CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
LANGLEY, VA

October 18, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR: Members of Congress

SUBJECT: **Protests Erupt Across Russia**

Over the past few days, mainstream media outlets have reported on the alleged incapacity of Russian President Putin. The Kremlin has adamantly denied all such reports. However, tens of thousands of Russian citizens have taken to the streets across Russia in what are the largest demonstrations since the fall of the Soviet Union. They are demanding the resignation of President Putin and an end to the conflict with the Ukraine.   The ruble has destabilized and is in freefall.

These protestors also include a faction of former Russian troops who served on the frontline of the Ukrainian conflict but were discharged due to injuries sustained in the battlefield, and students who have not been called for conscription. Russian troops have been called up and deployed to large population centers to quell the unrest. The sheer number of protestors have made it difficult for the Russian government to arrest or detain all of them. Belarus President Aleksandr Lukasheko has pledged resources to support President Putin.

U.S. intelligence believes that the protestors have silent the support of a faction of the Russian military, which is also the group responsible for the use of the weapon causing Havana Syndrome in President Biden and President Putin.

The Russian oligarchs have remained silent and have not chosen sides, but some business contacts have attempt to reach out to United States Department of State softly and quietly inquiring about potential support or assistance from the United States.

President Zelensky has continued to press the Western countries, particularly the United States, to employ U.S. weapons to strike inside Russian territory. U.S. intelligence reports confirm the movement of Russian tactical nuclear forces to within striking distance of Ukrainian territory. U.S. intelligence is unable to assess whether these forces have launch authority.