

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 6, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
320 21st Street, NW
Washington, DC 20451

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

As you begin the difficult task of formulating the Administration's Russia policy, we write to ask you to pay close attention to a most troubling development. News broke last week that thirty-five-year old Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian pro-democracy advocate and journalist, was hospitalized and is currently on life support in Moscow. Reports indicate that he has symptoms similar to an incident two years ago, when he was hospitalized due to an apparent poisoning.

Mr. Kara-Murza is a friend of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Over the years, many Members of Congress and our staffs have met with him to discuss the deterioration of the rule of law, free speech, and press in Russia. He testified before our committee in June of last year about the punishment of dissent and the dangers that opposition activists face in Russia. In addition to numerous political prisoners, since Vladimir Putin rose to power in Russia, around 30 journalists, critics, and opponents of the Kremlin's policies have been killed.

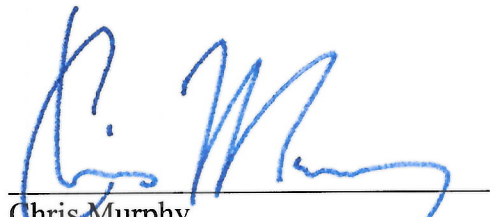
We recognize the complexity of our relationship and the numerous issues that the Administration needs to address with Russia. However, the murder of dissidents cannot be tolerated. As you review U.S. policy, we ask that you make this issue a priority.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Chris Murphy
United States Senator