

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,

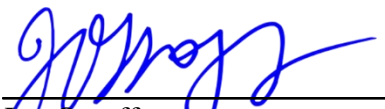
We write to urge that the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) for Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Jerusalem remain an officer of three-star rank and not be downgraded below that level. Given continued regional volatility, steadfast high-level U.S. leadership and engagement to support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



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



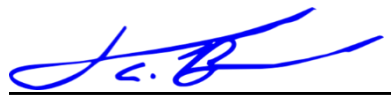
Lindsey Graham
United States Senator




John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

/s/


Roy Blunt
United States Senator



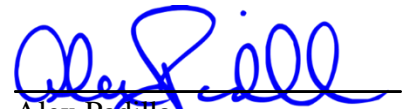
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



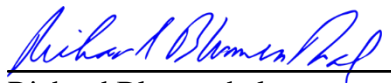
James E. Risch
United States Senator




John Kennedy
United States Senator




Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



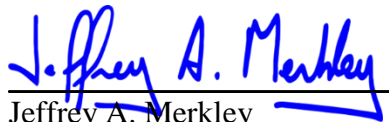
Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Michael D. Crapo
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



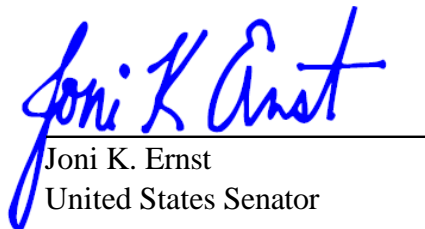
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator




Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



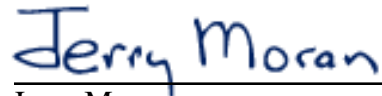
Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



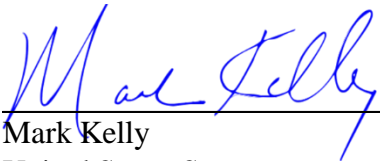
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



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

/s/

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Susan Collins
United States Senator