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One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Esper:

We write to express our deep concern with the decision to divert millions of dollars from the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) to President Trump's border wall. This is a blatant misuse of appropriated funds intended to bolster security and support for our European allies. We urge you to respect Congress' authority and immediately cease the use of these critical funds to prop up President Trump's failed border wall initiative.

Taking funds from the European Deterrence Initiative undermines U.S. security by degrading the mission-readiness of U.S. forces in Europe, renegeing on commitments to our allies and partners, and signaling to Russia that funds meant for Europe are at risk of being hijacked for other purposes. This sends the wrong message to allies and partners and denies funding critical to our forces at a time when relations between the United States and Russia are at an all-time low and when Russia continues to threaten the United States and our allies. Furthermore, these ill-conceived cuts to our deterrent in Europe directly contradict the Administration's own National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy which call for bolstering our NATO allies and strengthening our deterrent.

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Russia not only interfered in the 2016 and 2018 elections, but it wages a non-stop disinformation war against the United States and our allies, endangers our men and women in uniform with its aggressive military activities in the Middle East and elsewhere, illegally occupies parts of Ukraine and Georgia, and continues to hold American citizens hostage. And even now, in the midst of a major global health crisis, President Putin is actively exploiting the world's suffering by pushing anti-Western disinformation narratives and further undermining our interests and security.

President Trump's inability to secure funding for his border wall is not a reasonable justification to circumvent the Congress' constitutional authority to appropriate funds. While the President concocts a misleading narrative about a national emergency on the southern border in order to divert funds to the wall, the threat of Russian aggression to the United States and to our allies and partners in Europe is tangible.

Four Secretaries of Defense, three Secretaries of State, and both Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate have supported the EDI because we know it is crucial to U.S. national security and the security of our allies and partners. We therefore urge you to make clear that we remain committed to deterring Russian aggression against the United States and our allies and partners by restoring EDI funds for their intended purpose.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman

WILLIAM R. KEATING
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe,
Eurasia, and the Environment

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Member of Congress

CC:

National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien
Deputy National Security Advisor Matthew Pottinger

