



# CONGRESS OF RUSSIAN AMERICANS, INC.

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TO: Donald Trump,  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, District of Columbia 20500

March 28, 2018

Dear President Trump,

This correspondence comes to you from the Congress of Russian Americans (CRA), a national organization established in 1973 that has thousands of members, primarily American citizens of Russian ancestry and heritage. The CRA is a recognized voice of Russian Americans. Our members have contributed to enriching this nation, and the CRA Hall of Fame includes a Nobel laureate alongside many Russian-American innovators, artists, and leaders in humanities, arts, and sciences. The CRA stands staunchly in support of the American ideals of democracy, civil rights, human dignity, and the rule of law.

Once again, we are compelled to write you to express our deep regret that you personally sanctioned the decision to expel 60 Russian diplomats from the U.S., as well as to close the Russian Consulate General in Seattle. The timing of this decision was quite unfortunate, as these unprecedented sanctions were announced at a time when the people in Russia and the Russians around the world were in mourning, appalled at the massive death toll of mostly women and children from a mall fire in Kemerovo.

We think it is too early to jump to the conclusion that Russia is guilty in the attack on Sergei Skripal in the United Kingdom. The investigation has only begun, and the political branches should allow the due process of law to run its course. Especially in a country that strongly believe in due process of law and that you are innocent until proven guilty.

We, as Russian-Americans, are deeply affected by the recent rounds of sanctions. We can no longer rely on consulates in San Francisco and in Seattle for routine consular services. Many of us now have to fly across the country to get an appointment at the Russian Consulate in New York or Washington, D.C. for visas to visit family in Russia. We can no longer invite our relatives to visit us because more visa applications from Russia are being rejected than ever before. The closure of the consulates and the expulsion of the diplomats have worsened our lives. And yet almost 90 percent of Russian-Americans voted for you in the hope that you would restore relations with Russia and lift the sanctions. Today, it appears that you are backing away from your campaign pledge to improve the bilateral relationship.

We do not support the present course of Russian-American relations. It cannot lead to anything good. It has become a serious obstacle to constructive dialogue. Moreover, this odious rhetoric against Russia breeds hatred toward all Russians. Five million Russian-Americans living in this country have to bear the brunt of the consequences of these reckless words and actions. Russian-Americans have come to face serious discrimination. It does not serve the interests of America to collapse into the abyss of russophobia.

We ask you to please arrest the progression of the new Cold War that is spiraling more and more out of control. Sanctions against Russia need to stop, and dialogue needs to be initiated. Regrettably, the more tenuous the links connecting Russia and the United States turn out to be, the more imperiled peace on our entire planet becomes.

Sincerely,

Natalie G. Sabelnik,

President, Congress of Russian Americans on behalf of the CRA National Board of Directors