

HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON, CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN  
ROSCOE G. BARTLETT, MARYLAND  
MAC THORNBERRY, TEXAS  
WALTER B. JONES, NORTH CAROLINA  
W. TODD AKIN, MISSOURI  
J. RANDY FORBES, VIRGINIA  
JEFF MILLER, FLORIDA  
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
FRANK A. LoBIONDO, NEW JERSEY  
MICHAEL TURNER, OHIO  
JOHN KLINE, MINNESOTA  
MIKE ROGERS, ALABAMA  
TRENT FRANKS, ARIZONA  
BILL SHUSTER, PENNSYLVANIA  
K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, TEXAS  
DOUG LAMBORN, COLORADO  
ROB WITTMAN, VIRGINIA  
DUNCAN HUNTER, CALIFORNIA  
JOHN C. FLEMING, M.D., LOUISIANA  
MIKE COFFMAN, COLORADO  
TOM ROONEY, FLORIDA  
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCOTT RIGELL, VIRGINIA  
CHRIS GIBSON, NEW YORK  
VICKY HARTZLER, MISSOURI  
JOE HECK, NEVADA  
BOBBY SCHILLING, ILLINOIS  
JON RUNYAN, NEW JERSEY  
AUSTIN SCOTT, GEORGIA  
TIM GRIFFIN, ARKANSAS  
STEVEN PALAZZO, MISSISSIPPI  
ALLEN B. WEST, FLORIDA  
MARTHA ROBY, ALABAMA  
MO BROOKS, ALABAMA  
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA

## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

November 17, 2011

ADAM SMITH, WASHINGTON  
SILVESTRE REYES, TEXAS  
LORETTA SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA  
MIKE McINTYRE, NORTH CAROLINA  
ROBERT A. BRADY, PENNSYLVANIA  
ROBERT ANDREWS, NEW JERSEY  
SUSAN A. DAVIS, CALIFORNIA  
JAMES R. LANGFORD, RHODE ISLAND  
RICK LARSEN, WASHINGTON  
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE  
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GUAM  
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT  
DAVE LOEBSACK, IOWA  
GABRIELLE GIFFORDS, ARIZONA  
NIKI TSONGAS, MASSACHUSETTS  
CHELLIE PINGREE, MAINE  
LARRY KISSELL, NORTH CAROLINA  
MARTIN HEINRICH, NEW MEXICO  
BILL OWENS, NEW YORK  
JOHN R. GARAMENDI, CALIFORNIA  
MARK S. CRITZ, PENNSYLVANIA  
TIM RYAN, OHIO  
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER, MARYLAND  
HANK JOHNSON, GEORGIA  
KATHY CASTOR, FLORIDA  
BETTY SUTTON, OHIO  
COLLEEN HANABUSA, HAWAII

ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta,

As members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces – responsible for oversight of the nation’s missile defense – we write out of concern about new intelligence concerning foreign developments in long-range ballistic missile development, specifically, ballistic missiles capable of attacking the United States. We believe this new intelligence reiterates the need for the Administration to correct its priorities regarding missile defense, which should have, first and foremost, the missile defense of the homeland.

In 2009, the Administration announced that it would reduce the development of the homeland missile defense system by severely limiting the purchase of ground-based interceptors (GBI) for deployment in the United States and by cancelling the deployment of the Third Site system in the Czech Republic and Poland. As you know, the only missile defense capability to project the homeland currently in place is the ground-based midcourse defense system (GMD) in Alaska and California, which this Administration and the previous Congress cut by over \$1.65 billion. At the time, this decision was explained on the basis of “new intelligence” that justified de-prioritizing national missile defense in favor of defense against regional missile threats.

With regard to the intelligence, we believe this decision was in error at the time and that new information reaffirms that error. We further believe it is now critically important that the Administration immediately reprioritize the defense of the homeland. And we believe your predecessor, Secretary Gates, was of the same view when he announced prior to his departure from office that, “with the continued development of long-range missiles and potentially a road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile and their continued development of nuclear weapons, North Korea is in the process of becoming a direct threat to the United States.”

Almost from the day of the announcement of the Administration’s new architecture for missile defense, the House Armed Services Committee has been pressing the Administration for a “hedging strategy” to be assembled and implemented for the defense of the homeland. And Administration witnesses have repeatedly promised such a strategy. For example, Dr. Jim Miller, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, told the Strategic Forces Subcommittee in his March 2, 2011 testimony that, “the Department is in the process of finalizing and refining its hedge strategy.” Less than a

The Honorable Leon Panetta

November 17, 2011

Page 2

month later, Dr. Brad Roberts, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy, testified that, “[t]he Administration is considering additional steps to strengthen the U.S. hedge posture...we are evaluating the deployment timelines associated with fielding additional capabilities.”

Despite these commitments, and despite passage by the House of section 233 of the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act, the Congress has received no “hedging strategy” from the Department of Defense. Further, we are hearing from the Department of Defense that the Administration has no plans to restore the buy of GBI interceptors planned by the previous Administration, and may only be prepared to buy new missiles solely for testing purposes. What’s more, we are informed that the Administration may be preparing to walk away from its commitment to develop the SM-3 IIB missile, perhaps by downgrading it to a mere technology risk reduction program. It would be a double blow to the defense of the homeland if the Administration now walks away from the IIB missile without restoring programs for missile defense of the United States.

Such decisions, which will further compromise the national missile defense of the United States, may be a result of the Administration’s decision to build a missile defense system in Europe, with little application for the defense of the United States, as a contribution to NATO; in other words, to build a missile defense shield for Europe at enormous cost to the United States. Continued short-changing of the missile defense budget may force Congress to make a choice if the missile defense of the homeland continues to be deprioritized by the Administration.

In view of the briefing the subcommittee received this week, we do not believe the United States can afford further delay in the release of the hedging strategy by the Department of Defense. We urge you to take steps to ensure it is completed and briefed to the Congress before the end of the year. We further urge you to ensure that when the FY13 budget for the Department of Defense is submitted to the Congress next February, it restores funding to homeland missile defense programs to counter the rising long-range ballistic missile threat to the United States. The defense of the United States must be the top priority for the Department of Defense.

Sincerely,



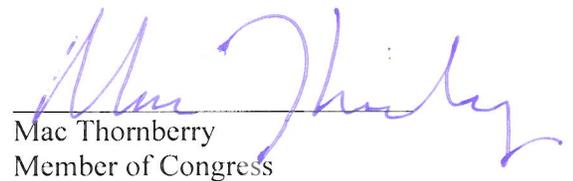
Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress



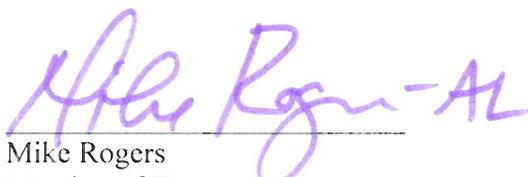
Trent Franks  
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress



Mac Thornberry  
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers  
Member of Congress