

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 20, 2015

Secretary of State John Kerry  
Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

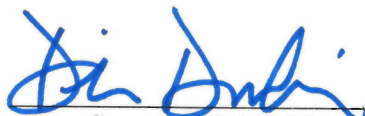
Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write with grave concern and urgency over the flagrant Russian violation of the February 12, Minsk agreement regarding Ukraine. Not surprisingly, Russian-backed forces continued their brazen military offensive against thousands of besieged Ukrainian forces in Debaltseve, laying bare any remaining pretense that Russian President Vladimir Putin intends to abide by any cease fire agreement or follow well-established international norms of behavior. As such, we urge the immediate tightening of international sanctions against Russia and the provision of defensive weapons to Ukraine so that it can defend its territorial sovereignty.

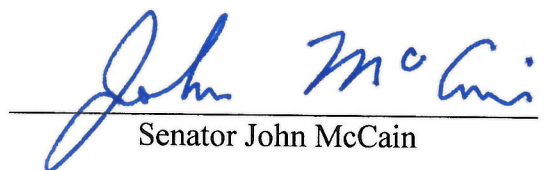
Many of us were extremely doubtful that Russia would respect the terms of the second Minsk agreement, given it has utterly failed to abide by the Minsk Protocol reached in September. In fact, Putin's duplicity regarding these agreements has been matched only by his delusional denials of Russian involvement in eastern Ukraine. The unfortunate conclusion is clear – he hopes to carve out further sovereign territory of Ukraine, much as he illegally did in Georgia, and undermine the legitimate Ukrainian government as it strives to build a modern democratic state. So threatening is the latter to Putin that he has selfishly gambled his own nation's economic and international standing and the futures of the Russian people on this tragically misplaced paranoia.

As such, we can only conclude that in the absence of greater Western support for Ukrainian forces, a Russian-imposed military outcome will continue to unfold in Ukraine. With the potential of such an unacceptable outcome imposed by force, thousands already killed and wounded, and hundreds of thousands displaced, it is time to provide defensive weapons to Ukraine and to consider imposing additional sanctions and penalties that will increase the cost of Putin's actions, including the potential removal of Russia from the SWIFT financial system. And we must redouble allied efforts to ensure Ukraine's long-term economic and political future as it undertakes courageous economic reforms in the face of Russian destabilization.

Sincerely,



Senator Richard J. Durbin



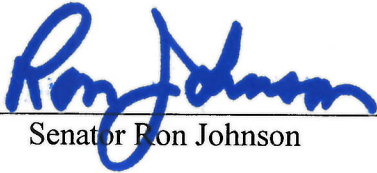
Senator John McCain




Senator Rob Portman



Senator Richard Blumenthal



Senator Ron Johnson



Senator Jeanne Shaheen



Senator Mark Kirk



Senator Pat Toomey



Senator Kelly Ayotte



Senator Bill Nelson