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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

June 6, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, you made a series of very detailed promises when you sought ratification of the New START treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation in 2010. I'm sure you agree that without the modernization program and your promises to fund and implement it, concerns in the Senate about the treaty would have prevented it from being ratified. This would have also halted any agreement to the reductions in U.S. nuclear forces called for by the treaty.

For the first time, the U.S. has signed a treaty that required it to undertake unilateral reductions of its deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-based ballistic missiles, or nuclear-capable bombers, with no reductions of those forces required by Russia. This concern is compounded by your stated commitment to a world without nuclear weapons and steep reductions in U.S. nuclear forces, for which you received a Nobel prize. What's more, there is a growing concern, including by your former Secretary of Defense, about the safety, security, reliability, and credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, the bedrock of global security for our country and our allies for almost 70 years.

That is why the modernization plan, and your promises to request and secure the funding of it, were necessary. About this modernization plan, you said in December of 2010, "[t]hat is my commitment to the Congress – that my administration will pursue these programs and capabilities for as long as I am President." (emphasis added)

But, in the May 18, 2012 "MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES" from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) there appears fresh evidence that your promise isn't being kept. About the fiscal year 2014 budget request your Administration is assembling, your Acting Director of the OMB stated, "your overall agency request for 2014 should be five percent below...the 2013 budget." As you know, your fiscal

year 2013 budget request was significantly below what you promised in November 2010 and as much as \$4 billion below what is projected for just the next five years in the section 1251 plan.

This retreat by your Administration from your promises has led one director of the national nuclear weapons labs to state in testimony that he would no longer be able to endorse the commitment of support in your modernization plan, presented in November 2010, as he did in December of that year. Of equal concern, your specific and detailed commitments to construct a new plutonium facility in New Mexico have been broken, as well as your commitments to the schedule promised for modernization of the U.S. nuclear triad.

Every time Congress has questioned these cuts, your Administration blames the Congress for the Budget Control Act, which you signed into law. Such an excuse, however, does not stand up to scrutiny as nowhere in the Budget Control Act were you required to break the modernization commitments you made that allowed the Senate to approve the unilateral nuclear reductions in the New START treaty.

Efforts by the Congress to fulfill the promises you've made, and even to find savings through reforming the National Nuclear Security Administration to assist in keeping your promises, have been rebuffed with "strong objections" but include no better plan. These proposals for reform were carefully considered by innumerable expert bodies. Yet, they were casually tossed aside by your "senior advisors" in the Statement of Administration Position on H.R. 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

Mr. President, the American people deserve better, and the Congress deserves constructive alternatives when you and your Administration disagree with its proposals. I ask you to start by fully funding your promises to modernize the U.S. nuclear deterrent and to stick to the schedule you promised for fielding a modernized nuclear triad and plutonium production facilities. Finally, I urge you to provide your own alternative for how to fix the broken management and governance system of the nation's nuclear weapons enterprise instead of simply throwing stones at those who have taken the first steps.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Turner
Chairman
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

CC: The Honorable Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
The Honorable Jeffrey Zients, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Thomas D'Agostino, Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration