

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

December 23, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write with urgent concern surrounding the unprecedented decision to recall nearly 30 career U.S. ambassadors. Already, 80 ambassadorial posts were vacant before this order. Now, the number of empty U.S. ambassadorial posts will climb to well over 100 – about half of all U.S. ambassadorial positions in the world. This vacuum in U.S. leadership poses a significant threat to our national security and unnecessarily risks the safety of U.S. citizens and businesses overseas. We ask you to reconsider this decision before it damages America's credibility and the ability to advance U.S. interests abroad.

The dedicated, apolitical professionals impacted by this decision have served under Republican and Democratic presidents and are among the most experienced and capable members of America's Foreign Service. The hasty decision to remove them was made without prior consultation with Congress and with no apparent plan to replace those removed with other qualified candidates. Any potential replacement will need to undertake the lengthy nomination and Senate confirmation process that the career officials you recalled had already successfully completed. As the over 100 U.S. embassies lacking senior leadership await a new U.S. ambassador, China, Russia and others will maintain regular communications with the foreign leaders that we will have effectively abandoned, allowing our adversaries to expand their reach and influence to limit, and even harm, U.S. interests.

In the Indo-Pacific, this broad recall signals American disengagement from a region home to half the world's population, nearly two-thirds of its economy and multiple potential security crises. The U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, a U.S. defense treaty ally, will be absent as the Chinese Coast Guard continues aggressive conduct against Philippine vessels in the South China Sea. Other countries across Asia and the Pacific will be without U.S. ambassadors as their governments navigate increasing pressure to combat Chinese predatory lending, host Chinese naval vessels, and side with Beijing in critical votes at the United Nations.

Across Africa, this decision grants Moscow and Beijing an open invitation to advance their economic and security interests in the fastest growing continent in the world. Somalia will be without an ambassador as U.S. service members work to counter the growing al-Shabab

insurgency. Ongoing U.S. efforts to ease China's grip on critical minerals and energy resources in Gabon, Madagascar and other countries will hit significant roadblocks without U.S. ambassadors to negotiate directly with their leadership.

In Egypt, one of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign military financing, America will lack an ambassador as Egypt and other partners work to implement the Gaza ceasefire plan that you brokered. In Europe, the entire Western Balkans region will be without a single Senate-confirmed ambassador as Russia's malign influence continues and China expands its economic reach.

And in our own hemisphere, despite the administration's stated focus on disrupting the flow of illegal drugs, we will have no U.S. ambassador in Guatemala, which serves as a significant transit country. Energy-rich Guyana will also have no one left to advocate for U.S. interests at the highest levels as China makes inroads there and more broadly in our hemisphere.

Mr. President, no other administration has issued such a mass recall of career ambassadors since Congress established the modern Foreign Service a century ago. These ambassadors have demonstrated their commitment to faithfully execute the policies of administrations of both parties for decades. We need their skills and nonpartisan experience now more than ever. We urge you to reverse this decision immediately before more damage is done to America's standing in the world.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Chris S. Murphy
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Cory Booker
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State