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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

February 26, 2015

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write out of concern about the revelation in the Wall Street Journal on February 16th of yet another missile defense concession by your Administration to Vladimir Putin's Russia. The piece brought to light the unilateral concession of Phase IV of the European Phased Adaptive Approach, which was to be the only element of that system to contribute to the defense of the United States. It seems, we now know exactly what you meant when you told then-President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev in March 2012 that, "[t]his is my last election. After my election, I have more flexibility." As in the wages paid to your original Reset with Russia – at the cost of the credibility of the U.S. alliance with Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as a more robust homeland missile defense – this latest revelation exposes yet another poorly-conceived decision to leave America more vulnerable to the ballistic missile threat in an ill-conceived effort to improve relations with Vladimir Putin.

It is ironic, and alarming, that the day after your budget request was submitted to Congress, the Islamic Republic of Iran launched its Safir ballistic missile into orbit, reportedly with a small satellite. As you know, a satellite launch uses technology with significant applications for a long-range ballistic missile. There is little doubt this success will further Iran's development of missiles with the capability to reach the United States, an effort which your Administration has agreed to not limit as part of its ongoing negotiations with the regime's fanatical clerics. At the same time as your negotiators seek accommodation with this terrorist state, our defenses have been limited by year-after-year of your Administration's ill-conceived decisions.

In six years, the nation's missile defense has been transformed from a multi-layered system with advanced concept development intended to keep the United States paced well-ahead of the developing threat to an under-resourced and fragile system. Your latest budget request seeks increased resources – when compared to your fiscal year 2015 budget request – yet, at the same time, it reveals a future years defense plan (FYDP) that is more than 25 percent lower per annum than the plan you inherited from your predecessor. In fact, you have proposed budgets

for missile defense with less investment than any time since the Clinton Administration, when the United States was limited by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1974.

The United States has no boost phase missile defense nor development program for one, despite two programs in development when you were inaugurated in 2009. Both the Third Site and your European Phased Adaptive Approach Phase IV have been cancelled, and your Administration continues to drag its feet on an East Coast missile defense site, notwithstanding that your original missile defense plan, and that of your predecessor, acknowledged that a forward-deployed location is needed to supplement the existing West Coast sites, which were optimized only to the North Korean threat. And while the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) was created to be a nimble research and development and acquisition entity, cutting edge research and development is increasingly being led by the services in the form of ship-based and truck-based directed energy applications, electro-magnetic rail gun research, and numerous other cutting-edge research and development programs. These are precisely the sort of efforts that should be led by MDA, if it was properly resourced.

Even now, your Administration clings to a dated policy of limited ballistic missile defense deployment from its 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review, ignoring that Russia has spurned nearly every effort put forward to be “partners for the future” or to seek a “collaborative and cooperative relationship.”

Mr. President, the policy of trading missile defense to adversaries like Russia, or China, is a failure. As the House Armed Services Committee begins the 54th National Defense Authorization Act, we welcome your cooperation, but, the House Armed Services Committee will not allow the missile defense of the United States to any longer be treated as a chip to bargain with or give away. We urge you to direct Secretary Carter to deliver to the Congressional Defense Committees, not later than March 31st, a plan to field a robust, multi-layered homeland ballistic missile defense system capable of defending the United States from the full range of ballistic missile threats, including the immediate commencement of planning, design and construction of an East Coast missile defense site and the beginning of a program for boost phase missile defense and to exploit next-generation technologies for use in missile defense.

Sincerely,



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Chairman
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces



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Member of Congress



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