

June 24, 2019

Dear Members of the Illinois Delegation,

We write to request your support for S.J.Res.11 and H.R.1004 – Prohibiting Unauthorized Military Action in Venezuela Resolution of 2019 – introduced by Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Representative Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Congress's adoption of S.J.Res.11 and H.R.1004 could not come at a more urgent time. U.S. officials in charge of policy toward Venezuela, such as Elliott Abrams, have pursued a strategy provocation and confrontation. In violation of the Charter of the Organization of the American States, and the Charter of the United Nations, and therefore treaty obligations of the United States, President Trump has publicly declared that all options, including U.S. military force, are on the table. Former acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe recounted that in 2017 President Trump privately argued that Venezuela is the “country we should be going to war with. They have all that oil and they’re right on our back door.”

National Security Advisor John Bolton has publicly stated that “in this administration, we’re not afraid to use the word Monroe Doctrine,” has clutched documents referring to a proposal to deploy “5,000 troops to Colombia,” and has argued that “it will make a big difference to the United States economically if we could have American oil companies really invest in and produce the oil capabilities in Venezuela.” Meanwhile, Secretary Pompeo explicitly endorsed U.S. military action recently stating: “Military action is possible. If that’s what’s required, that’s what the United States will do” in Venezuela.

We applaud Congress for voting to reassert its sole authority over war and peace under Article I of the Constitution and working to bring an end to the unauthorized U.S.-Saudi military campaign in Yemen with the historic passage of the Yemen War Powers Resolution. S.J.Res.11 and H.R.1004 both invoke the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

We call on you to again ensure that Congressional war powers be exercised in the case of Venezuela through Congress's adoption of S.J.Res.11 and H.R.1004. Administration officials and members of Congress who seek to involve the United States military in a regime change effort in Venezuela have a constitutional obligation to present their case to both chambers of Congress and have the people’s duly elected representatives carefully debate and vote on whether to authorize any such proposal.

Sincerely,

About Face: Veterans Against the War & Iraq Veterans Against the War (Chicago)

Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training

American Friends Service Committee – Chicago

AWARE of Champaign Urbana

CAPA DePaul

CAPA Loyola

CCAWR (Chicago Committee Against War and Racism)

Chicago Committee for Justice in Ayotzinapa

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America - CRLN

Clean Count Cook County

Just Foreign Policy

Neighbors For Peace, Evanston/Chicago

Students for Justice in Palestine

Veterans For Peace - Chicago Chapter

Voices for Creative Nonviolence