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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

January 22, 2015

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Hagel and Secretary Kerry:

We write to express our deep concern about Russia's repeatedly stated position that it has the right—and the intention—to deploy its nuclear weapons in the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Such provocative and illegal use of its nuclear forces signals a dangerous escalation in Russia's recent aggression and poses a new military threat to U.S. allies and deployed forces in Europe. We believe it is well past time for the U.S. to respond assertively to defend its interests.

Russia's moves to deploy nuclear-capable Iskander short-range ballistic missiles as well as nuclear-capable Backfire bombers in the illegally-occupied territory shows that President Putin's aggression has not been checked by economic sanctions nor by the finger-waving of diplomats. Nor can the U.S. continue unilateral adherence to treaties and agreements like the Budapest Memorandum, the NATO-Russia Founding Act, or the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces.

We believe the U.S. must immediately take actions to respond to Russia's threats to European security and to change President Putin's calculus. In our opinion, the Administration must immediately move to update the U.S. defense policy and force posture in Europe. These policies, which have not been updated to reflect that Russia has no interest in being a partner to the West, and, in fact, views the West as a military threat, were naive at inception and are simply dangerous at present. One such step should include adding, in Eastern Europe, new sites for the deployment of Dual-Capable Aircraft (DCA) and forward-deployed nuclear weapons.

Because we intend to ensure the United States pursues all appropriate options to ensure the security of U.S. allies and U.S. deployed forces, we seek your detailed responses to the following questions:


- 1) What bilateral agreements (including plans for information sharing and contingency planning) would be required to establish a nuclear weapons storage site or base able to host forward-deployed U.S. nuclear weapons on a permanent basis in additional NATO states? On a temporary basis?
- 2) What existing bases, in states admitted to NATO since 1999, are capable of hosting U.S. DCA?
 - a) Please detail which of these bases possess hardened aircraft shelters and related infrastructure.
 - b) Please details costs, schedules and related procedural requirements to work with such states to equip, as appropriate, such shelters.
- 3) What states admitted to NATO since 1999 possess aircraft capable of modification to enable dual capability (i.e., F-16s, F-15s, or Tornado aircraft)? What training (and other matters) would be required to certify their personnel in the extended deterrent mission set?
- 4) What bilateral agreements and arrangements would be required to rotationally base U.S. strategic bombers in Europe?
- 5) What is the cost of installing modern variants of Weapon Storage and Security System (WS3) vaults or other secure storage for B61 nuclear gravity bombs at additional air bases in Europe? What studies and agreements would be required? How long would such storage options take to design, construct, and make operational?
- 6) Please detail the specific responses the Administration is planning to prevent Russia's deployment of nuclear weapons in Crimea and to deny it a military advantage from such actions if prevention is not possible.

We request your written and detailed response to our inquiries by February 1, 2015.

Sincerely,



Mike Rogers
Chairman
Strategic Forces Subcommittee



Mike Turner
Chairman
Tactical Air and Land Forces
Subcommittee

cc: General Martin Dempsey, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
General Phillip Breedlove, Commander, U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe