

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 4, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write as bipartisan Members of Congress who share your goals of protecting American families from the deadly toll of narcotics and of halting the flow of these substances into our country. We understand that beginning on September 2, 2025, the United States military began carrying out lethal strikes against boats reportedly smuggling drugs in the Caribbean Sea and the Eastern Pacific Ocean and has conducted fifteen such strikes to date. In a notification to Congress dated September 15, 2025, your administration provided a justification for the use of lethal military force, and on October 30, 2025, representatives briefed members of the House Committee on Armed Services on the strikes. We remain committed to public safety and have questions about the strategy and legal status of these strikes.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you provide thorough answers to the questions below no later than November 14th, 2025.

1. Do you intend to request an Authorization for the Use of Military Force from Congress for this operation? If you do not believe that to be necessary, please explain your rationale.
2. The September notification states that the United States is now in a non-international armed conflict with drug-trafficking organizations, which represents a major shift in how our country fights transnational crime. Under what specific legal authority are these strikes being conducted?
3. For decades, counter-drug operations in this region have been conducted via visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) missions with DoD in a supporting role. Why have you pivoted to employing lethal strikes instead of using those resources in support of law enforcement-based interdiction and arrest operations?
4. What is your plan to brief Congress at the appropriate classification level on the military intelligence used to designate certain transnational criminal organizations as terrorist groups and to positively identify the vessels and individuals subject to these strikes?
5. Cartels often force low-income individuals into maritime smuggling through threats or deception. What evidence confirms that those killed were cartel operatives, rather than coerced, deceived, or trafficked civilians? What review mechanisms exist to investigate and

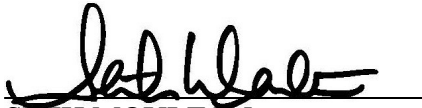
assess strikes? Will Congress receive post-strike identity verification and target assessment reports for every engagement?

6. Your administration has deemed the individuals on these boats to be unlawful combatants posing an imminent threat to U.S. security that warrants lethal engagement. At the same time, survivors of the October 16 strike were repatriated to their home country with no agreement for their prosecution. Could you clarify how this approach aligns with your stated legal and policy rationale?

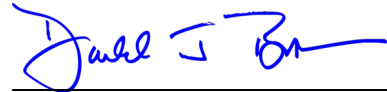
We strongly support the effort to reduce the flow of narcotics into this country. This effort, like every action the United States military takes, must be done within the legal, moral, and ethical framework that sets us apart from our adversaries. We look forward to hearing your answers on this critical national security issue.

We respectfully request a response by November 14th, 2025. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress