United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 12, 2018

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you prepare for your upcoming summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, we write to urge you to reinvigorate the strategic arms control and stability dialogue between our two nations. Specifically, we ask that you convey America's interest in extending the New START Treaty with Russia by five years, as well as urge President Putin to resolve quickly Russia's ongoing noncompliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Our present relationship with Russia is at its lowest point since the Cold War. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, annexation of Crimea, perpetuation of the ongoing violence in Syria, and interference in our elections, among other issues, have badly strained the relationship. Regrettably, this strain is also apparent in our reduced bilateral dialogue on issues related to strategic arms control.

As the nations with the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world, it is imperative that we cooperate to reduce the risk of nuclear war. Even throughout the Cold War, and often in spite of other sometimes vigorous disagreements, the United States and Russia have maintained a robust strategic arms control dialogue to foster transparency, promote accountability, and preserve stability beneficial to the United States, Russia, and the world.

In 2010 the United States Senate ratified the New START Treaty with strong, bipartisan support. The Treaty limits the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems, and includes detailed verification measures to bring much needed transparency to Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal.

At present, the New START Treaty will expire in February 2021. However, as noted by your administration's Nuclear Posture Review, this Treaty "with mutual agreement, may be extended for up to five years, to 2026." Your upcoming summit provides an historic opportunity to announce this extension.

We also urge you to raise Russia's continuing violation of the 1987 INF Treaty, which required the United States and the then-Soviet Union to eliminate all nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500-5,500 kilometers. Russia's deployment of non-compliant missiles threatens not only our security, but that of our closest allies as well. We recognize that your administration has continued to highlight this issue, and we encourage you to press President Putin to return Russia to compliance with its INF treaty obligations immediately.

Mr. President, you have an opportunity to reinvigorate a crucial part of the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship in spite of its other, overall challenges at present. In the face of these tensions, your leadership will be instrumental to rebuilding our existing strategic arms control and stability dialogue, maintaining arms control treaties imperative to American and global security, and creating new opportunities to expand upon these important efforts with Russia.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator