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February 10, 2011

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We strongly urge you to make every effort to ensure that threat reduction and nonproliferation programs are funded at your requested FY 2011 levels in the next continuing resolution (CR) or omnibus appropriations bill.

Your personal commitment to preventing nuclear terrorism has led the global community to take unprecedented action to secure and eliminate weapon-usable nuclear materials around the world. As you noted in your State of the Union address, *"Because we rallied the world, nuclear materials are being locked down on every continent so they never fall into the hands of terrorists."*

However, U.S. leadership is lacking in one important area – the funding of this top national security priority. The current CR limits key nuclear material security programs to FY 2010 levels. This is affecting the acceleration of some programs and preventing others from being initiated. The House of Representatives intends to take up action on a new CR to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY 2011 the week of February 14. The Senate is expected to take action soon thereafter.

Sufficient funding for U.S. international weapons of mass destruction (WMD) security programs is essential to maintaining credible American leadership on nuclear security, and we ask for your help to ensure that such funding is in place to keep our nation safe from the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Thanks to your leadership, the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington D.C. was an unprecedented event during which the leaders of 47 nations pledged their support to secure vulnerable nuclear materials on their soil and to work in tandem to decrease threat levels. Numerous bipartisan reports have outlined the urgency of the danger and warned that more needs to be done to ensure that terrorists and non-state actors never obtain a nuclear weapon or materials usable for a nuclear device.

In FY 2011, you requested over \$2 billion for international WMD security programs within the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), Department of Defense (DoD), and Department of State. A critical piece of this request is a \$320 million increase over the FY 2010 appropriated level that enables NNSA and DoD's Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program to accelerate their efforts to lock down and eliminate nuclear materials around the world. The FY 2011 National Defense Authorization Act fully supported this funding.

Additionally last summer, both relevant House and Senate subcommittees decided to fully fund these important programs despite the current economic climate and competing funding demands. Money for these programs was also passed by the House during the lame duck session and in the omnibus bill that died in the Senate.

However, the final CR passed at the end of December 2010 funded most government programs at FY 2010 levels through March 4, 2011, including the programs to secure and safeguard nuclear weapons and materials. This is a significant setback in efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism because the overall funding request and congressional appropriations for threat reduction in FY 2010 are actually less than the amount Congress appropriated in FY 2009.

Failure to correct the shortfalls in the CR would significantly hamper U.S. leadership in the important efforts to secure vulnerable weapons and materials around the world. For example, NNSA's Global Threat Reduction Initiative could face delays in completing critical conversion, removal, and protection activities in Russia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, and Mexico.

Experts agree that limiting access to vulnerable nuclear weapons-usable materials will greatly reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism. The global financial cost and terrible destruction of a nuclear terrorist attack would dwarf the costs of preventing such an attack.

The fight against nuclear terrorism is a fight that can and must be won. At the close of 2010, NNSA announced that 111 pounds of bomb-making highly enriched uranium were removed from three sites in Ukraine. Since April 2009, six countries have given up all their highly enriched uranium and a total of 120 bombs' worth of nuclear material was secured. But the United States will not be able to sustain this progress if Congress does not adequately fund the programs that made these successes possible.

We urge you to ensure that threat reduction and nonproliferation programs at NNSA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State are funded at the FY 2011 requested level for the remainder of the fiscal year. No less than America's national security is at stake.

Sincerely,

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cc: The Honorable Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State

The Honorable Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense

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The Honorable Thomas P. D'Agostino, Administrator for Nuclear Security of the National Nuclear Security Administration and Under Secretary for Nuclear Security of the Department of Energy

The Honorable Jacob J. Lewis, Director, Office of Management and Budget

Ms. Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary, Arms Control and International Security, Department of State