

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2014

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We applaud the pledge contained in your 2009 speech in Prague regarding your arms control policies that “[r]ules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words must mean something.” It is in agreement with that pledge that we urge you to act on the compelling evidence pointing to Russia’s material breach and circumvention of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. Defending this principle is especially important given the ongoing nuclear negotiations with Iran.

According to recent press reporting, your Administration has been aware of Russia’s illegal and destabilizing actions for years. However, the senior-most officials in our government have to date failed to directly confront their Russian counterparts. This stands in stark contrast to the past. When faced with a Soviet violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, President Ronald Reagan used the full power of his office to publicly confront—and ultimately reverse—that serious breach.

We believe it is imperative that Russian officials not be permitted to believe they stand to gain from a material breach of this or any other treaty. To fail to act would only invite further violations by Russia, which would inevitably undermine our national security and that of our NATO allies.

We note that other countries around the world will be closely watching the U.S. response to any Russian violation. As the United States and other world powers pursue nuclear negotiations with Iran, it is vital that Members of Congress have confidence that the Administration will forcefully confront all violations by Iran when they occur. In this regard, your Administration’s response to Russia’s actions has not been reassuring.

We would also note that while Russia is aggressively recapitalizing its nuclear forces and violating its treaty commitments, U.S. nuclear forces have gone for a generation without modernization. In this respect, we believe that it is imperative that you recommit your Administration to undertake the comprehensive modernization of U.S. nuclear forces pledged in your 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and in your personal commitments during the ratification of the New START treaty. In practically every instance, these programs have been delayed, deferred, or cancelled altogether. In contrast with Russian advances, these updates to the U.S. arsenal can be made in complete compliance with our treaty obligations. With this in mind, it is clear that the U.S. should not pursue a new nuclear arms control agreement with Russia, or undertake any other nuclear force reductions, until that country has come into full compliance with its existing obligations.

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The security of the United States and its allies requires serious and prompt attention be devoted to resolving these issues. To that end, we ask that you inform us as soon as possible of the course of action you intend to pursue in this matter.

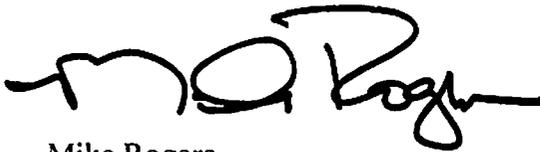
Sincerely,



Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee



Ed Royce
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence