

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President;

As members of the bi-partisan Ukraine Caucus in the United States Senate, we write to express our deep concern regarding the recent unprovoked buildup of Russian military forces on the eastern border of Ukraine, and the Crimean Peninsula. Over the past month, Russia has deployed thousands of troops, armored vehicles, artillery and rocket launchers in an unprovoked escalation of forces that threatens the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine. There has also been a significant increase in attacks on Ukrainian forces in the Donbas that has resulted in the death of 31 brave Ukrainian soldiers since January of this year.

Russian media and government spokespersons falsely portray this massing of forces as “routine exercises” but as we have seen from past Russian actions, this blatant display of unprovoked aggression is either a precursor to future offensive actions or an attempt to intimidate the Ukrainian government into making concessions regarding the future status of the occupied Ukrainian territories. Neither of these outcomes should be acceptable to the United States and the international community.

We commend your Administration’s recent actions in support of Ukraine to include new sanctions targeting Russia’s occupation of Crimea and provocations in Eastern Ukraine, your call to President Zelensky, Secretary of State Blinken’s statements of opposition to the Russian buildup and Secretary of Defense Austin’s engagement with his Ukrainian counterparts.

We strongly encourage your Administration to continue to provide critical support to Ukraine during this period and work closely with our European allies in NATO to present a united front in opposition to this unwarranted Russian provocation. In the past Congress has provided robust military assistance to Ukraine, including through the Ukraine Security Assistance

Initiative, and authorized billions of dollars in Foreign Military Sales to improve Ukrainian military capabilities and readiness. Congress has also authorized vital funding to support Ukraine's reform agenda, strengthen democratic institutions and support Ukraine's energy independence from Russia – all of which are similarly critical to ensuring Ukraine's long-term security. We stand ready to support your Administration as you work to build an international consensus against these most recent Russian provocations. We encourage you to provide critical material assistance to Ukraine in the short term and that you continue to request robust economic and military assistance funding for Ukraine through your budgetary requests to Congress.

Ukraine is a strategic security partner of the United States that desires to align itself with democratic values. Since 2014, President Putin has engaged in an unrelenting campaign of military and political actions designed to deny Ukraine this dream and draw them back into the Kremlin's sphere of influence. It is critical that we continue to push back against Putin's aggression and support the brave people of Ukraine.

Respectfully,



Rob Portman
United States Senator

/s/

John Barrasso, MD
United States Senator

/s/

Ron Johnson
United States Senator

/s/

Pat Toomey
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/

Robert P. Casey
United States Senator

/s/

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/

Joni Ernst
United States Senator

/s/

Ben Cardin
United States Senator

/s/

John Cornyn
United States Senator

/s/

Chris Murphy
United States Senator

/s/

Jim Inhofe
United States Senator

/s/

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/

Gary Peters
United States Senator