Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 18, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The United States requires a 21st century defense policy, not one that turns back the clock to the Cold War era. Unfortunately, the House just passed a backwards-looking defense bill that does not reflect our current national security needs. The Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) embraces Cold-War era defense policies and limits the President's ability to make nuclear weapons reductions. We agree with the March 15, 2012, Statement of Administration Policy that stated, "The Administration strongly objects to sections 1053-1059, which would impinge on the President's ability to implement the New START Treaty and to set U.S. nuclear weapons policy. In particular, sections 1053 and 1055 would set onerous conditions on the Administration's ability to implement the Treaty, and section 1058 would set onerous conditions on the President's ability to retire, dismantle, or eliminate non-deployed nuclear weapons." The statement declared that your senior advisors would recommend that you veto such a bill. We strongly agree with that recommendation.

In addition to these needlessly restrictive provisions, a number of amendments were agreed to that would prohibit your administration from making any further reductions to U.S. nuclear forces. The amendments would also limit the availability of critical funds for Cooperative Threat Reduction and nuclear nonproliferation activities with Russia. The amendments only made a bad bill even worse.

At a time when the U.S. has formally agreed to reduce its nuclear arsenal under the New START Treaty, and there is a growing consensus among defense experts and retired military officers that a far smaller nuclear force is required for an effective nuclear defense and deterrent, we must reduce our nuclear weapons arsenal. We must reject attempts to retreat from our commitments and relationships and adopt a Cold War mentality that is no longer relevant, nor reflective of our national security needs.

We are among the 104 Democrats and 16 Republicans who voted against this bill in the House of Representatives, and we are gravely concerned that the policies in the bill fail to address our 21st century security needs. Each year, Congress considers the NDAA, which is meant to set the priorities and policies required to safeguard Americans at home and around the world. Regrettably, this bill will make the U.S. less safe.

The Cold War ended 20 years ago. We celebrated the fall of Communism. We cheered the triumph of democracy. Yet the House of Representatives has turned a blind eye to history and doubled down on nuclear weapons policies of the past. We urge you to reject this Cold War

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thinking and strongly support a veto if the final bill presented to you includes these dangerous provisions.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

John Conyers Jr.

Barbara J. Lee

George Miller

Jesse L. Jackson Jr.

Earl Blumenauer

Pete Stark

John W. Olver

Michael M. Honda

Dennis J. Kucinich

James P. McGovern

Paul Tonko

Bob Filner

Barney Frank

Charles B. Rangel

Maurice D. Hinchey

Lloyd Doggett

Louise M. Slaughter

Jan D. Schakowsky

John Lewis

Keith Ellison

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Michael E. Capuano

Alcee L. Hastings

Gwen Moore

Sam Farr

Wm. Lacy Clay

Raúl M. Grijalva

Lynn C. Woolsey

Jerrold Nadler

Hank Johnson

Carolyn B. Maloney

Jared Polis