



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DEC 31 2010

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

This letter is to follow up on, and confirm, our recent conversations. The Administration remains strongly committed to effective missile defenses to protect the U.S. homeland from limited ballistic missile threats, including the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) program, in which the missile defense assets at Fort Greely play an indispensable role.

The Department believes that thirty ground-based interceptors (GBIs) deployed at Fort Greely and Vandenberg Air Force Base remain more than sufficient to defeat the projected threat from Iran and North Korea. At the same time, recognizing the uncertainty associated with intelligence projections, Secretary Gates directed the Missile Defense Agency to complete the construction of missile field 2 at Fort Greely in 2012, thus establishing the capability for the contingency- deployment of an additional eight GBIs if required by a more rapidly emerging threat.

More broadly, the Department of Defense is currently developing a detailed ballistic missile defense hedge strategy, which includes a range of potential options for ensuring effective protection of the homeland if there are significant changes in the projected threat. Upgrading missile defense capabilities at Fort Greely is among the options that will be part of the hedge strategy. Specifically, we are evaluating the costs and potential benefits of "mothballing" missile field 1 at Fort Greely, which would preserve the asset so that bringing it to operational standards later and deploying six additional missiles remains a cost-effective hedge option.

Notwithstanding last week's unsuccessful GBI test, the Department's confidence in the operational GMD system and its ability to protect the U.S. homeland from limited ballistic missile threats remains strong. As you know, Fort Greely is a pivotal part of our homeland defense architecture today and will continue to be so in the future.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the New START Treaty does not constrain the U.S. ability to develop and deploy the most effective missile defenses possible to protect the United States, our deployed forces, and our Allies. Nor does the Treaty increase the costs of doing so. We retain full freedom to develop and deploy missile defenses at Fort Greely, as everywhere else. The Treaty in no way limits our ability to sustain our current thirty GBIs, to complete construction of missile field 2, to update or build new missile fields as necessary, or more generally to expand and modernize our missile defenses both qualitatively and quantitatively in the future.

Sincerely,

James N. Miller
Principal Deputy Under Secretary
of Defense for Policy

LTG Patrick O'Reilly
Director, Missile Defense Agency