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One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

April 8, 2019

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are following up on a February 26 request by the Chairman and Ranking member of our Committee—to which the Department has not responded—and our interactions with you when you testified on March 27 before the Committee, requesting that Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad brief Committee members on the U.S. diplomatic strategy for Afghanistan reconciliation. The State Department's lack of transparency with Congress on a foreign policy issue of this magnitude is unacceptable and hinders this body's constitutional oversight responsibilities.

During your recent testimony before the Committee, you refused to make a commitment that Ambassador Khalilzad would be made available for a member-level briefing on the negotiation and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and scoffed at the notion that this is an important subject for congressional oversight. As a justification for this refusal, you made the insulting suggestion that members of the Committee would leak sensitive or classified information to the media. You also incorrectly asserted that the Department doesn't brief Congress on "secret" negotiations, knowing full well that successive administrations have routinely briefed the Committee on the status of sensitive talks with Iran, North Korea, and the Taliban.

In fact, the Obama Administration's first Special Representative for Afghanistan, the late Richard Holbrooke, and several of his successors—including Ambassadors Marc Grossman and James Dobbins—briefed our members extensively on efforts to bring this long war to an end.

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The refusal to allow Ambassador Khalilzad to brief our Committee is even more perplexing in light of the fact that the Ambassador has engaged in a number of on-the-record interactions that outline the parameters of these negotiations, including with members of the press, participation at think tank events, and via his official tweets.

We urge you to immediately reverse your untenable position and commit to having Ambassador Khalilzad brief this committee within seven days of his return to the United States. As we know you appreciate from your service in Congress, the Committee has the right to such information, and we are prepared to use every tool at our disposal to ensure that we are able to conduct our constitutionally mandated oversight responsibilities.

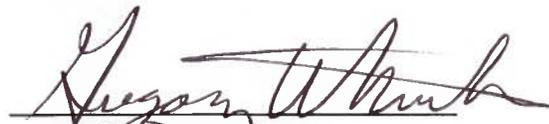
Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman



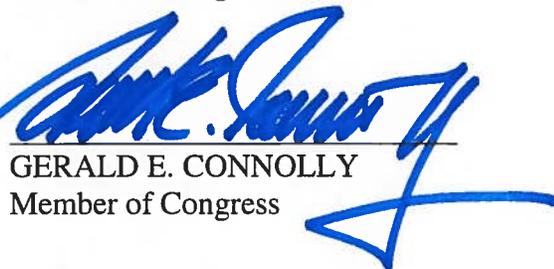
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Member of Congress



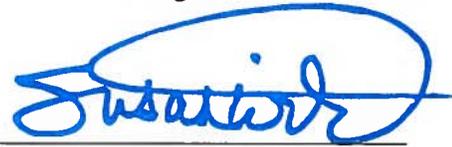
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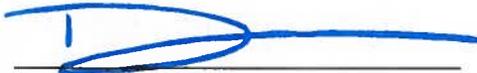
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Member of Congress



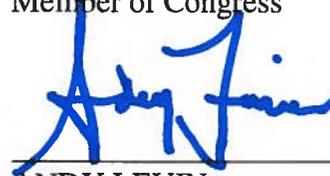
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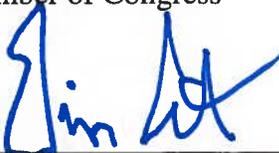


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