October 29, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Restoring Pressure on Russia to End the War in Ukraine

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned former diplomats, military officers, intelligence officials, and national security experts, have served in both Republican and Democratic administrations. We share your goal of ending the war in Ukraine with a durable peace that meets the strategic interests of the United States. We write because several recent U.S. policy decisions risk putting that goal further out of reach.

Wars end when the aggressor concludes that fighting on will cost more than stopping. Russia started this war and Russia can end it. The task for American policy is to raise the price Moscow pays for every day it continues while making sure Kyiv can defend itself. In recent weeks, Washington has done the opposite. To restore American leverage, we urge you to enforce the sanctions law you signed in September, reverse the Russian diesel deal, lift the restrictions on Ukraine's Starshield access, release the Patriot interceptors our allies have already paid for, and keep Ukraine at the negotiating table.

The most consequential of these steps is enforcing the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act. The law passed the Senate 86 to 11 and gave you powerful tools: sanctions on Russia's banks, energy sector, and shadow fleet; tariffs of up to 100 percent on major buyers of Russian oil and gas; and sanctions on those responsible for the forced deportation of Ukrainian children. Yet, on October 16, two days before those measures were to take effect, an executive order waived most of them. Moscow offered no ceasefire or concession in return. Giving up leverage for nothing tells the Kremlin that it can outlast Washington. We urge you to rescind the waiver and enforce the law as Congress intended.

The diesel agreement announced on October 9 compounds the problem. Under it, the administration agreed to purchase Russian diesel, and the Treasury Department issued a license allowing that diesel onto world markets, including the United States' market. Every dollar from these sales will help pay for missiles and drones that Russia fires against Ukrainian cities. The deal is also legally questionable. A bipartisan group of

seven senators has warned that it conflicts with the Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act of 2022, which allows the import ban to be lifted only after a certification to Congress. The license should be withdrawn and the 2022 law honored.

While those decisions have eased pressure on Moscow, others have weakened Ukraine's ability to defend itself. On October 13 and 14, speed limits imposed on the Starshield satellite network, which Reuters reported the White House ordered, disrupted the interceptor drones Ukraine uses to stop Russia's new jet-powered Shahed drones. Because Starshield does not operate over Russia, these restrictions do nothing to restrain Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory. What they do is weaken Ukraine's air defenses and operations against Russian forces on occupied Ukrainian land. We urge you to lift them and commit not to reimpose them.

Ukrainian air defenses face a second strain. Ukrainian officials report that a substantial shipment of Patriot interceptors, already paid for by European allies, is waiting on the Secretary of War's approval, and that requests from partners to transfer Patriots from their own stocks have been delayed. Patriots are Ukraine's main defense against the ballistic missiles Russia now launches almost daily on Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, where American diplomats live and work. Every day of delay leaves those Ukrainian civilians more exposed, and we urge you to approve these transfers immediately.

The contrast between the two sides is clear: Ukraine has offered to halt strikes on Russian energy infrastructure if Russia does the same; Moscow has offered nothing. When only one side is willing to show restraint, pressure should be directed against the side that refuses. Russia is not winning on the battlefield. It is betting that Washington will lose interest. Peace through strength means using the leverage Congress has provided, not setting it aside.

Finally, any lasting peace must be negotiated with Kyiv, not over its head. Ukraine must be a full participant in any negotiations over the terms of peace. Reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin has proposed a trilateral meeting with the United States and China that would explicitly exclude Ukraine and set terms for ending the war are deeply concerning. Ukraine has demonstrated that it has the capacity and resolve to defend its own territory and will ultimately be responsible for implementing its commitments under any agreement that ends Russia's invasion. It must therefore be at the negotiating table. European allies, whose security is directly implicated in the outcome of this war, must also be represented.

Mr. President, you have the tools to end this war on terms that serve American interests and deter future aggression. We urge you to use them and stand ready to support your efforts toward a just and lasting peace.

Sincerely,

General (Ret.) Philip Breedlove

Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Ian Brzezinski

Former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Europe and NATO Policy

General (Ret.) Wesley K. Clark

Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)

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Amb. Eric Edelman

Former U.S. Ambassador to Finland

Former U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy

Dr. Evelyn Farkas

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Former U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE and to Georgia

Amb. (Ret.) Douglas Lute

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Rear Admiral (Ret.) Mark Montgomery

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Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

Former U.S. Ambassador to Greece

Former Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources

Amb. Todd Robinson

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

Amb. Stephen R. Sestanovich

Former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the Former Soviet Union

Amb. William B. Taylor

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

Amb. Alexander Vershbow

Former NATO Deputy Secretary General

Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense

Amb. Marie Yovanovitch

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

Disclaimer: All signatories endorse this letter in their personal capacities. Institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.