

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 27, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
U.S. Department of War
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

I am writing to strongly oppose the May 13, 2026, letter sent to you by Rep. Jesús “Chuy” García, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and nearly 20 other House Democrats. Their call to suspend U.S.-Ecuador joint operations suggests a dangerous misunderstanding of South America’s narco-terrorism crisis, of the dedication and commitment made by U.S. Special Forces, and possibly a willingness to undermine America’s national security in exchange for attention.

President Daniel Noboa has taken on the enormous security crisis he inherited from Ecuador’s previous administrations. Under his leadership, Ecuador is finally pushing back hard against narco-terrorists by targeting the drug cartels, human smuggling rings, and criminal groups responsible for flooding American communities with deadly drugs. It is deeply troubling that these Democratic lawmakers are trying to tie the hands of both U.S. and Ecuadorian forces based on unverified allegations.

I was born in Colombia, where I had a front-row seat to the destruction that narco-terrorist organizations inflict on the families and communities in the entire region. The notion that U.S. elected officials would use their seats to scold President Noboa, a strong U.S. ally, for defeating these groups is not only ill-informed but borders on moral bankruptcy at the expense of Latinos on both sides of our border. While the cartels continue to murder, traffic drugs, and destroy lives, their letter sends a damaging message across Latin America that a vocal group in Washington prioritizes protecting a narrative over defeating these organizations.

I urge you to reject the demands in Rep. García’s letter. Instead, we should expand support for President Noboa’s government and strengthen our joint efforts to dismantle these criminal networks. The United States should stand firmly with allies who are willing to fight. Thank you for your leadership on these critical issues. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



BERNIE MORENO
United States Senator