

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2016

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you again because of our urgent concern about the failure of your Administration to confront Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The United States must finally impose penalties for Russia's near-decade long pattern of violations that undermine this seminal arms control treaty and place it on the verge of collapse.

The INF Treaty is the only arms control treaty that succeeded in eliminating a class of nuclear arms. Its provisions are simple: a flight test or the production or possession of a ground-launched ballistic missile or cruise missile of the defined-ranges is illegal and defeats the Treaty's object and purpose.

While your Administration finally stated in 2014 (as a result of pressure from our committees) what had been well-understood before then—that Russia was illegally flight-testing intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs)—neither the State Department nor Defense Department imposed consequences on Russia. Despite testimony on at least two occasions by Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller that Russia would face economic sanctions for its illegal behavior, no such sanctions have been imposed. And, despite the testimony of senior Department of Defense leaders that the Pentagon would develop a series of military responses to ensure Russia understood the cost of its illegal activity, and Congress passed and you signed a law to require that such responses be implemented, we understand that your Administration is not permitting the military to pursue the options recommended to you by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Martin Dempsey.

It has become apparent to us that the situation regarding Russia's violation has worsened and Russia is now in material breach of the Treaty.

We urge you to direct your National Security Council to abandon legacy-building Prague Agenda actions under review this month, such as eliminating a leg of the nuclear triad or renegeing on the modernization commitments you made in 2010. Further, in view of such Russian behavior, you should not prematurely extend the New START Treaty (a potential source of leverage with Russia) or implement destabilizing changes to U.S. nuclear doctrine that guarantees our allies' security. We also urge you to implement the stiff economic penalties your State Department has repeatedly promised and the military response options that General Dempsey recommended to you in 2015. U.S. and allied security cannot wait until January 20, 2017.

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We stand ready to support you in taking steps to respond to the military impacts of Russia's breakout of the INF Treaty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mac Thornberry". The signature is stylized, with "Mac" written in a cursive script and "Thornberry" in a more blocky, cursive style.

William M. "Mac" Thornberry
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Devin Nunes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Devin Nunes
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence