

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Secretary Austin,

We write to urge that the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) for Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Jerusalem remain an officer of three-star rank and not be downgraded below that level. Given continued regional volatility, steadfast high-level U.S. leadership and engagement to support peace and stability in Israel and the West Bank remain in the national security interest of the United States.

The USSC coordinates multilateral efforts toward peace and stability and serves as a critical liaison between Israeli and PA security forces. Downgrading this position would undermine U.S. leadership and credibility in a region where it is essential to have a high-ranking officer who can engage with other nations' highest-level military leaders.

The European Union, United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Poland and others count on the USSC to provide this leadership. Downgrading this position would undermine critical security programs and degrade communications between Israelis and Palestinians, which the USSC facilitates. Such a downgrade would also risk fracturing the U.S.-led international coalition committed to strengthening security and stability in Israel and the West Bank.

We understand Congress has required the Department to reduce the aggregate number of flag and general officers, and this requirement may have driven consideration of this change. Nevertheless, we urge you not to downgrade this position at a time when U.S. leadership in the region is critical, and we stand ready to work with you to amend the law as necessary to support this vital policy objective.

Sincerely,




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Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator

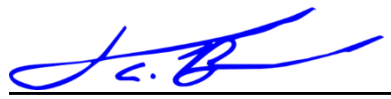



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Lindsey Graham  
United States Senator

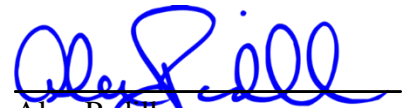
  
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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator

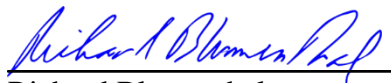
/s/  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Roy Blunt  
United States Senator


  
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James E. Risch  
United States Senator

  
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John Kennedy  
United States Senator

  
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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

  
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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

  
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Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senator

  
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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

  
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Rob Portman  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



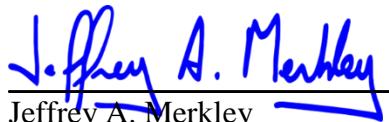
Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock  
United States Senator



Michael D. Crapo  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



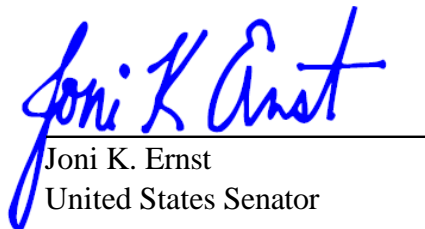
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator




Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



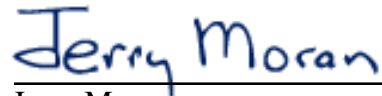
Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator



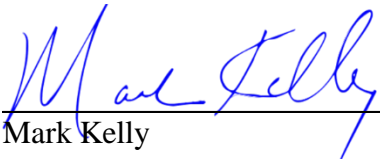
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Jerry Moran  
United States Senator



Mark Kelly  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



John Hoeven  
United States Senator

/s/

Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator