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By Appointment**Congress of the United States**
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HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
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RANKING MEMBER, CONGRESSIONAL-
EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINAwww.chrissmith.house.gov

March 26, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for your leadership in addressing the unprecedented global health and economic crisis brought upon by the coronavirus. I wish, however, to request your assistance with regard to an unfolding and urgent crisis impacting east Africa – a plague of locusts threatening mass starvation – where a simple intervention by the United States may have an outsized positive impact.

Specifically, I understand through contact with Executive Director David Beasley of the World Food Programme (WFP) that there are insufficient resources to conduct aerial spraying to address the outbreak of desert locusts that is currently devastating countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, South Sudan and Uganda. I ask that you therefore make available any resources which may be requested – such as the 910 Airlift Wing, based in Youngstown Ohio – to support the WFP's locust control efforts in east Africa.

By way of background, USAID reports that this is the worst locust outbreak in east Africa in decades that will devour crops across the region. There are an estimated 10 million people at risk of hunger right now in the affected areas right now, and untold more will be at risk if the locusts, currently in their most vulnerable state, are not controlled using airborne pesticides, before they mature into full grown locusts in late March through April, coinciding with the spring planting season. On March 17, the Food and Agriculture Organization stated "The situation remains extremely alarming in the Horn of Africa, specifically Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia where widespread breeding is in progress and new swarms are starting to form, representing an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods at the beginning of the upcoming cropping season."

While I understand that this is an immediate appeal at a time when the energy of your Administration and the country is focused on battling the deadly virus which originated in Wuhan, our small investment in resources immediately will hopefully alleviate the need to invest much more later for emergency food relief in the stricken areas. Executive Director for the WFP David Beasley recently stated, "Do nothing now and WFP will need up to 15 times that amount – more than US\$1 billion - to assist people devastated by losing crops and livelihoods."

Beyond impacting millions of at risk lives in Africa, your intervention greatly enhance the United States' public diplomacy profile in the affected countries by this low-cost intervention – much as President George W. Bush elevated the United States' positive image through the

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR – with the additional benefit of countering China's malign influence in the region.

I ask, therefore, that you direct that spare air assets be deployed on this humanitarian mission.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith", is positioned above the printed name.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

Copied:

The Honorable Mark Esper, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State
The Honorable Mark Green, Administrator
General Stephen J. Townsend, United States Africa Command