

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 13, 2017

The Honorable Thomas A. Shannon, Jr.
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Shannon,

We strongly urge the State Department not to return the diplomatic compounds in Maryland and New York to the Government of the Russian Federation at this time. Simply put, the Russian government has done nothing to deserve renewed access to these compounds.

As you know, the Russian diplomatic compounds were seized based on the harassment, sometimes violent, of U.S. personnel in Russia. Since the seizure of these compounds, we are unaware of any evidence or assessment that the treatment of U.S. personnel in the Russian Federation has markedly improved.

It is also widely suspected and reported that these two compounds were used not simply for diplomatic purposes, but as bases for Russian spying operations. The Russian government's interference in the 2016 U.S. election makes abundantly clear the Kremlin's nefarious intentions toward the United States, which also remain unchanged. As you engage in a July 17 bilateral dialogue with the Russian government, we strongly urge you to consult closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation on relevant counterintelligence considerations.

S. 722, which passed the Senate in June by a vote of 98-2, includes a provision that could make the return of the Maryland and New York compounds subject to Congressional review. There is clearly very strong support in Congress for vigilance with regards to the Russian government presence in the United States. We urge you to be similarly vigilant as you broach negotiations on a range of bilateral issues with the Russians on Monday, and to deny the Russian government the ability to advance its interests from within our own states.

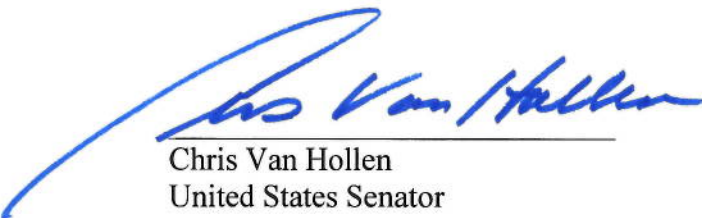
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator