United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6225

November 13, 2026

Mr. Elon R. Musk
Chairman & CEO
Space Exploration Technologies Corp.
1 Rocket Road
Starbase, TX 78521

Dear Mr. Musk:

We request that you take immediate steps to preserve all documents, communications and electronically stored information of yours or of SpaceX's relating to Starlink or Starshield in Ukraine. Recent restrictions on those services—which have occurred as Russia continues to carry out strikes on Ukrainian civilians—have disrupted critical air defense capabilities, endangered American personnel and raise serious questions about the control SpaceX has over critical communications capabilities essential to U.S. national security, the safety of American personnel and Ukraine's ability to defend itself against Russian aggression. As senior members of the Committee charged with oversight of U.S. policy towards Ukraine and the safety of U.S. diplomatic personnel abroad, the answers to these questions are critical for the Committee to ascertain whether future legislation may be warranted.

Between October 13 and October 24, 2026, restrictions on Starlink and Starshield disrupted communications services used by Ukrainian forces, including for interceptor drones defending civilian population centers against Russian missiles and drones.[1] During that period, Russia launched nearly 4,000 aerial attacks against Ukraine, killing and injuring civilians.[2] On November 12, 2026, President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian military reported renewed disruptions to Starshield across the entire front line and Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine, hindering Ukraine's ability to defend itself and putting civilian lives at risk.[3]

These restrictions prevent Ukrainian defensive systems from maintaining connectivity at the speeds necessary to intercept certain fast-moving Russian drones, undermining Ukraine's ability to protect its civilian population from aerial attack. As we detailed in our October 15, 2026, letter to the Department of Defense Inspector General, the October disruption also coincided with reports that American diplomatic, military and security personnel in Kyiv struggled to reach designated shelters during Russian air raids.[4] Congressional staff in Ukraine at the time

[1] Marcus Walker and Serhiy Bosak, "Ukraine's Military Starlink Is Working Again, Kyiv Says," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 24, 2026, https://www.wsj.com/world/europe/ukraines-military-starlink-is-working-again-kyiv-says-7ad2617d.
[2] "Russia Launched 1,600 Bombs and 2,300 Drones Over Past Week," *Kyiv Post*, October 25, 2026, https://www.kyivpost.com/post/88109.
[3] Matthew Luxmoore and Ievgeniia Sivorka, "Ukraine Says Its Military Starlink Is Disrupted Again, Hurting Defenses," *The Wall Street Journal,* Nov. 12, 2026, https://www.wsj.com/world/ukraine-says-its-military-starlink-is-disrupted-again-hurting-defenses-bfb00a64.
[4] Letter from Senators Shaheen, Tillis, et al., Oct. 15, 2026, *available at* https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/dem/release/shaheen-tillis-lead-bipartisan-senators-in-calling-for-department-

witnessed and experienced the effects of the throttling firsthand. To date, SpaceX has not provided any explanation or clarification of who authorized these restrictions, their contractual basis and the scope of SpaceX's independent authority to impose or reverse them.

Further, the conflicting statements and reports as to who ordered and approved of these restrictions only underscore the need for a comprehensive inquiry and full accounting of the facts. For example, you asserted that limitations on Starshield were decisions made by the U.S. military and ultimately the President.[5] Secretary Hegseth subsequently suggested that SpaceX could impose restrictions unilaterally under its terms of service, while Secretary Rubio stated that decisions regarding Starlink access likewise rested with SpaceX.[6]

This is not the first time SpaceX's control over satellite communications has raised national security concerns. Previous restrictions affecting operations near Crimea demonstrated the risks of relying on commercial infrastructure whose availability could be determined by a single corporate executive.[7] The development and procurement of Starshield were intended, in part, to address the military's need for more reliable and government-controlled communications. The October and November restrictions now raise the disturbing possibility that these vulnerabilities persist even within systems on which the U.S. government relies.

There remain critical unanswered questions about SpaceX's contract terms, its compliance with that contract and who is ultimately responsible for directing and approving restrictions on these communications services. Given the importance of SpaceX's systems to U.S. national security as well as the defense of a vital partner, it is imperative that Congress have a complete and accurate picture of what led to these restrictions and how they can be prevented in the future.

To better inform the Committee as it evaluates potential legislation addressing these topics, we request that SpaceX immediately preserve all documents, communications and electronically stored information relating to Starlink or Starshield in Ukraine. This preservation demand includes, but is not limited to:

- All contracts, task orders, amendments, statements of work and technical specifications governing Starlink and Starshield services in Ukraine, including materials addressing availability, speed restrictions, allowable uses, geofencing, suspension, termination, modification authority and notice requirements.

