

US foreign policy**Democratic senators urge Trump to halt mass recall of ambassadors**

Lawmakers warn that empty posts at more than 100 embassies endanger US national security



Senator Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the foreign relations committee. The senators described the scale of the recall as 'unprecedented' © 2025 Getty Images

Amy Mackinnon in Washington

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Democrats on the Senate foreign relations committee have urged President Donald Trump to halt a recall of nearly 30 career ambassadors worldwide, warning that the move could endanger US national security.

The senators said that the decision to remove dozens of veteran diplomats risks leaving a vacuum that Russia and China would be quick to fill.

Before the latest decision, 80 ambassadorial posts were vacant, according to a tracker maintained by the American Foreign Service Association, which represents US diplomats.

In a letter made public on Wednesday, [Democrats](#) on the panel warned that the recall would leave more than half of US posts around the world without an ambassador.

“As the over 100 US embassies lacking senior leadership await a new US ambassador, China, Russia and others will maintain regular communications with the foreign leaders that we will have effectively abandoned, allowing our adversaries to expand their reach and influence to limit, and even harm, US interests,” they wrote.

All ambassadors serve at the pleasure of the president and can be asked to return home from their post at any time, although career diplomats typically remain in their role across administrations.

In their letter, the senators described the scale of the recall as “unprecedented”.

AFSA said in a statement that affected diplomats had been notified by phone, and that no explanation had been provided.

“That method is highly irregular,” the union said. “Career diplomats and ambassadors are not typically recalled in this manner. The lack of transparency and process breaks sharply with long-standing norms.”

A senior [state department](#) official described the move as a “standard process” in any administration.

“It is the president’s right to ensure that he has individuals in these countries who advance the America First agenda,” the official added.

The state department has not released a list of embassies affected by the move, but they are expected to be worldwide, including in the Indo-Pacific, Africa and Europe.

“In the Indo-Pacific, this broad recall signals American disengagement from a region home to half the world’s population, nearly two-thirds of its economy and multiple potential security crises,” the senators wrote.

“Across Africa, this decision grants Moscow and Beijing an open invitation to advance their economic and security interests in the fastest-growing continent in the world.”

The recalls follow the [laying off](#) of more than 1,300 state department officials in July as part of a wide-ranging effort to reshape the agency in line with Trump’s priorities.

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Amy Mackinnon