June 8, 2021

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

President Biden:

We write to you today concerning the growing threat posed by the rapid Chinese nuclear build-up, as well as the unwillingness of the Chinese Communist Party to engage with the United States in good faith arms control negotiations.

The House Armed Services Committee recently heard testimony from Admiral Charles Richard, the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, that China has moved a portion of its nuclear force to a Launch on Warning posture and has a nuclear weapons stockpile that is expected to at least double, if not triple, or quadruple, over the next decade. Based on most opensource estimates, to include those produced by the Department of Defense, this could bring size of the deployed Chinese nuclear deterrent to approximately 1,000 warheads by 2030. Additionally, the Annual Threat Assessment (ATA) as presented to the Congress by DNI Haines earlier this year stated that China is fielding a full Cold War-style triad of nuclear assets — intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear-armed bombers and submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles. China's ballistic missile arsenal is "more survivable, more diverse, and on higher alert than in the past, including nuclear missile systems designed to manage regional escalation and ensure an intercontinental second-strike capability." Combined, these statements by Admiral Richard and Director Haines mean that China is likely to reach a degree of nuclear parity with the United States by the end of the decade.

Further, we noted a May 18, 2021, Reuters story entitled "U.S. says China is Resisting Nuclear Arms Talks" as well as a series of press stories that China has rejected bilateral conversations between Secretary Austin, General Milley, and their Chinese counterparts. While this may be concerning, it is not surprising, as China also refused to participate in good faith arms control negotiations, either bilaterally or trilaterally, with the Trump administration. As you are aware, Article VI of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), requires nuclear weapons states to participate in "good faith" negotiations on arms reductions. Despite China being a party to the NPT, it has not only consistently refused to negotiate in "good faith" but has refused to

negotiate at all. We are left to reach no other conclusion that China is in violation of Article VI of the NPT.

We respectfully request that the administration provide to us the following:

1) A comprehensive interagency strategy for getting China to enter meaningful arms control negotiations, either bilaterally or trilaterally. This strategy should include the full use of our diplomatic, military, intelligence, and sanctions toolbox to bring them to the table.

2) A determination as to whether or not China is acting inconsistent with Article VI of the NPT, to include any underlying intelligence indicative of China's willingness to enter into good faith arms control negotiations as required by the Treaty.

3) An updated comprehensive unclassified IC assessment of Russian and Chinese nuclear modernization trends, similar to those which Lieutenant General Ashely made at the Hudson Institute on May 29, 2019. We additionally request that this includes updates to any Russian and Chinese chemical and biological weapons programs.

Over the last decade the threat environment has worsened and become more complicated. As I'm sure you agree, the time to arrest China's build-up is now, not after they deploy new delivery systems and materially expand the size of their stockpile. Additionally, the need to continue to modernize the U.S. deterrent is vital to our efforts to deter both Russia and China. We appreciate your attention to these important matters of national security.

Sincerely,

Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services

Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs

Ranking Member
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence