

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 28, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

Dear President Obama,

The ongoing atrocities by the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad and his allies continue to frighten and shock the global community. The daily barrages from Syrian, Iranian, and Russian artillery in places like Aleppo exhibits the true horror of this conflict that has gone on for more than five years. With the recent ceasefire now in shambles, it is imperative that the United States demonstrate strong leadership by using coercive economic action against the Assad and Putin regimes. With nearly 500,000 Syrians dead – more than 50,000 being children – it is time that these brutal strongmen realize there are consequences for their indiscriminate killings of innocent civilians.

We were dismayed over the recent news that the Administration worked to delay consideration of H.R. 5732, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2016, which would highlight atrocities of the Assad regime and its allies and make it U.S. policy to use all available tools to stop the murder in Syria. Additionally, this legislation prohibits arms transfers and related materials to Syria and enhances sanctions on Syrian officials that have engaged in crimes against humanity. Rather than blocking critical pieces of legislation to hold murderers accountable for their crimes, we need to utilize all the tools in our arsenal to make the violence stop.

Vladimir Putin and Russia are delivering bombs on medical facilities, humanitarian aid convoys, and on children in Syria. They are no ally of ours. Rather than negotiating on ceasefires and imposing a diplomatic freeze that will do nothing to allow humanitarian aid to starving and suffering Syrians, it is time Assad, Putin, and their supporters bear the consequences for their vicious murder of civilians in Aleppo.

In April, we sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew requesting a detailed update on your strategy to utilize economic sanctions against Russia and Vladimir Putin for their belligerent and destabilizing activities in the Middle East and Europe. With regards to Syria, the Treasury Department's response highlighted how it has "targeted Russia's support for the Assad regime pursuant to our Syria authorities, sanctioning entities like Russian Financial Alliance Bank and Russia's Tempbank. We have also worked through diplomatic and other channels to disrupt this report." We remain concerned that Russia and other Assad allies are not feeling the consequences for their continued support of the regime's crimes against humanity.

We believe increased coercive economic measures against Assad and Putin could not only have an impact to alleviate the suffering on the ground, but would be vital to our national security interests in mitigating the violence in Syria. That is why we urge you to develop a comprehensive and effective strategy to place needed pressure on these regimes. Specifically, we would appreciate a detailed response from the Treasury Department on the potential viability of issuing a finding under Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act to identify Russian banks that are “primary money-laundering concerns” and involved in the financing the Assad regime. Furthermore, we request the Treasury Department to provide an analysis on potential actions against Syria, such as blocking worldwide business and financial transactions with the Assad regime and even blocking Syrian banks from using the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT).

Additionally, we would be particularly interested to know how the Treasury Department is implementing the sanctions already on the books against Syria and Russia. Those actions would include targeting banks controlled by or providing services to Syrian regime officials or supporters who have already been sanctioned by the Treasury Department. Also, we believe there is a need to enhance our sanctions against individuals and entities that could be providing arms and weapons to these regimes for the use of maiming and killing Syrian civilians. A policy that puts additional financial pressure on Bashar al-Assad, Vladimir Putin, and their allies would send a strong message that there are devastating costs for the devastation in Aleppo and greater Syria.

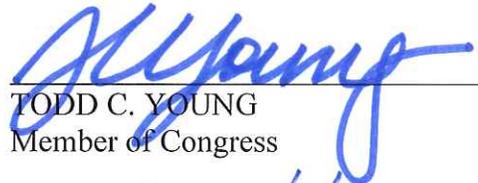
The consequences from continued inaction in Syria are causing reverberations across the region. The instability caused by terrorism, tyranny, oppression, and the killing of innocents needs to be mitigated in order to prevent further threats to our interests. Rather than negotiating with our enemies that have no interest in ending the conflict, it is time that the United States employ strong and decisive action to show Assad and Putin the costs for their continued violations of global order. We urge you to do everything in your power as Commander-in-Chief to mitigate the ongoing crisis in Syria.

We look forward to your response on this critical matter.

Sincerely,



ADAM KINZINGER  
Member of Congress



TODD C. YOUNG  
Member of Congress



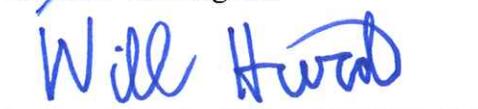
ROBERT J. DOLD  
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