Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

James R. Clapper
Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, DC 20511-0001

Jeffery D. Zients
OMB Acting Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503-0009

Dear Secretary Panetta, Director Clapper and Acting Director Zients:

We write to you regarding the potential costs of going to war in an attempt to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. We share President Barack Obama's belief that a nuclear-armed Iran would seriously undermine the security of the United States and our allies in the Middle East. We also support his administration's firm commitment to preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons through targeted sanctions and diplomacy.

It is in large part because we endeavor to keep nuclear weapons from proliferating to Iran that we are very concerned about the growing prospect of launching a new war against it. The current discourse over how to deal with Iran's nuclear program is disconcerting for several reasons. Numerous American and Israeli security experts have warned that a military strike against Iran would likely fail to stop its nuclear program, and could even trigger its acceleration. Moreover, these experts have cautioned that Iran could counter the use of force against it by igniting a regional war through its terrorist proxies that would gravely imperil the populations of our allies and U.S. troops stationed throughout the Middle East and Afghanistan. A strike on Iran would also undermine Iran's domestic opposition movement, by allowing the Iranian regime to rally the Iranian people around their national leaders in response to foreign attack.

After the past decade of wars in the Middle East paid on the nation's credit card, our troops have been stretched to their limits and our fiscal situation remains precarious. Military hostilities could

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easily escalate into a conventional war with Iran which could place an untenable burden on our troops as well as threaten our economic recovery by incurring tremendous new debt and destabilizing oil prices. Further, with Congress now considering appropriations for Fiscal Year 2013— including the prospect of a sequester— the time is more than ripe for considering the practical and fiscal costs of the use of force against Iran.

We request a report assessing the projected costs of a potential war with Iran. The report would address the following (with appropriate classified appendixes):

- The scope, duration, potential number of combat troops (including National Guard and Reserve Forces) and costs of military action by the United States Armed Forces that would be required to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons or the capability to produce such weapons.
- Additional measures that would be necessary to protect members of the United States Armed Forces and the United States Armed Forces' facilities in the Middle East, Afghanistan, and elsewhere from the Iranian forces and their proxies following a military attack by the United States or any of its allies against Iran.
- Any other factors relating to the efficacy, risks, and costs of the use of military force by the United States against Iran as a means of deterring or neutralizing Iran's nuclear program.

The United States is only now transitioning out of a period of nearly a decade of war. It is essential that we understand clearly what another war would do to our economic and national security, and the safety of our troops. Having your full assessment of the costs of war with Iran will allow Congress to have an informed discussion on this pressing issue.

Please contact Teddy Miller in Rep. Lee's office at (202) 225-2661 or teddy.miller@mail.house.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

John Conyers
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Raùl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
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Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

John W. Olver
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Nick J. Rahall
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Charles B. Rangel
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Bobby L. Rush
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Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress