



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

June 27, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to take full advantage of the upcoming NATO Summit in Warsaw to ensure our defensive and deterrent postures fully meet the needs of our steadfast Allies in Eastern Europe as they face an increasingly challenging and uncertain security environment. The United States must demonstrate leadership and resolve at this critical juncture in European history.

Russian actions, above all its illegal occupation of Crimea and its ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine, threaten all of its neighbors. Russia's unacceptable actions have been well documented, and include unilateral military incursions against Georgia and Ukraine; threatened use of tactical nuclear weapons against other countries; harassment of U.S. and Allied military assets; abandonment of key transparency measures and commitments, including those undertaken under the Helsinki Final Act. In short, Russia's actions have severely undermined the European security order.

We therefore urge you to use the occasion of NATO's Warsaw Summit to ensure that NATO, led by the United States, puts in place a credible conventional deterrent to Russian aggression against our allies in the east.

Mr. President, the NATO members most immediately concerned by these developments are by anyone's definition the staunchest of Allies. Poland, for example, the host of the NATO summit, has made numerous positive contributions to NATO since it joined the Alliance in 1999: it contributes to NATO operations and exercises, hosts NATO facilities, and crucially, leads by example on defense spending by devoting the NATO-agreed benchmark 2% of GDP to defense – increasingly focusing this spending on new capabilities, rather than legacy costs like pensions. Poland's extensive contributions to Allied defense will be magnified by the Aegis Ashore ballistic missile defense site it has agreed to host in Redzikowo, which saw a groundbreaking ceremony on May 13. Poland has made extensive contributions to U.S.-led efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and currently participates in the anti-ISIL coalition. Finally, let us not forget that Poland is also host to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, an institution that plays a critical role in efforts to advance the rights and dignity of all people, as well as to the Community of Democracies.

Congress has played a key role in demonstrating our nation's commitment to its Alliance with Poland, including through appropriating funds for the Administration's European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). The ERI has enabled stepped-up exercises, including the more than 12,000 U.S. personnel participating in Poland's flagship military Exercise Anakonda (June 7-17) and a significantly increased rotational equipment and troop presence across Europe.

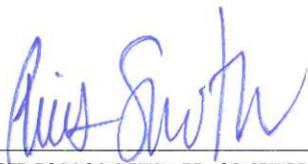
These steps have made an important impact, Mr. President, and we can and should do more, both bilaterally and in a NATO context, to demonstrate our commitment and advance the compelling U.S. interest in European security. We strongly support proposals to provide an additional \$3.4 billion to the ERI for FY2017. This funding level would increase the presence in Europe of U.S. Army armored units, provide for additional training exercises with NATO allies, and fund improvements to airfields and other facilities for U.S. forces deployed in Europe. We urge you to ensure at the Warsaw Summit that our bilateral efforts to uphold our commitment to our NATO Allies are fully integrated into an Alliance-wide plan for concrete and detailed steps towards an increased NATO presence of personnel, infrastructure and equipment on the Alliance's eastern flank. This multinational presence should be sustainable and include a visible NATO presence in Poland.

We urge you to make the U.S. component of NATO's enhanced presence in the eastern flank as robust as possible, and further urge you to encourage the greatest range, depth, and durability of commitments to such a presence from other key Allies who have benefitted so much since NATO's founding from the United States' sacrifices for transatlantic security. We must also ensure that additional critical measures, such as an expanded exercise schedule, remain a priority. NATO plans for countering any aggression must be fully up to date, detailed and effective, including in response to the challenge of hybrid warfare.

Some might seek to limit our efforts to support our Allies by invoking the language of NATO Russia Founding Act. However, we point out that the Founding Act explicitly references the post-Cold War principles of European security -- principles that Russia has violated repeatedly in recent years, including by using force against Ukraine and violating Russia's commitments to Ukraine's territorial integrity by illegally occupying Crimea. While the Act states that NATO intends to provide for its collective defense while avoiding "additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces," in the same sentence it ties this commitment to "the current and foreseeable security environment" of 1997. It is self-evident that Russian actions have dramatically altered this security environment for the worse and threaten European and Transatlantic security.

Mr. President, the words that we use to describe our enhanced presence in Poland and elsewhere -- whether permanent, continuous, or persistent -- are far less relevant than the clear and resolute message that we urge you to send through both words and deeds: that we are unwavering in our absolute commitment to the security of all Allies.

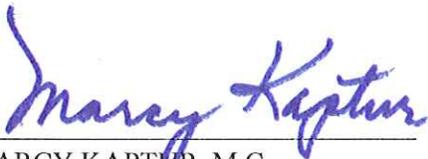
Sincerely,



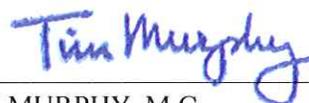
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, M.C.  
Co-Chair, Poland Caucus



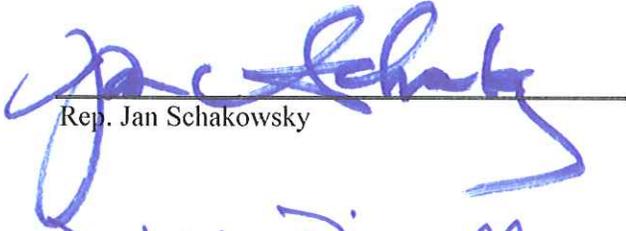
DANIEL LIPINSKI, M.C.  
Co-Chair, Poland Caucus



MARCY KAPTUR, M.C.  
Co-Chair, Poland Caucus



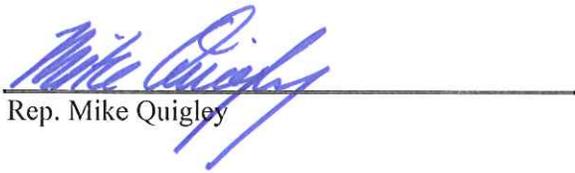
TIM MURPHY, M.C.  
Co-Chair, Poland Caucus

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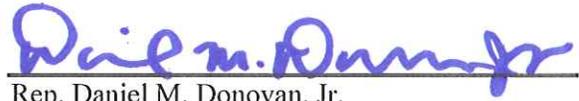
Rep. Jan Schakowsky

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Debbie Dingell", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Debbie Dingell

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Quigley", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Mike Quigley

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Trent Franks", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Trent Franks

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Higgins", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Brian Higgins