are spent and accounted for. Investment in new weapon systems must take lessons learned from recent conflicts and provide relevant capabilities in a more cost-effective manner. We should be investing in more low-cost munitions, uncrewed systems, and drone and missile defense capabilities. We need an appropriate mix of

high-end survivable systems and lower-cost attritable capabilities, not a fleet of nuclear-powered battleships as proposed by the President.

If reelected to lead the Armed Services Committee, I remain committed to finding a way to pass the National Defense Authorization Act and have it enacted into law. This will necessitate us working with Republicans, despite the Trump Administration and the current political environment making that more difficult each day. I know working with them will be extraordinarily difficult and I will never sacrifice important principles just to get a bill done. Having successfully countered the Trump Administration's efforts to weigh down the bill in the past while achieving real successes, such as enactment of paid parental leave for federal workers, I have no doubt that we can make progress on many issues important to our Caucus in the 120th Congress.

As we organize for the 120th Congress, I would be honored to receive your support to serve as the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely,



Adam Smith
Member of Congress