

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 3, 2019

The Honorable Jim Bridenstine
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20546

Dear Administrator Bridenstine:

I am writing to express my concern about reports that you plan to welcome Dmitri Rogozin to visit the United States this year for a visit to NASA and for a public speaking engagement. I strongly urge you to immediately withdraw this invitation given the Trump Administration's current sanctions on this individual.

As you know, Mr. Rogozin is on the U.S. specially designated nationals ("SDN") list. All SDNs are subject to a visa ban. As such, Mr. Rogozin would be able to enter the United States only if the Administration waives the ban and issues him a visa.

Such a waiver would be a grave mistake. Mr. Rogozin is on our sanctions list for a reason. On March 17, 2014, the Obama administration under Executive Orders 13660 and 13661 determined "that the actions and policies of the Russian government with respect to Ukraine – including through the deployment of Russian military forces in the Crimea region of Ukraine – undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets."

As Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation at the time, Mr. Rogozin was sanctioned for his actions contributing to the Russian government attack on Ukraine. In solidarity, the European Union also sanctioned Mr. Rogozin for his actions and reportedly denied him entry into the EU on two separate occasions. As far as I know, Mr. Rogozin has done nothing since that time that would justify removal from the SDN list by the Treasury Department.

In the event that the administration waives the visa ban and allows Mr. Rogozin to travel to the United States, I plan to introduce a resolution of disapproval of such action under the Russia Review Act title of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (PL 115-44). Given Mr. Rogozin's egregious behavior over the years, I would expect that such a resolution would pass with broad bipartisan support.

I am a supporter of NASA and understand the importance of maintaining a dialogue with the Russian Federation on issues related to space. But that dialogue should not take place with a specially designated national on U.S. soil as it totally undermines our sanctions regime.

To welcome Mr. Rogozin to the United States and provide him a platform to speak is an affront to our sanctions regime and will further undermine the Trump Administration's limited credibility on Russia policy. I urge you to immediately reconsider your invitation to Mr. Rogozin in light of these circumstances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State