

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 24, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express deep concern about your decision to divert nearly \$1.3 billion in U.S. funding away from critical national security projects in NATO countries, including funds specifically designated by Congress to deter Russian aggression and reassure our allies, in favor of your proposed border wall with Mexico. On numerous occasions you promised the American people that Mexico would pay for this wall. However, your administration's diversion of funding from our core security interests and Secretary Esper's statement that our NATO allies should pick up the tab, shows that the American people and our NATO allies, and not Mexico, are, in fact, paying. Your decision endangers our national security and signals to the Kremlin that the United States is not willing to stand up to its aggression.

In light of the Kremlin's ongoing assault on our democracy and its malign actions in Ukraine, Syria, and Venezuela, U.S. national security requires our close cooperation with our NATO allies and maintaining a robust presence in Europe. Congress has strongly supported the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) to bolster U.S. and NATO's military preparedness in Europe in the face of the persistent Kremlin threat.

This diversion of \$770 million in EDI funds, in particular, will impact critical projects such as a special operations training facility in Estonia, airfield upgrades in Slovakia, and ammunition storage in Poland. These cuts signal to the Kremlin that you do not view its interference in Europe as a serious concern and potentially serve as a green light for Moscow to expand their malign activities. Cutting EDI also again raises questions about the United States' commitment to NATO and to Article Five, which has been repeatedly reaffirmed by Congress on a strong bipartisan basis. In addition to the EDI cut, your \$1.3 billion cuts divert an additional \$520 million from U.S.-operated facilities in Europe, that are vital to support the military families based there and to sustain our missions in the Middle East.

Instead of sending a signal that could be interpreted by Vladimir Putin as an invitation to further aggression in Europe, we strongly urge you to support U.S. national security interests and reverse this decision.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator