

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 15, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary of Defense
United States Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Michael R. Pompeo
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

The Honorable John J. Sullivan
Deputy Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Mattis, Director Pompeo, and Deputy Secretary Sullivan,

We welcome today's announcement of the imposition of sanctions on Russia in response to its information operations during the 2016 election and its continued cyber-attacks against the United States and our allies.

The United Kingdom took a strong step yesterday in responding to the vile and reckless use of a military grade nerve agent against ex-Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal, his daughter, and the community of Salisbury, England. In expelling 23 Russian diplomats and freezing Russian financial assets, our ally demonstrated that it has no tolerance for Putin's continued hybrid war against free and open societies.

Russia's latest attack has larger systemic implications as well. As Prime Minister May stated in her address to the UK Parliament today, "this was not just an act of attempted murder in Salisbury – nor an act against the UK. It is an affront to the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. It is an affront to the rules-based system on which we and our international partners depend."

In this crucial period following attribution of the attack – and as Director Pompeo begins his transition to the Department of State – we ask that you prioritize discussions with our NATO allies regarding a collective response to this attack and urge you to consider invoking Article IV of the North Atlantic Treaty to accelerate this dialogue. Whether it is the consideration of similar Russian expulsions from NATO nations, freezing more Russian assets, or other appropriate measures, we must make it inescapably clear to Russia that its shadow operations will meet a coordinated NATO response.

Sadly, this attack will not be the last time that Russia tries to silence those who publicly condemn Putin's regime from Western soil. That is why the United States should be leading conversations with our NATO allies weighing a coordinated response now, so that we are better prepared to react to Russia's next brazen act against our allies and the rules-based international system.

Thank you for your prioritization and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Ben Sasse
United States Senator



John McCain
United States Senator