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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

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February 1, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

In the first of what will be many tests for your new administration, Russia and its proxy forces launched attacks against Ukrainian forces this week, killing at least seven Ukrainian soldiers and wounding dozens more. That this surge of attacks began the day after he talked with you by phone is a clear indication that Vladimir Putin is moving quickly to test you as Commander-in-Chief. America's response will have lasting consequences.

Vladimir Putin's violent campaign to destabilize and dismember the sovereign nation of Ukraine will not stop unless and until he meets a strong and determined response. Therefore, in light of the latest Russian attacks and the prospect of future aggression against Ukraine, I urge you to exercise the authority given to you by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 to provide defensive lethal assistance to Ukraine to defend its territory against further violations by Russia and its separatist proxies. At the same time, so long as Russia continues to occupy Crimea and destabilize Ukraine, I implore you to maintain current sanctions against Russia. And based on Russia's attempted interference in our elections, I urge you to expand current sanctions against Russia.

Ukrainians are not asking Americans to do their fighting. Nearly 10,000 Ukrainians have died to protect their homeland and many more are serving and have sacrificed for the cause of a free and united Ukraine. But America does have a proud history of helping free people to defend themselves. We should do so once more by giving our Ukrainian friends the assistance they need and deserve. Failing to do so now not only risks Ukraine's sovereignty, but the further erosion of American credibility.

Sincerely,



John McCain
Chairman