

United States Senate

March 22, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In light of Iran's escalating pattern of ballistic missile tests, we write to express our growing concern about Iran's destabilizing activities. These events highlight the importance of investments in U.S. missile defense capabilities, as well as our missile defense partnership with Israel.

As you know, the series of ballistic missile drills conducted by Iran last week build on multiple similar tests conducted in the past six months. While we support expanding U.S. and international sanctions against Iran in response to these tests, sanctions alone are not an adequate solution to Iran's dangerous behavior. Iran has continued to advance their missile programs even under harsh sanctions and an international embargo on missile technology.

We must confront the hard reality that Iran already possesses the Middle East's largest ballistic missile arsenal and is determined to continue advancing ballistic and cruise missile capabilities to threaten our deployed forces, our homeland, and our allies. Iran's reckless provocations are destabilizing and pose a significant threat to the national security interests of the United States and our allies in the Middle East.

With that in mind, we strongly support strengthening our own missile defenses with the following priorities:

- Completing the deployment of additional Ground-Based Interceptors (GBIs) in Alaska to reach a total of 44 GBIs with coverage of the entire United States by the end of next year;
- Improving the sensor and discrimination capabilities supporting the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system (including the deployment by 2020 of a discrimination sensor oriented against an attack from Iran), as well as the lethality of the GMD kill vehicle;
- Enhancing the ballistic missile defense capability of our Aegis fleet and continued modernization of Standard Missile-3 interceptors;
- Continuing maturation of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system; and
- Modernizing and providing adequate manning to support the Army's Patriot air and missile defense capability.

We also support strengthening our partnerships with key allies around the world, particularly Israel. We were deeply troubled by the remarks of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' leadership that the missiles tested last week are designed to be a direct threat to Israel. Across

party lines, Congress and successive Administrations have supported U.S.-Israel collaborative missile defense programs designed to counter a wide range of threats, including Iron Dome and co-production of the David's Sling system and the Arrow III Upper Tier Interceptor. Iron Dome continues to thwart rockets fired on Israeli civilian communities by Iranian proxies, like Hamas and Hezbollah. For nearly 30 years, our two nations have partnered on Arrow systems to defend against higher end threats, and the Arrow III Upper Tier and David's Sling systems will provide new capabilities to fill critical gaps in Israel's ballistic and cruise missile defenses.

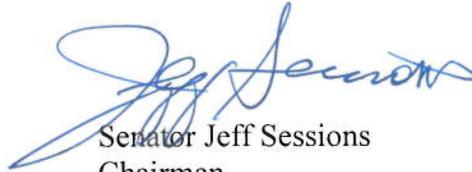
Now is the time to send Iran a clear message not only on the consequences of its repetitive disregard for United Nations Security Council resolutions, but also on the futility of its belligerence. In a time of limited resources, we must prioritize investments in U.S. missile defense systems, maintain our long-standing and critical missile defense partnership with Israel, and leverage new partnerships to support our shared security interests. This will be a priority for us in shaping the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017*, and we hope to work with you to maintain bipartisan support for strong investments in missile defense.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We look forward to your response.



Senator Joe Donnelly
Ranking Member
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
Senate Armed Services Committee

Sincerely,



Senator Jeff Sessions
Chairman
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
Senate Armed Services Committee