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of-defense-inspector-general-investigation-into-starlink-disruptions-in-ukraine.

[5] Siladitya Ray, "Musk Says US Military, Trump Control Starshield Limits—As Zelenskyy Vows Renewed Russian Oil Strikes," *Forbes*, Oct. 15, 2026, https://www.forbes.com/sites/siladityaray/2026/10/15/musk-says-us-military-and-trump-control-starshield-limits-as-zelenskyy-vows-renewed-russian-oil-strikes/.

[6] Claire Carter, "Hegseth points to Starshield 'terms of service' in Ukraine speed cap dispute," *Washington Examiner*, Oct. 20, 2026, https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense/4773319/hegseth-starshield-terms-of-service-ukraine-restrictions-stock-depletion/; Gram Slattery, "Starlink access in Ukraine a decision for Musk, not White House, Rubio says," *Reuters*, Oct. 21, 2026, https://www.reuters.com/world/rubio-says-witkoff-zelenskiy-meeting-positive-ideas-be-discussed-with-russia-2026-10-21/.

[7] Joey Roulette et al., "Musk Ordered Shutdown of Starlink Satellite Service as Ukraine Retook Territory from Russia," *Reuters*, July 25, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/investigations/musk-ordered-shutdown-starlink-satellite-service-ukraine-retook-territory-russia-2025-07-25.

- All technical records, network logs, configuration changes, software instructions, operational directives and records identifying when restrictions were proposed, activated, modified, removed or reinstated, including the identities of individuals who authorized or implemented those changes.
- All communications related to Starlink or Starshield in Ukraine, including authorized use thereof, speed restrictions or changes in access or speed, compliance with contractual terms, and including communications involving you, SpaceX executives and employees, President Trump, White House officials or employees and Department of Defense employees or contractors.
- All internal communications, legal analyses, risk assessments and decision memoranda addressing the rationale for the restrictions, their contractual or legal basis and their anticipated or actual effects on Ukrainian air defenses, unmanned systems, civilian protection or American personnel.
- All records concerning reports of failed Ukrainian interception missions, degraded defensive capabilities, civilian casualties or risks to U.S. diplomatic, military or security personnel, including any warnings received before or during the restrictions.
- All records concerning representations made to the U.S. government, Congress, investors or the public regarding who controlled Starlink and Starshield, who ordered the restrictions, whether services were degraded and the circumstances under which normal operations were restored.
- All documents related to required public disclosures, contract disputes and compliance or noncompliance with any federal contract, congressional request or investigation.

This demand applies to records in the possession, custody or control of SpaceX, its officers, employees, agents and contractors, including communications conducted through personal devices, encrypted messaging applications or other noncorporate channels used for company business. It encompasses records created from September 1, 2026, to the present, as well as subsequently created records relating to these events. For purposes of this request, "preserve" includes taking reasonable steps to prevent the partial or full destruction, alteration, testing, deletion, shredding, incineration, wiping, relocation, migration, theft, mutation or negligent or reckless handling that could render the information incomplete or inaccessible.

We request that you provide written confirmation no later than November 30, 2026, that the preservation measures described above have been implemented. We further request answers to the following questions no later than November 30, 2026:

1. How were any restrictions on Starlink or Starshield services affecting Ukraine since October 1, 2026, communicated, approved and/or directed? Identify the specific restrictions, the dates they took effect, the authority under which they were carried out and whether anyone outside of SpaceX authorized or directed those actions. If applicable, identify the individual or entity responsible for each decision, including any relevant U.S. government officials, and explain the extent of your knowledge of those decisions.
2. Did SpaceX conduct any assessment of the potential consequences of restrictions on Starlink or Starshield for Ukrainian air defenses, civilian lives or American personnel? If so, provide a copy of those findings and identify who conducted those assessments and who received those findings. Provide a complete chronology of all restrictions,

restorations and subsequent modifications, including the technical parameters and geographic scope of each change.

3. Which restrictions since October 1, 2026, remain in effect, and which have been reinstated? Identify who authorized each change and explain the renewed restrictions reported on November 12, 2026.

The United States cannot permit critical national security capabilities to be subject to opaque decision-making or unilateral disruption without government authorization and accountability. As Congress evaluates the adequacy of existing contracts and the need for additional statutory safeguards, we must establish whether current arrangements provide the operational control, reliability and oversight necessary to protect American personnel and sustain Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression. We expect your full cooperation with this congressional oversight request and written confirmation by November 30, 2026, that all appropriate preservation measures have been implemented.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Foreign Relations

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator