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## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

February 9, 2017

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Last week, we witnessed a new escalation in violence in Ukraine along the line of contact between Ukrainian government forces and Russian-backed separatists. In fact, the White House press statement following your call with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko cited a "long-running conflict" between Russia and Ukraine, and in her first speech to the U.N. Security Council your Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, noted that "the United States expects that those who can influence the groups that are fighting—in particular, Russia—will do everything possible to support an end to this escalation in violence." In light of your conversation with President Poroshenko, I would encourage you to do everything possible to peaceably resolve the ongoing conflict, starting with a strong signal to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The actions and policies of the Russian government continue to undermine the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including through the deployment of military forces to and illegal occupation of Crimea. Further, the terms of the Minsk agreements have not been met, nor has Russia addressed the actions that justified the imposition of sanctions on Russian interests by the United States and our European partners. In fact, the Russian government only continues to support aggressive actions intended to undermine Ukraine and our European allies and partners.

Since the start of the conflict, Congress has made clear that the illegal occupation of Crimea and continued Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, particularly its support to Russian-backed separatists, is unacceptable. In the most recent National Defense Authorization Act, Congress extended a prohibition on funds for activities that would recognize Russian Federation sovereignty in Crimea, and it enhanced the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative. Importantly, this included a provision extending authorized funding for the provision of lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine.

As the conflict in Ukraine unfolds, the world will be watching you. Your words, your actions, and, most importantly, your leadership will matter. Now is not the time to consider easing the sanctions levied on Russia or to back away from Ukraine. It is the time for the United States to stand firm. I strongly urge you to demonstrate implacable U.S. resolve, at the very least, by enforcing current sanctions and exercising the authority provided by Congress to provide lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam Smith". The signature is stylized and written over the word "Sincerely,".

Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee