

PAT FALLON
4TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

2416 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6673

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
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AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4304
February 18, 2025

The Honorable Peter Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Secretary Rubio,

Congratulations to both of you on your recent confirmations. President Trump's confidence in your abilities and experience speaks volumes, and we look forward to your leadership at this critical moment in our nation's history.

As you both settle into your roles, we urge you to continue to combat bureaucratic complacency and to remain vigilant. The United States and the free world have already been subject to the negative impact of the soft-on-Russia approach employed by both the Obama and Biden Administrations. U.S. deterrence failed because of them. Their failure to deter Russian aggression has allowed the Kremlin to capitalize on power vacuums in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, with Crimea being a prime example. Chamberlain-esque appeasement by Washington, coupled with the failure of many NATO members to abide by the two percent defense spending commitment in years past, has cleared the path for authoritarian land grabs and further escalation. President Trump is doing everything he can to fix this and restore peace in the region and part of restoring that peace is ensuring the integrity of American deterrence. More than ever, it is critical that we maintain a powerful posture in Eastern Europe. A key factor towards ensuring a consistent forward projection of U.S. deterrence is our Eastern European bases. We strongly urge you to make these bases permanent as a means to increase regional security and bolster our allies and partners.

With the rise of global tensions in recent years and the ongoing war in Ukraine, it's essential that the U.S. can properly and effectively project power within Eastern Europe. In addition to Russia, China has continued to work to secure CCP influence and control in the region to undermine the West. Our adversaries have made clear their intentions to use the region to expand their reach and bolster their access to critical resources. A strong forward posture in the region will act as a deterrent to our adversaries and will allow us to secure, strengthen, and stabilize the region. Neither Russia nor China will stop until they have replaced the United States as the number one global hegemon, and a strong forward posture in Eastern Europe will allow us to deter our adversaries early and decisively.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to learning more about your policy aims for this critical region, and we remain open to any ways that Congress can provide further support.


Sincerely,




Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress


Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress


Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress


Jen Kiggans
Member of Congress