

June 24, 2016

Senator John McCain
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jack Reed
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators McCain and Reed,

There is a provision in the Senate version of the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act which would repeal the following statutory requirement:

§203. Director of Missile Defense Agency

If an officer of the armed forces on active duty is appointed to the position of Director of the Missile Defense Agency, the position shall be treated as having been designated by the President as a position of importance and responsibility for purposes of section 601 of this title and shall carry the grade of lieutenant general or general or, in the case of an officer of the Navy, vice admiral or admiral.

We strongly urge you not to rescind this requirement for several reasons.

First, the scale, scope and complexity of the position demands the minimum grade of a lieutenant general or vice admiral. The incumbent serves in several capacities including the Acquisition Executive and Head of Contracting Authority for the Ballistic Missile Defense portfolio of programs valued at more than \$30 billion. These include land- and sea-based sensors and interceptors as well as air- and space-based sensors. The elements of the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) are also globally deployed from Romania to the UK to Greenland to California to Alaska and Japan. The ongoing development of the BMDS involves the entire spectrum of weapon systems acquisition from basic research to development to production to deployment and sustainment.

Second, the position involves establishing working relationships with very senior allied military and political leaders where the executive experience and savvy of at least a three star is required. The quality of these relationships can mean the difference in success or failure in integrating U.S. and allied capabilities which can have a direct effect on our ability to provide defense for our deployed forces, allies and friends. Examples include the co-development of the SM 3-IIA interceptor with the government of Japan and the development and construction of interceptor sites in Europe.

Third, the Director of the Missile Defense Agency must engage with very senior industry leaders to include CEOs of the top major defense contractors. This is critical to ensure the proper management and resourcing of the programs to achieve their cost, schedule and operational performance objectives.

Fourth, the Director must be able to interface at the most senior levels with the Services and other Defense agencies to ensure the proper integration and implementation of capabilities as well as their eventual transition.

Finally, any downgrade of this position at this time would send the absolute wrong message to our adversaries that the U.S. is backing off of missile defense as a priority within our warfighting capability.

So again we strongly urge you not to change the requirement for at least a lieutenant general or vice admiral to fill the Director of the Missile Defense Agency position.

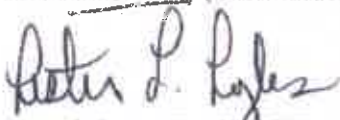
Sincerely,



Henry A. Obering III, Lt. Gen., USAF (Retired)
Director, MDA (2004-2009)



Ronald T. Kodish, Lt. Gen., USAF (Retired)
Director, MDA (1999-2004)



Lester L. Lyles, Gen., USAF (Retired)
Director, BMDO (1996-1999)



Malcom R. O'Neill, LTG, USA (Retired)
Director BMDO (1993-1996)



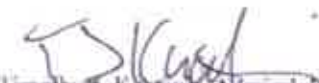
Ambassador Henry F. Cooper
Director, SDIO (1990-1993)



Kevin P. Chilton, Gen., USAF (Retired)
Commander, USSTRATCOM (2007-2011)



Victor E. Renhart Jr., Gen., USAF (Retired)
Commander, USNORTHCOM (2007-2010)



Timothy T. Keating, Admiral, USN (Retired)
Commander, USPACOM (2007-2010)
Commander USNORTHCOM (2004-2007)



Richard P. Formica, LTG, USA (Retired)
Commanding General,
USASMDC/ARSTRAT (2010-2013)



Joseph W. Costantino, LTG, USA (Retired)
Commanding General,
USASMDC/ARSTRAT (2001-2003)

24 June 2016



Kenneth Todorov, Brig. Gen., USAF (Retired)
Deputy Director, MDA (2014-2015)