

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As you prepare your administration's Fiscal Year 2022 budget for submission to Congress, we strongly encourage you to support modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent and homeland missile defense.

The U.S. nuclear triad is the bedrock of our national defense and our allies and partners rely on our nuclear deterrent to maintain peace and order. It would be a fatal and strategic mistake for us to lose or degrade that capability. Accordingly, we urge you to fully execute and fund the nation's nuclear modernization program that the Future Years Defense Program and Future Years National Nuclear Security Program laid out for the 2021-25 budget requests.

For decades, U.S. nuclear weapons have deterred nuclear and strategic non-nuclear aggression, including chemical, biological, and large-scale conventional attacks. Our nuclear posture proactively prevents any adversary from escalating to the brink of nuclear conflict and U.S. nuclear weapons provide the assurance to our allies and partners that we are committed to their security.

Now is the time to prioritize long-overdue investments required for the Department of Defense and the National Nuclear Security Administration. We have regrettably allowed much of our nuclear deterrent to atrophy. Most U.S. nuclear delivery systems have been extended far beyond their originally planned service lives and cannot be sustained beyond the 2025 to 2035 timeframe. Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles—which originally only had an expected 10-year service life—have been operating for 50 years now and must be replaced by the more survivable and cost-effective weapon system, the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent. Similarly, the Long-Range Standoff Weapon must replace the nearly 40-year old Air-Launched Cruise Missile. Additionally, sustainment of nuclear warhead production, its related infrastructure, to include ensuring that the nuclear security enterprise produces no less than 80 war reserve plutonium pits per year by 2030, and low-yield nuclear weapons are critically important and must be supported simultaneously.

These investments will support all three legs of the nuclear triad; nuclear infrastructure, weapons stockpiles, and weapon modernization activities; as well as, the nuclear command, control, and communication (NC3) capabilities that underpin them. Currently, DoD spends less than two percent of its budget on modernizing its nuclear forces, and the annual cost for modernizing,

sustaining, and operating U.S. nuclear forces will peak at only 6.4 percent in DoD's FY 2029 budget, according to the Department of Defense. This small fraction of DoD's budget plays an exponentially larger role in defending our vital interests and keeping America and her allies safe.

While we have been reducing or barely sustaining our nuclear capabilities, our adversaries have been increasing their nuclear weapons numbers and advancing their capabilities and strategies for deployment at an alarming pace. China will soon field its own nuclear triad and its nuclear stockpile is expected to, at a minimum, double over the next decade. Russia is building new and novel systems and increasing their stockpiles of non-strategic weapons. North Korea continues to seek to threaten the U.S. homeland with nuclear-armed ICBMs. Iran long ago pushed beyond civilian nuclear research into nuclear weapons development in violation of its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and it's now increasingly clear, Iran never came clean to the IAEA in 2015 about the military dimensions of its nuclear weapons program.

We also urge you to use your FY 2022 budget request to make key investments in homeland missile defense. Specifically, it is imperative that we transition from the Ground Based Interceptor to field the Next Generation Interceptor (NGI). NGI is a priority, and once complete, is expected to add 20 additional interceptors to the current inventory and enhance U.S. capabilities for defeating ICBM attacks against the homeland. To not execute this program would risk America's safety.

In the last two Administrations, both Presidents Obama and Trump designated nuclear deterrence as the Defense Department's highest priority mission and accordingly, expanded nuclear modernization investments. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin also reaffirmed his support for nuclear modernization in his Senate confirmation process stating that we are at a "tipping point." Additionally, Congress has supported such efforts on a bipartisan and bicameral basis. We are at a critical juncture to ensure that DoD and NNSA nuclear programs are maintained and executed on time. Our nation's security and the security of our allies and partners depend on it.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on these efforts.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Turner
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces



Mike D. Rogers
Ranking Members
Committee on Armed Services



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Elise Stefanik
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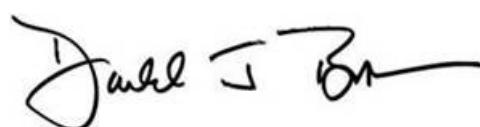
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Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
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Member of Congress



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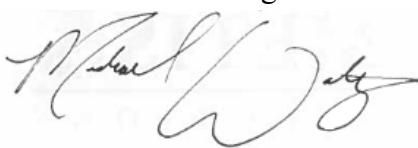
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Member of Congress



Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
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Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
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Blake D. Moore
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Member of Congress



Ronny Jackson
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress