

June 29, 2020

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

Dear Mr. President,

I write with urgency following this weekend's disturbing media reports which stated that the Russian military intelligence agency, the GRU, offered bounties in exchange for the targeting and killing of American and coalition service members in Afghanistan. If confirmed, this deserves a strong and immediate response from our government. It is imperative that the Congress and your Administration work together to deter any further aggression toward our nation.

As Vladimir Putin continues his misguided campaign to restore Russia's great power status, we must not permit Americans to be used as pawns in his global chessboard. I know you agree that our troops and our nation must be defended and I stand ready to hold Putin accountable for his actions.

I recognize the actions your Administration have already taken against Russian behavior such as confronting them in the Ukraine, imposing heavy diplomatic costs, and advancing sober-minded nuclear policies, including efforts to modernize our nuclear triad and working to extend New START. However, if these reports are confirmed and American service members were found to have been killed as a result, an even stronger response will be required. Depending on where the facts lead, there should be no invitation for the Russian Federation to rejoin the G7 and you should impose sanctions directly on both President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov.

It is imperative that the United States remain vigilant and uncompromising in the face of Russia's threatening, provocative, and destabilizing behavior. With that in mind, I am alarmed by reports that you, the Vice President, and the relevant Congressional Committees were not briefed on this critical threat to our service members and to our national security. I believe that you would have wanted to know this critical intelligence information and be provided with the resources necessary to save the lives of our men and women in uniform. I stand ready to hold any members of your Administration accountable for their gross negligence in performing such a grave responsibility.

As part of our constitutional prerogative, I recommend that the relevant Senate committees convene oversight hearings on this matter. In the coming days, we must work to ascertain the reliability of media reports and, where necessary, advance accountability within our own government and facilitate a punishing response to the seemingly immoral, illegal, and unconscionable actions of the dictator who lords of the Russian people.

Sincerely,



Todd Young  
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable John Ratcliffe, Director of National Intelligence  
Robert C. O'Brien, National Security Advisor  
Senator Jim Risch, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Senator Jim Inhofe, Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee  
Senator Marco Rubio, Acting Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence