



July 16, 2015

To: Conferees on the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act

cc: Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, Senate Majority Leader McConnell, Senate Minority Leader Reid, Speaker of the House of Representatives Boehner, and House Minority Leader Pelosi

Dear Conferees,

As you move to the conclusion of the conference on the fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, we urge you to consider the following recommendations for a more principled approach to national security and foreign policy:

Support the Senate provision on limiting availability of funds for the F-35 until the planes delivered in FY 2-18 are combat ready (sec. 131): The F-35, projected to be the most costly weapons program in history, is at risk for further cost growth and schedule delays. We support the Senate provision limiting the availability for F-35A procurement to \$4.3 billion until all F-35As as delivered in FY 2018 have full combat capability. Although we believe the entire F-35 program should be halted, this provision is a step in the right direction.

Oppose the House provision that restricts funding research programs for arms control treaty verification and monitoring: We strongly oppose this provision as it prevents funds necessary to understanding our adversaries' nuclear weapons programs from being spent. It is not clear why the House wants to blind one important method for tracking other countries' nuclear efforts.

Oppose House provision prohibiting the reduction of the alert posture of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force: The Cold War is over. Yet our ICBM force has been on high alert since 1959. We oppose this provision because it sets a bad precedent for Congress weighing in on Executive Branch decisions.

Oppose the House provision that limits funds for nuclear weapons dismantlement: This provision unnecessarily ties the hands of the NNSA and the Pentagon to make determinations about the management of the nuclear weapons stockpile and could waste taxpayer money by requiring secure storage and management of weapons that have already been retired. A recent GAO report (GAO 14-449) notes that the Navy saved \$190 million by avoiding construction costs for a storage facility when W-76 warhead dismantlement was accelerated.

Oppose the House provision restricting on the use of fixed portal monitors (sec. 3117): This provision unnecessarily prohibits the use of fixed portal monitors for detecting nuclear weapons-grade and radiological material at major border crossings and ports in

foreign countries. It is nonsensical to place permanent bans on tools that might stop terrorist groups and rogue states from acquiring nuclear and radiological materials

Oppose the House provision that requires new counterforce capability within two years if Russia continues to violate the INF treaty (sec. 1243): Both versions of the defense bill require a plan for development of counterforce capabilities if Russia continues to violate the INF treaty. The United States should not plan to violate the treaty as a response to Russia's activities. We oppose any provisions that encourage U.S. violations of the INF treaty by decided on adding weapons that add little to our security.


Oppose the House provision that blocks implementation of the New START treaty: The United States is correct to call attention to present or future violations of agreements by the Russians or the Iranians. Our position would be seriously weakened if we violated this treaty. We oppose this provision because it blocks the implementation of the New START treaty, which is critical to establish transparency between US and Russian nuclear weapons stockpiles.

Oppose the House provision providing \$30 million for an East Coast missile defense site (sec. 1673): According to the Senate version of the bill, the currently deployed ground based midcourse defense system is sufficient to protect the East coast from threats such as Iran and North Korea. We oppose the provision to field an East Coast missile defense site because it is not necessary for U.S. national security.

President Obama has threatened to veto this bill because of the additional \$39 billion for the Overseas Contingency Operations Account both chambers have included above the presidents request. Like the president, we do not support this irresponsible budgeting tactic. We believe that Congress should find savings in wasteful and ineffective spending, and budget within the caps.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at acanterbury@clw.org, or our Senior Fellow, John Isaacs, at jdi@clw.org.

Regards,



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