



**One Hundred Fourteenth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

December 17, 2015

His Excellency Jens Stoltenberg  
Secretary General  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
Boulevard Leopold III, 1110  
Brussels, Belgium

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

We are encouraged by NATO's efforts over the past year to strengthen its presence in countries along the Alliance's eastern flank. While the security of the Alliance's southern members remains a pressing concern, the rise of a belligerent leadership in Russia challenging NATO in the east, along with its continuing destabilization of several former Soviet states, requires bolstering NATO's frontline members.

Unfortunately, the years since the Cold War have seen a reduction in NATO deployments, contraction in the size of member states' militaries, and shrinking defense budgets. Moscow's aggressive actions have demonstrated that these reductions have gone too far and that the resulting gaps must be filled. Russia's forcible and illegal occupation of Crimea, along with its aggression in other parts of Ukraine, merely underscores just how much the European security environment has deteriorated since the 1990s.

Given these developments, we urge that NATO consider increasing the credibility of its force posture in the east to ensure that its deterrence capability is unambiguous. To that end, we believe that NATO should consider the utility of a number of steps in addition to those already being implemented, such as ensuring the persistent and continuous presence of a battalion in Poland and in each of the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Only when Russia's leadership is convinced that it cannot prevail in a military contest with the Alliance will the risk of miscalculation be eliminated.

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We commend your leadership of the Alliance as it strives to adapt to fast changing circumstances. We are committed to working with you to prepare for the 2016 Warsaw Summit and to ensure that NATO has the resources to continue to keep the peace in Europe and carry out its critical missions.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Ranking Member  
House Foreign Affairs Committee