

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2022

Dear Mr. President:

We write with appreciation for your commitment to Ukraine's legitimate struggle against Russia's war of aggression. Your support for the self-defense of an independent, sovereign, and democratic state has been supported by Congress, including through various appropriations of military, economic and humanitarian aid in furtherance of this cause. Your administration's policy was critical to enable the Ukrainian people, through their courageous fighting and heroic sacrifices, to deal a historic military defeat to Russia, forcing Russia to dramatically scale back the stated goals of the invasion.

Crucially, you achieved this while also maintaining that it is imperative to avoid direct military conflict with Russia, which would lead to "World War III, something we must strive to prevent." The risk of nuclear weapons being used has been [estimated](#) to be higher now than at any time since the height of the Cold War. Given the catastrophic possibilities of nuclear escalation and miscalculation, which only increase the longer this war continues, we agree with your goal of avoiding direct military conflict as an overriding national-security priority.

Given the destruction created by this war for Ukraine and the world, as well as the risk of catastrophic escalation, we also believe it is in the interests of Ukraine, the United States, and the world to avoid a prolonged conflict. For this reason, we urge you to pair the military and economic support the United States has provided to Ukraine with a proactive diplomatic push, redoubling efforts to seek a realistic framework for a ceasefire. This is consistent with your [recognition](#) that "there's going to have to be a negotiated settlement here," and your [concern](#) that Vladimir Putin "doesn't have a way out right now, and I'm trying to figure out what we do about that."

We are under no illusions regarding the difficulties involved in engaging Russia given its outrageous and illegal invasion of Ukraine and its decision to make additional illegal annexations of Ukrainian territory. However, if there is a way to end the war while preserving a free and independent Ukraine, it is America's responsibility to pursue every diplomatic avenue to support such a solution that is acceptable to the people of Ukraine. Such a framework would presumably include incentives to end hostilities, including some form of sanctions relief, and bring together the international community to establish security guarantees for a free and independent Ukraine that are acceptable for all parties, particularly Ukrainians. The alternative to diplomacy is protracted war, with both its attendant certainties and catastrophic and unknowable risks.

Russia's invasion has caused incalculable harm for the people of Ukraine, leading to the deaths of countless thousands of civilians, Ukrainian [soldiers](#), and displacement of 13 million people, while Russia's recent seizure of cities in Ukraine's east have led to the most pivotal moment in the conflict and the consolidation of Russian control over roughly 20 percent of Ukraine's territory. The conflict [threatens](#) an additional tens of millions more worldwide, as skyrocketing prices in wheat, fertilizer and fuel spark acute crises in global hunger and poverty. A war that is allowed to grind on for years—potentially escalating in intensity and geographic scope—threatens to displace, kill, and immiserate far more Ukrainians while causing hunger, poverty,

and death around the world. The conflict has also contributed to elevated gas and food prices at home, fueling inflation and high oil prices for Americans in recent months. Economists believe that if the situation in Ukraine is stabilized, some of the speculative concerns driving higher fuel costs will subside and likely lead to a drop in world oil prices.

We agree with the Administration's [perspective](#) that it is not America's place to pressure Ukraine's government regarding sovereign decisions, and with the principle you have [enunciated](#) that there should be "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine." But as legislators responsible for the expenditure of tens of billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars in military assistance in the conflict, we believe such involvement in this war also creates a responsibility for the United States to seriously explore all possible avenues, including direct engagement with Russia, to reduce harm and support Ukraine in achieving a peaceful settlement.

In May, President Zelensky, despite deadlocked negotiations, [reiterated](#) that the war "will only definitively end through diplomacy," and had previously [explained](#) that "any mentally healthy person always chooses the diplomatic path, because he or she knows: even if it is difficult, it can prevent the loss of thousands, tens of thousands...and maybe even millions of lives."

In conclusion, we urge you to make vigorous diplomatic efforts in support of a negotiated settlement and ceasefire, engage in direct talks with Russia, explore prospects for a new European security arrangement acceptable to all parties that will allow for a sovereign and independent Ukraine, and, in coordination with our Ukrainian partners, seek a rapid end to the conflict and reiterate this goal as America's chief priority.

Sincerely,



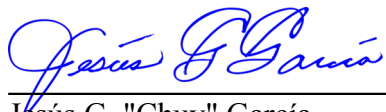
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Member of Congress



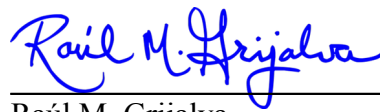
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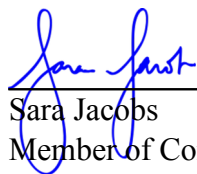
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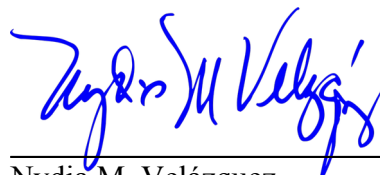
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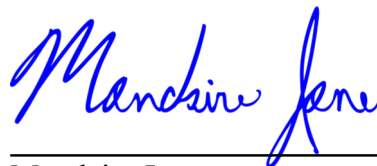
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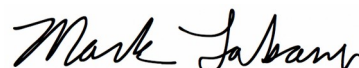
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