



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

JUL 24 2018

The Honorable William M. "Mac" Thornberry
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As I have written to you before regarding the existing Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) Law, I am specifically following up with you regarding my request for a national security waiver. Such a waiver would enable allied nations to simultaneously sustain their current force while they move to a closer security relationship with the U.S. I am writing to you again on this issue, to clarify the waiver and apprise you of the worsening situation if a waiver provision is not granted in time.

We seek a limited exception for the Secretary of State that would allow the United States to sell military equipment and enable countries pulling away from the Russian orbit. As always, all Foreign Military Sales are subject to Congressional notification in advance. This limited exception is to ensure we have the footing to support these nations whose goal is to end reliance on Russian weapons sales. **This action would not benefit Russia; it will only benefit the U.S. and countries willing to pursue a security relationship with us.**

The negotiated language between House and Senate FY19 NDAA conferees provides the possibility of a national security waiver only if the following stringent certifications are met:

- The waiver is in the national security interest of the US;
- The transaction is significant and is not with one of at least seven specific entities, including anyone operating for or on behalf of the Russian defense and intelligence sectors - or who has directly participated in or facilitated Russian cyber-attacks;
- Proof the transaction will not endanger multilateral alliances, ongoing operations, or increase the risk of compromise of defense systems;
- The entity being waived is taking steps to reduce reliance on Russian-made weapons and cooperating with the US government on strategic U.S. interests;
- That no existing sanctions on Russia will be lifted or impacted

As we impose necessary and well-deserved costs through existing sanctions, it is clear that we need additional tools to aggressively compete with Russia. We are faced with a once in a lifetime opportunity to decrease Russia's dominance in key regions, to build closer relationships with strategic partners. Granting waiver authority to the Secretary of State encourages our partners to reduce their reliance on Russia by purchases of major U.S. defense articles and services through foreign military sales. Doing so builds stronger partnerships with nations who have historically been aligned with Russia, but are now coming to share the U.S. vision for global security and stability.

Failure to provide waiver relief would deny the U.S. a very effective tool to undermine Russian influence in many areas of the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Mattis".

cc:
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Secretary of State