

Letter to President-elect Donald J. Trump from America's Allies

January 9, 2017

President-elect Donald J. Trump
Trump-Pence Transition Team
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President-elect Trump:

We—decision-makers and public figures from across Europe—welcome your election as America's 45th president. We are eager to work with your administration to sustain our powerful transatlantic Alliance, jointly defending our way of life at a time of great peril.

Russia's continuing efforts to destabilize Ukraine, and its illegal annexation of Crimea, threaten the peace, predictability and security that Americans and Europeans created together through our victory in the Cold War. We are concerned that the prospect of a new grand bargain with Russia will endanger this historic achievement.

It would be a grave mistake to end the current sanctions on Russia or accept the division and subjugation of Ukraine. Doing so would demoralize those seeking a Euro-Atlantic orientation for that country. It would also destabilize our Eastern neighborhood economically and give heart to extremist, oligarchic and anti-Western elements there.

The wider damage would be grave too. The aftershocks of such a deal would shake American credibility with allies in Europe and elsewhere. The rules-based international order on which Western security has depended for decades would be weakened. The alliances that are the true source of American greatness would erode: countries that have expended blood, treasure and political capital in support of transatlantic security will wonder if America is now no longer a dependable friend.

Have no doubt: Vladimir Putin is not America's ally. Neither is he a trustworthy international partner. Both of the presidents who preceded you tried in their own ways to deal with Russia's leadership in the spirit of trust and friendship. Big mistake: Putin treated their good intentions as opportunities.

Under Putin, Russia's record of militarism, wars, threats, broken treaties and false promises have made Europe a more dangerous place. **Putin does not seek American greatness. As your allies, we do.** When America called on us in the past, we came. We were with you in Iraq. We were

with you in Afghanistan. We took risks together; sacrificed sons and daughters together. We defend our shared transatlantic security as a united front. This is what makes our Alliance powerful. When the United States stands strong, we are all stronger—together.

A deal with Putin will not bring peace. On the contrary, it makes war more likely. Putin views concessions as a sign of weakness. He will be inclined to test American credibility in frontline NATO allies, such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. He may use not only military intimidation, but also cyber-attacks, energy and economic pressure, espionage, psychological warfare, disinformation and the targeted use of bribery. As Russia's neighbors, we are familiar with these techniques. Countering them requires greater strength, solidarity and resolve from the West—not more accommodation.

As your treaty-bound allies, we appeal to Americans in the new U.S. Administration and Congress to stand firm in the defense of our common goals and interests: peace, Atlantic strength, and freedom. United, we are more than a match for Russia's ailing kleptocracy. Divided, as we have seen all too clearly in recent years, we are all at risk. For decades, our unified Alliance has been the bulwark of European security. We appeal to our American friends to strengthen, not weaken our transatlantic ties. Ukraine needs support; the frontline states need your constancy and resolve. And most of all, Russia must see that when we are attacked, we grow stronger, not weaker.

Sincerely,

Traian Băsescu

Paweł Kowal

Carl Bildt

Janusz Onyszkiewicz

Mikuláš Dzurinda

Rosen Plevneliev

Mátyás Eörsi

Karel Schwarzenberg

Iulian Fota

Radosław Sikorski

István Gyarmati

Petras Vaitiekūnas

Toomas Hendrik Ilves

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga

Rasa Juknevičienė

Alexandr Vondra

Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš