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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

JOHN P. KEAST, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
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October 6, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E970
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

On October 1, 2025, the Senate Armed Services Committee received a classified briefing from your Department regarding ongoing military operations in the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) area of operations, including the three lethal strikes executed in September. During the briefing, both majority and minority members requested additional information be provided to the committee with respect to the legal and policy underpinnings and other aspects of these operations to date.

Therefore, to conduct appropriate congressional oversight of these operations, we request you provide the committee with:

- 1.) Any written opinion issued by the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel opining on the domestic or international legal basis for these operations and strikes;
- 2.) A complete list of all designated terrorist organizations and drug trafficking organizations with whom the President has determined the United States is in a non-international armed conflict with and against whom the President has determined lethal military force may be used, as referenced in the report provided to the committee pursuant to section 1230 of the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 118-31);
- 3.) All Execute Orders approved by the Secretary or the commander of a combatant command underpinning Departmental activities to combat drug trafficking cartels as required by section 1067 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118-159) and section 1744 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116-92);
- 4.) A notice of changes to the legal and policy framework report as required by section 1549 of title 50, United States Code; and

5.) Unedited video of the three lethal strikes conducted in the southern Caribbean Sea on September 2nd, 15th, and 19th.

Thank you for your prompt response to this request.

Sincerely,



Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee



Senator Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee