

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 29, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am writing to urge the administration to fully exercise the authorities granted by the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. Russian aggression in Ukraine has surged since January 13<sup>th</sup>, resulting in the most deadly period since the ceasefire agreement was signed in Minsk on September 5<sup>th</sup>. We must urgently renew our commitment to the people of Ukraine, and while I appreciate the administration's comprehensive efforts to counter Russian aggression to date, I believe that the administration must act immediately to influence the course of events on the ground.

The sanctions implemented by the United States and the European Union have had a tangible effect on the Russian economy. Combined with the decrease in global energy markets, the international pressure on the Russian economy has been unprecedented. However, this has not deterred Vladimir Putin, who continues to provide illegitimate and illegal support to separatists in Eastern Ukraine, as evidenced by OSCE and NATO reports cataloging the growing Russian troop and artillery presence in the region.

Accompanying this build-up of Russian military presence is an alarming spike in violence by Russian-backed separatists on both military and civilian populations. The January 24<sup>th</sup> attack on the portside town of Mariupul, which is located 25 kilometers outside of the Minsk ceasefire line, killed at least 27 innocent civilians, some of them women and children, and injured more than 100 others. This follows two weeks of intense violence in which attacks on civilian buses claimed more than 20 innocent lives.

The international community has an obligation to respond to these attacks and to Putin, who has willfully ignored commitments made under the Minsk Agreement and clearly signaled his intentions to escalate tensions in Ukraine and across the region. While we should continue to pursue a diplomatic track, a more assertive international response, led by the United States, is required.

Using the Ukraine Freedom Support Act as a framework for action, the U.S. should increase its pressure by imposing additional sanctions on Russia, and provide strong support for the Ukrainian people through the provision of defensive military assistance, as well as financial backing and humanitarian aid.

First, the administration should fully impose sanctions as laid out in the law. I understand that at least three sanctions measures against Rosoboronexport have been implemented by the

administration. I urge the administration to take immediate action and impose additional sanctions as suggested in the law on this company, which also continues to provide weapons to the Assad regime in Syria.

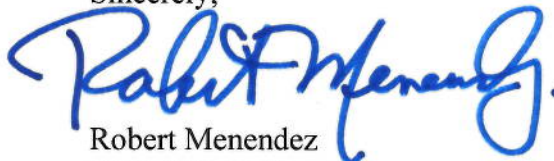
Second, the law requires the imposition of sanctions on others in the Russian Federation's defense industry that contribute to instability in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Syria, as well as energy sanctions relating to special Russian crude oil projects by January 31, 2015. This deadline is fast approaching, and I urge you to use this authority. I expect to be fully briefed on the administration's decision to exercise these sanctions by no later than February 2, 2015.

Third, on February 15, 2015, the administration is required to report on its plan for increasing military assistance to the government of Ukraine. The law authorized the provision of defense articles including anti-tank and anti-armor weapons, crew weapons and ammunition, radar, and communications equipment for the Ukrainian military. Such assistance is urgently required to repel the Russian-backed forces as they continue to step up their heavily armed attacks. As noted in your January 24<sup>th</sup> statement, "the separatists' new offensive, not just in Mariupol and Debaltseve, but along the ceasefire line, has been aided and abetted by Russia's irresponsible and dangerous decision to resupply them in recent weeks with hundreds of new pieces of advanced weaponry, including rocket systems, heavy artillery, tanks, armored vehicles, in addition to continuing operational command and control."

Such blatant disregard for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity cannot stand. I strongly urge the administration to provide Ukraine with the weapons it needs to defend itself, and I look forward to the administration's report on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, the law was explicit in its support for the development of Ukrainian society. Protracted Russian aggression is depleting Ukraine's fragile economic resources, and I support the administration's loan guarantees and efforts to encourage substantial financial support by the International Monetary Fund, European Union and individual EU member states. I will encourage the Senate Appropriations committee to fully support efforts towards this end. I also look forward to reviewing the administration's report on plans to assist IDPs – we have yet to see this report, and I urge the administration to provide a description of these efforts as soon as possible. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the administration is also obligated to report on its strategy for assisting civil society in Ukraine. This too is critically important – the ultimate long term defense against Russian aggression is a strong, democratic Ukrainian government and civil society. I look forward to reviewing this strategy and working closely with you in support of these critical efforts.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator