

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 17, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

In your capacity as National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, we write with urgency to request that you ensure the Department of Defense's ongoing Europe Force Posture Review is conducted in close consultation and meaningful partnership with the Department of State. You are uniquely positioned to ensure this outcome. As President Trump's National Security Advisor, you are responsible for an interagency process that incorporates the views of key departments and agencies. As Secretary of State, you are also responsible for the diplomatic relationships those decisions will affect.

It is precisely because you hold both roles that we are concerned by reports that the Department of Defense is not adequately consulting with the Department of State on this review. As National Security Advisor, you bear responsibility for ensuring that force posture decisions proceed through a rigorous interagency process that weighs the full range of national security equities, rather than the views of one department alone. The Department of Defense's force posture review, announced on June 18, is considering decisions with implications far beyond the military relationship between the United States and our Allies, without the interagency deliberation that has typically accompanied previous force posture reviews.

As Secretary of State, you should recognize what is at stake in these decisions. Even changes that may appear modest from a purely military standpoint can have outsized effects on our bilateral relationships, particularly with Baltic Allies, as Russia continues to intensify its hybrid actions along NATO's eastern flank. Moreover, decisions under consideration could require execution by the Department of State, including basing arrangements, status-of-forces agreements and host nation negotiations. The Department responsible for carrying out these decisions should be a full participant in shaping them from the outset.

What we are requesting is not a departure from precedent — it is a return to longstanding practice. The Department of State, which is responsible for managing our bilateral relationships, has traditionally played a substantial role in reviews of this kind. We see no reason to depart from that practice here.

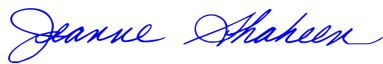
Yet what we are hearing through our own conversations, travel across Europe and engagement with our Allies tells a different story. U.S. Ambassadors and Chiefs of Mission in affected countries have been excluded from consultations. The Department of State has not been adequately included in bilateral discussions with Allied governments on this issue. Nor is it clear that the Department was consulted on the questionnaire sent to Allies in late July as part of the

review, or that it received the responses submitted by our Allies. This is especially concerning because the questionnaire asked, “Has the country been publicly supportive of U.S. foreign policy priorities, including ongoing initiatives in Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere?” – a question squarely within the State Department’s domain.

Last week marked 25 years since NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time, after the September 11 attacks. Our Allies didn't hesitate — their commitment was ironclad, and we shouldn't forget that when weighing the importance of our European Allies to U.S. national security. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, NATO Allies have made historic commitments to boost defense spending and build military capability. The Alliance remains a consequential force that has consistently benefited the United States. Arbitrary force posture decisions that ignore our diplomatic relationships and NATO's central role serve neither America's interests nor the European Allies who have stood by us.

We urge you to use your unique standing as both National Security Advisor and Secretary of State to ensure that the Department of State is fully and meaningfully engaged from this point forward in every stage of the Europe Force Posture Review before your role requires you to respond to recommendations with lasting implications for the transatlantic relationship. We look forward to working with you on this vital issue.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



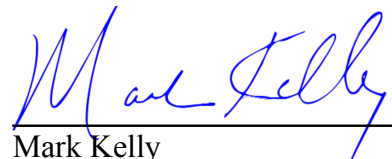
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



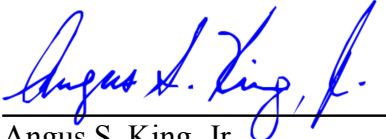
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator

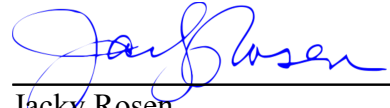


Mark Kelly
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angus S. King, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Angus S. King, Jr.

United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacky Rosen" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jacky Rosen

United States Senator