

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2022

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. President:

Recent media reports and public statements of Russian officials suggest that Russia views the use of nuclear weapons as an acceptable option to achieve their malign and illegal objectives in Europe. In fact, Russian leaders have explicitly threatened a nuclear strike against the United States and our European allies. Such threats are unprecedented and are reminiscent of the rhetoric of Russian leaders at the height of the Cold War. They are chilling and must be taken seriously.

There are numerous examples of Russian attempts at nuclear intimidation against the United States and NATO. Some disturbing examples include:

- President Putin made an explicit threat to *“those who stand in our way,”* saying that the *“consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history.”* Three days later, he said he would raise the alert level of Russia’s nuclear forces.^{1,2}
- Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said that *“one can believe that the horsemen of the Apocalypse are already on their way and all hope is in Almighty God.”*³
- Defense Committee Deputy Chairman, Aleksey Zhuravlyov, threatened multiple European nations and the United States with nuclear attack. *“If the United States threatens our state, it’s good: here is the Sarmat for you, and there will be nuclear ashes from you if you think that Russia should not exist.”*⁴
- Viacheslav Volodin, the Head of the State Duma (lower house of federal assembly of Russia) said *“Poland - along with the rest of Europe - would cease to exist if Russia is threatened.”*⁵

¹ Izwe Lethu on Twitter: "Russian President Vladimir Putin: No matter who tries to stand in our way or create threats for our country or our people. They must know that Russia will respond immediately & consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history. <https://t.co/GzQkFmc0ma>" / Twitter

² <https://www.politico.eu/article/nuclear-weapons-russia-war-ukraine-united-states-china/>

³ <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-warns-horsemen-apocalypse-ukraine-war-hits-100-days-1712609>

⁴ <https://www.irishmirror.ie/news/world-news/russia-threatens-make-nuclear-ashes-26966354>

⁵ <https://www.sundayworld.com/news/world-news/russia-issues-new-nuclear-threat-against-europe-that-would-wipe-ireland-off-the-map-41750933.html>

- Andrey Gurulyov, an internationally sanctioned member of the Russian State Duma and former military commander said, *“They should understand there could be a strike against Miami, Texas or any other state...Then, they'll tuck their tail in. They aren't very brave over there. This is our truth and what we should aspire to and confidently move toward that.”*^{6,7}

On May 31st, you wrote a guest opinion essay in the New York Times in which you stated, *“Let me be clear: Any use of nuclear weapons in this conflict on any scale would be completely unacceptable to us as well as the rest of the world and would entail severe consequences.”*⁸ This statement is insufficient to deter Russia.

In our view, every tool of national power should be leveraged to achieve deterrence of Russian nuclear aggression. To this end, we urge you to clarify U.S. policy concerning the use of tactical nuclear weapons by Russia in Europe and to clearly communicate such policy to the Russian government. We must reinforce our extended deterrence commitments regarding our nuclear umbrella upon which our European allies have relied for decades.

In addition, the U.S. cannot be a passive spectator as Russia uses nuclear intimidation. If Russia uses nuclear weapons in Ukraine, the U.S. must act. This must be clear to Russia to deter their use of nuclear weapons in this unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.



Michael R. Turner
Ranking Member
House Permanent Select
Committee on Intelligence



Michael T. McCaul
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee

⁶ <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-warns-horsemen-apocalypse-ukraine-war-hits-100-days-1712609>

⁷ <https://www.newsweek.com/russian-state-tv-argues-over-using-nuclear-war-threaten-us-1715850>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/01/us/politics/nuclear-arms-treaties.html>