

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2016

President-elect Donald J. Trump
Trump-Pence Transition Team
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President-elect Trump,

As Members and friends of the Senate Ukraine Caucus, advocates for a strong US-Ukrainian relationship, and backers of NATO, we write to convey strong, bipartisan support for Ukraine in the United States Senate. We look forward to working with you and your new administration to support our ally Ukraine and help it secure a peaceful and democratic future.

Almost three years after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military aggression in eastern Ukraine, daily ceasefire violations along the line of contact make a mockery of the Minsk Agreement and demonstrate that this conflict in the heart of Europe is far from over. Russia has yet to withdraw its heavy weapons and continues its sabotage and subversion efforts. It has not halted its disinformation war against Ukraine and the West, nor stopped its economic and political pressure aimed at undermining the Ukrainian government. According to conservative estimates from the United Nations, approximately 10,000 people have been killed, over 20,000 wounded, and more than two million internally displaced since the conflict began. And, unfortunately, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observers still do not have full, unimpeded access to the Ukrainian-Russian border while Russia continues to supply weapons, equipment, and personnel to the separatists.

Quite simply, Russia has launched a military land-grab in Ukraine that is unprecedented in modern European history. These actions in Crimea and other areas of eastern Ukraine dangerously upend well-established diplomatic, legal, and security norms that the United States and its NATO allies painstakingly built over decades – a historically bipartisan global security framework that has greatly served US security and economic interests. We believe it is in our vital national security interest to uphold these norms and values, and prevent America's commitment to its allies and ideals from being called into question.

In light of Russia's continued aggression and repeated refusal to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereign right to choose its own destiny, we also renew our call for the United States to increase political, economic, and military support for Ukraine. This includes defensive lethal assistance as part of a broader effort to help Ukrainians better defend themselves, deter future aggression, and implement key structural reforms. Similarly, we believe that Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea should never be accepted, nor should we lift sanctions imposed on Russia for its behavior in eastern Ukraine until key provisions of the Minsk Agreement are met. Accordingly, US leadership on maintaining such transatlantic sanctions should remain a priority.

We look forward to continuing the tradition of bipartisan support for Ukraine in Congress, which has authorized meaningful assistance programs through the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, and other pieces of legislation. We stand ready to work with you and your new administration on strengthening the US-Ukrainian relationship and look forward to learning more about your plans to engage on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Senator Rob Portman



Senator Richard J. Durbin



Senator John McCain



Senator Jeanne Shaheen



Senator Marco Rubio



Senator Sherrod Brown



Senator Ron Johnson



Senator Christopher Murphy




Senator John Barrasso



Senator Benjamin L. Cardin



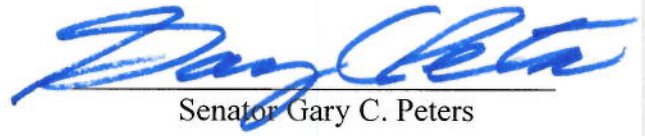
Senator Lindsey Graham



Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.



Senator John Boozman



Senator Gary C. Peters



Senator Jim Risch



Senator Jeff Merkley



Senator Johnny Isakson




Senator Kirsten Gillibrand



Senator James Inhofe



Senator Amy Klobuchar



Senator Cory Gardner



Senator Richard Blumenthal



Senator Pat Roberts



Senator Jack Reed



Senator Christopher A. Coons



Senator Sheldon Whitehouse



Senator Robert Menendez