

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 12, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

In the 116th Congress, we will sustain our longstanding commitment to providing the resources needed to secure our nation and defend America's allies. However, we write out of deep concern that your administration is now abandoning generations of bipartisan U.S. leadership around the paired goals of reducing the global role and number of nuclear weapons and ensuring strategic stability with America's nuclear-armed adversaries.

Your administration's efforts to double down on new, unnecessary nuclear weapons while scrapping mutually beneficial treaties risks the United States sliding into another arms race with Russia and erodes U.S. nonproliferation efforts around the world.

First, to put us on a safer path, we urge you to redouble diplomatic efforts to preserve the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty rather than simply terminating it. One of President Reagan's most significant accomplishments, and approved by the Senate in a vote of 93-5, the INF Treaty eliminated an entire class of missiles and formed the foundation for subsequent verifiable bilateral arms control treaties.

We should address Russia's serious violation of the Treaty arising from its production, flight-testing, and deployment of a non-compliant ground-launched cruise missile (Novator 9M729, or SSC-8) by vigorously exploring a diplomatic resolution in close concert with our allies. NATO's unanimous condemnation of Russia's INF violation is a positive first step. However, the U.S. still lacks a comprehensive strategy to address the security threats that would result from a collapse of the INF Treaty. A U.S. withdrawal from INF will embolden Russia to deploy, without any legal constraint, an unlimited number of currently banned missiles, thereby increasing the threat to our allies and forward deployed troops in Europe.

We must both hold Russia accountable for its violation of the INF Treaty and ensure that the United States and its allies maintain Treaty-compliant capabilities to deny any military gain Russia hopes to gain by its violation. In October of this year, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated, "We don't want a new arms race and therefore I don't foresee that Allies will station more nuclear weapons in Europe as a response to the new Russian missile." Failure to weigh the concerns of allies risks weakening the joint resolve necessary to counter Russia's aggressive behavior while handing Russia a "get out of jail free" card for its Treaty violation.

Second, we are concerned that your administration has taken no concrete steps toward extending the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with Russia, which is due to expire in

February 2021. A collapse of the INF Treaty and failure to renew New START would lead to the absence of verifiable limits on U.S. and Russian nuclear forces for the first time since the early 1970s. New START provides the U.S. military and intelligence community with crucial insight into the location, movement, and elimination of Russia's strategic forces. Abandoning the Treaty would free Russia to expand its capacity to directly threaten the entire U.S. homeland.

Finally, we are also concerned that your proposed new types of nuclear weapons threaten the bipartisan consensus that investments in the U.S. nuclear weapons deterrent and supporting infrastructure must be accompanied by pursuit of continued arms control measures.

In the 116th Congress, the Democratic Caucus will work to maintain generations of U.S. global leadership in reducing the salience and number of nuclear weapons. We ask you to reverse the recent course set by your administration and instead point our nation back towards stability.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



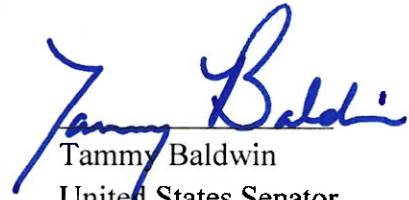
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



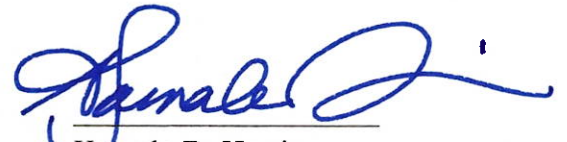
Tina Smith
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



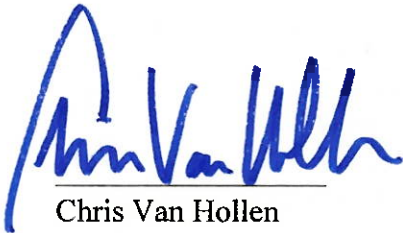
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



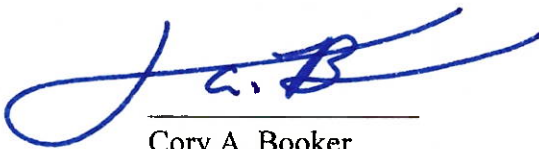
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



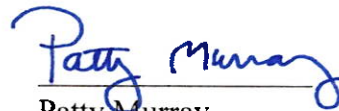
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



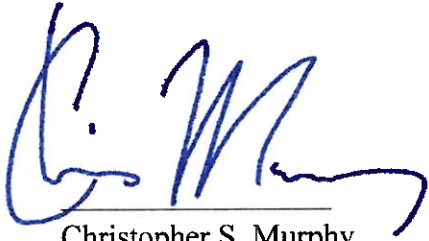
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator