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House Armed Services Committee Democrats' Priorities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Armed Services Committee (HASC) Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-Wash.) released the following statement outlining HASC Democrats' priorities for the year ahead:

“We face many national security challenges. As we look to this year and beyond, Congress must play a critical role in addressing these issues. There will be opportunities to work together in a bipartisan manner and there will be occasions when House Armed Services Committee Democrats will strongly disagree with the Trump Administration. Chiefly, Congress must reestablish its authority and responsibility as a co-equal branch of government. Looking at the year ahead and beyond, the following areas will be a focus for the House Armed Services Committee Democrats:

- **Iran:** We're over a month into Trump's disastrous war of choice and we've yet to receive a clear strategy from the president despite the staggering costs, including the deaths of 13 U.S. service members and hundreds more injured, billions' worth of munitions and military equipment lost, and the resulting chaos that has engulfed the Middle East and thrust the U.S. and global economies into freefall. Congress must fulfill its duty to provide oversight to ensure a complete accounting of the risks to U.S. service members and civilian harm and the use and replenishment of materiel.
- **Oversight and Transparency:** Holding more frequent public events, congressional investigations, and legislative action would serve as vital checks and balances on the Trump Administration. The staggering lack of transparency and adherence to the law by this administration has resulted in the expanded use of military force overseas without congressional authorization, including a major combat operation against Iran; the deployment of U.S. troops in American cities; the illegal repurposing of taxpayer funds; the use of the Department of Defense's weapons in U.S. domestic airspace; politicization of the military and civilian workforce; and the unilateral decision to rename the Department of Defense. The list of issues in need of congressional oversight and transparency is long and continues to grow.
- **Acquisition Reform and Innovation:** Last year, Congress delivered acquisition reforms that will fundamentally shape future generations. We need to continue to build on these

reforms to strengthen our domestic industrial base and deliver capabilities to the military in a faster and more cost-effective manner. And we need to do so with an eye toward procuring and sustaining needed capabilities in a way that is realistic both for industry and federal budget. This means taking a hard look at legacy systems, the future of warfare, and vanity projects that were put forward to pacify the President Trump, while investing in key areas needed to provide for the defense of the country now and into the future.

- **Returning to Appropriate Missions:** The Trump Administration has deployed the U.S. military to U.S. cities, assigned judge advocates to serve as immigration judges, detailed civilians to the Department of Homeland Security, and carried out counterproductive culture wars against the military and civilian workforce, civilian educational and research institutions, and non-profit organizations. These political decisions detract from the military's core missions, reduce the Department's readiness, threaten our country's position at the forefront of global innovation, and erode public trust and confidence in the military. Reining in mission creep needs to be a focus of the committee.
- **Competing for Talent:** We must continue our focus on recruiting, developing, and retaining the military and civilian talent we need. To do so, we must provide military personnel, civilians, and their families with quality benefits and a reasonable standard of living. We also must celebrate their public service and respect their diverse backgrounds, views, and experiences. This requires addressing the Trump Administration's sustained assault on the federal workforce through denial of collective bargaining rights, arbitrary layoffs, the promotion of loyalty to a political ideology over competence for key senior military and civilian positions, and the erosion of the apolitical foundation of the armed forces by engaging in political speeches and rallies at military installations.
- **International Partnerships and Alliances:** The Trump Administration has alienated partners and allies through threats and intimidation. Partnerships and alliances, especially with NATO, are more important than ever, as are their contributions to global stability and the rules-based order. We must work to restore America's position as a reliable lawful partner, strengthen existing partnerships, and develop new ones to help ensure a more safe and secure world.

We have our work cut out for us, but House Armed Services Committee Democrats are working on behalf of our national security. We stand strong in our commitment to the duty of Congress to provide for the common defense. We are united in the fight to ensure that Congress fulfills its responsibility as a co-equal branch of government, regardless of who is president. We continue to stand in strong support of the service members, civilians, and military families who have dedicated themselves to keeping us safe at home and aboard. They are the heart and backbone of the national defense.”