

## United States Senate

March 11, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

After attending this year's Munich Security Conference, I write to express my concern that the European Union (EU) will not renew sanctions against Russia for its illegal annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine.

I applaud the EU for recently extending its Crimea-related sanctions on nearly 150 Russian officials and pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, but sectoral sanctions against the Russian economy must also be renewed by July 31, 2016. A number of European officials have visited Moscow recently and announced their desire to see sectoral sanctions withdrawn over the summer.

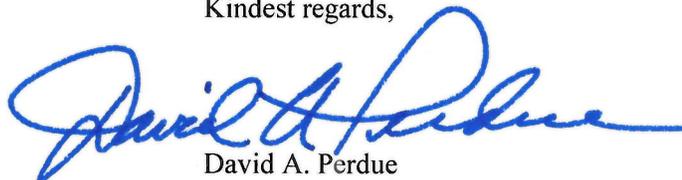
Such action would be completely unjustified. Russia continues to occupy Crimea and undermine Ukraine's territorial integrity in its eastern regions. Vladimir Putin has now openly admitted to the presence of Russian nationals in Ukraine "who carried out certain tasks, including in the military sphere." He violates the Minsk agreement and refuses to grant Kyiv control of Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. Russia also persists in its war of attrition against the Ukrainian economy. Moscow recently banned the import of Ukrainian agricultural products and imposed new tariffs after Kyiv and the EU began to implement a free trade agreement.

This is not behavior that warrants sanctions rollback. Any loosening of the sanctions regime against Russia would send a dangerous message at a time when Putin has refused to change his policies toward Ukraine and threatens others in the region.

I am particularly concerned about Putin's hostility toward the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. These states are our frontline NATO allies. The United States must do more to support Baltic security and counter Kremlin propaganda that fuels discontent among Russian speakers in the region. As we take stronger action, the United States should also press harder to convince our NATO partners that the alliance needs to collectively demonstrate its ironclad commitment to the defense of the Baltic countries, including at the upcoming NATO summit in Warsaw, Poland.

I urge the administration to exercise more active American leadership and engage with our European partners to make sure the EU renews its Russia sanctions in July. These sanctions must remain in place until Putin ends his aggression and returns Crimea to Ukraine.

Kindest regards,



David A. Perdue  
United States Senate