

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2015

Dr. Ashton B. Carter
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

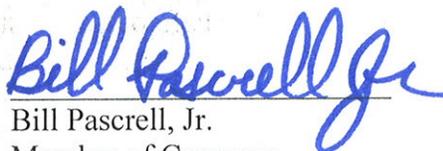
Dear Defense Secretary Carter,

In light of Russia's continued violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, we believe the United States must act to reassure our NATO allies, such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania, who are unnerved by Russia's intervention in Ukraine and to deter further aggression. It is our worry that Russia will try to destabilize the region to test the level of NATO's commitment to collective defense. In order to protect, NATO's deterrence must involve a real military presence in the region. As a result, we respectfully ask you to bolster support for the six regional command-and-control centers in order to reinforce the defenses of our allies.

It is clear that Russia's actions have escalated the conflict in Ukraine in violation of the Minsk Agreements. Russia is continuing to send uninspected convoys of cargo trucks, weapons, and soldiers into eastern Ukraine, which has contributed to the deaths of at least 6,350 people, including 625 women and children, and an estimated 2 million displaced people. We worry that Russia talks of peace, but keeps fueling the conflict and that we cannot trust President Putin at his word, which is why we need to bolster NATO's military presence in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania.

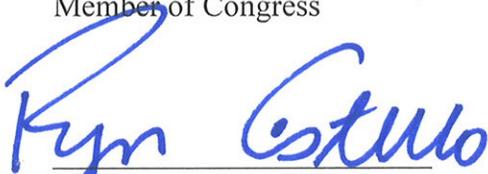
As the administration continues to weigh providing Ukraine with the defensive military assistance Congress has authorized, we respectfully urge you to provide the increase in support and equipment that our NATO allies need for training and exercises in order to defend against further Russian aggression in the region. These measures will bolster the efforts of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, which has the support of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Spain and was designed to ensure NATO is ready to respond swiftly and firmly to new security challenges after President Putin's illegal and forcible occupation of Crimea and continued hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

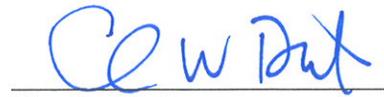
Sincerely,

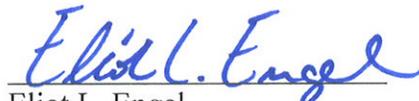

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress


Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

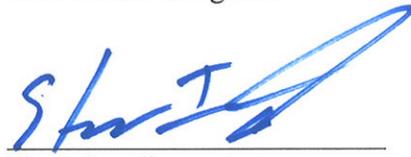

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress


Ryan A. Costello
Member of Congress

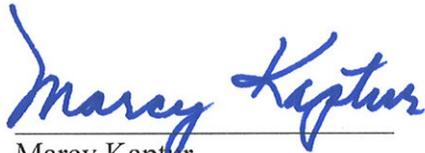

Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

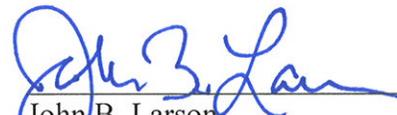

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

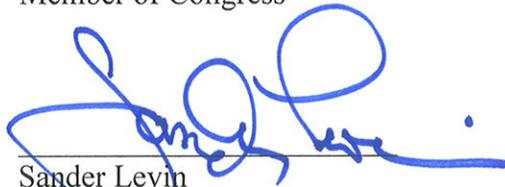

Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress


Steve Israel
Member of Congress


Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

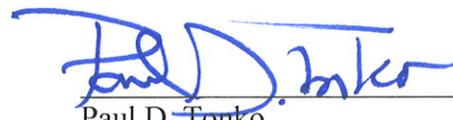

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress


John B. Larson
Member of Congress


Sander Levin
Member of Congress


Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress


Steve Stivers
Member of Congress


Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress


Mike Quigley
Member of Congress