

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2020

Steven Mnuchin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin,

We write to express our profound concern in response to recent reports that, according to American intelligence assessments, Russian officers offered to pay terrorists to kill American and allied service members in Afghanistan. This represents an unprecedented escalation in hostility by Russia. We urge you to leverage existing statutory and administrative authority to impose new sanctions against the Russian Federation, its leadership, and arteries of its financial network.

According to recent reporting, Russia secretly offered to Taliban-linked militants bounties on forces in Afghanistan, which included targeting American troops.¹ This attempt at targeting Americans and NATO coalition forces is an alarming aggression by Russia. While the reporting was not able to attribute a specific number of murders resulting from these bounties, the U.S. Department of Defense has confirmed that 20 American service members were killed in Afghanistan in 2019.² This assessment of Russian malign activity is based on analysis from the U.S. Intelligence Community and has been shared with allied forces, who were also targeted. The same analysis, per press reporting, also concluded that the Russian unit executing these bounties has engaged in a series of other attacks targeting U.S. persons and institutions. We understand that the U.S. intelligence reports were considered so serious that the National Security Council met in March on the matter. As more information is revealed with each passing day, we are forced to question why this administration has not acted or spoken out in defense of our citizens. Worse still, the President has advocated in support of this dangerous regime for membership into the G-7. These reports, whether taken individually or together, highlight the utter insufficiency of the Trump administration's current posture vis a vis Russia and its aggressive and nefarious intentions. As we continue to investigate these developments, it is imperative that you use the tools Congress has provided to defend our country.

These actions by the Russian Federation warrant not delay or silence but rather a robust and coordinated response. To that end, we urge you to freeze assets and transactions of Russian persons and financial institutions that have enabled these violent acts—pursuant to Executive Order 13224 (September 23, 2001). This order provides for sanctions against foreign persons who have committed or have attempted to commit, acts of terrorism against the United States

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html>

and U.S. nationals, and those who have provided material supports of such terrorists. Additionally, we strongly urge you to work in coordination with international allies to impose comprehensive sanctions against Russia and its leadership. Finally, elements of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2014 (P.L. 115-44) targeting Russia have yet to be implemented.³ These provisions are long overdue and the Trump administration's foot-dragging in executing them have likely emboldened Moscow to pursue increasingly hostile acts against the United States, our people, and our interests.

We look forward to your response on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emanuel Cleaver, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

CC: Michael Pompeo, Secretary, United States Department of State

³ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10779>