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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
REPUBLICAN
POLICY COMMITTEE

March 7, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

During your State of the Union speech, you echoed my thoughts regarding the continued development and installation of a robust Missile Defense Program. Recent events in both East Asia and the Middle East stress the importance of strengthening our defense. On March 7, 2013 North Korea threatened a preemptive nuclear strike on the United States. This threat was in response to the call for increased sanctions imposed upon them after North Korea President Kim Jong Un authorized a third nuclear weapons test. This is not a warning we should take lightly. You highlighted the importance of protecting our nation and its citizens by stressing the need for a fully-funded missile defense system. Without one, we risk unimaginable consequences for possibly millions of Americans.

Under new and uncertain leadership, North Korea's repeated, deliberate provocation of the international community confirms the bold and unstable nature of its new leader. Their successful nuclear test on February 12, 2013 also suggests significant advancement in the refinement and delivery capabilities of their nuclear arsenal. If North Korea continues to advance its nuclear program, it may soon be able to strike major cities across the United States. If such a weapon were to strike a major US city, it would result in the deaths of millions of Americans. The current tension is particularly relevant to me being that Anchorage, Alaska is the closest major American city to North Korea, a mere 3,800 miles away, making it an achievable target for any nuclear attacks. This is a possibility that must be addressed if there is even the slightest possibility that such a tragedy could occur.

An increasingly hostile North Korea is not the only threat. Despite the efforts of the United States, Iran has reported continued success in its efforts to become a nuclear power. Under the aggressive and unrelenting leadership of President Ahmadinejad, Iran may soon have higher-grade enriched uranium enabling them to produce and detonate nuclear weapons. This is a terrifying prospect, and a reality that should not be ignored.

In a world of rapidly increasing threats and diminishing resources, the United States must remain vigilant so as not to become more vulnerable to missile strikes from our enemies abroad. While an attack on our own soil may seem improbable, it is clear that we can no longer rely on sanctions to defend our homeland. Our inability to use political pressure to prevent these nations from acquiring and using such devastating capabilities precipitates the need for continued and strong support for our defense.

I am proud that Alaska plays a large part in our defense from intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). Our ground based interceptor missiles and radar sites in Alaska are an important cornerstone of the national missile defense program. I am especially proud of the fact that the Alaska Army National Guard does such an admirable job in protecting the nation. Fort Greely has been a bulwark against America's enemies since 1942, and remains the nation's most valuable Ballistic Missile Defense System. Additionally, Alaska's Clear Air Force Station is also a critical part of detecting ICBM threats and provides an early warning to higher operating units throughout the country. Both of these Alaskan bases serve as critical components of maintaining a credible defense.

Over half a century has passed since the United States was forced to engage in warfare on a global scale, but this peace cannot lull us into complacency. The technological gap between our nation and that of our enemies is closing. A worst-case scenario, in which a nation executes a nuclear strike on United States soil, is becoming more possible with each passing day, and such an attack would inflict untold destruction and cost millions of American lives. Our enemies today grow bolder and more dangerous with a nuclear arsenal at their disposal.

Mr. President, we must remain strong in the face of such perils. As a government, it is our duty to protect our citizens from the unimaginable horrors that lurk beyond our borders. With the possibility of nuclear threats looming on the horizon, it is imperative that we continue to fully fund missile defense programs to ensure these threats do not reach our shores.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Don Young". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

DON YOUNG
Congressman for all Alaska