

October 11, 2011

Dear Representative,

We, the undersigned organizations and experts, ask you to cosign Rep. Markey's (D-MA) letter to members of the Super Committee urging them to reduce nuclear weapons spending and use the resulting savings to invest in higher priority programs.

There is broad bipartisan agreement that few national security issues are as critical as how to deal with America's crippling debt. Getting America's fiscal house in order will require difficult budgetary choices. This means that we need to make smart decisions about what is most needed to safeguard U.S. national security in the 21st century.

The United States currently spends over \$50 billion per year on maintaining and upgrading a nuclear weapons force of 5,000 nuclear weapons and weapons related programs. These costs are expected to increase in light of the Obama administration's plan to spend at least \$200 billion over the next decade on new nuclear delivery systems and warhead production facilities. Much of this spending is designed to confront Cold War-era threats that no longer exist while posing financial and opportunity costs that can no longer be justified.

In the current economic environment, it will be counterproductive to make unsustainable, open-ended commitments to hugely expensive programs that are irrelevant to the most likely threats we face. *"We're not going to be able to go forward with weapon systems that cost what weapon systems cost today,"* Strategic Command chief Gen. Robert Kehler said recently *"Case in point is [the] Long-Range Strike [bomber]. Case in point is the Trident [submarine] replacement. . . . The list goes on."*

Fiscally responsible Republicans are also proposing to rein in spending on nuclear weapons. Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), who voted against the New START nuclear reductions treaty in December 2010, has proposed a deficit reduction plan that would cut \$79 billion in spending on nuclear weapon systems over the next decade by reducing the U.S. nuclear arsenal to below the New START limit of 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads and cutting the number of delivery systems and warheads in reserve and by delaying procurement of a new long-range bomber until the mid-2020s.

The United States could save billions by canceling or scaling back new nuclear weapons programs such as the plan to build 12 new nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines, which the Pentagon estimates could cost nearly \$350 billion over their 50-year lifespan and new facilities to support the nuclear weapons force. For example, by building and deploying no more than 8 new SSBN(X) nuclear-armed submarines, the United States could still deploy the same number of strategic nuclear warheads at sea as is currently planned (about 1,000) under New START and save roughly \$26 billion over 10 years, \$31 billion over 30 years, and \$120 billion over the life of the program.

By responsibly pursuing further reductions in U.S. nuclear forces and scaling back plans for new and excessively large strategic nuclear weapons systems and warhead production facilities, the United States can help close its budget deficit. And by reducing the incentive for Russia to rebuild its arsenal, these budget savings will make America safer and more secure.

Please sign Rep. Markey's letter calling on the Super Committee to increase U.S. security by reducing spending on outdated and unaffordable nuclear weapons programs.

Sincerely,*

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for Disarmament and Peace Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva

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