

Sen. Roger F. Wicker, *Mississippi*
Chairman

Rep. Joe Wilson, *South Carolina*
Co-Chairman



January 15, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Scott Bessent
U.S. Department of Treasury
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretaries Rubio and Bessent,

As Vladimir Putin continues Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, we urge you to impose further sanctions on Russia's "shadow fleet." The European Union recently expanded its sanctions to include an additional one hundred Russian-linked vessels and associated enabling organizations involved in this vast illicit network. We hope that, with your leadership, the United States will follow suit, acting in concert with our allies and ensuring that Russia can no longer evade accountability.

We commend the Rosneft and Lukoil sanctions, and we support your efforts to persuade our European allies to cease consumption of Russian petroleum products. Sanctioning Russia's shadow fleet would assist both efforts. The shadow fleet is a financial lifeline for Putin. Without it, Putin's ability to fund his war would be placed in question.

To continue selling its oil and gas in violation of U.S. and international sanctions, Russia changes tankers' names, sails them under different national flags, and hides their locations. The vessels comprising this shadow fleet are frequently old, dilapidated, insufficiently insured, and helmed by inexperienced crew. The shadow fleet not only supplies Putin funding to prolong his war, but it also risks damaging critical infrastructure and environmental catastrophe.

The tanker operators, financiers, flag registries, foreign countries, and opaque shell companies that facilitate Russia's shadow fleet are complicit in sanctions evasion, enabling Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, threatening critical undersea pipelines and cables, and endangering global maritime security and the environment. Many of the same vessels have also shipped sanctioned Iranian and Venezuelan oil.

Putin should know that we will punish his relentless attacks on Ukraine—and his targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure—with real consequences. We should also seek to close the loopholes by which he attempts to evade those consequences. Expanding the current shadow fleet sanctions to match those of our European partners is the next necessary step to cut off the resources Russia is using to fund its merciless attacks on Ukraine.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
Chairman



Joe Wilson
Co-Chairman



Sheldon Whitehouse
Senate Ranking Member



Steve Cohen
House Ranking Member